

Sample Community Needs Assessment Plan

Community Needs Assessment Plan From Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs

1. Needs assessment goal
 - a. Identify barriers to accessing services and reporting crimes experienced by persons with disabilities.
2. Information to be obtained (the experiences, gaps in services, barriers to access, and needs of crime victims with disabilities)
 - a. What barriers are experienced by persons with disabilities in reporting crimes?
 - b. Why do some persons with disabilities not report abuse or other crimes?
 - c. How do victim service agencies, disability service providers, and the criminal justice system respond to crime victims with disabilities?
 - d. How can service systems be more welcoming and accessible to persons with disabilities?
 - e. Is there a need for personal safety education for persons with disabilities?
3. Project members conducting the assessment
 - a. Access North

- b. Program for Aid to Victims of Sexual Assault (PAVSA)
 - c. The Disability Law Center
 - d. Domestic Abuse Intervention Program (DAIP)
4. Who has the needed information (target groups)
- a. Crime victims with disabilities
 - b. Prosecutors (city and county)
 - c. Defense attorneys (Indian Legal Assistance Program, legal aid, Minnesota Volunteer Attorney Program)
 - d. Law enforcement (patrol and investigation in the Duluth Police Department)
 - e. Jail
 - f. DAIP nonviolence groups (offender-based programs)
 - g. Probation
 - h. Disability service providers (e.g., Center for Independent Living, Trillium, Access North, Arc Northland, Goodwill, TBI Services, adult foster home network, county social services, Human Development Center)

- i. Victim service providers (e.g., PAVSA, Safe Haven, DAIP), victim witness (St. Louis County Attorney Victim Witness Program), detox (Center for Alcohol and Drug Treatment), women's transitional housing, American Indian Community Housing Organization, Marty Mann Halfway House, New San Marco, Churches United in Ministry, Loaves and Fishes, Dorothy Day Center, Life House, Salvation Army)
- j. Family members and caregivers of persons with disabilities
- k. Persons with disabilities

5. Methods used to obtain information (e.g., focus groups, interviews)

Law enforcement and systems people (e.g., probation, attorneys, judges) will be contacted to take surveys and for followup interviews (individual). The reasoning behind this is that they are likely to have access to electronic surveys and little time. The surveys can give us initial information to guide further inquiries with these individuals as needed. The surveys can be presented in alternative formats to accommodate individual needs. We will send at least 25 (more if available) electronic surveys to members of law enforcement and probation agencies and to defense and prosecution attorneys and judges by August 28 with a 2-week response time.

Focus groups and individual interviews will be used for crime victims with disabilities. The focus groups will include groups for family members/caregivers and people with a wide array of disabilities. Each focus group should have one disability and one victim service provider in attendance. We will hold five focus groups with three to five people in attendance each. One focus group will be for family members/caregivers. The focus groups will be conducted as

follows: Two between September 7 and 11, two between September 21 and 25, one between October 5 and 9, and one on either Saturday or Sunday, October 10 or 11. Half of the groups will be offered during the day and half during the evening so that we can accommodate the schedules of people who would like to participate.

To obtain information from disability service providers, we will use telephone surveys, in-person interviews (short one-on-one interviews), focus groups, and lunch groups. Electronic surveys don't seem to be the best option but may work for adult foster homes. Past experience has shown that focus groups are not the most conducive method to use for this population. The questions will be asked using the method most effective for the agency. We will conduct a total of 25 interviews or surveys with a wide variety of agencies (see above for a partial list).

Victim service providers will be contacted for individual interviews or will be asked to take surveys. We will choose the most appropriate method for any given agency and will interview or survey at least 15 victim service providers.

6. Demographic Information Plan

The total population of our service area is 100,255 people. Approximately 93 percent of the population is white, 2 percent American Indian, 1 percent African-American, 1 percent Latino, 1 percent Asian-American, and 2 percent multiracial. Data from the 2000 census reveal that 33,458 (or 17 percent) of St. Louis County residents ages 5 and older have a disability (Access North Center for Independent Living, a project partner, states that the actual percentage is close to 20 percent for 2008). St. Louis County has the highest population of Minnesota residents with disabilities outside of the Twin Cities' metro counties and 15 percent below the poverty rate,

compared to the statewide rate of 10 percent. Fifty percent of St. Louis County residents are female. Currently none of our partners track information specific to crime victims with disabilities. This will be addressed as a part of the grant (unless otherwise noted, data is from the [2010 U.S. Census](#)).

7. Location

The focus groups are likely to be held at one of the partner agency facilities, all of which are accessible. If another location is needed, we will ensure accessibility. The final decision on location and the specifics of each focus group are to be determined.

8. Accessibility

In addition to the accessibility of the physical location for in-person meetings and interviews, we plan to make any written material (e.g., surveys) available in alternative formats to meet people's needs. We will also evaluate any recruitment material for accessibility prior to releasing it.

9. Outreach and Participant Recruitment

The flier for the first set of focus groups is included here [not included as part of this sample]. The flier will be updated for the other four focus groups to reflect the correct dates and times.

10. Confidentiality (forms)

Each participating agency signed the memorandum of understanding for this grant and understands issues of privacy and confidentiality. Signed originals are included in this packet [not included as part of this sample].