

Collaboration Toolkit for Anti-Trafficking & Housing Programs



Freedom
Network USA

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This toolkit was created to address the need for collaboration across programs and communities for anti-trafficking and housing programs. The purpose of this toolkit is to provide information on the most meaningful ways to collaborate, form partnerships, and maintain survivor confidentiality. Additionally, this toolkit contains supplemental resources and a sample Memorandum of Understanding to assist with collaboration building.

*For the purpose of this toolkit, we have highlighted the same programs consistently to illustrate how various areas of collaboration can be addressed.

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Introduction to Collaboration



“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

– African Proverb



“[T]he housing needs of survivors of human trafficking are immense. Survivors need access to emergency, transitional, and long-term housing to establish a safe place to live, far away from their traffickers if needed, especially if they are escaping from their trafficker. Survivors of human trafficking need services that empower social justice and inclusion and provide the tools needed to succeed.”

– United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking Annual Report 2016

Collaboration is when two or more individuals or groups join forces to achieve a common goal. In the context of creating social change, collaboration is essential. We cannot singlehandedly end poverty, address the shortage of affordable housing, or close the

access gap for survivors of trafficking. These types of challenges require the investment of stakeholders with a diverse set of knowledge, skills, and resources; a clear, common purpose; and a framework for partnership. No one organization will have all it needs to tackle human trafficking or the housing needs for survivors; collaboration is a critical tactic to ensure meaningful and holistic outcomes for survivors.

Increasingly, funders are incorporating collaboration as a program requirement in order to ensure wraparound services and leverage resources within communities. This important integration creates an opportunity for anti-trafficking organizations to establish new partnerships, and to focus on meeting the unique, individual breadth of services survivors may need.

When To Collaborate

Working alone is unsustainable. It restricts time, resources, and capacity. Effective partnerships can ease these constraints by creating more efficient program delivery, eliminating duplication of effort, and avoiding working in silos. Survivors benefit from collaborations, when the diverse needs of survivors are heard and met.

Housing for survivors is a top priority that demands significant attention and energy, especially because many housing programs are not tailored to the needs of trafficking survivors. In this context, it is worth exploring the importance of spurring meaningful collaboration among stakeholders who share a common vision to expand housing security and capacity.

Continuums of Care (CoCs) are programs under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development designed to promote and support community commitment to ending homeless and providing resources, and funding, for housing individuals and families. For further information on CoCs, please visit hudexchange.info/programs/coc.

■ **Do Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) or Continuums of Care (CoCs) have housing resources to support long-term housing for survivors?**

- By collaborating with PHAs and CoCs, your program can serve as a referral partner as well as provide training on working with survivors. In turn, trafficking survivors will have access to long-term housing support.

Here are some questions you may want to consider in establishing or growing out a housing program:

■ **Are you and another local organization both fundraising to open a shelter in your community?**

- Collaborating may maximize impact and avoid duplication.

■ **Who else could call city council members to advocate for an affordable housing ordinance or priority for housing vouchers?**

- Collaborating may increase our power and influence.

■ **Do you work in a shelter setting but have clients who want to live in their own apartment?**

- Turn to other community programs and organizations when the goal is larger than the organizational or personal mission.

■ **Having trouble connecting with a hard-to-reach population about your services?**

- Partner with culturally specific organizations to increase visibility and raise awareness and acknowledge the expertise and role of others in the field.

■ **Does your city have a waitlist for subsidized housing?**

- Turn to other community programs and partners when feeling stuck.

■ **Do you have a promising housing model that could work in a neighboring community?**

- Team up with other service providers in the area to increase the scale or broaden the scope.

Types of Collaboration

Depending on the context and the desired outcome of the partnership, collaborations may be formal or informal, complex or straightforward, time-bound or permanent. Whether you're engaged in a local referral partnership or a member of a national coalition, various types of collaborations require different levels of risk, reward, trust, and commitment. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) describes and delineates the nature of a collaboration.

■ **What is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)?**

- An MOU is a written agreement that outlines an agreement between partners. In some cases, it can be a binding contract. A well-designed MOU serves to: (1) establish a structure around which partnerships can adapt and grow, (2) support accountability by defining roles, responsibilities and decision-making processes, and (3) ensure shared goals, values and purpose among partners. An MOU can cover topics such as: governance and leadership structure, decision-making framework, financial relationships among partners, communications, and policies regarding confidentiality, intellectual property, conflicts of interest, and diversity and inclusion.

A sample MOU is provided at the end of this toolkit.

Keep in mind that a partnership may come together under one set of circumstances and evolve over time as needs and circumstances change. Remember to revisit MOUs as a partnership grows and progresses to ensure that the information is still relevant and up-to-date. The continuum of a partnership often begins with networking, develops into coordination and cooperation, and progresses into a formalized collaboration.

As a program, you may consider the following items that can inform collaboration:

1. **Structure:** Partnerships can occur through referrals between organizations, participating in coalitions, ad hoc committees, or working on projects together. Many organizations have informal partnerships, in which staff members from each organization may be connected and feel comfortable reaching out and referring to one another. Cultivating these relationships can help facilitate an informal referral process and support with advocating for survivors.
2. **Purpose:** Referrals are agreements between two entities to provide a clearly articulated service or set of services to mutual clients. A referral partnership is more than handing a client, a name and phone number; it requires a personal relationship with the provider and deep knowledge of the resource (e.g., what services are available, how they are provided, who provides them, what is required of clients, where the office is located, and what the client can generally expect when walking in the door).

Example: The Chicago Housing Authority Collaboration - In most places there are systemic barriers that prevent survivors from accessing safe and affordable housing. In 2016, service providers and local government in Chicago established a partnership to support housing solutions for survivors of human trafficking. The referral framework resulted from the partners' collaborative efforts to design and implement an approach that centered survivors in navigating the complexities of the public housing system. The referring agencies agreed to a standard of supportive services outlined in the "Supportive Services Pledge," and they agreed to follow a standardized process for assessments and referrals of survivors.

3. Many referral partnerships are informal and unfunded. In those circumstances, consider how to design and implement a framework that is realistic and flexible. In either situation, partners should communicate regularly about what works and what needs improvement.
4. **Membership:** Coalitions are alliances that come together for a specific goal that can be time limited or last for years. They exist to bring attention to and influence a particular issue. They are comprised of multiple organizations that share decision making while maintaining their individual autonomy. Coalitions are common in a political context or local community building. Leadership support is also essential – having folks at the table who have the authority to make commitments and support the engagement must be part of the process.

Example: Established in 2004 to increase victim identification and to enhance collaboration among organizations serving survivors of trafficking, the Washington Anti-Trafficking Response Network (WARN) is a coalition of non-governmental organizations that provide direct services to victims of human trafficking in Washington State. The International Rescue Committee in Seattle leads WARN with support from its partners – API Chaya, Real Escape from the Sex Trade, and YouthCare.

- WARN serves as an important platform for service providers to share information, coordinate referrals and collaborate on training, outreach, and technical assistance. For example, a component of WARN's multidisciplinary response is to serve as co-chair of the Washington Advisory Committee on Trafficking, a task force led by the Seattle Police Department, the US Attorney's Office for the Western District of Washington and the International Rescue Committee in Seattle.

Elements of Successful Collaborations

Successful collaborations are built on trust and a shared vision among partners. Both agencies benefit from collaborating, and those that they serve benefit from this collaboration. Other critical components include:

- Creating buy-in within the organization
- Stakeholders with vested interests
- Teamwork
- Open, consistent communication
- Motivated partners
- Means to sustain efforts
- Action plan

To develop a collaboration built on trust, partners should communicate openly about their organizations' respective interests, capacity, and aims. Negotiating a partnership ensures that partners form a collaboration in a mutually beneficial way that produces the desired results. If desired results are not obtained, there are still important lessons to be learned and information to be obtained for the future. Importantly, discussions about partnerships should be open and solutions oriented.

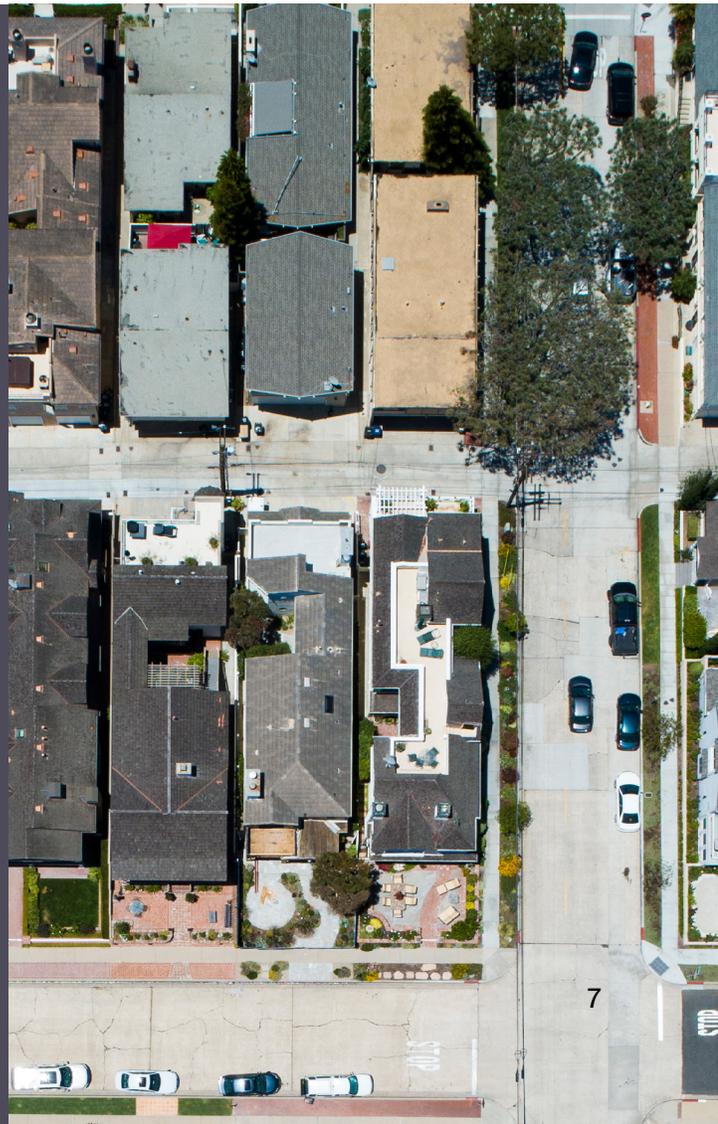
There are key elements that can strengthen and advance collaborations, and address any potential conflict, such as:

- Honor relationships
- Engaging survivor voices and needs
- Encourage innovation
- Be realistic and fair
- Recognize that each partnership is unique, and that each has strengths and skills to contribute
- Engage in active listening
- Know your bottom line – what are your ultimate goals or desired outcome?
- Come prepared to commit resources (time, staff, funds, etc.)
- Take a fresh look at practices and standards of each individual agency and of the partnership being established
- Data collection and tracking
- Allow sufficient time for partners to work out details

“ Housing First

This approach is guided by the belief that people need basic necessities like food and a place to live before attending to anything less critical, such as getting a job, budgeting properly, or attending to substance use issues. Additionally, Housing First is based on the theory that client choice is valuable in housing selection and supportive service participation, and that exercising that choice is likely to make a client more successful in remaining housed and improving their life.

- The National Alliance to End Homelessness



Why Collaboration is Needed Between Anti-Trafficking and Housing Programs

Housing is a human right. For survivors of labor and sex trafficking, it can mean the difference between stability and healing, as well as continued exploitation. Survivors and anti-trafficking service providers alike identify housing as simultaneously the most important and difficult need to address. We also know from the evidence-based Housing First model that housing is fundamental to achieving other goals (e.g., accessing legal services, mental health services, employment).

The reality is that survivors face multiple barriers to accessing and staying in housing, to include: a lack of financial resources; bad or no credit history; lack of documentation to establish personal identity or lawful immigration status; criminal record; eviction history; substance use disorders; and perceived and/or physical distance from family and community. Affordable housing is difficult to find, trafficking-specific resources are in short supply, and service providers may not be familiar with other options that exist within housing systems or their communities.

Survivors may be feeling overwhelmed or traumatized when they meet with service providers. The pressure is on for survivors to identify their needs, and for providers to connect them with the resources they need. Survivors may have limited options and bounce from one temporary situation to the next. This tends to exacerbate vulnerability and compound trauma. Housing systems, such as Continuums of Care and Housing Authorities, usually have longer-term housing options that a survivor may be eligible for but have extraordinary waiting lists that can last several years or more.

There is a better way...through collaboration! Building relationships with partners in the housing field enables service providers to leverage their expertise and connect survivors with untapped resources. Establishing formal partnerships with Continuums of Care (CoCs), Public Housing Authorities, shelters, and housing programs can expand housing options that can meet the needs of survivors. For further information, please reference some of the specific housing terms and references on page 8 of this toolkit.

Key Partnerships

Survivors often identify housing as their most urgent need. Anti-trafficking case management often includes housing case management. To stabilize survivors, service providers must understand, tap into, and help to connect to the housing resources available in the communities they are a part of. Having these partnerships identified and solidified in advance can support service providers in accessing housing options for survivors when there are emergencies, as well as having a proactive approach for identifying long-term housing.

Anti-Trafficking Programs

Both the [Department of Justice \(DOJ\)/Office for Victims of Crime \(OVC\)](https://ovc.ojp.gov/) and the [Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\)/Office on Trafficking in Persons \(OTIP\)](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip) support a network of anti-trafficking service providers across the country. If you are working with survivors and are not already connected with these services, this is an important starting point.

Below is an overview of several anti-trafficking services and housing programs to illuminate partnership opportunities for service providers working with adult survivors of human trafficking. Though many federal initiatives are highlighted, most housing options will be local or state-based programs.

- [DOJ/OVC Programs and Funding Opportunities \(https://www.ojp.gov/\)](https://www.ojp.gov/)
- [Office for Victims of Crime \(https://ovc.ojp.gov/\)](https://ovc.ojp.gov/)
- Some examples of human trafficking-specific OVC-funded programs may include:
 - Direct service programs
 - Human trafficking task forces
 - Human trafficking-specific housing programs

- For specific resources on local projects and partners within OVC, please visit: <https://ovc.ojp.gov/program/human-trafficking/map>

For a link to all OVC-funded awards, please visit: <https://ovc.ojp.gov/funding/awards/list>

- [HHS/OTIP Programs and Funding Opportunities \(https://www.hhs.gov/programs/index.html\)](https://www.hhs.gov/programs/index.html)
 - The **Domestic Victims of Human Trafficking Program (DVHT)** provides comprehensive case management, direct services, and referrals to services, including short and long-term housing, substance abuse treatment, mental health counseling, educational opportunities, job training, legal advocacy, and financial services. The DVHT program empowers organizations and communities to deliver trauma-informed, strength-based, and victim-centered services. In addition, the program encourages innovative collaboration within communities to ensure long-term outcomes.
 - The **Trafficking Victim Assistance Program (TVAP)** funds case management services for foreign national adults and minors who have experienced trafficking and are pursuing [HHS certification \(https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/fact-sheet/resource/certification\)](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/fact-sheet/resource/certification). The grantees provide assistance through a network of providers throughout the country. Grantees can help with case management, referrals, emergency support and assistance with federal and state benefits to certified individuals and certain family members.



Housing Programs & Resources

Whether you're looking to develop connections to shelters, transitional housing, your Continuum of Care (CoC), or permanent housing, the housing field has a variety of stakeholders with whom to develop partnerships.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has specified that human trafficking meets the definition of "other dangerous or life threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or family member" under paragraph 4 of the definition of "homeless," and the release of a [joint letter \(https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/Joint-Letter-August-2016.pdf\)](https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/Joint-Letter-August-2016.pdf) with DOJ and HHS to restate the rights of immigrant survivors to access programs, services, or assistance that are "necessary for the protection of life or safety."

Survivors of trafficking are eligible for HUD funded services under Category 4. Category 4 states: "The Category 4 homelessness definition under the HEARTH Act states that survivors who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, stalking, or human trafficking are eligible for HUD funded housing." This applies to homeless services only. Other HUD programs may not use this definition of eligibility.

HUD Programs and Funding Opportunities

HUD awards grants to support a wide range of programs. Shelter systems and CoCs are aimed at quickly providing housing for people who are experiencing homelessness whereas Public Housing Authorities provide long-term subsidies to low-income individuals to cover housing expenses.

Shelter Systems

Shelter systems are often the first point of access for individuals or families experiencing homelessness. Shelters are intended to solve an immediate crisis, not for long-term stays. There are different types of shelters: homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, runaway shelters (which may service individuals up to 25 years old), and others. [Domestic Violence \(DV\) Shelters \(https://freedomnetworkusa.org/app/uploads/2019/03/Guide-for-Working-With-DV-Programs.pdf\)](https://freedomnetworkusa.org/app/uploads/2019/03/Guide-for-Working-With-DV-Programs.pdf) may be a good short-term resource for those in need of immediate housing. Eligibility for domestic violence shelters typically requires individuals to be fleeing immediate danger of an abuser. Survivors of trafficking may not fit squarely into the eligibility criteria and shelter staff may not be experts on the dynamics of human trafficking, but they are often well-informed about trauma, safety protocols, confidentiality, and cultural sensitivity. For those reasons, human trafficking service providers may want to explore partnerships in advance and negotiate a special referral protocol & supportive services that best serves trafficking survivors.

OVW Transitional Housing Program

The U.S. Department of Justice’s Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) offers grant assistance for transitional housing services. According to OVW, the purpose of this program is to support “programs that provide 6-24 months of transitional housing with support services for victims who are homeless or in need of transitional housing as a result of a situation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking; and whom emergency shelter services or other crisis intervention services are unavailable or insufficient.” To learn more, please visit: <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/page/file/1117496/download>

Partnership Opportunity: To identify opportunities to partner with DV shelters, reach out to your [state DV coalition \(https://ncadv.org/state-coalitions\)](https://ncadv.org/state-coalitions). Read more about working with DV shelters to meet the needs of trafficking survivors [here. \(https://freedomnetworkusa.org/app/uploads/2019/03/Guide-for-Working-With-DV-Programs.pdf\)](https://freedomnetworkusa.org/app/uploads/2019/03/Guide-for-Working-With-DV-Programs.pdf)

Continuums of Care (CoCs)

CoCs are community-based programs designed to promote community wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness. They provide funding for efforts by service providers, and State and local governments to quickly rehouse individuals and families experiencing homelessness while minimizing trauma and dislocation; promote access to and effect utilization of mainstream programs by individuals and families experiencing homelessness; and, optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

CoCs primarily fund three programs: permanent supportive housing, rapid re-housing, and transitional housing.

- [Permanent Supportive Housing \(https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3892/housing-first-in-permanent-supportive-housing-brief/\)](https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3892/housing-first-in-permanent-supportive-housing-brief/) (PSH) is designed to meet the needs of individuals who have experienced [chronic homelessness \(https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/resources-for-chronic-homelessness/\)](https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/resources-for-chronic-homelessness/) —meaning they have been homeless for at least a year—or repeatedly—while struggling with a disabling condition such as a serious mental illness, substance use disorder, or physical disability.
- While the experience of human trafficking on its own may not make an individual eligible for PSH, a survivor with a disabling condition may benefit from PSH.
- [Rapid Re-Housing \(https://freedomnetworkusa.org/app/uploads/2019/07/Rapid-Rehousing-Fact-Sheet-FINAL.pdf\)](https://freedomnetworkusa.org/app/uploads/2019/07/Rapid-Rehousing-Fact-Sheet-FINAL.pdf) provides housing identification, move-in assistance, short-term rental assistance, and case management services. The goals are to help people obtain housing quickly, increase self-sufficiency, and stay housed.
- Rapid Re-Housing may be an option for survivors of trafficking who need quick, short-term support to get back on their feet and will not require longer-term supportive services or

rental assistance. Survivors who may choose to utilize Rapid Re-Housing are those who: have previously rented or owned housing, are likely to earn enough income to pay rent independently, are able to abide by lease requirements, and are capable of advocating for their own needs with landlords.

- **Transitional Housing** (<https://freedomnetworkusa.org/app/uploads/2020/07/Housing-Options-for-Survivors-of-Trafficking-Final.pdf>) is designed to provide a time-limited housing subsidy or financial support coupled with supportive services for up to 24 months.
- Transitional Housing may be an option for survivors who have: limited independent living experience, limited financial income, or otherwise will likely need more extensive support for the next two years.

Partnership Opportunity: Join your local CoC as a member of the board, a committee, or a working group. Even though the governance structure of each CoC varies, service providers have an opportunity to connect directly with housing and homeless service providers through participation in the CoC. Contributing to the CoC is an opportunity to raise awareness about the housing needs facing survivors of trafficking and to shape the policies, protocols, and funding that have a direct impact on their lives, including how the CoC assesses housing needs, what types of programs and populations are included in the annual funding application, amending referral protocols, and defining success metrics. To find your local CoC and point of contact, visit the [HUD website \(https://www.hud.gov/\)](https://www.hud.gov/).

Public Housing Authorities

Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) provide comprehensive rental housing for eligible low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. PHAs offer minimal flexibility and often very long waiting periods.

Keep in mind that each person on the PHA waiting list is living in poverty. Violence, trauma, racial inequity and gender discrimination are predominant challenges for those living in poverty, as well as for survivors of human trafficking. Stakeholders should work together to create, support and strengthen systems so that all PHA participants—including survivors of trafficking—can be successful.

In order to find more information about how to attend public hearings in your community, please visit your state's Housing Development Authority website or your state or city's government website.

HUD supported a [public housing pilot \(https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/housing/mfh/map/maphome/taxcredit\)](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/housing/mfh/map/maphome/taxcredit) for survivors in partnership with the Chicago Housing Authority, HHS, and 6

local service providers. The goal of the pilot was to understand how survivors of trafficking may, or may not, achieve success as a Housing Choice Voucher consumer, and to inform the anti-trafficking field with insights gained from the pilot. The program achieved important successes: 60 housing choice vouchers for survivors that did not exist before; deeper relationships between survivors and service providers; increased motivation to access other services; improvement in the ability to reunite with children and strengthen family relationships; and, ability to focus on job search. Anecdotally, service providers also reported an increase in hope, health and well-being for survivors on a path to permanent housing. On the other hand, the program participants experienced challenges, some of which were systemic issues not unique to trafficking survivors whereas others were specific. For example, survivors identified safety concerns for locations where vouchers were more readily accepted.

Partnership Opportunity: PHAs offer public hearings, which are great ways to raise awareness about the housing needs of survivors and develop relationships with PHA stakeholders. Engaging in the administrative process creates an opportunity for service providers to shape PHA program policies to better serve trafficking survivors and others who have experienced trauma. Public hearings are a way to gather public concerns and comments on community issues before a government or agency acts. Public hearing information is specific to states, cities, counties, and issue types, and upcoming hearings can be found on a location's website. For example, further information about a general public hearing taking place in Washington, D.C. can be found at <https://dccouncil.us/events/category/public-hearing/list/>. In order to find more information about how to attend public hearings in your community, please visit your state's Housing Development Authority website or your state or city's government website.

Private Sector Housing Resources

Hospitality Industry

Hotels can be a useful resource for survivors especially when other housing options may be unavailable, may not be a good fit, or to meet short-term immediate needs. It is essential to discuss any housing option with the survivor and whether they feel comfortable with it. As a program you may consider partnering with local hotels or management companies that can bill you directly, thereby bypassing the need for identification or credit cards from the survivor. Hotels may be a great option for individuals who may not have other housing options, for example male survivors. Additionally, hotels offer survivors autonomy; however, it is important to ensure that

case management and/or regular contact with the survivor is provided by the program to avoid a survivor feeling isolated or feeling “discarded” while staying at a hotel. Additional considerations can include access to food for the survivor and accessibility to transportation in order to access community resources.

Partnership Opportunity: Cultivate a relationship with a hotel or a hospitality chain and explore a formal partnership to provide free or discounted nights when rooms are available.

Example: During the COVID-19 pandemic, The Network Advocating Against Domestic Violence (The Network) formed a partnership with the City of Chicago and the State of Illinois to find private emergency shelter options for survivors of domestic violence. Together, these three entities were able to create a partnership with hotels across the State to ensure that survivors had access to safe, private, and confidential housing during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a part of this collaborative partnership, The Network and the local hotels working with them ensured that survivors did not have to use their real name or identity to check into the hotel, that service providers could book hotels on an online portal on behalf of survivors, and The Network was billed directly for all survivor stays.

When developing partnerships with a hotel consider “negotiating”:

- Need for ID to check in. Often survivors of trafficking leave their trafficking situation without ID. Consider asking the hotel to “waive” the need for ID.
- Need for a credit card to check in. Often survivors will not have a bank account or credit cards. Consider negotiating with the hotel to “waive” the need for a personal credit card and allow you to use the organization’s card.
- One point of contact. Consider asking the hotel for one point of contact that your agency can contact directly to book a hotel room and ensure that negotiated accommodations will be provided to survivors. This will protect survivor confidentiality and facilitate smoother communication.

Rental Properties

Survivors may want to rent an apartment. Even survivors who achieve physical and financial stability may continue to face significant barriers, or encounter new barriers: affordable housing is scarce; available housing may not be located in safe areas; background checks may fail due to a criminal record or a poor credit score; and,



discriminatory practices persist in the housing sector on the basis of race, immigration status, gender, sexual orientation, and disability. Even survivors who have Housing Choice Vouchers that allow individuals to choose where they live experience difficulty because landlords illegally refuse to accept vouchers.

Master leasing is an option that enables service providers to serve as a “leaseholder” while offering a sub-lease to clients who occupy the unit(s). This approach means survivors avoid directly experiencing the above-named barriers. On the other hand, the organization must shoulder the responsibility to ensure the unit is well maintained and that the tenant/survivor follows the terms of the lease. For more information about partnerships with landlords, please see:

<https://freedomnetworkusa.org/app/uploads/2020/05/Human-Trafficking-Housing-Options-Partnerships-with-Landlords.pdf>

Partnership Opportunity: Establishing relationships with property management companies and private landlords can make a powerful difference for survivors who are ready to live independently. These kinds of partnerships can be challenging because they demand time, trust, and transparency. It is important to maintain a client-centered approach while also developing a trust-based relationship with partners, and sometimes there is tension between these goals. Without revealing details about any individual case, service providers should be transparent about the services offered to survivors so landlords understand the support systems in place to ensure prospective tenants are successful.

In Seattle, to address the scarcity of affordable housing, API Chaya succeeded in establishing a decade-long partnership with a private landlord. Facing rising rental costs coupled with the heightened need for housing that could accommodate survivors and their families, API Chaya leveraged its community networks – ethnic, linguistic, geographic, and religious – to identify and cultivate relationships with landlords. After a two-year effort at building trust and understanding with a particular landlord, API Chaya creatively negotiated a partnership that enabled survivors to enter short-term leases at reduced rent. Apart from the satisfaction of contributing to his community, the landlord also benefited because he took a tax deduction for the amount that rent was reduced.

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Field

The Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) field has extensive knowledge and programs that meet the needs of homeless youth. Youth who have experienced trafficking may also be experiencing homelessness, couch surfing, or need safer housing options. Developing a collaboration with RHY and youth-serving programs can help support the work that you are doing and expand the resources that a young survivor has access to. To find access to local programs, National Network for Youth (<https://nn4youth.org/>) and National Safe Place Network (<https://www.nspnetwork.org/>) may be good places to start.

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Training and Technical Assistance Center (RHYTTAC) is the training and technical assistance provider for all federally-funded runaway and homeless youth

(RHY) grantees. RHYTTAC assists these organizations in developing and implementing effective approaches to serving young people who have run away and/or are impacted by homelessness, accessing new resources, and establishing linkages with other programs with similar interests and concerns.

Host Families and Host Homes

In communities and areas where housing options are limited or for survivors who do not want to live independently, service providers may collaborate with host families or homes to welcome survivors of trafficking for short or extended periods. There are notable advantages when a family invites a survivor and their family into their home: minimal expenses, expansion of community, and established support systems. To achieve success, placement in a home requires careful planning, support and assessment. It is also necessary to offer training on cultural sensitivity, personal obligations, and family expectations.

In North Dakota, Youthworks runs a program to provide comprehensive services and temporary housing for youth trafficking victims in licensed and trained host homes that provide clients with basic needs, a family environment, relationship modelling, and emotional support. Working with social service agencies across the state, Youthworks recruits host home families to receive training on human trafficking, guidance on how to provide a trauma-informed home environment, and assistance throughout the licensing process. Youthworks accepts referrals from state social service agencies, law enforcement, and shelters. Working closely with specialized trafficking case managers who travel to host homes to offer in-person support, clients receive intensive case management that covers counseling, transportation, life skills classes, education, substance abuse treatment, medical care, and employment assistance. In a 2018 evaluation, Youthworks reported that host home placements ranged from 3 days to several months with the average length of service reported as 88 days and the average number of days case managers worked during the service period as 15 days.

When creating a partnership with host families or homes, consider:

- Clear guidelines about confidentiality and survivor choice
- Training about trauma-informed care
- Detailed information to ensure a good match between the survivor and the host family (including issues such as language, culture, gender, and location)
- Clear plans for ongoing support for host families and survivors
- Clear plans for responding to concerns raised by hosts or survivors, including alternate housing options
- Clear and approachable methods for reporting abuse

For more information you can access the sample host home manual created by Point Source Youth, which focuses on supporting runaway and homeless youth: <https://www.pointsourceyouth.org/host-homes>.

Community Landscape

Many programs in your community may already be serving survivors of trafficking or may have programs that survivors could benefit from. By understanding who is part of your community, you can create meaningful relationships and leverage each other's expertise and work.

1. Who is my Continuum of Care lead?

2. Do they host regular meetings? If so, when?

3. What domestic violence programs are in my community?

4. What Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) programs or youth-serving programs are in my community?

5. What housing and homelessness programs are in my community?

6. Who can I contact at my local Housing Authority?

7. Who can I contact at my local HUD office?

8. Who is my Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) administrator?

Developing a Collaboration

Collaborations require an intentional mindset, engaging with each other and in the work you do rather than allowing the status quo to dictate your work. The nature of collaboration requires you to also understand your partners' perspectives and the context in which they operate. At the outset of a new partnership, be prepared to provide context, training, and data to establish a shared understanding and concern for the issues and needs at hand.

It is also important to understand each other's resources and to expect that there are limitations, restrictions, and gaps. Service providers often adopt a scarcity mindset, a common consequence of competition over funding, visibility and influence. Forming a collaboration challenges this mindset and enables partners to leverage each other's resources, to obtain new resources, and to meet a common goal.

Choosing to Collaborate

Successful collaborations are hard work and require time, trust, and teamwork. Consider these questions on your own and choose the important ones to explore together as you evaluate whether and how to establish a partnership:

■ Do we share a common goal? Do we share similar values?

- Partners should share compatible goals. As in a personal relationship, partners need to communicate clearly and transparently so the parties understand where interests are aligned and where they diverge. It is important to remember that complete alignment on all issues is not necessary. Collaboration may be effective in a limited area of alignment.

For example, in New York City one of the main housing programs (HRA 2010E) is tailored to individuals experiencing homelessness and mental illness. Safe Horizon accesses this program for its clients where they meet the criteria: they do not have a home that they can call their own and they are experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder, or another diagnosed psychological condition related to surviving human trafficking. In this case, the goals of the housing program are aligned with service providers' priority on safe, secure housing for survivors.

■ **Do we have an equal stake in the issue at hand? If uneven, are we okay with that?**

- Partners should all have a vested interest in the partnership, but they may not have an equal stake. Whether or not partners contribute equally is not as important as whether partners leverage each other's complementary strengths to achieve a common goal.

For example, a shelter or housing program may rely on a partner for referrals of human trafficking survivors. Strong referral mechanisms are instrumental in facilitating access to services. Complementarity, clear communication, and flexibility – rather than equity of effort – are more likely to be markers of an effective referral partnership.

■ **What expertise do we each bring? What can each of us contribute?**

- Negotiating expectations about roles and responsibilities will ensure mutual understanding about how partners are accountable to each other. Even so, flexibility is a necessity, particularly for service providers working to secure housing. In the interest of sustaining a partnership, organizations should be prepared to compromise and remain open to varied ways of achieving its goal.

For example, to overcome the limitations inherent to operating in a pandemic, consider ways to be flexible. In southern California, some shelters moved to remote operations, some closed entirely, and some remained open. Residents could only interact with staff online. In this context, shelters adjusting to operating with remote staff will benefit from partners' support and understanding. Referring partners may consider what new processes could be implemented and share information with the survivor before making the referral. Consider how to reach out to partners to understand how agencies are adapting, what they are learning, and where they need help from allies and stakeholders.

■ **Who has access to critical resources that can be leveraged (e.g., shelter beds, housing programs, funding, relationships)? Do we each have the organizational capacity – leadership, funds, staff, materials, time - to move forward or will we need to bring in additional resources to support the collaboration?**

- Mapping out resources and increasing awareness about how organizations operate is a critical step. Understanding and appreciating partners' differing challenges and limitations will help establish trust and transparency.

For example, Lifeboat attributes its success at collaboration to its leadership and staff capacity. As an agency operating specialized housing services for trafficking survivors, it relies on collaboration to support clients: Valencia Community College offers clients educational opportunities, local law enforcement supports shelter safety and security, and a local counselor offers weekly therapy sessions.

■ **Are there effective channels of communication to facilitate collaboration among partners? Are there clear and concrete goals and action steps that everyone understands?**

→ A cohesive collaboration is developed by co-creating attainable and realistic goals that are clearly communicated to all partners. Goals should support a shared vision that is aligned with the missions of the partners. To ensure that the partners stay focused on the purpose of the collaboration, consider establishing formal and informal channels of communication. Individuals and organizations adopt various communication styles, and it is important to work together to identify different approaches and decide what works best. Options to consider include standing meetings, in-person meetings, one-on-one meetings, conference calls, working group meetings, or ad hoc meetings. Once a decision is made, document it and plan ahead to evaluate whether and what changes may be necessary.

■ **Are the right organizations at the table? Are all the organizations relevant to achieving the common goal? Are the organizations interested in contributing? Do other individuals or groups need to be involved?**

→ It is important for partners to understand and appreciate their existing structures, processes, and programs because it will enable partners to adapt to changing circumstances and needs. Building a strong foundation for a partnership will yield results in the long term because a track record of trust diffuses tensions, eases transitions, and increases team spirit.

For example, in Chicago Housing Authority, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) led a partnership to provide housing vouchers to trafficking survivors. The partnership served a critical purpose for service providers because it offered survivors autonomy and choice, and it enabled the housing authority to work closely with trafficking experts to design and implement a successful program. The metrics tell the story of the partnership's success: 56 vouchers issued (as of April 2020), 35 residents housed, and an impressive 100% successful voucher retention rate. The qualitative background is equally as important: none of the partners claim credit for the success with each reflecting that the outcome could not have been achieved unless each agency came together to do its part.

In California, since Ruby's Place obtained HUD funding for a new housing program, their CoC has been the guide to their procedures and policies around the housing program. With the help of their CoC, Ruby's Place has been able to bring in a total of 12 new clients in a span of less than two months to provide supportive services around housing for their clients. While Ruby's Place has always served clients from different counties, they have been happy to be able to do so in a more intentional and person-centered way through the HUD-funded program. Ruby's Place has been able to expand and grow their housing team to meet community needs and to work closely with other service providers to assist homeless populations in navigating the housing market. Ruby's Place found the resources provided under CoC to be helpful while continuing to grow their housing program.

■ **Is there a favorable environment to support the collaboration? Are the partners well positioned to navigate any tensions that come up?**

- Learning about respective partners' organizational cultures, values, expectations and structures will strengthen mutual understanding and deepen trust. Trust and mutual respect are essential to any long-lasting partnership that achieves impact.

For example, to overcome rising rental costs in Seattle, API Chaya cultivated a partnership with a landlord who owned properties in neighborhoods where their clients would find community. According to API Chaya, they leverage their grassroots approach to activate a network of supporters from their clients' ethnic and religious communities. Doing so enables them to navigate challenges, overcome impediments, and create a favorable environment for their clients to recover.

Shared Vision Activity

Setting Up the Structure: What is the purpose of your partnership?

Now it's time to get specific about what you're going to do together and how you're going to do it.

A **shared vision** sets the stage for any successful collaboration. It guides conversations, drives strategy, keeps you on track if you start to lose focus, and it's inspiring! Working with others can be challenging and so is obtaining safe, affordable housing. Defining and looking regularly to your agreed upon goals provides the clarity and energy needed to move forward when something gets you stuck.

A visioning exercise is an opportunity to collectively set your sights on the future and imagine what success looks like. Paint a picture of your individual visions and bring them together into one cohesive frame. If the problem is a survivor moving from multiple temporary housing situations to meet their family's needs, consider:

■ **What will it look like when that problem is solved? Examples:**

- Survivors will not have a constant concern of remaining housed.
- The survivors will show improved well-being.
- Program resources can support a survivor's stability versus ongoing housing emergencies.
- Survivors will be able to choose from at least 3 housing options - some options should be big picture collaboration options, and some should be smaller and more discreet partnership options

- Survivors will be able to access housing that accommodates their families.
- All providers will have up-to-date, comprehensive information about all partners.

■ **What will their new outcomes be? Examples:**

- The survivors will be stably housed for the long-term.
- Programs will be able to leverage combined resources and support the survivor.
- Referrals will be completed within 3 days.
- Providers will be able to accurately describe options to survivors; programs will reduce number of conditions or rules to only those deemed absolutely necessary

■ **In what ways will survivors be engaged in services? Example:**

- Survivors will be able to choose and take advantage of comprehensive case management by utilizing more services once they have housing.
- Survivors and case managers discussed housing options in detail before making a referral
- What words will survivors use to express their experience? Examples:
- I feel comfortable in my home.”
- I found a mosque in my new neighborhood that I really like.”
- My housing preferences were respected.
- Choosing this housing was a great collaboration with my case manager, he really understood my needs and concerns.

■ How will the system feel differently for providers?

- I have more time to focus on my clients' other needs.”
 - Finding appropriate resources is easier.
 - I am more confident that I have accurately informed survivors about their options.
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Practical Tips for Visioning Exercises:

- Support an inclusive dialogue by identifying comfortable opportunities for everyone to participate. Design different ways for participants to engage like written feedback, visual presentations, or small group discussions.
- Spur creative thinking by using different mediums and approaches: plenary, small breakout groups and individual exercises; writing, visual, and presentation exercises; and, creative and analytical exercises.
- Encourage participants to make personal connections. Schedule breaks so people have time to network and do icebreaker exercises to facilitate personal relationships.
- Expect to improvise and to compromise. Identifying and articulating a North Star is a demanding process. Embrace open-mindedness and flexibility. Do not let perfect be the enemy of good because visions should be adapted and adjusted over time.



Building and Action Plan

Goals, objectives, outputs, outcomes, and action planning follow the development of a shared vision.

Goals focus on the thing or things you want to accomplish (e.g., increase survivors’ access to transitional housing that meets their specific needs).

Objectives are more specific and measurable (e.g., a local safe house will carve out 15 new slots for survivors; slots will all be filled by January).

Outputs are the activities, services, methods, and approaches you use to achieve the goal (e.g., meet with CoC Board to seek approval; utilize [housing assessment tool \(https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/5294/housing-first-assessment-tool/\)](https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/5294/housing-first-assessment-tool/) to determine which clients will benefit from this new resource). Outcomes are the results, impacts, and accomplishments of those outputs (e.g., 15 survivors move into transitional housing units; survivor engagement in English language classes increases by 10%). An Action Plan puts the steps together on paper—including tasks and activities, person(s) responsible, timeline for completion.

Goals	
Objectives	
Outcomes	
Action Plan	

Shared Values

Adhering to a human rights-based approach, trauma-informed services, and other values is often easier said than done. Our support for survivors’ autonomy to make decisions that they determine to be best for themselves and their families is paramount. But what about when they make a choice you just can’t understand, or don’t agree with? What about when they engage in what you consider to be dangerous behavior, that puts their wellbeing (or their new housing that you’ve spent months advocating for!) at risk? What do you do with one housing slot when there are two survivors with equal housing needs?

The regular practice of a rights-based approach, trauma-informed care, culturally sensitive services, harm reduction, non-judgement, and other values is challenging enough on an individual basis, and requires even more intentionality in the context of a collaboration. As you work through your vision and goals, incorporate a discussion of what values each member brings. It is important that all partners use the same definition for each value to ensure all partners are on the same page.

Consider how to handle a partnership with organizations that may share some values but not others. There are multiple ways to design a partnership to account for differences in values, approaches and perspectives but there is one common element: trust. Open communication is critical to establishing and fostering trust. The process of discussing differences often yields greater understanding and crystallizes ideas for how to overcome impediments and challenges.

Practical Tips for Values Exercises:

- Document values and infuse them throughout your planning and execution.
- Incorporate strengths-based language like the value of housing as a fundamental human right for all.
- Ensure the partnership is flexible enough to place the rights and preferences of each survivor at the center.

Setting Expectations & Objectives

Armed with answers to the fundamental questions about vision and values, it's time to set expectations for your collaboration. This process requires each partner to articulate their needs and assumptions. When expectations are clearly set and measurable objectives agreed upon, it goes a long way to prevent poor outcomes, wasted time, and a lot of confusion and frustration.

A partnership agreement, whether formal or informal, should cover objectives, structure, and accountability mechanisms. The components might include vision statement; management plan; decision-making process(es); approach to conflict resolution; confidentiality and information sharing policy; delineation of financial resources; and roles and responsibilities.

Questions to consider when setting expectations:

- How will survivors voice and needs be elevated and incorporated in the partnership's process?
- How will survivors' needs be considered during the process of setting up a partnership?
- How will decisions be made? Through consensus? Will one person have the power to decide?
- Who is responsible for communication and project management (e.g., compiling and sharing agenda, sending meeting notes and capturing action steps; benchmark tracking; documenting process)?
- What is the system for accountability?

- How will you communicate with each other and externally? What will you share, who will share it, with whom will you share it, when, and how?

In the beginning, partners will be asking themselves (as will you) what this collaboration has to offer and what it will require of them. There is also the often anxiety about whether they'll "fit in" or be seen as knowledgeable. This is normal and will repeat when new members join the group. To enhance impact, opt for more communication about your shared agenda, mutual expectations, and affirmation about each individual's contributions.

Practical Tips for Setting Expectations & Objectives:

- Document your expectations, objectives, and respective responsibilities. For formal partnerships, especially if there is shared funding involved, an enforceable agreement may be advantageous. However, many partners simply co-create a workable format that describes the purpose and structure of the partnership.
- Plan for challenges to arise and when they do, remember to consider the many ways trauma may have thrown a wrench into the gears. When this occurs, work to recall the common goal or mission of the collaboration.

Structuring the Work: Designing a framework for decision making, selecting a team, and developing an action plan

Not every collaboration will require a formal governance structure, but even the smallest and simplest partnerships require clarity as to who is doing what and how things will get done. That is why convening a cohesive team and developing an action plan are two of the critical final steps for launching a successful partnership.

A partnership without a clear and transparent approach to decision-making will suffer from confusion, inertia and conflict. Designing a coherent decision-making framework will depend on respective partners' level of engagement and authority. Important questions to consider in the design process may include:

- Will partners make decisions by consensus, majority vote, or something else? Are there any decisions, perhaps ones that involve funding or resource allocation, that require a special decision-making approach?

→ How are referrals managed among partners? What is the procedure? Is there a common referral form? Who serves as a point of contact for decisions on referrals? What information is collected and shared? What release of information form will be used? What are the confidentiality protocols to Ensure shared information is properly protected by all partners?

→ Who is responsible for administering grant funding? How does the organization serving as the grant administrator engage partners on funding decisions? What administrative fee or resources will be allocated?

→ What adaptations are necessary, if any, during emergencies (public health emergencies, weather emergencies, etc.) to ensure decisions are made transparently and on a timely basis?

→ Is the proposed approach fair and realistic?

→ How will partner confidentiality be protected in the decision-making process?

→ How will partners stay informed about decisions, and will there be opportunities for partners to give feedback ahead of decision-making?

→ Is it possible to meaningfully engage survivors in the process? How do you ensure the engagement is victim-centered and trauma-informed? Do you have resources to compensate survivors for their expertise?

Considerations for Service Providers:

Existing systems, like CoCs, likely already have a process in place for referrals, standing meetings, and goals. In these cases, it is important to identify what is already in place, how your organization can benefit, what you can add to the group, and how to most effectively engage with the existing group.

Investing in relationships is vital. Consider ways to bring partners together to get to know one another through team building exercises. Then explore the roles that need to be played in the partnership and who is positioned to assume them. Where an individual or organization lacks capacity or special skills for a particular role, consider how to collaborate to build and share capacity within the partnership. For example, anti-trafficking organizations collaborating with stakeholders in the housing sector may consider offering training, organizing a roundtable with survivors, or hosting an “information marketplace” among partners to share background on different aspects of the anti-trafficking field.

An action plan is the operational roadmap for the partnership. Though standard templates for action plans are available, the best approach is to rely on a format that is suited to the partners. Any action plan should be framed around “S.M.A.R.T.” objectives: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound.



Sustaining a Collaboration

Keeping a partnership active largely involves building on the foundation established through the effort made to form it. In other words, maintaining a collaboration relies on revisiting, revising and renewing the contours of the partnership: vision, values, structure, action plan, and any other unresolved issues and opportunities. Ideally, learning and evaluation, topics discussed in greater detail in the next section, should inform the ways that partners maintain their collaboration.

Depending on its purpose and nature, a collaboration may be time-bound or ongoing. Either way, partners benefit when they rely on tactics that establish trust, foster adaptability, and deepen understanding. Doing so will ensure that a partnership will overcome common challenges and that it will evolve to confront new ones as well.

Effective, Meaningful Communication

The most fundamental element in establishing strong communication channels is building personal relationships among partners. Whether relationships develop in-person or remotely, there is a need for ongoing cultivation of personal connections. This will result in a stronger, more cohesive and aligned group working toward a common agenda.

Communications may be internal among partners (e.g. setting agendas, data sharing) or external to allies and stakeholders (e.g. media outreach, public presentations). In developing messages for external communication, consider developing talking points about the collaboration, drafting social media guidelines, and coordinating an approach to media inquiries. These elements should be a part of a communications plan that covers topics such as: Which organizations are primary points of contact for internal and/or external communication? What kind of communication, at what frequency, is realistic and feasible for the partnership (e.g. email, conference call, webinar)? Who manages intellectual property on behalf of the partnership (e.g. marketing and training materials, data, records)?

Meetings, virtual or in-person, are standard opportunities for facilitating internal communication among partners. Consider rotating agendas and meeting hosts for best collaboration practices. Whether partners are convening to decide or to plan for implementation of an activity, it is valuable to consider the most effective way to set an agenda, to determine who is required to attend, and to manage time. An agenda should be drafted and circulated to partners ahead of time for input. Consider a standard format for agendas that delineates roles, projects timeframes, and leaves time for discussion. Finally, remember to identify who is responsible for documenting the meeting, keeping partners informed, and following up on next steps. For small scale partnerships of two

to three, partners should consider identifying points of contact to be responsible for attending meetings and sharing information. Keep in mind that partnerships with more organizations involved will require flexibility and structure; it is important to set expectations but to also be realistic about the inherent limitations of working with a small team.

Practical Tips

- Consider doing a brainstorming exercise to identify different approaches to connecting partners informally and formally. Keep in mind that activities should be inclusive and accessible to encourage wide participation, and they should occur with regularity so there is an opportunity for partners to introduce new people and to deepen existing relationships.
- Action plans are roadmaps for partnerships. A clear action plan with specific timeframes, responsibilities and measures will facilitate effective communication. Keep in mind that action plans should not be static; rather, the action plan should be responsive to changing conditions and contexts, and should be reviewed often to see if any adjustments should be made.

When Communication Matters Most – Public Health Emergencies and Natural Disasters: Public health emergencies and natural disasters can change the ways that service providers operate, and can also heighten the risk and vulnerability experienced by trafficking survivors. When these emergencies and disasters strike, the availability of immediate housing options may become more limited. As stakeholders adapt, partnerships are a vital way to navigate the changing circumstances. Relying on established channels of communication and relationships built on trust is one way to support survivors and to alleviate the heightened stress associated with public health emergencies and natural disasters.

Resolving Conflicts & Working Through Common Challenges

Conflict is an inherent characteristic of collaboration because organizations and individuals with differing perspectives and values are coming together to tackle difficult, often intractable, challenges. Establishing an approach to conflict resolution encompasses setting values and delineating a process for how to handle conflict. Documenting values and processes related to conflict resolution is critical to ensuring transparency and accountability.

A key feature of successful partnerships is the participation of partners willing to set aside their own priorities in the interests of the collaboration and the individuals they serve. Even though compromise is essential to resolving conflict, it is difficult and acknowledging as much is important. To encourage compromise, consider ways to offer spaces that allow for honest, direct conversations that result in a healthy dialogue among partners.

There are several common challenges that may arise for a partnership. Some are general, like staff turnover and misaligned values, and others are specific to a collaboration focused on housing

for human trafficking survivors, like confidentiality and program limitations. Whether general or specific, it is a best practice to not only plan ahead for a partnership's successes but to also contemplate challenges.

■ **Staff Turnover (Common)**

- In most partnerships it is likely to experience staff turnover: staff leave, new staff join, or staff are reassigned. At the outset, it will be helpful to identify the process for onboarding new staff into the partnership and for debriefing with departing staff.

■ **Misaligned Values or Goals (Common)**

- Where expectations are not set clearly or communicated openly, or when organizational priorities or values shift, there is a risk of conflict. In the process of forming a collaboration, sharing organizational values and establishing mutual goals is a prerequisite for an effective partnership. Once determined, partners should document their shared understanding and revisit this resource to ensure ongoing buy-in among the organizations involved, and to enable the partnership to make changes as needed. You may consider revisiting annually and as you include new partners.

Partners must approach discussions about values and goals with clarity and candor. Keeping motivations and needs a secret will undermine trust and risk conflict. Partners need to be aware of each other's aspirations and limitations. In the context of housing this is crucial because it is central to survivors' recovery. Establishing an impactful partnership that increases access to housing is an outcome worth the transparency and dialogue necessary to nurture trust and understanding.

■ **Confidentiality (Specific)**

- The principle of confidentiality is central to a rights-based, client-centered approach. Partners may have different policies, procedures, and expectations around confidentiality. To avoid conflict, partners should discuss and document their shared protocols on confidentiality that cover when and how to protect client information, how and when survivors will receive release forms, and when they will be provided to partners. Confidentiality ensures that survivor names, identities, and cases are protected.

■ **Program Limitations (Specific)**

- Where there are appropriate available housing options tailored specifically for survivors of human trafficking, service providers should refer to those agencies, if survivors feel like they are the best fit. Acknowledgement of duties and what the housing providers can and cannot help the survivor with is key, and this should be communicated to the survivor so that they can make an informed choice about what is best for them. However, it is reasonable to expect that most options for housing will not be tailored specifically for survivors of human trafficking.

Instead, housing alternatives need to be explored with the survivor, including options for survivors experiencing homelessness, domestic violence, or for survivors who are also runaway and homeless youth.

In environments with limited specialized housing programs for survivors, partnerships are a strategic tactic to expand options. Depending on the criteria for eligibility, survivors of trafficking may qualify for housing at a domestic violence shelter or at a transitional housing program for individuals experiencing homelessness. The key is to understand the programs and eligibility criteria. Partners should explore where flexibility is possible and where limitations and restrictions cannot be adjusted. In emergencies like COVID-19, partnerships with an established rapport and deeper understanding about each other's operations will be more likely to extend support seamlessly even in drastically changing contexts.

■ Changes in resources

- When a partner's resources (funding, housing stock, community connections, etc.) change, it may impact the partnership. This can both provide new opportunities as new resources are made available and create potential challenges as resources are exhausted. By having an ongoing partnership, changes can be communicated amongst partners to allow for adjustments to be made.

Putting energy and attention into maintaining partnerships is crucial. It is an opportunity to be creative, to gather evidence about what is working, and to make personal connections.

Evaluating for Success

Measuring and evaluating progress is a tool to enhance learning and improve the likelihood of success. Understanding whether, where and how a partnership achieves progress has significant advantages. First and foremost, it establishes an understanding of how to define success. Second, it offers partners valuable data to track and share. Third, it attracts donors that value evidence-based approaches. Finally, it enhances the likelihood of achieving successful, long-lasting outcomes on housing for survivors.

Once there is a shared understanding of the outcome that a collaboration aims to achieve, you should establish program objectives as a point of reference for partners to understand the specific ways they will work together. Then, partners should develop indicators of collaborative success to help them evaluate whether and what is working and enable the collaboration to iterate and evolve to become more successful in reaching its goals. Ultimately, evaluation results should inform strategic planning, fundraising, and communication.

Defining “Success”

All collaborations – whether formal or informal, small scale or multi-faceted, short-term or long-term, should incorporate a framework to define, measure and evaluate success. Partners should co-create shared goals and an action plan, and then identify who is responsible for implementation and documentation.

For example, in the Chicago Housing Authority Collaboration, a partnership of eight public and non-profit agencies, the Lead Agency is responsible for storing data including demographic information, qualitative data, referral details, and tracking of vouchers. On a quarterly basis, the Lead Agency analyzes the data and compiles a report to share among the partners.

The success of a partnership is best defined by the perspective of the partners, though it is reasonable to expect that criteria from a particular funding source may need to be incorporated as well. In defining success, partners should assess the overall impact of the partnership (in relation to the goals) as well as by the value of the partnership to the individual partners. For the former, measures will probably be more straightforward than the latter, which requires partners to come together and reflect on the value of the partnership itself.

■ **What impact is considered a successful outcome for a partnership related to housing survivors of trafficking?**

→ In Chicago, partners in the Chicago Housing Authority Collaboration, envision success as:

1. Participants in the program are stably housed, and remain stably housed long-term, in a safe environment.
2. Program increases survivors’ ability to achieve self-sufficiency.
3. Program increases survivors’ abilities to access needed services to maintain housing stability in a safe environment.

In New York, Safe Horizon takes a client-centered approach, which focuses on meeting the self-identified needs of the survivor. It has also adopted harm reduction as a value. When COVID-19 forced anti-trafficking providers to adapt to social distancing and limited services, Safe Horizon took steps to explore more ways to safety plan with clients forced to shelter in place or quarantine. In some cases, Safe Horizon adjusted its definition of success to mean that clients stay in a place where they may be temporarily safe like at the home of a friend or extended family rather than pursue longer term housing options or emergency shelter. Relatedly, there are times when Safe Horizon will recognize a success where a client is referred to a vetted organization that offers safe, beneficial housing services even though the agency does not support harm reduction.

■ What is success for a healthy partnership related to housing survivors of trafficking?

In Florida, Lifeboat emergency and transitional housing has worked with survivors of human trafficking to provide stable transitional housing options. According to Lifeboat, the outcome of a healthy partnership should be strong and trusting relationships. Whether taking referrals from allied organizations through coalitions like Freedom Network USA or making connections with law enforcement through the local task force, Lifeboat relies on long-standing relationships rooted in trust and understanding. Combined with devoted staff that pursue every option and opportunity to support clients, Lifeboat's partnerships have sustained the organization and enabled it to thrive even through periods of turbulence like COVID-19.

In Seattle, API Chaya has established a successful partnership with a landlord that offers properties for reduced rent to survivors of trafficking. The partnership took two years to cultivate and requires ongoing effort to maintain. According to API Chaya, an essential element of the partnership's success is transparency that is client centered. Openness is a critical factor of a healthy partnership, but it must be done in a way that respects client confidentiality and reinforces trust with the landlord. Despite the demands of maintaining a successful partnership API Chaya believes it is worth the effort: "You are recruiting not only a landlord, you are recruiting an ally in this work."

Ultimately, the success of your collaboration will depend on the partners' coming together at the outset to co-create a shared vision and agreeing on indicators that track the partnership's impact on housing survivors as well as the process for achieving it.

Developing an Evaluation Approach

There is no single way to develop an evaluation framework for a collaboration related to housing survivors of trafficking. You should decide what is workable based on the partners' level of engagement, capacity, and style. In other words, design a framework that fits for you and your partner(s). Try to remain open and flexible to adapting and evolving along the way.

Here are some ideas for activities that facilitate the development and implementation of an evaluation framework:

- **Group Workshop:** Gather the key staff across organizations in the partnership or select a small group to co-create an evaluation framework at the outset. Then, reconvene the group to reflect on the partnership, share anecdotes, and brainstorm areas for improvement.
- **One-on-One Meetings:** Coordinate one-on-one meetings with key staff across organizations in the partnership to solicit input, feedback, and data on the process for developing the partnership and the impact of the partnership on their agency and on the beneficiaries, it serves.

- **Survey:** Circulate standard questions to partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries to assess the value of the partnership, the effectiveness of the process, and invite ideas for areas to improve. Try to be as comprehensive as possible while being mindful of partners' time constraints.
- **Feedback Loop:** After gathering feedback on the process for developing the partnership and the impact of the partnership, draft a narrative for the partners to review and offer input. Consider including survivor testimonies and accomplishments as a method of evaluating the partnership.
- **Types of Questions:** Both multiple choice and open-ended questions can have benefits and draw-backs for evaluations. Open-ended questions might be better to gain specific information or more specific answers, but multiple-choice questions might take less time for a participant to answer. Consider what types of information you are looking to receive, and how much time someone might be willing to spend on taking an evaluation. Some things to consider are: how in-depth is the information you're looking for? Can a simple yes or no answer or rating scale provide that information? Will you be missing key information by only providing multiple choice questions?

Keep in mind that an evaluation framework does not need to cover everything. Instead, choose the measures that resonate with the partners, that offer meaningful insight into the partnership, and that are feasible and viable to track. Here are ideas for topics and ways to measure the success of a partnership:

Relationships

- Level of partners' engagement and commitment: Are members motivated to act? How do partners demonstrate commitment? Are the right people and organizations at the table?
- Strength of connectivity among and between partners: What new connections have been established? Were connections maintained, and for how long?
- Level of trust and understanding among and between partners: How do partners rate trust? How often, if at all, was trust undermined? Do partners have mutual understanding of each other's programs, including resource limitations and areas of flexibility?

Process & Operations

- Quality of internal information flow among and between partners: How often do partners share information? Is the information shared useful and worthwhile?
- Quality of external communications: Is there an increase in media coverage? Is there more visibility for partnership's external messages? Do spokespeople for the partnership share common messaging?
- Effectiveness of partnership framework: are survivors accessing housing because of the collaboration?

- Adequacy of resources to sustain the partnership: Does the partnership have adequate resources (funds, leadership, staff, materials, time)? What additional resources are necessary to maintain or strengthen the partnership?

Alignment

- Degree of shared vision and values: Do the partners share a vision and values for the partnership? Where vision or values are not shared, has it undermined the partnership? If yes, how?
- Improved alignment of efforts: Do partners share common priorities, values, and goals?
- Policy Change: Do partners support appropriate policy changes? Have partners established strategic alliances to advocate for policy changes?

Learning

- Best practices: What are the most important, unexpected, and instructive lessons about the partnership? What best practices have partners identified and implemented?
- Change Management: To what degree are the partners' assumptions about collaboration correct? How well has the partnership managed change (environmental, resources, policy)?
- Survivor Expertise: Does the partnership have accessible processes in place to ensure the opportunity for survivors to offer their expertise on policy and practice? Is the input from survivors considered to adjust implementation?
- Measuring Impact: How many survivors have been safely and effectively housed? Do survivors express satisfaction with their housing? Has the number of units/beds/apartments available to survivors increased?

Sharing Success

One of the main advantages of a strong approach to evaluation is the collection of quantitative and qualitative data that enables partners to tell a story about the impact they collectively achieve. How you tell a story will depend on your audience. You may draft a written report, give a conference presentation, host a panel discussion, or develop talking points for press outreach.

There are internal and external audiences to consider. The former includes clients impacted by the partnership, people involved in staffing the partnership, leadership of the partner organizations, and colleagues or departments that support the partnership with operational, communications or development support. The latter includes donors, policymakers, coalition allies, and media. Importantly, survivors should always inform and, where appropriate, participate in telling the story of a partnership's impact.

In California, International Rescue Committee (IRC) Northern California have collaborated regularly with Ruby's Place, who run a few shelters in the Bay Area. Ruby's Place has a rental subsidy program that IRC has referred clients to in the past. IRC has found that this subsidy program has been instrumental in chipping away at the astronomical rental prices in the Bay Area. Ruby's Place has also helped with emergency hotel vouchers for IRC's clients in the past. Ruby's Place is a subgrantee on one of IRC's grants as well which has allowed them to collaborate more formally/consistently. During the acute housing crisis in the Bay Area, stable housing has been one of the most urgent issues that IRC's clients face. In addressing the lack of affordable housing, it has been imperative to find creative stopgaps, and to build mutual partnerships in order to best support clients.



In Chicago, the Housing Choice Voucher Program tracked the partnership's impact on increasing subsidized housing for human trafficking survivors. As a result of careful planning and effective implementation of its evaluation framework, the program reported notable outcomes that were timely, measurable and specific. Among the successes achieved by the program were:

- 60 housing choice vouchers for survivors of human trafficking that did not exist before.
- Connections to housing and more housing options have acted as a vehicle for rapport building and deeper relationships between survivors and service providers.
- Increased motivation to access other services, including substance use treatment, in order to qualify for the program.

- Anecdotal increase in hope, health and well-being for people on a path to permanent housing.
- Improvement in the ability to reunite with children due to stable housing.
- Strengthening of relationships with family and support systems because of stable housing.
- Ability to focus on job search due to stable housing.

Telling the story of a successful partnership is important but there is also value in documenting and sharing failures. Building a successful partnership related to housing for survivors of trafficking is a difficult endeavor. Partners are bound to fail, but that does not mean the partnership is a failure. The measure of a successful failure is whether the partners learn and adapt. Sharing these experiences may not be appropriate or strategic under all circumstances so consult partners and consider the risks and drawbacks before taking steps to share an example of failure.

Remember, partnerships and collaboration take effort and time, especially at the beginning. New grant opportunities, new partnerships, or newly identified unmet needs in the community might make it a great time for your organization to explore which organizations and system are in your local community. Find out who your Continuum of Care lead is and where your Housing Authority is. Connect with them and talk about the housing needs of survivors. Ask what programs are available and make personal relationships. The need for housing will likely always exist. It is to your benefit and the survivors that you serve to have partners that you can leverage as needs arise.

Additional Resources

1. Office of Victims of Crime (OVC)
<https://ovc.ojp.gov/>
2. Office on Trafficking in Persons
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip>
3. HHS Certification
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/fact-sheet/resource/certification>
4. HHS, DOJ, HUD, Joint Letter
<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/Joint-Letter-August-2016.pdf>
5. National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Find Your State DV Coalition
<https://ncadv.org/state-coalitions>
6. HUD, Continuums of Care
<https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/>
7. HUD, Housing Assessment Tool
<https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/5294/housing-first-assessment-tool/>
8. S.M.A.R.T Objectives
<https://www.professionalacademy.com/blogs-and-advice/what-are-smart-objectives-and-how-do-i-apply-them>
9. United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking, Annual Report 2016
<https://www.state.gov/united-states-advisory-council-on-human-trafficking-annual-report-2016/>
10. US Department of Justice Community Oriented Policing Services, Collaboration Toolkit <https://cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/Publications/cops-cd019-pub.pdf>
11. US Department of Health and Human Services, Collaboration Toolkit
<https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/resources-and-training/online-learning-modules/collaboration-toolkit/index.html>
12. Freedom Network USA, Subsidized Housing for Human Trafficking Survivors
<https://freedomnetworkusa.org/app/uploads/2018/04/CHA-Collaboration-FN-Conference-FINAL.pdf>
13. RTI International, Evaluation of Domestic Violence Victims of Human Trafficking Demonstration
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/dvhtcohort2evaluationbrief_dec2018_508.pdf
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/dvhtcohort2evaluationbrief_dec2018_508.pdf

Sample MOU

This form has been adapted from the National Network to End Domestic Violence, to fit the needs of trafficking-specific organizations.

Organizations are welcome to adapt these sample materials to fit your needs and the work you do. You may change wording to match the language your organization prefers (e.g., “victim or “client”). You may also modify the types of organizations and partners who will be using this document. Before using this template, be sure to remove all notes in blue and replace [Program Name] with the name of your collaborative partnership.

I. Introduction

The partners in [Community Collaboration] who are governed by this policy recognize and understand that—

1. Appropriate, secure partnering among governmental and/or non-governmental agencies can enhance safety for survivors of human trafficking.
2. The partners have a common goal of providing access to human trafficking survivor services that enhance victim safety.
3. Survivor safety can be compromised by the failure to maintain the confidentiality of personal identifiable information.
4. Information sharing may increase the effectiveness of service delivery and increase survivor safety and abuser accountability, but only when a survivor, who is fully aware of the risks and benefits of sharing her/his personal information, authorizes the information sharing.
5. Each partner continues to maintain its own legal and ethical obligations to honor survivors’ confidentiality and privacy; or depending on the program, legal obligations to share information.
6. The survivors who use the services offered by the collaboration or any of its partners retain their right to confidentiality from agencies within the collaboration that have confidential relationships with survivors.
7. Survivors, who use the services offered by the collaboration, determine when and how their information will be shared among the partners or outside of the partnership, consistent with the requirements of law.
8. Releases of information should enhance services provided to the survivor, and not be used solely for the purpose of easing the program’s administration.

9. The most protective privacy option will always be considered. Before a survivor chooses to sign a release, the partner will determine if there is another way to accomplish the purpose without the advocate or program releasing the survivor's personally identifying information.
10. When releases of information are required, they will be written, informed, and reasonably time-limited.

II. Partner Roles, Responsibilities, Information Sharing, and Confidentiality Obligations

The partners to the [Community Collaboration Name] have created a multi-disciplinary partnership to provide access to human trafficking services that enhance survivor safety and privacy. When there is a question about whether a certain approach should be taken by the [Community Collaboration Name] in a given situation, the determining factor will be whether the proposed action will enhance survivor safety and privacy.

Human Trafficking Services Program

Roles and Responsibilities:

1. Provide confidential services to survivors/clients.
2. Identify and work to resolve problems that may impede survivors' access to resources in the social services network, civil and criminal justice system, and other systems.
3. Educate other partners on human trafficking issues.
4. Update partners on emerging issues/research human trafficking.
5. [Other specific obligations]

Confidentiality Obligations:

1. Recognize that partners have different levels of confidentiality obligations in regard to survivor/client information and the sharing of that information.
2. The human trafficking program has a strict confidentiality obligation to the survivor/client. The program will not share individual, personally identifying information about any individual who has received or sought services without the informed, written, and reasonably time-limited release of the survivor/client except for the mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect as required by state law.

3. The human trafficking program limitation on sharing personally identifying information includes sharing of such information with any of the partner agencies in this agreement.
4. The human trafficking program may share non-personally identifying information (demographics) about those who have used its services and information about systems and processes that affect the survivor/client.

Housing Program

Roles and Responsibilities:

1. Provide information about housing options in the community, including emergency shelter/housing, transitional housing, scattered site housing, and permanent housing options.
2. Identify and work to resolve problems that may impede survivors' access to resources in the social services network, civil and criminal justice system, and other systems.
3. Serve as a liaison with the housing and shelter communities.
4. Educate the partners in regard to current information surrounding housing availability and choices for survivors of human trafficking in the area.
5. [Other specific obligations]

Confidentiality Obligations:

1. Recognize that other partners may have different levels of confidentiality obligations in regard to survivor/client information and the sharing of that information.
2. Limit the sharing of personal health care information and any individual, personally identifying information about any individual who has received or sought housing services without the informed, written, reasonably time-limited release of the individual except for mandatory reports that may be required by law.
3. The limitation on sharing of personal information and any individual, personally identifying information includes sharing of such information with any of the partner agencies in this agreement.
4. The housing program may share non-personally identifying information (demographics) about those who have used its services and information about systems and processes that affect the survivor/client.

(OPTIONAL)

Faith-Based And Community Organizations

Roles and Responsibilities:

1. Provide confidential services to survivor/clients.
2. Identify and work to resolve problems that may impede survivors' access to resources in the social services network and other systems.
3. Educate other partners on human trafficking issues.
4. Update partners on emerging issues/research regarding human trafficking from the faith-based and community organization's perspective.
5. [Other specific obligations]

Confidentiality Obligations:

1. Recognize that other partners may have different levels of confidentiality obligations in regard to survivor/client information and the sharing of that information.
2. The faith-based and community organization partner has a strict confidentiality obligation to the survivor/client and will not share confidential information about any individual who has received or sought services without the informed, written, reasonably time-limited release of the individual except for mandatory reports as required by law.
3. The faith-based and community organization partner's limitation on sharing personally identifying information includes sharing information with any of the partner agencies in this agreement.
4. The faith-based and community organization partner may share non-personally identifying information (demographics) about those who have used its services and information about systems and processes that affect the victim/client.
5. [List Other Partner Roles and Responsibilities and Confidentiality Obligations Here]

Confidentiality Monitor

The partners agree to appoint a confidentiality monitor whose job is to—

1. Review the partnership operation and identify areas where confidentiality can be strengthened.
2. Evaluate information flow.
3. Evaluate [Collaboration Program] partners' roles and their individual confidentiality and information sharing requirements.
4. Evaluate the [Collaboration Program]'s own obligation to maintain confidentiality.
5. Ensure that confidentiality releases and acknowledgements/agreements are signed.
6. Know what resources are available to evaluate confidentiality questions (e.g., attorney general's office, consultants, state coalitions, or other national experts on confidentiality.)
7. Provide for periodic training and evaluation of confidentiality practices.
8. Initiate the [choose one: semiannual/annual] confidentiality audit.

DATED:

Human Trafficking Program Partner

Signature

Printed Name

Title Housing Program Partner

Signature

Printed Name

Title

Faith-Based and Community Organization Partner

Signature

Printed Name

Title



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