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Improving Criminal Justice Responses to Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence and Stalking Grant Program, OVW FY 2024 Memorandum of Understanding

WHEREAS, **the City of Northampton**, and the **Northwestern District Attorney's Office** have come together to collaborate and to make an application for the **Improving Criminal Justice Response Grant**; and

WHEREAS, the partners listed below have agreed to enter into a collaborative agreement in which the City of Northampton will be the lead agency and named applicant and the other agencies will be partners in this application; and

WHEREAS, the partners herein desire to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding setting forth the services to be provided by the collaborative; and

WHEREAS, the application prepared and approved by the collaborative through its partners is to be submitted to the Office on Violence Against Women on or before May 2, 2024;

We set forth the following agreement:

I) Description of Partner Agencies

Project Partners: City of Northampton, Northwestern District Attorney's Office, Eastern Hampshire District Court, Greenfield District Court, Northampton District Court, Orange District Court, Franklin County House of Corrections, Hampshire County House of Corrections, Massachusetts State Police Dispatch Control Center in Shelburne, Massachusetts State Police Dispatch Control Center in Northampton, Ashfield Police Department, Athol Police Department, Bernardston Police Department, Buckland Police Department, Charlemont Police Department, Colrain Police Department, Conway Police Department, Deerfield Police Department, Erving Police Department, Gill Police Department, Greenfield Police Department, Greenfield Community College Public Safety, Heath Police Department, Leverett Police Department, Leyden Police Department, Montague Police Department, New Salem Police Department, Northfield Police Department, Orange Police Department, Rowe Police Department, Shelburne Police Department, Shutesbury Police Department, Sunderland Police Department, Warwick Police Department, Wendell Police Department, Whately Police Department, Amherst Police Department, Amherst College Public Safety, Belchertown Police Department, Chesterfield Police Department, Cummington Police Department, Easthampton Police Department, Goshen Police Department, Granby Police Department, Hadley Police Department, Hatfield Police Department, Huntington Police Department, Mt. Holyoke and Smith College Public Safety, Middlefield Police Department, Northampton Police Department, Pelham Police Department, Plainfield Police Department, South Hadley Police Department, Southampton Police Department, University of Massachusetts Campus Police, Ware Police Department, Westhampton Police Department, Williamsburg Police Department, Worthington Police Department, New England Learning Center for Women in Transition (NELCWIT), Safe Passage, YWCA of Western MA, Valley Human Services (VHS) & Proteus at Behavioral Health Network (BHN) Inc., The Salasin Project, Center for Women and Community (CWC), and Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA).

Collaborative Member Organizations' Background and Work Experience

Collaborative members are all longstanding partners with extensive experience working on issues of domestic violence. Members include court partners from four counts in the district, forty-nine municipal and college law enforcement partners, intimate partner abuse education program, two county houses of correction, two dispatch centers and six community victim service programs. All partners have participated on the High-Risk Team (HRT) since its inception fourteen years ago and are highly qualified in their work regarding domestic violence (DV) and sexual assault (SA).

All police departments have been active partners with the Northwestern District Attorney's Office for over twenty years and have received ongoing training by the district attorney's office in domestic violence best practice response. They utilize products created by our coordinated response team, including the "Domestic Violence Law Enforcement Policies and Procedures" manual and the "Police Guide for Charging in Domestic Violence Cases". Dispatchers have also been trained and follow the "Dispatch Checklist for Domestic Violence Incidents" when responding to domestic violence calls. The policy manual, charging booklet and checklist were all created by our Law Enforcement Safety and Accountability Audit Team and approved by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security.

The community domestic violence victim service providers (NELCWIT, Safe Passage, Center for Women and Community (CWC), The Salasin Project, Valley Human Services of Behavioral Health Network (VHS) and the YWCA of Western Massachusetts) have all been partners for twenty three years and are all well-established agencies with longstanding reputations in the community. They each provide counseling, advocacy and outreach for victims of domestic and sexual violence as their primary mission. Proteus is the Intimate Partner Abuse Education Program in the district and provides victim centered abuse education for DV offenders. They are certified by the MA Department of Public Health and a representative attends High Risk Team meetings.

The court partners from our four district courts have participated on our courts and prosecution safety audit team, domestic violence high risk team and domestic violence court roundtables for over twenty years, illustrating a commitment to work together on behalf of victims and to hold offenders accountable.

The Franklin and Hampshire Houses of Correction utilize domestic violence tools and training from Praxis International in Duluth, MN and from our office. Both have been project partners for fourteen years and actively participate in monitoring high risk offenders and attend high risk team (HRT) meetings.

The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) is the newest member of the team. DTA sends their DV Specialist to team meetings with caseloads devoted to intimate partner violence and with many years of experience doing this work.

II) History of Relationship

History of the Collaborative Relationship

The Northwestern District Attorney's Office (NWDA) has a strong history of collaboration with the above mentioned groups. Each partner actively participates in one or more collaborative projects administered and coordinated by the NWDA, including the Domestic Violence High Risk Team, the Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP) and the Task Force on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.

All partners collaborate through the DVIP, which began in 1996 and is funded through the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety, Violence Against Women Act (V.A.W.A.) S.T.O.P. Grants Program. This program provides an early intervention crisis response where police and dispatch contact an on-call advocate immediately following a domestic violence arrest. Advocates are employed by our non-profit domestic violence partners, NELCWIT in Franklin County and VHS in Hampshire County. Advocates contact the victim and

provide support and safety planning along with assistance with restraining orders and referrals. The DVIP also collaborates with the Franklin and Hampshire County District Courts. DVIP Advocates leave follow-up messages with the DA's office and local courts to ensure continuity for victims going to court the following morning. DVIP Partnership Meetings include training on domestic and sexual violence for underserved populations and partners discuss best practices to hold offenders accountable and protect victims. Forty-four percent of referrals to the high risk team come from DVIP Community Advocates.

The Northwestern District Attorney's Office facilitates a monthly meeting of the Northwestern District Attorney's Task Force on Domestic and Sexual Violence which began in 1991. Many of the above named partners attend these meetings and participate on task force initiatives such as the White Ribbon Campaign and DV Judges Panels.

These same groups have also participated on the Law Enforcement, the Courts and Prosecution and the Probation and Batterer's Intervention Domestic Violence Safety and Accountability Audit teams, (now called "Community Assessments"). The law enforcement audit was convened in January 2003, the court and prosecution audit in January 2005 and the probation and batterer's intervention audit in 2009 with funding from the Grants to Encourage Arrest Program. Each team was charged with reviewing our system response to domestic violence and identifying ways to strengthen victim safety and offender accountability. Domestic violence court roundtables were utilized as a vehicle to implement audit recommendations which included participation from the above named partners.

Finally, all partners participate on the Domestic Violence High Risk Team either directly as members of the team, through the Advisory Board or through on-going communication with the High Risk Team Coordinator. High Risk Teams meet monthly in alternating counties.

Changes in the Collaboration

Department of Transitional Assistance staff are the newest members to the team. It has been extremely beneficial to have the DV specialist present at each meeting, particularly when cases involve economic abuse and/or the need for public assistance.

Critical and Long- Range Goals of the Collaborative

Critical and long range goals of the collaborative include expanding HRT members training and sensitivity to barriers for underserved communities, reviewing and implementing supplemental risk assessments for underserved communities, increase training for law enforcement in the areas of stalking, strangulation and animal cruelty by distributing post video training packets on those subjects, provide training to shelters on domestic violence, provide supplemental risk assessment tools for shelters to identify high risk factors in underserved communities, provide a training on domestic violence to paramedics, emergency medical technicians and emergency medical staff, partnering with the four hospitals in the district to add post strangulation instructions and a strangulation packet to their discharge papers for patients that have been strangled and provide a training/conference on near fatal strangulation to law enforcement and community.

III) Development of Application

Project partners and HRT Advisory Board members have significantly aided in the development of this application and provided input on project goals and objectives. Specifically, advisory board members, including community victim service partners, met to discuss development of the application. Through joint trainings and ongoing meeting discussions, the team has identified the ways in which the project can expand its scope of service to ensure its success in increasing victim safety and offender accountability.

IV) Roles and Responsibilities to Ensure Success of the Project

NOW, THEREFORE, it is hereby agreed by and between the partners as

follows: *City of Northampton agrees to:*

- Submit Department of Justice grant proposal to the Improving Criminal Justice Responses to Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence and Stalking Grant Program
- Support the continuation of district-wide coordinated high risk teams
- Assist in grant financial and progress reporting requirements

The Northwestern District Attorney's Office is the lead agency responsible for implementing the project and will provide:

- A High Risk Team Coordinator (HRTC) to lead a team in each county; accept referrals of potential high risk offenders (HROs) to be presented to the team; communicate regularly with law enforcement and advocacy partners to contain HROs and protect victims; participate in training for the district police, prosecutors, and hospital staff; and work with Advisory Board to increase sensitivity to barriers for marginalized survivors and adopt supplemental risk assessment tools reflective of the community
- A Domestic Violence Victim/Witness Advocate designated as liaison to the high risk team who will attend meetings and provide follow-up support for victims of near fatal strangulation
- Information to team members of any available training as designated in the grant
- Staff to complete all grant reporting requirements
- Data and project statistics to be used to inform project goals
- Training to paramedics, emergency medical technicians, emergency medical staff and shelter staff on domestic violence
- Follow up training to law enforcement on near fatal strangulation investigation, stalking and animal cruelty
- Ongoing participation on the MA Governor's Task Force on Domestic and Sexual Violence to assist in the development of statewide standards and guidelines for high risk teams

Police Departments and Dispatchers will collaborate in the following manner:

- Police chiefs will support the ongoing participation of designated domestic violence officers from their departments on the high risk team
- Designated officers will attend high risk team meetings when the identified offender to be discussed is from their town and communicate any offender updates to the HRTC
- Designated officers will assist the High Risk Team Coordinator and Victim/Witness Advocate in follow up training for police on near fatal strangulation investigation, stalking and animal cruelty

Non-profit DV programs, NELCWIT, Safe Passage, The YWCA of Western Massachusetts, Center for Women and Community (CWC), Valley Human Services at Behavioral Health Network (BHN Inc.), and The Salasin Project will collaborate in the following manner:

- Make referrals to the High Risk Team Coordinator and attend the high risk team meetings
- Participate on the High Risk Team Advisory Board to advise law enforcement high risk team regarding victim safety and create plan for expanding the team's ability to serve marginalized communities
- Assist High Risk Team Coordinator to provide on-going training of non-profit intervention staff in high risk assessment, near-fatal strangulation, stalking and animal cruelty
- Provide increased safety planning for victims of identified high risk offenders in consultation with Domestic Violence Victim/Witness Advocate

Intimate Partner Abuse Education Program (IPAEP), Proteus, will collaborate in the following manner:

- Make referrals to the High Risk Team Coordinator and participate on the high risk team and attend meetings
- Assist the High Risk Team Coordinator in on-going training of IPAEP staff in high risk assessment and referral

- Participate on the High Risk Team Advisory Board to advise law enforcement high risk team regarding victim safety and offender accountability and to create plan for expanding the team's ability to serve marginalized communities

East Hampshire, Greenfield, Northampton and Orange District Courts will collaborate in the following manner:

- Coordinate with high risk team and communicate with HRTC to prioritize accountability of high risk offenders
- Assist the High Risk Team Coordinator in ongoing training of district court staff in DV risk assessment

The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) will collaborate in the following manner:

- Assign DV staff to attend the high risk team meetings
- Participate on the High Risk Team Advisory Board to advise law enforcement high risk team regarding victim safety and create plan for expanding the team's ability to serve marginalized communities
- Provide increased safety planning for victims and families of identified high risk offenders in consultation with Domestic Violence Victim/Witness Advocate and High Risk Team Coordinator

Franklin and Hampshire County Houses of Correction will collaborate in the following manner:

- Support efforts to identify high risk offenders and make referrals to the high risk team
- Designate staff to attend high risk team meetings
- Inform offenders they have been identified as high risk and communicate team recommendations to the offenders
- Communicate with high risk coordinator when high risk offender is scheduled for parole and/or when there are relevant incidents while in jail

All of the above named parties will work together to achieve project goals and will assist project staff in program evaluation and meeting grant report requirements. Through ongoing collaboration, all parties will remain committed to sustaining the project, should funds no longer be available.

V) Timeline

The roles and responsibilities described above are contingent on the City of Northampton receiving funds requested for the project described in the OVW grant application. Responsibilities under this Memorandum of Understanding would coincide with the grant period, anticipated to be 10/01/2024 through 09/30/2027.

VI) Commitment to Partnership

- 1) The collaboration service area includes Franklin and Hampshire Counties and the Town of Athol, in the state of Massachusetts.
- 2) The partners agree to collaborate and provide a coordinated team response to identify and contain offenders likely to kill their intimate partner, and to protect victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, pursuant to the program narrative of the grant application attached to this agreement.
- 3) Compensation for the contributions of victim community service providers and Intimate Partner Abuse Education service partners will be provided as outlined in the attached OVW budget detail worksheet. Police departments agree to no compensation to attend meetings.
- 4) We, the undersigned, have read and agree with this MOU. Further, we have reviewed the proposed project and approve it.

Project Partners: City of Northampton, Northwestern District Attorney's Office, Eastern Hampshire District Court, Greenfield District Court, Northampton District Court, Orange District Court, Franklin County House of Corrections, Hampshire County House of Corrections, Massachusetts State Police Dispatch Control Center in Shelburne, Massachusetts State Police Dispatch Control Center in Northampton, Ashfield Police Department, Athol Police Department, Bernardston Police Department, Buckland Police Department, Charlemont Police Department, Colrain Police Department, Conway Police Department, Deerfield Police Department, Erving Police Department, Gill Police Department, Greenfield Police Department, Greenfield Community College Public Safety, Heath Police Department, Leverett Police Department, Leyden Police Department, Montague Police Department, New Salem Police Department, Northfield Police Department, Orange Police Department, Rowe Police Department, Shelburne Police Department, Shutesbury Police Department, Sunderland Police Department, Warwick Police Department, Wendell Police Department, Whately Police Department, Amherst Police Department, Amherst College Public Safety, Belchertown Police Department, Chesterfield Police Department, Cummington Police Department, Easthampton Police Department, Goshen Police Department, Granby Police Department, Hadley Police Department, Hatfield Police Department, Huntington Police Department, Mt. Holyoke and Smith College Public Safety, Middlefield Police Department, Northampton Police Department, Pelham Police Department, Plainfield Police Department, South Hadley Police Department, Southampton Police Department, University of Massachusetts Campus Police, Ware Police Department, Westhampton Police Department, Williamsburg Police Department, Worthington Police Department, New England Learning Center for Women in Transition (NELCWIT), Safe Passage, YWCA of Western MA, Valley Human Services (VHS) & Proteus at Behavioral Health Network (BHN) Inc., The Salasin Project, Center for Women and Community (CWC), and Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA).

1) We, the undersigned have read and agree with this MOU. Further, we have reviewed the proposed project and approve it.

By _____
Montague Police Department Chief, Christopher Williams
Date _____

cc: Agencies and Interested Parties