Guide for Developing a Victim Legal Assistance Network

National Crime Victim Law Institute

Contents

Background

"Vision 21: Transforming Victim Services," an initiative of the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), examined the victim assistance field in the United States with the goal of improving the treatment of crime victims. One area Vision 21 explored was the value of addressing victims' issues through coordinated, wraparound services to help victims assert their rights and obtain specialized legal assistance.[1] As stated in the *Vision 21 Final Report*,

> A coordinated, collaborative, and holistic legal response has the potential to serve victims far better through an inherent capacity to provide the type of legal assistance needed at any given time. A network approach would also ensure that victims are connected to community legal resources that can help them address their administrative, civil, and other legal issues.[2]

A "network" is "an interconnected group or system"[3] the goal of which is to provide seamless, integrated and intersected delivery of products or services. In the context of networked legal services for victims the vision is to ensure readily accessible and interconnected legal services responsive to myriad legal needs that victims have in the aftermath of their victimization.

In 2012 OVC launched the first national-scope effort to support the delivery of networked legal services by funding six Victim Legal Assistance Networks as demonstration sites and, in 2014, four additional sites were funded.
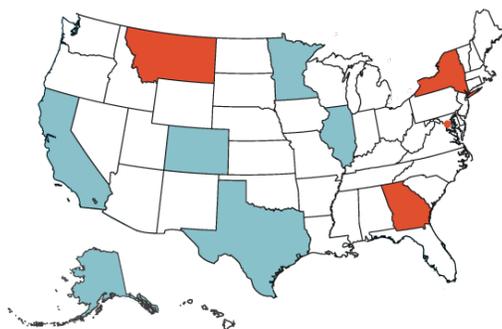
Established in 2012
Alaska, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, Minnesota, Texas

Established in 2014
Georgia, Montana, New York, Washington DC

While each of these Networks is unique, their common mission has been to create coordinated, collaborative systems of holistic legal services for crimes victims. The process by which each Network has developed has varied but there have been some commonalities. Specifically:

Overview of each of the ten OVC-funded Networks

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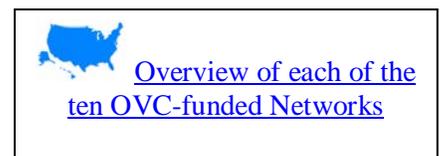
[1] *Vision 21, Final Report*, p. 14.

[2] *Id.*

[3] American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition. 2011 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12
Stakeholder Recruitment & Initial Conversations	➔											
Steering Committee Meetings		➔										➔
Marketing of Network & Outreach for Partners			➔									➔
Capacity & Needs Assessment IRB Approval & Data Collection		➔				➔						
Draft Capacity & Needs Assessment Report					➔	➔						
Draft Network Mission, Vision & Values Statements						➔						
Draft Implementation Plan						➔	➔					
Cross Training of Partners to Enhance Services & Referrals						➔						➔
Roll Out Pilot Project Outlined in Implementation Plan									➔		➔	
Pilot Project Evaluation									➔		➔	
Full Network Roll Out & Ongoing Evaluation												★

Just two examples of cases the OVC-funded Victim Legal Assistance Networks reveal the complexities of the challenge.

Alaska Network: The Alaska Network was presented with a domestic violence crime victim from Southeast Asia. After meeting her U.S. citizen husband there, he petitioned for her to receive a fiancé visa and join him in the United States. The victim left her family, her support system, and the country she knew. After their marriage ceremony, the victim's husband's behavior changed. He became verbally abusive and controlling. He also became physically and sexually abusive. The victim needed a divorce attorney and a protective order attorney. At the time, she was facing the prospect of her conditional green card expiring, without a way to renew it without her husband's consent. Consequently, she also needed an immigration attorney. The Network ensured each of these attorneys coordinated services to best advocate for the victim.

Texas Network: The Texas Network was presented with a client who needed assistance securing custody of her granddaughter following the murder of the child's mother/Client's daughter by the child's father as well as with her rights in the criminal case. There were myriad jurisdictional hurdles for the client regarding custody but the Network was able to navigate these for the victim and help with victims' rights in the criminal case.

Despite the complexity of the task each Network has made tremendous strides. This *Guide* reflects upon the successes and challenges, identifying and articulating lessons learned and promising practices garnered from each step of their development and implementation.

How to Use this Guide

There is no one size fits all to creating a network of legal services for crime victims. Each community has unique victims' needs, existing service capacities, and opportunities for collaboration. These differences mean that every network will be created through a different path and will look different in operation. This *Guide* draws upon the experience of ten OVC-funded Victim Legal Assistance Networks to present key questions, considerations and resources to inform the process of establishing a network of legal services for crime victims. The *Guide* is intended to inform the processes and activities to help you establish a network that will best serve your community.

Throughout this Guide these icons direct the reader to additional information.

Supporting documents are available in the *Replication Tools* section of the abridged online *Guide*, available at victimlegalassistance.org.

Information referenced is drawn directly from one of the ten OVC-funded Victim Legal Assistance Networks

A direct quote from staff working in one of the ten OVC-funded Victim Legal Assistance Networks

Video interview with staff working in one of the ten OVC-funded Victim Legal Assistance Networks

I.   A Network of People

At the core of any coordinated system of victim services are people. In the words of Meg Wheatley, "[p]eople organize together to accomplish more, not less. Behind every organizing impulse is a realization that by joining with others we can accomplish something important that we could not accomplish alone."[4]

While the process of developing an effective and sustainable victim legal assistance network often starts with exploratory conversations among a few individuals, involvement of more individuals later will aid network formation, success and sustainability. The exact numbers and types of people involved vary by network and developmental stage. This Section of the *Guide* identifies and defines key capacities and possible naming conventions for the various people involved.

Stakeholders are the broad group of people who have an interest in or may be impacted by a network, including potential Network Partners, allied professionals, service providers, and system actors. Stakeholders may advise on key issues, participate in formal or informal needs and capacities assessments, promote a network to their constituents, receive and make referrals, or assist in gauging the success of the network over time.

Brian Johnson of the Chicago Network discusses the benefits of partnerships

Referral Partners are victim service providers, community organizations or system-based agencies that agree to refer victims to the network and/or receive victim referrals from the network but are not formally part of network creation or operation.

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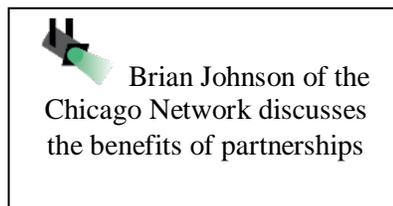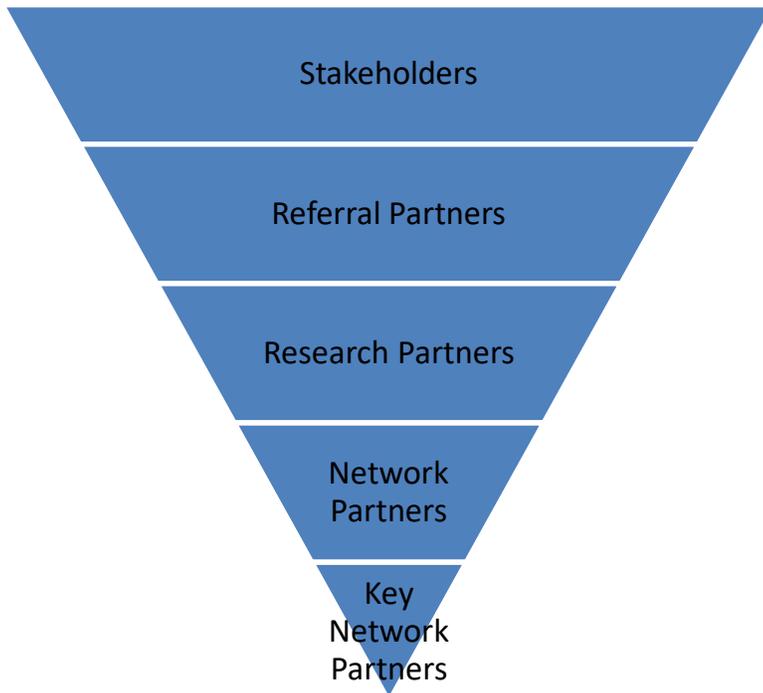
[4] Meg Wheatley, *Leadership & the New Science.*

Research Partners may reside within an agency that fits into one of the other stakeholder categories or be independent. Including Research Partners early and throughout network formation and operation will allow the researchers to have a clearer understanding of the goals of the network, which in turn allows them to effectively evaluate the effort. It may be particularly beneficial to involve researchers well-versed in crime victimization, trauma and legal issues as they may be able to be fuller partners, including serving as either a Network Partner or Key Network Partner.

"[B]eing folded into the whole process, not just dropped in for the research components, made the relationship a true partnership. [This allows] you to do a better job because you really understand the issues that the agencies are grappling with." Denver Network

"Initially it was tough to get on the same page about what to collect to evaluate. Service providers brought the technical expertise, and the researchers had their own expertise. It takes time to share a vision." Alaska Network

Network Partners include victim service providers, funders, researchers or others formally committed to active and regular participation in a network.

Key Network Partners denotes a small subset of Network Partners that serve as leadership or even a steering committee for a network. These are the individuals primarily responsible for shepherding the process of network development and operation, including crafting documents, scheduling meetings, engaging in sustainability efforts, and establishing the network's guiding principles such as mission, vision, and value statements.

Jabeen Adawi of the Washington D.C. Network discussing the value of a Partner involvement in crafting Network Mission statement

Example mission, vision and values statements

The list of Stakeholders in any community may be quite large. Determining who to invite into which role at what time can be challenging. As progress toward network initiation is made some Stakeholders will want to be Referral Partners, others will want to be Network Partners, and still others will want to be Key Network Partners. Four possible steps to identifying and involving Stakeholders at various partner levels include: (1) identifying potential Stakeholders; (2) initial input from stakeholders and network partners; (3) defining roles and responsibilities; and (4) planning for project management. Descriptions of these steps follow.

1.   Identifying Potential Stakeholders

To ensure a holistic, wraparound network of legal services consider these criteria when identifying Stakeholders: service types, crime types and populations, the systems worked within, connection to specific communities (e.g., culturally specific), history of collaboration, and potential for reaching additional Stakeholders.

Services Provided

Collaboration History & Connections

Crime Types Served

Systems
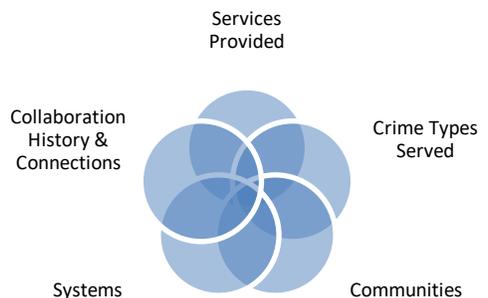
Communities

While existing community legal service providers are obvious Stakeholders, consideration should be given to a broader group. Certainly those who provide direct legal representation to victims should be included but also those who provide legal assistance. Including non-legal service providers may not only be beneficial but critical. For instance, for networks with a service area covering rural areas, or areas that for other reasons may not have a variety of legal service providers, non-legal service providers may be crucial to effective services. Among potential non-legal Network Partners to consider are crime-specific victim advocacy organizations, general social service organizations, system actors, and organizations that serve specific communities.

One method to identify potential Stakeholders is to map the existing community on a chart, identifying type of organization, communities served, services available and any other considerations. By plotting Stakeholders into the map the gaps revealed can help to inform invitations and outreach.

Template Network Partner Composition Chart and Sample List of Possible Network Partners

"In more rural or resource-hungry areas, there is no other legal service provider, so developing a purely legal network was not do-able. So we had to adapt. Including a diverse range of service providers will build a Network with the capacity to address a plethora of legal and non-legal crime victim needs." Texas Network

"Including groups that work with specific cultural communities is critical; while these groups may not be legal service organizations, they are in a position to identify their clients' needs for legal services. Further, Cultural Ambassadors (people with relationships to particular communities) can help ensure we are providing holistic support. " Los Angeles Network

"While the legal component is the most critical piece, creating the space for the social services to happen is important; social services can affect the legal outcome and more." Chicago Network

2. Initial Input From Stakeholders and Network Partners

Early input and buy-in of Stakeholders must be balanced with respect for individuals' and organizations' time, capacity and expertise. Not every Stakeholder needs to be involved in the details of crafting a needs assessment or implementation plan. Rather some Stakeholders can offer targeted input to inform development. For example, community-based Stakeholders can help gather needs assessment data from people who have not historically sought services; systems-based Stakeholders can help provide insight into the paths victims might have to navigate. Regardless of role, early and regular sharing of goals, vision, and meaningful input opportunities will maximize Stakeholder investment.

Jessica Alas of the Texas Network discussing the importance of early Stakeholder involvement

3. Defining Roles and Responsibilities

Who is a Stakeholder and who serves as which type of Stakeholder should be continually assessed during the development and implementation of a network. Changing the membership of these groups can help fill skill and knowledge gaps identified at each stage of a network and leverage unique skill sets. Additionally, identifying subcommittees, each with a defined role, can help advance the work of the network. Finally, detailing the roles and responsibilities for each Stakeholder at each phase through a Memorandum of Understanding or similar written agreement, can be beneficial.

> [Considerations in Preparing a Memorandum of Understanding and Template MOU](#)

4. Planning for Project Management

Several key skills will support the development of a successful and sustainable network, among these: facilitation, strategic planning; communication; logistics; development; team leadership; marketing and outreach; and systems and policy development. These skills may be shared among Key Network Partners or reside with one project manager. Thoughtfully crafted job profiles are critical to effective project management.

> [Example Job Profiles](#)

II. Moving From the People to the Vision

Once the Stakeholders are identified and brought together, there are many ways to approach the effort to move from people to vision. This section of the *Guide* broadly describes four phases: (1) exploration; (2) initiation; (3) definition; and (4) formation. Each of these is discussed below.

> [Template Network Timeline](#)

1) Exploration

Exploratory conversations among a few Stakeholders can reveal a community's (1) level of interest in creating coordinated and collaborative victim legal services; (2) perceptions of under- or unmet needs; and (3) members who are necessary for more in-depth conversations. The length of time for exploration depends on factors such as the familiarity of participants with each other and past discussions regarding victims' legal needs.

> [Sample Initial Exploration Meeting Agenda](#)

2) Initiation

If *Exploration* reveals the perceived need for and interest in networked legal services, the process of developing a network can be initiated. At this juncture the number of Stakeholders involved will likely increase to ensure a wider variety of victim service expertise, communities and perspectives are represented. To be effective, the size of this group must balance the agility

afforded by smaller groups with the principle: "people support what they create."[5] Because *Initiation* momentum requires consistent coordination of Stakeholders, this is a key moment to secure commitment from Stakeholders and ensure project management is in place.

During *Initiation* an informal needs and capacities assessment based on the knowledge of Stakeholders can identify perceptions of under- and unmet needs, and the community's vision of how networked services can help to fill the gaps. The following information may be informative: (1) individual and organizational availability and capacity to help develop and sustain a network; (2) identification of the existing services and service providers in the community; (3) current understanding of gaps in and barriers to victim access to those services and providers; and (3) Stakeholder concerns regarding a network (e.g., new or additional work with little or no new or additional funding; competition for funding streams or volunteer resources).

3)   Definition & Formation

With information and commitments garnered during *Initiation*, the work of defining and framing the network can begin. Three components are integral:

      a.   Scope of the Network
      b.   Formal Needs and Capacities Assessment
      c.   An Implementation Plan

a)   Scope of a Network

Defining a shared vision of the scope of a network provides a framework for a needs and capacities assessment that will ultimately refine this vision. The question of scope includes at least five areas: (i) geographic scope; (ii) crime types; (iii) communities and populations; (iv) available and desired services; and (v) current service capacity. An overview of these areas follows.

i.   Geographic Scope

Network geographic scope can vary from a city to an entire state and may change over time. Because there is no perfect geographic area, determining scope of any particular network can be informed by asking the following questions:

- If the network is to serve a single urban center what are the implications (e.g., do victims need to know city/county lines)?

> The geographic scope of a network need not be stagnant; piloting in a small region, followed by a phased geographic rollout allows for the structures and processes to be tested and evaluated. The Alaska and Texas Networks proceeded this way.

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[5] Wheatley, Margaret J. & Kellner-Rogers, Myron. Bringing Life to Organizational Change. *Journal for Strategic Performance Measurement*, April/May 1998.

- If the network is to serve a mix of urban, suburban and rural areas what are the implications (e.g., transportation options to access services)?
- What are the demographics of each possible geographic area and what are the implications of the variations (e.g., language access)?
- Will the geographic area include tribal jurisdictions? Campuses? Military facilities? Prisons? What are the implications of the variations?

ii. Crime Types

Stakeholders may serve victims of particular crimes such as intimate partner violence, sexual violence, stalking or human trafficking. Understanding which victim populations and which crime types are currently served by which organizations and comparing this to the desired scope of services for victims will reveal gaps. Common gaps include victims of identity theft, fraud, homicide and gun violence, robbery and burglary, vehicular crimes, hate crimes, and cybercrimes. With this information the critical determination will be whether filling these gaps is best achieved by inviting additional Stakeholders and/or building capacity within organizations. As with geographic area, a phased rollout of crime types served may be desirable. To determine gaps and desired scope of crime types to serve consider asking:

- What crimes are the primary foci of Stakeholders?
- What services does each Stakeholder provide to victims of that crime type?
- What victim populations contact Stakeholders that are not ultimately served, and to whom are they referred?
- To what extent does current service capacity meet the needs of victims of all crime types, in terms of the number of victims seeking services and the timely availability of services?
- How could service capacity be increased?

iii. Communities and Populations

An effective, holistic legal network should be able to respond with cultural intelligence and humility to diverse populations which experience unique barriers, including victims who are immigrants, houseless, elders, people of color, Native Americans or Alaska Natives, LGBT, religious and/or living in rural or frontier areas. In addition, there must be capacity to work with victims who have physical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities or

Mel Fisher of the Montana Network discusses strengthening culturally appropriate services.

have limited English proficiency, little or no access to technology, transportation barriers or limited financial resources. To ensure these capacities requires assessing the current landscape and identifying gaps. Questions that can help assess capacity include:

- Which communities and populations are served by each Stakeholder in a significant or meaningful way?
- Which communities and populations contact each Stakeholder that they do not serve and to whom do they refer?
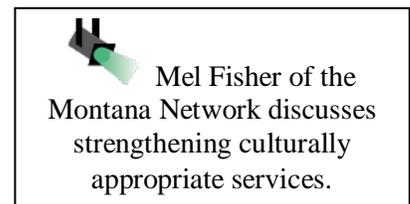
- Are there populations present in the community that are not seeking services from any Stakeholders but who statistically are likely to be victims of crime? To whom are they turning?
- To what extent does current service capacity meet the legal needs of victims from each community and population in the geographic service area?
- To what extent are existing services and service providers culturally appropriate?
- To what extent are policies and resources in place at each Stakeholder organization to eliminate barriers and increase access to services for each community and population in the geographic service area?
- How could service capacity be increased?

iv)   Available and Desired Services

While the vision is of networked legal services responsive to every victim's every need, articulating which services (legal and non-legal) will be included *in* the network, which will be by *extra-network* referrals, and establishing a process for fluid movement between each is critical. With regard to legal services the inquiry must include what types of law will be covered (e.g., rights enforcement, immigration, employment, housing, education, family, benefits, Indian, military) in what settings (e.g., criminal, civil, administrative, campus, tribal, immigration). With regard to non-legal services the inquiry must include what types of services will be covered (e.g., housing needs, health services, language access, education, safety planning). As with geographic area, a phased rollout of crime types served may be desirable. An achievable vision of a network requires asking both what exists and what one hopes will exist, including:

- What services are already provided by Stakeholders?
- What services are available from non-Stakeholders in the community or surrounding areas?
- What unmet legal and non-legal needs of crime victims are believed to exist?
- To what extent does current service capacity meet the demand, in terms of the number of victims seeking services, the timeliness of services, and accessibility?
- What commonalities exist among victims not seeking services (e.g., crime type, community)?
- How could service capacity be increased?

v)   Current Service Capacity

Accurate information regarding available resources, including funding, personnel and technology, will affect decisions about the scope of a network and how Partners refer, coordinate and share information. Critical information to assess includes:

- Service Provider capacity (e.g., staffing, volunteers, pro bono networks, funding);
- Service eligibility requirements and restrictions (e.g., income, population type);
- Accessibility of services (e.g., including language accessibility as evaluated by languages spoken by service providers, available interpretation services and languages of written materials);

- Existing technologies and victims' access to them (e.g., websites with legal information for the public; referral lines or networks); and
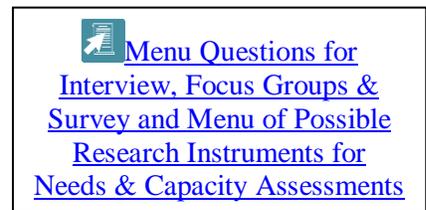- Methods and processes of inter-service provider collaboration and information sharing.

While this information may be gathered more comprehensively at a later point, having a sense of capacity at this phase will help to ensure that the network scope properly factors existing resources versus needed or hoped-for resources.

b) Formal Needs and Capacities Assessment

While legal and non-legal victim service providers can often readily detail a list of what they perceive to be victim needs and gaps in existing services, because it is impossible to escape one's biases and perspective a formal needs and capacities assessment can create a more accurate and comprehensive picture of community needs.

Example Steering Committees During Needs & Capacity Assessments
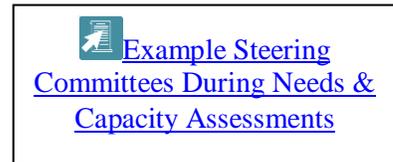
For an assessment to meaningfully capture the needs of victims and the gaps in services in a community, innovative strategies should be used to secure a wide variety of victims and service providers in the data collection. Experiences of the ten OVC-funded Networks reveal a successful needs and capacity assessment has three key components, each discussed below: (i) assessment design; (ii) methodology; and (iii) and results.

Menu Questions for Interview, Focus Groups & Survey and Menu of Possible Research Instruments for Needs & Capacity Assessments

i. Assessment Design

The capacity and needs assessment process should consider factors that may impact the amount of resources, time, and funding needed. Among the internal factors to consider are: staff expertise and capacity, financial resources, technology needs, and competing organizational needs. External factors include timelines for design, approval, and deployment of research instruments and coordinating the logistics of each particular method. The plan may encounter delays due to factors such as slow return rates for surveys, weather, holiday and school schedules, translation or transcription, and any applicable Institutional Review Board (IRB) processes. A well-structured plan of network development can take advantage of delays to advance other network tasks.

Interviews

Focus Groups

Surveys
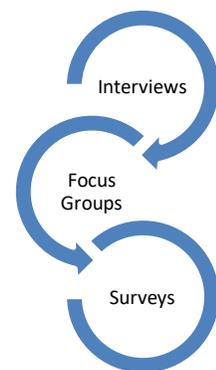
ii.   Methodology

For a capacity and needs assessment to prove useful sufficient data must be collected. A mixed methods approach that gathers information from a diversity of persons through a variety of means has proven most effective to eliciting information that leads to a comprehensive picture of victim needs and service provision gaps. Common instruments include one-on-one interviews, **focus groups**, **listening sessions** and surveys which solicit input from victims, service providers (both front line and leadership) and others who work within systems and live in our communities. The order in which each methodology is deployed can vary. Even when one crafts the ideal vision of how an assessment should unfold, developing and deploying an assessment requires patience and flexibility.

> Beginning with professional interviews, then moving into focus groups including victim and survivor voices organized loosely by crime type can reveal findings that inform survey items for victims. (Colorado Network).
>
> Beginning with surveys allows for recruitment of participants for focus groups or interviews through the survey by inviting survey participants to be more deeply involved. (Alaska Network)

Throughout the process, trauma-informed and culturally-appropriate perspectives and tools should be used and deployed. Things to consider:

- Plan in advance for victim trauma reactions and ensure someone is available if the victim is triggered by a survey, interview or focus group
- Ensure researchers and focus group facilitators are well-trained regarding:
  - trauma and trauma responses
  - signs of distress, including non-verbal cues
- Design data collection tools to reduce participation barriers (e.g., reading level, language diversity)
- Make focus groups physically, linguistically and geographically accessible
- Use tools to ensure informed consent (e.g., consent quizzes)
- Ensure that the trauma needs of research personnel are taken into consideration before, during and after each research step

> [Menu of Considerations for Successful Data Collection & Increasing Participation](#)

iii.   Results

While each jurisdiction's assessments will reveal unique needs, findings common to the ten OVC-funded Network Needs Assessments included:

- Victims and service providers alike lack awareness of available services;
- Service coordination is lacking;
- Inadequate availability of services, resources and funding;
- Victims experience barriers to accessing services; and
- Crimes are often concurrent or consecutive and focusing on one type of crime type often misses victim need.

In addition to anticipated results, assessments may produce results that are challenging to confront, for example the following results from several of the ten OVC-funded Networks.

- Victim service staff are under-trained, lack knowledge of victim needs, or make inappropriate and untimely referrals;
- Agencies have inaccessible locations and information;
- Trauma-informed, culturally appropriate services are lacking;
- Different crime victims receive different services; and
- The community has a limited knowledge of victims' rights.

Kazi Houston of Denver Network discusses the Network's Needs Assessment findings

While perhaps initially unwelcome, such results offer the opportunity to strengthen services throughout the community.

III.   Planning for Implementation

Sample Logic Model and Example Agendas for Partner Meetings during Implementation

An Implementation Plan moves beyond visioning to operational planning. The Plan should rest on the solid foundation of the Needs and Capacities Assessment, which means that some ideas developed in the *Exploration* and *Initiation* phases may no longer be relevant.
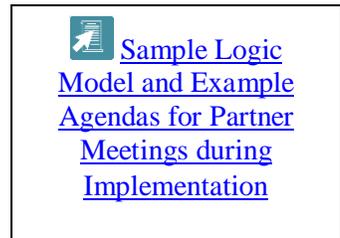
Generally a written Plan should include an introduction, a summary of the Needs and Capacities Assessment and describe the scope and roll out or staging of the Network. The Plan should also include these four components to help ensure buy-in and aid in execution: (1) Structure of the Network; (2) Network Processes, Policies and Procedures; (3) Marketing; and (4) Evaluation and Quality Assurance.

Sample Implementation Plan Outline and Example Implementation Plans
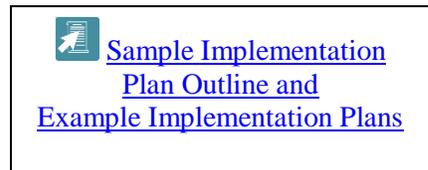
(1)   Structure of the Network

A network "organizational chart" that provides an overview of groups (e.g., Stakeholders, Network Partners) and their respective roles (e.g., steering committee, referral agency); identifies network staffing, including project leadership, program management, intake workers, case workers, attorneys, navigators, and case managers (while some of these roles may overlap, or conversely, have multiple personnel assigned each should be detailed); and describes the role of technology.

(2)   Network Processes, Policies and Procedures

Network intake and referral processes should be detailed, including points of entry, conflict check processes, client eligibility criteria, accessibility and accommodation plans (e.g., for victims with disabilities, limited English proficiency or who might experience other barriers to service). With regard to intra- and extra-network referral processes, the Plan should detail

methods for enhancing issue spotting, information sharing and data tracking. This documentation should include key policies, guidelines and other structures that will guide the work of the network, including confidentiality, privilege, consent, and mandatory reporting policies. Finally, include planned communication channels and training of network staff and Network Partners.

(3)   Marketing

Strategies for marketing of the network and outreach to stakeholders, victims and the general public regarding the availability of network services should be included. These efforts might take the form of a public website, creation of a logo and branding strategy, presentations in the community, or trainings and individual meetings with potential partners.

(4)   Evaluation & Quality Assurance

A plan to evaluate the quality and impact of networked services should be articulated, including ensuring a process for reviewing and integrating newly identified needs and gaps. In addition to client and community impact evaluation, evaluation of the network itself through an examination of team meetings, trainings, and modifications to the existing structures and processes of service provision may be desirable.

IV.   Implementing a Network

Operationalizing a Plan may seem daunting. These five components of operations can help you get there: (1) Network Tools; (2) Legal Case Management; (3) Legal Advocacy; (4) Evaluation; and (5) Sustainability.

1.   Network Tools

Networks can use a range of tools to facilitate implementation, ensure smooth roll out of services and ensure efficient and sustainable operations. Key among these are: (a) technology; (b) marketing and outreach; and (c) cross-training.

(a)   Technology

Innovative use of technology can aid services. Considerations to ensure thoughtful use of technology in networked victim legal services include:

- Human aspects of services are likely always necessary as not everyone has access to or capacity for technology

> "The implementation plan is really just a best guess, so don't get too attached. Be prepared to roll with the changes as they come. Weave in versatility, and know that things will change." Texas Network
>
> "An implementation plan should consist of goals and deliverables, creating a living document that will be flexible. A plan that locks in some policies and procedures makes it more like a blueprint that is harder to shift." Chicago Network

Remla Parthasarathy of the New York Network discusses the Network's use of technology

- Technology must be accessible to be useful to victims (e.g., reading level of content – particularly legal information, disabilities, Internet and cell phone service in rural areas)
- Legal and ethical issues may be unique when deploying technology and must be analyzed (e.g., sharing information between legal and non-legal providers; providing remote legal services)

> [icon] **Legal, Ethical and Technical Considerations with Remote Representation and Information Sharing**

- Data collection processes among Partners may be able to be streamlined to reduce duplication and minimize burdens while ensuring useful data collection while still protective of privacy
- An Analysis of organizational capacity and skills must be undertaken to determine what technology needs can be handled internally versus contracted out and how technology will be sustained

(b)   Marketing & Outreach

Marketing to increase awareness of the Network and its services must be ongoing. Marketing efforts may include:

- Leveraging of existing relationships and Stakeholders
- Using existing local collaboratives, consortiums, work groups, professional groups and associations
- Using printed marketing and electronic materials
- Using social media (e.g., blogs, websites, mass email)

> [icon] **Marketing Materials and Rules for Effective Storytelling**

(c)   Cross-Training

Cross-training provides opportunities to leverage limited staff and resources to achieve Network goals. Cross-training activities include:

- Formal onboarding of new people (staff and Partners), including Network and Partner profiles and history
- Leveraging Partners as subject matter experts in trainings
- Provide professional educational opportunities (e.g., CLE and CEU) to develop pro bono network

> [map icon] A lack of attorneys is a common barrier; pro bono attorneys can help fill the gap.
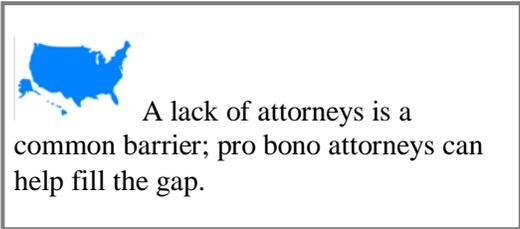
2.   Legal Case Management

Formal case management processes are necessary in any Network regardless of unique structure and processes. These should include: (a) intake and assessment; (b) referrals; and (c) relationship of services.

> [icon] **Select Ethics Considerations: e.g., mandatory reporting, unbundled services**
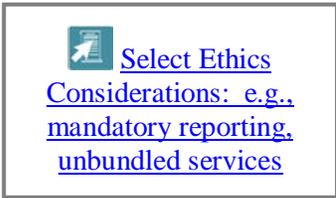
(a) Intake & Assessment

Intake processes should be designed and structured to streamline the process for victims and service providers while balancing and coordinating logistical, technical, legal and evaluation considerations and maintaining victim control over privacy. An Intake Checklist is a useful tool. It should have enough questions to clearly identify legal and non-legal needs, provide enough information to accurate assess potential clients and inform program evaluation, and facilitate smooth and accurate intra- and extra-Network referrals. Once the intake process is complete, the number and types of legal and social services a victim needs at the time of intake should be evident and effective case management and referrals can occur.

> [Menu of Intake and Referral Considerations to Ensure Holistic Services](#)
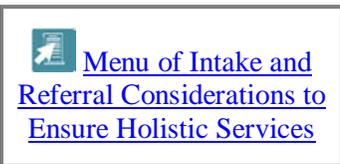
(b) Referrals

Referrals are the heart of a Network. Efficient, accurate, and timely referrals require knowing other service providers' capacities, scope of services, eligibility requirements, proximity to mass transit, and more. Written network referral policies should be developed with broad input to inform how cases are balanced and prioritized between and among Partners, and provide for tracking of and processes for victims that have unmet needs. In addition, understanding each Partner's representation agreement, case closing practices and other case management processes are critical to effective referrals.

> [Sample Policies for Network Referrals](#)

> [Template Representation Agreements, Case Closing Checklist](#)
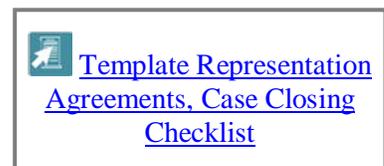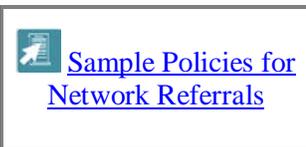
(c) Relationship of Services

Creating a map or flowchart which visually represents a client's interaction and flow through the Network and points when tasks are completed is a useful tool to ensure processes are completed at the appropriate times. This tool can also aid analysis of the relationship of services when victims present with multiple legal needs that necessitate multiple attorneys (e.g., will attorneys be co-counsel? are common interests at stake that allow for privilege?). A useful flowchart reveals:

- Points of entry into the Network
- Points when victims interact with each aspect Stakeholder
- When a victim is an organizational or Network "client"
- When releases of information are executed and when/how information sharing occurs
- When conflict checks are done and by whom
- Data collection and retention practices

> [Example Network Flowcharts](#)

3.   Legal Advocacy

Victims can have myriad legal needs in the aftermath of crime, including civil litigation, victims' rights enforcement in criminal law, family law, employment law, consumer law, immigration law and more. Some legal needs do not become apparent until well after the intake process is complete. Combine these legal needs with nonlegal needs such as public benefits, housing, transportation, safety, and mental health, and it is clear that legal advocacy for victims requires coordination and specialized knowledge. A Network best serves clients by thoughtful and regular cross-training, legal collaboration and resource sharing.

[Template Pleadings]

4.   Evaluation

Evaluation in implementation should be guided by the same design and methodology considerations that informed the Needs & Capacity Assessment discussed above. In determining when, how often and from whom data is collected, balance the need for data with possible data collection fatigue among those being asked to complete instruments.

[Evaluation Considerations During Implementation]

For evaluation to inform Network services, a combination of outcome and output data should be collected and evaluated. Useful information to collect includes:

- How a victim found/entered the Network
- Legal and social service needs – unduplicated totals, for met and unmet (amount and reason)
- Referrals – intra and extra-Network
- Client outcome surveys – increased feeling of safety, satisfaction with systems, empowerment, goal(s) met
- Quality assurance data – including process for handling good and bad feedback
- Declined cases and documenting why to identify service gaps
- Barriers to victims accessing services
- Barriers to provider's ability to provide services

5. Sustainability

Early, proactive planning of Network priorities and activities can positively impact the sustainability of a Network. At a minimum, thought should be given to the following:

- Documentation of processes, procedures and best practices to allow for replication
- Phased roll out or soft launch Network to identify issues and areas in which gaps and barriers still exist so that adjustments can be timely made

- Technology designed for longevity, including identifying who owns it, leverage existing community resources, selecting user-friendly platforms, minimizing resources needed to maintain, and identifying who is responsible for maintenance (funding, staff, hardware, and software).
- Leveraging multiple funding streams to increase community knowledge and referrals into the network.
- Pro bono networks, strengthen relationships, increase capacity, and enhance referrals.
- Marketing & outreach & branding

 The Denver, Montana and New York Networks have each tackled sustainability

Replication Tools

Supporting documents referenced in this Guide are available in the *Replication Tools* section of the abridged online *Guide*, available at victimlegalassistance.org.