

Measuring Capacity

to Serve Domestic Violence Survivors with Disabilities

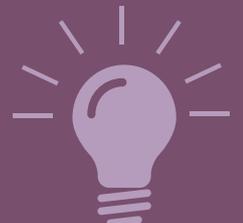
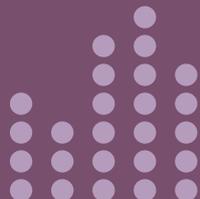
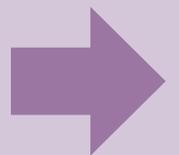
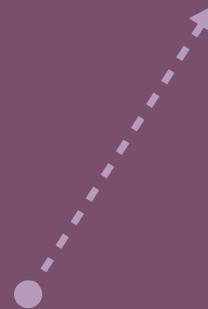
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Residential Domestic Violence Programs



Center on Victimization and Safety

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September 2015



Acknowledgments

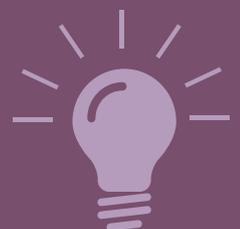
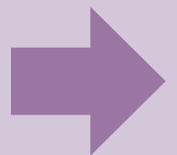
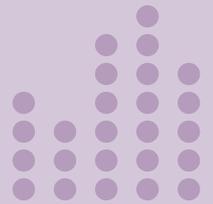
A special thanks to those who have contributed their expertise and time to assist in the development of the performance indicators presented in this guide: Carol Corgan, Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault; Lisa Fleming, Rose Brooks Center; Suzanne Hopkins, the YWCA of Greater Cincinnati; Alison Iser, King County Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Amy Judy, the Vera Institute of Justice; Besiki Kutateladze, CUNY Institute for State and Local Governments; Amy Loder, U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women; Stephanie Sanford, Kansas Association for Independent Living; Michelle "Schell" Schwartz, SafePlace; Roberta Sick, Partners for Inclusive Communities at the University of Arkansas; MaryLee Underwood, Commonwealth Council on Developmental Disabilities; and Shelley Yen-Ewert, Boston Area Rape Crisis Center. We would also like to thank Erika Turner and Chris Munzing for their invaluable editorial contributions during the preparation of this publication.

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The Vera Institute of Justice is an independent nonprofit organization that combines expertise in research, demonstration projects, and technical assistance to help leaders in government and civil society improve the systems people rely on for justice and safety.

The Center on Victimization and Safety works with communities around the country to fashion services that reach, appeal to, and benefit all victims. Our work focuses on communities of people who are at elevated risk of harm but often marginalized from victim services and the criminal justice system. We combine research, technical assistance, and training to equip policymakers and practitioners with the information, skills, and resources needed to effectively serve all victims. For more information on the Center on Victimization and Safety, please visit our website at www.endabusepwd.org, or contact us at cvs@vera.org or 212.376.3096.

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Survivors with Disabilities

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Residential Domestic
Violence Programs

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Introduction



Research has shown that people with disabilities experience violent victimization—including domestic violence—at rates three times higher than people without disabilities.¹ They also routinely face barriers—communication, physical, programmatic, and attitudinal—when reaching out for help, contributing to higher rates of repeat victimization. In recognition of the crucial role they play in helping survivors of domestic violence, residential domestic violence programs across the country are actively working to remove these barriers and enhance their capacity to effectively serve survivors with disabilities. The success and sustainability of these efforts rely on the ability to track their progress and measure their effectiveness. Until now, no such resources were available.

In October 2012, with support from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), the Vera Institute of Justice launched the *Measuring Capacity to Serve Survivors with Disabilities* project. The project's first step was to determine the best evaluation method given the project's goals and the needs and realities of residential domestic violence programs—many of which lack specific funding to support evaluation efforts and formal evaluation training—to measure their capacity to serve domestic violence survivors with disabilities and track changes in their capacity over time. After consulting experts in the field, including staff from residential domestic violence programs, Vera decided to use performance indicators—measures that help determine whether, and to what degree, progress is being made toward a certain objective.² Due to their applicability, practicality, and cost-effectiveness, social service agencies increasingly use them to determine whether they are achieving their goals and track changes in their capacity over time. Vera was poised to develop performance indica-

tors to measure an agency's capacity to serve survivors with disabilities because of its ten-year history of working at the intersection of victimization and disability and its extensive experience designing and conducting practical evaluations, including performance indicators, in other justice-related fields.

To develop the indicators, Vera defined priority areas within residential domestic violence programs that have the greatest impact on the experiences of survivors with disabilities and the ability of the staff and volunteers of these organizations to meet their needs. Vera also:

- conducted a thorough review of the academic literature on victimization of people with disabilities and best practice materials on serving survivors with disabilities;
- gathered feedback from experts on violence against people with disabilities from diverse fields including criminal justice, disability, domestic violence, medical, and sexual violence;
- applied lessons learned from other efforts that rely on indicators to measure performance in human services; and
- tested the indicators in 20 pilot sites to ensure the indicators were relevant to a range of agencies and to ensure that the information was useful to them. The pilot sites were selected from among the grant recipients of OVW's *Training and Services to End Violence Against Women with Disabilities Grant Program*.

The final set of indicators in this guide gives residential domestic violence programs a first-of-its-kind comprehensive tool to track and improve their capacity to serve survivors with disabilities, as well as step-by-step instructions for its implementation. The indicators in this guide measure and are organized into two primary areas: commitment and capacity. Commitment is the willingness and determination of a residential domestic violence program to address abuse against people with disabilities. Capacity is the knowledge, skills, and resources an agency needs to do so. Within each of these areas, the indicators are further grouped into more specific categories. Each category has four to six specific indicators of an agency's ability to serve survivors with disabilities.

Providers are able to measure their capacity through data collected from internal documents, observations, and self-reports from agency staff. Most agencies will have ready access to the data that is required to score or measure the indicators. The indicators are designed to be measured every six months so providers can track their progress and make adjustments as needed to maximize the impact of their capacity-building efforts.

This manual is designed to improve services for people with disabilities who have experienced domestic violence. It is our hope that residential domestic violence programs that have a strategic objective to serve people with disabilities will adopt the indicators presented in this guide. Residential domestic violence programs that measure their capacity to serve these survivors will know with greater certainty the impact of their efforts on the people they serve, and ultimately, whether they are meeting the global mission of the domestic violence field to serve all survivors.

About the Guide

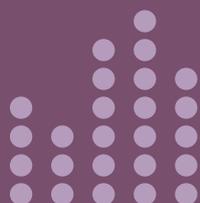
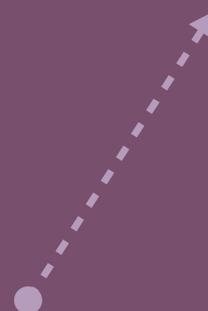
Section I provides an overview of performance indicators, and describes how the indicators are organized and what they are designed to measure.

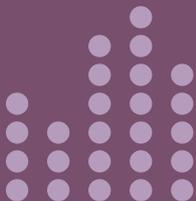
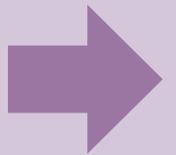
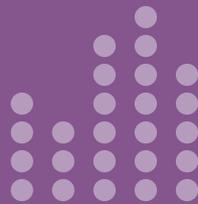
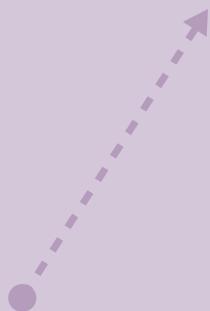
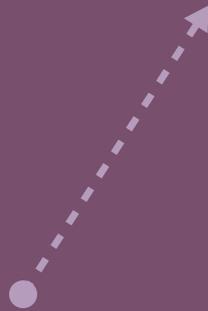
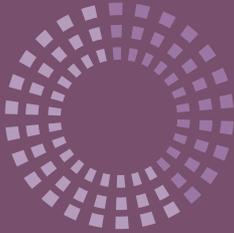
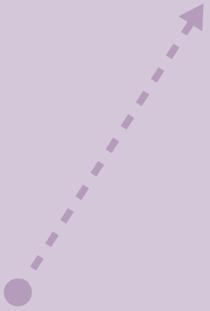
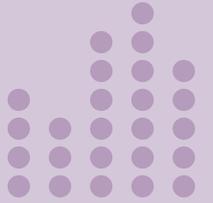
Section II provides detailed information on each indicator, including a definition, why it was included, and important considerations related to the area the indicator intends to measure.

Section III provides step-by-step instructions for implementing the indicators in residential domestic violence programs, including helpful tips and practical resources. The appendices include the full list of performance indicators for residential domestic violence programs, as well as three guides designed to assist providers to collect the data necessary to score their agency using the indicators.

Section I

Understanding Performance Indicators





Section I: Understanding Performance Indicators

Overview



A performance indicator is a measure that helps answer the question of how much, or whether, progress is being made toward a certain objective. They are simple, easily understood pieces of information that provide insights into more complicated concepts. The main value of an indicator is to make complex concepts measurable, so that they can capture change within an agency over time. In this case, the performance indicators are designed to measure an organization's capacity to serve people with disabilities who have experienced domestic violence.

For example, you may be interested in understanding whether your agency's services are accessible to diverse groups. On its own, accessibility is an abstract concept and is difficult to measure without first identifying specific aspects of accessibility. To measure accessibility, you could assess how many referrals you receive for services, how many of these referrals are from underserved groups, and how many result in sustained contact with your services. This information is concrete and measurable, and can be repeatedly collected so users can track their progress, regress, or lack of change over time, and develop plans around those results.

If an agency uses the indicators once, it would have a point-in-time snapshot of its services; to understand performance over time, an agency needs to analyze the indicators at regular intervals (for example, every six months). Because they cover a wide range of service provisions and agency operations, the performance indicators are useful to organizations at all stages of addressing the issue of effectively serving survivors with disabilities, from those just starting to those who have been working at this intersection for many years.

Agency staff can implement these performance indicators, and no evaluation experience is needed. The information used to score the indicators already exists within the agency. Agency documents, agency observations, and staff knowledge are the three sources of information needed to use the performance indicators, and each indicator links to a specific piece of information housed within the agency. The Information Collection Guide—which can be found on page 77—provides details on the exact pieces of information needed to complete the performance indicator scoring.

The Benefits of Using Performance Indicators

Allows agency to measure their performance.

- Allows agency to easily identify areas needing more attention, informing and shaping project design.
- Allows agency to develop strategic plans for reaching underserved groups and maximizing impact.
- Allows agency to compile scores over time, which can improve funding opportunities when included in grant proposals.
- Allows agency to build stakeholder support.
- Allows agency to incorporate the perspectives of service recipients and minority and marginalized groups.
- Allows agency to document progress and celebrate successes.

Development of the Performance Indicators

Performance indicators are not designed to provide a comprehensive assessment of every aspect of an agency's services. Rather, they are strategically chosen, specific measures that when taken together, provide a reasonable estimation of the agency's performance in a certain area. Performance indicators are a balancing act—if there are too many, the process can become tedious and important information about an agency's capacity can be lost. If there are too few, the information on an agency's capacity in a specific area will be incomplete. For this reason, four to six indicators under each theme are ideal, as this allows for a range of information to be collected and scored without overwhelming the user or taking too much time.

The performance indicators were created to reflect elements of effective service to survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors. They were developed through reviews of academic and best practice materials and multiple rounds of feedback from external project advisors who have expertise at the intersection of violence and disability.

Structure of the Performance Indicator Measurement System

The performance indicator measurement system represents established and best practice standards for serving survivors with disabilities. The scores provide snapshots of an agency's culture, environment, practices, and programming around accessible and welcoming services. Taken together, the system represents a set of universal standards that guide agencies in serving survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors. The structure of the performance indicator measurement system is described in detail below.

At the highest level, the indicators fall into one of two **components**—Commitment and Capacity—which represent the agency's desire and ability to effectively serve survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors.



Component A

Commitment

Agency demonstrates willingness and determination to address domestic violence against people with disabilities and Deaf people.



Component B

Capacity

Agency has knowledge, skills, resources, and programmatic ability necessary to provide domestic violence services to survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors.

Each component has three major **themes**, which represent important areas of service and agency operations. Under Commitment, the themes are Responsibility, Partnerships, and Policies. Under Capacity, the themes are Material Resources, Human Resources, and Programmatic Resources and Activities.

Commitment

Theme 1: Responsibility

Theme 2: Partnerships

Theme 3: Policies

Capacity

Theme 1: Material Resources

Theme 2: Human Resources

Theme 3: Programmatic Resources and Activities

Each theme contains a series of four to six strategically chosen **indicators**, designed to represent an agency's capacity to serve survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors in that particular area. Each indicator consists of a series of four **measures** which, when met by the agency, suggest that the agency has a high capacity in that particular aspect of service. The more measures an agency meets under each theme, the closer it is to meeting the standards for effectively serving survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors.



**Performance Indicators
for Residential Domestic
Violence Agencies**

Component A

Component

Commitment

Agency demonstrates willingness and determination to address domestic violence against people with disabilities and Deaf people.

Theme

Theme 1: Responsibility

Agency recognizes duty to serve survivors of domestic violence with disabilities and Deaf survivors.

Indicator

Definition

1.1

Indicator

Recognizes Violence Against People with Disabilities as a Priority

Agency recognizes violence against people with disabilities and Deaf individuals as a priority by:

Measures

- A.** Specifically mentioning people with disabilities and Deaf people in agency's public outreach brochure or social media accounts
- B.** Including efforts to increase agency's accessibility for people with disabilities and Deaf people in agency's strategic plan
- C.** Having an internal committee or work group focused on enhancing the agency's response to domestic violence against people with disabilities and Deaf people

The indicators rely on data from three types of information housed within agencies to determine if each measure is met and, ultimately, a score.

- **Agency documents** include such things as intake forms, policies, procedures, and resource sheets.
- **Agency observations** focus on details of the agency that are unable to be captured in documents, and will require a staff member to make a series of observations related to safety and accessibility within the agency.
- **Staff interview questions** focus on different aspects of agency service and operations and capitalize on the knowledge staff have about agency capacity.

Each indicator relies on data points from one or more of these sources for scoring.



Document Checklist

Some of the information you will need to measure your agency's capacity to serve survivors of domestic violence with disabilities comes from pre-existing agency documents. Gather the documents listed below, and then consult them in order to answer the questions in the *Indicator Scoring Tool*.

Client Documents

- Intake forms/packet
- Direct services staff training
- Volunteer training
- Healthy relationships training
- Parenting class curriculum
- Policies
 - Client accommodations
 - Full participation
 - Medications
 - Staff accommodations
 - Client non-discrimination
 - Eligibility

Service animals

- Resident handbook
- Medications
- Written agreement with ASL interpreters or interpreting agency
- MOU with disability organization
- Contract or other written agreement with Deaf agency or advocate

Legal advocacy resources

- Outreach brochure/social media pages
- Accessible transportation list
- Accessible transportation map
- Accessible car/van services list
- Agency's power and control wheel
- Survivor handout

Staff Resources

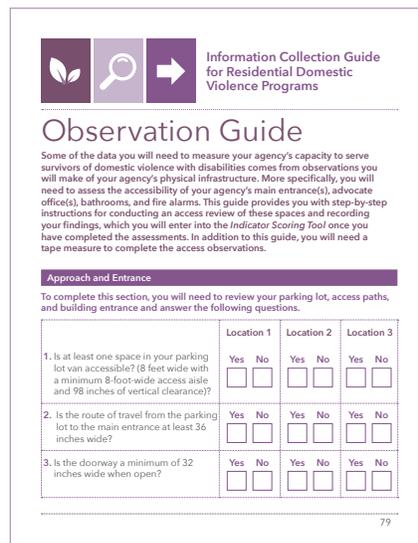
- Hotline protocol
- Counselor/advocate resources
- Access review tool
- Access review team roster
- Access review team meeting minutes

Programmatic Resources

- Case management resource sheets

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Document Checklist



Observation Guide

Some of the data you will need to measure your agency's capacity to serve survivors of domestic violence with disabilities comes from observations you will make of your agency's physical infrastructure. More specifically, you will need to assess the accessibility of your agency's main entrance(s), advocate office(s), bathrooms, and fire alarms. This guide provides you with step-by-step instructions for conducting an access review of these spaces and recording your findings, which you will enter into the *Indicator Scoring Tool* once you have completed the assessments. In addition to this guide, you will need a tape measure to complete the access observations.

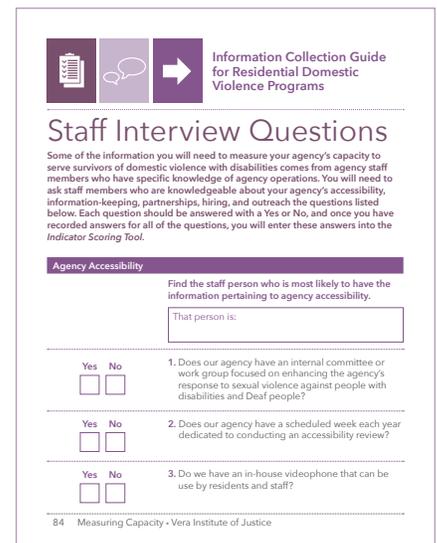
Approach and Entrance

To complete this section, you will need to review your parking lot, access paths, and building entrance and answer the following questions.

	Location 1		Location 2		Location 3	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1. Is at least one space in your parking lot van accessible? (8 feet wide with a minimum 8-foot-wide access aisle and 98 inches of vertical clearance)?	<input type="checkbox"/>					
2. Is the route of travel from the parking lot to the main entrance at least 36 inches wide?	<input type="checkbox"/>					
3. Is the doorway a minimum of 32 inches wide when open?	<input type="checkbox"/>					

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Observation Guide



Staff Interview Questions

Some of the information you will need to measure your agency's capacity to serve survivors of domestic violence with disabilities comes from agency staff members who have specific knowledge of agency operations. You will need to ask staff members who are knowledgeable about your agency's accessibility, information-keeping, partnerships, hiring, and outreach the questions listed below. Each question should be answered with a Yes or No, and once you have recorded answers for all of the questions, you will enter these answers into the *Indicator Scoring Tool*.

Agency Accessibility

Find the staff person who is most likely to have the information pertaining to agency accessibility.

That person is:

Yes No

1. Does our agency have an internal committee or work group focused on enhancing the agency's response to sexual violence against people with disabilities and Deaf people?

Yes No

2. Does our agency have a scheduled week each year dedicated to conducting an accessibility review?

Yes No

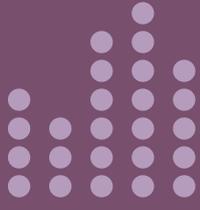
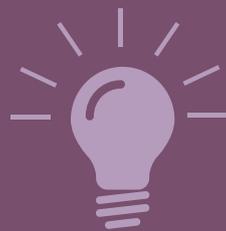
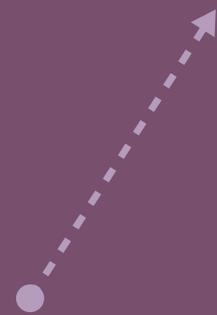
3. Do we have an in-house videophone that can be used by residents and staff?

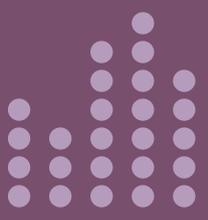
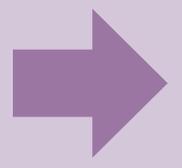
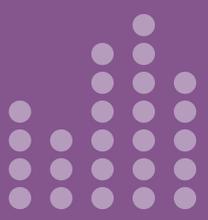
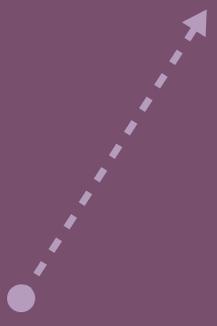
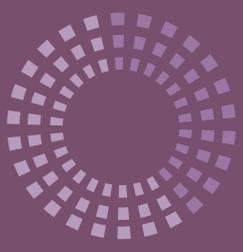
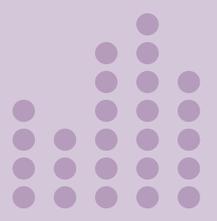
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Staff Interview Questions

Section II

The Indicators

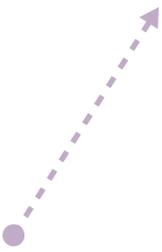




Component A

Commitment

Categories: Responsibility, Partnerships, Policies



Residential domestic violence programs with a high capacity to address domestic violence in the lives of people with disabilities take tangible steps to demonstrate their commitment to addressing this issue in their communities. Their commitment reflects their willingness and determination to be a leader in this area and to be as effective as possible in their work to end domestic abuse of people with disabilities. Importantly, these organizations have also communicated their commitment to their staff and volunteers, as well as the community at large.

The commitment indicators will help domestic violence agencies measure their willingness and determination to address domestic violence in the lives of people with disabilities. How do they reflect their responsibility to address abuse of people with disabilities internally and externally? What partnerships do they forge to enhance their ability to serve survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors? Do their policies establish a baseline of accessible and inclusive services?

1. Responsibility

It is important for an agency to be explicit about including people with disabilities and Deaf people among the communities of people it serves. There are many indications of this commitment within domestic violence agencies, from integrating access and inclusion into day-to-day operations and long-term planning, to publicly communicating their commitment to address abuse of people with disabilities and Deaf people. The following indicators will help domestic violence agencies measure the extent to which they recognize their duty to serve survivors of domestic violence with disabilities and Deaf survivors.

1.1

Recognizes Violence Against People with Disabilities as a Priority

Agency recognizes violence against people with disabilities and Deaf individuals as a priority by:

- Specifically mentioning people with disabilities and Deaf people in agency's public outreach brochure or social media accounts.
- Including efforts to increase agency's accessibility for people with disabilities and Deaf people in agency's strategic plan.
- Having an internal committee or work group focused on enhancing the agency's response to domestic violence against people with disabilities and Deaf people.
- Having a client non-discrimination policy that explicitly includes disability status.

Why This Indicator Matters

Specifically including people with disabilities and Deaf individuals among its priorities reaffirms a domestic violence agency's commitment to addressing this issue and can spur it to dedicate the resources necessary to build its capacity to serve these communities. It signals to staff and volunteers that serving members of these communities is central to the agency's mission and empowers them to tailor their services to meet the needs of people with disabilities and Deaf people. Specifically naming these communities in public materials, such as outreach brochures and client policies, communicates to members of these communities a commitment to serve them and confirms that the agency can meet their access and communication needs.

1.2

Promotes Accessibility

Agency has infrastructure to routinely assess its accessibility to people with disabilities, including:

- A trained review team of internal staff and external experts in accessibility for people with disabilities and Deaf individuals.

- A standardized review process and tool.
- A scheduled week each year dedicated to conducting the review.
- A process to review findings with staff and external experts to develop possible solutions to identified issues.

Why This Indicator Matters

The accessibility of domestic violence agencies is vital to successfully serving people with disabilities and Deaf people. It shapes all aspects of a survivor's journey from crisis to healing, including how s/he learns about services provided, her or his decision and ability to bring her or his children and themselves into shelter, her or his experience while in shelter, and her or his satisfaction with the outcome of the services received. An agency's overall accessibility is determined by its compliance with existing laws and its adoption of established practices that address the limitations of the minimum standards set by law.

Conducting formal access reviews allows an agency to identify and remove barriers through a systematic process. Conducting these reviews on a routine basis helps an agency track and monitor changes in its accessibility and reflects its ongoing commitment to operate with the highest degree of accessibility. An element of the review process that has proven invaluable is to include survivors with disabilities and those who are Deaf, as well as representatives of a local disability organization. These collaborators can weigh in on the assessment process and make suggestions for how to improve accessibility.

1.3

Raises Funds

The agency seeks funding to address violence against people with disabilities in the following ways:

- Agency has a written fundraising plan to raise funds to better support survivors with disabilities, including making physical modifications to the building, providing accommodations to individuals, etc.

- Agency has submitted at least one proposal in partnership with a disability or Deaf organization.
- Agency has raised the issue of serving survivors with disabilities to its Victim of Crime Act and Violence Against Women Act state administrators.
- Agency has created a fundraising appeal letter that seeks funding to address this issue from individual/private donors.

Why This Indicator Matters

Funding specifically allocated to address domestic violence in the lives of people with disabilities and Deaf people allows domestic violence agencies to improve their accessibility, build their knowledge and skill base, expand their resources, and provide tailored services to survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors. There are many strategies to secure this type of funding, from cultivating new sources of support for this area of a domestic violence agency's work to applying for funding opportunities that include serving people with disabilities and Deaf people in their priority areas. Having a written fundraising plan establishes a domestic violence agency's intention to raise funds to address abuse of people with disabilities and provides the agency with benchmarks to measure its progress towards its goal.

1.4

Includes in Budget

The agency's direct services programming budget includes separate line items dedicated to addressing accessibility needs of survivors served, including funds to:

- Provide auxiliary aids and accommodations to people with disabilities when requested.
- Hire consultants to create agency materials in plain language.
- Make physical modifications to the shelter.
- Hire interpreters for people who are Deaf.

Why This Indicator Matters

While not all strategies to achieve access require financial resources, instituting some changes—making modifications to the agency’s shelter, creating materials in alternate forms, and providing auxiliary aids and services—does. Routinely including line items in an agency’s budget ensures that agency staff has the resources available to improve the overall accessibility of the agency. Moreover, the budget of an organization is often a window into its values and priorities and, in this case, an indication of an agency’s commitment to access and inclusion.

1.5

Collects Data

Agency collects the following information, in either paper or electronic form:

- Number of people receiving shelter who identify as having a disability.
- Disability types.
- Perpetrator’s relationship to survivor.
- Types of auxiliary aids provided to survivors with disabilities.

Why This Indicator Matters

Collecting disability-related information from the people requesting and receiving an agency’s services is a reflection of an organization’s willingness to build a knowledge base around victimization of people with disabilities. It can help an organization identify gaps in services and can lead to a better understanding of domestic violence in the lives of people with disabilities and the unique needs of these survivors. With this information, staff can allocate resources to tailor their outreach, services, and financial supports to meet these needs. By collecting this information over time, they can also identify trends and emerging issues, which may inform how the agency allocates future resources in the area of disability.

1.6

Uses Data

Agency adjusts its programmatic priorities to better meet the needs of survivors with disabilities based on an analysis of the following data:

- National trends on victimization of people with disabilities, using data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS).
- Jurisdictional needs, including the number of people with disabilities that live in the community, their disability type(s), and their expressed service needs.
- Agency trends, including number of people with disabilities served, type(s) of disability, and their level of satisfaction with services.
- Gaps between victimization and service utilization rates among people with disabilities.

Why This Indicator Matters

Collecting agency data is the first step to identifying issues and making appropriate changes. To do so, an agency needs information about incidence and prevalence, and service utilization and satisfaction, among other areas. In most communities, there is a dearth of data on service area-specific incidence and prevalence rates. To fill this gap, organizations that want to make data-driven decisions must look to national data sources, such as BJS. Applying this national data to the local community's statistics can give an estimate of who is in need in their community. Comparing this estimate to the agency trends then allows the agency to identify unmet needs and gaps in domestic violence services, which serves as a foundation for any decisions around programmatic changes. This type of analysis requires time and expertise on the part of agency staff and affords opportunities to make enhancements with a laser focus.

2. Partnerships

No one organization offers all the services survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors need when seeking protection from an abusive partner, or possesses all the expertise necessary to provide those services in a way that is safe and accessible. Partnering with other organizations that specialize in serving people with disabilities and Deaf people, as well as enforcement agencies such as law enforcement and protective services departments, is an effective way for residential domestic violence programs to expand their ability to address domestic violence against people with disabilities and Deaf people. Developing and sustaining these partnerships requires residential domestic violence programs to dedicate time and resources toward relationship building, frequent communication, and joint action.

2.1

Collaborates with Disability Organization

Agency has a memorandum of understanding (MOU), collaboration charter, or equivalent agreement with at least one disability organization that serves people living in the agency's service area that:

- Is current and signed by agency leaders.
- Commits the agency to provide consultation and other assistance to the disability organization as needed.
- Dedicates staff time to participate in cross-agency meetings.
- Commits the agencies represented in the MOU to provide training at one another's new employee/volunteer orientations.

Why This Indicator Matters

Disability organizations are a natural partner for residential domestic violence programs. With a formal agreement in place, their staff can serve as an invaluable resource and enhance the ability of residential domestic violence programs to meet the needs of people with disabilities. They can help identify access barriers

within domestic violence shelters and offices and offer practical solutions for removing them, provide disability-related training to their staff, co-advocate on behalf of survivors with disabilities, and more.

Reaching out to a disability organization to talk about abuse of people with disabilities is the first step toward formalizing a partnership. Most geographic areas in the country are served by at least one disability organization. Common disability organizations include The Arc, centers for independent living, community-based mental health centers, Easter Seals, and United Cerebral Palsy. Other important steps in the process of formalizing collaboration include learning about each other's organizations; determining a shared purpose for the collaboration; determining roles, responsibilities, and resources; and sharing the news of the collaboration with everyone who works and volunteers at both agencies.

2.2

Builds Relationships with the Deaf Community

Agency cultivates relationships with the Deaf community by:

- Having a written engagement plan to develop ongoing relationships with Deaf organizations and groups within their local area.
- Budgeting money for American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters' services during planning meetings for domestic violence awareness month (October)
- Having an established relationship, documented in writing (i.e., a contract or other written agreement), with an expert(s) on domestic violence within the Deaf community.
- Having an established written agreement with a Deaf domestic violence advocate or organization that outlines how each organization can work together to best support a survivor.

Why This Indicator Matters

Many Deaf and hard of hearing people identify as members of a distinct cultural group in the United States that coalesces around a shared language (ASL), values, behavioral norms, and traditions

that differ from those of hearing culture. Because of these differences, it is common for Deaf people to experience communication and cultural barriers when interacting with hearing organizations. These barriers often prevent Deaf survivors of domestic violence from getting the help they need from residential domestic violence programs. Building relationships with the local Deaf community, as well as practitioners who have expertise in domestic violence in the Deaf community, is an essential first step to overcoming these barriers and successfully serving the Deaf community within a residential domestic violence program's service area. Through these relationships, staff of residential domestic violence programs can increase their exposure to and familiarity with Deaf culture, build trust and rapport with members of the Deaf community, and identify ways to work together to best support Deaf survivors. Building these relationships requires commitment, time, and deliberate planning. It also requires skilled leadership to help create and ensure a partnership that is culturally and linguistically appropriate. Lastly, financial resources are needed for ASL interpreters and other accommodations that participants may need to ensure effective communication.

2.3

Collaborates with Interpreter Agency

Agency has a written agreement with an ASL interpreter agency or two freelance interpreters that includes:

- A requirement that interpreters sent to the agency have received training on interpreter safety and self-care.
- A requirement to disclose conflicts of interests (including previous or existing relationships with the perpetrator[s], if known).
- A commitment to provide interpretation services outside of business hours.
- A commitment for individual interpreters to sign confidentiality agreements when performing services.

Why This Indicator Matters

Being able to secure qualified ASL interpreters is essential to effectively communicating with and serving members of the Deaf community. Many organizations, however, struggle to do so because they have little knowledge of the sign language interpreting industry, including whom to call to secure interpreters, how to contract with interpreters for these services, and how to ensure they are qualified to interpret in contexts involving domestic violence. These struggles are exacerbated when the need for interpreters arises spontaneously or after business hours. Having a formal agreement with at least one ASL interpreter agency or two freelance interpreters provides residential domestic violence programs with the relationships and resources necessary to secure ASL interpreters whenever they are needed. It also reflects a high degree of commitment and dedication to meeting the needs of Deaf survivors.

2.4

Includes People with Disabilities

Agency encourages the inclusion of people with disabilities in the following ways:

- By inviting people with disabilities to train agency staff as lead or co-trainers.
- By supporting people with disabilities to create and operate educational/empowerment groups (likely to be housed in disability organizations).
- By supporting their participation in at least one community effort to address domestic violence per year.
- By inviting them to inform the policies and practices of the agency.

Why This Indicator Matters

People with disabilities have expertise and unique insights to contribute to residential domestic violence programs. They can help improve an agency's capacity to serve survivors with

disabilities by training staff and making recommendations to improve policies and practices. They can also bolster the agency's direct services to the community by conducting outreach, facilitating educational or empowerment groups, and providing peer support. People with disabilities can be involved as volunteers and staff. Many communities have at least one self-advocacy group composed of people with intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, or psychiatric disabilities. These groups are designed to build a network of support around people with disabilities to allow them to learn from each other and educate the community about issues that affect them. Some of these groups have already begun building their capacity to address the issue of domestic violence, while others may have yet to consider it among their priorities. Residential domestic violence programs should consider partnering with these groups to identify potential people to involve. Self-advocates may require a range of supports—auxiliary aids, training on domestic violence and services residential domestic violence programs provide, one-on-one time to prepare for meetings, mentoring to develop leadership skills—to meaningfully participate in efforts to address domestic violence depending on their previous experience.

2.5

Participates in Multi-Disciplinary Collaboration

Agency participates in a community-based multidisciplinary collaboration to end violence against people with disabilities and attends its meetings:

- Never
- Once a year
- Semi-annually
- Quarterly
- Monthly

Why This Indicator Matters

Domestic violence has cascading effects on the entire community, not just the survivor with a disability or Deaf survivor, and requires the community to work together to address this issue. Survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors often turn to a variety of social systems when seeking protection from domestic violence. Participating in a multi-disciplinary collaboration that addresses violence against people with disabilities allows key players in community systems to develop strategies for a cohesive community response to this issue. These collaborations may include members of disability organizations, rape crisis centers, the criminal justice system, the education system, and the medical system, among others, and create a system-wide network of support for survivors with disabilities. The frequency of an agency's participation in these meetings is one way to measure its overall commitment to providing effective services to survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors.

3. Policies

An organization's policies affirm its mission, provide the framework for the organization's culture, and establish its expectations for individual members of its staff. Integrating access, disability, and Deaf culture into its policies communicates a clear message of commitment to staff members as well as the people using a residential domestic violence program's services. Furthermore, adopting policies specific to people with disabilities obligates the residential domestic violence program to ensure consistent follow through. The following indicators provide a barometer for residential domestic violence programs to determine the extent to which their policies contribute to a culture and framework for effectively serving people with disabilities and Deaf people.

3.1

Eligibility

Agency has an eligibility policy that states services are available regardless of a person's:

- Disability status
- Medication usage and needs
- Guardianship status (for adults)
- Need for auxiliary aids

Why This Indicator Matters

Historically, some people with disabilities have been excluded from goods and services offered by businesses and nonprofit organizations because of their disability and circumstances surrounding it, such as use of certain medications, need for auxiliary aids, and assumptions about their capacity to legally consent to services. Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) sought to address this discrimination by prohibiting these entities from establishing eligibility requirements that exclude, discriminate against, or segregate people with disabilities.³ Making explicit through policy that an organization will provide services regardless of a person's disability and factors surrounding that disability establishes an expectation within the organization that its staff and volunteers comply with the law and do not exclude people with disabilities from services.

3.2

Accommodations

Agency has an accommodations policy that outlines its obligations to:

- Ask all individuals at intake whether they need any accommodations to ensure full participation in services.
- Ask all individuals served about needed accommodations on an ongoing basis.
- Secure reasonable accommodations upon request within an established timeframe.
- Assume the cost, if any, of providing accommodations.

Why This Indicator Matters

The ADA prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, state and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation. Title III of the ADA requires “places of public accommodations,” including businesses and nonprofit organizations that serve the public, to provide auxiliary aids and services, such as ASL interpreters and materials in Braille, to people with disabilities to ensure effective communication. The ADA also requires these entities to make reasonable modifications to their policies, practices, and procedures when necessary to allow equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities to participate.⁴ An accommodations policy articulates an organization’s expectations for its staff to identify accommodation needs and its willingness to fulfill those needs.

3.3.

Full Participation

Agency’s policies promote the full participation of people with disabilities by allowing:

- Flexibility in where staff can meet survivors (e.g., at an off-site, accessible location).
- Flexibility in moving internal programming to accessible locations within the agency’s office.
- Non-offending personal care attendants to accompany survivors into shelter.
- Staff to tailor the length of sessions with individual survivors based on that survivor’s needs.

Why This Indicator Matters

Fidelity to confidentiality and safety contributes to effective responses to survivors of domestic violence. To maximize confidentiality and safety, programs have developed policies and procedures that limit public exposure of people receiving their services and the information shared about survivors they serve. While this has enhanced survivors’ comfort and safety, it has also

created some tensions around meeting the needs of survivors with disabilities and, in some cases, has limited their full participation in services. For example, policies may be in place that limit where staff can provide services, which some practitioners have interpreted to mean that they cannot move services to an off-site location with greater accessibility. As another example, some policies aimed at preventing perpetrators from gaining access to survivor information have resulted in people with disabilities being unable to have the assistance of their non-offending caregiver while receiving services.

In many cases, agency policies do not specifically limit the full participation of people with disabilities, but staff and volunteers interpret them in ways that do. Creating policies that establish expectations around confidentiality and safety, while allowing staff flexibility to meet the diverse needs of survivors, is an effective strategy to promote full inclusion. The need for flexibility cuts across most policies within a residential domestic violence program. Determining how best to do this requires an organization to review its policies.

3.4

Service Animals

Agency has a service animal policy that:

- Establishes the definition of a service animal.
- Allows service animals into their facility.
- Addresses concerns emerging from the presence of service animals, including allergies and phobias.
- Designates a safe service animal relief area.

Why this Indicator Matters

The ADA defines service animals as “dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities.”⁵ Such work includes guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are D/deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having—or about to have—a seizure, reminding a person with a mental health disorder to take prescribed medica-

tions, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Under the ADA, state and local governments, businesses, and nonprofit organizations that serve the public generally must allow service animals to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of the facility where the public is normally allowed to go.⁶ In addition, the 2010 revised regulations of the ADA modify its policies to permit miniature horses that have been trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities where reasonable.⁷ A service animal policy affirms a residential domestic violence program's commitment to meeting these legal requirements and also provides guidance to its staff and volunteers on the definition of a service animal, establishes a safe area near the shelter for service animal relief, and other important considerations when serving survivors who are accompanied by service animals.

3.5

Resident Handbook

Agency has a handbook for residents of its shelter that:

- Addresses the use of scents and fragrances in the facility.
- Clearly explains what, if any, personal care services staff may provide.
- Offers flexibility to people with disabilities in maintaining their private living space.
- Explicitly names people with disability in its statement about the importance of respecting the diversity of the other residents in a communal living environment.

Why This Indicator Matters

Domestic violence shelters issue handbooks to domestic violence survivors residing in the shelter to communicate the agencies' policies, their commitments to residents, their expectations of residents, and other important information. The resident handbook helps to shape the agency's overall culture and environment and provides residents with a concrete resource they can consult throughout their stay. Addressing issues specific to people with disabilities in the

handbook—such as chemical sensitivities, which can be triggered by scents and fragrances, and personal care services—is one strategy domestic violence shelters can adopt to ensure that survivors with disabilities are welcomed and integrated into the shelter community.

3.6

Medication

Agency has a medication policy for its emergency shelter that:

- Ensures the provision of individual, accessible personal lockboxes for all residents.
- Ensures the provision of locked refrigerator space for medication.
- Prohibits staff/volunteers from collecting and/or dispensing medication.
- Requires resident to sign a waiver in order for staff to hold a key to resident's personal lockbox.

Why This Indicator Matters

When survivors of domestic violence enter a shelter, they often bring along medications for themselves and their children. Because of the communal nature of the shelter environment and to ensure the safety of all residents, many residential domestic violence programs have adopted practices to secure medications upon arrival and have staff dispense the medications to residents. These practices, however, present significant barriers to survivors with disabilities, who often need their medication to be readily available to them. Additionally, these practices have had the unintended effect of stigmatizing survivors who have mental health disabilities and require psychotropic drugs to manage their disability. A medication policy that offers shelter residents the greatest possible privacy and autonomy concerning their medication, while also promoting a safe shelter environment, can guide staff in ensuring a welcoming and accessible environment for survivors with disabilities. Adopting a policy that delineates the shelter's commitment to providing locked and refrigerated storage space for medication, among other things, supports the goal of maximizing residents' privacy. Articulating restrictions around staff and volunteer access to medications provides increased autonomy to residents with disabilities.

Capacity

Categories: Material Resources, Human Resources, and Programmatic Resources

The capacity of a residential domestic violence program to address abuse of people with disabilities and Deaf people is reflected in its:

- physical and material resources: buildings, equipment, and written materials;
- human resources: the composition of its staff and volunteers as well as their skill and experience; and
- programming: the approach, content, and resources that inform the design and delivery of each service offered.

By proactively accounting for people with disabilities and Deaf people in all of these areas, residential domestic violence programs eliminate barriers to accessing services and equip their staff to meet the needs of people with specific disabilities.

The capacity indicators will help staff members determine whether their agency possesses the building blocks necessary to serve people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence. Are physical spaces and materials accessible and welcoming to people with disabilities and Deaf people? What training and other learning opportunities are provided to staff and volunteers to bolster their capacity to support survivors? How does the programming provided incorporate the needs and experiences of people with disabilities and Deaf people?

4. Material Resources

The accessibility of an organization’s material resources, such as its physical locations and printed materials, is an essential element of its capacity to serve people with disabilities and Deaf people. Standards for accessibility are set by federal, state, and local law and by best practices in the field of victimization of people with disabilities. The following indicators will help residential domestic violence programs measure the extent to which their material resources comply with legal standards and best practices.

4.1

Accessible Modes of Communication

Agency provides a variety of accessible methods of communication, including:

- A website that meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA/AAA standards.⁸
- An in-house videophone that can be used by residents and staff.
- A telephone accessible for people who have low vision.
- A dedicated line for receiving text messages from survivors.

Why This Indicator Matters

Residential domestic violence programs communicate with the people they serve in a variety of ways, including websites that raise awareness about their services and emergency support/crisis lines that allow survivors to access immediate crisis intervention. Equally as important, resources must be available on site to facilitate communication between the people residential domestic violence programs serve and referral agencies or other sources of support. The accessibility of a residential domestic violence program’s communication approaches directly impact its ability to meet the needs of people with disabilities and Deaf people. For example, having a website that meets the most current WCAG standards allows a residential domestic violence program to reach the widest array of people with disabilities in their community. Similarly, operating a hotline that can receive text messages provides a mecha-

nism for residential domestic violence programs to offer immediate crisis intervention to members of the Deaf community who use text messaging as a primary form of communication. Communication is inextricably linked to technology and it is critical for organizations to continuously examine how the technologies they use either facilitate communication with people with disabilities and Deaf people or create barriers to it.

4.2

Accessible Location

All of the agency's offices where services are provided meet the minimum standards of access set by the ADA, including:

- Bathrooms
- Approach and entrance
- Fire alarm system
- Resident sleeping rooms

Why This Indicator Matters

An important component of an organization's capacity to serve survivors with disabilities is the accessibility of its physical locations. Every space, from an agency's parking lot to its restrooms, impacts the ability of people with disabilities and Deaf people to gain access to the building, as well as their experience while they are there. The Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) establishes standards for accessible physical design that residential domestic violence programs must meet to be in compliance. While the ADAAG does not address every access consideration, it is the base on which solutions for inclusion are built in the United States. Compliance is therefore a necessary component of a residential domestic violence program's capacity to serve people with disabilities and Deaf people.

4.3

Alternate Formats

Agency's client intake packet is available in the following alternate formats:

- Large font (14 point or greater)
- Braille (upon request)
- Video with captioning or American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation
- Plain language

Why This Indicator Matters

Programs use written materials, as well as other strategies, to communicate important information to the people they serve, including how to contact the organization, its hours of operation, services available through the agency, and what people using its services can expect. Inaccessible written materials create barriers for people with disabilities. Having these materials in alternative formats (e.g., large font and Braille) eliminates these barriers. Intake materials are one of many forms of written materials provided to people being served by a residential domestic violence program and the extent to which they are available in alternate formats is a gauge for the agency's capacity to provide all other materials in alternate formats.

4.4

Inclusive Materials

Agency's public outreach brochure is inclusive of disability and Deaf people by:

- Including disability access symbols.
- Using people-first language.
- Recognizing the cultural identity of Deaf people by referring to them as a separate group.

- Including examples of abuse tactics that perpetrators use against people with disabilities and Deaf people.

Why This Indicator Matters

An agency's outreach brochure does more than convey the services offered. It demonstrates the organization's knowledge, experience, and credibility, all with the aim of inspiring trust in the community it serves. Through its images, content, and word choice, it also implicitly conveys important information about an organization's culture, values, and priorities. There are a number of markers that are recognized within the disability community as indications that an organization is welcoming and accessible to people with disabilities and Deaf people, such as using people and culture-first language and including the universal symbols for access. Including these markers in a residential domestic violence program's brochure signals the program's commitment and capacity to serve people with disabilities and Deaf people.

4.5

Accessible Transportation

Agency promotes accessible transportation options by:

- Having an annually-updated resource sheet on paratransit providers and contact information.
- Having an annually-updated map of the paratransit route.
- Having an annually-updated contact list of accessible private car/van services.
- Selecting an accessible taxi company or advocating for more accessible vehicles with local taxi providers.

Why This Indicator Matters

Survivors of domestic violence who are residing at an emergency or transitional shelter often must rely on transportation coordinated by or provided by the residential domestic violence program. In some cases, domestic violence programs own a vehicle they use to transport residents and their children. In other cases, the domestic violence program will issue residents bus tickets or taxi vouchers.

To ensure that the transportation options available through a residential domestic violence program are accessible to survivors with disabilities, agencies can take a number of steps, such as researching paratransit providers, creating updated maps of the paratransit routes, and working with taxi companies that have accessible vehicles in their fleet. These efforts signal a program's commitment and capacity to serve people with disabilities and Deaf people.

5. Human Resources

A residential domestic violence program's staff and volunteers represent its human capital and are essential to supporting and building the desired organizational culture. A program's capacity to serve survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors relies on policies and practices that ensure its staff and volunteers represent the diversity of the communities it serves, and that they have the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to effectively serve all survivors. The following indicators provide a measure for residential domestic violence programs to determine how its human resources policies and practices are supporting staff members' and volunteers' ability to fulfill their mission.

5.1

Inclusive Hiring Practices

Agency recruitment, hiring, and retention practices include:

- Job announcements that delineate essential and non-essential responsibilities.
- Job announcements that explicitly encourage people with disabilities to apply.
- Posting job announcements on disability-centered job boards.
- Policy and procedures for providing staff with reasonable accommodations.

Why This Indicator Matters

Creating a diverse and inclusive workforce requires a human resources department that understands and complies with employment laws and incorporates best practices in recruitment, hiring, and retention. The ADA makes it unlawful to discriminate against people with disabilities in the full range of employment-related activities, including recruitment, advancement, pay, and benefits.⁹ Additionally, ensuring that an agency's staff is representative of the diversity of the communities it serves requires it to adopt practices that will reach people with disabilities and Deaf people, such as posting job announcements on disability-centered job boards and explicitly encouraging people with disabilities to apply.

5.2

Direct Service Staff Training

Agency's direct service staff training builds competency around domestic violence against people with disabilities and Deaf people by addressing topics that are particularly relevant to serving these survivors, including content on:

- Power and control tactics perpetrators use against people with disabilities and Deaf people.
- Supporting survivors of domestic violence who have psychiatric disabilities.
- Safety planning for survivors with disabilities.
- The potential negative consequences domestic violence survivors with disabilities experience when reaching out for assistance.

Why This Indicator Matters

The knowledge and skills possessed by people who work at residential domestic violence programs have a direct bearing on their ability to meet the diverse needs of the people they serve. Serving people with disabilities and Deaf people requires specialized knowledge on a wide range of topics, from the basics of disabilities and Deaf culture to the unique power and control tactics employed by perpetrators, the specific needs of survivors with mental health

disabilities, the considerations for safety planning when working with survivors with disabilities, and other important skill sets necessary for serving survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors. Residential domestic violence programs can help to build their staff members' knowledge base by offering specialized training on an ongoing basis. Providing such training is an excellent opportunity for residential domestic violence programs to partner with disability and Deaf organizations and self-advocacy groups, as their staff and volunteers can help design the curriculum and can serve as co-trainers.

5.3

Practical Learning Opportunities

Agency provides its staff and volunteers with the following learning opportunities:

- Arranging for its staff to tour a local disability or Deaf organization.
- Role-plays and other interactive exercises to practice serving survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors.
- Presentations from domestic violence survivors with disabilities or Deaf survivors.
- Assistive technology demonstration.

Why This Indicator Matters

In addition to formal training opportunities, there are a number of learning opportunities residential domestic violence programs can offer to its staff and volunteers to increase their comfort and confidence around serving survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors. Having staff members tour local disability and Deaf organizations builds their awareness of the services those organizations provide and fosters relationship building among staff of both organizations. Interactive exercises afford staff and volunteers with opportunities to practice their skills before they start supporting these survivors. Having presentations from survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors provides staff and volunteers with opportunities to interact with survivors and learn about their unique experiences and needs. Assistive technology demonstrations can help staff and volunteers

learn about common equipment and software designed to assist people with disabilities in performing various tasks and how they can be used to achieve full participation within the organization.

5.4

Volunteer Recruitment and Training

Agency builds capacity of its volunteers to support survivors of domestic violence with disabilities by:

- Specifically recruiting people with disabilities to serve as volunteers.
- Specifically recruiting Deaf individuals to serve as volunteers.
- Including a module on working with survivors with disabilities in its volunteer training.
- Including module on working with Deaf survivors in its volunteer training.

Why This Indicator Matters

Many residential domestic violence programs rely on volunteers to assist their staff to deliver services and supports to the communities they serve. Volunteers may serve as hotline/crisis counselors, provide hospital accompaniment, and conduct outreach and community education. The composition, knowledge, and skill sets of an organization's volunteers contribute to its ability to effectively serve people with disabilities and Deaf people. Residential domestic violence programs can help to build this capacity within their volunteers by deliberately recruiting people with disabilities and Deaf people and integrating content specific to serving these communities into their established volunteer training.

6. Programmatic Resources and Activities

Being able to meet the needs of people with disabilities and Deaf people through the variety of programming offered is a critical component of an agency's capacity to serve survivors with disabilities. There are many indications of this capacity within residential

domestic violence programs, from where and how it conducts its outreach to the resources available to help survivors with disabilities navigate the civil legal system to equipping its playground with accessible features. The following indicators will help residential domestic violence programs measure the extent to which their programmatic resources and activities account for the unique needs of people with disabilities and Deaf people.

6.1

Community Outreach and Education

Agency's outreach and education to increase awareness of domestic violence integrates disability by:

- Conducting annual outreach activities to organizations that serve people with disabilities and Deaf people.
- Including a module or integrating information on people with disabilities in their healthy relationships programming.
- Spotlighting abuse of people with disabilities during domestic violence awareness month by using one of the following strategies: 1) featuring a speaker with a disability; 2) including a person in a wheelchair in the silent witness exhibit; 3) writing a fundraising appeal that includes statistics on domestic violence against people with disabilities.
- Offering teen dating violence education programming to special education classes at local area high schools.

Why This Indicator Matters

A critical service offered by residential domestic violence programs is educating the communities they serve about the problem and scope of domestic violence. Residential domestic violence programs use a variety of approaches to educate the community, from offering prevention programs in schools to providing information to the public at community resource fairs. The information they share is invaluable to people who experience domestic violence, as it can help them understand what happened to them and where to go for support. Some residential domestic violence programs have expanded where they conduct community education and outreach

to places where people with disabilities and Deaf people congregate, such as special education classrooms, schools for the Deaf, and self-advocacy groups. They have also incorporated content into their curricula and awareness-raising events that is relevant to the experiences of people with disabilities and Deaf people. These approaches increase residential domestic violence programs' capacity to reach people with disabilities and Deaf people, and subsequently, link them to needed services.

6.2

Case Management

Agency's advocates have up-to-date information on services to support survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors, including a(n):

- Information sheets on how to access SSI/SSDI benefits.¹⁰
- Affordable housing list that notes accessibility of housing for people with disabilities.
- Lists of employment training opportunities welcoming to people with disabilities.
- Lists of childcare options that specialize in caring for children with disabilities and Deaf children.

Why This Indicator Matters

Survivors of domestic violence living in emergency or transitional shelters have often had to leave their lives behind to gain safety. Residential domestic violence programs work with survivors to rebuild their lives, often from the ground up. To support this work, residential domestic violence programs provide their staff and volunteers with information on external resources that survivors can rely on for employment opportunities, financial assistance, and long-term housing. Integrating information and resources that respond to the needs of people with disabilities and Deaf people on these lists is indicative of a high capacity to serve these communities.

6.3

Legal Advocacy

Agency's advocates can navigate legal concerns specific to survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors, including:

- Strategies to support a parent with a disability through a child custody process.
- A tip sheet for staff on how to advocate within the criminal justice system for improved accessibility for survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors.
- Guidelines for staff on how to safeguard the mental health records of the people they serve.
- A tip sheet for supporting survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors in identifying appropriate civil protections.

Why This Indicator Matters

Seeking protection through the civil legal and criminal justice systems is an important option for survivors of domestic violence. Survivors rely on the civil legal system for civil protection orders, temporary and permanent custody decisions, and divorce decrees. Survivors rely on the criminal justice system to respond during a dangerous situation and ultimately hold their abusers accountable. Residential domestic violence programs, in recognition of the important roles these systems play and the difficulty a layperson faces in navigating them, offer residents in their shelters legal advocacy services. Legal advocates guide survivors through the complexities of the legal system and are resourced with information, training, and guidelines to effectively support survivors. Meeting the needs of survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors who are involved with the legal system requires legal advocates to have specialized knowledge and skills. Residential domestic violence programs can help their staff members expand their capacity in this area by making concrete and practical resources available.

6.4

Child Advocacy

Agency's child advocacy program is equipped to meet the needs of children with disabilities by:

- Having the parenting class's curriculum include specific topics and needs relating to parents and children with disabilities.
- Having a playground or play area that is accessible to children with disabilities.
- Having an activity or exercise that is accessible and inclusive to children with disabilities.
- Having children's books depicting characters with disabilities.

Why This Indicator Matters

Many survivors of domestic violence enter shelters with their young children, many of whom have either witnessed the abuse or have experienced abuse themselves. Residential domestic violence programs work to provide resources to the non-abusive parent through parenting classes, counseling, and support groups. Additionally, residential domestic violence programs work to create spaces within the shelter for children to play and learn, such as playground areas, libraries, and support groups. Residential domestic violence programs can take a number of steps to ensure that parents and children with disabilities can benefit from these services, such as integrating experiences of parents and children with disabilities into the parenting class curriculum, equipping the playground with accessible features, and ensuring that children with disabilities are reflected in the books in the program's library.

6.5

Crisis Intervention

Agency's crisis intervention services account for disabilities by:

- Including examples of abuse tactics against people with disabilities in the agency's "power and control wheel."

- Having a handout for survivors with disabilities who have acquired a disability as a result of the abuse.
- Having a guide for advocates on safety planning with survivors with disabilities.
- Having a protocol for confirming the identity of survivors using text, TTY, or relay-based hotline communication.¹¹

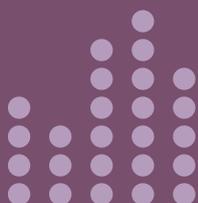
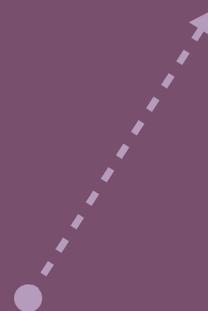
Why This Indicator Matters

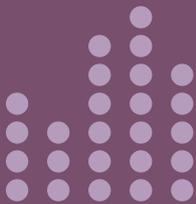
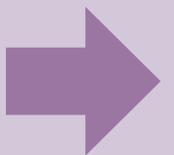
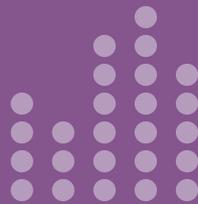
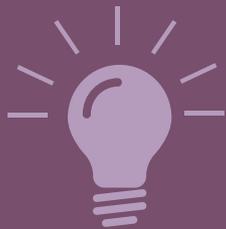
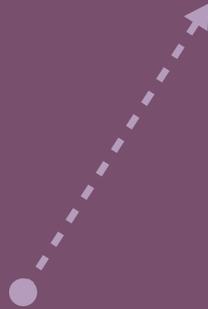
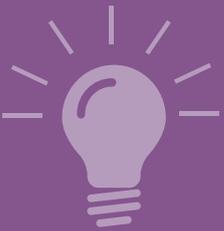
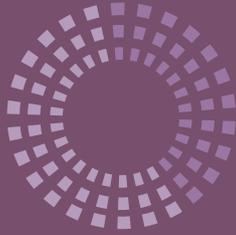
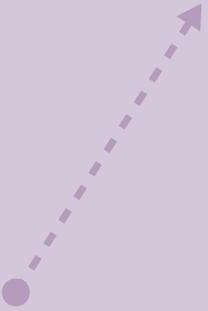
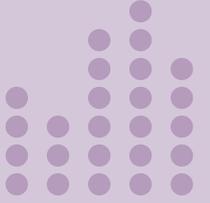
Crisis intervention is a core service of residential domestic violence programs. Domestic violence programs work hard to ensure that their advocates—staff and volunteers—can respond to the wide variety of circumstances that present when survivors reach out for help. For survivors with disabilities, this can include anything from experiencing power and control tactics unique to their disability to dealing with the aftermath of acquiring a disability from the abuse. These instances are often challenging for advocates to navigate without resources to guide them. For example, one of the most common resources used in a residential domestic violence program is a “power and control wheel” intended to help the survivor recognize the various abuse tactics. However, these wheels were designed around the experiences of women without disabilities and often do not reflect the unique tactics experienced by survivors with disabilities. Adapting power and control wheels—and other resources—to reflect the abuse tactics survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors experience is essential to serving these communities.

Notes

Section III

Using the Indicators in Your Organization





Section III. Using the Indicators in Your Organization



Once you are ready to use the performance indicators within an agency, follow the steps below to successfully collect data, score the indicators, interpret your scores, and use the results to increase your capacity to serve survivors with disabilities. If you have not already done so, familiarize yourself with the performance indicators and the process discussed in sections I and II before proceeding.

Step 1

Build a Culture of Indicator Appreciation

Before your agency begins the process of using the indicators, it will be helpful to build a culture of indicator appreciation throughout your agency. You should discuss the performance indicator system with your staff, why your agency is using it, and its benefits, such as developing strategic plans, documenting progress, and celebrating successes around effectively serving survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors (see box on page 10 for more benefits). In addition, it is important to communicate to staff that the indicators are not meant to be a comprehensive assessment of the agency's services, nor are they an audit of employees' individual performances. Openly communicating these points to your staff will maximize the utility of the indicator system within your agency, allowing you to use the scores in a wide variety of ways, such as grant applications, fundraising appeals, and annual reports.

Step 2

Notify Your Agency's Staff

Once you have set a date to begin using the performance indicator measurement system, notify your agency staff about the timeline, thus alerting them to the possibility that they may be asked to assist in the process and communicating to them that this process is an agency priority.

Step 3

Assemble an Indicators Team

The next step is to create an indicators team that will gather information and score the indicators. Depending upon the size of your agency, the team may consist of multiple staff members or just one staff member and your project director. Select team members who are best suited for collecting the various pieces of information listed in the Information Collection Guide. Choose staff members who have a strong working knowledge of agency policies and procedures, agency programming and operations, or outreach activities. Once you have selected your team, meet to determine everyone's roles and responsibilities in the process. Members of the team within the agency will work together to collect the relevant information (listed in the Information Collection Guide) and then meet to score the indicators (using the Indicator Scoring Tool).

Step 4

Collect the Information

Once you have established your indicators team, the next step is collecting the three types of information needed to score the indicators: agency documents, agency observations, and staff knowledge. To gather this information, use the Information Collection Guide, located on page 77. The guide is divided into three sections—a **document checklist**, an **observation guide**, and **staff interview questions**—that instruct you on what information to collect and how to collect it. Review the Information Collection Guide with your indicators team and assign collection tasks based on the following information sources:

1. The **document checklist** section requires indicators team members to compile various agency documents (such as intake forms, policies, procedures, and resource sheets) that they will review together. Pull the relevant documents (either digital or hard copies) and house them in a central location so they are easily accessible during the scoring portion of the process. You can check off each document you have collected as you go.

- The **observation guide** focuses on details of the agency that are not captured in agency documents and instead must be directly observed. It leads agency staff through a series of observations of the agency's physical environment and asks Yes/No questions based on these observations related to safety and accessibility. The team member(s) responsible for collecting this information will record answers in the space provided on the sheet.
- Finally, the **staff interview questions** are Yes/No questions designed to obtain information about the agency from various agency employees. The questions are grouped by theme and should be answered by the staff member most knowledgeable in each area. The team member(s) responsible for collecting this information will record answers in the space provided on the sheet.

Information Collection Guide for Residential Domestic Violence Programs

Document Checklist

Some of the information you will need to measure your agency's capacity to serve survivors of domestic violence with disabilities comes from pre-existing agency documents. Gather the documents listed below, and then consult them in order to answer the questions in the *Indicator Scoring Tool*.

- Client Documents**
 - Intake forms/packet
 - Service animals
 - Resident handbook
 - Medications
 - Legal advocacy resources
 - Outreach brochure/social media pages
- Curricula**
 - Direct services staff training
 - Volunteer training
 - Healthy relationships training
 - Parenting class curriculum
- Interagency Agreements**
 - Written agreement with ASL interpreters or interpreting agency
 - MOU with disability organization
 - Contract or other written agreement with Deaf agency or advocate
- Accessible transportation list**
- Accessible transportation map**
- Accessible car/van services list**
- Agency's power and control wheel**
- Survivor handout**
- Other**
 - Access review tool
 - Access review team roster
 - Access review team meeting minutes
- Staff Resources**
 - Hotline protocol
 - Counselor/advocate resources
- Programmatic Resources**
 - Case management resource sheets
- Policies**
 - Client accommodations
 - Full participation
 - Medications
 - Staff accommodations
 - Client non-discrimination
 - Eligibility

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Document Checklist

Information Collection Guide for Residential Domestic Violence Programs

Observation Guide

Some of the data you will need to measure your agency's capacity to serve survivors of domestic violence with disabilities comes from observations you will make of your agency's physical infrastructure. More specifically, you will need to assess the accessibility of your agency's main entrance(s), advocate office(s), bathrooms, and fire alarms. This guide provides you with step-by-step instructions for conducting an access review of these spaces and recording your findings, which you will enter into the *Indicator Scoring Tool* once you have completed the assessments. In addition to this guide, you will need a tape measure to complete the access observations.

Approach and Entrance

To complete this section, you will need to review your parking lot, access paths, and building entrance and answer the following questions.

	Location 1	Location 2	Location 3
1. Is at least one space in your parking lot van accessible? (8 feet wide with a minimum 8-foot-wide access aisle and 98 inches of vertical clearance)?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
2. Is the route of travel from the parking lot to the main entrance at least 36 inches wide?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
3. Is the doorway a minimum of 32 inches wide when open?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No

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Observation Guide

Information Collection Guide for Residential Domestic Violence Programs

Staff Interview Questions

Some of the information you will need to measure your agency's capacity to serve survivors of domestic violence with disabilities comes from agency staff members who have specific knowledge of agency operations. You will need to ask staff members who are knowledgeable about your agency's accessibility, information-keeping, partnerships, hiring, and outreach the questions listed below. Each question should be answered with a Yes or No, and once you have recorded answers for all of the questions, you will enter these answers into the *Indicator Scoring Tool*.

Agency Accessibility

Find the staff person who is most likely to have the information pertaining to agency accessibility.

That person is: _____

Yes No

1. Does our agency have an internal committee or work group focused on enhancing the agency's response to sexual violence against people with disabilities and Deaf people?

Yes No

2. Does our agency have a scheduled week each year dedicated to conducting an accessibility review?

Yes No

3. Do we have an in-house videophone that can be use by residents and staff?

Yes No

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Staff Interview Questions

***Tip:** Record the person's name and position on the answer sheet, and store this information with the documents, so that you do not need to re-identify agency experts in future rounds of information collection.

Step 5

Score Your Agency

Once all of the information is collected and entered into the Indicator Scoring Tool—a Microsoft Excel file—compare those data to the performance indicators to determine your agency’s overall score. The scoring sheet calculates your agency’s scores automatically. Use the gathered documents and information to answer the Yes/No questions found in the scoring tool. The scoring tool has six tabs along the bottom—Document Checklist, Observation Guide, Staff Interview Guide, Scores at a Glance, Component A Commitment Progress, and Component B Capacity Progress. Follow the instructions below to score the performance indicators.

Document Checklist

Scores at a Glance

Observation Guide

Component A Commitment Progress

Staff Interview Guide

Component B Capacity Progress

Note: To score the indicators, you will need access to a computer, all of the documents listed in the document checklist, and answers to the agency observation and staff interview questions.

- Open the Indicator Scoring Sheet and save it to your desktop.
- Beginning with the first tab, “Document Checklist,” use the designated document listed in the first column to answer the Yes/No questions listed in the “Questions to Answer” column. Check the box next to the question if your answer is yes. **Please note: you must actually pull the document and review it to determine the answer. Do not answer these questions simply from memory.**
- If the answer to the question is “Yes”, you will receive a point for that measurement. The tool will automatically calculate your scores as you answer the questions.

- Move to the next tab, “Observation Guide”, and enter your answers from the observations you conducted, found in the information collection guide.
- Move to the next tab, “Staff Interview Guide”, and enter your answers from the information you collected from various staff members.
- Review your scores, which are the percentage of indicator measures your agency has met. You can view the completed measurements for each individual indicator in the “Component A Commitment” and “Component B Capacity” tabs. You can view the themes, component, and overall agency scores in the “Scores at a Glance” tab. Use these to identify areas of strength and areas of need.
- Once you have completed answering the questions in these three tabs, save the Excel file as “YOUR AGENCY NAME_Month_Year.”

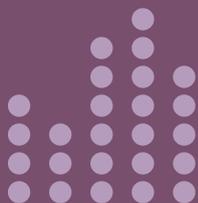
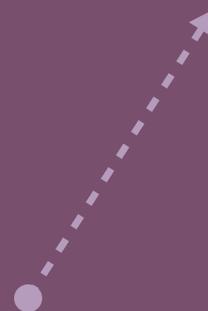
Step 6

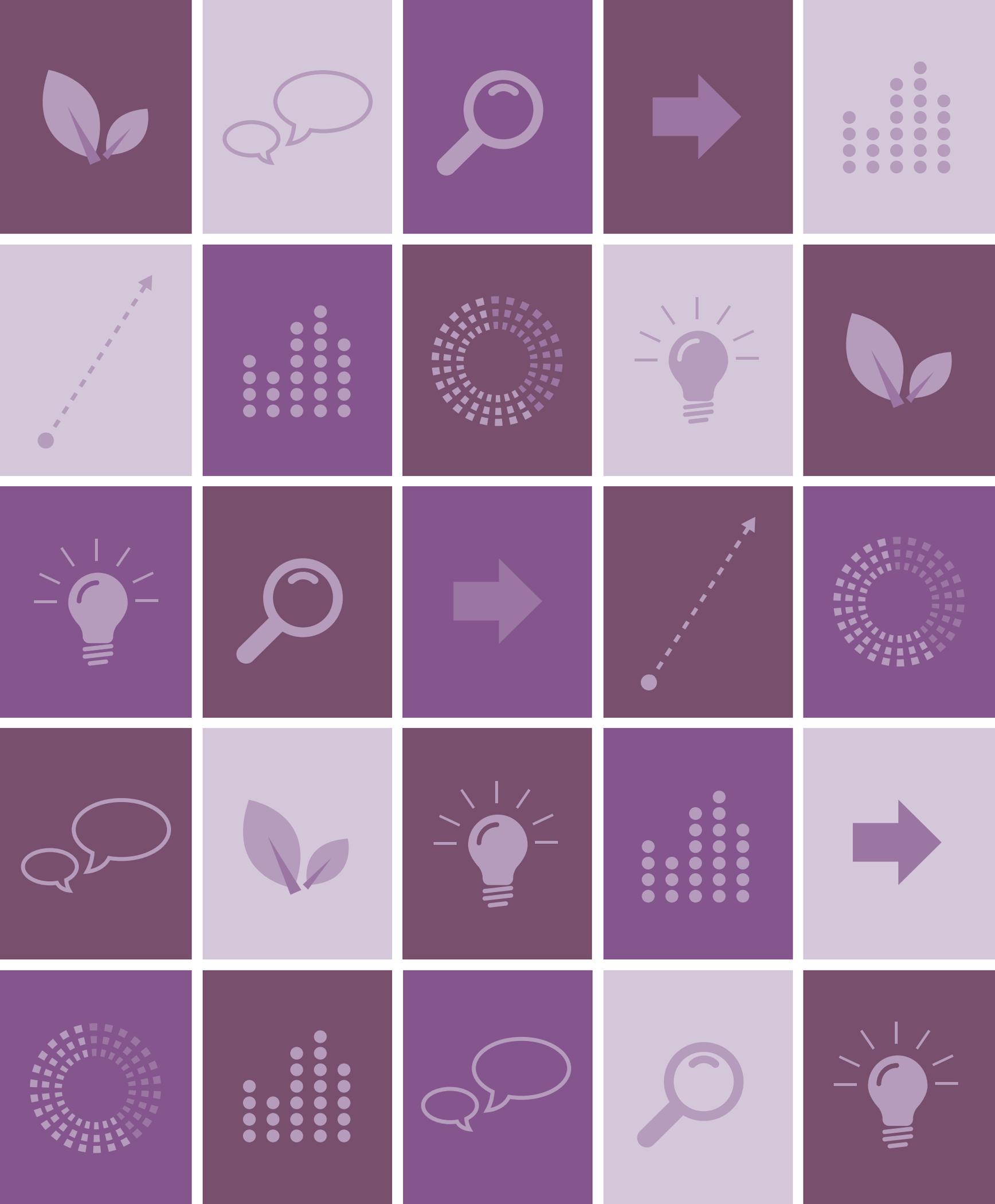
Interpret the Results

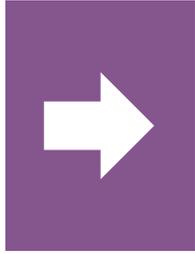
After you have completed the Indicator Scoring Sheet, you can view your results in Tabs 4 through 6. Tab 4—“Scores at a Glance”—contains your agency’s scores. Scores are determined as the percentage of measurements complete within each theme, component, and overall. Tabs 5 and 6—“Component A Commitment Progress” and “Component B Capacity Progress”—have the indicators and measures listed. Those which your agency has met are marked as “Achieved,” and those which your agency has yet to meet are marked as “Not Achieved.” These tabs are useful for agency planning and in deciding where to focus short and long-term efforts to increase levels of service to survivors with disabilities or Deaf survivors. You can share the results with the indicators team and the agency as a whole. To learn more about enhancing levels of service, agencies can visit www.endabusepwd.org.

As you collect this information periodically over time, you will also be able to track areas of progress, regress, and lack of change. The most important thing to remember when looking at your agency's results is not to get discouraged if your scores are low. The indicators do not capture all of the work that your agency has done at the intersection of violence and disability. It is okay to begin with a low score; changes take time. What matters is that your agency demonstrates an improvement in scores over time.

Appendices







Performance Indicators for Residential Domestic Violence Agencies

Component A

Commitment

Agency demonstrates willingness and determination to address domestic violence against people with disabilities and Deaf people.

Theme 1: Responsibility

Agency recognizes duty to serve survivors of domestic violence with disabilities and Deaf survivors.

Indicator

Definition

1.1

Recognizes Violence Against People with Disabilities as a Priority

Agency recognizes violence against people with disabilities and Deaf individuals as a priority by:

- A. Specifically mentioning people with disabilities and Deaf people in agency’s public outreach brochure or social media accounts
- B. Including efforts to increase agency’s accessibility for people with disabilities and Deaf people in agency’s strategic plan
- C. Having an internal committee or work group focused on enhancing the agency’s response to domestic violence against people with disabilities and Deaf people

Commitment / Responsibility

Indicator

Definition

- D. Having a client non-discrimination policy that explicitly includes disability status

1.2

Promotes Accessibility

Agency has infrastructure to routinely assess its accessibility to people with disabilities, including:

- A. A trained review team of internal staff and external experts in accessibility for people with disabilities and Deaf individuals
- B. A standardized review process and tool
- C. A scheduled week each year dedicated to conducting the review
- D. A process to review findings with staff and external experts to develop possible solutions to identified issues

1.3

Raises Funds

The agency seeks funding to address violence against people with disabilities in the following ways:

- A. Agency has a written fundraising plan to raise funds to better support survivors with disabilities, including making physical modifications to the building, providing accommodations to individuals, etc.
- B. Agency has submitted at least one proposal in partnership with a disability or Deaf organization
- C. Agency has raised the issue of serving survivors with disabilities to its VOCA and VAWA state administrators

Commitment / Responsibility

Indicator

Definition

- D. Agency has created a fundraising appeal letter that seeks funding to address this issue from individual/private donors

1.4

Includes in Budget

The agency's direct services programming budget includes separate line items dedicated to addressing accessibility needs of survivors served, including funds to:

- A. Provide auxiliary aids and accommodations to people with disabilities when requested
- B. Hire consultants to create agency materials in plain language
- C. Make physical modifications to the shelter
- D. Hire interpreters for people who are Deaf

1.5

Collects Data

Agency collects the following information, in either paper or electronic form:

- A. Number of people receiving shelter who identify as having a disability
- B. Disability types
- C. Perpetrator's relationship to survivor
- D. Types of auxiliary aids provided to survivors with disabilities

Indicator

Definition

1.6

Uses Data

Agency adjusts its programmatic priorities to better meet the needs of survivors with disabilities based on an analysis of the following data:

- A.** National trends on victimization of people with disabilities, using data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)
- B.** Jurisdictional needs, including the number of people with disabilities that live in the community, their disability type(s), and their expressed service needs
- C.** Agency trends, including number of people with disabilities served, type(s) of disability, and their level of satisfaction with services
- D.** Gaps between victimization and service utilization rates among people with disabilities

Theme 2: Partnerships

Agency works closely with relevant organizations to enhance its ability to meet the needs of survivors of domestic violence who have disabilities and Deaf survivors.

Indicator

Definition

2.1

Collaborates with Disability Organization

Agency has a Memorandum of Understanding, collaboration charter, or equivalent agreement with at least one disability organization that serves people living in the agency's service area that:

- A.** Is current and signed by agency leaders
- B.** Commits the agency to provide consultation and other assistance to the disability organization as needed
- C.** Dedicates staff time to participate in cross-agency meetings
- D.** Commits the agencies represented in the MOU to provide training at one another's new employee/volunteer orientations

2.2

Builds Relationships with the Deaf Community

Agency cultivates relationships with the Deaf community by:

- A.** Having a written engagement plan to develop ongoing relationships with Deaf organizations and groups within their local area

Indicator

Definition

- B.** Budgeting money for ASL interpreters' services during planning meetings for domestic violence awareness month (October)
- C.** Having an established relationship, documented in writing (i.e., a contract or other written agreement), with an expert(s) on domestic violence within the Deaf community
- D.** Having an established written agreement with a Deaf domestic violence advocate or organization that outlines how each organization can work together to best support a survivor

2.3

Collaborates with Interpreter Agency

Agency has a written agreement with an ASL interpreter agency or two freelance interpreters that includes:

- A.** A requirement that interpreters sent to the agency have received training on interpreter safety and self-care
- B.** A requirement to disclose conflicts of interests (including previous or existing relationships with the perpetrator[s], if known)
- C.** A commitment to provide interpretation services outside of business hours
- D.** A commitment for individual interpreters to sign confidentiality agreements when performing services

Indicator

Definition

2.4

Includes People with Disabilities

Agency encourages the inclusion of people with disabilities in the following ways:

- A. By inviting people with disabilities to train agency staff as lead or co-trainers
- B. By supporting people with disabilities to create and operate educational/empowerment groups (likely to be housed in disability organizations)
- C. By supporting their participation in at least one community effort to address domestic violence per year
- D. By inviting them to inform the policies and practices of the agency

2.5

Participates in Multidisciplinary Collaboration

Agency participates in a community-based multidisciplinary collaboration to end violence against people with disabilities and attends its meetings:

- A. Never
- B. Once a year
- C. Semi-annually
- D. Quarterly
- E. Monthly

Theme 3: Policies

Agency's written policies ensure accessible and inclusive services are provided to survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors.

Indicator

Definition

3.1

Eligibility

Agency has an eligibility policy that states services are available regardless of a person's:

- A. Disability status
- B. Medication usage and needs
- C. Guardianship status (for adults)
- D. Need for auxiliary aids

3.2

Accommodations

Agency has an accommodations policy that outlines its obligations to:

- A. Ask all individuals at intake whether any accommodations are needed to ensure full participation in services
- B. Ask all individuals served about needed accommodations on an ongoing basis
- C. Secure reasonable accommodations upon request within an established timeframe
- D. Assume the cost, if any, of providing accommodations

Commitment / Policies

Indicator

Definition

3.3

Full Participation

Agency's policies promote the full participation of people with disabilities by allowing:

- A.** Flexibility in where staff can meet survivors (e.g., at an off-site, accessible location)
- B.** Flexibility in moving internal programming to accessible locations within the agency's office
- C.** Non-offending personal care attendants to accompany survivors into shelter
- D.** Staff to tailor the length of sessions with individual survivors based on that survivor's needs

3.4

Service Animals

Agency has a service animal policy that:

- A.** Establishes a definition of a service animal
- B.** Allows service animals into their facility
- C.** Addresses concerns emerging from the presence of service animals, including allergies and phobias
- D.** Designates a safe service animal relief area

3.5

Resident Handbook

Agency has a handbook for residents of its shelter that:

- A.** Addresses the use of scents and fragrances in the facility

Indicator

Definition

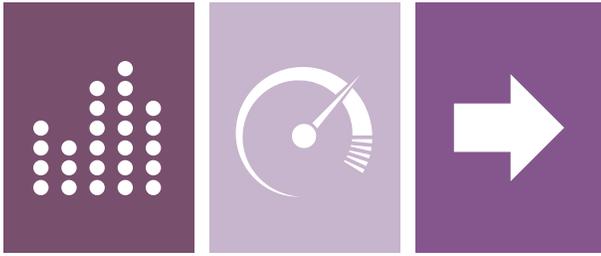
- B.** Clearly explains what, if any, personal care services staff may provide
- C.** Offers flexibility to people with disabilities in maintaining their private living space
- D.** Explicitly names people with disability in its statement about the importance of respecting the diversity of the other residents in a communal living environment

3.6

Medication

Agency has a medication policy for its emergency shelter that:

- A.** Ensures the provision of individual, accessible personal lockboxes for all residents
- B.** Ensures the provision of locked refrigerator space for medication
- C.** Prohibits staff/volunteers from collecting and/or dispensing medication
- D.** Requires resident to sign a waiver in order for staff to hold a key to resident's personal lockbox



Performance Indicators for Residential Domestic Violence Agencies

Component B

Capacity

Agency has knowledge, skills, resources, and programmatic ability necessary to provide domestic violence services to survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors.

Theme 4: Material Resources

Agency's physical infrastructure is accessible to survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors.

Indicator

Definition

4.1

Accessible Modes of Communication

Agency provides a variety of accessible methods of communication, including:

- A. A website that meets WCAG 2.0 AA/AAA standards
- B. An in-house videophone that can be used by residents and staff
- C. A telephone accessible for people who have low vision
- D. A dedicated line for receiving text messages from survivors

Capacity / Material Resources

Indicator

Definition

4.2

Accessible Location

All of the agency's offices where services are provided meet the minimum standards of access set by the ADA, including:

- A. Bathrooms
- B. Approach and entrance
- C. Fire alarm system
- D. Resident sleeping rooms

4.3

Alternate Formats

Agency's client intake packet is available in the following alternate formats:

- A. Large font (14 point or greater)
- B. Braille (upon request)
- C. Video with captioning or American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation
- D. Plain language

4.4

Inclusive Materials

Agency's public outreach brochure is inclusive of disability and Deaf people by:

- A. Including disability access symbols
- B. Using people-first language
- C. Recognizing the cultural identity of Deaf people by referring to them as a separate group

Capacity / Material Resources

Indicator

Definition

- D. Including examples of abuse tactics that perpetrators use against people with disabilities and Deaf people

4.5

Accessible Transportation

Agency promotes accessible transportation options by:

- A. Having an annually-updated resource sheet on paratransit providers and contact information
- B. Having an annually-updated map of the paratransit route
- C. Having an annually-updated contact list of accessible private car services or vans
- D. Selecting an accessible taxi company or advocating for more accessible vehicles with local taxi providers

Theme 5: Human Resources

Agency's employment and staff development practices build staff capacity to address domestic violence against people with disabilities and Deaf people.

Indicator

Definition

5.1

Inclusive Hiring Practices

Agency recruitment, hiring, and retention practices include:

- A.** Job announcements that delineate essential and non-essential responsibilities
- B.** Job announcements that explicitly encourage people with disabilities to apply
- C.** Posting job announcements on disability-centered job boards
- D.** Policy and procedures for providing staff with reasonable accommodations

5.2

Direct Service Staff Training

Agency's direct service staff training builds competency around domestic violence against people with disabilities and Deaf people by addressing topics that are particularly relevant to serving these survivors, including content on:

- A.** Power and control tactics perpetrators use against people with disabilities and Deaf people
 - B.** Supporting survivors of domestic violence who have psychiatric disabilities
-

Indicator

Definition

- C. Safety planning for survivors with disabilities
- D. The potential negative consequences domestic violence survivors with disabilities experience when reaching out for assistance

5.3

Practical Learning Opportunities

Agency provides its staff and volunteers with the following learning opportunities:

- A. Arranging for its staff to tour a local disability or Deaf organization
- B. Role-plays and other interactive exercises to practice serving survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors
- C. Presentations from domestic violence survivors with disabilities or Deaf survivors
- D. Assistive technology demonstrations

5.4

Volunteer Training

Agency builds capacity of its volunteers to support survivors of domestic violence with disabilities by:

- A. Specifically recruiting people with disabilities to serve as volunteers
- B. Specifically recruiting Deaf individuals to serve as volunteers
- C. Including module on working with survivors with disabilities in volunteer training
- D. Including module on working with Deaf survivors in its volunteer training

Theme 6: Programmatic Resources and Activities

Agency's programmatic resources and activities account for the unique needs of people with disabilities and Deaf people.

Indicator

Definition

6.1

Community Outreach & Education

Agency's outreach and education to increase awareness of domestic violence integrates disability by:

- A.** Conducting annual outreach activities to organizations that serve people with disabilities and Deaf people.
- B.** Including a module or integrating information on people with disabilities in their healthy relationships programming
- C.** Spotlighting abuse of people with disabilities during domestic violence awareness month activities by using one of the following strategies: 1) featuring a speaker with a disability; 2) including a person in a wheelchair in the silent witness exhibit; 3) writing a fundraising appeal that includes statistics on domestic violence against people with disabilities
- D.** Offering teen dating violence education programming to special education classes at local area high schools

Indicator

Definition

6.2

Case Management

Agency's advocates have up-to-date information on services to support survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors, including a(n):

- A. Information sheet on how to access SSI/SSDI benefits
- B. Affordable housing list that notes accessibility of housing for people with disabilities
- C. Lists of employment training opportunities welcoming to people with disabilities
- D. Lists of childcare options that specialize in caring for children with disabilities and Deaf children

6.3

Legal Advocacy

Agency's advocates can navigate legal concerns specific to survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors, including:

- A. Strategies to support a parent with a disability through a child custody process
- B. A tip sheet for staff on how to advocate within the criminal justice system for improved accessibility for survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors
- C. Guidelines for staff on how to safeguard the mental health records of the people they serve
- D. A tip sheet for supporting survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors in identifying appropriate civil protections

Indicator

Definition

6.4

Child Advocacy

Agency's child advocacy program is equipped to meet the needs of children with disabilities by:

- A.** Having the parenting class's curriculum include specific topics and needs relating to parents and children with disabilities
- B.** Having a playground or play area that is accessible to children with disabilities
- C.** Having an activity or exercise that is accessible and inclusive to children with disabilities
- D.** Having children's books depicting characters with disabilities

6.5

Crisis Intervention

Agency's crisis intervention services account for disabilities by:

- A.** Including examples of abuse tactics against people with disabilities in the agency's "power and control wheel"
- B.** Having a handout for survivors with disabilities who have acquired a disability as a result of the abuse
- C.** Having a guide for advocates on safety planning with survivors with disabilities
- D.** Having a protocol for confirming the identity of survivors using text, TTY, or relay-based hotline communication



Information Collection Guide for Residential Domestic Violence Programs

Document Checklist

Some of the information you will need to measure your agency's capacity to serve survivors of domestic violence with disabilities comes from pre-existing agency documents. Gather the documents listed below, and then consult them in order to answer the questions in the *Indicator Scoring Tool*.

Client Documents

- Intake forms/packet

Curricula

- Direct services staff training
- Volunteer training
- Healthy relationships training
- Parenting class curriculum

Policies

- Client accommodations
- Full participation
- Medications
- Staff accommodations
- Client non-discrimination
- Eligibility

- Service animals
- Resident handbook
- Medications

Interagency Agreements

- Written agreement with ASL interpreters or interpreting agency
- MOU with disability organization
- Contract or other written agreement with Deaf agency or advocate

Staff Resources

- Hotline protocol
- Counselor/advocate resources

Programmatic Resources

- Case management resource sheets

- Legal advocacy resources
- Outreach brochure and/or social media accounts

- Accessible transportation list
- Accessible transportation map
- Accessible car/van services list
- Agency's power and control wheel
- Survivor handout

Other

- Access review tool
- Access review team roster
- Access review team meeting minutes

Document Checklist

- Agency strategic plan (current)
 - Agency fundraising plan (current)
 - Annual statistical report
 - Fundraising appeal letters
 - Grant proposal submitted in partnership with disability/Deaf organization
 - Job announcements/postings
 - Redacted budget
 - Volunteer recruitment postings/flyers
 - Roster of trainers/co-trainers
 - Written engagement plan
-



Information Collection Guide for Residential Domestic Violence Programs

Observation Guide

Some of the data you will need to measure your agency's capacity to serve survivors of domestic violence with disabilities comes from observations you will make of your agency's physical infrastructure. More specifically, you will need to assess the accessibility of your agency's main entrance(s), advocate office(s), bathrooms, and fire alarms. This guide provides you with step-by-step instructions for conducting an access review of these spaces and recording your findings, which you will enter into the *Indicator Scoring Tool* once you have completed the assessments. In addition to this guide, you will need a tape measure to complete the access observations.

Approach and Entrance

To complete this section, you will need to review your parking lot, access paths, and building entrance and answer the following questions.

	Location 1	Location 2	Location 3
1. Is at least one space in your parking lot van accessible? (8 feet wide with a minimum 8-foot-wide access aisle and 98 inches of vertical clearance)?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Is the route of travel from the parking lot to the main entrance at least 36 inches wide?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Is the doorway a minimum of 32 inches wide when open?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Observation Guide / Approach and Entrance / Office and Rooms

	Location 1	Location 2	Location 3
4. Is an automatic door (switch plate, sensor, or remote control) present?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Did you answer "yes" to questions 1 to 4 for all of your agency's office locations?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		
Record your answer to question 5 in row 5 in the <i>Indicator Scoring Tool</i> (Observation Guide Tab)			

Resident Sleeping Rooms

	Room 1	Room 2	Room 3
6. Is there at least 36 inches of clear maneuvering space on both sides of the bed?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7. Does the bed measure 20 to 23 inches from the floor to the top of the mattress	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
8. Are light switches in the bedroom 15 to 48 inches high and on an unobstructed path?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9. Are fixed or built-in storage (cabinets, shelves, drawers) in the bedroom 15 to 48 inches high and on an unobstructed path?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Observation Guide / Resident Sleeping Rooms / Bathrooms

10. Did you answer “yes” to questions 6 to 9 for **all** of your agency’s office locations? **Yes** **No**

Record your answer to question 10 in row 8 in the *Indicator Scoring Tool*

Bathrooms

Go to each of the bathrooms used by the people you serve in your agency and answer the following questions about the features in each bathroom and/or the accessible stall.

	Bathroom 1	Bathroom 2	Bathroom 3
11. Is the toilet 17 to 19 inches above the floor?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
12. Does the toilet have a horizontal grab bar along the wall behind the toilet that is at least 36 inches long and mounted 33 to 36 inches above the floor?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
13. Are hot water and drain pipes under the sink insulated or protected from contact?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
14. Is the bathroom hardware (faucets, levers, pulls, etc.) easily operable with one hand, without tight grasping, pinching, or twisting of the wrist?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
15. Is there clear floor space where persons who use wheelchairs can turn around using a 60-inch diameter circle or T-turn?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Observation Guide / Bathrooms / Fire Alarm System

	Bathroom 1	Bathroom 2	Bathroom 3
<p>16. Is there is a roll-in shower stall (curb no higher than ½ inch high) with a seat and grab bars at least 18 inches long and mounted 33 to 36 inches above the floor?</p>	<p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>17. Did you answer “yes” to questions 11 to 16 for at least one male and one female bathroom or one gender-neutral bathroom used by the people your agency serves at each of its offices?</p>	<p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>		
<p>Record your answer to question 17 in row 11 in the <i>Indicator Scoring Tool</i></p>			

Fire Alarm System

Identify someone in your agency who is familiar with the fire alarm system(s) at each of your agency’s office locations and answer the following questions about the system at each location.

	Location 1	Location 2	Location 3
<p>18. Does the system have both flashing lights and audible signals?</p>	<p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>19. Is the visual fire alarm (strobe light) linked to a building-wide fire alarm system?</p>	<p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>20. Is the fire alarm box a minimum of 15 inches from the floor but less than 48 inches?</p>	<p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Observation Guide / Fire Alarm System / Website

	Location 1	Location 2	Location 3
21. Is there clear space (minimum 30 inches by minimum 48 inches) adjacent to the control?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
22. Did you answer "yes" to questions 17 to 21 for all of your agency's office locations?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		
Record your answer to question 22 in row 14 in the <i>Indicator Scoring Tool</i>			

Website

To complete this section, you can use free website accessibility tests that you can find online. Use the test to answer the following questions.

23. Does our website have text alternatives for any non-text content so that it can be changed into other forms people need, such as large print, Braille, speech, symbols, or simpler language?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
24. Is the website compatible with current assistive technology?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
25. Does the website have the capability to resize text up to 200 percent without loss of content or functionality?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
26. Are all functions of the website content available from a keyboard?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
27. Did you answer "yes" to questions 22 to 26 for your website?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Record your answer to question 27 in row 17 in the <i>Indicator Scoring Tool</i>	



Information Collection Guide for Residential Domestic Violence Programs

Staff Interview Questions

Some of the information you will need to measure your agency's capacity to serve survivors of domestic violence with disabilities comes from agency staff members who have specific knowledge of agency operations. You will need to ask staff members who are knowledgeable about your agency's accessibility, information-keeping, partnerships, hiring, and outreach the questions listed below. Each question should be answered with a Yes or No, and once you have recorded answers for all of the questions, you will enter these answers into the *Indicator Scoring Tool*.

Agency Accessibility

Find the staff person who is most likely to have the information pertaining to agency accessibility.

That person is:

Yes No

1. Does our agency have an internal committee or work group focused on enhancing the agency's response to domestic violence against people with disabilities and Deaf people?

Yes No

2. Does our agency have a scheduled week each year dedicated to conducting an accessibility review?

Yes No

3. Do we have an in-house videophone that can be used by residents and staff?

Staff Interview Questions / Agency Accessibility / Data/Statistical Reports

Yes No

4. Do we have a dedicated line for receiving text messages from survivors?

Yes No

5. Do we have a telephone accessible for people who have low vision?

Yes No

6. Do we invite people with disabilities to inform the policies and practices of our agency?

Yes No

7. Do we make sure that our preferred taxi company has accessible vehicles in its fleet or advocate for them to do so?

Yes No

8. In the past year, have we raised the issue of serving survivors with disabilities to our VOCA and VAWA state administrators?

Data/Statistical Reports

Find the staff person who is most likely to have the information pertaining to agency data/statistical reports.

That person is:

Yes No

9. Does our agency make data-informed programming decisions by reviewing the Bureau of Justice Statistics to understand national trends on victimization of people with disabilities?

Yes No

10. Does our agency make data-informed programming decisions by reviewing jurisdictional needs, including the number of people with disabilities that live in the community, their disability type(s), and their expressed service needs?

Yes No

11. Does our agency make data-informed programming decisions by reviewing agency trends, including number of people with disabilities served, type(s) of disability, and their level of satisfaction with services?

Yes No

12. Does our agency identify gaps between victimization and service utilization rates among people with disabilities?

Partnerships

Find the staff person who is most likely to have the information pertaining to agency partnerships.

That person is:

Yes No

13. Does our agency participate in a community-based multi-disciplinary collaboration to end violence against people with disabilities and attend its meetings? If yes, how often do we attend meetings?

- a. Never
 - b. Once a year
 - c. Semi-annually
 - d. Quarterly
 - e. Monthly
-

Recruitment and Retention

Find the staff person who is most likely to have the information pertaining to agency activities around recruitment and retention policies and procedures.

That person is:

Yes **No**

14. Do we post job announcements on disability-centered job boards?

Yes **No**

15. Does our agency arrange for its staff to tour a local disability or Deaf organization?

Yes **No**

16. Does our agency provide staff and volunteers the opportunity to practice assisting a survivor with a disability and Deaf survivors through role-plays and other interactive exercises?

Yes **No**

17. Does our agency offer presentations to staff from domestic violence survivors with disabilities or Deaf survivors?

Yes **No**

18. Does our agency offer assistive technology demonstrations to staff?

Community Outreach, Education, and Engagement

Find the staff person who is most likely to have the information pertaining to agency activities around community outreach, education and engagement.

That person is:

Yes **No**

19. Do we support people with disabilities to create and operate educational and/or empowerment groups (likely to be housed in disability organizations)?

Yes **No**

20. Does our agency support people with disabilities to participate in at least one community effort to address domestic violence per year?

Yes **No**

21. Does our agency conduct annual outreach activities to organizations that serve people with disabilities or Deaf people?

Yes **No**

22. Does our agency offer its teen dating violence educational programming to special education classes at local area high schools?

Yes **No**

23. Does our agency spotlight abuse of people with disabilities during domestic violence awareness month activities by using one of the following strategies: 1) featuring a speaker with a disability; 2) including a person in a wheelchair in the silent witness exhibit; or 3) writing a fundraising appeal that includes statistics on domestic violence against people with disabilities?

Children's Programming

Find the staff person who is most likely to have the information pertaining to agency activities around children's programming.

That person is:

Yes **No**

24. Does our agency have a playground or play area that is accessible to children with disabilities?

Yes **No**

25. Does our agency offer children's activities or exercises that are accessible and inclusive to children with disabilities?

Yes **No**

26. Does our agency have children's books depicting characters with disabilities?

Endnotes

1. E. Harrell, "Crimes Against Persons with Disabilities, 2008–2010 - Statistical Tables," *Bureau of Justice Statistics*, last modified February 25, 2014, <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/capd10st.pdf> (accessed June 17, 2015).
2. U.S. Agency for International Development, *Handbook of Democracy and Governance Program Indicators* (Washington, DC: USAID, 1998).
3. ADA: Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990. Public Law 101-336. §12182. 108th Congress, 2nd session (July 26, 1990).
4. ADA: Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990. Public Law 101-336. § 1. 108th Congress, 2nd session (July 26, 1990) § 36.302 Modifications in policies, practices, or procedure.
5. ADA: Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990. Public Law 101-336. § 1. 108th Congress, 2nd session (July 26, 1990) 28 C.F.R. § 36.104 and 28 C.F.R. § 35.104.
6. ADA: Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990. Public Law 101-336. § 1. 108th Congress, 2nd session (July 26, 1990) 28 C.F.R. §§ 35.130(b)(7), 35.136, 35.150(a)(3), 35.164, 36.301(b), 36.302 (c)(1), and 36.303(a).
7. ADA: Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990. Public Law 101-336. § 1. 108th Congress, 2nd session (July 26, 1990) 28 CFR § 36.302(c)(9)(i) and 28 C.F.R. § 35.136(i)(A).
8. World Wide Web Consortium, "How to Meet WCAG 2.0," <http://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG20/quickref/> (accessed June 24, 2015).
9. The US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, "The ADA: Your Responsibilities as an Employer," <http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/ada17.html> (accessed May 11, 2015).

Endnotes

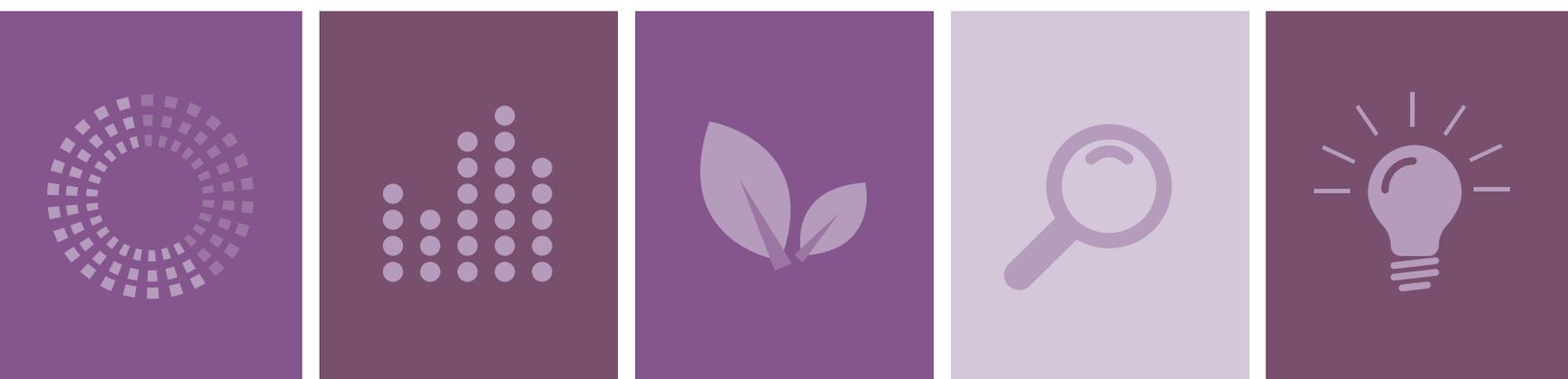
10. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a Federal income supplement program funded by general tax revenues (not Social Security taxes) that is designed to help aged, blind, and disabled people, who have little or no income; and to provide cash to meet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter. <http://www.ssa.gov> (accessed August 4, 2015). Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) pays monthly benefits to workers who are no longer able to work due to a significant illness or impairment that is expected to last at least a year, and benefits are based on the disabled worker's past earnings and are paid to the disabled worker and to his or her dependent family members. <http://www.nasi.org/learn/socialsecurity/disability-insurance> (accessed August 4, 2015).
11. TTY stands for Text Telephone. It is also sometimes called a TDD, or Telecommunication Device for the Deaf. TTY is the more widely accepted term, however, as TTYs are used by many people, not just people who are deaf.

Notes



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An electronic version of this report is posted on Vera's website at www.vera.org/serving-survivors-with-disabilities.





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