



## PSN VICTIM AND WITNESS INTIMIDATION AND RETALIATION TOOLKIT

# COLLABORATION TO COMBAT INTIMIDATION AND RETALIATION

Sustainable, safe communities are supported by organizations and agencies that can collaborate effectively, develop and sustain strong relationships, and work together to solve problems. Continuous collaboration among law enforcement, prosecutors, systems-based advocacy programs, and community-based advocacy programs is the most effective, trauma-informed, and victim-centered way to address victim and witness intimidation and retaliation. Without cohesive collaboration among these professionals and groups, victims and witnesses will remain unprotected.

This guide provides the necessary foundation for establishing collaborative and strategic relationships, as well as best practices for how systems-based advocacy programs, community-based advocacy programs, prosecutors, and law enforcement can work together to better serve victims and witnesses and combat intimidation and retaliation.

*For more information on victim and witness intimidation and retaliation, see the other guides in this toolkit.*

### **FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS TO ESTABLISH COLLABORATIVE AND STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS:**

- Identify all partners that can play a role in victim and witness intimidation and retaliation cases. The opportunity for strategic relationships exists locally and federally. Partners include but are not limited to: law enforcement agencies, family justice centers, child trauma response teams, housing authorities, domestic and sexual violence support services, and homicide survivor groups, jails, local prosecutors' offices, county offices, community shelters, US attorneys' offices, state and federal prisons, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and more.
- Determine the role of each actor. For example, if the local advocacy organization is a critical partner, determine what their role will be when the victim contacts them and what resources they can offer.

### **Training Programs Available from the National Organization for Victim Assistance**

**Trauma-Informed Advocacy Course:** Created in partnership with the Justice Clearinghouse, this self-paced online course discusses the foundational topics of victim advocacy and providing trauma-informed services. Through this online course, participants learn the fundamentals and best practices of trauma-informed advocacy and develop critical skills for being effective victim advocates. From the neurobiology of trauma to ethical practice and self-care, this course teaches participants to better communicate and succeed in this helping profession.

**Child and Family Advocacy Academy:** Offered in partnership with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, this advanced training is targeted to professionals working with child and adolescent victims of crime and their families. It helps participants learn evidence-based best practices, enhance valuable skills, and learn prevention models and systems-based approaches.



## PSN VICTIM AND WITNESS INTIMIDATION AND RETALIATION TOOLKIT

### COLLABORATION TO COMBAT INTIMIDATION AND RETALIATION

#### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS: SYSTEMS-BASED ADVOCACY PROGRAMS**

- Connect victims and witnesses to community-based organizations—regardless of whether they want to work with the criminal justice system. These efforts could include outreach in communities most affected by violence and in neighborhoods with high levels of community intimidation and retaliation.
- Make people aware of the victim service providers in the area, community organizations, and national, state, and local resources for legal, medical, and financial assistance. These resources are particularly helpful if the victim or witness is fearful of a particular individual or group(s) in the community and are afraid to report that information to law enforcement.
- Introduce victims and witnesses to the lead detectives on their cases. Making this introduction early in the process can help build relationships and provide the victim or witness with someone to call when or if their safety may be in danger.
- Communicate with law enforcement agencies or local prosecutors immediately when victims and witnesses bring forth intimidation and retaliation claims. Quick communication requires strong relationships between actors, which are built from strategic collaboration, effective communication, and standardized processes.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS: VICTIMS SERVICES PROFESSIONALS**

- Meet regularly with law enforcement and prosecutorial staff to develop a sustainable and effective relationship. This collaboration could include establishing and participating in a task force that meets regularly to discuss cases (keeping victim and witness confidentiality in mind) and emerging trends within the community.
- Provide quarterly or yearly training to law enforcement and prosecutors on the services available to victims and witnesses of crime.

#### **Victim & Witness Intimidation and Retaliation Referral Templates**

Jurisdictions can develop victim & witness intimidation and retaliation referral information resources using these templates.

#### **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Practitioner Training**

SAMHSA's practitioner training offers tools, training, and technical assistance to practitioners in the fields of mental health and substance use disorders.

#### **Collaboration and Challenges in Antitrafficking Task Forces: Lessons Learned from the Enhanced Collaborative Model Task Forces to Combat Human Trafficking**

This report discusses lessons learned from an evaluation of the federally established Enhanced Collaborative Model (ECM) Task Forces to Combat Human Trafficking. Key recommendations from task force stakeholders to improve collaboration include enhancing organizational and operational factors, strengthening relationships between task force members, and leading more trainings and activities.

#### **Keys to Collaboration Between Hospital- Based Violence Intervention and Cure Violence Programs**

This brief provides guidance to communities that are interested in or are implementing a model of hospital-based violence intervention (HVIP) with a Cure Violence (CV) strategy of violence interruption and street outreach. Both of these program models, which use a health approach, have been evaluated and have demonstrated their effectiveness. Together, these models address primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention, and they link communities and institutions in efforts to end violence. Other major sections of this guide address the benefits of collaboration, models for collaboration, and guidelines for collaboration.



## PSN VICTIM AND WITNESS INTIMIDATION AND RETALIATION TOOLKIT

### COLLABORATION TO COMBAT INTIMIDATION AND RETALIATION

#### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS: PROSECUTORS**

- Refer victims and witnesses to other services, including family grief counseling, shelters, job counseling, alcohol or drug rehabilitation, DV programs, and immigration services.
- Engage victim advocates (either community-based or systems-based) in conversations with victims and witnesses.
- Communicate with law enforcement when instances of intimidation and retaliation have occurred.

#### **Directory of Crime Victim Services by State**

This resource list by the Office for Victims of Crime provides information about victim assistance and victim compensation available by state.

#### **Toll Free, Text, and Online Hotlines for Victims of Crime**

This list compiled by the Office for Victims of Crime addresses multiple ways for victims of crime to contact service providers.



#### **WANT TO LEARN MORE?**

For a more in-depth analysis of how systems, community-based advocacy programs, law enforcement, and prosecutors can collaborate to better protect victims and witnesses from intimidation and retaliation, see NCVC's "[Working Collaboratively to Address Victim and Witness Intimidation and Retaliation](#)" video.



*This project was supported by Grant No. 15PBJA-21-GK-02617-MUMU, awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.*