



OVC Bulletin

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MAKING COLLABORATION WORK: THE EXPERIENCES OF DENVER VICTIM SERVICES 2000

Over the past 20 years, the field of victim services has grown from a small grassroots effort to an emerging profession. The advancement of the rights of victims, once achieved through adversarial struggles and lawsuits, is now accomplished through multidisciplinary efforts and collaborations among former adversaries throughout the country. Today there is greater understanding of victims' issues due to legislation enacted to support victims' rights, increased funding for victim services, and hard work by many victim advocates. Out of these efforts, understanding has grown and collaboration on behalf of victims is unprecedented.

The public's awareness of crime victimization has developed largely due to accounts given by victims and survivors and the hard work and advocacy of the service providers working with them. As the victim services movement has grown, alliances and collaborations among service providers have increased. Out of the interrelationships among certain victimizations—such as sexual

assault, domestic violence, and partner, child, and elder abuse—have grown new agendas for collaboration in advocacy, programming, legislation, and education.

Alliances have developed among criminal justice advocates, community-based agencies, educators, institutions, and other allied professionals. Within the criminal justice system, collaboration has taken hold as well. The public expects the agencies of the criminal justice system to uphold the law and provide protection from crime. When research documented that the public had lost confidence in "the system," parts of the criminal justice system were prompted to find new ways to address problems. Asking whether our reactive, adversarial approach to justice and law enforcement continues to make sense as our only, or even our primary, response to crime, criminal justice offices and professionals reached out to the criminal justice system and beyond to work collaboratively with various agencies to address the safety and well-being of our communities.

Message From THE DIRECTOR

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) funded the Victim Services 2000 (VS2000) project to establish demonstration sites for the development of effective systems of services delivery to crime victims. The project goal was to develop a model that would improve the range and quality of services for crime victims as well as the victims' access to them.

In 1997, Denver, Colorado, was awarded a VS2000 grant and selected as the VS2000 urban demonstration site. This bulletin describes the factors most critical to the success of Denver's efforts. Project participants agreed to be guided by core values, a shared vision and goal, and a commitment to the creative use of collaboration. Other critical factors were diverse, balanced leadership; skilled facilitators; careful maintenance of the collaborative climate; dedication to victim-centered services; and the inclusion of all stakeholders in planning and decisionmaking.

OVC and the VS2000 staff hope that sharing the Denver experiences will help victim service professionals across the country form productive collaborations for better services and assistance to victims of crime.

John W. Gillis
Director

Victim Services 2000 (VS2000) represents all of these forms of collaboration. Funded by a discretionary grant from the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), VS2000 is a demonstration project designed to create a comprehensive, coordinated, seamless system for delivery of services to victims of crime. OVC selected two VS2000 sites for the development and implementation of two comprehensive collaboration models: Denver, Colorado, in 1997, as the urban site and Vermont, in 1998, as the rural site. Both sites were charged with developing a distinct model for seamless delivery of victim services, tailored to their particular geographic, political, and demographic complexities and using the concepts of collaboration and innovation. Once this was accomplished, both VS2000 sites were charged with developing and providing information and technical assistance about their particular VS2000 model of victim services.

One of a series, this bulletin documents VS2000 initiatives in Denver and addresses planning and collaboration, the factors most critical to the success of any interdisciplinary effort. While each VS2000 model is unique, some common themes run through them, including a strong emphasis on creative collaboration and planning.

Defining Collaboration

Defining collaboration is difficult because of ambiguities in practical usage. For example, the word “collaboration” is commonly interchanged with terms such as “networking,” “cooperation,” and “coordination.” To distinguish collaboration from other terms, Chris Huxham, in *Creating Collaborative*

Advantage (1996), provides definitions of these terms:

- Networking is exchanging information for mutual benefit.
- Coordination is exchanging information and altering activities for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose.
- Cooperation is exchanging information, altering activities, and sharing resources for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose.

Huxham distinguishes these terms from collaboration:

Collaboration is the exchange of information, the altering of activities, the sharing of resources, and the enhancement of the capacity of another for the mutual benefit of all and to achieve a common purpose.

Three tables that appear later in this bulletin briefly illustrate how Denver victim service agencies moved from networking to collaboration in three areas that became VS2000 project initiatives: an online Resource Directory, an online Case Management System, and the Community Advocacy Program. The tables note the stage in the collaboration continuum at which the agencies became involved in the VS2000 project.

Application of the Collaborative Model to the Criminal Justice System

The Federal Government has long encouraged and supported a collaborative approach to planning and

decisionmaking in the criminal justice system. In the 1970s, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, a grant-making agency, worked with state and local coordinating and planning councils to establish common goals and funding priorities to meet them. Other projects, such as the National Jail and Prison Overcrowding Project (NJPOP), made similar programming efforts. Jointly funded by the National Institute of Corrections (NIC), a federal agency, and the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, a private organization, NJPOP recognized that unless all parts of the system that contribute to the growth of jail and prison populations participate in decisionmaking about the best use of existing resources, jails and prisons will continue to fill. Such collaboration required tremendous effort by all parts of the system. Each part had to be willing to try to understand the roles and responsibilities of the others, to compromise on issues, and to acknowledge and respect others’ political realities.

In recent years, numerous federal initiatives have continued to work for empowerment of communities by encouraging the use of collaboration by criminal justice policymaking entities, including Comprehensive Communities, Weed and Seed, Community Oriented Policing Services, Violence Against Women Office (VAWO), Safe Kids/Safe Streets, the Office of Justice Program’s Drug Courts Program Office, NIC, and the Office of Justice Programs. Many of these programs represent federal interagency or interbureau collaboration. To ensure that the goals of collaborations are successfully met, philosophical hurdles and entrenched organizational structures must be overcome through training and commitment of resources.

Application of the Collaborative Model to VS2000

VS2000 has been a 5-year experiment in collaboration within the victim services field. It is hoped that the experiences and lessons learned from the VS2000 project will help professionals around the country form new collaborations as they work in the fields of victim assistance and criminal justice.

Building on Existing Collaborations

In 1996, when OVC announced its intention to fund development of model victim service networks in both rural and urban communities, the Denver Victim Assistance and Law Enforcement (VALE) board convened its planning committee, which comprised more than 50 community and criminal justice-based victim service providers and allied professionals. Since Denver's victim service community had a strong history of collaborative projects and partnerships, the creation of a seamless, integrated victim service delivery system such as VS2000 seemed like the logical next step. The goal of Denver's VALE committee was to design the components and structure of a VS2000 model for the city of Denver and strategize their implementation. Historically, Denver's victim service community has had several interdisciplinary task forces and councils to focus on sexual assault, domestic violence, and child abuse. In addition, three statewide coalitions representing domestic violence, sexual assault, and criminal justice programs have been active in Denver. Further, interdisciplinary, victim-centered protocols have been in place in Denver for sexual assault, domestic violence, elder abuse, older and disabled crime victims, and child sexual assault and abuse. In an effort to fill

existing gaps in Denver's services to victims, collaborative planning in 1987 led to the establishment of a centralized victim services center. Victim services in Denver continue to be provided to the entire continuum of crime victims, including services specifically designed for traditionally underserved victims. Many of the agencies work to increase the public's education and awareness about victims' issues. By regularly conducting client satisfaction surveys, agencies determine the best strategies to adopt for refinement and expansion of their services.

Once Denver was selected as a VS2000 site, funding began, and the project was under way. The planning committee became the steering committee, and all of the agencies and programs participated as partners in Denver's VS2000 project. Participants included community and criminal justice-based victim service programs as well as victims, survivors, and allied professionals. Though many of these programs had a history of collaboration on distinct projects and smaller scale initiatives, VS2000 provided the first opportunity for collaboration with participation from the full spectrum of Denver's victim service agencies. With OVC funding for staffing and program innovations, these service providers and allied professionals came together to work toward the following goals:

- The creation of a seamless, comprehensive, coordinated, interdisciplinary system of delivery of services for victims of crime, with special emphasis on services for victims previously underserved or unserved.
- The establishment of a training institute that integrates technology, cross training among victim service providers, and training for allied professionals who work with victims of crime.

- The application of relevant technology to the delivery of services for victims of crime.

The following statement reflects the mission of VS2000 as it has evolved with the project goals in mind.

To work with the community to create a model network of services that offers outreach as well as innovative, specialized, seamless, and integrated services to all victims of crime, strengthening and restoring the fabric of our community.

Leadership and Facilitation

Leadership was the first critical factor in the success of Denver VS2000. Research has demonstrated overwhelmingly that successful collaborations depend on skilled leaders. Historically, few in the criminal justice system have had the training or experience necessary to convene, lead, and facilitate collaborations effectively. Until recently, it was difficult to find skilled collaboration conveners, leaders, and facilitators within the victim services field.

Critical to the success of Denver VS2000 was the fact that the VALE board already had in place the leadership necessary to facilitate this complex collaboration. The VALE board was established in 1984 to fund local crime victim services, using surcharges on criminal cases in Denver's county and district courts. This five-member board awards more than \$1 million each year to approximately 26 community-based victim service programs that serve victims in the city and county of Denver. A similar municipal structure funds the criminal justice-based victim service programs in Denver. With separate funding sources, criminal justice-based victim service programs and community-based victim service programs

do not compete for funding, which eases tension surrounding selection of programs for funding.

The Denver VALE board convened the VS2000 Planning Committee and other necessary stakeholders, supported the development of the project financially, and arranged for the housing and administration of the project by the Denver District Attorney's Office. Perhaps the board's most important contribution was a commitment to facilitate and fund the final programmatic and fiscal recommendations of the VS2000 Steering Committee.

Staff Selection

Staff selection was the second critical factor in the success of Denver VS2000. The planning body of Denver VS2000 realized that successful collaboration requires the time, energy, and talent of a supportive staff. Convening meetings, documenting progress, and acting on agenda items all take dedicated staff time. Recruitment for the VS2000 staff targeted individuals with particular experience and knowledge. They needed experience working with both criminal justice and community-based victim service organizations, and they needed knowledge about planning and collaboration, training, curriculum development, community organizing, technical writing, and program management. A concerted effort was made to hire a culturally diverse team that reflected Denver's demographics, demonstrated VS2000's commitment to cultural competency, and met the needs of all victims of crime.

Using Skilled Facilitators

The use of skilled facilitators at strategic points was the third critical factor in the success of Denver VS2000 collaboration and planning. These strategic points included setting initial goals; developing values and a mission; identifying and

defining the transition points between planning, implementing, providing technical assistance, and overseeing the long-term, operational phase; and planning major meetings and retreats. The collaboration curriculum developed by the Center for Effective Public Policy for the State Justice Institute (*see A Note to Readers*) was also very helpful in framing the issues of collaboration for VS2000 participants. This curriculum would be especially beneficial to beginning collaborative projects.

VS2000 Online Resource Directory

Early in the project, VS2000 participants identified a critical service gap. Appropriate referrals were not being provided to victims since there was no resource database to generate accurate, up-to-date referral information. Providing information to victims about resources is the backbone of victim assistance. Locating, compiling, screening, organizing, and distributing information about resources to victims in a timely manner are some of the most time-consuming tasks for a victim services agency. Too often, by the time an agency has gathered, processed, printed, and distributed information about resources to its clients, it is out of date. In addition, great duplication of effort resulted as each agency individually went through the process of providing information about resources to victims. To replace this approach, Denver victim service providers developed and implemented a collaborative, Internet-based directory of resources available for use by all service providers. All 38 Denver victim services agencies share this Web-based resources directory of more than 800 records, contributing data and accessing information. The administration, maintenance, and updating of directory records for all agencies is performed by an information specialist employed by a VS2000 member agency.

VS2000 Case Management System

In 1997, VS2000 conducted a needs assessment that asked underserved victims how services might be tailored to better meet their needs. Respondents said they wanted service providers to ask them what they needed rather than only tell them what is available. Also, they expressed a desire for services that recognized and addressed the multiple layers of obstacles they often encounter in getting their needs met.

In response to this feedback, VS2000 is developing a Case Management System for victim services providers. This shared system will operate over a secure private network that makes it possible for service providers to assist and track their clients through the network of services to ensure clients are getting the help they need. It also allows service providers to communicate with colleagues about shared clients. In particular, this system allows service providers to assist, follow up on, and support those victims who must navigate multiple agencies. For victims, using this system means they will not have to retell their stories and complete duplicative forms each time they access services at a different agency.

Community Advocacy

The 1997 needs assessment of underserved victims showed that these victims do not trust that the services being provided will meet their needs, even if the services were designed for their particular demographic group. Further, the assessment showed that underserved victims normally will not access services outside their community even when they have knowledge of the services. They want services to be located in their community and they want the services to be provided by individuals who are members of their communities or neighborhoods.

Table 1. VS2000 Online Resource Directory

Networking →	Coordination →	Cooperation →	Collaboration
<p>Victim service agencies referred victims to each other's services. Each agency created, used, and updated its own paper resource directory.</p>	<p>Several agencies began to share their paper resource directories and to use more than one as a reference.</p>	<p>Three agencies pooled their resource data to create a joint resource directory. One agency developed the database and updated information using an automated version. The other two agencies used paper versions of the directory.</p>	<p>Thirty-eight agencies collaborated to design and develop a shared online resource directory of their combined resource data. Each agency inputs current data electronically. An information specialist administers, maintains, and updates records for all member agencies.</p>
			<p>▲ VS2000 enters the process</p>

Table 2. VS2000 Case Management System

Networking →	Coordination →	Cooperation →	Collaboration
<p>Victim service agencies made referrals to each other's services.</p>	<p>Agencies developed, and currently participate in, an Inter-agency Cross-Training Plan to increase knowledge and trust among agencies.</p>	<p>Case managers currently meet monthly for case reviews. Victim service agencies created a standard intake and assessment process and form (an element of the online Case Management System).</p>	<p>Twenty-two agencies will use the online Case Management System to eliminate duplicative intake procedures, better follow up on referrals, and share case records as appropriate.</p>
			<p>▲ VS2000 enters the process</p>

The assessment also showed that the underserved victim wants services provided in his or her language, in a culturally competent manner, and with recognition of the unique barriers experienced by many ethnic and cultural communities in accessing services.

Community advocates and community advocacy programs were conceived in direct response to the information gathered in this needs assessment. Community advocates are members and residents of the community or neighborhood they serve. They are known, respected, and involved in their communities and are responsible for linking victims with available services.

Three underserved communities were selected as sites for the VS2000 Community Advocacy Program. Community advocates inform the VS2000 Steering Committee and VS2000 working teams about both the need for services and the barriers to services experienced by the victims in their communities.

Collaboration changes the way we work and requires a profound shift in our thinking about how change is created. The examples provided in the three tables illustrate how collaboration shifted organizational focus from competing to consensus building, from working alone to including others, from thinking about activities to thinking about results and

strategies, and from focusing on short-term accomplishments to demanding long-term results.

Establishing a Collaborative Structure

We know that many victims of crime have experienced multiple and varied victimizations. We also know that the impact of a crime ripples out to affect many people beyond the primary victim. Many specialized programs have been developed to meet these multidimensional needs resulting from crime victimization. These programs create a continuum of services, and within that continuum, each service provider has expertise, access, or purview within a particular service area.

Table 3. VS2000 Community Advocacy Program

Networking →	Coordination →	Cooperation →	Collaboration
Agencies informally exchanged information about meeting community needs in flexible and specific ways.	Agencies hired certain employees to perform targeted outreach to community members.	Three community advocates were hired to address community needs. Agencies and community advocates host and participate in cross-training events to learn from each other and to build trusting relationships. VS2000 funds this project.	Underserved communities obtain services from agencies and agencies receive more referrals from underserved communities.
▲ VS2000 enters the process			

Further, instead of delivering one unduplicated type of service to a victim, service providers often unknowingly deliver several very similar services to the same victim at the same time. Using training, technology, and community advocacy initiatives, the VS2000 demonstration project coordinates these specialized service providers and programs so that the services victims receive are networked and interconnected. This is what victims said would increase the value of the services.

The structure of the coordination in VS2000 was critical to its success. Each agency involved in the collaboration had a seat on the VS2000 Steering Committee, its governing body. VS2000 agencies also participated on several working teams that addressed the core issues of collaboration: technology, model network development, and training. Subcommittees were convened under each of these teams to address specific issues, make recommendations to their team, and submit them to the Steering Committee for approval.

Developing a Guiding Vision and Core Values

The guiding vision of all VS2000 agencies can be expressed like this:

When crime victims in Denver look for services, there will be no wrong door for them to open. Wherever they turn, a quick, reliable connection will be made to get them to the most appropriate services.

During their first month of working together, the VS2000 partners developed this vision and the following values in support of it:

- **Victim-centered services.** The victims are our clients, and they come first. We provide services to our victim clients based on an evaluation of their needs and we deliver them with respect. The advocacy and services we provide to our victim clients are intended to empower them. We agree to keep in mind the big picture of victim services, including prevention and important community issues.

- **Embodiment of the spirit of diversity.** We acknowledge our limits, our assumptions, and our privileges, and those historical cultural concepts of victim services that do not work for all victims. We are willing to listen and learn from each other. We honor each other's identity.
- **Creative collaboration.** We recognize that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. We value risk taking. We work with flexibility. We communicate openly and honestly with each other. We share information, knowledge, and values.
- **Self-care so you can care for others.** We commit our agencies in vision and in practice to the exercise of self-care. Only by being aware of and accountable for our own needs and by keeping ourselves and our agencies healthy can we adequately provide for our clients. We realize that agencies as well as individuals need renewal and restoration.

The Denver Experience: Lessons Learned

In their 1989 book, *Teamwork: What Must Go Right/What Can Go Wrong*, Carl E. Larson and Frank M.J. Lafasto described eight characteristics found in high performing teams: a clear, elevating goal; a results-driven structure; competent team members; a unified commitment; a collaborative climate; standards of excellence; external support and recognition; and principled leadership. The discussion below uses these characteristics as a framework to analyze the planning and collaboration of VS2000. What worked? What did not? What lessons were learned?

1. Establish a Clear, Elevating Goal

- **Base the project goal on project values.** At the inception of the project, Denver VS2000 convened a facilitated, all-day, team-building session attended by members of the planning committee who represented more than 50 VS2000 participant agencies. The purpose of the meeting was to define the project's core values and create a common vision. Four core values were identified: victim-centered services, an atmosphere that welcomes diversity, creative collaboration, and passionate well-being (self-care so you can care for others).
- **Use words and pictures of clear, elevating goals so people fully understand them.** A few months into the project, VS2000 convened a Visioning Session to define the vision further and begin developing the structure of the model victim service

network. Visual exercises were used. In one exercise, participants were asked to draw pictures of what the world or their communities would look like if seamless services were provided for all victims of crime.

- **Be aware of and address changes in participants' attitudes, perceptions, and level of support and participation.** As time passes, participants sometimes become uncomfortable comparing their original ideas with the actual developments. As the Denver VS2000 project matured, conversations and actions naturally shifted from philosophy and visions to the implementation of new initiatives and new ways of delivering services. This made some participants feel their turf was threatened. Others felt that the time and work involved had begun to outweigh any evidence of tangible change. Commitment began to wane and participation on working teams and committees decreased. Two things became clear. VS2000's core values and mission needed to be revisited, and it was more important than ever for all decisions to be made with input from all participants.

2. Develop a Results-Driven Process

- **Maintain balance between the process and the product.** Denver VS2000 continues to be a large, collaborative effort, which involves many agencies that compete for funding and territory. Issues of trust were present from the beginning. Mindful of this, VS2000 staff and meeting facilitators knew it was critical for the participants to have time to express and process these and

other issues. This made participants feel that they had a voice and it was heard. Opportunities were provided to participants to engage in trust-building discussions with their colleagues. In the first year, especially, meetings often consisted of processing issues and clarifying positions. This created an atmosphere of mutual trust and collective ownership of the project and its outcomes that was crucial to sustaining a collaborative network of this magnitude.

- **Provide the participants with immediate feedback about the results of the time and effort they spent on the project.** Design, and insert into the work, some short-term goals that the participants can achieve. This will keep participants motivated to continue working on the long-term goals. Aware that busy people would continue to attend meetings only if they see tangible results, project staff interspersed challenging, short-term goals that could successfully be completed while working on the long-term goal of creating a model victim service network. Another long-term goal, that of developing a technology system, began with smaller goals of providing participants with e-mail accounts and training them in basic software applications for word processing, spreadsheets, and databases. The larger goal of raising the awareness of service providers to create a truly seamless network of victim services began with the smaller goal of implementing a cross-training plan throughout VS2000. Selecting interns from a minority intern recruitment program was a short-term commitment to the goal of embracing the spirit of diversity.

- **Maintain good communications among all stakeholders involved in the process.** A network of good communications is necessary for the success of any collaboration, particularly one as diversified as the Denver VS2000 project. A staff of 5 provided communications support for the approximately 150 individuals who worked in 5 teams on 15 committees and subcommittees. The staff coordinated meetings; maintained a participant database; wrote and disseminated a newsletter; announced meetings, trainings, and other pertinent information; established e-mail accounts for project participants; maintained a meeting calendar; recorded minutes; and uploaded products created by the project onto the VS2000 Web site. Communications were further enhanced by frequently including updates about the progress of other teams, team committees, and committee agendas. In addition, time was allotted for agency updates and networking.

3. Develop the Capabilities of Project Participants

- **Encourage and inspire all team members to participate.** All Denver VS2000 participants, both management and staff, were encouraged to join in and share the responsibility for the project. They were encouraged to make decisions about the structure and components of the VS2000 model service network. When it became clear that each person's opinion was important and actively sought, individuals who may normally remain reserved and quiet in group situations began to take a more active role and display leadership qualities. During times

of disagreement, it was helpful to revisit the core vision and values to maintain focus and inspire participants.

- **Recruit diverse and balanced leadership.** Ongoing recruitment for leadership of the VS2000 project sought diverse individuals of all levels of skill, knowledge, and experience to reflect the diversity of the field and to provide balance and broad perspective to the project. Believing a diverse and balanced work force would be best for the development of the project, VS2000 required each team on the project to have the same diversity as existed in the field, including age and work experience. Included in the leadership search were direct service providers, such as victim service providers, community members, and allied professionals, as well as policymakers and administrators, such as agency directors and administrative and program staff.

4. Recruit Unified and Committed Stakeholders

- **Commitment needed from all levels of the VS2000 project and agencies.** The VS2000 staff believed that multilevel participation by all stakeholders regardless of position would give the project greater and necessary depth and breadth of perspective. For example, the executive directors of Denver's victim service agencies serve as members of the VS2000 Steering Committee. In addition, many also participate on the project's working teams and committees and allow or require their staff to participate also.

5. Create a Collaborative Climate

- **Understand the obstacles to using collaboration in victim services.** Collaboration is not often seen in victim services because the conditions for successful collaboration rarely exist. Normally, victim services funding is scarce and the competition for it is intense. Victim services work often operates from a model of scarcity, forcing the service provider to function with the anxiety and fear of losing or not finding resources. None of this is conducive to collaboration. VS2000 was possible because the basic needs and resources were met by a grant, allowing the individuals enough relaxation, security, and peace of mind so that ideas could emerge, take root, and grow.
- **Recognize the value of building relationships between criminal justice-based and community-based programs.** A tension often exists between community-based and criminal justice-based programs. Rather than acknowledging that the work done by both programs is necessary and complements the other in serving victims, program members argue about each program's relative value and contribution. The experience of VS2000 indicated that collaboration would not be realized without a solid understanding of roles by both the criminal justice-based and community-based programs and without the establishment of respect and trust between them. VS2000 found that cross training was critical for increasing understanding. Guided discussions were very valuable in helping the participants work through issues of tension and

develop the trust necessary for a collaborative environment.

- **Understand that collaboration is a process that requires constant evaluation and adjustment.** A collaborative effort is not a destination but a journey. During the project, all VS2000 team members had to constantly assess whether the collaborative effort represented the populations being targeted for better service. As new collaborators joined the effort, it was important and necessary to reassert the agreements and understandings of the collaboration to maintain the original collaborative climate established by the core VS2000 group. As team members reached out to other victim services providers, allied professionals, victims, and underserved communities, it was very important that the original collaborative climate was strong and that all involved had a good understanding of its meaning.

6. Set a Standard of Excellence

- **Set a standard of excellence that provides results that meet the needs of the targeted community.** The needs assessment that VS2000 conducted was a necessary first step in defining the project's standard of excellence. In this assessment, focus groups were most helpful in clearly identifying areas where victim services did not reflect the "no wrong door" vision. Focus groups noted where victims seeking services might run into obstacles.
- **Stress the importance of evaluation.** As a profession, victim services often does not evaluate the impact of its services adequately. Those who work in victim services will never know if their work is truly making a

difference unless the consumers of their services evaluate them and provide feedback. Since VS2000 projects are guided by the concept of creating and providing *victim-centered* services, evaluation and feedback from those served is very important for assessing the effectiveness of a VS2000 project.

7. Recruit External Support and Recognition

- **Recognize the importance of diversified support.** VS2000 worked hard to cultivate relationships and garner the support of external entities that were interested or willing to help provide services or support for victims of crime. These included allied professionals in local seminaries, law schools, and corporations such as AT&T Wireless. By building the broadest, most integrated victim service network possible, the greatest number of victims can be assisted.
- **Acknowledge the critical roles of funding entities.** Ranging from housing staff members to helping ensure the ongoing viability of project initiatives, the support of the Denver VALE board in administering the VS2000 project has been critical. The Denver District Attorney's Office, which housed the Denver VALE board, was key in making VS2000 a reality. Denver District Attorney Bill Ritter devoted the resources of his office to administrative, housing, and oversight functions for the VS2000 effort, as well as providing his leadership and commitment to the issues of victim rights and services.
- **Understand that internal support is also critical.** One's own organization must provide support and

recognition. VS2000 discovered that those who were involved in successful collaborations enjoyed the internal support of their agencies. VS2000 also discovered that collaboration takes time and energy, and receiving only superficial commitment from partner agencies impeded success.

8. VS2000 Leadership Principles

- **Embrace diversity, critique, and conflict as opportunities for growth and understanding.** One goal of the VS2000 model is for the collaboration participants to develop trust in the leadership and believe it to be fair, open, and supportive of creative decisionmaking. The VS2000 model believes this will ensure many voices are heard and participants will be encouraged to work hard. In the VS2000 model, the leadership invites criticism as an important step in resolving conflict and moving forward collaboratively. Further, it is important for leadership to embrace criticism and conflict as positive opportunities to achieve mutual understanding. The VS2000 Community Advocates and the Victim Advisory Council are two groups that invited criticism and embraced conflict as an impetus for growth.
- **Consensus building and collaboration.** While the consensus model of decisionmaking has been important to the grassroots and feminist philosophies underlying victim services, applying it to collaboration is more challenging. On the plus side, consensus building empowers more people to participate. On the minus side, having increased numbers of participants makes decisionmaking difficult. An organization must take care to implement and manage the consensus-building process wisely.

Principled Leadership

From *Teamwork: What Must Go Right/What Can Go Wrong* by Carl E. Larson and Frank M.J. LaFasto, 1989.

Responsibilities of Team Leaders

- Avoid compromising the team's objective with political issues.
- Exhibit personal commitment to the team's goal.
- Do not dilute the team's efforts with too many priorities.
- Be fair and impartial toward all team members.
- Be willing to confront and resolve issues associated with inadequate performance by team members.
- Be open to new ideas and information from team members.

Create a Supportive Decisionmaking Climate

- Trust team members with meaningful levels of responsibility.
- Provide team members with the necessary autonomy to achieve results.
- Present challenging opportunities that stretch the individual abilities of team members.
- Recognize and reward superior performance.

- Stand behind the team and support it.

Responsibilities of Team Members

- Demonstrate a realistic understanding of my role.
- Demonstrate objective and fact-based judgments.
- Collaborate effectively with other team members.
- Make the team goal a higher priority than any personal objective.
- Demonstrate a willingness to devote whatever effort is necessary to achieve team success.
- Be willing to share information, perceptions, and feedback openly.
- Help other team members as needed and appropriate.
- Demonstrate high standards of excellence.
- Stand behind and support team decisions.
- Demonstrate courage of conviction by directly confronting important issues.
- Demonstrate leadership in ways that contribute to the team's success.
- Respond constructively to feedback from others.

Excessive emphasis on the consensus-building process can ultimately be unproductive. Skilled management and implementation of the process and capable facilitation of the group are needed to ensure that the group actually reaches decisions and honors them rather than reprocessing them.

Conclusion

This bulletin outlines the most critical factors that contributed to the success of the interdisciplinary, collaborative Denver VS2000 project. These success factors are not unique to Denver. They exist in the Vermont model and other successful collaborations both within and outside the criminal justice system.

Although it is impossible to isolate which critical element may be the most important predictor of success, it is very important to highlight three elements that contributed to success in the Denver experience:

- Acceptance by the stakeholders that a collaborative climate is not a destination, but a journey.
- Adoption of a shared vision and core values by all that set the tone for the entire process.
- Agreement that collaboration is part and parcel of how the planning process is conducted.

A Note to Readers

The Center for Effective Public Policy for the State Justice Institute, in concert with the National Center for State Courts, is administering a national training and technical assistance project on this topic, called the National

Resource Center on Collaboration in Criminal and Juvenile Justice. This project, sponsored by the State Justice Institute and its federal partners—the Bureau of Justice Assistance, NIC, OVC, the Drug Courts Program Office, VAWO, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention—is assisting selected jurisdictions, including the Denver VS2000 Project, with building stronger initiatives and enhancing justice in their communities. Denver VS2000 is proud to publish the first bulletin on collaboration resulting from this training and technical assistance project.

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Denver VS2000 Steering Committee

AMEND

Anti Violence Program

Asian Pacific Development Center

AT&T Wireless Services

City Attorney’s Office, Domestic Violence Unit

Colorado Attorney General’s Office

Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Colorado District Attorney’s Council

Colorado Division of Criminal Justice

Colorado Federal Bureau of Investigation

Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance

Colorado State Judicial, Office of Probation Services

Curtis Park Community Center

Denver Child Advocacy Center

Denver Community Corrections

Denver County Court Probation

Denver Crime Victim Compensation Program

Denver Department of Human Services

Denver District Attorney’s Office

Denver Health Medical Center

Denver Indian Health and Family Services

Denver Police Department

Denver Sheriff’s Department

Denver VALE Board

Denver Victims Service Center

Domestic Violence Initiative for Women with Disabilities

Dove: Advocacy Services for Abused Deaf Women and Children

Justice Information Center

Mary’s Hope

Muslim Women’s Society

The Poder Project

Project Safeguard

PAVE: Promoting Alternative to Violence through Education

Rape Assistance and Awareness Program

SafeHouse Denver

Servicios de la Raza

Sexual Assault Interagency Council

U.S. Attorney’s Office

Victim Offender Reconciliation Program

WINGS Foundation

Resources

For more information about the Denver VS2000 project and related products, please contact Denver VS2000 or OVC at the following:

U.S. Department of Justice
Office for Victims of Crime
810 Seventh Street NW.
Washington, DC 20531
202-616-3575
Fax: 202-514-6383
E-mail: dolisek@ojp.usdoj.gov
Web site: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc

Denver VS2000
303 West Colfax, No. 1300
Denver, CO 80204
720-913-9256
Fax: 720-913-9090
Web site: www.vs2000.org

For information on training and technical assistance available from OVC, contact:

OVC Training and Technical Assistance Center
10530 Rosehaven Street, Suite 400
Fairfax, VA 22030
1-866-OVC-TTAC (1-866-682-8822)
Fax: 703-279-4673
E-mail: TTAC@ovcttac.org
Web site: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/assist/welcome.html

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