



**Memorandum of Understanding**  
**The Saint Tammany Domestic Violence Coordinated Community Response Team**

**I. Introduction**

The partners in The Saint Tammany Domestic Violence Coordinated Community Response Team who are governed by this policy recognize and understand that—

- Appropriate, secure partnering among governmental and non-governmental agencies can enhance safety for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.
- The partners have a common goal of providing access to domestic violence and sexual assault victim services that enhance victim safety.
- Victim safety can be compromised by the failure to maintain the confidentiality of client information.
- Information sharing may increase the effectiveness of service delivery and increase victim safety and abuser accountability, but only when the information sharing is authorized by a victim who is fully aware of the risks and benefits of sharing personal information.
- Each partner continues to maintain its own legal and ethical obligations to honor victims' confidentiality and privacy, or depending on the agency, legal obligations to share information.
- The victims who use the services offered by the collaboration or any of its partners, retain their right to confidentiality from agencies within the collaboration that have confidential relationships with victims.
- Victims who use the services offered by the collaboration determine when and how their information will be shared among the partners or outside of the partnership, consistent with the requirements of law.
- Releases of information should enhance services provided to the victim, and not be used solely for the purpose of easing the program's administration;
- The most protective privacy option will always be considered. Before a victim chooses to sign a release, the partner will determine if there is another way to accomplish the purpose without the advocate or agency releasing the victim's personal identifying information;
- When releases of information are required, they will be written, informed, and reasonably time-limited.

## II. Partner Roles, Responsibilities, Information Sharing, and Confidentiality Obligations

The partners of The Saint Tammany Domestic Violence Coordinated Community Response Team have created a multi-disciplinary partnership to provide access to domestic violence and sexual assault services that enhance victim safety and privacy. When there is a question about whether a certain approach should be taken by The Saint Tammany Domestic Violence Coordinated Community Response Team in a given situation, the determining factor will be whether the proposed action will enhance victim safety and privacy.

### Safe Harbor

#### *Roles and Responsibilities:*

- Provide confidential services to victims/clients.
- Identify and work to resolve problems that may impede victims' access to resources in the social services network, civil and criminal justice system, and other systems.
- Provide support services to victim/clients who have cases in the criminal justice system.
- Educate other partners on domestic violence/sexual assault issues.
- Update partners on emerging issues/research regarding domestic violence/sexual assault issues.

#### *Confidentiality Obligations:*

- Recognize that partners have different levels of confidentiality obligations in regard to victim/client information and the sharing of that information.
- The domestic violence/sexual assault agency has a strict confidentiality obligation to the victim client. The agency will not share individual, personal identifying information about any individual who has received or sought services without the informed, written, reasonably time-limited release of the victim client, except for any mandatory reporting as required by state law.
- The domestic violence/sexual assault agency limitation on sharing personal identifying information includes sharing of such information with any of the partner agencies in this agreement.
- The domestic violence/sexual assault agency may share non-personal identifying information (demographics) about those who have used its services and information about systems and processes that affect the victim/clients.

## The District Attorney's Office

### *Roles and Responsibilities:*

- Provide case status and disposition information to victims and the partners, as appropriate, including information when cases can or cannot be prosecuted.
- Educate other partners on prosecution policies and practices.
- Explain legal definitions and current, relevant law to partners.
- Update partners on emerging criminal justice legal issues.
- Act as a liaison between the partners and law enforcement or legal agencies.

### *Confidentiality Obligations:*

- Recognize that other partners may have different levels of confidentiality in regard to victim/client information and that some partners must decline to share information about a specific victim/client because of a legal obligation to protect victim/client privacy and confidentiality.
- Notify victims of their rights and of any other people or professionals, including prosecution-based victim witness assistants, with whom the District Attorney's Office must share their personal identifying information.
- Refer, when appropriate, victims to domestic violence/sexual assault advocates for confidential counseling, advocacy, and support services.
- Protect prosecution work product information to the extent permitted by law.
- Honor victim/client privacy to the extent permitted by law.

## Law Enforcement

(St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office, Slidell Police Department, Covington Police Department, Mandeville Police Department, Madisonville Police Department, Folsom Police Department, and Pearl River Police Department)

### *Roles and Responsibilities:*

- Provide public safety services to victims and the community.
- Provide case status information to victims and the partners, as appropriate.
- Identify and work to resolve problems that may impede victims' access to resources in the social services network, civil and criminal justice system, and other systems.
- Educate other partners on law enforcement policies and practices.
- Update partners on emerging criminal justice issues.
- Act as a liaison between the partners and other law enforcement agencies.
- Coordinate with each other and the partners to develop and maintain uniform policies and procedures regarding domestic violence and sexual assault cases.

*Confidentiality Obligations:*

- Recognize that other partners may have different levels of confidentiality in regard to victim information and that some partners must decline to share information about a specific victim because of a legal obligation to protect victim privacy and confidentiality.
- Notify victims of their rights and of any other people or professionals, including victim witness assistants, with whom one's agency must share victims' personal identifying information.
- Refer victims to domestic violence/sexual assault advocates for confidential counseling, advocacy, and support services.
- Honor victim privacy to the extent permitted by law.

**Probation and Parole**

*Roles and Responsibilities:*

- Provide public safety services to victims and to the community.
- Provide case status information to the victim and the partners, as appropriate.
- Identify and work to resolve problems that may impede victims' access to resources in the social services network, civil and criminal justice system, and other systems.
- Educate other partners on law enforcement policies and practices specific to probation and parole.
- Update partners on emerging criminal justice issues.
- Update partners on available technology as it pertains to offender supervision.
- Act as a liaison between the partners and other law enforcement agencies and victim rights agencies.
- Misdemeanor Probation will provide data only unless otherwise directed by the 22<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District Court.

*Confidentiality Obligations:*

- Recognize that other partners may have different levels of confidentiality in regard to victim information and that some partners must decline to share information about a specific victim because of a legal obligation to protect victim/client privacy and confidentiality.
- Notify victim of their rights and of any other people or professionals, including victim witness assistants, with whom one's agency must share victims' personal identifying information.
- Refer victim/clients to the local domestic violence/sexual assault advocates for confidential counseling, advocacy, and support services.
- Honor victim/client privacy to the extent permitted by law.

## Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)

### *Roles and Responsibilities:*

- Provide public safety services focused on the children affected by domestic violence and sexual assault to victims and the community.
- Provide case status information to victims and the partners, as appropriate.
- Coordinate with the partners to work toward acting in the best interest of the child.
- Educate other partners on policies and practices surrounding children and family services.
- Coordinate with the partners to develop and maintain uniform policies and procedures regarding children and domestic violence and sexual assault cases.

### *Confidentiality Obligations:*

- Recognize that other partners may have different levels of confidentiality in regard to victim information and that some partners must decline to share information about a specific victim because of a legal obligation to protect victim privacy and confidentiality.
- Notify victims of their rights and of any other people or professionals, including victim witness assistants, with whom DCFS must share victims' personal identifying information.
- Refer victims to domestic violence/sexual assault advocates for confidential counseling, advocacy, and support services.
- Honor victim privacy to the extent permitted by law.

## Clerk of Court:

### *Roles and Responsibilities:*

- Identify and work to resolve problems that may impede victims' access to judicial resources and the civil and criminal justice system.
- Educate other partners on Clerk's office procedures and practices.
- Update partners on emerging civil and criminal justice legal issues.
- Work with the partners to develop and maintain a uniform set of local practices regarding applying for and obtaining protective orders in domestic violence and sexual assault cases.

### *Confidentiality Obligations:*

- Recognize that other partners may have different levels of confidentiality in regard to victim information and that some partners must decline to share information about a specific victim because of a legal obligation to protect victim privacy and confidentiality.

- Honor and protect victim privacy to the extent permitted by law.

#### **Core Partners**

- Core Partners control the direction of the organization. The Core Partners of this organization are Safe Harbor, Law Enforcement (Defined previously), the Saint Tammany Parish District Attorney's Office, Probation and Parole, the Saint Tammany Parish Clerk of Court, and the Department of Children and Family Services.
- Additional Core Partners can only be added by a unanimous vote of the existing Core Partners. Law Enforcement will be counted as two votes (one vote designated to the St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office and one vote designated to the Police Chiefs exercised by a majority vote of the Chiefs).
- Only Core Partners have voting privileges.
- Committees are created by the Core Partners and approved by a majority vote.
- Committee participants are appointed by and approved by the Core Partners assigned to the committee.

#### **Community Partners**

- Community Partners support the STCCRT and serve on committees as appointed and agreed on by the Core Partners. The Core Partners must approve the admission of General Partners into the STCCRT.
- Community Partners do not have voting privileges.
- All community partners will be required to sign a separate MOU outlining their role and responsibility.

#### **Working Committees**

- Only Core Partners can establish a committee.
- Committees can be established by Core Partners to advance the goals of the CCRT.
- Committees can be made up of Core Partners and Community Partners.

III. Development of High Risk Team

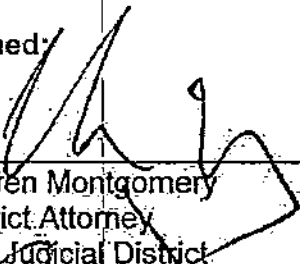
- The STCCRT will form a High Risk Team assembled from the Core Partners of the STCCRT. The team will be comprised of Law Enforcement, the District Attorney's Office, Safe Harbor, Probation and Parole, and DCFS.
- The High Risk Team will be responsible for reviewing high risk offenders for prosecution. The team will meet regularly to determine charges, conditions of supervised release, safety of the victim, and available resources to assist.
- The best interest of the victim will be the primary focus of the team.

Prepared by:

  
J. Collin Sims  
Chief Criminal Assistant District Attorney  
22<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District

DATED: 10/2/18

Signed:

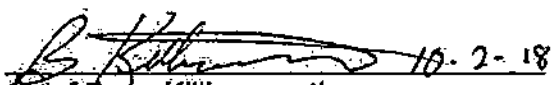
  
Warren Montgomery  
District Attorney  
22<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District

  
Chief Tim Lentz  
Covington Police Department

  
Sheriff Randy Smith  
St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office

  
Chief Johnny "JJ" Jennings  
Pearl River Police Department


  
Chief Gerald Sticker  
Mandeville Police Department

  
Chief Beau Killingsworth  
Folsom Police Department


  
Chief Randy Fandak  
Slidell Police Department

  
Chief Barney Tyrney  
Madisonville Police Department

  
Melissa R. Henry  
St. Tammany Parish Clerk of Court

  
Thomas Bickham  
Louisiana Probation and Parole

  
Wendy Griffith  
Louisiana Department of Children  
and Family Services

  
Kim Kirby  
Executive Director of Safe Harbor