

Formative Evaluation of the Demonstration Grants to Strengthen the Response to Victims of Human Trafficking in Native Communities (VHT-NC) Program

SITE VISIT INTERVIEW: Project Leadership

Overview

- **Purpose:** Conduct a 90-minute, semi-structured interview with project leadership focused on VHT-NC project implementation, including successes, challenges, and lessons learned.
- **Respondents:** VHT-NC project leadership, e.g., project directors, project coordinators, project managers.
- **Pre-interview activities:**
 - The site liaison team will review the project profile, the project logic model (if applicable), and projects’ progress reports to inform the interview and prefill information.
 - INTERVIEWERS NOTE: We are not expecting that every respondent will speak to every question and every prompt. Move on to the next question/section if the respondent doesn’t seem to have input to provide on a certain topic. Use your knowledge of the project to help guide the interview. If needed, the site team may review the guide beforehand to identify priority questions for each respondent.
 - The site liaison team will email information about the interview (see **Introduction** information below) to respondents before. The team will also bring copies to provide respondents, if needed.

Site:		Date:	
Respondent:			
Interviewer:		Notetaker:	

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to talk with us today about your Demonstration Grant to Strengthen the Response to Victims of Human Trafficking in Native Communities (VHT-NC) project. Throughout our discussion, we’ll refer to it as your “VHT-NC project” or “project.”

[The site team will send the information below to the respondent before the interview. Before starting the interview, review it with the respondent and answer any questions.]

This interview is part of the data collection for the VHT-NC Program formative evaluation that aims to:

- (1) document how projects approach and accomplish the VHT-NC Program goals;
- (2) inform the Administration for Children and Families’ (ACF’s) efforts to address human trafficking in Native communities;
- (3) inform future evaluation; and
- (4) engage with and solicit input from local American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities and people who have experienced human trafficking by creating a Community Expert Group.

The evaluation is being conducted by RTI International, a non-profit, independent research institute, and its partner, American Indian Development Associates. It is overseen by ACF's Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) in collaboration with ACF's Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP).

We are visiting the VHT-NC projects to talk with project staff, partners, and participants. The purpose of our interview today is to learn more about your VHT-NC project implementation. We will ask questions about your community, project goals, staffing, partnerships, outreach approaches, service delivery, and community training. We are interested in hearing your perspectives on project successes and challenges, and the lessons you have learned throughout project implementation. We developed a semi-structured interview protocol to ask project leadership a similar set of questions. If there are questions that you do not know the answer to, that is fine; just let us know, and we can skip those questions.

We emailed you information about your participation in the interview that we'd like to review. *[Review **privacy information** below]*

- Participation in this interview is voluntary. You may choose not to answer specific questions or not to take part in the interview at any time.
- The information we collect from you is private to the extent permitted by law. We keep your interview answers on a secure computer. After the evaluation ends, the interview data will be stored securely through 2027, and then deleted.
- Your name will never be connected to what you tell us today, and we will not tell anyone associated with [PROJECT NAME] what you share with us in a way that can identify you. Information generally will be reported in the aggregate, meaning your responses will be combined with other responses and will not be linked to you. Reporting and dissemination products will not use your name or other identifying information. We may also combine the information you provide with information we learn about your project through other sources, such as your OTIP progress reports.
- As part of our reporting, we may present quotes from this interview and will make all efforts to remove all identifying information in the quote. Quotes will not include your name, any staff names identified during the interview, or your organization's name. We may describe interviewees in general terms, like "project director" or "project staff." If there is information that you would prefer that we not quote, please let us know, and we will exclude it from our notes and not include it in any reporting.
- We expect this interview to take about 90 minutes.
- With your permission, we will audio record the interview. This recording is a backup to our typed notes, and we will only share it within the RTI and AIDA evaluation team. After we clean up our notes, we will delete the audio.
- Finally, I need to let you know that an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB number for this information collection is 0970-XXXX and the expiration date is XX/XX/XXXX.

Do you have any questions about any of this information?

Do I have your permission to record the interview?

[If yes, begin audio recording the interview.]

EQ1: What is important to know about the community context (e.g., geographical, historical, cultural, governance, legal)? How does this affect the planning and development of VHT-NC projects?

In previous interviews, we've talked about how community context influences human trafficking and the response to it in Native communities. Today, we'd also like to learn more about how historical factors relate to human trafficking in Native communities.

What historical and intergenerational trauma impacts do you see with human trafficking in the Native community/communities your VHT-NC project works with? E.g., effects of colonization, displacement, victimization, systematic oppression, forced assimilation, boarding schools, extractive industries.

In what ways does historical and intergenerational trauma impact how your local Native [community responds /communities respond] to human trafficking?

The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples' crisis is a current issue that Native communities are addressing. In your community, how do efforts to address the MMIP crisis intersect with anti-trafficking efforts?

[If not addressed]

- How are these efforts distinct?
- Has your VHT-NC project been involved in efforts to address the MMIP crisis? If so, how?

Since you started working on your VHT-NC project, what are the most important things you've learned about human trafficking in Native communities?

[If not addressed]

- Are there risk factors for human trafficking that differ for Native people from non-Native people in your area?
- Are there protective factors against human trafficking that differ for Native people from non-Native people in your area?

[If not addressed]

What community or cultural strengths can you draw from to support Native people who have experienced human trafficking?

EQ2: What are the projects' VHT-NC goals? How do projects define successful achievement of their goals?

Now I'm going to ask you some questions reflecting on your VHT-NC project's goals and the approaches and values that are incorporated.

If you could go back to the planning stage of this project, are there any changes you would make to the goals or design? *[if yes]* Please describe.

Prompts:

- What would you change and why?
- How, if at all, have your goals or project design evolved over time?
- How, if at all, did lessons you learned along the way influence your goals or project design?

Has the way you measure or think about success changed since the project began? If so, how?

Are there any grant requirements that have been challenging? [if yes] Please describe.

- *Prompt:* Is there anything ACF/OTIP could change to facilitate project implementation?

How would you explain the term culturally responsive? What does that mean to you?

How has your VHT-NC project incorporated cultural and/or traditional practices?

- How successful has that been?
- Do you feel that the cultural supports provided reflect the values, customs, and beliefs of the [tribe or service population] you are serving? Why or why not?
- What cultural elements could be added to your VHT-NC Project's support or services? For example, the [tribe or target population's] language, community or family strengths.

[If not addressed]

Are there any barriers your VHT-NC Project experiences in incorporating culture in service delivery? If so, please tell us more.

Prompts:

- Staffing, i.e., with non-Native staff members
- Training in cultural awareness and humility
- Support from leadership (grant recipient organization, or Tribe)

How would you explain the term trauma-informed? What does that mean to you?

- Do you think there's broad understanding of what trauma-informed means? Do your VHT-NC staff and partners have the same understanding of what trauma-informed means?
- How successfully have trauma-informed practices been incorporated into your VHT-NC project?
 - *Prompts:* Challenges? Strengths?

EQ3: What are the characteristics of the VHT-NC grant recipients, primary partners, and project clients?

In this next set of questions, we're going to talk about your VHT-NC staff and partners.

What are your most important lessons learned related to staffing your VHT-NC project?

Prompts

- What advice would you share with a project that is just starting?
- Important qualities, skills, or experience?
- Helpful approaches to supervision?
- Helpful collaboration/coordination practices?
- Challenges related to staff retention/turnover?

It is not uncommon for people working in this field to experience vicarious/secondary trauma or burnout. What do you find helpful to support your wellness and self-care?

- Are there other supports or resources you wish you had access to?
- What cultural supports or resources are available to your Native staff?

EQ4: How do VHT-NC projects develop and maintain partnerships and intergovernmental relationships?

[For non-Native organizations] **What approaches, if any, has your VHT-NC project used to engage the local Native community / Native communities?**

- How successful have these efforts been?
- What were the benefits?
- Have you experienced any challenges? If yes, how were they addressed?

How do your partnerships help your VHT-NC project achieve its goals, if at all?

Prompts

- What culturally relevant strengths do partners bring to your VHT-NC project?
- What cultural values or practices support your partnerships? E.g., reciprocity, knowledge transfer, cultural humility.
- How do you and your VHT-NC partners work together to achieve project goals?
- Are project goals shared by the group?
- What have you learned from your partners?

Are there partnerships that you consider critical to your VHT-NC project's success?

- Which partnerships (e.g., organizations, groups, people)?
- What would be different without this partner/these partners?

Have there been any partnerships for this project that have not been successful? Why?

What are your most important lessons learned related to...

- Identifying and recruiting partners for your VHT-NC project?
- Educating project partners about your VHT-NC project?
- Nurturing collaboration and coordination with and among VHT-NC partners?
- Sustaining VHT-NC partnerships beyond the project period?

EQ5: What are the outreach approaches VHT-NC projects use to identify Native American victims of human trafficking?

Now I'm going to ask some questions about your VHT-NC project's outreach, case management, and service delivery approaches.

How successful have your VHT-NC project's outreach and enrollment efforts been?

Prompts

- What could be improved?
- Primary successes?

[if not addressed]

Have you experienced any new challenges related to outreach to Native people who have experienced human trafficking? *[if yes]* Please describe.

- How were they addressed?

[if not addressed]

What are the main barriers, if any, your project faced enrolling participants?

- How were they addressed?

Prompts

- Reluctance to talk about trafficking experiences
- Reluctance to identify as a victim
- Eligibility criteria
- What strategies or supports facilitated enrollment?

What are your most important lessons learned related to...

- Outreach to Native people who have experienced human trafficking?
- Outreach to inform and educate the community about your project's services?
- Identification, screening, and assessment?
- Incorporating culturally responsive practices into outreach and identification?

EQ6: How do VHT-NC projects provide comprehensive case management services and other supportive services to clients?

How successfully has your project provided comprehensive case management and supportive services to VHT-NC participants?

Prompts

- What could be improved?
- Primary successes?

[if not addressed]

Have you experienced any new challenges related to case management or service provision? *[if yes]*

Please describe.

- How were they addressed?

What are your most important lessons learned related to...

- Providing comprehensive case management to VHT-NC participants?
- Providing culturally-specific services and traditional practices to VHT-NC participants?
- Providing other supportive services to VHT-NC participants?
- Keeping VHT-NC participants engaged in services?
- Helping VHT-NC participants achieve their goals?

What services or supports do you think are helping VHT-NC participants the most

Prompts

- Are there services that are essential to participants' healing and recovery?
- What cultural-based resources helped the most?

How do you define VHT-NC participant success? E.g., what does it mean for a participant to be "successful"?

EQ7: How do VHT-NC projects involve Native American trafficking survivors in project design and implementation?

As you know, OTIP is interested in understanding more about survivor engagement in the VHT-NC projects. Since our interview last [September], has your VHT-NC brought any Native survivors into formal role(s)?

[If yes, for each ask:]

- **What role do they fulfill?** (e.g., project leadership, case manager, peer mentor, direct service provider, support group leader)
- **What are their primary responsibilities?**
- **How long have they been in this role?**
- **Is this a paid or volunteer position?**
- *[If survivor(s) fill paid positions]* **Are survivors paid the same rates as staff without lived experience in similar positions?**
 - *[If no]* **How are the pay rates different? How were survivor(s)' pay rates determined?**
- **How were survivors identified and engaged for these roles?**

What are your most important lessons learned related to engaging Native survivors of human trafficking in your VHT-NC project implementation?

Prompts

- Efforts hiring and retaining Native people who are survivors for the project
- Getting input or feedback from VHT-NC project participants

How successfully has your project engaged Native survivors of human trafficking in VHT-NC project implementation?

Prompts

- What are the primary successes?
- What were the primary challenges, if any? How were they addressed?
- What changes have occurred because of survivor engagement?
- What are the benefits to survivors, project participants, and/or the project?
- Do you have plans to engage survivors in future project activities?

EQ8: How is community training provided?

Next, we're going to discuss the training activities your VHT-NC project provided and participated in.

What are your most important lessons learned related to providing training in your community?

Prompts

- What were the main barriers? How were they addressed?
- What was helpful to identify training needs?
- What facilitated successful trainings?

How successful has your VHT-NC project been in providing community training?

What topics, including culturally-specific topics, do you consider essential to learn before starting a project like VHT-NC?

What training or technical assistance, including culturally-specific TTA, that your VHT-NC project received was most helpful?

Are there any other supports that would have helped to implement your VHT-NC project?

We're almost finished; we have just a few more questions for you.

Imagine that you're asked to provide advice to someone wanting to duplicate your VHT-NC project. Reflecting back to when your VHT-NC project began up to now, what are the essential things you did to start your VHT-NC project and to keep it going?

Prompts

- What essential steps or activities would you recommend completing to implement the VHT-NC project?
- What has been critical to your ability to implement your project?
- Any culturally-specific elements or features that have been critical to implementation?
- Is there anything in particular that facilitated your progress?
- Examples: Establishing policies/procedures, engaging survivors, developing partnerships, learning about or engaging participants' Native communities, learning about services available in the community, providing community training

What has your VHT-NC project accomplished?

Prompts

- What are your project's main successes, including culturally-specific successes?
- What are you most proud of?

Finally, we'd like you think about what you envision this project looking like in 3-5 years. What components of your project do you hope continue, if any?

Prompts

- Which cultural aspects would you continue? Which would you change?
- What else would you change?
- What would support or help with sustainability? E.g., funding, established policies/procedures, continued partnerships, new partnerships, organizational support, tribal support, community support, data showing positive outcomes.