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

SITE VISIT INTERVIEW: Direct Services Staff

Overview

- **Purpose:** Conduct a 75-minute, semi-structured interview with direct services staff focused on VHT-NC project implementation, including successes, challenges, and lessons learned.
- **Respondents:** VHT-NC case managers/advocates, specialized services staff, outreach staff, etc.
- **Pre-interview activities:**
    - o 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.
    - o 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.
    - o 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 direct services staff 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 "case manager" 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 75 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.]

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

We'd like to start by learning about you and your involvement in the VHT-NC project.

[Grant recipient]'s VHT-NC project was awarded in October 2020. How long have you been involved in the project? E.g., during the application stage, when the project was awarded, after award.
- About how much time do you spend on your VHT-NC project? E.g., do you work on other projects?

What are your primary responsibilities for your VHT-NC project? E.g., what are the main VHT-NC activities you work on during the week or day?

What is your understanding of or background with Native people before starting to work in your VHT-NC project?]
   Prompts:
- Are you from a Native family?
- Do you have exposure to Native communities based on where you live, or who you're in community with?
- Have you worked with Native people in other jobs?

Do you have experience providing case management or supportive services?
- Did any of this work include Native people who have experienced human trafficking?

What training or resources, if any, has the project provided to help you prepare for your work with Native people or communities experiencing human trafficking?
- *[if applicable]* What was most helpful?

What other training, resources, or support would be helpful to your work on this project?

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, including cultural supports or resources, you wish you had access to?

When we spoke last fall, you shared that your primary responsibilities for your VHT-NC project are *[review information].* **Is this still accurate? Has anything changed?**

Since our last interview, have you received any training or other resources to support your work with Native people or communities experiencing human trafficking?
- *[if yes]* What was most helpful?

What other training, resources, or support would be helpful to your work on this project?
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?

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?

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?
  - What factors do you think are related to historical trauma?
- What are cultural protective factors against human trafficking for 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 about the approaches and values that are incorporated into your VHT-NC project.

How would you explain the term <u>culturally responsive</u>? 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 <u>trauma-informed</u>? 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?

The next set of questions focuses on your VHT-NC project partnerships.

We understand you work with the following partners *[review list of primary partners]*. **Are there any you would add to or remove from the list?**

In what ways do you work with the project partners?
Prompts
- Help to develop relationships
- Provide education about your VHT-NC project
- Receive or provide referrals
- Share resources or information
- Meet formally on a regular basis
- Communicate informally
- Conduct activities together (e.g., outreach, community training)

What culturally relevant strengths do partners bring to your VHT-NC project?

How are your VHT-NC partnerships helpful to the project's success?
Prompts
- Are there any partners you think are critical to the project?
- What would be different without these partnerships?
- What have you learned from your partners?

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

What helps your VHT-NC partnerships to thrive?

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

[For respondents who assist with outreach, identification, or project enrollment. Otherwise, SKIP to case management/supportive services]

Now I'm going to ask some questions about your VHT-NC project's outreach and identification approaches. When you think of your answers, please focus on what you do specifically for your VHT-NC project clients.

How successful have your VHT-NC project's outreach and enrollment efforts been?
Prompts
- What could be improved?
- Primary successes?

[if not addressed]

What are the main challenges, if any, you've experienced conducting outreach to identify Native people who have experienced human trafficking?

> *Prompts*
> - How were they addressed?
> - Is there anything that would have helped you to conduct outreach for this project?

[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
> - Are there any project requirements that are a barrier?
> - 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?

[For respondents who provide case management and/or supportive services. Otherwise, SKIP to survivor engagement.]

Now I'm going to ask some questions about your VHT-NC project's case management and service delivery approaches. When you think of your answers, please focus on what you do specifically for your VHT-NC project 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]

What are the main challenges, if any, you've experienced providing case management and supportive services for VHT-NC participants?

> *Prompts*
> - Challenges related to staffing, training, COVID-19, cultural challenges, etc.
> - How were they addressed?

- Is there anything that would have helped you to provide case management for this project?

What are your most important lessons learned related to…
- Providing comprehensive case management to VHT-NC participants?
- Identifying participants' service needs and their goals?
- 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?

[If respondent has non-VHT-NC experience providing case management or services]
How, if at all, is case management or service delivery for VHT-NC participants different from your other case management or service experiences?
Prompts
- What differences do you see working in Native communities?
- Are there differences due to the focus on human trafficking?
- How are outreach, identification, or case management procedures different?
- How are participant needs or goals different?
- How is service provision different?

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 help the most?

How easy or hard is it to collect or track participant data?
Prompts
- Are there any barriers to data collection?
- Do you collect data related to cultural services or resources (e.g., participated in cultural services, connected to healers, interpreters, peacemakers)?
- Is there any data that is missing? What should be added?
- Do you use the data to make decisions about case management or services?

Has the way you think about participant's success changed since the project began? If so, how?

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

OTIP encourages engagement of Native survivors of human trafficking into VHT-NC project implementation strategies. We'd like to talk about how your project approaches survivor engagement.

What does 'survivor engagement' mean to you?

Please tell us how your VHT-NC project involves Native survivors of human trafficking in project development and service delivery.
Prompts
- Informing project design, planning, implementation

- Reviewing protocols, policies, training materials
- Providing staff and/or community training
- Conducting outreach or providing direct services

[If no survivor engagement, skip. If any survivor engagement, ask:]
How successful has this survivor engagement been?
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?

[If no survivor engagement, ask:]
What barriers to survivor engagement has your project faced?
- Do you have plans to engage Native survivors in future project activities?

EQ8: How is community training provided?

Next, we're going to discuss the training activities for your VHT-NC project.

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 essentials 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.