

Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services (LEV)

Partnerships
September 2024



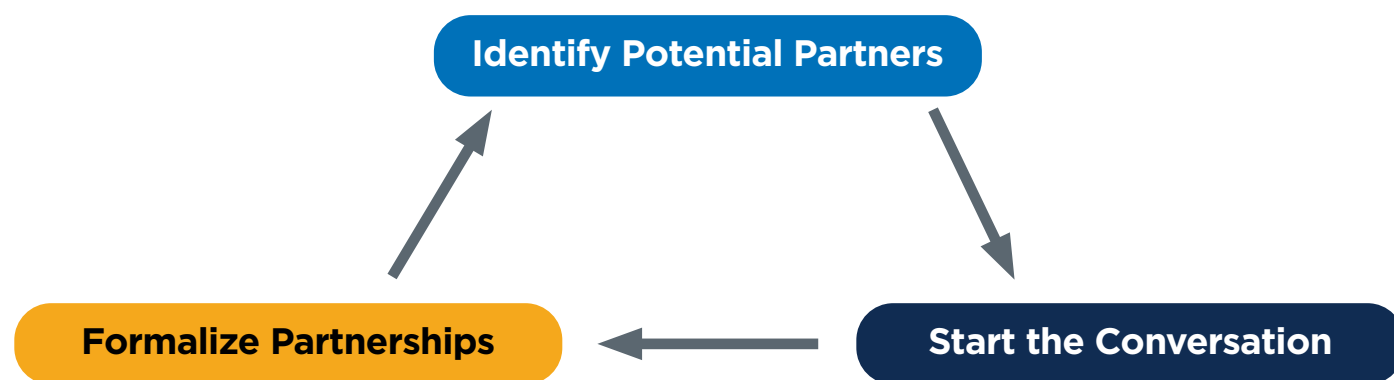
Partnering

Partnerships allow law enforcement-based victim services personnel to collaborate with other professionals that provide necessary resources and support to victims. Such collaborations can significantly enhance victims' access to needed services.¹ These partnerships can be internal or external.

Benefits that strong partnerships offer include:

- Streamlined communication and coordination, ensuring that victim services are seamlessly integrated into the agency's operations
- Opportunities for cross-training between specialized police agency staff and external partner organizations
- Enhanced cultural understanding and increased legitimacy in response to victims representing underserved communities (e.g., LGBTQ+, individuals with disabilities, immigrant communities)
- Increased procedural justice² and standardized communication to victims, resulting in elevated community trust in police

Police agencies can establish or enhance partnerships by following these steps:



1. For more information on victim needs, see [ELERV – Critical Needs of Victims](#).

2. Laura Kunard and Charlene Moe, [Procedural Justice for Law Enforcement: An Overview](#) (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2015).

1. Identify Potential Partners

Identify potential partnership opportunities by mapping out victim intersection points where current services can be strengthened, or where gaps in services exist.³ Bridging these gaps with internal or external partnerships can provide victims the broadest access to services.

Internal partnerships can help enhance whole-agency response to victims, while external partnerships can help agencies provide holistic victim services throughout the community and beyond victims' involvement with the justice system. Potential partners might include:

Internal Partners

- Agency Executives
- Command Staff & Mid-Level Management
- First-Line Supervisors
- Trainers
- Field Training Officers (FTOPs)
- First Responders Including Officers & Investigators
- Communications Personnel
- Crime Scene Investigators
- Public Information Officers (PIOs)/ Specialists
- Records & Information Systems Personnel
- Planners & Analysts
- Other Professional Personnel
- Victim Services Personnel
- Property Return/Evidence

External Partners

- Community-Based Organizations
- Faith-Based or Spiritual Organizations
- Private/For-Profit Community Organizations & Businesses
- Health Care Organizations & Providers (e.g., hospitals, forensic nursing programs)
- Child/Adult Welfare Agencies
- Schools & Institutions of Higher Education
- Legal Advocacy Organizations
- Legal Service Providers (e.g., victims' rights attorneys, immigration assistance)
- Research Partners
- Crime Victim Compensation Programs
- Other Criminal Justice Agencies (e.g., prosecution offices, probation/parole)
- Other Law Enforcement Agencies
- Community Wide Initiatives
- Funding Administrators
- Media
- Community Members
- Victims, Witnesses, Survivors, & Co-victims
- Medical Examiner/Coroner
- Funeral Homes

3. For more information on mapping victim services intersection points, see [LEV - Effective Partnerships](#).

2. Start the Conversation

After identifying potential partners, **start the conversation** with the partnering unit or organization.

Determine:

- What specific gap will this partnership fill?
- What is each partner's role? How will you avoid duplication of services?
- Who needs to be involved?
- What are potential challenges to the partnership, and how can they be addressed?

Be sure to include the chain of command in this conversation. This involvement will help with buy-in and engagement from both internal and external management.

3. Formalize Partnerships

Formalize external partnerships through MOUs, cooperative agreements, or other official agreements. Formalize internal partnerships through policies and protocols that clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of each partner.

Partnerships may start informally and continue to develop naturally over time. However, formalizing partnerships is an essential component of overall strategic planning. A formal agreement between partners demonstrates a collective investment in the partnership and clarifies each partner's roles and responsibilities. Formalizing also helps to ensure that practices are sustained beyond changes in agency personnel or administration. Agencies should routinely review and update partnership agreements to ensure they are up to date, align with agency goals, and include appropriate personnel.

Formal internal partnerships can include:

- Policies that establish cross-training between disciplines
- Procedures to include victim services personnel in key case-related activities (e.g., death notifications, property return, public relations)
- Inclusion of victim services personnel in strategic planning meetings when appropriate (e.g., CompStat report-outs, budget planning, policy review)

Formal external partnerships can include:

- MOUs among members of a multidisciplinary team to address high-risk community concerns (e.g., domestic violence, sexual assault response, human trafficking)
- Cost-sharing agreements among multiple law enforcement agencies sharing victim services personnel to implement a regional victim services response
- MOUs between law enforcement and a child advocacy center to conduct child forensic interviews

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