

Needs Assessment Plan

The Equal Access to Safety Initiative

Hampden County, Massachusetts

Section 1: INTRODUCTION

The Equal Access to Safety Initiative is a collaboration between Goodwill of the Springfield/Hartford Area and the YWCA of Western Massachusetts. The Initiative is funded by a three year grant from the U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women to enhance services for people with disabilities and those who are Deaf in Hampden County, Massachusetts, who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual assault. Senior staff members from the YWCA and Goodwill comprise the Initiative Team. They carry primary responsibility for this project. The Team hired a project manager to staff the project.

The Team has been meeting for a number of months to build an effective, mutually beneficial collaboration. As a part of the planning process significant time has been spent on developing understanding of shared mission, vision, goals, values, and assumptions. The Team has worked to build the foundation for a strong, long-term collaboration. This has included significant sharing of information about each organization, communication, confidentiality, decision-making, and areas of potential concern. In addition, key terms to be used by the collaboration have been defined. Mandated reporting requirements in Massachusetts and other mandates were reviewed for potential implications for the project.

In order to effectively meet the needs of people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual assault, the Initiative Team will undertake a needs assessment. A strategic plan with an implementation plan will be developed utilizing the information from the needs assessment. The focus of the Initiative is on the YWCA and Goodwill. It is on organizational change within the two organizations and on the relationship between the two organizations.

A. Vision Statement

We envision an inclusive service delivery system that provides a safe, accessible, respectful environment for people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual assault.

B. Mission Statement

The mission of the Equal Access to Safety Initiative in Hampden County is to enhance services for people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence and sexual assault so that each organization, both individually and collectively, responds effectively to their needs.

This will be accomplished by enhancing services for people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence and sexual assault through:

- Cultivating a culture and environment that responds in a respectful and inclusive manner.
- Creating policies and practices that focus on responsiveness, accessibility, safety and the promotion of seamless services.
- Fostering collaborative and cooperative relationships between members of the collaboration.
- Integrating each discipline's knowledge and expertise.
- Eliminating physical, attitudinal, cultural and programmatic barriers that prevent people from accessing services that are timely, supportive and responsive.
- Ensuring the delivery of appropriate assistance at whatever point a person enters the system.

C. Collaboration Members

The Equal Access to Safety Initiative is a collaboration between Goodwill Industries of the Springfield/Hartford Area and the YWCA of Western Massachusetts. Both collaboration members are affiliated with national and international organizations with long and rich histories. Both local organizations are among the oldest affiliates in the county.

1. GOODWILL INDUSTRIES OF THE SPRINGFIELD/HARTFORD AREA <http://www.ourgoodwill.org/>

In 1902 poor and destitute immigrants living in Boston Massachusetts touched a Methodist minister named Edger Helms and stirred him to take action on their behalf. He understood that these people could be best served by having their dignity restored through productive work. He conceived of the idea of collecting used goods and clothing and

refurbishing the items to resell. From that single idea the Goodwill model was born and has flourished. There are now 187 Goodwills in this country and 24 more throughout the world, making Goodwill Industries the largest provider of services to people with disabilities and other disadvantaging conditions. In 1925, a group of Springfield Massachusetts residents reached out to Rev. Helms and he worked with them to found the Goodwill of Springfield.

Today Goodwill Industries of the Springfield/Hartford Area (Goodwill) is one the largest providers of rehabilitation services in the region. In addition to vocational rehabilitation services, Goodwill Industries of the Springfield/Hartford Area offers residential and family support services; a day service option for adults with developmental disabilities; and a full range of workforce development services designed to assist individuals motivated to work but with barriers to employment. Our vision, "We at Goodwill Industries of Springfield/Hartford Area will be satisfied only when every person in our community has the opportunity to achieve his or her fullest potential and to participate and contribute fully in all aspects of life" articulates our commitment that the Goodwill movement will continue to be an agent of change supporting people with disabilities to become fully enfranchised members of their communities.

2. YWCA OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS

<http://www.ywworks.org/>

The YWCA of Western Massachusetts has been a strong force in the lives of women in need since 1868. They are the oldest and largest membership organization for women in the region and one of the oldest YWCAs in the country. Today the YWCA reaches out to a diversity of women representing many ethnicities, religions, ages and socio-economic backgrounds through eighteen different community-based programs. The YWCA strives to bring women of diverse backgrounds together in membership to work towards the empowerment of women and to help build a position of leadership in the community.

The YWCA of Western Massachusetts is a leader in providing services to battered women, pregnant and parenting teens, at-risk youth, and victims of sexual assault. The programs and services reflect a commitment to the provision of safe shelter and supportive service options for women and children. Services include two battered women's shelters, rape crisis programs, housing and legal advocacy, young parents programs, family violence programs, youth and young women's programs, employment and training programs, mentoring programs, and sexual assault prevention education programs.

Section 2: Needs Assessment Goals

A. Purpose

The purpose of the Needs Assessment is to gather practical information on existing policies, procedures, practices, knowledge, and attitudes at the YWCA and Goodwill that impact people with disabilities and Deaf people we serve who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual assault. Collecting information from program participants, staff, board, and stakeholders will inform us of strengths and areas in need of improvement at Goodwill and the YWCA. The information will be used to develop a strategic plan with manageable and achievable goals in keeping with our Initiative goals.

Each organization views strong collaborations as a means to meeting participant needs as well as furthering their organizations vision, mission, and goals. Each organization views The Equal Access to Safety Initiative as a means to meeting participant needs for safety and accessibility in a welcoming environment; as a means to furthering their organizations vision, mission, and goals. The Needs Assessment is another step in building the strong foundation for the work of this collaboration.

B. Needs Assessment Goals

Each organization in the Initiative has a long-standing commitment to a participant-centered approach to service delivery, and to policies and procedures that focus on the needs of participants. Both organizations are committed to providing appropriate, responsive, safe, accessible quality service, including embracing new approaches to service delivery and systems change. Both organizations are committed to respecting differences, including but not limited to language, race, gender, religion, age, ethnicity, sexual identity, socio-economic status, abilities, and disabilities. This includes treating participants, colleagues, and others with respect and acceptance. In working toward our goals for the Needs Assessment these commitments will always be kept in the forefront.

Goal 1:

Identify programmatic and physical barriers to receiving timely, appropriate, quality services at each agency, as well as strategies that support and facilitate access and increase responsiveness.

Goal 2:

Identify cultures and attitudes of each organization that support or limit a welcoming, accessible, safe, and supportive environment for survivors with disabilities.

Goal 3:

Identify the existing policies, procedures, practices - strengths and areas in need of improvement - and those that are missing at each organization to provide timely, appropriate quality services.

Goal 4:

Identify knowledge and attitudes at:

- Goodwill related to domestic violence and sexual assault;
- YWCA related to disability, Deaf culture, and accessibility;

- **Both agencies related to the intersection of these issues.**

Goal 5:

Identify how the YWCA and Goodwill can work together most effectively to serve survivors with disabilities within the context of the greater social service system in Hampden County, Massachusetts.

Section 3: Information Sources

A. Existing Information

Currently there is limited data or research that specifically addresses needs, safety and accessibility of people with disabilities and Deaf people who are victims of domestic violence and/or sexual assault in Massachusetts, and in Hampden County in particular. The Initiative has drawn on information gathered through Massachusetts state agencies that collect data on people with disabilities and Deaf people who are victims of domestic violence and/or sexual assault. We understand that existing information cannot substitute for but can compliment new information that will be collected by the Initiative through our Needs Assessment.

1. Massachusetts Disabled Persons Protection Commission

The Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC) is an independent state agency whose purpose is to investigate and remediate cases of abuse of the Commonwealth's most vulnerable citizens. DPPC's mission is to protect adults with disabilities from the abusive acts or omissions of their caregivers through investigation, oversight, public awareness and prevention. For additional information about DPPC:

<http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=dppchomepage&L=1&L0=Home&sid=ldppc>

- In 2007, DPPC's hotline received 7485 calls to report abuse and deaths of persons with disabilities in Massachusetts.
- From January through December of 2007 the DPPC hotline received 588 calls from Hampden County, 193 of which were referred for investigation and 62 led to criminal investigations.
- Between January and June of 2008 the DPPC hotline received 330 calls from Hampden County, 126 of which were referred for investigation and 46 led to criminal investigations.

2. Massachusetts Department of Public Health

a. Current Data

The Massachusetts Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Systems (MA BRFSS survey of adults in Mass.) data from 2005-2007 shows that among women, 27% of those with disabilities reported lifetime sexual violence compared to 13% of those without disabilities. This disparity was most striking among women ages 18-44; 38% of women with disabilities in this age category reported lifetime sexual violence compared with 15% of similarly aged women without disabilities.

http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dph/behavioral_risk/report_2007.pdf

b. Data from 1988-1997

A report is available of an analysis of 1988-1997 data from publicly funded rape crisis centers in Massachusetts. In that ten year time period: 2080 people (8%) were disabled; 16,716 people (64%) were not disabled; and for 7222 people (28%) the disability status is unknown. Page 17 of the report focuses on survivors with disabilities.

http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dph/com_health/violence/sexasslt.pdf

B. New Information

New data will be gathered during the Needs Assessment process through focus groups, surveys and individual interviews. Each method used will be designed to meet the specific needs of the audience, including access and safety considerations. We will safeguard individual and organizational confidentiality and pay keen attention to Mandated Reporting requirements. Collecting information from program participants, staff, board, and key informants will inform us of strengths and areas in need of improvement at Goodwill and the YWCA. The information will be used to develop a strategic plan with manageable and achievable goals in keeping with our Initiative mission and vision.

Section 4: Methods, Target Audiences, and Numbers

4-A Introduction

The Equal Access to Safety Initiative will use three methods for gathering information: focus groups, interviews, and surveys. Safety considerations, access considerations, confidentiality, mandatory reporting, and the consent process are all addressed in this document in Sections B and C.

Section 4-B includes detailed information on methods for gathering information from program participants. Program participants are survivors of domestic violence and/or

sexual assault served by the YWCA and people with disabilities served by Goodwill. Any individual invited to participate in a focus group who does not want to be in a focus group but is willing to be individually interviewed will be offered an interview. We will not specifically recruit for nor design focus groups or interviews for people with disabilities or Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence and / or sexual assault aside from one Deaf woman who is a survivor living in the YWCA shelter who will be offered an individual interview. She will be asked the same questions asked of other survivors from the YWCA with additional questions specific to providing services for Deaf people at the shelter.

Section 4-C includes detailed information on methods for gathering information from agency staff, board, interns and volunteers.

Summary of numbers of focus groups, interviews and surveys:

Program Participants	# Of Groups/Interviews	# Of People
Focus Groups	13	98
Interviews	2	2

Staff, Board, Volunteers, Interns	# Of Groups/Interviews/Surveys	# Of People
Focus Groups	7	42
Interviews	9	11
Surveys	6	126
Estimated totals	22	179

4-B Gathering Information from Program Participants

Program participants are survivors of domestic violence and/or sexual assault served by the YWCA, and people with disabilities served by Goodwill. Two methods of information gathering will be used: focus groups and individual interviews. Aside from people specifically invited for an interview, individual interviews will be offered to program participants who do not want to be in a focus group but are willing to have an individual interview.

Summary of numbers for focus groups and interviews for program participants:

Program Participants	# Of Groups/Interviews	# Of People
Focus Groups	13	98
Interviews	2	2

1. Program Participants Recruitment Process for Focus Groups and Interviews

a. How participants will be recruited

- A face-to-face conversation will be used to recruit program participants to take part in a focus group or interview. All individuals invited to participate will be current program participants of either the YWCA or Goodwill; there will be no public advertising.
- Recruiters will be a staff person from the same agency who has participated in training by the Team and is a supervisee of a Team member. The recruiter will be known to the program participant. She will be their case manager, their counselor or someone equivalent known to them.
- Materials will be in easily understood language that is intended to be appropriate for the target audience and in accessible formats (language, font, etc.)
- The recruiter will give the invitee an invitation letter and a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Sheet to read or will read to them, depending on the needs of the individual. At the end of the conversation the recruiter will take back the invitation letter and FAQ sheet. (See Appendix for copies of the invitation letters and FAQ Sheet.)
- The Goodwill recruiter will have a reply checklist that she will review with each recruit to insure needed information has been collected for accommodation and any other needs. The YWCA recruiter will have an RSVP form that she will review with each recruit to insure needed information has been collected for accommodation and any other needs. (See Appendix for copies of the YWCA RSVP form and Goodwill program participant reply check-list.)
- An individual at the YWCA will be the designated point person for keeping track of all RSVP responses and accommodation requirements for all focus groups and interviews for both the YWCA and Goodwill. The point person will keep the Initiative program manager informed of all RSVPs and accommodation requirements. The Initiative program manager will be responsible for making reasonable accommodation arrangements for focus group and interview participants.

All of the following pertain directly to the recruiter.

- The recruiter will discuss:
 - Content of the invitation letter.
 - Date, time, location of the focus group or interview.
 - The participant will be given a \$10 Wal-Mart gift certificate for participating in the focus group or interview. They will receive it at the beginning of the focus group or interview, can leave at any time if they don't want to continue, and can receive it at another time if they don't want to take it with them. (See invitation letter in Appendix for full description of this information.)
 - The RSVP form for YWCA program participants or Goodwill program participants reply check-list. In particular she will discuss any accommodation needs.
 - Whether or not the individual would like to receive a reminder and if so how to remind her. (phone, face-to-face, other) The recruiter will be known to the program participant. She will be a service provider at the agency where the participant

receives services. She will be their case manager, their counselor or someone equivalent known to them and is therefore familiar with any safety concerns.

- Whether or not the individual is willing to participate.
- If someone recruited for a focus does not want to participate in the group but would be willing to have an individual interview she will be offered an interview.
- The recruiter will answer questions.
- No written materials will be left with the participant unless she specifically requests them and the recruiter has discussed safety issues.
- The Goodwill program participants reply check-list will be reviewed with program participants; filled out by the recruiter; and given to the designated point person. It will not be given to the program participants. The same will be true for the YWCA RSVP form.
- The recruiter will let the designated point person know the responses of invitees and make her aware of any accommodation that will be needed. They will also give the YWCA RSVP forms or Goodwill reply check-lists to the designated point person.
- The recruiter will remind program participants of the date, time and location of their focus group or interview if they have agreed to a reminder. The reminder will be done face-to-face unless a different method was requested by the individual.
- All focus groups and interviews will be held at the agency where the individual receives services. Focus groups will be held during regular meeting times of program participants. Both agencies have physically accessible space.
- No questions will be asked at Goodwill about violence.
- Interviews will be arranged at the agency at a time that is acceptable to the interviewee and interviewer.

2. Methods of Gathering Information from Program Participants

a. Focus groups

As described in the recruitment section, program participants to be invited to join a focus group will be survivors served by the YWCA and people with disabilities served by Goodwill.

Participant Focus Groups			
Agency	Who	# of Groups	# Per Group
YWCA	Holyoke Teen Living Program*	1	8
YWCA	domestic violence residence - Springfield	1	10
YWCA	domestic violence services - Westfield	1	5
YWCA	Substance abuse/mental health /domestic survivors - Westfield**	1	5
YWCA	community based - Springfield - Group 1	1	8
YWCA	community based - Springfield - Group 2	1	8
YWCA	sexual assault	1	6

YWCA	Youth Build Girls***	1	10
YWCA	Youth Build Boys***	1	10
YWCA	Young Parent Services	1	10
Goodwill	People with less significant cognitive disabilities	1	6
Goodwill	MRC**** consumers with significant mental health issues	1	6
Goodwill	consumers with physical disabilities	1	6
	TOTAL	13	98

* Will only interview program participants ages 18 and over. Program serves youth ages 16-24.

** Program participants are domestic violence survivors who are struggling with co-occurring issues of mental health and substance abuse

*** Will only interview program participants ages 18 and over. Program serves youth ages 17-24.

**** MRC – Mass. Rehabilitation Commission

Focus groups will be used to bring together groups of 3-10 program participants for a moderated discussion on open ended questions. The groups will last about an hour aside from the time it takes to get people settled.

- YWCA program participant focus groups will include people in the same program at the YWCA. Goodwill program participant focus groups will include people in the same program at Goodwill and with similar levels of cognitive ability.
- Any materials distributed will be in easily understood language that is intended to be appropriate for the target audience and in accessible formats (language, font, etc.)
- All focus groups will be held in space at the agency where the individual receives service and be accessible for the individuals who will be attending.
- Individuals from Goodwill in need of assistance will be provided support in getting to and entering the room where the Focus Group will be held.
- Each focus group will have a group facilitator, recorder, floater, and support person from the same agency as the group participants. (Additional information on the role for each of these is below.) All will participate in a training to insure: consistency; clear understanding of roles, responsibilities, and reasons for the focus groups; and an opportunity to role play. All will be mandated reporters. Information on Mandated Reporting in Massachusetts can be found elsewhere in this document.

As program participants enter the room they will:

- Be welcomed.
- Be offered a snack.
- Be given a \$10 Wal-Mart gift card. If they do not feel safe keeping the gift card arrangements will be made for them to access the gift card at another time.

At the beginning of each focus group the facilitator will introduce herself and others in the room (facilitator and floater). The facilitator will be from the same agency as the program participants. The floater will be a Team member.

The facilitator will explain (Scripts can be found in Appendix):

- The purpose of the focus group and that they are being called upon as experts to assist us.
- She will also explain the process of the focus group and guidelines to encourage respect and safety for others in the group.
- Questions are intended to elicit information about the agencies, the services they provide, and access to services for those served by the agency. YWCA participants will be told that questions are not to gather personal experiences relating to violence, abuse or neglect. These issues will not be raised with Goodwill participants.
- Anyone can discontinue at any point if they are feeling uncomfortable. It will be made clear that leaving before the conclusion will not have any impact on the services they receive from the agency.
- No one will be forced to answer questions that make them uncomfortable.
- A person will be available at each focus group meeting to provide emotional support for anyone needing it either during or just following. The individual will be outside of the room. Focus group participants will be told that this individual is available, where to find her and that someone is available to escort them to the individual if requested. An accessible space will be made available that will allow for confidentiality and safety.

Additional details on consent, confidentiality, mandated reporting, and safety considerations can be found in other sections of this document.

Definitions of Team member roles for focus groups:

- Focus Group Facilitator:

The facilitator will follow the script designed by Initiative Team members. This includes welcoming people, the purpose of the focus group, consent, mandatory reporting, confidentiality, safety, and thanking people for coming. (Scripts can be found in the Appendix.) She will guide the discussion utilizing questions and prompts determined by the Team. The facilitator will also be responsible for insuring that people feel the environment is safe, and understand that they can leave at any time. She will also keep track of time with the assistance of the floater.

Facilitators will be a member of the Initiative Team. YWCA Team members will facilitate YWCA focus groups; Goodwill Team members will facilitate Goodwill groups.

- Focus Group Recorder:

The recorder will be responsible for objectively recording the discussion of the focus group questions, and, if there are no objections, for making an audio recording of the session. The recorder will keep track of themes, significant comments, and new information using a debriefing form to be completed at the end of each focus group with the facilitator and floater. The recorder will not participate in the discussion.

The Project Manager will be the recorder at all focus groups. If not possible, the recorder will be a member of the Initiative Team. The recorder will be responsible for insuring that all written information and recordings are kept in a safe place. (See section on confidentiality.)

- **Focus Group Floater:**

Whenever possible, there will be an additional Initiative Team member present to assist the facilitator and recorder as needed. The floater will assist with registration, food, room set-up, accommodations, and that focus group participants feel safe and comfortable. If anyone feels unsafe and wants to leave the focus group, the floater will bring them to the support person who will be in a safe space in the same building, if they choose to. The floater can also assist the facilitator by summarizing information on an easel pad so group participants can see what has been said. She will keep track of time and signal the facilitator when it is time to wrap up.

- **Focus Group Support person:**

A person will be available at each focus group meeting to provide emotional support for anyone needing it either during or just following. She will always be from the agency, i.e. she will be from YWCA if it is a YWCA focus group and from Goodwill if it is a Goodwill focus group. The individual will be outside of the room. An accessible space will be made available to insure confidentiality and safety. Focus group participants will be told that this individual is available. The YWCA support person will be a social worker with a BSW or MSW. The Goodwill support person will be a case manager. All will have professional training in crisis management as well as training from their own organization. All will have resources available from within their agency to provide needed supports as well as knowledge of community resources in case they are needed. By virtue of working for Goodwill or the YWCA they are mandated reporters. (See section on mandated reporters.)

b.) **Interviews**

Two program participants will be offered individual interviews unless they prefer to be in a focus group. One is a Deaf woman who is a survivor living in the YWCA shelter. She will be asked the same questions asked of other survivors from the YWCA with additional questions specific to providing services for Deaf people at the shelter. Arrangements will be made to insure she has an appropriate interpreter present. The other interview will be offered to a Deaf/blind woman who is a Goodwill program participant. She will be asked the Goodwill focus group questions. Arrangements will be made to insure she has an appropriate interpreter present who is not the interpreter where she lives. Individual interviews will be offered to program participants who do not want to be in a focus group but are willing to have an individual interview.

Participant Interviews			
Agency	Who	# of Interviews	Total People
YWCA	Deaf person/survivor living in shelter	1	1
Goodwill	Deaf/blind person	1	1
	TOTAL	2	2

Interviews will be arranged at a time that is acceptable to the interviewee and interviewer. They will be at the agency where the individual receives service. They will last approximately one hour. Interviewers will be from the same agency as the program participant. Wherever possible a recorder will also be present. Both will participate in the same training as focus group facilitators, recorders and floaters, as described above. Both will be mandated reporters. Information on mandated reporting in Massachusetts can be found elsewhere in this document.

The interviewer will introduce herself and the recorder (if present) to the interviewee. The interviewer will explain (script can be found in Appendix):

- The purpose of the interview and that the interviewee is being called upon as an expert to assist us.
- Give the interviewee a \$10 Wal-Mart gift card. If they do not feel safe keeping the gift card arrangements will be made for them to access the gift card at another time.
- Questions are intended to elicit information about the agencies, the services they provide, and access to services for those served by the agency. The YWCA participant will be told that questions are not to gather personal experiences relating to violence, abuse or neglect. The issues will not be raised with the Goodwill participant.
- Interviewees can discontinue at any point if they are feeling uncomfortable. It will be made clear that leaving before the conclusion will not have any impact on the services they receive from the agency.
- They will also be told that they do not have to answer questions that make them uncomfortable.

Additional details on consent, confidentiality, mandated reporting and safety considerations can be found in other sections of this document.

3. Consent Process for Program Participants

A passive consent process will be used for program participants. Program participants will be asked for verbal consent at the focus group or interview. Passive consent will be clearly outlined in the focus group opening remarks and by the interviewer. Confidentiality, mandatory reporting, safety, and access will also be addressed in the opening remarks. (See below.) If they choose to leave early they will still receive their gift card. They will also be told that there is someone for them to talk to individually in a private space outside of

the focus group room. People will be told they can leave the focus group or discontinue the interview at any time. Gift cards will be given out before the focus group or interview actually begins. Once the remarks have been read and they choose to stay in the group it will be assumed that they have given passive consent.

A written consent will be obtained from guardians if an individual with a guardian is going to be interviewed or be in a focus group. It is expected that there will be very few such individuals.

4. Confidentiality Considerations for Program Participants

Both the YWCA and Goodwill are strongly committed to confidentiality of information for everyone participating in the Needs Assessment.

- No personal information will be collected in the Needs Assessment process aside from the RSVP form. (See RSVP form in Appendix.) The RSVP information will be used by the Project Manager as a means of confirming who will be in the focus groups and interviews and contacting them if a reminder is agreed to, and only if it is safe to do so. No other RSVP information will be aggregated or shared.
- In the focus group, interview, and survey, participants will be asked not to provide any identifying information about staff or other program participants. In the introduction to the focus group they will be told:
We ask that you keep what is said in this room. We cannot stop people from talking once they leave but, again, we ask you not to. We want everyone to feel free to share their ideas and comments.
- No identifying information will be included in any aspect of the Needs Assessment report. This will be explained at the beginning of each focus group and interview.
- Focus group participants will be asked to keep confidential any information discussed or shared during the focus group with others who didn't participate in their specific focus group.
- The opening remarks of each focus group and interview will make it clear that there will be no adverse ramifications to their services due to any information shared.
- The recorder will not note specific identifiers for speakers in her notes.
- Any information gathered through the Needs Assessment process will be kept in a locked cabinet by the Initiative program manager. The individual at the YWCA who will be receiving and recording the RSVPs and the surveys will keep all information in a locked cabinet while she has it. The Initiative program manager she will keep it in a locked cabinet once she receives it from the YWCA. Draft copies of the Needs Assessment report will also be kept in the cabinet.
- All notes, records, recordings, surveys, RSVP forms, etc. related to the Needs Assessment will be destroyed after the Strategic Plan has been approved by the Office On Violence Against Women and both the YWCA and Goodwill have signed off on it. Once they are no longer needed by the project manager on a day-to-day basis they will be kept in a locked file cabinet in a storage unit that is behind locked doors in a secure facility.

Initiative Team members will receive information collected in the broadest possible terms, minimizing identifiers as much as possible. Team members will receive copies of the debriefing forms from each focus group and interview. No gender, names, dates, times or identifying information will be shared. The Project Manager will be identifying the themes, patterns, and issues that emerge utilizing information from a debriefing form. Information on policies, practices, procedures, knowledge, needs, strengths, weaknesses, etc. will be shared within the Team for the purposes of future planning.

Information specific to an individual agency can be shared within the Team. This information can then be shared with the agency executive director/president after discussion with other member of the Team and deemed to be appropriate. No information will be shared with others in either agency without prior discussion by the Team.

Prior to completing the Needs Assessment Report the Team will discuss what will be shared specific to an agency with the president/executive director of the agency. Information will be included in the Needs Assessment Report in the broadest terms possible with the least amount of identifying information possible.

5. Mandatory Reporting Requirements or Intent to Harm

The exception to the confidentiality statement above pertains to mandated reporting. Massachusetts has very strong mandatory reporting requirements. All staff at both agencies are mandated reporters. If a situation arises in which mandatory reporting is required, YWCA program participants will be encouraged to report themselves with the assistance of a staff person. The YWCA will notify participants that a report is being filed unless it places child/children at risk. At Goodwill staff will file the report. A decision will be made by Goodwill on a case-by-by case basis as to whether or not participants will be notified that a report is being made. Further action will be taken after appropriate consultation. Members of the Team will be notified, with no identifying information, that a report has been made.

Focus group participants and interviewees will be reminded of mandated reporting requirements at the beginning. The script for program participants will include the following information:

Massachusetts is a mandatory reporting state. That means that if you talk about someone hurting you or one of your friends, we may be required to report this information.

(YWCA participants; Goodwill participants from Mass Rehabilitation Commission; and Goodwill participants with physical disabilities) *If you talk about domestic violence and sexual assault that may be affecting your minor children, we may be required to report this information. Or, if you talk about domestic violence and sexual assault that is personally happening to you, and you are a person with a disability or are a Deaf person, we may be required to*

report this information. If we need to make a report we will let you know unless it will place your child or children at further risk. The same would be true if you specifically name someone who is a person with a disability or is a Deaf person. If you feel you need to report domestic violence and sexual assault that is happening to you, you may report this yourself by calling _____ at _____ or meet with someone after the meeting is over. I can give you the phone number again after we are finished if you need it.

The following must be reported due to mandated reporting requirements:

- Suspected abuse of people with disabilities between the ages of 18 and 59.
- Suspected abuse and neglect of children below the age of 18.
- Suspected abuse and neglect of elders age 60 and older.

Additionally an exception to confidentiality will be made if someone discloses intent to harm herself or others.

Appropriate required steps will be taken to protect the individual and/or the person she intends to harm. (Additional information on Mandated Reporting can be found in the Appendix.)

6. Safety Considerations for Program Participants

Every effort will be made to protect the safety of individuals participating in the Needs Assessment process. We will also make every effort to develop tools and processes to maximize the safety of all involved.

- There will be no public advertising. All individuals participating are current program participants of either the YWCA or Goodwill. They will be individually invited to participate. (See section on recruitment.)
- Palm cards with local resources will be made available to anyone requesting one.
- All materials will be in easily understood language that is intended to be appropriate for the target audience and in accessible formats (language, font, etc.)
- All focus groups and interviews will be held in space at the agency where the individual receives service that is accessible for the individuals who will be attending.
- Support people for the focus groups (see description elsewhere) will have resources available for program participants in need of emotional support either during or just following a focus group. Additionally they will have information on Mandated Reporting in Massachusetts in case a situation arises where a report must be made. All employees of both agencies are mandated reporters. (See section on Mandated Reporting.)
- No one will be allowed to observe any focus group or interview aside from Team members or individuals trained specifically for the pre-determined roles described earlier.

- If someone requires a personal care assistant, an alternate assistant will be provided upon request through the RSVP form. Their usual assistant will not be allowed in the focus group or interview. They can remain on the site so they can be available should the individual need their services.
- No guardians will be allowed in an interview or focus group.

Recruiters, focus group leaders and interviewers will attend training and have a script to follow. (Copy of scripts can be found in the Appendix.) At the beginning of each focus group, interview it will explain that:

- Questions are intended to elicit information about the agencies, the services they provide, and access to services for those served by the agency. YWCA questions are not to gather personal experiences relating to violence, abuse or neglect.
- Questions will be designed to minimize the likelihood of personal information being disclosed.
- Anyone can discontinue at any point if they are feeling uncomfortable. It will be made clear that leaving before the conclusion will not have any impact on the services they receive from the agency.
- No one will be forced to answer questions that make them uncomfortable.
- A person will be available at each focus group meeting to provide emotional support for anyone needing it either during or just following. The individual will be outside of the room. Focus group participants will be told that this individual is available, where to find her and that someone is available to escort them to the individual if requested. An accessible space will be made available to insure confidentiality and safety.
- No personal care attendants or guardians will be allowed to participate in or attend any interview or focus group. An alternative personal care attendant will provided upon request on the RSVP form.

Additionally:

- To the best of our ability, sites selected for focus groups and interviews will be where people can feel safe. We understand that each individual self-determines safety. Every effort will be made to make adjustments for safety if requested.

7. Access Considerations for Program Participants

The Initiative is committed to providing full access for all program participants throughout the Needs Assessment process.

- All focus groups and interviews will be held in space at the agency where the individuals receives service. It will be accessible for the individuals who will be attending.
- Language interpretation and Sign Language Interpreters will be made available upon request.
- All written materials, questions, and scripts will be in language intended to be appropriate for the program participants.

- Reasonable accommodation will be provided according to the needs of those participating in the Needs Assessment. The YWCA RSVP form for focus groups and interviews at the YWCA will include a check-list of potential accommodations, including requesting an alternate PCA, and space will be available for any request not listed. The Goodwill recruiter will review the reply check-list with invitees. It will contain similar information to the RSVP form. (copies of both can be found in the appendix) Every effort will be made to provide reasonable accommodation based on these requests. The Project Manager will be responsible for overseeing requested accommodations.

8. Incentives for Program Participants

- Program participants will be given a \$10 Wal-Mart gift certificate at the beginning of the focus group or interview. When they are given the gift certificate they will be asked if they feel safe keeping.
- Anyone who feels it is unsafe to keep the gift certificate can arrange with agency staff to keep it for them and then make it available upon request.

4-C Agency Information – Staff, Board, Volunteers, and Interns

The Equal Access to Safety Initiative will use three methods for gathering information from agency staff, board, volunteers, and interns: focus groups, interviews, and surveys. The interviews include Team members from both the YWCA and Goodwill. (All focus group, interview and survey questions are in the Appendix.)

Summary of numbers of focus groups, interviews and surveys for staff, board, volunteers and interns:

Providers	# Of Groups/Interviews/Surveys	# Of People
Focus Groups	7	42
Interviews	9	11
Surveys	6	126

1. Recruitment process for Staff for Focus Groups and Interviews

b. How staff will be recruited

- A face-to-face conversation will be used to recruit staff to participate in a focus group or interview. Recruiters will be their supervisor or a Team member from their agency who is known to them. Recruiters will have participated in a training by the Team.
- The recruiter will give the invitee an invitation letter, an RSVP form, glossary of terms developed by the Initiative, FAQ Sheet, and an envelope for returning the RSVP form. The invitee can give the RSVP form to the recruiter in the envelope to be mailed or mail it herself. Staff will be recruited from very diverse geographic sites served by the agencies so RSVP forms will need to be mailed if people don't want to return them immediately to the recruiter. (See Appendix for a copy of the letter, FAQ Sheet, RSVP form, and the glossary.)
- An individual at the YWCA will be the designated point person for keeping track of all RSVP responses and accommodation requirements for all focus groups and interviews for both the YWCA and Goodwill. The stamped envelope given to recruits will be addressed to this individual. The point person will keep the Initiative program manager informed of all RSVPs and accommodation requirements. The Initiative program manager will be responsible for making reasonable accommodation arrangements for focus group and interview participants.

All of the following pertain directly to the recruiter.

- The recruiter will discuss with all recruits:
 - Content of the invitation letter.
 - Date, time, location of the focus group or interview.
 - The RSVP form. In particular she will discuss any accommodation needs.
 - Confirm whether or not the individual is willing to participate.
 - If someone recruited for a focus does not want to participate in the group but would be willing to have an individual interview she will be offered an interview.
 - Whether or not the individual would like to receive a reminder and if so how to remind her. (phone, face-to-face, other)
- The recruiter will answer questions.
- The recruiter will let the designated point person know the responses of invitees and make her aware of any accommodation that will be needed. The Initiative program manager will be responsible for making reasonable accommodation arrangements for focus group and interview participants.
- The recruiter will remind people of the date, time and location of their focus group or interview if they have agreed to a reminder. It will be done face-to-face unless a different method was requested by the individual.
- All focus groups and interviews will be held at the agency within regular working hours in space that is physically accessible for those who will be attending.
- Interviews will be arranged at the agency site where the staff person works at a time that is acceptable to the interviewee and interviewer.

2. Methods of Gathering Information from Staff, Board, Volunteers and Interns

a) Focus groups

Staff to be invited to participate in a focus group:

Provider Focus Groups				
Agency	Who	# of Groups	# Per Group	Total People
YWCA	Leadership Team, CFO, Director of Facilities Management	1	6	5
YWCA	Site Directors/ Direct Care Supervisors	1	8	8
YWCA	Direct Care Staff	3	6	18
Goodwill	Case Managers	1	3	3
Goodwill	Job Coaches/ Direct Care Staff	1	8	8
	TOTALS	7	31	42

Focus groups will be used to bring together groups of 3-10 agency staff for a moderated discussion on open ended questions. The groups will last about an hour aside from the time it takes to get people settled.

- Focus groups will include people in similar positions or who work very closely together. They will be grouped by agency, with people from the YWCA together and people from Goodwill together.
- Any materials distributed will be in easily understood language that is intended to be appropriate for the target audience and in accessible formats (language, font, etc.)
- All focus groups will be held in space at the agency where they work and be accessible for the individuals who will be attending.
- Each focus group will have a group facilitator, recorder, floater, and support person. The facilitator will be a paid, professional consultant with experience in group facilitation, needs assessments, strategic planning, and familiarity with disability services and domestic violence/ sexual assault services. No others will be from the same agency as the group participants aside from the facilitator. (Additional information on the role for each of these is below.)
- The facilitator, recorder, floater, and support person will participate in a training to insure: consistency; clear understanding of roles, responsibilities, and reasons for the focus groups; and an opportunity to role play. All will be mandated reporters. Information on Mandated Reporting in Massachusetts can be found elsewhere in this document.

As focus group participants enter the room they will:

- Be welcomed.
- Asked to sign in or be assisted in signing in if assistance is requested. (Initials only.)
- Be offered a snack.
- Be given a written, pre-focus group survey. (See Appendix for copy of the survey.) They will be asked to return the written survey before the group begins.

At the beginning of each focus group the facilitator introduce herself and others in the room (Facilitator and floater).

The facilitator will explain (Script can be found in Appendix):

- The purpose of the focus group and that they are being called upon as experts to assist us.
- She will also explain the process of the focus group and guidelines to encourage respect and safety for others in the group.
- Questions are intended to elicit information about the agencies, the services they provide, and access to services for those served by the agency. Participants will be told that questions are not to gather personal experiences relating to violence, abuse or neglect.
- Anyone can discontinue at any point if they are feeling uncomfortable.
- No one will be forced to answer questions that make them uncomfortable.
- A person will be available at each focus group meeting to provide emotional support for anyone needing it either during or just following. The individual will be outside of the room. Focus group participants will be told that this individual is available, where to find her and that someone is available to escort them to the individual if requested. An accessible space will be made available that will allow for confidentiality and safety.

Additional details on consent, confidentiality, mandated reporting, and safety considerations can be found in other sections of this document.

Definitions of roles for focus groups:

- Focus Group Facilitator:

The facilitator will be a paid, professional consultant with experience in group facilitation, needs assessments, strategic planning, and familiarity with disability services and domestic violence/ sexual assault services. A strong section on confidentiality will be in her written contract.

The facilitator will follow the script designed by Initiative Team members. This includes welcoming people, the purpose of the focus group, consent, mandatory reporting, confidentiality, safety, and thanking people for coming. (Script can be found in the Appendix.) She will guide the discussion utilizing questions and prompts determined by the Team. The facilitator will also be responsible for insuring that people feel the environment is safe, and understand that they can leave at any time. She will also keep track of time with the assistance of the floater.

- Focus Group Recorder:

The recorder will be responsible for objectively recording the discussion of the focus group questions, and, if there are no objections, for making an audio recording of the session. The recorder will keep track of themes, significant comments, and new information using a

debriefing form to be completed at the end of each focus group with the facilitator and floater. The recorder will not participate in the discussion.

The Project Manager will be the recorder at all focus groups. If not possible, the recorder will be a member of the Initiative Team. The recorder will be responsible for insuring that all written information and recordings are kept in a safe place. (See section on confidentiality.)

- **Focus Group Floater:**

Whenever possible, there will be an additional Initiative Team member present to assist the facilitator and recorder as needed. The floater will not be from the same agency as the staff in the group. If that is not feasible it will be the most neutral party possible. The floater will assist with registration, food, room set-up, accommodations, and that focus group participants feel safe and comfortable. If anyone feels unsafe and wants to leave the focus group, the floater will bring them to the support person who will be in a safe space in the same building, if they choose to. The floater can also assist the facilitator by summarizing information on an easel pad so group participants can see what has been said. She will keep track of time and signal the facilitator when it is time to wrap up.

- **Focus Group Support person:**

A person will be available at each focus group meeting to provide emotional support for anyone needing it either during or just following. She will always be from the agency, i.e. she will be from YWCA if it is a YWCA focus group and from the Goodwill if it is a Goodwill focus group. The individual will be outside of the room. An accessible space will be made available to insure confidentiality and safety. Focus group participants will be told that this individual is available. The YWCA support person will be a social worker with a BSW or MSW. The Goodwill support person will be a case manager. All will have professional training in crisis management as well as training from their own organization. All will have resources available from within their agency to provide needed supports as well as knowledge of community resources in case they are needed. By virtue of working for Goodwill or the YWCA they are mandated reporters. (See section on mandated reporters.)

b. Interviews

Staff to be invited for an interview:

Provider Interviews			
Agency	Who	# of Interviews	Total People
YWCA	Executive director / Admin. Asst.	1	2
YWCA	Human Resources Coordinator/Volunteer Coordinator	1	2
YWCA	Director of Resource Development	1	1
YWCA	Deputy Director	1	1

YWCA	Receptionist	1	1
Goodwill	President	1	1
Goodwill	Vice President of Human Resources	1	1
Goodwill	Vice President of Rehabilitation Services	1	1
Goodwill	Program Director	1	1
	TOTALS	9	11

Individual interviews will be used to gather information from senior staff at the YWCA and Goodwill. This provides an opportunity for more individualized questions and allows the individuals to communicate their insights in their own style and time. It also allows for more flexibility in prompts and follow-up. Individual interviews will be offered to anyone invited to participate in a focus group that does not want to be in a focus group but is willing to be interviewed. Recruitment will be via the same process as for focus group participants.

Interviewees include members of the Initiative Team. Questions have been added to their interviews to allow for a broader discussion of the Initiative. (Questions can be found in the Appendix.)

Interviews will be arranged at a time and location that is acceptable to the interviewee and interviewer. They will last approximately one hour.

All interviews will be done by the Initiative project manager. If not possible, the interviewer will be a member of the Initiative Team but will not be from the same agency as the interviewee. Additionally, a Team member from the other agency will attend as recorder whenever possible, i.e., someone from Goodwill will record the YWCA interviews and someone from YWCA will record the Goodwill interviews.

The interviewer and recorders will participate in the same training as focus group facilitators, recorders and floaters, as described above. All will be mandated reporters. Information on mandated reporting in Massachusetts can be found elsewhere in this document.

The interviewer will introduce herself and the recorder (if present) to the interviewee. The interviewer will explain (Script can be found in Appendix):

- The purpose of the interview.
- Questions are intended to elicit information about the agencies, the services they provide, and access to services for those served by the agency. Interviewees will be told that questions are not to gather personal experiences relating to violence, abuse or neglect.
- Interviewees can discontinue at any point if they are feeling uncomfortable.
- They will also be told that they do not have to answer questions that make them uncomfortable.

Additional details on consent, confidentiality, mandated reporting and safety considerations can be found in other sections of this document.

c. Surveys

Survey will be given to:

Provider Surveys			
Agency	Who	# of Surveys	Total # of Surveys
YWCA	Board	1	10
YWCA	Finance, Maintenance, Technology	1	6
YWCA	Volunteers, Interns	1	15
YWCA	Direct Care Staff	1	60
Goodwill	Board	1	10
Goodwill	Direct Care Staff	1	25
	TOTAL	6	126

Surveys will be used to collect information from board members. They will also be used to collect information from staff who have not participated in a focus group or interview at the YWCA and Goodwill, as well as volunteers and interns. (Survey can be found in the Appendix.) This will allow the Team to gather information from a substantially larger number of people.

At a staff meeting they will receive a newsletter that explains the project. Staff will receive the written survey at a later staff meeting where they will also receive verbal information about the project. This individual will have participated in training presented by the Team. A reminder to return surveys will be given verbally at a subsequent staff meeting. (Surveys and newsletter can be found in the Appendix.)

Volunteers and Interns will also receive a written survey. It will be sent to them with a cover letter. Well in advance of the survey they will be sent a newsletter that explains the project. (Surveys and newsletter can be found in the Appendix.)

Surveys for board members will be sent and submitted electronically. They will receive information about the project and survey at a board meeting before it is sent. The advance information will include background information on the project, that the survey will be sent electronically, and web information for linking to the survey. The actual survey link will be sent by the executive director. One reminder will be sent to board members who have not completed a survey. (Survey can be found in the Appendix.)

Information on all surveys will include a statement about implied consent. The consent process for any surveys will be the actual completion and returning of the survey. Not returning a survey will indicate a lack of consent. Survey responses will be compiled by a designated point person at the YWCA. With all surveys distributed will be a stamped envelope addressed to the designated point person. The point person will be responsible for providing the information to the project manager in a timely manner.

3. Consent Process

For agency staff, volunteers, and interns we will use a passive consent process. People will be asked for verbal consent at the focus group or interview. The questions they will be asked to address will be based on their work experience at the agency or with the agency. We will not be gathering information based on their own personal life experiences nor any personal information.

Passive consent will be clearly outlined in the focus group opening remarks and by the interviewer. Confidentiality, mandatory reporting, safety, and access will also be addressed in the opening remarks. (See below) People will be told they can leave the focus group or discontinue the interview at any time. They will also be told that there is someone for them to talk to individually in a private space outside of the focus group room. Once the remarks have been read and they choose to stay in the group it will be assumed that they have given passive consent.

The consent process for any surveys will be the actual completion and returning of the survey. Cover information will include a statement about implied consent. Aside from board members the surveys will be completed in hard copy (written). One reminder will be sent to those who have not completed a survey. Not returning a survey will indicate a lack of consent. Survey responses will be compiled by a designated point person at the YWCA. With all surveys distributed will be a stamped envelope addressed to the designated point person. (Surveys can be found in the Appendix.)

4. Confidentiality Considerations

Both the YWCA and Goodwill have a strong commitment to confidentiality of information about staff, volunteers, interns, program participants, as well as the workings of each agency. In all circumstances staff, board members, volunteers and interns are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty, integrity and conduct.

- No personal information will be collected in the Needs Assessment process aside from the RSVP form. (See RSVP form in appendix) The RSVP information will only be used by the Project Manager as a means of confirming who will be in the focus groups and interviews, and for contacting them if a reminder is needed. Gender and how many from each agency program will be aggregated for the Needs Assessment Report. No other RSVP information will be aggregated or shared.

- In the focus group, interview, and survey, participants will be asked not to provide any identifying information about staff or other program participants. In the introduction to the focus group they will be told:
We ask that you keep what is said in this room. We cannot stop people from talking once they leave but, again, we ask you not to. We want everyone to feel free to share their ideas and comments.
- No identifying information will be included in any aspect of the Needs Assessment report. This will be explained at the beginning of each focus group and interview.
- The opening remarks of each focus group and interview will make it clear that there will be no adverse ramifications for employment due to any information shared.
- Focus group participants will be asked to keep confidential any information discussed or shared during the focus group with anyone who didn't participate in their specific focus group.
- The recorder will not note specific identifiers for speakers in her notes. Any information gathered through the Needs Assessment process will be kept by the in a locked cabinet. The individual at the YWCA who will be receiving and recording the RSVPs and the surveys will keep all information in a locked cabinet while she has it. The Initiative program manager she will keep it in a locked cabinet once she receives it. Draft copies of the Needs Assessment report will also be kept in the cabinet.
- All notes, records, recordings, surveys, RSVP forms, etc. related to the Needs Assessment will be destroyed after the Strategic Plan has been approved by Office On Violence Against Women and both the YWCA and Goodwill have signed off on it. Once they are no longer needed by the project manager on a day-to-day basis they will be kept in a locked file cabinet in a storage unit that is behind locked doors in a secure facility.

Initiative Team members will receive information collected in the broadest possible terms, minimizing identifiers as much as possible. Team members will receive copies of the debriefing forms from each focus group and interview. No gender, names, dates, times or identifying information will be shared. The Project Manager will be identifying the themes, patterns, and issues that emerge utilizing information from a debriefing form. Information on policies, practices, procedures, knowledge, needs, strengths, weaknesses, etc. will be shared within the Team for the purposes of future planning.

Information specific to an individual agency can be shared within the Team. This information can then be shared with the agency executive director/president after discussion with other member of the Team and deemed to be appropriate. No information will be shared with others in either agency without prior discussion by the Team.

Prior to completing the Needs Assessment Report the Team will discuss what will be shared specific to an agency with the president/executive director of the agency. Information will be included in the Needs Assessment Report in the broadest terms possible with the least amount of identifying information possible.

5. Mandatory Reporting Requirements or Intent to Harm

The exception to the confidentiality statement above pertains to mandated reporting. Massachusetts has very strong mandatory reporting requirements. All staff at both agencies are mandated reporters. If a situation arises in which mandatory reporting is required YWCA program participants will be encouraged to report themselves with the assistance of a staff person and Goodwill staff will file the report. It will be discussed with the Team as a part of the debriefing process. Further action will be taken after appropriate consultation.

Focus group participants and interviewees will be reminded of mandated reporting requirements at the beginning. The script for program participants will include the following information:

Massachusetts is a mandatory reporting state. That means that if you talk about someone hurting you or one of your friends, we may be required to report this information. If you talk about domestic violence and sexual assault that may be affecting your minor children, we may be required to report this information. Or, if you talk about domestic violence and sexual assault that is personally happening to you, and you are a person with a disability or are a Deaf person, we may be required to report this information. If we need to make a report we will let you know unless it will place your child or children at further risk. The same would be true if you specifically name someone who is a person with a disability or is a Deaf person. If you feel you need to report domestic violence and sexual assault that is happening to you, you may report this yourself by calling _____ at _____ or meet with someone after the meeting is over. I can give you the phone number again after we are finished if you need it.

The following must be reported due to mandated reporting requirements:

- Suspected abuse of people with disabilities between the ages of 18 and 59.
- Suspected abuse and neglect of children below the age of 18.
- Suspected abuse and neglect of elders age 60 and older.

Additionally an exception to confidentiality will be made if someone discloses intent to harm herself or others.

Appropriate required steps will be taken to protect the individual and/or the person she intends to harm. (Additional information on Mandated Reporting can be found in the Appendix.)

6. Safety Considerations

Every effort will be made to protect the safety of individuals participating in the Needs Assessment process. The Team will also make every effort to develop tools and processes to maximize the safety of all involved. At the beginning of each focus group, interview, and survey it will be made clear that:

- Questions are intended to elicit information about the agencies, the services they provide, and access to services for those served by the agency. Questions are not to gather personal experiences relating to violence, abuse or neglect.
- Questions will be designed to minimize the likelihood of personal information being disclosed.
- Palm cards with local resources will be made available to anyone requesting one.
- Anyone can discontinue at any point if they are feeling uncomfortable.
- No one will be forced to answer questions that make them uncomfortable.
- A person will be available at each focus group meeting to provide emotional support for anyone needing it either during or just following. The individual will be outside of the room. Focus group participants will be told that this individual is available and where to find her or they can request that someone take them to her. An accessible space will be made available to insure confidentiality and safety.

Additionally:

- To the best of our ability, sites selected for focus groups and interviews will be where people can feel safe. We understand that each individual self-determines safety. Every effort will be made to make adjustments for safety if requested.

7. Access Considerations

The Initiative is committed to providing full access for all agency staff, board members, volunteers, interns, and others throughout the Needs Assessment process.

- Accessible space will be used for all agency focus groups and interviews.
- Reasonable accommodation will be provided according to the needs of those participating in the Needs Assessment. The RSVP form for focus groups and interviews will include a check-list of potential accommodations, and space will be available to request any not listed. Every effort will be made to provide reasonable accommodation based on these requests. The Project Manager will be responsible for overseeing requested accommodations. (Copies of RSVP forms are in the appendix.)
- Language interpretation will be made available upon request through the RSVP or staff supervisor.

Section 5: Work Plan

Activity	Timeframe	Target Completion Date
Needs assessment planning and submit plan to Vera/OVW	April 2009 - October 2009	October 2009
Conduct needs assessment	November 2009 - January 2010	January 2010
Write needs assessment report and submit to Vera/OVW	January 2010 - February 2010	February 2010

Section 7: Appendix

A. Recruitment of Agency Program Participants

This section includes the following documents:

1. YWCA letter of invitation to participate in a focus group for program participants.
2. YWCA letter of invitation to participate in an interview for program participants.
3. YWCA RSVP forms for identified program participants.
4. Frequently Asked Questions for YWCA program participants. To be distributed at a Focus Group or interview.
5. Goodwill letter of invitation to participate in a focus group for program participants.
6. Goodwill letter of invitation to participate in an interview for program participants.
7. Goodwill RSVP checklist for program participants.

**Letter of Invitation to YWCA Program Participants
Participate In a Focus Group**

INITIATIVE LETTERHEAD

Dear xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx, (name of individual)

You are invited by the Equal Access to Safety Initiative to participate in a group discussion about services provided by the YWCA. The Equal Access to Safety Initiative is a collaboration between Goodwill and the YWCA to improve service for individuals with disabilities and Deaf people. We want to provide welcoming, safe, and accessible services for people who come to the agencies. Your voice is important in helping us do this.

In order to determine where changes are needed in each agency, people from the YWCA and Goodwill are collecting information about what would make the services better. We will be meeting with people like you who come to the agencies for programs and services. You are the expert in knowing what you need and how the YWCA can best meet your needs. We believe that people who have accessed our services are the best people to let us know what it was like, what is working well, and what isn't working.

We will also be meeting with employees, board members, and others from each agency to collect their views as well. The information gathered will be compiled into a report. This, in turn, will be used to develop a plan to make the services more welcoming and safe.

The group discussion should last for no more than one and one-half hours during a time when you are regularly at the agency. The time, date, and location of your discussion group is on the R.S.V.P. form. There will be no more than X people in your group.

We will serve refreshments. As a thank you gift for participating in the discussion you will receive a \$10 gift certificate from Wal-Mart.

If you are willing to participate in the group please complete the attached R.S.V.P. form and return it to the staff person who is reviewing this letter with you.

Help completing the R.S.V.P. form is available if you want the assistance. On the R.S.V.P. form you can check any accommodations you may need to participate in the group. If you have a personal care attendant, we would like for this person to wait in another room. If you do need someone with you, you can request an alternate personal care attendant.

If something happens and you can't participate, please let the staff person who is reviewing this form with you know as soon as possible. If you have questions please contact a member of the Equal Access to Safety Initiative Team listed below.

Thank you. We greatly appreciate your time and willingness to help us in providing better services for people in the community.

Sincerely,

YWCA

**Jodi Smith
(413) 755-3125**

**Dawn DiStefano
(413) 755-3114**

Goodwill

**Julie James
(413) 788-6984 x224**

**Carol Hasenjager
(413)265-6465**

Project Manager

**Beth Green
(413) 233-5286**

**Letter of Invitation to YWCA Program Participants
Participate in an Interview**

INITIATIVE LETTERHEAD

Dear xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx, (name of individual)

You are invited by the Equal Access to Safety Initiative to participate in an interview about services provided by the YWCA. The Equal Access to Safety Initiative is a collaboration between Goodwill and the YWCA to improve service for individuals with disabilities and Deaf people. We want to provide welcoming, safe, and accessible services for people who come to the agencies. Your voice is important in helping us do this.

In order to determine where changes are needed in each agency, people from the YWCA and Goodwill are collecting information about what would make the services better. We will be meeting with people like you who come to the agencies for programs and services. You are the expert in knowing what you need and how the YWCA can best meet your needs. We believe that people who have accessed our services are the best people to let us know what it was like, what is working well, and what isn't working.

We will also be meeting with employees, board members, and others from each agency to collect their views as well. The information gathered will be compiled into a report. This, in turn, will be used to develop a plan to make the services more welcoming and safe.

The interview should last for no more than one and one-half hours during a time when you are regularly at the agency. The time, date, and location of your interview is on the R.S.V.P. form. We will

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

serve refreshments. As a thank you gift for participating in the interview you will receive a \$10 gift certificate from Wal-Mart.

If you are willing to participate in the interview please complete the attached R.S.V.P. form and return it to the staff person who is reviewing this form with you.

Help completing the R.S.V.P. form is available if you want the assistance. On the R.S.V.P. form you can check any accommodations you may need to participate in the interview. If you have a personal care attendant, we would like for this person to wait in another room. If you do need someone with you, you can request an alternate personal care attendant.

If something happens and you can't participate, please let the staff person who is reviewing this form with you know as soon as possible. If you have questions please contact a member of the Equal Access to Safety Initiative Team listed below.

Thank you. We greatly appreciate your time and willingness to help us in providing better services for people in the community.

Sincerely,

YWCA

Jodi Smith
(413) 755-3125

Dawn DiStefano
(413) 755-3114

Goodwill

Julie James
(413) 788-6984 x224

Carol Hasenjager
(413)265-6465

Project Manager

Beth Green
(413) 233-5286

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

YWCA Program Participant Focus Group/Interview RSVP Form

(To be reviewed with program participant, completed, and returned to recruiter)

*I will complete this form to confirm your participation in a focus group/interview.
The group/interview will be held in physically accessible location/room at the YWCA.
All the information you provide on this form is confidential.
Please let us know how we can make the session accessible for you.
Focus groups will held in physically accessible locations/rooms.*

You will receive a \$10 gift certificate from Wal-Mart for participating. If you cannot safely take it home we will make an arrangement so you can access it when you want it.

First name only: _____
Gender: F M

___ I agree to participate in a focus group on
_____ at _____ at _____
(date) (time) (location)

___ I do not agree to participate.

Please check all of the following that apply:

You can follow up with me by:

___ Email. If yes, my email is _____

___ Phone. If yes,

My home phone number is _____

Is this a safe place to leave a message? Yes ___ No ___

My cell phone number is _____

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

Is this a safe place to leave a message? Yes ___ No ___

I prefer TTY _____. I prefer other: _____

Through program staff _____

____ You don't need to contact me with a reminder of the date, time, location of the group.

To attend, I need the following accommodations:

____ American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter

____ Other language interpreter

Please specify language: _____

____ Listening device

____ Alternate format for print materials

____ I need someone to read to me

____ Braille

____ Large print

____ Other (Please specify format: _____)

____ Other accommodation needs?

Please specify: _____

Other:

____ Dietary concerns/food allergies (for snacks) (focus group only)

Please specify: _____

____ I have a PCA (Personal Care Attendant).

____ I have a Guardian.

**Equal Access to Safety Initiative
YWCA of Western Massachusetts**

Frequently Asked Questions about the Initiative

(For YWCA program participants during recruitment. This will be returned to the recruiter at the end of the conversation unless the individual asks to keep it and it is determined it is safe for her to keep it. The recruiter will know the individual and be able to assess safety with her.)

Thank you for agreeing to help The YWCA of Western Massachusetts and Goodwill Industries learn how we can provide better services to you and others in the community. We thought you might want to know more about why we are doing this and answer a few questions that others like you have asked.

What is the Equal Access to Safety Initiative?

Goodwill Industries and The YWCA of Western Mass received a grant from the federal government to work together to improve services for people who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual assault. Both agencies want people who come to their agencies to feel safe, to be able to access the services that already exist, and to feel welcome. This cooperation between the two agencies is called the Equal Access to Safety Initiative.

Why are you talking to me?

We want to talk to you because you are one of the people that can best tell us about what services and supports you want or need from the agencies. You are the expert on your own services and what you need.

Do I have to talk if I don't want to?

No, you don't have to say anything during the group/interview if you don't want to. Participating in this process will not have any impact on any services that you receive and you can leave if you are uncomfortable staying. But we hope you will try to talk about how we can be sure you feel safe, that you can access the services that already exist, and that you feel welcome at the agency when you come.

If I talk, will you use my name?

We will not use your name in anything that we write about the meeting. We may use something you tell us in our report, but it will not say who said it.

Will you be giving me something for being here?

As a thank you for coming you will receive a \$10 gift certificate for Wal-Mart.

What happens if I lose the gift certificate?

Once we give you the gift certificate it will up to you to keep it safe. We cannot give you a new one if it is lost or stolen.

What if I don't feel safe in taking the gift certificate home?

It is up to you to decide if it is safe to take the gift certificate with you. If you do not feel safe taking it home, a staff person from the YWCA will keep it for you until you feel that it is safe. Tell us who you want us to give the gift certificate to. She will give it to you when you want it.

What are you going to do with the information?

We will put all of the information together into a report. The report will help us develop a plan to make changes at the YWCA and Goodwill to provide better services. Talking with us will not have any effect on the services that you already receive.

Who are you going to share the information with?

The report will be shared with people who work at the YWCA and Goodwill so they will know what needs to be done to make a safe, welcoming and accessible environment for people like you who come to the agencies. Then we will develop a plan so that we can begin to make the changes needed to meet those needs.

What should I tell people about this group if they ask?

You can tell them that you are helping The YWCA and Goodwill by providing information on what you need and how we can provide better services for everyone. But, we ask you not to tell other people what anyone talked about in the (interview/focus group). You wouldn't want anyone to tell what you said and others feel the same way.

If I have a personal care attendant can they come with me?

Your personal care attendant is welcome to bring you; however, we will have a separate room for them to wait in. They cannot be in the room when we are talking with you. If you need someone with you we can provide a different personal care attendant for you while you are in the (focus group/ interview). You will need to request this on the R.S.V.P. form that we give you.

How will I get to the group?

If you need transportation to the (interview/focus group), we will talk with you about making arrangements.

What if I can't come? Who do I tell?

If you say yes and find out that you can't come, you can let the person that invited you know or one of the agency Team members. If you still would like to be in (a/an interview/focus group) we can see if there is another time for you to participate.

**Letter of Invitation to Goodwill Program Participants
Participate In a Focus Group**

*(To be given to the individual to read or will be read to her by the recruiter.
It will be taken back by the recruiter.)*

INITIATIVE LETTERHEAD

Dear xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx, (name of individual)

You are invited by the Equal Access to Safety Initiative to participate in a group discussion about services provided Goodwill. The Equal Access to Safety Initiative is a collaboration between Goodwill and the YWCA. We want to provide welcoming, safe, and accessible services for people who come to the agencies. Your voice is important in helping us do this.

In order to determine where changes are needed in each agency, people from the YWCA and Goodwill are collecting information about what would make the services better. We will be meeting with people like you who come to the agencies for programs and services. You are the expert in knowing what you need and how Goodwill can best meet your needs. We believe that people who have accessed our services are the best people to let us know what it was like, what is working well, and what isn't working.

We will also be meeting with employees, board members, and others from each agency to collect their views as well. The information gathered will be compiled into a report.

Your safety and confidentiality are important to us. If you participate, no information that specifically identifies you will be

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

used in any of our reports. This focus group is intended to gather information about the organizations.

The group discussion should last for no more than one and one-half hours during a time when you are regularly at the agency. The time, date, and location of your discussion group is on the R.S.V.P. form. There will be no more than X people in your group. We will serve refreshments. As a thank you gift for participating in the discussion you will receive a \$10 gift certificate from Wal-Mart.

If you are willing to be in the group the person who is inviting you to come to the focus group will now read a few questions to you. These are to check for any arrangements you may need to participate in the group.

If you have a personal care attendant, we would like for this person to wait in another room. If you do need someone with you, you can request an alternate personal care attendant.

If something happens and you can't participate, please let the staff person who is reviewing this form with you know as soon as possible. If you have questions please contact a member of the Equal Access to Safety Initiative Team listed below.

Thank you. We greatly appreciate your time and willingness to help us in providing better services for people in the community.

Sincerely,

YWCA

**Jodi Smith
(413) 755-3125**

**Dawn DiStefano
(413) 755-3114**

Goodwill

**Julie James
(413) 788-6984 x224**

**Carol Hasenjager
(413)265-6465**

Project Manager

**Beth Green
(413) 233-5286**

**Letter of Invitation to Goodwill Program Participants
Participate In an Interview**

*(To be given to the individual to read or will be read to her by the recruiter.
It will be taken back by the recruiter.)*

INITIATIVE LETTERHEAD

Dear xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx, (name of individual)

You are invited by the Equal Access to Safety Initiative to participate in an interview about services provided Goodwill. The Equal Access to Safety Initiative is a collaboration between Goodwill and the YWCA. We want to provide welcoming, safe, and accessible services for people who come to the agencies. Your voice is important in helping us do this.

In order to determine where changes are needed in each agency, people from the YWCA and Goodwill are collecting information about what would make the services better. We will be meeting with people like you who come to the agencies for programs and services. You are the expert in knowing what you need and how Goodwill can best meet your needs. We believe that people who have accessed our services are the best people to let us know what it was like, what is working well, and what isn't working.

We will also be meeting with employees, board members, and others from each agency to collect their views as well. The information gathered will be compiled into a report.

Your safety and confidentiality are important to us. If you participate, no information that specifically identifies you will be

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

used in any of our reports. This focus group is intended to gather information about the organizations.

The interview should last for no more than one and one-half hours during a time when you are regularly at the agency. The time, date, and location of your interview group is on the R.S.V.P. form. As a thank you gift for participating in the interview you will receive a \$10 gift certificate from Wal-Mart.

If you are willing to be interviewed the person who is inviting will now read a few questions to you. These are to check for any arrangements you may need to participate in the group.

If you have a personal care attendant, we would like for this person to wait in another room. If you do need someone with you, you can request an alternate personal care attendant.

If something happens and you can't participate, please let the staff person who is reviewing this form with you know as soon as possible. If you have questions please contact a member of the Equal Access to Safety Initiative Team listed below.

Thank you. We greatly appreciate your time and willingness to help us in providing better services for people in the community.

Sincerely,

YWCA

**Jodi Smith
(413) 755-3125**

**Dawn DiStefano
(413) 755-3114**

Goodwill

**Julie James
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**Carol Hasenjager
(413)265-6465**

Project Manager

**Beth Green
(413) 233-5286**

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

Goodwill Checklist for Program Participant Focus Groups/Interviews

(To be read to program participants, completed by recruiter, and returned to the recruiter)

*I will complete this form to confirm your participation in a focus group/interview.
The group/interview will be held in physically accessible location/room at Goodwill.
All the information you provide on this form is confidential.*

You will receive a \$10 gift certificate from Wal-Mart for participating. If you cannot safely take it home we will make an arrangement so you can access it when you want it.

First name only: _____
Gender: F M

___ I agree to participate in a focus group on
_____ at _____ at _____
(date) (time) (location)

___ I do not agree to participate.

(Recruiter: Please check all of the following that apply)

You can follow up with me by:

___ Phone. If yes,
My home phone number is _____
Is this a safe place to leave a message? Yes ___ No ___
My cell phone number is _____
Is this a safe place to leave a message? Yes ___ No ___
I prefer TTY _____. I prefer other: _____
Through program staff _____

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

You don't need to contact me with a reminder of the date, time, location of the group.

To attend, I need the following accommodations:

American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter

Other language interpreter

Please specify language: _____

Listening device

Alternate format for print materials

I need someone to read to me

Braille

Large print

Other (Please specify format: _____)

Other accommodation needs?

Please specify: _____

Other:

Dietary concerns/food allergies (for snacks) (Focus Group only)

Please specify: _____

I have a PCA (Personal Care Attendant).

I have a Guardian.

B. Recruitment of Staff, Board, Volunteers, and Interns

This section includes the following documents:

1. Newsletter to be sent to Agency Staff, Board, Volunteers, and Interns.
2. Letter of invitation to participate in a focus group or interview to be sent to identified Agency Staff, Board, Volunteers, and Interns.
3. RSVP form for identified Agency Staff, Board, Volunteers, and Interns.
4. Frequently Asked Questions for identified Agency Staff, Board, Volunteers, and Interns.
5. Glossary of terms for identified Agency Staff, Board, Volunteers, and Interns.

Equal Access to Safety Initiative

A collaboration between Goodwill Industries of the Springfield/Hartford Area and the YWCA of Western Massachusetts to enhance services for people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual assault

Equal Access to Safety Update

(month) 2009

For Board Members, Staff, Volunteers and Interns of The YWCA of Western Massachusetts and Goodwill Industries of Springfield/Hartford Area

The YWCA and Goodwill have received a three year federal grant from the Office on Violence Against Women. The grant funding provides a unique opportunity for the two organizations to develop a strong, long-term partnership to enhance services for people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual assault.

Why are both organizations committed to this project?

Goodwill and the YWCA both envision an inclusive service delivery system that provides a safe, accessible, respectful environment for people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual assault. Through collaboration we will improve resource sharing and service delivery between the two organizations. If we are successful it will benefit our organizations, the people we serve, and our community.

How many people with disabilities have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual assault?

According to data provided by the Massachusetts Disabled Persons Protection Commission:

- More than ninety percent (90%) of people (both male and female) with developmental disabilities will experience physical or sexual abuse at some point in their lives. Forty-nine percent (49%) will experience ten or more abuse incidents.
- A study of psychiatric inpatients found that eighty-one percent (81%) had been physically or sexually assaulted.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

- Sixty-two percent (62%) of women with physical disabilities reported experiencing emotional, physical or sexual abuse.
- Women with disabilities are raped, assaulted, and abused at rates more than two times greater than those of women without disabilities.

What is our mission?

The mission of The Equal Access to Safety Initiative is to enhance services for people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence and sexual assault so that each organization responds effectively to their needs.

Who has been doing the work on this project?

A team of representatives from each agency has been meeting almost every week since the fall. Team members from the YWCA are: Dawn DiStefano, Director of Resource Development, and Jodi Smith, Deputy Director. Team members from Goodwill are: Julie James, Vice President of Rehabilitation Services, and Carol Hasenjager, Program Director. The Project Manager is Beth Green.

What does this have to do with you?

At some point you might be asked to help the Team by providing information about the services, policies, and practices currently at your agency used in serving people with disabilities and/or Deaf people. The Team will be looking for information on safety, accessibility and systems in both organizations. For improvements to be made it is important to include input from individuals like you in each organization who are familiar with: the agency, current services being provided, the people receiving the services and ideas about how things can be improved for people with disabilities and/or Deaf people that are victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

The information collected will inform the Team of strengths and areas in need of improvement at Goodwill and the YWCA. Once a strategic plan has been developed based on the information collected, the actual work will begin. Everyone in both agencies will be involved in implementing the goals from the strategic plan, including you.

Questions?

Contact a Team member with your questions about the Equal Access to Safety Initiative.

YWCA

Jodi Smith
(413) 755-3125

Dawn DiStefano
(413) 755-3114

Goodwill

Julie James
(413) 788-6984 x224

Carol Hasenjager
(413)265-6465

Project Manager

Beth Green
(413) 233-5286

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

INITIATIVE LETTERHEAD

Tag on letterhead:

The Initiative is funded by a three year grant from
the U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women

Letter of Invitation to Participate In a Focus Group or Interview

(To be sent to identified Agency Staff, Board, Volunteers, Interns)

Dear xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx, (name of individual)

You are invited by the Equal Access to Safety Initiative to participate in a (focus group / interview) to improve services for people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual assault. Your voice is important in bringing about change in your agency. The Initiative, a collaboration between Goodwill Industries of the Springfield/Hartford Area and the YWCA of Western Massachusetts, can make a difference in the lives of the people served by your agency.

The goal of the collaboration is for both agencies to respond effectively to the needs of people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual assault. By hearing from you and others we hope to gain perspectives about how services are currently being provided to these individuals and where there are opportunities for future changes. In particular our goal is to:

- Eliminate physical, attitudinal, cultural and programmatic barriers that prevent people with disabilities and Deaf people from having *equal access to victim service providers* if they have experienced or survived sexual assault and/or domestic violence.
- Eliminate physical, attitudinal, cultural and programmatic barriers that prevent people with disabilities and Deaf people from *experiencing timely, appropriate, and supportive response* by service providers when disclosing sexual assault and/or domestic victimization.

In order to determine where changes are needed Initiative Team members from the YWCA and Goodwill have begun to gather information through a Needs Assessment. The information will be collected through focus groups, interviews and surveys. Staff members of the Equal Access to Safety Initiative Team will be conducting (focus groups / interviews) during regular work hours at your agency. [Focus group only: Your focus group should last for no more than one and one-half hours.] [Interviewees only: Your interview should last no more than 45 minutes. It will be at a time that is convenient for you and the interviewer. Together you will determine where the interview will take place. The interviewer will be contacting you to find a mutually agreeable time.]

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

The primary reason for the needs assessment is to evaluate current service delivery for people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual assault. Questions to be asked are intended to elicit information about the agencies, the services they provide, and access to services for those served by the agency. They are not intended to gather personal experiences relating to violence, abuse or neglect.

Your experience and insight about your agency's service delivery system are key elements to the success of this project. The information gathered from you and others from the agency, along with the information from program participants, will be compiled into a Needs Assessment Report. This, in turn, will be used to develop a strategic plan for the Equal Access to Safety Initiative. Through implementation of the strategic plan we hope to develop a better system for meeting the needs of people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual assault.

Please complete the attached R.S.V.P. form and return it to Beth Green, the Initiative Project Manager, in the enclosed envelope before _____ (deadline). [focus group only] The time, date and location of your focus group is on the R.S.V.P. form and has been scheduled by your agency. If you have questions please contact a member of the Initiative Team listed below.

Thank you. We greatly appreciate your time and willingness to help us in creating systemic change to meet the needs of the people we serve.

Sincerely,

Equal Access to Safety Initiative Team Members

YWCA

Jodi Smith
(413) 755-3125

Dawn DiStefano
(413) 755-3114

Goodwill

Julie James
(413) 788-6984 x224

Carol Hasenjager
(413) 265-6465

Project Manager

Beth Green
(413) 233-5286

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

**YWCA and Goodwill
Agency Staff Focus Group RSVP Form**

Please complete this form to confirm your attendance at a focus group.
Please let us know how we can make the session accessible for you.
Focus groups will be held in physically accessible locations/rooms.
All the information you provide on this form is confidential.

First name only: _____ Gender: F M

___ I agree to participate in a focus group on
_____ at _____ at _____
(date) (time) (location)

___ I do not agree to participate.

Please check all of the following that apply:

You can follow up with me by:

___ Email. If yes, my email is _____

___ Phone. If yes,
My work phone number is _____

My cell phone number is _____

___ You don't need to contact me with a reminder of the date, time, location of the group.

To attend, I need the following accommodations:

___ American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter

___ Other language interpreter (Please specify language: _____)

___ Listening device

___ Alternate format for print materials
___ I need someone to read to me

___ Braille

___ Large print

___ Other (Please specify format: _____)

___ Other accommodation needs?

Please specify: _____

Other:

___ Dietary concerns/food allergies (for snacks)

Please specify: _____

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

**YWCA and Goodwill
Agency Staff Interview RSVP Form**

Please complete this form to confirm your participation in an interview.
Please let us know how we can make the interview accessible for you.
The interview will be held in physically accessible location/room.
All the information you provide on this form is confidential.

First name only: _____ Gender: F M

___ I agree to participate in an interview. The interviewer will contact me to arrange for at a date, time and location that is assessable and convenient for both of us.

___ I do not agree to participate.

Please check all of the following that apply:

The interviewer can contact me and someone can follow up with me by:

___ Email. If yes, my email is _____

___ Phone. If yes,
My work phone number is _____
My cell phone number is _____

To attend, I need the following accommodation:

___ American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter

___ Other language interpreter (Please specify language: _____)

___ Listening device

___ Alternate format for print materials

___ I need someone to read to me

___ Braille

___ Large print

___ Other (Please specify format: _____)

___ Other accommodation needs?

Please specify: _____

___ Other needs?

Please specify: _____

**Equal Access to Safety Initiative
YWCA of Western Massachusetts and Goodwill Industries
Frequently Asked Questions about the Initiative**

(For All Agency Staff, Board, Volunteer and Intern Positions)

Thank you for agreeing to help The YWCA of Western Massachusetts and Goodwill Industries learn how we can provide better services for people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual assault. We thought you might want to know more about why we are doing this and answer a few questions that others like you have asked.

What is the Equal Access to Safety Initiative?

The Equal Access to Safety Initiative is a collaboration between Goodwill Industries of the Springfield/Hartford Area and the YWCA of Western Mass. to enhance services for people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual assault. The YWCA and Goodwill have received a three year federal grant from the Office on Violence Against Women. The grant funding provides a unique opportunity for the two organizations to develop a strong, long-term partnership to enhance services for these individuals. The focus of the project is systems change.

Why do you need my input?

We are looking for information on safety, accessibility and areas in need of systems change in both organizations. For improvements to be made it is important to include input from people like you from each organization who are familiar with: the agency, current services being provided, the people receiving the services and ideas about how things can be improved.

Do I have to talk if I don't want to?

No, you don't have to say anything in the group/interview if you don't want to. Participating in this process will not have any impact your employment with the agency, service on the board, or your volunteering at the agency. You can leave if you are uncomfortable staying. But we hope you will try to talk about how we can make changes in our organizations to be sure we provide safe, assessable and welcoming services at both the YWCA and Goodwill and have good systems in place.

When will the groups/interviews be held?

Groups and interviews will be held at each agency during the regular work day.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

What should I tell people about this group if they ask?

You can tell them that you are helping the YWCA and Goodwill by providing information on how we can provide better services for everyone. But, we ask you not to tell other people what anyone talked about in the (interview/focus group). You wouldn't want anyone to tell what you said and others feel the same way.

Who should I contact if I have a scheduling conflict?

Please contact a member of the Team from your agency if any conflicts arise. If possible, we will arrange an alternate time and date.

Are responses confidential?

All individual responses will be kept confidential by the group facilitators and interviewers. Names will not be linked to individual responses in any of the written information.

What will you do with the information?

The information that you share, along with the feedback from others will be compiled into a Needs Assessment Report. It will help us understand the strengths and areas in need of improvement at Goodwill and the YWCA. Once a strategic plan has been developed based on the information collected, the actual work will begin. Everyone in both agencies will be involved in implementing the goals from the strategic plan, including you.

Who will get the information?

The Needs Assessment Report will go to our funding source which is the Department of Justice Office on Violence against Women. We will be preparing a summary report that will be shared with each agency. The choice of whom to further share the information with is up to each agency. When we begin to make changes in our agencies using the information from the Needs Assessment report, we hope to share the changes that we are making with the public. Again, no individual names will be used unless specific permission is given.

Questions?

Contact a Team member with your questions about the Equal Access to Safety Initiative.

YWCA

Jodi Smith
(413) 755-3125

Dawn DiStefano
(413) 755-3114

Goodwill

Julie James
(413) 788-6984 x224

Carol Hasenjager
(413)265-6465

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

Project Manager

Beth Green
(413) 233-5286

EQUAL ACCESS TO SAFETY INITIATIVE
GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

(This will be given to YWCA agency providers and Goodwill agency providers at the beginning of a focus group or interview and distributed to Board members at a Board meeting.)

Abuse:

Abuse is the non-accidental commission of any act which causes, or creates a substantial risk of physical or emotional injury, including non-consensual sexual activity and financial exploitation of children, elders, people with disabilities, and/or those who are Deaf.

Accessibility:

Accessibility refers to the ability of all people to have equal opportunity and access to services or programs from which they can benefit. Something that is accessible is easy to approach, enter, operate, participate in, and/or use safely and with dignity by a person with a disability. (Adapted from www.accessingsafety.org)

Disability:

A functional limitation that requires an accommodation to perform functions required to carry out daily life activities, whether situational or pervasive over time. One does not experience disability in isolation but in relation to the attitudes and behavior of others. Disability is not just a condition of the person. The person is more or less disabled based on the intersection between herself and the many types of environments within which she interacts. One is more or less disabled based on whether the physical, information, communication and the social and policy environments are accommodating and welcoming of variation in ability. (Modified from www.accessingsafety.org)

Domestic Violence

A pattern of coercive controls that one person exercises over another. It is the actual or threatened physical, psychological, sexual or economic abuse of an individual by someone with whom they have had an intimate or significant relationship. Domestic violence occurs in heterosexual and GLBT relationships and crosses all socio-economic, religious, racial, ethnic, cultural, disability status, class and age groups. Persons with disabilities also experience abuse specifically related to their disabilities which include:

- Denial of disability
- Accusation of faking
- Physical restraint or confinement
- Withholding or destroying medical devices or medication including devices for communication
- Refusing to provide assistance with personal care needs such as toileting, hygiene and eating

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

- Using disability to further isolate by convincing person that providers will not be available or appropriate

Safety:

Safety is freedom from physical, psychological, emotional, mental, or financial harm. What it means to be safe is different for everyone. For example, women may have risks related to their gender and people with disabilities may have their safety compromised based on their disability. We believe that safety is a basic human right. Our work will be guided by the perspective of participants as to what makes them feel safe.

Sexual Assault: (Definition from Mass. Department of Public Health)

Sexual assault is broadly defined as any unwanted sexual activity that is forced or coerced. Force can include verbal threats, physical restraint, use of drugs and or the use or presence of weapons. Consent means against the will of the victim. In Massachusetts, rape is legally defined by three elements: 1) Penetration, no matter how slight or with what; 2) Threat of or actual force; 3) No Consent. Persons with disabilities also experience sexual abuse specifically related to their disabilities which include:

- Demanding or expecting sexual activity in return for help
- Taking advantage of physical weakness
- Using trickery to coerce someone into sexual activities

Victim/Survivor:

Victim and survivor are terms of self-definition. Persons who have experienced domestic or sexual violence decide whether to identify as victims of the violence or as survivors. Typically a victim is a person against whom a crime is committed; most often used as a legal term, but also used in some organizations when discussing women or survivors who come in for services. Typically a survivor is person who has continued to live, prosper or remain functional after a traumatic event; considered an empowering term preferred by the violence against women movement. (Modified from www.accessingsafety.org)

C. Tools for gathering information:

This section includes the following documents:

1. YWCA Participant Focus Group Questions
2. YWCA Participant Interview Questions

3. Goodwill Participant Focus Group Questions

4. YWCA Provider Pre-Focus Group Questions
5. YWCA Provider Focus Group Questions
6. YWCA Provider Interview Questions
7. YWCA Provider Staff Survey Questions
8. YWCA Board Survey Questions

9. Goodwill Provider Pre-Focus Group Questions
10. Goodwill Provider Focus Group Questions
11. Goodwill Provider Interview Questions
12. Goodwill Provider Staff Survey Questions
13. Goodwill Board Survey Questions

QUESTIONS WERE SENT SEPARATELY

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

D. Other:

This section includes the following documents:

1. **Script for Provider Focus Group Leaders And Interviewers**
2. **Script for YWCA Program Participant Focus Group Leaders And Interviewers**
3. **Script for Goodwill Program Participant Focus Group Leaders And Interviewers**
4. **Mandated Reporting Requirements in Massachusetts For People with Disabilities**
5. **Mandated Reporting Requirements in Massachusetts For Child Abuse and Neglect**

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

SCRIPTS

Script #1

For Focus Groups and Interviews with All Agency Staff

Setting the Stage

Hello, my name is _____. I will be the facilitator/interviewer for our conversation today.

Thank you for coming today/for meeting with us. The YWCA of Western Massachusetts and Goodwill Industries of the Springfield/Hartford Area applied for and received a grant from of the Department of Justice Office on Violence against Women to enhance services for people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual assault.

We are asking for your help in identifying what you feel is missing that would make the whole process work better for individuals who come to our agency for help. We would like to hear about what is working well, what is missing, and what barriers there might be for people who receive services from our agency. How can we do better?

We will also be talking directly with people who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual assault and to people with disabilities about service delivery. We want to hear about what goes well and what doesn't go well in receiving services.

With the information gathered from people served by the agencies, staff, board members, volunteers and interns, Goodwill and the YWCA will create a strategic plan that will identify what the two agencies need in terms of training, resources, policies and procedures and so forth.

Who We Are and What We Are Doing Here

(Read this for focus groups; skip for interviews)

There are three of us here today running the focus group discussion. As I said, my name is _____. I will be the discussion leader. I will be asking you some questions. The questions are to help us have a conversation about the YWCA and Goodwill. There are no right or wrong answers. We really want to hear what you have to say so both agencies can provide responsive, appropriate, timely, and quality services.

_____ is here to help if you need something during the focus group, and to assist me if I need any help.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

_____ is the recorder. She will be taking notes on the computer about what people say. She will not be typing anything that could identify you as the one making comments or answering the questions. She will also be tape recording the information. The recording is to help her in case she misses an important point while taking notes. The information will be kept confidential to the best of our ability. No personal identifying information will be recorded. I will explain more about confidentiality in a few minutes. By staying you agree to and understand that your comments, insights, and suggestions will be written down and recorded. Although _____ will write what you say, she will not be recording your name, any description of you or any identifying information about you. If that is not OK please say something now. (Wait to see if anyone requests the group NOT be taped. If someone objects the group will not be taped.) Since no one has commented, we assume it is OK to tape the group.

The focus group will last approximately one hour. The restrooms are located (insert location information here). Please feel free to help yourself to more refreshments.

Glossary of Key Terms

Because there are two very different types of agencies talking about the same topics, we would like to review with you some important, common definitions so that we will all be on the same page when we are talking about the questions. These definitions may be different from what you currently use.

You were given a glossary of key terms when you came in and asked to look them over. Do you have any questions about any of these definitions?

Do you have any other questions?

(Read this for interviews; skip for focus groups)

The interview will be an informal conversation guided by questions. However, we want everyone we interview to hear the same information and questions. I will read a script to cover this information. Then we will move into our conversation.

I will be asking you some questions. The questions are to help us have a conversation. There is no right or wrong answer to any of the questions. We really do want to hear what you have to say about the questions so both agencies can provide responsive, appropriate, timely, and quality services. Our conversation will last about one hour.

(When there is a recorder to assist the interviewer) _____ will be recording what you say on the computer. She will not be typing anything that could identify you by your name as the one making comments or answering the questions. She will also be tape

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

recording the information. The recording is to help her in case she misses an important point while taking notes. The information will be kept confidential to the best of our ability. No personal identifying information will be recorded. If that is not OK please say something now.

(Wait for a response. If the person objects the interview will not be taped.) We assume it is OK to tape the interview.

Do you have any questions at this point?

Consent, Mandatory Reporting, Confidentiality, Safety

(For focus groups and interviews)

This is important so please listen carefully. If you have questions, please be sure to ask.

We are seeking your ideas and opinions but this is not a formal research project. Therefore you will not need to sign anything about consent for participating. By staying and participating in the conversation, you will be giving your consent.

1. You are volunteering your time to be part of this process and you are choosing to participate. You do not have to participate if you don't want to.
2. A variety of questions will be asked about services. You may or may not choose to answer.
3. Questions asked may include topics related to domestic violence and sexual assault but the information we will be asking you about is services and access to services. *We do not want you to share any personal information about domestic violence and sexual assault.*
4. Massachusetts is a mandatory reporting state. That means that if you talk about domestic violence and sexual assault that may be affecting your minor children, we may be required to report this information. Or, if you talk about domestic violence and sexual assault that is personally happening to you, and you are a person with a disability or are a Deaf person, we may be required to report this information. If we need to make a report we will let you know unless it will place your child or children at further risk. The same would be true if you specifically name someone who is a person with a disability or is a Deaf person. If you feel you need to report domestic violence and sexual assault that is happening to you, you may report this yourself by calling _____ at _____ or meet with someone after the meeting is over. I can give you the phone number again after we are finished if you need it.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

(Focus Groups Only)

5. We have a professional counselor from the YWCA/Goodwill in a nearby room. She is very good in helping people who are experiencing issues of domestic violence and/or sexual assault. If you decide that you don't want to answer questions because the information about violence or sexual assault bothers or upsets you, you may ask to talk to her at any time you are here with us. Let _____ know. She can bring you to the counselor any time during the discussion.
6. At any time you may change your mind about participating in this conversation. If you would prefer to talk to someone individually, you have that option and you can let someone here know.
7. At the end of our conversation you may also ask for someone safe to talk to if you experience any concerns about violence or sexual assault that is happening to you.
8. We cannot guarantee confidentiality since some of you may already know each other. We do ask that you do not talk about anything that is said in our conversation after you leave today. We cannot stop people from talking once they leave but, again, we ask you not to. We want everyone to feel free to share their ideas and comments.
9. The people working on this project will keep the information that is collected confidential. Even if we quote something you say we will not include your name. No names will be used in any written information.
10. We will need to record that the information shared came from a specific agency. This information will be used with the intent of effecting change at the YWCA and Goodwill.
11. Information collected from all the group discussions and interviews at interviews at Goodwill and the YWCA will be collected and put into one report. The report will be called the Needs Assessment Report.
12. At any time you may change your mind about participating in this conversation. If you would prefer to talk to someone individually, you have that option and you can let someone here know. We ask that you respect what each person has to say even though you might not agree with it. We also ask that you allow a person to finish speaking before you speak and to be very respectful of everyone here.
13. By choosing to stay in the group you are consenting to participate. You are not signing anything to give your consent. If you choose to stay you agree to participate and you also agree to keep the things said in this group confidential and not talk about them to others after you leave.

Are there any questions?

(Interviews only)

5. The people working on this project will keep the information that is collected confidential. Even if we quote something you say we will not include your name. No names will be used in any written information.
6. We will need to record that the information shared came from a specific agency. This information will be used with the intent of effecting change at the YWCA and Goodwill.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

7. Information collected from all the group discussions and interviews at Goodwill and the YWCA will be collected and put into one report. The report will be called the Needs Assessment Report.
8. By choosing to stay in the interview you are consenting to participate. You are not signing anything to give your consent. If you choose to stay you agree to participate and you also agree to keep the things said confidential and not talk about them to others after you leave.

Do you have any questions?

Continue for All

We are now ready to begin the focus group conversation / interview. Again, we are asking for your help in identifying the services that currently exist and what you feel is missing that would make the whole process work better for people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual assault who come to you for help.

Now we will begin with the (focus group/interview).

(INSERT FOCUS GROUP OR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS HERE.)

Concluding statement:

Thank you for your help in answering these questions today. If you would like any additional information or need someone to talk to, please ask one of us before you leave today and we will be glad to help.

Your participation is very much appreciated and your comments and insight into service delivery has been extremely valuable. Again, thank you for your help. This concludes our focus group or interview.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

Script #2

For Focus Groups and Interviews For People Served By the YWCA

(People who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual assault as well as people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual assault served by the YWCA)

Setting the Stage

Hello, my name is _____. I will be leading the focus group discussion / the interviewer today.

Thank you for coming today/for meeting with us. The YWCA of Western Massachusetts and Goodwill Industries of the Springfield/Hartford Area applied for and received a grant from the Department of Justice Office on Violence against Women to enhance services for people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual assault.

We would like to hear from you about what is working well, what is missing, and what barriers there might be for people who receive services. When we start our conversation we will be asking you questions about things such as what makes you feel welcome when you come to the YWCA for assistance? What makes you feel safe?

We will also be talking to people who work and volunteer at the YWCA and at Goodwill. We want to hear what they think about what goes well and what doesn't go well in providing services at their agency.

With the information we collect we will create a plan that will identify what the two agencies need in terms of training, resources, policies and procedures and so forth.

Who We are and What We Are Doing Here

(Read this for focus groups; skip for interviews)

There are three of us here today running the focus group discussion. As I said, my name is _____. I will be the discussion leader. I will be asking you some questions. The questions are to help us have a conversation about the YWCA and Goodwill. There are no right or wrong answers. We really want to hear what you have to say so both agencies can provide responsive, appropriate, timely, and quality services.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

_____ is here to help if you need something during the focus group, and to assist me if I need any help.

_____ is the recorder. She will be taking notes on the computer about what people say. She will not be typing anything that could identify you as the one making comments or answering the questions. She will also be tape recording the information. The recording is to help her in case she misses an important point while taking notes. The information will be kept confidential to the best of our ability. No personal identifying information will be recorded. I will explain more about confidentiality in a few minutes. You agree to and understand that your comments, insights, and suggestions will be written down and recorded. Although _____ will write what you say, she will not be recording your name, any description of you or any identifying information about you. If that is not OK please say something now. (Wait to see if anyone requests the group NOT be taped. If someone objects the group will not be taped.) Since no one has commented, we assume it is OK to tape the group.

The focus group will last approximately one hour. The restrooms are located (insert location information here). Please feel free to help yourself to more refreshments.

(Read this for interviews; skip for focus groups)

The interview will be an informal conversation guided by questions. However, we want everyone we interview to hear the same information and questions. I will read a script to cover this information. Then we will move into our conversation.

I will be asking you some questions. The questions are to help us have a conversation. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions. We really do want to hear what you have to say about the questions so both agencies can provide responsive, appropriate, timely, and quality services. Our conversation will last about one hour.

(When there is a recorder to assist the interviewer) _____ will be recording what you say on the computer. She will not be typing anything that could identify you by your name as the one making comments or answering the questions. She will also be tape recording the information. The recording is to help her in case she misses an important point while taking notes. The information will be kept confidential to the best of our ability. No personal identifying information will be recorded. If that is not OK please say something now. (Wait for a response. If the person objects the interview will not be taped.) We assume it is OK to tape the interview.

Do you have any questions at this point?

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

Consent, Mandatory Reporting, Confidentiality, Safety

(For focus groups and interviews)

What I am going to say next is very important so please listen carefully and if you have questions, please be sure to ask.

We are seeking your ideas and opinions but this is not a formal research project. Therefore you will not need to sign anything about consent for participating. By staying and participating in the conversation, you will be giving your consent.

1. You are volunteering your time to be part of this process and you are choosing to participate. You do not have to participate if you do not want to.
2. A variety of questions will be asked about services. You may or may not choose to answer.
3. Questions asked may include topics related to domestic violence and sexual assault but the information we will be asking you about is services and access to services. We do not want you to share any personal information about domestic violence and sexual assault.
4. Massachusetts is a mandatory reporting state. That means that if you talk about someone hurting you or one of your friends, we may be required to report this information. If you talk about domestic violence and sexual assault that may be affecting your minor children, we may be required to report this information. Or, if you talk about domestic violence and sexual assault that is personally happening to you, and you are a person with a disability or are a Deaf person, we may be required to report this information. If we need to make a report we will let you know unless it will place your child or children at further risk. The same would be true if you specifically name someone who is a person with a disability or is a Deaf person. If you feel you need to report domestic violence and sexual assault that is happening to you, you may report this yourself by calling _____ at _____ or meet with someone after the meeting is over. I can give you the phone number again after we are finished if you need it.

(Focus Groups Only)

5. We have a professional counselor from the YWCA in a nearby room. She is very good in helping people who are experiencing domestic violence and/or sexual assault. If you decide that you don't want to answer questions because the information bothers or upsets you, you may ask to talk to her at any time you are here with us. Let _____ know. She can bring you to the counselor any time during the discussion.
6. At any time you may change your mind about participating in this conversation. If you would prefer to talk to someone individually you have that option and you can let someone here know.
7. At the end of our conversation you may also ask for someone safe to talk to if you are concerned about violence or sexual assault that is happening to you.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

8. We ask that you keep what is said in this room. We cannot stop people from talking once they leave but, again, we ask you not to. We want everyone to feel free to share their ideas and comments.
9. The people working on this project will keep the information that is collected confidential. Even if we quote something you say we will not include your name. No names will be used in any written information.
10. We will need to record that the information shared came from a specific agency. This information will be used with the aim of bringing about change at the YWCA and Goodwill.
11. Information collected from all the group discussions and interviews at Goodwill and the YWCA will be collected and put into one report. The report will be called the Needs Assessment Report.
12. We would like to review one more time the issues of confidentiality and safety. We ask that what is talked about remains in this room. It could be important for your safety and/or for others in the room. It is also important for people's privacy. While we will do our best to insure confidentiality, privacy and safety, we also want you to realize that information may be disclosed outside of this room without our knowledge.
13. We ask that you respect what each person has to say even though you might not agree with it. You are all entitled to your opinion. We also ask that you allow a person to finish speaking before you speak and to be very respectful of everyone here.
14. By choosing to stay in the group you are consenting to participate. You are not signing anything to give your consent. If you choose to stay you agree to participate and you also agree to keep the things said in this group confidential and not talk about them to others after you leave.
15. Whether you stay through the entire conversation, leave early, choose not to answer some questions or decide not to participate at all, you may still keep your \$10.00 Wal-Mart gift card.

Are there any questions?

(Interviews only)

5. The people working on this project will keep the information that is collected confidential. Even if we quote something you say we will not include the name the person who said it. No names will be used in any written information.
6. We will need to record that the information shared came from a specific agency. This information will be used with the intent of effecting change at the YWCA and Goodwill.
7. Information collected from all the group discussions and interviews at Goodwill and the YWCA will be collected and put into one report. The report will be called the Needs Assessment Report.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

8. By choosing to stay in the interview you are consenting to participate. You are not signing anything to give your consent. If you choose to stay you agree to participate and you also agree to keep the things said in this conversation confidential and not talk about them to others after you leave.

Do you have any questions?

Continue for All

We are now ready to begin the focus group conversation / interview. Again, we are asking for your help in identifying the services that currently exist and what you feel is missing that would make the whole process work better for people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual assault who come to you for help.

Are there any questions before we begin?

Now we will begin with the (focus group/interview).

(INSERT FOCUS GROUP OR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS HERE.)

Concluding statement:

Thank you for your help in answering these questions today. If you would like any additional information or need someone to talk to, please ask one of us before you leave today and we will be glad to help.

Your participation is very much appreciated and your comments and insight into service delivery has been extremely valuable. Again, thank you for your help. This concludes our focus group or interview.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

Script #3 Script for Focus Groups and Interviews For People Served By Goodwill

(People with disabilities and Deaf people)

Setting the Stage

Hello, my name is _____. I will be leading the focus group discussion today.

Thank you for coming. We are asking for your help in learning what works well and what we could do better at Goodwill. We will be asking you questions about things such as what makes you feel welcome when you come to Goodwill for assistance? What makes you feel safe at Goodwill?

Remember how we do a survey every year about work? This time we are going to be asking you about feeling welcome.

Who We are and What We Are Doing Here

(Read this for focus groups; skip for interviews)

There are three of us here today running the discussion. As I said, my name is _____. I will be the discussion leader. I will be asking you some questions. The questions are to help us have a conversation about Goodwill. There are no right or wrong answers. We really want to hear what you have to say about the questions.

_____ is here to help if you need something during the focus group, and to assist me if I need any help.

_____ is the recorder. She will be taking notes on the computer about what people say. She will not be typing anything that could identify you by your name as the one making comments or answering the questions. She will also be tape recording the information. The recording is to help her in case she misses an important point while taking notes. The information will be kept confidential to the best of our ability. No personal identifying information will be recorded. If that is not OK please say something now. (Wait to see if anyone requests the group NOT be taped. If someone objects the group will not be taped.) Since no one has commented, we assume it is OK to tape the group.

The focus group will last about one hour. The restrooms are located (insert location information here). Please feel free to help yourself to more refreshments.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

(Read this for interviews; skip for focus groups)

I will be asking you some questions. The questions are to help us have a conversation. There is no right or wrong answer to any of the questions. We really do want to hear what you have to say about the questions so both agencies can provide responsive, appropriate, timely, quality services. Our conversation will last about one hour.

(When there is a recorder to assist the interviewer) _____ will be recording what you say on the computer. She will not be typing anything that could identify you by your name as the one making comments or answering the questions. She will also be tape recording the information. The recording is to help her in case she misses an important point while taking notes. The information will be kept confidential to the best of our ability. No personal identifying information will be recorded. If that is not OK please say something now. (Wait for a response. If the person objects the interview will not be taped) We assume it is OK to tape the interview.

Do you have any questions at this point?

Consent, Mandatory Reporting, Confidentiality, Safety

(For focus groups and interviews)

This is important so please listen carefully. If you have questions, please be sure to ask.

We are seeking your ideas and opinions but this is not a formal research project. Therefore you will not need to sign anything about consent for participating. By staying and participating, you will be giving your consent.

1. You are volunteering your time to be part of this process and you are choosing to participate. You do not have to participate unless you want to.
2. A variety of questions will be asked about services. You may or may not choose to answer.
3. Massachusetts is a mandatory reporting state. That means that if you talk about someone hurting you or one of your friends, we may be required to report this information.

(For participants from Mass Rehabilitation Commission and participants with physical disabilities only) If you talk about domestic violence and sexual assault that may be affecting your minor children, we may be required to report this information. Or, if you talk about domestic violence and sexual assault that is personally happening to you, and you are a person with a disability or are a Deaf person, we may be required to report this information. If we need to make a report we will let you know unless it will place your child or children at further risk. The same would be true if you specifically name someone who is a person with a disability or is a Deaf person. If you feel you need to report domestic violence and sexual assault

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

that is happening to you, you may report this yourself by calling _____ at _____ or meet with someone after the meeting is over. I can give you the phone number again after we are finished if you need it.

(Focus Groups Only)

4. We have a case manager from Goodwill in a nearby room. She is there to help in case you need it during the discussion. Let _____ know if you need help. She can bring you to the case manager any time during the discussion.
5. At any time you may change your mind about participating in this conversation. If you would prefer an alternate or different method other than the one you are in, you have that option and you can let someone here know.
6. We ask that you keep what is said in this room. We cannot stop people from talking once they leave but, again, we ask you not to. We want everyone to feel free to share their ideas and comments.
7. We ask that you respect what each person has to say even though you might not agree with it. You are all entitled to your opinion. We also ask that you allow a person to finish speaking before you speak and to be very respectful of everyone here.
8. The people working on this project will keep the information that is collected confidential. Even if we quote something you say we will not include your name. No names will be used in any written information.
9. Whether you stay through the entire conversation, leave early, choose not to answer some questions or decide not to participate at all, you may still keep your \$10.00 Wal-Mart gift card.

Are there any questions?

(Interviews only)

4. The people working on this project will keep the information that is collected confidential. Even if we quote something you say we will not include the name the person who said it. No names will be used in any written information.
5. We will need to record that the information shared came from a specific agency. This information will be used with the intent of effecting change at the YWCA and Goodwill.
6. Information collected from all the group discussions and interviews at Goodwill and the YWCA will be collected and put into one report. The report will be called the Needs Assessment Report.
7. By choosing to stay in the interview you are consenting to participate. You are not signing anything to give your consent. If you choose to stay you agree to participate and you also agree to keep the things said in this conversation confidential and not talk about them to others after you leave.

Do you have any questions?

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

Continue for All

Now we will begin with the conversation/interview.

(INSERT FOCUS GROUP OR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS HERE.)

Concluding statement:

Thank you for your help in answering these questions today. If you would like any additional information or need someone to talk to, please ask one of us before you leave today and we will be glad to help.

Your participation is very much appreciated and your comments and insight into service delivery has been extremely valuable. Again, thank you for your help. This concludes our focus group or interview.

Mandated Reporting Requirements in Massachusetts For People with Disabilities

[Required for all staff of the YWCA and Goodwill]

- **What is a Mandated Reporter in Massachusetts?**
Mandated Reporters are persons who, as a result of their profession, are more likely to be aware of abuse or neglect of persons with disabilities. This includes all staff employed by the YWCA and Goodwill. (Statutory requirement) This means that all agency staff are required by law to report any known or suspected cases of abuse (emotional, verbal, physical and sexual) or neglect. Other persons outside of the agencies who are not mandated to report may choose to file reports of suspected abuse.
- **Where mandated reporters must report in Massachusetts**
 - Suspected abuse of people with disabilities (between the ages of 18 and 59) is reported to the Disabled Person's Protection Commission Hotline.
 - Suspected abuse and neglect of children (below the age of 18) is reported to the Department of Children and Families.
 - Suspected abuse and neglect of elders (age 60 and older) is reported to the Elder Abuse Hotline.
 - Any person who is suicidal or homicidal must be reported to the police.
- **Who is mandated to report in Massachusetts?**
 - Person employed by a state agency within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services including but not limited to employees of the Department of Mental Retardation, Department of Mental Health, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission.
 - Person employed by a private agency providing services to people who might be subject to abuse or neglect.
 - Additionally any: physician ♦ medical intern ♦ hospital personnel engaged in the examination, care or treatment of persons ♦ medical examiner ♦ dentist ♦ psychologist ♦ nurse ♦ chiropractor ♦ podiatrist ♦ osteopath ♦ public or private school teacher ♦ educational administrator ♦ guidance or family counselor ♦ day care worker ♦ probation officer ♦ social worker ♦ foster parent ♦ police officer.
- **What is reportable in Massachusetts?**
The standard for reporting suspected abuse and neglect is "reasonable cause to believe" which means that mandated reporters need only a "mere suspicion" that abuse or neglect was committed. It is better to err on the side of action. In addition to reporting suspected abuse and neglect, mandated reporters are also required to report to Disabled Persons Protection Commission all cases in which an individual

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

with a disability has died, regardless of whether or not abuse or neglect is suspected.

- **Consequences for not reporting crime, abuse and neglect committed against persons with disabilities**

In Massachusetts, Mandated Reporters can be fined up to \$1,000 for failure to report incidences of suspected abuse and neglect of children, elders, and individuals with disabilities.

Statutory Definitions Specific to Mandated Reporting

- **Abuse** – An act or omission, which is not self-abuse, and which results in serious physical or emotional injury to a person. It causes or creates a substantial risk of physical or emotional injury; or constitutes a sexual offense under the laws of the Commonwealth; or any sexual contact between a caretaker and an individual under the care of that individual. This definition is not dependent upon location (i.e., abuse can occur while the individual is in an out-of-home or in-home setting.)
- **Act** – A caretaker's intentional, reckless, or negligent action regardless of whether the act is performed with intent to harm.
- **Caretaker** – Any state agency or any individuals responsible for the health and welfare of a person by providing for or directly providing assistance in meeting a daily living need regardless of the location within which such assistance occurs.
- **Disabled Person** – A person between the ages of eighteen to fifty-nine, inclusive, who is mentally retarded, as defined by section one of chapter one hundred and twenty-three (M.G.L. c.123, s.1) or who is otherwise mentally or physically disabled and as a result of such mental or physical disability prevents or restricts the individual's ability to provide for his/her own daily living needs. (Statutory definition)
- **Emotional Injury** – Impairment to or disorder of the intellectual or psychological capacity of a child as evidenced by observable and substantial reduction in the child's ability to function within a normal range of performance and behavior.
- **Institutional Abuse or Neglect** – Abuse or neglect which occurs in any facility including, but not limited to, group homes, residential or public or private schools, hospitals, nursing homes, detention and treatment facilities, family foster care homes, group day care centers and family day care homes.
- **Neglect** – Failure by a caretaker, either deliberately or through negligence or inability, to take those actions necessary to provide a child with minimally adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision, emotional stability and growth, or other essential care; provided, however, that such inability is not due solely to

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

inadequate economic resources or solely to the existence of a handicapping condition. This definition is not dependent upon location (i.e., neglect can occur while the child is in an out-of-home setting).

- **Omission** – A caretaker's failure, whether intentional or not, to take action to protect a child or person with a disability or to provide for their living needs to the degree that it causes serious physical or serious emotional injury or both.
- **Serious Physical Injury** – Impairment of the physical condition of a person including but not limited to: death, brain damage; permanent disfigurement, any burn; fracture of any bone; subdural hematoma; intramuscular injury; bruising, abrasion, laceration or puncture of the skin; bleeding impairment of a bodily system, function, limb or organ including human skin; any other such nontrivial injury; bedsores or similar condition or harmful symptoms resulting from the use of medication or chemicals with informed consent or appropriate authorization; or malnutrition or dehydration.
- **Serious Emotional Injury** – An injury to the intellectual functioning or emotion state of a child or person with a disability caused by either the verbal or nonverbal conduct of a caretaker, including but not limited to: coercion, harassment, the inappropriate isolation from family, friends, or regular activity and verbal assault including but not limited to ridiculing, intimidating, yelling or swearing.

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

[Required for all staff of the YWCA and Goodwill]

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is the Massachusetts state agency charged with the responsibility of protecting children from child abuse and neglect. To report abuse or neglect, call the Child-at-Risk Hotline anytime of the day or night at 1-800-792-5200.

To report possible child abuse or neglect in Massachusetts, **you must first file an oral report by calling the Child-at-Risk Hotline at 1-800-792-5200** to notify the appropriate area office of the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Even if you complete the 51A Report Form you must also first phone DCF directly or the Child-at-Risk Hotline. For information on how to report child abuse and neglect outside of Massachusetts, please call the National Child Abuse Hotline, 1-800-4-A-CHILD.

DCF relies on reports from professionals and other concerned individuals to learn about children who may need protection. DCF receives reports on more than 100,000 children each year. Certain professionals are mandated to report child abuse and neglect (listed below); however, anyone can report child abuse and neglect. If you learn that a child has been abused or neglected, or if you are concerned that a child may be in danger of abuse and neglect, please first call DCF and file an oral report immediately - *before* you mail or fax the 51A Report Form. Qualified professionals are available 24 hours a day to take reports and address your concerns.

When you call DCF to report child abuse and neglect, please do your best to provide the following information:

- The name, address, sex, date of birth or approximate age, present whereabouts of the reported child or children, and any other children in the household;
- The names, addresses and telephone numbers of the child's parents or other persons responsible for the child's care;
- The primary language spoken by the child and the child's caretaker;
- If you are a mandated reporter: your name, address, telephone number, profession and relationship to the child;
- if you are a non-mandated reporter: your name, address, telephone number, profession and relationship to the child; or you may remain anonymous;
- The nature and extent of the abuse or neglect;
- Any evidence or knowledge of prior injury, abuse, maltreatment or neglect;

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

- Your opinion of current risk to the reported child and to any other child in the home or substitute care setting;
- If the above information was given to you by a third party, the identity of that person, unless the third party has requested anonymity;
- The circumstances under which you first became aware of the child's alleged injuries, abuse or neglect;
- Any action taken to treat, shelter or assist the child; and
- Any additional information you believe may be helpful in establishing the cause of the child's injury or the person responsible.

Mandated Reporters

Massachusetts law requires many professionals who work with children to notify DCF if they suspect that any child has been, or is at risk of being, abused or neglected.

Massachusetts law defines the following professionals as mandated reporters:

- Physicians, medical interns, hospital personnel engaged in the examination, care or treatment of persons, medical examiners;
- Psychologists, emergency medical technicians, dentists, nurses, chiropractors, podiatrists, optometrists, osteopaths;
- Public or private schoolteachers, educational administrators, guidance or family counselors;
- Office of Child Care Services licensors;
- Day care and child care workers, including any person paid to care for, or work with, a child in any public or private facility, or home or program funded or licensed by the Commonwealth, which provides day care or residential services. This includes child care resource and referral agencies, as well as voucher management agencies, family day care and child care food programs;
- Social workers, foster parents, probation officers, clerks magistrate of the district courts, and parole officers;
- Firefighters or police officers;
- School attendance officers, allied mental health and licensed human services professionals;
- Psychiatrists, and clinical social workers, drug and alcoholism counselors; and
- Priests, rabbis, clergy members, ordained or licensed ministers, leaders of any church or religious body, accredited Christian Science practitioners, or a person

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

employed by a church or religious body to supervise, educate, teach, train or counsel a child on a regular basis.

Mandated reporters who are staff members of medical or other public or private institutions, schools or facilities, must either notify the Department directly or notify the person in charge of the institution, school or facility, or his/her designee, who then becomes responsible for filing the report. Should the designee/person in charge advise against filing, the staff member retains the right to contact DCF directly.

Massachusetts law requires mandated reporters to **immediately make an oral report to the Department of Children and Families (DCF)** when, in their professional capacity, they have reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of 18 years is suffering from abuse or neglect. You should report any physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse, including sexual abuse; or any indication of neglect, including malnutrition; or any instance in which a child is determined to be physically dependent upon an addictive drug at birth.

After you file an oral report with DCF, a written report must be submitted to DCF within 48 hours after the oral report has been filed. Please note that any mandated reporter who fails to file required oral and written reports can be punished by a fine of up to \$1,000.00.

During the screening and investigation of a 51A Report, any mandated reporter who has information that she believes might aid the Department in determining whether a child has been abused or neglected shall, upon request by DCF, disclose the relevant information to the Department. Under the law, mandated reporters are protected from liability in any civil or criminal action, and from any discriminatory or retaliatory actions by an employer.

Mandated Reporters Guide:

http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dss/can_mandatedrptrguide_english.pdf