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**Community Needs Assessment**

FY26 – FY28 grant cycle

**Purpose:**

Oftentimes, we have a pretty good sense of what is happening in our community. Anecdotes and lived experience – especially if we work in a shelter setting – can give us a lot of insight! A needs assessment quantifies these things.

* Pay special attention to changes in the landscape.
* Surprises are a sign of success. A good needs assessment reaches out to parts of the community you don’t work with as much to create a bigger, more holistic picture.

The act of asking these questions - and deeply listening to the answers - can help increase community readiness. Listening to people’s ideas and solutions and integrating that feedback into programming helps to create buy-in and increase participation. It builds local relationships, which is the foundation of our work.

Involve your coalition members in the process. Doing the actual work of collecting and analyzing the data builds a shared understanding of needs and sets a natural foundation for collaboration.

In these turbulent times, it behooves us to be as strategic as possible with our funding. Use this data to inform your programming.

Then use it to seek new funding opportunities. Share it with your community partners so they can use it to seek additional funding through shared factors.

One goal of this requirement is to build staff capacity, not only to do these reports, but to understand the big picture of prevention. Why do we do what we do and is it working for the people we serve? Alaska does not have as much academic research as other parts of the country so you are generating the data that can help to tell our stories.

This is not just a box to check that you farm out to a contractor and throw on a shelf to collect dust. *This process is an important a part of the work*. It takes time & capacity to do this**.** That’s why we built it into the first year of the grant cycle and made you submit a whole timeline about it. It is also a chance to tell CDVSA how things are going**,** to inform the prevention program work at the State level.

**Recommendations:**

We don’t expect you to reinvent the wheel, nor are we trying to create extra work. If you have recently done a needs assessment, please feel free to use that as a foundation! Check back with community, update the statistics and see if the trends remain the same.

The most important thing in that situation is to assess what has changed/is changing.

Reach out to folks that you don’t always have contact with.

If you need help or guidance, please reach out. We will also workshop this in October.

If you feel this would work better as a Powerpoint that you can share with community, by all means, do that! We encourage snapshots and Canva infographics. Share this with your local municipal assembly, etc.

**Suggested Data Sources:**

* [YRBS survey](https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/yrbs.alaska/viz/yrbs/LandingPage) – Youth Risk Behavior Survey (see if there is data specific to your area)
* [BRFSS survey](https://alaska-dph.shinyapps.io/BRFSS/) – Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey, AK Department of Health
* [Alaska Public Health Data Hub](https://dph-data-hub-alaska-dhss.hub.arcgis.com/) – a database of databases. From here you can explore ACEs, risk factors in pregnant families, child abuse & neglect, substance use, and hospital discharges, and deaths. Dig in to see what is available in your area.
* [the Alaska Victimization](https://dps.alaska.gov/CDVSA/Resources/Alaska-Victimization-Survey) survey done by UAA every 5 years (next one in progress)
* [Public Safety crime reports](https://dps.alaska.gov/Statewide/R-I/UCR)
	+ [Crime in Alaska (2023)](https://dps.alaska.gov/getmedia/e172226d-cf30-45c7-a8d3-63560d635b8f/Crime-in-Alaska-2023)
	+ [Felony Level Sex Offenses (2023)](https://dps.alaska.gov/getmedia/e4930fad-537f-46a5-9e4b-eaa0f456dcc7/Felony-Level-Sex-Offenses-2023)
		- [Sex Offenses Report to the Legislature (2019)](https://www.ajc.state.ak.us/acjc/docs/rr/sex_offenses_report.pdf)
* [CDVSA 2024 annual report](https://dps.alaska.gov/getmedia/e3df67b2-89de-4f8a-b0ba-0c43cab10df5/CDVSA-SFY2024-Fact-Sheet.pdf) based on shelter data from around Alaska. (More [here](https://dps.alaska.gov/CDVSA/Resources/CDVSA-Publications).)
* The [CDVSA dashboard](https://dps.alaska.gov/CDVSA/Resources/Alaska-Dashboard) is outdated due to staff turnover, but could be useful
* [Not One More](https://www.niwrc.org/sites/default/files/files/34%20NIAC%20Final%20Report_version%2011.1.23_FINAL_0.pdf) – Findings & Recommendations of the Not Invisible Act Commission 2023
* [Data for Indigenous Justice](https://www.dataforindigenousjustice.org/). Here is their [2021 report on MMIP](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/650a3ad1f4ccde7d793b6f02/t/65a85dab2441ae379b833205/1705532855762/Web-DIJReport.pdf).
* Other sources? University studies or census data? Local municipality studies or law enforcement data?

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**Needs & Resource Assessment Report Outline**

**I. Introduction (1-2 pages)**

In one to three sentences, identify the purpose of the community assessment and how this information will be used.

Who conducted the assessment? Who participated in the development of the assessment? Report any overarching concerns that brought local stakeholders to the table to discuss the prevention of SA, IPV, or TDV.

Briefly describe the community, including demographic characteristics of residents and

changes in community growth observed over time. It may also be useful to include the number

of schools in the community, types of major employers, and other information that describes

key aspects of the community.

**II. Methods (1-3 pages)**

Describe the methods used to collect data, including the names of any instruments that were used. Consider using: surveys, interviews, focus groups, mobile ethnography, etc. Include the response rate for written surveys or number of key informants/focus group participants, and

methods used for transcribing and scoring readiness surveys. Identify limitations of the data

collection methods (e.g., surveys were not translated into other languages), when necessary.

Point to secondary sources that were used such as crime reports, YRBS, etc.

**III. Key findings (max 15 pages)**

Report the most important information collected, highlighting key findings and important trends. When necessary, describe gaps in the data or limitations that the reader should consider when reviewing this information. Some of the key questions that may be answered in this section are listed below:

What is known about SA, IPV, and TDV in the community?

Using secondary and/or primary data sources, describe SA, IPV, and TDV in the

community. When reporting the results, consider if there are specific populations (i.e.,

cultural groups, age groups, genders) that are most impacted and changes in

trends/patterns over time. Consider including regional- or state-level data to put local

information into a larger context. Are there limitations to these datasets?

What are the perceptions of residents SA, IPV, and TDV in the community?

After reporting existing data that clearly describe prevalence and areas of community

concern, include information about how residents perceive SA, IPV, and TDV in the

community. Consider whether the perceptions of residents align with what is indicated

by the data.

What factors encourage/discourage SA, IPV, and TDV in the community?

Describe the factors that encourage or discourage (risk & protective factors) these

issues in the community. Example areas of interest you can include in this section of the

report are:

* Describe the policies that are in place (or are lacking in the community)
* related to SA, IPV, TDV
* Discuss concerns around social norms
* Resources and service coordination
* Neighborhood socioeconomic status

**IV. Recommendations (1-2 pages)**

The synthesis section of the report points out areas of concern in the community, as well as

resources and assets that can help the coalition address SA, IPV, or TDV. The

recommendations section should offer potential solutions that can be used to address

challenges or build on strengths. The types of recommendations will vary depending on the

needs and resources of the community. For example, an appropriate recommendation might

be, “Focus future coalition meetings on identifying evidence-based models that can be used

to address IPV among college students.” This section is also a place to suggest specific

resources that may be helpful to the coalition as they work on prevention efforts in the

community.

**V. Needs Statements (1 page or less)**

Clear, concise, prioritized statements of need.

**VI. Acknowledgements (1-3 paragraphs, usually not more than a page)**

Who wrote, compiled, and contributed in significant ways to making this report?

**VII. Appendix (optional)**

This is a place to put raw data or survey questions – things that you want to make available for reference but are too detailed for the main body of the report.