

## Memorandum of Understanding Mesa County Domestic Violence and Child Victimization Project

The problem to be addressed in Mesa County's Domestic Violence and Child Victimization Project is the gap between existing services and services necessary to ensure the safety of women and children in domestic violence situations. Funding would help to alleviate the problems by providing funds to pay for specifically identified needed services including children's services, community outreach, and services to the Hispanic community

The partners of this project have strong history of collaboration in Mesa County providing services to victims of domestic violence. The Task Force began in 1982 and resulted in opening a shelter in 1984 - now the Latimer House. Currently, the Task Force has monthly meetings in an effort to expand collaboration and share resources in order to provide services and safety for women and children in domestic violence situations.

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to identify the partners and roles and responsibilities that each organization or agency would assume to ensure the success of the proposed project.

### **Hilltop**

Hilltop will be responsible for carrying out this grant - implementation, oversight, progress reports, and fiscal management. Hilltop Health Services Corporation DBA Hilltop Community Resources, Inc. is a private nonprofit corporation that has provided an array of services to children, youth, adults and families since 1950. Hilltop's mission is to provide leadership in community-based services that foster self-sufficiency and enrich quality of life. Permanent and complete self-sufficiency cannot be achieved unless the needs of the whole person are addressed: life skills, motivation, education, physical health, decision-making ability, and a thorough understanding of available resources and how to access those resources. Hilltop's comprehensive services enable clients to strive to improve their lives by overcoming barriers to self-sufficiency. Hilltop is dedicated to delivering much needed services to community residents. With services ranging from pre-natal to supportive retirement living, Hilltop partners with a variety of organizations to manage 25 community based programs that provides services to 13,000 individuals each year in Mesa, Montrose, and Delta counties. The centralized management structure that oversees 25 programs is highly cost-effective and avoids duplication of administrative expenses. Website [www.hilltop-co.org](http://www.hilltop-co.org)

Key Staff: Barbara Salogga, Director Marketing & Development, Michaelle Smith, Director Early Childhood Services, Janet Hollingsworth, Grant Specialist.

### **Community Partners**

#### **Mesa County Domestic Violence Task Force:**

Several members of this group assisted in the application process. This group of 25 individuals, which came into existence in 1982, is comprised of representatives from the district attorney's office, law enforcement, treatment providers, advocacy, probation and private probation intervention, criminal justice, school district, public & private human service agencies, and groups against domestic violence. They played a key role in advocating for a women's shelter and the Latimer House was opened by Hilltop in 1984. Their purpose is to ensure best practices with regard to treatment of victims and offenders through meaningful collaboration. The group meets on a monthly basis to discuss issues, trends, needed trainings, etc with the goal of improving victim safety and treatment and rehabilitation of domestic violence offenders. The DV Task Force will play a key role in assisting Hilltop/Latimer House with the implementation of this grant.

Key Staff: Jay Pollock, Chairperson of the Mesa County Domestic Violence Task Force & Adult Probation Officer for the 21st Judicial District Probation Department has a Masters Degree in Psychology and has been a member of the DV Task Force for 2 years.

### ***Hilltop's Latimer House***

The Latimer House has provided services to victims of domestic violence since 1984 and is operated by Hilltop. Their mission is to provide opportunities to build and empower healthier, safer families. Latimer House offers a 24 hour crisis line, emergency shelter – food, clothing and support, advocacy, counseling – individual and group, children's services and general education to the community about domestic violence. The Latimer House staff will interface directly with the DV Task Force and Hilltop to oversee implementation of the grant. Specifically, Latimer House will be expanding children's services, services to the Hispanic community and oversee outreach and education portions of the proposal.

Key staff includes: Carol Forte, Coordinator, the Latimer House is a MA, LPC who has worked with domestic victims since 1990.

### ***Mesa County Department of Human Services (DHS)***

DHS is a respected partner in a healthy, safe, interconnected community where the basic needs of all are met in an environment of independence and dignity that affords opportunities for a better quality of life as determined by individual choice. The DHS values compassionate service through shared decision making while promoting responsibility and accountability in an atmosphere of respect for all. DHS will continue to provide referrals and services through the Family and Child Division and will be an ongoing partner in gap identification.

DHS and Hilltop are partners in the *Mesa County Workforce Center*. They are an important link between adults and the community. A domestic violence Counselor through DHS is located at the Mesa County Workforce Center. She assists in the early identification of victims experiencing domestic violence and is available to provide immediate intervention and counseling services. The Counselor connects shelter clients with necessary services at the Workforce Center, including TANF, job training, employment, and childcare services.

Key staff: Treva Houck, Family and Child Division Director for DHS. Scott Aker, Director of the Mesa County Workforce Center.

### ***Gateway Youth and Family Services***

While the DV Task Force identified this service as a need, funds were not available to work with this agency. Gateway played a role in the development of the children's services portion of this application and they are a new partner. Gateway's primary focus is the safety and welfare of children. They provide an array of services including structured visitations and safe exchanges. As part of these services, they train parents about appropriate communication and discipline, age appropriate developmental issues, ensure parents are focusing on the child needs (and not on themselves), appropriate affection and communication with their child and the benefit of parents supporting one another while in front of child. Visit rooms are fully equipped with tables, chairs, toys, and live plants to create a pleasant, conducive environment. Gateway will provide the services of safe visitations and safe exchanges for the purposes of this application.

Key Staff: Mary Walls, BS, CAC III is the Structured Parenting Coordinator

### ***21<sup>st</sup> Judicial District Probation Department – Victim Assistance.***

Part of the DV Task Force, the probation department has played an integral role in the development of this application. The 21<sup>st</sup> Judicial District Probation Office offers victims the opportunity to be informed of the offender's status throughout the probation sentence. As a victim or a member of the victim's family, rights are guaranteed by the Colorado Constitution. In order to avoid people who

feel victimized by the criminal defendant and the legal system, they assist them in understanding victim rights and being sure that victims of crime are treated with fairness, respect and dignity is the goal of the Victim Services Program within the Colorado Probation System. This office will continue to play a key role in victim safety & advocacy.

Key staff: Teri Shecter, Victim Assistance Coordinator

***21<sup>st</sup> Judicial District, District Attorney's Department- Victim/Witness Program***

A Victim/Witness Assistant assists victims in understanding victim rights and ensuring that victims of crime are treated with fairness, respect and dignity. In addition to information about how the court system works, the Victim/Witness Program provides assistance through the Crime Victim Compensation Program and referrals to other community services. The District Attorney's Victim/Witness Program provides critical services for victims of domestic violence.

Key Staff: Mary Sommerfeld, Victim/Witness Coordinator.

***Grand Junction Police Department- Victim Advocate Program:***

Part the DV Task Force, Grand Junction Police Department's Victim Advocacy Program (VAP) provides the initial assistance to domestic violence victims. They assist victims, witnesses, their family, and friends following a crime or traumatic incident. Trained volunteer advocates provide crisis intervention, referrals, follow-up, and detailed explanations of legal procedures involved. Volunteer advocates attend a 40-hour training academy and monthly training meetings. Through continual training, advocates learn the skills necessary to deal with crisis intervention, domestic violence, sexual assault, death notification and coping with adolescent victims. They will be a large part of implementation of this project.

Key Staff: Judy Shormann, Volunteer Services Coordinator

***Mesa County Sheriff's Office - Victim Advocate Program:***

Sheriff, Stan Hilkey currently serves on Hilltop's Board of Directors. The Sheriff's Office has been part of the DV Task force since its inception and provides the Victims Assistance Program, which is one of our most important extensions into the community. These volunteers provide 24-hour assistance to victims of crimes or traumatic incidents. Often forgotten in the criminal justice system, crime victims need assistance to recover from the incident; by providing a sense of security, support and comfort, this assistance not only benefits the victim, but also ensures that testimonies are complete and accurate. They will continue to play a role in the implementation of the project and provide ongoing services to ensure the safety of victims.

Key staff: Lauri Skala, Victim Advocate Coordinator.

***Homeward Bound:***

While Hilltop and the Latimer House have worked with this agency over several years, they are a new partner as it relates to the implementation of this project. Homeward Bound provides shelter and light meals for men, women and families in a safe and respectful atmosphere and helps the homeless transition into self-sufficiency through a program of compassionate, self-directed accountability. Homeward Bound will provide transitional housing case management to homeless women and families fleeing domestic violence situations. They will play a key role in assisting the Latimer House with transitional housing, rental assistance and case management.

Key Staff: Kathy Capps, Program Administrator.

***Western Colorado Area Health Education Center (WCAHEC)***

Ellen Wuertz currently serves on Hilltop's Board of Directors and played a major role in the development of the application. WCAHEC will be responsible for delivery of both professional and community education for this grant project. WCAHEC will provide these services in collaboration

with the multiple partner agencies involved in services delivery and with the DV Task Force, in order to assure the deliver of relevant training for professionals and education for community members and consumers. WCAHEC has been a recognized leader in the deliver of both professional and consumer education in Mesa County and other surrounding rural counties in Colorado for the past 25 years. WCAHEC will also oversee the provision of education to assure the delivery of culturally and linguistically competent services to our limited English speaking (largely Hispanic) community residents.

Key staff: Ellen Wuertz, Executive Director

*Colorado Legal Services:*

Part of the DV Task Force for the past two years, this agency was part of the planning and development team for this application. Colorado Legal Services is a non-profit organization funded partly by the legal services corporation, COLTAF and VALE grants. Among a variety of other legal issues, they represent domestic violence victim's protection orders and divorce cases. They handle referrals from Latimer House and law enforcement victim assistance personnel – sheriff, police district attorney, and probation departments. They will continue to work closely with law enforcement and Latimer House to ensure services are delivered smoothly and safely to domestic violence women and children.

Key staff: Kathy Boelte, Staff Attorney has represented domestic violence victims for 3 years.

The partners listed above are committed to work together to achieve stated project goals. We have a sincere desire to enhance the safety of those affected by domestic violence in our community and agree and approve of the proposed project budget.

Signature Page

The partners whose signatures appear below are committed to work together to achieve stated project goals. We have a sincere desire to enhance the safety of those affected by domestic violence in our community and agree and approve of the proposed project budget.

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Hilltop  
Sally Schaefer, Chief Executive Officer

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Mesa County Domestic Violence Task Force  
Jay Pollock, Chairperson

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Mesa County Department of Human Services  
Sue Tuffin, Acting Executive Director

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Mesa County Workforce Center  
Scott Aker, Mesa County Workforce Center  
Administrator

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Gateway Youth & Family Services  
Sherry Herzog, Executive Director

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21<sup>st</sup> Judicial District Probation Department  
Susan Gilbert, Chief Probation Officer

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District Attorney's Office 21<sup>st</sup> Judicial District  
Pete Hautzinger, District Attorney

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Grand Junction Police Department  
Captain Long

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Homeward Bound  
Teresa Black, Executive Director

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Western Colorado Area Health Education Center  
Ellen Wucrtz, Executive Director

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Colorado Legal Services  
Joel Smith, Managing Attorney

