

Memorandum of Understanding (SAMPLE)

From: *Building Stronger Sexual Assault Survivor Services Through Collaboration: A Manual for Rape Crisis Programs and Communities in Texas for Developing Sexual Assault Coalitions*. Developed by the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault, pages 25–27.

The Task Force is agreeing to take a proactive response toward sexual assault. The vision of the Task Force is to develop a coordinated response that is designed to enhance safety and justice for victims, hold perpetrators accountable, and provide education to the community that will encourage social change.

The Task Force has four primary objectives:

- Protect the victim by providing crisis intervention, medical advocacy, education, and legal advocacy.
- Coordinate the interagency flow of information that will enhance communication and evaluate policies and procedures.
- Protect the victim by bringing the assailant into the criminal justice system through enhancing investigation, filing criminal charges, and prosecuting the defendant.
- Protect the victim by imposing and enforcing legal sanctions on the assailant that will deter him or her from committing further acts of violence.

The following entities have agreed to participate in the Task Force:

Law Enforcement

Will:

- Record all 911 calls and retain sexual assault calls for prosecution.
- Coordinate crisis intervention and referrals with victim advocates.
- Coordinate investigation with appropriate agencies.
- If probable cause exists, arrest.
- Ensure that victims are advised of rights and services.
- Train officers regarding sexual assault.

Magistrates

Will:

- Assess danger to the victim when considering bail amount.
- Assess danger to the victim when considering jail time.
- Use Magistrate Order for Protection when necessary.

District/County Attorneys

Will:

- Coordinate victim advocacy and support services during investigation and court proceedings with victims and their families.
- Inform victims and advocates of court proceedings.
- Provide training for grand jury and jury members.
- Obtain convictions.

Criminal Court

Will:

- Provide swift incarceration if evidence is beyond a reasonable doubt.
- Ensure swift action including incarceration without possibility of bail if a violation occurs while the offender is on probation.

Probation

Will:

- Provide specialized officers for sexual assault offenders.
- Ensure that the defendant abides by the terms of probation.
- Ensure swift filing of motion to revoke with arrest warrant if the offender violates probation.
- Recommend probation to sex offender treatment.

Child Protective Services

Will:

- Initiate joint CPS/law enforcement investigations within 24 hours of the report.
- Protect victims from further abuse.
- Coordinate services through the Children's Advocacy Center of Bastrop County.

Hospital

Will:

- Provide a SANE to perform sexual assault exams.
- Allow victim advocates to support the victim in the exam room.

SANE

Will:

- Provide 24-hour, 365-day local (tri-county) availability of a highly trained SANE.
- Provide trained registered nurses (SANEs) to collect the forensic evidence and appropriately transfer custody to the law enforcement officer.
- Coordinate with the Family Crisis Center for crisis intervention, support, or advocacy.
- Appear before the grand jury and at criminal proceedings to confirm evidence collection.

Children's Advocacy Center

Will:

- Provide a safe, non-threatening environment in which child abuse victims can be interviewed/videotaped.
- Review cases of child abuse with staff and the multidisciplinary team (law enforcement, District Attorney, and Child Protective Services).
- Provide crisis intervention for child victims and their non-offending family members.
- Provide professional skill-enhancing training for members of the multidisciplinary team, law enforcement, and community programs working with child abuse victims.

CASA

Will:

- Provide independent investigations of cases and submit a report of findings to the court.
- Testify on a child’s behalf.
- Make recommendations regarding placement—removal from natural home, foster placement, reunification, adoption, or emancipation and future plans.
- Work alongside attorneys, social workers, therapists, and other professionals to ensure that the best interests of the child are observed.
- Monitor the case to ensure that court orders are followed and the needs of the child are met.
- Provide education and information to the public regarding child abuse and neglect.
- Recruit and train volunteer advocates.

Chief of Police Date

District Attorney Date

Sheriff Date

Executive Director, Rape Crisis Center Date

Executive Director, CASA Program Date

Program Coordinator, SANE Team Medical Director Date

Executive Director, Children’s Advocacy Center Date

Program Coordinator, CPS Date