

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/blog/collaboration-is-cornerstone-of-new-center-on-victimization-and-safety>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

The official debut, today, of the [Center on Victimization and Safety \(CVS\)](#) has me thinking about the importance of collaboration, one of the center's key values. Just as collaboration among service providers and the criminal justice system is essential to meeting the needs of survivors, we believe collaboration is essential to us being effective in our work to help government and nonprofits improve their responses to domestic and sexual violence.

I've been seeing this in action this week: I am in Providence, Rhode Island, hosting a national training that highlights the critical role partnerships play in the work we do.

The training seeks to help American Sign Language interpreters safely and effectively interpret in situations involving Deaf women who have experienced domestic or sexual violence. The Deaf community has been working to ensure these survivors have access to services that are provided by Deaf advocates who share their language and culture. But Deaf survivors still rely on mainstream services (like crisis lines, support groups, and shelters) and institutions (like hospitals, police departments, prosecutors' offices, and the courts) to access safety and supports they need, and in these instances interpreters play an integral role in facilitating communication. To be effective, they need to understand the dynamics of domestic and sexual violence, the language of the field, and protocols for interpreting in this area.

This training is the result of a partnership with the Deaf community that started in 2005. Since then, we have convened three national roundtables with members of the Deaf community to explore the unmet needs of Deaf survivors and identify possible solutions. A sufficient number of knowledgeable and experienced ASL interpreters was one of the unmet needs the roundtables identified, and a national training for interpreters was the suggested solution.

Over the past year, we have continued our partnership with the Deaf community, including interpreters, to design this training. I am excited to work with and learn from this committed group of advocates and interpreters during the training this week and to continue to build partnerships to inform the work of the center.

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