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Strategies to Promote the Implementation of a Statewide Data Collection Tool for
North Carolina's Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Agencies
A Project for the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation
By Emily Wexler, MPP
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Executive Summary

As a longtime supporter of domestic violence and sexual assault service providers in North Carolina, the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation (ZSR) has worked to strengthen the field's provision of services, its operational capacity, its identification of sustainable funding sources, its articulation of policy priorities, and the development of outcomes assessment tools. With regard to the latter, ZSR has devoted specific attention to the development of data-driven strategies to reduce rates of domestic violence and sexual assault.

This project analyzes the development of a new statewide data collection tool for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in North Carolina. Given that the utilization of domestic violence and sexual assault services is growing annually, the development of a tool to effectively track service outcomes is timely and relevant.

A data collection tool has both short-term and long-term benefits. In the short-term, it has the potential to dramatically ease the reporting process for agencies, while also synchronizing what gets reported. Better reporting mechanisms also increase opportunities for funding and strengthen an agency's ability to advocate for more resources to support their services. ZSR's particular focus is on the tool's long-term benefit of providing North Carolina with a set of aggregate, statewide data that will facilitate the evaluation of what interventions and services have the greatest impact on reducing rates of violence.

Because the successful implementation of a statewide, victim-level data collection tool is contingent upon full participation by the state's victim service agencies, their voice and perspective is essential. Therefore, the majority of my data come from interviews conducted with 17 agencies throughout the state that offer domestic violence and/or sexual assault support services. My interviews attempt to gauge how agencies currently use data, their perception of the new data collection tool, and how funders can assist agencies with data collection. I have complemented my agency interview findings with interviews with additional key stakeholders and two surveys developed by the North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence to assess organizational data collection capacity.

My research shows that the use of electronic data collection is increasingly the norm among agencies. However, agencies had varied levels of satisfaction with their tools and frequently expressed a desire for the resources, training, and time to adopt a better system. Agencies consistently recognized the utility of data and frequently used the data they collected for activities other than reporting to funders. In particular, agencies use data to track trends, modify their services to better serve their client populations, and demonstrate the need for their services to the broader community.

Agencies were generally aware of the new data collection tool, but knew little about it. Several agencies expressed excitement about the tool, but interviewees also raised several

concerns about it. In particular, the most notable concerns about the new tool pertained to training costs, its level of technicality, its ability to meet agency needs, its overall affordability, and its long-term relevance.

My report also includes three case studies from other states that have adopted some form of a statewide data collection tool for their domestic violence and sexual assault agencies: Oklahoma, Illinois, and Alaska. There are several salient lessons that emerge from these case studies. In particular, Illinois illustrates the importance of promoting agency buy-in and participation through the use of accessible technical assistance, agency data ownership, and trainings for agencies on how to use data collection for activities other than reporting. Additionally, all three states demonstrate how funders can convey the message that data is important through active involvement in tool development, but also by mandating that agencies use the tool or a tool with comparable capabilities in order to receive funding.

These case studies also offer lessons learned and on-going challenges that North Carolina should take note of. In particular, strong investments in on-going technical support are critical. These investments should include the training or hiring of staff who are capable of working directly with the data collection software and can make any necessary modifications themselves. Further, agencies should have easy access to support should they run into a glitch with the system and have easy recourse to modifying the tool in order to maximize its utility.

ZSR has consistently provided critical funding to the field of domestic violence and sexual assault services in North Carolina, as well as endeavored to advance the field by convening stakeholders, commissioning research, and challenging stakeholders to pursue strategies that have the greatest impact. Therefore, ZSR is uniquely poised to engage both other funders and victim service agencies on ways to ensure the effective implementation of this tool and encourage providers to move towards more evidence-based programming.

This report concludes with the following recommendations:

1. Work with the North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault, and public funders to increase marketing and communication about the data collection tool.
2. Convene funders to come to consensus on synchronizing funding requests and ensuring that current data requests yield meaningful output.
3. Provide financial assistance for a broad range of training.
4. Invest in technical assistance. In particular, hire regionally based, technical staff persons to assist agencies with the data collection process and act as a direct liaison with Osnium.
5. Hire an outside project manager to oversee the continued development and implementation of the data collection tool.

Policy Question

> How can ZSR encourage domestic violence and sexual assault agencies to make greater use of evidence-based programming through the successful implementation of a statewide, victim-level data collection tool?

Introduction

Within the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation's (ZSR) Social Justice and Equity focus area is the objective to "…eradicate the physical and sexual violence that threatens the lives and well-being of women."[1] As a longtime supporter of domestic violence and sexual assault service providers in North Carolina, ZSR has worked to strengthen the field's provision of services, its operational capacity, its identification of sustainable funding sources, its articulation of policy priorities, and the development of outcomes assessment tools. The latter objective is the primary focus of this project.

ZSR is part of a growing trend in the field of philanthropy to move away from tracking grantee outputs and instead, working with grantees to assess their desired outcomes and eventual impact. In 2010 ZSR announced its plan to focus more closely on "broader prevention strategies" in the field of domestic violence and issued a memorandum with revised funding priorities to its grantees. A critical component to achieving this objective involves supporting strategies to reduce rates of domestic violence and recidivism of domestic violence perpetrators that are "data-driven."[2]

Strengthening and synchronizing data collection processes for domestic violence and sexual assault service providers has been a topic of discussion for members and allies of the field since 2004. ZSR has played a critical role in facilitating discussions among advocates and funders about how to realize this objective. In particular, in 2004 ZSR hired the former Executive Director of the NC Council for Women/Domestic Violence Commission, Leslie Starsoneck, as a consultant to initiate steps to gauging agency interest and capacity, convening critical stakeholders, and identifying potential data collection tools. In 2006 Ms. Starsoneck coordinated a demonstration of a domestic violence and sexual assault victim-level data collection tool developed by public funds in Illinois for interested stakeholders, as well as member of the NC House Select Committee on Domestic Violence.

This project analyzes the development of a statewide data collection tool in North Carolina since this time and in its current progression. While North Carolina still does not have a tool in place, there are many reasons to believe that one is on the way. Given ZSR's commitment to move this field towards more data-driven and evidence-based

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[1] Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation Website. "Social Justice and Equity." Available at: http://zsr.org/social_justice.htm.

[2] Gore, James. "Memorandum: New Funding Priorities". Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. January 2010.

programming, this project will offer analysis on how this tool can help ZSR achieve this objective. In particular, this project assesses how ZSR can encourage domestic violence and sexual assault agencies to make greater use of evidence-based programming through the successful implementation of this statewide, victim-level data collection tool. This will entail a discussion of how ZSR can better market why the development of this tool is important and necessary, determine what is the "right" data to collect in order to evaluate interventions[3], and assess how all funders can best support the agencies adopting this data collection tool.

This project begins by setting the stage for what domestic violence, sexual assault, and their services look like in North Carolina. By locating the reader in the North Carolina context for these issues, this project can facilitate a better understanding of the responsibilities victim service providers currently manage in addition to data collection duties.

The second section provides a narrative of the current data collection tool's development, as well as an analysis of where it stands now. This section also explores the potential benefits and impact of a statewide data collection tool in North Carolina. Lastly, this section concludes with a discussion of ZSR's role and potential actions the Foundation will need to take in the short-term in order to achieve its long-term objective for the tool.

The third section of this paper presents the data I collected for this project, primarily interviews with domestic violence and/or sexual assault agencies. The data also include interviews with key stakeholders, such a coalition leaders, funders, and academics as well as two surveys administered to agencies throughout the state by the North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCCADV) in 2007 and 2011. An introduction of the data is followed by an analysis of the data and my findings. I have grouped the findings by themes that provide a more detailed picture of what data collection tools agencies currently use, how they use data, how they would like to use data, and their receptivity to the new data collection tool.

The fourth section of this project includes three case studies from states that have or are in the process of developing their own statewide, victim-level data collection tool: Oklahoma, Illinois, and Alaska. This section includes a brief sketch of the state's tool and its background. This section also highlights crosscutting themes and specific challenges that all three case studies encountered. I conclude with a set of recommendations for North Carolina based upon my findings from these three states' experiences.

This project concludes with a discussion of ZSR's value-added to the process of ensuring the effective implementation of this tool in North Carolina. This discussion is followed by a set of recommendations for ZSR. I have prioritized these recommendations based upon two criteria: their cost and time-intensiveness.

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[3] Snibbe, Alanna Conner. "Drowning in Data." Sanford Social Innovation Review. (2006): 39-45.

## Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault in North Carolina

In the last six years, the use of domestic violence and sexual assault services in North Carolina has vastly exceeded the rate of population growth. According to North Carolina's Council for Women, in 2009-2010 victim service agencies provided domestic violence support services to 66,320 clients and responded to 120,666 crisis calls. During this same time period, victim service agencies provide sexual assault support services to 13,392 clients and responded to 22,141 crisis calls. In 2004-2005 domestic violence service providers served 50,726 clients and responded to 104,063 crisis calls. Sexual assault service providers served 8,438 clients and responded to 20,157 crisis calls[4]. A comparison of service use growth to North Carolina's population growth follows:

DV/SA Service Use Growth Compared to NC Population, 2004-2010

DV Client Growth 2004-2010	DV Crisis Call Growth 2004-2010	SA Client Growth 2004-2010	SA Crisis Call Growth 2004-2010	NC Population Growth 2004-2010
31%	16%	59%	10%	12%

In the National Network to End Domestic Violence's 2010 "24-Hour Census of Domestic Violence Shelters and Services" 85% of North Carolina's domestic violence programs reported a higher demand for their services in the past year. At the same time, service providers also cited several challenges to meeting the needs of their clients. In particular, 39% of respondents reported a lack of sufficient funding and 24% reported a lack of specialized services[5].

In an examination of service users, women were the primary users of both domestic violence (85%) and sexual assault services (90%).
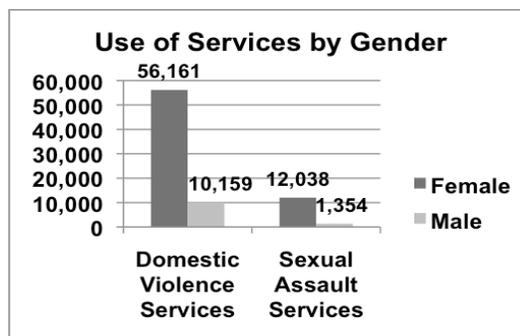
The Council of Women collects data on eight types of services provided to clients: Information, advocacy, referral, transportation, counseling, hospital, court, and other. The

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[4] North Carolina Department of Administration: Council for Women. "Statistics." 2010. Available at: http://www.councilforwomen.nc.gov/stats.htm.

[5] National Network to End Domestic Violence. "'10 Domestic Violence Counts: North Carolina Summary." 2010. Available at: http://nnedv.org/resources/census/2010-report.html.

proportion of services provided by both domestic violence and sexual assault agencies are as follows:

Domestic Violence Services Summary

Info	Advocacy	Referral	Transport	Counseling	Hospital	Court	Other
22.5%	20.5%	14.7%	8.9%	13.5%	.3%	11.5%	8.7%

Sexual Assault Services Summary

Info	Advocacy	Referral	Transport	Counseling	Hospital	Court	Other
25.5%	26.0%	13.1%	2.0%	17.8%	1.4%	4.0%	10.3%

Despite the increase in the utilization of domestic violence and sexual assault services, the North Carolina Department of Justice noted a significant decrease of 12.5% (per 100,000 persons statewide) in violent crime from 2008-2009. Violent crime constitutes murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Within this category, rates of rape remained unchanged and aggravated assault decreased by 10.7%. In recognizing the limitation of these findings, the Governor's Crime Commission's "2010-2013 Violence Against Women State Implementation Plan" notes that some challenges to the validity of these findings include, "…the number of victims who actually reported to the police, as well as, how the crime is defined by first responders and the manner in which the crime is documented…UCR reports the highest offense committed in any given situation that may have involved several violent acts."[6]

Nevertheless, efforts to improve domestic violence-related reporting have evolved. In 2007 North Carolina enacted General Statute 114-2.7, which requires all state and local law enforcement to complete a report on every domestic violence-related homicide in their jurisdiction and submit this report to the Attorney General's Office at North Carolina's Department of Justice (NCDOJ). Prior to this, NCDOJ relied on organizations, such as the North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCCADV) to provide them with domestic violence-related homicide information. NCCADV still tracks domestic violence homicides throughout the states, using public sources and the media as their sources. In 2008 they also began to collect statistics related to family domestic violence-related homicide. According to the NCDOJ's 2009 report, state and local law enforcements reported 100 homicides that were related to domestic violence. This is 31 fewer domestic violence-related homicides than were reported in 2008. Of these 100 homicides, 61 of the victims were female and 79 of the offenders were male. Three of the victims had current protective orders at the time of their murder.[7]

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[6] North Carolina Department of Crime Control and Public Safety: Governor's Crime Commission. "2010-2013 Violence Against Women State Implementation Plan." 2010. Available at: www.ncgccd.org/planning/victims/implement1.pdf.

[7] North Carolina Department of Justice. "Report on Domestic Violence Related Homicides for Calendar Year 2009." February 2010. Available at: http://www.ncdoj.gov/getdoc/e79bb308-90e3-44e5-be11-1c847f65a1b0/Domestic-Violence-Murders.aspx.

Lastly, in light of the current economic climate it is worth noting the relationship between financial stress and domestic violence. In a brief outlining the economy's impact on domestic violence, the National Network to End Domestic Violence notes that "Domestic violence is more than three times as likely to occur when couples are experiencing high levels of financial strain as when they are experiencing low levels of financial strain."[8] North Carolina's public officials have acknowledged this correlation as well and the state's Attorney General, Roy Cooper noted in a newspaper article discussing domestic violence-related homicides: "Economics and finances ... that can be the source of a lot of emotional turmoil."[9]

Data Collection Tool Background

Within the last five to eight years, state agencies and advocates against domestic violence and sexual assault have increasingly come to promote the adoption of statewide data collection tools to track victim-level services and background information.[10] Prior to this, criminal justice agencies were the primary aggregators of statewide data related to domestic violence and sexual assault, but most of the data pertained to perpetrators.[11]

Within North Carolina growing interest among advocates and funders in a victim-oriented data collection tool beginning in 2004 culminated in a grant in 2007 NCCADV from the Governor's Crime Commission (GCC) to initiate the tool development process. NCCADV is an umbrella agency that serves 92 member organizations throughout the state. The majority of these organizations provide domestic violence services. However, some organizations also provide services for victims of sexual assault. NCCADV provides a variety of services to its members, including technical assistance, training, education about relevant policy initiatives, and leads public awareness campaigns.[12] NCCADV has continued to serve as the lead of the tool development process.

To initiate the process, NCCADV and the North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCCASA) conducted a survey of member agencies in 2007 to assess "which programs were utilizing database tools to track and report on service provision and what tools they were using."[13] After reviewing, identifying, and piloting two different software models, the most recent of which concluded in July of 2010, the coalitions selected the Osnium software system.

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[8] National Network to End Domestic Violence. "The Impact of the Economy on Domestic Violence." 2010. Available at: www.nnedv.org/docs/Stats/NNEDV_DVandEconomy.pdf.

[9] Rodriguez, Barbara. "131 Killed in N.C. Domestic Violence Last Year." *News & Record*. March 26, 2009. Available at: http://www.news record.com/content/2009/03/26/article/131_killed_in_nc_domestic_violence_last_year.

[10] Chaet, Judy. North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Personal Interview. November 2010.

[11] Gore, James. Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. Personal Communication. October 2010.

[12] North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence. "What We Do." 2010. Available at: http://www.nccadv.org/what_we_do.htm#The.

[13] North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence. "Report on the Statewide DV/SA Data Collection Project. July 2010.

Since the conclusion of the most recent pilot of Osnium with seven participating organizations, NCCADV has served as the primary contact between the software company, funders, and member organizations to initiate next steps. On October 25 I attended a meeting with the project's "stakeholders,"[14] which included the Governor's Crime Commission/Victim Crime Services staff members, Council for Women staff members, ZSR program officers, UNC researchers, and NCCASA staff. The meeting consisted of a video conference call with Osnium staff to demonstrate how the data collection tool works in order for attendees to ask questions and make suggestions for the continued modification of the software in order to best fit the reporting needs of funders and agencies.

On November 1 NCCADV held an initial meeting for member organizations with staff from Osnium to debut the tool. NCCADV described the tool's reception as "positive." In February 2011 NCCADV re-surveyed all member organizations to assess their current data collection capacity and technology, as well as gauge what infrastructural and data conversion needs they will have in order to adopt Osnium's software. Since November 2010 Osnium has undertaken a process of incorporating the reporting requirements of all major public funders so that the software will contain discrete funder "tabs" that will self-populate reports for specific funders once staff has input all the necessary data about clients.[15]

NCCADV plans to conduct a staggered roll-out of the system, beginning with agencies that have demonstrated active interest in the tool based on results from the second survey. Interested agencies would receive a copy of the software and have approximately a month to become familiar with it.[16] NCCADV plans to complement this rollout with regional trainings led by Osnium staff. NCCADV's initial plan was a wholesale adoption of the tool by the Spring of 2011 in anticipation of the next grant reporting cycle. However, this is now unlikely since NCCADV was unable to conclude its second survey until mid-March due to a slow response rate.

Benefits of Statewide Data Collection

The adoption of a statewide data collection tool is a multi-step process with different benefits associated with each phase. ZSR is particularly interested in this tool because it has the potential to aggregate statewide data so that analysts and agencies can determine what interventions have the most impact on reducing rates of domestic violence and sexual assault. However, not all rank or even acknowledge this tool's benefits the same, nor is there a widely-articulated understanding of this project's longer term goals. Given that this project is well underway and in many respects, inevitable, ZSR can capitalize on this opportunity to move the field towards evidence-based programming. A critical

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[14] Unless specifically defined, all future references to "stakeholders" will refer to all participants involved in this project, especially domestic violence organizations.

[15] Chaet, Judy. North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Personal Interview. November 2010.

[16] Burgess-Johnson, April. North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Personal Interview. January 2011.

component of this project will include recommendations to better market why the development of this tool is important and necessary, determine what is the "right" data to collect in order to evaluate interventions[17], and assess how funders can best support the agencies adopting this data collection tool.

Reporting

Funding is an on-going concern for domestic violence and sexual assault agencies. In 2008 ZSR conducted a summary of funding sources for domestic violence and sexual assault agencies in North Carolina. The intent of this summary was to have "…some factual basis for determining a future role for the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation in funding local programs."[18] The major sources of funding that were outlined in the report include state and federal funds, such as N.C. Council of Women funds that come from marriage licenses and divorce fees, the federal Victims of Crime Act Award (VOCAA), the federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), and the N.C. Division of Social Services/Family Violence Prevention Program. Based on this summary and the unpredictability of funds coming from these central sources, ZSR determined that current funding sources were insufficient and that the foundation still had a significant role to play in providing these organizations with financial support.

The connection between a data collection tool and increased funding for the field has been a part of stakeholders earliest conversations about the tool since 2004. In fact, the Governor's Crime Commission (GCC) expressed a strong desire to work with ZSR at this time specifically because they recognized that a comprehensive data collection tool "…would provide relevant information about the sector which could potentially result in increased funding for the sector."[19]

Additionally, a central data collection tool would not only ease an organization's reporting process to funders and increase funding opportunities, but it would also synchronize *what* gets reported. The reporting requirements for all the listed funders are different and the definitions for data requested vary among them. This creates a "comparing apples to oranges"[20] situation when trying to compare data among funders. A tool, like Osnium, would enable organizations to input all their victim data into the software, which would then self-populate reports for the different funders according to their specific reporting criteria. Because the "core" data would all be the same, this software would ensure that the any comparison between organizations was the same. From my observations at the October 25 meeting, it is apparent that the NCCADV and funders have placed strong emphasis on the tool's ability to ease reporting requirements as a major incentive for organizations to adopt this tool.

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[17] Snibbe, Alanna Conner. "Drowning in Data." Sanford Social Innovation Review. (2006): 39-45.

[18] Rader, Donna. "Summary of Funding Sources for Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Organizations in NC." Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. 2008.

[19] Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. "Domestic Violence/Violence Against Women Initiative Comprehensive Exit Memo." 2007.

[20] Gore, James. Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. Personal Communication. October 2010.

<u>Assessing Interventions</u>

The primary objective for ZSR is to ensure that this tool can one day serve as a mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of both short- and long-term interventions.[21] A precursor to this, though, is assessing who is receiving services in the first place.[22] Additionally, this tool could enable analysts to measure the impact of a particular intervention and make a compelling case for the emphasis on a particular kind of service. For example, Rosch and Williams (2006) were able to overcome resistance from within the domestic violence community[23], who had concerns about associated stigma, through the use of research in order to make a case for increased mental health services for victims of domestic violence[24]. Additionally, Farmer and Tiefenthaler (2003) used aggregated victim data to attribute decreasing rates of domestic violence to increased provision of legal services, improvements in women's economic status, and demographic shifts[25].

Additionally, the ability to customize Osnium would enable organizations to introduce community-specific variables, such as impact from a plant closing, to gauge whether they have an influence on rates of domestic violence and sexual assault. Other assessments could include a cost-benefit analysis of current interventions, such as shelter stay versus hotel vouchers, as well as assessments of politically popular or unpopular interventions.[26] Lastly, a better understanding of how many people are receiving services and what services they are receiving would enable funders to develop more accurate funding formulas in order to allocate resources more equitably based on need.[27]

Despite the promising impact of a greater emphasis on data-driven interventions, the outcome is moot if agencies do not have the data collection tools, capacity, or interest to do this. Interviews with NCCADV and agencies illustrated that the use of this data collection tool as a way to transition to evidence-based programming was either a long way off or not presently part of their thinking. The immediate needs of assessing organizational capacity and interest while transitioning into a gradual implementation of this new tool are the primary foci of this project.

Z. Smith Reynolds' Role

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[21] ibid

[22] Rosch, Joel. Duke University's Center for Child and Family Policy. Personal Communication. 2010.

[23] There are concerns that evaluating interventions will invite a level of scrutiny the domestic violence and sexual assault services community has not yet experienced. This creates a heightened sense of vulnerability as well as a concern that the "best" intervention from an analyst's perspective may disempower a victim in determining what course of action she/he would like.

[24] Rosch, Joel and Jeff Williams. "Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Adult Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Victims: Considerations for Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Service Providers." <u>Center for Child and Family Policy, Duke Univsersity</u>. 2006.

[25] Farmer, Amy and Jill Tiefenthaler. "Explaining the Recent Decline in Domestic Violence." <u>Contemporary Economic Policy</u>. 21. 2 (2003): 158-172.

[26] Starsoneck, Leslie. Domestic Violence Policy Analyst. Personal Interview. 2010.

[27] Ibid

In 2001 the ZSR added the "Issues Affecting Women" focus to its Social Justice and Equity program area. As part of this focus the foundation has served as a longtime supporter of domestic violence and sexual assault services and has longstanding relationships with many victim services agencies throughout the state and with both coalitions. Alongside representatives from state funding agencies, ZSR has served as the sole private funder in the data collection tool's stakeholder group. This project attempts to evaluate how ZSR can best support and encourage agencies in order to achieve the foundation's desired objectives for this tool. For example, can ZSR use its leverage as a well-respected foundation to act as an "opinion leader"[28] among funders to press funders to ask for more outcomes and impact-oriented data? Should ZSR mandate grantees use the data collection as a condition to receive funding, as experts in the field have suggested[29]?

ZSR has already undertaken efforts to incentivize greater focus on the use of data through the modification of grant requirements. In January 2011 ZSR issued a memorandum to NCCADV, NCCASA, and state funders outlining a shift in their funding priorities in the fields of domestic violence, sexual assault, and reproductive health. The foundation also held three conference calls with current and prospective grantees to answer questions regarding their new priorities. In particular, ZSR illustrated that future domestic violence funding would support data-driven interventions and policies, the development of a statewide data collection tool, and increased technical support to grow organizational capacity. Conversely, the limitations of the foundation's resources prompted them to move away from funding efforts to reduce or prevent sexual assault and instead focus on funding efforts to increase access to sexual assault resources.

Data and Methods

Because the successful implementation of a statewide, victim-level data collection tool is contingent upon full participation by the state's victim service agencies, their voice and perspective is a critical guide in determining ZSR's next steps. Therefore, the majority of my data comes from interviews conducted with 17 agencies throughout the state that offer domestic violence and/or sexual assault support services. My interview questions (see Appendix A) enabled me to assess

- What data agencies currently collect
- How agencies use the data they collect
- How they perceive funder's request for specific data
- How they perceive the data collection tool
- How funders can best assist agencies with data collection

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[28] Skloot, Ed. Duke University's Center for Strategic Philanthropy and Civil Society. Personal Interview. 2010.

[29] Rosch, Joel. Duke University's Center for Child & Family Policy. Personal Interview. 2010.

The agencies I selected to interview came from a larger list provided to me by James Gore, ZSR Program Officer. All interviews took place by phone and used the same set of interview questions. I conducted all interviews with an agreement of confidentiality, but every agency provided me with a set of demographic information about the organization so that I had the option to qualify any recommendation I made based upon organizational size and capacity. This demographic information included:

- Annual budget
- Number of staff employed (both full-time and part-time)
- Number of clients served annually (including crisis calls)

I have complemented my agency interview findings with interviews conducted with key stakeholders, such as staff from NCCADV, NCCASA, James Gore, and academics. Additionally, NCCADV has generously provided me with the results from their survey to assess organizational data collection capacity in 2007 and the most recent survey completed in March 2011. This latest survey had 101 agency respondents.

Lastly, I have conducted case studies with states that have adopted similar tools. I have selected three states that are uniquely poised to inform the development and implementation of statewide data collection tool in North Carolina: Alaska, Oklahoma, and Illinois. Most of my case study research came from publicly accessible materials on these tools or via special request from the tool's administrators. I also conducted interviews with key persons involved with each state's data collection tool.

Findings and Analysis

I conducted interviews with a total of 17 agencies that provided domestic violence and/or sexual assault support services. I have integrated findings from both NCCADV surveys into my analysis.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of agencies interviewed by the type of services offered.

Types of Agencies Interviewed

12%
18%
70%

- Just Domestic Violence
- Just Sexual Assault
- Dual Service
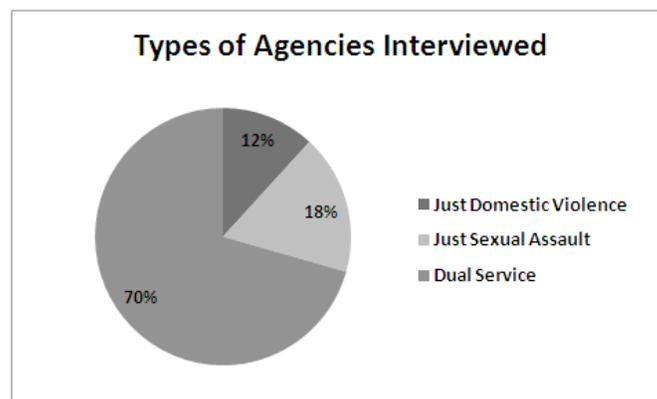
The agencies I interviewed represented a broad range in size, with those with budgets below $250,000 considered "small", those with budgets between $250,000 and $600,000 considered "medium", and those with budgets greater than $600,000 considered "large." Although 5 of the 17 agencies interviewed were divisions of larger family service organizations, I defined organizational size by the budget for that specific division.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of agencies interviewed by size of annual budget
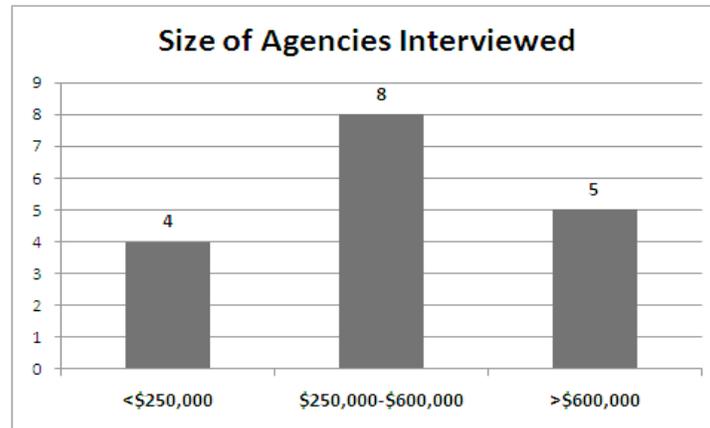
Electronic Data Collection Becomes the Norm

All of the agencies had some form of electronic data collection in place. These systems varied in sophistication from an Excel spreadsheet to an Osnium-like software tool. In NCCADV's 2007 survey only 52% of agencies reported having an electronic data collection system. NCCADV's 2011 survey reframed the question and asked agencies if they "utilized case management software" and 60% of respondents reported that they did. However, 13 agencies that responded "No" went on to mention that they either used a combination of digital and hard copy, commercial software, customized design software, or Excel spreadsheets. The 2011 survey and the interviews illustrate that electronic data collection is increasingly common among agencies.

Varied Level of Satisfaction with Current Electronic Data Collection Tool

Interviewees expressed varied levels of satisfaction with their current electronic data collection tool with 9 out of the 17 interviewees identifying specific problems or frustrations with it. Specific criticisms of their current systems included:

- It didn't provide space for client history or notes
- It was not trustworthy and pulled incorrect data
- It was susceptible to crashing
- It was too expensive to upgrade

- They did not have access to technical assistance
- It didn't allow them to customize
- As divisions of larger agencies, the agency-wide data collection system did not always meet their specific needs

"I know it seems antiquated…we end up entering information twice"

"I hate it"

"There's no program that captures everything we need"

"We've learned to use it and this is our system – we don't know any better"

All interviewees utilized some form of paper system, either for intakes that they subsequently entered into the electronic system or as an additional record for information that they could not put into their electronic system.

Conversely, 5 out of the 17 interviewees explicitly expressed their satisfaction with their current electronic data tool. Reasons for satisfaction with their current system included:

- They had it customized to meet their needs
- They devoted significant time and resources to developing it
- Staff were comfortable using it

It is difficult to attribute satisfaction or dissatisfaction to agency size, as both categories had representation from agencies of all sizes.

Figure 3 shows the distribution of agencies with problems with their current data collection tools by size
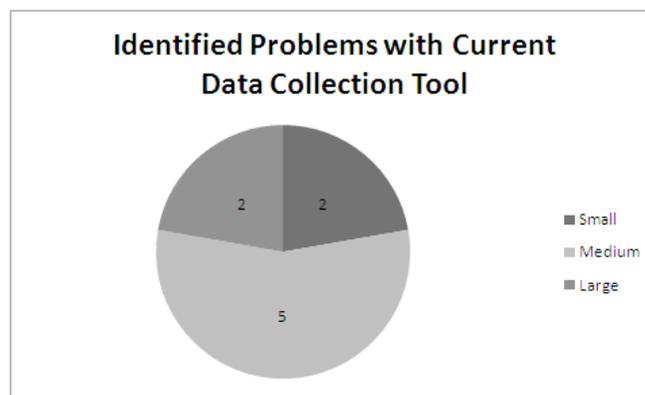
Though given their representation in the larger sample, large organizations are disproportionately represented as "satisfied" with their current electronic data collection tool.

Use of Data Collection Tool Goes Beyond Reporting

When asked about the intended use of the data they collect interviewees unanimously identified grant reporting as its primary use. In 2007, 87% of agencies with an electronic data collection tool reported using their tool for reporting purposes. However, interviewees consistently conveyed an understanding of the broader utility of data collection beyond reporting and recognized its overall importance in their work.

- 76% of interviewees explicitly mentioned using data to track trends (i.e. neighborhoods with high prevalence of violence, increase in clients with substance abuse issues, etc.)
- 53% of interviewees explicitly mentioned using data to modify or adapt services to meet community needs (i.e. responding to an increase in the Latino population by hiring a Latino outreach staff person)
- 59% of interviewees explicitly mentioned using data to illustrate the need for their services to the broader community and funders (i.e. information for media stories or community presentations)

Regardless of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their current electronic data collection system, 59% of interviewees expressed the desire to be able to track more data.

The New Data Collection Tool Has Promise, But There Are Concerns

All interviewees had heard about the new data collection tool, but the depth of their knowledge about it varied widely. Most interviewees could not describe any of its specific components. Nevertheless, 10 out of 17 interviewees (59%) explicitly expressed their excitement for the new tool and were eagerly anticipating its arrival.

> "The new system would be a lifesaver for us"
>
> "The sooner we can get it the better"
>
> "We've been crossing our fingers and holding our breath for the new database"

For several interviewees, this excitement was counter-balanced by a sense of frustration with the time it has taken for the tool to be developed. In one interview an interviewee mentioned that her agency, despite the need for it, had waited to invest in improving its current electronic data collection in anticipation of the new tool. In another interview an interviewee mentioned that her agency had gone ahead in making a significant investment in a new data collection tool because they could not wait any longer.

As one interviewee stated:

> "I think it's great, but they've been talking about it so long – get on with it!"

Some of interviewees' frustration arose from negative experiences with data collection tools developed by funders or overhead agencies that had never materialized or were ineffectual, with four interviewees citing specific experiences.

The 2007 survey gauges general receptivity to the tool by asking agencies "Would a database system that would ease varied funders reporting requirements be useful to your agency?" 89% of responded "Yes."

Concerns About the New Data Collection Tool

Interviewees offered varied concerns about the data collection tool.

Figure 4 shows the distribution of interviewees concerns
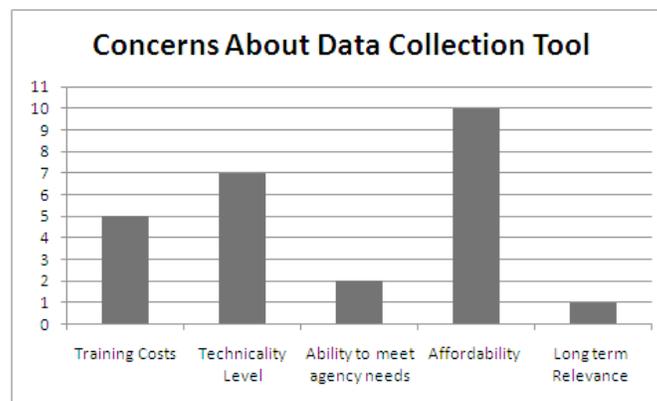
Training Costs

Five interviewees expressed concerns with the costs associated with training staff how to use the new data collection tool. In particular, interviewees highlighted the cost of travel, both the time and money associated with putting staff on the road. As one interviewee pointed out, the on-going response to crisis at her organization meant that:

> "At a 24/7 organization I only have so many hands to dispatch"

Level of Technicality

Seven interviewees expressed concerns regarding the level of technical equipment and training that would be necessary to effectively operate the tool. For agencies with old computers or staff who were not "tech savvy", this concern is especially acute.

Ability to Meet Agency's Needs

Two interviewees expressed concerns about the new tool's ability to meet their agency's needs. One of these agencies was large and the other was medium, but almost meeting

the "large" budget threshold. Both these agencies already had an electronic database in place that they were satisfied with.

> "We're supportive of it in concept, but it just depends on whether it meets our needs"
>
> "Holistically, it's a great thing, but we opted out for time reasons and because we created something that met our needs better"

Affordability

By far the largest concern about the data collection tool was its affordability, including the cost to set it up, transfer existing records, and maintain it. 10 out of the 17 interviewees (59%) cited this as a concern.

> "We're all scared to death about money"
>
> "We're already using a database and if we're going to switch there better be money behind it"

The only question pertaining to cost in the 2011 survey is one that asks agencies that have an electronic database about their willingness to pay for the cost of converting their current client data to the new data collection system. Of the 61 agencies that answered "Yes" to having case management software, 7 (11%) reported "Yes, interested and willing to pay," 20 (33%) reported "No, not able to pay," 9 (15%) reported "N/A We do not have an electronic database system," 22 (36%) asked to provide more information about their situation and primarily asked what the cost would be. 19 (19%) of all agencies interviewed made specific inquiries about the exact cost of the tool and/or conversion in the "More Information" section.

Long-Term Relevance of Tool

Although only referenced specifically by a single interviewee, it is worth noting that the long-term relevancy of this tool is in question. Given the speed with which agencies have adopted some form of electronic data collection tool it is clear that the field is evolving quickly. Evaluating the long-term sustainability of this tool is a worthy consideration.

Funders' Request for Data is Unnecessarily Complicated

Funders can play a valuable role in addressing the concerns raised by interviewees and some of these concerns do not pertain directly to the tool itself. In particular, eight interviewees (47%) expressed that one of the greatest challenges associated with data collection was the fact that their funders did not standardize their requests for data. The fact that, for example, two different funders would specify two different sets of client age ranges to report often added additional time to reporting and would force agencies to tally data by hand.

Customization is Key

Four interviewees expressly conveyed their excitement about the customization features of the new data collection tool. The ability to shape the tool to meet agency-specific needs is important to agencies.

Case Studies

I conducted case studies with three states that have or are developing a statewide data collection tool for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault: Oklahoma, Illinois, and Alaska. I selected these states because each has unique challenges and insights to offer North Carolina. Additionally, when I inquired with NCCADV as to which states were of particular interest to them they echoed my state selection. The majority of my data came from interviews with the key persons involved in a state's data collection tool development and implementation (see Appendix B).

Oklahoma

Funding for victim service agencies is provided on a fee-for-service basis in Oklahoma, so for nearly 20 years domestic violence and sexual assault agencies in this state have been accustomed to submitting detailed invoices to the state. However, the ability to pull data out of the system for other reporting purposes was very difficult. The Oklahoma Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (OCADVSA) formed a committee to search for software that would ease agencies' access to data for reporting, had controls, and offered a consistent model of collection. They developed a set of software criteria (see Appendix C) and selected Osnium as their software provider.

Their desired objectives for this tool are:

- Tracking trends within Oklahoma
- Understanding who they are and are not serving
- Formulating a legislative agenda
- Identifying best practices

Agencies and the coalition have covered most of the costs associated with the development of the tool and devoted a significant amount of volunteer labor. Once the data tool is in operation agencies will pay an annual fee for service. Fortunately, the coalition had a reserve of funds to help cover the data conversion costs for each agency once they are ready to switch to Osnium. The state had provided the coalition with some financial support for earlier software, but the coalition has since provided the Office of the Attorney General with financial support to utilize the software.

Illinois

ICJIA is the state agency in charge of administering federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) and Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) funds. When the federal government began to add fines from white-collar crime to VOCA funding in the mid-90's Illinois's funding grew by $12 million. To effectively distribute this deluge of funds ICJIA set out to gather data about domestic violence and sexual services throughout the state, but there was none.

With approval of the ICJIA board and the federal Office for Victims of Crime, ICJIA got approval to use VOCA funds to develop a statewide data collection system, InfoNet. Initially, InfoNet existed as a Microsoft Access database. In 2001 the ICJIA hired an information technology consultant and transitioned InfoNet into a web-based system, whereby agencies only needed access to the Internet to enter their data. ICJIA maintains technical responsibility for the tool, such as conducting weekly back-ups of the system, providing technical assistance to agencies, and hiring two fulltime programmers to work on InfoNet. Individual agencies are only responsible for knowing how to enter data and retrieve it from the system. Currently, about 120 agencies use InfoNet from about 200 sites throughout the state.

The system currently allows agencies to build their own reports and use custom filters to sort data according to specific grant requirements. Report tools not only enable agencies to provide grant-specific information to funders, but they also allow them to examine staff caseloads, resources committed to particular services, as well as facilitate program development by allowing agencies to track their client caseloads over time. InfoNet's overarching objectives are:

- Standardize data collection and reporting
- Create a central repository of statewide victim service data
- Ease mandatory reporting process for agencies to multiple funders
- Facilitate program development and improvement to better serve clients

InfoNet currently collects a limited amount of service-level outcome data, but there is collective interest in using the tool to move towards more evidence-based programming in the near future. A list of process and potential outcome indicators that InfoNet users have developed is available in Appendix D.

InfoNet is covered by both state and federal funds, including the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime, VOCA matching funds from general revenue funds, and the Illinois Department of Human Services. InfoNet's total operating budget is $450,000. The majority of these costs cover the salaries of InfoNet's two full-time programmers. InfoNet also employs a manager to oversee the tool's use throughout the state.

Alaska

The Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (ANDVSA), a non-profit organization, managed initial statewide data collection efforts. After ANDVSA learned

that the tool violated confidentiality laws, the Council on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault (CDVSA), a public agency, commissioned a study to identify a new data collection tool. They hired a contractor to develop a Microsoft Access tool with predefined queries to replace the current system.

With this new database, agencies enter data into pre-established fields on a computer in their office with no Internet or any potential exposure to hacking. The data goes through an extractor that redacts all personal information or the ability to connect specific populations with a specific community. Agencies enter comprehensive information regarding their client, client demographics, services provided, and details regarding the nature of the victimization. The system is very new, with the most version of the database premiering in 2010.

Currently, the annual costs for the database cover a research analyst at CDVSA who manages the tool. The Alaskan legislature discontinued additional funding for database maintenance and additional support. Agencies incur no costs to use this database.

Promoting Agency Buy-In and Participation

Due to the early presence of some standardized reporting or data collection tool none of the three states had to compete with a pre-existing data collection tool within agencies. Nevertheless, the case studies illustrate supplemental strategies for promoting agency buy-in and participation with a new data collection tool.

Illinois fostered buy-in by soliciting agency involvement through every step of InfoNet's development. In particular, agency representation is an especially critical component of the User Group committee, which routinely evaluates any proposed changes to InfoNet. Further, agencies own their own data. Funders have access to aggregate data that relates to all agencies, but access to individual records belongs solely to the agencies that entered the data.

In Illinois, the ICJIA provides agencies with regular training on how to use InfoNet, quarterly user group meetings to offer feedback on the tool, and technical assistance by phone during standard business hours. The InfoNet manager also offers trainings on how agencies can use InfoNet for purposes other than reporting – such as, teaching agencies how to put InfoNet into Excel in order to create graphs or other data presentation tools.

While the software has taken longer to develop than anticipated, tool administrators in Oklahoma plan to retrain all agencies through web-based training options, as well as offer live trainings every 6 months and host smaller trainings for cohorts of agency directors before bimonthly coalition meetings. Alaska complemented its trainings by developing a manual with trouble-shooting advice that is easily accessible on CDVSA's website. Additionally, CDVSA's research analyst is available to provide direct technical assistance.

In Alaska, the flaws with the initial data collection tool enabled state agencies and the coalition to mandate that agencies adopt the new tool. Further, as the administrator victim assistance funds, CDVSA mandates that agencies use the tool to submit quarterly report in order to receive funding.

Challenges

Technical Resources

All three states cited insufficient technical resources as a significant obstacle. Illinois' InfoNet Manager would like to hire an additional manager with greater technical skills, but does not have sufficient funding. Oklahoma's tool administrators lamented the lack of a statewide technical support system. Alaska agencies find the electronic manual too cumbersome to navigate and typically call CADVSA's over-extended research analyst for technical assistance, thus limiting her time devoted to improving the functionality of the tool.

Working with an Outside Software Developer

Oklahoma highlighted the challenges of working with an outside contractor to develop the tool. In particular, coalition staff highlighted its time intensiveness: "It takes as much time to communicate how to customize it as it does to actually customize it." They also felt that there was incongruity between the coalition and the software company's level of preparation, specifically citing that they were ready to train and implement the new tool before Osnium had completed the customization process. Additionally, significant turnover of staff at the coalition has made it challenging to consistently communicate with Osnium and know what committee members have already communicated to Osnium. The level of involvement that a new tool entails has also provided additional work for agency directors who already have limited time.

Agency Access to Tool

Limiting agency ability to manipulate the tool was a precaution taken by both Illinois and Alaska in order to protect the tool from error or inexperienced users. In Illinois any customization changes impacts the tool's appearance to all users. Therefore, any proposed changes in Illinois requires approval from the User Group Committee and if approved, are not adopted until July 1. In Alaska only CADVSA staff can access the software code, so individual agencies cannot customize the tool to suit specific agency data needs.

Tool Administrator

Both the tool administrators for Illinois and Alaska are public agencies. While not specifically referenced, I felt that this posed potential challenges because public agencies are uniquely vulnerable to shifts in the political climate and budget cuts.

Ineffectual Tools

Lastly, Alaska has experienced significant problems with its tool and lacks the resources to fix them in a timely manner. Like North Carolina's tool, the database has reporting forms for specific funders that should be able to self-populate with the necessary data. However, these forms are currently not functioning. Agencies are feeling frustrated, especially now that they have to double enter data to fill out reporting forms. The software codes are difficult to fix and Alaska's administrators would like to procure new funding in order to recreate the system from scratch.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations from Case Studies

Technical Support is Critical

All three case studies demonstrated the importance of strong investments in technical support. In particular, Oklahoma cited the need for a project manager with technical skills from outside of the coalition of domestic violence and sexual assault agencies:

> I believe it would have been tremendously helpful to have had funds to pay an individual or group to facilitate this work rather than having to rely on efforts of a group of agency directors, who have limited technology skills. I think it was great to get input from agencies across the state, but it has been extremely difficult to implement the project without the technical support and resources that are really needed.

Insufficient investment in technical support is especially acute in the Alaska case study, where the imbalance between the need for technical support and its availability is great.

Additionally, the ongoing need for technical support and high staff turnover necessitates creative and diverse forms of training. In particular, the Alaska case recommends the use of lower cost alternatives to in-person trainings, such as DVDs or web-based trainings.

Give Agencies Access and Ownership of Data

Part of Illinois' success is its valuation of agency buy-in. One way in which it galvanizes agency support is by giving agencies ownership of their data. This sense of ownership is emphasized in InfoNet's materials and in the actual operations of the tool, whereby funders only have access to aggregate level data.

While customization is not a simple process in Illinois, the User Group Committee fosters agency participation and provides an on-going forum for agencies to propose adaptions to the tool to best meet their needs. In Alaska, the sheer complexity and technical inaccessibility of the software is a challenge for both agencies and administrators – agencies are not able to maximize the utility of the tool and the sole administrator is struggling to adapt the software code to better meet agency needs without the assistance of the original software developer.

As Illinois illustrates, another way to facilitate agency ownership of the data is to solicit agency participation in order to better understand *what* data they would find useful in a data collection tool.

Promote Benefits of Tool Beyond Reporting

Illinois has effectively illustrated the positive impact of soliciting agency feedback in order to determine what type of data they would find useful in a data collection tool. By growing the utility that agencies derive from the tool for reasons other than reporting helps to ensure accurate reporting and participation. In particular, the InfoNet Manager recommends offering trainings on how to use the data collection tool for tasks others than reporting, such as putting data into Excel to create graphs for community education purposes.

Funders Must Play an Active Role

Oklahoma stressed the need for funders to continue to invest in agency overhead, so that agencies can simultaneously strengthen their data collection processes *and* provide services to clients.

Additionally, all the case studies emphasized the need for funders to work together in order to synchronize their data requests. They also recommend that funders, especially state administrative offices, work together to ensure that all the data fields in their state's tool meet VOCA and VAWA funding requirements.

Invest Up-Front

Advice from Illinois' InfoNet Manager and the Alaskan case study illustrate that short-term cost avoidance can lead to tools that are not sustainable, error prone, and bad investments. The case studies illustrate the need to invest in a tool that has long-term utility, is easy to use, and has accessible technical support.

Further, investing heavily up front in a tool that is easy to use helps to address the inevitability of staff turnover in the field, as both Alaska and Oklahoma have expressed. Training new staff on a regular basis is inevitable, so the tool should be easy enough to use in order to minimize the time costs associated with training new staff.

Funders Must Give the Message that Data is Important

One way that funders can ensure participation and give the message that data collection is important is to mandate that agencies use the data collection tool in order to receive funding. Alaska mandates that agencies use the data collection tool in order to receive public funding. In Illinois, most InfoNet users are under mandate by funders.

At this point in their tool's development, Oklahoma does not feel the need to mandate use of the Osnium tool as long as agencies are able to deliver the same data in the desired format. In particular, they stated that: "It's unrealistic to expect a large agency to quit doing what they need to do in order to accommodate other agencies." This applies specifically to higher capacity organizations that already have a data collection tool and do not feel that the new tool meets their organizational needs.

Capture Economies of Scale

Because InfoNet was created with federal dollars, its source code is free for use by other states. InfoNet's Manager felt that the tool could achieve greater cost efficiencies if Illinois administered the tool for multiple states. Washington currently administers its own version of the tool because InfoNet staff were not equipped to take on another state at the time Washington was ready to move forward with a statewide tool. However, InfoNet feels that they are now prepared to take on additional state data management and analysis.

Policy Recommendations

ZSR's Value-Added

ZSR has longstanding credibility among both funders and victim service agencies in this field. As a funder, ZSR has consistently provided critical funding, such as VAWA matching funds, and endeavored to advance the field by convening stakeholders, commissioning research, and challenging stakeholders to pursue strategies that have the greatest impact.

ZSR is uniquely poised to engage both other funders and victim service agencies on ways to ensure the effective implementation of this tool and encourage providers to move towards more evidence-based programming.

Prioritization

ZSR has several policy options at its disposal, but they necessitate varied expenditures of funds and time. Therefore, I have ranked my policy recommendations from the least resource intensiveness to the most. However, it is worth noting that the most resource intensive recommendations will also have the greatest impact on ensuring the effective implementation of the data collection tool.

1. Work with NCCADV, NCCASA, and public funders to increase marketing and communication about the data collection tool.

   Findings from my interviews and NCCADV's most recent survey indicate that there is a lack of generalized familiarity with the tool, as well as a lack of understanding about critical details that will have significant impact on whether

agencies are willing to pursue adopting it – namely cost. In particular, 19% of respondents in NCCADV's most recent survey explicitly asked questions about the cost of data conversion and/or indicated that it would be a determining factor in whether they would invest in the tool. This seems to indicate that agencies are unclear about what costs they would be responsible for and what NCCADV would provide for free.

ZSR should encourage NCCADV and NCCASA to draft a memo outlining a basic overview of the data collection tool that includes information about its cost, how it works, when it will be available, and a summary of FAQ. Both coalitions and the three major public funders should disseminate this memo simultaneously to all domestic violence and sexual assault agencies in the state. Both coalitions and all funders should keep this memo on hand and routinely include it in any communications they have with agencies.

2. **Convene funders to come to consensus on synchronizing funding requests and ensuring that current data requests yield meaningful output.**

While a data collection tool plays a valuable role in easing reporting for agencies, if funders do not align and evaluate their funding requests then it is challenging to assess changes in best practices over time. Additionally, inconsistencies in funding requests create reporting headaches for agencies and takes time away from service delivery. While federal reporting requirements limits funder flexibility in modifying data requests, it is worth revisiting this possibility and gauging funder commitment.

In particular, ZSR should exercise its ability as an "opinion leader" among funders to encourage funders to set funding priorities that are not just aligned with number of clients served and volume of services provided. Instead, funders should examine trends in the data, such as an increased need for outreach to Latino communities, and coordinate funding to allocate more resources to where there is a demonstrated need.

3. **Provide financial assistance for a broad range of training.**

As expressed in the interviews, agencies are concerned about the accessibility and cost of training. Additionally, the research also suggests that trainings are a good way to foster buy-in. Lastly, training can help facilitate agency's use of the tool as a way to evaluate services, as well as ease reporting requirements. Interviews demonstrated that agencies are looking at their data collection as a way to evaluate services and that several agencies wished they had the ability to collect even more data than they were currently able. Therefore, ZSR should look beyond just technical trainings on how to use the Osnium software. As illustrated by Illinois, agencies appreciated training on how to use InfoNet for reasons other than reporting.

Additionally, trainings should be affordable and accessible. Affordability and accessibility are critical not only because agencies have few resources to spare, but also because of high rates of staff turnover and the likelihood that agencies will need multiple trainings.

ZSR should provide funding for the development of a set of online training modules. These modules would offer online training on how to use the Osnium software, as well as other ways to use the software, such as how to use data to raise money or how to incorporate the data into Excel. By using an online training system, such as North Carolina AHEConnect, users would participate in simulation exercises on how to use the tool as well as be able access it as many times as necessary from any computer with an Internet connection.

ZSR could charge agencies a nominal fee to pay for the trainings' administrative costs, and cover the cost for the development and launch of the training. ZSR could pay Osnium, hire an in-state programmer, and/or staff from agencies that already have advanced data collection systems in place to develop the trainings. ZSR would pay a one-time fee for agencies to have unlimited access to the online courses. It would cost approximately $15,000 to cover the development of course material, access to online portals, and technical support.

4. *Invest in technical assistance. In particular, hire regionally based, technical staff persons to assist agencies with the data collection process and act as a direct liaison with Osnium.*

As the Illinois case study illustrates, a statewide data collection system is a significant undertaking and involves an investment of considerable resources in technical support. The InfoNet Manager strongly encouraged heavy investment up-front in technical resources in order to avoid the cost of cutting corners later. Both Oklahoma's and Alaska's systems are struggling from a dearth of technical support. In North Carolina's situation region-based technical assistance is critical because it drastically reduces the time agencies have to put their staff on the road and reduces training costs for agencies. Further, regionally based staff would have greater familiarity with the specific context, culture, and needs of the area they are working in.

Should ZSR decide to hire a project manager, critical hiring criteria should include technical skills and the ability to act as liaison between agencies and Osnium. The project manager should be able to offer regional trainings and/or train regional "experts" in the use of Osnium. Another way ZSR could ensure the availability of regional technical assistance would be to fund the training of a staff person at each of the Council for Women's regional offices to serve as a technical assistance provider. Additionally, ZSR could also provide supplemental funding to specific agencies with strong data collection technical skills to provide technical support to agencies in their region of the state.

This recommendation would cost approximately $30,000-$38,000 over the course of two years, dependent on the number of persons trained and whether the technical training dovetails with existing technical training on working with data collection software.

5. Hire an outside project manager to oversee the continued development and implementation of the data collection tool.

My research does not indicate that the goal to move towards more evidence-based programming has been a central consideration in the Osnium software's development. Therefore, it is unclear whether the tool is collecting the data that will facilitate the evaluation of interventions and services. Further, my research also indicates that there are several potential obstacles that might impede the tool's implementation. An outside project manager could conduct a "big picture" analysis of this project, beginning by assessing a. What data funders need and b. What data agencies need. This data needs assessment could ensure that the tool meets the needs of all necessary stakeholders. In particular, a project manager could ensure that the data collection tool collects information about both research proven and unproven interventions. The project manager could then assess how to meet both funder and agency data needs.

The project manager could ensure the right delivery of the right data in two ways: One option is to mandate the usage of the Osnium software once all parties' data needs are incorporated into the tool. Another, more preferable option is to mandate the delivery of specific data in a specific format, but keep the choice of data collection tool up to the discretion of the agency – as modeled in Oklahoma. Mandating agencies with sophisticated and customized data collection tools to switch to a tool that is potentially less adept at collecting data than their current system could foster ill will. Instead, the project manager can monitor and work with individual agencies to ensure that their data, through whatever collection mechanism they prefer, meets the desired specifications.

The hiring of a project manager would be a multi-year commitment. The project manager would serve in a fulltime position for the first two years and then they could serve in a reduced capacity for an additional two to three years. The ideal candidate for the project manager position would have four to six years of past project management experience, as well as technical skills that would enable them to navigate the Osnium software with ease. The position would pay $50,000 annually with an additional 28% of the salary ($14,000) to cover overhead such as benefits, travel expenses, office space, and equipment. The position would decrease to $30,000 in the 3rd through 5th year. The total cost associated with a five-year contract with a project manager is $243,000.

Appendices

Appendix A: Agency Interview Questions

My name is Emily Wexler and I am a graduate student working on my Masters project. I will be working as a consultant to the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation to explore ways in which they can better support organizations providing domestic violence services throughout North Carolina. In particular, I am interested in learning more about how your organization collects information about the services and resources you offer your clients and how this information impacts the work you do.

I'll be conducting a series of interviews with organizations throughout the state. I also hope to follow up my interviews with a survey to all domestic violence organizations. All my findings from my interviews and the survey will be confidential, however, I'd like to be able to categorize any organization I am referencing as small, medium, or large. In some instances, I'd also like to include quotations that would remain confidential. Would that be okay with you?

So that I can qualify any recommendations I make, could you provide me with three pieces of demographic information about your agency? (annual budget, number of staff (FTE and PTE), number of clients served a year)

What kind of information or data do you collect about your clients? How are you tracking this information?

How do you use the information or data you collect?

Do you have staff assigned to collecting data? What percentage of their time do they spend doing this?

What kind of information would you like to have about your clients or services that would help you maintain and improve the work you are doing?

What do you think of the data your funders ask you for? Is it the right data?

Is there a role funders can play in supporting you with the data collection process?

Has your organization participated in any formal evaluations? What was that experience like? Positive? Negative?

What are your thoughts on the data collection tool that the NCCADV is developing? Do you know about this tool?

How receptive do your peers in the DV/SA communities about this tool? What are some of the challenges or barriers for these organizations?

Thinking about your peers in the DV or SA community what do you think their reception of this tool will be? If there is resistance, what do you think it is based on?

Will this data collection tool positively affect your work? In what ways will the tool negatively affect your work?

Is there anything that will make this tool more helpful for you?

Appendix B: State Case Study Interviewees

Oklahoma

Dr. Ralph Lindsey, Executive Director, Stillwater Domestic Violence Services, Inc., member of the technology committee of the Oklahoma Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

Illinois

Jennifer Hiselman, InfoNet Manager at the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA)

Alaska

Judy Reckelhoff, Research Analyst, Council on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault

Appendix C: Oklahoma Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Software Tool Selection Criteria

DATA ELEMENTS		
Does the product support the collection of a comprehensive body of information?		
Will the product foster the collection of information needed:		
	for the individual program	
	for funding agencies	
	for the state	
What mechanisms are in place to protect data?		
	controls to limit accessibility	
	controls to protect confidential information	
	security to protect data from intruders	
	disaster protection processes	
Integrity of Data: Does the product:		
	foster consistency of data entered	
	handle duplicate data	
	have processes available to examine the veracity of the data	
USER ELEMENTS		
Ease of Use		
Are the data entry and reporting features user friendly and suitable for workers who have limited computer skills?		
Notes:		
Flexibility		
Can the product be modified to meet the unique needs of a given agency?		
	Large Urban	
	Small Rural	
	Multi Site	
	Special Grants.	
Can the product interface with other common software programs?		
	Microsoft Office	
	Open License	
	Apple products	
	Quickbooks	
	Excel	

Is capacity for billing available for:	
	Client Fees
	Medicare/Medicaid
	Variable Funding Sources
Training and User Support	
What level of training will be required to effectively use the product?	
	Data Entry
	Utilization of Reporting Features
	Customization of product for local agency
Who will provide the training for:	
	Data Entry
	Utilization of Reporting Features
	Customization of product for local agency
Is technical support needed for users?	
Is technical support provided?	
Notes:	

Appendix D: List of Process and Potential Outcome Indicators for InfoNet

Possible outcome performance indicators available from InfoNet

Service Outcome Data
Number of clients served who know more about community resources
Number of clients served who know more about planning for their safety

Number of new adult (walk-in) victims served (cases):
  Of these victims, number who returned for subsequent services:
  Of these victims, number who had more than 3 contacts:
  Of these victims, number who had more than 5 contacts:

Shelter Client Depature Information (Shelter/housing clients only - adults and children)
 Number of clients departing shelter or housing during the reporting period
 Number of clients departing with permanent destination tenure
 Number of clients departing with transitional destination tenure
 Number of clients leaving because they completed program
 Number of clients leaving due to criminal activity, destruction or property, violence, or disagreement with rules person
 Number of clients leaving because they disappeared
 Number of clients leaving because program could not meet needs

Orders of Protection
 Number of victims who filed OPs
 Number of OPs filed
 Number of OPs granted
 Number of civil OPs issued
 Number of criminal OPs issued
 Number of emergency OPs issued
 Number of interim OPs issued
 Number of plenary OPs issued
 Number of OPs upgraded
Number of OPs active during period
Number of OPs violated
 Number of violations with police charge
 Number of violations without police charge

Potential Performance Indicators for Overall Community
Response to DV
Number of victims who went to a medical facility for an
evaluation:
 Victims treated for injuries
 Victims who had photos taken
 Victims who had an evidence kit used

Number of victims who reported a crime to police
 Victims who received a patrol interview
 Victims who received a detective interview
 Victims whose abuser was charged with a crime
 Victims whose abuser was arrested
 Victims who were interviewed by state's attorney
 Victims whose abuser had charges filed against them (by
state's attorney)
 Victims who had a trial scheduled
 Victims whose abusers were acquitted
 Victims whose abusers had charges dropped
 Victims whose abusers were dismissed
 Victims whose abusers were convicted of a crime (includes
plea bargains)

Adult Client Referral Sources:
Clients referred from statewide help line:

Clients referred from health systems
 Hospital
 Medical
 Medical Advocacy Program
 Public Health

Clients referred from criminal justice system:
 Police
 State's Attorney

Clients referred from court system:
 Circuit Clerk
 Legal System
 Private Attorney

Clients referred by other systems:
 Clergy
 DCFS
 Education
 Media
 Hotline (any hotline)
 Friend
 Relative
 Self
 Social Service Program
 Telephone
 Other project
 Other

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