

# Blueprint to Engage Universities in Addressing Violence Against Women on Campus

December 2017



**DCCoalition**  
Against Domestic Violence



This project was supported by Grant No. 2014-TA-AX-K061 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice.

The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.





## A Letter of Introduction



You are about to read a synopsis of three years of hard work trying to raise the bar of the university response to dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking in Washington, DC. We at the Coalition knew it was possible and are so very proud of what we were able to achieve. This blueprint is designed to help others embark on this work, building from the lessons we learned.

The mission of the Coalition is to build a community where domestic violence is replaced with human dignity. We advance our mission through advocacy, community education, public policy, technical assistance and training, resource sharing and research.

We thank the **Office on Violence Against Women** for funding this project and are grateful to **Darlene Johnson** and **Rudelle Handy** for their leadership as our grant managers. We thank **Liz Odongo**, DCCADV's Programs Director and Training, and Outreach Specialists **Smita Varia** and **Leanne Brotsky** for always pressing on. And we extend our deepest appreciation to the Title IX teams and campus victim services for their hard work and participation in these efforts.

In peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karma Cottman".

Karma Cottman  
Executive Director



**I**n December 2017, the DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence (DCCADV, the Coalition) completed a three-year pilot project working with the eight universities in Washington, DC, the Enhancing The Campus Response to Domestic and Sexual Violence (ECRDSV) Grant Program. The purpose of this pilot project was to engage senior leadership and university presidents in the elimination of violence against women on college campuses. In order to respond to intimate partner violence and violence against women on college campuses, DCCADV convened all eight universities in DC to coordinate an enhanced response to dating and sexual violence.

Based on our experience, we have developed this blueprint as a set of recommendations and steps to build an effective, successful relationship between other universities and community organizations. As violence on college campuses is a national issue and the subject of much current conversation, there are ample opportunities to create partnerships between university campuses and community-based organizations in cities and states across the nation.

This blueprint is designed for community-based anti-violence organizations, including state domestic violence coalitions, seeking to enhance the local campus response to dating and sexual violence. It contains ideas to consider, examples from our experience, and scenarios to illustrate how the campus response to relationship violence gets shaped. We hope this resource is helpful in forming consortiums to end all violence against women on- and off-campus.

## Campus sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking

Interpersonal violence is an epidemic impacting all age groups. However, both in DC and across the nation, young women, age 18–24, are at greatest risk for dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. In fact, 43% of dating college women report experiencing abusive dating behaviors including physical, sexual, technological, verbal and/or controlling abuse.<sup>1</sup> While dating and sexual violence are pervasive among this age group, more than half of college students nationally report that they do not know how to help someone who is a victim of abuse.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, recent changes in federal law have presented challenges to universities in adequately addressing all forms of intimate partner violence. In 2012, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was expanded to include campus provisions focused on enhancing the response to all four major violent crimes against women: dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. As a result, campuses that were already struggling with the capacity to effectively respond to sexual assault had difficulty even beginning to address these other forms of violence against women. On many campuses, there was limited understanding of and programming to respond to dating violence, domestic violence, and/or stalking.

### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> 2011 College Dating Violence and Abuse Poll, Love is Not Abuse, Liz Claiborne, Inc. [http://www.loveisrespect.org/pdf/College\\_Dating\\_And\\_Abuse\\_Final\\_Study.pdf](http://www.loveisrespect.org/pdf/College_Dating_And_Abuse_Final_Study.pdf)

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## Why should your organization engage in this work?

Collaborating with colleges and universities to respond to dating and sexual violence requires community building and direction setting. As you begin to think about creating a campus initiative, it's important to consider the strengths and capacity of your organization that will allow you to convene and direct a university initiative.

### Evaluate strengths and capacity of the organization

*What existing partnerships do you have and can bring to the universities? What internal and external capacity do you have for technical assistance?*

Our experience: As the statewide domestic violence coalition, DCCADV works closely with survivors, civic leaders, local elected representatives, first responders, law enforcement, criminal and civil systems, allied stakeholders, and our member programs. These existing relationships strengthened our ability to help universities identify ways to effectively respond to victim needs, engage local systems, and assist students in navigating the response to violence against women. Our work bringing disparate systems and groups together also made us effective at convening the diverse colleges and universities in DC to work collaboratively and share resources and information across campuses.

*What internal and external capacity does your organization have for technical assistance?*

For many anti-violence organizations, advocates are well versed in confidentiality and systems work. State domestic violence coalitions are also particularly experienced and skilled in holding the confidence of public and private partners. This allows organizations to build trust with university leadership and leverage resources to help answer questions that universities may need answered but worry about asking publicly without consequence.

Our experience: DCCADV's ability to uphold confidentiality allowed us to work with each university toward full compliance without exposing them to penalties or sanctions.

*Who are your existing community partners? How will they strengthen your collaboration with local universities?*

One major strength of community-based organizations is their connection to and collaboration with programs doing similar work in the local area. This network of organizations with shared purpose and vision may feel like second nature to each program, but is a valuable tool that colleges and universities often don't know about. Think about who your local and national partners are, and how they'll help your university work.



Our experience: Our existing partnership with our local member programs and national experts like the [Victim Rights Law Center](#) allowed us to connect universities with a wide network and provide training and technical assistance on many subjects without added cost to the universities. The experience and expertise we brought to this university collaboration are shared by many anti-violence organizations and domestic violence coalitions across the country. We believe the skills and resources that a statewide coalition can bring to a university partnership is incredibly valuable, and makes all domestic violence coalitions excellent candidates to bring campus and community partners together in the response to dating and sexual violence.

## Goal-setting and Readiness

Before you can begin work with campus partners, it is critical to spend time thinking on and discussing why you want to do this work with universities. What is the purpose? What are your end goals?

### Recognize population need

*What is the college/university population in your area? Do they have specific needs in terms of addressing relationship violence?*

It's important to note that across the nation, young women ages 18–24 are at greatest risk of experiencing dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. While dating and sexual violence are pervasive among this age group, more than half of college students say they don't know how to help someone who is a victim of abuse. So it's safe to say that students across the country will benefit from an enhanced response to relationship violence. However, the student population in each area is unique, and may have different strengths or challenges in preventing and responding to dating and sexual violence. It's important to take some time to get to know your local campus population to figure out how your initiative can make the most impact for students.

### Consider existing tools and resource gaps

*What are local campuses already doing well to respond to relationship violence? What challenges do they face?*

Some colleges and universities may have robust dating and sexual violence prevention programs already in place, while others may be looking for more guidance and best practices to implement. In 2012, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was expanded to include campus provisions focused on enhancing the response to all four major violent crimes against women: dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. As a result, campuses that were already struggling with the capacity to effectively respond to sexual assault had difficulty even beginning to address these other forms of violence against women. Campuses may have already developed programming to respond to sexual assault specifically, but need additional support to best address dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking on campus.





## Identify specific partners who will help achieve shared goals

When engaging university partners, it's important to understand the role that each person plays on campus in order to most effectively engage the full university community in preventing dating and sexual violence. Senior leadership, faculty, staff, and victim service providers all have unique skillsets they can bring to the response to dating and sexual violence

### **Presidents and senior leadership**

Leadership like the university president, vice presidents, provosts, and deans set the tone and priorities for university-wide initiatives. They have the ability to prioritize relationship violence prevention work and marshal existing university resources to enhance the school's response. While they are not working on the issue directly every day, they are able to bring public attention to the issue and raise financial and social capital to address the issue on campus. Engaging senior leadership can help harness momentum for the response to relationship violence, and can create a lasting response to all forms of relationship violence on campus. An effective campus initiative must engage senior university leadership in order to be successful.

### **Victim service providers**

Victim service providers on campus can include the university's Title IX coordinator, prevention coordinators, campus law enforcement victim service specialists, counseling staff, wellness center personnel, and anyone else who provides supportive services to and assists with accommodations for students. Victim service providers often have experience with dating violence prevention and programming, whether through a formalized campus program or experiential work with students. Engaging victim service providers in your initiative will allow them to share their experience and expertise to strengthen your campus initiative, and will also allow the initiative to more fully reach the entire student body through these direct service providers.

### **Faculty and staff**

Faculty and staff often have direct contact with students who may be experiencing dating or sexual violence on campus, whether they know it or not. They may receive disclosures about relationship violence, and might need support to understand their reporting requirements or how to best engage with students around violence prevention. Engaging staff and teaching faculty in your initiative can help widen the response to student survivors and make sure they can connect with appropriate resources anywhere on campus.



## Know your end goals

When developing a partnership with different members of the campus community, it can be very helpful to work backwards. Think about your ultimate goal for this type of partnership, and allow that to inform and ground the work you do. What are specific outcomes you hope to achieve? What partnerships do you want to formalize? What do you want to see change? Are there metrics or final deliverables you want to produce? Universities are bustling places that focus on many issues and initiatives at a time. Without having concrete final goals for your initiative, it may be easy for your organization or campus partners to lose focus and concentrate on specific issues or incidences as they come up. By setting specific end goals, your initiative can maintain momentum and continue to focus proactively on the response to violence.

**Our experience:** One of the most successful takeaways from our campus initiative was our robust training and technical assistance program. We set clear training goals throughout our initiative, making sure to specify which university partners we would engage in each event. This allowed us to reach a wide swath of the university community and greatly increase the knowledge, skills, and beliefs around serving survivors on campus.

## Commit to being trustworthy

To successfully work with universities, it's critical to ensure a trusting relationship by showing you are truly interested in helping your campus partners. One large opportunity to build trust is through confidentiality; it can be helpful to stress that what is shared with you through the initiative is kept in confidence unless otherwise approved. Ensure your goals and programming include provisions for confidentiality. Think through how you will process and respond to information, especially information that is in contradiction to federal guidance or best practices. Remember why you are doing this work and how your work will enhance the campus response to violence against women.

## Plan for diversity

As you begin formalizing partnerships with universities, keep in mind who is present and served by each campus. Every campus you work with will be different. Ensuring that your initiative is engaging all campus partners equitably is crucial in order to truly support university staff and students. Recognizing and respecting the diverse makeup, climates, and needs of each of the local campuses in your area will allow you to best support all initiative members equitably.

### Identify intersectional factors and needs of campus partners

*What populations are served by each campus? Do these campuses have a specific educational focus? Do students live on campus or commute, attend school full or part-time, etc.?*



**Scenario:** DC is home to diverse colleges and universities, including two Historically Black Universities, one women’s university, one university dedicated to the education of deaf and hard of hearing students, several religious and non-religious institutions, commuter campuses, programs for professionals receiving continuing education, and campuses of very different sizes. Each university’s educational focus and student population define and shape its campus community and impact existing resources and needs for support. Access to resources, both financial and institutional, vary per campus. In some cases, faculty and staff may serve in multiple roles on a campus as some universities are more heavily resourced. Staff from each university in DC report unique campus needs, and take distinct steps to ensure resources and tools are accessible to their campus communities. Our initiative engaged these diverse campus stakeholders by making sure that trainings and workshops provided best practices and skill-building for diverse educational settings, and scheduled meetings and events at times that would allow staff from all learning settings to participate.

*Are existing university materials representative and accessible to all students?  
Do education and outreach efforts engage all students equitably?*

Through your initiative, it is critical to allow space for universities to explore how campus initiatives (like bystander intervention trainings, prevention programming, and more) are reaching different populations on campus. In many cases, resources must be adjusted or adapted in order to be fully culturally responsive. Training and outreach materials are often designed to reach the largest group of students, but it is important to consider whether these materials are truly reaching all students; are there changes or modifications that need to be made in order to connect with students of color, the LGBTQ community on campus, immigrant populations, etc.? Use the demographic data of universities in your area to identify key populations that need to be intentionally included in programming and materials.

## **Building a relationship**

It’s important to remember that each university brings unique resources and a unique campus climate to its response to dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Getting to know each university, its policies, resources, and needs, will best set up opportunities for collaboration and partnership.

### **Research campus policies and protocols**

*Has the university drafted a policy for addressing sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking? Are these policies widely known and understood?  
What do staff, faculty, and students think of the policies and their effectiveness?*

While federal policy mandates that colleges and universities respond to all forms of violence against women, many universities focus primarily on sexual assault prevention and intervention. It is therefore important to review whether local universities in your area are addressing all forms of violence equally, and to collect feedback from campus groups and task forces on implementation and acceptance of existing policy. It can also be helpful to review policies and best practices being used nationally and by surrounding universities of similar sizes and populations served to understand what policies can be effective and should be implemented by local universities.



### Review existing programming

*What is the university doing to engage and educate incoming students? Returning students? Graduate students? Have there been efforts to identify culturally-specific groups on campus and tailor prevention education accordingly?*

There are a number of local, statewide, and national initiatives that campuses across the country are employing to educate students on the realities of dating and sexual violence and violence prevention. This programming is often designed to provide all incoming students, undergraduate and graduate, with a foundational knowledge of the university's approach to violence prevention. Some universities also provide campus-specific bystander intervention training and education on healthy vs. unhealthy relationships. Investigate what prevention education strategies your campus partners are already employing, what students are and aren't being reached, and how the university community has responded to existing programs so far. You can also learn more about a few national approaches to prevention education that have been employed at universities throughout the country:



### *Who's already doing the work on campus?*

Map out who's already part of the campus' response to dating and sexual violence, and convene those efforts to help form an education committee. Many schools have multiple departments working on the campus response to violence, but they sometimes work in silos or aren't supported by one another. Increasing collaboration is a crucial part of enhancing violence prevention and intervention, and necessary in the early stages to make sure key stakeholders are all at the table.

## Join the team

*Is there an existing Coordinated Community Response Team (CCRT) on campus?  
Is it addressing dating violence, sexual assault, harassment, and stalking?*

If universities do have an existing CCRT, approach key stakeholders to discuss how your initiative can support the team through training and technical assistance, leadership opportunities, research and evidenced-based practices, and emerging trends. If no team exists, build the framework. Convene work groups based on position for universities in your state: convene groups of Title IX teams, victim service providers, senior leadership, campus law enforcement, and student educators (including students and staff working on prevention education) so that they can connect with people doing similar work at nearby schools. Start by discussing federal laws and mandates, assess for current policies and protocols, collaboratively brainstorm needs and challenges, and help fill identified gaps. After developing a sound relationship with staff and leadership from different arenas at each university, consider consolidating into a coordinated group with subcommittees for each mandate: prevention and bystander education, trauma-informed and survivor-centered response and interventions, climate surveys and data collection, and senior leadership engagement.

## Meet with senior leadership and share your map

Develop a collaborative team including respected campus leaders to present the findings of your research and potential areas for collaboration. Discuss what you've learned, gaps you've identified, and what you can offer to help (especially connection with existing community resources that can increase campus capacity to serve students). Come to a meeting with campus leadership with a plan and possible solutions, not just identified problems. It is crucial to highlight both existing programming that is working well on campus and identified strengths of each university. Get each university's input on what interests them, what support they want, and what members of the university community are best to engage and work with.





## Increasing capacity

As your initiative develops and progresses, it's important to evaluate how you can continue to grow and expand the important partnership you've formed with local universities. Evaluate university capacity to increase violence prevention programming, and determine how you as a community organization can support the campuses in expanding their violence prevention response to reach the entire campus community.

### Secure funding

While universities may have some funding for the response to violence on campus, many need additional funding sources to adequately respond to students' needs. Some smaller schools do not have the personnel, expertise, or capacity to apply for funding, while others may not yet have the full support of campus leadership to expand violence prevention programming. As you begin to work with local universities, talk to these potential partners about their capacity and funding to address dating and sexual violence and provide prevention education. If they are interested in expanding their campus response, coalitions and anti-violence community organizations can play a vital role in helping universities procure financial resources to fully address dating and domestic violence on campus. There are many national and government grants designed specifically to enhance university capacity for safety and violence prevention. This funding can increase university capacity for trainings, technical assistance, and staffing. The Office on Violence Against Women provides grant funding opportunities to address many aspects of violence prevention on campus.

### Data dive

#### *What information and data is the university already collecting? What's missing?*

Form a team made up of both campus partners and staff from your organization to explore and expand university data collection efforts. Examine how different departments (including university communications, the office of the President, student and residential life services, etc.) utilize violence prevention data. For many universities, campus climate surveys are a major opportunity for data collection about student attitudes and campus norms around dating and sexual violence. As universities have quite varied surveys and survey collection processes, campus partners may be collecting a wide range of information. Some universities may collect very limited data on who is accessing campus services and participating in anti-violence trainings. This type of data collection is vital not only to understand which students are being served, but also to identify which students are not being served by or engaging with existing mat

It is then very important for your organization to assist campus partners in expanding their data collection efforts to capture this type of vital information.

#### *How are universities currently collecting information?*

Research existing tools and survey instruments available for campus climate data collection. The Office on Violence Against Women has a [series of best practices for campus climate survey creation and implementation](#). Other research organizations and institutes have also created novel climate survey tools to further understand campus attitudes toward relationship violence. For example, [The Montana Institute created the Positive Community Norms Framework](#), which works to correct misperceptions of how the majority of people in a population act and think, building the energy and willingness of the community to engage in healthier, safer behaviors.



### Offer trainings and technical assistance

*Who has received training on campus violence prevention? Do they have existing access to ongoing training and technical support? Who needs more assistance in addressing all forms of violence in their work on campus?*

Talk with university leadership and staff about past opportunities for training, and what skills they hope to gain through future trainings and technical assistance. Identify topics, workshops, and facilitators that will help build the university's response to dating and sexual violence. Important trainings for university partners include how to be survivor-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive when working with students. When designing training workshops and events, tailor opportunities and topics for different audiences within the school's community. For example, some trainings should focus on systemic approaches to violence prevention and be designed for university leadership (including presidents and provosts), while others should focus on providing concrete skills for working with student survivors and be geared toward campus victim service staff.

Build on existing training and technical assistance resources that will be helpful to your university partners. The Office on Violence Against Women offers many webinars, trainings, best practice guides, and other forms of technical assistance through its [Technical Assistance Program](#). The Centers for Disease Control also offer a number of training [resources for relationship violence prevention](#), including the [Veto Violence](#) initiative designed to apply a public health primary prevention approach to dating violence.

### Help create representative programming

In addition to trainings on cultural humility and inclusion, help universities make sure all aspects of their violence prevention programming is accessible and representative for all students. Materials, resources, and programs must be developed with the largest possible audience in mind. It's also important to make adaptations to existing materials in order to ensure cultural responsiveness across race, age, ability, gender, etc. Students respond best to materials they can identify with and connect to. That means poster and messaging campaigns, surveys, and especially bystander intervention education must be respectful and representative of a university's student body if they are to be truly effective on campus.

## Support the relationship with students

As your campus partners begin to enhance their response to relationship violence, it is important to help them engage with students around these issues. University leadership and staff are committed to providing inclusive, safe environments to students. When incidences of sexual assault and relationship violence occur on campus, it can often be difficult for school leadership to balance their obligation to survivors' confidentiality with the demands from students to know what is happening and how the university is responding to the issue. Students do have a right to know about their safety and the safety of the campus, but universities are also required to uphold a survivor's confidentiality under the law. These sensitive and sometimes competing interests are difficult for universities to balance, providing an important opportunity for coalitions and community organizations to assist leadership in navigating these complex conversations with students. To support your campus partners, offer help in responding to any incidents on campus. This may look like helping to draft talking points for leadership, assisting victim service providers in facilitating community discussions about the issue, and more. As you demonstrate your organization as a trusted and confidential resource to universities, senior leadership will be able to look to you for assistance in navigating complex situations.

## Respond to changing needs and the national climate in real time

Throughout the course of the ECRDSV initiative, a number of breaking news stories and federal policy changes gave much national attention to the campus response to violence (including the release of *The Hunting Ground* documentary and the Department of Education's proposed changes to Title IX enforcement). We worked with our university partners to create talking points, messaging, and effective communication with students around these issues of national attention. Creating the space and resources for universities to have these conversations is crucial for building and maintaining trust between students and university leadership.

## Growing the response

As you establish a formal and successful partnership with local colleges and universities, evaluate opportunities to grow your initiative both within the campus community and in the community at large. Expanding these efforts will allow relationship violence education and prevention programming to reach more people and create a larger impact locally and nationally.

### Get students involved

After investing significant and meaningful time in building a relationship with senior leadership and university staff, work with student groups to help enhance the campus response to relationship violence prevention. As each campus has a different student body, including students in your initiative will look different on each campus. However, across campuses, it can be very helpful to provide training and education opportunities for student peer educators, activists, and student-led outreach committees so that they can learn more about the issue and decide how they'll get involved in campus efforts. Help educate student leaders about federal and local laws, connect them with local service providers, and provide technical assistance to help them navigate any individual incidences that may arise on campus. As students access their rights to information about campus safety, it can also be helpful to arm student leaders with tools and talking points to navigate their rights, the school's mandated requirements, and any conversations with senior leadership.





It can also be impactful to help students explore opportunities for ethical storytelling. Survivor-led events like [Take Back the Night](#) rallies are often incredibly powerful awareness raising opportunities and engage large numbers of students in conversations around relationship violence. However, these events can sometimes be difficult or triggering for survivors who attend or speak at these events. It is important for you as community partners to work with students to help them understand safe and ethical storytelling, and to help provide safe avenues for storytelling and information sharing.

When working with students and student leaders on campus, it can be very helpful to connect them with national groups providing expertise and opportunities for collaboration with students across campuses. Organizations like [Know Your IX](#) and [End Rape on Campus](#) operate nationally but often have representatives at universities across the country who can meet with interested students. It's also important to attend and support student-led events on campus to foster a relationship and better get to know the student body.

### **Provide space for national collaboration**

There is wonderful work being done on relationship violence prevention across the country. A large part of your role as a coalition or community organization is connecting people to new information and opportunities. As such, an important part of growing your initiative is connecting local campus partners with others doing similar work across the country. All universities are navigating similar overarching challenges when responding to dating and sexual violence on campus, so it can be helpful to share approaches and success stories. Use national resources, like the Office on Violence Against Women, to connect your campus partners with other universities through conferences, webinars, working groups, and more. Creating opportunities for university staff to connect with and learn from one another is key to a successful campus partnership.

## Addressing challenges and rolling with resistance

This work is not always linear, and you will face challenges throughout your initiative. However, by rolling with and responding to any resistance that comes up and continuing to serve as a trusted and consistent community support, you can develop a significant and effective initiative to enhance the campus response to dating and sexual violence.

### Recognize roles

It is important that you recognize the roles that campus leaders and staff play within their universities. While creating opportunities for dialogue and collaboration are key to success, it is also important to create safe spaces for candid conversations. Set up email groups or listservs for university presidents, campus victim service providers, and university communications staff to allow for regular communication between your organization and campus partners. Keep each group separate so that campus leaders can talk freely and use the listservs as meaningful methods of connection with one another as well as with your organization.

Encourage campus leaders to discuss the challenges of setting policy, managing large donors, supporting and growing financial support, and responding to student needs/concerns. Allow for space to address challenges and problem solve in an open dialogue across campuses. This opportunity for honest discussion and critique is critical to building a successful initiative that truly engages each local campus.

### Tailor content to each audience

Establish a meaningful plan of ongoing engagement with all members of the campus community, and recognize that each audience has different time and resources to devote to your cause. Most campuses are very committed to student safety and the prevention of sexual and dating violence, but they may have multiple campus safety arenas to address at one time. It is important to tailor content and an engagement plan for staff in different roles within the university so that you can most meaningfully and conveniently connect with key players.

**Content for senior leadership:** Recognize that university presidents and senior leadership (vice presidents, provosts, etc.) have numerous competing priorities and engagements, and that they have to prioritize their time and issues that they attend to on any given day. This can present somewhat of a challenge when hoping to engage with them on complex or nuanced issues that require ongoing conversation. Senior leadership have tight schedules and varied constituencies. To facilitate better dialogue with very busy senior leaders, it is critical to create and present polished, clear, and concise information. Spend some time consolidating and editing any emails, press releases, policy documents, or resource your initiative produces to make short and concise versions for university leadership. By keeping leadership informed about your work, but doing so in a clear and concise way to be mindful of their limited time and availability, you can ensure continued conversation and commitment to the initiative from all members of the campus community.



**Content for staff and faculty:** Staff and faculty have varied roles across the university, so engaging them in the conversation may look different for each campus and each person. Email listservs can be very helpful to keep them abreast of ongoing developments and projects within your initiative. It is also helpful to identify a few key staff or faculty who are heavily invested in the campus response to dating and sexual violence, and talk with them about the best way to spread information across departments. Faculty and staff who may be particularly invested in the initiative include campus diversity offices, legal services divisions, health and wellness centers, and women's centers.

**Content for campus victim service providers:** As campus victim services providers are already providing a significant response to dating and sexual violence, you are likely to work most closely and extensively with this group. Because you will have frequent and ongoing conversation with these service providers, you can share the most information with this group. Use email listservs and conference calls to keep them informed about your ongoing work, and to solicit ideas and feedback on plans and programming for the initiative. It can be very helpful to provide campus victim service providers with early drafts of any proposed policy or program outlines within the initiative. Getting feedback from this group is crucial to ensure the success of any communications or plans you put out to the larger university community.

### **Tension between leadership and student groups**

*What is the relationship like between university leadership and the student body at campuses in your area?*

There is often particular tension and disagreement between students and school administration when it comes to adequate responses to violence prevention. Throughout your initiative, there will likely be a number of high-profile national events related to violence on college campuses that spark particularly contentious conversations between administrations and students. For example, after the release of the documentary, *The Hunting Ground*, extensive conversations around sexual assault on college campuses created large-scale discussion and tension between student groups and school administrations. In these moments, university leadership often struggle with how to



communicate effectively with the student body on this topic. When responding to incidences on or off campus, administrations attempt to navigate federal confidentiality laws, a survivor's right to decide what steps are taken, and how to inform the student body about what happened and what was being done. In order to facilitate dialogue and provide university administration with tools for more effective student communication in these tense moments, it can be helpful for your initiative to circulate talking points in response to issues of national significance. To provide longer-term advice or guidance on communication, convene a communications committee within your initiative. This committee, made up of faculty and staff from all local campus partners, can explore how to frame the development and/or enhancement of the university responses to dating and sexual violence as a way to increase campus protections and safety.

It's important to note that even by providing assistance with communications and attempting to bridge the gap between students and university administration on this topic, it can still be challenging to ensure that universities are creating open dialogue around sexual assault and relationship violence. High profile conversations around sexual assault and relationship violence on campus are very likely to continue. Figure out how campus leadership feels about addressing these topics with students, and offer support. As survivor-centered providers with experience bringing together groups with varying interests, statewide coalitions are particularly well placed to assist students and campus administrations in coming together to have hard conversations about the response to relationship violence prevention.

### Variations in the Title IX process

While there are a few commonly used processes to investigate and adjudicate Title IX reports across campuses, each university's needs when it comes to the Title IX process are unique. Some campus partners have very thorough Title IX procedures that are well known and respected among the student body, while others have processes that are either less explicitly clear or less well-regarded on campus. Simultaneously supporting different universities with very different policies and needs can be challenging at times. Convene Title IX teams to provide universities with the opportunity to learn from one another and collectively talk through challenges. It can also be helpful to bring in outside agencies and Title IX experts, like the Victim's Rights Law Center and the Clery Center, for additional guidance and support. The Office on Violence Against Women is also an important and very helpful resource when talking with universities about Title IX processes and requirements. Draw on this federal support, as well as local or national experts, to assist universities in implementing robust policies and engaging with students on policies in place. Coalitions are uniquely positioned to leverage national, federal, and local resources to create opportunities for learning and collaboration around Title IX across university campuses.





## Next steps

Embarking on a partnership with universities may feel somewhat daunting, but coalitions are truly in a unique and advantageous position to provide very successful opportunities for collaboration with campus partners. It's time to take action and create your university partnership!

The DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence is available and happy to discuss potential university partnerships, and you are welcome to contact **Liz Odongo**, Programs Director ([lodongo@dccadv.org](mailto:lodongo@dccadv.org)) or **Leanne Brotsky**, Training and Outreach Specialist ([lbrotsky@dccadv.org](mailto:lbrotsky@dccadv.org)) for more information.

We also encourage you to read our final report, which includes additional recommendations for campus partnerships, at <https://dccadv.org/index.php?pid=193>.

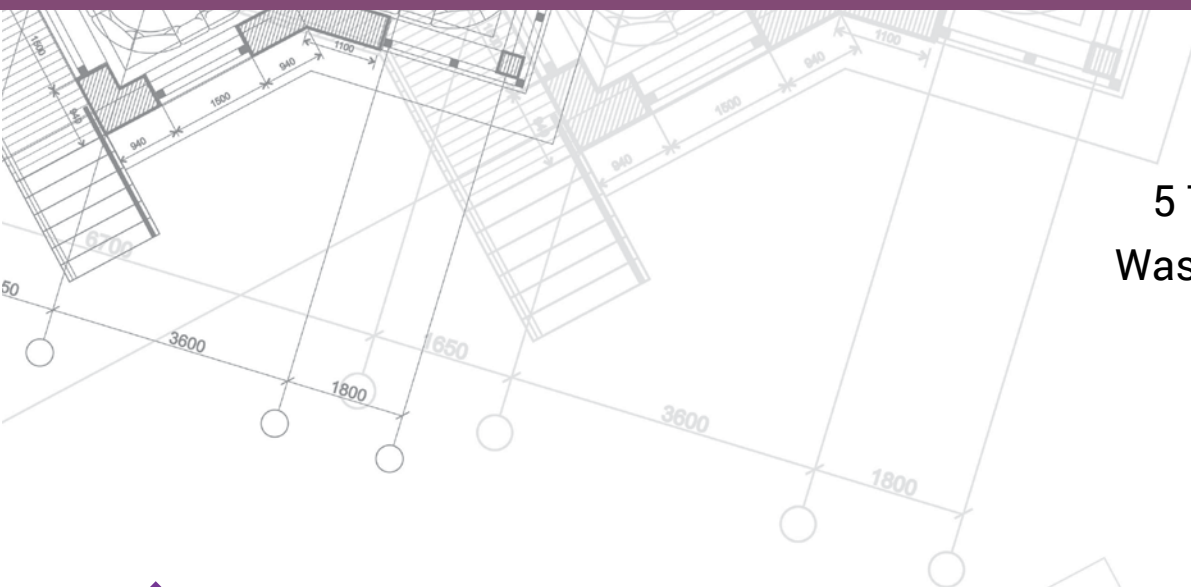
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**Nothing will  
work unless  
you do.**

**-Maya Angelou**

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