



## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

### OVW FY25 Improving Criminal Justice Grant Application

Between:

- TXFNE: Forensic Center of Excellence (FCE)
- Fort Bend County
- Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office
- Fort Bend County Women's Center
- Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office
- Missouri City Police Department
- Richmond Police Department
- Rosenberg Police Department
- Stafford Police Department
- Sugarland Police Department

WHEREAS, the above-listed agencies have come together to collaborate and apply for the U.S. Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) FY25 Improving Criminal Justice Response grant;

WHEREAS, FCE will be the lead agency and named applicant, with the above mentioned partners as formal project partners;

WHEREAS, the partners herein desire to enter into a memorandum of understanding setting forth the implementation of a coordinated community response to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking survivors, with a focus on development of a Victim Service Center (VSC);

WHEREAS, the application prepared and approved by this collaborative through the above listed partners is to be submitted to the Office on Violence Against Women on or before, June 16, 2025.

NOW, THEREFORE, this Memorandum of Understanding sets forth roles, responsibilities, and commitments of each party throughout the project period of October 1, 2025, to September 30, 2028.

#### A. Description of Partner Agencies

##### **TXFNE: Forensic Center of Excellence (FCE):**

Texas Forensic Nurses Examiners: Forensic Center of Excellence (FCE) is a 24/7 service center offering medical Forensic Exams, Adult Forensic Interviews, Advocacy and Counseling Support

for survivors of sexual assault of all ages, intimate partner violence, human trafficking, child abuse and elder maltreatment. Through a coordinated community response, FCE empowers victims of violence, promotes healing and creates innovative and comprehensive solutions to fill gaps in victim services.

**Fort Bend County/Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office:**

Fort Bend County, Texas, a body corporate and politic, acting by and through its Commissioners Court, herein after referred to as "Fort Bend County," and acting for the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office, herein after referred to as "Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office," pursuant to the Interlocal Cooperation Act, Texas Government Code, Chapter 791, and sometimes referred to as Party or Parties.

**Fort Bend County Women's Center:**

The Fort Bend County Women's Center is a shelter and support organization dedicated to helping survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, offering free services such as a 24-hour crisis hotline, emergency shelter, counseling, legal advocacy and long-term case management. It provides not only immediate safety — with secure, discreet lodging for women (and their children) fleeing abuse — but also assistance in rebuilding their lives, including help with housing, life skills, and support for children (school, mentoring, emotional care).

**Law Enforcement Agencies (Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office, Missouri City Police Department, Richmond Police Department, Rosenberg Police Department, Stafford Police Department and Sugarland Police Department):**

Provides law enforcement services across incorporated and unincorporated areas and partners victim safety, criminal investigations, and justice engagement.

**B. History of the Collaboration**

FCE and the Fort Bend County have had a long-standing working relationship. FCE launched in 2019 and began caring for victims of violence. DA Middleton and the Fort Bend County Judge were advocates and spoke at the FCE press conference announcing the launch of the FCE community based forensic model which brought forensic nursing services to various local fort bend county hospitals in 2019. FCE and the listed partners within this MOU has a longstanding collaborative relationship, each strengthening the response to the care of victims of violence as well as ensuring offenders are held accountable.

**C. Development of Application**

In 2024, discussion of bringing a location for the AFI program to Fort Bend County began with several discussions taking place over the past few months. The need for a clinic location for victims to have an alternative to a hospital-based exam was also expressed. Both parties discuss the benefits of colocation and the possibilities of partnership for improving access to services for victims of violence in Fort Bend County.

#### **D. Roles and Responsibilities**

FCE strives to improve the health and outcome of those affected by childhood sexual assault by providing trauma-informed medical care and fulfilling the judicial system need to collect evidence and document assault findings. FCE provides comprehensive medical forensic care to victims of human trafficking and child abuse.

NOW, THEREFORE, it is hereby agreed by and between the partners as follows:

#### **TXFNE: Forensic Center of Excellence (FCE):**

##### ***Roles and Responsibilities***

##### *Victim Service Center: Project Leader*

FCE will provide a shared space for parties involved in victim's journey through the criminal justice system to co-locate and provide comprehensive assistance for victims of violence in Fort Bend County. FCE will act as the primary party facilitating the Victim Service Center (VSC) and will be responsible for the following:

- FCE will host strategic planning meetings with key partners to discuss essential components regarding co-location of services.
- FCE will provide partners with information in a timely manner for OVW approved trainings relevant to Family Justice Center (FJC) processes, creation and collaboration and improving criminal justice responses to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking and utilize grant funds to support project partners in attending said trainings.
- FCE will coordinate the development of cooperative working agreements and protocols that establish roles, responsibilities, describe limitations and expectations on collaboration, and expectations of collaborative work.
- FCE will utilize the funds from this grant to further the objective of establishing a family justice center.
- Establishing and maintain space for co-location of multi-organizational parties with appropriate space for the parties to office.
- Maintenance of insurance of other required
- Establishment of Wi-Fi for co-locating parties and assist those that will need specialized internet access.
- In collaboration with law enforcement, lead stakeholder engagement to ensure a cohesive working process for the victims of violence in Fort Bend County.
- Design a long-term funding strategy for the VSC, engaging partners as needed. F. Develop policy and procedures related to the operation of the VSC in collaboration with all parties.
- Engage in community awareness and educational opportunities to distribute information about the use of the VSC.
- Engage partners to share data related to cases that interact with the VSC.

##### *Medical Forensic Exams*

- FCE will provide comprehensive medical forensic care to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking. FCE will offer the following services to victims of child abuse and sexual assault including:
- Detailed assault-specific medical history taking and physical examinations.
- Medical forensic documentation and photography.
- Evaluation for incapacitated or drug-facilitated sexual assaults and blood and urine specimen collection for toxicology testing. D. Evaluation and education about strangulation and other neck trauma.
- DNA and other evidence recovery and storage.
- Maintenance of evidence chain of custody.
- Pregnancy risk evaluation.
- The parties acknowledge that access to emergency contraception is available, if, after appropriate testing, there is no evidence that conception has occurred already and may treat with medications that would prevent ovulation, sperm capacitation, or fertilization.
- STI specimens for all patients will be taken to FCE for processing and follow up.
- Sexually transmitted infection (including HIV) risk evaluation.
- Direct referrals for medical follow up care.
- Respond to locations within a reasonable timeframe of phone dispatch, as decided upon by both parties, if the nurse is with another patient or if there is a delay, the nurse will keep the hospital staff informed.
- TXFNE will use advocates to bridge the gap between the forensic nurse and the survivor as well as connect the survivor to available community resources. FCE is committed to working with community agencies such as, Fort Bend County Women's Center to provide additional advocacy services for services within the patient's geographic area.

### Adult Forensic Interviews

FCE will provide trauma-informed Adult Forensic Interviews to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking, including:

- Work in collaboration with Fort Bend County staff and partners to maintain positive contact with clients.
- FCE agrees at a minimum to provide trauma informed interviewing of adult victims referred by Fort Bend County and to respond to law enforcement requests for forensic interviews of adult victims.
- FCE Forensic Interviewing will be conducted during regular business hours and will have an emergency on-call option for specific situations, to be determined by FCE.
- FCE will maintain open communication with Fort Bend County staff regarding changes in staff, policies or other issues at FCE as applied to Fort Bend County.
- FCE will exhibit discretion on any information received as is necessary to maintain the safety of staff, including police officers and the efficacy, integrity, and validity of any investigation and operations.
- FCE will maintain all information, interviews and data gathered and stored on a client in a confidential and forensically sound manner, with such made available to Fort Bend County personnel for review.

- Upon request by Fort Bend County, FCE will share aggregate data as relevant to any Fort Bend County case.
- FCE will participate in any relevant task force meetings, including meetings to discuss services and share information for research purposes.
- FCE will provide Adult Forensic Interviewers to testify as expert witnesses in the areas of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and human trafficking as those areas relate to the forensic interview conducted of the victims of such violence.
- Respond timely to all subpoena requests and communicate with Fort Bend County staff regarding witness testimony, along with any pretrial meetings requested by Fort Bend County staff prior to trial.
- Building structure, office furniture, office supplies, wi-fi access, technology needed to outfit adult forensic interviewing room.

**Fort Bend County/Fort Bend County District Attorney’s Office:**

**Roles and Responsibilities**

FBDAO will provide assistance with protective orders, victim assistance, and support to navigate the criminal justice system to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking and human trafficking, including:

- Fort Bend County will encourage law enforcement agencies within its county to utilize FCE forensic nursing and adult forensic interviewing services, and direct law enforcement agencies to send victims that need a forensic exam or forensic interview to FCE or its partners.
- Fort Bend County retains primary discretion over the outcome of criminal cases filed based on intelligence generated by FCE adult forensic interviews, and Fort Bend County will make all decisions regarding the resolution of criminal cases.
- Keep FCE apprised of all clients' status, along with any changes in policy or staff at Fort Bend County.
- Fort Bend County will assume investigative duties related to intelligence gathered during a FCE adult forensic interview.
- Notify FCE in a timely manner of upcoming hearings and trials that may involve the FCE adult forensic interviewer.
- Communicate clearly and timely all requests for meetings, telephone conferences, and the like.
- Fort Bend County work with local law enforcement agencies to utilize shared space as needed with FCE to observe adult forensic interviews, be accessible for communication with victims as requested, collection of evidence, expedite investigations as needed.
- Representatives will attend OVW approved training and technical assistance with funds available through the grant.

**Fort Bend County Women’s Center (FBCWC)**

**Roles and Responsibilities**

- FBCWC will provide staff to collocate at the VSC to provide supportive services to survivors.
- FBCWC will provide staff time to participate in planning and coordination of this project.

- FBCWC will provide expertise on domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking and human trafficking as needed for the planning and betterment of the project with partners and/or potential partners.
- FBCWC will provide expertise to partners regarding trauma informed care and best practices related to the care and support of survivors.
- Representatives will attend OVW approved training and technical assistance with funds available through the grant.

**Law Enforcement Agencies (Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Office, Missouri City Police Department, Richmond Police Department, Rosenberg Police Department, Stafford Police Department and Sugarland Police Department):**

- Representatives will attend strategic planning meetings and make clear their needs and expectations in relation to creating and continuing to work within the VSC, including logistics, space, equipment needed for their agency in the co-location.
- Representatives will attend OVW approved training and technical assistance with funds available through the grant.
- Representatives will participate in the development of cooperative working agreements and protocols that establish roles, responsibilities, describe limitations and expectations on collaboration, and expectations of collaborative work.
- Representatives will offer guidance, feedback, and expertise in DCFOF’s security planning and equipment purchase for the VSC.

**E. Commitment to Partnership**

- The collaboration service area includes Fort Bend County, Texas, all cities and municipalities within the county.
- The partners agree to collaborate to establish a Victim Service Center and provide medical forensic care, adult forensic interviews, advocacy, legal advocacy and on-site access to investigative agencies to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking, pursuant to the program narrative of the grant application attached to this agreement.
- Compensation for [non-lead] partners' contribution to this project will be provided as outlined in the attached OWVI budget detail worksheet.
- We, the undersigned have read and agree with this MOU. Further, we have reviewed the proposed project and approve it.
- We, the undersigned, have reviewed the project budget, are aware of the total amount being requested, and are being equitably compensated for our work under the grant.

**IV) Timeline**

The roles and responsibilities described above are contingent on FCE receiving funds requested for the project described in the OVW grant application. Responsibilities under this Memorandum

of Understanding would coincide with the grant period, anticipated to be 10/01/2025 through 09/30/2028.

**Year 1 (10/01/2025 – 09/30/2026)**

**Engage Community Partners**

- Develop and execute MOUs with planned partners.
- Develop survivor focused cross training materials planned to train the multidisciplinary working groups.
- Cross-train multidisciplinary groups interacting with the VSC to develop a cohesive approach to serving victims.

**Year 2 (10/01/2026- 09/30/2027)**

**Establish a Fully Functioning Survivor Focused VSC**

- Establish space for the VSC in Fort Bend County
- Provide co-located wrap around services within the VSC.
- Conduct timely, high quality medical forensic exams in both partnering hospitals within the VSC within Fort Bend County.
- Conduct trauma informed Adult Forensic Interviews.
- Ensure meaningful language access for limited-English proficient (LEP) survivors.

**Year 3 (10/01/2027 – 09/30/2028)**

**Evaluate Success & Ensure Sustainability**

- Begin engaging Fort Bend County and potential donors
- Develop client survey to obtain feedback related to VSC experience.
- Develop partner survey to obtain feedback related to VSC experience.

All parties agree to fulfill their respective roles and meet regularly throughout the project period to ensure a coordinated survivor-centered implementation.

\*Note: This MOU is pending grant funding and is contingent upon funding for the establishment of this project.

**Signatures:**

**Fort Bend County**

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: **KP George**

Title: Fort Bend County Judge

**Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office**

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Brian Middleton

Title: District Attorney, Fort Bend County

**Texas Forensic Nurse Examiners – The Forensic Center of Excellence (FCE)**

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Dr. Khara Breeden

Title: Founder & Chief Executive Officer