



IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION OF A PROGRAM TO ASSIST VICTIMS OF VIOLENT CRIME: STAFF AND STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK



**Implementation Evaluation of a Program to Assist Victims of Violent Crime:
Staff and Stakeholder Feedback**

*Part of an Evaluation Report Series
on the Implementation of Illinois Multi-Site Deflection Programs*

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Executive Summary

This report presents findings from ICJIA’s implementation evaluation of the East St. Louis Community Engagement Response Team (ESL CERT), a police-led deflection program designed to support victims of violent crime. Developed in partnership with the Illinois State Police (ISP), the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), and Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities (TASC), the program connects individuals to community-based services through non-enforcement engagement. Engagement Specialists (ESs) serve as the bridge between law enforcement and local service providers, providing case management and service referrals.

Background

Launched in January 2022, ESL CERT was developed in response to high rates of violent crime in East St. Louis and a desire to provide trauma-informed support to crime victims. Although deflection programs typically focus on individuals with substance use disorders, ESL CERT is notable for its focus on victims of violent crime, including those affected by shootings, domestic violence, and homicide. ISP officers from the Public Safety Enforcement Group (PSEG) refer victims to ESs at TASC Inc., who then contact participants to offer voluntary services. If the participant consents, the Engagement Specialists (ESs) coordinate referrals and provide ongoing case management. Between January 2022 and November 2024, 551 individuals were referred to the program; 19% chose to participate, resulting in 102 active clients. Most participants were Black, non-Hispanic women with an average age of 40.

Methodology

For this process evaluation, we used a three-pronged methodology to obtain feedback from and measure collaborations among key stakeholders of ESL CERT. Methods included:

- An online collaboration survey of 11 stakeholders and staff members, including law enforcement officers, social service providers, and TASC, Inc. ESs.
- A field visit to the PSEG office and the TASC, Inc. office that serves as ESs’ base of operations.
- Virtual interviews with five staff members and six stakeholders to elicit feedback on the program’s development, operations, collaborations, and perceived effectiveness.

Key Findings

Responses to the collaboration inventory tool indicated moderate levels of collaboration, and ESs generally rated collaboration more positively than other stakeholders did. Overall, respondents thought there was a cross-section of relevant organizations. However, concerns included limited prior community collaboration, unclear roles, and insufficient funding. Field visit conversations uncovered staff concerns about pre- and post-tests for recently victimized participants, which led us to make adjustments. Officers perceived the program reduced crime, increased community engagement, and expressed interest in expanding it. ESs reported challenges with service provider responsiveness, unclear program policies, and a lack of training specific to working with crime victims.

During stakeholder interviews, they praised staff and saw the program as promising, but noted collaboration issues, including strained relationships and inconsistent engagement. Finally, staff shared potential risks of conducting home visits, but noted they may also be a promising approach to supporting victims and warrant further consideration.

Recommendations

We recommend the following for programmatic enhancement:

- Conduct an assessment of community needs and assets before program planning.
- Increase stakeholder engagement, clarify roles and responsibilities, build trust, reduce service duplication, and provide partners with feedback on referrals.
- Improve the referral process to enhance coordination and reduce delays.
- Consider adding services to neighboring areas and material supports (e.g., petty cash, bus passes) and increasing community awareness.
- Provide staff with ongoing training on trauma and cultural responsiveness, improve data entry to support ongoing evaluation, and reconsider the use of home visits.

The ESL CERT program innovatively addressed the needs of crime victims through non-enforcement engagement, practical ES efforts, and strong stakeholder support. With improvements targeted to the challenges encountered in this early implementation, ESL CERT could serve as a promising model for victim-centered deflection efforts in other jurisdictions.

Section 1: Introduction

Violent crimes are acts in which a person is harmed by or threatened with violence, including rape or sexual assault, domestic violence, robbery, assault, and murder (National Institute of Justice, n.d.). People who are victims of violent crime often need support and services in the aftermath of violence. Police officers play a crucial role in connecting victims with essential services and are often the first to engage with them following a crime (Shaw et al., 2020).

The East St. Louis Community Engagement Response Team (ESL CERT) was established to provide support services to victims of violent crime¹ by connecting them with community-based services. Most law enforcement-led deflection programs divert individuals who have committed or are at risk of committing crimes away from the criminal legal system and refer individuals to treatment and social services. However, ESL CERT applies deflection principles to crime victims, aiming to provide early intervention and support before legal system involvement escalates.

This process evaluation examines ESL CERT and sought to answer questions in these key areas:

- How well does the program facilitate collaboration between law enforcement, Engagement Specialists (ESs), and service providers?
- To what extent do victims engage with services, and what are the barriers to successful engagement?
- What are stakeholder perceptions of the program’s overall impact?

Using a mixed-methods approach—including surveys, field visits, and stakeholder interviews—this report identifies strengths in ESL CERT’s implementation and highlights areas that require further refinement to enhance its effectiveness and long-term sustainability.

¹ We use the terms “crime victim” or “victim of crime” throughout this report. We recognize that these terms do not employ people-first language (for example, persons who were victims of crime), but they are the current standard conventions used among victim services, victim advocates, and the federal government.

Section 2: Background

Needs of Crime Victims

An individual's experience in the immediate aftermath of a crime can significantly influence their recovery process (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014). Initial victim reactions may include shock, numbness, denial, minimization, memory problems, and mood fluctuations (Hill, 2003). In the aftermath, an individual's immediate needs may include safety and security, crisis intervention, medical attention to treat injuries, and basic necessities such as food, clothing, and emergency shelter (Green et al., 2021). Recognizing that crime victims may have diverse and complex service needs is imperative. To address these needs promptly and efficiently, a collaborative and coordinated approach involving multiple organizations is essential (Houston-Kolnik & Vasquez, 2017). This approach underscores the importance of victim-centered care, prioritizing victims' empowerment, safety, and well-being (Gromet et al., 2012).

Various factors can affect the recovery of individuals who have been victimized. These factors may include the victim's age, race, education, marital status, and income (Takahashi & James, 2018). They also may include the nature of the relationship between the person who was harmed and the person who caused harm, the severity of the injury sustained, the use of threats, and the presence of a weapon (Campbell et al., 2009). Another factor that may impact recovery is a strong support system, including friends and family. People lacking a solid support system may not disclose their victimization and may never receive the assistance, advice, or comfort they need. Finally, the quality of interactions with, and help from, the criminal legal system and medical and service providers can also impact recovery from victimization (Campbell et al., 2009). By considering factors associated with victimization and aiming to develop effective interventions for recovery, programs like ESL CERT strive to fill these gaps.

Police Deflection Programs

Deflection is one model for connecting people with services and support outside of the criminal legal system. Traditional deflection programs redirect people away from further involvement in the criminal legal system and toward community-based services that address underlying needs—such as mental health conditions or substance use—rather than punitive enforcement strategies (Charlier & Reichert, 2021). For instance, rather than making arrests for low-level offenses, like public intoxication or loitering, officers may instead connect people with social workers, treatment programs, or shelters that can provide support. Some deflection programs have extended this model to support people who have been harmed by violence, though this departs from traditional deflection practices. This approach is grounded in research on the cycle of violence, which has shown that people who experience violence are at greater risk of being criminalized later in life (Browne et al., 1999; DeHart, 2008; Macmillan, 2001). Victim-centered deflection programs aim to center the rights, voices, and unique needs of people who have experienced harm in the support and intervention process.

The State Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force Deflection Project

The ESL CERT program is a deflection program that reduces violent crime victims' contact with the criminal justice system. It is primarily used by individuals who have initial contact with police officers and are then connected by these officers to behavioral health and other services. ESL CERT is part of a larger project led and funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) in collaboration with the Illinois State Police (ISP) and local police departments, TASC Center for Health and Justice (CHJ), and TASC Inc. Table 1 depicts the seven active program sites in this project at the time of this writing. ESL CERT is unique among these IDHS-funded deflection programs in that it addresses victims of violent crimes. While this is a nontraditional focus for deflection programs, victims of violent crimes still have contact with police officers. They can benefit from many services, including mental health services, domestic violence services, and grief counseling.

Table 1
State Deflection Program Sites

Program name	Location served	Law enforcement partner	Primary referrals	Date started
ESL-CERT	City of East St. Louis	Public Safety Enforcement Group	Crime victims	January 2022
SI-CERT	Washington, Jefferson, Randolph, Franklin, Hardin, Massac, Pulaski, Alexander Counties	Southern Illinois Drug Task Force	Persons with SUD	May 2022
Choices	Calhoun, Green, Jersey, Macoupin, Montgomery, Madison, St. Clair, Monroe Counties	South Central Illinois Drug Task Force and Metropolitan Enforcement Group of Southern Illinois	Persons with SUD	November 2023
LEAP	Jackson, Johnson, and Williamson Counties	Southern Illinois Enforcement Group	Persons with SUD	November 2023
SEED	City of Springfield	Springfield Police Department	Unhoused persons	November 2023
Empower	Henderson, Hancock, McDonough, Schuyler, Adams, and Brown Counties	West Central Illinois Task Force	Persons with SUD	August 2024
DART	Douglas, Coles, De Witt, Piatt, Vermillion, and McLean Counties	East Central Illinois Drug Task Force, Task Force 6, and Vermillion Metropolitan Enforcement Group	Persons with SUD	August 2024

Note. The seven sites were active as of April 2025. *Date Started* is when law enforcement began referring individuals to the program. SUD = substance use disorder.

Cannabis Regulation Funds support the state project through the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act (410 ILCS 705). IDHS receives 20% of Cannabis Regulation Funds after deducting costs associated with implementing, administering, and enforcing the Act (Illinois Department of Human Services, 2021). Funds address substance use disorder and mental health intervention,

including treatment, education, and prevention (Illinois Department of Human Services, 2021). IDHS has used the funds to contract with TASC CHJ to conduct action planning and guide program implementation. IDHS has also funded TASC Inc. to employ program specialists. These staff members engage with participants and refer them to services. Since 2022, IDHS has also funded our evaluation of the project.

The East St. Louis Program

Planning and Implementation

Action planning is an evidence-based practice that promotes intentional program development (Creately, 2023). TASC CHJ facilitated action planning for the ESL CERT program through seven three-hour virtual meetings between June 2021 and August 2021. These meetings were attended by 30 community members representing 23 organizations. The organizations in attendance primarily provided behavioral health services and support for families or youth. We produced a report detailing the action-planning process and its outcomes (Reichert et al., 2023). Our evaluation of action planning identified the following recommendations:

- Enhance program stakeholder engagement during action-planning sessions and subsequent meetings by using regular introductions, polls, and feedback to maximize the effectiveness of the virtual format.
- Assist the group in identifying measurable goals for their program, potentially by using a logic model.
- Invite additional community members, particularly East St. Louis residents and younger members of the community, to participate in the ESL CERT program.

These recommendations were presented to ESL CERT program stakeholders approximately two years following the original action planning sessions. Due to the delay in publishing the recommendations, the ESL CERT program was unable to implement any of them before launching its program in January 2022. Recommendations from the ESL CERT action planning sessions successfully guided subsequent action planning sessions with deflection program sites (Adams et al., 2023; Menninger et al., 2024; Sullivan et al., 2024). The primary recommendations from the action planning sessions resurfaced during this staff and stakeholder analysis, particularly emphasizing the need to increase the number of stakeholders in the ESL CERT program and enhance the quality of their engagement.

Following implementation, the ESL CERT program held a launch event on January 12, 2022. The launch event was held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The event included a description of the program's purpose and its potential support for victims of violent crimes. We provided training on best practices for engaging with crime victims. Members of TASC, Inc. described the referral process for law enforcement to connect victims with TASC ESs as well as the process for ESs to connect program participants with appropriate community services. The launch event was attended by over 60 people, approximately two-thirds of whom were local service providers, faith-based leaders, and other community members interested in learning about the program. The remaining attendees were members of TASC CHJ and TASC, Inc., ISP representatives, ICJIA evaluation team members, and program funders from IDHS. The ESL CERT program began assisting victims of violent crimes that same month.

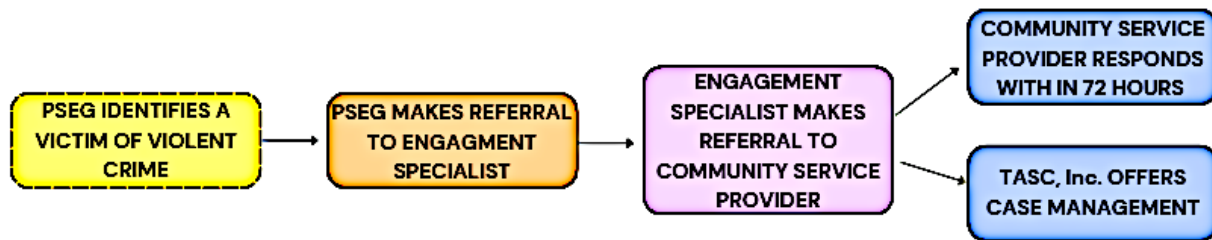
Program Design

As mentioned, while most deflection program sites in the IDHS/ISP collaboration focus on providing services for individuals with substance use or mental health concerns (Adams et al., 2023; Menninger et al., 2024; Sullivan et al., 2024), the ESL CERT program chose to focus on serving victims of violent crimes. This decision stemmed from the renewed interest in addressing violent crime in East St. Louis (Reichert et al., 2023). In 2020, the ISP established the PSEG task force to address violent crime in East St. Louis. The PSEG officers were the ones who typically responded to the scene of violent crimes and followed up with victims. As such, they were uniquely situated to provide referrals to services in the ESL CERT program.

Members of PSEG determine whether a victim of violent crime is eligible for the program and then send the referral information to the TASC ESs. The ESs perform “relentless engagement” to reach out to participants and determine their interest in the program. Participants who consent to services are scheduled for an intake appointment with an assigned ES. The ES identifies the services most appropriate for the program participant and then performs a warm handoff to a local service agency. The ES provides ongoing case management as necessary. Figure 1 depicts the flow of those processes in EST CERT.

Figure 1

ESL CERT Program Flow Chart



Note. PSEG is the Illinois State Police Public Safety Enforcement Group.

Referrals and Participants

We receive monthly data reports containing participant information from each IDHS-funded deflection program across Illinois. From the initiative's inception in January 2022 through December 2024, ESL CERT received 560 participant referrals. Of those referrals, 93% came from the Illinois State Police PSEG Task Force. According to the data available, ESL CERT referrals have been majority Black, non-Hispanic women with an average age of 40. However, approximately 65% of the demographic data for referrals were missing or unknown.

Out of the 560 referrals made to ESL CERT, 102 became active participants by agreeing to meet with an ES and receive a referral to services. Active participants, similar to referrals, have been majority Black, non-Hispanic women with an average age of 41. From inception, ESL CERT has had an average acceptance rate of 18% of persons referred agreeing to services. Table 2 breaks down the acceptance rate by each year of operation. The number of referrals and acceptance rate

decreased from 2022 to 2024, which may be due in part to staff turnover and periods of vacancy at TASC Inc.

Table 2
Number of ESL CERT Referrals and Participants

Year	Number of referrals	Number of active participants	Acceptance rate
2022	210	55	26.1%
2023	179	30	16.8%
2024	171	17	9.9%

Note. The data collection period runs from January 2022, when ESL CERT was launched, to December 2024. Active participants are those who have agreed to engage in the ESL CERT program.

Administering Pre- and Post-Tests to Participants

As part of our ongoing evaluation of the statewide deflection programs, we collaborated with TASC Inc. staff at multiple program sites to administer pre- and post-tests to program participants. The pre- and post-tests are brief Likert-scale surveys that can be completed in 5 minutes and are low in reading level. The ESL CERT program utilizes the Brief COPE questionnaire (Carver, 1997) to assess coping mechanisms among program participants. ESs administer this survey as a pre-test during participants' intake appointments and then as a post-test approximately 90 days later. Program participants are compensated for completing both the pre-test and the post-test, and ESs are entered into a raffle if they administer at least 3 pre- and post-tests within 3 months. Although results from the pre- and post-tests are not included in this report, we do discuss feedback from the ESs regarding the administration of the surveys.

Section 3: Methods

We employed three methods to collect data for evaluating ESL CERT: a survey, a field visit, and interviews. Data from those methods were analyzed separately and then compared to identify areas of convergence and divergence. Qualitative findings were used to contextualize and interpret quantitative survey results, providing a fuller understanding of ESL CERT's implementation. This section describes our evaluation samples, data sources, and analytic strategies.

Materials and Sample

Collaboration Survey

To assess collaboration, an online version of the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory, 3rd edition (Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 2018), was used. Previous research has established the reliability and validity of this tool as a measure of collaboration (Bonach & Witham, 2018; Derosé et al., 2004). The inventory comprises 44 items organized into 22 research-tested factors that determine the success of collaboration (Mattessich & Johnson, 2018). The factors, in turn, are organized into six overarching categories that influence collaboration: environment, member characteristics, process and structure, communication, purpose, and resources. Respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement with each of the 44 items using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5).

A total of 11 ESL-CERT stakeholders completed the online collaboration survey. The stakeholders included TASC ESs, law enforcement, and local social service providers. We did not collect demographics or other information from the stakeholders.

Field Visit

The ICJIA evaluation team member met with two members of the Illinois State Police at the PSEG office in East St. Louis, as well as two ESs and a supervisor at the TASC office in Belleville. The field visit was scheduled in advance and consisted of open-ended, unstructured conversations about the program, day-to-day operations, and the challenges and successes respondents had experienced. No preparatory questions were shared with program staff in advance, and the ICJIA evaluator did not collect any artifacts during the field visit. Program participants do not engage with the ISP at the PSEG office, and no participants were at the TASC office that day, hence providing no opportunities to observe police officers or ESs working directly with program participants.

Staff and Stakeholder Interviews

In the interview, we asked 28 questions about the interview participants and the program, covering six areas. There were six introduction and demographics questions, six program questions, two collaboration questions, nine program feedback questions, three questions on data and evaluation, and two closing questions. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing for probing questions and follow-up questions.

We decided to interview all TASC ESs and PSEG members involved in the ESL CERT program, given the relatively small numbers of each. The TASC staff consisted of the program supervisor, three line staff members, and an administrator who oversaw several deflection programs. The law enforcement interviews included the single PSEG member who sent referrals to the ESL CERT program and his supervisor.

To interview service providers involved in the program, we used a quota sampling strategy (Bryman, 2016). We were unable to determine the exact number of service providers involved in the program, as participation fluctuated from one meeting to the next and declined over time. Between one and five service providers attended the monthly leadership team meetings in the first half of 2023. As such, we set a quota of conducting interviews with four service providers, explicitly aiming to interview both those regularly engaged in the program and those whose participation had declined over time. Therefore, we interviewed 11 ESL CERT staff and stakeholders in total. Table 3 provides details on the interviewees. Most were Black women with at least a bachelor’s degree, and all were non-Hispanic.

Table 3
Characteristics of Interview Participants

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Female	8	73%
Male	3	27%
Race		
Black	7	64%
White	3	27%
Other race(s)	1	9%
Highest level of education		
High school	1	9%
Associate’s degree	2	18%
Bachelor’s degree	2	18%
Master’s degree	5	45%
Doctorate	1	9%
Role		
TASC staff	5	45%
Social service provider	4	36%
Law enforcement	2	18%

Note. The sample size was 11.

Procedure and Analyses

Collaboration Survey

We used Qualtrics software to display and distribute the online survey. We recruited survey participants through emails from November 2022 to February 2023. For the collaboration survey, we interpreted factor scores as suggested by the inventory authors. Based on the authors’

suggestions, we interpreted mean scores of 4.0 or higher on items as indicating strength and that these items probably did not need special attention. Scores between 3.0 and 3.9 were considered borderline and might require attention, while scores of 2.9 or lower indicated concerns that need to be addressed. We analyzed the data and generated descriptive statistics in Microsoft Excel.

Field Visit

The evaluation team member traveled to East St. Louis on July 12 and 13, 2023, to conduct field visits. The team member met with two PSEG members at their office for 2.5 hours and with two TASC ESs and their supervisor for 2 hours. They discussed the program's operations, successes, and weaknesses, and the evaluator took handwritten field notes during the visit. The ICJIA evaluator compiled the notes into a narrative for this report in Microsoft Word. Of the two ISP officers who participated in the field visit, one had previously completed an interview as part of the program evaluation, and the other agreed to an interview following the field visit. Of the three TASC staff members present during the field visit, the supervisor had previously participated in an interview; however, the two ESs had not been interviewed, as they had recently started in their positions.

The field visit aimed to answer the following evaluation questions:

- What are the working relationships between police, TASC, and service providers?
- How aligned are the police staff and the TASC staff on their views regarding the operations of the program?
- What are the physical spaces and distances between them?
- What can be done to improve relationships between social service providers and program staff?
- Why were there relatively low numbers of referrals and program participants?

While some of the evaluation questions that prompted the field visit also overlapped with questions during staff and stakeholder interviews, the field visit provided several unique opportunities, including:

- Allowing for a more open-ended dialogue to provide clarification on what was learned in the interviews.
- Allowing for a group discussion and providing an opportunity to observe group dynamics.
- Providing an opportunity to see the offices and workspaces in person and to gauge the travel time between East St. Louis and Belleville.
- Providing an opportunity to foster a more collaborative and engaging relationship between the program staff and the evaluation team.

Interviews

We recruited interview respondents through email from March to July 2023. As mentioned, 11 stakeholders were interviewed. We held virtual interviews from April to July 2023 using WebEx conferencing software. The interviews ranged in length from 27 to 170 minutes, with an average of 74 minutes (median: 76). We recorded the interviews, and WebEx automatically generated a transcript for each. The interviewer took notes, as well. We reviewed each transcript to ensure

accuracy by comparing it with the recording, then cleaned them to remove any errors. We used NVivo qualitative data software to perform intercoder consistency by having two evaluation team members code the same interview. Upon finalizing the codebook, a single team member thematically coded all 11 interview transcripts.

Evaluation Limitations

This component of our process evaluation of ESL CERT was designed to provide initial insight into the program's development. It relied on a small, voluntary sample of stakeholders, limiting the ability to generalize the findings beyond this site. Eleven individuals completed the collaboration survey and 11 participated in interviews, representing TASC Inc. staff, law enforcement, and local social service providers. Because participation was voluntary, respondents may differ from those who declined, introducing possible self-selection bias. Those who did agree to be interviewed may have been expressing their feelings at a specific point in time, which may have since changed. Interview data also relied on stakeholder recollection and perception, which may be influenced by recall or social desirability bias. For these reasons, findings should be interpreted as formative and descriptive, intended to inform program improvement and future evaluation planning rather than to demonstrate program effectiveness. Expanding the sample of survey and interview participants to include a greater diversity of stakeholders and program participants would also strengthen validity.

Section 4: Study Findings

Section 4.1: Survey Findings on Collaboration Among Staff and Stakeholders

This section presents the results of the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory. Effective collaboration is a critical element for the success of deflection programs. A comprehensive compilation of responses for each item in the collaborative assessment is provided in the Appendix.

Staff and stakeholders provided the highest mean ratings (greater than or equal to 4.0) for the following three items:

- The time is right for this collaborative project.
- The people involved in our collaboration represent a cross-section of those with a stake in what we are trying to accomplish.
- My organization will benefit from being involved in this collaboration.

Based on these high ratings, respondents perceived that the program adhered to appropriate timing, included stakeholders from multiple sectors of the community, and would provide organizational advantages.

Items that scored between 3.0 and 3.9 indicated areas of potential concern. Our respondents scored 37 of the total 44 questions (84%) in that range.

Items scoring below 3.0 raised the most significant concerns and warrant attention. Our analysis identified five such low-scoring items that suggest limited prior collaboration in the community, possibly leading to redundant efforts, and insufficient funding:

- Trying to solve problems through collaboration has been common in this community. It has been done a lot before.
- Agencies in our community have a history of working together.
- All the organizations that we need to be members of this collaborative group have become members of the group.
- No other organization in the community is trying to do exactly what we are trying to do.
- Our collaborative group has adequate funds to accomplish what it wants.

The responses indicated that other deflection programs may benefit from increasing early collaboration. In addition, the ESL CERT program and other deflection programs should consider including additional stakeholders and addressing competing efforts and funding concerns.

In addition to analyzing the 44 individual items, we grouped them into six collaboration categories and 22 corresponding collaborative factors. We reviewed the results of each. Table 4 presents the mean scores for the six categories, along with their standard deviations. The lowest scores were in the environment and resources categories; however, given the relatively large standard deviations for each category's mean score, it is likely that the high- and low-scoring individual items carry more significance than the category aggregates as a whole.

Table 4*Participant Scores by Collaboration Category*

Collaboration category	Score	Standard deviation	Number of items	<i>n</i>
Purpose	3.57	0.32	7	9-10 ^a
Membership characteristics	3.50	0.46	6	11
Process and structure	3.44	0.29	16	10
Communication	3.32	0.16	5	10
Environment	3.30	0.46	6	11
Resources	3.22	0.59	4	9

Note. Participant responses to the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory. Nine participants answered all seven questions, and one answered three.

Table 5 presents mean scores for the 22 collaborative factors, each comprising 1 to 3 items in the survey. In the aggregated means, staff and stakeholders scored only two factors above 4.0 out of 5.0 (“members see the collaborative as being in their best interest” and “skilled leadership”), indicating that these were the only areas of potential concern. Two factors had means below 3.0: a history of community collaboration and sufficient resources. These low-scoring factors align with components that emerged during the staff and stakeholder interviews, which also described challenges with interagency collaboration and insufficient program resources.

Table 5*Participant Scores by Collaboration Factors*

Collaboration factor	Mean Score	Number of items	<i>n</i>
Members see collaboration as in their best interest	4.63	1	11
Skilled leadership	4.19	1	9
Ability to compromise	3.94	1	11
Engaged stakeholders	3.88	1	9
Shared vision	3.78	2	9
Favorable political and social climate	3.68	2	11
Evaluation and continuous learning	3.67	3	10
Concrete, attainable goals and objectives	3.60	3	10
Mutual respect, understanding, and trust	3.50	2	11
Appropriate pace of development	3.50	2	10
Establish informal relationships and communication links	3.45	2	10
Development of clear roles and policy guidelines	3.45	2	10
Adaptability	3.45	2	10
Appropriate cross-section of members	3.45	2	11
Members share a stake in both process and outcome.	3.40	3	10
Collaborative group seen as legitimate leaders in the community	3.36	2	11
Multiple layers of participation	3.35	2	10
Unique purpose	3.33	2	9
Open and frequent communication	3.23	3	10
Flexibility	3.15	2	10

Collaboration factor	Mean Score	Number of items	<i>n</i>
History of collaboration or cooperation in the community	2.86	2	11
Sufficient funds, stall, materials, and time	2.83	2	9

Note. Participant responses to the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory.

Section 4.2: Program Field Visit Findings

Public Safety Enforcement Group

One evaluation team member conducted a field visit to East St. Louis City Hall, which houses the East St. Louis Police Department and the PSEG officers from ISP. PSEG was established in 2020 to assign ISP officers to assist the local police department with violent crimes. PSEG comprises 25 ISP staff and four East St. Louis police officers. The two groups have signed a formal memorandum of understanding (MOU), which expires in 2025. The ESL police have been able to go through training from ISP at no cost. At the time of this writing, PSEG was also hiring a person with a PhD in psychology to assist with training.

Before PSEG, the police department lacked sufficient officers to handle all violent crimes. PSEG officers shared their successes during the field visit. Officers reported that shootings in East St. Louis fell between 2020 and 2021. They further shared that their clearance rate (when an arrest is made following a crime) was about 5% for non-fatal shooting arrests prior to PSEG's involvement in the area, but rose to 28% by 2023. The officers perceived that PSEG's work may have helped restore some trust in the community.

PSEG officers discussed the possibility of the neighboring city of Cahokia Heights participating in the program. As background, in 2021, the cities of Cahokia, Centerville, and Alton were consolidated into Cahokia Heights. Cahokia Heights, like many under-resourced municipalities, has faced ongoing challenges related to poverty, public safety, and constrained law enforcement staffing. PSEG officers commented that Cahokia Heights should be added to the program to assist its citizens. Moreover, East St. Louis's crime rate was related to that of its neighboring city.

PSEG officers also commented on ways to improve processes for referring individuals to TASC ESs, particularly by streamlining the handoff. One way to facilitate a warm handoff would be for officers to remind potential participants that someone from TASC will contact them to offer services. Without receiving this advanced notice, many contacted persons expressed their displeasure and confusion to officers after receiving a cold call from TASC. PSEG members also discussed the possibility of officers leaving cards or pamphlets with crime victims to improve the referral process.

TASC Engagement Specialists

The evaluation team member also conducted a field visit to the TASC Inc. office, the headquarters for the ESL CERT ESs. The office is located in Belleville, Illinois, approximately 20 minutes from East St. Louis. One topic of conversation was ESs' perceptions of their integration into the program. They noted that they initially felt like outsiders in the community when the program was launched; however, they had recently begun attending biweekly briefings at PSEG headquarters, which had helped them feel more integrated into the area. To further support this integration, they discussed relocating the TASC office to PSEG headquarters. However, both TASC and PSEG were still determining whether sufficient space was available.

When discussing how ESs worked with individuals involved in violent crime, staff noted that they did not visit participants' homes. One reason was that the address provided by law enforcement was often incorrect or reflected the crime's location, which might not be the victim's home.

Staff also described challenges they faced when referring participants to service providers. First, some providers—due in part to funding restrictions—only served individuals who met strict eligibility criteria. Second, some service providers limited assistance to services directly related to the crime. For example, they would not fund rent or utility assistance. Finally, some providers were not responsive to participants referred by TASC and did not return phone calls. As a result, when referrals were unsuccessful, participants could become frustrated or angry.

Staff also provided insight into participant expectations. They shared that some participants could be very demanding, requesting extensive support or asking ESs to pay for expensive items, such as helping them obtain new housing.

TASC had historically supported individuals with substance use disorders (SUD) or in recovery, but ESL CERT was designed for crime victims, which could lead to some disconnect. ES training had focused primarily on SUD rather than on the specific needs of crime victims.

The staff noted that they frequently worked with victims of domestic violence and would benefit from additional training in this area. In particular, they noted that many of the domestic violence incidents involved older adults. They also discussed the need for training on how to support victims of human trafficking.

ESs also shared that TASC program policies were unclear and required greater clarification. For example, some staff said they did not keep their phones on during the weekend because they were not compensated for on-call duty; others believed they were expected to remain available. Additionally, staff expressed uncertainty about voicemail expectations, including whether they should include instructions for off-hours or for emergencies requiring 9-1-1 or police contact. Staff were also unsure how long a person could remain on the caseload and when they could be "closed out." As a result, policies may need to be established for both existing and future staff to ensure clarity and operational efficiency.

TASC ESs discussed the pre- and post-surveys that ESs administer to program participants on behalf of ICJIA. Staff provided constructive feedback, such as requesting that an 'unapplicable' or *NA* option be included. They also requested the removal of two items, as they perceived that the response options to those items implied a participant's hardship might have a positive impact on their lives. The ESs noted that this seemed insensitive in the context of someone who was recently a victim of a violent crime.

Section 4.3: Program Staff and Stakeholders Interview Findings

This section summarizes our findings from 11 individual interviews, five with ESL CERT program staff and six with stakeholders. Stakeholders included two law enforcement officers and four service providers. These interviews offer valuable first-hand accounts and expert opinions, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the program's dynamics and impact.

Program Development

Action Planning Sessions

Many stakeholders reported positive experiences during the action-planning sessions, which helped develop the ESL CERT program. Several law enforcement personnel expressed appreciation that the process clarified expectations and provided a clear picture of their responsibilities. A service provider initially expressed concern about a law enforcement-centered program operating in a predominantly Black community with a history of negative experiences with police. As the action planning sessions unfolded, however, the service provider felt reassured that community leaders could take a more active role and help balance the power dynamics, noting:

Some law enforcement officers who joined the call at different times, from my perspective, were a little heavy-handed in how they would show up in the community. But as time went on, I think the push from some of the community leaders at some point balanced out a little more.

A stakeholder also relayed that a community member mentioned the action planning sessions provided stakeholders with an opportunity to share their perspectives and better understand community needs.

During interviews, some participants expressed concerns about the action-planning process. Two of the four service providers found the sessions excessively long and not a good use of their time. One provider suggested that service providers should share their expertise, describe the contributions they could offer to the program, and then be excused from the remaining sessions. Another provider reported that their questions during action planning were not acknowledged or answered. The same provider felt the facilitators were reluctant to adapt the program based on local recommendations and feedback, stating:

And no one asked [what was needed], or even if they asked, they didn't acknowledge it. That happened a lot. You would ask questions or make a point and then it was not acknowledged or there was no follow through.

The same provider further reflected on the action planning process, “The whole thing was kind of off-putting in the beginning, with people that are in a small community filled with crisis working, I’m literally working, constantly. And so, it did not value my time.... I think they came in without seeing what the gaps were, what we needed.”

Furthermore, ESs sought to understand the existing relationships between law enforcement and service providers, including which services law enforcement previously referred individuals to *before* the ESL CERT program. Two service providers suggested it would have been helpful to know more about each person present in the action planning meetings and their work in the community. This information could have helped identify aspects of the program that might duplicate existing work. ESs also recommended that local data—such as substance use rates, substances of choice, police mental health-related calls, and police hospital transports, if available—be presented during action planning sessions.

One service provider expressed concern about the TASC CHJ action planning facilitators' reluctance to remove the term "deflection" from a program designed to serve crime victims. They noted:

As far as the process, I am a little disappointed ... [about the] the term 'deflection.' I know it's a law enforcement term.... It just feels like there wasn't much regard to all of the work that we put in to make sure that if these things are going up in the communities that it's community-oriented.

TASC ESs were hired at the end of the ESL CERT implementation process and, as a result, did not participate in the initial action planning sessions. They recommended that future planning processes include at least one ES to explain the details, benefits, and limitations of their role to other attendees. The ESs noted that participating in the action planning process for another deflection site helped them better understand their own program and the decisions that shaped it.

Program Goals

During interviews, stakeholders and staff identified several key goals for the ESL CERT program, most of which were developed during the action planning sessions. Overarching goals included:

- Supporting individuals impacted by severe trauma.
- Ensuring that participants feel cared for and supported.
- Enhancing the overall quality of life for community members.

To achieve these goals, stakeholders emphasized the importance of reducing stigma surrounding mental health and encouraging participants to seek help. ESs also aimed to reduce revictimization and decrease participants' desire for retaliation by supporting the development of healthy coping mechanisms. Additionally, both ESs and service providers sought to strengthen collaboration among community partners—particularly by improving communication between law enforcement and community members and reducing mistrust between the two groups.

Staff Training

TASC Inc. held a week-long training for ESs, which participants found informative. However, as noted during the field visits, additional training was needed to address the specific needs of a program serving victims of violent crime. ESs hired after the training expressed a desire to attend

a similar training session; however, a briefer set of workshops, rather than the entire week of training, could be sufficient.

Program Operations

TASC CHJ and TASC Inc.

TASC CHJ was responsible for program development, including action planning and technical assistance, while TASC Inc. oversaw program operations, including accepting police referrals by their ESs. One service provider noted that TASC's involvement was an asset, particularly the technical support provided by TASC CHJ and the skilled ESs employed by TASC Inc. A service provider commented that TASC Inc. was not well-known in East St. Louis, except for its work with justice-involved individuals. The person recommended that TASC ESs have an office in East St. Louis, rather than Belleville, to better connect with the community. Both service providers and ESs acknowledged that TASC is often associated with the court system and parole, and ESs frequently had to explain to program participants that this program was neither punitive nor mandated.

TASC Inc. Staff

All interviewed law enforcement officers and service providers shared positive feedback about the TASC ESs, even those who had previously expressed critiques of the program. Service providers noted that the ESs demonstrated a strong commitment to connecting participants to services and consistently followed up with both participants and service providers. Several service providers expressed a desire to meet with the ESs in person to help foster a deeper understanding of each other's roles. One provider who had met with the ESs described the meeting as particularly helpful in building the relationship and improving their ability to engage in the program.

Law enforcement officers described the ESs as invested in their work and the people they served. They noted that the personnel were the program's primary strength. One officer suggested that ESs should conduct site visits more often and explained:

I think that one barrier is the fact that they don't make site visits. Because people may be more apprehensive about a phone call or a cold call from somebody reaching out to them. I've heard feedback from some of the people at TASC about people being upset that they were getting called and wondering how they got their number. So only being restricted to making phone calls, although it is probably the safest route, but only making phone calls is one [barrier], because some people may be better with a face-to-face [interaction] and a site visit to just follow up with them.

A member of the TASC staff addressed the issue of home visits by explaining their hesitance to visit participants' homes. A large proportion of program participants were survivors of domestic violence. One ES noted that domestic violence calls are among the most dangerous for police to respond to, and that home visits could place both the ES and the participant at risk. Another ES explained that, in some cases, even phone calls could be dangerous for participants who have

experienced domestic violence. In such cases, ESs occasionally decide to stop outreach to avoid exacerbating intimate partner violence.

When describing their work, ESs noted that burnout was not due to caseload size but rather to the “relentless engagement” required. This engagement impacted the sustainability of their roles. One ES attributed their exhaustion and frustration to several participant-related challenges, including:

- Participants with disconnected phone numbers.
- Participants who were angry or described as “vengeful.”
- Individuals who preferred that TASC provide direct services, rather than referrals.
- Participants who were dissatisfied with their referred service providers.

According to an ES, another challenge in participant engagement was that individuals who had developed rapport with their ES sometimes felt abandoned when the ES clarified that they could not serve as a counselor. Two ESs described the difficulty of building trust while also maintaining professional boundaries.

Program Referral Process

In the program workflow, a PSEG Master Sergeant made program referrals by reviewing PSEG officers' police reports and identifying cases that could be eligible for referral to ESL CERT. Referrals are submitted to ESs in batches, leading to delays between the initial incident and the ES receiving the referral information. A law enforcement member recommended that the referral process include an alternative method for line officers to submit referrals directly to TASC ESs. The officer suggested using “a Google Survey link or an application.... Something that’s completely digital.” He explained that officers could access their phones to enter basic demographic and contact information while at a crime scene. Law enforcement also suggested having TASC ESs give presentations to the East St. Louis Police Department Patrol Division on the ESL CERT program, stating:

TASC, they've come here to a couple of our PSEG briefings, and they've given an overview presentation of what their roles and duties are. It probably would be a good idea if we did that for the East St Louis Police Department Patrol Division too, because they're pretty much going to be frontline.

ESs also indicated that additional efforts could be made to encourage East St. Louis police officers to refer individuals to the program.

Resources and Capacity

Law enforcement officers expressed no concerns about the program's resources or capacity. They reported that TASC ESs responded promptly and did not appear to be understaffed. Despite their heavy workloads, service providers stated that sufficient resources were available and accessible to community members. However, ESs reported that resources were stretched thin, particularly due to limited staffing among service providers. They noted that some service providers appeared understaffed, which delayed their ability to accept referrals. They noted that some

agencies were more consistent than others in updating them about waitlist changes. One ES recommended that law enforcement, community partners, and TASC staff receive additional training to help them manage long waitlists. Such training could also help identify alternative service and treatment options, reducing over-reliance on the same providers.

Interviewers asked ESs what additional support they could use. Unanimously, they mentioned that they would benefit from having petty cash and bus passes available to give to program participants. They noted that some community services provided bus passes, which can reduce barriers and help build rapport. They indicated that petty cash would help participants address their most immediate needs, such as purchasing groceries. They wondered if each ES could be given a set amount to distribute to participants each month. One ES also noted they could benefit from better office space, with windows, adequate ventilation, and heating.

Finally, service providers were concerned about how the program would receive sustained funding. During action planning, a service provider inquired whether TASC would assist with marketing, grant-related tasks, and general financial support. The provider indicated that questions of sustainability were left unanswered and that, once TASC CHJ completed its technical assistance, the program's community leadership group was left unsupported.

Program Stakeholders

Stakeholder Relationships

One service provider reported that relationships between stakeholders and staff were not strong. Relationships, however, improved significantly between the provider's organization and the ESL CERT staff through in-person meetings with ESs. Several service providers also noted distant relationships between the program and the East St. Louis Police Department.

Three of the four service providers mentioned strained relationships among themselves in the area. One provider attributed the strain to a lack of trust, as follows:

And then the other part I will say, no fault to the [TASC CHJ] consultants or the staff [ESs], but there's some community members that are just not trusted community members that stayed at the table. And that was the, you know, nail in the coffin.

A different service provider perceived that relationships with ISPs were hindered because some officers directly referred individuals to organizations with which they already had relationships. The service provider noted that this practice undermined the work of ESs and displayed officers' preferential treatment of select providers. Several service providers acknowledged these direct referrals and how they sidestepped collaborations with the ESs. Stakeholders also discussed that ISP officers sometimes "double-referred," meaning they referred directly to both the ESL CERT program and to one or two service providers. ISP officers agreed that this could lead to confusion and duplication of services, as those service providers might also receive referrals from ESL CERT ESs.

Service providers and ESs expressed a need to increase the number of relationships with community partners and law enforcement. They also hoped for increased buy-in from all program stakeholders and the community.

Collaboration

We interviewed participants about the benefits of collaboration for program stakeholders. One ES shared that the program immediately reduced the burden on law enforcement officers, allowing them to focus on their primary responsibilities rather than serving as case managers or mental health professionals. Unlike the immediate benefit to ISPs, this ES believed that collaborative benefits for service providers were more gradual. All ESs affirmed their desire to both receive referrals promptly from the ISP and connect people to services promptly.

Service providers indicated that collaboration could be strengthened through additional check-in meetings among program stakeholders, which were mainly in-person. As the provider emphasized:

I think what is missing is relational. I think referrals are relational. I think you send referrals to people you know and you trust, right? And so, I think although we spent a lot of time over Zoom, I think that would have gone differently had we done the meetings in person.

The service provider explained that in-person relationships would facilitate the sharing of program updates, ensure that program participants received appropriate and timely services, and foster rapport between stakeholders and staff. Extending this idea further, several service providers requested that ESs visit their offices in person to learn about their services and to “put a name to the faces.” ESs concurred, noting that informal and in-person meetings with service providers could enhance their ability to work together. However, several community partners pointed out that their busy schedules made it difficult to attend program check-in meetings.

ESs proposed that, to facilitate prompt referrals within 72 hours, each community partner should provide multiple points of contact. An ES also recommended that the leadership team receive guidance on expectations and ways to facilitate collaborative teamwork. ESs also focused on service providers who had ceased communication with them. Several expressed a desire to reach out to them to address the “disconnect” and identify changes that could enhance service providers’ engagement and buy-in.

Several service providers suggested that TASC CHJ return to East St. Louis to provide technical assistance and help program stakeholders address communication issues. Although communication was good during the action-planning process, the providers acknowledged that community partners now struggle to sustain the same level of collaboration. ESs similarly expressed a need for additional assistance with communication, specifically to clarify their roles in the program and the expectations placed on them.

To improve outreach and collaboration, the ESs suggested using victim advocacy. Additionally, an ES highlighted offering better resources for youth with substance use disorders or other behavioral health concerns.

Program Participants

ESs reported that most of the feedback they received from participants was positive. Program participants expressed gratitude for having someone who cared about their well-being, as one ES noted, “We've had some participants that really appreciate the engagement specialists, even just knowing that someone's there, thinking about them during the time that they really feel like no one cared.”

In addition, ESs reported that program participants said the program helped them build a support system, connect with services, and develop the tools to seek future assistance independently.

Families and community members also offered positive feedback. As an ES reported, family members were grateful for assistance for their loved ones. Community members benefited from the program's outreach efforts, which distributed harm reduction packets, snacks, and program business cards. An ES specified: “The team puts these harm reduction packets together. And the packets they have, like, fentanyl test strips; they have Narcan; information on different community providers in the community, their business card; condoms, candy, granola bar; stuff like that.”

ESs also received negative feedback from participants. For instance, participants wanted more from the program, hoping for direct services, like counseling, rather than just referrals to other services. An ES stressed that participants' desire for counseling was an issue, noting that they often treated ESs inappropriately as counselors. Knowing where to draw the line with individuals seeking direct assistance from TASC could be challenging. The ES wondered if there were training options to help the team navigate these complex relationships.

Other negative feedback came from individuals who did not want to participate in the program. They were upset that law enforcement shared their contact information with ESs. An ES stated, “[...] I've heard feedback from that, from some of the people at TASC about, like, people being upset that they were getting called and wondering how they got their number.”

Feedback on Data and Evaluation

Data Collection and Entry

A law enforcement officer noted that he and others could not explain changes in homicides or domestic violence offenses solely by tracking local crime trends. The PSEG officers sought additional data on victims' health and access to services to better understand these trends. Such data would also help ESs and service providers identify community services that best serve this population and determine the need for additional services. Since none of the service providers' electronic health records were integrated with TASC's client record system, data were shared entirely via email. The officer noted, “I think TASC takes the initiative with tracking and

collecting that data. And it's not super complicated, our electronic health records don't communicate, so it's being done via email.”

An ES noted that the internal TASC Inc. client record system frequently encountered issues and lacked several functions. They requested training to help them solve problems as soon as they arose within the system, rather than relying on the TASC IT department. Service providers were unable to access TASC Inc.'s client record system. As a workaround, a TASC Inc. supervisor pulled data and generated numerous spreadsheets.

Program Evaluation

ICJIA is responsible for providing the external pre- and post-evaluation of ESL CERT. The ESs voiced various concerns about the pre- and post-test process and content. First, the ESs requested notification when a participant submitted the pre- and post-test online. They reported a preference for paper tests (in person or by phone) over the online version. Second, one ES disliked the gift card incentive evaluators provided to staff for successfully administering pre- and post-tests, believing that participant survey completion was largely outside their control. The ES also noted discomfort in persuading participants to take the test, as this seemed to conflict with the program's voluntary nature. Additionally, several ESs were unsure of the benefits of the pre- and post-tests, preferring to measure participant satisfaction with the program themselves. Finally, an ES wanted data on those who refused service referrals, but thought it would be challenging to collect.

Community Awareness

All stakeholders agreed that the community was not familiar with the ESL CERT program. Several people attributed this unfamiliarity to the absence of a public launch event to introduce the program to the community. Others noted that crime victims might be hesitant to share their program involvement with others in the community due to stigma. An ES noted that community members have been hesitant to speak about the program and to ask for help, stating, “But, you know, it depends on the nature of the services that they need; most folks ain’t going to tell nobody because of privacy or fear for their lives or different things.”

Service providers described how community members’ distrust of law enforcement affects the community’s perceptions of the ESL CERT program. However, they also acknowledged some positive developments. One service provider pointed to ISP’s work on rebuilding trust within East St. Louis and thought the ESL CERT program might also rebuild community trust. Several interviewees stated that relocating the TASC offices — where ESs work — from Belleville to East St. Louis would increase community awareness and trust even more than current initiatives could. ESs described outreach initiatives, including staffing tables at local fairs, visiting homeless shelters, and distributing naloxone and other harm-reduction materials.

Another service provider perceived community awareness to be limited, partly because only those who attended action-planning and subsequent implementation meetings were aware of the program. Two service providers wished that ways to market the program were developed, a topic discussed among stakeholders, but it never materialized.

Echoing comments made by PSEG officers during field visits, ESs suggested that law enforcement officers should share program business cards or pamphlets with victims or family members when responding to a crime scene. Service providers recommended creating posters to place around the community to increase awareness and facilitate self-referrals. A service provider also recommended emailing the program to the school district via a blast email. Finally, ESs recommended that officers could improve their communication with potential program participants to ensure, for example, that people knew to expect a phone call from TASC ESs.

Program Benefits and Expansion

Service providers highlighted perceived benefits of the ESL CERT program, including its role in connecting community members who previously had limited access to services. Several people pointed out that it helped build relationships, enabling high-risk individuals to receive timely care. They described how it engaged community members who previously had been shuffled through the system. One stated, “I mean, I think the fact that they've been able to engage and build relationships with individuals in the community, who might have been just shuffled through the system before, is a huge step forward.” Service providers also emphasized the positive impact of bridging the gap between law enforcement and the community. One stated, “Helping to bridge the gap, you know, talking about the gap between the individuals and law enforcement.”

Law enforcement officers described the program’s presence in East St. Louis as a valuable step toward improving engagement between residents, service providers, and law enforcement. However, these are their observations, reflecting perceptions rather than measured outcomes. ESs perceived that the program could decrease the stigma around help-seeking and make people feel cared for. An officer stated, “We've had some participants that really appreciate the engagement specialists, even just knowing that someone's there, thinking about them during the time that they really feel like no one cares.”

ESs and law enforcement alike wished to expand the program's geographic coverage and proposed that the neighboring city of Cahokia Heights would benefit most from inclusion. On the other hand, a service provider cautioned against expanding the program too quickly. This provider expressed concern that it might become a law enforcement initiative that overlooks the community's needs.

Lessons Learned

ESs and service providers recommended that other jurisdictions developing similar programs exercise patience, take the time to build trust within the community, and engage participants. They also recommended being patient with participants who might not be willing to accept help. All stakeholders noted that maintaining a program's sustainability would require local community partners to assume leadership roles and engage stakeholders beyond the development stage. Service providers recommended that future action-planning facilitators allocate additional time to identifying both the available services in the area and the barriers individuals face when

accessing them. They advised talking to people throughout the community and learning what the community needed rather than assuming an outsider would know what was best.

Section 5: Recommendations

Successes of the ESL CERT program are documented throughout this report. This section recommends improvements for this program and for programs developed in other jurisdictions. The evaluators shared this report's findings and recommendations with the stakeholders and funders, and many of the recommendations have already been addressed.

Conduct Initial Community Needs Assessment

Feedback from the staff and stakeholder interviews suggested spending time on a needs assessment before action planning. A needs assessment is a systematic process for identifying a community's needs and assets. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2013, p. 6), "A community needs assessment provides community leaders with a snapshot of local policy, systems, and environmental change strategies currently in place and helps to identify areas for improvement." A needs assessment can include quantitative data analysis (e.g., local data trends) and qualitative assessments (e.g., listening sessions, surveys, key information interviews) (National Association of Counties and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, n.d.). During the needs assessment process, community voices—including individuals with lived experience as victims of crime—must be heard to inform public safety and social programs, particularly in marginalized communities (Head, 2007; O'Mara-Eves et al., 2015; Sankofa, 2021). Stakeholders expressed that such information would have helped them better understand the underlying dynamics between service providers and law enforcement.

Enhance Action Planning

Several stakeholders expressed concern about the extensive time commitment required to attend action-planning sessions. Therefore, to engage participants, organizers should clearly and transparently communicate the time commitment and be flexible with the dates, times, and formats of action planning sessions. Stakeholders also cited instances during action planning in which members' suggestions were not adequately addressed, such as labeling the program something other than "deflection." As another enhancement, ESs suggested spending more time explaining the leadership team's role and responsibilities. Doing so could have ensured more continuity in people's commitments during the program's transition from development (led by TASC CHJ) to operation (led by TASC Inc). Finally, comments suggested that ESs participate in future action planning meetings and answer questions from law enforcement officers and service providers to improve mutual understanding of the program. In general, programs can promote a shared understanding and improve program effectiveness through collaborative meetings (Roussos & Fawcett, 2000).

Improve the Referral Process

During the TASC office field visit and interviews, ESs identified the current referral process as a potential limitation of the program. The program could provide a quicker response if TASC ESs collaborated with ISP and the East St. Louis Police Department, rather than relying on a single PSEG officer to review cases and refer them to the ESL CERT program. We recommend implementing a standardized referral process with well-defined documentation procedures and

additional designated points of contact between law enforcement, service providers, and ESs. Additionally, a unified referral-tracking system would enhance coordination and accountability. Improving the referral process could have immediate and significant benefits to the program and, therefore, should be prioritized for short-term implementation.

Enhance Data Tracking and Analysis

A unified tracking system could improve the effectiveness of the referral process and enhance data tracking and sharing for program stakeholders. Developing a longitudinal tracking system to follow participants over time can provide an opportunity to assess long-term service engagement and well-being outcomes (Fantuzzo et al., 2017). Additionally, impact tracking could be enhanced by integrating standardized outcome measures, such as self-reported well-being scales or service utilization rates (Sprague et al., 2017).

A stronger data system can promote future evaluation activities, including a racial equity analysis and a review of how power dynamics influence program engagement (Nelson & Zanti, 2020). It would enable program staff and stakeholders to ensure that ESL CERT is serving victims equitably and effectively. To analyze whether disparities exist in victim engagement, service utilization, or referral outcomes, program partners should collect demographic information for all referrals and active participants. Qualitative interviews with focus groups of victims from diverse backgrounds can further explore how their lived experiences shape their program experiences (Hendren et al., 2023).

These steps, along with the outcomes of data analyses, may help make the program more accessible and responsive to the diverse needs of the community it serves. Both ESs and law enforcement members could benefit from training on trauma-informed and culturally responsive approaches to working with victims and diverse populations (Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2014). Collaboration and outreach to community organizations serving historically marginalized groups can enhance trust-building efforts beyond traditional law enforcement channels (Modise, 2023).

Increase Collaboration and Communication

We found a lack of collaboration among various program stakeholders. Nearly all staff and stakeholders mentioned that communication among program partners needed improvement. Delays occurred in referrals between law enforcement and ESs. Some service providers did not communicate with ESs, and several providers did not trust each other. In part, relationships between program partners were complicated by pre-existing dynamics and longstanding referral agreements and partnerships. In fact, several ESs expressed that they would have benefited from being informed about pre-existing relationships between law enforcement and service providers. During the field visit to TASC, ESs expressed concern that some service providers' failure to return their phone calls or respond to service requests made participants frustrated. Each community is unique, and generally, challenges to police social work and social service collaboration can take significant time and effort to overcome (Green et al., 2022; Patterson & Swan, 2019). However, in police-led community assistance programs, success depends on collaboration through communication and teamwork among stakeholders (Barberi & Taxman, 2019).

In the short term, a priority for ESL CERT staff and stakeholders is to address collaboration through increased communication and in-person meetings. ESs can hold in-person meetings with each service provider to foster a deeper understanding of each other's roles in the program. One service provider, who had such a meeting, confirmed that it led to clear communication and a good rapport. Alternatively, or in addition to such meetings, TASC CHJ could offer technical assistance sessions with program staff and stakeholders to overcome barriers and enhance program success. Increased collaboration could also help eliminate redundancies, a concern highlighted in the collaboration survey results. Through in-person meetings, program partners could build rapport and identify where existing partnerships and initiatives may create service redundancies.

The collaboration survey identified insufficient partnerships within the community as another area of concern, potentially impeding program success. ESs described several ways the program could increase collaboration with local organizations not currently involved in ESL CERT. They proposed enhancing connections with the local victim advocacy community and partnering with service providers who can assist youth with mental health and substance use concerns.

To measure whether the ESL CERT program is responsive to the needs of crime victims, we could conduct structured interviews or surveys with victims from diverse backgrounds, focusing on accessibility, service quality, and barriers to engagement. These interviews would provide critical insights into how victims' lived experiences shape their engagement and could help identify areas for improvement. Another effective strategy is to establish a victim advisory panel, providing a regular platform for victims to share feedback and guide program improvements. Research highlights that advisory panels can be particularly valuable for ongoing program refinement (O'Mara-Eves et al., 2015; Shaw et al., 2020). For ESL CERT, a panel could meet quarterly to share experiences and offer suggestions, ensuring that victims' voices are consistently incorporated into the program. Such structures enable better alignment of programs with community needs, thereby increasing accessibility and engagement (Takahashi & James, 2018).

Greater collaboration between ESs and the evaluation team could be fostered by holding regular meetings to discuss aspects of the evaluation process, such as data collection and analysis (O'Sullivan, 2012). During the field visit, ESs provided advice on the pre- and post-tests administered to ESL CERT participants. In response, we made several minor adjustments to the survey to enhance its relevance for the population that ESL CERT serves.

Finally, relocating the ESs to embed them within a law enforcement office should be considered for medium-term implementation. The ES interviews and the field visit to TASC offices uncovered displeasure with the office's current location, suggesting that greater proximity to East St. Louis would lead to greater program success. If possible, TASC should have an office in East St. Louis or within the police department, rather than its current location in Belleville. This relocation would strengthen TASC's ties to the community and promote communication with East St. Louis law enforcement and service providers. Research has shown that embedding social service staff within police departments effectively assists community members in need (Ban & Riordan, 2023).

Adjust Program Services

Home visits are one of several adjustments to current program services that could improve efficiency and quality. ISP officers and ESs have contending views on performing home visits, with law enforcement interviewees wanting to increase them and ESs fearing inherent risks to themselves and to program participants who experienced domestic violence. Research does not necessarily support this fear of risk. A prior systematic review of the literature, for example, found that home-visiting interventions for women experiencing intimate partner violence are promising to reduce future violence (Prosman et al., 2015). In addition, a study of a police-advocate home-visit program for women who experienced domestic violence found a significant reduction in calls for service compared to those who had a standard police intervention (Casey et al., 2007). Therefore, home visits should be reconsidered and explored as a potential benefit to program participants. An open discussion among law enforcement officers and ESs could resolve the contention.

In addition to adjustments to home visits, the ISP and ESs should consider whether an online form would streamline the referral process or if they would prefer to use their current referral method. Currently, ESs receive program referrals from a single ISP officer, who reviews case files and sends over referrals in batches. A streamlined, online referral process could enable immediate referrals at the scene and reduce the time between victimization and an officer's referral to the ESL CERT program.

Officers also noted that a leave-behind pamphlet or business card could help officers share information about the program when interacting with victims at a crime scene. Creating leave-behind materials should be considered for short-term implementation. For police-assistance programs, such as ESL CERT, it is recommended that law enforcement "hand out a small resource pamphlet or referral palm card" (National District Attorneys Association, 2021, p. 22).

Finally, due to ESs' confusion about TASC program policies, a formal Standard Operating Procedures guide could codify deflection policies and reduce misconceptions among ES staff. Such a guide could also be used to track policy changes over time, such as adjustments to home visits or referral processes (Development Services Group, Inc., 2017).

Offer Specialized Training for Staff

Instituting additional post-hire, specialty, and technology training for ESs could enhance the ESL CERT program. Additionally, it may be integral to program success to hold specialty training in domestic violence. Research has shown that experienced staff conducting outreach with domestic violence victims had better participant outcomes than more traditional criminal justice system-based referral programs (DePrince et al., 2012). In the study by DePrince and colleagues, community-based outreach by victim advocates resulted in decreased distress levels and greater readiness to leave abusive relationships. Outreach increased the perceived helpfulness of services compared to system-based referrals. However, specialty training needs to be relevant. During our field visit, ESs reported that their primary training on substance abuse in the program was not particularly relevant to their work in East St. Louis. ESs should be trained in topics specific to

the victims they serve, in this case, domestic violence survivors and the loved ones of homicide victims. ESs also requested training on their data management system.

Moreover, we recommend prioritizing regular training on trauma-informed care and culturally responsive approaches. Improving engagement with diverse populations requires ensuring that both law enforcement officers and emergency services personnel are equipped with the skills needed to work effectively in high-risk, diverse environments. Trauma-informed care fosters environments where individuals feel safe, respected, and supported, especially during high-stress situations (SAMHSA, 2014). Additionally, cultural competence training enhances officers' and specialists' ability to understand and respond to the unique needs of diverse communities, especially those that have been historically marginalized (Chu et al., 2022).

To address concerns among law enforcement regarding the effectiveness of the ESL CERT program, officers should receive quarterly training sessions that clarify the program's goals, eligibility criteria, and referral process. These sessions would help officers understand how the ESL CERT program aligns with and contributes to broader community safety initiatives by targeting individuals at risk and providing them with the support they need (Adams et al., 2023; DePrince et al., 2012). Clarifying the eligibility criteria would enable officers to identify individuals who are best suited for the program. A straightforward referral process would be emphasized to reduce confusion and encourage officers to participate in the program proactively. Research on police training — such as the success of police-advocate collaborations (Barberi & Taxman, 2019) — has demonstrated that structured, repeated training leads to greater understanding and engagement among officers in social programs. These sessions should be designed to provide clarity and transparency. Periodic updates on program changes, challenges, and successes would be provided to maintain officers' buy-in and engagement. This strategy has proven effective in other programs aimed at improving collaboration between law enforcement and community-based services (Labriola et al., 2023)

In addition to this officer training, ESs could play a role in training and educating law enforcement. As collaborators presenting the program's purpose to the East St. Louis police department, ESs could enhance officer buy-in by explaining the program's benefits to individuals and communities and by instructing officers on how to refer individuals to the ESL CERT program. A similar presentation from ESs was well-received by ISP officers. Increasing buy-in from law enforcement officers could lead to more program referrals by expanding referral sources beyond the ISP (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2024).

To address law enforcement's concerns about the impact of their referrals, a carryover of training could serve as a feedback mechanism, providing regular updates on the outcomes of the cases they have referred to the ESL CERT program. This feedback would help build trust and reinforce the value of their participation (Ban & Riordan, 2023). The feedback loop should include periodic, confidential updates on case outcomes, clear communication about the program's successes and challenges, and opportunities for officers to provide input on the program's implementation. To ensure the feedback loop is practical, an automated reporting system should be created. This will allow officers to track the progress of referred cases and participate in regular feedback sessions to discuss program outcomes and address any concerns. Success metrics should also be clearly defined and shared with law enforcement to highlight the

program's impact (Reichert et al., 2023). Implementing these strategies would result in officers gaining a deeper understanding of the value of their involvement, becoming more invested in the program's success, strengthening the program partnerships, and enhancing overall program effectiveness.

Promote and Expand the Program

All interviewees agreed that the program was not well known in the community and that a larger launch could have helped promote it. Program leadership should consider whether promotional materials, such as pamphlets or business cards, could help officers effectively communicate the program to community members. Other police referral programs have promoted their initiatives through various channels, including social media, radio, news outlets, local event promotions, and community presentations (Barberi & Taxman, 2019).

Based on responses from interviews and field visits, program partners could consider expanding the ESL CERT program's services to address identified community needs and mitigate obstacles to program effectiveness. The collaborative survey results revealed the obstacle of inadequate financial resources and material support. One potential strategy would be to establish a discretionary fund that provides ESL CERT with access to petty cash for minor, program-related expenses for participants. This would address ESs' unanimous request for bus passes and petty cash to be available to participants. Such resources might reduce barriers to participants' access to other services and could serve immediate needs, such as purchasing groceries or paying for a night in a motel (Mackay & Goodwin-Smith, 2015).

As we heard from stakeholders during interviews and at the PSEG field visit, expanding the program's geographic reach to neighboring Cahokia Heights might be beneficial. ESL CERT program staff and stakeholders should consider addressing current concerns about the program's effectiveness before expanding it to neighboring communities. Once they do, the program leadership team should discuss identifying a suitable law enforcement officer from the Cahokia Heights Police Department as a program champion. The program can also explore local service providers to invite as program partners. Across the country, police departments have been expanding service areas and building partnerships with neighboring jurisdictions and service providers (Labriola et al., 2023).

A different type of program expansion would be to have patrol officers at the scene of a crime, directly on the spot, refer participants to ESL CERT. Wait time would be reduced between an individual's experience of the violent crime and the ES's contact. With the current lag time between the incident and the first ES contact, some program participants' immediate needs following victimization may be going unmet. Prior research on police referral programs has found that these programs often expand their pathways or methods of reaching potential participants as they mature (Labriola et al., 2023).

Future Evaluation

Future evaluation should aim to achieve a comprehensive understanding of how power dynamics influence program engagement and service outcomes. For the ESL CERT program, subsequent evaluation should systematically examine structural inequities, identify disparities, and center on participant perspectives. The purpose of an equity analysis is to understand and address disparities in access, treatment, and outcomes across different populations (Ruiier et al., 2023). Conducting an equity analysis enables program evaluators and policymakers to identify systemic barriers and biases that may perpetuate inequities, facilitating the development of more inclusive and effective interventions (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2019). Only through this multifaceted approach can programs transform from accessible to equitable, fostering trust and ensuring that services align with the priorities of those most impacted by systemic injustice. This can help the program achieve more equitable outcomes for all participants.

Gathering direct victim perspectives in future evaluation reports is crucial for understanding the real-world impact of criminal justice processes and the effectiveness of victim support services. By incorporating victims' firsthand experiences, evaluators can identify gaps in service delivery, assess the effectiveness of existing programs, and gain insights into the emotional and practical needs of those affected by crime (Houston-Kolnik & Vasquez, 2017). Moreover, including victim viewpoints enhances the credibility and comprehensiveness of the evaluation, leading to more victim-centered recommendations for improving the criminal justice system and victim support services (Holder & Elglezos, 2023; Tibaduiza et al., 2014). Finally, future evaluation work can explore program outcomes beyond the process evaluation work we completed.

Section 6: Conclusion

Interviews, a collaboration survey, and a field visit with staff and program stakeholders revealed that the ESs themselves are one of the ESL CERT program's greatest strengths. All stakeholders noted the staff's dedication to their work and to the community they served during the interviews and the field visit. The successes of the ESL CERT program, which has served 102 participants from its inception in January 2022 through December 2024, can be built upon by following recommendations from staff and stakeholders, as well as other findings from our evaluation.

Along with ESL CERT's strengths, we identified several areas for improvement in program implementation and operations. Findings included inconsistent communication and information flow among partner agencies; concerns with the police referral and warm handoff processes; limited specialized training for ESs, particularly related to the unique needs of crime victims; and issues with engaging and retaining participants. These obstacles reflect everyday complexities in police-led community deflection initiatives. These findings may assist similar programs by considering our program recommendations, such as strengthening cross-agency communication, improving referral protocols, and tailoring staff training. These insights can help programs proactively plan to anticipate challenges, support success, and ensure sustainability over time.

We will continue our evaluation of the multi-site IDHS-funded deflection programs. Our future evaluation efforts will focus on obtaining direct feedback from program participants and analyzing outcomes—including pre- and post-tests—to assess program effectiveness. Importantly, these efforts will intentionally examine potential disparities, promote equity, and respond to structural inequalities and power dynamics within the community.

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Appendix: Collaboration Survey Results

Table
44 Item Collaboration Survey Results

Categories	Factors	Survey items	N	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean score	
				n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
1. Environment	1. History of collaboration or cooperation in the community	1. Agencies in our community have a history of working together.	11	2	18.2	2	18.2	3	27.3	4	36.4	0	0.0	3.00	
		2. Trying to solve problems through collaboration has been common in this community. It has been done a lot before.	11	2	18.2	1	9.1	4	36.4	4	36.4	0	0.0	2.91	
	2. Collaborative group seen as a legitimate leader in the community	3. Leaders in this community who are not part of our collaborative group seem hopeful about what we can accomplish.	11	1	9.1	1	9.1	7	63.6	2	18.2	0	0.0	3.27	
		4. Others in this community who are not a part of this collaboration would generally agree that the organizations involved in this collaborative project are the “right” organizations to make this work.	11	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	54.5	5	45.5	0	0.0	3.45	
	3. Favorable political and social climate	5. The political and social climate seems to be “right” for starting a collaborative project like this one.	6. The time is right for this collaborative project.	11	1	9.1	0	0.0	6	54.5	3	27.3	1	9.1	3.27
			7. People involved in our collaboration trust one another.	11	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	18.2	6	54.5	3	27.2	4.10
2. Membership characteristics	4. Mutual respect, understanding, and trust	8. I have a lot of respects for the other people involved in this.	11	0	0.0	3	27.3	3	27.3	5	45.5	0	0.0	3.18	
		9. The people involved in our collaboration represent a cross section of those who have a stake in what we are trying to accomplish.	11	0	0.0	1	9.1	3	27.3	4	36.4	3	27.3	3.82	
	5. Appropriate cross section of members	10. The people involved in our collaboration represent a cross section of those who have a stake in what we are trying to accomplish.	11	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	18.2	7	63.6	2	18.2	4.00	

Categories	Factors	Survey items	N	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean score
				n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
		10. All the organizations that we need to be members of this collaborative group have become members of the group.	11	0	0.0	4	36.4	5	45.5	1	9.1	1	9.1	2.91
	6. Members see collaboration as being in their self-interest	11. My organization will benefit from being involved in this collaboration.	11	0	0.0	1	9.1	1	9.1	7	63.6	2	18.2	3.91
	7. Ability to compromise	12. People involved in our collaboration are willing to compromise on important aspects of our project.	11	0	0.0	2	18.2	5	45.5	4	36.4	0	0.0	3.18
3. Process and structure	8. Members share a stake in both process and outcome	13. The organizations that belong to our collaborative group invest the right amount of time in our collaborative efforts.	10	0	0.0	2	20.0	6	60.0	2	20.0	0	0.0	3.00
		14. Everyone who is a member of our collaborative group wants this project to succeed.	10	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	40.0	4	40.0	2	20.0	3.80
		15. The level of commitment among the collaboration participants is high.	10	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	60.0	4	40.0	0	0.0	3.40
	9. Multiple layers of participation	16. When the collaborative group makes major decisions, there is always enough time for members to take information back to their organizations to confer with colleagues about what the decision should be.	10	0	0.0	1	10.0	5	50.0	4	40.0	0	0.0	3.30
		17. Each of the people who participate in decisions in this collaborative group can speak for the entire organization they represent, not just a part.	10	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	70.0	2	20.0	1	10.0	3.40
	10. Flexibility	18. There is a lot of flexibility when decisions are made; people are open to discussing different options.	10	2	20.0	1	10.0	5	50.0	3	30.0	0	0.0	3.00
		19. People in this collaborative group are open to different approaches to how we	10	1	10.0	0	0.0	5	50.0	3	30.0	1	10.0	3.30

Categories	Factors	Survey items	N	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean score
				n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
		can do our work. They are willing to consider different ways of working.												
	11. Development of clear roles and policy guidelines	20. People in this collaborative group have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities.	10	0	0.0	1	10.0	2	20.0	6	60.0	1	10.0	3.70
		21. There is a clear process for making decisions among the partners in this collaboration.	10	0	0.0	1	10.0	6	60.0	3	30.0	0	0.0	3.20
	12. Adaptability to changing conditions	22. This collaboration is able to adapt to changing conditions, such as fewer funds than expected, changing political climate, or change in leadership.	10	0	0.0	2	20.0	5	50.0	3	30.0	0	0.0	3.10
		23. This group has the ability to survive even if it had to make major changes in its plans or add some new members in order to reach its goals.	10	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	40.0	4	40.0	2	20.0	3.80
	13. Appropriate pace of development	24. This collaborative group has been careful to take on the right amount of work at the right pace.	10	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	70.0	3	30.0	0	0.0	3.30
		25. This group is currently able to keep up with the work necessary to coordinate all the people, organizations, and activities related to this collaborative project.	10	0	0.0	1	10.0	3	30.0	4	40.0	2	20.0	3.70
	14. Evaluation and continuous learning	26. A system exists to monitor and report the activities and/or services of our collaboration.	10	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	20.0	7	70.0	1	10.0	3.90
		27. We measure and report the outcomes of our collaboration.	10	0	0.0	1	10.0	4	40.0	5	50.0	0	0.0	3.40
		28. Information about our activities, services, and outcomes is used by members of the collaborative group to improve our joint work.	10	0	0.0	1	10.0	1	10.0	8	80.0	0	0.0	3.70

Categories	Factors	Survey items	N	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean score
				n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
4. Communication	15. Open and frequent communication	29. People in this collaboration communicate openly with one another.	10	0	0.0	2	20.0	4	40.0	4	40.0	0	0.0	3.20
		30. I am informed as often as I should be about what is going on in the collaboration.	10	0	0.0	4	40.0	1	10.0	5	50.0	0	0.0	3.10
		31. The people who lead this collaborative group communicate well with the members.	10	0	0.0	2	20.0	6	60.0	2	20.0	0	0.0	3.40
	16. Established informal relationship and communication links	32. Communication among the people in this collaborative group happens both at formal meetings and in informal ways.	10	0	0.0	3	30.0	1	10.0	5	50.0	1	10.0	3.40
		33. I personally have informal conversations about the project with others who are involved in this collaborative group.	10	0	0.0	1	10.0	4	40.0	4	40.0	1	10.0	3.50
		34. I have a clear understanding of what our collaboration is trying to accomplish.	11	1	9.1	1	9.1	2	18.2	6	54.5	1	9.1	3.60
5. Purpose	17. Concrete, attainable goals and objectives	35. People in our collaborative group know and understand our goals.	10	0	0.0	1	10.0	2	20.0	6	60.0	1	10.0	3.70
		36. People in our collaborative group have established reasonable goals.	10	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	50.0	5	50.0	0	0.0	3.50
		37. The people in this collaborative group are dedicated to the idea that we can make this project work.	9	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	33.3	5	55.6	1	11.1	3.78
	18. Shared vision	38. My ideas about what we want to accomplish with this collaboration seem to be the same as the ideas of others.	9	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	33.3	5	55.6	1	11.1	3.78
		39. What we are trying to accomplish with our collaborative project would be difficult for any single organization to accomplish by itself.	9	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	33.3	5	55.6	1	11.1	3.78
		19. Unique purpose												

Categories	Factors	Survey items	N	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean score
				n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
		40. No other organization in the community is trying to do exactly what we are trying to do.	9	1	11.1	1	11.1	5	55.5	2	22.2	0	0	2.89
6. Resources	20. Sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time	41. Our collaborative group has adequate funds to do what it wants to accomplish.	9	3	33.3	1	11.1	3	33.3	2	22.2	0	0.0	2.44
		42. Our collaborative group has adequate “people power” to do what it wants to accomplish.	9	1	11.1	2	22.2	1	11.1	4	44.4	1	11.1	3.22
	21. Skilled leadership	43. The people in leadership positions for this collaboration have good skills for working with other people and organizations.	9	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	11.1	8	88.9	0	0.0	3.89
	22. Engaged stakeholders	44. Our collaborative group engages other stakeholders, outside of the group, as much as we should.	9	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	66.7	3	33.3	0	0.0	3.33

Note. To generate the mean score, Likert-scale items were scored from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (5).