

# MONTANA

## Crime Victim Legal Assistance Network Demonstration Project



## 2017-2019 Implementation Plan

June 2017



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Definition of Terms** - - - - - Page 4

**Executive Summary** - - - - - Page 5

**Introduction** - - - - - Page 9

- Project Overview
- Network Project Partners / Governing Structure
- Constraints and Challenges

**Needs Assessment Overview** - - - - - Page 15

- Introduction
- Methodology
- Findings
- Recommendations

**Implementation Plan** - - - - - Page 19

- Goals and Objectives
- Launch and Infrastructure
- Expansion
- Summary

**Appendices** - - - - - Page 29

- A. Leveraged Funding for Collaboration Chart
- B. Client Process Flow Chart
- C. Logic Model
- D. Timeline
- E. Job Descriptions
- F. Forms & Documents
- G. Needs Assessment Report

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Civil Legal Aid:** Civil legal problems are non-criminal; rather, civil legal aid helps people access basic necessities such as healthcare, housing, government benefits, employment, educational services, and enforcing victims' rights in criminal cases.

**Pro Bono Attorney:** An attorney providing free legal services to a low-income client.

**Pro Se:** Appearing for oneself in court, without legal representation.

**Steering Committee:** Core individuals from the Montana Board of Crime Control, Montana Legal Services Association, and the University of Montana's Criminology Research Group leading the needs assessment and implementation planning processes.

**Network Partners – Phase 1:** An advisory group comprised of a diverse cadre of leaders working in statewide organizations serving and supporting crime victims, providing guidance through the needs assessment and implementation planning processes.

**Network (Implementation) Partner – Phase 2 and Beyond:** Key direct service provider partners who will collaborate on referrals, service provision, and cross-training endeavors. Potential partners might include agencies serving victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, veteran organizations, mental health providers, and disability and aging services.

**VLAN Team:** The core Victim Legal Assistance Network team housed within Montana Legal Services Association charged with leading the VLAN efforts. These team members include Crime Victim Attorney(s), an Elder Justice AmeriCorps Attorney, and a Crime Victim Navigator.

**Crime Victim Navigator:** A unique position new to Montana Legal Services Association, the Victim Navigator will collaborate with all Network Partners. The Navigator will allow the VLAN Attorneys to expedite the intake process, and will offer clients a central point of contact and support as they move through the various systems.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

In 2014, the Montana Board of Crime Control (MBCC) received funding from the Office of Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice Vision 21 initiative to support the development and implementation of a model to provide no-cost, wraparound legal services to crime victims in Montana.

MBCC has contracted with the University of Montana Criminology Research Group (CRG) to conduct a state-wide Needs Assessment analyzing the data that identifies gaps in services, and to provide ongoing project evaluation. MBCC has contracted with Montana Legal Services Association (MLSA) to coordinate the overall project, and to develop and launch an Implementation Plan to meet the legal needs of crime victims based on the assessment results. The Project will roll out in several phases:

- Phase 1: Needs assessment data collection, analysis, and report; Identify potential partners and lay ground work for project implementation.
  - Timeline: Fall 2014 – Summer 2017
- Phase 2: Formalize project partnerships; Pilot implementation; Early performance measurement and evaluation.
  - Anticipated Timeline: Summer 2017 – Summer 2018
- Phase 3 and beyond: Expanded implementation and program adjustments based on evaluation.
  - Anticipated Timeline: Summer 2018 – Summer 2019

### NEEDS ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

MBCC contracted with the UM CRG to conduct a state-wide Needs Assessment of the civil legal services for victims of crime to identify the strengths, weaknesses, gaps in services, and barriers to civil legal services in the state. The study sought to answer two central research questions:

- What are the civil legal needs of crime victims in Montana, and to what extent are these needs currently being met?
- What are the major barriers preventing victims from receiving civil legal services, and how can these barriers be overcome?

### METHODOLOGY

UM CRG facilitated seven in-person service provider focus groups throughout the state with a total of 67 participants; conducted 24 phone interviews with crime victims; conducted an online service provider survey with 189 responses; and an online victim survey with 36 responses.

## KEY FINDINGS

The key findings from UM CRG's Needs Assessment include:

### **Legal and Non-Legal Needs:**

- The greatest civil legal needs of victims are in the areas of family law and housing law.
- The need for legal assistance exceeds the available resources; victims often cannot retain an attorney and often lack access to adequate self-help resources.
- There is a need for more advocates to guide victims through the process, and for more education for crime victim service providers on legal issues.
- Education is needed around tribal jurisdictional issues and tribal crime victims' needs.
- There is a need for mental and behavioral health services for crime victims.
- Lack of transportation and child care serve as common barriers to legal assistance.
- Crime victims often face challenges related to housing and shelter in addition to, or in conjunction with, their legal issues.

### **Barriers to Legal Services**

- Victims often cannot afford legal representation and may not qualify for free legal services based on eligibility requirements.
- Legal assistance providers do not have the resources to serve all victims seeking legal aid.
- Victims are often unaware of the legal services available, uncertain how to obtain these services, or unaware that they are eligible for these services.
- Victims without legal assistance encounter significant difficulty navigating the court system.
- Victims want to know more about their rights as victims of crime.
- Lack of trust in the system, shame and embarrassment, and fear of retaliation by the offender may prevent a victim from reporting a crime or accessing services.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Key recommendations from the UM CRG to address the findings include:

### **Collaboration**

- Organizations must collaborate in order to meet all of the needs of their victim clients.
- Legal aid organizations need to be able to connect victims to non-legal service providers.
- Non-legal service providers need to be able to refer their clients to civil legal aid providers.

### **Increase Awareness**

- Civil legal aid organizations need to increase public awareness of their services and of victims' rights in the aftermath of a crime.
- Community outreach and advertising are needed to educate victims about the services that are available, who is eligible for these services, and how to access the services.

### **Increase Capacity**

- More *pro bono* or low cost attorneys are needed to address victims' unmet civil legal needs.
- More victim advocates are needed in order to most effectively meet the needs of victims.

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

**The MT VLAN PROJECT GOAL** is to develop a comprehensive, collaborative network model, incorporating partners from a cross-section of organizations providing services to crime victims, for delivering holistic legal assistance services to meet all legal needs that arise in connection with their victimization. This model will also attempt to focus on rural and remote geography including multiple Native American Tribes with culturally distinct crime victim needs.

**Objective 1:** Provide crime victims with improved referrals and increased access to attorneys to assist with their civil legal issues and to provide wraparound legal services.

**Objective 2:** Support service providers with improved materials and resources; improved referral processes; increased access to attorneys to assist with their legal technical assistance needs; increased access to navigators and/or other social service providers to receive wraparound support services; and increased cross-training among service providers in order to provide wraparound services, legal advocacy, information, and referrals to the crime victims they serve.

**Objective 3:** Implement policies and procedures to improve referrals and to increase crime victims' access to wraparound civil legal services within the Victim Legal Assistance Network.

**Objective 4:** Conduct ongoing evaluation to gauge the impact and effectiveness of the Victim Legal Assistance Network and to identify strategies for improvement and for potential program replication.

## LAUNCH, INFRASTRUCTURE, COMMUNICATION AND EXPANSION

### Project Launch

Implementation of MT VLAN will formally launch in mid-2018. The launch will benefit from the foundation that has already been laid by the Crime Victim Attorney, Elder Law Fellow, and Crime Victim Navigator who have been integrated into MLSA's legal assistance model, serving clients with legal aid and advocacy, and have been making connections with potential partners throughout the state. Relationships with Network Partners will be formalized with MOUs outlining roles, responsibilities, and benefits. Progress will be assessed and changes will be made as needed as new organizations are identified and invited to join the Network.

Key early launch activities will include:

- Improved referrals to, and expedited intake process for MLSA crime victim applicants.
- Formalization of referral and intake process among Network Partners.
- Policies for confidentiality and client information sharing among Network partners.
- Developing and scheduling initial cross-training events and activities.
- Outreach and marketing plan to increase awareness of available services.
- Creation of resources to assist both victims and service providers.
- Technical assistance from Crime Victim Attorneys to Network Partners as needed.

## **Project Infrastructure**

MT VLAN practice will outline policies and processes surrounding issues such as eligibility, client points of entry / intake, referrals, information sharing, conflicts of interest, confidentiality, data gathering and reporting, training, education, and outreach. The MT VLAN structure will include collaborative agreements with partner agencies.

Leveraged Funding: The intent is to grow this project – including funding for additional staff as well as resources for partners – and to provide and refine holistic services for crime victims. The Project Coordinator will work to maintain existing funding and develop new sources of support.

MT VLAN Client Navigation: A key component is the Victim Navigator position. This position will be housed within MLSA and will collaborate with all Network Partners. The Navigator will allow the VLAN Attorneys to expedite the intake process, and will offer clients a central point of contact and support as they move through the various systems. From intake to closed cases, the goal is to make sure no one falls through the cracks, and that everyone who is eligible receives at least some level of services. The VLAN Team and Network Partners will collaborate to improve referrals, information sharing, service delivery, outreach, and training efforts.

Evaluation: Thorough evaluation, conducted by the CRG, will occur throughout the entire project to identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities to expand and refine the Network.

## **Network Communication**

The Steering Committee will meet bi-monthly, or as needed, to discuss overall project direction and evaluation efforts. The Steering Committee will meet with Implementation Partners monthly (or as-needed) by conference or video call (as partners will likely be statewide). Updates, shared resources and training opportunities will be distributed by the Project Coordinator as necessary. Steering Committee members and Network Partners will have access to a shared online space where documents can be posted, edited, and accessed as needed.

## **Project / Network Expansion**

DOJ / OVC Vision 21 VLAN funding has already been leveraged with other funding sources to better serve crime victims. As stated, MLSA has already secured Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) and Elder Justice AmeriCorps funding to compliment the VLAN project. These funds will significantly bolster the VLAN project, increasing its collective impact to meet the needs and uphold the rights of crime victims statewide. MBCC and MLSA are proactively thinking about the sustainability and expansion of the MT VLAN. After the Implementation Plan is launched and initial evaluation has been evaluated, the Steering Committee and Network Partners will determine the most beneficial course of continuation and expansion for the project.



# INTRODUCTION

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

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In 2014, the Montana Board of Crime Control (MBCC) received funding from the Office of Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice Vision 21 initiative to support the development and implementation of a model to provide no-cost, wraparound legal services to crime victims. MBCC has contracted with the University of Montana Criminology Research Group (CRG) to conduct a state-wide Needs Assessment analyzing the data that identifies gaps in services, and to provide ongoing project evaluation. MBCC has contracted with Montana Legal Services Association (MLSA) to coordinate the overall project, and to develop and launch an Implementation Plan to meet the legal needs of crime victims based on the assessment results.

In the aftermath of a crime, victims face a variety of needs and challenges. Crimes such as domestic violence and sexual assault, child and elder abuse, DUI, assault, robbery, fraud or homicide leave victims with emotional, financial, and physical damage. Add in the need for an attorney to deal with civil legal problems and victims may be left feeling overwhelmed, confused, and potentially unsafe and afraid. Until now, comprehensive, coordinated, and holistic legal services have not been available to most crime victims in Montana. These services are outside the expertise of victim advocates and law enforcement. There are few attorneys available to provide the necessary legal assistance, and those attorneys simply do not have the time or resources to provide the additional support, advocacy and referrals their clients might need. Crime victims may be unaware of the help that might be available, or of their civil legal rights as they moved through both civil and criminal court processes. The largely rural and remote geography of the state adds to the difficulty of finding adequate resources in a timely manner for victims.

Montana is fortunate to be included as one of ten OVC Vision 21 Victim Legal Assistance Network sites to research and demonstrate innovative ways to improve civil legal aid for crime victims. This Implementation Plan, based on the Needs Assessment results, lays out an initial plan of how Montana will strengthen efforts to meet the holistic civil legal needs of crime victims.

## PHASES AND TIMELINE

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### **Phase 1**

Phase 1 of the Victims Legal Assistance Network provided valuable data to inform and guide planning and implementation. During this phase, the CRG conducted a comprehensive Needs Assessment to better understand the nature of available services, and identify gaps and limitations on resources that affect service delivery.

The final Needs Assessment Report (summarized on pages 15-18 and included in the appendices, provides better understanding of the current state of available legal services in Montana and what services are most needed by crime victims. Data collection from Phase 1 has revealed trends in the types of civil legal issues for which crime victims most need assistance. The findings and recommendations suggest increasing collaboration, awareness, and capacity in order to better and more holistically meet the legal needs of crime victims in Montana.

This Implementation Plan, based on the Needs Assessment, guides the policies, procedures and protocols necessary to provide crime victims with appropriate services and referrals within the established Victim Legal Assistance Network. This plan serves as a blueprint for building and implementing a successful statewide Montana Victim Legal Assistance Network. The anticipated completion of Phase 1 is spring of 2017.

### **Phase 2**

In Phase 2, MBCC will again partner with MLSA and the CRG to launch and evaluate this Implementation Plan, using a Pilot model that will address gaps in existing resources, and will bring together separate legal and social service organizations who all share a common goal of assisting crime victims. This will leverage the strengths of the Network Partners in crime victim legal services rather than duplicate existing resources. In addition to addressing the specific substantive civil legal issues that crime victims face, Phase 2 will begin to address challenges related to Montana's geography and weather, diverse populations, navigating multiple state and tribal jurisdictions, and the unique challenges related to the rural, remote and often frontier nature of the state.

During Phase 2, Vision 21 funds will be leveraged with other grant dollars to create several new staff positions within MLSA, including both attorneys and victim support staff. In addition to ongoing project coordination to increase outreach, awareness, and collaboration among partners, these new positions will provide legal and supportive services to crime victims,

technical assistance and guidance to service providers on civil legal issues faced by victims of crime, and develop additional community resources on legal issues for both crime victims and service providers to help navigate local, state, federal and tribal legal systems.

Phase 2 will also include additional performance measurement and program evaluation to gauge the effectiveness, measure the outcomes, and help guide and inform the Victim Legal Assistance Network Project, led by the CRG. The anticipated completion of Phase 2 is spring 2018.

### **Phase 3 and Beyond**

In Phases 3 and beyond, the Pilot will continue into full project implementation, expanding and refining the overall reach of the project, increasing and improving access to holistic civil legal aid for crime victims statewide. The MT VLAN Team and the Network Partners will continue to collaboratively serve crime victims with holistic civil legal services; outreach and awareness activities will grow; new materials and resources will be produced and refined; and ongoing cross-training opportunities will be offered to formal and informal partners.

Phase 3 will bring an expansion in Network Partners, with an ultimate goal of incorporating crime victim service providers from all sectors and all corners of the state with holistic, wraparound civil legal assistance and related support services. Continued evaluation efforts will help to measure the projects' success, identify gaps, and refine policies and procedures to ensure the highest quality programs and services to support crime victims as they recover and rebuild their lives. The anticipated completion of Phase 3 is fall 2019.

## **NETWORK PARTNERS AND GOVERNING STRUCTURE**

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### **Steering Committee**

Representatives from all three core agencies (MBCC, MLSA and UM CRG) comprise the MT VLAN Steering Committee. MOUs have been established among the core partners to outline roles and responsibilities. MT VLAN Steering Committee Members are listed below.

MT VLAN Steering Committee Members
Montana Board of Crime Control
Tina Chamberlain, VLAN Project Director, MBCC Program Specialist
Montana Legal Services Association
Alison Paul, JD, MLSA Executive Director
Melissa Fisher, MPA, VLAN Project Coordinator
Louis Villemez, JD, MLSA Supervising Attorney
University of Montana, Department of Sociology, Criminology Research Group
Dr. Jackson Bunch, VLAN Research Principal, UM Associate Professor
Dr. Dusten Hollist, VLAN Research Co-Principal, UM Professor
Patrick McKay, MA, Research Associate
Dustin Satterfield, MA, Research Associate

**Phase 1 Network Partners (Research Advisory Group)**

In addition to the Steering Committee, the MT VLAN is guided by a cohort of Network Partners, a diverse group of leaders working in statewide organizations serving and supporting crime victims. These Network Partners include a broad array of stakeholders in the provision of legal services to victims of crime in Montana. They represent the many facets of the justice system that interact to provide support to crime victims. All of these organizations strongly support the rights and aim to meet the needs of crime victims, and are thoroughly committed to developing a network to provide holistic legal services to crime victims. These Network Partners have helped shape this Implementation Plan by providing ongoing guidance and feedback as needed. An MOU outlines Phase 1 Network Partner roles and responsibilities.

MT VLAN Phase 1 Network Partners
Montana DOJ, Office of Consumer Protection & Victim Services
Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Montana Native Women’s Coalition
The State Bar of Montana
Montana DPHHS, Children & Family Services
Montana Office of the Public Defender
Montana Supreme Court, Court Help Program
Disability Rights Montana

## **Phases 2+ Network Partners (Implementation Partners)**

As MT VLAN moves into Implementation, key partners will be identified to collaborate on referrals, service provision, and cross-training endeavors. Potential partners might include agencies serving victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, veteran organizations, mental health providers, and disability and aging services. These Implementation Partners will be invited to sign Phase 2 MOUs to outline roles and responsibilities within the Network.

## **Project Elements / Staffing / Anticipated Expansion**

Specific elements of this implementation plan currently include:

- 1 FTE Crime Victim Intake Navigator to provide victims with referrals and support
  - Housed at MLSA, supervised by VLAN Coordinator
- 1 FTE Supervising Crime Victim Attorney to provide legal assistance, training, and supervision.
  - Housed at MLSA, supervised by MLSA Executive Director.
- 1 Elder Justice AmeriCorps Attorney to provide elder abuse legal services and training.
  - Housed at MLSA, supervised by Supervising Crime Victim Attorney.
- 1 VLAN Network Coordinator.
  - Housed at MLSA, supervised by MLSA Executive director.
- Needs Assessment Research and Report conducted by UM CRG.

As MT VLAN moves into Phase 2, VLAN funds will support the following expansions:

- 1 additional FTE Crime Victim Attorney to provide legal assistance and training.
- Cross training opportunities for Network Partners and other service providers.
- Outreach and education opportunities for Montana crime victims and stakeholders.
- Ongoing evaluation of, and refinements made to improve the project by UM CRG.
- Collaborative agreements (MOUs) with participating agencies / organizations to improve referral practices and policies, cross-training, and resource development.

As MT VLAN continues into Phase 3 and beyond, the project will continue to grow, as guided by Phase 2's successes, challenges, and ongoing evaluation.

## **Governance**

All MT VLAN Partners operate within the guidelines set forth by the MBCC, and by the Office for Victims of Crime in the Office of Justice Programs at the U.S. Department of Justice. MT VLAN's purpose is to improve access to holistic civil legal assistance for crime victims in Montana, by increasing capacity, enhancing coordination and collaboration among partners, expanding outreach and awareness of services, and providing networking and cross-training opportunities.

## CONSTRAINTS AND CHALLENGES

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While the need for increased collaboration, awareness and capacity to provide comprehensive civil legal aid for crime victims in Montana is great, there are several distinct challenges.

### **Scarce Resources**

Montana, like most of the nation, faces scarce resources when it comes to providing comprehensive services to those in need. MSLA is the only statewide civil legal aid provider in Montana. There is not adequate funding available to meet the current level of need, and competition for existing resources is strong. Utilizing and leveraging VLAN funds to improve access to services for crime victims is a positive step and will yield tangible results, but is not a total remedy to filling the gaps in services.

### **Partner Buy-In**

Montana Legal Services Association is working with the Montana Board of Crime Control and other Network Partner organizations, including the Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence and the Montana Department of Justice's Office for Consumer Protection and Victim Services, to conduct outreach for this project. However, the ultimate success of the project will depend on our prospective Phase 2 - Implementation Partners' ability and desire to support and participate in the project.

### **Sustainability**

As with all new projects, sustainability of the MT VLAN Project will rely on the projects' success, partner buy-in, and availability of resources in the future. The MT VLAN Steering Committee members are proactively addressing this need in hopes of securing the support and funding necessary to maintain the project.

### **Rural, Remote, and Frontier Regions**

Challenges exist in attempting to launch a statewide effort in Montana, the fourth largest state geographically, due to the sheer distance between our communities and service providers. Add in the rural (and often remote or frontier) nature of the state, and coordination of service provision becomes an even greater challenge. Harsh weather, lack of public transportation, inconsistent internet and phone coverage, and significant mileage will create challenges in implementing a successful statewide plan.

While these constraints must be acknowledged, it is the assumption and goal that this project will successfully improve access to services and increase collaboration among service providers, resulting in more victims receiving comprehensive services in the aftermath of a crime.

# NEEDS ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

## INTRODUCTION

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The Montana Board of Crime Control contracted with the University of Montana Criminology Research Group (CRG) to conduct a state-wide Needs Assessment of the civil legal services for victims of crime in Montana. The purpose of this research was to identify the strengths, weaknesses, gaps in services, and barriers to civil legal services in the state. The resulting Needs Assessment Report was used to develop this Implementation Plan.

The study sought to answer two central research questions:

- What are the civil legal needs of crime victims in Montana, and to what extent are these needs currently being met?
- What are the major barriers preventing victims from receiving civil legal services, and how can these barriers be overcome?

A summary of the methodology used in this research, the results of the research, and the recommendations drawn from these findings is provided below.

## METHODOLOGY

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In order to answer the research questions, CRG engaged in a mixed-methods approach consisting of two phases of research: a qualitative phase followed by a quantitative phase. The findings from the exploratory qualitative research shaped the surveys in the quantitative phase.

### Qualitative Phase

#### Focus Groups with Service Providers

- CRG conducted focus groups with 67 service providers in 7 communities across Montana, including two tribal communities.
- In these focus groups, participants discussed the resources available to crime victims in the community, the legal needs of these victims, and the barriers that victims face when addressing their civil legal issues.

#### Interview with Victims

- CRG conducted phone interviews with 24 crime victims.
- Victims were asked about their experiences following their victimization, including the problems that they faced, the services that they received, and the services that they needed but were unable to access.

## Quantitative Phase

### Service Provider Survey

- CRG conducted an online survey of 189 service providers.
- This survey focused on the needs of crime victims, barriers to services, inter-organizational collaboration, and civil legal services.

### Victim Survey

- CRG conducted an online survey with 36 crime victims.
- The survey examined the legal problems these individuals faced following their victimization and their experiences with civil legal services.

## FINDINGS

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The findings of the focus groups, interviews, and surveys revealed several important patterns involving the need for victim services and the barriers to civil legal services.

### **Need for Legal Services**

- The greatest civil legal needs of victims in Montana are in the areas of:
  - Family law (such as parenting plans, divorce or separation, and orders of protection)
  - Housing law (mainly landlord/tenant legal issues)
- Victims reported that their legal needs are not being met across all areas of civil legal issues.
- The need for legal assistance exceeds the available resources.
  - Victims often cannot retain an attorney.
  - Victims lack access to adequate self-help resources.
- Advocates are needed to help guide victims through complex legal processes.
- Many service providers need more education or resources related to tribal law.
  - Serving clients in tribal courts is a common form of jurisdictional issue in Montana.
  - Service providers and victims face challenges when dealing with the tribal court system.

### **Need for Non-Legal Services**

- The need for services related to mental and behavioral health was emphasized throughout this study. Service providers discussed the need for more mental health services, while victims discussed the deleterious effects that victimization had on their mental health.
- Some services facilitate access to other services. Two such services—transportation and child care—were discussed as unmet needs for victims of crime.
- In addition to the housing law needs mentioned above, housing and shelter were discussed by both service providers and victims as a need for some victims of crime.



## **Barriers to Legal Services**

- Organizations and Victims Face Financial Barriers
  - Victims often cannot afford legal representation and they may not qualify for free legal services based on restrictive eligibility requirements.
  - Budgetary limitations can force organizations to turn away victims seeking legal aid or put these individuals on long waitlists, and overburdened staff cannot adequately serve victims.
  
- Lack of Knowledge is a Barrier for Victims
  - Victims are often unaware of the legal services available, uncertain how to obtain these services, or unaware that they are eligible for these services.
  - Without assistance, victims of crime encounter significant difficulty navigating the court system. Currently available self-help resources are not an adequate solution for this lack of legal knowledge.
  - Victims want to know more about their rights as victims of crime.
  
- Victims Face Emotional Barriers
  - Lack of trust in the system, shame and embarrassment, and fear of retaliation by the offender are all critical barriers that may prevent a victim from reporting a crime or accessing services.
  
- Non-legal Needs of Victim are Not Being Met
  - Crime victims need mental and behavioral health services, transportation, child care, and housing. If these needs are not met, then they form significant barriers to addressing civil legal needs.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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Based upon these findings, CRG provided several recommendations for improving the delivery of civil legal services to crime victims in Montana.

### **Collaboration**

- Organizations must collaborate and interface with one another in order to meet all of the needs of their victim clients.
- Legal aid organizations need to be able to connect victims to providers who can give the non-legal services that they require.
- Non-legal service providers need to be able to effectively refer their clients to civil legal aid providers.

By collaborating with other service providers, civil legal organizations will be able to ensure that victims' non-legal needs are treated so that unmet needs do not form barriers to legal services. Organizations providing civil legal services to victims must help their clients access mental health services, housing, transportation, and child care.

### **Increase Awareness**

- Civil legal aid organizations need to increase public awareness of their services.
- Community outreach and advertising are needed to educate victims about the services that are available, who is eligible for these services, and how to access the services.

### **Increase Capacity**

- An increased number of attorneys who can provide free or low-cost services, with fewer eligibility requirements, are needed to address victims' largely unmet civil legal needs.
  - Most victims are not getting the legal assistance they require because they cannot afford an attorney or are unable to find an appropriate attorney and they are turned away from legal aid organizations.
  - Victims need legal assistance to navigate the civil legal system.
    - Without an attorney, victims face great difficulty addressing their civil legal issues.
    - Alternatives to legal representation—such as current self-help resources—are not sufficient replacements for a lawyer.
- It is also important to increase victims' access to advocates. Legal aid organizations should provide clients with advocates in order to most effectively meet the needs of crime victims.
  - Advocates can help victims effectively navigate aspects of the legal system and the sometimes complex processes of accessing other services.
  - Victims have very positive experiences with advocates, and there is a strong desire for advocates among victims who lack these services.
  - Victims will experience the best outcomes when they are being served by an attorney and advocate working together.

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Montana VLAN Implementation Plan was developed in response to the findings and recommendations identified in the Needs Assessment Report. The Needs Assessment Recommendations include (1) increased collaboration among legal aid and social service providers, (2) increased awareness of services among both crime victims and service providers, and (3) increased capacity – more attorneys and advocates to assist crime victims to better assist clients with both their legal and life needs. The Implementation Plan Objectives were developed to address the needs identified, and to meet each of these three recommendations.

### PROJECT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

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**The PROJECT GOAL** is to develop a comprehensive, collaborative network model for delivering holistic legal assistance services to crime victims to meet all legal needs that arise in connection with their victimization. This model will also attempt to focus on rural and remote geography including multiple Native American Tribes with culturally distinct crime victim needs.

The project objectives include:

- **Objective 1:** Provide crime victims with improved referrals and increased access to attorneys to assist with their civil legal issues and to provide wraparound legal services.
- **Objective 2:** Support service providers with: improved materials and resources; improved referral processes; increased access to attorneys to assist with their legal technical assistance needs; increased access to navigators and/or other social service providers to receive wraparound support services; and increased cross-training among service providers to provide wraparound services, legal advocacy, information, and referrals to the crime victims they serve.
- **Objective 3:** Implement policies and procedures to improve referrals and to increase crime victims' access to wraparound civil legal services within the Victim Legal Assistance Network.
- **Objective 4:** Conduct ongoing performance measurement and evaluation to gauge the impact and effectiveness of the Victim Legal Assistance Network and to identify strategies for improvement and for potential program replication.

## Objective 1

### Improve Referrals and Increase Access to Attorneys to Provide Wraparound Services

Montana Legal Services Association is the only statewide provider of general civil legal aid in Montana, and coordinates most of the state's *pro bono* volunteer attorney programs. Because MLSA is the core provider of these services, the MT VLAN Program is most logically centered within MLSA. Other specialized legal aid providers serve specific populations in Montana, such as veterans, seniors, or people with disabilities. MLSA will incorporate these programs into the MT VLAN Program. The overarching goal of MT VLAN is to improve access to civil legal aid for crime victims, and to connect providers throughout the state to improve collaboration.

In order to improve statewide collaboration and referral processes, increase training and awareness, and ultimately better meet the civil legal needs of crime victims, MLSA has created the Crime Victims Legal Assistance Practice Group, which will function as the **VLAN Team**. This group includes the two Crime Victim Attorneys, one Elder Justice AmeriCorps Attorney, one Crime Victim Navigator, and the MT VLAN Project Coordinator.

The **Crime Victim Attorneys** and the **Elder Justice AmeriCorps Attorney** will provide civil legal assistance to crime victims across the state, as well as education to service providers, stakeholders, and community members; the Elder Justice Attorney will focus exclusively on cases involving elder abuse, neglect, financial harm, or exploitation. (See Appendix E1 and E2 for the Crime Victim Attorney and Elder Justice Attorney job descriptions.) The Crime Victim Attorneys and Elder Law Fellow will provide direct emergency legal services including legal advice, brief services and representation for crime victims. They will develop partnerships with both legal and non-legal service providers throughout the state in order to improve referrals and collaboration.

The **Crime Victim Navigator** will work alongside the Crime Victim Attorneys, offering support, advocacy, information and referrals to victims, instituting a consistent human component to help guide victims through the relevant systems and processes related to their victimization. (See Appendix E3 for the Crime Victim Navigator job description.) Referrals will include placement of crime victim cases within MLSA's practice groups, externally with partnering organizations, and with volunteer *pro bono* attorneys when other alternatives are not available due to conflict of interest or capacity issues. These combined efforts will assist crime victims to stabilize, recover, and rebuild their lives.

To address complex legal issues, MLSA clients must first meet basic needs – which requires reliable information and informed referrals for needed services. Legal issues do not stand alone. Someone facing bankruptcy may also experience food insecurity or unstable housing.

Someone seeking a protective order may also need safety planning, emergency shelter, or counseling. Finding these services can be daunting. The Crime Victim Navigator will help victims identify and access the services they need in the wake of a crime.

The **VLAN Project Coordinator** will continue to support collaboration among the VLAN Team, Network Partners, and other service providers and stakeholders. The Coordinator will organize, coordinate, and provide support for the VLAN Team, Steering Committee, and Network Partners; maintain a formal structure for Network Partner participation; recruit new Network Partner agencies; and coordinate Cross-Training and Education/Outreach activities. The Coordinator will implement outreach and awareness strategies, assist with research on best practices on the issue areas identified as priorities through the Needs Assessment Report and Implementation Plan, provide ongoing support, and oversee project logistics. (See Appendix E4 for the Project Coordinator job description.)

The MT VLAN Team will partner both formally with **VLAN – Network Partner Organizations**, and informally with additional service providers throughout the state. The VLAN Team (MLSA’s Crime Victim Attorneys, Navigator, and Coordinator) will work with the Steering Committee to identify and invite organizations to become formal Network Partner Organizations. The VLAN Team and Network Partners will collaborate to establish a strong, comprehensive and collaborative network-wide information-sharing and referral process to aid victims in accessing services. They will also work together to develop strategies to provide holistic, wraparound services, utilizing existing resources rather than duplicating efforts, and drawing on the individual strengths and expertise of the organizations involved. These Network Partners will consist of organizations that provide legal or social services to crime victims in a variety of capacities. As the only statewide provider of free civil legal assistance in Montana, MLSA is uniquely qualified to bring together this Network and develop and coordinate efforts to provide holistic legal services to crime victims.

## **Objective 2**

### **Equip Service Providers with Cross Training, Resources, and Technical Assistance**

#### **Cross Training**

The MT VLAN project will bring cross-training opportunities to both formal and informal partners, increase awareness and understanding about the intersectional issues many crime victims face, strengthen relationships and collaboration among service providers, and improve referral processes among participating Network Partner agencies. Additionally, the Crime Victim Attorneys and Navigator will provide education on topics related to crime victim legal

assistance and remedies in the form of workshops, webinars, consultations or other venues to crime victims, service providers, community members, attorneys and judges upon request. Cross Training and educational events will use a variety of methods, including technology-enhanced web-based meetings and in-person training and outreach events. These events can also be recorded and shared widely when possible.

VLAN Partner Organizations will be invited to participate in, and to provide, cross-training workshops throughout the state, and will be encouraged to help raise awareness and conduct outreach regarding available services for crime victims.

### **Resource Development**

The Crime Victim Attorneys will provide advice and brief services to crime victims, technical assistance and guidance to service providers. The Crime Victim Attorneys and Navigator will also develop additional written (both paper copy and online) resources for crime victims and service providers to help navigate local, state, federal and tribal legal systems. These may include brochures, fact sheets, and legal forms in response to the identified needs of crime victims and the professionals serving them. The Program Coordinator and Intake Navigator will implement statewide communication and outreach plans to disseminate these materials.

### **Technical Assistance**

The VLAN Team, especially the Crime Victim Attorneys, will provide technical assistance to VLAN Partner Organizations. This will strengthen legal advocacy service programs for victims throughout Montana by providing access for victim service providers to expert consultation regarding civil legal issues faced by crime victims in Montana. The Crime Victim Attorneys will make available a critical service by providing legal information to victim advocates and other service providers whose clients do not receive direct legal services from MLSA or a private attorney due to the lack of available attorneys in remote rural areas, and the decrease of funding for direct legal assistance. The Crime Victim Attorneys will provide targeted consultation services to victim advocates, attorneys, and other professionals. This includes providing legal information, advice, best practice and strategy tips, and training.

### **Objective 3**

#### **Implement Policies and Procedures to Improve Referrals and Increase Wraparound Services**

Detailed policies and procedures outlining the roles and responsibilities of the MT VLAN Team and its formal Network Partners will be created and implemented. These will include written policies for MT VLAN and Network Partners regarding:

- Client eligibility criteria and points of entry (intake) processes;
- Referrals between MT VLAN and formal (MOU) Network Partner organizations;
- Referrals between MT VLAN and non-formal partnering (non-MOU) organizations;
- Sharing client information among MT VLAN and formal Network Partners;
- Referring conflict applicants from MT VLAN to partner organizations;
- Outreach and awareness activities alerting potential clients and service providers across the state of services provided by MT VLAN and partner agencies;
- Cross-Training and educational activities to increase understanding of civil legal issues and other areas related to the needs of crime victims;
- Materials and resource development activities to provide additional methods of providing legal information to crime victims and service providers statewide; and
- Data gathering and reporting.

Internally, MLSA will draft and implement written organizational policies and procedures for serving clients through MT VLAN, distinguishing this system from the operation of other MLSA practice groups.

#### **Objective 4**

##### **Conduct Ongoing Performance Measurement and Evaluation**

The Criminology Research Group (CRG) of the Fred W. Reed Social Science Research Lab at the University of Montana, led by Professor Jackson Bunch, will lead evaluation efforts, measuring the performance of the victim legal assistance network. Ongoing evaluation data will be gathered and compiled by the Project Coordinator in collaboration with members of the CRG. The CRG research will focus on measuring the performance of the victim legal assistance network. To accomplish this, Dr. Bunch and the CRG will gather a variety of data pertaining to the effectiveness of the network in carrying out its mission of delivering holistic legal services to victims of crime. This will involve examining the nature and the quality of the partnerships formed by the network and the effectiveness of these partnerships in serving victims. For example, this will include (but will not be limited to) gathering data regarding the partnerships formed; planning activities conducted; agency policies and procedures created, amended, or rescinded; groups participating in multi-jurisdictional linkages; agencies implementing best-practices; and the number of victims served through the partnership, as well as the type and nature of referrals.

In addition, the CRG will also gather a variety of data related to the goals and strategies discussed in the Implementation Plan. These data will be used to assess the overall effectiveness of the VLAN and the success of the particular approaches being employed. The

CRG will use this information to provide both formative evaluation during Phase 3—which can be used to inform any necessary adjustments during the implementation period—as well as summative evaluation at the end of Phase Three. The CRG will continue to meet with the Steering Committee to further develop program evaluation and performance measurement. The CRG will also assess other demonstration OVC Wraparound / VLAN sites currently in progress to determine the most successful approaches identified so far. This will serve to provide ongoing evaluation of the project during the implementation as well as evaluation of the MT VLAN at the end of Phase 3.

MLSA will also conduct an internal evaluation of the VLAN Project using a non-experimental mixed-methods approach, standard to all MLSA services provided. This approach incorporates formative and summative evaluations, and qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Formative evaluation will be employed to examine the program’s development, and to assist in improving its structure and implementation. Summative evaluation will be used to examine whether the project objectives were achieved. Both qualitative and quantitative methods will assure depth, scope, and the dependability of findings. Through the evaluation process, MLSA will seek to determine whether project goals and objectives were accomplished, and if project implementation is effective in producing the desired outcomes for crime victims.

MLSA will collect data through its computerized LegalServer case management system, MBCC’s statewide client data tracking system, and MLSA’s computerized accrual-based accounting system. With these systems, MLSA will track and report on information including the number of clients served; number of services provided; types of legal issues presented; geographic location; level of services provided; case outcomes; sources and number of referrals; and demographic characteristics including age, gender, nationality, ethnic origin, and disability. Existing community-level baseline data is largely contained in previous years’ information in the MBCC and LegalServer systems. MLSA will also collect data on client services through client satisfaction surveys distributed to all clients receiving services funded by this grant. These surveys are distributed in monthly batches for all cases closed during the previous month. Information from returned surveys is captured in LegalServer.

### **Focus on Services for Crime Victims within Tribal Communities**

Crime victim services have been a primary relationship builder between MLSA and reservation-based Tribal victim service providers through the beginning phases of the project. MLSA will further build on these relationships, with a goal of achieving Tribal buy-in for holistic legal services for all crime victims. During Phase 1, Steering Committee members established partnerships with Native American Tribal Governments through current relationships on all seven reservations in Montana. The VLAN will continue to seek input from these relationships,



including the Montana Native Women’s Coalition and other Tribal shelters and government agencies, to identify the best approach to provide holistic legal assistance to crime victims who are members of Montana’s Tribal communities. Implementation of Phase 3 of the Victim Legal Assistance Network will continue to increase and improve the resources available to Native American Crime Victims through provision of direct legal advice and services, as well as through development of Tribal court guides and forms (with assistance from MLSA), provision of technical assistance to Tribal social service providers, and offering educational opportunities to tribal community members and leaders. All Tribal resources will be created with the permission of the individual Tribes and Tribal court systems.

## **PROJECT LAUNCH, INFRASTRUCTURE, COMMUNICATION AND EXPANSION**

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### **Project Launch**

Implementation of MT VLAN will formally launch in mid-2018. The launch will benefit from the foundation that has already been laid by the Crime Victim Attorney, Elder Law Fellow, and Crime Victim Navigator who have been integrated into MLSA’s legal assistance model, serving clients with legal aid and advocacy, and have been making connections with potential partners throughout the state. Through this early work, organizations have been identified who may be prime partners to invite to participate as initial VLAN Partner Organizations. Relationships with Network Partners will be formalized with MOUs outlining roles, responsibilities, and benefits. This will mark the slow roll-out of the VLAN Project. Progress will be assessed and changes will be made as needed as new organizations are identified and invited to join the Network.

Early launch activities will include:

- Utilization of a “Book Me Now” button allowing Network Partner organizations to directly book intake appointments with the Crime Victim Navigator within MLSA, expediting the process to receive legal assistance;
- Formalization of referral and intake process among Network Partners;
- Formalization of policies regarding confidentiality and sharing client information among Network partners;
- Developing and scheduling initial cross-training events and activities;
- Developing an outreach and marketing plan to increase awareness of available services and victims’ rights;
- Create a list of printed and online resources to develop; begin creation of resources to assist both victims and service providers; and
- Alert Network Partner organizations of the Technical Assistance available to them from the Crime Victim Attorneys.

As the project grows, the MT VLAN Team and its partners will refine these processes; adapt as needed based on evaluation, feedback and performance measurement; recruit and onboard additional Network Partners; increase cross-training opportunities; and increase outreach.

### **Project Infrastructure**

As previously stated, policies and procedures will be implemented to guide the work of the VLAN Team and the Network Partners. These will outline policies and processes surrounding issues such as eligibility, client points of entry / intake, referrals, information sharing, conflicts of interest, confidentiality, data gathering and reporting, training, education, and outreach. The MT VLAN Team will include collaborative agreements with partner agencies.

See Appendix A for a pictorial layout of the current funding structure for the new MT VLAN Practice Group. The intent is to grow this project – including funding for additional staff as well as resources for partners – and to provide and refine holistic services for crime victims. The Project Coordinator will work to maintain existing funding and to develop new sources of support.

Appendix B provides a MT VLAN Client Navigation Flow Chart that outlines how applicants will move through the MT VLAN process. The central component of this process is the Victim Navigator position. The creation of this position will expedite the intake process, and will offer clients a central point of contact and support as they move through the various systems. From intake to closed cases, the goal is to make sure no one falls through the cracks and that everyone who is eligible receives at least some level of services. The VLAN Team and Network Partners will collaborate to improve referrals, information sharing, service delivery, outreach, and training efforts. Appendix C provides a Logic Model, and Appendix D shows a current anticipated timeline of activities. Key job descriptions are included in Appendix E. Appendix F provides various forms that will be used (or adapted) throughout this system by MLSA's VLAN Team and, if appropriate, the Network Partner organizations. The entire Needs Assessment Report is included as Appendix G.

Thorough evaluation, conducted by the CRG, will occur throughout the entire project to identify strength, gaps, and opportunities to expand and refine the Network.

### **Network Communication**

During Phase 1, the Steering Committee met bimonthly to discuss the Needs Assessment research and report. The Network Partners have provided feedback upon request. As the project moves to Phase 2, the Steering Committee will meet as needed to discuss overall project direction and evaluation efforts. The VLAN Team will meet with Implementation

Partners monthly via conference or video call as partners are located across the state. Updates, shared resources and training opportunities will be shared by the Project Coordinator as necessary. All Steering Committee members and Network Partners will have access to a shared online space where documents can be posted, edited, organized, and accessed.

### **Project / Network Expansion**

MBCC and MLSA are proactively thinking about the sustainability and expansion of the MT VLAN. After the Implementation Plan is launched and has been evaluated, the Steering Committee and Network Partners will determine the most beneficial course of continuation and expansion for the project. Potential expansion could lead to additional Crime Victim Attorneys and Navigators housed within MLSA and/or partner agencies, additional opportunities for cross training and education throughout the state, improved referral processes and procedures, or other solutions to improve services and systems for crime victims.

DOJ / OVC Vision 21 VLAN funding has already been leveraged with other funding sources to better serve crime victims. As stated, MLSA has already secured Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) and Elder Justice AmeriCorps funding to compliment the VLAN project. These funds will significantly bolster the VLAN project, increasing its collective impact to meet the needs and uphold the rights of crime victims statewide.

## **SUMMARY**

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Montana's Vision 21: Victim Legal Assistance Network Project provides an opportunity to assess – and address - the challenges and successes experienced by Montana crime victims when accessing legal services as they recover from their victimizations. Phase One identified and analyzed the gaps in legal services across the largely rural state of Montana, ultimately leading to the implementation of a collaborative, comprehensive network of legal services resulting in direct, focused, and improved support for all of Montana's victims of crime. Entering into the Pilot and Implementation Phase, the MT VLAN will launch and continue a plan for a model network that will deliver no-cost legal services holistically to crime victims in Montana. This will be accomplished through the work of Attorneys, a Navigator, and collaborating partners to serve crime victims statewide; cross-training and education for formal and informal project partners; material and resource development and dissemination; ongoing solicitation of feedback from Network Partners and stakeholders, and ongoing VLAN project coordination; and continued data collection, evaluation, research and performance measurement conducted by research partners at the University of Montana's Criminology Research Group.

MLSA anticipates that much of the information gathered during the Needs Assessment, and many strategies developed and implemented in Phases 2 and 3 will be easily adapted by other networks and tailored for other states' needs, particularly those with large rural and tribal communities. Because rural and Tribal communities nationwide often face similar issues, this project will benefit rural and remote communities across the country. MBCC, with help from its Tribal partners and counterparts, may create a replicable toolkit, available on the MBCC website to support this endeavor. These efforts will develop and implement a comprehensive, collaborative model for delivering wraparound legal services in Montana, to meet all legal needs that arise in connection with their victimization for crime victims.

## APPENDIX

- A. MT VLAN / MLSA Leveraged Funding for Collaboration to Serve Crime Victims
- B. MT VLAN Client Process Flow Chart
- C. Logic Model
- D. Timeline
- E. Job Descriptions
  - 1. Crime Victim Attorney job description
  - 2. Elder Justice AmeriCorps Legal Fellow job description
  - 3. Crime Victim Navigator job description
  - 4. MT VLAN Project Coordinator job description
- F. Forms & Documents
  - 1. Intake
  - 2. Release of Information
  - 3. Conflict Check
  - 4. MT VLAN Confidentiality Agreement
  - 5. MLSA Client Satisfaction Form
- G. Needs Assessment Report

**MT Victim Legal Assistance Network (VLAN) / Montana Legal Services Association  
Leveraged Funding for Collaboration to Assess, Improve, and Expand Legal Aid for Crime Victims**

**Vision 21  
Victim Legal Assistance Network\***

**Elder Justice  
AmeriCorps Program**

**VOCA Funding from MBCC**

VLAN Phase 1: Needs Assessment  
 - 7 Focus Groups with Service Providers with ~70 participants total  
 - 24 1-on-1 Phone Interviews with Crime Victims  
 - Online Surveys to Stakeholders and Crime Victims (still pending release)  
 Data gathered to identify gaps in service for crime victims, to develop a plan to improve, to provide holistic, collaborative service to crime victims in Montana.

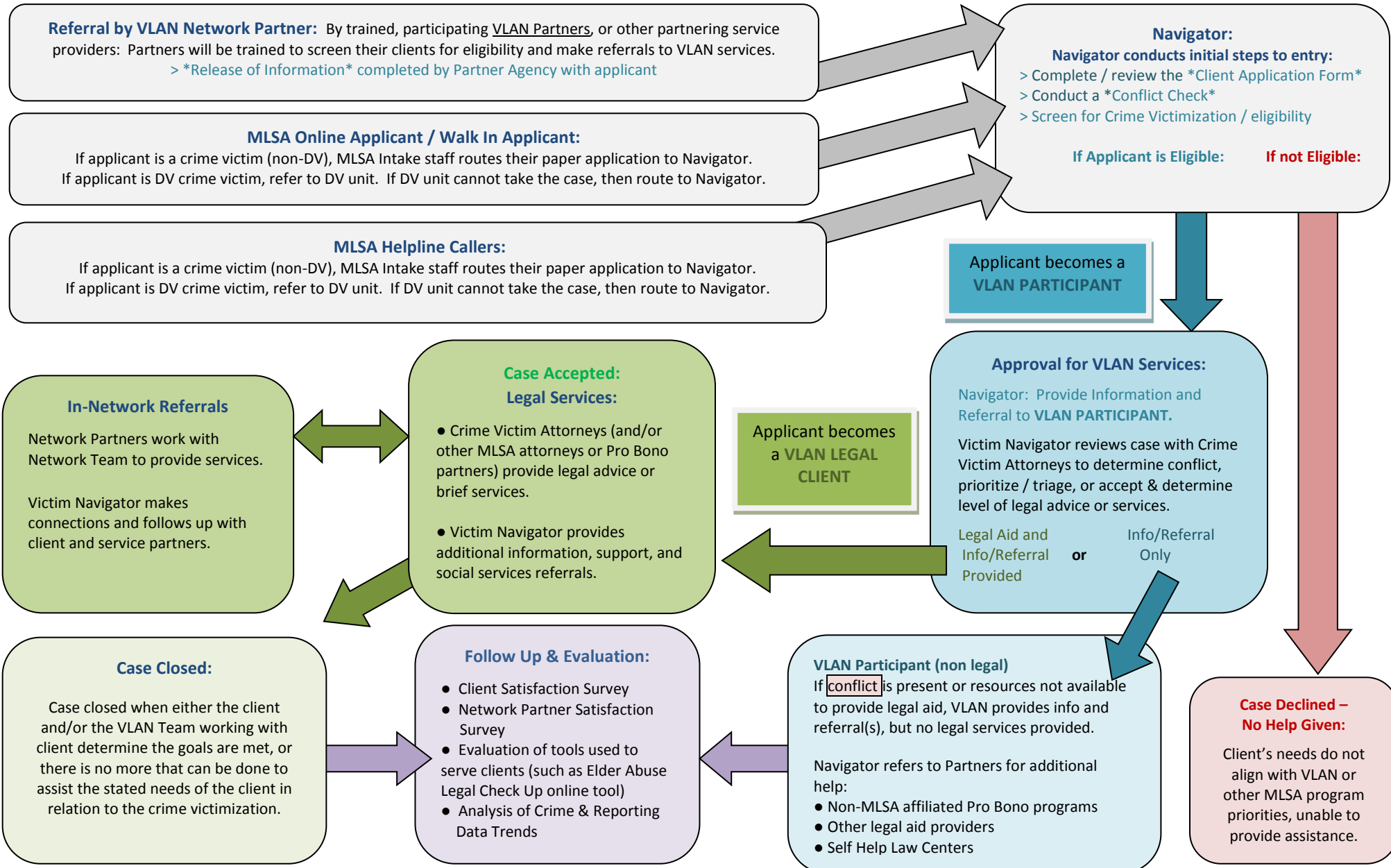
VLAN Phase 2: Launch and Implementation  
 1.5 FTE Crime Victim Attorney positions will be created at MLSA to work directly with crime victims and service providers, providing advice and brief representation. These attorneys and the VLAN Coordinator will work to build a stronger network for referrals and collaboration; increasing education and cross-training opportunities among crime victim service providers statewide.

1 FTE Elder Justice AmeriCorps Attorney and 2 Elder Justice Law School Interns will be hired by MLSA to provide direct legal aid to elders who are victims of crime, including elder abuse, neglect, exploitation, fraud, and other crimes. These Elder Justice members will work closely with the VLAN Team to provide holistic services to improve systems, outreach, referrals, and education opportunities statewide.

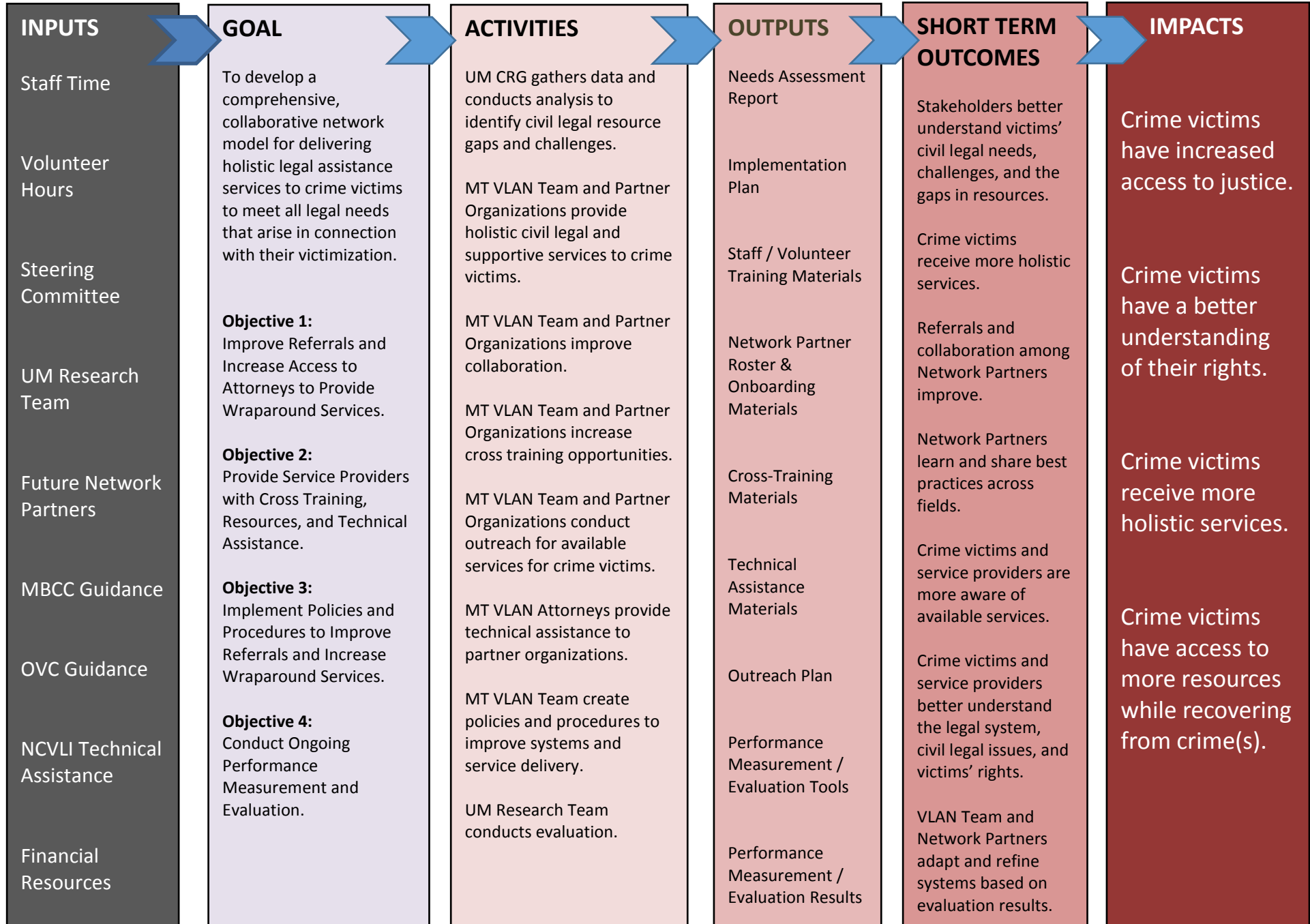
1 FTE Time Crime Victim Navigator and 0.5 FTE Crime Victim Attorney Positions will be created at MLSA to work directly with crime victims, providing holistic, collaborative legal services. These two new staff members will work alongside the VLAN project to improve systems, referrals, collaboration, education, and cross-training among service providers statewide in order to better serve crime victims.

These project partners will use the Needs Assessment data to better understand the nature of available services, identify gaps in services and limitations on resources that affect service delivery, improve collaborative efforts to meet crime victims' needs, and ultimately develop and launch and Implementation Plan to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of legal services for victims. This plan will inform the policies, procedures and protocols necessary to provide crime victims with appropriate services and referrals within the established Victim Legal Assistance Network.

# Montana Victim Legal Assistance Network (VLAN) Client Navigation Flow Chart



# MONTANA VICTIM LEGAL ASSISTANCE NETWORK LOGIC MODEL





## MT VLAN TIMELINE – Phases 1, 2, 3 and Beyond

RESEARCH TEAM	Nov 2016 – April 2017	April 2017	May 2017	June 2017	Phase 2: July 2017 – June 2018	Phase 3 and Beyond
<b>Phase 1 Research Activities</b>	Draft Needs Assessment Report	Final Needs Assessment Report				
<b>Phase 2 Research Activities</b>			Build Phase 2 Evaluation Tools	Begin Phase 2 Evaluation Methods	Ongoing Evaluation	Ongoing Evaluation
<b>MT VLAN TEAM</b>	Nov 2016 – April 2017	April 2017	May 2017	June 2017	Phase 2: July 2017 – June 2018	Phase 3 and Beyond
<b>Phase 1 Coordination Activities</b>	Draft Needs Assessment  Phase 1 Network Partner Input	Draft Implementation Plan  Phase 1 Network Partner Input	Final Implementation Plan			
<b>Phase 2 Planning and Coordination Activities</b>  <b>VOCA &amp; Elder Justice Funded Activities Linked to VLAN</b>	VOCA Navigator serves crime victims with info & referral  Elder Justice Attorney serves elder abuse clients  Onboard Crime Victim Attorney #1  Develop Crime Victim & Elder Abuse Client Info & Referral processes  Develop MLSA Client Intake, Referral, & Procedure Plans	Phase 2 Network Partner Outreach  VOCA Navigator, Elder Justice Attorney, and VLAN Crime Victim Attorney work as a team to serve clients	Phase 2 Plan for Cross Training  VOCA Navigator, Elder Justice Attorney, and VLAN Crime Victim Attorney work as a team to serve clients	Phase 2 Launch  Client Outreach Plan  Service Provider Education / Awareness Activities Plans  Phase 2 Network Partner MOUs  VOCA Navigator, Elder Justice Attorney, and VLAN Crime Victim Attorney work as MT VLAN Team to serve clients	Onboard Crime Victim Attorney #2  Begin Cross Training and Education Activities  Begin Phase 2 Network Partnership Referrals  Begin Phase 2 Network Partner Cross Training  Ongoing Outreach  MT VLAN Team collaborates with partners to serve clients	Refine and Expand Cross Training and Education Activities  Refine & Expand Network Partners Referrals  Ongoing Outreach  MT VLAN Team collaborates with partners to serve clients  Develop and implement sustainability plan to continue MT VLAN

## Appendix E1: Crime Victim Attorney Job Description

### **MONTANA LEGAL SERVICES ASSOCIATION**

**Position Title:** Crime Victim Staff Attorney

**Status:** Exempt

**Supervisor:** Supervising Attorney

**Location:** Missoula



The Crime Victim Staff Attorney will provide direct emergency legal services including legal advice, brief services for crime victims throughout the state of Montana.

### **Specific Duties**

- Interviewing, meeting with, and advising victims of crime with civil legal matters.
- Developing and maintaining specialized knowledge of the legal needs of crime victims.
- Providing services ranging from brief counsel and advice, to more extended representation on core legal issues affecting victims of crime.
- Composing correspondence, pleadings and other documents.
- Researching the law and preparing memoranda.
- Participating in MLSA's statewide initiatives and impact work, and implementing grant and contract requirements through casework.
- Develop legal resources for use by victims of crime, advocates and pro bono attorneys.
- Provide training on legal matters affecting victims of crime.
- Other duties as assigned by the Supervising Attorney.

### **Requirements**

- Law Degree and current license to practice law in Montana.
- Prior legal services experience preferred, particularly experience working with crime victims.
- A willingness to assume a varied case load.
- An understanding of the civil legal needs of crime victims, including the unique needs of populations that experience particular barriers to access to justice systems.
- Knowledge of substantive legal areas affecting crime victims.
- Ability to effectively communicate, to motivate others, and to work collaboratively with diverse groups of people with varying perspectives, and experience and expertise.
- Ability and willingness to learn and integrate new technologies and methodologies to efficiently perform responsibilities.
- A willingness to establish and maintain effective relationships with clients, the public, judges, court personnel and the bar.
- Ability and willingness to work cooperatively and collegially within a decentralized statewide law firm.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Excellent attention to detail.
- Ability to work independently in a deadline-oriented environment.
- A "can do" attitude and a willingness to pitch in where needed.
- Strong commitment to insuring equal access to justice.
- Proficient at the use of technology, including, but not limited to, word processing, spreadsheets, internet-based programs and computer-based legal research.
- Ability to travel within the state of Montana, occasionally overnight

**Position Title:** Elder Justice AmeriCorps Legal Fellow

**Location:** Helena



The Elder Justice Fellow will provide civil legal assistance to elder abuse victims across the state, as well as education to service providers, stakeholders, and community members. The Fellow will work as part of the MLSA Victim Rights Practice Group who will help provide holistic services to clients, offering support, advocacy, information and referral to victims of crime, instituting a consistent human component to help guide victims through the relevant systems and processes. These combined efforts will assist elder abuse victims to stabilize, recover, and rebuild their lives.

The Fellow will provide legal services ranging from brief counsel and advice, to more extended representation. The Fellow will also help provide more resources for elder abuse victims, caregivers, and pro bono attorneys by updating elder abuse information on MLSA's technology platforms, and by developing online and paper resources for elder abuse victims and service providers to help navigate local, state, federal, and tribal legal systems. The Fellow will assist in the development of a statewide outreach and communications plan to get the word out about the services available to victims of elder abuse. This position requires travel within Montana and attendance at the Equal Justice Works Leadership Development training and Elder Law training in Washington, D.C. on October 25-28, 2016. The preferred start date for this position is September 6, 2016, and no later than September 30, 2016.

#### **Specific Duties**

- Interview, meet with, advise and represent victims of elder abuse on civil legal matters.
- Compose correspondence, pleadings and other documents.
- Develop law related educational programs and materials directed to the client community or agencies regarding elder abuse issues, resources and legal remedies.
- Research the law and prepare memoranda.
- Handle all aspects of a client's legal matter, including preparing pleadings, negotiation, mediation and trial work.
- Develop and maintain specialized knowledge in the areas of law most relevant to elder abuse issues, including: fraud and financial scams; identity theft; financial or material exploitation; bankruptcy or other financial problems related to fraud and exploitation; property crimes, probate, estates, taxes; deception to gain power of attorney, conservatorship, payee or trustee status, or guardianship; and isolation, violence, sexual assault, neglect, and abandonment.
- Other duties as assigned by the Supervising Attorney or the Executive Director.

#### **Requirements**

- JD Degree with above average academic achievement.
- Licensed to practice in Montana, or able to take and pass the next Montana Bar exam.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills.
- Ability to travel, occasionally overnight.
- Ability to manage multiple tasks and work independently.
- The ability to undergo and pass AmeriCorps-mandated criminal background checks (only conviction for murder and/or presence on sex offender registry are automatic bars to service; other criminal convictions are allowable at MLSA's discretion).
- Creativity and willingness to take on challenging projects.
- Experience with using technology including document assembly, websites and video conferencing, preferred.
- Experience working with low income and/or elderly clients preferred.

## Appendix E3: Crime Victim Navigator Job Description



### **MONTANA LEGAL SERVICES ASSOCIATION**

**Position Title:** Crime Victim Navigator

**Status:** Non-Exempt

**Supervisor:** VLAN Project Coordinator

**Location:** Helena

The Navigator will offer support, advocacy, information and referral to victims, instituting a consistent human component to help guide victims through the various systems and processes related to their victimization. The Intake Navigator will refer cases as appropriate to the Crime Victim Staff Attorney and/or other MLSA advocates depending on the nature of the legal matter faced by the client.

### **Specific Duties**

- Answer incoming calls from victims of crime in Montana
- Conduct initial screening of all crime victim calls
- Determine if there is a legal aspect to a crime victim's problem and summarize the issue
- Open computer files for new clients and new cases
- Develop and maintain knowledge of, and strong working relationships with legal and social service agencies that provide services to victims of crime and make appropriate referrals and collaborate as needed.
- Input data from on-line or paper applications
- Scan and upload applications and client documents to MLSA's case management system
- Maintain calendars in the case management system and scheduling advice appointments with the Crime Victim Staff Attorney and other MLSA advocates as appropriate
- Responsible for other duties as assigned

### **Requirements**

- Associate's Degree, or equivalent educational experience
- Excellent oral and written communications skills
- Good listening skills
- Strong interpersonal and verbal skills
- Capacity to learn and adapt
- High degree of computer data entry proficiency and accuracy
- Ability to travel, occasionally overnight
- A commitment to providing high quality legal assistance to crime victims in Montana
- Ability and willingness to work cooperatively and collegially within a decentralized statewide law firm
- Proficient at the use of technology, including, but not limited to, word processing, spreadsheets, internet-based programs and computer-based legal research
- Willingness to learn and further develop technology skills and abilities
- Dependability, initiative and motivation and concern for the interests of the crime victims

**MONTANA LEGAL SERVICES ASSOCIATION**

**Position Title:** Project Coordinator

**Status:** 1.0 FTE, Exempt

**Location:** Missoula, Montana



The Project Coordinator for the Montana Crime Victims Legal Assistance Network will oversee the creation of a holistic model for providing wraparound no-cost legal assistance to meet the legal needs of victims of crimes. Project will include coordination of multiple network partners providing services to victims of crimes throughout the state of Montana. Together, the Network Partners and University of Montana research partner will design a detailed plan for providing victims with needed legal services and referrals. This position is for the duration of the 18-month project grant, with additional funding possible.

**Specific Duties**

- Develop knowledge & understanding of Network Partners and the services they provide to victims.
- Assist network partners with coordinating efforts to represent victims in legal matters and/or proceedings.
- Coordinate research partner and Network Partners.
- Coordinate project communications with Network Partners, internally, and with the community.
- Organize and coordinate agenda for Network Partner meetings.
- Organize and coordinate statewide focus group and survey meetings.
- Provide administrative support for the program including budget management and reporting.
- Assist with project research tasks.
- Coordinate and contribute to project report writing.
- Complete monthly and other required financial reports and other required grant reports.
- Maintain strong relationships with Network Partners and research partner.
- Conduct outreach to crime victims and community regarding project and services available.
- Complete other duties as assigned.

**Minimum Qualifications**

- Five years of experience in project management or similar is preferred.
- Knowledge of the legal system, demonstrated through education or professional experience.
- Experience that provides an understanding of the needs and challenges arising out of crime victimization, including the particular challenges of individuals and communities that face barriers to access to services.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills.
- Ability to work productively in a fast-paced environment with multiple timelines.
- Ability to organize, prioritize and manage multiple activities and tasks.
- Knowledge and proficiency in utilizing computer software such as MS Excel, MS Word/Works, computer-based research, internet-based project management programs, etc.
- Ability to use technologies to communicate with colleagues and victims in rural and remote locations.
- Ability to work cooperatively and collegially as a team member within a decentralized statewide law firm.
- Self-motivated and dependable.
- Ability to work independently with a high degree of accuracy and attention to detail
- Ability to supervise personnel and manage projects
- Ability to travel, occasionally overnight
- A commitment to providing high quality legal assistance to crime victims
- Willingness to learn and further develop technology skills and abilities
- Ability to interface well with the public



## Montana Legal Services Association Application for Assistance

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Complete the application to the best of your ability. All the information you provide in this application is strictly confidential.

### **What type of problem do you need help with?**

- |  |   |  |                                      |
|--|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Garnishment           | <input type="checkbox"/> Eviction                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Custody             | <input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collection Lawsuit    | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing Subsidy/Voucher    | <input type="checkbox"/> Divorce             | <input type="checkbox"/> TANF        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collection Harassment | <input type="checkbox"/> Return of Security Deposit | <input type="checkbox"/> Order of Protection | <input type="checkbox"/> Food Stamps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Repossession          | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Home Issues         | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____         | <input type="checkbox"/> Employment  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tax issues            |   |  |                                      |

### **Applicant Information:**

First name: \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Initial: \_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Other names you have gone by: \_\_\_\_\_

SSN: XXX – XX - \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ (last 4 digits only)

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Party Information:** Provide the following information about the other person, agency, or business in your case. For example, in a divorce that person would be your spouse. For custody, that would be another parent or guardian. For housing, it would be your landlord. If you've had funds taken from your bank account, it would be the financial institution and the creditor who took your money.

Full name of person, agency or business:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other names the other party has gone by:  
\_\_\_\_\_

City and State: \_\_\_\_\_

Other party SSN: XXX-XX-\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_

Other Party DOB: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Are you a citizen of the United States?  Yes  No

Attestation:

I am a citizen of the United States

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Applicant Contact Information:**

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Number MLSA can reach you during the day: Area code: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Another phone number to reach you at: Area code: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate best time to call you back: \_\_\_\_\_

Is it safe to contact you using the phone number(s) / address above?  Yes  No

Do you need an Interpreter?  Yes  No What language? \_\_\_\_\_

Within the last 12 months, have you or anyone else in your household received any income from agricultural work? (Agriculture includes working on farms, apiaries [bees], nurseries, forestry, ranching, and/or processing or transporting agricultural products.)  Yes  No

**Hearings and Deadlines:**

- Have you been served with court documents?  Yes  No

If yes, what date were you served with papers? \_\_\_\_\_

- Are there any deadlines that you know of?  Yes  No

If yes, what is the deadline? \_\_\_\_\_

- Is there a hearing scheduled?  Yes  No

If yes, what is the date and time of the hearing? \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:** Please do not include any detail about your legal issue. We will contact you by phone to get those details. If we cannot assist you because of ethical rules that apply to all law firms, we will return to you any confidential information you have provided to us.

# Montana Legal Services Association



*Provide, protect and enhance access to justice.*

Montana Legal Services Association  
616 Helena Avenue, Suite 100  
Helena, MT 59601

Phone: (406) 442-9830  
Fax: (406) 442-9817  
Toll Free: (800) 666-6124

## AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE INFORMATION

I, \_\_\_\_\_, the undersigned, hereby request the  
Montana Legal Services Association (MLSA) to release to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, the contents of any and all documents in its possession, including  
but not limited to notes, contracts, agreements, applications, reports and other papers  
pertaining to

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

You may also orally discuss my situation freely with employees of MLSA.

Facsimile, photostatic, carbon or other copy of this authorization shall be treated as an  
original.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



Appendix F3: MLSA Conflict Check Form



MT VLAN & Partner Organization Conflict Check Form

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Referral Source: \_\_\_\_\_

Referring To: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Adverse Party Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Adverse Party Relationship to Victim: \_\_\_\_\_

Adverse Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

## Montana Victim Legal Assistance Network (MT VLAN)



### CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT



I, \_\_\_\_\_, a \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name) (Title/volunteer capacity within MLSA)

with the **MONTANA LEGAL SERVICES ASSOCIATION (MLSA)**, understand that as a MT VLAN Network Partner and/or volunteer with MLSA I may have access to confidential client information. I agree that I am bound by the confidentiality requirements imposed on lawyers by the Montana Rules of Professional Conduct, especially Rule 1.6, a copy of which is attached. I acknowledge receipt of that copy and that I have read Rule 1.6. I know I am required to keep all information I have about a client's case confidential and that I may not reveal any information relating to a client's case, except as authorized by a lawyer in the office, in accordance with Rule 1.6.

**D**ated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(SIGNATURE)

ORIGINAL TO BE PLACED IN MLSA / MT VLAN RECORDS

## **Montana Rules of Professional Conduct**

### **RULE 1.6 Confidentiality of Information**

a) A lawyer shall not reveal information relating to representation of a client unless the client consents after consultation, except for disclosures that are impliedly authorized in order to carry out the representation, and except as stated in paragraph (b).

(b) A lawyer may reveal such information to the extent the lawyer reasonably believes necessary:

(1) to prevent the client from committing a criminal act that the lawyer believes is likely to result in imminent death or substantial bodily harm; or

(2) to establish a claim or defense on behalf of the lawyer in a controversy between the lawyer and the client, to establish a defense to a criminal charge or civil claim against the lawyer based upon conduct in which the client was involved, or to respond to allegations in any proceeding concerning the lawyer's representation of the client.

Appendix F5: MSLA Client Satisfaction Form

Dear Client:

According to our records, your case at Montana Legal Services ended after we gave you some legal advice. Many people who get legal advice would have liked a lawyer to represent them in court. Because of the huge demand for our services, we cannot provide a lawyer to everyone who requests it. We know this can be disappointing. We wish we had enough lawyers to help everyone who qualifies and needs our help.

We would like to know what you think about the quality of the advice we provided you. Your opinion will help improve our services for future clients. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions. After you've done the survey, simply mail it in the enclosed envelope. No postage is needed.

Thank you for telling us what you think about our services.

Yours truly,

Alison L. Paul  
Executive Director



15-0121170

**Client Satisfaction Survey**

1. What was the main issue that you asked MSLA to help with?

- Family Law
- Housing (Landlord-Tenant)
- Consumer or Debtor-Creditor
- Public Benefits (SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, Medicare)
- Other (please write in):

\_\_\_\_\_

2. The help I received from MSLA helped me in the following ways: (Check all that apply.)

- Helped me feel safer or gave me peace of mind
- Helped me reduce a debt
- Helped me save my home from foreclosure
- Helped me understand my rights
- Helped me get or keep rental housing
- Helped me understand the legal system
- Helped me have more time to find new housing
- Helped me know what to do next
- Helped me take action that improved my situation
- Gave me a helpful referral
- Helped me get or keep income, benefits or medical care
- Was not helpful

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Appendix F5: MSLA Client Satisfaction Form, Continued)

3. Did you understand the legal advice and information given you?

Yes  No  Partly  I don't know

4. Do you feel the advice you received from MLSA helped you understand your legal rights and what you could do to resolve your legal issue?

Yes  No  Partly  I don't know

5. If MLSA gave you advice about what you could do on your own, did you do it?

Yes  No  Partly  I don't know

6. If you did follow MLSA's advice, what happened?

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7. If you did not follow MLSA's advice, what happened? (check all that apply)

I didn't do anything because I didn't understand what to do, or it was too hard.

Something changed, and I didn't need to act anymore.

I needed a lawyer to represent me.

I changed my mind.

I got help from someone else.

Other (please write in): \_\_\_\_\_

8. Do you feel more prepared to handle your legal situation?

Yes  No  Partly  I don't know

Please tell us how or why: \_\_\_\_\_

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9. Overall, how would you describe your experience with MLSA?

Very good  Good  Fair  Not good  Really bad

10. How could MLSA's services to you have been improved?

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