

## LIAISON REPORT

**AGENCY:** ACCESS .....**LIAISONS:** Kris Peters, Colton Kreber, and Allen Wang

**1. Need for Program.** Describe who the target population is and whether their numbers are increasing or decreasing. Indicate the source of this information. Also, indicate how the program/service is different and how it is similar to others and what would happen if the program/service ceased to exist. List the priorities established by ASSET Funders, which the programming addresses. The mission of ACCESS is to address the roots and impact of domestic and sexual violence through services that enhance safety, empower survivors, and promote understanding and social justice within our community.

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### **They provide:**

- 24-hour Crisis Line: Listening, support, information and advocacy
- Shelter: Safe, temporary housing for women and their children.
- Children's Programs: Counseling, advocacy, outings, and play groups.
- Individual Counseling: Short-term counseling to adult survivors of child sexual abuse, sexual assault, or domestic violence or dating violence.
- Support Groups: Support groups for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and children who have experienced or witnessed family violence.
- Advocacy: Support, information and referrals for clients working with the legal, medical, or social service systems.
- Community Education: Educational programming to schools, community groups, organizations and agencies.
- Crisis Response Services
- SART (Story County Sexual Assault Response Team): Crisis support and on-going advocacy.

ACCESS is one of the few entities to provide both shelter (housing) and emergency services for sexual and domestic assault. They meet the funder's requirements for crisis intervention, assistance to low and moderate income families, safety, health, and well-being to children and adults, and programs and services that promote personal safety with regards to violence and substance abuse, both in Ames and Story County.

**As part of their sexual abuse services,** ACCESS provides FREE and CONFIDENTIAL support to victims of sexual violence. ACCESS understands that an experience of sexual violence is highly personal. Therefore, any victim may want to take time considering all options for service, and make the choices that best meet her/his comfort level.

- Our 24-hour crisis line 1-800-203-3488; for a victim, friend, family or support to reach an advocate to discuss safety and support needs.

- Response: In-person, 24/7 response to victim in need, such as when reporting sexual violence to law enforcement or a medical provider, or to another location where a victim is seeking help.
- Criminal Justice Advocacy: support to a victim as she/he reports a crime, or is involved in later proceedings relating to the crime such as meetings with attorneys or court hearings.
- Systems Advocacy: assistance to a victim in seeking help from, or explaining needs to systems such as a workplace, to a medical or counseling provider, or to a school/ university.
- Community education and training; to help all community members engage in the fight against sexual violence and to enhance community member's and professional's skills to increase protections for victims.

#### Sexual Abuse Counseling:

An advocate can provide counseling to assist a survivor of sexual violence in recognizing the impact of abuse, to identify the strength that she/he had in surviving this abuse, and to recognize resources that can be utilized for long term healing. We strive to increase a survivor's own capacity to heal in whatever way she/he feels is most beneficial. Whenever possible, ACCESS strives to connect a survivor to a long-term specialized resource such as a counselor or therapist. In addition, we hope to help a survivor build informal supports in her/his own life. We can provide education and support to family members, friends, neighbors, or supports within a faith community.

All services to victims of sexual violence are voluntary. The goal of ACCESS is to help a survivor decide what course of actions she/he is ready to take, to prepare for these steps through education and support, and empowerment.

**As part of their domestic violence services,** ACCESS provides FREE and CONFIDENTIAL support to victims of domestic violence. This includes:

- Our 24-hour crisis line 1-855-983-4641; for a victim, friend, family or support to reach an advocate to discuss options for immediate safety or wellbeing.
- Housing advocacy: help in assessing a victim's current living situation, and making a plan for safety relating to where that victim lives. This may mean seeking funds for rent assistance so that a victim can stay in her/his own home, assistance in relocating to a safer place, or financial counseling to help a victim organize her/his resources to increase stability.
- Response: In-person, 24/7 response to victim in need, such as when reporting domestic violence to law enforcement or a medical provider, or to another location where a victim is seeking help.
- Civil Legal Advocacy: support and education in civil legal cases such filing an order of protection or pursuing custody for the protection children.

- Criminal Justice Advocacy: support to a victim as she/he reports a crime, or is involved in later proceedings relating to the crime such as meetings with attorneys or court hearings.
- Systems Advocacy: assistance to a victim in seeking help from, or explaining needs to, systems such as the Department of Human Services, schools, workplaces, or counseling providers.
- Community education and training; to help all community members engage in the fight against domestic violence and to enhance community member's and professional's skills to increase protections for victims.

#### Domestic Abuse Counseling:

An advocate can provide counseling to assist a survivor of domestic violence in recognizing the impact of abuse, in identifying the strength that she/he had in surviving this abuse, and to recognize resources that can be utilized for long term healing and growth. Whenever possible, ACCESS strives to connect a survivor to a long-term specialized resource such as a counselor or therapist. In addition, or instead, we hope to help a survivor build informal supports in her/his own life. We can provide education and support to family members, friends, neighbors, or supports in a faith community.

All services to victims of domestic abuse are voluntary. The goal of ACCESS is to help a survivor decide what course of actions she/he is ready to take, to prepare for these steps through education and support, and empowerment.

**As part of their domestic violence services,** ACCESS operates scattered-site emergency sheltering in Ames. This shelter primarily serves Story County, with open spaces also available to any victim in need. An individual in need is encouraged to call to discuss the need for shelter. If a victim is looking for shelter from another area outside of ACCESS' service area, we encourage that person to be in touch with the shelter or domestic violence program in your area to best assess all options and coordinate services. To find your local program, visit [www.iowavictimservices.org](http://www.iowavictimservices.org).

Our shelter is designed to alleviate the immediate housing needs associated with fleeing domestic violence, sexual assault, or other forms of violence. An individual or family entering shelter is provided with basic needs like food, clothing, personal hygiene products, and other items to help them feel comfortable. A shelter resident is offered assistance in seeking immediate and long-term safety, processing the violence, and case management centered around finding the next best stable housing option.

All services are free and confidential.

**2. Program Strengths.** Pick two to four factors that contribute most importantly to the program/service outcomes. Do not list everything that is satisfactory. We will assume that things not mentioned are okay. For each strength, describe some supporting evidence.

- A. ACCESS was able to transfer from a single site shelter to scattered-site housing allowing them to put clients into housing that will allow them to more easily work back into a traditional living situation and provides for use of federal funding monies that prefers the scattered-site model.
- B. They were also able to procure a public office space that is separate from the shelter that allows for more visibility to the general population.
- C. There is a strong, dedicated, and experienced group of staff and volunteers that understands working w/ people in crisis. Training for the Housing Case Management staff is ongoing.
- D. They have a good response team and process for those who have experienced sexual assault both in the community and university, and have a good process set up to work with all parties involved, and are focused on what is best for the client.
- E. A good collaboration with Iowa State University continues and a staff member will be sitting on campus this year as part of the service. ACCESS maintains an office in the ISU campus in the Armory building and offers two –days a week with the women’s health clinic on campus.
- F. New ACCESS office located on Clark Avenue. This office houses outreach, etc. and serves as a face for ACCESS in the community.

**3. Program Weaknesses.** Select factors that detract most from the program/service achieving its outcomes. Present details as described above. Recommendations for reducing these weaknesses should follow the discussion of each weakness.

- A. With the new scattered site model there are still some growing pains and learning how to do it effectively and cost efficiently but they are working through the issues as they arise and have developed good partnerships as they go.
- B. They are working to catch up with fundraising after the changes that occurred last year and will be able to put more emphasis on that this year.
- C. There has been some board turnover and would like to look for some diversity in board members. They have a lot of ISU faculty and staff but would like board members from other industries.

**4. Financial Outlook.** Current funding concerns should be described. In addition, the assessment of the program's plan to cope with shrinking resources should be given.

The agency continues to become more financially stable and learn how to adapt to the changing resources. They have been able to work not only with ASSET funders, but have found other sources of revenue to maintain all of their programs.

**5. Internal Management Practices.** Summarize your assessment of the management of the agency, and the role of the Board. If there are deficiencies, details should be provided. Conclude with recommendations when appropriate.

ACCESS has a strong and experienced Executive Director that has a good relationship with staff, volunteers, and board. They are continually trying new things and exploring new avenues to make the agency successful. The entire staff is committed to ACCESS and is demonstrated by the time commitment and effort they make towards the agency.

**6. Agency Suggestions/Comments.** Make note of any suggestions, comments or questions agencies may have with regard to the ASSET process, budget forms and or anything else that relates to the process.

ACCESS seems to be doing an excellent job of meeting its core objectives through strong Board involvement; a more experienced and dedicated staff, good relationships with partnering agencies, and effective processes. The staff continues to demonstrate a resilience and goodwill that enables them to move forward in identifying and meeting the needs of those they provide services and programming too.