

# AUSTIN/TRAVIS COUNTY INTERAGENCY SEXUAL ASSAULT TEAM

## Memorandum of Understanding *Revised 11-03-20*

### MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is an agreement among the primary Austin/Travis County agencies that address and respond to adult sexual assault. The agencies entering into this MOU agree to form the **Austin/Travis County Interagency Sexual Assault Team (ISAT)**. ISAT will function as a community response team committed to a collaborative effort across law enforcement, prosecution, probation, evidence collection, and services for victims/survivors of sexual assault. This document does not create any contractual rights or obligations on the part of any signatory or on behalf of any third party.

#### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Austin/Travis County Interagency Sexual Assault Team is to increase the effectiveness of this community's systemic response, investigation and prosecution of adult sexual assault cases through a collaborative effort that embodies the Team's guiding principles.

#### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- **Honor, Respect & Collaboration:** working together in a courteous and professional manner and treating each other with decency and dignity by recognizing the value of the partnership;
- **Honesty, Empathy & Responsibility:** being truthful and forthright in our thoughts and words, responsive to individual and community needs and responsible for our actions; and
- **Integrity, Commitment & Justice:** maintaining a steadfast resolve and dedication to succeed by doing the right thing for the right reasons to support victim/survivor safety and offender accountability.

#### STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES

Strategic activities of ISAT include but are not limited to:

- Understanding and assessing current relevant policies and practices of individual ISAT agencies;
- Establishing and maintaining a process for reviewing ISAT policies and procedures as well as sexual assault cases and trends;
- Identifying gaps in and making recommended solutions to our systemic response to victims/survivors of sexual assault;

- Identifying and implementing trauma-informed, victim-centered, best practice strategies to improve the documentation, investigation, prosecution, and services provided to sexual assault victims/survivors;
- Pinpointing additional or identifying and securing new resources to enhance local sexual assault responses, including investigation, prosecution, notification and service delivery to victims/survivors;
- Identifying interdisciplinary training needs as well as developing and providing training;
- Reaching a common understanding of definitions and terms;
- Collecting, analyzing and evaluating data; and
- Making accurate and timely reports to the community on ISAT's systemic response to adult sexual assault.

## MEMBERSHIP

The Austin/Travis County Interagency Sexual Assault Team is made up of entities that have jurisdiction in Travis County and statutory responsibilities in regard to investigation, forensic evidence collection, and prosecution of adult sexual assault. This includes the following types of agencies:

### Law Enforcement

Any law enforcement agency in Travis County may be a member of the Austin/Travis County Interagency Sexual Assault Team (see signatory page/s for complete list of members).

Law enforcement agencies gather and preserve evidence to help ensure a prosecutable criminal case. This includes interviewing and taking statements of witnesses and suspects, evidence collection, evidence testing, crime scene preservation and the preparation and execution of search and arrest warrants.

### Victim Services within Law Enforcement

Departments that have a dedicated victim services unit or division are in a unique position, operating from within law enforcement and often serving as the crime victim's first point of contact. The counselors work in tandem with sworn personnel responding to violent crime incidents. Direct services, focused on trauma-informed care, include crisis intervention, counseling, personal advocacy, and information and referrals to help victims, survivors and their families recover more quickly and completely from the effects of victimization.

### Sexual Assault Forensic Exams

The SAFE Alliance is a non-profit organization that provides acute medical forensic examinations and sexual assault advocacy at the SAFE forensic clinic and in area hospitals for the purpose of gathering and preserving evidence and supporting survivors in the aftermath of a sexual assault.

The Brave Alliance provides medical forensic examinations at the Brave Alliance clinic and in area hospitals for the purpose of gathering and preserving evidence for survivors with a victim-centered approach to sexually and physically assaulted patients and by collaborating with the community and bridging the gap between the medical and legal processes.

#### Probation and Pre-Trial Services

Travis County Community Justice Services provides pre-trial release services as well as providing treatment and post-sentencing services (while under probation) for persons arrested for Class B misdemeanor and higher offenses. They enhance community safety and offender accountability by helping their clients live a productive life through the balanced use of supervision and therapeutic interventions driven by validated assessments. They interview for personal bond applications and pre-sentence investigations. They also update victims with legal actions and help collect restitution for victims through the collection of court-mandated fees and services.

#### Prosecution

The Travis County District Attorney's Office prosecutes all felony criminal cases of sexual assault. The primary statutory mandate of the District Attorney is to see that justice is done.

Responsibilities include: partnering with the law enforcement agencies in Travis County by providing prompt and comprehensive legal advice regarding criminal investigations of sexual assault on a 24-hour basis; assisting law enforcement with all aspects of criminal investigations, including assistance with grand jury subpoenas, search warrants and charging decisions, facilitating the coordination of investigations, reviewing all criminal sexual assault cases for presentation to the grand jury, closure and return for further investigation; and prosecuting sexual assault cases in district court to disposition.

The Travis County Attorney's Office prosecutes the offense of Indecent Assault, misdemeanor cases involving or related to sexual assault. The primary mandate of the County Attorney is to see that justice is done. The County Attorney's office provides legal advice and guidance to law enforcement officers who are investigating Indecent Assault cases and often collaborates with the District Attorney's Office to ensure that appropriate charges are filed. The County Attorney is responsible for prosecuting Indecent Assault cases to disposition in the County Courts at Law.

#### Victim Services within Prosecution

The DA's Office also includes Victim/Witness Counselors that provide victim services to assist victims during the prosecution process including, but not limited to, immediate crisis intervention counseling, information and referral for services, assistance with Crime Victim's Compensation and VINE, and criminal justice system advocacy and support.

The County Attorney's Office also includes Victim/Witness Counselors that provide victim services to assist victims during the prosecution process including, but not limited to, victim

support and counseling, information and referral for services, assistance with Crime Victim's Compensation and VINE, and criminal justice system advocacy and support.

### Survivor Advocacy and Services

The SAFE Alliance provides support and advocacy for survivors following a sexual assault regardless of their participation in the legal system. SAFE provides crisis intervention, counseling, legal services, emergency shelter, referrals and assistance with Crime Victims Compensation applications.

## **TEAM GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURE**

### **Executive Committee**

The Austin/Travis County Interagency Sexual Assault Team is established and governed by an Executive Committee composed of the executive leaders or their designated representative of any organization who are signatories of the ISAT MOU. The Committee will, at a minimum, address the following issues:

The Committee will, at a minimum, address the following issues:

- 1) The membership of the Executive Committee and the ISAT as a whole;
- 2) The selection of a Chair to serve as convener, responsible for setting agendas, and presiding over Executive Committee meetings;
- 3) The selection of other officers necessary for governance;
- 4) The development, approval, and adoption of written policies and procedures to guide and inform the duties of the working ISAT and the ISAT's collaborative operations;
- 5) The development, approval, and adoption of specific goals and objectives to strengthen the mission of the ISAT;
- 6) The development, approval, and adoption of written performance measures to assess the impacts, challenges and successes of ISAT;
- 7) The preparation and distribution of minutes; and
- 8) The time and place of Executive Committee and ISAT meetings.

Any media or open records request regarding the work of the ISAT received by any Team member should be referred to the Chair of the Executive Committee. See ISAT policies and protocols for additional information.

### **Team**

Each member organization of ISAT can appoint Team Member(s) who represent their organization. Members can include managers who oversee sexual assault investigation, prosecution, evidence collection, and victim/survivor services as well as persons providing these direct services. Team membership is flexible to allow for the appropriate staff to be present to address specific agenda items in meetings.

The Executive Committee will designate Team meeting leadership and how staff support for Team meetings will be provided. The Team leadership will report to the Executive Committee matters discussed at Team meetings, issues for which the Team seeks Executive guidance, and recommendations developed by the Team through a consensus building process.

#### **Other Stakeholders/Subject Matter Experts**

The Team may engage other stakeholders that have content knowledge or resources specific to an agenda item or Team/ISAT project. The stakeholders will generally participate in discussions during designated times and abide by all ISAT policies and protocols. If the stakeholder/subject matter expert is participating in a sensitive conversation/project within ISAT, the ISAT Executive Committee Chair and/or the Executive Committee (as decided by the Chair) will approve their participation and an agreement of confidentiality should be signed by the stakeholder/subject matter expert prior to that ISAT meeting/activity.

#### **SIGNATORY RESPONSIBILITIES**

All State and Federal confidentiality laws will be followed in connection with this agreement. ISAT agrees to abide by confidentiality protocols to ensure the integrity of ISAT and the privacy of victims/survivors. See ISAT policies and protocols for additional information.

Each entity signing this agreement is a full member of the Austin/Travis County Interagency Sexual Assault Team. The members recognize that the interests of sexual assault victims/survivors and the community are best served when investigations, prosecutions, and services are coordinated and when agencies collaborate in a way that is mutually supportive. Each member accepts and supports the value of the role and contribution of every other member and agrees to support the collaborative effort. This includes the commitment of resources to ISAT and the sharing of information to the extent allowed by law. Each member commits to an ongoing assessment of the collaborative effort.

Participation in the ISAT can be terminated by any party without cause by giving written notice to the other parties.

**THE UNDERSIGNED AGREE TO THE TERMS OF THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR THE  
AUSTIN/TRAVIS COUNTY INTERAGENCY SEXUAL ASSAULT TEAM:**

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**LYNN DIXON  
CHIEF OF POLICE  
AUSTIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

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**DATE**

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**BRIAN MANLEY  
CHIEF OF POLICE  
AUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DATE**

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**GARY MILLER  
CHIEF OF POLICE  
BEE CAVE POLICE DEPARTMENT**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DATE**

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**CRYSTAL LOVE, RN, SANE-A, CA-CP SANE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
BRAVE ALLIANCE**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DATE**

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**MANUEL JIMENEZ  
CHIEF OF POLICE  
CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DATE**

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**PATRICK SOUTH  
CHIEF OF POLICE  
ELGIN POLICE DEPARTMENT**

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**DATE**

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**PAUL TAYLOR  
CHIEF OF POLICE  
JONESTOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT**

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**DATE**

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**ROBERT SMITH  
CHIEF OF POLICE  
LAGO VISTA POLICE DEPARTMENT**

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**DATE**

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**TODD RADFORD  
CHIEF OF POLICE  
LAKEWAY POLICE DEPARTMENT**

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**DATE**

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**LAW ENFORCEMENT EXECUTIVES OF CENTRAL TEXAS  
CHAIR**

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**DATE**

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**LEONARD CANTU  
CHIEF OF POLICE  
MUSTANG RIDGE POLICE DEPARTMENT**

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**DATE**

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**JESSICA ROBLEDO  
CHIEF OF POLICE  
PFLUGERVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT**

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**DATE**

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**JASON BRADY  
CHIEF OF POLICE  
ROLLINGWOOD POLICE DEPARTMENT**

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**DATE**

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**KELLY WHITE  
CO-CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
THE SAFE ALLIANCE**

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**DATE**

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**JULIA SPANN  
CO-CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
THE SAFE ALLIANCE**

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**DATE**

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**HOMER HUERTA  
COMMANDER  
ST. EDWARD'S UNIVERSITY POLICE DEPARTMENT**

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**DATE**

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**LEN CARTER  
CHIEF OF POLICE  
SUNSET VALLEY POLICE DEPARTMENT**

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**DATE**

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**RODOLFO PEREZ, JR.  
DIRECTOR  
TRAVIS COUNTY COMMUNITY JUSTICE SERVICES**

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**DATE**

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**MARGARET MOORE  
TRAVIS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
TRAVIS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

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**DATE**

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**SALLY HERNANDEZ**  
**TRAVIS COUNTY SHERIFF**  
**TRAVIS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

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**DATE**

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**DAVID CARTER**  
**CHIEF OF POLICE**  
**UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS POLICE DEPARTMENT**

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**DATE**

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**SCOTT GERDES**  
**CHIEF OF POLICE**  
**WESTLAKE HILLS POLICE DEPARTMENT**

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**DATE**