

RURAL VIOLENT CRIME REDUCTION INITIATIVE SUSTAINABILITY TOOLKIT

Instructions: This toolkit is designed to provide interested grantees with additional resources to accompany the previously developed [RVCRI Sustainability Checklist](#) document. After review, please contact your training and technical assistance team with any questions.

INTRODUCTION: HOW TO CONTINUE THE WORK

RVCRI grantee agencies and their partners have implemented activities and initiatives to address violence crime challenges in their respective jurisdictions. Throughout the process of implementing crime reduction initiatives, agencies should consider how to approach sustainability and develop a plan to continue the important work once grant funding comes to an end.

There is no one size fits all approach to sustainability. Just as each community and program differs, sustainability plans can utilize varying approaches and models. Regardless of the approach grantee teams find most useful, they must think about and plan for sustainability at the onset of their project activities. Project teams should devote time to engage in robust sustainability planning throughout the grant term. Understanding that applying for grant funding is a time consuming and highly competitive process, what are the steps grantees can take now to ensure their projects can be sustained beyond their initial grant award? This guide provides additional information and resources on how to understand, create, and implement a robust sustainability plan.

WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

There are multiple definitions of sustainability:

- Ability to maintain or support a process, service and/or program over time.
- Ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- Ability to sustain oneself overtime to continue to meet one's goals, vision, or mission.



Program sustainability takes it a step further and aims to sustain the benefits and outcomes, and determine what can be maintained, expanded, or replicated over time.

TYPES OF SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES

Not all aspects of a program or project will be sustainable. Agencies must understand the different types of sustainable resources and focus on those that best meet the needs of the program or project. Sustainable resources include time and funding. There are several types of resources, including:

- Financial (local, state, federal grants, individual donations)
- Human (skilled staff and volunteers, In-kind, capacity building)
- Organizational (effective leadership & collaborative partnerships)
- Knowledge and Information Resources (data, research, communication, and subject matter expertise)

For many project teams, financial support often comes to mind. Many project partners enter sustainability discussions thinking that additional funding is the only way to sustain a program, but it is just one piece of a larger sustainability puzzle. A key consideration is the interplay between different resource types to create a well-rounded sustainability plan.

Some options for financial resources include:

- Philanthropic/Private Grant Funding: examples include [Ballmer Group](#), [Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation](#), [Mott Foundation](#), [Nathan Cummings Foundation](#) and local Police Foundations. Additional resources to assist searching for non-profit partner funding opportunities include [GrantStation](#), [Foundation Directory](#) and [Instrumentl](#) (please note: these resources may require registration or a subscription fee).
- Federal Grants: There are numerous federal grant opportunities that might be the right fit to sustain grantees' respective projects, including additional United States Department of Justice (DOJ) grants. Key DOJ resources include the Bureau of Justice Assistance's (BJA's) [current funding website](#), the Office of Justice Program's ([OJP's funding website](#)) and the [Community Oriented Policing Services \(COPS\) Office funding website](#). There may also be [funding opportunities for rural communities](#) in the Inflation Reduction Act, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and CHIPS and Science Act. [Rural Development grant opportunities](#) through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) may also be worth considering.
- Lastly, in-kind donations are a non-monetary contribution to a nonprofit organization or program. There are various types of [in-kind gifts](#) as well as multiple ways to [find in-kind](#) resource opportunities.

PARTNERSHIPS

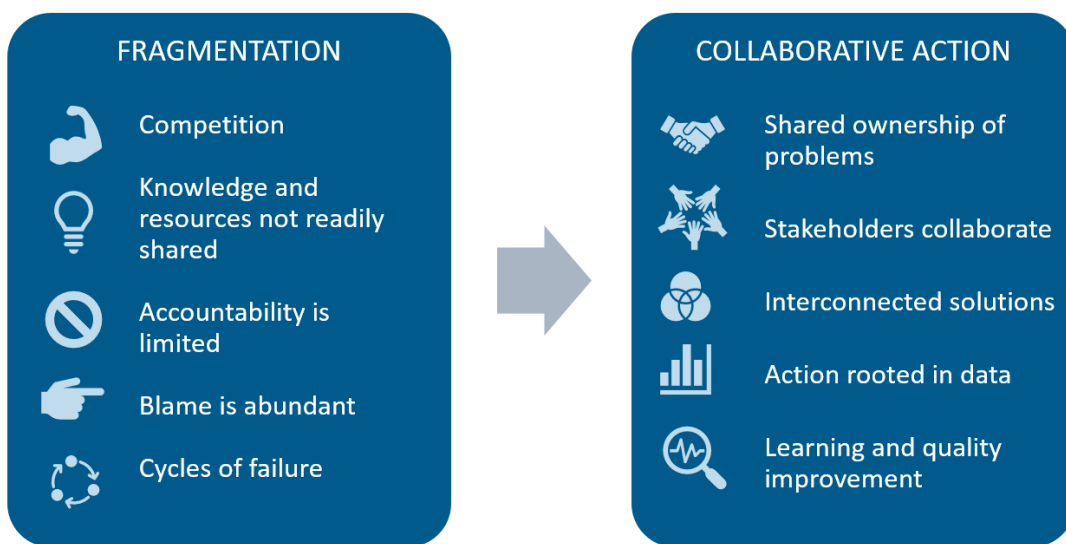
Partnerships represent the most important sustainable resource. Partnerships do not require funding and can be sustainable in a community as long as the parties remain committed. These partnerships can include governmental, corporate, nonprofit, faith-based organizations, school districts, medical providers, youth, parents, and residents of the community. To fully understand the power of partnerships and sustainability, we will examine the theory of Aligned Contributions and Collaborative Action, which can be a key piece of overall sustainability planning.

The [Theory of Aligned Contribution](#) suggests that every team member has something to contribute to a result, if they know the result or goal and believe they can contribute. Here is a [worksheet](#) that can help a group see what it looks like to have an identified result and an idea of who may have a role in

contributing to that result. Engaging representatives from across a wide variety of sectors can open more doors to effective partnerships and relationships.

Collaborative Action is the goal for sustained efforts between project partners. This process encourages grantees to reflect on the potential fragmentation of resources and stakeholders in their community, and the impact of that fragmentation. What would it take for partners to move from fragmentation to collaborative action? No one owns the solution to the problem or the result; it requires stakeholders to come together and collaborate.

From Fragmentation To Collaborative Action



SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

There are various examples of sustainability plans. The key is to start early and agree upon a sustainability framework that resonates with your project team.

Most sustainability plans will include:

- Clear vision and goals
- Financial strategy
- Capacity building
- Self-assessment
- Engagement and Partnerships
- Performance evaluation

One example is the [RVCRI Sustainability Planning Worksheet](#).



Additional resources include:

- The Office of Victims of Crime (OVC), Office of Justice Programs, has recently produced a very relevant program sustainability [toolkit](#) that provides additional resources including a sustainability plan template with accompanying instructions.
- [The Four Point Education Partners](#) has a [framework](#) that can be used to develop a specific sustainability plan. They also provide an informative sustainability self-assessment template that contains key issues to consider (found under [“Organizational Development”](#)).
- The [Rural Health Hub](#) is also a great resource that provides elements that an organization should consider focusing on when planning for a sustainable project.
- To see an example of how sustainability plans were developed for the U.S. Department of Education’s Promise Neighborhood federal grant program, read this article from the [Urban InSTITUTE](#).

Utilizing these varied resources will help support your RVCRI project team as it discusses sustainability plan options and priorities. Good luck on your sustainability journey!

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