



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between the
Rape Crisis Center Serving Horry and Georgetown Counties
And
City of Myrtle Beach

WHEREAS, **Rape Crisis Center Serving Horry and Georgetown Counties (RCC)** and the **City of Myrtle Beach** have come together as project collaborators for an application on the OVW FY25 Grant to Improve the Criminal Justice Response Programs;

and

WHEREAS, the partners listed below have agreed to enter into a collaborative agreement in which the Rape Crisis Center Serving Horry and Georgetown Counties will be the lead agency and named applicant and the other agencies will be partners in this application;

and

WHEREAS, the partners herein desire to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding setting forth the services to be provided by the collaborative; and

WHEREAS, the application prepared and approved by the collaborative through its partners is to be submitted to the Office on Violence against Women (OVW) on or before June 18, 2025;

I) Description of Partner Agencies

The City of Myrtle Beach (CMB) is a residential and vacation community at the heart of South Carolina's Grand Strand coast. Its approx. 40,000 permanent residents and millions of visitors enjoy wide beaches, warm weather and an incredible range of entertainment and activities.

Per the published mission statement, the Men and Women of the Myrtle Beach Police Department (MBPD) are committed to enhancing the quality of life through community partnerships and public safety while preserving the peace and protecting the constitutional and civil rights of those we serve. The MBPD has 300 officers and staff and provides a wide range of protection and enforcement services for CMB residents, visitors and businesses. MBPD assigned detectives work closely with victim advocates to ensure victims are given the opportunity to receive resources such as counseling, medical bill reimbursement, and assistance with court.

Our mission is to provide sexual assault education, intervention, and advocacy in order to foster a safe & healthy community that empowers survivors to heal & thrive.

The Rape Crisis Center Serving Horry and Georgetown Counties (RCC), formerly known as The Grand Strand Community Against Rape, is a private, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization, which first began servicing victims and survivors of sexual assault in 1990. RCC provides crisis intervention, advocacy, and support services to female and male adolescent and/or adult survivors of sexual assault and abuse, dating violence, and stalking. The agency serves these primary survivors and their family members in a two-county area: Horry and Georgetown Counties. As regulated under contract with the South Carolina Department of Public Health, these services include: 24-hour crisis hotline and intervention services via hospital ER accompaniments, information, and referrals, follow up contacts, legal advocacy in the criminal justice system, and community education. In addition, RCC provides individual therapy to primary and secondary survivors of sexual assault and abuse ages 12 years old and up. To provide effective and comprehensive services that address the multiple needs to sexual assault survivors and their families, the crisis and clinical staff also maintains ongoing communication with their counterparts in the medical, law enforcement, and judicial communities.

II) History of Relationship

The collaboration between RCC, CMB, MBPD and other partners throughout RCC's two-county service area has remained consistent through the years, except for some disruption during the COVID-19 pandemic. Meetings occur frequently between MBPD officers, detectives and law enforcement victim advocates (LEVAs) and RCC's advocates when supporting victims through the criminal justice process. Interactions may happen at the emergency room upon a victim expressing their desire to report an assault to law enforcement, through advocate follow-up regarding the status of a case, to collaboration with a law enforcement victim advocate (LEVA), or when providing court accompaniment, as a few examples. Additionally, MBPD regularly engages with RCC staff during SART meetings.

Collaboratively through this project, RCC and MBPD aim to respond appropriately to reports of sexual assaults, dating violence, and stalking in the community, create successful strategies to improve the criminal justice response, and increase trust and confidence among victims and the general public about how our community responds to sexual violence and abuse. Guiding principles include being trauma informed, offender-focused, victim-centered, and committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for victims during the criminal justice process.

III) Development of Application

A professor from Coastal Carolina University, who has been a community supporter of RCC's mission for many years, made RCC leadership aware of the OVW grant opportunity and offered to help in the development of the application and to provide research consultation on the project, if funding is awarded. RCC leadership, along with this professor, worked collaboratively over several meetings to develop the application and project proposal, which includes expanding existing partnerships with local law enforcement agencies on direct service provision to victims and to implement victim-centered, trauma-informed trainings tailored to law enforcement partners. Because RCC already has an established relationship with the CMB and the MBPD, it was a natural fit to invite them to join in this shared goal to improve the criminal justice response to these violent crimes and to ensure safety and autonomy for victims.

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IV) Roles and Responsibilities

Under this grant project, Rape Crisis Center Serving Horry and Georgetown Counties agrees to:

- Implement the training developed by OVW and tailored to the department.
- Develop and implement law enforcement training curriculum and provide to MBPD detectives, investigators, officers, and appropriate non-sworn staff.
- Provide programmatic performance reporting, assessment, and evaluation as directed by OVW.
- Collaborate with MBPD throughout their implementation process to facilitate open dialogue with all staff involved in the training.
- As needed, aid in connecting MBPD with community partners in the region as resources related to other aspects of sexual assault/abuse, dating violence, and stalking.

Under this grant project, the Myrtle Beach Police Department agrees to:

- Provide a project coordinator and training location.
- Support RCC in the implementation of the training component of the project tailored to the department.
- Continue regular participation in RCC's SART for Horry and Georgetown Counties to enhance the criminal justice response ensure victim-centered, trauma-informed collaboration for the victims we serve.
- Collaborate with RCC to develop practices for better engagement with the underserved population within the City of Myrtle Beach.
- Collaborate with RCC on outreach to other covered individuals and organizations that interface with victims.

Key representatives from Rape Crisis Center Serving Horry and Georgetown Counties include:

- Lindy Studds, Executive Director – primary agency contact
- Brittany Wartluft, Sexual Assault Services Director – will be project coordinator
- Sexual Assault Counselor (vacant position – to be filled by October 1, 2025)
- Sexual Assault Survivor Advocate/Team Lead (NEW position - to be filled ASAP if funds are awarded)
- Part-Time Sexual Assault Survivor Advocate (NEW position - to be filled ASAP if funds are awarded)

Key representatives from the Myrtle Beach Police Department include:

- Chief Amy Prock – primary agency contact
- Sergeant Thomas Bannister, Program Coordinator
- Sergeant David BeLue, Training Supervisor

This team will work together to develop and implement the training curriculum so it best fits with the needs of the MBPD and the community served. The team will also develop educational materials to hand out and work together to determine best practices to engage our underserved communities.

After the grant period ends, the relationship between MBPD and RCC will continue via the SART as well as through our victim services and referrals partnership.

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V) Timeline

The roles and responsibilities described above are contingent on the Rape Crisis Center Serving Horry and Georgetown Counties receiving funds requested for the project described in the OVW grant application. Responsibilities under this Memorandum of Understanding would coincide with the grant period, anticipated to be 10/01/2025 through 09/30/2028.

VI) Commitment to Partnership

1. The collaboration service area includes the municipality of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.
2. The partners agree to collaborate and provide victim-centered, offender-focused investigations and services to victims of sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking pursuant to the program narrative of the grant application attached to this agreement.
3. The partners agree to collaborate and provide trauma-informed, victim-centered, training including trauma-informed interviewing techniques, trauma-informed de-escalation approaches to working with victims, etc., focused on sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking pursuant to the program narrative of the grant application attached to this agreement.
4. We, the undersigned, have read and agree with this MOU. Further, we have reviewed the proposed program application.

By Authorized Representative, Rape Crisis Center Serving Horry and Georgetown Counties

Signature _____ Title _____
 Date _____

By Authorized Representative, City of Myrtle Beach

Signature _____ Title _____
 Date _____

By Authorized Representative, Myrtle Beach Police Department

Signature _____ Title _____
 Date _____

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