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# **Levels of Collaboration**

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## **Methods**

A diversity of organizations come together at the Task Force meetings to address human trafficking. The multiple service needs of people who have experienced trafficking make it unlikely that one organization has capacity to adequately address them all. For interagency task forces to be sustainable and effective, it is critical to have a functioning system of service coordination and interagency collaboration.

Over the course of the project we administered the Levels of Collaboration Scale, coupled with open-ended questions, a total of three times. The purpose of this scale and questions was to describe and assess collaboration among Task Force participants members, and engage Task Force members in dialogues about what promotes and inhibits collaborative efforts.

The first administration was in August 2016 at the general Task Force meeting. In deciding which agencies or individuals to include on the list, we reviewed all available meeting minutes from 2015 and 2016. If an organization/individual attended 2 or more meetings during that time period, we included them on the list. We created this inclusion criteria because attending at least two meetings is a minimum for collaboration to occur. Of the 44 agencies/individuals listed on the scale, 20 were present at the August meeting and completed the scale and open-ended questions (46%). Two agencies did not fill out the scale appropriately and were excluded from the data. Therefore, the data represents 18 agencies. Two agencies (Legal Aid Society – Employment Law Center; Robocop) that were not included on the list were present at this meeting and completed the scale and questions. For Robocop this was their first meeting.

The second administration of the scale was conducted at the general Task Force meeting in June 2017. We used the same inclusion criteria as was used for the first administration of the scale. Of 37 listed agencies, 19 completed the scale (51%). An additional three agencies completed the scale that were not listed.

For the last administration of the scale, in June 2018 we emailed the survey to the 23 agencies who are formal members of the Task Force. Sixteen of those (70%) completed the scale.

Seventeen agencies were included in all three administrations of the scale.

Although 5 levels of collaboration are listed on the scale, agencies can circle 0 for those situations where they do not interact at all with another agency that is part of the Task Force. With such a diverse group of participants, and a lot of the work happening at the committee level, we would anticipate that some agencies receive a zero. This is not

problematic; it accurately reflects that not all Task Force participants have reasons to work with each other. The range of scores, therefore, is zero through five.

	Networking 1	Cooperation 2	Coordination 3	Coalition 4	Collaboration 5
Relationship Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aware of organization</li> <li>- Loosely defined roles</li> <li>- Little communication</li> <li>- All decisions are made independently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide information to each other</li> <li>- Somewhat defined roles</li> <li>- Formal communication</li> <li>- All decisions are made independently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Share information and resources</li> <li>- Defined roles</li> <li>- Frequent communication</li> <li>- Some shared decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Share ideas and resources</li> <li>- Roles and time defined</li> <li>- Frequent and prioritized communication</li> <li>- All members have a vote in decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Members belong to one system</li> <li>- Roles, time, and evaluation formalized</li> <li>- Frequent communication is characterized by mutual trust</li> <li>- Consensus is reached on all decisions</li> </ul>

### **Levels of Collaboration – Findings**

#### **Quantitative**

The last administration of the scale had the highest response rate (70%). Previous administrations had a response rate of 41% (1<sup>st</sup> administration) and 51% (2<sup>nd</sup> administration). We attribute this increase in completion to limiting the agencies to those who are formal members of the Task Force, as well as administering this solely through email as opposed to distributing at the general Task Force meeting. We made this change based on what we learned from the 2<sup>nd</sup> administration. With that round we distributed the scale at the general meeting, and when we realized how few of the agencies listed had people in attendance, we emailed it to them. The responses to email were robust. We also learned in qualitative interviews with Task Force participants that they strongly preferred for us to administer the survey electronically so as not to take up limited and valuable meeting time.

#### **Overall Median Score**

When all agencies are included, the median collaborative score was networking (1). This means that the agency is aware of the other organization, has loosely defined roles, little communication with the other agency, and all decisions are made independently. No change

in the median score occurred between the first, second, and final administration of the scale.

Looking at Table 1 below we see how 10/20 (50%) agencies saw no change in their median score of collaboration as compared to 2017. Nine agencies (45%) saw an increase in their score, and only one agency (5%) saw a decrease.

**TABLE 1: Median Score for All Agencies**

	MEDIAN SCORE			
	August 2016	June 2017	June 2018	Change
<b>APILO</b>	1	2	2	0
<b>Asian Law Caucus</b>	n/a	0	1	+1
<b>Asian Women's Shelter</b>	2	1	n/a	-
<b>BaySWAN</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Bay Area Legal Aid</b>	n/a	1	1	0
<b>CA Massage Therapy Council</b>	0	0	n/a	-
<b>Dignity Health</b>	1	1	n/a	-
<b>District Attorney</b>	2	1	1	0
<b>District Attorney - Victim Services</b>	3	1	2	+1
<b>DOSW</b>	3	3	3	0
<b>Department of Public Health/Newcomers CONNECT Project</b>	2	1	1	0
<b>Environmental Department of Public Health</b>	1	0	n/a	-
<b>Family and Children's Services</b>	1	1	1	0
<b>Freedom FWD</b>	n/a	1	3	+2
<b>Huckleberry Youth Services</b>	2	2	3	+1
<b>Juvenile Probation</b>	1	2	n/a	-
<b>Larkin Street Youth Services</b>	1	1	n/a	-
<b>Legal Services for Children</b>	1	1	2	+1
<b>Love Never Fails</b>	1	1	1	0
<b>LYRIC</b>	2	1	n/a	-
<b>NALLS Foundation</b>	1	0	n/a	-
<b>NCJW</b>	n/a	0	n/a	-
<b>Not for Sale</b>	n/a	n/a	1	-
<b>Office of Small Business</b>	n/a	0	n/a	-
<b>Public Defender's Office</b>	n/a	1	n/a	-
<b>RTI International (alix lutnick)</b>	2	1	2	+1
<b>Safe &amp; Sound</b>	1	0	2	+2
<b>SFCAHT</b>	2	2	1	-1
<b>SFPD</b>	3	2	n/a	-
<b>SFPD - SVU</b>	3	2	2	0
<b>SFUSD</b>	1	1	2	+1
<b>St. James Infirmary</b>	1	0	1	+1
<b>Senator Feinstein's Office</b>	n/a	0	n/a	-
<b>SHADE</b>	1	1	1	0
<b>Sojourner Truth Family Foster Agency</b>	1	0	n/a	-
<b>Stanford University (Jessica Brunner)</b>	n/a	0	n/a	-
<b>STOP Slavery/NorCal Catholic Sisters</b>	n/a	n/a	0	-
<b>Transitional Age Youth (TAY) - SF</b>	n/a	0	n/a	-
<b>Young Women's Freedom Center</b>	n/a	1	n/a	-
<b>UNA USA/SF</b>	n/a	n/a	0	-

Note that we are excluding 20 agencies from the denominator because they did not have scores for both 2016 and 2017. These findings are notably different than the comparison of scores between 2016 and 2015, where 48% of agencies received a lower median score of collaboration and only 7% saw an increase in their score. Also noteworthy is that two agencies, Freedom FWD and Safe & Sound, saw their median score increase by two points from 2017 to 2018.

The highest median score received by an agency was 3, coordination. This is associated with sharing information and resources with each other, having defined roles, frequent communication, and some shared decision-making. DOSW, Freedom FWD, and Huckleberry Youth Services all received this score.

### ***Matched Ranking***

When examining these data it is important to assess whether agencies agree with each other about the levels of collaboration. For example, an agency may give another agency a 5, but the agency receiving that rating would not characterize the relationship similarly.

Looking at the frequency in which agencies had an exact match in score with another agency (see Table 2), in 5 out of the 10 cases where we have data from 2017 and 2018, agencies have increased the number of times that the scores match.

**TABLE 2: Percent of Exact Matches**

	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>APILO</b>	41%	33%	27%
<b>Asian Law Caucus</b>	---	72%	33%
<b>Asian Women's Shelter</b>	47%	---	---
<b>BaySWAN</b>	---	56%	---
<b>Bay Area Legal Aid</b>	---	33%	47%
<b>CA Massage Therapy Council</b>	59%	78%	---
<b>Dignity Health</b>	47%	---	---
<b>District Attorney</b>	24%	24%	---
<b>District Attorney - Victim Services</b>	24%	47%	---
<b>DOSW</b>	12%	22%	13%
<b>Department of Public Health/Newcomers CONNECT Project</b>	24%	44%	47%
<b>Environmental Department of Public Health</b>	47%	56%	---
<b>Family and Children's Services</b>	---	44%	33%
<b>Freedom FWD</b>	---	72%	40%
<b>Huckleberry Youth Services</b>	29%	28%	33%
<b>NALLS Foundation</b>	24%	---	---
<b>NCJW</b>	---	33%	---
<b>RTI International</b>	29%	50%	53%
<b>Safe &amp; Sound*</b>	24%	50%	53%
<b>SFCAHT</b>	6%	44%	---
<b>SFPD – SVU</b>	12%	---	7%
<b>St. James Infirmary</b>	24%	50%	60%
<b>Senator Feinstein's Office</b>	---	56%	---
<b>SHADE</b>	---	---	27%
<b>STOP Slavery/NorCal Catholic Sisters</b>	---	---	---
<b>UNA USA/SF</b>	---	---	---

\* Formerly Child Abuse and Prevention Center

For 2018, the St. James Infirmary, San Francisco Unified School District, and RTI International were the three agencies with the most exact matches (See Table 3). Freedom FWD, Huckleberry Youth Services, and Not For Sale were the most frequent under-raters. The three most consistent over-raters are Legal Services for Children, SHADE, and SFPD-SVU.

**Table 3: Frequencies of Matched Ratings for 2018**

	over	under	exact
<b>APILO</b>	6	5	4
<b>Asian Law Caucus</b>	6	4	5
<b>Bay Area Legal Aid</b>	1	7	7
<b>DOSW</b>	6	7	2
<b>Department of Public Health/Newcomers CONNECT Project</b>	4	4	7
<b>Family and Children's Services</b>	8	2	5
<b>Freedom FWD</b>	0	9	6
<b>Huckleberry Youth Services</b>	2	8	5
<b>Legal Services for Children</b>	11	1	2
<b>Not for Sale</b>	3	8	4
<b>RTI International</b>	1	6	8
<b>Safe and Sound*</b>	7	3	5
<b>SFPD - SVU</b>	9	4	1
<b>SFUSD</b>	1	6	8
<b>St. James Infirmary</b>	2	4	9
<b>SHADE</b>	11	0	4

\* Formerly Child Abuse and Prevention Center

### ***Median Score by Committee***

Recognizing that it is at the committee level that a lot of the task force's in-depth work occurs, it is important to look at the median score of collaboration at this level (See Table 4).

**TABLE 4: Median Score by Committees**

	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Youth</b>	4 (n=8)	2 (n=13)	2 (n= 16)
<b>Adult</b>	2 (n=10)	2 (n=7)	2.5 (n=7)
<b>Sex Work</b>	3 (n=7)	3 (n=6)	3 (n = 7)
<b>Executive</b>	N/A	2.5 (n=6)	n/a

Similar to the overall media score, it is also important to look at trends over time. Comparing findings from the three administrations of the scale, we see that the scores for the Sex Work Committee remained the same. The score for the Youth Committee initially decreased and then stayed the same. The median score for the Adult Committee slightly increased. The Executive Committee is not formally meeting so was excluded from the 2018 analysis. For all committees the median scores fall between cooperation (2) and coordination (3). Tables 5a-c present the median score for each agency when limited to the other committee participants.

**Table 5a: Median Scores within Adult Committee**

	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>APILO</b>	2	2	5
<b>Asian Law Caucus</b>	---	2.5	3
<b>Asian Women's Shelter</b>	1	---	---
<b>CA Massage Therapy Council</b>	0	---	---
<b>Dignity Health</b>	0	---	---
<b>District Attorney</b>	2	---	---
<b>District Attorney - Victim Services</b>	4	---	---
<b>DOSW</b>	4	5	5
<b>Department of Public Health/Newcomers CONNECT Project</b>	2	2	3
<b>NCJW</b>	---	2	---
<b>SFCAHT</b>	3	3.5	---
<b>SFPD-SVU</b>	4	---	2
<b>SFUSD</b>	---	---	1
<b>St. James Infirmary</b>	---	1	2

**Table 5b: Median Scores within Sex Work and Trafficking Policy Impact Committee**

	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>APILO</b>	---	3	3
<b>BAYSWAN</b>	---	2	3
<b>District Attorney</b>	2.5	---	---
<b>District Attorney - Victim Services</b>	3.5	---	2
<b>DOSW</b>	5	5	4
<b>Department of Public Health/Newcomers CONNECT Project</b>	2.5	1	3
<b>RTI International</b>	1.5	3	4
<b>SFPD-SVU</b>	4.5	---	---
<b>St. James Infirmary</b>	2.5	3	3

**Table 5c: Median Scores within Youth Committee**

	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>APILO</b>	---	1.5	1
<b>Bay Area Legal Aid</b>	---	1	2
<b>CA Massage Therapy Council</b>	---	0	---
<b>Safe &amp; Sound</b>	---	3.5	2
<b>District Attorney</b>	2	0	1
<b>District Attorney - Victim Services</b>	4	0	2
<b>DOSW</b>	4	5	3
<b>Department of Public Health/Newcomers CONNECT Project</b>	---	---	1
<b>Environmental Department of Public Health</b>	---	0	
<b>Family and Children's Services</b>	---	0	2
<b>Freedom Forward</b>	---	2	3
<b>Huckleberry Youth Services</b>	1	1	4
<b>Legal Services for Children</b>	---	---	2
<b>NALLS Foundation</b>	4	---	---
<b>NCJW</b>	---	2	---
<b>Not For Sale</b>	---	---	1
<b>Safe &amp; Sound</b>	---	3.5	2
<b>SFCAHT</b>	3	2	1
<b>SFPD-SVU</b>	4	---	2
<b>SHADE</b>	---	---	1
<b>UNA USA/SF</b>	---	---	0

## Qualitative

It is important to note that it is up to the Task Force members to define the level of collaboration they want to achieve in their work together. In the first two rounds of the scale people noted that they would like levels indicative of coalition (4) or collaboration (5). In conversations with Task Force participants after we administered the scale the second time, we noted that for most agencies participating it will not be possible to have a score of 5. This task force is not set up for consensus decision making. Similarly, with the diversity of agencies, it is unlikely that they all will belong to one system. What is more achievable and realistic is aiming for coordination (3) or coalition (4). In the final administration of the scale, most responded that their desired level of collaboration would be either coordination or coalition.

## ***Increasing Collaboration***

Collaborative projects take time and resources. Most Task Force participants are service providers who are trying to balance involvement on the Task Force with the competing priorities of case management, tending to crises in their clients' lives, and for some, staff supervision and grant writing. It is not surprising that many noted the difficulties of finding people who are willing to take on leadership roles within the committees and working groups, as well as doing work outside of the Task Force meetings. Across the three administrations of the open-ended questions, respondents indicated that without funding to support new, or increased, collaborative efforts, their agencies likely would not have the capacity to take on such endeavors.

Over the course of the evaluation, the Task Force has made notable progress with defining roles, and establishing and implementing membership and voting procedures. Respondents across the years highlighted how attention to specific needs would help strengthen the collaboration among Task Force participants. These topics included:

- 1) The need for an orientation for new attendees. Such an orientation would address what the Task Force has done, its goals and values, and a timeline of where the Task Force is in achieving its goals. Included would be information about the participating agencies and what they provide. Some also mentioned it would be helpful to share with newer members what strategies have been tried and were not successful.
- 2) Commitment to anchoring values. Respondents noted the ease of collaborations with like-minded organizations. However, where differences exist among ideas and values, the collaborations are strained. Many have highlighted how Task Force meetings provide little space for exploring differing perspectives and working towards identifying common ground. Some have highlighted the need to explore how anti-trafficking frameworks stigmatize and/or exclude certain communities. Ongoing is the reality of tensions among some social service providers and law enforcement. Agencies from both of those sectors often feel constrained or misunderstood by each other. Before levels of collaboration can increase, conversations are needed about whether agencies' values align in such a way that they can work towards a common goal.
- 3) How to meaningfully involve people who have experienced trafficking. Discussions are needed about whether, and to what extent, the Task Force wants to be an inclusive and welcoming space for individuals of varying backgrounds. People continue to note the absence of people of color, queer community members, young people, members from youth leadership organizations, and recent immigrants. If the Task Force is going to be an inclusive space, and one where people who have experienced trafficking are active members, adjustments will likely be needed for the meeting format, location, and logistics.

- 4) Consistent and strong leadership. Collaborative efforts are not possible without leadership that keeps everyone focused on the goals. Recognizing that most Task Force participants are involved in a volunteer capacity, it is unlikely that they can take on more responsibilities without formal support. Participants suggest that the Task Force identify several members who are interested in sharpening their leadership skills, give them a more defined role, and provide them with more targeted support including professional development and financial support. Those in leadership roles will provide coordination of members and attendees, and work with them to increase people's abilities to follow through on commitments.

### ***Successes with Cultivating Collaborations***

In the words of one Task Force member, *"True collaboration takes time to develop – from project conceptualization, to alignment on roles, to trust building. It's almost as if the collaboration itself is a living thing with its own culture, needs, expectations, and required care."* When the key stakeholders and decision makers are not at the table, when collaborators lack the requisite expertise needed, the work becomes much harder. This is also true when participants feel they cannot openly share their opinions at meetings. For some this is because they felt inhibited by funding dependence or other working relationships. Collaborative efforts are impacted by the demands and priorities of funders. Even if a robust plan is developed by one of the committees, it may be narrowed significantly if funders are only interested in specific subpopulations of people impacted by trafficking. With the diversity of organizations, it is to be expected that a diversity of priorities also exists. As such, it is easy for some to dominate the conversation while others remain silent. For collaborations to be successful, many spoke to how the Task Force needs to work towards a balance of power and creating a platform where people can share their opinions and perspectives.

Many respondents identified that because of attending Task Force meetings their agencies have built relationships with other service providers that have helped their day-to-day advocacy and work with their clients. In some cases, these relationships have resulted in receiving funding from another agency to deepen the work being done.

Many highlighted the successes coming out of the Youth Committee. The recently approved housing and placement recommendations were noted because of the meaningful involvement of the Youth Advisory Board. As one provider shared, *"I think the youth voice is critical to the success of any plan to prevent youth trafficking and their collaboration in developing the recommendation was essential."* Similarly, people mentioned how restructuring the Youth Committee meetings to make them working meetings has been particularly effective. Those participating in the Youth Committee Meetings have enjoyed coming together and working during meetings. This change addressed the reality that

people have limited to no time to work on things in-between meetings. Another strength of this committee is that it is pro-active in creating a space where everyone feels able to share their perspectives. Recognizing that not everyone will feel comfortable speaking in the meeting, they have implemented methods such as anonymous voting/stickers to let people express their opinions.

Another notable success was the Prioritizing Safety for Sex Workers policy. This process started with sex worker rights groups protesting an anti-human trafficking event, to gathering key groups to better understand the needs of the communities, and then creating the Policy. Although it took several years for the Policy to be implemented in San Francisco, its implementation inspired a first-in-the-country state law, Assembly Bill 2243.

Respondents addressed how often the successes are attributed to several key people taking on more active roles to achieve goals. They mentioned both the Prioritizing Safety for Sex Workers Policy and the passage of the Good Food Purchasing Resolution as examples. Similarly, some noted that they have seen success in cultivating collaborations outside participants in the Task Force to expand upon the Task Force's efforts. One example is partnering with the Department of the Environment to expand the Healthy Nail Salon Program to include labor rights information. Another example was reaching out to SPUR, the Teamsters' Union, and the Center for Good Food Purchasing to advance a resolution calling for the Department of Public Health and the Sheriff's Department to adopt principles of good food purchasing. This was recently passed by the Board of Supervisors.

## **Discussion**

Agencies have consistently indicated that they would like to see higher levels of collaboration, levels indicative of coordination (3), or coalition (4). It may be that because of the large number, and diversity, of Task Force participants, the overall median score of collaboration never exceeds networking (1). However, the scores at the committee level reveal deeper levels of engagement. The Sex Work and Trafficking Policy Impact committee is currently at coordination (3), while the others are at cooperation (2). Participants in these committees will want to have conversations about whether they would like to increase the levels of collaboration, and if so, how best to achieve that. The suggestions represented in the qualitative findings section may offer a good starting point for that conversation.

Within committees though, many agencies have reached, and in some cases exceeded, the level of coordination. Recognizing that it is within the committee structure that the work happens, this is the level that is most useful to look at for this Task Force. Within the Adult Committee, the following agencies have at least a median score of coordination: APILO, Asian Law Caucus, DOSW, and the Department of Public Health/Newcomers CONNECT Project. For the Youth Committee, DOSW, Freedom FWD, and Huckleberry Youth Services

all reached, or exceeded, the level of coordination. Lastly, for the Sex Work and Trafficking Policy Impact Committee, APILO, BAYSWAN, DOSW, the Department of Public Health/Newcomers CONNECT Project, RTI International, and St. James Infirmary all had a score of coordination or coalition. This is a significant improvement since the beginning of this evaluation.

For the Task Force to continue to increase the levels of collaboration it would benefit from attending to certain items. First, collaborations require people knowing about each other. Because of the open meeting format, new people and agencies are common. An orientation is needed for new attendees. Strong collaborations are built on common values. Conversations are needed that truly explore where there is value alignment and divergence, and then based on the areas of alignment create goals. Continued efforts are needed for increasing the meaningful involvement of people who have experienced trafficking, as well as other groups who are notably absent from most Task Force meetings (people of color, queer community members, young people, members from youth leadership organizations, and recent immigrants). Lastly, the Task Force would benefit from thinking about how best to support consistent and strong leadership.