



# THE ANNOTATED PROTOCOLS GUIDE

Project Roadmap created annotated protocols in response to regular requests for resources and support. ECM Coordinators/Directors, who often take a leadership role in creating written protocols, along with other subject matter experts, also helped to inform this guide.

This series of annotated protocols offers practical guidance, sparks meaningful discussion, and serves as a reference for both the content and scope of effective protocols. Each numbered heading outlines key elements to consider, explains their significance, and provides sample language to help task forces tailor protocols to their unique needs.

## Why Protocols Matter

In the early stages of a multidisciplinary task force's development, it is common for members to question the need for formal or extensive protocols especially as they are still evolving. Although protocol development may seem unnecessary at first, it is critical for consistency, longevity, and sustainability.

### Protocols help task forces:

- Build transparency and trust among members
- Avoid tension and misunderstandings
- Provide a clear process for addressing any conflict
- Establish clear accountability
- Ensure fair and consistent decision-making

Whether your ECM task force is just beginning or refining long-standing practices, this guide can help facilitate thoughtful conversations and intentional planning around protocol development.

## Annotated Protocols

- Information Sharing
- **Membership**
- Data Collection
- Decision Making



### Additional Protocol Development Resources

[\*Enhanced Collaborative Model \(ECM\) Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force Protocol Development Checklists\*](#)

[\*Human Trafficking Task Force Protocol Development Training Video Series\*](#)

[\*Multidisciplinary Collaborative Model for Anti-Human Trafficking Task Forces: Development and Operations Roadmap\*](#)

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## Task Force Membership Protocol (Annotated Example)

Below is an annotated example protocol for membership within a multidisciplinary human trafficking task force. Each provision begins with an explanation as to why that information is relevant/important and is followed by sample language. This is a tool, that when combined with other resources and discussion, will help task forces develop protocols that suit the needs of their circumstances.

This example is designed to show the full range of items a membership protocol may address. Task forces should select and adapt elements that are appropriate for their size, composition, and stage of development.



### 1. Purpose and Scope

Sets a clear intent for the protocol – membership is about contributing to a shared purpose, not just showing up.



**Sample Language:** This protocol defines how membership in the [Task Force Name] is structured, approved, maintained, and held accountable, to support a collaborative, survivor-centered, and effective multidisciplinary response to human trafficking.



### 2. Protocol Created By

Names who designed the protocol to signal legitimacy and build buy-in. Shows cross-disciplinary input, which encourages adoption and helps prevent bias toward one sector's norms (e.g., law enforcement vs. victim services).



**Sample Language:** This protocol was developed collaboratively by the task force, with input from task force members.



### 3. Shared Goals and Vision

Aligns the membership with core values and grant requirements and sets standards for joining.



**Sample Language:** All members agree to uphold the task force's mission: to respond to all forms of human trafficking through a victim-centered, trauma-informed, and collaborative approach, using non-discriminatory practices.



## 4. Membership Expectations

Outlines universal expectations that apply to all members, regardless of discipline or status. Builds shared accountability.



**Sample Language:** All members commit to:

- Regular attendance and active participation
- Confidentiality and respectful collaboration
- Prioritizing victim autonomy and safety
- Upholding the values outlined in the task force's guiding documents.

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**Note:** Consider offering training and support for partner agencies to build capacity around victim-centered and trauma-informed approaches, acknowledging variation in readiness across agencies.

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## 5. Discipline-Specific Expectations

Recognizes that not all partners have the same roles, responsibilities and limitations. Protects agencies from being asked to overstep boundaries.



**Sample Language:** Each member agency is expected to contribute according to its discipline's unique role, capacity and legal limitations. These expectations will be outlined in discipline-specific role descriptions or MOUs.



## 6. Membership Agreements

Explains that all members must sign a "Membership Agreement." Promotes accountability. Decreases incidence of absentee members.



**Sample Language:** Each member agency must sign a Membership Agreement that reflects:

- The shared vision and goals
- Role expectations (general and discipline specific)
- Benefits of participation
- Commitment to participation
- Commitment to keep contact information up to date
- Acknowledgement of the task force accountability/grievance policy



## 7. Tiered Membership (If Applicable)

Helps balance involvement based on interest, capacity, and relevance, allowing for more efficient operations and better engagement from members.



**Sample Language:** The task force uses a tiered membership structure. Each tier has clearly defined roles, expectations, and requirements:

- **Core Members:** Directly involved in decision-making and case coordination
- **Affiliate Members:** Participate in projects, subcommittees, or outreach
- **Advisors/Observers:** Limited engagement for technical support or policy alignment



## 8. New Member Process

Creates transparency and fairness. Also allows the task force to vet potential partners for alignment with mission and values.



**Sample Language:** Agencies interested in joining must complete an application reviewed by the leadership team. The process includes:

- Completion of intake form
- Standard for consistent evaluation of organizations
- Vetting discussion with core members
- Final approval and formal welcome packet



## 9. Onboarding

Facilitates new members' ability to perform their role and collaborate with existing members.



**Sample Language:** New members must complete onboarding that includes:

- Orientation to mission, values, and protocols
- Training on confidentiality and victim-centered practices
- Introduction of designated point of contact



## 10. Supporting Internal Collaboration

Strengthens internal cohesion and makes it easier for members to work together outside of full meetings.



**Sample Language:** The task force will maintain a member directory and encourage mutual support, cross-referrals, and collaboration between agencies.



## 11. Ownership, Review, and Revision

Sets expectation for growth and change. Reminds members that the protocol is a living tool, not a fixed rulebook.



**Sample Language:** This protocol will be reviewed annually, with input from task force members, and amended as needed to reflect growth, new partners, or evolving best practices.