

VELA DIRECT PILOT PROGRAM FINAL REPORT

JULY 2025



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Executive Summary

This report offers a look at what it truly takes to bring a new statewide data system into daily practice at organizations serving survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Phase 2 of the VELA Direct pilot focused on implementation. It asked how real people in real organizations adopted the system, shaped it to fit their work, and navigated the challenges that emerged along the way.

Three rape crisis centers in Ohio joined this phase of the pilot. They represented different geographies, staff sizes, and levels of digital readiness. Over a six-month period, each site received support from OAESV and the VELA Direct team to bring the system into their daily operations. Ubuntu Research & Evaluation studied that process closely. We paid attention to what made the work possible, what held it back, and what changed in the process.

Three themes stood out across every part of the evaluation:

- **Support made the difference.** Organizations trusted VELA Direct because the people behind the system understood survivor work deeply. Support staff responded quickly, listened with care, and honored the time and labor of front-line workers. OAESV's office hours added a layer of communal learning that helped teams feel seen and supported.
- **Reporting got easier to manage.** Many organizations had been relying on spreadsheets, paper files, or outdated tools. With VELA, they began to generate reports more easily, spot patterns in service delivery, and meet funder requirements with fewer steps. Some began using data in new ways, including sharing with boards and tracking internal progress.
- **Navigation felt approachable for most staff.** The system was described as modern, intuitive, and clear. Some users with less technology experience faced an initial learning curve. Over time, they gained confidence with support and practice.

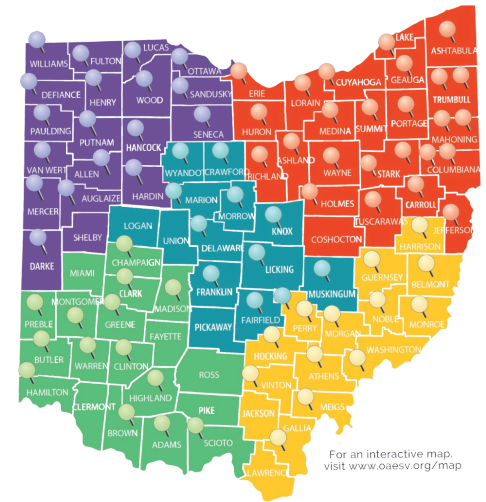
Across the board, staff were willing to try something new because they trusted who was asking. They had space to learn, time to adapt, and support that honored their expertise. Even when challenges came up, organizations kept going because they saw the value VELA could bring to their work. This pilot reminds us that change does not start with software alone. It starts with relationships. It depends on support that meets people where they are. It grows when the people closest to the work have a voice in shaping the tools they are asked to use. The insights in this report come directly from those voices. They offer guidance for future cohorts, reflections for system developers, and direction for funders looking to invest in infrastructure that truly supports the field. This work matters because survivors deserve systems that work. The people serving them deserve tools that respect their time, reduce harm, and strengthen the impact of their efforts. Phase 2 showed that progress is possible when care is built into every step.

Introduction

Project Background and Vision

The Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence (OAESV) launched a comprehensive, multi-phase initiative to transform how rape crisis centers across the state of Ohio collect, manage, and report data about sexual violence. This ambitious project recognizes that better data leads to better services for survivors and stronger advocacy for systemic change.

Sexual violence affects thousands of Ohioans every year, yet the true scope and impact often remain hidden due to inconsistent data collection across the state's 32 rape crisis centers. Some organizations use robust systems that allow them to track detailed information about survivors and services, while others lack the required sustainable resources and must use spreadsheets and paper tracking that aren't able to capture such intricate work accurately. This patchwork approach makes it nearly impossible to understand statewide patterns, demonstrate the collective impact of sexual violence services, or advocate effectively for increased resources and policy changes.



Phase 1: Research and Planning Foundation

In 2024, OAESV partnered with UBUNTU Research & Evaluation to conduct extensive research into what Ohio's sexual violence service providers needed from a data system. This Phase 1 work included:

- **Listening sessions** with rape crisis center staff across Ohio to understand their daily data challenges
- **Focus groups** in Athens, Akron, and Columbus with advocates, supervisors, and leadership
- **Interviews** with state agency representatives, funders, and survivors
- **Cost-benefit analysis** of four different database systems that could potentially serve Ohio's needs

Through this research, a clear picture emerged: organizations desperately wanted a better way to collect and use data, but they needed a solution that would make their work easier, not harder. They needed a system that would reduce administrative burden while improving their ability to demonstrate impact and secure funding. After careful evaluation, VELA Direct was selected as the pilot platform. VELA Direct stood out because it was built specifically for sexual violence service providers, offered flexible customization options, and used an

"umbrella structure" that allows individual organizations to maintain control over their client data while contributing to statewide reporting.

Phase 2: The VELA Direct Pilot Program

Phase 2 represents the implementation and testing phase of this vision. Beginning in early 2025, four Ohio rape crisis centers agreed to pilot VELA Direct for six months. These organizations, representing both urban and rural contexts, different organizational sizes, and varying levels of technology experience, served as crucial learning laboratories for understanding how a centralized data system could work across Ohio's diverse landscape. This pilot is not just about testing software; it's about understanding how organizational culture, staff capacity, training approaches, and ongoing support influence whether a new system succeeds or fails. The lessons learned from these four pioneering organizations will directly inform decisions about expanding VELA Direct to additional rape crisis centers across Ohio.

The pilot evaluation, conducted by UBUNTU Research & Evaluation, focuses on both the technical functionality of the platform and the human factors that determine successful adoption. This includes examining how well the system integrates with existing workflows, what support staff need to feel confident using new technology, and how organizations adapt the system to meet their unique needs.

Research Problem Statement

Ohio's rape crisis centers face significant data collection challenges that fundamentally impact their ability to serve survivors and advocate effectively for policy change. These challenges manifest in multiple interconnected ways that create barriers to comprehensive service delivery and evidence-based advocacy efforts.

Fragmented Data Collection Systems

Rape crisis centers across Ohio currently lack a uniform, centralized system for collecting and reporting sexual violence data. This fragmentation creates several critical issues:

- **Inconsistent data collection practices** across organizations lead to an incomplete understanding of sexual violence patterns and service needs throughout Ohio
- **Manual reporting processes** create substantial administrative burdens for already resource-constrained agencies, forcing direct service staff to spend valuable time on data entry rather than client services
- **Varied case management capabilities** affect organizations' ability to track services and outcomes effectively, limiting their capacity to demonstrate impact and secure sustainable funding

State-Level Impact

The consequences of inconsistent data collection extend beyond individual organizations to affect statewide understanding and response:

- **Difficulty aggregating data at the state level** limits evidence-based policy development and resource allocation decisions
- **Incomplete reporting to state agencies** prevents funders from understanding the true scope of sexual violence and service gaps across different regions and populations
- **Limited capacity to demonstrate collective impact** hampers advocacy efforts and funding requests at the state and federal levels

Service Delivery Consequences

Current fragmented systems directly impact service delivery in several ways:

- **Organizations struggle to track client outcomes and service effectiveness due to inadequate data systems**
- **Difficulty identifying service gaps and unmet needs across different populations and geographic regions**
- **Limited ability to coordinate services between organizations due to incompatible data systems**
- **Challenges in demonstrating compliance with various funder requirements, threatening continued funding**

Without a coordinated approach to data collection, important survivor data will remain siloed, patterns go undetected, and the full scope of sexual violence and service needs in Ohio cannot be adequately addressed. This fragmentation ultimately hampers both local service delivery and statewide advocacy efforts.

Project Rationale

Centralized System as Priority Solution

A centralized data collection system was identified as a priority solution based on extensive stakeholder engagement and research conducted during Phase 1 of the project. This solution directly addresses the core challenges identified by rape crisis centers, state agencies, and funders:

1. **Standardization:** A centralized system would create uniform data collection practices across the state, enabling reliable year-over-year comparisons and a comprehensive understanding of sexual violence trends
2. **Efficiency:** By streamlining reporting processes, organizations could reduce administrative burden and redirect resources toward direct services
3. **Evidence-Based Advocacy:** Comprehensive, reliable data would strengthen OAESV's ability to advocate for policy changes and secure funding based on demonstrated need and impact

Alignment with OAESV Strategic Objectives

This pilot supports several key strategic objectives of the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence:

- **Enhancing member organization capacity** by providing tools that improve data management and reporting capabilities
- **Strengthening advocacy efforts** through access to comprehensive, reliable data on sexual violence trends and service provision
- **Improving survivor outcomes** by enabling organizations to better track and demonstrate the effectiveness of their interventions
- **Building sustainable funding** by helping organizations meet diverse funder requirements more efficiently

Report Purpose and Scope

Evaluation Questions

Phase 2 evaluation seeks to answer several critical questions about the implementation and effectiveness of the Vela Direct pilot program:

Implementation Process Questions

How effective were the onboarding, training, and technical support provided to pilot sites?

How well did the Vela system integrate with existing workflows and data collection practices?

What barriers or challenges did organizations encounter during implementation, and how were they addressed?

User Experience and Adoption Questions

How do staff perceive the usability and utility of the Vela system?

How do staff perceptions change over the course of the pilot implementation?

What factors influence staff willingness and ability to adopt Vela as a long-term solution?

Organizational Impact Questions

What organizational resources are required for successful implementation?

What unexpected outcomes (positive or negative) resulted from implementation?

How has Vela implementation influenced the efficiency of data collection and reporting processes?

What changes have occurred in staff workload, data accuracy, or service tracking?

Sustainability and Scalability Questions

What adaptations would make the system more effective for a broader range of organizations?

What additional resources or supports are needed to sustain long-term use?

What lessons from the pilot can inform a broader statewide rollout?

Time Period and Activities

This report covers the period from January 2025 through July 2025, documenting:

Overview of Activities	Jan 2025	Feb 2025	March 2025	April 2025	May 2025	June 2025	July 2025
Pre-implementation planning and baseline assessment							
System launch and early implementation							
Mid-implementation assessment and refinement							
Final data collection and analysis							

Table 1: Overview of Activities Covered in Final Report

Intended Audiences and Use of Findings

This evaluation report is designed for multiple audiences with distinct information needs:

Primary Audiences



OAESV Leadership

Will use findings to make decisions about full-scale implementation and system modifications



VELA DIRECT Pilot Orgs

Will benefit from shared learnings and best practices for system optimization



OAESV Member Orgs

Will use findings to prepare for potential system adoption in future phases

Secondary Audiences



State Agencies and Funders

Will understand the pilot's impact on reporting quality and organizational capacity



Other State Coalitions

May use findings to inform their own data system development efforts



Research and Evaluation

Will benefit from implementation science insights and lessons learned

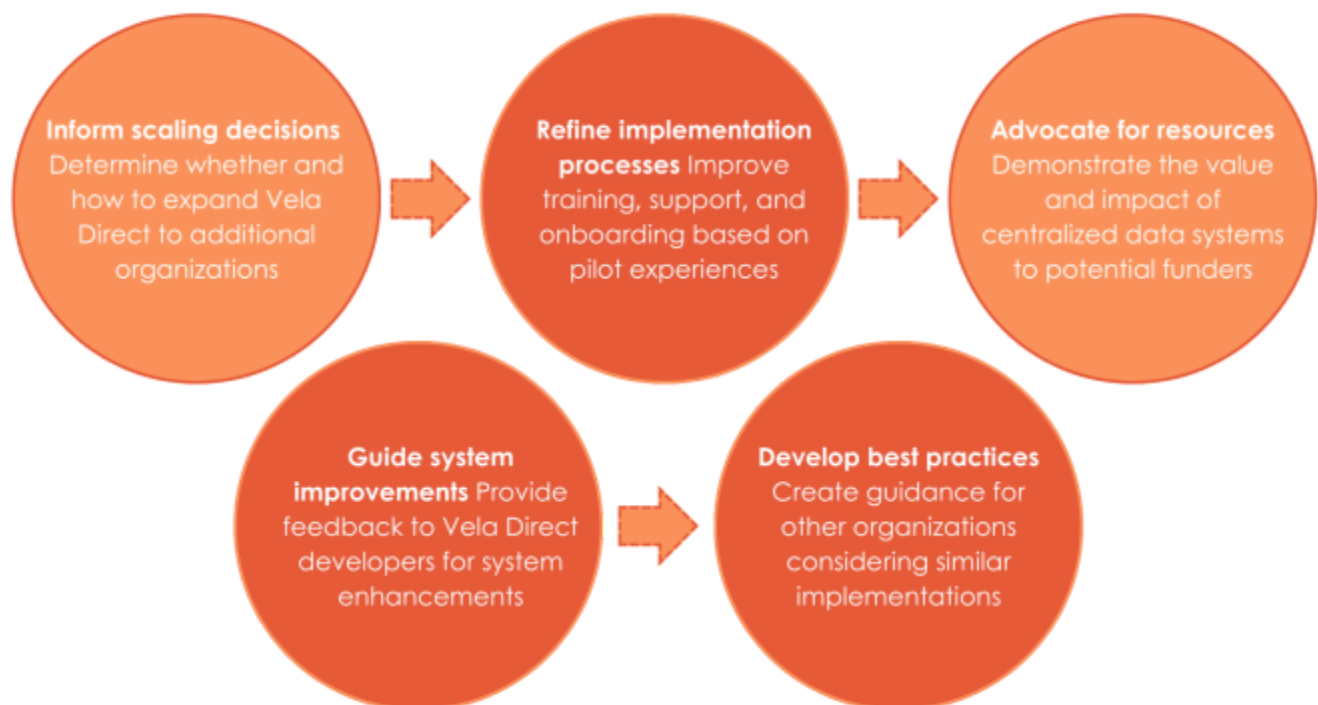


Vela Direct

May use findings as a case study to demonstrate indicators of a successful partnership with a host organization

Use of Findings

Evaluation findings will be used to:



Project Background

Addressing Phase 1 Identified Needs

Vela Direct directly addresses each of the six key themes identified through Phase 1 stakeholder engagement:

- **Theme 1 - Standardized Reporting** The system enables consistent data collection across organizations while providing aggregate reporting capabilities for statewide analysis.
- **Theme 2 - Enhanced Reporting Capacity** One-click reporting for major funders reduces administrative burden while ensuring compliance with diverse reporting requirements.
- **Theme 3 - Tiered Data Security** Role-based access controls and the umbrella structure ensure that sensitive information is only accessible to authorized individuals.
- **Theme 4 - Customization Options** Organizations can customize their portals and data collection beyond statewide requirements without additional licensing costs.
- **Theme 5 - User-Friendly Data Entry** The system was designed with input from front-line advocates to ensure intuitive, efficient data entry processes.
- **Theme 6 - Seamless Data Migration** Vela Direct provides dedicated support for data migration, including assistance with data cleaning and system transition.

Implementation Context

Sexual Violence Service Landscape in Ohio Prior to Pilot Launch

Before the Vela Direct pilot implementation, Ohio's sexual violence service landscape was characterized by fragmentation, resource constraints, and inconsistent data collection practices that limited the field's ability to understand and respond effectively to sexual violence.

Organizational Characteristics

Ohio's rape crisis centers varied significantly in size, capacity, and service delivery models:



- **Large urban centers** serving multiple counties with comprehensive services including 24-hour hotlines, emergency shelter, legal advocacy, and counseling
- **Medium-sized organizations** typically serving 1-3 counties with core services but limited specialized programs
- **Small rural organizations** often operate with minimal staff and volunteers, providing essential services but with limited capacity for comprehensive programming

Resource Constraints

Most organizations operated under significant resource constraints that affected their data collection capabilities such as: **Limited staff** with most organizations relying on direct service providers to also handle data collection and reporting, **Competing priorities** between service delivery and administrative requirements, **Funding diversity** requiring different data collection and reporting for various funders, and **Technology limitations** with many organizations using outdated or inadequate data systems.

Existing Data Collection Practices Variation

The variation in data collection practices across Ohio's rape crisis centers was one of the primary drivers for developing a centralized system.

Range of Current Systems

Organizations used a variety of approaches to data collection, from highly sophisticated to entirely manual



Paper-Based Systems

Smaller rural organizations used only paper forms and filing cabinets, making data analysis nearly impossible and requiring weeks of manual work for funder reports.



Spreadsheet-Based Systems

Many organizations relied on shared Excel spreadsheets through Google Docs, which enabled basic analysis but created errors, inconsistencies, and security issues.



Basic Systems

Some used simple databases or cloud tools that improved data management but lacked victim service features and couldn't integrate with other systems.



Comprehensive Systems

Larger organizations used specialized software like VSTracking or Matrix, which offered better functionality but were costly, isolated, and incompatible with other organizations' systems.

Reporting Challenges

The variation in data collection systems created significant challenges for reporting to funders such as **inconsistent definitions** of key terms across organizations led to incomparable data, **multiple reporting formats** required organizations to manipulate data differently for each funder, **time-intensive processes** took staff away from direct services for significant periods, and **data quality issues** including missing information, duplicates, and errors were common.

Funding Requirements

Federal and state funding requirements significantly influenced the implementation context:

VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) Funding

- Required specific data collection on client demographics, services provided, and outcomes
- Quarterly reporting requirements created ongoing administrative burden
- Changes in federal requirements necessitated system flexibility

VAWA (Violence Against Women Act) Funding

- Emphasized coordinated community response and data sharing
- Required reporting on collaborative activities and system improvement efforts
- Supported technology improvements that could enhance service delivery

State Funding Streams

- Ohio Attorney General's Office funding required specific programmatic reporting
- Ohio Department of Health funding emphasized prevention activities and outcome measurement
- Varying reporting schedules and requirements across state funders

This implementation context provided both challenges and opportunities for the Vela Direct pilot. While organizations faced resource constraints and varied capacity levels, there was also recognition of the need for improved data systems and general readiness for technological solutions that could reduce administrative burden while improving service delivery and advocacy capabilities.

Methodology

Evaluation Design

UBUNTU Research & Evaluation conducted a comprehensive process evaluation of the VELA pilot program from January through July 2025. Our evaluation used a mixed-methods approach that combined qualitative and quantitative data collection strategies to understand how organizations experienced implementing VELA across different contexts and settings. We designed this evaluation to capture both the practical realities of day-to-day system adoption and the broader organizational factors that influenced success or challenges during implementation.

The evaluation focused on examining how the selected pilot cohort of rape crisis centers across Ohio introduced and adopted the VELA data management software within their existing workflows and organizational structures. We studied the implementation process from initial training through daily usage, documenting both the immediate challenges organizations faced and the adaptations they developed to make the system work within their unique contexts.

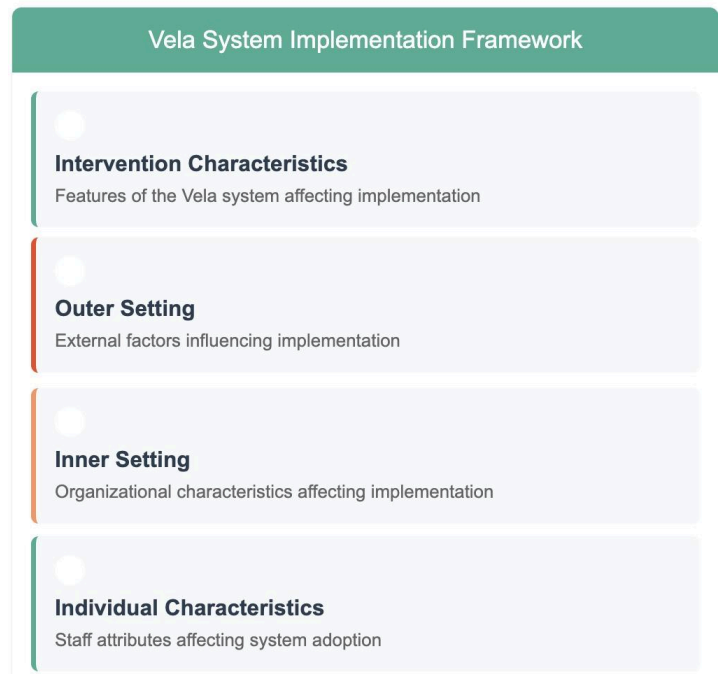
CFIR + Equitable Evaluation Framework

The Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR) is a tool that helps us understand all the different aspects that affect how well a new system gets put into place. It was created by researchers led by Laura Damschroder in 2009 to bring together various implementation theories into one unified approach. CFIR is essentially a systematic lens through which we can examine all the various factors that might influence how well a new system or process (like Vela) is implemented within organizations. It provides a structured way to understand why implementations succeed or struggle across different settings. CFIR helps evaluators understand the complex web of factors that influence whether new systems and processes are successfully adopted within organizations. Rather than looking at implementation as a simple success-or-failure outcome, CFIR provides a systematic lens for examining why implementations succeed or struggle across different organizational settings. We applied CFIR's five-domain structure throughout our data collection and analysis process. The Intervention Characteristics domain helped us examine specific features of the VELA system that affected implementation, including its complexity, adaptability, relative advantage over existing systems, and overall design quality. Through the **Outer Setting domain**, we explored external factors that influenced implementation success, such as policy contexts, collaboration networks, and the specific needs of clients served by each organization.

The **Inner Setting domain** allowed us to investigate organizational characteristics that shaped implementation experiences, including organizational culture, implementation climate, readiness for change, and structural characteristics like staffing and resources. We used the

Individual Characteristics domain to understand how staff attributes affected system adoption, focusing on knowledge levels, beliefs about technology, self-efficacy, and comfort with new systems. Finally, the **Intervention Process** domain helped us examine the strategies used to facilitate implementation, including planning approaches, stakeholder engagement, execution methods, and reflection processes.

Throughout our evaluation, we integrated equitable evaluation principles that centered dignity in our research process. This meant using culturally responsive approaches that actively reflected the voices and lived experiences of the communities served by participating organizations. We recognized that traditional evaluation approaches can inadvertently reinforce power imbalances, so we worked to ensure that our methodology honored the expertise and perspectives of frontline staff and the survivors they serve.



Data Collection Methods

Our data collection strategy involved multiple complementary approaches that allowed us to triangulate findings and develop a comprehensive understanding of implementation experiences. We began our data collection by participating in monthly OAESV VELA Cohort Office Hours throughout the pilot period. These sessions served as ongoing implementation support for participating organizations and provided us with real-time access to emerging issues, problem-solving discussions, and peer learning exchanges. The office hours data helped us track implementation progress and identify patterns in the types of support that organizations needed most frequently. Early in the pilot period, we conducted direct observation of three VELA system demonstrations.

These demonstration sessions provided insight into initial organizational reactions, the types of questions that staff raised when first encountering the system, and early indicators of implementation challenges or enthusiasm. Observing these sessions helped us understand the gap between system capabilities and organizational expectations and informed our approach to subsequent data collection. Following the demonstrations, we administered pre-implementation surveys that assessed baseline organizational characteristics and staff readiness for system change. These surveys helped us understand starting conditions across participating organizations and provided quantitative measures of factors like staff confidence, existing system usage patterns, and organizational capacity for technology

adoption. The survey data allowed us to identify patterns across organizations and establish a foundation for understanding implementation experiences.

Pilot Participant Profile

Organization	Size	Location	Staff Capacity	Existing System	Digital Confidence Level
Project Woman	10-30 staff	Urban	No dedicated data staff	Paper records, spreadsheets, Osnium	3/4
The Domestic Violence Shelter Inc	10-30 staff	Urban	No dedicated data staff	Paper records, Osnium	2/4
Haven of Hope	5-10 staff	Rural	No dedicated data staff	Paper records, spreadsheets	4/4

Table 2: VELA Direct Pilot Organizations Profiles

Key Baseline Characteristics:

- None had dedicated data management staff
- Primary data collection challenges included difficult-to-use existing systems and manual counting processes
- Top priority for new system was ease of use across all organizations
- Main concerns centered on staff training and integration with current processes

After organizations had time to begin using VELA in their daily work, we conducted semi-structured interviews with staff members from pilot organizations, members of the VELA Direct implementation team, and OAESV staff who supported the pilot process. These interviews were designed to capture detailed implementation experiences, identify specific challenges that emerged during adoption, and document adaptations that organizations made to integrate VELA into their work. The interview process followed a structured protocol that aligned with CFIR domains while remaining flexible enough to explore unexpected themes that emerged during conversations.

Analysis Approach

All qualitative data underwent systematic thematic analysis using a structured coding approach that combined the CFIR framework with themes that emerged from the data. We developed a comprehensive codebook that included both theoretical codes aligned with CFIR domains and empirical codes that captured specific implementation experiences unique to VELA adoption in survivor-serving organizations. Our coding structure included several major categories that reflected the implementation journey. We coded for organizational context factors such as organization type, staff roles, and previous system experiences, which helped us understand the starting conditions that shaped VELA adoption. We developed codes for the implementation experience itself, capturing both challenges and successes that

organizations encountered during adoption, including ease of learning, navigation satisfaction, and specific implementation difficulties.

The codebook also included detailed codes for system features and advantages that emerged as important to organizations, such as reporting benefits, real-time documentation capabilities, remote access features, and built-in funder reports. We coded for customization and adaptability themes, recognizing that organizations needed to tailor VELA to their specific workflows and reporting needs. Support and responsiveness codes captured how organizations experienced training resources, technical assistance, and ongoing support structures. We paid particular attention to organizational and staff adaptation patterns, developing codes that captured management buy-in, staff enthusiasm, change resistance, and the various ways that different staff roles approached system adoption. Our coding structure included specific attention to how technical proficiency levels and help-seeking behaviors influenced individual staff success with the system. We also coded for confidence and competency development over time, tracking how staff comfort and advanced feature use evolved throughout the pilot period.

Following initial coding, we engaged in pattern identification within and across code categories. This process involved looking for recurring themes that appeared in multiple interviews or across different organizational contexts. We systematically compared how different types of codes clustered together, identifying which implementation factors seemed to co-occur and which appeared to be influenced by specific organizational characteristics like size, location, or existing technology infrastructure. Our analysis included a comprehensive cross-case analysis that systematically compared implementation experiences across the different organizational contexts represented in our pilot cohort. We created comparison matrices that allowed us to identify patterns in how organizations with similar characteristics experienced implementation, as well as unique factors that differentiated successful adoption from ongoing challenges.

Throughout the analysis process, we used evaluator triangulation to integrate findings from surveys, interviews, and observational data. This integration allowed us to develop a comprehensive understanding that incorporated both quantitative indicators and detailed qualitative experiences. We used survey data to identify broad trends in staff confidence, system usage patterns, and organizational readiness, then used interview and observational data to understand the stories and contexts behind these trends. This triangulation helped us validate findings across different data sources and develop more nuanced interpretations of implementation success factors.

Limitations or Known Gaps in Data

Figure 1: Data Limitations and Evaluation Constraints

This visual summary presents the four primary limitations that affected the scope and reliability of the VELA pilot evaluation. Each limitation is categorized by its impact type. Collectively, these constraints should be considered when interpreting evaluation outcomes and planning future implementation studies.



Findings

Implementation Process Analysis

Vela Pilot Planning and Onboarding

The planning and onboarding process of this project was significantly impacted by the deadlines the host organization, OAESV, had to hold as part of their funding source. However, the full planning of this initiative can be traced back as early as March of 2024 where the original desire and need was found in creating a statewide database system (more on this can be found in the phase 1 report). This section will detail the process of planning and onboarding into VELA Direct, as well as include learnings that were garnered along the way.

Timeline & Activities

Overview of Activities	Dec 2024	Jan 2025	Feb 2025	March 2025	April 2025
OAESV introduces VELA Cohort program at Director's Meeting					
Interest Survey Shared to Rape Crisis Center Directors					
OAESV and VELA Host Demo sessions for RCC Staff					
Cohort Invitation Letters and proposal sent					
RCC Programs formally invited to cohort with confirmation signature page included.				7th	
OAESV Signs Contract with VELA					
VELA Direct begins scheduling on-boarding meetings with RCCs					
Staff and Administrators VELA Training				24th	
Programs begin implementation of VELA Software into their daily workflows					
Weekly Office hours hosted by OAESV and VELA team begin for continued support					

Table 3: Timeline of Activities for Vela Cohort

Lessons Learned from the On-Boarding Process

1. Create both pre- and post-onboarding help sessions.

Host drop-in sessions both before and after programs begin implementation. With the newness of anything, often people are unsure what they don't know or what questions they have until they begin to physically use a thing; that was the case with the implementation of VELA.

2. Begin Onboarding at the end of a quarter.

For a smoother transition, as it relates to data migration, programs should begin on-boarding at the end of the quarter and can begin using the new software at the start of the new quarter, creating a smoother entry point to software adaptation.

3. Everything Takes Longer Than You Think—Plan for It.

There is a significant gap between having an idea and implementing that idea; it often takes more time than we think to get the meetings set, have the first draft created and launch something new. The landscape of this work is emergent and requires a timeline that allows for the ebb and flow of the work.

4. Be as clear as possible in your communication.

There was a lot of communication that went out to programs concerning this project; however, there was an identified need to improve upon that communication in areas such as the timeline and the benefits of being under an umbrella organization for a software adaptation of this type.

“

“Like after we kind of decided to do this, learned afterwards, like, oh, maybe it's better if we have them join at the end of a quarter so that their data migration is a little bit different.”

“I think the assumption was learn the system and start using the system, but I don't think that assumption worked for everyone because we still have some programs that are still doing data migration.”

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“I think recognizing that first month everyone's just learning the program and figuring out what discussion points needed to happen. And people didn't necessarily have questions yet because they were still onboarding. So I think... looking back, those supportive spaces might have been helpful after That first month or a little bit later.”

“So I think the first month we didn't hear from a lot of programs because everyone was learning the program still.”

“

“I think having a timeline that is more flexible and giving some more guidance to programs of like, we want you to create your own timeline and these are some timeline recommendations based on reporting that might be most supportive for you so that they have that information up front and it's a little bit more clear to programs I think could be helpful.”

”

”

Training and Support Delivery

The quality of support that was provided by VELA Direct to both OAESV, as the umbrella organization, and RCCs was one of the most prevalent themes that emerged from our findings. Overall, center directors indicated that the support provided to them by the VELA direct team was positive and helpful to them as they adopted the new software. They noted that the VELA staff was very responsive to their requests and questions. They offered more than one solution to a problem and were able to provide custom solutions. Additionally, they were able to manage contact from a given organization's full staff and not just the center director. Another major highlight of the VELA support is that they were instrumental in helping crisis center directors garner buy-in from their staff through providing detailed training and centering their approach in WHY VELA was going to be a good thing for them to adopt. Additionally, they spoke highly of OAESV's added layer of support through the offered office hours, where directors and or their staff could attend and get their questions and

curiosities answered. Finally, OAESV also shared this positive experience with support from

“

“Like after we kind of decided to do this, learned afterwards, like, oh, maybe it's better if we have them join at the end of a quarter so that their data migration is a little bit different.”

“I think the assumption was learn the system and start using the system, but I don't think that assumption worked for everyone because we still have some programs that are still doing data migration.”

”

the VELA Direct team.

Another important aspect that should be uplifted that directly contributed to the positive experience and quality of support provided is the organizational history and backgrounds of the people who work at VELA Direct. The support that VELA Direct was able to provide is directly informed by the organizational and personal history of those who work there. The support is intentionally designed and not ad hoc nor reactive. For example, the support staff that helps organizations on board have over 20 years of experience in working with survivors of domestic and sexual violence. This first-hand understanding of what the boots on the ground work is truly like helps them bring a lens to the software's design and usability that is from a deeply informed perspective. Additionally, they understand the landscape of the work from how this software can support an individual organization to how it can speak and be leveraged as a tool at the state and federal levels when it comes to data reporting. With this understanding, they can center the experience of survivors in their approach, and they hold relationship development at the core of their onboarding process.

User Experience and System Performance

Ease of Use and Navigation

An important feature desired out of the phase 1 findings was that the statewide software be something that front-line users could navigate with ease and would for the most part be easily integrated into their workflow. What was found through the interviews is that this need is being met with VELA Direct. RCC directors reported that both in their role as administrators and their front-line staff, the system has been easy to navigate and integrate into their jobs. They indicated that the visual aesthetics of the VELA are modern and make understanding how to locate what they need for in-real-time documentation a positive experience, particularly in comparison to previous data entry methods.

"It's easy for them to find stuff and I think they really like it compared to our old system. I would say the hardest things to know. Navigate were the incidences. think staff struggled with that a little bit, but they caught on pretty quick, so that was awesome."

"I think when we first got it, everybody was excited and definitely thought it was better than our old system because it was so much easier to navigate."

"then also it's very nice that they have everything laid out so you know, I gotta get this person's name, I gotta, you know, I can put all my referrals in right now, which is really nice."

While programs have had a mostly positive experience in navigating this new system there have been some challenges presented specifically for folks who have less technological experience. They also reported that there was a learning curve to figure out certain functions and how to get the system to just show a specific set of clients. However, they do not report that these challenges detract from their desire to continue using VELA and they feel confident that this is something that with time can be overcome.

“

“The only complaint from my staff navigation-wise is that they really feel like there should be a spot for their clients on their dashboard that pulls up groups, which I think there is, and they don't know how to use it, so we are working on that.”

“I think I only had one staff person that was like, you know, I just need some extra time to sort of sit and play with it. Not that it's been hard to do. They've just not had a lot of time to spend in it. But I think, again, that's just something that comes from using it. You know, you get more and more confident every time you, you know, you use something.”

“But I think that is to be expected. Not everyone in the world is super tech savvy. So, and not everyone is great with change.”

”

Client Data-Management

VELA Direct's goal for their software is to create a more standardized way to track and talk about the work that organizations are doing in the field of domestic and sexual violence. Within this standardization, their software aims to still provide a level of customization that allows organizations to meet their reporting and tracking needs beyond state-level funder reports.

“It really standardizes how folks are defining service entry, the language that is being used, which I find really helpful so that across the board within a state there's that shared kind of process and shared understanding, which is really supportive to data entry as a whole.”

“What it does is it standardizes the data entry process and data collection process. Each organization already has the set data kind of [data] elements that they absolutely need to report on, and then they can customize that if they choose to.”

RCCs reported that this is the area in which they have experienced the most challenge in their implementation of VELA Direct. Most notably, the challenge has presented itself in logging anonymous hotline calls, and is not actively receiving a service from the organization. However, this challenge does not appear to outweigh the benefits that RCCs are already experiencing in managing client data. In fact, they are already able to see with more clarity

the rate of the services they are providing, build a strong narrative for funding around the various types of victimization, and identify the gaps in services provided.

"Trying to explain to them, if you don't have all the information, it's an anonymous call, was a little hard for them because they were like, well, how do I know if they call more than once?"

"I think it's easy, but I think they're struggling with that a little bit. But it's a lot easier to look at the data and see where our biggest needs are now than it would have been before and to see what services we're providing the most of and where the gaps are. I would say it's easier now."

"What this is going to help me do is pull domestic and assault numbers separate, which is huge because I get funding from both and they don't want to know about the other."

"I can just really look at the data and go, okay, this is. This seems to be something that we're really seeing an increase in this type of victimization or this or that, and how can I better, you know, prepare myself and my staff for being able to do that."

Reporting Burden and Data Quality

In seeking out a statewide data system one of OAESV's primary goals was that the selected software reduced the burden that RCCs experience with reporting out to funders. While it is very early on in adaptation, RCC directors reported that they are already experiencing more ease in their report generation. All centers have several state level funders that they must report to like VOCA and FIPSA.

"So VELA has set reports already for a lot of the major funders, which is really nice because I can just click on my VOCA report and pull everything for VOCA and all of my services billed to VOCA will pull on that report."

"From an admin standpoint, when I'm doing my grants, I can provide stats just for that advocate. If I'm doing paper, I would have to really pull each of my advocate's stuff, hand count that, go, okay, I'm reporting this to VOCA only, or I'm reporting, you know what I mean?"

This burden reduction seems to also have produced more space for them to be innovative in the other ways they can leverage VELA to create reports for their organizations beyond stat-level reports. Examples of these innovations are operating reports for board members, and error-checking reports. The extent to which the reporting burden being reduced is still yet to be determined but early indicators are promising for what the future holds.

“

"I have custom reports, I built one for our board, because I give them a monthly report on the things we've been doing, because they're always curious"

"then they also helped me build an error-checking report, so I can make sure staff are entering things correctly, which was immensely helpful, and I highly recommend all the other people do that are using VELA"

”

Trust and Risk Management

Trust was an integral part of the implementation and buy-in of this massive software shift. RCCs are extremely busy entities constantly responding to the urgency and pervasive nature of sexual and domestic violence. Asking them amid this work to take on implementing a new software is a large ask, which OAESV is hyper aware of and was sensitive to in this request. However, despite this, RCCs have enthusiastically taken on this challenge with confidence, and this can be attributed to the trust that they have in the host organization, OAESV.

“

"I think that you, what was nice about this is that if you have a state coalition or someone suggesting a certain type, I think you should trust that they've spent the time looking into that." -RCC

”

RECOMMENDATIONS

System Recommendations (Based on Phase 2 User Experience)

The phase 2 user experience interviews revealed insights into how advocates and administrators interacted with the system in their daily work. While organizations appreciated the system's comprehensive capabilities, several recurring challenges emerged that, if addressed, could improve user experience and operational efficiency. These recommendations are grounded in direct feedback from frontline staff who shared their experiences navigating the system's features and functionality.

Primary Areas for System Enhancement

The interviews identified two areas where system improvements would have the most significant impact on daily operations. These pain points were mentioned consistently across multiple organizations, suggesting they represent systemic rather than isolated issues.

Shelter Data Management and Reporting

Organizations consistently struggled with shelter-related functionality, which presents a core component of their service delivery. The challenges extend beyond simple navigation issues to fundamental problems with data retrieval and reporting capabilities. As one advocate explained during the interview process:

“

“I couldn't figure out the shelter part of it. That's still something I'm working on. Like, I'm not finding shelter numbers when I'm running reports. So, I don't know how, and that's, you know, that's something I definitely wanted to talk to someone about this week.”

”

This feedback indicates that users are unable to access shelter data even after extended periods of system use, suggesting that the current interface design may not align with user mental models of how shelter information should be organized and accessed.

System Complexity and User Adaptation Challenges

Beyond specific feature issues, the interviews revealed a broader challenge related to the system's comprehensive nature and customization capabilities. While these features provide flexibility, they also create barriers to adoption and efficient use.

The Customization Paradox

The system's strength as a highly customizable platform simultaneously serves as both an asset and a challenge for user organizations. Administrators from pilot organizations acknowledge this duality, noting that

“

"VELA is just a very comprehensive and customizable program. So I think that took a while for each program to kind of figure out how they were going to use it."

”

This observation highlights a fundamental tension between providing powerful, flexible tools and ensuring those tools remain accessible to users with varying technical expertise and time constraints. The customization process involves extensive decision making about organizational configuration as VELA Direct staff explained

“

"So the first part of it, we do an administrative configuration in which we talk to organizations about how they would like to configure their sites for their organization. And configuring can be anything from their funding to their shelter sites. To the different programs they collect information on, what they collect on their hotline."

”

While this thorough approach ensures the system meets specific organizational needs, it can overwhelm users who are simultaneously learning new software while making important decisions about their data management practices.

Administrator-Focused Strategies

The most successful onboarding approach for administrators involved comprehensive individual engagement with their entire staff. A RCC Director exemplified this approach:

“

"Something that has been really helpful for our organization and me personally was I met with every single one of our staff individually and talked to them about it."

”

This one-on-one strategy allowed administrators to address specific concerns, gauge individual readiness levels, and tailor messaging to each staff member's role and comfort level. Administrators also benefited from detailed configuration sessions that helped them understand the relationship between system setup and organizational workflows. As Vela Direct noted, the administrative configuration process involves extensive decision-making: *"we talk to organizations about how they would like to configure their sites for their organization. And configuring can be anything from their funding to their shelter sites."*

Advocate-Focused Strategies

Frontline advocates responded best to practical, hands-on training that emphasized immediate workflow benefits rather than comprehensive system overviews. Staff appreciated learning through real-world scenarios that demonstrated how Vela would improve their daily documentation tasks. As one user noted: *"it's very nice that they have everything laid out so you know, I gotta get this person's name, I gotta, you know, I can put all my referrals in right now, which is really nice."*

The most effective advocate training focused on core documentation functions first, with advanced features introduced gradually after staff gained confidence with basic operations. Organizations that attempted comprehensive training from the start experienced more resistance, particularly from *"staff who have worked here for 20 plus years and who are not very interested in changing."* Staff consistently described initial excitement about the system's modern interface and capabilities. *"I think when we first got it, everybody was excited and definitely thought it was better than our old system because it was so much easier to navigate."* However, this enthusiasm was tempered by the reality of learning comprehensive new workflows while maintaining service delivery.

Learning Curve Acknowledgment

Staff were realistic about the time needed to become proficient, with many describing a natural progression from uncertainty to confidence. *"I think I only had one staff person that was like, you know, I just need some extra time to sort of sit and play with it. Not that it's been hard to do. They've just not had a lot of time to spend in it."* This feedback suggests staff understood that competency would develop through regular use rather than intensive initial training.

Confidence Building Through Success

Staff described increasing confidence as they mastered specific functions, particularly those that directly improved their work efficiency. The visual organization of information was particularly appreciated: *"it's just a lot easier to navigate, and it's also nice that it doesn't look like it came from like Windows 2000, a little bit more modern."*

Specific Challenge Areas

Staff identified particular functions that required extended learning time, especially incident documentation: *"I would say the hardest things to know. Navigate were the incidences. I think staff struggled with that a little bit, but they caught on pretty quick."* This pattern suggests that complex features benefit from targeted, repeated training rather than one-time instruction.

- **Most Accessed:** Individual, Responsive Support Organizations consistently valued direct access to knowledgeable support staff. Haven of Hope's director emphasized: *"I've had meetings after Zoom meetings. I've had access to people to email them."* This personalized, responsive support was accessed frequently because it addressed specific organizational needs rather than generic system features.

The OAESV-hosted office hours were also heavily utilized and valued: *"I liked hearing that, what other people were having struggles with and how they were customizing their stuff, that was super helpful."* These sessions combined direct support with peer learning, making them particularly effective.

- **Most Accessed:** Problem-Solving and Customization Support Organizations frequently accessed support for system customization and report building. The ability to create "custom reports" and "error-checking reports" required ongoing technical assistance that organizations actively sought out.
- **Least Accessed:** Generic Training Materials Traditional training resources like manuals or pre-recorded tutorials were mentioned less frequently in interviews. Organizations preferred interactive, responsive support over static resources, particularly when facing specific implementation challenges.

- **Least Accessed: Scheduled Group Training** While initial group training was necessary, scheduled follow-up group sessions were less effective than on-demand support. OAESV noted that *"the first month we didn't hear from a lot of programs because everyone was learning the program still,"* suggesting that rigid support schedules didn't align with organizational learning rhythms.

Implementation Strategy (Cohort Lessons Learned)

Management Champion Presence

The most critical readiness factor was having a dedicated champion within organizational leadership. As Vela Direct emphasized: "I think definitely having that champion, right? So having Jen there, who has a good understanding of the data and the needs. And the reason why this change is happening is really pivotal." Organizations with engaged, knowledgeable champions who could advocate internally and support staff through challenges experienced smoother implementations.



Peer Mentoring Program

Based on the success of informal peer learning during office hours, future phases should establish formal mentoring relationships between experienced and new organizations. This could include pairing organizations with similar characteristics (*size, location, service focus*) to ensure relevant knowledge transfer.



Regular Feedback Circles

"I think if we do another cohort, I definitely want to keep the group demos as a session because I think that was really helpful." Regular peer learning circles could focus on specific implementation challenges, advanced features, or creative problem-solving approaches.



Shared Resource Library

Organizations could contribute anonymized examples of their configurations, custom reports, and workflow solutions to a shared library. This would allow others to learn from successful implementations while providing recognition for innovative approaches.



Site Visits

For organizations comfortable with sharing, structured site visits could allow staff to observe how others have integrated Vela into their workflows. This would be particularly valuable for organizations struggling with specific implementation challenges.

→ **Flexibility with
Imperfect
Implementation**

Organizations that succeeded were comfortable beginning to use the system while continuing to refine their setup. Conversely, organizations that struggled *"don't want to say that they're launched until every form is added to the system, until everything is exactly as they want."* The ability to embrace iterative improvement rather than requiring perfection was strongly predictive of success.

→ **Realistic Staff Change
Management**

Organizations that proactively addressed staff resistance experienced smoother transitions. The Domestic Violence Shelter's approach of individual staff meetings helped identify and address concerns early. Organizations that assumed staff would automatically embrace change faced more significant implementation delays.

→ **Technical Confidence
vs. Technical
Expertise**

Technical expertise was less predictive than technical confidence. Haven of Hope, with a 4/4 confidence rating, had a smooth implementation despite having no dedicated data staff. The willingness to experiment and learn was more important than existing technical skills.

→ **Sustained Leadership
Commitment**

Organizations needed leadership commitment beyond initial enthusiasm. OAESV observed that *"there was so much excitement at the directors meeting and then it just like fell off."* Organizations whose leadership maintained engagement throughout the implementation process had better outcomes.

The most significant gap was insufficient preparation of frontline staff before system launch. Organizations that succeeded implemented individual staff meetings, but this wasn't standard practice. Future cohorts need structured pre-launch staff engagement protocols that help identify and address resistance before implementation begins.

→ Pre-Launch Staff Engagement and Buy-In

While technical training was provided, organizations needed more support for managing the human side of system change. Staff resistance, particularly from long-term employees, required specialized change management approaches that weren't built into the standard onboarding process.

→ **Organizational Change
Management Guidance**

Organizations needed better guidance on creating realistic implementation timelines. OAESV learned that "having a timeline that is more flexible and giving some more guidance to programs of like, we want you to create your own timeline and these are some timeline recommendations" would have prevented early stress and unrealistic expectations.

→ **Realistic
Timeline Planning**

The timing of system launch relative to data migration created unexpected challenges. OAESV noted: *"maybe it's better if we have them join at the end of a quarter so that their data migration is a little bit different."* This strategic guidance should be provided during pre-implementation planning rather than during implementation.

→ **Data Migration
Strategy**

Organizations valued peer learning during implementation but would have benefited from connecting with similar organizations before launch. Pre-implementation peer connections could help set realistic expectations and provide early problem-solving networks.

→ **Peer Connection
Before Launch**

How can Phase 2 learnings inform customized pacing or tiered onboarding for future cohorts?

The pilot experience showed that every organization is different and needs its own timeline. Some organizations had strong leadership, flexible staff, and were ready to jump in quickly. Others needed more time and support. Instead of rushing everyone through the same process, future groups should be assessed upfront and given timelines that match their readiness level.

Digital comfort levels varied dramatically among pilot organizations; some rated themselves 2 out of 4 while others were 4 out of 4. This means some organizations need intensive, hands-on help with basic computer tasks, while others just need strategic guidance. Matching support intensity to technical confidence makes better use of everyone's time and gets better results. Training should happen in stages rather than trying to teach everything at once. Start with the basic documentation features that help with daily work, then move to reporting tools once people feel comfortable, and finally introduce customization options. This prevents overwhelm and lets people build confidence with early wins before tackling harder features.

Organizations also need different launch approaches. Some should transition gradually, especially if they have complex current systems or staff who resist change. Others might need to run old and new systems side-by-side during data migration. Organizations with simple systems and eager staff can switch completely right away. The key is matching the approach to what each organization can handle. Grouping similar organizations together for training creates natural peer learning opportunities. Small rural centers can learn from each other's challenges, while larger urban programs can share different strategies. These peer connections become valuable for problem-solving and sharing creative solutions that emerge during actual use.

Organizations need support well beyond initial training, with formal check-ins at 3, 6, and 12 months. This extended timeline recognizes that truly integrating new software into daily workflows is an ongoing process, not a one-time event. The bottom line is that successful implementation requires treating each organization individually rather than using the same approach for everyone. Future cohorts need flexible strategies that match organizational differences instead of forcing everyone into the same mold.

Sustainability & Action Planning

Building Long-Term Capacity

Organizations consistently valued direct, personalized support over generic resources. The most effective ongoing support appears to be responsive individual assistance rather than scheduled training sessions. Organizations appreciated being able to reach out when they encountered specific problems rather than having to wait for the next group training. Peer learning also emerged as a valuable ongoing support.

“

"I've had meetings after Zoom meetings. I've had access to people to email them."

"I liked hearing that, what other people were having struggles with and how they were customizing their stuff, that was super helpful."

”

Future cohorts should specifically identify and confirm the presence of someone within each organization who can advocate for the change and support their colleagues through the transition. Having a Vela Direct change champion became important for success. The Vela team emphasized:

“

"I think definitely having that champion, right? So having Jenn there, who has a good understanding of the data and the needs. And the reason why this change is happening is really pivotal."

”

What Pre-launch Practices Should Be Replicated, Revised, or Retired?

The individual staff meetings that successful organizations conducted should be replicated. This personal attention helped address concerns before they became implementation barriers. Group demonstrations and peer learning opportunities should definitely be continued. However, the rigid timeline approach needs significant revision. OAESV learned that organizations perform better when they have flexibility to create their own implementation schedules. As they noted, *"having a timeline that is more flexible and giving some more guidance to programs of like, we want you to create your own timeline and these are some timeline recommendations"* would work much better. Organizations need structure and guidance, but they also need the autonomy to move at a pace that matches their capacity and circumstances. The biggest assumption that should be retired is expecting organizations to transition completely and immediately to the new system. Many organizations needed to maintain hybrid approaches much longer than anticipated. Accepting that gradual transition is normal reduces pressure on organizations and actually leads to better long-term outcomes.

“

"So we're still doing some paper, but it's really just as a reminder of what I need to put into VELA."

”

Financial Sustainability

Funding Barriers and Solutions

Cost emerged as the primary barrier preventing organizations from adopting database systems. One participant was direct about this challenge: *"I'll tell you, the reason we haven't gone online to the database is one, costs."* Many organizations had long wanted to modernize their data systems but simply couldn't afford the transition costs, setup fees, and ongoing expenses that come with commercial database solutions. The grant-funded pilot model successfully removed this barrier by allowing organizations to focus on learning and implementation rather than worrying about finances. Participants appreciated this approach: *"having the opportunity to be able to try something out and not having to worry about how I pay for that has been super beneficial for me."* This experience demonstrates that upfront funding is crucial for getting organizations started, especially smaller organizations with

limited technology budgets. The umbrella model that OAESV provided also proved valuable for cost management. By hosting the pilot centrally, OAESV could "onboard programs at the same time for like a supportive group onboarding and also so that OAESV could support with the costs." This approach created economies of scale that individual organizations could never achieve on their own, making the system more affordable while also providing better support.

Justifying Long-term Investment

Despite initial cost concerns, organizations quickly identified concrete benefits that justify continued investment in the system. The most immediate impact was dramatic improvements in reporting efficiency.

“

"it's just so much easier to get what you need for the grants. You don't have to go search for each individual thing the grant is asking for, it's all in one report."

”

This time savings translates directly into cost savings through reduced staff hours spent on administrative tasks. Data quality improvements provide another strong justification for continued investment. Organizations had struggled with manual systems that produced inconsistent, unreliable data. Vela's standardization of "the data entry process and data collection process" creates much more reliable information for grant reporting and program evaluation, which strengthens funding applications and organizational credibility. The management benefits also support long-term investment decisions. Organizations appreciated being able to monitor service delivery more effectively and ensure staff accountability.

“

"I think inputting the information has been easy. I think I really like being able to go on a screen and kind of seeing if my staff's done what I've asked them to do or not."

”

Better oversight leads to improved service delivery and stronger organizational performance. Finally, organizations recognized that better data supports their broader advocacy mission. OAESV pointed out that "A lot of reporters are asking for statistics or numbers to quantify the scope of this issue, and if we're able to have numbers that accurately reflect the landscape in Ohio, it'll be much more impactful." Reliable, comprehensive data strengthens policy advocacy efforts, which benefits not just individual organizations but the entire field's ability to secure resources and drive systemic change.

Conclusion

This pilot showed that successful implementation depends on more than the tool itself. It depends on how people are treated while learning, how support is offered during change, and how trust shapes the pace of progress. The presence of care was as vital as the presence of training. Every organization approached this work with a different rhythm. Each had distinct histories, capacities, and concerns. Still, common ground emerged. Staff asked for clarity. Directors asked for flexibility. Everyone asked for systems that match the realities they face each day. These are not technical requests. These are conditions for sustainability.

The evaluation confirmed that survivor-serving organizations carry both knowledge and vision. Their insights should guide the next phase of system design, cohort selection, and statewide planning. Efficiency alone will not carry this work forward. Relationships, responsiveness, and reflection will. No single model fits every organization. Success requires tools that can grow and shift. It requires infrastructure that bends without breaking, especially when the stakes are high. The process must respect the labor of those doing the work.

This report closes with deep respect for what has already begun. What comes next will depend on continued listening, long-term support, and steady leadership. The foundation is in place. The work ahead will determine its reach.

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Appendix A: Implementation Resources and Tools

1. OAESV and Vela Invitation Letter



February 20, 2025

Hello,

Thank you for your interest in collaborating with OAESV to enhance the capacity for collecting, measuring, and reporting sexual violence data in Ohio. **We would like to invite your program to join the OAESV Vela Cohort.** This program allows your organization to adopt Vela, a secure, cloud-based case management software tailored for organizations addressing sexual and domestic violence.

We are launching this Cohort to provide access to Vela for up to 15 Ohio Rape Crisis Centers. Through this project, our goal is to improve case management, enhance data collection and reporting, and ultimately work towards comprehensive statewide sexual violence data collection. We hope that software like Vela can support programs like yours to increase effectiveness, reduce administrative burdens, and allow more time for direct services.

This proposal contains detailed information about the OAESV Vela Cohort, anticipated timelines, costs OAESV will cover, and ongoing support provided by OAESV and Vela, should you choose to join. If you have any questions or would like more information, please connect with myself, Jenn Eidemiller.

We are excited to offer this opportunity and hope you will consider joining this cohort. Please complete the final page of this proposal and submit it to us by March 7th, 2025, if you would like to opt into the OAESV Vela Cohort. We are looking forward to hearing from you!

Best regards,

Jenn Eidemiller

Grants, Resource & Communications Manager

Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence

OAESV Vela Cohort – Summary

OAESV, Ohio's statewide sexual violence coalition, aims to enhance sexual violence services by improving data collection, measurement, and reporting. This is crucial for addressing service gaps and advocating for resources and support.

OAESV has secured funding for Vela, a secure cloud-based case management system to strengthen data capacity and reduce administrative burdens. They plan to onboard 15 Rape Crisis Centers in April 2025, covering the first year's costs with a discounted ongoing rate. Vela will enable organizations to report aggregate data conveniently, allowing OAESV to produce annual regional and statewide reports demonstrating the scale and outcomes of sexual violence services, aiding local advocacy efforts.

What is Vela?

Vela is a secure data collection and reporting software solution for sexual and domestic violence programs created by advocates, for advocates. To learn more about what Vela has to offer, please visit their website for additional information, common questions, and answers:

<https://www.veladirect.com/>

If you would like to see Vela in action, [view the Vela Demo](#) provided to Ohio Rape Crisis Centers in December 2024. (Vela Demo Recording Password: na^bz5ky)



OAESV Evaluation Partners

As OAESV starts the first state-wide Vela Cohort, we will collaborate with Ubuntu, Research & Evaluation, to evaluate the process's success. To learn more about Ubuntu's evaluation and team, [please view this resource to learn more.](#)

OAESV Vela Cohort Agreement Page

Thank you for your interest in the OAESV Vela Cohort Program. If you want to join the cohort, please select "Yes" below and complete the remaining information. **Submit this form to Jenn Eidemiller at jeidemiller@oaesv.org by March 7th, 2025.**

Is your program interested in joining the OAESV Vela Cohort Program?

By selecting "Yes" below, you agree to a contract with Vela for at least one year, during which OAESV will cover the first year's costs. If you continue using Vela after a year or sign a more extended contract, your program will be responsible for reviewing and managing ongoing agreements and costs.

By joining this cohort, your program will be able to easily, quickly, and securely share aggregated sexual violence data with OAESV's Vela Umbrella site, reducing the reporting burden.

Please note that even though programs are onboarding as a cohort, each program will have its own Vela site, software, and ownership and security of its program data.

Yes

No

If you selected Yes above, OAESV & Vela will follow up with contract and onboarding information. Director Name:

Director Signature:

Date:

Vela Cohort Program Point of Contact

Please share 1-2 Point of contacts for your agency that will support with the implementation and set-up of your Vela site. These points of contact will ideally have a well-rounded idea of what direct service data your organization needs to collect, measure and report, and will be able to coordinate and share updates across your direct service teams. Direct services can mean sexual violence, domestic violence, and or housing services that you would like to utilize Vela to manage.

Name:

Job Title:

Email:

Are you interested in OAESV paying for Data Migration for your program? If so, what are the estimated costs if applicable?

Are you interested in signing a contract with Vela for 1, 3, or 5 years to lock in the 10% discount on monthly costs?

Appendix B: Data Collection Instruments

1. Pre-Survey for Pilot Organizations

Demographics

1. Name
2. Organization
3. What is the size of your organization?
 - a. 5-10 staff
 - b. 10-30 staff
 - c. 30-50 staff
 - d. 50-70 staff
 - e. 70-90 staff
 - f. 90 or more staff
4. Where is your organization located?
 - a. Rural area
 - b. Urban area
5. What is your role at your organization? (Fill in the blank)
6. Is your organization accepting or declining OAESV's invitation to join the Vela Direct pilot program?
 - a. Accepting the invitation to join the pilot program
 - b. Declining the invitation to join the pilot program

Organizational Readiness & Current Data Practices

1. How does your organization currently collect and manage sexual violence data? (Select all that apply)
 - Paper records
 - Spreadsheets (e.g., Excel, Google Sheets)
 - Case management software (please specify)
 - Other (please describe)
2. What challenges does your organization currently face in data collection and reporting? (Open-ended)

3. Does your organization have a dedicated staff member responsible for data management?
 - Yes, full-time
 - Yes, part-time
 - No
4. How confident are your staff in using digital tools for data entry and reporting? Explain your response.
(Scale: 1 - Not Confident to 4 - Very Confident)

Expectations for the Vela System

5. What aspects of a data collection system are most important to your organization? (Rank in order of importance)
 - Ease of use
 - Security & privacy compliance
 - Ability to generate reports efficiently
 - Compatibility with existing workflows
 - Other (please specify)
6. What are your expectations for the Vela system in improving your data collection process? (Open-ended)
7. What concerns, if any, do you have about adopting the Vela system? (Select all that apply)
 - Staff training and adaptation
 - Data security and privacy
 - Integration with current processes
 - Time required to transition
 - Other (please specify)

Training & Support Needs

8. What level of training do you anticipate your staff will need to use Vela effectively?
 - Minimal (a short tutorial or guide is sufficient)
 - Moderate (a few training sessions will be needed)
 - Extensive (ongoing support and hands-on training required)
9. What types of training formats would be most effective for your staff? (Select all that apply)
 - Live virtual training sessions
 - In-person workshops
 - Pre-recorded video tutorials
 - Written manuals/guides
 - Other (please specify)

Capacity for Implementation

10. What resources or support would help your organization successfully adopt the Vela system? (Open-ended)
11. What past experiences has your organization had with implementing new technology systems? What worked well or posed challenges? (Open-ended)
12. How do you see this system supporting your long-term data collection and reporting efforts? (Open-ended)
13. Is there any other relevant information that we should be aware of?

2. Pilot Organizations Interview Questions

INTERVENTION CHARACTERISTICS (VELA System Features)

Complexity and Usability

1. How would you describe the complexity of learning and using VELA compared to your previous data collection methods?
 - Probe: What aspects of VELA have been easiest to learn? Most challenging?
 - Probe: How does VELA's complexity compare to what you expected?
2. What advantages has VELA provided compared to your previous data collection and reporting methods?
 - Probe: What specific improvements have you noticed in your daily work?
 - Probe: Are there areas where your previous methods worked better than VELA?
 - Probe: Are there areas where your previous methods worked better than VELA?

Adaptability and Customization

3. How well has VELA been able to adapt to your organization's specific needs and workflows?
 - *Probe: What customizations have you made or requested?*
 - *Probe: How responsive has the VELA team been to your customization needs?*

Design Quality and Usability

4. How would you rate VELA's user interface and overall design?
 - *Probe: What design elements work particularly well for your staff?*
 - *Probe: What design improvements would you suggest?*

OUTER SETTING (External Environment)

Funding and Policy Context

5. How well does VELA support your reporting requirements to funders and state agencies?
 - *Probe: Which reporting requirements does VELA handle well? Less well?*
 - *Probe: Have funders expressed any reactions to reports generated through VELA?*

Client and Community Needs

6. How has using VELA impacted your ability to track and respond to client needs?

- *Probe: Has VELA changed how you identify trends in the population you serve?*
- *Probe: How do clients react to the data collection process using VELA?*

INNER SETTING (Organizational Context)

7. How receptive was your organization to adopting VELA, and what factors supported or hindered implementation?

- *Probe: What kind of leadership support did you receive?*
- *Probe: How has VELA affected your staff workload and daily operations?*

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS - USER ADAPTATION

8. How have you and your staff adapted to using VELA, and how has confidence changed over time?

- *Probe: Which staff members have adapted most easily/slowly?*
- *Probe: What individual factors seem to influence success with VELA?*

IMPLEMENTATION OUTCOMES - SATISFACTION & ADOPTION

9. How satisfied are you and your staff with VELA overall, and how consistently is it being used?

- *Probe: What aspects do staff appreciate most/least?*
- *Probe: Are there staff members who still resist using VELA?*

SUSTAINABILITY & FUTURE USE

10. How confident are you that your organization will continue using VELA long-term?

- *Probe: What factors support or threaten long-term sustainability?*
- *Probe: What would need to change for VELA to be more sustainable?*

RECOMMENDATIONS

11. How could the onboarding process be improved?

12. Based on your experience, what advice would you give to other organizations considering VELA?

- *Probe: What should organizations do to prepare for implementation?*
- *Probe: What potential pitfalls should they avoid?*

3. VELA Direct Interview Questions

ONBOARDING PROCESS & METHODOLOGY

1. Walk us through VELA Direct's standard onboarding process for new organizations.

- Probe: What are the key phases or milestones in onboarding?
- Probe: How long does the typical onboarding process take?
- Probe: What roles/staff from VELA Direct are involved at each stage?

2. How did you adapt your onboarding approach specifically for the OAESV pilot cohort?

- Probe: What modifications were made for this pilot context?
- Probe: How did working with a cohort differ from individual implementations?
- Probe: What lessons from previous implementations informed your approach?

3. What pre-implementation assessments do you conduct with organizations?

- Probe: How do you evaluate organizational readiness?
- Probe: What technical infrastructure requirements do you assess?
- Probe: How do you identify potential implementation challenges early?

DATA MIGRATION & TECHNICAL SETUP

4. Describe your approach to data migration for pilot organizations.

- Probe: What types of existing data systems did organizations have?
- Probe: What were the most complex data migration challenges?
- Probe: How do you ensure data integrity during migration?

TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING

5. Tell us about your training approach for new VELA users.

- Probe: What training formats and methods do you use?
- Probe: How do you customize training for different organizational contexts?
- Probe: What training components are most/least effective?

6. What ongoing training and support needs have emerged after go-live?

- Probe: What types of follow-up training are most requested?
- Probe: How long after implementation do organizations typically need intensive support?
- Probe: What self-service training resources have been most valuable?

4. OAESV Vela Pilot Host Interview Questions

PILOT PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING

Complexity and Usability

1. Tell us about the initial decision to host the VELA Direct Pilot Cohort.
 - Probe: What organizational capacity did you assess before committing?
 - Probe: How did this align with OAESV's strategic priorities?
2. Walk us through the planning process for developing this pilot cohort.
 - Probe: What were the key planning phases or milestones?
 - Probe: How far in advance did planning begin?

- Probe: Who were the key stakeholders involved in planning?
3. How did you determine the structure and timeline for the pilot cohort?
- *Probe: What factors influenced the cohort size and duration?*
 - *Probe: How did you balance pilot objectives with participant needs?*
 - *Probe: What alternative structures did you consider?*

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT & SELECTION

4. Describe your approach to recruiting and selecting pilot participants.

- Probe: What criteria did you use for participant selection?
 - Probe: What recruitment strategies were most/least effective?
5. What challenges did you encounter during the recruitment process?
- Probe: How did you address organizations' concerns about participation?
 - Probe: What barriers prevented some organizations from joining?

RESOURCE ALLOCATION & ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Funding

6. How did hosting this pilot impact OAESV's organizational resources and capacity?
- *Probe: What staff time and roles were dedicated to the pilot?*
 - *Probe: How did you balance pilot management with other OAESV priorities?*

Client and Community Needs

7. How has using VELA impacted your ability to track and respond to client needs?
- *Probe: Has VELA changed how you identify trends in the population you serve?*
 - *Probe: How do clients react to the data collection process using VELA?*

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES & ADAPTATIONS

8. What were the most significant challenges you faced as the pilot host organization?
- *Probe: How did challenges differ from what you anticipated?*
 - *Probe: Which challenges were internal vs. external to OAESV?*
9. Tell us about adaptations or changes you made during the pilot implementation.
- *Probe: What prompted these changes?*
 - *Probe: How did you decide what to adjust vs. what to maintain?*
 - *Probe: How did participants respond to changes?*
10. How did you support pilot participants when they encountered difficulties?
- *Probe: What types of support were most needed?*
 - *Probe: How did you balance individual organization needs with cohort objectives?*
 - *Probe: What support mechanisms worked best?*

SUCSESSES & OUTCOMES

11. What aspects of hosting the pilot cohort have you been most pleased with?

- *Probe: What outcomes exceeded your expectations?*
- *Probe: What feedback from participants has been most encouraging?*
- *Probe: How has this experience benefited OAESV organizationally?*

SUSTAINABILITY & FUTURE PLANNING

12. How sustainable is OAESV's role in supporting VELA implementation long-term?

- *Probe: What would need to change for this to be sustainable?*
- *Probe: How does this fit into OAESV's long-term strategic planning?*
- *Probe: What ongoing support capacity do you anticipate having?*

LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS

13. If you were to host another pilot cohort, what would you do differently?

- *Probe: What would you change about the planning process?*
- *Probe: How would you adjust resource allocation?*
- *Probe: What would you communicate differently to participants?*

14. What advice would you give to other state coalitions considering hosting similar pilots?

- *Probe: What organizational prerequisites are essential?*
- *Probe: What pitfalls should they avoid?*
- *Probe: What resources or partnerships are crucial to secure early?*

Appendix C: Phase 1 Report

Phase 1 Report

[Centralized Database System Needs Assessment Comprehensive Report](#)