
Reaching Blind & Low Vision Victims of Crime

AN UNDERSERVED POPULATION

ABOUT US

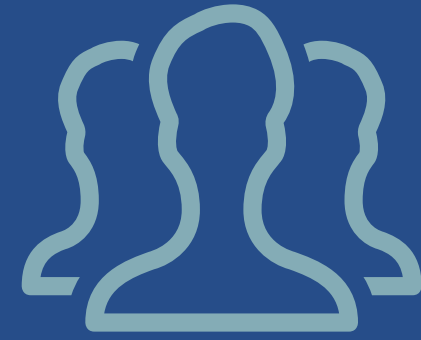
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Domestic Violence Shelters are not always set up in ways that accommodate blind and low vision individuals



Physical Accessibility

What accommodations are available?

What should be considered?

Programmatic Accessibility

How are programs accessible?

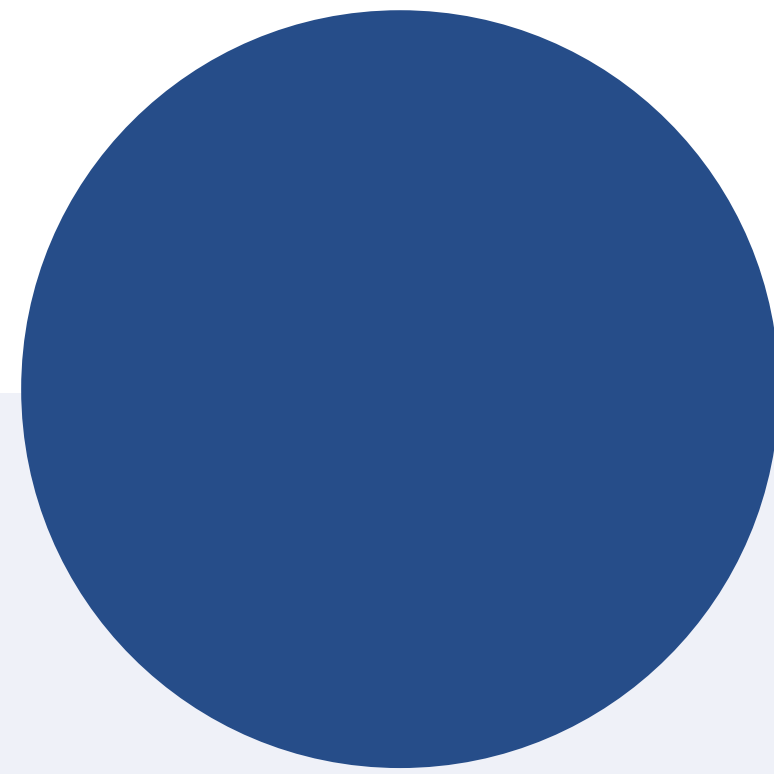
Is the website accessible?

Are other written materials?



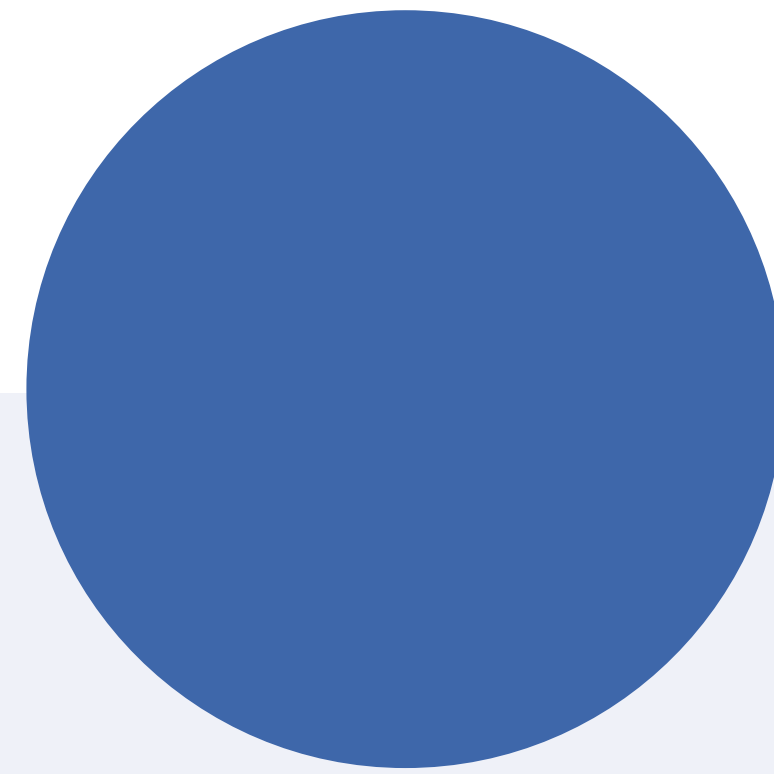
SPECIALIZED SAFETY PLANNING

WHICH TAKES INTO ACCOUNT NEEDS, PARTICULARLY WITH DV SITUATIONS



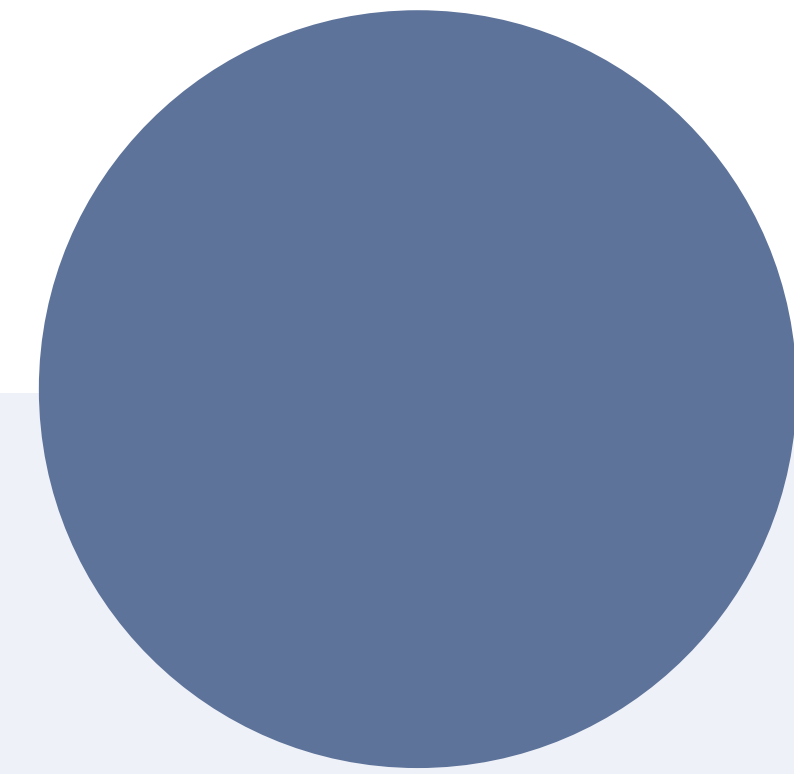
Transportation

Considerations vary significantly in rural and urban areas



Intake Paperwork

Have PDF's? Pro-tip: If highlighting a word highlights an entire block of text, it's probably not accessible to screen-readers.



Facility Orientation

Vital to ensure safety

POTENTIAL MARGINALIZATION & BARRIERS

FROM LAW ENFORCEMENT OR SYSTEMS



Access Barriers

From the police station to the courthouse, blind and low vision people face additional barriers



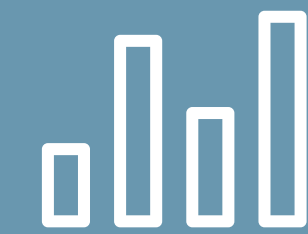
Credibility

Witness accounts may be doubted and credibility is likely to be challenged by defense attorneys



Information Gaps

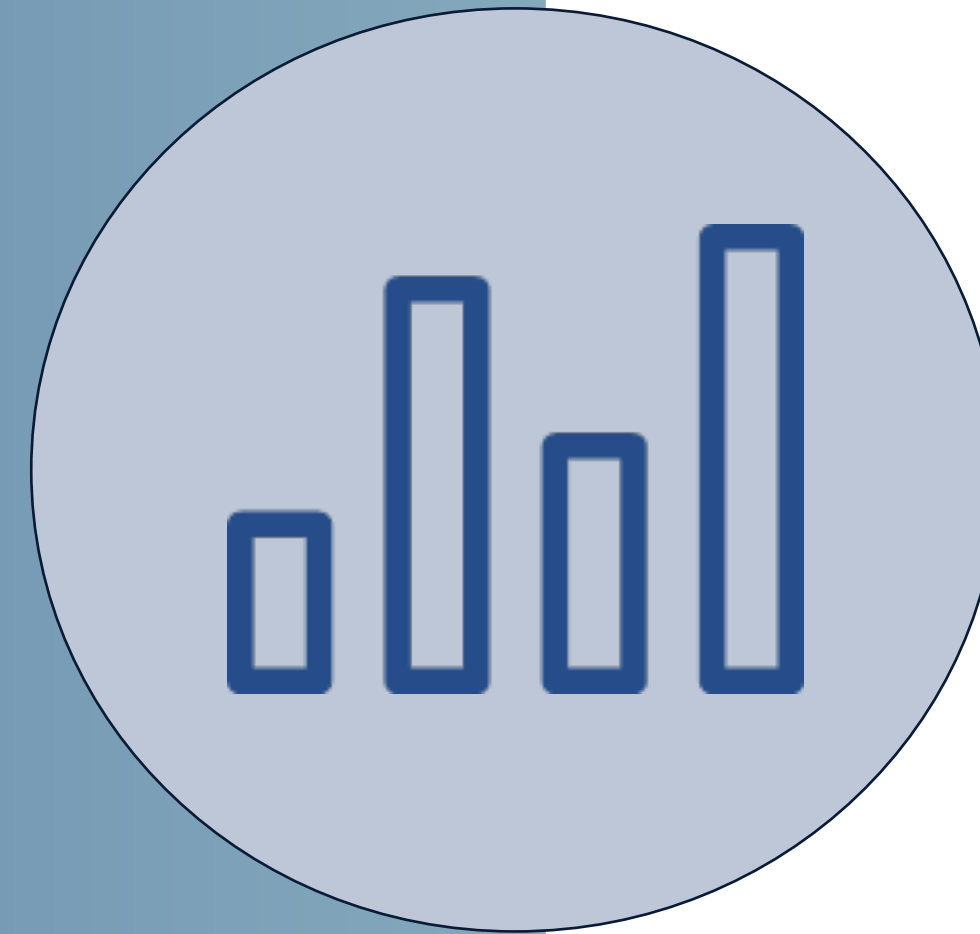
Many providers do not know what to expect or how to serve blind/low vision clients



Lack of Data

Data is rarely collected or tracked regarding blind/low vision victimization, needs or utilization of victim services

Blind/low vision people are a vulnerable population



Disproportionate level of victimization

- In the United States, 1.3 million adults over the age of 40 are blind (National Eye Institution and National Institute of Health, 2023).
- More than 135,000 of whom have experienced domestic violence
- Approximately 3% of children in the United States are now legally blind (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023).
- According to the DOJ, blindness is the only disability category within which women are significantly more likely than men to have been victims of violent crime, and blindness is the only disability category within which people are significantly less likely than people without disabilities to report to police (Crime Against Persons with Disabilities, 2009–2019, Erika Harrell, Ph.D., Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2021).

OUTREACH & REFERRALS

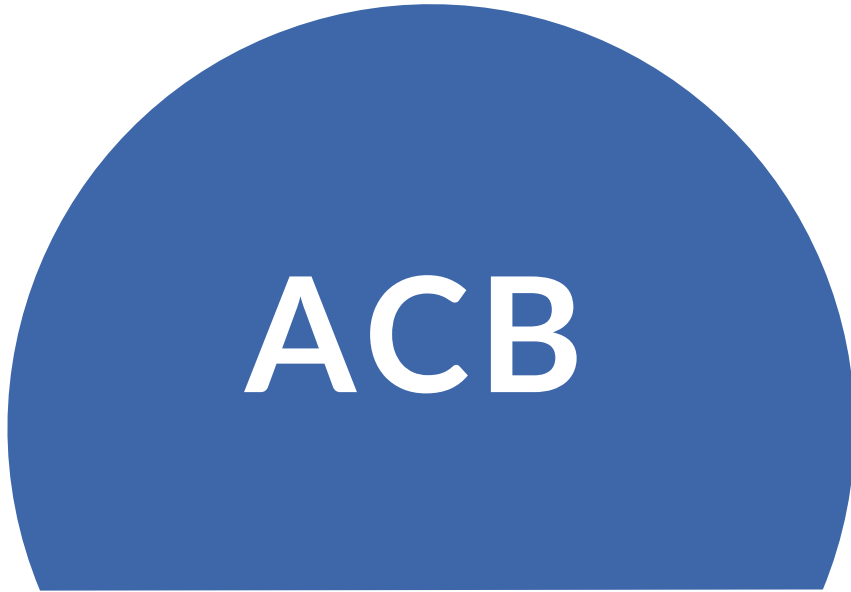
HOW DO YOU ADVERTISE TO BLIND PEOPLE?

PARTNER WITH YOUR STATE'S CONSUMER ORGANIZATIONS AND SERVICE AGENCIES



National Federation of the Blind

<https://nfb.org/>



American Council of the Blind

<https://www.acb.org/>



State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies

<https://rsa.ed.gov/about/states>



Protection & Advocacy

State protection and advocacy programs

Things to know

About blind people and blindness

- Blind people under-report crime of all kinds due to physical and societal barriers, even when adjusted for age and other demographics
- The same barriers that prevent blind people from seeking services are the barriers that increase our odds of being victimized
- When we do report, practical and attitudinal barriers often stand in our way

Assumptions

What service providers should and should not assume

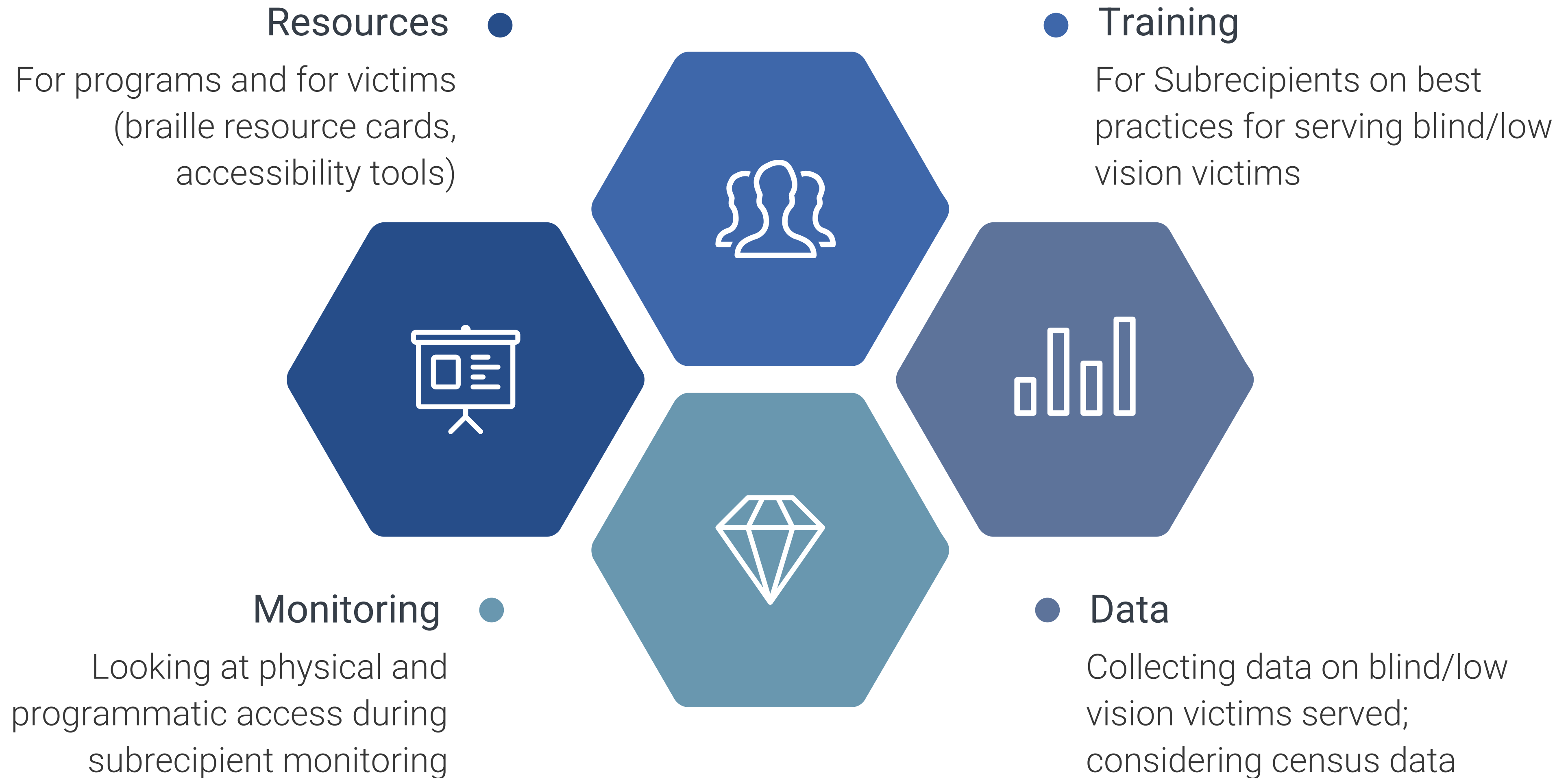
- Blind people have caregivers, service providers, or other forms of assistance that will naturally deter abuse
- The reason blind people aren't presenting to our programs is because they don't need us or because there are simply so few of them
- Blind people who do make it to our programs must be getting everything they need

Myths & Misconceptions

- *Blindness means no light perception:* In fact, only 4% of blind people are totally blind. 96% can see light and shadows, blurry images, or something in between
- *Blindness means a lack of awareness about one's surroundings:* On the contrary, many blind people have extensive Vocational Rehabilitation and Orientation and Mobility Training to teach us to maximize the use of our remaining senses.
- *All blind people read braille:* Unfortunately not. In 2023, only about 10% of blind people are fluent in braille. Best practice is to offer braille in combination with accessible electronic documents we can read with our phones and computers.

GRANT ADMINISTRATION

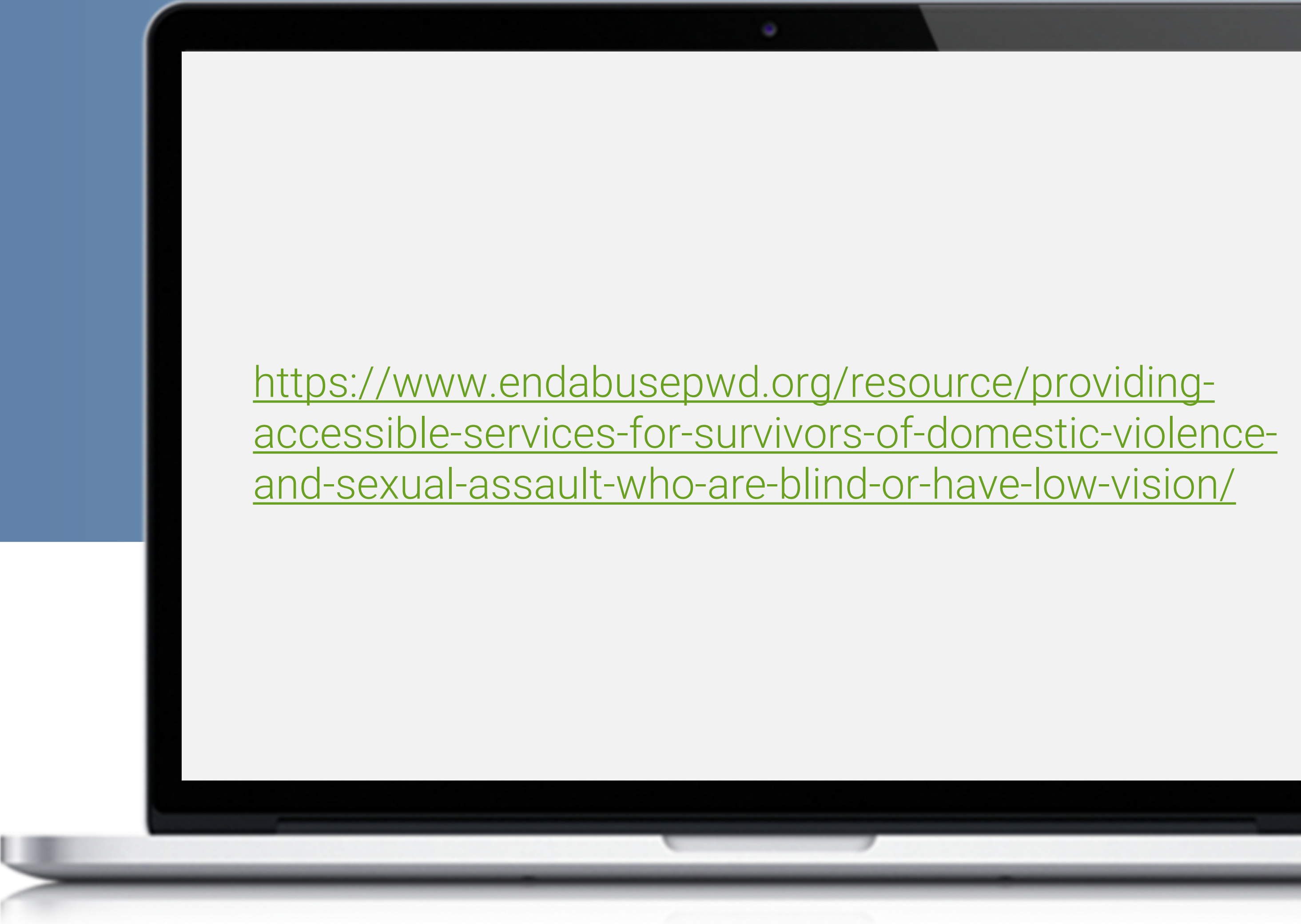
WAYS TO IMPROVE SERVICES FOR BLIND/LOW VISION PEOPLE



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

WRITE SOMETHING HERE

End Abuse of People With
Disabilities website



<https://www.endabusepwd.org/resource/providing-accessible-services-for-survivors-of-domestic-violence-and-sexual-assault-who-are-blind-or-have-low-vision/>

**Thank
you!**