

## Considerations for CVSSD Grantees when Using Technology to Work Remotely and for Communicating with Victims and Survivors

---

Several technology resources are available online to grantees who have [staff working remotely](#), offering [tele-advocacy and online support groups](#), hosting meetings and [multidisciplinary meetings](#), etc. CVSSD encourages grantees to research the technology options best suited for their needs and to thoroughly understand the security features of the technology they choose. Protecting privacy and personally identifying information is paramount. So is [compliance](#) with [national and state privilege and confidentiality requirements](#). State and national resources on [technology safety](#) are available from the [National Network to End Domestic Violence](#), [Victim Rights Law Center](#), and on [CVSSD's COVID-19 Helpful Resources](#) page. Specifically, NNEDV provides a tool for [choosing a digital services vendor](#) and VRLC offers guidance for [protecting survivor privacy when working from home](#).

When [choosing a digital services platform](#), grantees must weigh the ease of accessibility against the privacy and confidentiality risks associated with using the platform. Survivors must be informed of the potential risks of communicating digitally with advocates prior to or at the start of any communication, including how a platform could compromise privacy or confidentiality. Even in a digital landscape, survivors must be informed when the advocate or agency is required to disclose their information (e.g., mandatory reporting). Survivors must give informed consent about any disclosure of information that the advocate makes on their behalf. These [releases of information](#) must be time-limited and specific. Tools are available from NNEDV about how to obtain [digital written consent](#) from a survivor.

Grantees may consider upgrading technology infrastructure (routers, servers, firewalls, VPN, encryption, remote accessibility). It may be necessary to revise or create new [telecommuting policies](#) or [policies for use of remote devices](#). When new digital platforms are implemented, it is important to practice various features before it is used to avoid snafus. Costs associated with technology infrastructure and platform subscriptions are allowed by CVSSD grant funding (see questions #12 and #16 in CVSSD's [COVID-19 FAQs](#)). For non-profit organizations, it may be necessary to get approval from the Board of Directors prior to purchasing new technology or making changes to policy. For government-based victim services programs, be sure to consult with information technology staff to better understand technology options available through the city, county or Tribal Nation.