

Family Justice Center Governance Models

Family Justice Centers (FJCs) are encouraged to design their governance model based on the unique strengths and circumstances in their community. Lead agencies are responsible for coordinating the operations of the FJC. The governance structure is selected based on what would be most conducive to center growth and development. In other words, “relationships should determine governance” (Strack et al, 2012).

Public/Governmental
Lead Agency



Private/Nonprofit
Lead Agency



Pros:

- High visibility and accountability can support ongoing funding and sustainability
- Aligns the FJC framework with public safety/public health priorities
- May be easier to maintain law enforcement and prosecutor engagement

Cons:

- Subject to changes in political priorities and/or leadership
- May have more trouble gaining buy-in from local DV organization



Should you select an existing public agency or form a new agency? Things to consider:

Is there existing government infrastructure (relationships, funding sources, location, etc.) that would support the development of your center?

Do you have the support or resources to create a new government department/division?

Joint powers is a governance model in which the burden of operational support for the FJC is shared among multiple agencies. This model is not common as it can lead to more complex decision procedures and be more challenging to maintain. When done well, this model provides the perks of both public and private lead FJC's.

Pros:

- Able to receive grants only available to incorporated 501(c)(3) organizations
- Philosophical alignment with DV/SA movements which in turn can mobilize larger community engagement

Cons:

- Can be more challenging to obtain/maintain government engagement (law enforcement, prosecutor, etc.)
- May be seen as a duplication or a competitor to existing agencies or FJC may inherit pre-existing rivalries



Should you select an existing non-profit agency or form a new non-profit agency? Things to consider:

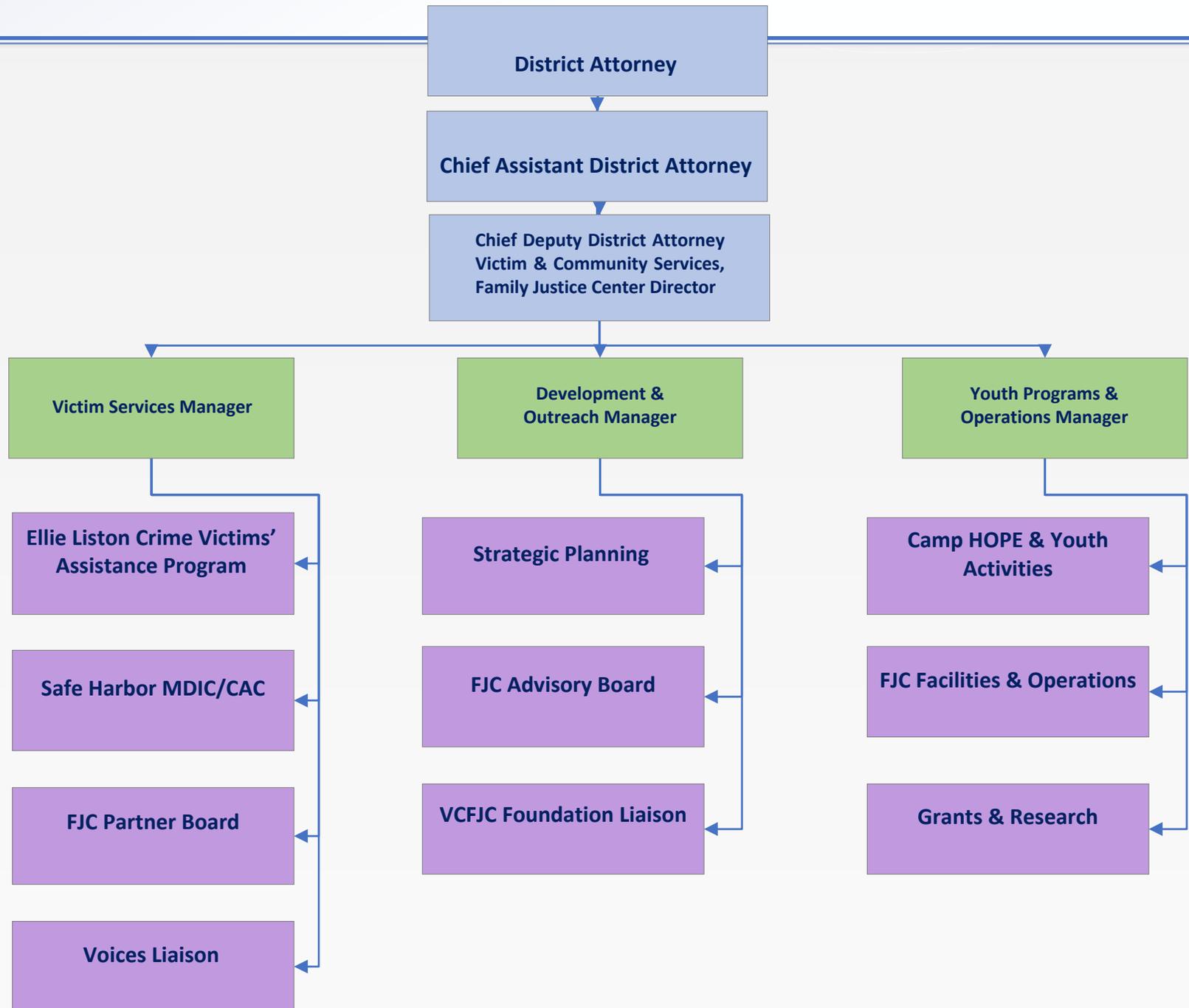
Is there existing infrastructure (relationships, funding sources, location, etc.) that would support the development of your center?

Do you have an existing community-based organization with a history of receiving and managing federal grants?

If an organization was created, does it fill a need for the community of self-identified survivors that could be leveraged for **NEW** growth and partnerships?

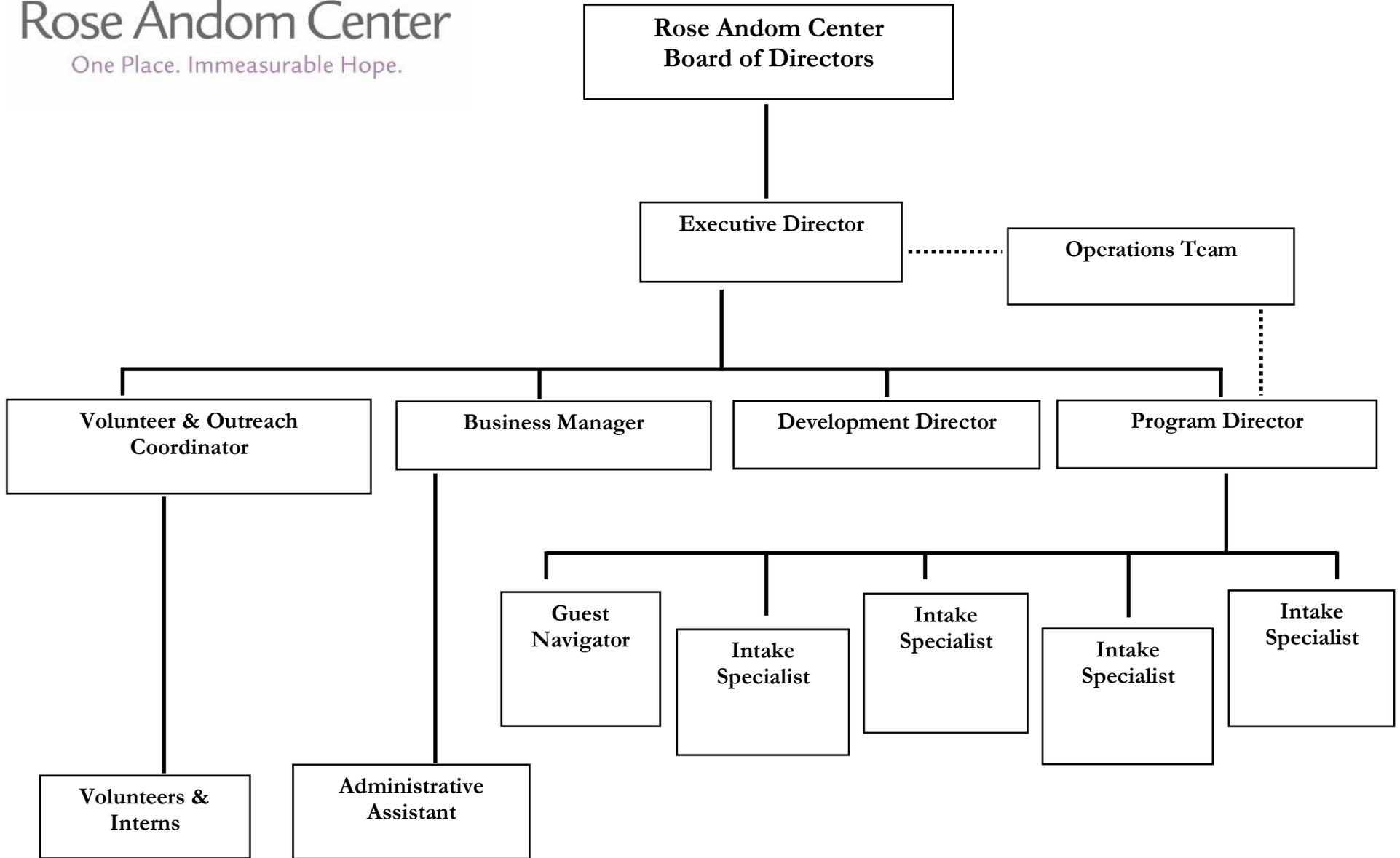
The governance style that works when you establish your center may not be the model to sustain your center. Continuous reflection and strategic planning are crucial to the long-term success of your center. Sample Organization Charts for a government-led FJC and a non-profit-led FJC are provided in the following pages.

**Office of the District Attorney – County of Ventura
Victim & Community Services Division**





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