

Together With Veterans

Taos
March 2023

VisibleNetworkLabs



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This report for the Taos Together with Veterans Network was produced on behalf of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Rocky Mountain MIRECC by **VISIBLE NETWORK LABS** using **PARTNER**.

VISIBLE NETWORK LABS is a data science company developing tools and technology to help people measure, understand and evolve the personal and professional networks that influence the communities where they live.

PARTNER is a social network analysis data tracking and learning tool designed to measure and monitor collaboration among people/organizations. It is a new, scientifically validated way to design data-driven network strategies that generate social impact.

PARTNER is a registered product of Visible Network Labs.



If you have questions on this report or want a deeper understanding of the results, please reach out to Visible Network Labs by emailing partnertool@visiblenetworklabs.com.

You have access to personally consult with Visible Network Labs around interpreting the data within this report.

Connect with Sara Sprong and Alena Lidey to dive into your results!

VisibleNetworkLabs



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Project Background

ABOUT TOGETHER WITH VETERANS

Together With Veterans (TWV) is a community-based suicide prevention program for rural Veterans. Veterans lead local suicide prevention efforts using best practices and in partnership with community members.

More information here: <https://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn19/togetherwithveterans>

SURVEY RESULTS

In March 2023, 19 organizations were identified as part of the Taos Together with Veterans and invited to participate in a Social Network Analysis (SNA) survey conducted using PARTNER. A total of 11 or 58% of organizations responded.

This report summarizes the results. Those that responded reported that they collectively had 60 partnerships, describing the resulting “network” of partnerships addressing suicide prevention.

WHAT IS A NETWORK?

A **network** is a formal partnership created between three or more organizations that facilitate public health planning for Veteran Suicide Prevention. Social Network Analysis (SNA) measures the number and quality of connections and increases the visibility of these connections. Using SNA to understand how a network functions can help leaders, members, funders and other stakeholders:

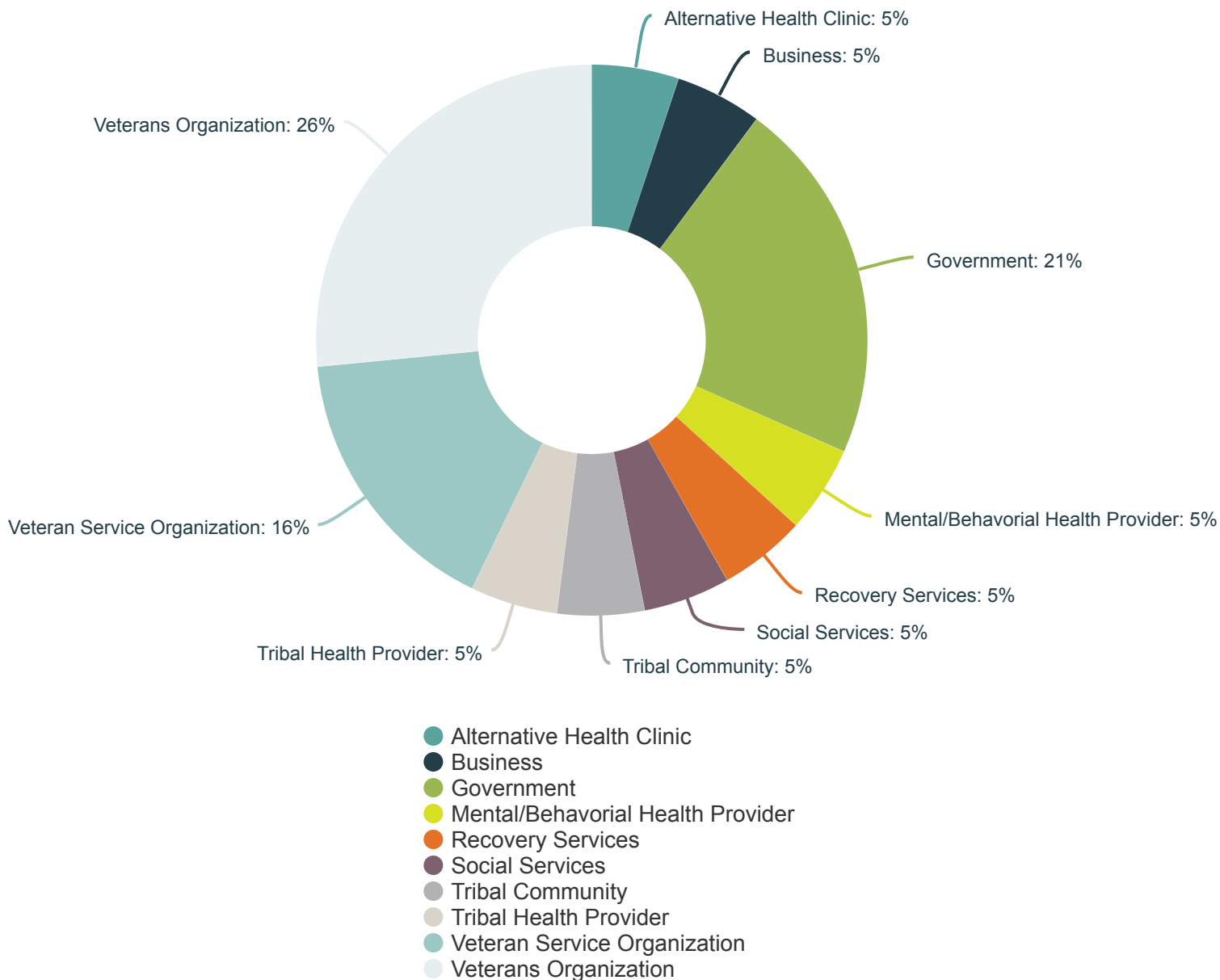
- Identify ways to improve ways of working to achieve common goals,
- Plan and implement relationship building and resource leveraging among network partners,
- Assess the quality, content, and outcomes of connections,
- Monitor change in networks over time,
- Develop strategies and action steps to fill gaps and leverage strengths in networks.

Network Summary

Members Invited

There were 19 organizations identified across 10 different groups.

For each category, the number and percentage of members is listed.

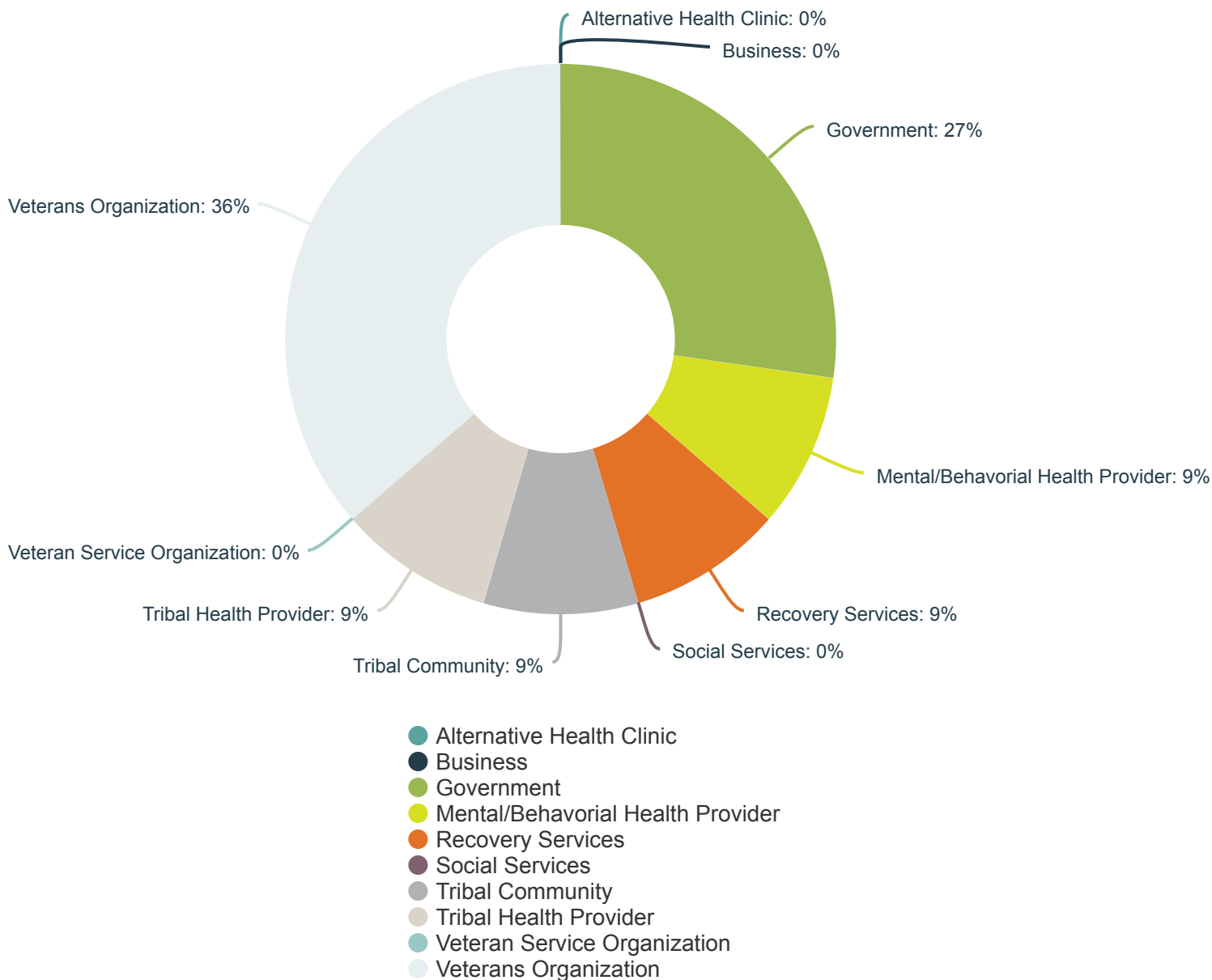


Network Summary

Respondents

Of the 19 organizations, 11 or 58% responded across six of those ten groups.

For each category, the number and percentage of members is listed.



This diverse set of partners from many sectors demonstrates a cross-sector collaborative initiative. Veterans organizations (36%) and Government (27%) make up 63% of all the respondents.

Considerations for Action Planning

Diverse partners are thought to bring new ideas and resources to a network. At the same time, the more diverse organizations are, the more difficult it can be to manage them.

- Focus on partner recruitment, based on identified gaps or redundancies.
- Think about the roles different partners play; are all required roles filled?
- Focus on stability, turnover, and consistency within partner organizations.



Considerations for Action Planning

- Does the network have all the essential partners in the system?
- If not, which partners are missing and what can be done to recruit them to the network?
- Are there any areas where additional/fewer partners would help to strengthen the network?

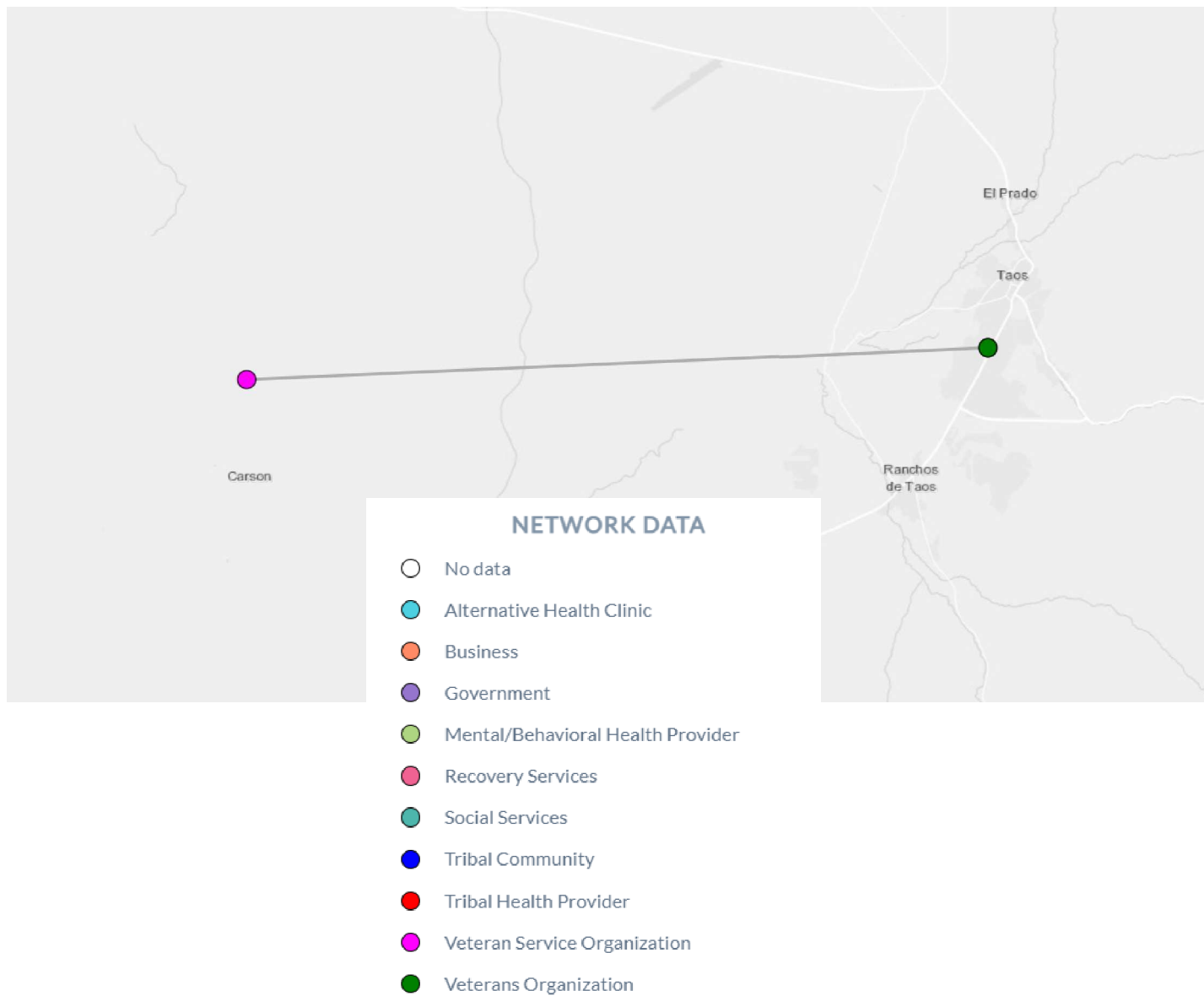
Map Labels and Organizations

The table below lists the of organizations, their map labels, and org types.

Organization Name	Map Label	Org Type
American Legion Post 16	ALP	Veterans Organization
Charity Finch, Trauma Therapist	CF	Mental/Behaviorial Health Provider
Help Outreach Taos	H.O.T.	Social Services
Indian Health Services	IHS	Tribal Health Provider
Lambert's of Taos	Lambert's	Business
NM Department of Health	NMDOH	Government
NM Herbal Clinic	NMHC	Alternative Health Clinic
Not Forgotten Outreach	NFO	Veteran Service Organization
Recovery Friendly Taos	RFT	Recovery Services
Taos County	TC	Government
Taos Pueblo	TP	Tribal Community
Together With Veterans TAOS - Jennifer	TWV - Fac	Veterans Organization
Together With Veterans TAOS - Valentina	TWV - Coor	Veterans Organization
Town of Taos	ToT	Government
US Senator Heinrich's Office	US-SMH	Government
VA Community Engagement Partnership Coor	VA-CEPC	Veterans Organization
VA Suicide Prevention	VA-SP	Veterans Organization
Veterans Off-Grid	VOG	Veteran Service Organization
Veterans Upward Bound	VUB	Veteran Service Organization

Network Summary

Network measures show connectivity and activity among network partners. Of all the possible connections in the network, 18% were reported. This means that there is some amount of connectivity already taking place within this network with opportunities to develop additional connections between organizations in this network.

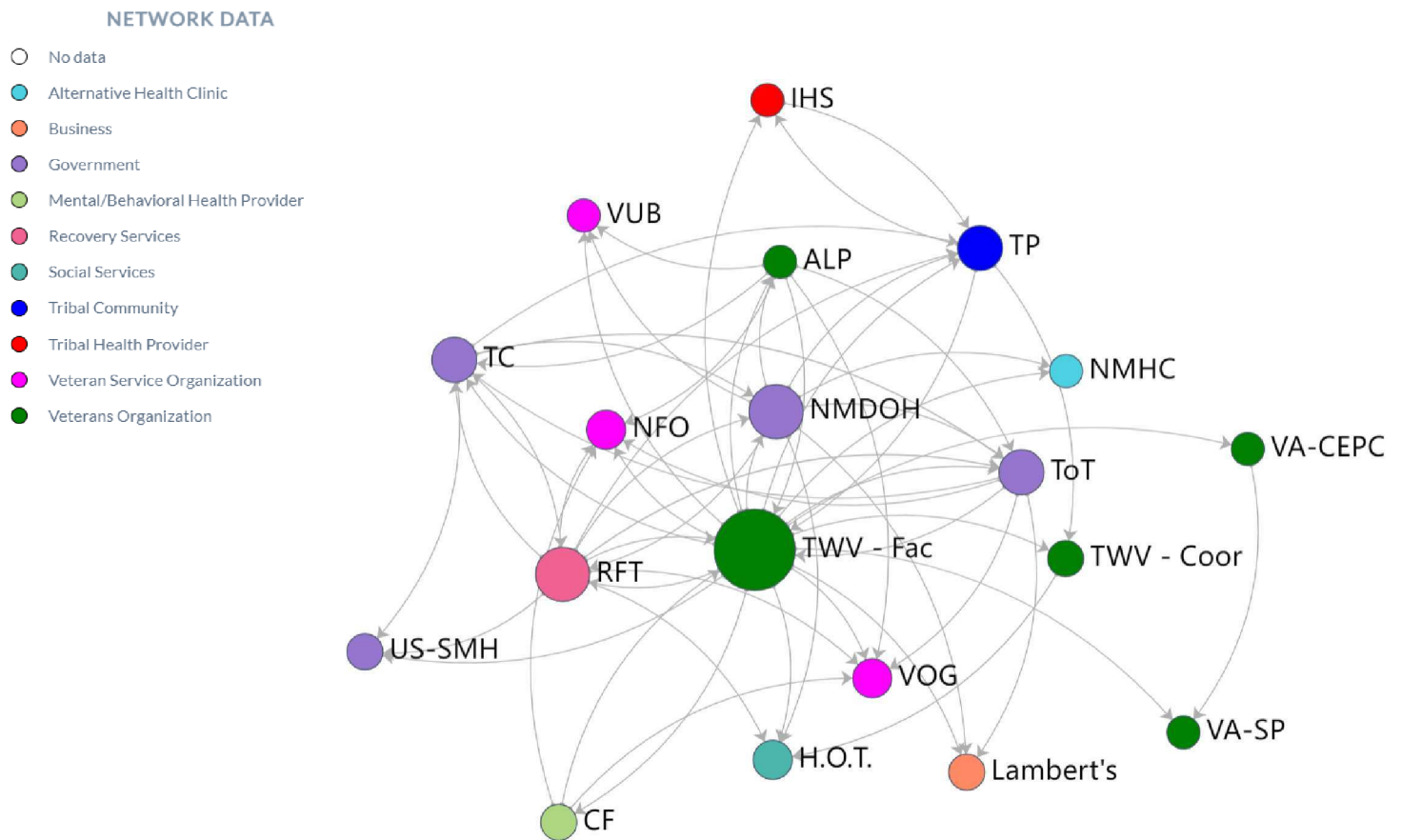


Above is a GIS social network maps of the Together with Veterans Taos that shows each organization represented in the survey as a circle (**node**) and the lines shown demonstrate all relationships that were reported by respondents (selected to show all reported relationships). Nodes are colored by partner organization type. The 11 organizations that responded described 60 unique partnerships (a partnership is defined as any two organizations and their relationship) around Veteran Suicide Prevention. Address information was provided for three members of the network.

Network Summary

Three organizations emerged as key actors in the network, indicated by their high number of network connections. These include Together With Veterans TAOS - Jennifer 178 (100%), NM Department of Health (50%), and Recovery Friendly Taos (50%). A **key player** is a member of the system who is connected to most of the network. The Veteran service network in this community heavily relies on these key players. If they no longer participate in the network, there is a risk that the system may not function as effectively.

Overall partners reported positive perceptions of power and influence among their connections (75%). **Power and influence** is defined as an organization/program holding a prominent position in the community by being powerful, having influence, showing success as a change agent, and showing leadership. Scores over 75% are considered the most positive.



Above is a social network map of the Together with Veterans Taos network that shows each organization represented in the survey as a circle (**node**) and the lines shown demonstrate all relationships that were reported by respondents (selected to show all reported relationships). Nodes are colored by the city where the organization is located. The size of the node shows which organizations have the greatest number of connections (they are larger).

Any Organizations Missing?

Q9: Are there any Organizations, Businesses or Groups that you consider a partner in your work that relate to Suicide Prevention among Veterans that were not listed on the survey? Please list the partners full organizational name and if there is a specific person at the organization that you work with.

"Please understand that Post 16 of the American Legion is still in its infancy. While I have attended this and that, our focus has been on keeping organized in the face of the loss of members, including officers due to death, illness, relocation, etc. I sincerely believe that with proper management, we can be a strong force one day. Strong finances aid greatly for growth. Post 16 must be diligent and innovative when it comes to fundraising. We don't have the advantages that come with a 501 (c)(3). In the meantime, I will do as much as I can to be a part of all local veteran's organizations. I hope I have been helpful in some way. Wayne."

*"Forward Flag Inc.
505-933-0549
info@forwardflag.org"*

"I believe Taos Pueblo Behavioral Health Program provides services."

Considerations for Action Planning

Network structure can tell us about key players in the network. Consider the connectivity among members of the network – this data can help assess whether there are vulnerabilities in the network (places where the connections are weak and/or need to be developed), find partners that are not well connected, and cut down on redundancy in connectivity.



If there are numerous organizations, it is not feasible to have a high connectivity score because organizations do not have time to foster many meaningful connections.



Considerations for Action Planning

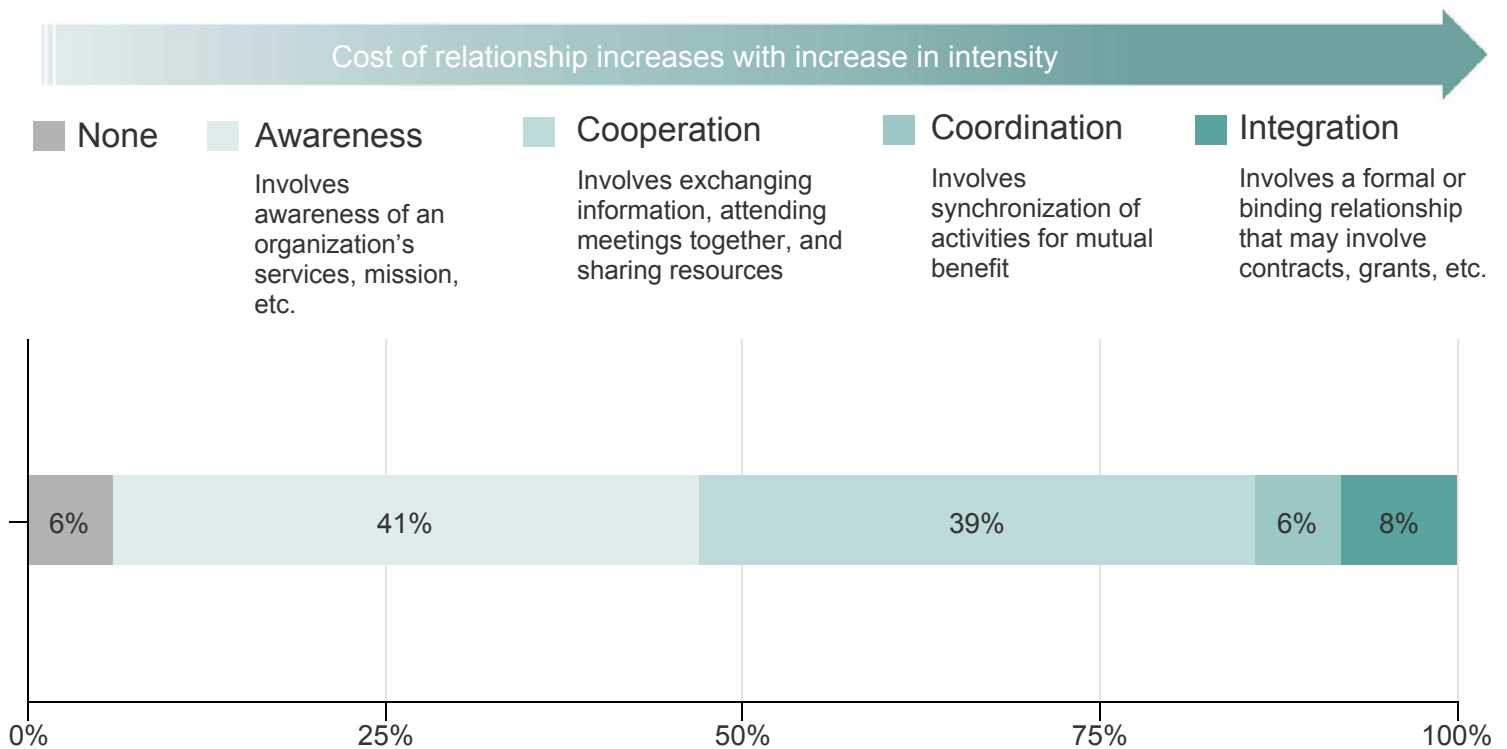
- What is the level of connectivity?
- Are most members connected to one another?
- Are there members who are isolated, meaning not connected to any partner?
- How can they be brought into the network?
- Do members perceive each other as valuable and influential?

Network Activities — Level of Intensity

More connections and more intensity of connections do not necessarily result in a thriving and sustainable network. **Level of intensity** refers to the amount of effort required to maintain a certain level of collaboration in a partnership. While the appeal to create a more diverse network is strong, we are equally challenged with the reality that we have limited relationship budgets – that is, limited resources to build and manage diverse networks. We know that networks have advantages, but there is a limit on how many relationships we can manage before we lose the collaborative advantage altogether. And while it is our intuition that more network connections should indicate a better functioning network, this approach can be endlessly resource intensive.

What the question says (Q4): Please describe the nature of your relationship with other organizations/programs in relation to the services you provide for Suicide Prevention among Veterans. (Check one)

Of the 51 relationships reported for this question:



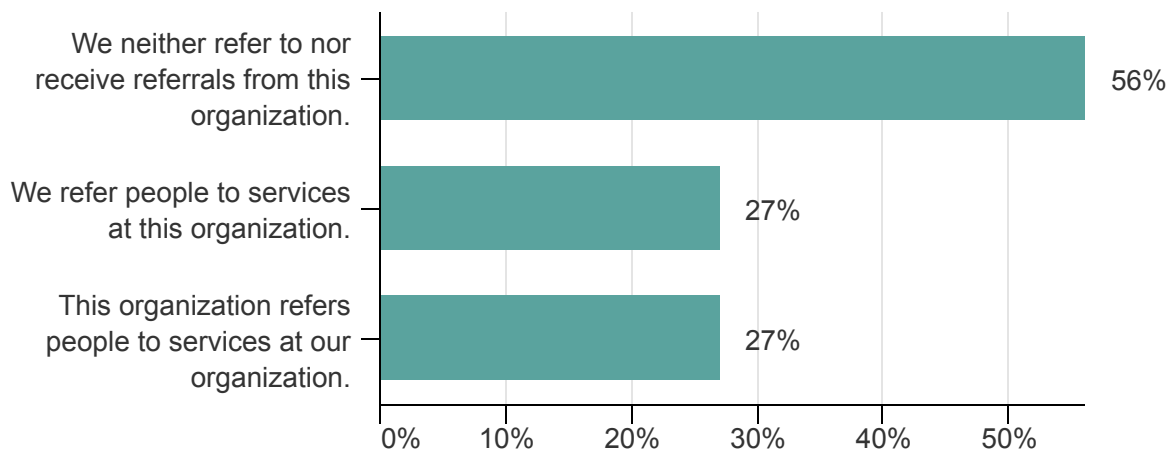
It is a positive result that connections are somewhat distributed across different levels. If more connections were at the integrated or coordinated levels, the relationships would require a greater number of resources to maintain.

Referrals with Organizations

Referrals

A total of 56% of partnerships neither refer nor receive referrals, while 27% of partnerships refer people to services at their partners' organization, and 27% receive referrals from their partners.

What the question says (Q8): We are interested in all the ways the organizations refer people to outside services or receives referrals from others. In what ways are you referring or receiving referrals with this organization? (Check all that apply); 52 relationships reported for this question.



Considerations for Action Planning

Quality of relationships help describe the network, including who is working with whom on what kinds of activities or at what level. This information can be useful in building network strategies.

- Remember, a more connected, higher percentage of ties at the integrated or coordinated levels may not be the ideal resource balance for your region.
- Rather, it may only be necessary that partners be connected at a cooperative level or aware of one another to have strong enough relationships to accomplish this network's goals.

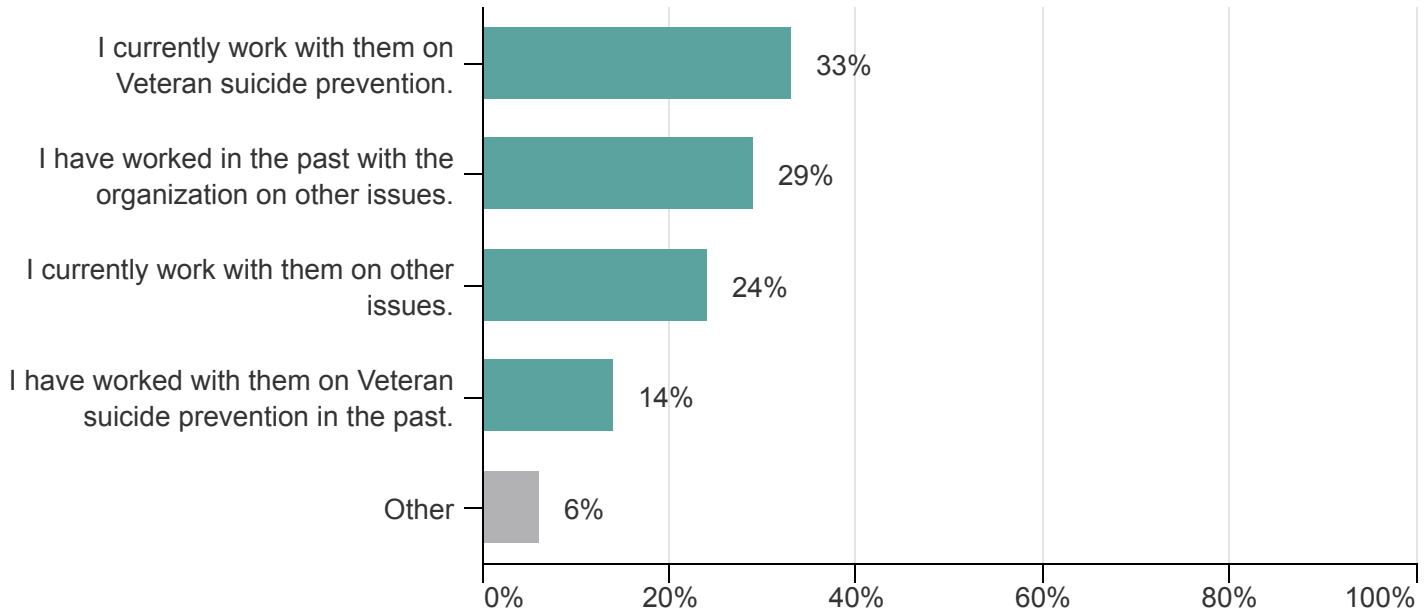


Considerations for Action Planning

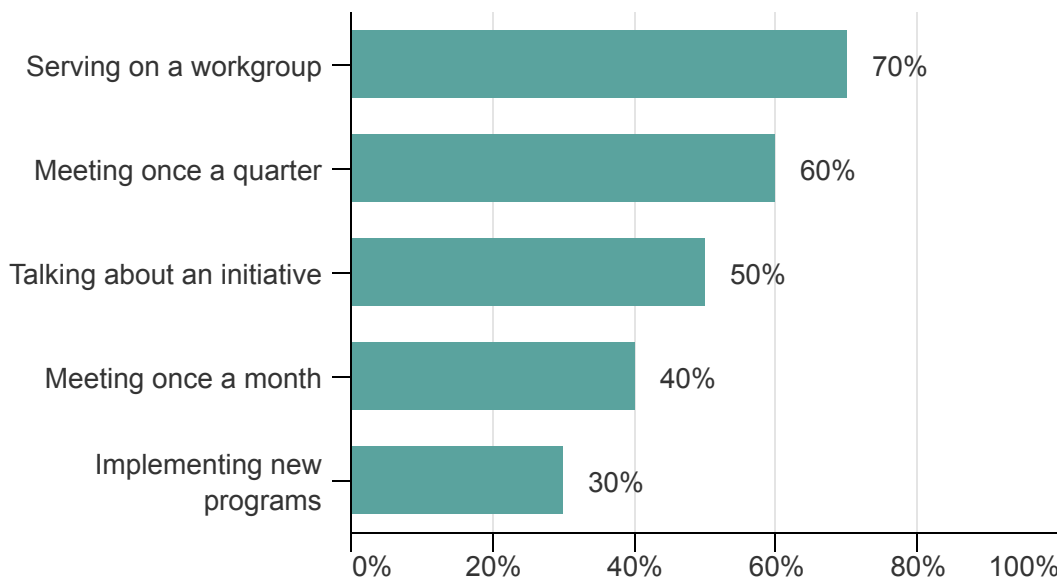
- Are organizations most connected through awareness, cooperative, coordination, and/or integrated level activities?
- Are these the appropriate or necessary relationships for this region? If not, why?
- Is the distribution across the activity levels sustainable for the network partners' relationship budget?
- How are organizations connected to one another?
- What can the network do to increase specific connections around Veteran suicide prevention work?

Ways of Connection and Network Time

Q6: We are interested in all the ways the organizations connect with one another, and how that relates to building community networks. In what ways are you connected to this organization? (Check all that apply); 51 relationships reported for this question.



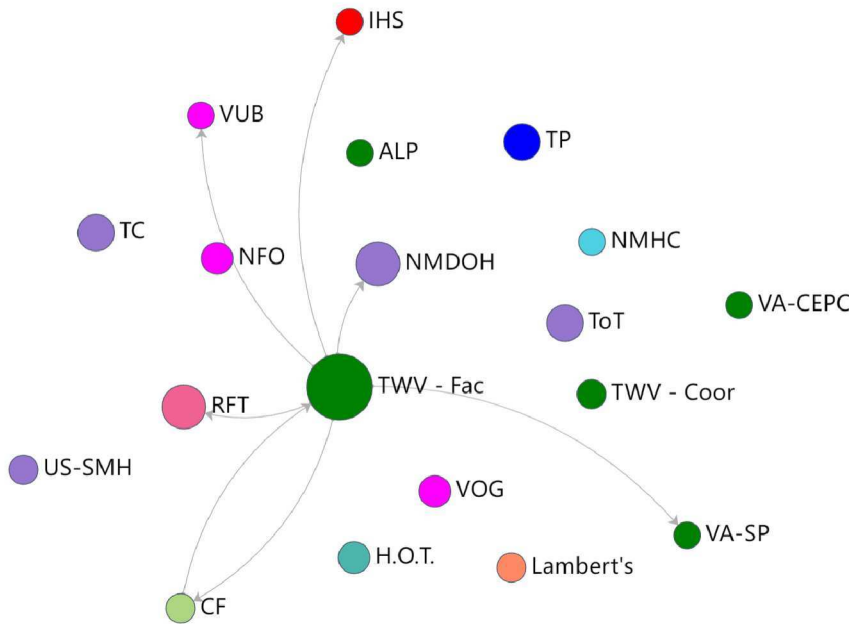
Q2: If an effort was undertaken to work together as a collaborative group to address Veteran Suicide Prevention, what level of involvement would you anticipate your organization would be willing to contribute? (Choose all that apply); 10 respondents answered this question.



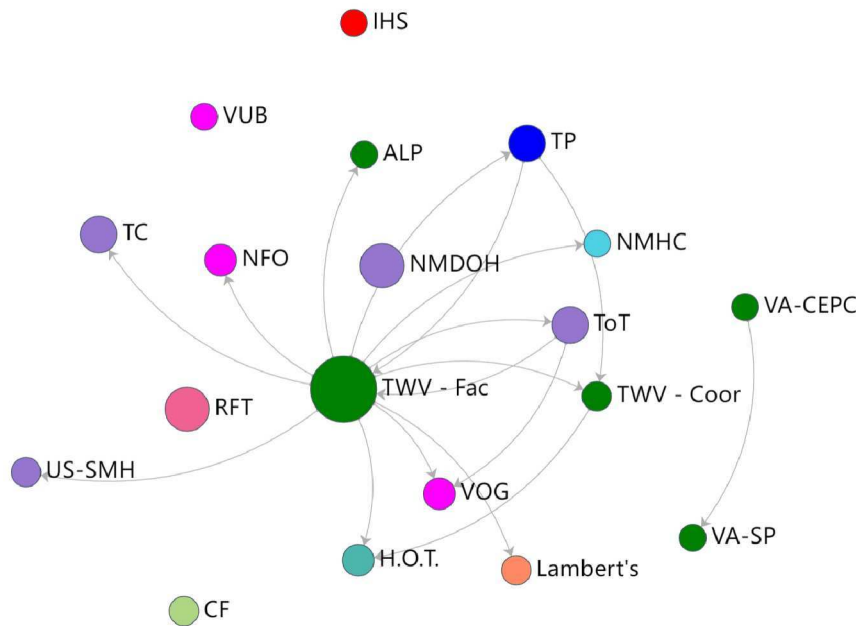
Partners are the most willing to serve on a workgroup, meet once a quarter and talk about an initiative.

Ways of Connection - Veteran Suicide Prevention

Below are social network maps of the Taos Together with Veterans network that shows each organization represented in the survey as a circle (node) and the lines shown demonstrate relationships that were reported by respondents around the different ways of connection (Question 6). Nodes are colored by the organization type. The size of the node shows which organizations have the greatest number of connections (they are larger).



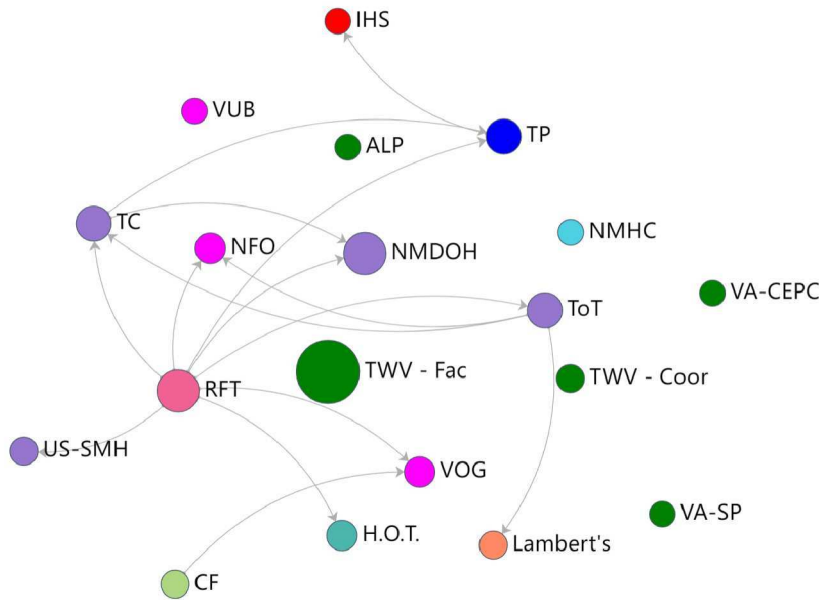
I have worked with them on Veteran suicide prevention in the past.
(7 reported relationships)



I currently work with them on Veteran suicide prevention.
(17 reported relationships)

Ways of Connection - Other Issues

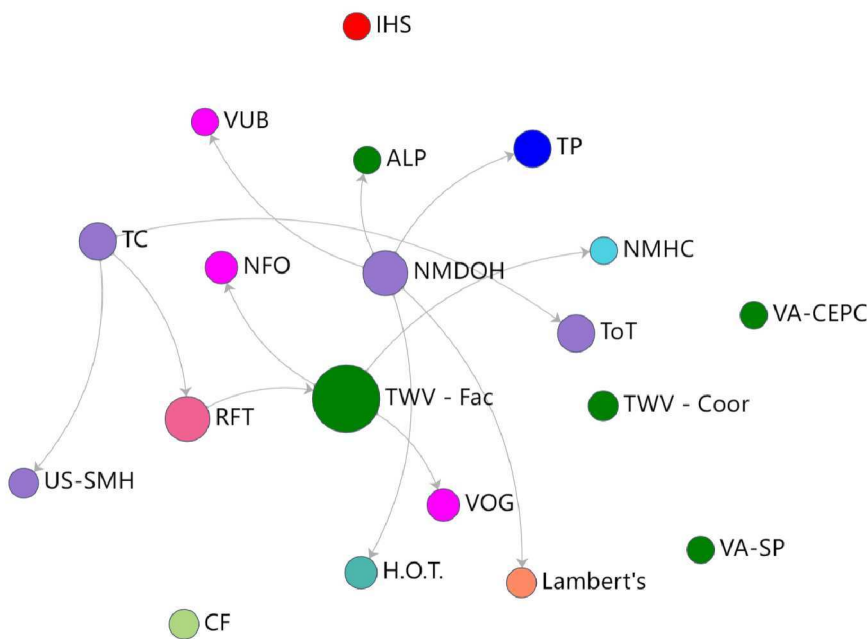
Below are social network maps of the Taos Together with Veterans network that shows each organization represented in the survey as a circle (node) and the lines shown demonstrate relationships that were reported by respondents around the different ways of connection (Question 6). Nodes are colored by the organization type. The size of the node shows which organizations have the greatest number of connections (they are larger).



I have worked with them on other issues in the past. (15 reported relationships)

NETWORK DATA

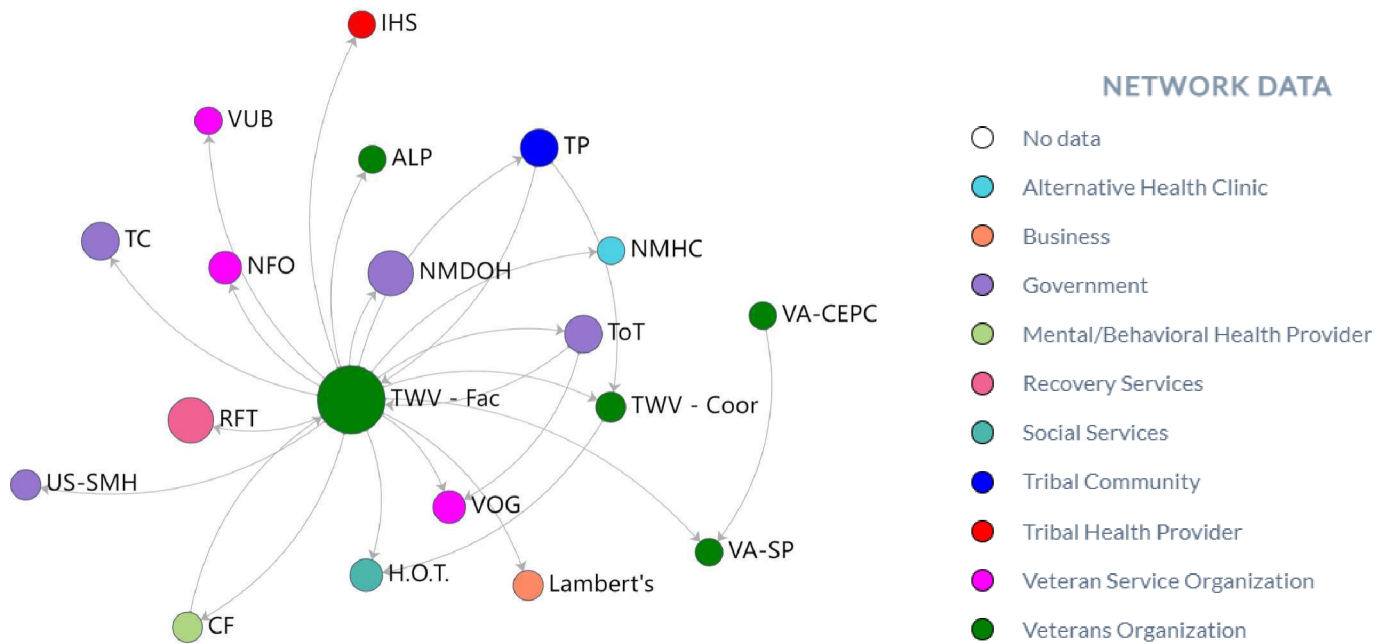
- No data
- Alternative Health Clinic
- Business
- Government
- Mental/Behavioral Health Provider
- Recovery Services
- Social Services
- Tribal Community
- Tribal Health Provider
- Veteran Service Organization
- Veterans Organization



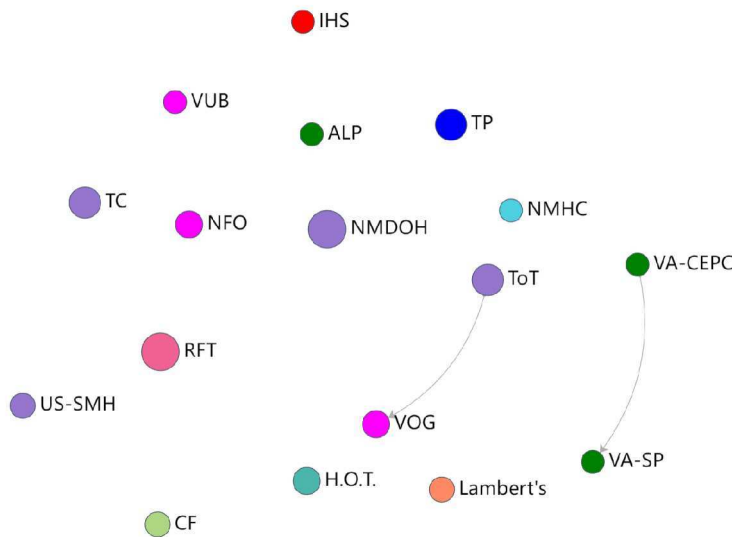
I currently work with them on other Issues. (12 reported relationships)

Ways of Connection - Attribution to TWV

There are a total of 24 relationships reported around Veteran Suicide Prevention work either currently or in the past (see map below).



If we take out the TWV node, you can see which relationships remain (n=2) around Veteran suicide prevention work (currently or in the past).



A total of 22 relationships around Veteran Suicide do not exist without TWV, which accounts for 92% of all relationships reported around Veteran Suicide Prevention work (currently or in the past).

Considerations for Action Planning

Partners vary in their willingness to engage and get involved in the network. Partners within the community are likely already overwhelmed with meetings and the time needed to engage in cross-sector opportunities. Ideally, to get the most “collaborative advantage” of the time and commitments of partners in this community, a balance is needed between creating avenues for information exchange among shared partners while not requiring too many meetings.

- Consider availability and contribution when scheduling meetings and assigning tasks.
- TWV encourages monthly meetings for first year to build the team recognizing some fall away. This information is more relevant during implementation.



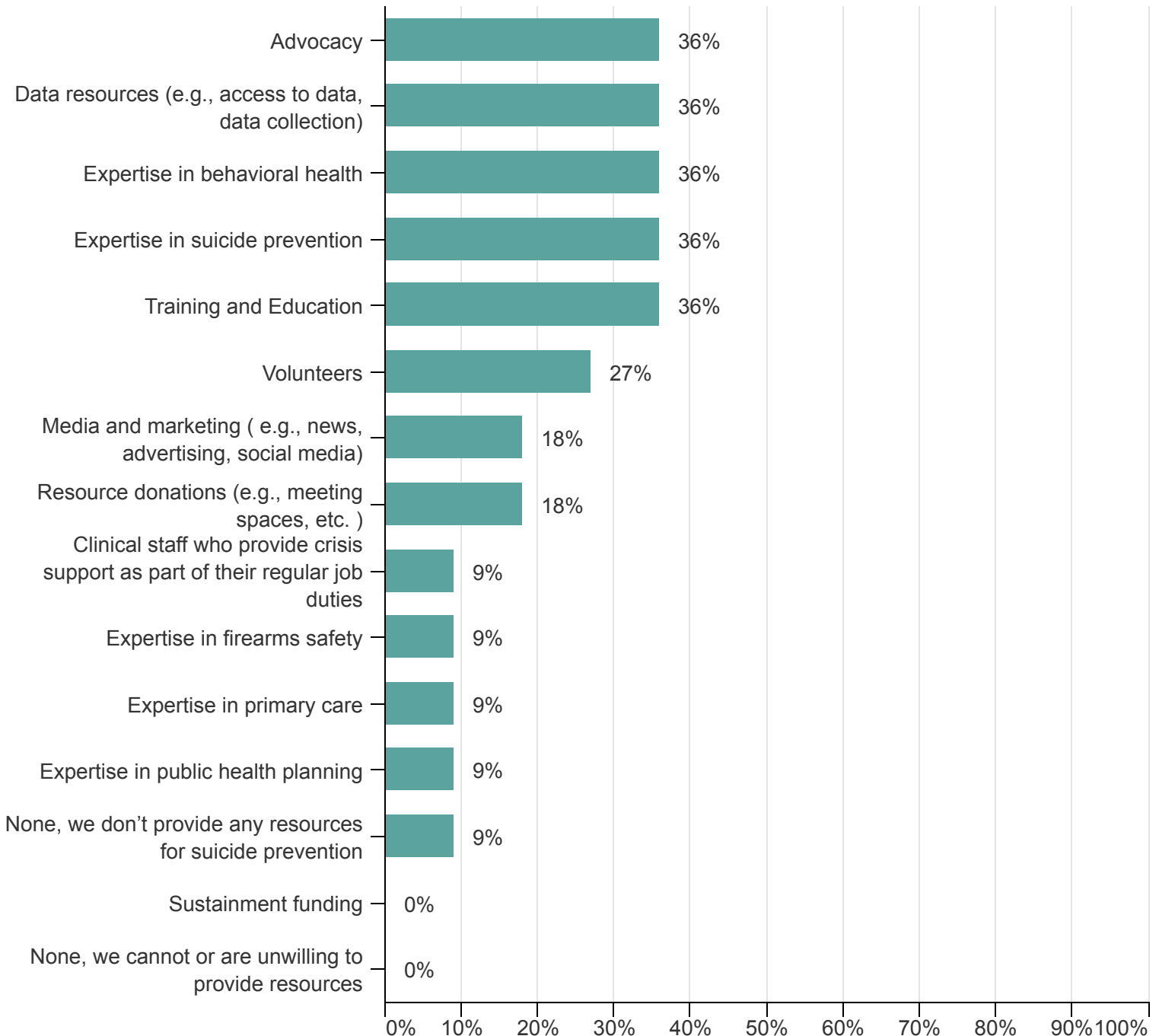
Considerations for Action Planning

- Is there an adequate willingness to contribute to a specific level of involvement from the partners of the network?
- What level of involvement is needed from partners for the network to reach its goals?
- How can partners participate in limited ways based on their role, interest and time?

Resource Contributions

Partners reported many resources that they contribute towards Veteran Suicide Prevention efforts. The top resources contributed are advocacy (36%), data resources (36%), expertise in behavioral health (36%), expertise in suicide prevention (36%) and training and education (36%). No respondents reported contributing sustainment funding.

What the question says (Q1): Please indicate what your organization/program/department contributes, or can potentially contribute, to the network. (Choose as many as apply); 11 respondents answered this question.



Considerations for Action Planning

Taking an inventory of resources that network partners can contribute explains which resources and information are shared between network partners, the types of resources needed by the network, and the extent that these resource exchanges increase community capacity around Veteran suicide prevention.



Considerations for Action Planning

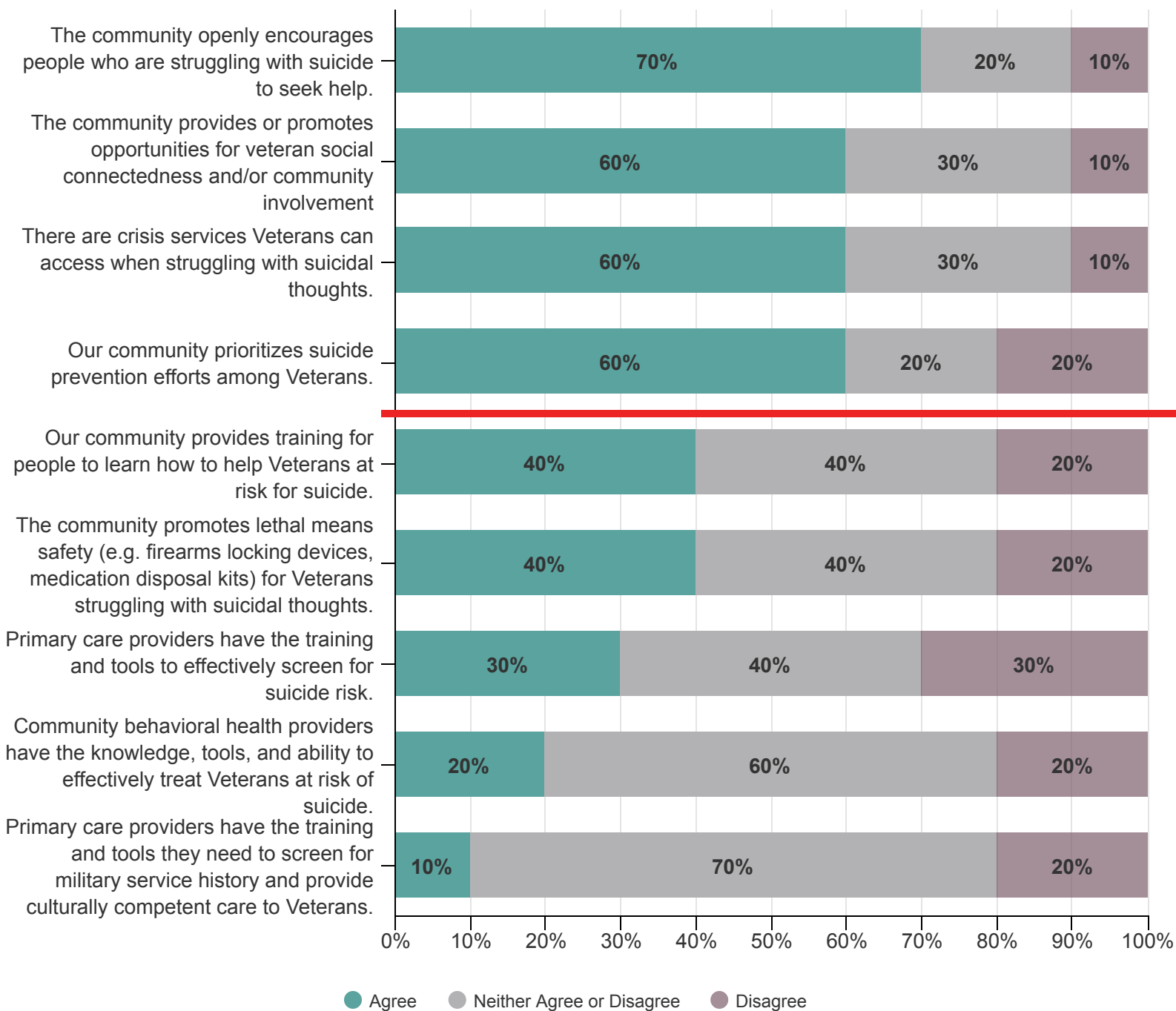
- Are there any resources that are overrepresented by partners?
- What resources are underrepresented or not represented at all? Why is that the case?
- What steps could be taken to acquire this resource either through a new organization or an existing organization?

Strengths & Weaknesses

STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES OF RURAL SUICIDE PREVENTION OUTREACH

The following 9 characteristics below were assessed by the partners in the community. The teal bar demonstrates agreement amongst partners on whether each characteristic is a strength. The purple bar represents agreement that each characteristic is an area for improvement. The gray bar represents agreement that partners do not identify this characteristic as either a strength or an area for improvement. The red line separates the items where there is less than 50% agreement among members. Across 4 of the 9 items, there's at least 50% agreement among respondents that the characteristics are strengths in the community.

Q10: Please rate the following 9 items assessing characteristics of your community.
10 respondents answered this question.



Considerations for Action Planning

The Strengths and Weaknesses data illustrate how partners perceive what is working and what needs to be addressed to support Veteran suicide prevention efforts in your community.



Considerations for Action Planning

- Which characteristics do partners agree are successfully supporting Veteran suicide prevention efforts?
- What network relationships help explain this success?
- Which characteristics do partners agree are lacking in supporting Veteran suicide prevention efforts?
- How can we address those characteristics that have the least agreement from partners?
- What resources and activities can improve these characteristics?

Trainings

The table below lists respondents and their answers for two questions around trainings for Veterans.

Organization Name	Has your staff or organization ever participated in suicide prevention training? If so, what kinds? If not, why not?	What training would be beneficial to your organization related to Veterans?
American Legion Post 16	None. We are a developing organization. Eventually, we expect to be a strong force.	We're not ready for that level of training.
Charity Finch, Trauma Therapist	No, I'm unsure why this isn't addressed	Mental Health 101
Indian Health Services	Unknown	I recommend reaching out to the Taos Picuris Health Center Clinical Director
NM Department of Health	QPR	PTSD de escalation
Recovery Friendly Taos	I think so. I personally have not.	More interaction with veterans experiencing substance use disorder.
Taos County	I'm not sure, but I believe certain departments (dispatch, detention center, indigent care, DWI, Sheriff's Office) likely have.	Suicide prevention / mental health crisis intervention and first aid.
Taos Pueblo	None	All training available
Together With Veterans TAOS - Jennifer	Yes, QPR.	
Together With Veterans TAOS - Valentina	Yes, with H.O.T, gatekeeper training.	S.A.V.E
Town of Taos	No, we are currently working to amend that.	All that pertains to a Municipal government that could assist Veterans
VA Community Engagement Partnership Coor	yes, the required VA-S.A.V.E suicide prevention.	screening for military service and cultural competence on the military culture.

Open-Ended Responses

Q13: Do you have any additional questions or comments?

"Explore other suicide prevention trainings, such as QPR-Question, Persuade, Refer or Military Resilience."

"Be patient and allow us to grow and organize."

"The more we work together, the more progress we will make."

Recommendations

Evaluating partner feedback about Veteran suicide prevention strategies builds alignment when prioritizing efforts. These results highlight areas of disagreement about what is important to inform further discussion.



Considerations for Action Planning

The following may be considered by the network to strengthen their Veteran suicide prevention system. These include:



1. Consider partner engagement and involvement when conducting your TWV action planning.
2. Determine the levels of activity among members. What is the minimum amount of effort required to reach goals? Where are gaps present?
3. Discuss resource contributions of the **Delaware County Together with Veterans** members during the action planning process.
4. Strengthen and implement Veteran suicide prevention trainings and outreach in **Delaware County**.

The social network analysis was conducted using **PARTNER** by Visible Network Labs. For more information about **Visible Network Labs** and the tools and resources available, please visit www.visiblenetworklabs.com.

