

2023



# **THE ARMORY PROJECT TOOLKIT**

**PARTNERING WITH FIREARM RETAILERS  
TO PROMOTE VOLUNTARY AND TEMPORARY  
OUT-OF-HOME FIREARM STORAGE**

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### Disclaimer

The views expressed in this toolkit are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the VA or the United States government.

VA respects the important role firearms play in many peoples’ lives and is dedicated to educating Veterans, their families, and other firearm owners about how secure firearm storage can prevent misuse, accident, theft, and suicide.



**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

Veterans Health Administration  
*Office of Mental Health and  
Suicide Prevention*



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**To use or adapt any of these materials, email [vision.nola@gmail.com](mailto:vision.nola@gmail.com) and use the below citation:**

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Available at: [www.visioncoalition.net/projects/tap](http://www.visioncoalition.net/projects/tap)

## What is The Armory Project (TAP)

The Armory Project is an initiative for firearm retailers, shooting ranges, and clubs who are interested in promoting voluntary, temporary out-of-home firearm storage to prevent firearm suicide. These leaders in the firearm industry can help save lives by raising awareness and decreasing stigma



around voluntary out-of-home storage and providing temporary firearm storage for firearm owners when they need it. Firearm owners may consider temporarily storing firearms outside the home when they are traveling for an extended period or are away on a military deployment, when someone in the home is dealing with a mental health crisis or abuse of alcohol or other substances, or when children are visiting.

The Veteran-Informed Safety Intervention & Outreach Network (VISION) is a coalition of Veterans, community leaders, and experts in public health and research who created and tested TAP in their home state of Louisiana. VISION's work focuses on building collaboration between firearms professionals and instructors, law enforcement, community leaders, healthcare professionals and others to develop and implement strategies to prevent firearm suicide by creating time and distance between a person in a suicidal crisis and a loaded firearm.



VISION members championed TAP because they are united in promoting secure firearm storage messaging and practices to prevent firearm misuse, accident, theft, and suicide. VISION also seeks to connect firearm owners—including Veterans, service members, and their families—with resources and support during times of distress to prevent firearm suicide and to foster healing for those who have lost someone to firearm suicide. For more information visit our website at

[www.visioncoalition.net](http://www.visioncoalition.net)

## Why the TAP Toolkit was Developed for Communities Like Yours

This toolkit was developed in response to inquiries from other coalitions and motivated communities interested in partnering with firearm retailers and range owners (referred to as Federal Firearm Licensees or FFLs) and want to learn from our successes with The Armory Project. We, in turn, have learned from initiatives in other states, and we include a list of those efforts and their websites in this toolkit. The intention of this toolkit is to encourage and facilitate sustainable partnerships between public health advocates and leaders in the firearm industry.



TAP staff and the owners of Brute Force Firearms in Houma, LA

## Why Temporary Out-of-Home Storage

Firearms are the most common and lethal means of suicide.<sup>1</sup> Research has shown that a person experiencing a suicidal crisis who cannot access their preferred means will not pursue an alternate method.<sup>2</sup> Introducing time and distance between a person in crisis and their firearms has been shown to decrease suicide risk.<sup>3</sup>

Research also shows that suicidal crises are often very brief (most lasting approximately 10 minutes), and 90% of people who survive a suicide attempt do not go on to die by suicide.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, Veterans and service members tend to own firearms at higher rates than the general population and are comfortable with firearms because of their training and experience in the military.<sup>4,5</sup> Finally, firearms are the most commonly used means of suicide among Veterans — and the most lethal.<sup>1,4-6</sup>



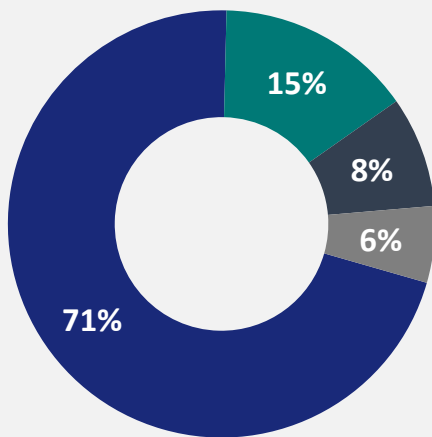
Suicidal crises are often brief lasting approximately 10 mins

90%

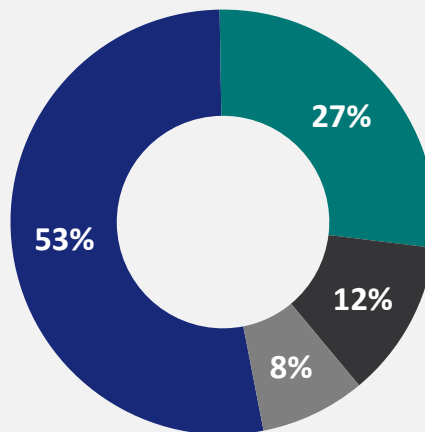
of people who survive an attempt never go on to die by suicide



Firearms are the most lethal suicide method



**Veteran Suicides**



**National Suicides**

■ Firearm  
■ Suffocation  
■ Poisoning  
■ Other

VA 2022 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report and National Vital Statistics

## Creating time and distance between a person in crisis and a loaded firearm can prevent suicide.

We have heard from many firearm owners that temporarily storing their firearms with someone else or holding onto a friend or family member's firearms for them, is acceptable; in fact, many people have already done this in the past. This practice seems familiar to many Veterans and military families due to norms in the military around using an armory to secure firearms when not in use or when it is unsafe for a service member to handle their service weapon.<sup>7</sup>

In conversations with firearm owners, we learned that temporary, out-of-home firearm storage was an acceptable intervention if certain conditions are met. Trust is paramount when addressing issues such as suicide, mental health, and the right to firearm ownership. The firearm retailers involved in developing The Armory Project are all Veterans who are dedicated to serving their communities. Together, we recognize the importance of promoting secure firearm storage to prevent misuse, accident, theft, and suicide. We also agree it is essential to bring together leaders in firearm-owning communities, mental health and suicide prevention advocates, health care providers, and concerned citizens to ensure that initiatives such as TAP are successful and sustainable.<sup>7</sup>

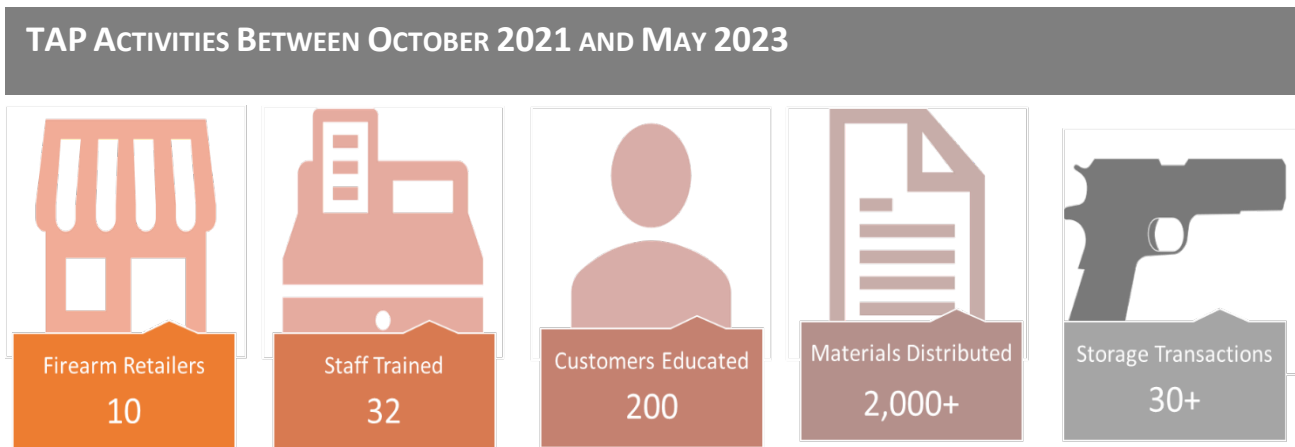
*"I realize not everyone has a friend like that, and folks don't want to freak out family members. I like the option of gun shops and others stepping up in that way.... that seems to be a good partnership for [those shops] and the veteran community."*

**-TAP Partner**

If a need arises to store one's firearms somewhere other than the home, firearm owners report a preference for storing firearms with trusted friends or relatives.<sup>8</sup> However, because of privacy concerns and perceived stigma around mental health issues, many firearm owners may avoid sharing their life struggles and challenges with others. Sometimes, a person is socially isolated and doesn't have anyone who can hold their firearms for them. In addition, some states do not allow for temporary firearm transfer or the process for temporary transfer is complicated. In these cases, a firearm owner may prefer temporary firearm storage options with a trusted outside party, such as a firearm retailer, gun range, and gun club. In addition, storing firearms with a firearm business is perceived as a more "professional" option and helps them feel more in control of a difficult situation.<sup>8</sup>

## History of TAP

We spent 6 months developing The Armory Project in partnership with several firearm retailers and another 4 months pilot-testing and evaluating the program. We learned the program is acceptable to staff and customers, relatively low-cost, and feasible to implement.<sup>9</sup> We have continued expanding the program ever since. Between October 2021 and May 2023, we onboarded 10 firearm retailers and trained 32 staff. Retailers reported talking to over 200 customers about temporary storage of their firearms and that at least 30 firearms had been stored for customers who requested it.



We found the existence of the storage program leads to open conversations about mental health and suicide prevention with the FFLs that are part of TAP. In this way, the secondary impacts of increased awareness and discussion around mental health may also contribute to the prevention of firearm suicides. By partnering with firearm retailers and other community stakeholders to initiate and develop options for voluntary, temporary out-of-home firearm storage, this intervention reaches people in their communities in a relevant and practical way. Importantly, this practice can complement related efforts for outreach and education done within the community and allow for partnerships with diverse groups focused on suicide prevention.

**Hear the history from one of our Partners on CBS News: *A Veteran started a gun shop. When a struggling soldier asked him to store his firearms-he started saving lives***  
[www.cbsnews.com/news/veteran-gun-shop-stored-firearms-started-saving-lives/](http://www.cbsnews.com/news/veteran-gun-shop-stored-firearms-started-saving-lives/)



## Using This Toolkit

This toolkit refers often to firearm retailers, defined as businesses that sell, buy, repair, and/or clean firearms. TAP partners may also include shooting ranges or shooting sports clubs. We designed this toolkit to provide relevant information for developing a project locally and expanding out-of-home storage options for firearm customers. Please take the time to read through the toolkit before starting TAP locally to ensure a successful launch in your community.

This toolkit will walk you through the TAP process of:

- Creating Partnerships,
- Onboarding and Training Partners,
- Creating a Community of Practice, and
- Evaluating TAP

As well as provide guidance and tools on:

- Having conversations with someone in distress
- National mental health referral resources, and
- TAP marketing materials.



VISION Engagement Consultant and U.S. Army National Guard Veteran, Matt Bailey at a gun show.

All materials needed to implement TAP are available in this toolkit or via the VISION Coalition ([www.visioncoalition.net](http://www.visioncoalition.net)). Please contact VISION at [vision.nola@gmail.com](mailto:vision.nola@gmail.com) if you need other file formats of the documents or would like to schedule a consultation with our consultation service.

## Championing TAP in your Community

Given the variability in state and local laws and regulations, as well local community needs and resources, the exact steps to develop partnerships with firearm retailers to provide voluntary and temporary out-of-home storage may differ across settings. Local champions or lead organizations may need to adapt the guidance and materials to fit their setting and seek additional support and guidance from VISION and other similar temporary firearm storage initiatives. The following sections describe steps and resources have led to successful development and sustainment of TAP.

## Roles and Responsibilities

A successful project requires multiple, dedicated partners who collaborate to ensure that firearm storage is provided when needed and that firearm retailers receive the resources and information they need throughout all stages of the collaboration. To implement TAP in your community, we believe you will need at a minimum, support from designated TAP staff (i.e., **project coordinator, project outreach staff**) and **TAP partners** willing to offer temporary firearm storage services. Transparency and clear responsibilities are essential for developing trust between organizations and firearm community members who often have no history working together.

The Table below provides a description of each role and the associated responsibilities:

<b>Role</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
<i>Project coordinator</i>	Manages TAP implementation. This person may work for a larger entity but should have decision making authority when in the field and know the parameters of support that can be provided through TAP marketing, mentorship, and partner training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversees outreach.</li> <li>• Develops relationships with community stakeholders.</li> <li>• Recruits, trains, and supports community partners.</li> <li>• Manages the marketing support and logistics.</li> <li>• Organizes and facilitates or co-facilitates monthly Community of Practice meetings.</li> </ul>
<i>Project outreach staff</i>	Spends time calling, emailing, visiting, and following up with potential or current partners and other stakeholders.  Must plan to spend time visiting and engaging in conversation with firearm retailers and others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visits firearm retail stores</li> <li>• Develops relationships with community stakeholders.</li> <li>• Attends gun shows and other public events.</li> <li>• Spread awareness within the community.</li> <li>• May assist project coordinator in organizing and co-facilitating Community of Practice meetings.</li> </ul>
<i>TAP partner</i>	A partnering firearm retailer responsible for communicating about TAP and providing materials and resources in their stores. They must have a plan to store firearms or plan to refer customers to other retailers for temporary storage transactions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide time for a 1-hour training of staff.</li> <li>• Discuss TAP with customers, explain importance of secure firearm storage (including temporary out-of-home storage)</li> <li>• Be willing to share knowledge about mental health and suicide prevention resources.</li> <li>• Participate in Community of Practice calls and respond to calls or text messages from TAP staff.</li> <li>• Offer temporary firearm storage for customers or refer to other TAP partners with capacity.</li> </ul>

TAP Staff serve as ambassadors, connecting with firearm retailers and community stakeholders, participating in community events, and are part of the training team and Community of Practice (CoP) meetings. Staff ensure that TAP is cohesive and coordinated. Maintaining close collaboration between TAP partners can be particularly helpful when an FFL is unable to provide out-of-home firearm storage due to limited storage capacity. In some instances, a retailer with more storage capacity may be able to meet the needs of the customer seeking temporary storage, thus ensuring that TAP achieves its goal.

## Health and Mental Health Connections

Connecting with local health and mental health professionals can be a helpful strategy to strengthen implementation of TAP. They can help get the word out about TAP as a



Image of TAP marketing material for patients.

resource to relevant community members and patients in need. See TAP Toolkit Appendix for an implementation guide for health care providers including a TAP patient and provider card.

These collaborations also facilitate development of a locally focused resource list that can be provided during trainings to supplement the existing national resource list (TAP Toolkit Appendix).

TAP provides “Gatekeeper” suicide prevention training and connections to mental health and suicide prevention specialists (such as VA Suicide Prevention Coordinators and Community Engagement and Partnership Coordinators) to provide additional support when the need arises. This training and support bolsters confidence among TAP FFL partners and their staff when speaking about suicide prevention.

VA suicide prevention and mental health partners will not be provided individuals names or identifying information of firearm owners, unless a firearm owner decides they want help from the VA and consents to have their information shared.

Your local VA Community Engagement and Partnership Coordinator (CEPC) may like to be involved and can provide connections to Veteran-specific service groups and community organizations. They may also have existing connections to firearm retailers or to other groups that have connections to a firearm retailer. Veterans were highly involved in the VISION Coalition and the initial creation and rollout of TAP in Louisiana. Furthermore, local CEPCs have supported growth, sustainment, and awareness of TAP. To reach your local CEPC, connect first with the VA Suicide Prevention Coordinator in your area and then ask to be connected to the CEPC. You can use this website to connect to your area SPC:



### **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

Veterans Health Administration  
*Office of Mental Health and  
Suicide Prevention*

[www.Veteranscrisisline.net/find-resources/local-resources](http://www.Veteranscrisisline.net/find-resources/local-resources)

### Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)



If you are a coalition or group interested in implementing TAP in your community another excellent collaborator is your regional ATF Field office. ATF staff can be helpful when it comes to understanding federal and local firearms laws, and these staff can be a resource as questions arise around temporary out-of-home firearm storage. You can get connected to your local ATF Field Office by contacting

Marianna Mitchem [FITB@atf.gov](mailto:FITB@atf.gov) and mentioning your connection with “VISION’s The Armory Project” or looking up your local director of industry and operations at:

[www.atf.gov/contact/atf-field-divisions](http://www.atf.gov/contact/atf-field-divisions).

While participation will always be at the discretion of the FFL, the ATF liaison can direct FFLs to any appropriate regulations as needed. If you are an FFL, you may have an ATF liaison who you can talk to about your participation in TAP and/or your interest in providing firearm storage for owners in need.

## Budget Considerations

Although not required, it can be helpful to have some funding to cover expenses for program coordination, outreach, and partner support, among other budget items. Anyone considering launching a storage project in their area should consider budget alongside the other initial logistics and project management concerns.

Some examples of potential expenses:

- Salary for staff (program coordinator, outreach staff, others)
- Budget for consultants or outreach partners (Veterans or firearm owners to work with you to connect with potential partners and understand the local landscape)
- Funds for printing marketing materials or customizing materials locally such as banners, posters, educational materials radio advertising, television advertising, local print media, billboards, etc.
- Funds to support TAP partners to cover any expenses incurred in launching temporary storage services (e.g., storage cabinet or space)
- Travel funds for coordinator and outreach staff to travel to firearm shops, gun shows, and community outreach opportunities.



Damien Harvey, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran, and VISION volunteer.

You may be able to obtain initial funding from your city or state government or other grant funding sources. For example, many cities and states participate in the Governor's and Mayor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families ([SAMHSA.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov)). Support could also come from your state's Department of Veterans Affairs or the city or state Department of Public Health.



**VISION members in Louisiana have been able to get provided radio media time due to the altruistic nature of the content.**

## Creating Partnerships

TAP can be done as a stand-alone project or as part of other initiatives. Those we worked with reported that the main source of our success has been coordinating every step of the way with the firearm retailer community to create messaging and processes tailored to and endorsed by our firearm retailer partners, resulting in a sustainable program. This section will support you in replicating our community partnered approach to creating TAP.



### Scanning the Local Landscape

The firearm community is often tight-knit, and its members are knowledgeable about the local retail landscape. Connecting personally with community members will help the coordinator and team develop relationships with potential partners and users of the service. Importantly, this will provide an opportunity to listen to the needs, concerns, and suggestions of those who will be most directly involved in and affected by the program.

If you do not already have existing relationships with a firearm retailer but you have connections with an interested and passionate community member, this person may be able to facilitate a conversation with a firearm retailer.



**Effective partnership with retailers is the crux of a successful out-of-home storage initiative. To get started, the team should work on getting a snapshot of the local landscape, both in terms of veteran organizations as well as the firearm professional community and firearm clubs.**

## Finding TAP Partners

Your initial firearm retailer partners will be the first in their community to establish TAP at their stores. You and these representatives should know that their locations are the first step of a larger goal to spread this work to other retailers as well. Consider your community and utilize some of the below strategies to help you make connections and find retailer partners.



- Utilize [www.atf.gov/firearms/listing-federal-firearms-licensees](http://www.atf.gov/firearms/listing-federal-firearms-licensees) for geographic searches of Federal Firearm Licensees (FFL) holders. The search will show active retail locations as well as gunsmiths and possibly private collectors, pawn shops, or other non-retail firearm professionals.
- This list will include FFLs that may not have the space or capacity to provide voluntary storage, so you may need to ask some questions to determine whether they can be a storage partners.
- Identify the largest and/or most well-known locally owned retailers in your area. They are easier to approach than larger, corporate stores. We have had the most success at FFLs where the owner is often on-site and/or there is a manager who is empowered to make decisions or can advocate to an off-site owner.
- Go to local gun shows, either participating with a table advertising your group or simply go as an attendee. Approach tables of firearm retailers to talk about TAP when they are not busy.
- Seek out firearm retailers that hold classes or training for firearm owners.

Once you have identified firearm retailers in your area, you can begin the process of reaching out and connecting with them in a purposeful and intentional manner. At the outset, keep in mind that many firearm retail stores are small businesses, often operated by individuals or families. Some are “side businesses” of those with other full-time employment, while some may be an individual’s primary means of employment. Recognizing the role the shop plays in the life of the owner will help you appreciate the underlying interests of the individuals you will be speaking with, leading to more productive initial outreach.

Trust is a prerequisite in working with both firearm and Veteran communities, and trust is often established most easily through face-to-face interactions. Phone calls and emails can be great first steps, but in-person engagement will help lay the necessary groundwork for trusting, working relationships. Showing up and visiting a gun shop shows genuine interest in the retailer as a potential partner.



The owners of Feliciano Firearms, TAP partners in Saint Francisville, LA

**Whenever connecting with the community, it is important to always model respect, be prepared and organized, and know the material. Be sure to pay attention to the needs and goals of the person you are talking to by listening closely, and adjust your conversation based on those needs.**



In the TAP Toolkit Appendix, we provide draft email language for new partners and for those you may have met in the community at an event like a gun show.



Meeting the retailer where they are, both literally and figuratively, helps to build initial trust. Visiting also allows for a subjective evaluation of a shop's environment, including getting to know the culture of the store. Ultimately, TAP project coordinator and outreach staff must recruit partners by introducing what is likely a new concept (temporary, out-of-home storage for suicide prevention) and inviting them to partner, while also listening to their concerns. It requires more than just casual outreach. The coordinator must be prepared to approach the process with thoughtfulness and intentionality. To support you in this effort, you will want to review and understand many of the common questions and concerns firearm retailers and owners have with TAP.

*“Living in Louisiana, I know others who have between 15-100 guns, and it is part of the culture. Giving them to a gun store may be easier than giving to a friend. I love the idea of the storage at gun shop and a place to turn the weapons in.”*

**-Firearm Owner**

In the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document (in the TAP Toolkit Appendix) we have included some of these common questions and our suggested answers. It can be helpful to review this beforehand to help increase your confidence in discussing frequent concerns. Topics and questions that are not in the FAQ document may arise and it is important not to provide an answer if you are not sure, as this would damage trust. In such circumstances, you can let the retailer know that you will work with them to find an answer or solution. Additionally, you can reach out to us at [www.visioncoalition.net](http://www.visioncoalition.net) to join our community of practice and seek answers.



For newly established areas pursuing TAP with businesses, initial partners are welcome to attend and join the VISION Coalition [www.visioncoalition.net](http://www.visioncoalition.net) community of practice meetings to gain guidance and knowledge from our FFLs and support team, who have been doing this work for a while. We want to support you in creating your own community of practice meeting, so you are better able to navigate legal and regulatory processes unique to your State and/or County.

## TAP Onboarding

A strength of TAP is that each firearm retailer who joins us first participates in a brief onboarding meeting with TAP support staff, followed by a training session for their staff. This onboarding and training process ensures the FFL, and their employees are well-prepared to have conversations about secure firearm storage, know how to watch for and respond to signs of a suicidal crisis, can share information about the process of temporary out-of-home firearm storage, and can conduct the necessary storage transactions when appropriate.

The materials for this section are intended to provide basic information so that all TAP members have consistent background information and shared understanding of the project. Modification and tailoring may make sense to meet the local context of your community.

After initial contact with the owner and/or manager-- which may take place in person, over the phone, or by email-- a retailer will signal that they agree to be a TAP partner. At that time have a meeting to review the Onboarding Memo, materials from the project, and to schedule training for employees (Steps 1- 4).

**Who should attend:** Program Coordinator, Project Outreach Staff, Owner(s) and/or key managers (this varies by business)

**Time commitment:** Up to two hours (up to one hour with key managers and up to one hour training staff).

**Activities:**

1. Step One: Tour of Store
2. Step Two: Establish the Mission - Go through the slide deck with the owner and/or manager so they know what will be said at the training before they attend with their staff.
3. Step Three: Review Onboarding Memo and optional In-store Guidance Document
4. Step Four: Train the Staff

**Organizing:** See the TAP Partner Onboarding and Training Checklist in the TAP Toolkit Appendix to assist with organizing steps throughout the onboarding process.

**What to bring:** The onboarding materials located in the TAP Toolkit Appendix include:

- Onboarding Memo
- The Training Presentation Slides Handout, (There are both slides with notes for presenting and slides to share in the TAP Toolkit Appendix)
- Sample printed resources related to suicide prevention and secure firearm storage (we have these on [www.visioncoalition.net](http://www.visioncoalition.net) for FFLs to download, and we offer to print additional copies for retailers as our funds allow)
- Any additional resource materials locally provided in addition to TAP resources.
- Marketing materials request document
- In-store Guidance Document



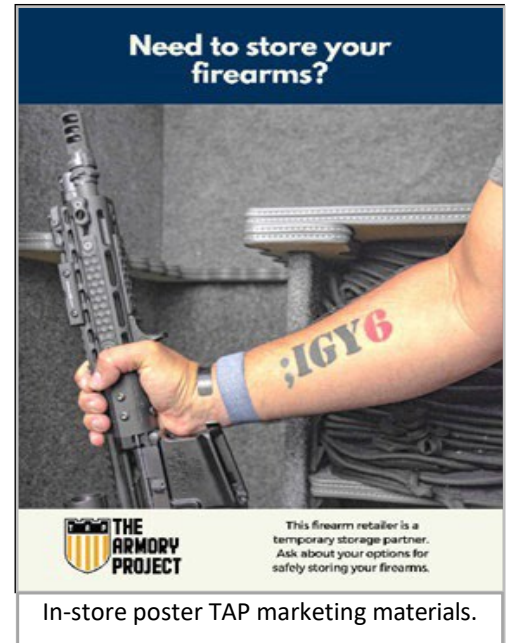
Josh and Felicia Burns, TAP partners and owner,  
Apocalypse Sports in Ponchatoula, LA

## Step One: Tour the Store

When you arrive at the new TAP partner for onboarding, first ask the retailer to show you around their store. Take this opportunity to mention signs, banners, decals for TAP and gauge what materials they are interested in having at the store. (Note: if you have completed initial meetings with the FFL via phone or email, etc., the first time you visit the store may be during staff training).

Marketing and Outreach is a key component of TAP. To build awareness and prompt conversations in retail stores, partners should have adequate and appropriate signage and informational handouts or brochures available to customers. All partners should be willing to promote the service in their stores and when they speak to those in their community.

While program marketing could be left up to each partner to handle individually, the overall project is stronger because of the common design, language, and advertising across partners in the community. The language and look of the materials we provide you within this toolkit were developed with the initial TAP partners. Because our partners had a role in creating the materials, they were enthusiastic about using them to market the program. We hope these materials will also resonate with firearm retailers in other regions.



*“We’ve noticed a lot of people; they’ll pick up the brochure and they’ll be very impressed with it. They’ll go, ‘Oh yeah, that’s a great idea.’”*

**-TAP Partner Staff**

As you tour the store take notes to make sure you get the correct items and amounts recorded on the Marketing Materials Request document (in the TAP Marketing Materials Appendix). Discussing their store, learning about their business, gauging which marketing items are of interest, and writing this information down will demonstrate your commitment to personalizing TAP for their needs.

**Firearm retail stores can vary widely by size, layout, and style. By offering partners a variety of marketing materials, you can ensure that each partner will have options to properly advertise the temporary storage program in each unique store environment.**



Interior of The Rustic Renegade, one of the first TAP partners.

## TAP Marketing Materials

Our marketing materials are found in the TAP Marketing Materials Appendix, and we encourage you to use what is provided with your community. You can also customize these materials with your own images or by adding your own logos. If you want to use or adapt our materials, please reach out to the VISION coalition ([vision.nola@gmail.com](mailto:vision.nola@gmail.com)) so we can track how the materials are being used and make sure use of the materials aligns with TAP goals and values.

Marketing is a great option for TAP partners without the capacity to provide out-of-home storage or who are hesitant to become a full storage partner right away. Firearm retailers who market at their location can support TAP, by increasing awareness of temporary out-of-home storage for suicide prevention, offering resources to their community, and providing interested customers with a “warm hand-off” to other retailers in the TAP network to assist them with storage needs.

*“They see the banners and the pamphlets in our store and after I explain what it’s about, they take a pamphlet either for themselves or for someone they know.”*

**-TAP Partner**

### Marketing Materials:

- 18x24 Wall Posters
- Window Clings
- A trifold brochure
- Banners
- Small tabletop signs
- Stickers

## Step Two: Establish the Mission

Next, you will want to find somewhere to sit with the owner and/or manager and provide a mini training on TAP (again, this step may take place over the phone, email, video conference, etc.). This will mirror the training that will be done with the employees once fully onboarded. It may be abridged in some places based on the conversations you have already had but it is important the store leadership knows what will be taught in staff training. Reviewing the material together will allow you to better understand store leadership's perspective and address additional questions or misunderstandings about the temporary storage project and/or suicide awareness.

We have developed a template that FFLs can adapt to help guide conversations between an FFL and a firearm owner about the temporary storage process. It covers topics such as whether the FFL will charge a fee for storage (most TAP partners do not) and what will happen when the firearm owner is ready to have their firearm(s) returned to them.



TAP partners and owners of Neutral Ground Gun Company, Arabi, LA.

**Training description:** The training provides a general overview of suicide risk and prevention and related firearm safety basics. These are key concepts to prepare employees to interact with customers positively.

You will find instructional notes on conducting the training in the TAP Toolkit Appendix. The slide training section is designed to support owners or managers to conduct the training themselves (if needed) or in partnership with TAP staff (preferred). The notes with the slides in the TAP Toolkit Appendix are provided for the trainer, followed by an easy printable slide section that can be handed out to the trainees. Feel free to use the presentation language in the slides or modify as makes sense for the presentation.

Within the training are slides on the different ways temporary out-of-home firearm storage may be provided by an FFL. When reviewing the slides is a good time to solidify the temporary out-of-home firearm storage the store will plan to use.



**Please note: Editing the training slides is appropriate to make the training more applicable to your audience. Below are some suggestions on training modifications you may want to consider:**

- Adding slides on the organizations involved in the TAP effort locally,
- Removing the slides that are not applicable on different ways to conduct temporary safe storage if a particular store is not using that method, and
- Adding slides on local resources or additional resources at the end of the presentation.

**We suggest discussing changes with your local community of practice and a store owner.**

## TAP Firearm Storage

As part of TAP, firearm retailers follow the law and utilize their professional discretion in choosing how to accept firearms for temporary storage and return those firearms when the owner is ready to have them back. Through discussions with the firearm owner, a retailer may choose to establish a uniform policy for all temporary storage situations or to handle each situation on a case-by-case basis. Firearm storage according to the circumstances that cause a firearm owner to want to store their firearm(s).

### Some considerations:

- Is the customer experiencing an acute situation regarding mental health and/or relationship or other challenges?
- How long does the customer want to store their firearm(s) for? A set duration or open-ended?
- Before and during the initial time of storage, is the customer keeping in touch with the retailer regarding how they're doing?

Based on these and any other relevant factors, the retailer may choose to treat the temporary storage situation as a “consignment hold” (where they take in the firearm on consignment but don’t put it up for sale) or as gunsmithing and cleaning (where the retailer must perform some minor repair or cleaning). Some FFLs may provide storage lockers that a firearm owner can access and use on their own. Options for providing temporary storage should conform to local, state, and federal laws; FFLs are most likely to know these laws and/or to have an ATF liaison they can consult with questions. Regardless of which process they adopt; the retailer must follow the requirements of federal regulations when taking in and returning the firearm.

*“The longest I’ve kept [a firearm] is about a month. That person was dealing with a bad anniversary. He went off to [another state] and got some help... got some time to think and self-reflect. He came back, picked his stuff up, and was like ‘Man, that was great. I think I’m going to do that every year.’”*

**-TAP Partner**



Record keeping guidance for an FFL to log the firearm(s) into their Acquisition and Disposition (A&D) logbook is provided in the Appendix. FFLs and firearm owners often express concern about what will happen if a customer does not pass the background check; we provide our best answer to that question in our FAQ.

It is important for the FFL to have a transparent discussion with the customer about what the firearm storage intake and return process will look like. Some retailers we've worked with have developed their own written document to help guide discussions about temporary storage with their customers. We have developed a template for a firearm storage agreement that can be adapted and edited by any FFL for their use, included in our Appendices.

**See the TAP Toolkit Appendix for:**

- FAQ on frequently asked questions
- Guidance on the logistics of out-of-home storage
- NSSF Guidance for record keeping at firearm retailers.
- Template for Firearm Storage Agreement




Raul Fuster, Veteran and VISION volunteer,  
talking about secure firearm storage

## Step Three: Review the Onboarding Memo

The Onboarding Memo is an important document to review. It solidifies the partnership in a transparent way, detailing the roles and responsibilities for both the TAP partner and any coordinating group/entity.

If the firearm retailer does not have the capacity to offer on-site storage as a TAP partner, you may want to discuss the item on, “Purchasing storage devices, and/or making changes to on-site storage facility, or otherwise support the participation in TAP as they see fit to facilitate success of the program”. In general, this has meant having a plan in place for having that partner refer interested temporary out-of-home storage customers to another TAP partner in the network.

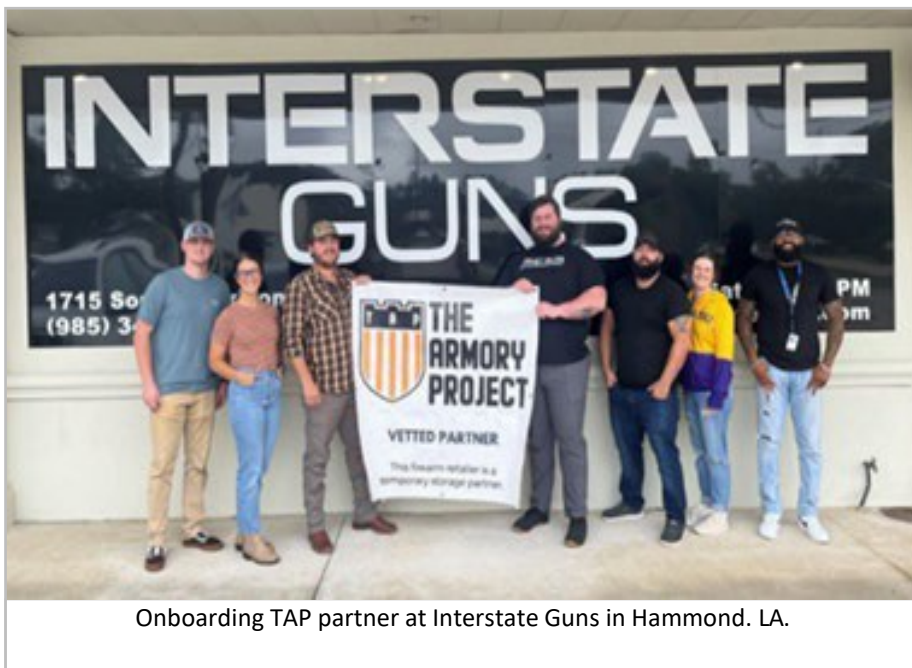
	Thank you for adopting The Armory Project (TAP) at your location, your participation will help prevent suicide by firearm within the community. TAP is an effort to provide out-of-home firearm storage options for those at increased risk for self-harm. TAP staff, and the retailers have different responsibilities but will work together to ensure success of this program.	
<b>Staffs' duties and responsibilities will include:</b>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Hosting regularly occurring meetings to develop a shared practice plan for this effort and to manage any issues that emerge in the execution of the plan.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Providing retailers with sample storage agreements used by other firearm retailers that can be tailored for use at the discretion of the individual retailers. The staff undertakes no legal representation, nor does it guarantee agreements protect participants to the extent desired.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Providing each retailer with staff training regarding suicide prevention and managing conversations with those at risk for suicide.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Providing each retailer with printed materials describing out-of-home storage options and how customers can access mental health care.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Providing the retailers with advertising materials including posters and banners for the TAP.	
<b>Firearm retailers' duties and responsibilities will include:</b>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Participating in regularly occurring meetings to develop a shared practice plan and provide feedback on utility of the TAP practice plan.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Develop and utilize a firearm storage agreement to store firearms for customers.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Permitting training to staff that will describe suicide prevention interventions and strategies for managing conversations with those at risk for suicide.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Displaying printed materials describing out-of-home storage options included in TAP and information on how customers can access mental health care.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Displaying advertising materials including posters and banners with the TAP logo.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Engaging interested customers in conversations about the out-of-home storage options and will provide customers with printed informational materials.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Purchasing storage devices, and/or making changes to on-site storage facility, or otherwise support the participation in TAP as they see fit to facilitate success of this program.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Allowing periodic visits by staff to interact with retail staff, determine acceptability and utility of TAP and to assist with support or modifications as needed.	
<i>By signing below, you voluntarily agree to the terms and scope of work described above. Thank you, and we look forward to collaborating with you.</i>		
On behalf of the TAP team:	_____	_____
	Signature	Date
Retailer:	_____	_____
	Signature	Date
<b>TAP Onboarding Memo</b>		

**Suggestion: Read through the memo out loud and check off each one with your pen as you read. You are forming a new partnership with this business, and it is important they know your group is committed to its end of the work. Reading and checking off your responsibilities is a way to demonstrate your commitment to build trust.**

## In-Store Guidance Document

At the outset, retailers should solidify plans for how to handle storage transactions, implement a paperwork process, and train their employees on the service.

The paperwork should include an agreement that lays out the terms of the temporary storage agreement including timing, costs (if any), when and how the stored firearm(s) may be retrieved, etc. It should provide answers for some of the common questions a firearm owner might have when considering temporary, out-of-home storage. See the Template for Firearm Storage Agreements on the TAP Toolkit Appendix.



Utilizing a staff support document allows you to create a quick access reference that can detail the basics for having discussions about suicide and secure firearm storage, procedures for temporary storage services approved by the business owner, and how to contact TAP project staff and partners.

A customizable In-store Guidance Document is provided in the TAP Toolkit Appendix to review with the business owner and/or manager. This document can be printed on cardstock and laminated so it can be easily accessed by staff when needed.

## Step Four: Train the Staff

Below are brief explanations of the training sections to supplement the instructions provided in the TAP Toolkit Appendix. Large sections of the training use the Department of Veterans Affairs S.A.V.E. training and have been modified to support the needs of TAP and its partners. TAP training covers three sections: Perceptions and Myths, S.A.V.E. training, and Resources and Connection.

### Perceptions and Myths

In this section we review myths and realities that can create barriers to suicide prevention work. These are beliefs and attitudes we have encountered from firearm owners or FFL staff, or that they heard from their customers. This section of the training prepares firearm retail staff to hear and appropriately react to such beliefs and attitudes.

**It's important to help participants understand that some of the attitudes they may have about suicide can be harmful — for example, the myth that asking someone a direct question about suicide will plant the idea of suicide in their mind.**

### S.A.V.E. Training

This section provides the basics of “Gatekeeper” training for suicide prevention. Nested within are specific considerations around suicide and firearms. These slides explain why we focus on firearms by providing FFL staff with information on suicidal behavior, lethality of different means of suicide, and misconceptions associated with suicide and firearms. This section also includes two slides on different ways that FFLs can provide temporary out-of-home storage services. The end of this section would be a good time to review the In-store Guidance Document created for the business.

### Resources and Connection

The last section includes resources and slides connecting the training back to the larger TAP effort and educates staff on the CoP.

**Individuals have many different experiences with crisis lines and/or the VA, so it is important to ensure they are heard and answer questions in an unbiased way.**

Consult the FAQ to be able to respond to questions and experiences around resources such as the national suicide prevention crisis line. Some community members may have concerns related to the stigma of reaching out or about the quality and availability of help through the crisis line, and it is important to address these concerns.

## Logistics of Staff Training

Identify an appropriate location and room set up for a staff training, ensure that you can either print and review the slides or, ideally, present slides to the group either using a projector and screen, or a monitor or tv hookup. (Note: some FFLS have classroom space for firearms classes where we have been able to conduct staff training. Others do not, and we have brought printed copies of the training slides for discussion in whatever space is available).

Work with the FFL owner to identify an appropriate time and day for the training to ensure their staff will be present for the training. In our experience, this has typically been a morning before the store opens or during a less busy time at the store to allow staff to pop in and out if customers come in.

*“[We] need some training in what to say, what not to say, what could help, and what’s just plainly not going to help.”*

**-TAP Partner**

Materials you will need for the training include:

- Printable Slides
- Examples of each print resources (related to suicide prevention, firearm safety, and/or mental health) that the retailer will be providing.
- Local crafted and/or provided Life Challenges + Mental Health Resources
- In store Guidance Document that can stay near the register for staff.

## Preparing for Training

Before conducting a training, you will want to familiarize yourself with the goals, topics, and possible reactions to the training. Beyond the training slides, training instructions, and FAQs we have included information in this section to support successful trainings.

**Be prepared with any consents and/or posters or banners you may need. After the training is a great opportunity to take a picture with those trained.**

## Emotional Responses to the Topic of Suicide

Discussions are encouraged to help participants feel comfortable with the topic and have more confidence to talk with others about it. Discussion about suicide attempts, personal history with suicide risk, or other difficult emotions may naturally arise during the training. TAP project coordinator and outreach staff should be prepared to manage these conversations with empathy.

Occasionally, a person may become very emotional or may disclose more about their own life experiences or circumstances than expected. Such disclosures may feel uncomfortable for the discloser or other people who are present in the training.

**You do not know who will be in the training or what they may be dealing with or have dealt with in their lives. Maintain an open, engaging, caring, and nonjudgmental approach throughout the presentation.**

Strategies for coping with sharing of personal experiences during training could include:

- Set expectations by discussing that the training can be emotional prior to starting.
- During training, avoid group discussions becoming one-on-one conversations by regularly checking in with other trainees on the content of the training.
- Referring trainees to resources before and/or after the training.
- Checking in with the person after the training
- If the emotions are extreme and it is taking the training off course, take a break.

The project itself, the staff, and the TAP partners do not have requirements of liability, supervision, documentation, or oversight to provide mental health care and it is important to remember that the training is not a support group and is not intended to be therapeutic. The goal of the training is to prepare retail staff to discuss TAP with customers who may need the service.

**While disclosure of personal experiences can sometimes be challenging during the training, you may also encounter times when people are quiet because they have had personal experiences but don't want to discuss them in a group setting. In such circumstances, the trainer should be prepared to lead discussions and provide examples.**

## New TAP Partner Onboarded

Once onboarded, invite the new TAP partner to the next community of practice meeting so they can connect with other TAP partners. Also make sure to add them to all group correspondence.

Once onboarded, offer to introduce the new TAP partner to other existing TAP partners by inviting them to CoP meetings. The next section will walk you through the process and background for having these calls. Also make sure to add them to all group correspondence. In many locations, organizations are trying to get the word out about the availability of temporary out-of-home storage by creating storage maps. If you would like to create a map to connect storage seeking customers to your TAP partners, you should first confirm the business's desire to be included. Below is a list of existing maps and there is a guide to creating your own map at: [firearm-injury-prevention-toolkit52fb14e7302864d9a5bfff0a001ce385.pdf](https://firearm-injury-prevention-toolkit52fb14e7302864d9a5bfff0a001ce385.pdf) ([cuanschutz.edu](http://cuanschutz.edu))

VISION's website lists all FFL partners on its website and on a map as soon as they are officially onboarded to help firearm owners locate and contact a storage location.

<b>State</b>	<b>Link to Map *</b>
Colorado	<a href="#">Colorado Firearm Safety Coalition</a>
Louisiana	<a href="#">Gun Shop Partners — VISION Coalition</a>
Maryland	<a href="#">Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence</a>
Mississippi	<a href="#">Mississippi Storage Map</a>
New Jersey	<a href="#">NJ Firearm Storage Map</a>
New York	<a href="#">New York Firearm Storage Map</a>
Washington	<a href="#">Washington Firearm Safe Storage Map</a>
Wisconsin	<a href="#">Gun Shop Safety and Storage Program</a>
National: Hold My Guns	<a href="#">HMG Storage Partners (holdmyguns.org)</a>

*\*These sites are updated and maintained by local coalitions; please verify information before using or sharing these maps.*

*\*\*The following states are considering or are in the process of creating a map: California, Delaware, Missouri, Oregon, Texas, Wyoming*

## Partner Support

Once the new TAP partner site is up and running there are basic ongoing tasks that will continue to support the TAP partner.

### Creating a Community of Practice

We have found that a key element of sustaining and growing TAP is having regular CoP meetings, these meetings are where TAP partners can meet and connect with program staff and other partners. New TAP partners can become part of the existing community, receive “mentoring” from existing members, and bring their new ideas and enthusiasm to the group.



These meetings can be formal or informal in nature and can be held in-person or virtually, depending on the preferences of those involved. You and your partners can decide how often to meet and who to invite. The goal is to set up regular meetings where firearm retailers involved in TAP can meet to discuss challenges, logistics, and share experiences.

Benefits of regular CoP meetings for TAP partners:

- Networking opportunities
- Chances to problem-solve real world challenges with a group of experienced professionals.
- A setting to introduce new TAP retailers and help them learn more about the project from those already involved.
- Opportunities to tackle larger issues as a group.
- Creates a space for firearm retailers to discuss future directions for this type of work, beyond TAP.

*“That’s the biggest help, hearing from the other guys and what’s working for them. I stole my idea from [name of store owner], to get the word out by reaching out to our local sheriff.”*

**-TAP Partner**

**Example:** A new TAP partner is considering various options for how to manage the paperwork side of their storage service. The TAP program coordinator can offer any insights that come from the research literature while other TAP partners can share their own experiences and any lessons learned.



Currently, our CoP meetings are organized and co-facilitated by a member of our project staff and a local CEPC. They occur monthly, last 30-45 minutes, and are held via an online video conference platform. We open the meeting with a brief check-in, during which TAP retailers can share what is going well, what challenges have come up, and where they need support. Retailers often share resources and ideas with each other. We also discuss any new directions TAP could take in the future.

TAP partners have shared that offering temporary storage without some ongoing support would be difficult or impossible given their range of responsibilities in running a retail business. It is important for the program coordinator to provide technical support to the TAP partners (to the extent possible) as well as creating opportunities for connections between the partners.

**When VISION implemented TAP in Louisiana, the group successfully pursued the creation of Louisiana ACT 253 in 2022 to provide immunity from civil liability for FFLs who provide temporary storage.**



Caleb Morse, owner of the Rustic Renegade and TAP partner, with his team at a community event

## Ongoing Support

Once the CoP is up and running and you can bring on more FFLs, there are basic ongoing tasks that will continue to support the TAP partner as the project grows in your area.

- Check in with TAP partners via their preferred method and provide additional marketing materials at regular intervals.
- Hold regularly scheduled CoP meetings.
- Connect with FFLs and others at community firearm events, such as gun shows or health fairs to promote TAP.
- Develop strategies with TAP partners to address the need for refresher training or training for new retail staff.
- Discuss other efforts TAP partners may want to work on. These could be related to suicide prevention or other secure firearm storage practices, such as educating:
  - Modifying existing classes held by FFL to include education or videos such as these: [Firearms Professionals — VISION Coalition,   
www.youtu.be/NIIYHYJcUrQ?si=4o0YiLbesSGW4mZs](https://www.youtube.be/NIIYHYJcUrQ?si=4o0YiLbesSGW4mZs)
  - New firearm owners and families with small children about secure storage
  - Supporting family members who have someone in the home with dementia or other cognitive challenges.
- Connect partners with resources for postvention as needed. (Postvention is interventions and supports for those who are recently bereaved due to suicide.)
- Promote TAP to health care providers and others in the community who can raise awareness.
- The TAP CoP has explored recording trainings so that new staff could have something to view as they start working at a TAP partner store.

**All VISION TAP partners have mentioned a desire for a “refresher training” annually or every six months. We are currently working on a video training.**

## Other Temporary Out-of-Home Firearm Storage Projects

Other ideas for temporary out-of-home storage practices we have heard include firearm storage in lockers located at Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) as well as firearm storage with law enforcement (which is an official option in states such as Utah, Colorado, and Washington). In developing TAP, firearm owners

*“Obviously, a gun store is not traditionally thought of as a place where you go to talk about mental health. But you have this brochure in front of you, and that opens up a can of worms... we’ve had multiple conversations that are beneficial for all.”*

**-TAP Partner**

voiced that some are reluctant to store their firearms with law enforcement due to concerns about the potential for damage to firearms and/or challenges with getting their firearms back. We also heard about challenges to VSOs providing firearm storage, including liability concerns and lack of secure storage options. We therefore decided to focus on firearm retailers as acceptable storage partners.

Firearm industry leaders and other coalitions around the country have developed and shared helpful materials related to secure firearm storage and suicide prevention. Community-focused firearm suicide prevention resources:

Name	Description
<a href="#">Be There for Wisconsin Veterans</a>	Gun Shop Project introduction packet and forms
<a href="#">Gun Shop Project</a>	A project reaching out to gun shops on roles they can play in suicide prevention
<a href="#">Injury and Violence Prevention Center and Firearm Injury Prevention Initiative</a>	A toolkit for creating maps for voluntary out-of-home firearm storage
<a href="#">National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF)</a>	Includes toolkit and materials from a partnership between VA, NSSF, and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)
<a href="#">Oregon Firearm Safety Coalition (OFSC)</a>	Training and support to community for multiple initiatives on voluntary community-led strategies
<a href="#">Suicide Prevention is Everyone’s Business</a>	A Toolkit for Safe Firearm Storage in Your Community
<a href="#">Hold My Guns</a>	An organization that connects FFLs to provide crisis services to their community

*\*Each resource above is also a clickable link that will take you to that resource’s website. If you are utilizing a print document of this toolkit, you will need to conduct an internet search to access the resource.*

## Evaluation Options

Evaluating your secure firearm storage program may help you document impacts of the program and how to improve its effectiveness over time. Through collecting data and evaluating your program, you will have data to support applications for funding from private and not-for-profit organization including local, state, and/or federal grant funding.

Here are a few examples of how data might be gathered to measure impact:

- TAP partners and employees can be asked to complete brief surveys measuring knowledge and attitudes both before and after the TAP training.
- Partners can be evaluated for display of TAP marketing materials in their stores.
- Impact can be measured by counting the number of conversations about temporary out-of-home firearm storage, referrals to additional resources or support, or total numbers of firearm storage transaction and/or firearms stored.
- TAP partners could create a brief survey to ask their customers for feedback when they engage with the voluntary, temporary out of home storage of their firearms.
- You could conduct qualitative interviews with TAP partners and their staff to ask about acceptability and feasibility of participating in the program.

Find examples of the following evaluation tools in the appendix to modify or use:

- Pre-training Evaluation
- Post-training Evaluation
- Marketing Materials Evaluation

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# THE ARMORY PROJECT

## THE ARMORY PROJECT TOOLKIT APPENDIX

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## Email Draft Language Example

*Below is sample language to use with potential TAP partners you have never met:*

**Subject:** The Armory Project Partnership

Hello -

I work for XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX as a XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. I am a partner of the group working on The Armory Project (TAP). The purpose of this program is to aim in preventing suicide by firearm. One of the ways we aim to do that is through our Armory Project, where we partner with local firearm retailers to provide a place for firearm owners to store their firearms when in crisis. We are working with businesses that sell, repair, or clean firearms, shooting ranges, or shooting sports clubs to raise awareness about out-of-home firearm storage to prevent suicides. Some FFLs also agree to consider providing temporary out-of-home storage for firearm owners.

I've attached a 1-page info sheet about TAP partner opportunities.

I would love to talk to you in more detail about what we do, with hopes of potentially working together one day to save lives. I am sure that you will have questions about liability, storage cost, and the overall process in which we are excited to listen and answer any questions that you may have. We can come out to your location and speak with you about this in person, as well as bring some of our sample resources. We are looking forward to hearing from you.

If you prefer, we can call and discuss any questions you may have before we visit. Is there a good time to give you a call to discuss further at your convenience?

Thank you,  
[Your Name, Title, and phone number]

---

*Below is sample language to use with potential TAP partners meet at a community event:*

**Subject:** Follow-up from Gun Show: The Armory Project

Hello -

We met briefly at the Gun Show on Sunday. I am part of the group working on The Armory Project (TAP).

We are partnering with FFLs in [Your Community] to raise awareness about secure firearm storage to prevent suicides. Some FFLs also agree to consider providing temporary out-of-home storage for firearm owners.

I've attached a 1-page info sheet about TAP partner opportunities.

We know you are leaders in the local firearm-owning community and would welcome the chance to talk more with you about TAP.

Is there a good time to give you a call to discuss further at your convenience?

Thank you,  
[Your Name, Title, and phone number]

---





## Temporary Firearm Storage to Prevent Suicides

Firearm owners, instructors, and retailers are joining together to reduce access to lethal means (firearms) when individuals are dealing with life or relationship challenges, mental health issues, and related difficult situations.

**The Armory Project (TAP)** is a partnership with firearm retail shops to offer temporary, out-of-home firearm storage to veterans and other customers. Each shop participates to the extent they are able and according to their own terms.

Partnership Options
Participation in a regularly occurring virtual “community of practice” meetings
In-person orientation/training for partner + employees on suicide prevention
Receive ongoing support related to mental health resources & connections for the community
Connect with other storage partners for peer support
Displaying TAP printed materials describing out-of-home storage options
Engage with customers in conversations about the out-of-home storage options
Be listed as a partner in the TAP Project website and mentioned in community outreach
Store offers or refers customers to stores that offer temporary storage

Contact: [Your name and title]  
[Phone number /Email]

# The Armory Project: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

**Important note:** These are our best attempts at answering questions that may be asked by Federal Firearm Licensees (FFLs) who are considering joining The Armory Project (TAP) or a similar program, or by firearm owners who are considering temporary out-of-home firearm storage with a FFL. This document was created to be in simple terms and is not meant to provide legal advice. We recommend you consider local, State, and federal laws that may pertain to your FFL and check with the ATF for guidance. The answers to some of these questions are complex and may change based on state or federal laws and regulations, so please consult with additional sources if necessary.

## **Why would someone want to temporarily store their firearm(s) at a firearm retailer or range?**

As described in other parts of this toolkit, about half of all suicides in the United States involve a firearm, and the percentage is much higher for Veterans and service members. When an individual is at risk of suicide—especially when someone is at high risk—it may be best to temporarily remove lethal means (firearms) from the home. Putting “time and distance” between a person at risk of suicide and firearms will give the person time to get help and to get their firearms back when they are ready.

Some people may also want firearms temporarily stored outside of the home when going through a divorce, loss of job, have children visiting their home, if someone in the home is experiencing dementia or other memory issues, or if they are traveling out of state or on a deployment.

## **Why store firearms with a firearm retailer or range instead of with a family member?**

A person who is having suicidal thoughts may not want to tell their family or friends, and some firearm owners may experience stigma around admitting to family or friends that they can't have their firearms at home. Also, social isolation is a major risk factor for suicide risk, and some people who are having suicidal thoughts may not have anyone they can turn to for temporary firearm storage.

In addition, while many state laws allow a person to give their firearms to a family member or friend to hold onto for them (if that person is not prohibited from owning firearms), some states have laws that make temporary transfer of firearms from one individual to another more challenging. In these states, a firearm retailer or range may be the best option for temporary out-of-home storage.

## **What organizations promote out-of-home storage?**

Organizations like the National Shooting Sports Foundation recommend temporary off-site storage for firearms when you are concerned about yourself or a loved one. Currently, a national non-profit called *Hold My Guns*, is working to connect firearm owners with voluntary storage locations. There are efforts similar to TAP in many states including Colorado, Wisconsin, and Washington; we provide a table listing these groups in the main part of the toolkit. We may

not be aware of every effort, and new groups may get started at any time, so our list is not exhaustive.

### **What guidance does the ATF provide?**

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ATF notes that FFLs can provide storage lockers for firearm owners on their premises, where an individual could temporarily store firearms on their own (not transferring the firearms to the FFL). This option may be preferred in some states and by some FFLs. However, there may be FFLs who do not have sufficient store space for providing lockers and/or there may be concerns about security of lockers. In addition, some individuals may have firearms collections of a size that prohibits the storage locker option.

A FFL may use what TAP calls a “consignment hold” or temporary transfer agreement between a FFL and a firearm owner. In this case, the FFL logs the firearm(s) in their Acquisition and Disposition (A&D) logbook, and the owner must pass a 4473 Background Check in order to have their firearms returned. (Please see the TAP Temporary Storage Agreement Template for more information.)

TAP has also heard from FFLs who have had a firearm owner drop off a firearm for Smithing (Repair) and Cleaning services and not come back to pick up the firearm until they are ready. In the case of Smithing and Cleaning, a FFL must log the firearm(s) into their A&D logbook if the firearm is left for more than 24 hours but the firearm owner does not have to complete a 4473 Background Check in order to have their firearms returned (note: it must be the original owner who is picking up the firearm).

Please always check with the ATF for guidance and up-to-date regulations and laws.

### **Is voluntary out-of-home firearm storage the same as court-ordered firearm storage?**

The process of voluntarily storing firearms outside the home, as promoted by TAP, is different from the required removal of firearms that occurs under Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs), also known as “Red Flag Laws.” Under an ERPO, a court may rule that an individual who is deemed at high risk of harming themselves or others must relinquish all firearms and may not purchase additional firearms until the ERPO expires. With TAP, an individual firearm owner voluntarily chooses to temporarily store his/her firearm(s) away from home. There is no official court or law enforcement agency involvement with voluntary storage under initiatives such as TAP.

### **Does TAP track individuals who store firearms and/or the firearms that are stored with a FFL?**

Coalitions like TAP do not collect that information. Rather, these groups are looking to create a public resource where firearm owners can voluntarily and temporarily store their firearms

during a time of crisis or other need. TAP does not ask for names or identifying information about firearm owners who store their firearms with a firearm retailer. As part of evaluating TAP's success, we ask our retailer partners to let us know how things are going, how many people they have spoken with about temporary out-of-home firearm storage, and approximately how many firearms they are storing for customers.

### **What happens if a person temporarily stores firearms with a FFL and fails to pass the 4473 Background check?**

There are several options in the event this happens.

1. The firearm owner can appeal the denial. Find out more information about the appeal through NICS here: <https://ucr.fbi.gov/nics/appeals/nics-guide-for-appealing>. The FFL can continue to hold the individual's firearm(s) until the appeal has been considered.
2. The FFL may be able to release the firearm(s) to a trusted adult family members or friend (adult must be over the age required by local and State laws) if they provide a sworn statement that they understand the original owner has been denied through the NICS background check from possessing firearms. The designated adult will need to pass a background check, and the FFL may need to consult with the ATF in this scenario to ensure all local, State and Federal laws are being followed. On form 4473, Section E, Item 32, the FFL can indicate who received the firearm(s). The original firearm owner who did not pass the NICS background check is prohibited from constructive or actual possession, meaning the person who ends up with possession of the firearms cannot leave them around unlocked in the same house or in a safe where the prohibited person knows the combination, etc.
  - a. In this scenario, a FFL may consider a written statement be signed by the adult who does pass the background check and accepts responsibility for the firearm(s) indicating their knowledge that the prohibited person cannot have access to the firearm(s).
3. The FFL may offer to purchase the firearm(s) from the owner and/or sell them on consignment for the owner.

This situation is complicated, and it may be helpful for a FFL to have a transparent discussion with the firearm owner about this possibility prior to storing firearms. Our Storage Agreement Template provides suggested language for guiding such a conversation.

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As of 2023, [Form 4473](#) (Questions 21.g.) asks: "Have you ever been adjudicated as a mental defective OR have you ever been committed to a mental institution?" Before answering the question, we recommend reading closely the Notices, Instructions and Definitions section for Question 21.g, which is the following: "Adjudicated as a Mental Defective: A determination by a court, board, commission, or other lawful authority that a person, as a result of marked subnormal intelligence, or mental illness, incompetency, condition, or disease: (1) is a danger to himself or to others; or (2) lacks the mental capacity to contract or manage his own affairs.

This term shall include: (1) a finding of insanity by a court in a criminal case; and (2) those persons found incompetent to stand trial or found not guilty by reason of lack of mental responsibility. Committed to a Mental Institution: A formal commitment of a person to a mental institution by a court, board, commission, or other lawful authority. The term includes a commitment to a mental institution involuntarily. The term includes commitment for mental defectiveness or mental illness. It also includes commitments for other reasons, such as for drug use. The term does not include a person in a mental institution for observation or a voluntary admission to a mental institution.”

### **State Firearm Legislation:**

It is important to be aware of what legislation exists in your state that could impact efforts to implement an initiative like TAP in your community. This includes state requirements for firearm transfers, Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO), and other relevant laws, which can change over time.

Some resources to understanding the legislation in your state:

- Laws specific to out-of-home storage: [Map & Resources Directory - WAV \(worriedaboutaveteran.org\)](#)
- Overall state firearm legislative information: [State Laws and Published Ordinances - Firearms \(34th Edition\) | Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives \(atf.gov\)](#)
- For most recent legislation it is highly suggested you meet and speak with your local ATF office about the TAP initiatives in your area. You can get connected to that person by contacting Marianna Mitchem [FITB@atf.gov](mailto:FITB@atf.gov) and mentioning your connection with “VISION’s The Armory Project” or looking up your local director of industry and operations at: [www.atf.gov/contact/atf-field-divisions](http://www.atf.gov/contact/atf-field-divisions)

### **Is there any federal legislation or guidance for firearm retailers when it comes to providing temporary firearm storage under a program such as TAP?**

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In the state of Louisiana, our coalition was able to pass legislation that provides immunity from civil liability for a FFL that provides temporary storage as long as they follow the law when returning firearms; see Louisiana Act 453 [ViewDocument.aspx \(la.gov\)](#). Other states, such as Texas and Oregon, are trying to pass similar legislation.

### **Will the insurance policy of an individual firearm retailer cover the retailer in the event of a claim (for example, damage to a firearm that is being stored under a program like TAP)?**

Any questions about insurance coverage would need to be addressed directly from a retailer to their insurer.

**What if it's not possible for the gun shop partner to attend every monthly Community of Practice call?**

It is not necessary to attend all the monthly COP calls—there are other ways to remain engaged in the TAP Community of Practice, including reading and responding to monthly email communications or checking in with a member of the TAP team by text, email, or phone call. Our TAP team makes monthly outreach calls/texts/emails to keep TAP partners updated and connected to the program.

**What happens if a retailer doesn't have the space to provide temporary storage for a large number of firearms or if there is an influx of requests?**

Some retailers have limited space and cannot hold multiple firearms. When this issue has come up, the Community of Practice has facilitated connections between retailers so that a retailer with more space available has been able to step forward and volunteer to store the firearms for the individual.

**How can an interested person support TAP and temporary out-of-home firearm storage?**

Promoting awareness of temporary out-of-home firearm storage and normalizing it as an option is one of the most helpful things you can do to support initiatives like TAP and to help prevent firearm suicide. Some people in your community who may be interested in hearing more about this option and spreading the word include:

- Health care providers
- Behavioral health systems and service providers
- Crisis hotlines and centers
- Suicide prevention organizations
- Veteran Service Organizations
- Gun clubs and shooting ranges
- Law enforcement and public safety associations
- Clergy and religious organizations that provide counseling
- Gun violence prevention groups
- Educational institutions and school counselors

**This project promotes the use of the National Crisis Line. What do you do when someone has negative thoughts about those services?**

Listen to the person's concerns and be open to understanding their experience or what they have heard. Validate that there have been problems identified in the past, but improvements are made to the service every day. Instill hope, let them know anyone can call the crisis line, even friends or family who are concerned about someone, and that the crisis line responders can give them tips and suggestions to help the person they are worried about. You may even suggest that the person call the crisis line during the day and ask responders questions to increase comfort, understanding, and trust in this resource.

**If you do not know the answer, do not try to answer it or give a partial answer. Instead say, "That's a great question, let me get back to you."**



## TAP PROJECT/ COALITION RECRUITMENT CALL SCRIPT:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I work with \_\_\_\_\_. In partnership with firearm owners, retailers, and community leaders we meet periodically to discuss how we can help reduce suicide through creating time and distance between a person and their firearm.

This has led us to focus on:

- Creating out-of-home firearm storage solutions
- Improving in-home firearm storage solutions, and
- Improving messaging around safe firearm storage

### **How can gun shops help?**

In many places, like Mississippi, Colorado, Washington, Maryland, and New Hampshire, different non-profits are teaming up with gun shops to address suicide. For example, Project ChildSafe, the NSSF, and the VA's Suicide Prevention program bring brochures and info for shops to display somewhere in their store.

Some organizations have online maps of their state where community members can find local gun shops, shooting ranges, or law enforcement offices where they can voluntarily store their guns when they (or someone in the home) are experiencing a mental health crisis or feeling suicidal.

**We want to offer the same services to our community, and we are inquiring into whether you might be interested in partnering with us to provide this service?**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Yes**                      \_\_\_\_\_ **No**

**(If yes, explore this option and take information on next page / describe how it might work).**

If "no" to gun storage.....

**We understand that gun storage might work for your store. But we also know gun stores have customers who trust them.** When folks visit your store, or their local range or gun club, they expect the high level of safety and accountability that you provide. We know that is important to you and your business, and it means a lot to customers. That's why we are wondering if there are other ways you might be willing to partner with us to prevent suicide and save lives.

**Would you be willing to hand out or display any materials related to suicide prevention in your shop?**

**Can we come visit you and bring educational materials?**

**Would you want to join a regular meeting we have with other business owners like yourself to discuss suicide prevention efforts we are working on in your community?**

**If willing to join the community of practice meeting:** “what is the preferred name and phone number (any other contact information) you would like us to list? Would you like us to send you a “welcome packet” that includes a background on the project and resources on suicide prevention?

Name of Store: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred name to be listed? \_\_\_\_\_

If your store currently displays or hands out materials on suicide prevention, can you describe any of them?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**If unwilling:** “Thank you for your time. Would you like us to provide you with our contact information in case you reconsider in the future?” **YES / NO**

Please contact: \_\_\_\_\_ or call me at: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Helpful Statements:**

- “The last thing we want to do is tell you how to do business and that’s why we will clearly state that the listed businesses consider requests for storage on a case-by-case basis.”
- “We want to make sure that you still feel empowered to make your own decisions whether or not to offer storage depending on the individual circumstances.”
- “My goal is to reduce deaths by suicide. I just want to explain who we are and what we are trying to do and let your business make their own informed decision.”

**TIP:** Always be open and honest: If you do not know the answer, check the FAQs below, if that doesn’t help, tell them you will find out and follow up with them.



# The Armory Project: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

**Important note:** these are our best attempts at answering questions that may be asked by Federal Firearm Licensees (FFLs) who are considering joining The Armory Project (TAP) or a similar program, or by firearm owners who are considering temporary out-of-home firearm storage with a FFL. The answers to some of these questions are complex and may change based on state or federal laws and regulations, so please consult with additional sources if necessary.

## **Why would someone want to temporarily store their firearm(s) at a firearm retailer or range?**

As described in other parts of this toolkit, about half of all suicides in the United States involve a firearm, and the percentage is much higher for Veterans and service members. When an individual is at risk of suicide—especially when someone is at high risk—it may be best to temporarily remove lethal means (firearms) from the home. Putting “time and distance” between a person at risk of suicide and firearms will give the person time to get help and to get their firearms back when they are ready.

Some people may also want firearms temporarily stored outside of the home when going through a divorce, loss of job, have children visiting their home, if someone in the home is experiencing dementia or other memory issues, or if they are traveling out of state or on a deployment.

## **Why store firearms with a firearm retailer or range instead of with a family member?**

A person who is having suicidal thoughts may not want to tell their family or friends, and some firearm owners may experience stigma around admitting to family or friends that they can't have their firearms at home. Also, social isolation is a major risk factor for suicide risk, and some people who are having suicidal thoughts may not have anyone they can turn to for temporary firearm storage.

In addition, while many state laws allow a person to give their firearms to a family member or friend to hold onto for them (if that person is not prohibited from owning firearms), some states have laws that make temporary transfer of firearms from one individual to another more challenging. In these states, a firearm retailer or range may be the best option for temporary out-of-home storage.

## **What organizations promote out-of-home storage?**

Organizations like the National Shooting Sports Foundation recommend temporary off-site storage for firearms when you are concerned about yourself or a loved one. Currently, a national non-profit called *Hold My Guns*, is working to connect firearm owners with voluntary storage locations. There are efforts similar to TAP in many states including Colorado, Wisconsin, and Washington; we provide a table listing these groups in the main part of the toolkit. We may not be aware of every effort, and new groups may get started at any time, so our list is not exhaustive.

## **What guidance does the ATF provide?**

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Notes on Legislation:

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**If you do not know the answer, do not try to answer it or give a partial answer. Instead say, "That's a great question, let me get back to you."**



Thank you for adopting The Armory Project (TAP) at your location, your participation will help prevent suicide by firearm within the community. TAP is an effort to provide out-of-home firearm storage options for those at increased risk for self-harm. TAP staff, and the retailers have different responsibilities but will work together to ensure success of this program.

<b>Staffs' duties and responsibilities will include:</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Hosting regularly occurring meetings to develop a shared practice plan for this effort and to manage any issues that emerge in the execution of the plan.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Providing retailers with sample storage agreements used by other firearm retailers that can be tailored for use at the discretion of the individual retailers. The staff undertakes no legal representation, nor does it guarantee agreements protect participants to the extent desired.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Providing each retailer with staff training regarding suicide prevention and managing conversations with those at risk for suicide.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Providing each retailer with printed materials describing out-of-home storage options and how customers can access mental health care.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Providing the retailers with advertising materials including posters and banners for the TAP.

<b>Firearm retailers' duties and responsibilities will include:</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Participating in regularly occurring meetings to develop a shared practice plan and provide feedback on utility of the TAP practice plan.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Develop and utilize a firearm storage agreement to store firearms for customers.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Permitting training to staff that will describe suicide prevention interventions and strategies for managing conversations with those at risk for suicide.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Displaying printed materials describing out-of-home storage options included in TAP and information on how customers can access mental health care.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Displaying advertising materials including posters and banners with the TAP logo.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Engaging interested customers in conversations about the out-of-home storage options and will provide customers with printed informational materials.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Purchasing storage devices, and/or making changes to on-site storage facility, or otherwise support the participation in TAP as they see fit to facilitate success of this program.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Allowing periodic visits by staff to interact with retail staff, determine acceptability and utility of TAP and to assist with support or modifications as needed.

*By signing below, you voluntarily agree to the terms and scope of work described above. Thank you, and we look forward to collaborating with you.*

**On behalf of the TAP team:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature Date

**Retailer:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature Date

# Onboarding and Training Checklist

Referenced materials are within the appendix, on the VISION website ([www.visioncoalition/het/projects/tap](http://www.visioncoalition/het/projects/tap)) and add what is locally appropriate as needed.

## Pre-Training

### Prepare two folders with:

1. Training materials
  - TAP Agreement Memo (2 copies)
  - Photo Release Forms (number of copies depending on number of staff) [Note: Use your organization's photo consent form or create one from an online template]
  - TAP Training slide deck (# depends on # of staff)
2. Folder Brochures (1 copy each of all our resources)
  - Life Challenges and Mental Health Resource Sheet and/or local resource document (1)
  - Firearms and Suicide Prevention (NSSF) (1)
  - Program Advertisements
  - Graphic Booklets, labeled (25 ct) [Note: optional]
  - Business Cards (5) [Optional]
  - TAP Brochures (100 ct) and small plastic holder.
  - Tabletop displays (2 ct)
3. Advertising materials
  - Outdoor banner (1) optional
  - TAP Interior Window Cling, Large (1)
  - TAP Interior Window Cling, Small (1)
  - TAP Exterior Window Cling (1)
  - TAP Poster 18x24 (1)
  - TAP Stickers (20 ct)
  - Flyer Display holder (1)

## At-Training

- Review TAP Agreement Memo with FFL owner and get signature/Leave 1 copy of memo with owner.
- Take photos of training/staff/store & get written consent from anyone included in photo(s)
- Hand out slides or project on screen.
- Discuss with owner how materials will be displayed & that we will be asking how many booklets and brochures were handed out.

## Post-Training

- Save TAP Agreement Memo appropriately.
- Leave copies with FFL owner and/or staff.
- Use text or email nudge to remind owner to display and give out materials.
- Check with owner(s) on monthly calls about how many materials have been handed out & whether new materials need to be mailed out.
- Check with owner(s) and staff on monthly calls about how many conversations have been had/how many customers have asked about TAP/how many times TAP service has been used.

## Out of Home Storage: TAP Guidance

### *Purpose:*

Assist gun shop owners in determining options for providing clients with out of home storage.

### *Rationale:*

Most gun owners who die by suicide utilize firearms as the means of death. Many gun shop owners want to assist their clients who might be at risk by providing out-of-home storage and provide these customers with information for seeking assistance.

### *Options:*

1. Use of consignment process to hold firearms for gun owner and return only to the consignor following laws governing consignment.
2. Use of “clean and hold” informal agreement.

### *Description, Pros, & Cons:*

#### *Option 1: Consignment Process*

A consignment process in which the gun shop owner returns the firearm to the consignor is the preferred method for storing firearms. A variation of this process is utilized by a large suicide prevention effort, “Hold my Guns,” and provides protection for the firearm dealer and the client.

Please see attached “Consignment Contract” as an example of consignment agreement that could be used to hold firearms. Please see draft “Consignment Agreement for Firearm Hold” as a ***possible*** modification of this agreement for use a contractual arrangement for firearm hold.

In this process, the firearm dealer provides storage for their client’s firearms following signing a document that states costs (if any) and describes conditions for return. The document explicitly states that the consignor must clear pass the 4473 background check. (Form and guidance can be found here: [www.atf.gov/firearms/atf-form-4473-firearms-transaction-record-revisions](http://www.atf.gov/firearms/atf-form-4473-firearms-transaction-record-revisions)) If the consignor fails to pass the FBI background check, the document states methods for disposal of guns (e.g., purchase by firearms dealer, sale to another individual). The document also describes disposition of the firearms should the consignor not return at the end of the contract or respond to communication from firearms dealer.



The primary benefit is that this contract set clear expectations on storage. The agreement is a contract that specifies conditions of return. The contract provides the firearm owner with an opportunity to discuss responsibilities and to make referrals.

One possible drawback is that the firearm owner may be reluctant to utilize consignment because of a fear that he/she will not be allowed to have weapons returned.

### *Option 2: Clean and Hold*

A less formal option is to have the client allow the firearm dealer to clean and hold firearm(s). This is a paid arrangement for service to the firearm that will also involve holding the firearm and may involve use of a subcontractor. The sole document for this transaction is a bill of sale that describes the maintenance services to be performed on the firearm and the likely return date.

One benefit for the customer is that this option does not require a background check before return. Additionally, the customer does not need to disclose the reason for requesting the service. However, drawbacks would include that (1) opportunity for referral to mental health professional or other resources might be lost, (2) the store owner does not know the legal state of the individual at the time of return, (3) the gun owner must have some idea if the time frame for cleaning matches with time frame for his stressor, and (4) costs associated with cleaning/maintenance may be prohibitive for some.

#### **Reminders for all gun shop owners:**

1. You are not a mental health professional and cannot determine risk to your client. Determination of risk to self or others is very difficult even for those with training in mental health and risk identification.
2. Please provide your customer with possible resources but you are not responsible for decisions the individual makes regarding use of those referrals or in engaging in self- harm or harm to others.
  - a. Ask your TAP contact for a resource guide and for information that could guide a conversation about out-of-home storage.

## RECORD KEEPING FOR REPAIR FIREARMS

# A Guide for Retail FFLs

*Prepared by Harry McCabe, Former ATF Deputy Assistant Director and Consultant to the National Shooting Sports Foundation*

The aim of this article is to help every retailer keep complete and accurate A&D records for all firearms taken in for repair, whether it be just for cleaning or for return to the manufacturer for repair or replacement, and everything in between.

First, keep a separate A&D book for your repairs. It's much easier that way.

Second, make sure that A&D book looks like (is formatted like) all your other A&D books. It's required by the ATF regulations at 27 CFR 478.125(e), and by ATF Rulings 73-13 and 77-1.

Third, enter all required information in the repair book for every firearm taken in for repair that stays more than one business day. That is also required by the ATF regulations at 27 CFR 478.125(e), and by ATF Rulings 73-13 and 77-1.

Only firearms that are received, repaired and returned to the customer, all on the same day are exempt from the requirements discussed in this article. If the gun stays in your store overnight, ATF Ruling 77-1 requires it to be logged into your A&D record as an acquisition.

Your record of firearms received for repair must contain a complete description of the firearm – manufacturer, importer (if any), model, serial number, type of firearm (not type of firearm action), and caliber or gauge.

It must contain the full name and complete street address of the individual who brought it in for repair and the date it was brought in.

When the firearm is returned to the individual who brought it in for repair, the disposition side of the record must again contain the full name and complete street address of the individual who picked it up and the date it was returned to that individual. I know this is the same information that you entered on the acquisition side of the record, but no

shortcuts are allowed, even when the firearm is returned to the same person from whom it was received.

If the firearm is returned to the same person who brought it in for repair, no Form 4473 or background check is required because the law says this is not a “transfer.”

If, however, the repaired firearm is returned to anyone other than the individual who brought it in – a spouse, for example – both a Form 4473 and a background check are required. (NOTE: Per the instructions at item 11a on Form 4473, an individual picking up a repaired firearm for someone else does not have to answer 11a.)

Between the receipt of the firearm for repair and the return of the repaired firearm to whoever picks it up, several things can happen. Most commonly, the firearm can be sent out to another licensed FFL/gunsmith for repair, or it can be sent back to the manufacturer for repair.

In both of those cases, sending the firearm out of your store is a disposition that must be entered in the A&D record; and you must get a copy of the firearms license of the FFL or manufacturer to whom you ship it just as you must if you are transferring a new firearm to another FFL. That disposition entry must contain the date of the shipment, the name of the FFL to whom you shipped it, and the complete 15-character FFL number of that licensee.

When the repaired firearm you shipped out is returned to you, you must make a new and complete acquisition entry in your records to record the receipt from the licensee that repaired it.

When you return that repaired firearm to the individual who brought it in for repair (or to another person picking it up for that individual), you must make a disposition entry (on the same line where you received that firearm from the repair facility) to record the full name and complete street address of the individual who picked it up, and the date it was picked up.

Finally, if the defective firearm is sent back to the manufacturer for warranty (or non-warranty) repair and the manufacturer chooses to replace that firearm with one of the same kind and type, 27 CFR 478.147 allows the transfer of that firearm to the individual who originally brought the defective firearm in for repair without a Form 4473 or

background check. Both the acquisition and the disposition of the replacement firearm must be recorded in your acquisition and disposition records, however.

Records that do not comply with all of these provisions are in violation of 27 CFR 478.125(e), and you will be cited for that violation on an ATF inspection.

So I'd recommend that you take a few minutes and review your records and pay extra attention to the records you keep for the firearms you repair. A few minutes of review might just save you a number of problems down the road.

## Possible signs a customer could be suicidal:

- No firearms knowledge and no interest in instruction or safety
- No interest in which firearms/he rents or buys (“anything will do”)
- Talk of recent crisis such as a divorce, job loss, or other setback
- Appears anxious or upset (avoids eye contact, fidgety, fighting back tears)
- Gives unconvincing responses to basic questions
- Makes suggestive comments relative to suicide such as “I don’t need a lot of ammunition.” or “I won’t have the gun for long.”
- Wanting to sell firearms and not caring about price or logistics

## Responding to a customer who may be suicidal:

- Take the customer to a private place in the store if one is available.
- Notify shop owner or manager (if applicable) if unsure or uncomfortable with a customer, discussing TAP or prospective sale.
- Ask customer directly in a manner comfortable to you if they are suicidal.
  - Use direct words and phrases, such as “killing yourself” and “suicide,” when asking about suicidal thoughts. Do not use vague phrases such as “hurting yourself,”
  - Have openness to listening and remain nonjudgmental no matter the answer.
  - “Do you feel like you need to put some space between you and your firearm?”
  - “Do you feel like you need somewhere to store your firearms temporarily?”

If yes, provide information and resources.

- Trust your instincts. Listen and be supportive.
- If you deny a sale, notify other nearby dealers/ranges that you had concerns about the sale and that the customer might attempt to obtain a firearm from them.



## Initiating TAP Storage:

- “Thank you for bringing in your firearm(s) while in a challenging time. I am sure that is not an easy decision.” Use language that Validates the person’s experience and does not pass judgment.
- Briefly explain the process of turn in and pick up. Highlight that there are some forms that we must sign together, since the store will temporarily be in custody of the firearms. Also highlight that when they are ready to come and pick up the firearm that a background check will be completed depending on the methods used for storage.
- Fill out forms/Take firearm
- Thank the customer and offer resources. 988 or a variety of the other resources included in the kit. The goal is ensuring that the customer is connected.

Additional notes for initiating an In-store Temporary Firearm Hold for a customer:

**Returning a TAP Firearm Hold:**

- Welcome them. “Hey, it’s good to see you”
- Start the process of the background check (as needed by hold type per ATF regulations)
- Make simple observations about the customer. Do they appear distressed?
  - If distressed, it’s okay to say that the background check was delayed and ask them to come back tomorrow.
  - We can’t restrict the customer from getting their firearm back.
  - We can create time and distance and reach out to the owner/manager, another TAP partner or the program coordinator for more guidance and or resources.
- If all is well, give the firearm back to the customer.

Additional notes for returning an In-store Temporary Firearm Hold for a customer:

# The Armory Project: Agreement for Temporary Firearm Hold

Document Instructions and cover sheet (delete pages 1 and 2 before using)

The following document is a template that can be adapted to the needs of individual Federal Firearm Licensees (FFLs).

This document was created to be in simple terms and is not meant to be a legal contract. However, within the text boxes are some legal language other FFLs have found helpful, which can be included at the FFL's discretion. Change or delete any ***bolded + italicized*** text before using this document so it fits the needs of your FFL. We recommend considering local, State, and federal laws that may pertain to your FFL and check with the ATF for guidance.

This is intended to help guide a conversation between a FFL and an individual firearm owner about temporary firearm storage, including the process for taking in and returning firearms. Firearm owners who choose to temporarily store their firearms with a FFL may be dealing with serious life stressors, so it is important to ensure the process is as transparent as possible.

While there is no ideal amount of time for temporary firearm storage outside of the home, we are suggesting 90 days (3 months) as a starting point—this will give the individual time to access the help and support they need. However, this is just a suggestion. FFLs may prefer to leave the amount of time open-ended or opt to discuss options with each firearm owner on a case-by-case basis.

Decisions to be made in adapting this document for use at your FFL include:

- Consider what sections are appropriate for your use. Add, delete, or edit as needed.
- FFLs may function differently from each other and may choose, for example:
  - o to specify a limit on how long they will hold firearms,
  - o to charge a fee after a certain period of time or for conducting a background check prior to returning firearms, etc.
  - o to store ammunition as well as firearms or to refuse to store ammunition,
  - o to collect information such as the name of a secondary contact or a photocopy of the identification/license of the person who is storing firearms.

Whether to use all or a portion of this sample agreement will be left to the discretion of the FFL; TAP and the VISION Coalition do not undertake any legal representation, nor do they guarantee that the sample agreement will protect participants to the extent desired.

Consider having two copies of this document for each transaction—one for your records and one to send home with the firearm owner.

If you need access to a Microsoft Word version of this document, please contact [vision.nola@gmail.com](mailto:vision.nola@gmail.com). To use or adapt these materials, email [vision.nola@gmail.com](mailto:vision.nola@gmail.com) and use the below citation:

True, G. and Wendleton, L. 2023. The Armory Project Toolkit: Partnering with firearm retailers, to promote voluntary and temporary out-of-home firearm storage (Version 2). Veteran-Informed Intervention and Outreach Network (VISION). Available at: [www.visioncoalition.net/projects/tap](http://www.visioncoalition.net/projects/tap)



Learn more at <https://www.visioncoalition.net/projects/tap>.





## THE ARMORY PROJECT (TAP): AGREEMENT FOR FIREARM HOLD/STORAGE

The goal of The Armory Project (TAP) is to provide voluntary, temporary out-of-home firearm storage to an individual in need.

People may want to store firearms outside of their home when anyone in the home is going through a mental health crisis and/or stressors such as loss of job, divorce, or other major life transitions.

Creating time and distance between a person in crisis and a loaded firearm can prevent suicide.

Other reasons for needing temporary out-of-home storage may also include extended work travel, military deployment, concerns about memory issues for someone in the home, or concerns about children or others being able to access firearms.

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This agreement is to ensure transparency between **[insert name of FFL]** and you, the firearm owner, regarding your property and the processes used to temporarily store and return your firearm(s).

**Temporary Hold/Storage:** Taking part in this temporary hold/storage agreement is completely voluntary. This agreement explains that you as the firearm owner are agreeing to place the firearm(s) listed below **[on consignment or in storage]** with this FFL. Firearm(s) will be received from you unloaded and will be safely and securely stored in an air-conditioned location within the store.

The firearm(s) listed will be on hold for **[90 calendar days]** free of charge to you.

- You may opt to receive your firearm(s) at the end of the duration or at any time prior to that by contacting us to pick up your firearm(s).
- If you want us to continue to hold your firearm(s) beyond the original agreement, contact us about extending the time we will hold onto your firearm(s).
- If the hold duration lasts longer than specified, we reserve the right to charge you a storage fee of **[Dollar Amount]** per month.

You will need to come in yourself to pick up the firearms and sign below to indicate that your firearm(s) have been returned to you.

If we do not hear from you after **[number]** months and have not been able to reach you or your identified Secondary Contact (below) after reasonable attempts to contact you, we may consider the firearm(s) abandoned after **[number]** months from today. In that event, we reserve the right to dispose of abandoned firearms as we see fit.



Learn more at <https://www.visioncoalition.net/projects/tap>.



**Return of Your Firearm(s):** Our goal is to store your firearm(s) for a period of time to prevent them being used by yourself or others in a way you do not want. At such time that it makes sense, you can come in to retrieve the firearms. To return your firearm(s) to you, we will complete and run a background check using the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), [Firearms Transaction Record, Form 4473](#). When you are approved, we will return your firearm(s) to you.

Our goal is to temporarily store your firearms for you and then return them to you when you are ready. In the unlikely event that you are denied during the background check, we have several options:

1. You can appeal the denial. During that appeal process, we will continue to hold onto your firearm(s) for you free of charge. Find out more information about the appeal through NICS here: <https://ucr.fbi.gov/nics/appeals/nics-guide-for-appealing>.
2. We may be able to release the firearm(s) to one of your trusted adult family members or friends (adult must be over the age required by local and State laws) if they provide a sworn statement that they understand you have been denied through the NICS background check from possessing firearms. The designated adult will need to pass a background check, and we may need to consult with the ATF in this scenario to ensure we are all following local, State, and Federal laws. On form 4473, Section E, Item 32, we will indicate who received your firearm(s).
3. If you want, we can list the firearm(s) for consignment sale on your behalf and issue the proceeds of any sale to you [*minus a X% consignment fee to cover our overhead*].

Your name, firearm(s), and any paperwork related to this agreement with our store is confidential and private, except as necessary for federal licensing requirements and other laws.

**Risk Allocation:** Owner (on behalf of himself and his successors, heirs, and assigns) shall release, protect, defend, indemnify, and hold harmless Facility and its affiliates (as well as its and their owners, officers, managers, employees, agents, invitees, insurers, and indemnitees) (collectively, the “Facility Group”) from and against any and all claims or liability of whatever nature, and however so arising, where such claims or liability arise out of or relate to this Agreement or the storage of the Firearms (collectively, “Claims”), *all except to the extent a Claim is caused directly by the gross negligence or intentionally harmful conduct of Facility or any person, party, or entity for which Facility is directly responsible*. For the avoidance of doubt, and without limiting the foregoing protections in favor of Facility Group, this Agreement does not create a bailment, and the protections above in Facility’s favor specifically include a release of any Claims arising out of or related to loss, damage, or disposition of the Firearms. Further, all insurance policies of Owner shall, to the fullest extent allowed in such policies, name Facility Group as additional insured, waive subrogation against Facility Group, and be primary and noncontributory to any insurance of Facility Group.

**Miscellaneous:** This Agreement shall be governed and construed by the substantive law of the State of Louisiana without reference to its conflicts of laws principles. The terms of this Agreement are severable, and if any term in this Agreement is held by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid or unenforceable, the Agreement shall be deemed modified to comply with applicable law and to meet the Parties’ intent as much as possible. No waiver of any right in this Agreement shall enforceable against a Party unless it is specific and made in a writing signed by competent authority of the waiving Party.



Learn more at <https://www.visioncoalition.net/projects/tap>.



**Temporary Storage/Hold Terms**

Hold Start Date:

Anticipated End Date [if any]:

Extension of Hold Date [if any]:

Storage Fee and Start Date [if any]:

**FFL Contact Information**

*[FFL Name]*

**Contact Person:**

*[Phone]*

Direct phone/email:

*[Address]*

**Firearm Owner**

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_

Drop Off Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Pick Up Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Secondary Contact and/or relative [if any]**

Name:

Relationship:

Contact information:

**Firearms Being Stored/Held (listed below, or reference attached receipt or ticket number):**



Learn more at <https://www.visioncoalition.net/projects/tap>.



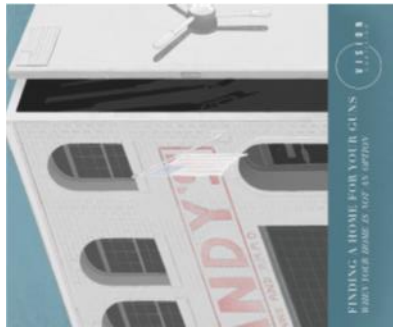




**TAP Marketing Materials**

# Marketing Materials Request Form

Please take notes on the quantity and placement or usage notes for the TAP Partner below. Provide examples of handheld items you have with you. TAP Partners may want extra items if they have any community events or gun shows they attend.

Marketing Item		Quantity:	Placement
<p><b>TAP Circle Stickers with white background</b></p> 	<p>Quantity:</p> <p>Placement</p> <p>Comments:</p>	<p><b>Marketing Brochure</b></p> 	<p>Quantity:</p> <p>Placement</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<p><b>Window Cling for glass cases or windows</b></p> 	<p>Quantity:</p> <p>Placement</p> <p>Comments:</p>	<p><b>Graphic Novel: A ten-page Graphic Novel depicting a time of concern and the discussion/steps to deciding to utilize temporary storage with a firearm retailer.</b></p> 	<p>Quantity:</p> <p>Placement</p> <p>Comments:</p>

# Marketing Materials Request Form

<p><b>Banner</b></p> 	<p><b>Posters 18x24 Glossy Printed</b></p> 	<p><b>Quantity:</b> <b>Placement</b> <b>Comments:</b></p>	<p><b>Quantity:</b> <b>Placement</b> <b>Comments:</b></p>
<p><b>Tabletop Tent Sign</b></p> 	<p><b>Quantity:</b> <b>Placement</b> <b>Comments:</b></p>	<p><b>Quantity:</b> <b>Placement</b> <b>Comments:</b></p>	<p><b>Quantity:</b> <b>Placement</b> <b>Comments:</b></p>

Additional Notes:

# Need to store your firearms?



**THE  
ARMORY  
PROJECT**

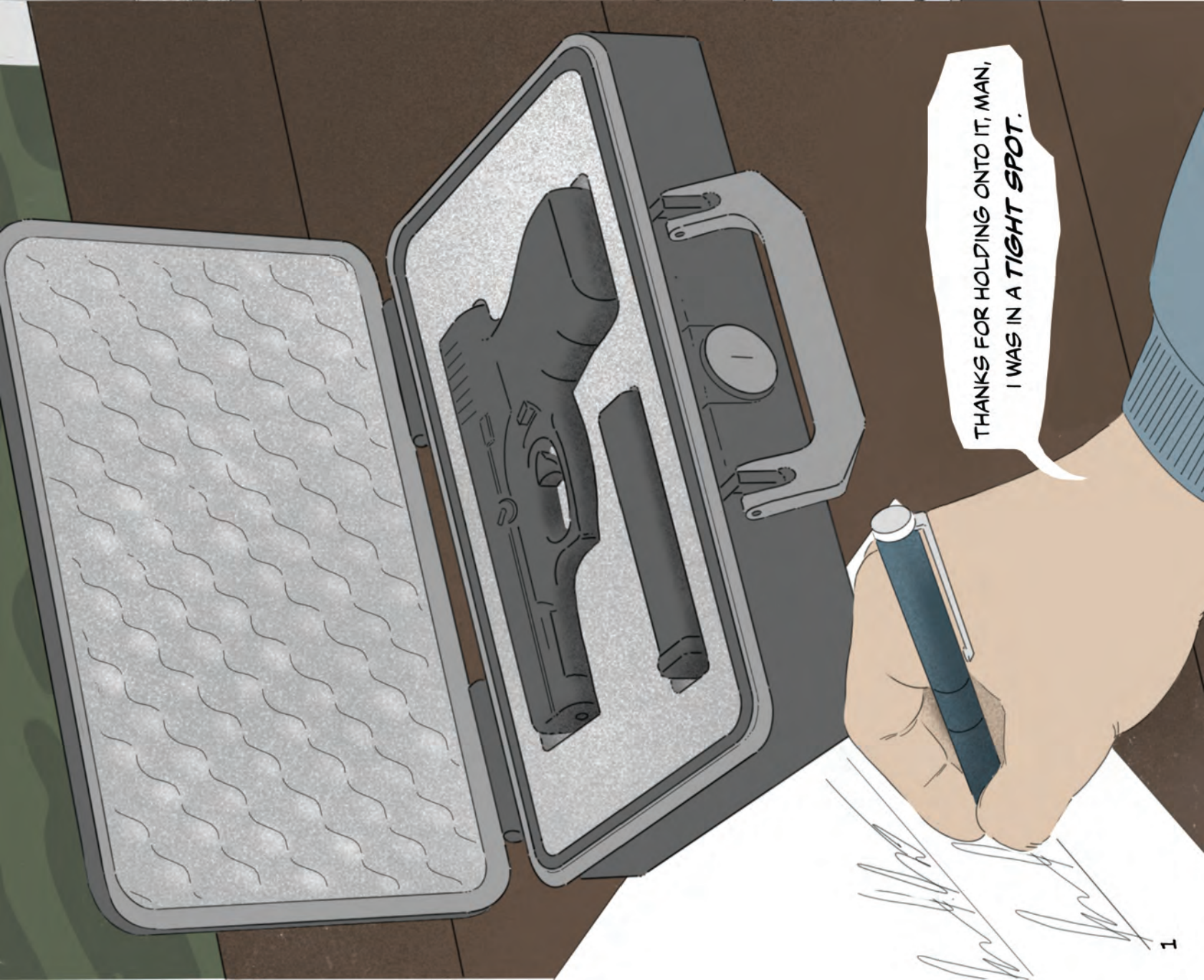
This firearm retailer is a temporary storage partner. Ask about your options for safely storing your firearms.



FINDING A HOME FOR YOUR GUNS  
*WHEN YOUR HOME IS NOT AN OPTION*







THANKS FOR HOLDING ONTO IT, MAN,  
I WAS IN A **TIGHT SPOT**.

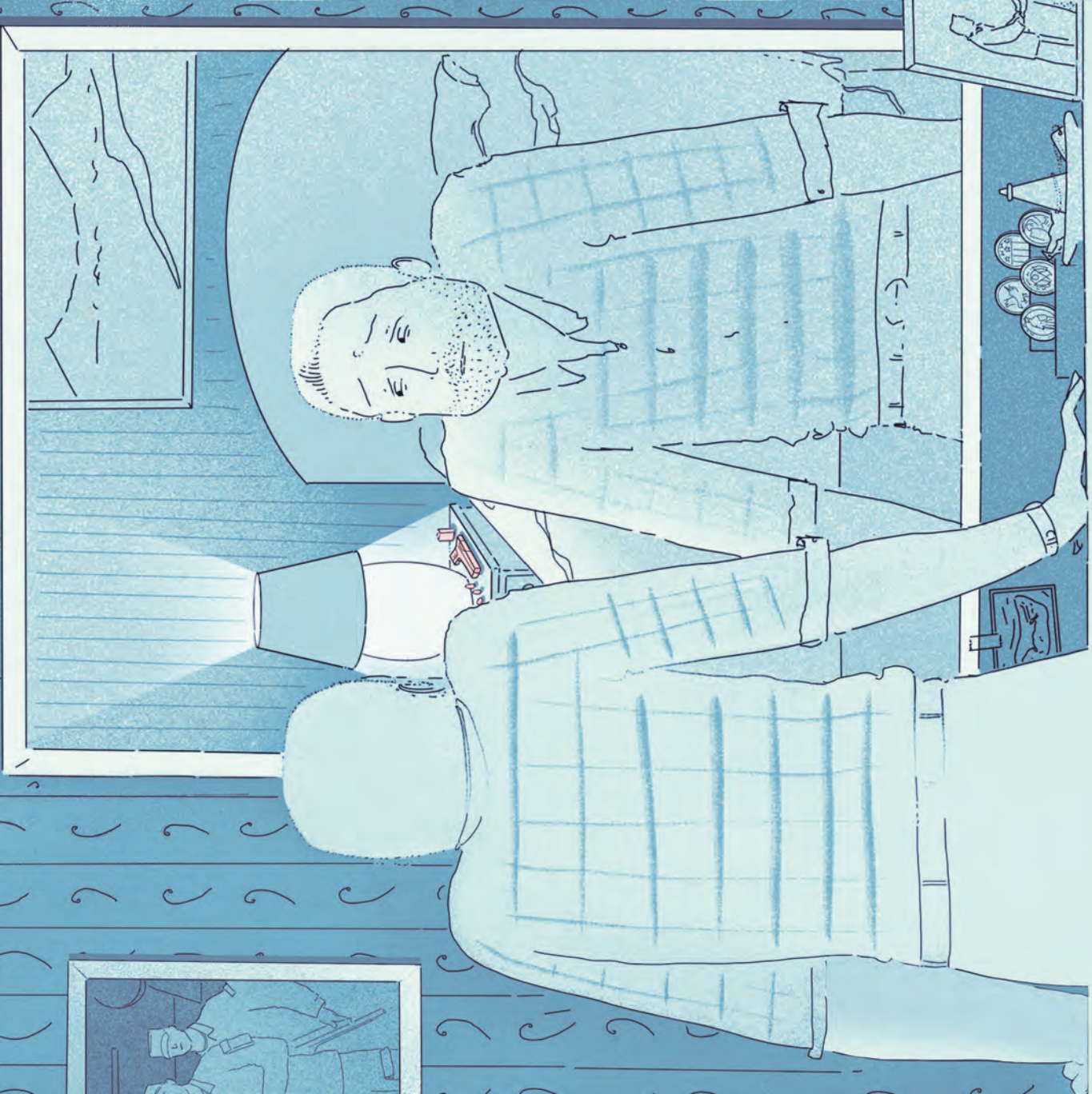


ANYTIME, BROTHER. YOU KNOW WHERE TO FIND ME...

APPRECIATE YA, RANDY.

*RANDY'S GUNS & AMMO OFFERS TEMPORARY STORAGE TO VETS  
AND OTHER CUSTOMERS WHO NEED IT DURING DIFFICULT TIMES.*

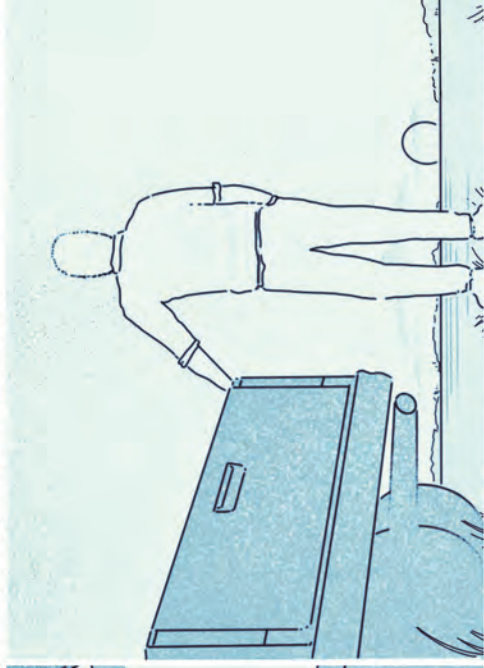
TWO WEEKS AGO...



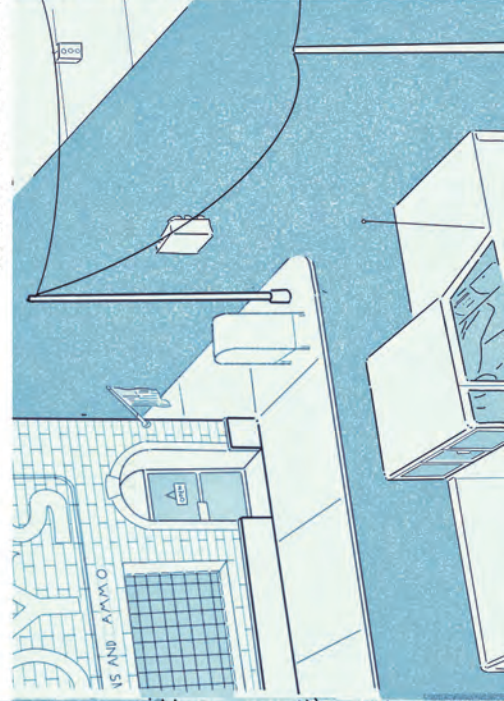
NORMALLY I COULD LOCK UP MY GUN AND GIVE THE KEYS TO MY WIFE, BUT I DIDN'T WANT HER TO WORRY ABOUT ME.



OR I COULD HAVE GIVEN MY GUN TO A FRIEND TO HOLD ON TO FOR ME, BUT I RECENTLY MOVED HERE AND I DON'T HAVE ANYONE I CAN TRUST.



THEN I REMEMBERED RANDY DOWN AT THE GUN SHOP AND THOUGHT, "HE'S A VET TOO, MAYBE HE COULD HELP ME OUT."



MONTHS AGO...

THANKS, BROTHER. I'M RANDY. WHERE'D YOU SERVE?

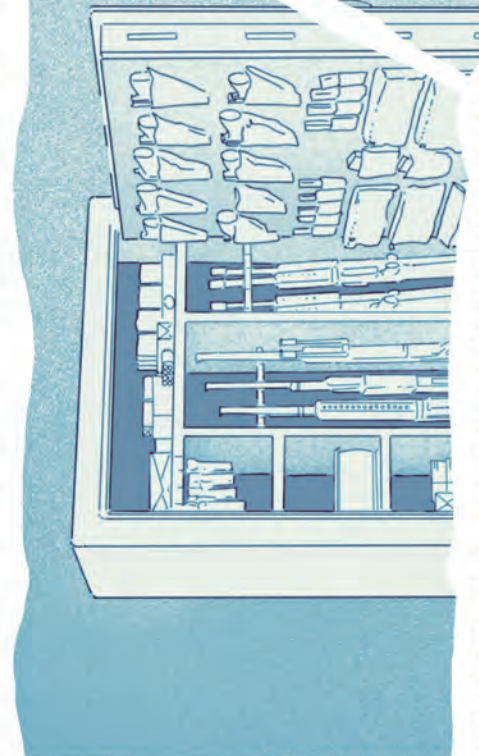
SO I CALLED HIM...

RANDY, I NEED A FAVOR, MAN...

**EASY FIX, BROTHER.**  
BRING IT OVER AND WE'LL  
GO THROUGH THE PROCESS  
TOGETHER.



WE DEVELOPED THIS STORAGE CONTRACT TO PROTECT YOU **AND** YOUR GUN RIGHTS.



WHEN YOU COME BACK TO US, WE'LL RUN A BACKGROUND CHECK  
JUST LIKE WHEN YOU FIRST BOUGHT IT.

YOUR GUN WILL BE IN  
GOOD HANDS WITH ME.



AND REST ASSURED -  
YOUR RIGHTS THROUGHOUT  
THE PROCESS ARE MY **PRIORITY.**

LISTEN MAN. I WON'T BEAT AROUND THE BUSH. I STARTED OFFERING STORAGE  
BECAUSE I'VE BEEN WHERE YOU ARE. THERE IS HELP OUT THERE AND YOU ARE  
OBVIOUSLY MAKING THE RIGHT MOVES TO MAKE THINGS BETTER. KEEP IT UP SO  
YOU CAN BE ONE OF MY REGULAR CUSTOMERS, YOU KNOW? UNTIL THEN,  
**I GOT YOUR SIX.**





THANKS, BROTHER.

OF COURSE, STEVE. COME BACK WHENEVER YOU'RE READY.



BACK TO PRESENT DAY...

HEY, RANDY!

WELCOME BACK, STEVE!



AND THAT THINGS CAN GET BETTER.

### **YOUR STORY MAY NOT LOOK EXACTLY LIKE STEVE'S, BUT YOU'VE GOT OPTIONS TOO...**

- YOU CAN ASK A FRIEND TO HOLD YOUR FIREARMS IF THAT IS AN OPTION.
- IF YOU HAVE A SAFE OR LOCKBOX AT HOME, YOU CAN LET SOMEONE YOU TRUST HOLD ONTO YOUR KEY.
- YOU'RE NOT REQUIRED TO SAY ANYTHING ABOUT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH TO STORE YOUR FIREARM.
- THIS STORAGE SERVICE WAS DEVELOPED BY FIREARM RETAILERS WHO WANT TO PROTECT YOU AND YOUR SECOND AMENDMENT RIGHTS.



## **ARE YOU HAVING THOUGHTS ABOUT HURTING YOURSELF OR CONCERNED ABOUT SOMEONE WHO IS?**

CONNECT WITH THE VETERANS CRISIS LINE TO REACH CARING, QUALIFIED RESPONDERS WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS. MANY OF THEM ARE VETERANS THEMSELVES.

**DIAL 1-800-273-8255 OR SEND A TEXT TO 838255**

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THE VISION COALITION IS A GROUP OF VETERANS, CAREGIVERS, GUN-OWNERS, FIREARM RETAILERS, RESEARCHERS AND PHYSICIANS WORKING TOGETHER TO PREVENT SUICIDE BY FIREARM.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HOW YOU CAN HELP IN YOUR COMMUNITY, VISIT US AT**

**[VISIONCOALITION.NET](http://VISIONCOALITION.NET)**

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## **WHY ARE WE PROMOTING TEMPORARY OUT-OF-HOME STORAGE IN GUN STORES?**

70% OF VETERAN SUICIDE DEATHS INVOLVED A GUNSHOT WOUND. PEOPLE CAN SURVIVE OVERDOSE AND OTHER METHODS. **BULLETS ARE DESIGNED TO KILL. THAT MEANS THERE ARE NO SECOND CHANCES.**

TEMPORARY, VOLUNTARY OUT-OF-HOME FIREARM STORAGE GIVES YOU TIME TO GET SOME HELP AND THEN GET BACK YOUR FIREARM. **MORE TIME AND DISTANCE BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR GUN MEANS YOU HAVE MORE TIME TO THINK.**

**MOST OF THE VETERANS WHO DIE BY SUICIDE ARE NOT GOING TO THE VA,** BUT THEY VISIT THE GUN SHOP, THE RANGE, ETC.

**WE NEED MORE COMMUNITY-DRIVEN SOLUTIONS TO STOP VETERAN SUICIDE.** THERE HAVE BEEN A LOT OF EFFORTS THROUGH THE YEARS, AND WE CAN ALL DO MORE.

THERE MAY BE OTHER TIMES WHEN OUT-OF-HOME STORAGE IS A GOOD OPTION - LIKE WHEN CHILDREN ARE VISITING, LONG PERIODS AWAY FROM HOME, ETC.

MAYBE YOU'VE NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT SUICIDE, BUT YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT SOMEONE ELSE.

**WE WANT TO BE SURE YOU HAVE THE TOOLS TO HELP.**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

*This booklet was produced with support from:*

**VA Health Services Research and Development**

Innovation Initiative Award #1101HX002947

*Principal Investigators: Gala True, Ph.D. and Joseph Constans, Ph.D.*

## FINDING A HOME FOR YOUR GUNS

*WHEN YOUR HOME IS NOT AN OPTION*

Created by a team of veterans, caregivers, gun-owners, firearm retailers, researchers and physicians.

Produced by Ray Facundo and the VISION team / Illustrated by Tyler Thompson

Window Clings and Banners



Stickers

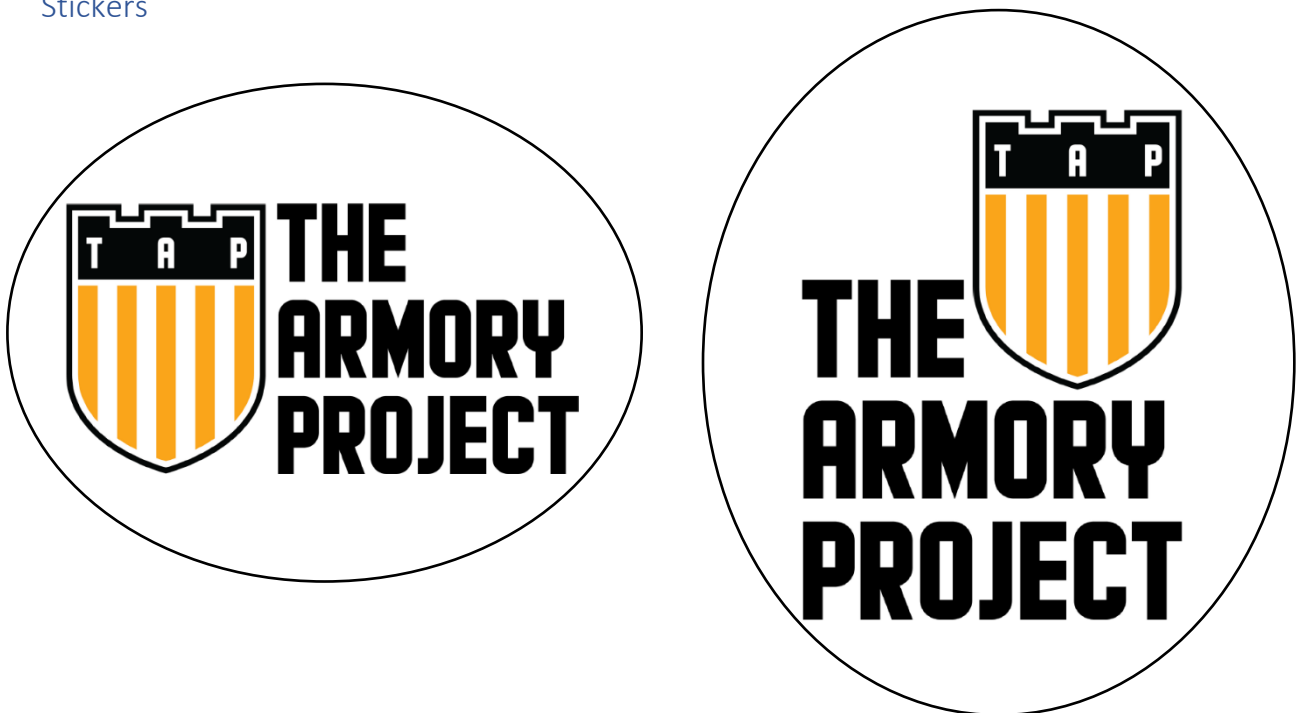




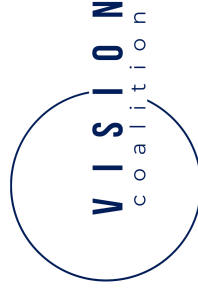
Photo Credit: Nam Anh Tran



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**Sometimes, it just makes sense to temporarily store your firearms somewhere other than at home.**

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## LEARN MORE

The Armory Project is an initiative of the VISION Coalition. To learn more, visit [www.VISIONcoalition.net](http://www.VISIONcoalition.net).

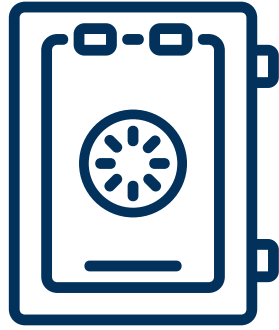
## NEED TO STORE YOUR FIREARMS?

This firearm retailer is a temporary storage partner. Ask about your options for safely storing your firearms.



# RESPONSIBLE FIREARM OWNERSHIP

Being a responsible firearm owner means having a safe storage plan. When safe storage practices are not used, there is a **higher risk** of injury or death, particularly suicide.



## Reasons for storing firearms out of the home temporarily...

- Young children visiting
- Relationship stress or divorce
- Depression or thoughts/talk of harming oneself or others
- Substance abuse or legal challenges

Fortunately, **there are options.**

## STORING YOUR FIREARM TEMPORARILY

### FRIENDS & FAMILY

Sometimes it makes sense to give your firearm to a relative or trusted friend, as long as that person is not prohibited from having firearms.

### STORAGE FACILITY

If you already have a rented storage space, your facility may allow you to store your unloaded, locked firearms.

### SHOPS & RANGES

Your local firearm dealer and/or shooting range may offer storage services at low/no cost.

Ask any employee for information on storage services available here.

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**Putting time and distance between a person in crisis and a firearm helps keep them safe.**

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## THE ARMORY PROJECT STORAGE OPTIONS

### CLEAN & HOLD

Your retailer may hold your firearms for a set period of time and may or may not offer basic cleaning or other services for a small fee.

### CONSIGNMENT

Your retailer may hold your firearms on a consignment sale basis and may not offer them for sale until a set period of time has elapsed.

Together, we can safeguard ourselves and those we care about while protecting our rights.

**Speak to a staff member of this store to find out more about what they offer.**

NOTE: Federal law requires background checks when a Federal Firearms License holder transfers a firearm to any individual, even when returning a firearm following a period of storage.

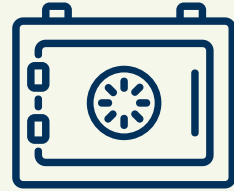
If you or someone you know is thinking about self-harm, call the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (24/7) at 800-273-8255**



Fortunately, there are options.

- Young children visiting
- Relationship stress or divorce
- Depression or thoughts/talk of harming oneself or others
- Substance abuse or legal challenges

Reasons for storing firearms out of the home temporarily...



### THE ARMORY PROJECT STORAGE OPTIONS

#### CLEAN & HOLD

The retailer may hold your firearms for a set period of time and may or may not offer basic cleaning or other services for a small fee.

#### CONSIGNMENT

The retailer may hold your firearms on a consignment sale basis and may not offer them for sale until a set period of time has elapsed.

### STORING YOUR FIREARM TEMPORARILY

#### FRIENDS & FAMILY

Sometimes it makes sense to give your firearm to a relative or trusted friend, as long as that person is not prohibited from having firearms.

#### SHOPS & RANGES

Your local firearm dealer and/or shooting range may offer storage services at low/no cost.

Speak to a staff member of this store to find out more about what they offer.

Together, we can safeguard ourselves and those we care about while protecting our rights.



# THE ARMORY PROJECT

### VETTED PARTNER

This firearm retailer is a temporary storage partner.



[www.VISIONcoalition.net](http://www.VISIONcoalition.net)

Fold on the dotted lines and use clear tape to secure.

## The Armory Project Outreach

## Implementation Guide for Healthcare Providers

### Background

Firearms are highly lethal and result in fatal outcomes more frequently compared to other methods of suicide. Secure firearm storage significantly reduces the likelihood of suicide by firearms. It provides a window of time for interventions, professional support, and other resources to be engaged, increasing the chance of saving lives.

Healthcare providers play a crucial role in veteran suicide prevention due to their unique position in identifying and addressing mental health concerns. By addressing access to firearms, healthcare providers can help reduce the immediate risk of suicide and create opportunities for individuals to seek help, access treatment, and find alternatives to lethal means. Temporarily storing firearms with a trusted individual is the best practice for patients at high risk of harm or injury. **The Armory Project (TAP)** is a coalition of firearm retailers who have agreed to provide free firearm storage for their communities.

### What is this material for?

The TAP provider outreach material was developed by a team of researchers, VA healthcare providers, and Veterans. The aim is to help healthcare providers address secure firearm storage practices with their patients and promote the availability of temporary out of home storage through TAP. The material consists of two double-sided cards, one for healthcare providers and one for providers to give to patients.

The card for healthcare providers is meant to provide them with information on their role in firearm suicide prevention, how to talk with their patients about secure firearm storage, and secure firearm storage options including temporary out of home storage in high-risk situations. Providers can keep this card in their office to refer to when needed.

VETERANS ARE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE LIKELY TO USE FIREARMS AS A MEANS OF SUICIDE THAN THE GENERAL POPULATION

#### HOW TO TALK TO PATIENTS ABOUT SECURE FIREARM STORAGE

- Approach the conversation with an understanding of veterans' experiences and perspectives about firearms.
- Reassure the veteran that no one is trying to take their firearm away.
- Emphasize how secure firearm storage can help prevent accidents and suicides.

#### HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS' ROLE IN FIREARM SUICIDE PREVENTION

- Identify and engage veterans at risk for suicide.
- Educate and encourage patients to practice secure firearm storage.
- Half of veterans who die by suicide are seen in primary care settings in the month prior to death.

#### FIREARM STORAGE OPTIONS

- Creating time and space between a person and lethal means (firearms) in a time of crisis is recommended.
- Secure in-home storage: storing firearms secured, with ammunition stored in a separate location.
- Temporary out-of-home storage: best practice for high-risk patients.



To learn more and find locations visit: [www.VISIONcoalition.net/projects/tap](http://www.VISIONcoalition.net/projects/tap)

- **The Armory Project** is a coalition of firearm retailers who have agreed to provide free or low cost firearm storage for their communities.
- **TAP partners** have received suicide prevention training and are committed to preventing firearm suicide.

The patient-facing card is meant to be given to patients by their provider to inform them of the importance of secure firearm storage and why/when it may be needed. Both documents contain basic information about TAP as well as a link to find TAP partner locations and more information.

#### 70% OF VETERAN SUICIDE DEATHS INVOLVED A FIREARM

##### SECURE FIREARM STORAGE REDUCES THE RISK OF FIREARM INJURY OR DEATH.

- Creating time and distance between a person in crisis and a firearm helps keep them safe.
- Firearm injuries in the home can be prevented by making sure firearms are secured when not in use, with ammunition stored in a separate location.
- There are many storage options that still allow for rapid access.

##### CONSIDER TEMPORARY OUT-OF-HOME FIREARM STORAGE DURING:

- Personal crisis
- Relationship stress or divorce
- Substance misuse or legal challenges
- Depression or thoughts/talk of harming oneself or others



##### The Armory Project:

- The Armory Project is a coalition of firearm retailers who have agreed to provide free firearm storage for their communities.

##### Storage Options:

- Consignment hold- offers secure storage of one's firearm and prevents the firearm from being sold.
- Gunsmithing and Cleaning- retailer provides cleaning prior to return.

To learn more and find locations visit: [www.visioncoalition.net/projects/tap](http://www.visioncoalition.net/projects/tap)

## Who is this for?

- **Healthcare Providers** can use this card as a resource for talking with patients about secure firearm storage and directing them to reliable options, including out-of-home storage with TAP partners
- **Veterans** who receive the patient-facing card from their provider can use it as a resource to learn more about secure firearm storage including when out-of-home storage should be considered. A patient who does not feel comfortable discussing this topic with their provider or is not in immediate crisis can keep the card with them for future use.

## When should it be used?

- Cards can be distributed to all firearm owning patients or anyone living with a firearm in the home.
- Patient in crisis
- Positive suicide risk assessment
- History of suicidal ideation or attempt

## **Where can these cards be found?**

- Cards are available for download at [Gun Shop Partners – VISION Coalition](#)
- For hard copies of cards and more information contact:
  - Gala True- [Jennifer.True2@va.gov](mailto:Jennifer.True2@va.gov)
  - Kate MacWilliams- [Katherine.MacWilliams@va.gov](mailto:Katherine.MacWilliams@va.gov)

## **Thank you to contributors**

- TAP retail partners
- This material was developed with funding from the US Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Rural Health.

## 70% OF VETERAN SUICIDE DEATHS INVOLVED A FIREARM

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- **The Armory Project** is a coalition of firearm retailers who have agreed to provide free or low cost firearm storage for their communities.
- **TAP partners** have received suicide prevention training and are committed to preventing firearm suicide.

## LIFE CHALLENGES + MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

<b>National Suicide Prevention Lifeline</b>	Free counseling and support for anyone in the United States	<b>988</b> (Veterans press 1) <b>Text 838255</b> Chat at <a href="https://veteranscrisisline.net">veteranscrisisline.net</a>
<b>Crisis Text Line</b>	24/7 text support for any crisis including depression, anxiety, self-harm, COVID, etc.	<b>Text HOME to 741741</b>
<b>United Way</b>	211 is a comprehensive source of information about local resources and services.	<b>211</b> <b>211.org</b>
<b>SAMHSA National Helpline + Treatment Locator</b>	Free support and treatment locator/referral services for mental and/or substance use	<b>800-662-HELP (4357)</b> <b>Text ZIP code to 435748</b> <a href="https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov">findtreatment.samhsa.gov</a>
<b>Postvention Resources</b>	Support for survivors of suicide loss	<a href="https://visioncoalition.net/resources/postvention">visioncoalition.net/resources/postvention</a> <a href="https://mirecc.va.gov/visn19/postvention">mirecc.va.gov/visn19/postvention</a>
<b>Give an Hour Counseling</b>	Free counseling and education with efforts focus on people impacted by military service, mass violence, the opioid epidemic, and interpersonal violence.	<a href="https://www.giveanhour.org">www.giveanhour.org</a>
<b>Vets4Warriors</b>	Help with challenges before they escalate into a crisis for veterans, military, and families	<b>855-838-8255</b> Or chat/email at <a href="https://www.vets4warriors.com">www.vets4warriors.com</a>
<b>Military OneSource</b>	Confidential support for military members and families during times of stress (non-crisis)	<b>800-342-9647</b> <a href="https://www.militaryonesource.mil">www.militaryonesource.mil</a>
<b>Combined Arms</b>	Wide range of support for military members, veterans, and families	<a href="https://www.combinedarms.us">www.combinedarms.us</a>
<b>Vet Center (Readjustment Counseling)</b>	Confidential support for combat veterans and families facing issues with readjustment to civilian life	<b>877-WAR-VETS</b> <b>877-927-8387</b>



## Other Handouts and Resources

VISION Coalition and TAP Resources available through:

<https://www.visioncoalition.net/resources/veteransfamilies>

Safe Home Environment One Pager:

[https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide\\_prevention/docs/TWC\\_Safe\\_Home\\_Environment\\_CLEARED\\_508\\_1-9-20.pdf](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/docs/TWC_Safe_Home_Environment_CLEARED_508_1-9-20.pdf)

Lethal Means Safety Brochure:

[https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide\\_prevention/docs/Lethal-Means-Brochure-508.pdf](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/docs/Lethal-Means-Brochure-508.pdf)

Gun Storage for Your Lifestyle Infographic:

[https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide\\_prevention/docs/Lethal\\_Means\\_NSSF\\_Gun\\_Safe\\_Infographic.pdf](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/docs/Lethal_Means_NSSF_Gun_Safe_Infographic.pdf)

Suicide Prevention is Everyone's Business: A Toolkit for Safe Firearm Storage in Your Community:

[https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide\\_prevention/docs/Toolkit\\_Safe\\_Firearm\\_Storage\\_CLEARED\\_508\\_2-24-20.pdf](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/docs/Toolkit_Safe_Firearm_Storage_CLEARED_508_2-24-20.pdf)

Safe Messaging Best Practices:

[https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide\\_prevention/docs/OMH-086-VA-OMHSP-Safe-Messaging-Factsheet-4-9-2019.pdf](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/docs/OMH-086-VA-OMHSP-Safe-Messaging-Factsheet-4-9-2019.pdf)

NSSF Firearms and Suicide Prevention: <https://www.nssf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Firearms-Suicide-Prevention-brochure.pdf>

Start the Conversation Fact Sheet:

[https://starttheconversation.veteranscrisisline.net/media/1045/vasp\\_when-you-are-concerned\\_final-508-11.pdf](https://starttheconversation.veteranscrisisline.net/media/1045/vasp_when-you-are-concerned_final-508-11.pdf)

# TAP Evaluation Tools

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ID _____
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Pre-Training Evaluation

<i>Demographic Questions</i>	
Your age:	Your gender:
Your race/ethnicity:	Home ZIP code:
Are you a veteran? If so, branch of service?	
<i>Knowledge / Perceptions / Beliefs</i>	
Many suicides can be prevented.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree
The most common method of suicide in Louisiana is by firearm.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree
It is important to be able to discuss out of home firearm storage options with my store's customers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree
I am confident about discussing out of home firearm storage options with my store's customers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree
In general, if a person receives mental health care, it does NOT mean they will be prohibited from having their firearms returned to them after temporary storage or from owning/possessing firearms in the future.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree

ID \_\_\_\_\_



## Post-Training Evaluation

<i>Knowledge / Perceptions / Beliefs</i>	
Many suicides can be prevented.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree
The most common method of suicide in Louisiana is by firearm.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree
It is important to be able to discuss out of home firearm storage options with my store's customers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree
I am confident about discussing out of home firearm storage options with my store's customers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree
In general, if a person receives mental health care, it does NOT mean they will be prohibited from having their firearms returned to them after temporary storage or from owning/possessing firearms in the future.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree
I found this training valuable.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree

Please share any additional comments you have about this training below:

### Qualitative Interview Guide for Owners of TAP Partner:

1. How do you feel things have gone with the TAP project overall?
2. What supported or facilitated your participation in TAP?
3. What made it difficult or posed a challenge to your participation in TAP?
  - a. Probes: financial issues/burden, time and attention, concerns about liability?
4. What do you think about the ways we have been keeping in touch with you?
  - a. Probes: what did you think about monthly one-on-one check-ins? What did you think about the monthly Community of Practice calls? If you have not been able to participate in the one-on-one check-ins and/or the CoP calls, what has made it challenging to do so?
5. What did you think of the materials we provided as part of TAP—the banner, window clings, table top cards, TAP brochure, graphic medicine booklet? Which materials were most useful/easy for you to use?
  - a. Probes: Which were least useful/easy for you to use? What challenges did you face in displaying or sharing the materials in your shop? What, if anything, could we do to make it easier for you to display or share these materials?
6. What feedback did your staff give you about your store’s participation in TAP? How did their attitudes towards TAP change over time?
  - a. Probes: What kind of feedback did your staff give you about the training we provided for TAP?
  - b. Did your staff have conversations with your customers or others about TAP? If yes, what do you think facilitated them being able to have those conversations? If not, what do you think got in the way of them having those conversations?
7. What feedback did customers give you about your store’s participation in TAP? How did that change over time?

- a. Probes: can you share any stories with me about these conversations and how they went?
  - b. Can you share any stories about storage inquiries, where someone asked you about storing firearms with you or went ahead and stored firearms with you? what happened?
8. Who else did you talk with about TAP (for example, to raise awareness or share what you were doing with TAP)? What was their reception to your participation in TAP?
9. What are your plans for continuing to participate in TAP going forward?
  - a. Probes: what factors go into that decision?
  - b. If you're willing to continue, what support would you need (e.g., refresher training for staff, other support)?
10. What suggestions do you have for how we could improve TAP going forward?
  - a. Probes: to support TAP partners? To raise awareness about TAP?
11. Do you know of any other FFLs who would be good TAP partners?

### **Qualitative Interview Guide for Staff of TAP Partner:**

1. How do you feel things have gone with the TAP project overall?
  - a. To what extent were you involved in TAP (for example, having conversations with customers)?
2. What did [name of store owner] tell you about TAP and why s/he decided to participate?
  - a. What did you think at the time?
  - b. How did your thinking about TAP change over time?
3. What supported or facilitated your participation in TAP?
4. What made it difficult or posed a challenge to your participation in TAP?
5. What did you think of the training that was provided at the start of TAP?
  - a. What did you like most or find most useful about it?
  - b. What did you like least or find least useful?
  - c. What was missing or did you wish had been covered?
6. What did you think of the materials we provided as part of TAP—the banner, window clings, tabletop cards, TAP brochure, graphic medicine booklet?
7. What feedback did customers give you about your store's participation in TAP? How did that change over time?
  - a. Probes: can you share any stories with me about these conversations and how they went?
  - b. Can you share any stories about storage inquiries, where someone asked you about storing firearms with you or went ahead and stored firearms with you? what happened?
8. Who else did you talk with about TAP (for example, to raise awareness or share what you were doing with TAP)? What was their reception to your participation in TAP?
9. What suggestions do you have for how we could improve TAP going forward?

- a. Probes: to support staff in stores that are TAP partners? To raise awareness about TAP?
10. What would you tell staff in other stores about TAP?
- a. Anything else you'd like to share about your experience with TAP?
11. Do you know of any other FFLs who would be good TAP partners?





DATE:

**RE: Evaluating and rating the display of marketing materials by TAP Partners**

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As part of The Armory Project, our firearms retailer partners were asked to utilize a suite of marketing materials that we developed, produced, and delivered to their stores. The materials supplied included a large vinyl banner (for outdoor use), two sizes of wall posters, trifold brochures, tabletop signs, copies of a graphic medicine booklet, and various stickers and clings.

Specifically, the stores received the following quantities of the following items:

- Partner 1 received 120 graphic medicine booklets and 602 trifold brochures
- *Partner 2* received 120 graphic medicine booklets and 602 trifold brochures
- *Partner 3* received 120 graphic medicine booklets and 650 trifold brochures

Because every store is different in terms of size and layout, we did not prescribe or require any specific use of these materials. Rather, we asked each partner to use their discretion and knowledge of their stores (and customer habits) to best use these materials to spread awareness and spark in-store conversations. For example, only one partner displayed the outdoor banner; his parking lot has a fence that offers a great location for this. The other stores do not have outdoor areas where a banner would be useful, so they did not use that particular asset.

## Evaluation

We collected additional data points through a qualitative evaluation of each partner's use and display of the marketing materials we provided. This metric is intended to help answer the question: *did the partners use the supplied materials effectively?*

To capture this data point, we visited each store for a short and informal visit. During each visit, we observed the visibility of the various materials and noted the locations and number of separate displays (various materials shared in distinct locations, as opposed to grouped together). We were seeking to evaluate whether customers could reasonably be expected to see the materials while in the store.

To quantify our evaluation, we developed the following numerical rating spectrum:

- Rating of 0 = no visible display of TAP materials
- Rating of 1 = 1 display of TAP material (e.g., banner is up in a visible location)
- Rating of 2 = 2 displays of TAP material (e.g., tabletop brochure by the register, and copies of the trifold brochure and the graphic medicine booklet are grouped together on the counter)
- Rating of 3 = at least 3 displays of TAP material (e.g., several displays of brochures and graphic medicine booklets in different parts of the store and tabletop brochures displayed in two different places on the counter)

## FFL Partner 1

**We gave FFL Partner 1 a rating of 2** based on this system. The banner was very prominently displayed outside the shop on a fence near the entrance to the parking lot and a very busy service road. There was a display of the trifold brochures at the cash register, definitely a central point of interaction in a very large store (probably >3,000sf).

There was one tabletop sign display, but it was on a table in the back area of the store near the axe throwing space, where most customers apparently do not go. Incidentally, we may have given a 3 if the tabletop sign was on a shelf or countertop in the gun retail area or in another area of the store where customers spend time.

## FFL Partner 2

**We gave FFL Partner 2 a rating of 2** based on this system. There were two displays on different sections of the U-shaped countertop, both in plain sight. One spot had a tabletop sign very appropriately displayed. The other spot, near the cash register, had a tabletop sign along with trifold brochures.

This store had limited floor space – probably not more than 300sf – and very little marketing space outside the building because it is located at the end of a residential driveway. As a result, there was no display of banner, posters, or stickers.

A rating of 3 might have been warranted with just one additional display at eye-level, such as a poster or a cling.

## FFL Partner 3

**We gave FFL Partner 3 a rating of 3** based on this system. There were multiple displays of materials throughout the interactive areas of the store. One end of the room featured a long countertop for firearm sales, and the tabletop sign was displayed on the counter near both ends and in the middle near a cash register (3-4).

One side of the medium-sized room (~1500sf) looks out to the indoor shooting range and has interactive spaces for patrons who are either preparing to use the range or observing others who are shooting. The trifold brochure was included with a larger display of relevant brochures. This was near some screens where patrons register to use the indoor range, and there were copies of the graphic medicine booklet near each of the two terminals. On shelves by the windows of the indoor range, there were also two more displays of the tabletop sign.

This was an impressive use of the materials. The only consideration might be that the TAP brochures would be better placed in the firearm sales area rather than the indoor range sign-up area. Our materials were designed for the retail sales environment, and I presume there would be different or additional considerations when it comes to marketing in a shooting range environment.

**SLIDE #1****The Armory Project (TAP):****Temporary Out-of-Home  
Storage and Suicide  
Prevention**

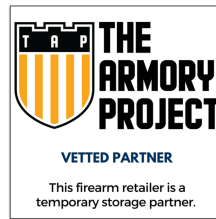
Funded by VA HSR&D INV 19-294  
For more information visit: [www.visioncoalition.net](http://www.visioncoalition.net)

**Note:** Ask participants to introduce themselves, start with introducing yourself by saying your name, organization, any personal reasons you are passionate about this work and any connections you have with high risk populations such as Veterans, Emergency Response (Police, EMTs, etc.).

**SLIDE #3**

What makes you uneasy  
when thinking about  
discussing mental health  
issues and firearm storage?

**Script:** To start lets have an open discussion. There are some common beliefs and concerns about suicide. What makes you uneasy when thinking about discussing mental health issues and firearms? (Pause for discussion) Some of the uneasiness we have may be due to the myths and stigma around talking about Suicide in general so next we are going to cover some of the most common myths.

**SLIDE #2****What to Expect**

- Learn about what process your store will be using for out-of-home storage.
- In this training we will cover:
  - Common Myths vs. Realities
  - Facts about Suicide
  - S.A.V.E. Steps
  - Why secure firearm storage is important for preventing suicides
  - Helpful resources

**Script:** This store is joining a network of firearm retailers nationally in The Armory Project or TAP. TAPs goal is to raise awareness on how temporary out-of-home firearm storage can save lives and to provide out-of-home storage options for people when they need it. We will walk through a training called SAVE which coaches you to recognize the signs of suicide, provides guidance in asking questions to family, friends or customers, and how to validate and connect with someone in need. This presentation is interactive so we want you to feel comfortable in speaking up and asking questions.

**Note:** Slides #4 to #11 are discussing common myths vs. realities. Review the slide content and discuss with the group. You can start the discussion by talking about your initial uneasiness or what you have heard others say about the myths.

**SLIDE #4**

Common Myths vs. Realities

Myth

People who talk about suicide are just seeking attention.

**SLIDE #5**

Reality

No matter how casually or jokingly said, **suicide threats should never be ignored** and may indicate serious feelings.

Someone who talks about suicide provides others an opportunity to intervene before suicidal behaviors occur.

**SLIDE #6**

Common Myths vs. Realities

Myth

The only people who can or should help someone who is suicidal is a mental health counselor or therapist.

**SLIDE #7**

Reality

Special training is **NOT** required to safely raise the subject of suicide.

Helping someone feel included and showing genuine, heartfelt support can also make a big difference during a challenging time.

**SLIDE #8**

Common Myths vs. Realities

Myth

Asking someone if they are thinking about suicide will put the idea in their head.

**SLIDE #9**

Reality

Research shows that asking someone about suicidal thoughts does **NOT** have a negative impact.

In fact, it has a slight positive effect on mood.

**SLIDE #10**

Common Myths vs. Realities

Myth

If you tell a mental health provider you are thinking about suicide, they will take your firearm away.

**SLIDE #11**

Reality

Mental health providers almost never have the direct ability or desire to take away someone's firearm.

They will want to discuss how to keep yourself and your environment safe.

**SLIDE #12**

How common is suicide?

**Script:** People may not realize that suicide is a major public health concern. It is a particular health concern for Veterans, Law enforcement, and other emergency responders, it affects many Americans and people around the world.

**SLIDE #14**

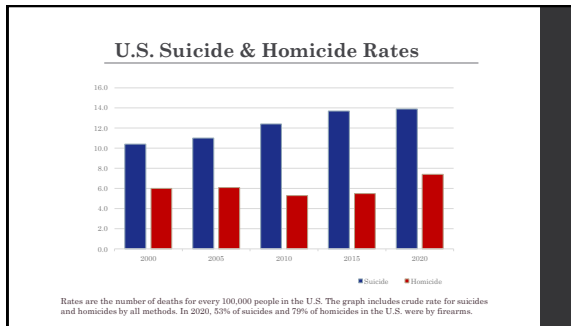
What can I do?

Have the conversation

Remember, you can S.A.V.E someone with a few simple steps.

**Script:** The SAVE program is designed by the Dept of Veterans affairs and is focused on preventing suicide attempts and saving lives that might otherwise be lost to suicide. It is designed to train everyone to be a “gatekeeper.” The role of gatekeepers is connecting those at risk for suicide with people who can help them. You can save lives by being sensitive to people in distress and by connecting them with resources to keep them safe.

**SLIDE #13**



**Note:** Suicide was the 10th leading cause of death in 2019. Today it is the 12th largely due to COVID. You may be surprised to know that suicide is a more common cause of death than homicide.

- In 2020- 45,979 people died by suicide
- Estimated 12.2 mil U.S. adults have seriously thought about suicide, 3.2 mil planned an attempt, and 1.2 mil attempted suicide.
- Rates of suicide are higher in some populations (Veterans rates are twice that of general population), we know a lot of reasons and risk factors for that but one of those is the access, familiarity and lethality of firearms.

**SLIDE #15**

S.A.V.E.: Teaching Communities How to Help Firearm Owners at Risk for Suicide

S.A.V.E. will help you act with care and compassion if you encounter a person who is in suicidal crisis.

- Signs of suicidal thinking should be recognized.
- Ask the important questions.
- Validate the Person’s experience.
- Encourage treatment and Expedite getting help.

**Script:** SAVE is a straightforward approach to providing help to those who may be experiencing suicidal thoughts. The components are simple and effective for all gatekeepers, regardless of your professional role or background.

**SLIDE #16**

**S** Signs of Suicidal Thinking

Learn to recognize these warning signs:

- Hopelessness, feeling like there is no way out
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, or mood swings
- Feeling like there is no reason to live
- Rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities without thinking
- Increasing alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawing from family and friends

**SLIDE #17**

**S** Signs of Suicidal Thinking


The presence of any of the following signs requires immediate attention:

- Thinking about hurting or killing themselves
- Looking for ways to die
- Talking about death, dying, or suicide
- Self-destructive or risk-taking behavior, especially when it involves alcohol, drugs, or firearms

**SLIDE #18**

**Risk and Protective Factors**

<p><b>Risk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior suicide attempt</li> <li>• Mental health issues</li> <li>• Substance abuse</li> <li>• Access to lethal means</li> <li>• Recent loss</li> <li>• Legal or financial challenges</li> <li>• Relationship issues</li> <li>• Unemployment</li> <li>• Homelessness</li> </ul>	<p><b>Protective</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to mental health care</li> <li>• Sense of connectedness</li> <li>• Problem-solving skills</li> <li>• Sense of spirituality</li> <li>• Mission or purpose</li> <li>• Physical health</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Social and emotional well-being</li> </ul>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------


 **Goal:** Minimize risk factors and boost protective factors

**Script:** Risk factors are characteristics that are associated with an increased likelihood of suicidal behaviors. Some risk factors include: prior suicide attempt history, certain mental health conditions, access to lethal means, and stressful life events, such as divorce, job loss, or the death of a loved one.

Protective factors can help offset risk factors. These are characteristics associated with a decreased likelihood of suicidal behaviors. Some protective factors for suicide include access to mental health care, feeling connected to other people, and positive coping skills.

**SLIDE #19**

**Warning Signs**



Changes in:

- Agitation
- Marked irritability
- Social withdrawal
- Severe affective states
- Sleep disturbances

**Script:** Risk/protective factors are cues but a percentage of those that go on to die by suicide deny suicidal ideation. It is important to pay attention to time-limited changes in a person that happen in a period of hours to days, rather than months to years. These include changes in; agitation or outward behavioral signs including hand-wringing, grimacing, and pacing, marked irritability or increased proneness to annoyance and anger, social withdrawal or a sudden decrease in activities that were routine including social outings, severe expression of abandonment, anxiety, desperation, guilt, and rage, and sleep disturbances including insomnia, nightmares, and nighttime panic attacks.

**SLIDE #20**

How will I know?

**You may not.**

Here are some things you can look out for in your shop:

- Mention of recent crisis (e.g., divorce, job loss)
- Avoiding eye contact
- Seems tearful, upset or agitated (e.g., fidgety, mentions restlessness)
- Lack of interest in type of firearm (“anything will do”)
- No firearms knowledge and no interest in instruction or safety
- Suggestive comments about suicide (“I won’t have the gun for long”; “I don’t need a lot of ammunition”)
- Behavior that seems like preparing or tying up loose ends
- Wanting to sell firearms and not caring about price or logistics

**SLIDE #21**

**A** Asking Questions

**Know how to ask the important questions...**

**Script:** The things we have just covered should prompt the listener to ask about suicidal thoughts. Now we will dive in how to do that as taking that step. What are your thoughts about “Asking the question”?

**SLIDE #22**

**A** Asking Questions

- What are your thoughts on asking someone if they need somewhere to store their firearms temporarily?
- What initial concerns do you have?
- Lets talk about a few ways of asking the question and you can tell me which ones you think are most effective and direct.
  - Do you feel like you need to put some space between you and your firearm?
  - Do you feel like you need somewhere to store your firearms temporarily?

**Script:** You may be in the position to ask these questions of those who are not in the store, like friends and family.

**SLIDE #23**

**A** Asking Questions

Do's	Don'ts
<b>DO</b> ask questions if you've identified warning signs or symptoms.	<b>DON'T</b> ask questions as though you are looking for a “no” answer. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “You aren't thinking of killing yourself, are you?”</li> </ul>
<b>DO</b> ask questions in a natural way that flows with the conversation.	<b>DON'T</b> wait to ask questions when someone is halfway out the door.

**Script:** Why it is so important to ask this question directly instead of indirectly? What may be the outcome of asking indirect questions? (Answer: indirect answers!). Use direct words and phrases, such as “killing yourself” and “suicide,” when asking about suicidal thoughts. Avoid using vague phrases such as “hurting yourself,” as these can have different meanings to different people. Phrase questions in a way that indicates openness to listening and remain nonjudgmental no matter the answer. This is extremely important, as it will help the person understand that people are willing to listen. The question should not be an afterthought but asked promptly once someone indicates that they may be at risk for suicide.

**SLIDE #24**

**A** Asking Questions


“Are you thinking about killing yourself?”

**Script:** There may not be an optimal time to ask the question, and doing so may be uncomfortable for you. Acknowledge that there did not feel like a good time to ask them this and you do not want them to feel uncomfortable but that you want to check in with them to know what is going on with them.

**Note:** Check in with group to see how they feel about asking the question now.

**SLIDE #26**

Why focus on secure firearm storage to prevent suicides?




**Script:**

- **Suicidal crises are often brief.**
- The deadliness of an attempt depends in part on the method used.
- 90% of those who attempt suicide and survive- do not attempt suicide again.

**SLIDE #25**

**V** Validate the Person’s Experience

- Talk openly about suicide. Be willing to listen and allow the person to express his or her feelings.
- Recognize that the situation is serious.
- Do not pass judgment.
- Reassure the person that help is available.



**Script:** Many times, we try for a quick fix with statements such as “It’s going to get better” and “You can get through this.” However, statements like these often leave individuals feeling unheard or dismissed.”

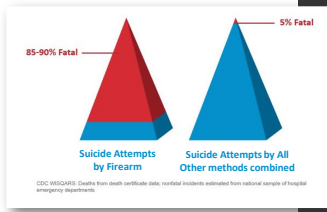
Examples of validating statements include:

- “Anyone in your situation would feel that way.”
- “Of course you’re overwhelmed.”
- “You have been struggling with a lot.”
- “This would be too much for anyone to handle.”

**SLIDE #27**

Firearms as Lethal Means

- Firearms are highly lethal- people who attempt suicide via firearm rarely survive
- Access to firearms and unsafe storage practices are associated with increased risk for death by suicide.

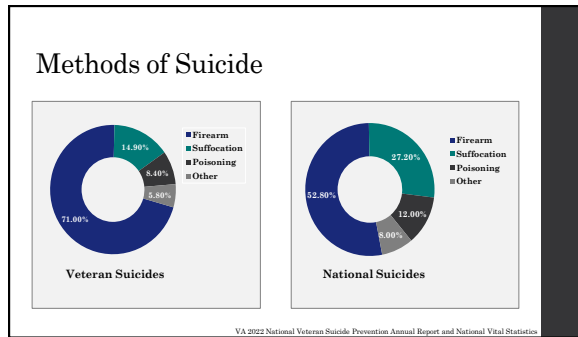


CCIC WISQARS: Data from death certificate data, verified incidents extracted from national sample of hospital emergency departments. Source modified from: CDC WISQARS and US Dept. of Veterans Affairs. <https://www.cdc.gov/wisqars/about/>

**Script:** Having access to firearms during a suicidal crisis increases the likelihood of a lethal attempt. About 90% of firearm related suicide attempts are fatal as compared to approximately 5% of attempts by all other methods combined. If someone is at risk, putting time and distance between them and their gun is like holding on to a friends’ care keys when they are drunk. How a person attempts suicide impacts how fatal the injury will be. About 90% of firearm-related suicide attempts are fatal, as compared to approximately 5% of suicide attempts by all other mechanisms combined. Research shows most who survive a nonfatal suicide attempt do not go on to die by suicide. Putting time & distance between a suicidal person and a gun may save a life.



**SLIDE #28**



**Script:** Firearms are the most frequent means for men, 2x the rate of suffocation in the general population. In 2020, firearms surpassed suffocation and poisoning to become the leading means of suicide among women. “But won’t they just substitute another method?” Some may, but other methods are less likely to kill them and we know that people rarely “substitute” one method for another. It is important to restrict whichever means they have in mind. Others may delay their attempt. Either way, the odds of survival go up.

**Note:** In 2020: Females the rate of firearm-related suicide (1.8) was higher than rates by poisoning (1.5) and suffocation (1.7). Males the leading means of suicide was firearm (12.5), at a rate 2x that of suffocation (6.1), the second leading means.

**SLIDE #30**

Protecting One Another

- Having access to a firearm during mental health crisis increases the odds that an attempter will die.
- We can protect one another. **Be alert to signs of suicide in friends and family.**
- If Someone is at risk, help **keep guns from them until they recover**. It’s like holding a friend’s car keys when they’re drunk.
- Other reasons to store firearms out of the home:
  - concerns for small children,
  - older adults impacted by health concerns or dementia,
  - safety of weapons during moves or deployment,
  - concerns of theft.

**Script:** Access to lethal means increases suicide risk for everyone living in the home during these brief phases of suicidal crisis. Building in time and space—even 30-60 minutes—between impulse to act and the means to harm one’s self saves lives.

**SLIDE #29**

### Time & Distance

Putting time & distance between a person and a firearm may save a life.

But won't they just substitute another method?

- Some may, but nearly anything else is less likely to kill.
- Others may delay their attempt.
- Either way, the odds of survival go up, for three reasons...

Time	Percentage of attempters
Less than 5 minutes	24%
Less than 20 minutes	48%
Within an hour	71%

**Script:** The time between when a person decides to die by suicide and acting on the decision is often very short. In one study of attempt survivors, 47% said it took **less than one hour** between their decision to attempt and their actual attempt. 24% said it took **less than five minutes** for them to act. This reality underscores the importance of reducing access to lethal

**SLIDE #31**

### Secure Firearm Storage (aka Lethal Means Safety)

• A range of options for adding space and time

VISION

**Script:** There are different types of strategies that focus on making lethal means less deadly and/or available. These are referred to broadly as Lethal Means Safety. Secure storage of firearms in the home and temporary storage away from the home during crises have emerged as intervention that decrease the use of firearm in suicide attempts. This store is offering temporary out of home storage and we will review how now.


**SLIDE #32**

**Utilize a Consignment Service**

*Description:* the firearm dealer provides storage for the client's firearms following the signing of a document that states the fees (if any) and describes the conditions for return.

The document states that the consigner must pass the 4473 background check. If the consigner fails the check, the document states methods for disposal (For example: purchase by the dealer or sale to another individual). The document also describes what will happen if the consigner *does not* return before the end of the contract or respond from communications from the firearms dealer.

<b>Pros:</b>	<b>Cons:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sets clear expectations about storage.</li> <li>• Agreement specifies condition of return.</li> <li>• Provides opportunity for the firearm owner to reach out for help.</li> <li>• Firearm dealer can provide resources for suicide prevention.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Firearm owner may fear that they could fail the background check and not be able to get their firearms back.</li> </ul>




**SLIDE #33**

**Utilize a Cleaning and Storage Service**

*Description:* An arrangement for service to the firearm that will also involve holding the firearm. Shops may perform their own services on site or involve the use of a subcontractor. (some TAP partners offer this for free)

The sole document is a bill of sale that describes the maintenance services to be performed on the firearm and the estimated date of return to the firearm's owner.

<b>Pros:</b>	<b>Cons:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No background check needed to retrieve firearms.</li> <li>• Firearm owner has no need to disclose the reason for temporary storage.</li> <li>• Provides time for the firearm owner to reach out for help.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not provide an opportunity to for the firearm dealer to provide resources.</li> <li>• The store owner will not know the legal state of the individual at the time of return.</li> <li>• Limits the amount of time for the firearm owner to seek help.</li> <li>• Fees/costs may be prohibitive.</li> </ul>



**Script:** Your store may be using one of these two options or both that we will be presenting.

**Note:** If store is only using one option present and focus on that option. With the preferred method slide up it would be a good time to introduce the In-store support document

**SLIDE #34**

**Other Temporary Out of Home Storage Options**

You can save a life by raising awareness among firearm owners about the option to store firearms out of the home during times of need or distress.


Other options for temporary out-of-home storage include:

- Family and Friends (firearm owners should review state laws about who can hold firearms for them) Search for your state laws at [Map & Resources Directory - WAV \(worriedaboutaveteran.org\)](#)
- Law enforcement (Police or Sherriff's Office)
- Storage Facility or Pawn Shop (review state laws)

**SLIDE #35**

**E** Encourage Treatment and Expedite Getting Help

- What should I do if I think someone is suicidal?
  - Don't keep the person's suicidal behavior a secret.
  - Do not leave him or her alone.
  - Try to get the person to seek immediate help from his or her doctor or the nearest hospital emergency room.
  - Call 911.
- Reassure the person that help is available.
- Call the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline
  - For Veterans, press "1" after dialing
  - Text and Chat options are available



**Script:** No keeping secrets- if someone says they will talk to you about an issue "only if you promise not to tell anyone," it's important to be up front in saying you cannot make that promise because you care about them and want them to get any help that they may need. You don't want to keep a secret and regret it. You are not expected to resolve the suicidal crisis. Nevertheless, being there and talking about the crisis is valuable, as it can help the person connect with resources.

**SLIDE #36**

**When Talking with a Person at Risk for Suicide**

- Remain calm.
- Listen more than you speak.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Act with confidence.
- Do not argue.
- Use open body language.
- Limit questions — let the person do the talking.
- Use supportive, encouraging comments.
- Be honest — let the person know that there are no quick solutions, but help is available.

**Script:** Open body language signals interest in the other person and in the conversation. Maintain a relaxed posture, lean in closer, use direct eye contact, and nod in agreement to show the person that you’re present in the moment with them.

Keep in mind: Even if they are in crisis, they may not wish to dive into details and that is okay

**SLIDE #38**

**Remember**

S	Signs of suicidal thinking should be recognized.
A	Ask the most important question of all.
V	Validate the Person’s experience.
E	Encourage treatment and Expedite getting help.

**Script:** This training is to help you feel comfortable with these conversations so that help can be effectively provided for those that need it.


**SLIDE #37**

**Free, Confidential Support 24/7/365 with chat and text options available**

Available to:

- Veterans (press 1 for Veterans)
- Service members
- Family members
- Friends


If you are helping someone else who is in crisis, you can also call them for support



**Script:** Veterans Crisis Line: The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring VA responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call 988 and Press 1, chat online, or send a text message to 838255 to receive confidential crisis intervention and support 24 /7.

**Note:** Individuals’ have many different experiences with crisis lines and/or the VA, so it is important to ensure they are heard and answer questions in an unbiased way.

**SLIDE #39**



**Debrief**  
Thoughts, feelings, or questions?

39

**Note:** The nice thing about VA S.A.V.E. training is that no one expects you or me to have all the answers.

**SLIDE #40**



**Note:** Hand out resource list

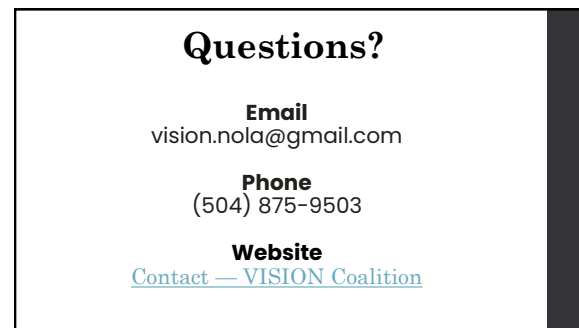
**SLIDE #41**



**SLIDE #42**



**SLIDE #43**



**SLIDE #1**

# The Armory Project (TAP): Temporary Out-of-Home Storage and Suicide Prevention

Funded by VA HSR&D INV 19-294

For more information visit: [www.visioncoalition.net](http://www.visioncoalition.net)

**SLIDE #2**

## What to Expect

- Learn about what process your store will be using for out-of-home storage.
- In this training we will cover:
  - Common Myths vs. Realities
  - Facts about Suicide
  - S.A.V.E. Steps
  - Why secure firearm storage is important for preventing suicides
  - Helpful resources

**SLIDE #3**

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What makes you uneasy  
when thinking about  
discussing mental health  
issues and firearm storage?

**SLIDE #4**

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## Common Myths vs. Realities

Myth

People who talk about suicide  
are just seeking attention.

**SLIDE #5**

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**Reality**

No matter how casually or jokingly said, **suicide threats should never be ignored** and may indicate serious feelings.

Someone who talks about suicide provides others an opportunity to intervene before suicidal behaviors occur.

**SLIDE #6**

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**Common Myths vs. Realities****Myth**

The only people who can or should help someone who is suicidal is a mental health counselor or therapist.

**SLIDE #7**

## Reality

Special training is **NOT** required to safely raise the subject of suicide.

Helping someone feel included and showing genuine, heartfelt support can also make a big difference during a challenging time.

**SLIDE #8**

## Common Myths vs. Realities

## Myth

Asking someone if they are thinking about suicide will put the idea in their head.



**SLIDE #9**

## Reality

Research shows that asking someone about suicidal thoughts does **NOT** have a negative impact.

In fact, it has a slight positive effect on mood.

**SLIDE #10**

## Common Myths vs. Realities

## Myth

If you tell a mental health provider you are thinking about suicide, they will take your firearm away.

**SLIDE #11**

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**Reality**

Mental health providers almost never have the direct ability or desire to take away someone's firearm.

They will want to discuss how to keep yourself and your environment safe.

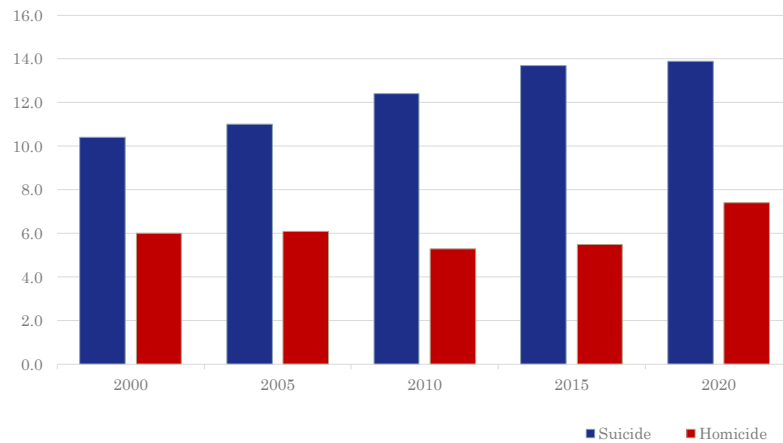
**SLIDE #12**

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How common is suicide?

**SLIDE #13**

## U.S. Suicide & Homicide Rates



Rates are the number of deaths for every 100,000 people in the U.S. The graph includes crude rate for suicides and homicides by all methods. In 2020, 53% of suicides and 79% of homicides in the U.S. were by firearms.

**SLIDE #14**

What can I do?

Have the conversation

Remember, you can  
S.A.V.E someone with a  
few simple steps.

**SLIDE #15**

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## S.A.V.E.: Teaching Communities How to Help Firearm Owners at Risk for Suicide

**S.A.V.E.** will help you act with care and compassion if you encounter a person who is in suicidal crisis.

- **S**igns of suicidal thinking should be recognized.
- **A**sk the important questions.
- **V**alidate the Person's experience.
- **E**ncourage treatment and **E**xpedite getting help.

**SLIDE #16**

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## **S** Signs of Suicidal Thinking

Learn to recognize these warning signs:

- Hopelessness, feeling like there is no way out
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, or mood swings
- Feeling like there is no reason to live
- Rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities without thinking
- Increasing alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawing from family and friends

**SLIDE #17**

## Signs of Suicidal Thinking

The presence of any of the following signs requires immediate attention:

- Thinking about hurting or killing themselves
- Looking for ways to die
- Talking about death, dying, or suicide
- Self-destructive or risk-taking behavior, especially when it involves alcohol, drugs, or firearms

17

**SLIDE #18**

## Risk and Protective Factors

### Risk

- Prior suicide attempt
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse
- Access to lethal means
- Recent loss
- Legal or financial challenges
- Relationship issues
- Unemployment
- Homelessness

### Protective

- Access to mental health care
- Sense of connectedness
- Problem-solving skills
- Sense of spirituality
- Mission or purpose
- Physical health
- Employment
- Social and emotional well-being



**Goal:** Minimize risk factors and boost protective factors

18

**SLIDE #19**

## Warning Signs



### Changes in:

- Agitation
- Marked irritability
- Social withdrawal
- Severe affective states
- Sleep disturbances

**SLIDE #20**

## How will I know?

**You may not.**

Here are some things you can look out for in your shop:

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- Behavior that seems like preparing or tying up loose ends
- Wanting to sell firearms and not caring about price or logistics

**SLIDE #21**

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# A Asking Questions

**Know how to ask  
the important questions...**

21

**SLIDE #22**

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# A Asking Questions

- What are your thoughts on asking someone if they need somewhere to store their firearms temporarily?
- What initial concerns do you have?
- Lets talk about a few ways of asking the question and you can tell me which ones you think are most effective and direct.
  - Do you feel like you need to put some space between you and your firearm?
  - Do you feel like you need somewhere to store your firearms temporarily?

22

**SLIDE #23**

## A Asking Questions

Do's	Don'ts
<b>DO</b> ask questions if you've identified warning signs or symptoms.	<b>DON'T</b> ask questions as though you are looking for a "no" answer. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "You aren't thinking of killing yourself, are you?"</li></ul>
<b>DO</b> ask questions in a natural way that flows with the conversation.	<b>DON'T</b> wait to ask questions when someone is halfway out the door.

**SLIDE #24**

## A Asking Questions

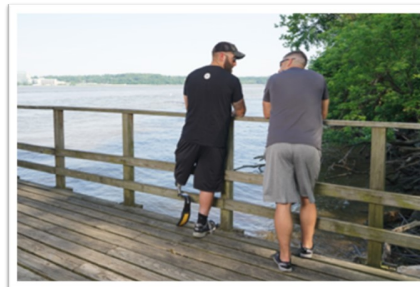
"Are you thinking about killing yourself?"



**SLIDE #25**

## **V** Validate the Person's Experience

- Talk openly about suicide. Be willing to listen and allow the person to express his or her feelings.
- Recognize that the situation is serious.
- Do not pass judgment.
- Reassure the person that help is available.

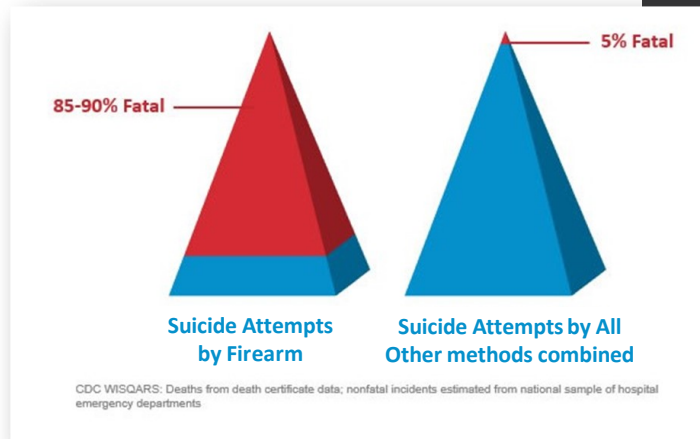
**SLIDE #26**

Why focus on secure  
firearm storage to prevent  
suicides?

**SLIDE #27**

## Firearms as Lethal Means

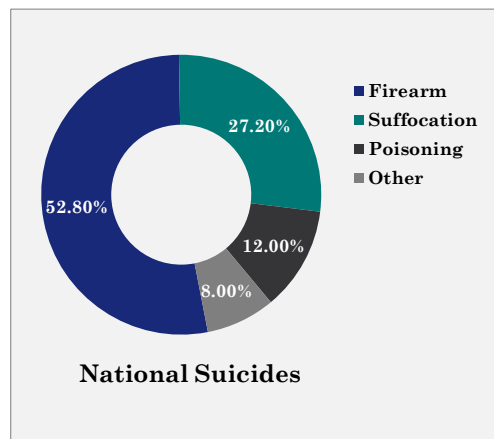
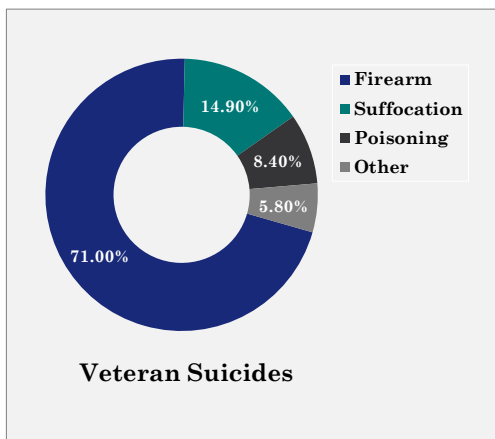
- Firearms are highly lethal- people who attempt suicide via firearm rarely survive
- Access to firearms and unsafe storage practices are associated with increased risk for death by suicide.



Source modified from : CDC WISQARS and US Dept. of Veterans Affairs <https://www.mirecc.va.gov/lethalmeansafety/facts/>

**SLIDE #28**

## Methods of Suicide



VA 2022 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report and National Vital Statistics

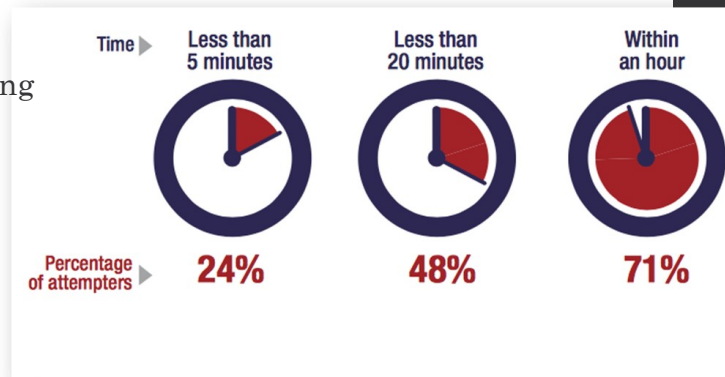
**SLIDE #29**

## Time & Distance

Putting time & distance between a person and a firearm may save a life.

But won't they just substitute another method?

- Some may, but nearly anything else is less likely to kill.
- Others may delay their attempt.
- Either way, the odds of survival go up, for three reasons...

**SLIDE #30**

## Protecting One Another



- Having access to a firearm during mental health crisis increases the odds that an attempter will die.
- We can protect one another. **Be alert to signs of suicide in friends and family.**
- If Someone is at risk, help **keep guns from them until they recover.** It's like holding a friend's car keys when they're drunk.
- Other reasons to store firearms out of the home:
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**SLIDE #31**

## Secure Firearm Storage (aka Lethal Means Safety)

- A range of options for adding space and time

**SLIDE #32**

## Utilize a Consignment Service

**Description:** the firearm dealer provides storage for the client's firearms following the signing of a document that states the fees (if any) and describes the conditions for return.

The document states that the consigner must pass the 4473 background check. If the consigner fails the check, the document states methods for disposal (For example: purchase by the dealer or sale to another individual). The document also describes what will happen if the consigner *does not* return before the end of the contract or respond from communications from the firearms dealer.

### Pros:

- Sets clear expectations about storage.
- Agreement specifies condition of return.
- Provides opportunity for the firearm owner to reach out for help.
- Firearm dealer can provide resources for suicide prevention.

### Cons:

- Firearm owner may fear that they could fail the background check and not be able to get their firearms back.

**SLIDE #33**

## Utilize a Cleaning and Storage Service

**Description:** An arrangement for service to the firearm that will also involve holding the firearm. Shops may perform their own services on site or involve the use of a subcontractor. (some TAP partners offer this for free)

The sole document is a bill of sale that describes the maintenance services to be performed on the firearm and the estimated date of return to the firearm's owner.

**Pros:**

- No background check needed to retrieve firearms.
- Firearm owner has no need to disclose the reason for temporary storage.
- Provides time for the firearm owner to reach out for help.

**Cons:**

- Does not provide an opportunity for the firearm dealer to provide resources.
- The store owner will not know the legal state of the individual at the time of return.
- Limits the amount of time for the firearm owner to seek help.
- Fees/costs may be prohibitive.

VISION

**SLIDE #34**

## Other Temporary Out of Home Storage Options

You can save a life by raising awareness among firearm owners about the option to store firearms out of the home during times of need or distress.

Other options for temporary out-of-home storage include:

- Family and Friends (firearm owners should review state laws about who can hold firearms for them) Search for your state laws at [Map & Resources Directory - WAV \(worriedaboutaveteran.org\)](http://Map & Resources Directory - WAV (worriedaboutaveteran.org))
- Law enforcement (Police or Sherriff's Office)
- Storage Facility or Pawn Shop (review state laws)

**SLIDE #35**

## **E** Encourage Treatment and Expedite Getting Help

- What should I do if I think someone is suicidal?
  - Don't keep the person's suicidal behavior a secret.
  - Do not leave him or her alone.
  - Try to get the person to seek immediate help from his or her doctor or the nearest hospital emergency room.
  - Call 911.
- Reassure the person that help is available.
- Call the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline
  - For Veterans, press "1" after dialing
  - Text and Chat options are available

**SLIDE #36**

## When Talking with a Person at Risk for Suicide

- Remain calm.
- Listen more than you speak.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Act with confidence.
- Do not argue.
- Use open body language.
- Limit questions — let the person do the talking.
- Use supportive, encouraging comments.
- Be honest — let the person know that there are no quick solutions, but help is available.

**SLIDE #37**

## Free, Confidential Support 24/7/365 with chat and text options available

Available to:

- Veterans (press 1 for Veterans)
- Service members
- Family members
- Friends

If you are helping someone else who is in crisis, you can also call them for support

**SLIDE #38**

## Remember

- S** Signs of suicidal thinking should be recognized.
- A** Ask the most important question of all.
- V** Validate the Person's experience.
- E** Encourage treatment and Expedite getting help.

**SLIDE #39**

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# Debrief

Thoughts, feelings, or questions?

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**SLIDE #40**

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# Resources

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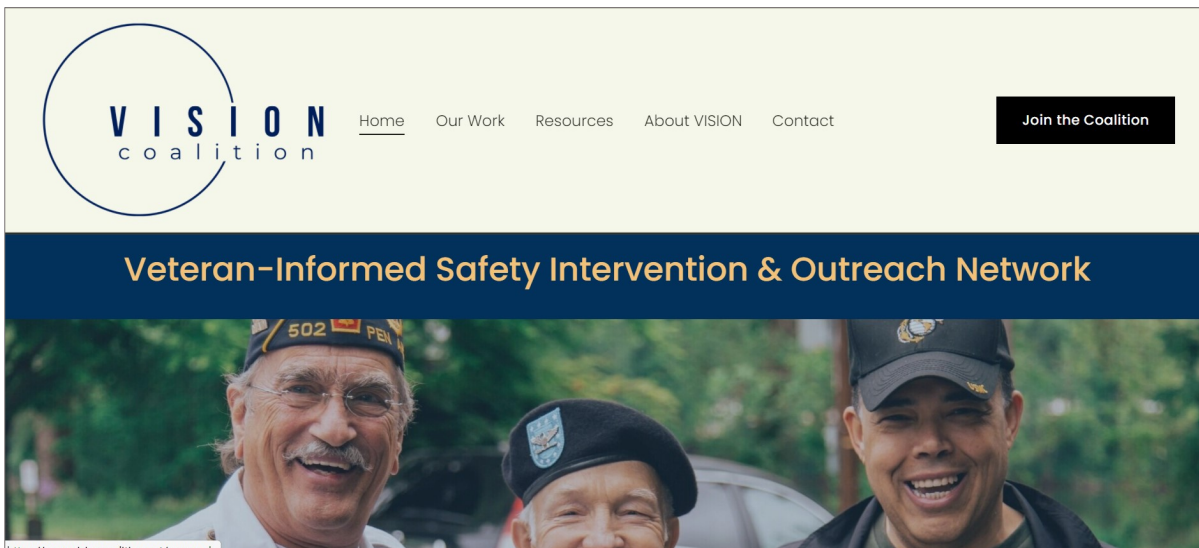
**SLIDE #41**

## The Armory Project:



**SLIDE #42**

Join the Coalition: [visioncoalition.net](http://visioncoalition.net)



**SLIDE #43**

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# Questions?

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