

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES
SR 95/HR76 Domestic Violence Study Group
Thursday, October 24, 2013, 10 am – 4 pm
Meeting location: Iberville Building, Room 1-129, Baton Rouge, LA

I. Introductions

Members Present

Judy Bell	- Representative, Domestic Violence Program Director
Pam Baker	- La. Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges
Rutha Chatwood	- La. Commission on Law Enforcement
Tracy Dahmer Farris	- La. Dept. of Justice, Office of the Attorney General
Melanie Fields	- La. District Attorneys Assn.
Ramona Harris	- La. Supreme Court, Judicial Administrator's Office
Cordelia Heaney	- La. Women's Policy & Research Commission
Kim Matherne	- La. Dept. of Children and Family Services
Beth Meeks	- LCADV
Richard Pittman	- La. Public Defender Board
Trashica Robinson	- Representative, Domestic Violence Survivor
Karen Webb	- La. Department of Health and Hospitals
Carmen Weisner	- La. Chapter of the Natl. Assn. of Social Workers

Members Absent

Tommy Clark	- La. Assn. of Chiefs of Police
Vonnie Hawkins	- LaFASA
Patricia Kock	- La. District Judges Assn.
Jimmy Pohlmann	- La. Sheriffs Assn.
Paul Young	- La. Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges
Amy Zapata	- La. Department of Health and Hospitals

II. Approval of Minutes from Sept. 4, 2013 Meeting

The minutes were voted on and approved.

III. Law Enforcement/Judicial Training and Law Implementation Work Group

Presentation from Tracy Dahmer Farris, Chair of the work group:

- What do we do well? - Law Enforcement & Judicial Training:
 - Title 46; Rights of Crime Victims and Witnesses; Protection from Family Violence Act; Domestic Abuse Assistance; Law Enforcement Duties; Protection from Dating Violence Act; Subject matter experts statewide: Identification of SME's in the areas of victim advocacy, law enforcement, prosecution, judiciary, sexual assault. However, state is in need of sexual assault trainers for law enforcement.
- 2006 LE Training Taskforce
 - Created standardized and uniform training system; created uniform trainings in academies; created e-learning for Law Enforcement; most police academies offer 8 hours of DV training on average
- Judicial trainings (LPOR)
 - Created annual trainings both interdisciplinary and specialized; clerks, judges, prosecutors, law enforcement and advocacy; new program specific to judges launches in spring '14
- Prosecutor trainings

- Annual and semi annual trainings on DV, Sexual Assault and Child Abuse ; in development of specialized prosecutor training; specialized prosecutors within some jurisdictions
- How might we improve?
 - Continuing and more in-service trainings; consistent trainings; knowledge of other trainings available regarding different disciplines; better coordination among courts; full understanding by Law Enforcement on LPOR
- Training Issues
 - T & U- Visa; more online trainings; annual mandatory trainings for all involved; mandatory policies for response; barriers to mandatory trainings
- What do we do well? – Law implementation:
 - Title 46 Predominant Aggressor; Domestic Abuse Battery; Strangulation component of 14:35.3; Burning component; Enhanced penalties; Domestic Aggravated Assault; Violation of a Protective Order
- How might we improve?
 - Under-utilized Laws
 - Home Invasion
 - Post Separation and Family Violence Prevention Act
 - Unclear Laws and Lack of Laws/Services:
 - Same sex relationships not covered in 14:35.3
 - Criminal, Civil and Children’s Code have differing language
 - Lethality assessments for LE
 - Legal assistance for victims
 - Firearms
 - Different policies among agencies
 - Federal firearm prohibition vs. state
 - Arrests
 - Seizure of weapons
 - Language on Protective Orders
 - Louisiana Protective Order Registry steering committee
 - No recommendations at this time
- Tie-ins to best practices
 - Avoiding re-victimization of non-offending parent (children exposed to violence, drugs)
 - Specialized dockets
 - Lethality assessments
- Recommendations from the Work Group:
 1. Establish a state-wide data system for Law Enforcement/prosecution and judiciary.
 - Alabama is one example, and their tech is actually 20 years old so a newer version from another state might even be necessary.
 2. Encourage specialized DV training for all who work within that field
 3. T& U-Visa incorporation in trainings
 4. Sheriff’s, local law enforcement should have officer-involved DV policy
 5. Funding for civil legal representation for victims of domestic and dating violence should be increased
 6. Increased funding to provide victim advocates to be with the victim during court proceedings- only some courts have this.
 7. Dedicated dockets for criminal misdemeanors, so one judge in a jurisdiction handles all DV cases.

- Leads to more consistent and faster sentencing. Also, create training for prosecutors to have specialized prosecutors that could handle all DV cases in some jurisdictions for felonies & misdemeanors.
- 8. A standard, simple lethality assessment tool should be developed that all police are encouraged to use with victims, as well as providing victims with resources.
- Additional recommendations discussed:
 9. Create a DV training task force, to make sure trainings offered are consistent
 10. Create a trainings clearinghouse with information on national trainings and trainings available statewide. Right now various entities like LCADV collect some of this but would be great to have one for all types of training.
 11. More DV training for civil attorneys
 12. Need a legislative review team to make laws more consistent. Ex: there are different distances required for different types of protective orders.
- Mandatory versus Recommended: because many police stations in rural areas are small, mandating that all law enforcement professionals attend a training or complete an e-training has potential issues: What is the punishment for not completing it? How do we collect data/track completion? Also, a lot of smaller department in LA don't have internet.
- Tying DV funds for law enforcement to their having attended required trainings could be considered; first responders should have to do trainings if they receive OVW funds.

IV. Data Collection & Needs Assessment Work Group

- Data Collection: this work group has found through its conference calls that there is a great deal of DV-related data being collected at the state level by all the different stakeholders, but there is currently no system for compiling or analyzing it collectively.
- Statewide Needs Assessment: the study group feels that this is a top recommendation. Funds should be identified to contract with a university expert to conduct a statewide needs assessment survey; its findings would shape additional work group recommendations. While this work group was able to make initial recommendations, the consensus was that the recommendations are provisional, and the findings of a statewide needs assessment could trump some of these recommendations.
- Recommendations from the Work Group
 - Needs Assessment:
 1. Create an online needs assessment survey that includes questions about the major needs of victims and how well they are presently being met, and questions that assess the knowledge base of responders/service providers.
 2. Focus groups as part of a listening tour should be planned. Meetings should have a common agenda and the same people should conduct all meetings if possible. The tour can be conducted by region or major metropolitan area; the specific way to identify where events should take place and their frequency is still to be determined.
 - Data Collection:
 3. Create a standing group that collects and analyzes domestic violence-related data from national and state organizations annually, reviewing it for trends and recommendations for further data collection needs or actions. This would be a standing group that met annually.
 4. Designate one specific location on the web where links to all available data sources for DV in Louisiana are listed. This could be on the Office on Women's Policy Page or DCFS could host a page that is DV specific, would be the conduit that hosts the portal that all programs use and analyze. It could house the information listed in recommendation c.

5. Create a single uniform exit interview survey for survivors that all victim services organizations would use, and institute a system to collect that data into a single document.
6. Create a work group to annually produce a report on Primary Prevention, Secondary Prevention, and Tertiary Prevention work occurring in the state.
7. Assess which DV service providers utilize which data software, and explore the feasibility and cost implications of adopting a uniform software, such as Osnium. After discussion the study group decided that before the uniform adoption statewide of a particular software could be recommended, it needed to first be assessed which systems all 17 providers use, since some have invested heavily in software and adopting a new system could mean the state would have to find funds for this.
 - Creating a statewide, standing domestic violence fatality review panel had been a work group recommendation, but the larger study group decided to eliminate it for the time being.

Additional recommendations discussed:

- Create a statewide report on prevention so we can track how much DV prevention work is happening or if that needs to be made a priority
- Create a single uniform exit interview for survivors

V. **Best Practices Review: Judy Bell**

- *Best Practices, Promising Practices, Evidenced Based Practices, Evidenced Informed*, all terms are linked to Best Practices, so using a broad definition is key. Everyone wants to have data to share with funders and to help inform their own practices. For this group's purposes, "Best Practices" equates to WHAT WORKS according to a research of the literature and limited empirical evidence, which, of course is just based on observation or experience.
- Focus on current best practices already in existence in LA, with the goal of zeroing in on ones we'd like to see expanded
- Key goals/principles: Ensuring safety and support of victims, holding abusers accountable for behavior, providing a network of intervention and prevention, engaging the whole community in efforts to change societal attitudes and behaviors that contribute to domestic violence, to promote zero tolerance for domestic violence
- Prevention Strategies:
 - Primary- preventing violence before it happens; changing societal norms/conditions. Example: school-based programs, public education campaigns.
 - Secondary - decrease the prevalence when you see early signs of DV. Example: home visits
 - Tertiary- intervening when violence has occurred. Examples: offering counseling and support groups; batterers intervention programs
- Victims safety
 - Safe, confidential shelter providing for basic needs (food, clothing, medical care) as well as providing comprehensive supportive services: Safety Planning, Case Management, Counseling, Support Groups (Women and Children), Domestic Violence Education and Information, Basic Life Skills, Advocacy, Assistance with Protective Orders, Financial Literacy, Community Referrals, Child Care, Children's Play Group, Tutoring, Housing Assistance, Job Search, Follow-up/support
- Crisis Hotline
- Group Discussion: How can we better address a survivors' fear of being in a "shelter" - dealing with misconceptions
- Turn-away rates: 1,820 people were turned away by programs because shelter was unavailable. Hotel/motel stays are not the best for high-lethality cases.

- Prevention money is needed for DV: a state awareness campaign with dedicated state funds would make a difference; could include PSAs, billboards, morning news show appearances, as well as education programs
- Housing best practices: Billi Lacombe, Faith House
 - Offer transitional housing, clients can have up to 24 mos. in that program
 - 2 types of permanent housing:
 - Scattered site rental assistance: in 2 parishes; often these victims have disabilities, so they get at-home regular assistance from Faith House
 - Complex-based housing program: have 10 units, for victims who can't afford their own housing.
 - HUD and Sisters of Charity are funders
- Supervised visitation centers: a safe exchange program, for children under joint custody. To create a facility like this there are many stipulations, including separate entrances for the offending and non-offending parents. Not enough of these around the state.
- Some study group members felt that more funds should be set aside for professional therapy for those who need it
- Group Discussion: what would we prioritize? More is needed for everything, but emergency shelter beds should be a focus because of the high turn-away numbers. Also: transportation needs, rural outreach, more training.
- Coordinated Community Response around the state: STOP grant money can be used to drive more CCRs. Can require that the funder is shown the minutes of CCR minutes and meeting dates of committees and make funding is contingent on this.
 - More of these CCR groups are important because they ensure a shared sense of knowledge among partners and can help prevent offenders from making an end-run around the system. They also are needed because they can be created in a community for a community to help meet that community's unique needs.
- Family Justice Center model: To provide a safe and accessible, central intake and service center for survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking where comprehensive community services can be received under one roof. Group did not have time to discuss this model in depth, so saved that topic for the time being.

VI. Regional Plans & Regional Funds

Beth Meeks provided an overview of current resource allocation of DCFS funded DV programs, a review of federal requirements, a review of the state's current resource map, a review of different common allocation methods, and a broad discussion of possible recommendations from the study group.

- FVPSA Requirements: 1) "provide an assurance that there will be an equitable distribution of grants and grant funds within the State and between urban and rural areas within such state;" 2) Equitable- defined as fair and reasonable. They have the most restrictive definition of the federal DV dollars.
- Currently, there are 100 shelter beds available between the 4 programs at the northern swath of the state, and 300 at the 13 shelters in the lower half of the state; no beds/programs in the middle.
- Over time resources are not aligned with the population size served, and not in tune with square mileage served. Example: 5 LA shelters were analyzed, and showed the following:

% population	% beds	% funds
8%	8	14
5%	17	9
7%	15	11
12%	4	8
10%	7	5

Group agreed that this doesn't meet the definition of equitable from the FVPSA language

- Considerations: Louisiana has limited financial resources, we are not able to supply enough shelter beds to meet demand, some areas have multiple shelter programs and other programs are responsible for large physical areas. Some programs do not have outreach offices in the parishes they are serving.
- Common funding models:
 - Straight competitive- this is what DCFS uses now for the majority of its DV funds; in 2013 for the first time DCFS used a formula that took into account COQUA scores, square mileage and population served for a percentage of the funds
 - This funding model does not have a formula, no floor or a ceiling.
 - Cons: hard to explain/justify decisions, can cause instability for local programs from year to year, competition can become conflict
 - Pros: very flexible, responsive to current needs, encourages programs to make their best case for being funded
 - Straight Formula: has a pre-set math equation, can have one feature (e.g., population only), or can be tiered with multiple weighted factors (LaFASA does this).
 - Cons: no reward for innovation; no incentive to maintain basic quality
 - Pros: very stable, easily defined, lessens conflict
 - Hybrids:
 - Tiered formula w/ a competitive/quality component: could use population, square miles, service numbers, quality score or other factors to determine funding
 - Regional formula with interregional competition: people in a region compete for the money that is reserved for that region only (LCLE uses this model)
- Regional funding is not the same as regional programming. Regional funding is administrative, it is apportioning money based on regions; regional programming is a service design within a region for specific programming models, like each region having one shelter that is funded. Regional programming implies services designed and limited specifically within a region. Iowa model uses both regional funding AND regional programming model.
- Study Group members discussed ideal recommendations for a funding plan. The group agreed it would like the DCFS funding model to move away from a straight competitive formula and preferred a tiered formula; agreed it would like all programs to receive a base amount of funds that enable them to run, and then use population and square mileage for additional funds. Also, some funds should be set aside so some funds could be competitive, to incentivize quality. The group did not want to adopt a regional programming model. They wanted to revisit a discussion of a regional funding model.

VII. Meeting Adjourned

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Meeting location: Iberville Building, Room 1-129, Baton Rouge, LA

I. Introductions

Members Present

Judy Bell	- Representative, Domestic Violence Program Director
Pam Baker	- La. Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges
Gwendolyn Brooks	- La. Dept. of Children and Family Services
Rutha Chatwood	- La. Commission on Law Enforcement
Tommy Clark	- La. Assn. of Chiefs of Police
Tracy Dahmer Farris	- La. Dept. of Justice, Office of the Attorney General
Melanie Fields	- La. District Attorneys Assn.
Ramona Harris	- La. Supreme Court, Judicial Administrator's Office
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Amy Zapata	- La. Department of Health and Hospitals

I. State Review

Members of the group had been broken up into 4 smaller groups and given the state VAWA STOP plans for 4 states to review. They were given review question for consideration when discussing the state plans:

- What are the main goals of this state's plan?
- What plan components/resources do they include to achieve these goals?
- How do they ensure equity in resource distribution?
- What best practices are they implementing?
- How do they serve both rural & urban victims?
- What outreach & prevention models are they using?
- What role would your agencies each play in this model?
- How does your group's state case study compare to work happening in Louisiana?
- What issues does your group's state case study not address that we want to find examples/models for?
- What are the general pros and cons of this state's plan?

Then the group convened and each group shared what they liked from the plan and what their group might want to include in a Louisiana plan:

Georgia

- Centralized goal for state plan
- Visually show victims we (law enforcement, service providers, state agencies, judges & prosecutors) work together
- DOE, DARE, and other partnerships to raise awareness- primary prevention efforts

- Target agencies for outreach
- Identify programs in-state that use best practices to train other agencies in the state
- Policy monitoring groups (5): Training, Performance & Evaluation, Coordinated Community Response, Underserved Communities, Legislation & Protocols. Similar to DV policy board we had discussed
- Emergency outreach in rural communities

Texas

- Sexual Assault training (esp. law enforcement)
- Hire outside data evaluator for parish data
- Study group-standing, planning
- Increase communication and a collaboration across all levels of government and victim services systems
- Add BIT's state plan-prevention
- Add urban/rural to needs assessment
- Use parish data to define needs- local orgs and state funds to expand services

Florida

- Used needs assessment to construct goals
- Culturally competent training to help serve underserved groups and set money aside for training and services to serve these groups
- Had measurable goals – helps quantify the effectiveness of efforts
- Outreach to medical communities and other potential allies
- Prevention emphasis
- Services to serve groups –Native American tribes rural (Louisiana is beginning to do this through LCLE)

Michigan

- Data collection
- Compare quality assurance systems between funders
- Duplicating best practices

Then each member of the group chose their favorite feature from any of the states' plans that they felt would be their first choice to incorporate into a Louisiana plan.

Things the group liked:

- Measurable goals
- Outside data evaluator
- Become a standing work group
- Visually show victims the coordination of our efforts
- FL-surveys inclusive of stakeholders
- Partnerships for prevention
- Urban/rural needs assessment
- Primary prevention plan development
- Cultural competence training/service delivery
- Compare quality assurance systems between funders
- Duplicating best practices

III. Study Group Recommendations

The group reviewed its recommendations from the discussion the previous day, and the recommendations from the different states' plans, to construct a rough draft list of their recommendations for the January report to the legislature.

- The group felt that all recommendations for this study group's January '14 report ought to be couched as preliminary recommendations, and that the report should include a disclaimer that they

are subject to the findings of a statewide needs assessment before listing the recommendations, and the report should stick to broad recommendations

- The group found that overall, the major DV-related needs in Louisiana were a need for data collection & training. While many organizations collect data and do trainings, the state lacks centralized data collection mechanism that can be used to help track DV cases and to analyze the best targets for funding initiatives, and lacks an overall training strategy for the state.
- The group found that programs are doing a great deal that we were not aware of, and that there are best practice structures in place in many organizations, but we need to enhance, expand and support these efforts at a state level

As per statute, stakeholders have been tasked with studying and developing a comprehensive statewide plan for the delivery of domestic violence services and to report its recommendations to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare on or before January 15, 2014. The plan should include but is not limited to all of the following:

1. Development of a state needs assessment and a comprehensive and integrated service delivery approach that meets the needs of all domestic violence victims:

a. state needs assessment:

1. Hire an outside data evaluator to conduct domestic violence-related data collection and analysis. They would create an online needs assessment survey that includes questions about the major needs of victims and how well they are presently being met, and questions that assess the knowledge base of responders/service providers. This needs assessment should be given to a wide array of stakeholders, including law enforcement, the judiciary, survivors, prosecutors, and service providers.
 - suggested components include but are not limited to demographics, various stakeholders (law enforcement, medical professionals, etc.)...
 - data analysis should be integrated into needs assessment
 - other states' data plans should be researched
2. The Domestic Violence Study Group created by SR 95/HR76 in 2013 should continue to exist and should become a standing work group that participates in statewide planning.

b. comprehensive and integrated service delivery approach:

3. Establish a multi-tiered formula for DCFs funding of domestic violence service providers that includes a competitive/quality component. Provide an initial base amount of funding for all approved service providers that would be established based on grant criteria, and then construct a formula to calculate additional funding based on population size and square mileage served. In addition, a portion of funds would be set aside to provide quality incentives; these funds would be competitively awarded. This recommendation, it should be noted, is subject to change based on the findings of the needs assessment and may need to be re-evaluated.

2. Establishment of a method to transition domestic violence service providers towards evidence-based national best practices focusing on outreach and prevention.

4. Update quality assurance standards, and prioritize that programs meet those standards and be held accountable to adhering to them.
5. Prioritizing the incorporation of cultural competency best practices into the training of service providers and in the services offered survivors to better serve traditionally underserved communities.
6. Establish measureable goals and outcomes for domestic violence funds in Louisiana.

3. Development of a plan that ensures that Louisiana laws on domestic violence are being properly implemented and provides for training on domestic violence and its many dimensions to law enforcement and the judiciary.

a. Law implementation :

7. Establish a statewide data system for law enforcement/judiciary information (possibly like Alabama's).

8. All sheriffs and police departments should have a policy for officer-involved DV cases
 9. Louisiana should increase the funding available to provide civil legal representation for victims, and prioritize providing more DV training to civil attorneys.
 10. Louisiana should increase the funding available to provide victim advocates to provide victims with support during court proceedings.
 11. The domestic violence study group should explore new methods for accessing outside funds to help provide more victims with civil legal assistance.
 12. Ask the Louisiana Protective Order Registry steering committee to review inconsistencies in laws for the numerous types of civil and protective order provisions as they relate to domestic violence.
 13. Encourage courts to explore creating dedicated dockets for domestic violence in criminal misdemeanor civil and family court protective order cases. This provides consistent, quick responses to DV cases.
 14. Add a domestic violence code or extension into the law enforcement tracking system, so that instances of domestic violence-related crimes can be more accurately reported and tracked, even when perpetrators are charged with a charge that is not domestic violence-specific.
- b. Training:*
15. T- and U-Visa information should be incorporated in trainings for law enforcement/prosecutors/the judiciary
 16. A standing DV training task force should be created to ensure training consistency, track types of trainings being offered and to whom, and to prioritize new topics on which to develop training.
 17. A standard, simple lethality assessment should be adopted that all police are encouraged to use with victims, as well as providing victims with resources
- 4. Development of a framework to collect and integrate data and measure program outcomes:*
18. Create a standing group that collects and analyzes domestic violence-related data from national and state organizations annually, reviewing it for trends and recommendations for further data collection needs or actions.
 19. Designate a location on the web where links to all available data sources for DV in Louisiana are listed.
 20. Create a work group to annually produce a report on Primary Prevention, Secondary Prevention, and Tertiary Prevention work occurring in the state.
 21. Assess which domestic violence service providers utilize which data software, and explore the feasibility and cost implications of adopting a uniform software, such as Osnium.

Cordelia Heaney will compile a rough draft of the report with assistance from Rutha Chatwood (LCLE), and will send it to the whole study group for review prior to the group's last scheduled meeting on Nov. 21, 1-3 pm at DCFS.

IV. Meeting Adjourned