

MEETING MINUTES  
SR 95/HR76 Domestic Violence Study Group  
Wednesday, September 4, 1:30pm – 3:30pm

Meeting location: Iberville Building, Room 1-125, Baton Rouge, LA

**I. Welcome from Secretary Sonnier**

**II. 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
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
Vonnie Hawkins	- LaFASA
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
Jimmy Pohlmann	- La. Sheriffs Assn.
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

Patricia Kock	- La. District Judges Assn.
Paul Young	- La. Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges
Amy Zapata	- La. Department of Health and Hospitals

**III. Presentation**

**a. Review SR 95/HR 76**

- Domestic Violence Study Group: DCFS collaborates with stakeholders to study and develop a comprehensive statewide plan for the delivery of domestic violence services; we are required to report its recommendations to the Louisiana Legislature by January 15, 2014
  - Goal: become more in line with federal laws that expect a statewide coordinated community response to domestic violence
  - Goal: maximize resources to provide services to victims in a manner that prioritizes safety and results in long-term, sustainable outcomes
  - Goal: develop a formula for driving funding decisions; align other state-supported funding to the greatest extent possible, to support the comprehensive plan and funding formula

**b. State DV statistics**

- Louisiana has the 4th highest rate of female homicide in the nation. 97% of these women knew their assailant and 70% of those victims were wives, ex-wives or girlfriends of their assailant.

- Women are murdered at a rate about 40% higher than the national average in Louisiana. We consistently lead the nation in domestic homicides and have ranked in the top 5 every year since 1997.
  - There was at least one domestic homicide in every parish between 1997 and 2009.
  - Louisiana has a higher than average rate of multiple death domestic violence incidents. The average is about 30%, ours is 39% and often includes extended family and 10% of the time bystanders.
  - These statistics point to the immediacy of this issue, and why it is key that we focus as a group on creating concrete next steps to help the state make significant strides
- c. **Overview of Current Louisiana Domestic Violence (DV) Services**
- i. **Funding sources, assessment for Programs: DCFS, LCLE & DHH**
- ***Department of Children & Family Services***
    - Funds 18 programs
    - Partners with Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence (LCADV)
    - Manages about \$6.1 million overall
      1. Federal Funds for DV:
        - a. FVPSA: \$1,371,388
        - b. TANF: \$2,350,000
      2. State general funds: \$2,400,000
      3. Marriage licenses & civil fees: approx. \$425k/yr. from marriage license fees; approx. \$92k/yr. civil fees
    - Assessment
      1. Committee on Quality Assurance (COQA): Made up of 5 Peers, a DCFS staff member and an LCAADV staff member.
      2. Score calculated through 4 different types of submissions: a provider self-study, provider documents submitted to COQA, a site-visit, and contract performance & reporting.
        - Programs do self-study; DCFS conducts site visit
        - Site visits: consist of DCFS staffer, LCAADV staffer, and 1 peer
        - Conducted annually, bi-annually, or every 3 years, depending on previous COQA score of program
  - ***Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement***
    - Victims Services Advisory Board
    - Partner with Louisiana Foundation Against Sexual Assault (LaFASA) & LCAADV
    - Fund 19 outreach and service providers; also fund legal assistance, sexual assault service providers
      1. Federal funds: manages \$1,493,932 total
        - a. VOCA CVA: \$1,195,394
        - b. VAWA STOP: \$298,538
    - Assessment
      1. Each program has its own benchmarks when applying for the funding in the Goals, Objectives, and Activities in their application; are assessed based on quality of service, encouraged to collaborate with criminal justice agencies
  - ***Bureau of Family Health, DHH***
    - Funds 14 sexual assault centers, 5 of which are dual SA/DV
    - Partner with LaFASA
    - Manages \$682,519 overall
      1. Federal Funds:

- a. Preventive Health Block (PHB): \$109,436; has been the same amount for at least the past 6 years
    - b. Rape Prevention and Education (RPE): \$493,083; changes annually
  - 2. State supplemental funds: \$80,000; cover state expenses
  - Assessment
    - 1. PHB funds are evenly distributed among the 14 SACs
    - 2. RPE funds LaFASA calculates with “SAC Score”
- ii. **Current Challenges**
  - Amount of Funding Allocated to Service Providers is Inconsistent:
    - not previously established based on size of population served, parish size, quality of services or a unilateral scoring system
  - Different assessment standards coming from each funder
  - Sometimes funding/not funding different shelter programs
  - Are all parishes getting equal coverage?
  - Emphasis on providing shelter over services
- d. **Law Enforcement, Prosecution, & the Judiciary**
  - i. **How these entities interact with DV victims**
    - Law Enforcement
      - Arrest for charges
      - Connect to services
    - Prosecution
      - Can adjust charges
      - Some parishes have prosecutors that are dedicated DV prosecutors
    - Judiciary
      - Criminal Cases
      - Family Court: handle community property, divorce, custody. Protective Orders (Civil: family court; Criminal: criminal court)
  - ii. **Current Challenges**
    - Lack of training: are first responders, uniformed officers getting enough training? Right now there are only 4 hours of DV training at the police academy, and zero for sexual assault.
    - Inconsistent coordinated community response culture in Louisiana: some areas have it and others don't, and we don't have a state-wide plan.
    - Need victim advocates in court; need coordination between state and city courts on cases.
    - Protective Orders aren't leveraged to their best use. Ex: ours mentions the gun prohibition but we don't actively remove them like some states do; protective orders not available to victims of stranger/acquaintance stalking. Need to make sure everyone serving victims has strong understanding of how protective orders work.
    - Lack of tools for effective prosecution/offender management: other states have implemented some best practices like specialized dockets, risk assessments to assess for lethality.
    - Current Statute: Louisiana's current statutes regarding domestic violence state specifically that shelters be the method used to provide services for DV survivors. Louisiana Revised Statutes 46:2124 makes it necessary for the state to specifically fund shelters, rather than other housing options such as safe houses, rapid rehousing, or long-term or permanent housing. Likewise, it makes shelters the hubs for other forms of services such as counseling. The language restrictions of the statute restrain creativity and flexibility within the Louisiana DV system, and make it more complicated for the state to

explore new service models that provide services more equitably based on population and needs of specific regions of the state.

IV. **HCR 76 & SCR 95, which established this DV Study Group**

- The department (DCFS) along with the stakeholders shall develop a plan that includes 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.
  - (2) Establishment of a method to transition domestic violence service providers towards evidence-based national best practices focusing on outreach and prevention.
  - (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.
  - (4) Development of a framework to collect and integrate data and measure program outcomes.

V. **Road Map for Study Group/Study Group Work Flow**

- a. Established 2 Work Groups:
  1. needs assessment and data collection; conference call set for 9/17/13, 9-10 am, Beth Meeks will chair
  2. law enforcement/judicial training and law implementation; conference call set for 9/20/13, 3-4 pm; Tracy Dahmer will chair
- b. Whole Study Group will work on 2 subject areas
  1. best practices
  2. comprehensive service delivery approach
- c. General Meetings
  - 2 consecutive all-day meetings scheduled in October:
    - Oct. 24, 10 am – 4 pm: needs assessment/data presentation & discussion; law enforcement/judicial training and law implementation presentation & discussion
    - Oct. 25, 10 am – 4 pm: best practices group discussion/brainstorm recommendations; service delivery plan group discussion/brainstorm recommendations
- d. Cordelia Heaney will compile information from these meetings into written document draft which will be circulated to study group members for critique
- e. November 21, 1:30-3:30 pm: a group meeting will be held to review and finalize the draft. Additional meeting(s) can be scheduled if need be, prior to the January 15, 2014 submission deadline.

VI. **Group Discussion:** topics the group is interested in/wants to learn more about

a. **Promising Best Practices**

- i. Firearms and protective orders
  1. Previous judges opinions- Tracy Dahmer has this information
  2. Shreveport's methods for apprehending firearms from offenders
  3. How to create straightforward policies around DV, convictions, protective orders, and firearms
  4. coordinating federal and state laws/policies on DV and firearms
- ii. Coordinated Community Response
  1. co-morbidity with child welfare
  2. working with private charities
  3. This will tie-in to many best practices and the overall theme of the study group- how to coordinate our efforts
- iii. Training of Officers
  1. investigating DV homicides

- 2. lethality assessment training
    - 3. training for 911 operators
    - 4. how to create ongoing DV training
  - iv. How to better enforce Protective Orders
  - v. Services
    - 1. Need for a comprehensive information resource for providing to victims
  - vi. Training of Judges
    - 1. how to make sure they are up-to-date on DV-related laws
  - vii. Non-Offending Parents
    - 1. interaction with child welfare courts
    - 2. mom being victimized twice by the system is a problem
  - viii. Creating a plan that addresses disasters and typically stressful times of year (e.g. holidays, tax time)
  - ix. Serving marginalized identity groups: male, LGBTQ, elderly, disabled, and Native American victims.
  - x. Accountability for offenders/gender double standards
    - 1. dominant aggressor
    - 2. dual arrests
  - xi. Promising Prevention Models
  - b. Comprehensive Service Delivery Approach**
    - i. Service Delivery – basing services on demand
    - ii. Covering all parishes
      - 1. how to assure services are at accessible distances
      - 2. serving rural communities
    - iii. Non-shelter models
      - 1. more emphasis on counseling/access to services
    - iv. Social Ecology Model
      - 1. assess risk & protective factors
      - 2. community support
    - v. What's NOT working
      - 1. services assessment needed
    - vi. Multi-Sector Funding Collaborations: California
    - vii. Competitive Systems: Iowa
    - viii. Family Justice Center model
  - c. What information do we have/need?**
    - i. The group will select items they would like to research/can provide additional information on for the study group once they review the list from the minutes
- VII. Adjourn**
- a. Community members can leave written comments in the drop box and-or email comments to Cordelia Heaney at [Cordelia.Heaney@LA.GOV](mailto:Cordelia.Heaney@LA.GOV)

Meeting adjourned at 3:40 pm