

★ Acknowledgements

Texas Council on Family Violence extends our thanks to the family violence programs across the state that assisted in convening women, men and youth for the focus groups which provided the basis for many of the recommendations presented here. Additionally, we appreciate the Executive Directors and their program staff who participated in lengthy telephone interviews regarding the services they currently provide.

Additionally, we will be forever indebted to the participants of our focus groups. Their candid responses and willingness to share the intimate details of their lives are symbolic of their courage. Thank you.

Special thanks are extended to the staff at the Texas Department of Human Services' Family Violence Program whose ongoing support for this project made it a reality. We also extend our appreciation to the Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division, for its support during the first two years of the statewide planning process. We appreciate the work of the Research Institute on Violence and Social Injustice in collecting the data used to develop this report.

Finally, for invaluable inspiration, special thanks to Kathleen Krenek and Susan Schuster for their written materials on the series, "Building Comprehensive Solutions to Domestic Violence" Margaret Hobart, author of "Honoring Their Lives, Learning from Their Deaths"; a review of Washington State's Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team, 2000; and the National Advisory Council on Violence Against Women and the Department of Justice's Violence Against Women Office, for creation of the "Toolkit to End Violence Against Women," 2001.

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2/2/2000:

Sherry Knight, 41, of Fort Worth, was assaulted by her boyfriend and run over by him in his truck.*

★ Executive Summary

Overview of Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence in Texas

The prevalence of domestic violence¹ in our state and the nation as a whole has reached epidemic proportions. One of every four American women reports that she has experienced physical or sexual assault by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their life.² The Texas Department of Human Services (TDHS) estimates that 874,736 women³ were battered in 2001 and reports that 44,856 victims were provided domestic violence services (12,589 shelter and 32,267 nonresidential).⁴ Despite the large number of victims served, these numbers reveal that domestic violence programs funded by TDHS reached only 5.12% of the estimated number of battered women in 2001.

In 2000, Texas law enforcement agencies received 175,282 reports of domestic violence, an increase of 42% from 1991. In that same year, the Texas Department of Public Safety reports that an average of two women were killed by their intimate partners each week.⁵ While these numbers are staggering enough, studies show that only half of all domestic violence incidents are actually reported to the police.⁶

These statistics come to life in the stories gathered through focus groups conducted across the state as part of this statewide planning process. The varied stories of victimization paint a disturbing picture of the scope and severity of domestic violence that transpires today. The stories frequently told of threats of suicide and homicide. Severe beatings, emotional torment, sexual abuse and other forms of violence, often lasting many years and resulting in serious injuries were often part of the stories:

*He would have me screaming. He broke my nose twice . . .
He would choke me, he would put his knee over my throat*

¹ Although the generic term “family violence” is often used, in this document, the terms “domestic violence” and “intimate partner violence” are used to more accurately describe the problem being addressed and individuals for whom services are provided.

² “Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey” National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, November 1998.

³ The vast majority of domestic violence victims are women. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, 85% of victimizations of intimate partners are against women. Thus, victims of domestic violence are often referred to in this document as women although we acknowledge that men are victimized as well. Bureau of Justice Statistics, “Intimate Partner Violence,” May 2000.

⁴ Texas Department of Human Services, 2001

⁵ “Crime in Texas: 2000;” Texas Department of Public Safety.

⁶ “Intimate Partner Violence;” Bureau of Justice Statistics, May 2000.

* Stories of victims of domestic violence found throughout this report are derived from the Texas Council on Family Violence’s Texas Silent Witness Initiative.

*until I couldn't breathe no more and then when he knew I was about done, sometimes I would pass out.*⁷

2/23/2000:

Shameeka Chanteau Austin, 18, of Kilgore, was strangled by her boyfriend less than two weeks after he was arrested on domestic violence charges. Her two year-old son witnessed the murder

All too often, children are pawns in offenders' manipulation of their victims, often children are either directly assaulted or otherwise psychologically abused by the perpetrator.

My kids were horrified and I needed the police, but he came and beat me unmercifully . . . He beat me to the point where my lips were turned inside out and my eyes and head were [swollen], and I went to the emergency room. He told me that if I went to the police that he was going to kill the kids and me and he hit my son.

While domestic violence continues to be an enormous problem recent statistics document that prevention and intervention efforts are making a difference in victims' lives. The infusion of resources into victim services and widespread prevention initiatives have measurably reduced the incidence of domestic violence. Throughout the United States, the estimated rate of domestic violence decreased by 21% between 1993 (the year prior to enactment of the Violence Against Women Act) and 1998.⁸ In Texas, from 1993 to 1999, the incidence of women murdered by intimate male partners declined by 38%.⁹ The continued provision of critical victim services and outreach to underserved communities are necessary to continue this trend toward the elimination of domestic violence.

Family Violence Resources in Texas

Texas Department of Human Services Family Violence Program. The TDHS Family Violence Program's goal is to promote self-sufficiency, safety and long-term independence from family violence for adult victims of domestic violence and their children by providing emergency shelter and support services, educating the public, and by providing training and prevention support to domestic violence service providers. This goal serves to fulfill the TDHS mission of providing human services that promote the greatest independence for all clients.

In 1980, the first year of appropriations for family violence services, only \$188,699 was allocated to support six domestic violence programs. In 1981, the Texas Legislature created the TDHS Family Violence Program. As of January 1, 2002, programs under the Family Violence Program have grown to include 70 shelter centers, four nonresidential centers, and 27 special projects. The 77th Regular Session of the Texas Legislature made an annual appropriation in FY 2002 and FY 2003 of \$20,271,411. The sources of these

⁷ Quotes throughout this document reflect statements made by participants in the focus groups conducted in 2001, unless otherwise noted.

⁸ "Intimate Partner Violence;" Bureau of Justice Statistics, May 2000.

⁹ "Crime in Texas Report," Texas Department of Public Safety, 1993 and 1999.

2/23/2000:

Delonia Deneice White, 30, of Houston, was shot by her estranged husband. Their four children witnessed the murder.

appropriations to the TDHS Family Violence Program are federal Family Violence Prevention and Services Act funds (22%) and crime victim's compensation funds (78%). Less than one-tenth of one percent of Family Violence Program appropriations are derived from the general revenue fund.¹⁰

TDHS contracts with private, nonprofit family violence programs (residential and nonresidential) that "provide, as their primary purpose, services to adult victims of family violence and their children."¹¹ Family Violence Program funding is exclusively for the support of organizations providing comprehensive family violence services that are not part of the healthcare system, criminal and legal systems, mental health and substance abuse treatment systems, military system or education system. It should be noted that a small number of family violence programs operate in Texas that do not contract with TDHS.¹²

TDHS also contracts with other nonprofit agencies that provide at least one specialized family violence service, giving priority to projects serving marginalized populations or addressing unmet needs in their communities. All family violence contractors must demonstrate that they address a need in their community consistent with this statewide plan for family violence service delivery.

Additionally, TDHS contracts with the Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV), the statewide domestic violence coalition, to provide technical assistance and training to domestic violence service providers and other allied professionals. TDHS joined the Governor's Office in contracting with TCFV to accomplish the statewide planning process summarized in this report.

Statewide Planning Process

Overview of Three Years

Challenges for Texas. This statewide plan for domestic violence services in Texas is unprecedented because of the plan's comprehensive nature as well as the vastness of the state, the varying population densities, and the diversity of its inhabitants. Creating a blueprint for effective domestic violence interventions for the second largest state, both in population

¹⁰ Ch. 51, Human Resources Code.

¹¹ The Office of Attorney General is granting \$3.8 million in crime victims compensation funds to family violence programs for FY 2002 and FY 2003, to be allocated to programs through TDHS. This temporary assistance ends in FY 2003 unless in the 78th Regular Session, the Texas Legislature appropriates additional discretionary funding for family violence.

¹² All maps and charts in this document that indicate domestic violence services available include both TDHS and non TDHS-funded services

¹³ U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

2/28/2000:

Janice Collins Smith, 36, of Houston, was shot by her estranged husband. Her twelve year-old son was in the car with her.

(20,851,820) and land mass (261,797 square miles) presents unique challenges.¹³ Although Texas is home to three of the largest cities in the United States (Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio), it is also a land of vast, sparsely populated regions, where the nearest family violence center may be hundreds of miles away from the people it serves.

In addition to geographic challenges, the rich diversity of our state's inhabitants requires a wide range of domestic violence services in order to ensure availability and accessibility for all Texans. Currently, the population of Texas is 52% white, 32% Latina/Latino, and 11.5% African-American.¹⁴ By 2026, the percentage of persons who are white is expected to drop to 47%, Latinas/Latinos will grow to 38% and ethnic minorities will represent 62% of the population of metropolitan areas. Strikingly, almost 17% of Texans live below the poverty level, including 24% of Texas children. The same issues of geographic and ethnic diversity that presented challenges in the statewide planning process also present challenges to effective delivery of domestic violence services.

Statutory Mandate. In 2001 the Texas Legislature directed TDHS to “develop and maintain a plan for delivering family violence services in this state.” The statute also provides that, in developing the plan, “the department shall consider the geographic distribution of services and the need for services, including the need for increasing services for underserved populations.”¹⁵

Planned Growth. With limited funds available, TDHS must develop a responsible plan for growth of future domestic violence services. When the Texas Legislature first allocated funds in 1980, virtually no services existed. Consequently, funding was allocated to those nonprofit organizations that met the TDHS contract requirements. With 70 shelter centers, four non-residential centers and 29 other specialized domestic violence projects now receiving funding, essential services have become available in many areas of the state. To ensure good stewardship of state funds, the current level of service must be sustained while establishing additional programs that reach new areas, underserved populations, or provide critical unmet needs. To accomplish this dual directive, additional funding will be required.

To provide for planned growth, TDHS and TCFV should collaborate in making a biennial determination regarding the maximum number of new centers

¹⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

¹⁵ Human Resource Code, Section 51.0021

¹⁶ The term “marginalized population” refers to individuals or communities that are subject to various barriers that deny or limit access to quality domestic violence advocacy and services. The barriers often arise out of complex historical intersections of various group, political structures, and sources of power. (National Resource Center on Domestic Violence) Marginalized populations include individuals with disabilities, elderly people, African-Americans, Latinos, Asians, other people of color, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, children and youth, and immigrants.

3/3/2000

Precious Burleson, 24, of Fort Worth, was stabbed by her estranged boyfriend.

that may be funded, while ensuring quality service provision by all TDHS-supported programs. The decision-making process regarding use of additional funds should focus on areas where core emergency services are not available, critical needs are unmet and marginalized populations¹⁶ are underserved by the type of services currently available.

Methodology. Developing a plan for the delivery of domestic violence services requires knowledge about what victims need to obtain safety, justice and opportunity. As a foundation for creating this comprehensive, statewide plan, the Governor's Office and TDHS, in collaboration with TCFV, conducted in-depth research targeting formal and informal systems that provide assistance to victims of domestic violence. Throughout this project, perspectives representing the diverse composition of the state were sought and utilized in developing this plan: victims of domestic violence; persons from marginalized populations; community members; domestic violence program staff; academics; and members of professions who often work with victims, including law enforcement, courts, healthcare, education, and welfare.

In 1998, the first year of this three-year process, quantitative data was collected to create the Texas Domestic Violence Databook (Databook) describing each county's demographics, available domestic violence services, crime statistics and other related information (Appendix A). These figures were coupled with qualitative data collected from providers of domestic violence services outlining the most critical unmet needs for victims. The resulting compilation revealed the need for a more comprehensive investigation into the geographical complexity of service provision.

Consequently, in 1999, audits of formal community-based systems were conducted in four geographically diverse areas, which included rural, urban and mid-size cities (Appendix B). In 2000, the third and final year, the voices of marginalized and underserved populations who had not been represented in the first two years of the process were added. During this last year, researchers conducted 34 focus groups to provide a more complete picture of both the critical unmet needs of victims and the barriers to meeting those needs for marginalized and underserved populations (Appendices C and D). They conducted telephone interviews with directors of domestic violence programs regarding services provided and gaps in service delivery (Appendices E and F). Additionally, researchers collected quantitative data to update and expand upon information presented in the Databook (Appendices G through P).

Guiding Principles

Victims of domestic violence are the experts. Because only victims of domestic violence know what they need to be safe, their voices have been the cornerstone of this statewide planning process. Efforts to end domestic violence at all levels must be guided by victims, from educational efforts that change attitudes and policy, to implementation of culturally specific

3/7/2000:

Ginger Crow, 25, of Fort Worth, was shot by her boyfriend as she pleaded for her life. He had two previous arrests for assaulting her.

services. Victims can tell us how to help them break through the deep shame, embarrassment and hopelessness that many feel regarding the abuse. They can effectively guide efforts to help protect themselves from retribution by batterers, to overcome the judgment of peers, and to prevail over the lack of resources they face upon leaving the relationship. They can also best articulate the support necessary to safely stay in the relationship.

Victims of domestic violence must have safety, justice and opportunity.

Safety and justice have been goals for domestic violence services over the last quarter of a century. This statewide plan further documents the vital importance of incorporating opportunity, or access to economic resources, as a primary goal. Victims cannot escape the abuse in their lives if they do not have economic security or at least the means to create it. Broadening the scope of domestic violence services to ensure opportunity for all victims will require changing the way that domestic violence services are provided and expanding the types of services that might be included in domestic violence intervention efforts.

Services must meet the specific needs of the community. Domestic violence service providers have worked to tailor their programs to fit the predominant needs for their geographic areas of service. While it is necessary to shape services to the particular needs of geographic communities, other forms of community must also be considered. As this statewide planning process has demonstrated, members of marginalized populations may be reached by such program design but these communities are too often missed. While the nature of violence experienced by members of marginalized populations may be similar to that experienced by other individuals within a given service area, service providers must understand ways that race, class, gender, culture, sexual orientation, religion and other factors impact these victims' lives and the complexity and diversity of strategic responses required to address their needs.

Summary of Key Themes

In each phase of the research, a number of key themes were identified consistently by victims of domestic violence, service providers and community members as crucial to ending domestic violence. These key themes were:

1. Public Awareness
2. Education and Training
3. Domestic Violence Services
4. Marginalized Communities
5. Economic Security and Opportunity
6. System Coordination and Community Collaboration
7. Accountability for Batterers

These key themes do not stand in isolation and the recommendations should be viewed as interdependent. For example, success in raising public awareness of domestic violence services available in a particular community

3/7/2000:

April Henderson, 18, of Houston, was running away from her husband when he cornered her in the doorway of a convenience store and shot her.

does not enhance safety for victims unless victims also have access to transportation to those services and the services provided to victims are linguistically and culturally appropriate.

Underlying each of these themes is the need for increased statewide funding for domestic violence services. The ultimate success of this plan in reducing domestic violence and protecting victims requires additional funding from current sources as well as the identification of new sources of funding. Many domestic violence programs are making dramatic progress in addressing each of the themes discussed below. Yet, scarce resources make it impossible to address them comprehensively, which is necessary for victims to obtain safety, justice and opportunity.

Theme One: Public Awareness

In each phase of research for the statewide planning process, there has been a consistent and overwhelming call for increased public awareness regarding the dynamics of domestic violence and the availability of services for victims and their children. In fact, the theme most often mentioned in the 1999 Community Audit was the need for more public awareness about domestic violence.

General and specialized recommendations are made in the state plan, beginning on page __, regarding the following areas of public awareness:

- Defining domestic violence
- Increasing awareness of available domestic violence services
- Educating friends and family
- Changing societal attitudes

Theme Two: Education and Training

As heightened public awareness increases the demand for domestic violence services, agency staff and community members must know how to identify victims, assess their needs and appropriately intervene. As more victims reach out for assistance, these helpers have the potential to have a tremendous impact with both the victim and the community in which they live. Success in their endeavors depends upon their sensitivity to the challenges, both societal and interpersonal, facing victims as they seek to escape violence. As found in this statewide planning process, and by other researchers, even when services are available, the sensitivity of those delivering services has a major impact on whether the needs of victims are met.¹⁷

General and specialized recommendations are made in the state plan, beginning on page __, regarding education and training in the following areas:

- Domestic violence service providers

¹⁷ Lein, L; "TANF Clients' Experiences with Domestic Violence;" 2001.

- Criminal legal system
- Civil legal system
- Social service providers
- Children, teens and young adults
- Healthcare providers

3/10/2000:
Victoria Anna Alexander, 44, of
Llano County, was shot by her
husband. Her 16 year-old daughter
called 911 to report the murder.

Theme Three: Domestic Violence Services

A large portion of the plan is devoted to the discussion of domestic violence services. Research data from all three years of the state planning process were used to create a comprehensive picture of the true need for domestic violence services in Texas, paying attention to the essential balance between core emergency services, critical transitional supports, and services to underserved populations.

The research revealed that decisions for program development could not be made solely on the factors of geography and proximity to services. The following funding guidelines were developed as a framework for considering the complex factors involved in making necessary services and supports available to victims of domestic violence.¹⁸

Considerations for Future Development and Funding of Domestic Violence Services. The following questions were set forth as guidelines:

- *Is a region in Texas predominantly unserved?*
- *Are core emergency services adequately available in the county?*
- *Are services addressing the critical unmet needs of victims of domestic violence available in the county?*
- *Are there regions with a high concentration of a marginalized population where adequate services for that population are not available?*
- *How does the rate of reported domestic violence incidents compare with the rate of individuals accessing domestic violence services in the county?*
- *How dense is the county's population?*
- *Is the program victim-centered and empowerment-based?*

The complexity of services needed by victims of domestic violence was a theme permeating the statewide planning process. Participants discussed the increasing complexity of fulfilling physical, emotional, financial and legal needs in domestic violence cases, and noted the multi-layered nature

¹⁸ This plan adopts the premise that existing funding for domestic violence services should be continued where they are being effectively delivered to meet the needs of the service area.

3/24/2000:

Lisa Meyer Cospers, 38, of Gatesville, and a co-worker were shot by her estranged husband.

of victims' problems. To thoroughly review the array of services available to victims and identify gaps in service, this section addressing domestic violence services is divided into two parts, first discussing core emergency services and then, critical unmet needs and transitional supports. Effectively responding to this continuum of needs is critical to ensuring safety, justice and opportunity for all victims.

Core Emergency Services. As long as domestic violence occurs, victims will need emergency services. These core services are designed to provide victims in crisis with assistance through legal advocacy and counseling, as well as the lifesaving necessities of shelter, food and medical care.

County-by-county profiles of available services detail the accessibility of core emergency services to victims across Texas (Appendices F through H). These profiles show that adequate access to core emergency services is available in 169 out of 254 Texas counties, leaving 85 counties without access to these services.¹⁹ Many of the counties without access to core emergency services are isolated and rural counties. Ten are entirely unserved by any domestic violence program, although it is possible that some victims from these counties may access services at family violence centers in their region.²⁰

General and specialized recommendations are made in the state plan, beginning on page __, regarding increasing victim access to core emergency services.

Critical Unmet Needs and Transitional Supports. Effective domestic violence intervention requires a wide range of services. Each phase of the three years of state planning research demonstrated the vast need for transitional supports that victims need to build lives free of domestic violence. (See Appendices A through E and Appendices J and K.) While the delivery of domestic violence services historically has centered on addressing the violence in victim's lives, victims do not necessarily experience the violence as their primary obstacle to building lives free from violence. Longer-term solutions of economic supports and affordable housing, for example, are also necessary. While basic safety for victims must always be a priority, the array of victim's needs must also be addressed.

General and specialized recommendations are made in the state plan, beginning on page __, regarding the following areas of critical unmet needs and transitional supports:

¹⁹ Because many domestic violence programs are charged with serving several counties and resources limit their ability to conduct outreach, this evaluation tool cannot be used as the sole measure for the effectiveness of individual programs.

²⁰ Since there are no domestic violence programs formally serving these ten counties, researchers could not speak with any program representatives in these counties and further information about them is unavailable.

- Affordable, quality childcare
- Affordable housing
- Transportation
- Legal services
- Employment and job training opportunities
- Critical unmet needs based on geography and population density

3/25/2000:
Christine Mae Blumbaugh, 16, of
Grand Prairie, was shot twice with
a shotgun by her ex-boyfriend.

Theme Four: Marginalized Communities

For more than twenty years, the creation of domestic violence services and domestic violence advocacy based on the needs voiced by victims themselves. Unfortunately, a variety of social barriers have historically silenced certain groups of victims and kept them from accessing help from these service providers. These victims need very different services than those that are established, having not been part of the process of shaping domestic violence service delivery and are often comprised of members of marginalized populations.

Interviews with domestic violence service providers revealed their desire to improve outreach to and accessibility for underserved communities, but they have not always had the knowledge of how to accomplish this effectively. As the voices of underserved victims of domestic violence have been included, gaps have been identified that demonstrate the need for more complex and varied services to enable victims from marginalized communities to break free from violence.

General and specialized recommendations are made in the state plan, beginning on page __, regarding the following marginalized populations:

- People with disabilities
- People who are elderly
- People with mental illness
- People with substance abuse problems
- People who are immigrants
- People of color
- People who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender

Theme Five: Economic Security and Opportunity

Victims can only be free from violence if they have economic security (or at least the means to create it) and an opportunity for a better life. Unfortunately, victims of domestic violence who are experiencing poverty are extremely challenged in their efforts to accomplish this necessary goal.

The connections between domestic violence and poverty are both significant and complex. Studies investigating this connection have found that over half of the women receiving welfare said they had experienced physical abuse by an intimate male partner at some point during their adult lives.²¹

²¹ Lyon, E.; Welfare, Poverty, and Abused Women: New Research and Its Implications, 2000.

3/29/2000:

Jennifer Ward, 27, of Travis County, was strangled by her estranged husband after many years of abuse.

Victims who experience both recurring violence and persistent poverty are likely to require more services than those who have financial resources. While the pervasive effects of poverty often seem to be a more pressing problem for victims than the physical violence they intermittently experience, poverty should never preclude a victim from accessing safety and justice.

General and specialized recommendations are made in the state plan, beginning on page __, regarding economic security and opportunity for victims of domestic violence.

Theme Six: System Coordination and Community Collaboration

To create more opportunities and increased safety for victims, domestic violence service providers must collaborate and coordinate with an ever-increasing number of agencies and communities. Encouragement, training and ongoing support must be provided to other systems in their efforts to develop solutions to domestic violence as it is encountered in their work.

While increased collaboration is critical to providing all victims of domestic violence the support they need, the burden of creating effective collaboration cannot rest solely with domestic violence service providers.

General and specialized recommendations are made in the state plan, beginning on page __, regarding collaboration with the following entities:

- Collaboration with victims
- Coordination with criminal legal system
- Coordination among state government agencies
- Coordination with the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services
- Collaboration with sexual assault programs
- Collaboration with marginalized communities
- Collaboration with faith-based organizations
- Collaboration with social and economic justice organizations
- Collaboration with the private sector

Theme Seven: Accountability for Batterers

A recurring theme throughout the statewide planning process was appropriate consequences for batterers and their violent behavior. Batterers must be held accountable for perpetrating the abuse and responsible for stopping their abusive behavior. In the community audit, service providers typically spoke about more accountability for batterers, especially from the criminal legal system. In the third year of this process, domestic violence service providers were asked, “What will it take to end domestic violence in your communities?” Among the most frequent responses was holding batterers accountable.

General and specialized recommendations are made in the state plan, beginning on page __, regarding increasing batterer accountability.