

Court Process Workgroup Joint Meeting

Where are We Now?



FAIRFAX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
FAMILY SERVICES

Fairfax County Department of Family Services
DSVS
Domestic & Sexual
Violence Services 

Gap Identification Process

PO Systems Walkthrough conducted for JDR and GDC

Group identified gaps and barriers

Voted on top priorities through survey

Formed workgroups

Victim Access Workgroup: Original Gaps

Language Access

- Barriers accessing interpreters due to limited availability
- Need for translation assistance for affidavits, especially languages other than Spanish
- Requirement in GDC to use state interpreters

Filing for PPOs

- Bouncing back and forth between JDR and GDC- lack of clarity on relationship or unknown facts of the case

Victims don't know where to file

Missing information for respondent

- Delayed engagement of legal services (LSNV or otherwise)

Victim Access Workgroup: Original Gaps

Providing clear information to public about filing, relief, and appeals: JDRDC

- No centralized place where information can be accessed by public, website under development
- Amount of information when filing can be overwhelming between relief options and procedural information
- Victims who don't work with an advocate or are self-represented have a much harder time navigating the system
- During the pandemic, some victims were afraid to use affidavits, lack of in-person hearings a challenge for victims who could not write effectively or had literacy challenges

Victim Access Workgroup: Original Gaps

Providing clear information to public about filing, relief, and appeals: GDC

- Victims state they didn't know where to go for services to file
- Lack of information to the public about which agencies can help and roles
- Structural limitations of clerk's office (no dedicated clerk for POs and unable to provide same type of support as an Intake officer in DR)
- How to provide the information in a way that is easily accessible and translated?

Criminal and Civil Protective Order Process: Original Gaps

Parallel criminal process/criminal POs/Commonwealth Attorney involvement (GDC)

- In 2021, CWA was not involved in criminal cases aside from sexual battery
- CWA has reversed their policy and prosecutes cases for non-IPV

Criminal and Civil Protective Order Process: Original Gaps

Parallel criminal process/criminal POs/Commonwealth Attorney involvement (JDRDC)

- CWA's office was previously not involved in non-IPV cases
- Divergence in how magistrates issued EPOs (victim or LE petitions)
- Victims do not always follow through and obtain PPO after EPO
- Criminal and civil matters had been docketed for the same day; overwhelming for victims
- If existing civil PO exists, the PO entered for the criminal matter may conflict; also happens in criminal bond motions