



County of Fairfax, Virginia

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods, and diverse communities of Fairfax County.



COUNCIL TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Coordinated Community Response Committee & Workgroup Reports January 2025

Achievements & Ongoing Work

- January is Stalking Awareness Month and Human trafficking Awareness Month.
- The CEDV Equity Subcommittee has new leadership.
- 2025 Domestic and Sexual Violence Tier One Training dates announced.
- CEDV Victim Access Workgroup – the Protective Order Website is now live.
- CEDV Equity Workgroup - GIS Mapping Project to be finalized in coming months.
- See the trends across the CCR (page 4).
- Concerns consistently raised by allied professionals across the county consistently express concerns and are preparing for the change in administration.

COURT PROCESS WORKGROUP - VICTIM ACCESS SUBGROUP

Victim Access Subgroup

- The Protective Order Website is now live; you can access it [here](#). The workgroup is making small adjustments to make the website easier to navigate as well as develop materials to advertise the website in various spaces
- The workgroup is in the early stages of identifying next steps to improve victim access in the courts

EQUITY WORKGROUP

- Toni Zollicoffer stepped down as Co-Chair of the Equity Workgroup when she began her new position as Chief Equity Officer for Fairfax County. Eduardo Leiva, Management

Analyst for Fairfax County Department of Family Services, graciously stepped into the Co-Chair role.

- In October, CEDV Equity Workgroup Co-Chairs Eduardo Leiva and Corie O'Rourke presented at the Fairfax County Domestic and Sexual Violence Annual Meeting about the GIS Data Mapping Project. This project aims to develop an interactive map tool that lays out resources available to people living in Fairfax County, with information on types of services available and eligibility criteria for access to services. The Mapping Project will be finalized in the next couple of months and posted online for public use. We will share the link once it is live!
- The Equity Workgroup started the process of strategic planning by reading *Belonging Without Othering* by John A. Powell and Stephen Menendian and doing a book study together over the course of several months. To continue the strategic planning process, the workgroup will have an in person retreat in mid-February to discuss goals for 2025 and beyond.

STEP UP 4 KIDS COALITION



The Step Up 4 Kids Coalition continues to move forward with several aspects of work related to children and domestic violence.

- The Guardian ad litem Training Committee trained 52 GALs in November 2024. The training focused on children who resist or refuse visitation with a parent and are some of the toughest cases GALs have on their caseload.
 - Evaluations showed GALs had an increase in knowledge on the topic and felt better equipped to help families experiencing resistance and refusal.
- The Resilient Kids, Thriving Families grant continues to serve families impacted by domestic violence. The array of grant services now includes a parent workshop that can be presented in Spanish and English.

- Trainings for professionals can also now be presented in Spanish
- Community Information Sessions for Youth Wellbeing are still in development. As the Children's and Youth Care Navigation System is launched, the services will be shared with the community as a part of the presentation.

DV NETWORK

The DV Network continues to meet monthly. [You can sign up to receive agendas here.](#)

Coordinated Community Response (CCR) Prevention and Training Committee

Tier One

- Domestic Violence Tier One and Sexual Violence Tier One are 16-hour introductory trainings hosted by the Fairfax County Sexual Assault Response Team (SART), Fairfax County DV Network, and partners across the coordinated community response to domestic and sexual violence.
- Both trainings are held 3 times annually (6 total), including at least 1 virtual offering, 1 in-person weekend offering, and 1 offering during traditional business hours.
- These training opportunities continue to be in high demand and well attended each time they are provided, including significant waitlists.
- In 2024:
 - 16 partner agencies presented sessions including Fairfax County Department of Family Services, Fairfax County Police Department, Fairfax County Health Department, Fairfax County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court, Fairfax County Public Schools, Northern Virginia Community College, George Mason University, Safe Spot Child Advocacy Center, Legal Services of Northern Virginia, Northern Virginia Family Service, JCADA, Shelter House, Center for Clinical and Forensic Services, and Inova Ewing Forensic Assessment and Consultation Team (FACT) Department.
 - 285 participants were trained. This group included domestic and sexual violence services providers, law enforcement and court staff, volunteers, allied

professionals including housing and healthcare providers, and community members.

Challenges and Next Steps

- Training demand has continued its increase since 2023, both for regularly scheduled trainings (Tier One, Annual Human Trafficking Training) and requests for a broad diversity of topics.
- Service providers and stakeholders across the coordinated community response to sexual and domestic violence will be surveyed regarding training interests for 2025.
- Need for increased practical support from partner agencies and stakeholders – locations to host training, facilitation and hosting expert presenters, coordination of food/beverages, on-site support during trainings
- Increased representation of culturally specific organizations in facilitation and coordination of trainings to meet the needs of providers and those they serve through training opportunities.

Trends & Emerging Issues:

Nora Mahoney presented the common themes in the Trends survey. The Trends survey received fourteen responses during this last survey period. Themes such as housing and funding concerns persist. See bullets below for information from survey:

Have you observed any recent changes in the demographics of those seeking your services?

- More homelessness / difficulty finding housing
- More elderly victims
- Increase in immigrant clients, especially undocumented
 - Specific mention of Nepalese population
- Increase in requests for counseling for children
- Difficulty finding free/low-bono legal help
- (Most answers were “no”)

Main IPV Issues Currently:

- Lack of affordable housing
- Lack of affordable family law services

- Lack of affordable and accessible mental health/substance abuse services
- Victims being arrested
- Felony strangulation charges being pled down to misdemeanors
- Lack of knowledge by law enforcement about dynamics of DV
- Challenges for the aging population, immigrants
- Funding

Looking back on 2024, what themes, if any, seemed to dominate your work?

- Increased strangulation cases
- Higher / overwhelming volume of clients
- Lack of affordable housing, more financial abuse
- Fewer solutions for clients, more competition for services
- Increase in female perpetrators / referrals for BIP
- Mental Health / safety concerns
- Loss of VOCA funding, staff changes / high turnover
- Intensity of cases increased – burnout

What resources or supports are needed to advance work on the issues you have identified?

- Funding. More flexible financial resources such as:
 - Housing vouchers, transitional housing, grant programs, landlord partnerships
- Multi-lingual services (beyond English and Spanish)
- More services for LGBTQIA+ population
- Way to be aware of the resources that do exist, how to refer clients
- Long-term case management for clients
- Community centers (like libraries) with space to work on safety, housing, etc.
- Pro bono family law attorneys
- Better understanding of immigrant experiences, DV & Aging, other chronic issues

Raised in Discussion:

Allied professionals throughout the county have consistently expressed concerns and are preparing for the incoming administration. "Know Your Rights" presentations are being conducted for both community members and staff, with the Tahirih Justice Center offering these services. Service providers have reported an increase in clients who are new to the country, arriving with asylum cases and in need of immigration attorneys.

Language access issues have posed significant challenges, particularly due to the loss of the Ayuda interpreter bank, which has had a devastating impact on service provision. The Shelter

House hotline has experienced a notable increase in service requests from immigrant populations, with a marked rise in shelter requests and services from Middle Eastern immigrants.

Looking forward to 2025, the capacity to handle asylum cases is a major concern. Organizations are overwhelmed, only able to manage referrals due to the influx of asylum help requests. Many individuals are calling in fear and seeking assistance, which is difficult to provide given the current capacity constraints. Additionally, there has been an increase in U-Visa referrals, particularly in cases involving strangulation and other related charges. Offices, especially in Baltimore, have seen a significant rise in asylum inquiries. There is hope that the new administration will maintain the U-Visa program, which remains critical for many clients.

Supervised Visitation reported an increased request for services and a rise in estrangement issues and complicated family situations. Paid legal resources are so scarce and expensive that no one can afford it. Also seeing a current trend of people needing basic needs.

VOCA funding has had a serious impact on organizations with some losing all their VOCA funding; this changes the ability to help people, especially now at a time when clients are at high risk.

There has been a noticeable increase in violence related to pregnancy, leading to issues such as premature birth weights and a rise in clients missing prenatal visits. To address this, when clients come into the clinic and are flagged for intimate partner violence (IPV), a home visit nurse is assigned to ensure they receive the necessary support and connections to appropriate services.

Service providers also reported a trend of law enforcement not recognizing stalking as a form of domestic violence. This oversight means that stalking cases are not being adequately addressed, leaving victims without the necessary protection and support.