

# Department of Family Services, Domestic and Sexual Violence Services (DSVS)



## Cross-Systems Initiative 2023 Equity Impact Plan

**Leadership Sponsor:** Toni Zollicoffer, Division Director, Domestic and Sexual Violence Services

**Name:** Keesha Coke, Assistant Division Director, Domestic and Sexual Violence Services

**Brief Description of the Initiative:** The Fairfax County Department of Family Services Domestic and Sexual Violence Services (DSVS) works across systems for many of its services as issues of domestic violence, sexual violence, human trafficking and stalking require a coordinated community response to effectively respond, reduce and prevent incidents of interpersonal violence in Fairfax County. The key milestones to date are:

- 1) Fairfax County was an early adopter of the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) and was one the first jurisdictions in Virginia to implement this partnership between law enforcement and domestic violence services. The LAP prioritizes victims that are at highest risk and connects them in real time with victim services (FY22-365).
- 2) The Domestic Violence Action Center (DVAC)- a partnership among 15 government and community-based organizations to provide holistic and easily accessible services to victims of interpersonal crime (FY22 - 994).
- 3) The Council to End Domestic Violence (CEDV)- a Board approved governing body that unites senior-level public officials and community leaders to advise the Board of Supervisors on a range of domestic violence policy, legislative, and program issues; and to guide the development of a coordinated and collaborative community response to domestic violence. In FY 2023, the CEDV Accountability workgroup was formed to focus on examining how to promote accountability, including service provision to those who cause harm. Additionally, the CEDV Equity subcommittee was tasked with researching a new leadership structure, which includes equitable practices, and presenting recommendations to the full CEDV team.
- 4) Community education, technical assistance, and prevention to government agencies, community-based organizations and community members (FY22- 2,048 individuals) to advance the mission of reducing and preventing interpersonal violence.
- 5) Equity is one of the pillars of the DSVS strategic plan for the next 2-4 years.
- 7) DSVS is an active member on several boards, commissions, and workgroups that address interpersonal violence and intersectional issues (a link to the list of workgroups, committees, etc. in which DSVS is actively involved is provided below).

**Context:** There is value in domestic violence service providers engaging in a reevaluation of its philosophical approach and assessing whether its approach has applicability to a diverse population of victims/survivors and using new information (best practices) to make appropriate changes in practice to be more responsive to the diverse needs of victims from differing backgrounds, ages, and gender identities. Key areas to address are:

- 1) True victim choice and self-determination,
- 2) Access to meaningful services, the systems' ability to build in natural and community supports and resiliency into the Coordinated Community Response (CCR), and
- 3) Alternative, community-based responses (co-responder and restorative justice) to traditional resources and services for victims of domestic and sexual violence, stalking, and human trafficking.

In gathering data, there is not common language or understanding of the difference between race and ethnicity in defining demographics across databases. There are also limitations in demographic choices to capture gender identity and gender expression. As a result of these inconsistencies, it is

difficult to code data accurately to reflect the various populations we serve. In reviewing the highest usage of DSVS services, black and Latinx (of any race) persons are over-represented in the Anger & Domestic Abuse Prevention and Treatment (ADAPT) program when compared to the population in Fairfax County. Between FY21-22, twice as many Black and Latinx people were represented among ADAPT clients as compared to the respective proportions among county residents. Approximately 17% of ADAPT clients were Black/African American and 40% were Latinx compared to 10.8% of the Black/African American population in Fairfax County in 2020 and 16.6% of the Latinx population.

Since most ADAPT clients are court-ordered, it requires more research and comparing DSVS data with the other Domestic Abuse Intervention programs in the County. Since we know that incidents of domestic violence are not more prevalent in one race, ethnicity or socio-economic group, it is important to understand who is accessing emergency shelter services and why and what intersectional issues make it more or less likely for someone to seek emergency shelter.

Internally, DSVS must lead efforts to:

- 1) Crisp messaging about interpersonal violence and bring awareness to the societal norms that fuel it.
- 2) Use more user-friendly language and models that have relevance to a broader, more diverse audience.
- 3) Provide community education of how historical oppression is foundational and has provided the gateway to all forms of interpersonal and power-based violence and inequities.
- 4) Begin to provide services that are tailored to diverse communities.

Immigrant clients, regardless of status, are concerned about how accessing services may impact them. Our ability to respectfully bridge language barriers is important to our success in providing quality services to immigrants in our communities. Generally, language interpretation services have not integrated quality control protocols into their service array to ensure that interpretative services are delivered with trauma-informed lens and cultural humility to attend to the socio-cultural context of the client and the services requested.

Finally, interpersonal violence in all communities is historically underreported and more so in immigrant communities and communities of color. DSVS has begun considering the need for alternative, community-based responses (co-responder and restorative justice) to support victims of domestic and sexual violence, stalking, and human trafficking who want alternative methods of support and accountability. There is momentum across the country to explore coordinated community responses to crises that give victims of interpersonal violence true choice in how they want to restore safety and hold accountable those who do harm. When survivors have choices, it can have a positive impact on helping them heal and restore personal safety. Without alternatives to traditional crisis responses, many Fairfax County residents (particularly persons of color and immigrants) will continue to be a greater risk of further abuse, and possibly even death, due to interpersonal violence.

### **Long-term Outcome(s):**

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural and Recreational Opportunities                               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Health                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Opportunity  | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing and Neighborhood Livability |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficient and Effective Government                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Lifelong Education and Learning     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Empowerment and Support for Residents Facing Vulnerability | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobility and Transportation         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Safety and Security      |

**Key Stakeholders:** Key Fairfax County human services organizations, courts, and public safety organizations; Fairfax County Public Schools; nonprofits; civic organizations; Inova Fairfax; Virginia

Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance; Council to End Domestic Violence; Domestic Violence Network; and Commission for Women

## DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY SERVICES, DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE SERVICES CROSS-SYSTEMS INITIATIVE 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

Goals	One Fairfax Area of Focus	Actions	Performance Measures
<b>1. Infuse leading with race as the core approach for equity work within DSVS.</b>	6,10	1a. The DSVS equity team will adapt its equity and social justice priority plan to ensure it focuses on leading with race.	Through a self-report survey, 90% of DSVS staff will indicate understanding of leading with race in DSVS equity work.
		1b. Using content from Advancing Racial Equity: The Role of Government curriculum as well as data on the continued impact of systemic racism, the DSVS equity team will develop and implement a communications plan to educate staff on the reason DSVS is leading with race.	
		1c. The DSVS equity team will develop and administer a survey to assess staff understanding of leading with race in DSVS equity work.	
<b>2. Transform workforce in knowledge base and skill set regarding racial equity.</b>	6,10	2a. DFS will administer the Government Alliance on Race and Equity racial equity assessment with its workforce.	Creation of a plan to educate and strengthen staff DSVS staff on racial equity based on areas from the GARE survey where DSVS staff score 60% or less.
		2b. The DSVS equity team will develop a plan to strengthen staff knowledge and competency in areas of development identified from the GARE survey results.	
<b>3. Obtain feedback from marginalized populations regarding domestic and sexual violence, stalking, and human trafficking services to strengthen DSVS services provided to diverse communities.</b>	6,8,10	3a. In collaboration with George Mason University’s School of Social Work, DSVS will research resources that marginalized populations utilize to address domestic and sexual violence, stalking, and human trafficking.	Number of resources identified in the county that support marginalized populations with regards to domestic and sexual violence, stalking, and human trafficking.
		3b. In collaboration with the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services, DSVS will assess the domestic and sexual violence, stalking, and human trafficking-related needs in the southern region of Fairfax County and resources utilized to address them.	

Goals	One Fairfax Area of Focus	Actions	Performance Measures
<p><b>4. Continue to coordinate the County's efforts to address disparities in access to systems and services through the work of the CEDV.</b></p>	<p>6,8,10</p>	<p>4a. In collaboration with members of the Council to End Domestic Violence (CEDV) Equity Committee, DSVS will revise the CEDV bylaws to reflect greater community influence in determining the annual goals and objectives of the CEDV and a revised leadership structure that promotes more government and non-government partnership and collaboration.</p>	<p>CEDV Bylaws updated to reflect more community engagement and greater collaboration and partnership between government and non-government agencies.</p> <p>The Accountability workgroup will make recommendations to the Council to End Domestic Violence (CEDV) for implementation of specific actions that improves the systems' response to those that cause harm. If approved, the accountability workgroup will develop a SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) action plan based on those recommendations.</p>
		<p>4b. In collaboration with CEDV members, the Institute for Court Innovation and the Action Alliance, DSVS will facilitate the County's efforts to improve the systems' response to persons that cause harm to improve victim/survivor safety and be more responsive to the unique cultural, individual and geographical needs of families experiencing violence.</p>	