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# CROSS-SYSTEMS INITIATIVE ANNUAL REPORT

## CALENDAR YEAR 2024

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Cross-Systems Initiative Name: Department of Family Services, Domestic and Sexual Violence Services (DSVS)

Lead(s): Keesha Coke, Division Director, Domestic and Sexual Violence Services (DSVS); Andréa Nunes-Gardner, Crisis Response Services Program Manager, DSVS; Abby Picard, Prevention and Education Coordinator, DSVS; Tianna Hairs-Hughes, Victim Advocate, DSVS

Date: 11/27/24

### CROSS-SYSTEMS INITIATIVE PLAN REPORT

#### GOALS

*Review your Cross-Systems Initiative Plan for CY 2024 at [Equity Impact Plans | Topics \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#). Add each goal below and describe: 1) what was done to make progress toward the goal, 2) with whom (partners), and 3) how work toward this goal was measured/evaluated and the results. If you have data for the performance measures listed in your CY 2024 Cross-Systems Initiative Plan, report them. Add more goals as needed.*

**Goal 1:** Identify and implement a partnership framework which enables DSVS to strategically identify, develop, and sustain partnerships with service providers, marginalized and diverse populations, and stakeholders to ensure that services are responsive to community needs.

**Goal 1 Progress:** DSVS and Second Story facilitated community conversations within the Culmore community for feedback on culturally and locally relevant services needed for this typically underserved community and conducted programming focused on community needs. This partnership has also resulted in implementation of focus groups and a monthly women's group at a local library, and DSVS staff participation in other community-led projects in the region.

To expand DSVS services to military connected families, DSVS Advocacy Services continued to cultivate a relationship with Fort Belvoir's Family Advocacy Program (FAP). As a result of this partnership, Advocacy Services received 13 FAP referrals within a 6-month period in FY24 and has successfully addressed gaps in services for military/DSVS co-connected families.

The DSVS Partnership Workgroup identified a framework, the DSVS Partnership Framework, for identifying and collaborating with partners across the county. The Workgroup trained DSVS staff on the framework, including its application, how to identify types of partnership requests, and the process for receiving guidance from the Partnership Workgroup. The Partnership Workgroup will pilot the DSVS Partnership Frame with Second Story and the Military Family Advocacy Program at

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# CROSS-SYSTEMS INITIATIVE ANNUAL REPORT

## CALENDAR YEAR 2024

Fort Belvoir in CY2025 because of their focus on serving marginalized and diverse communities in the Culmore community and southern part of Fairfax County, respectively.

**Goal 2:** Strengthen the provision of domestic and sexual violence services to marginalized and diverse communities.

**Goal 2 Progress:** In partnership with DSVS, George Mason University (GMU) School of Social Work conducted a series of interviews with community leaders in South County regarding their knowledge of domestic and sexual violence and experiences with Domestic and Sexual Violence Services. DSVS and GMU developed a survey based on this feedback and translated into in Spanish, Farsi, Twi and Urdu. This survey will be administered with community members in zip codes 22306 and 22309 in early 2025 to assess knowledge of existing services and community needs regarding sexual and domestic violence.

DSVS developed a culturally and linguistically relevant curriculum for Latinx and Spanish-speaking youth, Proyecto de Prevención e Información Lidereando Adolescentes Saludables (PILAS), to complement a similar curriculum in English, Healthy Youth Prevention Education (HYPE). These curriculums are aimed at youth ages 11-19 and discuss healthy relationships, self-esteem, and teen dating violence. Additionally, PILAS focuses on addressing the unique challenges and cultural contexts faced by Latinx adolescents and empower them to recognize and prevent dating violence.

DSVS conducted focus groups in partnership with Neighborhood and Community Services, Second Story, and Northern Virginia Family Service on the development of this curriculum. These focus groups were held in English and Spanish including 2 with Latinx youth, 1 with parents, and 1 with youth-serving providers.

Implementation of the PILAS curriculum began in October 2024. As of November 2024, 4 individual sessions and 3 cohorts of all 8 sessions have been conducted (66 total participants). The curriculum is now available by request to any organization serving Latinx youth ages 11-19 and will be conducted with Spanish-speaking youth involved in the DSVS Teen Advocates program.

In partnership with the Fairfax County One Fairfax Central Team in the Office of the County Executive, Commission for Women, and the Department of Management and Budget, the Department of Family Services DSVS sponsored a study on the status of women and girls in Fairfax County, [Gains, Gaps, & Goals](#), through the Social and Decision Analytics Division Biocomplexity Institute & Initiative, University of Virginia. This study highlights areas where women are still striving for equity, evaluates the status of women and girls by supervisor districts in the county, and provides insights about how women and girls of different identities are impacted. This report also provides context and data to support critical investments and recommended solutions to improve the status of women and girls in Fairfax County, which ultimately contributes to stronger, more prosperous communities for all. The initial report was presented in March 2024 alongside a panel

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# CROSS-SYSTEMS INITIATIVE ANNUAL REPORT

## CALENDAR YEAR 2024

of women with professional and/or personal expertise in the areas of study, and a subsequent panel focused on healthcare was held in July 2024.

**Goal 3:** Infuse racial equity into DSVS policies and practices.

**Goal 3 Progress:** DSVS will infuse racial equity into at least one policy or practice per DSVS service area utilizing the DFS equity tool, DFS Equity Analysis for Proposed Business and Process Change.

All new DSVS MOUs (100%) developed in 2024 included an Equity Consideration Statement, and this practice will continue to be implemented with all future MOUs.

Clinical Services Quality Assurance (QA) conducted an assessment of existing race/ethnicity data collection methods and tools used by DSVS and county partners. QA consulted with the Fairfax County Office for Management and Budgeting and the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance on collection of race/ethnicity data. Based on this feedback, a pilot was conducted beginning on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, with Clinical Services' clients in which they were asked to self-identify their race upon intake for services. The data from this pilot showed approximately 80% of Clinical Services clients provided race and gender data between April 2024-October 2024. In 2025, this dataset will be assessed and compared with data previously collected using racial demographic categories as aligned with federal and state agencies. This information will help DSVS better identify who is and is not accessing DSVS Clinical Services and support DSVS' efforts in strengthening standards regarding race data collection and data analysis.

**Goal 4:** Coordinate the County's efforts to address disparities in access to systems and services through the work of the Council to End Domestic Violence (CEDV).

**Goal 4 Progress:** The CEDV revised its bylaws to utilize a leadership structure which better balances government, non-government, and community leaders and promotes community collaboration. This three-part structure includes a Board of Supervisors chair, a nonprofit vice chair, and community member vice chair. The leadership structure developed also includes succession planning which would allow the role of chair to shift among the vice chairs on an annual basis.

DSVS, the CEDV Equity Committee, and Fairfax County GIS & Mapping Services mapped services and service providers around the County that support persons impacted by interpersonal violence as a baseline to identify new and existing service providers, gaps in services, and underserved communities. This GIS map was presented in October 2024 at the CEDV meeting and at the DV/SV Community Annual Meeting. This project is currently in its first feedback cycle to ensure inputs from a wide group of organizations and services are included, and the map will become available to the public in 2025.

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# CROSS-SYSTEMS INITIATIVE ANNUAL REPORT

## CALENDAR YEAR 2024

The CEDV Accountability Workgroup explored how an accountability process can create pathways to responsibility, healing, hope, transformation, and in some cases restoration in people who cause harm, systems, and communities. In April 2024, the Workgroup published a [report](#) on their research, which included main recommendations. Members of the Accountability Workgroup conducted a site visit to RISE, a program in New York City that works to transform responses to intimate partner violence (IPV) and address its intersection with gun violence, in response to these recommendations. In partnership with Department of Neighborhood and Community Services, Fairfax County Courts, and the Department of Family Services, the Workgroup is creating a multi-agency proposal of recommendations to the CEDV for broad community-based accountability work. Additional action steps towards implementing the recommendations with county and community partners will be taken in 2025.

The CEDV Step Up 4 Kids Coalition Training Committee is developing curriculum for community learning sessions about the impact of trauma and exposure to domestic violence on children. A series of these workshops will be implemented by Domestic and Sexual Violence Services in partnership with community-based organization Second Story in 2025.

### OTHER EQUITY-RELATED WORK

*Was other equity-related work completed in addition to the goals above? If so, please describe.*

#### ***Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP) Expansion***

The Fairfax County Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP) team expanded the LAP criteria on November 11, 2023, to address the following: 1) provide greater access and critical services for an additional group of high danger victims/survivors - current or former dating or sexual partners, and 2) include all incidents of intimate partner violence with high lethality, independent of whether an arrest was made or warrant issued. This new criterion joins the existing criterion - couples who are married, cohabitate, or share a child. The LAP's enhanced inclusivity works to dismantle systemic barriers that have historically excluded certain groups from receiving crucial support.

Expanding eligibility criteria for high-lethality incidents also brings attention to the high risks faced by various relationship types, ensuring that every victim has an equitable chance to receive assistance and potentially life-saving interventions. Overall, this LAP expansion illustrates an equity-based approach by recognizing the diverse needs and circumstances of all survivors of intimate partner violence, and working to provide them with accessible, inclusive, and unbiased support and protection. As a result of the LAP expansion, the LAP crisis line experienced a 30% increase in calls, with the expanded criteria accounting for 50% of this increase.

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# CROSS-SYSTEMS INITIATIVE ANNUAL REPORT

## CALENDAR YEAR 2024

### ***Advocacy Services Community Sites***

Informed by outreach conducted in 2024 to engage communities affected by domestic violence and sexual violence (DV/SV), Advocacy Services began providing on-site support at five strategically chosen community-based sites. Site selection was based on a thorough assessment of community needs and strengthened by ongoing relationships and partnerships within these communities to reduce barriers to access. Through these partnerships, DSVS gained a deeper understanding of diverse engagement approaches, enabling the organization to meet clients and communities where they are, respecting cultural norms and supporting informed decision-making.

Additionally, DSVS arranged for a Victim Advocate to be housed at General District Court (GDC) to support victims of intimate partner, including victims served through the Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP) criteria expansion. Based on the definition of family violence in the Virginia code (Ann.§16.1-228), most cases of domestic violence are heard in Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court (JDRDC), which has a history of providing legal protections to victims of interpersonal violence. Victims excluded by this definition cannot seek relief in JDRDC, but must appear in GDC, where there is limited assistance with petitions, referrals, or navigating the court process. Furthermore, because of its complex challenges, it is especially difficult for victims and survivors who are young adults (18-24), older adults (over 65) or who have limited or no English proficiency, to effectively use the GDC system for relief. Having a dedicated GDC Advocate ensures equitable support to victims of IPV who do not fit within the Virginia code definition of family violence. Since the role was implemented, the GDC Advocate has supported 116 new clients, 54 of which were referred as a result of the LAP expansion.

### ***DCJS Accreditation***

In July 2024, DSVS obtained Professional Standards Accreditation for sexual and domestic violence programs, issued by the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Program Professional Standards Committee through June 2027. Professional Standards Accreditation a voluntary process in which sexual and domestic violence programs are systematically measured and evaluated on standards and procedures through a peer-reviewed process. Accreditation confirms DSVS as an agency operating at the highest level of practice standards in the sexual and domestic violence field and conveys the quality of a program to potential clients, community members, staff, board, and funders.