

Domestic and Sexual Violence Services

2022 Equity Impact Plan



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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 of 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 (FY21-353).
- 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 (FY21- 990 adults served impacting 1,063 children).
- 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. During FY 2021, the CEDV stood up an Equity subcommittee to provide recommendations on board structure and gaps in services based on inequities; and conducted a court-process walkthrough to identify and remedy barriers for petitioners seeking relief from the courts.
- 4) Community education, technical assistance, and prevention to government agencies, community-based organizations and community members (FY20- 2,850 individuals) to advance the mission of reducing and preventing interpersonal violence.
- 5) DSVS completed its strategic plan and refined its key activities and plan for the next 3-5 years. An equity focus was applied to the strategic plan.
- 6) DSVS is a recipient of the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance's Underserved Populations Learning Collaborative designed help sexual and domestic violence programs across the State provide services that are culturally specific, culturally appropriate, trauma informed, and accessible to all Survivors, which requires the voices and experiences of people who have been historically oppressed and marginalized to be at the center, informing the work.
- 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 FY19-21, twice as many Black and Latinx people were represented among ADAPT clients as compared to the respective proportions among county residents. Approximately 19% of ADAPT clients were Black/African American and 35% were Latinx compared to 10.2% of the Black/African American population in Fairfax County in 2020 and 16.5% 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"/> Empowerment and Support for Residents Facing Vulnerability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Opportunity | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficient and Effective Government | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Health |

Housing and Neighborhood Livability
 Lifelong Education and Learning

Mobility and Transportation
 Safety and Security

Key Stakeholders: 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

DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE SERVICES 2022 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

Short-Term Goals	One Fairfax Area of Focus	Actions
1. Serve with proficiency historically and currently marginalized populations, increasing the diversity of clients in all programs and services (direct and systems' services)	6, 10	<p>1a. Develop plan of which historically and currently marginalized populations to target for DSVS victim and offender services.</p> <p>1b. Through the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance, Underserved Populations Learning Collaborative, obtain feedback from the historically and currently marginalized customers/clients served regarding DSVS victim and offender services.</p>
2. Obtain feedback from the historically and currently marginalized customers/clients served regarding DSVS services to strengthen services provided to diverse communities	6, 8, 10	<p>2a. Cultivate relationship with at least two existing partners.</p>
3. Transform workforce in knowledge base, skill set, diversity, and in ability to have courageous conversations (with accountability)	6, 10	<p>3a. Increase by 60% staff knowledge acquisition related to equity and equitable outcomes.</p>