A Year in Review

As 2017 ends and we embark on a new year, we utilize this issue of the Florida Voice to provide our readers with a review of the year, and share some highlights and accomplishments. The following highlights provide a sample of FCADV’s programs, initiatives and trainings. For specific information about any of the programs and services listed, please visit www.fcadv.org.

Forty years ago, 14 shelters in Florida formed a network of battered women’s advocates known as the Refuge Information Network. Several years later, this same organization was incorporated as the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence. FCADV is the private, nonprofit organization that serves as the statewide professional association for Florida’s 42 certified domestic violence centers. In this role, FCADV provides leadership, advocacy, education, training, technical assistance, and support to certified domestic violence centers, their community partners, and other statewide professionals to improve services, practices, and policies related to domestic violence. FCADV is statutorily required to implement, evaluate, and fund the state’s domestic violence services. As such, FCADV conducts annual monitoring of certified domestic violence centers to ensure the provision of quality services and fiscal accountability. FCADV also serves as the primary voice for survivors of domestic violence and their children in the public policy arena.

In 2004, FCADV was designated by the Legislature as the administrator of state and federal funding earmarked for domestic violence services. As the administrator of these funds, FCADV subcontracts with Florida’s 42 certified domestic violence centers, a multitude of law enforcement agencies, state prosecutors’ offices, statewide associations, and community-based organizations dedicated to providing services and resources to survivors and their children while holding perpetrators accountable for their violence. FCADV ensures compliance with administrative, programmatic, and fiscal accountability requirements of each provider by engaging in a stringent monitoring process. This statewide role leads to efficient and effective coordination among agencies responding to domestic violence throughout Florida.

By viewing the provision of domestic violence services through a statewide lens, FCADV is uniquely positioned to advance a comprehensive, statewide approach that focuses on the development of innovative services, programs, and best practices to respond to the needs of survivors and their children.
Each year, thousands of hours of training and technical assistance are provided to strengthen knowledge, enhance standards, and build capacity to provide quality services to domestic violence survivors and their children. FCADV tailors each training to address the specific needs identified by the center and/or local community organizations.

DURING FISCAL YEAR 2016-2017 FCADV:

• Responded to 8,222 technical assistance requests from domestic violence centers, collaborative partners, and other agencies
• Conducted 360 onsite technical assistance visits and trainings for certified domestic violence center staff and/or Board of Directors, collaborative partners, and other agencies
• Conducted 202 webinars/technical assistance calls
• Conducted 50 regional and statewide training events and/or conferences
• Conducted 26 listening and/or focus groups throughout the state to obtain input from survivors, advocates and other service providers regarding the current needs, barriers and trends impacting the prevention and intervention of domestic violence.
• Administered and managed 219 contracts
• Conducted 86 monitoring visits and/or desk reviews

FCADV Programs, Initiatives and Training

• Changing Lives: Economic Empowerment Program
• Child Protection Investigation Project
• Community Collaborative Projects
• Coordinated Community Response Program
• Critical Incident Support Initiative
• Database and Evaluation Programs
• DELTA FOCUS Program
• Domestic Violence Accessibility Program
• Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative
• Domestic Violence in Later Life Program
• Emergency Preparedness and Response Program
• Engaging Men and Boys Program
• Florida Domestic Violence Hotline
• Healthy Advocate Initiative
• Hotline Training Program
• Injunction for Protection Project
• Intimate Violence Enhanced Service Team (InVEST)
• Justice for Families Batterer Accountability Program
• Law Enforcement Enhanced Response Program
• Law Enforcement Training Initiative
• Legal Assistance for Victims Program
• Legal Clearinghouse Project
• Linguistic and Culturally Specific Services Program
• Primary Prevention Initiative
• Roaming Attorney Project
• Rural Statewide Initiative
• Rural and Underserved Communities Program
• Statewide Economic Empowerment Program
• Strong Families Domestic Violence Prevention Campaign
• Survivor Listening Project
• Technology and Safety Program
• Youth Engagement and Leadership Program

In addition to the aforementioned programs, FCADV conducts 30 hours of Core Competency Training for newly hired advocates across the state multiple times each year as well as onsite trainings from FCADV’s Effective Advocacy Training Series based certified domestic violence center request. For more information, please visit http://fcadv.org/training-technical-assistance
FCADV’s Signature Program Expansions

Injunction for Protection Project

The most frequently sought advice from FCADV’s Legal Hotline staff is for information regarding obtaining an injunction for protection and directions related to preparing for related court appearances. In addition, survivors regularly report to FCADV during annual listening groups that access to legal services remains one of their greatest unmet needs. During fiscal year 2016 – 2017, FCADV was awarded a Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant from the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) to fund Florida’s certified domestic violence centers to hire attorneys to represent survivors of domestic, dating and sexual violence and stalking when seeking civil injunctions for protection. The Injunction for Protection (IFP) Project attorneys meet with survivors referred by partnering agencies such as clerk and court staff, law enforcement, state attorneys, and other organizations to determine whether filing for an injunction is a safe and appropriate legal action. The IFP Project attorneys represent survivors from the temporary petition stage through the final injunction hearing, and in civil show cause hearings for injunction violations. The attorneys also represent survivors in other injunction-related proceedings that impact their safety such as defending against a perpetrator’s motion to dismiss a final injunction.

Currently there are 48 IFP Project attorneys providing services in 35 counties. The vast majority of survivors receiving injunction representation are victims of domestic violence. Since the implementation of the program in January 2017:

• IFP Project lawyers provided legal advice to 1,259 survivors
• IFP Project lawyers represented survivors in 1,614 injunction for protection and other injunction related hearings
• 1,490 survivors received information and referral services and 1,022 survivors received victim compensation/relocation information as a part of the program

Statewide Economic Empowerment Program

FCADV’s Statewide Economic Empowerment Program was created to directly respond to the financial control exercised by perpetrators. Lack of financial knowledge and resources is the number one indicator of whether a domestic violence victim will stay, leave, or return to an abusive relationship. Financial abuse occurs in 98 percent of all domestic violence cases. Survivors report that abusers utilize a multitude of economically-related tactics to gain and maintain power and control over them, such as creating large amounts of debt in joint accounts, withholding funds from the survivor or children to obtain basic needs such as food and medicine, prohibiting the survivor from working, and not allowing the survivor to access bank accounts. FCADV’s Statewide Economic Empowerment Program includes a critical partnership with Allstate Florida who provides funding to advance financial independence for survivors of domestic violence and their children by coordinating grants for two certified domestic violence centers to implement local economic empowerment projects.

During the 2016 – 2017 Fiscal Year, FCADV was awarded a second VOCA grant through the Office of the Attorney General to expand its successful Economic Empowerment Program to 28 certified domestic violence centers in Florida. Grantees utilized The Allstate Foundation’s “Moving Ahead Through Financial Management” curriculum and program models from the national ProLiteracy organization to assist survivors with budgeting, investing, retirement planning, debt reduction, completing job readiness programs, gaining new employment, participating in microloans or microenterprises, and other financial literacy components based on each survivors’ unique situation and needs.

Overall, 100% of those individuals participating in FCADV’s Economic Empowerment trainings increased their knowledge of survivors’ financial safety needs. Additionally, since the expansion of the program in January 2017:

• 100% of participating certified domestic violence centers have incorporated financial safety planning into their centers’ safety planning procedures.
• 2,096 survivors of domestic violence participated in financial empowerment services utilizing the Allstate Moving Ahead Curriculum.
• 1,150 survivors participated in the certified domestic violence center’s Literacy Programs.
• Centers conducted 164 meetings with financial institutions or agencies that assist in developing programs related to microloans, microenterprises, matched savings accounts, and/or individual development accounts for survivors.
• 1,262 survivors received assistance with identifying and securing affordable housing and/or identifying and securing employment.
• Participating programs provided 4,498 units of information and referral services; 3,084 advocacy and accompaniment services; 3,277 emotional support and safety services; and 1,668 shelter and housing services.

Florida’s Certified Domestic Violence Centers
Florida’s 42 certified domestic violence centers are located throughout the state and are responsible for providing critical, life-saving emergency shelter, services, and programming to survivors and their children. In Florida, our centers are on the front lines of responding to domestic violence by providing a place of safety, security, healing, and empowerment to survivors of domestic violence and their children fleeing violent homes. Certified domestic violence centers are the only state-designated organizations responsible for the provision of a continuum of services to survivors, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, as they begin to access safety and independence.

During the 2016-17 fiscal year, certified centers provided 682,311 nights of life-saving emergency shelter to 14,394 women, children, and men. Many survivors fled violent homes with their children, who represented 46 percent of those served in emergency shelter. This past year, centers provided an additional 81,690 shelter nights to survivors and their children which represents a 14% increase from the previous year.

Individuals Seeking Services
Fiscal Year 2016-17

• 14,394 individuals received emergency shelter at a certified domestic violence center
• Domestic violence survivors and their children spent 682,311 nights in emergency shelter
• Advocates received 84,457 hotline calls
• 145,327 safety plans were completed with survivors
• 37,025 women, children, and men received outreach services
• 5,212 requests for emergency shelter went unmet due to lack of capacity and resources

2 Includes calls received by the FCADV Florida Domestic Violence Hotline
ADVOCATES RESPONDED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BY:

- Completing 145,327 survivor-focused safety plans
- Providing 333,473 hours of counseling and advocacy
- Offering 335,255 direct service information and referrals to survivors, family members, and individuals seeking assistance
- Spending 92,195 hours facilitating child and youth-specific activities
- Providing youth-targeted community education to 87,861 participants
- Providing education and training programs to 40,365 adults

Domestic Violence Crime in Florida

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) publishes annual and semi-annual Uniform Crime Reports (UCRs) that serve as a reliable indicator of the number, rate, and types of crime and criminal activity known to and reported by the state’s law enforcement agencies. In addition to overall crime statistics, domestic violence crimes and arrests are segregated in the UCR data by the respective crime categories.

The 2016 UCR\(^3\) reflected that while overall crime decreased 2.8 percent, domestic violence crimes only decreased by 1.9 percent. While any decrease is certainly positive, the report also reflected an increase of 11.8 percent in domestic violence aggravated stalking offenses. An increase in these crimes raises concern as stalking is a known precursor to domestic violence homicide. Tragically, there were 193 individuals that died as a result of domestic violence homicide, representing 17.4 percent of all homicides in Florida last year.

In 2016, law enforcement agencies reported a total 105,668 domestic violence offenses and arrested 63,193 individuals. Domestic violence crimes against spouses and cohabitants are overwhelmingly the most frequently reported relationship between perpetrators and victims. Overall, 34 of Florida’s 67 counties reported increases in domestic violence crimes, 32 experienced decreases, and one remained constant. It should be noted that the data contained in the annual report and reflected in the UCR only represents domestic violence offenses reported to law enforcement agencies, and domestic violence is recognized as a significantly underreported crime.

\(^3\)Information from FDLE’s 2016 Uniform Crime Report:
Domestic Violence Crime in Florida
January – December 2016

- Overall crime decreased by 2.8 percent, while reported domestic violence offenses only decreased by 1.9 percent
- 105,668 domestic violence offenses were reported to law enforcement
- 193 individuals died as a result of domestic violence homicide, representing approximately 17.4 percent of all homicides in Florida
- Law enforcement made 63,193 arrests for domestic violence related crimes

Counties that Experienced a 10 percent* +
Increase in Domestic Violence Offenses, 2016

- Baker
- Holmes
- Seminole
- Lafayette
- Walton
- Suwannee
- Hardee
- Nassau
- Okeechobee
- Gilchrist

Counties that Experienced a 10 percent*+
Decrease in Domestic Violence Offenses, 2016

- Gadsden
- Calhoun
- Wakulla
- Marion
- Hendry
- Monroe
- Levy
- Dixie
- Jefferson
- Columbia
- Hamilton
- Taylor
- Glades
- Clay
- Okaloosa

*Percent changes should be interpreted with caution. In small counties with low numbers of crime, a small increase may produce a large percent change.

4Ibid
5Ibid
6Ibid
Domestic violence does not go away by looking away. It stops when we stand up together. It stops when we say it must, and not just one of us, but all of us.