

# **Report of the Leon County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team**



**December 2012**

Reported by the Institute for Family Violence Studies

College of Social Work

Florida State University

850-644-6303

## Introduction

The Leon County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team (Leon Team) reviews deaths associated with domestic violence in order to improve coordination and delivery of services to prevent incidents of domestic violence and deaths resulting from domestic violence. Formed in late 2011, the Leon Team is currently coordinated by the Institute for Family Violence Studies (IFVS) at Florida State University's College of Social Work. The members all serve in a voluntary, uncompensated capacity. This Report is the Leon Team's first Annual Report.

## Background

In 2011, there were five domestic violence fatalities in Leon County, a striking increase from prior years noted and emphasized by the local newspaper, the *Tallahassee Democrat*, and reporter Jennifer Portman. Over the course of several months, Portman wrote a series of in-depth articles about those local domestic violence fatalities. In many ways, Portman's detailed articles served as a roadmap for a new Team: her meticulous examination of particular homicides raised public awareness, highlighted the absence of a review team in Florida's Capital, and demonstrated how much information could be gleaned from the study of individual cases. With Editor Bob Gabordi, Portman subsequently assembled a group of community members in a boardroom at the newspaper's office in November 2011 to discuss forming a fatality review team to seek ways to reduce this crime.

The resulting Leon County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team was formed pursuant to Section 741.316 of the Florida Statutes. Under 741.316, a "domestic violence fatality review team" may include, but is not limited to, representatives of law enforcement agencies, the state attorney, the medical examiner, domestic violence centers, child protection service providers, the office of court administration, the clerk of court, victim services programs, child death review teams, members in the business community, probation or corrections agencies, or other persons with knowledge regarding domestic violence fatalities, nonlethal incidents of domestic violence, or suicides, including research, policy, law, and other matters connected with fatal incidents.

Twenty-four states, including Florida, currently have active statewide domestic violence fatality review teams. In Florida, there are 14 fatality review teams, with two teams made up of more than one county: Alachua, Brevard, Broward, Duval, Hillsborough, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk/Highlands, Santa Rosa, Sarasota/Manatee, Seminole, and St. Johns counties. Team practices from these counties' review teams were taken into account when forming the Leon County Team and developing the procedures for its operation.

Fatality review teams review fatal and near-fatal incidents involving domestic violence and suicides. The reviews include a history of events leading up to the domestic violence fatality, a survey of available resources in the community, laws, policies and procedures affecting domestic violence prevention and response, and other information or actions that were deemed relevant, including a review of public records. Throughout 2012, The Leon Team also reviewed state and local statistics on domestic and dating violence, as well as other crime data.

The Team's coordinators at the IFVS conducted research on other fatality review teams in the state and nationally. The National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative (NDVFRI) is a program designed to assist local and state level domestic violence fatality review teams with the task of identifying overarching goals to prevent domestic violence-related homicide. The program is directed by Dr. Neil Websdale at Northern Arizona University. The tools available from NDFVRI, as well as published books and articles on fatality review by Dr. Websdale, were reviewed in preparation for the review process.

All information and records acquired by the Team were subject to strict confidentiality standards, as set out in Section 741.3165, Florida Statutes. Additionally, pursuant to Section 741.316(4), Florida Statutes, the records and information used in the review are not subject to introduction into evidence in any criminal, civil, or administrative action or disciplinary proceeding. These records serve only as resources to fulfill the mission of the team.

## **Crime Statistics**

Appendix A indicates the number of domestic violence-related crimes committed in Leon County (including Tallahassee and the surrounding area) for 2010 and 2011, as well as the percentage of change between the two years in Leon County and Florida as a whole.

Domestic violence statistics during 2011 that are of particular note include:

- 5 of 14 murders (35.7%) were domestic violence related
- 21 of 129 rapes (16.3%) were domestic violence related
- 300 of 1,313 aggravated assaults (22.8%) were domestic violence related.

Particularly notable changes include the domestic violence murders (from zero in 2010 to five in 2011), forcible fondling (14 in 2010 to 21 in 2011), as well as reported forcible sodomy (from two in 2010 to 11 in 2011).

Under-reporting of domestic violence crimes is a major concern, locally, statewide, and nationally. The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence estimates that only one-quarter of all physical assaults, one-fifth of all rapes, and one-half of all stalking perpetrated

against females by intimate partners are reported to the police. Thus, domestic violence is one of the most chronically underreported crimes.

## **2012 Team Members**

*The following served as members of the Leon County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team during 2012:*

### Office of the Attorney General, Division of Victim Services and Criminal Justice Programs

Emery Gainey, Division Director

Christina Harris, Chief, Bureau of Advocacy and Grants Management

Michelle Johnson, M.S.W., Regional Victim Advocate

### Clerk of the Court, Leon County

John Stott, Chief Deputy Clerk, representing Bob Inzer, Clerk of the Court

### Florida Department of Children and Families

Necia Little, Program Administrator for Child Protective Investigations

Traci Leavine, Regional Operations Manager, Child Protective Investigations

### DISC Village

Joni Morris-Anderson

### Florida Council Against Sexual Violence

Grace Frances, Certification and Programs Manager, representing Jennifer Dritt, Executive Director

Ebony Tucker, Assistant Executive Director

### Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University

Calvin Ross, Chief of Police

Tina Washington, LMHC, Assistant Director of Clinical Programs and Victim Advocate, representing Yolanda Bogan, Ph.D., Director

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial Circuit, Guardian ad Litem Program

Sonia Crockett, J.D., representing Deborah Moore, Director

Leigh Merritt, Assistant Circuit Director

### Healthcare Providers, Florida State University College of Medicine

Joedrecka Brown, M.D., Associate Professor

Suzanne Harrison, M.D., Associate Professor and Family Medicine Education Director

### Legal Services of North Florida

Chris Del Marco, J.D., Domestic and Sexual Violence Attorney

Leon County Schools, Division of Special Programs

Beverly Owens, Division Director

Leon County Sheriff's Office

Loris McCorvey, Victim Advocate

Robert Swearingen, Captain, Criminal Investigations Bureau Commander

Charlie Strickland, Lieutenant

Gwen Williams, Victim Advocate

Leon County Medical Examiner

Anthony Clark, M.D., KWB Pathology

Pace Center for Girls

Kelly Otte, M.S.W., Executive Director

Leon County Probation Office

Shakonda Beamer

2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial Circuit, Public Defender

Nancy Daniels, J.D., Public Defender

Refuge House

Meg Baldwin, J.D., Executive Director

2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial Circuit, Office of the State Attorney

Willie Meggs, J.D., State Attorney

Tallahassee Board of Realtors

Christie Orros, Realtor

Tallahassee Interfaith Council

Franklin Rush, Elder

Tallahassee Police Department

Dennis Jones, Chief of Police

Joani Chase, Captain

Darrell Furuseth, Captain

David Odom, Lieutenant

Melanie Tudor, Victim Advocate

Institute for Family Violence Studies, Florida State University

Karen Oehme, J.D., Director

Zachary Summerlin, M.S.W., Program Coordinator

## Training of Team Members

The first full meeting of the Leon Team was a training session for the members held on January 19, 2012. Emery Gainey, Director of Victim Services and Criminal Justice Programs at the Office of the Attorney General, led an introduction and welcome for the Leon Team. Other guest speakers included Matthew Dale from the Montana Department of Justice, Office of Victim Services, who presented data on familicide and domestic violence homicides. An overview of the fatality review process and the process of the review teams was presented by Jerald Monahan from the Apache Junction Arizona Police Department, along with Mr. Dale, who is also a senior consultant for the National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Institute. The Team also viewed a film describing the review process – *STOP Inaction: Success Stories from Montana*. Local law enforcement representatives led a panel discussion on the law enforcement perspective of domestic violence.

After the training, Monahan and Dale lead a mock review of a fictional case with the new Team. The mock review taught the step-by-step process of examining cases with a “no blame, no shame” approach to seeking ways to engage community members, improve agency response, and prevent domestic violence tragedies in the future.

## Team Review Process

After the formal training, the Leon Team met as a group three times to review individual domestic violence homicides: May 3, August 23, and November 15, 2012. An additional training of Team members who could not make the January 19, 2012 meeting was held on May 3, 2012. The Team’s Planning Subcommittee also met February 2, March 15, August 15, and October 30, 2012. The subcommittee discussed issues including meeting logistics, community agency membership, potential cases for the Team, and the possibility of inviting family members and friends of the victim to speak to the Team.

At each full Team meeting, the Leon Team voted on which cases to review at the next meeting. In preparation for each in-depth case review, a great deal of data was collected by the IFVS staff. This included, but was not limited to, police records and documents, news articles, criminal records, interviews with witnesses, maps detailing the locations of murders/suicides, toxicology reports, forensics reports, medical examiner reports, 911 recordings, and legal proceedings. This information was aggregated into a draft timeline of relevant events leading up to the domestic violence fatality. Relevant events that occurred during and after the fatal incident were included in each timeline draft. In addition to a timeline, a document summarizing witness/character statements and a list of persons involved in the case were also created for each case for the Team to review, discuss, add to, and analyze. At each meeting, confidentiality forms were signed by all members and the restrictions on data and information sharing were reviewed. The Team members discussed

each element of the case, including the history of the perpetrator and victim, the work/school/family interaction of all individuals involved (including the perpetrator and victim), public and private agency/entity involvement, and many other factors.

Three domestic violence fatalities that occurred in Leon County were examined in detail by the fatality review team. Team members participated in extremely active discussions of red flags and antecedents of violence in each case. During these lengthy discussions, team members drew on their extensive experience to shape recommendations that were developed and recorded. At the end of each meeting, all documents relating to the case reviewed were collected and shredded in compliance with the confidentiality requirements of section 741.3165.

## **Community Support**

Community support was crucial to the Leon Team. The law firm of Hopping, Green, and Sams, in addition to Coldwell Banker, Hartung and Noblin, Inc., Starbucks on West Tennessee St., and the Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare Foundation sponsored Team supplies and hosted each of the day-long reviews. The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council agreed to pay for the costs of printing the landlord-tenant brochure, described on page nine. The Institute for Family Violence Studies, Florida State University College of Social Work contributed meeting space and team coordination.

## **Data Collection**

The Florida Attorney General created a statewide domestic violence fatality review team in 2008. The statewide team helped the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (FCADV) develop a web-based tool to collect data from local domestic violence fatality review teams around the state. Specific data elements of each case reviewed by the Leon Team were added to the online collection tool. The Leon Team hopes that its contribution to the statewide database eventually leads to a reduction in domestic violence fatalities. Such a result would reduce the number of victims, families of victims, families of perpetrators, and neighborhoods and communities affected by domestic violence homicides.

## **2012 Team Reflections on the Leon County Community**

### **Community Advances**

Despite the tragic fact that domestic violence homicides have occurred in Leon County, the Leon Team discussed notable improvements in services for victims made in our

community over the past decade. Members felt that in 2012 there was a greater coordinated community response to victims, more collaboration among agencies that serve victims and survivors, less victim blaming among providers who deal directly with victims, a notable decline in charges of “failure to protect” children against mothers who are victims, and more offender accountability system-wide than existed a decade ago. These improvements are largely due to the long-term efforts of national, state, and local advocates and agencies that have highlighted the widespread nature of domestic violence, the high cost of such violence to families, communities, and businesses, and the desire to break the cycle of violence to prevent future tragedies.

### **Strengthening Survivor Capacity through Community Infrastructure**

While acknowledging long-term improvements in how the community addresses domestic violence, the Team felt that the community can do much more to strengthen the capacity of survivors to escape violence. Thus, the Leon Team calls on local leaders and political representatives to redouble their efforts to strengthen the community infrastructure to meet basic needs such as:

- Increased affordable housing and transitional housing for victims of domestic violence and their children
- Increased healthcare services, including physical health, mental health, chemical health (e.g., substance abuse counseling), and dental care
- Increased public transportation and public transportation resources for victims and their children
- Increased access to services meeting basic needs, such as food and utility payments

The Team noted that such improvements would help an entire range of citizens in addition to victims, and would strengthen the entire Leon County community. Thus, officials of Tallahassee and Leon County are respectfully asked to consider these crucial infrastructure improvements when making their governing decisions.

### **2012 Team Recommendations**

In addition to discussing the general needs of local victims of domestic violence, the Leon Team found consistent themes within the in-depth case studies of particular homicides. One overarching theme is that many people, including friends, family, employers, and landlords knew that the victim was being abused prior to her murder. Some people had far more information about the victims’ situations than others, but the Team felt that all of these third parties might have benefitted from access to information about specific ways to



help the victim. With these issues in mind, the Leon Team offers the following recommendations.

### **1. Public Awareness and Education:**

Echoing the recommendation of the statewide FCADV Team's report "The Faces of Fatality," (available at <http://www.fcadv.org/publications>) the Leon Team recommends that the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence create statewide public awareness campaigns to educate the public on domestic violence and stalking/cyber-stalking. The Leon Team adds that scenario-based bystander training would add a crucial component to the public awareness effort.

The Leon Team believes the local community would also benefit from increased public awareness about domestic violence. This could be accomplished by existing local groups that conduct public awareness campaigns such as the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council, Refuge House, and child protective agencies. The Tallahassee Police Department and Leon County Sheriff's Office should increase efforts to encourage the public's awareness of reporting of domestic violence crimes to law enforcement or Crime Stoppers.

In 2013 the Team will create an insert sheet for City of Tallahassee utility customers with information about resources regarding domestic violence. The Team will request that the City of Tallahassee include this information in utility bills.

### **2. Recommendations to inform landlords about tenant safety:**

The Leon Team benefitted from having a licensed realtor on the team. The group engaged in lengthy discussions about how to provide landlords with valuable information about domestic violence and decided to develop a brochure for landlords about domestic violence. The Team coordinators at the IFVS expanded on earlier efforts of the DVCC and drafted the brochure with Team input. The DVCC assisted with monetary support for the printing of the brochure. The intent of the brochure is to educate landlords about the dynamics of domestic violence and to educate them about community resources. The brochure will be made available to landlords in 2013.

### **3. Workplace Violence Training Should Include Domestic Violence Issues and Resources:**

The Leon Team learned that domestic violence can often include a workplace violence component, and that employers should have information about the crime and local resources to address it.

**A. Creating/Strengthening workplace violence training materials for state agencies and governmental offices to include domestic violence issues.**

The Leon Team noted that Leon County is the home of numerous state agency headquarters and governmental offices. Team members noted that workplace violence training occurs at such agencies, and it recommends that domestic violence issues be added consistently as part of that training. The Team takes an expansive view of those agencies, to include large state agencies, as well as local offices, such as the Clerk of the Court, Tax Collector, Supervisor of Elections, and Property Appraiser.

**B. Creating/strengthening workplace violence training materials for city and county workers on domestic violence issues.**

The Team recommends that Leon County and the City of Tallahassee present domestic violence issues training and information about existing local domestic violence resources to all employees.

**C. Private employers should have access to information about local domestic violence resources for their employees.**

The Team recommends that private employers in Tallahassee have access to information about local domestic violence resources. The Team calls on the local Chamber of Commerce to suggest ways to bring information to private businesses in the city and county.

**4. Education for Young People:**

The Team emphasizes the need to increase education efforts aimed at children, youth, and young adults in local schools, colleges, and universities about healthy dating relationships to prevent violence in the future. The Team looks forward to having a representative from the Leon County Schools system at meetings in 2013.

**5. Enhanced Agency Training:**

Agency personnel who interact with victims and perpetrators should have enhanced training on issues of victim sexual exploitation, mental illness and chemical dependency. Victims who are sexually exploited, mentally ill, and/or addicted to substances may not believe that they are entitled to assistance and may not know how to access resources to get the help they need. In addition, and more specifically, the Team recommends that agency training include a discussion of the co-occurrence of domestic violence and substance abuse and/or mental illness, and then delve more deeply into the complex dynamics of perpetrators who use victims' substance abuse and/or mental illness as a mechanism of controlling the victim.

Existing trainings on topics of substance abuse could be amended to include information about the co-occurrence of domestic violence so that this subject is addressed in many ways.

## **6. LGBT services:**

The Team recommends that existing community agencies and services develop new strategies to be responsive and sensitive to the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender victims of domestic violence. Community agencies, organization, or entities that create new outreach programs, along with individual members of LGBT community groups who may have insight into how to achieve successful outreach, will be invited to discuss new service strategies with the Team in 2013.

## **Conclusion:**

Although it has only completed its first year of service to Leon County, the Leon Team hopes to be part of long-term, meaningful, substantive change to assist victims of domestic violence. This 2012 Report is dedicated to all of those in our community who seek that change.

# Appendices

# Appendix A – Uniform Crime Report



## CRIME IN FLORIDA

### Leon County January - December 2011



Florida Department of  
Law Enforcement

The statistics presented in this release are an indication of crime and criminal activities known to, and reported by, law enforcement agencies for 2011. This report reflects data residing in the UCR database as of 04/12/2012.

#### Offense Totals

INDEX OFFENSES	2010	2011	Percent Change
<b>Murder</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>-6.7</b>
Firearm	10	12	20.0
Knife/Cutting Instr.	0	2	
Hands/Fists/Feet	1	0	
Other	4	0	
<b>Forcible Sex Offenses</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>-9.7</b>
<b>Forcible Rape</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>-15.7</b>
Firearm	9	0	
Knife/Cutting Instr.	2	3	50.0
Hands/Fists/Feet	131	124	-5.3
Other	11	2	-81.8
<b>Forcible Sodomy</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>21.1</b>
Firearm	0	1	
Knife/Cutting Instr.	0	0	
Hands/Fists/Feet	19	21	10.5
Other	0	1	
<b>Forcible Fondling</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>-4.5</b>
Firearm	0	0	
Knife/Cutting Instr.	0	0	
Hands/Fists/Feet	57	62	8.8
Other	9	1	-88.9
<b>Robbery</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>575</b>	<b>6.7</b>
Firearm	327	364	11.3
Knife/Cutting Instr.	25	24	-4.0
Hands/Fists/Feet	155	156	0.6
Other	32	31	-3.1
<b>Aggravated Assault</b>	<b>1,304</b>	<b>1,227</b>	<b>-5.9</b>
Firearm	291	265	-8.9
Knife/Cutting Instr.	228	236	3.5
Hands/Fists/Feet	237	245	3.4
Other	548	481	-12.2
<b>Burglary</b>	<b>3,517</b>	<b>4,062</b>	<b>15.5</b>
Forced Entry	2,054	2,430	18.3
No Forced Entry	1,102	1,341	21.7
Attempted Entry	361	291	-19.4
<b>Larceny</b>	<b>7,019</b>	<b>7,335</b>	<b>4.5</b>
Pocket Picking	30	23	-23.3
Purse Snatching	12	13	8.3
Shoplifting	932	739	-20.7
From Motor Vehicle	1,223	1,470	20.2
Motor Vehicle Parts	782	770	-1.5
Bicycles	260	298	14.6
From Building	505	445	-11.9
From Coin Oper. Dev.	18	29	61.1
All Other	3,257	3,548	8.9
<b>Motor Vehicle Theft</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>5.2</b>
<b>TOTAL INDEX OFFENSES</b>	<b>13,096</b>	<b>13,916</b>	<b>6.3</b>

#### Crime Volume

Total Index	13,916
Total Violent	2,031
Total Nonviolent	11,885

#### Property Values

Total Stolen	\$ 18,865,675
Total Recovered	\$ 4,059,858

#### Arrest Data

Total	10,504
Adult	9,589
Juvenile	915
Male	7,700
Female	2,804

#### Domestic Violence by Offense Type

PRIMARY OFFENSE	2010	2011	Percent Change
Murder	0	5	
Manslaughter	1	0	
Forcible Rape	19	21	10.5
Forcible Sodomy	2	11	450.0
Forcible Fondling	14	21	50.0
Aggravated Assault	318	300	-5.7
Aggravated Stalking	1	1	0.0
Simple Assault	1,018	1,114	9.4
Threat/Intimidation	9	8	-11.1
Simple Stalking	0	2	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,382</b>	<b>1,483</b>	<b>7.3</b>

#### PROPERTY INFORMATION VALUES

TYPE PROPERTY	STOLEN VALUE	RECOVERED VALUE
Currency, Note, Etc.	3,212,892	37,867
Jewelry, Precious Metals	2,315,876	58,397
Clothing & Furs	410,317	70,419
Motor Vehicles	3,656,060	2,547,214
Office Equipment	1,475,103	101,626
TVs, Radios, Stereos	1,774,041	75,665
Firearms	148,194	12,905
Household Goods	763,021	16,393
Consumable Goods	243,185	13,867
Livestock	1,200	0
Miscellaneous	4,865,786	1,125,505
<b>TOTAL VALUES</b>	<b>18,865,675</b>	<b>4,059,858</b>

CRIME IN FLORIDA

Leon County

January - December 2011

Crime Trends

	Index Total Crimes	% CH	Violent Crime	% CH	Nonviolent Crime	% CH	Population	% CH	Crime Rate	% CH
2007	13,213	5.0	2,226	5.2	10,987	4.9	272,896	0.1	4,841.8	4.8
2008	13,873	5.0	2,308	3.7	11,565	5.3	274,892	0.7	5,046.7	4.2
2009	12,836	-7.5	2,039	-11.7	10,797	-6.6	274,803	0.0	4,671.0	-7.4
2010	13,096	2.0	2,096	2.8	11,000	1.9	274,853	0.0	4,764.7	2.0
2011	13,916	6.3	2,031	-3.1	11,885	8.0	276,278	0.5	5,037.0	5.7

Domestic Violence

by Offense Type to Victim's Relationship to Offender

OFFENSES	Total	RELATIONSHIP VICTIM TO OFFENDER							Arrests	
		Spouse	Parent	Child	Sibling	Other Family	Cohabitant	Other		
Murder	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	1	5
Manslaughter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Forcible Sex Offenses	53	2	6	18	7	16	3	1	15	15
Forcible Rape	21	0	3	6	3	7	2	0	7	7
Forcible Sodomy	11	0	0	2	3	6	0	0	4	4
Forcible Fondling	21	2	3	10	1	3	1	1	4	4
Aggravated Assault	300	48	36	32	25	24	72	63	160	160
Aggravated Stalking	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
Simple Assault	1,114	230	156	107	91	73	252	205	442	442
Threat/Intimidation	8	1	1	1	0	0	1	4	0	0
Simple Stalking	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL OFFENSES</b>	<b>1,483</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>623</b>	

ARSON			
STRUCTURE	TOTAL INHABITED	TOTAL ABANDONED	ATTEMPTED
Single Occupied Residence	5	8	0
Other Residence	2	6	0
Storage	0	0	0
Industrial/Manufacturing	0	0	0
Commercial	0	5	0
Community/Public	1	0	0
All Other Structures	0	0	0
Motor Vehicles	7	0	0
Other Mobile	0	0	0
Other	1	3	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0</b>

VEHICLE RECOVERY	
	Number
Stolen Locally and Recovered Locally	254
Stolen Locally and Recovered By Other Jurisdictions	45
Stolen Other Jurisdictions and Recovered Locally	35

## **Appendix B – Leon County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team Bylaws**

### **Leon County Domestic Violence Fatality Review By-laws**

Adopted May 3, 2012

\*Updated Statutes added November 30, 2012

#### **I. Introduction**

##### **Mission**

The Leon County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team will review deaths associated with domestic violence in order to improve coordination and delivery of services to prevent incidents of domestic violence and deaths that result from domestic violence.

##### **Legislation**

741.316 Domestic violence fatality review teams; definition; membership; duties.

(1) As used in this section, the term “domestic violence fatality review team” means an organization that includes, but is not limited to, representatives from the following agencies or organizations:

- (a) Law enforcement agencies.
- (b) The state attorney.
- (c) The medical examiner.
- (d) Certified domestic violence centers.
- (e) Child protection service providers.
- (f) The office of court administration.
- (g) The clerk of the court.
- (h) Victim services programs.
- (i) Child death review teams.
- (j) Members of the business community.
- (k) County probation or corrections agencies.
- (l) Any other persons who have knowledge regarding domestic violence fatalities, nonlethal incidents of domestic violence, or suicide, including research, policy, law, and other matters connected with fatal incidents.
- (m) Other representatives as determined by the review team.

(2) A domestic violence fatality review team may be established at a local, regional, or state level in order to review fatal and near-fatal incidents of domestic violence, related domestic violence matters, and suicides. The review may include a review of events leading up to the domestic violence incident, available community resources, current laws and policies, actions taken by systems and individuals related to the incident and the parties, and any information or action deemed relevant by the team, including a review of public records and records for which public records exemptions are granted. The purpose of the teams is to learn how to prevent domestic violence by intervening early and improving the response of an individual and the system to domestic violence. The structure and activities of a team shall be determined at the local level. The team may determine the number and type of incidents it wishes to review and shall make policy and other recommendations as to how incidents of domestic violence may be prevented.

(3)(a) There may not be any monetary liability on the part of, and a cause of action for damages may not arise against, any member of a domestic violence fatality review team or any person acting as a witness to, incident reporter to, or investigator for a domestic violence fatality review team for any act or proceeding undertaken or performed within the scope of the functions of the team, unless such person acted in bad faith, with malicious purpose, or in a manner exhibiting wanton and willful disregard of human rights, safety, or property.

(b) This subsection does not affect the provisions of s. [768.28](#).

(4) All information and records acquired by a domestic violence fatality review team are not subject to discovery or introduction into evidence in any civil or criminal action or administrative or disciplinary proceeding by any department or employing agency if the information or records arose out of matters that are the subject of evaluation and review by the domestic violence fatality review team. However, information, documents, and records otherwise available from other sources are not immune from discovery or introduction into evidence solely because the information, documents, or records were presented to or reviewed by such a team. **A person who has attended a meeting of a domestic violence fatality review team may not testify in any civil, criminal, administrative, or disciplinary proceedings** as to any records or information produced or presented to the team during meetings or other activities authorized by this section. This subsection does not preclude any person who testifies before a team or who is a member of a team from testifying as to matters otherwise within his or her knowledge.

(5) **The domestic violence fatality review teams are assigned to the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence for administrative purposes.**

**741.3165** Certain information exempt from disclosure.

(1)(a) Any information that is confidential or exempt from s. 119.07(1) and s. 24(a), Art. I of the State Constitution and that is obtained by a domestic violence fatality review team conducting activities as described in s. 741.316 shall retain its confidential or exempt status when held by a domestic violence fatality review team.



(b) Any information contained in a record created by a domestic violence fatality review team pursuant to s. 741.316 that reveals the identity of a victim of domestic violence or the identity of the children of the victim is confidential and exempt from s. 119.07(1) and s. 24(a), Art. I of the State Constitution.

(2) Portions of meetings of any domestic violence fatality review team regarding domestic violence fatalities and their prevention, during which confidential or exempt information, the identity of the victim, or the identity of the children of the victim is discussed, are exempt from s. 286.011 and s. 24(b), Art. I of the State Constitution.

### **Protection of Victim and Victim Confidentiality**

Florida statute 39.908 deems all information about clients received by the Department of Children and Families or by authorized persons employed by or volunteering services to a domestic violence center, through files, reports, inspection or otherwise, without the written consent of the client to whom the information pertains.

#### **39.908 Confidentiality of information received by department or domestic violence center.-**

(1) Information about clients received by the department or by authorized persons employed by or volunteering services to a domestic violence center, through files, reports, inspection, or otherwise, is confidential and exempt from the provisions of s. 119.07(1). Information about the location of domestic violence centers and facilities is confidential and exempt from the provisions of s. 119.07(1).

(2) Information about domestic violence center clients may not be disclosed without the written consent of the client to whom the information or records pertain.

### **Team Membership**

The Fatality Review Team must function as a cohesive team in order to most effectively attain its mission. It is important that Team members trust one another, understand domestic violence fatalities and the local response system, maintain continuity and consistency in reviewing cases, and have excellent communication among Team members. The Team should also have members whose own disciplines or experience offer additional perspectives.

Thus, consistency in membership and attendance is crucial. They will be asked to make a two-year commitment to participate in the process, to attend Team meetings regularly, and to not miss such meetings. The Team intends to meet four times each year. Team members may agree to serve successive two-year commitments. A Team member or identified designee may be removed from the Team for nonattendance at two consecutive meetings or two meetings in a calendar year. In the event that a member resigns or is unable to perform the duties expected and is removed from the

Team, the Team will identify and extend an invitation for a replacement member with similar expertise.

At times community representatives may be asked to participate in reviews in order provide additional information to the Team. These community representatives will be required to sign the confidentiality agreement, and prior to their participation, the Team will decide the level of participation in cases as needed.

Fatality review is not an avenue to find fault or place blame, but rather a nonjudgmental evaluation of the events leading up to the family or intimate partner violence fatality, and it is not to be utilized as an avenue to find fault or place blame.

## **Confidentiality**

### **Team Member Confidentiality Agreement**

At the beginning of each meeting each Team member and any other person present will review and sign the following confidentiality agreement.

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**

We, the undersigned members of the Leon County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team, do hereby agree to hold in confidence any and all information reviewed, discussed, or received from or with any member of this team or other persons or sources. Aggregate statistics may be released by the Team.

Currently, the Team is coordinated by the Institute for Family Violence Studies. The Institute staff may convene a subcommittee or group of Team members to facilitate operations and organize Team meetings.

No member may disseminate information concerning the matters discussed during a Fatality Review Team meeting to any third party, including but not limited to representatives of the deceased, the accused, or his/her representative, any governmental agency, the media, or the public. Members who receive information within the scope of confidentiality set forth in FL Statute 39.908 may not disclose any such information to other members of the Team or in connection with the work of the Team without the prior written consent of the victim.

Any document(s) presented to the Team remain the property of the person offering the document(s) and shall be returned to the person who provided said document(s) when the need ceases or the case review is completed, whichever occurs first.

If a Team member is subpoenaed due to his or her involvement in the Fatality Review Team, he or she shall immediately notify the Team so that an appropriate response may be made.

An annual report shall be produced by the Team and shall become public upon being approved by the Team. The annual report may only include aggregate data. No case identifying information shall be included.

No member other than the coordinating Team member/agency shall speak on behalf of the Team and only aggregate data may be disseminated.

Any member who violates this policy shall be removed from the Team.

Any member who leaves the Team, for whatever reason, shall surrender all case documents received to the Team coordinator. The terms of this confidentiality agreement remain in force following any team member's separation from the Team and upon dissolution of the Team.

By our signatures below and by participating on the Team we do agree to abide by the requirements of this confidentiality agreement.

## Appendix C – Local Resources

### Shelter and Victim's Services:

**Refuge House:** The mission of Refuge House is to provide direct services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, and to their children and families, as well as to work to eliminate such violence through community education and public advocacy.

Address: PO Box 20910  
Tallahassee, FL 32316  
Phone: (850) 681-2111  
Website: <http://www.refugehouse.com/>  
Email: [info@refugehouse.com](mailto:info@refugehouse.com)

**Big Bend Homeless Coalition (BBHC):** The BBHC is a nonprofit community-based organization whose mission is to end homelessness in the Big Bend area. BBHC provides shelter and counseling services through the Hope Community and other transitional services.

Address: 2729 W. Pensacola Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32304  
Phone: (850)576-5566  
Website: <http://www.bigbendhc.org/index.htm>

### Crisis Counseling and Resources:

**211 Big Bend Crisis Hotline:** The 211 Crisis Hotline provides assessment, emotional support, crisis assistance, education, training, and referrals with accurate, up-to-date resource information.

Address: PO Box 10950  
Tallahassee, FL 32302  
Phone: (850) 617-6348 or 211  
Website: <http://211bigbend.net/>

**Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (FCADV):** The mission of the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence is to work towards ending violence through public awareness, policy development, and support for Florida's domestic violence centers.

Address: 425 Office Plaza Dr  
Tallahassee, FL 32301  
Hotline: 800-500-1119  
Website: <http://www.fcadv.org/>

**Florida Council Against Sexual Violence (FCASV):** The Florida Council Against Sexual Violence leads, informs, and inspires the people of Florida to create safe and just communities.

Address: 1820 E. Park Ave, #100  
Tallahassee, FL 32301  
Hotline: 888-956-RAPE (7273)  
Website: <http://www.fcasv.org/>

**Turn About: Victims of Abuse and Violence:** Turn About provides services for children, adolescents, and college undergraduate young adults who are at-risk for or have alcohol, drug and/or behavioral problems and/or who have been victims of family or non-family violence.

Address: 2771 Miccosukee Road  
Tallahassee, Florida 32308  
Phone: (850) 671-1920  
Website: <http://www.turnabout.org/victims.cfm>  
Email: [info@TurnAbout.org](mailto:info@TurnAbout.org)

### **Batterer Intervention Programs:**

There is a list of certified Batterer Intervention Programs at <http://dv.dcf.state.fl.us/results.aspx?type=bip>.

### **Legal and Injunction Assistance:**

**Refuge House Courthouse Injunction Office:** The Refuge House Courthouse Injunction Office provides information and assistance to victims, such as asking a judge for a legal order of protection, to stop a stalker, or keep a perpetrator from continuing to sexually harass and assault a victim.

Leon County Courthouse, Room 164  
301 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32301  
Phone: (850) 577-4480

**Legal Services of North Florida (LSNF):** LSNF is a private non-profit corporation dedicated to providing free legal representation to low income people with civil legal problems.

Address: 2119 Delta Boulevard  
Tallahassee, FL 32303

Phone: (850) 385-9007

Website: [www.lsnf.org](http://www.lsnf.org)

## **Law Enforcement Agencies:**

### **Tallahassee Police Department (TPD):**

Address: 234 E. Seventh Avenue

Tallahassee, FL 32303

Phone: (850) 891-4200 or 911

Website: <http://www.talgov.com/tpd/tpdHome.aspx>

### **Leon County Sheriff's Office:**

Address: 2825 Municipal Way

Tallahassee, FL 32304

Phone: (850) 922-3300 or 911

Website: <http://www.leoncountysos.com/>

### **Florida State University Police Department (FSUPD):**

Address: 830 West Jefferson Street

Tallahassee, FL 32304

Phone: (850) 644-1234

Website: <http://www.police.fsu.edu/>

**Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University Department of Public Safety:** The FAMU Public Safety Department is a full service law enforcement agency providing safety, security, and enforcement services to the university community.

Address: 2400 Wahnish Way

POM Bldg. A, Suite 128

Tallahassee, Florida 32307

Phone: (850) 599-3256

Website: <http://www.famu.edu/index.cfma=?PublicSafety&p=PublicSafetyHome>

**Big Bend Crime Stoppers:** Crime Stoppers relies on cooperation between the police, the media, and the general community to provide a flow of information about crime and criminals. The success of Crime Stoppers is based upon a greater awareness in the community that there is a crime problem, a willingness by the community to fight back against crime, and improved relationships between law enforcement, media, and the community. Tips can be reported to Crime Stoppers by phone, text, and online.

Phone: (850) 574-TIPS (8477)

Website: <http://www.bbcsi.org/>

## Other Community Resources:

**Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC):** The DVCC is a Tallahassee area task force on domestic violence. Their mission is to promote a zero tolerance response to domestic violence through education, prevention, and accessible coordinated intervention strategies focused on victim safety and offender accountability.

Phone: (850) 222-3845

Website: <http://www.facebook.com/DvccTally>

Email: [dvccally@gmail.com](mailto:dvccally@gmail.com)

**Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls:** This team is a group of community leaders who gather to consider input and promote awareness in the community regarding discrimination, employment, education, social services, and health as those issues relate to women and girls in Leon County.

Phone: (850) 222-2747

Website: <http://cms.leoncountyfl.gov/committees/detail.asp?id=123>

Email: [RobinHThompson@comcast.net](mailto:RobinHThompson@comcast.net); [sarah.oasis@comcast.net](mailto:sarah.oasis@comcast.net)

## State Agencies/Organizations:

**Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (FCADV):** The mission of the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence is to work towards ending violence through public awareness, policy development, and support for Florida's domestic violence centers.

Address: 425 Office Plaza Dr

Tallahassee, FL 32301

Phone: (850) 425-2749

Website: <http://www.fcadv.org/>

**Florida Council Against Sexual Violence (FCASV):** The Florida Council Against Sexual Violence leads, informs and inspires the people of Florida to create safe and just communities.

Address: 1820 E. Park Ave, #100

Tallahassee, FL 32301

Phone: (850) 297-2000

Website: <http://www.fcasv.org/>

**Florida Department of Children and Families Domestic Violence Program:** DCF ensures the safety of victims of domestic violence by developing partnerships with community organizations to create a seamless system of services.

The Florida Abuse Hotline: (800) 962-2873

**Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE):** The mission of FDLE is to promote public safety and strengthen domestic security by providing services in partnership with local, state, and federal criminal justice agencies to prevent, investigate, and solve crimes while protecting Florida's citizens.

Address: 2331 Phillips Road

Tallahassee, FL 32308

Phone: (850) 410-7000

Website: <http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/Content/home.aspx>

**Office of the Attorney General – Division of Victim Services:** The Division of Victim Services serves as an advocate for crime victims and victims' rights, and administers a compensation program to ensure financial assistance for innocent victims of crime. As part of its responsibility, the division also notifies victims of the status of any appellate decisions regarding their cases.

Address: 400 South Monroe Street

Tallahassee, FL 32399

Phone: 800-226-6667 or (850) 414-3300

Website: <http://myfloridalegal.com/pages.nsf/main/1c7376f380d0704c85256cc6004b8ed3!OpenDocument>

**Florida Commission on the Status of Women:** The Florida Commission on the Status of Women is a nonpartisan board, statutorily created in 1991, consisting of 22 appointed members. The Commission's mandate is to study and make recommendations to the Governor, Cabinet and Legislature on issues affecting women. These recommendations are presented in the form of an annual report that is distributed in the first quarter of each year.

Website: <http://www.fcsww.net/>

### **College and University Resources:**

**Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University Public Safety:** The FAMU Public Safety department is a full service law enforcement agency providing safety, security, and enforcement services to the university community.

Address: 2400 Wahnish Way

POM Bldg. A, Suite 128

Tallahassee, Florida 32307



Phone: 599-3256

Website: <http://www.famu.edu/index.cfma=?PublicSafety&p=PublicSafetyHome>

**Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University Counseling Services:** FAMU Counseling services provides a professional, confidential atmosphere where students can discuss academic and personal issues.

Address: 101 Sunshine Manor

Tallahassee, FL 32307

Phone: (850) 599-3145

Website: <http://www.famu.edu/index.cfm?Counseling>

**Florida State University Victim Advocate Program:** FSU's Victim Advocate Program offers include emotional support, instructor notification, referrals, and educational programming for persons in the campus community who have been victims of crime.

Address: University Center A, Suite 4100

Tallahassee, Florida 32306

Phone: (850) 644-7161 or (850) 644-2277 (Nights and weekends, call FSUPD)

Website: <http://victimadvocate.fsu.edu/>

**Florida State University Counseling Center:** The Counseling Center provides confidential psychological counseling and consultation services to currently enrolled FSU students.

Address: 942 Learning Way,

201 Askew Student Life Bldg.

Tallahassee, FL 32304

Phone: (850) 644-2003

Website: <http://counseling.fsu.edu/>

**Tallahassee Community College Mental Health Services:** The goal of Mental Health Services is to assist students with achieving their academic goals. Mental health counseling services are offered for Tallahassee Community College students.

Address: 444 Appleyard Dr.

Tallahassee, FL 32304

Phone: (850) 201-7726

Website: <https://www.tcc.fl.edu/Current/ESSS/MentalHealthServices/Pages/default.aspx>

**Institute for Family Violence Studies (IFVS):** The IFVS is a research institute at Florida State University's College of Social Work that serves as a catalyst for the elimination of child maltreatment and all forms of domestic violence.

Address: 296 Champions Way

University Center, Building C

Tallahassee, FL 32306

Phone: (850) 644-6303

Website: <http://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu/>

Email: koehme@fsu.edu