



STATE OF DELAWARE
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Domestic Violence Coordinating Council Strategic Plan 2023 - 2026

The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) is a State agency legislatively created in 1993 to improved Delaware's response to domestic violence. The Coordinating Council brings together domestic violence service providers and policy level officials to identify and implement improvements in system response through legislation, education, and policy development.

Mission Statement

The mission of the DVCC is to reduce the incidence of domestic violence and abuse in all its forms.

Vision Statement

The DVCC is committed to leading the nation through innovative legislative action, community education and an outstanding coordinated system response to domestic violence and sexual assault.

Statutory Duties

13 *Del. C.* § 2103

The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council shall:

- 1) Continuously study court services and procedures, law-enforcement procedures and protocol, and criminal justice data collection and analysis as it relates to domestic violence;
- 2) Effectuate coordination between agencies, departments and the courts with victims of domestic violence and abuse;
- 3) Promote effective prevention, intervention and treatment techniques which will be developed based upon research and data collection;
- 4) Recommend standards for treatment programs for perpetrators of domestic violence to the Department of Health and Social Services, Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families and the Department of Corrections;
- 5) Review and comment upon legislation relating to domestic violence introduced to the General Assembly at the request of any member of the General Assembly or on its own initiative; and
- 6) Improve the response to domestic violence and abuse so as to reduce the incidents thereof.

Overview

To begin the process of updating the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council's strategic plan, DVCC contracted the services of the Center for Court Innovation (CCI) to conduct six focus groups and two surveys on various subject areas related to Delaware's domestic violence response. Among participants in the focus groups were advocates, sexual assault nurse examiners, culturally specific victim service organizations, domestic violence treatment providers, civil legal attorneys, youth and children service providers, mental health providers, law enforcement, probation and corrections personnel, court personnel, judicial officers, and other stakeholders involved in the state's domestic violence response. The feedback gathered was used to review the existing strategic plan and inform the revisions in this new plan, to better promote victim safety and accountability in response to changes seen as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The DVCC continues to be focused on enhancing statewide coordination on domestic violence cases and promoting victim safety and offender accountability.

The focus groups and surveys were structured around the following subject areas:

- Sexual assault response
- Access to Justice
- Culturally specific response/representation
- Abusive Partner Intervention
- Criminal legal system response (two sections)
- Faith-based response
- Financial institution response

Based on feedback received from both surveys and focus groups, CCI highlighted several key, recurring themes that emerged through comments made by various stakeholders. The following themes were developed into key priority areas for the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council to consider in moving forward with revising its Strategic Plan:

- Coordination and collaboration of local resources to enhance wraparound services (legal services, housing, employment, etc.)
- Sustainable widely accessible domestic violence training and education across disciplines
- Funding to increase availability of resources for survivors and people who cause harm
- Financial empowerment for domestic violence survivors
- Cultural responsiveness, language access, racial equity

The DVCC selected five priority areas to focus the revision of the Strategic Plan, but due to time constraints, CCI could only facilitate discussion with the Council on three areas (priority areas 1-3). On the following pages are the 2023-26 Strategic Plan, which includes CCI's recommendations for all priority areas, as well as related tasks that DVCC Committees and staff have established as priorities and ongoing goals from the 2018-21 Plan. For a complete list of status updates on the 2018-21 goals, see Appendix A.

2023-2026 Strategic Plan Priorities:

Priority #1: Coordination and collaboration of local resources to enhance wraparound services

Three specific areas of focus:

- 1) Continued coordination of the Kent County Domestic Violence High Risk Team (DVHRT) while exploring feasibility for expansion to the remaining two counties
- 2) Fatal Incident Review Team (FIRT)
- 3) Establishment of Family Justice Center(s)

- ⇒ Focus ongoing development of coordinated community response or high-risk team that include advocates, domestic violence treatment and intervention staff, mental health and substance abuse service providers, civil legal aid, etc. that regularly communicate, share information, and assess community resources to support both survivors and people who cause harm
- ⇒ Identify potential community partners who can collaborate in coordinated community response teams
- ⇒ Maintain an updated, inclusive list of each jurisdiction's community stakeholders to enhance communication and inclusion in trainings, meetings, and availability to serve survivors and prevent the duplication of services
- ⇒ Develop a regularly updated statewide online resource manual compiling resources for survivors and people who cause harm by jurisdiction
- ⇒ Conduct comprehensive assessments to identify mental health and other potential co-occurring issues (e.g., substance use)
- ⇒ If the courts hold regular stakeholder meetings, include community advocates, domestic violence treatment and intervention programs, and other stakeholders to share information about their programs and voice concerns

Utilize the Domestic Violence High Risk Team to assess the pilot project:

- ⇒ Establish a data evaluation plan to demonstrate effectiveness and outcomes of the pilot project in Kent County
- ⇒ Depending on outcomes, make Kent County position permanent and expand to New Castle & Sussex Counties
- ⇒ Consult with the [Geiger Institute](#) for technical assistance as needed

Enhance the work of the Fatal Incident Review Team through the following actions:

- ⇒ Identify a clear definition of “near death” for tracking purposes as well as for determining what cases are eligible for a “near death” review
- ⇒ Define a process for both short term and long term follow up regarding FIRT recommendations
- ⇒ Implement a more streamlined and effective referral process for cases

- ⇒ Create a comprehensive and user-friendly tracking database for all FIRT cases
- ⇒ Consult with the [National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative](#) for technical assistance as needed

Utilize the multidisciplinary team and the Family Justice Center (FJC) model to implement wraparound services:

- ⇒ Utilize the final Feasibility Study to make decisions regarding FJCs in each county
- ⇒ Identify key direct service providers and services that survivors tell us they would most like to see in the FJCs
- ⇒ Establish a governance structure and funding sources to build and sustain FJCs
- ⇒ Create a safe and inviting atmosphere to enhance survivors’ experience by offering security, transportation, and onsite day care, etc.
- ⇒ Develop a community outreach plan for the FJC(s) to engage survivors who would not typically reach out to service providers or utilize IPV services
- ⇒ Develop a system to ensure ongoing training and development of the FJC staff and community partners
- ⇒ Develop a plan to evaluate outcomes and survivor satisfaction

Priority #2: Sustainable widely accessible domestic violence training and education across disciplines

Create and promote a sustainable training plan for stakeholder groups on dynamics of domestic violence, community resources, best practices for domestic violence treatment programs (versus anger management), trauma, cultural competence, and other pertinent areas. Ensure that training is widely accessible across disciplines. [NOTE: Training priorities were provided in Priority #4 of the 2018-21 Strategic Plan. The recommendations listed below came from CCI for the revised strategic plan and are similar to the previous priorities. There is overlap between this section and the “Ongoing Goals from the 2018-21 Plan” section on page 7. It is important to acknowledge that training is an ongoing and continual priority.] The plan should include:

Conduct a yearly assessment to identify and support training needs across various disciplines.

- ⇒ Outreach and assess community-based domestic violence organizations who can provide training on dynamics of domestic violence to community members and stakeholders
- ⇒ Survey court staff and stakeholders and community-based agencies annually to identify training needs to support accountability and safety
- ⇒ Record training modules on training topics to host on an accessible online platform
- ⇒ Devise methods to measure individual and systemic changes based on training efforts to assess outcomes
- ⇒ Engage sites after trainings to evaluate effectiveness and assess impact on protocols, policies, and day to day operations

<p>Target regular trainings specific to judicial officers, court personnel, medical community, and faith-based communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Education topics should include domestic violence treatment standards and best-practices, and risk assessment in intimate partner violence cases ⇒ Encourage judicial officers to observe domestic violence treatment programming in the community to be more familiar with these programs for sentencing and engage in more informed discussions with those who cause harm. ⇒ Host CNE/CME credited trainings related to the DVCC Medical Manual for Health Professionals ⇒ Create standards/recommendations to enhance faith-based responses to Domestic Violence and DV Treatment
<p>Offer regular trainings to law enforcement, prosecutors, public defenders, probation and corrections officers, and other stakeholders in the criminal justice system.</p>
<p>Offer community-wide multidisciplinary trainings to address turnover in staffing among all agencies working with survivors and/or people who cause harm</p>
<p>Convene roundtables to address various roles and organizations and facilitate greater coordination and understanding between all parts of the system in order to improve response and coordination</p>

Priority #3: Funding to increase availability of resources for survivors and people who cause harm

<p>Explore a method to track funding opportunities that support effective coordination between agencies, departments and the courts involved with the response to domestic violence</p>
<p>Pursue funding to increase availability of resources for survivors and people who cause harm.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Survey organizations throughout the state about current funding needs ⇒ Identify which organizations experience the largest gaps of funding ⇒ Pursue diverse streams of funding ⇒ Enhance efficiency of services within communities and to address possible duplication of services ⇒ Explore ways to partner with culturally specific organizations to apply for funding to enhance services to historically marginalized groups

Priority #4: Financial empowerment for domestic violence survivors

Enhance strategies to support financial empowerment for domestic violence survivors.

- ⇒ Pursue more robust outreach strategies and avenues to engage financial institutions and cultivate buy-in to help them understand how they can serve survivors of domestic violence
- ⇒ Identify and partner with community-based domestic violence organizations who can provide training on dynamics of domestic violence and safety planning to financial institutions
- ⇒ Assist in the development of protocols for financial institutions to respond to signs of domestic violence among clients
- ⇒ Identify financial institutions who can create programming and resources to help survivors become financially independent

Priority #5: Cultural Responsivity, Language Access, Racial Equity

Address differences in culture and norms and cultivate a domestic violence response that reflects the diversity of community members to ensure that all survivors and people who cause harm are represented, understood, and are given the same opportunities to have their needs supported

- ⇒ Identify and cultivate community partners that offer culturally-specific programming and collaborate with these organizations to ensure that stakeholders are trained in cultural responsivity and humility, the diverse needs of both survivors and people who cause harm, and how to create inclusive spaces beyond language differences
- ⇒ Identify gaps in language access during the reporting and criminal justice process, and provide regular, ongoing training on how to properly utilize these resources
- ⇒ Create ongoing training opportunities for stakeholders and community organizations on cultural responsivity and cultural humility
- ⇒ Gathering more demographic data for each county and track additional demographic data at the court level to determine whether the needs of all communities are being met and whether access to their justice system is proportional to demographic representation

Ongoing Goals from the 2018-21 Plan

Promote accessible treatment for offenders:

- ⇒ Promote services of DVCC Certified Treatment Providers
- ⇒ Expand resources or availability of Certified Treatment Providers
- ⇒ Continue the work to implement recommendations from the “Abusive Partner and Engagement Technical Assistance Plan” provided by the Center for Court Innovations

Promote access to legal resources. Enhance legal services and pro se assistance for victims and offenders.

Provide training, education and outreach appropriate to the needs of stakeholders (for example: students in K-12 schools, professionals, community members, law enforcement, stakeholders in the courts and in the criminal justice process)

- ⇒ Review training best practices and approaches for in person and virtual trainings on sexual and domestic violence
- ⇒ Review the public health approach, socio-ecological model, Universal and Primary Prevention models, and develop future trainings in accordance with these approaches
- ⇒ Research, choose and implement use of evidence-based curricula
- ⇒ Collaborate with community partners to offer training and education on sexual and domestic violence
- ⇒ Determine tools for evaluation and implement evaluation of learning outcomes at all training, education and outreach events
- ⇒ Establish tracking database for training and outreach conducted
- ⇒ Increase accessibility of all training and education offered

Appendix A
2018-2021 Strategic Plan Priorities with Status Updates:

Priority #1: Court Operations	Status <i>(as of 2/2023)</i>
<p>Create a statewide domestic violence coordinator position</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibilities may include: coordinate communication; identify cases in various court dockets; identify and assess training needs; discern through DELJIS whether civil cases have corresponding criminal cases 	<p>Completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Court approved for STOP funding for DV Coordinator. • Family Court DV Coordinator contract secured 09/2018.
<p>Establish a DV Compliance Calendar:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May involve the statewide coordinator and key stakeholders • Train staff on court coordination for compliance 	<p>In process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DV Compliance Calendar was created and began being used in New Castle County in November 2022. The goal is to expand to Kent and Sussex Counties in 2023. • Trainings were conducted in 2021.

Priority #2: High Risk Specialization	Status <i>(as of 02/2023)</i>
<p>Identify DVHR Team Coordinator position</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsibilities may include: coordinate communication with DVHR Team; receive and track high risk cases; prepare cases for review Pilot project in Kent County Secure office / work space to accommodate Coordinator and Team meetings Establish identification and referral mechanism for high risk cases 	<p>Completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOU with Capitol Police and DSHS for office space. DVCC continues VOCA-Assistance funding for DVHR Coordinator. DVHR Coordinator filled 3/4/19-12/31/22. New Coordinator hired 1/29/23. DVHRT Policies and Protocols were approved by DVCC 12/9/19.
<p>Identify members of DVHR Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-disciplinary team to include law enforcement, P&P, police-based victim specialists, community-based/shelter advocate; DOJ. Allow for case-specific ad hoc members 	<p>Completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DVHR Coordinator has met monthly with all partners to review cases since December 2019.
<p>Create MOU between the MDT Members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define roles and responsibilities Address confidentiality issues 	<p>Completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instead of MOUs, the DVHRT created “Rules and Procedures” which were approved by DVCC 12/9/19. It addresses roles, responsibilities & confidentiality.
<p>Develop a “system map” that would lead to development of protocol for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What information should be utilized (LAP, Danger Assessment Tool, Risk Assessment Tool, etc) Sharing information within agencies or with other agencies (create release of information forms; address confidentiality issues) 	<p>Completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Team identified the Lethality Assessment Protocol as the screening tool for law enforcement referrals because it is already in use by all LE agencies in Delaware. The Danger Assessment has been identified as the tool for DV Advocates/Hotline. Confidentiality & Information Sharing are addressed in the “Rules & Procedures.”

<p align="center">Priority #3: Services and Resources for Offenders</p>	<p align="center">Status <i>(as of 02/2023)</i></p>
<p>Promote accessible treatment for offenders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote services of DVCC Certified Treatment Providers • Expand resources or availability of Certified Treatment Providers. • Explore methods to reduce cost barrier for DV Treatment from certified programs. • Collaborate with DOC to explore services for offenders in custody 	<p>What has been completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatment Committee reviewed evaluation recommendations and established a workgroup to revise the Treatment Standards. • The Center for Court Innovation's Abusive Partner Accountability and Engagement Training and Technical Assistance Project met with the Treatment Committee 3 times in 2021. They provided feedback and a facilitated discussion on the Community Self-Assessment, Guiding Principles and training needs on 11/17/21. • Staff position supporting Treatment Committee was vacant for much of 2022 so the Committee met for the first time since Nov 2021 on 1/19/23. They discussed conducting training for Probation and Parole, the JP Retreat and Family Court. • People’s Place began running a pilot program in a level V facility in Smyrna. They are working with the second cohort and it is going well. • Each agency promotes its own services; services are listed on state agency websites; and referrals are made by courts, state services, and nonprofits.
<p>Promote access to legal resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance legal services and pro se assistance for victims and offenders • Create a series of web-based resources, including information for attorneys 	<p>What has been completed:</p> <p>Family Court Enhancement Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created and updated materials. Resources and video are available on the Court’s Protection From Abuse website. <p>Training Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DVCC Staff began using the Delaware Learning Center (DLC) as a platform to provide online

	<p>trainings and offered 5 courses. 73 people utilized licenses and have completed trainings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• May 2021: Partnered with Family Court and the Administrative Office of the Courts to offer virtual training from the Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention.
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Priority #4: Trauma-Informed Education, Prevention and Awareness	Status (as of 02/2023)
Establish target audience for educational programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance/expand education efforts in schools • Increase accessibility for educational events to the community at large 	Completed and ongoing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Awareness & Education Committee and DVCC Trainer/Educator increased contacts with high schools & middle schools. • Staff researched Best Practice Models for community education tools and programs (ex: the CDC’s “Dating Matters” program; the WSCADV’s “In Her Shoes”; “In Their Shoes”). • February 2020: DVCC partnered with community stakeholders to collectively reach 15 schools throughout Delaware for Teen Dating Violence and Awareness Month. Students engaged with resource tables and class presentations. • DVCC partnered with Parkway Academy in Dover, an alternative school for at-risk teens, to create a monthly TDV workshop. These sessions moved to virtual setting due to COVID-19. • 2021: DVCC staff revised training modules for school administrators, school nurses and school counselors (14 Del C§4166(a)). The modules were shared with DOE for publication in Schoology.
Identity training needs of professionals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create curricula • Increase accessibility for training • Face to face workshops; on-demand web-based 	Completed and ongoing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DVCC Training Committee continues to identify priorities and topics. • DVCC provided online trainings via the Delaware Learning Center (DLC). • The LET Workgroup launched the first series of online trainings in the Spring of 2021. Topics include: The PFA Process; Evidence-Based

	<p>Prosecution; The Sexualization of Strangulation; The Identification and Response to Stalking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DVCC partnered with CLASI, DVLS and the Beau Biden Foundation to offer the Stewards of Children Training. • DVCC staff continues to work with the Department of Education to produce an online TDV training for educators and administrators. • Annual LET Conference was held in October 2022 (after a hiatus due to Covid-19).
<p>Expand social media presence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create content for social media campaign • Build capacity for managing social media presence • Learn more about national education and prevention efforts 	<p>Completed and Ongoing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 2018: The DVCC received recognition as “Allied Organization” of the NO MORE Campaign to end DV & SA. • DVCC maintains accounts on twitter, facebook, and Instagram and uses these to publish new content and to promote the work of other national organizations and coalitions that address IPV. • DVCC utilized an intern from UD’s Women and Gender Studies department in Summer 2022 to develop social media campaigns, which are being posted on DVCC’s social media outlets in an ongoing basis. • Use of social media to educate our community about Family Justice Centers is being explored for 2023 currently.