

**ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
HENNEPIN COUNTY FAMILY VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL**

**2004**

**HENNEPIN COUNTY FAMILY VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL**

Chief Judge Lucy Wieland  
Hennepin County District Court  
Hennepin County Government Center  
Minneapolis, MN 55487

Re: **2004 Annual Report**

Dear Chief Judge Wieland:

On behalf of the Hennepin County Family Violence Coordinating Council, we are pleased to present you with the 2004 Annual Report and the proposed membership list for 2005-2006.

The strong attendance at the full Council and committee meetings during 2004 reflected effort to rebuild membership during 2003. Thirty to forty people attended most of the monthly full Council meetings, and three of the five committees met monthly. Furthermore, due to the strength of interest in the work of the Council, membership via the non-voting "Participant Observer" category grew significantly. We appreciate your recent decision to lift the cap of 35 voting members. The proposed membership list requests appointment of 42 members, and future appointment of an additional four members.

As Council co-chairs, we are especially appreciative of the leadership responsibilities taken on by the committee chairs and co-chairs. Their tireless work this past year ensured real progress in many different forums where domestic violence affects the citizens of Hennepin County. As referenced in the committee reports herein, each committee worked diligently to advance the goals of victim safety, perpetrator accountability, system collaboration, and innovation.

Throughout your tenure as Chief Judge, the Family Violence Coordinating Council will stand ready to fulfill its statutory role as the county-wide forum for addressing all issues pertaining to domestic violence. We look forward to another year of collaborative success.

Best regards,

Judge Tanja K. Manrique  
Co-Chair

Judge Diana S. Eagon  
Co-Chair

Cc: Assistant Chief Judge Gary Larson

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**FAMILY VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL  
BYLAWS**

**Adopted May 2003**

**PURPOSE OF THE FAMILY VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL**

The Fourth Judicial District has established the Family Violence Coordinating Council for the purpose of dealing with family violence issues. The Council will promote interdisciplinary programs and initiatives to coordinate public and private legal and social services and law enforcement, prosecutorial, and judicial activities. The general purpose of the Council shall be:

- To coordinate between agencies, departments and the courts on the issues of domestic violence and abuse;
- To promote effective prevention, intervention and treatment techniques; and
- To improve the response to domestic violence and abuse so as to reduce incidents of domestic violence and promote victim safety.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Overall, the Executive Committee shall take a directive role, providing leadership for the FVCC, handle emergency issues, and coordinate efforts.

- *Membership:* The committee will be made up of the FVCC co-chairs, the chairs of the committees, and two at-large members voted on by the FVCC.
- The committee chairs will attend all Executive Committee meetings and provide reports on their committees' activities. In the event of an absence, information and proxy votes, if applicable, will be communicated to the FVCC co-chairs. No designee will be sent to the Executive Committee meeting.
- The committee will meet the first week of month (the week before the FVCC meeting) at a standard time and location.
- The committee sets the agenda for the upcoming FVCC meeting and identifies what issues require a vote of FVCC members.
- The committee identifies and coordinates presentations to the FVCC.
- The committee shall address issues of membership attendance and filling vacancies.
- Members shall take minutes of meetings on a rotating basis.

**STANDING COMMITTEES**

There will be five standing committees of the Family Violence Coordinating Council:

- (1) Civil Committee
- (2) Criminal Committee
- (3) Advocates Committee

- (4) Child/Juvenile Committee
- (5) Community Outreach

**Committee structure:**

- Each committee will have a chair and vice-chair.
- Each committee will establish goals for the coming year.
- Each committee will submit a written year-end report to the Executive Committee committee activities.
- Each committee can establish temporary workgroups to work on specific, short-term issues.
- Additional standing committees may be established by a vote of the FVCC.

**Committee meetings:**

- Committees will have standing meeting times and locations.
- Committees will meet at least 6 times per year.
- Minutes must be taken and distributed to committee members and members of Executive Committee.
- Committee members (listed on committee roster) can vote on issues.

**Committees chairs:**

- Chairs serve for term of one year and can be reappointed.
- Chairs are appointed by the FVCC co-chairs.
- Chairs must be voting members of the FVCC.
- Chairs sit on the Executive Committee.
- Chairs run meetings and set procedure for meetings.
- Chairs maintain their committee rosters—identifying “members” as opposed to guests.
- Chairs reports on committee activity at each FVCC meeting, or asks designee to make report.
- New chairs should be identified by December and begin their term in January.

**Committee vice-chair:**

- Takes minutes.
- Appointed by chair of committee.
- Runs committee meeting in absence of committee chair.
- Does not attend Executive Committee meetings.

**FVCC MEETINGS**

- Meeting run by the FVCC co-chairs.
- Only FVCC members can vote.

- Name cards provided for all FVCC members.
- Attendance taken at each meeting.
- The FVCC meets the second Thursday of the month, 12:15—1:30 pm.
- The FVCC meetings are open. Anyone who is not a member is a guest. Guests are welcome to participate in the meetings, but only members can vote.

### **FVCC MEETING AGENDA**

- To get on agenda, notify the FVCC chair or other member of executive committee.
- Meeting has regular agenda items:
  - (1) Presentations
  - (2) Committee reports
  - (3) Business requiring votes
  - (4) Issues and other business not requiring votes
  - (5) Announcements and new issues

### **FVCC MEMBERS**

- The Chief Judge appoints all members.
- Members are expected to attend all FVCC meetings.
- Members must sit on at least one committee of the council.
- The FVCC will be made up from 35 representatives from governmental and nongovernmental organizations. *(See attached grid for breakdown.)*
- New members should be provided an orientation and given the FVCC bylaws and roster.

### **ANNUAL WORKPLAN**

- Each committee makes at least one goal for the year.
- The Executive Committee shall review the goals of each committee, as well as identify overall goals for the FVCC and come up with an annual work plan by the October FVCC meeting to be presented to the entire FVCC at the November meeting. The annual workplan shall be voted upon at the December meeting.

### **YEAR-END REPORT**

- The Executive Committee will prepare a year-end summary of FVCC activities for distribution to the FVCC and the community at large.
- The annual report shall be prepared in December and January, and delivered to the FVCC at the February meeting.

## **FVCC YEAR**

- The FVCC operates on a calendar year schedule—January to December. FVCC co-chairs and committee chairs begin their annual appointments starting in January.

## **OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING STAFFING**

- If a new FVCC Executive Director position is established, it is recommended that the ED have the following duties:
  - (1) Organize and maintain FVCC records.
  - (2) Maintain up-to-date FVCC membership roster.
  - (3) Take minutes of FVCC meetings and committee meetings.
  - (4) Provide orientation to new members.

**FAMILY VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
2004**

Judge Manrique, FVCC Co-chair  
Judge Eagon, FVCC Co-chair  
Kimberly Weinacht, Civil Committee Chair  
Judge Zimmerman, Criminal Committee Chair  
Deirdre Keys, Advocates Committee Chair  
Elizabeth Stofferahn, Esq., Child/Juvenile Committee Chair  
Dr. Pamela Harris, Community Outreach Chair  
Dr. Deb Eckberg, At-Large  
Mike Gephart, At-Large

**FAMILY VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND VICE CHAIRS**

**Criminal**

Chair – Judge Lloyd Zimmerman  
Vice Chair Jennifer Inz

**Civil**

Chair Kimberly Weinacht

**Advocate**

Chair Deirdre Keys  
Vice Chair Sarah Green

**Child/Juvenile**

Chair Elizabeth Stofferahn, Esq.  
Vice Chair Anthony Scott

**Community Outreach**

Chair Dr. Pamela Harris  
Vice Chair Fran Hesch

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CRIMINAL COMMITTEE**

The Criminal Committee of the Family Violence Coordinating Council met monthly in 2004. The Committee established goals and assessed the progress which had been made from the goals of the previous year. The Committee decided to narrow its focus for 2004 and concentrate on the following three areas:

1. Release Issues;
2. Firearms Issues; and
3. Enhancements.

**1. Release Issues.** The Release Issues Working Group met several times and was chaired by Kelly Cashman of the Hennepin County Attorney's Office. This working group identified areas where release of defendants charged with domestic abuse crimes was not being done in compliance with victim notification statutes, and set up a protocol for compliance with those statutes. The proposal has been drafted and is awaiting approval by the full Family Violence Coordinating Council.

**2. Firearms Issues.** Michelle Jacobson of the Minneapolis City Attorney's Office drafted an extensive document detailing state and federal statutes regarding firearms possession as it relates to domestic abuse crimes. That document was approved by the Family Violence Coordinating Council and was disseminated to any requesting party. Particularly, probation supervision units are in possession of the document and are better able to advise their clients when questions arise regarding firearms possession.

Also, at the end of 2004, in conjunction with other committees of the Family Violence Coordinating Council, this committee began work on an exploratory committee regarding the establishment of a gun repository in Hennepin County. That work continues as of this date.

**3. Enhancements.** The Enhancement Working Group met monthly in 2004 and has concentrated on a two-pronged approach for improving enhancements in the County. First, the working group has supported Michelle Jacobson's work with the current felony enhancement list and the numerous projects regarding outreach with respect to this document. It is our hope that additional agencies will familiarize themselves and use the current enhancement list as much as possible.

Our second focus has been on establishing a new form of the document so that the list does not have to be updated manually by any one person, but can instead be generated by some technical means and is also available via some other dated dissemination tool. Our work in this area continues.

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CIVIL COMMITTEE**

In 2004 the Civil Committee of the Hennepin County Family Violence Coordinating Council had regular attendance from many different people, including attorneys, advocates, judicial officers, court administration, court monitoring, and building security. This is an improvement from the past year, when people from so many different systems were not present. The attendance of so many different systems personnel has improved the functioning and quality of the committee's work. In 2004 we addressed the following issues:

**FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER MONITORED WAITING ROOMS**

One of the main issues the Civil Committee tackled this year is actually a myriad of issues arising out of the Family Justice Center monitored waiting rooms. Advocates, attorneys and other committee members expressed concern about victim safety and confusion about procedures of the monitored waiting rooms. As a result of the Committee's efforts, Court Administration made several significant changes at the Family Justice Center.

**Safety:** The location of public payphones was changed so that OFP Respondents could not use the location of the phone as an excuse to loiter near the Petitioner's waiting room. Court Administration put a shade on the window of the clerk's office so that Respondents could not threaten Petitioners through that window. While these changes are small, they have made a difference in victim safety in the Family Justice Center.

**Clarification of Procedures:** Civil Committee meetings gave many systems personnel the opportunity to communicate about the effectiveness of certain policies and procedures. The following are issues that were clarified during Civil Committee meetings:

- 1) Clerks should be staggering when they call parties to the courtroom;
- 2) Clerks will stagger service of the Respondent whenever possible, but they cannot hold a Respondent for any particular length of time once the Court has faxed the final OFP to the monitored waiting room;
- 3) Clerks are the proper person to contact when a party, their advocate or attorney need to contact the Court or security. Court Administration has put bulletin boards up in each monitored waiting room to communicate important information to parties.

**CHANGE IN PROCEDURE FOR JUDGES SIGNING EX PARTE OFP PETITIONS**

During several meetings the Civil Committee addressed the issue of changing procedures for the review and signing of Ex Parte OFP Petitions. In November, the FVCC asked the Civil Committee to discuss the issue and report back with pros and cons of a change in procedure. The Civil Committee discussed the issue and came to the conclusion that the

issue was premature for any meaningful discussion, but requested that they be given the opportunity to comment once there was an actual proposal.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

In June, Central Minnesota Legal Services gave a presentation about their Domestic Violence Internet Project, and the Civil Committee offered feedback on the project. The Civil Committee also provided feedback to District Court on an information sheet that was to be handed out to all parties once an OFP Petition was filed. In October, WATCH presented their OFP Project to the Committee. The WATCH OFP Project Report specifically mentions the work of the Civil Committee to improve victim safety in the OFP process.

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**ADVOCATE COMMITTEE**

The Advocate Committee processed and addressed safety concerns of Petitioners at the Family Justice Center. Changes were made and concerns have been minimized. The advocates report a big difference toward a positive outcome. There are a few remaining concerns that will be undertaken by the 2005 Advocate Committee.

This Committee also forged a relationship with the Minneapolis Police Department wherein they came together to discuss police procedure and policy. This discussion was very helpful, but the Advocate Committee regrets a poor attendance. We are discussing expanding to additional police departments in the jurisdiction.

The advocates decided in the second half of 2004 that they would get together on an as-needed basis in response to the needs of the FVCC. We had one meeting in November to discuss the topic of signing OFP Ex Parte orders. Consensus among the advocates was not to fix what is not broken. Judge Belois will be signing to the end of the year which lends itself to consistency. Additionally, it was brought up that the larger portion of the OFP's were granted with findings of domestic abuse.

Finally, in the November 2004 meeting, the Committee welcomed a new Chair of the Advocate Committee whose terms start in January, 2005.

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**CHILD/JUVENILE COMMITTEE**

The Child/Juvenile Subcommittee has met every month in 2004. The meetings are on the third Tuesday of the month at 12:15 p.m. in the C-20 administrative conference room of the County Attorney's office in the Government Center.

The core goals of the Committee remain:

- To increase the awareness of children's domestic violence issues in the community;
- To identify the unmet needs of children affected by domestic violence and realistic ways in which the court system can respond;
- To promote better information sharing between agencies which deal with family domestic violence issues; and
- To keep children's domestic violence issues visible to the Council.

The membership of the Committee increased to 16 in 2004. The agencies represented include the County Attorney's office, Department of Human Services, Adult and Juvenile Community Corrections, Domestic Abuse Project, Cornerstone, Tubman Family Alliance, Family and Children's Service, Division of Indian Work, Home Free, Freeport, and the Guardian ad Litem's office.

In January, the Committee presented several videos on children affected by domestic violence to the Council, which was followed by a discussion.

In May, Vicki Vial Taylor of the County Attorney's office spoke to us about information sharing between agencies and data practices.

In November, the Committee sponsored a fair for agencies which provide services to children affected by domestic violence. Approximately 30 agencies were represented, and many probation officers and DHS social workers attended. The fair was followed by a roundtable discussion facilitated by Dave Mathews of DAP. Feedback from providers and attendees was positive. A spring 2005 follow-up event is being planned.

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**OUTREACH COMMITTEE**

The Outreach Committee met nearly every month during 2004. To support our mission of implementing innovative services to families affected by domestic violence, we formulated a programmatic proposal for which we intend to seek funding. Titled, “Once and For All,” the proposal addresses the following well-known dynamic:

In domestic violence cases, too often the same perpetrators commit the same crimes against the same victims. The system addresses the family unit with a one-size-fits-all approach - the perpetrator is prosecuted, an Order for Protection may be issued, and the perpetrator is ordered to have no contact with the victim. Sometimes the no-contact order precludes or limits the perpetrator’s parent-child relationship. After the court process, reality sets in and often due to overwhelming life situations, the perpetrator resumes residency with the family.

Our hypothesis is that breaking the cycle of domestic abuse for families likely to reunite requires addressing the factors which contribute to the violence. Unless the contributing factors are addressed, the abuse likely will recur and the family will have more contact with the criminal, child protection, and/or family court. This cycle of violence contributes to the demise of the family unit, the well-being of the individuals, and child development. The effects on children living in abusive homes manifest in their interpersonal relationships, school conduct and educational development, and in the community. The cycle of violence also is costly to taxpayers because of the high number of system contacts made by family members in such situations.

Innovative means of reducing recidivism must be created. The Outreach Committee proposes to identify 25 “high-contact” families that have a long-term history of domestic violence, reunification, and unmet therapeutic or programming needs. Eligible families would be referred for comprehensive case assessment and case management. The victim, perpetrator, and children would be given individual case plans. The families would be evaluated for three years to gather data on recidivism, completion of case plan services, and family safety. Participation in the program would be voluntary. We are unaware of any similar studies having been completed.

In August, we were able to use portions of this proposal to support African American Family Services in submitting a grant proposal to the Child Welfare League of America for which AAFS would act as the convener of a leadership team to encourage “Parenting Rich Communities” through Family Preservation. Although the grant was not funded, it was ranked among the finalists. Through this process we documented a partnership between the HCFVCC, African American Family Services, Minneapolis Public Schools – Health Related Services, Tubman Family Alliance, Sojourner Project, Battered Women’s Justice Program, and the Council for Civic Parent Leadership.

Our goal for 2005 is to obtain grant writing assistance and funding to successfully move the proposal from concept to implementation.