



Legal Services Committee  
February 17, 2022

Amy Smith	HCDVCC
Thecia Jenkins	HCDVCC
Amy Johnson	HCDVCC
Rebecca Councill	HCDVCC
Jacklyn Guerra	HAWC
Kapriva Hutchinson	HCDA- DVD
Jessica Howton	Tahirih Justice Center
Katharina Dechert	Tahirih Justice Center
Barbara McInnis	PCT 5- Crime Victim Liaison
Shantel Davis	Family Ties

Amy Smith opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Introductions were made.

Thecia Jenkins gave an update on the planned upcoming trainings. The Training Sub-Committee has planned a series of 3 trainings tentatively scheduled for March 31<sup>st</sup>, April 28<sup>th</sup>, and May 26<sup>th</sup>. All the trainings will from 10:30 am to noon on ZOOM. The training will be an Advanced Guide for Advocates on the PO Process. It will be focused on those advocates who know about Protective Orders but not sure where and how to make referrals now since the changes in the 280<sup>th</sup> have taken place. The tentative schedule is

- March 31<sup>st</sup> will feature Leeja Thomas from the D.A.'S Office DVD to explain their new process.
- April 28<sup>th</sup> will feature speakers from Lone Star Legal and AVDA
- May 26<sup>th</sup> will feature speakers from TxFNE and Texas Legal Services

Barbara McInnis from PCT 5 Victim Services gave a brief overview of the role of an Advocate at a Law Enforcement Agency- they do immediate outreach to victims, especially DV victims and provide assistance with obtaining POs and CVC. They will also support the victim through the criminal justice process for as long as they want them to do so.

Jessica Howton and Katharina Dechert from Tahirih gave an update on their agency. Still doing most of their work remotely. Most court hearings are still virtual but they can assist their clients with that by having them in their office during the hearings. They have 3 job openings 1 in Development and 1 in Social Services and 1 in Policy. The Immigration Courts are open it is hard to determine which of the 4 courts a

case will be heard in. They have 2 locations Downtown, 1 in the Greenspoint area and 1 in Southwest Houston. They are scheduled to do a virtual training on TVIsas and UVisas for Bay Area Turning Point in April. They are also working on trainings for HPD and the D.A.'s Office.

HAWC's building is closed to all but staff and all services are virtual. They will reassess when the COVID level goes down.

D.A.'s Office DVD- clients are seen by appointments and virtually. They still have walk-ins and will fit them in if they can.

Family Ties is fully open and are back in court with their clients.

Amy Smith asked about Advocates present for Law Enforcement Interviews with Sexual Assault Survivors-

- HAWC- if it at the hospital then their SAC Advocates handle it, if any other place than a legal advocate will be present
- Family Ties- has not had any requests

Next meeting March 17<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 am.