



Policy Committee Meeting
September 19, 2023

Judge Judy Warne	Committee Chair
Amy Smith	HCDVCC
Thecia Jenkins	HCDVCC
Lt. John Klafka	HCSO
Maisha Colter	AVDA
Katharina Dechert	Tahirih
Bill Kelly	Mayor's Office
Lt. Kira Webster	HPD
Sonia Corrales	HAWC
Aarian Tipton	Texas Advocacy Project
Shannon Fowler	UH/Downtown
Alicia Nuzzie	HCDVCC
Rebecca Councill	HCDVCC
Celina Lilly	Fresh Spirit

Judge Judy Warne welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. She announced that the mandated Protective Order forms had been approved by the Texas Supreme Court on August 25th. They left in the prohibited guns. The forms cover all PO's including MOEP to Permanent PO's. You can download the forms from the Texas Supreme Court website. She also mentioned that we are all waiting on the United States Supreme Court to rule on the Rahimi Case which will not take place until at least October. Even if the ruling says the Federal law is Unconstitutional, Texas still has some laws in place that can be used so more arguments around this topic are sure to be down the road. She also talked about the burden of "likely to occur in the future" being removed from PO's. Some groups are concerned about what this means for PO's. Some Judges might just grant a PO without any restrictions just to say they complied or grant a PO for a short period of time. People are looking at adjusting the language around this burden and even looking at the definition of family violence in the broad sense. So, look for some brainstorming sessions over the next year to address this. Please email the Judge with any thoughts or issues that may arise.

Amy Smith talked about the successful Criminal Justice 101 training sponsored by the Legal Committee. It has been suggested to make this an annual training but also early next year to do a CJ 102 where advocates can apply what they learned to the management of their cases, especially regarding safety tools.

Alicia Nuzzie talked about how having the Domestic Violence Assistance Fund has allowed the freedom and flexibility to assist clients in an individualized way.

Thecia Jenkins talked about HCDVCC'S Voices of Freedom, a group of survivors who are doing great work in the community as well as speaking about their experiences. They have also been incorporated in her work at the HCSO's Academy. The officers have been impressed with their stories.

Rebecca Council mentioned HCDVCC is gearing up for October and all the activities planned.

Lt. John Klafka said they are also gearing up for next month. They will be selling Challenge Coins with the proceeds going to buy gift cards for their victims to use. They have several awareness projects they are working on around the County. They are also in the process of revamping their Advocates.

Lt. Kira Webster thanked Sonia Corrales for resuming the tours of the shelter for her new investigators. She also mentioned they are working on implementing HB660- the immediate entering of PO into the database no later than the next business day after it has been signed. They will be ramping up their staff to comply.

Katharina Decher announced Tahirih is now open for legal screenings again. They are launching a Young Professionals group. They are also looking for a Houston Executive Director and a Development Director. They are still working on the Enhanced Library Card to be accepted at places as an ID.

Shannon Fowler announced he will be teaching a Graduate Victimology class next semester and if anyone has or needs help with any projects, he is looking for some for his students.

Sonia Corrales wanted HCDVCC for Flexible Funding as well. She also mentioned that TCFV will be watching the impact of the new Stalking bill that passed and went into effect September 1st. She also mentioned that updating Chapter 51 on the Human Resources Code passed and it has been 20 years since that was updated. It will not take effect until September 2024. She also mentioned their new facility should be finished by late 2024 or early 2025. The facility will be for emergency housing as well as some transitional housing. She also said that HAWC's partnership with DART is expanding to include temporary stays at hotels for some victims until they can find them shelter space.

Maisha Coulter announced that AVDA is also gearing up for October. They just hired a Development Director but still have openings for 2 staff attorneys. She is also speaking on October 4th to the Houston Bar Association's Family Law Section with Judge Curvey.

Aarian Tipton announced the Texas Advocacy Project has an opening for a Staff Attorney as well.

Celina Lilly announced Fresh Spirit is having a 2-day Empowerment Event on October 20th and 21st. She also announced they have 2 positions open- a Program Coordinator and a Therapist.

Judge Warne thanked everyone for everything they do!

Meeting Adjourned.

Our next meeting is on October 17th at 2:00 via ZOOM.