



Legal Services Committee
January 18,2024

Amy Smith	HCDVCC
Deborah Alexis	HCDVCC
Celina Wells	KCM
Sarah Bryan	Advocates for Immigrant Survivors
Lt. John Klafka	HCSO
Amy Johnson-Duong	HCDV- Victim Services
Jessica Howton Stool	Houston Volunteer Lawyers
Jacklyn Guerra	HAWC
Stefanie Hayes	HCDVCC
Demika Warren	HCDVCC

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

Deborah Alexis stated that the P.O. training is about 95% complete. She needs scenarios from people about issues getting P.O.'s so they can be woven into the training. The training will be recorded so it will be available to everyone.

Sarah Bryan stated they have been very busy and hope to hire another legal advocate soon. The data and results from their first round of their research project should be out next week. A new round of research should start in March. She also noted that the fallout from SB 4 is happening and most of their clients are feeling like they do not belong even if they have their citizenship. Most are leery of interacting with the Criminal Justice System. Tahirih has been doing some "Know Your Rights" presentations.

Lt. John Klafka reported they have selected candidates to fill their 2 Victim Advocate positions just waiting to get the final approval to hire them. Also, Assistant Diaz has requested new DV reports that will include repeat addresses/repeat offenders/repeat victims. He also stated that they are focusing on building up their Sexual Assault Unit.

Amy Smith reported that the Harris County Sexual Assault Response Team report is out. You can find it at <https://hawc.org/2023-sart-report/> She also reported there have been preliminary discussions about a DV Docket in Criminal Courts as well as a possible Family Justice Center. She also discussed the Rahimi decision is still pending in the U.S. Supreme Court after arguments in November with over 50 Amicus briefs filed.

Jessica Howton Stool announced that Houston Volunteer Lawyers are accepting clients for citizen applications, record sealing cases, and Opioid cases. They do some eviction and landlord/tenant cases. There are waiting lists depending on the type of cases especially in Family Law cases.

Jacklyn Guerra reported that HAWC is working in the community at satellite offices until their new shelter is ready in 2025.

Celina Wells stated KCM has run out of space in the offices, so her staff is working hybrid now. She mentioned today is the Day of Action for Stalking and in 2023 KCM saw 3,000 people and half reported some stalking in their cases. She also stated they are having problems getting people to support groups. They are thinking of doing 1-to-2-night workshops instead. In February they are having their 10th Annual Night of Beauty where 27 clients get pampered for the night.

Our next meeting will be February 15, 2024, at 11:30 via ZOOM. Remember we are meeting on ZOOM so log on to the link in the body of the email not to TEAMS.

Meeting adjourned.