



Legal Services Committee
February 15, 2024

Amy Smith	HCDVCC
Rebecca Councill	HCDVCC
Maisha Colter	AVDA
Alexia Rauen	Advocates for Immigrant Survivors
Lt. John Klafka	HCSO
Thecia Jenkins	HCDVCC
Jessica Howton Stool	Houston Volunteer Lawyers
Jacklyn Guerra	HAWC
Jazmyne Olson	HAWC
Javier Dominguez	Tahirih
Alejandra Alvarado	HCDVCC
Kourtnei Gartman	Coalition for the Homeless
Celina Wells	KCM

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

Amy announced that HCDVCC has added Legal Services Trainings to the Teachable Platform. Currently there is DV 101, the Protective Order 101 training requested by the Committee and created by Deborah Alexis did before she left DVCC and went into Private Practice, and Criminal Justice 101. The PO and CJ training are specific to Harris County and does give a general overview of PO's and the CJ system before diving into Harris County specifically. It can be accessed through our website. <https://hcdvcc-academy.teachable.com/p/legal-services-training>

Thecia Jenkins announced DVCC is partnering with UT Austin for a training- Fact or Expert: An Introduction to the Ethical Roles & Use of Expert Witnesses on February 22nd.

Rebecca Councill announced you can go to the Events page on our website and our events can be added to your calendar.

Javier Dominguez announced that Tahirih is gearing up to start taking new cases around the first week of March. They are also working with other agencies to restart Court Screenings in Immigration Courts so they will have a consistent schedule. This will allow people to speak to

attorneys and know about their Immigration Rights. Currently, they have also restructured and are not looking for an Executive Director.

Jessica Howton Stool announced that Houston Volunteer Lawyers are at the VA Hospital every Friday for in person clinics. They are helping with Wills, Probate and Estate Planning. They also have 7 clinics for Naturalized Citizen cases. They are waiting for a funding decision about providing a Pro Bono Law School to help train Pro Bono Lawyers on several issues.

Jacklyn Guerra and Jazmyne Olson reported that HAWC has switched their DART Advocate over to the Legal Services Team and for the last quarter of 2023 they have 838 referrals. They estimated they have had over 1600 DART referrals in 2023. Their new shelter will go from 120 beds to 325 and is anticipated to open in 2025.

Maisha Colter announced AVDA is looking for a BIPP facilitator. They have also submitted several grants to renew their partnerships with HAWC and Tahirih.

Kourtnei Gartman reported that the Coalition for the Homeless is doing training on several issues related to Homelessness. Last quarter they had DV training and this quarter they are focusing on Youth Homelessness. They have estimated they have helped 416 youths with homelessness. (of the 416, 80 were kids of those youths).

Lt. John Klafka discussed the HCSO has implemented a Smart 911 program. Survivors can register with the program and have their information, their abuser's information and upload copies of their PO or conditions of bond. They can also have a code word that will trigger an immediate 911 response.

Thecia Jenkins discussed Domestic Violence in the Black Community that was hosted by HCDVCC on February 1st. The conversation was robust, and they will continue quarterly. Roundtables for the Hispanic and Latina Community are in the planning stages. She also announced she has been working with Houston Works on implementing a 1 day train the trainer workshop with 2 follow ups to see how they implemented their training.

Alejandra Alvarado introduced herself and said she would be coming to the meetings representing the High-Risk Team. If anyone is concerned about a case, they can reach out to her to see if it can be placed on the Team.

Celina Wells stated KCM will publicize their Community Impact Report. They saw a huge increase across the board for all their services. They are expanding their Sexual Assault Team by 3, a full-time licensed therapist, a part-time licensed therapist, and a full-time advocate to help reduced the counseling wait list and outreach. Their Sexual Assault Hotline is 281-693-7273, the DV Hotline is 281-391-4357 and their main number is 281-396-4007. Their Support Groups have started both in person and virtual. The English speaking group meets on Tuesday evenings from 6:00 to 7:30 pm and their Spanish speaking group meets Wednesday evenings from 6:00 to 7:30 pm

If anyone is interested in helping to plan a CJ 102 training, please reach out to Amy and let her know.

Our next meeting will be March 21st at 11:30 via ZOOM. Remember we are meeting on ZOOM, not Teams so log on to the ZOOM link in the body of the email. Meeting adjourned.