



2024 Domestic Violence Assistance Fund (DVAF)

Harris County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (HCDVCC)

Executive Summary

Background

The Domestic Violence Assistance Fund (DVAF), administered by the Harris County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (HCDVCC), was created in response to growing safety and stability concerns for survivors of domestic violence, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. In partnership with Harris County Commissioners Court, DVAF offers flexible financial support to help survivors address urgent needs, avoid homelessness, and rebuild their lives.

Launched in 2020 and funded initially through CARES and ARPA, DVAF has evolved into a county-funded line item, establishing a model of long-term investment in survivor safety. HCDVCC partners with 19 community organizations to distribute funds across all four precincts in Harris County.

Key Results (2023–2024)

- 2,558 Households Served - 7,317 Individuals reached, including 4,398 children
- 59% of those served were children under 18
- 96% of adult survivors were women; 33% identified as Hispanic
- Top Needs Met: food/basic needs (20%), rental assistance (17%), daily living expenses (17%)
- 50% of survivors had no reported income; 20% experienced homelessness

Flexible, Survivor-Defined Support

DVAF's flexible emergency assistance model allows survivors to receive support directly via gift cards, checks, or ACH payments. This flexibility empowers survivors to determine how best to meet their own safety and stability needs—whether it is paying rent, repairing a vehicle, or purchasing medication.

- 46% of all 2024 DVAF disbursements were in the form of gift cards
- Support included: transportation, childcare, utilities, safety tools, legal fees, and moving costs

“We are safe – this program helps make it safer for our children in our own way.”
– Survivor



Impact Beyond Immediate Needs

DVAF funding has contributed to:

- Increased safety via housing support, legal assistance, and protective tools
- Improved trust between survivors and advocates
- Reduced advocate burnout by offering quick, meaningful ways to assist
- Expanded organizational capacity of grassroots and culturally specific providers

Innovation and Integration

The Domestic Violence High Risk Team (DVHRT): HCDVCC's DVHRT integrated DVAF to help prioritize survivors at risk of homicide by offering housing, safety planning, and financial assistance.

Neurofeedback Initiative: Launched with DVAF support, this trauma-regulation program provides nontraditional mental health support. Over 200 sessions have shown improvements in emotional regulation and wellbeing.

Harm Reduction/Violence Prevention Program: This pilot project served 31 IPV offenders. Only 6.5% reoffended vs. a national average of 40–50%, showing early signs of success in reducing violence and recidivism.

Lessons Learned and Leadership

The DVAF model has highlighted the importance of reducing administrative burdens, building infrastructure, and investing in community-based and culturally specific providers. HCDVCC has helped partners overcome barriers by streamlining reimbursement and providing tools and mentorship.

A National Model of Survivor-Centered Care

DVAF has been recognized nationally for its equity-centered and trauma-informed approach. A recent case study was featured by the National Safe Housing Alliance and shared with key federal agencies.

**“If I had known this kind of help was available, I would have left a long time ago.”
— Survivor**

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