

4th Judicial Circuit
Family Violence Coordinating Council
FACT SHEET

Purpose Statement - The purpose of the 4th Judicial Circuit Family Violence Coordinating Council is to establish a forum to share & discuss information in order to promote a coordinated response to family violence in our communities. The council works to improve the institutional and professional responses to family violence issues through education, prevention, and coordination of intervention & services for victims and perpetrators of child abuse, teen dating violence, domestic violence, elder abuse, & sexual assault. A goal of the Council is to contribute to the improvement of the legal system & the administration of justice.

Council Chair

Hon. S. Gene Schwarm, Chief Judge
Chief Judge's Office, 4th Judicial Circuit
Montgomery County Courthouse
120 N. Main St.
Hillsboro, IL 62049
PH: 217-532-9501

Local Coordinator

Brenda Benton
Educational Services Division, ROE #3
1830 W. Fletcher, Suite B
Vandalia, IL 62471
PH: 618-283-1763
e-mail: bbenton@fayette.k12.il.us

Committee Structure & Membership - The FVCC of the 4th Judicial Circuit is a body of local decision makers from all systems that have contact with family violence victims & perpetrators. These include judges, probation officers, state's attorneys, public defenders, law enforcement officers, circuit clerks, victim advocates, clergy, hospitals & health care providers, social services, DCFS, educators, mediators, & victim service providers. The Council engages in education, prevention, & coordination of intervention & services for victims & perpetrators of child abuse, teen dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, & elder abuse. There are 6 Issues Committees that meet regularly to address issues of family violence in the 9 counties in the 4th Judicial Circuit. Our Planning/Steering Committee meets 4 times a year to determine the direction that the FVCC will take, what issues need to be addressed by the Council, & the topic of our annual Symposium/Full Council Meeting.

Accomplishments - Some of our accomplishments include: Annual Symposiums/Full Council Meetings with nationally-known speakers such as Mark Wynn, Lydia Walker, Paul Greenwood; Protocol Development & Training for Hospital Staff; DV & Stalking Protocol Development & Training for Law Enforcement Officers; Development of Victim's Packets for Law Enforcement Officers to use in DV cases; Protocol Development & Training and Teacher's Sheets for Educators & School Staff on their Response to Victims of Family Violence; Development of a Quick Clergy Guide; Workshops & Trainings on The Link Between Animal Abuse, Child Abuse, & Domestic Violence; The Effects of Domestic Violence & Methamphetamine on Children; Fall & Spring Teen Dating Violence Workshops for Junior & Senior High students, 2003 to 2009; Mandated Reporting; Stalking Training for advocates & law enforcement officers; FOID Card, Domestic Violence, & Mental Health Training; Religion: As a Roadblock & a Resource for Domestic Violence Victims; and Elder Abuse. We have also compiled a large collection of resources to assist in education of professionals and the general public. Members are currently participating in the federally-funded Office For Violence Against Women Rural Grant to address the safety of victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking in the 4th Judicial Circuit.

Future Direction - The FVCC believes that the reduction of family violence is central to the reduction of other forms of violence. Reducing and preventing family violence will contribute significantly to the creation of communities that are safe, secure, and healthy.