



17th Judicial Circuit Court Family Violence Coordinating Council

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the Family Violence Coordinating Councils, at both the state and local judicial circuit level, is to establish a forum to improve the institutional, professional and community response to family violence including child abuse, domestic abuse, and elder abuse; to engage in education, prevention, and coordination of intervention and services for victims and perpetrators, and to contribute to the improvement of the legal system and the administration of justice.

Council Chair

The Honorable Rosemary Collins, Circuit Judge, 17th Judicial Circuit

Coordinator Contact Information

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Description of Committee Structure & Membership of the Council

The 17th Judicial Circuit's FVCC is made of 6 Committees: Steering, Children's Safe Harbor Exchange Center Planning, Child and Youth Safety, Court Procedure, Domestic Violence Awareness Month Planning and Elder Abuse Committee. The Steering Committee, chaired by Judge Collins, is made up of Committee Chairs. This Committee oversees the work of the Council.

The Child and Youth Safety, Court Procedure, and Elder Abuse Committees meet monthly. The Children's Safe Harbor Planning Committee meets as needed and is divided into four working subcommittees. The Domestic Violence Awareness Month Planning Committee meets from June to October as needed. Each committee has a chair-person who oversees the meetings and the work of the Committee. The Membership is drawn from various local groups representing law enforcement, criminal justice system, schools, health care professionals, faith community, social service, community members and local and state government. Anyone interested in participating on a committee is welcome.

Accomplishments of the Council

The Council hosts two free symposiums and other events throughout the year to achieve our goals of family violence prevention, intervention, and education. In 2008 the Council hosted a national speaker who provided information on issues that surround law enforcement regarding family violence. The Council also welcomed a speaker who provided valuable information about immigration laws as they relate to family violence.

Each committee sets a group of goals for the calendar year based on the needs of our community. The elder abuse committee completed a multimedia tool kit that was sent to 200 faith based groups. The kit contained education information and suggestions for addressing elder abuse in the faith community. The Child and Youth Safety Committee continue to raise awareness, during the month of April, about child abuse prevention. Over 80 professionals and community members attended an awareness event hosted by the Council last year. The Court Procedure committee was successful in helping the court system implement an automated Order of Protection system which increased the availability of this protection remedy to those in need. The Council provided support to the Children's Safe Harbor planning committee and Board of Directors and is proud that as a result of the collaboration this valuable service is a reality in Winnebago County.

Future Direction

The Council continues to identify and address current trends and needs within the 17th Circuit. We will continue to provide education, information and support to the various systems which intersect those who are affected by the devastating issues of family violence.