

Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Family Violence Prevention Council Serving Bureau, Grundy, & LaSalle Counties

Purpose: The Family Violence Coordinating Councils (FVCC), at both the state and local/circuit level, was created 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 and prevention; to coordinate intervention and services for victims and perpetrators; and, to contribute to the improvement of the legal system and the administration of justice.

Structure: The Council owes its structure to the FVCC, which is funded by the Illinois Violence Prevention Authority. It is chaired by Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Chief Judge James A. Lanuti and co-chaired by Circuit Judge Cynthia Raccuglia and Associate Judge James Brusatte.

Council Staff: Two persons currently staff the Council: Council Coordinator Nancy Churchill, funded by the FVCC, and Special Projects Coordinator Christie Barnes, funded through other state and federal grants. A third staff member will be hired to coordinate activities of the Illinois Health Cares grant. Staff can be reached by mail at 100 W. Lafayette, Ottawa, IL 61350; by telephone at 815.431.0630; by fax at 815.431.0637; or by e-mail at 13fvpc@mchsi.com.

Membership: It is the membership of the Council that makes it all work! About 500 community members from service and advocacy agencies, law enforcement, the judiciary, education and various health care professions come together within the Council to collaborate on ending interpersonal violence. Council work is accomplished through committees: the Executive Committee guides Council activities; Bureau, Grundy, and LaSalle Counties each has one main committee and several subcommittees to address local issues; and the supplemental activities of Elder Abuse Training, Safe to Live, and Health Cares augment the work of the Council. All committees work in tandem to identify specific issues and develop appropriate and coordinated responses.

Accomplishments: Since 1996, the Council has addressed adult partner abuse, child abuse, youth dating violence, and elder abuse. We have expanded from our focus on community awareness to include a focus on community engagement in preventing interpersonal violence, and expanded our work with professionals from protocol development and education to expanding local services that are available to victims and perpetrators of interpersonal violence.

In 2006, we worked with local agencies to procure funding to open five supervised visitation and safe exchange centers for families who have experienced domestic violence, a service that had not existed in our area before. In 2007, ten local residents were trained in QPR through our efforts, training enabling community members to recognize warning signs associated with suicide and take action to help. During that same year, we also developed a social marketing campaign to address Shaken Baby Syndrome.

Members of the Council routinely work together on public awareness events, local resource manuals, a speakers bureau, law enforcement and health care protocols and related documents, social service screening tools, clergy manuals and resource guides, schools resource guides, and protocols for educators. The Council is recognized as a repository for local data and as a source for trainings for community professionals and the general community on interpersonal violence issues including child abuse, elder abuse, and youth dating violence.