DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW

ILLINOIS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW:

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE FOR REGIONAL REVIEW TEAMS

1st Edition

ICJIA

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Special recognition extends to the Illinois Statewide Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee co-chairs for their feedback and contribution to the guide:

- Sara Block, J.D, Managing Director of Advocacy and Partnerships at Ascend Justice

- Megan Alderden, Ph.D., Director & Associate Professor of Criminology at DePaul University

Thank you to the members of the Statewide Committee for providing direction and feedback that shaped the Illinois Domestic Violence Fatality Review model and the implementation of the State's regional review teams.

This guide reflects the collaborative efforts of passionate and committed individuals and organizations dedicated to ending domestic violence. In acknowledgment of their impact and efforts, we extend our deepest gratitude.

A NOTE FROM THE STATEWIDE COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS

On behalf of the Illinois Statewide Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee, we are pleased to present the first edition of ***Illinois Domestic Violence Fatality Review: A Comprehensive Guide for Regional Review Teams***. This publication provides model guidelines and practices to assist stakeholders in forming and maintaining domestic violence fatality review teams in Illinois, in selecting and reviewing cases, and in developing and implementing recommendations.

We encourage all regional review team members to familiarize themselves with this guide and to use it as an aid in navigating case reviews and technical aspects of the fatality review process.

In this guide, you will find information on the following topics:

1) Establishing a team
2) Team sustainability
3) Meeting organization and protocols
4) Confidentiality
5) Selecting cases
6) Conducting case reviews
7) Reporting to the Statewide Committee
8) Developing recommendations

The Statewide Committee is dedicated to a culture of continuous learning and improvement, and therefore, we invite your feedback and suggestions to keep this guide updated and relevant as new questions and challenges emerge.

As co-chairs of the Statewide Committee, we would also like to express our gratitude to everyone who has participated in and contributed to this effort. Thank you for your commitment to domestic violence fatality review in Illinois.

Sincerely,

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION **1**

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW 2

Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority *2*

Statewide Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee *2*

FATALITY REVIEW PHILOSOPHY 3

Important Terms (750 ILCS 62/5) *4*

CHAPTER 1: ESTABLISHING A REVIEW TEAM **6**

SECTION 1-01: BUILDING A TEAM 6

What is a Regional Review Team? (750 ICLS 62/5) *6*

Team Jurisdiction (750 ILCS 62/45) *6*

Team Formation *7*

Selecting Team Members (750 ILCS 62/50) *7*

Appointing Team Members *9*

SECTION 1-02: STRUCTURING A TEAM 10

Team Roles and Responsibilities (750 ILCS 62/60) *10*

SECTION 1-03: PREPARING TEAM MEMBERS 12

Getting Started *12*

Team Duties and Responsibilities (750 ILCS 62/65) *13*

Team Policies and Procedures *14*

Recognizing Vicarious Trauma *16*

CHAPTER 2: CONFIDENTIALITY **18**

SECTION 2-01: CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENTS (750 ILCS 62/75) 18

SECTION 2-02: AGENCY CONFIDENTIALITY 19

SECTION 2-03: DOCUMENT STORAGE AND DESTRUCTION (750 ILCS 62/85) 19

Document Storage *19*

Destruction of Confidential Information *20*

SECTION 2-04: BREACH OF CONFIDENTIALITY (750 ILCS 62/75) 20

CHAPTER 3: MEETING ORGANIZATION **21**

SECTION 3-01: RRT MEETINGS 21

SECTION 3-02: MEETING LOGISTICS 21

CHAPTER 4: PREPARING FOR A REVIEW **24**

SECTION 4-01: CASE IDENTIFICATION AND SELECTION (750 ILCS 62/70) 24

Identifying Cases *24*

Guidelines For Selecting Cases *26*
SECTION 4-02: GATHERING DOCUMENTS (750 ILCS 62/80) 28
SECTION 4-03: GUEST PARTICIPANTS 31
SECTION 4-04: INTERVIEWS 32
Interview Considerations *32*
CHAPTER 5: REVIEWING A CASE 37
SECTION 5-01: STEP ONE – ESTABLISH A TIMELINE 37
SECTION 5-02: STEP TWO - HIGHLIGHT ANTECEDENTS OR RED FLAGS 38
SECTION 5-03: STEP THREE - IDENTIFY AND ANALYZE AGENCY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT 38
Remaining or Unanswered Questions *39*
SECTION 5-04: STEP FOUR - BRAINSTORM RECOMMENDATIONS 39
Post-Review Survey *41*
Closing Practice *41*
CHAPTER 6: REPORTING AND RECOMMENDATIONS 42
SECTION 6-01: TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS 42
Drafting Actionable Recommendations (750 ILCS 62/65) *42*
SECTION 6-02: REPORTING REQUIREMENTS 45
Reporting to the Statewide Committee *45*
APPENDIX 46
APPENDIX A: SAMPLE LETTER OF INVITATION 46
APPENDIX B: MEMBER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT 52
APPENDIX C: GUEST CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT 55
APPENDIX D: SECURE STORAGE GUIDELINES 58
APPENDIX E: SAMPLE FIRST MEETING AGENDA 59
APPENDIX F: SAMPLE DVFR PLANNING AGENDA 60
APPENDIX G: SAMPLE CASE REVIEW AGENDA 61
APPENDIX H: DOCUMENT REQUEST TRACKER 62
APPENDIX I: REQUEST FOR RECORDS 63
APPENDIX J: CHRONOLOGICAL TIMELINE 65
APPENDIX K: DATA COLLECTION WORKSHEET 66
Incident Characteristics *66*
Primary Victim/Survivor Information *67*
Offender Information *69*
Relationship Characteristics *72*
Prior Incidents and System Contact *73*
Case Characteristics *76*
Risk Factors *78*

Analysis *79*
Findings and Recommendations *80*
APPENDIX L: POST-REVIEW SURVEY 81
APPENDIX M: DEVELOPING SMARTIE RECOMMENDATIONS WORKSHEET 87
APPENDIX N: ANNUAL REPORT TEMPLATE 88
APPENDIX O: BIENNIAL REPORT TEMPLATE 92

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Illinois Domestic Violence Fatality Review: A Comprehensive Guide for Regional Review Teams.* Illinois has recently joined more than fifty states and countries in formalizing a process to review domestic violence fatalities and near-fatalities through its passage of the *Domestic Violence Fatality Review Act* (the Act).[1] The Act governs the process by which regional multidisciplinary teams conduct comprehensive reviews of domestic violence related fatalities and near-fatalities to:[2]

- Examine barriers to safety, justice, self-determination, and equity.
- Identify systemic and community gaps and consider alternate and more effective systemic responses.
- Develop recommendations for reform to reduce the occurrence, frequency, and severity of domestic violence and prevent fatalities and near-fatalities.

This guide will assist domestic violence fatality regional review teams in Illinois as they navigate and build upon the requirements of the Act.

[1] 750 ILCS 62/1
[2] 750 ILCS 62/5

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

ILLINOIS CRIMINAL JUSTICE INFORMATION AUTHORITY

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) is a state agency dedicated to improving the administration of criminal justice. ICJIA brings together key leaders from the justice system and the public to identify critical issues faced by the criminal justice system in Illinois and to propose and evaluate policies, programs, and legislation that address those issues. The agency also works to ensure the criminal justice system in Illinois is efficient, effective, and equitable. The Statewide Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee is an Ad Hoc Committee of the ICJIA Board. The domestic violence fatality review project director is also an employee of ICJIA.

STATEWIDE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Statewide Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee was established as an Ad Hoc Committee of the ICJIA Board by the *Domestic Violence Fatality Review Act* in 2021. The purpose of the Statewide Committee is to establish and provide guidance, leadership, technical assistance, and other supports to regional domestic violence fatality review teams. It also serves as a statewide resource for addressing domestic violence and domestic violence related fatalities and near-fatalities.

FATALITY REVIEW PHILOSOPHY

The purpose of fatality review work is to create a culture of safety that protects victims and communities while holding offenders responsible and fostering avenues of offender accountability. This guide is intended to serve as a resource for teams in Illinois as they engage in the critical work of reviewing domestic violence related fatalities and near-fatalities using a "no blame, no shame" philosophy. The adoption of this philosophy will ensure that no one agency is faulted, that barriers are openly discussed, and that trust in the community and among team members is built. Blaming and shaming individuals or organizations is ineffective because:

1) Perpetrators of domestic violence often use methods of blame and shame towards victims, and it is critical that this work does not perpetuate the same blaming culture.
2) Blaming individuals or agencies who have come together for solutions will prevent the open sharing of information teams need.

Therefore, it is crucial to regularly remind members that teams are formed to decrease domestic violence related fatalities and near-fatalities through improved community response, not to place blame on individuals or organizations. According to the National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative: [3]

> Although the perpetrator of domestic homicide bears the ultimate responsibility for the killing…The failure to prevent deaths through inaction, negligence, malfeasance, corruption, the inability to better coordinate service delivery…, is common in many walks of life where the safety and security of the public are at stake. It is essential that review teams gather information to make informed decisions about how to introduce changes to prevent domestic violence.

[3] National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative (n.d.). *What philosophies have teams adopted and why?* https://ndvfri.org/about/faqs/

IMPORTANT TERMS (750 ILCS 62/5)

1) **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:** Abuse as it is defined in Section 103 of the Illinois Domestic Violence Act of 1986 and paragraph (1) of subsection (b) of Section 112A-3 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of 1963. The National Network to End Domestic Violence defines domestic violence as a pattern of coercive, controlling behavior that can include physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual abuse, or financial abuse (using money and financial tools to exert control) exerted to maintain power and control over an intimate partner.[4]
2) **FATALITY:** Death caused by suicide or homicide.
3) **NEAR-FATALITY:** Death that nearly occurred by means of suicide or homicide, or an injury that could have resulted in death.
4) **FAMILICIDE:** The killing of a family including one or both parents and any children, by a family member.
5) **OFFENDER:** The person who inflicted domestic violence upon the victim and caused the victim's death, or the person who inflicted domestic violence upon the survivor. The offender can be deceased or alive and does not need to be the subject of a criminal investigation or prosecution.
6) **VICTIM:** The person who experienced domestic violence and is deceased through homicide or suicide.
7) **SURVIVOR:** Person who experienced domestic violence and is alive.
8) **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW (DVFR):** The deliberative process of multiagency and multidisciplinary teams that select eligible cases of domestic violence related fatalities and near-fatalities. It involves tracing prior systemic interventions and involvement to develop recommendations to prevent domestic violence fatalities and near-fatalities and reduce the frequency and severity of domestic violence.

[4] National Network to End Domestic Violence. (n.d.). *Frequently Asked Questions about Domestic Violence: What is domestic violence?* https://nnedv.org/content/frequently-asked-questions-about-domestic-violence/

9) **REGIONAL REVIEW TEAM (RRT):** Multiagency and multidisciplinary team that select and review eligible domestic violence related fatalities and near-fatalities.

CHAPTER 1: ESTABLISHING A REVIEW TEAM

Before reviewing cases, it is necessary to establish a statutorily compliant RRT. The *Domestic Violence Fatality Review Act* (the Act) outlines basic requirements for RRT organization. However, many of the ways in which teams will organize are at the discretion of each team. This chapter provides guidance on the statutory requirements for establishing and organizing an RRT, including jurisdictional boundaries, membership criteria, appointment terms, responsibilities, and formulation of team procedures.

SECTION 1-01: BUILDING A TEAM

WHAT IS A REGIONAL REVIEW TEAM? (750 ICLS 62/5)

An RRT is a multidisciplinary group of individuals who come together, at the local, regional, or state level, to review fatal and near-fatal incidents related to domestic violence. Through a thorough examination of fatal and near-fatal cases, RRTs work to identify patterns, trends, risk factors or red flags, and missed opportunities for prevention. After reviewing a variety of cases over two years, RRT members work together to develop policy recommendations aimed at strengthening interventions for victims, survivors, and offenders and improving the ways communities and systems respond to domestic violence.

TEAM JURISDICTION (750 ILCS 62/45)

Each RRT must be established within the boundaries of one of Illinois' 25 judicial circuits (Figure 1). Once a review team is formed within a circuit, it may be divided into one or more sub-teams, at the team's discretion, to allow for more efficient operation. For example, if a circuit has more than one county, each county may form their own team within the circuit. Teams will consider domestic violence related fatalities and near-fatalities that occurred within their regional jurisdiction.

Figure 1. Illinois Judicial Circuit Map

TEAM FORMATION

Teams typically form through the following steps:

1) **INTEREST:** A Statewide Committee member or the Project Director approaches someone in the circuit court region, or someone from the circuit court boundary approaches the Statewide Committee or the Project Director about bringing DVFR to the region.
2) **MEETING:** The Statewide Committee co-chairs, the Project Director and the interested person meet to discuss the DVFR initiative in Illinois and how to begin the process of forming an RRT.
3) **OUTREACH:** The interested person in the region reaches out to potential RRT members and schedules an initial meeting with them. At the meeting, the Statewide Committee co-chairs and/or the Project Director share with the potential members about domestic violence fatality, the structure of the initiative in Illinois, and next steps for forming an RRT.

SELECTING TEAM MEMBERS (750 ILCS 62/50)

Teams should be comprised of a diverse group of members who:

- Live or work within the boundaries of the team's judicial circuit.
- Honor confidentiality.
- Employ a non-defensive approach.
- Regularly attend meetings.
- Participate in a collaborative and thoughtful way.

The Act lists the specific categories of members that must be on the RRT (Figure 2). Teams are encouraged to appoint required members from a variety of backgrounds (e.g., age, race, gender, ethnicity, language proficiency) so that cases may be examined from a variety of perspectives.

REQUIRED	• State's Attorney or Assistant State's Attorney • A public offender or other criminal defense attorney • A coroner or medical examiner • A Sheriff, Deputy Sheriff, Chief of Police, or other law enforcement officer with experiences in domestic violence cases • A social service provider whose significant role is to provide services to survivors of domestic violence • A social service provider who has significant experience working with domestic violence offenders, if available in the region • A civil legal services lawyer or pro bono lawyer connected with a civil services program
AT LEAST TWO OR MORE REQUIRED	• A public health official • A physician licensed by the State • An advanced practice registered nurse • A licensed mental health professional • A circuit court judge or associate judge • A clerk of the circuit court or other elected or appointed court official • An administrative law judge • An emergency medical technician, paramedic, or other first responder • A local or regional elected official or State legislator • A representative from the private business sector • A member of the clergy or other representative of the faith community • A public housing authority administrator or manager • An alcohol and substance abuse treatment professional • A probation or parole officer • A child welfare administrator, caseworker, or investigator • A public school administrator, teacher, or school support staff person • A representative from a State university or community college • A social science researcher or data analyst • A survivor or a family member or friend of a survivor or victim • A supervised child visitation or child exchange staff person • A member of the public at large who has education, training, or experience to carry out the purposes of the regional review team

Figure 2. Required Team Members

The list of required members is intended to be a starting point from which communities structure their teams. Teams are encouraged to invite additional members who may bring other perspectives to their work to meet the needs of their specific community. For example, if a region includes a military base, it may be beneficial to include a member of the military on that RRT. If a community is struggling with an opioid epidemic, a substance use disorder counselor could be a member of the RRT. Therefore, each team's size may vary over time, depending on the team's needs and how the team chooses to structure itself beyond statutorily required appointments.

APPOINTING TEAM MEMBERS

INVITATION

While not mandatory, letters of member invitation may be used in situations where a formalized approach is desired or necessary, or when the team does not have a prior relationship with a prospective member. The letter should be tailored as needed for mail or email delivery.

See Appendix A for Sample Letter of Invitation

APPOINTMENT TERMS (750 ILCS 62/55)

The first set of members appointed to the RRT will have their terms staggered so that one-half of initial members serve two-year terms and the other half serve three-year terms. The initial terms will be drawn by lot at the first RRT meeting. Following the initial terms, each member will serve a three-year term. No member will serve more than two consecutive terms. Officers' terms coincide with RRT membership terms.

COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES (750 ILCS 62/60)

RRT members are not compensated for their participation in the RRT nor are members or individuals compensated for their participation in the reviews. RRT members are eligible to seek reimbursement for actual expenses incurred in the performance of their RRT duties, subject to the availability of State or local funds for those purposes. Reimbursable

expenses may include costs related to travel, supplies, training, and other reasonable costs incurred in accordance with State reimbursement policies.[5]

Teams may seek their own funding to hire administrative support or to compensate members for their time.

NOTE: Requests for reimbursement should be made by RRT officers to the Project Director.

VACANCIES AND REAPPOINTMENTS (750 ILCS 62/55)

RRT vacancies must be filled by individuals who meet membership requirements. Vacancies can be filled through an application process or at the recommendation of a current member. The new appointment must be approved by a majority vote of RRT members.

If a vacancy occurs during a member's term, the co-chairs or another member can recommend a replacement to be approved by a vote of the majority of RRT members. Members whose terms have expired may choose to continue serving until a new member is appointed. Former team members are eligible for reappointment after 12 months following their last date of service.[6]

QUORUM AND VOTING

All RRT members are voting members. Five members constitute a quorum.[7]

SECTION 1-02: STRUCTURING A TEAM

TEAM ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (750 ILCS 62/60)

The Act provides a basic framework for RRT leadership roles and duties. Each team should further structure itself to fit its own specific needs and goals. For example, a team without a dedicated administrative support person may choose to divide record gathering and other administrative duties among team members.

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[5] 750 ILCS 62/60(d)

[6] 750 ILCS 62/55

[7] 750 ILCS 62/60(a)

At the team's first meeting and upon expiration of an officer's term, the RRT *must* elect two co-chairs and a secretary and *may* elect any other officers or designate other roles that the members deem necessary for the team to carry out its duties. See Figure 3 for team roles.

SECRETARY - Required

- **Description:** Responsible for taking meeting minutes and assisting the co-chairs with record collection and organization
- **Duties:**
  - Obtain and share case information with team members
  - Research case information
  - Draft meeting agendas
  - Manage meeting logistics
  - Take meeting minutes and document activities
  - Orient new team members
  - Facilitate meetings

CO-CHAIRS - Required

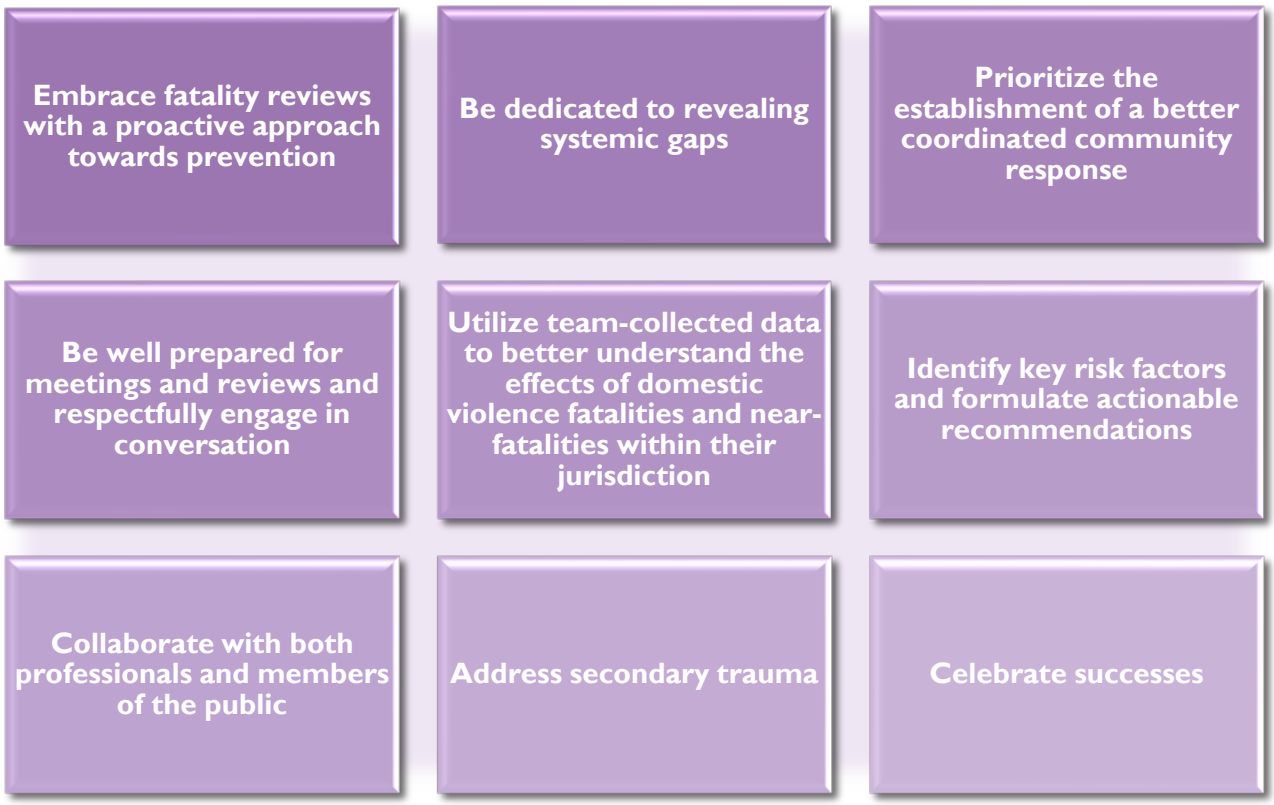
- **Description:** Assume a leadership role, planning and organizing team meetings and activities
- **Duties:**
  - Serve as the primary contact for the Statewide Committee and the Project Director
  - Schedule team meetings and create agendas
  - Attend and chair all meetings
  - Encourage member participation in meetings and the fatality review process
  - Coordinate case selection and data collection, as needed
  - Coordinate record collection, if team coordinator not designated

TEAM COORDINATOR - Optional

- May be elected to provide administrative support, such as assigning case reviews and assisting with gathering case material. The team has discretion in how it carries out these functions.

Figure 3. Team Roles

SECTION 1-03: PREPARING TEAM MEMBERS



GETTING STARTED

In the early team formation stages, the Statewide Committee will assist new teams with recruiting members. Its members or the Project Director are available to conduct a presentation outlining the mission, principles, and benefits of the DVFR process to new teams.

In established teams, any newly appointed members must sign a confidentiality agreement (see Chapter 2) before participating in discussion of cases.

The orientation process for new teams and new members of existing teams includes:

- **WELCOMING:** New members will have an initial meeting with RRT co-chairs and/or the Project Director to discuss the team's policies, procedures, and team formation, and for an in-depth review of the DVFR process, local and state domestic violence issues, previous findings, recommendations, and reports.

- **TRAINING:** New teams and new members will engage in both synchronous and asynchronous training. This may include an in-depth training on the DVFR process and participation in a mock review exercise.
- **MATERIAL:** New members will receive the Illinois DVFR Guide and any team specific documents, such as previous reports.
- **DOCUMENT EXECUTION AND DELIVERY:** Co-chairs or a designated RRT member are to send the names, professional titles, and business contact information for all new members to the Project Director,[8] including a copy of all signed confidentiality agreements and confirmation that required training has been completed.

TEAM DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (750 ILCS 62/65)

After forming, each RRT has the following duties and responsibilities:

- ❑ Report the names, affiliations and contact information of the RRT members to the Program Director.
- ❑ Select two co-chairs and a secretary, and any optional roles.
- ❑ Ensure that each member participates in required training.
- ❑ Meet at least quarterly and maintain minutes of each meeting.
- ❑ Execute confidentiality agreements with every RRT member and any guest review attendee (see Appendices B and C).
- ❑ Establish priorities for reviewing eligible cases.
- ❑ Vote by a majority to select specific cases for review.
- ❑ Prepare for reviews by collecting document, conducting interviews, and inviting guest attendees.
- ❑ Share documents for the review with RRT members and guest review attendees via the RRT's secure Microsoft Teams Channel

[8] 750 ILCS 62/65(a)(2)

- ❑ Conduct reviews of at least two cases per calendar year.
- ❑ Complete the post-review case survey online.
- ❑ Prepare and submit an annual report on the RRT operations to the Program Director and Statewide Committee.
- ❑ Prepare and submit a biennial report on odd numbered years of recommendations to the Program Director and Statewide Committee.

The RRT may do the following:

- ❑ Collect and analyze data from cases reviewed and other sources of domestic violence related fatality and near-fatality data in its region.
- ❑ Engage with a researcher to conduct an evaluation of the RRT and its work.
- ❑ Seek funds to support the operations of the RRT.
- ❑ Support implementation of the teams.

TEAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

RRTs should discuss procedures specific to their individual team operations, beyond the framework outlined in the Act and by the Statewide Committee.

The following questions are intended to serve as an example of policies or procedures that teams may want to consider as they get started. *Please reach out to the Project Director with any questions.*

How do we want our team to be structured?

Teams will need to plan their membership size. Some teams may opt for a larger membership, whereas others may prefer a more streamlined group. They also need to consider the types of professionals that will serve as members versus invited guests. For example, teams may find that the participation of a school principal may only be necessary when cases involve children; therefore, this professional would participate as a guest, not as a team member.

Who will carry out the administrative functions of the team?

The co-chairs and secretary are responsible for the team's administrative functions. Teams may seek funding to hire a staff member who can provide administrative support. Alternatively, a team member may volunteer to provide administrative assistance, or teams may seek an intern to provide this support.

How frequently will we meet?

RRTs must meet quarterly, at minimum, but each team should choose the schedule that best meets their team's needs.

Will meetings be in person or virtual?

Case preparation or administrative meetings may be held virtually, but it is recommended that reviews take place in person.

How many reviews will the team conduct?

The statute requires teams to conduct a minimum of two reviews per year, but teams can review more cases. Teams should consider the number of times they will meet when determining the number of reviews they intend to conduct in a year.

Who will coordinate record collection?

A team coordinator may organize case-related record collection for the team. There may be a different team coordinator for each review. If teams elect not to have a team coordinator, coordination of record collection will be the responsibility of the co-chairs or team staff, if applicable.

What are the attendance requirements for team members?

If a member is unable to attend a meeting or a review, they are encouraged to send someone in their place. The replacement should have all relevant information so they may actively participate in the meeting. The replacement must sign and submit the Guest Confidentiality Agreement to the RRT co-chairs. It is suggested that chronically absent members be dismissed from the team.

How will we ensure each team member is aware of responsibilities regarding confidentiality?

Teams may choose to review and sign a new confidentiality agreement for each review. Team co-chairs should frequently remind members of the importance of confidentiality.

Who will represent the team to the community and/or the media?

Each team should discuss and agree upon the member(s) best positioned to speak to community members and media on behalf of the team.

Can the team review homicide photos?

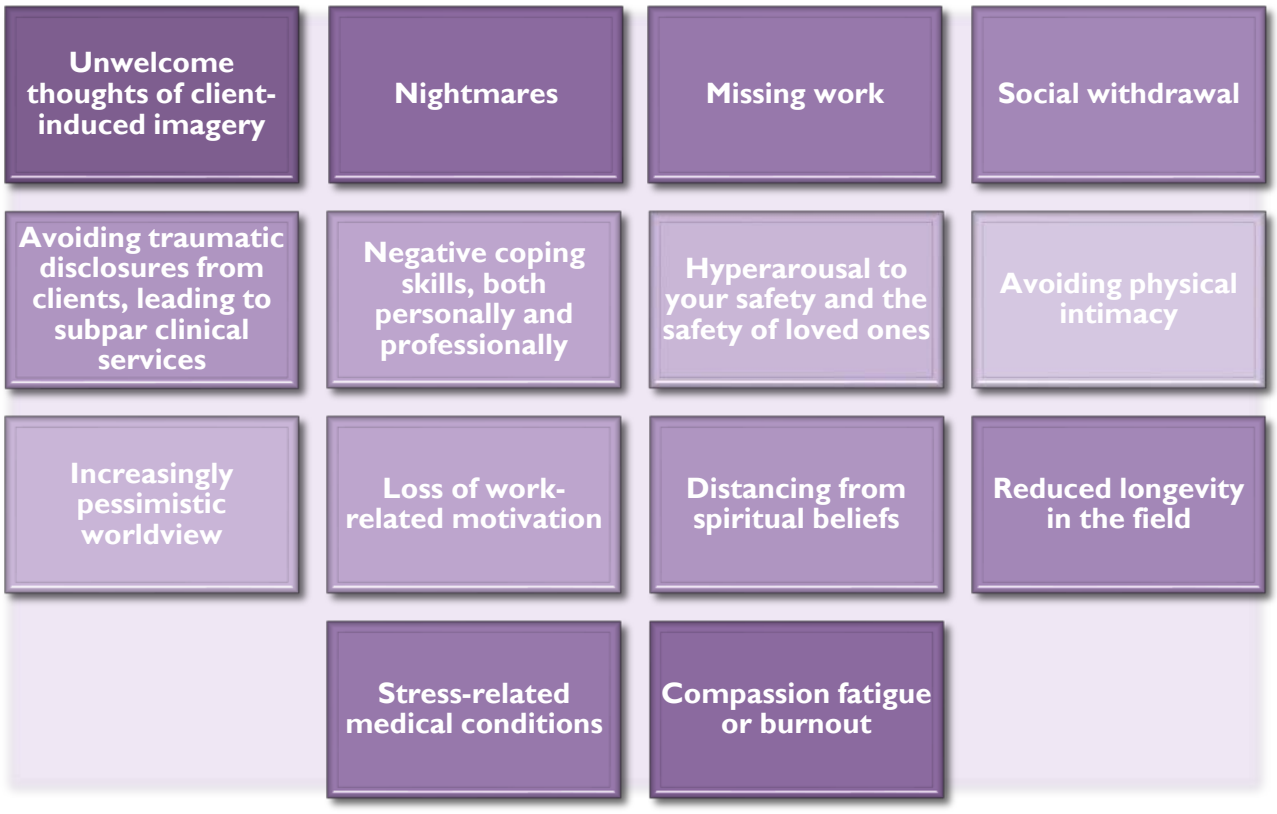
Yes, the team may review homicide photos, but this is not a requirement. If reviewed, it is suggested that a trigger or content warning be provided.

RECOGNIZING VICARIOUS TRAUMA

Vicarious trauma is defined as indirect exposure to trauma through firsthand account or narrative of a traumatic event. The National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative states:

> Reviewing the life and deaths of other human beings can be a disturbing and emotionally taxing process. People react differently to the details that surface during death reviews, and teams need to anticipate this. Teams should establish a process of "taking care" of each other and discuss the impact fatality reviews are likely to have on them emotionally.[9]

Members need to be aware of vicarious trauma signs and should create an environment where all members feel supported and ask for help, if necessary. Signs of vicarious trauma can include any of the following:



[9] National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative (n.d.). *What about the emotional toll on reviewers?*

PREVENTIVE MEASURES:

- Regularly check in with team members
- Teams should debrief after each review. *Co-chairs should use this as a time to allow members to freely discuss challenges and help validate and normalize feelings.*
- Offer resources, education, or training on vicarious trauma
- Encourage and model self-care
- Know when to seek help

CHAPTER 2: CONFIDENTIALITY

This section provides guidelines and requirements for safeguarding confidential information throughout the review process.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION is information, records, documents, photographs, images, exhibits, and communications obtained by the ICJIA Board, Statewide Committee, or an RRT from a public body, as well as information possessed, shared, discussed, or created by these entities for the purpose of case review. It includes any information that discloses the identities of victims, survivors, deceased, or offenders, or their family members or by which their identities could be reasonably determined. It also includes discussions, deliberations, minutes, notes, records, or opinions related to case review.

SECTION 2-01: CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENTS (750 ILCS 62/75)

Having an environment that upholds confidentiality allows for open, honest, and constructive discussions among team members. All team members, guests, and staff are required by the Act to adhere to strict confidentiality standards. To ensure members understand and agree to these standards, they must review and sign the "DVFR Member Confidentiality Agreement" when they become a member of the RRT and prior to discussing or reviewing any case material. All guest participants must review and sign a "DVFR Guest Confidentiality Agreement" before participation. Teams may have members sign agreements annually or for each new review.

The RRT should maintain copies of all signed agreements and forward copies to the Project Director.

See Appendix B for Member Confidentiality Agreement
See Appendix C for Guest Confidentiality Agreement

TRAINING: In addition to signed confidentiality agreements, teams may implement other practices to reinforce the importance of confidentiality. For example, they may provide routine training on confidentiality standards.

SECTION 2-02: AGENCY CONFIDENTIALITY

The Act requires most agencies and professionals to share information as part of DVFR (750 ILCS 62/80).

However, the Act does not change the confidentiality and privilege communications under the following laws:

- Illinois Domestic Violence Act of 1986.
- Section 8-802.1 of the Code of Civil Procedure (confidentiality of statements made to rape crisis personnel).
- The Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Code.
- 42 CFR 2.15, Section 40002(b)(2) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12291(b)(2)), 45 CFR 1370.4, and 28 CFR 94.115).

Members having agency specific confidentiality standards should consult with their agency's legal counsel. Albeit rare, members who must withhold information should be transparent about the reason they are unable to share the information.

SECTION 2-03: DOCUMENT STORAGE AND DESTRUCTION (750 ILCS 62/85)

DOCUMENT STORAGE

ICJIA will host a Microsoft Team titled "ICJIA-DVFR." Each RRT will have its own private ICJIA-DVFR Channel. This Microsoft Team and each RRT's private Channel will serve as the secure system used by RRTs for maintaining and storing minutes, correspondence, and confidential information related to teams and DVFRs.

See Appendix D for Secure Storage Guidelines

DESTRUCTION OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Following a domestic violence fatality review, participants who provided confidential information may regain possession of the information, subject to any applicable State or federal laws or privileges.[10] RRT members are not allowed to disclose or share confidential information unless permitted by law. One year following submission of the RRT's biennial report the team's co-chair or designee must destroy the confidential information.[11]

An RRT can vote to share confidential information solely for educational or research purposes without sharing identifying information of the victims, deceased, survivors, or offenders (750 ILCS 62/75(c)(4)).

SECTION 2-04: BREACH OF CONFIDENTIALITY (750 ILCS 62/75)

Any RRT member or guest of a review who discloses, releases or shares confidential information in violation of the Act commits a Class A misdemeanor.[12]

If a member suspects a breach of confidentiality, the member must notify their RRT co-chairs immediately. RRT co-chairs must then notify the Project Director and Statewide Committee co-chairs of the breach and of any corrective action planned or taken. The Project Director and Statewide Committee co-chairs will inform the RRT co-chairs if making a report to law enforcement is necessary. The RRT co-chairs should separately consider whether to discipline or dismiss a member due to a confidentiality breach.

[10] 750 ILCS 62/85(a)

[11] 750 ILCS 62/85(b)

[12] 750 ILCS 62/90

CHAPTER 3: MEETING ORGANIZATION

SECTION 3-01: RRT MEETINGS

Teams are required to meet at least quarterly but may meet more frequently (750 ILCS 6/35). Meetings may take one of the following forms:

- **TEAM OPERATIONS:** Prior to reviewing a case, RRTs will need to meet one or more times to structure the team, set team policies, and establish priorities for reviewing cases.
- **CASE PREPARATION:** Meeting to select a case for review and to discuss next steps for gathering and preparing case review materials.
- **CASE REVIEW:** Meeting to review and analyze cases. See *Chapter 5: Reviewing a Case* for more information on the case review process.
- **RECOMMENDATION DRAFTING:** Teams will also meet to discuss proposed recommendations and RRT annual and biennial reports. In addition, they will meet to finalize and vote on recommendations to report to the Statewide Committee as part of their biennial report and may meet to discuss and develop content for the RRT's annual report. See *Chapter 6: Reporting and Recommendations* for further guidance.

RRTs must maintain minutes of the business conducted at each meeting.

RRT meetings are confidential and therefore not subject to the Open Meetings Act or the Freedom of Information Act.

See Appendix E for Sample First Meeting Agenda
See Appendix F for Sample DVFR Planning Meeting Agenda
See Appendix G for Sample Case Review Agenda

SECTION 3-02: MEETING LOGISTICS

Meetings may be held in person or using a virtual platform, including Zoom, Webex, Microsoft Teams, and Google Meets. RRTs should vote to determine whether in person or virtual meetings are preferrable, and can determine that certain meetings (e.g., team operations) will be virtual and other meetings (e.g., case reviews) will be in person. Hybrid meetings where some people are in person and others are virtual are not recommended.

The following practices are recommended for **in-person** meetings:

- Poll the members about the time and location that is preferrable. If the time and location preferences vary, adjust meeting times and locations so a wide range of members can attend.
- Ensure the location is accessible to all members.
- Ensure the meeting space is private and that discussion cannot be overhead by non-members or non-guests.
- If inviting family members or friends of victims or survivors, ensure that these guest participants are comfortable with the location selected. Some may be uncomfortable meeting at certain locations because of past experiences or interactions with specific organizations or stakeholders.
- Provide for any technological needs (e.g., Internet access, adequate power outlets, projector).

The following practices are recommended for **virtual** meetings:

- Poll the members about a preferred meeting time. If preferences vary, alter the meeting times so a wide range of members can attend.
- The calendar invitation for the meeting should contain the virtual meeting link.
- Prior to their first team meeting, members should register or check their login credentials for any virtual platforms being used to avoid potential issues.
- Provide a "waiting room" for attendees to prevent non-members and non-guests from accessing the meeting room.
- Attendees should enter the meeting room with their microphones muted to prevent disruptions from background noise. Remind participants to mute their microphones when they are not speaking.
- Encourage attendees to turn on their video or cameras to help improve engagement and communication.
- Consider disabling the chat feature, particularly for larger teams, to ensure chat messages are not inadvertently overlooked. Instead encourage attendees to use the hand raise feature and call on attendees to participate in the discussion.

- Building consensus within a team is important. Consider using the anonymous poll feature as a tool for capturing members' perspectives.
- Remind attendees to join the meeting in a private area where the meeting is not audible to others and case information on the screen is not visible.[13]
- **DO NOT** record case reviews.

[13] Norling M., Luqman, A. R., Kavanaugh, V. M., & Powell, V. (2009). *Family and intimate partner violence fatality review: Team protocol and resource manual* (3rd ed.). Virginia Department of Health, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. https://www.communitysolutionsva.org/files/RM_Final_12-23-09.pdf

CHAPTER 4: PREPARING FOR A REVIEW

SECTION 4-01: CASE IDENTIFICATION AND SELECTION (750 ILCS 62/70)

IDENTIFYING CASES

ELIGIBLE CASES:

To be eligible for RRT review, a case must include a fatality or near-fatality connected to domestic violence that occurred within the team's geographic boundaries AND include a qualifying relationship.

A fatality or near-fatality includes at least one of the following:[14]

Homicide: A homicide, as defined in Article 9 of the Criminal Code of 2012, in which the offender causes the death of the victim, the deceased, or others *OR* the survivor causes the death of the offender, the deceased, or others.

Suicide or Attempted Suicide: Includes incidents in which the victim *OR* the offender committed suicide *OR* attempted suicide.

Familicide: Offender causes the death of the victim and other members of the victim's family, such as minor or adult children and parents.

Near-Fatality: A near-fatality of a survivor caused by the offender *OR* the near-fatality of an offender caused by the survivor.

Other Domestic Violence Cases: Other incidents involving domestic violence that a majority of RRT members believe, that if reviewed, will advance the purposes of the Act.

[14] 750 ILCS 62/70

A qualifying relationship between the offender and the victim or survivor includes instances or a history of domestic violence perpetrated by the offender against the victim or survivor and at least one of the following circumstances:

Common Dwelling: The offender and the victim or survivor resided together or shared a common dwelling at any time.

Child in Common: The offender and the victim or survivor have or are alleged to have a child in common.

Relationship of Offender to Victim or Survivor: The offender and the victim or survivor are or were engaged, married, divorced, separated, or had a dating or romantic relationship, regardless of whether they had sexual relations.

Stalking: The offender stalked the victim or survivor as described in Section 12-7.3 of the Criminal Code of 2012.

Order of Protection: The victim or survivor filed for an order of protection against the offender under the Illinois Domestic Violence Act of 1986 or Section 112A-2.5 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of 1963.

Civil No Contact Order: The victim or survivor filed for a civil no contact order against the offender under the Civil No Contact Order Act or Section 112A-14.5 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of 1963.

Stalking No Contact Order: The victim or survivor filed for a stalking no contact order against the offender under the Stalking No Contact Order Act or Section 112A-2.5 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of 1963.

Order of Protection Violation: The offender violated an order of protection, civil no contact order, or stalking no contact order obtained by the victim or survivor.

Relationship of Deceased to Victim or Survivor: The deceased resided in the same household as, was present at the workplace of, was in the proximity of, or was related by blood or affinity to a victim or survivor.

Responder to Domestic Violence Incident: The deceased was a law enforcement officer, emergency medical technician, or other responder to a domestic violence incident between the offender and the victim or survivor.

RRT Vote: A relationship between the offender and the victim, survivor, or deceased exists that a majority of the RRT determines warrants a review of the case to advance the purposes of the Act.

In addition, any criminal investigation, civil, criminal, or administrative proceeding, and appeals must be complete for the case to be eligible for review. A case is complete once the first direct appeal has concluded. A case should not be reviewed if a subsequent appeal is pending. If a subsequent appeal begins while the case is being reviewed, the review must end, and the documents must be destroyed in accordance with the Act.

CASE IDENTIFICATION:

Teams may use a variety of sources to learn of fatalities and near-fatalities in their jurisdiction. By the nature of their professions and roles in the community, members may be knowledgeable of fatalities and near-fatalities that they wish for the team to consider. Cases covered in the media and information contained on death certificates may also provide options for cases to review.

GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING CASES

Teams should establish priorities for the types of cases their team will review. When selecting cases to review, teams should determine their capacity to review eligible cases. They should also consider the needs of their communities and whether they anticipate that review of specific case types are more likely to result in systemic, policy, or other changes. Some teams may elect to review a broad range of case types to identify trends or similarities across cases despite differences in case type. Other teams may decide to prioritize cases that are the same type because they directly connect to a specific community issue or concern, or they believe reviewing similar cases will result in stronger, more actionable recommendations.

In addition to identifying case types to prioritize, teams are encouraged to consider the following case characteristics when selecting cases for review:

- **DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS:** Age, ethnicity, location, gender, and socioeconomic background of the victim or survivor and the offender.
- **FATALITY OR NEAR-FATALITY CHARACTERISTICS:** In addition to considering the type of fatality, e.g., homicide, suicide, and the relationship type, such as order of protection filed, child in common, teams may decide to consider other characteristics. These characteristics can include whether the incident involved strangulation or the use of a weapon or firearm, or the presence of a

traumatic brain injury. Teams may also want to prioritize cases in which it is less clear that the incident was domestic violence related. For example, this could include a mass shooting in which the offender was a victim of domestic violence.

- **SEVERITY AND COMPLEXITY:** This may include the number and type of individuals involved and the victim, survivor, or offender's history of mental health or substance use disorders, victimization, and system involvement.
- **AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION:** Assess the availability of the records needed to conduct the review and the team's ability to access them.
- **TIMELINESS:** Teams should focus on reviewing cases that are recent enough so that the analysis remains relevant, avoiding situations where systemic issues may be resolved, or information is inaccessible. This will ensure that the team focuses on recent cases, allowing for a current analysis of the circumstances and an effective assessment of the response and interventions.

Cases are to be selected by a majority vote prior to beginning the review process.[15]

Teams are encouraged to select cases during a planning meeting and to then determine a meetings schedule for the year. Teams should only review one case at time.

[15] 750 ILCS 62/65(8)

SECTION 4-02: GATHERING DOCUMENTS (750 ILCS 62/80)

Collecting and reviewing documents is a necessary step when preparing for a review. The documents must be kept confidential in accordance with the Act and should be shared with the RRT members through their respective Microsoft Teams Channel.

With limited exceptions, the Act requires holders of information and documents to share them with the RRT for the purposes of reviewing a case. RRTs may request, either orally or in writing, relevant records and oral or written information from various entities.[16] These entities include state and local governmental agencies and officials, medical and dental providers, domestic violence offender and partner abuse intervention service providers, childcare providers, and employers. All records are to be provided free of charge. Importantly, the records and oral or written information can be provided for the purposes of fatality review without authorization of the person(s) to whom the records or information relate. The Statewide Committee or RRT may request and obtain information and records from outside the state using any available legal means. The Project Director and Statewide Committee co-chairs can assist the RRT in obtaining documents if obstacles arrive.

RRTs can request documents, including but not limited to:

- Guardian ad litem reports.
- Parenting evaluations.
- Victim impact statements.
- Mental health evaluations submitted to a court.
- Probation information.
- Law enforcement incident reports.
- Medical records.
- School records.
- 911 call recordings and/or transcripts.
- Employment records.

[16] 750 ILCS 62/80

Information may be found through the following sources:

CHILD WELFARE

- Department of Children and Family Services reports
- Intact case reports
- Guardian ad litem reports
- Childcare providers

COURTS

- Civil court files (protective orders, divorce, custody)
- Criminal court files
- Drug court/veteran's court
- Prior convictions/sentences
- Sex offender registry
- Photographs

MEDICAL

- Emergency care/hospital records
- Primary care/specialist records
- Dental records

POLICE

- Audio tapes/transcripts
- Contact cards/non-arrest reports
- Crime scene photographs
- Investigation reports
- Homicide reports
- Interview transcripts
- Reports from prior partners or secondary victims

PROBATION

- Sentencing requirements
- Completion of probation
- Petitions or warrants for revocation

WORKPLACE

- Workplace polices
- Employee Assistance Programs
- Attendance records
- Availability of domestic violence resources

OTHER AGENCIES & RESOURCES

- Places of worship
- Substance use providers
- Housing Authority
- Mental health providers
- Partner Abuse Intervention Providers (PAIP)
- Legal service providers
- Schools
- Social media
- Obituaries
- News articles

Teams are encouraged to take the following steps when collecting documents for a review:

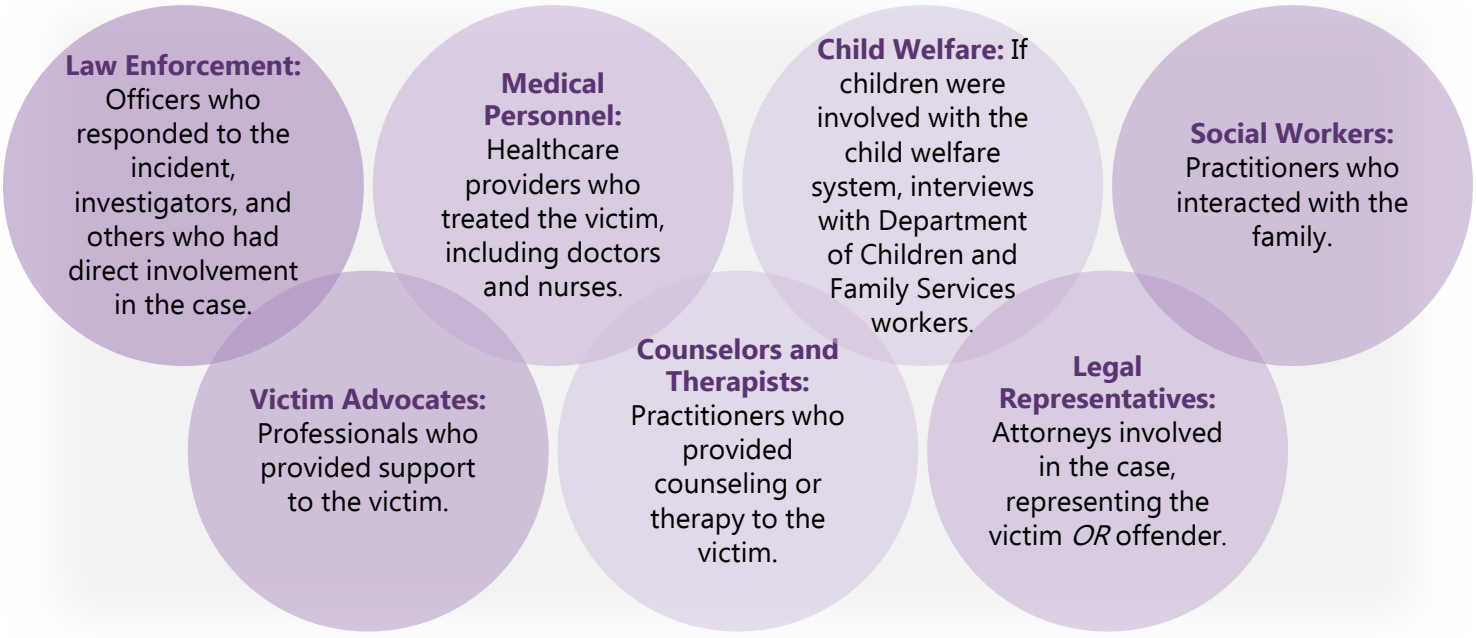
1) **IDENTIFY DOCUMENTS NEEDED:** As a team, determine which documents are needed to conduct a thorough review.
2) **DETERMINE AGENCIES:** Identify the agencies housing the documents. This may include police departments, local schools, medical examiner's offices, places of employment, court clerks, etc.
3) **RECORDS REQUEST:** Draft a formal request for records. Be sure to include a detailed description of the documents needed and the secure file sharing link for uploading documents to the RRT's Microsoft Team Channel (See Appendix I).
4) **FOLLOW UP:** If necessary, follow up with agencies that records requests were made with to ensure documents are received in a timely manner. If an agency does not comply with the records request, the team should request a letter explaining the agency's decision not to fulfill the request and any applicable laws prohibiting release of the requested records.
5) **RRT CHANNEL:** Ensure documents are uploaded to the RRT's Microsoft Teams Channel.
6) **TRACK DOCUMENTS:** Create a list or system to track the status of document requests (See Appendix H).
7) **DOCUMENT REVIEW AND ANALYSIS:** Once documents are received the team may begin examining them in preparation for their review. During this initial review the team may learn of other potential information sources. If time allows, the team should request additional documents as necessary to carry out the case review.

See Appendix H for Document Request Tracker
See Appendix I for Request for Records

SECTION 4-03: GUEST PARTICIPANTS

When determining whom the team should interview or invite to be a guest member, it is important to consider various agencies or persons connected to the case to gain comprehensive case insights. Teams should collaborate with stakeholders who had contact with the victim, survivor, or offender or another representative from that agency who can comment on the agency's policies and practices.

It may be appropriate to invite representatives from agencies that did not have contact with the victim, survivor and/or offender in order to identify gaps in responses. For example, if substance use disorder issues were present, but the individual with the disorder had no contact with a treatment center, it may still be beneficial for the team to invite a representative from that type of agency. Once the team has identified stakeholders to include, they should reach out to those agencies or persons and ask them to participate in the review. Below are examples of various agencies or persons that the team may consider for guest participation:



SECTION 4-04: INTERVIEWS

INTERVIEW CONSIDERATIONS

Teams may interview various individuals prior to or during case review meetings. The primary aim of these interviews is to provide the team with insight into the sequence of events, circumstances, and states of mind leading up to the fatality or near-fatality. Team members often discover that families, friends, and employers possess valuable insights and information beyond what is captured in official reports. Conducting interviews also offers families, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and other people in the lives of the victim, survivor, or the offender an opportunity to share their narrative. This process may help humanize the victim who lost their life, provide insight into the life of the offender, and may fill in information gaps from collected reports and documents.

Ethical and emotional implications should be considered when determining who to interview, especially when involving individuals with a personal connection to the case. Sensitivity, consent, and support for interviewees should be prioritized. The objective is to gather a comprehensive understanding of the case while respecting the dignity and privacy of those involved.

Furthermore, the team should consider how to handle cases when a family member does not support the team's decision to conduct the review. Balancing the interests of all relevant parties while maintaining the integrity of the review process is critically important.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW:

- **CHOOSING AN INTERVIEWER:** With consensus from the team, any team member who feels comfortable may conduct an interview on behalf of the team. Different team members can conduct interviews for the same review.

- **CHOOSING INTERVIEWEES:** Teams will need to collectively decide who to interview for each case review. Teams should consider who may offer valuable insight into the victim, survivor, or offender's life and the circumstances leading up to the fatal or near-fatal incident. This may include the **victim or survivor's family and friends, the offender, the offender's family and friends, co-workers, employers, clergy, faith leaders or fellow congregants, neighbors, or any other relevant parties.** Teams may find during the interview process that participants refer to other individuals who

also have valuable insights. The interviewer may decide to follow up on that information, recognizing that an initial interview may allow for the web of connections to grow.

- **REQUESTING AN INTERVIEW:** The Statewide Committee strongly encourages that all requests for interviews be made by phone. However, teams may decide to submit requests for interviews using other methods, such as mail or email. All initial contact with prospective interviewees should contain information about the team, the DVFR process, and confidentiality.

- **ORGANIZING AN INTERVIEW:** It is highly encouraged that all interviews be conducted in person, especially those with family and friends. This allows for open communication and for the interviewer to more easily observe nonverbal cues. Interviews should take place in a private space. To foster open communication, it is important that the interviewee feels comfortable. The interviewer should ask where they would feel most comfortable meeting. If the interviewee suggests meeting in a public setting, the interview must take place in a quiet and non-crowded space, such as the back room of a restaurant or a park. The interviewer should set aside the appropriate amount of time to conduct the interview. Some interviews may be short, but others may be hours long.

- **PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS:** The interviewer may want to familiarize themselves with available case information so that they can ask relevant and informed questions. Conversely, other interviewers may choose not to review information prior to the interview to avoid unconscious or preconceived notions or biases about the case.

CONDUCTING AN INTERVIEW:

- **EXPLAIN THE DVFR PROCESS:** Explain the DVFR process to the interviewee and how the interview can inform the team's understanding of the case and recommendations. Ensure that the interviewee understands that the information provided will only be shared with the review team and that members and guests participating in the review are required to keep the information confidential.

- **SET THE TONE:** Conduct interviews using a trauma-informed approach. Interviewers should also convey the following message throughout the interview: "We are not trying to blame you or question your choices. We are trying to change us – the community – to stop this from happening again to someone else." Avoid terms like "victim" and "perpetrator" as they may make the interviewee uncomfortable. Make sure to use the

victim or survivor's name. Maintain a respectful demeanor and avoid any judgment or bias.

- Interviewers should use the following practices when conducting an interview:
    a. **MAINTAIN PRESENCE AND FOCUS:** Maintain a genuine and attentive presence during the interview. Show an interest in what the interviewee has to say without distraction. If taking notes, make sure it does not hinder the flow of conversation or make the interviewee uncomfortable. It is important to keep eye contact and show that you are listening.
    b. **CONVEY EMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING:** Acknowledge the interviewee's feelings and validate their experiences. This fosters trust and encourages open communication.
    c. **ENGAGE IN ACTIVE LISTENING:** Involves reflecting, encouraging, summarizing, and exploring.[17]
        i. **REFLECTING:** Indicate you are paying attention through non-verbal cues. This may include making eye contact, nodding your head, or responding with a short phrase, such as "Yes, absolutely" or "Mm-hmm" to demonstrate you are paying attention. It also involves observing the interviewee's non-verbal cues like facial expressions, tone of voice, or body language. These cues may reveal thoughts or emotions otherwise unnoticed.
        ii. **ENCOURAGING:** Offer a one-sentence statement or non-verbal action that indicates you want the interviewee to continue. For example, say "I'd like to hear more about…" or provide an encouraging smile or head nod.
        iii. **SUMMARIZING:** Paraphrase or summarize the information shared by the interviewee. Be proactive in asking if you understood correctly. For example, you may want to say, "I heard you say…" or "Let me know if this fits…" or ask "Did I get that right?"
        iv. **EXPLORING:** Ask clarifying and open-ended questions that encourage interviewees to share their thoughts, feelings, and observations. These questions often start with "how," "why," or "tell me about." When needed ask for specific details or clarification. Do

[17] Green, L. (2017). Tips for active listening. *Resource Sharing Project: Rural Training & Technical Assistance*. https://nnedv.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Library_TH_Active_Listening_Tipsheet.pdf

not make assumptions. See Figure 4 for examples of open-ended questions.

d. **MAINTAIN PATIENCE:** Maintain respect and patience. Give the interviewee time to think. Allow time for the interviewee to express themselves without rushing or interrupting. It is okay to sit in silence.

e. **HAVE RESOURCES AVAILABLE:** Consider having resources and referrals available for friends or family. For example:

- Family or friends may want to know about the offender's status. Be prepared to advise the family on how to register with the Illinois Department of Corrections, Illinois Information and Notification Everyday (VINE), or the Illinois Prisoner Review Board.
- Be knowledgeable about the Illinois Crime Victim's Compensation program.
- Have referrals for counseling options available in the interviewee's community.

Tell me about (victim's name).
What would you like us to know about (victim)'s life?
What were they like as a person?
What would you like us to know about _____'s relationship with _____?
Were there any good times in the relationship?
Do you know who _____turned to for help as they experienced abuse?
Did they try to talk to you or anyone else about the abuse they were suffering?
Were you aware of the abuse? When/how did you become aware?
How did your relationship with _____ (the victim) change over the years?
How did your relationship with _____ (the offender) change over the years?
What kind of community support might have been helpful to _____ as they tried to stay safe?
Is there anything else you would like us to know about _____'s life and death?
What message would you give to other families who are experiencing violence?
How would you like _____to be remembered?
Was there any behavior that you were aware that you believe that contributed to this?
Do you believe there were any opportunities for intervention that were missed?
In your opinion, what changes or improvements could have potentially prevented this outcome?
How do you think the community and professionals can work together to prevent similar incidents in the future?

Figure 4. Example Open-Ended Questions

SHARING INFORMATION FROM INTERVIEWS:

Interview notes should be stored in the designated folder on the RRT's Microsoft Teams Channel. Teams may decide to have these visible to all members to allow members to prepare follow-up questions or teams may decide that interview notes are to be strictly used as a reference for the interviewer. If notes are not shared, the interviewer should come prepared to provide a summary of the interview at the case review meeting.

CHAPTER 5: REVIEWING A CASE

Though various methods for reviewing fatalities and near-fatalities are utilized by teams across the country, Illinois has adopted the process utilized by the National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative. However, teams should modify or expand upon this process, as needed, to fit their team's specific needs. The process includes the following steps:

1) **ESTABLISH A TIMELINE:** List all significant events in chronological order so that there is a linear timeline.
2) **HIGHLIGHT ANTECEDENTS OR RED FLAGS:** Using the timeline, highlight signs that a relationship may have been moving towards serious violence, injury, or death.
3) **IDENTIFY AGENCY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:** Determine the extent to which the victim/survivor or offender were involved with or had contact with any community-based or government agencies and their interactions with community members.
4) **BRAINSTORM POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:** Discuss any preliminary policy recommendations that would answer the questions, "What is to be done?" and "What may have prevented this event?"

SECTION 5-01: STEP ONE – ESTABLISH A TIMELINE

The foundation of each review is a timeline. The timeline can be populated in an Excel sheet, on a whiteboard, or teams may utilize the provided template (See Appendix J). The timeline will provide members with the sequence of events that occurred in the lives of *both* the victim or survivor and the offender, leading up to the fatal or near-fatal incident. The timeline should include a date and description for each event. It should also note the information source or reference.

See Appendix J for Chronological Timeline

SECTION 5-02: STEP TWO - HIGHLIGHT ANTECEDENTS OR RED FLAGS

While collaboratively reviewing the timeline, highlight signs or indicators that a relationship may have been moving towards serious violence, injury, or death. These may be referred to as antecedents, risk factors, risk indicators, or red flags. Examples include prior incidents of violence or abuse, drug or alcohol use, ownership of one or more weapons, or threat of divorce or separation.

SECTION 5-03: STEP THREE - IDENTIFY AND ANALYZE AGENCY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Once the timeline has been completed, the team will identify and analyze both agency and community involvement, or lack thereof. This includes focusing on the extent of agency engagement, communication, coordination, and collaboration. The team should also identify community involvement, emphasizing the roles of family, friends, neighbors, and other relevant individuals. Analysis of these interactions will enable the team to identify systemic issues, service gaps, and areas for improvement. The following questions can be used to guide the team's discussion and analysis.

1) **What investigation, if any, occurred following the fatality or near-fatality?**
   - Discuss what steps each investigating agency took during their investigation.
   - What information did the case records include? What information was missing?
   - What other investigative steps could have occurred?
2) **What services were utilized?**
   - What, if any, services did the individual and family receive prior to the fatality or near-fatality? If none were received, what services could have been offered?
   - Were culturally responsive and inclusive services available to the individual or family prior to the fatality or near-fatality? If not, what culturally responsive and inclusive services could have been offered?
   - What services were available at the time of the incident? What services are available now that were not available at the time of the incident? What relevant services are lacking in the community?

3) **Did collaboration and communication among agencies occur?**
   - What systemic responses to domestic violence occurred **prior** to the fatality or near-fatality? What systemic responses to domestic violence did not occur prior to the fatality or near-fatality?
   - What systemic responses to domestic violence occurred **after** the fatality or near-fatality? What systemic responses to domestic violence did not occur after the fatality or near-fatality?
   - What barriers, if any, did the individuals or family encounter when receiving services?

Teams may choose to use a data collection worksheet (See Appendix K) to record and track case information. The worksheet prompts members to consider incident characteristics, certain victim or survivor and offender information and characteristics, past or current system or agency involvement, and risk factors. While teams are not required to complete this worksheet, they may find it to be a useful tool for organizing information across multiple documents and for identifying potential information gaps.

See Appendix K for Data Collection Worksheet

REMAINING OR UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

Now that the team has completed the timeline, identified risk indicators, and discussed agency and community involvement, teams should review the timeline to identify gaps or missing information. If missing information is identified, such as police reports or agency records, or a prospective interviewee is identified, teams may decide to reconvene, after they have gathered this additional information, to complete the review. But it is important to strike a balance between thorough analysis and spending finite resources on a single case. Teams should keep in mind that they may not receive an answer to each question that arises or fill in every gap. Teams may need to discuss a good stopping point for each case.

SECTION 5-04: STEP FOUR - BRAINSTORM RECOMMENDATIONS

At the conclusion of each case review, the team should engage in a brainstorming session to begin generating a list of potential policy recommendations. The recommendations should be

practical, actionable, and focused on addressing systemic issues, improving policies, and reducing the incidence of domestic violence.

Questions to consider:

1) **What reforms or changes are needed to prevent a similar fatality or near-fatality?**
   - What changes in behaviors, technologies, agency practices, or laws could minimize the identified risk factors and prevent another fatality or near-fatality? Consider training, public awareness, education, increased coordination, and additional services or programs.
2) **What recommendations could ensure a more robust domestic violence safety net?**
   - What are the team's recommendations for addressing the identified gaps?
   - Who should take the lead in implementing each recommendation?
   - Are there evidence-based interventions that could have been effective in this situation, but were not available?
   - Does the team agree that the recommendation may reduce the risk of violence or address a gap in a system's response?
   - Are potential improvements or impacts proportional to the amount of effort or resources required to affect change?
   - Is the recommendation objective and free from judgment?
   - Is the recommendation based on facts uncovered from the review and data-driven? Is it practical?
   - Does the recommendation introduce risks in another area, or could it have unintended consequences?
   - Is the recommendation sustainable?[18]

[18] Norling M., Luqman, A. R., Kavanaugh, V. M., & Powell, V. (2009). *Family and intimate partner violence fatality review: Team protocol and resource manual* (3rd ed.). Virginia Department of Health, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. https://www.communitysolutionsva.org/files/RM_Final_12-23-09.pdf

POST-REVIEW SURVEY

Following each review, teams should complete the post-review survey (See Appendix L). The post-review survey asks for select incident characteristics, victim or survivor and offender demographic characteristics, legal system and domestic violence agency contact, and risk factors. Teams may collaboratively discuss and agree on survey responses or may designate one or more members to select survey responses on behalf of the team. However, only one post-survey should be submitted for each case review. A link to this online survey will be made available by the Project Director. This data will serve as a valuable resource for identifying trends and patterns. The aggregated data may also be utilized by the Statewide Committee to identify common trends and patterns across Illinois, facilitating informed decision-making and policy formulation.

See Appendix L for Post-Review Survey

CLOSING PRACTICE

Each team should develop a way to close the review that both honors the memories of those involved in the reviewed case and addresses the impact of the process on those participating in the review. Ideas for closing practices include, but are not limited to, a moment of silence, meditation, sharing of self-reflections, or a reading. Teams may choose to use the same closing practice for each review or to vary the activities for each review.

CHAPTER 6: REPORTING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SECTION 6-01: TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Together, the team will formulate recommendations that are data-driven and can address gaps identified through the review process. Recommendations submitted via the team's biennial report will be reviewed by the Statewide Committee and will help to inform the Statewide Committee's biennial report to the Governor and the General Assembly.

DRAFTING ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS (750 ILCS 62/65)

The purpose of reviewing specific cases of fatal or near-fatal domestic violence incidents is to generate ideas for systemic change that are codified into recommendations. Recommendations should not be based on an individual's actions (unless the action of an individual stems from a larger systemic problem, such as confusion or lack of education about a policy,) but rather should focus on ways to fill in gaps or improve responses to families experiencing domestic violence

In Illinois, the recommendation cannot include any information that identifies victims, survivors, deceased, or offenders, or their family members or any information by which their identities could be determined by a reasonably diligent inquiry.

COMPILATION AND CONSOLIDATION: Every two years, in odd numbered years, each RRT is required to submit a biennial report to the Statewide Committee with their recommendations. Teams should compile a master list of recommendations generated during case review discussions that occurred over the past two years and since their last biennial report was submitted. They must ensure recommendations do not contain any identifying information.

REVIEW AND REFINEMENT: The RRT should review and discuss recommendations to identify recommendations that the team would like to consider for inclusion in their biennial report. It is recommended that teams utilize the "SMARTIE" method to guide the review and drafting of final recommendations (Figure 5). This tool will ensure that each recommendation is Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Relevant, Time-Bound, Inclusive, and Equitable.

See Appendix M for Developing SMARTIE Recommendations Worksheet

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INCLUSION: Each member should have an opportunity to discuss recommendations and vote on them.

INCLUSION IN THE REPORT: The recommendations that receive majority support during the voting process should be included in the team's biennial report. These recommendations should be clear, actionable, and address the systemic factors in an effort to reduce domestic violence related fatalities and near-fatalities.

DE-IDENTIFICATION: A team may decide to include background information to provide context for the recommendations, such as a summary of the cases presented, demographic information, incident types, and findings, including trends or patterns observed across cases. Reports should not include identifying information or summaries that contain specific details or information that could easily identify the cases reviewed.

DRAFT AND SUBMIT: The RRT co-chairs should identify an individual or sub-group to draft the biennial report. After the report is written, all RRT members should be given the opportunity to review the draft and make comments and edits. A cover letter or introduction to the report could include the names and affiliations of the RRT members who are in support of the biennial report. The co-chairs should submit the biennial report to the Project Director.

DEVELOPING SMARTIE RECOMMENDATIONS						
Specific	**M**easurable	**A**chievable	**R**elevant	**T**ime-bound	**I**nclusive	**E**quitable
Who? (target population and activity implementers) and What? (action or activity)	**How much change is expected?**	**Can desired outcome be accomplished given the available resources?**	**Is desired outcome realistic and achievable, but also consistent with the RRT's findings?**	**When will the desired outcome be met?**	**Does desired outcome consider all persons, including traditionally marginalized persons?**	**Does desired outcome address systemic injustice and inequities?**
Recommendations should provide the "who" and "what" of the change the RRT wants to see in the community. Recommendations should be simplistically written and clearly define what it is going to do, and who will be responsible for their implementation. Use only one action verb, and make sure recommendations are clearly measurable, avoiding ambiguous verbs like "know" or "understand."	Recommendations should quantify the amount of change expected. Being measurable is used for planning and evaluation purposes and provides tangible evidence that the RRT has accomplished its goal(s).	Recommendations should be achievable. Constraints (time, funding, available resources, staff capacity) should be taken into consideration, and recommendations should be made accordingly. Recommendations can also identify necessary conditions for achieving the change.	Recommendations should be relevant to achieving the overall goal of preventing domestic violence related fatalities and near-fatalities, and reducing the occurrence, frequency, and severity of domestic violence. Recommendations are more effective when they accurately address the scope of the problem in the community and have defined steps that can be implemented within a specific period.	Recommendations should create a sense of urgency and a timeline for completion and evaluation.	Recommendations should bring traditionally marginalized people—particularly those most impacted by domestic violence and related fatalities—into processes, activities, and decision- and policy-making in a way that shares power.	Recommendations should be anti-racist, address systemic oppression, and be aimed at meeting the needs of individuals, families, and communities impacted by domestic violence.

Figure 5. SMARTIE Recommendations

SECTION 6-02: REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

REPORTING TO THE STATEWIDE COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT

On March 1st of each year, RRTs are required to prepare and submit a report to the Statewide Committee detailing the team's operation and activities for the preceding year. The first report must be submitted by March 1st, following the establishment of the RRT. Subsequent reports should be submitted no later than March 1st each year thereafter.[19]

See Appendix N for Annual Report Template

BIENNIAL REPORT

On April 1st of each odd numbered year, RRTs are required to prepare and submit a report of recommendations to the Statewide Committee based upon the reviews conducted over the previous two years.

This biennial report should include specific recommendations for systemic, policy, and any other changes that may reduce the incidence of domestic violence and domestic violence related fatalities and near-fatalities.

Aside from placing responsibility on offenders for their own actions, the report should not attempt to assign blame or point fingers at any individual person or entity in accordance with the "no blame, no shame" philosophy of DVFR.

Extra diligence should be exercised to ensure that no identifying or case specific information is disclosed in any RRT report or by any other means that could lead to the identity of the victim, survivor, offender, or their family members.

See Appendix O for Biennial Report Template

Thank you for your commitment to the domestic violence fatality review initiative in Illinois. Your involvement will help save lives, reduce domestic violence, and enhance safety, stability, well-being, and healing for survivors of domestic violence across the state.

[19] 750 ILCS 62/65(12)

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE LETTER OF INVITATION

Dear _____,

I am reaching out to inform you about important work taking place in our community around domestic violence and to invite you to take part.

In 2021, Governor Pritzker signed the Illinois Domestic Violence Fatality Review Act (750 ILCS 62) into law. This Act creates a formal process for regions within the State to form a multidisciplinary review team that will review domestic violence fatalities and near-fatalities, identify gaps in supports and responses, and recommend and implement changes to improve outcomes for domestic violence victims and survivors.

This legislation created the Statewide Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee (Statewide Committee). The Statewide Committee is charged with establishing regional domestic violence fatality review teams in judicial districts across Illinois and providing support, training, and technical assistance to those teams. Excitingly, we are in the beginning stages of forming a regional team here in _____and think that you could fill a significant role. In fact, the statute identifies your role as a required or recommended member of the regional review team.

We hope that you will be able to join this important initiative. The domestic violence fatality review process is invaluable for uncovering potential warning signs, risk factors, and missed points of intervention that can help inform and shape policies to prevent future fatalities. It is a vital step in creating safer communities and protecting victims of domestic violence. It is important to have a multidisciplinary group of experienced professionals who can bring diverse backgrounds and perspectives to this team to help inform our policy recommendations.

We invite you to join this effort as a regional review team member. Your perspective can help us identify the changes needed to reduce domestic violence fatalities. For more information on the domestic violence fatality legislation and initiative, please see the attached frequently asked questions document. Please let me know if you have questions or would like to touch base. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you for your consideration.

[Your name]
[Title]
[Phone]
[Email]

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative/Act?

The Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative in Illinois was borne out of a collaboration between policy makers, city and state elected officials, researchers, and advocates across the State in an effort to reduce and prevent domestic violence fatalities and near-fatalities through case analysis, review, and reform. Through this collaboration, the *Illinois Domestic Violence Fatality Review Act* (750 ILCS 62) was drafted, establishing a formalized process for domestic violence fatality review. The Act was signed into law in August 2021.

What is the purpose of Domestic Violence Fatality Review (DVFR)?

The primary purpose of DVFR under the Act are to:

1) Reduce domestic violence, domestic violence related fatalities and near-fatalities in Illinois.
2) Address disparate and discriminatory practices and attitudes in the systems that interact with domestic violence victims, survivors, and offenders.
3) Reduce the cost on society of domestic violence and domestic violence related fatalities.
4) Improve community and systemic responses to domestic violence by fostering points of intervention and support that are effective, coordinated, collaborative, consistent, just, and equitable.

How is the DVFR initiative organized?

The Act creates the Statewide Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee – a 35-member multi-disciplinary, multiagency group – as an Ad Hoc Committee of the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority Board. The role of the Statewide Committee is to establish and implement regional review teams across the State and to provide training, guidance, and technical support to those teams. The Statewide Committee will also collect and compile policy recommendations from regional teams and report them to the Governor and General Assembly every two years.

The Statewide Committee has two co-chairs, elected by the members, and a full-time staff member, a Project Director, employed by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. A member of the Statewide Committee and/or Project Director will act as a liaison between the Statewide Committee and regional review teams.

What is a regional review team?

A regional review team is a multiagency and multi-disciplinary group that forms within the boundaries of judicial districts throughout the State to review domestic violence fatalities and near-fatalities within their jurisdiction. Although the regions are organized by circuit court boundaries, review teams may elect to divide into sub-teams that are county specific, jurisdiction specific, or neighborhood specific, for example.

What is the role of the regional review team?

The regional review team's role is to review individual cases of domestic violence that resulted in a fatality or near-fatality and trace prior systemic interventions and community outreach to:

1) Examine how systems have responded to individual experiences.
2) Examine barriers to safety, justice, self-determination, and equity.
3) Identify both systemic and community gaps and barriers in communication, coordination, and response.
4) Identify gaps and barriers to effective and equitable responses that promote safety, stability, well-being, healing, and accountability.
5) Consider alternate and more effective responses.
6) Develop recommendation for greater coordinated and improved systemic response.
7) Develop policy recommendations and/or prevention initiatives to address domestic violence.

What is a pioneer team?

The first cohort of regional teams are referred to as pioneer teams. The pioneer cohort will include between four and seven sites that have agreed to form in this early group and will be among the first teams to review cases. The Statewide Committee will work closely with the pioneer sites as they encounter challenges and find solutions that will help to inform and guide the policy-making process for future regional teams.

How are teams formed? Who will gather all the team players?

Team formation and the designation of a team lead will be jurisdiction specific. In some jurisdictions, a person may volunteer to lead and begin convening a group. For instance, specific agencies have taken the lead in gathering a group of professionals for formation. In other areas,

the Project Director has worked with a local Illinois Family Violence Coordinating Council. The Project Director can also provide support and assistance in recruiting members as needed.

Who serves on a regional team?

The Act requires that certain members, or their designee, be a part of each regional team. Some examples are listed below. For the full list, please see 750 ILCS 62/50.

- State's Attorney/ASA
- Public Defender/APO
- Coroner/medical examiner
- Sheriff, Deputy Sheriff, Chief of Police, or other law enforcement
- Social service provider for domestic violence victims
- Social service provider for domestic violence offenders, if available in region
- Civil legal services lawyer
- *At least two of the following*: public health official, physician, nurse, mental health professional, circuit judge, elected official, paramedic, clergy, public housing official, alcohol or substance abuse treatment provider, child welfare professional, public-school administrator, representative from state college, researcher, survivor or family member of a victim/survivor

How will teams know which members to invite to the full team vs. on an as needed basis?

It is important to distinguish which members are necessary for a permanent position for your community. The list of "two or more members" set out in 750 ILCS 62/50 (above) allows for a very diverse team; however it is not necessary to have each of those professionals sit on the full team at every review. It may be beneficial for some of those professionals to sit on the full team and for some of them to be invited to a specific case. For example, it may be vital to have a mental health expert or physician hold a permanent position on the full team if drug use is high in the community and to invite a school official only if there are children involved or impacted. The invitation of members that are not required is entirely up to how the specific team wants to be structured, as long as the requirements set out in 750 ILCS 62/50 are met.

If one member is unavailable, can another representative of that organization be sent in their place?

Yes, this is encouraged. Though all original team members will receive case review training provided by the Statewide Committee, it is important to have the perspective of an office or organization in the review of each case. Each member and any visiting reviewers or guests are required to sign a confidentiality agreement upon discussion of any identifying case information.

Will teams have support?

Yes, the Statewide Committee and the Project Director are available for training, research, technical assistance, guidance, and some administrative support (750 ILCS 62/20). The administrative support of each team will be specific to the way that each team decides to organize itself. Team members may choose to divide duties, recruit an intern, solicit assistance from an established group coordinator or team lead, or seek funding to carry out the work of the team, if funding is available. Members serving as liaisons between the Statewide Committee and the regional team may also be willing to provide additional support.

Will teams receive training?

Once team members have been identified, regional teams will be trained to conduct fatality reviews of individual cases. This may include a mock case review and/or webinar, vicarious and secondary trauma, and other training the team or Statewide Committee may deem necessary. Training will be provided through and funded by the Statewide Committee.

How many times does the team have to meet? Can meetings be virtual?

Teams will need to meet at least quarterly and as many times as necessary to be able to establish a timeline and walk through the facts and circumstances of each case. There is nothing prohibiting teams from meeting virtually, though occasional in-person meetings are encouraged and may be necessary in some areas in order to appropriately distribute case material.

How many and what kind of cases are regional teams required to review?

Regional DVFR teams are required to review a minimum of two eligible cases per year. Cases eligible to review under the Act include a fatality or near-fatality that includes at least one of the following:

- Homicide: Victim's death was caused by offender, or offender's death was caused by survivor.
- Suicide: Offender, survivor, or victim attempted or completed suicide.
- Familicide: Deaths of victim and other members of victim's family were caused by offender.
- Near-fatality: Survivor caused the near-fatality of offender, or offender causes the near-fatality of survivor.
- Other cases: Any other case involving domestic violence by a majority vote of regional review team members if it advances the purposes of the Act (750 ILCS 62/62a-5).

Are there reporting requirements?

Regional teams will draft biennial reports and reform recommendations to send to the Statewide Committee. The Statewide Committee will review and analyze the recommendations and any data for trends, strengths, and vulnerabilities, and report the recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly on a biennial basis.

The Statewide Committee will share model policy and procedure guidelines with each team, assist in any case reviews at the regional team's request, and collect annual reports.

What about confidentiality?

Domestic violence fatality reviews are confidential (750 ILCS 62/75). Fatality review often necessitates possessing confidential information. Each regional team member participating in any portion of a case review must sign a confidentiality agreement with copies to be housed by the Statewide Committee. Confidential information held by a regional review team is not subject to disclosure by the regional team under the Freedom of Information Act, subpoena or discovery nor is it admissible as evidence in any civil or criminal proceeding. Review team members cannot be compelled to release or disclose any confidential information learned or obtained under their official duties as part of a domestic violence fatality review team under the Act. Meetings of a DVFR team are exempt from the Open Meetings Act.

APPENDIX B: MEMBER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

ILLINOIS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW
MEMBER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Pursuant to the *Illinois Domestic Violence Fatality Review Act*, 750 ILCS 62/75 (d), all Statewide Committee and subcommittee members and staff, all members of each regional review team, and any other person who participates in any manner in a domestic violence fatality review shall execute this confidentiality agreement that acknowledges and agrees to comply with the responsibility not to disclose or release confidential information.

I, _____, as a member of the _____ Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee/Team, acknowledge that the effectiveness of the fatality review process is conditioned on the confidentiality of the review process and the information shared.

I understand and agree that all information pertaining to survivors, victims, witnesses, and their families will be respected and held in confidence.

Thus, I agree that I will not use or disseminate any confidential information or materials obtained or learned during a domestic violence fatality review for any reason other than for that which it was intended as part of the review process, pursuant to Illinois law.

I understand and agree to comply with the following requirements:

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW CONFIDENTIALITY DEFINITION
(750 ILCS 62/5)

I understand that, for the purposes of this agreement, "confidential information" includes any oral, written, digital, or electronic original or copied information, records, documents, photographs, images, exhibits, or communications created or maintained for the purpose of addressing whether a case should be reviewed or for use in the review of a case.

I understand that confidential information also includes any information that discloses the identities of any victims, survivors, offenders, or their family members, or information by which their identities can be determined by a reasonably diligent inquiry.

I understand that confidential information includes any discussions, deliberations, minutes, notes, records, or opinions of the members of any domestic fatality review committee or team.

I understand that "confidential information" does not mean non-identifying or aggregate data information or analysis of data, or recommendations for community and systemic reform.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE REGIONAL REVIEW TEAMS, INFORMATION, AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEWS
(750 ILCS 62/75)

I understand that the regional review teams are not subject to the Open Meetings Act. 750 ILCS 62/75(a)

I understand that confidential information is not subject to disclosure by a domestic violence fatality review team or committee under the *Freedom of Information Act*. 750 ILCS 62/75(b)(1)

I understand that confidential information in possession of a domestic violence fatality review team or committee is not subject to subpoena and discovery under 725 ILCS 5/2-402 or *Illinois Supreme Court Rule 412*.

I understand that confidential information in possession of a domestic violence fatality review team or committee is not admissible as evidence in any civil or criminal proceeding and that any confidential information admissible as evidence prior to its use in a domestic violence fatality review remains admissible. 750 ILCS 62/75(b)(3)

I understand that domestic violence fatality review team members, committee members, or staff cannot be subject to examination or compelled to disclose or release in any administrative, civil or criminal proceeding confidential information learned or obtained as a result of their participation in domestic violence fatality review. 750 ILCS 62/75(e)

UNLAWFUL DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION; PENALTIES
(750 ILCS 62/90)

I understand that the unauthorized disclosure of confidential information may result in exclusion from domestic violence fatality review proceedings and may result in civil or criminal liability.

I understand that, pursuant to 750 ILCS 62/90, the penalty for unlawful disclosure of confidential information is a Class A misdemeanor.

I agree that, in the event of my departure from the Fatality Review Committee or team, I will keep confidential all information related to any and all reviews during my participation on the Committee or team.

This confidentiality agreement is made effective as of _____ by _____ and sets forth an entire understanding of confidentiality as it relates to Domestic Violence Fatality Review. I declare in the event of my departure from the Illinois Domestic Violence Fatality Review initiative, I will keep confidential all information related to any and all reviews during my participation with Domestic Violence Fatality Review.

_____

Signature

_____

Printed Name and Title

_____

Agency

_____

Circuit

Please email this completed form to your regional review team co-chairs. Please keep a copy for your records.

APPENDIX C: GUEST CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

ILLINOIS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW
GUEST CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Pursuant to the *Illinois Domestic Violence Fatality Review Act*, 750 ILCS 62/75 (d), all Statewide Committee and subcommittee members and staff, all members of each regional review team, and any other person who participates in any manner in a domestic violence fatality review shall execute this confidentiality agreement that acknowledges and agrees to comply with the responsibility not to disclose or release confidential information.

I, _____, as a guest participant of the _____ (Circuit/County) Domestic Violence Fatality Review on _____. I understand and acknowledge that as a participant of the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team, I may have access to confidential information and sensitive materials. In consideration of my involvement in the team and to ensure the protection of individuals' privacy and the integrity of the review process, I hereby agree to the following terms: acknowledge that the effectiveness of the fatality review process is conditioned on the confidentiality of the review process and the information shared.

I understand and agree that all information pertaining to survivors, victims, witnesses, and their families will be respected and held in confidence.

Thus, I agree that I will not use or disseminate any confidential information or materials obtained or learned during a domestic violence fatality review for any reason other than for that which it was intended as part of the review process, pursuant to Illinois law.

I further understand and agree to comply with the following requirements:

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW CONFIDENTIALITY DEFINITION
(750 ILCS 62/5)

I understand that, for the purposes of this agreement, "confidential information" includes any oral, written, digital, or electronic original or copied information, records, documents, photographs, images, exhibits, or communications created or maintained for the purpose of addressing whether a case should be reviewed or for use in the review of a case.

I understand that confidential information also includes any information that discloses the identities of any victims, survivors, offenders, or their family members, or information by which their identities can be determined by a reasonably diligent inquiry.

I understand that confidential information includes any discussions, deliberations, minutes, notes, records, or opinions of the members of any domestic fatality review committee or team.

I understand that "confidential information" does not mean non-identifying or aggregate data information or analysis of data, or recommendations for community and systemic reform.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE REGIONAL REVIEW TEAMS, INFORMATION, AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEWS (750 ILCS 62/75)

I understand that the regional review teams are not subject to the Open Meetings Act. 750 ILCS 62/75(a)

I understand that confidential information is not subject to disclosure by a domestic violence fatality review team or committee under the *Freedom of Information Act*. 750 ILCS 62/75(b)(1)

I understand that confidential information in possession of a domestic violence fatality review team or committee is not subject to subpoena and discovery under 725 ILCS 5/2-402 or *Illinois Supreme Court Rule 412*.

I understand that confidential information in possession of a domestic violence fatality review team or committee is not admissible as evidence in any civil or criminal proceeding and that any confidential information admissible as evidence prior to its use in a domestic violence fatality review remains admissible. 750 ILCS 62/75(b)(3)

I understand that domestic violence fatality review team members, committee members, or staff cannot be subject to examination or compelled to disclose or release in any administrative, civil or criminal proceeding confidential information learned or obtained as a result of their participation in domestic violence fatality review. 750 ILCS 62/75(e)

UNLAWFUL DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION; PENALTIES
(750 ILCS 62/90)

I understand that the unauthorized disclosure of confidential information may result in exclusion from domestic violence fatality review proceedings and may result in civil or criminal liability.

I understand that pursuant to 750 ILCS 62/90, the penalty for unlawful disclosure of confidential information is a Class A misdemeanor.

I agree that, in the event of my departure from the Fatality Review Committee or team, I will keep confidential all information related to any and all reviews during my participation on the Committee or team.

This confidentiality agreement is made effective as of _____ by _____ and sets forth an entire understanding of confidentiality as it relates to Domestic Violence Fatality Review. I declare in the event of my departure from the Illinois Domestic Violence Fatality Review initiative, I will keep confidential all information related to any and all reviews during my participation with Domestic Violence Fatality Review.

_____
Signature

_____
Printed Name and Title/Role

_____
Agency if applicable

_____
Circuit

Please email the completed form to the regional review team co-chairs of the team for which you are serving as a guest member. Please keep a copy for your records.

APPENDIX D: SECURE STORAGE GUIDELINES

ILLINOIS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW

SECURE STORAGE GUIDELINES FOR DVFR TEAMS

This guidelines document is currently under review. Its release is anticipated in Quarter 1 of SFY25. In the interim, please direct questions regarding Microsoft Teams and DVFR secure storage guidelines to:

Amanda L. Vasquez
Research Manager
Center for Victim Studies
Research & Analysis Unit
Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority
Amanda.L.Vasquez@illinois.gov

SAMPLE FIRST RRT MEETING AGENDA

Location:	
Meeting ID *(if applicable):*	
Access Link *(if applicable):*	
Date:	
Time:	
Subject:	**(First)** Meeting of **(name)** Fatality Review Team

Call to Order & Roll Call

- Welcome and Introduction of Members (and staff, if applicable)

New Business

- Overview of DVFR and structure in Illinois pursuant to 750 ILCS 60
- Discuss member terms; Draw lots
- Importance of confidentiality; Sign confidentiality agreements
- Elect Officers: Co-Chair A, Co-Chair B, & Secretary (required)
    - Division of duties
    - Additional officers/roles (optional)
- Discuss team policies and procedures
- Determine how cases will be chosen (within statutory guidelines)
- Determine meeting frequency, time, location (virtual, in-person, hybrid)

Adjournment

- Self-care
- Next meeting date and time

SAMPLE PLANNING MEETING AGENDA

Location:	
Meeting ID *(if applicable):*	
Access Link *(if applicable):*	
Date:	
Time:	
Subject:	Meeting of **(name)** Fatality Review Team

Old Business

- Vote to adopt minutes from previous meeting
- Discuss status of previous case reviews or team recommendations

Call to Order & Roll Call

- Welcome and introduction of members (and staff, if applicable)
- Reminder of team purpose
- Sign Confidentiality Agreements, if needed

New Business

- Identify case to be reviewed
- Identify records needed
- Identify potential interviewees and guest members

Adjournment

- Self-care
- Next meeting date and time

SAMPLE DVFR CASE REVIEW AGENDA

Location:	
Meeting ID *(if applicable):*	
Access Link *(if applicable):*	
Date:	
Time:	
Subject:	Meeting of (name) Fatality Review Team

Old Business

- Vote to adopt minutes from previous meeting

Call to Order & Roll Call

- Welcome and introduction of members (and staff, if applicable)
- Reminder of team purpose
- Sign Confidentiality Agreements, if needed

New Business

- Moment of silence or other team practices
- Establish a timeline
- Highlight antecedents or red flags
- Identify agency and community involvement
- Brainstorm policy recommendations

Adjournment

- Closing practice
- Next meeting date and time

APPENDIX H: DOCUMENT REQUEST TRACKER

Agency or Entity	Description of Request	Individual Receiving Request	Individual Making Request	Date Requested	Follow-Up Date	Notes	Date Received

APPENDIX I: REQUEST FOR RECORDS

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW

[Date]
[Agency or Organization Name]
[Address]
[City, State, ZIP Code]

Dear [Recipient's Name],

I am writing on behalf of the _____ domestic violence fatality regional review team established under Illinois law to comprehensively review domestic violence related fatalities and near-fatalities in Illinois. We are requesting records, and oral or written information relevant to the purposes of carrying out the work of the Domestic Violence Fatality Review initiative.

Pursuant to 750 ILCS 62/80, access to records and information requested by a regional review team for the purposes of domestic violence fatality review shall be provided free of charge by state and local governmental agencies and officials; medical and dental providers; domestic violence offender and partner abuse intervention service providers; childcare providers; and employers. The records and oral or written information may be provided for purposes of domestic violence fatality review without authorization of the person or persons to whom the records and oral or written information relate. Regional review teams and any other participant in a domestic violence fatality review shall maintain the confidentiality and shall not disclose or release the confidential information received, shared, or obtained.

We are currently conducting a thorough review of a domestic violence related fatality or near-fatalities involving [insert name] that occurred on [Date of Incident]. We are seeking documents that relate, reflect or refer to [insert name], [insert DOB]. Our objective is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the events leading up to this incident and to prevent similar incidents in the future. To conduct a thorough and accurate review, we kindly request your assistance in providing us with the following documents free of charge:

We understand the sensitivity of these documents and assure you that all information provided will be kept confidential.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation. Documents may be uploaded using the following secure link:

[INSERT LINK]

However, if you are unable to upload documents using the provided link, please let me know the available options for obtaining records. We look forward to receiving the requested documents by [Requested Deadline].

Your cooperation is crucial to the success of our review process. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this request, please do not hesitate to contact me at [email] or [phone number].

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
[Your Title]
[Your Contact Information]
_____ Domestic Violence Fatality Regional Review Team

APPENDIX J: CHRONOLOGICAL TIMELINE

Date	Event	Source	Red Flag/Risk Factor

APPENDIX K: DATA COLLECTION WORKSHEET

ILLINOIS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW TEAM

DATA COLLECTION WORKSHEET

Case Number/Identifier: _____

Date of Review: _____

Regional Review Team: _____

INCIDENT CHARACTERISTICS

1. Please choose the incident characteristics that fits the case being reviewed. ***Check all that apply.***

- ❑ Offender killed victim
- ❑ Offender killed child
- ❑ Offender killed a third party other than child
- ❑ Offender attempted to commit a homicide
- ❑ Offender committed suicide
- ❑ Offender attempted suicide
- ❑ Offender was killed by a third party
- ❑ Survivor killed the offender
- ❑ Survivor killed child
- ❑ Survivor killed a third party other than child
- ❑ Survivor attempted to commit a homicide
- ❑ Survivor committed suicide
- ❑ Survivor attempted suicide
- ❑ Survivor was killed by a third party
- ❑ Familicide
- ❑ A firearm was used
- ❑ Other circumstance. Please specify: _____

PRIMARY VICTIM/SURVIVOR INFORMATION

2. Age at time of incident (years): _____

3. Race/Ethnicity. ***Check all that apply.***
   - ❑ White or Caucasian
   - ❑ Middle Eastern or North African
   - ❑ Hispanic or Latino
   - ❑ Black or African American
   - ❑ Asian
   - ❑ Native American or Alaska Native
   - ❑ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
   - ❑ Other. Please specify: _____
   - ❑ Unknown

4. Gender. ***Check all that apply.***
   - ❑ Female
   - ❑ Male
   - ❑ Transgender male
   - ❑ Transgender female
   - ❑ Genderqueer/Gender non-conforming
   - ❑ Other. Please specify: _____
   - ❑ Unknown

5. City of Residence: _____

6. Was the victim/survivor pregnant at the time of the incident?
   - o Yes
   - o No
   - o Unknown

7. Did the victim/survivor have children?
   - o Yes
   - o No
   - o Unknown

For the victim/survivor, please indicate whether the following circumstances were present:

8. Mental health concern or issue?
   - o Yes, previously diagnosed
   - o Yes, suspected, but not diagnosed
   - o No
   - o Unknown

9. On public assistance at time of incident?
    - o Yes
    - o No
    - o Unknown

10. Substance or alcohol abuse history?
    - o Yes, please specify: _____
    - o No
    - o Unknown

11. Tested positive for alcohol or other drugs on autopsy?
    - o Yes, please specify: _____
    - o No
    - o Unknown

12. Ever attempted suicide?
    - o Yes, please specify: _____
    - o No
    - o Unknown

13. Ever threatened suicide?
    - o Yes, please specify: _____
    - o No
    - o Unknown

14. Did the victim/survivor serve in the armed forces?
    - o Yes, active duty, reserve, or National Guard at time of incident
    - o Yes, former service
    - o No
    - o Unknown

15. Was the victim/survivor a current or former law enforcement officer, prison or jail employee, or other protective service employee?
    - o Yes
    - o No
    - o Unknown

16. Were there other victims involved in the incident?
    - o Yes
    - o No
    - o Unknown

If yes to Q16, please complete the following table:

Other victim(s)	Age (years):	Gender	Race/ethnicity	City of Residence	Relationship to victim/survivor
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

OFFENDER INFORMATION

17. Age at time of incident (years): _____

18. Race/Ethnicity. ***Check all that apply.***
    - ❑ White or Caucasian
    - ❑ Middle Eastern or North African
    - ❑ Hispanic or Latino
    - ❑ Black or African American
    - ❑ Asian
    - ❑ Native American or Alaska Native
    - ❑ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
    - ❑ Other. Please specify: _____
    - ❑ Unknown

19. Gender. ***Check all that apply.***
    - ❑ Female
    - ❑ Male
    - ❑ Transgender male
    - ❑ Transgender female
    - ❑ Genderqueer/Gender non-conforming
    - ❑ Other. Please specify: _____
    - ❑ Unknown

20. City of Residence: _____

For the offender, please indicate whether the following circumstances were present:

21. Mental health concern or issue?
    - o Yes, previously diagnosed
    - o Yes, suspected, but not diagnosed
    - o No
    - o Unknown

22. Was the offender ever required to receive mental health treatment?
    - o Yes, please specify mental health treatment received: _____
    - o No
    - o Unknown

23. Was the mental health treatment completed?
    - o Yes
    - o No
    - o Unknown

24. Were they in mental health treatment at the time of the incident?
    - o Yes, please specify: _____
    - o No
    - o Unknown

25. Was there a history of the offender abusing animals?
    - o Yes, please explain: _____
    - o No
    - o Unknown

26. On public assistance at time of incident?
    - o Yes
    - o No
    - o Unknown

27. Substance or alcohol abuse history?
    - o Yes, please specify: _____
    - o No
    - o Unknown

28. Ever attempted suicide?
    - o Yes, please specify: _____
    - o No
    - o Unknown

29. Ever threatened suicide?
    - o Yes, please specify: _____
    - o No
    - o Unknown

30. If offender is deceased, was their death related to this incident?
    - o Yes
    - o No
    - o Unknown

<u>If yes to Q30, please answer the following questions:</u>

30.1 Did they commit suicide?
- o Yes. Please specify means: _____
- o No
- o Unknown

30.2 Were they killed by the survivor?
- o Yes
- o No
- o Unknown

30.3. Were they killed by law enforcement?
- o Yes
- o No
- o Unknown

30.4 Tested positive for alcohol or other drugs on autopsy?
- o Yes, please specify: _____
- o No
- o Unknown

31. Did the offender serve in the armed forces?
    - o Yes, active duty, reserve, or National Guard at time of incident
    - o Yes, former service
    - o No
    - o Unknown

32. Was the offender a current or former law enforcement officer, prison or jail employee, or other protective service employee?
    - o Yes
    - o No
    - o Unknown

RELATIONSHIP CHARACTERISTICS

33. Please choose the relationship type that best matches the offender's relationship to the victim/survivor at the time of the incident.
    - o Current romantic/sexual partner
    - o Former non-married romantic/sexual partner
    - o Current spouse or common law partner
    - o Former spouse or common law partner
    - o Parent
    - o Child
    - o Sibling
    - o Other family member/relative
    - o Caretaker
    - o Roommate
    - o Other. Please specify: _____

34. Length of relationship: _____

35. Was the relationship intact or separated?
    - o Intact
    - o Separated
    - o Not applicable
    - o Unknown

36. Did the victim/survivor and offender live together?
    - o Yes, at time of incident
    - o Yes, previously
    - o No
    - o Unknown

37. Did the victim/survivor and offender share any pets?
    - o Yes
    - o No
    - o Unknown

38. Did the victim/survivor and offender share any children?
    - o Yes
    - o No
    - o Unknown

39. Was domestic violence ever reported to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)?
    - o Yes
    - o No
    - o Not applicable
    - o Unknown

PRIOR INCIDENTS AND SYSTEM CONTACT

40. Please list any prior alleged or reported domestic violence incidents involving the victim/survivor and offender.

Event	Outcome

41. Did any of the prior incidents involve strangulation?
    - o Yes
    - o No
    - o Unknown

42. Were others aware or notified of prior violence between victim/survivor and offender? ***Check all that apply.***
    - ❑ Yes, family member(s)
    - ❑ Yes, co-worker of victim/survivor
    - ❑ Yes, friends of victim/survivor
    - ❑ Yes, friends of offender
    - ❑ Yes, co-worker(s) of offender
    - ❑ Yes, neighbors
    - ❑ Yes, priest, pastor or clergy
    - ❑ Yes, university, college, or school
    - ❑ Yes, please specify: _____
    - ❑ No
    - ❑ Unknown

43. Did the offender have a prior history of domestic violence with others?
    - o Yes, it was suspected
    - o Yes, there were arrests or charges
    - o No
    - o Unknown

44. Were there prior domestic violence related 911 calls for service. ***Check all that apply.***
    - ❑ Yes, domestic violence incident involving the offender as the perpetrator
    - ❑ Yes, domestic violence incident involving the survivor/victim as the perpetrator
    - ❑ None
    - ❑ Unknown

45. Was there prior contact with law enforcement for domestic violence related incident. ***Check all that apply.***
    - ❑ Yes, domestic violence incident involving the offender as the perpetrator
    - ❑ Yes, domestic violence incident involving the survivor/victim as the perpetrator
    - ❑ None
    - ❑ Unknown

46. Was an Order of Protection sought by the victim/survivor or offender? ***Check all that apply***
    - ❑ Yes, against offender
    - ❑ Yes, against survivor/victim
    - ❑ None
    - ❑ Unknown

If yes to Q46, please complete the following table.

Name of Petitioner/ Defendant	Type of Order	Was order granted?	Was order served?	Comments
Petitioner: Defendant:	❑ Order of Protection ❑ Firearm Order of Protection ❑ Civil No Contact Order	❑ Yes, an ex parte order (e.g., Emergency Order of Protection) ❑ Yes, a full order (e.g., Plenary Order of Protection) ❑ No, order was denied ❑ No, order was withdrawn	❑ Yes ❑ No	
Petitioner: Defendant:	❑ Order of Protection ❑ Firearm Order of Protection ❑ Civil No Contact Order	❑ Yes, an ex parte order (e.g., Emergency Order of Protection) ❑ Yes, a full order (e.g., Plenary Order of Protection) ❑ No, order was denied ❑ No, order was withdrawn	❑ Yes ❑ No	

47. Was an Order of Protection sought against the offender by another party?
    - o Yes
    - o No
    - o Unknown

If yes to Q47, please complete the following table.

Date	Was this order granted?	Reason for denial	Notes
	❑ Yes ❑ No		
	❑ Yes ❑ No		
	❑ Yes ❑ No		
	❑ Yes ❑ No		

48. Did the victim/survivor or offender have a criminal history? ***Check all that apply.***
    - ❑ Yes, incident involving the offender as the perpetrator
    - ❑ Yes, incident involving the survivor/victim as the perpetrator
    - ❑ None
    - ❑ Unknown

If yes to Q48, please answer the following questions.

48.1 Prior arrest for domestic violence related offense. ***Check all that apply***
- ❑ Yes, offender
- ❑ Yes, survivor/victim
- ❑ None
- ❑ Unknown

48.2 Complete the table below:

Charge	Disposition	Sentence	Time Served

48.3 Were any charges related to the victim/survivor?
- o Yes. Please specify number of charges related to victim/survivor: _____
- o No
- o Unknown
- o Not applicable

48.4 Were any charges related to other domestic violence victims?
- o Yes. Please specify number of charges related to other victims: _____
- o No
- o Unknown
- o Not applicable

48.5 Does the offender have a prior incarceration record?
- o Yes. Please specify: _____
- o No
- o Unknown

48.6 Does the offender have a history of parole/probation?
- o Yes
- o No
- o Unknown

49. Prior contact with domestic violence agency or program. ***Check all that apply***
- ❑ Yes, offender
- ❑ Yes, survivor/victim
- ❑ None
- ❑ Unknown

50. Prior contact with domestic violence offender accountability or batterer intervention programming. ***Check all that apply***
- ❑ Yes, offender
- ❑ Yes, survivor/victim
- ❑ None
- ❑ Unknown

If "yes, offender" selected for Q50, did the offender complete the program?
- o Yes
- o No
- o Unknown

CASE CHARACTERISTICS

51. Date of incident: _____

At the time of the incident:

52. Was an Order of Protection in place?
- o Yes
- o No
- o Unknown

53. Was the offender on probation of parole?
    - o Yes
    - o No
    - o Unknown

54. Were any criminal cases against the offender pending?
    - o Yes
    - o No
    - o Unknown

55. Report of alleged substance use by the offender?
    - o Yes
    - o No
    - o Unknown

56. Were victim/survivor or offender's children present?
    - o Yes
    - o No
    - o Unknown

57. Were there any other children present?
    - o Yes
    - o No
    - o Unknown

58. Was anyone else present and injured?
    - o Yes
    - o No
    - o Unknown

If yes to Q58, please complete the following table:

Relationship to victim/survivor	Means of harm

59. Were there criminal charges related to this incident?
    - o Yes
    - o No. Please explain:_____
    - o Unknown

If yes, to Q59, please answer the following questions.

59.1 What were the charges? _____

59.2 Disposition? _____

60. Location of incident
    - o Public building/space
    - o Offender's home
    - o Victim/survivor's home
    - o Victim/survivor's work
    - o Other. Please specify: _____
    - o Unknown

61. Victim/survivor's means of death or near death. *(Please copy and paste this section for each victim)*
    - o Arson
    - o Asphyxiation
    - o Blunt violence
    - o Drowning
    - o Gunshot wound
    - o Stabbing
    - o Strangulation
    - o Unknown
    - o Other. Please specify: _____

RISK FACTORS

62. Please indicate if the following risk factors were present for the offender and/or survivor/victim. ***Check all that apply.***

Risk Factor	**Yes, offender**	**Yes, survivor/victim**	**None**	**Unknown**
History of domestic violence perpetration				
History of violence perpetration other than domestic violence				
Prior threats to kill or homicidal ideation				
Prior threats or assault with a weapon				
Prior threats to commit suicide or suicidal ideation				
Prior violence or threats against family pets				
Access to or possession of any firearms				

63. Please indicate if the following were present for the offender only. ***Check all that apply***

- ❑ Past failure to comply with authority
- ❑ Sexual jealousy
- ❑ Misogynistic attitudes
- ❑ Abused as a child
- ❑ Witnessed domestic violence as a child
- ❑ Displayed obsessive behavior
- ❑ Unemployed at the time of the incident
- ❑ Threatened and/or harmed a child in the past
- ❑ Prior attempts to isolate the survivor/victim
- ❑ Controlled most or all of survivor/victim's daily activities
- ❑ Prior hostage-taking and/or forcible confinement
- ❑ Prior forced sexual acts and/or assaults during sex
- ❑ Prior destruction or deprivation of survivor/victim's property
- ❑ Prior assault on survivor/victim while pregnant
- ❑ Choked/strangled survivor/victim in the past

64. Please indicate if the following additional risk factors were present. ***Check all that apply.***

- ❑ Child custody or access disputes
- ❑ Escalation of violence documented
- ❑ Financial strain/stress in the home
- ❑ New partner in survivor/victim's life
- ❑ Actual or pending separation
- ❑ Presence of stepchildren in the home
- ❑ Extreme minimization and/or denial of domestic violence in the home
- ❑ Survivor/victim feared offender
- ❑ Other risk factor. Please specify: _____

ANALYSIS

65. Describe the response(s) that could have occurred to mitigate the risk for the domestic violence fatality or near-fatality?

_____

_____

66. Describe any missed opportunities for prevention or support.

_____

_____

67. Describe any missed opportunities for system collaboration or intervention.

_____

_____

_____

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

68. What, if any, recommendations did the team make as a result of this case review?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX L: POST-REVIEW SURVEY

ILLINOIS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW TEAM

POST-REVIEW SURVEY

"Offender" means the person who inflicted domestic violence upon the victim and caused the victim's death, or the person who inflicted domestic violence upon a survivor. "Offender" includes a person who is deceased or alive, and is not required to have been the subject of a criminal investigation or prosecution. "Survivor" means a person who experienced domestic violence and is alive. "Victim" means the person who experienced domestic violence and is deceased, including by means of homicide or suicide.

Note: In some cases, both parties may have engaged in violent or abusive behaviors. For the purposes of this survey, the offender is the primary individual engaged in the domestic violence or abuse. The survivor is the individual who was the primary victim of violence or abuse.

Once complete, please submit this Post-Review Survey online.

Regional Review Team: _____

Date of Review: _____

Regional Review Team Completing This Survey: _____

Incident Characteristics

1. Please choose the incident characteristics that fits the case being reviewed. ***Check all that apply.***
   - ❑ Offender killed victim
   - ❑ Offender killed child
   - ❑ Offender killed a third party other than child
   - ❑ Offender attempted to commit a homicide
   - ❑ Offender committed suicide
   - ❑ Offender attempted suicide
   - ❑ Offender was killed by a third party
   - ❑ Survivor killed the offender
   - ❑ Survivor killed child
   - ❑ Survivor killed a third party other than child
   - ❑ Survivor attempted to commit a homicide
   - ❑ Survivor committed suicide
   - ❑ Survivor attempted suicide
   - ❑ Survivor was killed by a third party
   - ❑ Familicide
   - ❑ A firearm was used
   - ❑ Other circumstance. Please specify: _____

Victim/Survivor Information

2. Age at time of incident (years): _____

3. Race/Ethnicity. ***Check all that apply.***
   - ❑ White or Caucasian
   - ❑ Middle Eastern or North African
   - ❑ Hispanic or Latino
   - ❑ Black or African American
   - ❑ Asian
   - ❑ Native American or Alaska Native
   - ❑ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
   - ❑ Other. Please specify: _____
   - ❑ Unknown

4. Gender. ***Check all that apply.***
   - ❑ Female
   - ❑ Male
   - ❑ Transgender male
   - ❑ Transgender female
   - ❑ Genderqueer/Gender non-conforming
   - ❑ Other. Please specify: _____
   - ❑ Unknown

5. Substance or alcohol abuse history noted
   - o Yes
   - o No
   - o Unknown

6. Mental health concern or issue noted
   - o Yes, previously diagnosed
   - o Yes, suspected, but not diagnosed
   - o No
   - o Unknown

7. Employment as a law enforcement officer
   - o Yes, at the time of the incident
   - o Yes, previously but not at the time of the incident
   - o No
   - o Unknown

8. Military experience
   - ❑ Yes, at the time of the incident
   - ❑ Yes, previously but not at the time of the incident
   - ❑ No
   - ❑ Unknown

Offender Information

9. Age at time of incident (years): _____

10. Race/Ethnicity. ***Check all that apply.***
    - ❑ White or Caucasian
    - ❑ Middle Eastern or North African
    - ❑ Hispanic or Latino
    - ❑ Black or African American
    - ❑ Asian
    - ❑ Native American or Alaska Native
    - ❑ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
    - ❑ Other. Please specify: _____
    - ❑ Unknown

11. Gender. ***Check all that apply.***
    - ❑ Female
    - ❑ Male
    - ❑ Transgender male
    - ❑ Transgender female
    - ❑ Genderqueer/Gender non-conforming
    - ❑ Other. Please specify: _____

12. Substance or alcohol abuse history noted
    - ❑ Yes
    - ❑ No
    - ❑ Unknown

13. Mental health concern or issue noted
    - ❑ Yes, previously diagnosed
    - ❑ Yes, suspected, but not diagnosed
    - ❑ No
    - ❑ Unknown

14. Employment as a law enforcement officer
    - ❑ Yes, at the time of the incident
    - ❑ Yes, previously but not at the time of the incident
    - ❑ No
    - ❑ Unknown

15. Military experience
    - ❑ Yes, at the time of the incident
    - ❑ Yes, previously but not at the time of the incident
    - ❑ No
    - ❑ Unknown

Offender Relationship to Victim/Survivor

16. Please choose the relationship type that best matches the offender's relationship to the victim survivor at the time of the incident.
    - o Current romantic/sexual partner
    - o Former non-married romantic/sexual partner
    - o Current spouse or common law partner
    - o Former spouse or common law partner
    - o Parent
    - o Child
    - o Sibling
    - o Other family member/relative
    - o Caretaker
    - o Roommate
    - o Other. Please specify: _____

Contact with Criminal Legal System

17. Prior domestic violence related 911 calls for service. ***Check all that apply.***
    - ❑ Yes, domestic violence incident involving the offender as the perpetrator
    - ❑ Yes, domestic violence incident involving the survivor/victim as the perpetrator
    - ❑ None
    - ❑ Unknown

18. Prior contact with law enforcement for domestic violence related incident. ***Check all that apply.***
    - ❑ Yes, domestic violence incident involving the offender as the perpetrator
    - ❑ Yes, domestic violence incident involving the survivor/victim as the perpetrator
    - ❑ None
    - ❑ Unknown

19. Prior arrest for domestic violence related offense. ***Check all that apply***
    - ❑ Yes, offender
    - ❑ Yes, survivor/victim
    - ❑ None
    - ❑ Unknown

20. Prior conviction for domestic violence related offense. ***Check all that apply***
    - ❑ Yes, offender
    - ❑ Yes, survivor/victim
    - ❑ None
    - ❑ Unknown

21. Order of protection. ***Check all that apply***
    - ❑ Yes, against offender
    - ❑ Yes, against survivor/victim
    - ❑ None
    - ❑ Unknown

Contact with Domestic Violence Services or Programs

22. Prior contact with domestic violence agency or program. ***Check all that apply***
    - ❑ Yes, offender
    - ❑ Yes, survivor/victim
    - ❑ None
    - ❑ Unknown

23. Prior contact with domestic violence offender accountability or batterer intervention programming. ***Check all that apply***
    - ❑ Yes, offender
    - ❑ Yes, survivor/victim
    - ❑ None
    - ❑ Unknown

Risk Factors Documented

24. Please indicate if the following risk factors were present for the offender and/or survivor/victim. ***Check all that apply.***

Risk Factor	**Yes, offender**	**Yes, survivor/victim**	**None**	**Unknown**
History of domestic violence perpetration				
History of violence perpetration other than domestic violence				
Prior threats to kill or homicidal ideation				
Prior threats or assault with a weapon				
Prior threats to commit suicide or suicidal ideation				
Prior violence or threats against family pets				
Access to or possession of any firearms				

25. Please indicate if the following were present for the offender only. ***Check all that apply***

- ❑ Past failure to comply with authority
- ❑ Sexual jealousy
- ❑ Misogynistic attitudes
- ❑ Abused as a child
- ❑ Witnessed domestic violence as a child
- ❑ Displayed obsessive behavior
- ❑ Unemployed at the time of the incident
- ❑ Threatened and/or harmed a child in the past
- ❑ Prior attempts to isolate the survivor/victim
- ❑ Controlled most or all of survivor/victim's daily activities
- ❑ Prior hostage-taking and/or forcible confinement
- ❑ Prior forced sexual acts and/or assaults during sex
- ❑ Prior destruction or deprivation of survivor/victim's property
- ❑ Prior assault on survivor/victim while pregnant
- ❑ Choked/strangled survivor/victim in the past

26. Please indicate if the following additional risk factors were present. ***Check all that apply.***

- ❑ Child custody or access disputes
- ❑ Escalation of violence documented
- ❑ Financial strain/stress in the home
- ❑ New partner in survivor/victim's life
- ❑ Actual or pending separation
- ❑ Presence of stepchildren in the home
- ❑ Extreme minimization and/or denial of domestic violence in the home
- ❑ Survivor/victim feared offender
- ❑ Other risk factor. Please specify: _____

APPENDIX M: DEVELOPING SMARTIE RECOMMENDATIONS WORKSHEET

Developing SMARTIE Recommendations						
Specific	**M**easurable	**A**chievable	**R**elevant	**T**ime-bound	**I**nclusive	**E**quitable
Who? (target population and activity implementers) and What? (action or activity)	**How much change is expected?**	**Can the desired outcome be accomplished given the available resources?**	**Is the desired outcome realistic and achievable, but also consistent with the RRT's findings?**	**When will the desired outcome be met?**	**Does your desired outcome include all persons, including traditionally marginalized persons?**	**Does your desired outcome address systemic injustice and inequities?**

APPENDIX N: ANNUAL REPORT TEMPLATE

ILLINOIS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW

ANNUAL REPORT TEMPLATE

Regional Review Team: [Insert Name of Regional Review Team]

Reporting Period: [Insert Reporting Period, e.g., January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024]

Pursuant to the *Illinois Domestic Violence Fatality Review Act*, 750 ILCS 50/62-65(12), each domestic violence regional review team in Illinois must prepare and submit an annual report to the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee (Statewide Committee) on the team's operations and activities during the previous calendar year, in accordance with the guidelines set by the Statewide Committee.

Instructions: Please answer the following questions using the template below. This will serve as the regional review team's annual report. Submit the completed template to the Project Director by **March 1** of each year. Please attach additional documents, as needed.

FORMATION AND MEMBERSHIP:
What year was the regional review team formed?
Names and affiliations of current members *(may attach spreadsheet or list).*
Changes in membership *(please note members who left prior to the completion of their term in the spreadsheet or list).*

TRAINING:
List any domestic violence or fatality review-related trainings and technical assistance sessions attended by team members, noting the names of members who attended each training or technical assistance session.
MEETING REQUIREMENTS: *(Regional review teams are required to meet at least quarterly. Please indicate if meetings were held virtually or in person)*
List all meeting dates and locations:
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEWS:
Number of cases reviewed:
If fewer than two reviews were completed, please provide an explanation.
Indicate factors the team considered in selecting cases for review. Please include any priorities for reviewing eligible cases established by the team, including demographics and case type, in your response.

OPTIONAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (if applicable):
Summarize any data collection and analysis efforts.
Describe any engagement with higher education institutions or research entities for research, training, and educational purposes.
Briefly summarize efforts to seek funds to support the regional review team's operation or any funding secured.
Describe other activities not described above that advance the regional review team's purpose.

Provide any other information about the regional review team's operations and activities that your team would like to include.

Annual Report Submission

Submitted By:

Name:

Title:

Date:

Approved By Statewide Committee:

Name:

Title:

Date:

APPENDIX O: BIENNIAL REPORT TEMPLATE

ILLINOIS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW
BIENNIAL REPORT TEMPLATE

Regional Review Team: [Insert Name of Regional Review Team]

Reporting Period: [Insert Reporting Period, e.g., January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2024]

Pursuant to the *Illinois Domestic Violence Fatality Review Act*, 750 ILCS 50/62-65(12), each domestic violence regional review team in Illinois must prepare and submit to the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee (Statewide Committee) a biennial report of recommendations based upon the domestic violence fatality reviews conducted during the preceding two calendar years. The biennial report shall include specific recommendations for legislative, systemic, policy, and any other changes to reduce domestic violence and domestic violence related fatalities and near-fatalities. Recommendations will be reviewed by the Statewide Committee and will inform the Statewide Committee's biennial report to the Governor and the General Assembly.

Any information that identifies the victims, survivors, deceased, or offenders, or their family members or any information by which their identities can be determined by a reasonably diligent inquiry shall not be disclosed in any domestic violence fatality review biennial report or by any other means. Any narrative of nonidentifying facts should be limited to facts that are essential to the team's analysis or recommendations being made. Aggregate and nonidentifying data, including demographics, may be included in the biennial report.

Instructions: Please answer the following questions using the template below. This will serve as the regional review team's biennial report. Submit completed documents to the Project Director by **April 01, 2025,** and each odd numbered year thereafter. Please attach additional documents, as needed.

Introduction
Briefly describe the regional review team, including its boundaries (e.g., counties, major cities), team size and composition, and meeting frequency and content. Also, provide demographic information (e.g., racial/ethnic composition, income levels) and crime statistics for the geographic area covered by the team.

Methodology
Outline the team's process for conducting case reviews. Include the process for selecting cases, collecting, discussing, and analyzing data, and forming recommendations. How has the process varied by case?
Lessons Learned
Describe challenges that the team encountered over the past two years, strategies used to overcome those challenges, and any lessons learned.
Findings
What trends, patterns, or themes were observed in the cases reviewed (e.g., substance use, firearm access, limited system collaboration)? Include factors that contributed to domestic violence and related fatalities or near-fatalities.

Recommendations
Provide specific recommendations for legislative, systemic, policy, and other changes aimed at reducing domestic violence and related fatalities or near-fatalities. Recommendations should be actionable, and address identified gaps or areas in which current practices can be improved.

Implementation *(If Applicable)*
Describe any steps that the regional review team or its members have taken or will take to implement recommendations. Describe any barriers to implementation and strategies for overcoming those barriers.
Conclusion
Describe planned next steps (e.g., anticipated number of cases that will be reviewed over the next two years, frequency of meetings moving forward, other activities or trainings members plan to engage in), and any other concluding remarks.

Attachments
Please attach any additional documents or supporting materials that demonstrate the regional review team's work, such as de-identified case summaries, data tools, or research. List the additional documents or supporting materials attached to this report below.

Biennial Report Submission

Submitted By:

Name:

Title:

Date:

Approved By Statewide Committee:

Name:

Title:

Date:

Approved By Statewide Committee

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