



Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

ILLINOIS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: August 13, 2024

Time: 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm

Location: Zoom

Subject: Fourteenth Meeting of the Illinois Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee

Task Force Member Attendance	Present	Telephone	Absent
Sen. Sally Turner			x
Rep. Maurice West			x
Sen. Tony McCombie			x
Rep. Celina Villanueva			x
Jennifer Cacciapaglia, City of Rockford (Megan Brechon in her absence)	x		
Jenny Schoenwetter, Harbor House	x		
Jennifer Greene, Life Span Chicago			x
Judge Robert Anderson	x		
Sara Block	x		
Amanda Pyron			x
Vickie Smith	x		
Willette Benford, Live Free Illinois			x
Jennifer Vancil, Quanada	x		
Michelle Meyer			x
Jeannine Woods			x
Meg Hefty, Sarah's Inn Forest Park	x		
Jenna Lopez, YWCA			x
Megan Alderden, DePaul University, Program Director of Criminology	x		
Fawn Pettet, Land of Lincoln, Alton	x		
Carol Klarquist, Office of the Illinois State Public Defender	x		
Stacy Short, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services			x
Amanda Vasquez	x		
Thomas Golebiewski	x		
Wendy Cohen, Attorney General Office	x		
Emily Miller, Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy Office of Illinois Governor JB Pritzker			x
Dan Likens, ISP Division of Criminal Investigations Zone 1 Commander	x		
Teresa Tudor, Illinois Department of Human Services			x
Dr. Jacob Stelter, North Shore, Lake County			x
Ariana Karia			x
Ret. Chief Tom Weitzel			x
Sheriff Andy Hires	x		
Amirrah Abou-Youssef	x		

MEETING MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

- a. Co-Chair Sara Block called the meeting to order at 1:09 p.m. and welcomed Illinois Domestic Fatality Review Task Force members to the eighth meeting. Peter Yu of ICJIA conducted roll call and declared a quorum.

2. Old Business

- a. Vote to adopt minutes from May 21, 2024, meeting

Jennifer Vancil made a motion to adopt the minutes. Motion to Second made by Bob Anderson. Motion carried. Minutes were approved.

3. New Business

- a. Mission Moment and Discussion

This mission moment focuses on the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence's 2023 "Annual Illinois Domestic Violence Homicide Report."

During 2023, there were 94 incidents of domestic violence that led to 120 deaths, a significant increase from the 45 incidents of domestic violence that led to 57 deaths for 2022. This is a 110% increase.

27 counties reported deaths in connection to domestic violence, an increase from 20 counties in 2022. The five counties with the highest number of domestic violence related homicides are 1) Cook, 2), Will, 3) Lake, 4) Madison and 5) Peoria. Pioneer regional review teams are in Will, Lake and Madison.

Firearms were the means of death in 82 cases or 68%, up from 49% in 2022.

89% (107) of the deaths were homicide. 11% (13) were suicide.

Of the total deaths, 105 were caused by males and 61% of the victims were female.

Of the 13 deaths caused by females, 85% of the victims were male.

The ages of the victims range from under 1 to 86 years old. 8% of the deaths were of children, a decrease from 33% in 2022.

The report looks at all deaths that meet the definition of domestic violence under the Illinois Domestic Violence Act, such that half of the homicides involved current or intimate partners.

In summary, domestic violence related homicides increased as did fatalities by firearms. This report does not document near-fatalities, which are part of the purview of IL's Domestic Violence Fatality Review Act.

Amirrah Abou-Youssef commented on the helpfulness of receiving this information earlier in the year.

Fawn Pettet appreciated the perspective of including familial relationships.

Vickie Smith spoke about the importance of how these were preventable deaths and they often hear from the field that the cases weren't taken seriously. She advocated for continued education of the criminal justice system about how critical it is to take intervention and prevention steps early to keep from having to report the domestic violence-related deaths. Smith also stated that ICADV relies on print media to identify these deaths as long as it can be easily identified as domestic violence. These numbers are very likely underreported.

Wendy Cohen asked if there's somewhere that near-fatalities are documented. Co-Chair Alderden stated that there is work to be done to unpack the National Incident-Based Reporting System data to better understand the relationships. Co-Chair Block defined near-fatalities referencing the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Act.

b. Administrative Updates

- i. Leadership Transition – Amanda Vasquez updated the shifts between ICADV, ICJIA, co-chairs, and the committee. ICJIA is in the process of hiring a new project director. The position was posted in July with interviews in August and September.

At this moment, if anyone needs assistance with administrative or research, they should contact Vasquez. For legal assistance, they should contact Peter Yuh or Scott Riolute. For training and technical assistance, they should contact the co-chairs Block or Alderden or Vasquez.

- ii. Member Vacancies – Vasquez shared that there are three current vacancies: one public member domestic violence survivor and two public member social service providers. Please submit recommendations and a resume on their behalf to Vasquez

(Amanda.L.Vasquez@illinois.gov) or Rislute. These terms are for three years.

Pettet asked for clarification if social service providers including domestic violence agencies, to which Co-Chair Block said yes.

- iii. National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative, Conference, October 14 and 15th, Prescott, Arizona

Block discussed the upcoming conference, at which she'll be presenting and various regional review teams are attending. To learn more about the conference go to <https://ndvfri.org/>

- iv. TA structure

Alderden, Vasquez, and Block have set up a regular regional review team meetings to provide technical assistance and support.

c. Regional Review Team Updates

3rd Circuit: Madison/Bond Counties –Pettet stated their next meeting is September 4 where she'll be encouraging members to read the guidebook.

12th Circuit: Will County –Abou-Youssef updated that they reviewed specific appendices and chapters and have selected their first case. They have begun getting into teams and collecting data. Their next meeting is the week of August 19.

17th Circuit: Winnebago/Boone Counties – Dominique Sheehama shared they have voted on their co-chairs and secretary positions and their first two cases. They will review the first case this year and the second case next year. They discussed the importance of self-care and supporting one another throughout this process. They hope to schedule their review dates by the end of this month.

19th Circuit: Lake – Tom Golebiewski stated they have elected their co-chairs and secretary. He expressed appreciation to Alderden and Block for their guidance. They are discussing cases for consideration and training for those who haven't attended a training yet or would like a refresher. Their next meeting is in September.

21st Circuit: Kankakee – Robin Savage shared that they have voted on their case and are in the process of data collection and establishing the interview process. She also shared they are sending at least four members to the conference.

d. Guidebook Overview and Discussion

- i. Guidebook Link: https://dvfr.icjia-api.cloud/uploads/DVFR_RRT_Guide_V1_FINAL_bdae575aa2.pdf

Alderden shared that the IDVFR guidebook is now officially completed. Appreciation and acknowledgement to:

- the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence for their work in starting the draft of the guidebook,
- the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, and in particular Amanda Vasquez and Peter Yuh for their meticulous editing and insightful feedback and helping to finalize the guidebook,
- Dr. Neil Websdale and his team at the National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative for offering their guidance and expertise,
- members of the Statewide Committee for providing direction and feedback that helped shape the review process for Illinois,
- and the regional review teams, who kindly offered patience as the guidebook was being written. They also have already identified ways in which the guidebook can be enhanced.

The guidebook is intended to be a living document that will be periodically updated as the committee moves forward. The committee will try to make updates in a systematic manner and will make sure to keep all aware of any major changes.

The guidebook is intended to provide regional review teams with support and ensure some standardization across the groups. It is important to note that we do expect that not all teams will operate the same; there are and will continue to be spaces where teams can innovate to meet the needs of their jurisdictions and communities. For instance, teams may look slightly different from one region to another as they have some space to decide who to invite outside of the legislated members. Different teams will likely focus on different types of cases. These differences are important and necessary. There are, however, areas where consistency is also critical. For instance, there is specific guidance on issues around confidentiality and data storage and destruction that teams will be required to follow.

The guidebook is also important because it is the foundation for

the technical and training assistance that the state committee will be providing teams. Block, Vasquez, and Alderden have created a TTA process based on the guidebook and other relevant materials in the field. They have already started those meetings and to date have found them to be an excellent opportunity to brainstorm with teams as they work through the review process. It has also been an excellent opportunity for them to identify areas where the guidebook can be enhanced. For instance, already the TTA providers have identified ways in which the tools provided can be modified to fit multiple purposes. Appendix H, for instance, was intended to track of requested documents. They quickly realized that with a slight modification, teams could also use it to help coordinate their information collection efforts. Right now, many of the teams are preparing for their first reviews, or Chapter 4. Most have been meeting somewhat regularly and have already identified the first and/or second case they intend to review. A lot of the discussions have now turned to document and data collection and the interview process of witnesses and/or surviving family members. Some of these discussions revolve around the particulars of cases, but over time these discussions will also help the committee further refine and improve the guidebook. Additionally, they have already identified instances in which some of the committee's expertise may be needed; so please keep an eye out for requests for individual meetings should such issues arise.

In addition to the guidebook, they have been identifying areas where additional, supplemental training may be needed. They will keep the committee up to date on these trainings.

Sheehama provided feedback specific to the barrier of how to approach next-of-kin regarding the case.

Savage said they have found it useful and were excited to receive it.

Alderden stated the TTA Team has found it helpful to see what issues are all regional teams experiencing so they can gather the groups to brainstorm.

- e. Presentation: Document the Abuse, Changing the Outcomes of Abuse – Norma Peterson, Executive Director of Document the Abuse

Norma Peterson is the Executive Director of Document the Abuse, who provided a presentation entitled “Document the Abuse – Changing the Outcomes of Abuse.”

Document the Abuse which houses the work of the late domestic violence advocate Susan Murphy Milano, specifically the Evidentiary Abuse Affidavit (EAA).

As Executive Director, Norma collaborates with other experts in intimate partner violence to train and certify service providers to catapult the EAA into a global network of assistance for victims of violence. In addition, she partners with law enforcement agencies and legislators to establish the EAA in their protocol when working with victims of domestic violence.

As the sister-in-law of Drew Peterson, Norma had a front row seat to see the effects of domestic violence which led to the deaths of Drew's wives Kathleen Savio and still missing Stacy Peterson.

As an Illinois State Outreach Coordinator for CUE Center for Missing Persons, Norma, and her husband, Paul Peterson, head a team of volunteers who assist with missing persons outreach and assistance. CUE Center is integral in implementing all aspects of Document the Abuse and the EAA.

To learn more about Document the Abuse, go to <https://documenttheabuse.com/>

Block shared the importance of sharing this resource with clients and for fatality reviews.

4. Public Comment

No Public Comment.

5. Adjournment

The next meeting will be November 19 at 1 p.m.

A motion to adjourn was made by Jennifer Vancil. Vasquez seconded the motion. Motion Carried. Meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Secretary Jenny Schoenwetter.