



Family Violence Coordinating Council

Ninth Judicial Circuit

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Council Chair: Judge Richard Gambrell

Local Coordinator: Cheryl Blythe

Serving Fulton, Hancock, Henderson, Knox, McDonough, and Warren Counties

Family Violence Coordinating Council Purpose Statement:

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

The Family Violence Coordinating Council is a group of decision makers from many sectors, both public and private that deal with family violence. It includes representatives from the judiciary, law enforcement, prosecutors, victim's advocates, partner abuse intervention, social services, housing authority, healthcare, education, mental health, and substance abuse prevention and treatment.

The Council is directed and advised by a **Steering Committee** composed of policy level officials appointed by the Council Chair. Three Teams create and implement projects specifically for the 9th Judicial Circuit counties.

The Law Enforcement/Courts Circuit Core Team determines the direction, coordinates County roundtable discussions, and plans law enforcement/courts trainings and protocol work. Recent projects include Domestic Violence (DV) and Firearms Laws trainings, updated DV Protocols, DV officer checklists, and development of the Orders of Protection brochures for all Circuit Clerk offices. This team received the **2008 Justice Benjamin K. Miller award** given by the IFVCC to a local council/member(s) for their visionary leadership, dedication, and commitment to the purpose of the IFVCC. The 9th Judicial Circuit FVCC participated in a research project conducted by the University of Illinois tracking domestic violence cases through the criminal justice system. We learned more about the current movement of cases through the criminal justice system from incident to sentencing and examined victim safety and batterer's accountability. In 2010 the team developed a Police Report Addendum adopted by most Law Enforcement agencies in the 9th Judicial Circuit.

The Community Education Team's work includes implementing *Elder Sensitivity/Abuse Prevention* trainings for over 200 individuals in the past 2 years, directing the *Schools Respond to Family Violence* project – a 2 hour program designed specifically for school faculty and staff, and developing a *Clergy Guidelines: Counseling Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault* manual presented to Ministerial Associations and churches circuit wide. Prevent Child Abuse Illinois and the Department of Children & Family Services awarded this committee **the Blue Ribbon Community Award** for their Prevent Child Abuse campaign in 2006.

The Training and Development Team plans annual workshops focusing on Family Violence Awareness and Prevention. Recent topics have included: Shaken Baby Syndrome, On Scene Investigations-Responding to Children at the Scene, Children, Families and You: Tying it all together, Domestic Terrorism, Internet Crimes, and Family Violence and Substance Abuse. The members coordinate the methods to assess needs and deliver trainings.