



## **The Austin/Travis County Family Violence Task Force**

### **BYLAWS**

**WHEREAS**, the mission of the Austin/Travis County Family Violence Task Force (“Task Force”) is to reduce family violence and promote safety through a coordinated community response;

**WHEREAS**, the Task Force works to increase victim/survivor safety and hold those who use abuse and/or violence in their relationships accountable by creating an interagency forum for collaboration, problem-solving, and public awareness; and

**WHEREAS**, criminal justice professionals seeking to reduce family violence in our community created the Task Force in 1989. At that time, an in-house study by the Austin Police Department revealed that they were receiving many repeat family violence calls from the same victims. By increasing communication and collaboration among agencies addressing family violence, we improved our response for victims by pairing arrests with early intervention, batterer intervention and prevention programs for perpetrators and immediate support for victims. Since 1989, this collaboration has resulted in numerous community initiatives, most notably the Family Violence Court in 1990;

**NOW THEREFORE**, the Task Force hereby adopts the following Bylaws:

#### **Article I – Membership**

##### **A. Membership Definition**

The Task Force’s membership shall be recruited from a broad spectrum of the community, including, but not limited to, providers of family violence services, advocates, survivors and victims, local and state government, neighborhood leaders, the faith community, funders, and others whose inclusion will meet the goal of fostering community-wide involvement.

##### **B. Membership Application**

Membership applications shall be available from the Task Force Chair(s).

##### **C. Number of Members**

There is no limit to the number of members on the Task Force.



#### D. Representations by Members

Task Force members may not speak on behalf of the Task Force unless approved by the Task Force Chair(s).

### **Article II: Meetings of the Task Force**

Meetings of the Task Force shall be open to the public. The Task Force shall meet monthly at a time and place determined by the Governance Committee. The yearly calendar of meeting dates shall be distributed to Task Force members following the annual election of Task Force Chair(s).

### **Article III: Organizational Structure**

#### **A. Standing Committees**

The Governance Committee, Batter Intervention and Prevention Program (“BIPP”) Committee, Policy Committee, and Public Awareness Committee shall be the standing committees.

#### **B. Governance Committee**

##### 1. Purpose of the Governance Committee

The Governance Committee shall be responsible for:

- Planning and facilitating monthly meetings
- Prioritizing projects of the Task Force;
- Approving letters of support for Task Force members; and
- General guidance of the Task Force.

##### 2. Composition of the Governance Committee

The Governance Committee shall be composed of: the Task Force Chair(s), the immediate past Task Force Chair(s), a representative of the BIPP Committee, and Chairs for all current Committees

##### 3. Governance Committee Meetings

The Governance Committee shall meet once a month preceding the monthly general Task Force meeting. Governance Committee meetings are open to all members of the Task Force.

**Committee Chairs shall be self-selected based on their interest in leading specific Committees, and shall attend Governance Committee meetings while their assigned projects are in progress.**



### C. Task Force Chair(s)

#### 1. Duties

The Task Force Chair(s) shall be responsible for:

- Preparing agendas and minutes of meetings;
  - Planning and facilitating Governance Committee meetings and general Task Force meetings;
  - Publishing dates, times, and locations for meetings;
  - Recruiting and scheduling speakers for general Task Force meetings;
  - Documenting attendance;
  - Representing the Task Force at community events and interagency meetings; and
- Other duties as necessary for the achievement of Task Force goals, as determined by the Governance Committee.

#### 2. Nominations for Task Force Chair(s)

Nominations for the Task Force Chair(s) will be received annually at the August general task force meeting.

#### 3. Election of the Task Force Chair(s)

The Task Force Chair(s) shall be elected by a simple majority of the Task Force members during the September general Task Force meeting. The Task Force Chair(s) term shall begin on October 1<sup>st</sup> immediately following the September general Task Force meeting and shall end on September 30<sup>th</sup> of the following calendar year.

### **Article IV: Project Selection and Prioritization**

#### A. Proposal of Projects

A Task Force member or the Governance Committee may propose a project.

#### B. Prioritization of Projects

Proposed projects shall be prioritized by the Governance Committee based on the viability and interest in the project and its relevance to the mission of the Task Force.

Before it shall be considered by the Governance Committee, a project shall define: (1) the desired outcome of the project, time line for completion, and individuals who shall lead the project.



The Governance Committee shall seek input from the Task Force membership for the prioritization of projects annually and shall report back to the general membership on the status of the previous year's projects.

### **ARTICLE VI – Letters of Support**

The Task Force may issue a formal letter of support for an agency that seeks funding to improve the overall delivery of family violence services in Travis County and to further the mission of the Task Force. In order to receive a letter of support, the agency must:

- 1) be a member of the Task Force *and*
- 2) submit a request in writing to the Task Force Chair, including a description of the purpose of the sought funding, a description of why the agency should be awarded funding, and specifics of where to direct the letter of support.

Decisions regarding the issuance of a letter of support shall be made by the Governance Committee. For purposes of voting on the issuance of a letter of support, members of the Governance Committee may vote *via* e-mail. The majority of members of the Governance Committee must vote in support of a letter of support before one may be offered by the Task Force.

### **ARTICLE VII – Bylaws**

#### **A. Amendments**

Amendment of these Bylaws shall require the approval by the majority of the Task Force membership.

These Bylaws may be amended at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Task Force. Amendment of these Bylaws requires at least thirty (30) days notice to the Task Force membership. The Governance Committee shall provide the Task Force membership with recommendations regarding a proposed amendment to the Bylaws prior to any Task Force membership vote regarding that proposed amendment.