

88th
Session

Update



Appropriations: Creating Access to Safety

Family Violence Services: Overall Funding of \$88M in the 88th Legislature

TCFV thanks the Texas Legislature for investing in funds to enhance access to safety for survivors of family violence via funding for family violence services.

In the 2024-2025 biennium, \$78.7 million was appropriated for core services. These funds will be distributed through the Health and Human Services Commission Family Violence Program to Family Violence Centers statewide to offer life-saving services from 24-hour-a-day hotlines to shelter and comprehensive advocacy and safety planning.

While these funds are critical, Texas has a serious capacity crisis, with shelters routinely full and other services running waitlists. Increases in service needs statewide from FY 21 to FY 22—including an 18% increase in survivors sheltered and an increase of 20,000 hotline calls—strained family

violence centers working to meet needs in their community. Compounding this was a spike in the shelter bed capacity crisis when shelters are so full they must refer a survivor elsewhere, which went up over 10% to 50% in just one year.

To address the increase in service needs and the barriers creating the shelter capacity crisis, the 88th Texas Legislature, led by Representative Howard and Senator Perry, added \$4.65 million each year of the FY 2024-2025 budget for \$9.3M total. These funds will support \$6.3 million in enhanced services funding (economic, housing, mental health, and legal services) but also, **for the first time, \$3 million in prevention and community education funding.** With prevention also being added into state code this session via SB 1841, TCFV is elated to see this work put in the state budget.

Offender Accountability

Battering Intervention & Prevention Programs (BIPPs)

BIPPs are offender accountability programs that offer alternatives to incarceration via violence intervention that promote healthy, nonviolent relationships and parenting skills. Increasing safety for victims of family violence is the fundamental goal of BIPPs. BIPP funds are administered by the Community Justice Assistance Division within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. Via an increase to the rider from \$3.5M in the prior funding cycles to \$5M over the FY 2024-2025 biennium, **this BIPP funding increase of \$1.5M is the largest in recent history and was championed by Senator Hinojosa and Representative Allison.**

Lethality Reduction

Domestic Violence High-Risk Teams (DVHRTs)

DVHRTs create a community-coordinated initiative in which survivors at the highest lethality risk are identified and receive enhanced support from law enforcement, family violence advocates, prosecutors, and others. This wraparound model holds offenders accountable and is a trauma-informed approach to maximize victim safety. In the 88th Legislature funding was maintained for DVHRTs at \$600,000 over the FY 2024-2025 biennium appropriated to the Office of the Attorney General.



Changing the Landscape for Survivors

TCFV Agenda Items

Trauma-Informed and Voluntary Service Standard Updates

[SB 1841](#) Senator Hinojosa, sponsored by Representative Howard



ute left law enforcement confused and unable to respond to victims reporting stalking behaviors effectively and presented challenges to apply in prosecution. The law particularly lacked clarity in cases where the stalker is a current or former intimate partner with a history of domestic abuse. This left many family violence victims who were also stalked without meaningful protection, even when they sought help from the justice system.

SB 1717 expands the description of how a victim perceives the stalker's actions beyond harassment, including feeling terrified or intimidated. Further, it narrowly applies the reasonable-person standard to circumstances similar to the victim's. It also expands to threats of offenses (not just bodily injury or death) against a member of the person's family or household or an individual with whom the person has a dating relationship, creating enhanced usability by survivors and the criminal legal system. This law takes effect on September 1, 2023.

[Chapter 51 of the Human Resources Code](#) outlines the required services family violence centers must provide if funded by the Health and Human Services Commission. It had not been updated in over 20 years and no longer reflected the realities of survivors' needs or best practices in direct services. This law creates a required advocacy service model rooted in trauma-informed and voluntary services. It makes changes to the required service list, including the addition of counseling, peer support, housing, economic advocacy, health and mental health advocacy, and children's advocacy.

Updating this section of the code ensures that, at minimum, survivors can access trauma-informed, voluntary services that survivors have expressed they need and want and puts prevention as a required service in state code for the first time. Expanding access to these crucial services will bolster options for survivors, helping to create greater safety and healing. This law takes effect on September 1, 2024.

Stalking is a known lethality factor, yet Texas' stat-

Enhancing Response and Safety for Stalking Survivors

[SB 1717](#) Senator Zaffirini, sponsored by Representative Moody



Addressing Abusive Tactics

[HB 767](#) / [HB 1427](#) / [HB 2715](#)
[SB 1004](#)



The 88th Legislature passed additional items to promote accountability and increase victim safety. [HB 767](#) (Harless / Kolkhorst) adds stalking to the offenses for which conditions of bond must be entered into the Texas Crime Information Center and for which sheriffs must be notified. [HB 1427](#) (Campos / Bettencourt) enhances the harassment law in the Penal Code to include the action of making obscene, intimidating, or threatening calls or other electronic communications from a temporary or disposable telephone number provided by an internet application or other technological means. [HB 2715](#) (Hull / Alvarado) allows courts to address and prohibit tracking an individual physically or electronically in protective orders, temporary divorce orders, and conditions of bond and includes the same list of behavior as the harassment statute in the Penal Code. [SB 1004](#) (Huffman / Herrero) creates a criminal offense for tampering with electronic monitoring devices fitted on an offender for monitoring.

Changing the Landscape for Survivors

TCFV Priority Legislation

Measures that supported privacy rights were a welcome theme in the 88th Legislature promoting safety for survivors and their families. [SB 2105](#) (Johnson/Holland) requires the Secretary of State to host a data broker registry for all data brokers conducting business in Texas to register, allowing survivors a streamlined way to opt out and protect their data. [SB 510](#) (Perry/Longoria) protects Texans, including survivors, by prohibiting disclosing identifying information related to their occupational licenses, such as home address and telephone. [HB 3130](#) (Guerra/Zaffirini) furthered this protection for survivors of family violence, sexual assault, or human trafficking, allowing them to request that all information held by the occupational licensing board be confidential. [SB 578](#) (Zaffirini/Thompson) provided an avenue for survivors to request to keep their county of residence confidential in the protective order process, aiding them in limiting locating information as they navigate safety planning. Further bolstering survivor safety was the passage of [SB 1325](#) (Alvarado/Goodwin), also known as the Natalia Cox Act, requiring the development of an updated written notice with resources on legal rights, such as lease termination and information

on access to services to be provided by law enforcement, campus law enforcement, and the medical community to victims of family violence, stalking, harassment, or terroristic threat. [SB 49](#) (Zaffirini/Gonzalez) brought a comprehensive update to Texas' Crime Victims' Compensation (CVC) program with updates to the terms 'household' and 'family violence' to broaden access to key remedies such as rent and relocation to more victims as well as significantly raising the cap for that component of CVC from a maximum of \$1,800 to \$5,000.

The Legislature took historic steps to improve court response to survivors of family violence. [SB 855](#) (Alvarado/Hull) requires all judges to have a minimum of

Judicial Training and Protective Orders

SB 855 / SB 48 / HB 1432

1 hour of training on family violence dynamics following their election or appointment. It requires continuing education on family violence dynamics training for judges with a primary responsibility of family law or family violence matters. These trainings must be developed in consultation with TCFV. [SB 48](#) (Zaffirini/Leach) requires the Office of Court Administration (OCA) to develop standardized forms for protective orders, magistrate's orders for emergency protection, and temporary ex parte orders in consultation with TCFV, among others. Courts will be required to utilize the standardized forms once developed. [HB 1432](#) (Meza/Whitmire) removes the second required finding for protective orders, that family violence 'is likely to occur in the future.' Noting this second finding has been a reason for denial of issuance for survivor applicants in some courts, this new law will prompt broader issuance of protective orders.

Supporting Privacy and Crime Victims' Rights

SB 2105 / SB 510 / HB 3130
SB 578 / SB 1325 / SB 49



TCFV at the #txlege

TCFV staff supported 127 instances of legislative action on bills and the budget, including:



Dropping 83 cards of support for bills being heard in committee



Crafting and submitting written testimony 16 times at hearings



Offering or facilitating oral testimony 28 times

Staff also consulted, met, and partnered with over a dozen advocacy groups and coalitions and hosted Capitol Day in February. This was in partnership with the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault, which brought over 200 advocates from across the state to the Texas Capitol.

TCFV especially thanks the survivors, advocates, and partners who inspired, informed, and advocated alongside us and everyone who supported TCFV's work in the 88th Legislative Session.



Our Advocacy Must Continue

Gun violence continues to be a preventable epidemic and acutely impacts survivors of domestic violence. In 2001, the Texas Legislature enacted firearm prohibitions for family violence perpetrators to recognize and address the lethality associated with perpetrators with access to firearms. Though these laws have been on the books for decades, most communities in Texas lack sufficient guidance and protocols to ensure these dangerous individuals do not maintain possession and access to guns when the lethality risk is highest.

The 88th Session saw a host of gun violence prevention measures introduced, accompanied by powerful advocacy of families and victims of gun violence and mass shootings, that were ultimately unsuccessful. HB 2744 (King), a direct response to the Robb Elementary School massacre, sought to raise the minimum age required to purchase semi-automatic rifles. This particular effort was a focus of a PBS Frontline episode released immediately following the 88th Session, [After Uvalde: Guns, Grief and Texas Politics](#). HB 1617 (Ordaz) would have required courts to inform defendants if their conviction would make possessing or acquiring a firearm unlawful. This bill came from a recommendation of the Texas Safety Action Report released in 2019 by the Governor's Commission in response to the mass shootings in a Santa Fe middle school and Walmart in El Paso. HB 2090 (Manuel) proposed to offer a firearm education elective for high school students in a curriculum that would have also included education on family violence and sexual assault prevention. TCFV's priority, HB 3938 (Moody), was a proposal requiring any person subject to a firearm prohibition to submit a signed affidavit to the court affirming they either disposed of all firearms or did not have any firearms to surrender.

Although none of these measures passed, TCFV is resolute in our commitment to support and advocate for common sense efforts to reduce and prevent firearm-related family violence and homicides that support victim, family, and community safety.

Gratitude and Appreciation

The TCFV Policy Team

Every member of the Policy Team played an important role and contributed immensely to TCFV's efforts at the 88th Legislature. We applaud these Team members.

Amanda Aubrey
Barbra Grimmer
Breall Baccus
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Gabby Fuentes
Jen Mudge

Krista Del Gallo
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Molly Thibodeaux
Molly Voyles
Tabetha Harrison

We'd also like to extend our appreciation to the entire TCFV team for their support, and special thanks to **Gloria Terry, Maria Jose Angelelli** and **William West** for their service on the PPC.

The TCFV Public Policy Committee

Key to our process in developing substantive legislative priorities is the TCFV Public Policy Committee (PPC), composed of professionals addressing and responding to family violence across Texas. PPC members play a critical role in strategy and advocacy throughout the Legislative Session. We commend and appreciate the participation of each Committee member.

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Sonia Corrales
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Houston Area Women's Center
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The TCFV Board of Directors

We proudly acknowledge the integral role of the TCFV Board in our success in the 88th Session.

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