

1978

FORMATION

The Texas Council on Family Violence was established as a nonprofit membership statewide organization on April 8, 1978, and officially incorporated on December 27, 1978.

Nine representatives from local domestic violence shelters—Debby Tucker (Austin), Catherine Chambers (Corpus Christi), Jane White (Dallas), Muffie Tatum (Denton), Diana Luna (El Paso), Lynn Bendslev (Fort Worth), Toby Myers (Houston), Ruthe Winegarten (San Antonio), and Myrt Taylor (Waco)—along with the vision and leadership from Debby Tucker resolved to form a statewide organization to provide a unified statewide presence for domestic violence survivors and service providers. On April 8, 1978, six of these women officially established the TCFV. This group coordinated its efforts with community service partners and political office holders to structure a non-hierarchical TCFV board. The group selected Toby Myers, a survivor of family violence and advocate with the Houston Area Women’s Center, as the first TCFV board representative. The Texas Secretary of State signed and officially certified the Articles of Incorporation.

TCFV opened its first office and hired four staff from January 1982–1984.

Funding for TCFV came from a three-year challenge grant from the Levi Strauss Foundation, which was matched with donations from the Haas Foundation and The Trull Foundation. In addition, funding was supported by membership dues from family violence service providers, community partners, and individual members who believed in the TCFV’s mission.

In 1982, Eve McArthur and Debby Tucker from Austin Center for Battered Women (SafePlace) were the first staff hired to open the office. Melissa J Eddy, a private practitioner and founding TCFV board member from 1978 to 1984, became the third staffer in 1984 hired as the Program Associate. Melissa held a variety of positions until her tenure ended in 1992. Janice Wood was later hired as the first administrative staff in 1984.

1980s

BEGINNING OF POLICY ADVOCACY

From the onset, TCFV strongly advocated at the Texas legislature for funding for prevention and intervention services and laws to keep family violence survivors safe.

1979 – TCFV successfully advocated, and the Legislature established a pilot funding program through the Texas Department of Human Services (TDHS) to appropriate \$200,000 to the initial nine agencies working to end family violence.

1980 – TDHS contracted and funded 25 family violence service providers throughout Texas.

1981 – TCFV advocated, and the Legislature increased Family Violence Program funding to \$1 million per year. TDHS contracted with 30 family violence shelter centers to provide services to survivors of family violence. TDHS also contracted with TCFV to develop materials and provide technical assistance to the family violence service providers.

1982 – TCFV hosted the first Statewide Conference with 200 attendees.

1983 – TCFV advocated for, and the Legislature increased the Family Violence Program funding to \$1.5 million per year and passed several bills and resolutions aimed at expanding Texas family violence service providers and offering greater protection under the law for family violence survivors, including criminal sanctions for violating a protective order, making the violation a Class A misdemeanor. TDHS contracted with 32 family violence shelter centers.

1984 – Congress passed the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA), a primary federal funding source dedicated to supporting emergency shelter and related assistance for survivors of domestic violence and their children. FVPSA allocated \$2.3 million per year for the Family Violence Program. TDHS contracted with 42 family violence providers and increased funding to TCFV.

1985 – TCFV advocated for funding and the Legislature increased the Family Violence Program budget to \$2.5 million per year. TDHS contracted with 46 family violence service providers.

1987 – TCFV advocated for, and the Legislature passed measures clarifying the use of protective orders in domestic violence cases, affording shelters a role in assisting the children of victims of domestic violence, and eliminating the spousal exemption from charges of aggravated sexual assault.

1990s

1989 – TCFV advocated for the establishment and funding for Battering Intervention and Prevention Project (BIPP). The legislature established funding and BIPP under the authority of TDCJ-CJAD. The Texas Legislature appropriated \$400,000 to fund thirteen BIPPs. This funding was the first state-funded civilian program for battering intervention. The Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Article 42.141 defined the nature and consequences of family violence and established the BIPP parameters.

1990 – TDHS requested TCFV take oversight of the state's allocation, monitoring, and policy role of family violence shelter centers. TCFV membership voted for and agreed to allow TCFV to have policy oversight but requested that the state continue to have allocation and monitoring oversight.

1992 – TCFV held the first Allocation committee providing funding recommendations to TDHS and then the first Rules Revision committee with the outcome of revising all TDHS standards for family violence providers. TCFV hired its first Program Policy staff, Maria José Angelelli.

1992-1994 – TCFV formed the BIPP Strategic Planning Work Group to develop the TDCJ-CJAD BIPP Guidelines.

1994 – Congress passed The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). VAWA included an Immigration Title, a significant step towards relief and regularization of status for immigrant victims. TCFV worked alongside Senators Jack Brooks and Edward Kennedy to add the National Hotline legislation to the Crime Act.

1995 – TCFV BIPP Strategic Planning Work Group completed its first statewide BIPP guidelines and TDCJ-CJAD made the guidelines effective.

1996 – In February, TCFV opened the National Domestic Violence Hotline (NDVH); a father concerned about his daughter made the first call right before President Clinton announced the opening of the Hotline from the White House.

1998 – TCFV and TDCJ-CJAD formed a committee to examine the BIPP Guidelines and propose revisions.

2000s

2005 – Texas passed a lease termination law for survivors. VAWA Reauthorization included a Housing Title. Both represent landmark legislation to address the link between stable housing and safety and each law has been subsequently expanded.

2006 – TCFV operated the National Domestic Violence Hotline (NDVH) for 10 years and answered over 1,500,000 calls. NDVH and TCFV separated and established their own nonprofit agencies. Gloria Aguilera Terry transitioned from TCFV President to TCFV CEO and successfully navigated TCFV through the transition.

2010s

2007 – TCFV advocated for the accreditation process for Texas BIPPs. The Legislature passed Senate Bill 44 which created an accreditation process for BIPPs under the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Article 42.141. TCFV also became one of the first states in the nation to pass required dating violence policies, bringing prevention strategies to youth around healthy relationships.

TCFV received the first Allstate Foundation grant relating to survivor economic empowerment. This kickstarted over a decade of receipt of these grants and poising TCFV as a leader in survivor economic advocacy.

2009 – Along with services and systemic interventions, TCFV recognized that BIPPs represent an important part of Texas' proactive response to femicide prevention by directly addressing the cause of this violence, and TCFV and TDCJ-CJAD collaborated to revise the BIPP guidelines to include an accreditation process.

2011 – TCFV worked with the Texas Legislature to pass a legislatively created task force relating to the intersections of the child welfare system and survivor parents. This prompted subsequent policy promulgation and funding to address these intersections.

TCFV also launched the ReCentered project that offers a systematic opportunity for entire organizations—survivors and staff, together—to reflect on their programs and make the changes they feel will lead to environments of even greater trust, respect, dignity, safety, self-determination, and support.

2012 – TCFV hosted Gloria Steinem at the TCFV Statewide Conference to over 1,000 attendees and honored tenured Texas advocates with a commemorative poster.

2013 – TCFV worked with the Texas Legislature to pass a legislatively created task force on the health care system's response to pregnant and postpartum survivors. TCFV continues to work on maternal-child health and sexual health issues as they intersect with survivors and safety.

2014 – TCFV and TDCJ-CJAD collaborated to revise the BIPP Guidelines.

2019 – TCFV recognized 1,400 women murdered by their intimate partner in the last 10 years. TCFV and the Legislature approved funding for 26 BIPPs. In recognition of strangulation as one of the leading causes of femicide in Texas, TCFV worked with legislative partners to pass a law requiring all law enforcement officers in the state to receive training on strangulation within the context of family violence.

2020s



2021 – TCFV advocated, and the Legislature approved level funding for BIPPs and Domestic Violence High-Risk Teams. Further, TCFV and advocates statewide successfully lobbied for historical funding appropriations of just over \$78 million over the biennium for family violence services distributed through the Health and Human Services Commission Family Violence Program. These funds, which include a \$13-million exceptional item fund to address critical barriers for survivors such as legal and housing assistance, are also to reduce current capacity issues in programs statewide.

2023 – In the 88th Regular Session, TCFV successfully advocated for the following:

- ▶ A \$1.5M increase to Battering Intervention and Prevention Program (BIPP) funds at \$5M over the FY 2024-2025 biennium and level funding for Domestic Violence High-Risk Teams (DVHRTs).
- ▶ The first state funding ever dedicated to domestic violence prevention and community education at \$3M over the FY 2024-2025 biennium and an additional \$6.3M increase to continue to address capacity issues and barriers to long-term safety and stability such as housing and legal services.

Collectively these funds bring state appropriations to \$88M each biennium.

- ▶ To pass a law updating the stalking statute in the Penal Code, centering survivor experience to enhance criminal legal response to stalking victims. Other significant legislation on issuing and enforcing protective orders, crime victims' compensation eligibility, and required family violence training for judges.
- ▶ Passage of an update to Chapter 51 of the Human Resources Code changing service standards statewide. This change is bolstered by adding a service model rooted in trauma-informed and voluntary services, prevention as a required service, and other survivor-informed services, such as counseling.

