

TCFV Supports HB 1796

Centering Survivor Voices in Updating Service Standards

Issue

Chapter 51 of the Human Resources Code, which outlines the required services for family violence centers statewide, has not been updated in over twenty years. Updates are necessary to holistically represent the needs of survivors and the services many family violence centers currently offer. TCFV collaborated with researchers to center the proposed changes to Chapter 51 in survivors' experiences, as well as advocates' perspectives.

Background

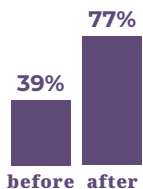
Chapter 51 sets a baseline for services throughout our state, but has no required service model. Although family violence centers adhere to federal requirements, such as the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act, research shows that when services are offered in a framework that is **voluntary, trauma-informed, and culturally relevant**, efficacy increases.

Further, it is critical that Chapter 51 be adapted to include several areas of advocacy commonly cited as necessary to support survivors. These include advocacy focused on **children, economics and housing, criminal and civil legal systems, and physical and mental health.**



Economic Needs:

With **over 80% of survivors making under \$2,000 a month**, and facing multiple economic barriers in accessing housing, this is an essential addition to Chapter 51.



Health & Mental Health Needs:

39% of participants rated their health as good to excellent before using FV services.

77% of participants reported their health as good to excellent after using FV services.

Solution

RAISING UP SURVIVORS' VOICES IN SERVICE DELIVERY REQUIREMENTS

Along with the inclusion of an advocacy service model and specific advocacy services, this bill proposes four additional required services to represent survivors' needs more accurately:

- » **Safety planning** - With over 50% of survivors reporting an increased sense of safety after using services, clarifying the importance of this service is needed.
- » **Counseling services** to support survivors and their families as they heal from violence.
- » **Peer support services** which include activities and efforts led by survivors of family violence that support and facilitate connection with other survivors.
- » **Prevention efforts** to raise awareness about family violence and promote healthy relationships aimed at ending family violence in communities.



Aligning Chapter 51 with services that many family violence centers and survivors cite as needed will directly and positively impact survivors' lives. Survivors' safety and wellbeing increases when they can access trauma-informed, culturally relevant, voluntary services.

***"Their counseling was my life saver. I was in a really dark place. It was exactly what I needed at that time. ... It was necessary in order for me to begin healing."* – TEXAS SURVIVOR**