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MILWAUKEE COMMISSION ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT REPORT TO PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

I. Commission Purpose, Responsibilities and Duties

City of Milwaukee Ordinance Number 320-22(2) defines the purpose of the Milwaukee Commission on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (the Commission) as:

PURPOSE. The purpose of the Milwaukee Commission on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault is to increase the safety for victims of domestic violence and their children and for victims of sexual assault, and to hold abusers accountable for their violent behavior.

The responsibilities and duties of the Commission are set forth in City of Milwaukee Ordinance Number 320-22(5)(a) - Responsibilities and Duties:

The Commission is charged with the responsibility of coordinating the community's response to domestic violence and sexual assault by promoting communication and collaboration among members of law enforcement, victim's advocates, court staff, school personnel, health care providers, abuser programs, corrections officials, policy makers, children's service providers and prosecutors.

II. Activities in Support of Responsibilities and Duties

A. General Duties and Responsibilities

1. Regularly scheduled meetings - The Commission continues to hold monthly meetings for its membership. During this reporting period, the Commission met at City Hall, Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, Department of Corrections, Black Health Coalition, Jewish Family Services, United Way of Greater Milwaukee, Mount Mary University, and Milwaukee Public Schools' Central Office. Hosting meetings in different community spaces has afforded Commissioners the opportunity to better acquaint themselves with partner agencies and available resources.

B. 320-23(5) b-1 – Training for current officers/recruits of MPD – The Coordinator has been in communication with the Milwaukee Police Department regarding their current sexual assault and domestic violence training protocol. The department is scheduled to provide an update on their training during a regularly scheduled Commission meeting in Fall 2013. In April 2013, the Coordinator participated on a panel to speak to the benefits of a multidisciplinary approach to domestic violence during the "Partnership Against Domestic Violence" training in Brown Deer for an audience of 180 attendees, representing law enforcement, prosecution, advocates, and victim-witness specialists.

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C. 320-23(5) b-2 – Policy review to improve response to victims – The Commission reviews policy, makes recommendations, and implements policy changes through its leadership on numerous projects, including the Sexual Assault Planning Initiative, United Way’s Teen Pregnancy Sexual Violence Subcommittee, Milwaukee’s Sexual Assault Response Team, the Milwaukee County Human Trafficking Task Force, and the Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission. The Commission met with the Milwaukee Police Department’s administrative personnel during the first quarter to propose the inclusion of trained advocates during law enforcement interviews. This change in policy is currently being drafted through the local SART team in partnership with the Milwaukee Police Department.

D. 320-23(5) b-3 – Monitor and promote legislation – The Commission monitors legislation related to sexual assault and domestic violence and, in conjunction with the City’s Intergovernmental Relations staff, has formulated recommendations on state and federal legislation. The Common Council approved language in the City’s legislative package to support work on issues of domestic violence and sexual assault, including two key priorities:

- 1) To amend Wis. Stat. Ch. 950 (Crime Victims Rights Amendment) to provide for a victim’s right to be accompanied by an advocate during all stages of the criminal justice process; and
- 2) To support legislation to address the effects of interpersonal domestic violence that make restraining orders more effective, that removes guns from domestic violence perpetrators and allows human trafficking victims to heal and rebuild their lives.

The Commission formalized its membership to the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault and the End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin. Through these partnerships, the Commission receives regular legislative updates and action alerts, so it can influence state and federal policy.

In keeping with its duty to monitor legislation, the Commission is tracking the progress of LRB 4293/1 – a bill to ensure that victims of sexual assault and domestic abuse have the right to a victim advocate during key stages of the criminal justice process. Commissioners also followed the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women reauthorization and local legislation regarding commercial bail bondsmen and GPS monitoring of those who are subject to restraining orders.

In conjunction with IRD, the Commission wrote a letter of support in favor of the omnibus gun violence prevention bill (S.649/H.R. 137) to require background checks on all firearm sales and improve the national instant criminal background check system. Furthermore, the Coordinator participated in a press conference in January alongside Mayor Tom Barrett, Representative Jon Richards, End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin, and Wisconsin Anti-Violence Effort to share information on the link between gun violence and domestic abuse.

Discussions during our monthly meetings have been supplemented with presentations by Tony Gibart (End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin), who provided an overview of the Willis report on the Brown Deer Police Department’s response to the Azana Salon and Spa incident. Dr. Eric Gass (Public Health Research and Policy Director, Milwaukee Health Department) attended a recent Commission meeting to explain the Affordable Health Care Act and its implications for the clients our membership serves.

E. 320-23(5) b-4 – Community awareness aimed at intervention and prevention –

1. Literature Distribution / Responding to Citizen and Community Calls – The Coordinator has distributed at least twelve thousand copies of the Commission’s popular “You Are Not Alone” brochure, a comprehensive listing of resources for those affected by domestic violence and sexual assault, in English, Spanish, and large print since September 2012. Nearly one thousand copies of the Commission’s Safety planning cards for survivors of domestic violence have been distributed in English, Spanish, and Hmong. These publications are available on our website and are widely accessible to those who would like to share brochure.

The “Solutions for Men” brochure, which provides domestic violence and sexual assault resource information tailored to men, was updated and revised during the Summer 2013 and will be available in the near future.

Commission materials were also made available for attendees of a domestic violence retreat hosted by Voice of the Fatherless Child.

The Commission receives daily phone calls from community members and agencies, looking for assistance with domestic violence and sexual assault concerns. Callers seeking support or resources included private citizens, staff members from City departments in search of assistance for constituents, non-profit service providers, and private health care clinics requesting training and literature.

2. Resource Fairs – During this reporting period, the Commission staffed resource tables, answered participant questions, made referrals, and distributed literature at PrideFest, the Department of Corrections’ resource fair, and Journey House’s “Protect & Serve” Community Safety Fair.

3. Trainings – The Coordinator provided training, presentations, and resource information on domestic violence, sexual assault, and the Commission for Alverno College’s security staff and UW-Madison’s Criminal Justice Program students. The Commission supported a joint training with Sojourner Family Peace Center for the Milwaukee Health Department’s home visitation nurses. The Coordinator participated on a panel to speak on the benefits a multidisciplinary approach on domestic violence for the “Partnership Against Domestic Violence” training in Brown Deer in April 2013.

4. Awareness Events –

Human Trafficking Awareness Day – The City of Milwaukee’s Office of Violence Prevention and its Commission on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault collaborated with members of the Human Trafficking Task Force of Greater Milwaukee to host a Human Trafficking Awareness Day in January 2013 at City Hall. This event brought attention to human trafficking and motivated attendees to raise community awareness and coordinate resources, as they work to eradicate this issue in Milwaukee. It included representation from elected officials as well as testimony and poetry readings from survivors of human trafficking.

Denim Day- The Office of Violence Prevention and the Commission teamed up with Aurora Health Care, United Way, The Healing Center, and a variety of community partners and victim advocates to organize a press conference and Persons of Influence campaign in recognition of Denim Day- a day to honor survivors of sexual assault and bring awareness to the dangers of victim blaming. On April 24th, 2013, the project coordinators asked the public to mark Denim Day by wearing jeans in support of sexual assault awareness. Influential individuals were asked to submit a photo of themselves in jeans and provide a statement in support of sexual assault survivors. In total, 106 photos were submitted and posted to social media throughout the month of April to coincide with Sexual Assault Awareness Month and promote participation in Denim Day. A press conference was held in City Hall on April 24th, which was attended by numerous community members, including several Commissioners of the Milwaukee Commission on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. This effort has since received national praise.

Next Door Foundation Child Abuse Awareness – The Office of Violence Prevention and its Commission on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault attended and assisted in coordinating a press conference with the Next Door Foundation on the impact of child abuse in the City Hall Rotunda on April 16th, 2013.

The Office of Violence Prevention and its Commission on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault cosponsored Mount Mary University's "Untold Stories – A Three Part Series Creating Change for survivors of human trafficking and sexual violence" and Hmong American Women's Association's International Women's Day celebration.

5. Stalking and Technology Training – The Office of Violence Prevention and the Commission worked with Sojourner Family Peace Center and the Milwaukee Police Department to bring experts from the National Center for Victims of Crime Stalking and Technology for a multidisciplinary training on the use of technology to stalk on October 11th, 2012. The well-received conference had 161 attendees, representing law enforcement, prosecutors, community-based organizations, faith-based leaders, victim advocates, and other interested community stakeholders.

6. Human Trafficking Conference – The City of Milwaukee's Office of Violence Prevention and its Commission of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault planned, cosponsored, and attended a Human Trafficking conference in February 2013 at Pewaukee's Country Springs Hotel. This event was coordinated with state, local and federal partners, featuring many well-known speakers and survivors of human trafficking. The conference's attendees represented law enforcement officers, prosecutors, corrections personnel, social workers, community groups, faith-based leaders, health professionals, social services agencies, and government officials. Out of 130 evaluations, almost three-quarters of the evaluations rated this conference as "excellent."

7. Press– The Coordinator shared expertise on domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking and stalking through print media coverage from the Journal Sentinel ("Local centers offer help to domestic abuse victims"; "77 youths sexually exploited in Milwaukee over two years, report says"), Shepherd Express ("Keep guns out of the hands of domestic abusers"), and Urban Milwaukee ("Another Hole in the Safety Net?") as well as a radio interview with WMWK 88.1. In addition, the

Journal Sentinel and other media outlets covered the Commission's statement on the Azana Spa domestic violence incident. Commission staff was sought as a media resource in related stories.

III. Continuing Efforts

A. Sexual Assault Planning Initiative – The Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance selected the Commission to undertake a 1-2 year planning project focused on improving the delivery of justice and human services to victims of sexual assault. Using a needs assessment study as its foundation, the Commission created a workplan to emphasize comprehensive and seamless service delivery for victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault through community-based advocacy. The planning process addresses both the long-term and short-term needs of victims and survivors by examining data, engaging in group strategic planning processes, and increasing inclusion of survivor perspectives.

The Coordinator has contributed to meetings to advance the workplan, focusing specifically on the collection of sexual assault data, education and outreach, and the recruitment of volunteer advocates and a volunteer coordinator through Aurora Health Care. The Commission's Sexual Assault Subcommittee resurrected its data collection efforts. From this subcommittee, a smaller workgroup has formed, dedicated to mapping the landscape of available systems' data and translating that information to generate a picture of the impact of sexual assault in Milwaukee. A UW Medical and School of Public Health Fellow, assigned to the Office of Violence Prevention and the Commission, will be surveying beliefs, attitudes, and experiences in order to develop a sexual assault outreach campaign. This project will use the Community Readiness Model to assess where Milwaukee stands on the issue of sexual assault. Based on the responses, the model defines nine stages of community readiness ranging from "no awareness" to "high level of community ownership" in the response to the issue. It will then identify resources, obstacles, and different types of efforts that are appropriate to initiate. This is a valid and reliable method to determine culturally and community-specific outreach options regarding sexual assault in Milwaukee. Finally, a training for advocates is slated for early Fall 2013, which is cosponsored by the Office of Violence Prevention.

B. Safe Exchange – The City of Milwaukee is partnering with Sojourner Family Peace Center, Children's Service Society of Wisconsin, and the First Judicial District of Wisconsin to develop and implement the first Supervised Exchange and Visitation Program (SEVP) in Milwaukee for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, sexual abuse, and stalking. The overarching goal of the SEVP is to protect victim safety and confidentiality and protect children from witnessing violence, being abducted, or experiencing abuse or sexual violence during visitation and exchanges. In keeping with intent and statutory requirements of Safe Havens, the SEVP will focus on serving low-income, underserved victims and families in Milwaukee. Once established, the program will be open 20 hours per week and will include evening and weekend hours (day and evening) to accommodate working families. The site selected for the program will be located in a neighborhood that is convenient and accessible to families. Services will include:

- assessment of all victims and offenders;
- orientation to program services
- monitored onsite supervision
- monitored onsite exchange; and
- advocacy to ensure that victims and offenders are linked to the services and supports they need to eliminate violence in their interpersonal relationships.

Security and safety measures will be in place to ensure there is no violation of no contact and restraining orders.

The City of Milwaukee, through its Commission on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault leads the project; its Coordinator acts as Project Coordinator. During this reporting period, the four core partners of the project engaged a diverse slate of public and private stakeholders to participate in a Consulting Committee charged with supporting and overseeing the project. Members include the Milwaukee Police Department, Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office, State Public Defender's Office, Legal Action of Wisconsin, Legal Aid, as well as batterer's intervention programs, sexual assault providers, local philanthropists, and community based agencies that serve the Latino, Hmong, and LGBT populations. Currently, the Committee members are developing policies and protocols regarding referral procedures, information sharing, victim safety and facility security that are consistent with the Safe Havens Guiding Principles.

The core partners traveled to the "Creating and Enhancing Supervised Visitation Services that Account for Domestic Violence" conference in Dallas and the "Envisioning Solutions for Collaborative Practice" conference in Reno. The conferences provided a much-needed opportunity to build relationships with OVW and VERA staff and network with other teams, who were in similar stages of project development. The team returned from these conferences with more information to guide discussions and provided a foundation of knowledge to build on as the project proceeds in Milwaukee. Core team members also participated on three webinars with OVW/VERA to learn about the grant, mission and vision statement development, and site selection.

A community assessment was completed for the project, which received 214 responses from community members; most of the respondents represented legal, child protection, and domestic violence professionals. In collaboration with partners at the Hmong American Women's Association, a focus group was held in June with clients of their agency to receive additional community feedback. Additional focus groups are slated to be held in the future, and these groups will be done in partnership with other domestic violence agencies, including those who work extensively with underrepresented communities (e.g. Asha Family Services, Latina Resource Center).

The Core Partners are currently vetting sites. Children's Service Society is pulling on its resources to find a location; the City of Milwaukee is considering location options through its contacts in Milwaukee Public Schools and the Department of City Development. Some site options have surfaced, but the team is still looking for possibilities that will better accommodate the geographic concerns of the community.

In order to quickly and efficiently develop policies and protocols, the consulting committee is meeting in three subcommittees to focus on Court/Legal, Safety/Security, and Service Parameter policy and protocol development until late summer.

C. Milwaukee County Human Trafficking Task Force – The Coordinator attended monthly meetings of the Milwaukee County Human Trafficking Task Force, which aims to streamline and improve services for victims of human trafficking. Since this workgroup concluded its efforts under the County's jurisdiction in September 2012, the Commission Coordinator has continued to provide administrative support to this effort. The Office of Violence Prevention and its Commission on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault provided key funding to sustain and complete a report on available services for people who have been trafficked in Milwaukee. The survey, compiled by Claudine O'Leary, was distributed multiple times to hundreds of organizations and individuals. Fifty-two programs responded in a ten-month period.

D. Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission (MHRC) – The Commission participated in monthly reviews of homicides and near fatal injuries in Milwaukee that are a result of domestic violence. The goal of these sessions is to develop prevention strategies based on an examination of each individual case, identifying opportunities for intervention that may have been missed, areas of improvement in service delivery, and common factors between cases. The Coordinator will work in partnership with the Office of Violence Prevention’s newly assigned fellow, Crysta Jarczyński, to implement a list of recommendations from the MHRC.

E. Advocacy Response Network (ARN) – The Commission Coordinator attended meetings of the Advocacy Response Network (ARN). This group is comprised of advocates from a wide array of service providers. Meeting attendees share ideas about system response, suggest areas for improvement, and brainstorm strategies to assist survivors of sexual assault and abuse.

IV. Additional Activities/Comments

A. Executive Committee Elections - In addition to the above-listed activities, the Commission held elections for Chair and Vice Chair positions in December 2012. The Chair is Carmen Pitre (Sojourner Family Peace Center). The Vice Chairs are Dr. Alice Belcher (Impact Coalition for Families), Nicole McDowell (Milwaukee Public Schools), and Judge Jeff Kremers (Judiciary).

B. Strategic Planning- The Commission conducted a one-day planning session in June, facilitated by Urban Strategies. Attendees articulated ideas to define the Commission’s work over the next couple years. This session had thirty-one attendees. A smaller group of commissioners will meet in the near future to review initial feedback from the larger meeting and solidify goals that will guide the Commission’s work for the next few years.

C. Internships– The Commission Coordinator supervised a Marquette University undergraduate intern during the summer of 2013 and shares supervision of a two-year Health Department fellow.