



VIRTUAL **STUDY TOUR** REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2020



Prepared by Raeanne Passantino and Michelle Morgan,
Family Justice Center Alliance, a program of Alliance for HOPE International
familyjusticecenter.org | allianceforhope.com | 888.511.3522 | 101 W Broadway, Ste 1770, San Diego, CA 92101

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INTRODUCTION

It was an honor for our Family Justice Center Alliance (FJCA) Technical Assistance Team, a program of Alliance for HOPE International (Alliance), to participate in a virtual Study Tour to support the development of a Family Justice Center in Little Rock, Arkansas on August 25-26, 2020. The Study Tour process was an opportunity for the Alliance team to meet with key stakeholders, service providers, and survivors to learn more about the services being provided in Little Rock and Pulaski County. The focus of the Study Tour was to identify the current strengths and gaps in the county's various service delivery systems, pinpoint any processes that present challenges to survivors,

and determine how the Alliance can best support ongoing efforts toward the creation of a Family Justice Center. As part of the Study Tour, the Alliance team gathered feedback and information about your community through pre-planning meetings, anonymous partner surveys, online research, stakeholder meetings, and a focus group with survivors. We believe that with the development of effective, diverse Steering and Planning Committees, and through the implementation of the recommendations below, Women & Children First is poised to continue gaining momentum toward the next steps in planning for and establishing a Family Justice Center in Little Rock, Arkansas.



BACKGROUND

For more than a decade, the Alliance has been leading the effort to break down silos by integrating and coordinating services using the Family Justice/Multi-Agency (FJ/MA) Center framework. Our collective community impact model creates a collaborative approach that comes alongside survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, elder abuse, and human trafficking to break generational cycles of family violence. The Alliance is one of the leading systems and social change organizations in the country, creating innovative, collaborative, trauma-informed, hope-centered approaches that meet the needs of survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault and their children. The Alliance and its allied FJ/MA Centers serve between 150,000 and 200,000 adult and child survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault each year in the United States.

THE MISSION of the Alliance is to create pathways to hope for women, children, and men who are victims of domestic violence and sexual assault through collaborative and integrated multi-disciplinary centers, teams, and initiatives in order to break the generational cycle of violence and abuse in families across the United States and around the world. We were pleased to learn more about Little Rock's alignment with that mission and its commitment to strengthening collaboration and implementation of effective strategies that better serve survivors and their children.

THE ALLIANCE TEAM conducting the Study Tour consisted of Raeanne Passantino, Interim Director of the FJCA, and Michelle Morgan, Vice President and Director of One Safe Place in Fort Worth, Texas. Over the two-day virtual event, held in Little Rock, they met with many stakeholders to learn more about the community's response to domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, sexual assault and human trafficking.



BACKGROUND

THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS that the Alliance team met with included:

- **Ron and Scott Sloan**, Architect Firm
- **Chelsea Johnson**, Arkansas Autism Outreach Resource Center
- **Beth Goodrich**, Arkansas Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- **Myca Hunthorp**, Arkansas Commission on Child Abuse, Rape, and Domestic Violence
- **Terra Patrom**, Executive Director, Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission
- **Arnold Chavers**, Arnold Chavers Consulting
- **Cathy Browne**, Board Chair, Women & Children First
- **Jennifer Long**, CAC Arkansas Children's Advocacy Center
- **Ali Miller**, Camp Aldersgate
- **Kathy Webb**, City of Little Rock
- **Chris Porter**, City of Little Rock
- **Dana Dossett**, Director, Community Programs for the City of Little Rock
- **Barbara Osborne**, Community Programs for the City of Little Rock
- **Michael Sanders**, City of Little Rock Department of Community Programs
- **Laurie Williams**, Department of Human Services
- **Sherri Funk**, FBI Victim Advocate
- **Ralph "Buck" Ward**, Program Manager to Governor Hutchinson
- **Robert Holt**, Healing Waters Outreach Center
- **Kelly Owen**, Volunteer Engagement Manager, Heart of Arkansas United Way
- **Justin Sanders**, Assistant Director, Immerse Arkansas
- **Judge Melanie Martin**, Little Rock District Court Criminal Judge
- **Chief Hubbard**, Little Rock Fire Department
- **Captain Rusty King**, Southwest Little Rock Neighbors
- **Captain Max Spriggs**, Division Commander, Little Rock Police Department
- **Rita Byers**, Executive Director, Mainstream Independent Living Center
- **Cynthia Van Winkle**, Major Gifts Officer
- **Rodrigo Morales**, Mexican Consulate
- **Edna Ramirez**, Victim Advocate, North Little Rock Police Department
- **Roberta Sick**, Partners for Inclusive Communities
- **The Peacekeepers**
- **Melanie Thornton**, University of Arkansas Partners of Inclusive Communities
- **Jajuan Archer**, Executive Director, Women's Own Worth

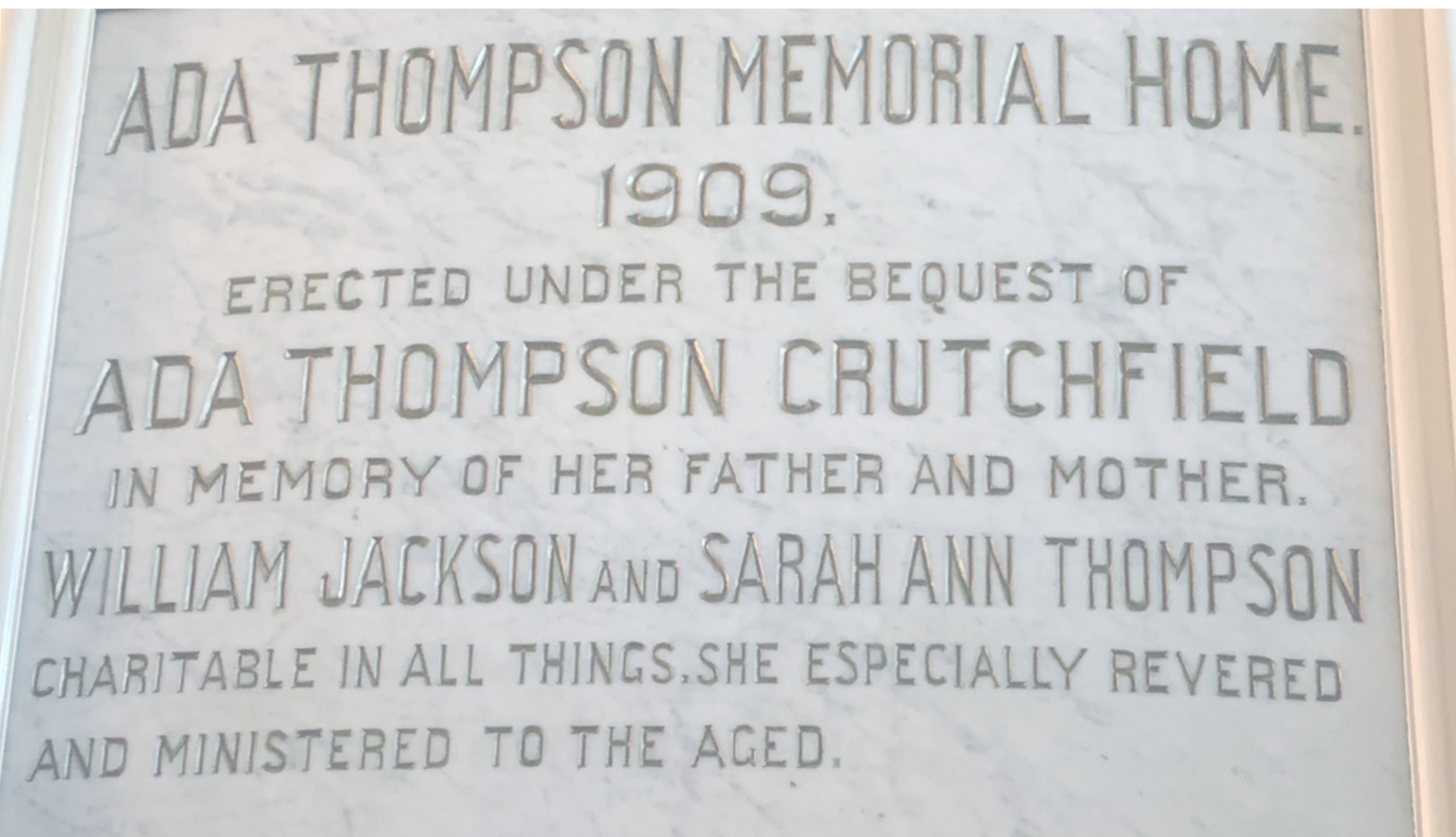
BACKGROUND

THE HISTORY

For over 40 years, Women & Children First (formerly The Center Against Family Violence) has been leading the way in the provision of domestic violence services in Little Rock. Over the years they have seen an increase in need for shelter and other supports and have pivoted to provide additional services, such as advocacy, support groups, a transitional housing program, education and career classes, as well as life-skills, parenting, and others. In the meantime, the shelter was at capacity nearly every night so a move to a building twice as large was necessitated to double capacity. In 2004, Women & Children First complete their first strategic plan that included the creation of a revamped board and leadership team, improved financial stewardship and sustainable community support to provide the foundation for future planning.

The Alliance was contacted in January 2019 to begin planning for the development of a Family Justice Center framework in Little Rock to address the need to expand service delivery and include a new shelter to replace the 112-year-old building that is no longer sustainable. Women & Children First and the Alliance began working on a two-part technical assistance plan that includes this Study Tour and a future Strategic Planning activity that will create a blueprint for the creation of a Family Justice Center in Little Rock. This Report is the result of a first-ever virtual Study Tour to begin the development of a Family Justice Center framework in any community.

We are proud of Women & Children First and their desire to move forward with the planning of a Center in Pulaski County despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.



THE STUDY TOUR

"We need to be in the hope business.
The challenge we are up against is
that people get robbed of hope.
Hope is at the heart of all this."

Casey Gwinn, President, Alliance for HOPE International

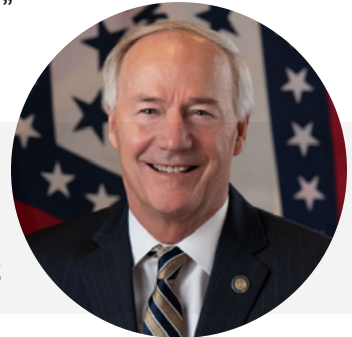
COMMUNITY FORUM

The Study Tour began with a virtual Community Forum, with recorded and live comments from Governor Asa Hutchinson; Mayor Frank D. Scott Jr.; Marcy Doderer, President and CEO, Arkansas Children's Hospital; District 29 Representative Frederick Love; Cathy Browne, Board Chair, Women & Children First; and Angela McGraw, Executive Director, Women & Children First.

The sequence of messages shared during this welcome attest to the strong political support for a Family Justice Center on a state, local, and county level. As Angela emphasized in her opening comments, "It's going to take every one of us to make this dream come true."

"THERE IS NO MISSION GREATER THAN PROTECTING THOSE
WHO ARE LEAST ABLE TO PROTECT THEMSELVES."

ASA HUTCHINSON, GOVERNOR OF ARKANSAS



"THIS CENTER WILL ALLOW US TO MAKE A GREATER IMPACT
ON HURTING AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE BY TRANSFORMING
OUR COMMUNITY'S RESPONSE TO FAMILY VIOLENCE.
THE CITY OF LITTLE ROCK IS EXCITED TO DO OUR PART."

FRANK SCOTT JR., MAYOR, CITY OF LITTLE ROCK

"THESE ARE EXCITING TIMES FOR WHAT CAN BE.
TOGETHER, WE CAN TRULY MAKE HISTORY."

CATHY BROWNE, BOARD CHAIR, WOMEN & CHILDREN FIRST



THE STUDY TOUR



"WE SEE YOU. WE HEAR YOU. WE ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR PAIN. WE WILL BE HERE FOR YOU IN THE COMING WEEKS AND MONTHS AS YOU REBUILD YOUR LIFE."

FREDERICK LOVE, REPRESENTATIVE, DISTRICT 29

"AT ARKANSAS CHILDREN'S, WE CANNOT DELIVER OUR PROMISE WITHOUT PARTNERS WHO WILL JOIN US IN ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES CHILDREN FACE ON A DAILY BASIS. WOMEN & CHILDREN FIRST IS ONE OF THOSE KEY PARTNERS."

MARCY DODERER, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF ARKANSAS CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL



"THE BEST PART OF THIS IS VALUING THE VOICES OF SURVIVORS AND VALUING WHAT THEY WANT, NOT US. NOT MAKING THE SYSTEM EASIER FOR US, BUT LESS STRESSFUL FOR VICTIMS."

ANGELA MCGRAW, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WOMEN & CHILDREN FIRST

"WE ARE ON A CHANGE JOURNEY THAT SAYS WE CAN DO BETTER. WE CAN REIMAGINE HOW TO ADDRESS TRAUMA, AND WE CAN TRULY, TOGETHER, DO THIS WORK."

CASEY GWINN, PRESIDENT, ALLIANCE FOR HOPE INTERNATIONAL



Casey Gwinn, President of the Alliance, then provided an overview of the Family Justice Center framework to over 140 participants watching virtually. His dynamic and passionate presentation highlighted the development of the first Family Justice Center in San Diego, provided

an overview of the Family Justice Center framework, took the audience on a virtual tour of Centers from around the world, and encouraged community members to create a Center that provides hope and healing to survivors and their children. You can view a copy of the presentation [here](#).

THE STUDY TOUR

MEETINGS

The Alliance team had the honor of meeting with leaders, frontline staff, and a variety of key stakeholders from agencies across Pulaski County who are passionate about the work they are doing to support survivors and their families. The conversations produced compelling insights from professionals who are currently handling domestic violence and sexual assault cases, and their thoughts and experiences illuminated the current state of service provision and collaboration in the county.

The perspectives of potential partners and frontline staff in particular were crucial for gaining a deeper understanding of service delivery effectiveness and existing survivor needs. The Alliance team gathered insight on the need for a Family Justice Center in Little Rock after meeting with service providers and potential partner agencies. Conversations with staff and leaders from each of these agencies better identified existing strengths that will support the development and success of the Family Justice Center. The meetings also clarified potential challenges that will need to be addressed in order to maximize the impact of the developing Center. The Alliance team found that there is widespread support of the Family Justice Center model, and many potential partners and frontline staff are eager to be involved in the planning process and decision making. Meeting participants thoughtfully raised questions about the current development of the Center, asking the following:

- 1 How was the location selected?
- 2 Who is the Center going to serve?
- 3 How will the Center be funded?
- 4 Is the planning process moving too quickly?
- 5 How do we engage those who are missing from this conversation?
- 6 How can we support underserved communities at the Center?

These questions, frequently asked during Study Tours conducted across the country, helped guide our recommendations provided at the end of this report.

Discussions during meetings with judges, architects, elected officials, employees of the City, the Mexican Consulate, and the Department of Human Services raised important and practical points about a phased approach to the Family Justice Center that might foster an increase in collaboration and impact by starting small and dreaming big together. In particular, it was noted that while the location for the Center has already been determined, partner and survivor voices play an important role in providing input on the layout, design, and service flow.

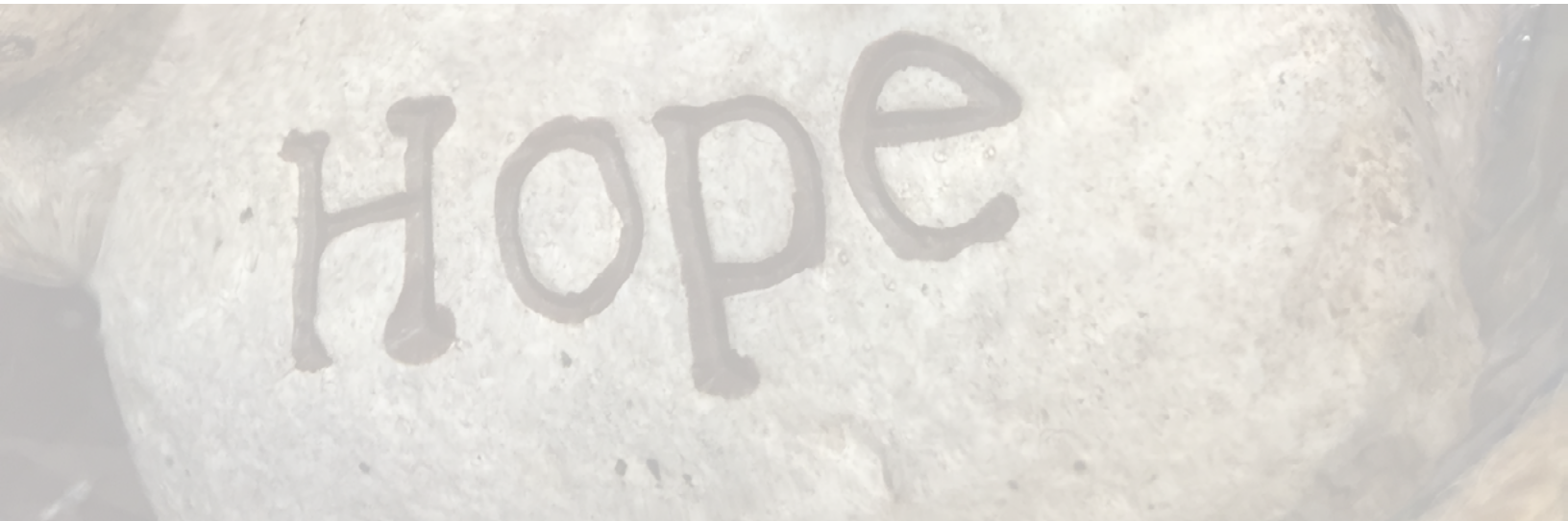
From our meetings with key community partners and survivors, on the next page we identify five key themes throughout the Study Tour that support the need for a Family Justice Center in Little Rock, AR.

THE STUDY TOUR

KEY THEMES

- 1 There is widespread support and community excitement surrounding the development of a Family Justice Center in Little Rock;
- 2 The creation of a flourishing, dynamic Family Justice Center in Little Rock will require Planning and Steering Committees that include a variety of key stakeholders and decision makers;
- 3 Interactions with the legal system and law enforcement are the most daunting for survivors who are in crisis in the county;
- 4 Prosecutors and law enforcement officers are not currently at the table, and their engagement will be crucial in both the planning for and operations of the Center;
- 5 The survivors in the focus group unanimously expressed the need for centralized, collaborative services for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault to receive ongoing support in Little Rock.

The five themes continuously surfaced in dialogues throughout the Study Tour. The Alliance team was impressed with the widespread eagerness and support from a variety of community-based and government agencies to see the Family Justice Center vision become a reality.



HOPE

THE STUDY TOUR

FINDINGS FROM MEETINGS WITH POTENTIAL PARTNERS

The meetings with potential partners and community members resulted in helpful input about the benefits and obstacles of a Family Justice Center model.

Below are the current strengths and challenges expressed by those who participated in meetings with the Alliance.

CURRENT STRENGTHS

- All potential partners expressed support of the Family Justice Center initiative and investment in its success. They are excited and eager to be involved in the planning process.
- The Fire Department provides EMT services and transports survivors to medical facilities. The Chief shows strong support for enhanced training and the development of response protocol within the Fire Department.
- There is buy-in from Judges, who are interested in developing a domestic violence specialty court and video capability at the Family Justice Center for temporary Ex-Parte Orders.
- The District Attorney's Office has a Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Unit with attorneys prosecuting cases without the need for victim's cooperation or testimony.
- Staff at Women & Children First are kind and engaged with clients. It is evident that there is an intentional effort to build strong connections and trust with all survivors coming in for services.
- The service providers with whom the Alliance met throughout the Study Tour are very passionate about their work with survivors. It is very clear that the community is invested in creating pathways to hope for survivors and their children.
- Little Rock has strong, dynamic services for people with disabilities. This will be an incredible asset to the Family Justice Center framework and an important voice to include during the planning process.
- There is excitement surrounding the selected location for the Family Justice Center, due to its close proximity to the police station and children's hospital clinic. The location is also centrally located, making it more accessible to survivors.
- Survivors from the focus group unanimously agreed that the Family Justice Center framework would have mitigated their stress in accessing services and creating a greater system of support.

THE STUDY TOUR

CURRENT CHALLENGES

- A few key partners were not at the table. Law enforcement officers and prosecutors were not present for Study Tour meetings, which could indicate a need for expanded efforts to reach out to additional jurisdictions and leaders throughout the county.
- The Fire Department does not receive training on domestic violence, despite the support they provide to survivors, and they are unaware of the implications of non-fatal strangulation.
- Key stakeholders expressed a concern regarding the ability to raise the funds needed to operationally support the Family Justice Center.
- Architects have been through multiple designs for the FJC without partner or survivor input.
- There is an urgency for Women & Children First to relocate from their current space as soon as possible due to health concerns in their building. At the same time, the long-term success of the Family Justice Center framework hinges on the commitment to have all of the partners at the table for decision making about the design and layout of the building.
- Potential partners expressed concern that the process is moving too quickly.
- Key voices from the LGBTQIA+ and immigrant communities are missing.
- Survivors expressed significant challenges when trying to navigate the legal system.
- The local community in Little Rock is unaware of the services that are available for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, as expressed by community partners.
- Service providers identified a need for addressing language barriers throughout Pulaski County in an effort to provide more accessible services to survivors who speak a variety of languages.
- Transportation is a limiting factor for survivors accessing services throughout Pulaski County.
- Community partners expressed a lack of adequate apartment units for survivors in need of transitional housing.
- At present, there remains siloing across agencies handling cases, and while there is widespread interest in developing a Family Justice Center, there is a need for increased collaboration and inclusion of partner agencies in order to make that vision a reality.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PARTNERS SURVEY

Prior to the Study Tour, community partners throughout Little Rock were invited to participate in a Community Partners Survey. The data collected from the survey enabled the Alliance team to better understand the current state of interdisciplinary collaboration and identify potential hurdles to co-location. The survey is intentionally designed to pinpoint any sources of apprehension, which then helps the Alliance team work with your community to mitigate any projected

challenges of a Family Justice Center. The survey was completed by 46 community partners from a variety of agencies, and the data revealed that there is strong buy-in and widespread understanding of the benefits of co-located, inter-disciplinary services. The results also pointed to a need for shared decision-making as the community continues to plan for a Family Justice Center, as well as cross-training opportunities for community partners.

COLLABORATION

Respondents were asked if they worked closely with a number of service providers. The top six service providers that most closely collaborate with other agencies are:

SHELTER PROGRAMS with **85%** of respondents reporting a close-working relationship;

COMMUNITY-BASED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS with **76%** reporting working closely;

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES with **71%** reporting working closely;

HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS with **70%** reporting working closely;

LAW ENFORCEMENT with **65%** reporting working closely;

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES with **64%** reporting working closely.

The services with the highest responses of “no,” indicating a lack of close working relationships with other agencies are:

PROSECUTION with **42%** ;

COMMUNITY-BASED HUMAN TRAFFICKING ADVOCACY PROGRAMS with **42%** .

The collective responses reveal a moderate level of inter-disciplinary collaboration throughout Pulaski County, with ample room for improvement as the community plans for and develops a Family Justice Center.

TRAINING

The responses on cross-training reveal a strong need for increased training on fatal and non-fatal strangulation assault, with only 8% of respondents having received this training in the last 12 months.

Additionally, just close to half of the respondents have received training on the following, further indicating a need for heightened focus on cross-training for all agencies and disciplines:

CHILD MALTREATMENT with **51%** of respondents having received training in the previous 12 months;

HUMAN TRAFFICKING with **51%** having received training;

SPECIAL POPULATIONS, such as immigration issues, with **56%** having received training.

The cross-training focus area with the highest number of affirmative responses (70%), indicating a priority focus for Little Rock, is domestic violence and intimate partner violence. Cross-trainings on sexual assault and the criminal justice system are also prioritized, with 62% and 60% of affirmative responses respectively.

The results on cross-training reveal a need for increased focus on cross-training opportunities for community partners. This finding was further supported in the Alliance's meetings throughout the Study Tour, in which community partners emphasized that additional training would enhance their ability to support survivors.



HOPES AND FEARS

The Community Partners Survey asked respondents to express their degree of agreement or disagreement with a variety of statements in order to capture current hopes and fears surrounding the development of a Family Justice Center in Little Rock. The strongest responses on anticipated benefits of a Family Justice Center, of which community partners see many, included:

- Development of new skills
- Development of valuable relationships
- Gain new knowledge about services, programs, or people in the community
- Ability to have a greater impact than my agency could have on its own

The anticipated benefit with the weakest response was “gain additional financial

support.” Respondents do not have notable fears surrounding the development of the Family Justice Center, but the strongest responses addressing anticipated drawbacks included:

- Diversion of time and resources away from other priorities or obligations
- Frustration or aggravation
- Conflict between my job and the Family Justice Center’s work

The survey results revealed that less than half of the respondents perceive the planning process for the Family Justice Center to have incorporated shared decision making. However, despite this perception, the majority of respondents expressed that they greatly value their involvement in the planning process and will benefit from co-location at the FJC.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FOCUS GROUP WITH SURVIVORS

The Alliance team conducted a focus group consisting of five survivors who experienced a range of domestic violence incidents, and all but one of the survivors had experienced non-fatal strangulation. Most of the survivors accessed services through Women & Children First, in addition to interacting with the court system and law enforcement in Pulaski County. All of the survivors who were connected to Women & Children First

emphasized that the shelter, counselors, and Angela McGraw specifically, were key to their pathways toward safety and healing. The group shared consistent comments regarding the lack of safety associated with traveling to multiple locations for services, which led to increased levels of stress and trauma during their crises. Due to these complex experiences, the focus group expressed unanimous support for the development of a Family Justice Center.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Emphasizing that positive interactions with law enforcement are central to beginning the journey toward safety, survivors recommended enhanced training for officers on how to interact with victims. Many survivors expressed that their own interactions with law enforcement often left them with unmet needs for safety and support. They specifically highlighted that not all survivors have the same needs for shelter when they are in crisis, and oftentimes the officers handling their cases would prevent them from returning home and funnel them to the shelter for their sole source of support. This created limited options for survivors seeking safety plans specific to their unique situations.

One survivor in the focus group had a female officer give specific attention to her case, emphasizing the lethality of her situation by communicating, “His size doesn’t matter. He is going to kill you.” This officer’s support and directness regarding her level of danger changed the survivor’s situation and played a central role in her ability to reach safety. To better build trust and rapport between survivors and law enforcement, the focus group participants recommended increased training for law enforcement officers. They also requested that law enforcement be an onsite partner at the Family Justice Center.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FOCUS GROUP WITH SURVIVORS

THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

There is widespread frustration and confusion amongst survivors around the criminal justice system and the process for filing for a Protective Order (PO). All of the survivors who participated in the focus group ran into multiple struggles with the PO process, which oftentimes left them without protection for longer than necessary when they were in crisis. Many survivors feel the lack of clear information and

guidance prevents those seeking protection orders from successfully acquiring them due to the complicated process. The complexities of the criminal justice system have created fear amongst survivors, who do not feel the process is currently set up to ensure their safety due to the need to return to the courthouse multiple times in order to file for a protection order.

STRANGULATION ASSAULT

All but one of the survivors in the focus group experienced non-fatal strangulation, and two of the survivors experienced non-fatal strangulation on more than one occasion. One survivor was strangled to the point of unconsciousness while pregnant and holding her two-year-old child, and in response to the strangulation assault, she went into pre-term labor. Despite the prevalence of strangulation assaults in the community, there is a lack of training on fatal and non-fatal strangulation among

professionals working on domestic violence cases. The Community Partners Survey revealed that only 8% of professionals have received training on strangulation assault within the past 12 months, yet nearly all of the participants in the survivor focus group have experienced this specific type of victimization. Survivors emphasized that more intentional, widespread training and education on strangulation could have made a difference in their journeys toward safety and healing.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FOCUS GROUP WITH SURVIVORS

LOOKING FORWARD

Focus group participants shared a unanimous feeling of excitement and eagerness around the development of a Family Justice Center in Little Rock. Participants reported having a hard time identifying and accessing supportive services related to their situation at the time and felt having all services in one location would make it easier, a commonly expressed opinion in over 200 survivor focus groups facilitated by the Alliance over the years. In tandem with this desire for co-located services, survivors expressed a need for training in all facets of the county, most specifically: law enforcement officers working on domestic violence cases, the school district which often does not enforce orders of protection, and all professionals working on domestic violence cases who lack training on strangulation assault.

The focus group concluded with a brainstorm about potential names for the Family Justice Center, where survivors requested the use of words such as “hope” and “peace” rather than justice. They specified that they do not like the word “justice” in the name, and that alternatives create a better sense of encouragement and healing. Survivors also expressed a desire for the center to be a space where there is no judgment, with décor and layout that resembles a home. All of the survivors who participated in the focus group are eager to learn of the center’s anticipated date of opening, and all are enthusiastic about participating on a survivor committee to be actively engaged throughout the entirety of the planning process.





RECOMMENDATIONS

At the conclusion of the Study Tour, our team met with the staff of Women & Children First to debrief the virtual event. Below is a list of our recommendations for your consideration as you move forward with the FJC planning process.

1 LAW ENFORCEMENT AND PROSECUTION:

The Alliance team was only able to meet with one member of law enforcement, Captain Max Spriggs of the Little Rock Police Department, and no prosecutors were present in the Study Tour Meetings. As two core partners in the Family Justice Center framework, it is recommended that prosecutors and law enforcement officers are engaged with more intention and given central roles in the planning process for the Center. Their support will be key to providing wraparound services and increasing safety for survivors in Little Rock.

2 SURVIVOR ENGAGEMENT: Survivor voices are central to the success of the Family Justice Center framework, and their inclusion will be essential to the continued development of your center in Little Rock. The participants that the Alliance met with during the survivor focus group were eager to engage in the planning process and provided important feedback on both the name and design of the Center itself. Consider adding survivors to your Steering and Planning Committees, adopting the Alliance protocol on survivor focus groups, and engaging all potential partner agencies in conducting additional focus groups with survivors (the Alliance has a [Focus Group Toolkit](#) to assist with this). It is imperative for a large, diverse group of survivors to provide input regarding their experiences with the current systems and agencies, along with their ideas for a countywide Family Justice Center framework. Survivors should be asked about the types of services they want co-located in the Family Justice Center, as well as the overall design and layout of the building itself.

3 EXPAND COMMUNITY PARTNER OUTREACH:

The voices of the LGBTQIA+, faith leaders and immigrant communities were not present during the Study Tour. All of these stakeholders will play an important role in gaining community buy-in and creating a Center where survivors feel safe, seen, and supported. To build trust and partnerships with law enforcement officers, consider expanding efforts to reach all jurisdictions within Pulaski County. Meetings and consistent updates with law enforcement, prosecutors, and agencies that work with underserved populations will be crucial for engaging all key voices in the planning efforts. It is recommended that any community partners who are not currently at the table be invited to join the Steering Committee and/or Planning Committee.

4 EXPAND THE STEERING COMMITTEE: For the Family Justice Center to be a successful, dynamic, sustainable framework, it must include and amplify the ideas of all key community leaders, partner agencies, and survivors. At present, many key stakeholders perceive Women & Children First as the lead on this project, and it is important to expand the conversation and decision making to include more perspectives, which will increase buy-in and create community momentum towards opening the Center. As touched on above, consider diversifying the Steering Committee by including members of law enforcement, faith leaders, prosecutors, medical professionals, judges, survivors, underserved populations, people with disabilities, university staff, suicide prevention agencies, substance use agencies, the Department of Education, social workers, etc. Once the Steering Committee has been organized, it is recommended that the committee meet monthly to continue moving towards the creation of a Center. As a starting point, we recommend all committee members read [Dream Big, Start Small](#). Some committees in other communities have divided up the chapters, each taking the lead on a few, and then the committees come together to start dialoguing on the key steps toward developing an Family Justice Center.



RECOMMENDATIONS

5 CREATE A PLANNING COMMITTEE: It is vital that a strong Planning Committee is created to begin the process of identifying the nuts and bolts of developing a Family Justice Center. The Planning Committee is most successful when it includes community partners, survivors, and many others who are ready and able to do the work necessary to carry out the recommendations laid out in this Study Tour Report and report back to the Steering Committee throughout the process.

6 ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN: It is recommended that the architects working on the blueprints for the Family Justice Center be in ongoing conversations with potential partners and survivors. It is essential that the space be designed to meet the needs and wants of survivors in the local community, and the layout of the building must also be functional for the partners who will be working at the Center. Consider sharing [these spotlight videos](#) of affiliated Family Justice Centers with the architects, to provide them with a variety of ideas for how a Center can be designed to specifically fit the needs of the community. Throughout the design process, take into consideration the unique needs for IT in a collaborative framework, including panic buttons, security cameras, wiring and server room capabilities, etc. It is strongly recommended that designing and building the Family Justice Center does not move forward without key stakeholders and survivors informing the process.

7 CONSIDER A PHASED APPROACH: To accommodate both the needs for a new shelter location and strong community involvement in the planning process for a dynamic, sustainable Family Justice Center, consider a phased approach. Many communities will open in two phases, with the first phase of the Family Justice Center including a small handful of partners and availability 1-3 days a week. Phase two of these Centers then expands to the full building, with a robust group of onsite and offsite partners and full availability for walk-in services throughout the week. A phased approach would enable the shelter to move into the new building as soon as possible and potentially bring a small group of partners onsite a few days a week. This would then create ample time to dream big for phase two, engage all voices and potential partners in the planning process, and take strategic and intentional steps towards creating a Family Justice Center framework that best meets the needs of Pulaski County.

8 STRANGULATION TRAINING: Based on the Alliance's national research and experience, 70% of cases can be proven without victim testimony when law enforcement investigators follow up on domestic violence calls. Additionally, providing acknowledgment to officers for conducting timely, trauma-informed investigations and referring survivors to Women & Children First for services can build morale and improve responses. If a victim is strangled one time, she is 750% more likely to later be killed by her abuser, yet per the Community Partners Survey, only 8% of the service providers in Pulaski County have received training on strangulation assault within the last 12 months. To improve your response to non-fatal strangulation cases, consider sending a multi-disciplinary team to the Alliance's advanced strangulation prevention training in order to better understand the risks, lethality, signs, and best practices for treating and prosecuting strangulation crimes. There are also a variety of tools and resources on our [Resource Library](#) that will assist with better supporting survivors of strangulation assault.



RECOMMENDATIONS

<p>9 LEGAL SERVICES: The survivor focus group pointed to a need for increased civil legal services in Little Rock. Consider a legal incubator model that has been adopted by several Family Justice Centers to provide more representation to victims in civil legal matters.</p>	<p>10 CREATE A CASE FOR SUPPORT: Determine the cost of one domestic violence homicide in the state of Arkansas, looking at the costs of prosecution, jail time, etc. Utilize this information to share the positive fiscal impacts of a Family Justice Center in an effort to create support within government agencies and to ask the city and/or county for funding. In addition, track the number of locations a survivor must go to receive the needed services. For some counties, this number can be in the thirties, making a glaring case for why a Family Justice Center is needed.</p>
<p>11 TOUR FAMILY JUSTICE CENTERS: When public health and safety guidelines allow, it is recommended that members of the Steering Committee tour a variety of Family Justice Centers across the country. There are strong Family Justice Centers in your neighboring states of Louisiana (New Orleans Family Justice Center), Texas (One Safe Place, Fort Worth), Oklahoma (Palomar – Oklahoma City’s Family Justice Center, and the Family Safety Center, Tulsa), and Tennessee (Family Safety Centers, Nashville). Touring multiple Family Justice Centers will provide your community with creative ideas for how to develop a Center that will uniquely meet the needs of survivors in Little Rock.</p>	<p>12 CO-CHAIRS FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING: Begin to identify community stakeholders to serve as co-chairs for the work groups that will be created during the Strategic Planning process, currently scheduled for 2021:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Governance and Facilities; 2) Funding and Sustainability; 3) Service Delivery and Operations; 4) Community Engagement and Outreach; and 5) Volunteers. <p>Once the co-chairs have been recruited, arrange for a Zoom call with the Alliance and anticipated work group chairs to discuss roles and responsibilities of the chairs, purpose of the work groups, and their role in the Strategic Planning process.</p>
<p>13 ADVERTISE THE STRATEGIC PLANNING EVENT: Advertise the Strategic Planning event and coordinate all details with the Alliance team as soon as possible. Hold intentional, one-on-one meetings with potential partners to learn more about the services they provide and personally invite them to Strategic Planning. Emphasize the importance of having all voices represented in the planning and visioning process for the Family Justice Center. We recommend 100-125 participants for the two-day Strategic Planning event. This could include:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leaders of agencies and direct service providers (frontline workers) - Representatives from all law enforcement agencies - Faith community leaders - Business leaders - Educators (middle school, high school, and college level) - Civil legal service providers - Social service providers - Professionals from the affordable housing sector - Law schools - City and County officials - Potential funders - Survivors - Local architects - Leaders from other community groups, such as tribal leaders, Latinx community, etc. - Criminal and civil justice system agencies (including prosecutors, judges, magistrates, and clerks) - Local Bar Association



RECOMMENDATIONS

14 COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND

ENGAGEMENT: Begin educating the community on domestic violence and available resources. A common theme throughout the Study Tour was a frustration that the community is unaware of the prevalence and severity of domestic violence, creating additional barriers to survivors receiving support and knowing how and where to access resources. Consider inviting community members to events in an effort to involve them in the planning process, increase buy-in, and spread awareness and education.

15 IMPLEMENT THE USE OF THE DANGER ASSESSMENT

TOOL: Standardize the use of the [Danger Assessment Tool](#) in advocacy processes with survivors in order to assess lethality and assist with safety planning. The Danger Assessment should be scored and discussed with survivors during intake in order to create a personalized safety plan and ensure the client is aware of their lethality risk. For additional context on how to implement the tool, see the Alliance's template resource on the [Use of the Danger Assessment in FJCs](#).

16 DATA COLLECTION AND BENCHMARKING:

The Alliance recommends all participating agencies identify and document local domestic violence and sexual assault statistics to benchmark the progress of your collaboration, including: 911 calls; police reports; charged, negotiated, and/or dismissed criminal cases; recidivism rates; homicides; and temporary and permanent protective orders. Consider conducting a "mini safety audit" of your systems by gathering, randomly, and then de-identifying (prior to analysis) 10 police reports, 10 protection order files, 10 cases from domestic violence court, 10 private warrant cases, and ten 911 tapes. The Alliance often assists in analyzing this information for communities, but members of the local planning team are likely the best people to conduct this evaluation after the Strategic Planning event.

17 JUDGES/COURT SYSTEM: Consider implementing e-filing onsite. Survivors could receive services in a safe and secure location at the new Family Justice Center as they wait for their protection orders and/or trials instead of entering the courthouse, which survivors expressed induces fear and confusion. Video conferencing could be utilized for protection order hearings and other court procedures where information is needed from the victim. The judges in Pulaski County are supportive of the FJC framework and interested in partnering to develop video capabilities for temporary Ex-Parte Orders. Ensure the judges are included in the planning process and focus on building this partnership as the Family Justice Center develops. The Alliance also recommends gathering information about offender intervention programs: *How effective are the programs? How do they measure success? How are offenders signing up for treatment? Are treatment providers giving clear, accurate, timely feedback to the court?*

18 TRAINING: Training was identified as an existing need amongst service providers based on the Community Partners Survey and in the Alliance's meetings throughout the Study Tour. As the community continues to plan for a Family Justice Center, pinpoint additional training needs for core team members, including: confidentiality and information sharing procedures; identification of or creation of clear dominant aggressor policies; handling of forfeiture hearings (Crawford v. Washington); handling of high-risk victims including a High-Risk Team protocol; and multi-disciplinary team approaches to address near-fatal strangulation cases.

19 TRANSPORTATION: Consider including transportation as a line item in the projected budget and expenses. In meetings with community partners, it was acknowledged that transportation can be a barrier to survivors accessing services. While the new location is located on a bus line, which will make the Center more accessible than services may have been previously, transportation will remain an important factor in the planning process. Some Family Justice Centers have purchased vehicles and offered transportation services to survivors. Others have fundraised in order to provide clients with gift cards for gas, bus passes, and ride sharing apps. It is recommended that the Steering Committee consider transportation as they continue to plan for the Family Justice Center.



RECOMMENDATIONS

<p>20 FOCUS ON CHILDREN: A few community partners expressed great interest in the Camp HOPE America program and were unaware that it had been hosted in Little Rock previously. It is recommended that strong efforts be made to spread awareness of the Camp HOPE America program and to create a strong partnership between the Family Justice Center and the camping and mentoring program for children and youth exposed to trauma. In addition, consider bringing the Children's Protection Center to the table as an onsite partner, either full-time or part-time, in an effort to create wraparound services for survivors and their children in one location. For additional information on co-location of Family Justice Centers and Child Advocacy Centers, reach out to the Alliance team to set up a Zoom call.</p>	<p>21 ATTEND THE VIRTUAL 21ST ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER CONFERENCE: Register a multi-disciplinary team to attend the 21st Annual International Family Justice Center Conference, April 20-22, 2021. Consider fundraising to cover registration of multiple staff at Women & Children First and coordinate with additional staff from partner agencies in order to attend the Conference as a developing team.</p>
<p>22 COMMUNICATION: Consider a plan to keep the public and community informed on the planning process of your Center on a regular basis, such as a website. See, for example, this website created by a community in North Carolina.</p>	<p>23 RESOURCES FROM THE ALLIANCE: Become familiar with the Alliance's Online Resource Library funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, which includes toolkits, webinars, sample protocols and forms. Visit familyjusticecenter.org/resources/ for access to the library and more information about Family Justice Centers. Attend the Alliance's monthly calls for developing and operating Centers. They are held the 2nd Wednesday of every month.</p>
<p>24 SHARED SUSTAINED FUNDING POLICY: Review and share the Alliance's Shared Sustained Funding Policy with all potential partners during the planning process for feedback and potential adoption.</p>	
<p>25 GUIDING PRINCIPLES: Review, share, and consider formally adopting the Alliance's Guiding Principles at the Strategic Planning event.</p>	

CONCLUSION

Little Rock and those providing services to survivors throughout Pulaski County have the passion and vision to continue working towards the creation of a dynamic, thriving Family Justice Center. Through the implementation of the above recommendations, we believe your community will be ready to conduct a Strategic Planning event in 2021.

The Alliance is committed to doing all we can to support your planning process, and we look forward to seeing a Family Justice Center framework emerge in Pulaski County that will further serve survivors and their children.

We encourage you to **DREAM BIG!** but cautiously remind you to start small, because survivors in your community need all of you working together to create pathways to hope and healing.