

# Victim Services Community Plan

## INTRODUCTION

The Austin/Travis County Victim Services Task Force (VSTF) serves as the official planning body of the Community Action Network and the Community Justice Council of Travis County<sup>1</sup> for issues regarding victimization of violent crimes and victims' services within Austin/Travis County. Members of the VSTF are listed in the footnote below. The VSTF is a multi-agency, volunteer collaboration focused on improving victim services in Travis County by assisting policymakers, service providers, funders, advocates, and citizens in addressing the comprehensive needs of victims of violent crimes in Travis County.

The Executive Committee of the VSTF led the process for completing the victim services section of the 2006 Travis County Community Plan. A key step in this process included the design of an online Victim Services Survey completed by the VSTF membership regarding the types of services delivered, as well as the number of Travis County citizens receiving those services. Twenty-two out of the twenty-nine VSTF members completed the survey, and each member agency had the opportunity to identify areas of priority and concern related to services for crime victims. Safety (shelter, affordable and transitional housing, and legal services); language (interpretation, communication); and appropriate treatment for persons with significant mental health issues were consistently identified as priority issue areas for victims of violent crime. In addition to the survey, the VSTF conducted monthly general meetings to discuss problem statements, goals and strategies, and funding priorities. *See attached Victim Services Survey Results.*

Within this Community Plan, the VSTF has identified four areas in the continuum of needs for crime victims. These include: a) Legally-mandated services involved in the criminal justice process; b) Crisis and short-term services; c) Legal and long-term support services; and d) Public awareness and education. In each area, problem statements, supporting data, goals, strategies and funding priorities are listed. Currently, the overall goal of the victim services community is to maintain current level of services, expand capacity as resources become available, and fill gaps in services as identified.

Travis County is fortunate to have a well-developed and established victim services system that includes many nationally-recognized best practice models. However, rapid growth in the local population over the last ten years and greater acuity of service needs by victims, combined with

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<sup>1</sup> Travis County District Attorney's Office, Travis County Attorney's Office, Austin Police Department-Victim Services, Travis County Sheriff's Office-Victim Services, Travis County Juvenile Probation, Texas Department of Criminal Justice-Community Assistance Division, Center for Child Protection, Austin Children's Shelter, Family Eldercare, Political Asylum Project of Austin, Any Baby Can, Department of Family and Protective Services-Adult Protective Services, Saheli, SafePlace, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, TexasRio Grande Legal Aid, YWCA of Greater Austin, Catholic Charities of Central Texas, Austin Academy, Austin Independent School District, Austin Child Guidance Center, Community Action Network, Deaf and Abused Women and Children Advocacy Services, Travis County Counseling and Education Services, Pflugerville Police Department-Victim Services.

stagnant or declining funding in many areas, has created overwhelming challenges related to victim services. According to the Community Action Network, from 2004-2005, Travis County's population grew by 39,536 people to 888,185, making it the 52<sup>nd</sup> largest county in the U.S. Approximately 11% of the Travis County population is comprised of non-U.S. citizens. Mexico and Asia are the top two birthplaces for Foreign Born residents with almost half (48.8%) from Mexico and almost one-quarter (23.3%) from Asia.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the Austin Independent School District expects to see an additional 110,000 students over the next 30 years.<sup>3</sup> As of May 2006, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), there are 6,750 evacuees of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita who have applied to FEMA for support who are living in the Austin-Round Rock MSA.<sup>4</sup>

## **FUNDING ISSUES**

As true for many issue areas, the victim services programs in our community face challenges in securing needed funding. Several of the VSTF member agencies are city/county entities that receive governmental funding, but also apply for and need grant funding to support needed victim assistance programs. Member non-profit agencies are committed to fundraising through grants, special events and other development activities. However, there are additional and costly administrative expenses associated with fundraising and foundation grants. In addition, there are limits to community support, especially to fund ongoing operations. Many private foundations prefer to fund new, "innovative" programs and some do not support programs that have already proven their success, but need ongoing support to continue. This trend creates significant challenges for the Austin/Travis County victim services system.

### ***Loss of Services:***

VSTF member agencies reported losses in funding for direct victim services during 2004-2005. According to the Victim Services Survey, these cuts resulted in the loss of seven positions that provided vital victim services in Travis County. Some positions came from Travis County Sheriff's Office (TCSO) and the Austin Police Department (APD) Victim Services Divisions, which provide crisis and mandated victim assistance within these agencies. The non-profit organization Deaf and Abused Women and Children Advocacy Services (DAWCAS), which provides domestic violence and sexual assault services to the Deaf and hard-of-hearing population, reported the loss of three advocate positions. Additionally, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) closed two offices and discontinued their summer camp for teen survivors of Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) crimes as a result of redistribution of statewide funding..

Some agencies that did not lose positions or programs had to find other sources of funding to maintain current staffing levels, and were unable to expand programs as needed. These losses affected a range of issues, including immigrant victims, child abuse victims and victims needing legal services. Some examples include:

- In 2005, (PAPA) experienced a \$26,000 reduction in VAWA funding. As a result, 20% fewer law enforcement officials were educated on the legal protections afforded to immigrant victims of family violence. (Victim Services Survey-PAPA).

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<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2004, Preliminary Demographics

<sup>3</sup> Community Action Network, Community Overview-May 2006

<sup>4</sup> Community Action Network, June 2006

- In 2004, an \$18,000 reduction in payments from the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to the Austin Children’s Shelter resulted in the loss of approximately 1,700 hours of direct care staff time with children who have been abused and neglected. In 2005, Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds for professional social work services decreased by \$54,000, resulting in the provision of case management and therapy services to 19 fewer clients that year. (Victim Services Survey-Austin Children’s Shelter).
- According to the Center for Child Protection, in 2004, a loss of governmental funding resulted in the delay of the Family Advocate Program, a critical follow-up program to support protective caregivers of child sexual abuse victims. (Victim Services Survey-Center for Child Protection.)
- In 2006, A federal grant from the U.S. Department of Justice was not renewed. This grant has supported three attorneys at the Women’s Advocacy Project, and an attorney at SafePlace to coordinate legal services for domestic violence survivors among agencies. This project assisted victims by providing a position who helped route cases to the most appropriate agency within the Travis County legal system. The loss of funding impacted the provision and coordination of services for survivors.

***New/Expanded Services***

During 2004-2005, some of the VSTF member agencies received new funding, most of which was obtained to address needs of specific populations. For example, Saheli, which is focused on serving survivors of domestic and sexual violence from the Asian community, received \$165,000 for use in translation and direct services for Asian and immigrant populations. (Victim Services Survey-Saheli)

In addition, a collaboration of several VSTF member agencies received a \$75,000 grant to develop a public awareness campaign to encourage Spanish-speaking victims to report crime, and to increase awareness of crime victims’ rights and services (Victim Services Survey-APD-Victim Services)

In 2005, the Travis County Attorney's Office received \$48,830 in funding from the Texas Office of the Attorney General, which supported one victim counselor position to provide counseling, advocacy and support services during misdemeanor prosecutions (Victim Services Survey-Travis County Attorney’s Office).

**VICTIM SERVICES PROBLEM STATEMENTS**

**Mandated Victim Services**

In 1989, Texas passed a constitutional amendment giving victims the right to participate in the criminal justice process, including the right to complete a victim impact statement. Furthermore, the state also recognized that victims of violent crime require specialized investigative services to minimize the impact of the process and address their safety and well-being. Therefore, in addition to the criminal and civil investigations of crimes, the Texas Code of Criminal

Procedure<sup>5</sup> and the Texas Family Code<sup>6</sup> statutorily mandate that communities respond to the physical, emotional, medical and legal needs and rights of victims of crime. The agencies listed below represent the system and community-based services that provide mandated intervention and legislatively-supported services for victims. It is important to note that mandated services are only eligible to those victims who report to identified authorities.

<b>Travis County System-Based Mandated Providers</b>
• APD, Pflugerville Police Department and TCSO all have internal Victim Services programs.,
• Travis County District Attorney’s Office – Victim-Witness Division
• Travis County Attorney’s Office – Victim-Witness Division
• Travis County Juvenile Probation
• Travis County Community Supervision Victim Liaisons

<b>Community-Based Support Services for Mandated Services</b>
• Child Forensic Interviews (Center for Child Protection)
• Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE programs)
• Sexual Assault Hospital Accompaniment (SafePlace, DAWCAS)
• Courtroom Accompaniment (MADD, SafePlace)

**Problem Statement #1**

A high number of cases, increased acuity, and the multi-level needs of each victim of crime, tax the current victim services resources available, resulting in victims receiving only the minimally-mandated service response.

**Issues to Consider and Supporting Statistics**

- In 2005, the average annual caseload for 15 APD Victim Services Counselors assigned to provide support throughout the investigative process was approximately 677 cases per counselor. (Victims Services Survey-Austin Police Department)
- Due to high caseloads, APD Victim Services Counselors frequently make contact with only approximately 50%-55% of the victims. For example, in 2005, APD reported 1,182 robberies and Victim Services served 628 (53%) robbery victims. In addition, APD reported 6,867 family violence cases and Victim Services served 3,486 (51%) victims. (Victim Services Survey-Austin Police Department)
- Currently, each TCSO Victim Services Counselor serves approximately 635 victims per year. After the loss of three counselor positions, the number of victims served in 2004 and 2005 dropped by 24% (from 3,176 victims to 2,400). (Victim Services Survey-TCSO-Victim Services)
- In 2005, the Travis County District Attorney’s Office received approximately 500 new felony cases per counselor, which was an overall division increase of 300 cases as compared to 2004. (Victim Services Survey-Travis County District Attorney’s Office)
- In 2004, one victim witness staff member assigned to the Travis County Attorney’s Office provided mandated victim assistance services on 5,695 criminal family violence

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<sup>5</sup> Chapter 56, Subsection A

<sup>6</sup> Chapter 264, Subsection E

cases. In 2005, 2½ victim witness staff worked 6,350 criminal family violence cases. (Victim Services Survey-Travis County District Attorney's Office)

- Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) has been successfully utilized by victims and professionals seeking information about offenders in the jail system. Victim Witness programs in prosecutor's offices spend much of their time updating victims/witnesses on court dates and other court-related information. Implementation of the automated VINE system – or other similar automated system – to include all court information, would redirect their time to providing services.
- SANE exams are crucial to a victim-centered sexual assault investigation. The Travis County Adolescent and Adult SANE program is managed on a volunteer basis, which creates issues related to long-term growth and stability.

### **Goal**

Ensure that victims receive information and support services at a level that effectively addresses their needs and allows their informed participation in the criminal justice process.

### **Strategies**

- Support and promote multi-disciplinary, co-located teams to improve specialized investigations and the services available to victims of violent crime. (Family Justice Center Model)
- Support implementation of the VINE, or similar system, to include both district and county court information.
- Increase advocacy support during prosecutions through increased coordination with non-profit organizations and volunteers and/or through increased staffing levels.
- Provide a letter of support, as appropriate, for grant applications for a Coordinator position for the Travis County Adolescent and Adult SANE program for program stability.

### **Funding Priorities**

- Increase number of victim advocates within law enforcement agencies
- Enhance current VINE system or develop another automated system to provide court information to crime victims.
- Increase number of victim advocates in the Travis County District Attorney's and County Attorney's Offices.

### **Crisis Response and Short-Term<sup>7</sup> Services**

The overall goal of crisis response and short-term services is to assess and respond to the victim's immediate emotional, medical, and safety needs. Such services are generally provided at the scene of a crime or within a short period of time following the crime. These services are critical to meeting the needs of a victim immediately following a crime. Timely, victim-focused intervention is the first step to secondary and tertiary prevention and interrupts the cycle of violence. Victims typically have three major needs after a crime has been committed: the need to feel safe; the need to express their emotions; and the need to know "what comes next" after their

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<sup>7</sup> Short-term services are defined as those immediate, transitional support services usually lasting no longer than six to eight sessions or appointments.

victimization. Crisis response and short-term services help to stabilize a victim and provide critical support.

## **Problem Statement #2**

The crisis, immediate needs of crime victims exceeds available community resources.

## **Issues and Supporting Statistics**

- Victims of violent crime need immediate emotional support and accurate information to address his/her safety and well-being.
- Due to the unpredictability of crime, it is necessary to have counselors available throughout the day to respond to the immediate needs of crime victims in Travis County. These needs include: on-scene response; counseling; advocacy and safety planning; and emergency protective orders.
- Demand for specialized shelter services for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, elder abuse and child abuse exceeds the current capacity within the community.
- In 2004-2005, SafePlace was unable to serve 3,057 victims of domestic violence and sexual assault due to capacity issues. (Victim Services Survey, SafePlace)
- In 2004-2005, the Austin Children's Shelter was unable to serve 747 child victims of abuse and neglect due to unavailable, appropriate space to meet their needs. Due to new legislation regarding the privatization of the child protection system, the child welfare population is estimated to grow by 350% to 2,011 child victims<sup>8</sup>. (Victim Services Survey-Austin Children's Shelter)

## **Goal**

Ensure that victims will have access to crisis and short-term services when they are needed.

## **Strategies**

- Increase access to emergency shelter bed space for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, elder abuse and child abuse by increasing beds (as appropriate), supportive services, and transitional services
- Further develop coordination among shelters in Central Texas for the best use of resources.
- Identify community and private resources for emergency psychiatric services.
- Improve cross-training and coordination among professionals working with victims of crime. by conducting presentations to community agencies or other task forces
- Promote use of 2-1-1, a statewide 24 hours resource information hotline, by providers and clients.

## **Funding Priorities**

- Transitional support services (i.e., advocacy, case management, transitional housing) for shelter clients to expedite exit from shelter, which will make beds available for other clients.
- In-person crisis counseling services for crime victims that is available after hours.

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<sup>8</sup> Senate Testimony, Nancy Holman, Texas Alliance for Child and Family Services

## **Legal and Long-Term<sup>9</sup> Support Services**

For many victims, access to a full range of legal and mental health services is critical to safety, long-term healing and recovery. Psychiatric services, residential treatment for adults and children, comprehensive substance abuse services, and therapeutic counseling services are essential to the ideal system of support. This also includes accessible and affordable legal services for victims of violent crime, which is essential in freeing them from violence. Many victims of crime and abuse are unable to break free of their abusers and are reluctant to report crimes because they are legally bound to the perpetrator, and the perpetrator uses this dependence as a threat to keep the victim from reporting crimes and escaping dangerous situations. Legal services and transitional resources, especially for victims who are low-income and/or have special needs, are necessary for long-term stability.

### **Problem Statement #3**

Victims cannot readily access legal and support services that help to increase safety and long-term stability.

### **Issues to consider and Supporting Statistics**

#### ***Support Services***

- Affordable and specialized counseling services are essential in treating victims and the unique issues they face.
- The trauma of victimization can have long-term psychological and emotional effects. For example, children who are victimized are more likely to become violent, fail in school, and may suffer from a variety of social problems.
- Currently, Medicaid only covers psychiatry or psychologists and not other mental health services. In addition, Crime Victims' Compensation (CVC) eligibility requirements and reimbursement rates limit options. Costs for private insurance are increasing, along with the co-pay requirements for non-primary care services.
- The state and local Mental Health Mental Retardation (MHMR) system serves only a limited population of persons who need mental health services (persons diagnosed with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and major depression), which makes many crime victims ineligible for these counseling resources.
- The YWCA of Greater Austin has a 2 to 3-week waiting list for counseling services. (Victim Services Survey-YWCA of Greater Austin)
- Communities In Schools, a school-based non-profit agency, estimates that due to a lack of resources, 1,025 students did not receive counseling and case management services in 2005. (Victim Services Survey-Communities In Schools)
- At any point in time, there are approximately 60 adults and 30 children on the waiting list for individual counseling for domestic violence and sexual assault issues at SafePlace (. – CITATION FOR THIS STAT?)
- Finding safe and affordable housing is one of the greatest obstacles that victims of domestic violence, elder abuse and child abuse face when leaving an abusive situation. Transitional housing resources and support services provide an essential continuum between emergency shelter and independent living.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Long-term services are defined as those therapeutic support services lasting between 3 -24 months.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Conference of Mayors, *A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities*, December 2003.  
LINK TO THIS?

### ***Legal Services***

- DFPS has limited legal authority to intervene when vulnerable populations (such as youth, the elderly and/or persons with disabilities) have been alleged victims of abuse or exploitation. As a result, families need access to private or community-based legal services to address legal concerns.
- Without legal guardianship protection, incapacitated victims of crime are at risk of continued abuse or exploitation. This population benefits from an advocate to ensure a safe environment, and any needed restitution. (Victim Services Survey-Family Eldercare)
- Without a court order, caregivers of abused or neglected children have difficulty accessing medical assistance, insurance, public benefits, school enrollment, or the ability to make other needed decisions on behalf of the child. (Victim Services Survey-Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid)
- Immigrant victims of trafficking, domestic abuse and other violent crimes are often taken advantage of by persons who are aware of the victim's fear of losing their immigration status or being deported.
- The demand for legal assistance for immigrant crime victims has increased. PAPA provided immigration-related legal services to 589 victims in 2004 and 766 victims in 2005. (Victim Services Survey-PAPA)
- Adult victims of family violence and their children are often unable to break away from the batterer because of their legal and financial ties to the abuser. Civil legal assistance is needed for emergency protective orders, divorce filings, custody and other key legal issues.
- TRLA can only provide counsel/advice or brief services that do not necessarily meet the long-term legal needs of a client. For example, in 2004, TRLA was unable to address 476 requests for services, and 1,414 clients received only counsel/advice or brief services. In 2005, TRLA was unable to address 478 requests for services and provided 1,181 clients with counsel/advice or brief services (Victim Services Survey-TRLA)
- The Travis County Attorney's Office was unable to assist approximately 1,028 protective order applicants in 2004 and 1,145 applicants in 2005. (Victim Services Survey-Travis County Attorney's Office). As a result, these applicants had to be referred to other, limited community/non-profit legal resources for protective orders.

### **Goal**

Ensure that victims have access to a complete range of legal and support services that provide for their safety, long-term stability, and full recovery from trauma.

### **Strategies**

- Send VSTF outreach letters to private therapists and psychiatrists to invite them to take a role in the treatment of victims of violent crime, by accepting CVC as payment, and/or providing *pro bono* and sliding scale services in areas most convenient to victims. In addition, these providers would be encouraged to register with 2-1-1 as a crime victim provider.
- VSTF will meet with the Young Lawyers' Association and Volunteer Legal Services to discuss available free and reduced civil legal services available for crime victims and strategies on how to increase these resources.

- VSTF members will meet with Child Protective Services (CPS) to clarify legal issues and appropriate legal resources for CPS clients.
- Identify programs that offer emergency rent and utility assistance, transitional housing and permanent housing options
- Provide training to other community groups (e.g., the Basic Needs Coalition of Central Texas) so that they can more effectively support victims
- Expand VSTF membership to include more private and community-based mental health professionals
- Research and support legislation that increases the Medicaid and CVC reimbursement amounts for counseling.
- Support legislative and systemic procedures and changes that strengthen protective orders (temporary and permanent), and extend protective orders to stalking victims.

### **Funding Priorities**

- Specialized victim-oriented counseling programs which offer easy access to services (i.e., school-based, home-based or neighborhood-based services).
- Collaborative civil legal resources specific to crime victims.
- Counseling, advocacy and legal services provided in Spanish and Asian languages, critically-needed resources given the increases in these populations in our community.

### **Public Awareness and Education**

While the primary focus of the VSTF is to serve individuals and families who have been victimized, it also recognizes the need to support prevention and public awareness efforts focused on educating victims and the public about the frequency and type of victimization that occurs in our community and how to get help. Most VSTF member agencies provide some level of community education and participate in victim-oriented community events.

### **Problem Statement #4**

The community has a limited understanding about the precursors, dynamics, and prevalence of violent crime, including which populations are likely to be victimized and who perpetrates violent crime.

### **Issues and Supporting Data**

- All people in our community are at risk of victimization. However, certain groups of people are at higher risk for experiencing violent crime, specifically: persons with disabilities, the elderly, immigrants, youth, persons with mental health issues and persons who are socially isolated or under the influence of drugs and alcohol.
- In a review of 522 sexual assault cases, in approximately 35% of the cases, the victim appeared to be incapacitated by alcohol and/or drugs. In approximately 14% of the cases, the victim self-identified as having a pre-existing mental health diagnosis.<sup>11</sup>
- The vast majority of victims of violent crime know their perpetrators, which creates both emotional and physical barriers to reporting and obtaining help, and creates unique emotional, safety and intervention challenges.

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<sup>11</sup> Austin Police Department, 2005 *Making a Difference Project*

- Victimization costs individuals and society billions of dollars each year in health services and absenteeism from work. It also diminishes the quality of life for everyone in our community. It is estimated that nationally, child abuse and neglect costs over \$94 billion dollars each year in direct (mental health care, criminal justice system) and indirect (special education, criminality) costs.)<sup>12</sup>
- Underreporting impacts the ability to access services as well as the amount of resources dedicated to help crime victims. Nationally, it is estimated that one-half of all violent crime goes unreported; and in Texas, only 18% of victims of sexual assault report the assault to law enforcement.<sup>13</sup>
- Children and older adults are most likely to be abused by family members and caregivers or other non-strangers. According to DFPS, of confirmed abuse/neglect cases in 2004, 86% of abusers were related to their adult victims, and an additional 6% were the adult victims' friends, neighbors or staff. In the same year, 91% of abusers in confirmed child abuse/neglect cases were related to the victims.
- In the 2005-2006 school year, of the students referred to SafePlace for school-based services, 29% indicated that they had witnessed and/or experienced domestic violence; 19% had experienced dating violence; and 34% had witnessed and/or experienced other forms of abuse.
- At the statewide level, a 2006 study by the Texas Council on Family Violence showed that 75% of Texans ages 16-24 reported that they had either experienced dating violence or knew someone who had.
- Bullying is a precursor to teen dating violence and abusive adult relationships. 58% of Austin Independent School District 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders reported experiencing bullying at least once during the 2004-2005 school year; and 45% of high school students reported at least one experience of bullying during the 2004-2005 school year.<sup>14</sup>
- Studies have shown that bullying and/or being the target of bullies are among the risk factors for future victimization and/or perpetration of violence. Research has also indicated that children who are maltreated or victimized by other forms of violence are at greater risk for juvenile delinquency and adult criminal behavior.<sup>15</sup>

<b>Barriers to Reporting</b>
• Physical, cognitive and other disabilities
• Confusion or incomplete memory due to the impact of trauma
• Fear of reporting because of immigration status
• Lack of trust in government and other authorities
• Threats or intimidation by alleged perpetrators
• The victims' perceived shame that he/she contributed to or caused the victimization
• Lack of memory or self-blame due to alcohol or drug use at the time of the crime

## Goal

<sup>12</sup> Suzette Fromm, Prevent Child Abuse America, 2001

<sup>13</sup> Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault – The University of Texas at Austin

<sup>14</sup> Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities , 2004-2005

<sup>15</sup> Victims of Violence Crime Community Assessment Report, June 2003

Increase public awareness and outreach efforts to enhance knowledge of victims' rights, reporting processes and available resources, especially for vulnerable populations.

### **Strategies**

- Continue development of a comprehensive public awareness campaign geared toward the Spanish-speaking community through various media.
- Continue to collaborate with and train faith-based community groups on victim issues.
- Create a multi-purpose presentation to be used by VSTF members in community presentations.

### **Funding Priorities**

- School-based prevention and intervention programs to address domestic, sexual and dating violence and bullying among youth.
- Psycho-educational programs that address the connection between alcohol/drugs and violent victimization of all types and forms.
- Public awareness campaigns about victimization, victims' rights, and available resources.

## **CROSS CUTTING ISSUES**

The Community Action Network (CAN) Assessment and Planning Committee provided an opportunity for each of the CAN Issue Area Groups (IAGs) to identify cross-cutting themes and barriers to their work. Through the collaboration of the various CAN Committees members and IAG groups, three priority cross-cutting issues have been identified:

- Behavioral Health;
- Affordable Housing;
- Transportation.

VSTF is committed to being part of the solutions to these priority issues by:

- Actively participating in the CAN's and the IAGs' initiatives to address these cross-cutting issues.
- Invite other IAGs to meet with VSTF, at least once per year.
- VSTF will meet with housing-related coalitions to identify available transitional and permanent affordable housing in Travis County.
- Provide training on victim issues and resources upon request.

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