

The Southern Nevada Family Justice Center Overview

The Family Justice Center model is an innovative multi-agency collaboration established to coordinate services and resources for victims. The Southern Nevada Family Justice Center, the first in our state, will serve victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and adult victims of human trafficking. The center will address several challenges impacting victim safety; access to resources, difficulty navigating the criminal justice system and distrust of the very system in place to help victims. The Southern Nevada Family Justice Center will empower victims to identify and chose the services and resources at their own pace. The core concept is to provide one place where victims can go to talk to an advocate, plan for their safety, interview with a police officer, meet with a prosecutor, receive information on shelter, and get help with related immediate needs.

The Center is scheduled to open in September with a grand opening in October, 2016, to coincide with Domestic Violence Awareness Month and the annual Domestic Violence Memorial Ceremony on October 4, 2016. We will be sharing a 13,000 square foot building with the Department of Juvenile Justice Services, Juvenile Assessment Center. The facility will be divided, but the unique partnership will enable us to initially share mental health and substance abuse resources.

Initial onsite partners in the Family Justice Center will include; LVMPD investigators and advocates, the Clark County District Attorney's Office, the Las Vegas City Attorney's Office, Safenest, a domestic violence program, The Rape Crisis Center, The Salvation Army Seeds of Hope Program, a human trafficking program, and Hermandad Mexicana Transnacional, an immigration program. Assistance with filing Protection Orders and Victims of Crime Program applications will be available through the Center.

The documented and published outcomes in the Family Justice Center model have included:

- Reduced homicides;
- Increased victim safety;
- Increased empowerment for victims;
- Reduced fear and anxiety for victims and their children;
- Increased efficiency and coordination among service providers;
- Reduced recantation and minimization by victims when wrapped in services and support.

In order to ensure a victim centered program, survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking met to provide feedback about their experiences with services and the criminal justice system. In addition, they provided input as to what they felt would make the center safer and more responsive to the needs of victims. The development of a Survivors' Advisory Board will be critical to the success of Nevada's first Family Justice Center.

During the first year of operation it is anticipated that additional partners and resources may be identified through a gap analysis. Funding will be a primary concern as we strive for long term growth and sustainability.

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