



**SOLANO COUNTY
CIVIL GRAND JURY**

2020-2021

**SOLANO COUNTY FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER
REVISITED**

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Solano County Civil Grand Jury 2020-2021

I. SUMMARY

In February 2007, the Solano County Board of Supervisors (BOS) authorized the Office of Family Violence Division of the Probation Department to conduct a feasibility analysis to explore the creation of a Family Justice Center in Solano County. The Solano County Family Justice Center (SFJC) began operating in February 2011 based on a strategic plan developed in 2008-2009 by a committee comprised of representatives from several different agencies and/or County offices.

California law defines a family justice center as a multiagency, multidisciplinary service center where public and private agencies provide services to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, elder or dependent adult abuse, or human trafficking. The family justice center should function as a “one-stop-shop” to provide a single location where victims can tell their story and access needed services and support. The Solano County Civil Grand Jury found that the SFJC is still not fully functioning as a “one-stop-shop” and may benefit from repositioning it within the county administrative structure.

II. INTRODUCTION

The 2020-2021 Solano County Civil Grand Jury decided to study the SFJC to assess how efficiently and effectively it serves the County’s victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, elder or dependent adult abuse, or human trafficking. The SFJC was the subject of a prior Civil Grand Jury investigation conducted in 2016-2017. The findings and recommendations presented in that report were included in the review to evaluate what progress has been made in providing these key services.

III. METHODOLOGY

Interviewed:

- Current and former SFJC staff
- District Attorney’s Office staff
- Partner agency administrators
- FJC Employees of other counties
- Solano County Health and Social Services staff

Reviewed:

- California Penal Code Part 4, Title 5.3 – Family Justice Centers and Multidisciplinary Teams, Chapter 1. Family Justice Centers, sections [13750-13753]
- *The President’s Family Justice Center Initiative, Best Practices*. United States Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women. February 2007
- Solano Center for Family Safety and Justice - Feasibility Study. Solano County June 2008
- Strategic Implementation Plan Solano Family Justice Center. Presentation to Solano County Board of Supervisors. November 1, 2011
- *Solano County Family Justice Center Operations Manual*: Revised October 2016
- *Solano County Family Justice Center Operations Manual*: Revised September 2020
- California Sexual Response Assault Team (SART) Manual: January 2016
- Solano County Office of Family Violence Protection website:
https://www.solanocounty.com/depts/ph/hpe/programs/family_violence_prevention.asp
- Solano County Family Justice Center website:
<https://www.solanocounty.com/depts/fvp/fjc/default.asp>
- Family Justice Center Alliance website: <https://www.familyjusticecenter.org>
- Solano County Board of Supervisors Meeting Agenda; Item 21 October 7, 2014
- Solano County Board of Supervisors Meeting Agenda and Minutes; June 23, 2015
- 2016-17 Solano County Civil Grand Jury Report, Solano County Family Justice Center
- Solano County Fiscal Year (FY) 2016-17 Recommended Budget
- Solano County FY 2017-18 Recommended Budget
- Solano County FY 2018-19 Recommended Budget
- Solano County FY 2019-20 Recommended Budget
- Solano County FY 2020-21 Recommended Budget
- California Secretary of State filings
- Responses to Requests for Information from SFJC staff
- Responses to Requests for Information from partner agencies

Toured:

- Solano County Family Justice Center

IV. STATEMENT OF FACTS

According to the Penal Code¹:

“A city, county, city and county, or community-based nonprofit organization may each establish a family justice center....”

¹ California Penal Code Part 4; Title 5.3, Chapter 1, Section 13750(a)

The Penal Code also provides that:

“For purposes of this title², family justice centers shall be defined as multiagency, multidisciplinary service centers where public and private agencies assign staff members on a full-time or part-time basis in order to provide services to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, elder or dependent adult abuse, or human trafficking from one location in order to reduce the number of times victims must tell their story, reduce the number of places victims must go for help and increase access to services and support for victims and their children. Staff members at a family justice center may be comprised of, but are not limited to the following:

- Law enforcement personnel.
- Medical personnel.
- District attorneys and city attorneys.
- Victim-witness program personnel.
- Domestic violence shelter service staff.
- Community-based rape crisis, domestic violence, and human trafficking advocates.
- Social service agency staff members.
- Child welfare agency social workers.
- County health department staff.
- City or county welfare and public assistance workers.
- Nonprofit agency counseling professionals.
- Civil legal service providers.
- Supervised volunteers from partner agencies.
- Other professionals providing services.”

The term “one-stop shop” is commonly used to describe the intent to aid and address needs while providing services for victims at one location.

The first family justice center in the nation began operation on October 10, 2002 in San Diego, California. Victims of domestic violence in the City of San Diego could come to one location to talk to an advocate, file for a restraining order, and plan for their safety. They could also talk to a police officer, meet with a prosecutor, receive medical assistance, counsel with a chaplain, get help with transportation, and obtain nutrition and pregnancy services counseling.

Subsequently, in 2003, President George W. Bush announced the creation of the President’s Family Justice Center Initiative (Initiative). The President based his Initiative on the San Diego Family Justice Center model. The \$20 million Initiative began a movement toward more co-located, multi-disciplinary service centers. The Initiative specifically set out to create fifteen additional Family Justice Centers around the nation.

² California Penal Code Part 4; Title 5.3, Chapter 1, section 13750(c)

The Initiative identified the family justice center model as a best practice for domestic violence intervention and prevention services. Ten best practices were listed, as follows³:

- Co-located multi-disciplinary services for victims of family violence and their children increases safety and support.
- Community history of domestic violence specialization increases the success of collaboration in the family justice center model.
- Offenders must be prohibited from on-site services at centers.
- Policies incidental to arrest /enforcement reduces re-victimization of victims.
- Pro-arrest/mandatory arrest policies in FJC communities increase accountability for offenders.
- Strategic planning is critical to short and long-term success in the family justice model.
- Strong/diverse community support increases resources for victims and their children.
- Strong support from local elected officials and other local and state government policymakers increases the effectiveness and sustainability of family justice centers.
- Victim confidentiality must be a priority.
- Victim safety/advocacy must be the highest priority in the family justice center service delivery model.

The State of California passed Assembly Bill 1623 (AB1623) in 2014. AB1623 added Title 5.3-Family Justice Centers to Part 4 of the California Penal Code sections [13750-13753]. This law established specific criteria and standards with which a family justice center must comply.

A. Solano County Family Justice Center

In June 2008, the BOS approved the recommendations contained in the Feasibility Study Report for a Proposed Family Justice Center. A subsequent fifteen-month Strategic Implementation Planning process hosted by the Office of Family Violence Prevention resulted in a fully developed strategic plan.

Beginning in October 2009, approximately 40 representatives from 34 different agencies and/or County offices came together to plan, strategize, debate, and sometimes compromise, to create the final document that is the Solano Family Justice Strategic Implementation Plan.

On February 2, 2011, the SFJC officially began co-locating services and operating under the Solano County Office of Family Violence Prevention (OFVP). The SFJC as well as the OFVP were first housed in the Solano County Probation Office and then moved to the District Attorney's office in July 2011.

³ *The President's Family Justice Center Initiative, Best Practices*. United States Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women. February 2007.

On December 11, 2012, the BOS approved a 30-month pilot project with total General Fund contributions for the occupancy, minor renovations, and moving costs not to exceed \$218,938 which included \$8,465 to cover the cost of renovations to 604 Empire Street. The SFJC relocated to 604 Empire Street in Fairfield in January 2013.

The SFJC currently operates under the Office of Family Violence Prevention which is overseen by the Solano County District Attorney's Office.

The 2016-2017 Solano County Civil Grand Jury reviewed the operation of the SFJC and produced several findings and recommendations. Responses to the recommendations were provided by the Solano County Board of Supervisors and the Solano County District Attorney's Office.

1. Inadequate Facilities

In a June 23, 2015 update to the SFJC pilot project which ended on June 30, 2015, the BOS affirmed 604 Empire Street as the permanent site for the SFJC. The building area is less than 10,000 square feet. Although this location is near county legal and administrative offices, its location is unknown by many Solano County residents, and is not readily accessible by public transportation.

One of the top findings of the 2016-2017 Civil Grand Jury investigation was that the SFJC building did not accommodate enough on-site partners or provide adequate privacy. In their responses to this finding, the District Attorney and the Board of Supervisors recognized the limited space and indicated that the facility was doing the best it could. According to the District Attorney, privacy was improved with "white noise machines" placed outside office doors during confidential meetings. The few on-site partners' office spaces were reassigned in an attempt to improve privacy.

The building configuration includes a large open area with a few cubicles which offer no privacy for confidential meetings. The 2020-2021 Civil Grand Jury members were told during a tour of the facility that plans had been developed and would soon be implemented to renovate this portion of the building to provide more confidential spaces. However, the Civil Grand Jury was told during an interview that this information is incorrect, and there are no current plans for these modifications.

The facility is not adequate to provide confidentiality for victims and to efficiently serve its clientele. Even with the use of sound masking (white noise) devices, individuals can hear conversations through heating/air conditioning ducts, open doors, and open spaces (cubicles) used for interviews. There are too few rooms that can serve as confidential spaces. The SFJC Operations Manual states that the SFJC's goal is to secure a larger facility of approximately 30,000 square feet in size which would accommodate more partners to better serve the needs of domestic violence victims and their children. No plan to achieve this goal was provided to this Civil Grand Jury.

2. Few Partners

At the time of this Civil Grand Jury's investigation, the SFJC had few on-site partner organizations. The 2016-2017 Civil Grand Jury also found that the number of on-site partners was inconsistent, and the "one-stop-shop" idea had not developed as envisioned. The District Attorney agreed.

According to information provided by the SFJC in October 2020, the on-site partners, many of which are county employees, are:

Full-time:

- Catholic Charities
- Ombudsman Services of Contra Costa and Solano County
- Solano Advocates for Victims of Violence
- Solano County Eligibility Benefits Specialist
- Solano County Help Bureau
- District Attorney Victim/Witness Advocates
- Office of Family Violence Prevention
- SafeQuest Solano (Expected to return October 2020)

Part-time:

- Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program
- Positive Parenting Program.

The Grand Jury did not observe the presence of all the partners listed above during our November 2020 tour. The SFJC Operations Manual lists an additional twenty partners providing services off-site or by referral.

The following table, based on information provided by the SFJC, presents the SFJC on-site partners from 2016 through 2021. A description of the services provided by these partners is presented in Appendix A.

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021 ⁽⁴⁾
Courage Center	Courage Center	Courage Center	Courage Center	Courage Center	
SafeQuest Solano	SafeQuest Solano	SafeQuest Solano			SafeQuest Solano
Child Haven	Child Haven				
DA Victim/Witness	DA Victim/Witness	DA Victim/Witness	DA Victim/Witness	DA Victim/Witness	DA Victim/Witness
DA Investigator	DA Investigator				
TRC ⁽¹⁾	TRC	TRC	TRC	TRC	
SAVV ⁽²⁾	SAVV	SAVV	SAVV	SAVV	SAVV
H&SS Help Bureau	H&SS Help Bureau	H&SS Help Bureau	H&SS Help Bureau	H&SS Help Bureau	H&SS Help Bureau
EBS ⁽³⁾	EBS	EBS	EBS	EBS	EBS
		Ombudsman	Ombudsman	Ombudsman	Ombudsman
				Catholic Charities	Catholic Charities

(1) Trauma Recovery Center

(2) Solano Advocates for Victims of Violence

(3) H&SS Eligibility Benefit Specialist

(4) Note that the Office of Family Violence Protection is included in the SFJC Operations Manual as an on-site partner, but was not included in a list provided to the Civil Grand Jury on March 8, 2021

The previous Civil Grand Jury recommendation to “actively recruit more on-site partners to better serve domestic violence victims with the comprehensive services they will need for support” remains unmet.

3. *Duplication of Services*

The SFJC states on its web page that it provides the following on-site services:

- Access to Domestic Violence Shelter Services
- Cash Aid, Cal-Fresh, MediCal Applications
- Child Support Services
- Confidential Victim Advocacy
- Crisis Intervention
- Domestic Violence & Elder Abuse Restraining Order Applications, and Court Accompaniment
- Elder Abuse Services

- Homeless Outreach Services
- Immigration Services
- Referrals for Adult and Child Counseling
- Safe At Home Applications
- Safety Planning
- Victims of Crime/Victim Witness Assistance
- Access to Mental Health Services

The Solano County Department of Health and Social Services offers a number of services, particularly through the Behavioral Health Unit (BHU), that overlap those provided by the SFJC. According to the BHU web page, it assists over 6,000 children, youth, and adults each year who are experiencing a psychiatric crisis, addiction, or who have significant mental and emotional disabilities. Services include:

- Crisis supports
- Integrated care clinics that offer brief therapy
- Case management
- Psychiatric assessments and medication
- Outpatient treatment
- Full-Service Partnerships
- Foster care supports
- Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams
- Supported employment
- Peer support
- A range of community support services, including various contracted community-based organizations and wellness centers.

As shown above, many of the services provided by the SFJC are also provided by other county departments such as the Behavioral Health Unit of the Health and Social Services Department.

Although SFJC reportedly does not preferentially provide services for individuals involved in court cases, there is a perception among non-profit partners and former partners that this is the case.

4. Sustainability/Budgeting

On October 7, 2014, the BOS received an update on the SFJC pilot project. Agenda item number 21; File number 14-0690, noted that:

“The pilot project included a commitment by the District Attorney to establish a nonprofit agency that could raise funds and access resources only available to nonprofit agencies. A nonprofit board of directors was selected, and the Solano Family Justice Center Foundation received its nonprofit designation in July 2013. The Foundation Board developed a fundraising strategic plan and to date has raised \$29,000 from fundraisers and individual and corporate donors. This amount exceeds

the \$5,000 amount included in the Benchmark Matrix which outlined the goal for fundraising in connection with the pilot project.”

According to FY 2016/17 budget documents, the District Attorney received a one-time final allocation of \$10,000 from the Solano Family Justice Center Foundation, which was the result of fund-raising efforts, and also received notice that the non-profit intended to disband so no additional funds would be received in future years. Budget documents also stated that the District Attorney OFVP staff were continuing efforts to identify appropriate partners and funding opportunities, including grants, that could augment/complement the operation of the Solano Family Justice Center. Budget documents for FY 2017/18 and 2018/19 stated that the Family Violence Prevention Officer was in the process of forming a new foundation to help fundraise and support the sustainability of services offered and housed at the SFJC. FY 2019/20 and FY 2020/21 budget documents noted that a non-profit foundation, Solano Community Justice, Inc., had been established to assist the SFJC with fundraising to increase services for victims of violence. According to SFJC personnel, this foundation is officially accepting donations, actively recruiting additional board members, and developing a website/marketing strategy.

Articles of Incorporation of a Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation were filed with the California Secretary of State on September 27, 2017 for Solano Community Justice, Inc. A Statement of Information for this organization was filed in the office of the California Secretary of State on May 14, 2018. A Certificate of Amendment of Articles of Incorporation was filed on June 13, 2019 which amended the Articles of Incorporation to change the name of the corporation to Solano Alliance for Justice and Empowerment (SAJE).

On December 20, 2020, SFJC personnel stated that SAJE had participated in some fundraising activities and recently donated \$2,500 in gift cards to the SFJC for needy clients. There is no website available for SAJE.

As shown in the table below, the SFJC is not “fiscally neutral” and the SFJC is not positioned to be self-sufficient as envisioned by the Terms and Conditions of the pilot project. The existing foundation has not been successful in raising funds to support occupancy costs at the SFJC.

Family Justice Center Expenditures - Budget Years 2013-14 through 2020-21

Budget Year- Actual Expenditures	Total Expenditures	Net County Cost	Net County Cost - Percent of Total Expenditures
2013-14 (pilot year)	\$ 916,003	\$423,237	46.2%
2014-15 (pilot year)	\$ 916,762	\$486,669	53.1%
2015-16	\$ 739,088	\$381,760	51.7%
2016-17	\$ 664,866	\$400,314	60.2%
2017-18	\$ 731,030	\$549,985	75.2%
2018-19	\$ 879,113	\$686,652	78.1%
2019-20	\$1,017,835	\$697,992	68.6%
2020-21 (adopted)	\$ 926,173	\$682,207	73.7%

While grants are sought, they are not applied for on a regular basis and only for the services the SFJC already provides. There is not a well-defined planning process that identifies additional critical on-site partners nor a process for obtaining grants or other sources of funding. This limits the ability of the SFJC to expand and recognize its full potential. The SFJC does not have an assigned grant writer, and current grants are expiring.

As reported by the District Attorney, the grant funds for 2016 through 2021 for the Solano Family Justice Center are as follows:

Grant	Period	Amount
Safe Haven Supervised Visitation Program	October 2014 – September 2016	\$450,000
Grant to Encourage Arrest Policies & Enforcement of Protection Orders Program (GTEAP)	October 2014 – September 2018	\$300,000
CalOES ⁴ Victim Services Grant Program (XC)	July 2016 – December 2019	\$919,179
CalOES Victim Services Grant Program (XC) continuation funding	January 2020 – December 2020	\$255,489
CalOES Family Justice Center Program (FJ)	January 2019 – March 2021	\$377,828
Kaiser Foundation – Breaking Barriers	June 2018 – May 2019	\$ 90,000
Kaiser Foundation – Breaking Barriers continuation funding	July 2019 – June 2021	\$ 90,000
Kaiser Foundation – Family Justice Center Collaborative	December 2018 – June 2021	\$ 95,000

The District Attorney reported that in addition to the grant funding listed above, they have assisted on-site partners in securing funding, including a \$90,000 Kaiser Foundation grant

⁴ California Office of Emergency Services

awarded to Napa-Solano SANE/SART⁵ for the establishment of the Courage Center 2. This eventually led to the Courage Center 2 receiving the CalOES Child Advocacy Center grant program. They also assisted Ombudsman Services of Contra Costa and Solano in receiving the CalOES Elder Abuse grant program and the Solano Advocates for Victims of Violence in receiving the CalOES Victim Legal Assistance grant program.

The 2016-2017 Civil Grand Jury recommended that SFJC staff increase their expertise in grant writing and aggressively pursue new grants to reduce county expenses for the SFJC. An additional recommendation was that they establish a relationship with a non-profit foundation to help solidify the center's financial stability. In 2017, the SFJC responded to this recommendation by stating that they were "...in the process of forming a new foundation which should be completed within the next several months." To date, this recommendation to provide significant financial support for the SFJC has not been fulfilled.

5. Transportation

The Fairfield location of the SFJC facility is in the center of the county and near county law and administration headquarters but getting to the facility via public transportation is extremely time-consuming and difficult for residents of Dixon, Rio Vista, and Vallejo. Since 2016-2017, the transportation industry has changed. A ride on public transportation from Vallejo to Fairfield could take up to four hours. Ridesharing services are more prevalent and can offer victims discreet 24/7 transportation from one location directly to the SFJC and then on to other locations. The amount of time required to use other public transportation and the limited availability during non-peak hours is a barrier to victims seeking support. Also, bus stops are known locations where victims may be spotted by their assailers. To resolve a similar transportation issue, Lyft and the Alameda County District Attorney's Office have partnered to provide free rides to and from the Alameda FJC.

Since a significant number of the victims seeking services at the SFJC are Vallejo residents, it is important to consider establishing an SFJC office in that city to more effectively and efficiently provide services to this population.

The 2016-2017 Civil Grand Jury also concluded that the SFJC did not effectively serve the transportation needs of clients and recommended securing funding to provide transportation to its clients. The District Attorney expressed an intention to complete its look into alternative funding by August of 2017. No evidence of alternative funding for transportation was presented to the Grand Jury in 2021.

⁵ Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner/Sexual Assault Response Team

6. Workplace Environment

Domestic violence and sexual assault victims are trauma victims. Trauma informed care is a specific manner of care guided by four principles: realization about trauma and how it can affect people and groups, recognizing signs of trauma, having a system which can respond to trauma and resisting re-traumatization. Trauma-informed care addresses the pervasive nature of trauma and promotes environments of healing and recovery rather than practices and services that may (inadvertently) re-traumatize individuals (including the staff). Working with traumatized individuals and their families is a very intense and exhausting job that requires that all partners doing the work at the SFJC are supportive of one another.

Information received during this Civil Grand Jury investigation communicated concerns relating to the workplace environment at the SFJC. Some employee behaviors were described as “unprofessional” by both current and former SFJC partners and employees. Other behaviors were described as creating a less than supportive work environment. These types of behaviors and resulting workplace environment detract from the ability of the SFJC to deliver needed services to victims in a manner consistent with trauma-informed care.

7. Operations Manual Update and Statutory Compliance

The mission statement presented in the SFJC Operations Manual states:

“The Solano Family Justice Center (SFJC) provides a safe and welcoming environment where individuals and families benefit from comprehensive services offered at one location. We coordinate violence intervention and prevention services that are accountable, culturally responsive, and accessible to all. We treat clients with dignity and respect.”

Neither the Mission Statement nor the Operations Manual is being followed. The SFJC is not a “one-stop” location for the services a victim may need. Many services are provided off-site, requiring victims and their families to travel to several locations.

The Operations Manual describes both an Advisory Committee and an Administrative Team. According to the Operations Manual, the Advisory Committee is to meet regularly, but the frequency of meetings is not defined. There are no explicit meeting requirements for the Advisory Committee and no mention of routine staff meetings.

At the time of our review, the SFJC did not follow the requirements of California Penal Code Part 4, Title 5.3, sections 13750-13753. Section 13751 states that:

“Each family justice center established pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 13750 shall maintain a formal training program with mandatory training for all staff members, volunteers, and agency professionals of not less than eight hours per year on subjects, including, but not limited to, privileges and confidentiality, information sharing, risk assessment, safety planning, victim advocacy, and high-risk case response.”

This training program is not included in the SFJC Operations Manual. The required training is not being provided for SFJC staff.

Sections 13750(g)(1) and (g)(2) state that:

“(g) (1) Each family justice center shall consult with community-based domestic violence, sexual assault, elder or dependent adult abuse, and human trafficking agencies in partnership with survivors of violence and abuse and their advocates in the operations process of the family justice center, and shall establish procedures for the ongoing input, feedback, and evaluation of the family justice center by survivors of violence and abuse and community-based crime victim service providers and advocates.

(2) Each family justice center shall develop policies and procedures, in collaboration with local community-based crime victim service providers and local survivors of violence and abuse, to ensure coordinated services are provided to victims and to enhance the safety of victims and professionals at the family justice center who participate in affiliated survivor-centered support or advocacy groups. Each family justice center shall maintain a formal client feedback, complaint, and input process to address client concerns about services provided or the conduct of any family justice center professionals, agency partners, or volunteers providing services in the family justice center.”

The SFJC does not have a clearly stated formal client feedback, complaint, and input process as described above.

The SFJC does not have a designated privacy officer as required below in section 13750 (h)(1):

” Each family justice center shall maintain a client consent policy and shall be in compliance with all state and federal laws protecting the confidentiality of the types of information and documents that may be in a victim’s file, including, but not limited to, medical, legal, and victim counselor records. Each family justice center shall have a designated privacy officer to develop and oversee privacy policies and procedures consistent with state and federal privacy laws and the Fair Information Practice Principles promulgated by the United States Department of Homeland Security. At no time shall a victim be required to sign a client consent form to share information in order to access services.”

8. Law Enforcement Agencies

The 2020-2021 Civil Grand Jury requested information from county law enforcement agencies to assess their awareness of the SFJC and to determine how they coordinate services offered by their agencies with those offered by the SFJC. The agencies reported that they appreciate the services that the SFJC provides, and that contact information for the SFJC is contained in informational pamphlets made available to victims, and victims are usually verbally informed as well. Agencies reported that it would be helpful if the SFJC provided training to law enforcement agencies in the county addressing provided services.

It was also noted that the Fairfield location of the SFJC posed some difficulties since community members who need services are not able to get to them. This transportation issue cuts into time that detectives have to work on active investigations, limiting the services offered to the community. One agency suggested developing a partnership to bring the services offered by the SFJC to their local community.

Another agency suggested that more Spanish-speaking individuals should be available at the SFJC and that a food pantry available for families in need would be helpful. It also suggested that lawyers or paralegals who could advise about immigration issues would be important as well as pro bono lawyers who could advise about Family Law issues, such as divorce and child custody as well as child support.

V. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FINDING 1: The SFJC is not meeting its Mission Statement and is not performing as a one-stop-shop for victims, adding stress to an already stressful situation.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Aggressively pursue additional on-site partners to provide the comprehensive services needed by domestic violence and sexual assault victims.

FINDING 2: The building currently housing the Solano County Family Justice Center is inadequate and its location is unknown to many residents.

RECOMMENDATION 2: SFJC develop a plan to procure a more appropriate and better located facility to house the SFJC. Increase publicity to identify how services for victims can be accessed.

FINDING 3: The SFJC work environment is not consistent with trauma-informed care, affecting the quality of services provided to victims.

RECOMMENDATION 3A: Provide all SFJC staff with additional training in understanding the statutory requirements of an FJC, discrimination issues, and trauma-informed care.

RECOMMENDATION 3B: The SFJC should clearly define the manager’s role in managing both county employees and employees of on-site partners.

FINDING 4: Public transportation to get to the Solano County Family Justice Center in Fairfield is unnecessarily challenging for those victims outside Fairfield.

RECOMMENDATION 4A: SFJC establish and fully staff an office in Vallejo.

RECOMMENDATION 4B: The SFJC make arrangements with ride share companies to provide safe, free, and efficient door-to-door services throughout the county.

FINDING 5: Most County law enforcement agencies are aware of services provided by the SFJC but would welcome training by SFJC to make them more aware of what services are provided.

RECOMMENDATION 5: SFJC Director develop and implement a training program to better inform county law enforcement agencies of the services provided.

FINDING 6: The SFJC is not fiscally neutral, and the non-profit foundation established to help achieve that goal, SAJE, is neither robust nor performing as envisioned in the strategic plan and has no online presence.

RECOMMENDATION 6: SAJE improve its ability to achieve SFJC financial stability.

FINDING 7: The SFJC Operations Manual does not adequately explain how the SFJC will comply with the statutory requirements of Penal Code sections 13750-13753.

RECOMMENDATION 7: SFJC review and revise the Operations Manual to clearly address statutory requirements including, but not limited to, the establishment of a mandatory training program, designation of a privacy officer, and establishment of a formal client feedback, complaint, and input process.

FINDING 8: The SFJC Operations Manual defines both an Advisory Committee and an Administrative Team, but no meeting frequency is identified for either; no requirements for general staff meetings are included in the Operations Manual.

RECOMMENDATION 8A: SFJC hold regularly scheduled meetings of both the Advisory Committee and the Administrative Team to improve communication among staff and management.

RECOMMENDATION 8B: SFJC have regularly scheduled full staff meetings.

FINDING 9: Solano County’s Health and Social Services Department offers services and has resources similar to those offered by the SFJC.

RECOMMENDATION 9: The Board of Supervisors initiate a study to determine if the transfer of the SFJC from the District Attorney’s Office to the Department of Health and Social Services would result in providing more efficient and effective services to victims in Solano County.

COMMENTS

The SFJC facility is a secure building. Its operating hours are Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., excluding holidays. Individuals entering the building are verified, screened, and provided with an access badge and escorted inside.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Solano County Board of Supervisors (All Findings)
Solano County District Attorney (All Findings)
Solano County Health and Social Services Department (Finding 9)
Solano County Family Justice Center (All Findings)

COURTESY COPY

Solano County Administrator

Appendix A

Glossary

Catholic Charities of Yolo/Solano (CCS) – Provides victims of domestic violence with U-Visas (visas for immigrant victims of serious crimes), permanent residency applications, work permits, and extended temporary legal status. CCS provides victims of violence with free or low-cost professional counseling, family assistance services including low-cost phone services, income tax return preparation, emergency food, and self-sufficiency case management.

Child Haven – Child Haven provides a continuum of mental health services for infants, adolescents, teens, and families using research and evidence-based therapeutic modalities.

Courage Center 2 – Provides a safe child-friendly place for suspected victims of child abuse. The center conducts forensic examinations and gives interview support by a multi-disciplinary team of professionals that include forensic interpreters, law enforcement and medical practitioners trained to work with vulnerable children.

DA Victim Witness – The Victim/Witness Assistance Program strives to reduce the trauma of a crime by empowering and assisting crime victims, witnesses, and significant others in reconstructing their lives through advocacy, support, information, and referrals.

District Attorney Bureau of Investigations Investigator – The DA Investigator is assigned to the Solano Family Justice Center to provide investigative support to the Office of Family Violence Prevention and other on-site partners.

EBS – Health and Social Services Employee Benefits Specialist – EBS assists clients with determining eligibility for public benefits. These benefits include medical insurance, food stamps, and cash aid.

Health and Social Services HELP Bureau – HELP works with clients who are on CalWORKS and Welfare to Work eligible. The social workers help clients address barriers that are keeping them from being able to successfully work their welfare-to-work case.

Ombudsman Services of Contra Costa and Solano – Advocacy services for residents of long-term care in Contra Costa and Solano County to address issues or situations that negatively impact the health, safety, and dignity of the residents and to help create a swift and immediate solution to problems whenever possible.

Safe at Home – Safe at Home is a confidential address program administered by the California Secretary of State's office and is most effective when used as a part of an overall safety plan. Safe at Home offers victims of domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault, human trafficking & elder and dependent abuse, as well as reproductive health care workers, a substitute mailing address to receive first class, certified, and registered mail. This address is also accepted by California state, county, and city government agencies in lieu of a

residential or other mailing address where a victim can be tracked down, keeping the residence address confidential and out of the hands of someone who might want to harm the victim.

SafeQuest Solano – Provides advocacy services, safety, and support to all of those who are affected by domestic violence, sexual assault, and elder abuse.

All services are confidential and offered in English and Spanish. Language services for the deaf are available.

SAJE – Solano Alliance for Justice and Empowerment - non-profit foundation established to assist the SFJC with fundraising to increase services for victims of violence.

Solano Advocates for Victims of Violence (SAVV) – Provides advocacy and follow-up services for assigned clients. This includes providing crisis intervention and resource/referral services in person or by phone and email to individuals seeking shelter, legal assistance, counseling, or other various support required by victims of violence.

Trauma Recovery Center (TRC) – Provides supportive services to victims of crime including case management, assistance with the California Victim’s Compensation Board application, and referrals for advocacy, mental health or legal assistance, and housing services.