



LOS ANGELES COUNTY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COUNCIL (DVC)

GENERAL MEETING NOTES

Tuesday, January 16th, 2024; 12pm to 2pm (Pacific Time)

Los Angeles County – Department of Mental Health

DVC MISSION

The Los Angeles County Domestic Violence Council (DVC) provides leadership in the creation and support of a victim/ survivor-centered, countywide, and coordinated approach to educate, prevent, and respond to domestic/ intimate partner violence.

DVC Chair

Lan Pham, DVC Executive Director

DVC Staff:

Cindy Hernandez, DVC Admin. Assistant

Meeting Attendees: The meeting was attended by 80 community members; including 50 attendees who participated remotely and 30 joined the meeting in person.

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Lan Pham welcomed attendees and acknowledged that January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month. She provided an overview of the agenda and introduced presenters.

II. LOS ANGELES HOMELESS SERVICE AUTHORITY ADDRESSING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Sarah Whitman, Domestic Violence Systems Coordinator of the Los Angeles Homeless Service Authority (LAHSA) provided an overview of LAHSA’s work to address human trafficking, namely her organization’s work in facilitating the “Supporting Human Trafficking Survivors” Network. This network comprises of The Sidewalk Project, Dept. of Public Health – Office of Women’s Health, LAHSA, Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Human Trafficking (CAST), City of Los Angeles – Community Investment for Families Department, and Sunita Jain Anti-Trafficking Initiative at Loyola Law School.

She shared that the group’s purpose is to hold space for difficult conversations and conflicting viewpoints that is inclusive and empowers consensual sex worker lived experience advocates, and to promote a voluntary service model that is not dependent on law enforcement, criminalization, or behavioral modification. Further, the group supports survivors who are LGBTQIA+, BIPOC, undocumented, non-English speakers, disabled, and those dealing with mental health and/or substance use issues. The group works to support policy advocacy that reflects community centered, public health approach because gender-based violence is a public health issue.

III. THE SIDEWALK PROJECT – STREET ENGAGEMENT

Jen Elizabeth, Director of Street Engagement with The Sidewalk Project provided an overview of the work of the agency and shared her background, expertise, and lived experience related to human trafficking. Jen is a harm reductionist and leads the Specialized Women’s Program at The Sidewalk Project. Jen’s focus is on supporting sex workers living and working near Skid Row. Jen is a former sex worker and sexual abuse survivor. Jen is also a trauma coach and author writing about recovery and de-stigmatization of sex work. The Sidewalk Project is an arts and harm reduction organization that creates wellness for those that live outdoors. Through various mediums (i.e., art, music, film, and public health) the group aims to be socially active to empower houseless communities.

Jenn shared her story as an advocate and a survivor and spoke of the difference between human trafficking and sex work. The need to understand the difference between exploitation and individuals’ freedom of choice. She shared the importance of a client-centered approach to supportive services and healing, and the importance of harm reduction.

IV. PRESENTATION: COUNTYWIDE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND HOMELESSNESS COORDINATION

Anabel Martinez is Senior Policy Counsel with Sunita Jain Anti-Trafficking Initiative with Loyola Social Justice Law Clinic. Anabel provided an overview of her agency and spoke to the specific needs and gaps for human trafficking survivors who are LGBTQIA+. (See January 2024 DVC General Meeting PPT Slides.)

V. UPDATE: DVC’S SHELTER/HOUSING COMMITTEE

Marilyn Figueroa, Staff Attorney with Central American Resource Center (CARECEN) provide immigration updates on behalf of LA VAWA Network.

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

Stephanie Whack, DV Alliance Co-Chair and Domestic Violence Program Coordinator DV Systems Alignment with LA Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) announced that there will be a memorial for Carol Tantau on February 8th from 11am-1pm at LA City Hall. Carol is a long-time domestic violence advocate and leader in the field. Her work has resulted in systems improvement and important changes in programming in the LA County.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lan Pham shared that there will not be a Special General DVC meeting for the month of February 2024. The next DVC General Membership meeting will be Wednesday, February 14th at Almansor Court.

Meeting adjourned at 2pm.