



Buncombe County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team

Summary

A Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team (DVFRT) is a multi-disciplinary team that includes a broad cross section of community representatives who meet quarterly to review domestic violence homicides that have occurred within the County and identify systems issues that can be addressed to prevent future domestic violence homicides. The duties of a DVFRT include issuing reports to the Board of County Commissioners, the North Carolina Domestic Violence Commission, and the Governor's Crime Commission summarizing findings and activities and making recommendations for action. Domestic Violence Fatality Review Teams are defined by the NC General Assembly in Session Laws [2009-52](#) and [2013-70](#).

Background

Through our Coordinated Community Response to Domestic and Sexual Violence, partners have been working together to address domestic violence by improving our response to high-risk cases, streamlining access to survivor services and holding offenders accountable. The leadership of this collaboration includes law enforcement, advocacy organizations, court partners, health care providers and survivors with lived experience.

In January 2017, the Buncombe County Family Justice Center and Coordinated Community Response Leadership Teams requested introduction of a Session Law that would add Buncombe County to the list of counties (Mecklenburg, Pitt, Wake, and Alamance) designated by the North Carolina General Assembly as a DVFRT County. In April 2017, [House Bill 217](#), which would add Buncombe County as a designated DVFRT county, passed the North Carolina House.

In June 2018 [Senate Bill 808](#) was introduced in the Senate. The Buncombe County Board of Commissioners passed a Resolution Supporting the Creation of a DVFRT on June 19th. On June 28th [Session Law 2018-116](#) was signed into law, establishing Buncombe as a designated DVFRT county.

Lead Agency

Per session law, the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners designates the Lead Agency for the DVFRT. The Lead Agency serves as the convener and facilitator of DVFRT Meetings. Buncombe County currently staffs the position of Family Justice Center Coordinator, serving as a convener and facilitator for multi-disciplinary communication and implementation of programs to address domestic and sexual violence.

Team Membership

Team members are appointed by a range of community institutions and officials as outlined by session law. The Buncombe County Board of Commissioners has the authority to appoint up to three members on the team. These include “a representative of an institution of higher education” and “not more than two additional representatives from the community who have knowledge, experience, or expertise in preventing domestic violence.” No person who has been convicted of a domestic violence-related crime or who has been a participant in a batterer intervention program shall be a member of the Review Team.

Staff Recommendations

1. **Vote to approve Buncombe County Government to serve as Lead Agency.**
2. **Vote to approve the following team members.**
 - A representative of an institution of higher learning:

Dr. Jill Moffitt, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Title IX Coordinator, UNC Asheville

Jill serves as the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and the Title IX Administrator for the University of North Carolina Asheville. In her role she oversees the safety and well-being of students engaging in co-curricular activities across a number of different platforms and directly supports students affected by sexual and domestic violence. She has been in Higher Education for 18 years working with students experiencing various amounts of crisis, trauma, and mental health concerns. She has worked exclusively with issues related to sexual violence, sexual harassment, IPV, and sexual assault for the last six years at UNC Asheville. Jill has presented on the topic of protecting all students (focusing attention on serving the trans community specifically) at Association of Title IX Administrators (ATIXA), National Association for Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), and North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCCDV). Jill has lived in Buncombe county for 10 years.

- Two additional representatives from the community who have knowledge, experience, or expertise in preventing domestic violence:

Julia Horrocks, Managing Attorney, Pisgah Legal Services Julia is a Managing Attorney at Pisgah Legal Services where she manages the domestic violence team of attorneys. Pisgah Legal Services provides free civil legal representation and advice to low-income people in western North Carolina who seek assistance with meeting their most basic needs, including but not limited to safety from abuse, housing, and access to healthcare. For seven years, Julia has practiced poverty law with a focus in family law for domestic violence survivors in North Carolina and in Pennsylvania. Julia was staffed at the Buncombe County Family Justice Center during its first two years, and she continues to collaborate with FJC partner agencies both in a leadership role and in providing direct civil legal representation for domestic violence survivors.

Jackie Latek, Executive Director, The SPARC Foundation Jackie is one of the founders and current Executive Director of The SPARC Foundation whose mission is to keep people out of institutional care through community based programming. SPARC operates Buncombe County's Batterer Intervention Program which provides group-based and individual support and accountability to clients who use power, coercion and control with their intimate partners. Clients are referred by the courts, the Department of Social Services, Probation/Parole, as well as self-referred. As a member of Buncombe County's Coordinated Community Response Leadership team, SPARC plays a specific role in reducing domestic violence in our community through offender services. The SPARC Foundation also coordinates Buncombe County's Focused Deterrence protocol. Focused Deterrence is an evidence based strategy in crime reduction. In Buncombe County, this strategy focuses on reducing domestic violence and violent crime.