

**PART XIII  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

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**39.901 Domestic violence cases; treatment and rehabilitation of victims and perpetrators; legislative intent.**--The Legislature recognizes that certain persons who assault, batter, or otherwise abuse their spouses and the persons subject to such domestic violence are in need of treatment and rehabilitation. It is the intent of the Legislature to assist in the development of domestic violence centers for the victims of domestic violence and to provide a place where the parties involved may be separated until they can be properly assisted.

**History.**--s. 1, ch. 78-281; s. 1, ch. 84-343; s. 113, ch. 98-403.

**Note.**--Former s. 409.601; s. 415.601.

**39.902 Definitions.**--As used in this part, the term:

(1) "Domestic violence" has the meaning set forth in s. 741.28.

(2) "Domestic violence center" means an agency that provides services to victims of domestic violence, as its primary mission.

(3) "Family or household member" has the meaning set forth in s. 741.28

**History.**--s. 2, ch. 78-281; s. 2, ch. 79-402; s. 1, ch. 82-135; s. 71, ch. 83-218; s. 1, ch. 84-128; s. 2, ch. 84-343; s. 17, ch. 92-58; s. 19, ch. 93-200; s. 30, ch. 94-134; s. 30, ch. 94-135; s. 137, ch. 97-101; s. 114, ch. 98-403; s. 3, ch. 2002-55.

**Note.**--Former s. 409.602; s. 415.602.

**39.903 Duties and functions of the department with respect to domestic violence.**--

(1) The department shall:

(a) Develop by rule criteria for the approval or rejection of certification or funding of domestic violence centers.

(b) Develop by rule minimum standards for domestic violence centers to ensure the health and safety of the clients in the centers.

(c) Receive and approve or reject applications for certification of domestic violence centers. If any of the required services are exempted from certification by the department under s. 39.905(1)(c), the center shall not receive funding for those services.

(d) Evaluate each certified domestic violence center annually to ensure compliance with the minimum standards. The department has the right to enter and inspect the premises of certified domestic violence centers at any reasonable hour in order to effectively evaluate the state of compliance of these centers with this part and rules relating to this part.

(e) Adopt rules to implement this part.

(f) Promote the involvement of certified domestic violence centers in the coordination, development, and planning of domestic violence programming in the districts and the state.

(2) The department shall serve as a clearinghouse for information relating to domestic violence.

(3) The department shall operate the domestic violence program, which provides supervision, direction, coordination, and administration of statewide activities related to the prevention of domestic violence.

(4) The department shall enlist the assistance of public and voluntary health, education, welfare, and rehabilitation agencies in a concerted effort to prevent domestic violence and to treat persons engaged in or subject to domestic violence. With the assistance of these agencies, the department, within existing resources, shall formulate and conduct a research and evaluation program on domestic violence. Efforts on the part of these agencies to obtain relevant grants to fund this research and evaluation program must be supported by the department.

(5) The department shall develop and provide educational programs on domestic violence for the benefit of the general public, persons engaged in or subject to domestic violence, professional persons, or others who care for or may be engaged in the care and treatment of persons engaged in or subject to domestic violence.

(6) The department shall cooperate with, assist in, and participate in, programs of other properly qualified agencies, including any agency of the Federal Government, schools of medicine, hospitals, and clinics, in planning and conducting research on the prevention, care, treatment, and rehabilitation of persons engaged in or subject to domestic violence.

(7) The department shall contract with a statewide association whose primary purpose is to represent and provide technical assistance to certified domestic violence centers. This association shall implement, administer, and evaluate all services provided by the certified domestic violence centers. The association shall receive and approve or reject applications for funding of certified domestic violence centers. When approving funding for a newly certified domestic violence center, the association shall make every effort to minimize any adverse economic impact on existing certified domestic violence centers or services provided within the same service area. In order to minimize duplication of services, the association shall make every effort to encourage subcontracting relationships with existing certified domestic violence centers within the same service area. In distributing funds allocated by the Legislature for certified domestic violence centers, the association shall use a formula approved by the department as specified in s. 39.905(7)(a).

**History.**--s. 3, ch. 78-281; s. 3, ch. 79-402; ss. 2, 3, ch. 84-128; ss. 3, 5, ch. 84-343; s. 31, ch. 94-134; s. 31, ch. 94-135; s. 2, ch. 95-187; s. 55, ch. 96-418; s. 115, ch. 98-403; s. 4, ch. 2002-55; s. 1, ch. 2003-11.

**Note.**--Former s. 409.603; s. 415.603.

**39.904 Report to the Legislature on the status of domestic violence cases.**--On or before January 1 of each year, the department shall furnish to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives a report on the status of domestic violence in this state, which report shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

(1) The incidence of domestic violence in this state.

- (2) An identification of the areas of the state where domestic violence is of significant proportions, indicating the number of cases of domestic violence officially reported, as well as an assessment of the degree of unreported cases of domestic violence.
- (3) An identification and description of the types of programs in the state that assist victims of domestic violence or persons who commit domestic violence, including information on funding for the programs.
- (4) The number of persons who are treated by or assisted by local domestic violence programs that receive funding through the department.
- (5) A statement on the effectiveness of such programs in preventing future domestic violence.
- (6) An inventory and evaluation of existing prevention programs.
- (7) A listing of potential prevention efforts identified by the department; the estimated annual cost of providing such prevention services, both for a single client and for the anticipated target population as a whole; an identification of potential sources of funding; and the projected benefits of providing such services.

**History.**--s. 4, ch. 84-343; s. 138, ch. 97-101; s. 116, ch. 98-403.

**Note.**--Former s. 415.604.

### **39.905 Domestic violence centers.--**

(1) Domestic violence centers certified under this part must:

- (a) Provide a facility which will serve as a center to receive and house persons who are victims of domestic violence. For the purpose of this part, minor children and other dependents of a victim, when such dependents are partly or wholly dependent on the victim for support or services, may be sheltered with the victim in a domestic violence center.
- (b) Receive the annual written endorsement of local law enforcement agencies.
- (c) Provide minimum services which include, but are not limited to, information and referral services, counseling and case management services, temporary emergency shelter for more than 24 hours, a 24-hour hotline, training for law enforcement personnel, assessment and appropriate referral of resident children, and educational services for community awareness relative to the incidence of domestic violence, the prevention of such violence, and the care, treatment, and rehabilitation for persons engaged in or subject to domestic violence. If a 24-hour hotline, professional training, or community education is already provided by a certified domestic violence center within a district, the department may exempt such certification requirements for a new center serving the same district in order to avoid duplication of services.
- (d) Participate in the provision of orientation and training programs developed for law enforcement officers, social workers, and other professionals and paraprofessionals who work with domestic violence victims to better enable such persons to deal effectively with incidents of domestic violence.
- (e) Establish and maintain a board of directors composed of at least three citizens, one of whom must be a member of a local, municipal, or county law enforcement agency.
- (f) Comply with rules adopted pursuant to this part.
- (g) File with the department a list of the names of the domestic violence advocates who are employed or who volunteer at the domestic violence center who may claim a privilege under s. 90.5036 to refuse to disclose a confidential communication between a victim of domestic violence and the advocate regarding the domestic violence inflicted upon the victim. The list must include the title of the position held by the advocate whose name is listed and a description of the duties of that position. A domestic violence center must file amendments to this list as necessary.

(h) Demonstrate local need and ability to sustain operations through a history of 18 consecutive months' operation as a domestic violence center, including 12 months' operation of an emergency shelter as provided in paragraph (c), and a business plan which addresses future operations and funding of future operations.

(i) If its center is a new center applying for certification, demonstrate that the services provided address a need identified in the most current statewide needs assessment approved by the department.

(2) If the department finds that there is failure by a center to comply with the requirements established under this part or with the rules adopted pursuant thereto, the department may deny, suspend, or revoke the certification of the center.

(3) The annual certificate shall automatically expire on the termination date shown on the certificate.

(4) The domestic violence centers shall establish procedures pursuant to which persons subject to domestic violence may seek services from these centers voluntarily.

(5) Domestic violence centers may be established throughout the state when private, local, state, or federal funds are available.

(6) In order to receive state funds, a center must:

(a) Obtain certification pursuant to this part. However, the issuance of a certificate will not obligate the department to provide funding.

(b) Receive at least 25 percent of its funding from one or more local, municipal, or county sources, public or private. Contributions in kind, whether materials, commodities, transportation, office space, other types of facilities, or personal services, may be evaluated and counted as part of the required local funding.

(7)(a) All funds collected and appropriated to the domestic violence program for certified domestic violence centers shall be distributed annually according to an allocation formula approved by the department. In developing the formula, the factors of population, rural characteristics, geographical area, and the incidence of domestic violence shall be considered.

(b) A contract between the statewide association and a certified domestic violence center shall contain provisions assuring the availability and geographic accessibility of services throughout the district. For this purpose, a center may distribute funds through subcontracts or to center satellites, provided such arrangements and any subcontracts are approved by the statewide association.

**History.**--s. 5, ch. 78-281; s. 4, ch. 79-402; s. 2, ch. 82-135; s. 4, ch. 82-192; s. 3, ch. 84-128; s. 5, ch. 84-343; s. 32, ch. 94-134; s. 32, ch. 94-135; ss. 3, 8, ch. 95-187; s. 117, ch. 98-403; s. 2, ch. 2003-11.

**Note.**--Former s. 409.605; s. 415.605.

**39.9055 Certified domestic violence centers; capital improvement grant program.**--There is established a certified domestic violence center capital improvement grant program.

(1) A certified domestic violence center as defined in s. 39.905 may apply to the Department of Children and Family Services for a capital improvement grant. The grant application must provide information that includes:

(a) A statement specifying the capital improvement that the certified domestic violence center proposes to make with the grant funds.

(b) The proposed strategy for making the capital improvement.

(c) The organizational structure that will carry out the capital improvement.

- (d) Evidence that the certified domestic violence center has difficulty in obtaining funding or that funds available for the proposed improvement are inadequate.
  - (e) Evidence that the funds will assist in meeting the needs of victims of domestic violence and their children in the certified domestic violence center service area.
  - (f) Evidence of a satisfactory recordkeeping system to account for fund expenditures.
  - (g) Evidence of ability to generate local match.
- (2) Certified domestic violence centers as defined in s. 39.905 may receive funding subject to legislative appropriation, upon application to the Department of Children and Family Services, for projects to construct, acquire, repair, improve, or upgrade systems, facilities, or equipment, subject to availability of funds. An award of funds under this section must be made in accordance with a needs assessment developed by the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Department of Children and Family Services. The department annually shall perform this needs assessment and shall rank in order of need those centers that are requesting funds for capital improvement.
- (3) The Department of Children and Family Services shall, in collaboration with the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence, establish criteria for awarding the capital improvement funds that must be used exclusively for support and assistance with the capital improvement needs of the certified domestic violence centers, as defined in s. 39.905.
- (4) The Department of Children and Family Services shall ensure that the funds awarded under this section are used solely for the purposes specified in this section. The department will also ensure that the grant process maintains the confidentiality of the location of the certified domestic violence centers, pursuant to s. 39.908. The total amount of grant moneys awarded under this section may not exceed the amount appropriated for this program.

**History.**--s. 2, ch. 2000-220.

**39.906 Referral to centers and notice of rights.**--Any law enforcement officer who investigates an alleged incident of domestic violence shall advise the victim of such violence that there is a domestic violence center from which the victim may receive services. The law enforcement officer shall give the victim immediate notice of the legal rights and remedies available in accordance with the provisions of s. 741.29.

**History.**--s. 7, ch. 78-281; s. 6, ch. 79-402; s. 6, ch. 84-343; s. 28, ch. 94-134; s. 28, ch. 94-135; s. 118, ch. 98-403.

**Note.**--Former s. 409.607; s. 415.606.

**39.908 Confidentiality of information received by department or domestic violence center.**--

- (1) Information about clients received by the department or by authorized persons employed by or volunteering services to a domestic violence center, through files, reports, inspection, or otherwise, is confidential and exempt from the provisions of s. 119.07(1). Information about the location of domestic violence centers and facilities is confidential and exempt from the provisions of s. 119.07(1).
- (2) Information about domestic violence center clients may not be disclosed without the written consent of the client to whom the information or records pertain. For the purpose of state law regarding searches and seizures, domestic violence centers shall be treated as private dwelling places. Information about a client or the location of a domestic violence center may be given by center staff or volunteers to law enforcement, firefighting, medical, or other personnel in the following circumstances:
  - (a) To medical personnel in a medical emergency.

(b) Upon a court order based upon an application by a law enforcement officer for a criminal arrest warrant which alleges that the individual sought to be arrested is located at the domestic violence shelter.

(c) Upon a search warrant that specifies the individual or object of the search and alleges that the individual or object is located at the shelter.

(d) To firefighting personnel in a fire emergency.

(e) To any other person necessary to maintain the safety and health standards in the domestic violence shelter.

(f) Information solely about the location of the domestic violence shelter may be given to those with whom the agency has an established business relationship.

(3) The restriction on the disclosure or use of the information about domestic violence center clients does not apply to:

(a) Communications from domestic violence shelter staff or volunteers to law enforcement officers when the information is directly related to a client's commission of a crime or threat to commit a crime on the premises of a domestic violence shelter; or

(b) Reporting suspected abuse of a child or a vulnerable adult as required by law. However, when cooperating with protective investigation services staff, the domestic violence shelter staff and volunteers must protect the confidentiality of other clients at the domestic violence center.

**History.**--s. 6, ch. 78-281; s. 5, ch. 79-402; s. 7, ch. 84-343; s. 22, ch. 91-71; s. 33, ch. 94-134; s. 33, ch. 94-135; s. 277, ch. 96-406; s. 119, ch. 98-403.

**Note.**--Former s. 409.606; s. 415.608.