

2019
Annual Report and Interim Amendment
To The
Domestic Violence Plan

Domestic Violence Oversight Board

Table of Contents

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
i. Executive Summary	3
ii. Domestic Violence Oversight Board Members	4
A. Introduction	5
B. Assets and Resources	5
1. Crisis Response	5
2. Transitional Housing	6
3. One Stop Family Justice Center	6
C. Domestic Violence Plan Amendments	7
1. Amendment 1- Preservation of Domestic Violence Tax Proceeds	7
2. Amendment 2- Expansion of Food & Beverage Tax to Beach Municipalities	8
D. Recommendations and Priorities	9
Recommendation 1- Comprehensive Analysis - Intimate Partner Violence	9
Recommendation 2- DVOB Administrative Support and Location	10
Recommendation 3- Expedite Procurement and Construction of Third Domestic Violence Shelter	10
E. Responses to January 2018 Office of Management and Budget Study	11
1. System Wide Performance Outcomes	11
2. Dual Board Membership and County Employees	11
3. Domestic Violence Oversight Board Administrative Structure	12
F. Summary Closing & Next Steps	12
A Coordinated Community Response	12
Protecting and Expanding the Food& Beverage Tax	13
Intimate Partner Violence and Homelessness	13
Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence	14
Development of Domestic Violence Oversight Board Website	14
G. Appendix A -Accomplishments	
H. Appendix B - DVOB Information & Overview of Intimate Partner Violence	

i. Executive Summary

In 1993, the Florida Legislature enacted Chapter 93-233, Laws of Florida, now codified at Florida Statutes, Section 212.0306 (State Statute), which authorized counties to levy a food and beverage tax (Food & Beverage Tax) to fund homeless shelters and associated services, reserving 15% of the proceeds of the Food & Beverage Tax for the construction and operation of domestic violence centers (Food & Beverage Tax for DV). In 1994, the State Statute was amended to require that each county electing to levy the Food & Beverage Tax appoint an Oversight Board to prepare and submit to the governing body of the county for its approval a plan for disbursing the funds made available for the construction and operation of the domestic violence shelters. Also in 1994, the Miami-Dade County (County) Board of County Commissioners (BCC) adopted Ordinance Number 94-156, now codified as Section 2-891 through 2-895, which authorized the imposition of the Food & Beverage Tax for DV and created the Domestic Violence Oversight Board (DVOB). The BCC chose to bestow upon the DVOB powers and duties beyond those required by the State Statute to provide for a broader advisory power of the DVOB to the BCC on all matters related to domestic violence.

Among its powers and duties, the DVOB shall submit to the BCC a comprehensive plan, budget, and specific recommendations for use of the Food & Beverage Tax for DV. The plan shall be specific and shall be reviewed annually by the DVOB, which shall recommend any needed amendments, deletions or modifications. The BCC shall only have the power to amend the plan by an affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) majority.

To date, the portion of the Food & Beverage Tax reserved for construction and operation of domestic violence centers has produced over \$40 million. These funds allowed for construction and operation of the first Food & Beverage Tax-funded domestic violence shelter (The Lodge) in 2004. Currently, funds are available for development of an additional facility and the procurement to provide for such shelter is ongoing. Additionally, the contract for operation of the new shelter has been competitively procured.

In compliance with its obligations under the State Statute and County ordinance, the DVOB respectfully presents this 2019 Annual Report and Interim Amendment to the Domestic Violence Plan. The report contains amendments to the 2010 Domestic Violence Plan, approved in Resolution No. R-751-10, as well as additional recommendations for improvement of our system of delivery of services to victims of domestic violence and their children.

Per the statutory mandate, the DVOB's highest priority is to preserve the Food & Beverage Tax for DV proceeds for their intended purpose and provide a plan and recommendations for use of such proceeds. In furtherance thereof, the report contains two plan amendments intended to both preserve the existing revenue stream, as well as enhance it.

Additionally, the report contains several recommendations, including the commission of a comprehensive study to provide the necessary data for more informed recommendations and decisions for allocation of resources, creating a user-friendly website that individuals

with limited computer proficiency can easily access, and a recommendation to expedite the procurement process for development of the new facility.

Finally, in early 2018, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) conducted a study of domestic violence issues in Miami-Dade County titled “A Review of Miami-Dade County’s Domestic Violence Programs” (OMB Study). This report also contains responses to several of the recommendations of the OMB Study.

On behalf of the members of the DVOB, we thank the BCC for the opportunity to serve those in need in our community and look forward to changes to and enhancement of the funding sources that will allow the County to provide much-needed services to those who are now turned away because of resource and capacity constraints.

ii. 2019 Domestic Violence Oversight Board Members

Miguel A. De Grandy Esq., Chair (Vice Chairwoman, Rebeca Sosa)

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A. Introduction

In June 2010, the DVOB submitted its most recent update to the Domestic Violence Plan (the Plan) to the BCC, which adopted it in Resolution No. R-751-10. This 2019 Annual Report and Interim Amendment to the Domestic Violence Plan provides a summary of existing resources for those fleeing Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in our community, and plan amendments that protect and augment the proceeds of the Food & Beverage Tax for DV. It also provides administrative and policy recommendations adopted unanimously by the DVOB. The DVOB used available data to guide its recommendations, but recognizes it is constrained in that data to be able to make informed decisions and recommendations to the BCC.

As such, the DVOB is recommending the BCC approve and fund a comprehensive analysis of the state of IPV in Miami-Dade County whose scope encompasses an in depth view of the various systems that interface with it. The study should include the identification of data elements and metrics to guide and better inform funding and policy decisions, as well as determine the effectiveness of a coordinated community response to IPV in our local community. Finally, Appendix A highlights accomplishments in FY 2017-18, and Appendix B provides an overview of facts on the DVOB and IPV. The Plan and its recommendations are presented for approval by the BCC in order to proceed at greater speed with the construction of a third Food & Beverage Tax-funded domestic violence center; related programs and initiatives, and more importantly, the DVOB's efforts to protect and expand funding for domestic violence centers in Miami-Dade County and guide the comprehensive study of IPV in our community.

B. Assets and Resources - Domestic Violence Services in Miami-Dade County

1. The Crisis Response - Domestic Violence Centers

Miami-Dade County currently has a total of two state certified and funded domestic violence emergency shelters (centers) providing comprehensive services to those fleeing IPV. The first center constructed with Food & Beverage Tax for DV, "The Lodge", opened its doors in 2004 and is operated by Victim Response, Inc., a community-based nonprofit organization. The other certified center is Safespace North, which is operated by Community Action and Human Services Department (CAHSD) and has a satellite location (Safespace South) in South Miami-Dade County.

There are a total of eight services required of all certified domestic violence centers. Services are provided from the perspective of trauma informed care and the framework of the Empowerment Model, which is an evidence-based service delivery that emphasizes participant choice and independence. Center services expand beyond shelter and include community education, professional training, outreach, a 24 hour hotline service, safety planning, therapy, counseling, case management, referrals to mainstream resources such as Food Stamps, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), and social security benefits. Services also encompass legal services to address injunctions, protective orders, and immigration issues, as well as job training, housing relocation assistance, self-sufficiency and financial literacy training.

Children comprise over 50% of the bed nights at the centers, and as a result, all centers have programming for children that include counseling, recreational activities, day care, tutoring, clothing and baby supplies. The Lodge has a summer camp (Purple Moose) where current and former program participants attend. Primary prevention services are also offered at the elementary and middle school levels through the centers' outreach component.

Miami-Dade County's capacity for crisis response housing through these certified domestic violence centers totals 163 beds and 18 cribs. A new center, scheduled to begin construction in December 2019, will add 60 beds to the inventory and increase the total capacity of emergency domestic violence beds to 223. The construction and operations of this new center is funded by the Food & Beverage Tax for DV proceeds. Victim Response, Inc. was the successful applicant in the competitive bid process to procure the operator of the new center.

All centers are funded and certified by the Department of Children and Families (DCF), through the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (FCADV), which monitors the compliance of and sets policy for all certified domestic violence centers in the State of Florida. The centers leverage other funding sources, such as funds from the Office of Violence Against Women. The CAHSD-operated centers are supported by County general revenue funds, and both receive federal funding to support their respective operations.

2. Transitional Housing: A Sanctuary and Time for Healing and Recovery

Transitional Housing programs support victims of IPV who require more time to heal from the trauma experienced, and helps prepare them and their children for independent living. This model of medium term housing and services (up to 24 months) is offered by way of rental subsidies in affordable, market rate housing in cluster type setting, or in one facility where housing and support services are provided either on or off site, tailored to the needs of each family. Miami-Dade County, through CASHD, has two cluster-type facilities: one in North Dade that offers 64 beds and four cribs (up to 75 beds are available), and a second facility in South Dade that has 55 units and accommodates 252 beds.

In addition, both The Lodge and CAHSD offer rental assistance to eligible households. This is known as "Rapid Rehousing". In this program model eligible applicants must find affordable rents that meet basic housing quality standards. Rapid Rehousing is a resource for housing and services for individuals experiencing homelessness and is considered permanent housing. The program provides eligible households with rental subsidies for up to two years and supportive services tailored to the needs of the household.

3. A One Stop Family Justice Center: Coordinated Victims Assistance Center

In 2008, Miami-Dade County was one of the first communities nationwide to create a Family Justice Center. The Coordinated Victims Assistance Center, through CAHSD, provides a one-stop service center where those fleeing from domestic violence are able to access and receive over 38 services that include an array of legal services related to immigration, protective orders, injunctions, as well as group and individual therapy and counseling provided through the department's partners.

C. **Amendments to the Miami-Dade County Domestic Violence Plan.**

Amendment 1: *All funds derived from the Food & Beverage Tax for Domestic Violence shall be used exclusively to finance, develop and operate domestic violence emergency shelters. The County should take all necessary and prudent steps to oppose any changes to Florida Statutes, Section 212.0306 which would result in authorizing use of the Food & Beverage Tax for Domestic Violence proceeds for any other purpose than for construction and operation of domestic violence emergency shelters.*

Background: The DVOB is grateful to the BCC for rescinding Resolution Number R-724-16, which urged the Florida Legislature to enact legislation that would allow Food & Beverage Tax Proceeds for DV to be used to fund existing domestic violence centers, not only those centers constructed and operated with the tax proceeds. The State Statute, in its current form, serves the County and its residents well by maintaining the integrity of a dedicated and steady funding stream for the construction and operations of new domestic violence centers.

Given current capacity, allowing greater flexibility in the use of Food & Beverage Tax Proceeds for DV for alternative uses, albeit related to domestic violence services, would be a disservice to those seeking safety. Current available data from existing domestic violence centers reflects the community's demand exceeds the capacity for safe shelters, and thus, more domestic violence shelters are needed as a critical and necessary component of protecting and serving survivors of domestic violence.

A new shelter (the second center built with Food & Beverage Tax Proceeds for DV proceeds) to be completed in May 2020 will add 60 beds, making the total countywide capacity for crisis response of 223 beds and 18 cribs. Once completed, this new domestic violence shelter is expected to also be operating at full capacity. Based on the current growth rate of the Food & Beverage Tax Proceeds for DV, it is expected there not be sufficient funds for a third shelter built with Food & Beverage Tax Proceeds for DV until 2035.

In January 2018, OMB provided a study and recommendations to the DVOB. Some of those recommendations have been favorably received. However, after much consideration and review of the valuable information received through the OMB Study, which includes projected revenue and expenditures, the DVOB finds that OMB's recommendation to divert up to \$750,000 in Food & Beverage Tax Proceeds for DV to be used with flexibility for other domestic violence programming would delay the construction of a third Food & Beverage Tax-funded shelter by five years (2040). This is unacceptable when lives are at stake. Thus, the DVOB respectfully rejects the recommendation.

Knowing the existing demand for emergency shelter, the DVOB unanimously agrees on the importance of preserving the integrity of the funding for the construction and operations of new domestic violence centers. It is the DVOB's position that this important and sole dedicated funding source for the construction and operations of new domestic violence

centers not be diverted for any purposes other than its intended use. Thus, after due consideration, the DVOB unanimously voted to include this Plan Amendment #1 into the County's Domestic Violence Plan.

Amendment 2: *Increasing Funding through Food & Beverage Tax Expansion- The BCC should include in the County's 2019 legislative priorities that the Florida Legislature and the Miami-Dade Legislative Delegation work to amend and expand the local option Food and Beverage Tax to include the municipalities of Bal Harbour, Surfside and Miami Beach, and authorize the DVOB to lobby such municipalities to support the County's legislative efforts to expand the local option Food & Beverage Tax to include food and beverage sales in each of these municipalities.*

Background: When the State Statute was enacted, there was a compromise made wherein sales in cities or towns presently imposing a municipal resort tax as authorized by chapter 67-930, Laws of Florida, were exempted from the imposition of the Food & Beverage Tax. This exemption applies to the municipalities of Bal Harbour, Surfside and Miami Beach (Beach Municipalities). Five of six of the major County-wide homeless shelters and one of the two domestic violence shelters are located within the City of Miami proper. The Beach Municipalities have no such resources within their municipalities. Victims and individuals experiencing homelessness are driven to where safe shelter and services are offered and where affordable housing is more readily available. Miami- Dade County's domestic violence centers and homeless shelters serve residents in need countywide, including residents of these Beach Municipalities.

According to data from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), from 2013 and 2017 there were 2,143 domestic violence-related offenses, and according to the Miami-Dade County Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) database, 1,698 domestic violence related arrests, combined, in the Beach Municipalities. Domestic Violence and Homeless shelters are fielding and turning away calls for help each year because we lack the resources to provide needed shelter; enriched supportive services, and affordable housing for those in need. Yet, there continues to be an inherent disparity in the current system for collection and expenditure of resources to address the needs of victims of violence in Miami-Dade County. City boundaries are invisible to those fleeing violence in search of safety and resources. Thus, is only fair that the Beach Municipalities also shoulder a proportionate share of the costs of providing these services.

The DVOB recognizes that one of its responsibilities is to explore ways to increase funding for domestic violence centers and services. In response to this, on July 27, 2018, the DVOB unanimously approved Resolution R-2018-1. Based on reliable estimates, according to the Miami-Dade County Tax Collector's Office, expansion of the Food & Beverage Tax to the Beach Municipalities would increase the annual tax proceeds by \$6.5 million, which represents approximately \$1 million per year in additional funds for the construction and operations of domestic violence shelters. These additional tax proceeds would allow for increased capacity in the County's crisis response to those seeking safety and services, and help accelerate the timeline for construction of a third shelter.

D. Recommendations and Priorities

Recommendation 1: Comprehensive Assessment on the State of Intimate Partner Violence. *The DVOB recommends the BCC approve and fund a comprehensive study that looks at the state of IPV in Miami-Dade County.*

Background: While the array of services in our community available to survivors of IPV has evolved significantly, the demand for services and changes in federal policy and funding requires we examine the way by which these services are accessible and helpful to victims.

In 2007, an evaluation of the centers in Miami-Dade County revealed the average length of stay in the existing centers increased threefold since 2003-04, while remaining fairly the same statewide. In 2003, the average length of stay (LOS) for participants was 33 days and almost doubled to 76 days in 2005-06. In Fiscal Year (FY) 17-18, the average LOS at The Lodge was 54 days with the longest participant staying 158 days.

In FY 2013-14, The Lodge received requests for shelter from a total of 293 women, who were turned away due to lack of capacity. In FY 2015-16, that number increased to 693. Data from 2015 also indicates an overall trend in increase of unmet requests for shelters for Safespace North and Safespace South. In FY 17-18, there were 3,404 domestic violence hotline calls to The Lodge alone which provided 16,929 shelter nights and hotel placements to 39 women, 53 children and 3 men. The Lodge's unmet shelter demand in FY 17-18 increased to 738 with 243 of these representing women, 21 men and 474 children.

In Miami-Dade County, it has become increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to find appropriate and affordable housing for victims when they are otherwise prepared to exit the centers. This is particularly critical when considering some women return to the batterer because they have no other housing options. When shelter beds are occupied, the capacity to serve those in need of safety decreases.

Lack of sufficient comprehensive services and resources effect a survivor's ability to be independent, specifically if the survivor is female. In an effort to assess, strengthen and safeguard the viability and sustainability of the current system and ensure Miami-Dade County has a coordinated community response to IPV, a comprehensive study is needed that conducts an analysis of the following range of issues:

1. Existing continuum of and demand for services (supply and demand),
2. Comparing the socioeconomic demographics in Miami-Dade County to national and like sized counties;
3. Describe and analyze service interventions and responses provided by the domestic violence system;

4. Determine this community's current ability to help abusers stop their violent behavior, while holding them accountable;
5. Identify outcomes and benefits of services and interventions;
6. Identify intersectional issues and collaborative strategies and opportunities between systems designed to enhance shelter services;
7. Identify how to maximize and leverage funding for domestic violence services, and
8. Build capacity among the current service providers with the intent to strengthen the overall system.

Recommendation 2: DVOB Administrative Support and Location. *The DVOB will assess the benefits and disadvantages of the current administrative structure to determine where its mission is best served and make any necessary future recommendations on this matter.*

Background: As pointed out in the OMB Study, the Homeless Trust supports the DVOB's activities, which closely monitors all of Miami-Dade County's domestic violence programs, including state-certified emergency shelter services provided at The Lodge. DVOB staff was transferred to the Homeless Trust as part of a reorganization in fiscal year 2009-10. The mission of the Homeless Trust is to end homelessness. It is not directly related to domestic violence services, although some domestic violence victims are homeless. Given this administrative placement of DVOB staff in the Homeless Trust, there is a possibility of conflicting interests and priorities regarding services for victims of domestic violence and homeless individuals. Prior to being placed in the Homeless Trust, the DVOB staff was part of the Office of Community Advocacy. Prior to that, it was located within in the Department of Human Services.

While, as stated in the OMB Study, the mission of the DVOB may be more closely aligned with the mission of Community Action and Human Services Department, the DVOB recognizes this could also lead to a potential prioritization of County domestic violence programming over other matters that may come before the DVOB.

Recommendation 3: Expedite the procurement and construction of the third domestic violence shelter (the second shelter to be constructed with Food & Beverage Tax proceeds).

Background: Sufficient funds were received and are available for construction of the third domestic violence shelter (the second paid for with Food & Beverage Tax proceeds) in Miami-Dade County, and a site for the shelter has been identified. On September 4, 2018, the Internal Services Department's Procurement Division issued a competitive solicitation for construction of this new facility. Current demand for IPV service and shelter resources exceeds supply. Thus, it is imperative to take all steps necessary to expedite completion of the procurement process and begin development of the facility.

One of the top tasks embarked upon by the DVOB has been the identification of a site for the construction of the new domestic violence shelter. While the DVOB is pleased with the progress achieved, the expedited design, build and completion of this Silver LEED Certified state-of-the-art center that will add 60 beds to our inventory is our highest priority.

The DVOB strongly urges the BCC to adopt a resolution directing procurement staff, through the Mayor or his designee to take all steps necessary to accelerate and complete the procurement process and award the project expeditiously, since literally, the safety and lives of vulnerable individuals and children are at stake.

E. Responses to the January 2018 Office of Management (OMB) Study

Background: The DVOB is grateful to the OMB Director and her team for presenting the results of their report, “A Review of Miami-Dade County’s Domestic Violence Programs” (OMB Study). It provided a thorough analysis with valuable information and recommendations, including the role and function of the DVOB. The following section summarizes the DVOB’s responses to the report’s specific recommendations.

1. System-Wide Performance Outcomes

Background: The OMB Study offers specific recommendations related to programming for victims of IPV as well as tracking metrics that provide information on the effectiveness of these programs. The Study also suggests regular reporting of those programs and measures to the DVOB and other stakeholders.

Response: *The DVOB agrees that housing and crisis response programming options currently in place may not be considered best practice in 2035. The DVOB is dedicated to begin gathering and analyzing existing data, and exploring best practices on an ongoing basis. The DVOB is also recommending the comprehensive study of the state of IPV in Miami-Dade County. The DVOB feels it is also important to address the accountability of batterers and determine why a survivor is re-victimized; analyzing and addressing law enforcement’s response to domestic violence, to include the number of arrests, prosecutions, no actions, and the number of batterer intervention programs that exist in our community, their impact and best practice for this population. The DVOB will begin identifying the type of indicators that speak to the impact of services and needs of survivors and victims. This includes but is not limited to system wide tracking of length of stay in shelters, the number of exits from shelter, how many exits to permanent housing, educational attainment, and employment and income growth.*

2. Dual Board Membership and County Employees Serving as Voting Board Members

Background: The OMB Study points out that the DVOB is currently comprised of two County employees with a non-direct supervisory-subordinate relationship that manage and have supervisory responsibilities over domestic violence programs. The DVOB also has board members who serve on other County boards, specifically the Homeless Trust Board.

As a result of the OMB Study, the DVOB sought advice from both the County Attorney’s Office and the Commission on Ethics on the two issues:

- i. Dual board membership and competing missions or “duality of interests”, and
- ii. County employees who provide direct services to survivors of domestic violence serving as voting members on the DVOB.

The DVOB recognizes that conflicts can be subtle and have more to do with a “duality of interests” than a financial conflict. Should there be conflicts of interest under local or state law, such as relating to funding recommendations to be made by the DVOB, DVOB members will seek appropriate legal opinions from the Commission on Ethics or County Attorney’s Office and, where inappropriate to do so, would refrain from partaking in discussion or voting on those matters.

Response: *After receiving guidance from both entities, the DVOB agrees these are policy decisions to be made by the BCC and the Mayor. The DVOB further agrees that all DVOB members must remain mindful and properly advised of state and County ethics laws, the Sunshine Law, and other laws, limitations and requirements at all times.*

3. DVOB Administrative Structure

Background: As stated in Recommendation 2 in the Recommendations and Priorities Section D, Page 10 of this report, the DVOB recognizes the importance of its independence and intersection between the Homeless system and Domestic Violence system.

Response: *The DVOB will assess the benefits and disadvantages of the current administrative structure to determine where the DVOB’s mission is best served and make any necessary future recommendations on this matter.*

F. Summary Closing & Next Steps

A Coordinated Community Response - Survivors of IPV need access to counseling, child and family therapies, attention to physical, medical, dental, and mental health, educational assistance, legal assistance, job readiness training, trauma informed child care, transportation, and a host of other supports and activities to empower them to reclaim their lives, heal, achieve greater self-sufficiency and transition to their new homes.

Domestic violence centers must be available and equipped to address the multi-faceted needs of those they serve with a full range of supports that empower them to heal and build the foundation for safer, brighter futures. Enriched therapeutic supports are essential to saving lives, stopping the cycle of abuse, and empowering women and their children to begin again.

Likewise, victims must have access to affordable permanent housing options, with readily available supportive services. In every instance, pathways to economic self-sufficiency are a priority, including educational attainment, vocational and job readiness training, licenses and certifications, and assistance with employment searches, attainment and follow up.

Much progress has been made in the areas of domestic violence prevention and intervention in this community, but available data reflects there is much work to be done. Review of 2018 IPV fatalities at the state level, which is comprised of local fatalities, identifies that 52% of decedents reported incidents of domestic violence committed by the perpetrator to law enforcement compared to 31% in 2017. This speaks stridently about the importance of collaboration among communities, respective disciplines, and stakeholders to hold perpetrators accountable and enhance the safety for survivors and their children, who make up a significant sector of those impacted.

The domestic violence system in Miami-Dade County is both comprehensive and complex. Gathering and analyzing data at the local, state and national level is key to having a well-informed DVOB that is better equipped to advise the BCC, other policymakers, and the community at large on the matter of IPV, and plan programming that is victim-centered and appropriately responsive to their needs.

Recognition of the many nuances and differing characteristics of this community is also needed in discerning policy decisions that have positive consequences and impact in addressing IPV. The DVOB recommends the BCC approve funding for a comprehensive study on the state of IPV in Miami-Dade County to help provide guidance on the system's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Protecting and Expanding the F&B DV Tax - Given the general conditions of IPV in Miami-Dade County and the demand for safe shelter in our community, the DVOB is focused on protecting the funding source it oversees to ensure these needed services are strengthened, and in some cases, expanded. The DVOB opposes any form or amount of diversion of those funds from the original intent of the statute creating the F&B DV Tax proceeds for domestic violence. The DVOB further seeks to expand the funding source for the construction and operation of domestic violence centers by supporting the expansion of the F&B Tax to the Beach municipalities, who are not exempt from IPV, and whose constituencies we serve.

The domestic violence and homeless systems are joined by the tragic reality that both lack sufficient resources to meet the demands of those seeking safety and housing. As such, both systems benefit from each other's successes and strengths.

If the BCC adopts legislation as urged by DVOB Resolution Number 2018-1, the DVOB will join the Homeless Trust in a coordinated campaign to ensure the expansion of the Food & Beverage Tax to include the Beach Municipalities and increase the revenue source to better meet the current demands of both systems.

Intimate Partner Violence and Homelessness- We are challenged as a community to address the multi-faceted needs of survivors of violence across both domestic violence and homeless systems of care. Miami-Dade County's domestic violence continuum must be robust and enriched, assuring the path that each survivor follows from the moment help is sought to achieving their goals for healing and housing are acknowledged, respected, supported, nurtured and empowered.

We start with recognizing and honoring the importance of a safe, supportive crisis response, offering shelter, trauma-informed care and deep protective factors for adults and children alike, and the importance of ready access to affordable, safe and permanent housing. We know that a meal, a bed and a shower do not heal broken bodies, minds and spirits.

In partnership with the Homeless Trust, the DVOB will build upon existing collaborative relationships between the two (2) systems. The DVOB and Homeless Trust have undertaken a coordinated effort to align their providers and protocol to intentionally establish ready access and smooth transitions, as needed, between them.

Both systems are committed and resolved to facilitate a seamless, no-wrong door approach and efficient and coordinated movement between the two for the benefit of their constituency. Both systems recognize they must be better aligned, and that the partnership between the two, specifically the DVOB, the Homeless Trust, and respective providers, must be strengthened in an effort to better serve those seeking safe housing and services. The DVOB will be reviewing how these strengths can be developed through more structured and formalized cross systems training, improved communications and information flow, ensuring inclusion of survivor voices in all steps going forward.

Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (FCADV) - The DVOB recognizes that FCADV is the statewide monitoring and funding entity for all certified domestic violence centers in the State of Florida. Further, FCADV is the authority that sets policies, regulations and requirements for all certified domestic violence centers. It provides technical assistance and training to all domestic violence centers within the 66 counties in Florida.

The DVOB has reached out to FCADV in efforts to explore possible resources it can offer Miami-Dade County. The DVOB also seeks to learn the total statewide funding available for domestic violence centers, and the method by which Miami-Dade County's local share is determined. The Board's intention is to learn, through FCADV, of opportunities for strengthening services and accessing funding resources for our community up to and including funding for capital improvements of existing facilities.

Finally, the DVOB seeks guidance from FCADV in determining evidence based and best practices for an improved coordinated community response to IPV that specifically addresses a streamlined no-wrong door approach for callers to access the domestic violence hotline and pathway to services.

Development of DVOB Website- Currently, the website for the DVOB is housed within the Homeless Trust's website and has very limited information and exposure. The DVOB recognizes the current DVOB website is lacking in design, information, independence, visibility and accessibility. Through its Executive Director, the DVOB is embarking on development of the website with assistance and guidance from the Information Technology Department.

The focus is to improve and ensure that the end product is user friendly with valuable information that is interactive and accessible to users with varying computer literacy skill levels.

The DVOB is resolved and recharged in its duty to ensure that critical lifesaving, victim centered, and empowerment-based services are accessible, seamless, and efficient. The DVOB looks forward to discussing this report in more detail with the BCC and provide regular updates and communications on its progress on behalf of victims and survivors of IPV and the community.