**About Family Justice Centers**

Family Justice Centers are multi-agency, multi-disciplinary co-located service centers that provide services to victims of inter-personal violence including, intimate partner violence, sexual assault, child abuse, elder or dependent adult abuse, and human trafficking. Both public and private partner agencies assign staff on a full-time or part-time basis to provide services from one location. Centers focus on reducing the number of times victims tell their story, the number of places victims must go for help, and look to increase access to services and support for victims and their children.

Partner agencies at a Family Justice Center may be comprised of, but are not limited to:

* Community-based rape crisis, domestic violence, and human trafficking advocates
* Law enforcement personnel
* Medical personnel
* District attorneys and city attorneys
* Victim-witness program personnel
* Domestic violence shelter service staff
* Social service agency staff members
* Child welfare agency social workers
* County health department staff
* City or county public assistance workers
* Mental health professionals
* Civil legal service providers

**Definition**

In order to create standards for services within Centers, develop best practices, and establish a common language across the growing movement, Alliance for HOPE International has developed a definition that characterizes the Family Justice Center Model.

**Family Justice Center**

Family Justice Centers have a minimum of the following full-time, co-located partners: domestic violence or sexual assault program staff, law enforcement investigators or detectives, a specialized prosecutor or prosecution unit and civil legal services. Many Family Justice Centers have additional onsite partners on either a full or part-time basis. Family Justice Centers also have established a centralized intake and information sharing process that is HIPPAA and VAWA compliant with their full-time, co-located partner agencies.

**The Growing Movement**

Documented and published outcomes of Family Justice Centers include: reduced homicides; increased victim safety; increased autonomy and empowerment for victims; reduced fear and anxiety for victims and their children; reduced recantation and minimization by victims when wrapped in services and support; increased efficiency in collaborative services to victims among service providers; increased prosecution of offenders; and dramatically increased community support for services to victims and their children through the family justice center model. (Gwinn & Strack, 2006).

The Family Justice Center model has been identified as a best practice in the field of domestic violence intervention and prevention services by the United States Department of Justice. It was included as a “purpose area” under VAWA 2005. Additionally, three states have legislation defining Family Justice Centers.

**California:** [California AB 1632](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140AB1623)

**Louisiana:** [Louisiana HB 1860](https://www.legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=935344)

**Oklahoma:** [Oklahoma Statute Title 22-60.31](http://www.oscn.net/applications/oscn/DeliverDocument.asp?CiteID=475864)

**Work Cited:** Gwinn, Casey & Strack, Gael (2006). *Hope for Hurting Families: Creating Family Justice Centers Across America.*Volcano Press.