

PROMISING PRACTICES

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Center for
Justice Planning

Homegrown Solutions: Reducing Domestic Violence in Rural Texas

Although domestic violence and intimate partner violence (IPV) occur in rural, urban and suburban settings alike, rural women typically experience [higher frequency and greater severity of abuse](#) as well as reduced access to resources and support. A rural community in South Texas leverages the power of a faith-based organization to lead a promising initiative focused on domestic violence prevention, support and education.

In 2018, local pastors and community members noticed a lack of services and support for domestic violence survivors and supporting agencies across Kleberg County, Texas. Sponsored by the [First Baptist Church of Kingsville](#) and primarily funded through donations from the church and the community at large, the [End Domestic Violence Task Force of Kleberg County](#) was formed in 2019. This grassroots effort brings together local agencies, including the [Purple Door](#), a regional domestic violence organization; law enforcement; and the county attorney's office.

TRUSTED PARTNERS & LOCATIONS

One focus of the task force is empowering community members with the proper resources and knowledge to help neighbors and friends who may be experiencing domestic violence. This initiative is referred to as trusted partners/trusted locations. The task force provides training on identifying IPV, the legal process and the availability of local resources. Similarly, the task force designates trusted locations by training local businesses to recognize the signs of abuse, including how to provide help to those who need it. Trusted locations are marked with small stickers, typically placed in front windows, and include places such as salons and churches. Additionally, the task force hosts educational events to raise awareness of the prevalence of domestic violence and the availability of localized resources.



TRUSTED PARTNERS & LOCATIONS continued

The nearest domestic violence shelter is an hour's drive away, and as such, poses a multitude of challenges for rural individuals experiencing IPV, such as transportation and childcare issues. In partnership with the task force, local law enforcement hands out hotel vouchers to anyone in need of emergency short-term housing. Upon arriving at a safe location, survivors are encouraged to reach out directly to the Purple Door, which provides free services to clients. The last component of the program is court accompaniment, which allows survivors to request the task force's presence during trial and protective order hearings. Attended by roughly half of the task force's 40 members, this feature allows for community solidarity and support.

One hundred individuals have been trained as trusted partners, with 15-20 businesses designated as trusted locations. In 2023, the task force was named [one of the six innovative rural justice programs](#) by the Rural Justice Collaborative. The task force meets monthly to discuss ongoing community needs.

As trusted resources and sources of support for many community members, faith-based organizations can be powerful partners in public safety. The strength of this Texas task force, driven by a rural faith-based organization, lies in its grassroots and community-driven approach to meeting the needs of survivors of domestic violence.

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