
DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HB 368 Original

2015 Regular Session

Badon

Abstract: Authorizes the establishment of and requirements for a family justice center, provides for the victims that are eligible to receive services at a family justice center, provides relative to the sharing and confidentiality of information relative to victims, and provides relative to immunity from liability for service providers at the family justice center.

Proposed law does all of the following:

- (1) Authorizes the establishment of a family justice center in any judicial district to provide multiagency and multidisciplinary support and services to victims of domestic abuse, sexual assault, stalking, cyberstalking, cyberbullying, and human trafficking and to persons protected by the Adult Protective Services Act pursuant to present law.
- (2) Provides for the types of services and support made available at a family justice center.
- (3) Authorizes a family justice center established in one judicial district to serve those victims from one or more geographically contiguous judicial districts.
- (4) Authorizes each family justice center to consult with, contract with, work with, or be staffed by personnel from any public, private, or nonprofit entities providing services within any of the judicial districts served by and participating in the family justice center.
- (5) Requires each family justice center to establish procedures for the evaluation of its operations, develop policies and procedures to ensure coordinated services are provided to victims, and maintain a formal process for receiving feedback, complaints, and input from those persons receiving services at the family justice center and for addressing any concerns about services provided or the operations of the family justice center.
- (6) Prohibits any family justice center from denying services to any victim on the grounds of the victim's criminal history, requesting the criminal history of a victim without the victim's written consent unless pursuant to a criminal investigation, requiring a victim to participate in the criminal justice system or cooperate with law enforcement in order to receive services at a family justice center, or requiring a victim to sign a consent form to share information in order to access services at the family justice center.
- (7) Authorizes a person providing services to a victim at a family justice center to obtain

information, including material otherwise made confidential or privileged, that is necessary to assist the victim. Provides for limitations on the disclosure and use of this information.

- (8) Provides that the material or information used or developed in providing services to a victim at the family justice center are confidential and not subject to the Public Records Law.
- (9) Requires each family justice center to maintain a client consent policy, to comply with all state and federal laws protecting the confidentiality rights and identity of the victim, and to designate a privacy officer to develop and oversee privacy policies and procedures consistent with state and federal privacy laws.
- (10) Requires each family justice center to obtain informed, written, and reasonably time limited consent from the victim before sharing information obtained from the victim with any staff member, agency partner, or personnel providing services at the family justice center except when the person is required by law to report or disclose specific information or incidents.
- (11) Provides that consent by the victim to share information within a family justice center pursuant to the provisions of this proposed law is not a universal waiver of any existing evidentiary privilege or confidentiality provision provided by law.
- (12) Requires each family justice center to maintain a formal training program with mandatory training of not less than eight hours per year for all persons providing services at the family justice center.
- (13) Provides immunity from civil liability to any person providing services to a victim at a family justice center while acting in the official scope of his duties if the person, in good faith, makes a recommendation, gives an opinion, or releases or uses information for the purposes of protecting or providing services to the victim.

(Adds R.S. 46:1860-1863)