

# Developing FJC State Legislation Checklist

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## Why is Family Justice Center state legislation important?

Family Justice Center legislation will help you define FJCs in your state, develop best practices, protect confidentiality, and set requirements for the role of onsite and offsite partners. FJC legislation also authorizes government entities in your state to develop funding streams to help sustain FJCs, which can also be useful in the creation of a statewide initiative.

## Do Your Research

- ☐ Learn about the existing FJC legislation
  - **Recommendation:** Look at the state legislation in Oklahoma, Louisiana, and California (i.e. explore the language of the legislation for these three states on our [Resource Library](#))
- ☐ Be clear about the intent of developing FJC legislation – this will be critical when sharing the information with others
  - Ex: is it simply to define FJCs? Is it for funding? Is it for research and establishing best practices?

## Build Relationships at Local, State, and Federal Levels

- ☐ Reach out to policymakers on both sides of the aisle to prevent the FJC from becoming a polarizing or partisan issue and to ensure continued support and championship during election cycles
  - Family Justice Centers are a great public health and public safety framework
- ☐ Mobilize other cities/communities across your state that have similar interests
  - **Examples:** Invite them to conferences, stakeholder meetings, tours of your Center, multi-disciplinary trainings, and presentations to local and state politicians
- ☐ Work with state coalitions and community-based domestic violence/sexual assault organizations
  - **Recommendation:** Build relationships with stakeholders by keeping them part of the conversation and ensure they understand the plans and reasons for FJC legislation (i.e. send updates, meet with their leadership, be transparent with Center plans, etc.)
- ☐ Emphasize to community-based agencies that this legislation will not create competition for funds but will focus on utilizing unique/new funding streams
- ☐ Highlight the community impact and sustainability of your Center to build trust with coalitions

## Create Awareness of FJCs in Your State

- ☐ Provide education about the FJC model, co-location, and best practices
- ☐ Share domestic violence statistics in your state
- ☐ Develop resources for current policymakers and legislators
  - **Examples:** Talking points, annual reports of domestic violence and sexual assault crime rates, and evaluation reports of current FJCs

## Host an Event for Policymakers and Elected Officials

- ☐ Present on the impact of the Family Justice Center model
  - **Recommendation:** Research the cost of one domestic violence homicide in your state. How does the Family Justice Center save the state money by preventing domestic violence homicides? What does that do for the state budget?
  - **Recommendation:** Explain why the FJC is aligned with best practices for survivors
  - **Recommendation:** Emphasize the momentum that FJC legislation has generated in other states
- ☐ Engage governors, legislators, and representatives to host something at their residence
  - **Recommendation:** Invite all senators and representatives, while being mindful of election cycles and leadership changes
- ☐ Host a presentation in your state capitol building – it's free!
  - **Recommendation:** Plan ahead by developing an agenda and collecting statistics, identify speakers correctly, and highlight the positive by showcasing those who have done this (ex: The Center for Family Justice in Bridgeport, CT)

## Utilize Evaluation and Outcomes to Make Your Pitch

- ☐ View annual reports and evaluations drafted by other Family Justice Centers on our [Resource Library](#)
- ☐ Collect data to demonstrate why there is a need for FJC legislation
  - Include both qualitative (i.e. interviews, focus groups, observations, etc.) and quantitative (i.e. satisfaction surveys, online surveys, standardized measures, record review, etc.) data