

*City of Alexandria, Virginia*

MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** MAY 16, 2025

**TO:** JAMES PARAION, CITY MANAGER

**FROM:** ROBERT SNYDER, CHIEF INTERNAL AUDITOR

**SUBJECT:** DCHS VDSS SACDVP SITE MONITORING VISIT (FS25-09)

**Background**

On December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024, the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) contacted the Sexual Assault Center and Domestic Violence Program (SACDVP) of Alexandria's Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) to schedule a site monitoring visit of their agency. They were informed that the case review would occur in February 2025. The purpose of the review was to be focused on their FAM-22-078 VDSS grant. **The total amount of funding for this grant is \$165,942.72 which mainly provides funding for two (2) staff members.**

**OIA Analysis of DCHS SACDVP and Other Audits**

OIA has reviewed our records regarding other engagements involving the DCHS SACDVP. This program is one of the more heavily audited or monitored programs and has consistently been praised for its effectiveness and impact on vulnerable members of our community. Table 1 shows the engagements involving the DCHS SACDVP.

**Table 1 Prior Audits or Monitoring Reviews**

Date	Engagement Name	Notes
02/25/25	<a href="#">FS25-06 DCHS SACDVP DOJ Site Visit</a>	DOJ identified no programmatic or administrative issues. OIA recommended that they request an extension of the grant.
12/06/23	<a href="#">FS24-04 DCHS SACDVP DCJS Follow-up Monitoring Review</a>	DCJS confirmed that recommendations to federal audit had been implemented.
04/17/23	<a href="#">FS23-10 DCHS -SACDVP DOJ OIG Monitoring Visit</a>	One (1) finding related to accounting treatment of expenditures.
01/07/23	<a href="#">FS23-09 DCHS SACDVP VDSS Monitoring Review</a>	Three (3) required actions and two (2) recommendations largely related to program officiation.
07/14/22	<a href="#">FS23-01 DCHS Sexual Assault Domestic Violence (SACDVP) Site Visit</a>	No recommendations made.

**Discussion**

For the case review VDSS informed DCHS that the months under review would be June 2023 and April 2024. They requested a comprehensive list of documents for the three (3) sections of the monitoring visit which were broken down by (1) Program Review, (2) Administration and Human

Resources Review, and (3) Fiscal Review. VDSS and DCHS were able to agree to a date of February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025, for the actual site visit and the documentation was due two weeks prior to that date.

DCHS was able to submit all of the relevant materials for the three parts of the review for the grant in question. During the actual site visit the agenda was broken down into several sections including a section where DCHS highlighted their program services and achievements. VDSS then conducted Question and Answer sessions with DCHS leadership, fiscal staff, human resources, supervisors, and grant-funded staff. After reviewing all documentation and conducting all question-and-answer sessions, VDSS informed DCHS on the call that they were within compliance of all requirements.

### **Requirements and Recommendations**

On April 1, 2025, the QAA team from VDSS sent DCHS a letter summarizing the results of the site visit. The QAA team determined that the City was assessed as meeting the standard for acceptable performance. They also identified two (2) requirements that the City should meet. The requirements were:

- DCHS must increase the response rate for Documenting Our Work (DOW) surveys
- DCHS must ensure all expenses that are included on the invoice are incurred in the month for which they are invoiced.

The QAA team also issued one (1) recommendation which was to:

- DCHS should review all client-facing documentation to ensure the language aligns with the requirement that all services and activities are voluntary.

### **Conclusion:**

On April 2, 2025, the QAA team contacted DCHS and notified them that no actions were needed at this time. The requirements and recommendations may be included as areas for review in future engagements. Based on this communication OIA considers this engagement as closed. Should you have any questions, please contact me.



*Commonwealth of Virginia*  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

March 31, 2025

██████████  
Division Chief, Sexual Assault Center and Domestic Violence Program  
City of Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services  
4850 Mark Center Dr., 6th Floor  
Alexandria, VA 22311

Dear ██████████,

I am writing to follow up with you regarding the site visit conducted with City of Alexandria in February 2025. This experience helped us learn more about your agency's supportive services and how you continue to address the needs of survivors and collaborate with community partners in Alexandria. The site visit included interviews with grant-funded staff for your FAM-22-078 Domestic Violence Prevention and Services grant, as well as administrative, fiscal, and programmatic reviews of your performance during the grant cycle. We appreciate the time and effort of gathering and organizing the requested documentation, as well as the time spent discussing your program with us.

The site visit demonstrated many strengths of the program, including the presence of a diverse and dedicated leadership team, whose members have years of experience. The program maintains impressive organizational practices with invoicing and time tracking. In totality and based on this review, we find that City of Alexandria meets the threshold for an *acceptable performance*. To encourage continued success, please refer to the below findings of this site visit to include any required actions (if applicable), recommendations, and relevant due dates:

**Requirements:**

1. **Documenting Our Work** – during the site visit, we reviewed the Documenting Our Work response rate over three fiscal years, and this data demonstrated difficulty collecting Documenting Our Work survey responses. These surveys are a requirement of this award and program evaluation methods need improvement to ensure clients' experience inform the ongoing development of the program. For reference, the Action Alliance has provided resources such as electronic copies of the survey translated in 11 languages, as well as online training modules for the DOW process, which are available on the [VaData website](#). Contact your Contract Administrator for assistance.

For future reference, you may use these guidelines found in the RFA to determine DOW collection effectiveness:

If client count  $\geq 1,000$ , required DOW response rate = 10%



If client count = 750, required DOW response rate = 20%  
If client count = 300, required DOW response rate = 25%  
If client count  $\leq$  100, required DOW response rate = 50%

2. **Invoicing** – the fiscal review indicated that, in past fiscal years, City of Alexandria has submitted invoices which included expenses incurred during a previous month. It is a requirement of your grant that all expenses included on the invoice are incurred in the month for which they are invoiced. You may use the following guidance for future reference:

**Cash Basis Reimbursements**

All VDSS invoicing is built on a “Cash Basis”. This means expenses must be paid before they are invoiced to VDSS. ***This is especially important for end of the year invoicing.*** Examples we have seen that have resulted in reimbursements (sometimes significant) to VDSS.

Payroll expenses for the last week of June were paid in July but invoiced in June.

Services rendered and invoiced in late June were not paid until July.

End of year furniture replacements were ordered and invoiced in May but not paid for until July.

Acceptable types of payments to meet this contractual requirement include:

Cash

Check

Electronic payments

Credit Card

**Recommendations:**

1. **Policy revision** – our desk review of the organization’s personnel and board policies revealed at least one section in which it was suggested that participation in an activity was mandatory. While this specific section was changed during the site visit, it is recommended that the agency review all client-facing documentation to ensure the language aligns with the requirement that all services and activities are voluntary. In addition, it is recommended that the agency implement a regular policy review and revision process to ensure they align with the ever-evolving local, state, and federal policies and procedures, as well as best practices in the field.

This site visit has demonstrated that City of Alexandria has an experienced and passionate team dedicated to supporting survivors and their families. We look forward to learning of any updates and accomplishments in your progress reports and in any future collaborative meetings. Thank you for your time, patience, and engagement during this site visit. Please contact us if you have any questions.

All best,

[REDACTED]  
Contract Administrator, Underserved Populations  
Office of Family Violence, Virginia Department of Social Services  
[REDACTED]