

Summary of H.689

H.689 accomplishes 2 main goals

1. Places into statute and funds the position of Coordinator of the Vermont Council on Domestic Violence

This full-time position will combine two part-time positions that currently exist (which have been staffed by the same person for the past year and a half) .

- The Coordinator of the Vermont Council on Domestic Violence is currently a funded half-time position.
- The Coordinator of the Domestic Violence Accountability Programs is currently an unfunded half-time position.

While these two half-time positions currently exist, they have not been in statute and have not included the full scope of responsibilities proposed in this bill. Under H.689, this new position will merge both of the half-time positions to become one full-time position under the title of Coordinator of the Vermont Council on Domestic Violence. This new position will include coordination of the Council as well as the oversight and management of the domestic violence accountability program standards and certification. The responsibilities will include:

- coordinating the Council's duties, committees, and membership;
- overseeing recruitment, orientation, and retention of Council members
- reviewing certification of domestic violence accountability programs and presenting recommendations for program certifications to the Council;
- providing annual training and technical assistance to domestic violence accountability programs; and
- reporting regularly to the Council and relevant committees

2. Funds the domestic violence accountability programs

The Domestic Violence Accountability Programs provide statewide services for offenders. They provide an alternative to incarcerative remedies in our communities. They offer perpetrators the tools they need to change their violent behaviors, and they offer victims and their families the hope of safer lives. This appropriation is an investment in the well-being of our neighbors and a commitment to safe and healthy communities.

Until 2014, these programs received state funding to ensure compliance with Vermont's statewide standards. These programs currently receive no state funding and rely upon participant fees, often paid on a sliding scale. While these programs are running now on a shoestring, they are required to meet the statewide standards in order to accept referrals from the courts, the Department of Corrections, or DCF.