

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Newborn Safe Haven Program

Annual Status Report 2023



Submitted to the Council
of the District of Columbia
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GOVERNMENT OF THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DC MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

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Introduction

The Newborn Safe Haven Amendment Act of 2010 (D.C. Law 18-158; D.C. Official Code § 4–1451.01 *et seq.*) allows a parent who resides within the District of Columbia to surrender a newborn infant 14 days old or less to staff at designated hospitals (Authorized Receiving Facilities or ARFs), in the District of Columbia, confidentially and without fear of prosecution, if there is no evidence of child abuse or neglect. Under the law, hospitals are required to notify the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) immediately when a newborn is surrendered. CFSA gains custody of the newborn from the hospital within 23 hours of the notice and provides foster care services to the newborn while seeking a permanent home through adoption.

The law requires the Mayor to submit an annual status report giving an update on the number of newborns in the District of Columbia surrendered under the law within the reporting calendar year. This status report to the Council of the District of Columbia fulfills this requirement.

Status Report

Following are CFSA's responses to questions found in the D.C. Official Code § 4–1451.07- Status Report section.

- **Number of newborns surrendered and dates of surrender**
There were no newborns surrendered under *The Newborn Safe Haven Amendment Act of 2010* in 2023.
- **Services provided to surrendered newborns**
Not applicable.
- **Outcome of the care provided for each surrendered newborn**
Not applicable.
- **Number and disposition of cases of surrendered newborns**
Not applicable.

Activities

Information and trainings were facilitated by the staff responsible for the Newborn Safe Haven Program on the following dates:

- Presentation and dissemination of materials to the North Capitol and Georgia Avenue Collaboratives via virtual platform on September 19, 2023. There were approximately fourteen (14) participants.
- Presentation and dissemination of materials to the East of the River Family Strengthening Collaborative, Edgewood Brookland Family Strengthening Collaborative, and CFSA In Home Services via virtual platform on September 21, 2023. There were seventy-five (75) participants.

- Presentation and dissemination of materials to the CFSA Office of the Attorney General via virtual platform on October 5, 2023. There were thirty-six (36) participants.
- Presentation and dissemination of materials to the managers of the CFSA Office of Child Protective Services via virtual platform on November 28, 2023. There were approximately fifteen (15) participants.
- During 2023, information on the Newborn Safe Haven Law was disseminated to 140 professional and social work staff both internal and external.
- During the balance of 2023 and into the first months of 2024, confirmation of required signage will be conducted for all indicated hospital facilities within the District of Columbia.

The team will continue to schedule training to Divisions within CFSA, the Community Collaboratives and other community partners throughout 2024. This training will ensure that social workers and other professionals are continuously aware of the policies and procedures related to the Newborn Safe Haven Program. The training will be conducted by the staff responsible for the Newborn Safe Haven Program with the support of the CFSA Child Welfare Training Academy. The training will be offered at varied times and through various modalities to ensure all tours of duty are covered and to compliment all learning styles. There will be requests made during 2024 for additional signage to be obtained as changes occur in hospital facilities.

Information about the program can be found on CFSA's website at <http://cfsa.dc.gov/service/safe-havens-newborns>. Safe Haven locations can be found in the *DC Safe Haven General Information* publication found on CFSA's website.