

# **CITY RESPONSES TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

**A 77-City Survey**

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**The United States Conference of Mayors**

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# SURVEY REPORT

When she became Chair of The U.S. Conference of Mayors Women Mayors Caucus, Hallandale Beach Mayor Joy Cooper identified domestic violence as the issue on which she would focus during her tenure. Having witnessed an increase in domestic violence police calls in her City as the current economic decline continued, and concerned about the impact of increased domestic violence on the women, men, and children affected, as well as the lack of resources available to break the cycle of domestic violence, Mayor Cooper initiated a survey through which cities could report their current approaches to preventing and responding to domestic violence.

## SIZE AND SCOPE OF PROBLEM

The Justice Department's Office on Violence Against Women describes domestic violence as a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner. This includes physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person, and any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone. OVW also describes the substantial effect that domestic violence has on family members, friends, co-workers, other witnesses, and the community at large, and on children who grow up witnessing domestic violence and who are among the most seriously affected by it.

As the Website of the National Domestic Violence Hotline illustrates, the size, scope, and dynamics of the problem have been well documented over the past several years:

- In a 2004 Allstate Foundation National Poll on Domestic Violence, three out of four respondents personally knew a victim of domestic violence; 83 percent of respondents strongly agreed that domestic violence affects people in all racial, ethnic, religious, educational, social and economic backgrounds; two out of three strongly agreed that domestic violence is a serious, widespread social problem in America.
- In 2006 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that, each year, intimate partner violence results in an estimated 1,200 deaths and two million injuries among women, and nearly 600,000 injuries among men. CDC reported that more than 23 percent of women and 11 percent of men aged 18 years or more have a lifetime history of intimate partner violence victimization; more than 31 percent of women victims are 45 to 54 years of age; more than 21 percent of men victims are 25 to 34 years of age.
- A 2005 CDC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey found that one in four women and one in nine men in the U.S. were victims of domestic violence at some point in their lives; in households with incomes under \$15,000 per year, more than 35 percent of women and nearly 21 percent of men suffered violence from an intimate partner.
- In a 2006 Harris Poll, approximately eight in 10 respondents recalled "seeing or hearing something" about domestic violence in the past year; approximately 15 percent of all adults admitted that they were a victim of domestic violence; six in 10 adults claimed they knew someone personally who had experienced domestic violence.

In a "Profile of Intimate Partner Violence Cases in Large Urban Counties," funded by the Justice Department and published in October 2009, researchers reported on the characteristics and processing of 3,750 cases of intimate partner violence filed in the state courts of 16 large urban counties in May 2002. They found that most cases of intimate partner violence involved a charge of assault – aggravated in 12 percent of the cases and simple in 78 percent. A witness to the incident was present in half of the cases, and half of those witnesses were children. The defendant was convicted in 56 percent of the

cases, a third were discontinued by the prosecution or dismissed by the court, and less than one percent ended in acquittal by a judge or jury.

## **SURVEY FINDINGS**

In late October 2009, Mayor Cooper invited mayors to submit information on approaches to domestic violence issues and programs in their cities – including how domestic violence has affected police department organization and staffing, the extent to which shelters for victims are available, and the extent to which public-private partnerships have been developed to address domestic violence.

Responses were received from 77 cities in 31 states. These cities, listed at the end of this report, range in population from 8,000 (Mount Carmel, IL) to 8,000,000 (New York City). As a group, the cities reported a total of 444,414 domestic violence calls for service in 2008 and a slightly (.08 percent) smaller total of 440,822 in 2009. Cities experiencing increases and decreases in numbers of calls were fairly evenly divided, with 46 percent reporting increases, four percent reporting no change, and half reporting decreases. Most cities supplied information on calls for service, but a few were able to provide only information on reports or arrests that were made.

On the impact of the domestic violence problem, the survey found that:

- About two-thirds (66 percent) of the cities said the number of domestic violence calls has had an impact on police department staffing; the balance said it has not. Many of the cities explained that they require a minimum of two officers to respond to any domestic violence call because of the danger involved. Many also mentioned the amount of time needed for paperwork and follow-up when an arrest is made. The following comments are typical of those made by the cities:

**Sacramento, CA:** A majority of the calls are handled by patrol officers. They require a minimum of two officers to respond, and are priority one calls. We are mandated to make an arrest when we establish probable cause. The entire process of making an arrest, booking the individual, processing the evidence, and writing the reports, averages three to four hours of manpower. In addition, these calls can be very volatile, and officers must be alert and aware of their tactics and procedures.

**Bowling Green, KY:** Domestic violence calls often involve arrests, reports, and in-depth investigations. Each of those components can be very time consuming. When examined in an aggregate form the hours spent on domestic violence calls can quickly add up to substantial amounts of time. The staffing plan must take into account the possibility of domestic violence calls in order to establish appropriate shift levels.

**Boston, MA:** Boston Police Rules and Regulations stipulate only two-man units respond to domestic violence calls (because of the potential volatility of these calls). Therefore, the greater number of domestic violence calls, the more two-man units the Department is forced to deploy. In addition, the high number of domestic violence cases makes it necessary to have a number of detectives (currently 15) dedicated exclusively to domestic violence investigations. Finally, our domestic violence civilian advocates have also, in recent years, been forced to cover multiple districts due to the high number of cases and lack of resources and funding which prevent us from hiring an advocate in every district.

**Eugene, OR:** In relation to other calls for service, the number is not large; however, to successfully handle and deliver appropriate service to the family and victims, the time spent on these calls is significant.

**Providence, RI:** Due to the large number of domestic violence-related calls for service, the Department's Special Victims Unit operates at full staff.

- Just over half (51 percent) of the cities have a separate domestic violence unit in their police departments.
- Nine in 10 of the cities have a victim advocate. Mentioned most frequently in an open-ended question as a funding source for the victim advocate are:
  - federal grants, by 29 cities;
  - city government funds, by 26 cities;
  - county government funds, by nine cities; and
  - state government funds, by eight cities.
 A few cities reported that local nonprofit organizations or volunteers provide assistance.
- In 72 percent of the cities there is a shelter or safe haven for victims of domestic violence. Among those which do not have a shelter within the city limits, most report there is a shelter within five to 15 miles.
- Eighty-three percent of the cities have developed public/private partnerships to help reduce domestic violence. In response to an open-ended question, these cities identified a variety of funding sources to support their partnerships, including:
  - grants, by 18 cities;
  - city government funds, by 12 cities;
  - federal funds, by 12 cities;
  - donations and fund-raising activities, by 11 cities;
  - private organizations, by 10 cities;
  - county government funds, by five cities;
  - state government funds, by five cities;
  - volunteers, by three cities; and
  - foundations, by three cities.

## **PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS**

Most cities provided descriptions of individual partnerships with both public and private agencies and organizations which they have formed to respond to domestic violence. A few of the survey cities simply listed several organizations with which partnerships exist.

### **Mobile, AL**

Penelope House is a nonprofit organization established in 1979 by the Daughters of Penelope to help victims of domestic violence regain social and economic independence. The Family Violence Center is the only shelter for battered women and children in the City, although services currently are provided across Mobile and Washington Counties. Services offered by Penelope House include advocacy, community education, counseling, on-site medical care, prevention education in schools, transitional living, and victims' support groups.

### **Tucson, AZ**

Among Tucson's partnerships:

- The Domestic Violence Alternative Center program is an alternative booking process used by the City's Police Department, Pima County, and private sources for juvenile domestic violence suspects.
- Emerge is a domestic violence shelter that provides support services for victims and children of victims.
- S.I.S. is a private entity that monitors counseling for domestic violence defendants who have pled guilty and are ordered to undergo counseling. S.I.S. also administers the City Prosecutor Office's diversion program, which allows first-time domestic violence defendants to avoid a guilty plea by going to counseling, paying any restitution to victims, avoiding any further domestic violence charges during the diversion period and, in some cases, having no contact with the victims.

- The Pima County Domestic Violence Task Force, a coalition dedicated to preventing and addressing domestic violence in the County, is comprised of domestic violence victims, prosecutors, private attorneys, immigration representatives, Child Protective Services staff, law enforcement officers, probation officers, medical personnel, domestic violence advocate agency staff, juvenile and adult advocates, and education experts.

### **Irvine, CA**

The Family Violence Prevention Project is a partnership to increase awareness and reporting of domestic violence, primarily through education and outreach, and to decrease domestic violence incidents. It includes the Police Department, Community Services, the local women's shelter, and the County Victim Service Agency.

### **San Francisco, CA**

The Department on the Status of Women received a two-year grant from Blue Shield of California Foundation to train 450 criminal justice personnel on domestic violence using an innovative cross-training model. The Office of Language Services received a grant from the Zellerbach Foundation to test a pilot language fluency program for criminal justice personnel; the program trains staff who may be interacting with monolingual victims of domestic violence on common legal terminology and domestic violence issues in both Spanish and Cantonese. Additionally, many community-based organizations receive private grant funding to train criminal justice personnel on specific issues related to domestic violence.

### **Miramar, FL**

A partnership exists with the Broward Domestic Violence Council, a Countywide council made up of professionals who work together work on reducing domestic violence through community education, legislative work, and linking or creating resources. An example of a project developed with the Family Success Center is Code Pink, which provides limited shelter as an alternative to domestic violence centers which often are filled to capacity.

### **Orlando, FL**

The Police Department is part of the Orange County Domestic Violence Task Force, a group comprised of the State Attorney's Office, the Orange County Sheriff's Office, Orange County Animal Services, Probation and Parole, Court Watch, Harbor House, Orange County Clerk of Courts, UCF Victim Services, the Michael Ruschak Foundation, Florida Hospital, the Department of Children and Families, the Victim Service Center, the Attorney General's Office, Help Now of Osceola County, Osceola County Corrections, and JCS Probation.

The Department also partners with Harbor House through the INVEST Advocate program, a proactive program designed to reach out to victims multiple times to offer them services.

A federal STOP grant has funded one full-time detective devoted to domestic violence cases; this has allowed the Department to focus on quicker apprehension and on violations of court orders after apprehension and release.

### **Athens, GA**

The Athens-Clarke County Government and Police Department operate a Family Protection Center Program in cooperation with local nonprofit agencies. This collaborative program places services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault together in one location. Personnel from the Police Department's Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Unit, the local domestic violence shelter, the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner's (SANE) program, the District Attorney's office, and the Sexual Assault Center are housed together in one building located at the Police Department. The building project was paid for with Special-Purpose Local-Option Sales Tax funds. The program enhances communication and collaboration among all providers in order to improve service delivery to victims and hold offenders accountable.

Members of the Police Department participate in a Domestic Violence Task Force comprised of representatives of several local governmental and non-governmental agencies. The Task Force focuses

on community education and awareness regarding domestic violence issues. They also review systemic processes for ways to improve services and foster interagency communication.

### **Maui, HI**

Within Maui County (which is comprised of three separate islands) there are five Domestic Violence Task Forces, the first of which was organized in 1992 under the leadership of a former County legislator. Early Task Force membership included Family Court judges and related personnel, prosecutors, police personnel, Child Protective Services staff, Probation Department staff, and representatives of domestic violence shelters and other domestic violence agencies. Over the years, the Task Force has added representatives of the State's Department of Health and the Maui Humane Society, substance abuse providers, the clergy, public officials representing the State and County, and private citizens.

### **Louisville, KY**

Louisville has developed an initiative with ADT – the AWARE program – which provides home alarms for high-risk victims of domestic violence. The community has also developed a centralized Domestic Violence Intake Center through which a victim can receive needed and appropriate court-related protections (warrants and/or civil protective orders) as well as safety planning, advocacy, social service referrals, and other services together in one safe location within the local courthouse.

### **Boston, MA**

The Boston Police Department has been an on-site partner of the Family Justice Center (FJC) of Boston since it opened in 2005. The Department's Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Crimes Against Children, and Human Trafficking Units are physically located at the FJC, which also provides a wide range of on-site advocacy services from various nonprofit, community-based organizations, including Casa Myrna Vazquez, the Association of Haitian Women, The Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence, the Gay Men's Domestic Violence Project, The Boston Area Rape Crisis Center, and many others.

Boston Police civilian advocates participate in the Boston Multi-Cultural Advocacy Support Project which teams advocates from the law enforcement and legal sectors with advocates from the nonprofit sector for networking, idea- and best practice-sharing, and cross-training events.

### **Peabody, MA**

Meetings of the Domestic Violence Roundtable, which is concerned with community awareness, are held at the Police Department on a monthly basis. Roundtable members represent, for example, clergy, schools, hospitals, the Essex County District Attorney's office, Help for Abused Women and Their Children (the battered women's agency), PDC Probation, the Department of Children and Families, the Essex County Correctional Facility, the Peabody Housing Authority, North Shore Elder Services, Peabody City Hall, and the Police Department.

Peabody's High Risk Assessment Team, which focuses on issues such as victim safety and batterer accountability, includes representatives of the Essex County District Attorney's office, PDC Probation, the Peabody and Lynnfield Police Departments, Help for Abused Women and Their Children, the Department of Children and Families, and the Essex County Correctional Facility.

### **Rio Rancho, NM**

The Police Department and City are involved in a Coordinated Community Response Team which meets monthly to address regional domestic violence issues. Partnerships developed among law enforcement, prosecutors, domestic violence shelters, and other community groups have been in existence for many years and have brought about significant change in how domestic violence is investigated and whether appropriate actions are taken to ensure the safety of all parties involved.

### **New York, NY**

New York City has developed several public-private partnerships to address domestic violence. Among these:

- The New York City Family Justice Centers are an initiative of the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) in partnership with the District Attorney's Offices. Currently, there is a

Family Justice Center in two of the five boroughs which comprise New York City, Brooklyn and Queens, with a third Center under development in the Bronx. At the Centers, clients may walk in and choose services they want, including counseling, advocacy, meeting with a prosecutor, assistance with shelter and housing, and civil legal assistance – all in their native language while their children play safely in the next room. Representatives from City and State agencies, community organizations, including civil legal organizations and universities provide support to the Centers. With both public and private funding, these Centers help domestic violence victims break the cycle of violence by streamlining the process of receiving supportive services. Staff of the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence manages the Centers and other government agencies and nonprofits provide the direct domestic violence services to the clients. In addition, several programs, including the children's room, children's counseling, and the self-sufficiency program are funded through grants from private organizations.

- The New York City Healthy Relationship Academy was established in 2005 by OCDV in partnership with the Department of Youth and Community Development and the Avon Foundation. The Academy offers educational workshops and training sessions for adolescents, parents, and organizational staff throughout New York City on the topics of dating violence and healthy relationships. The Academy consists of 16 Peer Educators, ages 18 to 25, who travel to venues such as GED programs, runaway homeless youth programs, after-school programs, faith communities, schools, and detention facilities to facilitate a 90-minute interactive workshop. Workshops cover information on defining domestic and dating violence, warnings signs, how to help a friend, components of a healthy relationship, and resources available to teens in New York City. The program is designed to reach especially vulnerable populations, including youth who are runaway homeless, lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender, foreign-born, sexually exploited through prostitution, and pregnant/parenting.
- Project H.E.A.L., a comprehensive plan to improve the services provided to domestic violence victims at all 11 City public hospitals, is a partnership of OCDV and the Health and Hospitals Corporation. It enhances the ability of City hospitals to identify victims, document their injuries, and connect them with social and legal services. Currently, through Project H.E.A.L., two hospitals partner with the nonprofit Safe Horizon to provide onsite counseling, advocacy, and referral to identified domestic violence victims/survivors. Additionally, InMotion Legal Services provides free legal services to patients experiencing domestic violence, including custody, family court issues, and immigration assistance. Approximately 100 patients per year participate in the program. If cases are not selected for direct legal representation, patients will be educated on their rights and options.
- The Verizon Wireless HopeLine Program is a collaboration of OCDV and the Verizon Wireless' HopeLine cell phone program that urges all New York City residents to help survivors of domestic violence by donating their no-longer-used wireless devices. This program was recently expanded to include college campuses.
- The Pro-Bono Public Education Campaign, a Citywide public awareness campaign to encourage New Yorkers to seek assistance if they or someone they knew was a victim of domestic violence, was launched by OCDV in May 2006. The three-quarter-million-dollar print advertising campaign, which ran for three months, was developed pro bono by the advertising firm of McCann Erickson, and was featured in subways, bus shelters, telephone kiosks, and magazines.

### **Providence, RI**

The Law Enforcement Advocacy Project was created in October 2004 as a partnership of Day One and Sojourner House and the Police Department to provide the services of a Law Enforcement Advocate to the Department's Special Victims Unit. The Special Victims Unit handles all domestic violence, sexual assault, sex offender compliance and registrations, violations of restraint orders, no contact orders, crimes against the elderly, and cyber stalking cases that occur in the City.

## **Arlington, TX**

Among the public-partnerships in Arlington:

- SafeHaven of Tarrant County, a family violence shelter, was recognized by the International Association of Chiefs of Police in 2005 as one of 10 exemplary partnerships for its collaborative work on a daily basis to serve victims of family violence. Victim Assistance staff transport victims to the shelter and provide follow-up support there, and shelter staff come to the police station to provide services to victims there. Staff meets at least weekly to discuss cases, and a new project is directed at addressing repeat family violence incidents. SafeHaven provides a Spanish-speaking counselor to assist in outreach to victims one afternoon a week; on another afternoon a SafeHaven counselor meets with victims of repeat family violence at the police station.
- The Tarrant County Council on Family Violence includes representatives of the Family Violence Court, the Tarrant County District Attorney, women's shelters, probation, Child Protective Services, local and State legislatures, the Tarrant County Health Department, and many County law enforcement agencies. The Victim Services Coordinator has served as co-chair of the Council's Public Awareness Committee and a member of the Law Enforcement Committee.
- The Tarrant County Family Violence Prosecution Unit collaborates with prosecutors, provides additional information when appropriate, and testifies regarding observed injuries and other relevant facts in court during prosecutions. The Unit has assisted in the development of standardized on-scene paperwork for law enforcement agencies across the county.
- The Tarrant County District Attorney Protective Order Unit assists Arlington victims with preliminary paperwork so that they do not have to travel to downtown Ft. Worth to initiate the process. The Unit faxes police reports and shares information as the District Attorney prepares to petition the court for protective orders on behalf of victims, and accompanies victims to court for protective order in some cases.

## **Burlington, VT**

The Police Department is part of a Countywide Domestic Violence Task Force that meets monthly. The Department also works closely with Women Helping Battered Women and other nonprofit organizations that provide direct services to domestic violence victims. An in-house referral form is faxed by the Department's advocate to shelter advocates, with the victim's permission. Countywide, law enforcement agencies and shelter programs train together on domestic violence issues, apply for grant funding together, and collaborate on strategies for public outreach.

## **Alexandria, VA**

The Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP), formed in 1988, is an interagency coordinating council that meets monthly to coordinate and monitor the response of the legal system and the community to family violence. This partnership includes the Police Department, Commonwealth's Attorney Office, Courts, Mental Health, Social Services, Substance Abuse, Child Protective Services, Victim Witness Assistance, Alexandria Inova Hospital, Health Department, Adult Probation and Parole, Office of the Sheriff, Legal Services of Northern Virginia, and Office of the Magistrate. Protocols and procedures are in place for interagency referrals of domestic violence victims and their children. Subcommittees work on enhancing best practices in the legal, health care, and social service systems; provide training and workshops to allied professionals on intimate partner violence; and monitor grants and do fundraising to assist with direct services.

## **Milwaukee, WI**

The Milwaukee Commission on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault is a 30-year continuously-running City task force on domestic violence. It is a government commission created by ordinance with appointed commissioners representing government (the Mayor's office, District Attorney's office, judiciary, Police Department, school system, Bureau of Child Welfare, Department of Corrections, and County government), nonprofit community-based agencies (with a particular emphasis on underserved populations), and health care systems. Commission members work together to reduce and address domestic violence in the community at all levels. The Commission functions as the City's Coordinated Community Response to domestic violence. It also partners with several local agencies in projects focusing on domestic abuse and persons with disabilities, in health care interventions in domestic violence, and in primary prevention models for underserved populations.

**West Allis, WI**

WISH – Women Initiate Self-healing and Hope – is a new initiative in the West Allis community, a support group that meets weekly to help women gain support, insights, and strength from other women who have experienced domestic violence. It offers a safe place to learn, gain self-awareness, and heal. A local church has donated space for the meetings. The group is meeting once a week for 52 weeks. Free childcare services are provided for women with children and assistance with transportation is available to those women who do not have transportation.

A partnership formed by the Police Department with the West Allis Health Department, the Sojourner Family Peace Center, and the Woman's Club of West Allis allows law enforcement, the health profession, a local women's club, and the largest nonprofit agency in Milwaukee County to collaborate on services to alleviate isolation, raise awareness, increase victim safety, provide information on the cycle of violence, and connect victims with cross-referral services in the community.

Additional survey cities provided brief descriptions or lists of the public-private partnerships they have formed in their cities.

**Yuma, AZ** provides funding to the nonprofit Amberl's Place, which provides on-scene crisis response and follow-up. The organization has a close working relationship with all law enforcement in the area.

**North Little Rock, AR** has formed partnerships with: 1) the Attorney General's Crime Victims Reparations for reparation claims; 2) the Arkansas Commission on Child Abuse, Rape and Domestic Violence for education; 3) Dorcas House for shelter/support groups and career training; 4) the Family Treatment Program for counseling; 5) Legal Services for free legal services; 6) the Prosecutor Coordinator's Office for education; 7) the Sixth District Victim Assistance Program for advocacy support during court proceedings and related services; 8) Professional Counseling Associates for counseling; 9) Safe Places for advocacy/support groups and other services; 10). Partners for Inclusive Communities for advocacy for disabled victims; and 11) Women & Children First for shelter and support counseling.

**Fresno, CA** targets children exposed to domestic violence through a partnership involving Child Protective Services, the Victim Advocate, the MMC shelter, and the Police Department.

**Sacramento, CA** has a group of community organizations and allied agencies that are collaborating, through their membership on a board, on domestic violence issues. The members share information and discuss the problems and issues related to domestic violence with the goal of improving the response to it and ending the domestic violence cycle.

**Santa Cruz, CA** police partner on meetings, events, and press conferences on domestic violence with various resource agencies in the City as well as the City's Commission for the Prevention of Violence Against Women.

**Santa Rosa, CA** police have a long-standing partnership with the local YWCA. A YWCA advocate is stationed in the Domestic Violence Detective Unit. The County is in the final stages of building a Family Justice Center in the City that also represents a public-private partnership to address domestic violence issues in the community.

**Hallandale Beach, FL** partners with Women in Distress of Broward County, an organization that provides victims of domestic violence with safe shelter, crisis intervention, and resources, and which provides community education and advocacy aimed at ending abuse.

**North Miami, FL** coordinates with other police departments to raise awareness and educate the community on domestic violence, and is represented on the boards of several organizations devoted to reducing the number of domestic violence incidents.

**Pembroke Pines, FL** has formed partnerships with organizations such as Women in Distress; the Sex Assault Treatment Center; the Family Success Center; Work Force One; the Broward Sheriff's Office;

Kids in Distress; the Salvation Army; the Broward County Victim Rights Coalition; the Broward Domestic Violence Council; the Catholic Archdiocese; the Lutheran Diocese of Florida; Jewish Family Services; Legal Aid; Child Protective Services; the Department of Children and Family Services; the Children Services Council; and the City SW Focal Point Senior Center.

**Pinellas Park, FL** partners on an emergency shelter, counseling based on clients' needs, a peacemakers in school program, a 24-hour helpline, child abuse recovery services, a Safe Start partnership, and with other agencies combating domestic violence.

**Tampa, FL** partners with the Family Justice Center, the Circuit Court Domestic Violence Intervention Program, The Spring Of Tampa Bay (Florida's largest certified domestic violence shelter), and Metropolitan Ministries.

**Valdosta, GA** is represented on the board of directors of the domestic violence shelter and also supports other area shelters that serve persons affected by domestic and family violence.

**Boise, ID** has formed partnerships with local corporations for prevention and resource dissemination programs, and with the Family Justice Center. Strong relationships exist with community advocates.

**Pocatello, ID** works with the Family Services Alliance, an organization dedicated to assisting victims of domestic violence, and has partnered with them on grants for specific projects and personnel.

**Alton, IL**, through the Weed & Seed Program, has partnered with Lewis and Clark College to conduct a GED program and other programs related to the needs of those victimized by domestic violence.

**Glendale Heights, IL** has partnered with the DuPage Family Shelter to provide education and public awareness of domestic violence issues.

**Dubuque, IA** has a volunteer Domestic Crime Unit within the Police Department that works with the Dubuque County Sheriff's Office, the YWCA/YMCA Battered Women's Program, shelters, and probation. Their meetings are held on a regular basis. A member of the Unit is a member of the Dubuque/Delaware Domestic Violence Program.

**Bowling Green, KY** is represented on the Warren County Domestic Violence Council by members of the Police Department. The Council, established in 1998, meets quarterly.

**Burnsville, MN** partners primarily with the Community Action Council and Lewis House Shelter.

**Saint Paul, MN** works with the Saint Paul Intervention Project to provide advocacy and to interview victims the morning after the initial report of domestic violence is filed.

**Meridian, MS** is currently organizing a multi-agency community response team to aid victims of domestic violence and their families.

**Columbia, MO** partners with the shelter, prosecutor's office, probation and parole, sheriff's office, and Family Counseling Service to form the DOVE Unit, a coordinated community response to domestic violence.

**Kansas City, MO** participates in the Safe Families Coalition and has a domestic violence victims assistance unit that works with area shelters to assist victims of abuse.

**Irvington, NJ** partners with the Rachel Coalition, a group of attorneys who donate their time and provide free legal representation to victims of domestic violence, and Babyland, which provides shelter and counseling for victims of domestic violence and assists in finding jobs and obtaining medical attention for them.

**Albuquerque, NM** has the ABQ Family Advocacy Center, a police and community collaboration to address the epidemic of domestic violence.

**Clovis, NM** refers domestic violence victims to a local nonprofit organization for services and education materials.

**Niagara Falls, NY** has an informal relationship with Family and Children Services and the YWCA to refer victims for services including counseling, safe haven and emergency shelter, and monitored parental visitation.

**Durham, NC** has a Mayor's Domestic Violence Committee that consists of the Police Department, Human Relations Department, and local nonprofit organizations that address various issues stemming from domestic violence.

**Columbus, OH** government has developed within the County the Columbus Coalition Against Family Violence, which incorporates several entities addressing family violence, such as the Child Advocacy Center, Choices, Franklin County Children Services, and police into a combined response/resource. Choices, instituted in the 1970's as a safe haven for battered women, has grown to include education on domestic violence issues.

**Dayton, OH** works with the Artemis Center for Alternatives to Domestic Violence, which provides early intervention, services, and education for victims of domestic violence and their children.

**Lancaster, OH** has a Fairfield County Domestic Violence Task Force which implemented a Countywide domestic violence protocol for courts, law enforcement, and prosecutors.

**Eugene, OR** has, in addition to its individual department and service provider relationships, a communitywide, multi-jurisdictional coordinating council that deals with system-wide issues, the fostering of partnering, and funding.

**Portland, OR** police have partnerships involving Parole and Probation, other law enforcement agencies adjacent to the City, the Department of Human Services, the nonprofit Elders in Action, Animal Control, the District Attorney's office, Choices (a batterers intervention program), and Legal Aid (when funding through the grant is available).

**Fort Worth, TX** is in the process of forming a Family Advocacy Center and engaging partners.

**Haltom City, TX** is helping to fund a regional Women's Center.

**Auburn, WA** works with a City-funded citizen volunteer domestic violence response team; a domestic violence impact panel, which convicted offenders are required to attend; a domestic violence task force, which assists victims with resources; and South County Outreach, which assists victims with emergency housing.

## **BEST PRACTICES**

The survey's request for information on public-private partnerships produced many descriptions of initiatives that could be considered best practices in responding to domestic violence. In a separate item, however, cities were invited to describe their best practices, and this produced many additional examples of either policies and procedures or unique projects that have been found to be effective.

### **Tucson, AZ**

The State's Aggravated Domestic Violence law, ARS 13-3601.02, which applies to domestic violence defendants who have two prior felony or misdemeanor convictions within 84 months, requires a mandatory jail term of four months. Under a mandatory arrest policy, if an officer is called to a domestic violence situation, one of the parties is taken into custody so that the situation does not escalate.

Domestic violence detectives provide new officers with training in domestic violence procedures, law, and investigations.

### **Yuma, AZ**

The City's multi-disciplinary domestic violence team includes law enforcement, crisis response advocates, specialized detectives, City and County prosecutors, and the courts. In addition to working as a group on domestic violence cases, the team educates the community on the dynamics of domestic violence and residents' responsibility to report it. Because educating responding officers is considered paramount to the success of any domestic violence program, advocates and specialized detectives educate local officers on the dynamics of the problem and the resources available to victims. A domestic violence task force with all disciplines represented meets monthly to review statistics and trends. A newly-formed Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team headed by the County Sheriff and the County Attorney includes members from all law enforcement agencies, including Tribal agencies. This review team will examine domestic violence cases to better understand law enforcement successes as well as the gaps in the system which need to be closed to prevent future deaths.

### **North Little Rock, AR**

Because citizens and the community expect law enforcement to treat domestic abuse as a crime and to make an arrest when probable cause suggests a crime has been committed, the North Little Rock Police Department has implemented directives for police officers concerning the handling of domestic abuse cases that include a pro-arrest policy. Recognizing that law enforcement's role is only one part of the community-wide response necessary to address domestic violence adequately, NLRPD has joined with other criminal justice, social services, and advocacy agencies to combat the problem. And recognizing the importance of training in this area, officers are trained in domestic violence dynamics, laws, procedures, and departmental policies and are updated on changes or additions to the laws. For new officers, 20 hours of training specifically addresses domestic abuse; each year an additional four hours of training is provided.

Patrol officers responding to a domestic abuse incident are instructed to take immediate action to insure the safety of the victim and witnesses. Any weapons used or threatened to be used are seized. Officers determine if medical attention is required or requested. All parties are interviewed separately. Officers then verify the existence of any court order in effect and enforce the provisions thereof. An NLRPD Domestic Violence Supplement Form is completed and attached to the original incident report, using the same report number. The Domestic Violence Supplement provides detailed and graphic information regarding the domestic incident. When police officers have probable cause to believe a person has committed acts which constitute a crime, an officer can make an arrest without a warrant within 12 hours of the occurrence of those acts. Arrests in domestic violence incidents are the preferred actions of NLRPD.

A Domestic Violence Unit with a Sergeant, three detectives, and a full time victims' advocate has been established within the Investigations Division. After a domestic abuse report is written it is directed to the Investigations Division, most often the next day. The Unit's Sergeant reviews each report and runs the suspect through ACIC/NCIC to check prior arrests, warrants, or prior reports. In cases of felony arrest or prior domestic convictions, the report is then assigned to a detective for further investigation and a case file is completed. If the offense is a misdemeanor, the case is directed to the victims' advocate who will contact the victim to assist in filing of criminal charges, obtaining Orders of Protection, Crime Victim's Reparations, transportation to court proceedings, placement of victims in safe shelters, and referral to counseling, support groups, and other victim service providers. Victims are offered various forms of assistance to help them break free from their cycle of violence. The NLRPD partners with various victim service providers in the area to provide a wide range of services to victims and their families.

### **Fresno, CA**

All domestic violence-related reports and cases are handled by the Police Department's domestic violence unit, with domestic violence detectives handling investigations. It is also important to have a data base that can track victims and all aspects of the cases. In filing cases, detectives record all prior domestic violence cases or calls for service in the follow-up report, which allows the District Attorney

reviewing the case to have a complete picture of the violence or turbulence in the home. Detectives partner with a victim advocate to complete follow up and assist the victim with services needed. Upon follow-up contact with the victim the detective takes additional photos of injuries, if needed – an important step since, in many cases, bruising shows up one or two days after the incident, or appears to worsen after a few days. The detective also reviews the 911 call for evidence purposes.

Cases where children are involved or are present are referred to Child Protective Services. A response team made up of a detective, victim advocate, and CPS social worker responds to felony calls of domestic violence where children are present at any time between 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM, and are available for call outs on serious domestic crimes at any time. Once on scene they assist the primary officer with the investigation and victim services. Advocates are available to assist with restraining orders, to assist the victim with the court trial, and to explain to the victim the services, including mental health services, which are available. Victims in need of a safe place to stay are referred to the shelter. The response team conducts follow up investigations and contacts to check on the safety of the victim and children. CPS checks their data base to determine the risk level of leaving the children in the home, and to identify any prior contacts for child abuse or neglect.

It is important to arrest an offender as soon as possible. The Police Department works closely with the Fresno County Department of Probation, the California Department of Corrections' Parole Division, and the District Attorney's office in the apprehension, prosecution, and supervision of domestic violence offenders. Law enforcement aggressively pursues offenders and completes compliance checks with those on probation or parole. A task force or roundtable with representation from all aspects of law enforcement and other support agencies dealing with domestic violence will meet monthly to discuss cases and issues surrounding domestic violence.

#### **Irvine, CA**

Under the umbrella of its Family Violence Prevention Project, the Irvine Police Department has implemented a variety of projects and programs to reduce the prevalence of family violence while increasing reporting and awareness. The Department has implemented 1) a victim advocate ride-a-long program in which a trained advocate rides with a patrol officer and is available to provide on-scene crisis counseling for domestic violence victims; 2) a new, comprehensive Victims Resource Guide which is given to every victim; 3) community forums to address family violence in the community; 4) school presentations that address abusive relationships for high school- and college-aged individuals; and 5) a dedicated victim advocate assigned to the Department to provide comprehensive, customized care for victims.

#### **Murrieta, CA**

The creation of S.A.F.E., a public-private partnership, was in response to the need to educate the community regarding domestic violence and, when needed, to provide a shelter and legal or medical assistance for victims. Local law enforcement responds to domestic violence calls, files any necessary reports, makes any necessary arrests and, when needed, refers or directly transports victims to the local S.A.F.E. facility.

#### **Sacramento, CA**

In domestic violence situations, police officers make an arrest when they establish that probable cause exists, and when the primary aggressor is identified. Suspects are booked into the jail; when suspects are released, victims are alerted through the County's use of the Vine Program. The victim is referred to a District Attorney's victim advocate who provides needed help and direction. Regardless of whether the perpetrator is located or apprehended, the victim is referred to an in-house advocate for assistance in areas such as restraining orders and court appearances. Advocates may also refer victims for counseling, emergency shelter, and safety planning. Officers also provide pamphlets containing information on the Marsy's Law Bill of Rights, and a domestic violence resource guide. A new pamphlet on "Children Exposed to Domestic Violence" is designed to make parents aware of the negative effects of domestic violence on children's brain development. The Police Department works closely with the filing Deputy District Attorney, providing reports in a timely manner and getting additional evidence or information when requested.

### **San Francisco, CA**

The Department on the Status of Women coordinates the Justice and Courage Project, a progressive and precedent-setting partnership of community, government, and law enforcement that seeks to create a seamless criminal justice response to domestic violence. Collaboration among all parties in the domestic violence response system is a key to making both sweeping and small policy reforms. The Project provides a forum in which criminal justice departments talk to one another about what is working and what gaps exist; the relationships that form have led to such projects as the Victim Safety and Accountability Audit and the Domestic Violence Response Cross-Training Institute, both of which serve to close systemic gaps affecting all branches of the system.

The Department on the Status of Women formed Justice and Courage in 2002 in the wake of a domestic violence homicide that revealed a number of serious holes in the legal system's response. Since that time, the Department has engaged each of the criminal justice agencies in the process of closing those gaps – the Police Department, Probation Department, District Attorney, 911, Sheriff, and the courts.

The importance of the Department on the Status of Women as a convener cannot be overstated, as this is a critical component of building trust and a forum for interaction between departments that have historically operated separately and with little cross-communication. For example, the Safety Audit conducted in 2006 brought representatives from each agency, along with community advocates, together to openly examine and critique their own departments' protocols and procedures. Hundreds of recommendations have been implemented through this collaborative process in the years since Justice and Courage formed. The Project also provides a space for community advocates who engage with victims and the criminal justice system everyday to have a voice in the policy reform procedure.

The seven-member committee, chaired by a member of the Commission on the Status of Women, comprises community stakeholders and experts in the field of domestic violence. With private grant funding, the Department was able to bring the Domestic Violence Response Cross-Training Institute to Justice and Courage, and engaged community advocates as expert trainers of criminal justice personnel, further strengthening the relationship between government and community agencies. Through its committees, Justice and Courage has addressed a number of large-scale issues, including batterer accountability, language access to services, cross-departmental communication, the systemic response to specific issues such as stalking, and many other areas that directly impact the lives and safety of San Francisco residents. Additional information on the Justice and Courage Project is at [http://www.sfgov.org/site/dosw\\_page.asp?id=16748](http://www.sfgov.org/site/dosw_page.asp?id=16748).

### **Santa Rosa, CA**

Recognizing that strong partnerships and clear understanding of all of the roles involved in responding to domestic violence is key to making the system work for offenders, victims, and their families, Sonoma County is in the final stages of creating a Family Justice Center, a partnership of the District Attorney, local law enforcement, advocacy groups, social services, health services, legal aid, and a variety of additional public and private entities. The goal is to provide, in one place, the essential services victims need, and to ensure all agencies are working toward the same goal.

### **Vista, CA**

A Countywide protocol covering the handling of domestic violence cases, established by representatives of all elements of the law enforcement system in 1990, was updated last year. A reflection of the spirit of cooperation among all jurisdictions in San Diego County, the protocol ensures that every agency in the County will handle investigations and follow up of domestic violence cases in the same manner. The domestic violence protocol requires that 1) a pro-arrest policy is followed for domestic violence cases; 2) every domestic violence case that does not result in immediate arrest is followed up on by a detective; 3) every domestic violence victim receives a referral pamphlet documenting their rights as victims and providing them with information on numerous resources available to them free of charge; and 4) every domestic violence case report is referred to the federally-funded North County Family Protection Center for follow up by a victim advocate.

### **Bridgeport, CT**

The Domestic Violence Unit created within the Bridgeport Police Department several years ago was recognized as a model program within the State of Connecticut, and the Department helped others in the area create, or at least establish a foundation for, effective domestic violence response. Bridgeport's Unit conducts follow-ups with victims when an arrest has not been made, usually because the offender has fled the scene. A database has been created and information on new incidents and repeat offenses is added on a daily basis, allowing the Unit to establish weekly "repeat offender" listings which are available to patrol officers, domestic violence detectives, and court personnel. To ascertain that court orders were being adhered to, "home visits" are also conducted by members of the Unit. If a violation of a court order is found, on-site arrests are made.

The police lieutenant who spearheaded the Unit found that building partnerships between service providers (for adults and children) and the oversight agencies (such as Parole, Probation, and Prosecution) was the most beneficial. In weekly meetings, all entities were present and able to discuss and address any concerns regarding offenders and their victims. The training component tied everything together and ensured that members of the Department were appropriately trained in order to better understand victimology, battering, recidivism, learned behavior, and laws and orders established and implemented by the judicial system – all important in order to better assist victims and their families, effect change, and save lives.

### **Lakeland, FL**

Since implementing the Domestic Abuse Response Team – Lakeland's domestic violence response initiative – in 1990, domestic violence-related homicides have dropped to below 10 percent per year. In 1999, there were no domestic violence-related homicides in the City. Lakeland's approach was designed to be a dramatic departure from the traditional, and potentially dangerous, response to domestic violence by law enforcement in which police officers responding to calls did not want to be there, often felt they were intruding into a family's private affairs, questioned their right to tell those involved how to conduct themselves, wanted to leave quickly, and would threaten that a return call would result in someone going to jail.

Since implementing DART, repeat calls have dropped substantially and first-time calls have increased, as awareness of the DART Program prompts more calls for assistance and referrals – a reflection of citizens' faith in the system. The physical arrest rate for domestic violence calls in Lakeland is between 40 and 50 percent. The Department has approved 40 to 80 hours of additional training for DART officers. There are DART officers and a DART team squad leader on each of the four patrol squads; the team leaders provide added support and guidance in the handling of domestic violence calls to the other patrol officers.

### **Orlando, FL**

The City's Domestic Violence Response Team is comprised of police officers in the field, serving on almost every squad, who receive specialized training in domestic violence cases from the Assault and Battery Unit. All of the detectives in the Unit are assigned to DVRT as well, and training for the entire team is conducted two to four times per year. The training sessions include national speakers, local victims, the CEO of Harbor House, and a summary of recent area cases. Training the officers in the field gives them the tools they need to act quickly when a victim calls – and when there is a better opportunity to quickly capture the abuser. If this is achieved when the call for assistance is made, detectives and advocates are freed up to do follow up, relocation, and education, and to work with the State Attorney to ensure compliance with court orders and injunctions.

### **Pembroke Pines, FL**

The City has experienced an evolution in the acknowledgment of victims' rights through the Police Department's implementation of the Office of the Victim Advocate and the provision of two full-time advocates and one part-time advocate. Essentially, victims of crime are assisted through the all criminal justice system processes, from outreach to trial services, consistent with all applicable State laws. All sworn personnel are trained in the Family Support Services requirements to provide victims with various informational materials, especially the Rights and Remedies information, and in the referral of victims to

the Office of the Victim Advocate. In addition, through the Citizen Volunteer Program, specially-trained volunteers provide essential informational services to victims of crime through a variety of media.

### **Athens, GA**

Uniform Patrol Officers document all reported criminal incidents of domestic violence on police incident reports. Officers are trained to complete thorough on-scene investigations, document and photograph injuries and other evidence, and arrest or seek arrest warrants in a timely manner based on probable cause. Officers receive training regarding the services available in the community to domestic violence victims and refer victims, as appropriate, to services at the time of the incident or report. All domestic violence incident reports are reviewed daily by a supervisor in the Domestic Violence Unit and then assigned as appropriate to a detective for further investigation (non-arrest) or follow-up investigation (arrest). Domestic violence detectives conduct interviews and interrogations, complete detailed investigations, make additional referrals to nonprofit service providers, and serve search warrants and arrest warrants. They coordinate with prosecutors, victim advocates in the District Attorney's office and Solicitor General's office, probation and parole officers, and with nonprofit service providers to improve victim safety and offender accountability.

### **Valdosta, GA**

Valdosta Police Department officers protect and defend the victims of domestic and family violence and work diligently to place responsibility for the crime where it belongs. The Department takes a proactive approach to domestic and family violence, providing all sworn personnel with training in State law and updates of Georgia and federal law governing domestic and family violence. A detective in the Investigations Division is dedicated to investigation of domestic and family violence, has received extensive training in the field, and works very closely with the Municipal, State, and Superior Courts and the District Attorney's office on domestic and family violence issues. The Police Department supports The Haven, a battered women's shelter, and members of the Department serve on its Board of Directors. Regular meetings between The Haven and law enforcement officials support a productive working environment and the ultimate goals of assisting the victims of domestic and family violence and holding the responsible parties accountable when such violence occurs. Members of the Police Department routinely provide victims with information regarding the services available in the community. The Department also works closely with the Southern Judicial District Attorney's office, which provides victim advocates in violent domestic cases.

Contact with a victim does not end with an arrest in a domestic violence case. During the initial police contact, a victim bill of rights form is completed. This document helps the court system provide the victim with information throughout the legal process. It covers: the suspect's arrest, the suspect's release and consideration of release, judicial proceedings, where release is considered, victim's compensation, and legal proceedings of a criminal case throughout the judicial process.

Because educating the public is key to reducing the number of domestic and family violence cases that occur in the community, the Department's community police officer addresses community groups, at their request, on the issues and on the role of law enforcement in dealing with them.

### **Glendale Heights, IL**

It is the policy of the Police Department to provide immediate, effective assistance and protection to victims of domestic violence and to take appropriate action against offenders. Department members treat all acts of domestic violence as criminal conduct, and domestic violence incidents are treated in the same manner as all other requests for police assistance in cases where physical violence has occurred or been threatened. The Department offers assistance, intervention, and referrals to all families experiencing conflict in an effort to prevent acts of domestic violence. Officers familiarize themselves with, and follow, the DuPage County Domestic Violence Manual.

### **Fort Wayne, IN**

A Lethality Assessment Program for first responders was implemented by the Police Department in June 2009. The Program screens domestic violence victims using a lethality scale; for those found to be high on the scale – that is, at high risk of homicide – the police officer handling the case will immediately

telephone the YWCA Domestic Violence Shelter and have the victim speak with an advocate on the telephone; the advocate attempts to get the victim to come to the shelter or provides other outreach services. The Department has found that this program is easy to implement, that it creates a partnership between domestic violence advocates and law enforcement, and that it increases the number of victims who seek services.

### **Bowling Green, KY**

The Barren River Area Safe Space, Inc., a regional domestic violence shelter and program, worked with the Bowling Green Police Department to develop the Police-based Advocacy Program. In its ninth year, this program is a collaborative effort to extend services to victims, assist with the filing of protective orders, and increase local law enforcement's domestic violence services. Two advocates employed by the local domestic violence program are provided office space, equipment, and other support by the Police Department. One advocate processes the JC3's (reports from domestic violence calls) and makes all follow-up contacts with victims, thus saving officers' time and extending Department services to victims.

### **Louisville, KY**

Over the years, Louisville has implemented many projects and programs to assist victims of domestic violence and to hold perpetrators accountable. Examples include development of a Mayor's Domestic Violence Prevention Coordinating Council, Fatality Review Subcommittee, Domestic Violence Intake Center, ADT/AWARE Program, Enhanced Domestic Violence Docket, No Drop Prosecution Policies, as well as Pro Arrest Policies, Roll Call Training, Domestic Violence Warrant Initiatives, a Third Run Follow-up Program, and a Specialized Detective/Advocate partnership within the Metro Police Department. City officials take pride in the strong working relationships and shared vision that has been established throughout the community to assist victims of domestic violence.

### **Boston, MA**

The Boston Police Department's "Community Policing" philosophy extends to its response to domestic violence crime in the City: Detectives, though centrally assigned, concentrate on specific neighborhoods; the Department makes every effort to ensure that, whenever possible, victims work with the same detective throughout the duration of their case and after any subsequent incident. The Department also cross-checks domestic violence and gang databases to identify domestic violence offenders who may also have ties to gangs or gang-related activity. These offenders are targeted for direct indictment, federal prosecution, additional criminal charges, and/or tougher sentencing when feasible. Detectives' pro-active approach also includes checking every offender's probation status and notifying probation officers when offenders violate the conditions of their probation.

The Department is committed to a dual strategy in addressing domestic crime in Boston: holding the perpetrators accountable while at the same time taking a victim-centered approach. Civilian advocates follow-up with victims to make sure they are safe and offer a wide range of information, resources, and advocacy services available in the community. Finally, the Department offers continual training to detectives and advocates working in the Domestic Violence Unit, and also to the first responders – the patrol force – in an effort to continually improve the quality of the interaction between police officers and victims of domestic violence.

### **Burnsville, MN**

The Burnsville Police Department established the Domestic Abuse Response Team more than 15 years ago with a goal of providing a comprehensive initial response and in-depth, multi-disciplined follow-up investigations. The team consists of specially-trained officers in the patrol and investigation units who assist victims in seeking advocacy services and in safety planning, and who maintain continued contact with them during investigations and court proceedings. DART officers utilize the latest technology to aid in building the most comprehensive cases possible based on victimless prosecution philosophy. Each DART officer is issued a digital camera to photograph the scene, victims, and suspects. Digital audio recordings of victims', witnesses' and suspects' statements are taken at the scene and/or during follow-up investigations. Ultimately, DART officers seek to reduce the impact of future court proceedings on the victim – an effort to avoid re-victimizing victims.

DART meets quarterly, bringing together police, prosecution, and probation representatives and Community Action Council advocates. Cases are reviewed, victims and suspects monitored, threat assessments completed, and long-term solutions for victims developed. DART officers also represent the Police Department on County and judicial district task forces to plan coordinated countywide responses to domestic violence. DART officers attend annual specialized training provided by recognized national leaders in domestic violence response. Officers also receive specialized training in evidence photography and evidence collection from Police Department Physical Evidence Officer experts. Burnsville DART has become a recognized leader in domestic violence response and has trained officers throughout the Twin Cities Metro and surrounding areas on its multi-disciplined response to domestic violence.

### **St. Paul, MN**

A statewide blueprint of best practices being developed includes organized responses to domestic violence by police, advocates, and City and County attorneys. All GOA cases are reviewed each day with the attorneys and determination of which cases are looked at first is based on a series of lethality questions. Cases in which children are present during an assault are more aggressively prosecuted. The Joint Prosecution Unit is made up of both City and County attorneys.

### **Columbia, MO**

The Police Department's Dove Unit handles domestic violence on a coordinated community response basis. Patrol officers handle initial calls for service. If probable cause exists and a dominant physical aggressor is identified the suspect is arrested; if the suspect cannot be located a warrant application is submitted. Officers collect evidence and photographs of the scene and injuries. The victim is offered a ride to a shelter or other safe place, given information on orders of protection, and offered medical services, if needed. DOVE detectives contact victims within 48 hours of the initial report and collect additional photographs of injuries and additional details on the incident. Detectives also work on locating and arresting the wanted domestic violence suspects. All members of the DOVE Unit meet on a monthly basis to exchange ideas and information that further the team's efforts to combat domestic violence in the City.

### **Piscataway, NJ**

The City's Domestic Violence CIT, in existence since 1995, is an innovative model for societal change that establishes a cooperative effort to provide services to victims of domestic violence and their children among abused women's services, local municipal police departments, and community volunteers. CITs also provide immediate responses to issues of dating violence. The goals of the CITs are to train community volunteers and provide assistance in the form of supportive counseling to battered women and their children, or people in dating relationships, at local police departments immediately following domestic violence incidents, when the victims are most upset, confused, and vulnerable.

The mission is to provide comfort and support, referrals and resources, and emergency shelter for all victims of abuse in time of need, and to prevent and intervene in domestic violence through immediate response to victims and education of community members. Working as immediate response counselors with the police, CITs see firsthand the impact of domestic violence on victims and their families. CITs also furnish information on the legal process, so that battered women may understand the various options available to them under the law (restraining orders, criminal charges, mandatory arrest policies, etc.). It is expected that persons making informed choices within the legal system will be less likely to drop orders of protection and more likely to follow through with subsequent proceedings, since they will have positively opted to take action rather than remain in an abusive relationship. The goal is that all victims are provided with current information concerning their legal rights as victims of abuse, including information on the special needs of immigrant women. CITs act as advocates with the police for abused women so that they may get the protection they are entitled to under the law, and provide an extensive list of community resources so that they may get the help they need to eliminate violence from their lives.

Other goals include: 1) establish cooperative efforts among abused women's services, local police departments, and community volunteers, all of whom work to protect victims of domestic violence; 2)

increase sensitivity of police, law enforcement officials, the judiciary, and court personnel to the needs of battered women and children; 3) strive to educate the community, including children and teenagers, that domestic violence is not all right and that people must speak out against it; 4) encourage the Board of Education to incorporate curriculum designed for all school-aged children on the danger of violence in the home; 5) send a message to abusers that the community will not tolerate domestic violence; 6) promote awareness of violence against women and work toward diminishing its occurrence through education, research, and advocacy; and 7) continue to train community volunteers to meet the challenge of eradicating the cycle of family abuse, which is such a serious and destructive force in our communities.

### **Rio Rancho, NM**

The Rio Rancho Police Department has a specific policy and procedure regarding law enforcement response to domestic violence-related incidents. It adheres to a strict policy regarding the reporting of domestic violence and in determining probable cause for arrest. In addition to their response to incidents, officers utilize crime victim advocates to assist victims and encourage them to leave abusive relationships. The advocates remain in contact with the victims and ensure transport to and from court.

### **Niagara Falls, NY**

The Police Department is taking a highly concentrated approach to reducing incidents of domestic violence in the City. Arrest paperwork is given top priority and compliance with orders of protection is monitored closely. A mandatory arrest policy is in force for any violation, as is evidence-based prosecution to protect against a lack of victim involvement. An interagency task force was recently formed to facilitate this process. The number of arrests for criminal contempt for violating an order of protection has nearly doubled from last year, from 82 to 156.

### **Rochester, NY**

The Police Department Domestic Violence Committee recently used funds from the Domestic Violence Consortium to develop a training video for officers and supervisors. Titled "Even in Our Families," the video was used at the Department's spring '09 in-service training session and in a recent State law enforcement training session. Featuring three actual Department officers involved in domestic crimes, the video aims to appeal to veteran officers, to illustrate that domestic violence affects "our own."

### **Columbus, OH**

The Columbus Division of Police requires an immediate response to domestic violence calls, mandates report taking, and enforces a preferred arrest policy. Arrests are made when the primary aggressor can be determined. Initial response requires thorough investigation, documentation, and collection of evidence. All reports and arrest and investigative materials are placed in a distinct domestic violence envelope and sent directly to the prosecutor's office with an arrest or filing of domestic violence charges. Misdemeanor cases involving offenders previously convicted are presented to a roundtable of municipal and County prosecutors, advocates, and police for review and consideration of enhancement to felony charges. The Division's Domestic Violence Unit is staffed for around-the-clock operation seven days per week. The two daytime shifts work in offices located in the City Prosecutor's Office to ensure close collaboration in the handling of cases. Felony cases are investigated and handled by trained domestic violence detectives and misdemeanor cases are handled by patrol officers with assistance from domestic violence detectives when needed.

### **Portland, OR**

The City maintains a Domestic Violence Enhanced Response Team within its Domestic Violence Unit whose members, police officers and community-based advocates, focus on the City's higher lethality cases. The Team goal is to hold offenders accountable while keeping victim safety at the core of all efforts. DVERT takes a "wrap around" approach with victims, working with community partners to make victims feel safe and better able to take steps needed to move ahead.

### **Providence, RI**

The Law Enforcement Advocacy Initiative provides funding to support a LEA at the Providence Police Department so all victims will receive the support and advocacy services they need throughout the criminal justice process. Without information and support, victims often become confused and frustrated

with the legal process and may decide not to pursue the case. Without safety planning, crisis intervention, and support services, victims of domestic violence will often return to their abuser. The LEA provides these much-needed services to victims throughout Providence.

### **Arlington, TX**

In addition to on-scene crisis response and/or telephone outreach by masters' level victim counselors, the Police Department's Victim Assistance Program maintains an extensive database of repeat domestic violence victims – victims who have had two or more contacts with police regarding family violence incidents. These victims are re-contacted periodically to follow up, review options and services available to them, and discuss safety issues. Their homes are flagged so that officers responding to these locations are aware that there is a domestic violence history and may want to consult with Victim Services Counselors or call them out to respond when a new incident has occurred. The Police Department has had a “no drop” policy in place since 1987, and the Tarrant County District Attorney has had this policy since 1991. Under the policy, charges are not dropped by the Police Department at the victims' request, and the District Attorney requires that victims who wish to drop charges first attend a four-hour counseling and information session provided through the local family violence shelter before making the request. The Department has also received funding to add a Spanish-speaking counselor to conduct more extensive outreach to Spanish-speaking victims, including immigrant victims, in order to encourage reporting and make them aware of laws that may protect their status if they report the crime.

### **Burlington, VT**

A Countywide Domestic Violence Task Force serving Burlington has operated since 1982. While level of participation has varied over the years, the Task Force has always been recognized as a resource for both law enforcement and nonprofit domestic violence service providers. With the exception of a general victim advocate assigned to the Vermont State Police Derby barracks two years ago, the only police-based domestic violence victim advocates in a law enforcement agency in the State are in Chittenden County. Domestic violence victims in the City and County are handled under updated policies and provided with updated resource material. Five of the 10 municipal police agencies in the County have a police advocate. The Task Force continues to seek funding to hire additional police advocates to cover additional agencies.

### **Alexandria, VA**

**Police Training:** All new recruits and 911 Operators are trained on policies and procedures related to domestic violence, stalking, protective orders and firearms violations. Roll call training occurs at least once yearly to update patrol officers and review best practices.

**Mandatory Arrest in Domestic Violence Cases:** Virginia law mandates arrest in domestic violence cases where probable cause is found; additionally, a local mandate requires that police contact the domestic violence hotline from the scene of all domestic violence calls, regardless of whether an arrest is made, to put the victim in touch with an advocate immediately. Advocates assess for shelter needs, provide safety planning, and inform victims of legal options and rights. The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia assists with prosecuting local domestic violence cases in Federal Court, where applicable.

**Victimless Prosecution and No-Drop Policies:** One prosecutor is assigned all domestic violence cases in the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office. A domestic violence detective is assigned to every case for enhanced evidence collection and follow-up interviews with the victim and defendant; this includes pre-trial meetings with the victim, advocate and prosecutor, and weekly case rounds including advocate, prosecutor, and domestic violence detective. The domestic violence unit sergeant reviews all police reports daily.

**Victim Advocacy and Legal Accompaniment:** The Victim-Witness Advocacy Program reviews all police reports and refers all sexual and domestic violence cases to the Office on Women's Sexual and Domestic Violence Advocacy Programs. Advocates provide fair, compassionate, and respectful treatment of all survivors of sexual and intimate partner violence regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression. Services

include crisis intervention, individual and group counseling, medical and legal accompaniment, access to resources, and referrals.

**Coordinated Community Response:** Memorandums of Understanding are adhered to so all agencies work together to provide seamless services to survivors and their children. Protocols govern referrals from medical personnel, including emergency department staff and emergency medical technician first responders to advocates for immediate emergency response; from law enforcement officers to advocates and child protective service workers for immediate emergency response; and between the courts, law enforcement and advocacy agencies for case coordination.

### **Milwaukee, WI**

Milwaukee's response to domestic violence is built on the Coordinated Community Response model, which brings together all organizations and institutions in the community able to contribute to any aspect of prevention, crisis response, and healing. Recently, the City's traditional crisis response model has been supplemented by Mayor Tom Barrett's creation of an Office of Violence Prevention within the Health Department. The new entity is applying health care prevention models (including early education in schools) to domestic violence incidents. The 33-member Milwaukee Commission on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault now operates within this new Office and its work is expanding to cover the full spectrum of domestic violence prevention and response, including healing for survivors and child witnesses to violence. The Commission is also working to ensure quality services for batterers, and is building non-traditional partnerships in the community with men's organizations and others that generally have not been involved in past efforts. One grant-funded partnership with a local agency is actively developing best practices for providing domestic violence victims with disabilities with all levels of service, from community advocacy to government and criminal justice response.

### **West Allis, WI**

Each year the Police Department, in coordination with the Victim Advocate, trains officers in the handling of domestic violence calls. The program provides officers with informational packets to be given to all victims of domestic violence while on the scene, and officers are instructed to place a phone call to the Domestic Violence Hotline immediately following a call for service, to insure the victim has access to support. These practices have been central to increasing victims' safety, providing information on the criminal court process, and connecting victims with cross-referral services in the community. The collaborative effort between the Department and the Victim Advocate is considered essential in combating the high rate of incidents and in addressing the causes of domestic violence.

Many other respondents to the survey provided brief descriptions of the approaches they were taking to domestic violence or of specific initiatives they have launched.

**Miramar, FL** utilizes an Empowerment Model to help victims/survivors gain control of their lives. Through education and resources, the survivor is able to maintain autonomy from their abusive relationship and learn to build healthy relationships.

**Maui, HI** operates under a general order that requires patrol officers to call the 24-hour domestic violence hotline to connect victims with advocates whenever there is an arrest for a domestic violence offense. The hotline advocates then work directly with victims to create a safety plan and share information on resources such as restraining orders and safe shelter.

**Boise, ID** screens domestic violence cases on a daily basis, with a detective being assigned to a case on the same day or on the day after an incident has taken place. This enables the detective to complete an interview prior to arraignment and permits a more extensive interview with the victim in the early stages of the case.

**Woodbridge, IL** pursues a Countywide policy mandating an arrest when evidence of a physical assault exists. As a condition of bail bond the offender must refrain from any contact with the victim for 72 hours – a requirement that reduces the more violent repeat domestic violence incidents.

**Meridian, MS** obtains for domestic violence suspects a conditional order, signed by a judge, detailing conditions of release and/or bond. If an order is violated, a suspect can be held until the initial court appearance. A judge can also require a cash bond for release.

**Kansas City, MO** has a Domestic Violence Victims Assistance Unit that has assisted over 2,000 domestic violence abuse victims by providing court advocacy, court notification, and referrals to services.

**Irvington, NJ** adheres strictly to the New Jersey State Attorney General's guidelines in the handling of domestic violence matters. This includes assisting victims through the legal process, protecting them from further acts of violence, and assisting them in obtaining the help they need to become self-sufficient.

**Clovis, NM** works closely with the District Attorney's Office and a local nonprofit organization, both of which have victim advocates, in handling domestic violence cases.

**Santa Fe, NM** has developed a lethality assessment for use by law enforcement officers responding to domestic violence incidents. Using the lethality assessments, officers have been better able to determine primary aggressors. The City also has a large "bystander" campaign which encourages residents to call when they think they see or hear domestic violence.

#### **New York, NY**

The Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence developed and distributed to healthcare providers Citywide more than 4,000 copies of a best practices manual, "Medical Providers' Guide to Managing the Care of Domestic Violence Patients within a Cultural Context." The publication provides best practices on the assessment and treatment of domestic violence victims in diverse populations.

**Dayton, OH** is working under a federal grant that aids its Domestic Violence Squad, in conjunction with the City Prosecutor's Office and Artemis Center, in successful investigations and prosecutions of repeat felony domestic violence and POV offenders.

**Lancaster, OH** follows a Countywide domestic violence protocol, taken from the Statewide protocol model, that focuses on victimless prosecution and strong victim support, contains a "no drop" policy on charges, and emphasizes training for law enforcement.

**Eugene, OR** provides services to children and families involved in domestic violence through its Child Advocacy Center, a safe place where children can be interviewed by police and other practitioners.

**Haltom City, TX** is working in partnership with three other agencies to fund and share a Crime Victim Liaison/Advocate that the City believes will greatly increase its ability to serve the victims of domestic violence as well as other crimes.



## SURVEY CITIES

Mobile	Alabama	Bowling Green	Kentucky
Avondale	Arizona	Louisville	Kentucky
Tucson	Arizona	Boston	Massachusetts
Yuma	Arizona	Peabody	Massachusetts
North Little Rock	Arkansas	Dearborn Heights	Michigan
Fremont	California	Burnsville	Minnesota
Fresno	California	Saint Paul	Minnesota
Irvine	California	Hattiesburg	Mississippi
Los Angeles	California	Meridian	Mississippi
Murrieta	California	Columbia	Missouri
Redondo Beach	California	Kansas City	Missouri
Sacramento	California	Irvington	New Jersey
San Francisco	California	Piscataway	New Jersey
Santa Cruz	California	Sewell	New Jersey
Santa Rosa	California	Albuquerque	New Mexico
Sunnyvale	California	Clovis	New Mexico
Vista	California	Rio Rancho	New Mexico
Bridgeport	Connecticut	Santa Fe	New Mexico
West Haven	Connecticut	New York City	New York
Pembroke Pines	Florida	Niagara Falls	New York
Hallandale Beach	Florida	Rochester	New York
Lakeland	Florida	Durham	North Carolina
Miramar	Florida	Columbus	Ohio
North Miami	Florida	Dayton	Ohio
Orlando	Florida	Lancaster	Ohio
Pinellas Park	Florida	University Heights	Ohio
Tampa	Florida	Eugene	Oregon
Athens	Georgia	Portland	Oregon
Valdosta	Georgia	Providence	Rhode Island
Maui	Hawaii	Charleston	South Carolina
Boise	Idaho	Arlington	Texas
Pocatello	Idaho	Fort Worth	Texas
Alton	Illinois	Haltom City	Texas
Glendale Heights	Illinois	Burlington	Vermont
Joliet	Illinois	Alexandria	Virginia
Mount Carmel	Illinois	Auburn	Washington
Woodridge	Illinois	Milwaukee	Wisconsin
Fort Wayne	Indiana	West Allis	Wisconsin
Dubuque	Iowa		



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