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▶ EDWARD BYRNE MEMORIAL
JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM

Criminal Justice and Community-Based Domestic Violence Services

FY 2001-2005

Executive Summary

What have we learned after four years?

Prepared for

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Background

Introduction

During FY 2001 – 2005 (October 1, 2001 – June 30, 2005), the Criminal Justice Services Division (CJSD) of the Oregon Office of Homeland Security provided \$3,301,506 in funding for innovative criminal justice and community-based services aimed at preventing and treating domestic violence and its consequences through the Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Formula Grant Program (Byrne grant). In collaboration with the Governor's Office and the Governor's Drug and Violent Crime Advisory Board, CJSD selected eight domestic violence programs aimed at preventing or providing services related to domestic violence. As a condition of funding, each program was required to hire an evaluator to examine program implementation issues and analyze program output and outcome data to assess program effectiveness. CJSD contracted with Program Design and Evaluation Services (PDES) to summarize evaluation results and lessons learned from all eight programs (based on each program's original individual cumulative reports) so as to make recommendations for future Byrne program selection, implementation, and evaluation.

In 2001, based on national and local research as well as the specific needs of domestic violence victims and their children in Oregon, the Oregon Governor's Office, CJSD, and the Governor's Drug and Violent Crime Advisory Board prioritized and funded eight criminal justice and community-based programs in four priority areas: 1) programs for domestic violence victims who are traditionally underserved (i.e., immigrant and refugee women, women living in rural areas), 2) programs for children exposed to domestic violence and their non-abusing parents (i.e., support, counseling, and education programs for children and supervised visitation and exchange services for children and their custodial parents), 3) crisis line services, and 4) enhanced supervision for offenders.

Seven of the eight programs completed a four-year funding cycle at the end of September 2005. The eighth program, the Domestic Violence Misdemeanor Supervision and Supervision Enhancement Program in Clatsop County, completed a three-year funding cycle in August 2004 and then voluntarily terminated their Byrne funding. This is a summary of program outcomes, lessons learned during implementation, and recommendations for future program selection, implementation, and evaluation.

Methods

As stated earlier, CJSD subcontracted with PDES to oversee the evaluation process for the eight programs. Each program was required to spend at least 10

percent of the overall budget on evaluation including hiring or subcontracting a local program evaluator. The average annual evaluation budget for the programs was \$10,000 so programs conducted limited studies that included assessing program implementation, monitoring program outputs (e.g., program completion), and collecting post-only (or pre-post in some instances) data on key outcomes. Over the course of the four years, each program worked closely with their local evaluator to complete an evaluation plan including an in-depth program description, logic model, implementation lessons learned, basic program outputs, and key outcomes that were specific to their program. Specific information about each program's evaluation plan and findings can be found on-line or by calling CJSD. This report is meant to be a summary of individual program findings, as analyzed by local evaluators and program staff, so that general lessons can be gleaned about services for underserved domestic violence victims, children who witness domestic violence, other domestic violence victims, and domestic violence offenders in Oregon.

Findings

Overall, the domestic violence programs funded by a Byrne grant from 2001 – 2005 reported success in serving their intended populations, implementing their proposed interventions, and positively affecting domestic violence victims, children exposed to domestic violence, and offenders. Brief program-specific summaries are provided below (including a description of each program, program participants, and key outcomes) followed by lessons learned across the eight programs.

Domestic Violence Education Program for Immigrant and Refugee Women

The Domestic Violence Education Program for Immigrant and Refugee Women was designed to address domestic violence within the immigrant and refugee community by providing: 1) English as a second language (ESL)/domestic violence (DV) classes for women focusing on life management skills, legal issues, safety planning and community resources, 2) case management and advocacy services to domestic violence survivors, and 3) law enforcement training to enhance officers' ability to respond to domestic violence in immigrant and refugee communities.

From 2001 to 2005, a total of 448 immigrant and refugee women, 18 years and older, attended ESL/DV classes and 129 immigrant and refugee victims of domestic violence received case management and advocacy services. These women represented 37 ethnic groups; Forty-percent of the women were Hispanic, one-quarter were Asian/Pacific Islanders, and one-fifth were white (mostly from Russia or Eastern European countries). In addition, 491 police officers received training.

Over the last four years, the Byrne grant enabled IRCO to provide valuable services to a population often underserved due to legal, linguistic, and cultural

barriers. The importance of this program is evident to program staff and the immigrant and refugee community members as an active link between service providers, law enforcement agencies, and the immigrant and refugee communities they serve. Women who completed ESL/DV classes gained knowledge about the U.S. legal system as it pertains to the domestic violence. All case management clients received safety planning, and 80 – 95 percent of them achieved their short-term and long-term goals, ranging from having their immediate needs met (e.g., safe and stable housing, restraining order) to attaining self-sufficiency. Outreach and training to law enforcement agencies increased officers' knowledge and understanding of domestic violence issues in immigrant and refugee communities, which, in turn, helped enhance officers' ability to respond to domestic violence in immigrant and refugee communities.

VAWA Immigration Project

The VAWA Immigration Project was designed to help immigrant victims of domestic violence in Oregon based on the 2000 reauthorization of the 1994 Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and immigration law. The VAWA Immigration Project consisted of three main components: 1) legal consultation and representation to assist immigrant victims of domestic violence, primarily Hispanics, in the process of gaining lawful immigration status under the VAWA, 2) outreach and education to educate immigrant victims of domestic violence and victim service providers about victims' rights under immigration law, and 3) a pro bono training program in which attorneys and interpreters were trained to represent immigrant victims of domestic violence.

From 2001 – 2005, 613 families (613 potential immigrant victims of domestic violence and 524 of their children) received legal consultation services. Most of the 1,137 clients were female (77 percent) and Hispanic (79 percent). Of those, 494 families received legal representation services to apply for lawful immigration status and 837 immigrants and victim services providers participated in 57 one and one-half hour outreach and education sessions. In addition, 31 attorneys and interpreters participated in three eight-hour training sessions.

The VAWA Immigration Project provided a valuable service to many immigrant victims of domestic violence. The project was able to successfully apply for immigration visas for 99 percent of applicants, a rate far exceeding the national rate of 77 percent. Clients who received legal consultation and representation services reported that as a result of receiving program services, they improved understanding of their cases and legal options, felt safer, and became more hopeful about their future legal status. In addition, the program leveraged resources by educating community-based service providers and training attorneys and interpreters to understand this issue and provide free services.

Enhance Shelter Services

The purpose of the Enhance Shelter Services program was to provide the residents of a domestic violence shelter (Chloe House) in rural Coos County with

information, skills, support, and activities that address the importance of emotional and physical well-being. The two main components of the Enhance Shelter Services program were case management and a variety of health and wellness/enhancement activities (e.g., peer buddy system, yoga).

From October 1, 2001 through June 30, 2005, the Enhance Shelter Services program provided services to 257 adult female victims of domestic violence. Of 183 for whom demographic data is available, most were between the ages of 18 and 44. Three-quarters of the participants were White, 10 percent were American Indian/Alaskan Native and six percent each were Hispanic or multi-racial.

Enhance Shelter Services was a unique domestic violence shelter program because it combined the most basic of shelter services (case management) that were not available before in this rural area of Oregon with innovative, holistic health and well-being activities that are usually not available in most shelters. Shelter residents participated in both case management and enhancement activities and reported increased knowledge about domestic violence and community resources, being able to rely on their safety plans, benefiting from the group enhancement activities, improved quality of life, increased self-efficacy, and lower depression.

Safe Families – Support for Children Witnessing Domestic Violence

The purpose of the Safe Families - Support for Children Witnessing Domestic Violence (Safe Families) program was to target child witnesses of domestic violence and their parents or caregivers and provide them with services necessary to increase their safety and improve their emotional and behavioral health. The main components of the program were: group therapy, individual therapy, and family therapy (provided in one-hour increments once a week or once every other week).

From October 1, 2001 through June 30, 2005, the Safe Family program provided services to 130 children (under age 18) and 55 of their parents. Almost three-quarters of the children (73 percent) and 67 percent of the parents completed the program. Of the children who received program services, 53 percent were male (42 percent were female and 5 percent were missing this data) and 90 percent were White.

The Safe Families program provided a valuable service to children and their parents in the local community who had been exposed to domestic violence. According to the results of the parent survey, there were improvements from the time of their program admission to completion in the following areas: children's and parents' emotional and behavioral health, children's and parents' safety, and parents' knowledge about domestic violence.

Hope, Education, Resources, and Opportunities (H.E.R.O.) for Kids

The Hope, Education, Resources, and Opportunities (H.E.R.O.) for Kids program was designed to identify, screen, and provide services for children in Multnomah County who had witnessed domestic violence. Program services included: referral, contact, and outreach to non-offending parents (or custodians); intake assessment; individual and family case planning; educational groups; safety planning; individual counseling; wrap-around services, and; exit assessment. The core components of the program were educational groups for children and their parents.

From October 1, 2001 through June 30, 2005, 371 children and 226 of their parents completed intake. Of those, 208 children and 133 of their parents participated in educational groups. Sixty-seven percent of the children completed the groups and 66 percent of the parents completed the groups. Of the 371 children who were initially enrolled, almost half were female (49 percent), all were between six and 14 years of age, 60 percent were White, 19 percent were Hispanic, 11 percent were multi-racial, and eight percent were Black or African American.

The H.E.R.O. for Kids program provided a valuable service to children and parents in the local community who had been exposed to domestic violence. According to the results of several parent and child surveys, from the time of children's program intake to completion, there were improvements in children's emotional and behavioral health, parents' communication with and empathy for children, and children's safety planning and other knowledge and skills to cope with domestic violence. These improvements also seemed to be sustained three months after program completion.

Kids First Safe Alternatives Center (Kids First)

Kids First Safe Alternatives Center (Kids First) was a supervised visitation and exchange program that provided an opportunity for non-custodial or non-residential parents, primarily in Lane County, to maintain contact with their children in a safe and neutral setting. Kids First had two primary components: 1) supervised visitation of parenting time for families in which the children generally live with one parent and see the other non-custodial parent only under supervision, and 2) supervised exchanges in which children are transferred from one parent to the other under supervision without the parents contacting each other. All of the families served by Kids First involved a history or allegations of domestic violence. The main purpose of the program was to ensure the safety and well-being of child and adult victims of domestic violence.

From October 1, 2001 through June 30, 2005, Kids First provided 4,081 supervised visits to 97 families (97 custodial parents, 97 non-custodial/visiting parents, and 187 of their children) and 707 supervised exchanges to six families (six custodial parents, six non-custodial/visiting parents, and nine of their children). Of the 206 custodial and non-custodial/visiting parents who received supervised visitation or

exchange services, half were female, most were White (79 percent), and 75 percent were between the ages of 25 and 44 years old.

The Kids First Safe Alternatives Center provided a valuable service to families who experienced domestic violence by offering an opportunity for non-custodial parents to share time with their children in a safe and neutral setting. As of June 30, 2005, 100 percent of supervised visits and exchanges had zero incidents of exposure to physical assault. As a result of receiving program services, custodial parents reported improvement in their own safety and well-being as well as the safety, well-being, and emotional/behavioral health of their children.

Centralized Domestic Violence Information, Referral, and Crisis Counseling Line

The purpose of the Centralized Domestic Violence Information, Referral and Crisis Counseling Line was to plan, design and implement a state-of-the-art centralized domestic violence information, referral and crisis counseling line (IRC) for the Tri-county region of Oregon (Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington Counties). The program aimed to address the growing needs of victims and service providers for an effective, centralized access point for various victim services and resources. The IRC program consisted of two primary components: planning (evaluating the regions' needs and current services, gathering information to guide the redesign process, and developing a redesign and implementation plan) and development and implementation (pilot testing the new model, ongoing training and skill development of the IRC staff, expanding use of new call-handling procedures, implementing collaborative agreements, updating and distributing the Information and Referral Software System (IRis) database, seeking additional funding sources, and fine-tuning the IRC model as needed).

From October 1, 2001 to June 30, 2005, the PWCL received 86,554 calls including 39,588 related to domestic violence. Unfortunately, demographic information on callers was not routinely collected by PWCL staff.

Through Byrne funding, staff were able to identify the critical components in an IRC model in terms of technology, protocols, and staffing and develop a service model. Overall, the new centralized domestic violence IRC resulted in an increased capacity to handle domestic violence and sexual assault calls from both survivors and domestic violence service providers. In addition, the implementation process resulted in an increased sense of collaboration among agencies that provide domestic violence interventions. However, these findings must be viewed as general indications rather than program outcomes since the program struggled with collecting demographic and satisfaction data from callers. In general, both victims and providers indicated that the new service was improved over the old service, although the process evaluation and anecdotal information from staff and victims indicated that the new call handling protocols were not always consistently implemented.

Domestic Violence Misdemeanor Supervision and Supervision Enhancement Program

The Domestic Violence Misdemeanor Supervision and Supervision Enhancement Program (Domestic Violence Supervision Program) was designed to increase the safety of domestic violence victims while providing specialized supervision and services to domestic violence offenders under formal supervision for a domestic violence or domestic violence-related offense. The Domestic Violence Supervision Program has three primary components: enhanced supervision, treatment services, and victim services. The primary goals of the program were to: 1) Increase the safety of domestic violence victims; 2) Enhance supervision of domestic violence offenders; 3) Provide a resource to victims of domestic violence whose offenders are on supervision; and 4) Respond to violations of offender/victim contact.

Near the end of the third year of Byrne funding, the Director of Clatsop County Community Corrections (who was the Grant Program Manager) accepted a new job as Director of Jackson County Community Corrections. As a result of his leaving and because Clatsop County was able to continue the program by using county funds, Clatsop County Community Corrections did not apply for a fourth year of Byrne funding. This early and sudden termination prohibited the program from completing all of their evaluation activities.

From October 1, 2001 through September 30, 2004 (the period of Byrne grant funding), a total of 300 offenders participated in the program. Unfortunately, cumulative demographic data is not available for these participants.

Full outcome data is not available due to the early termination of the program. However, the program evaluators were able to calculate offender recidivism rates (any new felony convictions with an incident date subsequent to admission to the program) and domestic violence re-offense rates (convictions for misdemeanor or felony domestic violence assaults). Of the 300 offenders who participated in the program, 12 percent were convicted of new felony crimes (compared to the average Clatsop County recidivism rate of 25 percent) and three percent were convicted of new domestic violence assaults. Program evaluators interviewed key stakeholders (including a community service provider, a probation officer, a law enforcement officer, and a prosecuting attorney) who felt that the program was "indispensable to the county; it's had a huge beneficial impact. I can see this from my own conversations with offenders in the program and their families;" "... any time you take a particular population with similar dynamics and supervision requirements and put them with one person, you have a higher quality of supervision, and greater protection for the community. You become very familiar with the populations, with how they react, how to communicate with them, how to predict behavior, how to intervene when you see that behavior, and how to elicit better information from collaterals;" "[the program] allows for consistency and accountability, running things through one person. I know who to talk to when I'm dealing with domestic violence. [Offenders] I've dealt with seem to be held accountable. They don't like it, but that's probably a good thing."

Lessons Learned

Programs for Traditionally Underserved Populations

All three programs found that it was possible and valuable to provide domestic violence services to rural and immigrant domestic violence victims who are largely underserved. The two programs funded to serve immigrant and refugee victims of domestic violence (the Domestic Violence Education Program for Immigrant and Refugee Women and the VAWA Immigration Project) stressed the importance of outreach and training to law enforcement and other service providers, while the Enhance Shelter Services program for rural domestic violence victims stressed the value of regular communication within the organization. All of the programs learned a great deal about how to collect program and client data and appreciated that the findings helped them to make mid-term program adjustments and provide evidence of program success.

Programs for Children Exposed to Domestic Violence and Their Non-Abusing Parents

The two education/counseling programs for children who witnessed domestic violence (the H.E.R.O. for Kids program and the Safe Families program) and the supervised visitation and exchange program (Kids First Safe Alternatives Center) recognized that many children are affected by domestic violence and a variety of programs are needed to help keep them safe and attend to their needs. The two education/counseling programs experienced difficulty recruiting enough children and learned that active community outreach was essential, while the supervised visitation and exchange program learned to utilize a pool of volunteers to handle the ever increasing number of visits and exchanges. Core to both programs was the acknowledgement that children are part of a family and any program for children must also address the safety of the non-abusing parent. Offering an environment in which the dynamics of domestic violence are well understood and parents and children are respected and empowered are key factors in program success.

Crisis Line for Domestic Violence Victims

Updating a local crisis line for domestic violence victims (e.g., the Centralized Domestic Violence Information, Referral and Crisis Counseling Line) is a valuable undertaking that involves culture change, protocol revisions, and new technology. Each of these new aspects can take a long time to implement and the process may create tension within the organization hosting the crisis line as well as the local community. Key components of a centralized domestic violence crisis line include appropriate technology, paid professional staff, clear call handling procedures, ongoing training and supervision, collaboration with community-based partners, and improved outreach to victims.


Enhanced Supervision Program for Domestic Violence Offenders

While it is essential to provide services to domestic violence victims and their children, programs aimed at domestic violence offenders are also crucial. Staff and community stakeholders affiliated with the Domestic Violence Misdemeanor Supervision and Supervision Enhancement Program were satisfied that the program reduced recidivism and felt that utilizing one highly qualified and motivated domestic violence probation officer to provide a high level of supervision to misdemeanor and felony offenders (including swift consequences for noncompliance) by using standardized program guidelines was the key to success. In addition, staff and key stakeholders identified strong partnerships between the domestic violence probation officer and the treatment provider as well as between all county providers involved in domestic violence as important program components.

Recommendations

Program staff and key stakeholders overwhelmingly felt that these programs were successful and should be continued. As discussed above, they learned many lessons through the implementation, operation, and evaluation of each of the eight domestic violence programs. Common themes among programs are discussed below in terms of recommendations for future program selection, implementation, and evaluation.

- It is important to identify statewide priority areas for funding. Due to the prevalence of domestic violence across all racial, cultural, social, and economic groups and the myriad of negative consequences, many prevention and intervention programs would be of benefit to victims, children, or offenders. However, involving key stakeholders in priority setting ensures that the most pressing areas are tackled first. Over time, the state will build a portfolio of evidence-based programs that can be replicated in other areas or for different populations. Future programs may expand to serve other underserved populations using program models with some evidence that they would be beneficial for the intended population.
- Collaboration between community-based organizations that serve domestic violence victims, children or offenders (e.g., shelters, parole and probation, counseling) takes time to develop and solidify, but when the collaboration takes hold it is a powerful force in serving clients and producing positive outcomes.
- Community outreach and education about domestic violence and its consequences as well as the benefits of programs that serve victims, children, and offenders is important to build support for programs, establish programs as a known resource, develop referral protocols, and ensure sustainability.

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- Program staff require training and supervision in data collection and may benefit by using a client database to store program data. If funding permits, professional program evaluators can design an evaluation that will provide the program with key information needed for quality assurance, to determine effectiveness, and to support sustainability.