

## **ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

### **Domestic Violence Training for Frontline Workers**

In September 1996, the Anne Arundel County DSS received a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to pilot test domestic violence training for frontline workers. DSS contracted with the YWCA of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, the local domestic violence service provider, to conduct the training. The training was completed in February 1997. As a result of the grant, 150 DSS staff were trained.

The staff included workers from: Child Care, Child Support, Eligibility, Job Counseling and Child Welfare. Also in attendance at the training as observers were several staff from the Maryland Department of Human Resources. All trainees completed a survey evaluating the training and the trainers. Subsequent to the training, DSS staff developed unit-specific strategies for incorporating domestic violence screening and referral in their daily operations.

Of the 12,650 customers screened during the first two years (Anne Arundel County screens all Food Stamps, Medicaid and Cash Assistance customers), 5 percent either “acknowledged” being victims of domestic violence (537 customers) or were “suspected” of being victims (24 customers).

Of those screened, 4,779 were cash assistance applicants and recipients, for whom the screening rate was higher: 7 percent.

The services available for all victims include: referral for counseling and legal options, funds for a family’s relocation (for example, first month’s rent and security deposit), and in some cases, temporary exemption from the work requirements.

#### **Replication**

Maryland is one of twelve states to adopt the Domestic Violence Option/Wellstone Murray Provision of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 in its Temporary Assistance for Needy Families State Plan.

In March 1997, DHR, with the input of local departments of social services, decided to replicate the training statewide. In September 1997, DSS received additional funds from HHS to lead the replication project.

*A “how to” manual for the training was developed and is available by contacting: Vesta Kimble, Deputy Director, Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services, 80 West Street, Annapolis, MD 21401. Telephone: (410) 269-4603; Facsimile: (410) 974-8566.*