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Jefferson County, Kentucky, Arrest Policies Project

**A Process Evaluation
On Site August 1999**

February 10, 2000

Prepared for
**Jefferson County Police Department
National Institute of Justice
Violence Against Women Office**

Prepared by
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Introduction

The Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies Program encourages jurisdictions to implement mandatory or pro-arrest policies as an effective domestic violence intervention that is part of a coordinated community response. Congress appropriated funds for this program under the Violence Against Women Act (1994). The Program assumes that the arrest of a batterer will leverage the coercive and persuasive power of the criminal justice system to ensure victim safety and manage the behavior of abusive, violent offenders. Ensuring victim safety and offender accountability are the guiding principles underlying the Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies. The Violence Against Women Act directs that the Arrest Program funds be used to

- Implement mandatory arrest or pro-arrest programs and policies in police departments, including mandatory arrest programs or pro-arrest program and policies for protection order violations;
- Develop policies and training programs in police departments and other criminal justice and tribal agencies to improve tracking of cases involving domestic violence;
- Centralize and coordinate police enforcement, prosecution, probation, parole or judicial responsibility for domestic violence cases in groups or units of police officers, prosecutors, probation and parole officers or judges;
- Coordinate computer tracking systems to ensure communication between police, prosecutors, and both criminal and family courts;
- Strengthen legal advocacy service programs for victims of domestic violence by providing complete information and support for a victim of domestic violence as the case against her abuser moves through the criminal justice system; and
- Educate judges and others responsible for judicial handling of domestic violence cases, in criminal, tribal, and other courts about domestic violence to improve judicial handling of such cases.

The Institute for Law and Justice, Inc. (ILJ) is conducting a national assessment of the Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies Program, which is funded by the National Institute of Justice. ILJ is using a three-stage methodology for this evaluation. First is an annual national assessment of all sites that will document the type and extent of projects funded. Second, a process evaluation of twenty sites will examine the process and problems associated with implementation of the project. And third, an impact evaluation of five to six sites will assess the

impact of the project on the agencies involved, victim well-being, offender accountability, and the community.

This report is a process evaluation of the Arrest Program in Jefferson County, Kentucky. The report describes the project environment, grant formulation, how the project was implemented, unit operations, challenges, community coordination, project resources, and information management. Conclusions and recommendations are offered.

Project Environment

The metropolitan area of Louisville and Jefferson County has a population of 664,937; almost one in five people in the state live in Jefferson County. The population is largely white with 17 percent African American and 1 percent being other minorities.

State Legislation

The state of Kentucky defines domestic violence and abuse (KS §403.715) as “physical injury, serious physical injury, sexual abuse, assault, or the infliction of fear of imminent physical injury, serious physical injury, sexual abuse, or assault between family members or members of an unmarried couple.” Family member means a spouse, previous spouse, a parent, a child, a stepchild, or any other person related by consanguinity in the second degree.

State statutes also require all courts to provide 24-hour access to emergency protection orders. Violation of a protection order is a Class A misdemeanor. No contact orders are issued as a condition of release.

Each court is also mandated to establish local protocols in domestic violence matters. The protocols must be submitted to the Kentucky Supreme Court for review.

Law Enforcement

The Jefferson County Police Department has 447 sworn officers and is responsible for crimes that occur outside the city of Louisville (365 square miles). The department has a pro-arrest domestic violence policy. The police chief has been supportive of the Arrest Project.

The Louisville Police Department is responsible for law enforcement within the city of Louisville and is very active in the community efforts to combat domestic violence. The

Department also has an Arrest Polices grant (\$620,000) to initiate it's own domestic violence efforts within the city's five districts.

The Jefferson County Sheriff's Department provides courtroom security and serves official documents such as E.P.O.s, subpoenas, warrants, etc. Jefferson County Corrections runs the county jail.

Court System

The court system in Kentucky has four levels—Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, Circuit Court, and District Court. In Jefferson County, Family Court consists of District and Circuit Court judges, each cross-sworn. Unlike most jurisdictions, the court system in Jefferson County is very progressive and is trying to find ways to effectively handle domestic violence cases. The following sections discuss Circuit, District and Family Courts where domestic related cases are handled.

Circuit Court

In Kentucky, Circuit Court handles civil actions over \$4,000, dissolution of marriages, adoption, termination of parental rights, and appeals on record from District Court. Most felonies start in District Court and proceed to Circuit Court after being waived to Grand Jury for indictment. The Commonwealth Attorney's Office handles felonies and prosecutes cases in Circuit Court. This office has a domestic violence and child abuse unit.

District Court

District Court hears misdemeanor cases and the County Attorneys Office prosecutes cases in the five separate courts. The domestic violence unit in the County Attorney's Office has an attorney assigned to each court. In addition, the unit has an attorney as director and one attorney who circulates where needed. Domestic violence cases are usually Assault 4, and the Office has a "no drop" policy. Victims are occasionally subpoenaed to testify; if she doesn't appear, the prosecutor asks for a "forthwith." A forthwith authorizes the police to go to a victim's home and bring her to court. Victims are held in contempt if they do not appear or are blatantly using the system.

District Court has a Domestic Violence Intervention Program for first-time offenders. Defendants are eligible for the program if there were no weapons and no children involved in the incident. The defendant is required to enter a guilty plea and a no contact order is issued. The program is for six months of counseling and the case is dismissed without prejudice if the defendant is compliant within that time. The case can also be expunged upon the request of the defendant, however, this practice makes it difficult to identify repeat offenders.

In cases where the defendant doesn't qualify for the intervention program and is a repeat offender, the court typically imposes a 90-day sentence or probation for 2 years upon completion of a counseling program. These cases aren't eligible for expungement.

Domestic violence cases are currently spread throughout the five courts. Cases filed by police are held in the morning and citizen complaints in the afternoon. District Court is currently under reform to improve the handling of domestic violence cases. This was inspired by five judges who attended NCJFCJ domestic violence training. A judicial domestic violence reform committee has been formed to evaluate the options. The Hall of Justice where District Court is held is being renovated to accommodate two courtrooms across from the victim advocate office, which includes a victim waiting room and conference area. The estimated time for completion is fall of 2000. The general assembly is assisting in developing the new District Court structure. Ideas being considered include:

1. Combining some dockets by removing the domestic violence cases from five dockets, thereby freeing judges for a domestic violence rotation/standalone court.
2. Eliminating arraignment court, which would free up a judge for a domestic violence docket
3. Each judge could assume responsibility for a portion of the cases and designate days to hear domestic violence cases.

The use of lethality assessments and a centralized intake for domestic cases is also being considered. The intake system would provide emergency protection orders (EPO) and warrants and would have a multi-disciplinary team (paralegal, advocates, attorneys, child and adult protective services, police, prosecutor, etc.) on duty and on call. The County Attorney leading this effort applied for a state VAWA grant.

Family Court

Family Court handles the EPO's, divorce, adoption, parental rights, paternity, child abuse, dependency, and neglect cases. Paternity court is confidential and only the parties involved in the case are allowed in the courtroom. EPO hearings are not confidential.

During the time of the site visit, several protection order cases were heard before the court and many of the cases were dismissed with or without prejudice. Cases can be dismissed without prejudice if one of the parties doesn't appear in court. Best practice guidelines followed by many judges suggest re-issuing EPO and subpoena parties if respondent is served. A bench warrant is sometimes issued. A few protection orders were also dismissed upon the request of the complainant. It appeared to be very easy to get an order dismissed. However, after interviewing several judges, the author concluded that it depends on which judge is presiding.

Grant Formulation

The Jefferson County Office for Women was created in 1991 in response to a domestic violence case that resulted in the victim's murder when the system failed her. Its primary focus is domestic violence. Other women's issues addressed are financial concerns, economic issues, sexual harassment in the workplace, gender equity in the courts, health concerns, and safety and defense. The Office has been instrumental in passing Kentucky's domestic violence legislation in 1992 and 1996 and assisted with the development of the victim notification system (VINE). In January 1996, the Office helped to establish the Jefferson County Domestic Violence Prevention Coordinating Council (DVPCC).

Needs Assessment

A subcommittee of the DVPCC arranged for a needs assessment to be conducted in the county to identify what was needed to better combat domestic violence. The Jefferson County Police Department conducted the assessment. The assessment identified and prioritized several areas that needed improvement. These areas are as follows:

- Supervised visitation for families where safety is an issue
- Improved communication and coordination between law enforcement and the court system
- Law enforcement investigations

- Violence prevention information for victims
- Domestic violence case processing
- Increasing accessibility to services.

Planning

After the assessment was conducted, the Office of Women brought the Arrest Policies RFP before the council. The police department and other agencies involved were asked if the ideas for a Domestic Violence Unit (DVU) and victim services were feasible. With their feedback and approval, the grant coordinator for Jefferson County, the Director of the Office for Women, and members of the Crime Commission wrote the initial Arrest Policies grant.

One of the biggest inadequacies in planning was the omission of funds for equipment such as cars and radios for HIP officers. Space needed for the unit was also omitted from the expansion proposal. The police department stations are very overcrowded and could not accommodate DVU staff by the time the expansion occurred.

The second proposal built upon the activities of the first. Obstacles encountered during the first grant period were documented and the inter-agency subcommittee had a good sense of what was needed to improve the DVU. The Jefferson County Police Research and Planning Department was actively involved in the second grant proposal since the scope was countywide. The Office for Women and the Crime Commission also assisted.

Goals and Objectives

The overall goal for the project is “to employ a coordinated and integrated response to domestic violence that emphasizes victim safety and offender accountability.” The goal and objectives have basically remained the same during the initial and continuation grants, however, some expansion has occurred. The initial objectives were:

Objective 1: To enhance the activities of the Domestic Violence Prevention Coordinating Council (DVPCC) in order to increase victim safety and offender accountability throughout Jefferson County.

The DVPCC will organize a public information campaign concerning safety planning to reduce the number of domestic violence related assaults/fatalities. Safety planning and resource guides will be designed and distributed to private agencies, law enforcement, and all city and

county government agencies. Specialized and experiential training programs for police, medical personnel, and advocates was held. A centralized visitation center was established to provide victims with a safe place to deliver their children to the paternal parent.

Objective 2: To evaluate and assess the effectiveness of domestic violence arrest policies when combined with a comprehensive coordinated response at the community level.

This goal involves the creation, implementation, and evaluation of a Domestic Violence Response Team in David District (District D), which accounts for the largest number of domestic related calls for service. Responsibilities of the team are to targeting repeat offenders, investigating cases, conducting follow-up investigations of domestic violence related incidents, preparing cases to increase offender conviction rates, and monitoring perpetrators of domestic violence to ensure accountability. Police officers, advocates, a probation officer, and a home incarceration officer were hired to form the nucleus of the team.

District D was designated as a “pilot” community-based location for victims to obtain legal protection and expedite issuance of protection orders and warrants. This arrangement provides immediate access to a trial commissioner for approval of warrants and a sheriff’s deputy to serve court papers.

A thorough review of the computerized information and distribution policies was conducted. A consultant developed the necessary linkages for the system to provide access to process EPOs and warrants within each district. A plan to improve coordination and collaboration among criminal justice, advocacy, medical, educational, and social service communities was also developed.

In the continuation grant, the pilot project in District D was expanded to Adam, Baker, and Charlie Districts (Districts A, B, C). Districts A and B were combined. Each response team includes police, advocates, probation, and corrections. All other goals and objectives were continued.

The Partnership

The Center for Women and Families (CWF) is the non-profit partner in the Arrest Project in Jefferson County. CWF is located in downtown Louisville. The mission of the Center is to

empower, heal, enrich, and advocate for women and families. The Center's service area serves 14 counties, 7 in Indiana and 7 in Kentucky. Both the West Louisville and the Southern Indiana campus have a full range of services for victims, including shelter, transitional housing, counseling, hospital and court advocacy, and child development services.

The Center is the only organization of its kind in the area and was the obvious choice for a non-profit partner. The partnership with the Center has been beneficial for both agencies although there have been some frustrations on both sides. During the site visit, some DVU members expressed concerns about the advocates being employed by the Center. Although, the Sergeant in the DVU directly supervises the advocates, the Center is ultimately responsible for any disciplinary action that becomes necessary. This has created some difficulties in setting boundaries of authority for the police department. Since, the beginning of the project, there has been one incident where the DVU wanted to terminate an advocate. Initially, the Center was not supportive. Advocates expressed some confusion about authority figures and the ambiguity in tasks given to them. It is also unclear whether there is buy-in from all Center staff to support the Arrest Project.

Implementation

The Arrest grant began March 1, 1997 and within the first two weeks, interviews were conducted and staff was selected for the pilot response team in District D. The team began to formulate policies and receive training needed to perform their new roles. The team officially began responding to calls for service on April 10, 1997. The problems encountered with implementation were

- Dealing with the bureaucracy of the county government took a lot of time. The fiscal management of the project was difficult, therefore, there were delays in getting the unit set up.
- In planning for the grant, necessities such as HIP cars and radios, and office space were left out of the budget.
- Hiring advocates was difficult because of the low salary offered. The team advocates are shelter employees. Therefore, they have to be compensated using the same salary scale as other shelter advocates even though their job duties are different.

- Initially, the Home Incarceration Program (HIP) officer was trying to monitor all offenders as frequently as possible. This was very time consuming.¹ Now HIP focuses on active domestic violence cases
- Paternal parents who participated in the Exchange Center would try to use volunteers to relay messages to the victim.

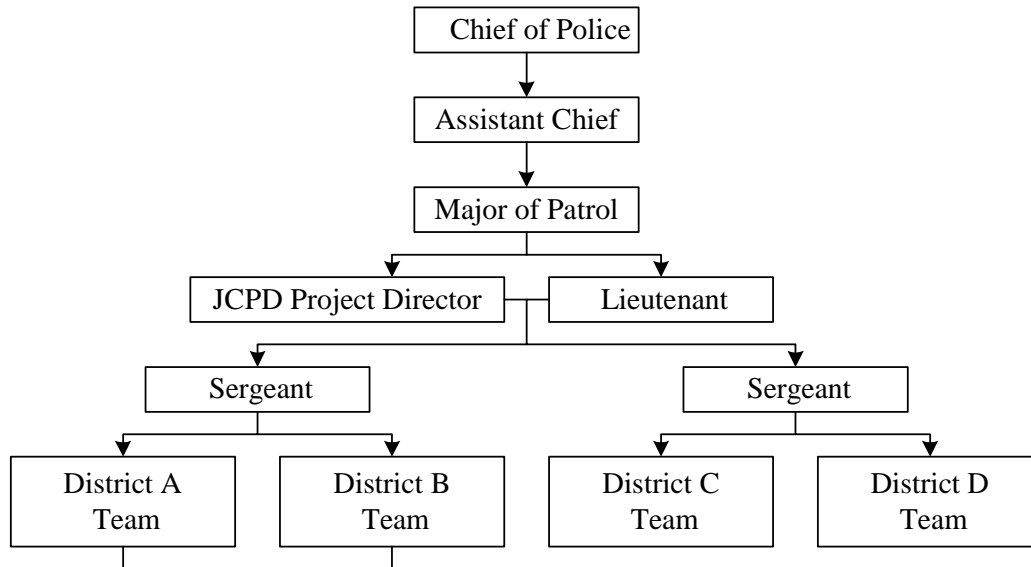
Operational Description

There are three response teams assigned to the four districts in Jefferson County. Districts A and B have been combined and one team handles the domestic incidents in this area. Districts C and D each have their own response teams. There are two Sergeants assigned to the unit (1 for A/B, 1 for C/D) and a Lieutenant and Director oversee all the team operations. When the pilot project in District D was started, a Lieutenant was not needed; with the expansion and decentralization of the team, a higher command was needed to oversee operations. The following chart illustrates the organization of the unit.

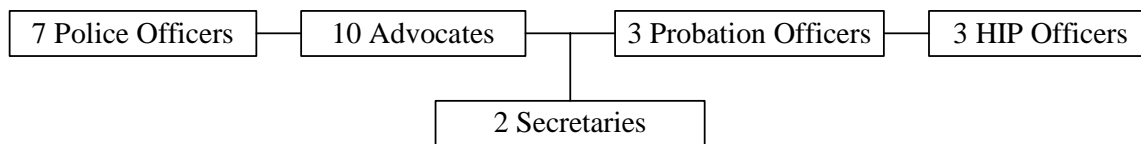
¹ HIP officers now use offender background information to help determine the level of monitoring.

Exhibit 1: Jefferson County Police Department Domestic Violence Unit

JCPD - Domestic Violence Unit Organizational Chart



Domestic Violence Unit Team Staff



Domestic Violence Protocols and Procedures

The Jefferson County Police Department revised its domestic violence policy in September 1996. The policy states that a JC-3 (incident report) should be completed in all known or suspected domestic violence incidents. If a responding officer is not part of the Domestic Violence Unit (DVU) and determines that more intensive investigation is needed, the officer should notify the DVU. Other guidelines for notifying the DVU are

- Victim and/or suspect in domestic violence incident receives a serious physical injury
- Spousal rapes
- Domestic related kidnapping or hostage situations
- Domestic related stalking cases where victim is in imminent danger
- If officers at the scene are having difficulty determining primary aggressor and particularly high risk or complex cases

- All domestic felonies.

The policy also clearly states which factors should be considered in determining primary aggressor. The factors are

- Threats creating and presence of fear
- Self defense
- History of violence between parties
- Creditability
- Height/weight of parties
- Criminal history
- Offensive/defensive injuries
- Level of violence
- Seriousness of injuries
- Corroborating witnesses and evidence
- Demeanor.

Officer/Advocate Team

The DVU officers and advocates respond to all scenes of verified intimate partner violence from 3 p.m. to 1 a.m. daily. They are on call the remaining hours of the day to respond to domestic felony calls or any high lethality cases. Officers and advocates respond to and do follow-up investigations on domestic related (includes stalking and sexual abuse—intimate partner cases only) incidents during their shift. The DVU is always called when a domestic felony occurs.

When the response team is on the scene, the advocate engages in crisis intervention, discusses safety planning, legal options, shelter, protective orders, and provides the victim with an information packet. The officer records the incident by collecting written and recorded statements from the victim and any witnesses, photographs injuries, documents history of abuse, determines primary aggressor, arrests perpetrator when appropriate, collects all crime scene evidence, and secures any weapons.

Follow-up is an important element of the officer/advocate team. On average, a victim is seen three times by the team after an incident occurs. Advocates continue to offer services to victims (e.g., housing, employment) and the officer continues to conduct follow-up

investigations. Taking photos of injuries within days after the incident and questioning neighbors and family members who may have witnessed the incident are some of the many follow-up activities. The team accompanies the victim to all court hearings involving the abuser, including EPO hearings, divorce or custody, as well as any criminal hearings pending. Transportation is provided if necessary.

Domestic Violence Orders (Protection Orders)

The advocates on the team are sworn clerks of the court so they have the ability to take affidavits for EPOs in the office (previously victims had to go downtown, wait, struggle through confusing bureaucracy). The advocate files the petition with the victim and contacts the trial commissioner by phone and reads the petition. If the trial commissioner approves the protection order, the advocate fills out the temporary EPO form, which is good for 14 days. Custody information is attached to the order and the victim gets a certified copy. A copy of the order is either faxed or hand delivered by HIP Officers to the Sheriff’s Office so the offender may be served.

Probation

There are three probation officers assigned to the DVU. Probation officers work varied hours and monitor domestic violence and sexual assault (intimate partners only) offenders placed on supervised probation. All violations are reported to the court as well as the officer/advocate team, so they can inform the victim. DVU probation officers try to provide intensive supervision to all offenders on their case load. The following chart describes each level of probation that a offender can be placed on.

Exhibit 2: Levels of Supervision

Level	Requirements
Intensive	Report to probation and parole officer weekly. Also includes a curfew from 10pm to 6 am seven days a week.
Maximum	Report to probation and parole officer two times a month.
Medium	Report once a month.
Minimum	Report once every three months.
Administrative	Probation officer performs one records check each quarter.

All probationers are subject to search and seizure if a probation officer has reason to believe that illegal drugs, alcohol, a volatile substance, or other contraband is in their possession. Convicted domestic violence offenders (felons and misdemeanants) are prohibited from possessing a firearm, ammunition, or any dangerous instrument. Compliance with court-ordered treatment or counseling is monitored, as are no contact orders. The offender and the probation officer sign a contract indicating the conditions of supervision including any financial obligations (e.g., restitution, supervision fee, child support, and fines) that need to be paid.

Home Incarceration Program (HIP)

Jefferson County Department of Corrections administers the Home Incarceration Program (HIP). Offenders on the HIP are either sentenced to the program or are on pre-trial monitoring. HIP officers average a caseload of 35-40 offenders. The maximum time an offender can be in the program is 12 months. There are three HIP officers assigned to the DVU, and their average domestic violence caseload is 20. Each officer is assigned to one of the DVU offices.

The HIP officers monitor home-incarcerated domestic violence and intimate partner sexual assault inmates located in the county. The HIP officers work from 5 p.m. to 1 a.m. and conduct unannounced home visits, verify domestic violence orders, and conduct breathalyzer and drug tests. The frequency of visits is determined by the history of the defendant. Offenders wear electronic anklets and their location is monitored 24 hours a day from a remote location. HIP officers also assist with serving arrest warrants, transporting perpetrators, and finding wanted offenders. The HIP officer also registers the offender with the VINE system. In the event of an escape, the victim is notified immediately by VINE and/or the HIP officer. HIP officers have taken the lead in finding and capturing escapees.

The officers can enter an inmate's residence and gather information without a search warrant. Unlike probation and parole, there are no provisions for this in HIP policy.

Exchange Center

The Office for Women oversees the Exchange Center, which is located in the Hall of Justice in downtown Louisville. The center is open Wednesday – Sunday and provides a safe place for parents to drop off and pick up their children for court-ordered exchange. When

participants sign-up with the center, a criminal record check is done on both participants for any outstanding warrants and protection orders. One parent picks up the child and returns the child to the center where the custodial parent picks the child up. The center alleviates a long-standing problem that the courts have faced. Domestic violence victims with no contact orders now have a safe place to drop off children without having to see the other party. Parents arrive at the center in staggered intervals to prevent contact.

If someone violates the Exchange Center rules, a letter is written to the judge who heard the case and participants are terminated from the program. Termination can occur if a parent is consistently late/no show, arrives intoxicated, etc.

The center averages about 25 to 30 exchanges a week, depending upon the terms of the court order. Originally the center operated with one part-time employee and several volunteers. The center currently has one full-time coordinator (a county employee) and several volunteers.

The center would like to collaborate more closely with the Family Support Center, which offers supervised visitation and other services. A satellite facility (in the county) has also been considered, but there are concerns about finding a secure location.

Current Challenges

The Jefferson County Domestic Violence Unit (DVU) has struggled with high turnover of advocates. Advocates for the unit are hired and employed by the Center for Women and Families (non-profit partner). However, the advocates that work with the DVU have different and expanded duties than other advocates of the center. The pay scale for all advocates of the center is the same. Unlike traditional advocates, DVU advocates work 3 p.m. to 1 a.m. and are expected to be in court with victims at 8 a.m. if necessary. It has been challenging to retain competent advocates at the DVU with the amount of compensation that is offered, and the high expectations in terms of hours, hazardous duty, skill, and judgment.

The site visit revealed that some members of the DVU feel a power struggle between the police department and its non-profit partner. At times, there is confusion over who actually supervises the advocates since they report to the DVU daily. The supervisor of the advocates at the Center for Women cannot be on-site daily.

Some officers also feel that the CAD system operators need clarification about what constitutes a domestic call. Occasionally, DVU officers are sent to answer non-domestic calls. This problem is a training issue that must be addressed so that DVU officers can be used as effectively as possible.

There are two Sergeants who work in the DVU. One supervises Districts A and B the other Districts C and D. Since Districts A and B are combined and centrally located, contact with the officers and supervision is simplified. However, Districts C and D are in different locations and it is sometimes logistically difficult for the Sergeant, who is located in District D, to communicate and have contact with officers and advocates in District C.

Information Management

Jefferson County Police and District Court are having new case management systems installed within the next 18 months. The current systems are antiquated and there is no way to share information. A program called “Perp Tracks” was written for the DVU to track cases during the pilot project, however, this program could not accommodate the expansion of the unit countywide nor could it be networked within the police department’s system. The private computer company that wrote the original program was consulted on modifying the program to accommodate the new scope of the project, but the bid was too high—over \$100,000. Consequently, the police department detailed a programmer from headquarters to develop a Microsoft Access program to track and log unit cases. The program accommodates previously entered data and has the ability to create statistical reports. It will be available to the entire department through the network by early 2000.

The unit holds case conferences monthly. Each sergeant (A/B and C/D) holds case conference meetings. At the meetings, the team discusses any felony and problematic cases. HIP and probation officers may discuss any new perpetrators on their caseloads. These meetings keep team members abreast of any issues relevant to their district and enhance coordination.

Confidentiality is maintained between officers and advocates. Officers of the DVU cannot look into advocate files, however, some information can be shared verbally. The supervisor at the Center for Women and Families reviews advocates’ case files routinely to ensure proper case handling and documentation.

Project Evaluation

The project evaluation consisted of a process and a summative evaluation of results during the initial months of the program's service. A time series design was used to compare each district with its performance during the preceding year. During that time, the response team was only operating in District D. District C was initially used as a comparison group for District D in the first year of the evaluation. The following methods were used:

- Compare current records and develop records systems for objective criteria from which to obtain performance measures
- Conduct individual interviews of consumers, identified in a two-phase process through police reports and social service providers
- Present illustrative case studies of incidents handled by the unit
- Survey perceptions of police, courts, and victim services personnel regarding program effectiveness
- Assess the usage and utility of the visitation center
- Evaluate rates of calls for service vs. reports taken and actual arrests
- Evaluate rate of repeat calls to specific residences, and any reduction in rate
- Assess the efficacy and utility of access to LINK terminal
- Evaluate information dissemination procedures and efficacy
- Examine rates and recurrence of domestic violence within the county both before and after the implementation of the program, as well as selected analysis of domestic violence rates in similar or adjoining districts.

A draft report was submitted in March 1999 and the findings were as follows:

- There was a statistically significant difference in the number of calls for service, actual domestic violence incidents, arrests, convictions, and number of days incarcerated between District D and District C.
- The pre and post tests of District D found that there was an increase in the number of domestic violence arrests. However, there was no significant difference in the number of domestic violence calls for service, number of written reports, or convictions. This finding contradicts to other parts of the study.
- Interviews with clients revealed positive experiences with the unit. Victims felt their safety was improved and reported some sense of empowerment.
- Prosecutors and judges reported better case preparation by unit police officers.

The evaluation of the project has been frustrating. The original evaluator completed a draft of the first report and was not asked to continue. The evaluator was on a personal contract

although he worked for a university. His boss felt as though the university was responsible, therefore, she agreed to continue the evaluation. Later, she realized she was too busy to work with the unit. A crew of researchers from the University of Louisville submitted a proposal to complete the evaluation. However, the county did not approve of one of the researchers working on the project because of prior unmet commitments. The rest of the team refused to work without him and resigned in solidarity. In August 1999, the director, through her masters studies identified a research team from the Kent School of Social Work. This team of PhDs is currently involved in other domestic violence research and has been working diligently to make up for lost time.

Resources

The Jefferson County Police Department has received \$2,400,000 in Arrest funds, \$625,000 the first year. Funds were initially awarded in March 1997 and continue until February 2000. Arrest funds were used to pay salaries for members of the team, cover training, database development, office space, and equipment. The DVU also had a COPS grant that paid for overtime for two advocates to work with police to do follow-up (1996). The unit also had a DART grant through the County Attorney's Office. A state VAWA grant was received in 1997, 1998, and 1999; it is pending for 2000.

The unit consists of a Director, a Lieutenant, two Sergeants, seven officers, ten advocates (depending on turnover), three probation officers, three HIP officers, and two secretaries. The unit has experienced some attrition, especially with advocates.

The original project director and Sergeant of D District left and there was no one in charge for two months. This occurred two months prior to the conclusion of the first grant. The police department did not want to hire anyone until the continuation grant was officially awarded. In last quarter of 1998, a new project director and a Lieutenant were hired. They, in turn, selected sergeants and police officers.

Community Coordination

The Domestic Violence Prevention Coordinating Council has taken the lead in addressing domestic violence in Jefferson County. The DVPC meets quarterly. The council consists of agency heads, elected officials, and policy makers. There are three subcommittees—inter-

agency, mortality review, and a database committee (recently inactive due to a similar committee through the crime commission). The mortality review subcommittee meets as necessary on a case-by-case basis. The inter-agency subcommittee meets every other month and consists of representatives from the Jefferson County and Louisville Police Department, judges, victim service organizations, prosecutors, probation, and other criminal justice personnel. The DVU has recruited two victims to serve in 2000.

The Judicial Reform committee also shows the importance of domestic violence to the community. The committee is working to improve the system so victims can receive the help they need and perpetrators can be prosecuted effectively. The remarkable effort put into the reform is bound to have a positive impact on victims, perpetrators, and the community. Again, reform initiated after judges attended training suggested and paid for by the grant.

Interagency Collaboration

The interagency subcommittee of the Domestic Violence Prevention Coordinating Council, which includes police, courts, prosecution, probation, corrections, and victim services, is very active. This subcommittee has various subcommittees within it that address issues such as emergency protection orders and warrants. The committee problem solves and strives hard to create a team effort in helping victims. Jefferson County has achieved a level of collaboration that many places strive for.

Site interviews and committee meetings have demonstrated an extraordinary level of commitment, and there is no doubt that efforts to address domestic violence will continue in some form after federal funds end. The Chief has committed to using police resources to continue this effort.

During the site visit, personnel commented that improved informal communication among agencies has allowed effective case handling. The unit has been able to move forward with cases quicker than before.

Policy and Leadership

Typically, the push to do something about domestic violence is done primarily by grass roots organizations. Jefferson County is the exception to this rule. The leadership in Jefferson

County, as it relates to domestic violence, is phenomenal. Judges, agency heads, and community leaders are all on board to combat domestic abuse. A judge is a chair or co-chair on several committees or sub-committees on domestic violence. Many judges have highlighted domestic violence on their political agenda during re-election campaigns. This represents real commitment to “the cause.”

The committees are actively pursuing policy changes to more efficiently handle domestic violence cases. They have been successful at doing so because of the type of people committed to the issue. To effect change, you need the support of policy makers, judges, agency-heads, etc. Jefferson County has achieved this.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Jefferson County is by far one of the most progressive jurisdictions when it comes to addressing the problem of domestic violence. This program can serve as a model for other jurisdictions that are trying to achieve inter-agency and community collaboration. Despite the lack of adequate planning for equipment, the unit has made the necessary adjustments. Although this program has shown exemplary process, there are a few small enhancements that can be made to refine its efforts. They relate to the advocates, the unit’s response to initial calls, and increased supervision.

Advocates

The first recommendation is to clarify the boundaries for supervision of advocates. The project director, Lieutenant, and supervisor at the Center for Women and Families need to clarify the level of authority the Sergeants have regarding the advocates. It may also be beneficial for the project director or Lieutenant to participate in the interview process to assess the candidate’s ability to perform with the DVU. This may lessen the ambiguous authority that is felt by some advocates.

Another issue that relates to the advocates is salary. The salary for advocates in the unit is very low. This has been a partial cause of the high turnover in the unit. High turnover can be detrimental to a unit such as this because continuity is vital to success. Ultimately, this problem will have to be solved by a pay increase or a decrease in duties. The center will have to realize that the duties of the advocates within the unit are more demanding.

Initial Calls

During the site visit, the process evaluator participated in ride-alongs with DVU officers and there was little initial response to domestic calls. The unit is called to the scene when there is a felony case, serious injury, rape, kidnapping, or domestic related stalking. However, most domestic incidents don't escalate to this level which would make the number of initial responses by the unit small compared to the total number of domestic violence incidents.

Increased Supervision

The Domestic Violence Unit has two Sergeants; one for Districts C and D, and one for District A/B. Since the A/B unit is essentially one unit for two districts, one Sergeant is adequate. However, Districts C and D are two fully staffed units with one Sergeant. It has been difficult to supervise these units because of their different locations. The Sergeant is housed in District D. A Sergeant for District C is needed for daily supervision of the district team.

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