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## **Greenville, Mississippi, Arrest Policies Project**

**A Process Evaluation**

**February 10, 2000**

*Prepared for*  
**Greenville, Mississippi, Police Department  
National Institute of Justice  
Violence Against Women Office**

*Prepared by*  
**Cheron DuPree**

## **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
- 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 to ensure victim safety and offender accountability through proactive judicial management.

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 examines the activities of the Greenville Police Department from the early stages of the project; it covers current operations and future plans. The relevant laws will be discussed as well as the project objectives, planning implementation, resources, inter-agency collaboration, and conclusions.

## **Project Environment**

The City of Greenville is located in Washington County, Mississippi. The county has a population of 67,935 with 39 percent White, 60 percent Black, and one percent members of other ethnic groups. Greenville is the fifth largest city in the state of Mississippi and sits along the river that borders Arkansas. The city covers 28.5 square miles and has a population of 45,226, with a per capita income of \$12,720 and a poverty rate of approximately 20 percent.

## **State Legislation**

The Mississippi legislature defines abuse as the occurrence of one or more of the following acts between family household members (spouses, former spouses, persons living as spouses, parents, children, or other persons related by consanguinity or affinity) who reside together or who formerly resided together:

1. Attempting to cause or intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing bodily injury or serious bodily injury with or without a deadly weapon.
2. Placing, by physical menace or threat, another in fear of imminent serious bodily injury.
3. Criminal sexual conduct committed against a minor.

The Mississippi Code, Section 97-3-7, was amended in 1998 to create a separate offense for domestic abuse. The code states that a person is guilty of simple assault if he

- (a) attempts to cause or purposely, knowingly or recklessly causes bodily injury to another; or
- (b) negligently causes bodily injury to another with a deadly weapon or other means likely to produce death or serious bodily harm; or
- (c) attempts by physical menace to put another in fear of imminent serious bodily harm; and, upon conviction, he shall be punished by a fine of not more than

Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) or by imprisonment in the county jail for not more than six (6) months, or both.

In July 1998, a third offense of domestic violence within a five-year time span became a felony. Additional enforcement and prosecution options have been added under third offense of simple assault, and these will also become felonies. The law gives officers immunity for arrests arising from incidents of domestic violence. Section 93-21-29 of the Mississippi Code states that an officer shall not be held liable in any civil action for an arrest based on probable cause, enforcement in good faith of a court order, or any other action or omission in good faith arising from an alleged domestic violence incident brought by any authorized party.

Section 93-21-13 of the Mississippi Code states that *ex parte* protection orders can be granted by the municipal, county, and justice courts. *Ex parte* protection orders are temporary and shall not exceed ten days. Regular protection orders are issued in chancery court. A protective order from another state issued to protect the applicant from abuse shall be accorded full faith and credit by the courts of the state and enforced as if a court in the state rendered the order.

The victim has to appear in court to receive a protection order. There is no time limit set for a victim to receive a hearing after she applies for an order of protection. Once a victim receives an order of protection, the court is responsible for notifying the police department of the order.

## **Law Enforcement**

The Greenville Police Department employs 103 sworn officers and 70 civilian staff. The citizen-to-officer ratio is one officer for every 430 residents. The department has four divisions, which are Patrol, Criminal Investigations, Support Service, and Special Operations. An organization chart is provided in Appendix A. There are no victims service counselors in the department.

The officers on patrol work in three shifts: 6 a.m.-2 p.m., 2 p.m.-10 p.m., and 10 p.m.-6 a.m. A captain is in charge of each division, and each shift is supervised by a lieutenant and three sergeants. Criminal Investigations is run by the Assistant Chief and includes the identification and juvenile units. Support Services is staffed by civilians and the Deputy Chief is

in charge. This division includes the jail unit as well as school crossing guards, parking control, humane officers, dispatch, and clerks. The Special Operations division has five sworn staff.

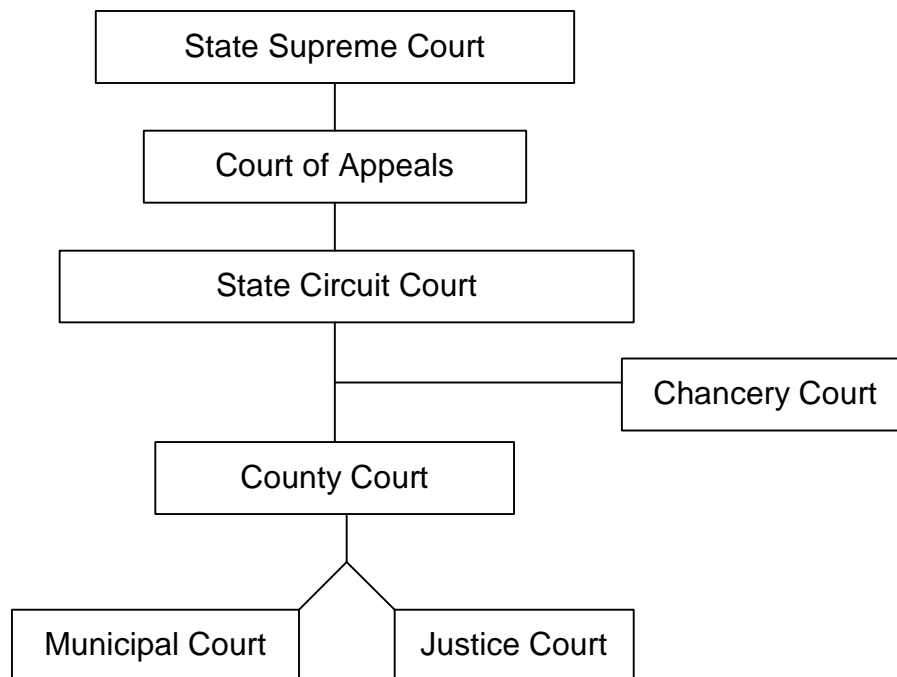
There are several smaller jurisdictions near the city of Greenville that have their own law enforcement agencies. Washington County also has a Sheriff's Department that runs the jails and patrols the county.

## Court System

The court system in Mississippi has several different courts that tend to have some overlap. The following diagram shows the structure of the court system in the state.

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### Exhibit 1: Court System



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The responsibility of each court is as follows.

- Municipal Court handles misdemeanor cases and is in session two days a week (Monday & Wednesday). This court has one judge and a prosecutor assigned to it. The current municipal court judge has been on the bench since February 1999. Most domestic violence cases are handled by municipal court.

- Justice Court hears preliminary hearings for felony cases, sets bonds, and also handles the county-level misdemeanor cases. Civil cases are also heard when the monetary value is \$7,500 or less. Judges in this court don't need a law degree to sit on the bench.
- County Court handles civil cases when the monetary value is less than \$10,000 and hears appeals from both Municipal and Justice court within Washington County. The county court along with the two previous courts can all issue temporary protection orders.
- Felony cases are handled by the state Circuit Courts as are civil cases up to an unlimited amount. Circuit court is the highest court in which cases can be heard before reaching the state Supreme Court. Its judges are elected.
- Chancery Court deals solely with civil aspects of the law. This includes child custody, divorce, dissolving partnerships, division of equity, petitions, and protection orders.

The District Attorney's Office prosecutes felony cases for three counties (Washington, LaFlore, Sunflower) in Circuit Court. The goal of this office is to reduce the trauma to the female victims of domestic and sexual violence, and to continue and enhance successful prosecutions by implementing better coordination between departments. Other activities include training for local departments in the tools for successful investigations, encouraging and implementing creative sentences for offenders, and to continue promoting stricter laws and enforcement for domestic violence cases. Cases in this office are randomly assigned to two attorneys who handle domestic violence cases. The district attorneys encourage victims to testify because of the higher success rate achieved when they do; however, it is not mandatory for victims to testify because such a policy would create too much of a risk for them. The District Attorney's Office received a STOP grant to fund an investigator to help gather information for domestic violence cases.

## **Probation**

The City of Greenville has a contract with a private agency to provide probation services. Probation consists of one individual who has credentials to administer these services and was approved by the city council to administer them in Greenville. Convicted offenders who are given probation pay the probation officer \$40 per month to be monitored. As you will see later, this has caused some problems with the domestic violence cases.

## **Objectives of the Project**

The primary objective of the Arrest Program in Greenville is to establish a coordinated community response that links the efforts of the police, victims, advocates, prosecutors, judges, healthcare professionals, and others having contact with families experiencing domestic abuse.

Three objectives identified to achieve this goal are

- To hire four patrol officers, one lead officer, a secretary, four dispatchers, and to obtain counseling services to be housed in a centralized location within the Greenville Police Department.
- To establish a working group of individuals interested in decreasing domestic violence in the community.
- To develop an evaluation plan to assess the domestic violence unit and working group progress.

The continuation grant for this project started in March 1997 and will end in February 2000. The aforementioned goal and objectives have remained the same but have expanded to some degree; two objectives have been added. The additional objectives in the continuation proposal include developing a court-monitoring program and conducting training for law enforcement.

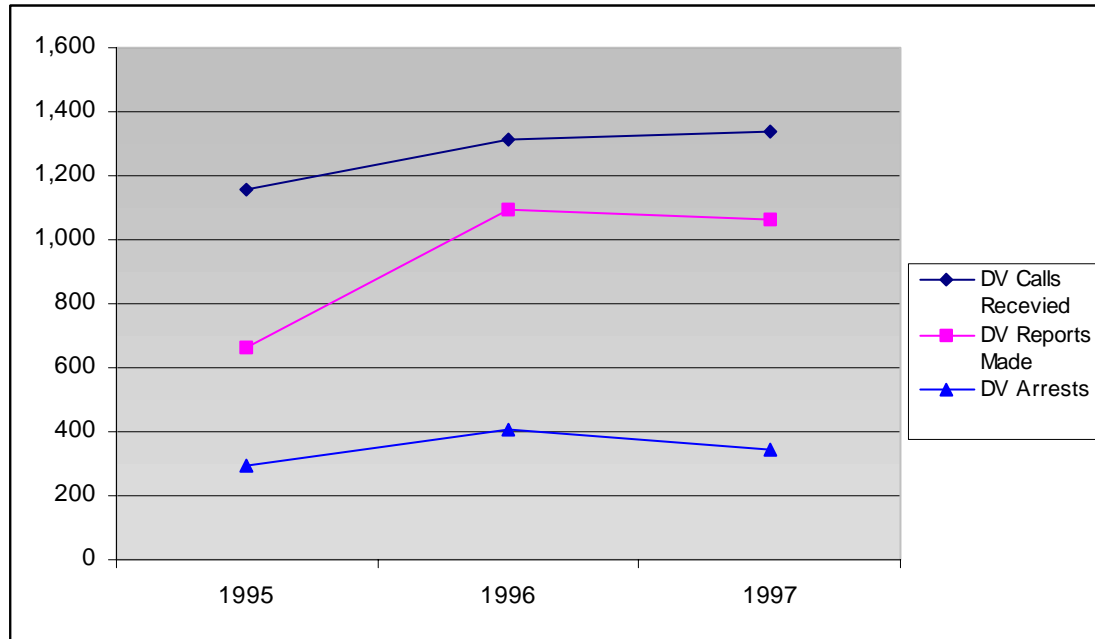
The Greenville Police Department and its non-profit partner have been successful in meeting the initial goals. Our House is actively recruiting members to expand the task force county-wide and has hired a court advocate to provide information to victims in the Greenville Municipal Court. Another court advocate has been hired and will start monitoring courts in the surrounding cities to initiate contact with victims.

## **Existence and Adequacy of Planning**

In 1995, there were over 1,000 domestic violence calls received, but only about half resulted in reports being made. Exhibit 2 illustrates the number of calls received, reports made, and arrests for 1995-1997.



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**Exhibit 2: Domestic Violence Statistics**

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Prior to receiving Arrest Program funds, the Greenville Police Department was already receiving funding under STOP for a lead officer to follow up on domestic violence cases. Through this experience, the department saw a need to have more officers working specifically on domestic violence cases. In 1996, the former Greenville Police Chief requested that an independent research consultant write the proposal for the Arrest Program. The consultant worked only with the police department to create the project objectives. In the first grant, the Greenville Police Department entered into a partnership with the Salvation Army's Catherine Booth Center (shelter), which was the only non-profit organization providing shelter for domestic violence victims at that time. Our House, Inc., was hired as the non-profit community agency to provide counseling services for the project.

By the time the first grant was ending, planning had begun for continuation of funds. The police department, Our House, Inc., and the evaluator on the project collaborated to write the

second proposal. During that time, the Commanding Officer of The Salvation Army was leaving, and it was unclear whether the new leadership would commit to participating in the arrest project. The former director of The Salvation Army Catherine Booth Center (shelter program) had resigned at the same time as the new Commanding Officer was scheduled to relocate. The former director of the Catherine booth Center is now the Executive Director for Our House, Inc., New Birth to Violence Free Living. This agency focus is outreach services and educational services for the elimination of domestic violence in the Mississippi Delta. Since the deadline for grant submission was approaching and the Salvation Army was undecided as to whether they would participate, Our House was enlisted as the new non-profit partner for the project. This decision created some misunderstanding on The Salvation Army's part that Our House was trying to take-over victim services. The Chief of Police at that time assured each agency that they had a specialty to offer to victims. Since that time, these agencies have complemented each other in meeting the needs of victims.

## **Implementation**

Implementation of the Arrest project in Greenville had its problems. The Salvation Army had no problems providing services to women during the first grant period. However, Our House experienced some problems during implementation of the batterers education program. Most of these problems were due to the need to refine program operations. The following sections will examine implementation problems in the Greenville Police Department and Our House.

### **Greenville Police Department**

The police department initially had problems with dual arrests. Officers did not fully understand the dynamics of domestic violence and were not clear about how to determine the primary aggressor. This problem has not been alleviated. However, training on the prevention of dual arrest has been scheduled in the upcoming months for the entire department.

Historically the police department turned its back on victims of domestic violence and offenders were given a slap on the wrist. The domestic violence officers in Greenville had to gain the trust of the community. Initially, victims were skeptical about calling police because of

how domestic incidents were handled in the past. Officers also had to deal with victims recanting their stories or not telling the truth because they didn't trust the officers.

## **Our House**

Behavior modification treatment was new for Our House. Embarking on this endeavor ensured some offender accountability, but there were also a couple of challenges. The court was initially mandating the offenders to only five sessions. Consequently, there was a large number of repeat offenders. Five sessions did not prove to be enough for clients to achieve any modification in their behavior.

Also, clients who could not pay the fees were given community service work. The Men Against Spousal Harm (MASH) program staff soon discovered that the victims were signing work verification forms. As a result, Our House has agreements with several community agencies that will allow clients to perform community service.

## **Project Operations**

### **Greenville Police Department**

The Greenville Police Department's domestic violence unit consists of six patrol officers and a sergeant. The sergeant conducts some follow-up investigations and handles domestic calls that may be upgraded to aggravated assault. She also keeps statistics for the unit, writes monthly reports, and makes sure the unit receives domestic violence training and is aware of any new laws and procedures.

It is the department's policy that dispatchers assign a minimum of two officers to domestic violence calls. If a patrol officer is dispatched to a call and later determines that it's a domestic violence incident, the officer should immediately request back-up. Dispatch should also advise officers of any order of protection issued.

Two domestic violence officers work on each shift. When a domestic violence call comes in through dispatch, a domestic violence officer is sent on the call, if one is available. Since the officers in the domestic violence unit answer all types of calls, it's impossible for them to be available to handle domestic calls at all times.

Responding officers identify themselves, explain their presence and request entry into the home. The officer usually makes contact with the person who called 911. Once inside the home, the procedures are as follows:

1. Separate parties involved and interview them
2. Survey surroundings for weapons and signs of a disturbance
3. Inquire about injuries and determine if medical help is needed
4. Take photographs of any injuries or disorder in the home (In many cases bruises do not fully appear for 48 hours so a follow-up visit should be scheduled to take additional photos.)
5. Determine the nature of relationship between the parties
6. Consider statements of the victim, suspect, and/or witnesses
7. Consider previous calls to same location or with same parties.

The officer should make an arrest if probable cause is determined. Probable cause means that there must be a belief that an act of domestic violence or felony has occurred, and that the person to be arrested is guilty based upon grounds that would cause an ordinary person to believe all of this was true. Probable cause may be established when

- An assault has occurred
- Allegations by complaint, of weapons having been used or threatened to have been used by suspect
- Statements by suspect which lead officer(s) to believe the suspect will continue or escalate cause of initial response
- Officers have probable cause to believe that an order of protection has been violated by the suspect
- Officers have knowledge of two or more previous calls involving domestic violence to the same location involving the same parties
- Signs of struggle or conflict are visible in the home.

The department discourages dual arrests. Therefore, officers should make every effort to investigate the incident and determine who is the most probable aggressor. After an arrest and interviewing the victim, the domestic violence officer calls the municipal court judge and makes a recommendation for bond. If there is no arrest at the scene, the officer can still make a warrantless arrest within 24 hours. After 24 hours, the judge will have to issue a warrant for the

suspect's arrest. The officer offers the victim assistance to assure her/his safety. This may entail transportation to shelter or another safe location, information about the shelter, and protection to allow the victim to gather clothing and personal items from the residence.

## **Our House**

Our House, Inc. partnered with the Greenville Police Department on the continuation grant of the Arrest project. Our House is the non-profit partner that provides a wide variety of outreach services to families who experience domestic abuse. Second Stage housing for women who are ready to leave the shelter is available through Our House. Some of the outreach programs run by Our House include LOVE, MASH, Survivor's United Homicide, Teens Intimate Partner Violence Prevention Project, Rural Communities Public Awareness Program. The LOVE and MASH programs will be discussed in detail since the services they offer directly apply to the Arrest project.

## **Let Our Violence End (LOVE)**

LOVE is an outreach program for victims of domestic abuse. The court advocate at Our House refers victims to the program. The advocate attends court sessions two days a week to identify domestic violence cases and offer services to victims. The lead officer at the domestic violence unit prepares copies of the domestic incident reports for the court advocate to contact the victims. Since confidentiality binds each agency, the exchange of this information has not been a problem. Initial contact is attempted by phone. Letters are sent to follow up with victims if contact is not established.

If a victim wants services, the court advocate begins filling out the intake forms. When a victim comes to the program office, a file is created for her and the intake process is completed. The file includes information about the victim, her children, the abuser, and the history of abuse. The files are confidential and are kept at Our House. Counseling is provided to victims at no cost; referrals to shelters (Salvation Army) are given; advocacy services are offered; and transitional housing is made available.

## **Men Against Spousal Harm (MASH)**

In the spring of 1996, Our House developed a behavioral modification program for court-ordered domestic violence abusers. The Duluth model is taught, and three instructors have been

certified to deliver this training. At each session there is usually a certified instructor, a part-time counselor, and a peer instructor. Peer instructors are former participants of the program who are actively applying the principals to their lives. The goals of this program are

- To accept full responsibility for threatening, abusive, and violent behavior
- To stop threatening, abusive, violent behavior
- To change attitudes that give permission or support threatening, abusive and violent behavior
- To learn new skills of self-control, non-violence, positive communication, and conflict resolution
- To actively practice my skills rather than using threatening, abusive and violent behavior
- To actively use my group for support and to build a better support network.

The length of the program varies for each participant. A client may be given 12, 26, or 52-week behavioral modification treatment plans. The court orders the number of sessions it deems appropriate according to certain guidelines. Each offender schedules an appointment to come in for orientation and an instructor helps him establish his personal goals for the program. A file is created for each client and includes personal information, a counseling liability waiver, confidentiality assurance, release of information, permission to contact partner, and the client's photograph.

Behavior modification sessions are held twice a week, seven different class periods in Greenville. Men are required to be on time and to bring their class notebooks. The fee for each session is \$10; however, there is no fee for orientation or closeout sessions. Men are encouraged to bring their partners to closeout sessions. If a client is non-compliant, the probation officer is notified.

The other outreach programs provided by Our House are

- **Survivor's United Homicide.** This program provides counseling, referral and information to family members and friends of homicide victims. Workshops and educational programs are provided to the community. This program also provides counseling services to children.
- **Teen's Intimate Partner Violence Prevention Project.** This program targets three school districts to increase teen's knowledge about domestic abuse and to decrease the number of youth involved in intimate partner violence. The instructor uses curriculums from Safe Dates and Nine Steps to a Safe Date Workbook.

- **Rural Awareness Program.** This is a awareness program that targets the schools and churches in rural parts of the county.

## **The Salvation Army Catherine Booth Center**

Although the Salvation Army is no longer the non-profit partner in the Arrest grant, it remains a supporter of the project. The Salvation Army was the original non-profit partner in the Arrest Project. Its Catherine Booth Center is the only emergency shelter for women in Greenville. Thirty is the maximum number of days a woman can stay at the shelter; however, if she is actively trying to find housing at that time, she is allowed to stay longer. A client is allowed back to the shelter as many times as needed. The only way she is refused admittance is if she has revealed the location of the shelter. In that case, she is referred to a shelter in a neighboring city. In spite of the numerous changes in the shelter’s leadership in the past five years, it has remained a safe place for women and children to escape violent homes.

The center runs a 24-hour crisis hotline, support groups, childcare services, outreach and aftercare programs, child care services, and counseling for abusers. Counseling sessions for men are offered to those who have not been court-ordered to receive it.

## **Issues**

### **Greenville Police Department**

During the site visit, some issues were identified that hinder effective investigations and handling of domestic violence cases.

- **Unit Operations** - As stated earlier, the officers in the domestic violence unit respond to all types of calls. This conflicts with the intended purpose of a special domestic violence unit. Officers don’t have time to thoroughly investigate an incident and complete paperwork because they’re being called to other incidents. Cases rushed through, are less likely to result in successful prosecution.
- **Follow-up** - Domestic violence officers also follow-up on domestic violence incidents that non-DVU officers respond to. Realistically, there’s no time to handle follow-ups. This results in some incidents where no follow-up is done at all.
- **Interview Rooms** - There are no designated areas for interviews in the police department facility. The environment is not victim friendly; sometimes, victims are interviewed in rooms where there are other victims and offenders. The

department is currently working on acquiring a separate space for the domestic violence unit.

## **Our House**

Our House is currently facing some challenges that are directly related to the inconsistent handling of domestic violence cases by criminal justice agencies. At times, the municipal court and probation aren't being consistent with the type of treatment given to domestic violence offenders.

The number of men referred to the MASH program isn't consistent with the total given probation and mandated counseling. Some clients aren't being referred to MASH initially; instead, they are being given "counseling" through the probation officer. Consequently, these men are re-offending because they have not received any intervention and don't understand the consequence related to their action. Monetary gain by the probationer may be a factor since the probation officer is paid each time an offender is given probation.

It was discovered that the majority of the white offenders were being sent to mental health or private counselors for intervention services. These offenders usually have the means to obtain lawyers.

## **Courts**

During the site visit, several people expressed concerns about the courts handling of domestic violence cases. There is no consistency in handling domestic violence cases among the county and circuit courts. Judges at that level may or may not have any knowledge of domestic violence. In some courts, depending on "who" the offender is, he is given a "slap on the wrist". There isn't enough advocacy for victims being done in the various courts throughout the city and county. Besides the court advocate employed by Our House, the only other advocate works with the District Attorney's Office in Circuit Court. However, it is questionable whether the District Attorney's advocate is doing enough to help victims of any crime.

## **Project Evaluation**

The city of Greenville has included an evaluation of the Arrest Project in their grant. The writer for the first grant proposal was the original evaluator for the project. He was unable to



fulfill his obligation to evaluate the project and a new evaluator was hired eight months into the project. She developed a new evaluation strategy, and some findings will be discussed in this report.

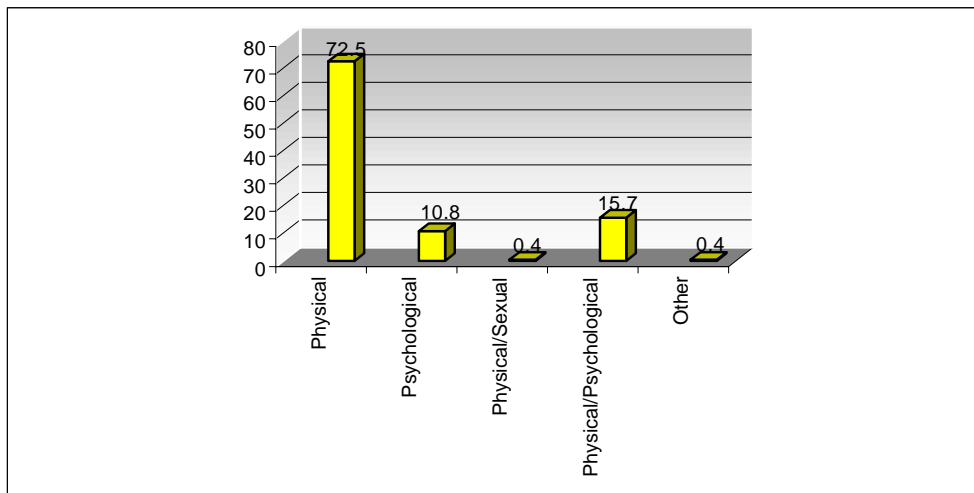
The evaluator, with the help of the task force, developed a Community Policing to Combat Domestic Violence Form to be used by officers to record information about domestic violence incidents. This information was translated into variables associated with the analysis of domestic violence. The data was coded and entered into SPSS for analysis. Data analysis procedures include the use of descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations to produce data analysis summaries for 503 cases reported from October 1996 through September 1998.

The characteristics of the victims and perpetrators were primarily African-American, within the ages of 19 to low-mid thirties. The victims were mostly women and the perpetrators were men. A little over 30 percent of the each group had received a high school diploma. About 60 percent of the perpetrators and 45 percent of the victims had some form of employment.

Information was also collected on the nature of victimization and whether or not weapons were used in the attacks. Almost 73 percent of the victims reported physical abuse, 10 percent reported psychological abuse, 15 percent reported both, and a small percentage experienced others type of abuse. The charts below described the nature of abuse and the type of weapon used.<sup>1</sup>

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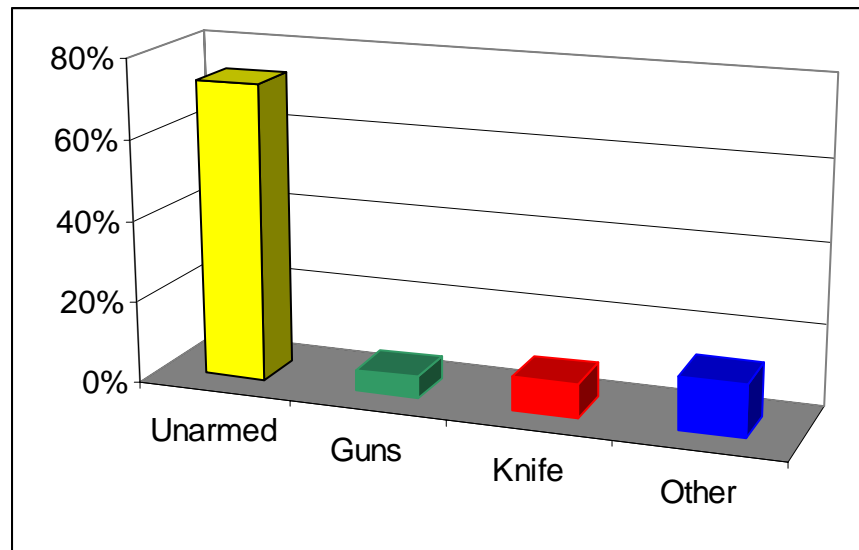
**Exhibit 3: Nature of Victimization (N=465)**



Officers also recorded the type of weapon used in the domestic attack. Seventy-five percent of victims reported that the perpetrator was unarmed, five percent had a gun, eight percent, a knife, and thirteen percent used some other object as a weapon in the attack.<sup>2</sup>

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**Exhibit 4: Weapons Used During Domestic Violence Attacks**



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The majority of women in these incidents reported that this was their first time being involved in a domestic incident. The increase in the number of new incidents reported may be a result of the outreach efforts of non-profit organizations like Our House to raise awareness of this issue in the community. The data also discovered that the victim’s children witnessed 25 percent of the incidents. As the evaluation progresses, this variable may become a component of the study. Perhaps, these children can be tracked over time to see if they are more likely to become abusers or be abused.

Other elements of the evaluation are (1) police officers who receive domestic violence training are given pre and post tests to assess their knowledge of domestic violence and (2) members of the evaluation team attend task force meetings to determine how effective the group is and how they interact.

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<sup>1</sup> Thompson & Associates, “An Evaluation of Violence Against Women Grants to Encourage Arrests,” February, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Thompson & Associates, “An Evaluation of Violence Against Women Grants to Encourage Arrests,” February, 1999.

## **Staffing**

The Greenville Police Department has experienced a significant attrition rate in the last couple of years. Last year the department lost approximately 50 officers. Most of these positions were filled; however, the department as a whole is still understaffed.

Officers who wanted to be in the domestic violence unit were required to submit an essay explaining why they wanted to be a part of the unit; the Chief and the lead officer reviewed these essays. The only other requirement for the position was at least two years of law enforcement experience. The domestic violence unit could use more officers to work each shift and to conduct follow-up investigations.

Our House is sufficiently staffed with counselors, advocates, and administrative personnel. Three of the counselors are certified in the Duluth model and the other instructors are required to have a master degree in guidance counseling, social work, or at least five years of experience in a people-oriented work field. Ministers may also serve as counselors. Court advocates are required to have bachelor degrees in business or social work, or five years of experience in the community social service field.

## **Interagency Collaboration**

Everyone involved in the collaboration perceives the partnership as going well. There haven't been any conflicts between agencies except the turf issue that involved the Salvation Army and Our House. However, that has been resolved. Since the Director for Our House was the impetus for the domestic violence movement in Greenville, she serves as a coordinator for the project and the working group. The Arrest Program in Greenville has received tremendous city council and community support.

Although communication is excellent between the police and the non-profit, a need exists for collaboration with other city agencies and the courts. Our House has obtained some cooperation with the municipal court to allow court advocates in the courtroom. However, this arrangement has been sporadic and at the pleasure of the presiding judge. This relationship with the municipal court might be more stable if it were formalized with a memorandum of understanding.

## **Community Coordination**

One of the goals of the Arrest Project in Greenville is to establish a domestic violence working group or task force. In developing the work group, the police department, the non-profit (at that time the Salvation Army), and the evaluator for the project met to discuss who should be invited to participate. They invited eleven people to become members of the task force and they in turn gave suggestions regarding other community members they felt should be involved. The task force is currently an informal group that meets once a month and serves several purposes.

- 1) It serves as a monitoring board for the Arrest Project.
- 2) It provides advice to the police department and Our House. The board is presented with problematic issues that arise related to the Arrest Project.
- 3) It helps to plan community awareness projects.

Task force membership includes representatives from the police, judges, victim service agencies, schools, prosecutors, hospitals, social services, and other professionals. Victims are actively being recruited to serve on the task force. Since the beginning of the project, the task force has experienced some attrition. Some of the members felt that the board wasn't fulfilling its intended purpose and members weren't regularly attending meetings.

When offenders realized the city of Greenville was taking a stand on domestic violence, they transferred their partner battering to other jurisdictions where the penalties are not as severe. The working group has been expanded to address domestic abuse countywide because of the increase of violence in the surrounding areas. The task force is now called the Washington County Domestic Violence Task Force and the membership has increased tremendously. Plans are underway to formalize the task force. (i.e., mission statement, expansion of goals, etc.)

## **Resources**

The Greenville Police Department has several grants awards that include Weed and Seed, STOP (Services, Training, Officers, and Prosecutors), and Community Oriented Policing Services. Arrest funds pay the salaries of six patrol officers, one secretary, and four dispatchers. Although dispatchers are included in the grant, it is unclear as to how their duties directly affect the domestic violence unit. Since there is no way to know that an incoming is a domestic violence call until you answer it, their duties and procedures for handling domestic violence calls should be the same as other dispatchers. Six patrol cars were purchased along with office supplies and beeper service. Grant funds also paid the evaluator for services rendered.

Our House operates its programs from several federal grants as well. They receive funding from the following grants: Empowerment Zone, Community-Based Primary Prevention Programs to Prevent Intimate Partner Violence for a Safe America, Rural Domestic Violence & Child Victimization Project. Part of the Arrest funds go towards operating a court advocacy and counseling program. Training for both agencies and the evaluator are included in the budget.

## **Conclusions**

Relative to other cities across the country, Greenville would be considered a small town. Greenville is one of the biggest cities within the state of Mississippi. Nevertheless, one would not expect a city such as Greenville to be so progressive in its stance on domestic violence. The city should be applauded for its efforts and achievements in this area. However, there are a few elements that may improve Greenville's approach to combating domestic violence. They include operational changes to the domestic violence unit, designated officers for follow-up or clearer procedures, improvements in probation, and collaborating with social service agencies.

## **Unit Operations**

One major area needing improvement is the operation of the domestic violence unit. As stated earlier, the unit responds to all types of calls, not just domestic violence incidents. This defeats the purpose of having a specialized domestic violence unit. Since the police department is understaffed at this time, it is understandable that officers in the unit can't be exclusively designated to respond to domestic violence calls. However, since two domestic officers are on duty each shift, perhaps at least one officer per shift could exclusively respond to domestic violence calls. Eventually when the police department is fully staffed, all six domestic violence officers should be used exclusively for domestic violence calls. The police department should make some level of effort to fulfill the purpose of the unit.

## **Follow-Up Investigations**

Another area of concern is the amount of time available to follow up on the cases that non-DVU officers respond to. It's apparent that officers in the unit don't have time to follow up on these cases. The sergeant has other duties so her time is limited. The department may want to consider adding a full-time investigator or officer to conduct follow-up investigations on

domestic violence cases. This may not be possible due to departmental budget constraints, but it should be considered in the future.

## **Probation**

The City of Greenville needs substantial improvements in how probation for domestic violence perpetrators is handled. Procedures should be developed to ensure that offenders who are ordered to attend behavior modification sessions actually make it to Our House. Generally, this confusion is due to the misconception of offenders and the lack of clarity by the courts. One way to ensure that counseling is being given to offenders is to track their progress through progress reports. These reports could be done monthly and submitted to the court. The report could include information on the offender and a brief summary of his participation. This is also a good way to give the court positive feedback about offenders. This method would, however, increase the duties of the instructors of the behavior modification sessions as well as the clerk of court who would be responsible for tracking the reports.

## **Social Services**

Greenville, as well as the entire state of Mississippi, has a poverty rate of approximately 20 percent. Consequently, a large number of women who are battered probably receive some type of financial assistance or may eventually seek assistance once they leave the batterer. Therefore, a relationship with the local social service agencies is a logical step in reaching these women.

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Appendix. Organization of Greenville Police Department