

III. MAILED SURVEY

This section presents descriptive data collected from departments around the nation that have partnered with the community to address domestic violence. The survey was sent to two groups of departments: 1) those that received funding from the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (the COPS Office) in 1996 to create partnerships to address domestic violence, and 2) those that were nominated either by the directors of the Regional Community Policing Institutes¹ (RCPI) or state domestic violence coalitions.

The goal of the brief survey was to learn what the agencies were doing and to gather enough information to help determine which departments should be selected for in-depth telephone interviews. From these agencies, eleven sites were selected for on-site case study. This section presents the descriptive information gathered from the survey.

Methods

Survey development. Ten subject experts from the fields of law enforcement, domestic violence support services, and advocacy were identified, through a snowball process, beginning with those known to the authors of this report and identified through the literature review as knowledgeable and experienced in developing partnerships in this area. Subject experts were interviewed about their experiences with police-community partnerships to identify important variables for inclusion in the forthcoming surveys and site visits. Further, these interviews helped identify terms that would be most inclusive because the researchers wanted to capture the full range of partnership arrangements. The survey used the terms “partner” and “collaborate” and did not provide a definition, and also the term “domestic violence,” which pretesting had determined was the broadest term used by police.

The short survey for law enforcement agencies was designed to collect basic descriptive information on the type of partnership arrangement in which the agency is engaged (task force, coordinated community response, response team²); how long it had been active; how often the partners meet; who participates; the target area (multijurisdictional, a single region, part of a region); the partnership activities (provide training, respond to calls, assist in referral services); and successes. The survey is provided in Appendix A.

Survey Sample and Response. The Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) surveyed 345 agencies funded by the COPS Office to develop community-policing partnership responses to the problem of domestic violence. Surveys were sent to either the attention of the agency representative who coordinates the domestic violence grant or the chief executive. Three waves of surveys were sent and 272 surveys were returned for a 79 percent response rate.

1. In 1997, COPS funded the creation of the only national training network of Regional Community Policing Institutes (RCPI) to provide comprehensive and innovative community policing education, training, and technical assistance to COPS grantees throughout the nation. To learn more about the RCPIs, visit COPS Online at www.cops.usdoj.gov.

2. Task forces are characterized by periodic meetings to set policies, procedures, and develop training. Coordinated community responses typically involve coordinating existing resources, case management, problem solving, information exchange, and resource sharing. Response teams partner police with a service provider to provide walk-in support, referrals, information, and counseling to victims and batterers.

TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

The following eleven sites were selected for case study (* indicates a satellite site):

1. Arlington (Texas) Police Department
2. Broward County (Florida) Sheriff's Office
3. Fort Worth (Texas) Police Department*
4. Fort Smith (Arkansas) Police Department
5. Huntsville (Alabama) Police Department
6. Indianapolis (Indiana) Police Department
7. Manchester (Connecticut) Police Department
8. Nassau County (New York) Police Department*
9. Santa Barbara (California) Police Department*
10. Westminster (California) Police Department
11. Xenia (Ohio) Police Division

- Colocate partners whenever possible, either in the police department or in the domestic violence shelter. The efficiency of a single point of contact for access to both law enforcement and services provides victims with the attention they need.
- Carefully select staff for the partnership team. Partners must have a clear understanding of, and respect for, their individual roles and responsibilities in responding to domestic violence. Advocates must not overstep their boundaries by telling officers what to do or interfering in the criminal aspects of the situation, and law enforcement officers must clearly understand the dynamics of domestic violence relationships. Team members must have personality characteristics suitable to sharing responsibility at the scene and providing care for victims.
- Educate all officers on the causes of domestic violence, how relationship violence can be cyclical, why some partners may not readily leave abusive relationships, and on available community resources. This knowledge can underscore both the necessity of arrest and the complexities of why arrest may not always be the most effective response.
- Exchange information readily between partners to promote effective communication and agreement on the appropriate course of action.
- Use volunteers wherever possible, but ensure that they are carefully selected and well trained.
- Conduct on-scene crisis intervention to increase victim trust in law enforcement and provide the victim with quick access to services.
- Prepare for an increased call load that may result from a new community focus on improving responses to domestic violence.

Conclusions

For many police officers interviewed for this project, calls related to domestic disturbances, whether or not they involve violence, are some of the most difficult calls to which they must respond. Some officers are concerned about safety, some are irritated by the amount of time they know the call will take, but for others, the difficulty comes from a sincere frustration with their inability to make a difference. In the words of a patrol officer:

“A lot of guys I know—and me, I’m guilty of this also—will go back to the same house so many times, you can walk in and start calling people by their first names. You get tired of it. And you will think: ‘Look, lady, I have been here fifteen times, I have written fifteen reports, I go to jail and you get up to the judge and tell him I lied on my report that I wrote, and now you want me to do what? How is this going to be different than it was the last fourteen times?’ So you get a negative attitude towards them. But if you’re patient, and I know myself—if I just back off and let the other officer handle it (who hasn’t been there as often) and try to believe them this time, then it helps.”

The COPS-funded partnerships PERF examined in this project are perhaps most valuable because they address the complexities of the situation just described. Through their focus on victim safety (rather than simply criminal justice system efficiency), these arrangements provide victims with access to services more frequently and efficiently; they provide officers with a more nuanced understanding of the situations they are encountering; and they enable officers to share their legitimate frustrations over domestic violence with advocates and service providers who respect their role as law enforcers. In the words of a domestic violence program coordinator:

“The work that the social workers do with the police officers has been the best training tool that we’ve ever had. Because they now see that we face some of the same challenges that they do. I think one of the biggest ‘light bulb’ experiences that some of us had was when the officers asked us: ‘Well, don’t you all ever get frustrated?’ Well sure we get frustrated—we want her to leave, because we know she’s not safe. But we can’t make her leave. All we can do is give her all the tools and all the resources that she needs to make that decision. But I can’t make that decision for her. And if I do make that decision for her, I’m doing the wrong thing, and I’m going to regret it, and she’s going to regret it. And so that was a big hurdle to see that we’ve faced the same frustrations as the officers have.”

Within the confines of this largely qualitative project, the data clearly show that substantial benefits accrue from partnering with the community to address domestic violence. The finding that most agencies have continued their partnership arrangements beyond the original funding provided by COPS is a testament to the strength of those outcomes. The agencies have forged close working relationships with others that had been considered adversaries in the past. This working relationship does not preclude these community activists from working to correct wrongs they see in the system; it just changes the means by which they do it. This quote from a shelter director sums up the changes in the advocacy community that support their work with law enforcement:

“There have been many changes in beliefs about what the advocacy community should be doing to address victims. What we thought was an awful thing to do 10 or 20 years ago is actually something we need to be doing, and vice versa. Some of the things we thought would work 20 years ago don’t work at all. For example, we always thought the primary thing was shelter, that it was the lifesaver. But you have to provide those other services or it’s not going to really change.”

That is what successful partnerships do: provide a range of services in hopes of changing domestic violence today and for the next generation. And the most effective way to do that is through partnerships. From the perspective of a chief:

“First, there has to be recognition that domestic violence tends to be cyclical, and there has to be an understanding of the causes. The officers responding to those calls have to understand that making an arrest won’t necessarily solve the problem. Police have to be educated. Then, once we have that understanding, then we have to be willing to work with nonprofit organizations within the community, and form partnerships with nonprofits and volunteers to help address issues of domestic violence.”

“If we’re doing this for victims—and we are—then we want to create the greatest impact possible, and we can only do that with our partnerships. We can’t do it alone.”

VII. References



VII. REFERENCES

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VIII. Additional Resources



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IX. Appendices



APPENDIX A: MAILED SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Partnering to Respond to Domestic Violence

1. Does/did your department collaborate/partner with the community to address domestic violence?

- Yes
 No

2. If YES, which of the following terms would best describe the collaboration/partnership in which your agency is/was involved?

- Task Force
 Coordinated Community Response
 Response Team
 Other (specify: _____)

3. How often does/did the collaboration/partnership hold formal meetings?

- Daily
 Once per week
 More than once per month but not weekly
 Once per month
 Less than once per month

4. During what period has (or was) the collaboration been in existence?

From __/__/__ to __/__/__ Ongoing:

5. What geographical area is/was affected by the collaboration/partnership?

- Several regions (such as several counties or cities)
 One region (such as a county or city)
 A section of a region (such as a patrol beat or district within a jurisdiction)

6. What organizations participate(d) in the collaboration/partnership? Please check all that apply:

From the Community:

- Advocacy Group
 Victims Shelter
 Medical Professionals
 Counseling Services
 Batterers Treatment Services
 Other (specify: _____)

From the Criminal Justice System:

- Police
 District Attorney's Office
 Judge
 Probation/Parole
 Other (specify: _____)

7. Which of the following describes the activity of the collaboration/partnership in which your agency is involved:
(please check all that apply)

- Set policy
- Coordinate the provision of multiple services
- Provide on-scene or follow-up responses to calls for service

8. Please briefly describe the collaboration/partnership in which your agency was/is involved.

9. What successes have been achieved by the collaboration/partnership?

10. How does/did the collaboration/partnership measure whether goals are achieved?

- Informal communication with partners
- Official statistics
- Victim surveys
- Other (specify: _____)

11. May we contact you or someone in your department to obtain additional information about your domestic violence program or policies?

- Yes
- No

If YES:

Name: _____

Department: _____

Phone: _____

Thank you very much for your time in completing this survey.
Please use the enclosed envelope or fax back to:

Melissa Reuland
Police Executive Research Forum
1120 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20036
Fax: 202.466.7826

Open-Ended Coding for Mailed Survey Data

Mailed Survey Question #8:

Activity codes

1. **Training and outreach** includes: trained staff, developed curriculum including supplemental materials such as videotapes, developed a database or other information-sharing techniques, conducted community outreach including education, conducted cross-training.
2. **Victim assistance or service** includes: social service assistance, counseling, sheltering, made referrals, transported victims, performed threat assessments or safety audits, conducted case conferences or consultations.
3. **Coalitions or teams** include: participated in task force, working group, planning committee or team: sitting on board of directors at safe house, shelter, advocacy center: created or participated on fatality review board.
4. **On-scene response** includes: provided on-scene response, formed response teams, did on-scene investigation.
5. **Special DV unit/review** includes: response or review mechanism that was not on scene, including follow-up.
6. **Policies/procedures** includes: revised or created policies, protocols, procedures, or coordinated responses in general.
7. **Offender services** includes: provided anger management services or other offender program.

APPENDIX B: TELEPHONE INTERVIEW SITES AND PROTOCOL

Telephone Interview Sites

- Alexandria (Virginia) Police Department
- Ann Arbor (Michigan) Police Department
- Arlington (Texas) Police Department
- Austin (Texas) Police Department
- Broward County (Florida) Sheriff's Office
- Cadillac (Michigan) Police Department
- Chico (California) Police Department
- Clark County (Washington) Sheriff's Office
- Cleveland (Tennessee) Police Department
- Danville (Illinois) Police Department
- Erie County (New York) Sheriff's Office
- Flint Township (Michigan) Police Department
- Fort Smith (Arkansas) Police Department
- Fresno (California) Police Department
- Fort Worth (Texas) Police Department
- Granite City (Illinois) Police Department
- Haywood County (North Carolina) Sheriff's Office
- Helena (Montana) Police Department
- Huntsville (Alabama) Police Department
- Indianapolis (Indiana) Police Department
- Knoxville (Tennessee) Police Department
- Lincoln (Nebraska) Police Department
- Los Angeles County (California) Sheriff's Department
- Los Angeles (California) Police Department
- Manchester (Connecticut) Police Department
- Midland Park (New Jersey) Police Department
- Monroe (Louisiana) Police Department
- Morrison County (Minnesota) Sheriff's Department
- Nassau County (New York) Police Department
- New Haven (Connecticut) Police Department
- Niagara County (New York) Sheriff's Department
- Normal (Illinois) Police Department
- Plymouth (Minnesota) Police Department
- Reidsville (North Carolina) Police Department
- Santa Barbara (California) Police Department
- Shreveport (Louisiana) Police Department
- Shrewsbury (Massachusetts) Police Department
- Vacaville (California) Police Department
- Washington Township (New Jersey) Police Department
- Westminster (California) Police Department
- Xenia (Ohio) Police Division

Telephone Interview Protocol

Partnering to Respond to Domestic Violence

Section I: Background Information

1. Which of the following victim/suspect relationships are covered by your jurisdiction's domestic violence statute?
Please check all that apply.

- Married couples
- Dating, ex-dating couples
- Couples with children in common
- Non-partner family relationships (e.g., siblings, parent-child)
- Divorced or separated couples
- Live-in couples
- Same sex couples
- Other (specify: _____)

2. Which of the following age groups are covered by the statute? Please check all that apply.

- Children (under 18 years of age)
- Adults (18 years old or older)
- Other (specify: _____)

3. Which of the following types of abuse are covered by the statute? Please check all that apply.

- Physical assault
- Emotional abuse
- Harassment
- Other (specify: _____)

4. To whom does your department provide training on issues related to domestic violence and the police response?
Please check all that apply.

- New recruits
- First line supervisors
- Patrol staff
- Executive staff
- Dispatchers
- Civilian employees or volunteers

Who provides this training? Please check all that apply.

- Local domestic violence service providers
- Department personnel
- Others (specify: _____)

5. Please check all types of information your department maintains on domestic violence incidents and whether this information is computerized:

Maintains	Computerized	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Calls for service
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Crime reports
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Incident reports
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Arrest reports
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Orders for protection
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify: _____)

6. Apart from UCR reporting, does your agency keep track of domestic incidents for other purposes?

- Yes No

If yes, please explain:

Section II: Partnerships for Domestic Violence

1. Police departments collaborate/partner with the community in a variety of ways to address domestic violence. Please briefly describe the collaboration/partnership in which your agency is involved:

2. Which of the following terms is used to describe the collaboration/partnership in which your agency is involved:

- Task Force
- Coordinated Community Response
- Coalition
- Response Team
- Other (specify: _____)

3. How long has the collaboration/partnership been in existence?

___ ___ Years and/or ___ ___ Months

4. What geographical area is affected by the collaboration/partnership?

- Several regions (such as several counties, or a city and its surrounding counties)
- One region (such as a county or city)
- A section of a region (such as a patrol beat or district within a jurisdiction)

5. What was the primary impetus for the formation of the collaboration/partnership?

- Members of the advocacy community began working with police based on their concerns about how incidents were being handled by police.
- Members of the advocacy community began working with police after changes in arrest laws.
- The police agency received a grant to begin a partnership to address this issue.
- The community faced a crisis that caused the partners to get together.
- Other (please explain: _____)

6. What are the goals of the collaboration/partnership?

7. How does the collaboration/partnership measure whether goals are achieved? Please check all that apply.

- Informal communication with partners
- Official statistics
- Victim surveys
- Other (specify: _____)

8. What successes have been achieved?

9. Which of the following types best describes the primary activity of the collaboration/partnership in which your agency is involved:

- Type A: Set policy
- Type B: Coordinate the provision of multiple services
- Type C: Provide on-site or follow-up responses to calls for service

10. What organizations participate in the collaboration/partnership? Please check all that apply.

From the Community:

- Advocacy Group
- Victims Shelter
- Medical professionals
- Victims' counseling services
- Other (specify: _____)

From the Criminal Justice System:

- District Attorney's Office
- Judge
- Probation/Parole
- Defense Counsel
- Other (specify: _____)

11. How often does the collaboration/partnership meet?

- More than once per week
- Once per week
- More than once per month, but not weekly
- Once per month
- Less than once per month

12. In what activities does the collaboration/partnership engage during meetings? Please check all that apply.

- Develop policies and procedures
- Manage cases
- Generate resources
- Solve emerging problems
- Develop training curricula
- Other (specify: _____)

13. What policies have been addressed by the collaboration/partnership? Please check all that apply.

- None
- Arrest
- Dual arrest
- Referral to service providers
- Training
- Information sharing
- Other (specify: _____)

14. Do collaboration/partnership members stay in contact between meetings?

- Yes No

If YES, what activities typically are the focus of these contacts? Please check all that apply.

- Manage cases
- Generate resources
- Solve emerging problems
- Media contacts
- Other (specify: _____)
- Other (specify: _____)

15. Does the police department share information, such as calls-for-service data, with non-police participants in the collaboration/partnership?

- Yes No

If YES, what information is shared?

16. Is there information the police department would be reluctant to share?

Yes No

If YES, what information would not be shared?

17. Do the non-police partners share information, such as the whereabouts of women in shelters, with the police department?

Yes No

If YES, what information is shared?

18. Has information that would be helpful to the police department been withheld?

Yes No

If YES, what helpful information was withheld?

19. Has the collaboration/partnership set up “experience exchanges” between partners from different disciplines? These can include having shelter staff do ride-alongs with police or having police officers stay in shelters.

Yes No

If YES, what was the nature of the exchange that occurred and who was involved?

**Type A and Type B Partnerships
GO TO SECTION III
Type C Partnerships — Answer following questions**

20. In addition to the police, what agencies are involved in the collaboration/partnership? Please check all that apply.

- Shelter services
- Other victims' services
- Batterers' treatment services
- Mental health services
- Medical professionals
- Others (specify: _____)

21. Why were these agencies chosen and not others?

22. Briefly describe what responses the collaboration/partnership provides:

23. What staff resources are used in the collaboration/partnership? Do you rely on volunteers? Students?

24. Is the collaboration/partnership response available for all situations, or is it limited by time of day or the characteristics of the situation? Please check all that apply.

- Available for all situations
- Limited by time of day (specify: _____)
- Limited by the situation characteristics (specify: _____)

Section III: Factors that Help or Hinder Partnerships

1. In your experiences partnering with the community to respond to domestic violence, what are the major barriers to success you have encountered?

2. How were they overcome?

3. What are 5 “do’s and don’ts” in partnering around domestic violence:

Do:

Don’t:

4. Is there anything we haven’t asked about your domestic violence partnership that is important to know?

Section IV: Respondent Information

Name and title of person completing the survey:

May we contact you to obtain additional information about your domestic violence program?

YES NO

Phone number to contact: (____) _____ - _____

We would also like to survey the community-based partner organization with whom you work most closely. If possible, please provide the following contact information for your community-based partner:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (____) _____ - _____

Thank you very much for your time in completing this survey.

APPENDIX C: SITE VISIT INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

1. Personal Background Information:

- a. What is your job title? _____
- b. What is your rank? _____
- c. How long have you been in law enforcement? _____ yrs. _____ mos.
- d. How long have you been with your current agency? _____ yrs. _____ mos.
- e. How long have you been in your current position? _____ yrs. _____ mos.
- f. How long have you been in your current capacity? _____ yrs. _____ mos.

2. Department Policies and DV Response Context

- a. What was the police department's response to domestic violence incidents prior to the current arrangement?
- b. What do you feel are the keys elements for effective police response to domestic violence? What helps police provide the best response? (*Prompts: training? special officers? good community support? good victim resources? city/county government support? media?*)

Ask respondent to obtain accurate figures for these two items:

- c. How many domestic violence calls have you had in the last 30 days: _____
- d. How many total calls for service have you had in the last 30 days: _____

3. DV Partnership Description

The partnership program in your department is a unique police response to domestic violence. First of all, let me make sure that I know the way the program operates. My understanding is: READ OVERVIEW

- a. When did your DV partnership get started?
- b. What was the impetus for the partnership?
- c. How would you describe the role you play in this partnership?
- d. Is this the role you expected to play?

1 = yes

2 = no

7 = unsure

- e. In what ways is this/is this not the role you expected to play?
- f. Are there other partnership activities I have not mentioned?

- g. What is the most unique aspect of your partnership?
- h. Where do partnership resources come from?
- i. How do you address problems or conflicts when they arise?
- j. How did you define the roles for each partner? Was this a challenge?
- k. To what extent do patrol officers work with the community-based partner organization and their staff?
 1 = extensively
 2 = somewhat
 3 = a little
 4 = not at all (we have special teams)
- l. Are some officers better able to work with community-based partner organizations than others?
 1 = yes
 2 = no
 7 = unsure
- m. What qualities are associated with being able to work well with a community partner?
- n. How can the department better prepare officers for working with a community partner?
- o. *If applicable*: How do you select officers for special response teams?

4. DV Partnership Success

- a. What are the partnership's goals?
- b. How successful do you feel the partnership has been at achieving those goals?
- c. What have been the barriers to success?
- d. How have you overcome these barriers?
- e. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is not at all effective and 10 is very effective, how effective do you believe the partnership has been in accomplishing the following objectives? Code as "99" if respondent feels item is not an appropriate objective of the partnership):
- | | |
|---|-------|
| i. Allowing police officers to do their jobs well? | _____ |
| ii. Improving services to domestic violence victims? | _____ |
| iii. Improving victim safety? | _____ |
| iv. Increasing offender accountability? | _____ |
| v. Reducing domestic violence incidents? | _____ |
| vi. Reducing officer time spent on these types of calls? | _____ |
| vii. Reducing officer frustration when responding to these calls? | _____ |

viii. Reducing repeat calls for service? _____

ix. Reducing the severity of incidents? _____

- f. What is the most successful aspect of this partnership?
- i. How has this aspect enhanced the partnership?
- g. What is the least successful aspect of the partnership?
- i. How has this impeded the building and/or development of the partnership?
- ii. With hindsight can you think of how this problem could have been avoided?
- iii. Do you have any suggestions for solving or mitigating this problem?
- h. What do you think could be improved about this partnership?
- i. What do you wish could be improved about this partnership?
- j. What is the community-based partner doing to be responsive to your needs as a police department?

5. Police Department Response to the Partnership

- a. What do you think the patrol officer's attitudes are toward the partner organization staff?
- i. What has caused these attitudes?
- ii. Have they changed over time?
- iii. Did any experiences improve these attitudes?
- b. *If Applicable:* What do you think the patrol officer's attitudes are toward the response team officers?
- i. What has caused these attitudes?
- ii. Have they changed over time?
- iii. Did any experiences improve these attitudes?

6. Transferability

- a. Do you believe that your partnership arrangement would work well as a model of response to domestic violence for other police departments? (Why or why not?)
- 1 = yes
2 = no
7 = unsure
- b. What was the most challenging part of developing this partnership in your department?
- c. What was the easiest part of developing this partnership in your department?
- d. What is the most challenging part of maintaining this partnership in your department?

- e. What is the easiest part of maintaining this partnership in your department?
- f. What would be the most challenging part of the program to transfer to other jurisdictions?
- g. In setting up/operating an effective program, who are the key community participants?
- h. What advice would you have for other departments that are thinking of implementing a partnership to address domestic violence?

7. Wrap Up – Looking to the Future

- a. With additional/unlimited resources, what would you do to improve your department's response to domestic violence?
- b. What will your DV partnership look like 10 years from now?
- c. Is there anything else you would like to share about your domestic violence response?

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
1100 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

To obtain details on COPS programs, call the
COPS Office Response Center at 800.421.6770

Visit COPS Online at www.cops.usdoj.gov

