

2013-2015 Domestic Violence Strategic Plan: Seattle’s Criminal Justice Response Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

The 2013-2015 *Domestic Violence Strategic Plan: Criminal Justice Response to Domestic Violence* builds upon the ongoing efforts of the City of Seattle to achieve a bold vision – that Seattle will become a community where there is no domestic violence. The response to domestic violence within our community includes a broad spectrum of intervention and prevention initiatives carried out by numerous agencies, all of which are designed to address the comprehensive needs of a domestic violence survivor. This proposed plan is the continuation of Seattle’s efforts to reflect upon and improve our criminal justice system’s response to domestic violence, which comprises a narrow range of interventions and services. The graphic below provides a visual representation of the strategic plan, including purpose, focus areas, guiding principles and factors critical to success.

Purpose	To provide a direction for the continuous review and improvement of the City of Seattle’s criminal justice response to domestic violence.
Focus Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victim safety • Batter accountability • Systems improvement
Guiding Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration – fosters regional collaboration and relationship-building within and across systems • Results – focused strategies and impactful results • Balance – innovative, new initiatives balanced with day-to-day work • Flexibility – an evolving document that is responsive to emerging trends, new ideas and opportunities • Realistic – funding sources and time constraints are considered when prioritizing objectives and tasks
Critical Success Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to using evidence-based and/or best practices • Relationships are important and valued • Pride of ownership among stakeholders • Innovation and willingness to identify new ideas and a place for problem solving • Institutionalize system improvements • Support and collaborate with other regional and state-wide initiatives

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Seattle's first Domestic Violence Strategic Plan was launched in 1998 and was the first effort to look at a systemic response to domestic violence in Seattle. This first strategic plan resulted in such accomplishments as the creation of the Police Department's Victim Support Team. Subsequently, the city embarked on a comprehensive assessment of Seattle's criminal justice system, which resulted in the city's second Domestic Violence Strategic Plan 2005-2009. The 2005-2009 plan identified eight strategic areas: Advocacy, Batterer Intervention, Firearms, Investigation, Prosecution, Sanctions, Special Populations, and Victim Defendants. The accomplishments resulting from this include the implementation of the High Risk Offender program in the City Attorney's Office. With the development of the 2010-12 plan the criminal justice planners wanted the plan to be flexible and less task and more outcome centered in order to allow the participants the flexibility to incorporate emerging trends and best practices into the work. The 2010 plan resulted in the development of a Co-located Community-Based Victim Advocate within the Seattle City Attorney's Office and the Seattle Police Department to ensure easier access to victim services for those survivors participating in the criminal justice system.

FUTURE DIRECTION

The Criminal Justice subcommittee of the Seattle Domestic Violence Prevention Council served as a Strategic Plan work group. The Criminal Justice subcommittee is made up of representatives from Seattle's three main criminal justice agencies – Seattle Police Department, City Attorney's Office, and Seattle Municipal Court – as well as representatives from a number of community-based agencies, including the King County Coalition Against Domestic Violence. The members of this subcommittee met routinely throughout 2012 to review the existing strategic plan and identify what had been accomplished and what needed continued focus. Numerous items, such as the response to identified victim defendants and the development of a coordinated response to intimate partner elder abuse were identified to carry over onto the 2013-2015 plan as the group did not feel that goals had been satisfactorily achieved from the existing plan. The planning group also held two retreats where a mini SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis of Seattle's criminal justice response was conducted, identifying strengths, weaknesses and opportunities in the current system. The planning committee also reviewed feedback from a community stakeholder's meeting held by the Seattle Human Services Department Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention staff in May of 2012. The stakeholders identified many areas of improvement throughout the criminal justice system based on their client's experiences. This feedback was provided to the strategic plan work group and was utilized throughout the process in identifying new priorities. The result was a list of recommendations for main focus areas for the plan, goals the next plan should attempt to achieve, and the steps necessary to accomplish those goals.

DISTINGUISHING FACTORS

Significant progress has been made in Seattle's response to domestic violence as a result of the previous strategic planning initiatives undertaken by the city. Many of the initiatives identified on previous plans are now routine practice. The criminal justice planners felt strongly that the

current plan needed to focus not on the continuation of existing accomplishments, but rather on implementing innovative solutions to identified real-life challenges. The planning committee recognized the barriers faced by the partners in the criminal justice system and community based agencies in attempting to meet the expanding needs for services with smaller available resources. Due to this, the planning committee worked with the intent that the 2013-2015 plan be more narrowly focused on realistic goals which would achieve the largest impact.

The proposed 2013-2015 plan aims to accomplish goals within three specific focus areas – victim safety, batterer accountability, and system improvement. These three focus areas have considerable overlap with the previous strategic plans, with one major exception: the 2013-2015 plan does not include a focus on prevention. While prevention is arguably one of the most impactful means of addressing domestic violence, the purpose of this strategic plan is to focus on the criminal justice response and those individuals responsible for implementing the initiatives within it do not engage in prevention work. Prevention will continue to be a focus of the initiatives implemented by the Seattle Human Services Department, but not within the context of the criminal justice response strategic plan.

Through the 2013-2015 plan, the City of Seattle aspires to have a functional and realistic document that is capable of responding to emerging trends, innovative ideas, and opportunities for development. The criminal justice planners have strived to develop a plan that is flexible, and impactful which inspires them to achieve the desired outcomes, and ultimately moves Seattle closer to the realization of our community's potential as a city free of domestic violence.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

The Criminal Justice Committee has dedicated considerable time and attention to the development of this plan. Thank you to the members of the committee for the effort, reflection and desire to improve the criminal justice response for victims that inspired these goals. The Criminal Justice Committee includes:

- Merrill Cousin, King County Coalition against Domestic Violence (KCCADV)
- Lt. Deborah King, Seattle Police Department Domestic Violence & Elder Abuse Unit (SPD)
- Cindi Williams, Seattle City Attorney's Office Domestic Violence Unit (CAO)
- Julie Huffman, Seattle City Attorney's Office Domestic Violence Unit (CAO)
- Joni Wilson, Seattle Municipal Court (SMC)
- Leslie Grow, Seattle Women's Commission (SWC)
- Burns Peterson, Associated Council for the Accused (ACA)
- Kristen Kleinsasser, The Salvation Army (TSA)
- Pam Smith-Mentz, New Beginnings (NB)
- Jessie Beck, Consejo Counseling and Referral Services (Consejo)
- Dusty Olson, Seattle Human Services Department (HSD)

2013-2015 Domestic Violence Strategic Plan: Seattle's Criminal Justice Response

❖ Focus Area: The Seattle criminal justice response enhances victim safety

Goal	Action Items	Lead Agency
Victims who interact with the Seattle criminal justice system have access to community-based domestic violence services	Expand co-located community advocate program to accommodate additional referrals	SPD/HSD
	Co-located advocate coordinating with other community-based agencies in a co-advocacy model to ensure greater victim access to the criminal justice system	Salvation Army
High-risk domestic violence cases are identified and receive additional focus on victim safety	Develop multidisciplinary high risk response team which includes victim services providers	Criminal Justice Committee
	Develop victim services response to the identification of high risk cases through the risk assessment project	Criminal Justice Committee
	Include risk information on referrals to co-located advocate to ensure heightened response to victims	SPD/CAO/Salvation Army
Immigrant and refugee victims and/or with limited English proficiency have access to the criminal justice system	Explore technology solutions to the lack of trust/access to interpreters in marginalized communities	SPD
	Promote the use of the Peace In the Home Helpline in order for LEP victims to access culturally specific resources	HSD
	Explore co-location advocacy model with community-based agencies serving marginalized populations	SPD/HSD
A Seattle Family Justice Center (FJC) is established, incorporating both the criminal justice response and community-based victim services	Develop a mission statement and values which focus on victim safety & services, not just criminal prosecution	Family Justice Center (FJC) Workgroup
	Involve community-based victim services program with planning, development and implementation	FJC Workgroup
	Participate in training on FJC model development	FJC Workgroup

❖ ***Focus Area: Batterers are accountable for their actions***

Goal	Action Items	Lead Agency
Systems coordinate in order to hold batterers accountable	Identify and recruit additional representatives of systems to participate on the Criminal Justice Committee	HSD
	Explore obtaining access to the King County Information Systems for Judicial Officers, Prosecutor's and Probation in order to access information regarding protection orders	SMC
	Support legislative efforts that provide sanctions and/or progressive sentencing for repeat domestic violence offenders	HSD
Alternatives to traditional batterers intervention models are investigated	Explore the successful use of screening protocols prior to treatment recommendations in other jurisdictions and if promising develop screening tools for use within Seattle Municipal Court	SMC
	Educate members on alternative treatment modalities through a variety of methods, including but not limited to literature reviews, program research, consultation, and trainings	HSD
Validated risk assessment tools are utilized to formulate case response and decisions	Develop interdepartmental procedures for the use of the actuarial-based risk assessment tool	SPD/CAO
	Coordinate current risk assessment processes and responses between criminal justice departments	SPD/CAO/SMC
	Launch electronic sharing of risk assessment information currently funded in 2012 GEAP proposal	SPD
No contact orders and Protection orders are adequately enforced	Continued training for advocates in order to aid victims in obtaining proper orders and documentation to ensure enforcement	KCCADV
	Explore technology fixes to ensure that patrol officers have routine access to protection order information	SPD
	Explore expansion of Protection Order Enforcement and Tracking Project to include civil protection orders to ensure real-time access to computer based information to enforce civil protection orders	SPD/HSD
	Regional training for judicial officers, criminal justice staff and advocates on the issue of conflicting court orders	CAO/SMC
Prosecutors have access to sufficient information to make informed in-custody filing decisions	Develop procedures to ensure Prosecutor's access to Judicial Access Brower System	CAO
	Develop technology to allow digital downloads of 911 recordings so they are easily accessible by Detectives and Prosecutors	SPD
	Ensure victim contact is made prior to in-custody filing decisions in order to provide input	CAO/Salvation Army

A coordinated response to the findings of the 2012 WSIPP report on the effectiveness of batterer's intervention is formulated	Determine how the WSIPP findings compare to the population at Seattle Municipal Court	SMC
	Determine if a consistent court response between Seattle Municipal Court and King County Superior Court is necessary or desirable	CAO/SMC
	Identify additional DV Court research in courts with a similar approach as SMC and compare findings and recommendations	HSD/SMC
	Include BIP providers receiving City of Seattle funding through the Indigent Batterers Treatment voucher program in formulating response	HSD

❖ Focus Area: Identify opportunities to improve the criminal justice system

Goal	Action Items	Lead Agency
A Seattle Family Justice Center is the primary hub for the criminal justice response to domestic violence	Identify a City department to take the lead on the development of a Family Justice Center	Criminal Justice Committee
	Develop a Family Justice Center (FJC) work group focused on the establishment of a Family Justice Center	Criminal Justice Committee
	Participate in training on FJC model development	FJC Workgroup
	Identify a combination of public and private funding to ensure program self-sufficiency	HSD/Seattle Police Foundation
	Identify space that would meet the needs of the public and providers	FJC Workgroup
Limited English proficient domestic violence victims have increased understanding and engagement with the criminal justice system	Identify and recruit marginalized community partners to serve as members of the Criminal Justice Committee	HSD
	Engage in a targeted outreach campaign to increase knowledge of service and the criminal justice system within communities	SPD
The Seattle criminal justice response is culturally competent	Develop policies to address the impact on Seattle Police Department of the federal Secure Communities program	SPD
	Identify and recruit marginalized community providers to serve as members of the Criminal Justice Committee	HSD
	Explore the rights of the Seattle Police Department to refuse immigration detainers when placing offenders into King County Jail	SPD

Victims charged with domestic violence crimes (victim defendants) receive fair and just treatment by the criminal justice system	Explore current services available in the community for women who are incarcerated or have been criminally charged	HSD
	If none currently exists, work with a community based program to establish DV services for women who are incarcerated or have been criminally charged	HSD
	Review policies and protocols regarding criminal justice response to victim defendants	SPD/CAO/SMC
	Make training on the issue of victim defendants a priority for judicial officers, criminal justice responders and victim advocates	HSD
Coordination occurs across jurisdictions and disciplines in order to improve the response to domestic violence	Increase information sharing between Seattle & King County criminal justice agencies focused on policies and procedures, not just individual cases	SPD/CAO
	Community-based and System-based advocates have increased opportunity to network and cross-train through regularly scheduled activities	KCCADV
	Continue implementation of the Protection Order Enforcement and Tracking Project which is a computer based information sharing system that enables the tracking of criminal No Contact Orders issued by Seattle Municipal Court.	SPD
A coordinated system response is in place to address cases of intimate partner elder abuse	Expand co-location model to include Adult Protective Services worker within Seattle Police Department Elder Abuse Unit	SPD
	Increase coordination between Aging & Disability Services Victim Advocate and the Elder Abuse Unit	HSD
	Explore additional opportunities to increase collaboration between the criminal justice system and senior services	SPD/HSD