



CITRUS HEIGHTS POLICE DEPARTMENT



Christopher W. Boyd
Chief of Police

August 23, 2016

Honorable Kevin R. Culhane, Presiding Judge
Sacramento County Superior Court
720 Ninth Street, Department 47
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Sacramento Grand Jury Report: Domestic Violence

Dear Judge Culhane,

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the following responses are submitted to you regarding the 2015-2016 Grand Jury's Findings and Recommendations regarding the Citrus Heights Police Domestic Violence Program.

Finding 1: Some law enforcement agencies in Sacramento County fail to use innovative domestic violence intervention best practices. These evidence-based practices demonstrate measurable results that have a positive impact on families, law enforcement and the community. These practices include:

- Leadership at the executive level that prioritizes domestic violence
- Countywide Domestic Violence Response Teams (DVRT) and active partnerships with domestic violence victim advocates.
- Specialized domestic violence training for patrol officers, first responders, and domestic violence investigators
- Use of field-based lethality risk assessment tool by patrol officers and first responders
- Data collection and tracking system

Response to Finding 1: Agreed

The Citrus Heights Police Department's (CHPD) Executive Staff has an unwavering commitment to the issues associated with domestic violence. This priority is demonstrated in our level of domestic violence training, investigation, follow-up, and community partnerships with local advocacy groups.

This dedication was highlighted when CHPD won the prestigious 2012 James Q. Wilson Award for "Community Based Domestic Violence Intervention." CHPD's submission for the award showcased the collaboration with grassroots community groups to impact and reduce domestic violence in Citrus Heights. These partnerships helped develop the "Harmony House", which is a non-profit women and children's shelter that serves victims in Citrus Heights and referrals from outside areas. Continued collaboration with advocacy groups created an innovative model of

victim outreach known as the Domestic Violence Response Team (DVRT), which placed a trained victim advocate with officers in the patrol car. Victims are contacted by an advocate at the scene of the incident. This unique partnership is one of mutual respect, benefit, and desire to be effective in breaking the cycle of violence with families in Citrus Heights. The Wilson award judging was based on several factors: problem solving, partnership with the community, partnership with public and private organizations, the extent of community policing, and results.

CHPD has an active partnership with A Community For Peace (ACFP) – a local advocacy group, and continues to utilize the DVRT partnering victim advocates and police officers in the field. This partnership places DVRT members on the frontline providing immediate resources to victims of domestic violence.

CHPD conducts frequent department wide training for staff which is instructed by police department experts, advocacy experts, the District Attorney's (DA) office prosecutors, and includes field-based lethality risk assessment tools as well as data related to domestic violence incidents. This training is also included in the field training program for new officers at CHPD.

Finding 2: Not all law enforcement departments in Sacramento County participate in active partnerships among police, prosecutors, victim advocates, social service agencies, and community organizations to reduce the incidence of domestic violence.

Response to Finding: Disagree in Part

The CHPD actively participates in partnerships with various community and government organizations. As previously mentioned, our partnerships include A Community For Peace, the Sacramento County District Attorney's office, and Child Protective Services in an effort to collaboratively reduce the incidences of domestic violence in our community.

The CHPD is unable to articulate the manner in which other agencies within Sacramento County engage and collaborate with other community organizations.

Finding 3: Coordinated and accessible domestic violence services for victims and their families have been proven to be most effective.

Response to Finding 3: Agreed

The CHPD partnership with ACFP has allowed officers and victim advocates the ability to provide immediate resources that are accessible for victims of domestic violence via the DVRT program. These well trained first responders have the ability to provide crisis intervention, emotional support, and information about services during the initial call for service. Approximately 50 percent of domestic violence victims currently request follow-up services as opposed to 8 percent of victims followed up for services prior to the partnership.

Finding 4: The comprehensive and coordinated approaches to domestic violence found at both Citrus Heights Police Department and Elk Grove Police Department are model programs that protect victims and create safer communities.

Response to Finding 4: Agreed

The CHPD model emphasizes collaboration with various stakeholders in the community to provide immediate resources in the field, domestic violence training for officers, risk assessment tools, and successful prosecution of offenders.

As previously mentioned, the success of this model was highlighted when our organization was awarded the 2012 James Q. Wilson award for our "Community Based Domestic Violence Intervention Program" and the dramatic increase in the amount domestic violence victims who are now receiving follow-up services.

Recommendation 1: Demonstrate their commitment to addressing domestic violence adequately by having fully functional domestic violence units that focus on response, investigations, follow-up, tracking, and collection of comprehensive domestic violence data.

Response to Recommendation 1: Agreed

As we have seen with the CHPD program, quality response and investigation requires trained personnel to understand the implications and intricacies of domestic violence.

The officers in our domestic violence unit are the hub of professional services for the victims of domestic violence. They develop expertise and train other officers, coordinate with the Deputy District Attorneys for maximum prosecution rates, provide a liaison with Child Protection Services (CPS) to address children exposed to domestic violence, and coordinate effective follow-up using law enforcement, CPS, and advocate groups.

Additionally, domestic violence units use data collection and tracking to elucidate patterns and trends which can assist with law enforcement response to domestic violence and department training.

Recommendation 2: Establish partnerships with domestic violence advocacy groups and provide comprehensive domestic violence specialized training for all patrol officers and detectives.

Response to Recommendation: Agreed

The CHPD regularly partners with ACFP to provide department wide training for our staff.

These dedicated training days are instructed by police department and advocacy group experts in the field of domestic violence. Instructors include; law enforcement, advocacy group members and prosecutors from the DA's office who are experts in the field.

In addition to specific department training days, officers also receive informal department training during patrol briefings to include recent case reviews and domestic violence case law updates. These trainings are conducted by specially trained officers who are members of the DVRT. The DVRT program is also included as a block of training during the field training program for newly hired officers at CHPD.

Recommendation 3: Develop, expand, and support the use of domestic violence victim advocates in law enforcement domestic violence calls and field investigations.

Response to Recommendation: Agreed

The CHPD has partnered with ACFP to create the award winning DVRT which partners advocacy group members with patrol officers to respond to domestic violence related calls in the field. This allows advocacy groups to assist police officers with providing resources to victims of domestic violence during the initial call for service. Having an advocate partnered with a police officer allows for victims to have an immediate resource to assist them. This immediate resource has been proven to reduce the return calls for service and provides a higher likelihood that the victims will continue to follow-up for resources and outreach assistance.

Recommendation 4: Use a field-based lethality risk assessment tool.

Response to Recommendation: Agreed

During CHPD trainings, instructors discuss two forms of field-based lethality risk assessment tools. The first is a 20-item assessment tool (created by Dr. Jacquelyn Campbell) which has been studied and validated. The second is a shorter 11-item assessment tool for first responders (created by Messing and Campbell). The purpose of teaching these risk assessment tools to our officers is to provide them the skills to accurately assess domestic violence situations while in the field.

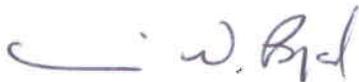
Recommendation 5: Evaluate the effectiveness of a Family Justice Center or similar models.

Response to Recommendation: Agreed

Sacramento County plans to open a Family Justice Center (FJC) which will bring multiple agencies together to provide victims of domestic violence, child abuse, and elder abuse with services they need at one location. Services at the center would include law enforcement, prosecutors, social service providers, medical examiners, and treatment. The Sacramento FJC will be a collaborative hub of multicultural and multidisciplinary services, bringing together nonprofit and government agencies in one safe and inclusive environment for victims.

The CHPD will actively support the FJC and intends to work in partnership with the FJC to ensure quality resources and information is available to victims of domestic violence.

Respectfully,



Christopher W. Boyd
Chief of Police

Cc: Becky Castaneda, Grand Jury Coordinator