

City of
SACRAMENTO
Police Department

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Ref: COP 9-16

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

Dear Presiding Judge Culhane:

This memorandum documents the Sacramento Police Department's response to the Sacramento County Grand Jury's final report section entitled *Domestic Violence: An Inconsistent Priority for Law Enforcement.*

Findings 1 - 3:

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 victims, 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 a field-based lethality risk assessment tool by patrol officers and first responders**
- **Data collection and tracking system**

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.

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

Response to Findings 1 – 3:

As noted in the report on page 44, the Sacramento Police Department does consider the crime of domestic violence a critical priority for our organization and we dedicate a significant amount of personnel resources as well as employee training dollars to the identification, investigation, and reduction of domestic violence crime. Additionally, we have developed and maintained strong partnerships with

The Mission of the Sacramento Police Department is to work in partnership with the Community to protect life and property, solve neighborhood problems, and enhance the quality of life in our City.

several advocacy groups in our continuing effort to reduce victimization and provide resources to victims in need.

The following paragraphs of this memorandum document the Sacramento Police Department's responses to the Grand Jury's recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Sacramento County law enforcement agencies should:

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: Concurrence: The Sacramento Police Department has a dedicated domestic violence investigative unit.

The Sacramento Police Department has a dedicated, fully functioning Family Abuse Detective Unit that investigates Domestic Violence and Elder Abuse cases. It is staffed by four full-time detectives and one full-time sergeant. The investigators assigned to the Domestic Violence Unit conduct investigations, follow-up, and outreach. Detectives routinely provide referrals to victims for support services and advocacy groups. The Unit is responsible for teaching "The Law Enforcement Response to Domestic Violence" to WEAVE and My Sister's House's incoming advocates and volunteers. Our detectives also teach at the SPD Basic POST Academy, instruct newly graduated officers, community groups, and at the Family Justice Center. The Sacramento Police Department regularly attends the Domestic Violence Death Review Team meetings (District Attorney's Office) and act as a Co-Chair for the Domestic Violence Prevention Collaborative. Through our Versadex records management system, the Department is able to track reports, in addition to victim and suspect data. Additionally, detective workload, cleared cases, and case dispositions can be easily queried. Detectives regularly utilize COP-LINK to determine if their victims have pending cases in surrounding jurisdictions.

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 2: Concurrence. The Sacramento Police Department has existing partnerships with domestic violence advocacy groups and also provides specialized training for our officers and detectives.

In 2016, the Sacramento Police Department's Continuing Professional Training (CPT) has a dedicated learning domain concerning domestic violence. This block of instruction is presented by detectives from the Family Abuse Unit, Adult Protective Services (Elder Abuse), and A Community for Peace. This section addresses victimology and the reasons that victims of violence are often reluctant to report abuse. This section provides officers with resources, tools, and an avenue for immediate referrals to local advocacy groups.

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 3: Concurrence. The Sacramento Police Department has long standing partnerships with victim advocates.

The Sacramento Police Department works closely with WEAVE, My Sister's House and A Community for Peace. We have also referred victims to resource service providers in Placer, San Joaquin, and Yolo Counties. The Family Abuse Unit refers families to each of the advocacy groups on a weekly basis. The detectives are trauma informed and work with A Community for Peace exclusively when children are exposed to violence. The Sacramento Police Department has reached out to A Community for Peace and asked them to respond in the field to provide additional resources to victims and their families.

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

Response to Recommendation 4: Non-concurrence. The Sacramento Police Department does not currently utilize a risk assessment tool.

Research is currently being conducted regarding the use of the evaluation tool at the patrol level. A survey of comparably sized local agencies who utilize this tool is being administered and the results will be evaluated. The results of the survey are expected to be complete in 60-90 days.

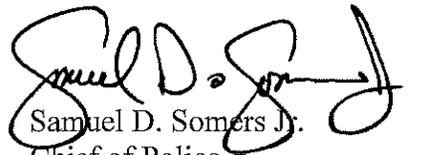
Recommendation 5: Evaluate the effectiveness of a Family Justice Center or similar models

Response to Recommendation 5: Concurrence. The Sacramento Police Department has been an active partner with the Sacramento County District Attorney's Office since the planning stages of the Family Justice Center.

The Sacramento Police Department is currently working in partnership with the Family Justice Center. We have conducted training for their interns and have offered any available resources necessary to get the Center up and running. We have participated in the planning of the Family Justice Center since its inception through the Domestic Violence Prevention Collaborative (DVPC). The Sacramento Police Department is committed to participating in the Family Justice Center in the future. We are currently considering the provision of a full-time Family Abuse detective at the Family Justice Center, which will provide victims direct access to law enforcement.

Should further information be required, please do not hesitate to contact my office at (916) 808-0800.

Sincerely,



Samuel D. Somers Jr.
Chief of Police

SS:lf

cc: Becky Castaneda, Grand Jury Coordinator