

Report on Domestic Violence for 2012

Lincoln/Lancaster County

FAMILY VIOLENCE COUNCIL

Contents

Overview of Year 2012	1
2012 Program highlights	2
Victim Services highlights	3
Criminal Justice highlights.....	6
Protection Orders highlights	7
Appendix A: Victim Services Information.....	8
Friendship Home	8
Voices of Hope	8
LPD Victim/Witness Unit	9
Appendix B: Criminal Justice Information	10
Investigations	10
Arrests/Dual Arrests	11
Homicides.....	12
Jailing.....	12
Racial/Ethnic Composition	13
Age	14
Percent of Women Arrested	14
Sexual Assault Reports by Intimate Partners	14
Number of Repeat Offenders	15
Prosecutor Outcomes	16
Sentencing Outcomes	17
Men's Domestic Violence Offender Intervention Programs.....	18
Appendix C: Protection Order Information	19
Requests/Approvals	19
Requests/Approvals Compared to Other Counties	20
District/County Courts Comparison	21
Types of Relationships.....	21
Judicial Variance	22
Service	22
Requests on Behalf of Minor Children	22
Approvals of Various Reliefs.....	23
Protection Order Recidivism	23
Appendix D: Protection Orders and Assaults.....	24
Appendix E: Regarding the Data.....	27
Appendix F: Family Violence Council	28
Appendix G: Referrals and Resources.....	29

OVERVIEW OF 2012

INVESTIGATIONS, ASSAULT ARRESTS UP

For the second year in a row, the number of reports of domestic violence or violation of a protection order was at its highest level in the 17 years the Family Violence Council has kept statistics.

A total of 2,127 investigations were handled by the Lincoln Police Department and Lancaster County Sheriff's Office. This was 7.7% above the total of 1,975 in 2011. The highest total prior to 2011 had been 1,904 in 2007.

Why the number of investigations varies from year to year is uncertain. Comparing 1996 to 2012, the increase is about 12%. During that time, the population in the county has grown 25%.

The increase in 2012 occurred more because of increased assault investigations than an increase in investigations for violation of protection orders.

As a result, the year saw the highest total of assault arrests since 2006. With a total of 1,066 arrests, it marked only the second time in a decade that more than 1,000 people were arrested for domestic assault. A total of 1,021 were arrested in 2006.

At the same time, arrests for violation of protection orders continued to decline, reaching 134, the lowest total in a decade. Arrests for violation of a protection order dropped below 200 in 2009 and have remained below that figure since. This decline tracks along with a decline in protection orders granted. *(For an analysis regarding protection order requests, approvals and related arrests in recent years see Appendix D on page 24).*

Dual arrests tie record low: Dual arrests for 2012 tied a record low, with just 29. That matched the total in 2010. In 2011 there were 35 dual arrests. In 1996, the first year of the project, there were 176. A dual arrest occurs when both parties in a domestic violence investigation are cited.

Dual arrests are seen as a key indicator of law enforcement response to domestic violence because domestic violence theory holds that a key element of the relationship is a significant power imbalance. As a result, domestic violence theory suggests that in most cases, one party is acting in self-defense and the other party is the predominant aggressor. Nebraska law passed in 2004 reflects that good investigations in most cases should determine the predominant aggressor.

No homicides in 2012: For the first time since 2003 there were no domestic violence-related homicides in Lancaster County. The last domestic violence homicide in Lancaster County occurred, Aug. 6, 2011.

Greater consequences for violence: A total of 65% of sentences were for jail in 2012, the highest percent since the project started in 1996. Between offenders being ordered into men's domestic violence programs or being sentenced to jail, consequences have increased significantly since 1996 when there were no offenders ordered into men's programs and only 14% of sentences were for jail. In 1996, 76% of sentences were fines. The median fine in 1996 was \$200.

In 2012, a total of 525 men attended approved domestic violence intervention programs, the most since the project began. This marked the third record in a row for attendance in the 24-week programs with 501 in 2010 and 505 in 2011.

2012 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Safe and Sound Project

The Safe and Sound Project seeks to improve the community's response to the co-occurrence of child abuse and domestic abuse. A focus of the project at this point is implementing the Safe and Together Model developed by David Mandel and Associates.

Safe and Together seeks to improve safety for children by focusing on behaviors that are harmful to children and seeking ways to stop them and on protective behaviors and seeking to bolster them.

During 2012, Lancaster County began a pilot project to implement the model. With help from funding by Woods Charitable Fund a series of training for DHHS workers and other coordinated response partners were provided by Mandel and Associates. Also, a separate training was developed on interviewing abusers and interviewing children and protective parents about abusers by the Family Violence Council.

Intimate Partner Sexual Violence Audit

An investigation into ways to improve the community's response to intimate partner sexual violence got under way in 2012. The project was organized by the Family Violence Council and included representatives from coordinated response stakeholders.

Dr. Kerry Beldin from the University of Nebraska at Omaha School of Social Work was hired to serve as the project coordinator. The audit used the Safety and Accountability Audit model developed by Praxis International. The audit reviews cases, completes interviews and focus groups, and looks at other strategies to review how agencies such as Voices of Hope, Friendship Home and law enforcement respond to victims of intimate partner sexual violence.

The goal of the audit is to identify general ways to improve the community's response. An assumption of the study is that IPSV happens frequently but is rarely discussed with victims or reported to law enforcement or identified by law enforcement during domestic violence investigations.

Outreach project to improve response for Latina and African American women

A federal "Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies and Protection Order Enforcement " grant was received in 2004 by Lancaster County resulted in the hiring of bilingual advocates and other staff at the Friendship Home, Voices of Hope, Nebraska Center For Legal Immigration Assistance, El Centro de las Americas, and the Lincoln Police Department Victim/Witness Unit. In 2010, this grant was renewed for an additional two years. FVC has coordinated the project.

The project seeks to increase contacts with victims of domestic violence by improving trust through outreach activities. In 2008, the project exceeded 1,000 Latinas and African American women served – the first time the project exceeded 1,000 served. The project has continued to serve more than 1,000 annually since then, reaching a high total of 1,742 in 2012. In 2005, the first full year of the project, a total of 547 victims were served.

Another project highlight has been an annual conference focused on African American experiences. The 2012 conference featured Dr. Thema Bryant-Davis, a psychologist with Pepperdine University. The conference title was: "A Cultural Context for Trauma Recovery. The conference drew 114 attendees.

Keepers of the Flame

In 2010, the outreach and services project to the Latinas and African American women was expanded into the Keepers of the Flame project. Funding for this project was received in a two-year federal grant awarded to El Centro de las Américas.

Other partners include the Malone Community Center, Asian Cultural and Community Center and the Indian Center along with Friendship Home, Voices of Hope and the Family Violence Council.

Work continued in 2012 on the project which initiates outreach activities through the Indian Center and expands existing efforts with the three other cultural centers.

Outreach activities were expanded to the Asian Community and Cultural Centers in 2009 through the community's coordinated response grant from the Nebraska Crime Commission. In 2010, federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds available through the Nebraska Crime Commission also supported this outreach activity. These funds also supported considerable training to support the community's coordinated response, including the cultural center outreach projects.

Southeast Nebraska Training, Response and Outreach Consortium

In 2011, domestic violence/sexual assault programs in southeast Nebraska received a renewal on a 2009 federal grant for the Southeast Nebraska Training, Response and Outreach Consortium (SENTROC). The \$1 million, 3-year renewal was awarded to the Crisis Center in Fremont.

The Family Violence Council serves as project manager for the project which includes Voices of Hope and Friendship Home along with Project Response in Nebraska City, which serves counties in southeast Nebraska, the Crisis Center in Fremont, which serves counties north of Lancaster County, and the Hope Crisis Center in Fairbury, which serves counties to the west and southwest of Lancaster County.

The focus of the grant is for the organizations to combine their expertise to improve training and increase outreach to key community partners in responding to domestic violence. The grant focuses on outreach to educators, health care professionals and to religious communities.

The grant allows project partners to continue an effort that began in 2003. This project has also provided advocacy, transportation, shelter and victim services to increase access to safety for rural victims and their families.

VICTIM SERVICES HIGHLIGHTS (more highlights pages 8-9)

Friendship Home

Friendship Home provides confidential safe shelter and supportive services for women and children who are victims of domestic violence. FH takes a strength-based approach to working with battered women and their children that addresses domestic violence and homelessness.

In 2012, FH provided emergency shelter and/or supportive services to 1,477 women and children; providing 26,093 bed nights of shelter to 560 women and children. The average length of stay in Friendship Home's emergency shelter program was 35.2 days, a slight decrease over 2011's average length of stay in emergency shelter (37.3 days).

A majority of families sheltered in 2012 (93%) reported incomes that placed them at or below the federal poverty thresholds. Upon checking out of emergency shelter in 2012, 97% of women reported they had a better understanding of domestic violence, and 90% stated they knew more ways to plan for their safety.

Other accomplishments in 2012 included:

- **At the 2012 World Conference on Women's Shelters**, Friendship Home's Coordinator of Strengths Centered Advocacy Services/LMHP presented Friendship Home's vision of Strengths Centered Advocacy, and corresponding curriculum, to an international audience. She has since piloted the Strength-Centered Advocacy Training to one DV program in Nebraska.
- **The support of the Community Health Endowment** allowed FH to work with a national consultant to study the viability of an alternative model for emergency shelter, which includes sheltering families in individual apartments with case management and advocacy services brought to them. This model may allow Friendship Home to serve women who may not be comfortable in a communal living environment.
- **Continued success of the Hestia Project**, Friendship Home's innovative program of pairing student interns with Women's Advocate staff as a method of staffing in emergency shelters. In 2012, 36 student interns and Women's Advocate volunteers provided 4,899.5 hours of service (2.36 FTE's) for a total of 39,967.75 hours of service since the inception of the program in 2004. The success of this program directly correlates to the provision of all 50 emergency shelter beds.
- **Continued provision of transitional housing and supportive services through a Federal Transitional Housing Assistance Program grant.** Women and children participating in this program receive transitional housing (in collaboration with the Lincoln Housing Authority), and enhanced supportive services provided by FH's Transition Team. Using FH's *Strength-Based Approach*, this team focuses their work on advocacy, goal setting, information, referrals and support as women work to gain economic independence from their batterer and self-sufficiency. They provide information/referrals and advocacy for securing housing, employment and/or education resources; help women set financial goals; and provide support on household management and single parenting issues.
- **FH continues its Economic Empowerment Program in shelter and transitional housing**, thanks to continued support from the Allstate Foundation. An Advocate dedicated to the project conducts weekly support groups which utilize Allstate's *Moving Ahead Through Financial Management* curriculum, designed specifically to provide financial education to women who are victims of domestic violence. This program also includes individual financial counseling and advocacy.
- **Ongoing collaborative work with CenterPointe, St. Monica's, and Voices of Hope**, to create a shared response protocol and identify strategies to overcome significant barriers to safety for victims of domestic violence who experience mental health concerns and/or substance use issues. This partnership is supported by a Federal Education, Training, and Enhanced Services to End Violence Against and Abuse of Women grant.

Voices of Hope

In 2012, Voices of Hope continued its commitment to providing 24-hour a day emergency services for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and related forms of abuse. Services are provided 24-hours a day through the crisis line (402-475-7273) and through advocacy services provided in response to calls from hospital emergency rooms and law enforcement for assistance with victims. Voices of Hope also offers daytime walk-in services Monday through Friday and Wednesday evenings. During that time individuals can come to VOH without an appointment for

safety planning assistance, help filling out and filing protection orders, and/or to receive information on community resources and referrals.

Offering 24-hour a day crisis intervention services provides an ongoing challenge to Voices of Hope. The crisis line is answered by staff members as well as trained volunteers. To ensure an adequate number of volunteers, Voices of Hope offers volunteer training three times a year. Each session provides 34 hours of training on the issues of domestic violence, sexual assault, incest, stalking and related issues and involves many opportunities for role-playing to prepare volunteers for the calls they will receive on the crisis line.

In addition to its crisis intervention services, Voices of Hope offers drop-in support groups for domestic violence and sexual assault survivors, including a group for Spanish-speaking individuals and one for African American women who are or have experienced violence in their relationships. Voices of Hope also offered several special focus time-limited educational groups in 2012, such as DV101 for victims of domestic or dating violence who are parents and have children who are witnessing this violence and a Parenting Support Group that focused on helping parents who have children who have witnessed violence in their homes to better understand and deal with the impact of it on their children.

Voices of Hope had two part-time bi-lingual advocates on staff to ensure services were available to Spanish-speaking individuals and to facilitate the Spanish speaking support group. In addition, Voices of Hope utilized interpreters as needed to assist with victims who spoke Arabic, Pharisee, Vietnamese, Sudanese, Chinese, Karin, Russian and other languages.

Voices of Hope worked with many partnerships in the community in 2012 to help ensure victim safety, including Friendship Home, Fresh Start, Catholic Social Services, El Centro de las Américas, Malone Center and the Asian Community Cultural Center. **VOH also established formal cooperative projects with El Centro de las Américas, the Asian Community Cultural Center, and Malone Center to reach out to under-represented populations in the community.** Voices of Hope was also an active participant to Lincoln's Sexual Assault Response Team, along with hospital and law enforcement representatives.

Highlights from 2012 include:

- **In 2011, the Sexual Assault Response Team completed an extensive sexual assault audit to determine how sexual assault victims are treated in our community and to identify areas where improvements could be made. As a result,** some changes in advocacy procedures regarding intimate partner sexual violence including increased follow up with sexual assault exams at all three hospitals in Lancaster County.
- **On-Campus Advocacy:** Voices of Hope continued its on-campus advocacy services at both the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus and Southeast Community College-Lincoln Campus. Students, faculty and staff at both institutions had access to an on-campus advocate who provided both services and educational and training programs on-site.
- **Partnership Focuses on Mental Health Issues:** Voices of Hope continued its participation in a multi-agency, three-year project designed to evaluate community services for victims of domestic violence who are also impacted by mental health and/or substance abuse issues. The project, titled Open Door Initiative, was funded by a grant from the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. Following extensive study and several focus groups held to evaluate, the group worked throughout much of 2012 to develop recommendations for improved policies and procedures for providing services for this

group of individuals and to plan for the implementation of the recommendations. Other partners in the project include: Friendship Home, St. Monica's and CenterPointe.

- **Increased Numbers of Children Served:** Voices of Hope saw an increase in the number of children receiving direct or indirect services. In 2012, Voices of Hope served 487 children, up from 448 in 2011. Services for children included free child care while mothers attended support and educational groups; parent/child counseling; children's basic needs items such as diapers, wipes, blankets, and winter clothing; holiday gifts for children of clients; and an art therapy group for children.
- **Support Groups Flourish:** Nearly 450 women participated in ongoing support groups and/or educational special topic groups at Voices of Hope in 2012. Six free, drop-in groups were provided each week, including two for survivors of sexual assault; two for survivors of domestic violence, one for Spanish-speaking survivors of domestic violence, and one for African-American women who have been or are in abusive relationships. Free child care was provided during all group sessions.
- **Outreach to Middle School & High School Students:** Voices of Hope's new Prevention Specialist presented to more than 1,000 middle and high school students in 2012. Her presentations utilized content from the Reaching and Teaching Teens to Stop Violence curriculum developed by the Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition. It provides information to raise awareness of existing violence in our communities and challenges social norms and expected behaviors that tolerate and perpetuate violence. It provides a toolkit for students to be able to recognize abuse, understand why it happens, and learn ways to protect themselves as well as provide them valuable skills for the future. In addition to her school presentation, she also presented to organizations such as CEDARS, Lighthouse, and the Nebraska Children Home's Society.
- **AmeriCorps Project with Center for People in Need:** Voices of Hope was an AmeriCorps site through contract with the Center for People in Need's AmeriCorps Project. The goal at VOH is to improve safety and awareness for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and human trafficking. An AmeriCorps member is on staff at Voices of Hope to provide advocacy and case management. This project focused on economic stability as it relates to these crimes.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE HIGHLIGHTS (more highlights pages 10-18)

- Not counted in the assault totals are investigations for sexual assaults involving intimate partners. In 2012, there were 28 such instances, resulting in 3 arrests.
- In 2012, 22.8% of those arrested for a domestic assault were women, down from 26.6% in 2011. The 2011 rate was the highest since 27.1% in 2002.
- Of those arrested in assault investigations, over 83% were lodged. In the first year of the project, 1996, only 43% were lodged. In recent years, the rate had ranged between 50% and 60% until 2008 when it jumped to 75.6% and has risen steadily since then to the 2012 rate.
- A total of 94% of arrests led to the Lancaster County Attorney's office filing charges. The figure is comparable to previous years. A total of 74% of the arrests led to some sort of consequence. This figure is also comparable to previous years.

- The majority of victims and offenders are white. But, there is an over-representation of some minority populations in these figures. With about 16% of the population non-white, 31% of perpetrators and 29% of victims were non-white. Also, 42% of those lodged and 44% of those receiving some consequence were non-white. These figures don't show that domestic violence happens more frequently in some populations than in other populations. The figures simply reflect what is reported to law enforcement. The majority of domestic violence incidents are not reported.

PROTECTION ORDERS HIGHLIGHTS (more highlights pages 19-23)

- Lancaster County ranks last or next to last among the most populous counties in Nebraska in protection orders requested and approved. In 2012 Lancaster County saw requests at a per capita rate of 38 per 10,000 people. Only Sarpy County at 28 requests per capita was lower. The overall per capita rate in the state was 50 per 10,000 people. The approval rate for Lancaster County was 46% percent. The overall state approval rate was 59%.
- As in past years, Lancaster County Court judges were more likely to grant a protection order than District Court judges. County Court judges granted 1-year orders to 40% of requests compared to District Court judges, who granted 1-year orders to 30% of requests.
- Protection orders on behalf of minor children continue to be granted much less frequently than other protection orders. In 2012, only 35 of 180 requests became 1-year orders, which is an approval rate of about 19%.
- Most protection orders are not violated. Only 23% of respondents who had protection orders placed against them in 2011 were arrested for a domestic violence offense expired after one year. Protection orders granted in 2011 were reviewed because some 2012 protection orders remain in effect.
- Domestic abuse protection orders require the petitioner to identify one of 9 qualifying relationships. Most commonly noted was spouse (150), father/mother of my child (143) and person I used to date (93). Approval rates when "person I used to live with" was marked were the greatest at 49%. The categories of person I used to date, person I am dating and person I'm living with were all approved at the next highest rates around 35%. Spouse or former spouse were approved around 25% -- about 25% less often person I used to live with. A total of 65% of orders for spouse/living with were granted compared to 47% of requests from former spouse/person I used to live with. Father/mother of my child was approved 54% of the time.