

Domestic Violence Audit for 2013

For Storey County

Prepared by:

Storey County District Attorney

Storey County Justice of the Peace

Community Chest, Inc.

Storey County Sheriff's Office

Completed: March 31, 2015

**Prepared by The Storey County District Attorney, The Storey County Justice of the Peace,
Community Chest, Inc. and The Storey County Sheriff's Office**

Completed: March 31, 2015

The Storey County District Attorney, Storey County Justice of the Peace, Community Chest, Inc. and Storey County Sheriff's Office have completed our annual domestic violence audit for Storey County's legal and social advocacy community for public review. Using numbers from 2013, representatives from these four agencies held substantive discussions, analyzed statistics for each of the four agencies, and engaged in self-evaluation.

As in previous editions, contained in this report is an analysis of the legal and social advocacy system's response with special attention paid to ways in which each of the various parts of the legal and social advocacy system can improve their responsiveness to addressing domestic violence. The District Attorney, Justice of the Peace, Community Chest and the Sheriff's Office are singularly and jointly committed to improving their abilities and capabilities such that perpetrator accountability and victim safety are optimized.

Domestic violence is shared by many, if not all, communities throughout the country. It is a crime that breaks the bond of trust between intimates -- husband to wife, father to son, mother to daughter. It is a crime that is passed down from generation to generation and is a violation of the basic human right to live with dignity and without fear.

The cost of domestic violence can be seen in the following ways: healthcare services used (emergency room visits, mental health care, and hospital stays), criminal justice and social service costs, decreased productivity and reduced earnings due to injury or fear of a perpetrator, and behavioral issues in secondary victims of domestic violence are just a few of the ways that society is negatively impacted by this "personal issue."

The most devastating effect that domestic violence has on a community is the damaged capacity for it to realize its full potential.

One of the more effective tools for addressing the issue of domestic violence within a community is to develop what is known as a "coordinated community response." This simply means that the various parts of the legal community -- in Storey County's case, the Sheriff's Office, the District Attorney, the Justice of the Peace and Community Chest (as a provider of services to victims of domestic violence) -- do their respective parts to address the issue of domestic violence *while maintaining relationships with the other partners*. The discussion points listed on the following pages have been pulled from each agency's self-evaluation.

Storey County District Attorney, Victim Services Unit (VSU) – (As written by Debra Burns)

In 2013 Victim Services Unit continued its partnership with Community Chest, Inc. in an effort to reach out and assist clients affected by domestic violence in addition to various other areas of need. Our staff remained as one paid advocate through STOP grant funds, as well as two volunteers, one stationed to the Mark Twain community of Storey County and the other in the Lockwood community of Storey County. The advocate and volunteers were available as needed after hours for response to on-scene situations as well as via phone for crisis intervention.

Notwithstanding efforts to bring more awareness to domestic violence, there were domestic violence incidents in Storey County in 2013, *but* continued efforts remained in effect to educate and help others' awareness.

VSU worked closely with the Sheriff's Office and Justice Court maintaining "no contact" instructions should an offender have bailed out of jail before the victim was able to secure a protection order. Deputies offered VSU information to victims when responding to calls and followed up with the VSU advocate should a victim decline to have advocate respond on-scene.

Our unit in 2013 had two trained and certified sexual assault responders available 24/7 that work with Advocates to End Domestic Violence (AEDV) in Carson City. In addition to responding to on-scene calls, our advocates accompanied victims to hospital exams and court hearings, referring them to proper services such as counseling and assisting with Victim of Crime applications.

Victim Services and Community Chest offered a weekly support group "Women's Parlor," facilitated by counselors and assisted by our volunteer advocate. This service was open to all women in the community and offered a safe, confidential and supportive environment to share their concerns and receive encouragement.

VSU continued its outreach to the high school both in educating students on the effects of domestic violence in the home, as well as dating violence and sexual predators via the internet and texting. Volunteers from VSU and CCI maintained an informational bulletin board at the high school maintaining our presence and services.

The most important goal of our victim services is providing assistance and guidance to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in a non-judgmental, supportive and ethical manner. It is our intent to provide professional, confidential and knowledgeable assistance in a positive manner without demeaning or re-victimizing the individual brave enough to make the first step in changing his or her life.

In 2013:

District Attorney Files Created Including Sherriff's Office Reports Received	31
Clients Provided Services	10
Clients Provided Emergency Shelter	0
Crisis Intervention Phone Calls	33
Protection Order Assistance	6

Storey County Justice of the Peace – (As written by Judge Eileen Herrington)

Storey County's Justice of the Peace review of case statistics from 2013 reflected a total of:

- 21 Applications for Temporary Protective Orders
- 11 Criminal Cases

The Court adhered strictly to NRS 400.285(8) which states, "...a prosecuting attorney shall not dismiss a charge in exchange for a plea of guilty or nolo contendere to a lesser charge or for any other reason unless the prosecuting attorney knows, or it is obvious, that the charge is not supported by probable cause or cannot be proved at the time of trial." As part of the plea process, it was required that the prosecutor state, on the record, the particular reasons for the dismissal and/or reduction in charges.

Domestic Battery is a serious crime. In 2013, at sentencing, the requirements were clearly set forth to the defendant on the record and through a written order. These included mandatory fines and domestic batterers' intervention classes. Domestic battery cases are complex and sometimes involve drugs and/or alcohol. In these particular cases, it may have been necessary to place the defendant on pretrial supervision either through the Court's court-monitored program or through out-of-jurisdiction pretrial services. (We frequently worked with Washoe County and Carson City in offering both pretrial supervision and alternative sentencing.) Our court also worked closely with Reno Court's Co-Occurring Disorders Program. The alleged victim's safety was paramount and caution was taken to ensure safety for all parties in the courtroom.

The Justice of the Peace reviewed all cases, in particular DV and DUI cases, on a monthly basis to monitor compliance. The goal was to ensure that the convicted person was participating in his/her counseling. Convicted persons who were found in violation of conditions faced consequences such as revocation of a suspended sentence and/or contempt.

Our website offers information, helpful links, and forms for Temporary Protective Order Applications. For more information please go to: <http://www.storeycounty.org/193/District-Court>

Community Chest, Inc. – (as written by Adrienne Sutherland, Community Chest)

Community Chest, Inc. (CCI) is a non-profit organization concerned with many aspects of social justice and a local provider of many social services, including those for victims of domestic violence. In 2013, CCI provided services to an average of 18.25 primary victims of crime quarterly, for a total of 73 victims of crime being served for 2013. Of these numbers 53, or 73%, were the result of Domestic Violence.

	Primary Victims of Crime	Secondary Victims of Crime	Victims of Domestic Violence
Quarter 1 (January to March)	19	6	17
Quarter 2 (April to June)	17	2	15
Quarter 3 (July-September)	11	1	10
Quarter 4 (October-December)	16	1	11

The types of abuses reported continue to be varied and include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and financial abuse.

In addition to counseling, victims continued to be provided with referrals and provided food/clothing/rent/utilities assistance as needed. CCI advocates and counselors endeavored to expand community partnerships and had worked more closely with allies from a variety of organizations, both government and non-profits, such as the Nevada Network Against Domestic Violence. At the end of 2013 CCI submitted a proposal for a grant for the purpose of funding a part time domestic advocate position to better coordinate services with the Storey County District Attorney’s Office. While ultimately accepted, advocacy services did not begin until January 2014.

We look forward to expanding these collaborative approaches as we continue to address domestic violence communitywide.

We share the opinions of the Sheriff, District Attorney, and Justice Court offices regarding how important a role the community-at-large plays in helping to send the message that domestic violence is not tolerated in Storey County and has, perhaps, the largest deterrent effect compared to other possible strategies. It is, therefore, important for all Storey County citizens and organizations to take a strong stand against domestic violence.

We endeavor to have community supports in place for *anyone* who is a victim of domestic violence to feel comfortable placing a call to 911, talking with officers, working with prosecutors, and obtaining the assistance they need in order to lead lives of dignity.

Storey County Sheriff's Office – (As written by Gerald Antinoro)

	Total Storey County Domestic Calls	Average Calls per month	Total Cases	% of Calls that become cases	Average cases per month	Total arrests	% of cases resulting in arrest	Average arrests per month
2013	76	6.3	40	53	3.33	15	38	1.3
2012	87	7.25	32	37	2.67	20	63	1.7
2009	57	4.75	20	35.1	1.67	13	65	1.1
2008	64	5.3	39	60.9	3.25	11	28	<1
2007	86	7.2	43	50.0	3.5	28	65	2.3
2006	86	7.2	38	44.2	3.1	26	68	2.1
2005	84	7.0	49	58.1	4.0	14	28	1.1

For the past few years the data relating to incidents of domestic violence in Storey County have remained fairly consistent. These statistics, sometimes falling and sometimes rising, have been relatively stable in Storey County for several years, since public education and awareness has been a primary focus to public safety and service providers.

Contributing factors:

- Public awareness, primarily through the advocacy program has raised awareness of the seriousness of domestic violence. People are aware of the seriousness of domestic violence and are calling in with suspected incidents of it, however as the data reflects, actual confirmed incidents of domestic violence remain relatively low. One reason this may be so, in comparison to the reports of other agencies and organizations, is the difficulty at times in identifying the primary aggressor. Also, some types of domestic violence are not arrestable offenses, for example, emotional abuse.

The Future:

- The Storey County Sheriff's Office will continue to improve domestic violence training and investigative procedures to produce solid evidence-based cases for the prosecution of offenders. We have made some great strides but must continually work towards improving the investigative process.
- Continue working in conjunction with the District Attorney's Office, DV advocacy, and support groups such as Community Chest, Inc. to further educate and provide assistance to victims increasing the likelihood of their coming forward to report victimization.

Considerations:

- Continued efforts to educate the public of the seriousness of this criminal act should be a priority. The “silent, family matter” atmosphere that once shrouded domestic violence is collapsing but education of people must earnestly continue to ensure positive cultural and systemic change if we are to eradicate these devastating criminal acts.

In Conclusion

Well-coordinated community responses to domestic violence result from each of the various components being fully trained on the issues of domestic violence and the various dynamics of domestic violence. Further, communities successful in developing and institutionalizing such coordination frequently have regular meeting times where all of the various components come together to hold each other accountable and work together. Indeed, only by doing so, can a community hold its perpetrators of domestic violence accountable.

By incorporating the best practices mentioned above, Storey County’s legal and social advocacy community continue to utilize nationally-recognized best practices to ensure that fewer families and their neighbors experience the damaging effects of domestic violence.

The participating agencies in this report respectfully present this report for public review as a sign of their commitment to do all within their power to limit the deleterious effects of domestic violence.

Shaun Griffin, Executive Director, Community Chest, Inc.

Anne Langer, Storey County District Attorney

Gerald Antinoro, Storey County Sheriff

Eileen Herrington, Storey County Justice of the Peace