
Dallas Domestic Violence Taskforce

Annual Summary Report: 2014-2015

The Institute for Urban Policy Research
At The University of Texas at Dallas

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Introduction

For almost 30 years the City of Dallas Domestic Violence Taskforce has served the community to combat domestic violence and raise awareness about this important public health and safety issue. Comprised of elected officials and representatives from law enforcement, courts, and corrections, as well as members from advocacy, religious, media, and volunteer organizations, the Taskforce has established itself as the clear voice for community concerns and activism on this critical issue. This Annual Summary Report will be the first official synthesis of the activities and membership of partners in the Taskforce, all in an effort to show Dallas' systemic response to the threat of domestic violence.

Dallas has a long history of using public-private partnerships to accomplish quality of life and health in our community. The City of Dallas Domestic Violence Taskforce was created in 1987 as a result of a class action lawsuit against the City of Dallas in 1985. The suit, filed by two women with the help of the Northwest Texas Legal Aid, alleged that police denied women equal protection under the law because of an unofficial policy for officers not to intervene or make arrests in family violence cases. The out-of-court settlement agreement directed that the Public Safety Committee create a Domestic Violence Taskforce within 90 days of the consent decree to investigate and monitor the City's response to domestic violence for two years. The decree mandated that the Taskforce be made up of representatives from family violence advocacy organizations, including The Family Place, Genesis Women's Shelter, and New Beginnings, and the Dallas Police Department (DPD). The Taskforce was to meet quarterly to review and evaluate training materials and programs as it related to the enforcement of family violence law and prevention.

Although the Taskforce was instructed to meet for only two years, the group quickly realized the salience of coordinating their efforts to help victims of domestic violence. Strong and trustful working relationships were formed in the group, and as a result, the Domestic Violence Taskforce has been meeting since 1986.

The Domestic Violence Taskforce has had several leaders including former Councilmembers Lori Palmer, Sandy Greyson, Pauline Medrano, Dr. Elba Garcia, Delia Jasso, and current Councilmember Jennifer Gates. The objectives and initiatives of the Taskforce have changed over the years depending on leadership and the needs of the community. The Domestic Violence Taskforce led the charge to tape all 9-1-1 calls, to help determine what domestic violence resource information to include on the blue cards police officers hand out to citizens, and to recommend to City Council that October be designated as Domestic Violence Awareness month. Currently, the Taskforce holds general meetings, open to the public, on a quarterly basis. In addition, a small number of partners comprise the executive committee, which meets monthly to provide detailed metrics and guidance for city policy.

On January 8th, 2013, Karen Cox Smith was brutally murdered by her estranged husband in the UT Southwestern Medical Center parking lot. Her husband was to be arrested the next day by DPD for a domestic violence-related issue. This crime led Mayor Mike Rawlings to launch his Men Against Abuse Campaign in March 2013. Shortly thereafter, he appointed Councilmember Jennifer Gates to chair the

Domestic Violence Taskforce. Since 2013, Mayor Rawlings has led more than a dozen public events, including breakfasts and rallies. These events serve to raise awareness. They also call for male advocates throughout the community to hold offenders accountable for their abuse and better support domestic violence victims in their recovery and healing.

As chair of the Domestic Violence Taskforce, Councilmember Gates was charged with gathering metrics to highlight the efforts of community and governmental partners. Toward this end, in 2014 she invited Dr. Denise Paquette Boots (Associate Professor of Criminology and Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Urban Policy Research at the University of Texas at Dallas) to join the executive committee and general taskforce and help spearhead this data collection. Accordingly, Dr. Boots met with these partners over an 18-month period to ensure reliability and rigor in these measures since these agencies and organizations have voluntarily expended significant efforts and manpower to inform this inaugural report. The following report will highlight a general survey (administered in August of 2015) of the entire Taskforce membership, as well as a more detailed summary of the executive committee partner metrics that have been collected between June, 2014, and May, 2015. Together, these data present a cumulative picture of the systemic response to domestic violence in our community and offer a preliminary glimpse into relevant policy and criminal justice issues.

A General Overview of the Systemic Response to Domestic Violence

In 2015, all attendees of the general Domestic Violence Taskforce meetings were invited to participate in a brief electronic survey about their organization and their involvement. In all, 87 invitations to participate in the survey were distributed to unique email addresses. Of those, 41 partially completed the survey, and 33 completed the survey in its entirety, yielding response rates of 47% and 38%, respectively. These response rates are outstanding considering that all attendees of general taskforce meetings were invited to return the survey, regardless of whether they had attended once or were regular participants.

About the Survey

The survey asked respondents for information about themselves, their organization (if applicable), and their involvement in the Domestic Violence Taskforce. For respondents who indicated they represented the interests of an organization, such as a non-profit or government agency, the survey asked about the employment and characteristics, as well as mission and purpose of the organization. For those organizations that provided shelter services, respondents were asked about the shelter capacity. It is important to note that, as with any survey instrument, respondents were free to answer all, some, or none of the questions. In cases where respondents did not answer, total sample sizes will vary across tables and figures. To maintain integrity, missing data were not imputed and no entries were changed from original respondent answers.

Survey Findings

As shown in Figure 1, representatives of governmental agencies and non-profit organizations combined to represent more than half of respondents, accounting for 33% and 35% of respondents, respectively.

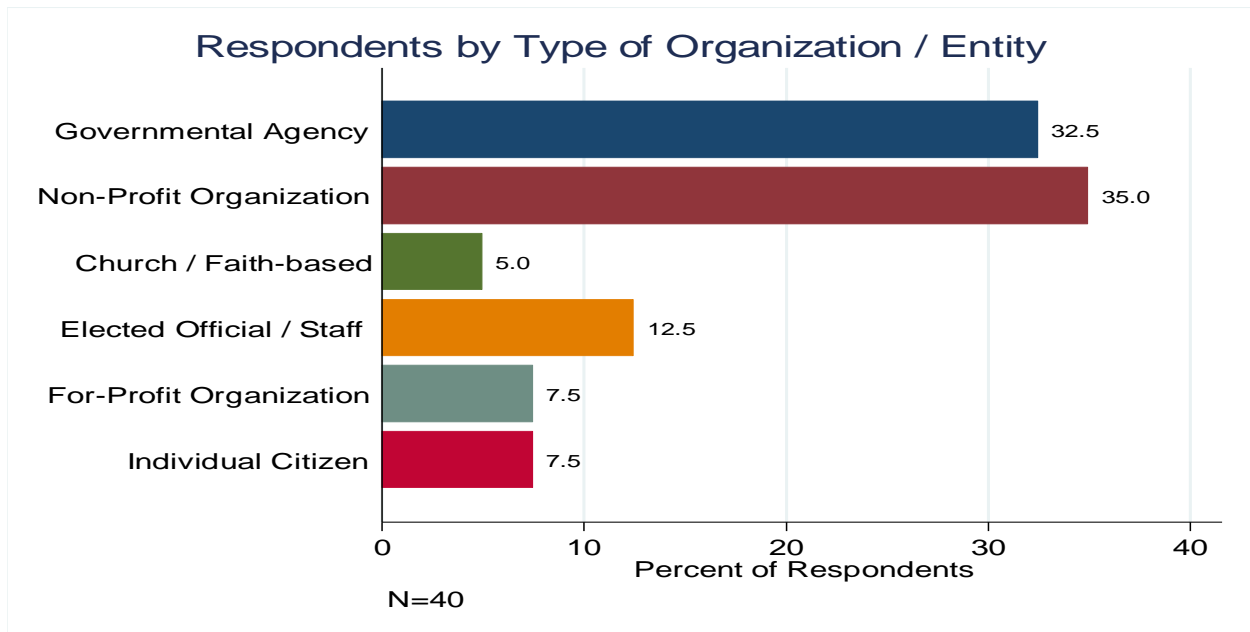


Figure 1. Percent of Respondents by Organization or Entity

Table 1 presents the distribution of survey respondents by type of organization and length of membership on the Dallas Domestic Violence Taskforce. Of the 35 who responded to the question, more than half have been on the taskforce for two or fewer years. This pattern held largely across the variety of organizations represented, with elected officials and for-profit representatives expressing slightly longer tenures.

Table 1. Distribution of Survey Respondents by Type of Organization and Length of Membership

	Govt. Agency	Non-Profit	Church / Faith Based	Elected Official	For-Profit	Individual	Total
Less Than One Year	3 25%	3 30%	0 0%	1 20%	1 33%	2 67%	10 29%
1-2 Years	5 42%	5 50%	2 100%	2 40%	1 33%	0 0%	15 43%
3-4 Years	2 17%	1 10%	0 0%	2 40%	0 0%	0 0%	5 14%
5-9 Years	1 8%	1 10%	0 0%	0 0%	1 33%	0 0%	3 9%
10 or More Years	1 8%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 33%	2 6%
Total	12	10	2	5	3	3	35

Table 2 presents, for respondents representing organizations, the distribution of organizational membership in the Dallas Domestic Violence Taskforce by type of organization. While the modal category for individuals was two or fewer years, here we see that almost half of the organizations represented on the taskforce have participated for five or more years. Combined, the results from these

tables suggest that the continued participation of corporate and non-profit entities in Dallas contribute to the Taskforce’s strength of mission.

Table 2. Distribution of Organizations by Type of Organization and Length of Membership

	Government Agency	Non-Profit	Church / Faith Based	For-Profit	Total
Less Than One Year	1 9%	2 20%	0 0%	0 0%	3 12%
1-2 Years	1 9%	3 30%	2 100%	0 0%	6 24%
3-4 Years	0 0%	1 10%	0 0%	0 0%	1 4%
5-9 Years	2 18%	2 20%	0 0%	0 0%	4 16%
10 or More Years	4 36%	2 20%	0 0%	1 50%	7 28%
Not Applicable	3 27%	0 0%	0 0%	1 50%	4 16%
Total	11	10	2	2	25

Services Provided by Agencies

Agencies were asked about the services they provided to victims of domestic violence. As can be seen in Figure 2 through Figure 9, a majority of responding agencies provide victim services, including counseling and therapy. More than one quarter of responding agencies provide shelter and education services. The most frequently co-occurring services were shelter and counseling / therapy services. All of the organizations offering shelter also offering therapy or counseling services. Notably, two services were not represented by any of the organizational respondents: medical services and media services.

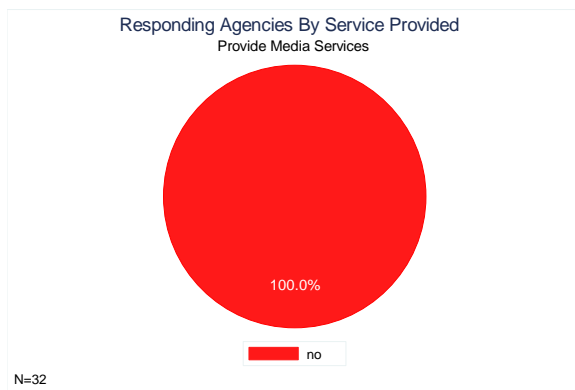


Figure 2. Agencies Providing Media Services

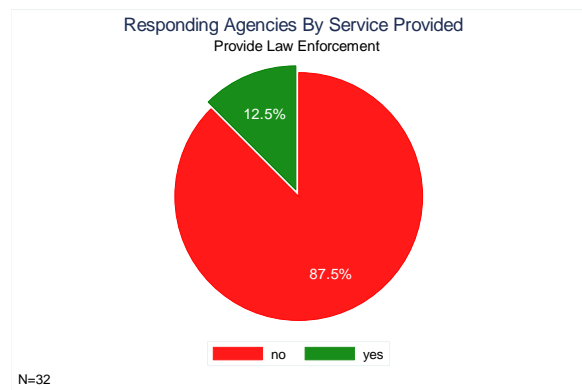


Figure 3. Agencies Providing Law Enforcement Services

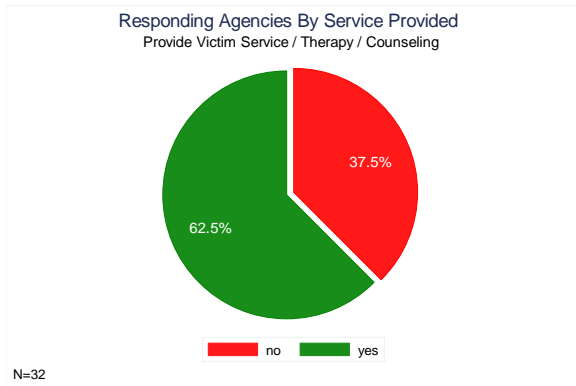


Figure 4. Agencies Providing Victim Services, Therapy, or Counseling

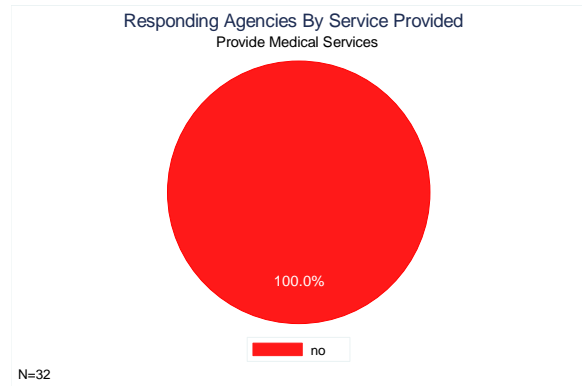


Figure 7. Agencies Providing Medical Services

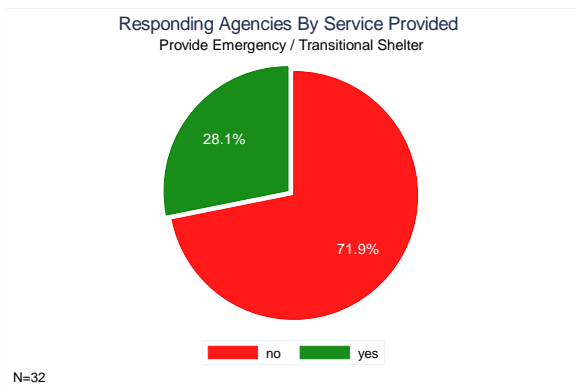


Figure 5. Agencies Providing Emergency or Transitional Shelter

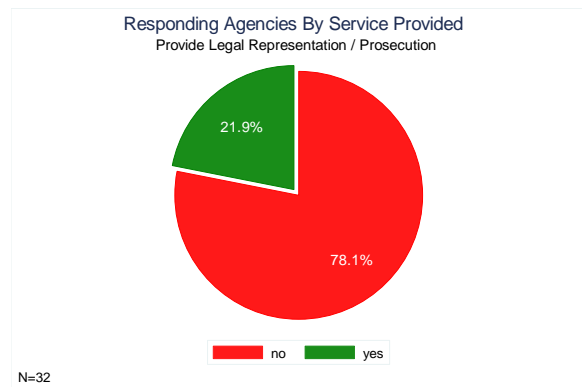


Figure 8. Agencies Providing Legal Representation or Prosecution

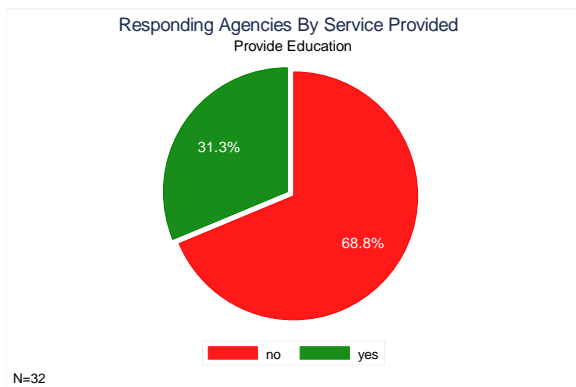


Figure 6. Agencies Providing Education

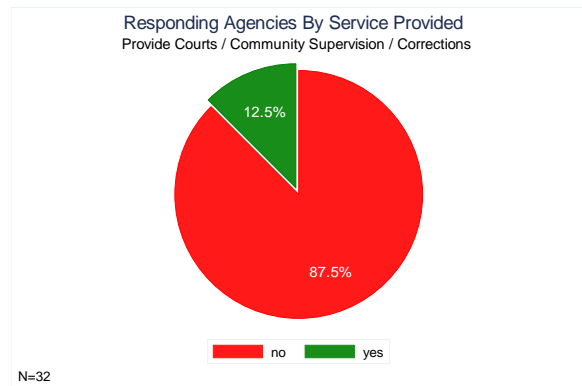


Figure 9. Agencies Providing Courts, Community Supervision, or Corrections

Agency Employment

Survey respondents representing organizational entities were asked about the number of employees working at their organization, as well as the number who focus directly on issues of domestic violence. Figure 10 presents the distribution of total organizational employment. Large employers represent the modal response, with 26% of respondents employing 1,000 or more. Mid-sized employers dominate the distribution, however, with one-third of respondents employing between 20 and 100 persons.

Figure 11 presents the distribution of total employment by type of organization. Here, one sees that the large employers are limited to the for-profit and government segments of respondents. Among the non-profit sector, the small- and mid-size categories are roughly evenly represented.

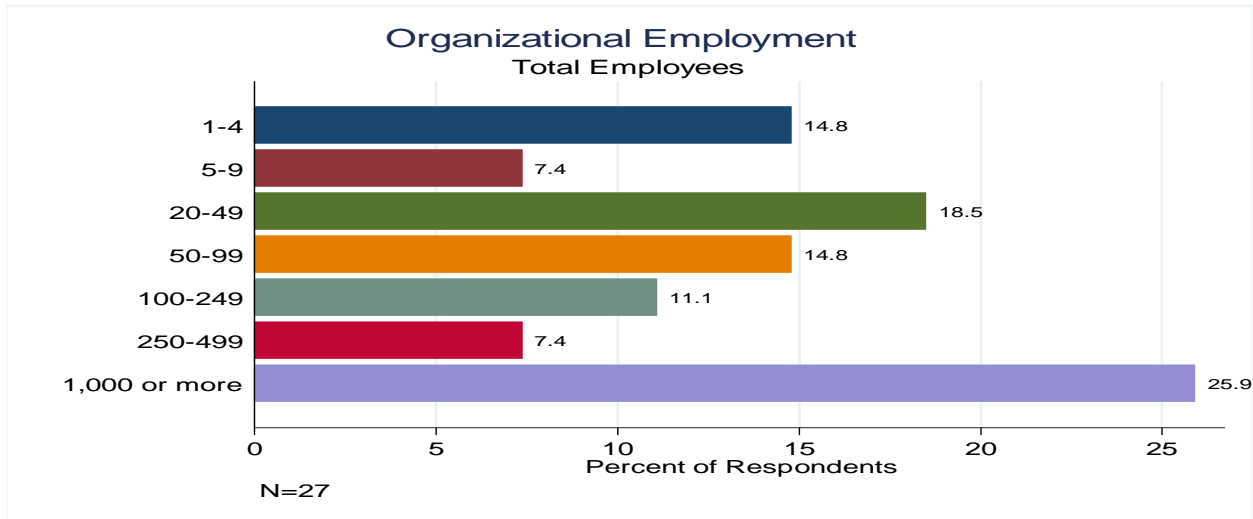


Figure 10. Total Organizational Employment

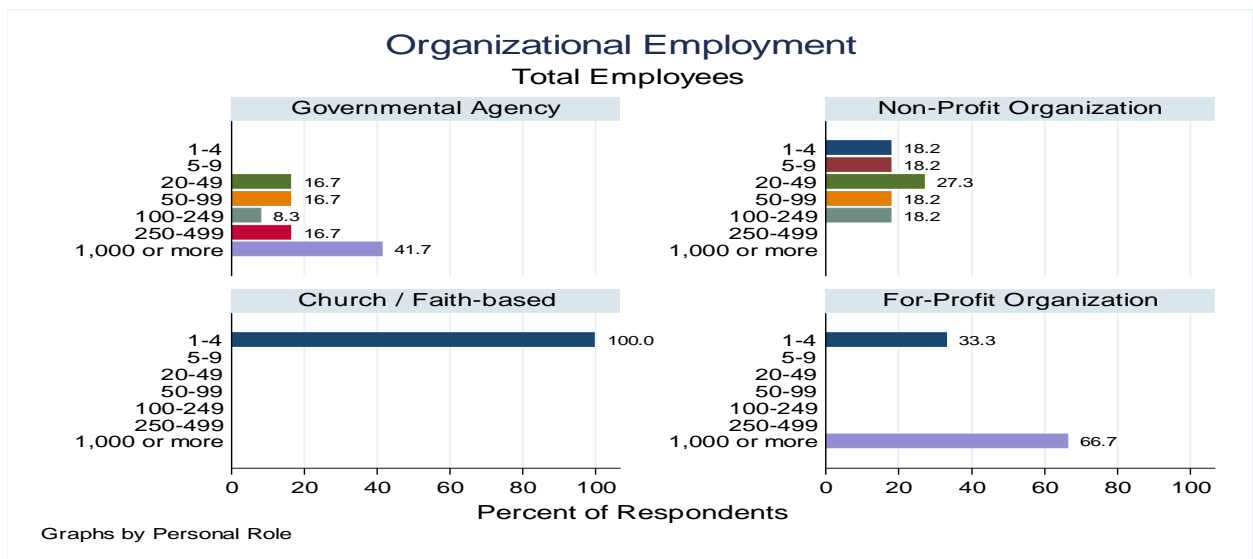


Figure 11. Total Organization Employment by Organization Type

Figure 12 presents the distribution of domestic violence-focused employment among survey respondents. Here, one can see that the modal category is 1 to 4 employees. Yet, 1 in 4 survey respondents employs between 20 and 49 employees who focus on domestic violence issues.

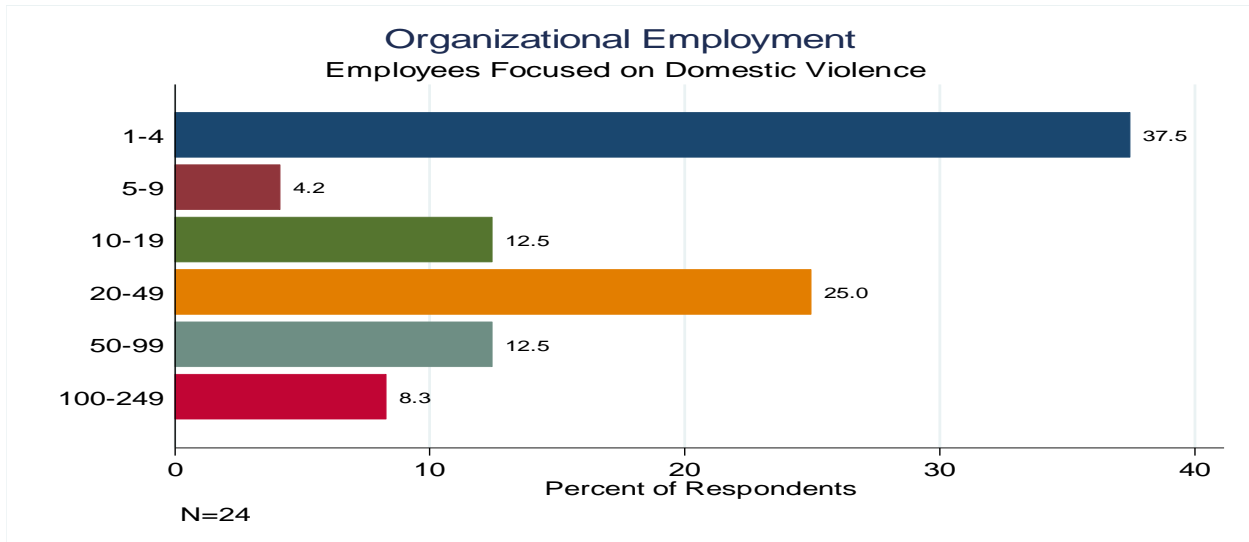


Figure 12. Total Domestic Violence Employment

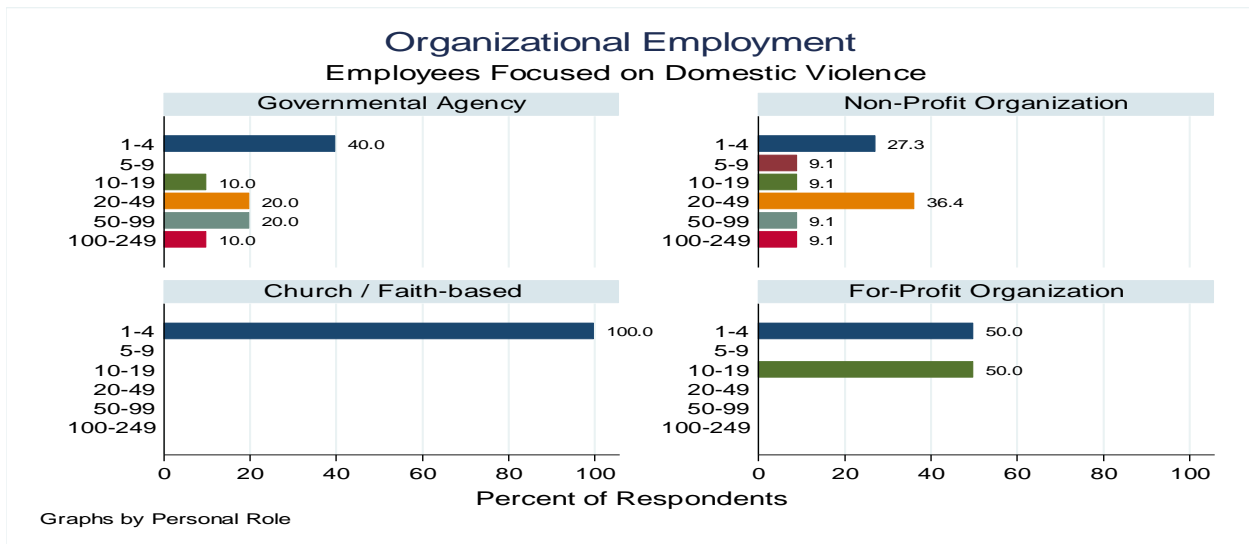


Figure 13. Total Domestic Violence Employment by Organization Type

Figure 13 represents the distribution of domestic violence-focused employment by organization type. Here, for both governmental agencies and faith-based organizations, the modal response was 1 to 4 employees focusing on domestic violence. For non-profit organizations, however, the modal response was 20 to 49 employees, with more than half of the organizations having 20 or more employees. Table 3 presents a cross tabulation of domestic violence and total agency employment. The table suggests that the smaller organizations in the sample were largely domestic violence organizations.

Table 3. Cross Tabulation of Domestic Violence and Total Employment

Total Employees	Domestic Violence Employees						Total
	1-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50-99	100-249	
1-4	3						3
5-9	1	1					2
20-49	1			4			5
50-99	1			1	2		4
100-249			1			2	3
250-499					1		1
1,000 or More	3		2	1			6
Total	9	1	3	6	3	2	24

Transportation Services Provided

Organizational respondents were asked what types of transportation they provided to victims of domestic violence. Figure 14 presents the distribution of responses. The transportation most commonly provided was public transit, typically facilitated through vouchers and passes, with roughly 41% of respondents providing this service. Taxi service is less widely used, with 27% of respondents reporting that they use taxis to transport victims. Private car and rail or bus (e.g., Amtrak and Greyhound) are still less prevalent, with roughly 20% of agencies reporting making each of these modes of transportation available. The least-used transportation option was air travel, with only one organization providing this service. This statistic is not surprising considering the expense that is incurred for these services.

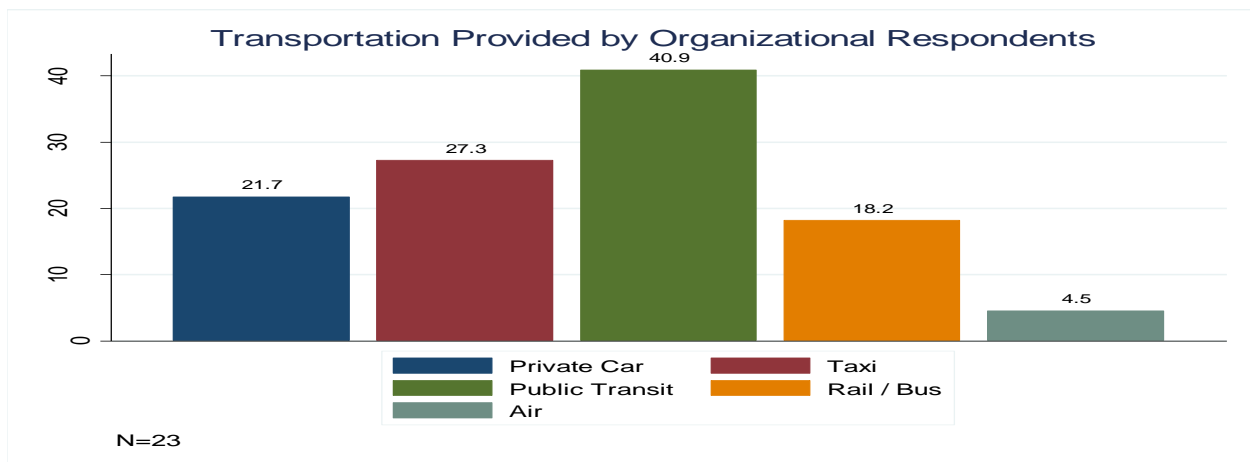


Figure 14. Types of Transportation Provided by Organizational Respondents

Reported Shelter Capacities

Organizational respondents who reported providing shelter as one of their top three services were asked to report on their shelter capacity. Here, shelter was broken into two contexts. Emergency shelter refers to the capacity to provide immediate shelter relief to victims of domestic violence in the immediate aftermath of an incident. Transitional shelter, on the other hand, refers to the longer-term housing assistance provided to clients as they seek to re-establish their lives after leaving a batterer. Capacity was further distinguished by location of facility. On-site capacity refers to that which is located within a facility owned and managed by the organization, while off-site capacity refers to any other

type of arrangement. For many responding organizations, off-site capacity took the form of hotel or motel rooms reserved on an as-needed basis. Table 4 presents the summary of capacity information reported by the six sheltering organizations (including Brighter Tomorrows, Genesis Women’s Shelter and Support, Mosaic Services, New Beginnings, Salvation Army, and The Family Place) all of whom responded to the general survey distributed across the entire taskforce.

Table 4. Reported Emergency and Transitional Shelter Capacity in Rooms and Beds for Men, Women, and Children (N=6)

	Onsite				Offsite			
	Emergency		Transitional		Emergency		Transitional	
	<i>Rooms</i>	<i>Beds</i>	<i>Rooms</i>	<i>Beds</i>	<i>Rooms</i>	<i>Beds</i>	<i>Rooms</i>	<i>Beds</i>
Women	62	183	60	100	4	4	9	9
Children	33	189	63	170	10	16	9	18
Men	2	2	2	2	10	16	2	2
Total	97	374	125	272	24	36	13	29

*Note: These data were aggregated from six organizations providing shelter services that responded to the general survey, including Brighter Tomorrows, Genesis Women’s Shelter and Support, Mosaic Services, New Beginnings, Salvation Army, and The Family Place.

A Detailed Analysis of Agency Metrics

The Domestic Violence Taskforce was able to compile metrics from members across the City of Dallas and Dallas County. Dr. Denise Paquette Boots of the Institute for Urban Policy Research has met with agencies and individuals involved in the Executive Committee for the Taskforce to coordinate and oversee the gathering of metrics related to police, the courts, and victim services. Detailed metrics and activity summaries were submitted by domestic violence shelters and victim advocates such as Mosaic House, The Family Place, Salvation Army, and Genesis Women’s Shelter and Support, as well as data from DPD, Dallas County District Attorney’s Office, the Dallas City Attorney’s Office, Judges Roberto Cañas (Misdemeanor Division) and Rick Magnis (Felony Division), The Dallas County Adult Intimate Partner Violence Fatality Review Team, and the Dallas Mayor’s Office. The detailed metrics section that follows synthesizes these data and offers more detailed information on the systemic response to domestic violence across these community partners.

Shelters

The shelter metrics reported in this section originate from four reporting non-profit organizations in the Dallas area, including Genesis Women’s Shelter and Support, Mosaic Services, Salvation Army, and The Family Place. (It should be noted that while six organizations reported information in the general survey results discussed previously, there are only four agencies that provided the monthly detailed metrics displayed in this portion of the report, so these areas of the summary report are not comparable). These four emergency and transitional shelters are mostly used by women and children, who make up the largest part of each metric category; including number of total un-served victims due to lack of space, the facility capacity percentage, average nightly census in shelter, average nightly census in transitional housing, and the number housed in hotels/outside facilities.

One serious problem Dallas faces is the lack of shelter space; from June 2014 through May 2015, there was a cumulative number of 7,567 men, women and children turned away by a shelter due to lack of space. Figure 15 presents the monthly trend of victims who sought shelter but were unable to be accommodated. The month of May had the highest turn away rate of 976 victims; over the year, an

average of 631 men, women, and children were turned away each month by these four shelter providers. The inability for a shelter to serve a person or family is largely based on the capacity of each shelter. It should also be noted that because individual shelters reported their own numbers of how many victims they turned away per month, without any identifying information for the victims, it is impossible to know if some of these numbers are duplicated with the same victim turned away at multiple locations. It is also possible that a victim denied housing at one shelter (and counted as unserved) was able to find emergency housing at another shelter partner's location (and became an active occupant there), although our partners reported that duplicates are likely very small in number.

Total Unserved Due to Lack of Space

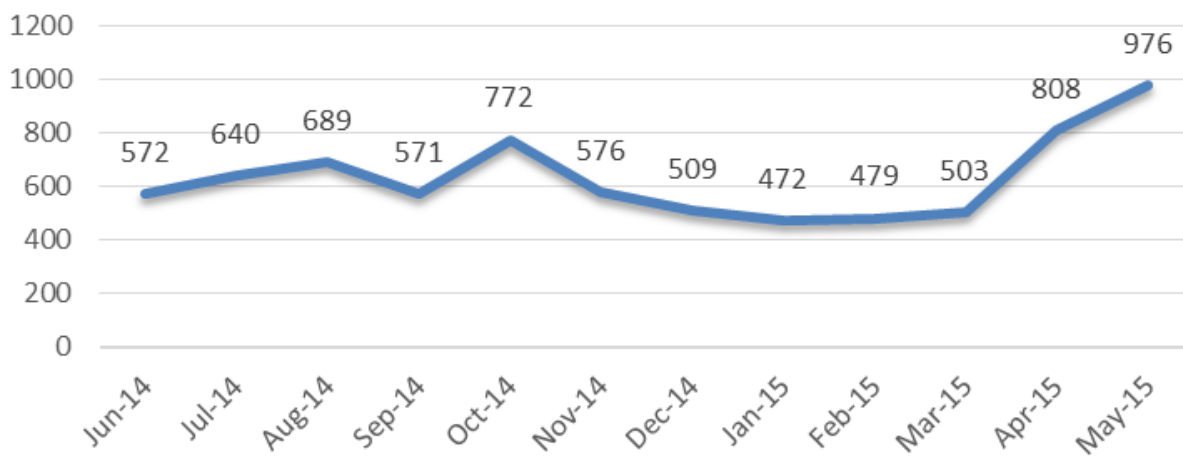


Figure 15. Total Number of Victims Unserved Due to Lack of Space, June 2014 through May 2015

Over the same one-year time period, Figure 16 indicates that the four reporting shelters reached an average capacity utilization of 95%, with one shelter reaching a maximum monthly utilization of 106%. These numbers can be complex to interpret with respect to capacity. For example, while some shelters opt to house multiple single female victims in a room with multiple beds, other shelters do not house multiple victims together due to privacy concerns. In the latter case, a single woman may seek shelter and occupy one room and bed while a woman and her three children would take up one room but four beds. This impacts the perception of how full these shelters become and why victims may not be able to be accommodated. This ratio of rooms to beds may create the impression that the shelter has a lower capacity in sheer numbers than they could handle, but it is actually more complex since the composition of victims and their families directly impacts need versus supply ratios. An additional caveat is that space and types of housing vary from shelter to shelter.

Average Monthly Facility Capacity Utilization

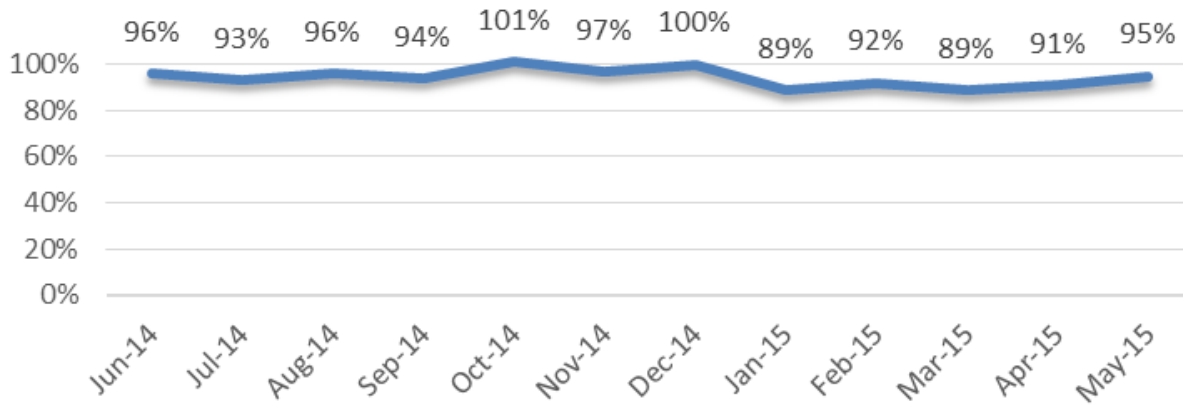


Figure 16. Average Monthly Capacity Utilization, June 2014 - May 2015

Figure 17 presents the monthly average shelter occupancy for the four reporting shelters in Dallas. The total cumulative number of victims in these shelters from June 2014 through May 2015 was 1,828. Combined, the four shelters had a total of 85 rooms and 352 beds for women and children and 8 rooms and 8 beds for men. Shelters are not open to the public in order to provide the victims with a safe environment. The need to facilitate therapeutic healing and provide safety are balanced. As stated previously, different shelters house victims differently. If a victim arrives at a shelter without any children, in one shelter he or she will occupy a full room, thereby creating the appearance of low capacity utilization. In other shelters, multiple single victims may be housed together in one room with multiple beds. The personal dynamics of victims and their dependents vary across circumstances as well and impact the metrics reported here. In addition, male victims both with and without children have few options to be housed in emergency or transitional shelter in Dallas County due to the fact that the majority of shelter providers designate adult females and their children as their primary populations (adult females are most often targets of domestic violence and the vast majority of victims who seek safety). While providing shelter for all populations of victims is critical, mixing adult females and their children with male victims (with or without children) is impossible due to safety concerns and privacy issues. Additional services are needed that can accommodate transgender victims as well if they cannot be accommodated in on-site facilities for emergency and transitional housing and support. The Family Place has recently received state funding to purchase a designated shelter for male victims that will serve to address some of these issues in the coming year. In the interim, victim safety and the delivery of victim services become much more difficult, as these victims are housed off-site in hotels or rented apartments.

Average Nightly Emergency Shelter Population

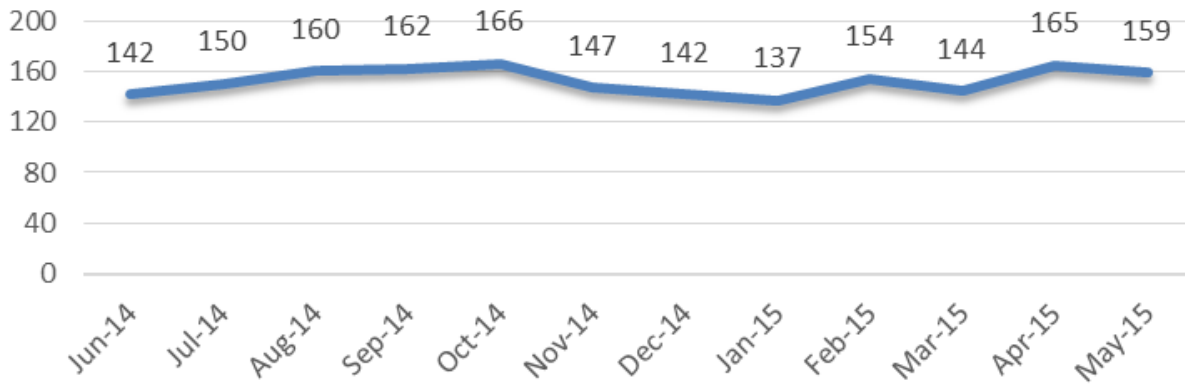


Figure 17. Average Nightly Emergency Shelter Population, June 2014 - May 2015

Several shelters also provide transitional, long-term housing to serve victims and help them avoid homelessness. Clients receiving transitional housing services are often long-term clients, with services lasting from several months to two years, depending on the capacity of the shelter. During the reporting period, an average of 147 clients each month received shelter in transitional housing. Figure 18 presents the monthly trend in transitional housing utilization for the four reporting shelters.

Average Nightly Transitional Housing Population

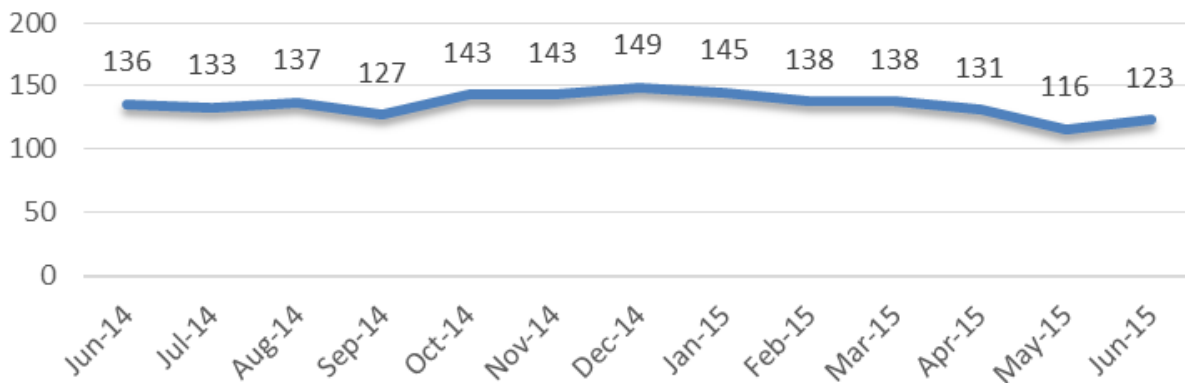


Figure 18. Average Nightly Transitional Housing Population, June 2014 - May 2015

Overall, we are very fortunate to have active, progressive, and growing shelters for victims across Dallas County with our shelter partners and advocates. These partners continue to perform invaluable services to our community in the form of daily outreach, awareness events, and education to break down the myths surrounding family violence and the stigmas that prevent victims from seeking the

help they need. The Family Place, Genesis Women’s Shelter and Support, and Mosaic Services shelters have also been very active in training religious leaders in how to handle domestic violence cases. Advocacy partners such as The Family Place and Genesis also are actively involved in DISD, dealing with teen dating violence and bullying education from elementary school to high school. These non-profit partners play a salient role in combatting domestic violence and providing long-term healing for adult and child victims, thereby making a long-term contribution to the health of our greater community.

Police Response

DPD has provided detailed metrics to the Domestic Violence Taskforce for the year between June 2014 and May 2015. They have provided detailed data on the following variables: number of reported offenses assigned as domestic violence; number of domestic violence arrests (broken down by misdemeanor and felony); number of family violence cases filed; number of protective order violation offenses; and number of family violence and intimate partner murders. In addition, DPD provided metrics for the number of home visits/high-risk victim contacts that were made monthly; the number of actual contacts; and the number of intimate partner murders.

From June 2014 through May 2015, 11,047 calls to 9-1-1 were investigated by DPD responding officers and found to be domestic violence-related. It is important to note here that 9-1-1 calls are not immediately classified as domestic violence-related, as there are many offense codes that can have a domestic violence origin. For instance, a 9-1-1 report of people fighting might later be determined to be domestic in origin. Likewise, a 9-1-1 report of a loud noise disturbance may also, upon investigation, be found to be related to a domestic violence complaint. Figure 19 presents the monthly trend in reported offenses to the DPD, which, upon investigation, were found to be related to domestic violence.

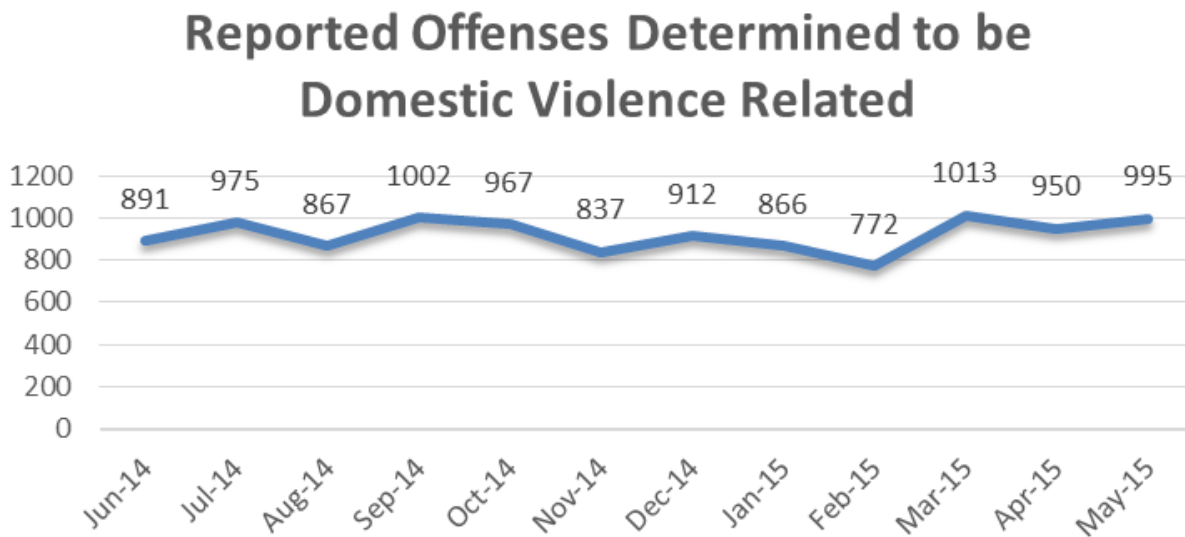


Figure 19. Reported Offenses Determined to be Domestic Violence-related

The total number of family violence cases filed by the DPD from June 2014 through May 2015 was 3,833. The month with the highest number of cases filed was December, with 389. Figure 20 presents the monthly trend from June 2014 through May 2015.

Number of Family Violence Cases Filed

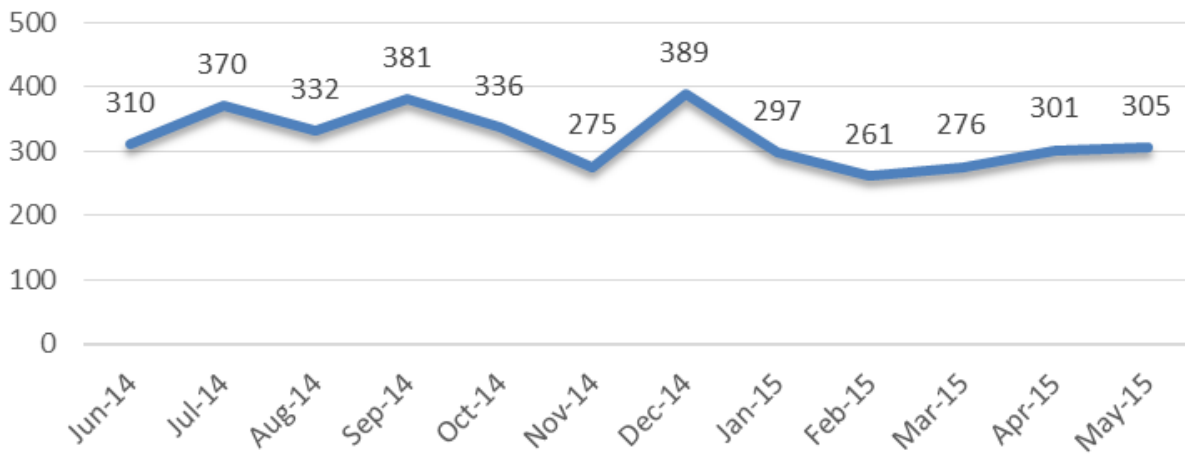


Figure 20. Number of Family Violence Cases Filed by DPD, June 2014 - May 2015

The total yearly number of protective order violations was 123. This happens whenever a victim holds a court granted protective order and the perpetrator violates the requirements on the order; these orders could include limitations to communication, distance between victim and perpetrator, or others determined by the court. Figure 21 presents the monthly trend, with the highest number of violations occurring in May 2015 at 26 violations.

Number of Protective Order Violation Offenses

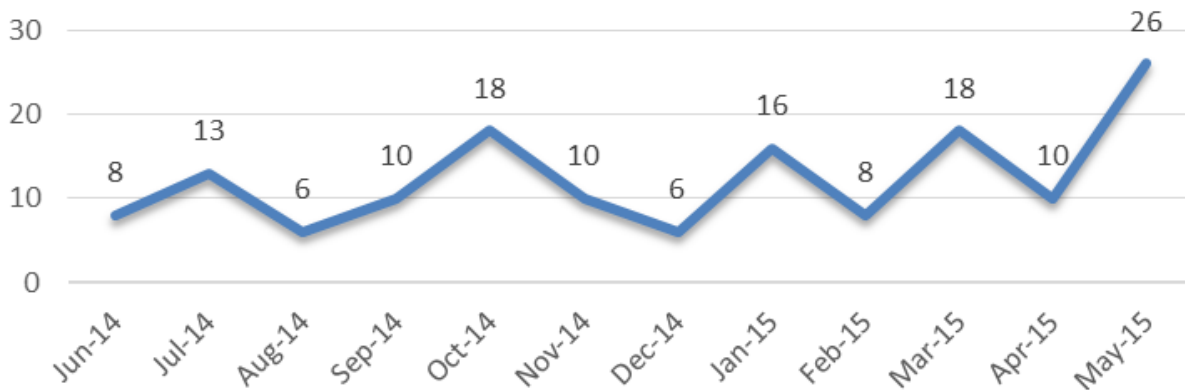


Figure 21. Number of Protective Order Violations Reported, June 2014 through May 2015

Figure 22 presents the trend, by month, from June 2014 through May 2015 for all homicides between family members investigated by DPD. The months of June and January held the highest numbers of family violence-related murders (for all family-related murders, not just those committed by former or

current intimate partners), with three each. From June 2014 through May 2015, DPD reported 16 family violence-related murders.

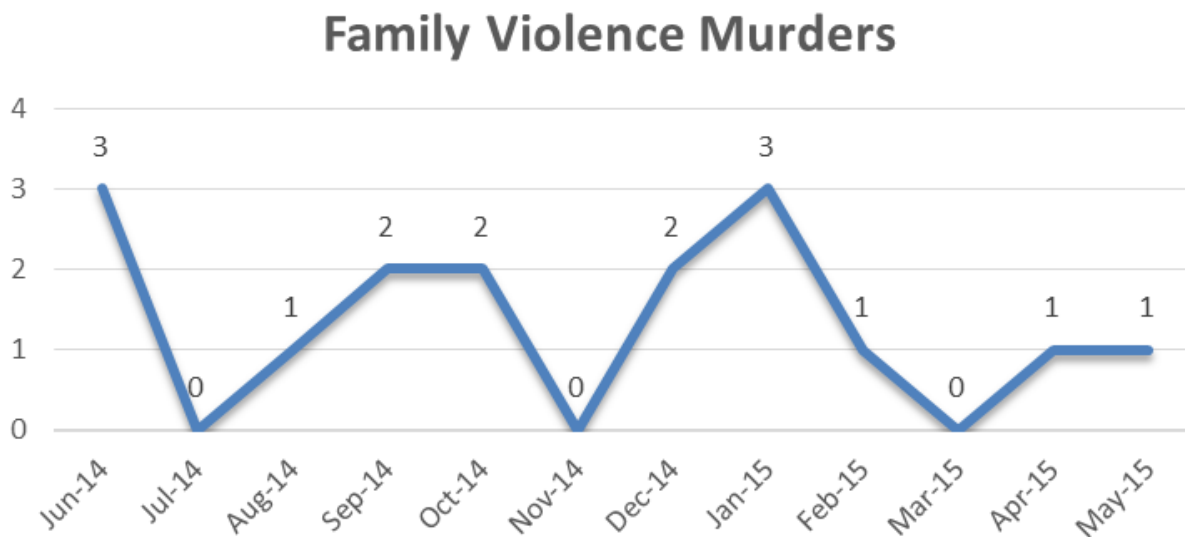


Figure 22. Number of Family Violence Murders, June 2014 through May 2015

When delving into the data from the victim-offender relationships within these family violence homicides, there are a smaller number of murders involving intimate partners. Figure 23 presents the monthly trend in intimate partner homicides for the duration of the study year. The highest months of intimate partner-related homicides were June, October, and December of 2014, with 2 domestic homicides for each of these months. For the 10 murders reported by DPD between June of 2014 and May 2015, 40 percent (n= 4) of the victims were black females killed by their former or current husbands or boyfriends. Another 40 percent (n= 4) of the victims were Hispanic females; three of these victims were killed by their current or former husband or boyfriend and one was killed by their current girlfriend. The remaining two victims included a black male killed by his ex-wife and a white male killed by his current girlfriend. The descriptive statistics presented here regarding these various victim and offender relationships over this one-year period highlight the complexity and diversity of domestic violence. Domestic violence occurs across every strata of society regardless of sexual orientation, gender, economic class, occupation, race, religion, or culture. Dallas County gained the dubious distinction in a recent Texas Council on Family Violence report of matching Harris County as having the highest rates of domestic homicide per population. Statistics such as these drive home the need for lethality assessments, high-risk victim visitation programs, and lethality review teams to better understand trends, assess failures in the system, and develop interventions to improve systemic response to domestic violence.

Intimate Partner Homicides

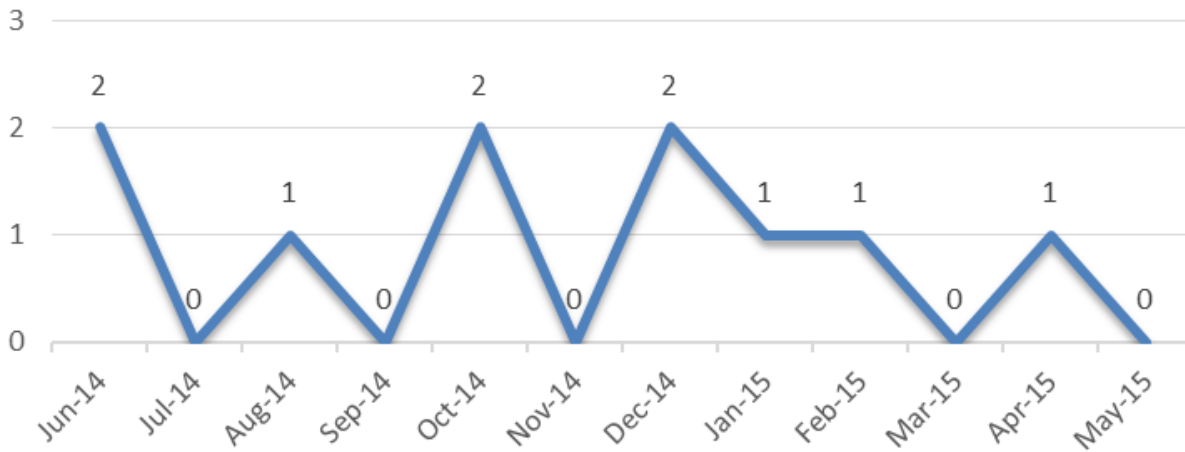


Figure 23. Number of Intimate Partner Homicides, June 2014 through May 2015

From June 2014 through May 2015, DPD made a sizeable number of domestic violence arrests. Of these arrests, 1,098 were at a felony level, and the remaining 3,504 were for misdemeanor charges. Figure 24 presents the monthly trend, showing an annual trend of increasing misdemeanor arrests.

Number of Domestic Violence Arrests

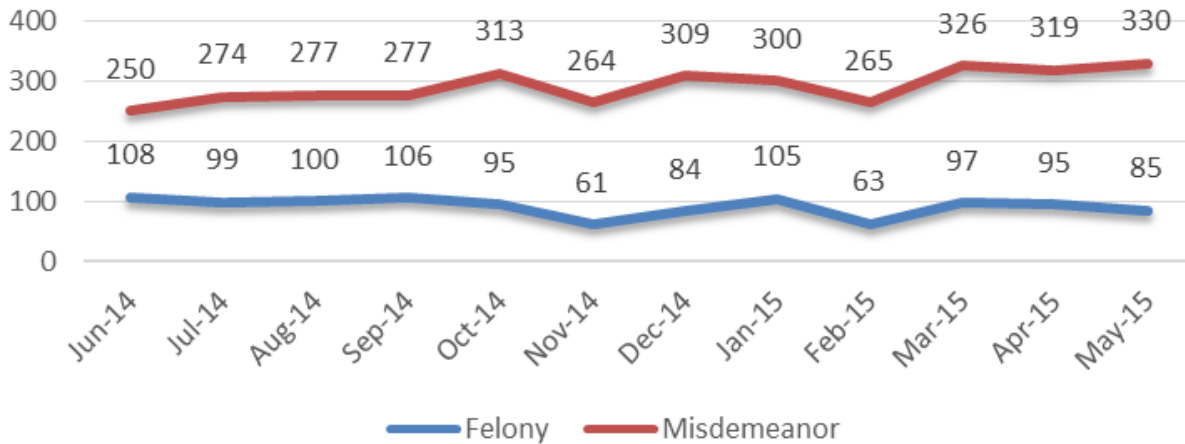


Figure 24. Felony and Misdemeanor Arrests for Domestic Violence, June 2014 through May 2015

The DPD has worked hard to reduce future domestic violence and homicides. In recent years, Lieutenant Miguel Sarmiento and Deputy Chief Robert Sherwin have worked closely with taskforce partners in advocacy, prosecution, and the courts across the Dallas area to increase the size of this unit, infusing the Family Violence unit with new leadership and personnel to provide additional support and better serve victims of domestic violence. Recent advances in technology have included the launch of

an electronic shared drive database system that allows for the digital exchange of evidence in domestic violence cases between DPD and the District Attorney's Office.

From June 2014 to May 2015, DPD made 354 home visits and/or contacts to high-risk victims, as determined from a combination of eight factors taken from the NYPD model, one of which is the lethality assessment conducted onsite by DPD personnel. These lethality assessments are now considered a best practice in the prevention of intimate partner homicides and represent a critical policy change for DPD in reducing the likelihood of domestic homicides and identifying high-risk cases in our community. DPD also reported 116 direct contacts with high-risk victims by officers within the Family Violence Unit to ensure victim safety and encourage successful prosecutions of pending cases within the legal system.

Prosecution

Prosecution of domestic violence cases in the City of Dallas is handled by two different prosecutorial entities. The Dallas County District Attorney's Office prosecutes defendants charged with any offense that is a Class B misdemeanor or higher. When police are unable to secure sufficient evidence to file at least a Class B misdemeanor, Dallas Police have the option of filing Class C misdemeanor charges with the City Attorney's office, which handles those prosecutions.

Dallas County District Attorney

The Dallas County District Attorney's Office under District Attorney Susan Hawk has also provided metrics to the taskforce. Metrics were offered across eight categories, including misdemeanor family violence cases received; misdemeanor family violence rejections; felony family violence cases received; felony family violence rejections; felony no-bills; felony family violence cases indicted; family violence enhanced offenses; and protective orders. All metrics reported here are from the time period between June 2014 and May 2015.

The total number of misdemeanor family violence cases received by the District Attorney's Office during the study year was 2,901. This number includes all cases filed in County Courts 10 and 11. It represents the enforcement activity of all Dallas County law enforcement agencies. Due to data limitations in the way cases are handled and coded within the management system, this metric represents all family violence-related cases from all agencies across the county (including non-intimate cases such as brothers, sisters, parents, etc.); some cases that were not intimate partner violence may have been subsequently transferred to another court. The research team is working diligently to secure funding that would allow for non-intimate cases to be disaggregated from this larger total. In the meantime, these metrics provide a glimpse into the volume of cases received in the Misdemeanor Family Violence Division. During this same period, 229 misdemeanor cases were rejected by the District Attorney's Office for a variety of procedural and administrative reasons. Figure 25 presents the monthly trend in cases received and rejected. The notable increase in rejections in December 2014 was created by the increase in cases processed during that month. Cases processed in December were rejected at roughly the same rate as those occurring in other months of the year.

Misdemeanor Family Violence Cases Received and Rejected

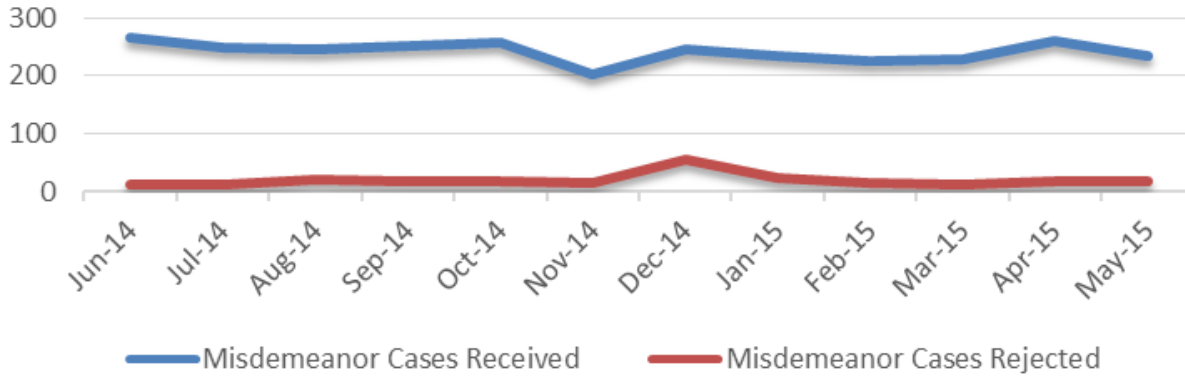


Figure 25. Misdemeanor Family Violence Cases Received and Rejected, Dallas County District Attorney, June 2014 through May 2015

During the study year, the Dallas County District Attorney’s Office received 2,728 felony family violence cases. Again, these data represent the collective enforcement action of all law enforcement agencies in the County that are assigned for prosecution to the Felony Family Violence Division. The metric only represents intimate partner violence cases and excludes other forms of family violence committed by siblings, parents, or other relatives. During the same period, 105 felony cases were rejected for a variety of administrative and procedural reasons. Figure 26 presents the monthly trend for these metrics.

Felony Family Violence Cases Received and Rejected

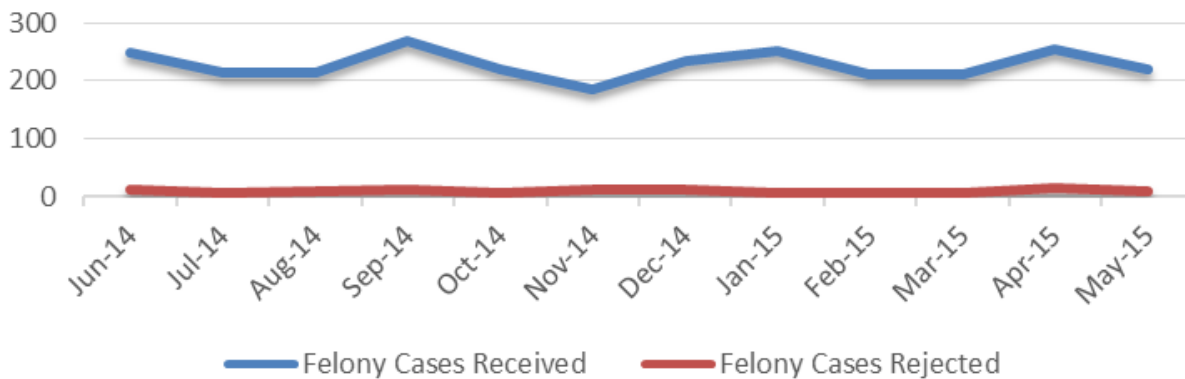


Figure 26. Felony Family Violence Cases Received and Rejected, Dallas County District Attorney, June 2014 through May 2015

During the study year, the Dallas County District Attorney’s Office took 2,552 felony domestic violence cases before the Grand Jury – an average of 212 per month. Of those, 1,971 (or 77%) were indicted,

while the Grand Jury returned no bill of indictment on 581 cases (23%). These 2,552 cases do not include those that were received as felony but reduced to misdemeanors, those felony cases that were rejected by the District Attorney’s Office, or those that were returned to the originating law enforcement agency for further investigation. Figure 27 presents the monthly trends in both no-billed and indicted cases.

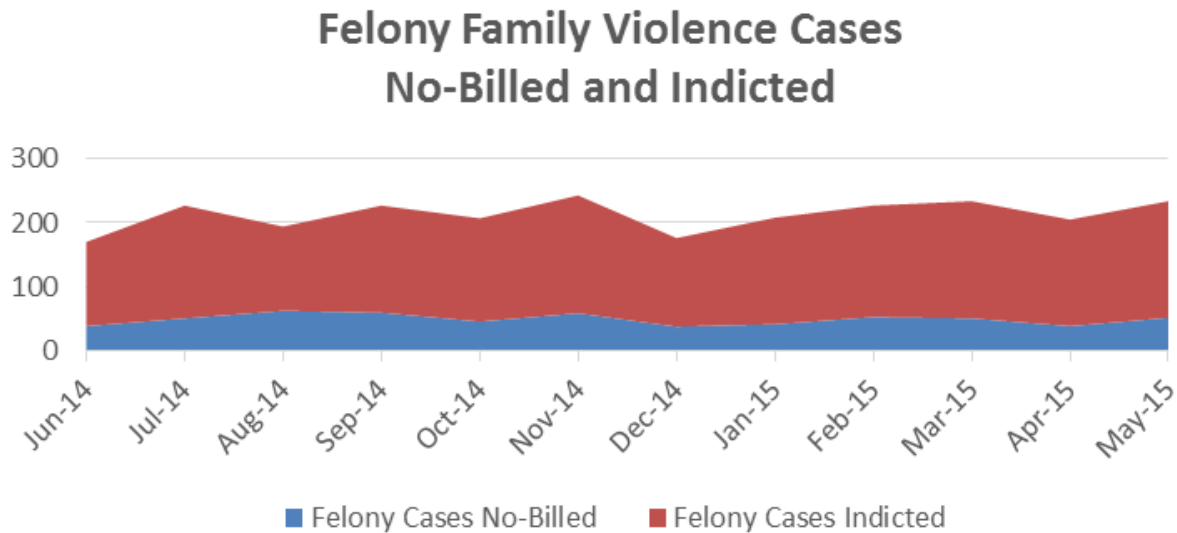


Figure 27. Felony Family Violence Cases No-Billed and Indicted by Grand Jury, Dallas County District Attorney, June 2014 through May 2015

Without additional funding, the Domestic Violence Taskforce cannot provide an exact number of “repeat offenders,” but exploring the application of enhancements to family violence cases helps illuminate this metric. The total number of enhanced family violence cases was 1,147. Enhancements included the following categories:

1. Continuous family violence (2 or more arrests for assault against a family member during a 12 month period), enhancing the offense to a third degree felony;
2. Assault Enhanced (a misdemeanor family violence assault enhanced by a prior family violence conviction), enhancing the offense to a third degree felony;
3. Impeding Enhanced (any strangulation with a previous family violence conviction), enhancing the offense to a second degree felony;
4. Stalking (multiple acts of stalking over time), enhancing the offense to a third degree felony;
5. Misdemeanor Violation of a Protective Order (any non-violent violation of a protective order), a Class A Misdemeanor; and,
6. Felony Violation of a Protective Order (any violent violation of a protective order), a third degree felony.

Figure 28 presents the monthly trend in the application of these enhancements to cases handled by the Dallas County District Attorney’s office. Table 5 presents the annual data totals across each enhancement category.

Family Violence Enhancements

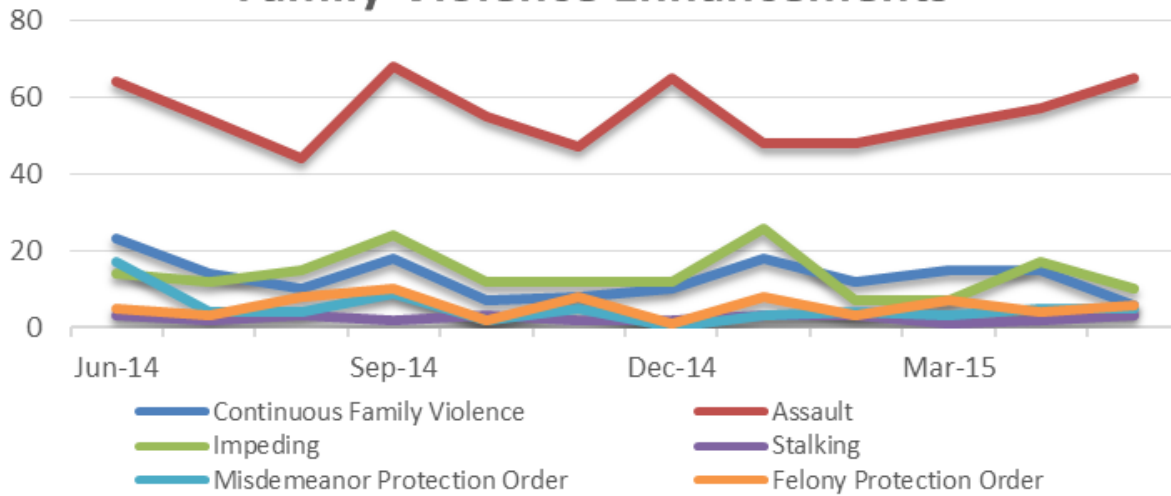


Figure 28. Family Violence Enhancements, Dallas County District Attorney, June 2014 through May 2015

As can be seen in Table 5, the Assault enhancement category, which represents current family violence cases where the offender has a previous conviction for family violence, is the most frequently applied enhancement. There were a total of 668 enhancements for previous assault, which outnumbered all other Assault, Stalking, and Protective Order enhancements combined. The District Attorney’s Office reported 156 continuous family violence offenses within the past 12 months (Third degree felony), 168 Impeding enhanced cases involving strangulations, 29 stalking cases, 61 misdemeanor Class A cases of violations of protective orders, and 65 cases of felony violations of protective orders with and without stalking.

Table 5. Annual Family Violence Enhancements Totals, Dallas County District Attorney, June 2014 through May 2015

Type of Enhancement	Number of Enhancements
Assault With Continuous Family Violence	156
Assault With Previous Conviction	668
Impeding	168
Stalking	29
Misdemeanor Protection Order	61
Felony Protection Order	65

During the study year, there were a total of 535 protective orders sought. Of those, 387 (72%) were granted, 11 (2%) were denied after a hearing, 101 (19%) were dismissed (usually because the applicant failed to appear), and 36 (7%) were dropped by the applicant. Figure 29 presents the monthly trend in orders of protection dispositions.

Orders of Protection by Disposition

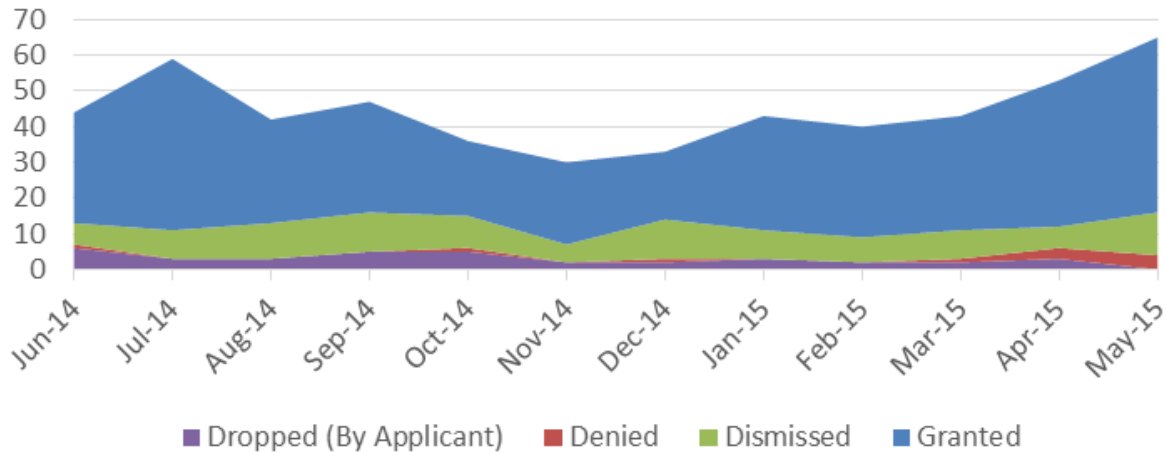


Figure 29. Disposition of Orders of Protection, Dallas County District Attorney, June 2014 through May 2015

City of Dallas Attorney's Office

The city attorney has the task of handling domestic violence cases and does not handle stalking cases, protective orders, or any other case that is higher than a Class C offense. The prosecution division of the City Attorney's Office handles Class C misdemeanors, including domestic violence cases. These cases involve crimes that include contact with the victim as well as threats. Class C misdemeanors are punishable only by a fine up to \$500, and the offense is usually more minor and does not pose a major risk to the victim. However, the initial offense can be enhanced to a higher-level offense, or the punishment can be raised with proof of conviction(s). Domestic violence is not always just between intimate partners, as it can also occur between housemates and other family. Many of the domestic violence cases are handled at the municipal level. Within this court is a great opportunity to reduce recidivism, especially where first time offenders are concerned. These minor attacks, such as a slap or a push, can escalate quickly and turn into larger, more serious violations resulting in injuries or death to victims.

There were 3,656 misdemeanor cases of family violence received in the Municipal Court from June 2014 through May 2015. These cases originate through the following process: when a victim calls the police in the city of Dallas, an officer will be dispatched to the scene to assess the situation. From there, the officer will issue a citation, arrest someone, or have one of the parties leave the premises. The majority of times in the case where a citation is issued, it is done so "at large," meaning that the defendant was not on the premises during issuance. From June 2014 through May 2015 there were 1,075 cases where the defendant did not respond to the citation. After a defendant is cited or taken to jail on an assault offense, the defendant has 21 days to appear at Municipal Court to plead either not guilty, or pay the citation with an automatic plea of guilty. If the defendant does choose to plead "not guilty," they are given the right to a trial where they have the opportunity to obtain a plea agreement. If a defendant does not enter a plea, the case goes into an "alias" status, whereby a warrant is applied around the 35th day by a judge. Figure 30 presents the monthly trend in family violence cases received in City of Dallas Municipal Courts.

Family Violence Cases Received

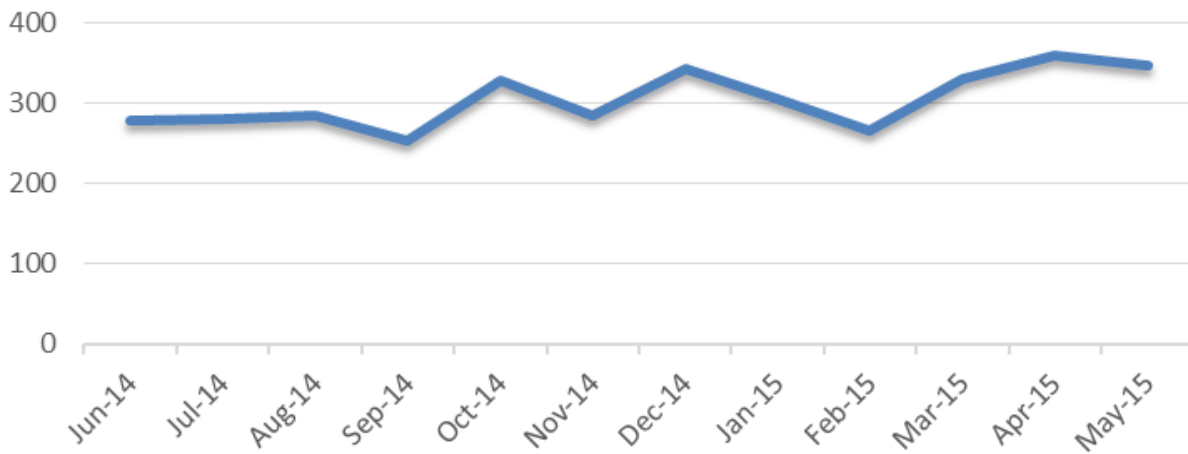


Figure 30. Family Violence Cases Received, City of Dallas Municipal Court, June 2014 through May 2015

From June 2014 - May 2015, there were 1,761 cases where the defendant was taken into custody. This is normally determined by the DPD officer who arrives on the scene. Taking the defendant into custody is necessary at times to prevent further acts of domestic violence. The defendant is taken to Lew Sterrett Jail where he or she can then choose to sit out the time, post a bond, or set a court date at the Municipal Court. If the defendant does choose to just sit out the time, then it is considered a conviction on their record. These defendants represented 42.2% of all cases that the Municipal Court received.

During the one-year study period, 530 domestic violence cases were dismissed by the Municipal Court. The majority of these cases were dismissed or rejected due to the lack of outside witness, a fact witness, or insufficient evidence. Out of all of the cases dismissed or rejected, five were dismissed by the magistrate without explanation, and one was dismissed by a judge due to completion of community service.

Family Violence Dismissals by Cause

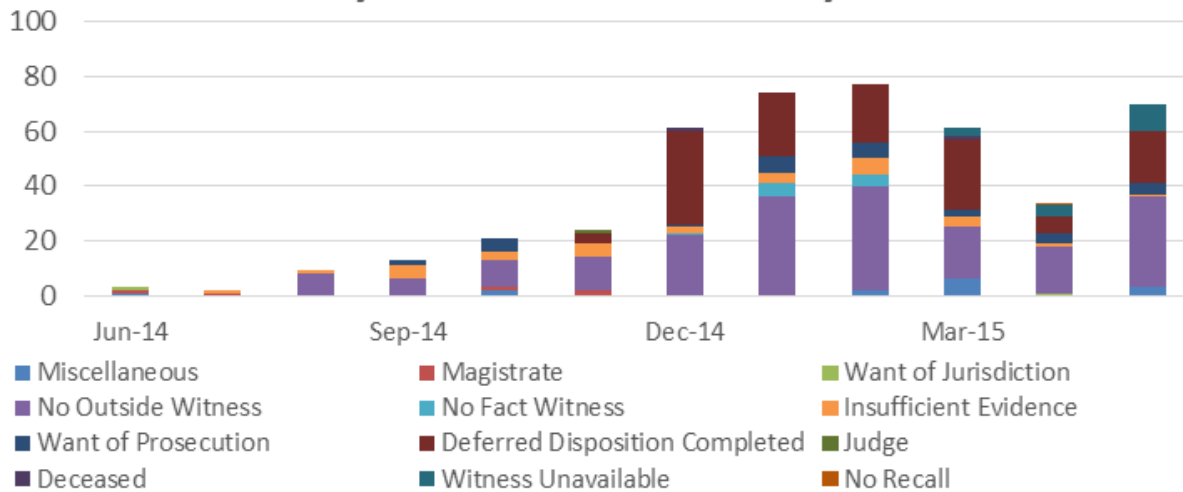


Figure 31. Dismissal of Family Violence Cases by Cause, City of Dallas City Attorney's Office, June 2014 through May 2015

Dallas Courts

Dallas has established various programs to aid in the fight against domestic violence and homicide. The High-Risk Offender Program was developed by Judge Rick Magnis and is assisted by community partners in the courts, police department, sheriff's office, and advocacy organizations. This new post-adjudication program applies to convicted felony domestic violence offenders and adds GPS monitoring, mandatory placement in The Family Place's 30-week intensive batterers' intervention program, as well as weekly check-ins to the adult probation department. Participants are selected to participate based on high scores on a lethality assessment administered by the probation department. This program had its first few "graduates" in 2015 and is collecting data for a future evaluation project between Dr. Denise Paquette Boots (UT Dallas) and Dr. Jill Johannson-Love (Dallas County Adult Probation) to determine the long-term efficacy of the program in reducing recidivism and fatalities.

Judge Roberto Cañas from County Court 10 has spearheaded the Dallas County Gun Removal Program, which is designed to ensure perpetrators are in compliance with the laws relating to gun possession. Through the program, if a person commits an act of domestic violence, then he or she is no longer legally allowed to own a gun and is required, by law, to surrender it to a designated location. Since the beginning of the program in May 2015 there have been fifteen firearms surrendered to the Sheriff's Office and five more surrendered to pre-approved third parties. There are groups pushing to make the law mandatory for all perpetrators of domestic violence, not only the ones considered most violent.

Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team Lethality Interim Report

The Dallas County Intimate Partner Violence Fatality Review Team (IPVFRT) recently published an interim report in August of 2015 that reviewed 34 adjudicated intimate partner violence fatality cases that took place in the larger Dallas area over a three-year period between 2009 and 2011. The highlights of this preliminary report, which focused on victim characteristics and data, are briefly summarized here to spotlight the critical insights that such lethality review teams provide. A more detailed report regarding secondary victims and offender characteristics is expected some time in the future.

The IPVFRT reported that there were a total of 34 primary victims in the city of Dallas and neighboring cities who were killed during this time period (6 males and 28 females). Primary victims were defined as the intimate partner who was killed by the perpetrator. The perpetrator was defined as the attacker who committed the homicide, and then committed suicide. In the same time period, there were 10 perpetrators of murder/suicides (where the victim was killed before the offender took his or her own life). The report also defined secondary victims as those persons who were killed as a result of the initial homicide incident (whether intentionally or as a bystander); these secondary deaths occurred in 5 of the 34 cases (4 males, 1 female).

Over the majority of age groups, African Americans had the highest number of victims with approximately 4.25 victims per 100,000 population aged 20-24. The total number of victims who were African American dropped off at age of 70-79, when whites had the highest rate at approximately 1.25 deaths per 100,000 population. Hispanics had lower rates of victimization across the majority of the age groups. Overall, the racial/ethnic group most likely to become a victim was African American females, who had almost a 2.5 times higher chance of being killed by their intimate partner than White or Hispanic females.

Disturbingly, when looking across the 34 cases, 44.1% directly impacted a child. Thirty of the 34 homicides occurred at a house or apartment. The majority of victims were killed with a firearm (n= 16 or 47%), followed by sharp instruments, strangulation, and blunt force trauma (n= 8 or 23%, respectively for all three methods), with 3 additional victims suffocated (9%) by their attacker. Sadly, 14 children were in the home when the domestic homicide took place, and out of those youngsters, there were at least two children that witnessed the homicide of their parent directly. This fact shows the distal impact of losing a parent and highlights the long-term trauma and loss that these children suffer as a result of this tragedy. Across the 34 cases, 64.7% of the couples were cohabiting and 15 of the relationships were pending separations. Five of these victims were killed immediately after threatening to break up with the perpetrator just before the homicide, 4 victims has just ended their relationship with the offender immediately prior to the homicide, and 6 of the relationships ended some time prior to the homicide event. Research has consistently shown that the separation (before, during and immediately after) is the most dangerous time for the victim because the likelihood for a homicide to take place rises significantly. Even more, in the majority (52.9%) of homicide cases, the perpetrator had a previous history of violent arrests.

Out of the 34 murder cases, approximately 53% ended with a conviction of the perpetrator; 3% of the perpetrators had unknown conviction statuses; 6% of perpetrators were apprehended; 6% of cases were considered no-bill or dismissed; and roughly 30% of perpetrators were deceased (by either murder or their own suicide). Three of the victims did seek help and had applied for protective orders. However, two of the orders were not valid during the time of death and one was not yet granted. Perhaps the most surprising and sobering statistic that ran common across these domestic homicides was that none of the victims had previously sought shelter in their community to escape their abuser. This startling fact highlights the critical need for continuing outreach, education, and awareness in our community to combat domestic violence and prevent future domestic homicides. These homicide events take lives and leave permanent fractures in the family members and friends who mourn these victims.

Dallas Mayor's Office: Dallas Men Against Abuse Awareness Campaign

The Dallas Men Against Abuse was initiated by Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings after the tragic death of Karen Cox Smith at UT Southwestern on January 8, 2013. This campaign seeks to elevate the level of

public discussion and accountability of offenders in their abuse of women by calling on men across the Metroplex to speak out against domestic battering and abuse. As male on female violence is the most common form of domestic violence, Mayor Rawlings has reached out to the men of his community and asked them to join him in ending this form of domestic violence by holding their friends, coworkers, family members, and acquaintances accountable for abusive behaviors against women. In February 2013, Mayor Rawlings held the Men Against Abuse Press Conference to launch this campaign, joined by Bishop Kevin Farrell, Brandon Carr, Jorge Calderon, and Casey Cox. The mayor announced a rally and campaign to end domestic violence at this event.

Since then, Mayor Rawlings has spoken at the Ring the Bell campaign at the United Nations Commission of the Status of Women and launched the Dallas Men Against Abuse Rally, which had a successful turnout of thousands of supporters. On September 20, 2013, the Mayor called a meeting for the Dallas County District Attorney's office, Dallas police, and advocates to work together to tackle domestic violence in Dallas. He provided greater emphasis to the Domestic Violence Taskforce by creating the executive committee and appointing Councilmember Jennifer Gates as chair. He charged the taskforce with creating metrics and reporting on the progress of our community partners in combating this social problem.

During the Domestic Violence Press Conference at UT Southwestern, the Mayor announced the "Be a Man" slogan that called on men and boys to take a pledge to never hit their partner. That pledge turned into a competition -- the DISD school with the highest number of pledges got the privilege to play football in the Dallas Cowboys AT&T Stadium. This competition brought tens of thousands of anti-abuse student pledges.

Since its inception, the mayor's awareness campaign has complemented the work of the taskforce and its efforts to raise awareness about this critical issue. Working in partnership with the Embrey Foundation and many support and advocacy organizations across Dallas, the mayor and Dallas Domestic Violence Taskforce sponsored a public screening of the HBO documentary *Private Violence* during Domestic Violence Awareness month in 2014, at the AT&T Performing Arts Center. The documentary highlighted the realities, challenges, and complexities of escaping from domestic violence and fighting these crimes in the social and legal systems of the United States. This event was put on in addition to other activities, such as Mayor Rawlings' Father and Son Pancake Breakfast on October 4, 2014 and the "Paint the Town Purple" campaign encouraging local businesses and citizens to color signs, storefronts, front porch lights, decorations, or employee attire purple to show their commitment to end domestic violence.

Councilmember Gates and other taskforce members reached out across the city to ask for cooperation from high-profile companies, resulting in the Dallas skyline being painted in purple at such landmarks as the Omni Hotel, Reunion Tower, Bank of America Plaza, and the Hunt Oil Building for nights in 2014 during the Conference on Crimes Against Women (CCAW). CCAW is an annual conference with over 1,500 attendees, and represents a decade-long successful partnership between Genesis, the city of Dallas, and DPD. The conference is internationally recognized with information, training, and strategies on best practices for first responders, investigators, therapists, law enforcement, and advocates regarding all forms of violence against women. In 2014, Mayor Rawlings hosted a luncheon during CCAW for all North Texas mayors. Along with Councilmember Jennifer Gates and Dallas Police Chief Brown, they spoke about Dallas' integrated response to domestic violence and discussed how other cities may be able to implement similar plans.

Summary and Future Considerations

The priority of reducing domestic homicides and increasing the efficacy of community responses to domestic violence requires a concerted, open, and progressive spirit of communication and cooperation across the social, criminal justice, and government sectors of the community. Here in Dallas, there is a long history of accomplishments and dedication to issues such as domestic violence, as seen through the impressive history of the Dallas Domestic Violence Taskforce and its diverse membership. This report represents the first annual summary of key performance indicators from both the general taskforce membership and detailed metrics and accomplishments from Executive Committee members. Taken together, they offer a preliminary portrait of how domestic violence cases are addressed, the volume and pathways these cases may take as they wind through the criminal justice system, and how advocates and shelters meet the daily and annual needs of adult and child victims who seek safe harbor from their abusers. While a more nuanced and comprehensive picture of arrest to disposition and the subsequent care and treatment of victims is certainly called for in the long-term, this preliminary report offers a glimpse into the successful partnerships and cooperation that has been forged across the city and county, serving as a template for other cities. Future research will require funding that can provide significantly more rigorous assessments of various processes and outcomes across the various offices and organizations regarding domestic violence case handling and dispositions. Funding and research is also needed to create programs that seek to reduce lethality and improve victim safety, and offer safe haven and long-term treatment and resources for adult and child victims. Such a report would provide meaningful insights into viable changes and reforms that might successfully bridge the gap between needs and current resources, while leveraging partner resources across the system more effectively. In closing, the overall aim of this report was to create a firm baseline and written record of the efforts, work, and accomplishments of the partners represented across the taskforce and an overview of the systemic response to domestic violence in the County of Dallas.

Acknowledgments

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