



City of Dallas

Domestic Violence Task Force Report

**Public Safety Committee
October 12, 2020**

Jennifer S. Gates
Councilmember, District 13

Background



- Domestic Violence Task Force was created in 1987
- The Domestic Violence Task Force's (DVTF) mission is to create a collaborative environment for local law enforcement, city government, representatives of the criminal justice system, and intimate partner and family violence prevention organizations to address the problems of domestic violence.
- In March of 2020, Mayor Eric Johnson charged the Domestic Violence Task Force to create recommendations that would pave the way for a 25% decrease in domestic violence aggravated assaults over the next three years.





- Increasing shelter space
- Training Police
- Partnering with public schools
- Removing barriers to transportation
- Decreasing the threat of severe injury and death due to domestic violence
- Serving multicultural and diverse populations



Increasing Shelter Space



- DV Beds.org is the real-time shelter bed cloud-based platform that helps domestic violence survivors access open emergency shelter space with one phone call.
- The Task Force recommends increasing single women's bed capacity as the main priority.
- The next version of this platform will provide specific numbers by client type to help us determine the exact number of beds needed to reach the demand in DFW.



Training Police



- Patrol officers: The Task Force recommends creating domestic violence training video and aides, cataloging them by topic, and posting them on Dallas PDs intranet homepage
 - DPD should create a system to monitor and track training hours for basic training and refresher training
 - DPD should create a tracking system to monitor utilization of the newly created domestic violence continued education courses.
- Family Violence Detectives: The Task Force recommends on-going training with the Domestic Violence section of the DA's office on topics specific to the investigation and filing of their cases.
- We also recommend gaining access to databases such as TX Workforce Eagle Connect so that the DV Warrant Squad is better equipped to find DV offenders.



Partnering With Public Schools



- DVTF recommends expanding domestic violence curriculum to all grade levels and incorporating it in an age-appropriate manner that aligns with SEL TEKS.
- These should be taught by the teachers during the course of normal instruction throughout the year and meet children where they are developmentally.
- Teachers should be trained on this new curriculum during their in-service days before school begins and be offered in conjunction with domestic violence services and resources.



Removing Barriers to Transportation



- DVTF recommends that all shelters build transportation costs into their budget and/or partner with agencies that offer free transportation.
- All shelter agencies should implement a proactive approach for each victim's transportation needs by discussing safety plans to exit the home safely and how the victim intends to arrive to the shelter.
- For victims who lack means of transportation to arrive, if the shelter has no means to provide transportation, shelter hotline advocates will directly connect the caller to a ride service provider to transport the victim.
- DVTF recommends the Dallas Police Department hire a victim advocate to assist with outreach and community education about family violence and provide transportation to shelters for victims who are unable to get to a safe public place or when other transportation services are unavailable. We recommend they be trained as a certified car seat technician.



Decreasing the Threat of Severe Injury and Death Due to Domestic Violence



- Count, Study, and Support Survivors of Near-Lethal Domestic Violence Assaults
 - The Fatality Review Team should commit to studying near-lethal DV assaults in addition to homicides
 - DPD should hire an additional detective and victim advocate to work with the High-Risk Team to follow up on Tier 2 cases and connect victims to services to prevent further escalation
- Provide the Lethality Assessment Profile (LAP) to Magistrate Judges and Probation Officers
 - DPD revise its internal protocols to ensure that both magistrate judges and the Dallas County Community Supervision and Corrections Department (CSCD) (Adult Probation) receive the Lethality Assessment Profile (LAP) at the earliest possible opportunity.
 - By providing the LAP to magistrate judges, they have specific information about the individualized risk to the offender's victim prior to setting bond.
 - Ensure that the LAP is provided to CSCD as soon as a defendant is placed on probation. The LAP would provide critical information, as well as a frame of reference, for CSCD, should the need arise for changes in probation conditions.



Decreasing the Threat of Severe Injury and Death Due to Domestic Violence



- Audit the LAP Annually
 - Members of the Domestic Violence Task Force should audit the LAP to identify gaps and trends and ultimately influence protocol changes
 - The number of people who refuse to participate in the LAP should be carefully monitored and solutions should be found to reach them in a manner they prefer
- Reform the Bond Process
 - We believe there are gaps in the Public Safety Assessment (PSA) that suggest that it alone cannot safeguard the well-being of victims; we therefore recommend that the PSA be used in conjunction with the Lethality Assessment
 - In the long-term, we recommend that magistrate judges explore different risk assessment options that are designed specifically to address the risk of recidivism for domestic violence offenders
 - Police officers should submit a High Bond Request Form if the LAP and prior conviction information leads them to believe that an offender is at high risk of putting the victim in harm's way
 - We recommend a magistrate system in which representatives of both the defense and the state appear at all bond hearings



Serving Multicultural and Diverse Populations Better



- Organizations should include statements, language, images, and/or stories and resources that reflect inclusivity and non-discrimination of multicultural and diverse survivors on public facing documents
- Organizations should include appropriate training focused on multicultural and diverse survivors for their own staff and within the domestic violence training curriculums recommendations.
- Organizations should build connections and mutual partnerships for collaboration with organizations within and serving specific multicultural and diverse communities for a coordinated community response.
- Organizations should conduct organizational evaluations and assessments to identify areas of improvement for access, services, referrals, and outreach to multicultural and diverse survivors. If organizations do not have the capacity to serve specific populations, they are encouraged to identify and provide resources and/or connections to other more appropriate organizations.
- The Domestic Violence Task Force and the Multicultural and Diverse Populations subcommittee should continue to exist to support implementation and conduct an assessment to further understand the needs of multicultural and diverse survivors in the Dallas community in the next year or longer as needed.



Conclusion



- As of Sept. 21, 2020, family violence aggravated assaults increased 8.6% over last year, and family violence homicides – though not on par with the previous year – are still high with 26 to date compared to 31 at this time last year.
- To address the problems of domestic violence, we must think upstream to address the problems before they start and fix current systems that slow the path to justice for victims, address inefficiencies that grant too much leeway to perpetrators, and remove barriers to access for people of all backgrounds.
- We believe the Task Force should continue as an Advisory Council on Domestic Violence to give our partners the opportunity to implement the recommendations made here. Domestic violence is a systemic issue in our City and will require constant advocacy and increased awareness from all members of our community.



Thank You



Jennifer Gates, Chair

Councilmember, District 13

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Councilmember, District 13



Family Domestic Violence Cases

Category	YTD	YTD LY	Count Difference	% Change
Aggravated Assault	1448	1332	116	8.71
Homicide Offenses	28	31	-3	-9.68
Grand Total	11309	10843	466	4.30

Source: NIBRS Family Violence Report for the Family Violent Unit Offenses Only





Family Violence Lethality Assessment September 2019 - 2020

LAP Count	7212		
	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>NA</u>
Victim Gender	5834	1280	98
Suspect Gender	1176	5889	147
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>NA</u>
Refused to Answer	197	4267	
1. Has a Weapon been used/threatened against you?	2396	4560	256
2. Have they threatened to kill you/children?	2972	3953	287
3. Do you think they might kill you?	3373	3026	813
4. Do they have a gun or access to a gun?	3066	3636	510
5. Have they tried to choke you?	4161	2749	302
6. Are they violent/jealous/controlling?	5356	1530	326
7. Have you previously left/seperated after cohabitating?	4411	2441	360
8. Are they unemployed?	3408	3403	401
9. Have they tried to commit suicide?	1396	5239	577
10. Do you have children unrelated to the Suspect?	2172	4625	415
11. Do they follow/spy/leave threatening messages?	3446	3425	341
12. Was the Victim Transported to the Hospital	318	6520	374
13. Was the Suspect Intoxicated/High during this Incident?	2562	4102	548
	<u>Screen In</u>		
15. Victim Screened in?	4123	1812	1277
	<u>Counseling</u>		
18. Did the Victim speak with a Counselor?	864	4770	1577
	<u>Screen In</u>		
	<u>At-Large</u>	<u>Arrested</u>	<u>NA</u>
14. What is the Status of the Suspect?	4377	1698	1137





Mayor Eric Johnson's Domestic Violence Task Force Letter



Eric Johnson
Mayor

March 3, 2020

The Honorable Jennifer Gates
Dallas City Hall
Room 5FN
Dallas, Texas 75201

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Dear Chairwoman Gates:

The Domestic Violence Task Force has played an important role over the years in convening leaders from the City of Dallas, Dallas County, law enforcement agencies, educational institutions, and nonprofits to focus on the issue of domestic violence. As mayor, I am hopeful that this year, the Task Force can bring forward actionable recommendations to support and advance the efforts of all the entities battling domestic violence in Dallas.

While not explicitly outlined in the Dallas Police Department's violent crime reduction plan, I believe that stopping domestic violence must be a key part of our strategies to fight violent crime. Some of the increases in violent crime we have seen have been driven, directly and indirectly, by domestic violence. In 2019, Dallas had more than 1,800 family violence aggravated assaults — an increase of about 2 percent over 2018. In addition, the police department linked 32 of the city's 210 homicides in 2019 to domestic violence.

We cannot accept the status quo, and we must continue to work, to the best of our ability, to stop the scourge of violence in the home and between intimate partners. And as with our broader violent crime issues, we must all commit to playing a part in the solution.

I believe setting goals — especially challenging ones — is important to our efforts, and I would like to realize a 25% reduction in domestic violence-related aggravated assaults over the next three years. With that end in mind, I hereby request that this Task Force report back to me a series of data-supported and community-driven recommendations, especially regarding ways to achieve the following:



Eric Johnson
Mayor

- 1) Increase shelter space in Dallas to ensure no victim seeking assistance is unable to access accommodations and services.
- 2) Ensure Dallas police officers, both patrol officers and family violence detectives, have adequate training and tools needed to respond appropriately to domestic violence incidents.
- 3) Integrate domestic violence education into Dallas and Richardson ISDs' curriculum.
- 4) Provide improved on-demand transportation services for victims of domestic violence.
- 5) Identify obstacles or circumstances that increase risk of severe injury or death for victims and create actionable plans to address these obstacles.

I would like these recommendations to be completed and submitted to my office by October 1, 2020, as Domestic Violence Awareness Month begins.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns, and thank you for your dedication to the cause of building stronger families and reducing violent crime in Dallas.

Sincerely,

Eric Johnson
Mayor





- [2020 Domestic Violence Task Force Report Press Release](#)
- [2020 Domestic Violence Task Force Report](#)
- [2020 Informe del Grupo de Trabajo sobre Violencia Doméstica](#)

