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Document Title: Law Enforcement Response to Domestic Violence Calls for Service

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Document No.: 215915

Date Received: October 2006

Award Number: 99-C-008

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**Law Enforcement
Response to Emergency
Domestic Violence Calls
for Service**

**ASP Task Order
99-C-008–Task 039**

February 1, 2005

Final Report

Prepared for
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1. Executive Summary: Report for the Study of Law Enforcement Response to Emergency Domestic Violence Calls for Service

In Fiscal year 2002, the appropriations for the Department of Justice included “\$200,000 for the Attorney General to conduct a study and prepare a report to be submitted to the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and State Appropriations of the Senate and House of Representatives Appropriations Committee on the response of local law enforcement agencies to emergency calls involving domestic violence.” In response to this, the National Institute of Justice awarded a task order to Abt Associates Inc. to conduct this study. This is the report on that research.

The study began with an extensive literature search that revealed that there is no historical baseline of how law enforcement agencies across the country have been responding to emergency domestic violence calls for service in the past. However, the literature demonstrated that law enforcement reform has been both encouraged and supported in a number of ways and has resulted in changes in departmental policies and procedures, the establishment of domestic violence special units, and collaborations with domestic violence victim advocate groups. Although selected programs across the country have been evaluated, no cross-sectional information has been gathered at the national level to examine local agency response to domestic violence calls. This project, therefore, provides vital descriptive information on current written practices and procedures of law enforcement agencies across the nation in responding to domestic violence calls for service.

Without a national understanding of law enforcement response to emergency domestic violence calls for service, it is impossible to describe how law enforcement agencies are currently responding to emergency domestic violence calls for service. To answer this question, a nationally representative sample of the more than 14,000 law enforcement agencies across the country was surveyed on the policies and procedures in place to support law enforcement response to emergency domestic violence calls for service. This information was supplemented with the results of nine interviews with community-based domestic violence victim advocate groups and focus studies with three law enforcement agencies.

1.1.1. Key Findings

Most police departments have established written operational procedures for responding to domestic violence calls for service. Over three-quarters or 77 percent of police departments have written operational procedures for responding to emergency domestic violence calls for service. Whether or not a department has a policy in place is significantly related to the size of the department; that is, larger departments are more likely to have a domestic violence policy than smaller departments. A little more than half of departments (53%) have had their policy in place for over six years.

Most departments have revised their policy since it was first implemented. Fifty-five percent of police departments have revised their policies since first implementing them. Among those departments that have made revisions, most (81%) have updated their policy to be consistent with state law. Departments are less apt to make changes based on recommendations made by community-

based domestic violence victim advocate groups (24%), internal studies of policy effectiveness (20%), or task force/advisory board recommendations (12%) than in response to legislation.

There was little variation in the scope of department policies across departments. In over 80 percent of departments, spousal relationships, cohabitants, and parents of a common child are considered domestic relationships. Same sex and dating partners are included in 71% and 69%, respectively, of department policies. Most departments consider physical (99%) and sexual (90%) assault as a domestic act, while more than half (62%) of departments also consider stalking a form of domestic violence.

There was some variation in the procedures covered in written policies. Departments are more likely to include basic procedures on how to dispatch (76%), questions to ask (67%), and how to prioritize calls (62%) than procedures on how to interact with victims (41%). There was also some variation in procedures included in policies for responding officers. Most departments include procedures regarding the arrest decision (95%), handling of violations of protection orders (89%), conducting on-scene investigations (75%), and other procedures relevant for responding to most domestic violence calls for service. It was less common for departments to include procedures for handling child witnesses (42%), officer-involved domestic violence (38%), juvenile suspects (33%), non-English speaking subjects (23%), and military suspects (10%).

There was some variation in what departments require call-takers to do when responding to emergency domestic violence calls for service. Most departments require call takers to ask about weapons (61%), to stay on line until police arrive (52%), to ask whether children are present (47%), to ask whether the suspect uses drugs/alcohol (46%), and inquire about restraining orders (41%), while it was less common among departments to require call takers to advise victims on protecting their own safety (32%), to ask about previous incidents (29%), and even less common for departments to require call takers to ask victims to leave the premises (10%) or ask whether suspects are on parole or probation (10%). Departments with automated dispatch systems require significantly more of call-takers than departments without automated systems. In general, the extensiveness or number of required activities was significantly related to the size of the department and whether the department has a special unit; that is, larger agencies and agencies with special units require call-takers to engage in more activities than smaller departments and those without a domestic violence special unit.

There was some variation in what departments require dispatchers to do when responding to emergency domestic violence calls for service. Seventy-two percent of departments require dispatchers to check on the safety of officers at the scene; 57% of departments require dispatchers to send emergency medical services to the scene; 54% to check on the presence of protection orders; 47% to provide call history to officers; and 44% to check on warrants associated with the address. Fewer agencies require dispatchers to check on gun licenses provided to members of the household (20%) and some departments (10%) reported having “other” requirements that included such things as checking on previous call history and whether or not there are dangerous animals at the scene. Again, agency size was significantly related to dispatch response; that is, larger departments make more requirements of dispatchers in terms of checking on officer safety, sending EMS, providing call history, and checking on warrants or protection orders.

Departments require officers to engage in a range of activities when dealing with victims and child witnesses of domestic violence. More than 90% of the departments require officers to interview

victims separately from the suspect, separate the victim and suspect when responding to a domestic violence call, inform the victim of shelter and other services, and photograph victim injuries. Fewer departments require officers to take custody of children (31%), review a safety plan with the victim (28%) or provide the victim with cell phones or pagers (10%). In general, procedural and evidentiary activities were more common than passive or active assistance to victims.

Most departments have implemented procedures to increase officer accountability for providing an appropriate response to domestic violence calls for service. Eighty-eight percent of departments require officers to complete an incident report for all domestic violence calls they are dispatched to, regardless of what occurs on scene. Sixty-three percent of departments require officers to complete a supplemental form for documenting domestic violence calls. Sixty-eight percent of departments require officers to provide a written justification when no arrest is made for domestic violence. Eighty-six percent of departments require a written justification when both parties are arrested.

More departments require officers to receive specialized domestic violence training than require that training for call-takers and dispatchers. Roughly half of departments with call-takers and/or dispatchers working within the department require that they receive specialized training on domestic violence, while 74% of departments require that officers receive specialized training.

Few departments have established domestic violence special units. Eleven percent of departments have a specialized domestic violence unit. Whether or not a department has a special unit is significantly related to the size of the department.

Many departments have established partnerships with community victim-advocate groups, while few departments have advocates working within the department. Sixty-five percent of departments have established a partnership with a community-based victim advocate group and 13% of departments have advocates working within the police department. In both cases, advocates are involved in helping victims with assistance from local victim-service providers, making referrals, counseling victims, and providing court advocacy.

Few departments reported receiving any funding from the Federal government in the past five years to support department response to domestic violence.¹ Twelve percent of departments reported receiving funding and, larger departments are significantly more likely to have reported receiving funding. Federal funding was also unrelated to whether the department reported having a specialized domestic violence unit or a partnership with a community victim advocate group.

The size of the police department seems to be positively correlated with the likelihood of having more domestic violence policy. Not only are larger agencies more likely to have a domestic violence policy, but they are also likely to have more extensive response requirements for their 911 call-takers and dispatchers and are more likely to have a domestic violence special unit and victim advocates working inside the police department.

Few police departments include information related to domestic violence on their websites. After reviewing 2,203 law enforcement agency websites, only 4% of agencies include information related

¹ Many departments may receive Federal funding through sub-grants from the State under a formula or block grant program. In such cases, the departments may perceive that they are receiving State rather than Federal funds.

to domestic violence. Roughly seventy-five percent of these departments have a domestic violence special unit and approximately half of these units are working in conjunction with community-based domestic violence organizations (e.g., responding to the scene of the incident with responding officers, conducting follow-up with department detectives).

Agencies that include domestic violence information on their websites emphasized services for victims and victim safety. Almost every agency website that includes domestic violence information includes information about local and national victim services. About half of the sites contain information about creating a personal safety plan and information about places to go after leaving the situation. Several departments include information about specific programs and resources available to victims (e.g., online chat rooms, cell phone programs, VINE program).

1.1.2. Implications for the Field

These findings provide a descriptive understanding of the state of the law enforcement response to intimate partner violence and begin to identify and explain variations in local policy. Both the national survey and supplemental data collection identified areas of change for further consideration that are described below.

Policy Content. State legislatures have done a service to the field by including definitions of domestic violence in state statutes and, consequently, promoted consistency across departments. However, in some cases, definitions may be in need of review and possible revision. For example, definitions of cohabitating couples that don't include a time span for how long ago the couple cohabitated or definitions that include "roommates," may need revision to provide more clarity on the intent of the law. Lack of specificity at the state level can trickle down to police departments and officers in the field who may feel in some cases that enforcement of the law is inconsistent with the spirit of the domestic violence policy. In other cases, policies may be improved by expanding the types of relationships or acts considered domestic.

Most departments review their policies and make revisions as needed, but most of the revisions are made to update the policy based on changes made to state statutes. Departments might consider other reasons for revision; for example, in response to a review of policy implementation that identifies responses in the field that are inconsistent with department goals. This could be accomplished through internal studies looking at incident reports or response patterns among officers, or working with the victim advocate community to identify weaknesses or inconsistencies in the department's response.

Response Procedures. Policies and procedures provide sufficient guidance to call-takers and dispatchers to promote officer and victim safety, but officers may need more guidance on handling more challenging aspects of domestic violence calls for service – uncooperative parties, mutual combatants, alcohol or drug involved violence, and violations of protection orders. For example, if a policy just states that arrest is mandatory, but does not provide further guidance on how to determine the predominant aggressor, police may arrest both parties rather than just the perpetrator. More guidance may also be useful in handling minor domestic incidents that involve a 3rd party caller and subsequent denial among the parties involved. There is the potential for officers to use their discretion to reclassify these incidents as non-domestic and therefore not treat them as crime prevention opportunities.

Training. Policy and procedure tell responders what to do, but training helps them learn how to do it. Unfortunately, only about half of departments across the country require specialized training on domestic violence for call-takers and dispatchers, missing an opportunity to improve response among the gatekeepers to police response. Most departments recognize the importance of training officers on domestic violence, but in practice the focus tends to be on recruits. In-service officers should also receive specialized domestic violence training of sufficient depth to review dynamics of domestic violence and how officers can use local resources to respond, and not just provide a review of standard operating procedure.

Accountability. Developing policies and procedures and training department personnel on them does not necessarily translate to a specific response in the field, unless first responders are held accountable. For example, call-takers and dispatchers could be monitored during their response and call tapes reviewed by supervisors periodically to ensure staff are adhering to procedure. It is unclear the extent to which this is done currently, and is likely that departments rely on feedback from patrol officers to identify any weaknesses among communications staff. Similarly, officer accountability could be improved by expanding the review of incident reports conducted by most departments to ensure it thorough – looking for response patterns and weaknesses – rather than only reviewing reports to identify missing or unclear information. Requiring officers to contact their supervisors in specific types of incidents or requiring written justification are also important steps towards holding officers accountable.

Partnership. Many departments have partnered with victim advocate groups. These partnerships can be capitalized on and used in a role that goes beyond a referral or advocacy resource for victims. Victim advocate groups can be involved in the development of policy and in making revisions to existing policy. These groups can also be useful in training department personnel, not only because of their expertise in domestic violence, but also because such training can help officers learn more about victim services available in the community.

Future research. This research provides an understanding of the policies and procedures in place in departments across the country to help guide response to emergency domestic violence calls. This understanding could be supported in a few ways: (1) by assembling a panel of experts to review model policies and identify critical elements so that judgments could be made on the quality of department policies; (2) by assembling a group of experts to assist in the development of guidelines for (a) partnerships between police departments and advocacy organizations, and (b) for responding fully to the service, information, economic, and safety needs of battered women; or (3) by collecting information on how individual officers are responding in the field, which may be done through a case review at specific departments, surveys or interviews with individual officers, or surveys or interviews with victims of domestic violence who have contacted the police to report domestic violence.

2. Introduction

Domestic Violence can include any threatened or actual violence occurring between family members or current and former intimates. In this review, we focus on intimate partner violence and the actual or threatened physical or sexual violence or psychological abuse that might occur between current and former spouses or partners, cohabitating couples, and dating couples. This definition is consistent with how the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention distinguishes intimate partner from other

forms of familial violence. This definition is also more likely to be consistent with the type of violence labeled by police as “domestic.”

Domestic Violence is a serious concern for American women, their families, and society as a whole. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of violence sustained by women in the U.S. is at the hands of intimate partners. In the first national study of family violence, the Family Violence Survey found that one out of every 26 American wives get beaten by their husbands each year, a total of 1.8 million women a year (Straus et al., 1980: 40). More recent estimates indicate the domestic violence problem has not abated, and that for many a “marriage license” continues to be considered a “hitting license”(a phrase coined by Straus and his colleagues (1980) in their first study of family violence). Recent studies estimate that in the United States, intimate partners physically assaulted approximately 1.3 million women each year (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). In 1996, intimate partners were responsible for 1,800 murders in the U.S., and almost three fourths of the victims were female (Greenfeld, 1998). Results from the 1995-1996 National Violence Against Women (NVAW) survey report that 76 percent of raped and/or physically assaulted women in the sample were victimized by a current or former husband, cohabitating partner, or date. And, a quarter of the women surveyed admitted being victimized by an intimate partner at least once during their lifetime (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Additionally, findings from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) indicate that in 1999 over 600,000 women age 12 and older experienced violent crimes at the hands of their current or former spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend (Rennison, 2001). As startling as these figures are, they are only an estimate of the magnitude of the problem, as they reflect only incidents self-reported to researchers.

Researchers generally agree that female victims of domestic abuse are much less likely to report violence perpetrated by an intimate than by a stranger. Consequently few studies offer definitive information on victims’ reporting and service use patterns. The 1992 NCVS showed that almost six times as many women victimized by intimates (18%) as those victimized by strangers (3%) did not report their violent victimization to police because they feared retaliation from the offender (Bachman, 1994). Further, women often do not contact the police because they consider the incident private, or they feel the police would be unable to do anything about the incident. More recent estimates from the NCVS report that only about half the intimate partner violence against women from 1993 to 1998 was reported. Reasons for not reporting included the personal nature of the incident (35%); fear of reprisal (19.8%); and perception of the incident as a minor crime (7%) (Rennison & Welchans, 2000). While, reasons *for* reporting included self-protection, perceptions of the domestic assault as serious, and the belief the police will consider it seriously (Felson et al., 2002). Factors that have been found to be related to calling the police include previous history of abuse, severity of the abuse, alcohol consumption by the offender, and, to a lesser extent, victim race and socio-economic status (e.g., Berk et al., 1984; Bachman & Coker, 1995; Jones & Belknap, 1999). Fischer and Rose (1995) reported that barriers to reporting domestic violence and subsequent protective services use included fear of involvement of authorities, embarrassment to families, and distrust or unfamiliarity with the criminal justice system. Other reasons that have been cited include societal norms, fear of retaliation, economic or psychological dependence, past poor interaction with the police, economic effects of reporting, and inability to make a decision because of post-traumatic stress disorder (Felson et al., 2002; Buzawa and Buzawa, 1996a, see chapter 5 for a review).

Furthermore, battered women of immigrant status often face the additional burden of legal and social barriers to reporting. In a national survey, 67 percent of officials said that immigrants report crimes less often than other victims, and that domestic violence was the crime least often reported (Davis &

Erez, 1998). It has been speculated that language barriers, possible dependence on a spouse for resident status, and uncertainty in dealing with the U.S. legal system may contribute to underreporting in these populations (Healy et al., 1998).

Intimate partner violence has broad personal, social, and economic consequences, including physical and psychological damage to victims and their children, increased pre-natal fatalities, higher divorce rates (Adragna, 1991), increases in corresponding health care, social service, and criminal justice costs (Healy et al., 1998), and in some cases death (NRC, 1996). Victims of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) are likely to suffer from Major Depressive Disorder (MDD), Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD) (Stein & Kennedy, 2001), and drug and alcohol abuse (Kilpatrick, 1994). Research has also demonstrated the more life threatening the abuse, the more traumatic the effect (Jones et al., 2001). Victims suffering from PTSD are also at higher risk for suicide (Jones et al., 2001).

Children from violent families are likely to have behavioral problems and social competency issues (Wolfe et al., 1985). Consequences are far-reaching, in that those who batter often witnessed domestic violence as children (Widom, 1992). Straus and his colleagues (1980) found that men who had seen parents physically attack each other were almost three times more likely to have hit their own wives (32%), as compared to those who did not witness violent parents (11%).

It is clear that domestic violence in the United States is a continuing problem with long term ramifications for victims and children that are exacerbated when victims do not receive adequate services. It is also clear that there are serious barriers to reporting for many victims, which makes it difficult for them to get justice and receive services. As the first line of response to an incident of domestic violence, police need to develop adequate response protocols that help victims overcome barriers to reporting and that provide a coordinated response.

2.1. Historical Response of Law Enforcement

The 1970s and 1980s witnessed a growing awareness of the prevalence and severity of domestic violence, particularly violence that occurs between intimate partners. This awareness was coupled with criticism of the police and how they were, or were not, responding to victims of domestic violence. Police play a pivotal role in managing the domestic violence problem. They are the first contact for violence-prone families, provide a free service, are visible authority figures, and are “likely to be the only public agency in a position to provide rapid assistance on a 24-hour basis” (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996a: 4). They are the most visible and important actors within the criminal justice system because they serve as its gatekeeper (Buzawa et al., 1995, see Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996b). As a result, problems arise when allegations are made that police do not take domestic violence seriously, consider it a family problem and, therefore, inappropriate for police action.

2.1.1. Criticisms of Police Response

Since the 18th century, spousal violence was often considered acceptable, a private concern, and even condoned under the law (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996a, see chapter 3 for a review). By the early 1970s, it was widely believed police used their discretion to avoid making arrests, except in the most serious cases (Straus et al., 1980), and they were criticized for ignoring victim requests for assistance (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996b). One study completed in the 1970s found that close to 60% of the homicides in one city involving family members were preceded by threats; in another city,

researchers found that police had been to the location of a domestic related assault or homicide at least five times before in about 50% of the cases (Wilt & Breedlove, 1977).

By the 1980s, studies indicated that it was common police policy to delay response in the hopes the problem would resolve itself or the disputant would leave before police arrive (Oppenlander, 1982), and, when responding, uniformly not arresting (Zorza, 1992). Police were trained to rely instead on crisis intervention, counseling for substance/alcohol abuse problems, mediation, and separations of parties at the scene (Bard, 1970; Straus et al., 1980), subsequently placing the burden of arrest on victims (U.S. Attorney General, 1984). There were a number of characteristics of this type of police response. First, many domestic violence cases were screened out by either police dispatchers or officers themselves in favor of more crime-fighting work. Second, officers did not like responding to these calls because of organizational disincentives; perceptions domestic violence calls were dangerous; statutory restrictions on misdemeanor arrests that prevented them from doing anything; perceptions victims would not follow through with prosecution; and bias against making arrests for a family problem (Buerger, 2003; Dutton, 1995; Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996a, see chapter 4 for a complete discussion). These characterizations have arisen from criticisms that police tend to base arrest decisions in domestic assault cases on personal values (Berk & Loseke, 1980-81), which reflect the belief that domestic violence should be treated less seriously than violence that occurs between strangers (Worden & Pollitz, 1984).

2.1.2. Impetus for Change

Major reforms of police handling of domestic violence began in the 1980s in response to pressure from women's rights groups and battered women's advocates (Morley & Mullender, 1992; Martin, 1997), successful litigation (Fagan, 1996; Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996a), and seminal research looking at the deterrent power of arrest (Sherman & Berk, 1984a).

Political Pressure

In response to the non-intervention policies prevalent in the law enforcement community (Morley & Mullender, 1992), battered women's advocates began campaigning for legal reform to make battering a criminal offense, bringing attention to spousal abuse and the criminal justice system's role in protecting women (Dobash & Dobash, 1987). Advocates began calling for changes in the criminal justice system, e.g., mandatory and presumptive arrest policies to ensure equal protection under the law (Belknap, 1995; Stark, 1996). The impact of this social movement was first realized in 1978 when the U.S. Civil Rights Commission recognized the magnitude of the spousal abuse problem in the U.S. and the role inequality between men and women played in the problem (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996a).

Legal Liability

At the same time battered women's advocates were increasing social awareness of the problem of spousal abuse and lobbying for reform, the legal community was fighting its own battle in the courtroom. A number of police chiefs across the country were facing lawsuits from individuals and groups of individuals, holding them and their departments accountable for failing to provide equal protection under the law (Niemi-Kiesilainen, 2001; Belknap, 1995; Dobash & Dobash, 1987). The first cases made it clear that police departments could be sued for failing to protect battered women (Scott v. Hart No. C-76-2395 N.D. Cal., filed Oct.28, 1976; Bruno v. Codd (90 Misc. 2d 1047, 396

NYS2d 974, filed 1977), but it was not until the third case of *Thurman v. City of Torrington* (595 F. Supp. 1521 Dist of Conn. 1984) and its \$2.3 million settlement that law enforcement took notice (Zorza, 1992 for a review). This last case put police departments and officers on notice that they were liable if they failed to adequately protect victims from harm (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996a), and that there was a significant financial penalty if it didn't happen.

Research Support

In response, police departments began considering options for increasing protection of victims and enforcement of batterers, which manifested itself in law enforcement's most powerful response in their arsenal - arrest. Departments began adopting mandatory or presumptive arrest policies to allow warrantless arrests in situations where probable cause existed. As arrest statistics increased, researchers became interested in the specific and general deterrent effect of domestic violence arrests. Sherman & Berk (1984a) conducted the first study of the deterrent power of arrest, finding that arrest was the most effective deterrent to future acts of domestic violence, which prompted some police departments to implement arrest policies for minor acts of domestic violence (Sherman & Cohn, 1989). In response to criticisms of the experiment's methodology and the validity of the findings, the National Institute of Justice supported replications in five communities. Although tasked with replication, the five sites varied on the criteria established for case inclusion, sample size, treatment options, incarceration time, outcome measures, and ultimately, their findings (Dunford et al., 1990; Hirschel et al., 1996; Hirschel & Hutchison, 1992; Sherman et al., 1992; Pate & Hamilton, 1992; Berk et al., 1992; Weisz, 1998 – 2002). In particular, three (Dunford et al., 1990; Hirschel et al., 1996; Sherman et al., 1992) of the five replications failed to substantiate the original study's findings. The results were slightly more optimistic after pooling data from all five sites; there was some evidence of a modest deterrent effect (Maxwell et al., 2001). Despite the less than conclusive empirical support, jurisdictions nationwide continued to institute pro-arrest policies in domestic assault cases in an effort to gain some control over police behavior (Stark, 1996).

2.1.3. Police Reform

Despite the lack of clarity on the best strategy to improve police response to domestic violence, reform was pushed at the Federal, state, and local levels, and focused not just on arrest policy, but on establishing a formalized operational response to domestic violence.

Federal Reform

One of the first steps was taken at the federal level with the U.S. Attorney General's Task Force on Family Violence, which made a number of recommendations for the justice system (U.S. Attorney General, 1984). Recommendations to law enforcement included an emphasis on establishing written operational procedures for responding to domestic violence calls, and the suggestion that officers inform victims of their rights, take statements from victims, write a report on the incident, instruct the abuser to leave the premises, inform victims of services, and verify the existence of orders of protection. The Task Force also recommended that law enforcement establish arrest as the preferred response, maintain current files of all protection orders, and respond to violations of protection orders or conditions of release (U.S. Attorney General, 1984: 16 – 18). Further recommendations were to train dispatchers to understand the nature of domestic violence calls and how to collect the necessary information for proper screening and dispatching of calls. It went on to suggest screening should be prioritized based on seriousness of injury, threatened harm to victim, presence of a weapon, and the

location of the abuser (U.S. Attorney General, 1984: 19-20). The most far-reaching recommendation was made to state legislatures to enact legislation to allow warrantless arrest in misdemeanor cases, where there is probable cause (U.S. Attorney General, 1984).

State and Local Reform

The focus at the federal level on making changes to improve the procedural barriers to arrest resulted in changes in protection orders and criminal statutes that encourage reporting, arrest, and prosecution of perpetrators of domestic violence (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996a). As a result, pro-arrest policies were implemented across the country in the 1980s. The first Domestic Violence Act was passed in the 1970s, which allowed warrantless arrest where there was probable cause of violation of a protection order, but Oregon was the first state to adopt a mandatory arrest policy in 1977 (Zorza, 1992). By 1985, over half of the state legislatures passed statutes in an effort to reduce the violence (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1992). Key reforms included removing procedural barriers to arrest, expanding the substantive grounds for arrest, establishing domestic violence as a separate criminal offense, as well as statutory requirements to provide certain services to victims (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996a, see chapter 11 for a review). As compared to 15 years ago, every state now permits police officers to arrest subjects in domestic violence cases (mandated in 19 states and preferred in 7 states) and violators of court orders of protection (mandated in 28 states and preferred in 2), where probable cause is sufficient (Miller, 1997). Based on his review of statutes in 50 states, Miller (1997:2) identified the following areas of state-to-state variation: severity of punishment; extent to which criminal code includes domestic violence related crimes; breadth and scope of police authority to arrest domestic violence offenders without a warrant; degree of non-arrest duties assigned to officers; emphasis on training; officer discretion to inform victim of states' victim rights act; and extent to which law provides for an evaluation of efforts. Despite these variations, it is clear the legal and civil protective laws surrounding domestic violence have significantly expanded across the country.

2.1.4. Implementing Reform

In spite of the far-reaching impacts of such legislative reform, police departments needed federal support and guidance to implement changes in practice.

Federal Support

The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), which was created in 1968 and existed until 1980, provided some of the early funding to law enforcement in the form of state block grants for law enforcement hiring (small percentage), education, and equipment to improve the criminal justice response to crime. Through its Family Violence Program, the LEAA provided funds to law enforcement agencies to train their employees on state domestic violence laws (Little et al., 1998), and on the law enforcement response to victims of domestic violence (Walker, 2000). The LEAA also funded independent organizations that offered domestic violence training to law enforcement agencies (Dobash & Dobash, 1992).

The first legislation to provide grant money for training to law enforcement was the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act of 1984 (Urban Institute, 1995). This was soon followed with the first wide-ranging federal legislation to address domestic violence in Congress in 1990. The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) (Title IV of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, P.L. 103-32.2) was passed in 1994 and included several grant programs targeting law

enforcement response. In particular, the STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant program, STOP Violence Against Indian Women Discretionary Grant program, Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies and Enforcement of Protection Orders Program (Arrest Program), and the Rural Domestic Violence and Child Victimization Enforcement Grant program provide funding to improve law enforcement response. The Arrest Program includes specific certification requirements related to law enforcement response. For example, applicants must certify that their “laws or official policies encourage or mandate arrests of domestic violence offenders based on probable cause that an offense has been committed.” In 1995, the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) was created in the Department of Justice to provide national leadership against domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking and implement the VAWA grant programs. In 2000, Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act of 2000 (Division B of the Victim of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act. P.L. 106-386) to strengthen and improve the original act.

More recently, funding from such federal agencies as the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) has assisted agencies in their quest to improve service delivery to victims of domestic violence. Since 1985, the OVC has distributed over \$4 billion, generated through the Crime Victim’s Fund, primarily to states to support their victim assistance and compensation programs, but some of which has been dedicated to training and technical assistance to law enforcement (of which some funds have gone to victim service units in law enforcement agencies) (Office for Victims of Crime, 2002). Additionally, between 1986 and 1992, OVC funded 23 law enforcement training projects to improve criminal justice response to victims of family violence (NIJ, 1995). In 1996 the COPS office awarded 336 law enforcement agencies \$47 million dollars through its Community Policing to Combat Domestic Violence initiative. An additional \$9 million was awarded to targeted sites in 1998 and 1999 to continue efforts toward the development of an innovative, progressive focus on domestic violence (Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2002).

Other Support

To help local police formulate and implement effective guidelines for police response to spousal abuse, the Police Executive Research Forum developed a guide (Loving, 1980) that recommended specific ranges of responses for domestic violent acts in light of statutory changes. The guide suggested how 911 operators and officers should be trained to respond to domestic violence calls for service and the type of information that should be presented in a training session (Loving, 1980). Other Federal agencies, e.g., Office for Victims of Crime (2001), have provided similar guidance on the content of domestic violence training for law enforcement. OVW also has provided technical assistance, training, and materials related to law enforcement response to domestic violence calls. States also began assisting in the reform by developing model domestic violence policies and procedures in an effort to standardize implementation at the local level. For example, the Wisconsin Department of Justice developed a guide for investigating and prosecuting domestic abuse in Wisconsin. The model provides guidance on how communications centers should respond to domestic violence calls and how officers and investigators should respond at the scene (Wisconsin Department of Justice, 2002). In another example, the Violence Against Women Committee of the Governor’s Crime Commission in North Carolina developed a uniform protocol to standardize reporting and investigations of domestic violence throughout the state of North Carolina (North Carolina Governor’s Crime Commission, 1998).

Organizational Change

Despite the guidance provided to law enforcement, concerns continued to arise regarding implementing change in communications centers; the emphasis on arrest; the likelihood that reform would impact officer decision-making; and the ability of police organizations to affect change. Some of these concerns continue to be raised today.

Discretion exists at all points in a victim's contact with the police, from dispatch to arrest. Dispatchers are responsible for screening all calls that come into the police department. The priority assigned to the call dictates whether an officer is dispatched to the scene. This decision is guided by internal policy, but may also be affected by organizational, situational, and personal factors, such as whether the elements of the situation indicate danger, the probability that an arrest might be made at the scene, whether the crime is in progress, and if there is a threat to property or public order (Manning, 1992). Like the police, dispatchers have been criticized for downplaying domestic violence calls and ignoring the seriousness of the crime through such strategies as reassigning the priority of the call, referring callers to social service agencies, or telling callers police do not respond to domestic violence calls (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996a). Curtailing dispatcher discretion would not be an easy undertaking, especially in cases where the call-taking and dispatch responsibilities are not the responsibility of the police department, but are performed by another agency or by contracted personnel.

Although police reform involved changes in a number of areas, the most powerful change was the increase in police powers of arrest, which can have both positive and negative repercussions. Besides punishing the abuser, arrest serves a number of functions, both for the victim (protection from immediate danger) and the community (general deterrence). However, there are a number of potential downsides to arrest, including the assumption that domestic violence behavior can be changed through arrest (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996a: 147-148), and the problem that arrest may hurt victims financially (Bowman, 1992), increase violence or retaliation (Wanless, 1996) and be perceived by victims as coercive (Buel, 1988; Jaffe et al., 1986). In fact, Hirschel & Hutchison (2003) found, after interviewing 419 victims who called the police to report misdemeanor spouse abuse cases, that victim preference for arrest is related to subsequent reoffending; that is, victims who prefer the offender not be arrested are less likely to be threatened in the future. Rather than a blanket focus on arrest, advocates recommended that law enforcement training emphasize the motivations of women and their preferences (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996a), and that policies focus on expanding protection to the most vulnerable female population (Stark, 1996) and prosecuting violations of protection orders (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996b). Another concern with the focus on arrest is a potential increase in the arrest of both parties - dual arrest - which has been abated in some cases through policies calling for police to identify and arrest only the "primary physical aggressor" (Zorza, 1992).

Another concern related to the focus on arrest policies is the significant amount of research supporting a "leniency thesis," i.e., theory that police treat men who batter less punitively than other violent offenders or exercise differential arrest practices (Buzawa et al., 1995, as cited in Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996a; Eigenberger et al., 1996; Fyfe et al., 1997) that would be difficult to overcome through policy. There was also a concern with the evidence suggesting that a number of factors become important during the arrest decision-making process and are also more difficult to control through policy. These include characteristics of the officer (for example, attitudes about domestic violence, perception of their roles in disputes, and the officer's own use of violence) (e.g., Dolon et al., 1986; Ferraro, 1989; Saunders, 1995; Stith, 1990; Breci, 1989; Stanko, 1988); legal characteristics

of the incident (for example, offender history of violence, threatened violence toward the officer, presence of children at the scene) (e.g., Bachman & Coker, 1995; Smith & Klein, 1984; Fyfe et al., 1997; Buzawa & Austin, 1993; Jones & Belknap, 1999); alcohol and other drug use (e.g., Smith, 1987; Worden & Pollitz, 1984; Jones & Belknap, 1999); characteristics of the victim and offender (for example, demeanor, race, and social class) (e.g., Berk & Loseke, 1980-81; Dolon et al., 1986; Gondolf & McFerron, 1989; Smith & Klein, 1984); and characteristics of the incident (for example, location and relationship between parties (e.g., Holmes, 1983; Fyfe et al., 1997). Unfortunately, compliance can be difficult, because the private nature and low visibility of domestic violence, as well as the insulation of officers by the organizational structure enables individual officers to ignore changes in laws without repercussions (Buerger, 2003).

The strong organizational culture and bonds among officers also makes change difficult at both the organizational and individual level (Robinson, 2000), resulting in inconsistent enforcement of the new policies. For example, in one agency, researchers found no difference in the number of arrests made by officers hired before and after a pro-arrest policy was in place, citing the organizational culture, poor training, and strong rookie-officer relationships as the cause for the lack of change (Robinson, 2000). To be effective, policies need to be supported by the organization (Gelles, 1996), comprehensive and well documented (Miller, 1987), and incorporated into standard training curricula (Robinson, 2000; Bourg & Stock, 1994). Additionally, because the decision to arrest is a product of complex decision-making, it is difficult to manage these decisions through mandated change (Smith, 1987), which is why it is important implementation is monitored and enforced so officers are held accountable.

In addition to developing sound policy and accountability procedures, some departments designate a domestic violence coordinator to review reports, network with service providers, conduct training, and possibly recontact victims to check accuracy of reports (Buerger, 2003). Other departments require officers to file reports for all domestic violence calls (Buerger, 2003), or develop a special unit to review reports, provide follow-up, train staff, and investigate internal claims of domestic violence (North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission, 1998). Training is also critical to effective implementation, particularly for in-service staff (Buerger, 2003).

2.2. What is the Present Situation?

Law enforcement agencies across the country have been implementing reform in a number of ways, including changes in policies and procedures, developing special patrol and investigative units, and collaborating with service providers in different ways to improve victim service delivery. For example, some departments are coordinating with crisis centers to provide lay legal advocacy to victims of domestic violence (Aluisi, 1994). In others, special units are being created in investigations to follow-up on all domestic violence cases (Robinson & Chandek, 2000), while in other departments counselors meet officers at the scene of all domestic violence calls to provide immediate crisis counseling and practical advice to victims and make appropriate referrals for follow-up services (Parker, 2001). And in some communities a more comprehensive response is being piloted, teaming police officers and victim advocates as first responders/follow-up investigators, and supplementing them with personnel from probation, parole, and corrections services (Whetstone, 2001).

Based on a look at legal reform and the available literature, it is clear the social movement of the 1980s affected change on police and how they respond to domestic violence calls for services. However, it is unclear the extent to which law enforcement agencies have taken further steps to

improve their response, such as developing comprehensive policy, establishing domestic violence special units, partnering with advocates, and working with other agencies and service providers to improve victim services in the community. It is clear there is more to learn from departments about the policies and activities that have been employed to improve their response to domestic violence in their communities. Specifically, we can improve our understanding of the range of policy changes and operational activities that are currently being employed by law enforcement agencies when responding to emergency domestic violence calls.

3. Methodology

Although selected programs across the country have been evaluated, no cross-sectional data collection has been conducted on the national level to examine local agency response to domestic violence calls. Therefore, this data collection effort involved conducting a representative national survey of law enforcement agencies to collect information on widespread practices of local law enforcement agencies. The survey findings were supplemented with contextual information gathered through interviews with nine representatives from community-based domestic violence victim advocate groups and focus studies in three departments. The rest of the report will focus first on the survey design and administration, then report the survey findings, the results of the interviews and focus studies, and close with some conclusions.

3.1. Sample Selection

The goal of the sampling strategy was to develop a nationally representative sample of law enforcement agencies. The sample was selected using the 2000 Census of Law Enforcement Agencies. The Census is periodically sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) to develop a sampling frame for its Law Enforcement Management and Administrative (LEMAS) survey. The Census of State and local law enforcement agencies includes agencies employing the equivalent of at least one full-time officer with general arrest powers. The Census represents the most current and complete accounting of law enforcement agencies across the country and is most appropriate for developing a nationally representative sample.

Starting with the Census as our sampling frame, we excluded special police departments (e.g., campus police, school district police), regional police departments, constables, and highway patrol departments because they are unlikely to have primary responsibility for responding to emergency calls for service. For the same reason, agencies that did not have at least one full-time officer whose regularly assigned duties include responding to citizen calls/requests for service² were also excluded. These steps reduced the census of 17,784 law enforcement agencies to 14,887 agencies as the sampling frame.

Because we were interested in all remaining law enforcement agencies, we considered the option of a simple random sample of the population of law enforcement agencies. Such a sample would give each police agency an equal probability of selection, so small agencies – most of which have fewer than 10 full-time officers – would dominate the sample (52% of the Censes agencies have less than 10

² Census question #9 is as follows: “Of the total number of FULL-TIME sworn personnel with general arrest powers, enter the number of uniformed officers whose regularly assigned duties included responding to citizen calls/requests for service.”

full-time sworn officers). The disadvantage of such a sample is that it would provide less information about large and medium sized departments, where calls for service for domestic violence may be the most prevalent. The option selected was a sample stratified on the number of full time officers; we then selected an equal number of cases from each stratum³. We calculated confidence intervals on estimates for each stratum, allowing for comparisons to be made across strata, as well as providing national estimates.

The sample size was guided by budget constraints, anticipated response rates from each round of survey administration, and assumptions regarding acceptable confidence intervals. Based on conservative assumptions⁴, we sampled 732 police departments, based on the assumption that we would achieve a 55% response rate. This provides a confidence interval of +/- .045 (at 90% confidence).

3.2. Survey Design

The design of the survey involved a number of steps. The first step in the design process included an extensive review of the literature to identify what is known about how police are currently responding to emergency domestic violence calls for service. This was supplemented by information available on law enforcement agency websites, which is described below. The second step, which is also described below, involved a focus group meeting to discuss survey design. The third step was to pilot the survey in a few departments. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix 1.

3.2.1. Web Search

To supplement published information on specific activities departments might be implementing to improve its response to domestic violence, we reviewed 2,203 public safety websites to gather current information on department activities regarding domestic violence. The websites were selected through an Internet search that identified websites that included law enforcement, police, sheriff, or public safety in the website text. The results of the review indicated that only a small percentage (4%) of the websites had information relating to domestic violence or linked to other websites with domestic violence information.

Almost every website with domestic violence information included information about local and national victim services, e.g., telephone hotline information and contact information for shelters. About half of the sites contained information about creating a personal safety plan, including lists of what a victim should take when leaving, as well as information about possible safe places to go after leaving the situation. Several departments also have specific programs and resources geared toward victims, e.g., online chat rooms, cell phone programs, and notification systems for victims to determine an offender's custody status. A number of sites include statistical and educational information consisting primarily of domestic violence theory and definitions of domestic violence, as well as preventative and legal advice on, such things as getting a protection order.

³ Four strata: 0 to 9 FT officers; 10-49 FT officers; 50-99 FT officers; and 100 or more FT officers.

⁴ 25% response rate from the mass mailings, 15% second mailing, and a combined 44% response rate from follow-up efforts.

Much of the internal information on department websites includes descriptions of department policies and procedures related to domestic violence and, in many cases, a description of the department's domestic violence special unit. Approximately three quarters of the departments with domestic violence information on websites had a specialized domestic or family violence unit. In addition to investigating domestic violence complaints, most domestic violence units offer community education, legal counseling, and general victim assistance. About half of the domestic violence units work independently, and half work in conjunction with community-based domestic violence organizations.

3.2.2. Focus group

To aid in the development of the survey, we convened a focus group and invited representatives from five major police groups: The International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Police Foundation, The Police Executive Research Forum, the National Sheriffs' Association, and the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, as well as three victim advocate organizations: the National Network to End Domestic Violence, the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and the Battered Women's Justice Project. One representative from each of the following agencies attended a three-hour focus group in Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, Police Executive Research Forum, Police Foundation, Battered Women's Justice Project, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and the National Sheriffs' Association.

Topics discussed included the definition of domestic violence in the law enforcement community; types of policies and procedures in place to guide police response for call-takers, dispatchers, and officers; strategies departments are using to improve local response; and areas where the group would expect to see variations in department response.

With respect to agency policies and procedures, focus group members pointed out that state domestic violence statutes provide guidance to agencies regarding what relationships and acts of violence should be included in the local definition of domestic violence. The group reported that agencies do not typically expand beyond what is required by law, i.e., it is unlikely that a department would include same sex relationships or stalking in their definition of domestic violence unless the state statute included it. Focus group members identified the following areas of potential variation across department policies and procedures: training requirements; handling child witnesses, strangulation, victim/offenders with disabilities, sexual assault cases, same sex relationships, and police-perpetrated crimes; and dealing with victims, language barriers, emergency protection orders, firearms, and perpetrators at large.

Focus group members also discussed the fact that call-taking/dispatch operations vary across agencies and can impact the role these actors play in facilitating a response. For example, agencies with computerized systems can process and prioritize calls more quickly, as well as provide call history information to the responding officer. In general, they felt call-takers and dispatchers are trained to handle domestic violence calls just as they would handle any other emergency call and receive little to no specialized domestic violence training.

The various ways that officers respond was also discussed, ranging from informing victims of their rights to evidence collection to completing specialized reports. The group also discussed steps departments are taking to hold officers accountable, which may include follow-up with victims by investigators or a supervisory review of incident reports. The group also discussed the level of

training received by officers, noting that it was likely to be greater in larger departments where funding is less scarce. Furthermore, the group identified activities departments might be engaging in to improve their response, including providing victims with cell phones or pagers, collaborating with victim advocate agencies, and use of victim/witness coordinators.

After talking about the planned content and administration of the survey, the focus group agreed that a mail survey was likely to be the best strategy for survey administration. They also suggested, if possible, to conduct two surveys, one targeted at supervisors of communications and the other to patrol supervisors.

The focus group was helpful in identifying additional response options for survey questions and confirming the content and administration of the survey. It also confirmed our sense of what is known or not known at the national level regarding overall police response.

Based on the literature review and feedback from the focus group, the survey was finalized and submitted to Abt Associate's Institutional Review Board (IRB), which reviews data collection procedures for all studies involving human subjects. Upon review and approval from Abt's IRB, the survey and administration protocol were submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for its review and approval.

3.2.3. Survey pilot

The survey was informally piloted with three police departments⁵ and one communications center across the country. In some cases two representatives from one agency were able to complete the survey so we could compare responses, and in others only one representative from the department completed the survey. The position held by agency representatives varied and included a crime analyst, two directors of domestic violence units, a watch commander, and a lead communications operator.

Respondents were asked to complete the survey, identifying any difficulties with specific questions or response items. Upon completion, questions, clarifications, and any difficulties were discussed. We also discussed respondent's impressions of the length of the survey and the likelihood that it would deter response, as well as the time it took him/her to complete the survey.

Overall, the feedback was very positive. Respondents did not think the survey was overly long, feeling instead that it was comprehensive. Based on a review of the actual responses and discussions with respondents, there did not appear to be any problems following the skip patterns and we found only one or two differences in responses across multiple respondents at the same department. There were a few issues on certain questions that were addressed through revisions to the instrument. For example, a few questions regarding staffing levels were revised to increase the accuracy of responses and others were deleted, e.g., a question requesting staffing levels for 911 call-taker and dispatcher positions that are often filled by the same person. We also found that respondents were able to provide information on functions call-takers and dispatchers are supposed to be performing, regardless of whether or not those operations are housed within the police department. We reordered survey questions to take advantage of the additional information respondents could provide by asking

⁵ North Miami Beach Police Department, Chula Vista Police Department, and Duluth Police Department

them to provide this information in all cases. We also made minor revisions to other questions to provide direction on how to properly complete the question or to clarify responses.

It was also clear in the responses that we should not expect a lot of variation in departments' policies and procedures. Certain questions, e.g., definition of DV, type of abuse included in the definition, and procedures were consistent. This is to be expected in a survey seeking to determine what law enforcement is being expected to do. We should emphasize that *this is not a survey of what departments are doing, which might produce more variation.*

3.3. Survey Administration

The survey was administered by mail to all law enforcement agencies in the sample. Survey administration began with a letter of introduction addressed to the law enforcement executive that included a description of the study, its purposes, and how the agency was selected. Shortly after the mailing, each agency (n=732) received a survey packet that included a cover letter, survey, and stamped pre-addressed envelope to be used to return the survey. Three weeks later a second mailing went to all non-respondents. Based on experiences from earlier police surveys, we expected a low response rate to the mailed surveys. This low response rate raises the likelihood that the sample could be a biased representation of the population. To deal with this problem, we identified non-respondents to the mailed surveys and phoned the agency at least twice to request a response.⁶

We received a total of 264 responses to the first or second mailing. At that point, telephone follow-up began with the remaining non-respondents (468). The goal of the follow-up was to identify agencies interested in responding to the survey and targeting a third mailing to a specific respondent, as opposed to the law enforcement executive. A total of 368 agencies responded to the survey, a response rate of 50%, which was determined to be adequate for analysis. The following exhibit identifies the number of respondents and proportion per strata.

Strata	Respondents
1 to 9 full-time officers	74 (20%)
10 to 49 full-time officers	107 (29%)
50 to 99 full-time officers	90 (25%)
100 or more full-time officers	97 (26%)
Total	368 (99%)

Of the respondents, 281 were police departments, 83 were sheriff's offices, and 6 were other types of agencies, including state and tribal law enforcement agencies.

Data Entry

Returned paper questionnaires were entered into a web-based data entry program that included checks for consistency across items. The majority of items on the instrument are closed-ended, minimizing

⁶ Given that mailed surveys are inexpensive compared with telephone follow-up, phoning a sample of respondents (rather than all respondents) is a cost-effective way of minimizing sampling variance.

data entry error. Upon completion of data entry, all responses were reviewed to address inconsistent responses and data entry errors.

3.4. Analysis

The following exhibit shows the characteristics of the sample. Departments were weighted to represent all police departments across the country. Below, we describe the weighting procedures that were used to adjust the sample for non-response bias.

3.4.1. Characteristics of the Sample

The following table describes the sample, based on size and type of department.

Characteristics	
Size of the Department	Percent of Distribution in Sample
1 to 9 officers	49%
10 to 49 officers	37%
50 to 99 officers	7%
Over 100 officers	6%
Type of Departments	
Police	80%
Sheriff	19%
Other	1%

Response Bias. We included one question from the BJS 2000 Law Enforcement Management and Administration Survey (LEMAS)⁷ on the existence of domestic violence arrest policies⁸ in our survey to try to assess any bias in our sample and make the necessary adjustments. The question asked in both surveys is, “What special policy does your agency have regarding domestic violence arrests?” and the same response options were offered in this survey as was offered to respondents to the LEMAS survey. We compared the results of the two nationally representative samples and found significant differences between the two groups ($p < .01$), with much of the variance explained by differences between groups on the mandatory arrest response. We attribute this difference to the lack of clarity that is likely to exist at the local level on the specific policy in place regarding arrests for domestic violence. This was confirmed by the fact that a state-by-state review of responses to this question indicates that respondents in states with mandatory arrest statutes reported having a “pro-arrest policy,” “some other type of arrest policy,” and even “no arrest policy” in some cases. Therefore, we concluded this question is not an adequate test of survey response bias.

⁷ The LEMAS survey collects data from a nationally representative sample of publicly funded State and local law enforcement agencies in the United States administered by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. It is conducted every 10 years and routinely achieves over a 95% response rate.

⁸ The question is “What special policy does your agency have regarding arrests in the following situation?” One of the situations is domestic violence.

3.4.2. Data Weighting

To overcome bias associated with non-response, we expanded the sample stratification and altered the subsequent weighting process to include factors we hypothesized to be related to a department's likelihood of responding to our survey. The steps we took to weight the data are summarized below and explained in more detail in appendix 2.

As discussed above, the sample frame consisted of all agencies that provide police services to the public, excluding certain special police entities such as tribal police or regional police. The trimmed frame was then stratified into four size categories. However, after a few of the first contacts with agencies we found that some of the agencies sampled did not in fact provide direct policing services. We identified those agencies erroneously included and attempted to replace them with similarly sized agencies in close geographic proximity. Since the replacements had an increased chance of selection for those agencies (because they were also in the original sampling frame), we introduced an adjustment for this in constructing the sampling weights.

We were also concerned that agencies especially focused on domestic violence issues may be more likely to answer the survey questionnaire and thus bias the results. To reduce the bias in responses related to this issue we used a question contained in the LEMAS survey that asks if the agency has a special unit for DV (assuming that agencies with a special unit would be more focused on domestic violence issues and, therefore, more likely to respond to our survey). However, only agencies with more than 100 officers answer this question in LEMAS. Therefore, we predicted the responses for non-answering agencies using logistic regression, which enabled us to further stratify the sample based on the presence or absence of a special unit. Finally, the strata were refined further based on the agency being a sheriff's office because many (but not all) of the earlier identified non-policing agencies were sheriffs' offices (which made us suspect responses from sheriff's offices might differ from police departments). The final weight for each agency is based on these separate refinements to the strata, as well as a final adjustment for non-response. Again, a full explanation of these weighting calculations can be found in appendix 2.

3.4.3. Analysis of Survey Data

Analysis methods were selected based on appropriateness for answering the evaluation questions. The selection involved making the following determinations: (1) the unit of analysis – police departments; (2) the type of inference to be made from the analysis – both descriptive and relational; (3) the time frame covered by the analysis – a single point in time; (4) the types of questions asked on the survey – categorical data; and (5) the complexity of the sample design – stratified rather than simple random. Below we describe the technical approach for both descriptive and relational analysis, taking into account the above factors.

Descriptive Analysis. The sample was designed as representative of all departments and appropriately weighted to reflect the total distribution. Therefore, percentages reported reflect the weighted estimates of departments nationwide responding on the variables of interest. Statistics represent the estimates of population means and variance.

Relational Analysis. Relational analyses refer to a broad class of statistical methods used to assess associations between an outcome variable and one or more predictor variables. We examined bi-variate relationships in our initial analysis of the data to reduce the number of potential independent

variables in predicting aspects of policy (presence of a policy, comprehensive nature or extent of policies or procedures). These analyses reduced variables to those that were eventually included in the analysis: size of the agency (number of full-time sworn officers), whether or not the department received federal funds (yes/no), whether or not the department works in partnership with a victim advocacy organization (yes/no), whether or not the department has a special unit (yes/no), and whether or not the department's 911 call-takers used automated systems (yes/no)⁹. The measures were obtained from either the CSLLEA or survey responses.

The purpose of the analysis was to try to explain the variation in police department behavior. Weighted logistic regression models and weighted least squares regression were applied. However, after further analysis, we found that relationships between the independent variables were confounding the results (i.e., making it difficult to interpret and explain the findings). Specifically, we found that whether or not the department has a domestic violence special unit and received federal funding was significantly related to the size of the department and to each other, i.e., larger departments were more likely to have a domestic violence special unit and to have received federal funding to support domestic violence response in the past five years. Therefore, we limited the analysis to the examination of bivariate relationships, through non-parametric statistics to report on relationships between contextual variables and the dependent variable.

4. Survey Findings

Key findings from the survey are reported below. A complete description of survey results is included in appendix 3.

4.1. Formal Domestic Violence Policies

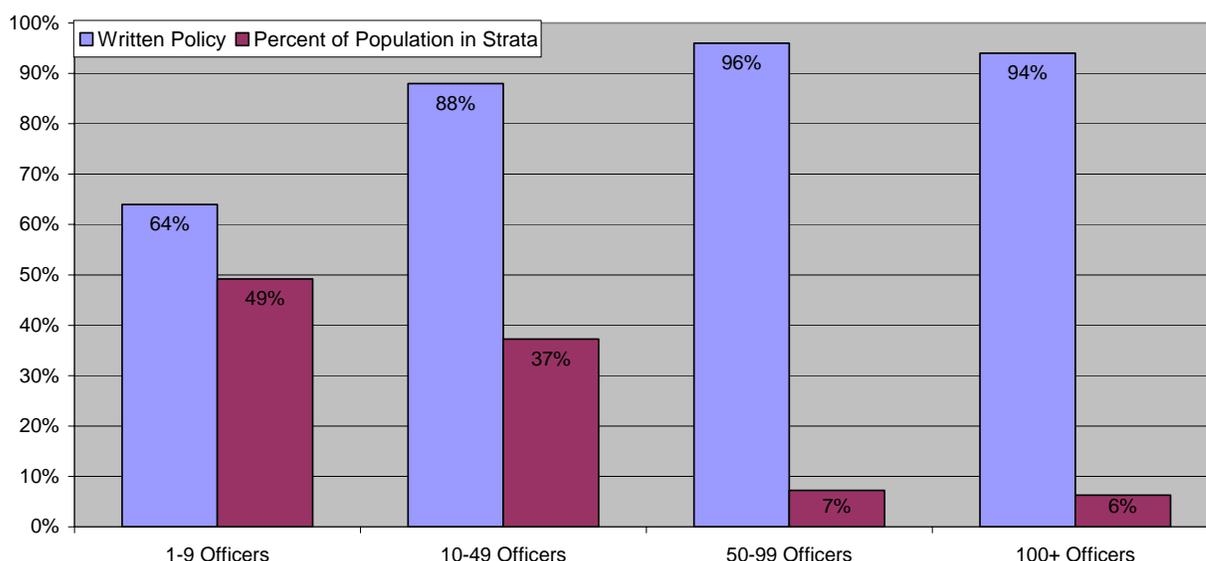
In 2004, more than three-quarters or 77% of police departments had written operational procedures for responding to domestic violence calls for service.

Total	77% (+/-6%)
1 to 9 officers	64% (+/-11%)
10 to 49 officers	88% (+/-6%)
50 to 99 officers	96% (+/-4%)
100 or more officers	94% (+/-5%)

The figure below shows the percentage of police departments within strata and the proportion having a written policy.

⁹ This predictor was only used in one set of relational analyses.

Figure 1. Percent of departments with written operational procedures for responding to DV calls

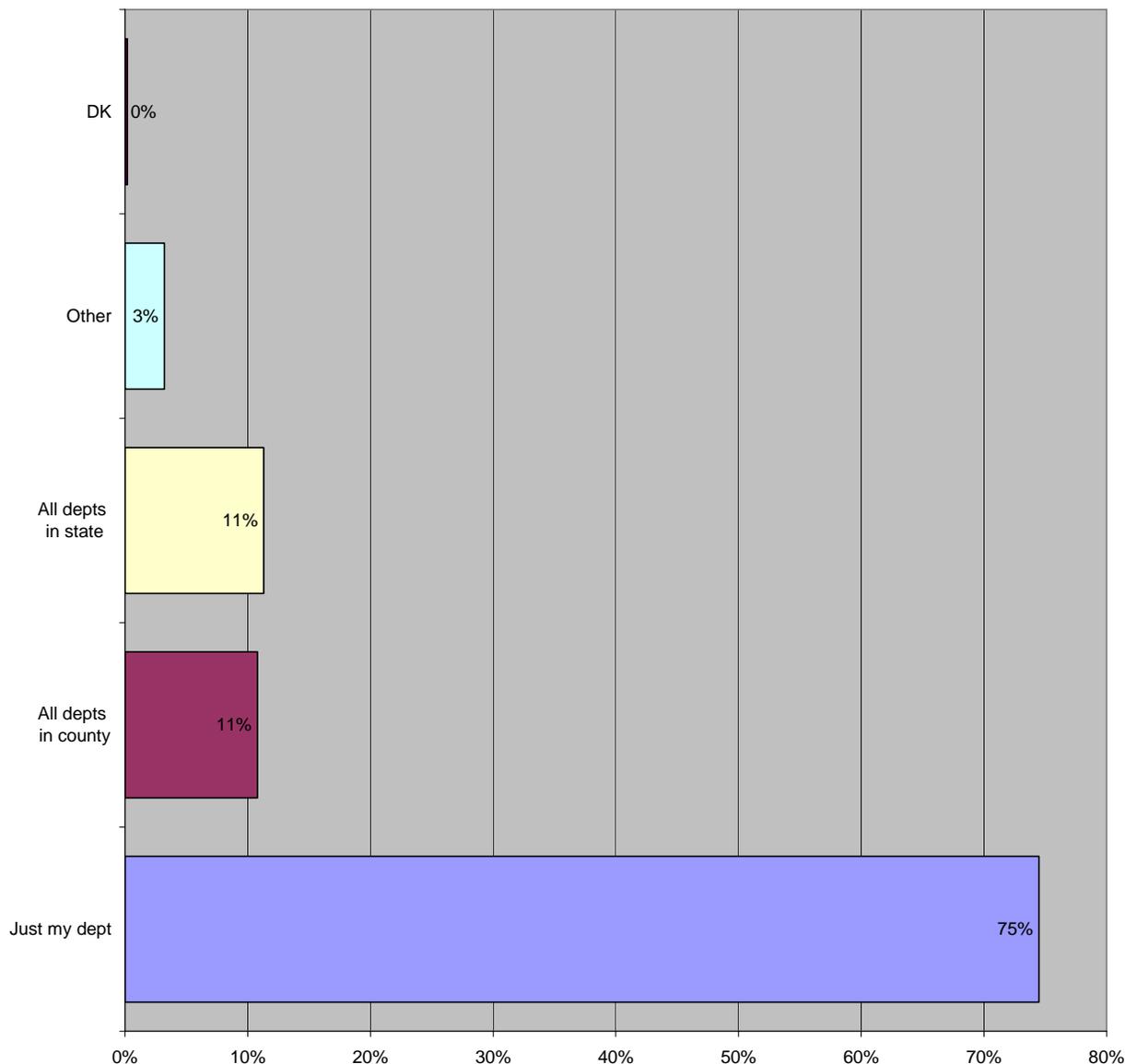


What factors are related to whether or not a department has a domestic violence policy? We hypothesized the following contextual factors to affect the presence of a policy: department size (i.e., number of full-time sworn officers); whether the department reported receiving federal funds; whether the department reported having a domestic violence special unit; and whether the department reported having a partnership with a community victim advocate group. Based on tests of independence (chi-square), we found that the number of sworn officers was related to the presence of a policy ($\chi^2 = 10.11$, $p = .002$); that is, large agencies are more likely to have a policy in place than smaller departments. It may be surprising that no relationship was found between the existence of a policy and whether the department has a special unit or a partnership with victim advocate groups; one might expect that departments engaging in these activities were more dedicated to improving their department's response to domestic violence and subsequently more likely to have a policy in place.

4.1.1. Policy Development

Most of the departments with a written policy had policies that were developed specifically for the police department (75%), as opposed to policies that were developed for all departments in the state (11%) or in the county (11%). This might be expected given that police departments are likely to prefer to tailor policies to their department, as opposed to using a more generic policy developed for multiple departments in the county or state.

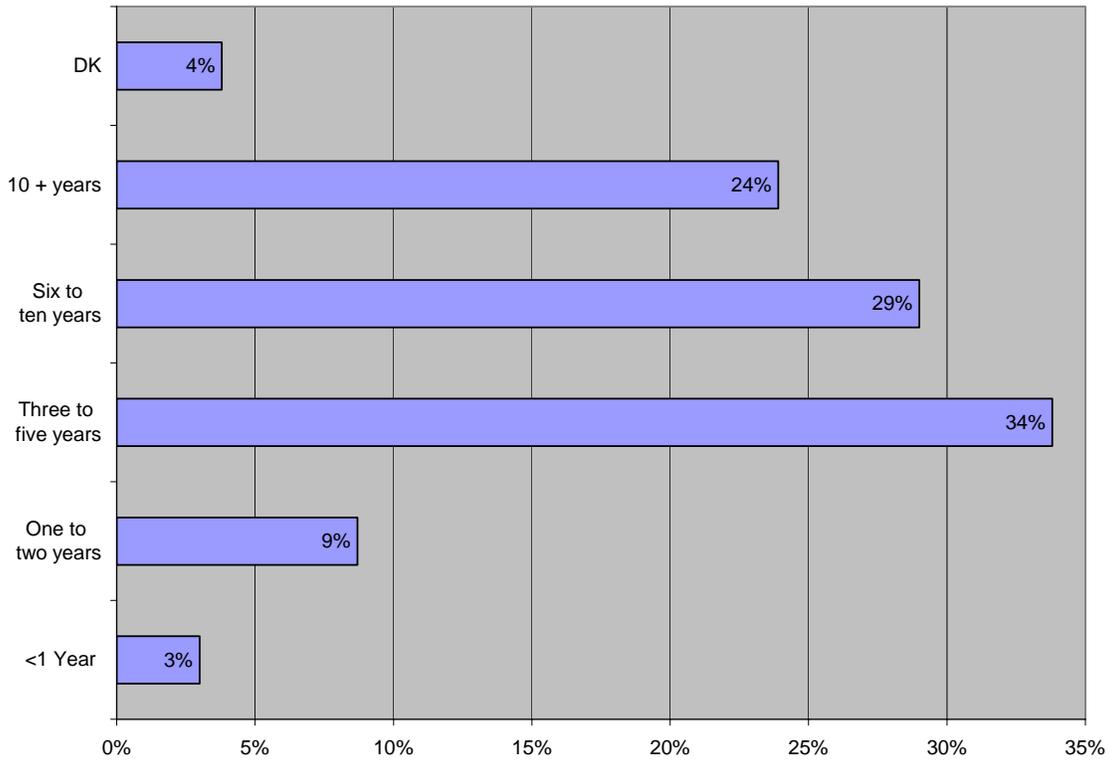
Figure 2. For what department was the current written policy developed?



In most cases, agencies participating in the development of the policy included the police department (80%), prosecutor’s office (48%), state criminal justice agencies (24%), community-based domestic violence victim advocacy groups (20%), governmental victim-services providers (15%), judicial representatives (10%), as well as other agencies (10%) that included a law firm or some other legal advisor, the state police association, a tribal council, a university group, or a victim of domestic violence. In most departments (68%), the development of the policy was limited to one or two agencies.

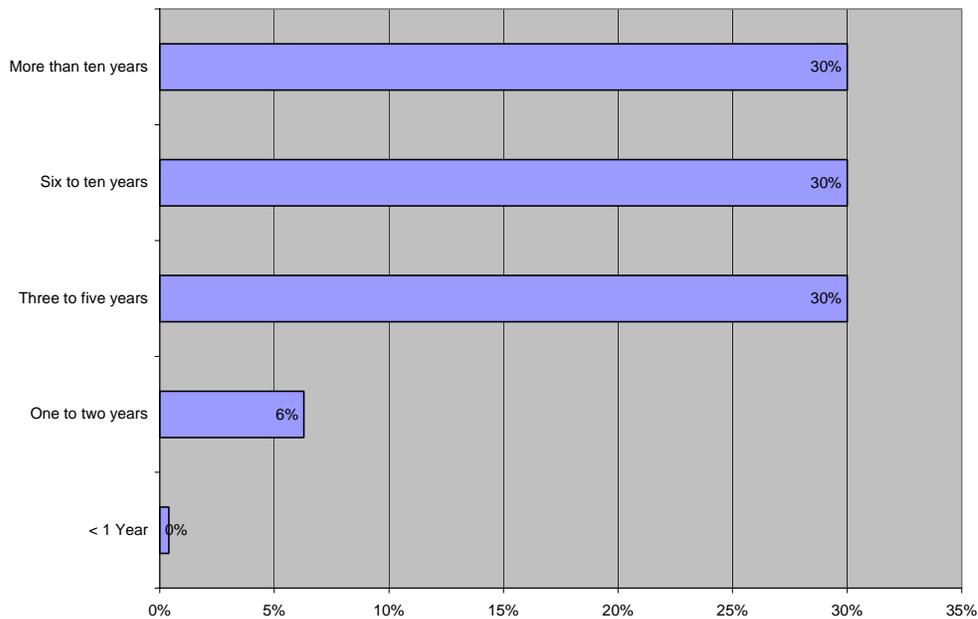
With respect to the length of time the departments have been using a written domestic violence policy, a little more than half of the departments have had their policy in use for over six years (53%), while 34% the departments have had their current written domestic violence policy in use for three to five years, 9% for one to two years, and 3% for less than a year.

Figure 3. Number of years Current Policy has been in Use



The written policies have undergone revisions in many departments (55%). The longer the policy has been in place, the more likely it has been to be revised ($\chi^2 = 13.67, p < .000$).

Figure 4. Number of years Current Policy has been in Use, for those who have made changes



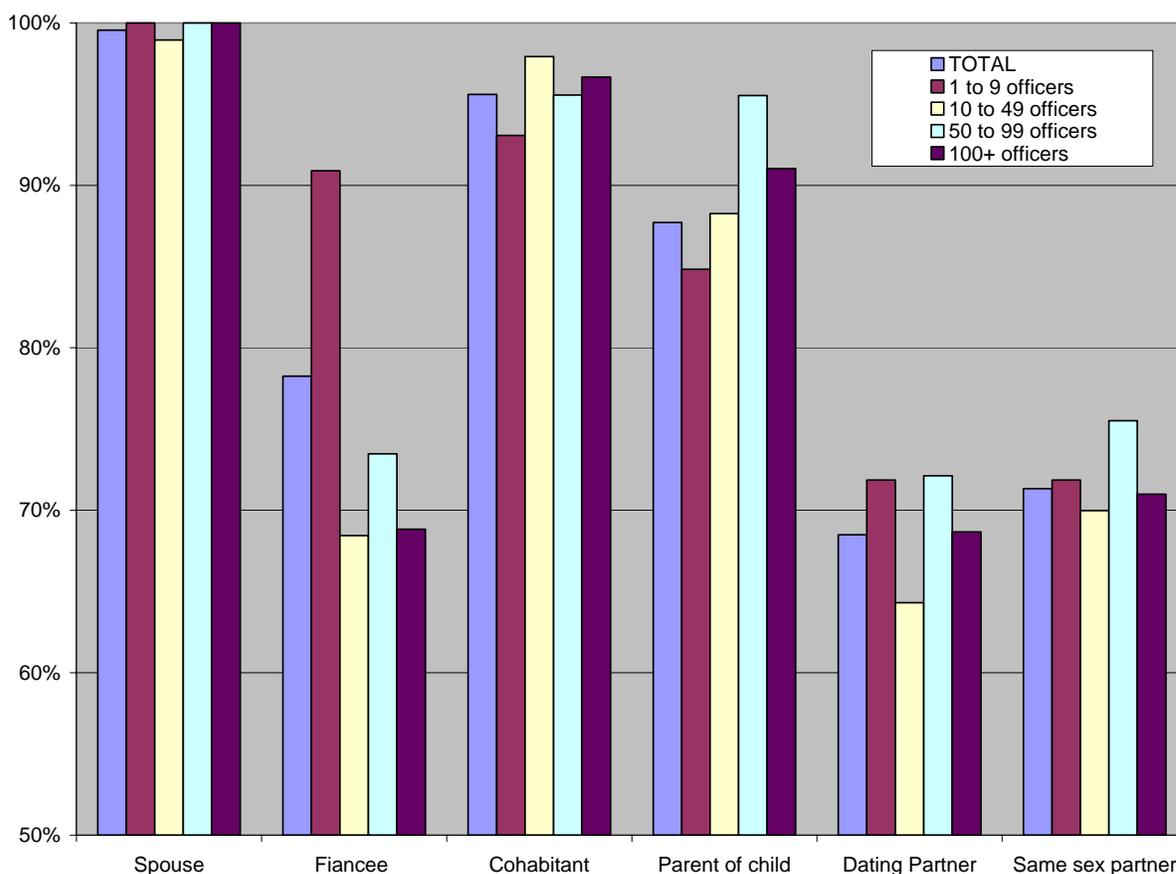
Of those departments that had made changes to their policy, the overwhelming majority of departments reported making revisions in response to changes in state law (81%), demonstrating the

impact state legislation has at the local level. Other reasons changes have been made include in response to recommendations made by community-based victim advocacy groups (24%), internal studies on the policy’s effectiveness (20%), a change in police leadership (15%), task force or advisory board recommendations (12%), accreditation requirements (10%), or grant requirements (4%).

4.1.2. Policy Content

There is some variation in the scope of definitions of what agencies consider a domestic relationship. Of those departments with written domestic violence policies in place, 99% of the agencies consider a spousal or former spousal relationship as a domestic relationship, 96% consider cohabitants or former cohabitants, and 88% consider a parent of a common child. Slightly fewer agencies include fiancée or former fiancée (78%), same sex partner (71%), and dating partner (69%) in their definition of domestic relationship.

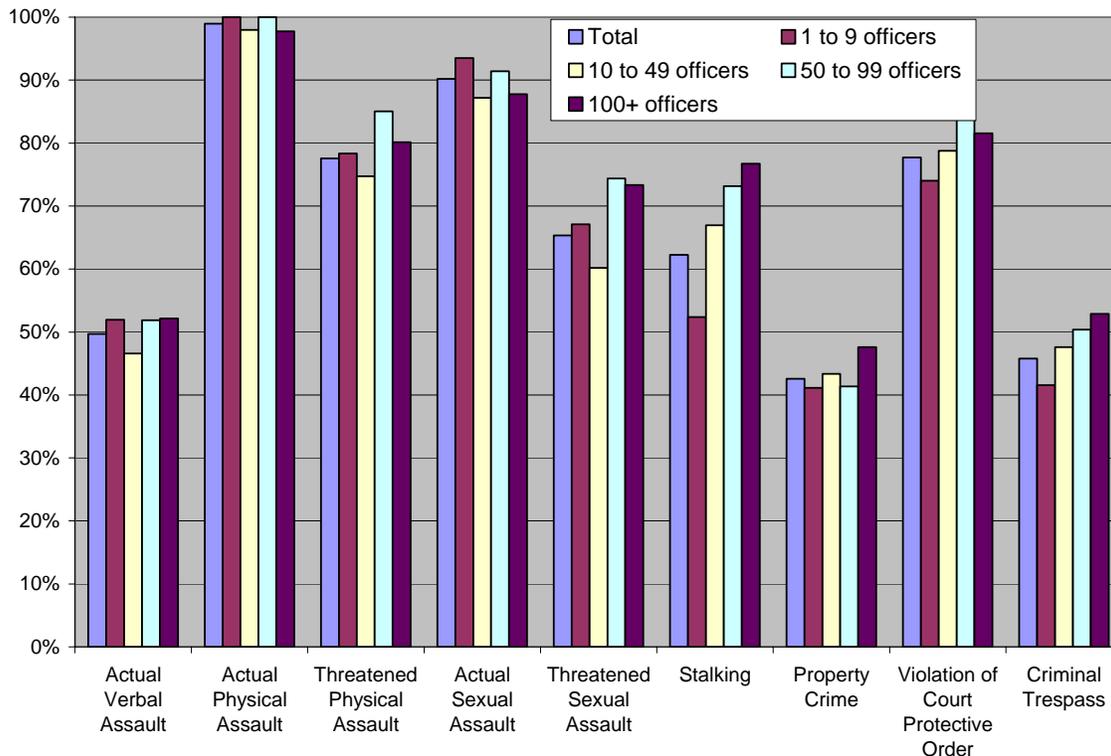
Figure 5. Relationships considered domestic



Similar findings are found when looking at what acts departments consider domestic violence. As the chart below indicates, almost all of the departments (99%) consider actual physical (non-sexual) assault as an act of domestic violence and 90% consider actual sexual assault domestic violence. Fewer departments consider violations of court protective orders (78%) or threatened physical (non-sexual) assault (78%) domestic violence; even fewer consider threatened sexual assault (65%), stalking (62%), verbal assault (50%), criminal trespass (46%), and property crime (43%) as domestic violence. Departments reporting “other” acts that are considered domestic violence include

harassment, any crime that results in death, and kidnapping.

Figure 6. Acts considered domestic violence



What factors are related to what relationships and what acts are considered to be domestic? We hypothesized the following contextual factors to affect the scope of the policy: department size (i.e., number of full-time sworn officers); whether the department reported receiving federal funds; whether the department reported having a domestic violence special unit; and whether the department reported having a partnership with a community victim advocate group. Only the size of the agency was related to the acts considered by departments to be domestic; that is, larger agencies are more likely to include such things as stalking in their definitions than smaller agencies ($\chi^2 = 6.35, p=.01$). On the other hand, there were no significant relationships between size of the department and less traditional relationships considered domestic, i.e., same sex and dating partners.

The actual procedures covered in written operational policies can be quite numerous. The following table lists the 911 call-taking and dispatch procedures covered in department policies. Among departments that perform the call-taking or dispatch function, 76% include procedures on how to dispatch domestic violence calls for service, 67% on what questions to ask when taking a domestic violence emergency call, 62% on how to assign the priority of domestic violence calls for service, 41% on how to interact with victims. Twelve percent did not include any of the listed procedures. Eight percent of the agencies identified “other” procedures covered in their policy, including how to handle a call back to cancel the previous call, how to handle a child caller, and procedures for keeping the caller on the line.

Table 2. Procedures for 911 Call-takers and Dispatchers Covered in Written Policies

	Questions to ask	Victim interaction	How to prioritize DV calls	How to dispatch DV calls	None of the above	Don't know	Other
TOTAL	67%	41%	62%	76%	12%	3%	8%
1 to 9 officers	63%	43%	56%	75%	6%	12%	6%
10 to 49 officers	70%	38%	62%	79%	3%	12%	8%
50 to 99 officers	67%	48%	70%	71%	2%	12%	9%
100+ officers	66%	43%	69%	65%	3%	9%	10%

Almost all (98%) of the departments' policies include procedures for responding officers to follow. These include procedures for responding officers on how to decide when to make an arrest (95%), how to handle violations of protection orders (89%), and how to conduct on-scene investigations (75%). Less than half of the departments included procedures for how to handle child witnesses (42%), officer-involved domestic violence (38%), juvenile suspects (33%), non-English speaking subjects (23%), and military suspects (10%) in their policies.

Table 3. Proportion of departments whose policy covers the following procedures for responding officers

Arrest decision	95%
Violation of protection order	89%
Conduct on-scene investigations	75%
Determining the primary physical aggressor	74%
Dual arrest decision	71%
Addressing victim safety	69%
Perpetrator gone on arrival	68%
Collecting evidence	66%
Completing report	63%
Interviewing parties	61%
Approaching scene	59%
DV and stalking	59%
DV with sexual assault	58%
Handling firearms at scene	56%
Child witnesses	42%
Officer-involved domestic violence	38%
Juvenile suspects	33%
Non-English speaking subjects	23%
Military suspects	10%
Other	5%

These findings are not surprising given that most departments include basic procedures that are inherent to a police response (e.g., when to arrest, how to handle violations of protection orders, how to determine the primary physical aggressor). The procedures that departments appear to be less likely

to include are those that provide guidance for less common situations, for example, cases where there are child witnesses or an officer involved in the domestic violence incident.

What factors are related to whether the department had a more comprehensive list of procedures (i.e., a higher number of procedures included)? We collapsed the various procedures for officers into four groups: (1) tactical, which includes, for example, how to approach the scene and how to handle perpetrators gone on arrival; (2) arrest decision-making, which includes, for example, how to decide to make an arrest and how to handle violations of protection orders; (3) difficulties, which includes, for example, how to handle non-English speaking subjects and officer-involved domestic violence; and (4) evidence collection, which includes, for example, procedures like how to collect evidence and how to interview parties. The following table identifies departments that include at least one procedure within each category (e.g., 97% of departments include at least one tactical procedure in their policy), while the last row identifies departments with at least one procedure in all four categories.

Table 4. Departments with at least one procedure in each area for responding officers

	Total	1 to 9 officers	10 to 49 officers	50 to 99 officers	100+ officers
Tactical	97%	98%	97%	98%	97%
Arrest decision-making	91%	89%	93%	89%	92%
Difficulties	81%	78%	84%	83%	83%
Evidence collection	85%	83%	86%	89%	88%
Percentage with all four components	71%	68%	74%	75%	77%

Again, we hypothesized the following contextual factors may affect the presence of procedures in the four areas: department size (i.e., number of full-time sworn officers); whether the department reported receiving federal funds; whether the department reported having a domestic violence special unit; and whether the department reported having a partnership with a community victim advocate group. Our analysis, however, did not show significant relationships between any of these contextual variables and the procedures included for officers in the policy.

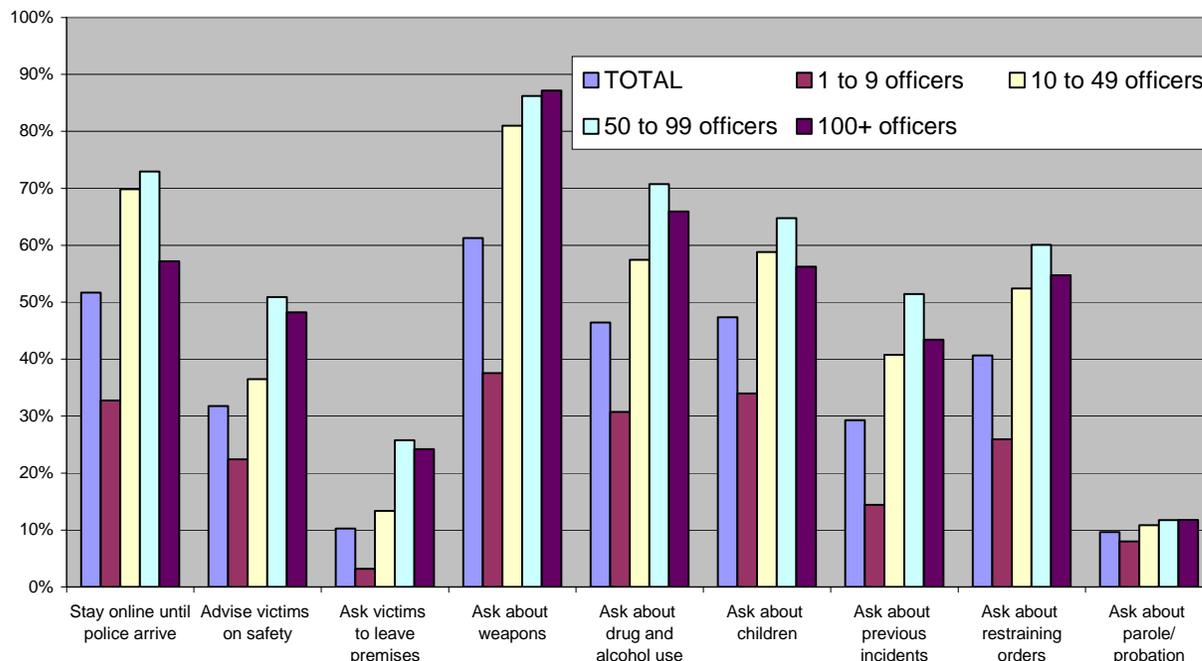
In addition to policies and procedures, a number of departments include additional information as background for responding officers or to document additional requirements for officers and the department. For instance, 87% of departments with a written policy include a definition of domestic violence in their policy, while 74% include information on state domestic violence statutes, and 10% on federal laws. Sixty percent of departments include information on procedures to be followed during investigations and 21% on domestic violence training requirements. Seven percent of the departments include “other” information on, for example, local victim services, how to handle court orders, arrest policies, and victim rights.

4.2. 911 Call-Taker Response

Emergency call-takers are required to engage in a number of activities when responding to an emergency domestic violence call. As the figure below indicates, sixty-one percent of departments require call-takers to ask the caller about weapons; 52% require call-takers to stay on the line with callers until police arrive; 47% to ask whether children are present; 46% to ask about the suspect's use of drugs or alcohol; and 41% to inquire about restraining orders. As this indicates, most of these activities are intended to protect both the victim and responding officer. It was less common for departments to require call-takers to advise victims on protecting their own safety (32%) or to ask

about previous incidents (29%), and even less common for call-takers to be required to ask victims to leave the premises (10%) or to ask whether the suspect is on parole or probation (10%). Seventeen percent of the departments also reported that call-takers are required to ask “other” things, such as, for a description of the suspect, if the victim needs paramedics, for a vehicle description, and if the suspect is still at the scene. Agency size was significantly related ($p < .05$) to the number of activities required of call-takers; that is, larger departments have more extensive response requirements for their 911 call-takers when handling emergency domestic violence calls.

Figure 7. Call-Taker Response Protocol (total and by strata)



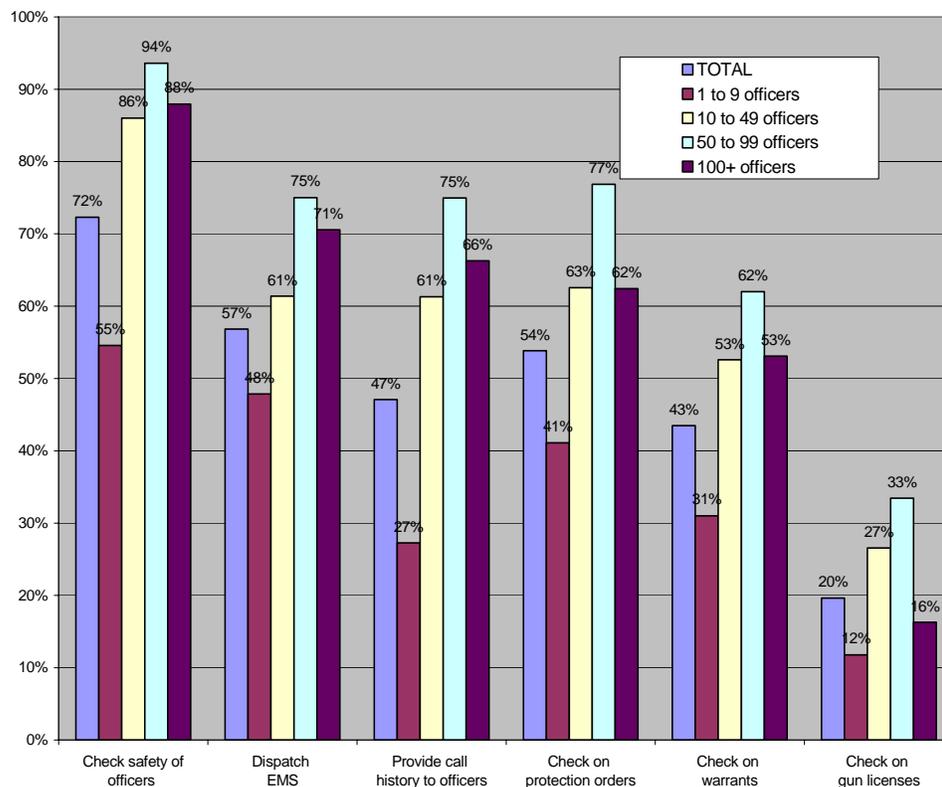
Among departments performing the emergency call-taking function within the department, many (66%) do not use a protocol card or software system to guide their questioning of domestic violence callers. We found that whether or not the department had an automated or manual system for guiding call-taker questioning during domestic violence calls for service was related to what call-takers in those departments were required to do, i.e., departments with automated systems require more of their call-takers than those without automated systems ($p < .004$).

4.3. Dispatcher Response

Dispatchers are required by departments to engage in a number of activities when handling emergency domestic violence calls for service. As the figure below indicates, 72% of the departments require dispatchers to check on the safety of officers at the scene, while 57% of departments require dispatchers to send emergency medical services to the scene, 54% to check on the presence of protection orders, 47% to provide call history to officers, and 44% to check on warrants associated with the address. Fewer agencies require dispatchers to check on gun licenses provided to members of the household (20%) and some departments (10%) reported having “other” requirements to check on previous history and whether or not there are dangerous animals at the scene. Again, agency size was significantly related to the number of activities required for a dispatch response ($p < .05$). The

larger the department, the more requirements that are placed on dispatchers in terms of checking on officer safety, sending EMS, providing call history, and checking on warrants or protection orders.

Figure 8. Dispatcher Response Protocol (total and by strata)



Among departments that perform dispatch services, once a call is assigned, 66% of departments allow dispatchers to change the priority of the call, based on information received during a call back (49%), access to additional information (48%), high call load (12%) or “other” information (14%), such as the return of the assailant to the scene, or the assailant leaving the scene. Agency size was significantly related to whether or not the department allows the priority of domestic violence calls to be changed ($\chi^2 = 4.85, p=.03$). That is, the larger the department the more likely it is to allow the priority of the call to be changed. This might be expected, given the fact that smaller departments are unlikely to have the same call management requirements as larger departments.

Dispatchers are the primary source of information for officers before they arrive to the scene of a domestic violence call for service. Often information is transmitted via in-car computers (63%). For these departments, the dispatchers in most departments provide information collected on the current incident (56%), information on the existence of protection orders (52%), information on outstanding warrants (48%), and information on previous incidents at the same address (49%). Dispatchers at many departments also provide previous histories of partners involved (37%), but few departments have dispatchers provide information on whether the suspect is on bond or probation (19%). These results are to be expected, given that departments with in-car computers are likely to maintain much of the above data in electronic databases, allowing the information to be more easily transmitted to officers via Computer Aided Dispatch systems.

4.4. Police Response

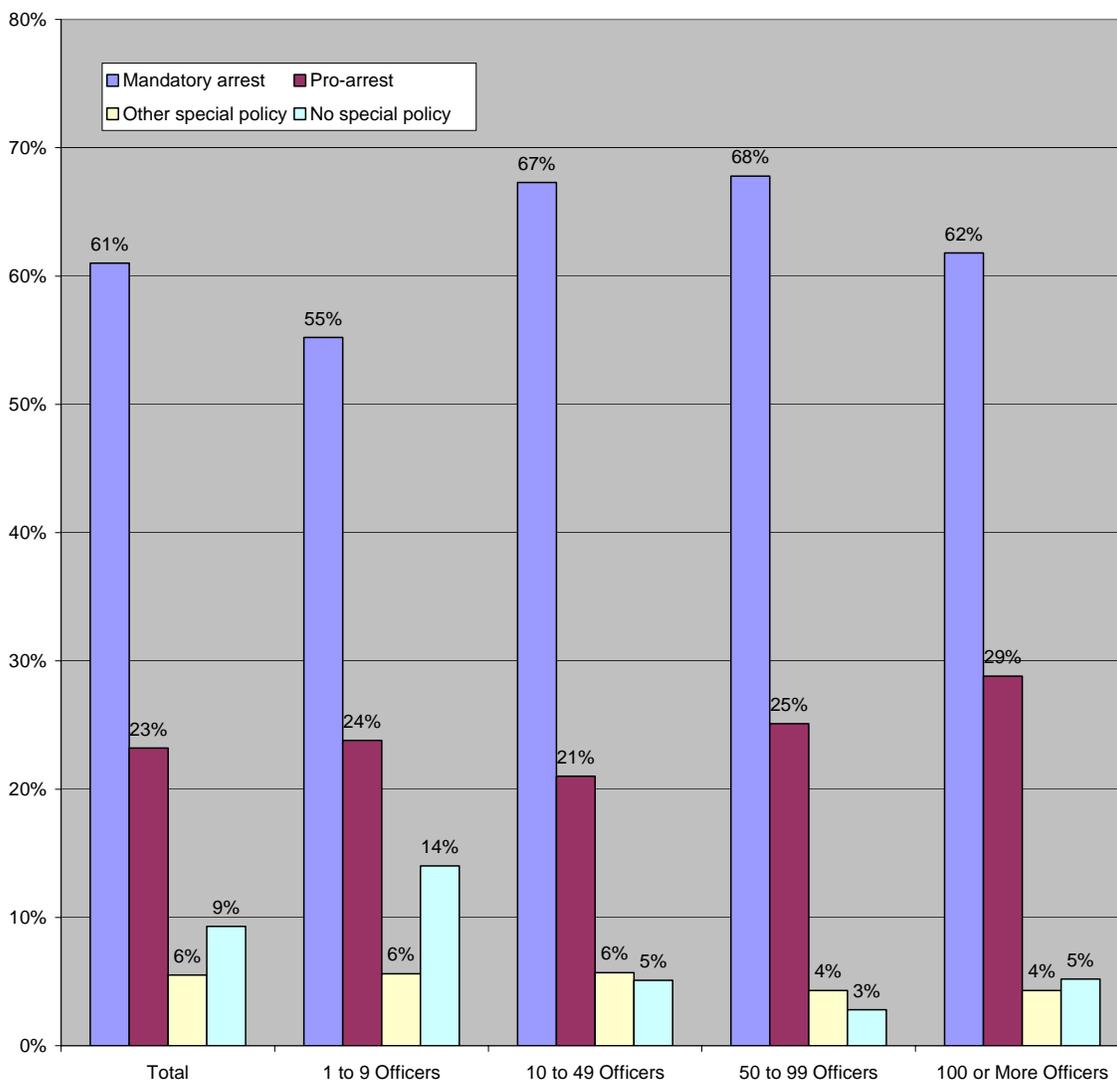
In the majority of departments (97%), patrol units have primary responsibility for responding to emergency domestic violence calls. These units are required to engage in a number of different activities when responding to victims and child witnesses of domestic violence. The following two tables identify the activities officers are required to engage in with victims and child witnesses of domestic violence. As is shown, more than 90% of the departments require officers to interview victims separately from the suspect, to separate victim and suspect when responding to a domestic violence call, inform the victim of shelter and other services, and photograph victim injuries, while fewer departments require officers to take custody of children (31%), review a safety plan with the victim (28%), or provide the victim with cell phones or pagers (10%).

Table. 5 Required officer activities with DV victims	Total	1 to 9 officers	10 to 49 officers	50 to 99 officers	100+ officers
Interview victim separately	96%	96%	98%	95%	91%
Separate victim and suspect	95%	95%	97%	97%	91%
Photograph injuries	90%	90%	89%	93%	88%
Inform victim of shelter	90%	88%	94%	90%	91%
Provide statement of rights	74%	66%	83%	82%	77%
Transport to shelter	74%	70%	78%	83%	79%
Provide hotline number	65%	61%	70%	65%	68%
Contact shelter	61%	58%	64%	68%	61%
Help with removal of property	59%	63%	57%	53%	42%
Provide with officer and case number info	58%	49%	63%	72%	80%
Review safety plan	28%	29%	28%	28%	17%
Provide cell phone or pager	10%	6%	16%	9%	7%
Other	8%	7%	8%	17%	13%

Table 6. Required officer activities with child witnesses of DV	Total	1 to 9 officers	10 to 49 officers	50 to 99 officers	100+ officers
Interview child witness	83%	81%	85%	87%	78%
Photograph injuries	82%	84%	80%	86%	79%
Document signs of trauma	80%	81%	77%	84%	79%
Separate child	73%	70%	79%	79%	65%
Contact CPS	66%	70%	62%	65%	57%
Take custody of child	31%	31%	32%	31%	21%
Other	7%	7%	4%	11%	10%
Don't Know	2%	1%	3%	1%	3%

How officers respond to perpetrators of domestic violence is largely driven by a department’s arrest policy. Sixty-one percent of police departments have a mandatory arrest policy, which means that officers are required to make an arrest where probable cause exists. In 23% of the departments, a pro-arrest policy is in place, which means officers are encouraged to make an arrest where there is reasonable grounds to make an arrest. Six percent of the departments have another special arrest policy in place, which might include making arrests based on evidence at the scene or giving officers discretion to make their own arrest decisions, and no arrest policy is in place in 9% of the departments.

Figure 9. Arrest Policy- Total and by Strata



Arrest is not always possible when handling persons suspected of domestic violence because probable cause may not exist in all cases. Options for officers vary by agency, but many agencies give officers the ability to seize weapons used by the suspect (87%), separate parties (82%), seize weapons in the home (74%), and remove one party (67%). In fewer departments, officers are able to mediate both parties (43%), counsel the suspect (38%), issue a citation (34%), issue an appearance ticket (18%), or take “other” actions (8%) that might include asking a party to leave. In a few cases (2%), departments do not allow officers to take any of the above alternate actions. Most departments focus on the

presence of weapons in the home. A high proportion of departments sanction separation of parties or removal of one party from the location (82% and 67%, respectively), actions police have been criticized for in the past. However, it is unclear as to when these actions may be taken, for example, is this an option for all calls or only those where probable cause does not exist.

Table 7. Officer response to DV suspects	Total	1 to 9 officers	10 to 49 officers	50 to 99 officers	100+ officers
Seize weapons used by suspect	87%	90%	82%	90%	92%
Separate parties	82%	87%	77%	74%	72%
Seize weapons that could be used by suspect	74%	73%	75%	73%	79%
Remove one party	67%	76%	59%	57%	56%
Mediate both parties	43%	48%	37%	45%	35%
Counsel the suspect	38%	31%	47%	43%	41%
Issue a citation	34%	39%	30%	23%	23%
Issue an appearance ticket	18%	24%	14%	5%	14%
Other	8%	8%	9%	8%	8%
None of the above	2%	3%	2%	1%	1%

One way to hold officers accountable for how they respond to emergency domestic violence calls is to require that reports are completed and reviewed. Most departments (88%) require officers to complete an incident report for all domestic violence calls they are dispatched to, regardless of what occurs at the scene; 12% do not. Many departments (63%) have supplemental forms for reporting on domestic violence calls to facilitate additional data collection; 36% do not have supplemental forms.

The following table identifies who reviews domestic violence incident reports in a department; in only 1% of the departments no review is done. Fifty-seven percent of departments answered “other” in addition to the listed categories. These “other” responses include law enforcement executives and patrol supervisors. In 28% of the departments, two groups review the reports and in 9% three or more groups review the reports.

Table 8. Who reviews DV incident Reports?	
Patrol Sergeant	55%
Detective Unit	19%
Detectives Assigned to a special DV Unit	6%
Patrol Officers Assigned to a Special DV Unit	4%
Victim Advocate Assigned to a Special DV Unit	7%
Other	57%

Another strategy to increase accountability is to require written justification when taking certain actions. For example, 68% of departments require officers to provide written justification when no arrest is made and 86% of agencies require officers to provide written justification when both parties are arrested.

4.5. Special Units

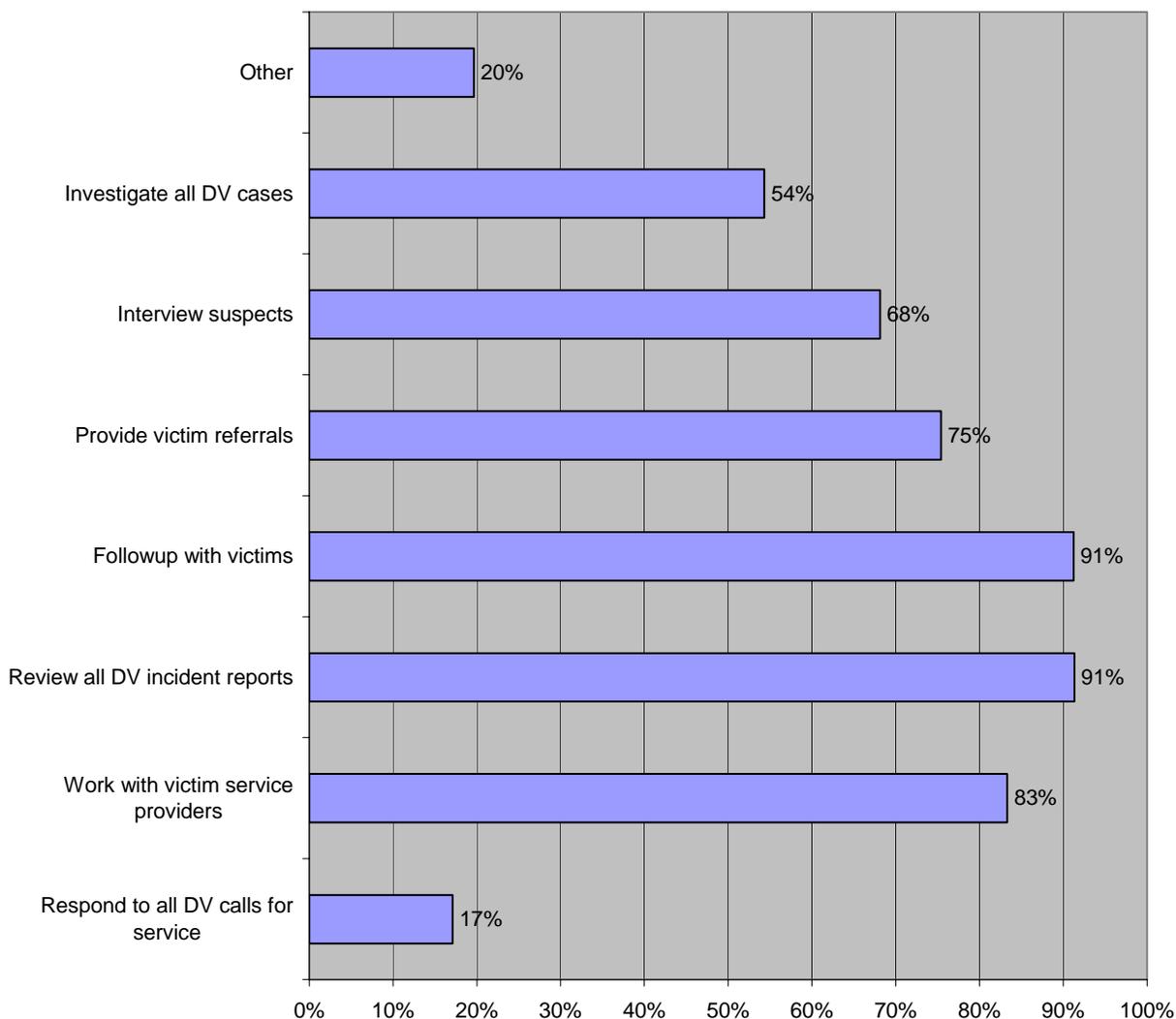
Some departments form domestic violence special units to help improve department response to domestic violence incidents. Eleven percent of departments have established specialized domestic violence units; this is significantly more prevalent in larger departments. While special units may work across divisions in the police department, most (69%) work in the investigations unit.

Table 9. Percent of agencies with specialized domestic violence units

	Percent of Agencies with DV unit	Confidence interval
Total	11%	(+/-3%)
1 to 9 officers	3%	(+/-3%)
10 to 49 officers	11%	(+/-6%)
50 to 99 officers	26%	(+/-9%)
100+ officers	56%	(+/-9%)

The following figure lists the activities that are the responsibility of officers in special units. As can be seen, many departments have officers in special units review all incident reports, follow-up with victims, and work with victim service providers. The low proportion of departments that have special units respond to the scene is likely due to the fact that most special units work in investigations to follow-up on cases.

Figure 10. Activities Officers in Special DV Units Participate In



4.6. Department Domestic Violence Training

Departments vary in the extent to which their first responders receive training. The following table describes the proportion of agencies requiring training and when in the career it is required. For example, among agencies with emergency call-takers working within the department, 41% require call-takers to receive domestic violence training and 22% provide it during recruit training only, 29% during in-service training only, and 49% during both recruit and in-service training. The fact that many departments are not providing specialized domestic violence training to call-takers and dispatchers is noteworthy, given they are the department's first response to domestic violence victims. Also of note is that close to three-quarters of police departments require specialized domestic violence training for officers, and 63% require the training be received during both in-service and recruit training.

Table 10. Percentage of agencies requiring domestic violence training	Emergency Call-Takers	Dispatchers	Patrol Officers
Total	41%	46%	74%
When is training received?			
Recruits only	22%	10%	24%
In-service only	29%	39%	11%
Both in-service and recruit	49%	48%	63%

For those being trained, the time spent on training also varies by position, with departments spending more time training officer recruits and special units. Specifically, most of the departments spend less than eight hours on domestic violence during recruit and in-service training provided to emergency call-takers and dispatchers. However, more than 20% of the departments provide between 2-3 days and one week of training to officer recruits and special units, compared to less than 8% of departments spending this much time training call-takers and dispatchers on domestic violence.

The following table illustrates what topics are covered during domestic violence training for all responders. As the table below indicates, training for officer, 911 call-taker, and dispatcher recruits frequently covers State domestic violence definitions (69%, 65% and 67% respectively) and State domestic violence laws (68%, 66% and 64%). More than half in each group cover the department policy (54%, 61% and 56%), and the dynamics of domestic violence (64%, 52%, and 50%). Training components were included more frequently for recruit training than in-service training for 911 call-takers and dispatchers, although many agencies reiterated DV policies (61%), State domestic violence laws (70%) and State domestic violence definitions (67%) in officer in-service training.

Table 12. Topics covered in DV training	Officers		911 Call Takers		Dispatchers	
	Recruit	In-Service	Recruit	In-Service	Recruit	In-Service
State DV definition	69%	67%	65%	41%	67%	35%
State DV laws	68%	70%	66%	43%	64%	39%
Dept DV policy	54%	61%	61%	41%	56%	43%
Dynamics of DV	64%	56%	52%	34%	50%	34%
Social cultural differences	51%	46%	44%	27%	41%	27%
Managing stress	41%	32%	50%	26%	54%	24%
Victim safety	58%	55%	52%	32%	59%	30%
Officer safety	61%	62%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Primary aggressor determination	65%	57%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Evidence collection	60%	57%	NA	NA	24%	17%
Investigation of DV cases	51%	47%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Contact shelter victim advocates	50%	48%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Victim rights	60%	62%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Local resources	43%	44%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Repeat calls	NA	NA	48%	27%	53%	29%
Children on line	NA	NA	64%	35%	62%	34%
Perpetrators on line	NA	NA	44%	26%	54%	29%
When to dispatch early	NA	NA	NA	NA	42%	26%

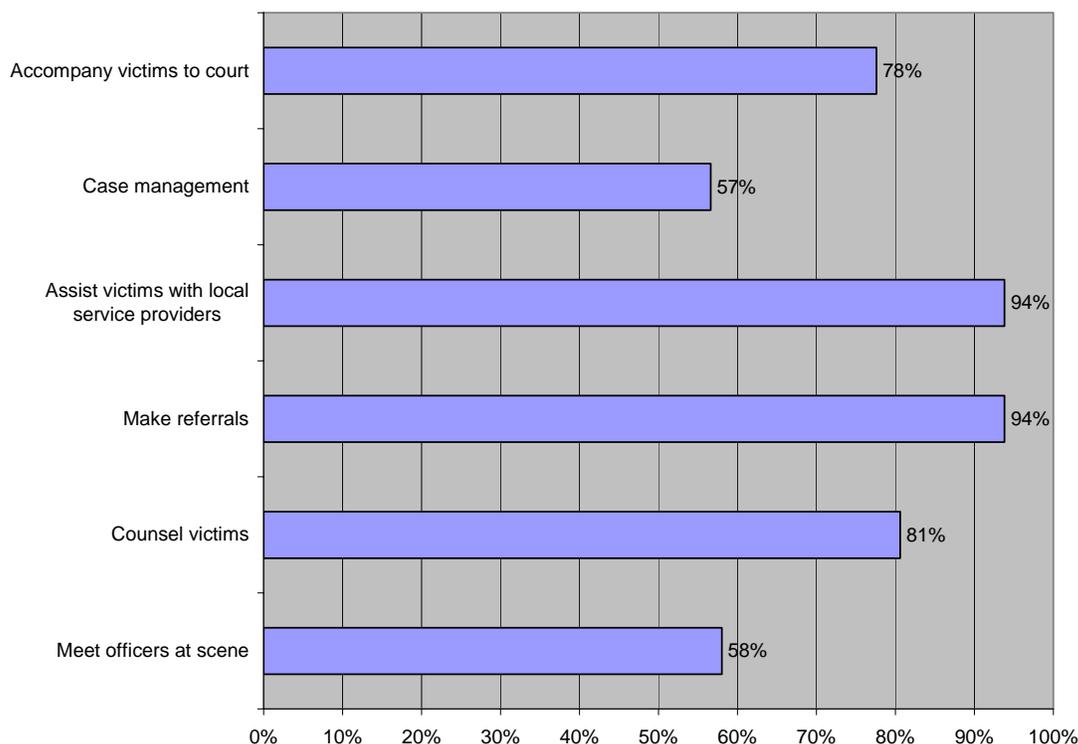
4.7. Community-Based Victim Advocate Groups

It is a relatively recent phenomenon for police departments to have local victim advocates work inside the police department. In fact, only 13% of departments have victim advocates working within the agency. What factors are related to whether the department had victim advocates working within the department? Our analysis found that larger agencies and those that receive federal funding are more likely to have victim advocates working inside the police department ($\chi^2 = 43.84; 370.51, p < .000$ in both relationships).

Table 12. Victim advocates working in the department	Yes	No
Total	13%	87%
1 to 9 officers	4%	96%
10 to 49 officers	15%	85%
50 to 99 officers	33%	67%
100+ officers	52%	48%
Unit victim advocates work in		
Patrol	14%	
Investigations	34%	
Other	52%	

For departments with advocates working within the department, more departments had advocates working in investigations (34%) than patrol (14%), but 52% of departments also reported that the advocates worked in “other” units, which include, for example, crime prevention, crises intervention, special, and court advocacy units. In most departments, the activities that advocates engaged in included assisting victims with local victim-service providers (94%), making referrals (94%), counseling victims (81%), or accompanying victims to court appearances (78%). In fewer agencies, advocates were meeting officers at the scene of an emergency domestic violence call (58%), assisting with case management (57%), or other activities (15%) that might include assisting victims with compensation, and assisting victims with transportation.

Figure 11. Activities of Victim Advocates working at Police Departments



It was more common (65%) for departments to have developed a partnership with community-based victim advocate groups; however, this activity was concentrated among departments with one to nine officers.

Table 13. Departments working in Partnership with community-based victim advocate groups	Yes	No
Total	65%	34%
1 to 9 officers	25%	75%
10 to 49 officers	75%	25%
50 to 99 officers	77%	23%
100+ officers	69%	27%
Unit community group is partnered with		
Patrol	74%	
Investigations	60%	
Other	26%	

In most departments, the advocates work with the patrol unit (74%) and/or the investigations unit (60%). Similar to advocates working internally, in most departments advocates assist victims getting assistance from local victim-service providers (94%), counsel victims (91%), make referrals (86%), and accompany victims to court appearances (80%). In fewer departments, advocates assist with case management (59%), conduct preliminary and follow-up investigations (48%), meet officers at the scene of emergency domestic violence calls (41%), or perform other tasks (8%) including assisting victims with protective orders, long term housing, and safety planning.

4.8. Funding

Only 12% of agencies reported receiving funding from the federal government in the past 5 years to support the department’s response to domestic violence. Federal funding was significantly more common among larger agencies ($\chi^2 = 43.07, p=.001$), but was not related to whether the department reported having a domestic violence special unit, or whether the department reported having a partnership with a community victim advocate group.

Table 14. Has department received federal funding?	Yes	No	DK
Total	12%	82%	7%
1 to 9 officers	4%	89%	7%
10 to 49 officers	13%	82%	6%
50 to 99 officers	27%	64%	9%
100+ officers	48%	44%	9%
Which agency provided funding?			
Bureau of Justice Assistance	15%		
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services	5%		
Office on Violence Against Women	36%		
Other	19%		
Don't Know	54%		

Among those that reported receiving federal funding, 54% did not know which federal agency provided the funding. Among those that reported, 36% reported receiving funding from the Office on Violence Against Women, 15% from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, and 5% from the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

5. Victim Advocate Agency Perspectives

To enrich and complement information we received from the survey, we designed and executed interviews with one representative from nine victim advocacy groups. The interviews enabled us to collect an alternate perspective on police response to domestic violence from representatives of victim advocate agencies. We recognize that interviewing personnel at nine victim advocate agencies only provides anecdotal feedback and the results are not representative of any other victim advocate agency. However, the information presented offers some insight into how victim service providers perceive police response to domestic violence.

Nine victim advocate agencies were selected from a Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse (MINCAVA) list of service providers. Although it was recognized that MINCAVA’s list is not comprehensive and excludes many service agencies across the country, we felt it provided a sufficiently broad list to select nine agencies for interviewing. The complete list of service providers was reviewed to exclude providers that serve only batterers or rape victims. The remaining agencies were organized by state and divided into four regions. Three agencies were randomly selected from each of the four regions to identify 12 potential agencies for interviewing. A call was placed to all 12

agencies¹⁰ and an interview was conducted with one representative from the first nine agencies to agree to an interview¹¹.

Of the nine agencies represented in the sample, four are mainstream organizations that provide direct services to victims of domestic violence, two provide these services to immigrant or refugee populations who are experiencing domestic violence, and one to lesbian and bisexual women and transgender populations. One other agency is a state coalition and another a family justice center.

The interviewers began by asking representatives to describe their agency's history, mission, and the services it provides to victims of domestic violence. Interviewers then discussed the specific services provided to local law enforcement by the agency and the nature of the agency's relationship with these departments (a list of advocate discussion topics is in appendix 4). Interviewers probed for information on the following: familiarity with law enforcement response policies; involvement in the development of response policies; satisfaction with the policies and possible improvements; and perception of changes in police response over the past three years. Discussions were kept to thirty minutes.

Among the agencies providing direct services to victims, the types of services varied from managing a safehouse to individual and legal advocacy. Most of these agencies supplemented their activities with community outreach, training, support groups, and a crises hotline. The agencies' relationships with the police varied. The mainstream victim service providers had a stronger relationship with police than the other agencies, participating on local advisory boards together, providing training on DV and on the agency to market its services, and providing a response in coordination with the police. The agencies serving special populations worked less formally with police, often working to complement mainstream providers in training and service delivery. These agencies did not get as involved in the provision of services to the victim, unless the victim contacted them, or, at least in one case, when the police contacted them for translation assistance. In no case was any agency formally involved in the development of any local law enforcement agencies policy or response protocols. One agency was involved in the development of a Memorandum of Understanding with the police department regarding the response protocol for the advocate, but not for the officer. A few of the agencies played an informal role by providing information to the department to help them in the formulation of policy.

In terms of their perception of the effectiveness of police response policies and whether they have improved over the past three years, all were able to provide feedback not only based on their own relationship with local police, but also based on feedback from victims who seek their services and officer comments during training. All but one representative felt that the policies were effective and the overall response had improved, but all agreed that the response is not consistent across officers or departments. They feel the improvements that have been made are a result of training efforts to increase knowledge of the law and improve understanding of domestic violence issues and services available to victims, as well as a byproduct of relationships police have formed with victim service providers and advocates. However, the representatives felt that law enforcement needs to increase

¹⁰ Interviewers contacted each agency, introduced themselves, and asked to speak to the director of the agency to explain the purpose of the call and request their participation in the interview.

¹¹ Interviewers read an informed consent and requested verbal agreement before beginning an informal discussion with agency representatives.

accountability and follow-up to ensure policies are being implemented by all officers, and provide specialized domestic violence training more frequently and address beliefs that result in victim blaming. It was unanimous across all specialized service providers that the overall police response is getting better, but that special attention needs to be paid to the response to victims of special populations. For example, one agency pointed out that officers are still looking to the batterer or child witness to translate for the victim and felt that departments also rely too heavily on bilingual officers who may not understand the cultural issues associated with the population.

6. Focus Studies

In addition to the interviews with victim advocates, we also conducted focus studies of selected police departments. In general, the focus studies were very useful in helping us interpret the survey findings. By having more in-depth discussions with policymakers, we were able to learn how they perceived certain issues and why they made certain implementation decisions. It should be noted that the focus studies were not designed to determine whether police departments were adhering to state statutes, and we made this clear to participants. Instead, the primary goal of the studies was to collect contextual or anecdotal information regarding policy development and implementation with policymakers and stakeholders in the community. The studies also provided an opportunity to collect input from first responders (call-takers, dispatchers, patrol officers, and victim advocates) on policy adoption and implementation. The studies were conducted over a day and ½ on-site visit that included interviews with policymakers at the department, stakeholders in the community, officers and patrol supervisors, and victim advocates working at the department (if applicable).

To identify potential agencies for the focus study, we reviewed survey responses to identify respondents who reported having written policies that address multiple forms of domestic violence; have made revisions to their policy since development; are working with local victim advocacy agencies; and have policies that include instruction to call-takers and dispatchers and a broad range of required procedures for responding officers. Using these criteria, we identified 17 potential departments and selected departments for further study based on those that involved a number of partners in the development of their policy and sites that varied on whether or not dispatch was performed within the department and the types of activities engaged in by victim advocates. A focus study guide was developed and is included in appendix 5.

Three law enforcement agencies were visited. Department A is an agency with approximately 100 sworn officers patrolling roughly 25 square miles in the upper Midwest. The department responded to 365 domestic violence calls in the first six months of 2004. Department B is an agency located in the Mid-Atlantic region with less than 100 sworn officers who responded to approximately 250 domestic calls for service during the first six months of 2004. Department C is an agency with approximately 100 officers patrolling 32 square miles in the Northeast and responded to 1,291 domestic incidents in 2003 (roughly 600 calls in a 6-month period).

Discussions during site visits were focused on four key areas: (1) the department's relationship with local victim advocacy agencies; (2) domestic violence policy development; (3) key aspects of the police response; and (4) perceptions of policy content and implementation. What was learned from the three departments is organized into these four areas.

Relationship with local Victim Advocates

All three agencies were working with at least one victim service provider in the community, but the relationship between the police and the providers varied across sites. In one site, the department works with a non-profit agency that acts as both a direct service provider and a referral source for domestic violence victims in the community. The department has developed a partnership with this agency to allow two of its counselors to work at the police department to follow-up on all domestic violence calls for service. In another site, the department is part of a Coordinated Community Response (CCR) team that involves the primary victim service provider in the community. The CCR includes representatives from all victim advocacy, social service, and criminal justice agencies in the community and meets monthly to discuss changes in statutes and any issues or concerns related to the domestic violence problem in the community. Domestic violence victims in this community might also receive assistance from the Victim Crises Response Team, which is made up of citizen volunteers who respond to a crime scene at the specific request of the officer and under the direction of an officer when a victim is in need of crises intervention. While in the third site the department operates a Victim Witness Program that is run by one member of the department, who follows up with all domestic violence victims. There is a non-profit domestic violence service provider in the county, but the department has not established a strong partnership with them.

In all three departments, there is one mid- to upper-level ranking officer who oversees the department's response to domestic violence. In two cases, this is the same officer who provides in-service domestic violence training to officers. In all three cases, this officer is also responsible for reviewing all domestic violence incident reports, which are also reviewed by others in the department. However, in all three cases, this person is not a direct supervisor in patrol, so does not have the authority to reprimand officers for their handling of a domestic call. In two cases, this person is responsible for attending local task force meetings with other agencies involved in providing a response to victims of domestic violence.

How the victim service provider and the department work together to provide a response to the victims of domestic violence also varies. In the department with counselors working within the department, counselors review all domestic violence reports and contact complainants to discuss safety concerns, making referrals for services, and walking them through the process of obtaining a protection order, filing charges, and acting as their legal advocate during prosecution. In the department with an internal victim witness program, the program administrator reviews all victim worksheets completed by officers and contacts victims to offer court accompaniment and advocacy, crises intervention and referral, assistance accessing victim compensation funds, and crime prevention information and assistance. In the third department, counselors at the local victim service providers are contacted by officers after any arrests are made for domestic violence to provide case information and contact information for the victim. A representative of the agency contacts all victims of domestic violence to offer shelter, crises intervention, group or individual counseling, or legal and other advocacy. In no case are officers required to discuss services available in the community with victims, although some officers reported doing so in some cases. In all cases, contact numbers are provided on either the complaint report or in a packet of information handed to the victim of a domestic incident.

In all cases, police policymakers believe that the above relationships have helped to improve their response to domestic violence victims in their community. Officers were also appreciative of the fact that someone in the community was available to provide the services to victims that they are not able to provide, taking some of the burden of a comprehensive response off their shoulders. However, it was also clear that in a few departments there is some tension between officers and victim-service providers because non-disclosure laws prevent officers from getting information on victims from service-providers.

A few representatives from victim services also reported that although most officers adhered to the requirements to contact victim advocates or provide information about victim services in the community, there are cases where officers forget as well as a small minority of officers who don't want to take these extra steps. This was more likely to be expressed in those departments where victim-service representatives were not working at the police department and not involved in training police department staff on domestic violence. In a few cases, representatives from victim-service agencies suggested that officers might benefit from additional training on the dynamics of domestic violence so they understand the role they might play in preventing future acts of violence, and if service providers were providing the training, officers would also learn more about the victim services in the community (domestic violence in-service training was conducted by internal staff in all cases). When asked about the feedback received from victims about police response, the responses were mixed. In one department, the feedback indicated that victims felt the police are not interested in doing anything about the problem. While the feedback in the other two departments indicated that the majority of victim complaints were not legitimate, because they typically involved victims complaining that officers did not do something that officers are not allowed to do, for example, not make an arrest when arrest is mandatory.

Policy Development

In only one department did the development of a domestic violence policy predate the state's adoption of pro-arrest policies for domestic violence. In all three departments, the development of the department's first domestic violence policy was one person's responsibility, with input from others within the department. In only one case was there a model policy available to the person developing the policy. In no case did the department involve representatives from victim advocacy agencies in the development and in only one case was the policy reviewed by another criminal justice agency. In all cases, implementation of the policy was launched with a training of all sworn staff on the policy and, in some cases, new reporting requirements for domestic violence. Whether or not the training also focused on the dynamics of domestic violence and victim services in the community was mixed. All three agencies also pointed out that officers receive a significant amount of training on domestic violence in the academy and by their Field Training Officer. All three departments reported that training was their main strategy for disseminating information on changes in policy and procedure, but also reported that their policies have not changed in any major way since development and minor revisions (legal and terminology updates) have been advertised through department memos and informal training during roll call or similar patrol meetings. Only one of the departments reported making changes in response to feedback received from victim advocates or review of internal police data, e.g., development of a policy for retrieval of personal property and incorporating guidance for making primary physical aggressor determinations.

Police Response

911 call-taking and dispatch services were performed within the department in two of the three departments. In one case, dispatchers complained that a lack of specialized domestic violence training limited their ability to respond. Even though the dispatchers in the other department did not complain about a lack of training and participated in the domestic violence training provided to officers, in neither case were the call-takers and dispatchers receiving specialized domestic violence training targeted to the duties they perform as first responders. In both cases, civilian dispatchers are supervised by civilian communications supervisors who provide on-site supervision, but are less likely to listen in on calls or review 911 tapes. In all three departments, officers felt they received most of the information policy required dispatch to provide before responding to a domestic call. In some cases, information on call history and the existence of protection orders was more difficult to obtain. Officers reported that the level of information received is fairly consistent across calls, but also felt that dispatch is limited by the amount of information the caller has or is willing to divulge.

In all three cases, officers are dispatched to all domestic violence calls. Two patrol officers are dispatched in all departments, except when the caller is reporting an incident that has already occurred. Officers are required to complete a report for all domestic violence calls in all three sites. In two departments officers complete the department's standard reports for non-arrest and arrest situations and a supplemental specialized domestic violence form in all calls in one department and only when the outcome is arrest in the other agency. In the third department, officers complete a specialized domestic violence report in lieu of the department's standard report for all domestic violence calls. In all three cases, victims, and in some cases suspects, were given a copy of the report. In one case, the specialized report is a state requirement, in the other an effort to collect additional information for advocate follow-up, and in the third an attempt to collect more information at the scene to facilitate evidence-based prosecution. Although there was agreement between department policymakers and officers in most cases on when the specialized domestic violence reports were completed, there were some cases where officers used some discretion to complete the report when the domestic incident they were called to was deemed by officers to be less serious.

In addition to varying on reporting requirements, the three departments also varied on what officers were required to do with the victim at the scene. In all cases, officers were required to collect evidence (including interviewing the victim and photographing injuries), get medical attention if needed, and confirm victim safety at the current location; however, there was some variation on whether officers were required to review verbally the rights of victims, discuss victim services available in the community, or transport the victim to a safe location.

Supervision and Accountability

In all three departments, policymakers felt officers were well supported in responding to domestic violence calls because supervisors were either available to provide assistance on a call or responded to domestic calls with officers. Reviewing domestic violence reports was also a common way for patrol supervisors to monitor officer response, as well as listening to radio communication and updates on their MDTs during the call. In most cases, domestic violence reports are also reviewed by department executives and in one case by the domestic violence special unit as well. Officers in all three departments felt that support was available to them if they had questions when responding to a domestic call and that their actions were being reviewed to ensure they were responding to calls

properly. The departments did vary on the extent to which officers were required to receive supervisor approval on actions taken at the scene of a domestic violence call. In one case, officers were only required to obtain supervisor approval for forced entry, while in another department officers were required to obtain approval to make a dual arrest or not to make a custodial arrest when probable cause for an arrest was present. They also reported receiving feedback from supervisors on their reports, either because of missing information or questions of clarity.

Policy Implementation

In general, officers in all three departments were familiar with their department's domestic violence policy. In all cases, officers reported that they try to adhere to the spirit of the policy, but that there are always cases that challenge their ability to perform all required steps, e.g., cases where participants in the violence are uncooperative or either party is inebriated or on drugs. There were also a number of officers and patrol supervisors who discussed repeat locations and victims as difficult. On the one hand, some officers are frustrated by having to return to the same location over and over, but on the other hand supervisors reported a concern that officers get too comfortable responding to these locations, making them vulnerable when the situation changes.

The responses from officers in the three sites were mixed on the difficulty associated with responding to situations where there are dual aggressors. In most cases, officers try to determine which person is the primary physical aggressor, often with the assistance of supervisors or by talking to witnesses, using call history, or contacting dispatchers to request information on what was heard in the background during the call. This may not be possible if both parties are being uncooperative and there are no witnesses. In one site, officers reported referring any questionable cases to the District Attorney's Office, often by arresting the male and referring the victim to the District Attorney for charging, placing the burden on the District Attorney to make charging decisions. While in another site, dual arrests are rarely considered and rarely made. And in the third, officers did not voice any concern with dual arrest.

Treatment of violations of protection orders was also difficult for some officers in all three departments, varying on whether the petitioner can be in violation and, therefore, arrested, when inviting the respondent into her home. In some cases, both parties are arrested and in the other, the respondent is arrested.

Another difficult crime identified by officers is when they cannot identify or confirm that a crime has been committed and there is no history of calls and/or a third party called in the complaint. This is especially difficult in situations where the officers and policymakers feel a lack of specificity in the state definition of "domestic" is contributing to this problem, e.g., no time frame on the term living together or including past roommates as domestic. In these and other non-serious or non-criminal domestic situations, the officers feel they are over-responding by completing a report on the incident, but yet feel obligated to respond because of the seriousness with which the department treats all domestic violence cases and liability concerns if something were to happen in the future. In one department, policymakers have made it clear that these situations should be treated as a crime prevention opportunity and officers in this department are less inclined to feel they are "over-responding." While officers in the other two departments are not even likely to complete specialized domestic violence reports when responding to such calls. Policymakers in all agencies agreed that officers might benefit from more guidance on how to respond to these "less serious" situations. One

patrol supervisor at one department pointed out that he recognized that allowing too much discretion in these cases might put the field back where they were ten years ago.

In some cases, policymakers reported that legislative attention has helped provide guidance to the development of policy and training, but in other sites, policymakers felt the legislators were not developing policies and requirements that are easily translated in the field and needed to be more practically-minded when developing statutes.

7. Conclusions

The study called for an understanding of how police departments across the country are responding to emergency domestic violence calls for service. What the results provide is a national representation (through a weighted sample of all police departments) of how police departments support call-takers, dispatchers, and police in their response to emergency domestic violence calls for service. The focus is on describing the development and content of policies and required procedures for first responders, as well as other activities departments have taken to improve their response to domestic violence (e.g., training, partnering with community victim advocacy groups). This information alone does not describe what is actually occurring in the field, but offers a picture of the infrastructure in place to support call-taker, dispatcher, and officer responses to emergency domestic violence calls for service.

Based on survey responses, over three-quarters of police departments (77%) across the country have a written domestic violence policy in place. These policies have been in place in most departments (53%) for six years or longer. The key factors that seem to explain these findings are the attention placed on domestic violence by state legislators and local police departments. In some states, statutes mandate that policies be developed and localities are provided model policies to be used as guides in their development. In other states, law enforcement agencies are provided with definitions of domestic abuse, but are not mandated to develop policies to support responses to such incidents. Despite the provision of model policies, it appears more common for departments to design policies for their own department (75%), rather than sharing a policy with other departments in the county or state.

Survey responses show that departments revise their policies to remain current with state statutes (81% of departments cited this as a reason for revising policy), rather than in response to recommendations from community victim advocate groups (24%) or internal studies of policy effectiveness (20%). This demonstrates the influence of state legislation at the local level and its power as an instrument of reform. The findings also indicate that the longer a policy has been in place, the more likely the agency is to have revised it.

Policy content is similar across police departments. Most include relationships and acts of violence that have been traditionally considered to be domestic, e.g., spousal relationships, physical violence, and sexual abuse. At least half of departments or more include same sex and dating relationships and verbal assault and stalking. With respect to the procedures and required activities for first responders, most of the procedures included in departments' policies and required activities are basic procedures and activities that should be taken on most domestic violence calls. The procedures and activities that are less likely to be required are those that would not apply to all cases (e.g., military suspects, child witnesses, and police-involved domestic violence). It was also found that agency size was

significantly related to the comprehensiveness of response requirements, i.e., larger departments required call-takers and dispatchers to engage in more activities than smaller departments.

In addition to developing strong policy, law enforcement executives have in general implemented mechanisms for holding officers accountable and most provide training to first responders to guide what occurs in the field. The majority of departments (88%) require officers to complete an incident report for all domestic violence calls they are dispatched to, regardless of the outcome. Sixty-three percent of departments also require officers to complete a supplemental form for domestic violence cases. Additionally, almost all (99%) agencies have command staff review reports. Officers in 68% of departments are also required to include a written justification when no arrest is made and when both parties are arrested in 86% of departments.

More departments require specialized domestic violence training for officers than call-takers or dispatchers. However, no departments required specialized training for both recruits and in-service officers – only requiring it for one or the other group. When training was offered, more time was spent (in terms of hours) training officer recruits and members of special units than call-takers, dispatchers, or in-service officers.

Departments were also asked about additional initiatives taken to improve the department's response to domestic violence, i.e., existence of domestic violence special units and partnership with local victim advocacy groups. Few departments had a DV special unit (11%) or victim advocates working within the department (13%) and the presence of either was significantly related to the size of the department. This is not surprising given the fact that larger departments have additional resources and perhaps greater need for specialization. It was more common among smaller departments for the police department to have established a partnership with community-victim advocates.

Of note was the fact that relatively few departments (11%) reported receiving Federal funding to improve DV response, although reporting receipt of funding is significantly related to size of the department; that is, larger agencies are more likely to report having received federal funding. Receipt of federal funding was unrelated to whether the department reported having a specialized domestic violence unit or a partnership with a community victim advocate group.

It is also noteworthy that the size of the police department seems to be positively correlated with the likelihood of having more extensive domestic violence policy. Not only were larger agencies more likely to have a domestic violence policy, but they are also, for example, likely to have more extensive response requirements for their 911 call-takers and dispatchers and are more likely to have a domestic violence special unit and victim advocates working inside the police department.

Our review of law enforcement agency websites also provided an indicator of the importance the department places on the issue of domestic violence, if we assume that issues of most importance are publicly advertised on agency websites. In a review of 2,203 law enforcement agency websites, we found that only 4% of agencies included information related to domestic violence. Roughly 75% of these departments had a domestic violence special unit and approximately half of these units are working in conjunction with community-based domestic violence organizations (e.g., responding to the scene of the incident with responding officers, conducting follow-up with department detectives).

Almost every website that included domestic violence information included information about local and national victim services. About half of the sites contained information about creating a personal

safety plan and information about places to go after leaving the situation. Several departments included information about specific programs and resources available to victims (e.g., online chat rooms, cell phone programs, VINE program).

7.1. Recommendations

These findings provide a descriptive understanding of the state of law enforcement response to intimate partner violence and begin to identify and explain variations in local policy. Both the national survey and supplemental data collection also identified a few areas of change for further consideration, which are described below.

Policy Content. State legislatures have done a service to the field by including definitions of domestic violence in state statutes and, consequently, promoted consistency across departments. However, in some cases, definitions may be in need of review and possible revision. For example, definitions of cohabitating couples that don't include a time span for how long ago the couple cohabitated or definitions that include "roommates," may need revision to provide more clarity on the intent of the law. Lack of specificity at the state level can trickle down to police departments and officers in the field who may feel in some cases that enforcement of the law is inconsistent with the spirit of the domestic violence policy. In other cases, policies may be improved by expanding the types of relationships or acts considered domestic.

Most departments review their policies and make revisions as needed, but most of the revisions are made to update the policy based on changes made to state statutes (81% of departments). Departments might consider other reasons for revisions; for example, in response to a review of policy implementation that identifies responses in the field that are inconsistent with written department goals. This could be accomplished through internal studies looking at incident reports or response patterns among officers (only 20% of departments report making revisions as a result of internal studies of policy effectiveness) or working with the victim advocate community to identify weaknesses or inconsistencies in the department's response (only 24% of departments report making revisions based on recommendations from community-victim advocate groups).

Response Procedures. Policies and procedures provide sufficient guidance to call-takers and dispatchers to promote officer and victim safety, but officers may need more guidance on handling more challenging aspects of domestic violence calls for service – uncooperative parties, mutual combatants, alcohol or drug involved violence, and violations of protection orders. For example, if a policy just states that arrest is mandatory but does not provide further guidance on how to determine the predominant aggressor, police may arrest both parties rather than just the perpetrator. More guidance may also be useful in handling minor domestic incidents that involve a 3rd party caller and subsequent denial among the parties involved. The opportunity for officer discretion may result in reclassification of these incidents as non-domestic and reduce crime prevention opportunities.

Training. Policy and procedure tell responders what to do, but training helps them learn how to do it. Unfortunately, only about half of departments across the country require specialized training on domestic violence for call-takers and dispatchers, missing an opportunity to improve response among the gatekeepers to police response. Most departments recognize the importance of training officers on domestic violence, but in practice the focus tends to be on recruits. In-service officers should also receive specialized domestic violence training of sufficient depth to review dynamics of domestic

violence and how officers can use resources in the community to provide a response, rather than use training time to just review standard operating procedure.

Accountability. Developing policies and procedures and training department personnel on them does not necessarily translate to a specific response in the field, unless first responders are held accountable. For example, call-takers and dispatchers could be monitored during their response and call tapes reviewed by supervisors periodically to ensure staff are adhering to procedure. It is unclear the extent to which this is done currently, and it is likely that departments rely on feedback from patrol officers to identify any weaknesses among communications staff. Similarly, officer accountability could be improved by expanding the review of incident reports conducted by most departments (88%) to be a more analytical task – looking for response patterns and weaknesses – rather than reviewing reports to identify missing or incomplete information. Requiring officers to contact their supervisors in specific types of incidents or requiring written justification are also important steps towards holding officers accountable. Supervisors should supplement these activities with regular review of radio logs and observations on sites to ensure that an appropriate response is being provided in all cases.

Partnership. It is noteworthy that 65% of departments have partnered with victim advocacy groups, though only a small percentage of larger departments have expanded this partnership into an internal position. These partnerships can be capitalized on and used in a role that goes beyond a referral or advocacy resource for victims. Victim advocate groups can be involved in the development of policy (only 20% of departments included community victim advocate groups in the development of their policy) and in making revisions to existing policy (only 24% of departments reported making changes as a result of a recommendation from victim advocacy groups). These groups can also be useful in training department personnel, not only because of their expertise in domestic violence, but also because such training can help officers learn more about victim services available in the community.

Future research. This research provides a national understanding of the policies and procedures in place in departments across the country to help guide response to emergency domestic violence calls. This understanding could be supported in three ways: (1) by assembling a panel of experts to review model policies and identify critical elements so that judgments could be made on the quality of department policies; (2) by assembling a group of experts to assist in the development of guidelines for (a) partnerships between police departments and advocacy organizations, and (b) for responding fully to the service, information, economic, and safety needs of battered women; or (3) by collecting information on how individual officers are responding in the field, which may be done through a case review at specific departments, surveys or interviews with individual officers, or surveys or interviews with victims of domestic violence who have contacted the police to report domestic violence.

8. Appendixes

8.1. Survey Instrument

OMB # 1121-0273

Date of Expiration: 05/31/2004

**Police Department Response to Emergency
Domestic Violence Calls
National Institute of Justice
Abt Associates Inc.**

⇒ ABOUT THE SURVEY

⇒ Who should complete this survey?

The survey should be completed by the person(s) most knowledgeable about your department's policies and procedures for responding to emergency domestic violence calls for service, particularly as they relate to 911 call-takers, dispatchers, and patrol officers. *The nature of this survey may require that you get input from more than one person.*

⇒ What is this survey about?

Written policies that guide law enforcement response to domestic violence calls; domestic violence training; day-to-day experiences among call-takers, dispatchers, and officers when responding to emergency domestic violence calls; activities of any domestic violence special units; and partnerships with domestic violence victim advocates.

Despite the fact that your department may include family abuse (e.g., child abuse) in its definition of domestic violence, this study defines domestic violence only as abuse of former or current intimate partners.

⇒ Why am I being asked to complete this survey?

The National Institute of Justice, the research arm of the U.S. Department of Justice, has provided funding to Abt Associates to conduct a congressionally mandated study of the policies and procedures in place in departments across the country to respond to emergency domestic violence calls.

This study is an assessment of the ways in which police departments develop policy and prepare staff to respond to domestic violence emergency calls. The study is not an evaluation of your department's response to emergency domestic violence calls for service. The information we collect will only be used to describe, in the aggregate, how agencies are responding to emergency domestic violence calls.

The results of these surveys will help inform the U.S. Department of Justice, and ultimately Congress, on how police departments respond to emergency domestic violence calls in their communities. Your responses will, therefore, help support future domestic violence funding and research decisions.

Participation in this study is voluntary and your responses will be held in confidence. Your name will not be provided to anyone. We only ask for your name and phone number for follow-up clarification of your responses. Results of this study will not report your name, nor the name of others responding, nor the name of your agency or any specific agency participating in this survey.

⇒ HOW TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY

⇒ How should I complete the survey?

The survey is made up of multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank questions. Check the box to answer multiple-choice items and print your responses to fill-in-the-blank questions.

⇒ What do I do with the survey when I complete it?

Place the completed survey in the attached envelope, seal the envelope and put the sealed envelope in the mail.

⇒ What if I have questions about items on the questionnaire?

Please call Abt Associates – Meg Townsend at (202) 263-1740 if you have any questions.

⇒ Please provide your contact information

In case we need to contact you to clarify your responses to any of these questions, please give us your name, title, address, phone number, and e-mail address. We will use this information for clarification purposes only.

Agency Name: _____ **State:** _____

Person Completing Survey: _____ **Title:** _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____ **E-mail Address:** _____

If input was provided by MORE THAN ONE PERSON, please include additional contact information below.

⇒ RETURN COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE TO:

ABT ASSOCIATES INC.

Attn: Meg Townsend

1110 Vermont Avenue N.W., Suite 610

Washington, DC 20005

Paperwork Reduction Act Notice: Under the Paperwork Reduction Act, we cannot ask you to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. We try to create forms and instructions that are accurate, can be easily understood, and which impose the least possible burden on you to provide us with information. The estimated average time to complete and file this application is 30 minutes per application. If you have comments regarding the accuracy of this estimate, or suggestions for making this form simpler, you can write to Meg Townsend at Abt Associates, 1110 Vermont Avenue N.W., Suite 610, Washington, DC 20005. The OMB control number for this questionnaire is 1121-0273.

SECTION A: STAFF

⇒ In this section, we are interested in your agency's staffing levels.

A1. To date, how many *authorized* full-time sworn officer positions does your department have?

A2. To date, how many *actual* full-time and part-time sworn officers does your department employ?

_____ Full-time

_____ Part-time

SECTION B: DEPARTMENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE POLICY.

⇒ In this section, we are interested in *written* policies and protocols your department has to guide 911 call-taker, dispatcher, or officer response to emergency domestic violence calls for service.

B1. Does your agency have *written* operational procedures for responding to domestic violence calls for service?

- Yes
- No [**skip to section D**]
- Don't know [**skip to section D**]

B2. According to your *written* policy, which of the following intimate relationships are considered *domestic*? (Check all that apply)

- Spouse or former spouse
- Fiancée or former fiancée
- Cohabitant or former cohabitant
- Parent of his/her child
- Dating partner
- Same sex partner

B3. According to your *written* policy, which of the following *acts* are considered domestic violence? (Check all that apply)

- Actual verbal assault
- Actual physical (non-sexual) assault
- Threatened physical (non-sexual) assault
- Actual sexual assault
- Threatened sexual assault
- Stalking
- Property crime
- Violation of court protective orders
- Criminal trespass
- Other: _____

B4. For how many years has your current *written* domestic violence policy been in use? (Check only one)

- Less than a year
- One to two years
- Three to five years
- Six to ten years
- More than ten years
- Don't know

B5. For what department(s) was your current *written* policy developed? (Check only one)

- Just my police department
- All police departments in my county
- All police departments in my state
- Other _____
- Don't know

B6. Which of the following agencies participated in the development of your *written* policy? (Check all that apply)

- Police department
- Prosecutor's office
- Judicial representative
- State criminal justice agency
- Governmental victim-services providers
- Community-based domestic violence victim advocacy groups
- Other: _____
- Don't know

B7. Have any changes been made to your policy since the current policy was first put into practice?

- Yes
- No [**skip to Section C**]
- Don't know [**skip to Section C**]

B7a. If yes, why were changes made? (Check all that apply)

- In response to task force/advisory board recommendations
- In response to Community-based domestic violence victim advocacy group recommendations
- In response to an internal study on the policy's effectiveness
- To satisfy accreditation requirements
- To satisfy grant requirements
- In response to changes in state law
- In response to change in police leadership
- Other _____
- Don't know

SECTION C: WRITTEN POLICY

In this section, we are interested in the content of your written domestic violence policy.

C1. Which of the following 911 call-taking and dispatch procedures are covered by your *written* policy? (Check all that apply)

- What questions to ask when taking a domestic violence emergency call
- How to interact with victims
- How to assign the priority of domestic violence calls for service
- How to dispatch domestic violence calls for service
- Other _____
- None of the above
- Don't know
- Not Applicable – department does not perform 911 call-taking or dispatch services

C2. Which of the following procedures for responding officers does your *written* policy cover? (Check all that apply)

- How to approach the scene
- How to decide when to make an arrest
- How to handle violations of protection orders
- How to determine the primary aggressor
- How to decide when to make a dual arrest
- How to handle perpetrators gone on arrival
- How to handle domestic violence involving sexual assault
- How to handle domestic violence and stalking cases
- How to conduct on-scene investigations
- How to collect evidence
- How to handle firearms at the scene
- How to interview parties
- How to complete a crime report
- How to address victim safety
- How to handle non-English speaking subjects
- How to handle child witnesses
- How to handle officer-involved domestic violence
- How to handle military suspects
- How to handle juvenile suspects
- Other: _____
- None of the above
- Don't know

C3. What other information is provided in your policy? (Check all that apply)

- Definition of domestic violence
- State domestic violence statutes
- Federal laws
- Investigation procedures
- Domestic violence training requirements
- Other _____

- Don't know

SECTION D: 911 CALL-TAKERS

⇒ In this section, we are interested in day-to-day practices of 911 call-takers.

D1. Which of the following are 911 call-takers required to do when handling an emergency domestic violence call?
(Check all that apply)

- Stay on the line with callers until the police arrive
- Advise victims on protecting their safety
- Ask victims to leave premises
- Ask caller about weapons
- Ask about suspect use of drugs/alcohol
- Ask about whether children are present
- Ask about previous incidents
- Ask about restraining orders
- Ask whether suspect is on probation/parole
- Other: _____
- Don't know

D2. Who provides 911 call-taking services to the department?

- Police department staff perform this function
- Department relies on another agency to perform this function [**skip to section E**]

D2a. Do your 911 call-takers have a protocol card or software system available to guide their questioning of domestic violence callers?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

911 CALL-TAKER TRAINING

D3. Are all 911 call-takers required to receive domestic violence training?

- Yes
- The training is optional [**skip to section E**]
- No [**skip to section E**]
- Don't know [**skip to section E**]

D4. When are 911 call-takers required to receive domestic violence training? (Check all that apply)

- During recruit training
- During in-service training
- Don't know [**skip to section E**]

D5. How many hours of domestic violence training are 911 call-takers required to receive as recruits and as in-service call-takers? (Check only one per group)

	As recruits	Each year as an in-service call-taker
One hour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Half a day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
One day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2-3 days	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
One week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify)_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not applicable- not trained in domestic violence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

D6. Which of the following topics are covered during required domestic violence training as recruits and as in-service call-takers? (Check all that apply)

	Recruit training	Each year of in-service training
State definition of domestic violence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
State domestic violence laws	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Department domestic violence policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dynamics of domestic violence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dealing with social and cultural differences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managing stress associated with DV calls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Techniques to minimize threats to victim safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to handle repeat calls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to handle children on the line	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to handle perpetrators on the line	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not applicable – are not trained in domestic violence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION E: DISPATCHERS

⇒ In this section, we are interested in day-to-day practices of dispatchers.

E1. Which of the following are dispatchers required to do when handling domestic violence calls for service? (Check all that apply)

- Check on safety of officers at the scene
- Dispatch emergency medical services to the scene
- Provide call history to officers
- Check on presence of protection orders
- Check on warrants associated with the address
- Check on gun licenses provided to members of household
- Other: _____
- Don't know

E2. Who provides dispatching services to the department?

- Police department staff perform this function
- Department relies on another agency to perform this function [skip to section F]

E3. Please identify the name of each of your department's call priority levels, from highest to lowest (e.g., emergency, urgent, as soon as possible, and routine). If you use a numbering system (e.g., 1-4), indicate the high and low ends of the system.

Priority Level Name	Number	<i>Example: Priority Level Name</i>	<i>Number</i>
_____	_____	Emergency	1
_____	_____	Urgent	2
_____	_____	As soon as possible	3
_____	_____	Routine	4
_____	_____		
_____	_____		

E3a. Of these, please indicate what level is used for emergency domestic violence calls.

Priority Level Name _____ Number _____

Example: Urgent or "2"

E4. What circumstances result in a change of the normal priority assignment of an emergency domestic violence call? (Check all that apply)

- High call load
- Information received during a call back
- Access to additional information regarding caller, victim, or suspect.

- Other _____
- Don't know
- The call priority is never changed.

E5. Which of the following information is routinely provided by dispatchers or is available to officers via in-car computers when responding to domestic violence calls? (Check all that apply)

- Information collected on the current incident
- Information on previous incidents to the same address
- Previous histories of partners involved
- Outstanding warrants
- Existence of protection orders
- Suspect on bond or probation
- Other: _____
- No information is available via in-car computers
- Don't know

DISPATCHER TRAINING

E6. Are dispatchers required to receive training on domestic violence?

- Yes
- The training is optional [**skip to section F**]
- No [**skip to section F**]
- Don't know [**skip to section F**]

E7. When are dispatchers required to receive domestic violence training? (Check all that apply)

- During recruit training
- During in-service training
- Other _____
- Don't know [**skip to section F**]

E8. How many hours of domestic violence training are dispatchers required to receive as recruits and as in-service dispatchers? (Check only one per group)

	As recruits	Each year as an in-service dispatcher
One hour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Half a day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
One day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2-3 days	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
One week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not applicable – not trained in domestic violence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

E9. Which of the following topics are covered during required domestic violence training as recruits and as in-service dispatchers? (check all that apply)

	Recruit training	Each year of in-service training
State definition of domestic violence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
State domestic violence laws	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Department domestic violence policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dynamics of domestic violence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dealing with social and cultural differences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managing stress associated with DV calls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Techniques to minimize threats to victim safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to handle repeat calls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to handle children on the line	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to handle perpetrators on the line	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When to dispatch officers early	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence collection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not applicable – not trained in domestic violence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION F: OFFICER RESPONSE TO EMERGENCY DV CALLS

⇒ In this section, we are interested in day-to-day practices of officers.

F1. Who has primary responsibility for responding to emergency DV calls? (Check only one)

- Patrol
- DV Special unit
- Other _____
- Don't know

F2. Which of the following are officers required to do when responding to victims of domestic violence. (Check all that apply)

- Provide victim and abuser with statement of victim's rights
- Provide victim with cell phones or pagers
- Provide victim with hotline number
- Photograph victim injuries
- Separate victim and suspect
- Interview victim separately from suspect

- Inform victim of shelter and other services
- Review a safety plan with the victim
- Arrange for transport of victim to shelter or medical facility
- Help victim with removal of property
- Contact a shelter or other victim service provider
- Provide victim with information card reporting officer and case contact information
- Other: _____
- Don't know

F3. Which of the following are officers required to do when responding to child witnesses of domestic violence. (Check all that apply)

- Separate child from victim and suspect
- Interview child witness
- Contact Child Protective Services
- Take custody of children
- Document signs of trauma
- Photograph injuries
- Other: _____
- Don't know

F4. What special policy does *your* agency have regarding arrests for domestic violence? (Check only one)

- Mandatory arrest
- Pro-arrest
- Other special policy (specify) _____
- No special policy (specify) _____
- Don't know

F5. What other actions can *your* officers take with a person suspected of domestic violence? (Check all that apply)

- Counsel the suspect
- Issue a citation
- Issue an appearance ticket
- Mediate both parties
- Separate parties
- Remove one party
- Seize weapons used by suspect
- Seize weapons that could be used by suspect
- Other _____
- None of the above
- Don't know

CALLS FOR SERVICE REPORTING

F6. Are officers required to complete an incident report for all domestic violence calls they are dispatched to, regardless of what occurs at the scene?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

F7. Does the department have supplemental forms for documenting domestic violence calls?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

F8. Are officers required to provide written justification when no arrest is made?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

F9. Are officers required to provide written justification when both parties are arrested?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

F10. Who reviews the domestic violence incident reports? (Check all that apply)

- Patrol sergeant
- Detective Unit
- Detectives assigned to a special DV unit
- Patrol officers assigned to a special DV unit
- Victim advocate assigned to special DV unit
- Other _____
- Don't know
- No review is done

OFFICER TRAINING

F11. Are officers required to receive specialized domestic violence training?

- Yes
- No [**skip to section G**]
- Don't know [**skip to section G**]

F12. If yes, who is required to receive specialized domestic violence training? (Check all that apply)

- Officer recruits
- In-service patrol officers

- Detective unit
- Domestic violence special unit
- Don't know

F13. How many hours of domestic violence training are officers required to receive as recruits and as in-service officers? (Check only one per group)

	As recruits	Each year as an in-service officer	Each year on the DV special unit
One hour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Half a day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
One day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2-3 days	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
One week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not applicable – not trained in domestic violence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

F14. Which of the following topics are covered during required domestic violence training as recruits and as in-service officers? (Check all that apply)

	As Recruits	In an average year as an in-service officer	In an average year on the DV special unit
State definition of domestic violence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
State domestic violence laws	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Department domestic violence policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dynamics of domestic violence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dealing with social and cultural differences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managing stress associated with DV calls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Techniques to minimize threats to victim safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Techniques to minimize threats to officer safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Primary aggressor determination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence collection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Investigation and management of DV cases	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contacting local shelter and requesting victim advocates on cases	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Victim rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not applicable – not trained in domestic violence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION G: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SPECIAL UNITS.

⇒ In this section, we are interested in the operations of any domestic violence unit your department might have.

G1. Does the department have a specialized domestic violence unit?

- Yes
- No [**skip to section H**]
- Don't know [**skip to section H**]

G1a. If yes, what part of operations does the special unit work? (Check all that apply)

- Patrol
- Investigations
- Across department units
- Other (specify) _____
- Don't know

G1b. Which of the following activities do officers in the DV special unit engage in? (Check all that apply)

- Respond to all domestic violence calls for service
- Work with victim service providers to improve service delivery to victims
- Review all DV incident reports
- Follow-up with victims
- Provide victim referrals
- Interview suspects
- Investigate all DV cases
- Other: _____
- Don't know

SECTION H: VICTIM ADVOCATES

⇒ In this section, we are interested in any relationships your department has formed with local victim advocate groups.

H1. Does the department have victim advocates working within the department?

- Yes
- No [**skip to question H2**]
- Don't know [**skip to question H2**]

H1a. If yes, what operational unit do the advocates work in? (Check all that apply)

- Patrol
- Investigations
- Other _____
- Don't know

H1b. How many advocates work within the department? (Please specify a number)

_____ (Part-time) _____ (Full-time) _____ (Don't Know)

H1c. Which of the following activities do advocates engage in? (Check all that apply)

- Meet officers at scene of emergency domestic violence calls
- Counsel victims
- Make referrals
- Assist victims get assistance from local victim-service providers
- Case management
- Accompany victims to court appearances
- Other: _____
- Don't know

H2. Does the department work in partnership with community-based victim advocate groups?

By partnerships, we mean a relationship that has been formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding or similar written agreement to address the common goal of domestic violence.

- Yes
- No [**skip to Section I**]
- Don't know [**skip to Section I**]

H2a. What operational unit do the advocate groups work with? (Check all that apply)

- Patrol
- Investigations
- Other _____
- Don't know

H2b. Which of the following activities do advocates engage in? (Check all that apply)

- Meet officers at scene of emergency domestic violence calls
- Counsel victims
- Make referrals
- Assist victims get assistance from local victim-service providers
- Case management
- Accompany victims to court appearances
- Conduct preliminary and follow-up investigation
- Other: _____
- Don't know

SECTION I: FUNDING

11. Has the department received any funding from the federal government in the past five years to support the department's response to domestic violence?

- Yes

- No
- Don't know

I1a. Which of the following federal agencies provided the funding? (Check all that apply)

- Bureau of Justice Assistance
- Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
- The Office on Violence Against Women
- Other _____
- Don't know

At the conclusion of this project, would you be interested in having the Department of Justice send you a final copy of the report?

- Yes No

Thank you for your participation!
Feel free to send any supporting documentation, for example, a copy of your domestic violence policy, with your survey response.

8.2. Sample Weighting

The following outlines the procedures we used to weight the survey responses. The weights use two sources of information. One, the 2000 Census of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies (CSLLEA), which is a Bureau of Justice Statistics-sponsored census of law enforcement agencies. The CSLLEA survey includes questions about type of agency, operating budget, types of law enforcement services provided, and personnel totals for various responsibilities. The CSLLEA forms the sampling frame for the 2000 Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) survey, a survey that collects more detailed information about agency staffing and expenditures than the CSLLEA. Most importantly for weighting our DV survey, LEMAS asks whether an agency has a domestic violence special unit staffed with full-time personnel.

For a law enforcement agency to be eligible for our DV survey an agency must provide police services to the public, i.e., it must employ personnel whose regularly assigned duties include responding to calls for service. Prior to drawing our sample we wanted to exclude any agency that really didn't provide policing services to the public. We first excluded any agencies whose "Type of Agency" was Special Police, Tribal Police, or Regional Police. We also excluded any agency that did not have any full-time sworn officers (CSLLEA Question 7), and a handful of remaining agencies that were identified as Highway Patrol or Department of Transportation. We finally unduplicated a couple of agencies appearing twice in the CSLLEA. This trimmed CSLLEA was our sampling frame, NI , and contained 15,254 law enforcement agencies.

To draw the sample, we stratified our new population of police agencies based upon the number of full-time sworn officers: 1 to 9, 10 to 49, 50 to 99, and 100 or more officers (denoting these four strata as s). We selected 732 agencies, nI , from our sample frame NI . nI was evenly distributed between the four s strata.

At the time of sampling we believed we had excluded all of the law enforcement agencies that did not primarily provide policing services. However, our first few pre-DV survey contacts with the sampled nI agencies revealed that we had erroneously included some agencies that did not provide policing services. All of the agencies we contacted that did not provide policing services had no full-time sworn personnel with general arrest powers assigned to respond to citizen calls or calls for service (CSLLEA Question 9). Therefore, we identified all of the agencies where CSLLEA Q9 was zero, and attempted to replace the sampled agency with a similarly sized agency in close geographic proximity. For example, in Nassau County, NY, the Nassau County Police Department replaced Nassau County Sheriff's Office. In all, there were 223 agencies in NI and 19 agencies in nI where CSLLEA Q9 was zero, and they were removed to create $N2$ and $n2$.

Since we replaced a non-policing agency with a policing one that also appeared in the NI sampling frame, it was as if those policing agencies appeared twice in NI . This doubles their probability of selection into the sample for our DV survey. Therefore, we needed to introduce an adjustment l , which represents the number of times an agency actually appears in NI . l was used in constructing the sampling weights.

After sampling we discovered another category of agencies whose policing responsibilities were ambiguous. These were identified by responding "Special district or authority" to CSLLEA Question

1. We trimmed these agencies from $N2$ and $n2$ to create $N3$ and $n3$. One agency in this category completed our DV survey but was included in our analysis (because its officers do not have primary arrest authority).

Since our analysis and DV survey questions focused on domestic violence issues, we thought police agencies that are especially focused on domestic violence issues might be more likely to respond to our DV survey than those agencies that are not. In addition, we also thought that agencies most focused on domestic violence issues would give the most favorable responses to our DV survey questions. In order to reduce the possibility of this bias in responses to our DV survey questions due to selection, we would need to identify those police agencies in $N3$ and $n3$ with a special domestic violence focus and then stratify $N3$ and $n3$ accordingly. Fortunately, LEMAS asks a question that is probably a good indicator of an agency's domestic violence focus, which is if the agency has a domestic violence special unit (LEMAS Question 48g1). However, only a sample of agencies with 100 or more full-time sworn personnel answer that question, so it may not be as useful for the small size strata.

Rather than discarding this potentially important response, for those agencies that did not answer the survey question, we instead predicted the response from information collected for every agency that responded. In particular, we ran the following logistic regression:

$$\text{Pr}(\text{DV Special Unit} = \text{Yes}) = \text{Logistic}[\alpha + \beta \times \text{Agency Characteristics} + \varepsilon]$$

The agency characteristics are questions contained in the CSLLEA. They include measures of size of agency, types of personnel employed, other types of special units, and whether the agency is a sheriff's office. The questions included were:

- Q2a – Agency performs criminal investigations for homicide
- Q2d – Agency provides crime prevention services
- Q2h – Agency responds to citizen calls/requests for service
- Q5f – Agency operates a training academy
- Q5g – Agency dispatches calls for service
- Q5h – Agency performs search and rescue operations
- Q5i – Agency performs tactical operations (SWAT)
- Q7 – Number of authorized full-time sworn personnel
- Q9 – Number of full-time sworn personnel, divided by Q7
- Q10a – Number of full-time sworn personnel serving as community officers, divided by Q7
- Q11b – Number of full-time sworn personnel with investigative duties, divided by Q7
- Q11c – Number of full-time sworn personnel with jail-related duties, divided by Q7
- Agency is sheriff agency

After running the above model, we applied the estimated $\hat{\alpha}$ and $\hat{\beta}$ coefficients to each agency in $N3$ and $n3$ and calculated the probability of an agency having a domestic violence special unit, here called \hat{p} . We then further stratified each stratum s in $N3$ and $n3$ based upon either the prediction or realization of having a domestic violence special unit, called d . For those agencies that responded to LEMAS Q48g1, we stratified based upon their survey response. For those that did not answer the survey, agencies were stratified into above and below median stratum s -specific \hat{p} . The above-

median agencies were joined with the agencies that answered “yes” to LEMAS Q48g1, and the below-median agencies were joined with the agencies that answered “no” to LEMAS Q48g1. Since the agencies that support construction \hat{p} are much larger than our two smallest s strata, in each of those strata we elected to merge the two d strata into one.

We further stratified the sd strata based upon the agency being a sheriff’s office. Most of the agencies we discovered in $N1$ that were non-policing agencies were sheriffs’ offices. Therefore, to correct for any bias introduced from potentially including some non-policing agencies in the analysis, we stratified based upon the type of agency being a sheriff’s office. We call this stratum t .

With the population $N3$ and sample $n3$ correctly trimmed and the strata sdt formed, we can compute base sampling weights for each agency i . Call $N3_{sdt}$ the number of agencies in $N4$ for stratum sdt , and $n3_{sdt}$ the number of agencies sampled stratum sdt . The base sampling weight for an agency, BSW_{sdti} , is:

$$BSW_{sdti} = \frac{N3_{sdt}}{n3_{sdt} \times l_{sdti}}$$

Not all of the agencies in $n3_{sdt}$ returned a completed DV survey. We applied a non-response adjustment to the agencies that returned and completed our DV survey. To preserve the proportionality of weights for the agencies that appear once in $N1$ versus those that appear twice, we computed non-response adjustments separately for the number of times an agency appears in $N1$. We denote the number of agencies that completed our DV survey as c , the number of times an agency appeared in $N1$ with the subscript l , and the non-response adjustment for stratum sdt as NRA :

$$NRA_{sdtl} = \frac{n3_{sdtl}}{c_{sdtl}}$$

We then applied the non-response adjustment to BSW to obtain an adjusted base sampling weight $BSW1$:

$$BSW1_{sdtli} = BSW_{sdti} \times NRA_{sdtl}$$

Due to the adjustment for the $n1$ agencies appearing more than once in $N1$, the sum of $BSW1_{sdtli}$ does not add to $N3$. Therefore to create the final analysis weight Wgt , we inflate $BSW1_{sdtli}$ so it will sum to the number of agencies in $N4$:

$$Wgt_{sdtli} = BSW1_{sdtli} \times \frac{N3_{sdt}}{\sum_i BSW1_{sdti}}$$

The table below shows the number of agencies in the $N3$, $n3$, and c for each of the strata described above.

Number of Full-Time Sworn Officers (s)	Has DV Special Unit (d)	Is a Sheriff Agency (t)	Number of Times Agency Appeared	N in Final Population ($N3$)	n in Final Sample ($n3$)	n Completed (c)
			Sample Frame NI (l)			
1 to 9	Stratum Merged	Stratum Merged	1	7,325	180	72
	Stratum Merged	Stratum Merged	2	1	1	1
10 to 49	Stratum Merged	No	1	4,226	132	86
	Stratum Merged	No	2	3	3	2
	Stratum Merged	Yes	1	1,320	47	20
50 to 99	No	No	1	410	70	30
	No	Yes	1	166	29	12
	Yes	Stratum Merged	1	499	81	47
100 or more	No	No	1	328	57	34
	No	No	2	4	4	2
	No	Yes	1	182	32	18
	Yes	Stratum Merged	1	419	81	43
	Yes	Stratum Merged	2	4	4	1

8.3. Survey Results

I. Formal Domestic Violence Policies

Percent of law enforcement agencies with a written operational policy		Confidence Interval
Total	77.0%	+/- 6%
1 to 9 officers	63.8%	+/-11%
10 to 49 officers	88.2%	+/- 6%
50 to 99 officers	95.5%	+/- 4%
100+ officers	93.9%	+/- 5%

According to Policy:

Which relationships are considered domestic?	
Spouse or former spouse	99.6%
Fiancee or former fiancée	78.3%
Cohabitant or former cohabitant	95.6%
Parent of his/her child	87.7%
Dating partner	68.5%
Same sex partner	71.3%

Which acts are considered domestic violence?	
Actual verbal assault	49.7%
Actual physical (non-sexual) assault	99.0%
Threatened physical (non-sexual) assault	77.6%
Actual sexual assault	90.2%
Threatened sexual assault	65.3%
Stalking	62.3%
Property crime	42.6%
Violation of court protective orders	77.7%
Criminal trespass	45.8%
Other	12.1%

Length of time policy in use (by strata)	Less than a Year	One to two years	Three to five years	Six to ten years	More than 10 years	Don't Know
TOTAL	3.0%	8.7%	33.8%	29.0%	23.9%	3.8%
1 to 9 officers	4.3%	10.8%	35.1%	26.0%	19.5%	4.3%
10 to 49 officers	2.0%	7.3%	36.2%	28.4%	20.7%	5.4%
50 to 99 officers	3.7%	6.8%	20.0%	39.5%	28.0%	2.1%
100+ officers	1.1%	6.7%	29.6%	36.3%	23.0%	3.3%

For what department was the current written policy developed? (by strata)	Just my dept	All depts in county	All depts in state	Other	Don't Know
TOTAL	74.5%	10.8%	11.3%	3.2%	0.2%
1 to 9 officers	67.5%	15.2%	13.0%	4.3%	0.0%
10 to 49 officers	78.1%	8.1%	10.8%	3.0%	0.0%
50 to 99 officers	76.5%	10.4%	11.8%	1.3%	0.0%
100+ officers	89.0%	3.4%	4.4%	2.2%	1.1%

Who assisted with policy development?	
Police department	80.0%
Prosecutor's office	48.3%
Judicial representative	10.3%
State criminal justice agency	23.9%
Governmental victim-services providers	15.3%
Community-based domestic violence victim advocacy groups	20.3%
Other	10.3%
Don't know	8.4%

Number of agencies assisting with policy development	
1	40.4%
2	27.2%
3	18.5%
More than 4	13.8%

Policy Changes

Percent of departments who have made changes to policy	
Yes	55.5%
No	40.6%
Don't Know	3.9%

Changes to Policy by length of time in use	
Less than one year	0.4%
One to two years	6.3%
Three to five years	30.9%
Six to ten years	31.8%
More than 10 years	30.6%

Why were changes made?	
In response to task force/advisory board recommendations	12.0%
In response to community-based domestic violence victim advocacy group recommendations	23.7%
In response to internal study on policy's effectiveness	19.5%
To satisfy accreditation requirements	10.1%
To satisfy grant requirements	3.6%
In response to changes in state law	80.8%
In response to changes in police leadership	14.6%
Other	4.8%
Don't Know	1.4%

Number of reasons changes were made	
1	54.4%
2	29.6%
3	8.5%
More than 4	7.5%

Procedures covered by written policy

Procedures for 911 and dispatch (totals and by strata)	Questions to ask	Victim interaction	How to prioritize DV calls	How to dispatch DV calls	None of the above	Don't know	Other
TOTAL	67.4%	41.1%	61.8%	75.5%	11.9%	3.4%	8.0%
1 to 9 officers	63.0%	43.2%	55.6%	75.3%	6.2%	12.3%	6.2%
10 to 49 officers	69.8%	38.4%	61.5%	78.6%	2.6%	12.2%	8.3%
50 to 99 officers	67.3%	47.9%	69.5%	71.2%	1.7%	12.1%	8.6%
100+ officers	65.5%	42.6%	68.7%	64.6%	2.7%	9.3%	9.5%

Procedures for responding officers	TOTAL	1 to 9 officers	10 to 49 officers	50 to 99 officers	100+ officers
How to approach the scene	59.3%	65.4%	56.2%	56.5%	47.5%
How to decide to make an arrest	94.9%	95.7%	93.6%	96.9%	95.5%
Violation of protection orders	88.5%	86.6%	90.5%	91.5%	83.7%
Determination of primary aggressor	73.6%	69.3%	77.1%	73.8%	77.7%
When to make a dual arrest	71.0%	74.0%	70.6%	66.3%	62.1%
Handling a perpetrator gone on arrival	68.3%	71.4%	63.6%	72.3%	73.1%
Handling domestic violence with sexual assault	58.0%	65.4%	51.8%	59.1%	50.7%
Handling domestic violence and stalking	58.5%	58.4%	57.9%	61.1%	59.6%
Conducting on-scene investigation	75.3%	74.0%	77.0%	69.6%	78.8%
Collecting evidence	66.3%	64.9%	67.6%	62.9%	70.7%
Handling firearms at scene	55.7%	51.9%	57.3%	57.1%	65.0%
Interviewing parties	60.7%	58.9%	61.6%	59.5%	67.6%
Completing crime reports	63.2%	61.0%	63.9%	67.8%	65.3%
How to address victim safety	69.1%	67.5%	69.3%	70.7%	74.1%
Handling non-English speaking Subjects	22.7%	21.6%	21.9%	29.1%	25.2%
Handling child witnesses	42.4%	39.4%	40.0%	54.7%	57.7%
Handling officer-involved domestic violence	38.3%	34.6%	36.6%	47.3%	57.5%
Handling military suspects	10.4%	13.0%	8.1%	7.3%	12.9%
Handling juvenile suspects	33.2%	35.1%	28.0%	43.0%	39.7%
Other	5.0%	2.2%	6.0%	6.8%	12.4%
None of the above	1.5%	2.2%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Don't know	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Other information included in policy	
Definition of domestic violence	86.7%
State domestic violence statutes	74.0%
Federal laws	9.6%
Investigation procedures	59.5%
Domestic violence training requirements	20.5%
Other	6.5%
Don't know	1.1%

II. Call-Taker Response

Response protocol (total and by strata)	TOTAL	1 to 9 officers	10 to 49 officers	50 to 99 officers	100+ officers
Stay on the line with callers until police arrive	51.7%	32.7%	69.9%	73.0%	57.2%
Advise victims on protecting their safety	31.7%	22.4%	36.5%	50.9%	48.2%
Ask victims to leave premises	10.3%	3.2%	13.4%	25.8%	24.2%
Ask about weapons	61.3%	37.5%	81.0%	86.2%	87.1%
Ask about suspect use of drugs/alcohol	46.4%	30.8%	57.5%	70.8%	66.0%
Ask whether children are present	47.3%	34.0%	58.8%	64.8%	56.3%
Ask about previous incidents	29.3%	14.4%	40.8%	51.4%	43.4%
Ask about restraining orders	40.7%	25.9%	52.4%	60.1%	54.7%
Ask whether suspect is on parole/probation	9.6%	8.0%	10.9%	11.7%	11.8%
Other	16.9%	19.2%	14.8%	10.6%	20.4%
Don't know	24.5%	40.0%	11.4%	10.4%	5.3%

Who provides 911 call-taking services?	
Department staff	37.2%
Other agency	59.9%

Do call-takers have a protocol card or software system to guide their questioning of callers?	
Yes	28.1%
No	66.4%
Don't know	5.5%

Response protocol (by automated vs. non)	Protocol or software system	Non-automated system
Stay on the line with callers until police arrive	85.5%	74.5%
Advise victims on protecting their safety	66.8%	40.2%
Ask victims to leave premises	31.9%	13.3%
Ask about weapons	98.6%	91.7%
Ask about drugs/alcohol the suspect used	83.9%	71.0%
Ask whether children are present	83.0%	68.1%
Ask about previous incidents	64.6%	43.7%
Ask about restraining orders	64.7%	59.3%
Ask whether suspect is on parole/probation	22.6%	13.4%
Other	4.0%	19.7%
Don't know	0.7%	0.6%

Call-taker domestic violence training

Is domestic violence training required for 911 call-takers?	
Yes	39.4%
No	48.1%
Don't Know	3.6%
Optional	8.9%

* Slight variation between the text and what is reported can be attributed to the use of different statistical software packages.

When are 911 call-takers required to receive domestic violence training?	
During recruit training	78.5%
During in-service training	70.8%
Don't know	0.0%

When are 911 call-takers required to receive domestic violence training?	
Trained both as recruits and in-service	49.3%
Trained as recruits only	21.5%
Trained in-service only	29.3%

How many hours of domestic violence training are 911 call-takers required to receive?	Recruits	In-service
1	26.6%	34.6%
4	27.9%	25.6%
8	18.7%	13.9%
32	1.0%	0.0%
40	6.6%	3.5%
Other	10.1%	11.0%
Don't know	9.1%	11.4%

What topics are covered during required training?	Recruits	In-service
State domestic violence definition	65.0%	40.6%
State domestic violence laws	65.7%	42.9%
Department domestic violence policy	60.7%	41.3%
Dynamics of domestic violence	51.5%	33.5%
Dealing with social and cultural differences	43.5%	27.1%
Managing stress associated with DV calls	50.1%	26.4%
How to manage threats to victim safety	52.3%	31.7%
How to handle repeat calls	47.6%	27.2%
How to handle children on line	63.5%	34.8%
How to handle perpetrators on line	44.1%	25.6%
Other	3.6%	5.4%
Don't know	8.2%	4.3%

III. Dispatcher Response

Dispatcher response protocol (total and by strata)	TOTAL	1 to 9 officers	10 to 49 officers	50 to 99 officers	100+ officers
Check on safety of officers at scene	72.3%	54.6%	86.0%	93.6%	87.9%
Dispatch emergency medical services to scene	56.8%	47.8%	61.4%	75.0%	70.6%
Provide call history to officers	47.1%	27.3%	61.3%	75.0%	66.3%
Check on presence of protection orders	53.8%	41.1%	62.6%	76.9%	62.4%
Check on warrants associated with address	43.5%	31.0%	52.6%	62.0%	53.1%
Check on gun licenses provided to members of household	19.6%	11.8%	26.6%	33.4%	16.3%
Other	9.8%	15.1%	3.7%	7.1%	12.0%
Don't know	21.4%	37.0%	10.3%	1.3%	4.5%

Who provides dispatching services?	
Police department staff	40.8%
Other agency	59.2%

Change in priority (total and by strata)	High call load	Info received during call back	Access to additional info	Other	Don't know	Call priority never changed
TOTAL	12.3%	48.9%	48.1%	13.9%	2.3%	33.8%
1 to 9 officers	0.0%	57.1%	71.4%	0.0%	0.0%	28.6%
10 to 49 officers	14.7%	43.0%	39.3%	12.1%	3.1%	40.3%
50 to 99 officers	17.3%	58.4%	54.3%	20.6%	1.7%	23.1%
100+ officers	8.3%	56.5%	57.1%	28.9%	1.5%	22.4%

What information is routinely provided by dispatchers or to officers via in-car computers when responding to domestic violence calls?	TOTAL	1 to 9 officers	10 to 49 officers	50 to 99 officers	100+ officers
Information about the current incident	56.1%	14.3%	55.7%	73.0%	84.0%
Information on previous incidents at the same address	48.6%	14.3%	45.3%	68.0%	75.4%
Previous histories of partners involved	37.4%	14.3%	36.8%	54.6%	42.8%
Outstanding warrants	47.8%	28.6%	44.4%	62.6%	66.1%
Existence of protection orders	51.7%	28.6%	50.0%	67.2%	64.2%
Suspect on bond or probation	19.2%	14.3%	16.1%	27.6%	28.9%
Other	5.6%	0.0%	4.7%	10.9%	9.3%
No info available through in-car computers	37.3%	71.4%	39.6%	19.5%	13.4%
Don't know	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%

Are dispatchers required to receive domestic violence training?	
Yes	45.4%
No	41.4%
Don't know	1.9%
Optional	11.4%

*Slight variation between the text and what is reported can be attributed to the use of different statistical software packages.

When do dispatchers receive training?	
During recruit training	86.4%
During in-service training	57.3%
Other	9.5%
Don't know	1.9%

When are dispatchers required to receive domestic violence training?	
Trained both as recruits and in-service	47.8%
Trained as recruits only	9.5%
Trained in-service only	38.5%

How many hours of domestic violence training are dispatchers required to receive?	Recruits	In-service
1	20.1%	10.2%
4	33.1%	25.5%
8	15.5%	0.0%
32	4.8%	0.0%
40	3.0%	50.0%
Other	11.6%	14.3%
Don't know	11.8%	0.0%

What topics are covered during required training?	Recruits	In-service
State domestic violence definition	66.6%	34.5%
State domestic violence laws	63.9%	38.7%
Department domestic violence policy	56.2%	42.6%
Dynamics of domestic violence	50.0%	33.5%
Dealing with social and cultural differences	40.9%	26.6%
Managing stress associated with domestic violence calls	53.9%	24.0%
How to manage threats to victim safety	58.8%	29.8%
How to handle repeat calls	52.8%	28.9%
How to handle children on line	62.4%	34.0%
How to handle perpetrators on line	54.0%	28.9%
When to dispatch officers early	41.9%	26.3%
Evidence collection	24.0%	16.7%
Other	3.3%	3.9%
Don't know	10.1%	0.8%

IV. Officers

Who has primary responsibility for responding to domestic violence calls?	
Patrol	96.9%
Domestic violence special unit	0.3%
Other	2.7%

What are officers required to do when responding to domestic violence victims? (total and by strata)	TOTAL	1 to 9 officers	10 to 49 officers	50 to 99 officers	100+ officers
Provide victim and abuser with a statement of victim's rights	73.7%	65.5%	82.5%	81.6%	77.2%
Provide victim with cell phone or pager	9.9%	5.5%	16.4%	9.0%	7.3%
Provide victim with hotline number	65.1%	61.3%	69.7%	64.6%	68.0%
Photograph victim injuries	89.8%	90.3%	88.7%	93.0%	87.7%
Separate victim and suspect	95.3%	94.5%	97.0%	96.5%	90.7%
Interview victim separately from suspect	96.2%	95.9%	97.9%	95.2%	90.8%
Inform victim of shelter and other services	90.3%	87.6%	94.0%	89.7%	90.8%
Review safety plan with victim	27.7%	29.0%	27.7%	27.8%	17.1%
Arrange transport of victim to shelter or medical facility	74.3%	69.6%	78.1%	83.0%	79.4%
Help victim with removal of property	58.6%	62.7%	57.1%	52.5%	42.4%
Contact shelter or other victim service provider	61.3%	58.3%	64.1%	68.1%	60.6%
Provide victim with officer and case contact information	57.7%	48.9%	62.8%	72.0%	80.3%
Other	8.3%	6.9%	7.7%	17.3%	12.6%
Don't know	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

What are officers required to do when responding to child witnesses of domestic violence? (total and by strata)	TOTAL	1 to 9 officers	10 to 49 officers	50 to 99 officers	100+ officers
Separate child from victim and suspect	73.4%	69.5%	78.9%	78.7%	65.4%
Interview child witness	82.9%	81.3%	85.3%	86.7%	77.5%
Contact Child Protective Services	65.6%	69.8%	61.8%	64.7%	57.1%
Take custody of children	30.7%	30.9%	32.1%	30.8%	21.4%
Document signs of trauma	79.6%	81.3%	76.7%	83.7%	79.0%
Photograph injuries	82.2%	84.2%	79.5%	85.7%	78.9%
Other	6.6%	7.2%	4.3%	11.2%	10.1%
Don't know	2.0%	1.4%	2.7%	0.5%	3.3%

What special policy does your agency have regarding domestic violence arrests? (total and by strata)	Mandatory arrest	Pro-arrest	Other special policy	No special policy	Don't know
TOTAL	61.0%	23.2%	5.5%	9.3%	1.0%
1 to 9 officers	55.2%	23.8%	5.6%	14.0%	1.4%
10 to 49 officers	67.3%	21.0%	5.7%	5.1%	0.9%
50 to 99 officers	67.8%	25.1%	4.3%	2.8%	0.0%
100+ officers	61.8%	28.8%	4.3%	5.2%	0.0%

What other actions can officers take with domestic violence suspects? (total and by strata)	TOTAL	1 to 9 officers	10 to 49 officers	50 to 99 officers	100+ officers
Counsel the suspect	38.4%	31.1%	46.9%	42.6%	40.6%
Issue a citation	33.6%	39.2%	30.0%	22.8%	23.1%
Issue an appearance ticket	18.2%	23.8%	14.1%	4.8%	13.7%
Mediate both parties	43.1%	48.2%	37.3%	45.2%	35.2%
Separate parties	81.7%	87.4%	77.2%	73.9%	71.5%
Remove one party	67.2%	76.2%	59.1%	56.9%	55.8%
Seize weapons used by suspect	87.1%	90.2%	81.5%	89.9%	91.6%
Seize weapons that could be used by suspect	74.2%	73.4%	74.7%	73.2%	79.0%
Other	8.4%	8.4%	8.7%	7.5%	8.4%
None of the above	2.2%	2.8%	1.8%	1.3%	1.0%
Don't know	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Are officers required to complete an incident report for all domestic violence calls they are dispatched to?	
Yes	87.8%
No	12.2%
Don't know	0.0%

Does the department have supplemental forms for documenting domestic violence calls?	
Yes	63.4%
No	35.5%
Don't know	1.1%

Are officers required to provide written justification when no arrest is made?	
Yes	67.9%
No	32.1%
Don't know	0.0%

Are officers required to provide written justification when both parties are arrested?	
Yes	86.0%
No	14.0%
Don't know	0.0%

Who reviews domestic violence incident reports?	
Patrol Sergeant	55.3%
Detective Unit	19.2%
Detectives assigned to special domestic violence unit	5.7%
Patrol officers assigned to special domestic violence unit	4.0%
Victim advocate assigned to special domestic violence unit	6.8%
Other	56.7%
Don't know	0.0%
No review is done	1.4%

How many people review reports?	
1	63.1%
2	27.8%
More than 3	9.1%

Are officers required to receive domestic violence training?	
Yes	73.1%
No	25.4%
Don't know	1.5%

*Slight variation between the text and what is reported can be attributed to the use of different statistical software packages.

Who is required to receive domestic violence training?	
Officer recruits	74.2%
In-service patrol units	85.8%
Detective unit	33.1%
Domestic violence special unit	12.9%
Don't know	1.0%

When are officers required to receive domestic violence training?	
Trained both as recruits and in-service	62.8%
Trained as recruits only	23.9%
Trained in-service only	11.3%

How many hours of domestic violence training are officers required to receive?	Domestic violence unit		
	Recruits	In-service	unit
1	3.1%	23.8%	11.1%
4	17.5%	24.4%	8.9%
16	30.8%	24.3%	8.2%
32	17.4%	2.9%	21.2%
40	3.7%	2.8%	5.6%
Other	4.1%	12.1%	10.6%
Don't know	23.4%	9.7%	34.4%

	Recruits	In-service	Domestic violence unit
What topics are covered during required training?			
State domestic violence definition	69.0%	67.0%	9.9%
State domestic violence laws	68.4%	70.3%	10.7%
Department domestic violence policy	54.2%	60.9%	10.3%
Dynamics of domestic violence	64.2%	56.1%	9.4%
Dealing with social/cultural differences	51.2%	45.9%	8.5%
Managing stress associated with domestic violence calls	41.3%	32.3%	5.8%
Managing threats to victim safety	57.8%	55.4%	9.0%
Managing threats to officer safety	60.7%	61.9%	11.0%
Primary aggressor determination	65.3%	56.8%	11.0%
Evidence collection	60.2%	57.2%	11.4%
Investigation/management of domestic violence cases	51.3%	46.9%	9.9%
Contact shelters and requesting victim advocates on cases	50.4%	48.0%	9.4%
Victim rights	60.1%	62.3%	10.4%
Local resources	43.3%	44.0%	8.2%
Other	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%
Don't know	9.5%	4.0%	2.9%
Not applicable	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

V. Special Units

Does the department have a specialized domestic violence unit? (total and by strata)	Don't know	No	Yes
TOTAL	0.3%	88.7%	10.9%
1 to 9 officers	0.0%	96.9%	3.1%
10 to 49 officers	0.9%	88.2%	10.9%
50 to 99 officers	0.0%	74.3%	25.7%
100+ officers	0.0%	43.9%	56.1%

What part of operations does the special unit work?	
Patrol	22.8%
Investigations	68.5%
Across department units	15.8%
Other	11.6%
Don't know	0.9%

What activities do officers in the special unit engage in?	
Respond to all domestic violence calls for service	17.1%
Work with victim service providers to improve service delivery to victims	83.3%
Review all domestic violence incident reports	91.3%
Follow-up with victims	91.2%
Provide victim referrals	75.4%
Interview suspects	68.1%
Investigate all domestic violence cases	54.3%
Other	19.6%
Don't know	0.6%

VI. Victim Advocates

Does the department have victim advocates working within the department? (total and by strata)	Don't know	No	Yes
TOTAL	0.7%	86.1%	13.2%
1 to 9 officers	1.4%	94.5%	4.1%
10 to 49 officers	0.0%	84.8%	15.2%
50 to 99 officers	0.0%	66.5%	33.5%
100+ officers	0.0%	48.3%	51.7%

*Slight variation between the text and what is reported can be attributed to the use of different statistical software packages.

What operational units do advocates work in? (total and by strata)	Patrol	Investigations	Other
TOTAL	14.3%	33.7%	52.0%
1 to 9 officers	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%
10 to 49 officers	16.2%	17.9%	66.0%
50 to 99 officers	19.5%	39.0%	41.5%
100+ officers	16.5%	57.5%	26.0%

How many advocates work within the department part-time?	
1	39.8%
2-5	41.4%
More than 5	15.9%

How many advocates work within the department full-time?	
1	79.0%
2-5	18.7%
More than 5	2.3%

Which activities do advocates engage in?	
Meet officers at scene of emergency domestic violence calls	58.0%
Counsel victims	80.6%
Make referrals	93.8%
Assist victims with local victim-service providers	93.8%
Case management	56.6%
Accompany victims to court appearances	77.6%
Other	15.1%
Don't know	0.5%

Does the department partner with community-based victim advocate groups? (total and by strata)	Don't know	No	Yes
TOTAL	0.9%	34.3%	64.8%
1 to 9 officers	0.0%	75.0%	25.0%
10 to 49 officers	0.0%	24.6%	75.4%
50 to 99 officers	0.0%	23.3%	76.7%
100+ officers	4.3%	26.6%	69.1%

What operational units do advocate groups work with?	
Patrol	73.9%
Investigations	59.6%
Other	25.6%
Don't know	0.0%

Which activities do advocates engage in?	
Meet officers at scene of emergency domestic violence calls	41.4%
Counsel victims	91.2%
Make referrals	86.2%
Assist victims with local victim-service providers	94.4%
Case management	59.0%
Accompany victims to court appearances	79.8%
Conduct preliminary and follow-up investigations	47.7%
Other	8.2%
Don't know	0.0%

VII. Funding

Has the department received funding from the federal government in the past 5 years for domestic violence? (total and by strata)	DK	No	Yes
TOTAL	6.85%	81.47%	11.68%
1 to 9 officers	7.2%	88.6%	4.1%
10 to 49 officers	5.6%	81.5%	12.9%
50 to 99 officers	9.0%	64.3%	26.8%
100+ officers	8.6%	43.6%	47.8%

Which agency provided the funding? (total and by strata)	Bureau of Justice Assistance	Office of Community Oriented Policing Services	Office on Violence Against Women	Other	Don't know
TOTAL	14.6%	5.3%	36.5%	19.1%	54.2%
1 to 9 officers	0.0%	0.0%	24.3%	12.1%	84.0%
10 to 49 officers	22.6%	4.8%	40.4%	22.6%	46.1%
50 to 99 officers	16.5%	12.6%	31.6%	29.9%	44.2%
100+ officers	21.0%	9.5%	52.4%	15.2%	24.1%

*Slight variation between the text and what is reported can be attributed to the use of different statistical software packages.

8.4. Victim Advocate Discussion Guide

- Describe the services you provide to victims of domestic violence in your community
- Describe the population you serve
- Describe the services you provide
- Describe your relationship with your local police
- Identify how long you have worked with them and the type of services provided
- Describe your knowledge of department DV policies and procedures.
- Describe your participation in the development and implementation of the local police department's DV policies and procedures
- In your opinion, are the policies and procedures effective, relative to the DV problems in the community?
- In your opinion, where do they fall short?
- In your opinion has local police handling of domestic violence changed over the past three years?
- Improved or declined?

8.5. Focus Study Guide

FOCUS STUDIES AGENDA LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSE TO EMERGENCY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CALLS FOR SERVICE

Focus Study Goal: Gather detailed information regarding the police department’s response to emergency domestic violence calls.

Describe the purpose of the project

The goal of this project is to conduct a study on the response of local law enforcement agencies to domestic violence emergency calls for service. The federal government is aware that law enforcement agencies have been improving their response to domestic violence over the past ten years, but that this has occurred in a number of ways, including changes in policies and procedures, developing special units, and collaborating with service providers to improve services delivered to victims. Although selected programs across the country have been evaluated, there has not been a cross-sectional study conducted to examine how local agencies are responding to domestic violence calls. This project, funded by the National Institute of Justice and the Office on Violence Against Women, is the first step in this effort, focusing on providing a national picture of the policies that are in place to provide a coordinated response to emergency domestic violence calls for service. We began this effort by designing a survey to answer the following research questions.

Describe the research questions to be answered

- How do local law enforcement agencies in the United States respond to domestic violence calls for service?
- How do local law enforcement agencies and their dispatch units coordinate, prioritize, and decide on operational responses to domestic violence calls for service?

After receiving responses from a national sample of law enforcement agencies, we selected three agencies to participate in a site visit so that we could gather more information on the development and implementation of the operational policy from policymakers, local stakeholders, and call-takers, dispatchers, victim advocates, and officers.

Read Informed consent

Participation in this study is voluntary. In addition, you may skip any question that you are unable or unwilling to answer. Your responses will be held in confidence – that is, no one, except for Abt Associates staff working on the project, will know how you answered any questions. The results of these interviews will only be summarized and used to draw out findings from the national survey, that is, individual responses will not be described. We may ask for your telephone number or e-mail address but only in case we need to contact you later to clarify any of your responses. Should you have any questions about this interview or the project please contact the Project Director, Meg Townsend, at (301) 634-1740. Do you have any questions before we proceed?

Discussion with Policymakers

Policy Development

- When was the department's DV policy first developed?
- What prompted the establishment of the policy?
- For what departments was the policy written for? Are these or other agencies currently using it?
- What agencies participated in the development?
 - How was their participation initiated?
 - What was each agency's role?
- How did you decide on the scope of the policy?
 - Intimate relationships – current or former spouse, fiancée, cohabitant, parent of victim's child, dating partner, same sex partner
 - Acts – verbal, physical, sexual, threatened, stalking, trespass, etc.
 - Topics – definitions, laws, call-taking/dispatch/officer/investigation procedures, training requirements
- How did you decide on what procedures would or would not be covered by the policy?
Examples:
 - Questions call-takers ask when taking DV call
 - How to assign priority to DV call
 - How to approach a scene
 - How to interview parties
 - When to make an arrest
 - How to address victim safety
 - Etc.
- Which procedures were the most difficult to set policy around?

Policy Adoption

- How was adoption of the policy communicated to staff?
- What steps were taken to ensure adoption?
 - Is the policy covered during training? How? When?
- Are there checks in place to make sure the policy was adopted?
 - Examples: review 911 call tapes, supervisor review of supplement report required for DV calls, contact advocacy agencies to gather feedback based on reports from victims

Policy Changes

- Has the policy been revised?
- How often?
- By whom?
- Why?
 - Recommendation to the department
 - Legal changes
 - Based on internal review (what? incident reports, 911 logs, evaluation)
 - Satisfy accreditation requirement
- How are changes communicated to staff?

- Examples: Memo, roll call, in-service training
- What steps were taken to ensure changes were adopted?
 - Are the changes covered during training?
- Are checks in place to make sure revised procedures are adopted?
 - Examples: review 911 call tapes, supervisor review of supplement report required for DV calls, contacts with advocacy agencies to gather feedback based on reports from victims

Policy Implementation

- How closely do you think call-taker/dispatcher/officer response adheres to the policy?
- What do you base your opinions on?
- Do you think the likelihood is higher for one group as compared to another? Why?
- Are there specific situations that make adherence to the policy more difficult than in others?

Domestic Violence Training

- Who receives specialized training on DV?
- When is this training provided?
 - How long and when?
 - May not know a lot about what is received in the academy
- Perception of training and whether it is sufficient

Relationship with Local Stakeholders

- Do you have a relationship with local stakeholders in the DV problem in your community (e.g., victim advocates, shelters, hospitals, etc.)?
- With what agencies do you have a relationship?
- What is the nature of your relationship with each agency?
 - How were these relationships initiated?
 - What services are provided/received by each agency?
- How were any of these agencies involved in the development and implementation of the DV policy?

Victim Advocates (may be folded into above discussion)

- Do you have victim advocate(s) working within the department or partnered with the department?
- What services are provided by advocates?
 - Both by the advocates and their representative organizations
- How was this partnership established?
 - Who initiated the partnership?
 - Was it based on a specific event?
- Do you feel the police department's response is improved by this relationship?
- How can this partnership be improved?

Discussion with Stakeholders

Nature of their relationship with the police department

- Who initiated the relationship?
- What types of services do you provide to the department and/or vice versa?
- Are you satisfied with this relationship?

- How could the relationship be improved?
- How knowledgeable are you of the department's policy regarding response to DV emergency calls?
 - Did you participate in the development of the policy?
 - Did you discuss/recommend modifications to that policy? If so, why were modifications made?
 - How satisfied are you with the existing policy?
 - How might it be improved/modified?
 - In your opinion, do you feel call-takers/dispatchers/officers/investigators adhere to the policy? If no, where do they fall short?
 - Have you seen a difference in the department's response now as compared to when there was no policy in place?

Discussion with Call-Takers/Dispatchers

- Does the department have a policy or set of procedures that guides how you handle emergency domestic violence calls for service?
- How were you made aware of that policy?
 - Was it part of your training? If so, where and when were you trained on the policy?
- Is the policy regularly updated to adjust for changes in how you do your job?
 - How do you learn of these changes?
- Can you describe your response protocol?
 - Is this all covered in the policy?
 - If the policy is not comprehensive, should it be? Why or why not?
- What other types of training do you receive on domestic violence?
 - When is it provided? For how long? What topics are covered?
- How might the department's response to DV emergencies be improved?

Discussion with Officers (Patrol and Special Units)

- Does the department have a policy or set of procedures that guides how you handle emergency domestic violence calls for service?
- How were you made aware of that policy?
 - Was it part of your training? If so, where and when were you trained on the policy?
- Is the policy regularly updated to adjust for changes in how you do your job?
 - How do you learn of these updates?
- Can you describe your response protocol?
 - Is this all covered in the policy?
 - If the policy is not comprehensive, should it be? Why or why not?
- What other types of training do you receive on domestic violence?
 - When is it provided? For how long? What topics are covered?
- How might the department's response to DV emergencies be improved?
- Do you work with victim advocates during your response?
 - Are the advocates assigned to the department or just available to the department?
 - What do they do?
 - Have guidelines been developed to structure their response?
 - Do you think their participation has improved your response to emergency DV calls?
 - If so, how?

- If not, why?
- [If DV Special Unit] – How do you coordinate with patrol to provide a coordinated response to the victim?
 - How do you coordinate with victim advocates?

Discussion with Victim Advocates working within the Department

- Does the department have a policy or set of procedures that guides how you handle emergency domestic violence calls for service?
- How were you made aware of that policy?
 - Was it part of your training? If so, where and when were you trained on the policy?
- Is the policy regularly updated to adjust for changes in how you do your job?
 - How do you learn of these updates?
- Can you describe your response protocol?
 - With which units do you work?
 - Is this all covered in the policy?
 - If the policy is not comprehensive, should it be? Why or why not?
- What other types of training do you receive on domestic violence?
 - When is it provided? For how long? What topics are covered?
- How might the department's response to DV emergencies be improved?

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