

# Domestic Violence Coordinating Council

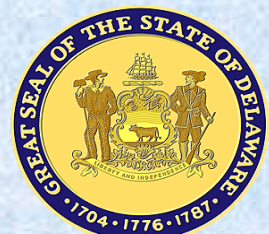
## 2016 Annual Report



To: Honorable Jack Markell  
Governor, State of Delaware

Members, General Assembly

Honorable Leo E. Strine, Jr.  
Chief Justice, Supreme Court  
State of Delaware



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Hon. Patricia M. Blevins  
Member, Senate  
Chair



Dana Harrington Conner  
At-Large Member  
Vice Chair

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As Chairs of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council, we are pleased to present the Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2016. The Annual Report highlights some of the DVCC's initiatives during the past year, as well as statistical information on domestic violence incidents and services throughout the State. The data is an important tool for informing policy decisions to best address domestic violence in our community and ensure that adequate resources are available for victims.

Through the work of the DVCC committees, the Council continues to advance its goals and meet its statutory responsibilities of addressing domestic violence issues in Delaware. One example is the Council's charge to promote effective prevention, intervention, and treatment techniques based on research and data collection. The Treatment Committee has spent the past year working with an independent consultant to evaluate the effectiveness of Delaware's batterers' intervention programs based upon research utilizing a 42-item scale designed to assess psychosocial change and recidivism data. The Legislative Committee reviewed and commented on domestic violence legislation in the General Assembly last session, and also advocated for several bills to improve the coordination between agencies, departments and the courts, and improve the response to domestic violence so as to reduce the incidents thereof. Those are just two of the committees' efforts to fulfill the Council's duties and I encourage you to review the work of the other committees highlighted in the report.

The DVCC could not accomplish its goals or meet its statutory duties without the dedication of all of the Council members, their agencies and the community partners. The DVCC provides a forum for issues to be addressed in a coordinated response to end violence in families and in the community, but without collaboration with our partners in law enforcement, the courts, healthcare, and the advocacy community, none of it would be possible.



# Council Members

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Hon. Patricia M. Blevins  
Member, Senate  
Chair

Dana Harrington Conner, Esq.  
At-Large Member  
Vice Chair

Carla Benson-Green  
Secretary, Dept. of  
Children, Youth & Family  
Services

Hon. Stephanie Bolden  
Member, House of  
Representatives

Hon. Catherine L. Cloutier  
Member, Senate

Hon. Robert M. Coupe  
Commissioner,  
Dept. of Correction

Dawn Culp, MSN, RN  
At-Large Member

Hon. Carl C. Danberg  
Judge, Court of  
Common Pleas

Hon. Matthew P. Denn  
Delaware Attorney  
General

Gretchen Gilchrist  
At-Large Member

Ms. Diane Glenn  
At-Large Member

Laura Graham  
At-Large Member

Matthew Hoffman, M.D.  
Representative,  
Health Care Community

Hon. Deborah D. Hudson  
Member, House of  
Representatives

Hon. Jan R. Jurden  
President Judge,  
Superior Court

Hon. James Mosley  
Secretary, Dept. of Safety  
& Homeland Security

Hon. Michael K. Newell  
Chief Judge,  
Family Court

Hon. Brendan J. O'Neill  
Chief Defender

Cpl./3 Adrienne Owen  
Representative,  
Law Enforcement  
Community

Hon. Vincent J. Poppiti  
At-Large Member

## DVCC Staff

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Ellie Torres  
Executive Director

Natasha Smith  
Senior Administrator

Aimee String  
Project Coordinator

Pat Kwetkauskie  
Trainer/Educator

Karen Ewing  
Administrative Specialist

Agency Main Number:  
302-255-0405



## Vision Statement

The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) is a state agency legislatively created to improve Delaware's response to domestic violence and sexual assault. The DVCC brings together all stakeholders including service providers, policy-level officials and community partners to eradicate domestic violence. The DVCC is committed to leading the nation through innovative legislative action, community education and an outstanding coordinated system response to violence in families and the community.

### Statutory duties of the DVCC (13 Del. C. § 2103)

- 
- Continuously study court services and procedures, law-enforcement procedures and protocol, and criminal justice data collection and analysis as it relates to domestic violence.
  - Effectuate coordination between agencies, departments and the courts with victims of domestic violence and abuse.
  - Promote effective prevention, intervention, and treatment techniques which will be developed based upon research and data collection.
  - Recommend standards for treatment programs for perpetrators of domestic violence to the Department of Health and Social Services, Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families and the Department of Correction.
  - Review and comment upon legislation relating to domestic violence introduced in the General Assembly at the request of any member of the General Assembly or on its own initiative.
  - Improve the response to domestic violence and abuse so as to reduce the incidents thereof.

# Committees

Much of our work is accomplished through committees made up of Council members, DVCC staff, first responders, service providers, policy-level officials, and community members. This collaborative approach has helped establish supportive ties in the community for victims of violence, identify areas of need, and implement policies and procedures that respond to those needs.

## **Children and Domestic Violence**

Chairs: Hon. Deborah D. Hudson and Hon. Carla Benson-Green

## **Criminal Justice**

Chairs: Hon. Jan Jurden and Hon. Brendan O'Neill

## **Elderly and Domestic Violence**

Chairs: Hon. Matthew P. Denn

## **Immigration**

Chair: Laura Graham, Esq.

## **Legislative Drafting and Review**

Chairs: Hon. Patricia M. Blevins and Hon. Matthew P. Denn

## **Medical**

Chairs: Matthew Hoffman, M.D. and Dawn Culp, MSN, RN

## **Public Awareness/Education**

Chair: Hon. Carl C. Danberg

## **Treatment**

Chairs: Hon. Brendan O'Neill and Hon. Robert Coupe



### **Additional DVCC Committees**

**Batterers' Intervention Certification Panel**

**Kent/Sussex Collaborative Working Group**

**Fatal Incident Review Team**

Chairs: Hon. Vincent J. Poppiti, Hon. Jan R. Jurden and Dana Harrington Conner, Esq.



## Children and Domestic Violence Committee

The Children and Domestic Violence Committee brings together representatives from the Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families (DSCYF), the General Assembly, Family Court, the Department of Justice, law enforcement, advocates and community partners to examine services and system gaps for children experiencing domestic violence.

In FY 2016, this committee discussed the possibility of legislative changes to the Code provisions regarding perpetrators of domestic violence. The Committee has discussed the current statute and will continue analyzing the legislation to determine if any changes are necessary in order to protect more of Delaware's children exposed to domestic violence.

In the upcoming year, the Committee will continue to examine current supports and gaps in services for children experiencing domestic violence.

## Criminal Justice Committee



The focus of the Criminal Justice Committee is to continuously review the system response to domestic violence and sexual assault in order to identify and implement improvements to the criminal justice system through policy development. This committee brings together law enforcement, the courts, the Chief Defender, the Department of Justice, the Department of Correction, DELJIS, advocates and community partners to resolve issues specific to the needs of those affected by domestic violence.

In 2016, this committee continued to work on the issue of default Protection from Abuse (PFA) orders on respondents who have failed to appear in court for a PFA hearing. As a result of the discussion, three large police agencies applied for grant funding to send additional law enforcement officers to serve difficult to locate respondents with PFA orders. The Committee has also worked on ways to more easily alert law enforcement officers that there is an unserved PFA order when they encounter a respondent in the course of their work. The Police Chiefs' Council has developed a protocol for serving respondents when law enforcement is made aware of the unserved order.

The Committee has also discussed the possibility of developing a domestic violence high risk team for the state. The purpose of the team would be to identify and provide a coordinated, multidisciplinary response to high-risk domestic violence cases. In the upcoming year, members of the Committee will continue to meet with stakeholders to determine the need and effectiveness of a domestic violence high risk team.





## Elderly and Domestic Violence Committee

The Committee is comprised of representatives from the Department of Justice, law enforcement, healthcare, advocates, and community partners including the Delaware Center for Justice, University of Delaware's Center for Drug and Alcohol Studies, and Adult Protective Services, Department of Health and Social Services. During FY 2016, the Committee continued to work on its goal to gather data and information to identify the safety needs of elderly victims of domestic violence. During meetings, the Committee learned about the private sector's holistic approaches to senior housing; free or low cost legal services provided to older Delawareans as well as the legal needs of seniors that are unmet; and current approaches to providing emergency, safe housing for elderly victims of domestic violence in New Castle County. The Committee also hosted a series of "listening sessions" throughout the state to learn from constituents about the unmet needs of elderly victims of domestic violence.

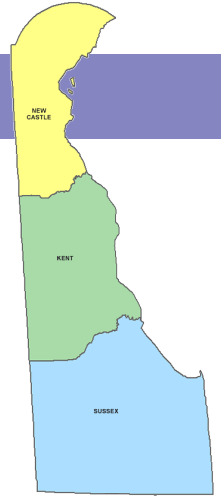
The dynamic "listening sessions" were attended by a wide range of participants including older Delawareans, family members and caregivers of older adults, community members, as well as professionals from the community. A member of the Committee used prescribed questions to facilitate guided discussions at each session. In addition, representatives from the Department of Justice, Adult Protective Services and police-based victim services provided information about their roles and their responses to older victims. Reoccurring themes that emerged during the sessions were the need to: provide education and promote awareness about domestic violence and the elderly; reduce seniors' risk factors for abuse including isolation; and expand the network of options for safe, temporary housing for elderly victims of domestic violence in order to reduce the potential for additional victimization by a family member who resides with the victim.

## Kent/Sussex Collaborative Working Group

In FY 2016, the Downstate Committee was re-launched as the Kent/Sussex Collaborative Working Group. The Working Group elected Diane Glenn, of Dover PD Victim Services as its chair. While the Working Group will continue to be an informational and networking group that is critical in bridging the gap between New Castle County and Kent/Sussex Counties, it has also established new working guidelines as outlined below:

- Work together collaboratively to identify the unique needs of domestic violence and sexual assault victims in Kent and Sussex Counties;
- Operate as a hub for service providers and interested parties to come together and problem solve about domestic violence and sexual assault related issues;
- Lead community-wide discussions and trainings to engage law enforcement, schools, and other community leaders as active prevention partners;
- Strengthen domestic violence and sexual assault victim service organizations throughout Delaware; and
- Create change through our collective voice.

The Working Group will identify the unique needs and issues specific to victims living in Kent and Sussex Counties by expanding the group membership in order to increase the number of voices at the table. Additionally, the Working Group has begun brainstorming about future projects and community outreach opportunities. The Committee is looking forward to collaborating on the 2016 Domestic Violence Forum to be held in Sussex County.





## Immigration Committee

Working with immigrant victims of domestic violence and sexual assault brings additional barriers and challenges. Immigrant victims often feel trapped in abusive relationships because of immigration laws, language barriers, social isolation, and lack of financial resources. A recent study in New York City found that 51 percent of intimate partner homicide victims were foreign-born, while 45 percent were born in the United States. The immigrant population is also less likely to report violence out of fear of law enforcement and deportation.

This Committee, made up of service providers, law enforcement, advocates, and survivors of domestic violence, openly discusses the additional barriers confronting immigrant victims and works to effectuate change. The Committee also maintains an open dialogue about the constantly changing laws, service issues and needs of immigrant victims.

In FY 2016, the committee mailed copies of the *Guide for Advocates Working with Immigrant Victims of Domestic Violence* to college wellness centers, libraries, service providers and other interested partners throughout the State of Delaware. The Guide provides practical tips and considerations to help advocates address the complex and unique needs of an immigrant victim including a list of both state and national resources. Each guide was accompanied by a cover letter offering training on a variety of immigration topics.

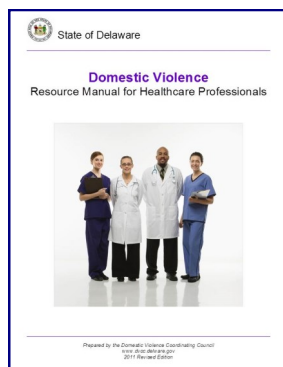
Additionally, the Immigration Committee collaborated with Christiana Care's Community Center of Excellence in Women's Health and Nanticoke Hospital's Forensic Nursing Program to bring a Domestic Violence Prevention Forum to the Hispanic community in Georgetown. The free event held in Spanish featured community resource tables, a performance by Art Fusion, a panel discussion with local service providers, childcare, refreshments and giveaways.



## Medical Committee

Domestic violence remains a challenge to the medical community and patients alike. Domestic violence diminishes a health care provider's ability to deliver effective care and is often the root cause of many problems providers encounter including headaches, pain syndromes, noncompliance with medication and multiple emergency room visits. Domestic violence may affect as many as 33% of female patients and their children, and up to 7.4% of male patients.

The Committee, made up of health care providers, advocates and service providers, acknowledges the profound difference that health care providers can make by universally screening for domestic violence and providing resources. The Committee seeks to provide accessible information and education to health care providers in Delaware regarding the screening and treatment of patients experiencing domestic violence.



The Committee continues to revise its *Domestic Violence Resource Manual for Healthcare Professionals* which was originally released in 2011 and widely praised for its comprehensive and collaborative approach. The updated Resource Manual will include new information about identifying and documenting strangulation. Information about the Lethality Assessment Protocol will also be added. The Committee revised its Domestic Violence Training for Healthcare Professionals. A careful review of past training evaluations led the Committee to include a deeper discussion about best practices in

screening for domestic violence and an opportunity to role play screening an individual. The revised training was approved by the Delaware Nurses Association for Continuing Education Credits.



## Legislative Drafting & Review Committee

The Legislative Drafting & Review Committee reviews proposed legislation addressing domestic violence and sexual assault issues and considers legislative initiatives to be supported by the DVCC. Participation on the Committee includes representatives from the General Assembly, the Department of Justice, the courts, law enforcement, advocates and community partners.

During Fiscal Year 2016, four bills that came through the Legislative Committee were passed by the General Assembly and have been signed into law. Those bills were:

- SB 55 extending ex parte PFA orders from 10 days to 15 days;
- SB 209 requiring that treatment for participants in the domestic violence first offenders program be through a DVCC certified treatment provider;
- SB 220 with SA 1 amending the DVCC statute regarding voting for chair and vice chair, and amending the Fatal Incident Review Team statute to expand membership, clarify the definition of near death, and requiring the Department of Justice, Department of Services for Children Youth and their Families and law enforcement notify the DVCC of DV-related homicides and near deaths; and
- HB 373 with HA 2 transferring misdemeanor criminal jurisdiction of domestic violence offenses between former spouses, couples with a child in common, and couples cohabitating without a child in common from the Court of Common Pleas to Family Court.



## Treatment Committee

Ensuring the quality and effectiveness of offender treatment is essential to promoting violence-free behavior and enhancing victim safety. The Treatment Committee develops and reviews batterers' intervention policies and procedures (Domestic Violence Intervention Standards) which mandate specific credentials, education and training for treatment service providers as well as outlining the components required for program content. The Intervention Standards seek to increase victim safety by eliminating violence in intimate relationships. Interventions focus on holding the offenders accountable for their behavior by teaching new skills and monitoring behavior while participating in intervention programs. The Committee continuously monitors changes in the field and focuses on providing the best treatment programs possible for the State of Delaware.

In Delaware and nationally, there has been discussion of domestic violence treatment programs and their ability to effectively treat domestic violence offenders. Over the past year, the Treatment Committee set out to perform a meaningful, precise and accurate evaluation that documents the success, identifies areas for improvement and makes recommendations for the certified treatment programs. The DVCC is collaborating with an independent contractor, Barbara Goldberg and Associates, Catholic Charities, CHILD Inc. and Turning Point at People's Place to conduct a treatment program evaluation that will utilize a combination of qualitative and quantitative data to assist in an effort to modify current operations to best meet the needs of individuals in treatment. The evaluation process is underway and will be completed in early 2017.

The Delaware Domestic Violence Intervention Standards require all certified treatment providers to obtain victim and offender centered training credits each year. In an effort to address concerns by treatment providers that it was difficult to obtain offender-centered training hours at affordable prices, the Committee brought training to Delaware. Lisa Young Larance, MSW, LMSW from the University of Michigan provided a free full-day training entitled, "Understanding and Addressing Women's Use of Force". Ms. Larance is a practitioner-researcher whose curricula, publications, trainings, and practice work focuses on meeting the needs of marginalized women and their families is widely known as one of the nation's leading experts on women's use of force. The presentation provided an overview of how women's use of force has become an issue, the language surrounding the issue, how women's use of force is different from men's battering behavior, emergent research in this area, and promising intervention practices.





## Batterers' Intervention Certification Panel

The Batterers' Intervention Certification Panel (Panel) is a subcommittee of the Treatment Committee. The Panel is responsible for overseeing and ensuring that treatment programs meet all specified requirements of the Domestic Violence Intervention Standards prior to being added to the list of Certified Treatment Programs. The Panel is made up of eleven members from designated agencies as prescribed by the Certification Rules and Procedures. The panelists include a representative from three of the certified treatment programs, a victim advocate from an agency or organization that works directly with domestic violence victims as well as representatives from Family Court, the Attorney General's office, Probation and Parole, Youth Rehabilitation Services, the Office of Defense Services, the Department of Correction's Treatment Unit, and a representative from Delaware Prevention and Behavioral Health Services with experience in adolescent development.

The Panel meets annually to review Certified Treatment Program's Annual Reports to ensure that programs remain in compliance with the Intervention Standards including compliance with all continuing education requirements for facilitators. This annual review process helps Delaware to maintain high quality and streamlined treatment services statewide.

Delaware currently has four certified programs which offer intervention treatment groups in numerous locations statewide.

**Catholic Charities**  
2601 West 4th Street  
Wilmington, DE 19805  
Phone: 302-655-9624  
Fax: 302-654-6432

**CHILD, Inc.**  
507 Philadelphia Pike  
Wilmington, DE 19809  
Phone: 302-762-8989  
Fax: 302-762-8987

**Dover Air Force Base**  
436 MDOS/SGOW  
Family Advocacy Program  
300 Tuskegee Blvd.  
Dover AFB, DE 19902

**Peoples Place II (Turning Point)**  
1129 Airport Road  
Milford, DE 19963  
Phone: 302-424-2420

The Domestic Violence Intervention Standards can be found at: <http://dvcc.delaware.gov/certinfo.shtml>.

## Public Awareness/Education Committee

The Public Awareness/Education Committee brings together representatives from the courts, law enforcement, healthcare, Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families, advocates and community partners to promote awareness and education about domestic violence and resources available to victims. During FY 2016, the Committee focused on providing information about teen dating violence, characteristics of healthy dating relationships, and resources available to teens. Interactive events which included theatrical performances, panel discussions and informational resource tables were conducted in two Delaware high schools - William Penn High School in New Castle and Early College High School in Dover. A total of 550 students and faculty participated in these events.

This coming year, the Committee will again plan and implement an interactive event for teens in a high school in Kent County and in New Castle County. In addition, the Committee will sponsor a poster contest that focuses on healthy relationships in the two high schools. The Committee will also coordinate its efforts with the Kent/Sussex Collaborative Working Group so that students in a Sussex County high school are afforded the same opportunity to participate in an interactive event and the poster contest.

Lastly, the Committee will oversee the distribution of Delaware Domestic Violence Resource posters to private and public high schools.





# Training & Education

Training and education fulfill an important function by increasing public awareness about domestic violence and sexual assault and the resources available to assist victims and their families. From July 2015 through June 2016, a total of 1,547 persons were trained. The DVCC provided 77 trainings for counseling professionals, peace officers, animal welfare services, judicial branch employees, victim advocates, schools, and members of the community. DVCC training and education activities included:

- DE Constables Academy (DTCC)
  - ContactLifeline, Inc. Staff & Volunteers - Statewide
  - Mediation Units - Statewide
  - DE Army National Guard - Sexual Assault Victim Advocates
  - Wilmington Health Planning Council - Health, Aging and Disabilities Committee
  - 2015 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Western Sussex Summit
  - Middletown Action Network
  - Woodlawn Library
  - Senior Listening Sessions - Wilmington, Newark, Dover, Georgetown, Lewes
  - DHSS Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Disabilities - Adult Protective Services Staff
- 

The DVCC also collaborates extensively with community partners statewide by participating in public awareness events. For example:

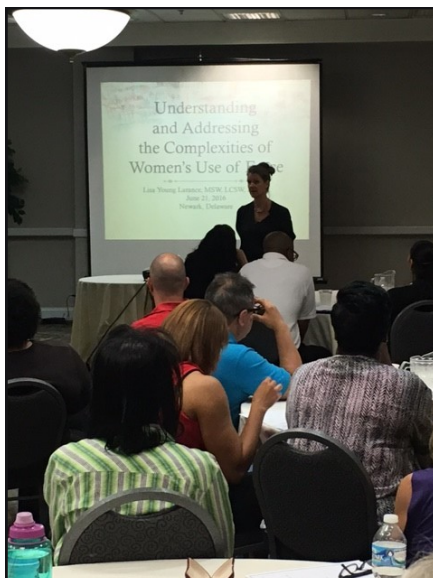
- Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims
- Family Fun Day – Thomas Edison Charter School
- Safe Summer Day – Kent County Levy Court
- Super Senators Day – Central Middle School
- DV Prevention Forums
- Veterans and their Families Resource Fair, Wilmington VA Medical Center
- Food Bank of Delaware Senior Health and Information Fair - Milford
- Community Awareness Day – First State Community Action Agency, Georgetown
- New Castle County Police Department Community Services Unit - *National Night Out*
- Wingman Day Health & Wellness Fair, Dover Air Force Base
- Recovery Month Rally - Rick Van Story Resource Center, Wilmington
- Safety Day – Houston Fire Department
- VRTF Victims' Rights Tribute – Dover
- My Health Matters Health Fair - Gateway House
- Freedom Festival – Middletown
- ADA 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Dover
- Food Bank of Delaware Mobile Pantry & Resource Fair – New Castle
- SAFETY FIRST Community Health & Wellness Expo, Dover Air Force Base
- Parenting Summit - Through the Word Bible Fellowship Church
- Prevention Field Day - Brandywine Counseling and Community Services, Wilmington
- World Elder Abuse Awareness Day – Wilmington, Newark, Dover, Georgetown
- Annual Delaware Law Enforcement Conference

In addition, the DVCC is invited by community partners to conduct interactive skill-building workshops for program participants. Workshop topics include understanding the dynamics of intimate partner violence including stalking and stalking using technology, safety planning, characteristics of health relationships, domestic violence as a risk factor for human trafficking, and when requested, positive parenting techniques. The DVCC has conducted workshops through:

- Beautiful Gate Outreach Center, Wilmington
- DE Mentoring Program Pre Release Classes, Baylor Women's Correctional Institution
- Mary Mother of Hope House I, Wilmington
- YWCA Home Life Management Center, Wilmington



Statewide Domestic Violence Prevention Forums  
William Penn High School and Early College High School



*Understanding and Addressing the Complexities of Women's Use of Force* conducted by Lisa Young Larance, MSW, LMSW from Michigan



## Promoting Healthy Relationships to Delaware's Tweens and Teens and the Public

The DVCC engaged in a range of activities to encourage healthy relationships and promote awareness about dating violence to tweens, teens and adults in Delaware. These activities were primarily in February, during Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month, and included workshops on characteristics in healthy dating relationships, establishing and communicating boundaries, as well as digital abuse and safety. In addition, DVCC conducted interactive resource tables during student lunch periods.

During FY 2016, the DVCC conducted 21 teen dating violence awareness and prevention education activities and reached more than 1,058 tweens, teens and young adults throughout Delaware. DVCC's school-related activities were hosted by:

- Springer Middle School
- Lake Forest High School
- Polytech High School
- Christiana High School
- Glasgow High School
- Smyrna High School
- Milford High School
- High Roads School
- Woodbridge High School
- St. Mark's High School
- Hodgson Vocational Technical
- Seaford High School

The DVCC enhanced its efforts to promote healthy relationships and prevent patterns of dating violence and partnered with the *safe + respectful* program at CHILD Inc. in New Castle County and the *REAL Relationships* program from Turning Point at People's Place in Kent and Sussex Counties to co-host the 2016 *RelationshipRespectDE Instagram Contest*. High school students throughout Delaware were invited to utilize Instagram or email to submit a photo and descriptive caption that represented Acceptance, Trust, Equality, or Communication – all characteristic of a healthy relationship. Eighty-four (84) students from 13 public, charter and private high schools entered the contest. The top three entries and an honorable mention were awarded prizes.

The DVCC also had an opportunity to promote awareness and provide information about the impact of dating violence on teens and their health during the Wilmington Health Planning Council's Health, Aging and Disabilities Committee meeting which was televised on WITN Channel 22.

Lastly, DVCC joined staff from the Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence to conduct workshops for teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, wellness center staff, community educators and partners during the 2015 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Western Sussex Summit hosted by the Woodbridge School District. The workshops covered information on Delaware's School Teen Dating Violence and Sexual Assault Act (a.k.a. the Liane Sorenson Act); the *Guidelines for Responding to Teen Dating Violence and Sexual Violence in Delaware Schools*; and on-line training on response to teen dating violence and sexual violence available through the Delaware Department of Education Professional Development Management System.

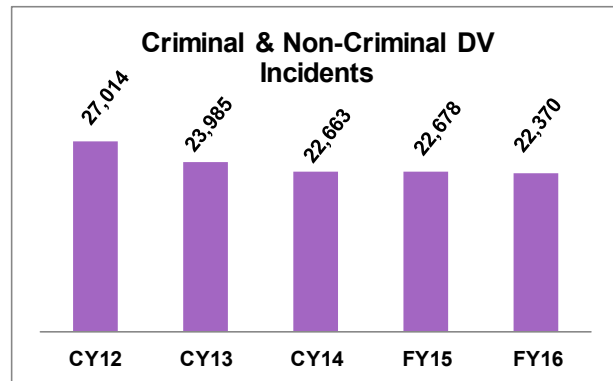


## Domestic Violence Statistics

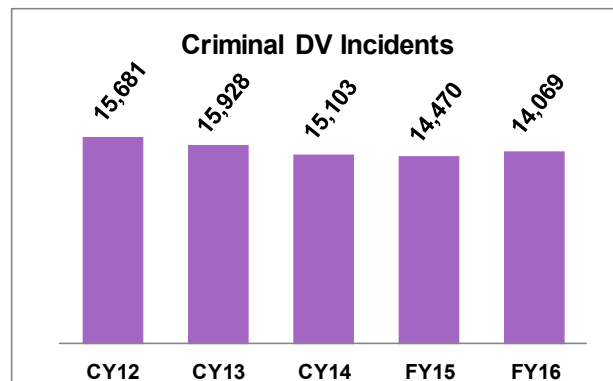
In FY 2016, there were a total of 22,370 combined criminal and non-criminal domestic violence incidents reported in Delaware.

Criminal domestic violence incidents are those in which a crime is committed or alleged.

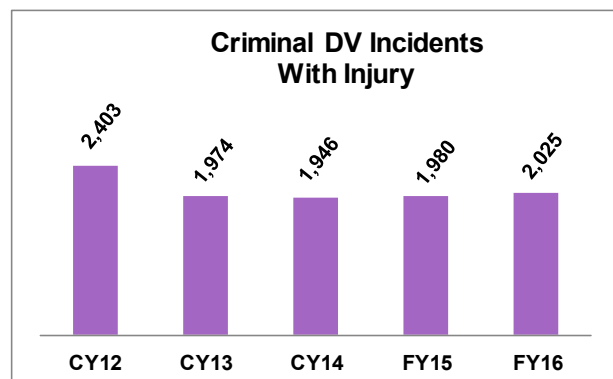
Non-criminal domestic violence incidents are those in which there is police contact, but no crime was alleged, e.g., a verbal argument without any threats.



In FY 2016, the total number of reported domestic violence criminal incidents was 14,069.



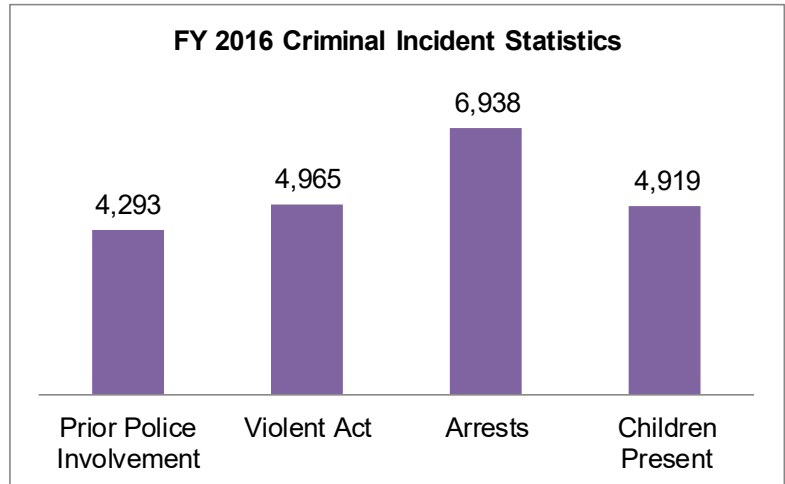
Of the 14,069 reported domestic violence criminal incidents in FY 2016, 2,025 resulted in physical injury to the victim.





## Domestic Violence Statistics

- In FY 2016, 30% of domestic violence incidents had prior police involvement.
- In FY 2016, 35% of domestic violence incidents involved a violent act.
- In FY 2016, 49% of domestic violence incidents resulted in an arrest.
- In FY 2016, children were present in 34% of domestic violence incidents.



### **Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP)**

Delaware adopted a Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP) in late 2010. The LAP provides an easy and effective method to identify victims of domestic violence who are at the highest potential for being seriously injured or killed by an intimate partner. A risk assessment is completed by law enforcement at the scene of a domestic violence incident, and the victim is put in contact with the domestic violence hotline immediately for safety planning purposes.

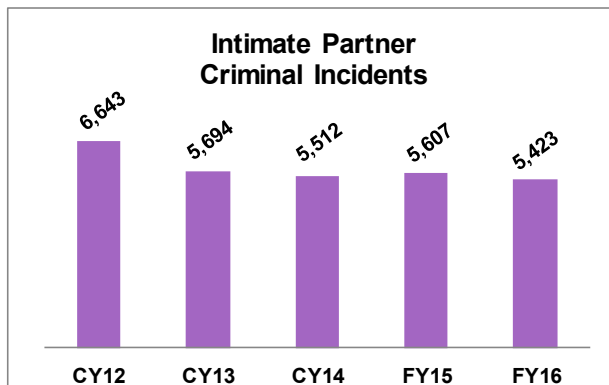
Three years after adopting the LAP, the statistics indicated that it was not being effectively or consistently utilized by the 43 police agencies that write domestic violence reports in Delaware. In Calendar Year 2013, law enforcement completed the risk assessment **only 40% of the time** when writing a domestic violence report that qualified under the protocol.

To increase usage of the LAP, the Department of Safety and Homeland Security hired a Domestic Violence Risk Analyst in 2013 to re-launch the LAP by training law enforcement officers statewide on the protocol. The Delaware Capitol Police received a grant through the Criminal Justice Council, under the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program to support this initiative. Since beginning the training in 2014, the DV Risk Analyst has conducted **48 training sessions in 27 agencies to over 543 officers** and the utilization of the LAP has dramatically increased. In 2015, the completion rate was up to **71%** and the first six months of 2016 indicate a completion rate of **78%**.

In addition to the re-launch of the LAP, Capitol Police and the Domestic Violence Risk Analyst collaborated with the courts and community partners to develop a web-based referral program for high risk cases. The Domestic Violence Intervention Program (VIP) allows anyone to make a referral for a domestic violence victim to receive police accompaniment to a court hearing in any of the three counties. A link to the VIP is: <http://capitolpd.delaware.gov/>.

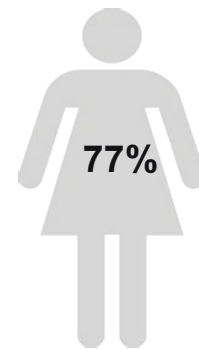
## Intimate Partner Criminal Statistics

Incidents of domestic violence can be perpetrated against an intimate partner or a family member. Intimate partners can include current and former spouses, current and former dating couples with or without a child in common and teen dating couples. Intimate partners may be the same gender.

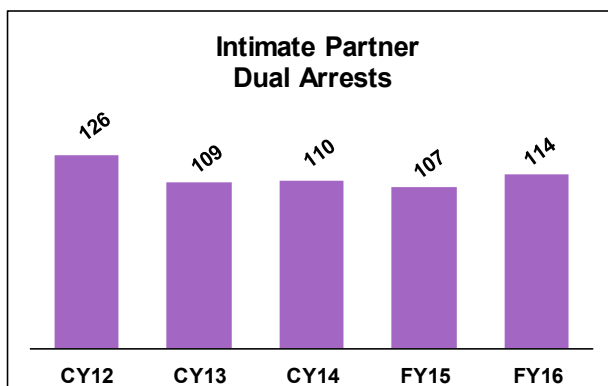


In FY 2016, of the 14,069 criminal incidents reported, 5,423 were between intimate partners.

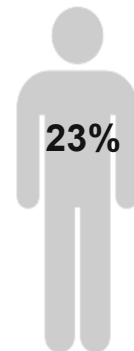
Of those reports in FY 2016, 978 indicated physical injury to the victim.



Of the intimate partner criminal incidents reported, 77% of the victims were female for FY 2016.



Dual arrests occur when police officers arrest both intimate partners involved in a domestic violence incident. In 2016, there were 114 dual arrests made by law enforcement.



## Protection From Abuse Statistics

An order of protection from abuse (PFA) is a civil order issued by the Family Court that provides protection from harm by a family or household member. In addition to family and household members, persons living separate and apart with a child in common, or persons in a current or former substantive dating relationship may file for a PFA. The Court may order the abuser to stay away from the person being abused, provide exclusive use of the home or possessions, award temporary custody, child support or spousal support, or payment of expenses. Additionally, the offender may be ordered to surrender firearms, or to seek treatment from a certified Batterers' Intervention Program.

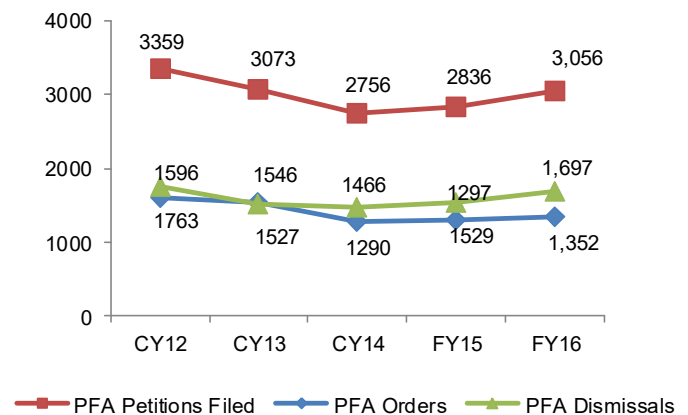
Upon a finding that aggravating circumstances exist, the Court may grant no contact relief for as long as reasonably necessary to prevent further acts of abuse or domestic violence up to and including a permanent, or lifetime, order.

In FY 2016, there were 67 lifetime PFA orders issued that were still in effect at the end of the fiscal year.

### Lifetime Orders

New Castle County:	32
Kent County:	23
Sussex County:	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>

- In FY 2016, Family Court processed 3,056 PFA petitions statewide. Of those petitions filed, 1,352 orders were issued and 1,697 petitions were dismissed.



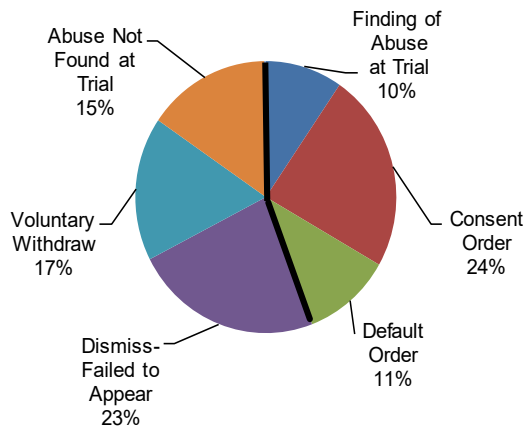
A PFA petition can be dismissed for one of three reasons:

- The petitioner failed to appear for the hearing;
- The petitioner voluntarily withdrew the petition before the hearing; or
- Abuse was not found by a preponderance of evidence following a hearing.

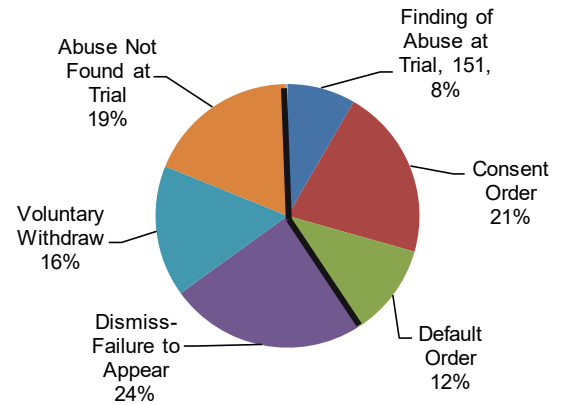
A PFA order can be issued by Family Court in one of three ways:

- The Court finds by a preponderance of the evidence following a hearing that domestic violence has occurred;
- The respondent consents to the entry of a protective order; or
- A default order is entered when the respondent fails to appear for a hearing after proper notice.

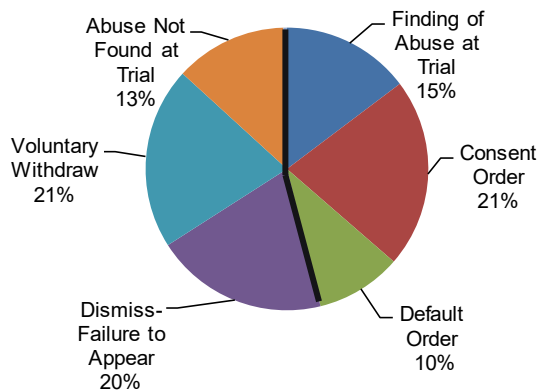
### FY 2016 Statewide PFA Outcomes



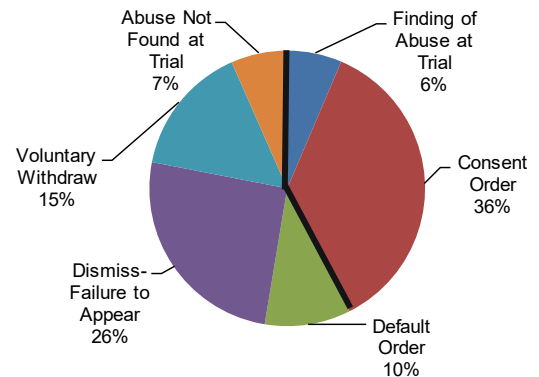
### FY 2016 NCC PFA Outcomes



### FY 2016 Kent PFA Outcomes



### FY 2016 Sussex PFA Outcomes



## **Family Court Enhancement Project**

In November 2013, Delaware Family Court was one of four courts nationwide to be selected to participate in the Family Court Enhancement Project (FCEP). The FCEP was created by the United States Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) with the goal of determining what family court procedures, practices, and structures related to custody and visitation can help keep victims of domestic violence and their children safe from further violence and trauma. The project is a collaboration with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the Battered Women's Justice Project, the Center for Court Innovation, and the National Institute for Justice.

The project launched in Delaware in the spring of 2014 with the national partners and a diverse selection of local individuals and organizations interested in issues of child custody and domestic violence. By the fall of 2014, goals and objectives were established and two subcommittees created. The Access to Justice Subcommittee is focused on evaluating and enhancing front-end resources for self-represented litigants in domestic violence-related parenting time and custody cases. The Differentiation Subcommittee is focused on developing a knowledge base regarding the impact of domestic violence on custody decision making. Both subcommittees are working to identify gaps in the current system; develop recommendations for training, case processing, resource development, evaluation and technical assistance; and submit recommendations to the Court.

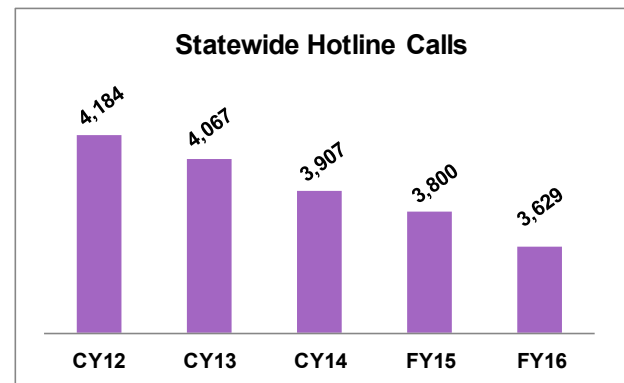


## Domestic Violence Hotline Statistics

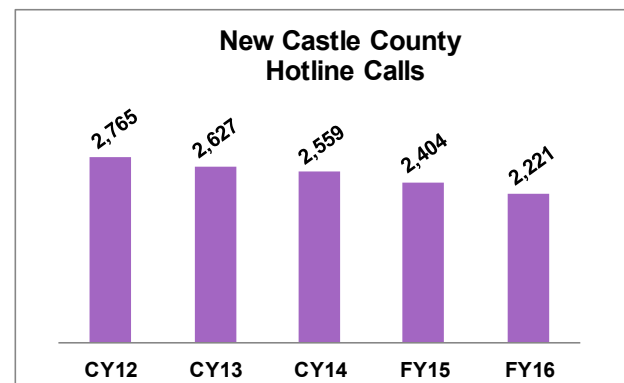
The Domestic Violence Hotlines are an important resource available to victims of domestic violence in Delaware. The hotlines, which are available in all three counties, are confidential and available 24 hours a day/7 days a week. Hotlines are staffed by trained professionals who assist in safety planning, offer emergency shelter when appropriate and refer victims to available resources. Services are available for victims who do not speak English and to those who are hearing impaired.

In FY 2016, there were a total of 3,629 calls received by the Domestic Violence Hotlines statewide.

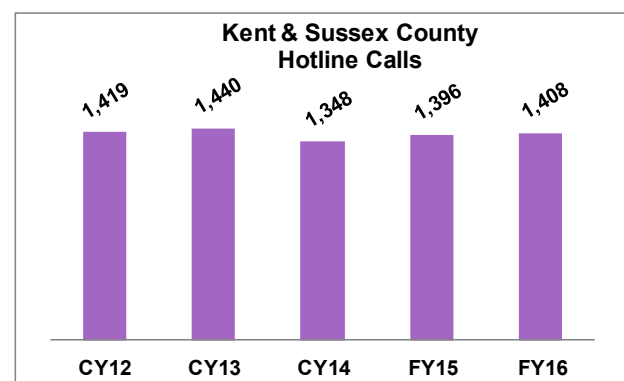
Over a five year span, the average number of hotline calls is 3,995 per year.



In FY 2016, there were 2,221 calls to the Domestic Violence Hotline in New Castle County.



In FY 2016, there were a total of 1,408 calls to the Domestic Violence Hotlines in Kent and Sussex Counties.

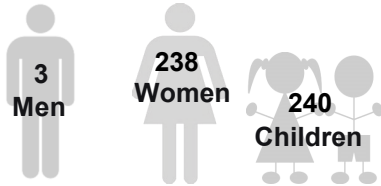


## Shelter Statistics

Two agencies, CHILD, Inc. and People's Place, offer shelter and transitional housing in confidential locations throughout Delaware. In addition to providing emergency shelter in a trauma-informed setting, domestic violence shelters offer safety planning, case management, advocacy, counseling, child care, job assistance and more.

### Statewide

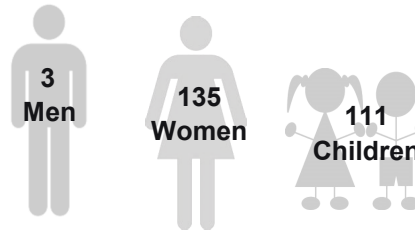
481 individuals were sheltered statewide



A 7% increase in the number of individuals sheltered from FY 2015.

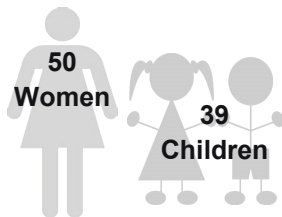
### New Castle County

249 individuals were sheltered in New Castle County



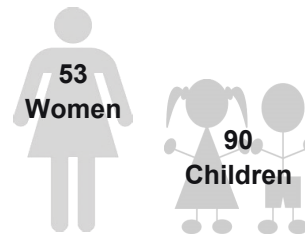
### Kent County

89 individuals were sheltered in Kent County



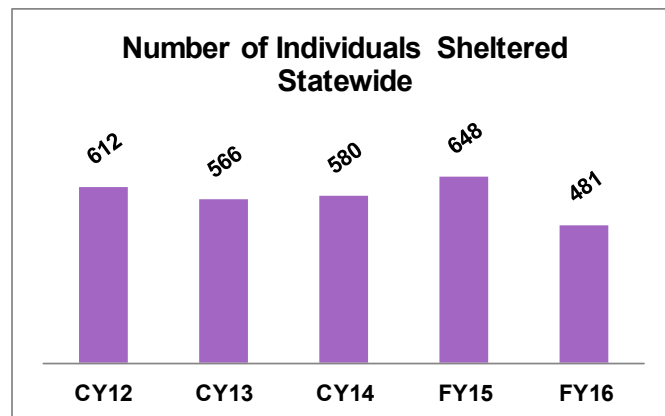
### Sussex County

143 individuals were sheltered in Sussex County



*"There is nothing but support at People's Place. The shelter staff are amazing. They are always asking if you need anything. Always there to listen and be supportive. People's Place has been my light, when all I saw was darkness. I was a stranger in need and the staff there made me feel right at home!"*

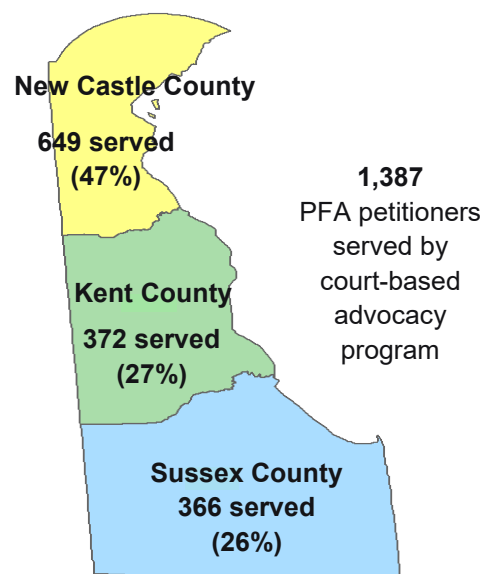
-Survivor in Shelter



Shelter was provided for 481 individuals during FY 2016.

## Domestic Violence Court-Based Advocacy Program

The Domestic Violence Advocacy Programs provide free services to help intimate partner victims of domestic violence navigate their way through the court system. CHILD, Inc. is the statewide provider of these services with an advocate located at the Family Court in each county. CHILD, Inc. trains advocates to assist victims with safety planning, answer questions about the court process, file petitions and provide a supportive presence at court hearings.



## Legal Services for Victims

Community Legal Aid Society, Inc. (CLASI) provides legal services for victims of domestic violence in Kent and Sussex Counties. In Calendar Year 2015, CLASI handled 354 cases for victims of domestic violence. This was a decrease from 411 cases in 2014. Of the 354 cases, 270 were PFA cases, 41 custody cases, 15 divorce cases, and 21 child support cases.

Delaware Volunteer Legal Services (DVLS) provides free representation in New Castle County to indigent victims of domestic violence. In 2015, pro bono attorneys represented 243 victims through the PFA Pro Bono Program in obtaining protection orders. Pro bono attorneys also represented 97 other clients with PFA matters, custody/visitation and divorce matters. In-house staff and contract attorneys handled another 189 cases for victims including PFA matters, custody and divorce. In-house staff attorneys also provided advice or brief services to an additional 117 victims of domestic violence on PFA, custody and divorce matters.

The Delaware Civil Clinic at Widener University School of Law provides practical legal experience to law students admitted to the limited practice of law, pursuant to Delaware Supreme Court Rule 56. The interns are directly responsible for their client's cases, under the close supervision of the program's director and a staff attorney. In 2015, interns represented 21 victims of domestic violence living below the poverty level in seeking civil orders of protection from abuse, child custody and/or visitation.

## Family Visitation Centers Statistics

Family Visitation Centers provide safe, supervised visits between visiting parents and their children at the centers, as well as supervised exchanges of children between parents for off-site visits. Visitation Centers are designed for families with a history of violence, including intimate partner violence, or in other situations when there is concern for the child's welfare. Families are most often referred by Family Court or the Division of Family Services (DFS), but families may also self-refer. The centers are structured to promote safety for families to include staggered arrival and departure times for parents, and separate entrances for parents. Family Visitation Centers employ experienced security guards for the safety of children and parents. The centers are equipped with age appropriate toys, games, crafts and the like. Trained staff support parents in engaging children in activities and positive interactions.

The Delaware Family Visitation Program is a federal and state funded program for the operation of the Family Visitation Centers. The Delaware Department of Health and Social Services/Division of State Service Centers (DHSS/DSSC) administers the program on a contractual basis with CHILD, Inc. and Turning Point at People's Place. The five centers in Delaware are located at the Belvedere State Service Center in Wilmington, the Hudson State Service Center in Newark, the Dover Center in Dover, the Milford State Service Center in Milford, and the Adams State Service Center in Georgetown.

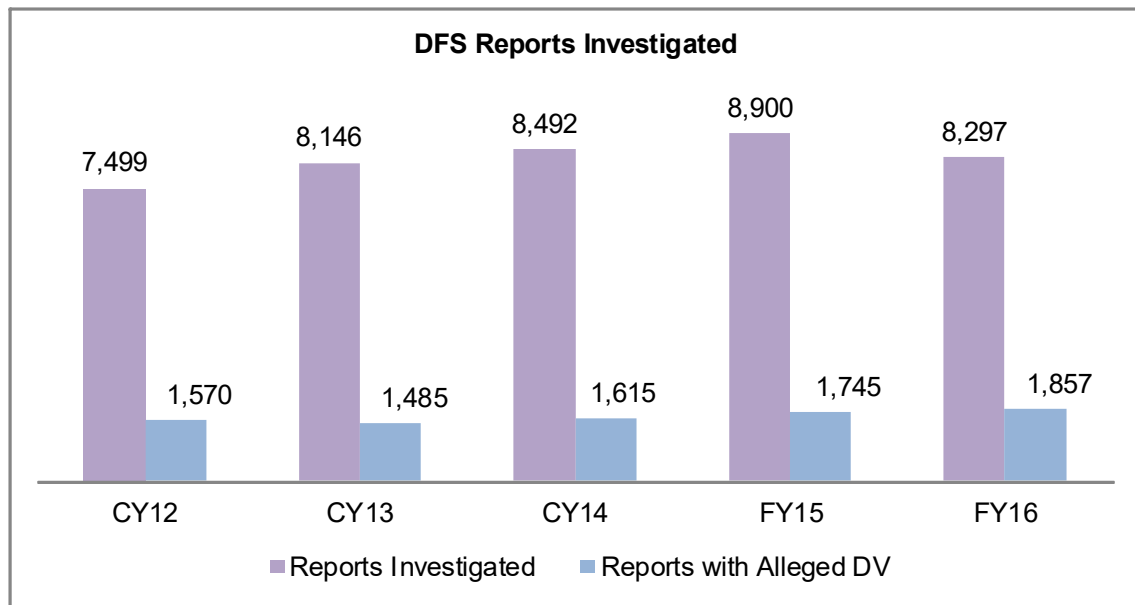
In 2012, DHSS/DSSC, in collaboration with CHILD, Inc. became the recipient of the U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) Safe Haven: Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Grant Program. The objective of the grant is to establish a new Family Visitation Center in the Middletown/Odessa/Townsend area (the Safe Haven Visitation Center) using the guiding principles of Safe Havens Program. The goal of the Safe Haven Visitation Center is to increase children's physical and emotional safety while facilitating visitation and exchanges; and providing for the safety of adult victims and other parties in cases of domestic violence. With the award of this grant, a core group committee was established comprised of representatives from DHSS/DSSC, Family Court, DSCYF/DFS, Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the DVCC, and CHILD, Inc. who will provide the visitation services. This committee is presently searching for a suitable location for the center and composing policies and procedures that are in line with the guiding principles. The Safe Haven Center will be staffed for approximately 26.5 hours per week (Wednesday, Friday and Sunday) and will serve a minimum of 50 families per week.

	<b>CHILD, Inc. New Castle County</b>	<b>People's Place Kent &amp; Sussex County</b>	<b>Statewide</b>
Visitation Exchanges:	195	991	1186
Group Visits:	389	960	1349
Individual Supervised Visits:	1058	1053	2111
Children Served:	258	207	465
Parent/Caregivers Served:	288	273	561



## Division of Family Services Statistics

The Division of Family Services (DFS) screens for domestic violence when an allegation of child abuse or neglect is reported to the DFS hotline. In FY 2016, DFS received 20,754 reports alleging child abuse or neglect. Of those, 8,297 (43%) were accepted for investigation. Of those reports accepted for investigation, 1,857 (20.8%) also alleged domestic violence. A total of 825 investigations were substantiated and 303 of the substantiated cases included a finding of domestic violence.



*"I was ashamed of my situation, but she made it so easy for me to feel comfortable to express every concern that I had. She pointed me in the right direction to free myself from being victimized."*

Client regarding DV Liaison

Since 2002, domestic violence advocates from CHILD, Inc. and the SAFE Program of People's Place have been located at DFS to assist victims referred by DFS. These DFS advocates provide safety planning and advocacy services and continue to work with the victims as needed. SAFE Program's *Making Cents* financial literacy program had 124 survivors participate.

### New Castle County

#### CHILD, Inc.

Victims Served by  
DFS Liaisons: 143

### Kent County

#### People's Place

Victims Served by  
DFS Liaisons: 66

### Sussex County

#### People's Place

Victims Served by  
DFS Liaisons: 45

\* Substantiated means that following an investigation, DFS found support for the allegation of maltreatment or risk of maltreatment.

## Services for Children Exposed to Domestic Violence

Trauma-informed therapeutic services are essential to help children who have witnessed domestic violence recover from the trauma it causes. Counselors providing these clinical services use age appropriate techniques, including play therapy for younger children. Safety planning, working through feelings related to the violence, and developing skills to break the intergenerational cycle of violence are the focus of this healing therapy. In New Castle County, services are provided by CHILD, Inc. In Kent and Sussex Counties, Turning Point at People's Place provides these services to children.

### **New Castle County**

#### **Helping Children Heal (CHILD, Inc.)**

Children/Adolescents Served:	87
Parent/Caretakers Served:	152
<b>Total:</b>	<b>239</b>

### **Kent & Sussex Counties**

#### **Turning Point (People's Place)**

Children/Adolescents Served:	103
Parent/Caretakers Served:	38
<b>Total:</b>	<b>141</b>

The Child Development Community Policing (CD-CP) Program provides immediate post-trauma counseling and referrals to children who have been impacted by witnessing homicides, rapes, assaults, domestic violence and other life threatening events. The CD-CP provides its services through collaboration between the Wilmington Police Department and the DSCYF's Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services.

Some families referred to the program declined services or were already receiving clinical services. All of the families received written information about reactions to trauma as well as information about resources.

DV referrals:	182
Children receiving DV clinical services:	131

## Treatment Program Statistics

In FY 2016, there were four certified treatment providers offering batterers' intervention programs in Delaware. Each of these programs followed the guidelines established through the *Domestic Violence Intervention Standards* and were certified by the DVCC Batterers' Intervention Certification Panel. The four programs are Catholic Charities and CHILD, Inc. in New Castle County; Turning Point at People's Place in Kent and Sussex Counties; and the Dover Air Force Base offering treatment to military personnel only. Batterers' Intervention is court ordered in criminal cases, and the Family Court can also order PFA respondents to be evaluated to determine if treatment is appropriate.

### Program Participation Statistics

	Catholic Charities		CHILD, Inc.		Peoples Place II	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Probation Evaluated:	63	6	134	34	201	31
With PFA Order Evaluated:	15	0	37	12	42	6
Self Referrals:	0	0	10	3	5	0
Court Ordered:	8	6	31	26	13	9
Group Intervention:	75	6	255	53	258	39
Completed Intervention:	58	3	149	37	168	28
Total Number Served:	123	6	388	133	383	72

Note: 2016 data was not available for Dover Air Force Base.



## **Supervised Domestic Violence Offender Data**

Probation and Parole has a specialized Domestic Violence Unit in each county with probation officers specially trained in the dynamics of domestic violence. Domestic violence cases are assigned to the DV Unit based upon criteria including offense, victim/offender relationship, and active PFA orders. The philosophy of the Probation and Parole DV Unit is to hold the offender accountable and maintain victim safety. In addition, Victim Service Agents are available to serve as liaisons between victims and probation officers and provide guidance through the criminal justice system once an offender is placed on community supervision.

### **New Castle County Domestic Violence Supervision**

Number of DV Offenders Supervised:	443
Number of Probation Officers Assigned to DV Cases	9
Probationer/Probation Officer Ratio	49:1
Number of Victims Served by Victim Service Agents:	122

### **Kent County Domestic Violence Supervision**

Number of DV Offenders Supervised:	229
Number of Probation Officers Assigned to DV Cases	6
Probationer/Probation Officer Ratio	38:1
Number of Victims Served by Victim Service Agents:	201

### **Sussex County Domestic Violence Supervision**

Number of DV Offenders Supervised:	350
Number of Probation Officers Assigned to DV Cases	5
Probationer/Probation Officer Ratio	70:1
Number of Victims Served by Victim Service Agents:	0

# Fatal Incident Review Team Report

The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council's Fatal Incident Review Team (FIRT) was established by statute in 1996 and became the first statewide team in the country. FIRT members are dedicated professionals who conduct system audits of State agencies and private organizations that had contact with the victim and/or the perpetrator to assess the system's response. Although domestic violence fatality reviews are retrospective in nature, their purpose is prospective. Reviews focus on identifying trends, patterns and obstacles in services, assessing agency interventions, and most importantly, developing practical recommendations aimed at improving the system and preventing future injury and death. In 2009, the General Assembly granted FIRT the authority to conduct near-death reviews. These reviews enhance the team's ability to improve Delaware's response to domestic violence with the wealth of knowledge that can be gained from speaking directly with the domestic violence survivor about the incident, the history of violence, system involvement, and awareness of resources.

The supplemental *2016 Fatal Incident Review Team (FIRT) Annual Report* is available online at the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council website ([www.dvcc.delaware.gov](http://www.dvcc.delaware.gov)) This report provides a summary of the Review Team's activities and accomplishments over the last year; statistical data for the domestic violence fatalities that occurred in calendar year 2015; information and recommendations from the death and near-death cases reviewed by FIRT in 2015.

## **Chairs:**

Hon. Jan Jurden,  
President Judge, Superior Court

Dana Harrington Conner,  
At-Large Member

Hon. Vincent Poppiti,  
At-Large Member

## **Staff Information:**

Natasha Smith  
302-255-0408  
[Natasha.Smith@state.de.us](mailto:Natasha.Smith@state.de.us)

## **Fatal Incident Review Team Report**

**2016**

This report is dedicated to the domestic violence victims who lost their lives. The Fatal Incident Review Team honors the memory of those lost and strives to create a safer community through our work.



# Safety Planning

- Domestic violence is NOT just violence leading to physical injuries. It is a pattern of abusive behavior used to gain control over another person that can include: threats, emotional, sexual or economic abuse; intimidation; deprivation; social isolation or repeated battering and injury.
- Over time the violence usually becomes more frequent and more severe. It does not go away without intervention.
- Children can be devastated by domestic violence. They are hurt by seeing or hearing the violence and they are more likely to be the victims of violence if you are being abused.
- Although you do not have control over your partner's violence, you DO have a choice about how to respond to him/her and how to best get yourself and your children to safety.

## 24-Hour Domestic Violence Hotlines & Shelters

**New Castle County 302-762-6110**

**NCC Bi-Lingual 302-762-6110**

**Northern Kent County 302-678-3886**

**Kent & Sussex County 302-422-8058**

**Bi-Lingual 302-745-9874**

### **To increase your safety and the safety of your children:**

- Have important numbers accessible to you and your children (i.e., 911, family members etc.).
- Ask a neighbor to be aware of suspicious activity in your home.
- Plan an escape route in case of an emergency and practice the plan with your children.
- Think in advance of where you may be able to go with your children in a hurry.
- Leave extra money, car keys, clothing and copies of documents with someone you trust.
- Call a Domestic Violence Hotline for assistance in planning.

### **If you leave the relationship:**

- Obtain a Protection From Abuse (PFA) Order and keep a copy with you at all times. Keep extra copies in your car, at school, work and/or with someone you trust. Remember-leaving your batterer is a very dangerous time!
- Notify all childcare providers if your partner has been restricted from seeing the children in addition to who has permission to pick up your children.
- Change the locks and make sure all outside lights are working.
- Have your calls screened at work and use an answering machine to screen your calls at home.
- Avoid places where your partner knows you will be (grocery stores, banks, etc.)
- When you feel down and ready to return to the relationship, call a support group, hotline or someone you trust.

**If you are in danger, please call 911.**

## **Domestic Violence/Rape Crisis 24-Hour Hotline Numbers**

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### **New Castle County**

Domestic Violence	302-762-6110
Bi-Lingual	302-762-6110
Rape Crisis	1-800-773-8570
TTY	1-800-232-5460

### **Northern Kent**

Domestic Violence	302-678-3886
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### **Kent & Sussex**

Domestic Violence	302-422-8058
Rape Crisis	1-800-262-9800
Bi-lingual	302-745-9874

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### **Capitol Police - Domestic Violence Intervention Program**

<http://capitolpd.delaware.gov>

## **DVCC Main Office**

New Castle County Courthouse  
Suite 700  
500 N. King Street  
Wilmington, DE 19801

Phone: 302-255-0405

Fax: 302-255-2236

[www.dvcc.delaware.gov](http://www.dvcc.delaware.gov)

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## **DVCC Kent & Sussex County Office**

Milford State Service Center  
Suite 105  
13 S. W. Front Street  
Milford, DE 19963

Phone: 302-424-7238

Fax: 302-424-5311

[www.dvcc.delaware.gov](http://www.dvcc.delaware.gov)



# Domestic Violence Coordinating Council

[www.dvcc.delaware.gov](http://www.dvcc.delaware.gov)