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# AGENDA REPORT

**TO:** DEANNA J. SANTANA  
CITY ADMINISTRATOR

**FROM:** Sean Whent  
Interim Chief of Police

**SUBJECT:** Informational Report on Domestic Violence

**DATE:** May 17, 2013

City Administrator  
Approval

*Deanna J. Santana*

Date

6/10/13

**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** City-wide

## RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council accept this informational report from the Oakland Police Department on the state of Domestic Violence in the City of Oakland.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Domestic Violence Unit (DVU) is part of the Criminal Investigation Division, Family Investigative Section. Other units in the Family Investigative Section are the Special Victims Unit (SVU) and the Vice & Child Exploitation Unit (CEU). These units often work closely together as the nature of the cases causes the investigations to overlap.

The DVU is responsible for the investigation of all domestic violence-related criminal cases (physical and sexual), physical elder abuse, and all violations of DV and non-DV court restraining orders. The domestic violence-related cases range from felony physical assaults to misdemeanor spousal battery, thefts, harassing phone calls, and threats. In summary, any and all criminal offenses, with the exception of a homicide, that occurs in the City of Oakland, which qualifies as domestic violence, or involves any court restraining order is investigated by the unit. The DVU is one of the highest volume investigative units within the Oakland Police Department.

The Departmental Subject Matter Expert (SME) is Officer Randy White. He is often called upon to lecture and teach the subject of domestic violence for various DV symposiums, law schools, non-profit organizations and the district attorney's office. Officer White also conducts ongoing and updated training to OPD staff.

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There are approximately 4,255 open and active DV cases. An absolute number is difficult to present because there is a variety of reported crimes that involve domestic violence, or a threat of domestic violence. As stated earlier, it is not uncommon to receive drive-by shootings, robberies, and auto thefts with a DV component.<sup>1</sup> The DVU receives an average of approximately 500-600 incoming reports per month.

In February 2009, the DVU had a substantial backlog of approximately 2,500 unassigned domestic violence cases. This backlog was created from a combination of the sheer volume of reports generated through OPD, reports received from the State and community caregivers and compounded by an ever reducing number of assigned investigators.

By April of 2009, the DVU increased its staffing from 7 to 10 full-time investigators each averaging 200-400 open cases. The increase in DVU staffing allowed investigators to fully investigate priority cases, and also investigate cases that may not have received the amount of attention, due to the previous lack of resources. As a result, the DVU was able to investigate complex cases, such as those involving search warrants and repeat offenders. The investigators were also able to work a manageable caseload. Prior to this staffing increase, the investigators were forced to only work on in-custody or priority violent felony cases.

Since 2009, the staffing has steadily decreased from 10 investigators to 6 or 5.5 as one investigator also investigates elder physical abuse part time. There were nearly 700 more reported cases of domestic violence in 2012 than in 2009. This may be in direct correlation with the training, community outreach and education accomplished between the DVU and our partnerships with the Family Justice Center (FJC).

### OUTCOME

As a result of these staffing decreases and the subsequent increases in the amount of DV related cases, there is currently a backlog of 4,255 open domestic violence cases or 700+ cases per the 6-assigned investigators. The impact of not having adequate investigative resources causes the DVU to only address in-custody cases and very serious out of custody cases.

In an effort to reduce the backlog of cases, the DVU must increase its staffing levels to effectively and efficiently investigate the current DV cases, as well as reduce the backlog of older cases. Only through proper staffing of the DVU can OPD ensure that victims of domestic violence receive adequate services. The lack of proper staffing has historically led to a decline in case clearance and service to the public.

The DVU is in need of additional resources to include:

- **Bilingual investigators:** There is currently one bilingual investigator (Spanish) in the unit. As Oakland's population increases, the likelihood for the need of bilingual translation is acute.

### **BACKGROUND/LEGISLATIVE HISTORY**

There was an agenda report presented in 2009, which brought to light the state of the DVU. Specifically, it presented the current caseload and number of investigators available to address those cases. As a result, increased staffing for DVU became a priority to OPD and the City of Oakland. The number of investigators was increased and the backlog of cases was addressed. Additionally, strong partnerships were formed with the DVU and FJC to address the needs victim and family unit.

### **ANALYSIS**

The issues outlined in this report are designed to inform, as well as make recommendations to reduce the backlog of DVU cases to a manageable level; all in line with industry standards, while ensuring that complete, accurate, and victim-centered investigations are conducted. The strategic goal is to provide appropriate police services to victims, connect them to the appropriate service providers, apprehend offenders, and lead to successful prosecutions.

#### *Plan for Ongoing Operations and Maintenance*

The Department has already begun to implement some of the strategies outlined in this report; however, these new systems cannot be maintained without adequate staffing. Once the backlog has been reduced to a manageable level, it will be crucial to ensure staffing levels are not reduced again.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST**

This item did not require any additional public outreach other than coordinating with partnerships within the Family Justice Center for the presentation.

### **COORDINATION**

The **Budget Office** and the **City Attorney's Office** were consulted in preparation of this report.

### **COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS**

There are no costs associated with this report; this is an informational report only.

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**FISCAL/POLICY ALIGNMENT**

None applicable at this time.

**PAST PERFORMANCE, EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

The following year-end reports show the staffing and other pertinent statistical data regarding cases and charging:

Domestic Violence Unit Statistics						
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
No. Investigators:	6	10	8	6	6	6
Total Cases:	4,825	7,343	7669	7347	8015	
Total Cases Assigned:	n/a	3,705	1956	3596	5147	
Total Cases Not-Assigned [closed by administrative process] <sup>1</sup>	n/a	3638	700	3361	2821	
Approx. Assigned Cases per Investigator:	690	412	244	599	648	
Domestic Violent Stats Continued Cases Charged						
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	
Felony:	215	532	238	204	95	
Misdemeanor:	460	1180	424	382	256	
Parole Violations:	n/a	135	4	137	116	
Probation Violations	n/a	845	74	71	196	
Other Information						
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	
Ramey/Arrest Warrants:	n/a	118	n/a	14	32	
Search Warrants:	n/a	10	1	12	6	
Admissions of Guilt:	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Statements:	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Elder Abuse Investigations:	26	40	29	46	47	
Call-Out Activations:	7	4	8	11	19	

<sup>1</sup> Non-violent / non-criminal cases, e.g., domestic disputes.

The Department is aware of the following Domestic Violence related homicides:

- 2008 – 8
- 2009 – 7
- 2010 – 3
- 2011 – 4
- 2012 – 4
- 2013 - 1

### SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

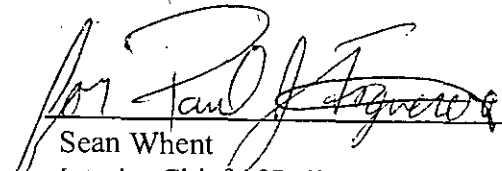
**Economic:** With the reduction of domestic violence cases, and the subsequent apprehension and prosecution of offenders, the physical atmosphere and the reputation of Oakland will improve, affording the City an opportunity for further financial growth.

**Environmental:** There are no environmental concerns associated with this report.

**Social Equity:** Fully addressing those incidences of domestic violence and apprehending and prosecuting those who have offended these survivors will improve public safety and the welfare of our community while making the City safer.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Acting Lieutenant Jill Encinias, at 510-587-2500.

Respectfully submitted,



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Oakland Police Department

Prepared by:  
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Oakland Police Department

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