



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Sarah Zárate

SUBJECT: Community-Led Solutions to
Domestic Violence Report

DATE: April 28, 2025

Approved

Date:

5/7/2025

COUNCIL DISTRICT: Citywide

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the Community-Led Solutions to Domestic Violence Report.

SUMMARY AND OUTCOME

This memorandum delivers a consultant report on community-led solutions to domestic violence. As directed through the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-2024 Adopted Budget, a request for proposals process selected the Battered Women's Justice Project (BWJP) to engage residents on gaps in domestic violence services outside of law enforcement. The consultant collected relevant research and hosted various community engagement opportunities to gather input.

BACKGROUND

As approved by the City Council, the FY 2023-2024 Adopted Budget allocated \$400,000 for a Community-Led Solutions to Domestic Violence project to develop a community-based approach to preventing and responding to domestic violence.¹ This project was inspired by Recommendation 9 from the Reimagining Public Safety Community Advisory Committee's final report, which proposed engaging residents across the community to prevent violence through community trainings and the provision of community-based services and resources. A request for proposal process selected BWJP to conduct this work.² BWJP's scope of work included the following deliverables:

¹ <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/106750/638367848009000000> (page 401)

² A total of three iterations of a Request for Proposal were issued before a successful procurement process selected BWJP.

- A literature review of domestic violence frameworks and models over time.
- Community needs assessment and asset mapping scan for domestic violence services in San José, especially examining services available to underserved groups.
- An extensive community outreach process centering on those affected most by domestic violence. This included practitioners and community-based organizations that serve survivors, but that may not be considered “domestic violence” programs.
- A final report with findings and recommendations based on trends and community needs.

An update on this work was provided to City Council on February 4, 2025, as part of the alternative and co-response models to 911 calls for services report.³ As included in that report, the City of San José’s (City) current programs specific to domestic violence survivors are funded through San José Police Department (SJPD) contracts with YWCA Silicon Valley. Both the Domestic Violence High Risk Response Team and the embedded YWCA advocate at the Family Violence Center provide supportive services and case management to survivors during or after an interaction with SJPD. The City also invests in programs and initiatives that broadly support violence prevention efforts, such as the Children and Youth Master Plan and Youth Empowerment Alliance. Although the City does not manage any domestic violence shelters or have programs specific to housing for domestic violence survivors, the City is committed to facilitating access to housing options that are flexible, including allowing children at family sites, allowing cohabitating partners, allowing pets, and prioritizing placement in nearby geographical areas.

San José Police Officers receive 12 hours of classroom training on domestic violence, exceeding the 10 hours required by the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training. Recruits must successfully pass a domestic violence test scenario before completing the program. Upon graduation from the SJPD Academy, recruits participate in a 16-week Field Training Program during which they are exposed to domestic violence calls for service. Additionally, the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training requires two hours of domestic violence training every two years for the duration of an officer's career. This is a mandatory training for all patrol officers and, therefore, SJPD is in strict compliance. Training materials on domestic violence include guidelines for supporting LGBTQ+ survivors, frameworks on power and control, and guidance on building trust to effectively connect survivors with resources.⁴ Recruits to the San José Fire Department Academy also receive training related to domestic violence. This includes training on responder safety in acutely dangerous environments and training on reporting procedures for suspected abuse to law enforcement.

³ <https://sanjose.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=13693140&GUID=7BD96236-10DE-474C-B22E-11D70938D1E5>

⁴ https://post.ca.gov/portals/0/post_docs/basic_course_resources/workbooks/LD_25_V-7.0.pdf

The County of Santa Clara has an Office of Gender-Based Violence Prevention housed within the County Executive's Division of Equity and Social Justice. This Office of Gender-Based Violence Prevention is currently finalizing a complementary study to further the understanding of the prevalence and impact of gender-based violence in Santa Clara County, understand what current support services are available, identify additional needs, and improve prevention and data collection efforts. The complementary study will also focus on diverse groups, including LGBTQ+ individuals, BIPOC communities, people with disabilities, and young people, to ensure inclusive and effective support. The findings from the complementary study will guide current and future policies, funding, and service priorities to better support gender-based violence survivors in the County of Santa Clara. Staff recommends closely coordinating any future domestic violence efforts with the County of Santa Clara.

ANALYSIS

The following is a summarized overview of BWJP's final report. The comprehensive final report is included as an Attachment: City of San José Study on Community-led Solutions to Domestic Violence.

Literature Review

BWJP conducted a review and analysis of domestic violence programs over time and evolving frameworks. Many government-sponsored domestic violence programs are Coordinated Community Response Models. These models evolved to facilitate collaboration between government agencies to hold offenders accountable. These models have been instrumental in promoting mandatory arrest of offenders, primary aggressor determinations, risk assessments, and other changes in law and policy. The City's Domestic Violence High Risk Response Team and Family Violence Center program partnerships are examples of this model in practice.⁵

BWJP also highlighted culturally-specific and culturally-responsive programs as promising models to center survivor goals and experience. These programs focus on providing service approaches that are specific to certain cultures or experiences; organizational or program staffing also typically reflects the cultural identity of the community being served. These models have grown out of the understanding that accessing mainstream services or systems-involved services may not work for marginalized communities who may have differing views on safety and accountability. San José is home to various non-profit organizations that tailor services to particular cultures or identities. The report lists several promising grassroots approaches, including the promotores model, community-centric outreach, mobile advocacy, lifetime spiral of violence frameworks, and community violence interrupters.

⁵ <https://www.sjpd.org/about-us/organization/bureau-of-investigations/investigations-division-ii/family-violence>

Community Engagement

BWJP partnered with Caminar and Maitri as local subconsultants to develop methodologies and connect with various groups working on domestic violence issues. This partnership was crucial for building trust and accessing survivors and community members to better understand their domestic violence experiences. Over 110 local organizations were contacted through direct outreach, word of mouth, and canvassing. Meetings and interviews for the study involved service providers, survivors, and the broader community. In total, 138 residents, community leaders, service providers, and/or survivors participated through in-person community meetings and virtual individual interviews. This included in-person validation meetings to get community input on initial report findings. Engagement opportunities were flexible, empowering participants to engage in ways that felt most comfortable to them, including private interviews. All participants were offered language interpretation and disability accommodations. The City Manager's Office supported outreach through social media, outreach to City Council Offices, and posting flyers in all City community centers.

Recommendations

BWJP developed recommendations to address the challenges and barriers impacting domestic violence survivors based on the literature review and themes that emerged from community engagement efforts. No one organization can effectively prevent, intervene, and address the impact of domestic violence as a public health issue that affects all age and socioeconomic groups. Therefore, SJPD will collaborate with the County of Santa Clara's Office of Gender-Based Violence Prevention to realize recommendations that are feasible with existing staff capacity and resources.

BWJP organized recommendations in the following categories:

- ❖ Promote and support culturally-responsive domestic violence education for all.
- ❖ Create a centralized, culturally-responsive resource hub with live advocate support.
- ❖ Center survivor realities through coordinated, culturally-responsive systems.
- ❖ Invest in building the capacity of culturally-responsive and culturally-specific organizations to provide domestic violence services.
- ❖ Strengthen City presence and partnership in community-led events to build trust and normalize dialogue on domestic violence.
- ❖ Invest in ongoing, accessible training for systems responding to domestic violence.
- ❖ Strengthen disability-inclusive domestic violence services and infrastructure.
- ❖ Rethink housing models to center survivor choice, cultural relevance, and holistic safety.
- ❖ Clarity around definitions and terminology.
- ❖ Measure domestic violence work in culturally responsive ways.

Some recommendations, if implemented, would require further exploration and resource allocation. However, staff has identified opportunities for collaboration across City departments utilizing existing staffing and resources as noted below.

Citywide

- ❖ Explore increased partnerships with the County of Santa Clara on education campaigns and materials, trainings, and community events. Work with the County of Santa Clara to ground future domestic violence work in the findings of this report and its forthcoming complementary report.
- ❖ Continue use of the City's communication channels to promote domestic violence awareness, prevention, and support services information in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese.
- ❖ Explore incorporating domestic violence prevention concepts into existing training opportunities for City staff.

City Manager's Office of Racial and Social Equity

- ❖ Align with the Welcoming San José plan by strengthening language access, culturally responsive services, and immigrant-centered collaboration. Build partnerships with promotores programs, faith-based groups, and domestic violence service providers.
- ❖ Continue to build access to legal support for survivors who may be eligible for U-visas and T-visas. U-visas and T-visas offer protection and stability for survivors of crimes and trafficking, including domestic violence. This visa allows survivors to remain in the U.S. to access support and help build safer communities.
- ❖ Continue work to further the disability affairs framework, including fostering inclusive and equitable spaces for domestic violence survivors with disabilities.

Housing Department

- ❖ Ensure report recommendations and housing needs specific to domestic violence survivors are incorporated into the next iteration of the Community Plan to End Homelessness.
- ❖ Explore increased partnership with County of Santa Clara and the Domestic Violence Advocacy Consortium on emergency and long-term housing for domestic violence survivors and their children. The City will work to continue increasing dedicated housing options to meet demand, particularly during anticipated times of high need, including safe spaces that meet the needs of trans or nonbinary survivors and men.

Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department

- ❖ Utilize recommendations to inform the Children and Youth Services Master Plan System of Care demonstration site implementation and service delivery.
- ❖ Promote conversations on domestic violence education, prevention, and intervention through the Youth Empowerment Alliance.
- ❖ Continue providing gender responsive and trauma-informed case management services for female-identifying youth ages 11-24 as part of the Female Intervention Team.
- ❖ Explore domestic violence prevention and education as a connection to care resource under the Opioid Overdose Prevention grant program using Opioid Settlement funds. Services could include promotores program, which utilizes trusted

community health workers to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach, education, and support.

Public Works Department

- ❖ Finalize implementation of the safety placards to reduce human trafficking and gender violence project as proposed by Councilmember Doan and included in the FY 2024-2025 Adopted Budget. This project will place placard signs with contact information for human trafficking, domestic violence, and sexual assault resources in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese in public locations throughout the city. Locations include City Hall, City libraries and community centers, and parks facilities. The Public Works Department is currently fabricating and installing signage and is expected to be completed by June 30, 2025.

SJPD

- ❖ Continue including the YWCA Silicon Valley in SJPD patrol briefings to provide brief trainings and updates, and explore inviting additional non-profits.
- ❖ Continue the existing Domestic Violence High Risk Response Team and embedded YWCA Family Violence Center advocate programs to provide supportive services and case management to survivors during or after an interaction with SJPD. SJPD will work with YWCA Silicon Valley program partners to use report findings and forthcoming County of Santa Clara findings to strengthen program procedures and data collection protocols for FY 2025-2026. This includes ensuring YWCA Silicon Valley teams monitor County of Santa Clara report findings and meet with the County of Santa Clara Office of Gender-Based Violence Prevention staff to ensure integration.

Other Forms of Violence in Community

While the scope of this project centers on domestic violence, some study participants expressed a need for community-based and culturally relevant services to address additional forms of violence. Specifically, some participants were interested in subsequent work around interpersonal violence. While outside of the scope of this project, staff have completed previous reports analyzing violence prevention efforts. Specifically, the Administration reported to City Council on violence prevention service models in other jurisdictions on December 7, 2023.⁶ A subsequent Manager's Budget Addendum was released during the FY 2024-2025 budget process, outlining options for increasing violence prevention efforts.⁷

⁶ <https://sanjose.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=12492524&GUID=9B967727-D896-416E-AE53-05768A122DC4>

⁷ <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/112072/638520613566530000>

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

Staff will monitor the forthcoming complementary County of Santa Clara report, disseminate it to City departments and partners, and follow up on recommendations, as needed.

COORDINATION

This memorandum and report have been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office, City Manager's Budget Office, City Manager's Office of Racial and Social Equity, Fire Department, Housing Department, Planning, Building and Code Enforcement Department, Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services Department, Police Department, and Public Works Department.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This memorandum will be posted on the City's Council Agenda website for the May 20, 2025 City Council meeting.

Meetings and interviews for the study involved service providers, survivors, and the broader community. In total, 138 residents, community leaders, service providers, and/or survivors participated through in-person community meetings and virtual individual interviews.

The City Manager's Office staff and BWJP met with members of the Race Equity Action Leadership Coalition to gather input and listen to community perspectives, particularly from former members of the Reimagining Public Safety Community Advisory Committee.

Staff met with the County of Santa Clara Executive's Division of Equity and Social Justice, Office of Gender-Based Violence Prevention, which helped inform this report.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION AND INPUT

No commission recommendation or input is associated with this action.

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CEQA

Not a Project, File No. PP17-009, Staff Reports, Assessments, Annual Reports, and Informational Memos that involve no approvals of any City action.

PUBLIC SUBSIDY REPORTING

This item does not include a public subsidy as defined in section 53083 or 53083.1 of the California Government Code or the City's Open Government Resolution.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Zárate". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sarah Zárate
Director, Office of Administration, Policy,
and Intergovernmental Relations

For questions, please contact Kailyn Kenney, Assistant to the City Manager, City Manager's Office of Administration, Policy, and Intergovernmental Relations at kailyn.kenney@sanjoseca.gov.

ATTACHMENT

City of San José Study on Community-led Solutions to Domestic Violence