



Memorandum

TO: PUBLIC SAFETY, FINANCE AND
STRATEGIC SUPPORT COMMITTEE

FROM: Edgardo Garcia

SUBJECT: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HIGH
RISK RESPONSE TEAM

DATE: March 14, 2019

Approved

Date

3-14-19

RECOMMENDATION

1. Accept a status report on the Domestic Violence High Risk Response Team.
2. Direct staff to provide a final report on the impact of the Domestic Violence High Risk Response Team in the areas of early identification of high risk cases, engagement of a multi-disciplinary team, ongoing monitoring and containment of offenders, and victim services as part of the Domestic Violence Prevention and Awareness Annual Report at a date to be specified in the Public Safety, Finance and Strategic Support Committee workplan for the period of August – December 2019.

BACKGROUND

Domestic violence is defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as violence or aggression that occurs in a close relationship. In San Jose, domestic violence investigations fall under the purview of the San Jose Police Department's Family Violence Unit ("The Unit"). The Unit's responsibilities include all types of violence or abuse within familial relationships, and investigators serve in three details for these types of cases: 1) domestic violence, 2) threat management, and 3) child/elder/dependent adult abuse. The Unit is housed at the Family Violence Center, located at 1671 the Alameda.

In responding to incidents of domestic violence, the Unit is aided by its partnership with the YWCA. This partnership allows the Family Violence Center to house one full time bilingual domestic violence advocate. The advocate provides follow-up services to domestic violence survivors and their children by initiating telephone contact with all survivors consenting to receive services. The YWCA also provides a 24-hour emergency hotline, counseling, emergency shelter, and other services.

As part of the 2018-2019 Budget process, Councilmember Carrasco proposed allocating additional resources to enhance services for domestic violence survivors, particularly for high-lethality cases. Mayor Liccardo proposed adopting her proposal through the June Budget Message for Fiscal Year 2018-2019. With its approval of the Budget, the Council allocated \$160,000 in one-time funds from the Essential Services Reserve to establish a High Risk Response Team and \$20,000 in Police overtime to support the effort. A High Risk Response Team is a nationally recognized model that can reduce lethality and improve service delivery to survivors. It employs four strategies: early identification of high-risk cases, engagement of a multidisciplinary team, ongoing monitoring and containment of offenders, and victim services.

The Council also directed the City Manager to report to the Public Safety, Finance and Strategic Support Committee with a preliminary evaluation of the program impact in the spring of 2019.

ANALYSIS

This report responds to Council direction to return to the Public Safety, Finance and Strategic Support Committee on this issue. The Department is in the process of executing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the YWCA to provide for the creation of a High Risk Response Team, with the goal of implementing the program by June 2019. This report provides a brief overview of the Department's current efforts to provide assistance to survivors and outlines the plan and timeline for implementation of the High Risk Response Team. Staff cannot provide an assessment of the impact of the High Risk Response Team, as it has not begun operation. Staff proposes to return to the Committee through the Domestic Violence Prevention and Awareness Annual Report at a date to be specified in the Committee workplan for the period of August – December 2019 to provide an assessment of the impact of the new program.

Existing Efforts

Typically, patrol officers are the first law enforcement members dispatched to domestic violence incidents and they are responsible for the preliminary investigation. All patrol officers are trained to follow Department policy and the Santa Clara County Domestic Violence Protocol for Law Enforcement; the latest version of this protocol was updated in 2018 and was approved by the Police Chief's Association of Santa Clara County. Both the protocol and Department policy require officers to conduct a Lethality Assessment and make an arrest in every applicable Domestic Violence incident.

The Unit falls within the Bureau of Investigations. There are three details within the Unit, one of which is the Domestic Violence Detail. Investigators from this detail conduct follow-up investigations and work closely with the District Attorney's Office to seek successful prosecution in Domestic Violence cases. In addition, investigators work closely with partner agencies such as the YWCA Silicon Valley.

The YWCA Silicon Valley is the Department's contract partner for providing follow-up support services to survivors of domestic violence. These services include, but are not limited to, a 24-

hour crisis hotline, counseling, emergency shelter, and advocacy for criminal justice and social services. The YWCA Silicon Valley has a Family Violence Center Advocacy Coordinator assigned to the Unit during business hours.

As previously mentioned, patrol officers are dispatched to domestic violence incidents and are responsible for conducting a Lethality Assessment in each Domestic Violence incident. This assessment includes a specific set of questions to be asked verbatim of the victim in a specific order. If the survivor answers "Yes" to certain questions, or answers "Yes" to a specific number of questions, then the officer is directed to call the YWCA 24-Hour Domestic Violence Crisis Hotline and have a counselor speak with the survivor. Additionally, the officer has the option of calling the hotline when they believe the survivor is potentially in a high-lethality situation, even if the survivor's answers do not require a telephone call. The highest lethality incidents tend to be those where the suspect has used a deadly weapon against the survivor, has strangled the survivor, or has made threats to kill the survivor.

Once a call is initiated to the Crisis Hotline, YWCA advocates offer the survivor support and services. The survivor is then referred to the Family Violence Center Advocacy Coordinator, who works during normal business hours. Services offered to the survivor will vary based on each unique situation.

High Risk Response Team

While the Crisis Hotline operates 24-hours a day, the City of San Jose did not have a program in place to have YWCA advocates respond in person to high-lethality situations.

The funding identified in the June Budget Message allows the Department and the YWCA Silicon Valley to create a program where an advocate can provide an in-person response for selected high-lethality domestic violence incidents. The framework for this new program was developed in the latter part of 2018. An MOU has been created and it is currently under review for final approval by both agencies. Once the MOU is in place, YWCA Silicon Valley can hire new advocates or transfer currently employed advocates within their organization to staff the High Risk Response Team, which is expected no later than June 2019.

The desire of SJPd and YWCA Silicon Valley is for the program to reach survivors in high-lethality incidents and offer them services as soon after the incident as possible. Each high-lethality incident will be evaluated by Family Violence Unit personnel, while patrol officers are on scene, to determine if an in-person advocate response is appropriate. The responding advocates' tasks would include, but not be limited to, safety planning, emotional support counseling, needs assessment, and providing emergency assistance, including shelter.

Providing services to survivors in-person will give this program the best opportunity to get them out of the high-lethality situation and maximize the chances of keeping them safe. An in-person meeting will allow the advocate to better evaluate the condition of the survivor, establish rapport with the survivor, and offer the most appropriate services. The in-person meetings between the advocate and survivor will need to take place in a safe location. YWCA Silicon Valley is

currently working with three area hospitals to create MOUs to provide safe places to meet. The responding advocate will later follow-up and work closely with the Family Violence Center Advocacy Coordinator, who will provide on-going support for the survivor.

This enhanced partnership between the YWCA and the City will allow for more complete implementation of the High Risk Domestic Violence response model. This nationally recognized model employs four strategies. The first strategy, early identification of high-risk cases, is accomplished by conducting a Lethality Assessment upon contact with a survivor, as discussed above. The second strategy, engagement of a multidisciplinary team, will be accomplished through the partnership between SJPD and the YWCA Silicon Valley. The YWCA advocate will be able to bring in additional resources as needed in individual cases. The third strategy, ongoing monitoring and containment of offenders, is primarily accomplished by the Parole, Probation and the Corrections Departments but SJPD may assist if appropriate. The fourth strategy, victim services, is accomplished by the YWCA Silicon Valley.

Once the program is in place, SJPD and YWCA Silicon Valley personnel will meet monthly to evaluate the program. The monthly review will allow SJPD and YWCA Silicon Valley to discuss potential improvements for the program and then immediately implement agreed upon improvements.

The estimated timeline for implementing the program is as follows:

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| March - April 2019 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MOU signed by both parties.• YWCA Silicon Valley hires advocates, creates MOUs with hospitals.• SJPD and YWCA Silicon Valley study latest available data to agree upon hours of operation and the criteria that would lead to activation of the DV-HRRT.• SJPD to create policy for DV-HRRT and train personnel on its use. |
| May 2019 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final details agreed upon prior to implementation. |
| June 2019 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Program implemented |
| July 2019 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monthly meetings begin to analyze program and improvements are made. |

As mentioned above, staff will report back to the Public Safety, Finance and Strategic Support Committee through the Domestic Violence Prevention and Awareness Annual Report at a date to be specified in the Committee workplan for the period of August – December 2019 to provide an assessment of the impact of the new program.

PUBLIC SAFETY, FINANCE AND STRATEGIC SUPPORT COMMITTEE

March 14, 2019

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COORDINATION

This memorandum was coordinated with the City Attorney's Office and the City Manager's Budget Office.

/s/
EDGARDO GARCIA
Chief of Police
Police Department

For questions please contact Lieutenant Robert Lang, Family Violence Unit, San Jose Police Department, at (408) 537-9711.