

## **AT A GLANCE**

### **Location of Court**

Tulsa, Oklahoma

### **Type of Court**

Criminal Domestic Violence Court

### **Project Goals**

Increase victim safety through partnerships with victim services agencies and training

Hold offenders accountable through increased judicial monitoring

Reduce recidivism and homicide

## **TULSA COUNTY DISTRICT COURT**

The Tulsa County Domestic Violence Court is a criminal domestic violence court with both misdemeanor and felony dockets focusing on intimate partner violence (IPV) in cases of domestic violence, violation of protective orders, and stalking. The Court works to coordinate with Protective Order and Family Court to increase victim safety and offender compliance.



## **COURT STAFF**

- **Judges:** trained judges preside over the Misdemeanor (MDV) and Felony (FDV) Domestic Violence Dockets
- **Court Coordinator:** works directly with judges and the Coordinated Community Response Team (CCR) to develop, implement, and evaluate progress of DV Court. The coordinator collects offender compliance information from partners and staffs all cases with the team prior to dockets.
- **Court Case Manager:** manages the DV Court database and prepares dockets
- **Prosecutors:** the Tulsa County District Attorney's office has a trained and dedicated DV Unit assigned to prosecuting MDV & FDV cases

This fact sheet is part of a series describing Domestic Violence Mentor Courts. Selected by the Office on Violence Against Women, Mentor Courts share their expertise and assist other domestic violence courts in implementing promising practices and procedures, and building the capacity of state court systems to respond effectively to these difficult cases.

- **Advocates:** victim advocates from a partner victim service agency are assigned to the MDV and FDV dockets to safety plan with and assist victims during court processes
- **Pre-Trial Compliance Officer:** monitor offenders on pre-trial bonds/electronic monitoring and are assigned a caseload of high-risk MDV offenders in their delayed sentencing program.
- **Probation & Parole Officers:** Department of Corrections (DOC) probation & parole officers are assigned to supervise FDV offenders
- **Batterers Intervention Program (BIP) Providers:** Oklahoma Attorney General certified BIP programs provide 52-week programs to court-ordered offenders and work with partners to share compliance reports and any concerns that need to be addressed with the court, victims, or probation.
- **Social Service Providers:** provide free drug and alcohol assessments and programming to offenders
- **Rapid Intervention Team (RIT):** works collaboratively with the court when high-risk, high-lethality cases on the MDV & FDV dockets have been identified by their trained team

## CASE MANAGEMENT

**Types of cases:** Misdemeanor and Felony intimate partner cases involving domestic violence (DV), violation of protective orders (VPO), and stalking

**Case identification, screening, and transfer:** All misdemeanor cases filed that include DV, VPO, and stalking are automatically assigned to the MDV docket. The Court Coordinator screens felony cases weekly to identify cases eligible for the FDV docket. Once FDV eligible cases are identified, a list is sent to prosecutors and preliminary hearing judges for transfer to the FDV docket. The DV Court tracks all MDV & FDV cases including, but not limited to the date of offense, filing, disposition, reviews, and revocation.

**Information sharing:** The court collects compliance reports from BIP providers, pre-trial, probation officers, and social service providers weekly through electronic communication. The compliance information is compiled into docket reports and staffed with appropriate team members 1 week prior to judicial reviews. Judges are not present during staffing of cases. The team provides recommendations to the court based on information shared at staffings.

**Schedule:** Arraignments and preliminary hearings are held daily. The Misdemeanor DV Docket has out-of-custody and in-custody settings with a separate compliance docket scheduled weekly. The Felony DV Docket has a compliance docket scheduled once a month. Both the MDV and FDV dockets will special set cases that need immediate attention.

## COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

**Frequency of stakeholder meetings:** DV Court Partner Meetings are held quarterly and subcommittee meetings are held monthly.

**List of stakeholders:** Court administration, Judges, prosecutors, public defenders, pre-trial and probation officers, victim advocates, batterers intervention programs, and social services providers including the Department of Human Services (DHS), workforce programs, substance abuse/mental health providers are present at and participate in meetings and sub-committee projects.

## VICTIM SAFETY

**Court security:** Upon entry, all persons must go through courthouse security. Once in the courthouse, court staff work to make sure victims and offenders are separated and use appropriate courtroom entrances/exits when available. Offenders are asked to remain in the courtroom to provide victims with enough time to exit and Sheriff deputies are available to escort victims to their vehicles.

**Victim services:** In addition to victim advocates being present in criminal and protective order courtrooms, The Family Safety Center (local Family Justice Center) is closely located to the courthouse for victims to visit for protective orders, safety planning, legal services, medical exams, access to law enforcement, and referrals to counseling or shelters.

**Risk Assessment:** Law enforcement uses an 11-question lethality assessment on all domestic violence calls, social service providers are also located in the jail to complete offender-screening tools, and pre-trial officers have been trained on how to use the Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment (ODARA).

## OFFENDER ACCOUNTABILITY

**Compliance reviews:** First compliance reviews are set no later than 30 days after disposition. Offenders are scheduled for frequent reviews during their probation period and can be reviewed more or less frequently by the Court as needed. Sanctions are used for offenders who are not compliant with Court orders. These sanctions may include, but are not limited to, box time,

essays, work hours, or jail time. The DV Court team is present for all compliance review dockets and prepare detailed docket notes and recommendations to the Court.

**Offender services:** Offenders are ordered into services based on lethality assessments completed by law enforcement, offender screening tools used by the jail, and recommendations by the DV Court team. Prosecutors provide their recommendations to the court during disposition. These recommendations include, but are not limited to, criminal no contact orders, batterers intervention programming, mental health assessments, and substance abuse evaluations. Offenders may be placed on electronic monitoring such as location or alcohol monitors during pre-trial or at the time of disposition. Batterers Intervention Programs (BIP) facilitate multiple specialty groups including a women's group, Spanish speaking group, veterans group, and high risk group. Resources such as bus passes, referrals to workforce agencies, and free substance abuse assessments are provided to offenders to reduce barriers for compliance with BIP.

## **LEGAL SERVICES**

If an offender cannot afford legal services, a Public Defender is appointed. Victims are referred to legal services through Legal Aid or our local victim services agency.

## **TRAINING**

The Tulsa County DV Court has hosted various training events for staff and partners from lunch-and-learn to multi-day events and has been asked to present at universities, at community events, and to state-wide groups like the Oklahoma Fatality Review Board. Topics have included DV 101, offender accountability, and risk assessment. Prior to receiving the Mentor Court Grant, Tulsa County assisted another Oklahoma metropolitan area in the creation of their DV Court and hosted their teams for court observations.

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