
Judicial Engagement in Coordinated Community Responses to Domestic Violence

By Elise Jensen

Center
for
Court
Innovation

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Executive Summary

A coordinated community response (CCR) model is an interagency group between the criminal justice system (e.g., law enforcement, corrections, prosecutors, courts), civil and family courts, and community-based organizations (e.g., victim advocates, social services, abusive partner intervention programs). The specific focus of local efforts may differ (e.g., prevention, victim services, justice system responses), but overarching goals of CCRs are generally to increase victim safety and hold offenders accountable. CCR members work together to provide a unified response to domestic violence by sharing information with each other, such as available resources for victims; standardizing policies and procedures; and educating members as well as the community at large. Judges are less likely to be involved, but there is some evidence that they can play an important role in CCRs. This study examined the extent and nature of judicial engagement in CCRs through a national survey and three in-depth case studies.

Methods

A survey was administered to representatives of 94 CCRs across the country. The survey included questions about CCR origins, operations, membership, judicial and other court-based engagement, strengths, and challenges. Specific questions elicited feedback on the potential benefits and ethical concerns of engaging courts and the judiciary in the CCR.

The project team conducted in-depth case studies of three coordinating councils with strong judicial leadership to flesh out survey results, providing a deeper understand of the relative challenges and benefits of incorporating the judiciary in community responses to domestic violence. The sites were identified through follow-up telephone interviews with ten survey respondents who indicated a willingness to participate in further research. Priority was given to sites with strong judicial engagement, while also ensuring diversity of geography, jurisdiction size, and age of the CCR. In-person site visits included interviews with council members, observations of council meetings, and focus groups with those directly impacted by domestic violence.

Survey Results

- **CCR Goals** Respondents nearly universally prioritize promoting victim safety (96%). In contrast, CCRs place significantly less emphasis on coordinating *offender* programming (21%) and enhancing offender program quality as a primary goal (18%).
- **CCR Membership** Victim advocates are involved in nearly all of the responding CCRs. Other members in the majority of surveyed CCRs included representatives from law enforcement (corrections, prosecutors' offices, local police/sheriffs) and service providers for victims and children (civil legal services, child advocates, child welfare agencies, social service providers).
- **Court and Judicial Engagement** Court players were less commonly involved in the responding CCRs, though non-judicial court personnel were more likely to be involved (67%) than criminal (49%), civil (48%), or juvenile (28%) judges. Of the 46 CCRs that indicated meaningful involvement of judges, ten considered a judge(s) the leader of the CCR. More than half of respondents (56%) rate court engagement as very important to the CCR.

Case Studies

Case studies were conducted in three sites:

1) Deschutes County, Oregon where the Deschutes County Domestic Violence Council was established in 2005. This council is co-chaired by a prosecutor and a representative of Legal Aid Services of Oregon. The presiding judge of Deschutes County Circuit Court attends all meetings.

2) Miami-Dade County, Florida where the Miami-Dade County Domestic Violence Council was established in 1994 as part of the Miami-Dade Domestic Violence Court. The administrative judge of the domestic violence division serves as council chair.

3) Mille Lacs County, Minnesota The Mille Lacs County Family Violence Coordinating Council was established in 2014 as part of the Mille Lacs County Domestic Violence Court. The domestic violence court's lead judge serves as chair.

Across the sites, interviewees reported that, although judges facilitate meetings, they do not have a strong presence in the collaborative. Judges mirrored this feedback and saw their role as not to dominate the meetings, but to give others a chance to be heard. None of the interviewees expressed concern about participation in the CCR influencing the objectivity of the judges.

Benefits & Challenges of the Model

Results from the surveys and case studies highlight several model benefits and challenges across sites.

CCR Benefits

Survey respondents and interviewees overwhelmingly reported that collaboration and information sharing were key benefits of the CCR model. Communication between agencies was reported to enhance offender accountability and promote victim safety. Similarly, interviewees in the three case study sites noted the benefit of cross-agency training and learning from one another.

Survey respondents and interviewees indicated that judicial inclusion brought legal knowledge and leadership to the team; the collaborative was also believed to lead to a better-informed judiciary about victims' experiences. Finally, the leadership of judges was felt to legitimize and promote the work of the CCR among those who might otherwise have taken it less seriously.

CCR Challenges

Difficulty attracting and maintaining diverse membership was frequently cited challenges across responding CCRs. Structural challenges were also frequently noted, including insufficient structure, lack of strong leadership, and too many members making it difficult to reach consensus. Interviewees mentioned difficulty securing buy-in from the local community.

Survey respondents also reported some specific challenges related to including judges in the CCR, such as a focus on court outcomes, inability and/or discomfort discussing some things (e.g., case specifics) in the presence of a judge, and the reality of judges' limited availability. During site visits, interviewees noted a need for greater judicial education around domestic violence—particularly for judges not directly involved in the local CCR, but who hear matters related to domestic violence.

Recommendations

Study findings culminated in a series of nine recommendations for other sites seeking to develop (or build upon) their CCR with a focus on judicial engagement.

- 1. Develop (and share) clear goals** Goals should be decided upon by representatives from all participating agencies. Goals should be shared with participating agencies and with new members joining the CCR.
- 2. Consider group structure** It is important to include leaders who can facilitate group decision-making, coalesce members, and delegate administrative and other tasks as needed. In particularly large or contentious CCRs, smaller working groups or committees may prove effective in timely decision-making.
- 3. Schedule meetings thoughtfully** Meetings should be planned with a clear purpose and structure in mind.
- 4. Be inclusive** CCRs should include the full range of relevant community organizations and be inclusive of all communities, particularly those that are underserved.
- 5. Continue to build interest** CCRs should offer informative presentations and training sessions to engage new members. Put systems in place to replace members lost due to turnover.
- 6. Include a judge in the CCR** The presence of a judicial leader can add weight to the work of victim advocates; encourage participation from other agencies; and facilitate collaboration among members. CCRs should reach out to judges from an array of court settings, including civil, family, and criminal courts.
- 7. Observe other coordinated community response models** CCRs should learn from more established ones before starting their own.
- 8. Provide ongoing training** CCR members should receive training so that they can understand more about domestic violence; members should pass the new information on to others within their agency.

- 9. Plan for sustainability past the life of funding** CCRs built on grant or other time-bound funding should plan for a time when that funding runs out. CCRs may be able to use community domestic violence statistics to show the extent of the problem and/or track measures of success, find more stable funding options, or create a statute that establishes their permanence in government.

Chapter 1

The Coordinated Community Response Model

A coordinated community response (CCR) model is an interagency group within cities, counties, or state-wide comprised of the criminal and civil justice agencies and community-based organizations that work together to create a comprehensive and uniform response to domestic violence (Pence 2001; Shepard and McGee 1999).¹ While judges have been involved in some CCRs from the beginning, others have expressed concern about the appropriateness of a strong judicial role for varied reasons, including compromising judicial objectivity by hearing details about cases; changing the dynamics of the CCR by becoming the dominant voice; and insufficient time to participate. Therefore, we seek to understand the extent and nature of judicial inclusion in coordinated responses. Further, among CCRs that incorporate the judiciary, findings will document the extent to which judges are engaged, their capacity in the CCR, and how judicial involvement impacts other CCR members' efforts to address domestic violence in the community.

Since the 1980s, community responses to domestic violence across the United States have undergone a significant evolution. For decades, law enforcement generally considered domestic violence a private family matter. The pressure brought about through the battered women's and victims' rights movements eventually precipitated an array of methods seeking to promote victim safety and offender accountability through the criminal justice system, including mandatory arrest policies, evidence-based prosecution, and specialized prosecution units (Bouffard and Muftić 2007; Rebovich 1996; Sherman 1992). Coordinated community response models were a reply to such shifts—a tool to coordinate the work of disparate agencies and improve system responses to domestic violence. The model, initially developed in Duluth, Minnesota, underlines the importance of working strategically within and across agencies and understanding the role of system responses in achieving victim safety and offender accountability (Shepard and Pence 1999).

¹ The term “domestic violence” is used throughout this report to refer to violence between intimates. Such violence is also sometimes referred to as “intimate partner violence.”

A CCR is a multidisciplinary model engaging local systems, agencies, and individuals in a comprehensive network of services for victims and their families. While membership varies by jurisdiction, CCRs commonly include members of the judiciary, including civil, and criminal court judges; representatives from the prosecutor's office and defense bar; domestic violence advocates; law enforcement; child welfare services; community-based programs and culturally-specific service providers (e.g., abusive partner intervention programs, restorative justice programs, vocational or educational programming, mental health or substance use treatment); corrections; and other relevant stakeholders (Pence 2001; Shepard, Falk, and Elliott 2002). CCRs can develop informally, typically spearheaded by local victim advocates, or in a more formal task force created by law enforcement or another agency (Stark 2001).

The specific focus of local efforts may differ (e.g., prevention, victim services, justice system responses), but the goals of coordinated community response broadly focus on increasing victim safety, holding offenders accountable, raising community consciousness, and changing norms around domestic violence. Specifically, CCRs seek to 1) improve system efficiencies, 2) differentiate services across agencies, 3) deliver appropriate services to victims with minimal distress, 4) protect victims, and 5) sanction offenders in a timely and appropriate manner (Adler 2002). To achieve these goals and create system-wide change, CCRs promote communication and coordination among criminal and civil justice agencies and community-based services through regular interagency meetings, increased information sharing between community partners to effectively assist victims and monitor offenders, and opportunities for continued education and targeted training on domestic violence for members (Mazur and Aldrich 2003). CCRs may operate state-, county-, or city-wide. While not all CCRs operate the same, CCRs generally represent a larger interagency group that meets semi-regularly (e.g., monthly or quarterly) to share updates and discuss overarching issues related to local response to domestic violence. Case reviews, protocol development, and policy discussions may happen in subcommittees in between the full CCR meetings with members of the CCR who are more relevant to the issues at hand and can share specific information about cases (End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin, n.d.).

Prior Research

Much of the research on coordinated community responses have focused on individual-level outcomes, such as offender recidivism (Bouffard and Muftić 2007; Casey et al. 2007; Exum et al. 2010; Shephard, Falk, and Ellison 2002; Syers and Edelson 1992; Tolman and Weisz 1995). Other studies have addressed systems-level impacts, such as victim access to

community resources and coordination among criminal justice agencies and advocates (Allen et al. 2010; Clark et al. 1996; DePrince et al. 2012; Klevens et al. 2008; Salazar et al. 1997). Johnson and Stylianou (2020) recently published a comprehensive review of the literature. Research specifically on the role of the courts, and in particular judges, has been more limited.

Coordinated Community Response & the Courts

While not all CCRs include representation from the courts, community partner involvement—including regular meetings with a range of partners and ongoing domestic violence education and training—is one of the key components of the domestic violence court model. These specialized courts are meant to establish greater inter-agency collaboration, increase victim safety, and hold offenders accountable (Mazur and Aldrich 2003). Common partners include representatives from prosecution, defense, court officers, victim advocates, probation, resource coordinators, abusive partner intervention programs², and legal aid programs.

A 2009 survey of specialized domestic violence courts across the country found that 86% of the 129 responding courts identified achieving a coordinated community response to domestic violence as a very important or extremely important court goal (Labriola et al. 2009). In terms of *how* courts incorporate a coordinated community response, many include stakeholders during the initial conception and planning of the domestic violence court (Steketee et al. 2000). Such inclusive court planning teams may morph into steering committees that meet on an ongoing basis once the court has opened (e.g., Harrell et al. 2007; Henning and Klesges 1999; Newmark et al. 2001). The community network created by these meetings also provides a mechanism by which participants can hold one another accountable for their responses to domestic violence (Newmark et al. 2001).

Such collaboration has been linked to greater access to victim services, improved information sharing, improved prosecutorial practices, and better-informed judicial decision making (Gover 2007; Harrell et al. 2007; Henning and Klesges 1999; Newmark et al. 2001; Weber 2000). Also, stakeholder participation in the development of court policies and

^{2 2} Abusive Partner Intervention Programs, or APIPs, are education programs for people who abuse in their intimate partners. This kind of program may also be referred to as a “Batterer Intervention Program,” or “BIP,” though the latter name for these programs has increasingly fallen out of use by government agencies and programs themselves in favor of APIP. The shift in language is a result of several reasons, including the need for the language to be more inclusive of a broader understanding of coercive control tactics that go beyond physical violence and to reflect the idea that abuse is a choice rather than a symptom of an emotional issue such as anger.

protocols may promote increased understanding, consensus, and buy-in—especially among those who may otherwise harbor doubts about the model (Cissner 2005; Steketee et al. 2000). Collaboration also promotes training across stakeholder agencies on relevant issues, such as the impact of domestic violence on children, teen dating violence, and elder abuse (Harrell et al. 2007; Newmark et al. 2001). This prior research suggests that domestic violence courts and a coordinated community response may be symbiotic, with inclusive collaboration benefitting both efforts.

Engaging Judicial Leadership

Beyond involving representatives of the courts generally, judges may have a special role in the CCR. Engaging the judiciary and drawing on judicial leadership offers a potential remedy to several challenges faced by CCRs. For one, the collaboration between practitioners with differing priorities (e.g., defendants' legal rights, victim safety, offender accountability) can create challenges (Clarke and Wydall 2013). Given their traditional impartial position, judges may be able to bring this neutrality to bear and play a mediating role when conflict arises. Additionally, effective CCRs must consider the complexities of the communities in which they operate, resource dependencies within local agencies, and stakeholder engagement (Hoymand and Ford 2009). The leadership of the judiciary may go a long way toward galvanizing stakeholder participation (Malik, Ward, and Janczewski 2008).

Study partners at the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) and Center for Court Innovation staff working with the Judicial Engagement Network (JEN) note two common barriers to engaging judges in CCRs. First, the judiciary may be reluctant to participate due to perceived ethical issues surrounding the neutral role of the judge. Second, local agencies and community stakeholders involved in the CCR may have concerns that the participation of judges in the CCR would violate confidentiality. If, however, the CCR is focused on systemic coordination (rather than case specifics), judicial officers can be integral to the larger discussion, judicial leadership can facilitate buy-in, and concerns about neutrality and bias may be ameliorated. According to the practitioner experts in the current project, CCRs without strong judicial engagement and leadership may struggle to coordinate diverse justice system stakeholders; the absence of key players may undermine the ability of the CCR to holistically address victim safety and offender accountability.

The Current Study

Through their work with jurisdictions across the country over the past 30 years, technical assistance providers at the Center for Court Innovation (hereafter, the Center) and the

National Council of Juvenile Court and Family Judges gained a preliminary appreciation for the potential benefits (and challenges) of incorporating judicial officers in the work of CCRs. The current study represents a unique research-practitioner partnership that arose out of these reflections and seeks to provide the first research examining the extent and nature of judicial engagement in a coordinated community response to domestic violence. To inform this national portrait, research staff at the Center collaborated with practitioner experts to develop and disseminate a survey, designed to assess the nature of judicial involvement in CCRs across the country. In-depth case studies of three sites in which judicial leadership is central to the local response serve to flesh out survey results, providing a deeper understanding of the relative challenges and benefits of incorporating the judiciary in community responses to domestic violence.

The next chapter provides an overview of the methodology employed, describing both the national survey and case studies. Chapter 3 presents survey findings. Chapter 4 outlines key themes emerging from the three case studies. Chapter 5 concludes with a summary and discussion of study limitations and future steps.

Chapter 2

Study Methodology

This chapter presents the methods used to conduct the national survey, including the design and content of the instrument, construction of the sample, data collection, and analysis. The subsequent section describes the methodology employed for the in-depth case studies, including site selection and data collection and analysis.

National Survey

Developing the Instrument

The survey instrument was developed through an iterative process, incorporating feedback from across the collaborative research-practitioner team, as well as members of the project advisory board.³ The survey was designed to provide a better understanding of judicial engagement in coordinated community response (CCR) models. Specifically, the survey covered the following domains:

- Geography and origins (e.g., region, jurisdiction size, year CCR began);
- Operations (e.g., goals, bylaws, funding, structure);
- CCR membership (e.g., level of involvement, communications); and
- Judicial and other court-based staff engagement.

In addition to the close-ended questions across these domains, the survey included open-ended questions about the model's strengths and challenges, as well as the potential benefits and ethical concerns of engaging courts and the judiciary in the CCR. Respondents were also asked to identify recommendations for other CCRs and describe the sustainability of their model. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix A.

Establishing the Sample

Because no comprehensive list of CCRs across the country exists, representatives from the court system and advocacy organizations were recruited through relevant organizational

³ The advisory board included eight members (see acknowledgments for the complete list). The Center for Court Innovation's Gender and Family Justice Programs team recruited advisory board members. The board met one time to discuss the study overall and provide feedback on the draft survey. Additional survey feedback was provided through email.

contact lists,⁴ as well outreach by members of the project team and advisory board. In the recruitment email, respondents were provided with information about the study, as well as a link to the online survey. Those eligible to complete the survey were court personnel—including judges—and victim advocates (court- or community-based). Data collection occurred from July 2018 to November 2018.

We received a total of 119 responses, including judges, non-judicial court staff (e.g., administrators, court-based victim advocates), and victim advocates from community-based organizations. Seven respondents were excluded from the analysis because they were not eligible to participate. In cases where there were multiple responses from a single site, the project team selected the response that included the most complete information, with preference given to responses from judges and victim advocates.⁵ Some sites included responses from multiple representatives of a single agency, in which case, we selected the most complete responses and gave preference to the respondent who had been with the agency the longest. After eliminating 18 duplicate responses through these strategies, we were left with a final sample of 94 responding jurisdictions.

The results presented in Chapter 3 include descriptive statistics derived from close-ended survey questions and thematic findings drawn from the open-ended survey responses.

Case Studies

To select in-depth case study sites from the 94 sites responding to the survey, the site visit team conducted brief telephone interviews with select survey respondents who indicated a willingness to participate in further research. Priority was given toward sites with strong judicial engagement, but we also sought to select diverse sites in terms of geography, jurisdiction size, and age of the CCR. The purpose of the interviews was to gather more information about the judge's role in the CCR, specifically seeking to speak with those who

⁴ Recruitment efforts included outreach through the Battered Women's Justice Project, Center for Court Innovation's Domestic Violence Court Forum, Judicial Education Network, Justice for Families grantees, National Network to End Domestic Violence, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and STOP (Services, Training, Officers, and Prosecutors) Court Administrators.

⁵ In these instances, the judge remained the primary respondent for closed-ended questions. Advocate responses to open-ended questions were incorporated into the analysis even when there were multiple respondents from a single site.

were highly involved or the leader of the CCR. The project team identified ten CCRs for telephone outreach:

- Illinois Family Violence Coordinating Council (*statewide*);
- St. Louis County Domestic and Family Violence Council (*St. Louis County, MO*);
- Mille Lacs County Family Violence Coordinating Council (*Mille Lacs County, MN*);
- Beltrami County Domestic Violence Court and CCR Team (*Bemidji/Beltrami County, MN*);
- Conasauga Circuit Domestic Violence Accountability Court (*Murray and Whitfield Counties, GA*);
- Domestic Violence Council Team (*Ada, Boise, Elmore, and Valley Counties, ID*);
- Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (*Miami-Dade County, FL*);
- Domestic Violence/Safe Havens Council (*Deschutes County, OR*);
- New Mexico Intimate Partner Violence Homicide Review Team (*statewide*); and
- Blueprint for Safety Team (*Kansas City, MO*).

In-Depth Case Studies

Site Selection Based on the telephone interview responses, three CCRs were selected as in-depth case study sites. The criteria for case study selection were similar to those used to select the initial ten sites for telephone follow-up (i.e., regional and size variation age of CCR). The project team also sought sites where judges were true leaders of the CCR or at least strongly involved, as well as those where a case study was feasible for the site. In particular, we wanted to ensure that judges and other members would be available for interviews, that we could attend a council meeting, and that the site had the bandwidth to accommodate a visit. The final case study sites were in Deschutes County, OR; Miami-Dade County, FL; and Mille Lacs County, MN.

Data Collection Each site visit lasted three days and used the following methods to gather qualitative information.

- **Semi-structured Interviews** with members (e.g., judges, court staff, law enforcement, victim advocates, abusive partner intervention programs, community organizations) to ask about the benefits and challenges of incorporating the judiciary in the CCR;
- **Observations** of a CCR meeting to better understand the role of the judge within council meetings; and

- **Focus Groups** with victims and offenders to understand whether the councils' efforts to improve the communities' responses to domestic violence affected victims' perceptions of safety, offender accountability, and/or access to resources.⁶

In total, we interviewed 62 CCR members (six of whom were judges), observed three meetings, and conducted focus groups with nine victims and eight offenders.

Data Analysis Two team members took detailed notes during interviews, meeting observations, and focus groups. We reviewed and manually coded the interview notes for general themes related to the goals, role of the judge, ethical concerns, benefits and challenges of the judiciary-led model, sustainability of the model, and recommendations. The observations were used to supplement information gathered during interviews. Specifically, observations were used to assess meeting content, the role of the judge, and the nature and extent of participation by other members. Notes taken during victim and offender focus groups were thematically coded. Themes included barriers and facilitators to service access in the community, interactions with the court system, and recommendations for criminal justice and community-based organizations.

⁶ A note on language: Throughout this report, I designate those directly impacted by domestic violence as victims and offenders. While some of those described as offenders may not have been convicted (and, therefore, might more accurately be described as “alleged offenders”), this provides a convenient shorthand across members of this group. During focus groups with members of this group, the term “offenders” was not used, instead opting for the language of “persons with a domestic violence case.” While some may prefer the language of “survivors” to “victims,” there is no consensus on the preferred terminology. Thus, I have opted to use the latter for the sake of clarity and in consultation with our Gender and Family Justice Programs team.

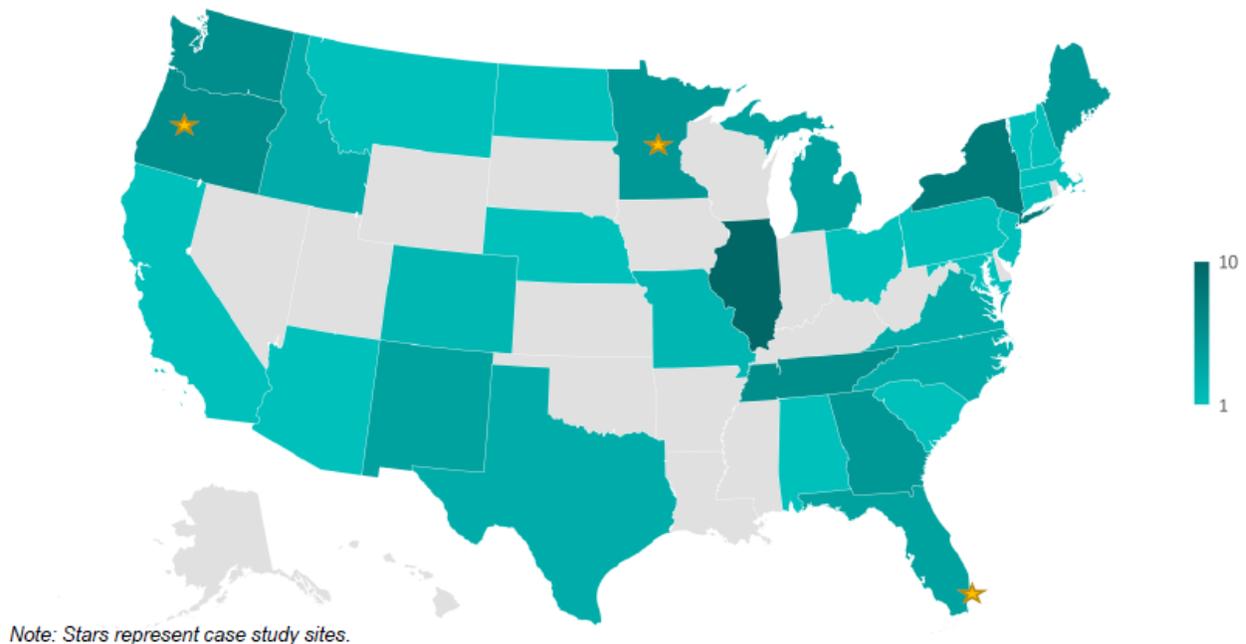
Chapter 3

National Survey Results

This chapter presents the results from the 94 unique jurisdictions that responded to the national survey. The chapter includes basic descriptions of the Coordinated Community Response (CCR) models (e.g., location, age, goals, membership); level and nature of judicial engagement; CCR challenges and strengths of the CCR; recommendations; and perceived sustainability.

Basic CCR Characteristics

Figure 3.1. Survey Responses Came from Across the Country
(N=94 Responses)



As shown in Figure 3.1, survey responses came from across the country. Table 3.1 provides further descriptive characteristics of the responding CCRs. The majority (83%) operate on a county level,⁷ with fewer operating at a state or municipal level. Jurisdiction size also varied greatly among responding CCRs. More than half classified their jurisdiction as having a

⁷ Twelve of the CCRs that operate at the county level have jurisdiction over more than one county.

population between 20,000 and 100,000 (34%) or between 100,000 and 300,000 (27%). More than a quarter (28%) represented larger jurisdictions with populations over 300,000. The oldest of the responding CCRs was established in 1978; the newest was established in 2017. Less than half (43%) were established within the last decade. On average, responding CCRs have been around for 14 years.

Table 3.1. Survey Responses Came from a Diverse Array of Jurisdictions

	N	94
Jurisdiction Type		
State		2%
County/Multiple Counties		83%
Municipality (City, Town)		10%
Multiple Jurisdictions		5%
Population Size¹		
Less than 20,000		12%
20,001 - 100,000		34%
100,001 - 300,000		27%
300,001 - 1 Million		16%
Greater than 1 Million		12%
Region		
Northeast		25%
Midwest		34%
South		37%
West		4%
Year Established		
Average Tenure		13 years
Median Tenure		11 years
Decade Established		
1970		1%
1980		4%
1990		29%
2000		22%
2010		43%

¹ State-level organizations were excluded from this breakdown (N=93).

CCR Goals

Respondents were asked to identify items from a list of goals as primary or secondary (or not applicable) to their CCR. Figure 3.2 presents the ten items most frequently rated as *primary* CCR goals. In general, top goals reflect an emphasis on keeping victims safe, connecting victims to services, and holding offenders accountable. Respondents nearly universally prioritize promoting victim safety (96%). Many CCRs also reported prioritizing identifying and addressing barriers that keep victims from accessing services (76%) and coordinating victim services (69%). In contrast, CCRs place significantly less emphasis on coordinating *offender* programming (21%) and enhancing offender program quality as a primary goal (18%).

Figure 3.2. Responding CCRs Prioritize Victim Safety & Services and Perpetrator Accountability¹



Notes: Total number of responding jurisdictions vary by survey item. Minimum N for this set of items is 92, maximum N is 94.

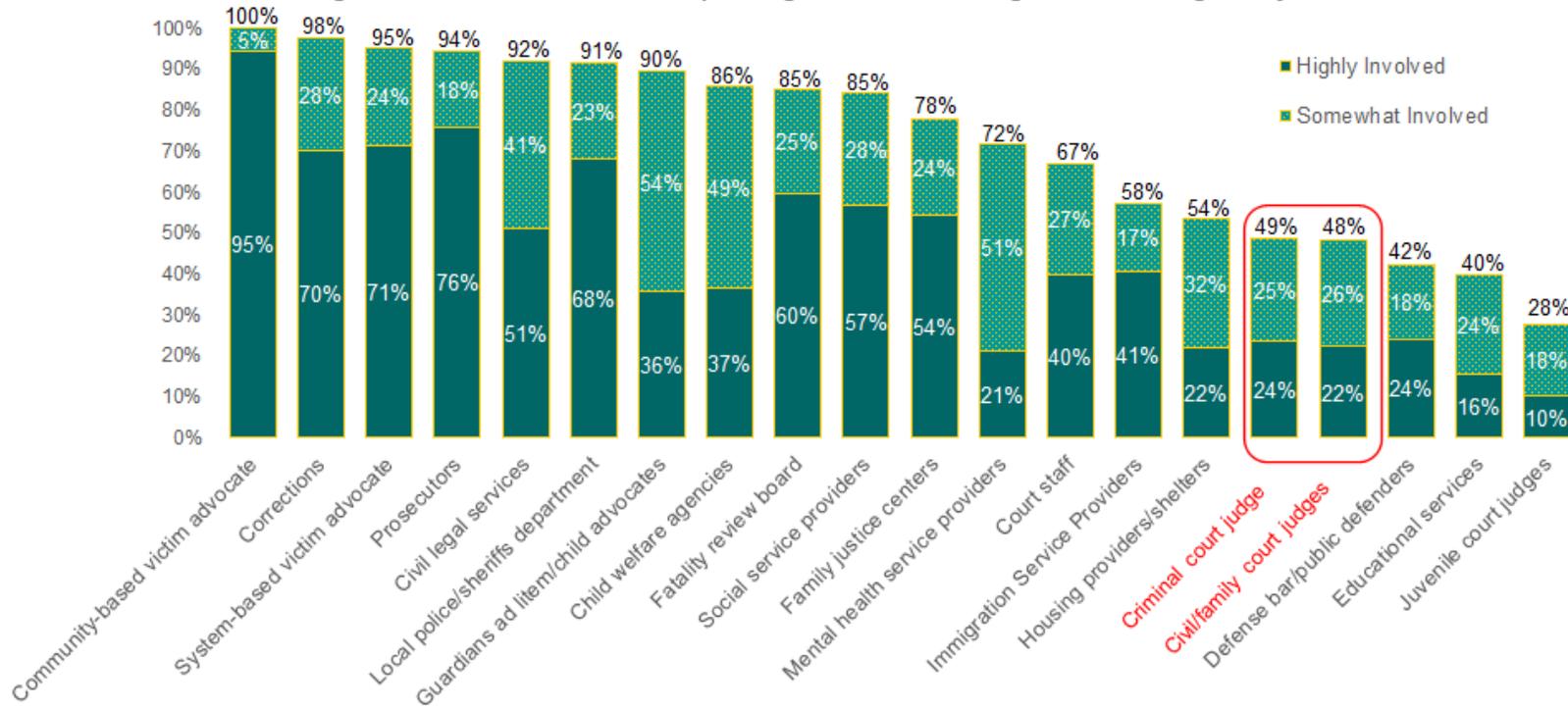
¹ Figure includes only those goals that at least 47% of respondents categorized as "primary." Goals deemed less critical to the CCR mission include risk assessment and community staffing of IPV cases (35%); changing organizational practice (33%); developing laws and policies to address DV (28%); coordinating offender programming (21%); and enhancing the quality of offender programming (17%).

CCR Membership

Responding CCRs generally incorporate many of the same major players. Figure 3.3 represents the percentage of respondents indicating that various stakeholder groups are involved (either highly or somewhat) in the local community response. Victim advocates—both community-based (100%) and system-based (95%)—are involved in most of the responding CCRs. Law enforcement, including corrections (98%), prosecutors (94%), and

local police or sheriffs (91%) are also commonly involved. Finally, providers of additional services for victims and children, such as civil legal service providers (92%), child

Figure 3.3. Just Under Half of Responding CCRs Include Judges in a Meaningful Way



advocates/law guardians (90%), child welfare agencies (86%), and social service providers (85%) are included in more than three-quarters of responding CCRs. Family justice centers, which correspond to this last category of stakeholders, are slightly less frequently included in CCRs (78%); this may stem from the fact that many communities do not have a family justice center to include.⁸

Respondents were asked to identify any other stakeholders not listed in the survey that were a part of the local CCR. Nearly half of respondents reported that some other stakeholder group is highly (9%) or somewhat (50%) involved in the local effort (results not shown). Several respondents noted that local abusive partner intervention programs are part of the CCR. Other organizations noted included services for the elderly and those with disabilities; youth-centered services (e.g., youth development, vocation/professional training for youth, urban farmers, community centers; one site); tribal services (one site); and forensic nurses (one site).

Court and Judicial Engagement

Notably, court players of all kinds are meaningfully involved in around half or fewer of responding CCRs. As reflected in Figure 3.3, court staff and administrators are the most commonly involved court players (67%); criminal (49%), civil (48%), and juvenile (28%) judges are involved in fewer CCRs. Attorneys representing offenders are similarly infrequently included in responding CCRs (42%). When isolating judges that are *highly* involved in the CCR (represented by the lower, solid portion of the bars in Figure 3.3), fewer than a quarter of responding CCRs reported major involvement on the part of either criminal (24%) or civil (22%) court judges.

To try to further tease out the role of judges, respondents were asked whether judges were the *leader* of the CCR. Of the 46 CCRs that indicated meaningful involvement of judges, criminal court judges play a leadership role in four, and civil/family court judges act as the leader of the local effort in two. Four additional CCRs have both criminal and civil/family court judges as leaders.

Despite relatively low levels of judicial involvement, more than half of respondents (56%) rate court engagement as very important to the CCR; only 6% rated court involvement as

⁸ A 2018 national scan of family justice centers funded by the National Institute of Justice identified a total of 87 such centers across the country (Abt Associates 2018).

unimportant. Even among the 30 CCRs that do not have judicial involvement, 41% feel that court engagement is very important.

One possible explanation for low judicial engagement and leadership across responding CCRs is concern about the ethical ramifications of hearing details of a case during a CCR meeting, violating Judicial Conference of the United States rules regarding *ex parte* communication (Salazar et al. 2007).⁹ A majority of respondents (63%) expressed no ethical concerns about judges being involved in the CCR. Asked to describe their concerns, those respondents who *did* indicate reservations suggested that their CCR discusses specific cases during meetings. These respondents felt that judicial involvement could make it difficult for judges to remain objective when deciding the outcome of a case. One respondent maintained that their state's rules governing judicial conduct explicitly precluded judges from participating in the CCR unless the defense bar is also represented, while another suggested that judges who are clear about their role in the CCR and adhere to the code of conduct would be qualified to participate. Another respondent felt ethical concerns could be mitigated if all sides (e.g., prosecution, defense) were represented in the CCR.

Benefits and Challenges

Benefits of the CCR

Many respondents felt that the team approach of the CCR fosters collaboration. Nearly all reported that members communicate frequently (93%) and that CCR members refer clients to other members (95%). Responses suggest that there is a mutual benefit to including members of the judiciary: judges can provide insight into the legal reasons why actions may (or may not) be feasible, while other members of the CCR (especially advocates) can educate judges (and other justice system players) about the victim experience.

Timely information sharing was also a frequently reported model benefit—a few respondents further suggested this benefit has the potential to enhance offender accountability and promote victim safety. Respondents reported that by working with service providers and community organizations, members of the CCR gain access to up-to-date information about compliance with mandated services. In the instance of non-compliance (e.g., not attending programs, violating protective orders), CCR members can respond quickly and appropriately to notify victims and intervene with offenders. This type of collaborative response was felt

by respondents to have sizeable potential impacts on victim safety and willingness to report future incidents.

Challenges of the CCR

Several respondents reported frequent member turnover; in particular, respondents reported that turnover is high among law enforcement members. Respondents also noted challenges in getting initial buy-in to the CCR model, particularly among staff from agencies that do not recognize the importance of CCRs. Then, once there is buy-in, respondents reported some difficulty in maintaining a consistent, sustained group over time.

Other respondents pointed to structural challenges, including insufficient structure, lack of strong leadership, and too many members making it difficult to reach consensus. Members across too many disparate agencies was also noted as a challenge. As one respondent explained, “There’s an unsaid understanding about which aspects of working in domestic violence are most important to prosecutors and law enforcement: accountability [over] victim safety, economic independence.” The underlying challenge suggested by this respondent is that other members—for instance, victim advocates and service providers—may feel that such a focus on offenders and accountability may undermine their work toward more victim-centered outcomes.

Judicial-Related Challenges A challenge specific to including judges in the CCR noted by some is that meetings take on a limited focus on *court* outcomes at the expense of “broad considerations of community safety, victim safety, parallel justice, offender accountability, and/or rehabilitation.” The inclusion of judicial officers can introduce real limitations to what issues can be discussed during meetings if judges feel the discussion of ongoing cases is improper and/or violates their obligation to objectivity. One respondent added that the presence of a judge in a meeting might create a power dynamic where members are hesitant to share their opinions, instead deferring to the judge. Other respondents reported that judges frequently have limited time, making it difficult for them to regularly attend CCR meetings. It can then be difficult to keep judges who are not able to regularly attend up to date on matters discussed during CCR meetings.

Chapter 4

Case Studies

This chapter presents findings from the case studies of three domestic violence councils.¹⁰ Site visits to these locations occurred between July and October 2019. The findings presented in this chapter are based on interviews with 22 council members in Deschutes County, Oregon; 15 members in Miami-Dade County, Florida; and 25 members in Mille Lacs County, Minnesota. Observations from each council meeting and focus groups with victims and offenders are also reflected.

Site Characteristics

Deschutes County Domestic Violence Council

Established in 2005, the Deschutes County Domestic Violence Council in Oregon serves a county population of 197,692¹¹. The deputy district attorney and an attorney from Legal Aid Services of Oregon are the co-chairs. The presiding judge of the Deschutes County Circuit Court attends all meetings. Prior presiding judges and judges from other courts (e.g., juvenile court) also take part in meetings.

Miami-Dade County Domestic Violence Council

Established in 1994 as part of the Miami-Dade Domestic Violence Court, the Miami-Dade County Domestic Violence Council serves a county population of 2,716,940. The lead judge of the domestic violence division in the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida chairs the council (also called the administrative judge). The associate administrative judge, who attends regularly, serves as a substitute chair, and other domestic violence court judges come to the meetings. The Miami-Dade County Domestic Violence Council is the only one of the councils to include a domestic violence fatality review team.¹² Miami-Dade County

¹⁰ In Chapters 1-3, we referred generally to the Coordinated Community Response (CCR) model. In the current chapter, we refer to the three CCRs as councils, which is the language used in their official names.

¹¹ Population estimates for all counties from the 2019 Census.

¹² The Miami-Dade County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team works under the Domestic Violence and Family Court Divisions to review adult and child domestic violence-related fatalities.

Domestic Violence Council has a Family Justice Center with 39 organizations that assist domestic violence victims with their needs (e.g., legal, childcare, food); most of those organizations are council members.

Mille Lacs County Family Violence Coordinating Council

Established in 2014 as part of the Mille Lacs County Domestic Violence Court, the Mille Lacs County Family Violence Coordinating Council in Minnesota serves a county population of 26,277. The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Reservation is 61,000 acres and covers part of Mille Lacs County. The domestic violence court's lead judge is the chair. The prior chair attends when available and serves as a substitute when the current chair cannot attend.

Council Meetings

The Miami-Dade and Deschutes Domestic Violence County Councils have quarterly meetings, and the Mille Lacs Council meets monthly. All meetings include updates, which might entail members sharing information about potential funding opportunities; community resources—such as new housing for victims; or changes in relevant legislation or policies (e.g., protection orders, child custody, social services benefits). There might be a presentation on research related to domestic violence (for example, we observed a presentation on recognizing the signs of a concussion). Other times, a member or someone from outside the council might conduct training for the group.

Nearly all interviewees reported benefiting from regular council meetings, which provide an opportunity to talk in person and have in-depth conversations that might not happen otherwise, given members' busy schedules. In these conversations, members might educate each other about their organization or processes. For example, one prosecutor said that he has discussed how prosecution works and helped members understand legal terms. An advocate reported that meetings provide them with the opportunity to explain women's experiences regarding co-parenting or custody battles, for example, to criminal justice system representatives (e.g., police, judges, and attorneys). Also, they can educate other members about the reasons that no-contact orders work (or do not work) and ways courts and police might support victims more.

Sometimes misunderstandings about others' perspectives can result in tension between agencies. One interviewee explained that increased awareness about each other's role in addressing domestic violence can diffuse disagreements. Several interviewees added that the meetings are about getting to know each other and building trust and provide a safe space to

discuss matters about domestic violence. Their familiarity fosters an environment where they can respectfully disagree and discuss how to best serve people.

While the meetings can be a time for more in-depth discussion, interviewees said that only policy decisions are hashed out in smaller committees. Other decisions, such as whether to apply for a grant, are made with the full group.

Role of the Judge

The judges in the Miami-Dade County Domestic Violence and Mille Lacs County Family Violence Coordinating Councils chair the meetings and have an active role in creating the agenda. The Deschutes County Domestic Violence Council's judge is not a chair but is heavily involved in the meetings. During interviews, the judges stressed the importance of providing a space that everyone can be heard. They never saw their role as the only voice in a meeting. One judge specified that they envision the council as a team where everyone can share their thoughts.

During our observations, none of the judges dominated the conversations, but rather facilitated them by soliciting members' opinions. Members used judges as a legal resource to explain why certain actions legally can or cannot be taken. During our interviews, one person said that the judge provides the whole legal perspective during the meetings so that the conversation does not become bogged down in what each agency (e.g., advocates, law enforcement) believes is possible.

Other court staff had significant roles in council meetings. Specifically, other judges who also hear domestic violence cases and court administrators almost always attend and can fill in when the chair or Presiding judge is absent. Case managers and clerks attend regularly to answer questions related to court processes or filing documents, such as injunctions and protective orders. One court clerk reported that when victims come to file for protection orders, for example, the clerks must interview them. Through that process, victims may share information about needs beyond court-related assistance. The clerks can pass that information to advocates who may be able to help. When explaining the importance of other court staff representation in meetings, a judge said, "If it affects the clerk's office, for example, or if they have a question about corrections, it's imperative [for council members] to be active, engaged, and listening, and put on the hat of the agency you represent and how it impacts your piece of the wheel."

Ethical Concerns

In contrast to survey respondents (see Chapter 3), none of the interviewees expressed concern with the judges' involvement, and many considered them an integral part of the council. The interviewees said they were aware that they cannot discuss pending cases during meetings. Some said that this can be challenging when they would like to discuss the details of a case where a policy or procedure (e.g., conditions of an offender's release) comes to their attention and needs to be addressed. As an alternative, interviewees said they can discuss topics generally, such as visitation rights, and meet with a sub-committee or smaller group to understand specifics related to the case.

A few interviewees mentioned that they minimize ethical concerns by allowing any organization or agency to participate in the council. For example, members of the defense bar and abusive partner interventions are encouraged to come to represent the offenders' perspectives or advocate for their needs. The judges also said that they remind members about what they can and cannot do in the meetings and outside, such as fundraising or speaking engagements for members' organizations.

Strengths

Benefits of the Local Approach

Building Relationships Across Agencies Interviewees from all sites overwhelmingly said that the main benefit of being on the council together is collaboration and relationship building. Through their council meetings, several said that simply putting a face with a name has made them more comfortable with reaching out for help. A law enforcement officer added that his involvement has broken down some organizational barriers that existed before the council. "We have an equal voice. Some people [on the council] have bad experiences with law enforcement. It's important for us to try to overcome that a little bit. I've learned about some different perspectives. I bring that back to my agency." A probation officer also gave an example about the importance of knowing each other. When an offender violates their protection order, he knows the advocates to contact who can assist the victim early with safety planning.

During focus groups, two victims shared their experiences of interacting with law enforcement and probation officers. Through communication with officers, advocates let one of the participants know the location of her abuser so that she could make safety plans. Other

victims in the same site reported that they were directly informed about their abuser's location through the probation officer, providing some evidence of coordination between the criminal justice system and community advocates (See Appendix B for the write-up of all findings from the focus groups.)

Connecting to Diverse Communities According to several interviewees from one council, an actively involved faith-based member has been an asset to raising awareness in a community that typically does not talk about domestic violence. The pastor is someone whom parishioners trust and might be more inclined to ask for help. Through connections on the council, he can help make connections to an advocate.

Providing Mutual Learning Opportunities Interviewees frequently mentioned that the council is beneficial because they learn from each other—whether through a discussion during a meeting or a presentation/training by another member. For example, an emergency room first responder said that after her training on the signs of domestic violence, she has noticed increased screening of victims. An interviewee who works in an abusive partner intervention program said that they can speak to the needs of offenders, which is important for judges to know when they consider sentencing. A defense attorney said that it is important for the defense bar to attend to get informed about policies in the community and courts so that they know how to best advocate for their clients.

Enhancing Victim Safety Many interviewees felt that their partnerships increased their capacity to assist victims of domestic violence. One specifically said, “I think the goals are to continue to improve how we respond as a community to domestic violence. So, we try to prevent it, and then when it does happen, what can we do to less victimize the victim, and then improve our response as an entire team? So, that means the entire community.” Another interviewee said that the changes in the way their community responds to domestic violence after establishing the council made it clear that they must continue. They believed that there was a perception in their community of non-responsiveness to victims' needs and lack of consequence for the offenders prior to the formation of a council. There was no coordination amongst agencies. The presence of different organizations and agencies within the community and criminal justice system working together helps move initiatives forward. An interviewee from the same council added, “The [council] changed people who were in the system. It wasn't really a system before. That's the magic of getting together.”

Benefits of Judicial Involvement

Connecting Courts and Community As discussed earlier, the judges are a source of legal knowledge for members. They can also disseminate information from members to other judges. One interviewee said that their courts use the “one family, one court model,” and having the judge on their council is helpful for them because if an issue arises in family court, the judge can bring it up to other judges who hear domestic violence cases. Another judge said that domestic violence is not solely about the family; there are collateral effects that impact other lives and the community, and the court needs to be involved. According to this interviewee, the judge is there to show that addressing domestic violence does not happen only in the courtroom, but that the community—and community-based organizations—also play an important role.

The judge can represent an important figure in the communities in which the councils are based. One interviewee explained, “the court is extremely relevant in ostracized [e.g., immigrant, LGBTQ] communities that historically they do not see the criminal justice system as being helpful.” They went on to say that they can share the concerns of the marginalized communities with the judge, who is there to listen and understand. The judge’s presence on the council can help change the court process, which “makes a difference to the life of a survivor.”

Finding Solutions Several interviewees referred to judges as problem solvers whose insights helped to improve court policies or services. For instance, victim advocates from one council were able to bring up the issue of including children in the courtroom during a compliance hearing to the council judge. They thought this should be prohibited because the offenders might try to influence the court by using their children to make them look like a better parent. After listening to the advocates’ concerns, the judge decided that children should not attend the hearings. In another instance, a parental visitation center was created when judges needed to find a better way for parents to visit with their children outside of the home. An advocacy group received a grant to create the center, which benefited both advocates and judges. The interviewee said their visitation center would not have happened and other projects in the community would have been more difficult to put in place without collaborating with judges.

Adding Legitimacy Interviewees across councils spoke about the impact of the judge within the criminal justice system. Their presence shows governmental agencies (i.e. prosecutors, law enforcement, corrections, other judges) that domestic violence is a serious

issue in the community that needs their attention. A few advocates expressed that the judge legitimized their work to those in the criminal justice system.

Challenges

Challenges of the Local Approach

Contending with Frequent Turnover Outside of logistic issues (e.g., not having enough time during meetings, too many meetings), a common concern amongst interviewees was turnover among members. This was especially an issue for law enforcement. Sheriff's offices and police departments have officers that frequently leave or move within the agency. New officers are sometimes assigned to be the agencies' representatives on the council without training on domestic violence and with little investment in their role on the council.

Attracting Diverse Stakeholders Another challenge was getting other community members involved. Interviewees in two sites mentioned that they would like more involvement from the defense bar. According to one public defender, the lack of time and funding was a factor in regular attendance.

Engaging the Local Community Some interviewees from the Mille Lacs Family Violence Coordinating Counsel mentioned there was no representation from the Native American Band whose reservation neighbors their county. They said that years of litigation on boundaries between the reservation and the county have negatively affected their relationship. The interviewees acknowledged that they should engage the Band in their discussions about how best to respond to domestic violence.

Challenges of Judicial Involvement

Engaging the Judiciary Lack of involvement from other judges was a concern expressed by many interviewees, including the judges in the council. They thought that judges need more education on domestic violence, but rarely attend trainings. One interviewee suggested that judges who do not understand the dynamics of domestic violence (but think that they do) can end up doing more harm to the victim than good.

Coping with Power Dynamics Two interviewees said that some members may be reluctant to bring up problems to the judge because of the inherent power differential. Members might be more likely to stay silent rather than express their actual opinions when a

judge is present. One judge acknowledged that he has to be careful about having too much influence by making sure other members know that the council is a team where the judge is not the only voice.

Sustainability

All interviewees felt that judges and court staff should be involved, and the judges expressed that they wanted to continue in their role. All councils have a precedent for a replacement when the current judge steps down or is not re-elected. There has never been a time when any of the three councils did not include a highly involved judge.

There were some concerns about retaining a judge on their council, but not due to a lack of support from members. A few interviewees thought that finding a replacement judge would be difficult, specifically noting the time commitment and buy-in required to lead the council. Another interviewee worried that some judges might feel inadequate to follow in the shoes of a particularly dynamic or successful judicial leader.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Recommendations

This study explored judicial engagement in coordinated community response (CCR) models to domestic violence. Specifically, we gained a better understanding of the role of judges within CCRs, as well as the associated benefits and challenges of having a judge in a leadership role on the council.

This chapter includes the key findings, study limitations, and recommendations for communities considering changes to their coordinated response.

Key Findings

Overall, survey respondents and case study interviewees prioritized victim safety as a key CCR goal. Few interviewees explicitly mentioned promoting offender accountability or assisting offenders with services outside abusive partner intervention programs. Those interviewed saw the CCR as having a positive impact on how members of their community work together to change local responses to domestic violence. Through the CCR, they report that they have become more familiar with other local players, how other agencies respond to domestic violence, and who to contact for specific needs or services.

Our survey results revealed that half of CCRs include a judge; ten include a judge as the CCR chair. Respondents suggested that judicial officers helped to facilitate discussion and answer questions about the legal feasibility of policy issues under consideration by the council. A judge's presence in the CCR was also felt to carry weight among other court officers and agencies in the criminal justice system. That is, some reported that having the judge on board adds legitimacy to their work and the significance of the CCR, increasing participation or commitment. In exchange, judges learn more about domestic violence from members, improving their treatment of victims and potentially raising awareness of domestic violence within the community.

Concerns about the ethics of judicial engagement were uncommon. Survey respondents and interviewees did specify that judges must remain neutral and that issues related to active cases cannot be discussed during meetings. Respondents also noted that including members

of the defense bar or other organizations that support offenders was another way to avoid potential bias.

Recommendations for Other CCRs

Survey respondents and interviewees from the case studies identified nine recommendations for other sites seeking to develop (or build upon) their CCR with a focus on judicial engagement.

- 1. Develop (and share) clear goals** Goals should be achieved through a consensus decision-making process, including representatives from all participating agencies. Goals should be revisited and modifications considered as the group grows and priorities change. Goals should be shared with participating agencies and with new members who join the CCR later in the process.
- 2. Consider group structure** It is important to include leaders who can facilitate group decision-making, coalesce members, and delegate administrative and other tasks as needed. Leaders may be identified naturally (e.g., someone who knows all the key players) or may need to be determined early in the process of establishing the CCR (e.g., through a vote). In particularly large or contentious CCRs, smaller working groups or committees may prove effective in timely decision-making.
- 3. Schedule meetings thoughtfully** To be respectful of members' time, meetings should be planned with a clear purpose and structure in mind. Distributing agendas in advance may help members determine when their presence is essential. As noted above, smaller working groups may help to avoid over-burdening the entire membership with too many meetings.
- 4. Be inclusive** To bring a range of perspectives and enhance collaboration, CCRs should include the full range of relevant community organizations. They should also be inclusive of all communities, particularly those who are underserved (e.g., LGBTQ, immigrants, individuals with disabilities). Maintaining open-mindedness and a willingness to share differing perspectives honestly may help to promote collaboration.
- 5. Continue to build interest** Respondents recommended that to keep their efforts viable, CCRs should engage new members (e.g., abusive partner intervention

programs, school systems, faith-based organizations) and engage judges beyond those sitting in dedicated domestic violence courts. Members' diminishing involvement over time and turnover were noted above as challenges. To combat these issues, respondents suggested that offering informative presentations and trainings may be useful tools for recruiting new members (and retaining older ones). Another potential method for dealing with turnover is to keep systems in place to replace members of the committees when a member leaves.

- 6. Include a judge in the CCR** All interviewees supported the inclusion of a judge (or judges) in a position of leadership in the CCR. Many community-based organizations explained that a judge adds weight to their work helping victims and identified projects that would have been more difficult to establish in the community without judicial involvement (e.g., the creation of a visitation center for parents and children). Also, a judicial leader in a prominent role may encourage participation from other agencies and facilitate collaboration among members.

Interviewees suggested that CCRs should reach out to judges from an array of court settings beyond civil, family, and criminal courts. Domestic violence impacts other cases—for instance, custody and divorce matters—and some interviewees felt that some of these other judges could also improve their understanding of domestic violence.

Several interviewees also emphasized the importance of the judge's personality and background. The judge should be respected and a good listener. They should be a lead judge in a domestic violence division or have taken domestic violence training so that they understand victims' behaviors and are sensitive to their needs.

When asking a judge to be involved in a CCR, a couple of interviewees noted the importance of being clear with this request. Specifically, the judge's role and boundaries should be stated at the beginning to show that their participation would not compromise their ability to perform in their role as a judge outside the CCR. Also, their role should not be so great that the extent of their involvement and time commitments would be unsustainable.

- 7. Observe other coordinated community response models** The second most common recommendation after having a judicial leader was that other CCRs should learn from more established ones before starting their own. Interviewees stressed the

benefit of learning from those who have been through the process already. More experienced judges and other members can share how they have benefitted from the model, as well as challenges and lessons learned.

- 8. Provide ongoing training** Interviewees from all sites emphasized that council members should receive training on domestic violence, an understanding of which is essential to improving the criminal justice system response. When a member is trained, they can pass what they learned on to others within their agency. A law enforcement officer explained, “I would like to have more of a clear indication that information is being disseminated through the department. Concussion and strangulation information should have an impact on our department policies and practices. We need to have more training to get out there. That’s why attendance at the meetings is so crucial.” Most interviewees added that judges from other divisions—not only criminal court—need basic training on domestic violence.
- 9. Plan for sustainability past the life of funding** CCRs built on grant or other time-bound funding should plan for a time when that funding runs out. CCRs may be able to use community domestic violence statistics to show the extent of the problem and/or track measures of success (e.g., number of victims served)—potentially strengthening requests for additional funding. One respondent suggested that CCRs might be advised to reduce their reliance on uncertain grant funding when there are more stable options. Similarly, creating a statute for a fatality review team and building visibility could help towards establishing their permanence in government.

Study Limitations

This study was designed to provide a better understanding of the extent and nature of judicial engagement in CCRs. Without discounting the findings presented here, it is worth noting two study limitations. First, the generalizability of the survey findings is limited as we did not have a comprehensive list of CCRs from which to recruit participants. It is possible that the sample is not representative and reflects CCRs that are more established and motivated to respond.

While it is not necessarily a limitation, the case studies focused only on three sites. The intent was to conduct an in-depth look at how CCRs with strong judicial engagement operate. Given the small sample size, and even fewer victims and offenders in the focus groups, the

findings should be interpreted with caution as they may not reflect the full range of CCR experiences.

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Appendix A.

National Portrait of Judicial Engagement Survey

Consent to Participate

You are being invited to participate in a survey on Coordinated Community Response Models (CCRs) and judicial engagement. This survey is part of a larger research study involving telephone interviews and case studies at selected sites and is conducted by the Center for Court Innovation, an independent nonprofit, in partnership with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. The study is funded by the Department of Justice, Office of Violence Against Women (OVW).

A CCR in the context of domestic violence is a multidisciplinary intervention model that engages local systems, agencies, and individuals to form a comprehensive network of services for victims and their families. CCRs commonly include judicial and legal services—including both criminal and civil systems—domestic violence advocates, culturally-specific services, law enforcement, child welfare services, schools, health care providers, and other stakeholders. This survey seeks to gather information specifically from CCRs that address intimate partner violence: a pattern of physical, sexual, financial, and/or emotional abuse between current or former partners.

How will the survey responses be used?

Your responses will be used in three ways:

- 1) Survey responses will help us document the diversity of CCRs, with special attention on the roles of the courts and judges;
- 2) The findings of this survey will be used to select six to ten sites for follow-up telephone interviews;
- 3) Based on the interviews, three sites will be selected for case studies.

Overall, this study will identify the benefits and challenges of having a judiciary-led CCR; document the lessons learned; and generate performance measures that determine the degree to which the judiciary has effectively facilitated participation amongst local agencies and community stakeholders in responding to intimate partner violence.

Your survey responses are completely confidential. They will not be shared with any other agency. All findings will be reported in aggregate (e.g. 10% of CCRs reported). No single CCR or respondent will be named, highlighted or singled out. The goal of this study is NOT to make any CCR look bad (or good).

The survey should take between 15-30 minutes, at most. You cannot save your progress. So, please plan to have enough time to take it. Otherwise, you cannot save your progress.

Who should complete this survey?

One survey should be completed for each CCR. This survey is designed to be completed by judges or court administrators and domestic violence advocates who have been involved with the CCR for at least one year. If you are brand new to your CCR (joined as of 2017), you may want to identify another CCR court representative or advocate who has been part of the CCR for longer to complete the survey.

How will the survey responses be used?

The survey will be used to identify the scope of the CCR; participating individuals and organizations; the leadership structure of the collaborative; frequency of meetings; respondents' roles within the CCR; respondent satisfaction with the CCR; perceived role of the courts (criminal and civil/family) in the CCR; perceived role of the judiciary in the CCR; challenges of working with the courts/judiciary; and future priorities. Respondents will be asked to reflect on practices they have found particularly effective, lessons learned, and problems encountered in their work as part of the CCR.

What are the risks and benefits of participating?

This study is considered minimal risk. All the questions asked are about your CCR and none are personal. Respondents will be asked to identify their CCR; however, the names will only be used to identify CCRs for a follow-up interview and case study. They will only be connected to your survey for a short period of time; these identifiers will be immediately removed prior to analysis and replaced with a pseudo-identifier. Any inadvertent disclosure of responses is unlikely and would not lead to any serious consequences. All data will be stored on secure drives at the Center for Court Innovation and will be destroyed three years after completion of the study.

There are no direct benefits to participation, but by agreeing to participate, you will be contributing to our knowledge about judicial engagement in CCRs. All the questions in this survey are aimed at getting information that we cannot obtain from any other source.

Who has reviewed and approved this study?

This study has been approved by the Center for Court Innovation Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a study participant, you can contact CCI_IRB@courtinnovation.org.

Who should I contact with subject matter questions or questions about how to complete the survey?

Please contact the Principal Investigator, Elise Jensen, at ejensen@nycourts.gov or 646-386-4040.

This project was supported by grant number 2017-SI-AX-0006 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this document

(or survey, or whatever the kind of publication it is) are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Having read the above, I understand that by clicking the “Yes” button below, I agree to take part in this study under the terms and conditions outlined in the accompanied letter of information. Do you consent to participate in the survey?

- Yes, I agree to participate.
- I do not agree to participate.

Note: If you are in more than one, please complete a separate survey for each CCR.

1. What is your name?
2. What is your title at your organization?
3. What agency/organization do you work for?
4. How long have you been at your CCR?
5. What is your role in the CCR?
 - a. Chair
 - b. Member
 - c. Representative from my agency
 - d. Chair of subcommittee
6. What is the name of your CCR?
7. Where is your CCR located (city, state)?
8. What geographic area does your CCR cover (e.g., city, county)?
10. What is the size of your jurisdiction (population)?
 - a. Less than 1,000
 - b. 1,000 – 20,000
 - c. 20,001 – 100,000
 - d. 100,001 – 300,000
 - e. 300,001 – 1 million
 - f. Greater than 1 million
 - g. I’m not sure
11. What year was your CCR created?
12. In addition to intimate partner violence (IPV), what kinds of abuse does your CCR address (check all that apply)?
 - a. Family violence
 - b. Sexual assault
 - c. Dating violence
 - d. Stalking
 - e. Elder abuse
 - f. Child abuse/neglect

12. What are the goals of the CCR? Which of these goals are primary versus secondary goals?

Goals	Primary	Secondary	Not Applicable	Not Sure
Promote victim safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hold perpetrators accountable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enhance the quality of offender programming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strengthen individual knowledge and skills of victims	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promote community education on intimate partner violence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Educate service providers and the legal system on IPV and resources/services available	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facilitate collaboration between the court and community stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Incorporate culturally responsive practices into community response to IPV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change organizational practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develop laws and policies to address intimate partner violence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify and address barriers for victims to access systems and services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Risk assessment and staffing of cases in the community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promote information sharing among CCRs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coordinate victim services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coordinate offender programming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. Do the agencies included in the CCR generally agree on the overarching goals?

- Yes
- No

14. How does the group resolve different priorities in terms of overarching goals and/or specific activities?

15. Does your state have statutes or regulations for all CCRs within the state?

- Yes
- No
- a. If so, please describe the statutes and regulations.

16. Is your CCR subject to any operating bylaws?

- Yes
- No

a. If so, please describe the bylaws.

17. Which agencies/organizations are currently included in the CCR and how intensive is each organization's involvement?

	Highly Involved	Somewhat Involved	Not Involved	Not Applicable	Not Sure
Criminal Court Judge(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Civil/Family Court Judge(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Juvenile Court Judges(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Court Administrators (e.g., administrative/supervising judges/chief clerks)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Court Staff (e.g., coordinators, case managers, security clerks)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Child Welfare Agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Governmental Victim Services Agency(ies) (advocates who work for prosecutors or law enforcement)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Non-Governmental Victim Services Agency(ies) (advocates who work for independent, non-profit agencies)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Defense Attorney (civil court) Public Defender's Office (criminal court)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Public Defender's Office (civil court)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Prosecutor's Office/DA (criminal court)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Prosecutor's Office/DA (civil court)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Law Enforcement (e.g., local police, county sheriff)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Corrections (e.g., probation, parole)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Fatality Review Board (if your CCR is not a Review Board)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Hospital/Health Care Providers	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Mental Health Service Providers	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Child Service Providers	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Guardians Ad Litem/Child Advocates/Law Guardians/Attorneys for Children	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Educational Services (e.g., vocational, universities)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Schools (e.g., administrators, counselors)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Housing Providers/Shelters	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Social Services	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Civil Legal Services (e.g., Legal Aid, law school clinics)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Family Justice Centers	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Immigration Service Providers	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Faith-based Services (e.g., religious, spiritual)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Other Agencies and their level of involvement:					

18. Which agencies/organizations were involved in the planning of the CCR?

	Highly Involved	Somewhat Involved	Not Involved	Not Applicable	Not Sure
Criminal Court Judge(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Civil/Family Court Judge(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Juvenile Court Judges(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Court Administrators (e.g., administrative/supervising judges/chief clerks)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Court Staff (e.g., coordinators, case managers, security clerks)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Child Welfare Agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Governmental Victim Services Agency(ies) (advocates who work for prosecutors or law enforcement)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Non-Governmental Victim Services Agency(ies) (advocates who work for independent, non-profit agencies)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Defense Attorney (civil court) Public Defender's Office (criminal court)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Public Defender's Office (civil court)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Prosecutor's Office/DA (criminal court)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Prosecutor's Office/DA (civil court)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Law Enforcement (e.g., local police, county sheriff)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Corrections (e.g., probation, parole)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Fatality Review Board (if your CCR is not a Review Board)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Hospital/Health Care Providers	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Mental Health Service Providers	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Child Service Providers	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Guardians Ad Litem/Child Advocates/Law Guardians/Attorneys for Children	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Educational Services (e.g., vocational, universities)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Schools (e.g., administrators, counselors)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Housing Providers/Shelters	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Social Services	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Civil Legal Services (e.g., Legal Aid, law school clinics)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Family Justice Centers	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Immigration Service Providers	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Faith-based Services (e.g., religious, spiritual)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Other Agencies and their level of involvement in planning:					

19. Are there particular players that stand out as leaders in the CCR? E.g., players who regularly convene/facilitate meetings, secure stakeholder buy-in, smooth over dissent among stakeholders.

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

20. What agency/organization do they belong to? What is their role in the agency, and why do they stand out?

21. Does your community or state have a Fatality Review Committee.

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

22. If yes, does the Board include the following:

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Medical Examiner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child Protective Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Law Enforcement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Court/Judges	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corrections (i.e., probation and parole)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prosecutors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)			

22. How does the Fatality Review Committee inform the work of the CCR?

23. Does the CCR have regular in-person (or Skype/teleconference) meetings?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

24. If so, how frequently do members of the CCR meet?

- Weekly
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Biannual
- Annual
- Other (please specify)

25. Which agencies/organizations are regularly present at such meetings?

- Criminal Court Judge(s)
- Civil/Family Court Judge(s)
- Juvenile Court Judges(s)
- Court Administrators (e.g., administrative/supervising judges/chief clerks)
- Court Staff (e.g., coordinators, case managers, security clerks)
- Child Welfare Agencies
- Governmental Victim Services Agency(ies) (advocates who work for prosecutors or law enforcement)
- Non-Governmental Victim Services Agency(ies) (advocates who work for independent, non-profit agencies)
- Defense Attorney (civil court) Public Defender's Office (criminal court)
- Public Defender's Office (civil court)
- Prosecutor's Office/DA (criminal court)
- Prosecutor's Office/DA (civil court)
- Law Enforcement (e.g., local police, county sheriff)
- Corrections (e.g., probation, parole)
- Other (please specify)
- Fatality Review Board (if your CCR is not a Review Board)
- Hospital/Health Care Providers
- Mental Health Service Providers
- Child Service Providers
- Guardians Ad Litem/Child Advocates/Law Guardians/Attorneys for Children
- Educational Services (e.g., vocational, universities)
- Schools (e.g., administrators, counselors)
- Housing Providers/Shelters
- Social Services
- Civil Legal Services (e.g., Legal Aid, law school clinics)
- Family Justice Centers
- Immigration Service Providers
- Faith-based Services (e.g., religious, spiritual)

26. Are there agencies/representatives who are less active?

- Yes
- No

27. Do members of the CCR communicate regularly about issues related to the CCR (e.g., promoting victim safety, holding offenders accountable)?

- Yes
- No

28. Do you refer clients to other agencies in the CCR when appropriate?

- Yes
- No

29. Are there any agreements for information exchange, confidentiality protocols, and laws that regulate how records requests are handled, especially if led by a court/judicial/government entity?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

a. If so, please describe the agreements.

30. Which members of the CCR does *your* agency regularly communicate with and how frequently?

	Daily	Weekly	Montly	Yearly	Not Applicable	Not Sure
Criminal Court Judge(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Civil/Family Court Judge(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Juvenile Court Judges(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Court Administrators (e.g., administrative/supervising judges/chief clerks)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Court Staff (e.g., coordinators, case managers, security clerks)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Child Welfare Agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Governmental Victim Services Agency(ies) (advocates who work for prosecutors or law enforcement)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Non-Governmental Victim Services Agency(ies) (advocates who work for independent, non-profit agencies)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Defense Attorney (civil court) Public Defender's Office (criminal court)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Public Defender's Office (civil court)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Prosecutor's Office/DA (criminal court)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Prosecutor's Office/DA (civil court)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Law Enforcement (e.g., local police, county sheriff)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Corrections (e.g., probation, parole)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Fatality Review Board (if your CCR is not a Review Board)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Hospital/Health Care Providers	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Mental Health Service Providers	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Child Service Providers	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Guardians Ad Litem/Child Advocates/Law Guardians/Attorneys for Children	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Educational Services (e.g., vocational, universities)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Schools (e.g., administrators, counselors)	<input type="checkbox"/>					

Housing Providers/Shelters	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Social Services	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Civil Legal Services (e.g., Legal Aid, law school clinics)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Family Justice Centers	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Immigration Service Providers	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Faith-based Services (e.g., religious, spiritual)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Other (please specify):						

30. How would you categorize the role of the criminal court judge in the CCR? The criminal court judge is not involved in the CCR.

- The criminal court judge is *not* involved in the CCR (e.g., is on the email list, but does not attend regular CCR meetings.
 - The criminal court judge is minimally involved in the CCR (e.g., is on the email list, but does not attend regular CCR meetings.
 - The criminal court judge is moderately involved in the CCR (e.g., attends regular meetings, participates in group discussions/decisions)
 - The criminal court judge is extremely involved in the CCR (e.g., regularly proposes agenda items for group discussion,
 - The criminal court judge is the leader of the CCR

31. Does the criminal court judge send a representative (e.g., court administrator) to the meetings, but does not attend themselves?

- Yes
- No

32. How would you categorize the role of the civil/family court judge in the CCR?

- The civil/family court judge is *not* involved in the CCR.
- The civil/family court judge is minimally involved in the CCR (e.g., is on the email list, but does not attend regular CCR meetings.
- The civil/family court judge is moderately involved in the CCR (e.g., attends regular meetings, participates in group discussions/decisions)
- The civil/family court judge is extremely involved in the CCR (e.g., regularly proposes agenda items for group discussion,
- The civil/family court judge is the leader of the CCR

31. Does the civil/family court judge send a representative (e.g., court administrator) to the meetings, but does not attend themselves?

- Yes
- No

32. How would you categorize the role of court administrators in the CCR?

- The court administrators are *not* involved in the CCR.
- The court administrators are minimally involved in the CCR (e.g., are on the email list, but do not attend regular CCR meetings.

- The court administrators are moderately involved in the CCR (e.g., attend regular meetings, participate in group discussions/decisions)
- The court administrators are extremely involved in the CCR (e.g., regularly propose agenda items for group discussion)

33. How important is court engagement to your CCR?

- Not at all important
- Somewhat important
- Moderately important
- Very important

34. What are some of the benefits of incorporating the court into the CCR?

35. What are some of the challenges of incorporating the court into the CCR?

36. Do you have any ethical concerns about the involvement of the criminal/family court in the CCR?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

a. If so, please explain your concerns.

37. Do you have suggestions for other jurisdictions seeking to create a CCR? If so, please describe.

38. What are the biggest strengths of your collaborative model?

39. What are the biggest challenges of your collaborative model? For example, what are the barriers to communication, finding funding, operations, how information is shared across agencies?

40. What are the ways in which you are working to ensure the sustainability of your model?

41. Do you have funding from state or local organizations/government?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

42. Does this affect your approach to addressing sustainability, staffing, and/or housing?

43. Would you be interested in participating in further research on your CCR model?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

44. Do you believe that other agencies/organizations involved in the CCR would be interested?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

a. If so, what are the names of these agencies?

45. [For victim service/advocacy agencies]: Would you be able to help identify victims who might be willing to share their experiences of going through the CCR model? (Victims would be financially compensated for their time and any feedback would be completely voluntary and anonymous.)
46. Is there anything else about CCRs you would like to mention that was not asked in this survey?
47. Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up interview to understand more about your CCR? If yes, please provide your email and/or phone number.

Appendix B.

Victim & Offender Focus Groups

As part of the three in-depth case studies, we conducted focus groups with victims and offenders who had been involved in a criminal domestic violence court case. In total, we spoke to nine female victims of domestic violence and eight (seven male and one female) offenders across the three sites. All offender focus group participants were already adjudicated and had nearly completed their participation in an abusive partner intervention program when we interviewed them.

While focus group participants were asked about the local coordinated community response, not surprisingly, they had little to say specifically about the CCRs. Some of the feedback speaks directly to coordination efforts and is incorporated in the discussion in Chapter 4. However, many of their comments in these discussions spoke less to coordination and more to needs, understanding, and experience of the process. Though this feedback does not directly address the underlying research questions considered by the current study, we nonetheless feel that it is important to include here and may provide helpful information both for the case study sites and more general audiences.

Victim Feedback

We conducted focus groups to better understand service delivery and victims' experiences accessing services and with the criminal justice system. We first asked victims about their needs. Their most prescient needs are long-term housing, employment, and mental health services. For one participant, her ability to get a job was impacted by a lack of access to transportation. She depends on the bus, which is unreliable and inefficient for commuting to a job. In addition to her struggles with mental health issues, another woman noted that others in the safe house struggle with depression. One woman mentioned that culturally specific needs—such as English language lessons—should be addressed.

All victim participants spoke positively about their experience with advocates. They reported that advocates generally helped victims receive therapy, healthcare, temporary housing, and financial assistance for resettling. One person added that their advocacy organization provided money for a place to live, bus tickets, gas vouchers, rides to doctor appointments, and assistance with getting food.

Most victim participants expressed frustration with the court system. Specifically, they thought that their abusers' sentences were not harsh enough and did not hold abusers accountable. They reported that judges and court staff did not understand their situation as victims of domestic violence. In one instance, court staff sent a reminder to the house where a victim previously lived, alerting her abuser to her whereabouts. Another victim participant felt like she was perceived by the court as the "crazy" one because she did not want to come to court where she would have to confront her abuser. Several participants said their experience in court was confusing, with unclear requirements and expectations for victims. Another said that being unfamiliar with the legal terminology in court was intimidating, adding that she is navigating multiple complicated systems (e.g., finding housing, getting custody of children).

Victim opinions about law enforcement and corrections differed across sites. One participant did not think the police took her case seriously or cared about her safety. Another felt that a police officer did not believe her story, saying "You get so tired you quit. You go to the government offices and they don't help you. The system is rigged." As noted in Chapter 4, two victim participants had a different experience, noting the helpful coordination between the advocacy agency and the criminal justice system (i.e., the police department and probation officer). Through communication with officers, advocates let her know the location of her abuser so that she could make safety plans.

Offender Feedback

All the offender participants were mandated by the court to an abusive partner intervention program. Perceptions of these programs were positive, with offenders reporting that their therapists were supportive and helped them reflect on their past behaviors and learn how to change.

When asked about being held accountable, all offender participants said the judge was clear about their sentence, and they understood what would happen if they violated probation. However, only one participant we spoke to believed he was treated fairly by the criminal justice system, explaining that if he followed his orders, he would be treated fairly by his probation officer. Others felt that law enforcement officers or judges did not understand the details of the incident or the history of their relationship.

Offenders provided limited feedback on access to services. One participant was able to get the help he needed with drug use and receive therapy outside of the abusive partner intervention program. Others from one site expressed frustration that the domestic violence

court does not provide additional assistance with employment, health care, and housing, unlike the drug courts in their jurisdictions. Offender participants in a different group were informed of free therapeutic services and an employment opportunity by a counselor in the abusive partner intervention program.