



**Illinois Family Violence Coordinating Councils**

**Domestic Violence Court Systems Project**

**Cook County**

***Summary Report***

“The real story is looking at the progression of the domestic violence court system as it matures in a jurisdiction.”  
–Domestic Violence Court Systems Project interviewee

**Cook County Domestic Violence Court Systems Round Table**  
**June 30, 2004**  
**Chicago Bar Association**  
**Chicago, Illinois**

## Contents

Introduction .....	3
History and Origins of the Domestic Violence Court Systems Project .....	3
Purpose of the Cook County Domestic Violence Court Systems Project .....	5
<i>Interviewing the Cook County’s Domestic Violence Court Systems</i>	
<i>Creating a Learning Network</i>	
The Process of the Cook County Domestic Violence Court Systems Project .....	5
Statistics for the Cook County Domestic Violence Court Systems .....	6
Table 1: <i>Misdemeanor</i> Domestic Battery Cases Filed (Page 6)	
Table 2: <i>Felony</i> Domestic Battery Cases Filed (Page 7)	
Table 3:    Violation of Orders of Protection (Page7)	
Table 4:    Criminal Orders of Protection– <i>Misdemeanor Division</i> (Page 8)	
Table 5:    Criminal Orders of Protection– <i>Felony Division</i> (Page 8)	
Overview of Cook County Interviews .....	9
Table 6:    Scheduling: Criminal Domestic Violence Court Systems (Page 9)	
Table 7:    Scheduling: Civil Domestic Violence Court Systems (Page 11)	
Table 8:    Cook County Pre-trial Services Department (Page 12)	
Table 9:    Cook County Probation Department (Page 14)	
Table 10:   Cook County Social Services Department (Page 16)	
Table 11:   Cook County Public Defender’s Office (Page 18)	
Table 12:   Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office (Page 19)	
Table 13:   Victim Advocacy: Criminal Domestic Violence Court Systems (Page 20)	
Table 14:   Victim Advocacy: Civil Domestic Violence Court Systems (Page 23)	
Table 15:   Legal Assistance (Page 25)	
Highlights from the Interviews .....	28
Challenges .....	34
Looking Toward the Future .....	36

## **Introduction**

*“Domestic violence is a community problem. Every part of the system has to come together to make the solutions work.”*

*–Domestic Violence Court System Project interviewee*

National research shows that an increasing number of jurisdictions across the country are implementing domestic violence court systems. While there is great diversity in what these court systems look like and how they operate, they all have similar goals: enhance victim safety, hold offenders accountable, and administer justice fairly to all parties.

Here in Illinois, the trend for establishing domestic violence court systems has been quite strong. There are nearly twenty (20) domestic violence court systems across the state, including each of the six (6) municipal districts in Cook County, and many more jurisdictions are considering developing such systems.

## **History and Origins of the Domestic Violence Court Systems Project**

*“The domestic violence court, because of its unique nature, reverberates through the entire building.”*

*–Domestic Violence Court System Project interviewee*

The idea for the Domestic Violence Court System Project arose in 1996, three years after the creation of the State Council of the Illinois Family Violence Coordinating Councils (IFVCC). For the most part, the development of domestic violence courts in Illinois was a trend that emerged with the formation of the local family violence coordinating councils. The Project resulted from the judges questions seeking guidance, information and models as they began to implement domestic violence courts. What was especially notable about this trend was that it involved more than just the courts; it mirrored the multi-disciplinary nature of the councils. Local jurisdictions brought together the Judiciary, State’s Attorney’s Office, Law Enforcement, Domestic Violence Advocates, Partner Abuse Intervention Programs, Public Defender’s Office,

Probation, and Circuit Clerk's Office to create specialized approaches to address the higher profile of domestic violence cases, generally, and the increasing volume of domestic violence cases, specifically.

Buzz circulated and questions were raised: What were these new courts? How were they set up? What did they involve? What worked well and what were the challenges? The IFVCC realized that the best way to answer these questions was to visit each domestic violence court system, interview the key players in the system, document what was said, and most importantly coordinate a statewide network of domestic violence court system personnel. This network could provide information and support to each other as well as informational and educational opportunities. The IFVCC Court Structure Committee was asked to host, advise, and guide the Project, which it readily accepted. And thus, the Domestic Violence Court Systems Project was born.

### **History, cont.**

In order to create a network of domestic violence court system personnel, the idea of a Round Table was developed for teams from domestic violence court systems from all over the state.

Due to the unique nature of the domestic violence court system in Cook County, the decision was made to hold two Round Tables. One for Cook County and one for the rest of the state. The first Round Table, held in May 2002, was for downstate courts. The Cook County Round Table was held in June 2004.

## **Purpose of the Cook County Domestic Violence Court Systems Project**

*“The domestic violence court provides a more uniform and structured approach.”  
–Domestic Violence Court System Project interviewee*

### ***Interviewing Cook County’s Domestic Violence Court Systems***

A goal of the project was to learn about and describe the domestic violence court systems in Cook County. This was accomplished by conducting site visits and meeting with the individuals involved in each of Cook County’s municipal districts domestic violence courts. The outcomes of the site visits were to learn how each of the Cook County domestic violence court systems operated, and to identify unique procedures and practices. That knowledge would provide the basis for information exchange between existing domestic violence court systems in Cook County, as well as the rest of the state, and contribute to improvement and learning by other jurisdictions and the generation of new ideas. Additionally, other jurisdictions that are contemplating creating a domestic violence court system could benefit by learning what key elements contribute to the success of such a system.

### ***Creating a Learning Network***

Another goal of the project was to encourage the creation of a learning network of domestic violence court system professionals in Cook County that would facilitate on-going educational opportunities and the sharing of information. A key feature of the learning network would be annual Round Tables for the domestic violence court professionals in Cook County. These would serve as a forum to exchange information and successful practices, engage in problem-solving dialogue, and lay a foundation for future networking and information exchanges.

## **The Process of the Cook County Domestic Violence Court Systems Project**

*“The more we talk to each other the more consistency gets created within the domestic violence court.”  
–Domestic Violence Court System Project interviewee*

To gain a view of the entire domestic violence court system in Cook County, interviews were conducted in each of the municipal districts.

Each site visit was scheduled to allow time to meet with all entities of the domestic violence court system individually. Typically, representatives of the following entities were interviewed in each jurisdiction:

- ◆ Judiciary
- ◆ Clerk of the Circuit Court
- ◆ Probation Department
- ◆ Sheriff’s Department
- ◆ State’s Attorney’s Office
- ◆ Public Defender’s Office
- ◆ Domestic Violence Program(s)
- ◆ Legal Services

- ◆ Police Departments (at least one)
- ◆ Social Service Department
- ◆ Pre-trial Services

After a site visit was completed, a report on the court system was written and sent to all the individuals interviewed for their comments or corrections. The report were revised based on their feedback and then re-distributed to everyone interviewed.

## **Statistics for the Cook County Domestic Violence Court Systems**

*“Stats help us gain a clearer sense of what our system is accomplishing.”  
 –Domestic Violence Court System Project interviewee*

To gain an understanding about the volume of each of the municipal districts in Cook County, the following statistics gathered for 2002 were provided by the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County.

### **Statistics, Cont.**

**Table 1**  
**2002**  
*Misdemeanor Domestic Battery Cases Filed*

<i>Cook County</i>	<b>First Mun. District</b>	<b>Second Mun. District</b>	<b>Third Mun. District</b>	<b>Fourth Mun. District</b>	<b>Fifth Mun. District</b>	<b>Sixth Mun. District</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Domestic Battery Cases Filed</b>	12,203	522	890	1,658	789	3,104	2,593
<b>Domestic Battery Dismiss</b>	9,401	391	548	1,218	646	2,692	14,896
<b>Domestic Battery Convictions</b>	2,040	81	237	284	116	199	2,957

**Table 2**  
**2002**  
**Felony Domestic Battery Cases Filed**

<i>Cook County</i>	<b>First Mun. District</b>	<b>Second Mun. District</b>	<b>Third Mun. District</b>	<b>Fourth Mun. District</b>	<b>Fifth Mun. District</b>	<b>Sixth Mun. District</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Domestic Battery Cases Filed</b>	95	4	4	11	1	3	118
<b>Domestic Battery Dismiss</b>	29	1	0	1	1	1	33
<b>Domestic Battery Convictions</b>	54	2	3	10	0	1	70

**Statistics, Cont.**

**Table 3**  
**2002**  
**Violation of Orders of Protection (VOP) Filed**

<i>Cook County</i>	<b>First Mun. District</b>	<b>Second Mun. District</b>	<b>Third Mun. District</b>	<b>Fourth Mun. District</b>	<b>Fifth Mun. District</b>	<b>Sixth Mun. District</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>VOP Filed</b>	1,666	120	113	173	115	406	2,593
<b>VOP Dismiss</b>	906	76	55	104	75	291	1,507
<b>VOP Convictions</b>	518	32	33	43	27	50	703

**Table 4**  
**2002**  
**Criminal Orders of Protection—*Misdemeanor Division***

<i>Cook County</i>	<b>First Municipal District</b>	<b>Second Municipal District</b>	<b>Third Municipal District</b>	<b>Fourth Municipal District</b>	<b>Fifth Municipal District</b>	<b>Sixth Municipal District</b>
<b>Emergency Orders of Protection</b>	3,108	45	185	235	91	507
<b>Interim Orders of Protection</b>	502	18	38	49	29	190
<b>Plenary Orders of Protection</b>	4,802	186	520	269	423	970

Statistics, Cont.

**Table 5**  
**2002**  
**Criminal Orders of Protection—*Felony Division***

<i>Cook County</i>	<b>First Municipal District</b>	<b>Second Municipal District</b>	<b>Third Municipal District</b>	<b>Fourth Municipal District</b>	<b>Fifth Municipal District</b>	<b>Sixth Municipal District</b>
<b>Emergency Orders of Protection</b>	9	0	0	1	2	4
<b>Interim Orders of Protection</b>	7	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Plenary Orders of Protection</b>	116	14	15	6	16	3



## Overview of Cook County Interviews

*“Communication, cooperation and collaboration are essential, but it takes more time—it is a constant challenge”–Domestic Violence Court Systems Project interviewee*

The following is an overview of the interviews completed in each Cook County municipal district.

### SCHEDULING *Criminal Domestic Violence Court Systems*

<i>Cook County</i>	<b>First Municipal District*</b>	<b>Second Municipal District</b>	<b>Third Municipal District</b>	<b>Fourth Municipal District</b>	<b>Fifth Municipal District</b>	<b>Sixth Municipal District</b>
<b>Domestic Violence Court</b>	4 full-time designated courtrooms	Based on “Key System.”*** Average 6 days a month.	Monday-Friday	Thursdays and Fridays	Monday-Friday	Monday-Friday
<b>DV Related Bond Hearings</b>	1 full-time domestic related bond court	Heard in Bond Court	Heard in DV court	Heard in Bond Court	Heard in DV Court	Heard in Bond Court
<b>Cases Assigned to Domestic Violence Court</b>	·Misdmnrs ·relationship of the parties falls under the IDVA**	·Misdmnrs ·relationship of the parties falls under the IDVA	·Misdmnrs and <i>felonies</i> ·relationship of the parties falls under the IDVA	·Misdmnrs ·relationship of the parties falls under the IDVA	·Misdmnrs ·relationship of the parties falls under the IDVA	·Misdmnrs ·relationship of the parties falls under the IDVA
<b>Hearings for Emergency, Interim and Plenary OPs</b>	Daily	Daily	Daily	EOPs– Daily in Bond Court; ·Returns Thursday mornings in DV court	Daily	Daily
<b>Hearings for Violations</b>	Tuesdays and Wednesdays	1 day a month	1 afternoon a week	Friday afternoons	1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the Month	<b>CALL SUSANA</b>
<b>Bench/ Jury Trials</b>	Daily	2 ½ days a month	Daily	Friday mornings	Daily	Daily

**Scheduling–Criminal, Cont.**

<i>Cook County</i>	<b>First Municipal District*</b>	<b>Second Municipal District</b>	<b>Third Municipal District</b>	<b>Fourth Municipal District</b>	<b>Fifth Municipal District</b>	<b>Sixth Municipal District</b>
<b>Status Hearings/ Motions</b>	<b>CALL JUDGE COCO</b>	4 days a month	Daily	Thursdays	Daily	Daily in the morning

\* This reflects the Domestic Violence Misdemeanor system at 13<sup>th</sup> Michigan

\*\* Domestic Violence cases are defined according to the relationship between the parties as defined in the *Illinois Domestic Violence Act (IDVA)*, not by the crime charged.

\*\*\*Criminal Court in the Second Municipal District operates on a “key system.” Key dates are set at the beginning of each year. This system was established to have set dates for all criminal cases. Domestic violence related cases have an individual key.

**SCHEDULING**  
*Civil Domestic Violence Court Systems*

<i>Cook County</i>	<b>First Municipal District</b>	<b>Second Municipal District</b>	<b>Third Municipal District</b>	<b>Fourth Municipal District</b>	<b>Fifth Municipal District</b>	<b>Sixth Municipal District</b>
<b>Emergency Orders of Protection Hearings</b>	Heard in late mornings and the late afternoon	As needed basis by assigned Judge-if that Judge is in trial another Judge will cover the hearing	Daily in the two Domestic Relations courtrooms -if the Judges are unavailable EOPs are heard in the criminal DV courtroom	Heard by any available Judge with a Court Reporter	As needed basis in the Unified Family Court**	As needed basis in the Domestic Relations Courtroom
<b>Interim/Plenary Orders of Protection</b>	Returns occur in the following order: ·POP with attorney Rep ·Alias Summons ·Service occurred, Respondent not present ·Both parties present and request hearing ·Respondent present, petitioner not present*	1:30 PM daily with assigned judge	Daily in Domestic Relations Court Rooms beginning at 9:30 AM	Return dates are scheduled at 9:30 AM with the Domestic Relations Judge	In the Unified Family Court Wednesday and Friday mornings	Daily in Domestic Relations Court at 10:30 AM
<b>Contested Orders of Protection (trials)</b>	Set for afternoons	Trial date is set by the same assigned Judge	Trial date set is by the Domestic Relations Judge	Trial date set is by the Domestic Relations Judge	Trial date set is by the Domestic Relations Judge	Trial date set is by the Domestic Relations Judge

\*Due to the high volume of cases in this courtroom, cases can be sent to the emergency Judge at the Daley Center

**Scheduling–Civil, Cont.**

\*\*The 5<sup>th</sup> Municipal District created a Unified Family Court Project in 1998. The types of cases heard in Unified Family Court include:

- Dissolution of Marriage, pre and post-decree
- Parentage Cases, that include paternity and child support for parents of minor children who are not married
- Probate cases (limited to guardianship of minors)
- Orders of Protection independent of criminal charges

**COOK COUNTY PRE-TRIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT**  
*Misdemeanor Cases*

<i>Cook County</i>	<b>First Municipal District</b>	<b>Second Municipal District</b>	<b>Third Municipal District</b>	<b>Fourth Municipal District</b>	<b>Fifth Municipal District</b>	<b>Sixth Municipal District</b>
<b>Pre-trial Ordered in DV Related Misdemeanor cases</b>	No*	Yes	Yes	Rarely*	Yes	Rarely*
<b>Back-ground of Defendant</b>	N/A	Background check is not done by case workers, but priors are read into court record at bond court	Officer meets with defendant and completes a 10-point scale including prior arrests, convictions, etc. to help determine bond	N/A	Case worker interviews defendant along with determining prior arrests, convictions, etc.	N/A

**Pre-trial Services, Cont.**

<i>Cook County</i>	<b>First Municipal District</b>	<b>Second Municipal District</b>	<b>Third Municipal District</b>	<b>Fourth Municipal District</b>	<b>Fifth Municipal District</b>	<b>Sixth Municipal District</b>
<b>Monitoring During Pre-trial Period</b>	N/A	Initial meeting assessment completed**  <i>DV Defendant is Required:</i> ·Check in weekly by phone ·Meet with caseworker monthly	<i>DV Defendant is Required:</i> ·Report by phone once a week ·Report in person once a month	N/A	At initial Meeting assessment completed <i>DV Defendant is Required:</i> ·Check in at least once a month, but could be more based on assessment	N/A
<b>Status Hearings</b>	N/A	Each status hearing a compliance report by caseworker is given to the Judge	Each status hearing Officer will submit a summary of activities regarding compliance	N/A	Each status hearing a compliance report by caseworker is given to the judge	N/A
<b>Violations of Conditions of Bond</b>	N/A	·Caseworker will contact ASA to discuss revocation of bond ·ASA files revocation ·Judge may modify conditions or revoke bond	·Officer submits a violation to the court clerk  ·Judge may modify conditions or revoke bond	N/A	·Caseworker will contact ASA to discuss revocation of bond ·ASA files revocation ·Judge may modify conditions or revoke bond	N/A

\* Pre-trial Services are used for felony cases in these municipal districts.

\*\* Assessments may consist of

### COOK COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT

<i>Cook County</i>	<b>First Municipal District</b>	<b>Second Municipal District</b>	<b>Third Municipal District</b>	<b>Fourth Municipal District</b>	<b>Fifth Municipal District</b>	<b>Sixth Municipal District</b>
<b>Who gets sentenced to Probation</b>	Judge decides between probation and Social Service		All felony convictions and severe misdemeanor cases	All felony convictions and severe misdemeanor cases	All felony DV convictions only	All felony convictions and severe misdemeanor cases
<b>Required Attendance in Partner Abuse Intervention Program (PAIP)</b>	IDVU* has its own PAIP and contracts with 5 DV service agencies that provide PAIP	Required to attend a PAIP (must attend a DHS** approved private group)	Only if ordered must attend a DHS approved PAIP	Only if ordered must attend a DHS approved PAIP	Required to attend a PAIP (must attend a DHS approved private group)	Only if ordered must attend a DHS approved PAIP
<b>Monitoring During Probation Period</b>	IDVU-3 phase reporting schedule: <i>Phase 1-</i> Report weekly <i>Phase 2-</i> Every other week and attend PAIP <i>Phase 3-</i> Once a month and attend PAIP	Initially maximum reporting level: ·report once every other week ·home visit once every three months ·Periodically reassessment for reporting level	Initially maximum reporting level: ·report once every other week ·home visit once every three months ·Periodically reassessment for reporting level	Initially maximum reporting level: ·report twice a month ·home visits will be made randomly ·Periodically reassessment for reporting level	Initially maximum reporting level: ·report twice a month ·one home visit every month ·Periodically reassessment for reporting level	Initially maximum reporting level: ·report twice a month ·one home visit every month ·Periodically reassessment for reporting level
<b>Violation of Terms of Probation</b>	Petition to Revoke Probation is filed by the Court Liaison for the	Officer can petition the ASA to revoke probation ·judge can	Officer can petition the ASA to revoke probation ·judge can	Officer can write up a petition for revocation- ·Court Liaison will take to	Officer can petition the ASA to revoke probation ·judge can	<b>ASK SUSANA</b>

	Probation Department ·judge can modify terms or revoke probation	modify terms or revoke probation	modify terms or revoke probation	judge ·judge can modify terms or revoke probation	modify terms or revoke probation	
--	---------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------	----------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------	--

**Probation, Cont.**

<i>Cook County</i>	<b>First Municipal District</b>	<b>Second Municipal District</b>	<b>Third Municipal District</b>	<b>Fourth Municipal District</b>	<b>Fifth Municipal District</b>	<b>Sixth Municipal District</b>
<b>Designated Probation Officers</b>		One Officer is assigned to DV cases in addition to other types of probation cases	One Officer is assigned to DV cases in addition to other types of probation cases	One Officer is assigned to DV cases in addition to other types of probation cases	One Officer is assigned to DV cases only	One Officer is assigned to DV cases in addition to other types of probation cases

\* This reflects the probation procedures at 13<sup>th</sup> and Michigan.

\*\* In order to be approved by the Department of Human Services (DHS) a program must fulfill certain requirements including following curriculum guidelines, etc.





**Social Services, Cont.**

<i>Cook County</i>	<b>First Municipal District</b>	<b>Second Municipal District</b>	<b>Third Municipal District</b>	<b>Fourth Municipal District</b>	<b>Fifth Municipal District</b>	<b>Sixth Municipal District</b>
<b>Violation of Conditional Discharge or Supervision</b>	Caseworker initiates a petition to revoke: ·prepares documentation ·takes to ASA to sign ·caseworker presents to judge ·judge can modify or revoke	Caseworker initiates a petition to revoke: ·prepares documentation ·takes to ASA to sign ·caseworker presents to judge ·judge can modify or revoke	Caseworker initiates a petition to revoke: ·prepares documentation ·takes to ASA to sign ·caseworker presents to judge ·judge can modify or revoke	Caseworker initiates a petition to revoke: ·prepares documentation ·takes to ASA to sign ·caseworker presents to judge ·judge can modify or revoke	Caseworker initiates a petition to revoke: ·prepares documentation ·takes to ASA to sign ·caseworker presents to judge ·judge can modify or revoke	Caseworker initiates a petition to revoke: ·prepares documentation ·takes to ASA to sign ·caseworker presents to judge ·judge can modify or revoke
<b>Designated Social Service Caseworker</b>	15 DV caseworkers	2 DV caseworkers	3 DV caseworkers	3 DV caseworkers	2 DV caseworkers	3 DV caseworkers



**COOK COUNTY STATE’S ATTORNEYS OFFICE**

<b><i>Cook County</i></b>	<b>First Municipal District*</b>	<b>Second Municipal District</b>	<b>Third Municipal District</b>	<b>Fourth Municipal District</b>	<b>Fifth Municipal District</b>	<b>Sixth Municipal District</b>
<b>Number of Assistant State’s Attorneys (ASA) Assigned to DV Court</b>	Fifteen (15) ASA’s assigned DV Criminal Misdemeanor Domestic Violence Court	Three (3) ASAs assigned to DV cases	Two (2) ASAs assigned to the DV courtroom	Three (3) ASAs assigned to DV cases	Two (2) ASAs assigned to DV Court	Two (2) ASAs assigned to DV Court
<b>Length of ASA Assignment</b>	Approx. 18 months	Nine to 12 month rotation	At least a six month rotation	Three to 4 month rotation	Eight month rotation	Four month rotation
<b>Victim Witness Specialist (VWS)</b>	15 VWS for DV related cases, 1 for sexual assault, 1 supervisor and 1 deputy supervisor	N/A	One VWS	N/A	N/A	N/A

**ADVOCACY**  
*Criminal Domestic Violence Court Systems*  
**External Domestic Violence Victim Services Program Court Advocacy**

<i>Cook County</i>	<b>First Municipal District</b>	<b>Second Municipal District</b>	<b>Third Municipal District</b>	<b>Fourth Municipal District</b>	<b>Fifth Municipal District</b>	<b>Sixth Municipal District</b>
<b>DV Programs Interviewed for this project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·Hull House</li> <li>·Family Rescue</li> <li>·Friends of Battered Women and Their Children (Friends)*</li> </ul>	Life Span**	Life Span	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·Constance Morris House</li> <li>·Sarah's Inn</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·Crisis Center for South Suburbia (CC for So. Suburbia)</li> <li>·Constance Morris House (CM House)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·Crisis Center for South Suburbia (CC for So. Suburbia)</li> <li>·South Suburban Family Shelter (So. Suburban Fam. Shelter)</li> </ul>
<b>Criminal Court Advocacy for Victims—Services Provided</b>	<p><i>Hull House:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·Describe services</li> <li>·Brief on court procedures</li> <li>·Describe civil and criminal OP process</li> <li>·Attend court hearings</li> <li>·Safety Plan</li> <li>·Referrals</li> <li>·Explain victim rights</li> </ul>	<p><i>Life Span:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·Discuss options and remedies of the OP</li> <li>·Describe court procedures</li> <li>·Attend court hearings</li> <li>·Describe services</li> <li>·Safety plan</li> <li>·Referrals</li> <li>·Reminders of court dates and case updates</li> <li>·Explain victim rights</li> <li>·Immigration information</li> </ul>	<p><i>Life Span:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·Discuss options and remedies of the OP</li> <li>·Describe court procedures</li> <li>·Attend criminal court hearings</li> <li>·Describe services</li> <li>·Safety plan</li> <li>·Referrals</li> <li>·Reminders of court dates and case updates</li> <li>·Explain victim rights</li> <li>·Immigration information</li> </ul>	<p><i>CM House:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·Liaison between the victim and the ASA (each complaining witness must speak with an advocate)**</li> <li>·Discuss options and remedies of OP</li> <li>·Assist in preparing the petition</li> <li>·Describe court procedures</li> <li>·Attend criminal court hearings</li> <li>·Describe services</li> <li>·Safety plan</li> <li>·Referrals</li> <li>·Reminders of court dates and case updates</li> </ul>	<p><i>CC for So. Suburbia:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·Discuss options and remedies of the OP</li> <li>·Assist in preparing the petition</li> <li>·Describe court procedures</li> <li>·Attend criminal court hearings</li> <li>·Describe services</li> <li>·Safety plan</li> <li>·Referrals</li> <li>·Reminders of court dates and case updates</li> <li>·Provide support group in shelter for victims going through the court system</li> </ul>	<p><i>CC for So. Suburbia:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·Discuss options and remedies of the OP</li> <li>·Assist in preparing the petition</li> <li>·Describe court procedures</li> <li>·Attend criminal court hearings</li> <li>·Describe services</li> <li>·Safety plan</li> <li>·Referrals</li> <li>·Reminders of court dates and case updates</li> <li><b>ASK SUSAN assist with petitions</b></li> <li>·Provide group in shelter on the court system</li> </ul>

**Advocacy–Criminal, Cont.**

<i>Cook County</i>	<b>First Municipal District</b>	<b>Second Municipal District</b>	<b>Third Municipal District</b>	<b>Fourth Municipal District</b>	<b>Fifth Municipal District</b>	<b>Sixth Municipal District</b>
<p><b>Criminal Court Advocacy for Victims–Services Provided</b></p>	<p><i>Family Rescue:</i>                      ·Attend court hearings                      ·Explain court process                      ·Describe victim’s rights                      ·Describe services                      ·Safety Plan                      ·Referrals                      ·Explain victim rights</p>			<p><i>Sarah’s Inn:</i>                      ·Liaison between the victim and the ASA (each complaining witness must speak with an advocate)**                      ·Discuss options and remedies of the OP                      ·Assist in preparing the petition                      ·Describe court procedures                      ·Attend criminal court hearings                      ·Describe services                      ·Safety plan                      ·Referrals                      ·Reminders of court dates and case updates</p>	<p><i>CM House:</i>                      ·Discuss options and remedies of the OP                      ·Assist in preparing the petition                      ·Describe court procedures                      ·Attend criminal court hearings                      ·Describe services                      ·Safety plan                      ·Referrals                      ·Reminders of court dates and case updates</p>	<p><i>So. Suburban Fam. Shelter:</i>                      ·Discuss options and remedies of the OP                      ·Assist in preparing the petition                      ·Describe court procedures                      ·Attend criminal court hearings                      ·Describe services                      ·Safety plan                      ·Referrals                      ·Reminders of court dates and case updates  <b>ASK SUSAN assist with petitions</b></p>
	<p><i>Friends:</i>                      ·Attend Court Hearings                      ·Explain court process                      ·Describe victim’s rights                      ·Describe services                      ·Safety Plan                      ·Referrals                      ·Transportation                      ·Explain victim rights</p>					

**Advocacy–Criminal, Cont.**

<i>Cook County</i>	<b>First Municipal District</b>	<b>Second Municipal District</b>	<b>Third Municipal District</b>	<b>Fourth Municipal District</b>	<b>Fifth Municipal District</b>	<b>Sixth Municipal District</b>
<b>Crime Victim Compensation</b>	<i>Hull House:</i> Specially trained liaison to assist victims <i>Family Rescue:</i> Provides information <i>Friends:</i> Provides information	<i>Life Span:</i> Provides information	<i>Life Span:</i> Provides information	<i>CM House and Sara’s Inn:</i> Provides information	<i>CC for So. Suburbia and CM House:</i> Provides information	<i>CC for So. Suburbia and So. Suburban Fam. Shelter:</i> Provides information
<b>Community Policing Advocacy–Victim Advocate Located in the Police Dept.</b>	Through <i>Family Rescue:</i> Chicago Police Dept’s–Third District	N/A*	N/A	N/A	Through <i>CC for So. Suburbia:</i> Police Adv. covers Alsip, Oak Lawn and Lemont Police Depts.	N/A
<b>Language Interpreters</b>	<i>Hull House:</i> Spanish and French	<i>Life Span:</i> Polish and Russian	<i>Life Span:</i> Polish and Russian	<i>Sarah’s Inn:</i> Spanish	N/A	<i>So. Suburban Fam. Shelter:</i> Spanish

\*Throughout the City of Chicago, there are several agencies available to assist victims of domestic violence. Included are the results of interviews with three of the many domestic violence victim services programs that serve the 1<sup>st</sup> Municipal District. Additional service providers that were not interviewed for this project, located in the 1<sup>st</sup> Municipal District, according to the Illinois Department of Human Services include: Anixter Center, Apna Ghar, Chicago Abused Women Coalition, Healthcare Alternative Systems, Howard Area Community Center, Howard Brown Health Center, Mujeres Latinas En Action, Neopolitan Lighthouse, New Hope Community Service, Polish American Association, Rainbow House, Mt. Sinai Hospital Medical Center and Women’s Resource Center.

\*\*In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Municipal District the majority of the law enforcement agencies have designated Police Social Workers to work with victims of violent crimes which includes victims of domestic violence. They provide information regarding victim assistance, counseling services, safety planning, crisis intervention, transportation, referrals, interpreters and court advocacy. Police Social Workers assist with filling out OP petitions, accompany the victim to court, and contacts victim with court dates, etc.

**ADVOCACY**  
*Civil Domestic Violence Court System*  
**External Domestic Violence Victim Services Program Court Advocacy**

<b>Cook County</b>	<b>First Municipal District</b>	<b>Second Municipal District</b>	<b>Third Municipal District</b>	<b>Fourth Municipal District</b>	<b>Fifth Municipal District</b>	<b>Sixth Municipal District</b>
<b>DV Programs Interviewed for this project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·Family Rescue</li> <li>·Friends of Battered Women and Their Children*</li> </ul>	<p><i>Evanston North Shore YWCA (YWCA)</i></p>	<p><i>Friends of Battered Women and Their Children (Friends)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·Constance Morris House</li> <li>·Sarah's Inn</li> </ul>	No External Programs Present*	<p><i>South Suburban Family Shelter (So. Suburban Fam. Shelter)</i></p>
<b>Civil Court Advocacy for Victims-- Services Provided</b>	<p><i>Family Rescue:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·Office at 28 N. Clark</li> <li>·Assist with filling out Petition for an OP</li> <li>·Explain remedies</li> <li>·Accompany petitioner to all court hearings (EOP, IOP, POP)</li> <li>·Referrals</li> <li>·Safety Plan</li> <li>·Program Services</li> <li>·Victim's Rights</li> <li>·Assist with service of out of county OPs</li> </ul>	<p><i>YWCA</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·Assist with filling out Petition for an OP</li> <li>·Explain remedies</li> <li>·Accompany petitioner to all court hearings (EOP, IOP, POP)</li> <li>·Notify of upcoming court dates</li> <li>·Referrals</li> <li>·Program Services</li> <li>·Victim's Rights</li> <li>·Assist with service of out of county OPs</li> </ul>	<p><i>Friends</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·Assist with filling out Petition for an OP</li> <li>·Explain remedies</li> <li>·Accompany petitioner to all court hearings (EOP, IOP, POP)</li> <li>·Notify of upcoming court dates</li> <li>·Referrals</li> <li>·Program Services</li> <li>·Victim's Rights</li> <li>·Assist with service of out of county OPs</li> </ul>	<p><i>CM House:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·Discuss rights and services</li> <li>·Referrals</li> <li>·Describe OP process</li> <li>·Answer questions about petition</li> </ul>	No External Programs Present*	<p><i>So. Suburban Fam. Shelter</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·Assist with filling out Petition for an OP</li> <li>·Explain remedies</li> <li>·Referrals</li> <li>·Program Services</li> <li>·Victim's Rights</li> <li><b>ASK</b></li> <li><b>SUSANA:</b></li> <li><b>accompany to court and assist with out of ctty.</b></li> </ul>

**Advocacy–Civil, Cont.**

<b>Cook County</b>	<b>First Municipal District</b>	<b>Second Municipal District</b>	<b>Third Municipal District</b>	<b>Fourth Municipal District</b>	<b>Fifth Municipal District</b>	<b>Sixth Municipal District</b>
<b>Civil Court Advocacy for Victims–Services Provided</b>	<i>Friends:</i> ·Assist with filling out Petition for an OP ·Explain remedies ·Accompany petitioner to all court hearings (EOP, IOP, POP) ·Referrals ·Safety Plan ·Transportation ·Program Services ·Victim’s Rights ·Assist with service of out of county OPs			<i>Sarah’s Inn:</i> ·Discuss rights and services ·Referrals ·Describe OP process ·Answer questions about petition		
<b>Language Interpreters</b>		N/A	Polish, Russian, and Czech	<i>Sarah’s Inn:</i> Spanish	N/A*	Spanish

\*Throughout the City of Chicago, there are several agencies available to assist victims of domestic violence. Included are the results of interviews with three of the many domestic violence victim services programs that serve the 1<sup>st</sup> Municipal District. Additional service providers that were not interviewed for this project, located in the 1<sup>st</sup> Municipal District, according to the Illinois Department of Human Services include: Anixter Center, Apna Ghar, Chicago Abused Women Coalition, Healthcare Alternative Systems, Howard Area Community Center, Howard Brown Health Center, Mujeres Latinas En Action, Neopolitan Lighthouse, New Hope Community Service, Polish American Association, Rainbow House, Mt. Sinai



Hospital Medical Center and Women’s Resource Center.

**LEGAL ASSISTANCE**  
*Civil Domestic Violence Court Systems*

<i>Cook County</i>	<b>First Municipal District</b>	<b>Second Municipal District</b>	<b>Third Municipal District</b>	<b>Fourth Municipal District</b>	<b>Fifth Municipal District</b>	<b>Sixth Municipal District</b>
<b>Legal Services Interviewed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·<i>Legal Assistance Foundation</i></li> <li>·<i>Pro Bono Advocates</i></li> <li>·<i>Life Span</i></li> </ul>	<i>Life Span</i>	<i>Life Span</i>	<i>Constance Morris House</i>	N/A	<i>South Suburban Family Shelter</i>
<b>Legal Services Provided</b>	<p><i>Legal Assistance Foundation:</i>                      Assist eligible victims with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·Obtaining an OP</li> <li>·Finding safe shelter</li> <li>·Referrals</li> <li>·Divorce where there are contested issues relating to child custody</li> <li>·Kidnapping and other emergency issues (Family Law Project)</li> <li>·Provide training to Hull House (Hull House Program) staff and Legal Assistance staff (Project SAFE)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Life Span:</i>                      Helps clients who meet income eligibility with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·EOP and POP</li> <li>·Divorce</li> <li>·Custody</li> <li>·Child abduction</li> <li>·Visitation</li> <li>·Paternity</li> <li>·Assist women seeking divorce with immigration issues (VAWA* funded)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Life Span:</i>                      Helps clients who meet income eligibility with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·EOP and POP</li> <li>·Divorce</li> <li>·Custody</li> <li>·Child abduction</li> <li>·Visitation</li> <li>·Paternity</li> <li>·Assist women seeking divorce with immigration issues (VAWA** funded)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Constance Morris House:</i>                      Helps qualifying petitioners with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·Completing EOP Petition</li> <li>·Represent at EOP, IOP and POP hearings</li> <li>·Referred to Legal Assist. Foundation for additional legal representation</li> </ul>	N/A	<p><i>South Suburban Family Shelter:</i>                      Helps qualifying clients with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·Completing EOP Petition</li> <li>·Represent at EOP, IOP and POP hearings</li> </ul>

**Legal Assistance, Cont.**

<i>Cook County</i>	<b>First Municipal District</b>	<b>Second Municipal District</b>	<b>Third Municipal District</b>	<b>Fourth Municipal District</b>	<b>Fifth Municipal District</b>	<b>Sixth Municipal District</b>
<b>Legal Services Provided</b>	<i>Pro Bono Advocates:</i> Assist eligible victims with: ·Orders of Protection ·Divorces					
	<i>Life Span:</i> Assists clients who meet income eligibility with: ·EOP and POP ·Divorce ·Custody ·Child abduction ·Visitation ·Paternity · assist women seeking divorce with immigration issues (VAWA** funded)					
<b>Legal Services Provided</b>	<i>Pro Bono Advocates:</i> Assist eligible victims with: ·Orders of Protection ·Divorces					

**Legal Assistance, Cont.**

<i>Cook County</i>	<b>First Municipal District</b>	<b>Second Municipal District</b>	<b>Third Municipal District</b>	<b>Fourth Municipal District</b>	<b>Fifth Municipal District</b>	<b>Sixth Municipal District</b>
	<i>Life Span:</i> Assists clients who meet income eligibility with: ·EOP and POP ·Divorce ·Custody ·Child abduction ·Visitation ·Paternity · assist women seeking divorce with immigration issues (VAWA** funded)					

\*Civil Orders of Protection are heard in Unified Family Court. Case managers assist victims with the order of protection process. They provide the client with an explanation of their rights and the OP process as well as help the client understand the forms and what the language means, but do not fill out the forms or give legal advice.

\*\*VAWA–Violence Against Women Act

## **Highlights from the Interviews**

*“The domestic violence court system will not work unless there is constant training, review, and a strong accountability message from the head leadership” –Domestic Violence Court Systems Project interviewee*

During the domestic violence court systems interviews, it was clear that not every system was exactly the same. Each system has its own unique characteristics and issues. The following are aspects of each system specific to particular jurisdictions:

### ***Felony Cases Assigned to Domestic Violence Court–3<sup>rd</sup> Municipal District***

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> municipal district, in addition to misdemeanor domestic violence related cases, felony cases are also assigned to the domestic violence designated courtroom. Those felony cases are prosecuted by both, a felony Assistant State’s Attorney (ASA) and an ASA from the state’s attorney’s misdemeanor domestic violence unit.

### ***Domestic Violence Related Bond Hearings Heard in Domestic Violence Court–3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Municipal Districts***

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Municipal Districts, domestic violence related bond hearings are assigned to be heard in the domestic violence court room rather than bond court.

### ***Criminal Court Victim Advocacy– 4<sup>th</sup> Municipal District***

Every complaining witness in the 4<sup>th</sup> Municipal District regardless of their decision to continue with the criminal case, is required by the ASA’s to speak with a victim advocate from Sara’s Inn or Constance Morris House, the domestic violence victim service providers. By speaking with a victim advocate, the complaining witness is advised of their rights, options and services available.

### ***Community Policing Advocacy–1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Municipal Districts***

#### ***1<sup>st</sup> Municipal District***

Family Rescue Domestic Violence Program has an office located in the 3<sup>rd</sup> District of the Chicago Police Department. The 3<sup>rd</sup> District is the only Police District in the city to have a domestic violence agency in-house. The 3<sup>rd</sup> District was originally chosen because it had the highest rate of domestic homicides in the City of Chicago.

When officers respond to a domestic violence related call, they complete a report and give the victim a referral card. If the victim would like to speak with a victim advocate, the responding officer will make a notation on the report. The advocates then contact victims who have requested services.

## **Highlights, Cont.**

Due to their in-house presence and relationships formed, Family Rescue is frequently asked to provide trainings for the 3<sup>rd</sup> District Police Officers regarding the dynamics of domestic violence and other related topics.

### *5<sup>th</sup> Municipal District*

In the 5<sup>th</sup> Municipal District the Crisis Center for South Suburbia has a Community Policing Victim Advocate available to provide follow-up services in three local police departments: Alsip, Oak Lawn and Lemont.

The Community Policing Victim Advocate serves as a liaison between the police department and victims of domestic violence. Each day, the Community Policing Victim Advocate, receives all domestic violence related police reports. If a phone number is listed for the victim, and the victim is interested in services, the Advocate will make contact and provide outreach. This allows for more communication between the program and the police departments, as well as reaching victims that may not wish to access the court system.

### *Police Social Workers–2<sup>nd</sup> Municipal District*

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Municipal District, a majority of law enforcement agencies have designated Police Social Workers that assist victims of domestic violence. The Police Social Worker Programs were established in the 1970's. The Police Social Workers are notified of every person-to-person crime, including, but not limited to, domestic battery, sexual assault and burglary. They either respond at the scene of the incident or follow up with the victim the next business day.

While Police Social Workers provide many services including safety planning, crisis intervention, short-term counseling, transportation, referrals and interpreters, their main function is to provide victim advocacy in the court system for victims of domestic violence. They accompany victims to court, assist with filling out Petitions for Orders of Protection, stay in contact to keep the victim apprised of any developments and provide reminders of court dates.

Police Social Workers adhere to the mental health confidentiality code. All records kept by the Social Workers are in a separate location from police reports and are not accessible to the law enforcement officers.

### *Unified Family Court–5<sup>th</sup> Municipal District*

In 1998 the 5<sup>th</sup> Municipal District created a Unified Family Court Project to provide continuity throughout its court system for domestic relations cases.

## **Highlights, Cont.**

The Unified Family Court operates three calendars:

- Dissolution of marriage
- Parentage
- Probate (limited to guardianship)

The types of cases heard in Unified Family Court include:

- Orders of protection, independent of criminal charges
- Dissolution of marriage, pre- and post-decree
- Parentage cases, that include paternity and child support for parents of minor children who are not married
- Probate cases (limited to guardianship of minors)

The Office of the Unified Family Court is staffed by both Mediators and Case Managers. A victim seeking an order of protection through the this court is assisted by a Case Manager to the Unified Family Court. Case Managers assist victims with filling out and filing orders of protection. They do not provide legal assistance or advice.

Mediators do not provide mediation services to parties with a history of domestic violence.

### ***Chicago Police Department (CPD) Program for Domestic Violence Victims When the Perpetrator is an Officer—1<sup>st</sup> Municipal District***

The Chicago Police Department Program is referred to as the Victim Advocacy Program and is devoted to serving victims of domestic violence when the perpetrator is a police officer. In 1992, a task force was assembled to study domestic violence perpetrators who were on the police force.

The program was then launched in 1994, specifically to assist victims when the abuser is a member of the Chicago Police Department. The Chicago Police Department, with over 13,000 officers, was the first department in the nation to have a Victim Advocacy Program of this type. The Program serves approximately 250 to 300 clients a year.

A protocol was developed and specific policies and procedures were implemented for officers responding to domestic violence related calls involving a fellow officer. Once responding officers arrive on the scene they must:

- Contact another officer of a higher rank.
- Contact the CPD Office of Professional Standards, within 1-hour, who will investigate the case.
- Notify the CPD Victim Advocate Program within 24-hours.

## **Highlights, Cont.**

The Victim Advocate Program will contact each victim and advise them of services available, such as:

- Civil and criminal court advocacy
- Crisis intervention
- How to obtain an order of protection and remedies available
- Options available to victims
- Consequences pertaining to the abuser
- Referrals to domestic violence agencies and other service providers in the county

If the victim chooses to pursue charges against the offender or is pursuing relief through civil court, such as a divorce or an order of protection, the Victim Advocate Program will continue to provide court advocacy. The CPD Victim Advocacy Program can accept referrals from any police department within Cook County when the perpetrator is a law enforcement officer.

### ***Attorneys hired by Domestic Violence Programs to Assist Victims in Civil Court—County-wide***

The South Suburban Family Shelter in the 6<sup>th</sup> Municipal District, and Constance Morris House in the 4<sup>th</sup> Municipal District each have an attorney on staff to represent victims with emergency and plenary orders of protection only. who meet eligibility requirements.

### ***Life Span***

Life Span provides comprehensive legal services to victims of domestic violence who meet eligibility requirements.

Life Span has ten attorneys, agency wide, to assist victims of domestic violence in civil court with the following cases:

- emergency and plenary orders of protection
- divorce
- custody
- child abduction
- visitation
- paternity

## **Highlights, Cont.**

### ***Immigration Services—County-wide***

Life Span Domestic Violence Program receives funding from the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) that allows for one full-time attorney and one full-time paralegal to assist victims of domestic violence who are not citizens of the United States. This program aids immigrant victims of domestic violence who may be going through a divorce or have other issues regarding immigration.

### ***School Notification—County-wide***

The Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County has a Domestic Violence Liaison. One of the duties of the Domestic Violence Liaison is to send notices to any school in Cook County when a child is listed as a protected party on an order of protection. In each order of protection packet, uniformly provided to petitioners throughout the county, a *Notice to Schools* form is included. The form is used to notify the schools of existing orders of protection and the remedies granted.

### ***Cook County Pre-trial Services Department—County-wide***

Cook County Pre-trial Services Department is a program unique in Illinois. Originally Pre-trial Services was ordered as a condition of bond for those individuals charged with felonies. Today, in a portion of the municipal districts, Pre-trial Services is ordered for domestic violence related misdemeanor cases in addition to felony cases (See Chart, Pg...). The purpose of Pre-trial Services is to evaluate, monitor, and assist the defendant prior to trial and for the duration of the court case.

### ***Pre-trial Services Department--2<sup>nd</sup> Municipal District***

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Municipal District is the only District where partner abuse intervention program participation is typically required as a condition of bond and monitored by Pre-trial Services (see Chart, Page...). If the defendant successfully completes the conditions of bond, has no criminal background and no additional issues, such as drug addiction, the State's Attorney's Office has the authority to strike criminal charges against the defendant. The decision to strike charges is made on a case by case basis by the Assistant State's Attorney.

More often than not the victim requests that criminal charges be dropped, and the States' Attorney's Office typically honors that request. Even so, by ordering the defendant to participate in and complete a partner abuse intervention program, it is felt that intervention at least occurs. In this court district it is believed that some intervention is better than no intervention at all, because it provides at least some possibility that the abusive behaviors of the defendant could change.



## **Highlights, Cont.**

### ***Transportation–1<sup>st</sup> Municipal District***

In addition to the public transportation tokens, bus passes, and tickets provided by all of the domestic violence victim services programs, Friends of Battered Women and Their Children provides personal transportation for their clients to and from court for both criminal and civil proceedings.

### ***Victim Witness Specialist Unit of the Cook County State's Attorney's Office–1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Municipal Districts***

#### ***1<sup>st</sup> Municipal District***

The Victim Witness Specialists (VWS) Unit acts as a liaison between the State's Attorney's Office and victims of domestic violence. The VWS is responsible for explaining victims rights and the difference between obtaining an order of protection in civil and one in criminal court and helping the complaining witness fill out a petition for an order of protection. They provide crisis intervention, referrals to domestic violence programs as well as to other community services. If a complaining witness is eligible, the VWS explains the Victims of Crime Compensation Program available through the Attorney General's Office.

#### ***3<sup>rd</sup> Municipal District***

The role of the VWS in the Domestic Violence Courtroom is to respond to the needs of victims and witnesses in domestic violence related cases.

The VWS are responsible for:

- Meeting with victims and answering questions regarding the current case
- Preparing order of protection petitions
- Giving referrals for appropriate services
- Assisting with victim impact statements
- Assisting with victim compensation through the Illinois Attorney General's Office
- Providing follow-up services for victims.

## Challenges Raised by Domestic Violence Court Systems

*“A policy never fits every situation; that’s why we have to all meet regularly”*

*–Domestic Violence Court Systems Project interviewee*

Several challenges were identified throughout the interviews. The systems in Cook County have ongoing efforts to address these challenges and are interested in learning how others in the county and country are handling similar situations. Some of the challenges included:

- ◆ **Orders of protection issued to both parties.** Concerns were raised about mutual orders of protection being sometimes issued by two different judges who are unaware of each other’s order. In either case, these orders present complications for enforcement and nullify the possibility for accountability of the actual offender.
- ◆ **Dual arrest.** This generally occurs when injuries are seen on both parties. It is challenging because it causes an increased caseload, makes pursuing charges difficult because of the ambiguity of the primary aggressor’s identity, wrongly accuses the victims and inhibits the victim’s confidence in the criminal justice system. **(Ask Jennifer)**
- ◆ **Volume.** The volume of domestic violence related cases heard in Cook County is one of the largest in County. There are criminal domestic violence designated courts in every municipal district in Cook County, including four in the 1<sup>st</sup> Municipal District. Participants described assuring access to the court system for victims and perpetrator as constant challenge
- ◆ **Adjusting resource allocations to match the increase of domestic violence caseloads.** As a result of pro-arrest and pro-prosecution policies, caseloads have dramatically increased without a corresponding reallocation of resources. This trend has affected the ability of the State’s Attorney’s Office, the Public Defender’s Office, and the Judiciary to pay appropriate attention to these complex, high risk cases which compromises offender accountability and victim safety.
- ◆ **Petitions to revoke probation, conditional discharge, or supervision.** Deciding when to revoke probation, conditional discharge, or supervision and how many chances to offer an offender to comply was cited as a challenging determination without an assisting criteria.
- ◆ **Transportation.** Many participants stated that transportation to and from the courthouse for both victims and defendants was a major challenge, in particular the lack of public transportation in the suburban districts was cited. In addition, transportation to/from partner abuse intervention programs is an obstacle to offender compliance.
- ◆ **Anger management versus partner abuse intervention programs (PAIP).** The discussion about proper referrals and what will help batterers change their behavior continues. Interviewees discussed the need for education and information about the

## Challenges, Cont.

differences and appropriateness of partner abuse intervention programs versus anger management. Because of the disparity between models research has shown that the criteria of safety and accountability are only addressed in the PAIP model.

- ◆ **Information sharing between municipal districts.** The opportunity for each of the municipal district domestic violence court systems to learn about, come together and share ideas with the other domestic violence courts systems is a need described by the participants. They felt it would allow for more communication and better coordination between professionals in the field.
- ◆ **Mental illness.** The increase in those with mental illness ending up in the domestic violence courts throughout the county is on the increase. Participants described many cases where an adult child with mental illness has committed acts of violence against their parents. Because of the lack of appropriate resources and places to go for help for the mentally ill, these cases inevitably end up in court. What to do with these types of cases continues to be a dilemma.
- ◆ **Out-of-county service.** For orders of protection where the respondent lives outside of Cook County, the petitioner must deliver the Order to the county where the respondent resides. Due to a lack of transportation and resources petitioners often must either rely on victim advocates to help deliver orders or forgo their delivery altogether.
- ◆ **Data collection.** Collecting data and establishing standardized data collection procedures can help assess the efficacy of the domestic violence court system, can identify system needs, and can provide justification for seeking additional resources or resource reallocation.
- ◆ **Visitation exchange.** Participants described petitioners and respondents meeting at local fast food restaurants or the police station to drop off children for visitation. They cited a lack of safety for the victim and the children. The establishment of centers for the safe exchange of children and for supervised visitation with trained supervisors would help to address this important community need.
- ◆ **Immigrant victims and perpetrators.** Outreach to immigrant victims of domestic violence continues to be a challenge. There is a need for non-English speaking domestic violence victim services workers and court system personnel who are trained in immigration issues. In addition, Partner Abuse Intervention Programs need groups for perpetrators where English is not their first language.

## **Looking Toward the Future**

*“We’re better now than we were six months ago; we’re working better together”–Domestic Violence Court Systems  
Project interviewee*

The domestic violence court system interviews are just the first step for the IFVCC to document and disseminate information about the domestic violence court systems in Cook County and the rest of Illinois. Also, the individual domestic violence court system reports only offer snapshots in time of the domestic violence court systems, because system development is an ongoing, dynamic process; each of the jurisdictions professed a commitment to continuous system improvement. As the existing domestic violence court systems continue to mature, and as new systems are developed, fresh challenges and trends will emerge. For these reasons, the Domestic Violence Court Systems Project will continue.

The creation of a learning network and the establishment of regular Round Tables will provide and facilitate opportunities for dialogue, problem-solving, education, and support among domestic violence court system professionals. Our belief is that these opportunities will foster collaboration and strengthen the common goals of domestic violence court systems: services for victims and offenders, victim safety, offender accountability, and the administration of justice.