

10 YEARS OF CREATING CHANGE

Nashville's 2013-2023
Domestic Violence
Safety & Accountability
Progress Report



Metro Nashville Office of Family Safety

This report is dedicated to the victims and survivors of interpersonal violence whose bravery, resilience, and hope are inspirational.

This report is also dedicated to the people who devote their careers, and subsequently a large part of who they are, to combat abuse and violence.

This report is an act of hope for both, affirming that we will continue our ground-breaking work in Nashville to stop cycles of abuse.

“We can’t become what we need to be by remaining what we are.”
—Oprah Winfrey

Abbreviations helpful for reading this report:

IPV – Interpersonal violence, which includes forms of abuse between people, such as domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, and child and vulnerable adult abuse.

DV – Domestic Violence

SA – Sexual Assault

HT – Human Trafficking

CA – Child Abuse

VAA – Vulnerable Adult Abuse

AGAPE – AGAPE Morning Star Domestic Violence Program

APS – Adult Protective Services

ARPA – American Rescue Plan Act Funds

BIPs – Batterer’s Intervention Programs

BWC – Body Worn Camera

CCR – Coordinated Community Response

COPS – Counseling, Order of Protection, Prosecution, and Shelter offered by MNP

CPIT – Child Protective Investigative Team

DA – District Attorney’s Office or Danger Assessment and **ADA** – Assistant District Attorney

DADRT – Domestic Abuse Death Review Team

DCS – Department of Children’s Services

DCSO – Davidson County Sheriff’s Office

FIP – Family Intervention Program of the Police Department

GS – General Sessions (Courts, Probation, etc.)

HRIP – High-Risk Intervention Panel

LAP – Lethality Assessment Program

OFS – Metro Nashville Office of Family Safety

OP – Order of Protection

MNP – Metro Nashville Police Department

MNPS – Metro Nashville Public Schools

MPC – The Mary Parrish Center

NCA – Nashville Children’s Alliance

SAC – Sexual Assault Center

SART – Sexual Assault Response Team

TDOC – Tennessee Department of Corrections

VAPIT – Vulnerable Adult Protective Investigation Team

VOCA – Victims of Crime Act Funds

VWC – Victim Witness Coordinator for the DA’s Office

YWCA – YWCA Nashville & Middle Tennessee

Colors to Note: sections of the report coincide with the awareness colors of each issue area – purple for domestic violence, teal for sexual assault, blue for child abuse, purple for elder and vulnerable adult abuse, and blue for human trafficking.

This report was published in July 2025 and includes some references to 2024 and 2025.

IPV CO-CHAIRS LETTER

10 YEAR REPORT



IPV Co-Chairs with MNP Chief John Drake

2024 Interpersonal Violence Co-Chairs

Diane Lance (OFS), Sue Fort White (Our Kids), Rachel Freeman (SAC), Dawn Harper (NCA), Mary Katherine Rand (The MPC), Sharon Roberson (YWCA), and Becky Bullard (OFS)

Nashville experienced a pivotal moment in 2011 when Mayor Karl Dean initiated the Domestic Violence Safety and Accountability Assessment. The progress that has been made since the release of the 2013 Assessment Report is nothing short of ground-breaking. Nashvillians should be incredibly proud of the ways this city is on the cutting edge of anti-abuse work. In this ten-year report, we are excited to share how the city's work on domestic violence and other forms of abuse has grown exponentially.

The Interpersonal Violence Taskforce Co-Chairs and Taskforce members also believe that Nashville is at another pivotal moment ten years later. To continue moving forward in our innovative work, we have evaluated where we are ten years later and where we hope to continue to grow and create change. As a result, this ten-year progress report also contains our collective recommendations for the next steps in ending abuse in Nashville.

We are grateful to Mayor Freddie O'Connell, the Metro Nashville Council, and our many partners for their support of this ten-year report. Thank you for investing in our work to end cycles of violence for Nashvillians.

”

The progress that has been made since the release of the 2013 Assessment Report is nothing short of ground-breaking. Nashvillians should be incredibly proud...

2013 Assessment Report



Authors & Leadership Contributions

The IPV Taskforce Co-Chairs and FSC Leadership Committee support the planning of city-wide IPV Taskforce and Summit Meetings while working within their agencies to implement changes and innovation for Nashville's IPV work.

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10-Year Progress Report

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INTRODUCTION

CENTRAL SUCCESSES & RECOMMENDATIONS



OFS has proved 'The Power of We' can change the world... Nashville is leading the movement and should be a required site visit for every community CCR and collaborative in America!

**~ Gael Strack, CEO,
Alliance for Hope**

2013 Assessment Report



Introduction

In 2011, Legal Aid Society attorney Jean Crowe and Judge Phillip Smith met with Mayor Karl Dean to share concerns about how domestic violence (DV) cases were handled in Nashville–Davidson County. Mayor Karl Dean designated Diane Lance from his office to lead an assessment of the city’s response from 911 calls through the court process. The assessment team consisted of over 80 individuals from non-profits, the court system, community agencies, and survivors who observed criminal justice processes and provided findings and recommendations to the Mayor and city leaders. This two-year review shed light on gaps in the criminal justice system that created barriers to victim safety and decreased offender accountability. This review resulted in the release of the **Domestic Violence Safety and Accountability Assessment Report** in 2013.

Ten years later, Nashville has evaluated the city’s progress in improving domestic violence victim safety and offender accountability while expanding our review to all forms of abuse, including sexual assault, human trafficking, and child and vulnerable adult abuse. The FSC Leadership Committee and IPV Taskforce Co-Chairs have hosted **two Interpersonal Violence (IPV) Summits in 2021 and 2023** to compile successes and recommendations in each abuse area. As a result of these Summits, multiple taskforce meetings, and leadership input, this report outlines **five new overarching recommendations** as well as in-depth recommendations for all IPV issues to support Nashville’s future work while assessing progress made on previous goals.

Structure of the Report

The first section of the report evaluates the **original Central Goals and Recommendations** from the 2013 Report, showcases our largest success – Nashville’s Family Safety Centers, and provides new central goals for the future. It also outlines **five new Central Goals and Recommendations**.

The following section evaluates the progress of the **2013 Report’s five stages of Criminal Cases**: Initial Response, Offender is Charged, Time Between Arrest and Court, Courts, and Post Court. Each stage evaluates the original recommendations’ progress, successes, relevant trends, and ongoing recommendations as of 2023. Innovative programs in other cities are also listed and clickable if viewing the report electronically. Because the report was published in 2025, there are some references to 2024 progress and trends, and areas noted with an asterisk where progress is anticipated in 2025 and 2026.

As a result of Nashville’s expanded focus on **all forms of interpersonal abuse**, the final section of the report reviews the successes, trends, and recommendations for sexual assault, child abuse, human trafficking, and vulnerable adult abuse, as well as survivor perspectives from survey data.



2013 Assessment Release Announcement



2023 IPV Summit

Central Successes from 2013 Report

Family Safety Centers & OFS

Additional successes for Nashville are highlighted throughout this report



Following the release of the 2013 Safety and Accountability Assessment Report, planning for two new Family Safety Centers began. To address the substantial needs in the courthouse, the **Jean Crowe Advocacy Center (JCAC)** was prioritized and opened in 2014. This Center provides victims a safe and secure space away from their abuser and support from Office of Family Safety (OFS) advocates, the District Attorney's Office (DA's), and other service providers while waiting for court. This Center accomplished several of the 2013 report's goals and is one of only a handful of similar court-based Centers in the country. Shortly after the opening of the JCAC, the Mayor's Office created a new department, the **Office of Family Safety (OFS)**, in 2015 to oversee the Center and continue implementing the report's recommendations. OFS is one of a small number of similar government agencies in the country whose sole focus is interpersonal violence.



In 2016, groundbreaking began on Nashville's community-based Center, and in 2019, the **Family Safety Center (FSC)** opened to the public. The FSC is one of the largest Family Justice Centers in the world and provides walk-in and by-appointment services for all forms of abuse. FSC onsite and drop-in partners include OFS, MNPD, DA's, DCS, NCA, FIP, AGAPE, SAC, and the MPC. The JCAC, FSC, and the work done inside these Centers have become national models.

2013 Central Goals & Recommendations Review



Risk/Lethality Assessments

Metro should have a standardized and comprehensive DV risk assessment tool. This tool should be utilized at each point that a victim interacts with Metro.

Completed: MNPd utilizes the Lethality Assessment (LAP) while OFS advocates and other community-based service providers use the Danger assessment (DA).



Advocacy

Metro should prioritize hiring advocates to assist victims at each stage of the process. Advocacy work should be standardized and include the use of risk/lethality assessments.

Completed: Metro created the Office of Family Safety in 2015 to provide advocates in its two Family Safety Centers. Advocates use an evidenced-based risk assessment, the Danger Assessment.



Coordinated Community Response & DV Coordinator

Metro should follow the Family Justice Center (FJC) model where victims can meet with multiple agencies in one place and employ a coordinator to oversee progress on this report.

Completed: Metro created two FJCs that are national models and created the Metro Office of Family Safety to manage these Centers and oversee Nashville's progress.



Training

All DV practitioners should receive significant annual Metro-sponsored DV training and certification on understanding victim and offender behavior, community resources, cultural and language barriers, and how police and judicial systems work and interact.

Mostly Completed: Metro mandated recurring DV training for all Metro employees in 2019 and OFS provides regular training opportunities for all practitioners; however, more required and advanced training is still needed to ensure similar understandings of IPV.



Integrated Data

Metro should better share domestic violence data across departments in a way that will more effectively ensure offender accountability and enhance victim safety.

Ongoing: While data sharing has improved between many partners, access to lethality assessment information and nation-wide criminal history is still unavailable to the judicial commissioners making bond decisions and not consistently reviewed by court personnel.



Removing Language Barriers

Metro should expand its ability to serve the needs of non-English speaking DV victims.

Ongoing: Language line and interpreter use still needs to be required for police and courts.



Delay & Inconvenience

Delay and inconvenience to the victim should be dramatically reduced or eliminated.

Needed: Convenience has improved as a result of the Family Safety Centers; however, delays have increased throughout the criminal justice systems response to DV cases.



Shifting the Burden

The burden of successful prosecution should rest on the investigative work of MNPd and prosecution strategies of the DA's Office, rather than on the appearance of the victim in court. Victims should not be referred to as "prosecutor" on any domestic violence case.

Needed: Victim testimony is still heavily relied on for DV cases to proceed, evidenced-based prosecution is inconsistent, and conviction rates have decreased since the original 2013 report.

2023 New & Ongoing Central Goals & Recommendations

There has been tremendous law enforcement, court, Metro Council, Mayor's Office, and non-profit support on the following central goals and recommendations. We look forward to seeing anticipated progress on these in 2025 and 2026.

1

Increase staffing & capacity to address increased IPV Caseloads

Since 2013, Nashville's population and interpersonal violence (IPV) rates, have grown; however, the number of staff serving IPV victims has largely remained the same.

- Increase staffing for MNPd detectives, prosecutors, and service providers.
- Consider creating an IPV prosecution division, mirroring MNPd's Interpersonal Crimes Branch, to increase capacity to prosecute intersecting crimes of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, vulnerable adult abuse, and human trafficking.
- Provide judicial assistants for commissioners to make informed bond decisions.

2

Require Recurring Training on IPV for all Practitioners & Specialization

While training and expertise on IPV has expanded in Nashville, training is not required for all practitioners working on interpersonal abuse.

- Require recurring, advanced training for any individual working on IPV or hearing IPV cases.
- For IPV specialization of court personnel, require a minimum of 40 hours of IPV training, and, ideally, 1-2 years of experience before specialization in investigating, prosecuting, or hearing IPV cases.

3

High-Risk Prioritization throughout the Criminal Justice System

Consideration of risk is not consistent throughout the criminal justice system.

- Identify and prioritize risk at every step in the criminal justice system process.
- Require risk assessment review and consideration by all court personnel.
- Prioritize high-risk cases to avoid the extensive delays in the court process so that abusers are not allowed to escalate their abuse.
- Enforce firearms dispossession throughout the criminal justice system with compliance hearings, investigations, and removals.

4

Reduce Court Delays, Reliance on Victim Testimony, & Re-traumatization

Criminal case convictions have decreased, and court delays have increased over the past ten years, compromising victims' right to a speedy trial and increasing victim risk.

- Decrease reliance on victim testimony and increase the use of national best practices of evidence-based investigations and prosecutions.
- Decrease case delays, especially on high-risk cases, citing victims' rights and risk factors.
- Implement trauma-informed practices throughout the criminal justice system to ensure victims are not retraumatized at any point in the process.

5

Increased Services for IPV Victims & Increased IPV Awareness

With Nashville's increased population, housing is scarce for people fleeing violence and their children, and service provision is under-funded.

- Increase shelter beds, transitional housing, and affordable long-term housing, as well as supportive services like therapy, case management, and advocacy to meet growing needs.
- Develop a city-wide awareness campaign to educate its citizens on the harms of abuse and the resources offered at the two FSCs and through non-profit partners.

"This report magnifies the crucial nature of whole-hearted collaboration. Our public/private partnerships make Nashville a much safer and more responsive city."

~Sue Fort White, Executive Director, Our Kids

"Nashville's continued commitment and focus on the report recommendations speaks volumes about the compassion, vision, and strength of our city's top leaders and our mighty collaborative, which works together every day to create hope and healing in the lives of those we serve. I couldn't be prouder to be part of this movement."

~Diane Lance, Office of Family Safety Dept. Director



STAGE BY STAGE

DV SUCCESSES & RECOMMENDATIONS

”

“Thanks to our strong partnerships with the OFS and MNPd, we've been fast and nimble in providing immediate intervention to thousands of abuse victims in the greater Nashville area.”

~YWCA Nashville & Middle Tennessee

2013 Assessment Report



Stage One: Initial Response

2013 Recommendations Review



Enhanced 911 Victim Information

Establish an enhanced DV protocol for 911 call takers that consistently gathers important information, such as injuries, current DV court orders, the presence of children, if it's safe to talk, and if victim has been strangled.

Completed: This is the current standard for call-takers and Dept. of Emergency (DEC), MNPd, and OFS have worked together to update and innovate 911 protocols.



Enhanced 911 Offender Information

Allow 911 dispatchers to have access to domestic violence criminal background information and court orders, such as orders of protection, if offender is currently facing criminal charges or is restricted by any bond conditions.

Mostly Completed: Call takers at 911 do have access to NCIC/CCIC; however, they are not allowed to run this report unless the officer on-scene requests this information.



Call Response Time

Decrease patrol response time to domestic violence calls for service.

Needed: Call Response time has increased; however, so has Nashville's population. Additional patrol officers and mobile booking locations could decrease response time.



Improve On-Scene Data Collection

Increase and improve the on-scene investigative work and data collection of patrol officers. Suggestions include equipping patrol officers with cameras that can take high quality photographs of injuries, and improved training on investigating and documenting a DV case in a way that will lead to effective prosecution.

Mostly Completed: A domestic violence supplement, which prompts officers to record detailed information on assaults, including strangulation, has been implemented; however, consistent use of the supplement on all DV cases, as well as consistent, enhanced evidence collection, is needed.



Improve Officer-Led Resources

Improve officer effectiveness with victims: (1) Provide victims with an informational packet that includes referrals, safety planning information, and risk indicators; (2) Provide a more detailed explanation of the resources available (3) Provide a consistent response that reflects an understanding of victim and offender behavioral dynamics.

Completed: MNPd officers have implemented the LAP, calls to YWCA for victims, pocket cards, and offer resources and options while on-scene.

"He was very informative/helpful in regards to giving me every option available to me and making sure I was truly getting the help I needed to be okay through the situation. He truly believed me and it made the difference."

- Victim on current police response

"Metro took hours to get to me when I called 911. I had to call them multiple times. Breaking OP was a slap on wrist - it happened four times and still he was out. Police deal with so much DV they seem desensitized."

- Victim on current police response

Successes for Nashville



Lethality Assessment (LAP)

Patrol officers now ask all intimate partner DV victims 11 questions on-scene to determine the victim's risk of being killed by their abuser.



MNPD Offers Services On-Scene

Officers ask all victims on-scene if they need counseling, an order of protection (OP), or shelter services, known as "COPS." Officers also transport victims to shelter or the Family Safety Center.



911 Safety Enhancements

Department of Emergency Communications revised its domestic violence response protocols with OFS and MNPD. New technology has also enhanced 911's response to these calls.



YWCA LAP Calls

High-risk victims identified by MNPD's LAP are connected by patrol on-scene to speak to a counselor at the YWCA for immediate safety planning, referrals, and shelter.



City-Wide Strangulation Protocol

MNPD requires a mandatory EMS medical evaluation on all strangulation cases, EMS receives annual strangulation training, and Vanderbilt Medical Center began doing strangulation forensic exams in 2024.



IPV MNPD Training & Resources

MNPD's DV Division and OFS provides training for MNPD on IPV and risk through video and in-person training. OFS also created pocket cards for MNPD officers to provide guidance on Strangulation, Firearms, and Human Trafficking.

Current Trends

Since 2013, Nashville's population has grown by 8% or 50,750 people & tourism has grown by 38% or 4.6 million people each year.



60%

Increase in average response time to DV-Related Calls

<u>2016</u>	<u>2023</u>
11.1 MIN	17.8 MIN

Metro Nashville Police Department



8.6%

Increase in the Number of DV Calls for Service

<u>2013</u>	<u>2023</u>
34,453	37,416

Metro Nashville Police Department



8,297

Number of victims MNPD connected to speak with the YWCA on-scene since LAP inception in 2016 through 2023

Metro Nashville Police Department



782

Number of victims escorted by MNPD directly to the FSC for services 2019-2023

Office of Family Safety



51,112

Number of LAPs administered by MNPD since LAP inception in 2016 through 2023

Metro Nashville Police Department



62%

Increase in strangulation charges filed in GS court

<u>2013</u>	<u>2023</u>
352	569

Metro Criminal Justice Planning Dept.

Stage One: Initial Response

2023 New & Ongoing Recommendations

***Signifies that noteworthy progress is occurring to address the recommendation*

1

Recurring and Required Trainings for 911 & Enhancements of 911 Information:

Require recurring training and evaluation for 911 call takers on DV, risk, and intersecting abuse. Create a process with MNPd patrol where requests for offender history are standard on all 911 calls to allow the operator to advise police on criminal history and OPs. Ensure that call-outs on deaths are not classified as suicides, accidents, or overdoses prematurely to limit officer bias for suspicious death investigations.

2

Increase Evidence-Based Case Investigations:

Ensure consistency in on-scene evidence collection by requiring DV Supplement completion, detailed photographs, witness interviews, immediate video evidence collection, recording victim statements and injuries, weapons collection (especially firearms), and collection of other elements pertinent to the case such as clothes, sheets, etc. Require that the "10 signs of a Suspicious Death" are evaluated for every death investigation where there is a history of domestic violence.

3

Expand Recurring & Required Trainings for MNPd:

Continue to enhance and expand training on DV and how it intersects with other crimes for patrol officers to ensure appropriate victim identification and response to these complex crimes. This includes understanding risk, identifying the predominant aggressor, and conducting trauma-informed and evidenced-based investigations.**

4

Continue to Enhance On-Scene Engagement with Victims:

Continue to find training opportunities for police on victim trauma responses and trust-building with victims through active listening and empathy. Ensure victims with limited English proficiency receive interpreters and do not use family members for interpretation. Continue meaningful connection to resources through LAP calls, education on resources through COPS, and transportation to shelter and the FSC.

5

Advocacy Co-Response with MNPd:

Consider implementing a national best practice model for DV response where advocates accompany officers on certain DV cases, such as high-risk assaults, to create direct connection to services and support on-scene. This improves the likelihood that the victim will engage in services, medical care, and the criminal justice process.

6

DV & Strangulation Forensic Exams at FSC:

Staff the Family Safety Center with a medical practitioner to conduct forensic exams for victims that include injury assessment and documentation, especially for strangulation and traumatic brain injury. ****FY 26 Investment - Nurse Practitioner at FSC through a collaboration between the Metro Public Health Department and Nashville General Hospital**

Innovative PROGRAMS

Family Justice Centers in multiple cities have onsite DV and Strangulation Forensic Exam availability for their clients, improving evidence collection and prosecution.

Lakewood, CO Police Department developed mandatory call outs for advocates, EMS, and forensic exams for strangulation established in 2019.

Stage Two: Offender is Charged

2013 Recommendations Review

***Signifies that noteworthy progress is occurring to address the recommendation*



Higher Offender Bonds

Commissioners should consistently set higher bonds for defendants who are already on bond for a previous domestic violence charge in accordance with Tennessee law.

Strongly Needed: Bond amounts have decreased over the past ten years, and there is no consistency in setting higher bonds for individuals who are already on bond, high-risk, or repeat offenders. Commissioners need additional staffing, bond guidelines, and to review the LAP and criminal records for every case.**



Electronic Notification for Offender Holds

Establish a system whereby any commissioner that is making bond determinations is electronically alerted if a defendant has a history of domestic violence, if the offender is being re-arrested while on bond or parole, or is subject to an order of protection.

Strongly Needed: Commissioners do not have automated alerts and indicate they are often unable to look up criminal history in Davidson Co. Concerningly, commissioners do not have access to nation-wide criminal data from NCIC-III database.**



Commissioner Resources & Availability

Ensure commissioners have necessary resources to quickly handle cases and to reduce and manage "bottlenecks" that cause significant delay processing warrants and OPS.

Ongoing: Commissioners have increased staff at busy hours since 2013, but still need assistants to research local, state, and national criminal histories, OP histories, and the LAP for high-risk indicators to ensure appropriate bonds are set.**



Self Help Guide for Orders of Protection

Make available an easy-to-understand, self-help guide for victims who want to obtain an order of protection independent of an advocate.

Mostly Completed: OFS created a self-help guide and step-by step video for people petitioning for an OP at night court. Providing an OP self-help kiosk would significantly increase accessibility.**



24/7 Advocates for Orders of Protection

Have advocates available 24/7 to all victims who wish to obtain an OP. These advocates can assist victims in completing necessary paperwork to file an OP; perform risk/lethality assessments; and provide partner referral information and safety planning.

Mostly Completed: FSC provides 24/7 OP advocacy assistance; however, afterhours and weekend advocacy can have coverage gaps.**



Private Location for Victims to obtain OPs & Warrants

Establish a victim-friendly location for victims to obtain an OP and/or take out an arrest warrant separate from offenders to avoid victims unexpectedly encountering them.

Completed: The JCAC opened in 2014 and the FSC opened in 2019 to provide safe, secure, and private spaces for victims to obtain OPs and warrants.

"This is a wonderful facility. I was extremely nervous and unsure before walking through the door. The waiting area is clean, inviting and comforting. The staff is warm and reassuring. Thank you for providing the community with a safe place."

~ Family Safety Center Client Survey Response

"It is especially concerning that there is such a delay between the time an abuse victim gets an OP in place and when the abuser is actually charged. A lot can happen in that time...There should be a swift penalty since those who have abused their victims multiple times could very well kill them the next time."

~ Grand Jury Report April-June 2024

Successes for Nashville



24/7 Order of Protection (OP) Help

Petitioners have safe, secure, and supportive spaces to receive an OP at the two Family Safety Centers. OFS staff provide OP services during business hours and AGAPE staff provide OP services after-hours.



New GPS Monitoring Law

In 2024, the state passed the “Debbie and Marie Domestic Violence Protection Act” that requires felony domestic violence offenders to wear a GPS monitor upon release from jail under a bond.



Strangulation Attempted Homicide

MNPD, OFS, and the DA’s Office advocated for a new strangulation law, passed in 2023, that allows MNPD and the DA’s Office to charge strangulation with loss of consciousness as an attempted homicide, increased the penalty for strangulation of a pregnant person, and prohibits stranglers from release without a secured bond.



Family Safety Centers

The Jean Crowe Advocacy Center (JCAC) opened in 2014 and the Family Safety Center (FSC) opened in 2019. Both Centers house multiple service providers that support victims with OPs, danger assessments, safety planning, court advocacy, therapy, housing, legal services, and referrals.



Required DV Training

In 2018, Metro government created an executive order requiring DV training for all 10,000+ Metro employees, provided by OFS. In 2021, the YWCA helped pass legislation to create the “Shear Haven” DV training program required for all hair stylists in Tennessee. In 2023, legislation passed requiring judges who hear custody cases receive two hours of DV training annually.



Commissioner LAP Access

OFS has advocated for the commissioners to have access to the MNPD LAP since 2018 and created a high-risk bench card to help commissioners identify risk in 2019. In 2024, MNPD created a prompt for officers to ensure LAPs are provided to commissioners.

Current Trends

Since 2013, Nashville's population has grown by 8% or 50,750 people & tourism has grown by 38% or 4.6 million people each year.



16,300

Victims who received
OP assistance from OFS
at the FSC and JCAC
from 2015-2023

Office of Family Safety



21,914

Or 43% of victims who screened
in as high-risk out of 51,112 LAPs
administered between LAP
inception in December 2016
through the end of 2023

Metro Nashville Police Dept.



638

DV Offenders with GPS monitoring
ordered as a condition of bond
since the new GPS law began in
July 2024 to March 2025

Metro Gov't Criminal Justice Planning Dept.



4

Strangulations charged as
attempted homicides
flagged by OFS at GS level
since state law allowed this
charge in 2023 to early 2025

Office of Family Safety



\$14,748

Average bond amount set
for strangulation in a 6-
month period in 2023

Lowest Bond: \$1,000

Highest Bond: \$80,000

Metro Gov't Criminal Justice Planning Dept.



-23.5%

Percentage change
decrease in the average
bond amount for all
defendants in 2016
(\$12,643) to 2023 (\$9,672)

Metro Gov't Criminal Justice Planning Dept.

Stage Two: Offender is Charged

2023 New & Ongoing Recommendations

***Signifies that noteworthy progress is occurring to address the recommendation*

1

Commissioner Bond Setting & Access to Information:

Ensure compliance with TCA 39-11-142, which requires commissioner due diligence in determining prior criminal history. Use all available databases, including NCIC-III, to review criminal records in-county, out-of-county, and out-of-state and consider these records to ensure every interpersonal violence offender is given an appropriate bond.**

2

Identify & Consider Risk when Setting Bond:

Review and consider the Lethality Assessment (LAP) every time bond and bond conditions are set for an intimate partner violence case. When there is no LAP, consider high-risk factors laid out in the warrant or criminal history, such as strangulation, sexual assault, stalking, and firearms.

3

Standardize Bond Guidelines:

A standard for “customarily set” bond amounts on IPV cases is needed. When a defendant is released on bail and charged with another bailable offense, TCA 40-11-148 requires bail of “each new offense in an amount not less than twice that which is customarily set for the offense charged.” Without a “customarily set” standard established, compliance with this law is challenging.

4

GPS Monitoring Law Implementation & Risk Consideration:

Consider GPS monitoring for misdemeanor DV cases, optional under the new law TN 40-11-152, reviewing criminal history and the LAP to understand victim risk and offender lethality. Where GPS monitoring is not optional on felony DV cases unless the commissioner finds the defendant “no longer poses a threat,” detailed reasons for any determination the defendant is no longer a threat should be clearly laid out.

5

Judicial Assistants for Commissioners:

Reinstate judicial assistants for commissioners. These assistants are necessary given the case load and the requirements above that commissioners set bonds with all pertinent criminal history and risk information. Additionally, assistants are needed to ensure limited English proficiency (LEP) individuals who petition commissioners directly for an OP are connected to a language interpretation line and fill out the necessary paperwork. An OP self-help kiosk would also increase ease and accessibility. ****FY 26 Investment - 6 Commissioner Judicial Assistants provided to the Courts**

6

Recurring & Required Trainings for Commissioners:

Require recurring training and evaluation on domestic violence, intersecting abuse issues, and high-risk indicators for all commissioners.

“It is recommended that Bail Bonds must be raised for certain cases such as domestic violence, order of protection violations, homicides, cases involving children and for serious and repeat offenders.”

~Grand Jury Report Jan- March 2024 Term

“I understand the frustration, and I understand the optics of seeing people on bond allegedly committing new crimes, but we can't set bond with a Ouija board.”

~General Session Judge Jim Todd, speaking to News Channel 5, May 2024

Stage Three: Time between Arrest & Court

2013 Recommendations Review

***Signifies that noteworthy progress is occurring to address the recommendation*



Safety Gaps of OPs, Order to Vacate, Serving Warrants

Explore and resolve safety gaps between the Sheriff's Office (DCSO) authority to enforce orders to vacate residences, and MNPd's authority to arrest/serve outstanding warrants.

Completed: Following a DV homicide in 2021, DCSO and MNPd created a new protocol where DCSO contacts MNPd any time an OP respondent has outstanding warrants.



Monitoring Criminal Behavior of Offenders on Bond

Routinely monitor recurring criminal behavior of DV offenders. Motions to revoke or increase bond should be consistently and promptly filed when a defendant violates bond conditions or OPs.

Needed: A law was passed in 2023 allowing MNPd to take out bond violations charges; however, bond revocations are not promptly heard, and there is no monitoring of compliance. A GPS law was passed in 2024 to increase monitoring of DV offenders on bond, but implementation and monitoring is inconsistent.**



Decrease Detective Workload

Reduce the amount of work done by detectives that does not require the expertise of a detective in order to provide additional time for case investigation.

Ongoing: Part-time civilian employees support DV Detective case work; however, the increased number and complexity of DV reports requires additional detectives to staff.



Decrease Clerical Work by Victim Witness Coordinators

Reduce clerical work performed by victim witness coordinators (VWCs) at the DA's Office to give them sufficient time to call victims within 24-48 hours of an incident.

Completed: VWCs use an app to reduce clerical work and call victims 24-48 hours after defendant arrest to set up early intervention meetings (EIM) with them at the courthouse.



Advocate Contact after Domestic Violence Incident

Coordinate and share the use of advocates by the Sheriff's Office, MNPd, and DA's Office to improve the speed, quality, and quantity of contact with victims after a DV incident.

Completed: MNPd FIP advocates contact victims on felony assaults, DA VWCs hold Early Intervention Meetings (EIMs) with DV victims, and OFS advocates contact victims who are clients or on HRIP post-incident. Victim outreach coordination is needed to reduce overlap.



Improved Victim Notification

Improve method to notify victims of court dates and keep contact private from offender.

Completed: Vinelink notification system is available for crime victims and their families.



Create MDT for Domestic Violence High-Risk Cases

Develop multidisciplinary Domestic Violence High-Risk Case Review Team to systematically identify and review high-risk DV cases, especially when the offender continues to threaten and/or harm the victim while on bond or pending arrest.

Completed: Metro Nashville's High-Risk Intervention Panel (HRIP) was created shortly after the 2013 Assessment and meets 5 times monthly to discuss and review high-risk cases. It is a national model for DV high-risk multidisciplinary teams.

"We highlighted Nashville's High-Risk Intervention Panel (HRIP) on one of our national webinars because it has become a national model in LAP and Danger Assessment case review."

~ Gael Strack, CEO Alliance for Hope International

"These cases were upsetting to our jurors and the fact that these types of crimes continue to occur and take years to bring to trial is not acceptable. Some cases we heard were almost two years old...that is unacceptable since often the victim remains vulnerable until the abuser is removed from the home."

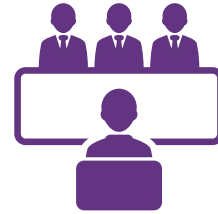
~Grand Jury Report April Term 2024

Successes for Nashville



MNPD Interpersonal Crimes Branch

MNPD established the Interpersonal Crimes Branch in 2020 that investigates cases of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, human trafficking, and vulnerable adult abuse



High Risk Intervention Panel

As a result of the 2013 Assessment, Nashville formed the HRIP. The Panel is a multidisciplinary team that reviews the highest risk cases of intimate partner violence every week. HRIP has become a national model.



Vinelink Notification System

Vinelink was implemented by the Tennessee Department of Corrections (TDOC) in 2021 to provide a free service for victims with reliable information about custody status changes and criminal case information for offenders who are currently in the custody of TDOC.



Early Intervention Meetings (EIM)

The DA's Office Victim Witness Coordinators (VWCs) contact DV victims within 48 hours of the defendant's arrest and request an EIM with the victim at the courthouse to discuss the case with the prosecutor.



Increased Advocacy

Availability of advocacy has increased in both MNPD and Metro since the 2013 report. Metro has ensured that advocates are available at the two Family Justice Centers for victims of abuse, as well as case managers for long-term needs.



Civil Legal Advocacy Program

Legal Aid and OFS created the Civil Legal Advocacy Program in 2017 to ensure legal representation for high-risk domestic violence clients with OPs. AGAPE also began staffing these cases with an attorney in 2019.

Current Trends

Since 2013, Nashville's population has grown by 8% or 50,750 people & tourism has grown by 38% or 4.6 million people each year.

+39

Increase of average number of days from arrest to disposition on the General Sessions (GS) DV bond docket

<u>2013</u>	<u>2023</u>
77 days	116 days*

*2024 showed progress with 82.5 days
Metro Gov't Criminal Justice Planning Dept.

7,446

Number of HRIP Case Reviews from 2016-2023

359 weekly meetings
95 monthly meetings

Office of Family Safety

-11.9%

Fewer OPs granted when heard after 90 days as compared to OPs heard within 15 days

Office of Family Safety Analysis

3,048

Number of DA's Office Early Intervention Meeting (EIMs) clients referred for services to the JCAC between 2016-2023

Davidson County DA's Office

17.5%

Percentage of DV offenders who were re-arrested while out on bond in 2023

Metro Gov't Criminal Justice Planning Dept.

15,449

Number of OFS Advocate Court Prep Calls to Victims from 2014-2023

Office of Family Safety

Stage Three: Time between Arrest & Court

2023 New & Ongoing Recommendations

***Signifies that noteworthy progress is occurring to address the recommendation*

1

Increase Detectives to Meet Increased Caseload & Create DV Firearms Dispossession Team:

DV reports have increased by 8.6% since 2013, and vulnerable adult abuse investigation was added to the DV Division, further increasing caseload. Cases have also increased in complexity, often involving online and video evidence investigation. Similar to other innovative cities, an MNPD DV firearms dispossession unit could remove illegal guns from high-risk offenders. Additional detectives are needed to meet these challenges.

****FY 26 Investment – DV Firearms Dispossession Investigator provided for MNPD**

2

Evidence-Based Case Preparation:

General sessions case preparation needs to involve a detailed review of MNPD case information and evidence, consultation with detectives, review with High-Risk Intervention Panel (HRIP), and ensuring all witnesses, EMS and forensic exam records, body-worn camera video, 911 call audio, jail calls, surveillance video, etc. have been subpoenaed and reviewed.

3

Decrease Time from Arrest to Court Disposition:

Time from arrest to disposition increased by almost 40 days from 2013–2023. While 2024 numbers show a promising decrease, the original assessment identified a concerning delay even in 2013. DV cases, especially high-risk cases, should move through the criminal justice system at a faster rate than the abuser can escalate their violence. During the wait for court, the abuser and others often engage in various forms of pressure on the victim, including harassment, stalking, threats, and further abuse.

****2025 – Existing GS Judge added to DV rotation to hear Orders of Protection**

4

Order of Protection (OP) Separation from Criminal Case:

Separate OPS from criminal cases so victims have the full order's protection even when the criminal case is delayed. OP protection is critical during the time between arrest and the criminal court date to ensure firearm dispossession and heavier penalties for violation. If OPs cannot be separated from accompanying criminal cases in General Sessions Court, move OPs to Circuit Court to fully separate civil and criminal cases.

5

Bond & GPS Compliance Dockets:

Compliance dockets during the period between arrest and court can help decrease the likelihood of escalating violence and increase compliance with bond conditions. Compliance with GPS monitoring, prohibited substance use, firearms possession, and contact with the victim could be evaluated on the bond initial appearance docket and continuously throughout the bond period, with bond violations heard immediately.

****FY 26 Investment – Two Bond Condition Compliance Officers provided for the Courts**

Innovative PROGRAMS

King County, WA created a regional firearms taskforce in 2018 with police, prosecutors, and advocates dedicated to firearms dispossession. This taskforce has resulted in a 3.3x increase in relinquishment of firearms.

Dekalb County, GA and St. Louis, MO have innovative DV civil courts that keep OPs separate from criminal cases and hold compliance dockets for OP court orders, including firearms dispossession.

Stage Four: Courts

2013 Recommendations Review

***Signifies that noteworthy progress is occurring to address the recommendation*



Firearms Compliance

When statutorily mandated, remove firearms from offenders and ensure compliance. Establish a protocol to govern the return of firearms following OP expiration and notification to victims.

Needed: OFS has created a comprehensive firearms dispossession protocol. Circuit court has implemented consistent dispossession compliance hearings while General Sessions (GS) court is inconsistent. Significant effort is needed for Courts, DAs, and MNPD to follow the firearms dispossession protocol and dispossess offenders.**



Victimless Prosecution

Prosecute cases even without the presence of victims. Use 911 recordings, jail call recordings and medical records to do so.

Needed: Evidenced-based or “victimless” prosecution is not consistently utilized and there are no requirements for obtaining additional evidence prior to case dismissal.



Courthouse Safety & Security

Increase and improve security, safety, and police presence in and around courthouses, including the parking garage. There should be verbal (by judges) and nonverbal (signage) instructing victims how to respond if threatened or intimidated while there.

Ongoing: Some courts are consistent in safety practices and trauma-informed courtrooms; however, ensuring consistency in all court practices is still needed, including physical distance between victims and offenders, staggered leave times, risk consideration in each case, and understanding, not penalizing, victims’ trauma responses.



Specialized Domestic Violence Professionals

Designate specialized judges and assistant district attorneys (ADAs) for all DV cases on jail and bond dockets. Assign offenders on probation to DV probation officers only.

Completed: Reestablishment of specialized professionals includes an unprecedented 4 DV GS Judges, the DA’s Office DV Division with 9 DV ADAs and 8 DV VWCs, and 3 DV probation officers as well as one magistrate who was assigned to hear OPs in circuit court.



Trauma-Informed Victim Waiting Area

Provide a separate and secure courthouse entrance and waiting area for victims that is outside the presence of offenders, enough space in courtrooms to ensure separation of victim and offender, as well as a separate meeting space should also be provided for victims to meet the District Attorney’s (DA’s) Office.

Completed: The Jean Crowe Advocacy Center opened in 2014, accomplishing this goal.



Consistent Advocate Presence

Provide a consistent presence of advocates on behalf of domestic violence victims for order of protection hearings, motions, and all criminal proceedings.

Completed: Advocates from the JCAC and Victim Witness Coordinators at the DA’s Office provide a consistent presence and support to those in court.

“The Jean Crowe Center is a true life saver. Being I did not have to sit in court (the same room) with my abuser was such a huge relief. I am not sure I could have done it without this center.”

~ JCAC Client Court Survey Response

“We recommend that the DA announce and follow a prosecutorial policy that certain crimes, such as firearm offenses, will be charged as the most severe that the law and facts allow, will not be plea bargained to a lesser offense, and will instead seek the maximum sentence permitted by law and for the subject to serve 100% of that sentence”

~ Grand Jury Report, Oct-Dec 2023

Successes for Nashville



Jean Crowe Advocacy Center

The JCAC opened in 2014 and created a space for victims to receive services while waiting safely away from their abuser in the courthouse, including court support, safety planning, and meeting with DAs.



Firearms Protocol Created

The Office of Family Safety created a DV Firearms Dispossession Protocol and has brought experts to Nashville to train judges, prosecutors, and police on dispossession.



Advocate Presence in Courts

JCAC, Legal Aid, and the DA's Office have advocates and victim witness coordinators in all court rooms to provide support and resources to victims during legal proceedings.



Specializations Re-established

The DA's Office and the Courts re-established domestic violence specialized judges and a unit within the DA's Office. The DA's Office also established the Prosecution Support Unit (PSU) to facilitate helping victims get to court.



Firearms & High-Risk Identification

The Office of Family Safety flags cases set for OP or criminal dockets for use of firearms and strangulation. OFS advocates also assess victims' risk, safety plan, and identify illegal firearms with victims.



Circuit Court Compliance Dockets

Circuit Court implemented DV Firearms Compliance Dockets in 2022 for all OP respondents to ensure compliance with state and federal dispossession laws.

Current Trends

Since 2013, Nashville's population has grown by 8% or 50,750 people & tourism has grown by 38% or 4.6 million people each year.

34,340

Number of Jean Crowe Advocacy Center (JCAC) visits from victims and witnesses since opening in 2014

Office of Family Safety

-26.5%

26.5% percentage change decrease in DV convictions in Criminal Court
2013-69.1%
2023- 50.8%*

*percentage point difference -18.3%

Metro Gov't Criminal Justice Planning Dept.

+235%

235% percentage change increase in strangulation cases that were dismissed or retired in Criminal Court
2013- 8%
2023- 26.8%*

*percentage point difference +18.8%

Metro Gov't Criminal Justice Planning Dept.

-51.5%

51.5% percentage change decrease in DV convictions in General Sessions Court
2013- 19.6% conviction rate
2023- 9.5% conviction rate*

*percentage point difference -10.1%

Metro Gov't Criminal Justice Planning Dept.

-36.6%

36.6% percentage change decrease in strangulation convictions in Criminal Court
2013- 72.4%
2023- 45.9%*

*percentage point difference -26.5%

Metro Gov't Criminal Justice Planning Dept.

57%

Percentage of order of protection and General Sessions criminal cases that were flagged for firearms or strangulation in 2023

Office of Family Safety

Stage Four: Court

2023 New & Ongoing Recommendations

1

Prioritize High-Risk Cases with Specialized Fast-Track Court:

Prioritize high-risk DV cases including strangulation, firearms, stalking, serious bodily harm, and sexual assault in the court process. Create a specialized high-risk docket, similar to other innovative cities, staffed by highly trained judges, prosecutors, court personnel, and probation officers who understand risk and reduce unnecessary and life-threatening delays.

2

DV Firearms Dispossession Protocol Implementation & Compliance Dockets:

Standardize all firearms dispossession court procedures, including advising defendant-respondent of requirements, asking under oath about possession, reviewing firearms affidavit in court, allowing presentation of firearms evidence by attorneys, setting all cases on compliance dockets, and requiring the third party as proof of dispossession. Create a way for the courts to identify defendants and respondents who are out of compliance. Currently, OFS does this for the courts.

3

Increase & Standardize Evidence-Based Prosecutions & Accountability:

Ensure prosecution does not rely on victim testimony, as this puts an unfair burden on the victim and places a target on them as the “reason” for prosecution. Utilize a checklist to ensure all evidence is considered before dismissing a case, including the MNPD DV supplement, body worn camera (BWC) footage, other video footage, 911 call, jail calls, other communication, witness testimony, medical evidence, forensic exam, and expert testimony, including DV experts. Prioritize DV offender accountability to reduce risk to victims, children, and the community. Discontinue practices of reducing serious charges and ensure appropriate abuse treatment programs are required.

4

Recurring & Required Training for All Specialized Court Personnel & Prosecutors:

Require specialized training on domestic violence, high-risk factors, trauma responses, and evidence-based prosecution strategies for courts and prosecutors to be specialized. Require extensive training and prior experience to practice in a specialized DV court, especially on a high-risk docket.

5

DV High-Risk Vertical Prosecution & IPV Prosecution Team:

Mirror MNPD IPC Branch with an IPV prosecution division that handles all domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, child and vulnerable adult abuse cases and consider following high-risk DV cases from General Sessions to Criminal Court whenever possible, a prosecution best practice known as “vertical prosecution.”

Innovative PROGRAMS

Cuyahoga Co. Ohio developed a High-Risk Court where offenders who perpetrate strangulation and firearms crimes are highly monitored by the court for compliance.

The Denver DA's Office created a DV Firearms Dispossession Investigator who focuses solely on dispossessing offenders after plea or OP, investigating possession by prohibited offenders and offering offenders help dispossessing.

Stage Five: Post-Court

2013 Recommendations Review



Specialized Protocols for Probation

The probation department should have domestic violence-specific protocols and specialized/trained domestic violence probation officers.

Ongoing: General Sessions (GS) Probation has DV-specific probation officers who use the DVSI to evaluate for high-risk probationers. Required and recurring training is still needed for these positions, and the DV-specific, high-risk probation officer model should be extended to the Criminal Court probation and parole.



Continued Victim Follow-Up by Probation

Probation officers should have a full history of abuse and risk assessment on the offenders they are supervising and ongoing contact with victims of the offenders.

Ongoing: GS Probation utilizes the DVSI risk assessment to evaluate offender risk level, though re-evaluation of the effectiveness of this tool is needed. Continuous risk evaluation, intensive monitoring, and behavior change assessment are still needed for high-risk probationers. Meetings are also held between OFS, Probation, and BIPs where each brings information on the probationer or the victim to increase accountability. This model should be developed for Criminal Court Probation and Parole.



Post Court Contact with Victims

Victims, especially in high-risk cases, should have a post-court point of contact assigned who will proactively contact victims. This point of contact should have the capacity to initiate a coordinated community response to a victim's safety concerns.

Ongoing: OFS contacts high-risk probationer victims post-court and can relay any issues to probation and/or the HRIP. OFS also reaches out to OP petitioners who do not appear for their OP or who had their OP dismissed to see if they would like to file for an appeal. Victims without probation status do not have standard follow up by any agency unless already working with an advocate.



Domestic Abuse Death Review Team (DADRT) In-Depth Review

Shift DADRT's focus from a cursory review of each DV death in Davidson County to an in-depth review of 1-2 DV deaths or near death cases per year.

Completed: DADRT does an in-depth review of 1-2 DV homicide or attempted homicides per year, reviewing histories of abuse, interactions with the court system and services, and conducting interviews with individuals who knew the victim and/or perpetrator.



DADRT Coordinator & Reports

Improve DADRT's case review methodology and staff DADRT with a coordinator to oversee the entire case review process, as well as the production and distribution of annual reports.

Completed: OFS assumed responsibility for DADRT coordination in 2016 and has worked to improve the case review process and collaboratively produce the annual report with the Team that details the in-depth case review(s), homicide trends, findings of gaps, and recommendations for improvement and innovation.

"I've worked with domestic violence homicide survivors throughout the court process for over 22 years. Having a team like DADRT is essential to turn tragedies into action for these families. Over the past ten years, this team and survivors of DV homicide have shifted policies and laws to ensure Nashville keeps improving to prevent domestic violence homicides."

**~Susan Tucker-Smith, Assistant Director, Victim Witness
Davidson County DA's Office**

"All programs he was to enroll in while on probation were a joke. Ex-offenders taught them it was a place to compare and out do others stories. It was a social event for hours while am taking care of my family. He was high even with drug testing and court. He made the rules nothing was enforced in a timely manner."

~Survivor Input Survey Response

Successes for Nashville



DADRT Review Team & Reports

DADRT has drastically changed case reviews since 2013, with in-depth case reviews that involve interviewing family, friends, and colleagues of victims and perpetrators.



High-Risk Probation & Team

General Sessions (GS) Probation uses the DVSI Risk Tool and LAP and refers high-risk probationers' victims to OFS. Meetings are also held between GS Probation, OFS, and Batterer's Intervention Programs.



Shelter & Housing for DV Victims, their Children, & their Pets

The YWCA, Morning Star AGAPE, and the Mary Parrish Center, Nashville's DV-specific housing providers, have each expanded their shelter or housing since 2013, but more capacity is needed to meet demand and Nashville's population growth. In 2021, the YWCA opened Abbie's Safe Home to house pets of DV victims coming to shelter.



Increased DV Education & Support Groups for DV Survivors

In 2017, OFS created the RISE Program to provide educational groups for incarcerated women on healthy relationships, domestic violence, sexual assault, and sex trafficking. Additionally, FIP & OFS provide multiple support groups for survivors.



Survivor's First Program

The DA's Office & YWCA created the Survivor's First Program in 2024. This program diverts victims who are charged with crimes away from the criminal justice system and provides supportive services.



Case Management

OFS created a case management program in 2022 that helps victims with long-term needs like housing, court and legal services, resource connection, and goal setting and achievement.

Current Trends

Since 2013, Nashville's population has grown by 8% or 50,750 people & tourism has grown by 38% or 4.6 million people each year.



79%

Percentage of housing requests unable to be met by Nashville transitional housing and permanent housing providers

The Mary Parrish Center



87

Number of High-Risk Probation Offenders in 2023

Office of Family Safety



507

423 Unmet Victim Shelter Needs from AGAPE
84 Unmet Victim Shelter Needs from YWCA in 2023

AGAPE and YWCA



10

In-depth case reviews of DV homicides completed by the Domestic Abuse Death Review Team (DADRT) since 2016

Office of Family Safety



80–100

Range of waitlist for counseling services between 2011–2023 for the Sexual Assault Center (SAC)

Sexual Assault Center



10,220

OFS Case management victim visits in the first two years of the program being fully-staffed (2022–2023)

Office of Family Safety

Stage Five: Post-Court

2023 New & Ongoing Recommendations

***Signifies that noteworthy progress is occurring to address the recommendation*

1

Enhance Probationary Oversight of High-Risk Offenders:

Continue to enhance monitoring for offenders who commit high-risk crimes or who screen in as high-risk through the LAP or high-risk probation tool. This includes in-person check-ins, increased frequency of check-ins, increased engagement with any BIP or mental health providers to gauge progress, ongoing risk assessment, and review with OFS high-risk probation liaison and service providers. Evaluate risk tool and consider the updated DVSI-R or another tool to screen risk levels such as BIRAM, DVRNA, or SARA-V3.

2

Increase Multidisciplinary High-Risk Probation Review:

Increase frequency and depth of high-risk probationer review between probation, BIPs, and OFS. Require high-risk probation supervision to include frequent in-person compliance checks, behavioral change evaluation, continuous risk assessment, new arrest monitoring, and consideration of information provided by the victim.

3

Expand High-Risk Probation to Criminal Court:

Currently, only General Sessions probation participates in evaluating risk for DV probationers and reviewing these cases with OFS and BIP providers. Expanding this program to Criminal Court probation and parole will expand this increased accountability to DV offenders convicted of felonies.

4

Enhance Batterer's Intervention Programs (BIPs):

Require certified BIPs to evaluate behavior change through pre- and post-evaluations to measure their program's impact. BIPs should receive probation risk evaluations, a description of the offense, and be required to evaluate ACEs and attitudes towards violence and women. BIPs should be administered in-person by qualified practitioners with mental health backgrounds and without domestic violence criminal backgrounds.

5

Recurring & Required Training for Probation & BIPs:

Specialized training on domestic violence, high-risk factors, trauma and victim understanding, ACEs, and misogyny/sexism should be required in order to supervise high-risk probationers or provide BIPs.

6

Reestablish & Expand Funding of Long-Term Victim Services:

With the loss of federal ARPA funds, the federal VOCA fund decrease, and insecure federal funding in 2025, service providers are attempting to meet increased needs with less funding. The state, city, and foundations should increase funding for service providers, safe housing solutions, and emergency funds for court parking, transportation, and emergency hotel stays lost from funding reductions. In a recent DV homicide, the victim reached out for shelter and there was no space. She was killed a few weeks later.

****FY 26 Investment – State and Metro Funds provided for Victim Services**

Innovative PROGRAMS

Colorado DV Probation delineates probationers based on risk evaluation into three risk levels of low, moderate, and high level intensity of treatment defined by frequency of contact and content of treatment.

Family Peace Initiative is an innovative BIP program out of Kansas that focuses on root causes of violence and on behavior change in participants using abuse in their relationships.

OTHER FORMS OF IPV

SUCCESSES & RECOMMENDATIONS



Because of the multidisciplinary approach to sexual assault amongst law enforcement, SANEs, the DA's Office, city officials, and victim advocates, Nashville has seen significant movement in the sexual violence field over the last several years. Just 6 years ago, there was only one place to receive a medical-legal rape exam in Davidson County, and care was only available to women. Now, there are multiple locations, anyone can receive an exam, and over 30 Nashville bars participate in Safe Bar. Continuing to collaboratively and effectively respond to sexual violence will truly make Nashville a safer city for all.

~Rachel Freeman, SAC President & CEO

2013 Assessment Report



Sexual Assault Updates

Successes



SAFE Clinic Established

The Sexual Assault Center (SAC) created the SAFE Clinic in 2018 for victims of sexual assault to receive a forensic exam and supportive services at a non-hospital location.



Sexual Assault Forensic Exams

Sexual assault forensic exam provision expanded from Nashville General Hospital as the only location to the creation of a traveling team to provide exams at 3 additional hospital locations and the SAFE Clinic. Vanderbilt also provides SANE and strangulation exams.



New Sexual Assault Prosecutor

Following the 2021 IPV Summit, the DA's Office created a specialized sexual assault prosecutor to ensure centralized sexual assault prosecution.



Safe Bars & Tracks

SAC created an outreach program with Nashville's bars and the music industry to train their staff on potential sexual assault interventions.



Child Sexual Assault Forensic Exams

Our Kids provides 24/7 medical evaluations and counseling for children who have experienced sexual assault and abuse.

Trends

538

Number of rape cases (including forcible rape, forcible sodomy, & sexual assault with an object) reported to police in Nashville in 2023

Metro Nashville Police Department

+56.4%

Increase in Criminal Court SA cases filed from 2013–2023
*78 to 122 cases filed

-24.3%

24.3% percentage change decrease in Criminal Court SA convictions from 2013 (75.4%) to 2023 (57.1%)*

*Percentage point difference of -18.3%

Metro Gov't Criminal Justice Planning Dept.

2023 Nashville SA Forensic Exams:

150 Our Kids

138 Vanderbilt

134 Nashville General

159 SAC Safe Clinic (**70%** report to police)

Sexual Assault Recommendations

1

Expand Sexual Assault Prosecution Team & IPV Prosecution Team:

The sexual assault prosecutor has significantly increased filings in Criminal Court for these cases; however, the ability to work all sexual assault and all sex trafficking cases is not possible due to the number of these crimes. Consider expanding the sexual assault prosecution team to at least two to three prosecutors and one VWC. They could also work collaboratively with all interpersonal violence (DV, SA, HT, CA, VAA) prosecutors in an IPV division due to the intersections of these crimes (p.20, Recommendation #5).

2

Increased MNPD Special Victims Division Staff:

Continue to expand the Special Victims Division investigative staff to meet demand of the increased reports of sexual assault and human trafficking in Nashville.

3

Decrease Silos between Sexual Assault & other Crimes:

Continue collaboration with investigation and prosecution of sexual assaults and decrease silos between interpersonal violence teams when sexual assault is perpetrated on intimate partners, family members, vulnerable adults, or have other overlapping abuse. Ensure that investigation and prosecution of sexual assaults with intersecting abuse involve information sharing and minimize overlapping work.

4

Continued Increase of Evidence Based Investigation & Prosecution:

Expand on sexual assault prosecutor and investigators' shift towards evidence-based prosecution by decreasing reliance on forensic evidence when perpetrator is known to victim and increasing use of innovative methods of sexual assault investigation such as BWC footage, video evidence, recordings, trauma-informed interviewing, medical expert, and subject-matter expert testimony.

5

Recurring & Required Training for Sexual Assault Practitioners:

Specialized training on sexual assault, risk, impact of trauma, strangulation and sexual assault, substance-facilitated sexual assault, male and LGBTQ victims, and intersections with other abuse types should be required and recurring for all practitioners.

6

Expand SART Collaboration, SANE Response, & Supportive Services:

Continue to expand the collaborative work of the Davidson County SART and intersecting abuse review teams like HRIP, CPIT, and VAPIT. Continue to expand Nashville's sexual assault forensic exam response with additional locations. Re-establish funding lost from ARPA for Sexual Assault Center (SAC) therapists to meet therapy needs.

"He was very educated in sex crimes as he was a detective over sex crimes. He allowed me time to tell him my story before jumping into recording me or making a move I was uncomfortable with. He educated me on process and what to expect. He saw the case through. He called often to check in on me to see if he could assist."

~Sexual Assault Survey Participant

"For things to be done faster, in my case, they didn't go collect evidence or speak to witnesses on the same day of the attack."

~Sexual Assault Survey Participant

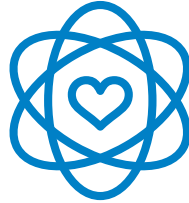
Child Abuse Updates

Successes



Child Protective Investigative Team (CPIT)

CPIT meets weekly to review severe child abuse cases of sexual or physical abuse. CPIT Includes NCA, the DA's Office, MNPD, DCS, and Our Kids and is housed at the FSC.



MNPD Handle with Care

MNPD created the Handle with Care (HWC) program in 2017 with MNPS to alert teachers when MNPD has responded to the child's home for an incident and the child needs to be "handled with care."



DV-DCS Liaisons

A partnership between DCS and OFS created two positions to work across both agencies to support families and non-offending parents who are experiencing domestic violence.



Child Abuse Prosecutor Retention

The DA's Office ended a two-year limit on child abuse prosecutors remaining in the unit. Allowing child abuse prosecutors to work on these cases beyond two years helps with knowledge retention in prosecuting complex child abuse crimes.



Child Physical Assault Forensic Exams

The Vanderbilt CARE Team provides forensic exams for child victims of physical assault.



Child Forensic Interviews

Nashville Children's Alliance (NCA) has expanded its forensic interview and therapy programs for children experiencing severe physical and sexual abuse. A therapist is always available for a client in crisis and ensures they are safe to leave the center after services. NCA is also entirely co-located at the FSC.

Trends

17,250

Child abuse reports made to DCS in Davidson County in 2023

TN Dept. of Children's Services

1,853

Number of CPIT cases reviewed in 2023

Nashville Children's Alliance (NCA)

-49.2%

49.2% decrease in Criminal Court child abuse (CA) cases filed from 2013-2023
*185 to 94 cases

-26.8%

26.8% percentage change decrease in Criminal Court CA convictions from 2013 (65.3%) to 2023 (47.8%)*
*Percentage point difference of -17.5%

Metro Gov't Criminal Justice Planning Dept.

Child Abuse Recommendations

1

Increased MNPD Youth Services Division Staff & DCS Staff:

Continue to expand the Youth Services Division investigative staff to meet demand of the increased reports of child physical and sexual abuse and image exploitation in Nashville. Youth Services recently reported a 32% increase in child sexual abuse reports. Stabilize DCS staffing and ensure appropriate caseloads and support are available for caseworkers.

2

Continued Increase of Evidence-Based Investigation & Prosecution:

Expand on shifts towards evidence-based investigation and prosecution by increasing use of innovative methods of child abuse investigation such as BWC footage, video evidence, recordings, trauma-informed interviewing, medical expert, and subject-matter expert testimony. Ensure that forensic interviews are routinely conducted by NCA for cases of physical and sexual abuse as well as exploitation.

3

Decrease Silos between Child Abuse & other Crimes

Continue collaboration and decrease silos between interpersonal violence teams when child abuse overlaps with other forms of abuse, such as domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. Ensure that investigation and prosecution of child abuse with intersecting abuse involve information sharing and minimize overlapping work. This could also include collaborative work through an IPV prosecution division (p.20, #5).

4

Recurring & Required Training for Child Abuse Practitioners:

Specialized training on child abuse, risk, impact of trauma, trauma-informed interviewing, familial trafficking, pediatric strangulation, and intersections with other abuse types should be required and recurring for all practitioners. This includes police, courts, prosecutors, DCS, and service providers as well as Juvenile Court magistrates hearing custody cases.

5

Pediatric Strangulation Interview Questions & Exams:

Add questions and/or evaluation for strangulation within DCS intake, forensic interviews, and forensic exams given new data on strangulation frequency perpetrated against children living in households experiencing domestic violence and young people engaging in strangulation during sexual activity.

6

Expand CPIT Collaboration & Increase Supportive Services:

Continue to expand the collaborative work of the Davidson County CPIT and intersecting abuse review teams like HRIP and SART. Re-establish funding lost from ARPA for Nashville Children's Alliance (NCA) therapists to meet therapy needs.

"Child crimes are reported at the Our Kids facility at the rate of 800-900 cases per year. All crimes are important, but these seem to not be given a priority, unless they are in certain communities. All our communities deserve to have these cases addressed in a swift manner. This is the future of our city. Again, there should be no plea deal agreements on these types of cases."

~Grand Jury Report, Jan-March 2023

Innovative PROGRAMS

Wisconsin Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) added questions on strangulation during forensic interviews and found 1 in 4 children experienced a recent strangulation and were 2.3x more likely to be strangled when someone else in the home had been.

Vulnerable Adult Updates

Successes



Vulnerable Adult Protective Investigation Team (VAPIT) Created

In 2017, VAPIT was created to review potential cases of elder or vulnerable adult neglect, abuse, or exploitation. The DA's Office leads this team with APS and MNPd's DV Division's VAPIT Unit.



New VAPIT Prosecutor

The DA's Office established a prosecutor specifically for vulnerable adult cases who also leads monthly VAPIT meetings.



Collaborative Response to Older & Vulnerable Adult Abuse (CREVAA)

This program was created to help provide short-term case management and financial assistance to vulnerable adult victims of crime.



Collaborative Response to End Self-Neglect in Tennessee (CREST)

This program provides short-term case management and financial assistance in self-neglect cases to assist victims of DV or individuals who are self-neglecting in part due to the abuse they suffered but no longer qualify for CREVAA.

Trends

1,973

Vulnerable adult abuse allegations made to APS in Davidson County in 2023

TN Dept. of Adult Protective Services

1,613

Number of VAPIT cases reviewed in 2023

VAPIT

+167%

Increase in VAA Criminal Court cases filed 2013-2023 (6 to 16 cases)

-35.8%

35.8% percentage change decrease in Criminal Court VAA convictions from 2013 (60%) to 2023 (38.5%)

*percentage point difference 21.5%

Metro Gov't Criminal Justice Planning Dept.

Vulnerable Adult Abuse Recommendations

***Signifies that noteworthy progress is occurring to address the recommendation*

1

Expand Vulnerable Adult Prosecution Team & IPV Prosecution Team:

The vulnerable adult abuse prosecutor has increased filings in Criminal Court for these cases; however, the ability for one prosecutor to staff all vulnerable adult cases is limited due to the number of cases. Consider expanding the vulnerable adult abuse prosecution team to at least two prosecutors. They could also work collaboratively with all interpersonal violence (DV, SA, HT, CA, VAA) prosecutors in an IPV prosecution division due to the intersections of these crimes (p.20, recommendation #5).

2

Increased MNPd VAPIT Staff & APS Staff:

Continue to expand the MNPd DV Division VAPIT Unit investigative staff to meet demand of vulnerable adult abuse cases in Nashville. Increase APS staffing and ensure appropriate caseloads and support are available for caseworkers.**

3

Continued Increase of Evidence-Based Investigation & Prosecution:

Expand on investigative and prosecutorial shifts towards evidence-based investigation and prosecution by increasing use of innovative methods of vulnerable adult abuse investigation such as BWC footage, recordings, trauma-informed interviewing, medical expert, and subject-matter expert testimony.

4

Decrease Silos between Vulnerable Adult Abuse & other Crimes:

Continue collaboration with investigation and prosecution of vulnerable adult abuse (VAA) and decrease silos between interpersonal violence teams when VAA is perpetrated on intimate partners, family members, or have other overlapping abuse such as sexual assault and exploitation. Ensure that investigation and prosecution of VAA with intersecting abuse involve information sharing and minimize overlapping work.

5

Recurring & Required Training for Adult Abuse Practitioners:

Specialized training on vulnerable adult abuse, risk, impact of trauma, trauma-informed interviewing, and intersections with other abuse types should be required and recurring for all practitioners. This includes police, courts, prosecutors, APS, and service providers. Additionally, medical examiners and death investigators should receive training on vulnerable adult abuse.

6

Increase Services, especially Housing, for Vulnerable Adults:

There is currently no specialized service provider in Nashville focusing on vulnerable adult abuse. While Fifty Forward used to have a program called "Victory over Crime" for this population, they had to close their program due to funding issues. Increased funding is also needed for specialized emergency and sustainable housing options for this population as well as increased standards for licensing caregivers for vulnerable adults.

"How we care for our most vulnerable populations helps to define us as a police department and as a society. I am so thankful to know officers, detectives, counselors, and community partners whose work comes not from obligation, but from a deep and genuine caring for others."
-MNPd Interpersonal Crimes Branch Inspector Rita Brockmann Baker

Innovative PROGRAMS

Samaritan Place provides shelter and support for senior citizens and is run by Catholic Charities East Tennessee. Services include emergency, transitional, and permanent housing services as well as case management.

Human Trafficking Updates

Successes



HT Service Providers

Multiple organizations provide services to human trafficking (HT) victims, including Thistle Farms, AncoraTN, SAC, EPIK Girl, Advocating Opportunity, and OFS, while non-profits working on intersecting issues also provide support for these victims.



Athena's Court

This treatment court, previously named Cherished Hearts, began in 2016 for justice-involved survivors of sex trafficking. The court includes a judge, prosecutor, public defender, probation officer, treatment providers, and OFS.



HT Prosecutor

The DA's Office had a full-time prosecutor working on human trafficking until 2022. More recently, the prosecutor has been divided between sexual assault cases and sex trafficking cases, so half a prosecutor is devoted to these cases.



TBI Investigations

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation has enhanced their work on HT over the last decade, increasing investigations and operations into sex trafficking activity throughout the state and in Nashville.



HT Trainings & Awareness

Training on human trafficking has expanded over the past decade to more appropriately reflect the nature of human trafficking and how it often intersects with child abuse, domestic violence, and labor exploitation. Laws have also been passed to require HT training in schools & most recently, for tattoo artists.

Trends

35

Reports of Human Trafficking to MNPD in 2023

Metro Nashville Police Department

383 or 95%

Women who were unable to receive long-term residential services at Thistle Farms due to capacity in 2023.

Thistle Farms

+66.7%

Increase in human trafficking cases filed in Criminal Court 2013-2023 (3 to 5 cases).

+8

Increase in convictions in Criminal Court HT cases from 2013-2023

*0 to 8 guilty defendants

Metro Gov't Criminal Justice Planning Dept.

Human Trafficking Recommendations

1

Reinstate Human Trafficking (HT) Prosecutor & IPV Prosecution Team:

Currently, there is only one sexual assault prosecutor for Davidson County, and this individual is also responsible for all human trafficking (HT) prosecutions. Previously, there was a single dedicated HT prosecutor, allowing specialized attention to and prosecution of these cases. Consider reinstating the HT-specific prosecutor. They could also work collaboratively with all interpersonal violence (DV, SA, HT, CA, VAA) prosecutors in an IPV division due to the intersecting natures of these crimes (p.20, #5).

2

Increased MNPd Special Victims Division HT Specialization:

In lieu of the MNPd human trafficking unit that was dissolved in 2023, ensure that detectives within the Special Victims Division are given specialization to work both sex and labor trafficking cases. Assess whether a specialized unit within SVD needs to reform after concentrated effort on investigating human trafficking cases stabilizes.

3

Decrease Silos between Human Trafficking & other Crimes:

Decrease silos between interpersonal violence teams when HT is perpetrated on intimate partners, family members, vulnerable adults, or have other overlapping abuse. Ensure that investigation and prosecution of HT with intersecting abuse involve information sharing and minimize overlapping work.

4

Recurring & Required Training for IPV Practitioners on HT:

Specialized training on both sex and labor trafficking, the intersections of trafficking with other forms of abuse such as intimate partner and familial trafficking, the impact of trauma, and trauma-informed interviewing should be required and recurring for all practitioners. This includes police, courts, prosecutors, DCS, and service providers, as well as judges and magistrates hearing these cases.

5

Expand Athena's Court to Juvenile Court:

Consider best practices in human trafficking diversion courts and programs for juveniles through various national models. Similar to Nashville's adult court, Athena's Court, justice-involved juveniles could receive specialized support and deferred sentencing.

6

Expand Collaboration, Fund Supportive Services, & Expand HT Laws:

Increase collaborative review of HT cases that currently takes place occasionally through HRIP and CPIT when cases are identified. Increase identification and wraparound response for runaway youth at risk of HT. Ensure that funding lost through ARPA and VOCA funds is reinstated for HT providers, especially for stable housing and recovery programs. Expand HT laws to support survivors, especially with expungement support.

"Over the past decade, we've seen important strides in how Nashville approaches human trafficking, with a stronger focus on victim-centered responses. Expanded trainings for and open dialogue with law enforcement have deepened understanding of how trafficking intersects with other forms of interpersonal violence, helping to change the landscape of how our systems identify, support, and advocate for survivors."

- Tasha Kennard, CEO of Thistle Farms

Innovative PROGRAMS

Throughout the U.S., courts have created diversion programs for justice-involved youth at risk of or identified as experiencing human trafficking. Some of these programs include the REST Court in Denver, CO; VOICES court in Jefferson County Alabama; and RISE Initiative in New Orleans.

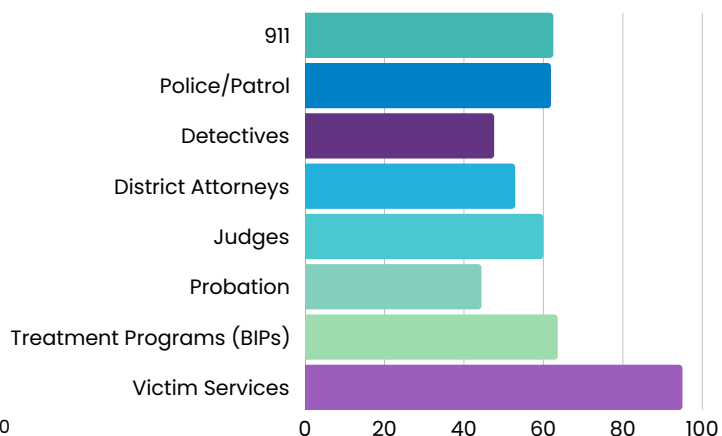
Survivor Voices

Data below is compiled from the JCAC Client Court Surveys, a Sexual Assault Survivor Survey, and a Survivor Input Survey. All surveys measured survivors' experiences with Nashville's response to IPV.

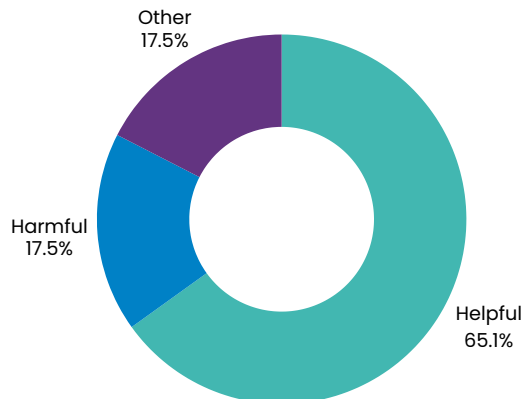
Top Barriers to Services



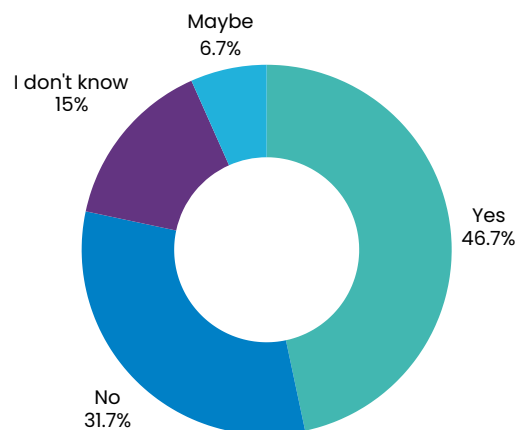
Overall Positive Rating of Services or Experience



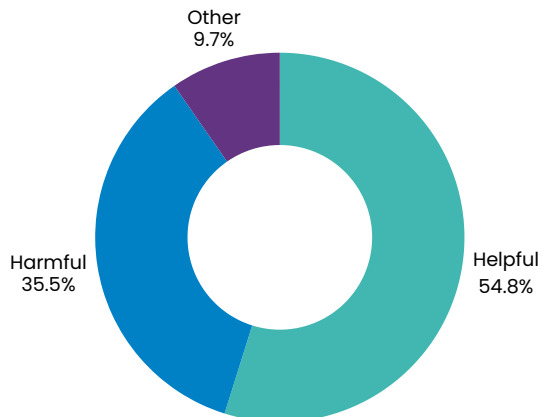
Overall GS Criminal Court Experience Was



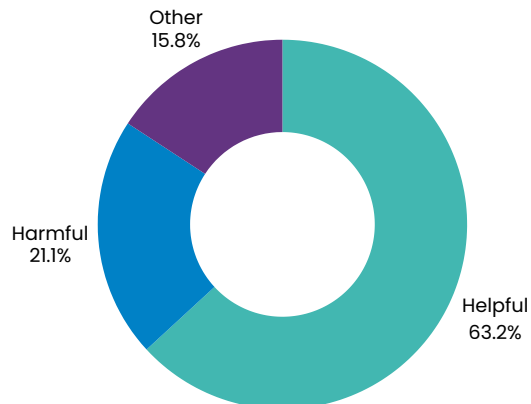
Would You Go Through GS Criminal Court Experience Again?



Overall GS OP Experience Was



Overall Circuit Court OP Experience Was



Survivor Voices

The quotes below are compiled from the JCAC Client Court Surveys, a Sexual Assault Survivor Survey, a Survivor Input Survey, and partner surveys for their clients. These surveys measured survivors' experiences with Nashville's current response to IPV.

Successes

"My response from the Nashville detective, police, and SAC have been so, so helpful and kind. I wouldn't change anything about that."

~Sexual Assault Survey Response

"I was being chased and the operator made me feel safe as well as helped me be aware of surroundings."

~Survivor Input Survey Response

The officers that I spoke with were very understanding and helpful throughout the whole process."

~Survivor Input Survey Response

"Every court should have a location like this. I can't speak highly enough about them. The resources they offer are incredible. From the complimentary food, to toys, privacy to discuss your case, complimentary diapers and feminine products, books, friendly and helpful staff, there isn't a single thing they haven't thought of. It makes a stressful situation as comfortable as possible. It makes me emotional to think about how incredibly generous a place like this is. We need more exactly like it."

~JCAC Court Client Survey Response

"Everyone from the DA to the court officers, they all made me feel safe, I appreciate the compassion and understanding from each and everyone of them, it truly made a difference, I was absolutely terrified."

~Survivor Input Survey Response

"The judge was excellent, aware, and fair! She listened with open ears and asked questions when clarification was needed. She made me feel safe and made me feel like I was heard."

~JCAC Court Client Survey Response

"I love how friendly, welcoming, and supportive the child center is. Because of places like this, our children can become more comfortable with themselves and become mentally healthy."

~NCA Client Caregiver

"When we came to Our Kids today with our nine-year-old daughter, it was the worst day of our lives. We were in the midst of our devastation. Dealing with child sexual abuse is like dealing with the unimaginable. After spending three hours with clinical staff and being reassured that our daughter's body is healthy, I know we are going to be alright. You people have given us light. Thank you, Our Kids."

~Our Kids Client Caregiver

Challenges

"This case took a year and a half to finally get to a contingent conviction. At one point, they tried to retire it. The first couple of times I was told to be at court, I showed up and was eventually told I shouldn't be there. They almost dismissed the order of protection case due to a clerical error. By the end, I was happy for it to finally be resolved, even though this will be wiped off his record in a year if he complies with everything. Seems like victims really have to fight for their rights or just give up."

~JCAC Court Client Survey Response

"They (advocates) heard my statements and helped me get a fair hearing in court. I felt like they didn't really prepare me for court, and I was standing alone in the courtroom with no representation, so I was really nervous and stumbled to find my voice to talk to the judge."

~Survivor Input Survey Response

"It took them an hour and a half to arrive at an aggressive strangulation domestic. That should not have taken that long, considering the station is only 5 minutes down the road."

~Survivor Input Survey Response

"The DA did not support, prepare, or represent me in any way that was helpful or eliciting a resolution. Not only was I not heard, I was victim-blamed and everything was alleged instead of the DA or court being prepared or ready with prior meetings or factual evidence on my side as the VICTIM. THIS IS WHY VICTIMS DON'T COME FORWARD."

~JCAC Court Client Survey Response

I felt very disrespected and unheard. Very ignored. Didn't even get an opportunity of truly explaining why I needed the order of protection or present the evidence I had. I got cut off while speaking, and he gave my assailant more opportunities to speak. I was told the previous violent incidents that happened to me by the assailant were too old to even consider. Which to me as a victim was a slap in the face. After this, I truly have lost faith in the courts again. And the way this case was handled. No compassion given whatsoever."

~Survivor Input Survey Response

Interpersonal Violence Resources

Nashville has multiple interpersonal violence service providers and first responders. Included below are some of the organizations and agencies dedicated to this work. Click on the logo to link to each agency if viewing report electronically.

Domestic Violence

Sexual Assault



Child Abuse



Human Trafficking

Vulnerable Adult Abuse



THISTLE FARMS



