



Metro Office *of* Family Safety

*Metropolitan Government of Nashville
& Davidson County*

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

METRO OFFICE OF FAMILY SAFETY

The mission of the Metropolitan Nashville-Davidson County Office of Family Safety is to improve victim safety and offender accountability through the coordination of services provided to domestic violence and sexual assault victims by Metropolitan Government, its Family Justice Centers, and nonprofit partners.

Ordinance number BL2015-1125 established the Office of Family Safety as a department of the Metropolitan Government on June 17, 2015.

The Office of Family Safety (OFS) is deeply appreciative of the widespread support we receive from the Mayor, the Metro Council, our Advisory Committee members, and all of our partners. This support is what allows us to continue in our work, expand our reach, and improve our services.

The Office of Family Safety is proud to introduce our new logo - one that better represents the services we provide and partnerships we have. The colors in this logo are the awareness colors for domestic violence (purple), sexual assault (teal), and child abuse (blue). The mountain and sun represent our department's critical role in supporting and lifting up the work of the many talented professional partners we work with and the survivors we serve. This logo (shown below) will be utilized as the umbrella logo for the new Family Safety Center.



2017 has been a year of tremendous growth for the Office of Family Safety in terms of programming and staff. In partnership with the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department (MNPd), OFS applied for and was awarded a VOCA grant by Tennessee's Office of Criminal Justice Planning. This grant enabled OFS to hire eleven (11) additional employees to increase victim advocacy, support the identification and response to high risk cases, and lead new areas of programming. In addition, the MNPd's Domestic Violence Division Counseling Unit was able to hire three (3) new employees under this grant.

Nashville's upcoming community-based Family Safety Center at 610 Murfreesboro Road is scheduled for completion in January 2019. We are often asked what will happen to our court-based Center, the Jean Crowe Advocacy Center (JCAC), when this new Center opens. The answer is that services for victims will get stronger. The JCAC will remain in the courthouse, serving victims who are engaged with our city's law enforcement and judicial systems. The location of the new community based Family Safety Center is a more convenient location and will better reach victims who may be reluctant to engage law enforcement and the courts. These victims are often at increased risk of homicide due to their isolation and lack of outreach to supportive services.

The work of the Office of Family Safety falls into four categories: 1) direct client services provided at the JCAC and soon to be provided at the new Family Safety Center; 2) high risk programming; 3) training and outreach; and 4) emerging programs. This report will summarize each of these four areas.



The living room area at the Jean Crowe Advocacy Center

JEAN CROWE ADVOCACY CENTER

The Jean Crowe Advocacy Center (JCAC) is the only fully **court-based** Family Justice Center in the country. The JCAC increases the safety of domestic and sexual violence victims by creating a supportive environment for victims to receive services while waiting for court. At the JCAC, highly trained advocates assist victims with safety planning, danger assessment, domestic violence education, referrals/resources, court accompaniment, and orders of protection in a safe location apart from the offender. The JCAC is open Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. **Phone:** 615-862-4767 **Email:** jeancroweadvocacycenter@nashville.gov

In the past year, JCAC assisted **8,144** people:

- **5,635** Victims (470 a month)
- **1,345** Supportive Family and Friends (112 per month)
- **627** Witnesses (52 per month)
- **537** Children (45 per month)

In the past year, JCAC provided the following services:

- **2,622** Ex Parte Order of Protection assistance (219 per month)
- **3,412** Safety planning assistance (284 per month)
- **1,325** Danger assessments (110 per month)
- **2,255** Follow-up call contact (180 per month)
- **1,413** Needs assessment and resource connection (118 per month)
- **1,820** Court escorts (152 per month)
- **2,196** Client meetings with partners agencies (183 per month)

"I am so thankful for everyone here. This is obviously the single worst event that's happened in my life which is dragging out through court. I honestly don't know what I would have done without the JCAC. I may not have had the courage to leave when I did. Thank you." - JCAC Client

JCAC MAKES A DIFFERENCE

In 2017, **83%** of subpoenaed victims who came to court received services from JCAC.

- Victims feelings of being **supported increased by 61%**
- Victims feelings of being **knowledgeable increased by 48%**
- Victims feelings of being **fearful decreased by 32%**
- Victims feelings of being **nervous decreased by 54%**
- Since opening the JCAC, there has been a **62% increase** in domestic violence victims **attending court** for the criminal case against their offender.



JCAC staff step outside to enjoy the total eclipse

"Everyone is so calm and friendly and gives you a feeling of comfort and safety. All of the resources they happily made available helps the feeling of hopelessness, or feeling I didn't deserve it." - JCAC Client

"I loved how calm, supportive, kind, soothing everyone is. The calming atmosphere is nice and helps to relax you." - JCAC Client

"I would like to thank the advocates who helped me today. Now I know I'm not alone. I feel more empowered to have a stable, safe, happy life with my children. Thank you very much." - JCAC Client

Order of Protection Volunteer Attorney Program

Since August 2015, Metro's Office of Family Safety and Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlandands have partnered to improve access to free civil legal representation to high risk victims of domestic violence. Through this Civil Legal Advocacy program, the JCAC refers high risk victims to Legal Aid Society to partner these victims with a volunteer attorney from Waller Lansden Dortch & Davis, LLP. In order to be a part of the program, attorneys must go through an extensive training program. Since the program's inception, the number of Order of Protection Petitioners with an attorney has risen from 5 to 18 percent.

"Without an attorney present, it can be intimidating for a survivor to testify against her or his abuser in court. We have more than 30 volunteer attorneys committed to volunteering their time to work with victims of domestic violence."
- DarKenya Waller, Legal Aid Society
Executive Director



A rendering of the front of the new Family Safety Center

NEW FAMILY SAFETY CENTER

Nashville's **community-based** Family Safety Center, located at the intersection of Murfreesboro Road and Foster Avenue, is scheduled to be completed in January 2019.

Family Safety Centers are considered a best practice in the field of domestic violence intervention and prevention services. Documented and published outcomes have included: reduced homicides, increased victim safety, increased autonomy and empowerment for victims; reduced fear and anxiety for victims and their children; reduced recantation and minimization by victims when wrapped in services and support, increased prosecution of offenders, and dramatically increased community support for services to victims and their children.

The following partners will be co-located with the Office of Family Safety in this building: three divisions of the Metro-Nashville Police Department that work with domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse victims; two divisions of the District Attorney's Office that handle domestic violence and child sexual/physical abuse cases; the Nashville Children's Alliance; the Department of Children's Services; and the Sexual Assault Center. Expected nonprofit drop-in partners include Legal Aid Society, Morning Star Sanctuary, The Mary Parrish Center, YWCA, Adult Protective Services, Catholic Charities, FiftyForward, Tennessee Coalition to End Domestic & Sexual Violence, and The Family Center.

Preparing for the Center's opening involves a lot more than planning the ribbon cutting ceremony. When this facility opens, it will be the first time these professional partners will be working together under one roof. In addition, it will be a new location for victims to receive scheduled and drop-in services. Preparing for opening requires planning around work culture, policies, procedures, standardized trainings, client flow, information sharing, confidentiality, and service provision. In order to best prepare, the Office of Family Safety leads eight strategic planning committees.

FSC Strategic Planning Committees:

- *Survivor Perspectives Committee:* Hosted by the Mary Parrish Center, this survivor focus group informs and approves all the decisions that the strategic planning teams make in terms of how the center will function. It was this team that made the final (unanimous) vote to call the building the FAMILY SAFETY CENTER.
- *Victim Centered Service Delivery Committee:* This team is focused on the client experience in the Center – from developing welcome scripts for front desk and security staff, to determining the process for how a client enters and moves through the building as a walk-in or established client.
- *High Risk Committee:* This team is focused on how high risk clients will be served in the center, including the creation of fast-tracking procedures for clients in imminent danger, risk assessment and screening tools, and determining how threats to the building will be managed.
- *Children's Committee:* This team is creating policies and practices for the play pyramid and working to develop a plan for volunteer and intern recruitment that will be focused on services for children.
- *Operations Committee:* This team is developing the Center's operations manual as well as policies and procedures for staff and clients.
- *Communications and Outreach Committee:* This team is developing the Center's website, print materials, and outreach strategies.
- *IT/Data Committee:* This team is focused on identifying or creating a shared intake database for all Family Safety Center partners.
- *Standing Committee:* This team is working on the Center's common mission, vision and values and makes final decisions on recommendations of the remaining strategic planning teams.



OFS employees tour the new FSC together

For more information on the new Family Safety Center, email FSCINFO@jjs.nashville.org.



Nashville's annual "Meet Us At The Bridge" Ceremony honors those who have lost their lives to domestic violence.

HIGH RISK PROGRAMS

It is Nashville's goal for there to be no domestic violence homicides. Our high risk programs are all rooted in this goal. Our work in this area grew significantly in 2017 and the Office of Family Safety (OFS) and its partner agencies have worked tirelessly to improve the response to high risk domestic violence cases.

Domestic Abuse Death Review Team (DADRT)

- OFS manages DADRT, which is a collaborative team that meets monthly to analyze domestic violence homicide trends.
- In 2017, DADRT released its 2016 Annual Report which reviewed a strangulation homicide between intimate partners. Strangulation is a deadly use of force that increases a person's risk of being killed **more than 7x**.
- The 2016 DADRT Report is available here:
<https://www.nashville.gov/Office-of-Family-Safety/Reports.aspx>
- In 2017, there were **11 domestic violence murders** and the majority of these were committed **with a firearm**.
- 7 of these murders were part of a **murder-suicide**, where the offender also killed themselves. In previous years, there have been very few or zero domestic violence murder-suicides.

"We share what we are doing to help survivors, we work to find ways to overcome barriers survivors face, and we collaborate on ways the community can better provide outreach, education and services to prevent domestic violence homicides."

- Kristi Steel, YWCA Senior Director of DV Services

Lethality Assessment Program (LAP)

- In December 2016, the OFS, Metro Nashville Police Department (MNPd), and the YWCA Nashville Middle Tennessee launched the Lethality Assessment Program or LAP.
- The LAP is an 11 question assessment that MNPd officers administer to all victims of intimate partner violence to determine their level of risk.
- If a victim screens in as “high risk,” the officer immediately connects them with the YWCA’s hotline to plan for their safety.
- In 2017, MNPd administered **7399 LAPS** and the YWCA’s hotline answered **nearly 4000 LAP calls**.
- OFS continues to manage the LAP data and multi-disciplinary team intervention plans for the highest risk cases.

“Victims have reported that they feel police and providers truly care about their safety.”

- MNPd Domestic Violence Counselor
on LAP impact

High Risk Intervention Panel (HRIP)

- OFS manages Metro’s High Risk Intervention Panel, a collaborative team that meets weekly to discuss very high risk cases and create a plan to ensure victim safety and offender accountability.
- HRIP includes the District Attorney’s Office, MNPd’s DV Division, the YWCA, Probation, DCS, and Legal Aid in addition to the Office of Family Safety and its JCAC.
- The Panel conducted **641 case reviews** in 2017, a **755% increase** in reviews from 2016.
- The HRIP was honored with the “**Most Innovative Program Award**” by the Nashville Coalition Against Domestic Violence at the Annual Meet us At the Bridge event (pictured right).



HRIP Partners receive Most Innovative Program Award in 2017

Domestic Violence & Firearms Dispossession Taskforce

- Firearms and DV are a deadly combination – offenders are **5x more likely to kill** their victim if they own a firearm and **20x more likely** if they’ve previously threatened/assault with the firearm.
- Firearms should be dispossessed under Federal and State law after a DV conviction or issuance of an Order of Protection.
- OFS manages this Taskforce, which involves partner agencies from MNPd, the District Attorney’s Office, the Sheriff’s Department, Probation, and the Courts, to develop a process for firearms dispossession under the law and ensure guns are not in the hands of these offenders.

“One of the most important things we can do as a system is to make sure that firearms are out of dangerous abusers’ hands.”

- Ricky Rooker, Davidson County
Circuit Court Clerk

TRAINING

The goal of the Office of Family Safety's Training Program is to improve the standardization and quality of trainings on interpersonal violence offered to Metro employees and partners. In 2017, our office **trained nearly 400** Metro employees and community partners with over **850 hours** of training. Upcoming in 2018, in partnership with Metro HR, the Office of Family Safety will develop a mandatory domestic violence curriculum for all Metro employees for the Mayor's consideration.

Trainings offered cover topics such as:

- Domestic Violence*
- Sexual Assault*
- Trauma*
- Safety Planning*
- Domestic Violence & Criminal Law*
- Orders of Protection*
- Sex Trafficking
- Related Topics upon request

**Denotes Federal Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) approved curriculum*

Training audiences include but are not limited to:

- Judges
- Commissioners
- Advocates
- Private attorneys
- Prosecutors
- Defense Bar
- Community Partners
- Additional groups upon request

*"From this training, I realize that I might be an abuser."
- Training Attendee*

Continuing Education:

We believe that trainings are an important investment, for this reason the Office of Family Safety has **hosted and sent 76 staff and partners** to the following large-scale workshops and conferences:

- Vicarious Trauma, Nashville, TN
- 13th Annual Conference on Crimes Against Women, Dallas, TX
- Alliance for Hope International Leadership Conference
- Futures Without Violence – Institute for Leadership in Education Development – Effective Program and Curriculum Development

*"I gained a great understanding in how to connect with a victim using empathy and how to help in a non-judgmental way."
- Training Attendee*

EMERGING PROJECTS

In 2017, the Office of Family Safety (OFS) began work on four new initiatives and partnerships focused on increasing domestic violence and sexual assault victim safety and offender accountability.

High Risk Domestic Violence Probation

- In partnership with General Sessions Court Probation, OFS now offers continued advocacy to domestic violence victims whose high risk offender is on probation.
- An OFS specialist offers case management to victims to ensure that high risk domestic violence offenders are complying with court orders pertaining to victim safety and autonomy.
- This initiative aims to reduce or eliminate communication and safety gaps that exist between an offender's probation officer and the victim.

Cherished Hearts/Grace Empowered

- In partnership with Cherished Hearts, Nashville's Human Trafficking Court, an OFS specialist attends this court and assists with linking victims to resources and additional support.
- At the accompanying program, Grace Empowered, an OFS specialist offers domestic violence and intersectionality training and resources to victims in attendance.

Inmate Education

- In partnership with Core Civic and Davidson County Sheriff's Office, the OFS provides female inmates a 6-week series of classes (RISE) about domestic and sexual violence, how to identify red flags and where to find help for themselves or others experiencing domestic violence.
- Research shows that around 80% of female inmates have experienced or will experience domestic or sexual violence in their lifetime.
- In the first cohort of this training, **83% of participants** reported a history of abuse.

"Until now I hadn't realized that I had never been in a healthy relationship."

-RISE participant

Sexual Assault & Strangulation

- In partnership with many agencies across Nashville, OFS is helping lead the Metro Health Department's effort to increase the number of hospitals that provide sexual assault forensic exams. In 2017, the team worked towards the 2018 opening of the Sexual Assault Center's SAFE Clinic - Nashville's first non-hospital location for forensic sexual assault exams.
- OFS is also working to expand strangulation awareness and best practice responses in Nashville's medical and first responder community.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

We are grateful for the many donations, volunteers, and interns we receive each year.

Volunteers & Interns: Four volunteers & ten interns donated **2,934** hours of their time. The volunteers and interns that dedicated their time and energy to our clients and center during 2017 are:

Emily Askew

Maheen Hameed

Laura Bowling

Kathy Hurley

Daniel Schwanke, Lipscomb University

Stephanie Powers, Vanderbilt University

Elise Flathers, Lipscomb University

Morgan Fox, Vanderbilt University

Helen Watson, Belmont University

Jyqueshia Webb, Tennessee State University

Kelsey Ridderhoff, Lipscomb University

Judith Clerjeune, Vanderbilt University

Kelly Goodfellow, Lipscomb University

Gavi Abelov, Harpeth Hall School

Donations: JCAC received in-kind and monetary donations from **23** different organizations in 2017. We thank the following agencies and individuals for your contribution to our work:

Nashville Diaper Connection

Whole Foods

Nashville Food Project

The Produce Place

Laura Little of Little Lady, Big Cause

Costco

Vanderbilt University Fine Arts Gallery and the Department of History of Art

Metro Nashville Probation Office

Davidson County Mental Health Court

Martha O'Bryan Center

Belmont University Social Work Dept.

HandsOn Nashville

Correctional Management Systems

Metro Nashville Domestic Violence Division of the Police Department

Children's Kindness Network

Stones River Women's Club

Waller, Lansden, Dortch, & Davis, LLP

McKay's Used Books and CDs

Metro Nashville Finance Department

Second Harvest Food Bank

Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland

Metro Nashville Water Services

UKno Café and Catering

Nashville Coalition Against DV

Tennessee Coalition to End DV/SV

Hank Harvey

Brunny Lopez

Sara Bauer

Kathy Hurley

Emily Askew

Katie Hedlund

Indie Pereira

Tracy Mitchell

And the dozens of other anonymous donors who support us throughout the year!

OFFICE OF FAMILY SAFETY

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OFS Staff:

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Lynnette Brown – JCAC Advocate

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