

Exploration of the Fiscal Impact of Domestic Violence on Local Criminal Justice Systems in the MAG Region

Maricopa Association of Governments Regional Domestic Violence Council
Victim Services Stakeholder Group

Executive Summary

The Maricopa Association of Governments' (MAG) Regional Domestic Violence Council, in partnership with Arizona State University's Partnership for Community Development, and through a grant from the Governor's Office Division for Women, set out to determine an estimate of the fiscal impact of domestic violence upon local criminal justice systems in the MAG region. This pilot study included a survey of the police departments, prosecutor's offices, and municipal courts of four municipalities to determine an estimate of local incidence, as well as local costs. The participating cities were the City of Avondale, City of Glendale, City of Phoenix, and City of Scottsdale. These four cities graciously volunteered to assist with this effort but do not provide a representative sample of the entire MAG region.

It was found that each municipality in the region tracks data on domestic violence related crimes differently; therefore, it was difficult to compare data from the various municipalities to reach an average cost for the entire region. Although the scope was significantly limited, it was determined that the average cost to provide the services included in the study would at a minimum likely range between \$18 and \$26 million per year across the MAG region*.

Three recommendations are provided. The first is for further research into the costs of DV upon local criminal justice systems. The most significant finding of this initial pilot study was how little information is currently available. The second recommendation is work more closely with municipal departments to better understand various local policies and procedures to identify differences and commonalities across jurisdictions. The most common policies and procedures, or those identified as the most useful, may be used to form a common procedural basis for enhanced information tracking. The third recommendation is to identify and recommend applicable data collection and data sharing models. It is possible that useful tools are already available to enhance the collection and sharing of DV related crime data. If identified these tools could be recommended for broader implementation for an authoritative law enforcement body.

Introduction

This report provides an initial exploration of the fiscal impact of domestic violence (DV) on local criminal justice systems in the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) region. It is an initial step toward quantifying the overall fiscal impact of DV on local governments, and toward identifying areas for future research. The report is limited in that it represents only a small portion of the costs involved in providing a public response to DV, and in that the four participating municipalities do not provide a representative sample of the entire MAG region. The data supporting this report was provided by the Cities of Avondale, Glendale, Phoenix, and Scottsdale. Additional information was independently researched by the Victim Services Stakeholder Group of

the MAG regional Domestic Violence Council. The Regional Domestic Violence Council and the Stakeholder Group would like to thank the cities that participated in this project for their time and effort. Thanks should also be extended to Arizona State University's Partnership for Community Development, which also provided support and assistance for this project.

This report is offered by the MAG Regional Domestic Violence Council. The Council is a multi-disciplinary group of state and local government leaders, social service providers, first responders, health care providers, and employers who work together to provide a more consistently coordinated community response to domestic violence in Maricopa County. The Council has been working since 1999 to end domestic violence in the MAG region. In that year, MAG published the Regional Domestic Violence Plan, which pointed to 41 recommendations that would serve to decrease the incidence of, and improve the community response to, domestic violence. Recommendation number 34 provided for the "implementation of a coordinated data collection and retrieval system in order to hold offenders accountable" (MAG, 1999). The development of this report, and its final recommendations, indicate the continued need for this type of coordinated data collection, and provides suggested next steps toward the implementation of the original recommendation.

The Council's Victim Services Stakeholder Group operates under the MAG Regional Domestic Violence Council. One of goals of this Stakeholder Group is to provide insight that will begin to quantify the financial impact of domestic violence on the municipalities in the MAG region. With this goal in mind, the purpose of this report is to explore the criminal justice public service costs of domestic violence in the MAG region. There is the incalculable cost of human suffering, both in the short and long-term health and well being of victims and their families. There are also many other fiscal costs associated with domestic violence. These costs include the provision of crisis services, health care expenses, social services, emergency and transitional shelter, legal services, and employment disruption. This report will focus upon the small portion the financial costs that municipalities incur as a result of domestic violence. As a first step toward assessing these costs, the Victims Services Stakeholder Group (hereafter the Stakeholder Group) developed a survey that focused on three areas of the criminal justice system. These three areas included police, prosecution, and municipal courts. Municipal employees who track fiscal data for these departments provided their input during the development of the surveys (Appendix A). The primary units of measurement were the number of DV related police calls and police reports, the number of DV related cases reviewed and charged, and the number of ex parte and contested Order of Protection hearings.

The report is part of a larger effort by the MAG regional Domestic Violence Council and other entities within Maricopa County and the State of Arizona to gather more empirical information about domestic violence and its impact upon communities. In December 2005, Arizona State University's Morrison Institute for Public Policy published a statewide report titled *Layers of Meaning: Domestic Violence and Law Enforcement Attitudes in Arizona*. This publication sought to demonstrate the implications of DV from

a law enforcement perspective, including information as to the prevalence of DV related crimes, the frustration many officers feel with the number of repeat cases, and the lack of discretion they feel they have in responding to DV incidents. In the Morrison Institute study, officers clearly expressed that DV is one of, if not the highest, volume calls they receive, and it is a drain on the resources of their departments (ASU, 2005). This economic case statement will show a portion of the costs involved in providing law enforcement services in DV cases.

A Behavior Research Center survey conducted in May 2005 found that 93 percent of residents in Maricopa County feel that domestic violence is a problem in Arizona, with 72 percent specifying that it is a “major” problem. This belief was held universally across all population subgroups (BRC, 2005). Thus, because this issue is of such great concern to the citizens of the MAG region, the MAG Regional Domestic Violence Council recognized the importance of conducting empirically-based research that can begin to shed more light on the issue from many different perspectives, including the financial perspective. With more empirically researched data, cities and towns can make more informed decisions as to how they can most appropriately respond to this critical issue in their own communities and appropriate resources accordingly.

In January 2006, the Stakeholder Group, together with Arizona State University’s Partnership for Community Development, released an initial report that demonstrated the current level of need for domestic violence shelter beds in the MAG region. Based upon quantitative and qualitative data received from each of the local domestic violence shelters, it was determined that at least 325 additional beds are needed in order to meet the current level of demand (MAG, 2006).

This report is funded by an Innovative Grant provided by the Governor’s Office for Children, Youth and Families, Division for Women. The Stakeholder Group and the MAG regional Domestic Violence Council would like to thank the Governor’s Office for its support of this report.

The report will present the following information:

- Definition of domestic violence
- Scope of the project
- Literature Review
- Barriers to the Study
- Caveats
- Findings
- Recommendations

Definition of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence (DV), or intimate partner violence (IPV), is a serious problem that negatively impacts all communities, including our communities in Maricopa County. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, every year about 1.5 million women and more than 800,000 men are raped or physically assaulted by an intimate partner in the United States. While these figures are staggering, the number

rises to 5.3 million incidents of IPV when relatively minor assaults like pushing, grabbing, shoving, slapping, and hitting are included (CDC, 2003).

The Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence defines DV as “a pattern of coercive control that one person exercises over another. Abusers use physical and sexual violence, threats, emotional insults and economic deprivation as a way to dominate their partners and get their way” (AzCADV, 2006). It is important to note the breadth of this definition, and also to note that many definitions of varying scopes exist for domestic violence. For example, in the State of Arizona, statute defines domestic violence by the relationship between the victim and abuser and the type of crime committed. Thus, it is a designation that can be assigned to a separate crime, such as assault or aggravated assault, if the “relationship test” is met. The determination if any individual crime is DV related is left up to the discretion of the responding police department. Therefore, for the purposes of this report, the definition of DV must remain subjective.

Scope of the Project

The intent of this project was to survey all municipalities in the MAG region in order to explore the fiscal impact of DV upon their communities. However, after an initial pilot study with a small number of volunteer cities, it was determined that the data accumulated from just the four municipalities would be used in this report. The Stakeholder Group discovered that the municipalities in the MAG region have vastly different ways of tracking such information. This resulted in a myriad of responses to survey questions, which had relatively little comparative or summative value (e.g., averaging costs across cities and towns was virtually impossible). It should be noted that the participating communities do not provide a representative sampling of all the communities in the MAG region, but serve only as examples of a portion of the costs in some areas. The Stakeholder Group determined that this report would be useful by informing the MAG region of both its initial findings from the survey and the challenges encountered in trying to quantify the fiscal impact. The results may suggest that changes in how DV cases are tracked may be necessary before a more accurate estimation of the criminal justice costs can be determined.

The prime focus of the report was limited to 1) the costs for police to respond to DV calls, 2) how much it costs to prosecute DV cases, and 3) the municipal court costs of *ex parte* and contested order of protection hearings. The costs of any specific DV training for employees and the total annual costs for any employees dedicated to DV (e.g., detectives, special task forces, and courts personnel) were also examined. However, this report does not attempt to capture the entire criminal justice public service costs of DV. For example, the costs of multiple-day incarcerations, court-mandated programs and pre-trial costs for perpetrators, and probation oversight represent some costs that were not analyzed for this initial report.

This report provides a small window into the complex variables involved when assessing the economic impact of domestic violence. However, what should not be lost in the analysis of this report are the victims of DV, who are more than statistics, and the women and men who work tirelessly to help victims and prosecute abusers.

Literature Review

To date, comparatively little research has been done in the United States to quantify the public service costs of domestic violence. More studies have attempted to highlight the direct and opportunity costs of DV on victims, private businesses, and health care systems. The following is a review of two studies that included public services in their cost assessments, and a cost-benefit analysis of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 1994. Please see Figure One for a comparison of the cost studies.

The State of Tennessee

The State of Tennessee Economic Council of Women commissioned a report entitled “The Impact of Domestic Violence on the Tennessee Economy” in January 2006. The report confirmed that DV is heavily underreported and has a severe negative economic impact on the state’s economy. The report focused on the DV costs to businesses, the health care system, the legal system, social services, and faith-based communities. The report is the first statewide study of the financial impact of domestic violence in the United States. However, the authors note that accurately projecting the extent of DV in Tennessee is problematic because so many incidents go unreported. The study relies upon data extrapolated from national statistics, in addition to the available state-level data.

The study estimates that DV costs the State approximately \$147 million per year, which includes \$49.9 million in costs to the legal system. Based on 2000 census data, this would equate to nearly \$26 per Tennessee resident, with nearly \$9 of this total going toward legal costs. The per capita legal cost estimation is close to that found in the analysis for this report of the costs in the MAG region, although the costs examined were quite different. This is explained further below.

The report includes the following recommendations to improve the State of Tennessee’s criminal justice systems’ response to DV (pp. 10-11):

- Local jurisdictions should establish one-stop shops to eliminate the re-victimization of DV survivors. These locations would likely be similar to the Family Advocacy Centers that operate in the MAG region.
- Courts, for decision-making purposes, need access to an integrated information system that would allow judges at all levels to identify not only the alleged abusers, but also their current status throughout the justice system.
- The statutory consequences of committing DV related crimes, including homicide, should be increased and modified.
- The state ombudsman program should be extended to court personnel who act as advisors to victims in DV cases.

United Kingdom

In a comprehensive study of the costs of domestic violence in the United Kingdom, Professor Sylvia Walby from the University of Leeds determined there were three major types of costs: 1) public services (including the criminal justice system, health care, social services, housing, and civil legal), 2) loss of economic output by employees and employers and 3) the human and emotional costs incurred by the victims (2004). Walby

estimated that in 2001, the U.K. spent the equivalent of nearly \$2 billion on DV in the criminal justice system alone. Based on 2006 population estimates, this is the equivalent of nearly \$33 per resident. Again, this study included a much broader spectrum of costs than this report.

As the Stakeholder Group found to be the case in the MAG region, Walby found that estimating the cost of police activity was difficult, even when police had to account for their time (every 15 minutes) and indicate what kind of call they were on (violent, nonviolent, etc). As in Arizona, another challenge in determining the actual DV costs for police in the UK was tracking the number of DV related crimes. “Since there is no specific crime of domestic violence, there is no specific crime code under which it may be recorded. Instead, domestic violence is embedded within existing police categories, largely within those of violence against the person” (p. 38). This is also true of the data collected in this report.

Violence Against Women Act, 1994

Professors Andrea Biddle and Sandra Martin from the University of North Carolina, with School of Public Health doctoral student Kathryn Andersen Clark, did a cost-benefit analysis of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (VAWA-I) to determine if the \$1.6 billion for programs spent over five years reduced the social costs of violence against women, much of which is DV related (2002). These costs included direct property losses, health care, police response, victim services, lost productivity, reduced quality of life, and death. The research found that VAWA-I did save \$14.8 billion in social costs and that government programs do work to reduce the impact of DV on our society. An unintended consequence of providing DV programs and services, such as shelter, is that justice systems costs may increase as more “women are informed of their legal rights and of the potential value of justice system intervention. More women may seek temporary orders of protection and place more calls to law enforcement, which could lead to more arrests and court actions” (Chanley, Chanley, & Campbell, 2001, p. 401). However, it is important to note here that the cost savings that may occur due to reduced recidivism may far outweigh the increased short-term costs of effective intervention by the criminal justice system.

Barriers to the Study

There were a number of barriers encountered in this project. Each city and town within the MAG region is unique, and given the vast differences in size, growth, development and availability of resources, each conducts data collection differently based upon its own circumstances and needs. The differences in data collection methods are born of the fact that there are currently no standardized state or countywide tracking requirements related to DV incidents. Therefore, the provision of one standard survey for each municipality did not elicit standard data. Although the Stakeholder Group consulted with police, prosecutors, and court clerks during the development of the survey, questions that are wholly answerable by one municipality may not be so for another.

In two of the survey categories, police and prosecution, only three of the four cities had enough internal data to enable them to respond. All four cities were able to respond to the municipal court questions. However, even when the cities were able to answer the survey questions in their entirety, they were not always able to answer them in the same way, or in the way the formula intended. For some questions the answer was “unknown.” The diversity in the answers makes it very difficult to compare or average the costs incurred.

As found in the UK study, domestic violence itself is not a crime in Arizona, as explained in the section above on the definition of domestic violence. Rather, it is a designation that can be assigned to certain crimes, such as assault and aggravated assault, when the “relationship test” is met. The number of individual decisions that must be made in any individual case as to whether or not the DV designation applies can itself lead to complications in attempting to track accurate data on the number of DV crimes in any given municipality. The number of discretionary decisions can make the application of the DV designation inconsistent. Additionally, some municipalities in the MAG region do not have a DV-specific code by which to track police calls. Survey respondents in cities that do have a DV code reported that they often have a very difficult time accurately quantifying the number of DV calls, depending upon how the dispatcher initially coded the call versus the determination of the responding police officers at the scene of incidence.

The root cause of these barriers may be twofold: 1) there is no statewide or countywide requirement for departments to track DV criminal justice costs and 2) cities that do have the ability to track this type of cost information do not do so in the same way due to differences related to individual municipal data needs, size and resources.

Caveats

The prime caveat to this study is that the data provided by the four cities included in the report were often “rough” estimates. The participating municipalities based their survey responses upon the data that was available to them, or upon their most educated estimations. Thus, the Stakeholder Group determined that trying to get comparative data from all municipalities in the MAG region was beyond the scope of this report and that it should be considered a pilot study of a small number of cities that will help to determine appropriate next steps for further research. It should also be noted that the participating municipalities do not provide a comprehensive sample of the entire MAG region, and so conclusions based on data should be thought of as not representative of the entire region.

Findings

Police costs

Cities were asked how many emergency 911 DV calls they received in fiscal year 2005 and how many DV reports were filed after responding to the calls. In the surveyed cities, there were large differences between the numbers of calls received and the numbers of reports filed. One reason given for this finding was that the Arizona Revised Statutes

defines DV very broadly, which leads dispatchers to code calls as DV more often than they might if the statute was more narrowly defined. In practice, some municipalities dispatch calls as DV whenever there is a possibility that it may be DV-related, even if the caller does not identify it as such. When the officer arrives on-scene after responding to a call dispatched as DV, he or she may determine that DV was not involved, thus removing the DV designation. This is just one reason why the number of calls dispatched as DV is frequently higher than the number reported as DV.

In another case, a municipality did not have a DV-specific code to dispatch calls until relatively recently. In this case, DV related crimes were designated as such by the responding officer, rather than by the dispatcher.

The prime finding is that different police departments both dispatch and report DV crimes differently. Further, this varied practice impacts daily resources, procedures and decisions. For example, in one city, if the dispatcher codes the call as DV, it automatically becomes a priority one call that requires two officers to respond, assuming two are available. However, other cities reported that DV calls frequently require only one responding officer.

Another finding is that some larger police departments have the capacity to track DV and other types of crimes in more detail, given their larger pool of human resources and larger budgets. Some smaller municipalities find it more difficult to hire enough police to keep up with growth, and thus are not able to track data in the same way. Additionally, they are also not able to dedicate the same amount of police resources to DV, such as additional training post academy or dedicated DV units.

These findings are not new to local law enforcement officials, who have long recognized the lack of accurate and reliable quantitative data on domestic violence related crimes, both on a strictly local level, as well as on a broader regional and statewide level. Individual municipalities, such as the City of Phoenix and the City of Scottsdale, have worked hard for several years to improve their own data collection methods in order to better inform their local elected officials as to the extent of DV related crimes in their communities. The City of Phoenix, for example, has also worked to support information sharing and standardized reporting across local law enforcement jurisdictions. However, due to widespread resource and technical capacity challenges, standardized data collection across municipalities and data sharing remains extremely difficult to realize.

Calls and Reports

When asked to provide the average cost per police call, three of the four cities were able to respond. When only calculating straight labor costs of the responding officers, the **average cost per DV call ranged from \$76.53 to \$256** per call. The range in cost per call could be due to a number of factors, including whether it is local policy to send one or two responding officers to the scene of a DV incident. Given the number of calls received over the fiscal year, the **total costs ranged from \$40,637 (data not available for the entire fiscal period) to \$4,964,717**. On a per capita basis, this ranged

anywhere from **\$.59 per resident to \$3.36 per resident**. All per capita data is based upon the mid-decade census numbers published by MAG in June 2006.

However, as noted above, in some cases the number of DV reports filed varied widely from the number of DV calls. Thus, in looking only at those calls that eventually became filed DV reports, the costs ranged from **\$.59 per resident to \$.83** on a per capita basis.

It is very important to note that the costs outlined above only include the cost of labor for the one or two responding police officers for an average one-hour call. There are many other costs associated with the police response to DV once a report is filed, such as labor costs for detectives, supervisors, laboratory technicians and crisis response personnel, just to name a few. Most cities were unable to provide data to this level of detail because each individual DV case is vastly different in its scope. Therefore, it is nearly impossible for the cities to estimate how much an “average” domestic violence case would really cost their police departments.

One city did attempt to average in at least some of these other costs. They estimated an average of \$585 per DV case. This would take their average annual cost of \$352,256, when only calculating the responding officers’ labor on cases that eventually were filed as DV reports, to \$804,960 when adding in the additional costs that may be incurred after the report has been filed. For this particular city, this new total would be approximately \$3.43 per resident when based on per capita data.

Direct DV Training

Cities were also asked how much they spent on specific DV training and how often they engaged in it. The range of costs provided was **\$0 to \$3,105 per year**, provided on an as-needed basis. One city reported that it provides each officer with a two-hour DV training course post-academy, with a cost of \$400 per two-hour training. Domestic violence training topics included Threat Management, STOP, Cycle of Violence, Victimology, Investigative Procedures, and Information on Resources for Victims. Overall, the reported cost of DV training was insignificant compared to other police department costs associated with DV response. Several cities noted that other training included, but did not focus solely on DV. Therefore, the training costs are likely underrepresented.

Service of Orders of Protection

Cities were also asked the total number of orders of protection served and attempted to serve and the cost of each. This was extremely difficult for the cities to estimate, given that serving an order of protection may only require one trip to a perpetrator’s home or place of business, or it may require several trips before the perpetrator is located. Two cities were able to estimate the cost of service per order of protection as **\$40-\$75** per attempt to serve. Overall, the reported cost of service of orders of protection was insignificant as compared to other police department costs associated with DV response.

DV Bookings

Cities were asked the annual total number of DV bookings, the cost of one booking, and the cost of one day in jail. The total cost for both booking and one day of jail ranged from **\$79.65 to \$163**. When coupled with the number of bookings over the fiscal year, the **total annual cost ranged from \$33,134 to \$732,874. Per capita, the figure is from \$.48 per resident to \$.50 per resident.** In this case, the main reason for the range of raw costs is due to the difference in total number of bookings, rather than a large difference is cost per booking or day of jail.

The data provided by the three participating police departments is very useful in demonstrating how complex it is to try to determine the total financial impact of DV on local law enforcement. Because each DV case is so different, and because each department tracks data according to its own internal needs, it is very difficult to determine the actual costs for the entire region.

Prosecution Costs

Three cities (different than above) were able to respond to the series of questions related to prosecution costs. Cities were asked the total number of DV cases reviewed for charging and the total number of DV cases charged. The cities were also asked to determine the average cost to prosecute a case.

The average cost to prosecute a DV case was reported to be anywhere from **\$45.68 per case to \$3,164 per case**. The wide range in responses is not immediately apparent given the data provided. However, it is clear that not all cities were able to respond to the survey questions as asked. Once the average cost per case is multiplied by the number of cases charged, **the annual cost for fiscal year 2005 was \$68,109 to \$15,168,216. Per capita, this equates from \$.28 per resident to \$10.28 per resident.** Clearly, not only the total number of cases charged, but also the difference in cost per case, account for the large range in annual costs.

Direct DV Training

Of the three cities reporting, all three responded that Prosecutor's Office personnel participate in domestic violence training. The annual budget for this training ranged from **\$0 to \$2,000 per year**. The cities report that the training is typically provided to attorneys through the Arizona Attorney General's Office, the National College of District Attorneys Annual DV Conference, in-house venues, case-law updates, DV "tips" sheets on evidence issues and victims' rights, Web sites, manuals, and articles in monthly newsletters. Overall, the reported cost of direct DV training was insignificant compared to other prosecution costs associated with DV response. As with the police departments, survey respondents noted that they receive other training that includes DV, but DV is not the sole topic. Training costs are likely underrepresented.

Municipal Court Costs

All four cities were able to respond to this series of questions. Cities were asked for the annual total number of ex parte order of protection hearings, the annual total number of contested hearings and the total cost of order of protection hearings in fiscal year 2005.

The cities estimated that an average ex parte order of protection hearing costs from **\$50 to \$97 per hearing**. The total annual cost for fiscal year 2005, based on the total number of ex parte order of protection hearings, ranged from **\$21,600 to \$189,247**. **Per capita, the range was \$.09 per resident to \$.42 per resident**. Again, the number of hearings, as well as the average cost per hearing determined the range in total annual costs.

Summary of Findings

The most telling finding of this initial study, as determined by the Stakeholders Group, is how much information about the public service cost of DV is currently unavailable. Because there are no statewide or countywide models in place to guide municipalities in how they might collect data in a more consistent manner, the cities and towns continue to do their best to collect information as they are able, and according to their needs at the local level. The information that was available regarding police, prosecution, and municipal court costs in the MAG region is useful in that it clearly demonstrates where additional data are needed, and begins to illustrate a portion of the costs involved.

Even given the gaps in the information that is available, it is clear that DV does have a direct fiscal impact upon local criminal justice systems. Although this report only represents a very small portion of the costs that are involved in providing a public sector criminal justice response to DV, the cost to police departments alone reportedly ranged from approximately \$75,000 per year to nearly \$5 million per year. Per capita for these municipalities, this equates from approximately \$1.08 per resident to \$3.39 per resident per year. The costs to Prosecutor's Offices ranged from just over \$68,000 per year to more than \$15 million per year. Per capita, this was \$.28 per resident to \$10.28 per resident. The costs to Municipal Courts ranged from more than \$21,000 to almost \$190,000 per year. The per capita cost was an additional \$.09 per resident to \$.42 per resident per year. The estimated raw costs vary widely depending on the size of the municipality, the incidence of DV in those municipalities, and the average cost of response per incident.

Taken together, the average cost to provide these services across the MAG region would at a minimum likely range between \$18 and \$26 million per year*.

Again, it must be emphasized that these costs represent only a small fraction of the total cost to provide a public service criminal justice response to domestic violence. Many additional related costs were not included in the survey; for example, prisons, probation, publicly provided legal defense services, offender treatment programs and family court services, to name a few.

There are significant additional costs related to domestic violence that are incurred by the public sector, the business sector, the health care system, and victims themselves. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that the cost of intimate partner rape, physical assault, and stalking exceeds \$5.8 billion each year nationally (2003). While this study did not

attempt to calculate the costs borne by the public sector specifically, but rather focused on health care costs and lost productivity, it does illustrate that the entire picture of the overall costs of domestic violence are staggering.

**This figure was estimated by averaging the per capita cost to each municipality to provide each surveyed category of service. The three service categories were then added to provide an estimated total cost of \$6.32 per person. Based upon the estimated 3.5 million population of the MAG region, the total cost is \$18 to \$26 million per year, given a plus or minus 20 percent variance.*

Recommendations

Based upon the findings outlined above, the Stakeholder Group puts forth the following three recommendations:

- 1) **Additional study:** Further study is needed about the fiscal impact of DV on the municipalities in the MAG region. One potential methodology for future study would be to research the currently available data in only one municipality, while reaching more deeply into areas of potential cost this report did not include, such as the cost of jails, supervised probation, and civil legal services, for example. This individual jurisdiction model would allow the researcher to complete a more in-depth analysis of the data that is uniquely available via the municipality's own method of tracking. Alternatively, future study might involve tracking a sampling of DV cases from the beginning of the case through to the end. This case study model would allow for a DV case to be followed from the initial call, through the legal system, to its conclusion. Costs could be added as they are incurred. This could be done in randomly selected cities to ensure a broad representation. The study would be longitudinal in nature, but probably reflect more accurately the true costs of DV on the criminal justice system in Maricopa County. The challenge with such a study is that very few DV cases are "typical", and determining an "average" cost of a DV case would remain difficult.
- 2) **Analysis of existing local policies and procedures to identify differences and commonalities:** It may be advisable to engage in further discussions with local criminal justice officials to determine in greater detail how and when different municipalities typically charge DV related crimes. Working more closely with local agencies to better understand how DV crimes are typically charged in various locations, the policies and procedures behind those charging decisions, and how these crimes are currently being tracked, may help to identify any commonalities across municipalities. These discussions would necessarily entail how agencies are currently defining DV, existing policies for when and how to charge DV related offenses, and how those cases are commonly adjudicated. Common policy and procedures that are identified to exist across municipalities, as well as new models that serve individual agencies particularly well, may be used to form a common procedural basis for enhanced information tracking.

- 3) **Identify and recommend applicable data collection and data sharing models:** Various data collection and data sharing models for other types of crimes should be explored and presented to municipalities as further options to assist in collecting information on crimes related to DV. There may be other types of misdemeanor crimes for which there is currently more data available, and for which better tracking methodologies may exist. For example, a great deal of information is available on DUI offenses. It is possible that the way DUI crimes are tracked may be replicable for DV offenses. Additionally, there is already a group of five municipal courts in the MAG region that are currently engaged in a “collaboration of courts” and are working together to make information available cross-jurisdictionally. If successful, this experimental collaboration may be expanded. There may be other useful models worth investigating, both inside and outside Arizona. Any models determined to be useful across jurisdictions could be recommended by an authoritative body, such as the Arizona Supreme Court, the Arizona Department of Public Safety, or the Arizona Governor’s Office. A simple, consistent methodology for tracking DV related crimes would be useful in determining the true costs of DV on the criminal justice systems in the MAG region. More consistent data could help to better define the impact of domestic violence upon our communities, making it far easier to work toward reducing domestic violence and/or allocating appropriate resources to do so.

Because it is well documented that the residents of the MAG region care deeply about this issue and most feel it is a major problem facing Arizona (BRC, 2005), it is all the more necessary to collect the information needed in order to fashion an appropriate response. As other research indicates, and this report begins to suggest, domestic violence does make a notable fiscal impact upon local governments. However, potential cost savings through effective prevention and intervention programs are also difficult to quantify. It is also challenging to capture data on the amount saved by providing DV victims with a safe place when needed and by engaging in prevention activities. Although this report clearly does not include all of the costs of DV, it also does not attempt to include the costs saved through the availability of effective DV programs. While it is critically important to clearly understand the financial costs of DV, in order to formulate an appropriate response, it is also necessary to understand how costs can be mitigated. As noted earlier in this report, financial costs are not the only costs involved when lives are at stake.

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Appendix A: Survey Instrument