

## White Paper on Juvenile Domestic Violence Alternative Center

*Introduction:* The current intervention model for juvenile domestic violence cases is an impossible paradigm because families in crisis only receive services when triggered by arrest and/or formal charging. Parents who are experiencing violence from their child want to be taken seriously, they want to feel supported, they want to feel safe, and they want their child to be motivated to change his/her behavior, but they almost never want formal criminal charges.

*Background:* Unlike adult court, juvenile DV rarely involves intimate partner violence. The vast majority of the cases involve youth acting out in ways against their parents or siblings that meet the legal definition of a crime. Most situations involve misdemeanor offenses, such as Assault 4, Harassment, or Malicious Mischief 3. Family violence easily makes up the largest category of violent offenses that we see in King County Juvenile Court. The problem is particularly concerning in the City of Seattle where 38% of all juvenile arrests for persons crimes were for domestic violence related offenses. It is also the only category of juvenile offense in Seattle that has actually seen an *increase* in arrests between 2008 and 2012.

Furthermore, juvenile DV accounts for 17% of all admissions to juvenile detention and a staggering 32% of all new bookings (329 total). DV matters also follow the disturbing trend of racial disproportionality in the juvenile justice system.

### King County Juvenile Court Admissions to Secure Detention on New Domestic Violence Offenses (2013)

Offense	American Indian	Asian/ P.I.	Black	Hispanic	White	Total
ASSAULT 2	1	2	11	1	5	20
ASSAULT 4	16	13	71	27	116	243
HARASSMENT	0	0	5	0	4	9
FELONY HARASSMENT	0	1	10	6	8	25
MAL MISCHIEF 1 & 2	0	0	1	1	1	3
MAL MISCHIEF 3	1	3	5	2	17	28
OTHER	1	0	1	2	0	4
	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>329</b>
<b>% of Total by Race</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Problem:* While DV cases make up a significant portion of the work we do, we haven't reexamined the way we provide services for these youth and parents in more than 15 years. Families that resort to calling the police are typically in crisis and are seeking help for themselves as well as the offender. Many of these youth struggle with substance abuse and mental health disorders. Although these families look to the juvenile justice system for help, almost none of them want their children to end up with a criminal record. Parents/guardians/siblings routinely decline to assist or participate in the formal court system for this reason. Approximately 40% of juvenile DV referrals result in declines. While the immediate crisis may have been resolved with the removal of the child from the home, these families receive no services and are left to fend for themselves when the youth is returned home. Of the cases that proceed with formal processing, most end up in dismissals, SOCs or other forms of diversion long after the incident. Ultimately, these families receive little benefit from involving the courts. King County Juvenile Probation statistics confirm that needed services rarely reach these families in crisis under the current system. Of the nearly 500 juvenile DV referrals received in 2013, only 18 youth were referred to an evidence based treatment program. Most troubling is the fact that the current system fosters an environment where parents and guardians may be less likely to reach out for help in the future when the crisis returns.

*Solution:* The trigger for services should be the call for help, not an arrest or subsequent charging. Fortunately, we do not have to reinvent the wheel to fix this issue. There are other jurisdictions that have recognized the unique dynamics present in juvenile DV and have employed alternatives to formal processing. One model example comes out of Pima County, AZ, at their Domestic Violence Alternative Center (DVAC) where they have seen their juvenile DV booking numbers plummet from over 1000 youth annually, to just 82 in 2012. In King County, our DVAC will be an alternative to detention intake for youth who are arrested for misdemeanor domestic violence offenses. Law enforcement present youth to this 24/7 center located adjacent to the detention facility. Youth and families get immediate crisis intervention services and assessment by a master level social worker guided by the leading experts in family violence (King County Sep-Up Program). Respite care is available for a cooling off period and time to assess next steps. Probation officers (co-located at DVAC) will provide youth with an opportunity to sign a domestic violence evaluation contract. If the youth abides by all of the conditions of the contract their case is never referred to the Prosecuting Attorney's Office.

The DVAC approach already has universal support from all juvenile justice stakeholders:

- King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office
- King County Superior Court
- King County Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention
- King County Department of Judicial Administration
- King County Department of Public Defense

The physical space required for a non-secure respite facility currently exists in juvenile detention and can be made available quickly with nominal capital investment. DAJD is committed repurposing this space and to re-training existing detention staff to work with youth housed in a non-secure DVAC. Superior Court Probation Services are committed to redeploying existing probation officers specifically for this project. Step-Up Program experts are committed to providing the specialized training for those who will work with this unique population.

#### *Staffing Needs:*

##### Step Up Social Workers

Step-Up is a domestic violence counseling program for teens who have been violent with family members. The program has been in operation in King County since 1997. Step-Up social workers work with parents and teens together with other families in a unique group setting and facilitate safety plans with youth before they are released from detention.

It is anticipated that the Step Up Program will play a role in the new center. The Step Up role will include the addition of two Step Up social workers. The additional Step Up social workers will:

- administer family violence assessments and intakes, and facilitate safety plans for all youth and families presented to the center.
- staff an expansion of Step Up groups to accommodate the families that will best be served by the 20 week series of group counseling facilitated in the community by the Step Up Program.

The two FIRS Step Up social workers will staff FIRS Monday through Saturday from 8:30 to 4:30, facilitate another evening Step Up group and assist the current Step Up social workers with an expansion of existing groups as necessary.

Cost for the Step Up services related to FIRS Salary and benefits will be \$196,570, which includes \$179,570 for salary & benefits, plus miscellaneous costs of \$20,000 for (computer and IT support, phone, mileage, supplies, training).

DAJD Staffing (for current Z-Hall location)

During waking hours it is recommended that a minimum of two staff should be assigned to the FIRS to ensure adequate staffing resources for trauma induced youth. The FIRS is proposed as a “respite” for youth to de-escalate from the volatile situation that law enforcement had removed them from and to give the youth an opportunity to reflect on their actions. By providing this level of staffing, it ensures that youth receive the necessary services during their “time out” with minimal disruption while staff can effectively respond to any situation with a youth that requires immediate de-escalation. During non-waking hours, it is recommended that one staff is assigned to the FIRS while being observed by Central Control. If DAJD provides a staff to support the program for each shift, 7 days a week, an additional staff during waking hours, 7 days a week will need to be provided by Superior Court, Prosecutor’s Office or the City of Seattle as illustrated below.

<b>Shift</b>	<b>DAJD</b>	<b>Other Partners</b>
Dayshift (7 a.m. – 3 p.m.)	1 Staff (7 a.m. – 3 p.m.)	1 Staff (8 a.m. – 5 p.m.)
Swing shift (3 p.m. – 11 p.m.)	1 Staff (3 p.m. – 11 p.m.)	1 Staff (1 p.m. – 10 p.m.)
Nightshift (11 p.m. – 7 a.m.)	1 Staff (11 p.m. – 7 a.m.)	Not Required

The staffing plan assumes that DAJD staff would work an 8 hour shift with a ½ hour paid meal break. The plan also assumes that normal waking hours for youth residing at the FIRS would be 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Staffing coverage for 1 position, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week requires 4.5 FTEs not including backfill for scheduled/unscheduled leave. A JDO FTE costs approximately \$70,782 (salary-\$54,448/benefits-\$16,334). Total anticipated cost for 4.5 FTEs would be \$318,519. This cost estimate does not include backfill for scheduled or unscheduled leave.

*Conclusion:* The benefits of this common sense approach will be substantial:

- Based on 2013 statistics, nearly 300 fewer youth will be booked into juvenile detention.
- 55% of these detention eligible youth would be youth of color.
- Nearly 500 families will bypass the delay created by formal court processing and receive earlier intervention services.
- Research has shown that formal processing in the juvenile justice system increases juvenile delinquency. DVAC will safely divert hundreds of youth out of this system every year.
- This approach draws from restorative justice principles that are widely supported by the community and have proven effective in addressing juvenile delinquency.
- Significant long-term savings will be realized as a result of foregoing costly formal court processing.