



County of Fairfax, Virginia

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods, and diverse communities of Fairfax County.



COUNCIL TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Coordinated Community Response Committee & Workgroup Reports July 2024

Achievements & Ongoing Work

- Join training on Tech/Online Safety for professionals – July 31st at 2PM. Simultaneous Spanish interpretation will be provided.
- The Accountability Workgroup completed its report including findings and recommendations.
- Summer Tier One Trainings are currently underway
- Victim Access Workgroup - content for the protective order process in JDRDC is now in the process of being added to the CEDV's website
- LAP: upward trend in calls. 17.4% increase in the number of Lethality Assessment Protocol calls this reporting period (through May 2024) compared to FY23.
- Challenge: Due to size of Fairfax County and diverse training needs across multidisciplinary service providers, it is challenging to address the wide array of trends and training topics requested

ACCOUNTABILITY WORKGROUP

The Accountability Workgroup completed its work on March 21st and forwarded its report to the CEDV leadership for distribution. The final report ([found online here](#)) from the Workgroup was shared with the Council on April 12th and the findings and recommendations was shared with the Council at its meeting on April 25th.

COURT PROCESS WORKGROUP - VICTIM ACCESS SUBGROUP

The Court Process Workgroup split into subgroups to address the issues raised by the protective order (PO) mapping process.

Victim Access Subgroup: Over the past quarter, the Victim Access Workgroup, as subgroup of the Court Process Workgroup, finished the content for the protective order process in Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court (JDRDC). The content is now in the process of being added to the CEDV's website so that members of the public, including survivors, can obtain information about the protective order process from one central location instead of calling offices throughout the county to learn about the process. The workgroup anticipates being able to debut the content and the website during the Domestic and Sexual Violence Annual Meeting in October.

The workgroup is currently adapting the content from Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court protective order process to the General District Court protective order process. The process is moving quickly, and the workgroup's goal is to have the content also finished in time to be shared at the Annual Meeting in October.

FIREARM SURRENDER WORKGROUP

This group is paused as it explores options for high-risk victims and survivors.

STEP UP 4 KIDS COALITION



The Step Up 4 Kids Coalition (SU4K) continues to plan various projects. A workgroup of the Coalition is planning the community information sessions shared in last quarter's report. The community information sessions were born out of a recognition that front line providers and stakeholders regularly report the need for additional mental health resources for children who experience DV. However, providers also report they are not always aware of the variety of mental health services available to the community. To address this gap in awareness, a multidisciplinary team of county, school, and nonprofit staff are creating sessions for the community that will provide information about children's mental health needs, information about the effect of domestic violence and other traumas, and the resources available in the immediate community.

These sessions will also provide a panel of hyper-local providers across a variety of mental health-related support services. The panelists will share information with the community about how their agencies can provide support to children and how families can access services. The information sessions will take place in groups across the county that already meet and gather on a regular basis to ensure attendance. The planning group is collaborating with other county agencies to ensure success and using resources effectively.

The Guardian ad litem (GAL) Training Committee is planning its next training for GALs in November 2024. The training will focus on the issue of children who may resist or refuse visits with a parent when custody is shared between the parents. This is often a topic that involves dynamics related to domestic violence and trauma and are among some of the most challenging cases with the fewest resources available for families in need of services and may not be able to afford them.

The Protective Order Relief Workgroup, a subgroup of the Coalition, continues under its new leadership of the Honorable Divani Nadaraja from Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court (JDRDC) and Tina Spurlock, Division Director for Intake in JDRDC. Efforts are underway to realign the resources and focus of the group in a way that meets the needs of the coordinated community response. In the last quarter, staff delivered a presentation to the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court judges on the inclusion of children on protective orders and the group will be providing the court with tools and best practices to make more structured decisions around the inclusion of children to ensure their safety after incidents of violence.

DV NETWORK

The DV Network continues to meet monthly and has recently covered topics such as Legal Housing Protections for DV Survivors, Compassion Fatigue for Professionals, and Serving LGBTQ+ Victims/Survivors of Interpersonal Violence. The July meeting will focus on new sexual and domestic violence legislation that came into force on July 1st.

Tier One Training

Beginning in 2024, Domestic Violence Tier One training and Sexual Violence Tier One training will each be held 3 times annually including in-person series in the spring and summer, and a

virtual series in the fall. These 16-hour introductory trainings are a collaboration across the coordinated community responses to sexual and domestic violence, including the Fairfax County Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) and Fairfax County DV Network.

The summer sessions of Sexual Violence Tier One were held in June, and Domestic Violence Tier One will be held in July. These training opportunities continue to be in high demand and well attended. Both summer sessions had full registration lists over 1-month in advance in addition to waitlists of over a dozen potential additional participants.

A review of the Domestic Violence Tier One curriculum began in March 2024 with the goals of 1) aligning training content with Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services Accreditation Standards for DV/SA Programs, 2) intentionally highlighting the disproportionate impacts of violence on marginalized communities, and 3) updating materials to be relevant to current trends and needs of those impacted by domestic and sexual violence in Fairfax County. This included providing and receiving feedback from previous and current presenters, seeking expertise from Fairfax County DFS Professional Development and Training unit, and incorporation of a shared case study across sessions.

Future goals for Tier One include enhancing community ownership, increased representation of culturally specific organizations in providing training content and assessing future capacity to provide simultaneous language interpretation for Spanish-speaking participants.

Challenges

Due to the significant size of Fairfax County and diverse training needs across multidisciplinary service providers, it is challenging to address the wide array of trends and training topics requested. Many training courses specific to the CCR on domestic and sexual violence continue to be held by county departments, particularly the Department of Family Services, Domestic and Sexual Violence Services.

Community-based organizations provide expertise and connections to county residents impacted by sexual and domestic violence which cannot be achieved by government bodies, and their participation is invaluable in providing training which is current and relevant to the needs of service providers. With the expansion of Tier One and shift to a CCR-specific

committee to meet training needs, there is a need for additional practical and logistical support by partners and external stakeholders to develop and implement a comprehensive training calendar.

Lethality Assessment Program (LAP)

The Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) is a multi-pronged intervention that consists of a standardized, evidence-based lethality assessment instrument and accompanying referral protocol that helps first responders make a differentiated response that is tailored to the unique circumstances of high-danger victims. Shelter and victim advocacy services are research-validated protective factors for victims, yet the majority of domestic violence-related homicide victims do not access services prior to their murder. Therefore, the primary goal of the LAP is to identify victims in “high-danger” (risk of serious re-assault or homicide), educate them about the level of their risk, and connect them to services immediately after the crime, in order to provide them with options to enhance their safety.

LAP Expansion: The Fairfax County Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP) team expanded the LAP criteria on November 11, 2023 to address the following: 1) provide greater access and critical services for an additional group of high danger victims/survivors - current or former dating or sexual partners, and 2) include all incidents of intimate partner violence with high lethality, independent of whether an arrest was made or warrant issued. This new criterion joins the existing criterion - couples who are married, cohabitate, or share a child. Before expansion, only domestic violence incidents involving couples who were married, cohabitating, or shared a child met LAP criteria. Expansion was based on research regarding high lethality indicators for current and former dating and/or sexual partners.

Furthermore, the post-pandemic numbers suggest that the LAP has continued to remain fully functional and operating at full capacity. For example, the overall number of LAP calls has remained consistent in comparison to prior years but has steadily increased during FY 2024 (see below).

Total # of LAP Calls by FY 2020 – FY 2023 (FY 2024 data through May 2024*)

FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024*
364	353	365	357	419

The Crisis Response Services noted a 17.4% increase in the number of Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP) calls this reporting period (through May 2024) compared to FY23. This upward trend in calls is further evidence of the impact of the new LAP protocol, which was expanded on 11/1/23 by the Countywide LAP team to include current and former dating and/or sexual partners and assessment of all incidents of intimate partner violence with high lethality, independent of whether an arrest was conducted, or warrant issued. Since the LAP expansion, there are now new criteria regarding the relationship with the person who caused harm which now includes current or former dating/sexual partner. For example, the relationship of current or former dating/sexual partner accounted for 16% of the total number of calls. This indicates that the LAP program is now reaching a population that was previously underserved before the expansion. This could lead to early intervention and help prevent domestic violence homicides in the community (see Table 1).

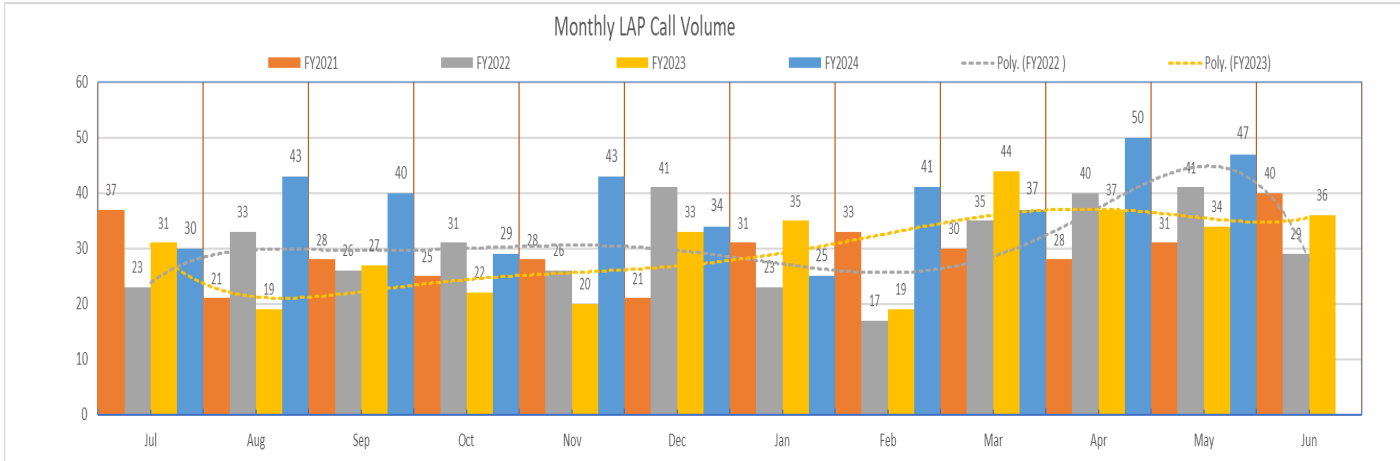
Table 1. Number and Percentage of Respondents who Indicated their relationship with the person who caused harm was either a current or former dating partner or current or former sexual partner.

FY	#	%
FY 2024: November 2023 – May 2024	43	16%

Another statistic that provides rationale to benefits of the LAP expansion is the number of the increase of Spanish-speaking callers. For FY 2024 (through May 2024), approximately 30% of LAP calls were Spanish-speaking which also indicates our capacity to provide direct service to a diverse population.

The monthly average call volume went from 29 for FY 2021 to 30 for FY 2022, and unchanged at 30 for FY 2023. For FY 2024 (includes eleven months of data through May 2024), the average number of calls is currently 36/month which is 20% higher in comparison to previous years.

Monthly LAP Calls – FY 2021 – FY 2024* (through May)



For FY 2024 (through May 2024), there has been an increased number of calls in comparison to previous years. Table 2 below displays the monthly call volume of LAP calls since FY 2020:

Table 2 – Number of LAP Calls by Month – FY 2020 – FY 2024 YTD*													Total
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	
FY2020	25	25	37	30	25	33	31	24	30	35	37	32	364
FY2021	37	21	28	25	28	21	31	33	30	28	31	40	353
FY2022	23	33	26	31	26	41	23	17	35	40	41	29	365
FY2023	31	20	26	22	20	33	35	19	44	38	33	36	357
FY2024	30	43	40	29	43	34	25	41	37	50	47	-	419

*Through May 2024

Question number one on the LAP asks the following: Has he/she/they ever used a weapon against you or threatened you with a weapon? On the current LAP, this question is part of a group of three questions that automatically trigger a high-danger assessment with an affirmative response. Since FY 2021, there has been a steady decrease in those individuals who

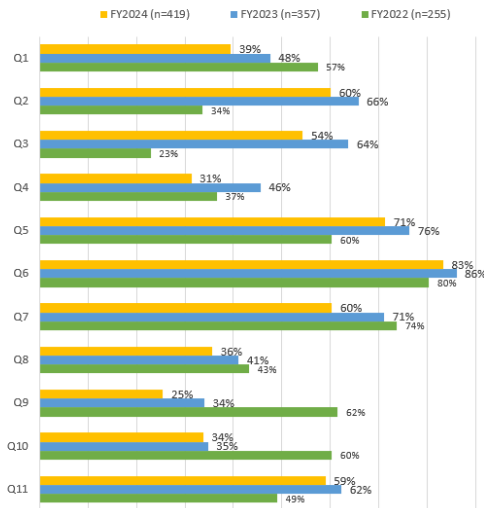
responded in the affirmative. The percentage of respondents who answered “Yes” to this question declined from 61% to 39% in FY 2024 (through May).

Table 3 – Responses to the question – Has he/she/they ever used a weapon against you or threatened you with a weapon? (n=398)				
July 2023 – May 2024				
	Yes	No	Not Answered	Total
Number	157	219	22	398
%	39%	55%	6%	100%

Furthermore, it is important to note the continued pattern of strangulation and stalking which is captured in two of the LAP questions. The occurrence of strangulation and stalking incidents are constant threats within the community based on the affirmative responses, which equaled 60% and 49%, respectively through FY 2024.

DSVS LAP Line Calls: FY 2022 through FY 2024* Proportion of Affirmative Answers to LAP Questions

*Through May 2024



1. Has he/she/they ever used a weapon against you or threatened you with a weapon?
2. Has he/she/they threatened to kill your children?
3. Do you think he/she/they might try to kill you?
4. Does he/she/they have a gun or can he/she/they get one easily?
5. Has he/she/they ever tried to choke you?
6. Is he/she/they violently or constantly jealous or does he/she/they control most of your daily activities?
7. Have you left him/her/they or separated after living together or being married?
8. Is he/she/they unemployed?
9. Has he/she/they ever tried to kill himself/herself/themselves?
10. Do you have a child that he/she/they knows is not his/hers/theirs?
11. Does he/she/they follow or spy on you or leave threatening messages?