

2016 Domestic Violence Law Enforcement Toolkit for Sheriffs

Year One Initiatives

The Governor's Domestic Violence Task Force and the Sheriff's Association recognize the significant role law enforcement plays in the life of a victim and accordingly commit to advancing a statewide, comprehensive approach to addressing domestic violence by requesting that Sheriffs' Offices make incremental changes over a three-year period. The strategy for Year One focuses on two initiatives, adopting an internal policy and conducting a needs assessment for domestic violence, which should be completed no later than December 31, 2016.

I. Adopt an Internal Policy for Domestic Violence:

A Sheriff's Office should adopt an Internal Policy for Domestic Violence for the purpose of following best practices to ensure victim safety, offender accountability, and officer safety and accountability. An example model policy will be made available that contains uniform standards but also allows for flexibility to fit local needs. The policy should include but not be limited to the following:

- A. Requiring officers to file Incident Reports on every call for the purpose of documenting domestic violence, which is escalating in nature, increasing in severity over time.
- B. Mandating Supervisory Review of all domestic violence incident reports for the purpose of ensuring that the protocols and procedures within the internal policy are correctly followed.
- C. Designating an individual to obtain copies of Orders of Protection from Family Court to deliver to the Sheriff's Office for the purpose of ensuring that Orders of Protection and Restraining Orders are entered into NCIC so that officers are aware of their existence when on scene.
- D. Requiring officers to conduct a Wanted Check at the scene of a domestic violence call for the purpose of checking whether Orders of Protection, Restraining Orders, or Warrants have been issued for an individual so that officers aware of their existence when on scene.
- E. Providing officers with a Reference Guide for the purpose of helping officers respond to calls and complete Incident Report forms accurately and efficiently. The Reference Guide should be a laminated front-and-back page that includes a summary of the 2015 Domestic Violence Reform Law as well as a basic checklist for a general lethality assessment. An example Reference Guide will be made available.

II. Conduct a Needs Assessment for Domestic Violence:

A Sheriff's Office should conduct a Needs Assessment for responding to and investigating domestic violence incidents for the purpose of developing a plan to obtain resources and improve services. The assessment should be composed of two parts:

- A. A list of current resources establishing a baseline inventory, which should include (i) the number and type of positions; (ii) the amounts and sources of funding; (iii) brief descriptions of other programs or partnerships; and (iv) a short evaluation of the current capacity to apply for and maintain grants.
- B. A list of identified needs based on level of priority, which should designate items as (i) immediate needs; (ii) short-term needs (3-5 years); or (iii) long-term needs (5-10 years).