

The Center for Court Innovation

Performance Measures for Specialized Domestic Violence Courts

Why develop performance/outcome measures?

Developing a set of performance measures provides a means of objectively assessing programs, products, activities, or services. A formal system for measuring the performance of domestic violence courts is also an essential step in long term institutionalization of these courts. It is recommended that this data is tracked both pre and post implementation of the domestic violence court in order to assess the full impact of the program.

How to measure your court's performance?

Using the categories of Enhancing Victim Safety, Processing, Offender Accountability and Interaction with Other Agencies, we suggest that courts use the performance measures listed under each heading.

ENHANCE VICTIM SAFETY

Connect victims to advocacy services

- Percentage of victims with cases in the DV Court that are referred to services
- Number of victims updated on the status of the case
- Total number of victims referred to services from all sources
- Types of service referrals made by advocates
- Number of victims from underserved populations served
- Number of follow-up contact made with victims

Increase victims' safety immediately following a domestic violence crime

- Number of emergency transportation requests
- Number of emergency short-term childcare requests
- Number of housing security requests

Increase victim satisfaction with court process

- Use local university or other researcher to conduct focus groups and/or interviews with victims

PROCESSING

Create a domestic violence court

- Date of court opening
- Number of cases in the DV Court since inception
- Types of cases the court hears

Reduce case processing time

- Time from initial domestic violence incident to arraignment
- Time between filing to disposition
- Time from arraignment to transfer to the specialized court
- Number of pre-plea appearances (on average)
- Number of continuances (on average)

Reduce the number of dismissals at the date of trial

- Number of dismissals
- Reasons that cases schedule for trial are dismissed
- Number of subpoenas to victims
- Number of victims participating in trial

Handle all domestic violence cases with a specialized staff (i.e., dedicated judge, clerk, prosecutor, defense, probation)

- Number of dedicated staff
- Number of non-dedicated staff

Coordinate conditions of criminal protective orders and conditions of civil protective orders

Number of overlapping criminal and civil protective orders

Court protocol in dealing with overlap

OFFENDER ACCOUNTABILITY

Hold offenders accountable

Number of compliance review hearings

Frequency of monitoring for compliant defendants

Frequency of monitoring for noncompliant defendants

Details of monitoring experience (judge script, etc.)

Frequency of probation regularly providing accurate compliance updates to the court

Number of probation violations filed per probation

Court's response to probation violations

Utilize graduated monitoring to promote compliance and penalize noncompliance

Types of noncompliance (e.g., breaking program rules, program absences, new arrests)

that result in heightened monitoring

Develop sanction schedule

Frequency of monitoring for noncompliant defendants

Number of noncompliant events not brought back to court

Impose swift penalties for noncompliance

Time from noncompliant event to case heard in court

Penalties imposed

Develop and utilize sanction matrix

Mandate defendants to attend a batterer program

Number of defendants mandated to attend a batterer program

Other types of programs used

Number of program sessions defendants attended

Consequences for noncompliance with program mandates

Program completion rate

Detect and respond to violations of the protective order

Time from violation of the protective order to case being heard in the DV Court

Action of the court to violations of the protective order

Number of calls law enforcement makes to victim's home when the offender violates

order

Issue protective orders in all appropriate domestic violence cases

Number/percentage of protective orders issued

Most frequently requested/used terms on the order

Terms of the order of protections

Require firearm surrender in all domestic violence cases covered by federal and/or state law

Percentage of protective orders which require firearm surrenders

INTERACTION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

Increase stakeholders, communication and effectiveness

Number of new agencies collaborating with the court

Number of cross-agency contacts

Number of stakeholder meetings

Number of joint trainings

Number of new policies/protocols/MOUs

