REVIEW OF PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MATTERS IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

June 1994

Consultant
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# COURTS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT ASSIGNMENT PROJECT ASSIGNMENT DATA SHEET

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<td>Requesting Official:</td>
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<td>Local Coordinator:</td>
<td>Dr. Cheryl Bailey, Senior Operations Management Analyst</td>
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FOREWORD

In January 1994, Hon. Eugene Hamilton, Chief Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, requested SJI's Courts Technical Assistance Project (CTAP) at The American University to review current procedures for handling domestic violence complaints and to also provide the Court with information on domestic violence programs in other courts which might be relevant to issues the District of Columbia is currently addressing.

In 1991, the District of Columbia enacted the Prevention of Domestic Violence Amendment Act in the District of Columbia, which requires police officers to make an arrest if there is probable cause that a person is responsible for an intrafamily offense that resulted in physical injury or was intended to cause a reasonable fear of injury or death. As a result of this legislation, the Court has experienced significant increases in requests for civil protection orders and domestic violence case filings generally. These caseload also increases brought to the forefront inefficiencies in the current case processing system, its limitations in dealing with domestic violence matters, and the difficulty of the current system to respond to the emergency and sensitive issues which these cases present.

A Domestic Violence Coordinating Council has been established to improve interagency coordination and communication in the handling of domestic violence matters and has charged the Council's Justice System Coordination Committee with responsibility for evaluating the manner in which domestic violence cases are currently processed. The requested technical assistance is designed to assist the Committee in this assessment and to provide recommendations to improve the domestic violence case process generally and provide victims with more timely assistance. It is anticipated that the results of this technical assistance study will provide a framework for further action by the Committee and the Council.

The consultant selected by the CTAP to provide the requested assessment was Sharon Denaro, Director of the Family Operations Division of the Administrative Offices of the Dade County Circuit Court in Miami. On May 23 and 24, Ms. Denaro conducted a site visit in Washington D.C. during which time she met with officials in the principal agencies involved in Domestic Violence matters, including the Court, the Metropolitan Police Department, the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Corporation Counsel, the Citizen's Complaint Center, and the Court's Social Services Division. Ms. Denaro also observed the intake process through which domestic violence complaints are handled and several Domestic Violence proceedings.

The local coordination for the study has been provided by Judge Susan Winfield, chairman of the Council's Justice System Coordination Committee and Presiding Judge of the Family Division, and Dr. Cheryl Bailey, Senior Operations Management Analyst for the District of Columbia Superior Court.
The results of Ms. Denaro's site findings are summarized in the following report. Because of the limited resources available for this study, Ms. Denaro has focused on current procedures applicable to the handling of domestic violence complaints, with reference to numerous other areas which need to be further explored in order to develop a comprehensive domestic violence program.

In addition to Ms. Denaro's assessment, the CTAP provided the services of Judge Jacqueline St. Joan, who oversees a Domestic Violence Program in the Denver County Court, and who met with Committee members on May 20 to discuss domestic violence program implementation issues and her experience with the Denver program. CTAP staff also compiled various background materials on these and other domestic violence programs for use by the Committee.
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I. INTRODUCTION

A. General

The following report is made after an analysis of materials provided by American University's Court's Technical Assistance Project and a two-day site visit to Washington, D.C.'s Court system on May 23rd and 24th, 1994.

Interviews with judges, court personnel, agency personnel and victim advocates, have contributed to the observations and recommendations made below.

It should be noted that many excellent components currently exist for a fine domestic violence program. In particular, there appears to be commitment and dedication within the leadership of the judiciary. Judicial interest and leadership is an integral component to a comprehensive domestic violence plan.

Further study of all system components and their relationship with one another is needed in order to determine how they may be best organized and enhanced in order to complement one another.

Once this process is complete, it is recommended that a plan be written and submitted to the Chief Judge and Domestic Violence Coordinating Counsel for their approval. Once approval is obtained and funding secured, comprehensive implementation should proceed. Partial implementation must be scrutinized since it may lead to a false sense of security for victims of domestic violence and may not provide a solution.

B. Caveat

The two days spent in Washington, although very informative, were not sufficient to analyze the entire system. In addition, no comprehensive analysis of local law was made. Therefore, some of the observations and recommendations made may need modification to accommodate realities which may have been undisclosed or not adequately understood during this brief visit. However, this report is meant to be as helpful as possible in view of the brief time allocated to this project.
II. ANALYSIS OF EXISTING SITUATION

A. Overview

The Civil case processing system, and to some degree, the criminal process relies upon the victim to move the system forward. Unfortunately, the victim is the person least able to accomplish this task.

For example, the Civil process begins with the victim seeking a Temporary Restraining Order, "TRO", or a Civil Protection Order, "CPO". This is difficult in the present system. It involves many interviews, focusing upon similar information, and a great deal of the victim's time. The victim could easily become discouraged by the process and abandon the endeavor.

B. The Citizens Complaint Center (CCC)

The CPO. There are several avenues by which the victim can obtain a Civil Protection Order, "CPO". The victim may interview with the paralegal for the U.S. Attorney at the Citizens Complaint Center (CCC), and then be referred to the paralegal for Corporation Counsel. Corporation Counsel may decline to take the case and the victim will be referred to the Clerk's Office. In the alternative, the victim may go directly to the CCC and speak to Corporation Counsel staff or directly to the Clerk's Office and file for either a TRO or a CPO or both.

Once a TRO or a CPO is prepared, the victim must again explain the situation to the "Judge in Chambers" who will decide whether a TRO should issue. If a TRO and subsequent CPO is issued, enforcement of the injunction is not emphasized, therefore, the entire process may be fruitless.

C. The CCC Procedure

The CCC is staffed by a paralegal and support staff from the U.S. Attorney's Office and a paralegal and support staff from the Corporation Counsel's Office. Each paralegal appears to be focused upon the preparation of the case for representation by their respective offices. Neither is prepared to offer the victim meaningful services.

The victim appears at the CCC office and the case is screened as a civil or criminal case by support staff. No screening is conducted to identify companion divorce or other family cases at this time.

If the case is a criminal non-arrest case, the victim is interviewed by a paralegal from the U.S. Attorney's Office. The paralegal for the U.S. Attorney's Office inquires as to whether the police were called and whether an arrest was made. Most of these cases are
non arrest cases. The victim is interviewed to ascertain the facts of the case. The paralegal inquires as to whether there are medical records or other witnesses. She then asks the victim what relief they would like, and if the victim wants the defendant arrested.

If the victim wants the defendant arrested, the victim is sent to the police department in an effort to have a warrant issued. If a warrant is issued, the victim must then go immediately to the U.S. Attorney’s Office for "papering". Nothing further is done. No relief is obtained at this time. There is no victim follow-up.

This interview process could take most of the morning. From this first interview, the victim is then referred to the paralegal for the Corporation Counsel to request a TRO or CPO. The paralegal screens the case to determine whether or not this is a "serious" case. If the case is deemed sufficiently "serious" The Corporation Counsel represents the victim at the CPO hearing. The Corporation Counsel will also prepare indirect criminal contempt cases from its own CPO Orders. Criminal violations of non Corporation Counsel clients usually obtain private counsel or proceed pro se.

Since the Corporation Counsel can only take approximately 15% of the cases, all other cases are referred to the Clerk’s office for a "Pro Se" filing for a TRO or a CPO. The Pro se process could take the remainder of the afternoon.

D. The Clerk’s Office

Petitioners may go from the CCC Offices to the Clerk’s Offices to file a petition for either TRO or CPO. In addition, petitioners may go directly to the Clerk’s office and bypass the CCC Offices. In either case, the Clerk interviews the victim and assists in the preparation of the petition for either the TRO or CPO.

Here the victim is interviewed again. This may be the third interview undergone by the victim in the attempt to obtain a TRO or CPO.

It does not appear as though the Clerk’s Office screens for other companion cases, however, this needs further study.

The Clerk appears to make a value judgment as to whether or not the victim should petition for a TRO or CPO.

A TRO is usually requested when there are physical injuries or threat of bodily harm, and there is "imminent danger" to the victim or family member.

There do not appear to be designated domestic violence clerks with either the educational background or the specific training in Domestic Violence necessary to assist victims in more than just the completion of the petition. This function needs further study. Their focus is to fill out the petition for TRO or CPO.
If the victim merely asks for a CPO, no temporary order is issued and the matter is set for hearing within 14 days.

In these cases, as in the case of the TRO, the burden is on the victim to effect both service and return of service. If service is not perfected, no CPO will be issued on the date of the hearing.

In those cases, where there is injury or "imminent danger", the victim is directed to the Judge in Chambers to request a TRO. This occurs in approximately 10% of the cases.

E. Judge in Chambers

A TRO is entered in cases that are deemed "serious". TROs are entered by the Judge in Chambers after an interview with the victim. Seriousness is loosely defined as "imminent danger" or evidence of injury or stalking. TRO's can only be issued by the "Judge in Chambers" between the hours of 9:00 a.m and 4:30 p.m. This process again depends upon the tenacity of the victim. The victim must wait his/her turn in line until the Judge in Chambers dispenses with other emergency matters. There is no priority for domestic violence cases.

This entire process could take more than a day and the victim could leave the courthouse after many hours and numerous interviews with only a hearing date for a CPO and no TRO or services in place. There is no emergency after hour access to the Clerk or the judge.

F. Intake Observations

If the factual analysis above is correct, a number of problems are apparent with the intake process:

- Civil

1. The CPO process is very time consuming. There are too many interviews which require the victim to repeat his/her story numerous times and in the end, 90% of the time he/she leaves with only a CPO hearing and no injunctive protection in place.

2. The process is not user friendly. A victim cannot go to one intake office, explain the facts to a sympathetic trained staff person, obtain emergency services and leave with a TRO.

3. Cases are subjectively screened by clerks and paralegal staff for "seriousness" or "imminent danger" of the victim.
4. The seriousness standard determines whether the victim is eligible for a TRO and Corporation Counsel representation. However, seriousness is a subjective standard and the cycle of violence is very complex.

5. A wrong guess by support staff as to what is serious may lead to injury of the victim and perhaps civil liability. It is difficult, impossible in some cases, to cull the "serious" from the non-serious cases. The dynamics of domestic violence have proven to be unpredictable. It is very difficult to know if danger is imminent or whether danger will become imminent as soon as the respondent knows of the existence of the application for the CPO.

6. The Judge in Chambers concept is very time consuming. The judge is the person in the best position to assess imminent danger but the current system does not allow the judge to assess each case.

7. The victim must serve the respondent. There is no governmental agency involved in the service. This is problematical because:
   
   a. Some respondents are dangerous and could pose a threat to any lay person who serves the injunction.

   b. The person serving the injunction may not understand the service rules which may lead to improper service in many cases.

   c. If service is not proper, the victim must come back and request another CPO and the process starts anew.

8. The procedure relies upon the victim to be tenacious and to follow rules at a time in their lives where this may be emotionally impossible.

9. There is little crisis counseling and few, if any, social services available to the victim at the front end of the system. Shelter seems to be a rare option. The focus seems to be upon case preparation.

10. The availability of the Corporation Counsel's services is an excellent concept, but they appear to be available to few petitioners. This resource needs additional study to determine its best allocation.

In summary the intake process can mean:

- a minimum of four interviews from the victim
- no social services assistance
- no TRO
- no Corporation Counsel assigned
- no assistance in serving the petition for CPO
- no protection from that date until the date of the hearing, and
- the possibility of a continuance of the hearing because the service rules were not followed

0 Criminal

1. The CCC paralegal function for the U.S. Attorney's Office concentrates on case preparation in non-arrest cases. There is little emphasis on the crisis or safety needs of the victim; yet, this is the first person the victim is likely to speak with.

2. The CCC function seems redundant. Non arrest cases must go to the police station to request a warrant prior for "papering" at the U.S. Attorney's Office. The stop at the CCC Office appears to be an unnecessary step which delays the criminal process.

3. Non arrest case victims may not file charges directly with the U.S. Attorney's Office without first pursuing a warrant. If the victim does not follow through, charges are not filed.

4. There is appears to be a no pro-prosecution policy that survives objection by the victim. Prosecution appears to depend upon the resolve of the victim. Yet, the victim must go through many steps and many interviews before seeing a mental health or victim witness counselor. For example, prior to arrest, it is possible for the victim to tell his/her story to:
   - CCC personnel including, the secretary, the paralegal for the U.S. Attorney's Office and the paralegal or Corporation Counsel,
   - the Clerk's Office personnel
   - the Judge in Chambers
   - Corporation Counsel
   - police personnel
   - U.S. Attorney's Office paralegal prior to papering
   - U.S. Attorney's victim witness counselor
   - Assistant U.S. Attorney
5. If the offender is arrested, he/she may be released the same day without posting bail. The victim is not notified of his release and there are no pre-trial services in place to protect the victim prior to adjudication in the criminal case.

G. CPO Hearing

1. Summary of Procedures

Victims are represented by Corporation Counsel, private counsel, pro bono attorneys or they appear pro se. Most pro se victims enter into a consent agreement with the respondent.

The Consent Procedure is as follows:

a. A victim advocate meets with both the petitioner and respondent in the same room just prior to the scheduled hearing.

b. The purpose of this meeting is to "negotiate" a settlement between the parties as to a CPO against violence, a visitation schedule, and child support.

c. Once a consent order is signed it is ratified by the judge on an uncontested calendar.

In practice, in spite of a dedicated victim advocate to assist the victim the following occurred in the session that I observed:

a. The respondent agreed to stay away from the victim but did not acknowledge any violence,

b. There was no evidence of financial ability to pay presented at that time, therefore, the victim advocate could do nothing except request that the respondent pay the minimum guideline amount of $50.00 per month for support of his three children and unemployed wife

c. The respondent’s wife, the petitioner, seemed afraid to talk in this setting, and was visibly upset and withdrawn,

d. The petitioner was not equipped to discuss financial arrangements for herself or her children,

e. The visitation issue was also unresolved. It was decided that the children would visit with the father for three hours each Saturday. The
visitation schedule was incomplete in terms of any long range visitation or unexpected changes.

f. The parties were both advised that a more permanent arrangement for child support could be arranged through the child support enforcement agency, however, this would not happen for a number of weeks or months.

g. It seemed clear that the victim might return to the respondent because of lack of support,

h. No batterer's treatment program was requested for respondent.

2. CPO Hearing Observations

a. There is an imbalance in the consent procedure. The victim and respondent sit next to each other, and the victim must agree or disagree to child support and visitation arrangements without the benefit the judge, as an impartial fact finder, discovery or counsel.

b. The situation seems contrived and the negotiated settlement seems to be emotionally coerced. The victim, once again, is charged with the obligation of negotiating a settlement to benefit herself and her minor children.

c. This process seems very much like mediation, which is generally disapproved in these cases.

d. It seems unlikely that the victim could request what she needed while facing the respondent in this setting. The presence of the victim's advocate did not seem to help the situation. At least in mediation, the parties might be separated and the mediator might caucus privately with each side. In this situation, the parties are face to face.

e. Also, the necessary child support arrangements and structured visitation schedule were incomplete.

f. There is also little remedy available to the victim if this negotiated settlement does not work. He/she would have to file a separate action for Child Support or Divorce. There is no apparent civil contempt procedure and the divorce process is not available to those who are not married.
g. As an alternative procedure, the victim's needs might be presented to the court by the victim advocate, if the victim is unable to do so.

h. It seems unlikely that the victim would again resort to the CPO process after the ordeal, presented by the application process and the court process.

Note: It is recognized that the number of cases and complexity of some of these cases pose a difficult scenario for a judge and that solutions to assist the judge in this setting are necessary. These solutions need additional study. Some recommendations for solutions are discussed in the recommendations set forth in section III.

H. Corporation Counsel

1. General

Some victims who apply for a CPO are assigned Corporation Counsel prior to the hearing.

When Corporation Counsel represents the victims, there seems that a more complete remedy is available to the petitioner. Corporation Counsel also represents its clients when there is a criminal violation of the injunction.

2. Corporation Counsel Observations

a. It is of some concern that the Corporation Counsel is appointed to some cases and not others, based upon the "seriousness" of the case. As was noted above, the paralegal screening process could easily fail to identify many "serious" cases. Research in this area is warranted.

b. Corporation Counsel's role is more neutral than traditional advocates and tends to support the judge in the preparation of the entire case.

c. Corporation Counsel's cases seem to have a more complete remedy for victims including recommendations to treatment and enforcement upon violation of the CPO.

I. Enforcement of the CPO

1. General

Traditionally, the contempt power of the court is the tool by which the court may enforce its orders. Misdemeanor arrest is the mechanism by which the state enforces its laws. Together, appropriately used, these two remedies give "teeth" to the CPO process,
respect for the court’s orders and potentially decreases family violence.

In the system, neither civil or indirect criminal contempt seem to be emphasized as a remedy to enforce the court's CPO orders. Indirect criminal contempt, when used, appears to be initiated by the victim who is either represented by Corporation Counsel, private counsel or is proceeding pro se.

This process requires further study to determine how it can be more effective.

2. Enforcement Observations

a. Civil Contempt
   - Enforcement of visitation and treatment provisions through civil contempt calendars appear to be uncommon.

b. Criminal Contempt
   - The indirect criminal contempt process relies upon the victim to obtain counsel. Government lawyers are generally not available to take these cases unless, as in the case of Corporation Counsel, the case is "serious" or the victim was represented by Corporation Counsel at the CPO hearing.
   - Private counsel may also prosecute the action, however, there does not seem to be sufficient representation for all victims who need this service. Consideration should be given to the appointment of the Corporation Counsel or the U.S. Attorney to prosecute these cases.
   - There does not appear to be an emphasis upon this remedy which lessens the effectiveness of the entire CPO process.

J. The Probation Department/Social Services

1. General

Social services in both the civil and criminal arena are coordinated and monitored through the Social Services Division, of the Probation Department. At the conclusion of a case, the respondent may be ordered to a substance abuse program or treatment program within the Social Services Division's Family Branch or Diagnostic and Information Resource Branch depending upon the origin and disposition of the case.

Some cases are sent directly to the DVIP for offender treatment and some cases are referred to Family Services for counseling or referral to outside treatment.
The Social Services Division of the Probation Department appears to have an excellent and wide array of services such as substance abuse treatment, offender treatment, family counseling, monitoring, supervision and a mental health staff.

2. Probation Department/Social Services Observations
   a. This department may potentially be the nucleus of the social service component of a full fledged domestic violence court including social service assessment, treatment, referral to outside treatment services and monitoring.
   b. There seems to be little access to social services for the CPO cases that are concluded by consent order.
   c. Some cases sent to Family Services receive couples counseling. This is very controversial. Most of the national models require an offender treatment program and support groups for victims or counseling for victims. There is no question that some of these families need and could benefit from counseling; however, the nature and design of this counseling needs additional study before this particular treatment methodology is accepted in D.C.
III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Analyze the functions of all affected agencies, both governmental and private and write a Domestic Violence Plan for the District of Colombia that will systematically approach the problem of domestic violence in the District.

2. Analyze existing legislation to determine where, if any, changes should occur and create legislative action committees to accomplish this goal.

3. Consolidate all CPO intake functions into one central intake for domestic violence.

4. Consolidate all criminal intake functions (including the non-arrest warrant process), into one Intake for both arrest and non-arrest cases.

5. Train staff, preferably with at least a Bachelors degree in criminal justice or social services, to assess the needs of the victim, assist in preparation of the petition, assist in the creation of a proposed visitation schedule, if children of the parties are in existence, arrange shelter for the victim and children, if necessary, and in general, assist the petitioner with both the social service needs and the request for CPO.

6. Create an ongoing training program for all intake personnel.

7. Train intake counselors to:
   a. interview the petitioner and assess needs;
   b. address the immediate social service needs of the petitioner and the minor children, such as shelter and counseling;
   c. notify HRS, if necessary;
   d. provide crisis counseling for the petitioner which incorporates knowledge of the psychology of domestic abuse and the cycle of violence,
   e. insure that existing family cases, including juvenile delinquency and dependency cases are advised of the existence of a CPO and consolidate, if necessary;
   f. draft a proposed visitation schedule;
   g. instruct the petitioner as to what to bring to the CPO hearing i.e. financial statement;
   h. contact petitioner prior to the hearing to ascertain whether or not service has been accomplished;
   i. if service has not occurred, facilitate the extension of the TRO without the necessity of the petitioner returning for a new
order;

j. contact the petitioner, if the petitioner does not attend the hearing, to ascertain the reason for such non-attendance prior to the dismissal of the action;

k. assist the petitioner to frame the allegations of the complaint.

8. Revise the "Judge and Chambers" concept. Consider:

a. A duty Judge specifically designated for domestic violence cases; or

b. A system which will revise the initial petition to include a comprehensive sworn affidavit of the factual allegations that give rise to the petitioner's request for the CPO so that the judge need not physically interrogate the victim;

c. A system whereby any Circuit Judge may review and sign Petitions for a TRO where the sworn allegations indicate the existence of violence and the potential for additional violence once the respondent is served with the petition for a CPO;

d. Add an after hours component to allow the emergency after hours judge to sign petitions for a TRO. One option for implementation might include a 24-Hour Domestic Violence Hot-line, local shelter personnel, a courier and the emergency judge equipped with a beeper and cellular phone. Some suggestions for implementation of such a system are included in the Dade County, Florida materials provided.

9. Consider shifting the emphasis from the current procedure of the entry of a TRO in only "serious" cases to a system where the TRO is entered in cases where the allegations of the petition indicate that there has been violence upon the petitioner and where it is reasonable to believe that violence may re-occur once the respondent is served with the petition.

10. The judicial involvement is critical to the Injunction process. This jurisdiction may wish to consider a Domestic Violence Division of the Court whereby one or more judges are designated to hear TROs, CPOs, civil and indirect criminal contempt and emergency motions to modify or set aside the CPO.

11. In the same manner, consider permitting these judges to hear the criminal domestic violence misdemeanors. This would involve separating the domestic violence misdemeanors from other criminal cases. It would also involve a
system whereby special prosecutors, familiar with domestic violence, would staff this court.

12. Domestic Violence judges may also wish to monitor these cases on a Judicial Review Calendars where the defendant is referred to substance abuse or offender treatment.

13. Consider redefining The Victim Advocate’s Role. The victim advocate’s talents would be better used to meet with the victim privately to ascertain:
   a. the victim’s support needs;
   b. housing needs;
   c. counseling; or
   d. other social services to assist the victim.

14. Consider eliminating the use of a Consent Order in favor of having one individual, preferably an attorney, (possibly Corporation Counsel) whose job it is to caucus privately with the individuals to arrive at a child support agreement which comport to the guidelines and a comprehensive visitation schedule. This person could work in conjunction with the victim advocate in a new role.

15. Order both respondent and petitioner to bring evidence of income to the CPO hearing in order to facilitate the entry of child support.

16. Create a system where the orders entered at the CPO hearing may become permanent by the filing of a Title IV-D petition with the local Child Support Enforcement Division after the entry of the CPO and before its expiration date.

17. Initiate a careful screening process to insure that pending divorce cases or paternity actions are identified and heard by the Family Court Judge hearing those matters.

18. Analyze all personnel currently used in the domestic violence case processing system. Determine where staff can be eliminated or reallocated to better serve the Court and the victim.

19. Negotiate with the local police agencies to provide service of process for both TROs and CPOs to eliminate the necessity of the petitioner effecting service. Service of a respondent in a domestic violence cases is dangerous and should be done by the proper police authority.
20. Negotiate with area shelters, if available, to provide 24 hour access to the petitioner for both shelter and the initiation of the CPO process.

21. Re-define the duties of the Corporation Counsel. The services of Corporation Counsel might be better utilized to assist in the negotiations between the petitioner and respondent to create a visitation schedule and the preparation of a Child Support guidelines worksheet to assist the Judge at hearing.

22. Consider the use of the Corporation Counsel's services to also prosecute indirect criminal contempt of Court for criminal violations of the court's orders. Consideration will also need to be given, however, to potential conflict issues that may need to be addressed.

23. In addition, Civil Contempt calendars may be considered to enforce non-criminal violations of the CPO such as violation of no contact provisions and visitation provisions. Child support enforcement should properly be left to the Child Support Enforcement Division.

24. Community partnerships between the court and local shelters and other service groups should be developed. For example, local shelters can provide immediate triage including overnight protection and assistance in the CPO application process for victims even where long term shelters are not available.

25. The Social Services Division of the Probation Department has all of the components for assessment, treatment, referral and monitoring for domestic violence cases. Current staff capability in this department should be assessed to determine whether they are able to:
   a. Provide a psycho-social assessment for cases referred from the Domestic Violence Court;
   b. Make referrals to the DVIP, drug programs, victim support groups, and other social service agencies;
   c. Provide monitoring of both the civil and criminal cases referred to treatment;
   d. Institute victim support groups to provide counseling for victims of domestic violence. These groups can be coordinated with local shelters;

26. Institute a Domestic Violence Training Bureau that will train Assistant U.S. attorneys, police agencies and court personnel in the new procedures and protocols.
27. Consider how other existing resources, such as those available through the District of Columbia's Drug Court program, might support Domestic Violence Program needs.

28. Other systems such as: Dade County, Florida; San Francisco, California; Seattle, Washington; Quincy, Massachusetts, should be studied with regard to legislation, prosecutorial intake and screening units, civil injunction intake units, court organization and social services. (A copy of the Dade County, Florida Domestic Violence Plan, with procedures for implementation, forms and job descriptions, has already been forwarded to the Court.)
IV. CONCLUSION

The current organization of justice system agencies in the District of Columbia poses numerous obstacles to a victim's obtaining protection in domestic violence cases. Yet, there are many fine components in place that can be utilized to create a comprehensive plan which will lessen the occurrence of domestic violence.

These components need to be analyzed, reconfigured and enhanced to accomplish the task. Some staff may be reallocated and additional staff will undoubtedly be needed. This will create initial costs. However, governmental inaction eventually costs more than it saves in the area of Domestic Violence. The financial impact incurred by the implementation of a systemic approach to the problem of domestic violence will, over time, lessen the overall costs in terms of human tragedy to the victims and real dollars to the community.