

# THE SUPREME COURT *of* OHIO

## SPECIALIZED DOCKETS GUIDANCE

### CORE COMPONENTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURTS: A National Perspective for Ohio Courts

#### INTRODUCTION

#### WHAT IS THE CENTER FOR COURT INNOVATION?

Winner of the Peter F. Drucker Award for Non-profit Innovation, the Center for Court Innovation is dedicated to reforming the justice system through demonstration projects, research, and expert assistance. The Center's goals are to help courts aid victims, reduce crime, and improve public trust in justice. In New York, the Center creates demonstration projects that test new approaches to problems that have resisted conventional solutions. Beyond New York, the Center disseminates the lessons learned from its demonstration projects, helping court reformers around the world test new solutions to local problems.

The Center provides hands-on technical assistance, advising innovators about program design, technology, and performance measures. The Center's approach to technical assistance is simple and practitioner-focused, based on direct in-house expertise implementing court reform projects.

#### Our Experience:

- Center for Court Innovation staff have designed, planned, and implemented a wide range of domestic violence courts that handle civil protection orders, misdemeanor, and felony cases. These courts are in suburban, rural, and high-volume jurisdictions.
- The Center has enhanced the domestic violence court model by creating one-family/one-judge, multi-jurisdictional Integrated Domestic Violence Courts. These courts, which integrate civil and criminal cases in a single courtroom, are among the most comprehensive judicial responses to domestic violence in the country.
- The Center has designed, built, and implemented specialized case management systems for domestic violence courts. Information technology is essential to ensuring that judges and domestic violence court staff are fully informed about each case.
- The Center uses research to assess the impact of domestic violence reforms to improve operations. The Center's research is published nationally.
- The Center employs a multi-disciplinary approach to plan, implement, and evaluate domestic violence courts.
- Center staff includes attorneys and social workers who have provided direct services to women who have been abused.

## WHAT IS A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT AND WHY ARE THEY NEEDED?

A domestic violence court is a dedicated court that provides comprehensive judicial monitoring of domestic violence offenders and frontloads services to victims. The design and structure of domestic violence court programs are developed at the local level to reflect the unique strengths, circumstances, and capacities of each community. Domestic violence courts may address criminal cases, civil cases, or a combination of both.

Domestic violence courts seek to create new links with key stakeholders, including: domestic violence agencies, social service agencies, law enforcement, civil legal service providers, the defense bar, and mandated programs for offenders (i.e. community corrections, abusive partner intervention/batterer education programs, substance abuse treatment providers, and mental health services).

Domestic violence courts may be particularly helpful in communities where there has been a lack of involvement by the court in the coordinated community response for victims. In addition, domestic violence courts collaborate with community agencies in order to streamline and enhance the coordination of resources for victims and their children. Domestic violence court programs use a variety of techniques to monitor offenders, impose accountability, and ensure consistency in judicial decision-making.

We have included a glossary of terms of frequently used terms in Appendix A for your reference.

TYPE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT, JURISDICTION, AND CORE PRINCIPLES

Type of Court	Jurisdiction	Core Principles
<p>One-family/ one- judge multi- jurisdictional domestic violence court</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criminal domestic violence cases, misdemeanor and/or felony;</li> <li>• family law matters, including divorce, custody, child support, paternity;</li> <li>• civil protection orders;</li> <li>• child protective and juvenile justice matters if related</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage informed judicial decision-making based on comprehensive and current information on issues involving the family.</li> <li>• Maintain due process and confidentiality protections for all matters.</li> <li>• Ensure consistent handling of all matters relating to the same family.</li> <li>• Provide on-going training for the presiding judge on domestic violence issues.</li> <li>• Improve victim safety through the elimination of conflicting orders and careful monitoring of offender compliance.</li> <li>• Increase efficient use of court resources, with reduced numbers of appearances &amp; speedier dispositions through consolidation of operations into one courtroom.</li> <li>• Ensure linkage to social services and other resources to address the needs of family members.</li> <li>• Improve collaboration among criminal justice, child welfare agencies and community-based groups offering assistance to domestic violence victims and their children.</li> <li>• Increase confidence in the court system by reducing inefficiency for litigants.</li> </ul>

Type of Court	Jurisdiction	Core Principles
Criminal domestic violence court	<p>Ordinance level, misdemeanor and/or felony criminal cases involving an adult defendant and adult victim involved in an intimate relationship, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persons legally married to one another;</li> <li>• Persons formerly married to one another;</li> <li>• Persons who have a child in common, regardless whether such persons have been married or have lived together at any time;</li> <li>• Persons currently or formerly involved in an intimate relationship, including dating partners and same sex couples.</li> <li>• Elder abuse by family member or caretaker</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage informed judicial decision-making based on comprehensive and current information.</li> <li>• Ensure a consistent criminal justice system response to domestic violence by having a single presiding judge.</li> <li>• Improve victim safety by front-loading services and increasing communication with other courts.</li> <li>• Increase offender accountability by ensuring ongoing monitoring of compliance.</li> <li>• Improve the community's response to domestic violence by linking the court with criminal justice system stakeholders – such as probation and the district attorney's office, the defense bar, community-based social services, and domestic violence advocacy groups.</li> </ul>

Type of Court	Jurisdiction	Core Principles
Civil/Family domestic violence court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cases in which a petitioner/plaintiff (victim) has filed a civil protective order against an intimate or dating partner.</li> <li>• This type of court may also include related cases involving the petitioner and respondent, such as custody, visitation, and child protective cases.</li> <li>• Guardianship petitions on behalf elderly victims of domestic violence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance judicial decision-making by increasing the information readily available to judges.</li> <li>• Ensure a consistent response to domestic violence by assigning a single presiding judge.</li> <li>• Improve victim safety by front-loading services and increasing communication with other courts, including criminal.</li> <li>• Increase offender accountability by ensuring ongoing monitoring of the respondent's compliance without increasing the burden upon the petitioner.</li> <li>• Improve the community's response to domestic violence by linking family court with criminal justice stakeholders, community-based social services, and domestic violence advocacy groups.</li> </ul>

Type of Court	Jurisdiction	Core Principles
Juvenile domestic violence court	Cases in which a petitioner has filed a restraining order/civil protective order against a juvenile with whom they share, or have shared an intimate relationship, or with whom they have a child in common; or protective order applications between juveniles and their parents and or caretakers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance judicial decision-making by increasing information available to judges.</li> <li>• Ensure a consistent response to juvenile domestic violence perpetrators by having a single presiding judge.</li> <li>• Direct juveniles to age-appropriate programs that are interactive and designed to engage young people.</li> <li>• Frontload social services and other resources to address young victims' needs comprehensively.</li> <li>• Increase offender accountability by ensuring ongoing monitoring of compliance.</li> <li>• Improve community's response to juvenile domestic violence by linking court with youth-serving community-based social service providers and domestic violence advocacy groups.</li> </ul>

## OPERATIONALIZING CORE COMPONENTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT

### What Form Will The Domestic Violence Court Take?

What are the goals and major objectives for the domestic violence court that is being created?

Identifying and prioritizing the goals envisioned for the court will be the first step in determining its attributes. These goals will define the overall mission and purpose of the court. Then, consider what objectives are set for each goal identified for the court. Objectives explain how each goal is achieved. Typically, increased victim safety and offender accountability are high priorities.

### What type of domestic violence court is right for the community?

Even if there is an idea of what type of domestic violence court the community needs, it is appropriate to reconsider the specific jurisdiction of the project in light of the data collected. For example, given the numbers of domestic violence cases does the court and community want to:

- Focus only on intimate partner violence criminal cases? Do you want to target any specific level of criminal case, i.e. ordinance, misdemeanor or felony?
- Address intimate partner violence civil protection order cases?
- Address multi-jurisdictional intimate partner violence cases, i.e. families that have both civil and criminal cases pending simultaneously?
- Address all family violence cases including child abuse, cases with grandparents/parents/adult children; siblings and elder abuse in addition to intimate partner cases?
- Address intimate partner violence among juveniles?
- Address language, cultural, and social services for underserved populations?

Communities might also consider more in-depth questions about the cases that will be handled by the court. For example:

- How will the court define intimate partner violence cases? Is this limited by statutory definitions? If not, how will the definition mesh with definitions used by local police and prosecutors?
- Will the court hear cases associated with the defendant/respondent/offenders not directly related to intimate partner violence? For example, should the domestic violence court judge hear a pending drug possession charge not related to the domestic violence but concerning the same defendant?
- Will the court include additional types of charges and/or cases in the future? If so, what will be the timetable for phasing in each case type?

## DOCUMENTING YOUR PLAN

### What is a planning document and why is it necessary?

Even with a short planning timeline, teams will discover the importance of creating a planning document. The planning document is the written version of all the policies and procedures developed during the planning process. Memorializing these protocols in writing helps to clarify the mission of the domestic violence court, formalizes the roles and responsibilities of court, and stakeholder staff and helps to ensure the accountability of the court and its partners. The planning document also serves as a reference for future personnel in the event of staff turnover.

As the planning process continues, additional challenges will arise. In addition to being a touchstone for action, the planning document will also be a living document that can be updated to reflect needed changes and additions.

## Planning Document Checklist: Basic Information that Should be Memorialized

A checklist is provided below to assist you in the creation and organization of the planning document:

- Mission and goals of the court.
- A list of planning team and advisory board members and additional stakeholders.
- The types of cases heard in the dedicated docket and any court rules/statutes issues to support the creation of the domestic violence court.
- A staffing plan for the court, delineating additional court personnel needs, and job descriptions of proposed additional staff. The plan should identify existing court and stakeholder agency staff who may perform some additional functions.
- Services for Victims: outlining who will be providing services both legal and supportive counseling, where services will be provided, and how referrals will be handled.
- Services for Defendants/ Respondents: outlining who will be providing legal services for defendants or respondents, what mandated programs are available to the court, and how referrals will be handled.
- Name the presiding judge and a back-up judge for the domestic violence court.
- List the trainings on domestic violence dynamics and law that the presiding judge, back-up judge, and relevant court staff will attend as preparation for opening the domestic violence court.
- If the court is handling protective orders, include policies concerning full, faith and credit requirements, firearms, and other strategies to ensure effectiveness.
- Include the plan for judicial monitoring of defendants/respondents/offenders, including those mandated to programs and under court orders of protection and other conditions. Outline linkages to the referral process to appropriate providers, reporting requirements, information sharing, designation of a liaison from each program to the domestic violence court, proposed scheduling of court appearances, and a sanctioning plan for defendant/respondent/offender failure to comply.
- Delineate the physical space plan that includes secure space for domestic violence victims, space for on-site services and additional back-office space for other court personnel. Additional court security plans should also be included.
- Outline the technology being used in the court project—include who will be using which technology and for what purpose being mindful of confidentiality issues.
- Document what types of evaluation and feedback mechanisms of the project will occur, and who is responsible for evaluation.



## CASE IDENTIFICATION AND TRANSFER

### Case Identification

Case identification is the process for flagging civil or criminal domestic violence cases as potentially eligible for transfer to the dedicated court according to the parameters that have been set for the court. For example, a state domestic violence statute may include violence between siblings, but the court may decide to focus on intimate partner cases only. Identifying these domestic violence cases is the essential first step in the process. Once it has been determined which cases will be handled in the dedicated court, for example, civil protection orders, criminal cases or both, the court and its stakeholders (prosecutors, clerk intake centers, etc.) will need to establish how they are screened and identified as eligible. The court will also need to determine who will carry out these screening and identification activities.

Planning teams may need to work closely with the state criminal justice agency, court staff, the county prosecutor's office, and local law enforcement to determine the best mechanism for identifying and tracking domestic violence cases. The following sources of information may prove helpful in the process:

1. The state criminal justice agency;
2. Order of protection petition and domestic violence complaint filings;
3. Supporting depositions;
4. Information on arrest reports;
5. Information from the prosecutor's office;
6. Automated Case Management Systems; and
7. Other domestic violence flags specific to your area.

### Transfer

In addition to developing protocols for the identification of eligible cases, it is helpful to create procedures that ensure eligible cases are moved at the earliest possible stage to the domestic violence court.

It is important to identify and document who will be responsible for case identification, screening and transfer of cases. Some courts have one person responsible for this, while others have multiple people or agencies indentifying the cases.

It is recommended that the team consider maintaining a separate calendar dedicated solely to domestic violence cases including monitoring compliance. (See judicial compliance section below for more information.) Many domestic violence courts have found that this practice facilitates improved information sharing and more efficient case management.

## Judicial Compliance

Judicial compliance reviews, or judicial monitoring, ensure court supervision of offenders' compliance with court-mandated conditions—such as restraining orders, probation conditions, and abuse intervention program attendance—and consequences for violations. Judicial supervision is typically accomplished in the domestic violence court context by bringing offenders back before the judge for frequent appearances on a compliance calendar. For example, a judge might bring a defendant back to court every other week in the beginning of the mandate. If the defendant complies with all court-imposed conditions, including abiding by the order of protection and attending an abuse intervention program regularly, the judge might increase the length between monitoring appearances. The goal is to send the message that all court orders, even those that don't involve incarceration, have real consequences.

The success of monitoring and the compliance calendar is dependent upon timely reporting and information sharing between stakeholders and the court.

Judicial compliance reviews are central to promoting accountability. It is important to consider how compliance will be monitored by the court and court stakeholders. In particular, consider:

- Establish guidelines for consistency in reports to the court regarding program compliance for all agencies who provide mandated programming;
- Ensure that programs have clear compliance rules;
- Designate court staff responsible for gathering reports and an easily accessible area to store these reports;
- Create standard forms for program agencies to be used for reporting;
- Establish general frequency of compliance appearances and determine if agencies providing mandated services can appear in court as well;
- Consider sanctions that may be appropriate for non-compliance other than new criminal behavior;
- Formalize the role of local stakeholders in monitoring compliance possibly in addition to judicial monitoring (i.e. probation); and
- Establish protocols for probation violation hearings.

## Ensuring Victim Safety in the Courthouse

Domestic violence courts should provide a safe and secure environment. What are the court's project goals regarding victim safety and how are they reflected in your courthouse and operational protocols?

Below are some suggestions for creating a safe and secure environment:

- Sufficient security personnel who are well trained in the area of domestic violence and can identify and respond to potentially volatile situations.
- Protocol for court staff (including clerks, security and interpreters) assigned to the domestic violence court specifying if staff will be dedicated or rotating staff.
- Protocols for timing of litigants arriving to and departing from court.
- A printed calendar for security and court staff to ensure identification of all litigants.
- Domestic violence training for all court staff including court security.
- Clear and visible signs posted to direct litigants to needed services in all relevant languages.
- A clearly marked information desk or central location for public inquiries with an ability to respond to those with limited English proficiency.
- Readily available information regarding the domestic violence court as well as on-site and off-site services.
- A safe waiting area for victims of domestic violence and their children that is staffed with an advocate who can direct them services.
- A safe space available for reception and a children’s play area.
- A separate space for defendants/respondents/offenders to avoid contact with victims including separate waiting and attorney conferencing areas for defendants/respondents/offenders and complaining witnesses/victims.
- A case management system that ensures confidentiality and case integrity.

## Staffing

It is important to outline which staff and stakeholders will be needed in court and what their roles and responsibilities will be in order to ensure the court runs smoothly. The caseload analysis, judicial monitoring, and victim safety considerations are useful tools in identifying what the day to day operations of the court will look like. In order to achieve the court’s goals, what court staff will be needed? What would these roles and responsibilities look like—both in the day to day operations and on the actual day of court? What time and staffing commitment is required of stakeholder agencies to ensure the court project is efficient and coordinated? Be specific as possible and include all possible stakeholders and court staff in this process. Examples of staffing considerations are:

- Case identification and screening
- Database management
- Clerk staffing in the court room

- Security staffing
- Compliance monitoring: resource gathering, program referral, compliance reporting, sharing information with judges
- Staffing of compliance reviews: what stakeholders need to be there
- Calendar call: what stakeholders and court staff need to be there

See Appendix B for samples of Victim Advocate and Resource Coordinator job descriptions.

## Technology

Technology plays an important role in enhancing court operations and can significantly increase a judge’s ability to make informed decisions, enhance the accountability of offenders, and promote collaboration with court partners. Planning teams should conduct research to discover all of the different technology applications currently being used by the court and determine whether or not these systems have specialized identifiers for domestic violence cases. These identifiers can assist in streamlining the transfer of cases into a dedicated court and tracking outcomes.

In addition, teams may want to investigate whether or not their state has access to a statewide database/registry of all orders of protection and how local orders are added to the registry. This type of registry will prove to be very useful for the domestic violence court when personnel need to determine the history of violence in a particular case.

## Stakeholder Involvement & Sustaining Collaboration

A clear understanding of the community’s resources will enable the court to develop protocols with stakeholder agencies to outline each agency’s role regarding victim service referrals and defendant program mandates.

## FRONTLOADED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES

Early linkage to services for victims helps to promote safety and improve service delivery for the victim and the children. The planning team should identify the existing victim services providers and the types of services offered. For example, the community might have system-based victim services, such as those provided by the prosecutor’s office, as well as an independent, community-based domestic violence service agency. In this case, the planning team should examine the difference in these services, create protocols for referrals made to each agency, and determine whether they can have staff on-site at the courthouse. In addition, the planning team should work to include culturally and linguistically responsive agencies for victims in order to meet the needs of the entire community.

Each domestic violence court presiding and back-up judge as well as court staff should become familiar with the agencies that can provide victim services to the court and litigants. When appropriate, the judge as well as court personnel can meet with the heads of each agency to determine referral protocols.

## LEGAL REPRESENTATION FOR LITIGANTS

It is important to identify potential sources of legal representation for the parties that come before the court, including public defender organizations, legal services and non-profit teams, lawyers for children, and the private bar. It will be helpful to develop protocols for determining how volunteer attorneys can be linked to self-represented litigants.

## OTHER COMMUNITY AGENCIES

Domestic violence courts may collaborate with service providers to ensure a coordinated community response and comprehensive services for all parties. Specific activities include:

- Establishing liaisons with all stakeholders for victim service provision and offender accountability including agencies that serve older, disabled, and diverse communities;
- Establishing protocols between these agencies and the court;
- Instituting cross-training programs;
- Providing a schedule for regular, ongoing stakeholder meetings; and
- Planning for the involvement of judges and court staff in outreach and training opportunities.

## SUSTAINING COLLABORATION

Continued communication among stakeholder agencies will help to encourage ongoing interagency cooperation and elicit helpful feedback and solutions regarding the court's performance. Each community faces unique challenges when creating and maintaining their own domestic violence court. Ongoing and consistent communication, periodic meetings and training with the planning team, and continued evaluation of court goals and operations are vital to the court's ability to serve the needs of victims effectively within the community and hold offenders accountable.

### Training

Understanding the dynamics of domestic violence, new research, and national best practices is crucial to ensure the ongoing success of your court project. Outlining training resources and integrating training into the planning and ongoing operations is a key step in the planning process.

## **Judicial Training**

An informed judiciary is vital to the efficacy of all domestic violence court models. In addition to providing education on the dynamics of domestic violence, trainings targeted specifically to judges can provide tools for handling the nuts-and-bolts legal issues of these cases and give a stronger sense of the roles judges play in and out of the courtroom to help victims achieve safety and hold offenders accountable.

## **On-Site Local Trainings**

Planning teams can take a leadership role to help engage and educate court staff, court stakeholders, and the community at large about domestic violence by organizing and providing on-site trainings at the courthouse.

A useful approach is to consult with the local domestic violence service provider(s) to choose a topic related to domestic violence and to select local domestic violence advocates/experts to conduct the training. Consider using the Planning Domestic Violence Training Programs for Your Community: A Practice Guide to help identify and prioritize training topics. Possible topics include: General Introduction to the Dynamics of Domestic Violence; Cultural Responsiveness and Domestic Violence; Elder Abuse; Domestic Violence and Disability Issues; Children and Domestic Violence; Procedural Justice; Trauma and Domestic Violence; and Offender Accountability Guidelines and Victim Safety.

## **Non-Judicial Personnel, Including Court Staff and Security**

Knowledge of the dynamics of domestic violence among court and court stakeholder staff is essential to creating a responsive court. Court staff may be the first people that victims encounter, and the demeanor of the domestic violence court staff will impact a victims' overall experience.

## **Evaluation: How will success be measured?**

The planning team will want to be able to monitor and assess the performance of the domestic violence court once it has been implemented. One way is to obtain a formal independent evaluation of the court's implementation and impacts by assessing recidivism, victim services, offender compliance with court orders, or other outcomes. In addition, whether or not the court decide to invest in a formal evaluation, it is useful to take some simple steps towards "self-assessment"—determine the court's most important goals and objectives, identify a simple, short list of key performance measures to monitor progress, and institute a data collection protocol to ensure that the measures that were identified can be tracked.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

#### Glossary of Terms

This glossary of terms provides definitions relevant to the contents of this toolkit and may not include definitions outlined by federal, state, and/or local laws.

**Abusive Person Intervention Program (APIP) also called Batterer Intervention Program (BIP):**

Educational programs for people that abuse their intimate partners.

**Accountability:** Holding domestic violence offenders responsible for their actions and promoting the message that battering will not be tolerated. This is one of the primary purposes of the domestic violence court. Both courts and stakeholders play significant roles in accomplishing this goal through coordination and information sharing.

**Advisory board:** A panel of executive-level personnel and decision makers from the community that provide assistance to the planning team from a policy-level perspective. The committee is not typically involved in the “day-to-day” running of the court.

**Baseline data:** Basic information gathered before a program begins. It is used later to provide a comparison for assessing program impact.

**Batterer Intervention Program (BIP):** see Abusive Person Intervention Program (APIP).

**Compliance calendar:** A consistently held calendar in the domestic violence court which entails bringing defendants back to court to ensure observance of a court-ordered condition such as an order of protection or attendance at a batterer program and swift consequences for noncompliance.

**Court stakeholders:** Agencies or organizations with a mission that necessitates frequent interactions with the court system or with individuals involved in the system, such as criminal justice agencies, defense attorneys, victim service agencies, and other social service organizations.

**Defendant:** The person charged with an offense in criminal court. Domestic violence courts maintain traditional adversarial roles and require strong defense advocacy.

**Domestic violence:** A pattern of actual or threatened physical, emotional, verbal, and sexual abuse, which includes, but is not limited to, threats, intimidation, isolation, and/or financial control. Domestic violence is an intentional pattern of behavior that is used by one person as a means to harm and take power and control over another person in the context of a dating, family, caretaker, or other intimate relationship.

**Domestic violence court:** A domestic violence court is a dedicated court that provides comprehensive judicial monitoring of domestic violence offenders and frontloads services to victims. (see the Introduction for a description of several domestic violence court models.)

**Institutional review board (IRB):** A group that has been formally designated to approve, monitor, and review research involving humans with the aim to protect the rights and welfare of the subjects.

**Judicial compliance review/monitoring:** Judicial supervision of domestic violence offender compliance with court mandates, including orders of protection and mandated program attendance. Effective monitoring is dependent upon coordination with court stakeholders. The domestic violence court compliance calendar is frequently used as the primary mechanism for judicial monitoring.

**Petitioner/Plaintiff:** The person or agency filing the petition in civil or family court.

**Planning document:** A written version of all the policies and procedures you have discussed and developed during the planning process.

**Planning team:** A group typically comprised of judges, court staff and middle-management court stakeholder representatives, who are responsible for participating in the development of policies and procedures within the court and between court stakeholders.

**Prosecution Witness:** In a criminal court, it is the primary witness for the prosecution whose testimony is the foundation for the charges brought by the prosecution.

**Respondent:** The person or agency against whom the petition is filed in civil or family court.

**Site visits:** Visits hosted by a pre-existing court for planning teams to observe court projects, meet judges and court planners, and participate in peer-to-peer consultations with relevant counterparts.

**Victim advocate (community-based):** An individual who works for an independent victim service agency and provides domestic violence victims with notification of and accompaniment to court hearings, education regarding the court system and domestic violence, safety planning, and assistance with obtaining protective orders. Community-based victim advocates also liaise with prosecutors, probation officers, and court personnel. Most independent victim service agencies have a written confidentiality waiver that must be signed by the victim before the advocate can share information with the court or any other person or organization.

**Victim advocate (institutional):** An individual who typically works for the prosecution or law enforcement agency and who assists victims of domestic violence and promotes trust and communication between the victims and prosecution as the cases proceed through the criminal justice system. These advocates also explain the prosecution's position to the victim and the possible effects and consequences of their actions to increase the victim's understanding of the criminal case. In addition, institutional victim advocates conduct safety planning, court accompaniment, shelter placement, and advocacy. Because of their affiliation with organizations mandated to investigate and prosecute criminal activity, these advocates may be compelled to give victim information to the prosecutor—even if the victim does not want the information to be shared.



## APPENDIX B

### Job Descriptions

#### **Resource Coordinator**

The Resource Coordinator will gather and organize all related court information pertaining to the litigants in the DV Court; assist with intake assessments; develop a resource guide for court staff and stakeholders; develop and implement protocols with off-site agencies regarding offender compliance and victim referral; oversee the submission of required reports and compliance-related paperwork; work collaboratively with staff, criminal justice, and social service agencies to coordinate the delivery of services; serve as a liaison between the Court, private, and public agencies; participate in program planning and development; identify appropriate offender services for referral; and facilitate linkages with community service providers.

Preference will be given to a MSW or CSW with experience in criminal justice or family court, teen dating violence or domestic violence, and assessment and linkages to services. Familiarity with the court system; ability to interact with members of the judiciary and social service providers; excellent written and oral communication skills; strong organization skills; ability to manage multiple projects simultaneously; and familiarity with computer technology applications is desirable.

#### **Victim Advocate**

The Advocate will work on-site at the [Name of Court] during the domestic violence court's days of operation. The Advocate will work closely with the Resource Coordinator to receive victim referrals and coordinate information sharing between the court and the victim service agency regarding court dates, offender compliance, and victim safety concerns. The Advocate will be responsible for: contacting victims by telephone, letter, or through appointments to provide information regarding court procedures, compliance, and conditions of protective orders, as well as provide crisis intervention, emotional support, referrals to shelters, relocation assistance, and safety planning; advocating with the criminal justice personnel on behalf of clients; maintaining case records and statistics; and attending domestic violence court stakeholder meetings with other service providers and court personnel associated with the domestic violence court.

## APPENDIX C

### Bibliography of Center for Court Innovation Domestic Violence Court Articles and Documents

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Also available at [www.courtinnovation.org](http://www.courtinnovation.org)

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