

# A GUIDE TO BECOMING A BLUEPRINT COMMUNITY

## An Interagency Response to Battering and Domestic Violence Crimes

October 2015

Copyright © 2015 by Praxis International

*This project is supported by Grant No. 2010-TA-AX-K008 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions and recommendations expressed in this document are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

Acknowledgments.....	7
Introduction .....	11
Becoming a Blueprint Community: Quick Start Guide.....	19
Adaptation Timeline.....	21
Who’s Who in Adapting the Blueprint for Safety? .....	23
Phase 1: Explore and Prepare .....	27
Phase 2: Assess Practice and Identify Problems .....	33
Phase 3: Adapt Policy and Adjust Practice.....	39
Phase 4: Implement and Institutionalize .....	47
Phase 5: Monitor and Revise .....	53
Principles and Complex Realities .....	59
Insights from the Early Adapters .....	73
Appendices.....	77



**For more information about the Office on Violence Against Women/Praxis International *Blueprint for Safety* and to access training, assistance, and materials, go to:**

Praxis International

[www.praxisinternational.org](http://www.praxisinternational.org)

**For more information about the Saint Paul *Blueprint for Safety*, go to:**

Saint Paul & Ramsey County Domestic Abuse Intervention Project

[www.stpaulBlueprintspip.org](http://www.stpaulBlueprintspip.org)



# The **blueprint** *for* **safety**

ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU TELLS US THAT JUSTICE DEMANDS THREE THINGS: THAT THE TRUTH BE TOLD, THAT TO WHATEVER EXTENT POSSIBLE THE HARM BE REPAIRED, AND THAT THE CONDITIONS THAT GAVE RISE TO THE INJUSTICE BE FOREVER ALTERED.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

---

There is a common saying about the great time and distance it takes for a cargo ship to change course. The process of adapting the Blueprint for Safety (Blueprint) is much like turning a cargo ship—in this case, the super-sized vessel carrying the criminal legal system and its response to battering. It requires all hands on deck to make the kinds of changes that position such a large, complex system to establish and sustain the Blueprint’s unified approach to battering and domestic violence. *Becoming a Blueprint Community: A New Response to Battering and Domestic Violence Crimes* is the result of learning from those who have been ‘turning the cargo ship’ since the Blueprint was first launched in St. Paul, Minnesota in 2010. Many communities and individuals have contributed their experience, insight, and expertise to the lessons and tools included in this guide. Praxis International extends its thanks and tremendous appreciation to all involved. We also offer our regrets for being unable to list by name each individual survivor, advocate, practitioner, and community member who has contributed to the Blueprint adaptation thinking and testing in the three demonstration communities and in St. Paul over the past five years. The names would run into the hundreds, if not thousands.

First, we thank the many survivors who have talked with and guided the local coordinators, adaptation teams, and Praxis staff involved in the demonstration initiative and ongoing adaptation of the Blueprint. Their contributions help keep the needs and lives of battered women at the center of the work.

Our appreciation to the U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women for funding to support the Blueprint for Safety Adaptation Demonstration Initiative—and for their guidance, curiosity and insight that supports the ambitious endeavor known as the Blueprint.

We cannot begin to adequately acknowledge the communities that have participated in the Demonstration Initiative. We trust that the coordinators who have been charged with the day-to-day challenge of making the Blueprint real in their communities (listed below as of July 2015), will convey our great appreciation and thanks to the police, prosecutors, probation officers, judges, and community members who are working alongside one another to create a unified policy and approach to violence that causes much harm and damage in our communities. Each site has contributed its distinctive experience to the task of understanding how to shape criminal legal system practice around the Blueprint for Safety. To illustrate, we acknowledge one facet of that experience here.

- Duluth, MN, brought its long history and experience with how to establish and sustain a coordinated community response to battering. The Duluth Model CCR is the foundation of the Blueprint.
  - Scott Miller, Blueprint Co-coordinator
  - Tara Haynes, Blueprint Co-coordinator



- Melissa Scaia, Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs
- New Orleans, LA, offered its willingness to try out new ways of involving advocates, practitioners, and the community to expand discussions about disparity.
  - Amalfi Parker-Elder, Blueprint Coordinator
  - Kati Bambrick Rodriguez, City of New Orleans Domestic Violence Program Director
- Memphis and Shelby County, TN, assembled a forum of practitioners, advocates, survivors, and community members to plot out the impact of the intersections of poverty, language, culture, and identity on the system's tendency to rely on the victim to carry the case forward.
  - Lia Roemer, Blueprint Coordinator
  - Martha Lott, Shelby County Community Services

A heartfelt thank-you to our many friends in the City of St. Paul and Ramsey County, MN, for their ongoing commitment to making the Blueprint a living, breathing, sustainable philosophy and approach to battering. St. Paul and Ramsey County have provided invaluable peer-to-peer and technical support to the demonstration site communities, and have continued to experiment with Blueprint implementation and strengthen it.

- Bree Adams-Bill, Blueprint Enhancement Coordinator
- Amy Brown Jensen, St. Paul Police Department
- Shelley Johnson Cline, St. Paul & Ramsey County Domestic Abuse Intervention Project

We also want to acknowledge the contributors to the December 2013 Disparity Think Tank organized by Praxis International and held in New Orleans. The rich and challenging discussions helped move forward the effort to actualize the Blueprint's intention to "act in ways that reduce unintended consequences and disparity of impact on victims and offenders" (Foundational Principle #6). Along with our thanks to the Blueprint coordinators and Praxis staff and consultants who participated, our great appreciation to the following presenters and participants:

- Sandra Harrell, VERA Institute of Justice
- David Pate, Center for Family Policy and Practice
- Hillary Potter, Department of Sociology, University of Colorado – Boulder
- Connie Sponsler-Garcia, Battered Women's Justice Project
- Olga Trujillo, Olga Trujillo, Inc.

- Mary Asmus, Duluth City Attorney's Office
- Amanda Crosby, Access North
- Kelly Whalen, Ramsey County Community Corrections
- Ashley Bernal, Women with a Vision
- Dianne Hoofkin, Crescent House
- Gwen Richardson, Ashe Cultural Arts Center
- Yana Sutton, Total Community Action
- Theresa McCusker, Shelby County District Attorney's Office

Praxis staff and consultants have provided ongoing technical assistance to the demonstration sites and continue to guide, refine, and strengthen the Blueprint idea and process.

- The Praxis Blueprint Team: Denise Eng, Blueprint Program Manager, and Julie Tilley, Maren Woods, Cyndi Cook
- Technical assistance consultants: Beverly Balos, Cheryl Beardslee, John Beyer, Marcus Bruning, Colia Ceisel, Kristine Lizdas (Battered Women's Justice Project), Rhonda Martinson, Jane Sadusky

Two of these deserve special recognition and appreciation: Denise Eng, fierce advocate for women and their children, who co-directed development of the original Blueprint in St. Paul, has shepherded the demonstration initiative skillfully from the very beginning, and is arguably the most experienced Blueprint coordinator on earth. And Jane Sadusky—a fierce advocate, too—but also wordsmith extraordinaire. She has taken our collective thinking and learnings, and crafted this guide so that women and children in every community may benefit from the changes the Blueprint creates.

As is common in a multi-year project, faces change when people move on. We would also like to thank the following individuals who contributed to the Blueprint adaptation demonstration initiative earlier in its development: Deborah Clubb, Dottie Jones, Cory Turner, and Dr. Betty Winter.

Finally, we acknowledge our gratitude to Ellen Pence, Praxis International's founding director, who was unable to see and enjoy her vision of the Blueprint tried and tested in such a dynamic way. Her wisdom and humor are greatly missed—she is greatly missed.

*Praxis International, October 2015*

# INTRODUCTION

---

## QUESTIONS

*How are we intervening in battering and the unique nature of this particular kind of violence against women, characterized by ongoing coercion, control, and violence?*

*Does our response make people safer? Are we reaching those who are most dangerous and cause the most harm? What messages are we sending and reinforcing? Are we paying attention to how our intervention impacts victims of battering and the community?*

Beginning in 2007—after decades of experience in reforming the criminal legal system’s response to domestic violence crimes and exploring “coordinated community response”—St. Paul, Minnesota, asked such questions of itself.<sup>1</sup> A partnership of advocates, system practitioners, and a faith-based economic and social justice coalition united to examine whether and how the community was meeting these goals. After using a Safety and Accountability Audit<sup>2</sup> to look deeply at current practice, the partnership sought support from the Minnesota Legislature to create a comprehensive, unified framework that would define how the criminal legal



---

<sup>1</sup> *Coordinated community response* (“CCR”) is the collective act of ensuring that institutions intervening in violence against women (1) centralize safety and well-being for victims/survivors, (2) hold perpetrators accountable while offering opportunities to change, and (3) seek systemic change that contributes to ending violence against women. In 1980, Duluth, MN, began the groundbreaking work to define CCR in the setting of the criminal legal system. See *Coordinating Community Responses to Domestic Violence: Lessons from Duluth and Beyond*, Melanie F. Shepard and Ellen L. Pence, Eds., Sage Publications, 1999. Praxis International’s founding director, Ellen Pence, was instrumental in developing the CCR idea and approach and drawing upon it in designing the *Blueprint for Safety*.

<sup>2</sup> Developed by Praxis International, the Safety and Accountability Audit is an interdisciplinary self-assessment tool that explores how institutional practice enhances or diminishes safety and accountability. Further information at [http://praxisinternational.org/iata\\_what\\_is\\_a\\_safety\\_audit.aspx](http://praxisinternational.org/iata_what_is_a_safety_audit.aspx).

system should respond to domestic violence-related crimes, particularly those involving the greatest harm. The result was the St. Paul *Blueprint for Safety*, subsequently tailored for broader adaptation by Praxis International as the *Blueprint for Safety* and drawing on the long history of institutional change provided by the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (“Duluth Model”).

## BLUEPRINT DEFINED

The Blueprint for Safety (Blueprint) is a coordinated justice system response to domestic violence crimes that positions this complex system to respond more quickly and effectively and enhance its capacity to stop violence, reduce harm, and save lives. While the Blueprint is applicable to the broad range of domestic violence crimes, its primary focus is on the criminal legal system’s response to battering in intimate partner relationships.<sup>3</sup>

The Blueprint is a distinct blend of approach, document, and process that together fully articulate the idea of a coordinated community response. As an *approach*, the Blueprint is a shared way of thinking about battering and domestic violence. It gets everyone on the same page under a common understanding of the intimidation and violence that characterize battering and how to intervene most successfully. The Blueprint is also a *process* for shared problem identification and problem solving based on regular monitoring and adjustments to practice. As a *document*, the *Blueprint* is a set of written policies, protocols, and training memos drawn from templates that are based on research and best-known practice. While each agency writes its own policy and protocols, the Blueprint framework and templates connect agencies in a unified, collective policy.

The Blueprint grew from conversations and consultation with victims of battering, community-based advocates, system practitioners, defense attorneys, researchers, agency leaders, other community members, and local and national experts. The Blueprint also grew from a recognition that while there had been many improvements and gains in the criminal legal system’s response to battering, the coordinated community response (CCR) sometimes floundered under the realities of making change in such a complex system. In many communities, the CCR pitfalls could be characterized by:

---

<sup>3</sup> The Blueprint differentiates **battering**, characterized by ongoing, patterned coercion, intimidation, and violence; **resistive** violence, used by victims of battering to resist or defend themselves or others; and **non-battering** violence resulting from such causes as a physical or mental health condition or traumatic brain injury. The legal system’s category of “domestic violence” includes many types of abusive behavior and relationships. When this guide refers to “domestic violence crimes,” it is primarily concerned with those in the context of battering, although the policies, protocols, and tools included benefit the response to all forms of domestic violence.

- An overall drift from the original purpose of CCR to create systemic change that improves outcomes for victims of violence against women and deterrence for abusers
- Reform replaced by meeting for the sake of meeting, with more emphasis on who should come to the table rather than on what should happen once they arrive
- Problem-solving limited to individual cases rather than a focus on systemic problems
- Policy development in a few agencies (e.g., law enforcement or prosecution), but rarely coordinated across all agencies that intervene in domestic violence cases

In St. Paul, the core organizers—the St. Paul Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, St. Paul Police Department, St. Paul City Attorney’s Office, and Praxis International—guided a process that involved ten agencies and multiple victim and advocate discussion groups. This broad effort resulted in the set of comprehensive policies, protocols, and related training memos—the *Blueprint as a collective policy*—implemented in 2010. St. Paul’s groundbreaking work has continued as it digs deeper into how to sustain a Blueprint community over time, effectively address unintended consequences and disparity of impact for survivors and their communities, and fully actualize the Blueprint’s reshaping of coordinated community response.

In 2011, three additional communities joined St. Paul in adapting the *Blueprint for Safety*: Duluth, Minnesota; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Shelby County/Memphis, Tennessee. Through an Office on Violence Against Women demonstration initiative, the three communities tested the Blueprint under different local conditions, including Duluth and its decades of experience with coordinated community response.

This guide is the result of the experiences and lessons from these four early adapters.

---

## BLUEPRINT FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

1. Adhere to an interagency approach and collective intervention goals.
  2. Build attention to context and severity of abuse into each intervention.
  3. Recognize that most domestic violence is a patterned crime requiring continuing engagement with victims and offenders.
  4. Ensure sure and swift consequences for continued abuse.
  5. Send messages of help to victims and messages of accountability to offenders.
  6. Act in ways that reduce unintended consequences and the disparity of impact on victims and offenders.
-

## CHANGE

The Blueprint is an innovative approach in its emphasis on self-examination and problem-solving, foundational principles, and the central role for community-based advocacy in its leadership and partnerships. The Blueprint is also grounded in over three decades of community practice, research, and reform related to the criminal legal system's intervention in domestic violence. The early adapters have been able to initiate or strengthen the following kinds of change in their communities:

- Document and communicate the context of the event and the violence occurring across all points of intervention via a series of linked tools: the Blueprint risk questions, 911 call guides, patrol officer's report format and checklist, framework for setting bail and conditions of release, and sentencing framework.<sup>4</sup>
- Anchor criminal case processing in an emergency-911 response that emphasizes a safety-oriented response and reassurance to callers that 911 is available regardless of the number or nature of prior calls.
- Collect and share more detailed information about who was at the scene and what happened, including improved witness interviews and direct observations by officers.
- Assess first for self-defense in cases where both parties are alleged to have used violence; make a predominant aggressor determination when self-defense cannot be established.
- Make more use of previously undercharged crimes, such as stalking or harassment, terroristic threats, witness tampering, crimes involving children, sexual assault, and burglary.
- Set a foundation for advocacy-initiated response by notifying the community-based advocacy program of domestic violence-related arrests and incidents where the suspect has left the scene.
- Set a foundation for advocacy-initiated response by notifying the community-based advocacy program of domestic violence-related arrests and incidents where the suspect has left the scene.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> The Blueprint risk questions: (1) Do you believe he/she will seriously injure or kill you/your children? Why or why not? (2) Is the abuse becoming more frequent? More severe? (3) What is the worst incident or time you were the most frightened?

<sup>5</sup> One of the riskiest and most stressful times in a victim's life is when the criminal justice system gets involved. Early contact with an advocate can lay a foundation for continued support and contribute to victim safety and

- Strengthen investigation and charging related to suspects who have fled the scene prior to officers arriving.
- Establish a framework for conditions of pretrial release that reflects risk and danger and includes victim input wherever possible.
- Respond to violations of pretrial release and conditions of probation with swift consequences based on graduated sanctions.
- Incorporate risk and danger considerations into prosecutors' charging decisions, bail recommendations, and negotiated plea agreements.
- Respond to domestic violence crimes in ways that are victim safety-centered but not victim-dependent.
- Position probation agencies to be able to differentiate the context and severity of a particular case and provide sanctions and supervision that best fit the case.
- Provide judges with more detail about the pattern and severity of abuse, including more detail on the type, scope, and severity of abuse.
- Establish internal and interagency monitoring of domestic violence policy and practice.
- Engage more directly with victims and survivors to better meet individual needs related to safety, identify any problems in how interventions impact victims and the community, and keep the criminal legal response grounded in awareness of the unique nature of battering.
- Initiate ways to be proactive in identifying and responding to possible unintended consequences and disparity of impact related to Blueprint policies and practice.

The Blueprint for Safety begins with and is ultimately sustained by forging an identity as a Blueprint community. The qualities of a Blueprint community include: (1) a commitment to the Blueprint foundation principles and purpose; (2) a shared, coherent way of thinking about domestic violence cases and the most effective interventions; (3) a central role for community-based advocacy in Blueprint

---

well-being. When an advocate calls a victim and offers confidential services—which she can refuse—most victims are willing to talk. Under an advocacy-initiated response, the arresting officer contacts the community-based advocacy program to let them know an arrest has been made and lets the victim know that an advocate will be calling. An advocate then calls the victim to offer confidential services related to her immediate safety needs, information about the court process, and determining what she wants to have happen in court and her wishes regarding contact with her partner. See [http://praxisinternational.org/library\\_advocacy.aspx](http://praxisinternational.org/library_advocacy.aspx).



leadership and partnerships, and (4) a commitment to using the Blueprint's essential elements as a constant reference point for weathering the inevitable changes in local conditions that occur over time in any community and in a system as complex as the criminal legal system.

## TOOLS

Is your community ready to design and implement a Blueprint for Safety? This guide will help answer that question. If the answer is “yes,” the guide and related tools will prepare your community to adapt, implement, and sustain the Blueprint: i.e., to become a Blueprint community.

The **Quick Start Guide** introduces the Blueprint and the roles and activities involved in establishing a Blueprint. It provides a stepping-off point to become familiar with the approach and process and gauge community readiness.

The five sections on Blueprint phases, activities, and tools are the heart of the guide. They include details for what happens, who is involved, and the key tasks, timelines, and tools for each phase in becoming a Blueprint Community. Turn to specific tools as you need them. The sections include:

### **Phase 1: Explore and Prepare**

Secure community will to initiate the development process and establish a Blueprint adaptation team.

### **Phase 2: Assess Practice and Identify Problems**

Conduct an assessment of current policy and practice to identify gaps that the Blueprint will address.

### **Phase 3: Adapt Policy and Adjust Practice**

Use the Blueprint templates to revise and write policies and protocols for each agency and to produce a collective policy.

### **Phase 4: Implement and Institutionalize**

Secure policy approvals, hold a community launch event, conduct internal and interagency training, initiate new documentation and administrative procedures, and establish a process for ongoing monitoring.

### **Phase 5: Monitor and Revise**

Conduct the ongoing data collection and assessment activities necessary to ensure that the Blueprint functions as a “living,” sustainable response to battering and domestic violence crimes.

**Principles and Complex Realities** frames the particular challenge of realizing two of the Blueprints distinctive foundational principles: Principle 2, to recognize that most domestic violence is patterned



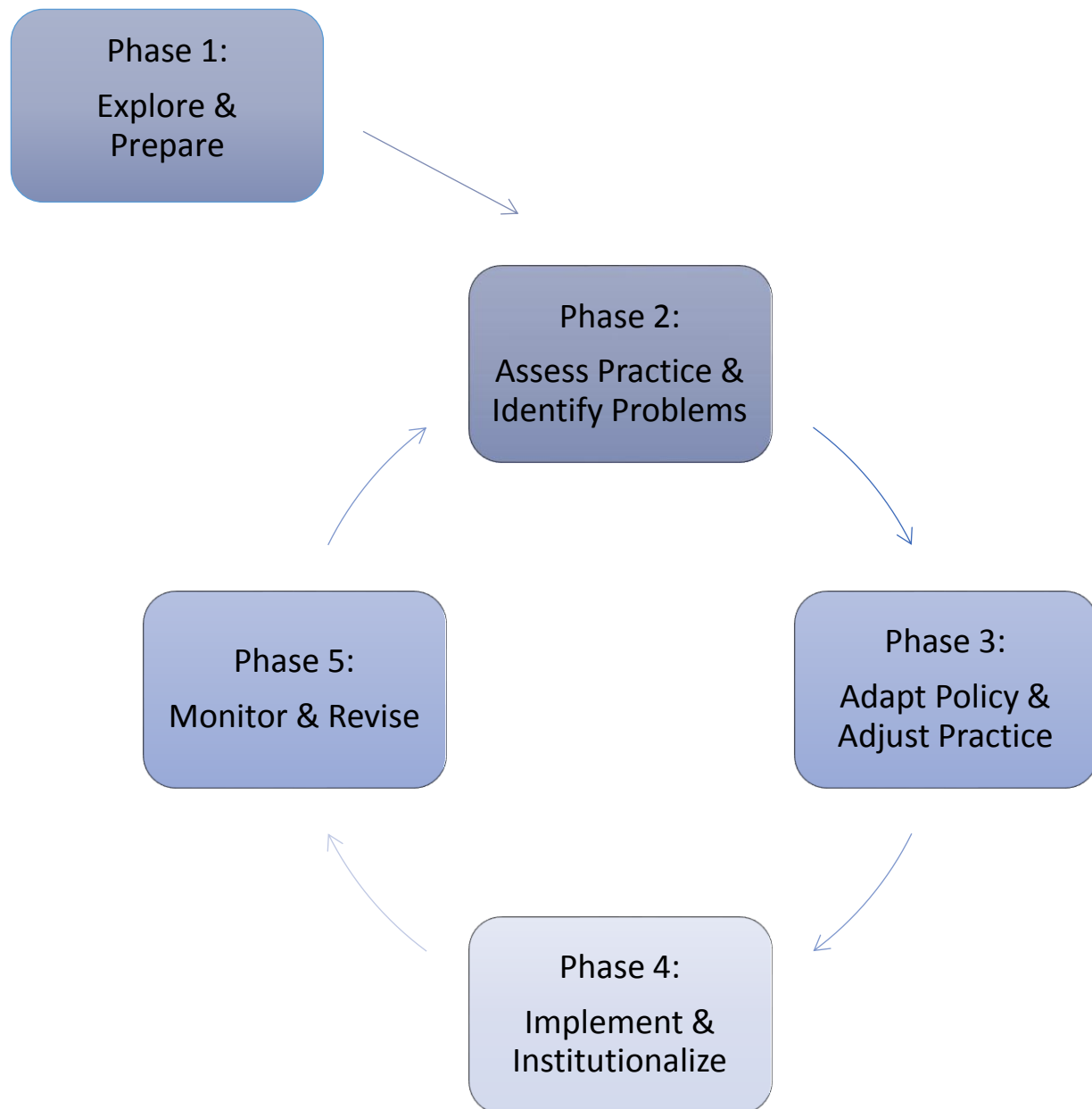
crime requiring continuing engagement with victims and offenders; and Principle 6, to act in ways that reduce unintended consequences and the disparity of impact on victims and offenders. This discussion acknowledges that the Blueprint seeks to address three complex realities: (1) the deep and pervasive harm of violence against women, (2) the deep and pervasive harm of mass incarceration and its impact on marginalized communities, and (3) the ways in which victims of battering are routinely caught up in the criminal legal system. The discussion offers strategies and two case studies to illustrate how such tools might be used.

**Insights from Early Adapters** sums up the major recommendations on how to organize and sustain the Blueprint’s sweeping approach to changing the criminal legal system’s response to battering.

The **Appendix** includes all of the related tools for each stage of development and others referenced throughout the guide.

This guide rests on lessons from the Blueprint’s early adapters and the decades of criminal legal system reform preceding it. As the work of St. Paul, Duluth, New Orleans, and Shelby County continues—and as additional communities gain experience with the Blueprint’s approach, documents, and process—further revisions and additions to the tools presented here are likely. The Blueprint is meant to be a dynamic and evolving idea as it seeks to stop violence, reduce harm the caused by battering, save lives, and strengthen our communities.

## THE BLUEPRINT FOR SAFETY: CREATING AND SUSTAINING A NEW PRACTICE



Becoming a Blueprint Community:

## QUICK START GUIDE

---

The Blueprint for Safety examines and reorganizes the criminal legal system response to domestic violence crimes. It defines a systematic, unified approach to help stop violence, reduce harm, and save lives. It is grounded in a shared commitment by system agencies, in partnership with community-based advocates, to identify and solve problems within the framework of the Blueprint principles and process.

If you are reading this guide, you most likely have an interest in building your own Blueprint for Safety. Are you:



- A community-based advocate who has been asked to learn about the Blueprint?
- A police officer or a prosecutor who is curious about how to strengthen your agency's policy and practice?
- Members of a coordinated community response (CCR) that is curious about how the Blueprint could renew and strengthen its mission?
- A group of advocates and practitioners preparing to persuade agency administrators or the tribal government to become a Blueprint community?
- Affiliated with a family justice or safety center that wonders how the Blueprint might enhance the community's response to domestic violence?
- Members of a domestic violence fatality review team that is looking for ways to address the gaps that it has discovered in the criminal legal system's response?

- A newly assigned “Blueprint Team” or “Blueprint Coordinator” with the task of making it all happen?

Whatever your role in exploring or adapting the Blueprint, some basic first steps will help you get familiar with the approach and process, gauge local readiness, decide whether to proceed further, and, depending upon that decision, prepare you to begin and manage the day-to-day work of adapting the Blueprint for your community.

1. Spend a few minutes with the Blueprint brochure to get the big picture. You can reproduce the brochure to use in your community.

Find the brochure in **Appendix 3** or see “*Blueprint for Safety Materials*” at [www.praxisinternational.org](http://www.praxisinternational.org).

2. Listen to webinar recordings that present examples of how communities have adapted the Blueprint. The presentations include representatives from St. Paul, MN, where the Blueprint was developed, and New Orleans, LA, the first of the three national adaptation demonstration sites to launch its Blueprint for Safety.

Find the webinars at [www.praxisinternational.org](http://www.praxisinternational.org) under “Blueprint for Safety.”

3. Review the Essential Commitments and Frequently Asked Questions to get familiar with the Blueprint’s overall features and process.

Find these tools in **Appendix 1**, Essential Commitments of a Blueprint Community, and **Appendix 2**, Frequently Asked Questions. Or, see “Becoming a Blueprint Community,” at [www.praxisinternational.org](http://www.praxisinternational.org).

4. Complete the Community Readiness Checklist to identify community strengths and pinpoint areas that will need more attention in order to establish the Blueprint.

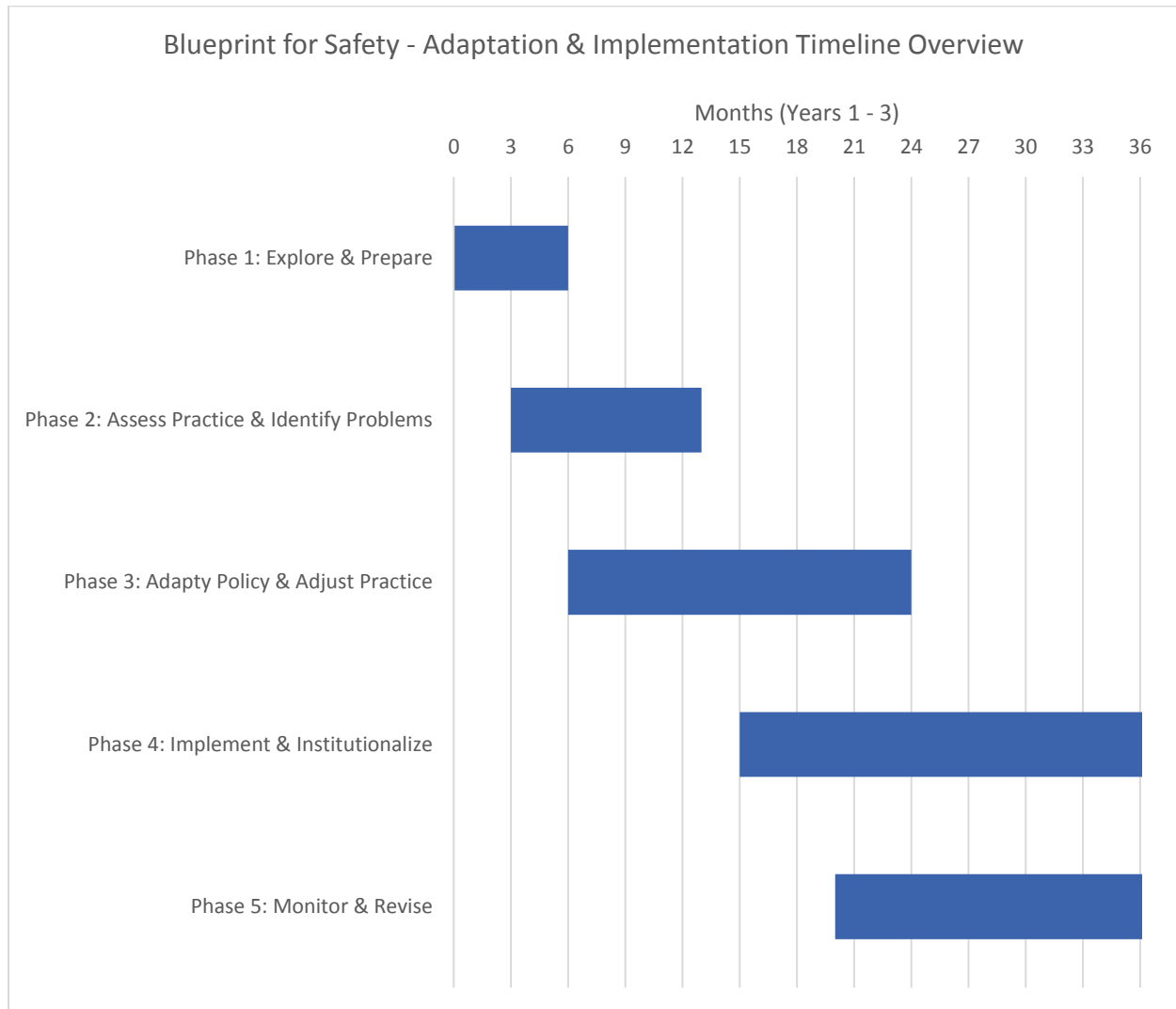
Find the checklist in **Appendix 6**.

5. Get familiar with the contents of this guide, *Becoming a Blueprint Community*, and its tools for adapting and implementing the *Blueprint for Safety*.

A three-year time frame shapes the process of fully adapting and establishing a Blueprint for Safety (see the following overview and the more detailed timeline in **Appendix 20**). Some communities may require less time, particularly those with a well-functioning CCR that has a history of problem solving together and many Blueprint-ready policies in place. The adaptation guide positions a community to develop and sustain the Blueprint as an ongoing, dynamic process rather than a finite set of tasks. While certain steps are required in a certain sequence—e.g., hire a coordinator and select an adaptation team before adapting and implementing new policy and practice—the Blueprint is fundamentally an approach to intervening in domestic violence crimes in a specific way with specific goals. That approach does not end when the last task is checked off, but continues as a new, unified way of working together to identify and solve problems on behalf of victims of battering and the community.

# ADAPTATION TIMELINE

Many activities occur simultaneously to establish a Blueprint for Safety. Particularly in moving from one phase to another, planning steps are likely to overlap. For a more detailed picture, see Blueprint Adaptation Tasks and Timeline, [Appendix 20](#).





## WHO'S WHO IN ADAPTING THE BLUEPRINT?

As an approach that rests on partnership and coordination between community-based advocacy and the criminal legal system, the Blueprint involves a broad-based group of agencies, individuals, and roles. An individual can fill multiple roles—e.g., organizer, champion, agency liaison, and member of an ad hoc work group—particularly in smaller communities or agencies.

- **Organizers**

Typically, a mix of community-based advocates and practitioners—often in leadership roles. Blueprint



organizers initiate the exploration and adaptation process, secure support from agencies and champions, write the grants, and manage or participate in activities related to securing a memorandum of understanding, hiring the Blueprint coordinator and advocate, assembling the adaptation and implementation teams, and sustaining the process. Organizers are likely to serve on Blueprint

teams and ad hoc work groups, particularly in smaller communities.

- **Champions**

Advocacy leaders, agency heads, and other influential voices in the agency and the community who support the Blueprint, encourage and promote its development, and help to sustain it over time, although without necessarily being involved in the day-to-day activities of adaptation, implementation, and monitoring. Champions can be agency or organizational leaders or individual practitioners who are influential with their colleagues. A respected 911 call-taker or police sergeant or probation supervisor, for example, can be a Blueprint champion.

- **Coordinator**

Manages the overall process and tasks involved in adapting and implementing the Blueprint. The coordinator provides the glue and guidance that helps the partner agencies and work groups assess current practice, adapt the Blueprint to local conditions, implement and monitor the resulting changes in practice, keep battered women's experiences central to the process. Most communities will require a full-time coordinator.

- **Advocate**

The leadership by and involvement of community-based advocacy are central to the Blueprint for Safety. Through its defined role, the position of Blueprint advocate is one part of advocacy voice and representation, but it is by no means the only avenue. The Blueprint advocate helps ensure the direct participation of community-based advocates throughout all phases of developing the Blueprint. The position of Blueprint advocate means that it is clearly someone's responsibility to engage with a wide range of community members, from victims and survivors and community-based advocates to populations overrepresented and/or underserved in the criminal legal system. The Blueprint advocate fulfills that role in consultation with the coordinator, who may also bring experience or affiliation with community-based advocacy. In some smaller communities, the coordinator and advocate roles may be combined into one position.

- **Agency liaisons**

Representatives appointed by each criminal legal system agency to work with the Blueprint coordinator and participate in all phases of Blueprint adaptation. Under the Memorandum of Understanding, each agency agrees to assign a lead person (or more) as an agency liaison. As members of the adaptation and implementation teams, agency liaisons assist in organizing and conducting the practice assessment, writing policies, collecting data, and overseeing internal agency implementation of the agreed-upon Blueprint policy and practice.

- **Adaptation and implementation teams**

The adaptation team develops the Blueprint for Safety collective policy. Members include the Blueprint coordinator, advocate, and agency liaisons, plus community-based advocates and representatives for organizations working on behalf of marginalized communities. The adaptation team then transitions to an implementation team that puts the local Blueprint into practice and ensures that the intended goals and practices of the collective policy are being met. Most or all of the same individuals and representatives who served on the adaptation team are likely to continue on the implementation team. Both teams convene small, ad hoc interagency groups as needed (typically, two to six members) to complete the tasks involved in developing and sustaining the Blueprint.



- **Agency supervisors**

Once each agency's Blueprint policy is approved and implemented, regular supervisory quality and compliance review of agency practice is crucial to maintaining the Blueprint. Without regular monitoring and oversight, practice tends to drift. Consequently, agency supervisors have a key, ongoing role in sustaining the Blueprint. Beyond their internal role, agency supervisors also contribute to the monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance of the Blueprint as a collective policy by participating in periodic interagency reviews.



## PHASE 1: EXPLORE AND PREPARE

---

### WHAT

The first major step in becoming a Blueprint community is to explore whether or not the Blueprint for Safety is even a good fit for your community. Who are the likely organizers and champions? What capacity exists to support the adaptation process, such as a history of coordinated community response and problem-solving? Is there sufficient community will to begin and sustain the Blueprint? If the answer to this question is yes, continue on to develop the necessary framework of people, agreements, and timelines.



### WHO

Community-based advocates and practitioners who are curious about the Blueprint's united approach and collective policy typically

initiate the exploration. These Blueprint organizers explore its features with likely champions and agency heads. The organizers may also be involved in seeking funding, securing a Memorandum of Understanding, hiring the Blueprint coordinator and advocate, and assembling the adaptation team—and perhaps serving on that team. Blueprint organizers promote the approach and the process. When exploration shifts to adaptation, the Blueprint coordinator sets up and manages the process, in partnership with the advocate and adaptation team. The Blueprint advocate ensures that the voices and experiences of battered women are represented at all stages of the process and that community-based advocates have a central role in leading the process. The Blueprint adaptation team adds practitioners to the mix. The adaptation team assesses current practice to identify problems and adapts policies to produce the collective Blueprint for Safety. The first phase concludes with these key roles in place. There is no bright line, however, marking who comes on board when and which tasks they pursue. Some communities may select a coordinator early on and that person will have a central role in assessing community capacity and selling policy makers on the merits of the Blueprint. In other communities, the organizers will complete those steps before hiring the coordinator. Early preparation also includes community consultation to help ground Blueprint policy and practice in the experiences of victims of violence, with particular attention to the complex and often dangerous implications of a victim's

collaboration with the criminal legal system. Community consultation is the process of engaging with and seeking guidance from survivors of battering and others in the community who represent the broadest range of life experiences, circumstances, and identities in order to keep victims' needs at the center and help identify and reduce unintended consequences and realize the Blueprint's commitment to a fair and just response.

## TASKS & TOOLS

While the **Phase 1** chart presents the tasks in sequence, it is a loose sequence and many tasks will be underway simultaneously. Similarly, some tools, such as the Blueprint Essential Elements, will be introduced at a particular step and then used at multiple points throughout Blueprint development. The chart highlights the major tasks involved in the initial phase of exploration and planning, the tools introduced or useful at each step, and the key players involved.

The following tools are referenced in **Phase 1** and located in the **Appendix** (by number):

1. *Essential Commitments of a Blueprint Community*
2. *Frequently Asked Questions*
3. *Blueprint for Safety Informational Brochure*
4. *Adapting the Blueprint: Phases & Key Activities*
5. *What Is Distinctive About the Blueprint as an Approach to Domestic Violence Crimes?*
6. *Community Readiness Checklist*
7. *Community Consultation in the Blueprint*
8. *Research Supports the Blueprint for Safety*
9. *The Blueprint Approach to Risk*
10. *Blueprint Essential Elements Annotated*
11. *Foundations of Effective Intervention*
12. *Sample Memorandum of Understanding*
13. *Blueprint Coordinator Role, Responsibilities and Skills*
14. *Blueprint Advocate Role, Responsibilities and Skills*
15. *Blueprint Adaptation Team Role and Activities*
16. *Planning a Blueprint for Safety Proposal*

17. *Policy Adaptation Phases*

18. *Adaptation Process and Timeline*

19. *Coordinating the Blueprint: Strategies to Stay Focused and Move Forward*

20. *Blueprint Adaptation Tasks and Timeline*

21. *Presentation Template: Becoming a Blueprint Community*

## PHASE 1: EXPLORE & PREPARE

Key Tasks	Key Tools [Appendix]	Key People
1. <b>Identify and bring together organizers and key champions to explore the features and goals of the Blueprint for Safety, decide whether or not to pursue the Blueprint, and support the adaptation process and ongoing implementation.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <i>Essential Commitments of a Blueprint Community</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <i>Frequently Asked Questions</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 3. <i>Blueprint for Safety Informational Brochure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 4. <i>Adapting the Blueprint: Phases &amp; Key Activities</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 5. <i>What Is Distinctive About the Blueprint as an Approach to Domestic Violence Crimes?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 11. <i>Foundations of Effective Intervention</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 15. <i>Blueprint Adaptation Tasks and Timeline</i>	Advocates and community and agency leaders: Blueprint organizers and champions
2. <b>Centralize community-based advocacy leadership and participation in exploration and planning activities and ongoing adaptation and implementation.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <i>Essential Commitments of a Blueprint Community</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <i>Frequently Asked Questions</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 5. <i>What Is Distinctive About the Blueprint as an Approach to Domestic Violence Crimes?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 14. <i>Blueprint Advocate Role,</i>	Organizers

Key Tasks	Key Tools [Appendix]	Key People
<i>Responsibilities and Skills</i>		
3. Assess community capacity and infrastructure to support Blueprint adaptation, implementation, and monitoring.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <i>Essential Commitments of a Blueprint Community</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 4. <i>Adapting the Blueprint: Phases &amp; Key Activities</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 6. <i>Community Readiness Checklist</i>	Organizers  Coordinator (in some communities)
4. Articulate the distinctive response that the Blueprint brings to the community and the problem of domestic violence.	<input type="checkbox"/> 3. <i>Blueprint for Safety Informational Brochure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 5. <i>What Is Distinctive About the Blueprint as an Approach to Domestic Violence Crimes?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 8. <i>Research that Supports the Blueprint for Safety</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 9. <i>The Blueprint Approach to Risk</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 10. <i>Blueprint for Safety Essential Elements – Annotated</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 11. <i>Foundations of Effective Intervention</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 21. <i>Presentation Template: Becoming a Blueprint Community</i>	Organizers  Coordinator (in some communities)
5. Promote the Blueprint's distinctive response and benefits to policy makers and agency directors.	<input type="checkbox"/> 5. <i>What Is Distinctive About the Blueprint?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 10. <i>Blueprint Essential Elements</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 21. <i>Presentation Template:</i>	Organizers  Coordinator

Key Tasks	Key Tools [Appendix]	Key People
	<i>Becoming a Blueprint Community</i>	
6. Secure agency participation and seek funding.	<input type="checkbox"/> 12. Sample Memorandum of Understanding <input type="checkbox"/> 16. Planning a Blueprint for Safety Proposal	Organizers Champions Coordinator
7. Select the Blueprint for Safety Coordinator.	<input type="checkbox"/> 13. Blueprint Coordinator Role, Responsibilities and Skills	Organizers
8. Select the Blueprint for Safety Advocate.	<input type="checkbox"/> 14. Blueprint Advocate Role, Responsibilities and Skills	Organizers Coordinator
9. Recruit the adaptation team, including community-based advocates and practitioners who are influential in their agencies.	<input type="checkbox"/> 15. Blueprint Adaptation Team Role and Activities	Organizers Coordinator Advocate
10. Develop and complete a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the roles and responsibilities of each participating agencies.	<input type="checkbox"/> 12. Sample Memorandum of Understanding	Organizers Coordinator
11. Designate a lead person (liaison) in each agency to work with the Blueprint coordinator, serve on the adaptation team, participate in all phases of development, and oversee internal agency implementation.	<input type="checkbox"/> 15. Blueprint Adaptation Team Role and Activities <input type="checkbox"/> 12. Sample Memorandum of Understanding <input type="checkbox"/> 19. Coordinating the Blueprint: Strategies to Stay Focused and Move Forward	Organizers Coordinator Adaptation team

Key Tasks	Key Tools [Appendix]	Key People
<b>12. Establish a plan and timeline for guiding the Blueprint and establishing needed work groups.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 6. <i>Community Readiness Checklist</i>	Coordinator
	<input type="checkbox"/> 4. <i>Adapting the Blueprint for Safety: Phases and Key Activities</i>	Advocate
	<input type="checkbox"/> 17. <i>Policy Adaptation Phases</i>	Adaptation team
	<input type="checkbox"/> 20. <i>Blueprint Adaptation Tasks and Timeline</i>	
<b>13. Begin a process and timeline profile for each agency, including and timelines for policy approvals and training.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 18. <i>Adaptation Process and Timeline</i>	Coordinator
	<input type="checkbox"/> 20. <i>Blueprint Adaptation Tasks and Timeline</i>	
<b>14. Use community consultations to discover the needs and lived experiences of victims of battering. Include members from communities overrepresented and/or underserved communities in seeking help from the criminal legal system.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 5. <i>What Is Distinctive About the Blueprint as an Approach to Domestic Violence Crimes?</i>	Organizers
		Coordinator
	<input type="checkbox"/> 7. <i>Community Consultation in the Blueprint</i>	Advocate



## PHASE 2: ASSESS PRACTICE AND IDENTIFY PROBLEMS

### WHAT

The Blueprint for Safety is in large part an ongoing process of finding and fixing problems in the criminal legal system response to domestic violence crimes. Analyzing current policy and practice is necessary in order to identify problems and determine what kinds of local adaptations to make. Most communities will have some aspects of the Blueprint already built into their current practice, although the elements might not be working as assumed. For example, a law enforcement policy defines and requires a predominant aggressor determination prior to making an arrest decision when both parties appear to have used violence.

When you examine what kind of Blueprint-specific policy and practice is actually in place, however, you discover that the predominant aggressor considerations are not



applied in practice as intended. In **Phase 2**, the adaptation team seeks statistical data and first-hand information about victims' experiences with the criminal legal system, including whether and how experiences differ for communities that are over-represented and/or under-served in the criminal system's response. The tasks and tools in **Phase 2** also help practitioners and community-based advocates work together in new ways to identify, document, and solve problems using the Blueprint approach. The practice assessment methods presented here are useful both in the initial policy adaptation and in the subsequent monitoring of changes post-implementation. **Phase 2** develops baseline practice data and a framework for ongoing evaluation of the Blueprint's impact. Ongoing practice assessment, in turn, helps sustain the Blueprint into the future.

## WHO

The Blueprint coordinator, advocate, members of the adaptation team, and other advocates and practitioners as needed form small (typically, two to six members) **internal work groups** to conduct the practice assessment. The work groups gather information by mapping the criminal legal system response and studying case records (e.g., 911 recordings, patrol reports, prosecution case files, or probation risk assessment forms). They may also interview practitioners and community members and observe steps in criminal case processing (e.g., sit with 911 call-takers, ride along with patrol officers, or attend bail hearings). Work groups check what they read, hear, and see against the recommended practice outlined in the essential elements in order to identify gaps that the Blueprint will address. The practice assessment might also reveal that the ways in which cases are actually handled differs from both the essential elements and from common assumptions about what happens. Among the Blueprint **coordinator's** key responsibilities is to organize and guide the practice assessment. The coordinator consults with the Blueprint **advocate** on how to best connect with a wide range of survivors and community-based advocacy organizations to learn about victims' experiences with the criminal legal system response. The coordinator ensures that there are broad-based **community consultations** with survivors, including those from communities that are overrepresented and/or underserved in seeking help from the criminal legal system.

## TASKS & TOOLS

Some of the tools introduced in the early steps of exploring and preparing for the Blueprint continue to be used in **Phase 2**, such as the agency tracking checklist, strategies to stay focused, tasks and timeline, and essential elements. The Policy and Practice Assessment Guide introduced in **Phase 2** will be used at later stages of monitoring the Blueprint after implementation. Again, while the following chart highlights the major tasks, tools, and key players involved, many activities will be underway simultaneously.

The primary tool for **Phase 2** is the Policy and Practice Assessment Guide, **Appendix 22**, which includes the following sections:

- 22-1 *Mapping Domestic Violence Case Processing*
- 22-2 *Source Book Contents*
- 22-3 *Data-Gathering Template*
- 22-4 *Community Consultation*
- 22-5 *Policy Comparison Worksheets*
- 22-6 *Analyzing Case Records*
- 22-7 *Case Review Worksheet*
- 22-8 *Practitioner Interviews and Observations*
- 22-9 *Analysis and Reporting*
- 22-10 *Notes and Documentation*

## PHASE 2: ASSESS PRACTICE & IDENTIFY PROBLEMS

Key Tasks	Key Tools [Appendix]	Key People
1. Identify the needed internal work groups and recruit members.	<input type="checkbox"/> 17. <i>Policy Adaptation Phases</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 22. <i>Policy and Practice Assessment Guide</i>	Coordinator Advocate Adaptation team
2. Create a source book of local policies, administrative forms and protocols for current criminal case processing of domestic violence cases.	<input type="checkbox"/> 22-2. <i>Policy and Practice Assessment Guide: Source Book Contents</i>	Coordinator Agency liaisons
3. Assemble all materials necessary to conduct the assessment: policies, protocols, forms laws, statistical information, case records (e.g., files, tapes, reports).	<input type="checkbox"/> 22. <i>Policy and Practice Assessment Guide</i>	Coordinator Agency Liaisons
4. Schedule activities related to information-gathering activities (case analysis, observations, and interviews) and/or provide the work groups with details on how to make those arrangements.	<input type="checkbox"/> 22. <i>Policy and Practice Assessment Guide</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 18. <i>Adaptation Process and Timeline</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 20. <i>Blueprint Adaptation Tasks and Timeline</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 17. <i>Policy Adaptation Phases</i>	Coordinator Agency liaisons
5. Compare current policy with the Blueprint essential elements.	<input type="checkbox"/> 22-5. <i>Policy and Practice Assessment Guide: Policy Comparison Worksheets</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 10. <i>Blueprint Essential Elements - Annotated</i>	Coordinator Advocate Adaptation team Ad hoc work groups

Key Tasks	Key Tools [Appendix]	Key People
6. <b>Compile baseline statistical data on domestic violence-related cases: e.g., 911 calls, arrests, crimes charged, disposition, sentencing, demographics.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 22-3. <i>Policy and Practice Assessment Guide: Data-Gathering Template</i>	Coordinator Advocate Adaptation team
7. <b>Map each point of criminal case processing (911 through to probation monitoring), with specific attention to how risk and danger and advocacy are addressed.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 22-1. <i>Policy and Practice Assessment Guide: Mapping Domestic Violence Case Processing</i>	Coordinator Advocate Adaptation team
8. <b>Analyze case records (e.g., 911 calls, patrol reports, prosecution files, probation records, etc.) to compare current practice with recommended practice.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 22-7. <i>Policy and Practice Assessment Guide: Case Review Worksheets</i>	Coordinator Advocate Adaptation team Ad hoc work groups
9. <b>Interview agency directors, supervisors, and practitioners about current practice.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 22-8. <i>Policy and Practice Assessment Guide: Practitioner Interviews and Observations</i>	Coordinator Advocate Adaptation team Ad hoc work groups
10. <b>Observe current practices via patrol ride-alongs, 911 “sit-alongs,” court observations, and other practitioner observations.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 22-8. <i>Policy and Practice Assessment Guide: Practitioner Interviews and Observations</i>	Coordinator Advocate Adaptation team Ad hoc work groups

Key Tasks	Key Tools [Appendix]	Key People
<b>11. Use information from the Blueprint advocate and community consultation to discover victims/survivors' experiences with the criminal legal system.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 22-4. <i>Policy and Practice Assessment Guide: Community Consultation</i>	Coordinator Advocate Adaptation team
<b>12. Include statistical data and first-hand information about the experiences of victims of battering from communities overrepresented and/or underserved in seeking help from the criminal legal system.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 22-3. <i>Policy and Practice Assessment Guide: Data-Gathering Template</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 22-4. <i>Policy and Practice Assessment Guide: Community Consultation</i>	Coordinator Advocate Adaptation team
<b>13. Use community consultations to help guide the practice assessment activities and analysis, with specific attention to communities that are overrepresented and/or underserved communities in seeking help from the criminal legal system.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 22-4. <i>Policy and Practice Assessment Guide: Community Consultation</i>	Coordinator Advocate Adaptation team

Key Tasks	Key Tools [Appendix]	Key People
<b>14. Coordinate and facilitate meetings to review, interpret, and analyze data throughout the assessment process.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 22-9. <i>Policy and Practice Assessment Guide: Analysis and Reporting</i>	Coordinator Advocate
	<input type="checkbox"/> 19. <i>Coordinating the Blueprint: Strategies to Stay Focused and Move Forward</i>	Adaptation team Ad hoc work groups
	<input type="checkbox"/> 18. <i>Adaptation Process and Timeline</i>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> 20. <i>Blueprint Adaptation Tasks and Timeline</i>	
<b>15. Keep a written record of all discussions, conclusions, and recommendations related to the practice assessment.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 22-10. <i>Policy and Practice Assessment Guide: Notes and Documentation</i>	Coordinator

## PHASE 3: ADAPT POLICY AND ADJUST PRACTICE

### WHAT

The assessment in **Phase 2** identifies where and how the current criminal legal system response differs from the Blueprint's recommended practice. In **Phase 3**, each agency's policy is revised or written to address the gaps in practice and problems identified via the assessment. Through a process of discussion and negotiation, Blueprint work groups and agency representatives reach agreement on recommended



policy language. For some agencies, the Blueprint might be the first time that a written policy is put in place; others will incorporate the Blueprint elements into existing policy manuals. The Blueprint as a collective, unified policy takes shape as agencies incorporate the shared commitments and response reflected in the foundation principles and essential elements.

Published as *The Blueprint for Safety: An Interagency Response to Domestic Violence Crimes*, the templates provide a detailed illustration of policies and protocols that are consistent with the *collective policy* for intervention that is fundamental to the Blueprint for Safety.<sup>6</sup> A Blueprint Community is free to adopt the template language and format as-is or modify them to meet local policy-writing structures and formats. At the heart of the Blueprint, however, are **essential elements of policy and practice that must be incorporated** regardless of how the document looks in its subject headings, layout, and organization. While a local policy might

---

<sup>6</sup> PDF versions of the templates are available at [http://www.praxisinternational.org/bp\\_materials.aspx](http://www.praxisinternational.org/bp_materials.aspx). Word document versions of the templates are available by contacting Praxis International at [blueprint@praxisinternational.org](mailto:blueprint@praxisinternational.org).



look different on the page in comparison to the Blueprint template, the content—the essential elements—must be the same, to the fullest extent possible.

## WHO

In many communities, those most directly involved in **Phase 3** are likely to be many of the same individuals who participated in the assessment. When an **assessment work group** becomes a **policy work group**, the crossover membership promotes a smooth transition from assessment to policy writing as members bring their shared analysis, familiarity with the essential elements, and experience with the Blueprint. The policy adaptation process benefits from as much continuity and core membership as possible between the phases, with orientation for new participants as needed. Members of the larger Blueprint **adaptation team** continue to participate in the policy writing groups and contribute to the ongoing problem-solving and negotiation of proposed changes. The Blueprint **coordinator** continues in the central role of organizing and managing the policy adaptation process. The Blueprint **advocate** continues as the primary link to ensure guidance from community-based advocates and victims/survivors. Blueprint **organizers and key champions** may become involved if areas of disagreement surface that are difficult to resolve. A Blueprint coordinator and team can also seek outside technical help, such as that provided or organized by Praxis International.

## TASKS & TOOLS

Policy writing groups rely on reports from the assessment to identify specific changes. The extensive Blueprint policy and protocol templates support and expand upon the essential elements. Agencies can elect to use the policy templates largely as-is or fit the Blueprint elements into the agency's policy format, as long as the content does not contradict the essential elements and foundational principles. Published as *The Blueprint for Safety: An Interagency Response to Domestic Violence Crimes*, the templates have a common structure: a framework statement that provides an overview of key aspects and rationale for agency and practitioner roles, followed by one or more policies and related protocols and supplemental material such as training memos, checklists, and other background relevant to the agency's response. Again, agencies are free to use the templates as-is or to adapt them to local conditions, within the overall framework of Blueprint principles and essential elements. In **Phase 1** the coordinator will have determined the specific policy approval process for each agency and incorporated needed steps and timelines into the overall Blueprint plan.

Tools introduced in the first two phases continue to support the overall coordination of the adaptation process, such as the tracking checklist, timeline, strategies to move forward, reporting and documentation tools, and community consultation guidelines. The Essential Elements Annotated (**Appendix 10**) and Research that Supports the Blueprint (**Appendix 8**) are particularly useful in **Phase 3** to address confusion or disagreement about policy language and why specific elements are included or worded in a specific way.



The Blueprint coordinator and team members continue to utilize many tools introduced in previous **Phases 1** and **2**. The primary **Phase 3** tools include:

- Summary of policy and practice assessment findings for each agency, utilizing the notes and documentation tool.
- Blueprint policy templates and related supplemental material and training memos located at [http://www.praxisinternational.org/bp\\_materials.aspx](http://www.praxisinternational.org/bp_materials.aspx).

The templates are published as *The Blueprint for Safety: An Interagency Response to Domestic Violence Crimes*.

## PHASE 3: ADAPT POLICY & ADJUST PRACTICE

Key Tasks	Key Tools	Key People
<b>1. Use small, agency-specific work groups (e.g., 911, patrol response, prosecution, etc.) to develop local adaptations to the Blueprint policies and protocols.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 17. <i>Policy Adaptation Phases</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 19. <i>Coordinating the Blueprint: Strategies to Stay Focused and Move Forward</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 20. <i>Blueprint Adaptation Tasks and Timeline</i>	Coordinator Advocate Adaptation team Policy-writing work groups
<b>2. Use results of the practice assessment to identify policy revisions and additions to current practice.</b>  <b>a. Highlight and discuss questions and concerns; agree on policy changes.</b>  <b>b. For areas of continuing disagreement, summarize options and barriers and propose solutions; use the Blueprint Essential Elements Annotated as a reference; seek outside technical assistance as needed.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 22-7. <i>Policy and Practice Assessment Guide: Notes and Documentation Tool</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 10. <i>Blueprint for Safety Essential Elements – Annotated</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 19. <i>Coordinating the Blueprint: Strategies to Stay Focused and Move Forward</i>	Coordinator Advocate Agency liaisons Policy-writing work groups

Key Tasks	Key Tools	Key People
<b>3. Adapt from Blueprint policy templates to incorporate essential elements, with adjustments to reflect local conditions and laws.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Templates and supporting material published as <i>The Blueprint for Safety: An Interagency Response to Domestic Violence Crimes</i> <sup>7</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 10. <i>Blueprint for Safety Essential Elements – Annotated</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 11. <i>Foundations of Effective Intervention</i>	Coordinator Advocate Agency liaisons Policy-writing work groups
<b>4. Present recommended changes to the full Blueprint adaptation team and agency directors for review and feedback.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 10. <i>Blueprint for Safety Essential Elements – Annotated</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 19. <i>Coordinating the Blueprint: Strategies to Stay Focused and Move Forward</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 8. <i>Research that Supports the Blueprint for Safety</i>	Coordinator Advocate Agency liaisons Policy-writing work groups Adaptation team
<b>5. Brief criminal legal system agency heads, interagency/CCR group, and other relevant community agencies and organizations on agency-specific changes and the Blueprint collective policy.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 22-5. <i>Policy and Practice Assessment Guide: Policy Comparison Worksheets</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 19. <i>Coordinating the Blueprint: Strategies to Stay Focused and Move Forward</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 10. <i>Blueprint for Safety Essential Elements – Annotated</i>	Coordinator Advocate Agency liaisons Policy-writing work groups Adaptation team Organizers and

<sup>7</sup> Available online [http://www.praxisinternational.org/bp\\_materials.aspx](http://www.praxisinternational.org/bp_materials.aspx)

Key Tasks	Key Tools	Key People
	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>8. Research that Supports the Blueprint for Safety</i>	champions
6. Assist agency directors in the process of accepting or modifying the recommended language changes to Blueprint policies, protocols, and memos.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>10. Blueprint for Safety Essential Elements – Annotated</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>8. Research that Supports the Blueprint for Safety</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>19. Coordinating the Blueprint: Strategies to Stay Focused and Move Forward</i>	Coordinator Agency liaisons Adaptation team
7. Secure approvals and adopt all Blueprint policies and protocols.	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy draft in each agency's format	Coordinator Agency liaisons Adaptation team Agency heads
8. Document all work group and adaptation team discussions and decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>18. Adaptation Process and Timeline</i>	Coordinator Policy-writing work groups
9. Keep the experiences of victims of battering visible and central throughout the policy adaptation process.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>7. Community Consultation in the Blueprint</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>11. Foundations of Effective Intervention</i>	Coordinator Advocate Adaptation team
10. Use community consultations to help guide the policy adaptation, with specific attention to communities that are overrepresented and/or underserved communities in seeking help from the criminal legal system.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>7. Community Consultation in the Blueprint</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>11. Foundations of Effective Intervention</i>	Coordinator Advocate Adaptation team

### The Blueprint for Safety Policy Templates & Supplemental Materials

Policy	Supplemental Material
<b>Chapter 1:</b> <b>All Agency Foundations</b>	1A Practitioners' Guide to Risk and Danger in Domestic Violence Cases
	1B Training Memo - Risk and Dangerousness
	1C Training Memo - Intervention with Victims of Battering as Suspects or Defendants
	1D History of Domestic Violence Summary Instructions and Sample
	1E History of Domestic Violence Summary
	1F Justice Involved Military Personnel and Veterans
<b>Chapter 2:</b> <b>911</b>	2A Protocol 1 - Card 1 Caller Safety Unknown
	2B Protocol 1 - Card 2 Unsafe for Caller to Speak Freely
	2C Protocol 1 - Card 3 Caller Safe to Speak Freely
	2D Protocol 2 - Card 1 Safety Oriented Dispatching
	2E Protocol 4 - Card 1 Call review checklist
	2F Training Memo - Accurate Coding of 911 Domestic Abuse Calls
	2G Training Memo - 911 Attention to Violence
	2H Training Memo - Recognizing Signs of Strangulation
	2I Training Memo - Suspect on the Line
	2J Training Memo - Open-line and interrupted calls
<b>Chapter 3:</b> <b>Law Enforcement</b>	3A Training Memo - Law Enforcement Response to Persons with Disabilities
	3B Training Memo - Gone on Arrival (GOA) Cases
	3C Training Memo - Making the Arrest Decision
	3D Training Memo - Miranda Rights and Domestic Violence Cases
	3E Training Memo - Implications of Crawford and Forfeiture by Wrongdoing

Policy	Supplemental Material
	<p>3F Training Memo - Law Enforcement Response to Strangulation</p> <p>3G Training Memo - Law Enforcement Response to Stalking</p> <p>3H Training Memo - Response to Children in Domestic Violence Related Calls</p> <p>3I Training Memo - How a Defense Attorney Reads a Police Report</p> <p>3J Training Memo - How a Prosecutor Reads a Police Report</p> <p>3K Training Memo - Victim Engagement and the Law Enforcement Response to Domestic Violence</p> <p>3L Domestic Violence Patrol Report Checklist</p> <p>3M Supervising Domestic Violence Investigations - Case Review Checklist</p> <p>3N Supervising Patrol Response to Domestic Violence - Patrol Report Checklist</p> <p>3O Follow Up Investigations and Expanded Attention to Risk</p> <p>3P-Training Memo-Working with Immigrant Victims of Battering</p>
<b>Chapter 4:</b> <b>Sheriff's Office</b>	<p>4A Training Memo - Safety Considerations in the Management of Domestic Violence Cases</p> <p>4B Training Memo - Receiving and Processing Warrants in Domestic Violence Crimes</p>
<b>Chapter 5:</b> <b>Prosecution</b>	<p>5A Training Memo - Implications of Crawford and Davis for Prosecution of Domestic Abuse Cases</p> <p>5B Training Memo - The Implications of Forfeiture by Wrongdoing for Prosecution of Domestic Abuse Cases</p> <p>5C Training Memo - Use of Expert Witnesses in Domestic Violence Cases</p> <p>5D Sample Policy Language - When to Compel a Victim to Testify</p> <p>5E Guide to Bail Setting Conditional Release and Enforcement</p> <p>5F Training Memo - Addressing Uncharged Sexual Abuse in Domestic Abuse Cases</p> <p>5G Framework for Recommending Time to Serve and Length of Probation</p>

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Supplemental Material</b>
	5H Sentencing Guidelines Departure in Domestic Violence Cases
<b>Chapter 6:</b> <b>Victim Witness</b>	6A Training Memo - Victim Impact Statements 6B Training Memo - Responding to Persons with Disabilities 6C Victim Witness Advocacy in Domestic Violence Cases
<b>Chapter 7:</b> <b>Probation and Bail</b>	7A Rehabilitation Program Considerations in Domestic Violence Cases 7B Training Memo - Conditions of Probation 7C Training Memo - Supervised Release in Domestic Violence Cases 7D Firearms Prohibitions 7E Monitoring Conditions of Probation in Domestic Violence Cases 7F Domestic Violence Resources 7G Training Memo - Probation Violation Law 7H Training Memo - Legal Considerations in Probation Violations Based on a New Offense 7I Training Memo - Probation Transfer in Domestic Violence Cases
<b>Chapter 8:</b> <b>The Bench</b>	8A Training Memo - Use of No-Contact Orders in Domestic Violence Criminal Cases 8B Memorandum on Consecutive Sentencing in Domestic Abuse Cases 8C Weekend Post-Arrest Procedures 8D Court Administration in Domestic Violence–Related Cases
<b>Chapter 9:</b> <b>Bibliography</b>	N/A

## PHASE 4: IMPLEMENT AND INSTITUTIONALIZE

---

### WHAT

**Phase 4** is the process of making the Blueprint real in everyday practice. **Phase 4** helps institutionalize and sustain the Blueprint once the policy adaptations have been approved. Blueprint policies are integrated into each agency's practice via new and revised administrative practices, such as new report formats, checklists, forms, and supervisory review.

An interagency communication strategy is established to share information about risk, history, context, and severity of violence. Agencies participate in events that officially launch the Blueprint as the new way of working together in response



to battering and other domestic violence crimes. Training occurs as needed for individual agencies. Interagency training reinforces the Blueprint as a unified policy and practice. The Blueprint coordinator and adaptation team design a monitoring plan specific to individual agencies and to the collective response. Community-based advocates and law enforcement agencies establish the Blueprint's advocacy-initiated response to victims.

### WHO

A Blueprint implementation team and the coordinator have key roles in managing **Phase 4** and ensuring that the collective Blueprint policy is meeting its intended goals and function. The adaptation team transitions to an implementation team that includes the Blueprint coordinator and advocate, a designated Blueprint agency liaison from each criminal legal system agency, and other practitioners, community-based advocates, and representatives from organizations working on behalf of marginalized communities. In most communities, members of the implementation team are likely to have participated in the assessment and adaptation phases. The implementation team convenes ad hoc work groups and invites others to participate as needed. While established in **Phase 4**, the implementation

team continues on to conduct the ongoing monitoring and assessment needed to maintain the Blueprint into the future. Agency supervisors, some of whom may have involved in earlier phases, work the coordinator and agency liaisons to become familiar with their role in monitoring the new Blueprint policy and practice.

## TASKS & TOOLS

The Blueprint coordinator sets the stage for implementation from the beginning of the process, back in **Phase 1**, by determining each agency's policy and training development process and incorporating any necessary steps and due dates into the overall plan. An implementation plan template guides the Blueprint coordinator, agency liaisons, and designated work groups through the key steps. The monitoring chart provides a foundation for identifying key activities and establishing a timeline for instituting both internal and interagency monitoring. The coordinator and implementation team continue to utilize tools introduced in the previous phases, such as the agency tracking checklist, timeline, strategies to move forward, and community consultation guidelines.

The Blueprint coordinator and team members continue to utilize many tools introduced in previous phases. New **Phase 4** tools (listed by Appendix number) include:

- *23. Blueprint Implementation Team: Role and Activities*
- *24. Launch and Interagency Training Planning Checklist*
- *25. Presentation Template Launch & Interagency Training*
- *26. Agency Implementation Plan Template*
- *27. Blueprint Monitoring – Key Activities Grid*
- *28. Implementing the Blueprint for Safety: Supervisory Roles and Responsibilities*
- *30. Agency Training Slide Presentation Template: 911*
- *31. Agency Training Slide Presentation Template: Patrol*



## PHASE 4: IMPLEMENT & INSTITUTIONALIZE

Key Tasks	Key Tools [Appendix]	Key People
1. Transition the adaptation team to an implementation team that will put the local Blueprint into practice.	<input type="checkbox"/> 23. <i>Blueprint Implementation Team: Role and Activities</i>	Coordinator Agency liaisons
2. Plan and initiate the administrative practices necessary to implement Blueprint policy, such as new documentation procedures, forms, checklists, database revisions, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> 26. <i>Agency Implementation Plan Template</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Templates and supporting material published as <i>The Blueprint for Safety: An Interagency Response to Domestic Violence Crimes</i> <sup>8</sup>	Coordinator Implementation team Agency liaisons Ad hoc work groups
3. Promote a Blueprint-informed Advocacy-Initiated Response.	<input type="checkbox"/> 14. <i>Blueprint Advocate Role, Responsibilities and Skills (Attachment 2: Overview of Advocacy-Initiated Response in Phase 1 Tools)</i>	Coordinator Advocate Agency liaisons Implementation team
4. Launch the Blueprint with specific events that announce the implementation and convey the meaning and intent of the Blueprint (i.e., what the Blueprint will address and how).	<input type="checkbox"/> 24. <i>Launch and Interagency Planning Checklist</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 25. <i>Presentation Launch &amp; Interagency Training Slide</i>	Coordinator Advocate Implementation team Blueprint champions

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.praxisinternational.org/bp\\_materials.aspx](http://www.praxisinternational.org/bp_materials.aspx)

Key Tasks	Key Tools [Appendix]	Key People
5. Conduct training: (1) internal and (2) interagency.	<input type="checkbox"/> 24. <i>Launch and Interagency Planning Checklist</i>	Coordinator
	<input type="checkbox"/> 25. <i>Presentation Launch &amp; Interagency Training Slide</i>	Advocate
	<input type="checkbox"/> 26. <i>Agency Implementation Plan Template</i>	Implementation team
	<input type="checkbox"/> 30. and 31. <i>Agency Training Slide Presentations: Samples for 911 and Patrol</i>	Agency liaisons and directors Blueprint champions
6. Design monitoring activities: (1) internal and (2) interagency.	<input type="checkbox"/> 27. <i>Blueprint Monitoring – Key Activities Grid</i>	Coordinator
	<input type="checkbox"/> 28. <i>Implementing the Blueprint for Safety: Supervisory Roles and Responsibilities</i>	Advocate
		Implementation team
		Agency liaisons Agency supervisors
7. Ensure that the Blueprint is “institutionalized” (i.e., integrated into agency policy, protocol, & practice; personnel trained and supervised).	<input type="checkbox"/> Agencies’ adapted policies	Coordinator
	<input type="checkbox"/> 26. <i>Agency Implementation Plan Template</i>	Advocate
	<input type="checkbox"/> 27. <i>Blueprint Monitoring – Key Activities Grid</i>	Implementation team
	<input type="checkbox"/> 28. <i>Implementing the Blueprint for Safety: Supervisory Roles and Responsibilities</i>	Agency liaisons Agency supervisors Agency directors

- |  |   |                     |
|--|---|---------------------|
| 8. Keep the experiences of victims of battering visible and central throughout the implementation processes. | <input type="checkbox"/> 7. <i>Community Consultation in the Blueprint for Safety</i> | Coordinator         |
|  |   | Advocate            |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> 11. <i>Foundations of Effective Intervention</i>             | Implementation team |

- |   |  |                     |
|---|--|---------------------|
| 9. Use community consultations to help guide the implementation, with specific attention to communities that are overrepresented and/or underserved communities in seeking help from the criminal legal system. | <input type="checkbox"/> 7. <i>Community Consultation in the Blueprint</i> | Coordinator         |
|   |  | Advocate            |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> 11. <i>Foundations of Effective Intervention</i>  | Implementation team |



## PHASE 5: MONITOR AND REVISE

---

### WHAT

The Blueprint for Safety is meant to be a dynamic, active response to battering, not a document that sits on a shelf. Once the initial adaptation is complete and the new policies and practice are set in motion, monitoring and revising the Blueprint positions a community to sustain this new way of working together and solving problems. **Phase 5** links directly back to the early steps in building an identity as a



Blueprint and forming the adaptation team. The Blueprint coordinator, advocate, and champions—agency, practitioner, and community champions—all have a role in keeping the Blueprint true to its principles, goals, and practice. **Phase 5** solidifies the data gathering and assessment that helps maintain the Blueprint over time. The ongoing

work of the Blueprint involves regular reviews of agency practice and attentiveness to potential disparities of impact and unintended consequences. **Phase 5** is anchored in the key role that community-based advocacy and community consultation have in keeping victims of battering visible and central to the criminal legal system's intervention.

Internal monitoring activities address practitioner compliance with policies and administrative practice. Interagency monitoring activities reinforce the Blueprint as a collective policy. The goals of ongoing monitoring are to:

- Ensure that practitioners are carrying out Blueprint policy and practice as designed and intended.
- Ensure that the planned interagency information sharing, cooperation, and accountability measures have been implemented.

- Identify problems unforeseen in the Blueprint design or implementation and correct them.
- Identify and correct any unintended negative outcomes and disparate impact of Blueprint policy and practice.

In essence, **Phase 5** poses this question: “We said we were going to do X, Y, and Z with the Blueprint for Safety. Are we doing this? If not, why not? What needs to change?”

## WHO

The full range of people and partnerships that have developed over the course of adapting the Blueprint continue to be involved, from the champions to the individuals who serve on the implementation team and ad hoc work groups. The Blueprint coordinator continues to have a pivotal role in the day-to-day oversight of the Blueprint. Agency liaisons help the implementation team secure the necessary data and implement the monitoring plan. Agency supervisors monitor internal policy and practice and contribute to ongoing interagency reviews. Ad hoc groups are convened as needed to participate in monitoring and assessment activities. The Blueprint advocate provides a bridge between community-based advocates and criminal legal system agencies as they implement the advocacy-initiated response. The coordinator, advocate, and the organizations and individuals participating in community consultation help keep the experiences of victims of battering visible and central to the Blueprint. The coordinator, advocate, and implementation team prepare an annual “state of the Blueprint” report to update the community on the impact of the Blueprint as a unified, collective policy.

## TASKS & TOOLS

The Blueprint coordinator and implementation team continue to use tools introduced throughout the entire adaptation process to track progress and assess and identify problems. While a Blueprint community with an active monitoring plan in place would rarely, if ever, conduct a full 911-through-sentencing policy and practice assessment, it will use the assessment tools as needed—and case review, in particular—to determine how the Blueprint is working and to identify any implementation problems. Internal monitoring by agency supervisors provides ongoing quality control and identifies needed corrections or problems that warrant further attention in the interagency review. Ad hoc groups are convened as needed to study a specific problem, revise policy language, or change an administrative practice, with information going back to the coordinator to keep track of issues and changes as they emerge. Ongoing agency training returns to and expands upon core Blueprint practices, such as documenting and communicating information about risk and danger, strengthening witness interviews and officers’ direct observations, making more use of undercharged crimes such as witness tampering, improving the investigation of charging of suspects who have left the scene, and using more thorough self-defense and predominant aggressor determinations to minimize arrest and charging of victims of battering. Community consultation continues as a key tool for keeping the experiences of battered women visible and addressing disparity for victims of battering from communities that are

overrepresented and/or underserved in the criminal legal system. The essential elements provide a steady point of reference for examining policy and practice. The coordinator continues to use such tools as the agency tracking system and strategies to stay focused to help manage the day-to-day monitoring and interagency response. The coordinator and implementation team prepare an annual “state of the Blueprint” report to update the community on the impact of the Blueprint for Safety as a unified policy and practice.

The new tool in **Phase 5** is the Interagency Accountability Check (**Appendix 29**), which defines five dimensions of accountability and provides a template for tracking agency successes and gaps in meeting them.

## PHASE 5: MONITOR & REVISE

Key Tasks	Key Tools [Appendix]	Key People
<b>1. Establish a calendar and tracking system for agency data collection, monitoring activities, and anticipated reports.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 18. <i>Adaptation Process and Timeline</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 27. <i>Blueprint Monitoring – Key Activities Grid</i>	Coordinator Agency liaisons
<b>2. Evaluate whether and how essential elements and features of the Blueprint are working.</b>  <b>a. Implement ongoing monitoring activities: (1) internal and (2) interagency.</b>  <b>b. Form small interagency work groups to review cases or conduct other practice assessment as needed to determine how agency practitioners are following new policies and practices.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 10. <i>Blueprint for Safety Essential Elements Annotated</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 22. <i>Policy and Practice Assessment Guide</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 27. <i>Blueprint Monitoring – Key Activities Grid</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 28. <i>Implementing the Blueprint for Safety: Supervisory Roles and Responsibilities</i>	Coordinator Advocate Agency liaisons Agency supervisors Implementation team
<b>3. Evaluate the extent to which agencies are working together on shared tasks, such an interagency case review and other monitoring.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 27. <i>Blueprint Monitoring – Key Activities Grid</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 29. <i>Interagency Accountability Check</i>	Coordinator Implementation team

Key Tasks	Key Tools [Appendix]	Key People
4. Collect statistical data for domestic violence-related crimes, including 911 calls, arrests, crimes charged, disposition, sentencing, and demographics.	<input type="checkbox"/> 22-3. <i>Policy and Practice Assessment Guide: Data-Gathering Template</i>	Coordinator Agency liaisons
5. Conduct annual focus groups and other consultation with victims/survivors to learn about their experiences with the implemented policies and practice.	<input type="checkbox"/> 7. <i>Community Consultation in the Blueprint</i>	Coordinator Advocate Implementation team
6. Include agency directors, liaisons, and supervisors in addressing low or incorrect compliance with Blueprint policies and practice.	<input type="checkbox"/> 27. <i>Blueprint Monitoring – Key Activities Grid</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 28. <i>Implementing the Blueprint for Safety: Supervisory Roles and Responsibilities</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 29. <i>Interagency Accountability Check</i>	Coordinator Agency liaisons Agency supervisors Agency directors
7. Present an annual report on Blueprint implementation internally to administrators (internal monitoring) <u>and</u> to the Blueprint implementation team (interagency monitoring).	<input type="checkbox"/> 27. <i>Blueprint Monitoring – Key Activities Grid</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 28. <i>Implementing the Blueprint for Safety: Supervisory Roles and Responsibilities</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 29. <i>Interagency Accountability Check</i>	Coordinator Agency liaisons Agency supervisors Implementation team



<b>8. Assess for unintended harmful consequences and disparity of impact and adapt Blueprint policies and practice to address.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 7. <i>Community Consultation in the Blueprint</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 22. <i>Policy and Practice Assessment Guide</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 29. <i>Interagency Accountability Check</i>	Coordinator  Advocate  Implementation team
<b>9. Adapt Blueprint policies and practice as needed to address unforeseen and new problems.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 27. <i>Blueprint Monitoring – Key Activities Grid</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 29. <i>Interagency Accountability Check</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 10. <i>Essential Elements Annotated</i>	Coordinator  Agency liaisons  Implementation team
<b>10. Update the community on the impact of the Blueprint collective policy, with specific attention to community-based organizations that regularly work with battered women and those representing marginalized communities.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 27. <i>Blueprint Monitoring – Key Activities Grid</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 29. <i>Interagency Accountability Check</i>	Coordinator  Advocate  Implementation team
<b>11. Keep the experiences of battered women visible and central throughout the monitoring process via ongoing community consultation.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 7. <i>Community Consultation in the Blueprint</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 11. <i>Foundations of effective intervention</i>	Coordinator  Advocate  Implementation team
<b>12. Utilize community consultations to help guide the monitoring, with specific attention to communities that are overrepresented and/or underserved communities in seeking help from the criminal legal system.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 7. <i>Community Consultation in the Blueprint</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 11. <i>Foundations of Effective Intervention</i>	Coordinator  Advocate  Implementation team

## PRINCIPLES AND COMPLEX REALITIES

---

**Principle 2: Recognize that most domestic violence is patterned crime requiring continuing engagement with victims and offenders.**

**Principle 6: Act in ways that reduce unintended consequences and the disparity of impact on victims and offenders.**

Reliance on the criminal legal system to address violence against women has been subject to much debate over the past thirty years, a vigorous debate that continues today.<sup>9</sup> The Blueprint for Safety enters this debate by acknowledging and trying to address three complex realities: (1) the deep and pervasive harm of violence against women, (2) the deep and pervasive harm of mass incarceration and



its impact on marginalized communities, and (3) the ways in which victims of battering are routinely caught up in the criminal legal system. The criminal legal system becomes involved in battered women's lives when they reach to it for help; when a family member, friend, or neighbor intervenes; or when women are entrapped or criminalized by their circumstances and survival strategies.

The Blueprint is not a way to force everyone to use the criminal legal system. It endeavors to make that system work in as protective and least harmful and oppressive way as possible for victims of battering

---

<sup>9</sup> For example, see *Safety and Justice for All: Examining the Relationship between the Women's Antiviolence Movement and the Criminal Legal System*, MS. Foundation for Women, 2003, based on meeting report by Shamita Das Dasgupta and summary by Patricia Eng; access at [http://files.praxisinternational.org/safety\\_justice.pdf](http://files.praxisinternational.org/safety_justice.pdf). Also, the positions and publications of INCITE! Access at <http://www.incite-national.org/home>.

who seek it out and for those who are drawn into it. To make that system work in as protective and least oppressive way as possible requires direct attention to issues of disparity.

## PROBLEMS OF IMMENSE SCOPE AND IMPACT

“... A woman called [Police Department] to report a domestic disturbance. By the time the police arrived, the woman’s boyfriend had left. The police looked through the house and saw indications that the boyfriend lived there. When the woman told police that only she and her brother were listed on the home’s occupancy permit, the officer placed the woman under arrest for the permit violation and she was jailed. In another instance, after a woman called police to report a domestic disturbance and was given a summons for an occupancy permit violation, she said, according to the officer’s report, that she “hated the [Police Department] and will never call again, even if she is being killed.”<sup>10</sup>

Susan and her boyfriend, Robert, are a young African American couple. Both are twenty years old; they live together with their six-month-old daughter, June. Susan has an early morning shift at a coffee shop and Robert recently started night classes to become a medical technician. Two months ago, neighbors called police when they heard Susan screaming. Robert was arrested for misdemeanor assault, even though Susan asked that they not arrest him. She told police that she had screamed at Robert after he had slapped her and broken several plates and that she also slapped him back. He had hit her a couple of times after they first got together, she told police, but this was the first time in over a year. Robert was booked into the jail for two days until his brother could pay the bail. He was released and ordered to have no contact with Susan. Susan missed two days of work when Robert was in jail because there was no one to

---

### DISPARITY OF IMPACT

Exists when the proportion of a specific group within the control of the criminal legal system is greater than its proportion in the general population or when criminal legal system intervention has a more negative impact on a specific group. The group may reflect a particular characteristic or, more likely, reflect the intersectionality of different aspects of identity, such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, poverty, ability, health status. Harmful disparity may result from overt bias or it may reflect unintended consequences, such as policy or practice that appears identity-neutral but that has a different impact on specific groups and communities.

---

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, *Investigation of the Ferguson Police Department*, p. 81. Released March 4, 2015. Access at: [http://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/opa/press-releases/attachments/2015/03/04/ferguson\\_police\\_department\\_report.pdf](http://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/opa/press-releases/attachments/2015/03/04/ferguson_police_department_report.pdf)

care for June. When Robert called to apologize, she asked him to return home. Ten days later, while giving her a ride to work, Robert is stopped for having expired plates. Because there is a no-contact order, Robert is arrested, his car impounded, and Susan and their daughter are left at a bus stop. Robert is charged with a gross misdemeanor for violating the no-contact order, in addition to the original assault charge. He's released and again ordered to have no contact with Susan. Now he has no car or money to pay the impound fee and get his car back; the fee grows by forty dollars a day. Susan has no one to care for June. Her boss asks her to get back on her usual shift or quit. Robert has missed several days of classes and a major test. Neither of them can get to work or school without traveling by bus for over an hour each way, but Susan could take the first bus at 4:30 am if Robert was there for June. If Robert returns home, however, he risks being charged with a felony for violating the no-contact order a second time.

Such stories raise our opening questions: *How are we intervening... Does our response make people safer? Are we reaching those who are most dangerous and cause the most harm? What messages are we sending and reinforcing? Are we paying attention to how our intervention impacts victims of battering and the community?*

The Blueprint for Safety has emerged during a time of widespread national discussion about racial and class disparities in the criminal legal system. Many activists, communities, and public officials are examining how to address the broad and costly impact of a process that incarcerates the highest number of people in the world, feeds a prison system of unprecedented size, and brings millions of people under an often lifetime sentence of restricted access to housing, employment, education, and voting rights.<sup>11</sup> Incarceration rates for Black, Latino, and Native American peoples are hugely disproportionate to their populations.<sup>12</sup> This “mass incarceration” comes at a high cost: 70 billion dollars each year to incarcerate 2.2 million people, plus 65 million adults (approximately one in four) with a criminal record and its collateral consequences.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> The United States has less than 5% of the world's population but over 23% of the world's incarcerated people. It imprisons the most women in the world. Crime rates do not account for the high incarceration rates. See *US Rates of Incarceration: A Global Perspective*, Christopher Harvey, National Council on Crime and Delinquency, November 2006. Access at [http://www.nccdglobal.org/sites/default/files/publication\\_pdf/factsheet-us-incarceration.pdf](http://www.nccdglobal.org/sites/default/files/publication_pdf/factsheet-us-incarceration.pdf). See also: *Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie*, Prison Policy Initiative Briefing, March 12, 2014. Access at <http://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie.html>.

<sup>12</sup> See *Breaking Down Mass Incarceration in the 2010 Census: State-by-State Incarceration Rates by Race/Ethnicity*, Leah Sakala, Prison Policy Initiative, May 28, 2014. Access at <http://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/rates.html>.

<sup>13</sup> *Criminal Justice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Eliminating Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Criminal Justice System*, Conference Report by Tanya E. Coke, National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, 2013. For a discussion of

*Never before have so many been arrested for so little... Despite the minor nature of most offenses processed through the system, a large number of defendants will be too poor to post bail, will plead guilty to time served to get out of jail, and then will suffer one or more of the collateral consequences of criminal conviction: deportation from the United States, the inability to get or keep a job, the loss of housing, student loan disqualification, and/or the denial of the right to vote.<sup>14</sup>*

Women who are being or have been battered experience this complex, troubled system in many different ways. Their experiences are shaped by different social realities and intersections of race, ethnicity, class, age, immigration status, gender, sexual orientation, ability, community, history, oppression, privilege, and many other aspects of culture and identity.

Women are disproportionately impacted by intimate partner violence, rape, and stalking. Many experience high lifetime rates of severe violence and the violence contributes to or causes unemployment, homelessness, and loss of their children. Violence against women and girls also

---

#### UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

Reforms to institutional policy and practice that are meant to increase safety and well-being for victims of battering, that instead jeopardize safety and well-being and contribute to disparity of impact.

Unintended consequences may affect a broad range of victims of battering or fall more heavily on a specific group or community.

---

increases the risk of arrest and incarceration, particularly for women of color and poor women. Criminalization of women's survival strategies and entrapment into crime by their abusive partners and by gender, race, and class oppression are paths to incarceration. Once criminalized and under correctional control, women face state "enforcement violence" through coercive laws and policies.<sup>15</sup> The consequences of enforcement violence, in turn, often lead to unemployment, homelessness, and

---

mass incarceration, see *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, Michelle Alexander, The New Press, 2010.

<sup>14</sup> New York State Supreme Court Justice Marcy Friedman, *Criminal Justice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, p. 8.

<sup>15</sup> See *Women's Experiences of Abuse as a Risk Factor for Incarceration*, Mary E. Gilfus, VAWNet Applied Research Forum, December 2002. Access at [http://www.vawnet.org/applied-research-papers/print-document.php?doc\\_id=412](http://www.vawnet.org/applied-research-papers/print-document.php?doc_id=412). Gilfus references the following researchers: Meda Chesney-Lind and Noelle Rodriguez (criminalization of survival strategies), Beth E. Richie (gender entrapment), and Anannya Bhattacharjee (enforcement violence).

loss of their children.

The United States imprisons more women than any country in the world and most of those women are survivors of violence. Over a million women are in the correctional population.<sup>16</sup> Between 1980 and 2010, the rate of growth of women in prison exceeded the rate of increase for men (646% to 419%). While incarceration rates overall have declined somewhat since 2008, the rate of women's incarceration continues to outpace the rate for men.<sup>17</sup>

Most women in the correctional system have histories of being abused, either as a child and/or as an adult. Estimates of prior abuse range from 55% to as high as 95%. Lower estimates reflect general screening questions while more in-depth studies with expanded measures of abuse report that nearly all girls and women in prison have experienced physical and sexual abuse throughout their lives.<sup>18</sup> Severe physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner is an overwhelmingly common experience of incarcerated women: 75% to 93% of women who report prior abuse have been abused by an intimate partner.<sup>19</sup>

Women in the correctional system are disproportionately women of color. While the rate at which African American women are incarcerated in comparison to white women and Latinas has dropped in the past ten years, African American women still represent over 30% of incarcerated women and Latinas represent roughly 17%.<sup>20</sup> While the downward trend for African American women is encouraging, as one

---

<sup>16</sup> Lauren E. Glaze and Danielle Kaeble, *Correctional Populations in the United States, 2013*. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, December 2014. The correctional population includes those on probation or parole, in state or federal prison, or in local jail.

<sup>17</sup> Marc Mauer, *The Changing Racial Dynamics of Women's Incarceration*, The Sentencing Project, February 2013. Access at [http://sentencingproject.org/doc/publications/rd\\_Changing%20Racial%20Dynamics%202013.pdf](http://sentencingproject.org/doc/publications/rd_Changing%20Racial%20Dynamics%202013.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> For a review of research studies, see Gilfus, *Women's Experiences of Abuse as a Risk Factor for Incarceration* (at note 15).

<sup>19</sup> Studies cited in *About Survivors in Prison*, fact sheet published by Domestic Violence Survivors' Justice Act, <http://dvsja.org/about-survivors-in-prison/>.

<sup>20</sup> Mauer, *Changing Racial Dynamics*. "Changes during the decade were most pronounced among women, with black women experiencing a decline of 30.7% in their rate of incarceration, white women a 47.1% rise, and Hispanic women a 23.3% rise" (p. 7-8).



commentator put it, “I don’t want to just exchange women of color for poor white women.”<sup>21</sup> Data on rates of incarceration for Native women is less accessible but rates for Native women have been rising—often greater than rates for Native men—and vastly outpace those for whites. For example, in South Dakota Native peoples are 10% of the population but Native women make up 35% of prison inmates; in Montana, Native peoples are 6.8% of the population but 29.6% of women prisoners.<sup>22</sup>

To repeat, the Blueprint for Safety faces three complex realities as it seeks to change the criminal legal system response to battering: (1) the deep and pervasive harm of violence against women, (2) the deep and pervasive harm of mass incarceration and its impact on marginalized communities, and (3) the ways in which victims of battering are routinely caught up in the criminal legal system. The realities are interconnected.

- Mass incarceration and the hyper-surveillance of the criminal legal system in marginalized communities is a barrier to engagement. Victims of battering who feel “over-policed and under-protected” in their communities and daily lives are unlikely to see the police and other representatives of the criminal system as a trusted source of help.<sup>23</sup>
- Battered women can become even more isolated in an environment of mass incarceration and over-policing as they are pushed to choose between their individual well-being and safety and the increasing devastation to their families and communities by the immediate and collateral consequences of incarceration.
- Violence against women—and battering, specifically—is a pathway to incarceration and state control for millions of women, a pathway that has opened even wider with the well-intended reforms of mandatory arrest and prosecution for domestic violence-related crimes.

---

<sup>21</sup> Glenn Martin, Fortune Society, cited in “Race, Women and Prison,” Graham Kates, *The Crime Report*, February 28, 2013. Access at <http://www.thecrimereport.org/news/inside-criminal-justice/2013-02-race-women-and-prison>

<sup>22</sup> Frank Smith, *Incarceration of Native Americans and Private Prisons*, access at <http://lenapeprograms.info/socio-political-issues-2/prisoners/>.

<sup>23</sup> For example, see the papers published in conjunction with the 2012 UCLA Law Review Symposium, “Overpoliced and Underprotected: Women, Race, and Criminalization.” Access at <https://maximinlaw.wordpress.com/2012/09/02/symposium-articles-published-ucla-law-review-overpoliced-and-underprotected-women-race-and-criminalization/>. See also, Donna Coker, et al., *Why Opposing Hyper-Incarceration Should be Central to the Work of the Anti-Domestic Violence Movement*, University of Miami Race & Social Justice Law Review, 2015. Access at <http://repository.law.miami.edu/umrsjlr/vol5/iss2/30/>.

How does a Blueprint community address these complex realities? How does the focused, interagency collective policy prescribed by the Blueprint for Safety make meaningful change in the face of these realities? How does a community make two of the Blueprint's most distinctive principles real?

## QUESTIONS AND LESSONS

The Blueprint for Safety begins to embody its principles and address these complex realities in part by asking many questions. Some of these questions focus narrowly on a specific practice or aspect of intervention; others are broader and more philosophical in nature.

To address and ultimately reduce harmful interventions and disparity of impact is challenging, arduous, and essential work. Few CCRs have been positioned to initiate and sustain an examination and response to disparity in their communities. The CCR idea and practice has been largely dominated by a criminal legal system orientation that has more or less accepted business as usual, even sometimes framing its role as “getting the bad guys.” For many victims of battering in marginalized, underserved and over-scrutinized communities, interventions based on accepting the system as-is have not contributed to safety, well-being, or accountability.

The Blueprint is distinctive in defining action to reduce harmful intervention and disparity as an essential function of a coordinated response to battering. That work begins by posing the questions to be answered, both as suggested below and as specific to each community. Lessons from the early Blueprint adapters—the demonstration communities and St. Paul—point the way to strategies that move this critical work forward.

In its structure and organization, the Blueprint requires a commitment by community-based advocates and allies in the criminal legal system to “stay at the table” as they identify problems and explore solutions. It is difficult to take varied viewpoints about complex issues—particularly when related to race, gender, class, and other disparities—and secure agreement on a direction to take, let alone agree on specific policy and practice changes. It is difficult to challenge long-standing practice.

Among the more specific questions that a Blueprint community must ask:

- How do practitioners sort out battering from other kinds of domestic violence? How can they use the Blueprint risk questions a path to identify battering and find out more clearly who is most dangerous to whom?
- Are there ways in which 911 is used as a resource by the community that inadvertently contributes to disparity?
- What is the impact of poor guidance on how to make sound self-defense determinations and how to assess for predominant aggressor when warranted?



- What domestic violence-related crimes should be enhanced? What is the impact of expanding the category of felony crimes related to domestic violence?
- Should prosecution diversion be reconsidered as an option in domestic violence-related crimes? Under what conditions and with what safeguards?
- What is the impact of the following kinds of laws and practices in relation to engagement and to a fair and just response: mandatory minimum sentencing, penalty/sentencing enhancements, mandatory arrest, and mandatory no-contact orders?
- How might options and costs related to electronic monitoring—or lack of options—contribute to disparity of impact?
- How can sanctions account for people’s economic circumstances (i.e., fees, fines, forfeitures and conditions under which they are leveled and multiplied)?
- At each step in the system, do people receive clear information about what is expected of them? Is there confirmation that people in fact understand what is expected? Are supports and resources in place to support their success in meeting what’s expected?
- In what ways might probation sanctions for technical violations (i.e., unrelated to a new assault or crime) contribute to disparity of impact?
- Should there be any kind of way to expunge criminal records in domestic violence-related convictions? If so, under what circumstances?

Among the broader questions:

- How do we keep women and children safe and yet hold batterers accountable without necessarily seeking longer, more punitive sentences as the response?
- How do we meet the needs of victims without eroding judicial fairness and the due process protections of accused persons?
- Who belongs in jail and when? Who does not belong in jail?
- What is the multiplier effect of intensive policing and poverty? Which communities reflect the greatest disparity in rates of incarceration and state control?
- What are effective alternatives for women and children’s safety within the criminal legal system?

- What discretion should exist for practitioners at each phase in the criminal legal system process?
- Would reducing the role of law enforcement provide a convenient excuse for some law enforcement officials to return to a response where victims of battering were largely ignored or discounted?
- How might we build a framework of community safety outside of criminal legal system? Should the criminal legal system become the diversionary program, the secondary option? If so, how?
- What are the right interventions to maximize safety and accountability while minimizing unintended harm and disparity?
- How can we put the intersection of poverty and race at the forefront of discussions and policy-making rather than treat it as an afterthought?

---

## ENGAGEMENT

To be engaged is to be active in seeking a meaningful relationship that is characterized by respect and thoughtfulness. Engagement requires openness to and awareness of peoples' unique identities and histories. In the context of the Blueprint for Safety, to be engaged means using practitioners' extended contacts with those experiencing the harm caused by battering and those responsible for the harm to build meaningful relationships over time. Such relationships reinforces messages of help and accountability and opportunities to change.

**BUT . . .** We can hear you wonder: how can it be helpful in an adaptation guide to pose so many questions? A guide should have the answers, right?

Not every question can be asked and answered at once. Initial answers might prove misguided when actually implemented or upon closer attention to unintended consequences. Nonetheless, the experiences of the early Blueprint adapters suggest effective strategies to accomplish both the mechanics of working together and the kinds of change that contribute to reducing harmful consequences and disparity. For example, the following discussion of strategies illustrates how two Blueprint communities have investigated disparities related to the arrests of victims of battering and the impact of mandatory universal no-contact orders.

The Blueprint for Safety is a dynamic approach and process to shaping the criminal legal system's response to battering. It is not a one-time event or document to place on a shelf. The Blueprint is very much a work in progress. As it is adapted and practiced by more communities, broader implementation will produce new insights and answers on how the criminal legal system can best engage with those impacted by battering and intervene in ways that are protective and effective while reducing unintended consequences and disparity of impact. Domestic violence-related crimes are a significant

part of the business of the criminal legal system. As the Blueprint principles shape actions in that system they have the potential to reduce broader institutional harm and disparity.

## STRATEGIES

On their own, Blueprint organizers and leaders are poorly positioned to tackle the deep-seated, structural factors that contribute to overall disparity—such as poverty and a highly racialized society. The overwhelming scope of the problem can make any effort appear impossible. Within the sphere of domestic violence-related crimes, however, a Blueprint community can investigate and make concrete changes in the response that help avoid harmful consequences and help reduce aspects of disparity.

Strategies will evolve as more communities implement the Blueprint and contribute their experiences. Again, the Blueprint is meant to be a “living” application of principles and practice. Its various tools and templates, such as those presented in this guide, will be revised to reflect new knowledge about how to best discover, talk about, and address the complex issues of disparity. In the meantime, the available tools help a Blueprint community conduct focused and effective inquiries into aspects of disparity and produce concrete recommendations for change.

## TOOL BOX

This adaptation guide itself is a primary tool via its organization of planning, implementation, and monitoring activities, all of which keep the Blueprint principles in focus. In addition, the following specific approaches and strategies help keep the Blueprint attentive to disparity.

- Use the practice assessment tools and process to identify possible areas of disparity and harmful intervention. Key assessment tools include:
  - Basic data collection about the number and disposition of cases, broken down by gender, race, ethnicity, and other characteristics
  - Mapping each step of criminal case processing and examining how disparity might be introduced or magnified
  - Consultation with victims/survivors and community members—via interviews and discussion groups, among other strategies—including advocates working with specific populations, to identify problems related to unintended consequences and disparity
  - Analysis of forms that direct practitioners to take certain actions (e.g., domestic violence supplement form or bail screening checklist) and the case records that convey the official accounts of cases (e.g., police reports or prosecution files).

- In all Blueprint phases, include meaningful representation (i.e., more than one or two individuals expected to represent an entire community) from communities most affected by likely problem(s) of disparity.
- Build a knowledge base about the nature of disparity within the larger community and the criminal legal system, with attention to the histories and distinctive experiences of people most impacted.
- Use the following questions to shape the exploration of a possible disparity:
  - What is the nature of the disparity and how did it come about?
  - Who does the disparity impact and in what ways?
  - What information is needed in order to define and explore this issue?
  - Are there laws that affect the disparity?
  - Are there policies or procedures that affect the disparity?
  - Are there linkages between intervening agencies—or lack thereof—that affect the disparity?
  - Are there Blueprint principles that are not being fully incorporated into a community's practice that affect the disparity (e.g., incorporation of risk and danger or recognition that risk change can change over time and the response may need to be modified)?

### Case Study: New Orleans

The New Orleans Blueprint demonstration site analyzed police arrest data and discovered that African American women had the highest rate of arrest among women charged with domestic violence, while also being the most likely to experience intimate partner violence. It began to examine how criminal justice policies and procedures might have a disparate impact on African American women arrested on domestic violence charges.

New Orleans conducted a literature review, analyzed police reports, held advocate and survivor focus groups, and established a community-based Disparate Impact Strategic Planning Committee—known as the disparity impact committee—to guide the Blueprint. The disparate impact committee is grounded in the critical expertise of community members with years of experience working with African American women in New Orleans. The committee also includes Blueprint coordinators, system practitioners, and a university-based researcher who has initiated an expanded analysis of police patrol reports.

Among the themes and discoveries:

- Persistent stereotypes build what Melissa Harris-Perry calls the “Black women’s crooked room” and influence how they are seen in the world.<sup>24</sup> This includes the “Sapphire” or “angry black woman” who is aggressive, strong, and loud: i.e., therefore cannot be a victim. In the police response, such assumptions can prevail in the absence of thorough self-defense and predominant aggressor determinations.
- African American women turn to the police as a last resort when they are fearful for their own or their children’s safety. This contrasts with the “mad day” belief expressed by police officers in mapping activities, interviews, and analysis of reports: i.e., women are out of sorts with their partners and decide to get mad and call the police.
- Trust is a significant element in whether and how women approach or avoid the police and other agencies. When women report helpful interactions with police and others in the system, it is often because there is an individual “gate-keeper” whom they trust and who acts on their behalf. While such a personal response is useful to an individual woman, it is not institutionalized in a way that benefits all victims of battering.

---

<sup>24</sup> Melissa Harris-Perry, *Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America*, Yale University Press, 2011. The New Orleans Blueprint sought out the Anna Julia Cooper Project on Gender, Race, and Politics in the South as a community partner. It utilized Harris-Perry’s analysis and conceptual framework for understanding the dominant myths about African American women.

While the disparity work in New Orleans is ongoing, it has already led to policy changes in the New Orleans Police Department’s approach to self-defense and predominant aggressor determinations, stronger attention to and documentation of the context and history of violence, and plans to revise report formats to eliminate the use of standard modus operandi categories (e.g., “broad nose,” “flabby,” “angry”) that can reinforce stereotypes of African American women.

The New Orleans experience has also produced insights into strategies for organizing community focus groups and adapting risk questions to meet diverse literacy and comprehension levels. For example, building relationships with diverse community-based advocacy organizations—beyond those typically identified as working with victims of domestic violence—was critical to reaching a broader range of participants, particularly those who were reluctant to turn to the police for help. In New Orleans, those relationships included organizations whose primary advocacy focused on issues of poverty, health and wellness, and the lives of marginalized women. The New Orleans analysis also noticed how seemingly neutral elements in Blueprint templates (e.g., document emotional demeanor, physical appearance, and indications of drug or alcohol abuse) can inadvertently reinforce stereotypes of African American women.

### **Case Study: St. Paul**

In St. Paul, the defense bar and probation officers raised concerns that young men of color were disproportionately affected by St. Paul’s application of Minnesota state law permitting courts to issue a pretrial or post-conviction Domestic Abuse No-Contact Order (DANCO). The DANCO is enforceable by warrantless arrest and punishable as a misdemeanor. Subsequent arrests for violating the no-contact order, however, can be enhanced as felony-level crimes. There is the possibility that a defendant can commit a low-level misdemeanor assault, be subject to the terms of a DANCO that the victim of the assault may not want, and subsequently be prosecuted as a felon, even if the victim wants contact and no further violence occurs. The defense and probation raise the concern that DANCO enforcement has a disproportionate impact on young men of color, resulting in felony convictions and potential incarceration for violations of no-contact orders that do not involve new acts of violence.

The St. Paul Blueprint partners—including the community-based advocacy program, practitioners, and technical assistance partner, Praxis International—together with the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council, identified the following key questions to answer in order to establish whether and to what extent the perceived disparity exists and how to address the disparity if it is established:

- How many offenders are ending up with felony convictions when they did not commit more violence? What is their race and age? How many did or did not commit additional violence or pose a serious threat to the victim?
- Are convictions for DANCO violations driven by a goal of increased conviction rates or a goal of increased safety?

- Prosecutors have charging discretion; under what circumstances would the Blueprint recommend that prosecutors not issue an enhanced charge for a DANCO violation?
- Under what circumstances should a prosecutor request a DANCO over the objection of a victim during the pretrial period? Post-conviction? What tool should be used to make this determination?
- Should a victim be able to request cancellation or modification of a DANCO? What process could be created to allow cancellation or modification? What tool would the court use to weigh its decision?
- If a cancellation or modification process is established, are advocates prepared to stand with the judicial decision-maker if a woman gets killed after a DANCO is cancelled or modified as she requested?

Initial steps have included (1) information-gathering focus groups with women who have had DANCOs ordered against their wishes, (2) formation of a work group that will draft a process for victim-directed modification or cancellation of no-contact orders, and (3) revisions to prosecutors' practice so mandatory universal DANCOs are no longer routine. Future steps include (4) case reviews to determine how many offenders are being charged with DANCO violations unrelated to new acts of violence and to examine more closely the risk to victims in such cases, and (5) additional statistical research on felony charges and convictions related to no-contact order violations.





## INSIGHTS FROM THE EARLY ADAPTERS

*Complex problems are not just more complicated than other problems; they are different in kind... The hallmark of complex problems is that they involve a wide range of factors that interact with one another to generate a constantly shifting set of issues and challenges. As a result, they can be addressed effectively only when an equally wide range of partners, each engaged with different aspects of the issue, work together to adjust and re-adjust how they affect one another through the decisions and actions they take.<sup>25</sup>*

The Blueprint for Safety reflects this essential approach to solving complex problems. It involves a wide range of partners within the criminal legal system, other government agencies, and community-based advocacy organizations. Each partner attends to its own practice and role while working together to “adjust and re-adjust” the Blueprint as a collective policy and practice.

The Blueprint is a design for change within a complex incident-focused system that was never organized to fit the distinct nature of battering, with its pattern of ongoing intimidation, coercion, and violence. The Blueprint is a fully articulated criminal legal system response framed by features that distinguish it from other approaches to intervening in domestic violence-related crimes. In a Blueprint community:

- A framework of foundational principles and essential elements guides intervention.



<sup>25</sup> Eric Leviten-Reid, *Comprehensive Strategies for Deep and Durable Outcomes*, Caledon Institute of Social Policy, April 2009.

- Practitioners are organized to identify, document, disseminate, and act upon cases based on risk and danger.
- Reform efforts are grounded in the experiences of victims of violence and organized around principles of victim engagement.
- Attention to recognizing and preventing harmful disparity of impact and unintended consequences is central to a unified response.
- Intra- and interagency monitoring and accountability are built into policy and practice throughout the system.

The Blueprint's early adapters have demonstrated that under certain conditions communities can position themselves to develop the shared philosophy, commitment, and response that characterize the Blueprint's distinct approach to curtailing and eventually eliminating domestic violence. Communities seeking to develop and apply the Blueprint benefit from the experience of St. Paul and the demonstration initiative sites: Duluth, New Orleans, and Memphis/Shelby County. Thanks to their groundbreaking efforts, a community starting now has the foundation of tools and options presented in this guide.

The early adapters have many insights and lessons to share about how to organize and sustain the Blueprint's sweeping approach to changing a complex system. Among the core insights:

- Structure, organization, and skilled coordination are essential from the beginning.
- The Blueprint requires champions at many levels—agency decision-makers and leaders, a coordinator, practitioner partners, advocates, community leaders—working in an environment of respect and trust for one another's role and contributions and a mutual willingness to seek out and respond to problems in the criminal justice system's response to domestic violence crimes.
- Everyone involved needs to see and understand the "essential elements"—the big picture and purpose—how the Blueprint will work at each step and within each agency, and everyone's role in implementing and maintaining it.
- A consistent and repeated message of the Blueprint as a collective policy is critical. It requires a focus on how the various roles, parts, and pieces in the criminal legal system response to battering fit together. Under a collective policy, everyone is always looking at how they are linked and what information is collected and where it goes.
- It is critical to learn the process, approvals, and timelines for each agency's policy writing and training delivery early on in the Blueprint adaptation process.

- Communities vary greatly and local conditions, skills, and circumstances require flexibility in approach and technical assistance related to adaptation and implementation.
- Blueprint coordinators, leaders, and team members need clear guidance on the logistics and mechanics of managing the Blueprint, including what to do, where to start, roles, timelines, strategies for addressing problems, and implementation and monitoring tools.
- Attention to unintended consequences and disparity of impact needs to happen early on. Community consultation must be a key part of Blueprint planning, adaptation, and monitoring.
- Community-based advocacy has a central role in adapting the Blueprint and helping to ensure that it is centered in the voices and experiences of victims/survivors.
- The practice assessment is an important element in adapting the Blueprint and maintaining it over time.

In short, the foundation for implementing and maintaining the Blueprint has to be set early on in how the community prepares, who is involved, and the ways in which the Blueprint is defined and communicated.



## APPENDICES

---

In addition to the appendices to this guide listed below, see the policy templates and supplemental material published in *The Blueprint for Safety: An Interagency Response to Domestic Violence Crimes*.

Access at [http://www.praxisinternational.org/bp\\_materials.aspx](http://www.praxisinternational.org/bp_materials.aspx).

1. *Essential Commitments of a Blueprint Community*
2. *Frequently Asked Questions*
3. *Blueprint for Safety Informational Brochure*
4. *Adapting the Blueprint: Phases & Key Activities*
5. *What Is Distinctive About the Blueprint as an Approach to Domestic Violence Crimes?*
6. *Community Readiness Checklist*
7. *Community Consultation in the Blueprint*
8. *Research that Supports the Blueprint for Safety*
9. *The Blueprint Approach to Risk*
10. *Blueprint for Safety Essential Elements – Annotated*
11. *Foundations of Effective Intervention*
12. *Sample Memorandum of Understanding*
13. *Blueprint Coordinator Role, Responsibilities and Skills*
14. *Blueprint Advocate Role, Responsibilities and Skills*
15. *Blueprint Adaptation Team Role and Activities*
16. *Planning a Blueprint for Safety Proposal*
17. *Policy Adaptation Phases*
18. *Adaptation Process and Timeline*
19. *Coordinating the Blueprint: Strategies to Stay Focused and Move Forward*
20. *Blueprint Adaptation Tasks and Timeline*
21. *Presentation Template: Becoming a Blueprint Community*
22. *Policy and Practice Assessment Guide*

- 23. *Blueprint Implementation Team: Role and Activities*
- 24. *Launch and Interagency Training Planning Checklist*
- 25. *Presentation Template Launch & Interagency Training Slide*
- 26. *Agency Implementation Plan Template*
- 27. *Blueprint Monitoring – Key Activities Grid*
- 28. *Implementing the Blueprint for Safety: Supervisory Roles and Responsibilities*
- 29. *Interagency Accountability Check*
- 30. *Agency Training Slide Presentation Template: 911*
- 31. *Agency Training Slide Presentation Template: Patrol*

# ESSENTIAL COMMITMENTS OF A BLUEPRINT FOR SAFETY COMMUNITY

---

## SELF-EXAMINATION AND PROBLEM-SOLVING

The Blueprint is about finding and fixing problems in the criminal legal system response to domestic violence crimes. It provides best-practice templates that articulate how agencies can more effectively aid and protect victims of ongoing abuse, hold offenders accountable, and further the goal of public safety. In a Blueprint community, criminal justice system agencies partner with community-based advocacy to check practices against the Blueprint standards and to identify and solve problems together. Agencies commit to a process of ongoing supervision and monitoring to sustain the Blueprint and adjust to unforeseen or new problems in their response.

## BLUEPRINT FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

Six foundational principles are fundamental to how the Blueprint functions.

1. Adhere to an interagency approach and collective intervention goals.
2. Build attention to context and severity of abuse into each intervention.
3. Recognize that most domestic violence is a patterned crime requiring continuing engagement with victims and offenders.
4. Ensure sure and swift consequences for continued abuse.
5. Send messages of help to victims and messages of accountability to offenders.
6. Act in ways that reduce unintended consequences and the disparity of impact on victims and offenders.

The principles carry the essence of the Blueprint. In a Blueprint community, the major criminal justice agencies agree that the foundational principles will guide the response at each step.

## A CENTRAL ROLE FOR COMMUNITY-BASED ADVOCACY IN BLUEPRINT LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIPS

The Blueprint is distinctive in its emphasis on leadership by community-based advocacy organizations with a history of legal systems advocacy to individual victims of battering and experience in improving the legal system response.

The Blueprint calls on advocacy organizations and criminal justice agencies to work together to develop procedures and protocols. It also calls for including and consulting with those in the community who are most impacted by such public policies. Along with practitioner-advocate partnerships, a Blueprint

community engages with a range of community members, from victims and survivors to populations overrepresented and/or underserved in the system, to develop, implement, and monitor Blueprint policies and practice.

Community-based advocacy located in nonprofit, nongovernmental or tribal organizations, such as a local program for battered women, is essential to grounding the Blueprint in the scope and scale of domestic violence and in victims' lives and experiences. One way this can happen is to establish and maintain an advisory group of survivors who can help direct the process of adapting and implementing the Blueprint.

Community-based advocacy provides a setting where victims of battering can speak confidentially, freely, and openly. No one else plays this role, which is distinct from that of the important support provided by victim assistance or legal services within government agencies. Community-based advocacy typically has broader access to victims and survivors, many of whom are fearful of and try to avoid public institutions such as the criminal legal system. Research reinforces the value of the advocacy initiated response reflected in the Blueprint in improving court outcomes in domestic violence-related cases.

*This project is supported by Grant No. 2010-TA-AX-K008 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions and recommendations expressed in this document are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.*



# BLUEPRINT FOR SAFETY: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

---

Read below for answers to frequently asked questions about the Blueprint for Safety...

- 1. What is distinctive about the Blueprint?**
- 2. Do we have to have a CCR in place?**
- 3. What are the key steps?**
- 4. Who does the work—and do we need a coordinator?**
- 5. How much does it cost?**
- 6. How do we sustain the Blueprint?**
- 7. How do we know if the Blueprint is the best step for our community?**
- 8. What if we can't take on the entire Blueprint?**
- 9. How can we prepare to write a grant to develop the Blueprint for Safety in our community?**
- 10. How do we learn more?**

## **1. WHAT IS DISTINCTIVE ABOUT THE BLUEPRINT?**

The Blueprint is a coordinated community response (CCR), fully articulated. It builds on the groundbreaking work of two Minnesota communities, Duluth and St. Paul, to present the first comprehensive, written interagency plan in the nation for the criminal legal system response to domestic violence crimes, from 911 through sentencing and probation. It unites each step in the process around consistent identification and communication of risk. The Blueprint is grounded in the experiences of victims of battering and understanding of how intervention by the criminal legal system affects their lives. It is distinctive in its emphasis on leadership by community-based advocacy and community consultation as ways to accomplish that grounding in victims' lived experience.

It establishes an ongoing process of reviewing, monitoring, and adjusting policy and practice to ensure the most protective and accountable response possible, from an emergency call for help through to sentencing and probation. The Blueprint organizes case processing around: 1) what victims need to be safe; 2) what practitioners need from each other to do their jobs and enhance safety; and 3) what is required by each worker and agency to hold offenders accountable. The Blueprint provides direction for each worker on how to identify, document, act upon, and communicate information about risk and danger. It provides direction on how to engage with victims to form partnerships and promote safety.

The Blueprint requires adjusting interventions in ways that avoid and correct unintended harmful consequences and disparity of impact.

## 2. DO WE HAVE TO HAVE A CCR IN PLACE?

The Blueprint is an interagency response, guided by community-based advocacy: i.e., it is fundamentally a coordinated community response, but a fully articulated and actualized CCR. A functioning interagency group that includes community-based advocacy and key agencies in the criminal legal system response—as characteristic of any CCR—is necessary to adapt and sustain the Blueprint. Starting out to develop a local Blueprint does not necessarily mean that every criminal legal system agency has to be fully on board and engaged. The Blueprint is unlikely to get far, however, without the early and continuous involvement of emergency communications/911, police, and prosecution. A community with a longstanding, well-functioning CCR will be able to move from adaptation to implementation more readily. If agreement among key players is in place, a community without an established CCR can also be successful in using the process of adapting the Blueprint to create a coordinated community response in the criminal legal system.

## 3. WHAT ARE THE KEY STEPS?

Adapting the Blueprint for Safety proceeds in five phases involving the following key steps:

1. **Explore and prepare**

Secure community will to initiate the Blueprint development process and establish an adaptation team.

2. **Assess practice and identify problems**

Conduct an assessment of current policy and practice to identify gaps that the Blueprint will address.

3. **Adapt policy and adjust practice**

Use the Blueprint policy and protocol templates and training memos to revise and write policies and protocols for each agency and produce a collective policy.

4. **Implement and institutionalize the Blueprint changes**

Secure policy approvals, hold a community Launch event, conduct agency-specific and interagency training, initiate new documentation and administrative procedures, and establish a process for ongoing monitoring.

5. **Monitor and revise**

Conduct the on-going data collection, assessment, and case-by-case and systemic problem-solving needed to ensure that the Blueprint functions as a “living,” sustainable response to battering and domestic violence crimes.

While certain steps are required in a certain sequence—e.g., hire a coordinator and select and adapt a team before adapting and implementing new policy and practice—the Blueprint is fundamentally an approach to intervening in domestic violence crimes in a specific way with specific goals. That approach does not end when the last task is checked off, but continues as a new, unified way of working together to identify and solve problems on behalf of victims of battering and the community.

#### **4. WHO DOES THE WORK—AND DO WE NEED A COORDINATOR?**

Adapting the Blueprint requires community-based advocates, agency administrators, practitioners who handle cases in their everyday jobs, a local Blueprint coordinator, and various community partners. Those involved come together in different ways, depending on the needs at different steps in the process. Champions get involved early on and at key points in launching, promoting, and sustaining the Blueprint. Champions might include agency administrators, such as the chief of police or prosecutor; elected officials such as the sheriff or mayor or tribal chair; and influential community members, such as members of the tribal council or the United Way or YWCA director. Except in small communities, Blueprint champions typically do not do the day-to-day work of adapting and implementing the Blueprint. Blueprint champions are key to securing the community and political will necessary to proceed and to securing the memorandum of understanding that defines each agency's participation.

The Blueprint team provides ongoing guidance and participates in activities related to assessing practice, adapting policies, launching and implementing the Blueprint, and establishing and managing a monitoring process. The Blueprint team includes practitioners who are decision-makers or otherwise influential in their agencies. Once the policies and protocols have been adapted and launched, many of the same individuals who were involved in the first phase are likely to participate on the implementation team. Ad hoc work groups come together as needed to collect data about current practice, review and revise policies and protocols, and monitor Blueprint changes. The Blueprint coordinator manages the day-to-day tasks of adapting the Blueprint and links everyone involved to the overall process. The coordinator keeps the focus on managing the parts and advancing the Blueprint from design to implementation. Do you need a coordinator? Yes.

#### **5. HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?**

Salary and fringe benefits for the participation of one or more community-based advocates and the Blueprint coordinator are the main costs in adapting the Blueprint. Other expenses include: office space and equipment; costs involved in recruiting and facilitating a survivor's advisory group and community focus groups; training and launch events; printing and distributing Blueprint documents; developing and maintaining databases, web-site, revised forms, and other tools. The Blueprint approach includes compensation for community-based advocates because of the critical role that advocacy plays in the essential partnerships and leadership.

## 6. HOW DO WE SUSTAIN THE BLUEPRINT?

Sustaining the Blueprint requires ongoing coordination and an ongoing process of institutionalizing the Blueprint. That process includes integrating Blueprint policies and protocols into each agency's practice; training personnel; establishing an interagency communication strategy for sharing information about risk, history, context, and severity of violence; monitoring implementation and compliance; and adapting the Blueprint to address unforeseen and new problems. Sustaining the Blueprint requires commitments from agency administrators to develop and activate internal and interagency compliance and monitoring plans.

## 7. HOW DO WE KNOW IF THE BLUEPRINT IS THE BEST STEP FOR OUR COMMUNITY?

If you can answer “yes” to the following qualities, your community is in a good position to design and implement a Blueprint for Safety.

- Community-based advocates have a central role in commenting on and shaping the criminal legal system's response to domestic violence.
- Community-based advocates and key leaders in the criminal legal system are accustomed to working together to identify and solve problems.
- We are curious and transparent about our response to domestic violence crimes.
- We seek out best practice rather than assuming that what we have been doing is the most effective approach.
- We are committed to a united approach with a shared purpose and goals.
- We can agree upon adhering to the Blueprint foundational principles to guide the response to domestic violence crimes.
- We can establish the necessary coordination.
- We can establish sufficient authority and resources to sustain the Blueprint.

## 8. WHAT IF WE CAN'T TAKE ON THE ENTIRE BLUEPRINT?

The Blueprint templates are a comprehensive set of best-practice guidelines for every step in the criminal legal system process. They include policies, protocols, and related training memos that can be used by any agency seeking to strengthen its response to domestic violence crimes, regardless of whether the community is ready to take on the Blueprint. While using parts of the templates to improve practice at a particular step or within a specific agency is helpful, the results do not equal a Blueprint for Safety.

## **9. HOW CAN WE PREPARE TO WRITE A GRANT TO DEVELOP THE BLUEPRINT FOR SAFETY IN OUR COMMUNITY?**

The discussions, groundwork, and information-gathering included in Planning a Blueprint for Safety Proposal help position a community to submit a grant for funding to develop and launch the Blueprint. In addition, many of the questions lead to the kinds of reflection that benefit any coordinated interagency effort.

## **10. HOW DO WE LEARN MORE?**

If you are interested in becoming a Blueprint for Safety community—or wondering if you’re ready for the Blueprint—contact Praxis International.

Go to [www.praxisinternational.org](http://www.praxisinternational.org) for general information and announcements of upcoming Blueprint webinars and events.

Write to [blueprint@praxisinternational.org](mailto:blueprint@praxisinternational.org) to request a phone consultation.

*This project is supported by Grant No. 2010-TA-AX-K008 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions and recommendations expressed in this document are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.*

# INFORMATIONAL BROCHURE

---

*The following informational brochure is available in electronic format to print locally for educating agency workers in your community. It prints as an 11" x 17" sheet that folds into an 8" x 11" brochure. A local printer can add your Blueprint Coordinator's name and contact information to the back page. Contact Praxis for an electronic version: [blueprint@praxisinternational.org](mailto:blueprint@praxisinternational.org)*



# the blueprint is anchored in SIX FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

Practices that align with these principles have proven effective at maximizing safety for victims of domestic violence and holding offenders accountable while offering them opportunities to change.

- 1] Adhere to an **interagency approach and collective intervention goals**.
- 2] Build attention to the **context and severity** of abuse into each intervention.
- 3] Recognize that most domestic violence is a **patterned crime requiring continuing engagement** with victims and offenders.
- 4] Ensure **sure and swift consequences** for continued abuse.
- 5] Use the power of the criminal justice system to send **messages of help and accountability**.
- 6] Act in ways that reduce **unintended consequences and disparity of impact** on victims and offenders.

Find more information on the Blueprint at [www.praxisinternational.org](http://www.praxisinternational.org) or contact Praxis at [blueprint@praxisinternational.org](mailto:blueprint@praxisinternational.org) or 651-699-8000 ext. 17.

## the blueprint for safety

### BUILDING AN INTERAGENCY RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CRIMES

**RESEARCH-BASED**  
The *Blueprint for Safety* was developed by criminal justice professionals in collaboration with national domestic violence and criminal justice policy experts. It is a detailed collection of practical policies, protocols, and training resources aimed at reducing and eventually eliminating domestic violence. A key feature of the Blueprint is that individual agencies' policies and practices are tied to each other.

- proven to:
- reduce domestic violence-related homicides,
  - reduce serious assaults, and
  - diminish the overall level of domestic violence in communities.

### THE BLUEPRINT'S IMPACT ON PRACTICE

#### Blueprint communities report...

##### 911 CALL

At 911 we're getting more information. We're engaging with callers in a different way and paying more attention to, and documenting, what patrol and prosecutors need.

##### PATROL

Patrol has a really unique role: we see firsthand what has happened. Under the Blueprint, we more accurately capture and communicate the nature and severity of the violence.

##### ARREST

Many times, both parties use violence. If self-defense was not used, then who is the predominant aggressor? Stopping this violence means getting control of the right person; knowing the history and context makes sure we get it right.

##### INVESTIGATIONS

The impact of all members of the system working together is greater than any one single agency doing it alone. We're devising better methods, protocols, and procedures, and we're having a positive impact.

The **Blueprint for Safety** was created in the City of St. Paul in 2010 at the urging of ISAAH — a coalition of 100 faith congregations — and through the collective work of ten agencies\* with leadership by the St. Paul Police Department, St. Paul City Attorney's Office, the St. Paul Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, and Praxis International. Praxis subsequently produced a universal Blueprint for Safety for adaptation by communities across the country and was selected by the federal government as the national model for domestic violence intervention.

\* 2nd Judicial District of Ramsey County, 2nd Judicial District Court Administration, St. Paul Police Department, St. Paul City Attorney's Office, Ramsey County Attorney's Office, Ramsey County Community Corrections, Project Renewal, Ramsey County Emergency Communications Center, Ramsey County Sheriff's Office, St. Paul Domestic Abuse Intervention Project.

Supported by grant #2010-TA-X-0008 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Office on Violence Against Women

the blueprint for safety

Praxis International

Office on Violence Against Women

the blueprint for safety

Praxis International

# the blueprint for safety

## RISK QUESTIONS A KEY FEATURE

"Domestic violence" is a broad category that jumbles together vastly different actions and motivations – from throwing a shoe at a partner who gambled \$1000 to strangling a woman because she wants out of the relationship. The Blueprint uses three risk questions so practitioners can document the scope, severity, and pattern of abuse, and communicate it from agency to agency.

**1] Do you think that he or she will seriously injure or kill you, your children, or someone else close to you?**

- What makes you think so?
- What makes you think not?

**2] How frequently does he or she intimidate, threaten, or assault you?**

- Is it changing?
- Getting worse?
- Getting better?

**3] Describe the time you were the most frightened or injured by him or her.**

# the blueprint for safety RELIES ON A STRONG PARTNERSHIP among CRIMINAL JUSTICE PRACTITIONERS & COMMUNITY-BASED ADVOCATES

## 911 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

911 has a critical role in gathering accurate details and **establishing the type and level of danger.**

## PATROL & INVESTIGATIONS

Patrol's response on the scene **affects how everyone else handles a case.**

## JAIL BOOKING & RELEASE

In jail operations, a sheriff's office is in a key position to reinforce **victim protection and safety.**

## ADVOCACY

Advocacy keeps the criminal justice system aware of **how policies and practices actually impact victims.**

## PROSECUTION

Prosecutors are uniquely positioned to adjust responses based on **severity, risk, and context** of each case.

## COURTS

Courts reinforce a community's ability to **protect victims from additional harm and hold offenders accountable.**

## PROBATION

Bail evaluations and pre-sentence investigations anchor effective intervention in **more accurate assessments** of the violence.

The Blueprint ensures that **each agency and practitioner**—from 911 operators and patrol officers to courts and probation—is **on the same page**. Instead of isolated policies and a fragmented response, interveners build upon and share essential information about risk and danger.

## THE BLUEPRINT'S IMPACT ON PRACTICE continued...

### JAIL

No one thought the jail had much to do with victims. Now we take extra measures to notify victims when offenders are released. And we're aware of retaliation—the witness tampering, subtle threats, intimidation—and communicating it to officers.

### PROSECUTION

We're seeing consistency across the board: photos taken, detailed victim statements, great police reports. When we get a report with such attention to detail and all of the things we've asked for, it makes us want to do an even better job.

### CHARGING

Before the Blueprint, it would take 80+ days to charge a gone-or-arrived case. We reduced that to under 8 days.

### BAIL/EVALUATION

We now consider not just the likelihood that the offender will appear in court but we also use the risk questions to decide if the offender is a risk to the victim or others in the community.

### ARRAIGNMENT HEARING

When I read that she's fearful of his behavior, that she thinks he's going to harm her and why, and that the harm is escalating—these weigh heavily in our decisions. Now I'm seeing how at-risk this victim is for future harm.

### PRE-TRIAL HEARING

The Blueprint makes sure that the victim is a central focus of a fair and just plea negotiation. Our goal is to get the right control over offenders (along with support to change), while always paying attention to the safety and well-being of victims.

### JUDGE

I'm finding out how scared these women are, and why. I'm finding out that this isn't an isolated incident—or sometimes it is—and that that makes a difference in my decision-making.

### MONITORING/PROBATION

Now when a probationer reoffends, we process the probation violation immediately instead of waiting until the new offense moves through the entire prosecution process.



# ADAPTING THE BLUEPRINT FOR SAFETY: PHASES AND KEY ACTIVITIES

---

While the tasks are presented in sequence, it is a loose sequence. Many tasks will be underway simultaneously and the phases will overlap.

## PHASE 1: EXPLORE & PREPARE

**Secure community will to initiate the development process and establish a Blueprint adaptation team.**

1. Identify and bring together organizers and key champions (“Blueprint organizers”) who will explore the features and goals of the Blueprint for Safety, decide whether or not to pursue it, and support the adaptation process and ongoing implementation.
2. Centralize community-based advocacy leadership and participation in exploration and planning activities and ongoing adaptation and implementation (in addition to the advocacy-focused role of the Blueprint coordinator and Blueprint advocate).
3. Assess community capacity and infrastructure to support Blueprint adaptation, implementation, and monitoring.
4. Articulate the distinctive response that the Blueprint brings to the community and the problem of domestic violence.
5. Promote the Blueprint’s distinctive response and benefits to policy makers and agency directors.
6. Secure agency participation and seek funding.
7. Select the Blueprint for Safety Coordinator.
8. Select the Blueprint for Safety Advocate.
9. Recruit the adaptation team, including community-based advocates and practitioners who are influential in their agencies.
10. Develop and complete a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the roles and responsibilities of each participating agencies.
11. Designate a lead person (liaison) in each agency to work with the Blueprint coordinator, serve on the adaptation team, participate in all phases of development, and oversee internal agency implementation.
12. Establish a plan and timeline for guiding the Blueprint and establishing needed work groups.
13. Begin a process tracking profile for each agency, including approvals and timelines for policy and training.

14. Use community consultations to discover the needs and lived experiences of victims of battering. Include members from communities overrepresented and/or underserved communities in seeking help from the criminal legal system.

## **PHASE 2: ASSESS PRACTICE & IDENTIFY PROBLEMS**

**Conduct an assessment of current policy and practice to identify gaps that the Blueprint will address.**

15. Identify the needed agency-specific work groups and recruit members.
16. Create a source book of local policies, administrative forms and protocols for current criminal case processing of domestic violence cases.
17. Assemble all materials necessary to conduct the assessment: policies, protocols, forms laws, statistical information, case records (e.g., files, tapes, reports).
18. Schedule activities related to information-gathering activities (case analysis, observations, and interviews) and/or provide the work groups with details on how to make those arrangements.
19. Compare current policy with the Blueprint essential elements.
20. Compile baseline statistical data on domestic violence-related cases: e.g., 911 calls, arrests, crimes charged, disposition, sentencing, demographics.
21. Map each point of criminal case processing (911 through to probation monitoring), with specific attention to how risk and danger and advocacy are addressed.
22. Analyze case records (e.g., 911 calls, patrol reports, prosecution files, probation records, etc.) to compare current practice with recommended practice.
23. Interview agency directors, supervisors, and practitioners about current practice.
24. Observe current practices via patrol ride-alongs, 911 “sit-alongs,” court observations, and other practitioner observations.
25. Use information from the Blueprint advocate and community consultation to discover victims/survivors’ experiences with the criminal legal system.
26. Include statistical data and first-hand information about the experiences of victims of battering from communities overrepresented and/or underserved in seeking help from the criminal legal system.
27. Use community consultations to help guide the practice assessment activities and analysis, with specific attention to communities that are overrepresented and/or underserved in seeking help from the criminal legal system.
28. Coordinate and facilitate meetings to review, interpret, and analyze data throughout the assessment process.

29. Keep a written record of all discussions, conclusions, and recommendations related to the practice assessment.

## **PHASE 3: ADAPT POLICY & ADJUST PRACTICE**

**Use the Blueprint templates to revise and write policies and protocols for each agency and to produce a collective policy.**

30. Use agency-specific work groups (e.g., 911, patrol response, prosecution, etc.) to identify and recommend local adaptations to the Blueprint policies, protocols, and supplemental training and procedural memos.
31. Include representation from community-based advocacy in all policy adaptation work groups.
32. Use results of the practice assessment to identify policy revisions and additions to current practice.
  - a. Highlight and discuss questions and concerns; agree on policy changes.
  - b. For areas of continuing disagreement, summarize options and barriers and propose solutions; use the Blueprint Essential Elements Annotated as a reference; seek outside technical assistance as needed.
33. Adapt from Blueprint templates to incorporate essential elements, with adjustments to reflect local conditions and laws.
34. Present recommended changes to the full adaptation team and agency directors for review and feedback.
35. Brief criminal legal system agency heads, interagency/CCR group, and other relevant community agencies and organizations on the Blueprint collective policy and agency-specific changes.
36. Assist agency directors in the process of accepting or modifying the recommended language changes to Blueprint policies, protocols, and memos.
37. Approve and adopt all Blueprint policies and protocols.
38. Document all work group and adaptation team discussions and decisions.
39. Keep the experiences of battered women visible and central throughout the adaptation processes.
40. Use community consultations to help guide the policy adaptation, with specific attention to communities that are overrepresented and/or underserved communities in seeking help from the criminal legal system.

## PHASE 4: IMPLEMENT THE BLUEPRINT

**Secure policy approvals, hold a community launch event, conduct agency-specific and interagency training, and establish a process for ongoing monitoring.**

41. Transition the adaptation team to an implementation team that will put the local Blueprint into practice.
42. Plan and initiate the administrative practices necessary to implement Blueprint policy, such as new documentation procedures, forms, checklists, database revisions, etc.
43. Promote a Blueprint-informed advocacy-initiated response.
44. Launch the Blueprint with specific events that announce the implementation and convey the meaning and intent of the Blueprint (i.e., what the Blueprint will address and how).
45. Conduct training: (1) agency-specific and (2) interagency.
46. Design monitoring activities: (1) agency-specific and (2) interagency.
47. Ensure that the Blueprint is “institutionalized” (i.e., integrated into agency policy, protocol, & practice; personnel trained and supervised).
48. Keep the experiences of battered women visible and central throughout the implementation processes.
49. Use community consultations to help guide the implementation, with specific attention to communities that are overrepresented and/or underserved communities in seeking help from the criminal legal system.

## PHASE 5: MONITOR & REVISE THE BLUEPRINT

**Conduct the ongoing data collection and assessment activities to ensure that the Blueprint is functioning as a “living,” sustainable response.**

50. Establish a calendar and tracking system for agency data collection, monitoring activities, and anticipated reports.
51. Evaluate whether and how essential elements and other key features of the Blueprint are working:
  - a. Implement ongoing monitoring activities: (1) agency-specific and (2) interagency;
  - b. Form small interagency work groups to review cases or conduct other practice assessment as needed to determine how agency practitioners are following new policies and practices.

52. Evaluate the extent to which agencies are working together on shared tasks, such as an interagency case review and other monitoring.
53. Collect statistical data for domestic violence-related crimes, including 911 calls, arrests, crimes charged, disposition, sentencing, and demographics.
54. Conduct annual focus groups and other consultation with victims/survivors to learn about their experiences with the implemented policies and practice.
55. Include agency directors and practitioners in addressing low or incorrect compliance with Blueprint policies and practice.
56. Present an annual report on Blueprint implementation internally to administrators (agency-specific monitoring) and to the Blueprint implementation team (interagency monitoring).
57. Assess for unintended harmful consequences and disparity of impact and adapt Blueprint policies and practice to address.
58. Adapt Blueprint policies and practice as needed to address unforeseen and new problems.
59. Update the community on the impact of the Blueprint collective policy, with specific attention to community-based organizations that regularly work with battered women and those representing marginalized communities.
60. Consult with community-based organizations and agencies that regularly work with battered women.
61. Keep the experiences of battered women visible and central throughout the monitoring process via ongoing community consultation.
62. Utilize community consultations to help guide the monitoring, with specific attention to communities that are overrepresented and/or underserved communities in seeking help from the criminal legal system.

*This project is supported by Grant No. 2010-TA-AX-K008 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions and recommendations expressed in this document are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.*

# WHAT IS DISTINCTIVE ABOUT THE BLUEPRINT FOR SAFETY AS AN APPROACH TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CRIMES?

---

The Blueprint is a coordinated community response (CCR), fully articulated. It builds on the groundbreaking work of two Minnesota communities, Duluth and St. Paul, to present the first comprehensive, written interagency plan in the nation for the criminal legal system response to domestic violence crimes, from 911 through sentencing and probation. It unites each step in the process around consistent identification and communication of risk.

The Blueprint is grounded in the experiences of victims of battering and an understanding of how intervention by the criminal legal system affects their lives. It is distinctive in its emphasis on leadership by community-based advocacy and community consultation as ways to accomplish that grounding in victims' lived experience.

The Blueprint establishes an ongoing process of reviewing, monitoring, and adjusting policy and practice to ensure the most protective and accountable response possible, from an emergency call for help through to sentencing and probation. It organizes case processing around: 1) what victims need to be safe; 2) what practitioners need from each other to do their jobs and enhance safety; and 3) what is required by each worker and agency to hold offenders accountable. The Blueprint provides direction for each worker on how to identify, document, act upon, and communicate information about risk and danger. It provides direction on how to engage with victims to form partnerships and promote safety. The Blueprint requires adjusting interventions in ways that avoid and correct unintended harmful consequences and disparity of impact.

The overall design and function of the Blueprint for Safety rest on several core features, all of which must be present for a community to say that it is developing and implementing a Blueprint response to domestic violence crimes.

1. A functioning interagency group, such as a Coordinated Community Response Team (CCR)
2. A commitment to the Blueprint Foundational Principles as an approach to domestic violence cases
3. A commitment to ground the Blueprint in the experiences of victims of violence and an understanding of how the intervention of the criminal legal system affects their lives
4. Agreement to use the Blueprint Essential Elements and templates to revise, adapt, or develop policies, protocols, or other documents to guide the work of agencies and practitioners in the criminal legal system
5. Agreement by criminal legal system agencies to engage in an ongoing process of guiding and supervising practitioners to ensure that Blueprint practices are being implemented

6. Commitment to an ongoing interagency process to review and monitor the work of each agency
7. An ongoing process of adjusting policies and practices, retraining, and providing new direction to workers, as informed by regular monitoring of domestic violence case processing

The Blueprint for Safety is a coordinated community response fully articulated to organize the entire criminal legal system around the Blueprint principles and the experiences of victims of violence. The Blueprint is an ongoing process of adaptation, implementation, and monitoring framed by a collective policy and accountability. The Blueprint requires:

1. A functioning interagency group, such as a Coordinated Community Response Team (CCR)
  - The Blueprint requires an interagency group that includes community advocates and representation from the primary agencies that handle cases of domestic violence crimes. Such groups often operate under the title of “coordinated community response” (or CCR). The CCR typically meets periodically—usually monthly, but sometimes bi-monthly or quarterly—for the purpose of addressing the community response to domestic violence.
  - Some CCR-type teams include representation from other community agencies such as child welfare, members of the medical and educational fields, social services, and counseling/therapy. The Blueprint does not require this broader involvement, but must include the key criminal legal system agencies, from 911 and police to prosecution, courts, and probation. In the Blueprint for Safety, the interagency group has significant participation and leadership from community advocates.
  - The interagency group may take up a number of aspects of the community response, including case review, policy development, training needs assessment and events. It has a key role in identifying gaps in the community response. The Blueprint takes this work to a fully developed level and puts the group’s knowledge and experience to work in building a comprehensive framework for organizing the response to domestic violence.
2. A commitment from the interagency group members to pursue an approach to domestic violence cases based upon the six Blueprint Foundational Principles:
  - Adhere to an interagency approach to domestic violence
  - Adjust the response based on the context and severity of what is occurring
  - Recognize that domestic violence is a patterned crime requiring continuing engagement with victims and perpetrators
  - Ensure swift and sure consequences for continued abuse
  - Send messages of help and accountability to victims and perpetrators
  - Reduce unintended consequences and disparity of impact of intervention

This commitment extends to individual agencies as well as the united response of the Blueprint as a collective policy. All policy adaptations must adhere to these principles.

3. Commitment to ground the work of the Blueprint team in the experiences of victims of violence, with specific attention to how criminal legal system intervention affects their lives
  - Community-based advocacy provides a setting where victims of battering can speak confidentially and openly—including those who are fearful of and try to avoid the criminal legal system. Because community-based advocacy is uniquely situated to bring victims' experiences and concerns forward, it has a central role in Blueprint leadership and partnerships.
  - Intervention by the criminal legal system affects victims in different ways, often with unintended harmful impacts. The Blueprint builds this awareness into policy and practice, with attention to the complex and often dangerous implications of a victim's collaboration with interveners.
  - The Blueprint acknowledges and seeks effective intervention that accounts for the realities of peoples' unique circumstances and social standing.
  - One way the Blueprint stays grounded in victims' experiences is to establish and maintain an advisory group of survivors who can help direct the process of adapting and implementing the Blueprint.
4. Agencies in the criminal legal system agree to use the Blueprint Essential Elements and templates to revise, adapt, or develop policies, protocols or other documents
  - Blueprint content is incorporated into the agency standard operating procedures or other documents that spell out what workers are required to do.
  - If it is not possible to incorporate all Essential Elements, most must be included along with an explanation of why some are not (e.g., where local law or court structure does not allow for the Blueprint requirement or if an element is covered by another agency's procedures).
  - When Essential Elements are missing, there is a commitment by the specific agency and the Blueprint team to work towards eventual inclusion of whatever is missing to the fullest extent possible.
5. Agreement by criminal legal system agencies to engage in an ongoing process of guiding and supervising workers to ensure that Blueprint practices are being implemented
  - There is a regular process of case review (e.g., listening to 911 calls, reviewing reports, observing on-scene or in the courtroom, case tracking) to identify any problems in how Blueprint policy and practice is applied.
  - Agency practitioners receive timely guidance and training to reinforce Blueprint practices and correct any problems in implementation.



6. Commitment to an ongoing interagency process to review and monitor the work of each agency
  - The Blueprint for Safety is a collective policy: i.e., while there are agency-specific policies and protocols for processing cases, criminal legal system agencies have a shared purpose and goals that reflect the Blueprint foundational principles.
  - Interagency monitoring seeks to determine how that collective policy is working by examining (a) whether workers are doing what was intended under Blueprint policies and protocols, (b) the results of Blueprint implementation as reflected in statistical data, and (c) the impact of Blueprint changes on the experiences of battered women.
7. An ongoing process of adjusting policies and practices, retraining, and providing new direction to workers based on the monitoring
  - The Blueprint is not a static document, but a living process to ensure that the foundational principles are reflected in policy and practice.
  - The results of the interagency monitoring are reported back to the CCR and to agency heads at least annually.

*This project is supported by Grant No. 2010-TA-AX-K008 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions and recommendations expressed in this document are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.*

# EXPLORE AND PREPARE: A BLUEPRINT FOR SAFETY COMMUNITY READINESS CHECKLIST

---

To build and sustain a Blueprint for Safety requires a sound foundation of knowledge, skills, and capacity for making system-wide change. The community readiness questionnaire helps draw a picture of that capacity, including:

- Current level of interagency coordination and problem solving in the community
- Role of community-based advocacy in shaping the criminal legal system response
- Access to basic information about domestic violence-related crimes

The questionnaire identifies community strengths and pinpoints areas that will need more attention in order to establish and maintain the Blueprint.

The questionnaire encourages the kind of discussion and reflection between the criminal legal system and community-based advocacy that is critical to a strong, effective Blueprint. How it is completed and who is involved will vary according to local conditions. For example:

## **Community A**

The local advocacy organization heard about the Blueprint for Safety and thinks it might be a good fit for the community. It uses the questionnaire internally to debate and strategize around allies, system agency partners, and next steps. Staff complete and discuss the questionnaire as a group.

## **Community B**

The director of the tribal advocacy organization, police chief, and prosecutor have a long history of working together. They meet regularly and have put some written policy place, but the tribe does not have a formal coordinated community response. They assemble a small group that includes the advocacy director and two advocates, the police chief and two officers, and the prosecutor and a tribal victim/witness specialist. Members of the work group complete the questionnaire individually; they review and discuss the results together before recommending whether or not to proceed with the Blueprint.

## **Community C**

A countywide coordinated community response has been in place for fifteen years. There is a part-time coordinator and an active steering committee that is interested in using the Blueprint to refresh and expand the CCR. The steering committee wants broad input early on from the CCR partners and others in the community. The coordinator uses an on-line survey tool, such as Survey Monkey or Google Forms, to set up and distribute the questionnaire. Invitations to complete the questionnaire go to a broad range of advocates, criminal legal system practitioners, and community members. The steering committee presents the results at the CCR's annual retreat as a first step in adapting the Blueprint.

Whatever the method used to distribute and complete the questionnaire, the final step is an in-person discussion among Blueprint organizers to review the results and answer the following summary questions. A community that can answer “yes” to most of these questions is in a strong position to adapt, implement, and sustain a Blueprint for Safety. Answering “no” does not mean that adapting the Blueprint will be impossible, but the process will be more challenging. The Blueprint’s systemic, unified approach requires basic working relationships, agreement to work together, willingness to identify and solve problems, and curiosity about how the community can strengthen its efforts to stop violence, reduce harm, and save lives.

**Yes, in our community . . .**

- Community-based advocates have a central role in commenting on and shaping the criminal legal system’s response to domestic violence.
- Community-based advocates and key leaders in the criminal legal system are accustomed to working together to identify and solve problems.
- We are curious and transparent about our response to domestic violence crimes.
- We seek out best practice rather than assuming that what we have been doing is the most effective approach.
- We are committed to a united approach with a shared purpose and goals.
- We can agree upon adhering to the Blueprint foundational principles to guide the response to domestic violence crimes.
- We can establish the necessary coordination.
- We can establish sufficient authority and resources to sustain the Blueprint.

A template for the questionnaire begins on the following page. Copy and use as-is or adapt the content to create a customized version or on-line survey.

## TWENTY QUESTIONS: ARE WE READY TO BECOME A BLUEPRINT FOR SAFETY COMMUNITY?

### ABBREVIATIONS

- Blueprint: Blueprint for Safety
- CCR: Coordinated community response
- CLS: Criminal legal system/criminal justice system

	Yes/Always	No/Rarely	Sometimes	Need More Information	Notes
<b>1. Basic data related to the number and disposition of domestic violence-related crimes is readily available.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What or who is missing?</li> <li>• What are likely barriers?</li> <li>• What are likely strengths?</li> <li>• What do we need to know more about?</li> </ul>
<b>2. An interagency group/CCR exists to identify and solve problems.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>☞ If <b>yes</b>, go to question 4</p> <p>☞ If <b>no</b>, go to question 3</p>					
<b>3. Even though no interagency group/CCR exists, there is interest in starting one.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>☞ If <b>yes</b>, go to question 10</p> <p>☞ If <b>no</b>, it is unlikely that your community is ready for the Blueprint. Conclude the</p>					

	Yes/Always	No/Rarely	Sometimes	Need More Information	Notes
questionnaire and seek how-to information about starting a CCR. <sup>1</sup>					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What or who is missing?</li> <li>• What are likely barriers?</li> <li>• What are likely strengths?</li> <li>• What do we need to know more about?</li> </ul>
<b>4. The interagency group/CCR includes representation from:</b>					
<b>a. Community-based advocacy</b>					
<b>b. 911/Emergency Communications</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>c. Police/Sheriff</b>					
<b>d. Prosecution</b>					
<b>e. Victim/Witness Services</b>					
<b>f. Probation</b>					
<b>g. Courts</b>					
<b>5. Community-based advocacy has a leadership role in the interagency group/CCR.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
☞ If <b>yes</b> , go to question 7					
☞ If <b>no</b> , go to question 6					
<b>6. Identify what would need to change for community-based advocacy to have a leadership</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<sup>1</sup> For information about how to establish a coordinated community response, see the resources and technical assistance available via the Battered Women's Justice Project, [www.bwjp.org](http://www.bwjp.org).

	Yes/Always	No/Rarely	Sometimes	Need More Information	Notes
role in the interagency group/CCR.					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What or who is missing?</li> <li>• What are likely barriers?</li> <li>• What are likely strengths?</li> <li>• What do we need to know more about?</li> </ul>
<b>7. The interagency group/CCR has experience in studying and assessing how community systems respond to domestic violence: e.g., completed a Praxis Safety &amp; Accountability Audit, conducted a fatality review, contributed to a university-based research project.</b> If <b>yes</b> , go to question 8 If <b>no</b> , go to question 9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>8. Describe the problems that such study or assessment identified.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>9. The interagency group/CCR is involved in writing agency-specific policies (e.g., the CCR has a role in drafting and/or reviewing the police department policy).</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>10. Written policies are in place that direct the CLS response to domestic violence.</b> If <b>yes</b> , go to question 10 If <b>no</b> , go to question 11	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

	Yes/Always	No/Rarely	Sometimes	Need More Information	Notes
<b>11. Domestic violence-specific policies are in place for:</b> a. 911/Emergency Communications b. Police/Sheriff c. Prosecution d. Victim/Witness Services e. Probation f. Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What or who is missing?</li> <li>• What are likely barriers?</li> <li>• What are likely strengths?</li> <li>• What do we need to know more about?</li> </ul>
<b>12. Local CLS agencies are likely to see the Blueprint as <i>unnecessary</i> because policies are already in place.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>13. Local CLS agencies are likely to see the Blueprint as <i>intrusive</i> (i.e., believe that no outside practitioners or community members should be involved in shaping agency policy and practice).</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>14. The interagency group/CCR or local advocacy organization regularly gathers feedback from victims/survivors about CLS intervention.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>15. The interagency group/CCR or key CLS agencies act to</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

	Yes/Always	No/Rarely	Sometimes	Need More Information	Notes
<p>anticipate, identify, and reduce unintended harmful consequences and disparity in the CLS response to domestic violence crimes.</p> <p>☞ If <b>yes</b>, go to question 16</p> <p>☞ If <b>no</b>, go to question 17</p>					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What or who is missing?</li> <li>• What are likely barriers?</li> <li>• What are likely strengths?</li> <li>• What do we need to know more about?</li> </ul>
<p>16. Examples of action taken to identify and reduce unintended harmful consequences and disparity.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>17. CLS agencies will support a collective policy with ongoing agency-specific and interagency monitoring.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>18. CLS agencies will provide access to their case records and statistical data in order to assess current practice.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>19. CLS agencies will provide personnel to participate in all phases of Blueprint development and implementation: assess current practice, write and adapt policy, implement new practices, and monitor agency and CLS response.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



	Yes/Always	No/Rarely	Sometimes	Need More Information	Notes
20. The community has a strong commitment to curiosity and creative problem solving in how we understand and intervene in battering.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What or who is missing?</li> <li>• What are likely barriers?</li> <li>• What are likely strengths?</li> <li>• What do we need to know more about?</li> </ul>

*This project is supported by Grant No. 2010-TA-AX-K008 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions and recommendations expressed in this document are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.*

# COMMUNITY CONSULTATION IN THE BLUEPRINT FOR SAFETY

---

## DEFINITION

One of the Blueprint's distinctive features is its commitment to grounding the approach and process in the experiences of victims of battering. The Blueprint calls on advocacy organizations and criminal justice agencies to work together to develop procedures and protocols. It also calls for including and consulting with those in the community who are most impacted by such public policies. Along with practitioner-advocate partnerships, a Blueprint community engages with a range of community members, from victims and survivors to populations overrepresented and/or underserved in the system, to develop, implement, and monitor Blueprint policies and practice.

Actions by the criminal legal system affect victims in different ways, sometimes with unintended harmful impacts. The Blueprint seeks to build this awareness into policy and practice, with attention to the complex and often dangerous implications of a victim's collaboration with interveners. The Blueprint acknowledges the realities of peoples' unique circumstances and experiences and seeks a criminal legal system response that best fits victims' needs as it helps stop violence, reduce harm, and save lives.

To keep victims of battering at the center of the Blueprint requires connecting and talking with survivors and others in the community as a matter of routine practice. In other words, community consultation must be a regular, sustained way of doing the business of the Blueprint. In the context of the Blueprint, community consultation is the process of engaging with and seeking guidance from survivors of battering and others in the community who represent the broadest range of life experiences, circumstances, and identities. Community consultation is not a one-time meeting or focus group or the presence of a token survivor on a team or work group. It is an active, intentional, and ongoing process that utilizes a variety of methods to help keep the Blueprint grounded in the realities of living with battering and the experiences of those who are overrepresented and/or underserved in the criminal legal system. A fully developed and sustainable Blueprint for Safety rests on community consultation.

## FORMS OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION USED IN THE BLUEPRINT

### ADAPTATION

Community consultation can be informal, via the encounters that advocates have with battered women and with one another and other practitioners. Sharing what we are hearing and seeing in the moment can point to questions that need to be answered or potential problems that the Blueprint might need to address. In addition, community consultation must take more specific forms in order to build the ongoing practice into a local Blueprint. Some of these forms overlap. Your community is likely to come up with a customized version that fits local conditions. While not all of the forms need to be developed and utilized—or in place simultaneously—the first two are essential. The Blueprint cannot proceed as

intended without active leadership by community-based advocacy and the first-person perspectives of survivors.

**1. Essential: Regular conversations and policy/practice review with community-based advocacy organizations**

Community-based advocacy located in nonprofit, nongovernmental or tribal organizations, such as a local program for battered women, is essential to grounding the Blueprint in the scope and scale of battering and in victims' lives and experiences. Community-based advocacy provides a setting where victims of battering can speak confidentially, freely, and openly. No one else plays this role, which is distinct from that of the important support provided by victim assistance or legal services within government agencies. Community-based advocacy typically has broader access to victims and survivors, many of whom are fearful of and try to avoid public institutions such as the criminal legal system.

The Blueprint advocate has the key role of ensuring that the voices and experiences of battered women are represented at all stages of developing a local Blueprint. This role is fulfilled in part via regular consultation with a wide range of community-based advocates. It includes frequent and focused conversations about what advocates are learning from the victims of battering that they work with. What is working and not working for battered women in the criminal legal system response? Are victims of battering getting arrested? What is happening for immigrant women? What are victims' experiences with no-contact orders?

The Blueprint advocate is a bridge between advocacy organizations and the adaptation team. Ideally, the adaptation team and related work groups will include several community-based advocates. At a minimum, the Blueprint advocate, together with the Blueprint coordinator, ensures that a wide range of advocates are fully informed about proposed changes in policy and practice and have ample opportunity to review the proposals and recommend revisions. Consultation with community-based advocacy is not limited to those organizations that are the most well-known for working with victims of battering. It includes seeking out organizations that may have a great deal of contact with victims in different advocacy settings, such as housing, health care, and economic security. Because of their distance from the criminal legal system, these "non-DV" advocates might offer particularly useful insights into survivors' experiences.

**2. Essential: Regular conversations and policy/practice review with survivors via individual interviews and group discussions such as listening sessions and talking circles**

While community-based advocates can provide critical information about victims' needs and experiences, talking directly with survivors adds depth and confirmation to what advocates report. First-person conversations are particularly important in understanding when and how the criminal legal system is experienced

---

**RESOURCE**

Discussion group guide and related information at [http://www.praxisinternational.org/iata\\_audit\\_coordinators\\_resources.aspx#LogisticsGuideSection3](http://www.praxisinternational.org/iata_audit_coordinators_resources.aspx#LogisticsGuideSection3)

---

as unhelpful or unsafe by survivors from overrepresented or underserved communities. The Blueprint advocate has a key role here, too, in organizing and ensuring direct feedback from survivors. Note: interviews or other direct conversations with survivors are not about grilling women on the details of the violence that they have experienced. The purpose is to learn about experiences with and problems in the system's response and to review and make recommendations on how the Blueprint can address those problems.

**3. Essential: Regular conversations and policy/practice review with communities that are overrepresented and/or underserved in the criminal legal system.**

The ongoing consultation with community-based advocates provides one link to communities that are overrepresented and/or underserved in the criminal legal system. In addition, a more direct and focused consultation with individuals and organizations from specific communities will add to the understanding of current and historical experience with the criminal legal system in general. Regular conversations with diverse communities helps connect the Blueprint coordinator, organizers, and adaptation team with local and national efforts to reduce disparity within the criminal legal system overall. Such conversations also encourage those focused on criminal legal system change to pay attention to the experiences and needs of victims of battering and the impact of proposed changes on women from marginalized communities.

**4. Useful: Questionnaires**

Questionnaires can be quick and inexpensive ways of surveying a large number of survivors about a specific issue, such as access to advocacy at the time of a police call, the use of mandatory no-contact orders, or experiences with one or more steps in the criminal case process. Many people are familiar with giving feedback in this way and are often more open in their responses because of the impersonal and anonymous format. A questionnaire can be designed so that it is easy to fill out and questions can be asked in a uniform way that makes it easy to tabulate and summarize responses. The availability of low- or no-cost online survey tools (such as SurveyMonkey, Zoomerang, or Google Forms) means that survivors, other community members, and practitioners can complete the survey at home, at an advocacy office, public library, or place of employment. Advocates can distribute or call attention to flyers and posters with information on the website and process. Questionnaires can also be distributed via postcards or paper forms that are deposited at a convenient collection point or returned via regular mail.

**5. Optional: Survivors' advisory group**

Communities that are positioned to bring survivors' together in a formal advisory role will benefit from the insight and guidance that this form of community consultation can provide. Establishing a survivors' advisory group for the Blueprint is more likely when community-based advocacy programs already have a similar approach in place within their organizations. Survivors' groups

---

**RESOURCE**

**Blueprint for Safety Survivors' Advisory Group: Role and Activities**

---

oriented to policy and practice review rarely emerge spontaneously, but grow from the intention—and attention and facilitation—of advocacy organizations that value survivors’ voice and guidance. Such a group can be challenging to establish and maintain over time as a fixed body with consistent membership. A more ad hoc approach can be more sustainable, with a group brought together as needed several times a year to analyze Blueprint adaptations and recommend changes. This approach can take advantage of any core membership and leadership that has emerged while also providing flexibility to bring in new members. For example, two or three times a year the Blueprint coordinator and advocate could partner with advocacy organizations to hold a dinner program that invites a diverse range of survivors to comment on specific questions or aspects of the Blueprint or criminal legal system response.

## 6. Optional: Disparate impact advisory group

The benefits and challenges in establishing a disparate impact advisory group to the Blueprint are similar those for a survivors’ advisory group. There is the potential for deeper insight and guidance that will help adapt and implement the Blueprint in ways that reduce unintended consequences and disparity of impact. It can be equally challenging to establish and maintain such a group over time as a fixed body with consistent membership. It can perhaps be even more challenging.

The experience of being overrepresented in and/or underserved by the criminal legal system has left many people and organizations representing

---

### RESOURCE

[Blueprint for Safety Disparity Impact Advisory Group: Role and Activities](#)

---

marginalized communities wary about the motivations and sincerity of that system. Their participation in policy discussions and development has often been at a token level. Blueprint communities that are positioned to form and sustain a disparate impact advisory group will most likely have already begun such work in meaningful ways elsewhere in the community. Blueprint organizers will have a foundation of relationships and trust that persuade individuals and organizations to join the effort.

## CONFIDENTIALITY — CONSENT — SAFETY

Community consultation in the context of the Blueprint and its focus on people’s experiences with battering requires specific attention to confidentiality, consent, and victim safety. Anyone completing a questionnaire or participating in an individual interview or focus group, for example, should be clearly informed of the purpose of the activity and how the information collected will be used. Victims of battering and others in the community—including those charged with domestic violence-related crimes—must understand that their participation in such activities is voluntary and that refusing to talk or otherwise provide information will have no impact whatsoever on their ability to use advocacy services or their case or any criminal legal system action. While the purpose of direct consultation with survivors and others is to learn about experiences with and problems in the system’s response, personal information about their lives and circumstances may be revealed. Personal information must be treated

confidentially and collected it in such a way that individuals are not identified (unless a person has granted clear, specific permission to do so).

Consultation with victims of battering should not put them at risk for further abuse. For example, when contacting victims by phone or mail with interview requests, focus group announcements, or questionnaires, consider who else is present in the home and has access to mail and phone messages. The Blueprint advocate and community-based advocacy organizations should be involved in planning any direct consultation with victims.

## **OPTIONAL: SURVIVORS' ADVISORY GROUP – ROLE AND ACTIVITIES**

### **Role**

A distinctive feature of the Blueprint for Safety is its commitment to ground policy and practice in the experiences of victims of violence, with particular attention to the complex and often dangerous implications of a victim's collaboration with the criminal legal system. Because community-based advocacy is uniquely situated to bring victims' experiences and concerns forward, it has a central role in Blueprint leadership and partnerships. Another way the Blueprint stays grounded in victims' experiences is via an advisory group of survivors who provide ongoing guidance and help direct the process of adapting and implementing the Blueprint. The Survivors' Advisory Group (survivors' group) acts as a touchstone to uncover problems that the Blueprint seeks to solve and test the Blueprint's solutions.

### **Members**

The Survivors' Advisory Group should reflect the broadest, most diverse range of battered women in the community. Recruiting a broad range of members requires reaching out to culturally-specific and other organizations working with survivors, perhaps around issues that are not directly identified as a "domestic violence" program, such as employment or post-incarceration programs. The structure and format of meetings should be established in consultation with the Blueprint Advocate and other advocates who can strategize on how to best provide flexibility and consistency, meet any necessary childcare and transportation needs, and compensate members for sharing their expertise.

### **Activities**

1. Meet regularly with the Blueprint advocate and the coordinator to provide guidance on strengthening victim engagement and avoiding unintended harmful consequences.
2. Review Blueprint policies and protocols from the perspective of survivor experience to identify potential harmful consequences of Blueprint interventions.
3. Contribute to building a knowledge base about violence against women in the community and the impact of criminal legal system intervention on the lives of battered women.
4. Act as a kind of "standing" focus group that can provide feedback on specific questions related to Blueprint policy and practice. Note: This is not in place of community focus groups with battered women.

5. Support ongoing conversations with victims of battering in the community by contributing to the organization and facilitation of focus groups and similar discussions.
6. Participate in policy and practice assessment activities, such as case file reviews and observations.
7. Recommend changes in Blueprint policy and practice to address any unintended consequences.
8. Contribute to ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and revision of Blueprint policy and practice.

## OPTIONAL: DISPARITY IMPACT ADVISORY GROUP – ROLE AND ACTIVITIES

### Role

The Blueprint for Safety faces three complex interconnected realities as it seeks to honor Principle Six: (1) the deep and pervasive harm of mass incarceration and its impact on marginalized communities, (2) the deep and pervasive harm of violence against women, and (3) the ways in which victims of battering are routinely caught up in the criminal legal system. The realities are interconnected.

---

**BLUEPRINT FOR SAFETY FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLE 6**  
Act in ways that reduce unintended consequences and the disparity of impact on victims and offenders.

---

The Disparate Impact Advisory Group (disparity impact group) identifies and analyzes issues of disparity in the community in relation to the Blueprint. It recommends adjustments to Blueprint policy adaptation and practice in order to avoid magnifying disparity. The disparity impact group provides an avenue for direct involvement in the adaptation process by communities that are overrepresented and/or underserved in seeking help from the criminal legal system.

### Members

The disparity impact group's core members include individuals affiliated with community-based organizations that represent and work directly with marginalized communities. The group includes meaningful representation from those most affected by disparity in the criminal legal system (i.e., sufficient numbers so that one or two individuals are not expected to represent an entire community). Possible sources to recruit core members include culturally-specific advocacy and civil rights organizations, legal aid services, and faith-based justice system reform groups. The specific make-up will depend upon local conditions related to current and historical disparity. The Blueprint coordinator and advocate also participate, along with a mix of Blueprint organizers and practitioners. The disparity impact group might also include one or more local researchers who study issues of disparity.

### Activities

1. Provide analysis and recommendations related to unintended consequences and disparity of impact in the criminal legal system's response to battering.

2. Contribute to building a knowledge base about the current and historic nature of disparity within the larger community and the criminal legal system.
3. Hold focus group or similar community discussions to gather information from victims of battering about the criminal legal system response and recommendations for change.
4. Participate in policy and practice assessment activities, such as case file reviews and observations.
5. Review Blueprint adaptations to policy and practice for any potential harmful consequences or disparity of impact.
6. Recommend changes in Blueprint policy and practice to address any unintended consequences or disparity of impact.
7. Contribute to ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and revision of Blueprint policy and practice.

*This project is supported by Grant No. 2010-TA-AX-K008 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions and recommendations expressed in this document are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.*



# RESEARCH SUPPORTS THE INTERVENTION STRATEGIES OF THE BLUEPRINT FOR SAFETY

---

Updated October 2014

## 1. COORDINATED WORK ACROSS AND WITHIN AGENCIES INCREASES PROTECTION

- “The core tenet of most coordinated criminal justice responses [is] the belief that a criminal justice system that predictably and routinely entangles offenders in multiple ways improves the odds that any given offender will encounter a response that may alter his behavior.” (Worden, 2003, p. 14)
- A number of studies found that a coordinated intervention in domestic violence cases could have a positive, even cumulative, effect on the behavior of the offender (Murphy, et al., 1998, pp. 278-279; Saunders, 2008, p. 165; Syers and Edleson, 1992, p. 484; Tolman and Weisz, 1995, p. 482; Worden, 2003, p. 13; 2001).
- Sullivan (2006, p. 205) reports an increased responsiveness to victims and improved interagency interactions through a CCR.
- “One large scale study of women in the justice system found that the more battered women perceived different agencies as working together, the more highly they rated them in terms of helpfulness and effectiveness and the more satisfied they were both with the legal system in general and with their own individual case outcomes in particular.” (Goodman and Epstein, 2008, p. 85)
- Russell and Light (2006) found that victims responded well to police when officers were proactive and part of an integrated team.
- Sullivan (2006, p. 205) says “strong leadership, a shared mission, shared power, and a membership extending across more fields” are needed to accomplish goals.
- CCR-related qualities and activities were correlated with higher rates of victim contact with intimate partner violence services in CCR communities when compared to communities without this intervention. These qualities and activities included: developing goals based on community needs, selecting priorities based on the salience of the need in the community, efforts to coordinate services, and disseminating information on the frequency of intimate partner violence in the community. (Klevens, et al., 2008)\*
- Zweig and Burt (2006) found that women’s perceptions of whether community agencies were working together to assist her and her case significantly and positively related to arrests in

domestic violence and sexual assault cases and to convictions in domestic violence cases. Perceptions that agencies were working together also increased women's beliefs that law enforcement and prosecution are effective agencies.\*

- A study of 48 different domestic violence community collaborations (Nowell, 2009) suggests that the presence of stakeholders who are perceived to be out of sync by other stakeholders with regards to their understanding of domestic violence, but do not acknowledge this apparent disconnect, can negatively impact the effectiveness of the collaborative. In other words, a CCR-type entity is more effective when members have a shared understanding of domestic violence.\*

## **2. OUTCOMES IMPROVE WHEN THE SYSTEM TREATS A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASE AS PART OF ONGOING PATTERN OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY VS. A SINGLE EVENT**

- Websdale (1999) reminds us that homicides are often preceded by multiple criminal justice interventions.
- In the Quincy study, Buzawa et al. (1998, p. 189) found about half of the offenders had prior arrests for violent offenses and within two years of the last criminal justice intervention, 44% of the offenders were rearrested for domestic violence.
- Hart notes that between the arrest and prosecution, 30% of offenders may re-assault (Goldsmith, 1991, p. 7) and as many as half of domestic violence victims may be threatened with retaliation for cooperation with prosecutors (Davis, et al., 1990, p. 19).
- Batterers can reoffend quickly. Goodman and Epstein (2008, p. 75) say that "20% to 30% of arrested offenders re-assault their partners before the court process has concluded or shortly afterward, often as retaliation for involving them in the court system."
- In another study, 14% of the victims reported threats from the perpetrator since disposition of their case, 8% had property damaged, 9% experienced new violence, and 37% of perpetrators had been verbally abusive. (Smith, et al., 2001, p. 72)
- Offenders with a 'stake in conformity' (employed, married, stable housing) are least likely to reoffend after interaction with the justice system. (Roehl, et al., 2005, p. 14) However, the high-risk offender with a criminal history tends not to change their behavior with criminal justice intervention. "For high risk offenders, even a 'model' court has not broken their pattern of intimidation and control and the interventions they have used to date are insufficient. Stopping chronic and/or serial batterers is apt to be a long, difficult process, not easily impacted by any one criminal justice intervention, especially one that is fundamentally compromised by long prosecutorial and judicial delays and restricted to misdemeanor type sentences." (Hotelling and Buzawa, 2003, p. 26)

- From their study of batterers in four cities, Heckert and Gondolf concluded that “men in the repeat re-assault category were slightly more likely to use a chain of tactics, or multiple tactics, in their violent incidents. That is, their violence was more likely to be excessive and unrelenting.” (2004, p. III-15-8)
- Buzawa et al. (1998, pp. 205 and 198) found that courts are most likely to see entrenched batterers who have had prior involvement with the system and less likely to see those batterers who use occasional violence and have no criminal record. They suggest that the level and conditions of an intervention could be linked to risk markers made visible for each offender.
- Stark (2007, p. 94) points out that the harm in domestic violence is not only due to the number of violent events, but to an accumulation of multiple harms. It is the cumulative effect, rather than a set of isolated acts that affect the victim of battering.
- Erskine (1999, pp. 1207-1232) discusses the importance of exploring ongoing patterns of intimidation and coercion to determine appropriate charges for a range of criminal or violent behaviors.

### **3. CLEAR AND CONSISTENT MESSAGES OF OFFENDER ACCOUNTABILITY AND VICTIM SAFETY CAN REDUCE VIOLENCE**

- Worden suggests that “the efficacy of many innovations [in intervention] may be contingent on the consistency of the messages that are exchanged among the victims, offenders, and practitioners” (2003, p. 10).
- Interactions with the police create an important baseline for the victim’s level of trust in the rest of system. Belknap and Sullivan (2003) found that whether victims believed the state was a resource for their help seeking was based on positive interaction with an officer who listened without judgment and communicated empathy. Victims saw police as helpful when they provided legal information, advocacy support, attended to medical care, and paid attention to the needs of the children.
- Goodman and Epstein (2008, p. 78) note, “Other research has shown that women who experience government officials as listening to their stories and responding to their individual needs are more likely to feel treated fairly and therefore to cooperate with the prosecutor’s requests than are women who feel forced into a mandatory model dismissive of their input.”
- Researchers at Texas Women’s University (2003) designed a one-hour phone contact for use with the victim during the processing of a protection order. Their study demonstrated that “abused women offered a safety intervention at the time of applying for a protection order quickly adopt safety behaviors and continued to practice those safety behaviors for eighteen months” (p.8).

- Practitioners can support a victim’s safety planning by providing tactical information about the legal process, legal options, appropriate referrals, and specific communication about the risk of severe violence and lethality. (Johnson, 2007; Kropp, 2008, p. 213)
- In his observation of courtroom interactions in domestic violence cases, Ptacek (1999, pp. 172-178) studied how the interaction between judges, victims, and offenders can support or deter the battering dynamic. He points out that the behaviors demonstrated in the courtroom can (intentionally or not) become another resource the perpetrator can use for intimidation or coercion in the future. To that extent, a victim’s experience of the criminal justice intervention can reaffirm the perpetrator’s messages. Ptacek created a graphic titled “Judicial Responses that Reinforce Women’s Entrapment” to describe some of the behaviors he observed. To demonstrate the potential parallels that victims may find in criminal justice interventions, he lays the judge’s behaviors alongside behaviors used by perpetrators. Ptacek’s graphic is available in a report by Levey, et al. (2000, p. Appendix I-2).
- Robinson and Tregidga (2007) found that taking a holistic multiagency approach to domestic violence can reduce recidivism, even among the population most at risk. The research was conducted with very high-risk victims of domestic violence to determine levels of victimization one year after being referred to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and their perceptions of this type of intervention. Nearly all victims acknowledged the importance of having multiagency support once they were ready to change their situations.\*
- One of the first studies to examine community-based outreach in the context of an interdisciplinary community coordinated response to police-reported intimate partner violence found that community-based outreach by victim advocates results in decreased distress levels, greater readiness to leave abusive relationships, and greater perceived helpfulness of services relative to system-based referrals. (DePrince, et al., 2012a)\*
- A randomized longitudinal study found that an outreach program was effective in increasing women’s engagement with prosecution, as well as the likelihood of their participating in the prosecution of their abusers. Results were particularly robust among women marginalized by ethnicity and class, and those still living with their abusers after the target incident. (DePrince, et al., 2012b)\*

#### **4. SURE AND SWIFT CONSEQUENCES FOR OFFENDERS REDUCE RECIDIVISM AND THE SEVERITY OF FUTURE ABUSE**

- Gondolf (2004) noted a reduction in no-shows and improved completion rates of batterer intervention programs when offenders moved through the system quickly. When intervention was swift and certain, the rate of offenders entering the groups increased from 70% to 95% and the completion rate rose to 70% (p. 619). Gondolf linked the effectiveness of batterer programs to a streamlined system where violations were treated with a ‘swift and certain’

response, offenders identified as high risk received increased sanctions, and risk markers were monitored throughout the intervention (see discussion on page 624).

- Two additional studies by Gondolf (2000; 1999) verify the impact of swift and sure response for domestic violence offenders.
- In domestic violence cases, the specific language of swift and sure is not commonly used, but several authors do recommend aggressive or prompt response to violations of court orders. (Buzawa et al., 2000; Hofford, 1991, pp. 12-17) One of the four lessons reported from the Judicial Oversight Demonstration project was the importance of “procedures to monitor or educate defendants and provide a quick court response to violations of no-contact orders and other bond conditions.” (Visher et al., 2007, p. 9)
- To review a theoretical frame for choice theory and negative sanctions see Pratt (2008) and Kurbrin, et al. (2009).
- A research study conducted by Weisburd, et al. (2008) demonstrated the impact of swift and certain responses to probation violators.
- Klein, et al. (2014) found that prosecution and sentencing of domestic violence cases can significantly reduce re-abuse for the majority of more chronic abusers who also commit non-DV crimes. The research suggests that what matters is the comparative severity of the domestic violence sentencing compared to non-DV sentencing, not the severity of the sentence itself. The researchers recommend that prosecutors and judges sanction crimes against person appropriately, namely more severely than typical non-DV crimes abusers may be arrested for.\*

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Belknap, J. & Sullivan, C. M. (2003). Longitudinal study of battered women in the system: The victims' and decision-makers' perceptions. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice. Available: <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/202946.pdf>
2. Buzawa, E., Hotaling, G., & Klein, A. (1998). The response to domestic violence in a model court: Some initial findings and implications. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, 16, 185-206.
3. Buzawa, E., Hotaling, G. T., Klein, A., & Byrne, J. (2000). Response to domestic violence in a pro-active court setting: Final Report. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice. Available: <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/181428.pdf>
4. Davis, R., Smith, B., & Henley, S. (1990). Victim- witness intimidation in the Bronx courts. New York: Victims Services Agency. Available: [http://www.popcenter.org/problems/witnessintimidation/PDFs/Davis\\_etal\\_1990.pdf](http://www.popcenter.org/problems/witnessintimidation/PDFs/Davis_etal_1990.pdf)
5. DePrince, A.P., Labus, J., Belknap, J., Buckingham, S., Gover, A. (2012a). The impact of community-based outreach on psychological distress and victim safety in women exposed to intimate partner abuse, *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 80:2, 211–221.

6. DePrince, A.P., Labus, J., Belknap, J., Buckingham, S., Gover, A. (2012b). The Impact of Victim-Focused Outreach on Criminal Legal System Outcomes Following Police-reported Intimate Partner Abuse. *Violence Against Women*, 18:8, 861-881.
7. Erskine, J. (1999). If it quacks like a duck: Recharacterizing domestic violence as criminal coercion. *65 Brooklyn Law Review*, 1207-1232.
8. Goldsmith S. (1991). Taking spouse abuse beyond a 'family affair.' *Law Enforcement News*, 17(334), 7.
9. Gondolf, E. (1999). A comparison of reassault rates in four batterer programs: Do court referral, program length and services matter? *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 14, 41-61.
10. Gondolf, E. (2000). Mandatory court review and batterer program compliance. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 15(4), 428-437.
11. Gondolf, E. (2004). Evaluating batterer counseling programs: A difficult task showing some effects and implications. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 9, 605-631.
12. Goodman, L. & Epstein, D. (2008). *Listening to battered women: A survivor-centered approach to advocacy, mental health, and justice*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
13. Heckert, D. A. & Gondolf, E. W. (2004). *Predicting abuse and reassault among batterer program participants*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice. Available: <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/199730.pdf>
14. Hofford, M. (1991). Family violence: Challenging cases for probation officers. *Federal Probation*, 55(3), 12-17.
15. Hotaling, G. T. & Buzawa, E. (2003). *Victim satisfaction with criminal justice case processing in a model court setting*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice. Available: <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/195668.pdf>
16. Johnson, I. M. (2007). Victims' perceptions of police response to domestic violence incidents. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 35(5), 498-510.
17. Klein, A., Centerbar, D., Keller, S. and Klein, J. (2014). *The Impact of Differential Sentencing Severity for Domestic Violence and All Other Offenses over Abusers' Life Spans*. Report to National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, NCJ 244757. Available: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/244757.pdf>
18. Klevens, J., Baker, C.K., Shelley, G.A., Ingram, E.M., (2008). *Exploring the Links Between Components of Coordinated Community Responses and Their Impact on Contact With Intimate Partner Violence Services*. *Violence Against Women*, 14:3, 346-358.
19. Kropp, P. R. (2008). Intimate partner violence risk assessment and management. *Violence and Victims*, 23(2), 202-220.
20. Kurbrin, C. E., Stucky, T. D., & Krohn, M. D. (2009). *Researching theories of crime and deviance*. New York: Oxford University Press.

21. Levey, L. S., Steketee, M. W., & Keilitz, S. L. (2000). Implementing an integrated domestic violence court: Systemic change in the District of Columbia. National Center for State Courts: State Justice Institute. Retrieved from <http://contentdm.ncsconline.org/cgi-in/showfile.exe?CISOROOT=/famct&CISOPTR=70>
22. Murphy, C. M., Musser, P. H., & Maton, K. I. (1998). Coordinated community intervention for domestic abusers: Intervention system involvement and criminal recidivism. *Journal of Family Violence*, 13(3), 263-284.
23. Nowell, B. (2009). Out of Sync and Unaware? Exploring the Effects of Problem Frame Alignment and Discordance in Community Collaboratives. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 20:91-116.
24. Pratt, T. C. (2008). Rational choice theory, crime control policy, and criminology relevance. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 7(1), 9-36.
25. Ptacek, J. (1999). *Battered women in the courtroom: The power of judicial responses*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.
26. Robinson, A.L. & Tregidga, J., (2007). The Perceptions of High-Risk Victims of Domestic Violence to a Coordinated Community Response in Cardiff, Wales. *Violence Against Women*, 13:1, pp1130-1148.
27. Roehl, J., O’Sullivan, C., Webster, D., & Campbell, J. (2005). *Intimate partner violence risk assessment validation study*. Washington, DC: National Institute for Justice. Available: <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/209731.pdf>
28. Russell, M. & Light, L. (2006). Police and victim perspectives on empowerment of domestic violence victims. *Police Quarterly*, 9(4), 375-396.
29. Saunders, D. G. (2008). Group interventions for men who batter: A summary of program descriptions and research. *Violence and Victims*, 23(2), 156-172.
30. Smith, B. E., Davis, R., Nickles, L. B., & Davies, H. J. (2001). *Evaluation of efforts to implement no-drop policies: Two central values in conflict, Final Report*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice. Available: <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/187772.pdf>
31. Stark, E. (2007). *Coercive control: The entrapment of women in personal life*. New York: Oxford University Press.
32. Sullivan, C. M. (2006). Intervention to address intimate partner violence: The current state of the field. In J. R. Lutzker (Ed.), *Prevention violence: Research and evidence-based intervention strategies* (pp. 195-212). Washington DC: American Psychological Association.
33. Syers, M. & Edleson, J. L. (1992). The combined effects of coordinated criminal justice intervention in woman abuse. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 7(4), 490-502.
34. Texas Women’s University (2003). *Increasing victim safety and system accountability: Evaluating a collaborative intervention between health care and criminal justice, Executive Summary*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice. Available: <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/201945.pdf>

35. Tolman, R. & Weisz, A. (1995). Coordinated community intervention for domestic violence: The effects of arrest and prosecution on recidivism of woman abuse perpetrators. *Crime and Delinquency*, 41(4), 481-495.
36. Visher, C. A., Harrell, A. V., & Newmark, L. C. (2007). Pre-trial innovations for domestic violence offenders and victims: Lessons from the Judicial Oversight Demonstration Initiative. NIJ Research for Practice. Retrieved from <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/216041.pdf>
37. Websdale, N. (1999). *Understanding domestic homicide*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.
38. Weisburd, D., Tinat, T., & Kowalski, M. (2008). The miracle of the cells: An experimental study of interventions to increase payment of court-ordered financial obligations. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 7(1), 9-36.
39. Worden, A. P. (2003). *Violence against women: Synthesis of research for task forces and coalition members*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice. Available: <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/199912.pdf>
40. Zweig, J.M. & Burt, M.R., (2006). Predicting Case Outcomes and Women's Perceptions of the Legal System's Response to Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 17:2, 202-233.

*This project is supported by Grant No. 2010-TA-AX-K008 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions and recommendations expressed in this document are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.*



# THE BLUEPRINT APPROACH TO RISK

---

## WHO IS AT RISK AND IN WHAT WAYS?

The Blueprint for Safety organizes everyone in the criminal justice system to keep this question in the forefront of their response to domestic assault cases.

Under the Blueprint, assessing for risk and danger in domestic violence-related crimes is built into each step in the response. Every practitioner, from the 911 call-taker to the judge and the supervising probation officer, is positioned to understand, collect, and communicate information about the kind of violence that is occurring (context) and the level of harm that has occurred and is likely to occur in the future (dangerousness). The Blueprint seeks to provide practitioners at each point of intervention with the knowledge, authority, and capacity to adjust responses along a continuum of interventions, moving to an elevated and then maximum response depending upon the circumstances surrounding the case. [From the Blueprint Supplement, see *Practitioner's Guide to Risk and Danger in Domestic Violence Cases* and the *Training Memo—Risk and Dangerousness: Managing Severe or Lethal Violence*].

The Blueprint approach differs from that of actuarial tools designed to measure specific acts or factors, such as prior assaults or employment status, and produce a score. The Blueprint approach to risk and danger seeks to “connect the dots,” i.e., to paint a picture of the violence in context and make that picture visible throughout the criminal case process. In that sense, the Blueprint takes a qualitative approach to analyzing risk and danger, using a more narrative framework that adds to, but does not replace, actuarial tools used to complete certain tasks, such as making pretrial release recommendations. Under the Blueprint approach, a judge gets a picture of the history and level of abuse used by the defendant, both toward the victim of the immediate crime and toward other intimate partners, in addition to a numerical score.

The Blueprint approach recognizes that 911 and law enforcement officer have a unique role in developing information about context and dangerousness. Because offenders tend to threaten victims for participating in the criminal case, a victim's willingness to share information about the history, severity, and context of the violence usually diminishes over time. The initial response may be the only opportunity to accurately identify the risk a particular offender poses to the victim.

The Blueprint requires patrol officers to ask three open-ended questions in order to help get an early and accurate picture of the nature of the risk and danger involved. The questions (based on Jacquelyn Campbell's Danger Assessment research<sup>1</sup>) encourage risk-focused dialogue that helps patrol officers zero in on the essentials of the case, quickly assess for urgency, and determine who is in danger from

---

<sup>1</sup> Campbell, Jacquelyn C. "The danger assessment instrument: Risk factors of homicide of and by battered women." Questions and answers in lethal and non-lethal violence 1 (1993): 27-38.

whom, and in what ways. The risk questions require responding officers to engage in conversation with victims of violence, as opposed to simply filling out a checklist. Such interaction creates opportunity for dialog between the victim and the officer, and conveys messages of concern for everyone's safety.

**The Blueprint risk questions:**

- Do you think he/she will seriously injure or kill you or your children? What makes you think so? What makes you think not?
- How frequently and seriously does he/she intimidate, threaten, or assault you? Is it changing? Getting worse? Better?
- Describe the time you were the most frightened or injured by him/her.

Officers use follow-up questions to get at more specific and relevant detail, including the extent to which a victim has been threatened for seeking help, particularly from the criminal justice system. When documented in the police report, the responses serve as the foundation for further investigation, charging decisions, sentencing, and conditions of release and probation. Each practitioner from thereon has a role in filling in the picture and disseminating what is known about context and dangerousness. The *Training Memo-Risk and Dangerousness: Managing Severe or Lethal Violence* outlines the primary tasks and requirements for each point of intervention in the Blueprint's coordinated flow of risk management information.

Concern about accurately identifying risk and danger in domestic assault cases has been a focus of criminal justice system response and research for decades. A number of tools and approaches exist, such as the Danger Assessment, the Maryland Lethality Assessment Program, ODARA, and the Domestic Violence High Risk Team Model<sup>2</sup>. The developers of the Blueprint for Safety conducted an extensive literature search and consulted key researchers on risk assessment to develop the Blueprint framework, which includes the *Practitioner's Guide to Risk and Danger in Domestic Violence Cases* and the *Training Memo-Risk and Dangerousness: Managing Severe or Lethal Violence*. They selected the risk questions as a way of immediately capturing key information on the scene that would help everyone intervening from that point onward produce as accurate a picture as possible of the danger and safety needs and respond accordingly. The three questions are not the only ones that should be asked, but they provide a patrol officer who is working under a high call volume or other time constraints a way to readily develop a picture of the case that would otherwise be lost or difficult to reconstruct.

The Blueprint's approach to risk seeks to capture and communicate what is known about an offender via institutional sources such as arrest and conviction records, protection and harassment restraining order affidavits and court records, and probation supervision violations. The *History of Domestic Violence*

---

<sup>2</sup> Risk, Domestic Violence High, and Team DVHRT Model. "Examining Domestic Violence High Risk Teams: A Qualitative Assessment of this Promising Approach in Massachusetts." (2014).

*Summary (HDVS)*<sup>3</sup> template helps organize and share a running record of an offender's conduct over time without having to recreate the information at every point of intervention or with every new incident. The HDVS captures not only case outcomes, such as guilty pleas to domestic assault charges, but concretely describes the violence: e.g., “restrained/headlock, spit in her face, left bruises” or “headlock involved squeezing neck; angry about any contact with other males; monitors phones calls; demands accounting of where she’s been.”

The information in the HDVS is key to helping practitioners differentiate responses to domestic violence cases based on context and dangerousness. The HDVS helps provide each practitioner acting on the case—from the bail evaluator to the responding officer to the charging attorney to the sentencing judge—with information that helps answer the following questions:

- What is the context of this act of domestic violence? Is this person engaging in a pattern of coercion, intimidation, and violence that establishes a relationship of dominance or control over the victim? Or, is this another type of domestic violence that requires a different kind of response?
- How frequent and severe is the violence and, if applicable, other related abuse? Is it escalating? Who is at risk and in what ways?

Find the following references to the Blueprint approach to assessing risk and danger under supplemental materials and training memos at [http://www.praxisinternational.org/bp\\_materials.aspx](http://www.praxisinternational.org/bp_materials.aspx):

- *Practitioner’s Guide to Risk and Danger in Domestic Violence Cases*
- *Training Memo-Risk and Dangerousness: Managing Severe or Lethal Violence*
- *History of Domestic Violence Summary Instructions and Sample*

*This project is supported by Grant No. 2010-TA-AX-K008 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions and recommendations expressed in this document are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.*

---

<sup>3</sup> Supplement to the Blueprint for Safety, Appendix 1D

# THE BLUEPRINT FOR SAFETY

---

An Interagency Response to Domestic Violence Crimes

## ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS – ANNOTATED

The Blueprint for Safety’s understanding of essential elements related to effective response to domestic violence crimes reflects the culmination of over thirty years of criminal legal system reform, the results of local Safety and Accountability Audits, and a review of recent research. Each element addresses a gap or issue identified through this work.

Access the following related material at: [http://www.praxisinternational.org/bp\\_materials.aspx](http://www.praxisinternational.org/bp_materials.aspx)

- The Blueprint for Safety: Foundations of Effective Intervention
- Research Supports the Intervention Strategies of the Blueprint for Safety

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

911 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS .....	2
LAW ENFORCEMENT PATROL AND INVESTIGATION.....	5
PRETRIAL RELEASE / BAIL EVALUATION .....	16
SHERIFF’S OFFICE: WARRANTS, JAIL, AND COURT SECURITY .....	20
PROSECUTION .....	24
VICTIM/WITNESS .....	31
PROBATION .....	36
THE BENCH AND COURT ADMINISTRATION .....	41

## 911 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>1. Set priority-level response for domestic assault calls.</b>	<p>In some communities, domestic calls are treated as “disturbances” with a low priority. The Blueprint starts with the assumption that these are potentially dangerous calls, which can be downgraded in priority if certain conditions exist that rule out the likelihood that danger is present.</p>
<b>2. Elicit and relay to responding officers information about:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Type &amp; level of danger, weapons, types of violence used, etc.</b></li> <li>• <b>Exact report of what caller saw/heard/experienced</b></li> <li>• <b>Who is at the scene</b></li> </ul>	<p>Often the only information officers receive is the domestic designation with some indication of whether violence has been alleged, e.g., “physical domestic” or “verbal domestic” or “man and woman fighting.” This does not provide officers with sufficient information to prepare them to respond to the level of danger at the scene.</p> <p>It is not unusual for officers to find when they arrive that those at the scene deny that any violence occurred. If officers have some information about what the caller told 911, this can be used for follow-up questioning at the scene.</p> <p>If 911 transmits this information to officers, supervisors can compare CAD entries or radio traffic recordings to police reports to monitor whether officers are writing reports in all domestic cases.</p>
<b>3. Collect and relay information to aid officers in apprehending suspects who have left the scene.</b>	<p>Suspects who leave the scene before officers arrive are often more dangerous suspects who have learned that if they are not present when police arrive they may be able to avoid consequences. Beginning with 911, the Blueprint organizes everyone to pay attention to these cases, beginning with providing officers with information that may be able to aid in apprehending these suspects right away, thereby ensuring a faster consequence.</p>
<b>4. Communicate effectively and respectfully with callers.</b>	<p>The most common concern relayed by victims of violence regarding 911 is a perception that the call-taker is uncaring and abrupt when talking with them. Victims who feel a partnership with interveners are more likely to use the legal system in the future.</p>

<b>5. Tell callers when a squad has been dispatched.</b>	Victims of violence who are afraid and anxious need reassurance that the next step is in progress. Victims tell us in focus groups that they do not need to know when the squad will arrive, but rather that the next step has been taken and the squad has been dispatched.
<b>6. Determine how and when to safely keep callers on the line.</b>	Call-takers sometimes see their jobs narrowly as getting information about the nature and location of a call to officers, rather than more broadly as helping the caller access safety. Understanding when safety is enhanced by keeping the caller on the line vs. encouraging the caller to retreat to a safer location is critical to a safe 911 response. The Blueprint lays out guidance for making these determinations.
<b>7. Respond to people having difficulty with communication.</b>	Callers who are very upset or impaired by alcohol, drugs or cognition can be frustrating for call-takers to deal with and can lead to ineffective ways of communicating with them. It is not uncommon for call-takers to demand that callers respond to their questions, try to talk over or shout to be heard, fail to tune in to what the caller wants to say if the call-taker is not provided guidance on more helpful ways of responding in these situations.
<b>8. Safely respond to interrupted calls.</b>	Suspects sometimes interfere with 911 calls; sometimes it's dangerous for the suspect to know that 911 has been called and the caller has to hang up; need to distinguish to the extent possible and respond accordingly.
<b>9. Safely respond to children on the line.</b>	Children need connection and reassurance and may be in physical danger. It's important for the child to be able to communicate safely with the call-taker and to maintain connection with a helper. Sometimes children act as instruments of the batterer and try to stop the police response or defend the actions of the batterer.
<b>10. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency. Provide access to language interpretation and TTY/TDD.</b>	It's tempting to use children or other family members as interpreters, but this may not be safe. Children should not be placed in this position and family members, especially if they are the suspect's family, may not interpret accurately.

<b>11. Utilize all available databases and information sources to obtain history on suspect.</b>	The more information responding officers have about history, the more prepared they can be to respond safely. The many databases that exist to capture criminal history don't necessarily talk to each other or include the same information, so call-takers and dispatchers need to be prepared to use as many information sources as possible.
<b>12. Code calls accurately according to Blueprint protocols.</b>	Accurate coding is essential to aid in setting the priority response, preparing officers to respond appropriately, collecting data, and aiding in later monitoring of 911 and patrol response.
<b>13. Record and keep calls and related documents in a manner which allows later access by bail evaluators, investigators, prosecutors, probation, and defense attorneys.</b>	Gaining access to 911 calls is difficult and/or time-consuming in some communities. The 911 recording is a key piece of evidence in a criminal case and should be made readily available to criminal justice workers who need it.
<b>14. Adopt Blueprint victim engagement protocols.</b>	911 personnel can play a significant role in helping victims feel safe and supported, and can have a huge influence on whether victims will feel confident about calling for help in the future. This idea is rarely embedded in 911 training and protocol; the Blueprint provides this guidance.
<b>15. Conduct regular supervisory review of calls and practice according to Blueprint policies and protocols.</b>	Internal monitoring for compliance with the Blueprint is key to maintaining the response.
<b>16. Provide structure for managers to participate in ongoing interagency Blueprint monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.</b>	Key Blueprint element is ensuring that agencies come together to monitor the extent to which the Blueprint is being followed and its impact on practice.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT PATROL AND INVESTIGATION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>PATROL</b>	
<b>1. Obtain or request enhanced information from dispatch, including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Type &amp; level of danger, weapons, types of violence used, etc.</b></li> <li>• <b>Exact report of what caller saw/heard/experienced</b></li> <li>• <b>Who is at the scene</b></li> <li>• <b>Information to aid in locating suspect who has left the scene</b></li> </ul>	<p>Officers generally have little information about what is occurring at the scene as they approach. Knowing some detail about what the call-taker is reporting, specifics about the violence, weapons involved, and who is present can more adequately prepare officers to address their own safety as well as safety of those at the scene and to be able to probe more deeply if those present are not forthcoming with information.</p> <p>Suspects who have left the scene are more likely to be apprehended if officers have sufficient information to locate them.</p>
<b>2. Separate the parties and minimize sight and sound contact between suspect and victim(s) as safety permits.</b>	<p>Victims of violence will more readily disclose information if the offender is not able to overhear or to send visual signals to victims.</p>
<b>3. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.</b>	<p>Assuming that officers' understanding of what is being said by those with limited English proficiency can lead to inadvertent misunderstanding. This can limit both the ability to render necessary aid to victims and can open the door for defense challenges of what's written in the police report.</p> <p>It's best not to use children or family and friends, who may be motivated to inject their own ideas into the conversation.</p>



## LAW ENFORCEMENT PATROL AND INVESTIGATION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<p><b>4. Interview everyone at the scene (including children) and obtain contact information for all.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain detailed contact information for the victim.</li> <li>• Obtain suspect's statement if present at the scene or if s/he can be located.</li> </ul>	<p>It is not uncommon for officers to fail to talk to all witnesses at the scene or get their contact information. Thus, officers may not have all relevant information about the totality of the circumstances in order to make a probable cause determination, and prosecution does not have access to witness accounts. Assuming investigators will follow up is insufficient because patrol has the best and most immediate access to people. Trying to obtain statements at a later time can mean that information important to the case gets lost.</p> <p>Likewise, victims often move around or go to safe locations, so getting complete contact information is very important. Just getting her cell phone number is insufficient.</p> <p>Some departments do not talk to suspects, either because they incorrectly believe the suspect must be Mirandized first and won't talk afterwards or because they don't want to have to document information that is contrary to the case they are building. It is necessary to talk with suspects, however, in order to evaluate the totality of circumstances. Miranda does not have to be given unless the interview is custodial and some suspects will agree anyway.</p>
<p><b>5. Identify and check on the welfare of all children at the scene.</b></p>	<p>Children are often ignored by law enforcement who are uncertain if they should talk to them or take the word of the adults that the children are unaware of what has occurred. Given the vulnerability of children and their limited ability to comprehend the implications of what is occurring, officers should find out who the children are, where they are, whether they witnessed anything or were harmed or otherwise drawn into the incident.</p>
<p><b>6. Document and collect all available evidence, including photos of all injuries, the scene, broken or</b></p>	<p>Many departments do this, but it is not uncommon for these tasks to be overlooked at the patrol level. It is insufficient to assume investigators will pick this up</p>

## LAW ENFORCEMENT PATROL AND INVESTIGATION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<p><b>damaged belongings, weapons, witness statements, electronic (e.g., recordings of text messages, voice-mail, social media), indicators of strangulation, indicators of stalking.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Do not seize telephone if it would leave victim without a working phone.</b></li> <li>• <b>Request the victim sign a medical release if medical treatment will be sought.</b></li> <li>• <b>Collect and secure evidence related to probable cause regardless of suspect's absence from the scene.</b></li> <li>• <b>Note spontaneous statements by those at the scene.</b></li> <li>• <b>Note physical appearance and emotional demeanor of parties.</b></li> </ul>	<p>later as much of the evidence will be gone before they are able to do so.</p> <p>Even when officers are organized to gather evidence at the scene, it is not uncommon for them to miss the broad range of available evidence, so we want to direct them to consider everything.</p> <p>Telephones can be a source of evidence (text messages, voicemail, caller ID or email; or broken or damaged phones). We want officers to be considering all evidence but we also do not want the safety of victims to be compromised by leaving them without a working phone.</p> <p>Obtaining a medical release at the scene ensures that it gets done promptly; an investigator tracking this down later is at a disadvantage if they can't find her or if she doesn't want to talk to them.</p> <p>It is not uncommon for officers to conduct a more cursory on-scene investigation if the suspect has left. These cases should be treated in the same way, especially since we know they may be among the more dangerous cases.</p> <p>Spontaneous statements made by those present, as opposed to statements made in response to police questioning stand a better chance of being viewed by the court as "non-testimonial", increasing the chances that they might be admissible hearsay if the victim does not appear in court.</p> <p>Officer observations about physical and emotional demeanor are important and often overlooked evidence, provided they are captured as concrete, specific descriptions of what the officer observes.</p>

## LAW ENFORCEMENT PATROL AND INVESTIGATION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<p>7. <b>Determine the existence of civil protection orders, harassment restraining orders, and criminal no-contact orders.</b></p>	<p>Document possible charges, provide the basis for probable cause determination</p>
<p>8. <b>Ask about and document past history of violence and stalking.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Victim and witness informants</b></li> <li>• <b>Law enforcement and criminal history records</b></li> </ul>	<p>Stalking is an under-investigated and under-charged crime and patrol has an opportunity to strengthen recognition and investigation early on. An incident-focused system is not well-equipped to identify a crime that by its very nature is a pattern of activity. Officers need to be tuned into this fact, including the reality that some stalking behaviors are not by themselves criminal (for example, sending letters or flowers).</p>
<p>9. <b>Ask and document responses to the 3 Blueprint risk questions and follow-up:</b></p> <p>a) <b>Do you think he/she will seriously injure or kill you, your children, or someone else close to you?</b> <b>What makes you think so?</b> <b>What makes you think not?</b></p> <p>b) <b>How frequently does he/she intimidate, threaten, or assault you?</b> <b>Is it changing? Getting worse?</b> <b>Getting better?</b></p> <p>c) <b>Describe the time you were the most frightened or injured by him/her.</b></p>	<p>These questions provide a window into what is currently happening in the relationship to help interveners understand the extent and nature of the violence. In contrast to a checklist, they require a conversation between the officers and the victim which in turn supports victim engagement. If both people have been alleged to have used violence, these questions can help illuminate who has been harmed, who is most at risk and who is afraid of whom, providing assistance in making self-defense and predominant aggressor analyses, making charging decisions, and requesting conditions of release. The number of questions reflects the reality of patrol work and the time available to talk with victims.</p>

## LAW ENFORCEMENT PATROL AND INVESTIGATION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>10. Ask about and document threats to victim for seeking help or attempts to dissuade victim from seeking help.</b>	<p>This question sets the stage for the prosecutor to use the doctrine of forfeiture by wrongdoing to get victim statements admitted if she is not present at trial.</p>
<b>11. When both parties have used violence:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Assess <u>first</u> for self-defense; arrest the party who was not acting in self-defense.</b></li> <li>• <b>If cannot determine self-defense, assess for the predominant aggressor; arrest the predominant aggressor.</b></li> <li>• <b>Discourage dual arrest.</b></li> </ul>	<p>All people have a legal right to defend themselves or others from physical harm. Self-defense must be ruled out before a predominant aggressor analysis takes place.</p> <p>Victims who are arrested after using force to stop the battering will be less likely to call police in the future. Batterers know this, strengthening their hand in the relationship.</p> <p>We know statistically that victims of violence who use force against their batterers are more likely to plead guilty because they want to get the proceedings behind them as quickly as possible so they can return to their children and their jobs, and they often feel guilty about their use of force. This can create significant disadvantages for victims of violence in child protection or family court custody cases.</p> <p>In <b>rare situations</b>, a person who has been a victim of ongoing violence at the hands of a partner will be determined to be the predominant aggressor, or the level of mutual violence is so severe that both must be taken into custody.</p>
<b>12. Mandatory arrest with probable cause and any one or more of the following conditions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Felony-level crime</b></li> <li>• <b>Injury or impairment to victim</b></li> </ul>	<p>While arrest may not be appropriate in every circumstance, officer discretion should be quite limited in order to avoid failing to intervene and thereby reinforcing a perpetrator's ability to act with impunity.</p> <p>Exception: do not arrest someone acting in self-defense or who is not a predominant aggressor.</p>

## LAW ENFORCEMENT PATROL AND INVESTIGATION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dangerous weapon involved</li> <li>• Violation of order for protection, harassment restraining order, or no-contact order</li> <li>• Victim fears imminent bodily harm</li> </ul>	
<p><b>13. Whether or not there has been an arrest, provide assistance to victims before clearing the scene:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At a minimum, address: medical care, transport to a safe place, notice of victim's rights and compensation, advocacy and community resources, civil protection orders.</li> <li>• Encourage victim to call 911 if suspect returns to the scene.</li> </ul>	<p>The Blueprint organizes officers to see their jobs more broadly than simply responding to an alleged crime. Engaging with victims in this way improves safety in the short term and strengthens the victim's relationship with the criminal legal system and increases the likelihood she will call again if necessary.</p>
<p><b>14. When probable cause exists to make an arrest and the suspect has left the scene, take measures to locate the suspect and protect the victims; submit an investigation report.</b></p>	<p>In those cases where a suspect has left the scene prior to police arrival, it is not uncommon for law enforcement to conduct a limited on-scene investigation with little or no follow-up. The Blueprint response recognizes that these are cases often involving more dangerous suspects hoping to evade law enforcement consequences, so officers are directed to actively search for the suspect and to submit a full report.</p>

## LAW ENFORCEMENT PATROL AND INVESTIGATION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>15. Document patrol response and arrest decision in a report utilizing the Domestic Violence Patrol Report Checklist.</b>	Each element in the Checklist is included to address a specific need that prosecutors have in proving a case, help subsequent interveners identify and act upon the level of risk and danger, and provide complete information for practitioners who will need to contact the victim.
<b>16. If there is insufficient probable cause for an arrest, write a brief report to document the complaint and the response. Do not recode a call dispatched as domestic abuse-related to a non-domestic category.</b>	<p>If the officer is permitted to re-code domestic calls there is no way for supervisors to trace back those calls and monitor compliance with patrol response. Only those calls later determined to not involve a domestic relationship should be re-coded.</p> <p>The law in MN as well as in many other jurisdictions requires that a report be written on all domestic calls whether or not probable cause is established. Recognizing that writing a complete report is time-consuming, the Blueprint permits officers to meet this requirement by writing brief comments in the CAD about the no probable cause determination.</p>
<b>17. If the suspect is gone from the scene (GOA), collect evidence in the same way as when an arrest has taken place and search for suspect as is reasonably possible.</b>	In those cases where a suspect has left the scene prior to police arrival, it is not uncommon for law enforcement to conduct a limited on-scene investigation with little or no follow-up. The Blueprint response recognizes that these are cases often involving more dangerous suspects hoping to evade law enforcement consequences, so officers are directed to actively search for the suspect and to submit a full report.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT PATROL AND INVESTIGATION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>INVESTIGATION</b>	
<b>18. Conduct prompt supervisory review and (1) assign follow-up investigation when patrol has determined probable cause for an arrest or (2) forward to charging attorney without further investigation.</b>	<p>Prompt review, follow-up, and referral helps ensure a swift response and minimize a drawn-out process that opens opportunities for offenders to intimidate or otherwise discourage victim participation in the criminal case process.</p>
<b>19. Cases with one or more of the following receive high priority regardless of whether offender is in custody or out of custody(GOA):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Imminent time deadline</li> <li>•Significant injury or impairment</li> <li>•Strangulation or stalking alleged</li> <li>•Victim’s response to risk questions indicates significant risk</li> </ul>	<p>Investigators sometimes must prioritize cases due to time constraints. This element is designed to ensure that cases are prioritized by risk and danger or legal procedures that might require release of an in-custody defendant if charges are not filed imminently, rather than prioritizing by date of offense or date the report is received.</p>
<b>20. In gross misdemeanor and felony cases:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Conduct an expanded domestic violence risk assessment as warranted, starting from responses to the three risk questions.</b></li> <li>• <b>Evaluate for all possible charges.</b></li> </ul>	<p>All felony and gross misdemeanor cases should receive additional review by investigators. Some investigative units may not have time to conduct a more comprehensive risk assessment in every case, so the Blueprint guides them to do so in cases where the patrol risk questions indicate elevated risk.</p> <p>In the event that patrol officers have not fully identified all possible charges, investigators should review and determine if the facts support additional charges.</p>

## LAW ENFORCEMENT PATROL AND INVESTIGATION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<p><b>21. Be alert to and investigate types of crimes associated with domestic violence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Stalking/harassment</b></li> <li>• <b>Strangulation</b></li> <li>• <b>Sexual coercion and sexual aggression</b></li> <li>• <b>Witness tampering</b></li> </ul>	<p>These crimes are often under-charged and under-reported.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stalking and harassment in particular, are by definition patterned crimes and thus easy to miss in an incident-driven response, particularly if the acts of stalking and harassment alleged would not by themselves be criminal in nature.</li> <li>• Strangulation cases are potentially lethal, even several days after the incident. Responding officers and investigators need specific training and guidance to know what to look for in these cases.</li> <li>• Sexual aggression in the context of intimate partner cases is under-identified. Victims themselves may be confused about whether the conduct is illegal or not, or may be embarrassed or afraid to disclose it. Since sexual aggression can be an indication of increased danger, investigators should pay attention to clues that this could be occurring and follow up.</li> </ul>
<p><b>22. Promptly notify the victim when a case is declined for referral to prosecution.</b></p>	<p>Important for engagement with victims and to aid in safety planning.</p>
<p><b>23. Determine if the suspect is on probation; if so, notify probation of the circumstances of the case, including any offenses where the suspect left the scene and has not been located.</b></p>	<p>If probation knows that a new offense has occurred they can respond promptly. The more time that passes between the incident and action taken by a probation officer, the less effective intervention is likely to be.</p>



## LAW ENFORCEMENT PATROL AND INVESTIGATION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>24. Adopt Blueprint victim engagement protocols to protect victims from retaliation, prioritize safety, offer resources, build collaboration over time, and increase access to services and protection.</b>	<p>Victims will be more likely to use the criminal legal system in the future if they feel partnership with interveners.</p> <p>Research shows that victims who have support within the court system and from advocates are more likely to be able to be successful in ending the violent relationship sooner.</p> <p>Confronting the suspect with information obtained from the victim can further endanger her and create additional risk of harm.</p>
<b>SUPERVISION</b>	
<b>25. Conduct regular supervisory quality and compliance review of departmental practice according to adapted Blueprint policies and protocols.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patrol and investigation supervisors conduct regular review of reports and files</li> <li>• Refer reports to supervisors and commanders for review, redrafting, and policy/protocol clarification</li> <li>• Approve officers' actions when exceptions to arrest policy are contemplated</li> </ul>	<p>Without regular oversight, practice tends to “fall off.”</p> <p>Supervisory oversight of exceptions to policy will reduce the likelihood that these exceptions will be used inappropriately.</p>
<b>26. Provide structure for supervisors to participate in ongoing interagency Blueprint monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.</b>	<p>The Blueprint changes the way people work together across agencies. Rarely does a community build in a response that allows workers across agencies to review together how their collective response is working and its impact on the community. This is a core feature of the Blueprint that distinguishes it from other CCRs.</p>

## LAW ENFORCEMENT PATROL AND INVESTIGATION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>27. Meet regularly with 911, prosecution, and probation to discuss and resolve problematic cases and responses.</b>	<p>It is very common that practitioners experience frustration with their counterparts in other agencies, but generally there is not a structure in place to help people resolve those problems when they arise. The Blueprint institutionalizes this by providing a mechanism whereby everyone has an opportunity to bring forward problematic cases for discussion and resolution.</p>
<b>28. Incidents involving department employees:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate, make arrest decision, process evidence, and conduct follow-up investigation in accordance with adapted Blueprint policies and protocols.</li> <li>Send a supervisor of higher rank than the suspect to the scene.</li> <li>Supervisor shall recover arrestee's badge, law enforcement identification card, and weapon.</li> </ul>	<p>This element is included to ensure that law enforcement officers do not receive preferential treatment by their peers, and that officers who are alleged to have committed violent offenses against family or household members are restricted from performing their duties pending a review of the case.</p>
<b>29. Incidents involving public figures:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate, make arrest decision, process evidence, and conduct follow-up investigation in accordance with adapted Blueprint policies and protocols.</li> <li>Send a supervisor to the scene.</li> <li>Take precautions to protect the victim's safety and confidentiality.</li> </ul>	<p>Intense media scrutiny may accompany an incident involving someone who is well-known to the public. This can also mean increased media attention to the victim, who may not find such attention welcome.</p> <p>It is important that officers are not influenced in their actions by their opinions or perceptions of the individuals involved and that they perform their duties in the same way they would other cases.</p> <p>In recognition of the fact that increased attention and scrutiny may come to the case, a supervisor should be included in all aspects of the response.</p>

## PRETRIAL RELEASE / BAIL EVALUATION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<p><b>1. Present a bail evaluation that includes severity and context, criminal history, risk to the victim and community as well as likelihood of reappearance.</b></p>	<p>The general function of pretrial conditions of release is to protect the public and to ensure that the defendant will appear at subsequent proceedings. Too often in domestic violence related cases, however, the primary concern has been on securing the defendant's appearance, followed by concern about general public safety but without consideration of the specific nature of safety for victims of domestic violence.</p> <p>The Blueprint emphasizes the protection of victims as equally, if not more, important to the goals of securing general public safety and defendants' appearance at proceedings. Under the Blueprint, an equally important part of determining bail and conditions of release is the history of violence, the severity of the offense and the risk posed to the victim and the public of continued violence by the defendant. The pattern of abuse is made visible and considered in determining the suspect's likelihood to reoffend. Conditions and monitoring balance the constitutional presumption of innocents, victim safety (which may require restricting the defendant's behavior), and steps that will assure the defendant's appearance at trial.</p>
<p><b>2. Inform the victim of limits of confidentiality; put procedures in place to protect information obtained from victim to the extent possible under law.</b></p>	<p>A victim's cooperation with the criminal legal system carries complex and often dangerous implications. Victims often experience threats or acts of violence and other retaliation. They are rarely able to speak freely and openly. They need to know whether and how what they say will be used.</p>

## PRETRIAL RELEASE / BAIL EVALUATION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>3. Differentiate recommendations for bail and conditions of release based on risk, context, and severity.</b>	<p>Not every act of domestic violence is the same. The Blueprint provides mechanisms to adjust the level of intervention to the level of violence and the context in which it is committed. When bail and conditions of release are tailored to the level of violence and dangerousness, interveners are better positioned to make decisions and enact sanctions that protect the public (including current and possible future victims) and hold offenders accountable while extending opportunities to change violent and abusive behavior.</p> <p>The Blueprint positions those making recommendations on pretrial conditions of release to evaluate and make decisions according to whether the defendant is an offender who is at high risk to continue, escalate, or turn lethal in his or her use of violence; or a defendant with minimal or no history of violence; or a defendant who is a victim of ongoing abuse who appears to be responding with violence.</p>
<b>4. Contact the victim about the incident, history of violence, and wishes concerning conditions of release, including no- contact orders.</b>	<p>Victims have unique information about their experience and about the arrest incident, the defendant's reaction to different conditions of release, and which kinds of conditions may be most effective.</p>

## PRETRIAL RELEASE / BAIL EVALUATION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>5. Inform the victim promptly of ordered conditions of release.</b>	Fragmentation and lack of coordination have characterized much of the criminal legal system's response to domestic violence related crimes. Victims have too often been among the last to know about what is happening in the case, whether the defendant has been released, and what kind of controls or sanctions have been put in place. The Blueprint emphasizes a collective, coordinated response where all practitioners are prepared to identify, document, and communicate risk and danger factors—and to keep victims informed and use each interaction as an attempt to build collaboration.
<b>6. Supervise defendants granted conditional release and monitor for compliance with conditions of release.</b>	Reoffending is common in domestic violence cases. Conscientious monitoring and supervision can help discourage and interrupt the domestic violence offender's efforts to intimidate the victim.
<b>7. Inform victim of who to contact and how to report violations or harassment by defendant.</b>	Informing victims that there are conditions of release is an inadequate response without only making clear how those conditions will be enforced and how to report violations.
<b>8. Respond promptly to violations of conditional release; take action based on the nature of the violation and risk and danger.</b>	A prompt response reinforces messages of accountability for defendants and the authority of the court and criminal legal system. It may also interrupt the likelihood of escalating violence and witness intimidation.
<b>9. Adopt Blueprint victim engagement protocols.</b>	Victims will be more likely to use the criminal legal system in the future if they feel partnership with interveners. Research shows that victims who have support within the system and from advocates are more likely to be able to be successful in ending the violent relationship sooner.

## PRETRIAL RELEASE / BAIL EVALUATION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>10. Communicate in a person’s first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.</b>	Assuming that those with limited English proficiency—whether victims or offenders—understand what is said or printed can lead to inadvertent misunderstanding about what is expected of the offender.
<b>11. Conduct regular supervisory review of pretrial/bail evaluation practices according to Blueprint policies and protocols.</b>	Without regular oversight, practice tends to “fall off.” Supervisory oversight of exceptions to policy reduces the likelihood that these exceptions will be used inappropriately.
<b>12. Provide structure for managers to participate in ongoing interagency Blueprint monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.</b>	The Blueprint changes the way people work together across agencies. Rarely does a community build in a response that allows workers across agencies to review together how their collective response is working and its impact on the community. This collective response is a core Blueprint feature that distinguishes it from other CCRs.
<b>13. Meet regularly with prosecution and court administration to discuss and resolve problematic practices and responses.</b>	It is common for practitioners to experience frustration with their counterparts in other agencies, but generally there is no structure in place to help people resolve those problems when they arise. The Blueprint institutionalizes such shared problem solving by providing a mechanism whereby everyone has an opportunity to bring forward problematic practices for discussion and resolution.

## SHERIFF'S OFFICE: WARRANTS, JAIL, AND COURT SECURITY

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>WARRANTS</b>	
<b>1. Use widest possible sources of information to locate the defendant.</b>	This may be obvious; it's simply a directive to deputies to be diligent in their efforts to locate people.
<b>2. Obtain and act upon information from victims related to locating the defendant.</b>	Some victims report that when they call warrant offices with information they are not taken seriously, their motives are questioned and/or the warrant office does not want their information. Over time, victims can be a valuable source of information about how to locate domestic assault defendants and this should be encouraged.
<b>3. Prioritize warrants based on crime level and risk and danger.</b>	The FBI requires that felony warrants be prioritized. While that is a given, it is also important to recognize that some misdemeanors pose even greater danger to people than some felonies. Violent misdemeanors should be elevated in priority alongside felonies, and violent felonies should get priority over non-violent felonies.
<b>4. When new information is received, reactivate dormant warrants and renew attempts to locate defendant.</b>	Most communities have a backlog of warrants that can go dormant when deputies have exhausted their information about how to locate someone. This should be revisited periodically in case the situation has changed.
<b>5. Capture and report to law enforcement the defendant's behavior at time of service regarding threats, intimidation, risk and danger.</b>	Deputies are generally not organized to capture this kind of information, but defendants who exhibit this type of conduct in the presence of officers, particularly when experiencing the consequence of arrest, may be more dangerous offenders. It may be necessary to notify the victim of possible increased danger, and such conduct may constitute additional crimes.

## SHERIFF'S OFFICE: WARRANTS, JAIL, AND COURT SECURITY

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>JAIL</b>	
<b>6. Capture and report to law enforcement information regarding threats and risk and danger during booking and defendant's stay in the jail.</b>	Jail staff are generally focused on duties to book, house, maintain security, and transport inmates. They are often not directed to pay attention to the conduct of defendants not directly related to these tasks, yet can be a valuable source of information to law enforcement and prosecutors when defendants make statements or exhibit behaviors that indicate they intend further harm to a victim. Such behavior may constitute additional crimes and victims may need the information to aid in safety planning.
<b>7. Provide prompt notification to victim of defendant's impending release.</b>	Required by law in MN and some other jurisdictions; important for victim safety.
<b>8. Prohibit visits, correspondence, and phone calls between defendant and victim if a no-contact order is issued.</b>	Defendants frequently harass, intimidate and coerce their victims from the jail. This element positions jail staff to take affirmative steps to protect victims, and assumes that the jail does not want offenders to be committing additional crimes while in their custody and should take steps to prevent this.
<b>9. Block victim's phone number unless victim wants contact and a no-contact order is not in place.</b>	It is assumed that if a no-contact order is in effect the number should be blocked because the defendant should not be permitted to use the jail phone to commit additional crimes. The Blueprint suggests that even in those cases where a no-contact order is not in effect that the default position should be to block the number unless the jail staff has information to the contrary. This last is somewhat controversial, and an acceptable alternative would be to block the number in these circumstances only if the victim requests it.
<b>10. Make jail audio readily available to law enforcement and prosecution</b>	This is valuable information to prove witness intimidation and to enable prosecutors to argue for the use of the forfeiture by wrongdoing doctrine. It also may be evidence of a crime. Often such information, though technically available, may be cumbersome to access. Law enforcement agencies and the jail should establish mechanisms to streamline access.



## SHERIFF'S OFFICE: WARRANTS, JAIL, AND COURT SECURITY

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>COURT SECURITY</b>	
<b>11. Establish procedures to obtain, accept, and act on victims' reports of harassment or threats.</b>	The courthouse presents many opportunities for victim intimidation. Deputies and court personnel often see their jobs as maintaining order, but not necessarily to look for and prevent such intimidation. They may or may not be able to affirmatively seek this out, but should communicate to victims and to defendants that they are prepared to act on information that comes to them, and that victims and their advocates are encouraged to enlist their help.
<b>12. Alert courtroom security to the existence of a protection order or no-contact order.</b>	Whenever possible, information about the existence of no-contact orders should be made available to court security staff to aid in enforcement.
<b>13. Establish procedures to act upon violations of court orders or victim intimidation.</b>	It is not uncommon for deputies in court to assume that contact is inevitable in these cases while in the courtroom. The presence of the victim and the defendant in the same courtroom does not require contact between them, however, and procedures must be in place to address prohibited and/or unwanted contact in order to enforce the integrity of the court's orders and to protect victims from intimidation. Ideally, when permitted by law, offenders should be taken into custody immediately for violations of the law.
<b>14. Provide a secure area for victims in the courthouse.</b>	Often victims must be or wish to be present at court, but do not feel free of intimidation while in the actual courtroom. MN law requires secure waiting space; it is strongly recommended in those jurisdictions where it is not required.
<b>15. Report to prosecutors any intimidation or harassment of victim by defendant.</b>	Prosecutors need to be aware of these incidents so that they can add additional charges when warranted, bring the defendant's conduct to the judge's attention or take other steps to protect the victim.

## SHERIFF'S OFFICE: WARRANTS, JAIL, AND COURT SECURITY

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>CROSS-DIVISION / AGENCY-WIDE</b>	
<b>16. Adopt Blueprint victim engagement protocols.</b>	A feeling of partnership between victims and system practitioners has been shown to increase victim satisfaction with criminal justice intervention and to increase the likelihood that victims will use the criminal legal system in the future. Giving specific guidance to workers about the ways in which this partnership can be nurtured is important to ensuring that it happens.
<b>17. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.</b>	When dealing with those who are not fluent in reading and writing the English language, it is necessary to provide mechanisms for effective communication. This can include a range of categories, including immigrants who are English Language Learners, those who are blind or deaf, and those with cognitive impairments. Do not assume that an English Language Learner who appears to have strong English-speaking skills will be able to communicate in English about the criminal legal system.
<b>18. Conduct regular supervisory review of Sheriff's Office practice according to Blueprint policies and protocols.</b>	Internal review is necessary for the ongoing maintenance of the Blueprint.
<b>19. Provide structure for managers to participate in ongoing interagency Blueprint monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.</b>	The Blueprint calls for bringing workers from different agencies together to periodically review to what extent the policies and protocols are working as designed. It is necessary that this work be done with an interagency group in order to examine how the interagency linkages are working, how information is being shared, if all workers are getting and using information about risk and danger, and so on.

## PROSECUTION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<p><b>1. Approach charging domestic violence cases in ways that minimize dependence on the victim and maximize other sources of information.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Know the doctrine of forfeiture by wrongdoing and utilize when appropriate.</b></li> <li>• <b>Expand the focus to include illegal behavior after patrol arrives.</b></li> <li>• <b>Charge all relevant crimes except where victim safety, including safety of victim/defendants, warrant otherwise.</b></li> </ul>	<p>Throughout the country, prosecutors routinely dismiss domestic violence cases when victims do not appear for court. Victims are rarely in a position to actively support prosecution even if they desire it; they are often intimidated, coerced and manipulated by the defendant. The Blueprint directs all workers to help position the prosecutor to continue these cases as often as possible when the victim is not present.</p> <p>Recent Supreme Court decisions limit the ways in which victim statements can be admitted if the victim is not present. If the prosecutor can show that the defendant is responsible for the victim’s failure to appear, the prosecutor may be able to get those statements in under the doctrine of forfeiture by wrongdoing. Prosecutors must understand this doctrine and know how to use it.</p> <p>Acts of intimidation or violence committed in the presence of officers may indicate that a suspect is particularly dangerous, so it is important to pay particular attention to allegations in a police report that defendants have engaged in this conduct.</p> <p>Generally, it is best to include the broadest range of possible charges. Exceptions can be made if the prosecutor has information that would suggest that this strategy may further endanger the victim. This will usually apply when reviewing cases involving victims of ongoing violence who have used force against their batterers. In those cases, it is often better to charge more conservatively, considering what is minimally necessary to discourage future use of force.</p>

## PROSECUTION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>2. Evaluate the risk and lethality factors and the context of the violence and adjust prosecutorial response accordingly.</b>	It may be appropriate to consider charging more marginal cases if the information available to the prosecutor indicates that the victim may be at significant risk of serious harm from the suspect.
<b>3. Request further investigation rather than decline a case that might be charged with additional evidence.</b>	Prosecutors should be diligent in working with law enforcement to ensure that the quality of investigations will support criminal charges. If the reports suggest that more information could be developed law enforcement should be asked to investigate further.
<b>4. Reevaluate the case for additional charges or amended charges as additional evidence is gathered.</b>	Once a case is charged, there is a tendency not to revisit the charging decisions. Particularly if information surfaces about more serious offenses, prosecutors should respond accordingly.
<b>5. Be aware of potentially undercharged crimes in domestic violence cases: strangulation, stalking, sexual coercion/sexual aggression, and witness tampering.</b>	Prosecutors act as the repository of information gathered by others, but can be alert to elements of crime that law enforcement may have missed. For example, a pattern of protection order violations could be indications of stalking behavior; victims stating that an assault took place in a bedroom could suggest a sexual assault; victims who express fear or reluctance to talk to police could be victims of witness tampering.

## PROSECUTION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
6. <b>Relay charging decisions, including declining charges, promptly to law enforcement, victim, and victim/advocate.</b>	<p>Victims report lack of communication from prosecutors and others in the criminal legal system as a problem. Victims need to know if the suspect is charged as she plans for how to manage the details of her life and how to keep herself and her children safe.</p> <p>If an advocate is involved, she will want to monitor the case as it progresses through the courts and ensure that the victim's information is considered throughout the process.</p> <p>In many communities officers do not know what has happened to the cases they are involved with unless they are subpoenaed to testify in court. The Blueprint strengthens this linkage and encourages officers and investigators to think beyond their specific tasks to the end of the case.</p>
7. <b>Adopt Blueprint victim engagement protocols.</b>	<p>Victims will be more likely to use the criminal legal system in the future if they feel partnership with interveners.</p> <p>Research shows that victims who have support within the court system and from advocates are more likely to be able to be successful in ending the violent relationship sooner.</p>
8. <b>Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.</b>	<p>Assuming that practitioners' understanding of what is being said by those with limited English proficiency can lead to inadvertent misunderstanding. Victims are more likely to be willing and able to participate in the legal system if they are communicated with in ways they can understand.</p> <p>It's best not to use children or family and friends, who may be motivated to inject their own ideas into the conversation.</p>

## PROSECUTION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>9. Engage in and document early and continuing contact with victims.</b>	One of the most frequently reported frustrations expressed by victims is that they don't know what is happening in their cases. Respectful, regular communication is key to victim satisfaction and willingness to participate in the criminal legal system.
<b>10. Adopt process to obtain and consider input from victim and/or victim's advocate about pretrial conditions of release.</b>	Crafting conditions of release are very important to victim safety and security. Victims are in the best position to inform practitioners about what conditions will provide protection and what the likely impact will be.
<b>11. Consider each no-contact order individually.</b>	The Blueprint establishes a "default position" that a no-contact order should be sought at the pretrial stage with some exceptions. Blanket policies to issue pretrial no-contact orders are common, but can undermine victim safety and well-being and lead to disparate impact on certain offenders. The sudden removal of an adult from a home can create significant disruption in the life of a victim and her children, or it can provide protection from a violent offender. Prosecutors must seek out sufficient information to balance the individual needs and desires of a victim against the obligation to take steps to deter future violence. Victims who do not want a no-contact order will more than likely disregard it. Prosecutors must weigh all of this carefully when deterring whether to request a no-contact order.
<b>12. Do not threaten to or place a victim in custody to ensure witness availability.</b>	Victims decide not to appear in court for a number of reasons—intimidation by the defendant, concerns about taking time away from work or family, conflicting feelings about the prosecution, and a myriad of others. Arrest or threats of arrest only exacerbate these concerns, punishing the victim for her life circumstances and making it far less likely that she will seek help from the legal system in the future.

## PROSECUTION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>13. Approach cases with the understanding that the victim may not appear for trial or may recant.</b>	The relationship between the victim and the defendant and the complexities of risk, danger and life circumstances involved mean that many victims will not appear at trial, or will decide to support the defendant. If prosecutors begin with the assumption that this will happen they will position themselves far more effectively to be able to continue the case in this event.
<b>14. Do not file criminal charges against a recanting victim.</b>	This will almost certainly mean that this victim will not seek help from the legal system in the future. It is also disingenuous if the prosecutor believes that the victim was telling the truth to begin with.
<b>15. Make recommendations for bail and pre-trial conditions of release that reflect context and severity of the offense, the risk and danger, and safety needs of the victim and public.</b>	Make sure that bail and pretrial recommendations do not consider likelihood of reappearance only, but also safety of the community and the victim.
<b>16. Unless provided by another agency, keep victim informed of bail and pretrial release conditions and procedures.</b>	In some communities, the court or pretrial services may provide this notification. The victim needs this information for her own safety planning, and she can be an important source of information about compliance with pretrial conditions.
<b>17. Take prompt action upon notice of violation of conditional release to ensure sure and swift consequences.</b>	Rather than waiting for the next scheduled court appearance, if the prosecutor learns that a defendant has violated conditions of release it's important that action be taken right away. Delay undermines the principle of sure and swift consequences for the defendant, which research has shown to be effective.
<b>18. Obtain and take into account input from victim and advocate about plea and sentencing recommendations.</b>	Since a domestic assault cases presupposes a relationship between victim and defendant, it is necessary to consider that any steps taken to contain the defendant could affect the victim as well. The victim is usually a good source of information about how dangerous the suspect is and what might be necessary to discourage future violent conduct.

## PROSECUTION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>19. Ensure access to victim’s rights protections under state statutes, including the right to restitution, compensation and offering victim impact statements.</b>	State law generally requires this.
<b>20. Adjust the response when considering plea agreements and sentencing with victim/defendants.</b>	Avoid strengthening the hand of the batterer, who may be the identified victim in a specific case. Focus intervention with the victim defendant on assisting her with obtaining support, information and community resources to reduce the likelihood that she will feel compelled to use violence in the future. Reduce opportunities for the identified victim in the case to use the prosecution to discourage the victim defendant from using the criminal legal system in the future.
<b>21. When recommending probation conditions, request a probationary no-contact order at the victim’s request, overriding this request only in rare cases where the suspect poses significant danger to the victim or the community.</b>	Research tells us that the pretrial period carries particular dangers for victims of domestic violence. Once the case is resolved, concerns about the likelihood of further violence are reduced. Probation also goes on for a much longer period of time, usually a year or more, creating additional hardships for victims of violence who intend to continue a relationship with the suspect.
<b>22. Provide information on plea and sentencing to appropriate persons and agencies including the victim.</b>	Usually required by law; however, the Blueprint requires meaningful consultation with the victim on plea negotiation and sentencing, not mere notification. We know that when victims feel as though they are included in decision-making and have the ability to have some measure of influence, their satisfaction with the process improves.
<b>23. Provide probation presentence investigation writer with already gathered information.</b>	When possible, the Blueprint directs practitioners to share information to avoid having to duplicate work and to expedite case processing.



## PROSECUTION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>24. Take prompt action to address violations of probation conditions to ensure sure and swift consequences.</b>	In those situations where a defendant violates probation by committing a new offense it is common practice to join the probation violation to the new offense and wait to consider whether to revoke probation until the new case is resolved. This can take weeks or months. Research tells us that responding swiftly to these violations reinforces the seriousness of the offense and increases the likelihood that a defendant will connect the consequence to his actions.
<b>25. Conduct regular supervisory review of prosecution files and practices according to Blueprint policies and protocols.</b>	A key Blueprint feature is for supervisors to establish a means of regularly reviewing agency practice to determine the level of compliance with Blueprint protocols.
<b>26. Provide structure for managers/supervisors to participate in ongoing interagency Blueprint monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.</b>	This monitoring cannot be done adequately if the agency is reviewing its own practices alone. The Blueprint emphasizes the linkages among all agencies and necessitates that practices be instituted that recognize the reality that the decisions made by prosecutors affect others in the criminal legal system.

## VICTIM/WITNESS

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>1. Inform victim that communication is not confidential.</b>	Because of their location within the prosecutor's office, victim/witness advocates are uniquely situated to facilitate victims' access to prosecutors and the legal system. This proximity also presents issues of confidentiality because of the prosecutor's legal requirement to disclose information to the defense. There can be no promise of confidentiality with the victim/witness advocate. Victim/witness advocates must be clear about this and connect victims with community-based advocates who can provide assurance of confidentiality.
<b>2. Make contact as soon as possible and maintain contact throughout the criminal court process.</b>	Research shows that victims who have support within the legal system process and from advocates are more likely to be able to be successful in ending the violent relationship sooner.
<b>3. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.</b>	Assuming that those with limited English proficiency understand what is said or printed can lead to inadvertent misunderstanding about the criminal case process, limits of confidentiality, and the role of victim/witness support.
<b>4. Connect victims with community-based advocates who can provide assurance of confidentiality.</b>	See Essential Element #1 regarding confidentiality. Community based advocates may also have ready access to community resources that may not be available to victim witness and can work with victims long past the conclusion of a criminal case.

## VICTIM/WITNESS

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<p><b>5. Seek input from the victim at all stages of the process and communicate information to prosecutor.</b></p>	<p>When victims are not consulted from the beginning and throughout the case, prosecutors miss the unique perspective that victims have about their experience, the arrest incident, the defendant's reaction to prosecution, and which kinds of disposition and sanctions might be most effective.</p> <p>Victim/witness advocates provide a bridge between victims and prosecutors. Extended contact with victims provides an opportunity to build responses that reinforce safety and to collaborate with victims in ways that acknowledge the nature of domestic violence as a patterned offense versus a one-time, isolated act.</p>
<p><b>6. Facilitate victim's access to the prosecutor and legal system to ensure that the victim has a voice in process and that her/his expressed concerns are communicated and considered.</b></p>	<p>Victim/witness advocates are uniquely situated to ensure that the victim's wishes and safety needs are made central to managing the criminal case. Their extensive knowledge of the legal process and their relationships with prosecutors position them to help move case forward, ensure that victim's needs are accounted for at each step, and promote victim engagement with the legal system.</p>
<p><b>7. Explore victim's concerns about safety and problem-solve to address question and concerns, including the implications of a no-contact order.</b></p>	<p>The criminal legal system process can be frightening and overwhelming. A victim's cooperation carries complex and often dangerous implications. Victims often experience threats or acts of violence and other retaliation for seeking help. They are rarely able to speak freely and openly.</p> <p>No-contact orders can have negative, unintended consequences, such as when the defendants are themselves victims of ongoing abuse; when victims are dependent on the defendant for physical care, financial or child care support, or housing; or when a victim operates a farm or other business together with the defendant. Some victims may also fear likely retaliation for turning to the criminal legal system for help.</p>

## VICTIM/WITNESS

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
	When victim/witness advocates are proactive in exploring such concerns and bringing them to the prosecutor's attention, there are more opportunities to address them and reassure victims that interveners are acting in their best interests.
<b>8. Provide required victim notifications related to the criminal case process pursuant to state law and assist victims in exercising their rights.</b>	Victims of domestic violence related crimes have the same rights as other victims of crime, including notifications about proceedings and remedies available.
<b>9. Work with prosecution to ensure access to victim's rights protections under state statutes, including the right to restitution, compensation and offering victim impact statements.</b>	<p>Restitution and crime victim compensation often go missing from sentencing in domestic violence related cases unless victims are well-informed and have assistance in making the request.</p> <p>Victim impact statements provide a voice in a process that otherwise provides little opportunity for them to articulate their thoughts and feelings to the defendant and the judge. Victims are rarely prepared to write and present a statement on their own, however.</p> <p>Under the Blueprint principle of continuing engagement, it is the victim/witness advocate who helps pull it together. This includes: a realistic discussion with victims of what "impact" the statement is likely to have, what they hope will be accomplished with the statement and whether the victim impact statement is the best option for meeting those goals. By identifying any fears a victim has about delivering the statement, the victim/witness advocate can help create a plan that accounts for those fears.</p>

## VICTIM/WITNESS

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>10. Offer support, information and resources throughout the process.</b>	Research shows that victims who have support within the legal system process and from advocates are more likely to be able to be successful in ending the violent relationship sooner.
<b>11. Arrange assistance as needed to facilitate victim's participation in court proceedings.</b>	Victims have a range of needs related to court proceedings, including transportation, communication with employers, and feeling secure and safe when they have to be in close proximity to the offender.
<b>12. Facilitate victim's connection to probation throughout presentence investigation, sentencing, and supervision.</b>	Probation has an ongoing relationship with domestic violence offenders but needs to engage with victims in order to understand what makes the ongoing situation dangerous, what sanctions and conditions are most appropriate, and what particular signs might signal reoccurring violence. Victim/witness advocates can help facilitate this connection.
<b>13. Provide for post-conviction assistance, information, and support.</b>	Victims' questions and concerns do not end at sentencing.
<b>14. Adopt Blueprint victim engagement protocols.</b>	Victims will be more likely to use the criminal legal system in the future if they feel partnership with interveners. Research shows that victims who have support within the system and from advocates are more likely to be able to be successful in ending the violent relationship sooner.
<b>15. Conduct regular supervisory review of Victim/Witness agency practice according to Blueprint policies and protocols.</b>	Without regular oversight, practice tends to "fall off." Supervisory oversight of exceptions to policy reduces the likelihood that these exceptions will be used inappropriately.

## VICTIM/WITNESS

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>16. Provide structure for managers to participate in ongoing interagency Blueprint monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.</b>	The Blueprint changes the way people work together across agencies. Rarely does a community build in a response that allows workers across agencies to review together how their collective response is working and its impact on the community. This collective response is a core Blueprint feature that distinguishes it from other CCRs.
<b>17. Meet regularly with law enforcement and prosecution to discuss and resolve problematic cases and responses.</b>	It is common for practitioners to experience frustration with their counterparts in other agencies, but generally there is no structure in place to help people resolve those problems when they arise. The Blueprint institutionalizes such shared problem solving by providing a mechanism whereby everyone has an opportunity to bring forward problematic cases for discussion and resolution.

## PROBATION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>1. Establish procedures to obtain victim input regarding presentence investigation (PSI) and conditions of probation, including imposition of no-contact order and response to violations.</b>	A key role of probation is to manage risk, which involves recommendations for sentencing and sanctions appropriate to the risk and ongoing supervision that stays aware of signs that abuse and violence may be reoccurring. Victim engagement and input helps probation understand what makes the ongoing situation dangerous and what particular signs might signal reoccurring violence.
<b>2. Conduct presentence and pre-supervision investigations that search all available records and capture complete information about the current offense and defendant's past use of violence.</b>	The immediate crime/conviction may not accurately reflect the nature of the risk or factors that should be addressed in sanctions and rehabilitation programs. To stop violence against the victim, both current and those in the future if the abusive behavior continues, requires as complete an understanding of the defendant's use of violence as possible, including criminal history and civil orders for protection involving the current and past victims.
<b>3. Incorporate history, context, severity, risk and danger in the PSI report, with particular attention to those cases involving apparent victim-defendants (i.e., where the defendant appears to have been abused in the past by the identified victim in the case).</b>	Probation's role in any case is to work with offenders who pose a risk to the public. In domestic violence cases, very specific, identifiable members of the public bear that risk. Recognizing the nature of the risk; constraining ongoing coercion, intimidation, and violence; and offering opportunities to change abusive behavior begin with the PSI. A PSI that presents the history, context, and severity of the violence positions the court to recognize victim-defendants and to act in ways that will not put them at further risk.
<b>4. Make PSI recommendations based on context, severity, risk and danger.</b>	When the event leading to the conviction and the offender's history of violence are presented in context, the court can impose a sentence which addresses victim safety and offender accountability and rehabilitation—and the supervising probation officer is better positioned to enforce the sentence.

## PROBATION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>5. Attempt to meet with or contact the victim prior to the first meeting with the defendant.</b>	<p>Batterers can be skilled at shifting attention and blame to the victim and away from their own actions. Early contact with the victim helps the supervising probation officer obtain information about the offender's pattern of violence and any markers for escalation, identify whether and how the victim has been threatened or harmed for seeking help, and reinforce probation's role in furthering victim safety and offender accountability.</p>
<b>6. Meet promptly with offender to review all probation conditions and obtain signed releases.</b>	<p>The more time that lapses between sentencing and supervision, the more opportunity there is for ongoing coercion and intimidation of the victim. What might have been a strong message from the court diminishes when there is no one to reinforce it. The supervising probation officer is the only practitioner in the system that develops and ongoing relationship with the probationer. The quicker that begins, the quicker the probation officer can relay and reinforce the messages intended by the overall Blueprint response: change is possible, being accountable is the first step toward change, continued abuse will not be tolerated, and there is help available to support efforts to change.</p>
<b>7. Establish and provide supervision that is appropriate to risk and danger and consistent in holding offender accountable for his actions.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that supervision of victim-defendants does not make the defendant more vulnerable to further violence.</li> <li>• Identify high risk offenders and place them under enhanced supervision.</li> </ul>	<p>Not all probationers in domestic violence crimes need to receive the same level of supervision, nor can probation provide the same level in all cases. To maximize protection and safety for victims most at risk requires maximizing probation resources to the most high risk offenders.</p>



## PROBATION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>8. Provide immediate response to probation violations, differentiated based on risk posed to the victim and the community.</b>	An immediate response reinforces messages of accountability and may interrupt the likelihood of escalating violence. Research shows that close probation supervision of domestic violence probationers coupled with swift and sure responses to all violations can reduce future abuse.
<b>9. Establish procedures to hear probation violations based on new criminal activity before the new charge is resolved, if the activity is associated with increased risk to victim.</b>	Too often probation violations are allowed to accumulate without attention, regardless of relationship to risk. The Blueprint approach calls for a prompt response to probation violations based on an allegation of assaultive, threatening, or stalking behavior; a crime against any victim or the property of a current or former victim; or violation of a no-contact order provision.
<b>10. Provide timely and thorough notification to victims of terms and conditions of probation.</b>	A victim who knows what is required of the offender is better positioned to incorporate that information into ongoing safety planning. Timely and thorough notices reinforce the messages of the Blueprint approach: (a) the focus is on the offender's actions and behaviors and resulting harm; (b) interveners are there to help, protect, and build safety; and (c) offender will be held accountable and offered opportunities to change violence and abusive behavior.
<b>11. Seek information from victims about their concerns during supervision, including how to report violations in a manner that does not increase risk to victim.</b>	Victims face complex and often dangerous implications for collaborating with the criminal legal system. Probation needs to know the specific implications and strategize accordingly on how to safely report violations.
<b>12. Ensure programming, including appropriate domestic violence treatment, that accounts for the level of risk and danger.</b>	Programming that is anchored in a full picture of the risk and danger and the offender's personal history identifies those most in need of enhanced supervision, connects batterers with batterer intervention treatment (versus anger management), and keeps victim-defendants <i>out</i> of batterer intervention groups.

## PROBATION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>13. Coordinate and share information with treatment programs and monitor compliance with all probation conditions.</b>	It is easy for probationers in domestic violence cases to slip through the cracks—some offenders may count on poor communication and follow-through by those involved in treatment and compliance and use it to play one part of the system against the other. Consistent coordination and monitoring reinforces accountability.
<b>14. Communicate in a person’s first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.</b>	Assuming that those with limited English proficiency—whether victims or offenders—understand what is said or printed can lead to inadvertent misunderstanding about what probation can or will do and what is expected of the offender.
<b>15. Adopt Blueprint victim engagement protocols.</b>	Victims will be more likely to use the criminal legal system in the future if they feel partnership with interveners. Research shows that victims who have support within the system and from advocates are more likely to be able to be successful in ending the violent relationship sooner.
<b>16. Conduct regular supervisory review of Probation practice according to Blueprint policies and protocols.</b>	Without regular oversight, practice tends to “fall off.” Supervisory oversight of exceptions to policy reduces the likelihood that these exceptions will be used inappropriately.
<b>17. Provide structure for managers to participate in ongoing interagency Blueprint monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.</b>	The Blueprint changes the way people work together across agencies. Rarely does a community build in a response that allows workers across agencies to review together how their collective response is working and its impact on the community. This collective response is a core Blueprint feature that distinguishes it from other CCRs.

---

## PROBATION

---

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>18. Meet regularly with law enforcement and prosecution to discuss and resolve problematic cases and responses.</b>	It is common for practitioners to experience frustration with their counterparts in other agencies, but generally there is no structure in place to help people resolve those problems when they arise. The Blueprint institutionalizes such shared problem solving by providing a mechanism whereby everyone has an opportunity to bring forward problematic cases for discussion and resolution.

---

## THE BENCH AND COURT ADMINISTRATION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
1. <b>Allow prosecutors/probation to present relevant information regarding the violence, risk, context, and severity at all stages of criminal process.</b>	The bench has the ability to impact recidivism. When the event leading to the conviction and the offender's history of violence are presented in context, the court can make a determination and issue sanctions that address victim safety (for both the current and future victims), offender accountability, and offender rehabilitation.
2. <b>Determine pretrial conditions of release and bail based on risk factors present, victim safety, public safety and likelihood of reappearance.</b>	The general function of pretrial conditions of release is to protect the public—and, specifically, the apparent victim or another family or household member—and to ensure that the defendant will appear at subsequent proceedings. Too often in domestic violence related cases, however, the primary concern has been on securing the defendant's appearance, followed by concern about general public safety. The Blueprint emphasizes the protection of victims as equally, if not more, important to the goal of public safety.
3. <b>Determine the issuance of no-contact orders on an individual basis.</b>	<p>For some victims, a no-contact order in a criminal case complicates safety. Pretrial no-contact orders can have negative, unintended consequences for many victims of battering, such as when the defendants are themselves victims of ongoing abuse; when victims are dependent on the defendant for physical care, financial or child care support, or housing; or when a victim operates a farm or other business together with the defendant. Some victims may also fear likely retaliation for turning to the criminal legal system for help.</p> <p>In keeping with the emphasis on differentiation among types of domestic violence related cases, the Blueprint rejects mandatory, universal no-contact orders and promotes flexibility in determining whether a no-contact order is an appropriate response.</p>

## THE BENCH AND COURT ADMINISTRATION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
4. If victim objects to issuance of a no-contact order, assess both the context and risk to victim if the no-contact order is not issued and the difficulty for victim if it is ordered.	When victims object to the issuance of a no-contact order, they are often making a reasoned choice between the better of two poor options. Making a decision that is most protective of victims and ensures that the defendant will make future appearances requires careful attention. Judges are positioned to make the most informed decision when they review patrol reports, risk indicators, and other information relevant to danger and safety. A victim has a right to speak and be heard in open court but should not be required to speak or asked in front of the defendant if she or he is afraid.
5. Set conditions of release and bail in gone-on- arrival (GOA) cases on the same basis as in-custody cases.	Domestic violence suspects who are gone when officers arrive at the scene are more likely to reoffend than those who stay. When defendants have gone for days or longer without arrest, once found, they have often been released without bail or minimal conditions of release.
6. State pretrial and probationary conditions in clear and precise language.	Legal terminology can be confusing for lay people. Presenting conditions in clear, non-technical language helps ensure that offenders—and victims—understand what is expected of someone charged or convicted of a domestic violence related crime.
7. Provide a prompt response to violations of conditions of pretrial release.	A prompt response reinforces messages of accountability for defendants and the authority of the court. It may also interrupt the likelihood of escalating violence and witness intimidation.
8. Read key conditions of probation aloud during sentencing.	Conditions of probation carry messages of accountability for the harm that has been caused, along with an opportunity to change such behavior. Reading conditions aloud reinforces those messages and the court's expectation that the offender is responsible and can change.

## THE BENCH AND COURT ADMINISTRATION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>9. Communicate in a person's first language and in ways that address limited English proficiency and literacy.</b>	Assuming that those with limited English proficiency—whether victims, witnesses, or offenders—understand what is said or printed can lead to inadvertent misunderstanding about court proceedings and sanctions.
<b>10. Establish a process to allow victims to request modification or dismissal of no-contact orders.</b>	Circumstances change and a no-contact order that once may have been helpful may be complicate safety or be unnecessary. Determining whether to cancel or modify an order includes the same considerations as the decision to issue the original order: victim, defendant, and prosecutor's preferences (and reasons for those preferences), the facts of the case, defendant's history, victim safety, and a review of danger and lethality considerations.
<b>11. Distribute court orders, including conditions of pretrial release, no-contact orders (and any modifications or cancellations), and probation conditions to involved parties and agencies, including to victim unless provided by another agency.</b>	Fragmentation and lack of coordination have characterized much of the criminal legal system's response to domestic violence related crimes. Victims have too often been among the last to know about what is happening in the case, whether the defendant has been released, and what kind of controls or sanctions have been put in place. The Blueprint emphasizes a collective, coordinated response where all practitioners are prepared to identify, document, and communicate risk and danger factors. It also emphasizes the role of the court in conveying the messages of help and accountability.
<b>12. Order a presentence Investigation (PSI) in all cases where the original charge is a domestic violence-related offense, regardless of conviction charge.</b>	Recognizing the nature of the risk; constraining ongoing coercion, intimidation, and violence; and offering opportunities to change abusive behavior begin with the PSI. A PSI that presents the history, context, and severity of the violence positions the court to recognize victim-defendants and to act in ways that will not put them at further risk.

## THE BENCH AND COURT ADMINISTRATION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>13. Issue a disposition that reflects risk, context and severity.</b>	<p>Not every act of domestic violence is the same. The Blueprint provides mechanisms to adjust the level of intervention to the level of violence and the context in which it is committed. When charges and requests made to the court are tailored to the level of violence and dangerousness, the court is better positioned to make decisions and enact sanctions that protect the public (including current and possible future victims) and hold offenders accountable while extending opportunities to change violent and abusive behavior.</p> <p>The Blueprint positions a judge to evaluate and make decisions according to whether the defendant is an offender who is at high risk to continue, escalate, or turn lethal in his or her use of violence; or a defendant with minimal or no history of violence; or a defendant who is a victim of ongoing abuse who appears to be responding with violence.</p>
<b>14. Except in rare cases involving particularly dangerous defendants who place victims or the community at high risk of serious or lethal harm, do not issue warrants for victims who do not appear in court pursuant to a subpoena.</b>	<p>A victim's cooperation with the legal system has complex and often dangerous implications for safety. Retaliation is common and victims are rarely in a position to "tell all." Any routine practice of issuing warrants to victims who do not appear in response to a subpoena or charging victims for refusing to testify only replicates or reinforces actions of the abuser.</p>
<b>15. Obtain victim input on pleas and sentencing.</b>	<p>The Blueprint principle of continuing engagement extends to victim input in pleas and sentencing, whether via a formal victim impact statement or other means. Consulting the victim about the nature of the plea or sentence helps ensure that it will reflect the impact of the violence and abuse and contribute to victim safety and well-being.</p>

## THE BENCH AND COURT ADMINISTRATION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>16. Except in very rare cases after an assessment of risk and danger, do not order a probationary no-contact order over the victim's objection.</b>	As with an initial no-contact order, a probationary no-contact order that extends over a period of months or years can complicate safety. A civil order of protection provides a more appropriate and flexible options for victims seeking a longer period of no contact with abusers.
<b>17. Hear probation violations promptly.</b>	An immediate response reinforces messages of accountability and may interrupt the likelihood escalating violence. Research shows that close probation supervision of domestic violence probationers coupled with swift and sure responses to all violations can reduce future abuse.
<b>18. Establish procedures to order surrender of firearms based on state and federal law.</b>	Research has established that the presence of and access to firearms is associated with lethality in domestic violence related cases.
<b>19. Facilitate victim input and participation as provided for in Blueprint victim engagement protocols.</b>	Research shows that victims who have support within the court system and from advocates are more likely to be able to be successful in ending the violent relationship sooner.
<b>20. Establish a courtroom atmosphere that enhances criminal justice system intervention to support victim safety and offender accountability.</b>	A judge can relay direct messages that challenge justifications for battering. As the person embodying society's response to breaches of its values, the judge is in a unique position to challenge rationalizations for violent and abusive behavior. When the judge articulates the societal values underlying the basis for the criminal charge and the sentence, such statements reinforce the expectation of behavioral change and place responsibility for the behavior on the defendant. Statements from the court can reinforce the efforts of the entire criminal legal system to support change in those who wish to stop their use of violence and to hold accountable those who do not.



## THE BENCH AND COURT ADMINISTRATION

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	DESIGNED TO ADDRESS
<b>21. Conduct regular supervisory review of court practices according to Blueprint policies and protocols.</b>	Without regular oversight, practice tends to “fall off.” Supervisory oversight of exceptions to policy and agreed-upon practice reduces the likelihood that these exceptions will be used inappropriately.
<b>22. Provide a structure for court administration to participate in ongoing interagency Blueprint monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.</b>	Agencies that adopt Blueprint practices rely on the bench—as the culmination of case processing—to support the Blueprint’s basic tenets. If the bench operates in harmony with the Blueprint’s coordinated, risk- and context-focused approach, the likelihood of successfully enhancing the community’s ability to reduce recidivism, protect victims from additional harm, and hold offenders accountable increases significantly.

*This project is supported by Grant No. 2010-TA-AX-K008 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions and recommendations expressed in this document are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.*