

**FINAL REPORT:**  
**Statewide Tracking of Domestic Violence Cases**

Submitted January 1998  
to the Governor's Task Force on Domestic and Sexual Violence  
Tallahassee, Florida

This report was prepared by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's Statistical Analysis Center for the Governor's Task Force on Domestic and Sexual Violence, Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence Section, Florida Department of Community Affairs, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Justice.

## **Acknowledgments**

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## **Executive Summary**

The purpose of the study was to determine the feasibility of creating a statewide program for tracking domestic violence cases in Florida. Twelve representatives from various organizations including, law enforcement, State Attorney's office, Clerks of Court, Department of Corrections, Office of the State Courts Administrator, domestic violence centers, and university research programs, participated in a workgroup to identify the major issues and obstacles in developing a statewide tracking system. Through a series of formal meetings, the workgroup determined that creating such a system is feasible, presented eight recommendations related to creating the system, as well as an implementation plan.

Currently, Florida does not have a comprehensive information system to track domestic violence cases or offenders through the criminal justice system. This Final Report presents the issues discussed to determine the feasibility of creating a statewide tracking of domestic violence cases, with recommendations for developing and implementing a system.

Representatives who were involved in this project unanimously expressed the need for an integrated, centralized source of domestic violence data. This data currently exists in separate and independent databases throughout state and local organizations as well as the court system. There are significant obstacles to developing an integrated system including: locating and defining data elements, jurisdictional variations in reporting policies, jurisdictional variations in levels and types of automation, sharing data, and linking civil and criminal systems in the collection of domestic violence data. Considering the domestic violence data currently being collected, the dire need of practitioners and researchers for an integrated domestic violence data system, and the obstacles identified, the workgroup recommends that existing data from current systems be coordinated and integrated into a system for the statewide tracking of domestic violence cases.

The workgroup recommends that the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) establish and oversee the development and implementation of the statewide tracking of domestic violence cases. The workgroup recommends that a Domestic Violence Data Resource Center (DVDRC) be established within the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). The DVDRC should have a staff with specific skills and responsibilities. Language establishing the DVDRC was submitted to the Governor's Domestic and Sexual Violence Task Force for submission to the Florida Legislature.

Based on the findings and recommendations of the workgroup, it was determined that the development of a system for the statewide tracking of domestic violence cases is a necessary and feasible goal. The Governor's Task Force on Domestic and Sexual Violence is encouraged to act upon the workgroup's recommendations.

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Background and Purpose of the project**

The seriousness and prevalence of domestic violence crimes is increasingly recognized, and the need for improved measures to inform State and local policy and planning decisions is clearly evident. The availability of comprehensive and accurate quantitative and qualitative data on domestic violence is a critical imperative because practitioners and policy makers at both the State and local levels are confronting questions concerning appropriate policies and effective procedures for addressing the problem of domestic violence. Coordinating and integrating state domestic violence data into a centralized database would facilitate decision-makers' ability to identify and understand domestic violence in Florida. The future of any centralized state domestic violence database depends upon the feasibility of overcoming significant obstacles including: definitional aspects of domestic violence, cross-jurisdictional differences in data collection and reporting, multi-agency cooperation, and differences in civil and criminal procedures for handling domestic violence. This study was funded by the Governor's Task Force on Domestic and Sexual Violence with money provided by the Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program, as authorized by Sections 2001-2006 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, as amended by Title IV, Section 40121 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, Public Law 103-322. The two purposes of this project were to perform a feasibility study and recommend an implementation plan for a comprehensive data collection and analysis system which would track Florida's domestic violence incidents, arrests, prosecutions and case dispositions.

## **B. Organization of the project**

In pursuit of the goals of this project, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) created a workgroup comprised of representatives from law enforcement agencies, the State Attorney's offices, the Clerks of the Court, the Department of Corrections, the Office of the State Courts Administrator, domestic violence centers, and university research programs. The activities of the workgroup included three meetings where key issues regarding the feasibility of a comprehensive statewide domestic violence data collection and analysis were discussed. Additional research activities conducted by the staff involved identifying potential domestic violence data sources within the state, identifying the varying procedures, within state and local organizations, for managing court protection orders, as well as investigating the efforts of other states to establish centralized systems for domestic violence data collection and maintenance. The group's findings regarding the feasibility study and recommendations for implementing a system for the statewide tracking of domestic violence cases, follow.

## **II. FEASIBILITY OF STATEWIDE TRACKING OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES**

### **A. Workgroup presentations of current domestic violence data uses and limitations**

The project began with workgroup participants sharing information about their respective roles in collecting, using, or analyzing domestic violence data. The participants discussed the data elements used by their organizations, including any data limitations or access issues. Participants identified data they need but can not currently access. From these presentations, the group received an overview of the role

and needs of domestic violence centers, law enforcement agencies, clerks of court, prosecutors, corrections and state courts. While specific points of interest are noted below, it should be pointed out that all of the participants emphasized the need for an integrated system. Regardless of which organization they were associated with, each participant expressed concern over the difficulty of locating and obtaining needed domestic violence data. This profound difficulty limits case management and research efforts alike.

The Department of Corrections presented the group with a description of the types of data the agency collects and uses. The Department of Corrections collects data pertaining to offenders' participation in Batterer's Intervention Programs, only when such participation is part of the offender's criminal sentence. The Department of Corrections also collects data from program evaluations of Batterer's Intervention Programs and victim follow-ups.

The Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence, which is comprised of state certified domestic violence shelters, is currently implementing a data system which will house domestic violence data from all of the state's certified domestic violence centers. There is concern over the ability of domestic violence centers to obtain injunction information, including whether there are any prior injunctions against the offender.

The Office of the State Courts Administrator provided the group with a description of the data collected by their Summary Reporting System. This system collects data from the Clerks of Court throughout the state. All data is aggregate data regarding case dispositions, there is no case-specific data.

FDLE addressed the domestic violence data currently available through the Computerized Criminal History (CCH) and Florida Crime Information Center (FCIC) databases, as well as the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR). The current status of the Criminal Justice Network, a closed network for criminal justice agencies, being implemented in Florida was discussed as a potential link in any statewide tracking of domestic violence cases.

Law enforcement representatives described their respective agency's current domestic violence data collection methods. Cross-jurisdictional difficulties were mentioned as impediments to collecting and sharing domestic violence data. The increasing mobility of both victims and offenders means that state and local organizations must be able to share information across jurisdictional boundaries. One area where cross-jurisdictional difficulties are especially evident is with court protection orders. Officials outside of the originating jurisdictions usually do not have ready access to much of the information necessary for enforcement of protection orders. Policies and procedures for issuing court protection orders often vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, making enforcement a complex issue for local authorities.

The State Attorney's representative explained the difficulties encountered when trying to compile data on domestic violence cases. Chief among these difficulties is the lack of a central database, and the incompatibility of relevant domestic violence data systems.

The Clerks of Court collect domestic violence data daily from both victims and from court dispositions . An important consideration for the Clerks of Court is the

variety of information systems that exist across the state within the County Courts. These systems range from highly automated to manual.

Academic representatives expressed their desire for a robust domestic violence database which would facilitate relevant and policy-related, systemic research.

The information provided by the workgroup participants formed the foundation for the workgroup's efforts to address the project's specific objectives.

## **B. Scope of the Project**

Inherent in assessing the feasibility of establishing a system for the statewide tracking of domestic violence cases is the need to define the scope of the project. That is, it must address the users needs for a domestic violence data system. Based on the specific domestic violence data needs expressed by workgroup participants, it was determined that any domestic violence data system should serve two main purposes: *case management* and *systemic research*.

The first of these purposes, **case management**, refers to the ability of practitioners who deal with domestic violence victims and offenders to have timely access to comprehensive data, both civil and criminal, regarding individual domestic violence cases, from case initiation to case disposition. Access to this type of case-specific data is necessary to enable practitioners to make informed decisions about domestic violence cases. For example, both prosecutors and judges need comprehensive data regarding the victim, the offender, and the nature of the offense in order to make decisions regarding the prosecution and sentencing of domestic violence offenders. Any lack of information seriously compromises their ability to make informed and fair decisions.

The second purpose of a domestic violence data system should be to collect and maintain data that can be used for **research purposes**. In addition to the practical data needed for case management, researchers in the area of domestic violence require additional, often more abstract data elements. The psychological and behavioral characteristics of both victims and offenders are examples of the types of data that would enable researchers to truly understand the problem of domestic violence. While the data needs of practitioners and researchers are not mutually exclusive, they are different in many respects. It is important that any statewide domestic violence data system accounts for these differences and collects and maintains data which allows for effective case management, as well as meaningful and relevant research into domestic violence.

### **C. Obstacles to Statewide Tracking of Domestic Violence Cases**

While the development of a system for the statewide tracking of domestic violence cases is feasible, the workgroup identified several obstacles that must be addressed.

- ◆ **There is considerable difficulty in explaining and describing domestic violence data elements.**

An initial task of the workgroup was to identify data types that participants felt were critically important and therefore necessary for inclusion in a domestic violence data system. A major obstacle that must be dealt with is establishing common data definitions. For example, “victim descriptors” was determined to be an important type of data, yet determining which types of information “victim descriptors” encompass is more difficult. Does it refer to demographic information such as age, race, etc. or does

it refer to psychological information about the victim, or both? This type of difficulty represents a serious obstacle to the collection of domestic violence data on a statewide level, as various organizations and personnel define data elements differently.

Therefore, before any statewide data collection can occur, some uniformity in defining domestic violence data elements must be established.

- ◆ **Another obstacle involved in locating and gathering domestic violence data is the dichotomy between civil and criminal procedures available for handling domestic violence cases.**

This problem is especially salient when dealing with domestic violence injunction data. Victims of domestic violence can obtain an order of protection (injunction) through either a civil or criminal procedure. Additionally, a violation of an injunction can also be handled through a civil or criminal procedure. Although they occur within the court system, the civil and criminal procedures are completely independent of one another. Clerks of Court generally maintain data on civil actions in a completely separate environment from criminal cases. Therefore, any attempt to collect data regarding domestic violence injunctions must inquire within both civil and criminal court systems, or risk losing valuable data. Further, linking data relating to the same victims, offenders, or incidents that are maintained in these separate systems is a major challenge.

- ◆ **The information contained in police narratives can provide crucial information about a domestic violence case. There are several obstacles involved in using data from these reports.**

A primary source of domestic violence data is police reports. Often, police officers are able to collect data regarding domestic violence incidents that are not available from any other source. However, a significant obstacle is the lack of any standardized reporting criteria. As a result, there are often inconsistencies in the types of data contained in police reports. These inconsistencies can be between different officers' reports or different agencies' reports. There are often jurisdictional differences in reporting policies, which further contribute to the heterogeneous nature of police report data. Finally, access to police reports is often limited, making the data unavailable for use by many individuals and organizations. Domestic violence centers and the clerks of court are the only entities which routinely receive copies of police reports involving domestic violence. The richness of the data found in police reports necessitates its inclusion in any domestic violence data system, yet a lack of standardized reporting criteria and restricted access to police reports make such inclusion a considerable obstacle.

- ◆ **Another obstacle to statewide domestic violence data collection is the variation in the type and level of automation amongst law enforcement agencies, State Attorney's offices, and Clerk's offices.**

Demographically, Florida consists of many large metropolitan jurisdictions, as well as many more small, rural jurisdictions. Law enforcement and other entities in these smaller jurisdictions often have little or no automation of their data systems. This is in comparison to the highly automated systems often found in large jurisdictions. Coordinating and collecting data from these different jurisdictions are made more complex by the need to integrate often incompatible data systems. Data collection

methods must account for highly automated jurisdictions as well as those with little or no automation.

◆ **The technical issues involved in developing a centralized tracking system represent significant obstacles.**

The variation in levels of automation discussed above is just one aspect of this problem. A further complication is the lack of linkages between relevant data systems. Domestic violence data exists in databases maintained by various state and local organizations, yet these databases are independent of one another. A significant consideration in developing a centralized or comprehensive statewide tracking system are the technical issues involved in extracting data from these various systems and integrating them in a centralized or comprehensive statewide tracking system. Standardizing data and definitions will be a significant task in developing any integrated system. The technical issues involved in extracting data from multiple data systems, data storage and data access mechanisms represent a significant obstacle to the proposed system.

◆ **Funding issues represent an obstacle to the development of a centralized or comprehensive statewide tracking system.**

Developing a centralized or comprehensive statewide tracking system will require the efforts of many different jurisdictions, many of which have very restricted budgets and limited manpower. The issue of whom will fund the efforts of these organizations and how funding will be accomplished is a serious consideration.

◆ **Issues involving data sharing must be considered.**

Domestic violence is an intimate and serious crime, and one in which the victim is often at risk of continued victimization. Understandably, victim information is highly sensitive and confidential. Domestic violence centers collect a great deal of victim information and are therefore a valuable data source, yet because their primary responsibility is the protection of the victim, access to this data is restricted. Similarly, access to criminal justice data is restricted to criminal justice agencies (with the exception of police reports, which are given to domestic violence centers as required by Florida Statutes). The creation of a centralized or comprehensive statewide tracking system could require the sharing of sensitive and confidential data. A priority must be to determine a way for domestic violence centers and criminal justice agencies to share data while, at all times, preserving the confidentiality of active investigative data and the safety of the victim.

The obstacles discussed above do not represent an exhaustive list. Certainly others may surface as the project continues. However, at a minimum, these obstacles must be resolved.

#### **D. Project direction**

Having addressed the obstacles to the development of a system for the statewide tracking of domestic violence cases, the workgroup considered the direction of the project. This meant determining the best way to collect and maintain meaningful and relevant domestic violence data on a statewide level and make it available to appropriate agencies and organizations that would benefit from the data. The group recognized three main options as possible directions for the statewide tracking of domestic violence cases.

Based on the obstacles identified and the considerable limitations of other options, the group decided that the most feasible direction for the project would be to **coordinate and integrate existing data** from current systems. This would all but eliminate the duplication of data entry and would impose a lesser financial and workload burden on reporting organizations. Currently, there is a large amount of domestic violence data being collected and maintained by various local and state organizations and court systems. It makes sense to use existing data as much as possible, and only where gaps exist in the data, should new data requirements be considered. While this approach is sensible, it has some limitations. A primary limitation is the problem of defining data elements and then locating them among the various systems. A lack of standardized reporting and collection measures, coupled with jurisdictional differences in policies and system automation, make the process of integrating existing systems time consuming. While an entirely new data system is not necessary, a good deal of technical assistance will be required to link all of the relevant systems together. However, due to the vast amount of domestic violence data currently being collected around the state and the independent nature of state organizations and court systems, the most feasible direction for the project is determined to be the coordination and integration of existing data from current systems.

Another option considered is the development of an entirely new data system for the collection and centralization of state domestic violence data. This would involve standardizing domestic violence data collection methods across state and local organizations and housing the data in a new database. There would be one data system which relevant organizations would participate in. An obvious advantage to

creating a new data system is the possibility of obtaining homogenous domestic violence data from a large and diverse population. There would be standard definitions of data elements, as well as standardized methods of data collection and entry.

However, an obvious disadvantage is the cost associated with designing and implementing such a system. It would be extremely costly to require all state and local organizations to comply with the specifications of a new system. Additionally, there would be a high degree of data duplication, as much of the data a new system would require is already being collected, although not in any standardized manner.

A final option considered by the workgroup is the development of standardized police report forms for statewide use. Standardized report forms for all law enforcement agencies would allow for the collection of uniform domestic violence data elements which would eliminate, or at least greatly reduce, jurisdictional differences in reporting. Standardized report forms could also reduce problems associated with defining domestic violence data elements. Limitations to using standardized report forms include the difficulty involved in designing a standard report form and gaining agency support for such a form. It would be difficult to develop a standardized report form comprehensive enough to capture all of the necessary domestic violence data yet concise enough to be user-friendly. Efforts of other states to develop standardized report forms have resulted in lengthy and cumbersome forms that are time consuming to complete. Law enforcement personnel currently face an abundance of paperwork, which they are required to complete and submit to their own agencies as well as state organizations. Additionally, most medium and large law enforcement agencies have computer systems developed based upon their report forms. A change in forms

triggers an expensive and time consuming reprogramming effort. It would be a difficult task to gain support for another form. Further, changes in forms create a need for agency-wide training of officers. Law enforcement agency finances and manpower are limited and the burden of an additional, likely lengthy, form as well as added data entry responsibilities would not be welcomed. Finally, a standardized report form would only cover domestic violence cases handled in the criminal system. Domestic violence cases handled within the civil court system would not be captured by this method of data collection.

### **III. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Having decided upon the feasibility and direction of the development of a statewide system for the tracking of domestic violence cases, the workgroup spent a considerable amount of time determining the necessary recommendations for the future of the project. This section presents the workgroup's recommendations, as presented to the Florida Governor's Task Force on Domestic and Sexual Violence. All recommendations are made with the intent of complying with current confidentiality laws.

**1. Recommendation: Create and organize an entity to oversee the implementation of a statewide tracking system. The workgroup referred to this entity as the "Domestic Violence Resource Center (DVDRC)" and this name is used throughout this report. The DVDRC will have the following attributes.**

The workgroup agreed that the breadth of this project is wide enough to require the establishment of a work unit to oversee the future of the project. A primary issue regarding the establishment of a new entity was where such an organization should be

housed. The two main options considered by the workgroup were to house the work unit in a University or within the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). Housing the DVDRC in a university was considered an option because of the research nature of the data collected. However, the workgroup recommends that the DVDRC be housed within FDLE. This recommendation is based on the ability of FDLE to support a work unit of this nature, since it currently collects crime information in several databases and houses similar work units to support this function. FDLE has established mechanisms for receiving and sharing data with local law enforcement, Clerks of Court, and State Attorneys. Further, independent state and local agencies are often reluctant to undertake additional data reporting. These agencies are more likely to report to an official law enforcement agency than to a university. Additionally, FDLE already maintains state level criminal data; some of this data is already domestic violence-related. A final consideration for housing the DVDRC within FDLE is the fact that domestic violence is a serious crime and housing a domestic violence database within an official criminal justice agency, as opposed to within a state university, further emphasizes the serious and criminal nature of domestic violence.

The issue of funding for a DVDRC is a significant consideration. Because the DVDRC will be a new work unit, the workgroup recommends that the Governor's Task Force on Domestic and Sexual Violence seek both general revenue and grant/foundation funds for establishing and staffing the DVDRC. General revenue funds could be sought to cover the start-up and initial staffing of the DVDRC, while grant/foundation funds should be considered as a supplemental resource for the initial

acquisition of technical equipment and software, as well as consultant services that may be needed to supplement the basic staff.

The workgroup has **additional recommendations** regarding the functioning and responsibilities of the DVDRC. The DVDRC should maintain **data for operational needs** as well as **research needs**. This recommendation addresses the dual purposes of a system for the statewide tracking of domestic violence cases: case management and systemic, policy-relevant research. Additionally, funding for the creation of an integrated data system should also include money for data analysis. It is important that data collected and maintained by the DVDRC not sit dormant, but rather be examined and analyzed in the context of policy relevant research. To this end, the DVDRC should be responsible for actively soliciting research by promoting the use of the available data.

As a primary source of information regarding domestic violence in the state of Florida, the DVDRC should be under obligation to **report yearly on domestic violence** in Florida. An important advantage to integrating access to domestic violence data into a centralized location is that it allows researchers and policy makers the opportunity to get a clear and comprehensive picture of the domestic violence problem in Florida. Additionally, the DVDRC should maintain a **repository of the best practices** nationally in the area of domestic violence policies, data collection, and research. For Florida to take the initiative in domestic violence issues, it is necessary to have some idea of what other states are doing successfully, or alternately, problems they have encountered. The DVDRC should be responsible for collecting and sharing this information.

It is recommended that the DVDRC be created and its responsibilities outlined. To this end, these recommendations for the creation and functioning of the DVDRC have been developed into implementing language.

**2. Recommendation: Endorse planned FCIC revisions, which will make past injunction information available in an on-line archive.**

A major issue relating to domestic violence data is the current unavailability of information regarding expired domestic violence injunctions. Currently, injunction information is maintained in FCIC until the injunction expires, terminates or is withdrawn by the court. The injunction information is then removed from FCIC and is lost, at least for state-level searching and automated access. This represents a serious data shortcoming. However, planned revisions to FCIC will take expired injunction information and locate it in an on-line archive so that it will be permanently available. Training of FCIC users should be included in the implementation of the new system to insure awareness of this feature and proper use of the system.

**3. Recommendation: Future studies are needed to investigate the possibility of capturing police report data to make this data available on a statewide basis.**

Recognizing the importance of the data found in police reports, the workgroup recommends that attention be paid to the issues regarding the accessibility of police reports. Currently, police reports are given to domestic violence centers and clerks of court. It should be a priority to determine how police report data can be accessed for inclusion in a statewide database. The workgroup considered three possibilities that should be considered in future studies.

The development of on-line document scanning and transmission capabilities should be studied as an option for making police report data centrally available. Police reports could be scanned into an on-line site and made available to a statewide-integrated data system. The scanning and electronic transmission of the reports could capture significant data with minimal workload impact for law enforcement agencies.

A second option that should be studied is the use of voice activation systems, which allow officers to verbally transmit their reports. A private voice activation company could then transcribe the reports and the transcribed reports would be available. This method could save police officers the time involved in filling out forms.

These two areas are recommended for future study because they have the potential of being costly to develop and implement.

A final area for consideration as a future study is the addition of a standard supplement to incident reports for police reports in cases of domestic violence. It is difficult to develop a valid and reliable standardized report form. Any new form would require support from law enforcement, so it is imperative that before this option is explored, true and exact data needs are defined. Otherwise, it will be impossible to generate an accurate supplemental report form. Additionally, the study should address the issue of confidentiality of active investigation information, which must be assured at all times.

**4. Recommendation: Ensure that data about domestic violence cases, from case initiation through case disposition, generated by State Attorney's offices, law enforcement, Clerks of Court, and Office of the State Court Administrator are included in any statewide tracking system.**

The workgroup recognizes that many different organizations and court systems generate domestic violence data, and it is important that a statewide tracking system capture as much of that data as possible, without duplicating data. For example, it is important to capture the State Attorney's data without duplicating data already captured by the Clerks of Court, as both organizations capture similar types of data.

Additionally, attention should be paid to the issue of civil domestic violence data. As discussed earlier, domestic violence cases may be handled in either civil or criminal systems and it is therefore important that civil data be identified and linked through a statewide system.

**5. Recommendation: Promote the preservation of current domestic violence data systems to prevent the loss of information (for example, aggregating data that was previously maintained as incident-based).**

It was determined that care should be taken by organizations so that they do not inadvertently, in efforts to consolidate or economize their data collection methods, reduce the effectiveness of current data systems. Rather, any prescribed changes in data systems should work to preserve the integrity of existing data. Before organizations make changes in their domestic violence data collection methods or systems, they should seek input from data users in an effort to protect current domestic violence data systems.

**6. Recommendation: Conduct an in-depth needs assessment to identify existing data types and data needs to be addressed by a system for statewide tracking of domestic violence cases.**

The workgroup recommends **three primary goals of a needs assessment.**

First, the needs assessment should include a survey of organizations and court systems to gain an **understanding of the existing data and its limitations.** A comprehensive look at state data systems is necessary to determine exactly what types of data are available for inclusion in a statewide system, as well as what types of data are currently missing. Second, the needs assessment should include a **prioritization of domestic violence data needs.** Integrating all existing data systems will require a great deal of time, so it should be determined which data elements are most critical and therefore require immediate attention. Finally, the needs assessment should focus on **linkages of criminal and civil data** regarding domestic violence. Again, care should be taken to ensure that domestic violence data generated in civil court systems is not lost because of a focus on criminal court systems. Rather, the goal should be to effectively link the different systems in an effort to capture all available domestic violence data. The needs assessment could be performed by a consultant firm, hired by the Domestic Violence Data Resource Center in cooperation with the Governor's Task Force on Domestic and Sexual Violence.

**7. Recommendation: Whenever possible, use existing data and data systems.**

**Do not re-enter data previously captured by another agency.**

Because domestic violence data is located in so many independent databases, the duplication of data is a real likelihood. It is important that each of these existing databases be fully explored before efforts are made to develop any new system.

However, it is possible that a needs assessment may identify gaps that need to be filled

because the data are not currently captured within any individual systems.

Modifications may be necessary to existing systems to capture some new data.

**8. Recommendation: The following Implementation Plan is presented for consideration and adoption.**

The workgroup outlined implementation plan that follows for the development of a system for the Statewide Tracking of Domestic Violence Cases.

**IV. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

This plan outlines activities that should occur to implement a mechanism to provide for the Statewide Tracking of Domestic Violence Cases. The order in which the activities are presented do not necessarily imply a suggested order of events and some may be addressed concurrently.

**1. *Create a Domestic Violence Data Resource Center and establish the responsibilities of the Center.***

Suggested implementing language concerning the establishment and functions of the DVDRC has been developed and included in this report.

**2. *Establish the Domestic Violence Data Resource Center***

Establishment of the DVDRC involves two main issues: staffing and funding. The DVDRC will need to have a lead-worker that is familiar with the goals of the project and is able to dedicate his/her time fully to the position. The Governor's Task Force on Domestic and Sexual Violence should serve in an advisory capacity to the DVDRC. The lead-worker will be the main point of contact between the Center and the Governor's Task Force on Domestic and Sexual Violence, as well as between the Center and any independent firms contracted by the DVDRC. An administrative

assistant will be a support position for the Center. It is anticipated that there will be a significant administrative workload associated with active and ongoing communication with all of the entities either capturing or using domestic violence data.

Research associates are needed to develop and conduct research initiatives. For example, research associates would be responsible for conducting the survey recommended as part of the needs assessment. Because of the size of the state of Florida and the enormous amount of work that will be required to identify and define all of the relevant data elements, it is recommended that 2 research associates be hired. These individuals would be responsible for extensive travel and coordinate with state and local organizations, domestic violence centers, and university researchers.

Funding issues require immediate attention. The workgroup has outlined a fiscal impact plan for the establishment and staffing of the DVDRC. This plan recommends monetary expenditures for salaries, office expenses, travel expenses, and miscellaneous expenses. General revenue and grant funds should be considered as sources to finance the both the staffing of the Center and the needs assessment.

### **3. *Conduct Needs Assessment***

The goals of the needs assessment are presented earlier in this report, under Recommendation 6. However, the primary purpose of the needs assessment is to contact each data source and data customer to evaluate what is there, what is needed, and perhaps begin to identify technical issues relating to what data currently exists.

### **4. *Address technical issues involved in the creation of a system for the Statewide Tracking of Domestic Violence Cases.***

Upon completion of the needs assessment and the subsequent identification of critical data elements, the technical issues involved in the project must be addressed. Concerns over linking databases to a centralized database, developing a standard data dictionary and the possibility of developing any new individual systems are all technical issues, which will likely need to be resolved. The workgroup suggests that the technical assessment may be contracted out to a consultant firm. This may represent the most timely and efficient way of conducting the technical assessment.

**5. *Initiate a pilot test in selected county or counties to pilot test solutions or systems.***

Following the needs and technical assessments a pilot site(s) should be selected to test the proposed system for the statewide tracking of domestic violence cases. The purpose of conducting a pilot study is not only to determine the adequacy and efficiency of a new system, but to more thoroughly learn about the various policies and procedures that exist for handling domestic violence data collection and domestic violence case management within the state.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the workgroup has determined that the development of a system for the Statewide Tracking of Domestic Violence Cases is indeed feasible and warranted. The development of this system will be a complex process and the future success of the project requires a dedicated staff and resources. Additionally, time is of the essence. The workgroup encourages the Governor's Task Force on Domestic and Sexual Violence move on this project in the upcoming legislative session. The workgroup also encourages full staffing and commencement of the needs assessment by July 1, 1998.

**FISCAL IMPACT PLAN**  
**Statewide Tracking of Domestic Violence Cases**

Based on the Workgroup’s recommendation that a Domestic Violence Data Resource Center be established, the first year operation costs are projected to be approximately \$277,000. The following Budget Summary outlines the estimated fiscal impact for the first year of the Domestic Violence Data Resource Center.

**BUDGET SUMMARY**

<b>BUDGET ITEM</b>	<b>ESTIMATED EXPENSES</b>		<b>TOTALS</b>
Staff:	<b>Salary + Benefits</b>	<b>Expenses + OCO</b>	
Senior Management Analyst II	\$ 69,000	\$ 6,886	\$ 75,886
Administrative Assistant	\$ 28,008	\$ 6,211	\$ 34,219
Research Associate (2)	\$ 41,277 (2)	\$ 6,886 (2)	\$ 96,326
<b>TOTAL STAFF</b>			<b>\$ 206,431</b>
<b>Contractual Services</b>			<b>\$ 50,000</b>
<b>Travel</b>			<b>\$ 10,000</b>
<b>Other Expense</b> (printing/supplies)			<b>\$ 5,200</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$ 271,631</b>

**Proposed Performance Measures**  
**For the Statewide Tracking of Domestic Violence Cases**

Percentage of customers (judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officers) satisfied with available domestic violence incident information (OUTCOME).

Number of responses to requests for domestic violence incidence information (Website and phone inquiries). (OUTPUT)

Number of agencies accessing and participating in the Statewide Tracking of Domestic Violence Cases. (OUTPUT)

