



Safe in Our Communities

**Community Recognition Program for Promising Practices
in Domestic Violence Response**

APPLICATION MATERIALS

May 2009

**Safe in Our Communities:
Community Recognition Program for Promising Practices in Domestic
Violence Response**

Table of Contents

Attorney General’s Message	3
Acknowledgments	4
Introduction	5
Application Process	6
Essential Elements	8
Optional Elements	10
Application Review Process	12
Application Checklist	13
Frequently Asked Questions	14
Appendix A – Model Resolution	15
Appendix B – Definitions	16

Message from Attorney General Bill Mims

Thank you for participating in the Attorney General's Community Recognition Program for Promising Practices in Domestic Violence Response. In the past several years, state and local agencies and organizations have worked diligently to end domestic violence by addressing the continuing problems facing victims in the Commonwealth of Virginia. As a result, Virginia provides victims with greater protection and access to social services, additional tools for law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and courts, and funding to promote public awareness on issues related to domestic and sexual violence.

In the ongoing effort to combat domestic and sexual violence, I challenge localities across the Commonwealth to participate in the Community Recognition Program. Localities that implement promising and innovative programs and policies to stem domestic violence in their communities should be publically recognized for their efforts, and their practices emulated by others. The Community Recognition Program provides localities with an opportunity to share best practices, to engage in further discussion, and to increase public awareness about domestic and sexual violence. The Program also serves as a vehicle to assist community leaders in assessing their current policies and practices and developing better programs to enhance community response to these crimes.

I ask you to join me in the second phase of this exciting initiative. I look forward to working with you and your community to bring hope and help to victims of domestic violence. Together, we can make this a safer and stronger Virginia.

Bill Mims

Acknowledgments

The Office of the Attorney General would like to thank the Office of the Governor, the Department of Criminal Justice Services, the Department of State Police, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court, the Virginia Poverty Law Center, and the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance for their support in the development and implementation of the Community Recognition Program. Thanks to the members of the Community Recognition Program Work Group and the Review Team for their input and guidance in this process. Thanks to Verizon Wireless for their continuous advocacy on behalf of victims of domestic violence.

Introduction

Domestic violence is an issue that impacts many families and communities in Virginia. From 1999 to 2005, nearly one in three homicides in Virginia was related to family and intimate partner violence, despite significant changes in law and policy during this same time period.¹ In 2007, 24,350 spousal abuse petitions were filed in Virginia courts.² Also in 2007, a total of 38,798 calls were made to the statewide domestic and sexual violence hotline and more than 6,500 adults and children received shelter care from local domestic violence shelter programs.³

The Attorney General's Community Recognition Program for Promising Practices in Domestic Violence Response is designed to recognize localities that have instituted promising or innovative practices in responding to domestic violence in their communities. This Program also encourages localities to develop and implement policies and practices to enhance their community response to domestic violence issues.

The Program is a collaborative effort of the Office of the Attorney General with several state agencies and non-profit organizations, including the Department of Criminal Justice Services, the Department of State Police, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court, the Virginia Poverty Law Center, and the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance.

To participate and be recognized by the Attorney General, eligible localities must meet all of the identified Essential Elements and at least five Optional Elements in their community response to domestic violence. For each identified element, the locality must provide a written explanation of, and to the extent possible, documentation of the locality's satisfaction of the element.

Localities selected through the Program will be publicly recognized by the Attorney General in the Fall of 2009. **Applications will be available to localities in May 2009, and will be accepted through July 31, 2009.**

¹ *Family and Intimate Partner Homicide, Virginia 2005*, Virginia Department of Health, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, July 2007.

² *Caseload Statistical Data, 2007*, Supreme Court of Virginia.

³ *2007 VAdata reporting*, Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance.

Application Process

In order to be eligible, the locality must meet the following three requirements:

1. **The applicant locality must be a locality in the Commonwealth of Virginia** (a city, county, or incorporated town, or any combination thereof within the geographic confines of a county, including any contiguous cities).
2. **The applicant locality must designate a local coordinator representing an existing inter-agency domestic violence coordinating team as the contact point for the recognition process.** Only one application per locality may be submitted to the Program; therefore, a local coordinator who represents an existing inter-agency domestic violence coordinating team is essential for the application process.
3. **The board of supervisors or governing council of the locality must adopt a resolution confirming the locality's application for recognition by the Attorney General.** The locality must submit a resolution from the local governing body (city council, board of supervisors, etc.) which confirms and supports the locality's application for recognition by the Attorney General. A sample resolution is provided as part of the application materials.

Localities that were recognized during the first round of the Community Recognition Program (October 2008 – January 2009) are not eligible to apply for recognition during the second round (May 2009 – July 2009).

To apply for recognition, the eligible locality must meet all of the 18 Essential Elements required by the program and at least five of the 15 Optional Elements suggested by the program.

For each element, whether Essential or Optional, the locality must provide a written explanation (250 words at minimum) of the locality's satisfaction of the element. The explanation should include the following information:

- A description of how the locality satisfies/has satisfied the element, or the steps that the locality is actively, *currently* taking to satisfy the element;
- The local agency or agencies which are involved in or which are responsible for satisfaction of the element; and
- Whether and how the local agency(ies) collaborate with other agencies (state, local) or non-profit or for profit organizations in order to satisfy the element.

Where appropriate, written documentation of the locality's satisfaction of the element should be provided with the application in addition to the written explanation. Documentation may include, but is not limited to, copies of agency policies and procedures, program brochures, copies of information distributed to victims or others, website information, membership lists, newspaper articles, or training agendas. Existing Memoranda of Understanding or Memoranda of Agreement with other agencies may provide documentary support for some elements.

All application packets should be typewritten on standard-size paper, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, and in 12-point font. Written explanations for the individual elements should be numbered or lettered according to the number/letter provided in the program materials. Each application must be provided both in hard copy and in electronic form (preferably as a pdf (portable document format) file on a floppy disk, zip disk, CD, or thumb drive).

To aid in the application process, an application checklist is included within these application materials. Please include a copy of the checklist with the application packet. A hard copy of the completed application packet should be forwarded to the following address, postmarked no later than **July 31, 2009**:

**Office of the Attorney General
Attn: Amy Wight Kube
Special Projects Coordinator
900 E. Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219**

An electronic copy of the application may be submitted on a CD or disk with the hard copy, or may be sent by e-mail to **awightkube@oag.state.va.us**.

Questions regarding the Program or completion of a local application should be directed to Amy Wight Kube at (804) 692-0484, awightkube@oag.state.va.us, or Corie Tillman Wolf, Assistant Attorney General, at (804) 786-9593, cwolf@oag.state.va.us.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY RECOGNITION

The following eighteen (18) elements are Essential Elements that the locality must meet in order to be recognized for its local response to domestic violence. These elements have been divided into three categories: Community Response, Policies and Procedures, and Training.

Community Response

1. There is an inter-agency domestic violence coordinating team that meets at least quarterly with a defined purpose that includes reviewing and enhancing local policy and procedure. The coordinating team includes, but is not limited to, the following representatives:
 - Commonwealth's Attorney's Office
 - Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Clerk
 - Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Judge
 - Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court, Court Services Unit
 - Local Community Services Board
 - Local Department of Social Services
 - Local Domestic Violence/Sexual Violence Agency
 - Local Police Department
 - Local Sheriff's Office
 - Local Government
 - Victim/Witness Program
2. The local government actively supports local domestic violence efforts, which may include, but is not limited to, commitment of resources such as funding, meeting space, or administrative support.
3. An accredited domestic violence agency or program is available to victims and their children within the locality, or within a reasonable distance of the center of the locality. An accredited domestic violence agency is a domestic violence agency or program that has met the training, administrative, and technical requirements set forth for accreditation by the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance.

Policies and Procedures

4. The local law enforcement agency has a written policy that establishes arrest policies and procedures for domestic violence and family abuse cases. This policy is reviewed and updated annually. Va. Code Ann. § 9.1-1300.
5. When responding to calls involving domestic violence, law enforcement officers provide victims of domestic violence with both oral and written information regarding the legal and community resources available to them. Va. Code Ann. § 19.2-81.3(C).

6. Local prosecutors have established policies and procedures regarding the prosecution of misdemeanor domestic violence cases and protective order violations.
7. When issuing an emergency protective order, the judge or magistrate provides a protected person with the form for use in filing a petition for a protective order and with written information regarding protective orders, including the telephone numbers of domestic violence agencies and legal referral sources. Va. Code Ann. § 16.1-253.4.
8. The local Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court has an intake process for domestic violence cases, including protective order petitions.
9. Local intake officers routinely provide a person seeking a protective order with a written explanation of the conditions, procedures, and time limits applicable to the issuance of protective orders. Va. Code Ann. § 16.1-260.
10. The Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Clerk's Office (or Combined District Court Clerk's Office) enters protective orders into the VCIN system no later than the close-of-business on the day of issuance of the protective order. Va. Code Ann. §§ 16.1-253.1, 16.1-253.4 and 16.1-279.1.
11. A process exists for referral of first-time domestic violence offenders to local community corrections for assessment where available. Va. Code Ann. § 18.2-57.3.
12. Local judges routinely notify respondents of the firearms restrictions, both federal and state, related to protective orders. Va. Code Ann. § 18.2-308.1:4; 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(8).
13. Local sheriffs' offices have established policies and procedures regarding security for court personnel and to protect court users from potential harm from alleged abusers.
14. Local courts have a current list of qualified spoken and sign language interpreters. Va. Code Ann. §§ 19.1-164, 19.2-164.1.

Training

15. Law enforcement personnel receive annual training on domestic violence policies and responding to domestic and family violence calls.
16. Local prosecutors who prosecute domestic violence cases receive annual training on domestic violence-related issues.
17. Local judges receive training on domestic violence issues, including the issue of stalking, and updates on changes to state laws related to domestic violence.
18. Local magistrates receive training on domestic violence issues and updates on changes to state laws related to domestic violence.

OPTIONAL ELEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY RECOGNITION

The following fifteen (15) elements are Optional Elements, of which the locality must meet a minimum of five (5) in order to be recognized for its local response to domestic violence. Where a locality has implemented an innovative or promising local practice or program related to domestic violence in the community that is not included on this list, Element “O” permits the locality to provide information on this practice or program. If deemed appropriate by the Program, the locality’s local practice or program may be used to satisfy an optional element. Although a minimum of five (5) Optional Elements are required for recognition, localities are encouraged to provide information on as many Optional Elements as possible.

- A. The locality has a certified Batterer Intervention Program.
- B. The locality supports educational programs in local middle and high schools regarding domestic and intimate partner violence.
- C. The locality has a TRIAD Program (a crime prevention program for seniors and law enforcement) that includes an elder abuse prevention component.
- D. The locality has a Sexual Assault Response Team (SART), focused on adult sexual assault.
- E. The locality has a local or regional Fatality Review Team for review of adult fatalities related to domestic violence.
- F. The local inter-agency domestic violence response team includes representatives from local healthcare providers, hospitals, or public health.
- G. The local inter-agency domestic violence response team includes a local magistrate.
- H. The local inter-agency domestic violence response team includes representatives from agencies or programs focusing on the elderly, disabled, and/or limited English speaking populations.
- I. Local law enforcement policies and procedures address guidelines on the service of protective orders across jurisdictional lines and, if applicable, across state lines.
- J. Local law enforcement policies and procedures include provisions for the expedited service of protective orders.
- K. The locality, or a local public or private agency, provides services to children and youth exposed to domestic violence.
- L. The local courts have designated waiting areas for children during court proceedings.

- M. The locality has a community-based primary prevention program that addresses domestic violence (e.g. DELTA, Red Flag Campaign, Student Connections Clubs, Mentors in Violence Prevention, Men of Strength Clubs, etc.).
- N. The locality has implemented use of the I-CAN! System for online completion of protective order forms.
- O. The locality has other domestic violence related programs deemed appropriate by the Attorney General's Community Recognition Program. Please specify the name of the program.

Application Review Process

Once application packets have been submitted to the Office of the Attorney General for consideration, the Community Recognition Program Work Group, comprised of representatives from the supporting agencies and organizations, will review the applications for completeness. If appropriate, a member of the Work Group will notify the local contact person within fifteen (15) days to assist with completion of the application. The locality will then be granted an extension of thirty (30) days in order to complete or correct the application.

Completed applications will be forwarded to the Community Recognition Program Review Team, composed of representatives from local and state, private and public agencies and organizations with an interest in domestic violence initiatives across the Commonwealth. The Review Team will determine whether the locality has satisfactorily met the Essential and Optional Elements for recognition and make a final recommendation to the Attorney General regarding which localities should be recognized for their efforts.

Based upon the recommendation of the Review Team, the Attorney General will recognize localities for their promising and innovative practices in response to domestic violence in their communities. There is no limit to the number of localities that may be recognized by the program.

Localities selected for recognition through the Program will be notified by the Office of the Attorney General in the Fall of 2009.

Application Checklist

Application Checklist (completed)

Designated Local Coordinator as Contact Person for Application

Name: _____

Title: _____

Agency: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ (w) _____ (c)

Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Resolution from Local Governing Body

Application

The application is typewritten on standard letter-size paper, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, and in 12-point font. Written explanations for the individual elements are numbered or lettered according to the number/letter provided in the Program materials.

The application is submitted both in hard-copy and in electronic form.

Essential Elements – The locality has satisfied all 18 Essential Elements and has provided a written explanation and, if appropriate, documentary support for each element.

Optional Elements – The locality has satisfied at least five of the 15 Optional Elements and has provided a written explanation and, if necessary or appropriate, documentary support for each such element satisfied.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why should my locality apply for recognition from this Program?

If your locality is selected for recognition through this Program, it will receive statewide, public recognition from the Attorney General for its promising and innovative practices in responding to domestic violence in the community. This recognition is not only a reflection of the efforts made by local agencies, organizations, and individuals, it is also an important tool for local marketing and crime prevention efforts.

In addition, through a generous grant from the Verizon Wireless HopeLine Program, recognized localities will receive a monetary award for their local domestic violence program.

What is the timeline for the application process?

Application materials will be available on the Attorney General's website (www.vaag.com) beginning in May 2009. Completed applications will be accepted from applicant localities through July 31, 2009.

Upon receipt of an incomplete or incorrect application, the designated contact person for the locality will be notified within fifteen (15) days by a member of the Working Group. The locality will have an additional thirty (30) days to submit a complete or corrected application.

Localities selected through the Program will be publicly recognized by the Attorney General in the Fall of 2009.

Appendix A – Model Resolution

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Domestic violence impacts thousands of Virginians each year and threatens our citizens, our families, our children, our homes, and our communities; and

WHEREAS, the _____ [governing body: City or Town Council; or County Board of Supervisors] of _____ [locality] is committed to the safety and security of our citizens and communities who are impacted by domestic violence and to holding perpetrators of domestic violence accountable for their actions; and

WHEREAS, the _____ [governing body] continues to support promising programs and initiatives to address the issue of domestic violence in our community and among our citizens; and

WHEREAS, the _____ [governing body] has the opportunity to apply for recognition for the domestic violence practices and initiatives of our community from The Attorney General’s Community Recognition Program for Promising Practices in Domestic Violence Response, a program supported by the Office of the Governor, the Department of Criminal Justice Services, the Department of State Police, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court, the Virginia Poverty Law Center, and the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance; and

WHEREAS, an application for recognition by the Attorney General’s Community Recognition Program requires a resolution of support from the local governing body;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the _____ [governing body] that our community, _____ [locality], wishes to apply for recognition by the Attorney General’s Community Recognition Program for Promising Practices in Domestic Violence Response and that the [governing body] fully supports all reasonable efforts to meet the application requirements established by the Office of the Attorney General for such application; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that our community application for recognition requires the designation of a local coordinator representing an existing inter-agency domestic violence team as the contact point for the recognition process, and the [governing body] designates _____ [contact] to represent our community for participation in this program.

This Resolution is in full effect upon its adoption this _____ day of _____, 20____.

SEAL:

Official

Title

Attest

Title

Appendix B - Definitions

The following definitions are provided to assist localities in the completion of their applications:

“Domestic violence agency” or **“Domestic violence program”** means public and not-for-profit agencies the primary mission of which is to provide services to victims of sexual or domestic violence. Va. Code Ann. § 2.2-515.2.

“Accredited domestic violence agency” means a domestic violence agency or program that has met the training, administrative, and technical requirements set forth for accreditation by the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance. <http://www.vsdvalliance.com>

“I-CAN! System” is the online forms program offered by the Supreme Court of Virginia to aid victims of domestic violence in the completion of a petition for a family abuse protective order. http://www.courts.state.va.us/programs/asst_with_family_abuse_protective_orders.html