



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
COORDINATING COUNCIL**

**2021 ANNUAL REPORT**

**MISSION:**

*To reduce the incidence of domestic violence and create a safe  
community for families to live free of abuse.*

**September 15, 2021**

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## DVCC MEMBERSHIP EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

**NICOLE Y. DREW**  
COMMISSIONER

FOR **JODI FINKELSTEIN**, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

**DEBBIE FEINSTEIN**  
CHAIR, DVCC

ASSISTANT STATE'S ATTORNEY  
FOR **JOHN MCCARTHY**  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

THE HONORABLE **KAREN FERRETTI**  
ASSOCIATE JUDGE  
FOR THE HONORABLE **SHERRI KOCH**  
ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE  
DISTRICT COURT OF MARYLAND FOR  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY

**INGRID GONZALEZ**  
FIELD SUPERVISOR II  
DIVISION OF PAROLE AND PROBATION  
MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

**DORNÉ HILL**  
ADMINISTRATOR, TRAUMA SERVICES  
FOR **RAYMOND L. CROWEL**, DIRECTOR  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

THE HONORABLE **SIDNEY KATZ**  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

**THOMAS MANION**  
VICE CHAIR, DVCC  
DIRECTOR, FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER  
FOR SHERIFF **DARREN POPKIN**  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

**TINA MICHAELS**  
RECORDS MANAGER  
FOR **ANGELA TALLEY**, DIRECTOR  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF  
CORRECTION AND REHABILITATION

THE HONORABLE **KARLA SMITH**  
ASSOCIATE JUDGE  
FOR THE HONORABLE **JAMES BONIFANT**  
ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT

**DINESH PATIL**  
ASSISTANT CHIEF OF POLICE  
FOR **MARCUS JONES**, CHIEF  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

THE HONORABLE **REBECCA SMONDROWSKI**  
BOARD MEMBER  
FOR THE HONORABLE **BRENDA WOLFF**  
PRESIDENT, BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## PUBLIC MEMBERS

**VIKHYANA GONZALEZ**  
STUDENT MEMBER

**MICHELLE MAXBERRY**  
COMMUNITY MEMBER

**MINDY THIEL**  
COMMUNITY MEMBER

**MAURA LYNCH**  
COMMUNITY MEMBER

**AMY PALUMBO**  
COMMUNITY MEMBER

**RONALD WHALEN**  
COMMUNITY MEMBER

**SPENDER CANTRELL (JCADA)**  
NON-PROFIT MEMBER

**VACANT**  
NON-PROFIT MEMBER

## STAFF

SMITA VARIA  
PROGRAM MANAGER  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

## COUNCIL INFORMATION

### **TERM OF SERVICE**

There are nineteen voting members of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) who serve without compensation and are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council. Five are Ex-Officio members who serve at the request of the County Council: the Administrative Judge of the Circuit Court; the Administrative Judge of the District Court; the Sheriff; the State's Attorney; and the Regional Administrator for the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. There are six Ex-Officio members who are appointed by the County Executive: a member of the County Council selected by the Council President; the Directors of the Montgomery County Departments of Correction and Rehabilitation; Health and Human Services; and Police; the Executive Director of the Montgomery County Commission for Women; and the President of the Board of Education for Montgomery County Public Schools. In addition, there are five members of the general public appointed by the County Executive for renewable three-year terms, at least one of whom must be an attorney representing domestic violence victims, and at least one of whom must be a survivor of domestic violence. In 2010, the DVCC's code pertaining to membership was amended to add a student member. The student member is a high school student who is appointed to serve a one-year term that can be renewed for one additional year. In 2019, the DVCC's code pertaining to membership was again amended to add two representatives from non-governmental domestic violence service or advocacy organizations serving County residents.

### **SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**

The DVCC meets bi-monthly on the second Thursday of the month and has met eighty-three times since September 2006. Meetings are open to the public.

### **LEADERSHIP**

The DVCC Chair and Vice Chair are elected by members via majority vote and serve two-year terms. In January 2021, the DVCC re-elected Debbie Feinstein, Assistant State's Attorney as Chair; and re-elected Thomas Manion, Director of the Family Justice Center, as Vice Chair, both for their second terms.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In the fifteenth year since its creation, the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) has advanced its mission of reducing the incidence of domestic violence and creating a safe community where families are free of abuse. In 2020-2021, the four committees—Victim Services, Education and Outreach, Legislative and Policy Planning, and Offender Program and Policy—identified focus areas and made progress on executing recommendations from the previous report. This report summarizes the accomplishments of the past year and makes recommendations for the next year.

### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- The Victim Services Committee collaborated with the Safe Start Program by Chesapeake Counseling to offer free summer activities that incorporated therapeutic elements for children who witness domestic violence;
- The Education and Outreach Committee coordinated the 12th Annual Choose Respect Montgomery Video Contest and received 349 entries;
- The Education and Outreach Committee presented the Choose Respect Montgomery Dating Violence Prevention workshop, “Expect Respect,” virtually to youth in Montgomery County Public Schools and private schools;
- The Education and Outreach Committee continued promoting the Programs for Athletes to various sports teams;
- The Education and Outreach Committee coordinated RespectFest, the annual Choose Respect event, virtually where 1,000 people engaged in content and activities.
- The Education and Outreach Committee distributed over 48,000 Family Violence Awareness Cards throughout the County.
- The Education and Outreach Committee recognized Domestic Violence Awareness Month and Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month with the County Executive, Montgomery County Council, and the Montgomery County Board of Education;
- The Legislative and Policy Planning Committee carefully monitored domestic violence-related legislation that was proposed during the 2021 legislative session in the Maryland General Assembly.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2020 - 2021**

- The Victim Services Committee recommends continuing to meet and collaborate with local government entities, and local non-profit organizations through the newly formed subcommittee in an effort to address the needs of victims of all types of family and sexual violence;

- The Victim Services Committee recommends continued implementation and expansion of the Safe Start Summer Camp Program through collaborations with Chesapeake Counseling Associates, Bar-T, and other stakeholders;
- The Victim Services Committee recommends continued partnership with Suburban Hospital's Addiction Treatment Center to launch the REACH program in 2022;
- The Education and Outreach Committee recommends continued collaboration with county agencies, community organizations, and schools to increase awareness and prevention of teen dating violence through an annual event, the video contest, presentations at area schools, and programs for athletes and other youth organizations;
- The Education and Outreach Committee recommends continued partnerships with other agencies and organizations to outreach to the community during the COVID-19 health crisis to ensure the public knows about services available;
- The Education and Outreach Committee recommends continuing to raise awareness of Domestic Violence Awareness Month and Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month with public events;
- The Legislative and Policy Planning Committee recommends ongoing collaboration with the Office of Intergovernmental Relations, the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence and the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault to monitor and promote legislation that supports the mission of the DVCC;
- The Offender Program and Policy Committee recommends ongoing collaboration with the Department of Health and Human services and the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation to expand the Abuser Intervention Program.

# VICTIM SERVICES COMMITTEE

## CHAIR: THOMAS MANION

The Victim Services Committee is focused on assessing current programs, systems, and procedures related to domestic violence victim services, especially those collaborative services available at the Montgomery County Family Justice Center (FJC) that keep victims safe, hold offenders accountable, and break down barriers to long-term sustainability. The Committee has been collaborating actively with Montgomery County FJC allied agencies and other stakeholders to identify potential gaps in these efforts and/or areas of improvement. When necessary and appropriate, the Committee also seeks funding to offset the costs of any proposed recommendations. Furthermore, the Committee is focused on developing and maintaining collaborative partnerships to ensure that survivors in the community receive the best possible services at such a critical time. Primary objectives successfully achieved in the previous year are outlined below, as well as recommendations for the coming year.

### FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER

The Victim Services Committee identified that many victims of intimate partner violence who come through the FJC are also victims of, or otherwise exposed to, other types of family and sexual violence such as child abuse, sexual assault, elder abuse and human trafficking. Many FJCs across the country are beginning to utilize the same collaborative framework to address all types of power-based violence, as well as other types of family and sexual violence individually.

This past year, the Victim Services Committee created a targeted subcommittee with a mission to transform victim services in Montgomery County by utilizing an innovative, multi-disciplinary, trauma-informed approach to meet the needs of victims of power-based violence across the life span.

The vision for this subcommittee is to leverage existing resources and expertise to create one safe place where victims of power-based violence can access first-rate care and wrap-around supports from a variety of service providers; to create seamless collaboration between public and private allied agencies through shared planning, decision-making and accountability; and to break the cycle of power-based violence by providing services to entire families.



**RECOMMENDATION:** The Victim Services Committee recommends continuing to meet and collaborate with local government entities through the newly formed subcommittee in an effort to address the needs of victims of all types of family and sexual violence.

## **SAFE START SUMMER CAMP**

The Victim Services Committee worked with Chesapeake Counseling Associates, LLC, which runs the Montgomery County Safe Start Program for children who witness domestic violence, and Bar-T to launch the first Safe Start Summer Camp during the summer of 2019. Unfortunately, because of the COVID-19 health crisis, this program could not have been duplicated during the summer of 2020 and 2021. However, the Safe Start therapists were able to supply art supplies to children enrolled in Safe Start and were able to host arts and crafts activities with a therapeutic component through an online platform throughout the summer. Although the children were not able to have a full camp experience, they were still able to connect with their therapists and continue their healing process.



**RECOMMENDATION:** The Victim Services Committee recommends continued implementation and expansion of the Safe Start Summer Camp Program through collaborations with Chesapeake Counseling Associates, Bar-T, and other stakeholders.

## **ADDICTION SUPPORT SERVICES**

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, "research indicates that women who abuse alcohol and other drugs are more likely to become victims of domestic violence and that victims of domestic violence are more likely to receive prescriptions for and become dependent on tranquilizers, sedatives, stimulants, and painkillers and are more likely to abuse alcohol."

The Victim Services Committee has been working with Suburban Hospital's Addiction Treatment Center to create a support group for clients of the FJC who are also dealing with substance abuse. The REACH (Resilience, Empowerment, Awareness and Creative Healing) Program, run by Suburban Hospital's Addiction Treatment Center, will be a course that provides wellness competencies to empower participants to develop effective coping skills.

The Memorandum of Understanding between Suburban Hospital's Addiction Treatment Center and the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office is currently being finalized at the Victim Services Committee hopes the program will begin in 2022.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Victim Services Committee recommends continued partnership with Suburban Hospital's Addiction Treatment Center to launch the REACH program in 2022.



## **EDUCATION AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE**

### **CHAIR: DEBBIE FEINSTEIN**

The Education and Outreach Committee continued to focus on domestic violence prevention this year. The teen dating violence prevention initiative, titled Choose Respect Montgomery, includes four primary programs: a teen dating violence workshop, “Expect Respect,” which is presented to middle and high schools in the County; programs for athletes to build a culture of respect, an annual event for teens, their parents, educators, and youth service providers; and a public service announcement video contest for teens. This year, the Committee promoted Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October 2020, Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month in February 2020, held RespectFest virtually, and distributed awareness materials on family violence prevention services amid the COVID-19 health crisis. Highlights from each of these activities, as well as recommendations for the future, are listed below.

### **CHOOSE RESPECT MONTGOMERY:** **EXPECT RESPECT**

Expect Respect, a 45-minute interactive program that teaches young people about dating violence, provides opportunities for student involvement and features brief videos on various dating abuse topics such as verbal abuse, abuse through technology, consent, and how to intervene as a responsible witness. Local resources and national teen dating abuse help lines and websites are also discussed.



The conversations with teens during the program specifically focus on:

- 1) Components of healthy relationships such as trust, respect and non-threatening communication;
- 2) Identification of early warning signs of abusive dating behavior including control, isolation and manipulation;
- 3) Addressing dating violence when it is witnessed in school or social circles.

Expect Respect is offered at no cost and is available in English and Spanish. Presentation requests are received at the Sheriff’s Office from various school personnel, including health teachers, counselors, and school principals; and from community organizations, including youth groups and religious organizations. Representatives of the Montgomery County State’s Attorney’s Office, the Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office, and Chesapeake Counseling Associates facilitate the Expect Respect presentations.

Due to the COVID-19 Health Crisis and schools being held virtually, the presentations halted for most of the school year. A few presentations were conducted virtually reaching

over 400 students. The DVCC Program Manager also created videos healthy and unhealthy relationships and how to help a friend for teachers to use during their classes. The Education and Outreach Committee has been working with Montgomery County Public schools to ensure the presentations are promoted to all health classes for the 2021-2022 school year.

### **CHOOSE RESPECT MONTGOMERY: PROGRAMS FOR ATHLETES**

Choose Respect Montgomery wants to create a culture of respect among teens. To help, Choose Respect Montgomery helps athletic teams facilitate two nationally recognized programs for athletes to learn about leadership, respect, and conflict resolution. Futures Without Violence has a program entitled Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM). CBIM is a free toolkit that utilizes the unique and important role that coaches play in the lives of male-identified youth. These comprehensive tools assist coaches in planning important discussions with athletes about respect for women and girls, and that violence does not equal strength. Through CBIM, male-identified athletes learn skills to avoid violence and abuse in their relationships. Athletes as Leaders is a similar program for female-identified athletes. This program aims to empower female-identified youth to take an active role in promoting healthy relationships and ending sexual violence. Athletes are encouraged to be leaders in creating a culture of safety and respect at their school.

Due to the COVID-19 Health Crisis, athletic teams only met virtually. Because of the virtual nature of athletics, only one school, Bethesda Chevy Chase High School, ran both the Coaching Boys into Men Program and the Athletes as Leaders Program successfully.

### **CHOOSE RESPECT MONTGOMERY: VIDEO CONTEST**



**1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE AND FAN FAVORITE:  
“LOVE SHOULD NEVER HURT”**

For the twelfth consecutive year, the DVCC coordinated a Public Service Announcement (PSA) Video Contest for local teens in middle and high school. This contest raises teens’ awareness on the issue of teen dating violence, both through the creation of the PSAs, as well as the distribution of the finished PSAs on social media, YouTube, and in schools. Participants were challenged to create a 60-second video addressing either physical abuse, emotional/verbal abuse, types of technological abuse,

financial abuse, issues around consent, examples of healthy behaviors in a relationship or bystander intervention. Students were also asked to include the phone number for the Family Justice Center. This year, all participants who followed the rules of the contest received 10 student service learning (SSL) hours. Participants submitted a record-breaking

349 entries (by 443 students) from 69 different schools and 1 organization. This year's winner, announced on social media during RespectFest in April 2021, was "Love Should Never Hurt" by a sister-brother team from Poolesville High School and Takoma Park Middle School. Along with the winners chosen by a panel of judges (\$1,000 for first prize, \$750 for second, \$500 for third, and gift cards for two honorable mentions), 16,000 students from around the county viewed and voted on a "fan favorite" video, which won \$500. The Fan Favorite was also awarded to "Love Should Never Hurt". The award money was provided by the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation. To view all of the winning videos, please visit

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/fjc/chooserespect/video.html>.

The DVCC will launch the 2022 contest in the Fall of 2021. Entries will be accepted in English and Spanish, and cash prizes will be awarded to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners at RespectFest in the Spring of 2022.

## **CHOOSE RESPECT MONTGOMERY:** **RESPECTFEST**

From 2010-2019, the Choose Respect Montgomery Initiative hosted the annual Choose Respect Heathy Teen Dating Conference. Each year, hundreds of students, parents and youth serving providers attended the event. After a successful event in 2019, the committee decided to change the annual event from a conference to a community festival and to rename it "RespectFest." RespectFest was scheduled for March 29, 2020 at the Wheaton Community Recreation Center. However, due to the COVID-19 health crisis, it was



cancelled. Because the health crisis continued into 2021, the Choose Respect committee planned RespectFest virtually with great success.

RespectFest took place from April 18 – April 23, 2021. During the week people could attend workshops via zoom such as the opening webinar with a keynote speaker sharing her story of dating violence while in high school, Dating Violence Jeopardy for High School students, "#RelationshipGoals: Navigating healthy and unhealthy friendships and relationships" for middle school students, Yoga and Self Defense Classes, and workshops for parents and youth serving providers.

In addition, students could also engage in the content on their own time with various online activities that addressed consent, healthy and unhealthy relationships, helping a friend, how to be an ally to LGBTQ+ folks, technology abuse, teen dating violence 101 and warning signs.

Students were also able to learn about different topics through the daily social media posts on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. The winners of the Choose Respect Video Contest were also announced on social media throughout the week.

RespectFest engaged 1,000 people on what dating violence is, the importance of speaking out about it, and how to help people who are in abusive relationships. The more people who know about dating violence the better chance we have to lower the rates. In addition, the more people who know where to go for help leads to more people getting help and living lives free of violence.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Choose Respect Montgomery initiative has been a successful prevention and outreach project over the past twelve years. It is the recommendation of the Education and Outreach Committee to continue and expand collaboration with county agencies, community organizations, and schools to increase awareness and prevention of teen dating violence through an annual event, the video contest, presentations at area schools, and programs for athletes and other youth organizations.

## **FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION CAMPAIGN**

The Family Violence Prevention Campaign was created in April 2020 as a response to the COVID-19 health crisis. The public health crisis surrounding COVID-19 has magnified the dangers that victims of family violence face every day. Victims are often isolated, manipulated, and controlled by their abuser. They may be intimate partners, children, seniors, or vulnerable people and unable to seek help on their own. Their isolation often cuts them off from potential support systems, which is why it is so difficult for them to come forward and seek help even in normal times.



Do you feel unsafe at home?  
Are you concerned about a neighbor or loved one?  
Free help is available.

—————>

¿Se siente inseguro en su casa?  
¿Está preocupado por su vecino o ser querido?  
Hay ayuda gratuita disponible.

**The Montgomery County Family Justice Center**  
240-773-0444  
safe@montgomerycountymd.gov

**The Montgomery County Crisis Center**  
240-777-4000 (24 hours/horas)



**Warning signs of family violence**

- ◆ Insults, demeans, or shames you with put-downs
- ◆ Controls every penny spent in the household
- ◆ Controls who you see, where you go, or what you do
- ◆ Intimidates you with guns, knives, or other weapons
- ◆ Threatens or causes physical harm

**Signos de advertencia de violencia familiar**

- ◆ Le humilla haciéndole sentir vergüenza o deshonra
- ◆ Controla como se gasta cada centavo en la familia
- ◆ Trata de controlar con qué personas usted se reúne, a dónde va o lo que hace
- ◆ Le intimida con armas de fuego, cuchillos u otro tipo de armas
- ◆ Amenaza o causa daño físico

### *Awareness Card*

The campaign message is: “Do You Feel Unsafe at Home? Are you concerned about a neighbor or loved one? Free Help Is Available.” This message was, and continues to be, available in English and Spanish on all printed material. Electronic versions of the message

were also translated into French, Mandarin, Amharic, Korean, Swahili, Igbo, Arabic, Tagalog, Russian, Urdu, Hindi, Vietnamese, Farsi and Portuguese.

This fiscal year, the DVCC continued to distribute over 48,000 awareness cards to the community.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Education and Outreach Committee recommends continued partnerships with other agencies and organizations to outreach to the community during the COVID-19 health crisis to ensure the public knows about services available.

### **PROMOTION OF AWARENESS MONTHS**

To bring attention to Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October 2020, the Education and Outreach Committee worked with the County Council to present a Proclamation for Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Tom Manion, Director of the Montgomery County Family Justice Center and Smita Varia, Program Manager for the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council also held a webinar for the public on domestic violence and COVID-19. In addition, the Choose Respect Committee in partnership with the One Love Foundation, the Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse (JCADA), the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA), House of Ruth Maryland and EmpowHER (Montgomery County Public School Organization) held an Instagram Takeover to spread awareness about dating violence. Each day, for one week during October, the Choose Respect Instagram Account posted information about different topics related to dating violence.

In February 2020, the Montgomery County Council with the Montgomery County Executive and the Montgomery County Board of Education each presented proclamations to the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council designating February as Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Education and Outreach Committee recommends continuing to raise awareness of Domestic Violence Awareness Month and Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month with public events.

# LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY PLANNING COMMITTEE

**CHAIR: SPENCER CANTRELL**

The Legislative and Policy Planning Committee focused this year on supporting certain domestic violence-related legislation in the state of Maryland. Below is a summary of supported legislation as well as the committee's recommendation for the coming year.

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEGISLATION UPDATES**

A few bills related to domestic violence were proposed to the Maryland General Assembly this year. The bills supported by the Legislative and Policy Committee are summarized below.

### **PASSED**

#### **HB39/HB581 - Name Changes – Prohibition of Publishing**

This bill will require a court to waive a certain publication requirement for a change of name under the Maryland Rules on motion by an individual who has filed the action. This will allow domestic violence victims to change their names safely and confidentially.

### **DID NOT PASS**

**HB 147/SB 250 – Criminal Law–Sexual Crimes–Repeal of Spousal Defense** – This bill would repeal the prohibition on prosecuting a person for rape or certain sexual offenses against a victim who is the person's legal spouse. Under current law, a person can only be prosecuted for raping their spouse under certain circumstances.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Legislative and Policy Planning Committee recommends ongoing collaboration with the Office of Intergovernmental Relations, the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence and the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault to monitor and promote legislation that supports the mission of the DVCC.

# OFFENDER PROGRAM AND POLICY COMMITTEE

**CHAIR: TINA MICHAELS**

The Offender Program and Policy Committee includes members from Montgomery County and Maryland State agencies that focus on domestic violence offender intervention.

Committee members focus on evaluating offender programs within their individual departments and identifying collaborative opportunities to improve communication and offender services as a whole. The details of the committee's departmental and system review as well as recommendations for improvement are outlined below.

Due to the COVID-19 Health Crisis, several initiatives were put on hold because the Courts were only hearing cases virtually and services for Offenders stopped in order to limit contact with others to ensure health safety.

## **ABUSER INTERVENTION PROGRAMS**

The Offender Program and Policy Committee is continuing to work on initiatives to expand the Abuser Intervention Program (AIP). The AIP program is a 22-week group therapy program for individuals who are abusive to their intimate partners and who have been court-ordered to participate. Participants learn to take responsibility for their actions and to communicate more effectively.

Currently, this program is available to protective order respondents, and defendants who are supervised by Pre-trial services or on probation. Since last year, the Offender Program and Policy Committee has been exploring the possibility of offering the program to those that are currently incarcerated in the county's jails on domestic violence charges. These are offenders who would greatly benefit from this program. However, because of the COVID-19 Health Crisis, all programs offered in detention centers have been halted. Once operations return to regular status, the Offender Program and Policy Committee will resume working with the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to offer the Abuser Intervention Program.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Offender Program and Policy Committee recommends ongoing collaboration with the Department of Health and Human services and the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation to expand the Abuser Intervention Program.

## SUMMARY

Through the services provided by the FJC, the monitoring of domestic violence policy, and the implementation of numerous domestic violence prevention initiatives, the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) continues to play an active and critical role in creating a safe community for families to live free of abuse. These activities and programs would not be possible without the support of DVCC agency partners, community groups and the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation. In the coming year, the DVCC will continue to promote and expand existing initiatives and services as well as explore new, innovative strategies to reduce the incidence of domestic violence in Montgomery County.



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