DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN WHATCOM COUNTY 1998 - 2009

BELLINGHAM-WHATCOM COUNTY COMMISSION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
1407 Commercial Street
Bellingham, WA 98225
360-312-5700
# Table of Contents

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** ........................................................................................................3

**LIST OF FIGURES** ................................................................................................................4

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INDICATORS: LAW ENFORCEMENT**
- Domestic Violence Offenses ..............................................................................................5
- Per Capita Rates of Offenses ..............................................................................................6
- Verbal Domestics and Domestic Violence Offenses .........................................................7
- Domestic Violence Offenses by Category of Crime .........................................................8
- Domestic Violence Data by Jurisdiction ...........................................................................9

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INDICATORS: JAIL AND THE COURTS**
- Jail Bookings ...................................................................................................................10
- Misdemeanor Charges ......................................................................................................11
- Felony Cases .....................................................................................................................13
- Probation ........................................................................................................................15
- Domestic Violence Protection Orders ............................................................................16

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INDICATORS: SERVICES**
- Domestic Violence Perpetrator Treatment ....................................................................17
- Services to Victims of Domestic Violence ......................................................................19

**APPENDIX A: Glossary** .....................................................................................................24

**APPENDIX B: Population Figures** ........................................................................................27

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS** ......................................................................................................28
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the annual report of domestic violence data in Whatcom County, published by the Bellingham-Whatcom County Commission Against Domestic Violence. This report describes the characteristics of domestic violence-related incidents reported by all Whatcom County Municipal, Tribal and County Law Enforcement Agencies; the nature and outcome of domestic violence cases adjudicated in Tribal, Municipal, District and Superior Courts; and the characteristics of services utilized by both perpetrators and victims of domestic violence in Whatcom County.

Many of the domestic violence indicators across the criminal and civil justice systems have been on the decline or remained steady over the past few years. For example, the number of domestic violence offenses reported by Whatcom County Law Enforcement Agencies has been on the decline since 2005, while the number of verbal domestics reported has been fairly steady over the same time period. When taking population increases into account, the downward trend becomes more pronounced, with a decrease in county-wide domestic violence rates each year since a peak in 2004. Statewide domestic violence per capita rates have also been on the decline over the past few years, hitting a low point in 2008. Aside from the per capita rates presented in Figure 2, all other statistics are based on frequencies and are not adjusted for population changes.

Though the number of domestic violence misdemeanors filed in 2009 was a slight increase from 2008, the past four years were the lowest in the twelve-year reporting period. The number of domestic violence jail bookings and the number of probation referrals have both decreased between 2008 and 2009, though the pattern over the entire data collection period is less clear. As discussed in previous reports, variation in jail bookings has more to do with systemic factors (i.e. jail space, changes in tracking systems) than with true changes in the prevalence of domestic violence or the criminal justice system’s response to this violence.

Like jail bookings, statistics on domestic violence perpetrator treatment are affected by many factors other than the mere occurrence of domestic violence. The number of perpetrators completing evaluations and participating in treatment varies year to year, though the treatment status has been more consistent. In 2009 and throughout the data collection period, about one-third of perpetrators receiving treatment each year are terminated due to non-compliance.

When looking at victim service providers as a whole, the picture is complex. For example, the numbers of domestic violence victims receiving emergency shelter from Womencare or advocacy services from Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services (DVSAS) have been fairly constant over the last few years. On the other hand, callers to the Womencare Helpline nearly doubled between 2006 and 2009. The number of victims receiving services from Lummi Victims of Crime fluctuates year to year, as does the relatively small numbers of students being served by Western Washington University’s Crime and Sexual Assault Support Services (CASAS).

Data limitations prevent a causal analysis of these changes in domestic violence-related activity. Significant enhancement of existing data collection methodologies are required to adequately address such questions.  

Data for domestic violence indicators were obtained from one of three sources: "Crime in Washington" (Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs); Judicial Information System (State of Washington); and records kept by individual agencies. A glossary is included in Appendix A.

---

1 The issues related to data collection and analysis are addressed on pages 5-6 of the March 2005 Report: "Domestic Violence in Whatcom County: A Compilation of Data", which can be found on the Domestic Violence Commission’s website (www.dvcommission.org).
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Domestic Violence Offenses: Whatcom County ........................ 5
Figure 2 Domestic Violence Per Capita: Whatcom County and Washington State Offenses per 1,000 Residents .......... 6
Figure 3 Verbal Domestics and Domestic Violence Offenses ............... 7
Figure 4 Domestic Violence Offenses by Category of Crime................. 8
Figure 5 Domestic Violence Jail Bookings ........................................... 10
Figure 6 Domestic Violence Misdemeanor Charges Filed ..................... 11
Figure 7 Domestic Violence Misdemeanors: Resolution of Charges (n=1096) .................................................................................... 12
Figure 8 Domestic Violence Felony Cases Filed as a Percentage of All Felony Cases Filed............................................................... 13
Figure 9 Domestic Violence Felonies: Resolution of Cases (n=215)........ 14
Figure 10 Whatcom County District Court Probation: Domestic Violence Charges for Supervision ................................. 15
Figure 11 Domestic Violence Protection Orders Filed ........................... 16
Figure 12 Domestic Violence Perpetrators: Evaluation and Treatment ................................................................. 17
Figure 13 Domestic Violence Perpetrators: Treatment Status .............. 18
Figure 14 Victims Served: Lummi Victims of Crime......................... 19
Figure 15 Victims Served: Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services .......................................................................................... 20
Figure 16 Victims Served: Womencare Helpline Callers .................. 21
Figure 17 Victims Served: Womencare Shelter Residents ............... 22
Figure 18 Victims Served: Crime and Sexual Assault Support Services (CASAS) ............................................................... 23

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DATA BY JURISDICTION: 2009 .................. 9
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN WHATCOM COUNTY: LAW ENFORCEMENT

Domestic Violence Offenses

In 2009:

- Whatcom County Law Enforcement Agencies reported a total of 1,259 domestic violence offenses.
- The Bellingham Police Department (BPD) and Whatcom County Sheriff’s Office (WCSO) reported 880 domestic violence offenses.
- 379 domestic violence offenses were reported by all other law enforcement agencies, including Lummi Nation and Nooksack Tribal Police Departments; Blaine, Everson-Nooksack, Ferndale, Lynden and Sumas Police Departments; and Western Washington University Police.

Figure 1 illustrates numbers of domestic violence offenses as reported by all Whatcom County Law Enforcement Agencies between 1998 and 2009. To see the breakdown of DV offenses by jurisdiction for 2009, see Table 1 on page 9.

In 2009, Whatcom County Law Enforcement Agencies reported a total of 1,259 domestic violence offenses, including 880 from BPD and WCSO, and 379 from other sources. The total number of offenses reported from BPD and WCSO has been on the decline in recent years, while the number reported from all other Whatcom County law enforcement agencies has been fairly steady.

Domestic violence continues to represent a consistent proportion of the total criminal offenses that are reported in Whatcom County. In 2009, as in preceding years, approximately 13.5 percent of all reported criminal offenses were domestic violence-related.
**Per Capita Rates of Domestic Violence Offenses**

*In 2009:*

- *Whatcom County’s per capita rate of domestic violence offenses was 6.5.*
- *The per capita rate of domestic violence for Washington State was slightly higher at 7.2.*

Figure 2 illustrates both Whatcom County and Washington State per capita rates of domestic violence offenses between 1998 and 2009.

In 2009, Whatcom County's domestic violence per capita rate was 6.5 offenses for every 1,000 residents. Whatcom County’s per capita rate of domestic violence has been on a downward trend since a peak in 2004. Washington State’s per capita rate has also been on the decline, with the exception of 2009.

---

2 Per capita rate is defined as the number of reported domestic violence offenses for every 1,000 residents.
Verbal Domestics and Domestic Violence Offenses

In 2009:

- The Bellingham Police Department (BPD) and Whatcom County Sheriff’s Office (WCSO) reported 1,141 verbal domestics, a similar number to the past few years of data.\(^3\)
- 880 domestic violence offenses were reported by BPD and WCSO, a figure that has been on the decline since a peak in 2005.

Figure 3 compares the number of reported domestic violence offenses to the number of reported verbal domestics in each of the years evaluated.

In 2009 the BPD and WCSO reported 1,141 verbal domestics and 880 domestic violence offenses. See Table 1 on page 9 for verbal domestics and domestic violence offenses across all Whatcom County jurisdictions.

With the exception of 2005, law enforcement have dealt with verbal domestics (where no crime has been committed) at a higher rate than they did domestic violence offenses (where a crime has been committed). On average, law enforcement typically responds to 13 percent more verbal domestics than they do domestic violence offenses. For BPD and WCSO, verbal domestics also appear to be on the decline.

---

\(^3\) Verbal domestics represent incidents where law enforcement determines that no physical assault has occurred, and/or where no other conditions are met that warrant arrest.
**Domestic Violence Offenses by Category of Crime**

In 2009:

- 60 percent of all domestic violence offenses were Assaults (including Simple Assaults and Aggravated Assaults).
- One-third of all domestic violence offenses were Violations of Protection or No Contact Orders.

Figure 4 illustrates domestic violence offenses by category as reported by all Whatcom County law enforcement agencies in 2009.

In 2009, Simple Assault represented the largest category of domestic violence related crime with 54 percent of reported offenses falling into this category. Aggravated Assault (assault that involves the use of a weapon and/or infliction of bodily injury) represented 6 percent of reported domestic violence offenses.\(^4\) Order Violations (i.e. violations of No Contact Orders or Orders of Protection) constituted a third of domestic violence offenses (34 percent).

\(^4\) Homicides represent .2 percent of Domestic Violence Offenses and are included with the Aggravated Assaults.
Domestic Violence in Whatcom County: Breakdown by Jurisdiction

Table 1 shows Verbal Domestics, Domestic Violence Offenses, and Domestic Violence Misdemeanor Charges Filed broken down by jurisdiction. Note that there may be some duplication between the WCSO, Tribal, and University police departments and other jurisdictions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JURISDICTION (POPULATION)</th>
<th>VERBAL DOMESTICS</th>
<th>DV OFFENSES</th>
<th>DV MISDEMEANORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BELLINGHAM (76,130)</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLAINE (4,740)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FERNDALE (11,080)</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LYNDEN (11,690)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMAS (1,326)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOOKSACK &amp; EVERSON (3,448)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHATCOM COUNTY SHERIFF’S OFFICE (84,686)&lt;sup&gt;5&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LUMMI RESERVATION (6,500)&lt;sup&gt;6&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOOKSACK HOUSING (400)&lt;sup&gt;7&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,566</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,259</strong></td>
<td><strong>1090</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

5 By statute, the WCSO also has a county-wide responsibility and at times handles domestic violence-related incidents within the corporate limits of the municipalities which include the County’s total 2009 Uniform Crime Report (UCR) population of 193,100. Some of the numbers may be generated within the municipal limits and the Indian reservations.

6 Out of the 6,500 reservation residents, only 4,000 are tribal members. WCSO is sometimes called in to respond to non-tribal members; however, these calls are also included in the Lummi numbers.

7 Out of the 400 residents of Nooksack housing, only 320 are tribal members. WCSO is always called in to respond to non-tribal members; however, these calls are also included in the Nooksack numbers.
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN WHATCOM COUNTY: JAIL AND THE COURTS

Jail Bookings

In 2009:

- The Whatcom County Jail reported 1,088 domestic violence-related bookings.

Figure 5 illustrates the number of domestic violence-related jail bookings between 2002 and 2009.

Between 2002 and 2009, an average of 1,219 individuals per year were booked into Whatcom County Jail on domestic violence-related offenses. Domestic violence consistently represents a significant category of jail bookings, accounting for 14 percent of total bookings in 2009.

The differences in jail bookings is partially due to factors related to jail space, booking priorities, and the opening of the Alternative Correction Center.
**Misdemeanor Charges: Filings and Resolutions**

*In 2009:*

- Whatcom County Courts reported 1,090 misdemeanor domestic violence-related charge filings.\(^8\)
- 53 percent of misdemeanor charges resolved were found guilty (this includes the 15 percent of charges that were amended).

Figure 6 illustrates the number of misdemeanor domestic violence charges filed in Whatcom County Courts between 1998 and 2009.

![Figure 6 Domestic Violence Misdemeanor Charges Filed](image)

In 2009, Whatcom County Courts reported 1,090 misdemeanor domestic violence-related charges filed. Though the number of domestic violence misdemeanors filed in 2009 was a slight increase from 2008, the past four years were the lowest in the twelve year reporting period.

---

\(^8\) Whatcom County Courts include: Whatcom County District Court; Nooksack and Lummi Tribal Courts; and Bellingham, Ferndale, Sumas, Lynden, Everson-Nooksack, and Blaine Municipal Courts.
Figure 7 illustrates the outcomes of those misdemeanor charges resolved in 2009.

Over the course of 2009, there were 1,096 domestic violence misdemeanor charges resolved across Whatcom County Courts. The most common disposition of charges in 2009 was “Dismissed” at 46 percent, followed by “Guilty” at 38 percent. Fifteen percent of charges were “Amended”9 and only one percent were “Deferred”.10

It is important to note that these figures do not reflect the percentage of defendants who are found guilty or who have charges dismissed. For example, a single defendant may be charged with three domestic violence misdemeanors; all parties may ultimately agree that the defendant will plead guilty to one of the charges and that the lesser two of the charges will be dropped. As such, two of the defendant’s charges would still be counted in the “Dismissed” category (and reflected in the figure above) even though the ultimate resolution of the case would be more accurately characterized by his/her “Guilty” plea.

---

9 An amended disposition, or sentence, means that the defendant entered a guilty plea to a charge that was amended from the original charge. This could include dropping the “DV” tag.

10 With a deferred prosecution, the defendant stipulates to facts of the charge, agrees to an order of continuance, and agrees to comply with certain conditions within a set time period. If the defendant is found to be non-compliant in that time period, the charge will resolve as guilty. If the defendant complies with the agreement, the original charge may be amended or dismissed upon completion.
Felony Cases: Filings and Resolutions

In 2009:

- The Whatcom County Prosecutor’s Office reported filing 208 felony domestic violence-related cases.
- The number of domestic violence felony filings dropped between 2008 and 2009. This was true across all categories of felony case filings.
- 82 percent of felonies cases resolved in 2009 were found guilty (this includes the 40 percent of cases that were amended).

Figure 8 shows the number of felony domestic violence cases filed by the Whatcom Prosecutor’s Office as a proportion of all felonies filed within a given year.

The number of felony domestic violence cases filed by the Whatcom County Prosecutor’s has averaged at 212 over the past nine years, with a low point of 162 in 2001 and a peak of 276 in 2005. When looking at domestic violence felonies as a proportion of all felonies, there is even less variation from year to year, with domestic violence cases making up between 10-14 percent of all felonies each year.
Figure 9 illustrates the outcome of felony domestic violence cases that were resolved in 2009.

Over the 2009 calendar year, there were a significant number of domestic violence felony cases resolved (n=215). With respect to the outcomes of these cases, a majority of cases were resolved with either “Guilty” or “Amended” classifications, (42 percent and 40 percent respectively). The remainder resulted in “Dismissed” (10 percent), or “Other” (7 percent) classifications.

Due to rounding, the percentages of felony case resolutions does not add up to 100 percent, though it does include all cases.

An amended disposition, or sentence, means that the defendant entered a guilty plea to a charge that was amended from the original charge.
**Probation Referrals**

_In 2009:_

- Whatcom County District Court Probation was referred 668 domestic violence-related charges for supervision.

Figure 10 shows all domestic violence charges referred to Whatcom County District Court Probation during the years 1998 through 2009.

In 2009, Whatcom County District Court Probation was referred a total of 668 domestic violence-related charges for supervision. This is a substantial drop from the 896 referrals in 2008, and a break from the trend of increasing referrals since 2000.

However, the supervision rates catalogued between 2007 and 2009 cannot be compared to preceding years based on significant changes in the scope of responsibility for Whatcom County District Court Probation. In August of 2007, Blaine Probation began referring all charges for supervision to Whatcom County District Court Probation. As such, Blaine cases are included in the number of charges for supervision reported in 6 months of 2007 and all of 2008 and 2009.
Domestic Violence Protection Orders

In 2009:
- 297 Domestic Violence Protection Orders were filed in Whatcom County Courts.\(^{13}\)
- The average number of protection orders filed each year over the past ten years is 342.

Figure 11 indicates the number of Domestic Violence Protection Orders filed in Whatcom County Courts between 2000 and 2009.

![Figure 11 Domestic Violence Protection Orders Filed](image)

The 297 protection orders filed in 2009 represents a slight increase since 2008, after a four year decline. 2004 was the peak number of protection orders filed in the ten-year time period.

---

\(^{13}\) Includes Whatcom County District and Superior Courts, and Lummi and Nooksack Tribal Courts.
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN WHATCOM COUNTY: SERVICES

Perpetrators: Evaluation and Domestic Violence Treatment\textsuperscript{14}

In 2009:

- 221 individuals completed Domestic Violence Evaluations.
- 210 individuals were in perpetrator treatment at some point during the year.

Figure 12 shows the number of individuals evaluated for domestic violence perpetrator treatment and the number of individuals who received treatment at any point during the year.

![Graph showing number of evaluations and treatment over years]

\textbf{Figure 12 Domestic Violence Perpetrators: Evaluation and Treatment}\textsuperscript{15}

In 2009, 210 individuals participated in domestic violence treatment at some point in the year, representing a substantial drop from the number of 2008 participants (315). No clear trends emerge from the seven-year period of data.

\textsuperscript{14} Since 2008, services to perpetrators of domestic violence in Whatcom County were provided by two agencies: Violence Intervention Professionals and Waterfront Counseling.

\textsuperscript{15} Includes individuals in treatment at any point during the 2009 calendar year.
In 2009:

- One third of all individuals in Domestic Violence Perpetrator Treatment were terminated due to noncompliance.
- Forty-three percent of all individuals in treatment in 2009 completed treatment that year.

Figure 13 demonstrates the treatment status for each person who received perpetrator’s treatment at some point in the year.

![Figure 13 Domestic Violence Perpetrators: Treatment Status](chart)

The proportion of individuals completing treatment each year has risen slowly since 2005, while the proportion in ongoing treatment has decreased.

---

16 Includes individuals in treatment at any point during the calendar year.
Victim Services\textsuperscript{17}

In 2009:

- 109 domestic violence victims received a wide array of services from Lummi [Nation] Victims of Crime (LVOC).
- 2,553 domestic violence victims received a wide array of services from Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services (DVSAS) of Whatcom County.
- 2,148 callers utilized Womencare Shelter’s helpline, and 232 women and children stayed at least one night in Womencare Shelter.
- 19 Western Washington University (WWU) students received Crime and Sexual Assault Support Services (CASAS) for domestic violence between January and June, and 9 students received assistance between July and December.

Figure 14 indicates the total number of domestic violence victims served by Lummi Victims of Crime between 2001 and 2009.

In 2009, Lummi Victims of Crime provided crisis intervention/support services and/or legal advocacy services to 109 Native American victims of domestic violence. While LVOC’s service provision has fluctuated over time, an average of 122 Native victims received services from this agency each year.

\textsuperscript{17} Services to victims of domestic violence in Whatcom County are overwhelmingly provided by three agencies: Lummi Victims of Crime (LVOC), Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services (DVSAS), and Womencare Shelter and Domestic Violence Services (Womencare). Crime and Sexual Assault Support Services (CASAS) also provides services to Western Washington University students who are victims.
Victim Services Continued

Figure 15 indicates the total number of domestic violence victims served by Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services (DVSAS) between 1999 and 2009.

In 2009, DVSAS provided services to 2,576 unduplicated domestic violence victims. These services include on-going and legal advocacy, and support groups.\(^{18}\) Figure 15 reveals a steady increase in the number of victims served between 1999 and 2006, followed by a sudden drop in 2007 and leveling out in 2008 and 2009. This pattern is the effect of a new tracking system implemented by DVSAS in 2007 that made available for the first time a reliable count of clients with minimal duplication. Prior to 2007, DVSAS utilized a tracking system that was unable to identify returning clients.

As such, the number of domestic violence victims served between 2007 and 2009 cannot be compared to previous years. However, over the last three years of tracking unduplicated clients served by DVSAS, there has been little change over time.

Though the current system does allow the identification of returning clients, there may still be some duplication in the number of victims served due to different tracking systems for clients served through different programs.

\(^{18}\)In addition to serving 2,576 domestic violence victims, DVSAS responded to 1,493 hotline calls. Some of these calls reflect unduplicated clients and some of these callers ultimately received other services. There also may be some duplication in the number of hotline callers due to anonymous callers.
Victim Services Continued

Figure 16 reports the number of callers served by the Womencare Helpline between 1999 and 2009.

After a decrease in callers between 2004 and 2006, utilization of the Womencare Helpline has been on the increase for the past three years. The number of callers received in 2009 is the highest in the 11 years that data is available. With the exception of anonymous callers, these numbers track unduplicated callers, regardless of how many calls each caller makes.
Victim Services Continued

Figure 17 reports the number of women and children victims who received emergency housing and support services from Womencare between 1999 and 2009.

In 2009, a total of 111 women and 121 children obtained emergency housing at Womencare Shelter to escape domestic violence in their own homes. In contrast to use of the help line, the number of people served by the shelter has decreased over the past four years.

A decrease in the number of people receiving shelter does not indicate a decrease in the number of people seeking shelter; rather, it likely indicates an increase in the average length of shelter stay, the causes of which are beyond the scope of this report.
**Victim Services Continued**

Figure 18 shows the number of domestic violence victims served each six-month period by Crime and Sexual Assault Support Services (CASAS) of Western Washington University.

![Bar chart showing the number of domestic violence victims served each six-month period by Crime and Sexual Assault Support Services (CASAS) of Western Washington University.](image)

**Figure 18 Victims Served: Crime and Sexual Assault Support Services (CASAS)**

CASAS confidential services include: 24 hour student helpline, medical/legal assistance, professional advocacy, information and referral, support groups, and academic advocacy. The numbers of students seeking CASAS services for domestic violence has been on a slight increase over the past two years, though fall and spring semesters may include duplicates. Nineteen students received CASAS services between January and June 2009, and nine students received assistance between July and December 2009. Due to the summer break, it is typical that fewer students are served during the second half of the year.
APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY

**Domestic Violence, as defined by service providers.**

This is a working definition used by domestic violence perpetrator treatment and domestic violence victim service providers. Domestic violence is defined as a pattern of behavior used by an individual to establish and maintain coercive control over one's intimate partner. Domestic violence consists of physical, sexual, psychological, and/or emotional abuse and can be verbal or non-verbal.

**Domestic Violence, as defined by the law.**

This is a definition used by the civil and criminal justice systems, including law enforcement, prosecution, probation, jails, and the courts. Washington State law (RCW26.50.010(1)) reads:

"Domestic violence means:

(a) Physical harm, bodily injury, assault, or the infliction of fear of imminent physical harm, bodily injury or assault, between family or household members;

(b) sexual assault of one family or household member by another; or

(c) stalking as defined in RCW 9A.46.110 of one family or household member by another family or household member."

**Domestic Violence Offenses**

Under Washington State law, an offense is considered to be domestic violence-related if it is committed by a family member (regardless of the family relationship) or by a domestic partner. Domestic violence offenses include crimes in the following categories: criminal homicide, forcible rape, robbery, assault, burglary, larceny theft, motor vehicle theft, arson and violation of Protection/No Contact Orders. It is not unusual for multiple offenses to occur during the same incident. However, based on recording standards established by the FBI, only the "highest-ranking offense" is recorded into Uniform Crime Reports, which is the nation's statistical database for crime (utilized by this report). For example, an offender can break into a victim's home, steal her car keys, force her into her vehicle, drive her to a secluded location, sexually assault her, take her car and her purse, and abandon her. Even though there are multiple offenses in this one event, the highest-ranking offense is the rape. This would be the only offense recorded, counted (and thus accessible to researchers) in Uniform Crime Reports. Therefore, for each domestic violence related incident, there is generally only one domestic violence offense counted. However, it is important to remember that this system of coding identifies and tallies a police identified problem and is not based on the findings of a court, medical examiner, jury or other judicial findings.

**Felony Domestic Violence**

Felony domestic violence offenses are defined as occurring when there is a family, household, or dating relationship, and one or both parties commit a crime against the person or property of the other. The nature of the charges filed may include both physical and non-physical assault offenses, including but not limited to, felony harassment/threats, violation of a no contact order, burglary, malicious mischief, robbery, kidnapping, unlawful imprisonment, assault and murder. The superior courts in the State of Washington have sole jurisdiction over the adjudication of cases when a felony offense is charged.
**Misdemeanor Domestic Violence**

Misdemeanor domestic violence crimes occur when there is a family, household, or dating relationship, and one or both parties commit a crime against the person or property of the other. Examples of this type of crime include: Violation of a Protection Order; Assault 4th Degree; Malicious Mischief; Disorderly Conduct; and Interfering with Reporting of Domestic Violence. Courts of Limited Jurisdiction (District and Municipal Courts) and Tribal Courts have jurisdiction over domestic violence related misdemeanors committed within their area of authority.

**Verbal Domestics**

Law enforcement officers are frequently called to respond to situations that are categorized as "Domestic Violence – No Assault", or "Verbal Domestics". These are incidents where law enforcement determines that no physical assault occurred, and/or where no other conditions were met to warrant probable cause for an arrest.

**Jail Bookings**

Due to inadequate jail space, Whatcom County Jail has had to prioritize those offenses that will be accepted for booking (versus being issued a citation and released). For the past several years, domestic violence offenses have been prioritized and typically accepted for booking. Comparatively, significant restrictions have been imposed on most other bookings. As a result, domestic violence-related offenses represent a significant proportion of jail bookings relative to all criminal bookings. Until space issues are remediated, accurate estimates regarding the proportion of offenders booked into jail for domestic violence-related offenses (versus all other offenses) will not be able to be determined.

**Probation Services**

Whatcom County District Court Probation provides probation services for Whatcom County District Court and the Municipal Courts of Bellingham, Everson-Nooksack, Lynden, Blaine, and Sumas. Lummi Tribal Court, and Ferndale Municipal Court provide their own probation services.

Probation services are typically limited to misdemeanor cases, with felony domestic violence cases supervised by the Washington State Department of Corrections. It is important to note that the number of new referrals to probation does not correspond to the actual number of individuals requiring supervision by that department. For example, a single incident may result in two domestic violence charges. If the individual responsible for this incident is mandated to pre-trial probation supervision by the courts, the probation department counts this as two new referrals (corresponding to the number of charges). If during the same calendar year that same individual is convicted of one of those domestic violence charges and is ordered to two years of probation supervision, this is counted as an additional referral by the department. In summary, this individual’s case will result in three new domestic violence probation referrals in one calendar year.
Protection Orders

A Domestic Violence Protection Order is a civil Court Order available to an individual who is a victim of domestic violence, or who is inflicted with the fear of violence by a family or household member (see RCW 26.50.510 for further definition). In general, Protection Orders may contain stipulations that include prohibiting contact of any kind between the abuser and victim, removing the abuser from a shared residence, awarding temporary custody of the children to the victim and setting parameters for visitation, and/or ordering an abuser to obtain a Domestic Violence Evaluation and Domestic Violence Perpetrator Treatment. Protection Orders are generally sought by individuals who are not involved in criminal domestic violence cases, individuals for whom a criminal case does not resolve all safety issues, such as temporary custody and visitation arrangements of children, and individuals who are the alleged victim in criminal domestic violence cases which result in no conviction or a dismissal of the charges or case.

Domestic Violence Perpetrator Treatment

Washington Administrative Code 388-60-0025 establishes minimum standards for programs that treat perpetrators of domestic violence. In the State of Washington, the Department of Social and Health Services must certify all domestic violence perpetrator treatment providers. In order to be certified, the program must demonstrate that it meets the standards outlined in WAC 388-60-0025. These state codes assert that the focus of domestic violence perpetrator treatment programs is on ending the program participant’s physical, sexual, and psychological abuse. Treatment must be based on strategies and philosophies that hold the participant accountable for the violent and abusive behaviors and are not blaming of the victim. The minimum treatment period for program participants is twenty-six consecutive weekly same gender group sessions followed by monthly sessions until a twelve-month period is complete.
APPENDIX B: POPULATION FIGURES

Washington State’s Office of Financial Management provided all population rates utilized in this report. Whatcom County and Washington State figures are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Whatcom County</th>
<th>Washington State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>160,220</td>
<td>5,750,033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>164,282</td>
<td>5,830,835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>166,826</td>
<td>5,894,143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>170,600</td>
<td>5,974,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>172,200</td>
<td>6,041,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>174,500</td>
<td>6,098,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>177,300</td>
<td>6,167,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>180,800</td>
<td>6,256,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>184,300</td>
<td>6,375,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>188,300</td>
<td>6,488,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>191,000</td>
<td>6,587,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>193,100</td>
<td>6,668,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgments

This report was produced and developed under the direction of the Bellingham-Whatcom County Commission Against Domestic Violence. Public and private organizations provided cooperation and assistance in providing data.

Commission Members: 2010

Laurie Alexander
Karen Burke
Anna Carey
Regina Delahunt
William Elfo
Sheri Emerson
Nikki Finkbonner
Joan Hoisington
Kirsten Hammer
Rebecca Johnson
Michael Knapp

Jon Komorowski
Dave McEachran
Joy Monjure
Linda Quinn
Todd Ramsay
Becky Skaggs
Linda Storck
Dan Story
Cherie Stutesman
Bruce Van Glubt

Commission Staff

Susan Marks, Director
Sue Parrott, Program Supervisor
Juliet Thompson, Program Coordinator
Meaghan Connell, Administrative Assistant

This report was produced with assistance from Cornerstone Strategies, Inc.

Bellingham-Whatcom County Commission Against Domestic Violence
1407 Commercial Street
Bellingham, WA 98225
Phone: 360–312-5700
Fax: 360-312-5770
mail@dvcommission.org
Web: www.dvcommission.org