

Vice President Biden and Attorney General Holder Announce Grants to Help Reduce Domestic Violence Homicides

Twelve Cities and Counties Receive Grants as Part of New, Evidence-Based Prevention Initiative

Vice President Joe Biden and Attorney General Eric Holder today announced grants to 12 programs across the country to target the urgent need to reduce domestic violence homicides. On average, three women a day die as a result of domestic violence. Research shows that women whose partner threatens them with a gun or other weapon are 20 times more likely to subsequently be murdered than other abused women. Moreover, children, coworkers, neighbors and police officers are also killed as a result of domestic violence. From 2009 to 2012, 40 percent of mass shootings – those with four or more victims killed – started with the murderer targeting their girlfriend, wife or ex-wife.

In total, the Department of Justice will award \$2.3 million to 12 sites across the country as part of the new Domestic Violence Homicide Prevention Demonstration Initiative (DVHP Initiative). The DVHP Initiative, created by the Justice Department’s Office on Violence Against Women, (OVW) helps state and local jurisdictions reduce domestic violence homicides by effectively identifying potential victims and monitoring high-risk offenders. The DVHP Initiative is modeled after programs in Massachusetts and Maryland, where the use of coordinated teams of law enforcement, prosecutors, health professionals and victims’ services significantly reduced the domestic violence homicide rate.

“Every single day in America, three women die at the hands of their boyfriend, or their husband, or their ex-husband. Many of these women have been threatened or severely abused in the past. We know what risk factors put someone in greater danger of being killed by the person they love – and that also means we have the opportunity to step in and try to prevent these murders. That’s why these grants are so important. They’ll help stop violence before it turns deadly,” said Vice President Biden.

“Domestic violence is a devastating crime – and it claims far too many lives each and every day,” said Attorney General Holder. “With today’s grant announcement, we are strengthening our ability to fight back more effectively – and aggressively – than ever before. And we’re supporting the kinds of evidence-based domestic violence homicide prevention models that will allow us to reliably predict potentially lethal behavior, take steps to stop the escalation of violence and save lives.”

The Vice President and Attorney General announced the grant awards in Rockville, Md., where they were joined by dozens of Maryland law enforcement officers who have been at the forefront of domestic violence homicide prevention efforts in that state.

“While the statistics seem overwhelming, we are not helpless in the face of these terrible crimes,” said Acting Director of Office on Violence Against Women Bea Hanson. “We hope this evidence-based initiative to reduce domestic violence homicide is a breakthrough in preventing murders and serious injuries across the country.”

The new DVHP Initiative is based on an assessment tool that researchers have identified that can be used to reliably recognize women who may be in fatally abusive relationships. Attempted strangulation, threats with weapons, sexual assault and obsessively jealous and controlling behavior are among the markers of particularly lethal abusers. Once at-risk victims are identified, law enforcement, prosecutors, courts and service providers can take action to protect them and their families.

Since passage of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in 1994, annual rates of domestic violence have dropped by more than 60 percent, but more work remains to reduce the most serious of this violence. OVW is partnering with the National Institute of Justice to rigorously monitor the implementation of the initiative and evaluate its outcomes. OVW is also working with national experts to provide technical assistance to the demonstration sites.

The demonstration sites, each receiving one-year awards ranging from \$100,658 to \$200,000, are: Contra Costa County, Calif.; Miami-Dade County, Fla.; Palm Beach County, Fla.; Rockdale County, Ga.; Winnebago County, Ill.; Boston; Brooklyn, N.Y.; Westchester County, N.Y.; Pitt County, N.C.; Cuyahoga County, Ohio; North Charleston, S.C.; and Rutland, Vt. After the 12-month assessment phase, up to six of the demonstration sites will be selected to continue a three-year implementation phase.

Click [HERE](#) for the fact sheet the Obama Administration’s commitment to reducing domestic violence homicides.

Click [HERE](#) for the fact sheet on the link between common sense efforts to reduce gun violence and preventing domestic violence homicides.

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