

Factsheet: The Obama Administration's Commitment To Reducing Domestic Violence Homicides

"Lives are being saved – we know how to do it – and these grants will help us expand those programs. They'll give 12 communities across the country the tools they need to predict when someone will become violent – and step in before they become deadly."

Vice President Joseph Biden
March 13, 2013

- Since passage of the Violence against Women Act in 1994, annual rates of domestic violence have dropped by 64% percent. In spite of this progress, domestic violence still occurs at alarming rates and too often becomes lethal. On average, three women a day die as a result of domestic violence, and for every woman killed in a domestic violence homicide, nine more are critically injured. We can and must do more to prevent these murders and near-murders.
- Certain behaviors by abusers are strong predictors of escalating violence that ends in homicide or serious injury. Research shows that women whose partner threatens them with a gun or other weapon are 20 times more likely to be murdered than other abused women. Those whose partner verbally threatens to kill them are 15 times more likely to be murdered. Those whose partner tries to strangle them are nearly 10 times more likely to be murdered.
- The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence has implemented a state-wide strategy to prevent domestic violence homicides by enlisting a broad range of first responders, including police, nurses, health clinics, faith leaders, and others to help identify women who are at the highest risk and immediately connect them to domestic violence services. Using this approach, Maryland has reduced its domestic violence homicide rate by 34% over the past five years. The Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center in Newburyport, Massachusetts, created a team of law enforcement and domestic violence service providers to identify high-risk victims and use all tools available under existing law to interrupt the violence and prevent further abuse. Since 2005, the team has intervened in over 106 high risk cases and has had no domestic violence homicides.
- The Department of Justice has announced funding for twelve communities to implement these proven domestic violence homicide reduction and prevention models through a new program, the Domestic Violence Homicide Prevention Demonstration Initiative. These funds are made available under the Grants to Encourage Arrest program in the Violence Against Women Act and were proposed in the President's 2012 budget.
- This four year initiative will replicate the successful work pioneered in Maryland and Newburyport, Massachusetts, and will provide each selected community with intense support in creating and implementing models in their communities to help prevent domestic violence homicides.

- The Department of Justice's National Institute of Justice will conduct a rigorous evaluation of the overall project to ensure that we achieve and document success.
- By replicating these successful models in new communities, this new project is a critical step towards helping keep victims of abuse safe.