


**Judicial Oversight
 Demonstration Initiative**
 City of Boston
 Dorchester Municipal Court



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**Dorchester Court Jurisdiction
 2000 Census**

■ Black/African American	48%	62,453
■ White	24%	30,681
■ Hispanic	12%	15,284
■ Asian/Pacific Islander	8%	10,201
■ Native American	0%	463
■ Other Single Race	3%	4,170
■ Multi-Racial	5%	6,349
Total		129,601

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**Dorchester Court
 Boston Police Department Statistics**

■ Total Aggravated Assaults			
	2001	2002	2003
■ B3:	655	566	580
■ C11:	688	576	629
■ Domestic Related Aggravated Assault			
	2001	2002	2003
■ B3:	257	216	218
■ C11:	223	216	215
■ % of total	36%	38%	36%

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**Dorchester Court
Boston Police Department Statistics**

■ Arrests for Intimate Partner Violence

	2001	2002	2003
■ B2	75	69	44
■ B3	326	391	305
■ C11	286	301	295

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**Dorchester Court
Domestic Violence Case Data**

- Total Number of Arraignments
2001: 1,106 2002: 1,430 2003: 1,545
- Dorchester Assignments to Probation
2001: 499 2002: 533 2003: 448
- Probation Assignments from Other Courts
2001: 81 2002: 68 2003: 40

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**Dorchester Municipal Court
Domestic Violence Case Data**

- Restraining Order Applications
2001: 1,640 2002: 1,352 2003: 1,245
- Restraining Orders Issued
2001: 1,492 2002: 1,250 2003: 1,161

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Dorchester JODI Project Partners

■ Criminal Justice Partners:

- Boston Police Department
- Suffolk County District Attorney's Office
- United States Attorney's Office
- Dorchester Probation Department
- Defense Attorneys

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Police Accomplishments

- Full Staffing of DV Units in JODI Stations
- Recoded Domestic Violence Cases
- High Risk/Repeat DV Offender Database
- Dominant Aggressor & Mutual Arrest Training
- Coordination with Probation
 - High Risk DV Probation Home Visits
 - DV Probation Warrant Apprehension Efforts

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Dorchester domestic Violence Court

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Prosecution Accomplishments

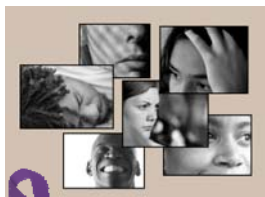
- Full Staffing of a Dedicated DV Unit
- Vertical Prosecution
- Focus on Evidence Based Prosecution
- Protocol Established to Assist with Probation Violation Hearings
- Case Referral System Established for Cases to be Prosecuted Federally

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Lessons Learned

"if you build it, they will come"



- Employee turnover (especially with high concentration of DV cases)
- Food and beverage for victims
- Clothing
- Child care
- Transportation
- Prepare other agencies for more requests i.e. 911 calls, medical records, R/O offices

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Probation Accomplishments

- Doubled Size of DV Unit- Cut Caseloads in Half
- Increased Victim Contact
- Increased Probation Home Visits & Community Supervision
- Increased Coordination w/CJ Partners & BIPs
- Case Management Approach to Supervision
- 2 Assistant Probation Officers assigned to DV Session

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Probation- Lessons Learned

- Intensive Supervision is often determined by caseload size or effective triaging
- Police help for safety checks, high risk home visits and effecting warrants is invaluable
- Prosecutors, advocates, & family members can provide valuable victim & safety information
- Front loaded supervision with clear information and swift consequences pays off
- BIPs & CBOs provide valuable defendant and family information

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Defense Bar

- Unfunded, but very important partner
- Helped to keep the project balanced
- Focus on protection of defendants' rights
- Key partner in defendant restraining order briefing program
- Ability to get buy in from defendants on plea bargains
 - Including explanations of BIPs
- Often have access to victims involved in cases

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Defendant Briefing Sessions

- Explanation of Restraining Order Hearing Process
- Explanation of Consequences of a Violation of a Restraining Order
- Outreach Worker Component
 - Provides Time for Victim to Leave After Hearing
 - Defuses Defendant's Anger
 - Allows for Crisis Intervention
 - Provides Referrals to Human Service Agencies

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Dorchester JODI Project Partners

Advocacy Partners:

Governmental:

- Boston Police Department Civilian DV Advocates
- Suffolk County DA Victim/Witness Advocates

Non-Governmental

- Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence
- Association of Haitian Women in Boston
- Casa Myrna Vazquez
- Center for Community Education Research and Service (CCHERS)- Community Advocacy Program
- Northeastern University School of Law's Domestic Violence Clinic

Dorchester JODI Project Partners

Court-Based Advocacy:

- Triage by JOD-Financed Restraining Order Clerk
- Criminal Cases to Three DA Victim Witness Advocates:
 - *Criminal Case Advocacy*
 - *Restraining Order Advocacy*
 - *Referral to Community-Based JOD and other Organizations*
- Civil Advocacy Office: Four Full-time Legal Advocates or Lawyers (One each from Asian Task Force; Association of Haitian Women, Casa Myrna Vazquez; N. U. Domestic Violence Clinic)
 - *Restraining Order Advocacy*
 - *Referral to DA/VW for Criminal Case Advocacy*
 - *Referral to Community-Based JOD and other Organizations*

Advocacy Accomplishments:

- An Advocate for Every Victim
- Linguistically and Culturally Competent Services
- Strong Civil Legal Advocacy Component
- Strong Referral Network

Advocacy Challenges:

- Coordination of Criminal/Civil RO Advocacy in Court
- Making Room for Advocacy: Court Demands/Culture
- Power/Access for Advocates within Institutions
- Follow-up/Feedback from Referrals Difficult

Advocacy Lessons Learned

■ **Collaboration among Advocates is Easier Said Than Done**

- *Advocates Not Fungible, Conflicting Secondary Goals*
- *Need for Structure, Coordination, Cross Training, & Personal Contact*
- *Formal Protocols for Collaboration Should Be Developed*

■ **Advocacy/Police/Court Staff Perspectives Misunderstood**

- *Conflicting/Poorly understood Goals and Roles Interfere with Coordination*
- *Differences in Institutional Status, Longevity, Hierarchy Create Problems*
- *Need for Structure, Coordination, Cross Training, & Personal Contact*
- *Formal Written Protocols for Working Together Should be Developed*

■ **Non-governmental Advocates Bring Cultural Diversity and Access to Community Agency Services**

■ **Working Together Governmental, Community and Lawyer Advocates Strengthen Court and Community-based Services**

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Dorchester JODI Project Partners

■ **Batterer Intervention Partner:**

- Common Purpose

■ **Other BIPS Serving Probationers**

- EMERGE
- MA Alliance of Portuguese Speakers (MAPS)
- Roxbury Comprehensive Behavioral Health

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Batterer Intervention Accomplishments

- Excellent Communication
 - Regular Monthly Reports to Probation
 - Next Day Notification of Problems/Terminations
 - Coordination with Probation Officers for Their Check Ins with Victims During BIP Session
- No Waiting Lists
- Local Programs
- Community Service Payment Option
- Linguistically and Culturally Specific Programs

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Dorchester JODI Project Partners

■ Community Based

Outreach Partners:

- Close to Home
- Boston Public Health Commission
- Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence

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Community Based Outreach Accomplishments

- Expansion & Strengthening of Informal Support Network for Victims & Families
- Training for Residents
- Ability to Reach Diverse Groups
 - Civic & Block Groups
 - Faith Based Communities
 - Community Centers
 - Health Centers
 - Men's Groups

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Session Accomplishments

- Consistent Judges
- Specialized Prosecution Unit
- Specialized Probation Unit
- Linguistically/Culturally Diverse Advocacy Services
- Regular Probation Reviews
- Restraining Order Briefings for Defendants

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Cultural Competency Accomplishments

- Diversity in Staffing
- Linguistically & Culturally Competent Services
 - Advocacy Services
 - Batterer Intervention Services
- Extensive Outreach in Community
- Training and Cross Training

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Challenges

- Finding the Appropriate Balance in Tone for Session
 - Positive Reinforcement vs. Enabling Defendants
 - Supporting Victims and Holding Defendants Accountable With Fairness as Guiding Principle
 - Presumption of Innocence vs. Tough on Domestic Violence Offenses

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Challenges

- Perception of Fairness in Session vs. Reality of Fairness in Session
 - Victims
 - Defendants
 - Defense Bar
 - Court Staff
 - Public

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Challenges

- Prioritizing Within Session
- Vicarious Traumatization for Staff in Session
- Immigration and Other Secondary Consequences for Victims and Defendants
- Cultural Competence
- Some Differences Among Agencies Remain Significant
 - Coordination
 - Working Within Court Culture

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Challenges

- Collecting Data and Putting General Practice into Written Guidelines and Policies
 - Making time for staff to do their job and document how they do it
 - Finding the resources and local expertise to capture data effectively and use it pro-actively to make policy changes

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Challenges

- If You Bring the Community Into the Court, Where Do You Put Them?
- Specific Program Gaps We Have Not Filled
 - Batterer Intervention Program for Heterosexual Women
 - More Extensive Support Services for Defendants

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Lessons Learned

Probation Reviews are Valuable

- Improve Compliance
- Ensure Consistent Monitoring and Collateral Contacts by Probation
- Promote Informed Supervision by Judge
- Provide Forum to Revise Conditions
- Expose Reasons for Failure

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Lessons Learned

Reviews Have Shown:

- Extensive Substance Abuse
- Other Life Issues Affecting Probationers
 - Mental Illness, Mental Retardation, Head Injury
 - Physical Illness
 - Homelessness
 - Illiteracy
 - Unemployment
- Batterer Intervention Programs Are Do-able
- BIP Failures Not Due to Money or Shame

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Lessons Learned

Focused Strategic Attention Makes a Difference

- Specialized Units
- Clear Lines of Authority
- Operation Silent Night
- High Risk Offender Warrant Prioritization

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Lessons Learned

Collaboration is Easier Said Than Done

- Need for Infrastructure & Coordination
- Conflicting Secondary Goals
- Training & Cross Training is Critical
- Attaining Cultural Diversity is Difficult

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Lessons Learned

Data and Collaborative Meetings are Needed to Measure Effectiveness

- It Takes Time to Set Up Data Collection Systems
- Gaps in Systems, Services, and Knowledge are Most Visible When Various Disciplines Work Together
- Statistics and Exposure to Others in a Quasi-Public Setting Can Foster Institutional Change

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