

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
FINANCE/GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
INFORMATION ITEM**

SUBJECT: **FY 2018 Budget Development – Domestic Violence**

ELECTION DISTRICT: Countywide

STAFF CONTACTS: Erin McLellan, Management and Budget
Julie Grandfield, County Administration

PURPOSE: The purpose of this item is to inform the Board about the County’s domestic violence response system and to highlight domestic violence resource requests that may be proposed during the FY 2018 budget development process.

BACKGROUND: This item is part of a series of service level discussions being brought to the Finance/Government Operations and Economic Development Committee (Committee) as part of the FY 2018 budget development process. It is meant to provide additional information on issues that need to be considered in advance of the Proposed Budget development so that the Board has time to engage in meaningful discussion at a time when overall Board direction on this topic can be formed. There are currently several areas in which staff has identified issues that are affecting current or required service levels. This item will present those issues associated with domestic violence prevention and response.

Domestic violence is a serious public health and public safety issue. Research estimates that one in three women will experience some form of domestic violence in their lifetime. Domestic violence, also known as intimate partner violence (IPV), is defined as the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault and/or abusive behavior as part of a systemic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another. It includes physical violence, sexual violence, threats, and/or emotional or psychological abuse. The frequency and severity of domestic violence varies dramatically. One in five women and one in seven men have been severely physically abused by an intimate partner. It is estimated that only 34 percent of people who are injured by intimate partners receive medical care for their injuries. It is prevalent in every community and affects all people regardless of age, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion or nationality.¹

¹ Source: National Coalition against Domestic Violence.

Loudoun County's Coordinated Community Response

Loudoun County operates within a coordinated community response (CCR) model in addressing domestic violence crimes. This model recognizes that a collaborative approach among potentially involved agencies is a far more effective and safe way to manage the impact of domestic violence crimes than each agency acting independent of one another. Project partners in Loudoun's coordinated community response are both internal and external to the County government structure.

Internal agencies include the Sheriff's Office; the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney; Community Corrections; the Juvenile Court Services Unit; Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Developmental Services; Family Services (both Child Protective Services and Adult Protective Services); and Animal Services. External agencies include the Town of Leesburg's Police Department, Loudoun Citizens for Social Justice (also known as the Loudoun Abused Women's Shelter/LAWS), Loudoun County Public Schools, Legal Services of Northern Virginia, the Virginia Department of Corrections/District 25 State Probation and Parole, the Magistrate's Office, and the Juvenile and Domestic Relations (JDR) Court.

Original Grant Funding

The CCR was implemented over 10 years ago, when the County was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women. The total amount of the grant over a six-year period was \$1.2 million dollars, with \$500,000 awarded in the first two years and lesser amounts in the subsequent years. The funds were to be used to enhance victim safety by providing protection and services to victims and to hold offenders accountable by recognizing domestic violence as a serious violation of criminal law. The grant funding was used to create 3.00 FTE dedicated to domestic violence and a part-time (10 hours/week) coordinator position (that reports to LAWS). The 3.00 FTE dedicated to domestic violence were assigned to the Juvenile Court Services Unit, the Sheriff's Office, and Community Corrections. Local tax dollars have since replaced the grant funding.

Domestic Abuse Response Team and the Domestic Violence Steering Committee

Two formal levels of collaboration were formed as part of the Coordinated Community Response. The first is the Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART), which is composed of front-line staff and mid-level managers of the internal and external agencies that make up Loudoun's domestic violence system. The primary objective of Loudoun's DART is to protect victims and their children and to hold offenders accountable by improving the response of the local criminal justice system. DART works directly with domestic violence victims, offenders, and their children. The team also identifies any systemic gaps in response and service provision and discusses recommendations for changes to local policies and procedures. DART representatives meet once per quarter with the Loudoun County JDR Court judges to discuss ideas for improving the judicial process.

The second level of collaboration is the Domestic Violence Steering Committee, which is comprised of the directors of internal and external project partners, the JDR Court Judges, County Administration, and the DART Coordinator. DART members also attend these committee meetings. The Steering Committee reviews and acts on DART's recommendations for developing new or enhanced policies and procedures, discusses and decides upon systemic changes, and approves new initiatives.

The part-time (10 hours/week) DART Coordinator serves as the liaison between DART and the Steering Committee, organizes and leads DART meetings, interacts with the JDR judges, coordinates training, collects countywide statistics, and identifies relevant grant funding.

The efforts of these combined individuals and agencies over the last decade have resulted in significant improvements to Loudoun's response to domestic violence crimes, including:

- Revising, improving and creating written domestic violence policies and procedures;
- Developing and providing training for law enforcement and other responding personnel;
- Establishing a dedicated domestic violence court docket;
- Establishing an automatic 60-day court review hearing for all DV probationers to report on probation compliance; and
- Increasing the number of service providers (from one to four) who offer Batterer's Invention Program counseling services to offenders.

One of the most recent system improvements was implementing a Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) in the Sheriff's Office, Town of Leesburg's Police Department, and LAWS. Used by law enforcement officers at the scene of a domestic violence incident, the LAP is a nationally-recognized, evidence-based strategy that assists in preventing domestic violence homicides. Law enforcement personnel have been trained to use the LAP, which is a standardized set of eleven questions, such as, "Has he/she ever tried to choke you?" The questions are meant to assess when a victim is at immediate risk of being seriously injured or killed by his/her partner.

If the victim is determined to be in high danger, he/she is immediately connected with the Loudoun Abused Women's Shelter (LAWS). LAWS staff respond by offering immediate services and options for safety. Very recently, a representative from the Town of Purcellville attended a Steering Committee meeting and requested that Purcellville's police officers be trained in the use of the LAP. Six months of data using the instrument is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Loudoun’s LAP Six Month Statistics

	Loudoun County Sheriff’s Office	Leesburg Police Department
Number of lethality Screens	174	54
% of high danger Screens	39%	56%
% of non-high danger Screens	47%	44%
% of victims that did not answer	14%	0%
% of high danger victims who spoke to a LAWS advocate	72%	73%
% of victims who spoke with a LAWS advocate & sought ongoing services with LAWS	59%	59%

An upcoming initiative is the implementation of a Family Violence Fatality Review Team. A Family Violence Fatality Review Team is a multidisciplinary group of professionals that are involved in their community’s systematic response to domestic violence. Fatality review is a nationally recognized model in which a team of professionals conducts reviews of domestic violence homicides, including an evaluation of the events leading up to a domestic violence homicide. The review process does not begin until all criminal investigations and prosecutions connected with the death are completed. The process does not seek to re-investigate a case or place blame. Rather, fatality review looks at circumstances surrounding the death and explores the strengths, challenges, and possible gaps in the community’s response to the violence in order to make recommendations for improvement. Fatality Review Teams are authorized by the Code of Virginia and the implementation of a Loudoun Fatality Review Team was endorsed by the Board of Supervisors in October 15, 2015.

The Loudoun County Domestic Violence Project and DART have gained the attention of peers throughout Virginia. DART members have given many presentations and trainings throughout the state, as well as at national conferences. DART has also been recognized/received awards from the Virginia Office of the Attorney General and the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo).

Victims in Loudoun’s Coordinated Community Response System

Victims can enter Loudoun’s system in several different ways: by calling law enforcement, by contacting LAWS directly, by going to the Juvenile Court Services Unit for assistance in obtaining an emergency protective order, or through a referral from the Departments of Family Services or Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Developmental Services. The DART’s protocols stipulate that member departments and agencies will refer identified victims of domestic violence to LAWS for services as well as to other departments and agencies as needed.

Once in the system, the services provided vary significantly depending on needs of the victim. Legal, mental health, and housing support may be provided by LAWS and other departments. Child protective services and/or the Child Advocacy Center could be involved. The Family Abuse Officer in Juvenile Court Services Unit may be involved assisting victims in obtaining

Protective Orders. At the same time, law enforcement may be working with Community Corrections, the Office of the Commonwealth’s Attorney, and the Juvenile and Domestic Relations (JDR) Court in dealing with the offender.

The two case studies (Attachments 1 and 2) illustrate the complexity of domestic violence incidents and the connectivity of Loudoun’s coordinated community response. Identifying information in the case studies has been changed to protect the confidentiality of the parties involved.

Offender Accountability

Offender accountability has increased in a variety of ways since the inception of DART. Prior to the creation of a specialized DV Probation Officer position in Community Corrections, the majority of DV offenders from JDR Court were placed on unsupervised probation and there was little to no follow up. Now the majority of offenders are referred for supervised probation, in which Community Corrections monitors and confirms completion of court ordered requirements. Domestic violence offenders are present in court to participate in plea negotiations and observe trials, and offenders each meet their domestic violence Probation Officer in Court as soon as they are placed on probation. An intake appointment is made, thus reducing the likelihood that an offender will abscond from supervision.

In the last ten years, the number of DV offenders supervised by Community Corrections staff has dramatically increased – from a daily average of 35 to a daily average of approximately 225. As a result of this increase, an additional specialized domestic violence position (1.00 FTE) was approved in 2008 for Community Corrections.

If a violation or non-compliance occurs, domestic violence Probation Officers quickly take action to ensure offender accountability with victim safety in mind. Additionally, the Domestic Violence Probation Review docket enhances offender accountability by encouraging offenders to begin requirements immediately, as they are aware they will have to appear before the Court in approximately 60 days regarding their compliance and adjustment to probation supervision.

Activity Levels

It is difficult to measure outcomes in domestic violence prevention and intervention efforts. However, despite population increases in Loudoun County, the numbers of domestic violence calls and arrests have fluctuated in the last several years, with increases from CY 2014 to CY 2015. Table 2 shows the aggregate numbers of domestic violence-related calls to law enforcement and the number of domestic violence arrests of the identified primary aggressor, as reported by the Loudoun County Sheriff’s Office and Leesburg Police Department.

The number of intimate partner homicides hit a peak of four in CY 2014 and then dropped to two in CY 2015. Additionally, there have already been two intimate partner-related homicides in 2016. An Intimate Partner homicide is defined as a homicide in which a victim was killed by one of the following: spouse (married or separated), former spouse, current or former boyfriend,

girlfriend or same-sex partner, or dating partner. This group could include homicides in which only one of the parties had pursued a relationship or perceived a relationship with the other, as in some stalking cases.

Table 2. Domestic Violence Calls, Arrests and Homicides

	CY 2012	CY 2013	CY 2014	CY 2015
Number of DV-related Calls to Law Enforcement	1,957	1,893	1,637	1,647
Number of DV Arrests of Primary Aggressor	462	386	388	480
Number of intimate partner homicides	1	3	4	2

ISSUES: There is an extensive waiting list for intake for outpatient mental health and substance abuse services in Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Developmental Services (MHSADS). One issue that can impact offender accountability and potentially public safety is the wait time for domestic violence offenders to access services at MHSADS. Each domestic violence Probation Officer is in frequent contact with Batterer’s Intervention Program providers to monitor compliance with Batterer’s Intervention Program attendance and progress. This is made known to offenders. If domestic violence offenders are in need of substance abuse or mental health services, they are required to complete these before entering the Batterer’s Intervention Program. This same wait list impacts victims who may be seeking mental health outpatient services as part of their recovery. Contracting out some of these services and/or additional FTE would assist in addressing service level gaps and delays.

The workload associated with a domestic violence case is very labor intensive, particularly for the Sheriff’s Office and the Office of the Commonwealth’s Attorney. This workload could impact the current service level of involved departments. Staff from these agencies do active follow-up, obtain prior history reports (if any exist), make and maintain personal contact with victims, work with each other (along with staff of LAWS), and fill in any gaps in the initial case report. Specialized DV staff positions at several project partner agencies have difficulty meeting the demands of the domestic violence workloads. Below is a brief description of current service level areas of concern.

Office of the Commonwealth’s Attorney

Staffing levels of the Office of the Commonwealth’s Attorney have not increased since FY 2007. The Office of the Commonwealth’s Attorney currently has three Victim-Witness Case Managers. An additional Case Manager is needed in this program to meet current service levels given the growing number of domestic violence crimes. These positions require constant diligence and contact with both victims and witnesses to ensure they are prepared for court and are willing to testify since their participation in a case would very likely impact the outcome.

With the increase in the number of arrests and continued intimate partner homicides, additional staff is needed to enhance service levels in the prosecution team that works on domestic violence and sex crimes cases. Currently two attorneys are staffed to manage the domestic violence

dockets. One supervising attorney oversees this program as well as the Victim-Witness Case Managers. This program also includes handling adult sex crimes, child sex crimes, and child abuse cases, many of which overlap with domestic issues.

In the first quarter of the current fiscal year, there were 132 domestic violence charges and 102 cases that were prosecuted. The workload of this team carries with it significant out-of-court obligations that are required and/or necessary. These include numerous “off-hour” telephone consultations with detectives/officers, DART meetings, multi-disciplinary team meetings, the Child Advocacy Center, and participation on other committees. Due to these additional responsibilities, the caseload for these prosecutors is unlike others. In the Office’s current posture, these prosecutors are reactionary to cases as they come into the system. Since a portion of the County’s homicides are considered domestic in nature, additional staff resources would enhance service levels, reducing the workload burden and allowing the domestic violence and sex crimes prosecution team to be more preventative than reactionary through participation on outreach and educational initiatives.

Other Agencies

The Sheriff’s Office has one DV coordinator (a sergeant) who oversees the domestic violence program, is a member of the DART team, leads and manages the agency’s resources and response to domestic violence, and manages the investigation and follow-up of high risk domestic violence cases based on the LAP. Each patrol squad also has a domestic violence coordinator who monitors and evaluates the initial response to domestic violence complaints, ensures that the complaints are handled per policy and that the appropriate follow up and referrals are conducted, and conducts training for entire squads on policy, changes to the law, violent offenders, and victim services. The Community Resource section also has trained domestic violence coordinators. Every law enforcement certified deputy is trained to respond to domestic violence calls and almost all domestic violence cases are initially handled at the field deputy level.

Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Developmental Services (MHSADS) and Child Protective Services (CPS) were discussed in a September 13, 2016 item to the Committee. MHSADS/Substance Abuse is also discussed separately in another item on the Committee’s November 15th agenda. Briefly, in terms of Mental Health Substance Abuse and Developmental Services, contractual funds and additional staff resources would maintain service levels by addressing the continued waitlist, continuing operations at the Crisis Intervention Team Assessment Center and managing caseloads. Many domestic violence cases involve children to some degree. The Director of Family Services recently reported that there is a 37% increase in the number of complaints coming into Child Protective Services that are domestic in nature. New staff resources in CPS would address staff’s difficulty in meeting required turnaround times and would enhance service levels.

The Family Resource Officer in the Juvenile Court Services Unit performs intake on victims who need to file petitions for Protective Orders. This position explains the Protective Order process to victims, assists victims in completing the appropriate paperwork and takes victims to the court

offices to file the petition. As the number of domestic relations intakes continue to increase (there was a 20% increase from 2014 to 2015), there will likely be a future resource issue (an additional position to maintain current service levels) in the Juvenile Court Services Unit.

The DART Coordinator is an employee of the Loudoun Abused Women’s Shelter (LAWS), but is funded by the County. When the federal grant funding ended in 2011, Loudoun County and LAWS reached an agreement regarding the DART Coordinator position to ensure sustainability of the countywide DV Project. Through an MOU, the County agrees to fund the DART Coordinator as a part-time position at 10 hours per week. It is possible that implementation of the Family Violence Fatality Review Team may increase workload and service levels for the Coordinator to the point where additional hours are needed.

FISCAL IMPACT: The Department of Management and Budget will continue to work with all County DV partners to assess the resources needed to maintain or enhance current service levels and present prioritized needs in the FY 2018 Proposed Budget.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Domestic Violence Case Study #1
2. Domestic Violence Case Study #2

Domestic Violence Case Study # 1

Kristin and her husband Chris had been married for five years. The physical abuse started in the third year of their relationship when Chris was laid off of work. The first time Chris hit her, Kristin believed it was a one-time incident. Although possessive at times, Chris was charismatic, intelligent, and well-liked. However, Chris's abusive behavior began to escalate. The following year Kristin separated from Chris. Chris was apologetic and promised to change. Kristen moved back in with the hope that things might improve. Chris found work and the situation seemed to get better for a few months.

After recently discovering that Kristen was three months pregnant, Kristin and Chris had an argument about finances. Chris became violently angry, pushed Kristen, and grabbed her by the throat until she could no longer breathe. Chris took Kristen's phone away to prevent her from calling 911, but she managed to get the phone back and call for help. Loudoun County Sheriff's Office responded to the scene and separated Chris and Kristin.

The responding deputy gave Kristin a lethality assessment screening to assess her risk level for potential homicide. As a result of her answers, the deputy stated that he was concerned for her. He asked if Kristin would speak to an advocate from the local domestic violence program - Loudoun Abused Women's Shelter (LAWS). Kristen agreed and the deputy called the LAWS hotline. A LAWS hotline advocate provided information about services that may be able to help Kristen, and asked her if she had a safe place to stay. Kristen wanted to stay in her own home that night. Chris was arrested and Kristin obtained an Emergency Protective Order that prohibited Chris from entering the home or having any contact with her for the next 72 hours. The deputies encouraged Kristin to go to the hospital for a medical exam, but Kristin was exhausted and declined medical treatment. The deputies gave Kristin information for additional county-wide resources for domestic violence victims.

The next morning, the LAWS advocate called Kristin to follow-up. Kristin expressed that she felt pain when she swallowed. The advocate recommended a forensic medical exam and offered to go with Kristin to the exam. A forensic took photographs of Kristin's injuries and asked a series of questions. Kristin was also examined by a doctor who recommended a follow-up appointment because she had been strangled. The doctor explained that strangulation can have serious health complications even if bruising on the neck is not immediately noticeable. The doctor also explained Kristin was at even greater risk for health complications due to her pregnancy.

That same day, the Domestic Violence Coordinator from Loudoun County Sheriff's Office contacted Kristin to conduct a follow-up investigation and to determine if Kristin needed to be connected with additional resources. The Coordinator took additional photographs, a history of prior acts of violence, and assessed if there were any additional witnesses to the abuse. The Coordinator explained the criminal court process and let her know that the reports and the medical reports would be sent to the Commonwealth's Attorney's office. .

Kristin asked about the criminal charges pending against Chris. Due to the serious nature of the crime, strangulation is a felony in the state of Virginia. The Domestic Violence Coordinator told

Kristin she would receive a subpoena for a court hearing in the criminal case within the next two weeks. Kristin wanted more information about the both criminal and civil court processes. The Coordinator recommended that she follow-up with the Loudoun Victim Witness Program and LAWS for more information on those processes. She also encouraged Kristin to consider requesting a Preliminary Protective Order that would be valid for 10-15 days.

The next day, Kristin met with a LAWS Advocate and expressed her concerns that the Protective Order and criminal charges could affect Chris' government job and potentially jeopardize his security clearance. Kristin recently started working part-time and she was worried she wouldn't be able to afford to live in her home even if the final Protective Order was granted and she was given possession of the home for the next two years. However, she also knew she was in danger of being hurt again or even killed if Chris moved back in.

After her meeting with the advocate, Kristin decided to meet with the Protective Order Attorney at LAWS for a free legal consultation to explore her options further. However, she decided that she would feel more comfortable making a decision about filing a Protective Order after she spoke to Chris' pre-trial probation officer. From the pre-trial officer, Kristin learned that the magistrate did not set bond for Chris. She also learned that the pre-trial officer interviewed Chris in the morning, created a report for court, and conducted a risk assessment with Chris. Chris had his arraignment in the morning and a trial date was set. Chris would be supervised by probation until the final deposition. With this information and her meeting with the Protective Order attorney, Kristen decided to file a petition for a Preliminary Protective Order.

The Advocate took Kristin to the Loudoun Juvenile Court Services Unit, where Kristen completed the paperwork to file a Preliminary Protective Order. Kristin met with the Family Abuse Officer, who reviewed the protective order process and condition options with Kristen. Once the Affidavit Statement and Petition for a Protective Order were signed, the officer accompanied Kristin and the advocate to the Clerk's office to file the petition.

At the court hearing that afternoon, the judge ordered the Preliminary Protective Order for 15 days, granting Kristin exclusive use of their home and prohibiting Chris from having any contact with her. After the court hearing ended, the LAWS Advocate helped Kristin develop a safety plan on how to respond if Chris violated the order. Two weeks later, Kristin went back to court for her final Protective Order hearing. Chris' attorney asked for a continuance until after Chris' criminal case was completed, and the continuance was granted.

Kristin had questions about the criminal process and contacted her advocate from the Victim Witness program. Her Victim Witness advocate informed her of the criminal case court date, answered her questions about the criminal justice process, determined if she could file for a Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund claim, gave her other resources, and also let her know she would accompany her to the court hearings.

Kristin was also instructed to arrive to court thirty minutes before the hearing so she could speak to the prosecutor assigned to the criminal case. The day of the hearing for the criminal case, Kristin expressed all of her concerns to the prosecutor. She told the prosecutor that she wanted justice served, but did not want to Chris to go to jail for an extended period of time. The

prosecutor explained to Kristin that she is doing the right thing, and that this is the proper way to get help for both herself and for Chris.

Due to the incident being Chris' first offense, the prosecutor made a plea offer to be found guilty of domestic assault and battery, a misdemeanor with suspended jail time. The prosecutor assured Kristin that his job was to make sure that she and her baby were safe and protected. He also told her that it was his goal for Kristin to walk away from this process feeling that justice had been served.

Immediately after the trial, a Loudoun County Department of Community Corrections Probation Officer gave Chris a card with a probation appointment time and date.

During Chris' first probation appointment, his Probation Officer completed an intake and conducted a domestic violence assessment. After the assessment was completed, the Probation Officer referred Chris to Loudoun County Department of Mental Health, Substance Abuse, & Developmental Services to enroll in the 24-week Batterer Intervention Program, a treatment group for domestic violence offenders.

A week after the criminal trial, Kristin, the LAWS Protective Order Attorney, and the LAWS Advocate went to court for the final Protective Order hearing. The judge granted a Protective Order for two years which gave Kristin possession of the residence, although she would be responsible for making rental payments. Chris was ordered to not terminate utilities, but was not obligated to pay Kristin anything unless she files for child support once their child is born. Kristin was told she could potentially file for spousal support since she is married and separated. Kristen now has to work two jobs and sublet a room in their apartment to a roommate to make the rental payments. Kristin is currently seeing the LAWS Domestic Violence Counselor to process the trauma she experienced. She also attended a Domestic Violence Support Group offered by LAWS to connect with other survivors who have shared similar experiences.

Domestic Violence Case Study #2

Mary and John had grown up together in another country. John moved to the United States when he was 18 to stay with relatives in Leesburg. A year later Mary moved to the US and connected with John, who was the only person she knew in the US. They began dating and moved in together. Mary became pregnant and they had a daughter who is now 5 years old. Mary quickly learned how jealous John could be. He wouldn't let her talk to friends and he isolated her from others. After their daughter was born, John started making threats to hurt Mary. His behavior became increasingly controlling. Mary wanted to work, but every time she looked for a job John would become angry. He started threatening that he would have Mary deported. That threat scared her enough to stay quiet and stop looking for jobs. She realized that John had purposely tampered with their birth control so that she would become pregnant. She confronted John about this and that was the first time he struck her. He told her it was her obligation to have sex with him and that he did not have to wear condoms if he didn't want to. After that, Mary rarely spoke up about anything in an attempt to maintain a safe environment for herself and her daughter.

Mary and John rented a basement in a home and had three other roommates. At first, the roommates would intervene and try to help her. However John began threatening to have them deported as well and they stopped helping. One night John and Mary got in an argument and John raped Mary. A week later one of her roommates mentioned Loudoun Abused Women's Shelter (LAWS) and a bilingual advocate who may be able to help her. She met with the advocate while John was at work. The advocate helped her create a safety plan in case she decided she was ready to leave John. They also discussed reporting the crimes, but Mary's fear of law enforcement was still too great as a result of the misinformation Jose had instilled in her. Mary's conversation with the advocate was the first time that she received accurate information about the process of reporting the crimes against her. The advocate told her she had the right to live a life free of abuse.

Mary's daughter was experiencing anxiety as a result of being exposed to her father's abuse of her mother. Her teacher at school noticed that she was becoming increasingly withdrawn and requested that the school counselor speak with her. The school counselor met with Mary's daughter, who disclosed that she had seen her father hurt her mother. The school counselor, a mandated reporter of child abuse, reported the incident to Child Protective Services (CPS). She also referred the daughter to the school social worker and Student Assistance Specialist to address both the anxiety and trauma through individual or group intervention. The counselor, social worker, and Student Assistance Specialist would maintain contact with the CPS worker to coordinate services.

An investigator with Child Protective Services was assigned to the case. The investigator interviewed Mary's daughter, and then reached out to Mary. While meeting with Mary, the investigator encouraged Mary to continue to seek services through LAWS and counseling was strongly recommended for the child and Mary. The CPS investigator let her know they would follow-up if there were any future reports.

Two weeks later, Mary called the LAWS advocate and let her know she was ready to come to the shelter. John's abuse was escalating as he became increasingly aware that Mary was reaching out to others for help. She feared for her safety. John continued to try to force Mary to have sex with him and began threatening to kill her if she left him.

The advocate helped Mary make a safety plan. Mary had a dog that she loved and was afraid it with John for fear he would hurt the dog in retaliation for her leaving. The advocate worked with Loudoun County Animal Services to ensure that Mary's pet had a safe place to stay while Mary was in shelter. Mary packed her belongings and moved quickly to the LAWS shelter while John was at work. After a few days in the shelter Mary began to feel safer and decided that she wanted file a police report against John for the sexual assault and also petition for a Protective Order.

The LAWS advocate helped her report the sexual assault to the Leesburg Police Department. An officer came to the LAWS Community Services Center to take the report. She sat down with the victim and gathered Mary's information and asked if she had anything to substantiate the abuse. Mary remembered she had received threatening text messages from Jose and one text message in which he apologized for the abuse. The officer let Mary know that a search warrant would be issued in order to gather more evidence and to speak to her roommates. Mary did not want to involve her roommates but the officer reassured her that this issue was not about deportation.

Mary then met with the Family Abuse Officer in the Juvenile Court Services Unit to file her petition for a Protective Order. The officer requested Mary's confidential phone number and informed her that her location would remain confidential. The option to request temporary custody of her child with the protective order was also given.

The judge granted Mary a preliminary Protective Order. The LAWS Advocate referred Mary to Legal Services of Northern VA (LSNV). LSNV provided free, confidential advice about the protective order case and walked Mary through what a trial would look like. The attorney at LSNV agreed to represent Mary at the final protective order hearing. At the trial, Mary's attorney advocated for what Mary needed to keep her safe, including getting temporary custody of her daughter, child support, and possession of her dog. The final Protective Order hearing was difficult for Mary as she had to testify about the sexual assault and abuse in front of her abuser, but Mary stayed strong and the judge granted a Permanent Protective Order.

Mary and her daughter stayed at the LAWS shelter for several months as they worked towards rebuilding their lives. Mary was worried about her financial situation since she had no job and was without friends or family in the area. The advocates at the LAWS shelter helped connect her to Ayuda, a nonprofit organization that provides immigration law services. She met with an attorney at Ayuda and was told she would most likely qualify for a U-Visa (which is set aside for victims of crimes and their immediate family members who have suffered substantial mental or physical abuse and are willing to assist law enforcement and government officials in the investigation or prosecution of the criminal activity). Receiving a U-visa would mean she would no longer live in fear of being separated from her daughter and would be able to find employment. The LAWS shelter staff worked with Mary to make sure that she and her daughter had counseling services to process the trauma they experienced. They also gave her an extension to stay at the shelter for longer than 30 days. Mary and her daughter stayed in the LAWS shelter for several months as the attorney from Legal Services of Northern Virginia continued to represent Mary for child custody and child support.