

AT A GLANCE

Location of Court

Tulsa, Oklahoma

Type of Court

Criminal Domestic Violence Court

Project Goals

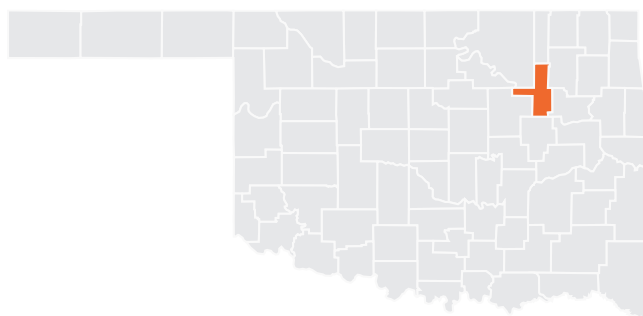
Increase victim-survivor safety through partnerships with victim-survivor services agencies and training

Hold people who cause harm accountable through increased judicial monitoring

Reduce recidivism and homicide

TULSA COUNTY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT

The Tulsa County Domestic Violence Court is a criminal domestic violence court with both misdemeanor and felony dockets focusing on intimate partner violence (IPV) in cases of domestic violence, violation of protective orders, and stalking. The Court works to coordinate with Protective Order and Family Court to increase victim-survivor safety and compliance for people who cause harm¹.



COURT STAFF

- **Judge:** trained judges preside over the Misdemeanor (MDV) and Felony (FDV) Domestic Violence Dockets.
- **Court Coordinator:** works directly with judges and the Coordinated Community Response Team (CCR) to develop, implement, and evaluate progress of DV Court. The coordinator collects compliance information from partners and staffs all cases with the team prior to dockets.
- **Court Case Manager:** manages the DV Court database and prepares dockets.

¹ The authors use people-first language. “Victim-survivor” refers to the person being harmed, and “people who cause harm” to the person causing harm through IPV/coercive control.

This fact sheet is part of a series describing Domestic Violence Mentor Courts. Selected by the Office on Violence Against Women, Mentor Courts share their expertise and assist other domestic violence courts in implementing promising practices and procedures, and building the capacity of state court systems to respond effectively to these difficult cases.

- **Prosecutors:** the Tulsa County District Attorney's office has a trained and dedicated DV Unit assigned to prosecuting MDV and FDV cases.
- **Advocates:** victim-survivor advocates from a partner victim-survivor service agency are assigned to the MDV and FDV dockets to safety plan with and assist victim-survivors during court processes.
- **Pre-Trial Compliance Officer:** monitor people who cause harm¹ on pre-trial bonds/electronic monitoring and are assigned a caseload of high-risk MDV people who cause harm in their delayed sentencing program.
- **Probation and Parole Officers:** Department of Corrections (DOC) probation and parole officers are assigned to supervise FDV people who cause harm.
- **Abusive Partner Intervention Providers:** Oklahoma Attorney General certified programs provide 52-week programs to court-ordered people who cause harm and work with partners to share compliance reports and any concerns that need to be addressed with the court, victim-survivors, or probation.
- **Social Service Providers:** provide free drug and alcohol assessments and programming to people who cause harm.
- **Public Defenders:** Tulsa County Public Defender's Office provides legal representation to indigent people who cause harm on the MDV and FDV dockets.
- **Rapid Intervention Team (RIT):** works collaboratively with the court when high-risk, high-lethality cases on the MDV and FDV dockets have been identified by their trained team.

CASE MANAGEMENT

Types of cases: Misdemeanor and Felony intimate partner cases involving domestic violence (DV), violation of protective orders (VPO), and stalking.

Case identification, screening, and transfer: All misdemeanor cases filed that include DV, VPO, and stalking are automatically assigned to the MDV docket. The Court Coordinator screens felony cases weekly to identify cases eligible for the FDV docket. Once FDV eligible cases are identified, a list is sent to prosecutors and preliminary hearing judges for transfer to the

FDV docket. The DV Court tracks all MDV and FDV cases including, but not limited to the date of offense, filing, disposition, reviews, and revocation.

Information sharing: The court collects compliance reports from abusive partner intervention providers, pre-trial, probation officers, and social service providers weekly through electronic communication. The compliance information is compiled into docket reports and staffed with appropriate team members 1 week prior to judicial reviews. Judges are not present during staffing of cases. The team provides recommendations to the court based on information shared at staffings.

Schedule: Arraignments and preliminary hearings are held daily. The Misdemeanor DV Docket has out-of-custody and in-custody settings with a separate compliance docket scheduled weekly. The Felony DV Docket has a compliance docket scheduled once a month. Both the MDV and FDV dockets will special set cases that need immediate attention.

Caseload: 1,450

COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

Frequency of stakeholder meetings: DV Court Partner Meetings are held quarterly and subcommittee meetings are held monthly.

List of stakeholders: Court administration, Judges, prosecutors, public defenders, pre-trial and probation officers, victim-survivor advocates, batterers intervention programs, and social services providers including the Department of Human Services (DHS), workforce programs, substance abuse/mental health providers are present at and participate in meetings and subcommittee projects.

VICTIM-SURVIVOR SAFETY

Court security: Upon entry, all persons must go through courthouse security. Once in the courthouse, court staff work to make sure victim-survivors and people who cause harm are separated and use appropriate courtroom entrances/exits when available. People who cause harm are asked to remain in the courtroom to provide victim-survivors with enough time to exit and Sheriff deputies are available to escort victim-survivors to their vehicles.

Victim-survivor services: In addition to victim-survivor advocates being present in criminal and protective order courtrooms, The Family Safety Center (local Family Justice Center) is closely

located to the courthouse for victim-survivors to visit for protective orders, safety planning, legal services, medical exams, access to law enforcement, and referrals to counseling or shelters.

Risk Assessment: Law enforcement uses an 11-question lethality assessment on all domestic violence calls, social service providers are also located in the jail to complete screening tools.

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR PEOPLE WHO CAUSE HARM

Compliance reviews: First compliance reviews are set no later than 30 days after disposition. People who cause harm are scheduled for frequent reviews during their probation period and can be reviewed more or less frequently by the Court as needed. Sanctions are used for people who cause harm who are not compliant with Court orders. These sanctions may include, but are not limited to, box time, essays, work hours, or jail time. The DV Court team is present for all compliance review dockets and prepare detailed docket notes and recommendations to the Court.

Services for People Who Cause Harm: Person who cause harm are ordered into services based on lethality assessments completed by law enforcement, screening tools used by the jail, and recommendations by the DV Court team. Prosecutors provide their recommendations to the court during disposition. These recommendations include, but are not limited to, criminal no contact orders, batterers intervention programming, mental health assessments, and substance abuse evaluations. People who cause harm may be placed on electronic monitoring such as location or alcohol monitors during pre-trial or at the time of disposition. Abusive partner intervention programs facilitate multiple specialty groups including a women's group, Spanish speaking group, veterans group, and high risk group. Resources such as bus passes, referrals to workforce agencies, and free substance abuse assessments are provided to people who cause harm to reduce barriers for compliance with abusive partner intervention programs.

LEGAL SERVICES

If a person who causes harm cannot afford legal services, a Public Defender is appointed. Victim-survivors are referred to legal services through Legal Aid or our local victim-survivor services agency.

TRAINING

The Tulsa County DV Court has hosted various training events for staff and partners from lunch-and-learn to multi-day events and has been asked to present at universities, at community events, and to state-wide groups like the Oklahoma Fatality Review Board. Topics have included Domestic Violence 101, accountability, and risk assessment. Prior to receiving the

Mentor Court Grant, Tulsa County assisted another Oklahoma metropolitan area in the creation of their DV Court and hosted their teams for court observations.

This project was supported by Grant Nos. 15JOVW-23-GK-00750-JFF and 15JOVW-23-GK-05136-MUMU awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.