



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT MONITORING: INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

COURT MONITORING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING PROJECT
A Joint Project of the Nevada Network Against Domestic Violence
and the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women

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PREFACE

The Nevada Network Against Domestic Violence (NNADV) developed this resource manual through the Court Monitoring Technical Assistance and Training Project, a project funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). The purpose of this manual is to give statewide domestic violence coalitions and other groups interested in developing court monitoring programs information about how different communities across the United States have developed innovative court monitoring programs.

Each highlighted program offers a different perspective on how communities can use court monitoring in their own coordinated community response effort to end domestic violence. One of the most important facets we found while researching these innovative court monitoring programs is that each program adjusted its process and procedures according to its resources and the needs of its community. While many of the programs are similar, they also are unique in their own approach to court monitoring—whether that be in how they report the data observed, build and maintain relationships with civil or criminal justice system personnel, build their base of volunteer observers, or determine which type of case(s) to monitor. Ultimately, what makes these programs innovative is the extent to which they have created collaborative partnerships within legal systems and among community groups to effect system change for battered women and their children in their communities.

The information in this manual was gained through reviewing the court monitoring reports and forms of each of the highlighted programs and having interviews with program staff. All of the program contacts and information in this manual were current as of September 2009. We would like to thank those who spent time with us as we researched the different court monitoring programs, and for sharing their materials with us. While neither NNADV nor OVW endorses any particular type of court monitoring program, we encourage you to contact the listed programs to find out more information about their approach to court monitoring.

INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence court monitoring provides a systematic way of reviewing the civil or criminal justice system's response to victims and perpetrators of domestic violence by actually observing the case handling and outcomes of individual domestic violence cases in the courtroom. Most court monitoring programs share the underlying objectives of enhancing safety for battered women and their children involved with civil or criminal justice systems, and holding accountable both the perpetrators of domestic violence and the multiple legal system personnel that come into contact with the parties.

Court monitoring has an important role to play in creating a coordinated community response to domestic violence, but it also has a number of limitations that can generate controversy.¹ First, court monitoring is designed to observe a branch of government that is unaccustomed to public scrutiny, and this attention may not be welcomed by legal system personnel.² Second, court monitors typically do not have access to all of the case information that legal system personnel have available to them, such as pleadings and law. Some argue that court monitoring reports based solely on observation in court may be inaccurate or incomplete.³ Third, many court monitoring projects are created to influence the behavior of judges, among others, and this can be seen as an impermissible infringement on judicial independence.⁴

Despite these limitations, court monitoring can enhance a community's coordinated response to domestic violence by providing an opportunity for a diverse, multi-disciplinary court monitoring team to meet regularly to discuss system response and social change. Relationships that develop as a result of serving on a court monitoring team can be long lasting and enhance coordination among individuals, agencies, and the community as a whole. Court monitoring has an important role to play in the emerging array of multi-agency, interdisciplinary strategies for confronting domestic violence. The court monitoring team approach has much in common with the approach used by safety audit and fatality review teams. Court monitoring can be employed simultaneously with safety audits and fatality reviews, or occur independently. Like safety audits and fatality reviews, court monitoring seeks to understand the experiences of battered women and their children, improve the accountability of individual agencies, and enhance interagency and system coordination.

This manual presents some of the most successful domestic violence and sexual assault court monitoring programs in the United States. Each of the ten programs described in the following pages has attempted to improve the justice system's response to victims of violence and their children through court monitoring. The programs and practices described in this manual are the result of many people working in courts and communities, urban and rural, throughout the country. Some programs have developed over many years; others have been in existence for only a few years. All of these programs are exceptional in some way.

FEATURES WITHIN THE MANUAL

Each of the programs highlighted in this manual is described through subsections which include: **Contact Information** with specific details about how to contact a program; **Description** providing a general overview

¹ L. Frederick, Keeping an Eye on Justice: Courtwatch (1998) (unpublished paper presented at the National College of District Attorneys Conference, Reno, NV).

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

of the program; **Innovative Features** which are worthy of replication in other communities; and details on **Cases Monitored, Monitors/Staff, Jurisdiction, Funding, and Resources Online**. We also have included briefer profiles of two other court monitoring programs that operate outside the context of domestic violence or sexual assault, yet might provide ideas for how to structure court monitoring in your community. In addition, the chart that follows outlines some basic components and features of each program for ease of reference. The manual concludes with an annotated bibliography of almost sixty online resources to help you locate volunteer recruitment and training materials, data collection forms, final reports, newsletter articles, and press releases and media reports.

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

Reading this manual can be a beginning point for developing an effective court monitoring project in any community. Every program in this manual offers a model for some aspect of getting a court monitoring project started. Please feel free to borrow and seek assistance from any or all of the programs listed here and from any of the contact persons mentioned. For example, if you are interested in developing a collaborative relationship between your court monitoring project and the local retired seniors program in your community, you will want to read about RSVP/DVIS Court Watch in Tulsa, OK. While every possible court monitoring issue may not be addressed in this manual, it does highlight innovative practices of programs that are making a difference for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. They can help you in your community.

A three step process for court monitoring includes:

- planning
 - developing a set of specific and attainable goals; and
 - developing a court monitoring plan of action;
- operation
 - designing a survey form for monitors;
 - developing a resource manual for monitors; and
 - recruiting, training, and supervising monitors to observe hearings and collect information about court cases; and
- reporting
 - analyzing data from monitoring surveys and developing recommendations;
 - sharing findings with legal system personnel and distributing reports to the public; and
 - working to create necessary change identified through the court monitoring project.⁵

This manual offers numerous examples of how successful court monitoring programs have approached each of these steps.

⁵ See generally, NOW LEGAL DEFENSE FUND, A GUIDE TO COURT WATCHING IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT CASES (1997).

CHART OF PROGRAM FEATURES

	Rural	Urban	Misdemeanor Cases	Felony Cases	Civil Protection Order Cases	Other Cases	Student Volunteers	Retired Citizen Volunteers	Family Justice Center	Resources Online
Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Programs										
Court Watch Program of Pierce County, <i>p. 23</i>		✓	Pre-trial	Pre-trial	✓		✓		✓	
CourtWatch Florida, <i>p. 9</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Sexual assault	✓			✓
DC Court Watch, <i>p. 7</i>		✓			✓		✓			✓
DeKalb County Domestic Violence CourtWatch, <i>p. 11</i>	✓		✓		✓					
Project Safeguard CourtWatch, <i>p. 5</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	Domestic Relations	✓			✓
Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, <i>p. 15</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓
Nevada Statewide Court Monitoring Project, <i>p. 17</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓					
RSVP/DVIS Court Watch, <i>p. 21</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	*See below		✓	✓	✓
Santa Fe Rape Crisis & Trauma Treatment Center Court Monitors Program, <i>p. 19</i>	✓	✓		✓		Sexual Assault				✓
WATCH, <i>p. 13</i>		✓		✓	✓	**CHIPS Sexual Assault	✓			✓
Other Programs										
The Fund for Modern Courts, <i>p. 25</i>										✓
Mothers Against Drunk Driving, <i>p. 26</i>										✓

* Emergency protection order cases, family relations cases, other civil cases related to family safety **Children in Need of Protection or Services

COLORADO

Name of Program:	Project Safeguard CourtWatch	Contact:	Andrea Love CourtWatch Coordinator
Address:	815 E. 22 nd Ave. Denver, CO 80205 Phone: (303) 863-7416 x 224 Fax: (303) 839-1808	Email:	courtwatch@projectsafeguard.net andrea@psghelps.org
		Website:	www.psghelps.org

Description:

For more than two decades, Project Safeguard has been monitoring and coordinating responses to domestic violence.¹ One mechanism for examining the justice system involves court monitoring. The primary purpose of Project Safeguard's CourtWatch program is to observe court procedures, identify and recognize best practices, and confront inequities for victims of crime. Some of the highlights of this program include:

- Student interns as volunteer observers,
- Domestic relations cases included among those cases monitored, and
- Collaborative relationships with members of the criminal justice system.

Project Safeguard's CourtWatch takes a broad view of a courtroom's climate in order to make recommendations for improvement. To address questionable situations or trends identified by CourtWatch, the CourtWatch coordinator researches the scope of the problem, the methods used to resolve similar problems in other jurisdictions, the adjudication records of the particular judge, the political climate of the courtroom or jurisdiction, and other case-specific information. Through careful preparation, the coordinator has established a dialog with judges and magistrates who handle domestic violence cases in order to improve the treatment of victims in the court.

¹ NAT'L COUNCIL JUV. & FAM. CT. JUDGES, FAMILY VIOLENCE: STATE OF THE ART COURT PROGRAMS 22-25 (1992).

[Project Safeguard website, newsletters, and conversations with staff.]

Innovative Features:

- Initiated as part of a well-known domestic violence advocacy organization;
- Student interns from the Forensic Psychology Department at the Graduate School of Professional Psychology, Denver University;
- Collaborative working relationships with advocates in the prosecutors' offices, as well as local domestic violence programs;
- Expansion of the program to include observation of domestic relations cases after identifying a pattern of concern in the community about how these cases were affecting children;
- Active participation in local task forces to identify community concerns about the legal system, share information about the program and its findings, and garner support for creating changes that have been identified as necessary.

Cases Monitored: Felony, misdemeanor, and municipal domestic violence cases; civil protection order cases; domestic relations cases

Monitors/Staff: CourtWatch Coordinator; volunteers; student interns

Jurisdiction: City of Denver/Metro area

Funding: State funding

Resources Online: Project overview

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Name of Program: DC Court Watch Project
Survivors and Advocates for
Empowerment, Inc. (SAFE, Inc.)

Contact: Elisabeth Olds
Co-Director

Address: P.O. Box 7412
Washington, DC 20044
Phone: (202) 408-1476
Fax: (202) 408-1429

Email: eolds@dcsafe.org

Website: www.dcsafe.org

Description: The DC Court Watch operates within the unique collaborative environment of the Domestic Violence Unit of the Superior Court of DC. While one of the goals of DC Court Watch is to encourage everyone working in the justice system to identify ways of increasing survivor safety and offender accountability, it also seeks to improve the experience of accessing judicial relief.

The DC Court Watch Project began in 2006 while SAFE was still a program of the DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence (DCCADV). In October 2006, SAFE split off from DCCADV as an independent organization.

The DC Court Watch volunteers represent many different ethnic and racial backgrounds, ages, genders, and levels of experience with the court system. The data collection instruments were developed in collaboration with the Presiding Judge of the Domestic Violence Unit. The Court Watch report compiles objective data, an analysis of that data, excerpts from transcripts of hearings, and recommendations and areas of additional research by the project.

In addition, the DC Court Watch observes the impact that the newly created Fathering Court Pilot Project in Family Court may have on survivors of domestic violence.¹

¹ *Press Advisory: Family Court and D.C. Attorney General's Office Announce Launch of New Father Court (10/29/2007), available at http://www.dccourts.gov/dccourts/docs/press/2007-10-29_FatheringCourtPilotLaunchAdvisory.pdf (last visited Feb. 28, 2008).*

[SAFE website, reports, and communications with the DCCADV Executive Director and project staff.]

Innovative Features:

- Initiated as a program of the DCCADV, with active support from the DC Superior Court;
- Monitoring form developed in consultation with the Presiding Judge of the DVU and local domestic violence attorneys;
- 2007 report contains “cases studies,” which include excerpts from case pleadings, hearing transcripts, and what advocates knew about the case.

Cases Monitored: Civil protection order cases

Monitors/Staff: Program Director; Volunteer Coordinator; 20 volunteer observers

Jurisdiction: District of Columbia

Funding: No dedicated funding

Resources Online: SAFE

- DC Court Watch 2007 Report, which includes:
 - Case Studies and Trends;
 - CPO Court Watch Form
- DC Court Watch 2006 Report, which includes:
 - CPO Court Watch Form

DCCADV

- Press Release:
 - Courthouse Welcomes an Extra Set of Eyes and Ears at Domestic Violence Hearings (2/21/2006);
-

FLORIDA

Name of Program:	CourtWatch Florida	Contact:	Laura Williams
Address:	P.O. Box 5333 Winter Park, FL 32793-5333 Phone: (407) 325-3052 Fax: (407) 645-3840	Email:	info@courtwatchflorida.org
		Website:	www.courtwatchflorida.org http://courtwatchflorida.blogspot.com http://twitter.com/courtwatcher

Description:

CourtWatch Florida began in 2004 as an initiative of the Orange County Domestic Violence Task Force and started monitoring cases in the spring of 2007. CourtWatch is a volunteer-based, non-profit organization that monitors domestic violence and sexual assault cases. The CourtWatch's mission is to provide an impartial assessment of the effectiveness with which domestic violence and sexual assault cases are handled by the court.

CourtWatch Florida works with graduate students to analyze the data gathered and to develop a method of reporting this data to the courts and to the community. CourtWatch's Board of Directors serves in an advisory capacity and is comprised of a multi-disciplinary group of concerned citizens, including representatives from local universities and colleges. Since April 2007, CourtWatch has trained more than 65 community members as court monitors.

The Matrix of Greater Orlando served as CourtWatch's umbrella organization while it pursued its own nonprofit status. CourtWatch operates independently and enjoys a positive working relationship with the courts and prosecutors in Orange and Seminole Counties.

[CourtWatch Florida website, newsletters, and communications with staff.]

Innovative Features:

- Initiated as part of a county domestic violence task force that has maintained its independence through separate non-profit status;
- Court monitoring internships as part of the formal curriculum in the Criminal Justice, Sociology, and Women's Studies Departments at the University of Central Florida;
- Recruitment of local graduate students to design the program's database and assist with data analysis;
- Development of an extensive website that can serve as a model for other court monitoring programs.

Cases Monitored: Adult domestic violence and sexual assault cases; civil injunction hearings

Monitors/Staff: Part-time staff; volunteer observers

Jurisdiction: Orange and Seminole Counties

Funding: Donations and private foundation funding

Resources Online:

- Monitoring forms (civil injunction, criminal trial, plea/sentencing, miscellaneous observations, volunteer/intern timecard);
- Training materials (judicial system overview, criminal justice process, criminal case evaluation criteria, injunctions, legal glossary);
- PowerPoint presentations (overview, training);
- News (local newspaper coverage);
- Brochure;
- Tracked cases spreadsheet

ILLINOIS

Name of Program:	DeKalb County Domestic Violence CourtWatch Safe Passage, Inc.	Contact:	Pam Wiseman Executive Director
Address:	Box 621 DeKalb, IL 60115 Phone: (815) 756-7930 x 131 Hotline: (815) 756-5228	Email:	dekalb@safepassagedv.org
		Website:	http://safepassagedv.org

Description: The mission of the DeKalb County Domestic Violence CourtWatch is to encourage court practices that conform to the Illinois Domestic Violence Act. In 2003, CourtWatch began observing court proceedings to learn more about the court's handling of domestic violence cases. The CourtWatch program is based on a *community organizing model*. A volunteer steering committee plans, develops strategy, writes and submits reports, and coordinates the efforts of the volunteer observers. The domestic violence and sexual assault organizations are part of the steering committee, but often in the capacity as advisors, and are generally not the face of the CourtWatch program. This relationship underscores that this is a community model and helps alleviate concerns of bias.

The strategic use of the media is an important part of the DeKalb County Domestic Violence CourtWatch.¹ Press conferences were used to launch the project and to announce the project's initial findings. CourtWatch has received television, radio, and newsprint coverage—all of which puts CourtWatch in the public eye, keeps pressure on the Court, and educates the public about domestic violence.² In collaboration with the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence, CourtWatch assists other Illinois communities in establishing a court monitoring project. The types of assistance provided include helping conceive the project; developing trainings; and providing media advocacy.

¹ Ill. Coalition Against Domestic Violence, *DeKalb Courtwatch: A Community Organizing Project* (Sept. 2004).

² *Id.*

[ICADV Newsletter (Summer 2004), communications with the Executive Director of Safe Passage, and CourtWatch reports.]

Innovative Features:

- Initiated as a coordinated community response initiative;
- Use of a grassroots steering/oversight committee that plans, develops strategy, writes and submits public reports, and coordinates the efforts of volunteer monitors;
- Use of observer reports, case studies, and victim testimony to create an environment of accountability within which the courts understand that they are acting on behalf of the communities they serve;

- Strategic use of the media to put CourtWatch in the public eye, keep pressure on the court, and educate the public about domestic violence;
- Collaboration with the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence to assist other Illinois communities in establishing a court monitoring project.

Cases Monitored: Adult domestic violence cases

Monitors/Staff: Volunteers; steering committee

Jurisdiction: DeKalb County

Funding: Donations and private foundation funding

Resources Online: Not applicable

MINNESOTA

Name of Program:	WATCH	Contact:	Dawn Dougherty National Project Director
Address:	608 Second Ave. South Northstar East Suite 465 Minneapolis, MN 55402 Phone: (612) 341-2747 x 3 Fax: (612) 339-1171	Email:	ddougherty@watchmn.org
		Website:	www.watchmn.org

Description: WATCH was created in 1992 to monitor cases of domestic violence and sexual assault in Hennepin County court, report on how the cases are handled, and work to improve the justice system.

The goals of WATCH include:

- holding the criminal justice system accountable for its actions by maintaining a public presence in the courts;
- identifying problem patterns and issues within the court system and proposing practical solutions;
- improving the administration of justice;
- increasing public awareness and public trust in the justice system;
- providing training and technical assistance to groups working on creating court monitoring programs.

WATCH includes as some of its priorities maintaining a constructive, rather than adversarial, relationship with the criminal justice system, and recognizing and attempting to understand the dilemmas and complexity of the decisions that justice system personnel face. In 2007, WATCH established the National Association of Court Monitoring Programs.

WATCH is an independent program and must raise its own funds and recruit its own volunteers. The program's autonomy is seen as critical to keeping WATCH rooted in and accountable to the community it serves.

[Developing a Court Monitoring Program, (2006), p. 7].

Innovative Features:

- Initiated as an independent court monitoring program;
- Use of a “defendant list” spreadsheet to facilitate creation of daily monitoring calendars;
- Use of “offender chronologies” to highlight gaps in the criminal justice system;
- Use of “targeted monitoring projects” to gain in-depth understanding of certain courts or types of hearings;

- Online project reports on a wide variety of topics, including juvenile court cases, order for protection cases, victim impact statements at sentencing hearings, and felony strangulation cases.

Cases Monitored:	Adult felony cases of violence against women and children; civil order for protection cases; and Children in Need of Protection or Services (CHIPS) cases
Monitors/Staff:	Volunteers and interns; five paid staff; directors; advisory board
Jurisdiction:	Hennepin County
Funding:	Donations and private foundation funding
Resources Online:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Volunteer forms (volunteer/ intern application, volunteer job description, intern job description);▪ WATCH Post (quarterly newsletter with information about programs, recent court observations, and reports of special projects);▪ Project reports and sample offender chronologies;▪ Media archives;▪ Links (list of current court monitoring programs, domestic violence resources, sexual violence resources, child abuse resources, crime victim services & rights, courts & legal resources, nonprofit resources)

MONTANA

Name of Program:	Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence	Contact:	Kelsen Young Candice Crider
Address:	P.O. Box 818 Helena, MT 59624 Phone: (406) 443-7794 Toll-free: (888) 404-7794 Fax: (406) 443-7818	Email:	kyoung@mcadsv.com ccrider@mcadsv.com
		Website:	www.mcadsv.com

Description: In 2005, the Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (MCADSV) membership requested that a manual be created as a resource for member programs and Montana Coordinated Community Response Teams (CCRs) who were interested in starting up a court monitoring program in their communities. In January 2006, MCADSV recruited an AmeriCorps VISTA member who created a manual that is specific to Montana communities and accessible to MCADSV member programs.

The Courtwatch Training Manual provides readers with a brief history and description of court monitoring, and outlines the steps necessary to develop, implement, and sustain a courtwatch program. The manual is designed to assist communities in tailoring a courtwatch program to meet their respective needs. MCADSV has been working with different communities to begin the process of developing a court monitoring program.

A key component of the MCADSV model is the use of a Steering Committee and Advisory Council in developing and implementing a courtwatch program. The Steering Committee is a group of volunteer community members who staff the program. The Advisory Council serves as a planning and guidance group consisting of individuals who are involved in domestic and sexual violence cases on various levels.

[MCADSV Courtwatch Training Manual (2007)]

- Innovative Features:**
- Initiated as a project of the MCADSV;
 - Extensive court survey of practices and challenges in domestic violence cases before beginning court monitoring program;
 - Recruitment of AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer to assist in program development;
 - Development of a flexible, community-based model of court monitoring which local communities can adapt to their own circumstances;
 - Publication of a comprehensive online training manual to assist local communities;
 - Development of a statewide blog to connect court monitoring programs throughout the state.

Cases Monitored:	Criminal cases; civil protection order cases
Monitors/Staff:	VISTA member coordinator; volunteer observers; steering committee; and advisory council
Jurisdiction:	Local communities statewide
Funding:	Federal funding/Montana Legal Services AmeriCorps VISTA Project
Resources Online:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ MCADSV Courtwatch Training Manual, which includes:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ How to conduct surveys and focus groups;➤ Sample letters (advisory council, courtroom personnel);➤ Monitoring forms (criminal, order of protection);➤ Case/offender tracking forms;➤ Training materials (suggested volunteer orientation manual, sample orientation agenda, volunteer policies and procedures, volunteer guidelines);➤ Volunteer forms (court monitor/data entry job descriptions, volunteer application, sample interview questions, sample observer agreement, sample confidentiality agreement).▪ Montana Courtwatch flyer and brochure▪ Montana Courtwatch blog

NEVADA

Name of Program:	Nevada Statewide Court Monitoring Project Nevada Network Against Domestic Violence	Contact:	Elizabeth Stoffel Training & Technical Assistance Manager
Address:	220 S. Rock Blvd., Suite 7 Reno, NV 89502 Phone: (775) 828-1115 Fax: (775) 828-9911	Email:	elizabeths@nnadv.org
		Website:	www.nnadv.org

Description: In 1999, the Nevada Network Against Domestic Violence (NNADV) conducted a Statewide Court Monitoring Project in partnership with the Supreme Court of Nevada and the Office of the Attorney General. The project was guided by an Advisory Committee and staffed by a project attorney, project consultant, eight regionally-based court monitors, and two data entry personnel. The goal of the Statewide Court Monitoring Project was to investigate and evaluate the prosecution and adjudication of domestic violence cases throughout Nevada in the context of recently enacted domestic violence legislation. To that end, the project produced a final report that offered key recommendations related to victim safety in the courthouse and access to the judicial system, orders for protection against domestic violence, and misdemeanor domestic violence cases.

Currently, the NNADV is working on a court monitoring project with local domestic violence programs in Nevada. The NNADV is helping its members develop court monitoring programs that are specific to the needs of their respective communities and that seek to increase victim safety and offender accountability. These local court monitoring projects will be developed in such a way as to build confidence in the community that the court monitoring efforts are impartial and designed to help identify problems in the criminal or civil justice system response to domestic violence and to offer solutions to those problems.

Innovative Features:

- Initiated originally as a partnership between NNADV, the Supreme Court of Nevada, and the Office of the Attorney General;
- Eight regionally-based court monitors who were paid to observe civil and criminal cases throughout the state of Nevada;
- Academic consultant from the University of Nevada Las Vegas who designed the program's database and assisted with data analysis;
- Multidisciplinary advisory committee of statewide experts who developed the monitoring forms, reviewed findings, and made recommendations.

Cases Monitored: Criminal misdemeanor cases; civil protection order cases

Monitors/Staff: Two staff; eight paid court monitors; academic consultant; advisory committee

Jurisdiction: Statewide

Funding: Federal

Resources Online: Not applicable

NEW MEXICO

Name of Program:	Santa Fe Rape Crisis & Trauma Treatment Center Court Monitors Program	Contact:	Maria Jose Rodriguez Cadiz Program Coordinator
Address:	PO Box 29541 Santa Fe, NM 87592 Phone: (505) 988-1951 x 106 Fax: (505) 988-1906	Email:	mjrodcadiz@sfrcc.org
		Website:	www.sfrcc.org/about/court.html

Description: The Court Monitors Program was established in 1997 by the Santa Fe Rape Crisis & Trauma Treatment Center and the League of Women Voters of Santa Fe County, as part of an ongoing campaign to see justice served in cases of sexual violence.

The primary purpose of the Court Monitors Program is:

- to identify where changes in the law need to be made;
- to gather data on all aspects of the criminal court system in order to reach practical suggestions and solutions to improve the judicial system; and
- to promote public awareness about the criminal justice system.

Since 1997, trained volunteers from the League and the community have become a consistent presence in New Mexico's First Judicial District courtrooms, appearing at arraignments, plea hearings, trials, and sentencing hearings dealing with sexual violence. The results of their court surveys are analyzed at the end of the year and are published to educate the community about sexual violence in the community. The results are then utilized to work with the State Legislature to change and introduce laws to help bring about justice for survivors of sexual violence.

[Santa Fe Rape Crisis & Trauma Treatments Center website and communication with staff.]

Innovative Features:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Primary focus on sexual assault cases in juvenile and adult court;▪ Initiated as a collaboration between the Santa Fe Rape Crisis & Trauma Treatment Center and the League of Women Voters of Santa Fe County;▪ Volunteer manual that has been distributed to programs around the country, with positive feedback;▪ Distribution of the Clipboard to over 2000 individuals and agencies, including legislators, activists, government and judicial personnel, therapists, and community centers and libraries.
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Cases Monitored: Felony sexual assault and domestic violence cases. Cases are followed from arraignment through sentencing.

Monitors/Staff: Volunteer observers, one staff member (program coordinator)

Jurisdiction: New Mexico's First Judicial District

Funding: Federal, State, City, private donors.

Resources Online: Program overview

OKLAHOMA

Name of Program:	RSVP/DVIS Family Safety Court Watch Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Inc.	Contact:	Sherry Clark Director of Volunteers
Address:	5756 East 31st St. Tulsa, OK 74135 Phone: (918) 280-8656 Fax: (918) 280-8659	Email:	Sherry@rsvptulsa.org
		Website:	www.rsvptulsa.org www.facebook.com/rsvptulsa

Description: “Court Watch is a coordinated voice for opening the courts to the community and making every home a safe home.”¹ The RSVP/DVIS Court Watch program began in 1999 with the overall objective of effectively reducing domestic violence in the community.² This program uniquely pairs the expertise of DVIS (Domestic Violence Intervention Services) regarding domestic violence and family safety, and the expertise of RSVP in connecting senior volunteers to meaningful community service opportunities.

RSVP/DVIS Court Watch identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the community’s response to the problem of domestic violence. This feedback helps DVIS and others involved to recognize and support successful practices, encourage dispositions and sanctions that better address victims’ safety, and make informed decisions that promote behavioral change in offenders. Findings and other information are communicated in a variety of ways such as meetings, local media, reports, and public speaking engagements.

RSVP/DVIS Court Watch has the support of several Tulsa County judges, the Law School at Tulsa University, the League of Women Voters, some members of the Tulsa County Bar Association and the Tulsa County Medical Society, and personnel from other non-profit organizations that advocate on behalf of family safety in Tulsa.³ Trained and experienced volunteers have unprecedented access to judges and process participants, and are often called upon for consultation.

¹ RSVP/DVIS, Court Watch Report (2007).

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

[RSVP/DVIS Court Watch report and communication with staff.]

**Innovative
Features:**

- Initiated as a collaboration between RSVP and DVIS;
- Operates within the context of the Ann Patterson Dooley Family Safety Center in Tulsa, OK;
- Creation of multiple volunteer opportunities, including as a volunteer court watcher, or an at-home volunteer researching cases on the Internet, performing

- data entry or case tracking;
- Emphasis on reporting findings through the development of personal relationships with court personnel and process participants.

Cases Monitored: Emergency protective order cases; protective order cases; misdemeanor and felony cases; family relations cases; and other civil cases related to family safety

Monitors/Staff: Part-time staff (serves as volunteer recruiter and program coordinator); volunteers

Jurisdiction: Tulsa County

Funding: Private funding

Resources Online: Program overview

WASHINGTON

Name of Program:	Court Watch Program of Pierce County, Pierce County Commission Against Domestic Violence	Contact:	Pam Dittman, Coordinator Ann Eft, Executive Director Dr. April Gerlock, VA Puget Sound Lynne Berthiaume, VA Puget Sound
Address:	1111 Fawcett St S, Suite 100 Tacoma, WA 98402 Phone: (253) 798-7660 Fax: (253) 798-4795	Email:	pdittman@tpchd.org aeft@tpchd.org apрила@u.washington.edu lynne.berthiaume@va.gov
		Website:	Not applicable

Description: The Pierce County Commission Against Domestic Violence (Commission) was established by the Pierce County Council and is dedicated to the prevention of domestic violence. The Commission employs two full-time employees dedicated to coordinating Commission members, allies, and others with many projects, including Court Watch. The Commission is fiscally managed by the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, yet remains its own entity.

The Commission began its first court monitoring pilot project in April 2006, partnering with Dr. April Gerlock, and the Forensic Nursing Program at the University of Washington, School of Nursing, to recruit volunteers.

The goals of the Court Watch Program of Pierce County are to monitor:

- court process for issues related to victim safety;
- court decorum of judges, attorneys, and other court staff;
- direct/indirect messages given to domestic violence batterers and victims during the court process; and
- outcomes of court proceedings regarding appropriate sanctions for perpetrators and the safety of victims and their children.

The Court Watch Program of Pierce County developed a report for the 2006 pilot project which outlined themes, recommendations, and future directions for Court Watch.

[Court Watch Program of Pierce County report, forms, and communication with staff].

Innovative Features:

- Organized as part of a local governmental entity;
- Consultations with courts, legal services providers, and other direct service providers from the beginning;
- Court monitoring internships through a collaborative partnership with the Forensic Nursing Program at the University of Washington, School of Nursing;
- Recruitment of a professor at the local university to analyze project data and develop a report.

Cases Monitored: Pre-trial criminal hearings (presently only City of Tacoma Municipal Court); civil protection order hearings

Monitors/Staff: Forensic nursing student volunteers (interns); forensic PhD; part-time staff person

Jurisdiction: Pierce County

Funding: No dedicated funding

Online Resources: Not applicable

OTHER PROGRAMS

Name of Program: Citizen Court Monitoring
The Fund for Modern Courts

Contact: Denise Kronstadt
Deputy Executive Director

Address: 351 West 54th St.
New York, N.Y. 10019
Phone: (212) 541-6741 x 103
Fax: (212) 541-7301

Email: justice@moderncourts.org

Website: www.moderncourts.org

Description: “In 1975, the Fund for Modern Courts pioneered an initiative designed to give New York citizens a powerful voice in how their courts are run. This groundbreaking program, known as Citizen Court Monitoring, is straightforward: From around the state, groups of non-lawyer volunteers observe court proceedings on a regular basis. The monitors evaluate the courts from the point of view of those outside the system, and recommend improvements to make the courts more efficient and user-friendly for the average person. The monitors’ findings and recommendations are then published by Modern Courts and released to court administrators, judges, court personnel, lawmakers, bar associations, civic groups, and the media...”

[Modern Courts website and communication with staff.]

Cases Monitored: Family court; criminal court; county court; city court; town and village justice courts

Monitors/Staff: Non-lawyer volunteers

Jurisdiction: Statewide

Funding: Unknown

Resources Online: Court Monitoring Reports

OTHER PROGRAMS

Name of Program:	Mothers Against Drunk Driving MADD National Office	Contact:	For your local MADD office go to: www.madd.org/About-Us/About-Us/Contact-Us.aspx
Address:	511 E. John Carpenter Fwy, Suite 700 Irving, TX 75062 Phone: (800) 438-6233 Fax: (972) 869-2206/07	Email:	programs@madd.org
		Website:	www.madd.org

Description: The mission of MADD is “to stop drunk driving, support the victims of this violent crime and prevent underage drinking.” “To truly reduce drunk driving, lawmakers, law enforcement officers and the judicial system must work in concert. MADD is here to help make that happen. The presence of volunteer court monitors from within the community sends a clear message to judges, prosecutors, defense lawyers and court staff: We care about what happens and we’re holding you accountable.”

“The Court Monitoring Program has three goals:

- Compile pertinent information on how DUI/DWI court cases are handled across the nation.
- Identify potential gaps in the prosecution and adjudication process.
- Use data to help improve the legal system.

To achieve these goals, we send volunteers trained in legal procedures to observe and note the outcomes of DUI/DWI court proceedings, including arraignments, pre-trial hearings, trials and sentencing cases. The program evaluates the courts through regular review of court proceedings, collection of court data and review of records. To achieve its goals, the program also focuses on forming strong strategic alliances with law enforcement, judges, prosecutors and the defense bar, including public defenders.”

[MADD website and communication with staff.]

Cases Monitored:	Criminal DUI/DWI cases
Monitors/Staff:	Volunteers/Project Coordinators
Jurisdiction:	MADD chapters in AZ, CT, MD, LA, IL, TN, TX, NM, NE, CA, HI, MO, MT, NC, KY, and VA, with plans to expand the program in every state
Resources Online:	Program overview, plus links to local chapters

ONLINE COURT MONITORING RESOURCES

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT & TRAINING MATERIALS

- “CourtWatch in Your Community!” Montana Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Helena, MT. 10 Sept. 2009** <[www.mcadsv.com/ documents/CWBrochure.pdf](http://www.mcadsv.com/documents/CWBrochure.pdf)>. This volunteer recruitment brochure explains MCADSV’s community-based model of court monitoring and the role of the steering committee and volunteer court monitors. Tri-fold brochure.
- “CourtWatch—Justice Doesn’t Just Happen.” CourtWatch Florida. Winter Park, FL. 10 Sept. 2009** <[courtwatchflorida.org/ uploads/Brochure_doc.pdf](http://courtwatchflorida.org/uploads/Brochure_doc.pdf)>. This volunteer recruitment brochure provides an overview of the origins, philosophy, and strategies of CourtWatch Florida. Tri-fold brochure.
- “CourtWatch Volunteer Application.” MCADSV CourtWatch Training Manual. Helena: Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, 2007. 134-135. 10 Sept. 2009** <www.mcadsv.com/documents/CourtwatchTrainingManual10.15.07.pdf>. Volunteer application adapted from WATCH Volunteer/Intern application. Handout. 2 pages.
- “Criminal Justice Process.” CourtWatch Florida. 10 Sept. 2009** <http://www.courtwatchflorida.org/uploads/Training_-_Criminal_Justice_Process.pdf>. This handout developed by CourtWatch Florida provides an overview of the basic agencies that comprise the criminal justice system, the steps in the criminal process, and a chart of the typical progression of criminal misdemeanor litigation. Handout. 6 pages.
- Ensuring Justice System Accountability through Court Monitoring. CourtWatch Florida. Winter Park, FL. 10 Sept. 2009** <courtwatchflorida.org/uploads/CW_Training_web.ppt>. Presentation developed by CourtWatch Florida outlines the project’s mission and philosophy, provides an overview of the civil and criminal justice systems, facts about domestic violence, the court monitor’s role, helpful judicial responses, how to use the monitoring forms, courtroom etiquette, and volunteer expectations. Designed to be used with accompanying handouts. PowerPoint. 22 slides.
- “Injunction Hearings” and “Support and Visitation Issues.” CourtWatch Florida. 10 Sept. 2009** <[http://www.courtwatchflorida.org/ uploads/Training_-_Injunctions.pdf](http://www.courtwatchflorida.org/uploads/Training_-_Injunctions.pdf)>. This handout developed by CourtWatch Florida provides information about injunction court procedures, and clarifies the structures for various kinds of child support, as well as visitation options for families. Handout. 2 pages.
- “Judicial System Overview.” CourtWatch Florida. 10 Sep. 2009** <courtwatchflorida.org/uploads/Training_Overview_of_Criminal_Justice_System.doc>. This handout developed by CourtWatch Florida clarifies for individuals unfamiliar with the court system different between civil and criminal law, the citizen’s relationship to the courts, and the purpose of the courts. Handout. 1 page.

“Legal Glossary.” CourtWatch Florida. 10 Sep. 2009 <http://www.courtwatchflorida.org/uploads/Training_-_Legal_Glossary.pdf>. This handout developed by CourtWatch Florida defines legal terminology that may come up during training and monitoring of court systems. Handout. 9 pages.

“Sample CourtWatch Confidentiality Agreement.” MCADSV CourtWatch Training Manual. Helena: Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, 2007. 139. 10 Sep. 2009 <www.mcadsv.com/documents/CourtwatchTrainingManual10.15.07.pdf>. Monitor code of conduct agreement that volunteers sign outlining expectations for how they will behave in court. Form. 1 page.

“Sample Court Monitor Position Description.” MCADSV CourtWatch Training Manual. Helena: Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, 2007. 131. 10 Sep. 2009 <www.mcadsv.com/documents/CourtwatchTrainingManual10.15.07.pdf>. Job description adapted from WATCH and RSVP/DVIS job descriptions; provides a summary of purpose, qualifications, responsibilities, time commitment, and benefits of the volunteer court monitor position. Handout. 1 page.

“Sample Data Entry Volunteer Position Description.” MCADSV CourtWatch Training Manual. Helena: Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, 2007. 132. 10 Sep. 2009 <www.mcadsv.com/documents/CourtwatchTrainingManual10.15.07.pdf>. Job description adapted from WATCH and RSVP/DVIS job descriptions; provides a summary of purpose, qualifications, responsibilities, time commitment, and benefits of the volunteer data entry position. Handout. 1 page.

“Sample Interview Questions.” MCADSV CourtWatch Training Manual. Helena: Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, 2007. 137. 10 Sep. 2009 <www.mcadsv.com/documents/CourtwatchTrainingManual10.15.07.pdf>. Questions to ask in an interview to determine if a potential volunteer is a good match with the court monitoring project. Handout. 1 page.

“Sample Volunteer Observer Agreement.” MCADSV CourtWatch Training Manual. Helena: Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, 2007. 138. 10 Sep. 2009 <www.mcadsv.com/documents/CourtwatchTrainingManual10.15.07.pdf>. Confidentiality agreement that volunteers sign in regard to cases observed and/or information entered into the court monitoring database. Form. 1 page.

“Sample Volunteer Orientation Agenda.” MCADSV CourtWatch Training Manual. Helena: Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, 2007. 160. 10 Sept. 2009. <www.mcadsv.com/documents/CourtwatchTrainingManual10.15.07.pdf>. Suggests topics of information and a format for orienting volunteers to courtroom observation in a day-long training session. Includes suggestions for appropriate facilitators for each topic. Handout. 1 page.

“Sample Volunteer Pre-Commitment Agreement.” MCADSV CourtWatch Training Manual. Helena: Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, 2007. 140. 10 Sep. 2009 <www.mcadsv.com/documents/CourtwatchTrainingManual10.15.07.pdf>. Agreement that volunteers sign indicating their time commitment to the court monitoring project. Form. 1 page.

“Volunteer Guidelines.” MCADSV CourtWatch Training Manual. Helena: Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, 2007. 165-166. 10 Sep. 2009 <www.mcadsv.com/documents/CourtwatchTrainingManual10.15.07.pdf>. Provides 20 suggested volunteer guidelines for court monitors on how to behave in court. Handout. 2 pages.

Volunteer/Intern Timecard. 2008. CourtWatch Florida. Winter Park, FL. 10 Sep. 2009 <courtwatchflorida.org/uploads/Volunteer_timecard_2008_web.xls>. Spreadsheet designed by CourtWatch Florida to document volunteer hours, mileage, and parking for an entire year. Form. 4 pages.

“Volunteer Orientation Manual.” MCADSV CourtWatch Training Manual. Helena: Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, 2007. 158-159. 10 Sept. 2009 <<http://www.mcadsv.com/documents/CourtwatchTrainingManual10.15.07.pdf>>. Suggests topics of information that should be made available in a volunteer orientation manual, including volunteer expectations, history of court monitoring and the violence against women movement, introduction to domestic and sexual violence, understanding the criminal and civil justice processes, and court monitoring basics. Handout. 2 pages.

“Volunteer Policies and Procedures.” MCADSV CourtWatch Training Manual. Helena: Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, 2007. 161-164. 10 Sep. 2009 <www.mcadsv.com/documents/CourtwatchTrainingManual10.15.07.pdf>. Outlines the fundamental expectations of a court monitoring volunteer and the prerequisites necessary to be considered to participate. Handout. 4 pages.

WATCH Intern Job Description. 2007. WATCH. Minneapolis, MN. 10 Sep. 2009 <<http://www.watchmn.org/files/volunteer/InternJobDescription.pdf>>. Job description developed by WATCH; provides a summary of purpose, responsibilities, qualifications, time commitment, and length of commitment for the court monitor intern position. Handout. 1 page.

WATCH Volunteer Job Description. WATCH. Minneapolis, MN. 10 Sep. 2009 <<http://www.watchmn.org/files/volunteer/VolunteerJobDescription.pdf>>. Job description developed by WATCH; provides a summary of purpose, qualifications, responsibilities, and benefits of the court monitor volunteer position. Handout. 1 page.

WATCH Volunteer/Intern Application. WATCH. Minneapolis, MN. 10 Sep. 2009 <<http://www.watchmn.org/sites/default/files/VolunteerInternApplication.pdf>>. Application form developed by WATCH; includes an extensive criminal history section used to screen for conflict of interest. Form. 2 pages.

DATA COLLECTION FORMS

- “CourtWatch Monitoring Form.”** MCADSV CourtWatch Training Manual (2007): 151-153. Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. Helena, MT. 10 Sep. 2009 <www.mcadsv.com/documents/CourtwatchTrainingManual10.15.07.pdf>. Court monitoring form developed by MCADSV for use throughout the state of Montana. Requests information about the case, court efficiency, defendant, charges, victim, jury and other participants, disposition, court personnel, and case outcomes. Form. 3 pages.
- “CourtWatch Civil Injunction Hearings.”** CourtWatch Florida. Winter Park, FL. 10 Sep. 2009 <courtwatchflorida.org/uploads/Form__Civil_Injunctions_doc.pdf>. Court monitoring form developed by CourtWatch Florida for use in Orange and Seminole Counties. Requests information about the petitioner, respondent, case in general, grade for the judge, and additional comments. Permits monitor to record two hearings on the same form. Form. 1 page.
- “Court Watch Criminal Trial Form.”** CourtWatch Florida. Winter Park, FL. 10 Sep. 2009 <courtwatchflorida.org/uploads/Form_Criminal_Case_doc.pdf>. Court monitoring form developed by CourtWatch Florida for use in Orange and Seminole Counties. Requests information about the defendant, jury, and case disposition. Second page requests judicial, prosecutor, and defense attorney evaluations. Form. 2 pages.
- “Court Watch Plea/ Sentencing Hearings.”** CourtWatch Florida. Winter Park, FL. 10 Sep. 2009 <courtwatchflorida.org/uploads/Form_Plea_doc.pdf>. Court monitoring form developed by CourtWatch Florida for use in Orange and Seminole Counties. Requests information about the defendant, case disposition, sentence, grade for the judge, prosecutor, and defense, and additional comments. Permits monitor to record two hearings on the same form. Form. 1 page.
- “CourtWatch Miscellaneous Observations.”** CourtWatch Florida. Winter Park, FL. 10 Sep. 2009 <courtwatchflorida.org/uploads/Form_Miscellaneous_doc.pdf>. Court monitoring form developed by CourtWatch Florida for use in miscellaneous criminal hearings in Orange and Seminole Counties. Form. 1 page.
- “CPO Court Watch Form.”** District of Columbia Court Watch Report (2007): 32-33. Survivors and Advocates for Empowerment, Inc. Washington, DC. 10 Sept. 2009 <dcsafe.org/docs/Court_Watch_Dec2007.pdf>. Court monitoring form developed by the DC Court Watch Project. Requests information about the parties, dismissal/continuance, type of hearing, background, children, allegations, evidence, and judicial behavior and courtroom decorum. Form. 2 pages.
- Criminal Case Evaluation Criteria.** 2007. CourtWatch Florida. Winter Park, FL. 10 Sept. 2009 <courtwatchflorida.org/uploads/Training_Criminal_Evaluation_Criteria.doc>. This handout developed by CourtWatch Florida outlines eight criteria for evaluating judicial demeanor, 11 criteria for evaluating prosecutor demeanor, and five criteria for evaluating defense attorney demeanor. Handout. 2 pages.

“Order of Protection Monitoring Form.” MCADSV CourtWatch Training Manual (2007): 154-156. Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. Helena, MT. 10 Sept. 2009 <www.mcadsv.com/documents/CourtwatchTrainingManual10.15.07.pdf>. Court monitoring form developed by MCADSV for use throughout the state of Montana. Requests information about the case, petitioner, respondent, court efficiency, hearing, and application of the law. Form. 3 pages.

FINAL REPORTS

District of Columbia Court Watch Report. Washington, DC: Survivors and Advocates for Empowerment, Inc., 2007. 10 Sept. 2009 <dcsafe.org/docs/Court_Watch_Dec2007.pdf>. This report provides a compilation of objective data gathered during a five-month monitoring period of protection order hearings in the District of Columbia, an analysis of that data, case studies based on specific issues identified by court monitors and advocates during a ten-month period, and recommendations. The document also includes a sample CPO Court Watch form. Report. 48 pages.

Dougherty, Dawn. Hennepin County Domestic Violence Court Report. Minneapolis: WATCH, 2006. 10 Sept. 2009 <<http://www.watchmn.org/files/reports/WATCH%20DV%20Court%20Report-%20updated%2010-10-2006.pdf>>. This report summarizes a 2006 study of the effectiveness of the Hennepin County Domestic Violence Court in handling cases of misdemeanor domestic abuse. It provides information about study design, successes of the domestic violence court since 2001, and key concerns and recommendations regarding judicial demeanor, attorney demeanor, court personnel demeanor, and no contact order violations. Report. 20 pages.

Elwell, Suzanne. Report on 2002 Court Monitoring Survey. Minneapolis: WATCH, 2002. 10 Sept. 2009 <<http://www.watchmn.org/files/reports/cm-survey.pdf>>. This report contains the results of a national survey of 33 court monitoring organizations located in 21 states and 2 provinces in Canada. The report provides data on the formation and current status of responding organizations, and a description of their programs, including organizational structure, cases monitored, staffing, monitoring frequency, and other activities. Report. 4 pages.

Fiscal Year 2006 Report DC Court Watch. Washington, DC: DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Survivors and Advocates for Empowerment (SAFE), 2006. 10 Sept. 2009 <dcsafe.org/docs/Court_Watch_Apr2007.pdf>. This report provides a compilation of data gathered during an eight-month monitoring period of protection order hearings in the District of Columbia, an analysis of that data, qualitative information, and recommendations. The document also includes a sample CPO Court Watch form. Report. 40 pages.

Hennepin County Criminal Courts: A View from the Outside. Minneapolis: WATCH, 1994. 10 Sept. 2009 <<http://www.watchmn.org/files/reports/Front%20page.pdf>>. This report contains the results of observations by WATCH volunteers of more than 1600 appearances in cases related to domestic abuse and criminal sexual conduct in Hennepin County. Findings and recommendations are provided for judicial performance and effective administration, victim issues, probation and conditional release practices, barriers to judicial services, and policy issues concerning judicial accountability and the tenure of the Chief Judge. Report. 13 pages.

Kutty, Rebecca. WATCH's Monitoring of Open CHIPS Cases in Hennepin County Juvenile Court. Minneapolis: WATCH, 2001. 10 Sept. 2009 <<http://www.watchmn.org/sites/default/files/2001%20CHIPS%20report%20-%20Final.pdf>>.

This report summarizes a study based on three years of observing children in need of protection or services (CHIPS) cases and over one year of systematically monitoring 45 CHIPS and termination of parental rights cases in Hennepin County Juvenile Court. Findings and recommendations are offered about the role of the judge, efficiency of the court, safety and welfare of the children, family safety in CHIPS cases with domestic violence, and breaking the cycle of child abuse and neglect. The Appendix includes 15 case summaries. Report. 113 pages.

Outar, Priya. 2004 WATCH OFP Report. Minneapolis: WATCH, 2004. 10 Sept. 2009 <<http://www.watchmn.org/files/reports/WATCHOFPReport.pdf>>. This report updates a study of civil orders for protection that was published in 1999.

This current study was based on monitoring of almost 300 hearings at the Hennepin County Family Justice Center between March and June 2004. It provides findings about improving the parties' understanding of the proceedings, the safety of waiting rooms in the Family Justice Center, application of the federal law prohibiting firearm ownership, and issues related to visitation of children in order for protection cases. It concludes with a summary of best practices and recommendations to improve comprehension. Report. 18 pages.

Schuster, Mary Lay and Amy Propen. 2006 WATCH Victim Impact Statement Study. Minneapolis: WATCH, 2006. 10 Sept. 2009 <<http://www.watchmn.org/files/reports/WATCH-VIS%20Final%20.pdf>>. This report summarizes the results

of a 2006 study to assess the extent to which victim impact statements affect sentencing decisions and acceptance of plea negotiations in local judges' courtrooms. The report includes findings on the benefits of victim impact statements, effect of statements on sentencing, motivation or reluctance to give a statement, features of persuasive statements, perceptions of victims, and judicial demeanor and dynamics in the courtroom. The study concludes that judges and advocates were sensitive to victims who provided input and impact statements, but gave more weight to "objective" factors in plea bargains and sentencing decisions. The report includes several recommendations for advocates, prosecutors, and judges. Report. 28 pages.

Thomas, Cheryl. Judicial Response and Demeanor in the Domestic Violence Court. Minneapolis: WATCH, 2001. 10 Sept. 2009 <<http://www.watchmn.org/files/reports/dv-report.pdf>>. This report summarizes the results of a study

focused on judicial response and demeanor in Hennepin County's new domestic violence court. Based on observations of over 600 misdemeanor hearings and interviews with various criminal justice personnel, it provides findings about courtroom decorum, delays, bail and release decisions, no contact orders, and violations of court orders. It concludes with recommendations for further improvement of the court. Report. 25 pages.

WATCH Report: Impact of Court Monitoring on Hennepin County, Minnesota. Minneapolis: WATCH, 2008. 10 Sept. 2009 <<http://www.watchmn.org/files/reports/2007CJSSurveyfinalreport.pdf>>. This report summarizes the results of a 2007

survey of 126 criminal justice personnel that asked for their impressions of WATCH and their opinions of its impact on the criminal justice system. It concludes that most respondents are aware of WATCH and what it is trying to accomplish, and believe it is making a difference in the courts. Report. 33 pages.

Wolfgram, Heather. **The Impact of Minnesota’s Felony Strangulation Law.** Minneapolis: WATCH, 2007. 10 Sept. 2009 <<http://www.watchmn.org/files/reports/Strangulation%20cover%20final%201-24-07.pdf>>. This report summarizes the results of a study designed to assess the impact of the 2005 law creating felony strangulation during a domestic assault. Using statewide charging statistics, case reviews of felony and misdemeanor cases in Hennepin County, a survey of Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women member programs, and interviews of criminal justice system personnel, the study concludes that the statute enhanced victim safety, held offenders accountable, and prevented domestic homicides. Challenges and gaps in implementation are outlined and specific recommendations for improved implementation of the statute are offered. Report. 37 pages.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

Anderson, Marna. “Courtroom Delays Follow-up.” **WATCH Post (Winter 2008): 2.** 10 Sept. 2009 <<http://www.watchmn.org/files/newsletter/newsletterW08.pdf>>. This article summarizes the results of a 2007 follow-up study on courtroom delays at the Hennepin County Government Center, and reiterated the call for increased funding and interim measures that could provide short-term solutions to courtroom delays. Article. 1 page.

Anderson, Marna and Heather Wolfgram, “WATCH Report on Findings from Survey of Hennepin County Criminal Justice System Personnel.” **WATCH Post (Winter 2008): 1+.** 10 Sept. 2009 <<http://www.watchmn.org/files/newsletter/newsletterW08.pdf>>. This article summarizes the results of a 2007 survey that asked criminal justice personnel for their impressions of WATCH and their opinions of its impact on the criminal justice system. Article. 5 pages.

Dougherty, Dawn. “Family Court: Consistent Approaches Lacking.” **WATCH Post (Winter 2006): 1+.** 10 Sept. 2009 <<http://www.watchmn.org/files/newsletter/newsletterw06.pdf>>. This article points to the lack of consistency in the OFP process in the Hennepin County Family Court, including inconsistent marriage counseling orders, parenting time orders, issuance of mutual orders, and denial of orders. Article. 3 pages.

Dougherty, Dawn. “2006 Hennepin County Domestic Violence Court Report.” **WATCH Post (Summer 2006): 3+.** 10 Sept. 2009 <<http://www.watchmn.org/files/newsletter/Summer%2006.pdf>>. This article summarizes a 2006 study of the effectiveness of the Hennepin County Domestic Violence Court in handling cases of misdemeanor domestic abuse. It provides information about study design, successes of the domestic violence court, and key concerns and recommendations regarding judicial demeanor, attorney demeanor, court personnel demeanor, and no contact order violations. Article. 3 pages.

Elwell, Suzanne. “Update on the Hennepin County Domestic Violence Court: A Look Back on the Court One Year after the Release of the WATCH Report.” **WATCH Post (Winter 2003): 2+.** 10 Sept. 2009 <<http://www.watchmn.org/files/newsletter/newsletterW03.pdf>>. This article updates a 2001 study of judicial demeanor and response in the newly established domestic violence court in Hennepin County. It concludes that demeanor, orderliness, and consistency in case processing had improved in the year since the study was issued, but calls for the reinstatement of the Domestic Violence Court Steering Committee, and continued meetings of judges assigned to the domestic violence court to confer on procedures, best practices, and court related issues. Article. 3 pages.

Luke, Katherine. “What Happens in Domestic Violence Court? Outcomes of Misdemeanor Domestic Violence Cases in Minneapolis.” WATCH Post (Winter 2003): 6+. 10 Sept. 2009 <<http://www.watchmn.org/files/newsletter/newsletterW03.pdf>>. This article summarizes a study of 121 defendants who were arraigned in 124 completed misdemeanor domestic violence cases in Hennepin County’s domestic violence court. It provides demographic information about the defendants in the study, average case length, initial charges filed, and case disposition. It concludes with a discussion of issues and concerns regarding case processing and case disposition findings. Article 4 pages.

Saunoi-Sandgren, Emily. “The Greater Minnesota Project Report: Challenges to System Advocacy.” WATCH Post (Winter 2005): 6+. 10 Sept. 2009 <<http://www.watchmn.org/files/newsletter/newsletterW05.pdf>>. This article summarizes a study of greater Minnesota that was done to describe and define what it means to do systems advocacy in rural areas and to identify factors that could affect a small community’s ability to engage in court monitoring and other approaches to systems accountability. Article. 3 pages.

Schuster, Mary Lay and Amy Propen. “Victim Impact Statements—Do They Make a Difference?” WATCH Post (Summer 2006): 1+. 10 Sept, 2009 <<http://www.watchmn.org/files/newsletter/Summer%2006.pdf>>. This article summarizes the results of a study to assess the extent to which victim impact statements affect sentencing decisions and acceptance of plea negotiations in local judges’ courtrooms. The study concluded that judges and advocates were sensitive to domestic violence and sexual assault victims who provided input and impact statements, but gave more weight to “objective” factors in plea bargains and sentencing decisions. The article concludes with several recommendations for advocates, prosecutors, and judges. Article. 4 pages.

Wolfgram, Heather. “Carter Shows Disdain for Justice System.” WATCH Post (Fall 2007): 1+. 10 Sept. 2009 <<http://www.watchmn.org/files/newsletter/newsletterF07.pdf>>. This article provides a chronology of the numerous assaults and terroristic threats of Kenneth Carter against 12 victims over a ten-year period, and concludes with recommendations that could curb some of the abuses of chronically violent men like Carter. Article. 6 pages.

Wolfgram, Heather. “The Impact of Minnesota’s Felony Strangulation Law.” WATCH Post (Winter 2007): 1+. 10 Sept. 2009 <<http://www.watchmn.org/files/newsletter/newsletterW07-Edited.pdf>>. This article summarizes the results of a study designed to assess the impact of the 2005 law creating felony strangulation during a domestic assault. The study concluded that the statute enhanced victim safety, held offenders accountable, and prevented domestic homicides, but made 10 recommendations for improved implementation of the statute. Article. 5 pages.

PRESS RELEASES & MEDIA REPORTS

“Courthouse Welcomes an Extra Set of Eyes and Ears at Domestic Violence Hearings.” DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence. 21 Feb. 2006. 10 Sep. 2009 <www.dccadv.org/docs/press_releases/CourtWatch.pdf>. This press release announces the launching of the new DC Court Watch program by the DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence (in collaboration with DC Superior Court and the Domestic Violence Intake Center). Press release. 2 pages.

“Do Victim Impact Statements Make a Difference in the Courtroom? WATCH Examines Outcomes in Study Released Today.” WATCH. 31 Jul. 2006. 10 Sept. 2009 <<http://www.watchmn.org/files/media/News%20release.pdf>>. This press release announces the publication of a study conducted by WATCH and the University of Minnesota’s Department of Rhetoric on the effectiveness of victim impact statements, believed to be the first study to examine this issue since Minnesota granted victims the right to make impact statements in 1988. Press release. 2 pages.

Lundy, Sarah. “Abused Women Have Friends in Court.” Orlando Sentinel. 14 May 2007. 10 Sep. 2009 <[courtwatchflorida.org/uploads/Sentinel_article_scan_2007-05-14.pdf](http://www.courtwatchflorida.org/uploads/Sentinel_article_scan_2007-05-14.pdf)>. This article provides a brief history of CourtWatch Florida, explains the current activities of court monitoring volunteers in Orange County, provides positive reactions to the program from the Assistant State Attorney and Circuit Court Judge, and outlines future plans of the program to issue a report of recommendations for court officials and prosecutors. Article. 1 page.

“Report Says More Offenders Are Being Charged Under State’s New Felony Domestic Strangulation Law.” WATCH. 24 January 2007. 10 Sept. 2009 <<http://www.watchmn.org/files/media/news%20release%20%20outstate%20-%20final.pdf>>. This statewide press release announces the publication of a report by WATCH on the impact of a 2005 felony domestic violence strangulation law in Minnesota. The report was issued jointly with a report from the Hennepin County Fatality Review Team. Press release. 2 pages.

Tomaselli, Debra. “CourtWatch—A Matter of Justice.” Central Florida Lifestyle Magazine. April 2008. 10 Sep. 2009 <http://www.courtwatchflorida.org/uploads/Lifestyle_article_2008-04-02.pdf>. This article provides an overview of the mission and activities of CourtWatch Florida and concludes with positive feedback from the Circuit Court Judge in Orange County and a court monitor who is studying criminal justice at the University of Central Florida. Article. 1 page.