

San Francisco Domestic Violence Multi-Disciplinary Team Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding stands as evidence that the San Francisco Department on the Status of Women (DOSW), the San Francisco District Attorney's Office (SFDA), the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD), Black Women Revolt Against Domestic Violence (BWRADV), and La Casa de las Madres (La Casa) have worked together to develop the project set forth below, focused on improving the criminal justice response to underserved and Limited English Proficient (LEP) victims at high risk for lethality in relationships.

If selected for funding, the identified collaborative proposes to 1) improve outreach strategies to reflect the diversity of domestic violence survivors and increase connections to all available services; 2) identify and address system gaps to reduce incidence of domestic violence and eliminate domestic violence related deaths in San Francisco.

These goals will be met through the following five objectives: 1) Citywide expansion and implementation of the Lethality Assessment Program; 2) Strengthen the Domestic Violence High Risk Team's ability to track high lethality cases and coordinate services across criminal justice and community-based agencies; 3) Maintain centralized prosecution and victim support services; 4) Re-Establish the San Francisco Domestic Violence Death Review Team; and 5) Conduct community-based outreach and education to underserved communities, especially Black survivors of domestic violence who are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system.

The collaborating agencies will work to ensure the successful coordination of community response to domestic violence high lethality risk cases. To this end, all agencies agree to submit this proposal in response to the 2021 solicitation of the Office on Violence Against Women Improving Criminal Justice Responses to Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking Grant Program and, if selected for funding, to perform the duties set forth in this MOU.

Long History of Meaningful Collaboration

San Francisco's public agencies and domestic violence and sexual assault service providers have worked together for many years to create a collaborative approach to preventing and addressing gender-based violence in the City and County of San Francisco.

DOSW, SFDA, and SFPD have a long history of collaboration, both having been integral participants in the Justice and Courage Oversight Panel on Domestic Violence Policy Reform and the Family Violence Council, two local initiatives that seek to develop and monitor protocols for criminal justice system response to domestic violence and to facilitate communication and collaboration among criminal justice agencies, social service agencies, and community-based organizations that serve survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and elder abuse. Most recently, DOSW, SFDA, SFPD, La Casa de las Madres and several community partners have worked together to enhance services to domestic violence survivors at high risk for lethality through the Domestic Violence High Risk Team Pilot Project funded by OVW 2018 Improving Criminal Justice Responses to Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking Grant Program.

DOSW has also worked extensively with La Casa de las Madres since 1980. La Casa de las Madres has been a Partner Agencies in DOSW's Gender-Based Violence Prevention & Intervention (GBV) Grants Program for over two decades. Black Women Revolt Against Domestic Violence (BWRADV) is a new initiative that seeks to provide Black survivors of domestic abuse with access to culturally competent resources to help them heal and be safe. BWRADV's resource center will also provide community health outreach workers, supportive parents and peers, and social workers with culturally sensitive insights needed to work effectively with Black families. Black Women Revolt Against Domestic Violence's mission is to heal and transform Black families in San Francisco by raising awareness about intergenerational and domestic violence and providing culturally competent support and case management for Black women and families in crisis. This proposal builds upon prior efforts to address gaps in San Francisco's criminal justice response to domestic violence, including the lack of a systemic process to identify risk factors and assess dangerousness in domestic violence cases on a consistent basis, the lack of domestic violence resources located in the communities that need them the most, and the lack of a formal Domestic Violence Death Review Team. The following is an overview of collaborating agencies.

San Francisco Department on the Status of Women (DOSW):

DOSW fosters the equitable treatment and advancement of the women and girls of San Francisco through policies, legislation, and programs, with particular focus on marginalized populations and survivors of gender-based violence. DOSW seeks to do the following: (1) create comprehensive protocols in San Francisco to advance the status of women and girls by working collaboratively with community leaders, other departments, and elected officials; (2) develop legislation and policy reforms informed by research and collaboration; and (3) provide fiscal and programmatic oversight to DOSW's GBV Grants Program, a network of community-based organizations selected to meet the needs of survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, and human trafficking in San Francisco. DOSW currently staffs the Family Violence Council, which is an inter-agency council addressing child abuse, domestic violence, and elder abuse in San Francisco, and the Mayor's Task Force on Anti-Human Trafficking. DOSW is the lead agency in our current Domestic Violence High Risk Team Pilot Project.

San Francisco District Attorney's Office (SFDA):

For over 25 years, the DA's Office has been dedicated to prosecuting crime with resolve while remaining committed to rehabilitation and preserving civil liberties. The felony conviction rates continue to rise and there is comprehensive and culturally competent advocacy and support for victims. In 2020, the DA's Office handled more than 2,000 domestic violence cases, representing 1,838 victims. 115 survivors were referred to the Cooperative Restraining Order Clinic (CROC) for assistance applying for a Civil Protective Order. 252 high lethality cases were referred in 2020 and 136 of those victims were successfully contacted by advocates.

In FY 2020, there were 2,259 victims of domestic violence supported by the Victim Services Division and 141 child witnesses to DV served. As a part of the SFDA's Office continued emphasis on addressing domestic violence, the service lens has shifted to expand the quality of services provided to victims by the Victim Services Division (VSD). The SFDA's Office is a current partner in our Domestic Violence High Risk Team Pilot Project.

San Francisco Police Department (SFPD):

The San Francisco Police Department's Special Victims Unit investigates all felony arrest cases involving abuse committed against any person, including minors, by a current or former spouse, cohabitant, dating partner, fiancé, or person with a child in common, and includes cases of same sex relationships. The Special Victims Unit reviews roughly 300 domestic violence incident reports each month, and checks suspects for probation and parole status. If the suspect is found to be on probation or parole, the Assignment Officer notifies the appropriate agency. The Special Victims Unit compiles statistics on domestic violence high risk cases from the screens administered by the Bayview District station officers. The Special Victims Unit recently worked in partnership with DOSW, the DA's Office, and a community working group to revise and update Department General Order 6.09 and the Department Training Manual on Domestic Violence.

An investigation consists of interviews with the victim, witnesses, and suspects. Inspectors seek to corroborate evidence and bring an unbiased case to the District Attorney's Office. Inspectors collect evidence and do computer background checks on all parties involved. The Police Department sends all misdemeanor arrest cases directly to the District Attorney's Office. Misdemeanor cases are only assigned for investigation when a victim specifically requests that an unassigned misdemeanor case receive warrant consideration. Because all felony arrest reports are time-sensitive and must be presented to the District Attorney's Office within 48 hours, if the case meets the criteria for active investigation, it is immediately assigned to an inspector who conducts a thorough investigation. The case is then presented to the District Attorney's Office for warrant consideration or formal charging if the suspect is already in custody. In non-arrest cases that are not assigned for investigation, the Assignment Officer calls every victim in an attempt to advise him or her about follow-up procedures and referrals. Special Victims Unit inspectors attempt to contact all victims in every domestic violence and stalking case.

The Special Victims Unit also hosts domestic violence advocates from La Casa de las Madres who do outreach to victims in domestic violence criminal cases.

The Police Department is a current partner in our Domestic Violence High Risk Team Pilot Project.

La Casa de las Madres (La Casa):

In 1976, La Casa de las Madres was California's first shelter dedicated to women and children escaping domestic violence. Today, that once-quiet safehouse sustains a 24-hour lifeline for survivors, and La Casa is a leading voice for abused women, their children, teens, and older adults in the San Francisco Bay Area. La Casa offers a continuum of free, confidential, culturally inclusive, and multilingual domestic violence services evolved to meet the diverse and context-specific needs of our diverse community. In broad and targeted partnerships, La Casa empowers individual and community changes empowering victims, survivors, and those at-risk of abuse to break free from overlapping cycles of violence and vulnerability. Last year, La Casa engaged 10,052 individuals and professionals in prevention education, opening the door for individualized support and social change. La Casa also answered 5,131 calls for help and

supported 3,770 local survivors—93% of whom achieved critical improvements across five impact dimensions: safety, connection, knowledge, empowerment, and stability. La Casa’s mission is to respond to calls for help from domestic violence victims, of all ages, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year; to give survivors the tools to transform their lives; and to prevent future violence by educating the community and by redefining public perceptions about domestic violence. La Casa has particular expertise in co-locating within other systems, and currently has advocates out-stationed at the San Francisco Police Department Special Victims Unit, San Francisco General Hospital, San Francisco Human Services Agency, San Francisco Housing Authority, the Mary Elizabeth Inn, and Hotel Verona (supportive housing for women-identified adults).

La Casa de las Madres is a current partner in our Domestic Violence High Risk Team Pilot Project.

Black Women Revolt Against Domestic Violence:

Black Women Revolt Against Domestic Violence is an initiative started by Black Women Revolt Media and several community-based domestic abuse advocates who have answered the call to listen to Black women who have experienced domestic violence. The mission of Black Women Revolt Against Domestic Violence (BWRADV) is to heal and transform Black families in San Francisco by raising awareness about intergenerational domestic violence by providing culturally competent support and case management for Black women and families in crisis. Services are culturally relevant, LGBTQIA+ inclusive, and rooted in Black spirituality and wellness. The Resource Center is located in San Francisco’s historic Lakeview District (District 11) in the southwest part of San Francisco.

Participation in Developing the Application

This proposal was developed by the San Francisco Department on the Status of Women, the San Francisco District Attorney’s Office, the San Francisco Police Department, Black Women Revolt Against Domestic Violence and La Casa de las Madres through multiple conversations. The San Francisco Department on the Status of Women will be the lead agency. The following persons assisted with the proposal:

- DOSW: Kimberly Ellis, Director; Elise Hansell, Policy & Grants Manager
- SFDA: Gena Castrorodriguez, Chief of Victim Services; Brad Allred, Managing Attorney of the Domestic Violence Unit; Tara Anderson, Director of Policy
- SFPD: Chief William Scott, Deputy Chief David Lazar
- La Casa: Kathy Black, Executive Director, Katharine Berg, Director of Community Partnerships and Philanthropy
- Black Women Revolt Against Domestic Violence: Pamela Tate, Executive Director

Roles and Responsibilities

Department on the Status of Women

- I. *Roles:* To monitor, report, and coordinate grant activities; to actively participate at quarterly Project Implementation Team meetings and quarterly Death Review Team meetings; to support data analysis of high lethality cases; to assist with creation and delivery of training for law enforcement; to develop policies and protocols that enhance the City's coordinated response to domestic violence.

- II. *Responsibilities:*
 - a. DOSW will fund a 1.0 FTE Project Manager to manage and staff quarterly Project Team meetings and quarterly Death Review Team meetings with SFDA, SFPD, La Casa, and Black Women Revolt Against Domestic Violence.
 - b. DOSW will work with SFDA and SFPD to coordinate data analysis and tracking of relevant police incident data and other criminal justice data to identify cases with victims at high risk of lethality.
 - c. DOSW will collaborate with Project Team to develop and enhance local victim-centered policies and protocols that promote the accountability of domestic violence offenders and protection of victims.
 - d. DOSW will assist with developing and delivering training on the Lethality Assessment Program to police officers;
 - e. DOSW will include findings from the Death Review Team in its annual Family Violence Council report.
 - f. DOSW will monitor grant activities and provide fiscal and programmatic reports to the Office on Violence Against Women.

- III. *Resources:* In-kind contributions include the following: a. Office and meeting space. b. Project staff—Director, Fiscal & Policy Analyst, Project Coordinator (1.0 FTE).

San Francisco District Attorney's Office

- I. *Roles:* To prosecute perpetrators of domestic violence and provide victims with support throughout the court process and access to victim compensation; to develop protocols to improve the criminal justice system's identification and protection of victims who are considered to be at high risk of lethality in relationships.

- II. *Responsibilities:*
 - a. The Victim Advocate and Managing Attorney of the Domestic Violence Unit will attend quarterly Project Team Meetings to monitor grant implementation activities.
 - b. SFDA will staff quarterly Law Enforcement High Risk Team meetings.
 - c. SFDA will fund a Prosecutor position to be staffed by an experienced attorney who will carry a full caseload of domestic violence cases in which the victim has been identified by the San Francisco Police and/or the Project Team to be at high risk of lethality.
 - d. SFDA will fund a Victim Advocate position who will work with the DV prosecutor to provide services to the victims on her caseload, including (i) supporting victims throughout the court process, (ii) connecting victims to

community-based service providers, and (iii) assisting victims access state victim funding.

- e. SFDA will collaborate with the Project Team to develop and enhance existing protocols.
- f. SFDA will work with DOSW and SFPD to track relevant police incident data and other criminal justice data to identify cases with victims at high risk of lethality.
- g. SFDA will assign one agency representative to participate and one agency representative to facilitate quarterly Domestic Violence Death Review Team meetings (Year 2 & 3).
- h. SFDA will collect data required for grant reporting.

III. *Resources:* In-kind contributions include the following:

- a. Office and meeting space.
- b. Project staff – Managing Attorney of Domestic Violence Unit, Chief of Victim Services, DV Prosecutor, Victim Advocate, Director of Policy.
- c. Materials and supplies.

San Francisco Police Department (SFPD)

I. *Roles:* To assist with citywide rollout of training on lethality assessment; To screen all domestic violence victims for high risk and offer a connection to a hotline advocate; To participate in quarterly Project Team meetings and quarterly Law Enforcement High Risk Team meetings; to monitor and report on relevant police incident data to improve identification and protection of domestic violence victims at highest risk of lethality.

II. *Responsibilities:*

- a. SFPD will attend all quarterly Project Team meetings and quarterly Law Enforcement High Risk Team meetings and Domestic Violence Death Review Team meetings.
- b. SFPD will partner with SFDA, DOSW, and La Casa to conduct domestic violence lethality assessment trainings for all District Stations.
- c. SFPD will work with SFDA and DOSW to track relevant police incident data and other criminal justice data to identify cases with victims at high risk of lethality.
- d. SFPD will collect data required for grant reporting.

III. *Resources:* In-kind contributions of Police Department personnel staff time.

La Casa de las Madres (La Casa)

I. *Roles:* To provide domestic violence training to first responders; to answer hotline calls from SFPD officers who have triggered the referral protocol while administering a lethality assessment tool in the course of responding to a domestic violence incident; to provide in-kind direct services at La Casa that support domestic violence survivors considered to be high risk of lethality referred by SFPD officers; to provide in-person services at a co-located community resource center; and to actively participate in

quarterly Project Team meetings and quarterly Domestic Violence Death Review Team meetings.

II. *Responsibilities:*

- a. La Casa's Executive Director or his/her designee will attend all quarterly Project Team meetings and quarterly Domestic Violence Death Review Team meetings.
- b. La Casa certified domestic violence counselors who staff the hotline will answer calls from SFPD officers who have triggered the lethality assessment tool referral protocol as part of the response to a domestic violence incident. Counselors will assist domestic violence victims with safety planning and/or referral to emergency shelter services.
- c. La Casa staff will work with Project Team to improve the Lethality Assessment Program.
- d. La Casa will serve as a point of referral for the Project Team and offer direct services as available to domestic violence survivors identified by police officers to be of greatest need.
- e. La Casa may fund a part-time Case Manager who will qualify as a Domestic Violence Counselor pursuant to California Welfare and Institutions Code 18290-18309.8 and Evidence Code 1037-1037.8 and be co-located at a community resource center to offer domestic violence counseling and case management to identified and referred survivors.
- f. Prior to participation at quarterly Project Team meetings and quarterly Domestic Violence Death Review Team meetings, La Casa staff must meet the criteria of a Domestic Violence Counselor under the provisions referenced above and agree to all related confidentiality agreements to ensure the protection of domestic violence victims. La Casa staff will participate in information sharing with the Project Team only to the degree allowed by legal constructs protecting domestic violence counselor confidential communications.
- g. La Casa staff will collect data required for grant reporting as well as data on the volume of hotline calls and/or emergency shelter nights generated through the Lethality Assessment Program.

III. *Resources:* In-kind contributions include:

- a. Support of program staff
- b. Existing services of La Casa de las Madres.

Black Women Revolt Against Domestic Violence:

- I. *Roles:* To provide in-kind direct services at BWRADV that support domestic violence survivors; to assist partners with the development of an outreach strategy to Black women who have experience domestic violence; to implement this outreach strategy in San Francisco's historically Black neighborhoods: Bayview Hunters Point, Visitation Valley, Potrero Hill, Western Addition, Tenderloin, Treasure Island, and Lakeview/OMI; and to actively participate in quarterly Project Team meetings.

II. *Responsibilities:*

- a. BWRADV's Executive Director or her designee will attend all quarterly Project Team meetings.
- b. BWRADV staff will provide technical assistance as needed to grant partners around serving Black domestic violence survivors.
- c. BWRADV staff will collaboratively develop a culturally sensitive outreach strategy to reach underserved and/or marginalized victims of domestic violence. Messaging will include information about all the options available to survivors, including but not limited to, law enforcement, civil protection orders, crisis intervention services, immigration relief, and family support services.
- d. BWRADV will serve as a point of referral for the Project Team and offer direct services as available to domestic violence survivors.
- e. BWRADV staff will collect data required for grant reporting.

III. *Resources:* In-kind contributions include:

- a. Support of program staff
- b. Existing services of BWRADV.

Funding


The parties to this MOU have reviewed and approved the budget and are aware of the total amount being requested and the funding being requested for each partner.

Commitment


The parties to this MOU have reviewed the project goals as stated in the project narrative and are committed to working together to achieve these goals.

Approval

The parties to this MOU through their duly authorized representatives have executed this MOU on the days set out below, and certify that they have read, understood, and agreed to the terms and conditions of this MOU as set forth herein.

DocuSigned by:

By _____
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KIMBERLY ELLIS
Director
Department on the Status of Women
City & County of San Francisco
San Francisco, CA

Date 3/31/2021


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By _____
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CHESA BOUDIN
District Attorney
City & County of San Francisco
San Francisco, CA

Date 3/31/2021

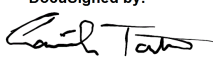
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By _____
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KATHY BLACK
Executive Director
La Casa de las Madres
San Francisco, CA

Date 3/29/2021

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By _____
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CHIEF WILLIAM SCOTT
Police Department
City & County of San Francisco
San Francisco, CA

Date 3/29/2021

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PAMELA TATE
Executive Director
Black Women Revolt Against
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Date 3/29/2021