

**Nevada Office of the Attorney General  
Committee on Domestic Violence  
Fatality Review Team Subcommittee**

Case Review Summary Report

Tonopah, Nevada

October 21, 2019

**Summary of Review:**

On October 21, 2019, the Nevada Office of the Attorney General Committee on Domestic Violence Fatality Review Subcommittee met in Tonopah, Nevada to conduct a case review. The purpose of the review was to gather information about a local fatality related to domestic violence and understand the circumstances leading up to the fatality to identify any opportunities for intervention. In addition to this case-specific review, the subcommittee also worked to generate discussion about the local community and/or state response to domestic violence, prevention, and intervention efforts. The multidisciplinary review process works to identify opportunities for improvement and make recommendations for prevention of future deaths related to domestic violence.

While the focus of the subcommittee was on the details of one specific case, through discussion with local community members the subcommittee discussed general community concerns related to domestic violence.

Below is a list of identified opportunities for improvement as well as resources and suggested strategies for implementation.

**Opportunities Identified by the Review Subcommittee:**

***Issue #1:** In many communities the resources that are available to victims of domestic violence are unknown to the general public and other agencies as well. This lack of resource awareness among the populace and professionals working with the public creates a barrier for victims in need of help. In some communities the local domestic violence service provider has succeeded in robust collaboration with government agencies and private businesses making services more accessible for those seeking help.*

**Proposed Response:** Advocates should try to partner with local newspapers and billboard owners on domestic violence awareness campaigns and ads, create ongoing social media campaigns, post flyers on bulletin boards at restaurants, grocery stores, animal shelters, community centers, churches, police departments, courthouses, health clinics, post offices, etc. promoting bystander intervention so witnesses know how they can help victims in need. In addition,

community advocates can contact local business owners such as restaurants, casinos, bars, hair salons, and gas stations to offer brief domestic violence and bystander intervention trainings which include cultural sensitivity and LGBTQ+ components for their employees creating greater public awareness for prevention and intervention. Finally, victim service providers need to have an identified contact they can keep updated and in communication with at the police department, courthouse, social services and any other agency in their area that delivers services to the public to ensure appropriate information is provided when needed.

**Issue #2:** *In many rural jurisdictions there are no system advocates placed in either the prosecutor's offices or the sheriff or police departments. This can leave victims who are unfamiliar with the criminal justice process confused and scared, which can have a significant negative impact on victim safety and successful prosecution of domestic violence crimes.*

**Proposed Response:** In jurisdictions without system advocates, encourage the prosecutor's offices and law enforcement agencies to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the local domestic violence service provider to place one of their community advocates in whichever agency they mutually feel would be most beneficial to victims.

**Issue #3:** *In many rural jurisdictions, agencies and organizations are working in silos which leaves them uninformed on resources and services that are available to victims of domestic violence. Not having access to all available assistance due to misinformation or lack of knowledge among those working with victims/survivors can leave this population with unnecessary barriers preventing them from leaving their abusers. With Nevada consistently ranking in the top five across the nation for women murdered by men every measure needs to be employed to give victims a safe way out of the violence.*

**Proposed Response:** Establish quarterly Coordinated Community Response (CCR) meetings with as many stakeholders as can be identified including: the district attorney's office, law enforcement agency, court personnel, social services, community advocates, churches, health clinics, schools, property managers, domestic violence survivors and any other groups who have the potential resources to serve these clients. For communities who do not have experience with facilitating CCR meetings the Nevada Office of the Attorney General is available to provide technical assistance with experts in coordinating these meetings until the local partners feel successful in adopting the project themselves.

**Issue #4:** *In rural areas of the state law enforcement agencies have limited resources and staff, limiting their ability to travel to urban areas where specialized training is usually offered. This leaves officers and prosecutors without the necessary skills to successfully investigate, prosecute or work in a trauma-informed and victim-centered approach on domestic violence cases. This significantly reduces offender accountability and victim safety which can lead to devastating outcomes.*

**Proposed Response:** The Nevada Office of the Attorney General will work to secure grant funding to bring regional domestic violence trainings to the northern and southern rural regions of the state both in-person and virtually, similar to the Victim Assistance Academy of Nevada (VAAN) virtual training conference. The trainings will include evidence-based prosecution, strangulation investigations, current Nevada laws, best practices, accessing victim services, roles of community and system advocates, cultural/ LGBTQ+ competency and trauma informed victim centered approaches in working with victims of domestic violence.

**Proposed Action Plan:**

The review subcommittee developed each of the recommendations listed above and the local community where the review was completed has already started to discuss ways that some of these recommendations can be implemented. The report of recommendations is provided to the Committee on Domestic Violence for discussion and possible action. In addition, the Committee on Domestic Violence and the Ombudsman for Domestic Violence can also help to support training initiatives, the dissemination of best practices and implementation of the review recommendations statewide.