

**ULSTER COUNTY
INTER-AGENCY COUNCIL ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Ulster County Inter-agency Council on Domestic Violence was established by the Ulster County Legislature in May 2009 “to begin work on system coordination, services, education, and reduction of victimization with the goal of achieving economies in system coordination to be utilized to deliver services and programs and shall work to collaborate seamless delivery of services to domestic violence victims by utilizing prevention services, family services, and coordination of courts”. As noted in Resolution No. 140, the Council shall meet monthly to review problems and concerns of an interagency nature, review data concerning operational issues, and advise the Ulster County Legislature and County Executive regarding the need for their attention and action. Toward that end, below are the Council’s 2014 accomplishments

Council Membership: Beginning in 2012, the Council’s goal was to increase membership and the participation of its membership. Through extensive outreach, the Council now boasts representatives from:

- City, Town, and Family Courts;
- Law enforcement including the New York State Police, Kingston Police Department, UC Sheriff’s Department, the Police Chiefs’ Association, Public Defender’s Office, and District Attorney’s Office;
- County Executive’s Office as needed, as well as full-time representation from other County departments, including DSS, Mental Health/Health, and Probation/Crime Victims Assistance; and
- Community stakeholder involvement in the form of Family of Woodstock, UCCC, SUNY New Paltz, and the Family & Child Advocacy Center, YWCA & LGBTQ Center.

This increased participation has helped to make the Council more robust and active, which in turn enhanced its ability to impact and educate the community and increase public awareness of domestic violence through many and varied activities.

Continuing Accomplishments:

“October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month” Recognition

- The County Executive Proclaimed October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month in Ulster County by issuing a Proclamation
- Two new banners were created to include a number people could call for help and were hung at the Ulster County Office Building and in front of the Ulster County Dept. of Social Services
- The Ulster County Office Building and the cupola of the Crime Victims Unit Office at One Pearl Street, Kingston were lit with purple lighting throughout October

- The Clothesline Project Art Exhibit was hung in the Lobby of the Ulster County Office Building during October.
- **2nd Annual Domestic Violence Information Forum** – An initiative of the Council developed in 2013, the 2nd Annual Forum was held on October 17th and included a half-day seminar for the public, stakeholders, providers, etc. to become familiar with the various agencies who are part of the network in the event of a domestic violence incident, as well as the services available and a viewing of “Shelter”. Natalie Merchant and Jon Bowermaster were on hand to introduce their concert film produced to benefit victims of domestic violence. This year’s event saw 144 attendees, up from 102 in 2013. The Forum is the County’s centerpiece to the theme “October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month”.
- Through coordination with the Executive’s Office, each County employee received a handout regarding domestic violence with their paycheck at the end of September.
- With funding through UCDCSS & UCDOH and coordination with the Executive’s Office, four billboards were placed throughout the County proclaiming “October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month”.

Updated Palm Card: With input from the Council, the District Attorney’s Office has updated the domestic violence palm card and has copies available for distribution.

New Initiatives in 2014:

Teen Dating Violence brochure – The Council developed a Teen Dating Violence brochure for distribution at offices, public events & human services fairs, schools, etc. that includes information on teen rights, knowing the signs of an abusive relationship, how to help a family member/friend in an abusive relationship, as well as contact information for relevant providers.

Teen Dating Violence Poster, Poetry & Video Contest: Several Ulster County school districts are participating in the 2014 Teen Dating Violence Poetry & Poster Contest and the Teen Dating Violence Video Contest in an effort to bring awareness to this very relevant issue, with a submission deadline of December 16th. The Subcommittee received 17 videos from Saugerties Jr/Sr High School and 5 from Ellenville High School. Winning submissions will be posted on Facebook and other websites throughout the month of February 2015. As an incentive for students to participate, the Police Chiefs’ Association collected donations to provide Grand, Second & Third Place prizes in the form of gift cards for supplies. This was a new initiative of the Council in 2014, one we hope will continue in 2015.

Development of Social Media Outreach: In conjunction with the County Executive’s Office, the Council has developed a Facebook page to post current events such as the Forum and Teen Dating Violence contests. In addition, the County Executive’s Office is considering a link on the County’s website for Council information.

Creation of a Domestic Violence app: To remain current with social media and target the largest audience, the County has developed a contract with a vendor to develop a Domestic Violence app which will be launched to the public in early 2015. To date, the ad for the app has been taped, including a message from the County Executive and work on the app has begun.

Teen Dating Quiz/Card: The Council is in the process of developing a postcard with a QR code that will link to a quiz for teens to determine if they are in a violent dating relationship. The hotline numbers will be listed at the end.

Danger Assessment Training - Lynn Carlson has confirmed with a vendor for an online Danger Assessment Training. Several departments will be participating during the next several months.

Domestic Incident Report (DIR) Database: Although not a direct initiative of the Council, members of the Council, in their respective roles at the Family & Child Advocacy Center and District Attorney's Office are finalizing an update/upgrade to the DIR database that will be available to all of law enforcement. It will also be able to populate statistical data.