

*EVALUATION OF
STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN PILOT PROJECTS
FINAL REPORT*

submitted to

THE PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY

by

JENNIFER ADAMS MASTROFSKI, PH.D.,

with Sean Griffin, Duncan Schlag, Lynne Goodstein, PH.D.

*The Penn State Justice and Safety Institute
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA 16802
(814) 863-0895*

October 1998

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

In 1994, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was passed as part of the 1994 Federal Crime Bill. This act has resulted in capability of states to fund projects targeted specifically toward reducing the incidence of violence against women. In the 1995-96 fiscal year, The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) funded three pilot projects with federally appropriated monies in *Lancaster*, *Luzerne*, and *Philadelphia* Pennsylvania counties.

Projects met generally established goals of Pennsylvania's STOP Violence Against Women program. The Violence Against Women Planning Committee identified four of the seven allowable purpose areas to be addressed during the first year, including training of law enforcement officers and prosecutors; developing units of law enforcement officers and prosecutors specifically targeting violent crimes against women; developing more effective policies and procedures for handling violence against women; and developing, enlarging, and strengthening victims services programs, including service to minority populations (summarized from PCCD Funding Guidelines, April 1996).

All projects addressed domestic violence and sexual assault as two categories of violence against women with emphasis on:

- developing and/or increasing services to under-served populations (Latinas, Hispanics, rural women);
- developing and/or increasing coordinated services and case management;
- intensifying training of law enforcement and prosecutorial personnel;
- developing specialized staff among law enforcement and prosecutorial personnel; and
- establishing/strengthening policies and procedures, protocols, tracking and documentation of violence against women to increase tracking reliability.

That same year, PCCD funded an impact evaluation of these three projects. This *Executive Summary* highlights major components of the evaluation grant.

Overview of the Evaluation Design

The evaluation took place over an **18-month** time frame and focused on four major research questions required by PCCD. Within this framework were numerous sub-questions developed by the evaluator which served to address the larger evaluation questions.

>> Question One: Have services to women victims been improved?

Each county proposed to expand and improve services to women victims through two primary means: increasing the overall quality of services to women who were currently accessing services and intensifying efforts to under-served populations of women victims.

The evaluation project concentrated its efforts on measuring improvement through increase of specialized personnel to provide services for women victims; improvement through intensified training; and improvement through establishing and/or strengthening policies and procedures for handling identified categories of women victimization.

>> Questions Two and Three: Have law enforcement practices changed and, if so, what are the results?; Have prosecutorial practices changed and, if so, what are the results?

The second and third major research questions to be addressed are linked closely with the first. Efforts to improve services for women victims through establishing new specialized positions, developing policies and/or revising existing ones, enhancing computerized tracking systems, and implementing new procedures for follow-up all have potential for changing behavior and practices of law enforcement and prosecutorial personnel. The evaluation assessed change as measured by more consistent, reliable case identification and tracking; change as measured by volume of cases reported under clarified categories of violence against women; change as measured by the quantity and quality of interactions among law enforcement, prosecutorial staff, and victims' services personnel; and change as measured by difference in attitudes and beliefs of law enforcement and prosecution.

>> Question Four: Has violence against women been reduced?

Unlike the previous three questions, the question of whether violence against women has been reduced as a result of intensified efforts was much more complex and difficult to assess. It was likely and expected that number of reported incidents would increase, at least for a significant time period, as a result of enhanced awareness, training, and improved tracking systems. Thus, it was not only unrealistic but inappropriate to measure "success" by change in case volume since projects began. However, a number of measures for assessing reduced violence were explored primarily through year-end interviews with key participants in the projects.

The Pilot Counties

Lancaster County identified the following major goals, among numerous objectives proposed for the first year of funding:

- creation of a new county detective position to join the planned Domestic Violence Unit (DVU);
- appointment of a full-time attorney within the DVU to prosecute all protection from abuse (PFA) contemptes and all domestic violence prosecutions involving violations of the PA Crimes Code;
- coordination between the county detective and police departments to provide all training (on county police protocol primarily);

- coordination between the DVU and the Domestic Violence Legal Services Clinic and women's shelters to provide advocates to appear with victims;
- Provision of a legal advocate by the Lancaster Shelter for Abused Women for advocacy and improved access to the justice system;
- bilingual sexual-assault counselor position within the YWCA Sexual Assault Center; and
- development of a computerized tracking system for all county domestic violence incidents in order to provide link between law enforcement activities and the DVU of the District Attorney's office.

Luzerne County identified the following, among numerous goals and objective proposed for the first year of funding:

- hiring of a domestic violence counselor/advocate to provide specific court and legal advocacy, to participate in Task Force activities regarding review, revision, and further development of police responses and court advocacy protocols, and to be responsible for all facets of the advocacy issues, including victims' compensation, legal issues, follow-up, and medical issues;
- policy development by the Task Force and local training by victims services agencies;
- development by the Legal Issues Committee of written policies and procedures for police response to sexual assault cases;
- creation and hiring of part-time Assistant District Attorney within the District Attorney's office to be primarily responsible for prosecuting PFA Indirect Criminal Contempt charges (ICC's);
- participation by the District Attorney's office in development of a county-wide protocol, with required trainings for Assistant District Attorneys and county detectives; and
- completion of county-wide training for law enforcement, projected to include over 300 persons, on the revised domestic violence protocol and presentations by associated victims services/prosecutorial personnel.

Finally, ***Philadelphia County*** identified the following, among numerous goals and objectives proposed for the first year of funding:

- recruitment, training, and deployment of volunteer peer advocates from among violence survivors, with special attention paid toward survivor members of the Latina community, in order to provide outreach, information, accompaniment, and personal support to victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse;
- establishment of sites for deployment of peer advocates;
- creation and hiring of two full-time bi-lingual volunteer coordinators, one to be on staff at the Lutheran Settlement House (LSH), and one to be on staff at the Congreso de Latinos Unidos;
- intensification and coordination of education and outreach around all forms of violence against women in the city of Philadelphia, and especially in the Latina community;
- representation in training of several key organizations committed to serving women victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, including Women in Transition, Women Organized Against Rape, and Women Against Abuse; and
- procurement of specialized police equipment to improve response for victims.

The three projects, thus, shared some goals and objectives while they maintained very distinct, unique components. All three counties set goals in the following areas: **creation of new positions, recruitment and training of volunteers, serving under-served populations, development of coordinating teams, training of staff and law enforcement personnel, education and outreach, writing and revision of protocols, tracking and documentation, county specific projects, and agreement to be evaluated.**

Analytical Approach and Data Collection

The evaluation relied on a multi-method approach for assessing change and addressing the major research questions required by PCCD. This design, which included collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, was deemed most appropriate given the complex nature of these projects to produce change in a host of areas, including policies and procedures, knowledge, service, and rates of violent acts. The overall design afforded opportunity for incremental evaluations throughout the course of the evaluation cycle.

Categories of information and data collected included agency documents, training assessment data, prosecution data, year-end interviews, and focus-group meetings. Where feasible and appropriate, data were collected for the six-month period prior to STOP funding through the first full-year of STOP funding. A detailed listing of data collected in each county is provided in the complete Final Report.

Findings and Discussion

There is clear, documented evidence of major agency/systems change associated with activities of the STOP grants in all three counties studied during this evaluation project. While varying by agency and county, examples of change include increased volumes of police referrals to victims services; change in knowledge and attitudes from pre- and post-training of law enforcement personnel, where formally examined -- as well as high marks for the quality of training provided; and evidence of emerging change on a number of dimensions associated with prosecution of domestic violence and sexual assault criminal cases. (Detailed, agency by agency data analysis is available in the full evaluation report.) Similarly, there are numerous qualitative indicators of change which fall under the specific research questions addressed. Indeed, most striking was the amount of activity -- hirings, trainings, protocol change -- gleaned primarily from repeated site visits, interviews, attendance at meetings, and qualitative assessment/content analysis of written documents.

Quantitative analysis of collected data in general was constrained by status of various tracking systems, requests for data that either did not exist or were not forthcoming, standards of confidentiality limiting the types and categories of data made available, relatively short time frames represented by available data, and by the focus of all projects on issues other than quantitative tracking and measurement.

While the evaluation revealed only the “beginnings” of quantitative change as measured by differences in volume of cases and other related factors, this conclusion must be put into context -- i.e., that such measures of success were not appropriate during the first year nor were they expected. The overwhelming sentiment of key participants, gleaned primarily from year-end interviews, was that first-year priorities focused on establishing and implementing a coordinated response to serving women victims. Such findings imply that greater recognition must be given to the complex tasks being undertaken by counties to effect and measure systemwide change and improvement. Indeed, it is essential to document and track both the change process as much as absolute, "quantitative" outcomes (such as number of victims served, cases prosecuted, etc.).

The most significant outcome” at the end of the first year, as indicated by key participants in year-end interviews, fell into the following categories: *case management and services*, *inter-agency relationships*, *resources*, *special populations*, and *violence itself*. Elaboration of responses highlighted the qualitative nature of change experienced by these participants which could not be corroborated quantitatively by the end of the first year.

The evaluation project revealed that counties are highly committed and dedicated to improving services to women victims, and they have excellent ideas/projects for effecting positive change. They evidence tremendous ability and determination to provide consistent, appropriate training for professionals working with victims. Overall, counties have been creative and skillful in making decisions about where to put financial support and identifying how support will result in systems change.

There is tremendous variation across agencies related to individual tracking over and above systemwide tracking capability. Consistent findings across counties highlight the need for

assistance in tracking change and measuring success. Even when technological "capability" exists, practitioners may not be knowledgeable about how to best document progress or link progress with original goals/objectives in a systematic fashion. These results may be the product of many factors, which likely include focus on simply accomplishing goals (hiring new personnel, forming committees, conducting training, etc.) without resources/expertise to address the best methods/approaches for measuring outcome. One of the most striking findings from the evaluation was the amount of energy and time required to define job parameters and descriptions, Coordinating Team function, and develop viable networks before tackling other initiatives.

Recommendations

With these findings in mind, the following specific recommendations are made for similar coordinated-response projects. They fall generally under the topic of *Tracking, Unique Position of Victims Services Providers, and Coordinated Response to Violence Against Women*.

Tracking

- Set aside some resources for an evaluation consultant.
- Assess status of existing tracking systems and, subsequently, develop/refine these systems.
- Ensure that the tracking system matches goals/objectives and will provide capability of measuring success.
- Develop tracking systems to measure incremental change as well as final outcomes. This kind of tracking may include: writing journals, keeping meeting notes/minutes, and maintaining chronological records of contacts, events, and accomplishments, as appropriate.
- Develop tracking systems for all aspects of projects, including tracking/monitoring of job development independent of what the job is expected to produce.
- Further, document the work of Coordinating Teams as an invaluable tool for providing records of challenges, dilemmas, and conflicts experienced/resolved by persons representing various organizations and perspectives. Content analysis of minutes provide insight and knowledge about topics covered, seeds for policy changes, and challenging issues identified and addressed. In essence, they will provide key ingredients for assessment of **organizational** and **systems change**.
- It is also critical to examine what other mechanisms are in place to measure systems change or, at least, "indicators" of systems change. In addition to tracking progress and goal attainment at the agency level, then, it is important to compare agency tracking

systems across all agencies/organizations involved in the project to ascertain consistency among these systems.

- Once tracking systems are implemented, individual agencies/organizations should develop periodic review of data entered and, specifically, what these data are telling them about progress.

Unique Position of Victims Service Providers

- It is critically important to examine demands and requirements for these positions since significant resources are spent training new personnel to become specialists within the agency, and high attrition rates can be costly and counter-productive to goals of establishing specialized positions.
- Given the high level of turnover evidenced in the evaluation project, counties should identify preventive measures to enhance longevity, which could include helping newly-hired personnel to see the "big picture" and where they fit in, as a possible incentive to remain in these positions. In addition to attending Coordinating Team meetings, efforts could include ensuring that various personnel have other opportunities to interact and learn/reap rewards from each other.

Coordinated Response to Violence Against Women

Findings suggest that victims services agencies can greatly enhance the quality and usefulness of data reported on clients, without divulging confidentiality. This evaluation recommends that agencies at both the local and state level re-examine tracking systems and collaborate with a program evaluation expert to develop more sophisticated reporting systems which maintain confidentiality. In time, counties must and should re-visit the possibilities and feasibility of developing inter-agency tracking systems in order to actually measure outcome of a systems response. While methodologically challenging, some multi-agency counties have surmounted obstacles and become nationally recognized for success in developing a coordinated tracking system to mirror a coordinated response.

Finally, it is essential to recognize that given the nature and scope of STOP formula projects to strengthen coordinated responses for serving victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, true systems change will occur slowly over a long period of time at best. This conclusion does not negate the value and utility of examining statistics to evaluate change. It simply stresses the importance of reporting quantitative change cautiously and within the context of other critical qualitative measures, thereby ensuring that interpretation of findings is appropriate.

INTRODUCTION

Background

In 1994, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was passed as part of the 1994 Federal Crime Bill. This act has resulted in capability of states to fund projects targeted specifically toward reducing the incidence of violence against women. In the 1995-96 fiscal year, The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) funded three pilot projects with these federally appropriated monies. Funded counties were: Lancaster, Luzerne, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Subsequently, PCCD also funded an impact evaluation of these three projects, and this report represents the culmination of the evaluation grant.

Projects met generally established goals of Pennsylvania's STOP Violence Against Women program: To reduce and eventually eliminate violence against women; to increase understanding of the dynamics of sexual assault and domestic violence among the general public, criminal justice and relevant professional communities; to promote a vigorous and effective response to violence against women among law enforcement and prosecution through appropriate training/technical assistance, model protocols and sufficient resources; and to enhance the capacity of victims services agencies to provide the broad range of services needed through a substantial commitment of additional resources (taken from PCCD Funding Guidelines for Research/Evaluation Projects, April 1996).

Further, the Violence Against Women Planning Committee identified four of the seven allowable purpose areas to be addressed during the first year, including training of law enforcement officers and prosecutors; developing units of law enforcement officers and prosecutors specifically targeting violent crimes against women; developing more effective policies and procedures for handling violence against women; and developing, enlarging, and strengthening victims services programs, including service to minority populations (summarized from PCCD Funding Guidelines, 1996).

The same year, PCCD solicited proposals for impact evaluations of the first year efforts of these three pilot projects. Generally speaking, impact evaluations focus on the outcome/results of an intervention (change), while process evaluations analyze implementation of intervention (change). However, given that the pilot projects, themselves, had been funded and operational for only three months in advance of the evaluation project, many components and eventual results of the evaluation reflect those of a process evaluation instead.

In general, the pilot projects involved development and evolution of specialized jobs, coordination, training, and other progressive changes over the course of first-year funding. Further, the projects were quite complex, encompassing multiple players in numerous stages of organizational/systems change with varying mechanisms, and knowledge/ability to track progress and outcome. Within this context, PCCD specified that the impact evaluation address three major research questions associated with organizational and

systems change (described later in this section). Thus, a narrowly-defined impact evaluation would simply have been insufficient and inappropriate.¹

This report highlights major findings from evaluating all three projects between the period of October 1, 1996 through June 30, 1998,² bearing in mind that each project has unique features which will be addressed individually. In general, however, all projects reflect goals and objectives of Pennsylvania's STOP Violence Against Women Program as well as The Violence Against Women Planning Committee's purpose areas identified for the first year. The following points summarize common features and characteristics of the three projects:

All projects addressed domestic violence and sexual assault as two categories of violence against women with emphasis on:

- developing and/or increasing services to underserved populations (including Hispanics, Latinos, and rural women);
- developing and/or increasing coordinated services and case management for violence-against-women victims;
- intensifying training of law enforcement and prosecutorial personnel who confront and handle violence-against-women incidents;
- developing specialized staff among law enforcement and prosecutorial personnel to follow-up violence-against-women incidents and to take major responsibility for oversight of training for additional personnel; and
- establishing/strengthening policies and procedures, protocols, tracking, and documentation of violence-against-women so that consistent, reliable data can be maintained.

Overview of the Evaluation Design

This evaluation was designed to be completed within an **18-month** time frame.³ Scheduling major events, activities and deliverables was based on the following information about the funded projects:

- These projects would be funded as of July 1, 1996;
- These projects had very specific goals and objectives to be accomplished during a one-year period;
- Evaluation grants would be funded by early October 1996.

Thus, by designing an 18-month evaluation, adequate time was available to:

- Make initial contacts with all project coordinators and key individuals participating in the projects;
- Gather data on "pre-project" (Pre-STOP) statistics relevant to the evaluation;
- Establish schedules for tracking/monitoring change for a 9-12 month time period; and
- Allow sufficient time for final data analysis and report writing to PCCD.

In sum, this evaluation was designed to start around October 1, 1996, and to culminate by the end of March 1998. As noted in Endnote #3, the project was actually extended at no-cost until June 30, 1998. The following pages provide a summary of major research questions to be addressed in the evaluation along with additional sub-questions, formulated by this evaluator, under each of the major questions. A detailed description of the evaluation design and methodology are summarized in a separate section entitled, Research Design and Methodology.

Major Research Questions to be Addressed

PCCD specified in its funding solicitation that the following four major research questions be addressed in the impact evaluation:

1. Have services to women victims been improved as a result of the project efforts?
2. Have law enforcement practices changed and, if so, what are the results?,
3. Have prosecutorial practices changed and, if so, what are the results?, and
4. Has violence against women been reduced?

The evaluation was designed to address the first three questions through examination of numerous sources of information and data; it set forth proposals for development of a methodology to address the fourth research question -- has violence against women been reduced -- in light of complex factors which must be taken into account when assessing this level of impact.

As part of meeting funding guidelines, each county applying for STOP grant funds agreed to impact evaluations. In addition, each county was asked to document capability for evaluation in a separate section of its proposal. Review of individual proposals, then, provided critical information for overall design of an evaluation for the three projects, since

site visits to the project counties were not possible before submission of the evaluation proposal. This information included status of existing policies and protocols and accessibility to pre-project data, as well as designs for self-monitoring from at least two of the funded projects (Luzerne and Philadelphia Counties). It also served to affirm that critical questions identified by PCCD to be addressed through impact evaluations, could indeed be responded to.

Sub-questions Within Major Research Questions

Each of the funded counties had compiled detailed, specific *Action Plans* to be implemented during the first year of project funding. These *Action Plans* reflect each county's response to its own critical component evaluations -- a key ingredient for determining priorities and designing project proposals. Thus, while there were similarities among *Action Plans* established by each county, there were distinct features of each plan which reflected the unique characteristics and needs of individual counties as well.

In this section, attention is given to plans common across all projects, as a way of summarizing how the evaluation originally proposed to track and measure outcome variables. Later in this report, under the section **DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**, a summary of modifications to the original proposal are described as well. Modifications reflect required changes based on new information revealed during initial site visits to the project counties.

The following paragraphs describes, then, initial proposals for addressing the four major research questions and sub-questions.

>> Question One: Have services to women victims been improved?

As mentioned above, each county proposed to extend/expand and improve services to women victims through two primary means: increasing the overall quality of services to women who were currently accessing services; and reaching out/intensifying efforts to underserved populations of women victims, as noted earlier.

Increasing the overall quality of services requires that all essential ingredients for providing improved services are in place and utilized. In particular, the three counties had identified elements of quality service provision which would be targeted for improvement during the first year's funding. Recognizing that these counties varied in status of these elements -- and, therefore, would vary in terms of goals to be achieved by the end of the first year -- these elements are described generally in this section from an evaluation perspective.

a. Improvement through increase of specialized personnel to provide services for women victims: In some counties, grants planned to provide monies for new positions to be created to help women victims. These included positions as peer advocates, legal advocates, systems advocates, specialized law-enforcement personnel, and specialized

attorneys in prosecutorial offices. The evaluation proposed assessing progress in establishing job descriptions, hiring, and actual work completed by these persons during the first year.

Particular emphasis, for new hires, was to be placed on managing cases to avoid gaps in services and/or lack of adequate follow-up. This component of the evaluation would, thus, require meticulous record keeping by new personnel to track progress adequately. Further, project personnel would need to face and address underlying concerns surrounding implementation of new positions when those positions cross professional boundaries. Maintaining strict victim confidentiality while providing comprehensive, coordinated services was projected to be one of the most difficult challenges in implementing project goals in this area.

To determine the impact of the specialized personnel in providing improved services to victims, the evaluation proposed sampling agency records of violence against women cases for equivalent periods of time both before and after the programs have been implemented in the three counties. Data from these cases would address several issues, including: (1) continuity of care by trained service providers; (2) willingness of victims to sustain contacts with service providers (e.g. keeping appointments, continuing with prosecutions); and (3) frequency of victim contacts with providers.

b. Improvement through intensified training. Training was identified as a critical areas for concentrated efforts during projects' first year of funding. This included training of new personnel who would become specialists in women victimization, and who, in time, would be responsible for either coordinating training of additional personnel and/or conducting that training as instructors. Training would also include education on types of violent acts against women, theoretical information about factors/conditions associated with violent acts, and policies and protocols for handling/tracking of these acts. The evaluation initially proposed pre- and post-training assessments of all persons trained during the first year to assess change in knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs as a result of this education.

c. Improvement through establishing and/or strengthening policies and procedures for handling identified categories of women victimization. Review of the three counties' grant proposals revealed that there were great needs to develop policies for handling certain kinds of violent acts against women, clarify and strengthening existing policies, and/or improve training on policy implementation for responsible personnel.

The evaluation aimed to assess the extent to which agencies in the project (STOP) counties successfully revised their procedures and policies for dealing with violence against women. It proposed that comparative analyses be conducted using documents outlining agency policies and procedures in effect 12 months prior to the implementation of the STOP programs and those in effect 12 months after implementation. In addition, the evaluation planned to assess knowledge of these revised policies and procedures among service providers through evaluation of training effectiveness

>> Questions Two and Three: Have law enforcement practices changed and, if so, what are the results?; Have prosecutorial practices changed and, if so, what are the results?

The second major research question to be addressed is linked closely with the first. In other words, efforts to improve services for women victims through establishing new specialized positions, developing policies and/or revising existing ones, enhancing computerized tagging and tracking systems, and implementing new procedures for follow-up all would have potential for changing behavior and practices of law enforcement and prosecutorial personnel. Change could be expected to be reliably measured through a number of strategies.

a. Change as measured by more consistent, reliable case identification and tracking. At the basic level, clarifying policies should result in law enforcement changing its behavior from the encounter level forward. There should be quantitative changes in how incidents are identified, and there should be greater levels of reliability and consistency in identification. There should also be concrete changes in documentation and record-keeping as a result of increased follow-up and tracking. It was expected that these changes would become evident incrementally as increased numbers of persons became trained and/or new coordinating positions were filled and became functional.

Evidence of improved consistency and reliability of case tracking was also expected to be linked to the specific changes implemented by each of the STOP counties. Changes in case identification could have realistically included the following: the number of specific categories of violence against women recognized by the systems (expected to increase as a result of the STOP grants); and reliability of agency service providers in "flagging" appropriate cases according to the aforementioned categories.

b. Change as measured by volume of cases reported under clarified categories of violence against women. As a result of intensified efforts already described, it was logical to expect that the actual number of incidents identified under various acts-against-women categories would increase in funded counties. If projects had targeted certain populations as underserved (such as the case in Lancaster and Philadelphia where Hispanic and Latina populations, respectively, were targeted for improved services), it would be especially important to measure whether these groups of victims became increasingly represented in case files. As with other kinds of systems change where tightened policies, protocols, and tracking mechanisms are implemented, it was hypothesized that increased education and attention to these issues would result in greater volumes of cases documented.

Assessment was expected to entail comparisons of numbers of cases processed per category of violence-against-women (e.g. rape, domestic violence, etc.) in each of the STOP counties for specified periods before and after implementation of the STOP grants. Special attention was proposed for assessing changes in the rates of identified cases among underserved populations.

c. Change as measured by the quantity and quality of interactions among law enforcement, prosecutorial staff, and victims' services personnel. If new positions met stated objectives of providing more coordinated, comprehensive services to women victims, the evaluation proposal predicted that indicators of success would be apparent in carefully maintained and documented records describing level and nature of contacts occurring under the umbrella of new/expanded positions. If the individual project focused on one underserved population, indicators of success would include evidence that these populations are served in greater numbers than prior to the project. Ultimately, the evaluation plan hypothesized that tracking of how/when cases "leave the system," including whether they had been resolved to the fullest extent possible, or whether there was not sufficient follow-up data to ascertain final disposition, would serve as evidence for this level of change.

d. Change as measured by difference in attitudes and beliefs of law enforcement and prosecution. The original evaluation proposal suggested that some changes expected and hoped for as a result of project-generated initiations would realistically be more qualitative in nature. Informal interviews conducted in preparation for the proposal revealed, for instance, that there has been a history of concern that some law enforcement and prosecutorial staff lack sensitivity and understanding for victims in women-victim cases. There has been additional concern that the onus in violence-against-women acts remains with the victim. Measuring change in attitudes is difficult, but several strategies for assessing indicators of change were set forth. In particular, change in beliefs and attitudes could be measured via pre- and post-training protocols. Qualitative assessment of change could be measured through interview questions with key project staff at the onset of the evaluation and again at the end, and so on. Recognizing that these data would be anecdotal and qualitative, they could nevertheless serve to corroborate change evident from pre- and post-training measures.

>> Question Four: Has violence against women been reduced?

Unlike the previous three questions to be addressed, the question of whether violence against women has been reduced as a result of intensified efforts was much more complex and difficult to measure. As indicated above, it was likely and expected that number of reported incidents would increase, at least for a significant time period, as a result of enhanced awareness, training, and improved tracking systems. Thus, it was not only unrealistic but inappropriate to measure "success" by change in case volume since projects began. However, a number of measures for assessing whether violence against women victims was reduced as a result of project efforts were expected to be explored during the evaluation period. These measures included the following:

a. Reduction as measured by "time to failure." Much has been written about patterns of repeat offenses in domestic violence cases.⁴ It is not uncommon for women to experience violence on numerous occasions within a short period of time. Further, when women report violence to the police, they are more likely to experience a longer period

without victimization than women who do not report. It follows, then, that with improved services proposed for the three counties, women victims would be more likely to report victimization to police **and** be more stringently monitored after having done so. Theoretically, maltreatment of those women should be reduced.

One means of measuring change, then, would be to compare histories of a select number of pre- and post-project cases from time of first report to last report. Comparisons would include total number of reported incidents by individual women, "time to failure" (period from one complaint to the next) and "case activity" (types and levels of services provided to the victims). Ideally, data would be gathered from specific pre-project timeframes (such as six months and one year) and compared to data collected quarterly during the evaluation period. Even if no reliable pre-project data exist to reasonably measure change from pre- to post-project periods, the evaluation could potentially assess reduction of violence for those women entering the system at different points in the project period (with the expectation that as policies and procedures become more stabilized and reliable, women victims will reap benefits such as those just described).

b. Reduction as measured by extent of injury. Research has also indicated that women victims experience increasingly serious injury with repeat violations (see Buzawa and Buzawa referenced in Endnote #4). From this perspective, each new incident represents an increase in violence on two dimensions -- one quantitative and one qualitative (produces more harm). Thus, another approach to assessing violence reduction would be to examine reported severity of injuries when repeat victimization occurs. If enhanced services result in longer time to failure, which in turn impacts favorably on the level of injury, then violence reduction would be even more significant.

During the course of the evaluation, plans were set forth to explore other opportunities for developing a methodology to rigorously address this question as well. At the time of initiating the evaluation project, these approaches appeared, at minimum, to be reasonable starting points, in light of numerous complex variables influencing this outcome.

The time line of activities for the originally proposed evaluation is described in a separate section of this report, **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**.

Support from an Advisory Committee

Plans to establish an advisory committee to provide consultation to the evaluation project director and staff were proposed, also. It was expected that this committee would provide on-going support to the evaluation team during the entire evaluation period.

Approximately five-six committee members were expected to be selected based on expertise in the area of violence against women and active role in the evaluation. Core members would be invited from staff from PCCD and the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence and professional groups represented in project (prosecution, law

enforcement, victims services, etc.). Meetings were to be scheduled for the advisory committee on a semiannual basis during the evaluation period.

Evaluation Project Organization

This project was administered through the Institute for Continuing Justice Education and Research at the Pennsylvania State University (Penn State) under the direction of Dr. Jennifer Mastrofski (author of this report) as project director. Investigators included the Institute's Director, Mr. Edwin Donovan (now retired); Dr. Lynne Goodstein, professor in the Crime, Law, and Justice Program and former Director of the Women Studies Program at Penn State; and graduate-student research staff.

The Institute and its faculty have a 20-year history of working/training with police, conducting large-scale evaluations, and being highly involved in community-based initiatives similar to the projects being evaluated through this grant. The Institute is an academic unit within Outreach and Distance Education affiliated with the College of Liberal arts at Penn State. Faculty from both the Institute and Crime, Law, and Justice have a well-established record of research on law enforcement, organizational and inter-organizational change, program evaluation and other justice-related topics. The Institute is well-suited and equipped with supportive staff, graduate students, and technological resources to carry out this project.

Dr. Mastrofski is Assistant Professor of Administration of Justice at the Institute. She has numerous years experience in survey research, teaching, training, and evaluation within the Colleges of Health and Human Development and Liberal Arts. Dr. Mastrofski has been involved in research examining court-reform for dealing with domestic violence over the past several years, has taught domestic-violence curriculum, and conducted a statewide needs assessment of training in domestic violence for professionals working directly/indirectly with victims and perpetrators.

Through these activities, Dr. Mastrofski has accumulated a wealth of knowledge about interest in and need for comprehensive, collaborative approaches for dealing with violence against women which has been extremely valuable in conceptualizing and preparing this proposal. She also currently serves on the Centre County Domestic Violence Task Force.

INTRODUCTION TO PILOT PROJECT COUNTIES

This section introduces each of the pilot project counties in more depth. It describes the general characteristics of each county and then highlights specific goals and objectives proposed by the county for completion during the first year of STOP grant funding.

Lancaster

Lancaster County is located less than 50 miles from the state's capitol, Harrisburg, and Philadelphia in a semi-rural area well known for its strong Amish population, tourism, farmland, and Spanish-speaking populations.

In its STOP grant proposal in 1995, Lancaster was reported to have one of the highest concentrations of Spanish-speaking residents in Pennsylvania. It has a total of 60 distinct municipalities, 40 police departments (including three Pennsylvania State Police Barracks or Substations and two college police departments). It was also reported to have "... two significant problems in dealing with domestic violence cases (related to law enforcement). First, in many situations, the local police department can make the proper initial response but does not have adequate resources or training to conduct a proper follow-up investigation. Second, these cases impact on numerous agencies/department and are thus dealt with on a fragmented basis with each agency dealing with the victim without necessarily coordinating its activities with other agencies."⁵

First year goals and objectives. Key among numerous, detailed goals and objectives proposed for the first year of Lancaster's STOP grant were the following:

- Creation of a new county detective position to join the planned Domestic Violence Unit to provide police support to law enforcement departments which require assistance;
- Creation of a tracking system for all domestic violence complaints;
- Appointment of a full-time attorney to augment existing Domestic Violence Prosecution Unit;
- New attorney to prosecute all protection from abuse (PFA) contempts and all domestic violence prosecutions involving violations of the PA Crimes Code;
- Coordination between the county detective and police departments to provide all training (on county police protocol primarily);

- Coordination between the Domestic Violence Unit and the Domestic Violence Legal Services Clinic and women's shelters to establish advocates to appear with victims;
- Lancaster Shelter for Abused Women (and other victims services agencies) to provide legal advocacy and greater access to the justice system, including but not limited to:
 - informing domestic violence victims of their legal options and accompanying them through steps of legal procedure;
 - subcontracting with the Central PA Legal Services to provide assistance in various steps of the legal process;
 - providing follow-up, tracking, and monitoring of domestic violence cases;
- Creation of a new bilingual sexual-assault counselor position within the YWCA Sexual Assault Center to effect the following:
 - increased services for Spanish-speaking victims of sexual assault and their families generally;
 - increased services for Spanish-speaking victims related to legal proceedings, counseling, and support-group advocacy;
- Development of a computerized tracking system for all county domestic violence incidents in order to provide link between law enforcement activities and the Domestic Violence Unit of the District Attorney's office; and
- Establishment of Coordinating Team, made up of representatives from key organizations/agencies associated with STOP grants, and subsequent periodic meetings to cover relevant issues associated with successful implementation of the STOP project.

Luzerne

Luzerne County is located in the Northeast portion of Pennsylvania. It has a predominately Caucasian, of European descent, population of about 330,000. Of this population, about 27% are identified as rural inhabitants. The county is somewhat unique from others in Pennsylvania in that it has more than 60 municipal police departments and Pennsylvania State Police Barracks and Substations, many of which are part-time, one-person departments.

Luzerne County is also unique from many other Pennsylvania counties in terms of its long-term history of establishing a multi-agency coordinated response for dealing with domestic violence incidents. Its Domestic Violence Task Force was established in 1991 in response to the murders of two children committed by battered women's boyfriends. Over the years

since, the Task Force has branched into numerous committees of the Task Force which address/serve a specific function area of domestic violence. At the time of STOP grant funding, Luzerne County had already been successful in obtaining funds from demonstration projects, including one to “provide a full-time court liaison/advocate to assist victims with PFA filing procedures at the court house.”⁶

First year goals and objectives. Key among numerous, detailed goals and objective proposed for the first year of Luzerne’s STOP grant were the following:

- Continuation and expansion of county-wide collaboration generally;
- Hiring of a domestic violence counselor/advocate to provide specific court and legal advocacy;
- Counselor/advocate to participate in Task Force activities regarding review, revision, and further development of police responses and court advocacy protocols;
- Counselor/advocate to be responsible for all facets of the advocacy issues, including victims’ compensation, legal issues, follow-up, and medical issues;
- Policy development by the Task Force and local training by victims services agencies;
- Development by the Legal Issues Committee of written policies and procedures for police response to sexual assault cases;
- Creation and hiring of part-time Assistant District Attorney within the District Attorney’s office to be primarily responsible for prosecuting PFA Indirect Criminal Contempt charges (ICC’s);
- Participation by the District Attorney’s office in development of a county-wide protocol, with required trainings for Assistant District Attorneys and county detectives;
- Completion of county-wide training for law enforcement, projected to include over 300 persons, on the revised domestic violence protocol and presentations by associated victims services/prosecutorial personnel; and
- Establishment of Coordinating Team, made up of representatives from key organizations/agencies associated with STOP grants, and subsequent periodic meetings to cover relevant issues associated with successful implementation of the STOP project.

Philadelphia

Philadelphia County has been identified as “Pennsylvania’s largest urban center...” (STOP Grant Proposal, Philadelphia). Its first year STOP grant focused on the East Division Police Division of the Philadelphia Police Department because this division serves the major Latina community of Philadelphia. The East Division consists of the 24th, 25th, and 26th Philadelphia Police districts and, “serves an area of “North Philadelphia east of Broad Street with 215,200 residents, roughly 13.6% of the Philadelphia population.”⁷

Philadelphia’s STOP grant proposal in 1996 also points out that the area targeted for funds is also “one of the lowest- income areas,” with “sections of abandonment and extreme deterioration alternated with densely-inhabited sections, with numerous families,” and that “the area also hosts a notorious drug traffic and has a high overall crime rate compared with the city as a whole.”⁸

The focus of Philadelphia’s first-year STOP grant proposal was clearly aimed at the Latina community, highly reputed to be under-represented and underserved among women victims in the county. Cultural factors lay at the root of hypotheses associated with the relatively low numbers of women victims seeking services for violence committed against them, according to narrative sections of Philadelphia’s proposal.

First year goals and objectives. Key among numerous, detailed goals and objectives proposed for the first year of Philadelphia’s STOP grant were the following:

- Recruitment, training, and deployment of volunteer Peer Advocates from among violence survivors, with special attention paid toward survivor members of the Latina community;
- Peer Advocates to subsequently provide outreach, information, accompaniment, and personal support to victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse. Provision of support to victims by Peer Advocates through the process and outcome of prosecutions, with emphasis on providing “empathetic, flexible, and informed preparation and support to victims...”⁹
- Proposed sites for deployment of Peer Advocates included but was not limited to:
 - District Attorney’s Office/Family Violence and Sexual Assault Unit
 - Family Court
 - Episcopal Hospital
 - Maria de los Santos Health Center
 - Women Against Abuse Shelter
 - Congreso
 - LSH
 - East Police Division;

- Creation and hiring of two full-time bi-lingual Volunteer Coordinators, one to be on staff at the Lutheran Settlement House (LSH), and one to be on staff at the Congreso de Latinos Unidos (Congreso), to coordinate, oversee the training and deployment of teams of Peer Advocates, with close association between the Coordinators through all stages of STOP grant activities, where appropriate;
- Volunteer Coordinators, themselves, will complete requisite number of training hours unless requirement has been met at the time of hiring;
- Procurement of equipment for use by Philadelphia police in order to more closely communicate and coordinate efforts between the Philadelphia Police Department and other members of the STOP grant Coordinating Team, including “data collection and analysis, specialized photographic equipment to aid in documenting evidence in domestic violence and sexual assault cases, and partial support of the Peer Advocates assigned with work with police;”¹⁰
- Establishment of Coordinating Team, made up of representatives from key organizations/agencies associated with STOP grants, and subsequent periodic meetings to cover relevant issues associated with successful implementation of the STOP project;
- Intensification and coordination of education and outreach around all forms of violence against women in the city of Philadelphia, and especially in the Latina community through a number of specific, scheduled events and media dissemination at numerous named sites; and
- Representation in training of several key organizations committed to serve women victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, including Women in Transition, Women Organized Against Rape, and Women Against Abuse.

From this brief overview of county descriptions and major goals and objectives for first-year STOP grant support, it is apparent that the three projects shared some goals and objectives while they maintained very distinct, unique components.

Commonalities Across Pilot Projects

Comparing these projects, it is evident that they share many commonalities at the same time they revealed clearly distinct features:

Creation of new positions

- All counties proposed development of new positions to specialize in either domestic violence or sexual assault victimization within local victims service agencies;
- Two counties -- Lancaster and Luzerne -- also proposed creation of new Assistant-District-Attorney positions to specialize initially in prosecuting domestic violence cases; and
- During the first year, Lancaster also proposed creation of a specialized detective position to handle domestic violence cases within the District Attorney's Domestic Violence Unit.

Recruitment and training of volunteers

- In Philadelphia, the primary goal was to recruit and train a core of Peer Advocates -- comprised of former victims -- to work with victims at various key locations near/around the East Division Police Department, hospitals, District Attorney's office and court, and victims services agencies.

Serving underserved populations

- Two counties -- Lancaster and Philadelphia -- targeted first-year efforts toward two identified underserved populations: the Latina community in Philadelphia and the Hispanic community in Luzerne; and
- While Luzerne did not specifically cite a specialized, targeted underserved population in its proposal for the first year efforts, intensifying efforts to serve rural populations was implied in several components of this county's application.

Development of Coordinating Teams

- All counties, as part of establishing eligibility for STOP-funding, agreed to develop a local Coordinating Team to meet regularly and collaborate on implementation of STOP grants, at a minimum.

Training of staff and law enforcement

- Training was planned and required for virtually all newly-hired personnel.
- Training for law enforcement was planned in two counties as follows:
 - Luzerne identified comprehensive, four-hour, countywide training all municipal and state police as part of its first year goals;¹¹
 - Lancaster specified department by department training and orientations as part of its first year goals; and

- Philadelphia specified that representatives from the East Division Police Department would work with the Coordinating Team to help train Peer Advocates as well as to work on protocol for advocates to work in police offices.

Education and outreach

- All counties proposed a number of educational, outreach, and community awareness activities as part of first-year activities, which varied in volume and intensity across counties and across individual events.

Writing/revision of protocols

- Two counties -- Lancaster and Luzerne -- set goals of revising police protocols for handling domestic violence cases during the first year and beginning, at minimum, work on protocols for handling sexual assault cases.

Tracking and documentation

- All counties planned for development of methods/techniques for tracking and documentation of progress made throughout the first year of funding;
- Luzerne proposed strengthening referral forms by police; and
- Lancaster proposed development of a computerized data base for all domestic violence incidents forwarded to the District Attorney's office from police departments.

County specific projects

- As summarized under each county subheading above, all counties highlighted specialized plans to be accomplished, too numerous to list in detail, but which included intensification of systems and victims advocacy, follow-up, establishing more uniform/consistent patterns of dealing with domestic violence and sexual assault cases, and so on.

Agreement to impact evaluation

- As mentioned above, all counties were required to propose methods/strategies for project evaluation as well as to agree to impact evaluation efforts.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Analytical Approach for Evaluation

This evaluation project was not designed to mirror classical evaluation models involving either experimental or quasi-experimental designs. Nor was it expected that comparisons would be appropriate between the unique projects these three counties set out to implement. The evaluation project proposal did respond specifically to research questions required by PCCD, without privilege of extensive time to explore potential sources of data at the research sites. Based on available information from individual count proposals, then, the evaluation proposal relied on a multi-method approach for assessing change and addressing the major research questions required by PCCD.

This approach was viewed as particularly appropriate for projects aimed at implementing numerous and various techniques for improving services to women victims. Further, the overall design afforded opportunity for incremental evaluations throughout the course of the evaluation cycle.

The evaluation design was also structured to assist project coordinators as they set out goals and objectives for subsequent years, and for new project coordinators in other counties during both implementation and evaluation stages. Finally, and most importantly, the design provided opportunity to identify and assess critical components of service provision independently; at the same time, an overall assessment of improving victims' services systematically through project initiatives would be possible.

Alternatives to the Proposed Approach for Evaluation

Numerous alternatives to the proposed approach for evaluation could have been considered for these three newly-funded projects. One straightforward and less-costly approach would have been to collect data at the end of the first year only. Changes that had occurred after one year of intervention could then be measured. This approach was viewed as quite limited, however, and the results from this approach could have been very misleading. For example, it was expected that overall incidents of violent acts against women, as documented on police reports, might increase over the pre-project period -- especially for a temporary period -- because of enhanced, more reliable tracking systems. (With time and more comprehensive services, incidents should decrease.)

Examination of total incidents pre- and post-project as one measure of impact, therefore, could produce results to suggest that little positive change had occurred. The proposed design, including periodic data analysis, was estimated to be more sensitive to understanding change over time as it may be influenced by a complex number of variables.

Other evaluation designs rely heavily on survey instruments -- gathering information on attitudes and beliefs (of key personnel and clients) which could be obtained either at some post-project time period or at both pre- and post-project times with comparisons between Time One and Time Two. This approach was eliminated as the primary source of data to study impact for several reasons. Obviously, there are problems with surveying "clients" in domestic violence cases -- both in terms of their receptivity to being interviewed and in terms of standards of confidentiality which may preclude accessibility for surveys.

Surveying key personnel through personal interviews could have provided valuable qualitative information to supplement quantitative data but, standing alone, this approach would not suffice to assess objectively whether services to women are improved, whether police officers increase their knowledge and skill from training, whether protocols/tracking mechanisms were more reliable, and whether violence against women had been reduced.

In summary, a multi-approach toward evaluation was deemed most appropriate given the complex nature of these projects to produce changes in a host of areas, including policies and procedures, knowledge, service, and rates of violent acts. No single approach should be taken to complete the evaluation adequately.

The next section outlines the originally proposed evaluation time line, followed by a summary account of actual sequence of activities and data-collection efforts.

ORIGINAL EVALUATION TIMELINE

Quarter One: Initial Contacts and Retrieval of Baseline Data (October- December 1996)

During the first quarter of the evaluation, site visits were to be made to the three projects for the purpose of:

1. Meeting all key persons in each site with whom there would be regular interaction during the course of the evaluation;
2. Reviewing and discussing the evaluation design;
3. Establishing a preliminary schedule for monitoring, data collection, and periodic review of progress, including plans for conducting pre- and post-training testing for all personnel (primarily law enforcement) undergoing training during the first year of funding;
4. Gathering copies of all existing protocols, policies, tracking sheets, pertinent staffing descriptions, and any other documentation relevant to outcome variables and measures of success;
5. Retrieval of pertinent pre-project data from all available sources, including law enforcement, district attorney offices, and victims services; and
6. First meeting of the Advisory Committee

In addition to gathering quantitative data from records and documents, formal interviews were to be conducted with project directors and coordinators to identify and focus on particular challenges to be faced in evaluating projects during the first year. These interviews were viewed as critical for establishing, up front, reliable means for measuring outcomes which might not be easily assessed quantitatively. [For instance, the goals of domestic violence training for law enforcement could include change in both knowledge (assessed through pre- and post-training measures) and demeanor (such as increased sensitivity) of street-level officers handling domestic violence calls. However, evaluating change in knowledge is far more straightforward than evaluating change in behavior during citizen-encounters, as noted earlier.]

For these types of challenges identified in initial interviews, the evaluation project director expected work with project personnel early on to focus on making determinations about what measures could be taken to assess outcome, positive or negative, using criteria that were understood and accepted by all participating individuals.

Finally, as necessary, the computer consultant planned to work with project coordinators to establish and firm up plans and strategies for systematically retrieving data from all appropriate sources on a periodic basis during the evaluation period. The consultant's primary responsibility was to ensure that appropriate and adequate systems for tracking data and progress were designed and implemented in a timely manner.

Quarters Two, Three, and Four: Data Collection and Quarterly Assessment and Periodic Reporting (January 1997 - September 1997)

The three middle-quarters of the evaluation period were designed to focus on assessing outcome of projects on a quarterly basis, leading to the final year-end evaluation. The rationale behind periodic assessments lay in anticipated benefits for these three initially-funded projects (which were designed to continue for at least two more subsequent years), and for future-funded projects which may be required by PCCD to implement evaluations using evaluation models such as this one.

By collecting data on a quarterly basis, the evaluation team would be able to identify key junctures in the project where critical goals and objectives set forth in *Action Plans* were achieved. The team would also be able to provide a more fine-tuned analysis of project components which could be lost in an overall yearly evaluation of outcome. Such analysis was expected to be extremely valuable for project coordinators planning subsequent years of operation and for newly-proposed project coordinators to benefit from realities of moving from *Action Plans* to *Action Implementation*.

It is important to underline that the quarterly design for evaluation maintains an impact-evaluation design in that the thrust of periodic review is to assess **impact** on a quarterly and first-year basis, and **not to** evaluate projects from a **process** focus and orientation. In so doing, specific data to be collected on a quarterly schedule would include:

1. Gathering copies of all protocols, policies, tracking sheets, pertinent staffing descriptions, and any other documentation relevant to outcome variables and measures of success that have been modified or changed during the preceding quarterly period (or documenting a status quo);
2. Retrieval of pertinent data from all appropriate sources, including data bases from law enforcement, prosecutorial offices, and victims' services; and
3. Second meeting of the Advisory Committee (approximately six months into the evaluation).

In addition, quarterly meetings were to be scheduled with project coordinators to obtain qualitative assessments from the preceding quarters, focusing on variables identified during the initial-contact phase as being non-conducive to quantitative evaluation.

Quarter Five: One-Year Evaluation (September - December 1997)

The fifth quarter of the evaluation was expected to focus on:

1. retrieval of all documents and data described earlier at the end of the first full year of project-funding; and
2. final data analysis for the evaluation.

Specifically, the evaluation team planned to review *Action Plans* set forth by each of the funded projects and methodically assess outcome based on explicitly set forth goals and objectives.

Quarter Six: Final Reporting Period (January - March 1998)

The final quarter of this evaluation expected to focus on final data analysis and report writing for each of the funded projects and to PCCD. Included in this report would be recommendations to individual projects for strengthening efforts during subsequent years, and to PCCD for adapting the evaluation model to future-project sites.

As part of the final reporting phase of the evaluation, the evaluation project director would convene a one-day meeting at The Pennsylvania State University for participating project coordinators and PCCD to review and discuss findings from the Year-One evaluation. The overall objective of this meeting would be to provide a setting for collaborative reflection and dialogue on the first year's efforts by key participating persons, and to set the stage for successful continuation of these projects. A final meeting of the Advisory Committee would also be planned around the time of this conference, also.

ACTUAL CHRONOLOGY OF SITE VISITS AND DATA COLLECTION

Initial site visits to the three pilot project counties occurred in November and December of 1996. These site visits were intended to meet key persons in each county, introduce evaluation staff to those persons, review major goals and objectives identified for the first year, request information on various tracking systems and protocols, and to establish a schedule for subsequent visits and data collection.

Depending on availability of key personnel, feasibility of data collection, and specific tasks to be completed, site visits by one or more members of the evaluation team took place on periodic bases throughout the first year of the evaluation grant. Since there was a great deal of variability among key persons' availability and potential for collecting data across agencies/organizations and counties, initial plans to conduct only quarterly visits to each site were quickly discarded as expected.

Over the course of the first year, based on information gathered during site visits, the evaluation team retrieved as much information as feasible on possible sources of data for evaluating change and outcome. (In collecting data, particularly client and prosecution data, the evaluation team attempted to retrieve data from a six-month Pre-Stop period in addition to the full first-year of data.)

Categories of information and data collected included the following:

Agency documents

- Samples of tracking/screening forms
- Relevant reports, including project Quarterly Reports to PCCD
- Coordinating Team minutes and new staff meeting minutes where applicable
- New job descriptions
- Original and revised police protocols
- Training curriculum
- Anonymous client data
- Supplementary sources of information, such as mapping, police jurisdictions, racial census data, samples of education and outreach productions

Training assessment data

Pre- and post-training surveys of almost 300 police officers and other training participants were conducted in Luzerne County in June and August 1997, in conjunction with that county's county-wide domestic violence training. Subsequently, follow-up surveys were sent to 132 officers who agreed to be contacted for follow-up at the time of training.¹²

Prosecution data

Prosecution data were collected on all closed simple/aggravated assaults and sexual assault cases available within the originally scheduled data-collection period for the six-month Pre-STOP period, as well as the full first-year STOP period, in Luzerne County.¹³ Prosecution data were also collected on all cases entered into Lancaster's Domestic Violence Unit computer system from the time it became operational in January 1997 through June 30, 1997.

Year-end interviews

Year-end semi-structured interviews were conducted with 25 key persons from the three pilot projects. These persons were identified early in the evaluation as representative of lead agencies, hired in newly-created positions, or were individuals otherwise recommended by such people for interviews. Thus, the evaluation staff used a general snowball sampling technique to identify persons for year-end interviews. Some individuals were unavailable at times when the evaluation team could conduct interviews on site. At times, this restriction meant, unfortunately, that some persons particularly appropriate for interviewing were not a part of this evaluation component.

The overall purpose of the year-end interviews was to supplement and enhance information/data collection proposed for assessment; to gather additional information on relevant events/activities that could lie outside explicit goals and objectives but could impact on final outcomes; to further clarify questions/issues emerging during the course of the evaluation; and to solicit perspectives on similar topics from a variety of persons with different roles/functions within STOP projects.

Identification of persons completing year-end interviews is deliberately kept very general in this report to protect the identity and confidentiality of interviewees. Each person who agreed to be interviewed was assured that all information would be presented in such a way as to preclude personal identification.¹⁴

A copy of the year-end interview protocol is included in **APPENDIX A** of this report.

Focus-Group Meetings

Two focus-group meetings were held for victims of domestic violence, as recommended during the evaluation period by personnel of victims services agencies and The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV). While not proposed in the original evaluation application, the evaluation team responded favorably to this recommendation and modified its plans accordingly. The evaluation team was advised not to meet with victims of sexual assault because of distinct, complex issues faced by these women. Since the decision to conduct any focus group meetings was made after the evaluation project was planned and funded, it was not feasible to complete these meetings in all project counties. Encouragement in Luzerne County resulted in two group meetings which are described in this report. The evaluation team took the approach that these

meetings were “pilot,” in nature; i.e., that they could provide critical information about this method for assessing outcomes for victims for future reference as well as supplementing existing evaluation data.¹⁵

Group participants were identified by a long-time staff members of the Luzerne County Domestic Violence Service Center (DVSC) and contacted by telephone to request their cooperation. The DVSC provided child care and transportation costs to prospective participants. Individuals invited to participate were selected on the basis of the timeframe during which they had had contact with the DVSC: pre-STOP participants had not had official contact with the Center prior to 1995; post-STOP participants had had contact with the Center during the past two years (as of October 1997). No attempt was made to obtain a scientifically drawn sample; the worker making the contacts simply called women she knew who, in her opinion, might be interested in participating.

Several women scheduled to attend the pre-STOP focus group meeting had to cancel at the last minute, resulting in a focus group comprised of two women and the evaluation group-facilitator.¹⁶

As it turned out, the distinction between the pre- and post-STOP groups was not as neatly drawn as would have been desired. Some of the pre-STOP participants had had more recent contact with service providers as a result of victimization; most of the post-STOP participants had encountered service providers prior to the implementation of the STOP grant. In the latter case, the ability of these individuals to compare the services they received before and after the implementation of the grant was useful, but it is certainly possible that their perceptions of the services they received under the STOP grant may have been influenced in some way by their earlier experiences.

Summary of data collected.

The summary data collected is not totally exhaustive of all information retrieved and data collected; however, it provides a solid overview of the majority categories/types of information gathered over the course of the evaluation. Clearly, this summary reinforces the fact that these pilot projects varied not only in the availability and quality of data appropriate for assessment, given different designs and goals/objectives of first-year grants, but also in the availability of comparable data for those areas where the projects were quite similar. This situation underscores the need to evaluate the projects quite individually, at the same time recognizing that the evaluation team was expected to address the same major research questions in all three counties.

End-of-Year Evaluation Conference

As planned for the end of the originally designed 18-month evaluation period, and funded by the evaluation grant, an End-of-the Year Evaluation Conference was hosted by the evaluation team at The Pennsylvania State University. Each project was invited to send five persons to the conference. In addition, members of the evaluation Advisory

Committee and representatives from PCCD were invited, along with all members of the evaluation team and selected personnel from The Institute at Penn State.

The day-long conference took place on March 31, 1998. The evaluation team presented an overview of all the projects and the evaluation grant, and preliminary findings to date. Feedback from the 25 participants at this conference was extremely positive and favorable.

County Inventory

The following inventory lists the major sources of data analyzed by the evaluation team. It does not represent an exhaustive list of data requested by the team.¹⁷

Lancaster

- 18 months of Domestic Violence Legal Services Voca Monthly client data
- 21 months of YWCA sexual assault client data (although only 18 months of data were requested)
- Police referrals sent to the Domestic Violence Unit from January 1997 through June 30, 1997 and entered into its newly-developed computerized data base, by department
- All criminal charges sent to the Domestic Violence Unit from January 1997 through June 30, 1997 and entered into its newly-developed computerized data base
- Training schedule of newly-hired Assistant District Attorney
- 10 semi-structured year-end interviews
- Hard copies of selected agency Quarterly Reports for PCCD
- Original/revised police protocols
- County racial distributions/mapping
- Selected job descriptions for newly-created positions
- Miscellaneous documents across a variety of topics/issues and sources

Luzerne

- 9 months of client-data by newly-hired personnel at Victims Resource Center
- 18 months of inter-agency coordinating reports for key personnel within the

- Two annual reports of aggregate sexual assault data from Victims Resource Center
- Various, miscellaneous documents/reports from both Domestic Violence Service
- 18 months police-referral data from Domestic Violence Service Center, by department
- Pre- and post-training surveys from 201 police officers and others completing Luzerne County's law enforcement training in domestic violence plus additional pre- or post-training surveys completed by an additional 30 training participants.
- Follow-up surveys from 27 responding officers
- Police training curriculum, participating officers by department, and schedule
- Interview data with select number of police departments on tracking systems
- 18 months of closed criminal-charges data meeting domestic violence and sexual assault definitions
- 18 months of Protection From Abuse orders data
- 18 months of Indirect Criminal Contempt data
- Sample case tracking files from newly-hired Assistant District Attorney
- 10 semi-structured year-end interviews
- Data from two focus-group meetings
- Original/revised police protocols
- Hard copies of selected agency Quarterly Reports for PCCD
- Selected job descriptions for newly-created positions
- Miscellaneous documents across a variety of topics/issues and sources

Philadelphia

- 12 months of Congreso Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence aggregate monthly client reports
- Coordinating Team meeting minutes

- Volunteer Coordinator meeting minute
- Four quarters of County Quarterly Reports to PCCD with specific agency reports
- Five semi-structured year-end interviews
- Miscellaneous documents/reports across a variety of topic/issues and sources

It is obvious from this inventory summary, that there was a wide range of information/data actually retrieved from pilot projects. Further, it is apparent that “data” varied from general qualitative information to aggregate quantitative data and more specifically individual, quantitative client data. The vast majority of requests for information and data were positively responded to; however, a great deal of requested information was simply not forthcoming. Particular gaps in data will be described in greater depth within the **DATA ANALYSIS AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS** section, which follows.

DATA ANALYSIS AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Given the diversity of projects, variation in types of data available and accessible for collection and retrieval across projects, it is very challenging to determine the best approach toward presentation of data analysis and findings. However, the most appropriate and straightforward strategy -- and one used for the End-of-the-Evaluation Conference -- is to simply to address each of the major research questions imposed by PCCD and summarize analysis which provides optimal opportunity for responding to these questions. In so doing, qualitative and quantitative data analysis are integrated, as appropriate, to address major research questions.

Thus, this section is organized by research question. Under each question, a brief review of original plans for evaluation is summarized, followed by actual approaches for evaluation based on available data/information.

When reading this section, it is important to bear in mind that three major research questions relate to organizational and systems change with organizations/systems being the units of analysis, while the last major question focuses on victims themselves with individuals being the unit of analysis. Since none of the three pilot projects had capability of truly measuring systems change, and goals/objectives of the pilot projects did not explicitly target reduction of violence against women (the fourth major question), this evaluation relies of indicators of organizational/systems change, and it develops some theories for assessing whether or not violence against women has been reduced as a result of intensified, coordinated responses for dealing with violence against women.

>> *Question One: Have Services to Women Victims Improved?*

Improvement through increase of specialized personnel to provide services for women victims. Across all counties, great emphasis was placed on developing and filling newly-created positions through an increase in specialized personnel. Indeed, all projects did develop specialized positions to work in a number of different agencies/offices, trained these individuals, and had them working productively on specified tasks within the first year of STOP grant funding. Depending on actual goals/objectives, there were variations across counties in terms of the exact number of positions which were created and filled, how long it took to both hire and train such individuals, and job retention at the end of the first year.

In **Lancaster**, the Domestic Violence Unit of the District Attorney's office established two new positions: a county detective and an Assistant District Attorney. The Domestic Violence Legal Clinic created a legal advocate position to be housed at the county courthouse. The YWCA created a legal counselor position to conduct outreach work related to sexual assault with women and teenagers of Hispanic origin.

A partial listing of specialized duties of the county detective include reviewing of all domestic violence cases coming into the unit, interacting with the prosecutor, contacting victims especially in cases of aggravated assaults, contacting police departments for follow-up, and being available as a resource for police departments on domestic-violence cases.¹⁸ The Assistant District Attorney's newly-created duties include, among many, going to preliminary hearings, handling preliminary hearings on specific matters, writing some briefs at the appellate level if cases go to trial, and making victim contact prior to preliminary hearings.¹⁹

Of the two new victims services positions, the legal advocate's position focuses on providing assistance to the bail administration office at the courthouse, where the majority of persons file for protection from abuse orders. In particular, this position provides individual help to victims on understanding their options and whether or not the protection from abuse order is the best avenue to take, and on identifying other service agencies that could be helpful.²⁰ The legal counselor position focuses on outreach in the Hispanic community via school presentations, talks at various sites/organizations reputed to have a high number of Hispanic representation, accompanying Hispanic women to medical facilities for attention/treatment following sexual assaults, and serving as a spokes-person of the YWCA Sexual Assault Center for the Hispanic community.²¹

In *Luzerne*, several new positions were created and filled as well: A newly-created program coordinator at the Domestic Violence Service Center; a counselor advocate at the Victims Resource Center; and an Assistant District Attorney within the District Attorney's office.

The program coordinator's duties include numerous tasks associated with carrying out the Center's specific project goals and objectives, from education and training, outreach, and other related tasks. The counselor advocate provides services to victims of crime, particularly sexual-assault victims, including counselor and group sessions. Group sessions emphasize "psycho-education," implying a focus on education with counseling included if needed. In addition, the person in this new position is expected to participate in activities of the county task force, such as the Legal Issues Task Force. The Assistant District Attorney's newly-created position focuses on prosecution of all domestic-violence cases and protection from abuse violations. In addition, this person has become a key contact for police officers to receive consultation/advise related to handling domestic violence cases.

In *Philadelphia*, the two newly-created positions were volunteer coordinators housed at Congreso and the Lutheran Settlement House. These positions are very similar in some ways, with other distinct features associated with the particular agency overseeing that position. Each coordinator was responsible for recruiting potential volunteer peer advocates, training these advocates, coordinating community-site assignments after training, supervising the work of volunteers, keeping records of volunteer activities, providing support to volunteers, delivering monthly progress reports to the Coordinating Team, and interacting with each other on regular bases.²²

It is apparent, then, that all counties did indeed create specialized positions to work with women victims and did hire persons to fill these positions. Sample copies of available job descriptions for some of these positions are included in **APPENDIX B** of this report. In general, these positions reflect project goals and objectives to fill gaps in services, to provide consistency in services for victims, and to enhance coordination of services across pertinent agencies.

Limitations of specialized personnel assessment. The evaluation project was not able to quantitatively assess various impacts of these positions, as set forth in the evaluation proposal, however. It was not feasible to systematically examine individual case files to evaluate continuity of care, willingness of victims to sustain contacts with service providers, or frequency of victim contacts with providers. Limitations of the evaluation project in this area stemmed from a variety of reasons which differed by agency: in some cases, the evaluation staff was simply not permitted to examine individual files; in others, agency tracking systems were such that following client services by specific personnel within agencies was not possible; in still others, tracking systems were constructed such that it was not practical to develop a reliable system of measurement.

However, there was one unexpected finding which emerged by the end of the evaluation project and related to the creation and hiring of new, specialized personnel. Specifically, the evaluation is striking in identifying the volume of newly-hired personnel for victims services positions who left within one year of the grants. This phenomenon was unique to victims services as opposed to other newly-created positions. In the three counties evaluated, about eight newly-created positions (the majority of new positions within victims services) experienced turnover during the evaluation period. Some thoughts about what factors may account for this high attrition rate is discussed in the **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS** section of this report.

Improvement through intensified training. As mentioned earlier in this report, virtually all newly hired, specialized personnel were required to participate in domestic violence/sexual assault training as a criterion for being hired. The few exceptions occurred primarily in cases where personnel had already completed mandatory training either in another agency, or the person was hired from within the agency and had already completed training for the previous position. This finding was documented through a variety of sources, including personal interviews with newly-hired personnel, records of personnel participating in training, and so on. Training occurred in a variety of contexts, in group settings and on individual bases.

For example, one newly-hired volunteer coordinator in Philadelphia received her training by participating in the same training as peer advocate recruits; in Luzerne County, the newly-hired Assistant District Attorney fulfilled her own training requirements and then served as instructor, herself, for law enforcement training during the latter part of the STOP grant's first year. Training encompassed a variety of activities beyond formal "classroom" instruction, also. It could include meeting with relevant personnel in other agencies, individual learning on protocols and procedures as well.

Meetings with key personnel from STOP projects, and with newly-hired personnel themselves, revealed a great deal of insight about the status of domestic-violence and sexual-assault training within given communities. Typically, victims services agencies schedule training on a periodic basis, which varies by community and need. These trainings may be scheduled several times a year and target potential volunteers or may involve on-going professional development for employees. Curriculum and minimum hour requirements meet state-agency guidelines in the vast majority of cases, specifically the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV) and the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR). Thus, there is tremendous amount of consistency across trainings. Because these regularly-scheduled trainings exist in all project counties, they became the main source of training for new personnel. Thus, depending on a newly-hired person's previous training, his/her hiring date, and schedule of planned trainings within a given community, completion of training and readiness to provide direct client-service provision varied significantly among these individuals. By the time of initial site visits and contacts with some of these persons, training had already been completed. For others, it was in progress.

Limitations of intensified training assessment. The individual nature of training among newly-hired personnel, along with diversity of training schedules and formats precluded pre- and post-training assessments of specialized personnel during the evaluation. As discussed later in the report, assessment was possible for formal training of law enforcement in one county, however.

Improvement through establishing and/or strengthening policies and procedures for handling identified categories of women victimization. During the first year of counties' STOP projects, a number of changes in policies and procedures occurred on an agency-by-agency basis. Depending on the agency and exact nature of change, initiatives may have involved single or multiple agencies. The evaluation team requested information and documentation of both original and revised policies and procedures upon learning that changes occurred. However, there was evidence that many changes in policies and procedures were informal and not always reflected in formal documents. In some instances, change involved intensified enforcement of a formerly-established policy; in others, change was more semantical than substantive. In this section of the report, the focus is on examples of policy changes across agencies. Further detail on changes associated with law enforcement and prosecution is described later in the report.

One of the most remarkable categories of change across agencies within counties relates to strengthening, inter-agency coordination and referral both informally and formally.

In **Lancaster**, formal policy changes included the provision for a legal advocate from the Domestic Violence Legal Clinic to be housed at the county courthouse; the requirement that law enforcement personnel fax information on all domestic violence cases to the Domestic Violence Unit of the District Attorney's office within 72 hours of a reported incidence; and

the revision of police domestic-violence protocols to reflect this change in county-wide policy, among others.

A copy of the revised police protocol for Lancaster County, along with a schedule of police training to review the protocol, is included in **APPENDIX C**.

Anecdotally, key persons told the research team repeatedly that the number of PFA's successfully filed had multiplied many times over since staff were made available at the courthouse to assist victims. Unfortunately, this project was not able to substantiate this perspective quantitatively, after numerous attempts were made to retrieve these data. In terms of the impact made by establishment of police protocol for faxing victim information to the District Attorney's Domestic Violence Unit, at least half of county departments had submitted at least one of the 183 victim cases faxed in from January through June 1997.

Nevertheless, the project did examine available client data from victims services agencies in all three counties. In Lancaster, client data were retrieved from both the YWCA Sexual Assault Center and the Domestic Violence Legal Clinic. In the next several paragraphs a brief overview and summary of analysis conducted on these data are reported. It is important to note limitations of these data for the purposes of this study, however.

Specifically, as alluded to previously, the evaluation team was restricted to analysis of data already gathered by victims services staff on existing agency tracking forms or to analysis of data re-coded onto customized forms designed by the evaluation team but entered by agency staff. In either case, this situation resulted in secondary-data analysis of available data gathered from persons outside of the evaluation project with no opportunity to conduct reliability checks of coders or to refine original coding schemes. As will be noted below, the impact of these limitations is substantial.

YWCA Sexual Assault Center Data. Upon request, client data were retrieved from the Sexual Assault Center on all clients served for six months prior to the STOP grant through the first five quarters of the STOP funding period (one more quarter than the team requested). Requests for data were made based on review by the evaluation team of information routinely gathered by staff on a clients served. A sample coding form was subsequently designed for the Center staff for data collection, keeping in mind that the evaluation team was limited to requesting only data it knew to exist. From available data, then, variables were chosen which most closely reflected goals and objectives of Lancaster's STOP project and research questions to be addressed in the evaluation project.

Data were gathered and analyzed descriptively on: victim age, victim and offender race, relationship of victim to offender, where client seen was "new" or "continuing," report status, type of client contact, source of referral to the Center, and referrals made by the Center.

Data were gathered on 444 clients from January 1996 through September 1997. Total client load across all documented quarters revealed very little change during the 21 months.

Client load varied from 62-69 for all quarters except one (the first STOP quarter), which was considerably lower than all others (48 clients were reported to be served during this period). Type of client contacts were fairly evenly split between “new” (221) and “continuing” (223) - the latter representing clients who had sought services from the Center previously. However, there were stark differences in category of contact. The vast majority of clients were “in-person” (413 or 93% of all clients served) as opposed to phone contacts.

The majority of victims served were females (419 or 94.4%) as expected, with the majority of offenders being male (384 or 86.5%). Victims were mostly White (320 or 72.1%), followed by 69 or 15.5% Black, and 39 or 8.8% Hispanic. “Other” race was coded for only one victim, and this information was missing for 15 victims. While there were a slightly higher number of Hispanic victims seeking services in each of the last two STOP quarters, these numbers remain relatively low (less than 10 per quarter) than for White or Black victims.

Victims ranged in age from 17 to 64, although age was missing on 26 victims. (It is important to note, there, that this project evaluated “adult” victims only.) About one-quarter of these victims were 25 years of age or younger; almost one-quarter of these victims were between 26 and 31; another quarter were between the ages of 32 and 39; and the remaining quarter were between 40 and 69. Of all possible relationships to the victim (spouse, boyfriend, blood or step parent, sibling, not available, and other), the modal category or about half of clients’ relationships to their offenders were coded as “other”, with no further description of what this category might include. The next most-frequently coded relationship was blood-parent (in 97 or 21.8% of the cases) and then step-parent (coded for 45 or 10.1% of the cases). Unfortunately, there was no further defining information here to determine whether offenders were strangers, acquaintances or otherwise associated with their victims. In only one case was this information missing altogether.

Offenders’ race was predominately White (260 or 58.6%), also, followed by 59 or 13.3% Black, and 41 or 9.2% Hispanic. One offender’s race was categorized as “other,” and this information was “not available” for 83 (18.7%) offenders.

Referrals were examined from two different direction -- both from where/how victims came to the Center and where were they directed to after coming to the Center. These categories of data are extremely important for establishing “indicators” of increased systems response and inter-agency interaction. Unfortunately, for these data sets, the information is also extremely sparse. In the majority of cases, data on both “referral from” and “referral to” are missing. For “referral from,” this information was missing on 256 (57.7%) client records. For “referral to,” this information was missing on 373 (84%) client records.

Where documented, then, a little more than one-third (161) of clients were referred from an “other” source (with no finer means of defining), followed by police and hospitals in almost equal numbers (14 and 13 cases respectively). Similarly, of documented “referral to” cases,

65 or 14.6% were referred to “other,” (with no finer means of defining), followed by almost equal numbers referred to police or the hospital (two and four respectively).

The status of these particular data highlight the need for fine-tuning coding categories in order to capture the substantial number of clients for whom referrals to/from the Center are not represented on existing coding forms. Second, these data document large volumes of cases where information is missing. It is important to determine why this information is missing and whether or not changes need to be made to rectify this situation. It is possible, for instance, that some information is not gathered because of emergency conditions at the time which would normally used for intake data -- in which case the Center may want to consider getting that information later.

Finally, with regard to “report status,” victimization was reported to police in 31.3% (139) of the cases documented. For the majority of cases (259 or 58.3%), reports were not made. This information was not available in 44 cases (9.9%) but missing for only two clients.

Domestic Violence Legal Clinic. Available data from the Domestic Violence Legal Clinic came from client data documented on the agency’s VOCA forms completed on a monthly basis. All data, then, represent monthly aggregate client data, which has limited value in assessing client variables. VOCA forms are used to gather such information as demographic data on clients, services provided, referrals to/from the clinic, and criminal justice orientation and support. Examination of these data, while aggregate, revealed marked change in client volume and a number of service-related areas from six months pre-STOP through the first full STOP year.

The overall volume of clients served on a monthly basis essentially doubled from January 1996 to June 1997, the mean number of clients served in the first pre-STOP quarter (January 1996 through March of 1996) being 92.3, and the mean number served by the fourth STOP quarter being 184. The period of most marked increase in mean number of clients served per quarter occurred between the first and second STOP quarter when the mean number of new clients increased from 101 to 120.67, and the mean number of continuing clients increased from 12.3 to 46. Indeed, it was the continuing client group that accounted for the sharpest increase during the evaluation period. This group almost quadrupled from the first pre-STOP quarter to the fourth STOP quarter, while the mean number of new clients increased by about 50% -- substantial but not as high as for continuing clients.²³

With volume going up, the mean age of clients decreased over this period, especially within the two youngest age-range groups (18-29 and 30-44), with incidental exceptions -- over the course of the 18-month evaluation period. Further, increase in client volume was primarily due to more female clients seeking assistance as opposed to more males. And these females represented the vast majority of all clients served.

In terms of ethnicity, white clients accounted for most of the increase client load, with the mean number of 38.67 white clients served during the first pre-STOP quarter compared to a

mean number of 58.67 white clients served during the fourth STOP quarter. Black client representation remained fairly constant throughout the 18-month evaluation period with minor fluctuation and constituted a very low number of clients overall. Hispanic representation increased gradually from the pre-STOP period through the first full-year of the STOP grant, although the total number of Hispanic clients remained consistently low (a mean number of 6 clients were served by the Clinic during the first pre-STOP quarter compared to 11.67 mean number of clients served by the fourth STOP quarter). Mean number of clients served by quarter and by ethnicity are included in the bar chart in **Appendix D**.

Services to clients at the Domestic Violence Legal Clinic varied from **court accompaniment** to **providing general information** and **systems advocacy**. Secondary data analysis revealed that the volume of court accompaniment and general information services increased dramatically from the pre-STOP period through the first full year of the STOP grant. Indeed, the mean number of court accompaniment services more than doubled during the 18-month period, with the most significant increase occurring between the first and second STOP-grant quarters. The mean number of general-information services almost doubled with two peak increases -- one between the first and second STOP-grant quarter and another between the third and fourth STOP grant quarter. While systems advocacy services increased also, this change was not as dramatic as for other services.

Referral-sources categories on the VOCA form included: **criminal justice agencies, social service agencies, mental health agencies, medical services, the media, brochures, the community, shelters, and other**. Examination of referral sources to the Clinic revealed that the greatest category of increase in services was, unfortunately, one that gave the evaluation team very little information -- the category of "other." Without further refinement of this category, and because this code was entered by more than one person over the course of the 18 months, there was no reliable means for ascertaining what "other" referred to. Yet, this category may hold some very important information about systems change. Assessment of other referral sources revealed modest increases during periods of the first year of the STOP grant but were not sustained consistently.

There were marked increases in the number of referrals to services from the pre-STOP to STOP-grant periods. Referral categories included **social service agencies, mental health agencies, medical services, legal services, victim/witness services, shelters, other services, and "other."** Increases in referrals were particularly evident for two service categories -- legal services and shelters. Referrals were made to legal services more than any other service, and these referrals more than doubled over the 18-months (acknowledging that the Domestic Violence Legal Clinic is located within the larger Lancaster Legal Services agency). A mean number of 64 such referrals were made during the first pre-STOP quarter and 129.3 during the fourth STOP quarter. However, there was a large increase in number of referrals to shelters, also, with the mean number increasing from 35 to 64.67 for the same two periods. By comparison, very few other referrals were made, and these were to either "other services" (no further definition given) or the social

services. Mean “referrals to” services, by category of service and by quarter is depicted in the bar chart by that title, in **Appendix E**.

Other variables reflected similar trends toward higher volume across the pre- and STOP quarter periods, including a higher numbers of crimes being reported under “crime status,” higher volume of support for defiant trespass and PFA’s, and higher volumes of spousal abuse reported under “crime committed.”

The Domestic Violence Legal Clinic has clearly experienced dramatic change in client services during the STOP grant period. Not only has the overall volume of clients increased but there are clear changes in the trends of service categories provided to these clients. In the **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS** section of this report, thoughts and suggestions are made about how to maximize the tracking of client information in this and other agencies with limitations in its current data base systems.

In *Luzerne*, the Domestic Violence Services Center (DVSC) re-activated the use of a referral form by police. This form, developed and disseminated prior to the STOP grant, provides a voluntary mechanism for police officers to refer victims to the DVSC. As part of Luzerne’s first-year STOP grant, DVSC and police departments worked together to revitalize this referral form by sending new copies to all departments and by emphasizing the importance of such referrals during county-wide training. Luzerne also revised its police domestic-violence protocol to include reference to these referral forms as already mentioned.

A copy of the revised, available policies/procedures, described on **The Domestic Violence Information Form**, is included in **APPENDIX F**. These changes are referenced later in this section under changing practices in law enforcement and prosecution generally and, specifically, under the sections examining change with quantity and quality of inter-agency interactions.

The evaluation project team had access to summary reports from the Domestic Violence Service Center as well as copies of numerous documents from various members of staff -- such as logs of contacts and meetings that staff assigned to the STOP project kept of their STOP activities.

Logged documentation was helpful in providing insight into the kinds of activities and meetings that occurred during the first year -- such as hosting or participating in candlelight vigils, speaking to healthcare professionals, making presentations on college campuses, and so on. A rigorous content analysis of this documentation was not feasible within the resources of the evaluation, however. A large volume of notes included abbreviations or were handwritten and therefore precluded the development of a reliable coding scheme and analysis.

The evaluation team did retrieve data on police referrals to the Domestic Violence Service Center from six months prior to the STOP (first and second Pre-STOP quarters) through the first full-year of the STOP grant.

These data were gathered by the DVSC as a means of tracking the police departments who were referring victims of domestic violence to the Center using the form. The form is intended to be offered to a victim of domestic violence by a responding officer. It provides some summary information for the victim on the Protection from Abuse Act (such as restraining powers over the abuser and temporary custody of children), the DVSC Hotline, and information on assistance the officer will provide in accessing the Hotline. The form also has space for the victim to write in permission for the officer to send victim information to the Center via the form itself (which, when completed, would then be faxed to the Center). DVSC has tracked both the number of referrals by police officers generally, by month (which was then computed quarterly), and by referring police department.

In the first pre-STOP quarter, 67 referrals were sent to DVSC using this form; 157 in the second pre-STOP quarter; and then 90, 55, 123, and 118 referrals were sent for the first through fourth STOP quarters respectively. As noted on the bar chart included in **Appendix G**, the number of referrals has shown variation in volume with two peak periods being the second pre-STOP quarter and the third STOP quarter. At the same time, the number of reporting departments has gradually increased over the first year of the STOP grant, with the largest single increase in reporting departments occurring between the third- and fourth-STOP quarters. Between those two periods, the number of reporting departments increased from 20 to 26 of the 64+ police departments in Luzerne County.²⁴ One possible explanation for this increase is the county-wide training on the revised domestic violence protocol which began in mid-June of that quarter.

In *Philadelphia*, changes in policies and procedures appeared to focus on the recruitment, training, and placement of peer advocates selected from the Latina community, as well as development of standards for these advocates who were expected to be placed partially at the East Division of the Philadelphia Police Department. In the next few paragraphs, the activities and outcomes of these planned changes are summarized.

As described under general goals and objectives of each county's STOP proposal earlier in this report, Philadelphia proposed to recruit potential peer advocates from among survivors of domestic- and sexual-assault in the Latina community. It then proposed to conduct two separate 60-hour training sessions for these recruits and, upon successful completion of training and working under supervision ("double-staffing"), to place peer advocates at several specific locations in Philadelphia. Proposed locations included emergency rooms of hospitals which serve rape victims, the East Division Police Department, and a site in the District Attorney's offices.

The two planned recruitment and training programs did occur -- one beginning in October of 1996 and one beginning in March 1997. In both cases, the newly-hired volunteer coordinators were responsible for identifying recruits and for coordinating the training.

Fifty-five Latina survivors were recruited, of whom 33 actually attended at least one training session. Training instructors were selected from a number of county agencies and divisions which provide services or assistance to victims of domestic- and sexual assault: Women in Transition (WIT), Lutheran Settlement House (LSH), Congreso, Women Organized Against Rape (WOAR), Women Against Abuse (WAA), and representatives from police, the District Attorney's office, and Adult Probation. The curriculum, itself, represented coordinated efforts of these entities as well.²⁵

During the ensuing months after both the first and second training programs, the Philadelphia STOP grant experienced numerous significant, unexpected difficulties in retaining and placing its peer advocates. These difficulties have been documented separately in formal reports on accomplishments and challenges by project directors of Philadelphia's STOP grant and will be only briefly summarized here. The information sources for this summary include year-end retreat documents produced by the STOP grant Coordinating Team and other written reports provided to the evaluation team.²⁶

Of the 33 volunteer recruits who attended at least one training session, nine successfully completed both training components (domestic violence and sexual assault). Among reasons cited for the "diminished" number of individuals who completed training in Philadelphia's August 1997 report to PCCD included the facts that:

- many recruits had not, themselves, dealt with or received counseling related to their own abuse, resulting in some recruits experiencing emotional setbacks/flashbacks related to previous abuse;
- some recruits were, at the time of training, actually involved in violent relationships that resulted either in withdrawal or need for time to deal with the abusive situations they were in;
- many recruits found out about existing services for victims only through their training as advocates;
- with the Welfare Reform Act, many recruits were forced to give up volunteer efforts and seek paid employment; and
- due to economic hardship, many recruits were unable to complete training requirements, even with nominal support for transportation and other assistance.

In addition, other complications arose which were associated with the peer advocacy project. These included difficulties or challenges associated with actual placements (for example, the East Division Police facilities were not conducive to housing an advocate at that location and an alternative site had to be found), scheduling constraints on the part of peer advocates, and their hesitancy with working in certain kinds of situations. Further, many of the women who were trained were unemployed and expected their volunteer efforts to enhance opportunities for employment. Yet, their very status of unemployment was often due to factors which might also have impacted on their ability and readiness to serve as peer advocates -- such as English-speaking skills, job skills, and comfort with inter-personal interactions.

By the time year-end interviews were conducted with key persons involved in the first STOP-grant year, it was not clear exactly how many of these peer advocates were actually working in regularly scheduled assignments. Interviewees reported different estimates from none to some, which could not be substantiated by the evaluation team.

As mentioned, this information has been detailed elsewhere for PCCD, and it is beyond the scope of this evaluation report to delve too deeply into the complex issues associated with this particular project design. However, it is critical to note that this innovative approach proposed by Philadelphia's STOP grant to improve services for women victims brings to light some thought-provoking issues:

1. Conceptually, the idea of survivors being trained to assist peers is compelling, especially when these survivors represent an underserved population such as the Latina community in this county.
2. Nevertheless, the very fact that this particular community is under-represented may be due to factors which have bearing on peer-advocacy potential as well: such as lack of knowledge about services provided for victims of domestic- and sexual assault and subsequent lack of service utilization; technical constraints associated with obtaining services (such as lack of transportation or finances), and inexperience with certain kinds of inter-personal communication and contacts which result in hesitancy to seek services.
3. Despite such obstacles, "lessons learned" from this experience include the real possibilities that life has improved -- i.e., "services have improved" -- from heightened awareness of services for this particular group of survivors. Thus, while this goal may not have been originally planned or directly sought, it nonetheless has been identified in Philadelphia as one positive outcome measure for this county's grant. According to interview data from key persons in Philadelphia, the results of this county's first year STOP grant, as it relates to survivor peer-advocate recruitment, led to significant re-thinking/designing of this model for subsequent STOP-grant years.

Finally, with regard to the development of a police protocol for peer advocates, a copy of the protocol in place by the end of the first STOP-grant year is included in **Appendix H**. By

the end of the evaluation period, however, it was not clear that these policies had been actually implemented.

The evaluation team did have access to and retrieve client information from Congress. This information, like that gathered from victims services agencies in Lancaster and Luzerne, was pulled from existing agency statistical reports (the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence [PCADV] Monthly Reporting Form) on clients served in its domestic-violence unit. As such, the evaluation team did not have control over data collection, variables coded, or reliability of data-entry personnel, and were limited in analysis by the aggregate nature of the data. The evaluation project was provided copies of 12 months of statistical reports. Efforts to retrieve six-months of Pre-STOP reports were unsuccessful by the end of the evaluation period. Communication with the STOP-grant project director revealed that reports from January through June 1996 had been sent to the agency's archives and "erroneously destroyed" (written communication, March 1998). Thus, descriptive analysis to be summarized in the next few paragraphs reflect client information for the first full-year of Philadelphia's STOP grant, only.

PCADV's reporting form solicited data on the following variables: **new adult recipients of service, new adult victims, continuing recipients of service, new and continuing telephone counseling/advocacy, new and continuing adult (in-person) individual counseling advocacy, new and continuing adult group counseling, systems change/systems advocacy, community education and prevention, trainings, and volunteer hours.** Within these broad categories, additional information was gathered on victims, such as race, ethnicity, rough age delineations, and special victim needs.

With regard to client characteristics, statistics provided to the evaluation team suggest a marked increase in the number of continuing adult victims served by quarter, after the first STOP quarter but an overall decrease in client volume during the first year of the STOP grant for all ethnic groups, most significantly for the Latina client population. Because of the lack of pre-STOP data from this organization and because of other circumstances which could account for this unexpected finding, these data are not presented in graph or chart form. One person interviewed indicated, for instance, that staff changes and vacancies would explain why monthly statistics might suggest actual decrease in services overall and especially for Latina victims. In any event, this author does not feel comfortable in highlighting report-data for which it cannot provide more comprehensive contextual insight.

Descriptive analysis of the vast majority of these data revealed no substantial or remarkable change, by quarter, over the 12 months examined. Therefore, a detailed summary is not provided in this report. There were some isolated instances in which monthly statistics -- combined into quarters for analysis -- provide quantitative evidence of specific categories of accomplishments in this county, however. In particular, there were certain quarters of the first year where the volume of press releases and of "persons reached" through press releases swelled dramatically or when the number of persons reached through school programs showed a marked increase; periods in which a large volume of newsletters

distributed with “persons reached” was documented; increase in persons provided with systems-training; and one quarter when training of counselors/advocates and in-service occurred. While it is beyond the scope of this evaluation to match the exact timing of these events with general reports from supplemental project sources, these numbers corroborate qualitative data related to these activities.

Clearly, all project counties addressed and revealed evidence of changing/modifying policies and procedures during the first year of their STOP grants. Obvious, too, is the incremental, agency-by-agency characteristic of this change.

Limitations of establishing/strengthening policies assessment. The previous paragraphs highlight indicators of service improvement for women victims identified during the proposal-writing stage of the evaluation project and prior to site visits in any of the project counties. As noted, evidence for service improvement across a number of proposed dimensions has emerged from the evaluation. As also noted, evidence is frequently “agency-specific” and not necessarily consistent across all core agency/department participants in grants. Or, if actually consistent, the evaluation team was not always successful in procuring documentation or information to support consistency. Further, indicators of service improvement are by and large qualitative. More rigorous, systematic methods for measuring improvement in services -- i.e., by tracking sample cases pre- and post-STOP grant resources within or across agencies -- were simply not feasible.

Ultimately, it might be possible to measure systems change through policies and procedures distinguishable as “system-wide,” encompassing all relevant agencies and entry/exist points between each one with the other. (An example of policies and procedures in place in Duluth, Minnesota, is included in **APPENDIX I**).

During the evaluation period, formal, written changes in policies occurred at the micro-level -- i.e., within a particular agency/organization/department or between two or three agencies/organizations/departments. However, informal change in language and practices was also notably prevalent across agencies in all counties; thus, it seems realistic that seeds for numerous formal changes in policies and procedures were being planted on a continuous basis and will be for the foreseeable future. The evaluation team was able to capture “snapshot” evidence of such reform movements.

Perspectives on improved services from interview data. Over and above the aforementioned approaches toward addressing the research question of whether services to women victims have been improved as a result of the STOP grants, this question was posed to all persons who completed year-end interviews with the evaluation staff.²⁷

The vast majority of respondents from all three counties responded that services to women victims have improved with STOP funding. Not surprisingly, however, descriptions of how, specifically, services to women victims have improved varied by respondents’ role in the STOP grants. Respondents focused on the perspective closest to them; i.e., if the

interviewee was a newly-hired person assigned to work with sexual-assault victims, she was likely to mention this work as a “service improvement” generally. If the person was a law enforcement officer, she/he was likely to talk about law-enforcement training or revisions in police protocols as a “service improvement.” Beyond these individual differences, there were similarities and differences across the three counties. They are described as follows:

In *Lancaster*, interviewees’ comments about service improvements fell under three categories: **the women victims themselves, services for victims, and inter-agency relationships**. As for victims, interviewees described victims as being “thankful” or “more comfortable” than prior to the efforts of the STOP grant. Under services, some interviewees highlighted support and counseling for women at the hearing level; an increase in numbers of services to give victims options; help for victims in deciding what action to take; provision of information about the local shelter; provision of safety tips and explanations about legal/support systems, or advocates’ roles; more in-depth and solid investigations of cases; more uniform protocol; support/legal services at the courthouse; and assistance to victims in using the “system.” Within the category of inter-agency relationships, reference was made to improved services between victims services and police departments.

In *Luzerne*, comments also fell under these three broader categories, but interviewees in these counties cited other dimensions of **victims themselves, services for victims, and inter-agency relationships**. One person mentioned “keeping in contact” with more victims as an indicator of improved services. Under services for victims, the impact of newly-created positions and getting the message of consequences out were identified as indicators of improved services. Within the sub-category of newly-created positions, interviewees described specific results stemming from these jobs: follow-up coordination, victims working primarily with one person, continuity and connection, accompaniment to medical facilities, more staff available, and more support and information generally. Finally, under the category of “inter-agency relationships,” interviewees described contacts between agencies (such as victims services personnel and law enforcement) to discuss questions/issues/problems associated with cases; implementing better services for coordination; working closer via committee work (on the county task force); and making referrals.

In *Philadelphia*, interviewees described improvement in services under two of these three broad categories: **services for victims and inter-agency relationships**. Under services, some persons mentioned that the STOP project has resulted in clarity of roles and who does what; “smoother” provision of services; more women being connected to victims services through police referrals; more people involved and someone available for victims to speak to directly; and persons available to victims for questions. Only one person indicated that she believed the STOP grant had not affected the way services are provided -- at least at the end of the first year. As for inter-agency relationships, interviewees voiced belief that the STOP funds have resulted in more communication between police departments and victims service agencies; more communication between the District Attorney’s office and victims

service agencies; increased inter-agency referrals; collaboration because different agency representatives have had to sit down and talk (particularly during Coordinating Team meetings); establishment of forums for representatives to say, “this happened..,” as well as to seek support or get advice; and increased knowledge about, “who to call and set up connections [with victims services] quicker” (quotes from year-end interviews in this county).

Findings from focus group meetings. As described in the **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY** section earlier, two focus groups of survivors of domestic violence (but not sexual assault) were conducted in Luzerne County in response to suggestions by STOP grant participants and by the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence. There was strong feeling that the evaluation needed to pay attention to the experiences and voices of victims of rape and domestic violence. The groups were held in October 1997 at the Luzerne County DVSC.

The objective of the focus groups was to provide survivors of domestic violence the opportunity to articulate their own experiences with individuals involved in various components of service delivery systems that interface with victims of domestic violence (e.g. police, courts, medical, and so on). Of special interest was the contrast between the experiences of victims who had encounters with service delivery systems prior to the implementation of the STOP grant and those interacting with system representatives post-implementation.

The focus-group meetings yielded many interesting insights and observations pointing to changes in the manner in which women victims of domestic violence experience treatment from service delivery agencies. These changes, however, are situationally specific, with some agencies and sites reflecting considerably more “improvement” in the quality of victim treatment than others. The focus-group discussions centered primarily on the treatment of victims by two community agencies: police departments and the District Attorney’s office. Each of these is discussed, citing liberally from the focus group transcripts to include victims’ voices in the discussion.

With regard to the ***Police response***, the pre-STOP group reported rather dismal experiences with police officers. Victims complained about officers not taking them seriously, siding with their male partners, neglecting to provide physical protection when called to scenes of violence, and failing to follow legal procedures with respect to the enforcement of protection from abuse orders. In general, the victims characterized police officers as not acting in a manner reflective of the seriousness of the episode or the potential dangers for the victim.

These themes are evident in the focus-group transcripts. In discussing her encounter with the police after receiving a beating, one pre-STOP victim reported:

... Basically I was told I was wrong... They told my ex to go out to a bar, relax, have a few drinks. It will blow over. I didn’t get any respect whatsoever. I was

told you're not bleeding, you are not dying, what are you calling us for? Where are your bruises? They said bruises show 24 hours.. come back tomorrow.

Another woman highlighted how police officers neglected to protect the physical safety of women, even after they were called to the scene:

They let him take me to the bathroom with a lock on the inside of the bathroom door. They let him take me in to talk to me. Away from them. He is like dragging me, and I looked at them to do something. They're like, "all right, we'll wait."

Another pre-STOP victim spoke about the officers siding with the victim's husband, whom they know, and neglecting to respond appropriately to protection from abuse orders.

I had my experience about 10 years ago when I first left my husband... When I would call them, they wouldn't come out. They'd say, "well, you have a copy but we don't have one, so how do we know?" So, they wouldn't come out. They would say, "We can't do anything about it."

Victims' descriptions of more recent treatment by the police are mixed. Some continue to share stories of officers being insensitive and siding with the victims' abusers. One woman, for example, stated:

I just had an incident a year ago in September. He wanted our son... There was a conflict in the court order, and I called the cops. He broke into my front door, and I'm yelling to the cops. They could hear him... He said he was going to kill me... He is coming after me, and they are asking me all this information... They didn't come until 20 minutes later. He was gone already... Then when they came, they asked me, "Well, what do you want us to do?"

Others reported a favorable comparison with prior years. As one woman phrased it:

The early years were horrible. The police didn't care. They came in like, well, obviously, you must have done something to deserve this. The _____ police are wonderful; right on the ball.

As for the *District Attorney's response*, pre-STOP victims also had less than favorable comments about their treatment by the District Attorney's office. One woman, for example, indicated that she felt the District Attorney's office treated her complaints as nuisance complaints:

To me, they look at it like a nuisance. These are nuisance problems. This isn't real stuff.

Another victim complained that the prosecutors were too ready to reduce charges and accept plea bargains:

The night I had my husband arrested for holding the knife to me... He was threatening the cops and everything... But when they arrested him, they sent him home two weeks later. He had the hearing and got a fine for \$130 and court costs.

These stories contrast dramatically with the experiences of one post-STOP victim, who praised the treatment she received from the new Assistant District Attorney hired as part of the first-year STOP project to serve the needs of domestic-violence survivors. Speaking of her experience in the courtroom, she states:

Some women get up there, and they are scared to death to say anything. But if the Assistant District Attorney is standing there, then they are standing up there, they are smack-dab right next to you. They are not sitting down far away; they are right there, and they surround you like a little covey, you right in the middle, so you feel like you're real safe, and he is not going to do anything there. I think it helps you tell your story. A lot of women get up there, and they are scared because he is standing right there. He can give you the evil eye. You know but if they are standing right there, I think it is easier for them to be there.

Another victim recounts:

I don't ever think that I saw an Assistant District Attorney years ago... You just went in and told your story, and that was that. I think it is more of a big deal than it used to be.

The two focus-group meetings provided opportunities for women victims to speak about their pre- and post-STOP experiences with the police and the courts. This sample was very small and selected by staff of DVSC. Thus, generalization of impact from the STOP grant to the population of victims cannot be made from the data available. These narratives offer a more grounded view of the experience of victims with service providers. Reported experiences with the District Attorney's office suggest that victims see improved response in recent years, while experiences with police department are more variable, improving in some circumstances and continuing negative past patterns in others. More rigorous exploration of victims' accounts might shed further light on how they view the system's response to victimization.

Summary of findings indicating improvement of services for women victims. The foregoing pages on newly created positions within victims service agencies to serve women victims, updates and revisions of policies from related agencies external to victims services, and views of both victims service providers and victims themselves, suggest that remarkable changes are being made across all three counties to improve services for women victims. And, indeed, there are measurable changes -- such as increases in the number of victims referred to victims services by law enforcement -- to substantiate quantitatively

what individuals are suggesting qualitatively. Nevertheless, data available from certain victims services agencies during the course of this evaluation do not provide supporting evidence of increase in services for underserved populations, such as Latinos in Philadelphia and Hispanics in Lancaster. This does not mean that these populations have not experienced positive gains during the first year of STOP grants, but that these gains may simply not have been measurably evident by the end of the evaluation data collection period.

>> *Question Two: Have Law Enforcement Practices Changed and, if so, What are the Results?*

Change as measured by more consistent, reliable case identification and tracking.

This element of change can be measured numerous ways: by directly examining and comparing pre-/ post-STOP tracking systems and concluding that there has been positive change; by assessing indirect indicators of change, such as training which one could infer would result in greater consistency and reliability; and by assessing other indicators of change in this area by documenting what key persons involved in the STOP projects say about change in consistency and reliability. In next several pages, description of efforts to assess tracking systems and training is summarized. Assessment of key persons' views on changes associated with consistency and reliability is covered under the heading of ***Perspectives on Change in Law Enforcement Practices From Interview Data*** within this section.

Comparison of tracking systems. For numerous reasons, it became apparent early in the evaluation project that it would not be possible to conduct in-depth analysis of police records and statistics -- either by department or by county. Some of the most significant had to do with the excessively large number of individual departments (over 60 in Luzerne and 40 in Lancaster (including state police barracks), many of which are part-time in Luzerne, with jurisdiction changing to state police after operating hours, and many of which have no computer systems in place at all. It also became clear early on that many individual departments had not developed individual, specialized tracking systems for various types of women victimization like domestic violence nor were such developments actively underway. (Ramifications for this situation is evidenced by efforts of the evaluation team to code prosecution data in Luzerne County.)

Meetings with representatives from various police departments across all counties revealed that departments varied tremendously in the type of computer systems in place which would have required inordinate amounts of time in training on the part of evaluation staff to understand and utilize these systems for the purposes of tracking data. From more practical standpoints, evaluation project personnel was stretched from time spent identifying, categorizing and coding data for other components of the project (i.e., prosecution) before they could be retrieved and analyzed. Finally, one major disincentive for expending energies to learn and collect police data systematically -- even if feasible within resource constraints -- came from key personnel themselves who stressed that development of

new/strengthened police tracking systems were not included among major goals and objectives for first year accomplishments.

The evaluation team was able to make a limited number of site visits to some police departments in all three counties and did develop an interview protocol for key personnel in these police departments. The protocol focused on departmental coding systems in place for flagging domestic-violence cases; identification of victims who report incidents; use of referral forms to various victims service agencies; time involved with writing of domestic-violence reports; departmental computer capability; and “walking through” of reported domestic-violence cases; statistical reporting; and inter-law-enforcement tracking and exchanges.

The original intent, indeed, was to conduct a much larger volume of interviews but other more pressing demands (such as time-consuming process of gathering prosecution in Luzerne County alone) on the project simply took priority over this original plan. However, what these few site visits were able to document rather quickly was the tremendous variation in tracking capability and technology across law enforcement agencies in these counties. The visits also serve to illustrate the potential value such inquiry might have. Regrettably, this evaluation project was not able to give necessary resources to this component of systems change.

Training. As evident from the original evaluation proposal, evaluation of training was initially planned for newly-hired specialized personnel. However, it became clear from initial site visits that at least two counties -- **Lancaster** and **Luzerne** -- identified training of law enforcement as goals and objectives during the first year of funding. Thus, the evaluation staff did assess accomplishments in these areas as feasible.

As described in the evaluation overview, above, training of law enforcement officers to better deal with victims of domestic violence and sexual assault was a priority area identified by the Violence Against Women Act office of the U.S. Justice Department. Hence, it was not surprising that counties identified this area as central to its efforts during the first year of STOP funding as well. While all counties had some form of law enforcement education integrated into its larger proposals, counties varied extensively in how law enforcement training occurred.

In **Lancaster**, training included a series of presentations by the newly-hired Assistant District Attorney and county detective at various police departments and barracks across the county. These presentations were sometimes conducted at roll calls or shift changes. One of the key areas covered in trainings was the newly-established policies for completing/faxing information on all domestic-violence cases to the Domestic Violence Unit of the District Attorney’s office within a three-day time frame. Due to the nature of this training -- i.e., that it could vary in length depending on scheduling and opportunity; that it could involve a very few number of officers or larger groups; and could take place at varied times over the course of a 24-hour day -- it was not feasible or appropriate to conduct pre- and post-training evaluations of officers/troopers taking part in orientations.

The most formal, broad-based law-enforcement training took place in *Luzerne* County. This county planned for and implemented five three-hour training programs for law enforcement officers, including State Police. Training focused on the newly modified Domestic Violence Policy and Protocol. Training, in general, replicated domestic-violence training conducted in 1994. Sessions were held at various sites in the county on June 16, 1997; June 19, 1997; June 23, 1997; June 24, 1997; and August 13, 1997. Presentations and instruction was provided by the District Attorney, personnel from the Domestic Violence Services Center, Children and Youth, Office on Aging, police, and the Assistant District Attorney hired to handle domestic-violence cases. Over the course of these five sessions, a total of 293 persons registered for training, of whom 283 were law enforcement personnel.²⁸

A copy of the revised domestic-violence protocol and training guideline are included in **Appendix J**.

During the first hour of training and again at the conclusion of training, the evaluation team administered pre- and post-training surveys to training participants. Prior to completing surveys, the team explained the general purpose of the survey to obtain information on various knowledge and attitudinal items, assured anonymity of responses, solicited informed consent and described how information from findings would be used.

Of the 293 participants, 201 completed both pre- and post-training surveys. Response rates for the surveys were 40.2%, 59.2%, 77.9%, 98.2%, and 80.8% respectively, by date of training. Thus, it is appropriate to assume that the findings from the training evaluation can be generalized to the population of training participants with the exception of the first training session. (Of course, this does not imply that these findings can be generalized to the total population of law enforcement personnel in Luzerne County).

During the first session of training, the evaluation staff had distributed both pre- and post-training surveys in an envelope with informed consent forms and background information on the surveys. Participants were instructed to complete pre-test surveys prior to training and were told that they would be notified at the end of training to complete post-test surveys. Unfortunately, the evaluation team observed a number of participants completing post-training surveys toward the end of training itself. This event required that the team bring this situation to the attention of all participants with another set of instructions -- that those who did, indeed, complete surveys before training ended, hand their surveys to one of the evaluation team members; and that those who followed instructions hand theirs to another member. All contaminated surveys were discarded.²⁹

The overall purpose of conducting training evaluations was to:

1. assess change in knowledge and attitudes/beliefs from the pre-training period to the post-training period;

2. gather information about the background of participants which could be useful in comparing differences among groups of varying background characteristics when interpreting evaluation findings; and
3. evaluate the overall quality and benefit of training from participants' perspectives.

The **pre-training** and **post-training** surveys were each divided into four sections.

Major sections of the **pre-training** survey included 10 knowledge items associated with Luzerne County's Domestic Violence Protocol; 15 statements related to Attitudes and Beliefs regarding domestic violence; 10 items which focused on police priorities in handling domestic violence situations; and 17 questions which solicited information about respondents' background and previous training in domestic violence. For knowledge items, respondents were instructed to indicate whether the Protocol statement was "true," "false," or "don't know." For the attitudes/beliefs items, respondents were asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with each of the 15 items, using a five-point Likert Scale.³⁰ The "priorities" section instructed respondents to assign a ranking (from 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest priority) to 10 possible responses in a hypothetical domestic violence scenario. The 17 background items consisted of fixed-choice and open-ended questions which respondents were requested to complete. These items included personal and professional background information, so that responses among persons from various backgrounds and positions could be examined.

Major sections of the **post-training** survey included a repetition of the Protocol items, the Attitudes and Beliefs items, and the priority items. The fourth section of the post-training survey solicited feedback on the training itself. Respondents were asked to rank the quality of training, the quality of instructors, the amount of new information received during training, and to complete a series of open-ended questions about the training sessions.

Development of survey items and final decisions about topics to cover in all major sections of both **pre-** and **post-training surveys** were made through joint efforts of both key persons involved in the STOP grant -- representatives from police, victims services, and prosecutions, specifically -- and the evaluation team. For knowledge items, these persons spent considerable time reviewing the newly revised Luzerne County Domestic Violence Protocol to ensure that items within the knowledge section covered critical issues adequately. For the Attitudes and Beliefs section, these persons pooled together some of the most common myths and points of misunderstanding about domestic violence. In addition, drafts of the surveys were reviewed, and pilot testing for timing and clarity of survey items was completed in a non-participating police department (State College, Pennsylvania) with volunteer respondents who gave excellent feedback before training assessments were administered in the field.

Copies of the **pre-training** and **post-training** surveys are included in **Appendix K** of this report.

Analysis of the **background characteristics** of respondents revealed, not surprisingly, that the vast majority were male (99.6%) and Caucasian (98.5%). Level of formal education among respondents ranged from high school diploma or certificate to graduate degrees, including Masters and Juris Doctorate degrees. The modal level of education (level reported by more respondents than any other level) was one-two years of college with no degree obtained. Thirty-four percent of respondents reported this level of education.

Professionally, the majority of respondents in training (53.7%) who completed this category of information have had less than nine years of police experience, including other law enforcement agencies. At the other end of the spectrum, 27.8% had 15 or more years of policing experience.

In terms of rank, the majority of respondents (78.2%) are police officers or state troopers. Ten percent are first-line supervisors with ranks of either Corporal or Sergeant. Eight percent are upper level management with ranks above Sergeant. Four percent of respondents classified themselves as “other.”

The size of agencies where respondents are employed ranged from as few as two full-time sworn officers to 4,500.³¹ The modal agency size is eight, meaning that more respondents recorded this number as the size of their agency than any other agency size.³² Seventy percent of respondents are employed in departments with less than 15 full-time sworn officers; and approximately 10% are employed in departments with between 15 and 30 full-time sworn officers. Four percent report being in an agency with at least 4,000 (presumably the Pennsylvania State Police); and seven percent did not complete this question.

As far as **experience** in dealing with domestic violence, three questions on the pre-training survey related to experiences and training in domestic violence. In response to the question, “About how much of your work time would you say is spent dealing with domestic disputes that involved violence with injuries at the scene?,” the majority of respondents estimated that “very little” or “some” of their work time is spent dealing with these kinds of incidents. Eighty-four percent of respondents reported these ranges of time spent. No respondent reported that nearly all of his/her time is spent dealing with domestic disputes involving violence.

A second question addressed domestic disputes that would not be categorized as violent. As with the former question, respondents were asked how much of their work time is spent dealing with these types of disputes. The majority of respondents again indicated that “very little” or “some” of their work time is spent dealing with such disputes, but this percentage (72.6%) was less than for disputes which include violence with injuries.

It is not possible within the context of this evaluation report to summarize the myriad findings emerging from this pre- and post-training surveys. In the next several paragraphs, highlights of analysis related to change in **knowledge** from pre- to post-training, change in **Attitudes and Beliefs** from pre- to post- training, and **feedback on training itself**.

Following a description of these highlights, some comments are made about limitations of pre- and post-training measures and subsequent activities to address these limitations.

To assess change in **knowledge** from pre- to post-training, a knowledge score was developed with input from key persons involved in the STOP grant in *Luzerne* County and the evaluation staff, built from consensus of what constituted “correct” responses for each of the Protocol items. Once the knowledge score was created, participants’ pre- and post-training responses (using paired comparisons) were analyzed using the paired t-test. In this way, it was possible to determine whether respondents increased in knowledge on the Protocol overall from pre- to post-training. It was also possible to examine item by item change in knowledge to determine if respondents revealed increase,³³ “decrease,”³⁴ or no change in knowledge on individual Protocol items as well. The evaluation staff hypothesized that this was an appropriate approach to assess change in knowledge due to training in that there were no intervening variables that could account for change in knowledge with post-training surveys being conducted immediately at the end of training.³⁵

Overall, the mean knowledge scores of participants did not increase from pre- to post-training. The mean knowledge score at pre-training was 7.48; the mean knowledge score at post-training was 7.40. Distribution of scores for the entire sample is included in the bar chart in **Appendix L**. It is important to emphasize, here, that participants were knowledgeable about the majority of Protocol items at pre-training; thus, any change in scoring at post-training should take into account this level of knowledge at the start. Further, there were dramatic differences in change across training sessions, as shown in the bar chart in **Appendix M**. Mean score in knowledge decreased considerably for the first training session participants, decreased somewhat for the second and third session participants, increased slightly for the fourth session participants, and increased substantially for the fifth training session participants.

Several factors might impact on differences in pre- and post-training change across training sessions. First, as described earlier, a large percentage of surveys from the first training session were contaminated and not usable. Second, training sessions drew officers from very different departments, who may have had different exposure to the police Protocol or experiences with it because of unique departmental policies and leadership. Third, the background characteristics of participants across training sessions may be varied. Since a number of different training sites were used for training, departments tended to send personnel to training which was conveniently located; therefore, there could be some “regional” differences from training to training. Differences in presentation of training curriculum, both in terms of variation in time spent on the Protocol itself and other topics covered during training and variation among instructors’ styles and teaching techniques, could also account for some of the observed variation in knowledge change.³⁶

Examination of change in **knowledge** for specific Protocol items revealed enlightening results that would not have emerged with pre- and post-test score comparisons alone.

For the entire training sample, participants overall increased their knowledge scores over 10% from pre- to post-training for Item 1 on inclusions of “covered relationships” in Protection from Abuse (PFA) cases (respondents changed from 78.8% to 89.3% correct); Item 6 on officers documenting justification when choosing not to make an arrest when it is authorized (respondents changed from 86.2% to 98.7% correct); and Item 10 on policies of the DVSC to contact victims referred by police (respondents changed from 60.5% to 76.8% correct). A bar chart, entitled in **Appendix N**.

Also for the entire sample, participants overall increased their knowledge scores some, but less than 10%, for the following items: Item 2 on rights of officers to make a probable cause arrests (respondents changed from 98.1 to 99.1% correct); Item 3 on the issue of asking about previous domestic-violence incidents during on-scene investigations (respondents changed from 94.6% to 96.1% correct); and Item 4 on the issue of asking about the status of protection from abuse orders during on-scene investigations (respondents changed from 99.6% to 100% correct). A bar chart is included in **Appendix O**.

Finally, participants overall did not reveal an increase in knowledge from pre- to post-training on the following items: Item 5 on use of discretion about making an arrest if the victim shows hesitancy (respondents changed from 70.9% to 53% correct); Item 7 on discretion with evidence of mutual battering (respondents changed from 38.2% to 29.4% correct); Item 8 on informing victims about availability of a shelter and other services (respondents changed from 54.9% to 44.2% correct); and Item 9 on officers forwarding information about a domestic violence victim to the Domestic Violence Service Center (respondents changed from 54.9% to 44.2% correct).³⁷ A bar chart is included in **Appendix P**.

Independent of factors which might explain group differences and have been summarized earlier, it is extremely important to note certain points relevant to the overall, item-by-item differences, also. First is the importance of noting, again, that for six out of 10 knowledge items, respondents revealed a high level of knowledge at pre-training. Indeed, for three of these items where increase in knowledge changed for less than 10% of respondents, almost all respondents knew the correct response at pre-training (approximately 95% and higher). At post-training, very few participants were incorrect in their responses for these items. In other words, there wasn't much room for increase given the high level of knowledge to begin with.

Second, a group of **knowledge** items stand out for two reasons, in particular: one being the varied level of knowledge at pre-test, including about half or less for Items 7 and 9; and another being the dramatic decrease in correct scoring from this relatively low level at the start. Several factors may account for these findings, also. First, it is essential to recognize that while items were developed with input from several persons knowledgeable about the Protocol and items were pilot-tested for clarity and understanding, these items were not field-tested extensively and could be problematic semantically. Further, stark differences in knowledge about this set of items could have significance otherwise: It is possible, for

instance, that for whatever reason these items were not covered in as great a depth in training. It could be that even the topics were covered, that the issue is more complex and calls for additional training or different methods of training. Indeed, one of the benefits to pre- and post-training assessments that extends beyond mere measurement of change is to identify those areas which may require a unique or different training approach.

In order to assess change in **Attitudes and Beliefs**, analysis to date has focused on changes in participants' stated views from pre- to post-training. It is possible, but outside the realm of this report, to factor-analyze attitudes and beliefs emerging from this part of the survey. Analysis to date has focused on item-by-item change rather than an overall change in **Attitudes and Beliefs**. Reliability of test-retest without training intervention would have strengthened portion of the assessment but was also outside the scope of this evaluation. As with the **Knowledge** items, the evaluation staff felt that it was reasonable to assume that participants could change certain attitudes and beliefs during the course of a short training session if the pre-training belief stemmed from misinformation. It also recognized that many **Attitudes and Beliefs** that persons across various walks of life have toward domestic violence and its victims would not realistically change during a few hours of instruction.

For the purposes of this analysis, the five-point Likert Scale responses were collapsed into three categories: Agree, Neutral, and Disagree. Thus, participants' responses which moved from either "Strongly Agree to Agree," or "Strongly Disagree to Disagree," would not be identified as changing. The most dramatic attitudinal changes occurred for items described below.

Item 17: Police officers should have more discretion in determining when and when not to make an arrest in domestic-violence incidents.

At pre-training, almost 62% of respondents agreed with this statement, while just over 18% disagreed, and about 20% were neutral on this topic. At post-training, the percentage of respondents who agreed dropped to just over 54%, with 16.9% disagreeing and 29% neutral. On this item, we see that more respondents indicated that they were neutral at post-training than at pre-training, when thinking about this issue associated with police discretion. Movement from some level of agreement to neutrality could be a remarkable outcome of training. Indeed, one interpretation is that the training has resulted in "being less sure" after training, which is certainly a more realistic view of changing attitudes than movement sharply from one stance to one of stark contrast. In this case, there is some indication that participants have begun to question or re-examine the issue of police discretion as it relates to making an arrest in domestic-violence incidents. See bar-chart is included in **Appendix Q**.

Item 18: If domestic-violence service agencies want to collaborate with police, they need to be willing to share more information about what happens after victims are referred to their care.

For this item, participants moved toward higher levels of agreement after training than before, with the neutral position remaining just about constant. Thus, the majority of respondents who changed position from pre- to post-training do so by changing from “disagreement” to “agreement” with this statement. Overall, change represented slightly more than three percent of respondents. While such change is not great, it is not in the direction that supports victims services personnel view of client confidentiality. Therefore, this is an area that instructors would most likely want to give some thought to as it relates to this and future trainings. See bar-chart is included in **Appendix R**.

Item 19: *Most staff of women victims service biased against men.*

As with the previous statement, change in position from pre- to post-training changed minimally but in the direction most professionals in this area would agree is in the desired direction -- i.e., toward a view that victims services personnel are not biased toward men. In this case, the percentage of respondents who agreed with this statement decreased slightly at post-training; the percentage of respondents who moved toward neutrality increased modestly also; and the even fewer respondents changed away from disagreeing with this statement. Indeed, change was largely due to those respondents who, again, changed from having an opinion on this topic to being neutral. See bar-chart is included in **Appendix S**.

Item 20: *Same-sex partners should not receive the same protections from abuse as heterosexual partners.*

At pre-training and post-training, about 13% of respondents agreed with this statement. At pre-training, 17% were neutral and 70% disagreed with this statement. At post-training, the neutral group had decreased to less than 13% of the total respondents, and the group who disagreed with this statement had increased to almost 74%. This change is in the desired direction of law and policies associated with victims services. See bar-chart is included in **Appendix T**.

Item 21: *A woman could get out of an abusive relationship if she really wanted to.*

Analysis of this item is most remarkable because of the high percentage of respondents who agreed with this statement at both pre- and post-training: 72% and 64.2% respectively. The neutral group decreased from 13.5% at pre-training to 17% post-training; and the group who disagreed with this statement increased from 14.6% at pre-training to 18.8% at post-training. While the majority of respondents still agreed with the belief that women can get out of abusive relationships if they really want to, at least some participants in training were either less certain of this attitude or changed to disagreement with this attitude after training. See bar-chart is included in **Appendix U**.

Item 23: *Police are not adequately trained in police academies for dealing with abuse and domestic violence.*

Over half of respondents (57%) agreed with this statement at pre-training, but this percentage decreased to less than half (48.5%) at post-training. Those who were neutral rose slightly by the end of training, with 14.2% being neutral before training, and 19.5% taking a neutral stance after training. The percentage of respondents who disagreed with this view of police academies increased from 28.7% at pre-training to 32% at post-training. See bar-chart is included in **Appendix V**.

This finding is particularly noteworthy because participants are addressing the adequacy of police academy training just before and after receiving instruction in one specialized law enforcement area. The question is, what are the implications of this finding? Among other possible explanations, one could hypothesize that law enforcement officers are more sensitized and aware of need for training after receiving three hours of instruction. Thus, they are more likely to conclude that police academy training was not adequate for dealing with abuse and domestic violence. This result could also reflect the sentiment that even after three hours of training, more is needed as well.

Changes in **Attitudes and Beliefs** on other items from pre- to post-training were negligible.

The results from this section of the training survey shed light on categories of changes that might realistically occur in relatively short-term training and what areas may be far more complicated and deep-seeded, thus requiring either different approaches to training or more long-term, intensive efforts.

Items on the pre- and post-training survey related to police priorities in handling domestic violence calls -- i.e., instructing participants to rank order the priorities of a number of issues/factors associated with police response in domestic-violence situations, revealed little or no change from pre- to post-training. Indeed, there was almost no variation in mean rankings from one test period to the next. Overwhelmingly, respondents indicated the top priority was determining whether weapons were involved on both pre- and post-training surveys.

The last major section to be examined in this report relate to feedback on the training itself. As mentioned earlier, participants were asked to provide feedback on a number of training-related issues: how they would rank the quality of instruction overall; how they would rank the quality of instructors overall; how they would rank the amount of new information learned; what topics they felt were most important, and so on.

For the sample as a whole, participants' mean ranking of the quality of training overall was 7.7, with a modal rank of 8, and a range of rankings from 1-10. Mean ranking of the quality of instructors was 8.13, with a modal rank of 10, and a range of rankings from 2-10. Mean ranking of amount of "new information" covered in training was 6.49, with a modal rank of 8, and a range of rankings from 0-10. While this last "ranked" item may suggest that participants did not learn much new information, it is important to keep in mind that respondents were given the following guide for responding to this item: i.e., that a rank of "0" would indicate that the respondent received "no new information," while a rank of

“10,” would indicate that the respondent received “a great deal of new information.” The mean of 6.49, therefore, suggests that participants felt that they received quite a bit of new information during training.

Analysis was also done to compare participants rankings on the quality of training overall, the quality of instructors, and quantity of new information with pre- and post-training scores. Results suggest that participants whose knowledge scores decreased from pre- to post-training were more likely to rank instruction lower than those whose knowledge scores stayed about the same or increased slightly. Similarly, participants whose knowledge scores decreased substantially were also more likely to rank the quality of instructors lower than those whose knowledge scores stayed about the same or increased slightly. Further, and not surprisingly, participants with higher pre- and post-training scores were more likely to rank “new information” received lower than those who had lower pre- and post-training scores. These findings are reasonable outgrowths of results stemming from pre- and post-training differences in knowledge. It makes sense, for example, that if a person had a high level of knowledge pre- and post-training that this person would not feel that she/he received as much new information in training as a person who started training with a lower level of knowledge. It also is logical to believe that if a person did not increase his/her knowledge, that individual would be less likely to rank the quality of training and instructors as high as someone whose knowledge scores did increase with training. Bar charts to depict the findings just described are included in **Appendix W** of this report.

As described earlier, participants were also asked whether they felt that domestic-violence training should be mandatory for all newly-hired law enforcement officers. The vast majority, 96.4% of all respondents feel (by marking their responses as either “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”) that such training should be mandatory. Slightly more than 2% were neutral about this topic, and less than 2% disagreed (by marking their responses as either “Strongly Disagree” or “Disagree”) that such training should be mandatory.

Finally, participants were asked to complete open-ended questions related to their training experience. Responses and comments were categorized, and a qualitative analysis of these comments revealed the following additional information about the *Luzerne* County training.

Two members on the evaluation team examined the open-ended the one open-ended question which appeared at the end of the pre-training survey (“**Please feel free to add comments or offer suggestions about handling domestic violence**”). They also examined the two post-training, open-ended questions (“**Of all the topics covered in training, which one is most important for you in handling domestic violence incidents from now on?**” and, “**In what ways do you think the training could be improved?**”), the staff subsequently developed coding categories for these responses for all three of these questions. From these categories, an overall report was generated on the findings from the qualitative data in the surveys.

In response to the pre-training question on comments or suggestions handling domestic violence incidents, very few participants completed this question. Indeed, only 19 responses were generated (the evaluation looked at separate responses, rather than individuals since some respondents may have made two separate comments on two different topics; therefore, this section describes “responses” rather than respondents) on comments or suggestions. These responses focused on three areas: **legal issues, training issues, policy issues, and miscellaneous.** Six responses indicated that more training was needed in this area, with an equal division between those who felt that training should be implemented into academy training and those who felt that more in-service training in this area was necessary.

Five responses were related to issues concerning domestic violence law. Of these five, one respondent stated that there should be a law preventing victims from dropping charges against the alleged batterer. The other four responses focused on the petitioners’ “abuse” of the Protection From Abuse (PFA) orders, and of those four, one recommended mandatory sentences for all PFA violators.

Of the remaining responses for this question, five were miscellaneous comments regarding policy issues, and three were general, miscellaneous suggestions.

From these few comments, then, there was an even distribution of comments on training, and legal and policy issues, although the comments on training and law were more uniform than other categories.

In response to the post-training question related to most important topics covered in training, responses fell under the following categories: **PFA issues, children and elderly issues, juvenile issues, protocol/procedures/policy issues, safety, agencies to contact, District Attorney’s position/role of court, indirect criminal contempt issues, legal issues, “all,” and miscellaneous.**

As with the open-ended question in the pre-training survey, the majority of respondents did not complete this question. There were a total of 97 responses across the completed surveys -- certainly more than on the pre-training survey but still representative of a minority of respondents. Most responses were made in one of two categories -- PFA’s and protocols/procedures/policies. Twenty-nine responses were made in each of these categories.

PFA’s were mentioned 10 times generally, while nine related to operational information about PFA’s of which three related to making arrests in PFA’s, and six related to discretion and violations of PFA orders. Other responses under the category of PFA’s mentioned the importance of getting information on state and federal PFA’s, emergency PFA’s, and PFA’s filed against juveniles.

Responses which identified protocol/procedures/policy issues as most important included 17 very general comments (including policies regarding victims' not testifying); 10 responses on arrest policies; and policies related to law or court.

Nine responses related to juveniles specifically, including instances when juveniles are offenders and just the whole topic of juveniles in relation to domestic violence. Six responses indicated that topics related to children and the elderly were the most important, either alone or together. Of the remaining 27 responses, three categories received an equal distribution of responses -- five responses each on the importance of knowing more about agencies available for officers to contact in handling domestic violence calls; the position of the District Attorney and role of the court in handling these calls, and five which indicated that all topics were "equally important" in training.

The remaining responses fell into the following general categories: officer safety, indirect criminal contempt issues, legal issues, and miscellaneous.

In response to the post-training question focusing on ways in which training could be improved, there were a total of 86 responses, again representing the minority of those in attendance, and fell within the following categories: **time, amount of information, presentation style, frequency and number of training sessions, training environment, content and type of information, speakers/presenters, miscellaneous, and "none"** (i.e., these respondents felt that the training "could not be improved" which would be interpreted as highly satisfied.

The modal response category was "time," and the modal response category for any one sub-category under time (12 responses) suggested that there needed to be more time for training. Another three responses indicated that the training was "too short." Only three responses reflected the opposite -- that the training was too long, while another two suggested that training should be spread out over two days.

Another area drawing considerable responses (13 total) for how the training could be improved focused on content and type of information. Responses suggested that training could be improved with more scenarios and examples; that there could be more thorough explanations given; and that mandatory trainings would keep officers up to date on police protocols.

There was fairly even distribution of responses related to a number of other ways that training could be improved: the amount of information covered; speakers and presenters (i.e., more information from judges; less from victims' services, include dispatchers in training; and bring victims into training). A few responses focused on other ways to improve training, such as better training environment (facilities and more breaks), presentation style (i.e., not reading material being presented which one person stated was a "waste of time"), and some miscellaneous comments. About 10 of the 86 responses were generally positive on training, with no suggestions for improvement. These responses were along the lines of: "none," "adequate," and "good."

While it is again emphasized that these open-ended responses do not reflect the opinions and views of the majority of participants in training, it is valuable to find that the varied responses centered on a limited number of topics. This suggests that some of the major areas of interest and concern to participants have been identified, although it is not possible to be sure the “non-respondents” would have replicated these views. Responses, while sometimes critical, also included positive suggestions, indicating that the authors were being thoughtful and attempting constructive review. In this light, comments do provide another important source of feedback to instructors for reference in future trainings.

There are, of course, limitations to the type of training assessments just described. While pre- and immediate post-training surveys can serve to assess knowledge attained during training itself, this approach does not suffice to measure the impact of training once trainees return to the field and apply new knowledge.³⁸ For this reason, the evaluation team built in a mechanism for possible follow-up at a future time after training, should the opportunity and resources become available to do so.

At the time of training, participants who were willing to receive some follow-up communication after training were asked to complete a form giving their name and address. This form had been pre-marked with the same identification number as the **pre- and post-training surveys** distributed to these individuals. In order to maintain anonymity of the **pre- and post-training surveys**, completed forms were retrieved separately from surveys and were kept separately in the evaluation offices. The plan was to place this matching identification number on any follow-up communication sent out to agreeable persons, so that results from a follow-up could be compared to results of the pre- and post-training surveying.

In late January, a request for a non-cost extension of the evaluation was made to PCCD and subsequently approved, enabling the evaluation team to develop and disseminate a follow-up survey. One hundred-thirty-two surveys were sent to interested participants from training near the end of the non-cost extension period, the end of June 1998.

The follow-up survey, like the original survey instruments, represented the joint efforts of key persons involved in the STOP grant in *Luzerne* County and the evaluation team. The goals of the survey were to follow-up on several topics covered in training from a number of different perspectives: the first section asked respondents to reflect on training after having been in the field for some months since training occurred; to specifically provide input on how helpful the training had been overall; to identify what topics had been particularly useful for subsequent work, and what areas respondents felt they needed additional training on after returning to the field; their thoughts on mandatory training in domestic violence several months post-initial-training; whether respondents had had additional training in domestic violence since initial training, and whether respondents had had any personal or professional experiences since training that had significant impact in handling domestic violence cases.

The second section of the follow-up survey focused on application of knowledge gained during initial training to commonly-occurring domestic violence situations. Respondents were asked a series of questions following a brief description of three different scenarios: what action should the officer take, if any, based on the information provided?; what additional information is needed, if any, before any action is taken?; what information is critical in order to make a decision about whether or not to make an arrest?; what discretionary power should the officer have, if any, in this particular case?; and opportunity to add any comments about the situation.

The third section instructed respondents to think about non-law enforcement agencies/institutions that they regularly contact in handling domestic-violence incidents. They were then asked to identify the top three such agencies based on either importance or frequency of contact. Finally, respondents were instructed to respond to two specific questions: first, what was the primary reason for the contact (making referral, seeking information, mandatory reporting, problem-solving with personnel, or other) and whether/how contact with these agencies had changed since training (on a five-point scale from “much more than before training” to “about the same” to “much less than before training”).”

The fourth and final section of the follow-up survey asked respondents to provide input on several different topics, including: their own thoughts on design of training in this area; the most frustrating as well as most rewarding aspects of handling domestic-violence cases personally; messages respondents would like to convey to supervisors in law enforcement or authorities in the justice system about law-enforcement work in this area; and final opportunities for comments.

A copy of the follow-up survey is included in **Appendix X**.

Unfortunately, only a very small proportion of persons who were sent surveys (27 out of 132) completed and returned them. The low response rate of 20% precludes the appropriateness of conducting in-depth analysis of responses, drawing conclusions about long-term impact of training or generalizing findings from these surveys to the population of participants in training a year earlier. Nevertheless, responses from these low number of individuals give some indication of the value for long-term follow-up and challenges counties who do conduct training to develop means for motivating trainees to be more responsive. Since follow-up surveying in this evaluation was an “add-on,” there no additional resources or time to deal with the low response associated with this follow-up. Further, only the most cursory analysis of responses has been possible under this project.

Nevertheless, it is useful to highlight some of the thoughtful responses that did come from the officers who did complete follow-up surveys. These few responses underscore the potential value and importance of follow-up that might be done in a more timely fashion than was possible in this project (by the time an extension request was made and approved, it had been almost a year since training had occurred and a request for extension was made only when it became clear that there was other justification for prolonging the project —

specifically, that a good percentage of requested data was still outstanding) that could influence future trainings. Focus here is placed on those responses which exemplify a unified view by the respondents who took time to complete follow-up surveys.

Twenty-three out of 27 respondents believe that domestic-violence training should be mandatory for all newly-hired law enforcement officers, after returning to the field from training. Twenty-two out of 27 respondents had had additional domestic-violence training since the initial county-wide training. Some training was in-service, related to either state-police training or the Pennsylvania's Municipal Police Officer Educational and Training Commission.

In the section of the follow-up survey which focused on non-law enforcement agency contacts, 51 different agencies/institutions were identified by respondents. Of these, Children and Youth Services was mentioned most frequently — by 13 different respondents, followed by Domestic Violence Services Center — identified by 9 respondents. Other agencies identified included the Victims Resource Center, the District Attorney's office, the Office on Aging, and other miscellaneous agencies. For 12 out of the 51 agencies, respondents indicated that they were in contact with identified agencies more frequently since training than before; for 3 of the 51, respondents indicated that they were contact less frequently than before training; and for the remainder, respondents indicated that contact was about the same as before training.

Responses to the question, "Of all aspects related to handling domestic-violence incidents, what is personally most frustrating or troubling to you?," half of the respondents (11 out of 22 who completed this question) focused on victims seeking protection from their abusers and, specifically, lack of "follow-through" after initial complaint is made; being unwilling to testify, changing decisions to press charges, and not accepting help that is offered (i.e., to seek assistance from the DVSC). Other comments related to frustration with PFA's, getting victims to be "non-victims," judges and district justices who don't have the "eye" of police, and so on.

Requests for input on "the most rewarding" aspects of handling domestic-violence cases resulted in a much greater mix of comments — from situations in which the victim and offender "make up and get help" and get their families back together, to times when "the victim becomes liberated and able to enjoy life again, instead of cowering in fear of an abusive person." A few respondents stated that there was little or nothing rewarding in handling "these cases."

Otherwise, these completed follow-up surveys brought out some very intense feelings on this topic, especially related to need for police discretion, not having a protocol to use in all cases, and other opinions that would not be seen as consistent with the Luzerne County police protocol or views of instructors in initial training. Thus, while these particular comments cannot be generalized to the population of trained officers in this county, they certainly give glimpses into perspectives of officers who deal with these cases on a day-to-day basis, after the training programs end and they return to the field. The following

sample quote written at the end of one follow-up survey, while certainly not indicative of the majority of responses, gives the flavor of some emotions and frustration associated with handling domestic violence cases by law-enforcement personnel:

One respondent wrote:

The courts, in my opinion, have not enforced penalties for PFA violations. Officers make arrests per PFA violations, victims demand it at the time of violation. Police take abuse from both the victim and the violator, only to find at the time of the hearing, case dismissed! Officer most of the time does not get to say anything in front of judges.... Cycle begins again within days after dismissal. I am speaking from experience (25 years)...

(I've) handled many domestics involving PFA's. Without a doubt, each and every time an arrest is made, the victim always refused to follow through. At court, victim tells judge she does not want to prosecute and police officer is not given a chance to put his input in. I am tired of filing charges on victims' behalf and not getting cooperation from the court or victim!

Another stated:

ICC's are a good start but in my experience with them, they are very lax at the D.J. Level. Usually ROR or ROS very few times has actual cash bail been given. ICC's should have a provision that there is no ROR or ROS.

A third writes:

It is the best thing that has ever happened. It should be zero tolerance for violence in family matters"... We always make arrests, however slight if we have to: we issue citations for harassment." It is the best thing...

And, finally, on the topic of training overall, one respondent wrote:

Training (is) good for new officers; with more than 13 years on the job, nothing really new. We arrest persons who assault. Newer officers had most benefit of training who may not know what to do or not see it as a crime.

In *Philadelphia*, there was no formal department- or county-wide law enforcement training nor any formal orientations or educational sessions conducted specifically for law enforcement, to the knowledge of the evaluation team. The STOP grant did provide funds for purchasing specialized cameras to be used by police, and police were involved in establishing protocols for peer advocates who could be located in the East Division location, which could have involved some orientation and training associated with this usage. Certainly, it is reasonable to expect that law enforcement personnel actively

involved with designing protocol with victims services personnel, and those participating regularly in Coordinating Team meetings did receive informal training and education associated with serving women victims.

Comments on law enforcement training and assessment. Evaluation of the three counties' approaches toward training and education in law enforcement serve to illustrate, first, the various methods for accomplishing this common goal — through orientation and brief education sessions on site of law enforcement agencies; through county-wide formal training; and through involving law enforcement directly in changing protocols and procedures for serving victims. Pre- and post-training assessments of Luzerne's formal law enforcement training reinforce both the value of such training for changing knowledge and some level of attitudes and beliefs as well as benefit of training assessments. Further, input from the small number of persons who completed follow-up surveys one year after training underscore the potential of more long-term assessments, also.

Change as measured by volume of cases reported under clarified categories of violence against women. As explained above, the evaluation team was not able to systematically assess this proposed aspect of the project due to the enormity of this component relative to resources available, and to other highly time-consuming activities which drained personnel resources.

Change as measured by the quantity and quality of interactions among law enforcement, prosecutorial staff, and victims' services personnel. The evaluation project attempted to identify the various means by which this change could be examined. From the quantitative perspective, there is tremendous variation in tracking mechanisms in place to document the links between any two agencies/organizations. However, even when such mechanisms are in place in some agencies or offices, the team revealed questions about the consistency, reliability or mere quality of this documented information. For instance, in some situations, tracking of interactions had evolved slowly as newly-created positions developed. This situation raised questions about the reliability and consistency of existing information. In others, tracking was done with handwritten notes that were then copied and sent to the evaluation team. These notes were not always readable or, if so, contained a lot of abbreviations and short-hand that would have required an inordinate amount of time to decipher, code, and analyze.

The evaluation team, thus, attempted to identify quantitative indicators of change in inter-agency relationships which appeared to be well developed, reliable sources of this kind of data. Even so, the project team recognized that these indicators most likely symbolized the "tip of the iceberg" in terms of measuring change in inter-agency relationships. They did provide glimpses of possibilities in system-wide tracking which will be discussed under the **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS** section of this report.

In the following paragraphs, these quantitative findings are showcased. Qualitative measures of changes in interactions among agencies/departments handling victims of

violence are described within the context of year-end interview questions which addressed changes in law enforcement later in this section.

In *Lancaster*, one of the most significant measures of change in interactions between law enforcement and other agencies is evidenced in computerized records in the Domestic Violence Unit of the District Attorney's office. Recall that one of the major goals of this county was to develop and implement a computerized data base of all domestic violence cases handled by police. Under the revised domestic violence police protocol in Lancaster, every officer who handles a domestic violence case is required to fax information about it to the Domestic Violence Unit within a three-day time frame. The computerized data base became operational in January 1997. All data entered into the system between that date and June 30, 1997 were retrieved by the evaluation team for analysis. Much of these data related to charges and dispositions of cases. In this section, only the information about reporting police departments is described, noting that there is no pre-STOP, computerized records to compare with.

Other indicators of change in interactions of agencies and departments handling violence against women cases in this county come from data files of the Domestic Violence Legal Services Clinic and the YWCA Sexual Assault Center, which has already been described.

Change as measured by difference in attitudes and beliefs of law enforcement?

The evaluation project was able to identify and measure some change in attitudes and beliefs of law enforcement through two primary approaches: the pre- and post-training surveys conducted in Luzerne County as described above, and qualitative data on changing attitudes from year-end interviews of selected persons in each of the three STOP project counties, described below.

Perspectives on Change in Law Enforcement Practices From Interview Data.

Over and above the aforementioned approaches toward assessing change in law enforcement practices as a result of the first year of STOP funding, this question was posed to all persons who completed Year-End interviews with the evaluation team.³⁹

While a number of interviewees felt that law enforcement practices have changed for the positive, there were more mixed responses to this question than for the one addressing services for women victims, across all counties. However, in fairness to law enforcement, the vast majority of persons interviewed were not, themselves, a part of a law enforcement agency and, as with other questions, respondents were frequently not aware of change and events outside their immediate purview. In reviewing these comments, it is important to emphasize again that these comments, while valuable to the evaluation project as a whole, do not necessarily reflect the majority of persons participating in STOP grants.

Across all three counties, interviewees' remarks generally fell under the following categories: **officer behavior/attitudes generally; case management; police protocols; inter-agency relationships; and areas in need of improvement.**

In *Lancaster*, under **behavior**, persons interviewed noted that they believed police officers are making an effort to respond better to domestic-violence incidents and that there has been an increase in reporting of women “in trouble” as the word gets out. Within the **case management** category, mention was made of uniformity in handling cases, more tracking and documentation in cases, and prompt reporting to the District Attorney with subsequent follow-through by more police departments. As for **protocol**, reference was made to its recent update; the clear stance on arrest from the District Attorney’s office reflected in the protocol; and dissemination of the protocol to police officers. Under **inter-agency relationships**, at least one interviewee noted that staff in human service agencies are reporting that the “police forces” are being helpful.

On the more critical side where there is **room for improvement**, interviewees noted that change is difficult and she couldn’t say it has actually occurred when it comes to law enforcement. Another person felt that change had not occurred but was hopeful that it would with “continued training” of law enforcement. Perhaps most noteworthy were the comments of two individuals who had this to say about change of law enforcement:

... (it’s) not fair to assume that major changes have been accomplished... (we’re) just setting up the system and getting familiar with what (we) want to do.
(Victims services provider)

I don’t expect results until the second or third year.
(Victims services provider)

In *Luzerne*, the majority of comments about change in law enforcement related either to **officer behavior/attitudes generally** and **inter-agency relationships**.

Under **officer behavior**, interviewees described a greater awareness among law enforcement officers; greater sense of accountability; officers’ who have now “heard the message”; evidence of increased comfort with handling cases; evidence of feeling support from the Assistant District Attorney; a “new surge of responsibility” on the part of law enforcement; changes in at least one department that made training mandatory for employment; officers seeking advice (“[they’re] more likely to pick up the phone and ask what they should do...”); officers now having to answer to “superiors,” as well as the District Attorney; and an increase in officers showing up at hearings.

Interviewees had very few thoughts that would be categorized as **officer behavior/attitudes related to arrest, case management, or protocol**. These comments were also quite general -- that there are now increased arrests for Indirect Criminal Contempts (ICC’s), that there is a different approach with management because officers’ “butts are on the line,” and mention of the newly-revised protocol. However, numerous comments were made about changes in law enforcement as they related to **inter-agency relationships**.

Interviewees cited instances of officers seeking advice here, also, but focused more on the different agencies and units being contacted rather than the subject of the contact. Specifically, contacts with victims services personnel and the Assistant District Attorney were mentioned. Other persons talked about law enforcement providing information and follow-through; more departments making reports and responding; feedback from police; increased understanding between social services and police on limitations of what each can do; increased police awareness of what other services in the community do; specific communication between the police and District Attorney's office; bringing gaps to the table; officers seeing victims service providers as "team players"; newly established, regular involvement of state police in task force activities; and involvement of additional local police chiefs.

On the more critical side where there is **room for improvement**, some persons reflected that change is not countywide; that attitudes haven't changed much; that the "timeliness" to talk to police has not been accomplished; that there is need for more frequent training; and that change won't be "measurable" until after training.

Finally, *Philadelphia* interviewees' comments related to changes in law enforcement were limited to three categories (**officer behavior/attitudes generally; inter-agency relationships; and room for improvement**). However, the majority of comments were related to **inter-agency relationships**. On **behavior** generally, one person indicated that the police department is simply more responsive. On **room for improvement**, several persons made the comment: that there is no real evidence of change in law enforcement; that if change has occurred, it is not very dramatic or apparent; and that there are needs in the areas of referral and information, including -- according to one person --- the need for developing a referral system.

While caution must be exercised when examining qualitative data on changes in law enforcement, it is valuable to see the common themes and consistency with which numerous persons from varied positions in the STOP grants across three counties tend to focus. Clearly, there is evidence of change in attitudes and behavior of law enforcement officers which includes seeking assistance from persons in non-police agencies. There is reference to the "slowness" of change, how difficult it is to achieve, how it happens incrementally, and that, for people at least, it is not so obvious at this time. Changes in police protocols to handle domestic violence cases are significant as are changes in uniformity and consistency in handling cases.

One person interviewed summed up some of these themes in the following quote from a non-police person involved in her county's STOP grant:

... what I am most happy with... (is that) officers will call on a regular basis with questions. Normally, they wouldn't call and normally maybe just make the arrest. Now, they will call and say, what should I do, give us your opinion?" Before, we did not

get a lot of that. Now they will call us and say, shall I make arrest, shall I ignore it, what shall I do?" Because of that, we are really happy that they feel confident that they can do that. The same with the victims.... is that they feel confident enough to call the police....

>> *Question Three: Have prosecutorial practices changed and, if so, what are the results?*

Change as measured by more consistent, reliable case identification and tracking.

Indicators of change within this area were apparent from both qualitative and quantitative measures in all three counties.

First, the creation of two Assistant District Attorney positions -- one in *Lancaster* and one in *Luzerne* -- to specialize in handling domestic violence cases during the first year of STOP funding was remarkable. These two positions have made it possible for virtually all domestic violence cases to receive personal follow-up from shortly after these incidents are reported until final disposition (which could involve prosecution or not). Both individuals in these positions created extensive files on the persons followed, although it was beyond the scope of this evaluation to code and analyze records. In particular, their personal tracking systems developed over the course of the first year efforts, and changed over that time. Since it was not possible to meet with these attorneys until months after their own tracking systems had been designed, there was no reliable consistent means of measuring efforts over the first full year. Nevertheless, one Assistant District Attorney shared samples of her files with the evaluation team. These sample files provide insight into the detail of information being maintained in at least one of the counties. Files contained notes on contacts -- phone and in person -- and dates and summary of content of contacts. They provide basic indicators of follow-up with victims, presence of advocates and other key personnel and witnesses. These files also lay the groundwork for creation of a computer database to record a chronological history of efforts associated with serving victims and prosecuting their charges.

In *Philadelphia*, the most obvious change in this area was the presence of one of two Volunteer Coordinators part time in one area of the District Attorney's office. Several months into the first year, this person scheduled time each week in this office. identifying Latina victims and providing follow-up to them. Because Philadelphia's project prioritized the improvement of services for the Latina community, the evaluation team understood that this person limited her follow-up to these individuals. However, it was also understood that, even though the first year STOP grant was designated to encompass the 35th Police Division of the Philadelphia Police Department, the Volunteer Coordinator followed-up on all victims with Latina surnames, whether or not they actually resided within the 35th Division.

In addition, the development of a computerized data base in the Domestic Violence Unit of the District Attorney's office in Lancaster evidenced clear change in the direction of establishing more consistent, reliable identification and tracking. Direct examination and assessment of data retrieved from cases filed through this unit in Lancaster and through the District Attorney's office in Luzerne will be summarized in the next several pages. The evaluation team did not attempt to retrieve data from the District Attorney's office in Philadelphia on domestic violence cases represented the 35th Police Division because of unique characteristics of Philadelphia's project described earlier in this report. Essentially, the evaluation team did not feel that it was appropriate to examine these data given the nature and status of that project's goals and objectives.

Change as measured by the volume of cases reported under clarified categories of violence against women.

In *Lancaster*, the computerized data base to enter and track all domestic violence cases in that county became operational in January 1997. This month represented the mid-year mark for the first year of that county's STOP grant. Prior to that time, there was no computerized system for tracking domestic violence cases in Lancaster. Thus, there was no means to compare data collected from January through June 30, 1997 (to be referred to as "STOP" data), the end of the first STOP-funded year, to a period before this year (to be referred to as "pre-STOP"). The data base was in place for six out of the 12 months being evaluated by the evaluation project.

Nevertheless, all data entered into the data base were retrieved and analyzed. Only descriptive statistics were computed to characterize the types of cases filed through the Domestic Violence Unit during that time, which represented the last two quarters of the first year's STOP grant. Given this short time frame, and the total volume of cases entered during the six-month period, it was not appropriate to conduct more rigorous analysis of these data, including change over time.

Between January 1997 and June 30, 1997, 186 cases were sent to the Domestic Violence Unit of the Lancaster District Attorney's office. According to notes on these cases sent to the evaluation team, the Unit handled 183 of these cases. Of the three cases not handled by the Unit, one charge was changed; one was completely deleted; and one was handed over the Child Abuse Unit to handle. The evaluation team then eliminated all non-assault cases from its analysis (one case, for instance, involved theft from a home involving persons in a domestic relationship), leaving 167 cases for analysis.

Originally, the evaluation team asked personnel in the Domestic Violence Unit to send information on all faxed cases which paralleled data collected in Luzerne County's District Attorney's office -- data case reported, date of final disposition, charges, outcome, and so on. It did not request race of victim, which was an oversight given Lancaster's emphasis on serving victims of Hispanic origin. However, at a later time in the evaluation, the team had the opportunity to view the "full-screen" of information on most half of these cases -- 84 cases in which race of victims and defendant was recorded.⁴⁰ For these cases, over 36% of

the files had no information on victim race. Race of defendant was recorded far more frequently than it was for victim. Thus, while this information should have been requested initially and it has potential for measuring change in serving a heretofore under-represented population, the team concludes that the large amount of missing data on this variable seriously jeopardized usefulness of this variable as an impact evaluation measure.

Thus, the evaluation project analyzed 167 of cases which fell under either aggravated or simple assault categories. The victims were female in 123 of these cases and male in 28 cases. The modal category (that recorded more than any other category) of "victim relationship to defendant" was "girlfriend." In 61 or 43% of the cases the evaluation project examined, this was the victim's relationship. The next most frequently cited relationship category was "wife," reported in 32 or 22.5% of the cases.

Data on total days in the court system (calculated from the time the case was received in the Domestic Violence Unit until disposition date when both dates were entered) was available on 72 cases. Days ranged from -7 to 168, with 50% being in the court system for 28 days or less.⁴¹ The mean number of the days cases were in the court system, for the 72 available cases, was 38.7. The number of cases in which total days could not be calculated due to missing information, coupled with the fact that -- unlike some jurisdictions -- court dates are scheduled in set intervals of weeks. Thus, these figures should be examined cautiously. Indeed, it would be more appropriate to assess the potential of this information for shedding light on time in the system rather than as a true measure of time associated with these cases in particular. As a measure, it is too problematic at this time.

Of the 167 cases, 155 counts of simple assaults (in 151 cases, there was one count of simple assault each, and in four cases there were two counts of simple assault each), and 13 aggravated assault counts were handled.

Among the aggravated assaults, two were pled by the defendant, one was Nol Pros because of the District Attorney's determination, and one was Nol Pros due to the victim refusing to testify. Among the simple assaults, five were pled by the defendant, 16 were Nol Pros because of the District Attorney's determination, and 41 were Nol Pros due to victim refusing to testify. From the data, it was not apparent which of the aggravated or simple assaults cases were found guilty or not-guilty by either a judge or jury. A substantial percentage of these cases 49 or 29.3% -- had what the team categorized as "questionable outcomes." By this is meant that it was not clear from the record how the case came to be decided.

There were 61 cases reported into the Domestic Violence Unit during the first quarter of computer data-base implementation (representing the third quarter of the first-year STOP grant), and 106 cases reported during the second quarter of operation (or the fourth quarter of the first-year STOP grant). Thus, the unit experienced a sharp increase in percentage of cases reported (74% aggregate increase from the third to fourth STOP quarters) in the fourth quarter compared to the third quarter of the STOP grant. Volume difference is largely due to the increase in female, rather than male victims (female victims increased

from 48 to 87, while male victims increased from 13 to 19). Certainly, it will be critical to follow patterns of changing volumes during subsequent years to determine if this dramatic rise will continue and to identify key factors which may explain change.

The case files entered into the Domestic Violence Unit data base also had space for a "Charges Narrative." These narratives could include qualitative descriptions of circumstances in the case. For example, one case file read in this section:

Defendant grabbed victim by throat and began choking to point where she could not breath. Visible bruises on her neck and chin. Warrant was issued.

Unfortunately, narratives were sparsely available and therefore not coded or analyzed for this evaluation. However, there is potential for these kinds of descriptions to provide excellent information on police documentation and subsequent disposition of cases. There has been a surge of recent attention paid to the importance of police case reporting to optimize likelihood of prosecution should that be pursued.

A review of departmental representation among the cases filed in the Domestic Violence Unit revealed that, as expected, the largest municipal department -- Lancaster City Police Department (LCPD)-- sent the majority of domestic-violence cases to the unit. Over 60% of domestic-violence cases filed came from LCPD. Each of the other municipal departments and state police barracks sent considerably fewer cases to the Unit. In fact, the next highest percentage of overall cases sent was only 6.55% of the cases, and these were sent from East Lancaster Police Department. Breakdown of cases sent, by police department or barracks, is depicted in **Appendix Y**.

The Domestic Violence Unit's database system illustrates the potential for police and District Attorney's offices to form a direct link in handling domestic violence cases. It can track the police departments who are sending cases to the system and enable the unit to determine whether these cases match the actual incidents occurring in the county's 40 departments. It can also track the adequacy of information sent. We've learned in this review, for instance, that substantial information is missing on case forms. Third, the District Attorney's office can track case outcome by a number of different important variables -- characteristics of victims, charge, time in the court system, disposition, and so on. It can also track where the case left the criminal justice system with what types of charges, according to the Pennsylvania Crime Codes.

The data gathered to date for this evaluation provide descriptive evidence on types of information being gathered on cases, following newly revised guidelines in the Lancaster police protocol, and entered into the system during its first six months of implementation. These data shed light on the critical role such a database plays in establishing one essential link in a developing systems response to dealing with domestic violence cases. At the same time, the database establishes a check-point for police department responsiveness, and it develops a mechanism for tracking cases and outcome within the court system itself. In

addition, it is important to recognize that the database in Lancaster is just being institutionalized, and that the evaluation team reviewed information from its first six months of implementation. Just as this evaluation identified information that would have been valuable but was not being recorded (such as race of victims and perpetrator), the personnel in the District Attorney's office will most likely do the same, and make modifications/additions to the system as needed and appropriate.

Indirect criminal contempts and protection from abuse orders. The evaluation team made numerous attempts to retrieve data on Indirect Criminal Contempts (ICC's) and Protection From Abuse orders (PFA's) for the 18-month, pre-STOP and STOP quarters, including personal requests and phone calls. Unfortunately, by the time the evaluation project ended, these data were not forthcoming. This situation was especially unfortunate because of repeated references to sharp rise in PFA filings in the courthouse with the arrival of a court advocate on site to help complete these filings. It would have been extremely informative to be able to document the volume of PFA filings from the pre-STOP quarters through the first full year of the STOP grant and compare results with qualitative data obtained on this topic through interviews.

Comparisons with UCR data. The Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) for 1996 and 1997 can only be used to indicate a small amount of information relating to the data collected from the District Attorneys' offices. For Lancaster County, we collected data on no cases prior to 1997, since their records were not computerized and available to us. The data provided from Lancaster only contained the cases departmentally identified as domestic incidents, so we had no stranger violence cases to create a comparison database. Therefore, we could not accurately calculate the amount of violence in the first six months of the STOP grant or the six months prior to it. According to the 1996 UCR, the last six months should have 227.5 aggravated assault counts reported and 186.5 counts cleared, and if the expected counts are adjusted based on the monthly variations as indicated in the 1996 UCR graphics, then there should have been 250.2 counts reported and 205.1 counts cleared.

When applying this approach to the 1997 UCR data, the first six months should have 222 counts reported and 181 counts cleared, and if the expected counts are adjusted based on the monthly variations as indicated in the 1997 UCR graphics, then there should have been 244.2 counts reported and 199.1 counts cleared. However, only cases with 10 counts were collected. These 1997 collected cases are just 4.5% of the UCR's reported and 5.5% cleared, 4.1% adjusted reported and 5% adjusted cleared. What this may indicate is that domestic-violence cases are not a significant number of the cases known to the criminal justice system. The District Attorney's office had been asked for all of its aggravated assault cases related to domestic violence, and the evaluation team was told that all cases had been retrieved. The key question, then, is whether domestic violence -- at the magnitude of aggravated assault -- is so statistically rare in Lancaster?

When examining simple assaults in Lancaster County, we encountered the same concerns as with aggravated assaults. According to the 1996 UCR, the last six months should have 1020 counts reported and 850 counts cleared, and if there is an assumption that aggravated

and simple assaults experience similar monthly fluctuations, and adjust the expected counts based on the aggravated assault monthly variations as indicated in the 1996 UCR graphics, then there should have been 1122 counts reported and 935 counts cleared. When applying this approach to the 1997 UCR data, the first six months should have 1037.5 counts reported and 810.5 counts cleared, and if the expected counts are adjusted based on the monthly variations as indicated in the 1997 UCR graphics, then there should have been 1141.2 counts reported and 891.5 counts cleared.

However, only cases on 149 counts were collected. These 1997 collected cases are just 14.4% of the UCR's reported and 18.4% cleared, 13.1% adjusted reported and 16.7% adjusted cleared. The key question here, then, is why does domestic violence comprise less than one-fifth of all violence known to the criminal justice system? Is there that much violence in the county or is it that under-reported?

In *Luzerne*, the evaluation team gathered 18-months of data on criminal and civil cases associated with victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. First, evaluation of criminal cases is summarized, followed by assessment of civil cases.

The primary goals associated with evaluating the nature and status of criminal and civil cases during a pre-STOP period and first-year STOP period, over and above the general research question stated above, were to determine whether specific changes occurred during this 18-month period. The evaluation team focused on charges, time, and disposition. In particular, the evaluation planned on examining whether or not there was evidence of changes in charges filed after the start of the STOP grant, whether or not time from entry to disposition in the court system decreased with the implementation of STOP, and whether or not there were changes in charges either be pled down or dropped with STOP.

Prior to making site visits to collect criminal data, the evaluation team made the decision to design spreadsheets which would facilitate recording the following information from the District Attorney's aggravated and simple assault cases: case number (not sufficient in retrospect); opening and closing dates for the case (vague, retrospect); offenses charged against the defendant; possible outcomes; referrals; if trial, whether a jury or judge heard the case; and comments to be made by the data collector.

Sheets were devised for each of four categories of prospective cases: domestic violence; sexual assault; domestic violence and sexual assault; other assault cases (beyond domestic violence -- e.g., bar fights). Sheets were broken down into the four quarters of 1996: first pre-STOP (1/1/96-3/31/96); second pre-STOP (4/1/96-6/30/96); first STOP (7/1/96-9/30/96); and second STOP (10/1-12/31/96), with plans to add the last two quarters of data (completing the first full year of the STOP grant) in subsequent data-collection site visits. The possible outcomes were taken from the District Attorney's annual report obtained during a site visit to this office and consisted of Nol Pros (i.e., withdrawn -- which would later be refined); Pled Guilty; Verdict of Guilty; Not Guilty.

The cases which would be pulled for evaluation would consist of those cases for which the highest charge was either aggravated or simple assault (i.e., a murder case, which would list aggravated and simple assault as lesser-included offenses, would not have been pulled for review). Cases would also be pulled based on the date the clerk of courts received the case, rather than the arrest date. Thus, many of the cases the research team would review were begun prior to the period of time being evaluated. For instance, if an incident occurred in 1994, and an arrest was made in October 1995 and the clerk of court received the case in January 1996, the team included that case in the first quarter pre-STOP period running from 1/1/96 through 3/31/96.

A decision was made to review aggravated and simple assault cases only, and not to review harassment, stalking and the like. The evaluation team believed that many physical harassment charges would be resolved at the district justice level, as would stalking.

While reviewing cases on site, the following additional decisions were made: Reliability checks of coding were conducted by each data collector after a review/coding of 10 cases each; thus, a total of 40 cases were double-checked for reliability. If any discrepancies between coding emerged, the two data collectors reached consensus on the differences before proceeding to individual coding of data.

Each case had two identifying numbers. The cases were numbered by the docket numbers (DN), one which represents the DN of the Court of Common Pleas and one which represents the DN of the final issuing action. The general understanding of the final issuing action DN was that it signifies which police authority brought forth the case. The Common Pleas DN is the number used by the District Attorney's office for identification. Both DN's were recorded on every case as the incident number in order to track cases within the court system and by the police organization. The prior decision to record only two case dates was immediately reevaluated. Many of the case folder/files contained several dates, including date of arrest, date the transcript was received by the court, date the summons was returned against a defendant, disposition date, sentencing date (often different from the disposition date), and updates on sentencing and parole issues. The decision was made to record the arrest, court reception and disposition dates in order to assess the expediency with which cases were being handled throughout the justice process. In situations where the arrest date was not offered, the "Summons returned" date was recorded due to the fact that this date was closest to the arrest in a thorough review of other cases. In cases which involved more than a single count of an offense, the number of counts was recorded, with the outcomes of each count.

Cases which did not fit the Luzerne County protocol definition for criminal domestic violence-related offenses but did fit the protocol's domestic-violence definition for Protection from Abuse-related offenses were highlighted but not included in the primary study. On some occasions, assault cases were pled down to harassment and/or stalking. Because of this situation, a separate category for outcomes was created. Thus, if a case was listed as having an outcome of harassment, since "true" harassment cases were not reviewed, the case was pled from the listed charge down to harassment. Finally, case

folders were specific as to why cases were Nol Pros. Thus, it was possible to record whether a case was withdrawn due to either a victim refusing to testify (RTT on spreadsheet) or due to lack of evidence on the part of the District Attorney's office.

The research team spent several days on site gathering data from closed cases made available by staff in the county's District Attorney's office. Cases represented all assault charges filed. They reviewed all cases which STOP project staff in the District Attorney's offices made accessible and which, over the course of the 18-month evaluation, the evaluation staff believed to be the sum of all aggravated and simple assault cases closed in that county from January 1, 1996 through the end of the evaluation period, June 30, 1997. However, several points are noteworthy as they relate to these collected data.

First, based on the evaluation project staff's understanding, there was -- at the time of data collection -- no unique codes to differentiate domestic-violence assault cases from non-domestic-violence charges. Therefore, data collectors were required to examine each simple and aggravated assault charge against both the crimes codes for Pennsylvania and Luzerne County's domestic-violence protocol. After this review, the data collectors could determine whether or not to include the case in its data base under domestic violence. Similarly, sexual assault cases were selected based on whether or not the case met conditions of sexual offenses in the Crimes Code of Pennsylvania, also. Those simple and aggravated assaults falling outside of either of these sets of categories were included as Other Offenses. This process was extremely time-consuming but believed to be the only way to distinguish cases that fit domestic-violence and sexual assault categories of offenses.

Second, it was noted earlier in this report that by March 1998, the original ending data for the end of the evaluation, a large proportion of cases from the third and fourth quarters of the first-STOP grant year were still open. This situation was one of the major reasons why a request was made to PCCD to permit a non-cost extension of the evaluation. Project staff in Luzerne County believed that most cases would be closed by the end of a three-month extension (June 30, 1998), if not before. The extension was granted, but unfortunately evaluation staff were able to make only one additional trip to Luzerne County to collect the remaining data from these last two quarters. This trip occurred in mid-April. There were still a large portion of cases open at that time. Numerous attempts to make arrangements for additional site visits to collect the last two quarters of data were unsuccessful. Thus, the evaluation staff estimates that only about 50% of the last quarter data were retrieved and analyzed.

Third, the evaluation research staff have reviewed data from the 1996 and 1997 Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) for Luzerne County to compare numbers generated for that report compared to the number of cases provided to the evaluation staff for the same time frames. This comparison is included in **Appendix Z** and suggests that the cases provided to data collectors substantially under-represents the total number of cases, across all categories examined, to UCR from Luzerne County. Since the 1997 UCR had just become available

for review as this report was being written, it was not possible to explore and research reasons behind these discrepant figures.

Comparisons with UCR data. The UCR for Pennsylvania for 1996 and 1997 indicate a different volume of crime occurring than the data collected from the District Attorneys' Offices. For Luzerne, the research team collected data from cases with 46 counts of aggravated assaults for the last six months of 1996, the first six months of the STOP grant. According to the 1996 UCR, the last six months should have 156.5 counts reported and 122.5 counts cleared. Thus, if an adjustment is made for the expected counts based on the monthly variations as indicated in the 1996 UCR graphics, then there should have been 172.15 counts reported and 134.75 counts cleared. The collected cases are just 29.4% of the UCR's reported and 37.6% cleared, 26.7% adjusted reported and 34.1% adjusted cleared.

When applying this approach to the 1997 UCR data, the first six months should have 139.5 counts reported and 95 counts cleared, and if an adjustment is made for the expected counts based on the monthly variations as indicated in the 1997 UCR graphics, then there should have been 153.45 counts reported and 104.5 counts cleared. However, the team collected only cases with 50 counts. These 1997 collected cases are just 35.8% of the UCR's reported and 52.6% cleared, 32.6% adjusted reported and 47.8 % adjusted cleared. Specific requests had been made in the District Attorney's Office to provide the evaluation team with all of their aggravated assault cases. The response was a confirmation that the team had received all these cases. The key question is, then, where are the rest of the cases that should be there? Even when combining the six months prior to the STOP grant to the rest of the 1996 collected data, the evaluation team has records on only have 97 counts of aggravated assaults. This is 31% of the reported counts and 40% of the cleared counts according to the 1996 UCR.

When examining simple assaults counts for Luzerne, we encountered the same concerns as with aggravated assaults. We collected cases with 163 counts of simple assaults for the last six months of 1996, the first six months of the STOP grant. According to the 1996 UCR, the last six months should have 564 counts reported and 415.5 counts cleared, and if we assume that aggravated and simple assaults experience similar monthly fluctuations and adjust the expected counts based on the aggravated assault monthly variations as indicated in the 1996 UCR graphics, then there should have been 620.40 counts reported and 457.05 counts cleared. The collected cases are just 28.9% of the UCR's reported and 39.2% cleared, 26.3% adjusted reported and 35.7% adjusted cleared.

When applying this approach to the 1997 UCR data, the first six months should have 530 counts reported and 417.5 counts cleared, and if we adjust the expected counts based on the monthly variations as indicated in the 1997 UCR graphics, then there should have been 583.00 counts reported and 459.25 counts cleared. However, we collected only cases with 119 counts. These 1997 collected cases are just 22.5% of the UCR's reported and 28.5% cleared, 20.4% adjusted reported and 25.9% adjusted cleared. So the key question is, where are the rest of the cases that should be there? Even when combining the six months

prior to the STOP grant to the rest of the 1996 collected data, we only have 329 counts of simple assaults. This is 29.2% of the reported counts and 39.6% of the cleared counts according to the 1996 UCR. Were these cases also resolved at the district justice level of the system? Somewhere, counts of assault are dropping out of the system, at least according to the information we have been given. Many counts classified as cleared are not being forwarded to/ resolved by the District Attorney's Office.

With these notes in mind, the next several pages summarize analysis of data gathered over the course of the evaluation. Most of this analysis is descriptive due to relatively low numbers of data across a number of variables and categories within those variables.

Categories of charges and outcomes. Data were collected on a total of 297 cases. Of these, 128 were categorized as domestic assaults, and 169 were not categorized as domestic-violence. Across all 18 months, six months Pre-STOP and the first-STOP year, there were a total of 108 aggravated assault charges. A decision was made not to include sexual assault cases because of the low number represented in the entire 18-month period. Almost half of cases (53) reviewed involved one aggravated assault count each. In 31 cases, there were two counts each.

General outcomes of these 108 aggravated assault charges were as follows: Defendants were found guilty on 6 counts and not guilty on nine counts. Seventy-four counts were Nol Pros based on determination of the District Attorney; and 10 counts were Nol Pros because the "victim refused to testify." Defendants pled guilty to 19 of these counts.

Also across all 18 months, six months Pre-STOP and the first-STOP year, there were a total of 281 simple assault counts logged. Over half of cases reviewed involved one count of simple assault each (155 or 55.2%); another 33.3% or 99 cases involved two counts of simple assault each. Sixteen cases involved three simple assault counts each.

General outcomes of the simple assault charges were as follows: Defendants were found guilty on 25 counts, including 17 cases where defendants were found guilty on 1 counts each, and eight cases where defendants were found guilty on two counts each. One hundred seven counts were Nol Pros by determination of the District Attorney, and 41 were Nol Pros because of victim refusal to testify. Defendants pled guilty for 115 counts. Across all counts -- aggravated and simple -- 23 counts were tried before a judge, and 17 counts were tried before a jury.

Time in the court system. With additional resources to hire specialized personnel to concentrate on domestic-violence cases, as well as intensified efforts at numerous other levels, one could expect that cases might move more quickly from arrest to court reception and then from court reception to final disposition. On the other hand, one could also argue that with greater resources and personnel, more time might be spent investigating cases from the time they arrive at the court until final disposition.

When looking at all cases during the evaluation period, the mean number of days from arrest to court reception remained fairly constant over the 18 months examined, and the mean number of days from court reception to final disposition increased, resulting in an overall increase in mean number of days for cases to move from arrest to final disposition. A bar chart summarizing mean number of days for these various intervals, for all charges by quarter, is included in **Appendix Z-A**.

Analysis of variance among these time frames (arrest to court receipt, court receipt to disposition, and total time from arrest to disposition) by the six quarters examined, revealed no significant differences in time that cases were being processed through the court system from six month pre-STOP through the first-full STOP year.

If these charges are broken down by domestic-violence assaults and others (excluding sexual assault), it is possible to get a better picture of where patterns of change are occurring. First, the mean number of days from arrest to cases being received by the court was examined by category of offense -- domestic-violence assaults and other categories of assault. For each category, there was one quarter where the mean number of days spiked (the first STOP quarter for “other assaults” and the third STOP quarter for “domestic-violence assaults”). Otherwise, the mean number of days from arrest to court receipt remained fairly constant for domestic-violence cases while it showed gradual increase for other types of assaults, and these mean number of days were always less than those in other assaults, across all six quarters examined.

Examination of mean number of days from court receipt to disposition by category of assault and quarter revealed a different pattern. In half of the quarters reviewed -- specifically the second Pre-STOP quarter, and the third and fourth STOP quarters -- the mean number of days for domestic-violence cases processed in this stage of the court system exceeded those of other categories of assault. Nevertheless, these differences were not enough to balance out the overall difference in time from arrest to disposition by category. Across all six quarters, the mean number of days for other assaults to be processed in the court, from the time of arrest to disposition, exceeded the mean number of days for domestic-violence cases to be processed during the same quarters. However, the last two quarters of the first STOP year reveals a narrowing of the gap between mean number of days for each category.

Analysis of variance among these three measures of time (arrest to court receipt; court receipt to final disposition; and arrest to final disposition) by category was not significant overall, although there were between group differences for “arrest to court receipt” mean time and between group differences “arrest to final disposition” mean time.

Obviously, there could be a number of reasons why cases show evidence of taking longer to go through the court system which could not be explored in this evaluation. Further, it is not clear from this relatively short time frame, whether this trend will continue. Nevertheless, it is important to examine the impact of processing time for victims and

perpetrators -- i.e., are victims safe during this period of time?, and how are perpetrators being held accountable?

The evaluation staff assessed whether the actual number of domestic-violence and other assault counts changed over the 18 months -- and, if so, how? Each of the six quarters' cases were examined by count, being aware that the number of cases documented during the last quarter substantially under-represented the total number of cases for that period. Assessment was done several different ways: total number of counts (domestic assaults and others) by quarter; total number of counts Nol Pros by offense and by quarter; total number of counts Nol Pros because of victim refusal to testify by offense and by quarter; and total number of counts Nol Pros compared with those Nol Pros because of victims refusal to testify by quarter.

The goal here was, first, to ascertain whether there were, as might be expected, an increase in number of domestic-violence cases prosecuted over the 18 months with increase in specialized staff and efforts to handle these cases. There was also the goal of looking at Nol Pros cases in particular, given the emphasis on prosecuting domestic-violence regardless of victim willingness to testify on law enforcement training and the domestic-violence protocol. The hypothesis would be that fewer cases would be Nol Pros due to victim refusing to testify over time.

Essentially, there did not appear to be an increase in domestic violence counts prosecuted over the 18-month period examined. Indeed, there were substantially fewer number prosecuted in the last two quarters of the first-year. Even if the estimated 50% of cases were still open and undocumented in the fourth STOP quarter, the actual number would likely not exceed the first Pre-STOP quarter. In the last two STOP quarters examined, there was a marked decrease in counts that were Nol Pros in domestic-violence assaults, compared to other assaults, again acknowledging the under-represented cases overall in the fourth quarter. And, upon examination of Nol Pros cases due to victim refusal to testify, alone, there is some indication of a trend toward fewer cases being Nol Pros because of victim refusal over the first STOP year. Indeed, there were no cases Nol Pros because of victim refusal to testify in the third STOP quarter. This trend was examined in another way, also. In comparison to all cases Nol Pros due to victim refusal to testify by offense, domestic-violence cases represent the majority of such cases overall. Therefore, the changes which appear to be occurring in Nol Pros cases appear to be due largely because of decrease in Nol Pros due to victim refusal to testify in domestic violence cases, in particular.

Bar charts summarizing the results of this analysis are included in **Appendix Z-B**.

Examination of convictions across all 18 months (pre-STOP and first year STOP) among aggravated and simple assault charges revealed a total of 15 convictions (nine for one count and six for two) on aggravated assault counts. There were a total of 88 convictions (68 for one count; 18 for two counties; and one each for three and four counts) on simple assault counts. Analysis of variance revealed no significant differences between aggravated and

simple assault convictions by category of offense (domestic-violence assaults compared to other assaults). There was no indication that the number of convictions changed significantly during the time examined (i.e., more or less convictions by quarter).

Indirect criminal contempts and protection from abuse orders. One of the major duties of the newly-hired Assistant District Attorney in Luzerne County was to handle indirect criminal contempt cases (ICC's) for perpetrators of domestic violence who violated protection from abuse orders. Thus, examination of these cases as well as protection from abuse orders (PFA's) was particularly important for the evaluation project. The evaluation team retrieved data on these two types of cases for the six-month Pre-STOP period and the first-STOP grant year. Overall, there was no clear pattern of change in volume for either category, during the course of the 18-months evaluated. As the bar chart illustrates in **Appendix Z-C**, there was a gradual rise in number of PFA's from the first Pre-STOP quarter through the second Pre-STOP quarter and first STOP quarter (with 193, 287, and 308 PFA's filed during these three quarters, respectively). The numbers then dropped during the next two STOP quarters (to 241 and then 215) but were followed by a rise again in the final STOP quarter reviewed (with 293 PFA's filed). Seasonable changes resulting in persons getting involved in certain kinds of crimes should certainly be recognized when we look at these patterns of change as well.

A fairly comparable trend, though not as dramatic, in changing volume of cases occurred with ICC's. Over the six quarters reviewed and starting with the first Pre-STOP quarter through the fourth STOP quarter, the volume of ICC cases per quarter changed from 86 to 90 to 101 to 81 to 84 and then to 106. The one quarter in which ICC's did not parallel the upward and downward trend of PFA's occurred in the third STOP quarter. At that time, the volume of ICC's showed minimal change. During the same quarters, as described earlier in this section, domestic assaults dropped considerably between the first and second Pre-STOP quarters; experienced a sharp rise in the first STOP quarter; dropped again in the second STOP quarter and then remained at an almost constant lower rate for the final two STOP quarters examined.

A comprehensive case tracking system designed to follow perpetrators of violence against women could shed some light on the relationship, if any, between rises and falls in volume of cases for these various categories. One reasonable hypothesis might be that as PFA's rise in volume, coupled with more aggressive response to ICC's, there would be a decrease in the number of assault charges filed. Unfortunately, it was beyond the scope of this project to rigorously examine the possible relationships and trends that might exist among these offenses and filings. However, when the opportunity arose during the evaluation, the evaluation staff did pose questions of this nature to key persons involved in the STOP grants for their input.⁴²

A review of outcome of ICC hearings from the first Pre-STOP quarter through the fourth STOP quarter revealed two peak quarters for these total ICC Hearings -- the first and fourth STOP quarters (101 and 106 respectively) -- and slightly different outcomes resulting from these hearings.⁴³ Proportionately fewer ICC hearings resulted in a "found"

outcome in the fourth STOP quarter compared to the first, but more hearings resulted in the case being “continued” in the fourth-STOP quarter than in the first. The bar chart in **Appendix Z-D** summarizes the volume and outcome of ICC hearings over the 18-month period evaluated. Finally, for offenders whose ICC hearings resulted in “found” outcomes, 147 (57.2%) were sentenced to jail time; 15 (5.8%) were put on probation; but 95 (37%) experienced some “other” repercussion (such as ARD, anger management and deferred adjudication). Over the course of the 18-month evaluation, there were a few notable trends that should continue to be examined. First, after a stark increase in “other” outcomes compared to “found” ICC’s in the first quarter STOP year, this number decreased dramatically for the duration of that first year. At the same time jail-time from “found” ICC hearings remained fairly constant for the last three STOP quarters after a dramatic drop between the second pre-STOP quarter and first STOP quarter (coinciding with the rise in the “other” outcome). At the same time, although the numbers to date are very low, there was a steady, consistent increase in the number of “Probation” ICC hearing outcomes for all six quarters of data reviewed.

It is critical to keep all foregoing analysis in context and perspective:

- These data represent a wide variety of tracking systems (or lack thereof) associated with client services and criminal charges filed in respective District Attorney’s offices that, at the time of evaluation, reflected needs and constraints of these units independent of suitability for evaluative outcome-based measures of change
- These data represent a relatively short time frame in the scheme of long-term interventions just being implemented in these counties; therefore, evidence of changing patterns (or not) should be noted with caution
- Shortcomings and limitations of accessed database systems have been noted and will be expanded on further within the **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS** section of this report
- It was beyond the scope of this project to attempt integration of multi-database systems and tracking (such as identifying and following victims/offenders across civil and criminal complaints/filings); however, this approach would be highly desirable and provide a much more comprehensive view of the links among these various interventions and impacts

Change as measured by the quantity and quality of interaction among law enforcement, prosecutorial staff, and victims’ services personnel. Previous sections in this report describe newly-developed policies for sharing information and other kinds of interaction between law enforcement and prosecution, particularly in Lancaster and Luzerne Counties. In Philadelphia, presence of the Assistant District Attorney, who serves as Chief of Family Violence and Sex Crimes, at that county’s Coordinating Team meetings has no doubt impacted on the quantity and quality of interactions among these key people as well. Finally, interview data reviewed below sheds further light on perspectives associated with prosecution in respective counties.

Change as measured by differences in attitudes and beliefs. Change among prosecutorial personnel, related to attitudes and beliefs, was not directly examined in this project. However, a few comments emerged from year-end interviews about attitudes and beliefs of personnel in prosecution (attorneys and Assistant District Attorneys) which will be briefly described in the next few paragraphs on these data.

Perspectives on Change in Prosecutorial Practices From Interview Data. Year-end interview data related to changes in prosecutorial practices were comparable to that related to law enforcement. Specifically, responses were more mixed than for the question on whether or not services for victims have improved. However, the same qualification applies here as elsewhere -- that interviewees were simply more familiar with their own work and did not necessarily have insight into the workings of other agencies/units involved with domestic violence.

Common themes emerging from interviews, *across all three counties*, were **inter-agency relationships**, and **areas in need of improvement**. Otherwise, there was a lot of variation among comments and perspectives voiced by interviewees.

In *Lancaster*, interviewees' responses fell into two other categories besides those just listed: **specific populations of victims, and case management**. Under the first of these categories, interviewees discussed change as measured by increase of people in color represented in prosecution and by change in the prosecution of cases involving victims of domestic-violence. Under the second, interviewees cited the development and implementation of the Domestic Violence Unit's data base, the number of cases reported to the District Attorney's office, more rigorous prosecution, victims being better informed, victimless prosecution, clarification of charges, and consistency of charges.

Turning to the themes common across all counties, the role of advocates in prosecution was mentioned under **inter-agency relationships**, and the following comments were made under **room for improvement**: that change wasn't noticeable, concern that district justices were not adhering to the county protocol with respect to PFA violations (i.e., that they are "not following the letter of the law), and that there was still too much discretion by district justices which was in direct conflict with protocol and law.

In *Luzerne*, responses fell into the following additional categories besides those common across all three: **general signs of change, specialized personnel, and actual prosecution**. Under the first of these, one comment focused on the "legitimizing, the hearing, the challenge" occurring in Luzerne; under the second, responses focused on the continuity of the specialized Assistant District Attorney and having one expert, the value of this Assistant having contact with the plaintiff in ICC hearings, having an extra person in the District Attorney's office to provide support, monitoring of PFA's as well, and the importance of "alerting the District Attorney" to practices which result in change.

Under **actual prosecution**, interviewees saw change with domestic-violence trials and victimless prosecution (elimination of cases being “let go” due to victim refusing to testify), the impact of victim subpoenas in this county, the requirement of police to attend hearings and testify, and cases being presented in a more sensitive, responsive manner.

As far as the two themes common in all counties, interviewees had this to say about **inter-agency relationships**: that there was now additional victim-support assistance at ICC hearings with someone sent from the Victim Witness Office by the District Attorney; that there were less problems when victims services sent personnel to provide support, and that victims services staff were sending referrals to the new Assistant District Attorney.

Finally in Luzerne, interviewees felt that there were a number of **room for improvement** areas, including: that a “lot of lawyers don’t get it yet” followed by the opinion that there is a need for training among attorneys, need for training other Assistant District Attorneys, that there has been no change with sexual assault at that time, that there are a lot of problems with sexual assault, that there is a lot of work to do and a lot has to happen in helping victims of sexual assault, that the “real test” in sexual assault is that the District Attorney has to recommend it, and that maybe if police were “better” and “more sensitive,” cases would go through at the prosecutorial level.

In *Philadelphia*, interviewees’ responses fell under the two common themes evidenced across all three: Under **inter-agency relationships**, increased contact between the District Attorney’s office and victims services, and increased communication generally were mentioned. Under **room for improvement**, some interviewees stated that they were not aware of any changes in practices, they didn’t know about changes, they “didn’t think so” and were “looking basically to continued things as had been.... in hopes that victims services would provide more services to people in the criminal justice system, that there were “numerous issues not resolved” regarding the District Attorney’s office -- i.e., what it wanted from victims services, for instance -- and that the “District Attorney’s office is waiting for advocates to show up....”

These statements reveal positive change at the same time they underline and emphasize how slow real change is, and how difficult it is sometimes to actually be able to measure change. An interviewee in one county described this evolution of incremental change very well. This person spoke from the perspective of changing prosecutorial practices:

....As we got more into what was happening, we realized what our system needed, we started a filing system where we kept files, and phone numbers on record (of) every contact, even with the victim after their hearing, we kept logging, and we realized that we talked tons of victims well after their hearing. our filing system, we log all of those as we talk to people, what they say, where it goes. Then we started realizing that a lot of defendants that violated the PFA, are on probation, ... bail, so our project one more step. So, now we run criminal checks on all of the defendants, ...

so when they violate the PFA and are arrested, we now notify their probation officers, their bail bondsmen, their payroll officers... So now we coordinate this with these officers.... I guess that is probably as far as we move and develop...

>> *Question Four: Has violence against women been reduced?*

This was by far the most difficult question to study during the evaluation project, as expected and predicted in the proposal-writing stage. From an evaluation perspective, this question represents a major switch from organizational and systems change to change for individual women victims. Given the charge of counties to create new specialized positions, develop coordinating teams, develop tracking systems in some cases, put together training packages, implement training, etc., the ability to be able to even think about whether violence against women has indeed been reduced becomes quite challenging. Indeed, posing this question in the field frequently drew a surprising reaction from interviewees. They often felt overwhelmed by the question. Nevertheless, the evaluation project offered a rare opportunity to address this question from the perspective of existing tracking systems which may or may not have capability to produce measurable indicators of “violence reduction,” and to ask the field experts what views they had on how to measure whether *violence against women has been reduced*.

When writing the evaluation proposal, some theories and hypotheses were formulated for measuring reduction of violence -- such as “time to failure” between violent incidents and “extent of injury” in presence or absence of intervention (drawing on literature which suggests that injury will likely increase in severity with repeated attacks). As far as measuring “time to failure,” it would be necessary to integrate database systems and develop capability for tracking victims/offenders across interventions -- PFA’s, shelter care, criminal charges and outcomes -- in order to systematically assess this issue. While the foundation exists for this type of follow-through, no county evaluated in this project appears to be even considering the establishment of multi-agency database/tracking systems at this time.

With regard to extent of injury, the evaluation team did review and record qualitative narratives in criminal case reports filed with District Attorney’s offices in both Lancaster and Luzerne. In some cases, there were descriptions of injuries, information on whether weapons were involved, and previous history of abuse. The presence and detail of these descriptive narratives varied tremendously from being non-existent to being quite extensive, however. Thus, while there is potential for measuring change in the lives of women victims through this kind of documentation, substantial training and commitment and consistency across incidents would be necessary to develop/use this data source for measuring change in level of violence.

This question was posed to all persons who participated in year-end interviews. Many of their responses were quite insightful and provocative. They are summarized by county below.

Perspectives on whether violence against women has been reduced from Interview Data.

General reactions to this question. This broad research question was first addressed at a general level. This approach, in turn, resulted in interviewees focusing on their own counties and knowledge about what efforts were underway relevant to this question. Across all three counties, the general reaction to this question was one of not knowing, not being sure, not being able to answer this question -- the same theme was repeated many different ways:

**“... Don’t think so... would like to think so...,” “... have a long way to go...,” “have not seen that happening yet...,”
“... gut reaction is ‘no’...,” “don’t know how to measure... (what) is happening when you don’t know the hidden numbers...,” “too soon to be able to tell...,”
“No... don’t see any difference in the numbers... still getting the same number of people...” “.... even if the project would have gone well... not sure we would have reduced violence....”**

Imbedded within these statements, commonly expressed by most persons who were interviewed at the end of the first year, are these similar sentiments. In essence, interviewees voiced the opinions that they had very little to guide them in drawing conclusions one way or another, that they were as uncertain about how to measure whether violence against women had been reduced, and that even if the “data” were evident, it would not account for “hidden” numbers.

Thoughts on evidence of reducing violence against women. This question was then asked another way. Interviewees were asked to provide thoughts on what kind of evidence would indicate that violence against women had been reduced. From this vantage, interviewees offered insightful comments about this difficult question.

From *Lancaster*, interviewees focused on reduction of violence for victims under the protection of shelters, and reduction of violence for other victims protected under PFA’s. They also focused on reduction as an outcome of police forces improving protection for women, taking violence more seriously, and making “efforts.” Finally, one interviewee described reduction of violence which resulted from cases being taken to the prosecution level.

From *Luzerne*, interviewees surmised that violence would be reduced through awareness, by victims working with the District Attorney, by the workings of the county Task Force,

and by focusing on one piece -- “investigation/prosecution” --which this person would result in change of the “whole cultural attitude.” No interviewee in *Philadelphia* offered suggestions at this second, more theoretical level.

The most prevalent view was that these persons are more focused on changing awareness/attitudes/behavior/policies of persons in positions to make differences for women victims. As for a later point when numbers of reports might decrease, or when women seek assistance in fewer numbers, these same people may still have questions about whether quantitative measures of “violence” reduction is actually realistic in light of “hidden” numbers historically. One interviewee, in response to the question of evidence that violence has been reduced, voiced quite poignantly the complexities inherent in this question. She stated:

The first thing that pops into mind are police reports. But (What) you have to look at is (if) the number of police reports are reducing because the number of people reporting are not reporting in or is it because there are not as many incidents? So I mean. We are struggling (over) this with another program we are running in _____ where we have kind of been doing this.. You have a domestic violence counselor... and the actual number of calls has been reduced. So they are saying DV’s are down, and I am saying, well, is it really down? Or, are people just not calling in anymore? I think that is always an indicator, and then I think if there is any way of getting a self-report that gives you a representative sample to be able to find out, is the message getting out there that domestic violence is wrong, that it is not right, and that women are doing something about it. Whether it is leaving or doing whatever it takes to make their abuser stop. We struggle with this so much as a movement, trying to figure out how do you measure? Is your work effective or not?⁴⁴

Additional Questions Posed to Interviewees. The evaluation team asked a few other, broad-based questions in year-end interviews. These questions focused on the full scope of projects from interviewees’ perspectives. The objective was to record each person’s views on project effort -- in what areas did projects expend the most effort, in what areas the least? More overarching, what did these interviewees feel were the most “significant” outcomes of the projects to date?

For the most part, interviewees were confident in responding to these questions. However, it was noteworthy that not all persons involved in their counties’ projects were familiar with the full scope of those projects. This was particularly true of newly-hired victims services personnel. In several interviews, these persons could not identify and describe what their projects’ first year goals and objectives were. They had not been invited to

attend Coordinating Team meetings and, therefore, did not know the full cast of players on their projects.

Most effort. In **Lancaster**, most interviewees identified changes in handling domestic violence cases by police as the area where greatest effort was exerted. Within this broader category, these persons went on to highlight changes with the domestic violence protocol, training departments, uniform handling of cases, and the database, among others. More generally, the development of comprehensive services and case work, as well as staff working on PFA's at the courthouse, were included in areas receiving great effort. In **Luzerne**, interviewees' responses to this question were more varied. They identified law enforcement training, also, but identified "systems" change with follow-up, and hiring of a new Assistant District Attorney as domains where "most" effort was placed as well. Interviewees in **Philadelphia** echoed effort on developing, increasing and coordinating services for victims. In addition, one person felt strongly that the most effort was placed on forcing persons of different perspectives "*to sit at the table and get to know each other for real.. Listen to each other's difficulties and challenging perspectives...*"

Least effort. In contrast, very few persons in **Lancaster** concretely identified areas receiving "least effort." They were more likely to say, "don't know" to this question or to acknowledge that the work being done for domestic violence is needed for sexual assault cases as well (although the focus on domestic violence the first year of STOP funding was planned). One person did cite the database and constant need for "more training," however. In **Luzerne**, too, interviewees were less vocal on areas where there was "least effort," but a couple of persons mentioned the need to conduct more generalized training in the District Attorney's office for Assistant District Attorneys, and another mentioned that there has been little done with probation in this county. Finally, interviewees in **Philadelphia** made comments in a variety of areas when the question was posed: tracking and documentation, training of law enforcement, and strengthening policies and procedures.

Most Significant Outcome. The last general question posed to interviewees and described in this report relates to perceptions about counties "most significant outcome." Several common themes emerged from this question that were not unlike those identified elsewhere in interviews. Although there were some differences across counties, comments fell under the following general categories: *case management and services, inter-agency relationships, resources, special populations, violence itself*, and -- though not a direct response to the question -- reflections on "*room for improvement.*"

Lancaster interviewees highlighted the standardization of cases, early intervention, and police keeping victims services in touch quicker under *case management*; everyone being "at the table," and communication/providing services between agencies under *inter-agency relationships*; and better awareness, court advocate position, and education of all parties under *resources*. **Luzerne** interviewees described specialized positions, consistency in roles, tracking by the Assistant District Attorney, and filing gaps in services under *case management*; training and comprehensiveness of populations able to train under *resources*; less violent violations in court under *violence itself*, and "everyone

talking about violence against women but haven't addressed the issue," under *room for improvement*. Finally, *Philadelphia* interviewees focused on persons working closer together, collaboration and talking, and "that's easy -- agencies came together, linked together...." under *inter-agency relationships*; learning more about Latina community that "we thought we knew," under *special populations*; and, finally, "learned more about own limitations..." under *room for improvement*.

Prevalent among the words of these interviewees was attention to case management and coordination of services that evolves from different agencies talking and working together. At the same time, there is clear recognition for the reality that much is needed to be done, that training is a constant need, and that service to special populations requires much education and understanding.

There were numerous other questions covered in year-end interviews which cannot be summarized in the report. However, suffice to say that these qualitative data are being analyzed further and provide a wealth of information about differences in perceptions across counties and across persons within counties who each have unique functions and roles in STOP-grant efforts. These data are rich with insight into the difficult challenges faced by communities committed to bringing about systems change on a day-to-day basis.

Content Analysis of County Documents. As feasible within the evaluation period, the evaluation team also conducted content analysis of various documents provided to it from various agencies and persons participating in the STOP grant. These included quarterly reports prepared by project directors for PCCD, annual reports of agencies/units, internal reports (such as Coordinating Team retreat summaries in Philadelphia), minutes from Coordinating Team meetings in Philadelphia only, and minutes from meetings between Volunteer Coordinators in Philadelphia, also. Copies of training curriculum, agency brochures, community educational materials, and other miscellaneous documents were offered and retrieved as well.

In this report, content analysis of Coordinating Team meeting minutes is summarized because of the requirement that all counties establish Coordinating Teams and hold regular meetings as a pre-requisite for obtaining STOP funds. Quite unintentionally, the evaluation team determined through attendance at one of these meetings in Philadelphia that this county did record minutes at virtually each meeting. The team felt it would be important to examine these minutes and summarize themes, discussions, and decisions resulting from them. It was especially interested in inter-agency dialogues because of the strong emphasis in "coordinated response," from VAWA and PCCD, as well as the recurrent theme of inter-agency relationships emerging from qualitative reports and interviews.

Attendance at Coordinating Team meetings usually represented a large number of victims services providers, such as Women Organized Against Rape, Women in Transition, Women Against Abuse, Congreso and the Lutheran Settlement House. In addition, the Assistant District Attorney in charge of Family Violence and Sex Crimes, and representatives of the Domestic Violence Team (DOM) of the Philadelphia Police Department were generally present as well.

Since the major goal of Philadelphia's STOP grant during its first year of funding was creating Volunteer Coordinator positions and in recruitment/training of peer advocates, it was not surprising that the meetings were generally facilitated by either the Volunteer Coordinator from Congreso or Lutheran Settlement House. Most striking about the content of these meetings was that much of the agenda centered on training and delegation of responsibilities associated with implementation of the STOP project. Given that the peer advocacy training was inter-disciplinary, and that recruits were to be solicited from the Latina community, a tremendous amount of time was spent developing and distributing training flyers and materials, developing and finalizing curriculum, identifying and recruitment of instructors, and so on. A particularly difficult issue dealt with in these meetings had to do with if/when to conduct criminal checks (actually more than one required) on recruits, the results of which would determine whether or not successful recruits would be able to volunteer in some specific capacities. Checks cost money, and the Coordinating Team was hesitant to invest several hundreds of dollars into crime checks before knowing if a recruit would complete training. On the other hand, if recruits successfully completed training and then checks discovered facts which precluded that recruit's participation as a volunteer, then time and commitment would have been wasted (or at least that was one prevalent view).

Once the training (two sets of 60 hour sessions over the course of the first year) began, there were on-going issues and dilemmas related to the recruits themselves, setting up recruit stations at identified sites within the Latina community and Philadelphia, completion of training requirements, double-staffing, efforts to provide trainees some level of support through transportation tokens or refreshments at training, and other kinds of nuts/bolts issues. Problems faced by the Volunteer Coordinators were brought to meetings for resolution, but the minutes do not reveal much evidence that many of these problems were addressed or reached final disposition/consensus.

In addition to the agenda items related to training and recruits, much of the content of meetings addressed the administration of the STOP grant itself -- scheduling of quarterly reports, responsibilities related to report writing, dissemination and management of funds, payment to various participating agencies, and, particularly noteworthy, statistical record-keeping. A topic of some conversation in the meeting attended by members of the evaluation team, for instance, was what numbers should be reported on client services and related efforts under STOP support, specifically, as opposed to general services and activities of total agencies. In many cases, it was very difficult for an agency to distinguish between work carried out specifically under the umbrella of STOP monies and that completed from other funds -- particularly if a person was partially funded by STOP support. The team spent considerable time debating this issue, and there was evidence that such discussions continued throughout the first year of Coordinating Team meetings, based on minutes from this meetings. Certainly, the subjects of proposal writing and future grants took up a considerable amount of time as well.

Intermittently, between these more administrative, technical discussions, philosophical debates were brought to the table of these meetings. And it was in these discussions that the evaluation team concluded a critical component of the STOP project work was being achieved -- this "coming to the table," that key persons involved in these projects talked about on several occasions throughout the evaluation period. For example, on the day that the evaluation team attended a meeting, one representative of law enforcement engaged in a rather lengthy conversation with the Assistant District Attorney over the question of whether or not domestic-violence prosecution was always the preferred action in these cases. Some lively debate and discussion followed this initial interaction. Unfortunately, the former -- administration, technical issues -- consumed a great deal of time which left little reserve for mulling over and grappling with these more complex aspects of developing a coordinated response.

Because of the tremendous potential of Coordinating Teams to bring about systems change through education about individual roles and philosophies in handling violence against women, this topic is reviewed again in the **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS** section of this report.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is clear, documented evidence of major agency/systems change associated with activities of the STOP grants in all three counties studied during this evaluation project. Similarly, there are numerous indicators of change which fall under the specific research questions which PCCD required the evaluation project to address. Indeed, most striking was the amount of activity -- hirings, trainings, protocol change -- gleaned primarily from repeated site visits, interviews, sitting in at meetings, and qualitative assessment/content analysis of written documents.

These features, while uniquely incorporated into county projects to meet specific needs/characteristics, all call for inter-agency collaboration to achieve common goals/objectives. Yet, the challenges of participating agencies can be immense as they struggle not only to understand each other's language, turf, and mandates, but also to reach consensus when goals appear to be at cross purposes.

Overall, quantitative analysis of collected data in general was constrained by status of various tracking systems, requests for data that either did not exist or were not forthcoming despite numerous attempts to obtain them, standards of confidentiality limiting the types and categories of data made available, relatively short timeframes represented by available data, and all overshadowed by the focus of all projects on issues other than quantitative tracking and measurement. While the evaluation team revealed only the most "beginnings" of change as measured by differences in volume of cases and other related factors, this conclusion must be put into context. That is, there must be recognition of statements made repeatedly by key participants in these projects: i.e., that such measures of success were not appropriate during the first year nor were they expected. The overwhelming sentiment was that other more pressing priorities were being addressed in establishing and implementing a coordinated response to serving women victims.

Such findings imply that greater recognition must be given to the complex tasks being undertaken by counties to effect and measure systemwide change and improvement. Indeed, it is essential to document and track both the change process as much as absolute, "quantitative" outcomes (such as number of victims served, cases prosecuted, etc.).

The evaluation project revealed that counties are highly committed and dedicated to improving services to women victims, and they have excellent ideas/projects for effecting positive change. They evidence tremendous ability and determination to provide consistent, appropriate training for professionals working with or victims. Overall, counties have been creative and shown a great deal of skill in making decisions about where to put financial support and identifying how support will result in systems change.

Further, there is tremendous variation across agencies related to individual-agency monitoring over and above systemwide tracking capability. Consistent findings across

counties highlight the need for assistance in tracking change and measuring success. Even when technological "capability" exists, practitioners may not be knowledgeable about to best document progress, and link progress with original goals/objectives in a systematic fashion. These results are the product of many factors, which likely include focus on simply accomplishing goals (hiring new personnel, forming committees, conducting training, etc.) without resources/expertise to address the best methods/approaches for measuring outcome. One of the most striking findings from the evaluation was the amount of energy and time required to define job parameters and descriptions, Coordinating Team function, and develop viable networks before tackling other initiatives and turning to long-term goals and objectives of reducing violence against women.

With these thoughts in mind, the following specific recommendations are made for future or on-going projects like these pilot projects. They fall generally under the topic of ***tracking, Unique Position of Victims Services Providers, and Coordinated Response to Violence Against Women.***

Tracking

1. Set aside some resources for an evaluation consultant, even if there are not enough funds to retain a researcher for a comprehensive process/impact evaluation.
2. Work with this person to assess status of existing tracking systems and, subsequently, development/refinement of systems.
3. Ensure that the tracking system matches goals/objectives and will provide capability of measuring success.
4. Develop tracking systems to measure incremental change as well as final outcomes. This is critical for gaining insight into amount of time/resources are required for developing Coordinating Teams and new positions. This kind of tracking may include:
 - writing journals
 - keeping meeting notes/minutes, and
 - maintaining chronological records of contacts, events, and accomplishments, as appropriate.
5. Develop tracking systems for all aspects of projects, some of which may not be readily thought of -- for example, tracking/monitoring of job development independent of what the job is expected to produce. This type of documentation provides critical information related to effort associated with creation and development of new positions and establishes a context for assessing products and outcomes from such positions.
6. Document the work of Coordinating Teams as an invaluable for providing records of challenges, dilemmas, and conflicts experienced/resolved by persons representing various organizations and perspectives. In and of themselves, Coordinating Team minutes provide a wealth of information about

major issues confronting counties with STOP grants, the energy and time spent resolving these issues, and decision-making/outcomes. Although not proposed originally, the evaluation team analyzed Coordinating Team meeting minutes in one of its counties for these reasons. Unfortunately, only one county had systematically recorded minutes.

This project recommends that all counties do this. Content analysis of minutes can then be done at the end of the project and provide insight and knowledge about topics covered, seeds for policy changes are planted, and challenging issues are identified and addressed. In essence, they will provide key ingredients for assessment of **organizational** and **systems change**.

7. When thinking about tracking, it is important to constantly keep in mind that STOP grants are aimed overall at producing systems change even when proposed project activities might be scheduled at "individual" agency level; therefore, it is also critical to examine what mechanisms are in place to measure systems change or, at least, "indicators" of systems change.

In addition to tracking progress, goal attainment, etc., at the agency level, then, it is important to compare agency tracking systems across all agencies/organizations involved in the project to ascertain consistency among these systems. The idea, here, is to examine tracking of those entering and leaving each agency/organization (door in; door out) and determine what kinds of information are gathered at one point that can then be tracked at another.

For example: Let's say that a law enforcement agency tracks all victims it refers to a women's shelter, and that this information is entered onto a computerized data base. The women's shelter may or may not track where its clients are referred from. Ideally, the shelter would not only record how clients came into its system (from a police department in this case) but specifically which police department sends the referral. In this way, means are developed for systems tracking in the aggregate, even when individuals can't be followed due to confidentiality.

Without a thorough examination of inter-agency tracking systems, the victims service agency might simply record whether the victim came from a police referral rather than the specific department, which limits the usefulness of the information. With specific departments named, it is possible to track activities of specific agencies and determine patterns -- i.e., are some departments represented or not, and what might account for this variation?

8. Once tracking systems are implemented, individual agencies/organizations should develop periodic review of data entered and, specifically, what these data are telling them about progress. The evaluation found that in some cases where computerized data bases were being established as part of the project, data were being entered but not retrieved or analyzed internally. Such a review would give individual agencies valuable feedback on whether the data base is sufficient and effective for internal purposes as well as giving specific content information -- i.e., how are we doing?

9. By all means, tracking/monitoring records should not be handwritten, even if computerization capability does not exist. It is imperative that all records and documentation be typed at a minimum. This evaluation project was unable to use significant amounts of handwritten copied records sent by victims services agencies (where first hand data collection by evaluation staff was not possible).

10. Not only is it important to retain an evaluation consultant as early as possible to ensure development of appropriate tracking systems, it is also critical that periodic reviews be conducted by an independent person, even if only in the short term, to assess progress in this area.

Unique Position of Victims Service Providers

Some comments and recommendations are specifically relevant to victims services agencies and, especially, new hires within victims service agencies.

1. It is critically important to examine demands and requirements for these positions, because if significant resources are spent training new personnel (virtually all new positions require domestic-violence/sexual assault training prior to seeing/serving clients) to become specialists within the agency, a high attrition rate can be costly and counter-productive to goals of establishing specialized positions.

Human-services positions, in general, are infamous for requiring fairly high educational standards (minimum bachelors degree), coupled with low salaries and high stress. Further, even when funded by external grants, positions generally must fit within agency pay scales for other personnel.

2. The evaluation also revealed through year-end interviews that a number of newly-hired personnel were not aware of their role within a larger project. A good many direct-service providers did not know about the grant out of which their position was funded, were not familiar with overall goals and objectives of the grant, and had never attended a Coordinating Team meeting.

3. Given the high level of turnover evidenced in the evaluation project, it is important that counties identify preventive measures to enhance longevity, which could include helping newly-hired personnel to see the "big picture" and where they fit in, as a possible incentive to remain in these positions. In addition to attending Coordinating Team meetings, efforts could include ensuring that various personnel have other opportunities to interact, provide feedback and their individual contributions to the greater project mission, and learn/reap rewards from each other.

Coordinated Response to Violence Against Women

Finally, it is essential to recognize that given the nature and scope of STOP formula projects to strengthen coordinated responses for serving victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, true systems change will occur slowly over a long period of time at best. It is premature to expect that success should/could be measured by dramatic statistical differences within one or two years of implementation.

This conclusion does not negate the value and utility of examining statistics to evaluating change. It simply stresses the importance of reporting quantitative change cautiously and within the context of other qualitative measures, thereby ensuring that interpretation of findings is appropriate. In time, counties must and should visit the possibilities and feasibility of developing inter-agency tracking systems in order to actually measure outcome of a systems response. Some counties have begun to successfully implement multi-agency databases and have overcome significant barriers and challenges associated with confidentiality of information. While somewhat overwhelming to contemplate initially, counties which

have surmounted early obstacles have since become nationally recognized for success in developing a coordinated tracking system to mirror a coordinated response.

Findings suggest, too, that victims services agencies can greatly enhance the quality and usefulness of data reported on clients, without divulging confidentiality. In many instances, only univariate aggregate data (such as numbers of rape cases, number of victims between certain age ranges, etc.) are available for evaluation because this kind of summary data are compiled for mandatory reports to contracted state-level agencies. Agencies may not have sufficient person-power to complete various kinds of forms; often, they are hesitant to permit case-file review by evaluation personnel and record data themselves, for confidentiality reasons. Consequently, potential value of individual client records decreases.

This evaluation recommends that agencies at both local and state levels reexamine tracking systems and collaborate with program evaluation experts to develop more sophisticated reporting systems which maintain confidentiality.

It is essential to recognize that given the nature and scope of STOP formula projects to strengthen coordinated responses for serving victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, true systems change will occur slowly over a long period of time at best. It is premature to expect that success should/could be measured by dramatic statistical differences within a year or two of implementation. This conclusion does not negate the value and utility of examining statistics to evaluate change. It simply stresses the importance of reporting quantitative change cautiously and within the context of other qualitative measures, thereby ensuring that interpretation of findings is appropriate.

An excellent resource for practitioners to use in formulating logic models and designs for evaluation, building such models into plans for establishing project goals and objectives, is The Evaluation Handbook: For Projects Funded by STOP Formula Grants Under the Violence Against Women Act, written by Martha R. Burt et al., and published by the Urban Institute (1997). This resource is extremely useful in providing concrete guidelines and suggestions for practitioners who desire and need to track progress of their STOP projects, either their goals be to conduct either process or impact evaluations, or to simply be more educated by evaluation designs and methods.

APPENDICES

This section of the report is not currently available in electronic format; Please contact PCCD to obtain copies of the printed appendices.

APPENDIX TITLE	NUMBER OF PAGES
A: Year-End Interview	7
B: Sample Job Descriptions	5
C: Revised Domestic-Violence Protocol For Lancaster County	13
D: Clients Served By Quarter And Ethnicity	2
E: Referrals To Services By Category	2
F: Domestic-Violence Victim Information Form	1
G: Number Of Referrals By Quarter	1
H: Police Protocol For Peer Advocates	2
I: Duluth Policies And Procedures	2
J: Training Guideline And Domestic-Violence Protocol For Luzerne County	28
K: Pre-Training And Post-Training Surveys	11
L: Mean Knowledge By Pre-Training And Post-Training For Whole Sample	1
M: Mean Knowledge By Pre-Training And Post-Training By Session	1
N: Increase In Knowledge Score By More Than Ten Percent	1
O: Increase In Knowledge Score By Less Than Ten Percent	1
P: No Increase In Knowledge Score	1
Q: Change In Attitude For Item 17: Police Discretion	1
R: Change In Attitude For Item 18: Collaborating With Police	1
S: Change In Attitude For Item 19: Staff Of Women Victims Services	1
T: Change In Attitudes For Item 20: Same-Sex Partners	1
U: Change In Attitudes For Item 21: A Woman Getting Out	1
V: Change In Attitudes For Item 23: Police Are Not Adequately Trained	1
W: Feedback On Training	4
X: Follow-Up Survey Of Police	6
Y: Breakdown Of Cases Sent By Department	1
Z: Summary Of County Comparisons With Summary Of UCR Statistics	2
Z-A: Mean Number Of Days From Court Receipt To Disposition For All Charges By Quarter	3
Z-B: Bar Charts Depicting Analysis	3
Z-C: Indirect Criminal Contempts And Protection From Abuse Orders By Quarter	2
Z-D: Volume And Outcome Of Indirect Criminal Contempt Hearings By Quarter	2
Endnotes	4

¹¹. This ultimate approach was discussed with and verbally approved by PCCD.

². This ending date represents a three-month extension required to obtain data unavailable by the original ending date of March 31, 1998. Specifically, the extension was requested for three major reasons:

- a. a large percentage of prosecutorial cases were still open at the last site visit/request for these data;
- b. an extension would allow time to conduct a follow-up survey after law enforcement training in Luzerne County; and
- c. the unexpected, inordinate amount of time spent retrieving information and formatting data for analysis precluded the ability of the team to complete data collection within the originally scheduled evaluation period.

4

4. Buzawa, E.S., & Buzawa, C.G. (1996). Domestic Violence: The criminal justice response (2nd edition).

⁵. Excerpt from Lancaster's Action Plan, submitted to PCCD in January 1996.

6

. Excerpt from Luzerne County's STOP grant proposal to PCCD, January 1996.

7

. Excerpted from Philadelphia's STOP grant proposal to PCCD, January 1996. The excerpt further states that, "Although the area is ethnically diverse, with some African American and Anglo residents (particularly towards the eastern part of the Division), a majority of the residents are of Latino, mostly Puerto Rican, descent."

9

⁹. Also excerpted from Philadelphia's STOP grant proposal to PCCD in January 1996.

10

. Also excerpted from Philadelphia' STOP grant proposal to PCCD in January 1996.

11

. As well as other specifically identified personnel, such as Assistant District Attorneys.

12

. Follow-up surveys were developed and disseminated during the no-cost extension period, between April 1 and March 31, 1998.

¹³. However, approximately 50% of cases from the fourth STOP quarter were still not closed by March 31, 1998. Despite an extension to collect missing data, repeated attempts to schedule one final data-collection site visit in Luzerne were unsuccessful.

¹⁴. All material for ensuring informed consent was submitted and approved by the Pennsylvania State University prior to interviewing.

¹⁵. Ironically, the evaluation proposal purposefully avoided suggestion of making direct contact with victims of either domestic violence or sexual assault, assuming that such suggestions would be criticized. In retrospect, this inaccurate perception underscores the value of evaluation teams consulting with critical figures in victims services prior to submitting proposals, when feasible. In fact, some time was spent with the evaluation project director and local victims services personnel but this suggestion/topic did not come up.

17

. Inquiries were made to key persons about collecting/gathering data on virtually all data described in the original evaluation proposal. However, it became very clear early in the proposal that much of these data were non-existent or not available/accessible, given confidentiality constraints. This included some data suggested as measures of success in the evaluation plan sections of projects own proposals to PCCD.

18

. Personal interview, October 6, 1997.

¹⁹. Personal interview, October 6, 1997.

²⁰. Personal interview, October 6, 1997.

²¹. Personal interview, October 9, 1997.

²². Proposal to PCCD, January 1996 and personal interviews with volunteer coordinators in December 1996.

²³. While these differences are remarkable, the distinction of clients as either continuing and new may not be an entirely reliable measure. During site visits, staff of the Clinic explained that for reporting purposes, clients who span certain reporting periods may automatically switch from being coded as "continuing" to "new" (with the start of a new reporting cycle).

²⁴25. The total number of police departments changed during the evaluation period.

²⁵. Information taken from Appendix C, The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency PCCD STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program, August 1997.

²⁶. Documents used for this section of the report included: excerpts from the Philadelphia STOP Violence Against Women Project Coordinating Team -- Time Line Evaluation (retreat), July 2, 1997, pp. 2-7; and Appendix C of The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency PCCD STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program, August 1997; as well as minutes from various Coordinating Team meetings held during the first year of the STOP grant, and year-end interview data.

"Artificial" categorization would underestimate the number of continuing clients, however, and not the number of new clients.

Other professionals attended training as well, including personnel from the District Attorney's office.

²⁹. This unfortunate event underscored the importance of evaluation staff being present throughout the entire training process, not only at the beginning and end of training to administer training surveys.

³⁰. Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

³¹. An assumption is made that this agency is the total sworn officers for the Pennsylvania State Police.

³². Mode does not necessarily imply that the majority of respondents come from an agency of this size.

³³. Knowledge "increase" was measured by change from either indicating an incorrect response or a "don't know" response at pre-training, and a correct response at post-training.

³⁴. The use of the word "decrease" is used to depict those respondents who actually moved from giving a correct response on a Protocol item initially to giving either an incorrect or "don't know" response after training.

³⁵. This hypothesis does not negate or preclude the possibility that such an assessment tool is limited, however, as discussed later in this section.

³⁶. The evaluation staff took meticulous notes throughout training at all five sessions and noted significant variation in amount of time spent on the topic of the Protocol itself, as well as methods used for covering the Protocol. Some instructors focused on reading/emphasizing certain portions of the Protocol, and others addressed/discussed application more than wording itself, for instance.

³⁷. See pre- and post-training surveys in the Appendices for exact wording of these items.

³⁸ Burt, M., & Harrell, A. Evaluation Guidebook, Urban Institute, 1997.

³⁹ Refer to earlier description of year-end interviews and general characteristics of persons completing this component of the evaluation.

⁴⁰ These cases were sent to the evaluation team because during preliminary evaluation, they were still open.

⁴¹ This time range was assumed to be an error, and this case was omitted from date calculations.

⁴² Indeed, it was on one such occasion that persons active in Luzerne County's STOP grant provided valuable insight into the importance of examining numbers within a context. At that time, a few persons gave information to the evaluation project team anecdotally that in pre-STOP years, there was a period in which the local abuse shelter experienced a sharp drop in women seeking shelter at a time of heightened awareness and subsequent PFA filings in the county.

⁴³ ICC hearings result in one of six outcomes: Found, meaning..; Dismissed, meaning...; Withdrawn, meaning...; Continued, meaning ...; or Capias, meaning....arrest.

44

A few phrases of this person's statement are deleted to protect confidentiality and anonymity of the respondent.