

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMICIDE REDUCTION TIP SHEET SERIES

Addressing the Gaps in Domestic Violence Homicide Reduction

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ABOUT THIS TIP SHEET

Question Addressed

How can STOP Administrators create an Implementation Plan and grantmaking strategies that consider all factors related to domestic violence homicide and meaningfully respond to the needs of underserved communities?

Objective

Acknowledge and respond to the needs of underserved victims, particularly in communities of color, in the context of domestic homicide prevention efforts.

What's in this Tip Sheet

- Analysis of domestic violence homicide data
- Description of current domestic violence homicide reduction efforts
- Examination of the gaps in reduction efforts for communities of color
- Considerations for moving forward

HOW ARE STATES AND TERRITORIES REQUIRED TO ADDRESS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMICIDES WITHIN THE STOP FORMULA GRANT PROGRAM?

State and Territory STOP Administrators are required to submit a STOP Implementation Plan every four years that includes information on **how the jurisdiction will address domestic violence homicides**.

Specifically, a state's or territory's plan must include the following:

- Goals and objectives for reducing domestic violence (DV) homicides
- DV homicide rates in the state, as well as challenges and how the plan overcomes them

The activities designed by a state or territory to address the reduction of DV homicides must be responsive to the needs of the communities in which they are implemented.

Implementation Plan is required to articulate:

- How the state will recognize and respond to needs of underserved populations
- How the state will reach out to community-based organizations that provide culturally specific services.



The required elements for a STOP Implementation Plan can be found in the [OWW Implementation Plan Checklist](#)

RELEVANT DATA

What do the data say about domestic violence homicides in communities of color?

92%

Of women killed knew the men who killed them

63%

Of those women were killed by an intimate acquaintance, partner or spouse

11.2%

Of victims of IPV-related homicide experienced some form of violence in the month preceding their deaths

There are a number of national models intended to reduce domestic violence homicides. Research shows that although the number of DV homicides are going down and the rate of white women killed by their intimate partner or spouse is declining, murders of women by an intimate acquaintance, partner, or spouse are still a high percentage of the total number of women killed each year. Additionally, these prevention efforts may not be as effective with survivors from communities of color.

In a [CDC study](#), homicide was found to be one of the leading causes of death for women under the age of 44. That report looked at rates of homicides from 18 states over the course of 10 years and found that homicides of white women went down. Over half of all homicides were IPV-related.

Notably, both studies found that Black and Indigenous women were killed at nearly three times the rate of white women. We'll come back to this below as we cover some of the gaps in our current domestic violence homicide reduction efforts.

The CDC also produces a variety of reports, research briefs, and fact sheets from its [National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey](#). This survey does not collect homicide information but does have information on behavior we know to be indicative of danger or lethality, such as serious assaults and stalking.

These different types of data analyses and reports regarding homicides of women can be helpful to grant administrators and applicants at state and local levels in defining the problem to be addressed, the populations affected, and more.

When Men Murder Women, for example, is published yearly with both national and state-by-state breakouts of data, and in addition to race/ethnicity information, identifies other case data relevant to lethality, such as whether a weapon was involved, whether a physical assault such as strangulation preceded the homicide, and so on. The report from the CDC, on the other hand, is a deep dive into 10 years of cases in 18 states, which is helpful in identifying trends.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMICIDE REDUCTION

What are current domestic violence prevention or reduction efforts?



Before reading about current domestic violence prevention or reduction efforts, it's important to keep in mind that the identification of such efforts isn't a recommendation that anyone implement a model "as is." Models are often created within mainstream communities without information about, engagement with, input from, or consideration of the impact upon marginalized communities. The end of this tipsheet will include considerations for Administrators that can aid critical thinking about and analysis of these models in preventing or reducing DV homicide in underserved communities.

Prevention models incorporate evidence-based risk assessment into a community's domestic violence response to identify and intervene in the most dangerous cases. Some communities do this through a multi-disciplinary team assessment which may include the victim, such as the Domestic Violence High Risk Team model created by the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center. Other communities assess the dangerousness of cases through an interview of victims. The interview is usually conducted by a responder in the case and is guided by a tool such as the Danger Assessment. This tool was also adapted for use with immigrant domestic violence survivors. The Danger Assessment also has a shortened version - the Lethality Assessment Program - for use by law enforcement officers responding to a domestic violence call.

Efforts to study individual domestic violence homicides - and any gaps in services and responses - are carried out by multi-disciplinary teams. Often called fatality review teams, they examine the circumstances surrounding these deaths with the objectives of preventing them in the future, preserving the safety of battered women, and holding accountable both the perpetrators of domestic violence and the multiple agencies and organizations that come into contact with the parties.

Review meetings can include hearing from witnesses and experts, and reviews of records.

Creating a coordinated community response to violence against women generally means integrating the efforts of intervenors and service providers together with victim-centered policies, information sharing, and accountability. In this context, accountability covers not only the accountability of offenders but also that of intervenors and service providers to victims and one another in making the violence visible to the next person who must act upon it. There are also more narrowly-focused coordination efforts. For example, on a particular aspect of domestic violence like strangulation, or on a particular type of responder to domestic violence.

These can be helpful in issue-spotting or showing the way to a starting point for community members just coming together for the first time to coordinate a response to domestic violence homicide prevention.

Efforts to raise awareness can be carried out by telling the stories of missing and murdered women, such as those undertaken in “Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls,” the second in the **Our Bodies, Our Stories** series of reports initiated by the Urban Indian Health Institute. It is important to note that this is not the same approach as the often rather voyeuristic or sensationalized media reports of women’s homicides. Rather, the goal of this report is to raise awareness of missing and murdered Indigenous women and end the violence by reclaiming Indigenous values of data collection, analysis, and research for Indigenous people by Indigenous people.

GAPS

What are the gaps in these domestic violence prevention and reduction efforts in communities of color?

Recalling the data that domestic violence homicides of Black women and Indigenous women occur at much higher rates than homicides of white women in the same geographic area and during the same time period, it is clear that current domestic violence homicide prevention and reduction efforts are not working equally for women of color and white women.

“*...it is clear that current domestic violence homicide prevention and reduction efforts are not working equally for women of color and white women.*”

Below are identified gaps in how the aforementioned models are often implemented that likely detract from their success in communities of color:

- Lack of inclusivity when identifying and defining “community” during the building of a coordinated community response to domestic violence homicide
- Limited or “mainstream only” view of what is relevant information about the existence of danger or lethality in a domestic violence victim’s experience
- Institutional bias and systemic racism.

These gaps can increase the likelihood of domestic violence homicide in communities of color because they discourage or prevent victims’ access to systems that provide help, safety, and justice.

A LOOK AHEAD

STOP Administrators can help improve DV homicide prevention and reduction efforts in culturally specific communities by encouraging engagement with communities and pursuing qualitative information about community members’ experiences. See the other Tip Sheets in this series: **#2: *Engaging with Communities to Learn about Underserved Community Needs***, and **#3: *Using Qualitative Data to Learn about Approaches in Culturally Specific Communities*** for more information.

As you read the next two Tip Sheets, consider the following questions about whether an approach or model is effective:

- Do victims from non-mainstream communities know how to access help or trust the response? Who can help them with individualized safety planning?
- Do any groups feel excluded from the help, safety, or justice that systems offer?
- For those who feel excluded, where are there other safety nets that they can access? Are they turning to non-mainstream resources for help?

