
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

NUMBER NINETY-THREE (2009)

ESTABLISHING VIRGINIA'S SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WORKGROUP

Importance of the Issue

Each year, Virginians are victims of sexual and domestic violence. In 2007 alone, 5,317 victims reported crimes involving forcible sexual violence to law enforcement, almost three quarters of which involved non-stranger offenses. That this number does not reflect the full picture of the amount of sexual violence in Virginia, however, is revealed by the fact that, of those who sought sexual violence crisis services, only half said that they reported the incident to law enforcement.

More than 38,000 people made calls to hotlines operated by Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Agencies in 2007. As of October 2008, there were more than 15,000 protective orders in effect in Virginia, a rate of 217 Orders per 100,000 people. Another 1,200 protective orders had been issued but not served.

Finally, it is a grim fact that 20% of the homicides in Virginia between 1999 and 2007 were homicides involving intimate partners. These homicides represent a total of 802 preventable deaths.

To make Virginia's citizens, communities and families safe, it is appropriate that the state government marshal all appropriate resources to combat, reduce and prevent sexual and domestic violence in the Commonwealth.

Virginia's Sexual and Domestic Violence Work Group

Since 1995, the Department of Criminal Justice Services and the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance (Action Alliance) have worked as partners addressing

violence against women issues as participants in the Virginia Services, Training, Officers and Prosecution (STOP) State Planning Team.

In 1999, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and the Office of the Executive Secretary joined this effort as members of the State Planning Team and partners on a grant to study domestic violence arrest policies and protective orders and to develop a protocol on intimate partner fatality review. In 2005, the Virginia State Police joined the state collaboration with a focus on the Virginia Criminal Information Network (VCIN) registry. In 2007, the Office of the Attorney General joined the partnership to encourage the involvement of prosecutors and other law enforcement personnel in the project.

Currently a \$1.26 million two-year competitive Grant to Encourage Arrest and the Enforcement of Protective Orders (GEAP) from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, supports this collaborative partnership. Work funded by this grant has revealed the critical need to continue a coordinated approach and collaborative effort to addressing issues of sexual and domestic violence across the Commonwealth. In addition, the findings and recommendations of the Governor's Commission on Sexual Violence remain to be fully communicated and implemented across the Commonwealth.

Accordingly, I hereby establish the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Workgroup, to build on the work of the GEAP partnership and the Commission on Sexual Violence and to promote ongoing collaboration among and between relevant state agencies and private sector partners involved in sexual and domestic violence reduction, enforcement and prevention efforts.

Composition of the Workgroup

Virginia's Sexual and Domestic Violence Work Group will be co-chaired by the head of the Department of Criminal Justice Services (or his or her designee) and a representative of a participating private sector organization chosen by the members of the work group.

Recognizing that developing and implementing an effective statewide and community response to sexual and domestic violence encompasses the work of many state agencies, this workgroup shall consist of appropriate designees from the following agencies:

- The Department of Criminal Justice Services
- The Department of Health, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner
- The Department of Juvenile Justice
- The Department of Social Services
- The Department of State Police

In addition, representatives from the Office of the Attorney General, Commonwealth's Attorneys' Services Council, Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia, Virginia Association of Commonwealth's Attorneys, Virginia Chapter of the International Association of Forensic Nurse Examiners, the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police, the Virginia Sheriffs' Association, the Virginia Poverty Law Center, the Victim-Witness Network, the Virginia Community Criminal Justice Association, the Criminal Injuries

Compensation Fund and the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance shall be invited to participate in the Workgroup. Additional members may be appointed at the Governor's discretion.

Staff support for the workgroup will be provided by the Department of Criminal Justice Services, the Governor's Office and such other agencies as may be designated by the Governor. All agencies of the Commonwealth will cooperate fully with the workgroup and offer support as requested.

Duties of the Workgroup

The specific objectives of Virginia's Sexual and Domestic Violence Workgroup are to:

1. Establish a central source of information, tools and resources that can be used by communities to improve the response to domestic and sexual violence.
2. Support training for criminal justice system professionals, promoting a consistent and effective response to sexual and domestic violence.
3. Increase the number of Virginia communities supporting intimate partner violence fatality review teams.
4. Increase the number of Virginia communities supporting Sexual Assault Response Teams.
5. Increase the number of Virginia courts utilizing the I-CAN system to make Protective Orders accessible to a broad range of victims, including victims with disabilities.
6. Improve the enforcement of Protective Orders in Virginia by increasing the number of correct Protective Order entries in VCIN.
7. Ensure that Virginia localities have law enforcement officers, prosecutors and victim advocates who are prepared to respond to allegations of sexual violence in a manner that complies with state and federal protocols for investigation, evidence collection and protection of victims' rights.

This Executive Order shall be effective September 30, 2009 and shall remain in full force and effect until September 30, 2011, unless sooner amended or rescinded by further executive order.

Given under my hand and under the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia this 28th day of September 2009.

Timothy M. Kaine, Governor

Attest:

Secretary of the Commonwealth