

## WORKPLACE VIOLENCE INITIATIVE (V)

### **SUMMARY**

Due to a significant increase in workplace violence/stalking from 1993 to 1998 in the Precinct #7 area of Cockeysville, Maryland an initiative was put in place for a Workplace Violence Program that was proactive instead of reactive. The project is designed to assist the business community for making a safer working environment for its employees.

The initiative began on September 1, 1999 and a target completion date of September 1, 2003 and if successful, the ultimate goal was to implement it county wide. Additional objectives included training police officers and private industry personnel with special emphasis on the workplace avenger, domestic violence coupled with employee relationships.

Funding was allocated by several means, which included training officers in advanced threat assessments and case management. Resources such as the Sheppard Pratt Health System donated numerous hours of service via forensic psychologists to help support, implement and provide advice on handling these types of cases.

The initiative was successfully promoted by use of the media and Baltimore County Government and assistance was provided in developing a countywide Workplace Violence policy for all county agencies.

A detailed process in capturing and tracking pertinent information was developed which resulted in the creation of a master plan for each participating organization of procedures and policies of what steps should be taken. Our department database was changed to track workplace violence cases. The enhanced tracking allowed our department to capture cases that included government employees and school student incidents.

This program was developed quickly and has made a significant contribution in fostering a safe work environment for both county residents and out of county employees with very limited manpower, resources and funding. This program has also had an impact on other jurisdictions in Maryland and across the country. The program expanded rapidly and has been implemented countywide prior to the 2003 objective. Since inception, the following occurred:

- Presented training workshops throughout Maryland and Baltimore County.
- Presented 6 professional conferences in Maryland, Virginia, the Ohio Attorney General's Office and California District Attorney's Conference.
- 50 Firearms were seized
- Surveyed over 500 businesses with over 60% requesting assistance.
- Worked with the Baltimore County States Attorney's Office to have an Assistant States Attorney assigned to review and prosecute workplace violence cases.
- Created and implemented the County's Workplace Violence Policy along with the creation of the Workplace Incident Response Team.
- Training private industry and 8,000 county employees.
- Placed on Safety Board for Board of Education.

## DESCRIPTION

### **PROBLEM/NEED FOR THE PROGRAM**

In 1998, the personnel assigned to Precinct 7 of the Baltimore County Police Department noticed an increase in the calls for service as it related to Workplace Violence/Stalking issues. Based on these observations it was decided that the next initiative for that precinct would be a Workplace Violence program that was proactive in nature versus reactive. It was further discovered that there was no exact method for capturing the number of calls of a Workplace Violence nature. Research was conducted with various business leaders in the community, including Fortune 500 companies and there appeared to be a trend of increased calls related to these type crimes. *The Police Department's* Analysis Unit found that there was an increase in domestic related Workplace Violence cases from 6.5% in 1993 to 47.5% in 1998. During that same time period, the number of calls with weapon involved cases rose from 17.1% to 33.3%.

Supporting statistical data on a nationwide basis revealed that homicide is the second leading cause of death in the workplace after transportation accidents. For females, homicide is the leading cause of death in the workplace. Annually, approximately 25% to 33% of people in their jobs are exposed as victims or witnesses to actual or threatened violence. While 14.6% of workplace violence occurs in the suburbs, the cities report a much higher 65.5% rate of violence. The Precinct 7-patrol area, a suburban section of the county, handled two domestic Workplace Violence homicides between 1993 and 1996.

Since the supporting data signaled an area of concern for the Police Department and with growing nationwide trends of reported and publicized events a new initiative was created. The pilot program in Precinct 7 used a portion of the precinct that contains approximately 750 businesses.

Although there were no legal obligations to initiate this program the Workplace Violence initiative is in line with one initiative of the County Executive. That initiative is to attract and retain small and large businesses.

The WVI supports the police department commitment to service by enhancing our assistance to the business community while improving the quality of life for business employers and employees.

### **DETAILS OF THE PROGRAM**

This project is designed to assist the business community in providing a safer working environment for its employees. This project addresses two key result areas: external relationships and delivery of police services. The objectives of this project are designed to combat workplace violence in the Hunt Valley/Loveton area of Precinct 7's business community.

The initiative began on 9/1/99 with a targeted completion date of 9/1/03, and if the program was successful in the pilot area the ultimate goal was to implement it county wide. On 11/21/99 the Xerox homicides in Honolulu, Hawaii reinforced a local and

national concern on the ramifications of the Workplace avenger. Almost immediately our program took a multifaceted role countywide.

Additional objectives included trained police officers, private industry personnel (CEO's, supervisors, employees) with special emphasis on the workplace avenger and domestic violence that is carried to the workplace coupled with employee relationships. The ultimate outcome would be that businesses know how to address these various problems, create policies if they had none, and to understand the police response to those types of calls for service.

The police department helped to fund this initiative by allocating \$58,675 in initial funding by utilizing a portion of the Bureau of Justice Assistance grant previously awarded to Baltimore County. The Baltimore County Police Foundation realized the importance of this program, and supported the idea to be on a countywide basis. The Foundation gave the Police Department \$7,000 to pay for the training of 3 police officers. The Sheppard Pratt Health system, a Baltimore based mental health facility, donated numerous hours of service via forensic psychologists to help support, implement, and provide advice on handling these types of cases. Baltimore County helped to implement the program by promoting both print and electronic media releases. The Human Resource Division of Baltimore County supported the initiative so well that they requested our assistance in developing a county wide Workplace Violence policy for all county agencies. The House of Ruth in Baltimore City, Maryland, supported our initiative, particularly as it related to domestic violence by assisting us with implementation of the training programs.

The following was the format of the objectives:

- Distribute surveys to the businesses
- Analyze and evaluate the surveys
- Create Situation Found codes for tracking purposes ( Baltimore County did not, per se, track workplace violence crimes)
- The fourth step was the planning of meetings and the creation of the organizational stage
- The assignment of police personnel to the respective participating corporations/business
- The training of company CEO ' s and police department personnel
- The training for corporation/business department heads, supervisors, and managers (to know what to look for and how to deal with the issues)
- Final phase
  - a. the creation of a master plan for each participating organization ( the master plan will be in booklet form outlining the procedures and policies of what to do when an incident occurs and what to expect from the responding police agency)
  - b. assist with victimization training
  - c. analysis of raw data supporting the project
  - d. implementation and evaluation of the reporting systems
  - e. Make any necessary changes to Rules and Regulations
  - f. Six month evaluation of project performance indicators

This program emphasizes the need to strengthen the ability and capacity of the police department and local businesses to develop strategies that address their needs.

### **USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

The WVI created an inter-net site and web page with links and e-mail so that both police and local businesses would have a confidential location to make requests and address their needs. An access database was created internally to track the type of cases and the locations that these incidents were occurring. A special investigative worksheet was created so that each officer could attain consistent information for proper assessments. The system for flagging addresses with the 911 center was utilized to promote officer safety with potential violators. Our departmental statistical database was enhanced by the creation of five specific situation found codes for reporting purposes. This helps a reporting officer properly code a report to track workplace violence cases. We additionally purchased two desktop computers with scanners and printers as well as a laptop computer, AV projector, remote and speaker.

### **COST OF THE PROGRAM**

The cost to initiate the program will depend on the size and the scope of the initiative. The initial \$58,675 was dedicated for start up costs including overtime projections as well as a contractual cost for a forensic psychologist to assist in threat assessments and on - scene investigations. Currently there is 1 lieutenant and 2 police officers working the initiative and a third officer is currently in training.

The following is a breakdown for the expended cost for Baltimore County to date:

- \$58,675 allocated funds from a portion of a BTA grant which were categorized in the following manner:
  - . \$10,000 for contractual utilization of mental health experts and psychologists,
  - \$35,000 for overtime,
  - \$3,675 for two desk top PC systems,
  - \$3,200 for a laptop computer,
  - \$6,881 for an AN projector,
  - \$522 for a recorder,
  - . \$200 for a dry erase board,
  - \$39 for a microphone,
  - \$195 for a remote,
  - \$315 for a speaker
  - . \$7,000 obtained from the Baltimore County Police Foundation to train the initial 3 police officers in advanced threat assessments and case management in California in April 2000.

To offset the initial cost and to provide a better flow of information and quality services, the Workplace Violence Coordinators' position was created and married with the Hostage Negotiations Commanders' position, which also encompasses the supervision of the Mobile Emergency Crisis Response Teams. Two of the three officers are assigned to the Business Patrol Initiative (BPI) in Precinct 7. The third officer has been temporarily assigned from the Community Outreach Team to Headquarters to assist the commander and investigate Workplace Violence cases.

**Total cost** expended to date to implement the program is **\$53,671**.

## **RESULTS/SUCCESS OF THE PROGRAM**

- We have assessed 67 serious cases throughout the county including government employees and school student incidents
- Presented this training in seven workshops throughout the state of Maryland and Baltimore County
- Presented to five professional conferences in the state of Maryland, Virginia, and the Ohio Attorney General's office. We are slated to present to the California District Attorneys conference in March 2001
- 27 firearms were seized
- Because of the uniqueness of this approach, a police agency offering training, free of charge to private industry, numerous requests are coming in from across the country asking about our program
- Five Situation Found Codes have been created:  
Identified to date are 1,552 assaults, 12 serious domestics, 11 stalkings, 47 harassments
- Access database created
- Workplace Violence case protocol created (departmentally and County agencies)
- We have created a county-wide Workplace Violence prevention committee
- Developed a time line for the creation and implementation of the county Workplace Violence policy and training to begin September 2001
- Two television appearances and one radio appearance
- Surveyed over 500 businesses in the targeted pilot area with 60% requesting our assistance



- Obtained a scholarship from a private industry (Gavin de Becker Corporation) to provide for training
- Held meetings with the Mid-Atlantic Region Community Policing Institute to assist in designing manuals and handouts
- . Met with representatives with the House of Ruth in Baltimore City to share research and training aspects in domestic violence
- Worked with the Baltimore County States Attorneys' office to have an assistant states attorney assigned to review and prosecute Workplace Violence cases

The program fosters a safer work environment for both county residents and out of county employees. The Baltimore County police department recognized the need for these services and took a proactive stance to provide for a better quality of life for the citizens of this county and other residents of Maryland and Pennsylvania who commute to Baltimore County. This program has received a lot of positive comments from other jurisdictions in the state of Maryland and across the country. The program expanded rapidly and implemented county wide prior to the 2003 objective.

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