



2016 Pinellas County Domestic Violence Statistics Report

Created by the Statistics Committee as part of the Pinellas County Domestic Violence Task Force

Domestic violence is a pattern of controlling behaviors that one intimate partner uses to gain power over the other. It includes the crimes of assault, battering, stalking, strangulation, kidnapping, sexual battery, and homicide. Domestic violence occurs in all economic and social backgrounds. Even a victim leaving the abuser does not stop the abuse. Therefore, it is critical that three criminal justice principles be applied to reduce it.

The first principle is for law enforcement to follow the Pinellas Police Standards Council's preferred arrest policy, to properly and thoroughly investigate every case of domestic violence, and to make an arrest when probable cause is found.

Second, the State Attorney's Office is, according to FL statute 741.290, to follow a pro-prosecution policy, conduct a thorough review of the case, and prosecute those with sufficient evidence regardless of the victim's lack of cooperation or her objections.

Third, the judiciary must order defendants into court approved Batterers Intervention Programs (BIP) which hold offenders accountable for their violence, as well as order swift and severe sanctions when a defendant fails to abide by judicial court orders. These combined actions will reduce recidivism and save lives.

In order to evaluate these three areas within the Pinellas County criminal justice system, statistics from odyssey (the local case management software) were analyzed by the Pinellas County Domestic Violence Task Force. From this analysis, recommendations were formulated. These recommendations are offered as suggestions to improve these three areas of the criminal justice system and are available upon request.



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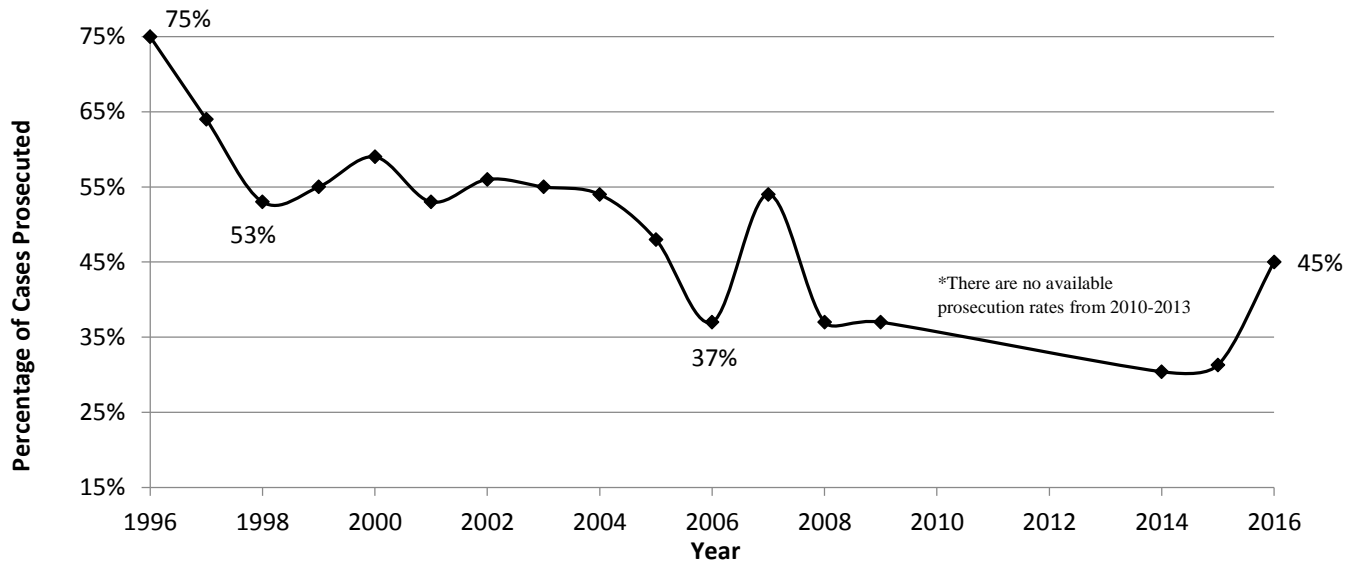
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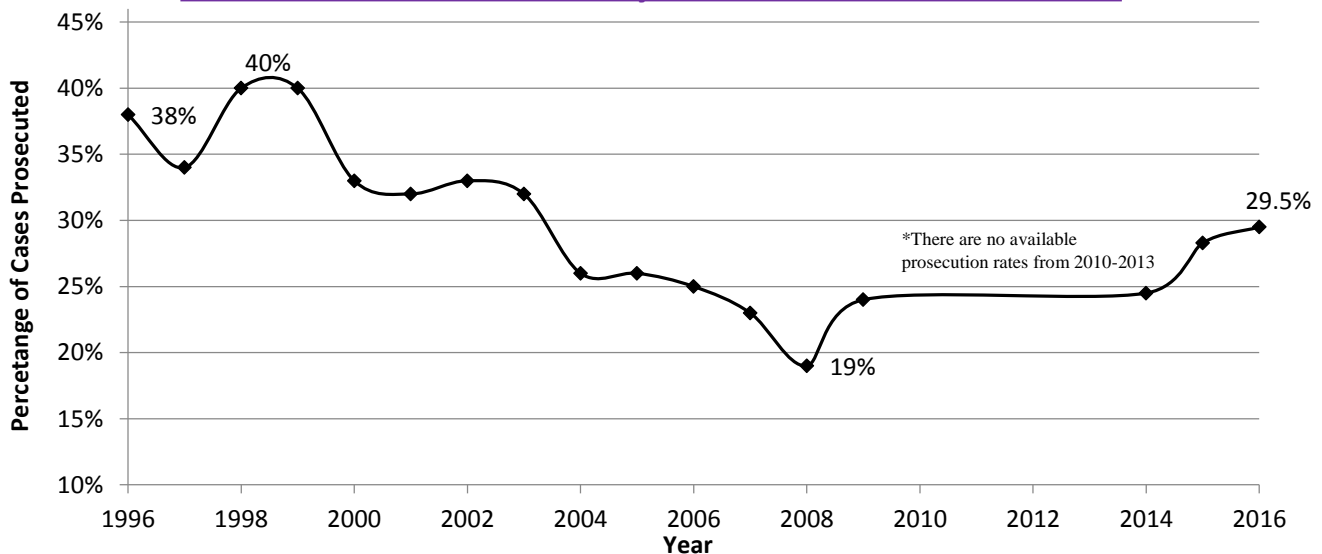
- Prosecution rates for misdemeanor and felony arrested domestic violence cases were undergoing a **declining trend for nearly 20 years** from 1996 until 2014. Since then, the prosecution rate has been on the rise.

Prosecution Rates for Misdemeanor Arrested Domestic Violence



- **Misdemeanor domestic violence prosecution offers the earliest and best opportunity to hold perpetrators accountable before their violence escalates to the potentially deadly felony level.** When the State Attorney formed the Misdemeanor Domestic Violence unit in 1996, prosecutions achieved their **highest rate of 75%** and in 2016, the rate was **45%**.

Prosecution Rates for Felony Arrested Domestic Violence

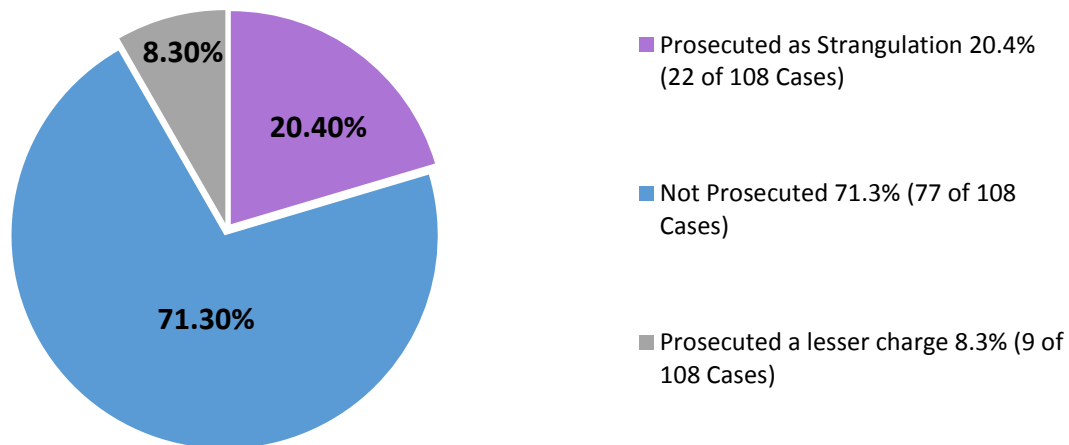


- **Felony cases are the most egregious, which include strangulation, attempted murder, battery on a pregnant woman, use of weapons, and perpetrators with a prior conviction of a battery; yet the prosecution rate is significantly lower than misdemeanor arrested domestic violence cases.**
- In 2016, the prosecution rate for felony arrested domestic violence cases was 29.5%.
- The prosecution rate for felony arrested cases has been less than 40% since 1999.

Prosecution Rates for Arrested Domestic Violence Strangulation Cases

- Strangulation cases are especially important to review because strangulation is one of the most lethal forms of domestic violence.
- Studies by Glass et al. 2008 have shown that victims of strangulation are **800% more likely to become victims of homicide**.
- Strangulation prosecution rates were collected by a member of Pinellas County Domestic Violence Task Force. The latest numbers that we have are January through June 2016.

2016 Strangulation Prosecution (Jan- June)



A total of 7 defendants out of 31 (22.6%) prosecuted strangulation cases were court ordered to attend Batterers Intervention Program (BIP).

Law Enforcement

Pinellas County has a county-wide Preferred Arrest Policy that was passed in 1987 by the Pinellas Police Standards Council.

It is difficult to have a successful prosecution without an arrest. Arrested cases have higher prosecution rates. From 1996 until 2004, when misdemeanor arrest prosecution rates were over 50%, arrested cases were prosecuted at a rate 40% higher than non-arrested cases.

Between 2004 and 2016, law enforcement agencies made improvements on domestic violence arrests where probable cause exists:

- 63% in 2004 to 76% in 2008
- 82% in 2009
- 89% in 2015 and 2016

Domestic Related Calls for Service by Law Enforcement Agency 2016

Despite being an underreported crime, the number of domestic related calls for service in Pinellas County is staggering. Although it often happens behind closed doors, it is impacting communities large and small.

Belleair	21
Clearwater	1016
Gulfport	109
Indian Shores	110
Kenneth City	81
Largo	2115
Pinellas Park	1613
Sheriff's Office	6510
St. Petersburg	9132
Tarpon Spring	278
Treasure Island	184
TOTAL	21,169**

****The total number of domestic related calls for service according to all law enforcement agencies in the county was 21,169. However, agencies may have used different criteria in reporting these numbers.**

Batterers Intervention Program (BIP) and the Courts

Criminal Court and the Batterers Intervention Program (BIP)

The Pinellas County Domestic Violence Task Force (PCDVTF) has repeatedly attempted to obtain the number of batterers intervention program (BIP) referrals from criminal court domestic violence cases. To date, we have been unsuccessful. There is no standardized, consistent, nor reliable method of gathering the information nor of pulling it from the available data bases.

The PCDVTF has begun the arduous process of gathering the information from the data base odyssey. Below is the data we have gathered.

Domestic Battery/Assault Statistics Prosecution and BIP

	Total Cases	Number of Filed Cases	BIP Ordered	Percentage of filed cases who were ordered BIP
January 2016 Misdemeanor battery/assault cases	184	52	16	30.77%
February 2016 Misdemeanor* battery/assault cases	143	37	16	43.24%
January 2016 Felony battery/assault cases	84	19	1	5.26%
February 2016 Felony** battery/assault cases	83	19	1	5.26%

* One of the BIP ordered was a shorter length of 12 weeks

** Three February felony cases are still open, therefore are not included

Below are the limited statistics available on criminal courts ordering BIP for misdemeanor domestic violence cases. Felony statistics were not available.

- 336 people accepted into the Domestic Violence Diversion Program (DVP) during the calendar year of 2016
 - 229 (68.2%) people were accepted in and ordered to BIP for 26 weeks
 - 107 (31.8%) were ordered Anger Management

Civil Court Injunctions and Batterers Intervention Program (BIP)

Batterers are rarely ordered to BIP in civil injunction hearings. In fact, the number of batterers ordered to BIP from final injunctions hearings remains in the **low teens, 11%, 14%, 11%**.

- From July to December 31, 2014, of the 583 Domestic Violence Final Injunctions for Protection granted, judges ordered **11%** of those batterers to BIP.
- In 2015, of 1,014 Domestic Violence Final Injunctions for Protection granted, judges ordered **14%** of those batterers to BIP.
- In **2016**, of 911 Domestic Violence Final Injunctions for Protection granted, judges ordered **11%** of those batterers to BIP.

Pinellas Fatality Review Report and BIP

For the last 16 years, the Pinellas Fatality Review Team reviewed 145 domestic violence homicides and near fatalities. Of the cases, 59 were involved in the criminal justice system for DV charges and 18 additional cases received court ordered DV civil injunctions, making a total 77 cases involved in the justice system. Of these 77 cases, the judges ordered **BIP** in 15 cases which is **19%** of them. That means that judges did **NOT order BIP in 81%** of the cases that nearly or did result in homicides.