

QUALITATIVE  
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# LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DURING COVID-19



“911 CAN BE YOUR LAST RESORT FOR  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE,  
AND IF YOU HAVEN’T HAD TIME OR SPACE TO  
CALL OTHER AGENCIES TO GET HELP,  
YOU’RE REALLY STUCK CALLING 911 WHEN  
THINGS GET BAD.”

– CITY POLICE OFFICER, HENNEPIN COUNTY



## RESEARCH PROJECT PREMISE

- Agency Call Data
- Accessibility Questions
- 911 Calls
  - Familiarity
  - Still operating
  - Severity
  - Who calls the police?

*If a victim could not find a safe space away from the perpetrator during Stay at Home orders, would they have been able to call an advocate?*

*Did victims know that advocacy organizations were still operating, while much of the state closed down?*

*Did first-time victims know who to call?*

# RESEARCH PROJECT PREMISE

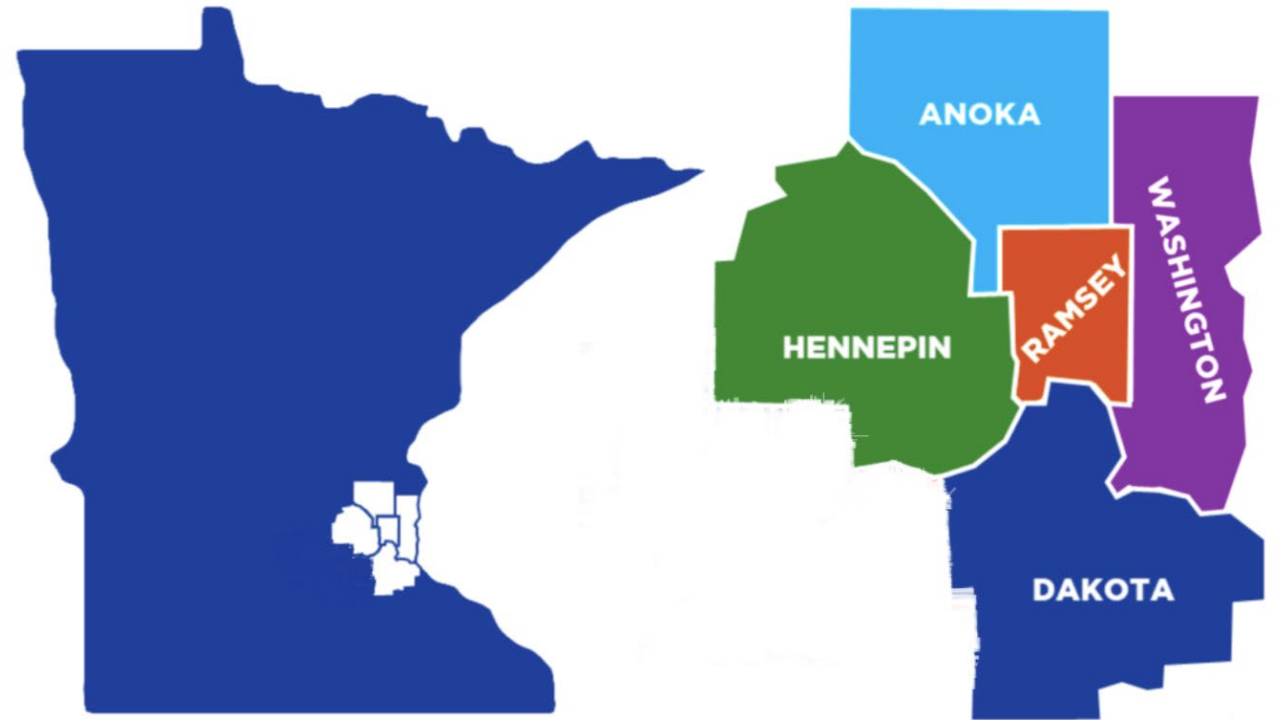
- Survey analysis
- Questions:
  - Officer experience
  - Police protocols

**Are you experiencing any issues working with other stakeholders? (Law Enforcement) / Are you witnessing/experiencing issues with law enforcement? (Yes)**

<b>Total</b>	24
<b>Greater Minnesota</b>	14
<b>Twin Cities Metro (TCM)</b>	10
<b>Culturally-specific</b>	6
<b>TCM Culturally-specific</b>	4
<b>Native American-serving</b>	3

# METHODOLOGY

- **Location: 5-county Twin Cities metro**
- **Sampling**
  - 360 Communities (Dakota County)
  - Alexandra House (Anoka County)
  - Cornerstone (Hennepin County)
  - Ramsey County SOS Services (Ramsey County)
  - Tubman (Hennepin and Ramsey Counties)
  - Cold-emailing
  - Snowballing



# METHODOLOGY II

- 27 interviews total

- **By County:**

- Anoka - 5
- Dakota - 6
- Hennepin - 5
- Ramsey - 7
- Washington - 4

Patrol Officer	Detective/ Investigator	Community Affairs Officer	Victim Advocate	Case Liaison	Probation Officer	Department Analyst
2	7	1	1	1	1	1

Sheriff	Chief	Captain	Lieutenant	Sergeant	Commander	Total
1	3	3	2	3	1	27

# FINDINGS:TRENDS

- **Domestic violence calls, cases, bookings:**

- Increase: 10
- No change: 13
- Decrease: 4

- **OFP/HRO/DANCO violations:**

- Increase: 7
- No change: 20
- Decrease: 0

- **Severity:**

- Increase: 8

*“We saw a dramatic decrease in cases coming in, but we saw an increase in volatility of the cases that were coming in. Heinous crimes were off the charts. There were less cases, but the cases that were coming in were really aggravated.”*

*– Shane Husarik, Detective  
Brooklyn Park PD, Hennepin County*

## FINDINGS: PROTOCOLS

- Arrest protocols for violent crimes have not changed
- Arrest protocols for OFP/HRO/DANCO violations have not changed
- Addition of PPE protocol
- Adaptations given through staff meetings or internal emails

*“Our response to domestics and OFPs and HROs are the only things that haven’t changed. It’s almost like COVID doesn’t exist except for PPE.”*

*– Matt Carlson, Patrol Officer  
Lino Lakes PD, Anoka County*



## FINDINGS: PROTOCOLS II

- What's working:
  - Effectiveness of state mandates
  - Lethality assessment protocols
- For consideration:
  - Intersection of law enforcement, court systems, and jail systems

*“With domestics we don’t have much discretion – if there’s a physical sign of injury, he/she must make an arrest. For a lot of other crimes, we’re not booking if we don’t have to, but with domestics we don’t have a choice or discretion.”*

*– Sheriff Tim Leslie, Dakota County*

# POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- **Are adaptations needed for the following systems?**
  - Law enforcement response: 0
  - Court systems: 12
  - Jail systems: 5
  - No changes: 3

*“The jails and prosecutors need to become more victim-centered, and more concerned with protecting victims from violators than they are right now. It seems to me like the victim gets forgotten in the wash of the whole thing – you can justify not keeping people in jail because the victim part gets forgotten.”*

*– Jeremy Hellpap, Investigator  
Mounds View PD, Ramsey County*

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS II

- **Short term: Increase communication**
  - Between agencies
  - To the public
- **Long term: Increase accessibility**
  - Increased communication
  - Community engagement by police officers
  - Call centers
- **Long term: Address socioeconomic disparities**
  - Financial stress
  - Mental health needs
  - Substance abuse

*“When there are communication relationships between law enforcement, the courts, and domestic abuse advocates – when those three systems hold each other accountable – there is less room for that discretion.”*

*– Jesse Mollner, Commander  
St. Paul PD, Ramsey County*



QUESTIONS?