The Texas Battering Intervention and Prevention Project

FY 2007

Annual Report

Prepared by the Texas Council on Family Violence
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Family violence is a pervasive issue that affects people of all economic and social backgrounds, and has repercussions for employers, health care providers and others. Battering Intervention and Prevention Programs (BIPPs) are an important part of ending this violence.

Texas’ 27 state-funded BIPPs served nearly 6,000 participants in FY07. The programs focus on batterers’ capacity to change, as well as holding batterers accountable for their behavior. Most BIPP attendees are mandated to attend by systems such as probation or parole.

BIPPs are one service among many that must work together to end family violence. BIPPs coordinate efforts with other community agencies by conducting trainings, participating in coalitions and working directly with local family violence shelters, law enforcement, district attorneys, probation and parole.

BIPPs are extremely cost-effective, with the state spending only $157 per offender in FY07. Currently, with state funding divided among 27 BIPPs, each BIPP receives an average of one quarter of its operating costs in state funds. In Texas, BIPPs that receive state funding are regularly audited to ensure that they are in compliance with regulations.

Each BIPP is required to submit a monthly report detailing participants served. TCFV has analyzed this data and presents three main areas of interest in this report:

1. Enrollment and Completion Rates: Approximately half of all batterers referred by probation and parole actually enrolled in a program. This could be due to duplicate referrals (i.e., two programs receive information saying that the same offender will enroll, but the offender will only enroll in one of those programs), or to lack of resources in probation and parole departments to ensure that batterers attend. In addition, only slightly more than half of participants who enroll complete the program. Completion is vital to getting the full benefit of the course.

2. Women in BIPPs: Nearly 10% of participants were women, though the number of women enrolled varies considerably in different programs. Research regarding rates of abuse by women against men indicates that women are overrepresented in BIPPs. Even women who have been appropriately referred to a BIPP may not get the benefit they need from the program, since the courses are designed specifically for men.

3. Ethnicity of Participants: Latino/Hispanic and African American populations are overrepresented in BIPPs, compared with the Texas population as a whole. Ethnicity of BIPP participants is consistent, however, with arrest rates.

TCFV recommends further analysis and study of each of the above areas.

BIPPs receive training and technical assistance from the Texas Council on Family Violence, which provides these services through a contract with the Community Justice Assistance Division of the Texas Criminal Justice Department.

Nationwide, Texas is one of only a few states that provides both funding for BIPPs and monitoring to ensure quality services. In this way, Texas is a model for a coordinated community response to ending family violence.
INTRODUCTION

In 2006, there were 186,868 recorded incidents of family violence in Texas\(^1\) and 120 women were killed by their intimate partners.\(^2\)

The impact of family violence reaches beyond emotional and physical injury to the victim. It places burdens on hospitals in emergency room visits and employers in lost time and productivity. It harms children both physically and psychologically.

Battering Intervention and Prevention Programs (BIPPs) are a crucial aspect of ending this violence. Texas is in many ways a model for how these programs can effectively be connected to the array of services necessary to keep victims safe and prevent further violence.

Although BIPPs are closely linked with the criminal justice system and provide direct services to perpetrators, they are also services that directly benefit victims. BIPPs work with victims by phone to safety plan and provide them with information about whether their batterer has completed the BIPP course. They also protect victims and help prevent future victimization by teaching batterers to live a non-violent lifestyle.

At the same time, ending family violence requires multiple types and levels of services, as well as prevention and education efforts. BIPPs and other agencies, including family violence shelters, courts, probation, parole and law enforcement, must work together to stop violence in Texas communities.

This report focuses on the 27 Texas state-funded BIPPs, analyzing the work they have done in Fiscal Year 2007 (September 1, 2006 to August 31, 2007). During this time, Texas’ 27 state-funded BIPPs served:

- **5,860** New Participants
- **447** Readmitted Participants
- **Totaling 199,582** Participant Hours

Please also note that although this report uses the gender-neutral terms “batterer” and “victim,” 90% of participants in BIPPs are men, and the current curricula are designed for men who abuse women.

WHAT IS FAMILY VIOLENCE? WHY DO MEN BATTER? WHY DO VICTIMS STAY?

Family violence can involve threats, forced isolation, pushing, punching, slapping, choking, sexual assault and assault with weapons. It is rarely a one-time occurrence and usually escalates in frequency and severity over time.

Battering is a choice made by the batterer in order to gain power and control over the victim. While circumstances such as childhood trauma, alcoholism or drug abuse may be factors in abuse, they are not the cause of abuse. Likewise, lack of anger management does not cause abuse. Batterers manage anger in ways that are effective for them, directing their anger only at their victim, and not at other people.\(^3\)

“Why didn’t she leave?” is a common question concerning family violence and it is based on the false assumption that leaving always means safety.

Victims of family violence often remain in abusive relationships because of fear—fear of being killed, fear for the safety of their children, and fear of homelessness. Often the batterer is a parent and any decision to take children away from one of their parents is difficult. Sometimes religious or cultural values pressure a woman to keep the family together at all costs.

Batterers often isolate victims by discouraging or preventing them from maintaining relationships with family and friends, as well as preventing them from accessing community resources. This leaves victims without the support they need to leave.\(^4\)

Batterers may also maintain control over household finances, not allowing the victim access to money.

However, the reality of domestic violence homicides, which often occur after a victim has left her abuser, means that even if a victim can leave, leaving doesn’t always mean safety.\(^5\)
The Texas Family Code, § 71.004, defines family violence as:

(1) an act by a member of a family or household against another member of the family or household that is intended to result in physical harm, bodily injury, assault, or sexual assault or that is a threat that reasonably places the member in fear of imminent physical harm, bodily injury, assault, or sexual assault, but does not include defensive measures to protect oneself;

(2) abuse, as that term is defined by Sections 261.001(1)(C), (E), and (G), by a member of a family or household toward a child of the family or household; or

(3) dating violence, as that term is defined by Section 71.0021.

HOW BIPPs END VIOLENCE

BIPPs provide Texas communities with high-quality, specialized services that increase victim safety and let batterers know that society and the community will not tolerate their violence.

BIPP offer an alternative to incarceration for family violence offenders. The goal of BIPP is to hold batterers accountable for their battering and to teach them the fundamentals of leading a non-violent lifestyle.

Batterers typically defend their violence by denying, minimizing, blaming, justifying, and rationalizing their behavior. As a result, they often appear logical and rational and can be convincing about their innocence. However, battering involves choices by batterers. Batterers must choose to be non-violent and non-abusive in order to ensure the safety of their victims/partners.

BIPP focuses on ending violence and abuse and on the batterer’s capacity to change. During group sessions, facilititors confront batterers’ avoidance of responsibility for their battering. Programs also present techniques for avoiding violence and becoming aware of abusive behavior patterns, work to change batterers’ beliefs and attitudes about intimate relationships, and explain the effects of family violence on children.

Research has shown that battering intervention programs are successful over a period of time in reducing batterers’ violence towards their partners. Although studies exist that find that BIPP have no effect, these have been shown to have serious methodological flaws.

IMPORTANCE OF COORDINATED COMMUNITY RESPONSE

Battering intervention and prevention programs are one vital link of a coordinated community response to ending family violence, along with victim services such as shelter and legal assistance and the criminal justice system.

In order to function within this network of services, BIPP work regularly with the criminal justice system and domestic violence service providers.

Nearly 85% of BIPP participants in FY07 were mandated to attend the program by parole, probation, and courts. BIPP work with these systems by notifying them whether or not the batterer completed the program.

State-funded BIPP programs are also required to conduct coordination of activities with local family violence programs, including providing information for family violence victims about BIPP program services, philosophy, and program content and limitations. All but 4 of the 27 state-funded BIPPs are operated by family violence programs. Those four coordinate with separate family violence service providers.

BIPP are also required to collaborate with substance abuse programs. While substance abuse is not a cause of family violence, it can be an exacerbating factor. The likelihood of success of the battering intervention program increases if substance abuse issues are treated simultaneously.

In order to educate other agencies and systems about the dynamics of family violence and the services provided by BIPP, programs regularly provide training to courts, law enforcement, parole and others. This helps ensure that appropriate referrals are made to BIPP. In FY 2007, BIPP programs conducted 201 trainings totaling 346.25 hours.

Studies have shown that recidivism rates for family violence offenders are reduced when multiple agencies throughout a community work together to provide services for victims and batterers.
BIPP FUNDING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In FY 2007, Texas spent approximately $157 on each offender who participated in a state-funded BIPP. This is remarkably cost-effective for the services provided to offenders, victims and the community. The cost is also significantly less than the five thousand dollars that the State would have spent to keep these offenders incarcerated for the equivalent length of a BIPP course (18 weeks).11

The total annual appropriation for the BIPP project for FY 2007 was $1.25 million. Of this amount, legislation mandates that 6% is allocated for administration costs, although the Community Justice Assistance Division of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (hereafter referred to as CJAD), which manages the state-funded BIPPs, forwards this funding to the programs. Another 14% is allocated to a non-profit (the Texas Council on Family Violence) via a contract with CJAD and 3% is allocated to the Community Educational Campaign (also a contract with the Texas Council on Family Violence).12 The remaining 77% is allocated to BIPP programs, so that including the 6% forwarded by CJAD, BIPP programs receive 83% of the allocated funds.

State funding represents an average of less than 25% of the total cost to run a BIPP. The remainder of the average BIPP budget is raised primarily through fees that batterers pay to enroll in the program (usually done on a sliding scale based on ability to pay), and a portion is also raised through grants and other private funding.
However, the importance of state funding goes beyond the direct services being supported. Programs that receive state funding are required to follow the *BIPP Guidelines* and are audited to ensure that they are in compliance. For courts, probation and other systems, this means that they can have confidence in the high quality of a state-funded BIPP program.

The audits of BIPPs are conducted by TCFV under its contract with CJAD. Each program is audited biannually. These detailed audits include a review of files and observation of group sessions. The *BIPP Guidelines* that audits are based on were created by CJAD in consultation with the Texas Council on Family Violence.

The 80th Texas Legislature (in 2007) passed a new law that judges may only refer offenders to accredited BIPP programs. The process for accreditation is currently being developed. The new law takes effect in September 2008 with exceptions and will be completely implemented in September 2009.

**BIPP ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR FY 2007**

Throughout fiscal year 2007, BIPPs provided the following services:

- Conducted **6,658** intake sessions totaling **9,973** participant hours.
- Provided **1,896** orientation sessions to **4,544** batterers totaling **7,577** participant hours.
- Provided **11,235** group sessions totaling **180,803** participant hours.
- Provided **1,141** individual sessions to **884** batterers totaling **1,229** participant hours.

Victim safety is a critical consideration in all BIPPs. Programs are required by CJAD BIPP Guidelines to contact victims to notify them when a batterer enters and exits a program, and explain what to expect as a result of the batterer receiving treatment. In addition to the two mandated victim contacts per offender, BIPPs made **3,188** additional victim contacts in FY 2007 to conduct safety planning with victims.

In addition to providing the services listed above, BIPPs also conducted a number of other activities including working with other community organizations and the media.

Following are some examples of these types of activities. This is not a comprehensive list—it is intended as a sampling of how BIPPs participate in their communities.

**Coordinating with Other Agencies**

The Bastrop BIPP worked to improve the flow of information between the BIPP and local law enforcement. BIPP staff trained law enforcement on information that officers could include in an incident report that would later be useful to the BIPP. This facilitates the intake process with new BIPP participants.

The Sherman BIPP worked with their local district attorney and probation to make a new requirement that offenders must register with BIPP within 60 days of being required by the court to attend. This has alleviated the problem of offenders waiting until the end of their probation period to register with the BIPP, and then not having enough time to complete the course.

The Perryton BIPP worked with local parole, probation and courts to educate them about the importance of BIPP. Those systems are all now more aware of how BIPPs can help hold batterers accountable.

The BIPP in Stafford has worked with local judges to ensure that they understand the importance of BIPPs. The judges are now more willing to send offenders to jail if they stop participating in the BIPP classes. This has made a difference in bringing offenders back who had dropped out of the program.

**Conferences and Trainings**

In addition to the trainings mentioned in the section above, many programs conducted additional trainings.

Bastrop co-sponsored a law enforcement conference, titled “Child Victims: Interventions and Investigations,” attended by 50 people from various counties surrounding Bastrop as well as other counties from across the state. Denton sponsored a conference entitled “Breaking the Silence” about the effects of domestic violence on children. Over 120 participants were in attendance.

**Prevention and Public Awareness**
Several programs regularly attended events such as health fairs to distribute information about domestic violence. Brownsville attended a “Victims’ Expo” at the county courthouse to provide information. Killeen gave a presentation on domestic violence issues at a local military base. Other BIPPs gave presentations at civic clubs, medical centers, churches, and other locations (including Perryton, Plano and San Antonio). Victoria provided a presentation for 100 inmates on the dynamics of domestic violence.

Several programs participated in local events. Victoria participated in an Angel Tree ceremony honoring victims of crime and collaborated with other agencies to honor victims and survivors with a memorial ceremony for National Crime Victim’s Rights Week. Brownsville staff and BIPP participants took part in a Sexual Abuse Walk. Men from the BIPP advisory council in Garland marched in the local Labor Day parade with a banner for the BIPP and attended a candlelight vigil.

A number of BIPPs regularly work with local media to inform the community about domestic violence and battering intervention, including San Antonio, Brownsville, Garland and Perryton.

**ANALYSIS OF PARTICIPANTS SERVED BY BIPPS**

BIPPs are required to complete monthly reports that detail information about their participants. TCFV collects and compiles this information.

In looking at this data for FY 2007, three main areas stood out: enrollment and completion rates, women in BIPPs and ethnicity of BIPP participants.

**BIPP Participant Enrollment and Completion**

Ensuring that offenders who are referred to BIPPs enroll and complete the course requires the cooperation of the BIPP and the referring agency.

As mentioned above, nearly 85% of participants in FY 2007 were mandated to attend the BIPP program by a court or other source. Another 6% were referred by Child Protective Services, which cannot mandate BIPP attendance, but can make it a condition of visitation or custody rights. The high percentage of mandatory participants is consistent with prior years as well as with information in research studies of BIPPs.\(^\text{13}\) Very few batterers enroll in a program of their own accord.

BIPPs are notified of these mandated participants either by the referral source (court, probation, etc.) or by the participant. However, the number of referrals received in FY 2007 was far greater than the number of participants who enrolled.

The chart below depicts the difference between referrals and enrollment for probation and parole.

There are a number of possible explanations for this discrepancy. Some courts or other systems may send a list of offenders mandated to attend a BIPP to more than one BIPP program, causing the referral to be counted twice. Alternately, an offender may never enroll.

In order to enforce enrollment where it is mandated, BIPPs must notify referral sources of offenders who do not enroll. The probation or parole officer must then follow up with the offender. This is not always easy, since the officers often carry a high caseload. TCFV
recommends further study of how enrollment can be enforced without overburdening criminal justice systems.

Finally, not all batterers who enroll in a program complete the entire course. The chart below depicts average completion rates for all BIPPs.

Completion of the entire course of a BIPP program is essential, not only so that batterers receive the full content of the program, but also because, as an alternative to incarceration, ensuring that a batterer completes the entire program is part of holding the offender accountable.

TCFV has noticed a trend over a number of years that most women referred to Texas BIPPs are not batterers, and in fact, many are family violence victims that were arrested for assault after defending themselves from their batterers.

A number of research studies, as well as crime statistics reports, have examined how often women batter men. Statistics show that women are far more likely to be injured or even killed by an intimate partner than men. Well-designed research studies that take into account factors such as women defending themselves against violence and the context in which battering occurs, find that men are much more likely to perpetrate this type of violence than women. For example, researcher Michael P. Johnson has examined violence that occurs in a context where the batterer creates fear and intimidation over a period of time—what Johnson labels “intimate terrorism.” In such situations, 97% of the batterers are male.

TCFV recommends further research regarding the women who are being referred to Texas BIPPs, and whether these programs are actually the most appropriate referral for them.

A secondary concern is that in the few cases where women may be appropriately referred to a BIPP, the curricula in these programs are designed for men. TCFV staff members’ collective experience has been that the dynamics of abuse by a female batterer are very different from those of male batterers. The Texas BIPP guidelines were created specifically for male to female abuse. The question of whether guidelines should be developed for women should be considered in the future.
Participant Race/Ethnicity
The percent of BIPP participants by race differs substantially from the general population. Latino/Hispanic and African American participants are overrepresented and white participants are underrepresented.

This is consistent with other data showing that both arrest rates are disproportionately high for Latino/Hispanic and African American people. Since most BIPP participants are referred by the criminal justice system, it is not surprising that the same holds true for BIPPs.

It is also worth noting that the Latino/Hispanic and African American populations experience far greater rates of poverty than the white population, and that the disparities in the criminal justice system could be linked to economic status as well as to race.

CONTACTS WITH TCFV
The Texas Council on Family Violence has two contracts with CJAD to provide services and support to BIPPs. One contract includes training, technical assistance, and support to CJAD, and the other includes awareness and prevention activities.

Technical Assistance
In FY 2007, TCFV answered over 3,500 requests for technical assistance, of which approximately 500 were funded by CJAD. TCFV also provides technical assistance and consults with CJAD on a regular basis.

The chart below depicts the number of requests funded by CJAD, organized by type of caller.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caller Type</th>
<th>Number of Requests</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIPP</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non State Funded BIPP</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing program</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Law Enforcement</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal system</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Violence Service Provider</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batterer</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Organization</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other individual</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>512</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Trainings
**Dedication:** In FY 2007, TCFV implemented its 40-hour Dedication training for new BIPP group facilitators, which was developed using CJAD funding. After four years of development, pilot testing and revisions, the entire training was presented for the first time in FY 2007 for 18 participants. In order to make the time commitment more manageable, the training was held in four parts (two in Austin, one in San Antonio and one in Dallas). Programs can meet BIPP Guideline requirements for new staff training by sending staff to Dedication. The training received excellent evaluations.

**New Worker’s Institute:** This annual two-day TCFV training was provided to 81 participants this year. It includes a workshop on the dynamics of battering. The training is open to all new employees in family violence programs, battering intervention programs and other community groups that work with victims or batterers. (Partially funded with BIPP funding.)

**BIPP Statewide Conference:** Convened the fourth annual statewide two-day conference of all state-funded BIPPs. The conference was attended by 95 participants, and included 15 workshops. The two keynote speakers were Ted Bunch, the director of Safe Horizons BIPP in New York City and the co-founder of A Call to Men, and Sarah Buel, a professor at the University of Texas School of Law and family violence advocate. Workshops at the conference were designed to meet the continuing education requirement for tenured BIPP staff.
Evaluation results were excellent. (Partially funded with CJAD funding.)

**Annual Conference:** TCFV held a 3-day statewide conference that was attended by approximately 400 staff from family violence programs, BIPPs, law enforcement, and victim assistance agencies. In addition to BIPP-related workshops being offered, Tony Porter gave the keynote speech “A Call to Men: Ending Violence Against Women.”

**Other Activities**
- Assisted CJAD with review of program applications for state BIPP funding.
- Gathered monthly statistical data from programs, including information about participants served and trainings conducted.
- Distributed information and materials to programs to help them comply with regulations and improve their services.

**Awareness and Prevention**
- On request, spoke about men’s violence against women at public events and trainings.
- Maintained TCFV’s men’s nonviolence web site (www.mensnonviolence.org) and distributed other public awareness activities and materials.
- Collaborated with the Office of the Attorney General of Texas to develop public awareness campaign materials for Fathers Stand Against Domestic Violence, a statewide initiative to encourage fathers to speak out against violence. Developed posters, a pledge card, and other materials. The pledge is also available on TCFV’s Men’s Nonviolence Project web site. The posters were distributed to all BIPP programs.

**TEXAS BIPPS COMPARED TO OTHER STATES**

Approximately 40 states have guidelines that battering intervention programs are required to follow. However, most are not enforced.

Only a small handful of states allocate funding for battering intervention programs. At least one state provides funds for monitoring BIPPs, but does not directly fund the programs.

In a study surveying BIPP guidelines in all states that had them, the researchers found that although nearly 75% of guidelines indicated that programs should be monitored, only a few indicated how this process would happen. Moreover, they found via telephone interviews that most states did not audit programs for compliance with their guidelines.

Texas’ model of funding programs, ensuring they are audited—and beginning soon, providing accreditation for programs that are not state-funded—is a model for other states.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

TCFV recommends the following activities and research be undertaken in the future. All of these are discussed in more detail in the body of the report.
- Analysis regarding how enrollment can be increased for offenders referred to BIPPs by probation and parole.
- Examine why the completion rate for BIPPs is higher in some communities than in others.
- Further study of women in Texas battering intervention programs.
- Evaluation of the need for separate guidelines for women’s battering intervention groups.
- Study of disproportionate representation of Latino and African-American participants in BIPPs.

**CONCLUSION**

Battering Intervention and Prevention Programs are an essential piece in Texas’ effort to end family violence. By working with batterers to teach them how to choose not to be violent, BIPPs help not only batterers, but also victims and communities.

Funding BIPPs is extremely cost-effective compared with incarceration. In addition to supporting programs financially, state funding helps ensure accountability from programs.

By ensuring that BIPPs continue to be supported within a continuum of services and programs that includes the criminal justice system, victim services, and prevention programs, Texas can stop family violence.
Endnotes


2 Based on research conducted by TCFV using public records, including the Texas Department of Public Safety’s *Uniform Crime Report: Supplemental Homicide Report,* media articles and Texas law enforcement agencies.


8 Jackson, Shelly, Lynette Feder, David R. Forde, Robert C. Davis, Christopher D. Maxwell, and Bruce G. Taylor. *Batterer Intervention Programs: Where Do We Go from Here?* U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, June 2003.


11 Based on a cost per day of $42.54 for FY 2006 as given in the Legislative Budget Board report “Current Correctional Population Indicators: Criminal Justice Uniform Cost Report Tables.”

12 Texas Code of Criminal Procedures, Article 42.141

13 See, for example, Healey and Smith: 1.


16 FBI Uniform Crime Reports.

17 U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey.