



Buncombe County
Family Justice Center
A Path to Strength, Safety & Hope



Coordinated Community Response to
Domestic and Sexual Violence
FY18 Annual Report



MANY PARTNERS, ONE LOCATION.





SUPPORTING SURVIVORS

In July 2018, the Buncombe County Family Justice Center (FJC) celebrated two years of providing victim centered and trauma informed support to survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Over 1,000 survivors have walked through our doors for the first time to access services provided by nonprofit partners, law enforcement, health care providers, and government agencies. With the support of these partner agencies, these survivors began their journey of strength, safety and hope.





At the FJC, partner agencies offer counseling, civil legal services, safety planning, sexual assault medical exams, education, and criminal justice support. Onsite Partners include: **Asheville Police Department, Buncombe County Health and Human Services, Buncombe County Sheriff's Office, Buncombe County District Attorney's Office, Helpmate, Mission Health, Mountain Child Advocacy Center, OurVOICE, Pisgah Legal Services, and the YWCA Asheville.**



INTEGRATED, SURVIVOR CENTERED SERVICES

Before the FJC, victims had to navigate a fragmented system to get the help they needed. At the FJC an Intake Specialist who works with Helpmate or OurVOICE meets with clients to listen to their needs and coordinate services. In fiscal year 2018 (FY18):

- **600 people accessed integrated intake services for the first time at the FJC**
- **This is 44% increase over FY17**

INCREASING SAFETY; REDUCING FEAR AND ANXIETY

After meeting with an FJC Intake Specialist:

- **97% of survey respondents indicated that they had a plan to keep themselves safe and they knew what to do if they were in danger.**
- **85% of survey respondents reported a decreased fear and anxiety level.**

In FY18 **61%** of victims accessing integrated intake at the FJC connected with more than one agency in their first visit. Many more survivors sought ongoing support services including counseling, case management, legal assistance, and criminal justice support at the FJC.



SUPPORT SERVICES



MISSION

133 Survivors received forensic medical services provided by Mission Health at the FJC.

HELPMATE

In FY18 Helpmate answered **2,841** hotline calls and served 2,751 unique clients



OUR VOICE

Victims • Outreach • Intervention

OUR VOICE

In FY17 OurVOICE served **564** new clients. In FY18 OurVOICE served **460** new clients at the FJC.

FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER ALLIANCE

The FJC is an Affiliated Center with the National Family Justice Center Alliance.



The FJC is supported by grants from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, and the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission.



ONE SURVIVOR'S STORY

After Chantel (pseudonym) broke up with the man she had been dating for close to three years, he lured her to his home promising he would not be there so she could retrieve what remained of her belongings. Once she arrived, he took her keys from her in the driveway and went into the house. When she followed him asking for her keys back he brutally assaulted her. Chantel went to the Emergency Department at Mission Hospital, and staff there told her about the walk-in services available at the FJC.

The next day, Chantel arrived at the FJC. She met with Helpmate staff who accompanied her to an onsite forensic medical exam onsite. During the medical exam, Chantel shared that she was extremely frightened to file charges because she feared her ex's retaliation.

Chantel decided to engage in counseling, file charges, and to request a Domestic Violence Protective Order. She met with Buncombe County Sheriff's Office Deputies at the FJC and they supported her in filing charges.

At the FJC, she was connected with Pisgah Legal Services who provided support to her in obtaining a Domestic Violence Protective Order. Throughout the criminal court process Chantel had support from Helpmate. The District Attorney's office moved forward with prosecution to start the process of holding her abuser accountable.

Chantel continues to attend counseling through Helpmate and is making progress toward healing. This Christmas, Chantel and her son were able to celebrate together, safe from abuse, with Christmas gifts donated by a local radio station.



ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

Survivors of domestic and sexual violence are publicly sharing their stories of strength and courage in a community art installation called Still Standing. The eNOugh Committee made up of community agencies, survivors, and the Buncombe County Communications Team created life size silhouettes with true stories of hope and healing after domestic violence and sexual assault.



Over 50 local businesses, restaurants, public libraries, schools, and agencies hosted a silhouette to help spread awareness and share a message of hope for those who have experienced violence.



The Still Standing Project engages our community in understanding the experience of domestic and sexual violence and offers power in telling the story of hope. In 2018, the graphic art was honored with First Place in the N.C. City and County Communicators Marketing Tools category.



A Path to Strength, Safety & Hope

SOCIAL WORK
ELEVATOR





Buncombe County
Family Justice Center
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RECEPTION



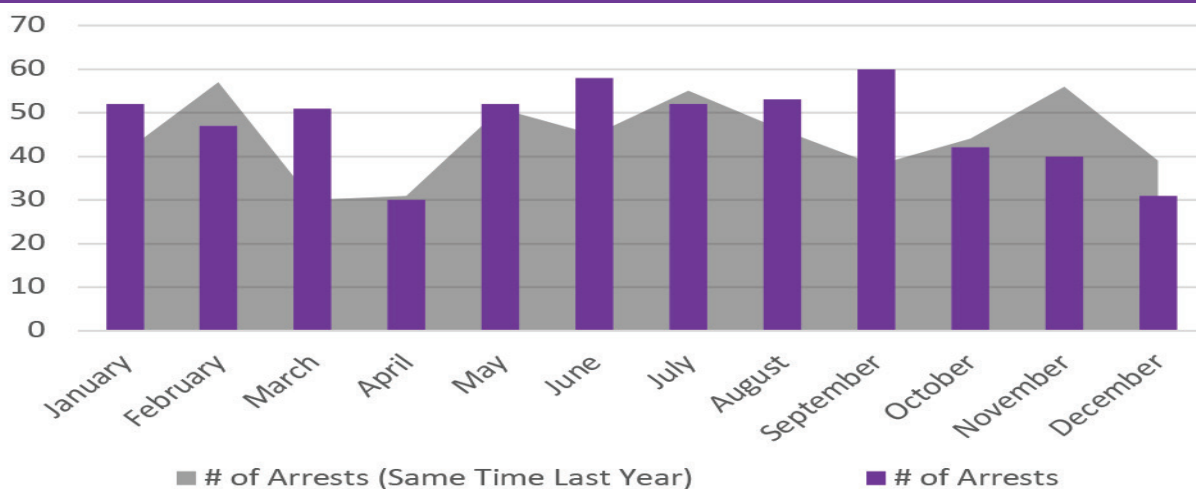


HOLDING OFFENDERS ACCOUNTABLE

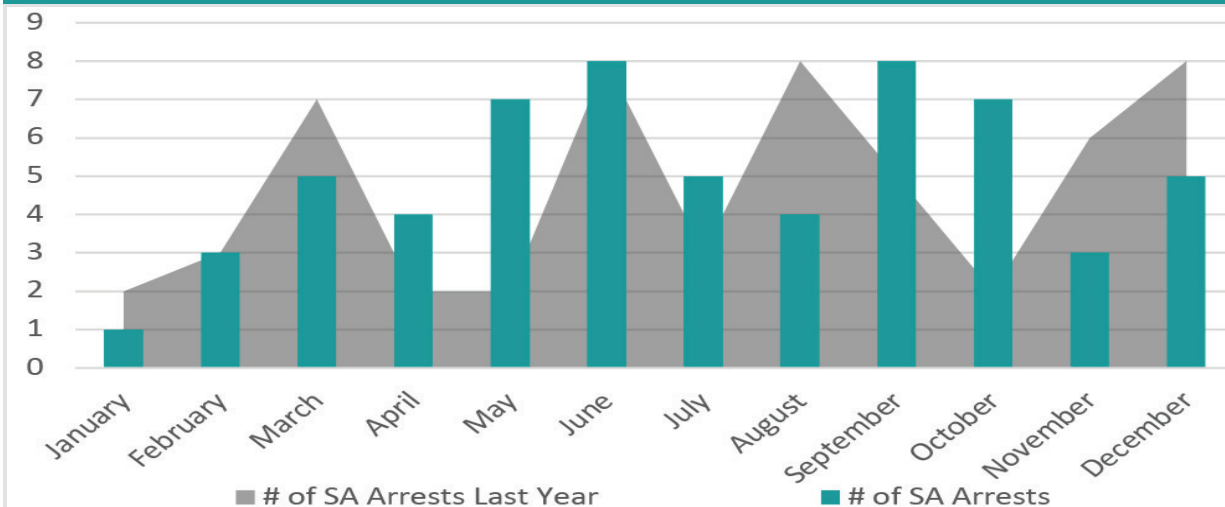
As we prioritize the safety of victims, we have seen an increase in arrests. Arrests for crimes related to intimate partner domestic violence* increased 6% from calendar year 2017 to 2018. Arrests for sexual assault crimes increased 5% during the same time period.

* North Carolina does not have a specific crime of domestic violence. Domestic Violence Intimate Partner arrests are calculated from cases identified by law enforcement officers as domestic violence intimate partner related on incident reports. This number includes arrests from the three law enforcement agencies in Buncombe County that utilize the Record Management System

2017 Domestic Violence: Intimate Partner Arrests



2017 Sexual Assault Arrests



Specialized Domestic Violence Prosecution Unit

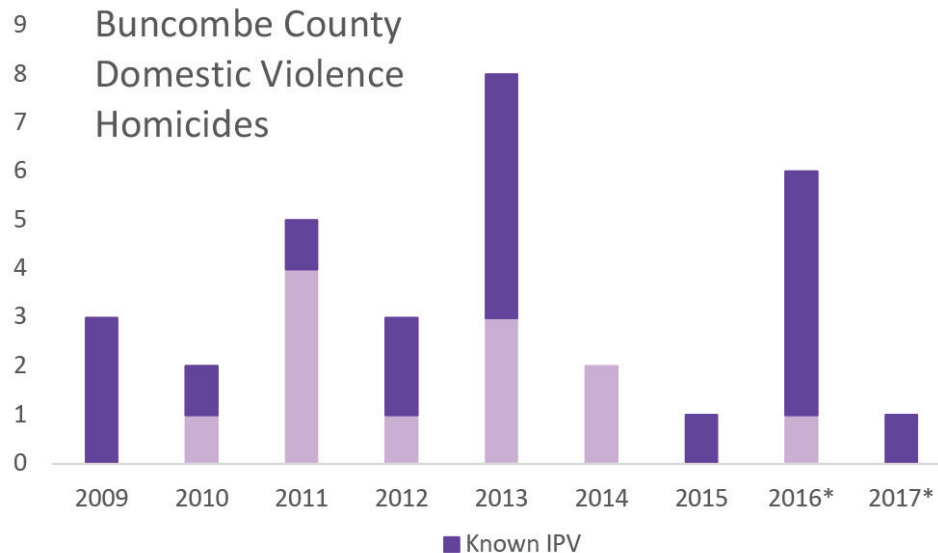
As part of Buncombe County's Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Buncombe County has invested in a Specialized Domestic Violence Prosecution Unit. Buncombe County's investment added an Assistant District Attorney, Legal Assistant, and Investigator to focus on domestic violence related cases. The ADA and Legal Assistant are based at the FJC.





PREVENTING HOMICIDES

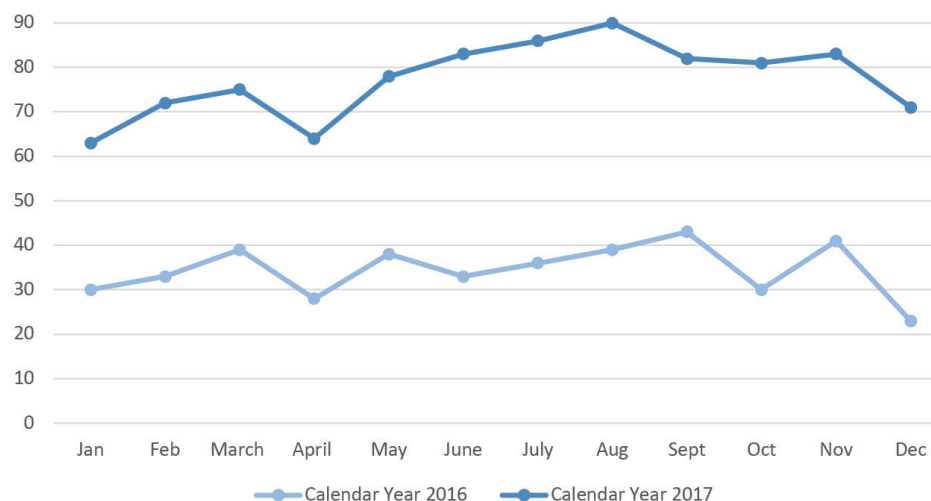
Buncombe County's Coordinated Community Response was created after we lost eight members of our community to domestic violence homicides in 2013. Our coordinated efforts to identify high-risk cases, implement safety resources, and prevent homicides continue.



Lethality Assessment Protocol

Following the national best practice model developed in Maryland, law enforcement in Buncombe County has implemented the Lethality Assessment Protocol. Officers use a risk assessment tool to identify victims at high risk of serious injury or death. If the tool identifies heightened risk, the officer connects the victim immediately to Helpmate who can provide safety planning, support, and shelter.

Lethality Assessment Calls Connected to Helpmate





Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention



Strangulation has been identified as one of the most lethal forms of domestic violence and sexual assault: unconsciousness may occur within seconds and death within minutes. With funding support from the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission, The FJC hosted Gael Strack and the National Training Institute for Strangulation Prevention. This training brought together 50 frontline responders including law enforcement, advocates, attorneys, and health care providers to learn about documenting the nonvisible evidence of strangulation, respond to nonfatal strangulations appropriately, and safety plan to address these high risk cases.

Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team



While our community has worked to reduce domestic violence fatalities, we will not be able to prevent every domestic violence related homicide and Buncombe County lost four people to domestic violence homicides in FY18. We are saddened by these losses and commit to continuing our work to build a community free from domestic violence. As part of this work, we requested designation as a Domestic Violence Fatality Review County by the N.C. General Assembly. In June 2018, Session Law 2018-116 was passed and Buncombe County partners will now work to establish a Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team.



OFFENDER SERVICES

To engage domestic violence offenders in behavior change, Buncombe County invests in offender support services. Through these investments, people using violence in relationships have the opportunity to learn new ways of dealing with conflict.



The SPARC Foundation offers Batterers Intervention Program and Domestic Violence Focused Deterrence. All of these programs include a case management component that supports offenders in accessing stable housing, employment, and education.

Batterers Intervention Program

The SPARC Foundation provides a 26-week Batterers Intervention Program following the Emerge Abuser Education Group curriculum. This curriculum focuses on battering not just as physical violence, but instead as a range of behaviors that often include physical, sexual, psychological, verbal, and economic abuse. In FY18:

- **109 people referred to the program were assessed and enrolled.**
- **43 people successfully completed the 26 week Batterers Intervention Program.**

Domestic Violence Focused Deterrence

The SPARC Foundation and community partners including Probation, Law Enforcement, and the District Attorney's Office are utilizing a modified High Point Domestic Violence Focused Deterrence Model to hold domestic violence offenders accountable and offer them access to supportive services. In FY 18:

- **20 Domestic Violence offenders were notified of the program.**



STATEWIDE LEADERSHIP

North Carolina Attorney General Josh Stein visited the Buncombe County Family Justice center in May 2018 to learn more about the Family Justice Center and the Lethality Assessment Protocol. Since the Buncombe County FJC opened in July of 2016 communities from across North Carolina have toured the Family Justice Center and begun developing Family Justice Centers in their counties. Representatives from the Buncombe County Family Justice Center served on the planning team and presented at workshops for the first North Carolina Statewide Family Justice Center Conference which took place in December 2017. Buncombe County continues to be a state leader in implementing innovative and collaborative programs to address domestic and sexual violence.

