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District Attorney Awarded Smart Prosecution Grant to Combat Repeat Domestic Violence

Data and Research Will Be Used to Better Protect DV Victims

San Diego County District Attorney [Summer Stephan](#) announced today that her office has received a \$484,364 grant from the U.S. Department of Justice for its innovative **Smart Prosecution Initiative**. The grant, which will help prosecutors provide greater protection to victims of domestic violence, comes at the start of Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The initiative uses data and research to identify and prevent repeat domestic violence through deterrence and focused prosecution. The District Attorney's Office is partnering with Deborah Lamm Weisel, a researcher from North Carolina Central University, who has a track record of working with law enforcement to reduce domestic violence across the country.

On average, about 17,000 domestic violence incidents in San Diego County are reported to police and law enforcement agencies each year. Research shows that repeat offenders drive up the number of domestic violence cases across the county.

“By enhancing our ability to leverage data and focusing on people who are repeatedly involved in domestic violence incidents, we can be even smarter about our prosecutions,” District Attorney Summer Stephan said. “This grant will help us better support victims of domestic and hold repeat offenders accountable, while providing incentives directed at offenders to stop the cycle of violence.”

The grant supports the District Attorney's Office's Family Protection Division by prioritizing offenders for prosecution and addressing the problem of repeat offending. One of the research tools provides a domestic violence educational and awareness component aimed at inmates who get arrested but are not formally charged. In addition, the grant will allow the DA's Office to develop a methodology to better identify and track serious, repeat offenders. Having this information will enhance the responses among criminal justice partners, with the end goal of improving recidivism and effective prosecution.

(More)

Grant-funded work will focus on four objectives to accomplish its goals: identifying high-risk and prolific offenders; using research and programs to demotivate the identified offenders from committing future offenses; reminding offenders that body-worn camera video will be used in prosecutions; and by enhancing victim safety by providing information to victims on a perpetrator's custody status. The grant will pay for law enforcement and investigative services as well as research.

“We are eager to assist in the Smart Prosecution Initiative and to use research to help reduce domestic violence in our county,” Sheriff Bill Gore said. “In partnership with District Attorney’s Office and the Probation Department, we are confident we can reduce recidivism among serious repeat domestic violence offenders.”