



Presentation for Lynden City Council

June 3, 2024



COMMISSION
ON SEXUAL & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Inspiring and coordinating community efforts to address sexual and domestic violence



❖ The SA/DV Commission is a quasi-governmental organization formed in 1998 by a joint resolution between the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County.

❖ **Purpose:**

- ❖ We improve systems so they work better for survivors and the community.
- ❖ We do not provide direct services; we support those who do.

Commission Membership

Commission member positions include:

- Executive directors and leaders from non-profits, health care, public schools, colleges and universities, faith communities, and human services
- Representatives from Lummi and Nooksack Tribes
- Therapist and researcher
- Police chiefs and sheriff, court and probation administrators, county attorney, public defender, and city attorney
- DCYF and DSHS administrators
- Elected officials

Funding

- ❖ Whatcom County
- ❖ City of Ferndale
- ❖ City of Bellingham

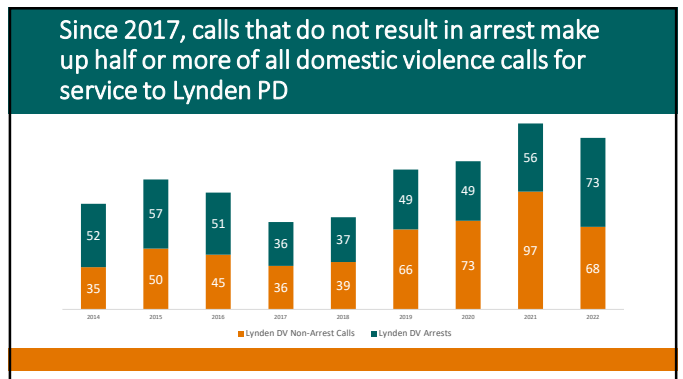
2023-2024 DV Commission Work Plan:

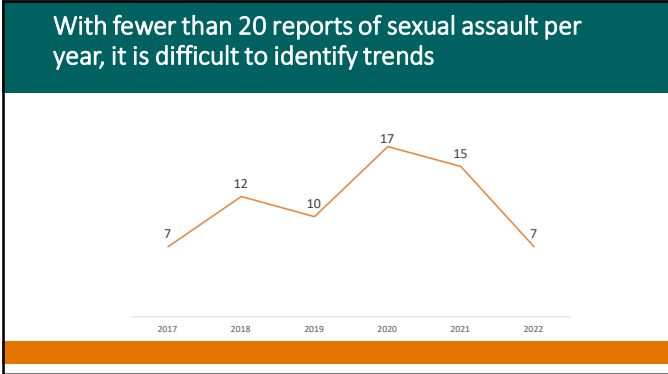
- ❖ Continue to stabilize funding and administrative structures for DV Commission operations.

In our community in 2022:

- **1 in 4 homeless households were fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence** or other dangerous conditions.
- **Reports of sexual assault to law enforcement continued to fall.** There is no evidence that incidents of sexual assault have decreased.
- **Fewer than 1/3 of SA & DV protection order requests were granted a final order.** Very few people petition for a sexual assault protection order.
- Nurses at PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center spent **660 hours conducting forensic sexual assault and domestic violence exams.**
- **Survivors shared what healing and justice mean to them.**

Read the full report: dvcommission.org/data-reports





- ### Current projects
- ❖ Restorative justice
 - ❖ Intimate partner violence case reviews
 - ❖ Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & People

Summit on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People

A cross-disciplinary summit in Whatcom County to learn and take action to prevent and intervene in violence, and to support survivors and families.

Wed, November 20, 2024
Time and location: 9-5 @ St. Luke's Community Health Education Center
Save the dates: Early June
Registration: Open in September

*Co-sponsored by:
 Community Consortium for Cultural Recognition in Education; Bellingham Whatcom County Commission on Sexual & Domestic Violence; PeaceHealth Tribal Affinity Group*

- ### Resource for
- ❖ Housing providers
 - ❖ Workplaces
 - ❖ Schools
 - ❖ Courts
 - ❖ Media
 - ❖ Faith communities
 - ❖ Healthcare providers

Questions or comments?

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COMMISSION ON SEXUAL & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Inspiring and coordinating community efforts to address sexual and domestic violence

The Commission consists of 17 government and 14 community members. Government officials are designated by government positions. Community members are selected by the Mayor and the County Executive from among stakeholders/agencies in the community who have an interest in and serve people who are impacted by domestic and sexual violence.

(17) Designated Government Representatives

Term Exp.	Name	Community Position
January 31, 2025	Deyettea Alexander	Area Administrator, DCYF
January 31, 2026	Diane Miltenberger	Administrator, DSHS/Community Services Office
January 31, 2027	<i>Vacant</i>	<i>Designated Representative/Lummi Nation</i>
January 31, 2027	Tammy Cooper-Woodrich	Designated Representative/Nooksack Tribe
January 31, 2027	Greg Hansen	Designated Representative-Whatcom County Cities
January 31, 2028	<i>Vacant</i>	Selected Police Chief-Whatcom County Cities
January 31, 2028	David VanderYacht	Selected Superintendent-Whatcom Co. School Districts
N/A	Adrienne Renz	Executive Director/Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Services
N/A	Bruce Van Glubt	Whatcom County Probation Administrator
N/A	Stephanie Kraft	Whatcom County Superior Court Administrator
N/A	Erika Lautenbach	Whatcom County Health and Community Services Director
N/A	Donnell Tanksley	Whatcom County Sheriff
N/A	Rebecca Mertzig	Bellingham Police Chief
N/A	Eric Richey	Whatcom County Prosecutor
N/A	Starck Follis	Whatcom County Public Defender
N/A	Darlene Peterson	Bellingham Municipal Court Administrator
N/A	Alan Marriner	Bellingham City Attorney

(7) County Community Appointments

Term Exp.	Name	Community Position	Agency
January 31, 2025	Jessyca Murphy	Community at Large	Make.Shift Art Space
January 31, 2026	<i>Vacant</i>	<i>DV/SA Victim Service Provider</i>	
January 31, 2026	Krista Touros	Health Care Provider	PeaceHealth
January 31, 2027	Garret Shelsta	Community at Large	Stuff You Can Use
January 31, 2027	Moonwater	Human Service Provider	Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center
January 31, 2027	Raquel Vernola	Institution of Higher Education	Whatcom Community College
January 31, 2028	<i>Vacant</i>	<i>Human Service Provider</i>	

(7) City Community Appointments

Term Exp.	Name	Community Position	Agency
January 31, 2025	Ken Levinson	Community at Large	Ken Levinson Law LLC
January 31, 2025	Beth Boyd	Human Service Provider	PeaceHealth/St. Joseph Medical Center
January 31, 2025	Jason McGill	DV/SA Victim Service Provider	Northwest Youth Services
January 31, 2026	Pamela Wheeler	Human Service Provider	Opportunity Council
January 31, 2026	Christina Byrne	Community at Large	Western Washington University
January 31, 2027	Christina Kobdich	Health Care Provider	Unity Care NW
January 31, 2027	Chris Roselli	Institution of Higher Education	Western Washington University

Bellingham Whatcom County Commission on Sexual & Domestic Violence

About

*“We’re making systems change...and there are more changes on the horizon.”
- Commission Member*

The SA/DV Commission improves systems so they work better for survivors and the community. We are made up of government and community leaders to fulfill our responsibility to effectively prevent and respond to sexual and domestic violence. We do not provide direct services; we lead projects for systems change.

2024 Work Plan Activities

- Develop pilot of restorative justice responses for people affected by domestic and sexual violence.
- Improve coordination and effectiveness of community responses for and prevention of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People and their families.
- Utilize case reviews, audits, and case consultations to improve criminal legal responses in sexual assault and high-lethality intimate partner violence cases.
- Provide training and tools to enhance understanding of and responses for criminalized survivors.
- Use public health framework to broaden understanding of the dynamics and effects of sexual and domestic violence, and community responsibility for addressing collectively; ensure commission projects are focused in all key areas of public health.
- Collaborate with Whatcom County courts and aligned professionals to improve access to justice for survivors in civil and family law cases, focusing particularly on language access and disability access.
- Plan for a healthcare screening and response project to identify and connect survivors with community support, doing research, developing tools, and identifying partners.
- Host engaging Commission meetings to provide education and implement meaningful action for systems change.
- Provide local data, tools, training, and subject matter expertise for systems and stakeholders to increase knowledge, influence decision making, and improve prevention and responses.



May 2024 project report



Restorative justice responses for sexual and domestic violence

Commission members involved: Christina Byrne, Moonwater, Jessyca Murphy

The RJ work group is studying the [Creative Interventions Toolkit](#) to help identify the foundation needed for restorative processes to address gender-based violence, the roles of people involved in RJ processes, and practical tools available for preparation, safety planning, and accountability agreements.



Improved community responses for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People (MMIWP) and their families

Commission members involved: Beth Boyd, Tammy Cooper-Woodrich, Chris Kobdich, Jason McGill, Adrienne Renz, Chris Roselli, Krista Touros

The steering committee will host a Summit on MMIWP on November 20, 2024 to bring together government and community leaders in Whatcom County to improve understanding, responses, and resources for victims and their families.



Case reviews of intimate partner violence cases to identify strengths and gaps in community response

Commission members involved: Starck Follis, Adrienne Renz, Eric Richey, Garret Shelsta, Katie Olvera, Christina Byrne

The multi-disciplinary case review team analyzed 3 intimate partner homicide cases in 2023 and developed key findings and themes; are report will be issued in June 2024. Agencies are implementing recommendations.



Workplace supports for survivors of sexual & domestic violence

In 2023, Commission staff provided training at the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) Conference in Bellingham on how to respond when employees experience domestic violence and sexual assault. Training is also provided for workplaces upon request. The Commission has an adaptable policy template and links to resources for workplaces at www.dvcommission.org/workplace-dv-sa.