

# **Domestic Violence in Whatcom County 1998 - 2004**

**Released May 2006**

**Bellingham-Whatcom County Commission  
Against Domestic Violence**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the third annual report of domestic violence data in Whatcom County published by the Bellingham/Whatcom County Commission Against Domestic Violence. This report describes the characteristics of domestic violence-related incidents reported by all Whatcom County Municipal, Tribal and County Law Enforcement Agencies; the nature and outcome of domestic violence cases adjudicated in Tribal, Municipal, District and Superior Courts; and the characteristics of services utilized by both perpetrators and victims of domestic violence in Whatcom County.

In general, every aspect of the Whatcom County Criminal and Civil Justice Systems that has been evaluated has catalogued significant increases in domestic violence-related activity over time. In fact, 2004 typically saw the highest levels of domestic violence-related activity since the inception of data collection. For example, the number of domestic violence felony cases filed by the Whatcom County Prosecutor's Office, the number of domestic violence-related bookings at the Whatcom County Jail, the number of domestic violence referrals to Whatcom County District Court Probation, and the number Protection Orders filed by victims in Whatcom County Courts statistically surpassed that of almost every single year since the beginning of data collection. Similarly, aspects of services provided to victims of domestic violence were statistically higher than those levels recorded earlier.

Even given notable increases in this community's domestic violence indices, when compared to the state as a whole, Whatcom County findings are in keeping with that found across Washington. For example, the number of domestic violence offenses per capita (defined as the number of domestic violence offenses for every 1,000 residents) are statistically equal to that found in the state as a whole. Thus, while all components of this community's Civil and Criminal Justice Systems are seeing increasing amounts of resources devoted specifically to domestic violence, this is not due to the fact that there is a higher rate of domestic violence in Whatcom County than that found across the state.

Unfortunately, the reasons for the increase in domestic violence-related indices documented across systems remains unclear. The information at hand cannot address the role that heightened attention to domestic violence, training of criminal justice personnel, or any host of other issues, may play in these increases. Moreover, significant refinement and enhancement of existing data collection methodologies are required before these questions can be adequately addressed.<sup>1</sup>

For the data contained herein, all domestic violence indices have been evaluated using Pearson's Chi Square Analysis. This procedure accounts for changes in the population, and determines whether differences in the numbers seen are a result of chance. When changes in numbers are statistically significant (i.e. not due to chance and mathematically meaningful), this is noted in the text.

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<sup>1</sup> Detailed discussion of the issues related to data collection and analysis are detailed in the March 2005 Report: "Domestic Violence in Whatcom County: A Compilation of Data", which can be found on the organization's website ([www.dvcommission.org](http://www.dvcommission.org)).

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN WHATCOM COUNTY: LAW ENFORCEMENT

### Domestic Violence Offenses

In 2004:

- Whatcom County Law Enforcement Agencies<sup>2</sup> reported a total of 1,685 domestic violence offenses
- Over 75% of offenses were handled by the Bellingham Police Department and Whatcom County Sheriff's Office
- Domestic violence offenses accounted for 14% of all reported criminal offenses in Whatcom County

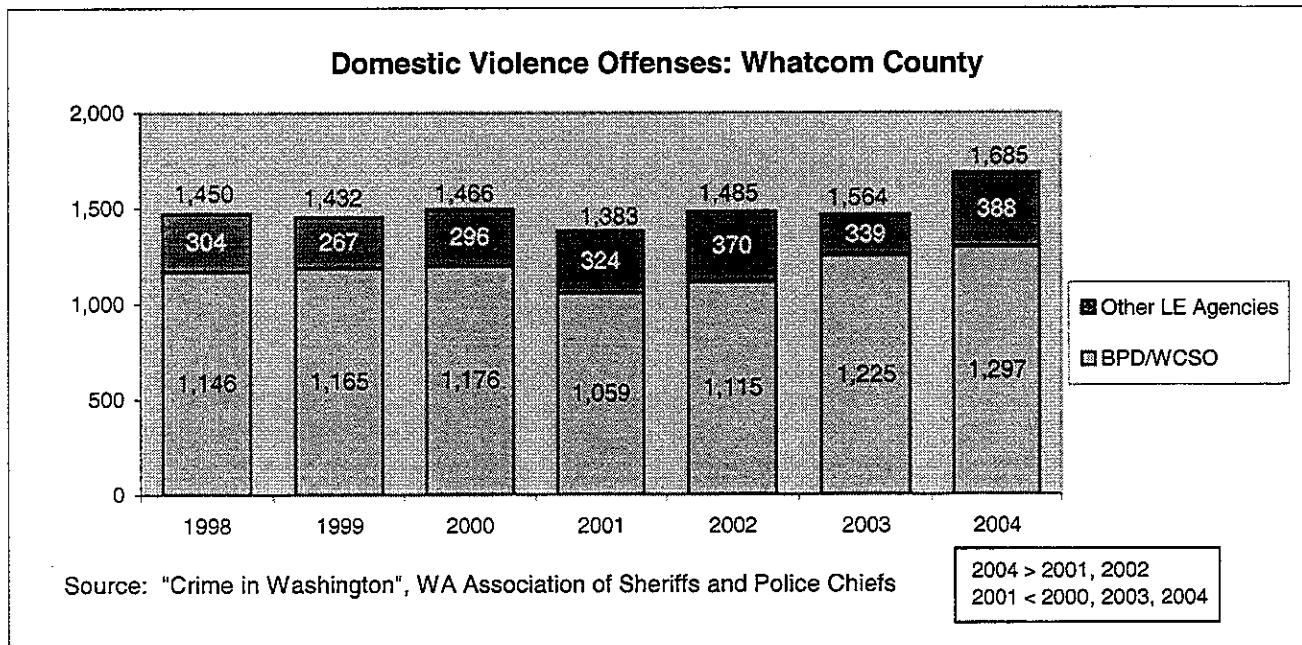


Figure 1

Between 1998 and 2004, Whatcom County Law Enforcement Agencies reported an average of 1,506 domestic violence offenses per year, with the Bellingham Police Department (BPD) and Whatcom County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) handling an average of 78% of these cases a year. In 2004, Whatcom County Law Enforcement Agencies reported a total of 1,685 domestic violence offenses, with 77% of these offenses handled by the two largest law enforcement agencies in the county. Figure 1 illustrates rates of domestic violence offenses as reported by all Whatcom County Law Enforcement Agencies.

<sup>2</sup> This includes the Bellingham Police Department, Whatcom County Sheriff's Office, Lummi Nation and Nooksack Tribal Law Enforcement, and Blaine, Everson-Nooksack, Ferndale, Lynden and Sumas Police Departments.

To determine whether there are any meaningful year-to-year differences in the number of domestic violence offenses handled by law enforcement, these figures were statistically evaluated. Results indicate that the number of domestic offenses that Whatcom County Law Enforcement dealt with between 1998 and 2000 were statistically equal after changes in the population were accounted for. On the other hand, between 2001 and 2004 there are significant fluctuations in the number of domestic violence offenses. For example, in 2001 and 2002 law enforcement dealt with the statistically lowest levels of domestic offenses in the time period evaluated. Alternatively, the statistically highest levels of domestic offenses in the county were seen in 2003. What appears to have happened in 2004 is that the domestic violence offense rate has leveled off again, essentially returning to those levels seen over the course of the first three years of reporting.

The roughly 1,500 domestic violence-related crimes that occur in Whatcom County every year are but one category of crime that law enforcement handles annually. For example, Whatcom County Law Enforcement reported an average of 11,036 criminal offenses (including domestic violence) during the 7-year period evaluated. When domestic offenses are evaluated in this context, results indicate that domestic violence accounts for a small but consistent percentage of all of the crime dealt with by law enforcement (14% on average).

Verbal Domestic

In 2004:

- The Bellingham Police Department and Whatcom County Sheriff's Office reported 1,381 verbal domestics<sup>3,4</sup>

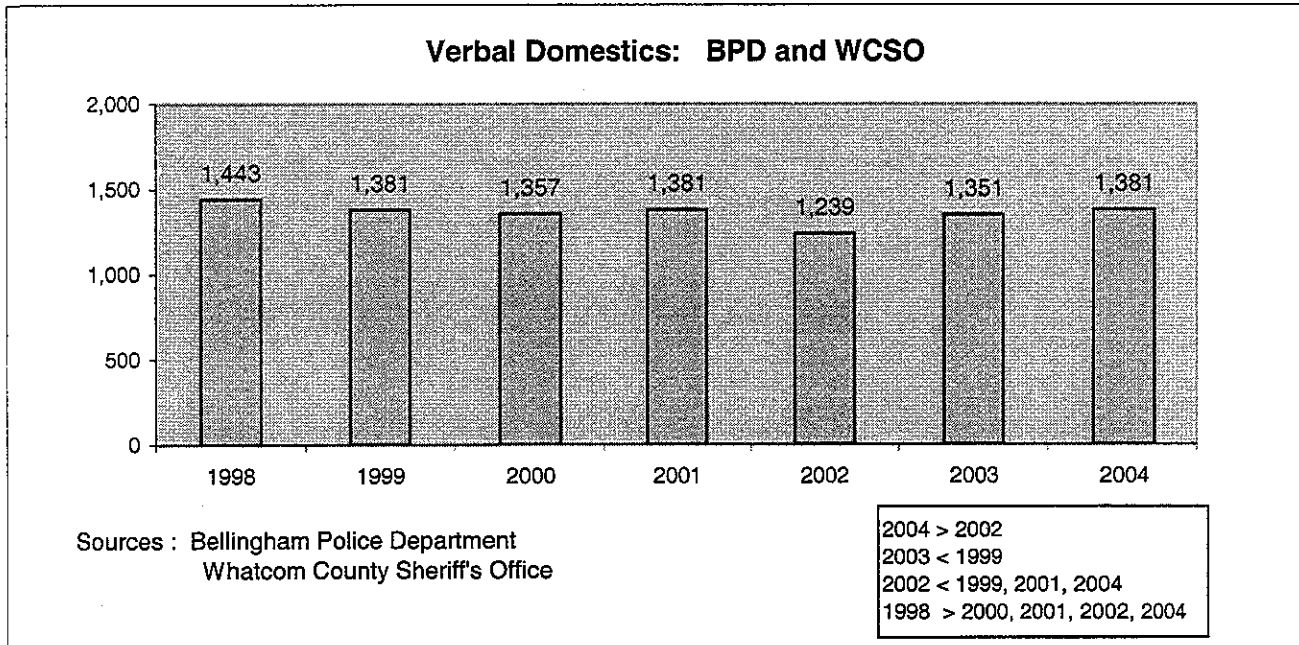


Figure 2

Between 1998 and 2004, the Bellingham Police Department and Whatcom County Sheriff's Office reported handling an average of 1,364 verbal domestics a year, with a total of 1,381 reported verbal domestics in 2004. Figure 2 illustrates rates of verbal domestics reported by the Bellingham Police Department and Whatcom County Sheriff's Office between 1998 and 2004.

The number of verbal domestics reported in 2004 is closely in keeping with the 6-year average as a whole (1,381 vs. 1,364). On the other hand, when the number of verbal domestics is evaluated across time, there are significant statistical differences that emerge. Most notably are the rates of verbal domestics reported by law enforcement in 1998 and 2002. For example, 1998 saw the statistically highest number of verbals handled by law enforcement in 5 of the 7 years evaluated. Likewise, the number of verbals reported by law enforcement in 2002 was at the statistically lowest level in 4 out of 7 years.

<sup>3</sup> Verbal Domestic incidents represent incidents where law enforcement determines that no physical assault has occurred, and/or where no other conditions are met that warrant an arrest.

<sup>4</sup> Data only available from these 2 agencies for the period of time evaluated.

**Domestic Violence Offenses vs. Verbal Domestic**

In 2004:

- *The Bellingham Police Department and Whatcom County Sheriff's Office reported dealing with statistically equivalent rates of verbal domestics and domestic violence offenses for the first time in 7 years*

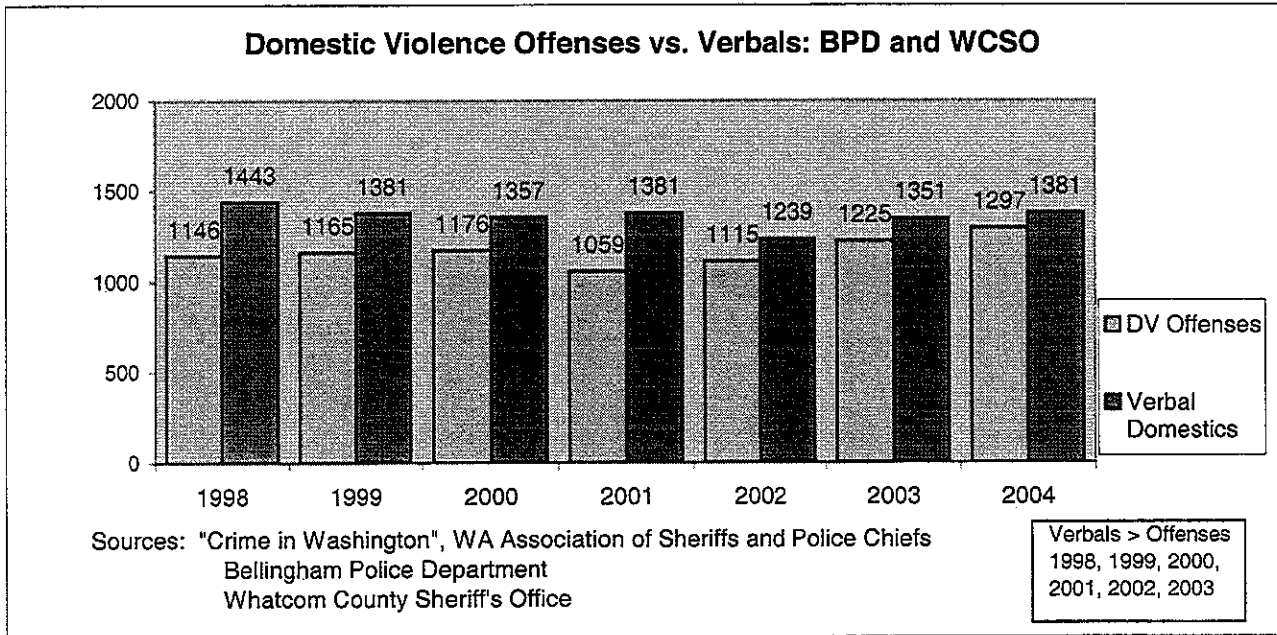


Figure 3

Between 1998 and 2003, law enforcement dealt with verbal domestics as much as 23% more of the time than they did domestic violence offenses. While the average difference between verbal domestics and domestic violence offenses during this time period was 13%, this differential was enough to be statistically significant in each of these years.

In contrast to the above, the 2004 rate of verbal domestics exceeded that of domestic violence offenses by only 6%. This did not prove to be a statistically meaningful difference. Thus for the first time since the beginning of data collection, the rates of verbal domestics and domestic violence offenses reported were essentially equivalent.

Figure 3 compares the rate of reported domestic violence offenses (where a crime has been committed) to the rate of reported verbal domestics (where no crime has been committed) in each of the years evaluated.

Per Capita Rates of Domestic Violence Offenses<sup>5</sup>

In 2004:

- *Whatcom County's per capita rate of domestic violence offenses was 9.5*
- *The per capita rate is equal to that seen in all other years evaluated, and generally reflects statewide statistics*

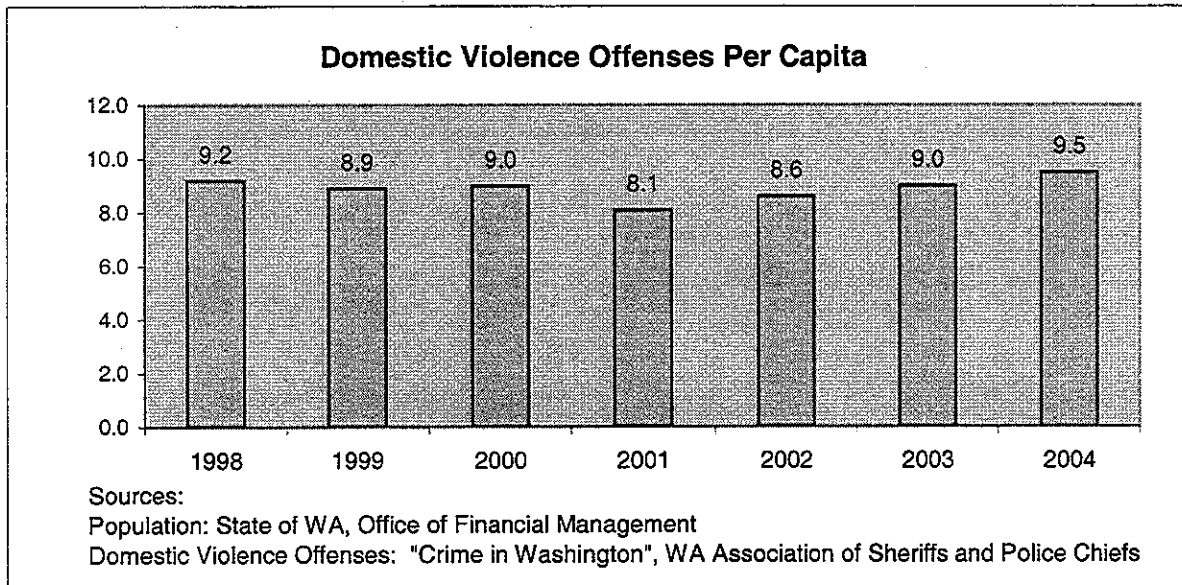


Figure 4

Between 1998 and 2004, Whatcom County's per capita rate of domestic violence offenses was 8.9 on average, with a per capita rate of 9.5 in 2004.

When evaluated over time, Whatcom County's per capita rate has remained essentially unchanged. Thus, even though rates have varied between 8.1 and 9.5 in the time period sampled, these fluctuations do not represent statistically meaningful differences.

When compared to Washington State as a whole, Whatcom County's average per capita rate of domestic violence offenses closely parallels that seen at the state level. For example, between 1998 and 2004, Washington State's per capita rate of domestic violence offenses was 8.6 on average (compared to 8.9 for Whatcom County).

Figure 4 illustrates per capita rates of domestic violence offenses in Whatcom County over time.

<sup>5</sup> Per capita rate is defined as the number of domestic violence offenses for every 1,000 residents



## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN WHATCOM COUNTY: JAIL AND THE COURTS

### Jail Bookings

In 2004:

- The Whatcom County Jail reported 1,526 domestic violence-related bookings, representing almost one-third of all jail bookings
- There was a 60% increase in the number of domestic violence-related bookings compared to 2001 booking levels

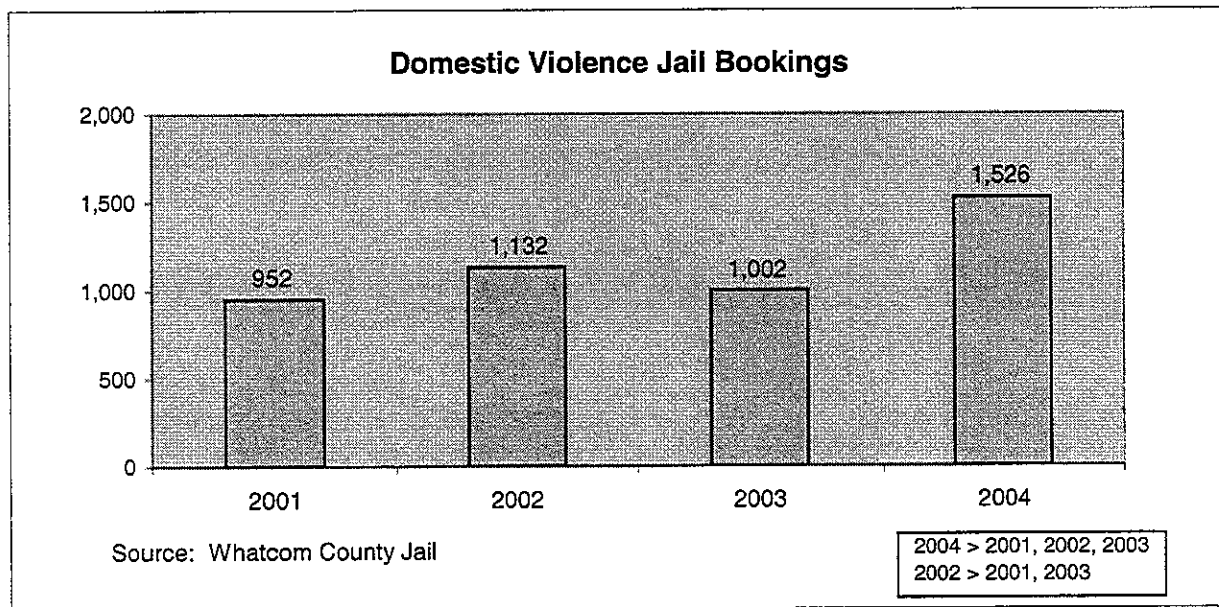


Figure 5

Domestic violence bookings represent a significant category of jail bookings in all of the years sampled (between 17% and 28%). Additionally, the number of domestic violence-related bookings reported in 2004 is at the statistically highest level since the start of data collection in 2001, and represents a 60% increase in this category of bookings over the 4-year time period evaluated.

One significant factor that affects the results detailed above has to do with refinements in data collection. For example, jail staff has addressed data collection practices with increased sophistication over time. The irregularity in data input that was seen in 2001 (which resulted in underreporting of domestic violence offenders) has largely been corrected. Thus, while there are likely true increases in domestic violence jail bookings, this is impossible to separate from the effects of more accurate reporting (which typically results in jumps in a reported phenomenon).

**Misdemeanor Charges: Filings and Resolutions**

In 2004:

- Whatcom County Courts<sup>6</sup> reported 1,368 misdemeanor domestic violence charge filings

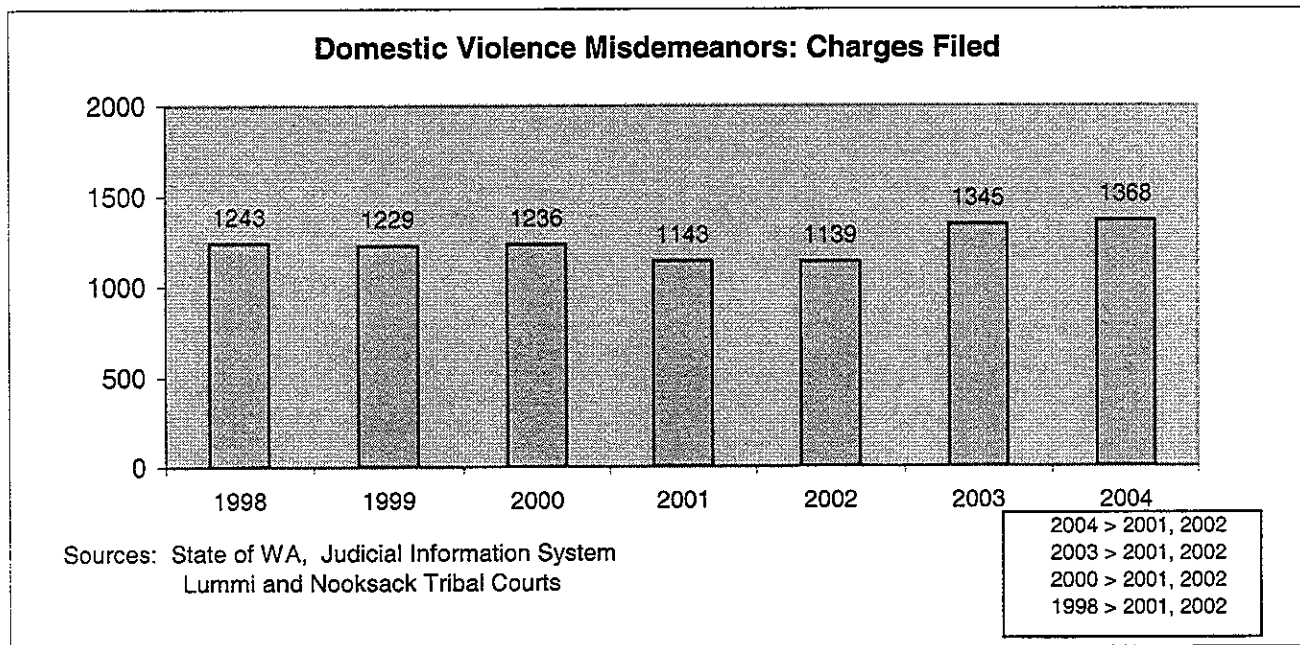


Figure 6

On average, 1,243 misdemeanor domestic charges were filed in Whatcom County Courts between 1998 and 2004. Over the course of this seven-year period, there have been significant fluctuations in the number of misdemeanor domestic violence charges filed.

In addition to those charges filed in 2004, there were also a significant number of domestic violence misdemeanor charges that were resolved in this same year. More specifically, 1,311 domestic violence-related misdemeanors were resolved across Whatcom County Courts in 2004. With respect to the outcomes of these charges, the majority resulted in either a “Guilty” (47%) or “Dismissed” (41%) status. Alternatively, 12% resulted in “Amended”<sup>7</sup> and 1% as “Not Guilty”. Finally, from the point of filing to the point of resolution, these charges were in the court system an average of 134 days.

Figure 6 illustrates the number of misdemeanor domestic violence charges filed in Municipal, District and Tribal Courts in Whatcom County between 1998 and 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Includes all Municipal, District and Tribal Courts in Whatcom County

<sup>7</sup> Conviction for a related misdemeanor other than the original charge

**Felony Cases: Filings and Resolutions**

In 2004:

- The Whatcom County Prosecutor's Office reported filing 217 felony domestic violence-related cases
- The number of felony domestic violence cases filed was at the statistically highest levels in six out of seven years evaluated

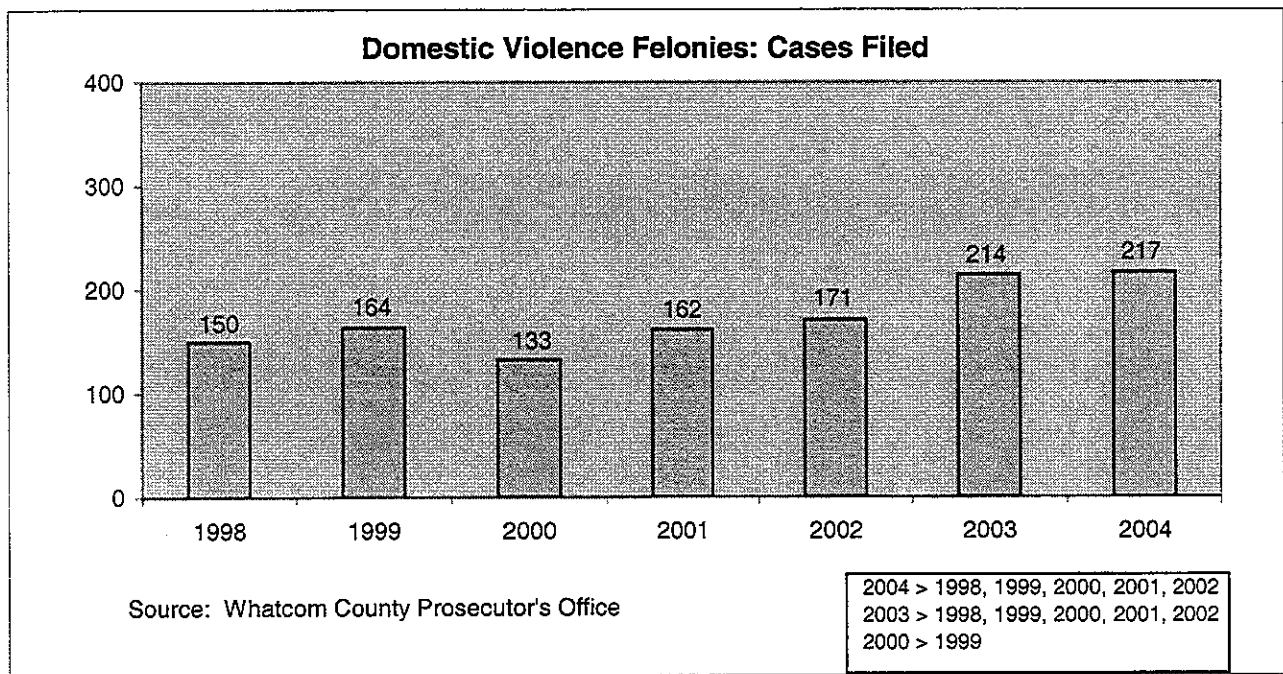


Figure 7

The number of felony domestic violence cases filed in 2004 markedly outpaced those felony filings in almost all of the preceding years. For example, the number of domestic violence felony filings in 2004 was at statistically higher levels than that seen between 1998 and 2002 (and statistically equal to 2003 levels). All in all, the number of felony case filings in 2004 represents a 38% average increase over filings in 5 of the 6 preceding years.

In addition to cases filed, there were 203 domestic violence felony cases that were resolved in 2004. With respect to the outcomes of these cases, the vast majority (87%) resulted in some form of a "Guilty" classification. Alternatively, 10% resulted in "Dismissed" and less than 1% as "Not Guilty". Finally, from the point of filing to the point of resolution, these cases were in the court system an average of 135 days.

Figure 7 illustrates the number of felony domestic violence cases filed by the Whatcom County Prosecutor's Office between 1998 and 2004.

### Probation Referrals

In 2004:

- *Whatcom County District Court Probation was referred 766 domestic violence-related charges for supervision*
- *Probation referrals were at the statistically highest levels in six out of seven years evaluated*

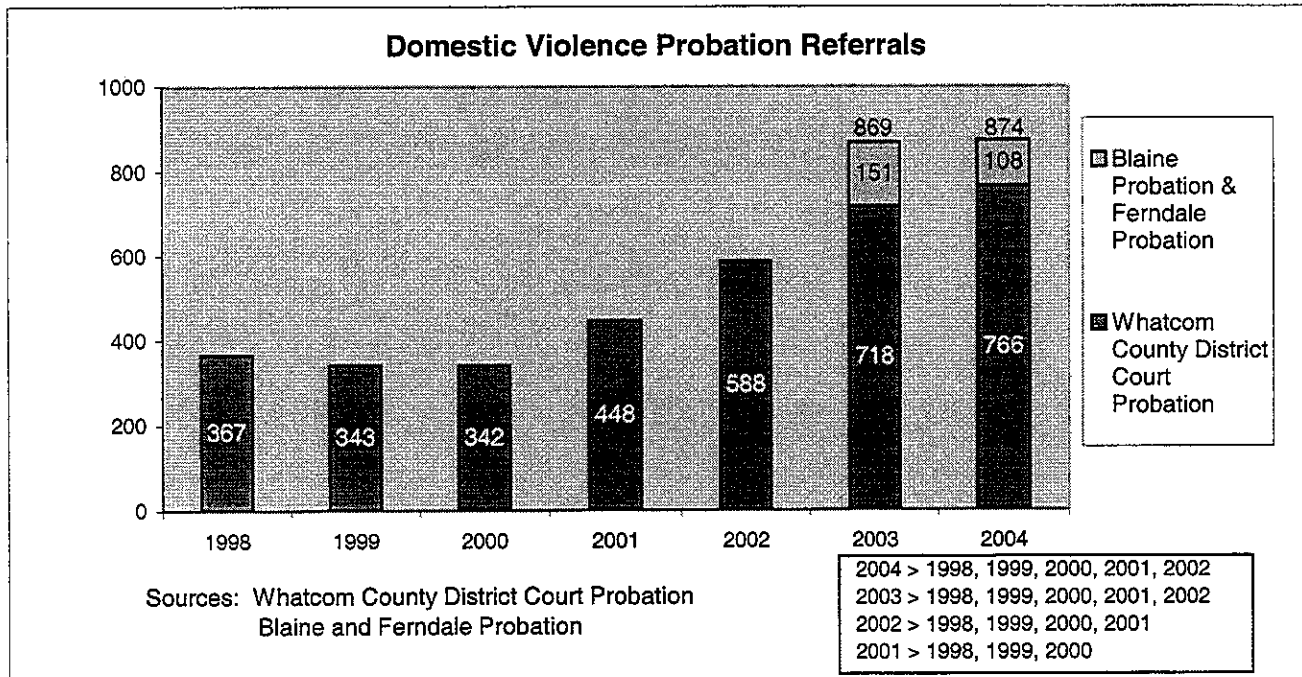


Figure 8

In 2004 the number of domestic violence-related probation referrals to Whatcom County District Court Probation was at statistically higher levels than that seen in almost every year preceding it. In fact, beginning in 2001 the number of referrals to this probation department has dramatically increased each year. When evaluated, the changes in number of referrals represent true statistical increases. Thus, Whatcom County District Court Probation has had a significantly greater number of charges referred for supervision every year since 2001. Blaine and Ferndale Probation referrals were not included in analyses.

Figure 8 documents all domestic violence charges referred to Whatcom County District Court Probation during the years 1998-2004. Additionally, domestic violence charges referred to Blaine and Ferndale Probation Departments in 2003 and 2004 are also included.

**Protection Orders**

*In 2004:*

- 445 Domestic Violence Protection Orders were filed in Whatcom County Courts<sup>8</sup>
- There was a statistically higher number of Protection Orders filed than in three of the four preceding years

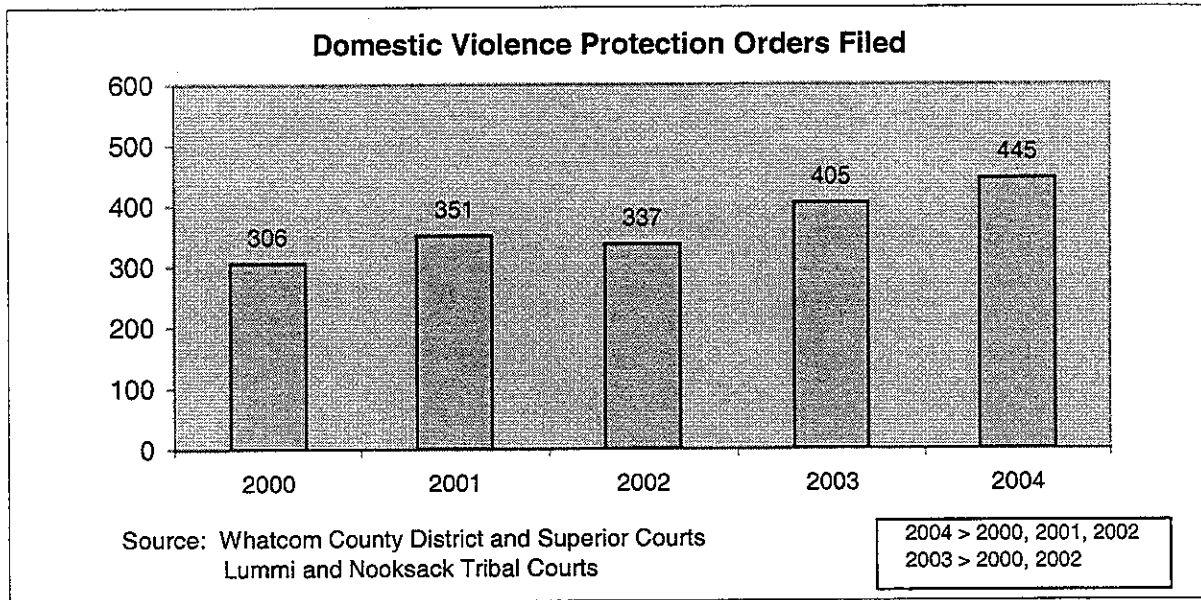


Figure 9

On average, there were 369 Protection Orders filed in Whatcom County Courts in the five year period evaluated. The number of Protection Orders filed in 2004 represents a 45% increase over 2000 levels, and represents the statistically highest levels of Protection Orders in three out of the four preceding years.

Figure 9 indicates the number of Domestic Violence Protection Orders filed in Whatcom County Courts between 2000 and 2004.

<sup>8</sup> Includes Whatcom County District and Superior Courts and Lummi and Nooksack Tribal Courts

**Misdemeanor Repeat-Offenders<sup>9</sup>***Between 2002 and 2004:*

- 20% of individuals re-offended subsequent to the resolution of their first domestic violence charge
- 28% of repeat offenders were charged with domestic violence crimes in multiple jurisdictions
- Repeat offenders were typically charged with Order Violations in subsequent incidents

<b>Misdemeanor Repeat Offenses: 2002 - 2004</b>				
Number of Additional Incidents	Number of Offenders (n=441)	Nature of Additional Charges:		
		Assault	Order Violation	Other <sup>a</sup>
1	212	52%	12%	36%
2	145	30%	63%	7%
3	57	22%	69%	9%
4	18	10%	82%	8%
5	6	12%	72%	16%
6	3	--	--	--

<sup>a</sup> For example: Malicious Mischief, Disorderly Conduct, Interfering with Reporting of Domestic Violence

Sources: State of WA, Judicial Information System  
Whatcom County Courts of Limited Jurisdiction

Table 1

Between 2002 and 2004, 2,146 individuals had misdemeanor domestic violence charges resolved in Whatcom County Municipal and District Courts. During this three-year time period, 441 of these individuals were charged with additional misdemeanor domestic violence offenses subsequent to the resolution of the original domestic violence charge (regardless of the resolution of this initial charge). The majority of these individuals (48%) were involved in only one additional incident. On the other hand, a small handful of offenders were involved in a significant number of additional domestic violence incidents (as many as 6 during this three-year time period).

<sup>9</sup> Re-offenders are defined as those individuals who have been charged in more than one misdemeanor-level domestic violence incident between 2002 and 2004 in Whatcom County District and Municipal Courts.

In addition to re-offending across time, a significant subset of individuals re-offended across geographical boundaries. Almost one-third of these individuals had domestic violence charges in multiple jurisdictions across Whatcom County.

For those individuals with one re-offense incident, roughly half of the charges were for domestic assault, and 12% of charges were related to Protection or No Contact Order Violations. After the first re-offense incident, the nature of charges in subsequent incidents changes markedly. For example, and for those individuals involved in two or more re-offense incidents, the vast majority of charges are for Protection or No Contact Order Violations. Specifically, up to 82% of charges associated with further domestic violence incidents are for this category of offense.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN WHATCOM COUNTY: SERVICES

### Perpetrators: Evaluation and Treatment<sup>10</sup>

In 2004:

- *Almost 250 individuals successfully completed Domestic Violence Evaluations, representing a 78% increase from the previous year*
- *There was a statistically significant increase in the number of domestic violence perpetrators in treatment*
- *Thirty five percent of perpetrators in domestic violence treatment were terminated due to noncompliance with court and/or treatment requirements*

Domestic Violence Perpetrator Evaluations and Treatment:		
	2003	2004
Completed Domestic Violence Evaluations	136	243
Number of Individuals in Perpetrator Treatment	140	181
Status of Individuals in Treatment:		
Completed	46 (33%)	54 (30%)
Ongoing	34 (24%)	48 (27%)
Terminated for non-compliance	52 (37%)	64 (35%)
Relocated	8 (6%)	15 (8%)

Table 2

Compared to the number of individuals who completed Domestic Violence Evaluations in 2003, as well as the number of perpetrators participating in Domestic Violence Perpetrator Treatment in 2003, the number of individuals in both of these categories increased significantly in 2004. Specifically, there were a statistically greater number of individuals who completed Domestic Violence Evaluations in 2004 (versus in 2003). Likewise, the number of offenders in domestic violence perpetrator treatment was at statistically higher levels than that seen in the preceding year.

With respect to Domestic Violence Evaluations, over 80% of these were ordered by the court. Of those evaluations that were not mandated by the court, over 50% of these individuals sought an evaluation on the advice of an attorney, while the remainder were referred by state or local agencies.

<sup>10</sup> Data derived from three existing state-certified Domestic Violence Perpetrator Treatment Programs in Whatcom County: Shannon Meyer, Ph.D. PLLC; Violence Intervention Professionals; and Waterfront Counseling



While the number of individuals in perpetrator treatment was significantly higher in 2004 than 2003, there were striking similarities in the status of those individuals over the course of both years. In general, during the year sampled, approximately one third of individuals completed treatment, one third were terminated from treatment for non-compliance, and one third were actively enrolled in treatment (including those who transferred due to relocation).

**Victim Services**<sup>11</sup>

In 2004:

- Over 3,000 domestic violence victims received a wide array of services from Whatcom County's Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services
- 1,700 victims of domestic violence utilized the emergency helpline provided by Womenscare Shelter, representing a 36% increase in services over earlier levels
- Almost 300 women and children stayed at least one night in Womenscare's shelter for victims of domestic violence

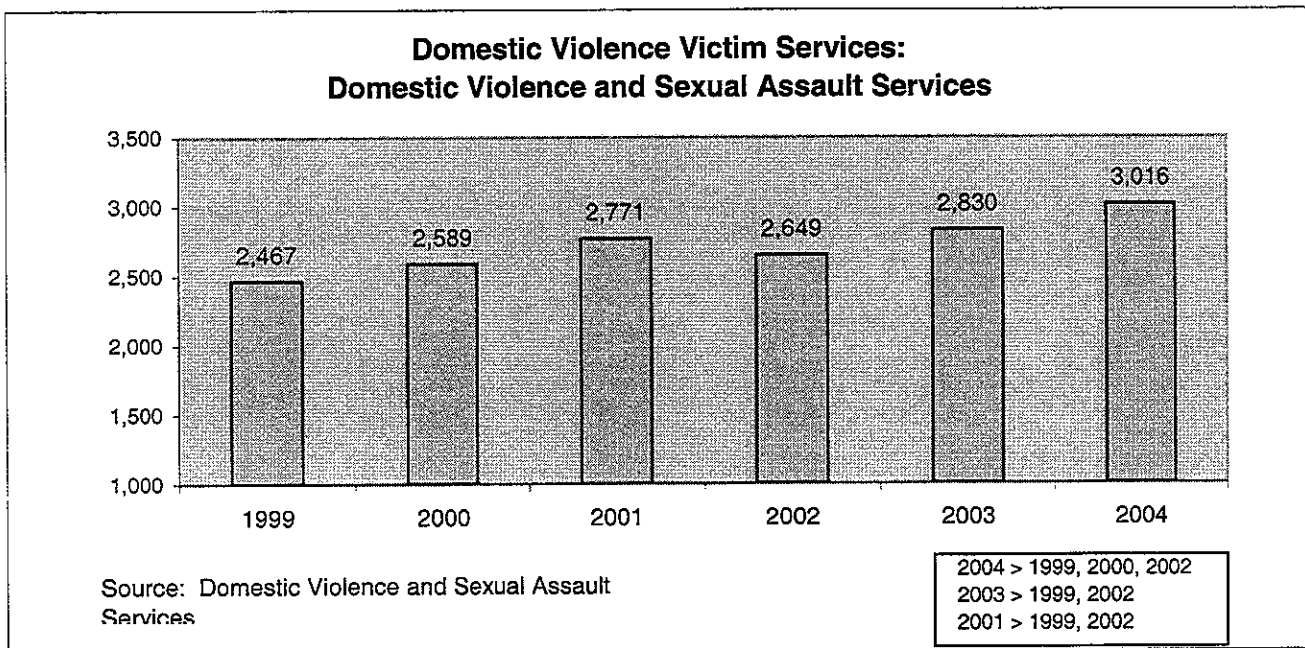


Figure 11

Over the six-year period evaluated, there are over 2,700 domestic violence victims, on average, that are served by DVSAS every year. While these figures have fluctuated over time, the number of clients provided crisis intervention and support services, legal advocacy, and support group services in 2004 represents a statistically significant increase in service levels over that seen in several preceding years (1999, 2000, and 2002).

Figure 11 indicates the total number of domestic violence victims served by DVSAS between 1999 and 2004.

<sup>11</sup> Services to victims of domestic violence in Whatcom County are overwhelmingly provided by three agencies: Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services (DVSAS), Womenscare Shelter and Domestic Violence Services (Womenscare), and Lummi Victims of Crime. At this point in time, data are only available for DVSAS and Womenscare.

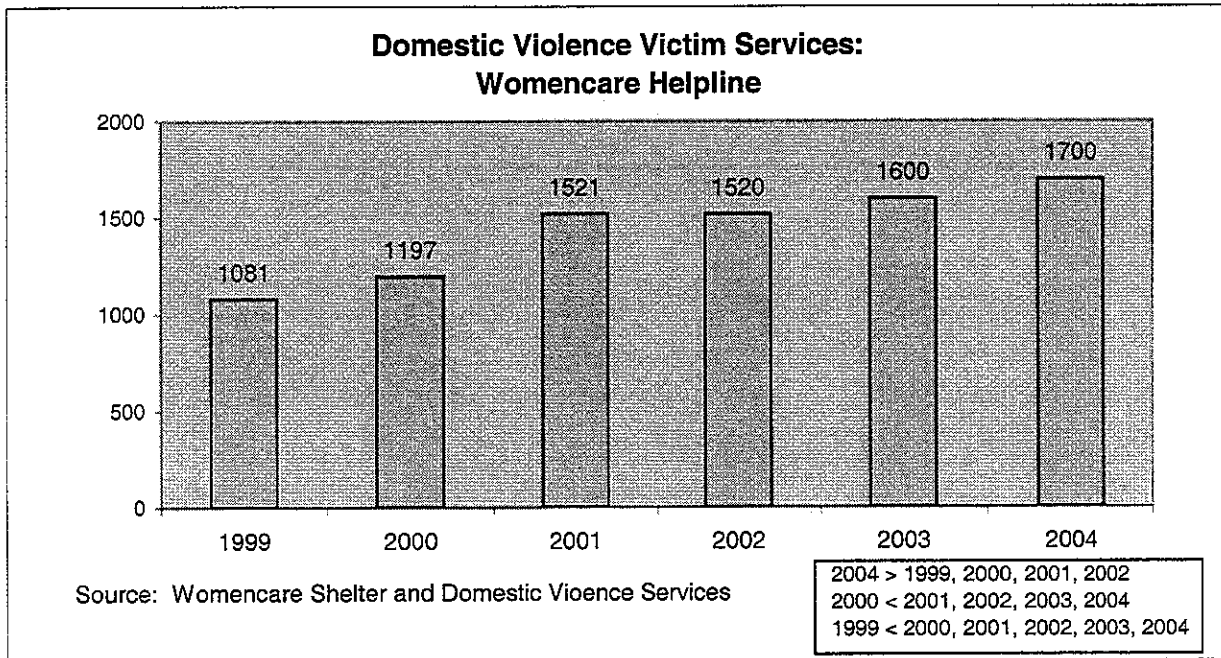


Figure 12

Between 1999 and 2004, Womencare Shelter and Domestic Violence Services has seen a significant increase in helpline services provided to victims. For example, the number of helpline calls to the agency increased 36% between 1999 and 2004. Moreover, the number of helpline callers in 2004 was statistically greater than the number of callers in 5 out of 6 preceding years.

Figure 12 reports the number of Helpline callers served by Womencare between 1999 and 2004.

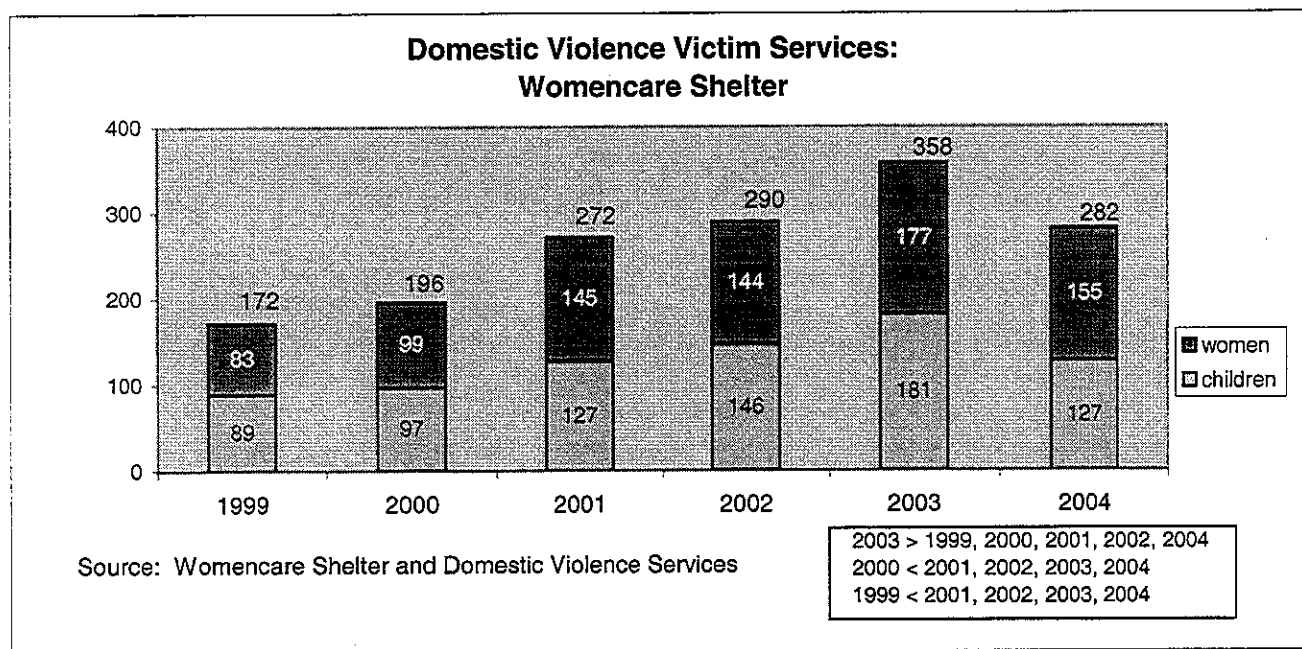


Figure 13

In 2004, a total of 282 women and children sought emergency shelter to escape domestic violence. On average the shelter housed 12 individuals per night, with residents typically staying slightly more than 2 weeks duration (16 days). Shelter services have fluctuated statistically over time with the highest demand in services seen in 2003. Nevertheless, the number of shelter residents in 2004 statistically surpassed that seen in 1999 and 2000.

Figure 13 indicates the number of women and children victims who received emergency housing and support services at Womencare Shelter between 1999 and 2004.

## Glossary of Terms

### Domestic Violence Offenses

Under Washington State law, an offense is considered to be domestic violence-related if it is committed by a family member (regardless of the family relationship) or by a domestic partner. Domestic violence offenses include crimes in the following categories: criminal homicide, forcible rape, robbery, assault, burglary, larceny theft, motor vehicle theft, arson and violation of Protection/No Contact Orders. It is not unusual for multiple offenses to occur during the same incident. However, based on recording standards established by the FBI, only the “highest-ranking offense” is recorded into *Uniform Crime Reports*, which is the nation’s statistical database for crime (utilized by this report). For example, an offender can break into a victim’s home, steal her car keys, force her into her vehicle, drive her to a secluded location, sexually assault her, take her car and her purse, and abandon her. Even though there are multiple offenses in this one event, the highest-ranking offense is the rape. This would be the only offense recorded, counted (and thus accessible to researchers) in *Uniform Crime Reports*. Therefore, for each domestic violence related incident, there is generally only one domestic violence offense counted. However, it is important to remember that this system of coding identifies and tallies a police identified problem and is not based on the findings of a court, medical examiner, jury or other judicial findings.

### Felony Domestic Violence

Felony domestic violence offenses are defined as occurring when there is a family, household, or dating relationship, and one or both parties commit a crime against the person or property of the other. The nature of the charges filed may include both physical and non-physical assault offenses, including but not limited to, felony harassment/threats, violation of a no contact order, burglary, malicious mischief, robbery, kidnapping, unlawful imprisonment, assault and murder. The superior courts in the State of Washington have sole jurisdiction over the adjudication of cases when a felony offense is charged.

### Misdemeanor Domestic Violence

Misdemeanor domestic violence crimes occur when there is a family, household, or dating relationship, and one or both parties commit a crime against the person or property of the other. Examples of this type of crime include: Violation of a Protection Order; Assault 4<sup>th</sup> Degree; Malicious Mischief; Disorderly Conduct; and Interfering with Reporting of Domestic Violence. Courts of Limited Jurisdiction (District and Municipal Courts) and Tribal Courts have jurisdiction over domestic violence related misdemeanors committed within their area of authority.

### Verbal Domestic

Law enforcement officers are frequently called to respond to situations that are categorized as “Domestic Violence – No Assault”, or “Verbal Domestic”. These are incidents where law enforcement determines that no physical assault occurred, and/or where no other conditions were met to warrant probable cause for an arrest.

### **Jail Bookings**

Due to inadequate jail space, Whatcom County Jail has had to prioritize those offenses that will be accepted for booking (versus being issued a citation and released). For the past several years, domestic violence offenses have been prioritized and typically accepted for booking. Comparatively, significant restrictions have been imposed on most other bookings. As a result, domestic violence-related offenses represent a significant proportion of jail bookings relative to all criminal bookings. Until space issues are remediated, accurate estimates regarding the proportion of offenders booked into jail for domestic violence-related offenses (versus all other offenses) will not be able to be determined.

### **Probation Services**

Whatcom County District Court Probation provides probation services for Whatcom County District Court and the Municipal Courts of Bellingham, Everson-Nooksack, Lynden, and Sumas. Lummi Tribal Court, Blaine Municipal Court, and Ferndale Municipal Court provide their own probation services.

Probation services are typically limited to misdemeanor cases, with felony domestic violence cases supervised by the Washington State Department of Corrections. It is important to note that the number of new referrals to probation does not correspond to the actual number of individuals requiring supervision by that department. For example, a single incident may result in two domestic violence charges. If the individual responsible for this incident is mandated to pre-trial probation supervision by the courts, the probation department counts this as two new referrals (corresponding to the number of charges). If during the same calendar year that same individual is convicted of one of those domestic violence charges and is ordered to two years of probation supervision, this is counted as an additional referral by the department. In summary, this individual's case will result in three new domestic violence probation referrals in one calendar year.

### **Protection Orders**

A Domestic Violence Protection Order is a civil Court Order available to an individual who is a victim of domestic violence, or who is inflicted with the fear of violence by a family or household member (see RCW 26.50.510 for further definition). In general, Protection Orders may contain stipulations that include prohibiting contact of any kind between the abuser and victim, removing the abuser from a shared residence, awarding temporary custody of the children to the victim and setting parameters for visitation, and/or ordering an abuser to obtain a Domestic Violence Evaluation and Domestic Violence Perpetrator Treatment. Protection Orders are generally sought by individuals who are not involved in criminal domestic violence cases, individuals for whom a criminal case does not resolve all safety issues, such as temporary custody and visitation arrangements of children, and individuals who are the alleged victim in criminal domestic violence cases which result in no conviction or a dismissal of the charges or case.

**Domestic Violence Perpetrator Treatment**

Washington Administrative Code 388-60-0025 establishes minimum standards for programs that treat perpetrators of domestic violence. In the State of Washington, the Department of Social and Health Services must certify all domestic violence perpetrator treatment providers. In order to be certified, the program must demonstrate that it meets the standards outlined in WAC 388-60-0025. These state codes assert that the focus of domestic violence perpetrator treatment programs is on ending the program participant's physical, sexual, and psychological abuse. Treatment must be based on strategies and philosophies that hold the participant accountable for the violent and abusive behaviors and are not blaming of the victim. The minimum treatment period for program participants is twenty-six consecutive weekly same gender group sessions followed by monthly sessions until a twelve-month period is complete.

**Population Figures**

Washington State's Office of Financial Management provided all population rates utilized in this report. Whatcom County and Washington State figures are as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Whatcom County</b>	<b>Washington State</b>
1998	160,667	5,685,459
1999	163,774	5,792,214
2000	166,814	5,894,121
2001	170,600	5,974,900
2002	172,200	6,041,700
2003	174,500	6,098,300
2004	177,300	6,167,800

## Acknowledgments

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