Recommendations for Effective Law Enforcement Investigations of Intimate Partner Violence Incidents

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Recommendations for Effective Law Enforcement Investigations of Intimate Partner Violence Incidents

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Elijah Hansen
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Abstract

Law enforcement officers are often considered the gatekeepers to the criminal justice system. Considering there are millions of individuals each year that are affected by intimate partner violence (IPV), it should be important for law enforcement officers to have an understanding of effective investigative techniques when conducting IPV investigations. The purpose of this research paper will be to provide law enforcement officers with those investigative techniques.

Keywords: intimate partner violence, domestic violence response
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I. Introduction

Each year there are millions in the United States who suffer from some form of intimate partner violence (IPV). A National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) (NCADV, 2018) study determined that 10 million men and women experience IPV annually. A third of women have experienced some form of IPV, while 25% of men have experienced some form of IPV. Furthermore, 25% of women and 11% of men have been victims of severe IPV. Additional statistics related to the frequency of IPV and reasons for ineffective law enforcement investigative techniques will be provided later. While the purpose of this research will not be to identify the causes of IPV, it is important to identify the frequency of it. Additionally, an important piece to addressing the issue of IPV is the role law enforcement officers play.

Law enforcement officers are often considered the gatekeepers to the criminal justice system. This is true in considering law enforcement officers are often times the first to respond to IPV calls for service and essentially determine if an individual is charged with an IPV offense (Rhodes et al., 2011; Davis et al., 2008). Traditionally, law enforcement’s role in IPV investigations has been minimal due to feelings that violence in a private home should have no government involvement (Lawson, 2012; Messing et al., 2015). This has contributed to problems and inconsistencies with IPV investigative techniques used by law enforcement officers.

The purpose of this research paper is to provide law enforcement officers with effective investigative techniques when conducting IPV investigations. To assist in developing effective techniques, secondary research will be completed. Also, existing legislation related to IPV offenses will be reviewed as it provides the framework that these law enforcement officers must work in. Additionally, the role of an IPV investigation policy will be examined.
Statement of the Problem

Effective law enforcement techniques for investigating IPV should be established as there are many individuals who are affected yearly by IPV and law enforcement officers are considered the “gatekeepers” for those affected by IPV entering the criminal justice system. Furthermore, the inclusion of research-based police policies and collaboration with other invested stakeholders could have a positive effect on IPV investigations. Additionally, it is important that law enforcement officers understand their importance as investigators of IPV offenses and have the knowledge of what works and what does not work during these investigations.

Initial response from law enforcement officers to IPV calls for service are important, due to the frequency of their response and the role they play in potentially assisting victims of IPV. It has been found that IPV cases make up a large percentage of responses in many larger law enforcement jurisdictions (domesticshelters.org, 2016). Furthermore, new law enforcement officer recruits are trained about the dangers of responding to IPV offenses. This is often based upon the fact law enforcement officers are more likely to be assaulted or killed when responding to IPV calls for service. Between 1980 and 2003, there were 224,000 law enforcement officers assaulted while responding to “family disturbance” events (Johnson, 2011). While the personal safety of all involved in the investigation of IPV offenses should be a priority, proper techniques for investigating these cases should also be a priority.

Research has identified a lack of adequate investigation skills for law enforcement officers who respond to IPV investigations. Rhodes et. al. (2014) found that documentation of IPV offenses, statements made by victims, and important evidentiary factors were not done consistently. The lack of attention to detail and consistency by law enforcement officers when
conducting IPV investigations is concerning and should be addressed. An additional area of concern is law enforcement’s lack of collaboration with other agencies invested in the field of IPV. One recent study found that of the law enforcement officers surveyed (N = 544) did not believe that an advocate would be helpful at the scene of an IPV call for service (Ward-Lasher, A., Messing, J., & Hart, B., 2017).

For many years, law enforcement officers have been tasked with solving multiple problems when dealing with a wide variety of cases. These can range from truancy issues in our school systems, to homelessness, and to drug epidemics. During these situations, law enforcement officers are asked to serve as counselors, social workers, or other non-police roles. Recently, there has been much political debate on returning those roles and decisions back over to experts in those social service issues. This is especially important when responding to cases of IPV. Carter and Grommon (2016) recommended that law enforcement collaborate with other IPV stakeholders to develop consistent reporting procedures, gather evidence, and provide resources for victims of IPV. Examples of IPV stakeholders could be those involved in community corrections, IPV victim advocates, and prosecutors. Additionally, IPV victims may want to avoid law enforcement involvement.

A National Domestic Violence Hotline (2015) survey of 637 women who had experienced some form of IPV revealed that 59% believed law enforcement would find their account of the incident being unbelievable. Additionally, 70% believed that their IPV offenders could increase the likelihood of abuse for them or a law enforcement response would produce no results if law enforcement was called. Finally, 17% of those surveyed believed if a call for assistance was made, they would either be arrested, or the responding officers would have become violent with them. A brief examination of research related to law enforcement response
to IPV shows problems do exist, further proving a need for changes. Further secondary research will be provided later within this paper. Purpose of the research paper will be provided next.

**Purpose of the Study**

When law enforcement officers are investigating cases of IPV, there are many factors that they must consider before making a decision. Several of the factors that law enforcement officers must consider is the safety of themselves, the community, and those involved. Additionally, the decision-making process can include history of the parties involved, likelihood of injury to either party if an arrest is not made, legislation, and department policies related to mandatory arrest. The recommendations for effective and consistent practices be provided to law enforcement officers charged with investigating these cases should account for the complexity of IPV cases. This paper will provide those recommendations, while also utilizing a comparison and contrast of police policies related to IPV investigations.

Many times, the decisions law enforcement officers make are guided by a policy, including what investigative techniques and response are considered appropriate. Additionally, legislation related to IPV also guides law enforcement officers’ decision-making. Several law enforcement agency IPV policies and state legislation will be compared and contrasted to assist in providing recommendations. Regarding IPV police policies, Townsend et. al. (2006) found that 77% of police departments in the United States had a written policy related to IPV investigation.

**Significance of the Study**

As it was previously stated, there is a large number of individuals who are subjected to IPV on a yearly basis. Additionally, with the increase in services that are provided for victims of IPV, it should be important that law enforcement officers can effectively investigate these cases.
As the effectiveness of law enforcement officer investigations of IPV increases, so too does victim assistance. Providing recommendations for law enforcement officer investigations of IPV offenses will help increase effectiveness.

II. Methods of Approach

Various methods were utilized to complete a comprehensive review regarding the response of law enforcement officers to IPV calls for service. To begin, a search of peer reviewed journal articles was done. The key terms that were utilized during the search were intimate partner violence, law enforcement response to intimate partner violence, police response to intimate partner violence, domestic violence, domestic abuse, Violence Against Women Act, domestic violence police policy, intimate partner violence strangulation, and coordinated community response to intimate partner violence. Upon reviewing identified journal articles, the reference section was reviewed in several of the articles and additional articles were located for reference. The databases utilized to locate the journal articles were Google Scholar, Elliot Karmann online library, and the National Criminal Justice Reference Service. Information regarding legislation related to IPV was found through the Iowa Legislature online code (www.legis.iowa.gov/law/iowaCode). IPV statistics were taken from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) website (www.bjs.gov). Within the website, a search tool exists and the term intimate partner violence was utilized to identify statistics and reports related to IPV. Additionally, the NCADV and National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence (NISVS) websites were utilized to identify relevant and current IPV statistics. Reasoning for the selection of certain law enforcement IPV policies are identified later. These policies were located through an examination of their department websites. Policies were located within those online policies.

III. Literature Review
With the previously identified increase in attention that is paid to instances of IPV, an increase of IPV related research has also occurred. This section will provide information related to the history of IPV and causes for increased attention, important statistics related to IPV, a brief overview of laws in the United States related to IPV, and also research regarding law enforcement’s role in IPV investigations. A history of IPV, more specifically American legislation that brought IPV to the attention of so many, will be provided first.

**History of IPV Legislation**

There are many criminal justice theorists who identify the feminist movement of the 1960’s and 1970’s as a turning point in protecting victims of IPV, especially female victims. The feminist movement brought advocacy for gender equality and assisted in the creation of women’s shelters, increased advocacy, and the creation of IPV as a criminal offense (Ali & Naylor, 2013). Additionally, a key legislative moment for changes in the area of IPV was the passing of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in 1994. Legislators who were instrumental in the passing of the VAWA indicated they were supportive of the legislation, because of insufficient responses by law enforcement officers and prosecutors. Since the original passage of the act, it has been reauthorized on three times: 2000, 2005, and 2013. Additionally, recent work has been done to reauthorize the VAWA (Sacco, 2019). The initial passage of VAWA and subsequent reauthorizations provided resource such as funding, guidance for legislation, and additional grants. Programs and resources that came from the passage and reauthorizations will be provided next.

During the original 1994 passage of VAWA, new legislation was enacted to hold IPV offenders accountable. Since the creation of VAWA, arrest policies have been created in throughout the United States. Although VAWA offers numerous resources, specific legislation
is created by each individual state. After the 2005 VAWA reauthorization, any law enforcement agency receiving VAWA funds must have a policy preventing dual arrests in IPV investigations. Additionally, 34 states have implemented primary aggressor policies and reduced responding law enforcement officer discretion when responding to IPV calls for service (Messing et al., 2015; Hirschel & Buzawa, 2012). Furthermore, as states have increased primary aggressor policies, the intimate partner relationship has further been identified. Further information regarding specific legislation in one of those states (Iowa) that have adopted primary aggressor and mandatory arrest policies will be examined. Grant programs that have been created with the creation and subsequent reauthorizations of VAWA will be discussed next.

Since the passage of the original VAWA, law enforcement has benefitted from the grant programs that have been created. These grant programs could not have been possible without the extra money provided through VAWA. Sacco (2019) highlighted six grant programs that were created. The programs are as follows:

1. Preventing domestic violence and sexual assault; 2. Encouraging collaboration among law enforcement, judicial personnel, and public/private sector providers with respect to services for victims of domestic violence and related crimes; 3. Investigating and prosecuting domestic violence and related crimes; 4. Encouraging states, tribes, and local governments to treat domestic violence as a serious crime and implement arrest policies; 5. Bolstering investigations and prosecutions of domestic violence and child abuse in rural states; 12 and 6. Preventing crime in public transportation as well as public and national parks.

These grant programs have provided financing for a large number of positions, trainings, research, and other resources to assist victims of IPV. The subsequent reauthorizations have provided additional resources for IPV victims and those working with those victims.
The VAWA reauthorization of 2000 provided additional grant programs for victims of IPV, more specifically non-immigrants. Additional grant programs to assist with transitional housing were also created. During the VAWA reauthorization of 2005, grant programs to improve law enforcement response were again added. An emphasis on collaboration was also included. Further importance of a collaborative effort during an IPV law enforcement investigation will be provided later. Less money from grant programs was authorized during the 2013 VAWA reauthorization. However, additional steps to protect underserved victims of IPV were also put into place. Also, additional housing rights for victims of IPV were added (Sacco, 2019). Efforts to reauthorize VAWA in 2018 and 2019 have stalled.

A 2019 article from the American Bar Association (ABA) identified issues that have stopped the most recent reauthorization of VAWA. The 2013 VAWA reauthorization expired in 2018, however, funds were extended. An initial House vote for the 2019 VAWA reauthorization passed with a House vote, but a government shutdown meant no Senate vote was held (ABA, 2019). At the time of this writing, funds have been extended, but the VAWA has not been reauthorized. If VAWA is not the answer or is not reauthorized, those working in the IPV field should continue to identify alternative resources to assist victims of IPV. Considering the effect VAWA has had on individual states passing IPV related legislation, providing a brief overview of one of those state’s legislation will be beneficial. By providing an overview of legislation this will provide the reader with the parameters that law enforcement officers work in when investigating IPV calls for service. An overview of the state of Iowa’s IPV legislation will be provided next.

Iowa’s IPV Legislation
Legislation for IPV provides law enforcement officers with guidelines they must follow when responding to IPV calls for service. Additionally, with the suggestions for primary aggressor laws from the passage of VAWA, legislation can also impact law enforcement officer’s decision making during IPV investigations. When examining what states mandate arrest during an IPV call for service, it was found that there are currently 21 states, and the District of Columbia, that mandate an arrest when probable cause exists. During violations of protective orders, 29 states mandate an arrest when probable cause exists to believe a violation of the order has occurred (Zelcer, 2014). The state of Iowa is one of the states that mandates an arrest for an IPV related offense when probable causes exists. However, like many states there are certain criteria that must be met for an arrest to be made. The overview of Iowa’s IPV laws, including what is classified as an intimate partner relationship and what IPV calls for service may result in a mandatory arrest, will be provided next.

Iowa classifies IPV as “domestic abuse” and there is legislation dedicated to defining what is classified as an intimate partner relationship. Iowa Code § 236 (2020) provides those definitions, however, legislation for assault is referenced within the specific IPV code. Essentially, an individual must meet the definition of an intimate partner relationship and commit an assault as defined by Iowa Code § 708 (2020). Further definitions of Iowa’s’ IPV law will be provided next.

Iowa Code § 236.2 (2020) identifies that for someone to be charged with an IPV offense, they must commit an assault, as defined by Iowa Code § 708 (2020) and meet one of several circumstances. If a family member or household member who reside together at the time of the assault or they have been household members within the last year it classifies as an IPV offense. Additionally, if a person is divorced from a former spouse or is separated from a spouse and
commits a defined assault this also classifies as an IPV offense. Also, parents of the same minor child who commit an assault can be charged with an IPV offense. Finally, those involved in an intimate partner relationship may be charged with an IPV offense (Iowa Code § 236.2, 2020). This varies from the previous identified classifications, because law enforcement officers are not mandated to make an arrest (Iowa Code § 708.2A). As stated above, law enforcement officers are mandated to make an arrest when probable cause exists to believe an IPV offense has been committed, but there are some exceptions. To provide best understanding of these situations, definitions of assault according to Iowa Code will be provided next, followed by exceptions to the mandatory arrest laws for IPV offenses.

Iowa Code § 708.1 provides definitions for what is classified an assault and there are different levels based upon injuries sustained by the victim and whether this is an IPV victim or general assault victim. Iowa’s definition for assault is as follows: Any act which is intended to cause pain or injury to, or which is intended to result in physical contact which will be insulting or offensive to another (Iowa Code § 708.1(2)A, 2020). Furthermore, Iowa Code § 708.2 (2020) provides the penalties for assault. Any assault which results in a bodily injury or above is classified as a Serious Misdemeanor and above. There are various levels of misdemeanors and felonies within the state of Iowa. Additionally, anytime someone has the ability to execute an act of assault and places that person in fear of being assaulted, they can be charged with a Simple Misdemeanor assault, which is the lowest level offense in the State of Iowa. Additional legislation for IPV strangulation will be provided next.

In the last two decades there has been an increase in research that has identified the dangers associated with IPV strangulation. The research identified that IPV strangulation was an escalation in use of force by IPV offenders. Additionally, victims of IPV strangulation were 6-7
times as likely to become a victim of an attempted homicide or homicide (Glass et al., 2008). Research of 300 IPV strangulation victims also found that in 89% of the cases, there was a prior history of IPV (Strack et al., 2001). This further proves that strangulation is an escalation in violent intimate partner relationships. The increase in research related to danger has in turn resulted in the creation of IPV strangulation laws in numerous states. As of 2016, there were 44 states, and the District of Columbia, that have laws relating to IPV strangulation (National District Attorney’s Association, 2016). An overview of Iowa’s IPV strangulation law will be provided.

Regarding Iowa’s IPV strangulation law, the same previously identified information of what classifies as an intimate partner relationship also apply to the IPV strangulation law. Also included in Iowa Code § 708.2A (2020), an IPV strangulation offense occurs when the offender “knowingly impeding the normal breathing or circulation of the blood of another by applying pressure to the throat or neck of the other person or by obstructing the nose or mouth of the other person.” When the IPV offender causes a bodily injury to the victim, the offense is classified as a felony. If no bodily injury is sustained by the victim, the offense is classified as an Aggravated misdemeanor. What constitutes a mandatory arrest situation when law enforcement respond to IPV calls for service will be provided next.

Legislation in Iowa states that when law enforcement officers have probable cause to believe an IPV offense occurred, they should use all reasonable means to protect IPV victims from further abuse. One of the ways Iowa law states to prevent further abuse is by mandating when law enforcement officers shall make arrests. Iowa Code § 236.12 provides law enforcement officers with guidance on when they are mandated to make an arrest and how to determine who the primary aggressor is. If a law enforcement officer has probable cause to
believe that an IPV offender caused a bodily or serious injury, used or displayed a dangerous weapon, or strangled their victim, they shall make an arrest. Situations where a law enforcement officer is not mandated to make an arrest is if no bodily injury is observed. Furthermore, the arrest shall only be made after the law enforcement determines who the primary aggressor is. To identify the primary aggressor, Iowa Code § 236. 12 states that the law enforcement officer should consider injuries to those involved, prior history of IPV, and need to protect the IPV victim from further abuse. Now that a brief history of IPV legislation and current legislation from one state have been provided, additional statistics related to the frequency of IPV will be provided.

**IPV Statistics**

In the introduction of this research, numbers from the NCADV (2018) were provided to prove there are large number of individuals that are affected by IPV each year. While these numbers are a starting point, it is also important to examine other statistics related to IPV to determine if there are disparities. Additionally, understanding there are barriers to reporting IPV offenses to law enforcement, this could be an opportunity for law enforcement leaders to determine what steps need to be taken to reach out to those who are still fearful of involving law enforcement in their personal lives.

An examination of the 2018 Criminal Victimization report collected by the BJS, showed an increase in IPV cases in 2018. The number of individuals experiencing IPV was 3.1 per 1,000, which was an increase of 0.9 from the 5-year low of 2.2 in 2016. This equates to 847,230 victims in 2019 compared to 597,200 in 2016. Another source states that 25% of women and 7.6% of men report being a victim of IPV during their lifetime (Cronholm et al., 2011). An additional source for data on the prevalence of IPV is the NISVS.
The 2015 NISVS survey produced similar results regarding female victims of IPV, but different statistics related to male victims of IPV. Approximately 25% of American women have experienced some form of sexual or physical violence or stalking from an intimate partner. The number of males experiencing similar situations is approximately 10%. An area that the NISVS addressed, which often is ignored by other research, is the additional impacts being a victim of IPV may have.

While it may be understandable for victims of IPV to suffer from a physical injury, the long-term effects of IPV are also present. Of the women identified in the 2015 NISVS survey who were victims of some form of IPV, approximately one-fifth were concerned for their safety, almost 20% reported being fearful, close to 15% experienced some form of PTSD, and only one-tenth indicated they needed assistance from law enforcement. These numbers are statistically larger than those of men. Of the men identified as victims of some form of IPV, less than 6% were concerned for their safety, less than 5% were fearful, only 3.4% experienced some form of PTSD, and fewer than 4% indicated they needed assistance from law enforcement. Statistics for IPV offenses reported to law enforcement will be discussed next.

It has already been established that barriers exist for reporting cases of IPV to law enforcement. Providing a statistic related to this matter will provide law enforcement officers with an understanding of the work that needs to be done to increase reporting. Furthermore, statistics related to the percentage of cases charged will also be provided.

From a 2017 BJS report on Police Response to Domestic Violence (2006-2015), it was found that law enforcement was notified of 56% of IPV victimizations. Based upon this percentage, it is estimated that from 2006-2015, law enforcement responded to 716,000 IPV calls for service while 582,000 went unreported. Of those IPV calls for service, law enforcement
officers filed charges or arrested the IPV offender 39% of the time. Those with a serious injury reported the incident to police at a rate of 54% (female victims) and 77% (male victims). Reasons identified from this report for not reporting the IPV offense to law enforcement will be provided next.

Reaves (2017) found that of the IPV cases not reported to law enforcement, 8% were due to a fear of an inefficient or biased police response. Additionally, almost 20% of victims did not report the offense out of fear of retribution or not wanting their offender to have criminal justice involvement. An additional victim survey collected by the National Domestic Violence Hotline (2015) found that 59% of IPV victims who had never called law enforcement before, believed law enforcement would not do anything. Additionally, 7 out of 10 surveyed believed that by contacting law enforcement, little to no punishment would be given to their offender or the abuse would increase. Of the IPV victims who did contact law enforcement, over 40% experience some form of discrimination from law enforcement. An additional research article identified numerous barriers to reporting IPV incidents to law enforcement.

A 2015 American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) report identified many additional barriers that exist in reporting cases of IPV to law enforcement. Of the more than 900 people that responded to the survey, 88% of IPV victims reported that law enforcement blames the victims for the violence they suffered. Additionally, 70% reported contact with law enforcement for IPV related offense could lead to loss of housing, employment, and/or other benefits. Another research study found additional concerns regarding law enforcement’s response to female victims of IPV.

Leisenring’s (2012) qualitative research with female victims of IPV found that there is a lack of appropriate response from law enforcement officers. Of the female victims interviewed,
over half were dissatisfied with the response and significantly more (two-thirds) had their offender arrested against their wishes. Additionally, the victims surveyed felt the responding law enforcement officers were critical of their need for help, were not sympathetic, and/or blamed the victims for their involvement. This fear goes even further with individuals from marginalized communities.

The same ACLU (2015) report identified that lesbian women and gay men suffer IPV at a higher rate than heterosexual IPV victims. Further research identified that somewhere between 25-50% of gay men experience physical IPV (Finneran & Stephenson, 2013). Additionally, individuals from the LGBTQ community reported that law enforcement failed to classify their victimization as an IPV offense. Furthermore, their fears were underrated by responding law enforcement officers. In cases involving Spanish speaking victims of IPV, law enforcement officers never spoke to the victim in 31% of the investigations. Also, only 29.4% of IPV victims who spoke Spanish were able to communicate effectively with the responding law enforcement officers. Further research should be conducted regarding barriers to law enforcement reporting and also issues with law enforcement response.

The history of IPV legislation, current IPV legislation, and statistics related to IPV offenses are important for understanding the best response to IPV calls for service. While law enforcement officers only serve as one portion of a CCR, an understanding of these items will assist in developing a best response for law enforcement officers. Additional literature review related to law enforcement response to IPV will be provided next.

Law Enforcement’s Role in IPV Response

As it was discussed earlier in this research, law enforcement officers are the gatekeepers to the criminal justice system. This is no different when examining the role law enforcement
officers play when responding to IPV calls for service. The history of law enforcement’s role in this position and recent statistics compiled by various agencies, have shown there is an issue in the way law enforcement has traditionally responded to these calls for service. For the purposes of developing an effective response to IPV calls for service by law enforcement officers, literature review of law enforcement’s role in the IPV response will be conducted next.

With the introduction of numerous movements, the increase in law enforcement involvement in private matters increased, especially in the area of IPV. This increase in law enforcement involvement is going against what has traditionally been the norm of leaving these types of problems for the family to solve or referring the issue to other non-law enforcement agencies. Traditionally when responding to IPV calls for service, law enforcement priorities were separating parties, referring to those other non-law enforcement professionals, or simply not responding. Additionally, personal influences, such as believing only men can be perpetrators of IPV and organizational influences had a large impact on a law enforcement officer’s decision-making process (Townsend, M. et al, 2006; Nelson, 2013). Examining insufficient investigations of IPV calls for service and the research related to it will be done next.

Many times, when a law enforcement officer responds to an IPV call for service, they are relying upon past experience, history of known parties involved, and also biases they may have developed. Often times, these pre-conceived notions can have a negative effect on the outcome of the investigation. Nelson (2013) found that routinely lower effort (RLE) law enforcement officers’ IPV investigations have significantly more reasons for rejection from prosecutors. Additionally, these same officers submit cases with insufficient evidence and unclear or inexact investigations. This compares to only 70% of cases that are rejected from routinely greater effort (RGE) officers. RLE officers received three time more reasons for no prosecution of offenses
than did RGE officer. Furthermore, of the cohort researched (n = 4700), 8% of the law enforcement officers produced more than half of the convictions. A total of 46% of the law enforcement officers did not produce a single arrest during the year the data was examined.

Research examining the role of a coordinated community response (CCR) will be provided next.

Qualitative research has found that if a case is charged by a law enforcement officer, communication between the prosecutor and IPV victim can prove to be beneficial. Additionally, a CCR can reduce the likelihood of an IPV offender re-offending while also increasing victim safety. Also, by including advocacy organizations and other partners working for the best interest of the IPV victim, the victim’s wishes for outcomes will be taken into consideration. This will assist in the balancing act of holding IPV offenders accountable and also respecting the wishes of the victim and allowing them to have a significant voice in the court process (Rhodes et al., 2011; Messing et al. 2015). Additional research regarding an IPV victim’s involvement in the prosecution portion found success with their involvement. IPV victims who were not given a choice of pursuing or dropping an IPV prosecution were more likely to suffer re-victimization than those who were given the option (Barner & Carney, 2011). It is clear through the research, that involving IPV victims in the decision-making process and also providing wrap around care for IPV victims will greatly benefit not only them, but all involved.

While there are many things to consider when drafting recommendations for effective law enforcement response to IPV calls for service, having an understanding of the negative history and improvements to the system can help positively shape future efforts. Additionally, an effective law enforcement policy can also shape an effective response and investigation. To assist in the drafting of these recommendations, a review of current law enforcement policies will be conducted next.
IV. Law Enforcement IPV Policy Review

Many times, law enforcement officers utilize their police agency’s policies to guide the decisions they make in a variety of investigations. Policies can be written for a multitude of different topics and situations and IPV investigations are no different. As it was provided earlier, 77% of law enforcement agencies surveyed in Townsend et al.’s (2016) report had a policy related to IPV. To provide the framework that law enforcement officers work in, several policies will be reviewed. The purpose of providing a review of these different policies was to provide an outlook from different law enforcement agencies. The first policy reviewed from the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), because of its influence with law enforcement administrators. Secondly, two agencies that approach IPV from CCR will be provided. Lastly, 3 municipal law enforcement agencies will be reviewed. These policies were selected based upon the variance in size of agency and region. Considering, the CCR policies are from the southwestern United States, 1 agency policy was selected from the Midwest, 1 from a Northeastern United States city, and lastly 1 was from an eastern United States city. First, a review of the IACP model policy will be provided first.

IACP Model Policy Review

The IACP is a not for profit professional organization of 30,000 members in over 160 countries. Since IACP was created in 1893, the organization has provided resources for law enforcement professionals such as research, training, and programming (IACP, 2020). Due to IACP’s influence and inclusion of law enforcement policy makers around the United States, an examination of IACP’s IPV model policy was reviewed.

IACP’s model policy for a law enforcement response was released via their website and updated in April of 2019. There are numerous sections included within the policy including:
purpose, policy, definitions, and procedures. The section that will be focused on is the procedures portion of the policy.

The procedures section of the IACP IPV model policy (2019) has multiple relevant sections. The first section addressed is the communications personnel (dispatcher) response. This section recommends that communications personnel dispatch two officers. Information gathered during the call should be relayed to responding law enforcement officers. Any change in information gathered should also be relayed. Resources available to communication personnel should allow them to determine previous cases of IPV. Previous contacts at the address law enforcement officers are dispatched to should be provided to responding law enforcement officers. If possible, communications personnel should try and keep the reporting party on the line until responding law enforcement officers arrive. A final suggestion for communications personnel is to send law enforcement officers even if the caller indicates a law enforcement response is no longer needed. The next policy section that will be examined is the initial law enforcement officer response.

To assist in the protection of law enforcement officers responding to IPV calls for service, the IACP (2019) IPV model policy directs officers to park away from the residence of the disturbance. Additionally, first responding law enforcement officers should request entry into the residence to make contact with witness, victims, and/or perpetrators. While on scene, law enforcement officers should check for injuries, including visible, non-visible, and/or strangulation. Medical attention should be requested if a strangulation has occurred or if a law enforcement officer feels the need for a potential victim to be screened by a medical professional. Further investigative tools for law enforcement officers responding to IPV calls for service will be provided next.
On-scene investigative techniques and evidence collection techniques for law enforcement officers were provided. The IACP (2019) IPV model policy recommends law enforcement officers conduct IPV victim interviews away from anyone else who may be on scene. Additionally, questions related to previous instances of IPV should be asked and also determining if any threats were made to IPV victims. Photographs of both the IPV victim and offender should be taken, regardless of injuries. Also, follow up photographs of the IPV victim should be taken in increments of 24, 48, and 72 hours after the IPV assault was reported. Any potential evidence from the scene should also be collected. Additional interviews with any potential witnesses should be conducted, paying special attention to interviewing child who may have witnessed the incident. Discussing what responding law enforcement officers should not do during IPV calls for service will be discussed next.

During the course of the IPV investigation, it is stated that law enforcement officers say anything that would discourage a victim of IPV from reporting the incident. Additionally, no law enforcement officer should “threaten, suggest, or other indicate the possible arrest of all parties to discourage future requests for intervention by law enforcement personnel” (IACP, 2019, p.3). Also included in the model policy is guidance for making an arrest decision. Considering each state has different legislation regarding mandatory arrest and previous legislative already provided, no further information regarding arrest decision will be provided. However, it should be noted that it is addressed in the IACP model policy (2019) that dual arrests are strongly discouraged. The next section addressed will be documentation of IPV calls for service.

Regardless if an arrest was made after a law enforcement responds to an IPV call for service, the IACP (2019) IPV model policy suggests that a “thorough, detailed” report should be
completed (p.5). Additionally, elements related to the relationship between the parties involved should be documented. Furthermore, it is suggested that a law enforcement agency representative be assigned to have follow up contact with IPV victims. Collaboration and training are also addressed in the policy. Additional IPV policy reviews will be provided next.

**Pima and Maricopa County (Arizona) IPV Policy Reviews**

When attempting to identify law enforcement policies for IPV investigations, policies from the Pima County, Arizona Domestic Violence Task Force (PCDVTF) and the Maricopa County, Arizona Attorney’s Office (MCAO) were located. It is important to note, these two agencies identify their policies as protocols, but to maintain consistency throughout this research, they will be addressed as policies. Included in both the PCDVTF (2010) and MCAO (2015) policies was guidance for law enforcement officers on how to thoroughly conduct IPV investigations. While there are numerous similarities between the PCDVTF IPV policy (2010) and the MCAO IPV policy (2015), differences still exist. A review of these policies will be provided next.

Both the PCDVTF (2010) and MCAO (2015) IPV policies include guidance for aiding victims of IPV, not only from a law enforcement officer perspective, but also various other stakeholders. Included in those, is guidance for medical personnel, IPV victim services, prosecutors, and probation offices. Through these inclusions of stakeholders, these policies are committed to a CCR to IPV. Although a large portion of the policies are dedicated to stakeholders other than law enforcement, only a review of guidelines for law enforcement officers will be provided.

Similar to the IACP (2019) IPV model policy, both the PCDVTF (2010) and MCAO (2015) policies implement guidelines for communications personnel who receive IPV calls for
Both policies suggest dispatching two law enforcement officers to IPV calls for service. Additionally, the policies state that no communications personnel will discuss a victim’s desire to press and/or drop charges against their offender or pursue prosecution. Also, it is required that communications personnel determine injuries, prior history, potential witnesses, and if there were any weapons used. The next topic covered will be the policies’ law enforcement officers’ response to IPV calls for service.

An area that differentiates the PCDVTF (2010) and MCAO (2015) policies from the other policies that will be examined is the guidance given on how to determine who the primary aggressor is during IPV calls for service. Included in this guidance are a list of questions that help law enforcement officers on scene make that determination. The questions are the following:

a. Was on party in actual fear of the other? b. Did on party escalate the level of violence? c. Was one party physically larger and stronger than the other? d. Was there a history of violence by one of the parties against the other or against other persons? e. Does one party have a history of being the aggressor? f. Does one party have more serious injuries than the other party? g. Do any injuries appear to be defense wounds, i.e., wounds inflicted by a person as a last means of escape (bite marks, scratching)?

While there are policies that address the need to identify who the primary aggressor is during IPV calls for service, few have provided in-depth guidance on how to identify who the primary aggressor was. With much legislation regarding the importance of identifying IPV primary aggressors, providing guidance to law enforcement officers on how to identify these aggressors is important. Further investigative techniques will be provided next.
Both the PCDVTF (2010) and MCAO (2015) policies state responding law enforcement officers should approach the scene with caution and attempt to gather evidence prior to contact. This can be accomplished by looking and listening to what is occurring before contact with the involved parties is made. When conducting interviews with the parties involved, both policies advise statements should be conducted separately and documented thoroughly. While documenting the content of the interview should be done, both policies also recommend documenting the state of mind of all parties involved. Additionally, prior instances of IPV between the parties involved should be documented. Suggestions for the collection of physical evidence is also provided.

When documenting any physical injuries, both the PCDVTF (2010) and MCAO (2015) policies suggest photographing any injuries or lack thereof on both parties involved. Additionally, both policies suggest describing the crime scene for signs of a struggle and also photographing the scene. Also, both policies also suggest the recording and documentation of excited utterances which may be beneficial in the prosecution of IPV offenders. Reporting requirements for both policies will be discussed next.

A difference between the two policies was found in reporting requirements for law enforcement officers responding to IPV calls for service. The MCAO (2015) policy requires that a law enforcement officer who responds to an IPV call for service that is covered in the protocol “must” complete a report. However, the PCDVTF (2010) policy indicates that law enforcement officers will prepare a report “when the elements of the crime are present (p.10).” Post response suggestions from the policy will be provided next.

It has been identified that an important part of effectively addressing IPV is participating in a CCR. To assist in this area, both the PCDVTF (2010) and MCAO (2015) policies suggest
including IPV victim services as soon as possible. Additionally, the PCDVTF (2010) policy provides recommendations for follow up investigations to be completed by investigative personnel. Contained in this recommendation is follow up photographs. Finally, the MCAO (2015) recognizes the severity of IPV strangulation and dedicated a section of its’ law enforcement response to responding to IPV strangulation. To provide further information on guidance given to law enforcement officers responding to IPV calls for service, several municipal law enforcement agency’s IPV response policies will be reviewed.

**Municipal Law Enforcement Agency IPV Policy Reviews**

The recommendations provided by the IACP (2019), PCDVTF (2010), and MCAO (2015) policies provide those interested in establishing effective law enforcement techniques when responding to IPV. To assist in providing recommendations for law enforcement officers investigating IPV calls for service, 3 municipal law enforcement agency’s policies will be reviewed. The IPV policies that are reviewed will be the Iowa City, Iowa Police Department (ICPD) created in 1999, reissued in 2015, and reevaluated in 2016, the Baltimore, Maryland Police Department (BPD) published in 2016, and the New Haven, Connecticut (NHPD) issued in 2015. The first reviewed will be the ICPD (2016) IPV policy.

The ICPD IPV policy was originally issued in 1999, was reissued in 2015, and reevaluated in 2016. Similar to the other policies already reviewed, ICPD’s (2015) IPV policy is divided into 4 sections: Purpose, Policy, Definitions, and Procedures. The majority of the mandates or direction for law enforcement officers is included in the procedures portion. Also included in the procedures portion is the communications personnel responsibilities. All incidents of IPV should be dispatched to a minimum of law enforcement officers. Communications personnel should attempt to ask a series of 11 questions to assist in determining
where the IPV occurred, who is involved, what happened, where any weapons involved, prior incidents of IPV, and other items. Additionally, communications personnel should attempt to gather updates from the reporting party and provide those updates to responding law enforcement officers. Initial response guidelines for responding law enforcement officers will be provided next.

Initial response guidelines for the ICPD (2015) IPV policy, like the other policies previously reviewed, recommend law enforcement officers to approach the scene in a safe and alert manner. If medical attention is needed, law enforcement officers should request medical attention. Regarding interviews of the parties involved, responding law enforcement officers should separate those individuals and interview all involved. After the interviews are complete, the responding law enforcement officers should have a conference “with the goal of arriving at a consensus for determining whether to arrest.” An additional purpose of the conference is to determine who the primary aggressor is. Evidence collection policy will be provided next.

ICPD (2015) IPV policy recommends responding law enforcement officers photograph victim, children, and scene. When photographing the scene, responding law enforcement officers should photograph broken objects and any disarray. Additional evidence that should be collected could be torn clothing and/or broken objects. Reporting and follow up procedures will be completed next.

According to the ICPD (2015) IPV policy, any law enforcement officer who responds to an IPV call for service shall complete a report. Any report that involves an IPV offense are forwarded to ICPD’s “domestic abuse investigator.” Follow up photographs may be taken to provide a context for any changes in injuries sustained by the victim. The next policy that will be reviewed is the BPD IPV policy.
BPD’s (2016) IPV policy was published in 2016. Unlike the previously reviewed IPV policies, BPD’s (2016) IPV policy indicates their IPV response is a preferred arrest response versus a mandatory arrest. It does however indicate that dual arrests are discouraged. Included in the BPD (2016) IPV policy, communications personnel should notify responding officers of any IPV related calls for service. Law enforcement officer response will be provided next.

BPD’s (2016) IPV policy does not provide guidance for law enforcement officers in how to interview witnesses, suspects, or victims of IPV. However, guidance is written for when children who witness incidents of IPV. Regarding law enforcement response, the policy indicates that responding law enforcement officers should conduct a “thorough preliminary investigation to determine the primary aggressor.” Additionally, law enforcement officers should process the crime scene and injuries to the suspect and/or the victim. Reporting requirements will be reviewed.

In IPV calls for service where responding law enforcement officers believe an IPV offense was committed or alleged, the BPD (2015) IPV policy requires a report be completed. If an investigation reveals that no IPV incident occurred or the situation is unfounded, responding law enforcement officers are can clear the call with no report. The next policy that will be reviewed is NHPD IPV policy.

The NHPD (2015) IPV policy provides response procedures for communications personnel which includes obtaining information related to the parties involved in an IPV incident. Additionally, communications personnel should determine if there are any children present and if there is drug or alcohol usage. The next area that will be discussed is the responding law enforcement officer procedures.
Similar to previous IPV policies reviewed, the NHPD (2015) IPV policy recommends that law enforcement officers interview the parties involved separately. Also, responding law enforcement officers should obtain statements from the IPV victim and obtain a signed medical release to assist in documenting any injuries sustained during the IPV incident. Further information regarding when a law enforcement officer should make an arrest for an IPV offense and when discretion is allowed, per Connecticut state law is provided within the policy. Suggested evidence collection methods will be reviewed.

The NHPD (2015) IPV policy suggests the scene of the IPV be documented. Additionally, photographs of the scene and injuries to the victim should be taken. Law enforcement officers responding to IPV offenses should also provide assistance to victims of IPV and assist victims in developing safety plans. Additional information regarding victim services is further provided in the policy. Dual arrests and guidance in investigating these situations are reviewed next.

Contained within the NHPD (2015) IPV policy are considerations for responding law enforcement officers when faced with dual complaints. Throughout the policy, it never explicitly states that dual arrests should be avoided, rather discusses the need for investigating law enforcement officers to evaluate each complaint separately. Furthermore, recommendations for investigating whether or not self-defense was used are provided. Additionally, it states within the policy that there may be situations where one party can be arrested for an IPV offense and the other for a non IPV charge “such as interfering with an officer.” It further goes on to say that these situations would not constitute a dual arrest. Policy requirements regarding written reports will be reviewed next.
Within the NHPD (2015) IPV policy there were no requirements for when a report should be completed. A further examination of the NHPD policies, which were found via their website, a policy regarding what calls for service requiring reports was located. NHPD (2017) Incident reports policy, states that law enforcement officers shall complete a written report for any call for service that results in an arrest for an IPV related offense. However, the same policy states that responding law enforcement officers who do not discover any additional information more than what the communications personnel learned, do not have to complete a written report. To assist in summarizing what was learned from these policy reviews, a comparison and contrast of the policies will be completed next.

**Comparison and Contrast of Reviewed IPV Policies**

The law enforcement IPV policies that were selected for review were taken from 6 separate criminal justice agencies. Additionally, the agencies that were represented were from different parts of the United States and the law enforcement agencies varied in size. Having an understanding of various and varied policies will assist in providing law enforcement officers with effective investigative techniques when responding to IPV calls for service. During the review of these policies, many similarities were found, but also many differences were also identified. A brief review of the similarities identified will be provided first.

In reviewing the policies, each policy had sections dedicated to communications personnel and initial law enforcement officer response. Each policy recommended the separate interviewing of all parties involved. Additionally, the need to assess for injuries to those involved and request medical attention was mandated. The collection of evidence during the IPV investigations is also consistent throughout the policies. While the depth of suggestions for evidence collection varies from policies, each policy addresses the need to collect evidence.
Every policy, with the exception of the ICPD (2015) IPV policy, addresses dual arrest situations. Differences noticed during the policies review will be examined next.

While each policy is unique to each agency, there are many differences throughout the policies that were found. Each policy varied in initial officer response and approach. Two of the policies, BPD (2016) and NHPD (2015), did not provide direction on safe approaches to IPV calls for service. Furthermore, reporting requirements varied and left discretion to law enforcement officers when reports should be completed. Through an examination of the history of IPV legislation, current legislation, current statistics related to IPV, and IPV policies recommendations for effective law enforcement investigations of IPV calls for service can be provided. The next section will be dedicated to providing recommendations for law enforcement officers responding to IPV investigations.

V. Best Practices for Law Enforcement Investigations of IPV Calls for Service

The purpose of this research was to identify recommendations for effective law enforcement officer investigations of IPV calls for service. By providing research related to the legislative history of IPV, current IPV laws, scholarly research related to law enforcement response to IPV, and current IPV law enforcement policies, effective recommendations have been identified. This section will provide those effective recommendations. Communications personnel’s role in IPV calls for service will be provided next.

Communications Personnel Recommendations

Although the purpose of this research was not to identify effective response from communications personnel to IPV calls for service, through the examination of the research, especially in the above reviewed law enforcement policies, the importance of communications personnel during IPV calls for service was identified. Communications personnel are often
overlooked when discussing the criminal justice field. Frequently, communications personnel are the first line who speaks to victims of IPV. Communications personnel have to assess situations and determine any dangers to law enforcement officers dispatched that are responding. Additionally, even though communications personnel work in a generally safe environment, they still experience similar difficulties that other first responders do (Golding, 2017). Communications personnel recommendations will be provided next.

When an IPV call for service, a minimum of two law enforcement officers should be dispatched to investigate. Prior to the law enforcement officer arrival, communications personnel should attempt to gather any information related to the IPV including who is involved and what happened. Any past history of IPV or past law enforcement calls for service should be gathered and provided to responding law enforcement officers. Additionally, communications personnel should attempt to determine if there were any weapons were involved and what weapons were used. As information is being provided and new information is learned, communications personnel shall provide that information to responding law enforcement officers. If an attempt to cancel law enforcement response is made, law enforcement response should not be cancelled. The next recommendations will be for initial law enforcement officer response.

**Initial Law Enforcement Officer Response Recommendations**

As it was earlier indicated in the research, IPV calls for service can be dangerous and deadly for law enforcement officers. Any act that can be done to increase the safety of responding law enforcement officers should be taken. Upon approach to the scene of an IPV call for service, law enforcement officers shall park away from the area and approach carefully on foot. While at the scene, the law enforcement officers should wait and listen to determine if they
can hear if anything can assist them in determining who the primary aggressor is. Entry into the location where the IPV incident has occurred or is occurring should be attempted. Importance of separation of parties will be discussed next.

Upon entry to the location of the IPV incident and the areas are determined to be safe by responding law enforcement officers, an assessment for any injuries should be done. During IPV calls for service in which injuries are sustained (any party involved), medical personnel should be called. It was earlier established through the literature review the dangers associated with IPV strangulation (Glass et al., 2008; Strack, McLane & Hawley, 2001). Due to these dangers, screening for strangulation injuries should also be done. If an IPV strangulation victim is identified, medical personnel shall be called to assess injuries. Interviewing techniques for IPV calls for service will be provided in the next section.

**Interviewing Parties of IPV Calls for Service**

Once safe approach and entry to the location of the IPV offense and an injury assessment is complete, the interview process should begin. This section will identify effective IPV investigation techniques for all parties involved. These parties may include victims, offenders, witnesses, and children. The first party addressed will be interviewing victims of IPV.

As it has been shown earlier in this research, victims of IPV fear contacting law enforcement for assistance, because of various reasons (Reaves, 2017; National Domestic Violence Hotline, 2015; ACLU, 2015; Leisenring, 2012). One way that law enforcement officers who respond to IPV calls for service can assist victims is through their interview techniques. Responding law enforcement officers should separate all parties involved. The purpose of separating parties involved is to limit the amount of control IPV offenders can have over their victims. Many times, IPV offenders will use physical IPV to maintain and establish
control in their intimate partner relationships (Hamberger, Larsen, & Lehrner, 2017). Additionally, by separating potential witnesses and/or children, this could also limit the amount of control IPV offenders have. Additional interview techniques for law enforcement officers will be provided next.

Law enforcement officers should remain objective during their interview process. Additionally, questions related to establishing the primary aggressor should be asked. Considering each state has legislation regarding primary aggressor identification, law enforcement policy, training, and experience should guide individualized interview techniques to determine the primary aggressor. The purpose of this research is not to teach law enforcement officers responding interviewing techniques. When interviewing victims of IPV, law enforcement officers should be aware of the likelihood of re-victimization. One study identified IPV victims are re-victimized 15% of the time by the same offender (Goodlin & Dunn, 2010). Also, considering prior research cited earlier in this research regarding the increase in violence for victims of IPV strangulation, gathering background information on prior IPV assaults is important. Providing further statistics and policies supporting separate interviews for children who witness instances of IPV will be provided next.

Nearly 11% of children witnessed some form of IPV, while 6.6% witnessed some form of physical IPV (Hamby et al., 2011). Additionally, the MCAO (2015) and PCDVTF (2010) advocate for forensic interviews of children exposed to IPV be completed by experts in children advocacy centers. With separate interviews, investigating law enforcement officers will increase the likelihood of obtaining an accurate description of what occurred during an IPV incident. Providing adequate services to IPV victims who don’t speak English will be discussed next.
It was found during an examination of the ACLU (2015) report on law enforcement response to IPV, that only 18% of those surveyed found it was never a problem for law enforcement officers responding to IPV calls for service to use some form of language interpretation during their investigation. Additionally, 25% felt often times the lack of using language interpretation was a problem when law enforcement officers responded. It is the recommendation that when a law enforcement officer finds that a victim or witness of IPV is identified, all efforts should be made to utilize an interpreter for who is being interviewed. Only approved interpreters or interpreter services should be used. Documentation of interviews and interactions during IPV calls for service will be provided next.

The most recent data compiled and released by the BJS regarding use of body worn cameras (BWC) by law enforcement officers includes data from 2016 and was released in November 2018. During this BJS (2018) report, it was found that almost half of all law enforcement agencies in the United States implemented BWC. Usage and deployment of BWC by law enforcement officers has increased over the last decade and with advancements in technology, this will increase. With the increase and future increase in usage of BWC, the ability to document statements will increase. It is the recommendation, based upon the review of the previously identified policies that all interviews be recorded with audio and video. Additionally, if there is an opportunity to gather a written statement from IPV victims, a statement should be gathered. Interviewing techniques are an important part of the law enforcement investigation of IPV calls for service, an additional part is physical evidence collection. Recommendations for collecting physical evidence for IPV investigations will be provided next.

Collecting Physical Evidence by Law Enforcement Officers During IPV Investigations
Information collected from the communications personnel, initial law enforcement response, and interviews of parties can all be considered evidence collected during IPV investigations. There is also importance in collecting physical evidence at the scene of an IPV call for service. Upon arrival to the scene of an IPV call for service, responding law enforcement officers should be attempting to locate physical evidence. Additionally, upon entry into the location where the IPV incident occurred, responding law enforcement officers should be attempting to locate physical evidence. The ICPD (2016) IPV policy provides examples of physical evidence from the scene like “broken objects, weapons, general disarray (p.8).”

Photographing the parties involved will be discussed next.

Injuries to parties involved should be documented with photographs. While it was previously discussed that BWC serve as a great tool for documentation, photographic evidence should also be taken. Photographs of both the IPV victim and offenders should be taken during the investigation. Additionally, follow up photographs with victims should be taken. IACP (2019) model IPV policy suggests follow up photographs of IPV victim’s injuries should be taken in increments of “24, 48, and 72 hours later in the vent the injuries become more visible and pronounced (p.2).” Additional physical evidence collection recommendations will be provided next.

Through interviews with individuals involved in IPV calls for service, responding law enforcement officers should attempt to determine if any weapons were used. During cases of IPV involving weapons, all efforts should be made to seize any weapons that are used. Prior to the item or weapon being seized, photographs of where the weapon was located should be taken. This should only be done in cases where it is safe for everyone on the scene of the IPV call for service. Providing effective techniques for evidence collection during IPV calls for service are
an important part of the entire process. Additional resources that are available for responding law enforcement officers through a CCR will be provided next.

**Coordinated Community Response**

In the introduction of the research, IPV stakeholders were identified. Building relationships with these stakeholders should be a priority of law enforcement administration. Additionally, it is important for the law enforcement officers who are responding to those IPV calls for service to know the IPV stakeholders involved and the resources available for IPV victims. The more all IPV stakeholders have an understanding of their defined roles and resources, the more successful everyone will be holding IPV offenders accountable and assisting IPV victims in receiving the necessary resources and assistance.

**VI. Summary and Conclusion**

With much more attention being paid to instances of IPV, legislation has increased. The increase of legislation has led to an increase in IPV law enforcement policies. Statistics and research related to the policies and practices related to law enforcement response to IPV has shown a need for an improved response. The recommendations provided above are based upon a review of the research, policies, and legislation to provide effective recommendations for law enforcement officers response to IPV calls for service. A summary of those recommendations will be provided next.

There are many important parts that make up an effective IPV response for law enforcement officers. First, having an adequate response from communications personnel could assist in keeping responding law enforcement officers safe. Secondly, information gathered from the caller, could assist law enforcement officers during their subsequent investigations. Providing resources, statistics, training, and including communication personnel in IPV related
policies will further improve an overall response to IPV calls for service. The next summary provided will be for law enforcement officers response.

In the above listed recommendations, law enforcement officers play an important role in ensuring victims of IPV are provided with an adequate response. Through effective investigative techniques provided, guidance provided through a law enforcement policy, and legislation related to IPV and how to apply it, response for victims can be improved. It is important for responding law enforcement officers to have knowledge on how to interview all parties of IPV, collect evidence, and collaborate with agencies dedicated to IPV. Combining all these factors, IPV victims will be better served. A conclusion of the research will be completed next.

Considering the number of individuals affected each year by IPV, more law enforcement officers should take IPV calls for service seriously. With the research provided, it is clear that much can be done to improve this response. Additional research should be conducted on law enforcement’s response to IPV, which can further provide recommendations. Finally, further collaborative efforts should be made between law enforcement and IPV partners. The responsibility for improved response lies not only on responding law enforcement officers, but everyone in the law enforcement agency from top to bottom.
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