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NEW YORK STATE LAUNCHES DOMESTIC INCIDENT REPORT (DIR) REPOSITORY

New secure, online database gives law enforcement in the Upstate and Long Island counties cross-jurisdictional access to information that can enhance officer, victim safety

Elizabeth Glazer, the Governor's deputy secretary for public safety, today announced the availability of the state's first Domestic Incident Report Repository, offering law enforcement officials cross-jurisdictional information about reported incidents of domestic violence in the Upstate and Long Island counties. For the first time, law enforcement will be able to search for incident information regardless of which police agency responded to a call or filed a report.



Deputy Secretary for Public Safety Elizabeth Glazer describes the state's new Domestic Incident Report Repository, which provides law enforcement officials cross-jurisdictional access to information about reported incidents of domestic violence in the Upstate and Long Island counties.

Photo by Judy Sanders

"Domestic incidents can be volatile and as we have seen in communities across the state, too often deadly," Deputy Secretary Glazer said. "This new tool provides access to information that will enable local law enforcement to more safely respond to calls, enhance the prosecution of domestic violence crimes and improve the supervision of offenders on parole and probation, and in doing so, better protect domestic violence survivors and break the cycle of abuse."

"This project is a perfect example of how New York State provides support to local law enforcement on the front lines in the fight against crime so that they can better protect their communities," Deputy Secretary Glazer added.

Deputy Secretary Glazer joined with law enforcement officials and domestic violence victims' advocates from across the state to discuss the Repository at a press conference in Ballston Spa at the offices of Saratoga County District Attorney James A. Murphy III, who is a member of the state's Domestic Violence Advisory Council.

The Repository gives authorized users such as police officers, sheriffs' deputies, prosecutors and probation and parole officers the ability to search domestic incident reports filed by agencies in the 57 counties outside of New York City; those agencies file approximately 175,000 domestic incident reports (DIRs) annually.

Authorized users will be able to search the secure, electronic database by victim or offender name, incident address or document number. Police dispatchers also will be able to use the system to advise responding officers about potential threats and history of incidents at an address, giving officers an opportunity to determine the best way to staff and handle a call for help. [View DIR Repository sample search results](#)

District Attorney Murphy said: "Domestic violence is a crime that frequently occurs as a pattern of behavior, but that pattern could go undetected if an abuser moves from county to county. It also is a crime that can escalate if there is no intervention. The Repository provides access to information that can detail those patterns of behavior, allowing prosecutors to build stronger cases and hold offenders accountable."

Added Todd Baxter, chief of the Greece Police Department in Monroe County: "The DIR Repository allows for the distribution of critical information and improves my officers' ability to identify risk factors and intervention strategies. The sharing of information also leads to effective multi-agency collaboration, which can provide safety for victims and accountability for offenders. Intervention is critical in keeping victims safe."

Police are required to file a paper Domestic Incident Report to document each call, regardless of whether an arrest was made, and provide copies of those reports to the state. The document contains a wealth of information, including the names of the individuals involved and the circumstances surrounding each call, which can be crucial to victim and officer safety and the effective prosecution of domestic violence cases.

Before the creation of this secure database, those paper DIRs were typically filed chronologically by the agency that took the reports, and the information contained in them couldn't be searched, shared or analyzed across jurisdictions. Now, the reports received by the state are scanned and stored in a database that is searchable by name and address and can generate a summary of all domestic violence activity at a specific location, including the number of reports filed and if there are any "red flag" indicators – threats that were made and or access to a weapon – for example.

Since the Repository's pilot phase began in September of this year, more than a dozen law enforcement agencies, including the Erie County Crime Analysis Center (CAC), have used the system to search approximately 244,000 records currently available. Erie is home to one of the state's four Crime Analysis Centers, which are responsible for conducting in-depth analysis of all county crime data; the other centers are located in Albany, Monroe and Onondaga counties.



Sean M. Byrne, acting commissioner of the state Division of Criminal Justice Services, describes how the Repository works.

Photo by Judy Sanders

When an individual is arrested in connection with a domestic violence incident, the Erie County Crime Analysis Center's staff creates a comprehensive packet for prosecutors that detail the individual's criminal history and criminal incident reports, and uses the Repository to access DIRs connected to that individual.

"Some offenders have multiple DIRs associated with their names, but no charges have ever been filed in connection with those incidents," said Jamie Giammaresi, director of the Erie County Crime Analysis Center. "The Repository provides one-stop access to DIRs, unveiling a pattern of behavior that previously could have gone undetected. Those packets have allowed prosecutors to build stronger cases that have resulted in stiffer sentences."

Added Rosemary Vennero, a domestic violence victims' advocate and director of non-residential crisis services at the YWCA of the Mohawk Valley in Utica: "From an advocate's perspective, the Domestic Incident Report Repository provides the availability to identify and document the long pattern of violence in a victim's life. The DIR Repository addresses the core issues in providing services to victims of domestic violence – victim safety and offender accountability."

The New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services and state Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence began working on the repository in 2009 and used \$1.5 million in federal American Reinvestment and

Recovery Act aid to complete the project.

Westchester County District Attorney Janet DiFiore, president of the New York State District Attorneys' Association, said: "Real time access to accurate and comprehensive information has become a vital tool for police and prosecutors. The Domestic Incident Report repository, with its searchable database, gives law enforcement in New York State a tremendous leg up both in the initial police response to a domestic violence incident and to the subsequent prosecution of the offender. Because police are now able to access specific details of previous incidents that occurred in other jurisdictions, victims can now feel more secure and offenders now have one less shadow in which to hide."

Added Rensselaer County Sheriff Jack Mahar, president of the New York State Sheriffs' Association: "I fully support the creation of the Domestic Incident Report Repository. This resource will help law enforcement share information and optimize our coordination efforts, which is especially important in domestic violence cases. Having the ability to perform cross searches of other agencies' databases will ultimately increase safety for victims and responding officers."

Mechanicville (Saratoga County) Police Chief Joseph Waldron, president of the New York State Association of Chiefs of Police, said: "Many domestic incidents are part of a cycle of violence. The availability of DIRs across jurisdictions will allow officers to consider prior incidents when making critical decisions in the field."

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