



# Delinquency Trajectories in Anchorage and Fairbanks

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Early longitudinal and birth cohort studies of delinquency discovered that not all delinquents are the same. Importantly, in the early 1970s, social researchers identified a group of “chronic delinquents,” a small group of offenders who accounted for the majority of recorded offenses. The existence of different groups, based on offending patterns, stimulated a great deal of research and debate. Unfortunately, the theoretical and practical implications of the chronic delinquent (also called the serious habitual offender or super-predator) could not be fully explored with the analytic methods of the time. Although powerful statistical techniques were available to focus on individual patterns of offending, it was not until recently that statistical techniques became available to aggregate individual patterns of offending into group-based patterns of offending. These group-based patterns of offending search for clusters or groups of individuals who share common histories of delinquent behavior. These common histories of delinquent behavior can then be displayed graphically with developmental trajectories, or lines of development that show offending rates over time. These graphical displays have confirmed the existence of different groups of offenders, each with unique histories of delinquent behavior.

Analytically, these methods recognize that delinquent behavior does not begin and evolve in the same manner for all offenders (e.g., some start early, others start late). Simultaneously, these methods recognize that some similarities in delinquent development do exist (e.g., those who start early all tend to subsequently offend at a high rate). Using these methods, we can empirically categorize offenders into groups. Each group

has its own history of delinquent behavior or developmental trajectory. Within each developmental trajectory are offenders who share a similar pattern of offending. As Bobby L. Jones and Daniel S. Nagin recently argued in their 2007 *Sociological Methods & Research*, “charting and understanding developmental trajectories is among the most fundamental and empirically important research topics in the social and behavioral sciences” (pp. 542–543).

The importance of this research topic is confirmed by recent advances in theoretical criminology. In particular, recent developmental theories strongly support typologies of offending. Typological theories classify offenders into different groups (just as group-based modeling does) with each group having its own history of delinquent behavior. For example, some theories differentiate between life course persistent offenders who start offending early, offend at a high rate, and persist through the life course, and adolescent limited offenders who start offending late, offend at a low rate, and desist by the time they emerge into adulthood. Some theories further suggest that the causes of offending vary across groups. Peer pressure, for example, may be more relevant for adolescent limited offenders than for life course persistent offenders. Group-based modeling now provides the opportunity to fully explore these ideas and their implications on theory and practice.

As part of our research on disproportionate minority contact in the Alaska juvenile justice system, we recently utilized group-based modeling to further examine how juvenile offending patterns from age 10 to 17 vary by race. Previous Justice Center research clearly showed that minority youth were overrepresented in referrals to the Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ).

For example, in fiscal year 2005, 61 percent of youth referred to DJJ in Anchorage were minority youth, but only 34 percent of the youth population in Anchorage was minority. In Anchorage, the rate of referral to DJJ was 3.0 times higher for minority youth than for White youth. Similarly, in fiscal years 2005 and 2006, 47 percent of the youth referred to DJJ in Fairbanks were minority youth, but only 27 percent of the youth population in Fairbanks was minority. In Fairbanks, the rate of referral to DJJ was 2.5 times higher for minority youth than for White youth. To better understand the impact of race, we developed group-based models of offending for youth referred to DJJ in Anchorage and Fairbanks. To do so, we examined the offending histories of two separate cohorts. The first included any youth who had been referred to DJJ in Anchorage who was born in 1989. The second included any youth who had been referred to DJJ in Fairbanks who was born in 1988 or 1989. In this article, we present descriptive information on these two cohorts, present their developmental trajectories, and assess the extent to which the development of delinquent behavior varied by race.

## Cohort Characteristics

The Anchorage cohort was built by selecting any youth who had ever been referred to DJJ in Anchorage and who was born in 1989. This cohort included 1,131 non-duplicated juveniles. The Fairbanks cohort was similarly built. It included 620 non-duplicated juveniles who were born in 1988 or 1989 and who were referred to DJJ in Fairbanks. For each juvenile in each cohort, we then measured the number of charges referred to DJJ at each age, from age 10 to 17. The 1,131 youth in the Anchorage cohort produced a

**Table 1. Total Number of Charges for Anchorage and Fairbanks Cohort, Age 10–17**

| Number of charges | Anchorage cohort |        |        | Fairbanks cohort |        |        |
|-------------------|------------------|--------|--------|------------------|--------|--------|
|                   | N                | %      | cum %  | N                | %      | cum %  |
| 1                 | 578              | 51.1 % | 51.1 % | 273              | 44.0 % | 44.0 % |
| 2                 | 199              | 17.6   | 68.7   | 106              | 17.1   | 61.1   |
| 3                 | 70               | 6.2    | 74.9   | 44               | 7.1    | 68.2   |
| 4                 | 56               | 5.0    | 79.8   | 43               | 6.9    | 75.2   |
| 5                 | 39               | 3.4    | 83.3   | 24               | 3.9    | 79.0   |
| 6                 | 24               | 2.1    | 85.4   | 20               | 3.2    | 82.3   |
| 7                 | 19               | 1.7    | 87.1   | 16               | 2.6    | 84.8   |
| 8                 | 15               | 1.3    | 88.4   | 9                | 1.5    | 86.3   |
| 9                 | 16               | 1.4    | 89.8   | 10               | 1.6    | 87.9   |
| 10 or more        | 115              | 10.2   | 100.0  | 75               | 12.1   | 100.0  |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>1,131</b>     |        |        | <b>620</b>       |        |        |

Source of data: Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice

**Table 2. Age at First Charge for Anchorage and Fairbanks Cohort**

| Age at first charge | Anchorage cohort |       |       | Fairbanks cohort |       |       |
|---------------------|------------------|-------|-------|------------------|-------|-------|
|                     | N                | %     | cum % | N                | %     | cum % |
| 10 years            | 47               | 4.2 % | 4.2 % | 27               | 4.4 % | 4.4 % |
| 11 years            | 56               | 5.0   | 9.1   | 33               | 5.3   | 9.7   |
| 12 years            | 108              | 9.5   | 18.7  | 51               | 8.2   | 17.9  |
| 13 years            | 215              | 19.0  | 37.7  | 97               | 15.6  | 33.5  |
| 14 years            | 203              | 17.9  | 55.6  | 102              | 16.5  | 50.0  |
| 15 years            | 163              | 14.4  | 70.0  | 111              | 17.9  | 67.9  |
| 16 years            | 180              | 15.9  | 85.9  | 111              | 17.9  | 85.8  |
| 17 years            | 159              | 14.1  | 100.0 | 88               | 14.2  | 100.0 |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>1,131</b>     |       |       | <b>620</b>       |       |       |

Source of data: Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice

**Table 3. Racial Composition of Anchorage and Fairbanks Cohort**

| Race             | Anchorage cohort |        | Fairbanks cohort |        |
|------------------|------------------|--------|------------------|--------|
|                  | N                | %      | N                | %      |
| White            | 553              | 48.9 % | 341              | 55.0 % |
| Native           | 174              | 15.4   | 186              | 30.0   |
| Black            | 116              | 10.3   | 46               | 7.4    |
| Asian            | 83               | 7.3    | 6                | 1.0    |
| Pacific Islander | 40               | 3.5    | 0                | 0.0    |
| Multiracial      | 97               | 8.6    | 22               | 3.5    |
| Other            | 37               | 3.3    | 8                | 1.3    |
| Unknown          | 31               | 2.7    | 11               | 1.8    |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>1,131</b>     |        | <b>620</b>       |        |

Source of data: Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice

total of 4,074 charges, for an average of 3.6 charges per youth. The number of charges for each youth ranged from one to 38. The 620 youth in the Fairbanks cohort produced a total of 2,624 charges, for an average of 4.2 charges per youth. The number of charges in the Fairbanks cohort ranged from one to 39. Additional details are shown in Table 1. It is important to note that 51 percent of the youth in the Anchorage cohort and 44 percent of the youth in the Fairbanks cohort had only one charge referred to DJJ from age 10 to 17. Only 10 percent of the youth in the Anchorage cohort were referred to DJJ for ten or more charges, but these youth accounted for 47 percent of the total number of charges. Similarly, only 12 percent of the youth in the Fairbanks cohort were referred to DJJ for ten or more charges, but these youth were responsible for 50 percent of the total number of charges. In both cohorts, a small group of youth (10 to 12%) was responsible for approximately half of the total number of referred charges. Table 2 shows the age at which the first charge was referred to DJJ. Over half (56%) of the youth in the Anchorage cohort and half (50%) of the youth in the Fairbanks cohort were referred to DJJ before age 15.

A greater percentage of females was found in the Anchorage cohort than the Fairbanks cohort, with 41 percent of the Anchorage youth and 32 percent of the Fairbanks youth being female. The racial composition of both cohorts is shown in Table 3. Almost half (49%) of the youth referred in Anchorage were White and slightly over half (55%) of those referred in Fairbanks were White. Alaska Native youth were more prevalent in the Fairbanks cohort (30%) than in the Anchorage cohort (15%). Conversely, other minority youth were more prevalent in the Anchorage cohort than in the Fairbanks cohort—Black youth made up 10 percent of the Anchorage cohort and seven percent of the Fairbanks cohort, Asian youth made up seven percent of the Anchorage cohort

and one percent of the Fairbanks cohort, and Pacific Islander youth made up four percent of the Anchorage cohort and zero percent of the Fairbanks cohort.

**Developmental Trajectories**

Group-based models were estimated for both the Anchorage and Fairbanks cohorts. In each cohort, we searched for groups of individuals who shared common histories of delinquent behavior. Delinquent behavior was measured by the annual rate of charges referred to DJJ while controlling

for periods of detentions and institutionalizations, when individuals are not at-risk of offending. Additional statistical details are available on the Justice Center website (<http://justice.uaa.alaska.edu>). We found five distinct developmental trajectories for youth in the Anchorage cohort and three distinct developmental trajectories for the youth in the Fairbanks cohort. The different developmental trajectories are shown in Figures 1 and 2, and are summarized in Table 4. Again, these developmental trajectories show groups of offenders that share similar delinquent histories. In both Anchorage and Fairbanks, we found clear evidence of a low delinquency group and an early starter/desister group.

Youth in the low delinquency group had an offending rate that very slowly increased over time, never surpassing one referred charge per year. Just over half (51%) of the Anchorage youth and over three quarters

(82%) of the Fairbanks youth were classified in the low delinquency group. Youth in the early starter/desister group started offending early, offended at a high rate, but began to desist by age 17. More specifically, the average offending rate for the early starter/desister group began to increase early (age 13), peaked at a high level at age 15, and then began to decline. In both Anchorage and Fairbanks, the increase in the average offending rate peaked at approximately four referred charges per year. The early starter/desister group included few youth (6% in Anchorage and 9% in Fairbanks). It is important to emphasize that although these youth began to offend at an early age and subsequently offended at a high rate, they also showed signs of desistance by age 17. This is an important finding because starting to offend at an early age is considered a strong risk factor for a long criminal career. Although the youth in this group entered the DJJ system early, they were able to show signs of desistance prior to adulthood. In part, this may have occurred because of the formal and informal services that they received. Understanding what reduced the delinquency of these youth is an important topic for future research.

In Fairbanks, we found an additional group of youth that showed signs of desistance by age 17. Contrary to the youth in the early starter/desister group, these youth did not start offending early. Youth in the late starter/desister group showed no increase in offending until age 15. More specifically, their average offending rate started to

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**Table 4. Developmental Trajectories for Anchorage and Fairbanks Cohort**

| Trajectory              | Characteristics  | Percent of youth from: |                  |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------|------------------|
|                         |  | Anchorage cohort       | Fairbanks cohort |
| Low delinquency         | Offending rate very slowly increases over time, but remains very low at all times.   | 51 %                   | 82 %             |
| Moderate delinquency    | Offending rate remains low up to age 12, moderately increases at ages 13 and 14, decreases thereafter.                       | 17 %                   | —                |
| Early starter/desister  | Offending rate begins to increase early, peaks at a high level at age 15, decreases thereafter.                              | 6 %                    | 9 %              |
| Early starter/persister | Offending rate remains very low up to age 12, then steadily increases from age 12 to 17, peaks at a high level at age 17.    | 5 %                    | —                |
| Late starter/desister   | Offending rate remains low up to age 14, then dramatically increases, peaks at a high level at age 16, decreases thereafter. | —                      | 10 %             |
| Late starter/persister  | Offending rate remains low up to age 15, then steadily increases, peaks at a moderate level at age 17.                       | 17 %                   | —                |

Source of data: Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice

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increase at age 15 and peaked at age 16 (at an average of 4.3 charges per year). At age 17, the average offending rate for youth in the late starter/desister group then dropped to 3.3 referred charges per year. Ten percent of the Fairbanks youth were classified as late starters/desisters. No comparable group of youth was found in Anchorage.

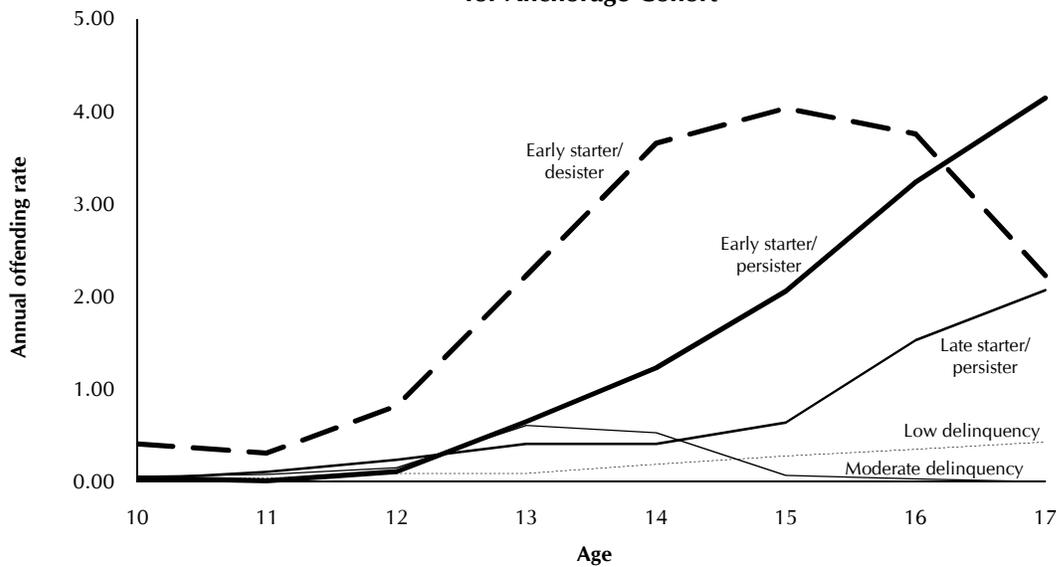
Three other groups were found in Anchorage. The moderate delinquency group included youth whose offending rate remained very low up to age 12, moder-

ately increased at age 13 and 14, and then decreased. The average number of charges referred to DJJ for youth in the moderate delinquency group was 0.61 at age 13 and 0.53 at age 14. By age 17, these youth completely desisted, with an average of zero charges referred to DJJ. For these youth, delinquent involvement occurred primarily at age 13 and 14. Seventeen percent of the Anchorage youth belonged to this moderate delinquency group.

The other two groups found in Anchorage both showed signs of persistence rather than desistance. One group started offending early while the other started offending late

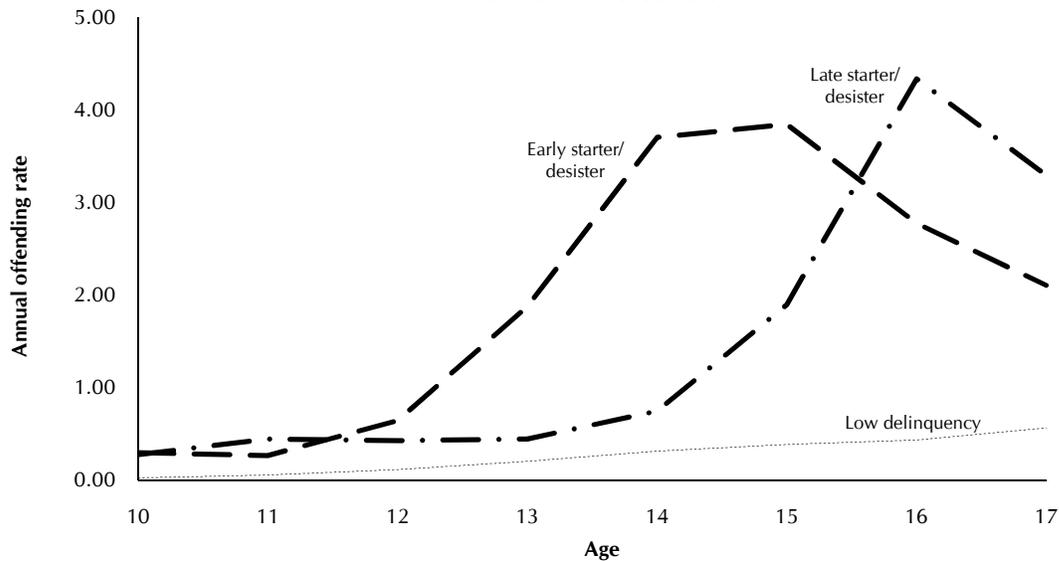
(but neither showed any sign of desistance). The offending rate for youth in the early starter/persister group steadily increased from age 12 to 17, peaking at age 17. At age 17, youth in the early starter/persister group were referred to DJJ for an average of 4.2 charges. Five percent of the Anchorage youth were classified as early starters/persisters. Youth in the late starter/persister group began offending later (age 16) and offended at a lower rate. At age 17, youth in the late starter/persister group were referred to DJJ for an average of 2.1 charges (rather than the 4.2 for youth in the early starter/persister group). Seventeen percent

**Figure 1. Developmental Trajectories of Offending for Anchorage Cohort**



Source of data: Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice

**Figure 2. Developmental Trajectories of Offending for Fairbanks Cohort**



Source of data: Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice

of the Anchorage youth were late starters/persisters.

A limitation of these developmental trajectories is that they only provide a representation of the delinquent development that occurred for the youth in these two cohorts. Youth born today may have very different patterns of delinquent development. Nonetheless, these historical results are important because they allow us to now retrospectively assess the extent to which the delinquent development of these youth varied by race.

**Profiles of Group Membership**

In Tables 5 and 6, we examine the demographic composition of each offending group in the Anchorage and Fairbanks cohorts. Summary statistics for each offending group are provided showing their composition by race and gender. Statistical tests were performed to examine if the percentage of youth within each racial and gender group varied significantly across offending groups (i.e., to determine if the percentage of White youth was the same in each offending group or whether White youth were over-represented in some offending groups). Results for the Anchorage cohort are presented in Table 5. The percentage of Black, Asian, and Pacific Islander youth did not vary significantly across offending groups. Conversely, the percentage of White, Native, and multiracial youth did vary significantly across offending groups. Too few multiracial youth were included in the Anchorage cohort to specifically locate the significant difference. For both White and Native youth, the differences occurred between the low delinquency group and the early starter/desister group and between the moderate delinquency group and the early starter/desister group. White youth were over-represented in the low and moderate delinquency groups, but were less likely to be found in the early starter/desister group. The opposite result was true for Native youth. They were over-represented in the early starter/desister group, and were less likely to be found in the low and moderate delinquency groups. Not surprisingly, males were more likely to be in the three high delinquency groups (early starter/desister, early starter/persister, and late starter/persister) while females were more likely to be in the two low delinquency groups (low delinquency and moderate delinquency).

Results for the Fairbanks cohort are presented in Table 6. Results are only presented for White, Native, and Black youth because the number of other minority youth in Fairbanks was too small (see Table 3). Youth who were not White, Native, or Black and

**Table 5. Demographic Composition of Developmental Trajectories for Anchorage Cohort**

|                  | Group           |                      |                        |                         |                        | % equal across groups? |
|------------------|-----------------|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
|                  | Low delinquency | Moderate delinquency | Early starter/desister | Early starter/persister | Late starter/persister |                        |
| <b>Race</b>      |                 |                      |                        |                         |                        |                        |
| White            | 52.5 %          | 53.7 %               | 26.2 %                 | 38.9 %                  | 38.6 %                 | No                     |
| Native           | 13.1            | 13.2                 | 30.8                   | 25.9                    | 17.9                   | No                     |
| Black            | 9.1             | 10.1                 | 13.8                   | 7.4                     | 14.5                   | Yes                    |
| Asian            | 7.2             | 7.1                  | 12.3                   | 7.4                     | 6.2                    | Yes                    |
| Pacific Islander | 4.0             | 2.4                  | 0.0                    | 5.6                     | 4.8                    | Yes                    |
| Multiracial      | 6.3             | 8.1                  | 15.4                   | 13.0                    | 13.8                   | No                     |
| Other/unknown    | 7.7             | 5.4                  | 1.5                    | 1.9                     | 4.1                    | Yes                    |
| <b>Gender</b>    |                 |                      |                        |                         |                        |                        |
| Male             | 56.0 %          | 50.7 %               | 71.0 %                 | 83.1 %                  | 83.3 %                 | No                     |
| Female           | 44.0            | 49.3                 | 29.0                   | 16.9                    | 16.7                   | No                     |

Note: Column percentages may not add to 100% because of rounding.  
 Source of data: Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice

youth whose race was unknown are included in the "other/unknown" category (N = 47). The percentage of Black youth and the percentage of youth in the "other/unknown" category did not vary significantly across offending groups. As in Anchorage, the percentage of White and Native youth did vary significantly across offending groups. White youth were over-represented and Native youth were under-represented in the low delinquency group. Conversely, White youth were under-represented in the early starter/desister group and in the late starter/desister group while Native youth were over-represented in these two groups. A significant gender difference was found between the low delinquency group and the early starter/desister group, with significantly more females in the low delinquency group.

**Summary and Implications**

Overall, three groups of youth were

identified in Fairbanks. The first included youth who offended at very low rates (low delinquency group). The second and third groups both included youth who offended at high rates but began to desist by age 17, with some youth (early starters/desisters) starting to offend earlier than others (late starters/desisters). In Fairbanks, all groups showed signs of desistance by age 17. Additional research should examine why none of the Fairbanks youth belonged to an offending group that persisted.

Three additional groups were found in Anchorage. The moderate delinquency group showed low levels of offending from age 10 to 12, moderate levels of offending at age 13 and 14, and low levels of offending thereafter. The two other groups both showed signs of persistence, with one starting earlier (early starters/persister) than the other (late starter/persisters). The offending rate for the early starters/persisters began to increase

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**Table 6. Demographic Composition of Developmental Trajectories for Fairbanks Cohort**

|               | Group           |                        |                       | % equal across groups? |
|---------------|-----------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
|               | Low delinquency | Early starter/desister | Late starter/desister |                        |
| <b>Race</b>   |                 |                        |                       |                        |
| White         | 58.8 %          | 29.8 %                 | 40.7 %                | No                     |
| Native        | 26.2            | 55.3                   | 44.4                  | No                     |
| Black         | 7.5             | 6.4                    | 7.4                   | Yes                    |
| Other/unknown | 7.5             | 8.5                    | 7.4                   | Yes                    |
| <b>Gender</b> |                 |                        |                       |                        |
| Male          | 65.3 %          | 89.4 %                 | 74.1 %                | No                     |
| Female        | 34.7            | 10.6                   | 25.9                  | No                     |

Note: Column percentages may not add to 100% because of rounding.  
 Source of data: Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice

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at age 13 while the offending rate for the late starters/persisters began to increase at age 16. Neither group showed any signs of desistance by age 17. Additional research should examine why none of these youth began to desist by age 17.

White youth were over-represented in low delinquency trajectories while Native youth were over-represented in trajectories that showed higher rates of contact with DJJ. The difference between the low delinquency group and the early starter/desister group was found in both Anchorage and Fairbanks. This result is important because it shows that disproportionate minority contact (as defined by the difference in rates of charges referred to DJJ) was evident by age 13. At that age, Native youth were already disproportionately referred to DJJ relative to White youth. Interventions designed to reduce the disproportionate contact of Native youth must therefore begin early. In Fairbanks, the disproportionate contact of Native youth also occurred for youth who started to in-

crease their offending rate at age 15 (i.e., for youth in the late starter/desister group). We did not find this result in Anchorage, but the Anchorage cohort did not have a late starter/desister group (all late starters persisted).

It is again important to emphasize that the majority of youth contacted by DJJ had very few referred charges from age 10 to 17. Descriptive statistics (Table 1) showed that 51 percent of the Anchorage youth and 44 percent of the Fairbanks youth had only one charge referred to DJJ from age 10 to 17. The group-based models showed that the most common trajectory was one of low delinquency (for 51% of Anchorage youth and 82% of Fairbanks youth), and this was particularly true for females. Unfortunately, Native youth were less likely to be found in the low delinquency trajectory. On a more positive note, Native youth were not disproportionately found in the two groups that persisted. Instead, Native youth were disproportionately found in a group that desisted (in both Anchorage and Fairbanks). This again suggests that some youth received the necessary formal and informal services to reduce their delinquent behavior,

particularly in Fairbanks. In Anchorage, two groups showed no signs of desistance by age 17. The late starter/persister group is particularly problematic because it included 17 percent of youth and it was not identifiable until age 16. This leaves little time for successful interventions. Understanding what caused the changes in referral rates observed in Figures 1 and 2 is, as Jones and Nagin argued, one of the most fundamental and empirically important research topics. Understanding these developmental trajectories in more detail could have significant impacts on policy.

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## East Anchorage Weed and Seed 2008 Community Survey

*Sharon Chamard*

The Justice Center recently completed a mail survey of residents in the Northeast area of Anchorage as part of an evaluation of the Weed and Seed project in that community. Weed and Seed is a federally-funded initiative aimed at using law enforcement to “weed out” violent offenders and drug dealers. Positive practices, programs, and institutions that contribute to a better quality of life for neighborhood residents are then “seeded in.” The study area is bordered by the Glenn Highway on the north, Fort Richardson on the east, Debarr Road on the south, and Bragaw Street on the west. The community has about 37,000 residents in 14,000 households, and is one of the most ethnically diverse parts of Anchorage.

Two-hundred-and-nine people responded to the survey; this was a response rate of 16.3 percent. There is no hard rule for determining an adequate response rate, but survey researchers generally agree that the bottom threshold is 50 percent. In addition, compared to the population in the study area, those who answered the survey were disproportionately female, white, childless, and retired. For both these reasons, the findings from this study must be taken with a great deal of caution.

Results from the survey were compared to those from an identical mailed community survey conducted in the same area in 2002 to

assess whether there had been any changes to dimensions measured by the surveys: fear of crime, victimization experiences, satisfaction with the police and social services, and participation in neighborhood activities. Relative to 2002 (which like the present study, also had limitations associated with a low response rate and an unrepresentative sample), there was little change. In both years, a small majority of residents reported that quality of life in the neighborhood had not changed in the past two years, but close to 80 percent said they were somewhat or very satisfied with the neighborhood as a place to live.

Victimization was low in both years, with 15–20 percent reporting a burglary in the previous two years, and under five percent reporting having been a victim of robbery, simple assault, or assault with a weapon. There was little change in evaluations of police activity from 2002 to 2008. Most residents said they didn’t know whether the police were doing a good job controlling the use and sale of illegal drugs, or whether the police were responsive to community concerns. This indicates an overall lack of awareness of police activity. Yet when it came to evaluating the police on their ability to keep order in the neighborhood, half of the sample in both 2002 and 2008 thought the police were doing a “good job” or a “very good job.” About 80 percent in both

years said they had seen a police car driving through the neighborhood in the past month. In both years, residents were unlikely to report having a conversation with a police officer, seeing an officer patrolling the alleys or backs of buildings, or walking around or standing on patrol in the neighborhood. In 2008, as well as in 2002, few residents said they had been involved in neighborhood activities (an anti-drug rally, vigil, or march, or citizen patrol or neighborhood watch), but about a third reported participating in a neighborhood clean-up project.

Overall, there were few significant differences between the survey findings in 2002 and in 2008. However, respondents in 2008 were significantly less likely, compared to the 2002 respondents, to report that they thought the police were doing a very poor job controlling the street sale and use of illegal drugs in the neighborhood. Another significant improvement, though perhaps not attributable to the Weed and Seed initiative, was a 10 percent increase (47.8 percent in 2002 to 58.6 percent in 2008) in residents who said they were somewhat or very satisfied with snow removal. The complete survey report is available online on the Justice Center website (<http://justice.uaa.alaska.edu/>).

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**Domestic violence**  
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(81%) were for fourth degree assaults and fewer charges were leveled for third through first degree felony assaults. Thirty-one percent of cases involved other charges. The most common other charges included interfering with a report of a crime involving domestic violence, criminal mischief, reckless endangerment, misconduct involving a weapon, DUI/reckless driving, resisting arrest, misconduct involving a controlled substance, and criminal trespass.

The time interval between the incident, the report to Troopers, and the Troopers' response was short, even with transportation and distance issues. The majority of reports (84%) were made the day of the domestic violence assault incident and 97 percent of reports were made within one week.

**Suspect and Victim Characteristics**

From the 1,281 cases included in this study, we gathered information on 1,356 suspects and 1,523 victims, though information was not always available for every suspect or every victim. Over three-quarters of the suspects were male while only 24 percent were female. Victim ages ranged from under one year to eighty-four years old. Most victims were in the following age groups: 21–30 years (26%), 31–40 years (22%), and 41–50 years (19%). Suspect ages ranged from 10 years old to eighty-eight years old. The majority of suspects were adults (94%). Starting with the group of suspects 21 or older, the number of suspects in each age group decreased as age increased. More specifically, 21–30 year olds made up 31 percent of suspects, 31–40 year olds made up 28 percent of suspects, 41–50 year olds

made up 19 percent of suspects, and suspects 51 years or older made up 7 percent of suspects. Most suspects were White (50%) or Native (47%) and most victims were also White (51%) or Native (47%) (Table 3).

The average age of suspects (33) was quite similar to the average age of victims (32). Thirty-nine percent of assaults in domestic violence incidents took place between suspects and victims in the same age group while 61 percent took place between suspects and victims in different age groups. The age groups most commonly shared by suspects and victims involved in assaults in domestic violence incidents included 21 to 30 year olds (38%), 31 to 40 year olds (27%) and 41 to 50 year olds (19%).

In contrast to the age groups of suspects and victims, the majority of assaults in domestic violence incidents (86%) were intraracial (occurring between suspects and victims of the same race). Of all intraracial assaults in domestic violence, 51 percent occurred between White suspects and White victims and 48 percent occurred between Native suspects and Native victims.

We examined alcohol and substance use among victims. Over a third of female victims (35%) and 27 percent of male victims used alcohol prior to the assault in domestic violence incident, but only two percent of female victims and less than one percent of male victims used illicit drugs (Table 4). We also examined alcohol and substance use among suspects. Fifty-eight percent of male suspects and 54 percent of female suspects used alcohol prior to the assault. Only three percent of male suspects and two percent of female suspects used an illicit drug prior to the assault. Overall, alcohol was involved in 59 percent of domestic violence incidents reported to Troopers. Nationally, for the period 2001–2005, 42 percent of victims reported the presence of alcohol or drugs during a domestic violence incident, while in Anchorage for the period 1989–2002 there was documented involvement of alcohol in 49 percent of the reported cases.

Many of the suspects (79%) remained at the location of the assault. Specifically, 76 percent of male suspects and 86 percent of female suspects were still at the scene of the assault when Troopers arrived. Troopers were able to interview 76 percent of male suspects and 89 percent of female suspects.

Eighty-one percent of suspects were interviewed on the day of report. Ninety-six percent of all suspect interviews occurred within one week of the report. Troopers interviewed 95 percent of the victims, with 89 percent being interviewed on the day of

Please see *Domestic violence*, page 8

**Table 3. Demographic Characteristics of Suspects and Victims**

Column percentages.

|                  | Suspects     |        | Victims      |        | Intragroup   |        |
|------------------|--------------|--------|--------------|--------|--------------|--------|
|                  | N            | %      | N            | %      | N            | %      |
| <b>Age group</b> |              |        |              |        |              |        |
| 1 to 10          | 3            | 0.2 %  | 54           | 3.6 %  | 2            | 0.3 %  |
| 11 to 17         | 94           | 6.1    | 174          | 11.5   | 23           | 3.9    |
| 18 to 20         | 122          | 8.0    | 131          | 8.6    | 32           | 5.5    |
| 21 to 30         | 477          | 31.2   | 397          | 26.2   | 225          | 38.3   |
| 31 to 40         | 433          | 28.3   | 326          | 21.5   | 160          | 27.3   |
| 41 to 50         | 288          | 18.8   | 284          | 18.7   | 114          | 19.4   |
| 51 or over       | 113          | 7.4    | 151          | 10.0   | 31           | 5.3    |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>1,530</b> |        | <b>1,517</b> |        | <b>587</b>   |        |
| <b>Race</b>      |              |        |              |        |              |        |
| Native           | 722          | 46.9 % | 720          | 47.3 % | 628          | 48.1 % |
| White            | 767          | 49.8   | 770          | 50.6   | 667          | 51.1   |
| Black            | 38           | 2.5    | 26           | 1.7    | 10           | 0.8    |
| Other            | 12           | 0.8    | 6            | 0.4    | —            | —      |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>1,539</b> |        | <b>1,522</b> |        | <b>1,305</b> |        |

Source of data: Alaska State Troopers (2004)

**Table 4. Male and Female Victim and Suspect Characteristics**

Row percentages.

| Characteristic           | Female |        |              | Male  |        |              |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|--------------|-------|--------|--------------|
|                          | N      | %      | Total        | N     | %      | Total        |
| <b>Victims</b>           |        |        |              |       |        |              |
| Gender                   | 1,047  | 69.6 % | <b>1,047</b> | 458   | 30.4 % | <b>458</b>   |
| Used alcohol             | 347    | 34.7   | <b>1,001</b> | 118   | 26.9   | <b>438</b>   |
| Used drugs               | 16     | 1.6    | <b>1,021</b> | 2     | 0.4    | <b>451</b>   |
| Present when AST arrived | 998    | 96.9   | <b>1,030</b> | 424   | 95.1   | <b>446</b>   |
| Interviewed              | 985    | 94.1   | <b>1,047</b> | 416   | 93.3   | <b>446</b>   |
| <b>Suspects</b>          |        |        |              |       |        |              |
| Gender                   | 319    | 23.6 % | <b>319</b>   | 1,034 | 76.4 % | <b>1,353</b> |
| Used alcohol             | 159    | 53.7   | <b>296</b>   | 553   | 58.0   | <b>953</b>   |
| Used drugs               | 7      | 2.3    | <b>299</b>   | 26    | 2.7    | <b>970</b>   |
| Present when AST arrived | 259    | 86.0   | <b>301</b>   | 775   | 76.2   | <b>1,017</b> |
| Interviewed              | 269    | 88.8   | <b>303</b>   | 775   | 75.8   | <b>1,023</b> |

Source of data: Alaska State Troopers (2004)

## Domestic violence (continued from page 7)

the report, and 98 percent of the interviews being completed within one week.

The total number of charges per suspect (including both assault and other charges), the number of assault charges, and the number of other charges are summarized in Table 5. On average, each suspect received a total of 1.78 charges, including an average of 1.33 assault charges and 0.45 other charges. Of the 1,356 suspects, 200 (15%) had multiple assault charges and 401 (29%) had at least one other charge. As a result, 580 (43%) of the suspects therefore had a total number of charges greater than one. Overall, the 1,356 suspects generated a total of 2,407 charges, including 1,803 assault charges and 604 other charges.

Despite the number and types of offenses suspects were charged with as a result of the assaults in domestic violence incidents, few suspects (just over 1%) had an existing domestic violence protection order filed against them by the victim at the time of the offense (Table 6). Likewise, few suspects were violating conditions of release or probation. Specifically, two percent of suspects were documented as violating a condition of release with their current charges. Another four percent of suspects violated documented conditions of their probation with the current charges. It is important to note that

the percentage of suspects violating conditions of release may be greater than those reported here, because these conditions are not always documented in APSIN (Alaska Public Safety Information Network) and are not readily available to Troopers, or for our analysis.

### Incident Characteristics

The presence of children during a domestic violence incident continues to be a serious concern. In this study, the victim's or suspect's children under the age of 18 were witnesses to 43 percent of the incidents (Table 7). In Anchorage during 1999–2002, 42 percent of domestic violence incidents occurred with children under the age of 18 present. Nationwide, in 43 percent of the incidents with female victims during 2001–2005, children under the age of 12 were residing in the household where the incident took place. Studies discussed by John L. Worrall in *Crime Control in America: An Assessment of the Evidence* highlight concern regarding children who are present during domestic violence. Exposure to such violence is associated with both child abuse and later delinquency.

Most assaults in domestic violence incidents (75%) occurred between victims and suspects who were staying or living together at the time of the incident. For the remaining quarter of incidents that occurred between

**Table 7. Presence of Children During Assault**

| Victim and/or suspect's child present | N            | %      |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------|
| No                                    | 654          | 57.0 % |
| Yes                                   | 493          | 43.0   |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>1,147</b> |        |

Source of data: Alaska State Troopers (2004)

suspects and victims who did not stay or live together, 34 percent occurred between victims and suspects who met in a public place, and 32 percent resulted from invitation by the suspect or victim. In 25 percent of incidents (where suspects and victims were not living together) the suspect was uninvited or forced entry, and in nine percent of these incidents the suspect entered through an open window or unlocked door.

The use of a traditional weapon such as a knife or a gun was extremely rare; each weapon was used in fewer than four percent of assaults in domestic violence incidents. While still fairly infrequent, suspects were more likely to throw something at the victim (9% of incidents) or hit the victim with an object (10%) rather than use a traditional

**Table 5. Number of Total, Assault, and Other Charges per Suspect**

Column percentages.

| Number       | Total charges |       | Assault charges |       | Other charges |        |
|--------------|---------------|-------|-----------------|-------|---------------|--------|
|              | N             | %     | N               | %     | N             | %      |
| 0            | 0             | 0.0 % | 0               | 0.0 % | 955           | 70.4 % |
| 1            | 776           | 57.2  | 1,055           | 77.8  | 274           | 20.2   |
| 2            | 344           | 25.4  | 216             | 15.9  | 82            | 6.0    |
| 3            | 121           | 8.9   | 54              | 4.0   | 25            | 1.8    |
| 4            | 63            | 4.6   | 18              | 1.3   | 16            | 1.2    |
| 5            | 26            | 1.9   | 7               | 0.5   | 3             | 0.2    |
| 6 or more    | 26            | 1.9   | 6               | 0.4   | 1             | 0.1    |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1,356</b>  |       | <b>1,356</b>    |       | <b>1,356</b>  |        |

Source of data: Alaska State Troopers (2004)

**Table 6. Suspects with Domestic Violence Protection Orders or who Violated Conditions of Release or Probation**

Row percentages.

| Characteristic                   | No    |        | Yes |       | Total        |
|----------------------------------|-------|--------|-----|-------|--------------|
|                                  | N     | %      | N   | %     |              |
| DVPO for this victim             | 1,330 | 98.7 % | 17  | 1.3 % | <b>1,347</b> |
| Violated conditions of release   | 1,320 | 97.9   | 28  | 2.1   | <b>1,348</b> |
| Violated conditions of probation | 1,280 | 95.6   | 59  | 4.4   | <b>1,339</b> |

Source of data: Alaska State Troopers (2004)



## Alaska Justice Forum

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weapon. Nationwide in 2001–2005, 19 percent of domestic violence incidents with a female victim reported a traditional weapon present, while 31 percent of incidents with a male victim reported a weapon.

We also gathered information about the presence of nine specific violent acts and seven types of threats in the assaults in domestic violence incidents. Only forms of violence that were documented as a result of victim disclosure or officer inquiry, rather than all forms of violence that occurred, were included for analysis. The three most common forms of violence disclosed by victims or documented as a result of officer inquiry included pushing, grabbing or shoving the victim (48%), punching the victim (29%), and slapping or hitting the victim (28%). Documented sexual assault of the victim occurred in only one percent of the cases.

Documented injuries to victims and emergency medical treatment data were also collected and analyzed. The percentage of

victims who sustained the most common types of documented injuries included the following: bruising (38%), lacerations or bite marks (27%), bloody nose or lips (10%) and black or swollen eyes (10%). Overall, few victims (12%) received any type of emergency medical treatment for their injuries.

### Legal Resolutions

Mandatory arrest in domestic violence cases has been in effect in Alaska since 1996. This law places additional requirements on law enforcement when investigating a domestic violence report and provides criteria for assessing whom to arrest if there are cross complaints “arising from the same incident.” (See “Mandatory Arrest in Domestic Violence Cases” accompanying this article.)

Most of the cases (96%) were closed and referred for prosecution including cases that were closed by arrest (79%), and those

closed and referred (13%). The remaining cases were closed after investigation (2%) or closed as unfounded (2%) in cases where a suspect was not arrested. On average, it took 6.30 weeks to close a case after it was reported, and 87 percent of cases were closed within 90 days.

An important component of this study involved tracking assaults in domestic violence incidents from reports to Troopers through case resolution by the Department of Law. Because we only examined referrals to the Department of Law (and excluded, for example, referrals to the Division of Juvenile Justice), the following statistics are not directly comparable to the ones reported in the previous paragraph.

When examining case processing with Department of Law data, we find that after Troopers close a case, the next decision is whether to refer the case for prosecution. Results show that 80 percent of the 1,281

*Please see Domestic violence, page 10*

## Mandatory Arrest in Domestic Violence Cases

Alaska’s mandatory arrest statute was passed as part of the Domestic Violence Prevention and Victim Protection Act of 1996 with the support of prosecutors, law enforcement, and advocates for domestic violence victims in the state. Alaska Statute 18.65.530, “Mandatory arrest for crimes involving domestic violence, violation of protective orders, and violation of conditions of release,” sets out conditions for arrest and minimum sentencing requirements. A law enforcement officer is required to make an arrest with or without a warrant:

if the officer has probable cause to believe the person has, either in or outside the presence of the officer, within the previous 12 hours, (1) committed domestic violence, except an offense under AS 11.41.100-11.41.130, whether the crime is a felony or misdemeanor; (2) committed the crime of violating a protective order in violation of AS 11.56.740; (3) violated a condition of release imposed under AS 12.30.025, 12.30.027, 12.30.029....

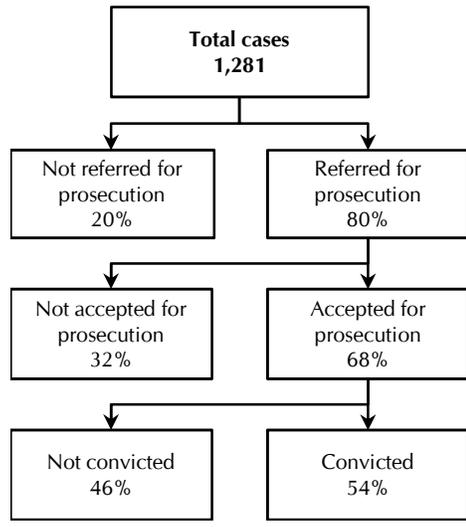
The statute provides criteria for an officer to use when determining who is the “principal physical aggressor.” A “principal physical aggressor” evaluation must be made in domestic violence cases if there are cross complaints “arising from the same incident.” In rare circumstances, an officer may determine that no arrest should be made. An “authorization not to arrest” must first be granted by a prosecutor from “the jurisdiction in which the offense under investigation arose,” and the officer must later report in writing why an arrest was not made. A prosecuting attorney is on call and available by phone to law enforcement in all parts of the state to provide an officer with an authorization, if needed.

Under Alaska law, there is a 20-day minimum sentence if the defendant is in violation of a domestic violence protection order, a 30-day minimum sentence if the defendant has a prior conviction for assault or domestic violence assault, and a 60-day minimum

sentence if the defendant “has been previously convicted two or more times of a crime against a person or a crime involving domestic violence, or a combination of those crimes.” Aggravating factors that can increase the length of the normal minimum sentence required by the statute include the presence of a child under the age of 16 during a felony crime involving domestic violence, as well as a domestic violence offense committed at a shelter or facility providing services to domestic violence and sexual assault victims. In addition, recent legislative changes have upgraded certain misdemeanor assaults to a Class C felony and have added a new provision to the animal cruelty statute dealing with “intent to intimidate, threaten or terrorize another person.” Some domestic violence convictions also carry federal legal consequences. Under federal law it is “unlawful to sell or dispose of a firearm” to a person convicted of a qualifying domestic violence misdemeanor.

The terms “domestic violence and “crime involving domestic violence” have a broad meaning under AS 18.66.990(3) & (5). “Acts of domestic violence” as defined under the statute go beyond physical assault; acts of domestic violence also include burglary, criminal trespass, arson or criminally negligent burning, criminal mischief, terrorist threatening, violating a protective order, and harassment. In addition, the statute defines domestic violence as an offense committed “by [one] household member against another household member.” The definition of household member encompasses more than persons living in the same residence. It includes many people who do not live together: “adults or minors who are current or former spouses, adults or minors...who have lived together, adults or minors who are dating or have dated, adults or minors who are engaged in or who have engaged in a sexual relationship, adults or minors who are related to each other up to the fourth degree of consanguinity..., adults or minors who are related or formerly related by marriage, persons who have a child of [their] relationship, and minor children in a relationship that is described [in the statute].”

**Figure 1. Processing of Domestic Violence Cases Reported to Alaska State Troopers, 2004**



**Domestic violence**  
(continued from page 9)

cases reported to Troopers were referred for prosecution, 68 percent were accepted for prosecution, and 54 percent resulted in a conviction (Figure 1). Once cases were referred for prosecution, they had a high likelihood of being accepted for prosecution. Specifically, 84 percent of referred cases (N=1,030) were accepted for prosecution, and 67 percent resulted in a conviction (Table 8). Cases accepted for prosecution (N=869) had an 80 percent conviction rate.

In addition to examining case resolution rates for all assaults in domestic violence incidents reported to Troopers, we reviewed case resolution rates separately for male and female suspects comparing cases that had at least one male suspect to cases that had at least one female suspect. In our sample of 1,281 cases, 974 cases included at least one male suspect and 259 included at least one female suspect. Cases with at least one female suspect were slightly less likely to be referred for prosecution, to be accepted for prosecution, and to result in a conviction than cases with at least one male suspect. Of the 259 reported cases with at least one female suspect, 75 percent were referred for prosecution (versus 82% with a male suspect), 56 percent were accepted for prosecution (versus 73% with a male suspect), and 44 percent resulted in a conviction (versus 58% with a male suspect) (Figure 2).

Once referred for prosecution, 89 percent of cases with at least one male suspect (N=707) and 76 percent of cases with at least one female suspect (N=146) were accepted for prosecution. Once accepted for

prosecution, the likelihood of cases resulting in a conviction did not vary greatly by suspect gender. Upon acceptance for prosecution, 80 percent of cases with at least one male suspect (N=568) and 78 percent of cases with at least one female suspect (N=114) resulted in a conviction (Table 9).

In addition to examining case resolution rates separately for male and female suspects, we examined case resolution rates separately for male and female victims. In our sample of 1,281 cases, 352 cases included at least one male victim and 925 included at least one female victim. Cases with at least one female victim were as likely to be referred for prosecution, as likely to be accepted for prosecution, and as likely to result in a conviction as cases with at least one male victim. Of the 925 reported cases with at least one female victim, 80 percent were referred for prosecution (versus 81% with a male victim), 59 percent were accepted for prosecution (versus 65% with a male victim), and 54 percent resulted in a conviction for both female and male victims (Figure 3 and Table 10). Although cases involving male suspects had higher case processing and conviction rates, case processing rates were quite similar for victims of both genders. No discernable pattern was found in case processing rates for domestic violence victims based on their gender.

Another variable examined in relation to case processing of assaults in domestic violence incidents was the relationship between the victim and the suspect. We examined the relationship between the victim and suspect separately for male and female victims. Most of the assaults in domestic violence incidents occurred between intimate partners. The most likely relationship identified was current or former intimate partner as seen in 67 percent of assaults in domestic violence incidents with female victims and 38 percent with male victims. The next most likely relation-

**Table 8. Number of Cases by Stage**

Column percentages.

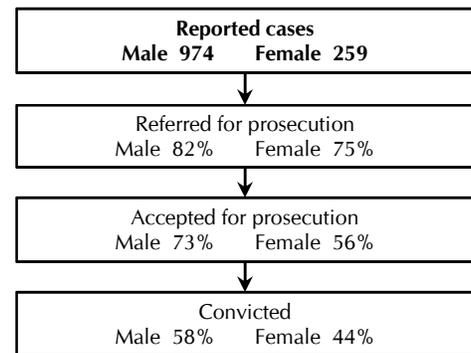
| Stage     | N     | % of reported | % of referred | % of accepted |
|-----------|-------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Reported  | 1,281 | 100.0 %       | —             | —             |
| Referred  | 1,030 | 80.4          | 100.0 %       | —             |
| Accepted  | 869   | 67.8          | 84.4          | 100.0 %       |
| Convicted | 692   | 54.0          | 67.2          | 79.6          |

Source of data: Alaska Department of Law

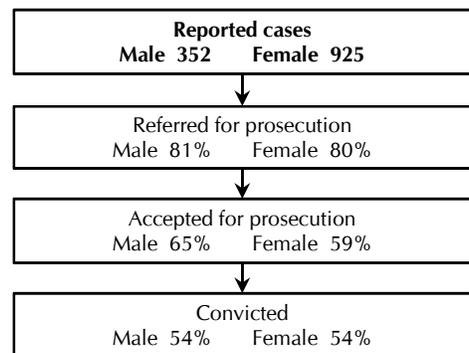
ship was parents or children comprising 16 percent of the assaults in domestic violence incidents with female victims and 25 percent with male victims. Another 12 percent of assaults in domestic violence incidents with female victims and 22 percent with male victims took place between other family members (including siblings and extended family). Six percent of assaults in domestic violence incidents with female victims and 13 percent with male victims took place between roommates. Overall, most assaults occurred between intimate partners, and this was particularly true for female victims.

An examination of case processing for the different relationship types revealed some differences in the earlier stages of

**Figure 2. Processing of Domestic Violence Cases Reported to Alaska State Troopers, 2004: Male/Female Suspects**



**Figure 3. Processing of Domestic Violence Cases Reported to Alaska State Troopers, 2004: Male/Female Victims**



**Table 9. Number of Cases by Stage for Cases with Male or Female Suspects**

Column percentages.

|                        | N   | % of reported | % of referred | % of accepted |
|------------------------|-----|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>Male suspects</b>   |     |               |               |               |
| Reported               | 974 | 100.0 %       | —             | —             |
| Referred               | 798 | 81.9          | 100.0 %       | —             |
| Accepted               | 707 | 72.6          | 88.6          | 100.0 %       |
| Convicted              | 568 | 58.3          | 71.2          | 80.3          |
| <b>Female suspects</b> |     |               |               |               |
| Reported               | 259 | 100.0 %       | —             | —             |
| Referred               | 193 | 74.5          | 100.0 %       | —             |
| Accepted               | 146 | 56.4          | 75.6          | 100.0 %       |
| Convicted              | 114 | 44.0          | 59.1          | 78.1          |

Source of data: Alaska State Troopers (2004) and Alaska Department of Law

**Table 10. Number of Cases by Stage for Cases with Male or Female Victims**

Column percentages.

|                       | N   | % of reported | % of referred | % of accepted |
|-----------------------|-----|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>Male victims</b>   |     |               |               |               |
| Reported              | 352 | 100.0 %       | —             | —             |
| Referred              | 284 | 80.7          | 100.0 %       | —             |
| Accepted              | 228 | 64.8          | 80.3          | 100.0 %       |
| Convicted             | 191 | 54.3          | 67.3          | 83.8          |
| <b>Female victims</b> |     |               |               |               |
| Reported              | 925 | 100.0 %       | —             | —             |
| Referred              | 743 | 80.3          | 100.0 %       | —             |
| Accepted              | 639 | 59.1          | 86.0          | 100.0 %       |
| Convicted             | 500 | 54.1          | 67.3          | 78.2          |

Source of data: Alaska State Troopers (2004) and Alaska Department of Law

case processing. Regarding referral rates for assaults in domestic violence incidents, 88 percent of cases involving roommates, 86 percent of cases involving intimate partners, 72 percent of cases involving other family members, and 63 percent of cases involving parents or children were referred for prosecution (Table 11). Cases involving victims and suspects who were roommates or intimate partners were more likely to be referred for prosecution than cases involving other family members or parents and children. Of all referred cases, 87 percent of cases involving intimate partners, 82 percent of cases involving parents or children, 81 percent of cases involving other family members, and 74 percent of cases involving roommates were accepted for prosecution. Referred cases involving intimate partners were most likely to be accepted for prosecution, and cases involving roommates were least likely to be accepted for prosecution. Although some differences were found in referral and acceptance rates for different relationship types in assaults in domestic violence incidents, conviction rates for accepted cases were remarkably similar. Eighty-one percent of cases involving intimate partners, 81 percent of cases involving other family members, 80 percent of cases involving parents or children, and 77 percent of cases involving roommates resulted in a conviction, once accepted for prosecution. Despite differences in referral and acceptance rates for assaults in domestic violence incidents involving various relationships between victims and suspects, conviction rates for accepted cases were similar across the different relationship types.

In another examination of assaults in domestic violence incidents, we assessed the combined influence of gender and relationship on case processing. In this examination, cases were classified as intimate partner violence or non-intimate partner violence

incidents. Incidents of intimate partner violence were defined as taking place between intimate partners and involving a male suspect and a female victim. Non-intimate partner violence incidents included all other combinations of suspect and victim gender and the various relationship types. (Few cases—1.5%—involved same-sex intimate partner violence. The characteristics of these cases will be included in a future study.) Results showed higher case processing rates for intimate partner violence incidents in the earlier stages of case processing. Specifically, 85 percent of intimate partner violence incidents and 75 percent of non-intimate partner violence incidents were referred for prosecution (Table 12). Once referred, 90 percent of intimate partner violence incidents and 79 percent of non-intimate partner violence incidents were accepted for prosecution. Again, no discernable differences were found in conviction rates for intimate partner and non-intimate partner violence incidents once they were accepted for prosecution.

Eighty-one percent of accepted cases involving intimate partner violence incidents resulted in a conviction, and 79 percent of accepted non-intimate partner violence incidents resulted in a conviction. Conviction rates based on the total number of reports to Troopers of intimate partner violence incidents were higher (62%) than for all reported cases to Troopers of non-intimate partner violence incidents (47%).

A more detailed examination of legal resolutions explored differences in case processing rates for male and female victims in various relationships with suspects. Just as cases with male suspects tended to have higher case processing rates at each stage

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**Table 11. Nature of Victim and Suspect Relationships and Legal Resolutions**

Column percentages.

|           | N     | Intimate partner | Parents or children | Other family | Roommates |
|-----------|-------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Referred  | 1,029 | 86.1 %           | 63.4 %              | 71.8 %       | 87.9 %    |
| Accepted  | 869   | 86.5             | 81.5                | 81.1         | 74.1      |
| Convicted | 692   | 80.5             | 80.0                | 80.8         | 76.7      |

Source of data: Alaska State Troopers (2004) and Alaska Department of Law

**Table 12. Legal Resolutions for Intimate Partner and Non-Intimate Partner Violence**

Column percentages.

|           | N     | % of reported    |                      | % of referred    |                      | % of accepted    |                      |
|-----------|-------|------------------|----------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------|----------------------|
|           |       | Intimate partner | Non-intimate partner | Intimate partner | Non-intimate partner | Intimate partner | Non-intimate partner |
| Reported  | 1,279 | 100 %            | 100 %                | —                | —                    | —                | —                    |
| Referred  | 1,028 | 85               | 75                   | 100 %            | 100 %                | —                | —                    |
| Accepted  | 862   | 76               | 59                   | 90               | 79                   | 100 %            | 100 %                |
| Convicted | 692   | 62               | 47                   | 72               | 62                   | 81               | 79                   |

Source of data: Alaska SANE data and Alaska Department of Law

## Domestic violence (continued from page 11)

of prosecution, male victims tended to experience higher case processing rates across different relationship types. One exception to this trend was higher rates of acceptance for referred cases involving intimate partners with female victims (76%) relative to male victims (67%). Similarly, cases involving intimate partners with female victims had higher conviction rates (61% of accepted cases) than cases with male victims (53% of accepted cases) (Table 13). In sum, cases of assaults in domestic violence incidents investigated by Troopers had relatively high referral, acceptance and conviction rates

overall, despite variation in rates by gender of the suspects and victims and relationships between them.

The findings presented in this article provide an initial description of case processing and conviction rates for assaults in domestic violence incidents in smaller communities across the state of Alaska. The full report containing more detailed descriptive analyses is published on the Justice Center website. Future studies may focus on comparisons of the data from the Anchorage analysis, this study, and nationwide reports. An important area to examine in more depth is factors affecting legal resolutions. More complex analyses involving multiple predictor variables are required to understand the

many influential factors in case processing and conviction of assaults in domestic violence incidents. A growing body of data about domestic violence incidents will enable policymakers to focus on improving ways to deal with this critical issue.

*Figures for national and Anchorage domestic violence incidents are from the Bureau of Justice*

*Statistics (2007) and the Municipality of Anchorage (2006).*

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**Table 13. Nature of Victim and Suspect Relationships and Legal Resolutions for Female and Male Victims**

Column percentages.

|                      | N   | Intimate partner | Parents or children | Other family | Room-mates |
|----------------------|-----|------------------|---------------------|--------------|------------|
| <b>Female victim</b> |     |                  |                     |              |            |
| Referred             | 663 | 85.3 %           | 60.8 %              | 69.6 %       | 88.2 %     |
| Accepted             | 580 | 76.2             | 44.6                | 57.6         | 55.9       |
| Convicted            | 454 | 60.6             | 34.6                | 41.3         | 35.3       |
| <b>Male victim</b>   |     |                  |                     |              |            |
| Referred             | 229 | 89.4 %           | 67.1 %              | 74.4 %       | 87.5 %     |
| Accepted             | 177 | 66.9             | 61.0                | 59.0         | 75.0       |
| Convicted            | 148 | 53.1             | 51.2                | 53.8         | 65.6       |

Source of data: Alaska State Troopers (2004) and Alaska Department of Law

## New Forum Editor

Barbara Armstrong joined the staff of the Justice Center in October as the new editor of the *Alaska Justice Forum* and as a Research Associate. She is the former Continuing Legal Education Director of the Alaska Bar Association.



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