



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Wednesday, October 2, 2019

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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

**MAYOR LONDON BREED ANNOUNCES EFFORT TO BETTER
SERVE SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

As Domestic Violence Awareness Month kicks-off, Bayview police officers will begin using technology to connect survivors of domestic violence with service providers as part of the Domestic Violence Lethality Assessment Pilot Program

San Francisco, CA — Mayor London N. Breed, in partnership with the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD), the District Attorney's Office, and the Department on the Status of Women, today announced the launch of a new phone application to quickly connect survivors of domestic violence with services. The application will enable officers in the Bayview District to systematically and accurately screen survivors of intimate partner violence, and then immediately connect victims who are at high-risk of death or serious injury with community-based and confidential domestic violence advocacy and services.

The application, called the Honest Assessment Response Tool (H.A.R.T.), was customized specifically for San Francisco as a screening tool to help identify people who are at high-risk for lethality in domestic violence cases. The app guides responding officers through 11 screening questions, helping them identify the risk level of the person they are assessing. Victims who answer "yes" to a certain number of questions are identified as "high-risk" and are encouraged to speak immediately by phone with an advocate from La Casa de la Madres. La Casa provides support to survivors of domestic violence, and operates a hotline staffed by employees who are trained counselors in crisis management, safety planning, and are able to perform intake for an emergency shelter.

"When it comes to helping survivors of domestic violence, a quick response and access to services is critical," said Mayor Breed. "This assessment will help our police officers more quickly connect survivors with advocates who can help them develop a safety plan, or get them into shelter. Getting that immediate assistance can make the difference for someone who is in an unsafe situation, and we're excited to see how this pilot helps San Franciscans."

"San Francisco Police Department officers are committed to compassionate, responsive care for anyone at risk of domestic violence," said Police Chief William Scott. "The implementation of this app will help bolster the success of this pilot program by automating the process for officers in the field to quickly link domestic violence survivors with advocates. We will continue to work closely with survivor advocates to improve our response and delivery of services."

The app is part of the City's Bayview Domestic Violence Lethality Assessment Pilot Program. The Pilot Program was created in 2017 through a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice,



Office of Violence Against Women. The Bayview District was chosen for the pilot project because of the high number of domestic violence calls to the SFPD that originate in that neighborhood.

Police officers participating in the Bayview Pilot Program were trained to conduct the lethality assessment using a paper form. Twenty-five officers will now use the app on their mobile devices to conduct the lethality assessment, while another 25 will continue using the paper version.

“Domestic violence is a widespread, but preventable crime,” said Dr. Emily Murase, Director of the Department on the Status of Women. “This program is effective because police are responding to some homes that have never accessed a community domestic violence advocate before, and we know that connecting survivors to advocates can save lives.”

“Early intervention is the key to ending domestic violence,” said Kathy Black, Executive Director of La Casa de las Madres. “Connecting survivors to services like La Casa’s drastically reduce the risk of further harm and injury. Together we are providing safer and brighter futures for some of the bravest and most vulnerable in our City. We are proud to be a partner in this work.”

The District Attorney’s Office worked with the Department on the Status of Women to ensure that the app works to better serve victims and public safety. In addition to connecting survivors with resources, the phone application will expedite the availability of high-risk incident information to SFPD Special Victims Unit Investigators and the District Attorney’s Office. Domestic Violence cases are typically challenging cases to prosecute, having a clear and consistent means for SFPD to share the lethality assessment ensures that victim services and the prosecutors in the District Attorney’s Office have the information they need to best respond to and support the survivor. The data will also enable criminal justice agencies to better identify gaps, trends, and areas for intervention.

All assessments will be automatically and securely sent to City and County servers as soon as a quality signal is detected on the device. In order to securely store assessment data, the Department of Technology’s Justice Tracking Information System (JUS.T.I.S.) Program will host the server for the H.A.R.T. application.

“We are using technology and innovation to come up with new ways to serve survivors of domestic violence,” said District Attorney George Gascón. “Working collaboratively with our partners at the Mayor’s Office, SFPD, and in the community, this phone app will better connect survivors of domestic violence to the services they so vitally need.”

“We are very proud to support the Department on the Status of Women and our criminal justice partners in their tireless efforts to identify and reduce Domestic Violence Lethality,” said Linda Gerull, Chief Information Officer for San Francisco. “This is an exemplary example technology enabling the collection of critical, life-saving information. Using the JUS.T.I.S. database will



allow us to correlate and integrate the assessments with our existing justice environment—providing more complete dashboards for our partner agencies.”

The application will be piloted at Bayview Station from October 1, 2019 to January 1, 2020, after which SFPD will evaluate its usability and efficiency for potential department wide deployment.

“Bayview District Station officers are proud to participate in this important program,” said Bayview Station Captain Troy Dangerfield. “Domestic violence is a critical issue in all communities and the safety and wellbeing of survivors is a priority to all of us.”

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. This app is part of the City’s broader efforts to reduce instances of domestic violence and serve survivors. The Department on the Status of Women operates a grant program to fund 39 programs that serve survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. The City Budget for Fiscal Year 2019-20 and 2020-21 includes \$8.6 million for the grant program. The organizations provide services in six core areas: crisis lines; counseling and case management; prevention and education; legal services; and emergency shelter and transitional housing.

La Casa de las Madres offers two toll-free domestic violence hotlines, and their emergency shelter provides safe refuge and comprehensive services for child and adult survivors fleeing violent homes and partnerships.

If you are a survivor of domestic violence and need assistance, please contact:

- In an emergency, call 911
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233
- W.O.M.A.N., Inc. Crisis Line: 415-864-4722
- La Casa de las Madres Crisis Lines: Adult Line 1-877-503-1850, Teen Line 1-877-923-0700
- Asian Women’s Shelter Crisis Line: 1-877-751-0880
- Saint Vincent de Paul Society – Riley Center Crisis Line: 415-255-0165

Resources for survivors of domestic violence can be found at <https://sfgov.org/dosw/violence-against-women-prevention-and-intervention-grants-program-0>.

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