



Attorney General

**Jeff Jackson**

## North Carolina Department of Justice Launches New Statewide Effort to Reduce Domestic Violence

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— Attorney General Jeff Jackson

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RALEIGH – Attorney General Jeff Jackson and the North Carolina Department of Justice are convening a statewide collective of domestic violence fatality review teams to review domestic violence fatalities at the state level and identify ways to prevent and address domestic abuse.

Five counties in North Carolina are currently authorized to conduct domestic violence fatality reviews, and the Department of Justice’s team will formally unite those five counties to help share data and insights and form stronger recommendations to prevent domestic violence-related deaths. In North Carolina, [13 people](#) have died in domestic violence-related homicides and suicides as of March of this year.

*“We are committed to protecting the people of North Carolina from domestic violence,” said **Attorney General Jeff Jackson**. “These teams play a key role in preventing future domestic violence incidents, and bringing them together at the state level means we’re going to find stronger solutions to keep people safe from abuse.”*

*“Courts of law can ensure justice and accountability when the worst happens,” said **Mecklenburg County District Attorney Spencer Merriweather**. “But it takes a community effort, like our local DV Fatality Review model, to make sure harm against our neighbors isn’t repeated. Asking ‘what went wrong?’ or ‘could some intervention have avoided this?’ isn’t second-guessing. It’s the smartest first step to eliminating intimate partner violence and saving lives.”*

“Collectively, teams have the power to advocate for state-level change,” said **Elyse Hamilton-Childres**, Prevention and Intervention Division Director for Mecklenburg County Community Support Services. “*The Statewide Domestic Violence Fatality Review Teams Collective was created as a convening for local teams to provide peer technical assistance and identify shared findings and recommendations from intensive fatality reviews. Together, North Carolina’s review teams represent an untapped resource for developing data-driven state policy intended to better protect victims, support survivors, hold abusive partners accountable, and ultimately prevent domestic violence-related deaths.*”

“County-level domestic violence fatality review teams in North Carolina provide valuable insight into understanding common themes underlying domestic violence homicides and helping us understand where to target prevention efforts and promote collaboration between systems in order to prevent future DV fatalities,” said **Elizabeth Sager**, Director of Evaluation at North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence. “*That includes looking at factors like an abuser’s access to firearms, previous history of strangulations, and support from victim service organizations. NCCADV is incredibly grateful for the NCDOJ’s involvement in this statewide collaborative in order to better uplift the findings, create informed recommendations, and reach policymakers and other decision makers.*”

Domestic violence fatality review teams include prosecutors, law enforcement officers, domestic violence survivors, social service providers, medical examiners, and domestic violence service providers. They meet regularly to look at how a domestic violence homicide or suicide happened, and what might be done differently to prevent future violence and deaths. The teams’ reports are sent to the NC Domestic Violence Commission and the Governor’s Crime Commission.

Attorney General Jackson and NCDOJ are working to help victims of domestic violence in many ways. NCDOJ runs the state’s **Lethality Assessment Program** (LAP), a lifesaving tool to help law enforcement respond to domestic violence incidents and connect victims to support and safety. NCDOJ helps law enforcement agencies and victim service agencies across the state **adopt the program**. LAP uses the Honest Assessment Response Tool, a proprietary software created and owned by Forseti.

NCDOJ also operates the Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) for victims and survivors of violence and abuse. As part of a comprehensive safety plan, this program helps keep victims’ addresses private from their abusers. The department’s Criminal Bureau also prosecutes domestic violence cases at the request of district attorneys and defends criminal convictions against people convicted of domestic violence crimes.

If you are a victim of domestic violence and need support, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 or visit <https://www.thehotline.org/>.

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