



COMMISSION

ON SEXUAL & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

improving systems so they work better for survivors and the community



COMMISSION

ON SEXUAL & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- ❖ The SA/DV Commission was formed in 1998 by a joint resolution between the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County.
- ❖ **Mission:** To inspire and coordinate our community's efforts to address sexual and domestic violence.
- ❖ **Purpose:** We improve systems so they work better for survivors and the community. We are made up of government and community leaders to fulfill our responsibility to effectively prevent and respond to sexual and domestic violence. We do not provide direct services; we lead projects to change systems.

SA/DV Commission membership

Government representatives:

Sheriff Donnell Tanksley
Starck Follis
Erika Lautenbach
Stephanie Kraft
Eric Richey
Bruce Van Glubt



Community appointments:

Dr. Katie Olvera, KPO Counseling LLC
Jessyca Murphy, Make.Shift Art Space
Krista Touros, PeaceHealth
Garret Shelsta, Stuff You Can Use
Moonwater, Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center
Raquel Vernola, Whatcom Community College

SA/DV Commission Funding



Whatcom County
City of Bellingham
City of Ferndale

2023-2024 DV Commission Work Plan:

Continue to stabilize funding and administrative structures for DV Commission operations.

In our community in 2022:



1 in 4 homeless households were fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence or other dangerous conditions.



Reports of sexual assault to law enforcement continued to fall. There is no evidence that incidents of sexual assault have decreased.



Fewer than 1/3 of SA & DV protection order requests were granted a final order. Very few people petition for a sexual assault protection order.



Nurses at PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center spent **660 hours conducting forensic sexual assault and domestic violence exams.**



Survivors shared what healing and justice mean to them. Read more at dvcommission.org under reports.

Read the full report: dvcommission.org/data-reports

Why does this matter?



Summit on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People (MMIWP)

A cross-disciplinary summit in Whatcom County to learn and take action to prevent and intervene in violence, and to support survivors and families.



Wed, November 20, 2024

Time and location: TBD

Save the dates: To be sent in May

Registration: To open in September

Co-sponsored by:

Community Consortium for Cultural Recognition in Education; Bellingham Whatcom County Commission on Sexual & Domestic Violence; Lummi Victims of Crime; PeaceHealth Tribal Affinity Group

Case reviews of intimate partner violence fatalities



- ❖ Dive deeply into individual cases to learn what victims are experiencing and need
- ❖ Multi-disciplinary team approach
- ❖ Extensive review of public records
- ❖ Grounded in self-care, collaboration, learning, looking forward, and making change
- ❖ Identify and implement strengths, gaps, and recommendations
- ❖ Next: Reviews of Sexual Assault Protection Orders (SAPOs)



Restorative Justice Pilot: reimagining justice for survivors

- ❖ Learning series
- ❖ Planning work group
- ❖ Survivor feedback on justice and healing
- ❖ Road map to developing pilot program
- ❖ Study of Creative Interventions Toolkit
- ❖ Gatherings for practitioners and interested stakeholders
- ❖ To be determined....



Subject matter expertise

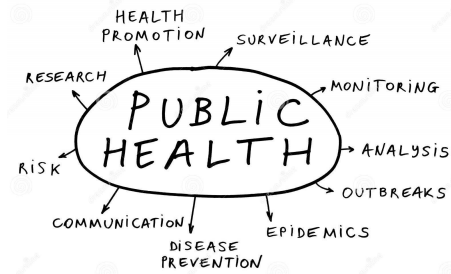


- ❖ Workplaces
- ❖ Faith communities
- ❖ Schools
- ❖ Courts
- ❖ Housing providers
- ❖ Media
- ❖ Healthcare providers

Annual meeting

Using a public health lens to address sexual and domestic violence

Thurs, May 23, 2024
8:30 – 10:30am
Whatcom Community College, Learning Commons
(LRN 160)



For more information or to register:
dvcommission.org/events



Questions or comments?

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COMMISSION ON SEXUAL & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Inspiring and coordinating community efforts to address sexual and domestic violence

April 2024

The Commission consists of 17 government and 14 community members. Government officials are designated by government positions. Community members are selected by the Mayor and the County Executive from among stakeholders/agencies in the community who have an interest in and serve people who are impacted by domestic and sexual violence.

(17) Designated Government Representatives

Term Exp.	Name	Community Position
January 31, 2025	Deyettea Alexander	Area Administrator, DCYF
January 31, 2026	Diane Miltenberger	Administrator, DSHS/Community Services Office
January 31, 2027	<i>Vacant</i>	<i>Designated Representative/Lummi Nation</i>
January 31, 2027	Tammy Cooper-Woodrich	Designated Representative/Nooksack Tribe
January 31, 2027	Greg Hansen	Designated Representative-Whatcom County Cities
January 31, 2028	Michael Munden	Selected Police Chief-Whatcom County Cities
January 31, 2028	David VanderYacht	Selected Superintendent-Whatcom Co. School Districts
N/A	Adrienne Renz	Executive Director/Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Services
N/A	Bruce Van Glubt	Whatcom County Probation Administrator
N/A	Stephanie Kraft	Whatcom County Superior Court Administrator
N/A	Erika Lautenbach	Whatcom County Health and Community Services Director
N/A	Donnell Tanksley	Whatcom County Sheriff
N/A	Rebecca Mertzig	Bellingham Police Chief
N/A	Eric Richey	Whatcom County Prosecutor
N/A	Starck Follis	Whatcom County Public Defender
N/A	Darlene Peterson	Bellingham Municipal Court Administrator
N/A	Alan Marriner	Bellingham City Attorney

(7) County Community Appointments

Term Exp.	Name	Community Position	Agency
January 31, 2025	Jessyca Murphy	Community at Large	Make.Shift Art Space
January 31, 2026	Katie Olvera	DV/SA Victim Service Provider	KPO Counseling LLC
January 31, 2026	Krista Touros	Health Care Provider	PeaceHealth
January 31, 2027	Garret Shelsta	Community at Large	Stuff You Can Use
January 31, 2027	Moonwater	Human Service Provider	Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center
January 31, 2027	Raquel Vernola	Institution of Higher Education	Whatcom Community College
January 31, 2028	<i>Vacant</i>	<i>Human Service Provider</i>	

(7) City Community Appointments

Term Exp.	Name	Community Position	Agency
January 31, 2025	Ken Levinson	Community at Large	Ken Levinson Law LLC
January 31, 2025	Beth Boyd	Human Service Provider	PeaceHealth/St. Joseph Medical Center
January 31, 2025	Jason McGill	DV/SA Victim Service Provider	Northwest Youth Services
January 31, 2026	Pamela Wheeler	Human Service Provider	Opportunity Council
January 31, 2026	Christina Byrne	Community at Large	Western Washington University
January 31, 2027	Christina Kobdich	Health Care Provider	Unity Care NW
January 31, 2027	Chris Roselli	Institution of Higher Education	Western Washington University

About

*“We’re making systems change, even if it’s slow,
and there are more changes on the horizon.” – Commission Member*

The SA/DV Commission improves systems so they work better for survivors and the community. We are made up of government and community leaders to fulfill our responsibility to effectively prevent and respond to sexual and domestic violence. We do not provide direct services; we lead projects for systems change, such as the ones below.

2024 Work Plan Activities

- Develop pilot of restorative justice responses for people affected by domestic and sexual violence.
- Improve coordination and effectiveness of community responses for and prevention of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People and their families.
- Utilize case reviews, audits, and case consultations to improve criminal legal responses in sexual assault and high-lethality intimate partner violence cases.
- Provide training and tools to enhance understanding of and responses for criminalized survivors.
- Use public health framework to broaden understanding of the dynamics and effects of sexual and domestic violence, and community responsibility for addressing collectively; ensure commission projects are focused in all key areas of public health.
- Collaborate with Whatcom County courts and aligned professionals to improve access to justice for survivors in civil and family law cases, focusing particularly on language access and disability access.
- Plan for a healthcare screening and response project to identify and connect survivors with community support, doing research, developing tools, and identifying partners.
- Host engaging Commission meetings to provide education and implement meaningful action for systems change.
- Provide local data, tools, training, and subject matter expertise for systems and stakeholders to increase knowledge, influence decision making, and improve prevention and responses.



March 2024 project report

Restorative justice responses for sexual and domestic violence

Commission members involved: Christina Byrne, Moonwater, Jessyca Murphy



The RJ work group is studying the [Creative Interventions Toolkit](#) for understanding of processes and practical tools, and planning gatherings for RJ practitioners and other interested stakeholders.



Improved community responses for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People (MMIWP) and their families

Commission members involved: Beth Boyd, Tammy Cooper-Woodrich, Chris Kobdich, Jason McGill, Adrienne Renz, Chris Roselli, Krista Touros

The MMIWP steering committee will host a summit in 2024 to bring together government and organizational leaders to improve responses and resources in Whatcom County.



Case reviews of intimate partner violence cases to identify strengths and gaps in community response

Commission members involved: Starck Follis, Adrienne Renz, Eric Richey, Garret Shelsta, Katie Olvera, Christina Byrne

The case review team analyzed 3 intimate partner homicide cases in 2023 and has 3 more cases on the horizon for 2024. Numerous strengths and challenges have been identified, and agencies are implementing changes.



Enhance understanding of and interventions for criminalized survivors

Commission staff hosted a networking session for DVSAS advocates and public defenders in 2023. In March 2024, training was provided for the Blaine Police Department. Currently, we have started developing a flow chart to describe the criminal legal process for criminalized survivors. (Note: Two of the cases reviewed in 2023 involved criminalized survivors.)