

Shelters, Support, Advocacy

*24-hour service

SAFE PASSAGE

Northampton (413) 586-5066
Toll free (888) 345-5282

NELCWIT

(New England Learning Center for Women in Transition)

Greenfield (413) 772-0806*
Orange/Athol (978) 544-9857
Toll Free (888) 249-0806*

THE NETWORK/ LA RED

Hotline (617) 742-4911*

CENTER FOR WOMEN AND COMMUNITY COUNSELOR/ADVOCATE PROGRAM

Amherst (413) 545-0800*
Toll free (888) 337-0800*

ALIANZA

Holyoke (413) 536-1628
Toll free (text capability) (877) 536-1628*

YWCA, SPRINGFIELD

Hotline (413) 733-7100*
Toll Free (800) 796-8711*

VALLEY HUMAN SERVICES

Ware (413) 967-6241

INTIMATE PARTNER ABUSE EDUCATION

Proteus Intimate Partner (413) 579-7570
Abuse Education Athol, Belchertown, Greenfield,
Northampton, Springfield and Ware
Gandara Domestic Violence (413) 736-0395
Program Springfield

Contact Information

NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT ATTORNEY OFFICES

Hampshire County

One Gleason Plaza
Northampton, MA 01060
Phone: (413) 586-9225 | Fax: (413) 584-3635

Franklin County

56 Bank Row
Greenfield, MA 01301
Phone: (413) 774-3186 | Fax: (413) 773-3278

Victim/Witness Assistance

Belchertown: (413) 323-5275
Greenfield: (413) 772-6944
Northampton: (413) 586-5780
Orange: (978) 544-7376

COURTHOUSE RESOURCES

District Court Clerk's Offices

Eastern Hampshire (Belchertown): (413) 323-4056
Greenfield: (413) 774-5533
Northampton: (413) 584-7400
Orange: (978) 544-8277

SAFEPLAN ADVOCATES

Eastern Hampshire (Belchertown)
District Court: (413) 426-8469
Greenfield District Court: (413) 406-3205
Northampton District Court: (413) 244-0761
Orange District Court: (413) 376-7372
Franklin Probate Court: (413) 512-0695
Hampshire Probate Court: (413) 266-9968



Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Unit

To Seek Justice For All

The Office of the Northwestern District Attorney, in partnership with the communities we serve, is dedicated to the pursuit of truth and justice, protection of the innocent, and safety of the public.

No one should be abused or assaulted.

This unit works with community and law enforcement partners on shared goals: **keep victims safe** and **hold offenders accountable**.

Staff are specially trained to work with people who have been victimized by domestic violence and sexual assault. Assistant District Attorneys, Victim Witness Advocates and other staff coordinate to protect victims through prevention and intervention and prosecution of domestic violence and sexual violence crimes.

Domestic violence is abuse committed by an intimate partner, family or household member. Victims have the right to seek abuse prevention orders (often called restraining orders) under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 209A. Sexual assault is intentional or forceful sexual contact without consent and can include intercourse, oral sex, and touching of private parts over or under clothing. Victims may seek restraining orders under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 258E against perpetrators even if there was no prior relationship.

NorthwesternDA.org

.....

In cases of family violence, the onus of arrest and prosecution *should not* be on victims. It is the obligation of the criminal justice system to proceed with cases to keep victims and the community at large *safe*.

.....

★ **Prevention**

Staff present trainings, share resources and promote evidence-based practices to prevent domestic and sexual violence, including topics such as risk assessment, strangulation, stalking, the intersection of substance misuse and mental health, campus sexual assault and responding to the needs of LBGTQ+ communities.

The **District Attorney's Task Force on Domestic and Sexual Violence** brings together law enforcement, victim services, domestic violence advocacy and community groups for training opportunities and networking around shared goals of ending domestic and sexual violence. The unit engages with the community in raising awareness of intimate partner violence and

sexual assault to reduce stigma so survivors can more readily reach out for help. Staff serve on task forces and working groups dedicated to community-based domestic violence and sexual assault prevention. They are vital members of the multi-disciplinary Sexual Assault Response Team convened by the Center for Women & Community, a state-designated rape crisis center, where law enforcement, health care, forensic sexual assault nurses, prosecutors and victim advocates develop consistent, coordinated responses to sexual assault.

★ **Intervention**

The **Domestic Violence Intervention Project** and county-based **High Risk Teams** aim to prevent escalating violence within familial or intimate relationships. These teams coordinate and maximize efforts to protect victims by providing resources and maintaining a watchful eye on perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence.

The intervention project promotes early intervention using evidence-based research that identifies behaviors known to substantially increase the level of risk and lethality for victims. The project coordinates with police and community advocates to send specially trained advocates from NELCWIT in Franklin County and Valley Human Services at BHN in Hampshire County to help victims immediately after a report of domestic violence. Advocates provide emergency support, safety planning and referrals for counseling, shelter and legal help.

High Risk Teams monitor offenders whose behaviors indicate victims are at increased risk of continued violence. Team meetings bring together representatives from probation, corrections, police, emergency dispatchers, child protective services, domestic violence shelters, batterer programs and victim advocates to discuss case information and concerning behaviors. Information about offenders identified as high risk is distributed to key partners to allow coordinated, comprehensive and consistent responses to incidents involving the offender.

There is a strong link between early intervention and the safety of victims. Domestic violence advocates are trained to make risk assessment part of safety planning with victims. Advocates also help police learn about threats to kill and past abuse; information then incorporated into risk assessment worksheets in a statewide effort to monitor high risk cases.

★ **Prosecution**

The unit is responsible for the prosecution of all domestic violence and sexual assault cases involving victims who are 18 or older in the Northwestern District. *(The Child Abuse Unit handles crimes involving children.)*

Staff collaborate with community and law enforcement partners to coordinate investigation and prosecution of cases. These partnerships ensure successful resolution of domestic violence and sexual assault crimes.

In Massachusetts, police must make an arrest at a domestic violence scene even when, as sometimes occurs, a victim prefers they do not. Prosecution may proceed even if a victim declines to cooperate because victims may experience pressure, intimidation, or even threats to recant. Taking that burden off victims means the onus of arrest and prosecution rests with the criminal justice system; it is the obligation of that system to take steps to keep victims and the community at large safe.

Crimes of sexual assault typically come to the DA's office from local or state police who share police reports and evidence for review of potential criminal charges. Memoranda of understanding between the office and law enforcement formalize a long-standing collaboration on cases, ensuring efficiency and consistency. These efforts identify repeat offenders and trends. The office works together with victims of sexual assault in deciding whether or not to proceed with charges.