

Maine Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Programs: 2019 – 2024



He started taking the class seriously. He started to ask questions in class. He's been good about engaging in class and taking notes. He started being clear headed, so I was comfortable honoring the visits. He's communicating his emotions better and taking the time to explain how he is feeling instead of just shutting down. It's given him tools to advocate for what he needs and communicate his feelings to prevent arguments. He is less reactive to changes. I think the class will help him in the long run and has been very good for him. They take the time to know each person and take it on a case-by-case basis and do not lump everyone into a box.



– Maine Survivor, 2024 CDVIP Survivor Impact Survey



**CONNECTING PEOPLE.
CREATING FRAMEWORKS FOR CHANGE.**

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Overview

Collaboration and Cooperation

“ [A] shared commitment to honoring the experiences of the victims while ending domestic violence through education has shifted into a highly collaborative, solution-focused alliance.

- Randall Liberty, Commissioner, Maine Department of Corrections

The experiences of victim-survivors are the clearest indicator of the impact that Maine’s Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Programs (CDVIP) have. In both 2020 and 2024, the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence (MCEDV) surveyed survivors whose current or former partners had been ordered to complete CDVIP. Results consistently affirm that survivors are safest when participants attend and complete CDVIP and that non-compliance and non-completion are causes for concern about victim safety. Maine is fortunate in the level of collaboration and cooperation between community service providers and state government in the development and intervention programming.

The team of partners works together to solve problems, hold offenders appropriately responsible, and ensure victim safety to the greatest degree possible, all with few resources to support the work.

Maine has mandatory standards to ensure quality programming and meaningful oversight of those standards. Not all states do. The Maine Department of Corrections (MDOC) oversees certification of the state’s Domestic Violence Intervention Programs, formerly called “Batterer Intervention Programs.” Maine additionally benefits from the collaborative approach that the MDOC, the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence (MCEDV), the Wabanaki Women’s Coalition (WWC), and the statewide CDVIP network bring to their collective efforts to end domestic abuse. The team of partners works together to solve problems, hold offenders appropriately responsible, and ensure victim safety to the greatest degree possible, all with few resources to support the work.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused an initial shutdown of Maine’s CDVIPs in 2020, with a brand-new program in Washington County and just a year of MCEDV’s funded leadership in the books. In Maine and globally, experts in abuse intervention wrestled with the questions of

how to safely and responsibly proceed under public health requirements that restricted gathering. Maine followed initial recommendations to move to individual phone contact with CDVIP participants, which was time-consuming and limited in effect. Upon release of guidance from national experts¹, Maine engaged in emergency rulemaking to add Section 11 of the CDVIP standards which allowed for the use of videoconferencing in the event of a State of Emergency². The pandemic prompted greater collaboration between programs, MCEDV, and MDOC, while also presenting a greater need for it as other systems, including the courts, probation, and child protective services, all pivoted their approaches in response to the pandemic. The effects of the pandemic have been long-term on the work of CDVIPs in Maine. Court backlogs led to large batches of enrollments instead of dispersed enrollments that allow CDVIPs to use a smooth rolling admissions process. Programs are still feeling the effects of this and have instituted monthly enrollment status checks to manage timely enrollment statewide.

¹ Scaia and Heath, “Engaging Responsibly with Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse Individually and in a Videoconference Software Group during COVID-19 and Beyond.” Global Rights for Women, March 2021 (Updated January 2022): <https://globalrightsforwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/COVID-19-Responsible-Work-with-Perpetrators-Updated-Jan-2022.docx.pdf>

² 03-201 Chapter 15, Domestic Violence Intervention Program Certification, Section 11. Declaration of State of Emergency.

CDVIP Historical Timeline

Maine's first statewide standards for the certification of domestic violence intervention programs (then batterer intervention programs) were made effective on April 29, 1998. In the following decades, programs were developed in many, though not all, parts of Maine to address men's violence against their female partners. This timeline represents some of the major milestones and accomplishments, but it should not be considered an exhaustive history.

2012 Maine's first CDVIPs for women were created in response to the State of Maine v. Mosher case. The Mosher case challenged the constitutionality of sentencing for his domestic abuse charges, which included a two-year probation term to allow for completion of CDVIP. The successful challenge was made on the grounds that no such programs existed for women and so the longer probation term was unconstitutional.

2016 In response to a legislative resolve, the Maine Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse, in collaboration with MCEDV and the MDOC, brought forward a report to the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety on the Pretrial and Post-Conviction Use of Batterer Intervention Programs,⁷ together with recommendations and proposed legislation to begin to better support these programs as increasingly critical to community-based, non-carceral intervention.

2018 Maine statutes were amended to recognize CDVIPs as the most appropriate and effective community intervention in cases involving domestic violence and to require any person convicted of domestic violence crimes to be court ordered to complete a CDVIP unless the court makes findings as to why that should not happen.

Maine legislature appropriated the first funds (\$150,000 annually) to support Maine's CDVIPs through partial reimbursement of reduced fees for indigent participants and to support statewide training for and coordination of CDVIP providers. Funds were appropriated to the MDOC, who has thereafter contracted with MCEDV for implementation.

2019 MCEDV hired their first staff member with a primary focus on Maine's domestic violence intervention efforts.

2020 Next Step Domestic Violence Project opened Step Forward, Leaving Violence Behind as the men's CDVIP in Washington County, providing CDVIP availability statewide and representing the only CDVIP that has been newly certified in the last five years.

Provision of CDVIP was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Programs in Maine and around the world adapted to offer virtual classes safely and responsibly.

MCEDV conducted the first CDVIP Survivor Impact Survey to determine the impact of CDVIP participation on the lives and safety of survivors and their children.

2021

MCEDV, in collaboration with MDOC, reported initial findings on the impact of CDVIPs on survivor safety to the 130th Legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety⁸, together with recommendations and proposed legislation.

The 130th Maine Legislature approved a modest increase in funding to expand the limited scope of the indigent participant fee reimbursement program to more fully support access of low-income perpetrators to this intervention.

MDOC and MCEDV started the collaborative biennial review of Maine's CDVIP Standards.

MCEDV received private donations that enabled \$2,500 mini-grants to CDVIPs to address infrastructure needs related to provision of services during the Covid-19 pandemic.

2023

MCEDV engaged global experts in women's use of force to offer a nearly year-long professional development opportunity, the Systems Advocacy Learning Lab (SALL), for advocates and intervention providers statewide to examine the experiences of survivor-defendants ordered to attend women's CDVIP. The SALL was made possible with funding from MDOC.

Volunteers of America NNE/Choice Program discontinued men's CDVIP classes in Sagadahoc, Lincoln, Knox, and Waldo counties. Penquis' DV Classes for Men took over Knox and Waldo, while Safe Voices' Alternatives to Abuse took over Sagadahoc and Lincoln.

Caring Unlimited discontinued women's CDVIP classes due to funding and staffing shortages.

Violence No More, men's CDVIP in York County, closed due to funding and staffing shortages.

2024

Safe Voices discontinued women's CDVIP classes due to funding and staffing shortages.

Safe Voices discontinued men's CDVIP classes in Sagadahoc and Lincoln counties due to funding and staffing shortages. Currently, both an existing CDVIP and an emerging organization are exploring the provision of services in this area.

MCEDV secured \$30,000 in private funding from the John T. Gorman Foundation to support some of the operational costs of Maine's CDVIPs.

MDOC and MCEDV collaborated on a successful application for federal funding through the Office of Violence Against Women's Improving Criminal Justice Response grant program which will support each of Maine's CDVIPs for men at approximately \$32,000 per program annually for 3 years.

MCEDV conducted the second CDVIP Survivor Impact Survey.

Caring Unlimited applied to certify a domestic violence intervention program in York County, and their application is being considered by the MDOC.

Maine's newly revised DVIP statewide certification standards were enacted.

Gender and Types of Violence Addressed through CDVIPs

For years, Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Programs (CDVIP) exclusively served men who battered their female partners. There were no programs for women. After Maine’s criminal statutes were changed to allow a two-year term of probation for misdemeanor domestic violence crimes to allow sufficient time to complete a CDVIP during the term of probation, Maine’s Law Court held in 2012 that the state must also certify programs for women charged with domestic violence crimes. This led to the establishment of women’s violence intervention programs in many parts of the state.

Men and women have separate classes, as required by Maine’s CDVIP standards, because domestic abuse is largely a gendered crime. Instructors in Maine’s intervention programs for men report that most of those participants use a pattern of coercive controlling behavior against their female partners, while instructors in Maine’s intervention programs for women report that most of those participants have used force against their male partners in response and/or reaction to the coercive controlling violence they experience. Most women required to attend CDVIP are survivors; sometimes they are referred to as criminalized survivors or survivor-defendants. Despite enrollment numbers of roughly 10 men to every woman in intervention programs³, there were seven programs for women in operation in 2022, nearly as many as the nine for men.



Men’s CDVIP programs use the curriculum *Creating a Process of Change for Men who Batter*, which is “rated as Effective for reducing recidivism with respect to violent offenses and Promising in reducing victimization” by the National Institute of Justice⁴. Women’s CDVIPs use *Turning Points: A Nonviolence Curriculum for Women*, which addresses both women’s use

³ Each year, there are 1,000 to 1,200 men and under 100 women enrolled in Maine’s CDVIPs.

⁴ “Practice Profile: Interventions for Persons Who Committed Intimate Partner Violence: Duluth Model.” National Institute of Justice: Crime Solutions: September 13, 2013. Accessed 10/31/2024: <https://crimesolutions.ojp.gov/ratedpractices/interventions-persons-who-committed-intimate-partner-violence-duluth-model#1-0>

of force, and the violence used against them by their partners. The *Turning Points* curriculum is widely used both nationally and internationally⁵.

When intervention work with people who have committed domestic abuse began in Maine, the programs were loosely affiliated through the Maine Association of Batterer Intervention Programs, but they never had paid staff to support their efforts at statewide coordination. In 2018, Maine’s legislature appropriated limited funds to the MDOC, which then contracted with MCEDV, to provide statewide coordination, technical assistance, and training as well as to implement a small scope, reduced fee reimbursement program to increase equitable access to CDVIPs statewide. This was the first-ever state investment in the work of Maine’s CDVIPs. **These programs are now facing the reality of being relied upon as a critical component of Maine’s non-carceral response to domestic abuse and violence without ever having been funded to be sustainable in the long-term.**

CDVIP in the Current Moment

Maine is nationally recognized for the excellent work of its CDVIP network. And they are struggling to keep their doors open.

Maine’s CDVIP network is strong in many ways. There is a great deal of trust, collegiality, and peer support among the programs statewide, and relationships between local domestic violence centers and local CDVIPs are stronger than ever. Thanks to the funding through the MDOC, administered by MCEDV, all of Maine’s CDVIP instructors are trained in the same curricular models. This means that all the programs and their staff members share a similar lexicon and approach to this high-stakes work. MCEDV is unaware of any other state in which this is the case. Numerous improvements have been made in the past five years, and many of them are highlighted in the *Recommendations and Progress* section of this report.

“ I appreciate the collaboration and statewide meetings, staying connected to other DVRCs and DVIPs. [It’s a] great learning opportunity, and I feel supported. I appreciate MCEDV and MDOC always being there to answer questions and provide support.

– CDVIP Director, 2024 MCEDV Site Visit

Maine is recognized nationally for its commitment to quality implementation of the *Creating*

⁵ Larance, Goodmark, Miller, and Dasgupta, “Understanding and Addressing Women’s Use of Force in Intimate Relationships: A Retrospective.” *Violence Against Women: Sage Journals*, 2019. Vol. 25(1) 56- 80.

a *Process of Change for Men who Batter (CPC)* and *Turning Points: A Non-violence Program for Women* curricula. Maine CDVIP educators were invited to participate in the revision of the CPC curriculum, and videos of Maine CDVIP educators were made to use as examples of responsible and effective implementation of the curriculum. Maine’s work to explore the experiences of survivor-defendants in CDVIPs for women was featured at a national intervention conference in the fall of 2024. Maine is nationally recognized for the excellent work of its CDVIP network. And they are struggling to keep their doors open.

Mandated Intervention Lacks Funding

Maine believes in this intervention enough to require courts to note when and why it is not ordered in a domestic abuse case, and Maine has not yet invested in the operational costs of this mandated and recognized intervention.

Reliance on participant fees and small financial infusions here and there have proven insufficient to support the intervention recognized in Maine statute as “the most appropriate and effective community intervention in cases of domestic abuse.” Maine believes in this intervention enough to require courts to note when and why it is not ordered in a domestic abuse case, and Maine has not yet invested in the operational costs of this mandated and recognized intervention. Without significant, sustained investment in these programs that are central to the state’s commitment to victim safety and meaningful accountability for those who commit domestic abuse, the good work of the MDOC, MCEDV, and the CDVIP network to build this quality, coordinated response is at risk.

“Increasing fees will NOT solve the financial picture. It is not the measure of accountability we once thought it was. Fees often take away from what the family and survivor needs.

- Maine CDVIP Director, 2024 MCEDV Site Visit

Impact of CDVIP Participation on Survivors of Domestic Violence

Maine's surveys of survivors whose partners are required to attend CDVIP affirms existing research that survivors and their children are safest when participants attend and complete CDVIP.

Assessing the effectiveness of domestic violence intervention is complicated. Denial, minimization, and blame are characteristic tactics of people who engage in patterns of coercive control, and recidivism statistics only tell part of the story as many tactics in the patterned behavior of abuse are not criminal acts in and of themselves. To fully understand the impact of Maine's CDVIPs, it is important to hear from survivors – the current and former partners of those ordered to Maine's CDVIPs. In both 2020 and 2024, advocates from MCEDV's member programs did just that. They reached out to survivors statewide to ask them a series of questions about their safety and autonomy before and since their partner was ordered to CDVIP.

Maine's surveys of survivors whose partners are required to attend CDVIP affirms existing research that survivors and their children are safest when participants attend and complete CDVIP. Maine's 2024 CDVIP Survivor Impact Survey showed that all participants expelled from CDVIP recidivated with DV offenses or DV and other offenses. Only two of those who completed and two of those currently attending had recidivated with DV offenses.

Approximately half of all survivor-respondents reported an increase in safety after their current or former partner attended CDVIP, and the majority of those (14 of 20) reported that they had either completed CDVIP or were still attending. Among those whose partners were still attending, three went from feeling “not at all safe” to “very safe.” Conversely, three respondents reported a reduction in safety, and only one of them had completed CDVIP; the other two had been expelled. As one survivor said, “I wish he would have attended the full group. Things seemed to be better in the beginning when he was attending.”

While many survivors noted significant improvement in their current or former partners after being sent to CDVIP, some saw no change, and some, sadly, saw abusive behaviors worsen. In both the 2020 and 2024 surveys of survivors, personal motivation to change emerged as a consistent determinant of the effectiveness of the CDVIPs.

“ I was notified that he was in CDVIP by mail. I remember feeling so relieved because I at least knew where he would be during those hours. We used to live on the same street at the time and I was terrified of this because I never knew when he could be driving by my house. It made me feel safer to know that during those hours, I did not need to look over my shoulder. - Maine Survivor, 2024 CDVIP Survivor Impact Survey

Some survivors highlighted the need for greater communication from the CDVIP and coordination while their current or former partners are enrolled in CDVIP like this one: “I wish people would contact me and let me know how class is going, what he is being taught.” CDVIPs want to be able to lean into this request from survivors. However, the barebones funding of CDVIPs prevents the kind of robust coordination and communication that would serve survivors and their children best. While some CDVIPs manage to do this, they often rely on staff volunteering their time.

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Another survivor notes the vital importance of an array of services working in concert with one another: “All resources listed⁶ above were needed throughout my healing. Even though [some] were not as effective as the other resources, they still provided help to maintain safety.” Thirty-eight of the 42 respondents to the 2024 survey reported reaching out to resources for help, and they reached out to an average of more than four resources each.

Recommendations and Progress

MCEDV, in collaboration with the MDOC, CDVIP Network, member programs, community partners, and the Maine Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse, has issued regular reports with recommendations for improving Maine’s domestic abuse intervention work as a part of an effective statewide coordinated effort to improve both victim safety and offender accountability. MCEDV has provided leadership and critical support in advancing progress on those recommendations. Below, recommendations from the two most recent

⁶ The resource list referenced included DV intervention program, DV Resource Center, friends/family, colleagues, religious group/church, doctor/other healthcare provider, helpline or online support, mental health provider, social service provider, police, lawyer/legal aid, and other.

preceding reports are reviewed with updates on progress toward realizing those recommendations.

2016 Recommendations and Progress

In February 2016, the Maine Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse made recommendations about program approach and improving program outcomes in their report to Maine’s Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, “Pretrial and Post-Conviction Use of Batterer Intervention Programs⁷.”

Best Practice Recommendations Regarding Program Approach

1. Retain the gender-based, educational approach currently used in Maine certified Domestic Violence Intervention Programs as appropriate for the vast majority of batterers.

This recommendation has been affirmed through Maine’s multi-disciplinary, biennial Standards Review process, co-facilitated by Karen Wyman, Director of Prevention and Intervention at MCEDV, and Tessa Mosher, Director of Victim Services at MDOC. The Standards Review Team noted that while retention of this approach continues to be appropriate for most people referred to intervention programs, attention must also be paid to the needs of LGBTQ+ people and others for whom this approach would not be appropriate. While there has been interest in developing these alternatives, the lack of funding to support that work has stopped it from progressing. Existing CDVIPs use gender-responsive curricula that consider the individual and social contexts in which domestic abuse has occurred.

2. Allow voluntary use of pretrial participation in a certified Domestic Violence Intervention Program.

This is allowed. Few people request this. Further exploration of voluntary participation in CDVIPs is needed.

3. In a domestic violence-related case, Deferred Disposition with a Domestic Violence Intervention Program as a condition should only be used if monitoring by a Judicial Monitoring program and supervision by a community agency are also ordered (especially if other conditions are included).

⁷ Both the 2016 and 2020 reports refer to “Batterer Intervention Programs” as that was the name in place at those times. The programs are now called “Domestic Violence Intervention Programs,” and the abbreviations DVIP or CDVIP (for Certified DVIP) will be used throughout this report to avoid confusion.

This is in progress. It is a somewhat consistent practice in the few counties that have implemented a domestic violence judicial monitoring court. MCEDV participates in a workgroup of the Maine Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse to address best practices related to domestic abuse and judicial monitoring. When referrals to CDVIP are made without supervision from a community agency, it compromises the ability of the CDVIP to engage in necessary community coordination to ensure victim safety and offender accountability.

4. Retain the current program duration of 48 weeks based on the time required for the educational process and behavior change.

This was affirmed in the 2024 Standards for Certification of Domestic Violence Intervention Programs.

5. Maintain the current model of independent offender funded DVIPs but create a statewide fund to support truly indigent participants identified through meaningful means testing.

Very low-income people are over-represented in these programs, as they are in the criminal justice system generally. With eligibility set at 138% of Federal Poverty Levels, approximately 30% of men's program participants and 90% of women's program participants are eligible for reduced fees. The program currently runs out of resources for fee reimbursement in the third quarter of the fiscal year.

This has been done. In 2019, MCEDV received its first funding of \$100,000 per year to provide partial reimbursement to CDVIPs for reduced fees for indigent participants. It proved to be insufficient, running out of funds far in advance of the end of the fiscal year. MCEDV successfully advocated for an increase to \$200,000 per year, and it still isn't enough to meet the need. This funding has improved the ability of Maine's CDVIPs to provide services to very low-income people who are referred to them, and it has prevented those individuals from experiencing further legal consequences solely for their lack of funds, but it has not been operationally stabilizing to the programs. The reduced fee reimbursement program has revealed the degree to which very low-income people were previously not being ordered to attend these programs due to their inability to pay the costs. With that no longer being a justification for the courts to not order completion of a CDVIP for those convicted of domestic violence, very low-income people are over-represented in these programs, as they are in the criminal justice system generally. With eligibility set at 138% of Federal Poverty Levels, approximately 30% of men's program participants and 90% of women's program

participants are eligible for reduced fees. The program currently runs out of resources for fee reimbursement in the third quarter of the fiscal year.

2016 Best Practice Recommendations for Improving Program Outcomes

6. Create a solid program infrastructure for DVIPs in Maine through the coordinated community response structure, [including more formalized CCR teams in all prosecutorial districts; funding for CDVIP teacher training and attendance at CCR activities; and implementation of certification standards.]

MCEDV receives \$25,000 in funding annually to support the training needs of CDVIP staff statewide. This level of funding has not allowed for inclusion of essential partners in training efforts, like probation officers, prosecutors and other referral sources, which would be a best practice approach.

MCEDV, MDOC, and the state's CDVIP Network have made substantial progress on this. Each month as part of their reimbursement request process, CDVIPs report the activities they have engaged in as part of their local Coordinated Community Response to domestic violence. Those include formal activities like attendance at local or regional DV Task Force meetings and DV court dockets, as well as more informal connections they have with advocates, prosecutors, probation officers, and child protective workers to collectively support both victim safety and offender accountability.

MCEDV receives \$25,000 in funding annually to support the training needs of CDVIP staff statewide. Through a combination of reimbursement to programs for attending national foundational training and provision of both online and in-person training in state, MCEDV has been able to meet the initial and ongoing professional development needs of Maine's CDVIPs, as well as covering the costs of mileage, per diem, and lodging when needed, at no cost to CDVIP staff. This level of funding has not allowed for inclusion of essential partners in training efforts, like probation officers, prosecutors and other referral sources, which would be a best practice approach.

MCEDV and MDOC work closely to ensure a collaborative and collegial environment in which CDVIPs, Domestic Violence Resource Centers, and other community partners can truly engage in a Coordinated Community Response to domestic abuse and violence. MCEDV hosts twice-monthly virtual CDVIP Network meetings that are open to any interested parties. The biennial Standards Review process is done by a multi-disciplinary team that includes CDVIP staff, probation officers, legal aid providers, victim advocates, and others.

Maine's Certification Standards reflect the best thinking of the state's experts in domestic abuse intervention.

7. Require judges to make findings on the record in a domestic violence related case that justify: 1) a disposition that does not include a DVIP; and 2) a disposition requiring Anger Management. A new general sentencing provision should identify DVIP as the appropriate effective community intervention in such cases.

This has been done. The Maine legislature enacted this requirement in 2018, through Public Law 2017, Chapter 105. However, while annual data is available about the number of forms docketed by the Maine Judicial Branch to indicate a disposition in a domestic violence case that did not include CDVIP, no tracking system is in place to collect additional data about the reasons why those dispositions are made. Implementation of such a tracking system would allow community partners to better understand those barriers that still exist to accessing this intervention and develop responsive strategies.

8. Oversight of DVIP participants through Judicial Monitoring and community supervision with a "swift and certain" sanction for non-compliance is key to positive Domestic Violence Intervention Program outcomes. Judicial Monitoring dockets should be implemented statewide, which will require additional resources for judge time and court clerks.

This is in progress. The Maine Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse has convened a working group to develop and promote best practices in judicial monitoring. CDVIP staff regularly participate in judicial monitoring in the few areas of the state where it exists. While domestic violence judicial monitoring dockets are not yet established statewide, interest and awareness are steadily growing.

9. High-risk batterers require ongoing risk management and supervision. Referral agencies should provide risk assessment information to DVIPs.

It is important to note that while some people who abuse are identified as higher risk, there are no zero-risk situations in domestic abuse and levels of risk can change quickly and unpredictably. We know from survivors that there is still more work to do around improving communication and information sharing. Appropriately and sustainably resourcing the CDVIPs is necessary to make progress on those goals.

Significant progress has been made to improve communication and information-sharing. In

2021, Public Law 2021, Chapter 647, the Maine Legislature codified a requirement that the State provide a copy of the relevant police report to their local CDVIP, together with known contact information for the crime victim, anytime a criminal court order requires the defendant to enroll and complete a program. Where law enforcement has scored ODARA as part of the indexed incident, that information would be included in the police report provided under this information sharing requirement. It is important to note that while some people who abuse are identified as higher risk, there are no zero-risk situations in domestic abuse and levels of risk can change quickly and unpredictably. We know from survivors that there is still more work to do around improving communication and information sharing. Appropriately and sustainably resourcing the CDVIPs is necessary to make progress on those goals.

10. Engage diverse community members in a way that is culturally competent and safe for the participants. Diverse populations must be integrated through training and preparation of DVIP facilitators to create an inclusive environment reflecting the populations local to the programs.

There is substantial interest and desire to engage in this work, and some initial steps have been taken to address the programming needs of people with disabilities, people who are LGBTQ+, and people with specific cultural and/or linguistic needs. Without stable funding to support the existence of the CDVIPs, those efforts have stalled. Investment is needed to ensure our state's capacity to build relevant and accessible programming and to hire, train, and retain staff who reflect the populations served.

11. Continue the DVIP standards' accommodation of programming specific for women, acknowledging differences between men and women's use of violence.

This was affirmed in the Standards Review process, and this remains a challenging area for the state's CDVIP Network. Almost without exception, the women referred to CDVIP are survivors of domestic violence who have either been wrongly identified as abusive or have used actions that meet the legal definition of domestic abuse in response and reaction to the ongoing pattern of abuse and violence they experience at the hands of their partners. In addition to preserving the accommodation of gender-responsive programming, MCEDV, with support from the MDOC, hosted a 9-month long examination of the experiences of women referred to CDVIP, the Systems Advocacy Learning Lab: Understanding Survivor-Defendant Experiences. This cohort strengthened their ability to engage in systems advocacy from a systems-involved survivor standpoint.

12. Implement a process to ensure that prosecutors submit the required annual domestic violence report to allow meaningful review by the legislative joint standing committees specified in existing law. In addition, prosecutors

should include the use of certified Domestic Violence Intervention Programs in their written policies for handling domestic violence matters.

Responsive to a longstanding recommendation from Maine's Domestic Abuse Homicide Review Panel, this funding and the ability hire a statewide resource prosecutor will provide the capacity to create statewide model policies to support best practice approaches to the handling of domestic violence cases.

Title 5, Section 204-A, requires the Maine Office of the Attorney General, working with the various district attorneys' offices, to submit an annual report on data from DV prosecutors across the state⁸. The process for doing so has not yet been fully established. MCEDV is in communication with the Maine Office of the Attorney General and the Maine Prosecutors' Association about the advancement of this work.

In 2024, the Maine Prosecutors Association, with support from the Office of the Attorney General, MCEDV and the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault, was awarded a competitive, three-year federal grant from the US Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women to support enhancing the investigation and prosecution of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking statewide through the hiring of a statewide resource prosecutor with expertise in handling these case types. Responsive to a longstanding recommendation from Maine's Domestic Abuse Homicide Review Panel, this funding and the ability hire a statewide resource prosecutor will provide the capacity to create statewide model policies to support best practice approaches to the handling of domestic violence cases.

2020 Recommendations and Progress

MCEDV shared a report to Maine's Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, pursuant to Public Law Chapter 431, "An Act to Enhance Maine's Response to Domestic Violence," entitled "Initial Findings on the Effectiveness of Maine's Certified Batterer Intervention Programs." The report offered eight recommendations, outlined below.

- 1) Continue Statewide Coordination, Technical Assistance, and Support. Priorities for continued statewide coordination include needs assessment for New Mainers and people with LEP, development of intervention***

⁸ <https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/5/title5sec204-A.html>.

programming for LGBTQ+ people, and accessibility for people who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing and people with disabilities....

MCEDV and MDOC have provided collaborative statewide coordination, technical assistance, and support to Maine's CDVIP network throughout the period covered in this report. This shared commitment has identified these priority areas, and there have not been sufficient resources to support advance in what would be new areas of work. The statewide coordination and support efforts have had to be focused on existing areas of work.

2) Continue Current Funding and Seek Additional Funding [to support core operations of CDVIPs, including participation in professional development and CCR activities; to continue reduced fee reimbursement; and to enhance training and statewide coordination.]

Increasingly, MCEDV member programs, the Regional Domestic Violence Resource Centers that CDVIPs collaborate with and rely upon, view domestic abuse intervention programming as a core service in addressing the victim safety of victim-survivors and offender accountability. MCEDV is committed to finding resources to support the operational needs of Maine's CDVIPs, and MCEDV has successfully sought modest increases to existing funding and secured private donations to support the work of Maine's CDVIPs. MCEDV has raised funds in response to the needs of Maine's CDVIPs, including securing funds to support infrastructure needs during the Covid-19 pandemic and offsetting a shortfall in reimbursement funds in 2024. Most recently, MCEDV supported the successful application of the MDOC for approximately \$900,000 in a 3-year grant from the Office of Violence Against Women's Improving Criminal Justice Response grant program. Even with these substantial efforts, there are unmet needs.

3) Prevent Abuse by Changing the Culture that Supports It.

One aspect of intervention work that can be hard to see is the work to change the culture that supports abuse. One CDVIP director describes this cultural influence through a metaphor of pickle brine – cucumbers are unaware of the impact of the brine as they are thoroughly immersed in it; they simply emerge pickled. In much the same way, our cultural norms and beliefs about violence, gender, and relationships soak into us from the very start. This recognition of the pervasiveness of belief systems that support and condone abuse, even by those not directly engaging in it, led to MCEDV and the CDVIP network engaging in a training series about how change happens, including a session called, “We are the Work,” focused on the need for each of us to reflect on how we participate in, benefit from, and resist these belief systems.



“I encountered someone in public with a black eye, they told me their husband had done that to them. I was able to refer them to where they could get help because of my partner going to CDVIP. This made me feel better.”

– Survivor, noted in the 2024 CDVIP Survivor Impact Survey

In the fall of 2024, MCEDV partnered with the United States Department of Veteran’s Affairs Maine Healthcare System to offer a free online [film screening](#) of the documentary, “A Better Man,” followed by a panel discussion that featured CDVIP instructors. Events like this help to shift the conversation throughout communities, and, in time, the cultural norms that permit abuse.

4) Address Victim Safety Risks [through “swift and certain” sanctions for non-compliance; consistent protocols for compliance monitoring; risk assessment related to participant safety in women’s CDVIPs; and timely notification of victims by prosecutors.]

MCEDV, the MDOC, and the statewide CDVIP Network have worked together to pass legislation that shifts the responsibility for provision of information about the precipitating incident and victim contact from the abusive party to the District Attorneys’ offices. MCEDV regularly addresses the implementation of this legislation at statewide CDVIP Network meetings and provides updates to system partners as needed⁹.

The women ordered to CDVIP in Maine are almost always victims of domestic abuse that have used force – or been accused of using force – in response to a pattern of abusive behavior used against them. They represent some of the most vulnerable survivors in our state, as some of their abusive partners have been able to successfully manipulate legal systems, designed to protect victims, into extensions of their abuse. In recognition of the complex circumstances of these survivor-defendants, MCEDV, through support from the MDOC, held an innovative 8-month learning lab focused on “Understanding the Experience of Survivor-Defendants.” This effort supported advocates and interventionists statewide to improve their system navigation and system advocacy skills and to apply those skills to the real-life situations of women in Maine’s CDVIPs. The cohort learned and practiced case mapping, text analysis, policy review, practitioner interviews, and focus groups. This work

⁹ 130th Maine Legislature, First Special Session: LD 782, HPO587: An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Department of Corrections for Certified Batterer Intervention Programming. Accessed 10/28/2024: [LD 782, HP 587, Text and Status, 130th Legislature, First Special Session](#)

has been recognized nationally, and MCEDV will be presenting this work at the 2024 Envisage Conference, sponsored by the Battering Intervention Services Coalition of Michigan, one of the leading national DV intervention events.

5) Increase Opportunities to Connect Victim-Survivors with Advocacy Services [through robust partner contact process and regular administration of the Survivor Impact Survey; expansion of legal representation, including for criminalized survivors; and recognition of the use of resistive/reactive violence and survivorship of women in CDVIP.]

Advocates from MCEDV's member programs administered the first CDVIP Survivor Impact Survey in 2020, and the 2024 survey was recently completed. In each iteration, advocates talked to over 40 Maine survivors whose current or former partners were required to complete CDVIP. They provided valuable feedback about the impact of CDVIP participation on their lives as well as the value of other community resources. Of the 42 respondents in 2024, 38 of them reported reaching out for help, and they reached out to an average of 4.5 resources each. Survey results in both 2020 and 2024 affirm that survivors are safest when participants attend and complete CDVIP and that non-compliance and non-completion are causes for concern about victim safety.

6) Strengthen the Coordinated Community Response Statewide [through improved communication among CCR partners; consistent provision of ODARA scores to CDVIP; education of mental health providers about working with people who abuse and CDVIP as the appropriate intervention; and training for civil and criminal judiciary members.]

The first step in strengthening the statewide Coordinated Community Response is understanding what's currently happening. MCEDV supports this with the state's CDVIP Network in several ways: regular updates at statewide meetings, inclusion of CCR activities as part of monthly invoicing process, and statewide training and technical assistance with local CCR efforts. Additionally, MCEDV includes up-to-date information about Maine's CDVIPs in trainings with other community partners, and MCEDV provides updates on an as-needed basis to the most frequent referral sources and community partners of Maine's CDVIPs, such as the Maine Judicial Branch, county District Attorneys' Offices statewide, and the Office of Child and Family Services.

7) Improve Program Evaluation and Data Collection across Systems [including creation of an effective mechanism for collecting data on cases related to domestic abuse from the MJB and MPA; training for the MJB; administration of the Survivor Impact Survey by MCEDV; and continued monitoring in compliance with MDOC DVIP Certification Standards.]

Maine's CDVIP Survivor Impact Survey recognizes that the current and former partners of CDVIP participants are best able to assess the impact of participation on their safety. Results support attendance and completion in CDVIP as safest for survivors and their children.

Program evaluation for Maine's CDVIPs includes several components:

- A) **Annual Site Visits** - these meetings between MCEDV and each CDVIP provide an opportunity to review compliance with standards, review best practices, address emerging needs, and discuss participation in local Coordinated Community Response efforts.
- B) **CDVIP Class Monitoring** – All CDVIP facilitator pairs are expected to be monitored on a quarterly basis by a qualified monitor, usually an advocate at the partnering DVRC. Additionally, MCEDV monitors classes at each CDVIP on an annual basis. Monitoring reports are shared with MCEDV, MDOC, CDVIP, and the partnering DVRC.
- C) **Survivor Impact Survey** – As often as capacity allows, MCEDV's member programs conduct a CDVIP Survivor Impact Survey by having a trained advocate reach out to the named victims and partners of CDVIP participants to assess the impact CDVIP participation had on their lives and safety.

Data collection has improved in the five years since MCEDV has had funding.

- Enrollment rates for men in CDVIP are consistently between 1,000 and 1,200 annually, while enrollment rates for women in CDVIP are between 90 and 100 annually.
- Maine has significantly increased the rates of conditions requiring probationers convicted of domestic violence to complete CDVIP over anger management.
- People with low incomes are over-represented in Maine's CDVIPs. In programs for men, approximately 30% statewide have incomes at or below 138% of Federal Poverty Levels (\$35,632 annually for a household of 3)¹⁰. In programs for women, 90% have incomes at or below the same level.
- The majority of CDVIP referrals come from probation conditions, followed by those referred as a condition of deferred dispositions and Child Protective Services referrals. A small number of other referrals, including self-referrals, make up the rest.

Maine's CDVIP Survivor Impact Survey recognizes that the current and former partners of CDVIP participants are best able to assess the impact of participation on their safety. Results

¹⁰ Federal Poverty Levels accessed 10/28/2024: [detailed-guidelines-2024.xlsx](#)

support attendance and completion in CDVIP as safest for survivors and their children. The 2024 CDVIP Survivor Impact Survey data shows an overall improvement in safety after attending CDVIP. Prior to CDVIP, 55% of all respondents reported feeling not at all safe or a little safe, compared to 34% after CDVIP. Similarly, 52% of survivor-respondents reported feeling somewhat or very safe after CDVIP.

8) Review Maine’s CDVIP Standards to Prioritize Victim Safety and Autonomy, Offender Accountability, and Equity of Response [including changing the name of “Batterer Intervention Programs;” retaining gender-specific educational approaches; and provision of partner contact information that does not rely upon the CDVIP participant.]

In the 130th legislature (2021-2022), the legislature enacted updates to Maine laws responsive to several of the recommendations from the 2020 report. Those changes included changing the name of these programs from Batterer Intervention to Domestic Violence Intervention. This change recognizes that the choice to use abusive behaviors is the problem that needs to be addressed and moves away from labeling whole people as the crimes they have committed.

2024 Recommendations: A Smart Investment

With minimal funding to date, the statewide CDVIP Network, which includes MCEDV, MDOC, CDVIPs, regional Domestic Violence Resource Centers, and allied community partners, have made tremendous strides toward ensuring both victim safety and offender accountability through a coordinated community response. At the same time, the scarcity of resources has limited what is possible.

Over the past 5 years, we have conducted two comprehensive surveys of the impact of CDVIP participation on the lives of survivors. From those efforts, we have affirmed that attendance and completion are key to improving survivor safety and autonomy.



I think it has caused a remarkable change in my husband. I saw that he was getting healthier, and our marriage was getting better.

- Maine Survivor, 2024 CDVIP Survivor Impact Survey

Five years ago, the relationship between victim advocacy organizations and the state’s CDVIPs was tenuous and strained. Now, Maine’s Domestic Violence Resource Centers view

the Certified DVIPs as partners providing a core service that aims to improve the safety of survivors as well as effectively hold those who are abusive responsible for the choices they have made. Collaboration and communication between CDVIPs and the advocates who monitor their classes and attend to the needs of survivors are closer than ever, reducing the chances that safety needs will fall through systemic cracks.

MCEDV recommends investment in the following to continue and advance the work to end domestic abuse and violence through statewide availability of Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Programs.

1. Support statewide access through funding operational costs of CDVIPs in all counties of the state.
2. Enhance Partner Contact practices in which DVRC advocates reach out to partners to increase consistency statewide, improve engagement and contact rates, and offer opportunities to provide program evaluation feedback over time.
3. Expand the capacity of both DVRCs and CDVIPs to participate in Coordinated Community Response efforts locally and statewide with the aim of improving victim safety and ensuring appropriate responsibility for abuse.
4. Develop and implement appropriate intervention programs for populations with specific needs, including those with language access needs (people who are Deaf or hard of hearing and those who speak languages other than English) and those who are LGBTQ+.
5. Continue the statewide coordination, oversight, and technical assistance provided collaboratively by MCEDV and MDOC.

The availability of this intervention is currently at a critical inflection point, due to the lack of operational funding for these programs. Not only are they not able to fully forward the recommendations that have been made over the last ten years, but their continued existence as a functionally available intervention resource statewide is also in question.

The investment of Maine's CDVIP network in getting this essential programming to where it is today signals our collective belief in the possibility of positive change on the part of people who choose abusive behaviors. Maine's CDVIPs skillfully provide opportunity and support for that positive transformation, and they proactively communicate with their community partners about the work they are doing so that the best possible decisions can be made. Not all the people who attend CDVIP choose to make the changes to be safe and respectful to their partners. In the cases of those who opt not to change, their refusal is valuable information for both survivors in determining their next steps and systems in determining

further consequences. We have demonstrated that Maine can improve victim safety, offender accountability, and equitable access to the intervention recognized in state statute as “most appropriate and effective in cases involving domestic abuse.” However, the availability of this intervention is currently at a critical inflection point, due to the lack of operational funding for these programs. Not only are they not able to fully forward the recommendations that have been made over the last ten years, but their continued existence as a functionally available intervention resource statewide is also in question.

“ He is very respectful if I want to see my friends and family, he doesn't get in the way of that. This was an issue in the past. This class has been so good for him. I am in control of my finances now. Since he's started the program, there has been no violence. I did not feel safe before these classes... but now that he's been made to take these classes, I feel much safer. He now takes accountability for his actions. I feel much better about him being with our children. - Maine Survivor, 2024 CDVIP Survivor Impact Survey

Supporting Materials

[2024 Survivor Impact Assessment Text](#)

[2020 Report: Initial Findings on the Effectiveness of Maine's Certified Batterer Intervention Programs](#)

[2016 Report: Pre-Trial and Post-Conviction Use of Batterer Intervention Programs](#)