

# CONTRA COSTA TIMES

## Contra Costa County one of four in nation to receive federal grant for domestic violence programs

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Contra Costa County is one of just four counties nationwide that will receive federal funding for a new program that aims to identify and stop potentially deadly domestic violence offenders.

U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder announced Monday that the East Bay county will be among the four sites to receive part of the \$2.6 million in federal grants for programs designed to save domestic violence victims' lives.

"Domestic violence is a devastating crime that claims far too many lives," the attorney general said in a video posted on the U.S. Justice Department's website. "Studies have shown that on average, three women die every day in America at the hands of their partner or ex-partner.

These are tragic and shocking statistics, and the Justice Department is working hard to bring an end to this horrific status quo."

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Using the federal funding, Concord-based organization STAND! For Families Free of Violence will partner with the county and local police agencies to launch the new program, with a focus on cases in the cities of Concord, Richmond and Brentwood.

The grant funding will allow police responding to domestic violence cases in those cities to conduct immediate assessments meant to gauge an offender's likelihood of committing murder and to step in before the violence escalates, STAND CEO Gloria Sandoval said.

"Research in the past several years has shown us that there are specific markers you can look for in an abuser's behavior that will help you to evaluate the lethality risk and the potential for homicide before it happens," Sandoval said.

Some of the signs include whether the abuser has strangled someone or threatened to kill someone and if they keep a gun in the home, she said.

In addition, the federal funding will help immediately connect victims with local services such as housing to ensure their safety from the offender.

The new, federally funded program will expand on the efforts by STAND and other agencies within Contra Costa County that have long worked to combat domestic violence.

In 2001, the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors launched a Zero Tolerance for Domestic Violence initiative - a partnership among public and private agencies on a mission to reduce domestic violence, child and elder abuse and human trafficking within the county.

In 2011, the West Contra Costa Family Justice Center opened, and now serves hundreds of victims annually.

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A new, much larger Family Justice Center is set to open in Richmond next year and the county is working to create a Family Justice Center network with additional centers in Concord and East Contra Costa County.

More information about Stand! For Families Free of Violence can be found at [www.standagainstdv.org](http://www.standagainstdv.org). Help for domestic violence victims can be found by calling their Crises Help Line at (888) 215-5555.

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