



Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

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Member Agencies

**The Umbrella Center for
Domestic Violence Services**
Ansonia, CT

The Center for Family Justice
Bridgeport, CT

Women's Center
Danbury, CT

**Domestic Violence Program
United Services**
Dayville, CT

The Network
Enfield, CT

**Domestic Abuse Services
Greenwich YWCA**
Greenwich, CT

Interval House
Hartford, CT

**Chrysalis Domestic Violence
Services**
Meriden, CT

New Horizons
Middletown, CT

Prudence Crandall Center
New Britain, CT

**The Umbrella Center for
Domestic Violence Services**
New Haven, CT

Safe Futures
New London, CT

Domestic Violence Crisis Center
Norwalk, CT

Women's Support Services
Sharon, CT

Domestic Violence Crisis Center
Stamford, CT

Susan B. Anthony Project
Torrington, CT

Safe Haven
Waterbury, CT

**Domestic Violence Program
United Services**
Willimantic, CT

New Family Violence Arrest Law Shows Positive Impact on Victim Safety
- CT dual arrest rate drops by 7-11% -

Hartford, CT – Citing a drop in family violence dual arrest rates of between 7-11%, Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) today released its [latest report highlighting the positive impact of Connecticut's new dominant aggressor family violence arrest law](#). The law, which guides law enforcement responding to a family violence call to arrest only the person who poses the most serious ongoing threat, has been in effect since January 1, 2019.

From 2014 through 2018, a full five years before the dominant aggressor law went into effect, Connecticut's statewide dual arrest rate stood between 17% and 26% according to the CT Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection and the CT Judicial Branch. By the end of 2019, after one full year of the new law being in place, the state's dual arrest rate stood between 10% and 16% according to those same agencies – a marked improvement.

"We're seeing positive results from the new law that have enhanced victim safety," said Daniel Cargill, CCADV Director of Law Enforcement Services. "Connecticut's dual arrest rate had historically been twice the national average. This new common-sense measure has given police officers the tools and discretion they need to keep survivors safe while avoiding unnecessary dual arrests. We're grateful to our partners in law enforcement who have embraced this change and ensured its successful application to the work they do every day to protect victims."

In 2019, Connecticut joined 27 other states with a dominant aggressor law to mitigate notable shortcomings in family violence arrest practices that often result in dual arrests. Dual arrest, the arrest of both parties for a family violence offense, had been a serious problem facing victims and survivors in Connecticut for nearly three decades. Essentially, law enforcement was arresting both parties involved in intimate partner violence more than 20% of the time, whereas this approach was occurring at around 7% of the time elsewhere in our country.

"The practice of dual arrest has a chilling effect on a victim's willingness to call police for help again in the future, which greatly diminishes her or his safety moving forward," said Attorney General William Tong, who helped lead passage of the new law in 2018. "I am proud to see the change that has resulted from a strong policy that comprehensively protects victims and holds offenders accountable."

Leading up to and after the effective date of the new law, CCADV partnered with the Police Officers Standard and Training Council (POST), State Police Academy, CT Police Chiefs Association (CPCA), and the CT Chief State's Attorney Office to develop a statewide training curriculum for police officers, prosecutors and domestic violence advocates. Dozens of trainings were held along with symposiums featuring national experts. Said professor and national expert, Dr. David Hirschel, "The data shows positive progress towards addressing the problem of dual arrest in Connecticut, highlighting the benefit of the collaborative approach spearheaded by CCADV."

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“We are extremely proud of the dedication of law enforcement across the state in their efforts to promote this innovative response to domestic violence,” said Chief J. Darren Stewart, Stonington Police Department and current President of CPCA. “CPCA looks forward to continuing our partnership with CCADV as we work to enhance victim safety.”

It is important to note, as we did when requesting the addition of the dominant aggressor provision to the state’s family violence arrest law, that there will always be circumstances where a dual arrest is appropriate. While Connecticut can continue to make progress on our dual arrest rate, it will never be zero and the progress made in just one year is something for which our state should be proud.

Moving forward, CCADV will seek to continue an ongoing dialogue with our partners in law enforcement and domestic violence advocates across the state, including annual reviews of dual arrest data and strengthening training and best practice tools available to the field. We will also focus discussions and trainings on assisting prosecutors and members of the Family Violence Intervention Units to identify best practices and uniform policies and procedures regarding dual arrests, awareness as to the impact of dual arrest on victims and the prevention of filing cases against victim-defendants. Finally, we will provide annual updates to policymakers to keep them apprised of ongoing progress with implementation and create opportunities to discuss further improvements to Connecticut’s family violence arrest laws.

Download the policy brief – [“New Dominant Aggressor Law Positively Impacts Intimate Partner Violence Dual Arrest Rate in CT”](#).

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Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Inc. is the state’s leading voice for victims of domestic violence and those organizations that serve them. We are a membership organization of the state’s 18 domestic violence organizations. Help is available to victims 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by visiting www.CTSafeConnect.org or by texting/calling (888) 774-2900. For more information about CCADV, please visit www.ctcadv.org.