King County
Best Starts for KIDS

Domestic Violence Services: A Critical Investment in Family Safety

Domestic violence (DV) is increasing in King County, with emergency department visits rising 48 percent from 2020 to 2024. While Best Starts Prenatal to Five partners provide support and referrals, many families become lost in the referral process and do not get connected to the comprehensive services they need.

What is the DV Emergency Response Pilot?

Best Starts for Kids launched a DV Emergency Response Pilot in partnership with Atlantic Street Center's (ASC) Gender-Based Violence Prevention program (GBV) in January 2025. The pilot builds foundational connections across 12 trusted service organizations to create a warm-referral pathway that directly connects families experiencing domestic violence to services, concrete resources, and wraparound support.

Initial findings

In 2025, the pilot served 52 families and delivered 576 services. Services include case management, therapy, financial assistance, safety planning, support groups, housing support services, bilingual services, and more.

100% of families requesting financial assistance received financial assistance

100% of referral requests have been successfully completed

100% of families receiving services have reported meaningful progress towards service plan goals

100% of families report services are culturally relevant, aceessible, and responsive to their long-term needs

What makes this DV Emergency Response Pilot unique?

Historically, most funders have focused on direct services. **This Best Starts Pilot invests in systems level infrastructure, relationships, and provider capacity to effectively close referral gaps and ensure coordinated, survivor-centered support. These elements contribute to the pilot's success:**

Relationships are the intervention: Intentional relationship and strong communication builds trust and bidirectional feedback; partners intervene earlier and prevent families from retelling traumatic experiences

Partner coordination and warm referral pathways: Warm, low-barrier referrals and consistent follow-up between partners and DV advocates strengthen coordination and capacity to respond to family needs

Direct services: Culturally and linguistically responsive services, including advocacy, case management, mental health supports, and participant-driven healing support groups

Training and community events: Customized trainings and tools for partners and King County communities

Flexible eligibility: Ensuring low-barrier and flexible eligibility for families impacted by DV

Flexible financial assistance: To support housing, food, transportation, child care, health, and immediate safety needs

Adaptive, responsive contract management: Ongoing evaluation, continuous quality improvement, monthly learning meetings, and flexibility to amend contracts allows the pilot to evolve in real time and respond to emergent needs



> *This experience reinforced the importance of staff awareness, strong partnerships, and proactive referrals in helping mitigate systemic barriers. While these practices are still evolving, they have strengthened our ability to connect participants to specialized resources and provide more holistic, responsive support. We plan to continue building staff knowledge and community partnerships to better serve survivors navigating multiple systems.*
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> - Best Starts for Kids Partner