



## **Recidivism Outcomes for 2009 SMC Defendants with Domestic Violence Cases**

### **Executive Summary**

The following report identifies defendants who had a domestic violence (DV) case created at Seattle Municipal Court (SMC) in 2009 and examines their pre and post 2009 recidivism rates. A number of factors are examined to get a better understanding of recidivism related to domestic violence cases including; defendant demographic characteristics, case disposition on the 2009 SMC case, and different types of post-disposition sanctions ordered for defendants (*probation and domestic violence treatment*).

**The purpose of this study is to establish a baseline to provide the court a better understanding of how frequently defendants charged with domestic violence return to SMC. When interpreting the study results, please understand court analysts relied on a Pre-Post research design to measure defendant recidivism. This design has an inherent limitation that any exhibited difference in Pre-Post defendant behavior is not directly attributable to any intervention(s) or variables examined in the study (i.e. DV treatment).**

**A more rigorous evaluation of DV treatment could only be undertaken by designing a study utilizing randomly assigned experimental and control groups of defendants. Therefore hard conclusions should not be drawn regarding the effectiveness of DV treatment or of any one treatment provider from this data. Instead, the study results should be a starting point to inform future policy and programmatic discussions on these topics. The major findings in this report include:**

**1. The majority of DV cases created by the City Attorney's Office end without defendants being ordered to Probation or DV Treatment at SMC**

There were 1,778 defendants included in this report. 27% of defendants' cases concluded without charges ever filed. In addition to the no-charge-filed cases, another 45% of defendants had their cases resolve without ever receiving post-disposition supervision, mostly because the cases were dismissed. In total, 1,073 of the 1,778 defendants or 60% either had their case resolve as no-charge-filed or it was dismissed.

**2. Defendants with 2009 domestic violence cases at SMC acquired more charges in the two years after their 2009 than in the two years beforehand.**

The overall recidivism change for all defendants analyzed was a 16.1% increase in statewide criminal charges in the two years after their first 2009 DV case at SMC.

Defendants acquired an average of 1.11 charges acquired in the two years before their first 2009 case and an average of 1.29 charges afterwards.

**3. A majority of defendants acquired no other criminal charges before their 2009 SMC case and a majority of defendants did not recidivate after this 2009 case.**

1,161 or 65% of the 1,778 defendants analyzed acquired no other criminal charges in the two years before their 2009 SMC DV case. 1,161 or 62% of the 1,778 defendants analyzed acquired no other criminal charges in the two years afterwards.

**4. Violations of domestic violence no contact orders make up a significant portion of charges acquired by defendants after their 2009 SMC DV case.**

Domestic violence no contact order violations made up 12% of violations in the two years before a defendant's 2009 SMC DV case. But this percentage increases to 22% afterwards. If one excludes DV no contact order violations, the overall recidivism rate decreases from 16.1% to 2.1%. This suggests a good portion of future domestic violence criminal involvement relates to conditions imposed on previous cases. This finding does not intend to minimize the importance of no contact orders, which are designed to keep victims safe and reduce potential for exposure to future abusive behavior.

**5. Defendants whose first 2009 SMC DV case ended as "no charge filed" display the most negative recidivism outcomes of the four defendant groups analyzed.**

This study looks at four different groups of defendants depending upon how their 2009 case resolved. Of the four groups, defendants who case ended as "no-charge-filed" acquired 44% more criminal charges in the two years after their first 2009 SMC case, the highest recidivism rate of the four groups. In addition, the no-charge-filed group of defendants acquired 129% more assault charges after their 2009 case than beforehand. This was the only defendant group of the four to exhibit an increase in assault charges.

**6. There are a number of factors impacting recidivism outcomes for defendants ordered to complete DV treatment. Only 36% of defendants assigned to treatment complete it, however defendants who do complete treatment exhibit better recidivism outcomes than those who do not.**

There were 268 defendants ordered to complete DV treatment. 36% of these defendants enrolled in and completed treatment. These "treatment completers" exhibited a 17% decrease in new criminal charges acquired in the two years after treatment. However, overall the 268 defendants ordered to DV treatment exhibited a 33% increase in recidivism. This finding indicates that treatment may be help curb future recidivism, but only for defendants who have a good chance of completing it.

**7. Recidivism outcomes change, depending on how one measures recidivism.**

This study measured defendant recidivism using five different methods including; identifying all statewide criminal charges, identifying only DV-related charges, identifying only charges filed at SMC, identifying only felony charges, and identifying all

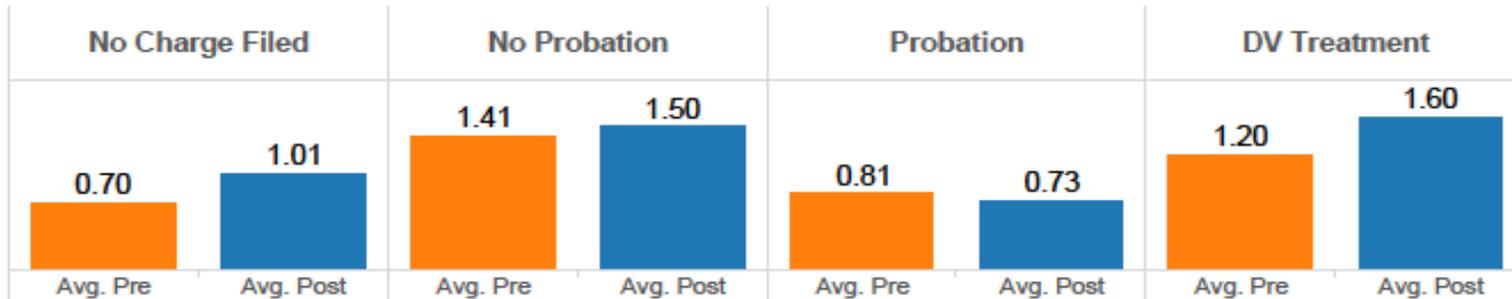
criminal charges but ignoring violations of domestic violence no-contact orders. There are varied reasons Judges and policymakers might be interested in each of these different approaches. Each one offers additional information regarding recidivist behaviors of SMC defendants. While the overall recidivism rate in this study was 16.1%, it changed significantly depending upon the way recidivism was measured.

### Executive Summary of Charts

#### Overall Pre - Post Recidivism Outcomes for 2009 DV Defendants

Number of Defendants	1,778
Total Adult Lifetime Charge Filings	21,938
Number of filings in 2 years before 2009 DV case	1,970
Number of filings in 2 years after 2009 DV case	2,288
Pre Post Change	318
% Change in Post Charge Filings	16.1%
Average Pre Filings Per Defendant	1.11
Average Post Filings Per Defendant	1.29

#### Average # of Criminal Charges Acquired in Pre and Post Time Period by Defendant Group



#### Overall Recidivism Rates for Different Defendant Groups

Defendant Category	# of Defendants	Pre Charges	Avg. Pre	Post Charges	Avg. Post	Total Pre Post Change	Avg. Pre Post Change per ..	Pre Post % Change
No Charge Filed	482	337	0.70	485	1.01	148	0.31	43.9%
No Probation	806	1,133	1.41	1,213	1.50	80	0.10	7.1%
Probation	222	179	0.81	162	0.73	-17	-0.08	-9.5%
DV Treatment	268	321	1.20	428	1.60	107	0.40	33.3%
<b>Total / Average</b>	<b>1,778</b>	<b>1,970</b>	<b>1.11</b>	<b>2,288</b>	<b>1.29</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>16.1%</b>

Table above displays average and total criminal charges for all defendant groups. The difference between total pre and post charges acquired was statically significant at the .05 level for the No Charge Filed group ( $p=.013$ ) and at the .1 level for the DV Treatment group ( $p=.059$ ). The difference was not significant for the No Probation group ( $p=.471$ ), the Probation group ( $p=.669$ ).

### Pre Post Recidivism Outcomes for Defendants Assigned to DV Treatment by Program Attendance and Program Completion

Treatment Status	End Reason Final	Number of Defts.	% in Group	Pre Filings	Post Filings	Avg. Pre Charges	Avg. Post Charges	Pre Post Change	Percent Change
Enrolled in Treatment	Completed	98	35.8%	47	39	0.49	0.41	-8.0	-17.0%
	Failed to Comply	65	24.3%	95	120	1.46	1.85	25.0	26.3%
	Stricken	10	3.7%	12	10	1.20	1.00	-2.0	-16.7%
Did Not Enroll	Failed to Comply	76	28.4%	122	218	1.61	2.87	96.0	78.7%
	Stricken	21	7.8%	45	41	2.14	1.95	-4.0	-8.9%
<b>Grand Total</b>		268	100.0%	321	428	1.20	1.60	107.0	33.3%

### Pre Post Recidivism Outcomes by DV Treatment Providers

TX Agency	# of Defts.	% in Group	Avg. Lifetime Charges per Deft.	Pre Filings	Post Filings	Avg. Pre Charges	Avg. Post Charges	Pre Post Change	Percent Change
Associated Behavioral Health	31	24.4%	6.3	11	24	0.35	0.77	13.0	118.2%
Wellspring Family Services	25	19.7%	9.3	26	29	1.04	1.16	3.0	11.5%
Navos	24	18.9%	11.0	26	41	1.08	1.71	15.0	57.7%
Sound Mental Health	21	16.5%	19.8	34	26	1.62	1.24	-8.0	-23.5%
Anger Control & Tx	12	9.4%	11.4	21	6	1.75	0.50	-15.0	-71.4%
Northwest Family Life	9	7.1%	10.6	7	10	0.78	1.11	3.0	42.9%
Asian Counseling & Referral Services	5	3.9%	18.2	5	8	1.00	1.60	3.0	60.0%
<b>Grand Total</b>	127	100.0%	11.3	130	144	1.02	1.13	14.0	10.8%