



Subject: Findings from Intimidation and Intimate Partner Violence Screening project with workforce development programs in Greater Cincinnati region during January – June 2016

Background Overview: There are currently approximately 25,000 open jobs in our region that employers are struggling to fill and about 85,000 people looking for a job or a better job. Our community has also launched an aggressive Child Poverty Collaborative to lift 10,000 children and 5,000 families out of poverty. Further, 66% of the children in poverty are in single female headed households who struggle to find and keep a job that allows them to provide for their family. This study was created as a quick snapshot to understand the incidence rate of intimidation and intimate partner violence on people who were seeking job training and employment to lift their families out of poverty. It was not intended to be a technically rigorous scientific study – rather it was intended to gather initial baseline data to assess if additional, more thorough and controlled research was indicated. Additional background is below.

Participating Agencies: Brighton Center, Cincinnati Works, Greater Cincinnati Urban League, Santa Maria Community Services, YWCA Greater Cincinnati, with financial support provided by the Women’s Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation and Partners for a Competitive Workforce

Topline Results:

The 5 community based organizations listed above screened 328 people, of whom 98, or 30% (overall average; individual agency results ranged from 3%- 43%,) reported some experience with intimidation and/or intimate partner violence. The behaviors ranged from active discouragement from enrolling or attending training (for GED’s or work readiness or industry-specific training) or employment all the way to physical violence to prevent the person from training or working.

Of those reporting these experiences, 81% were women and 19% were men. Detailed demographics are shown below. It is significant to note that there were 177 children in the homes of the people who positively reported these experiences. In fact, there was a large difference in the people who reported these experiences based on family size i.e. up to 64% of the people screened who had children in the home reported these experiences vs. a high of 26% of the people screened with no children in the home.

To put this data into an overall national context, according to the National Center for Domestic Violence, 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men have been victims of some form of physical violence by an intimate partner within their lifetime. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that domestic violence in the workplace contributes to the feminization of poverty in which women and children remain the poorest subgroups both nationally and globally. Domestic violence survivors lose 8 million days of paid work per year– and the abuse they suffer keeps them struggling financially or from advancing. Also, victims may stay in a relationship with an abusive partner for economic reasons or face worse abuse due to economic stressors.

Background/Purpose of the Pilot: For many years, there have been numerous programs to provide job training and career advancement services to women, especially for careers in industries that have low numbers of female employees. A particularly vexing dynamic that has been observed is a relatively frequent number of instances where women drop out of training or who turn down or are no-shows at interviews or when hired, with sometimes unclear explanations as to why.

When this dynamic was shared with workforce development peers in Chicago, they reported that job training programs in Chicago see an uptick in domestic violence incidents right before a woman starts an apprenticeship program. They did not have hard data on this – mostly anecdotal with very graphic and disturbing observations. Upon returning to Cincinnati, an informal “poll” of workforce training providers *and colleges* was conducted, and most, if not all, said in essence “yes, we see this all the time, but don’t have hard data on the incidence rate.” A further informal poll of workforce training providers across the US that focus on helping women attain non-traditional careers was also conducted and the same basic response was received i.e. anecdotal responses that many (estimates were given ranging from 20% to “nearly all”) women seeking workforce training experience some level of intimidation or intimate partner violence that oftentimes stops their career advancement. The only hard data that was available tended to focus on women in general (job seekers or not), or women already in the workplace, and the impact to business when their employees are victims *or are the victimizers*. There was no quantitative data available on the incidence rate of women who were seeking workforce training and employment who were experiencing intimidation or intimate partner violence (verbal, physical, financial, etc.). However, the anecdotal data seemed to indicate an issue “hiding in plain sight”.

Given the need to scale up our regional efforts to fill open positions at employers and the simultaneous need to help families rise out of poverty, PCW decided it needed to gather the data needed to dimension the incidence rate of this issue. *The concern was that we could have the best job training, supportive services and employer systems in the world but we will not move the needle on filling job openings and reducing poverty if the very audience we need to train and employ is being intimidated, threatened, or physically injured while trying to provide for their families.*

Design of the Pilot:

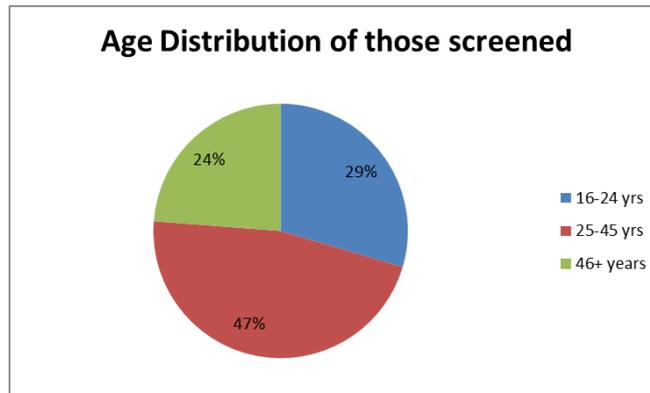
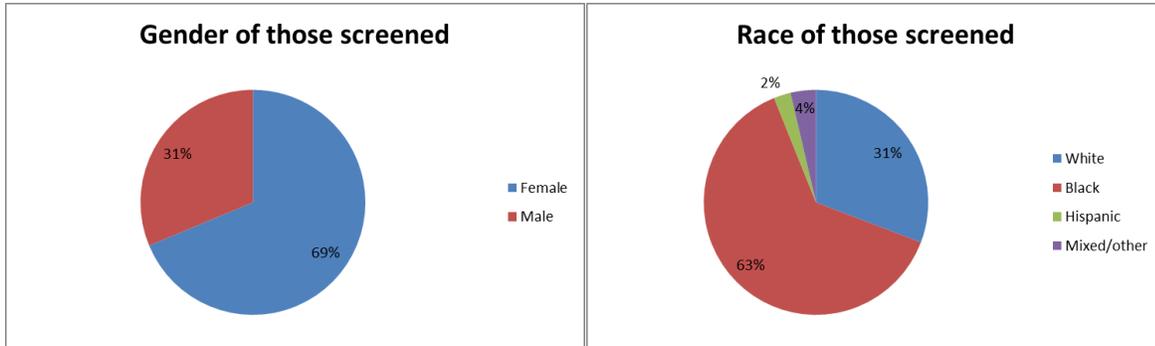
The YWCA of Greater Cincinnati is a regional expert on these issues and they helped to design the pilot. It was decided that the Financial Opportunity Centers (FOCs) were likely the best place to start given the deep relationships they form with their clients which would be needed given the sensitivity of the issues. The FOCs were convened to discuss the pilot and all agreed to participate. The YWCA provided two identical half-day training sessions to FOC agency personnel to learn the most effective ways to screen for domestic violence and the appropriate responses when a positive result was found. A stipend of \$1,000 was provided by the Women’s Fund to each of the FOCs to partially offset the additional costs associated with the pilot. PCW provided an additional \$1,000 to the YWCA to cover their expenses associated with the training sessions.

All agencies screened both women and men who were enrolling in workforce training at their site. Most of the agencies asked the screening questions within the first 1-3 weeks (during intake or orientation) of

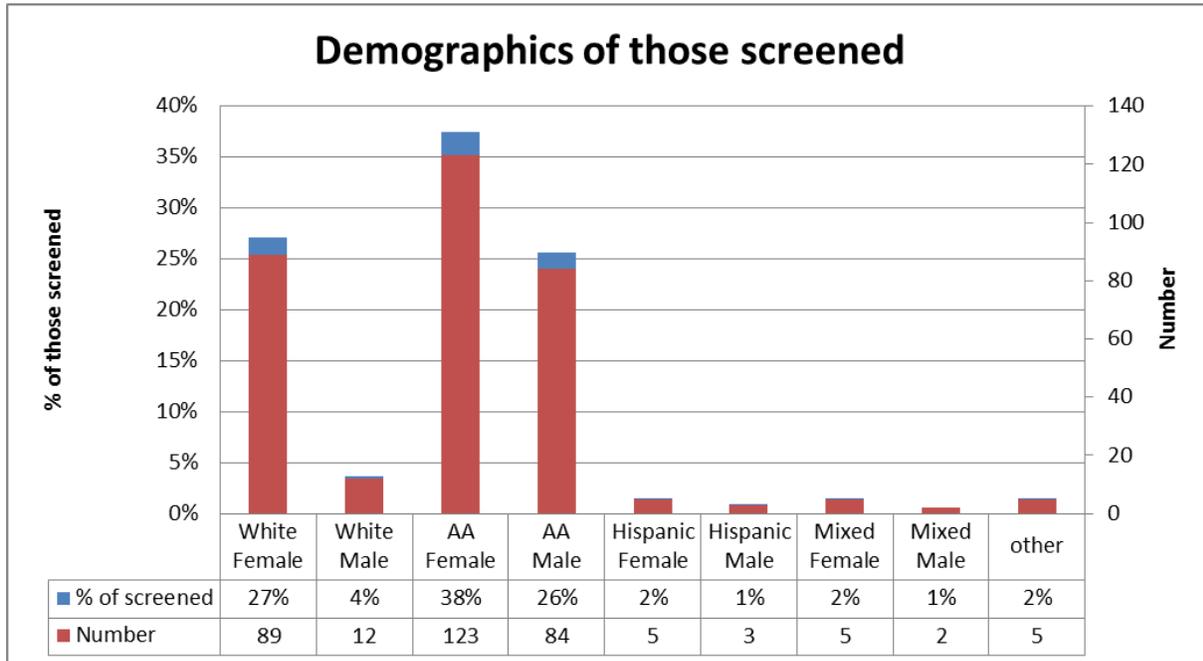
a client enrolling in a workforce program. One of the programs waited for up to 3-6 months to ensure that a relationship was established before asking the screening questions. Most of the agencies screened adults (21 or older) and one agency screened primarily youth (16-24 year olds). The screenings were performed by the staff (both male and female) at the agencies who typically help with intake and orientation.

Detailed Demographics:

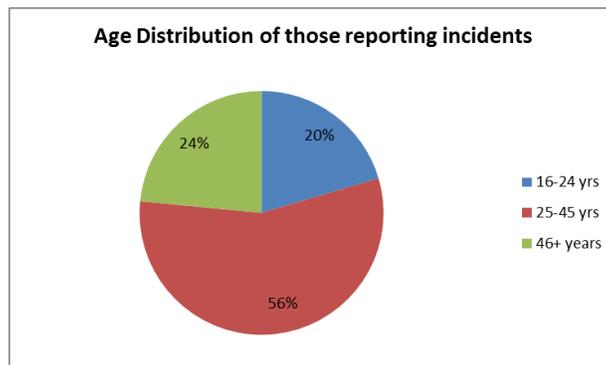
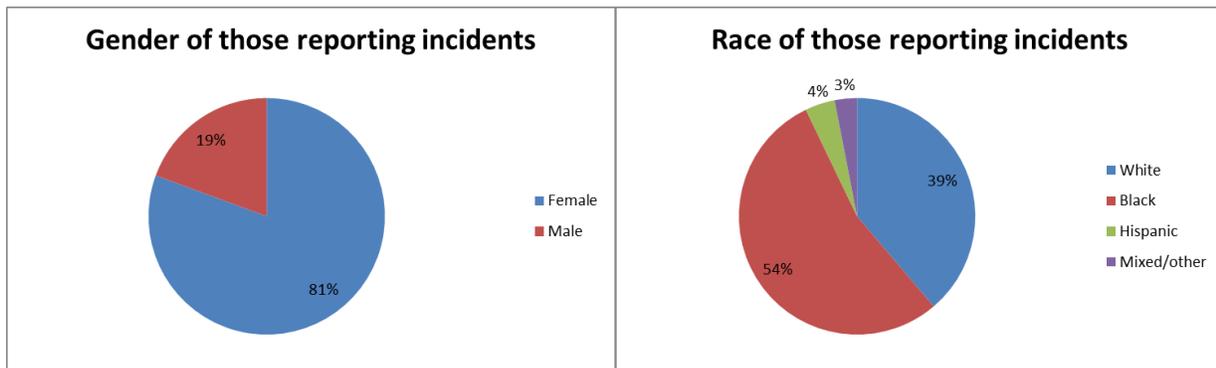
The following graphs provide a baseline of who was screened:



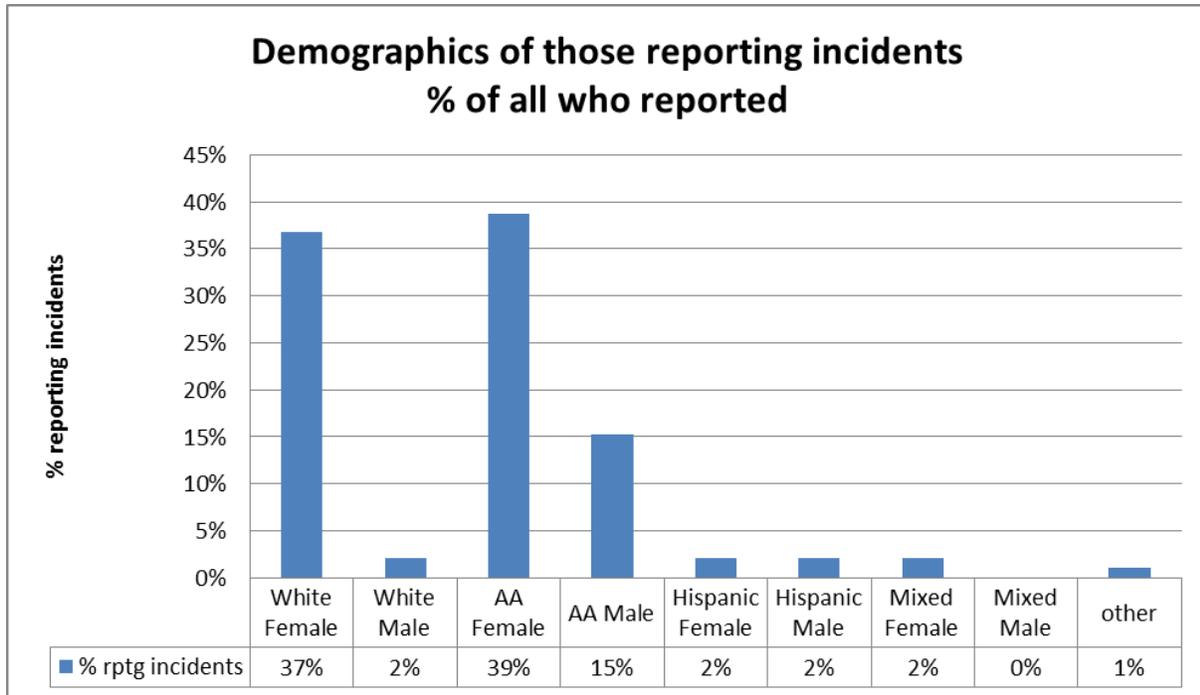
The following graph shows the race and gender of all of the people who were screened. For example, of the 328 people who were screened, 89 were white females, which represent 27% of the total.



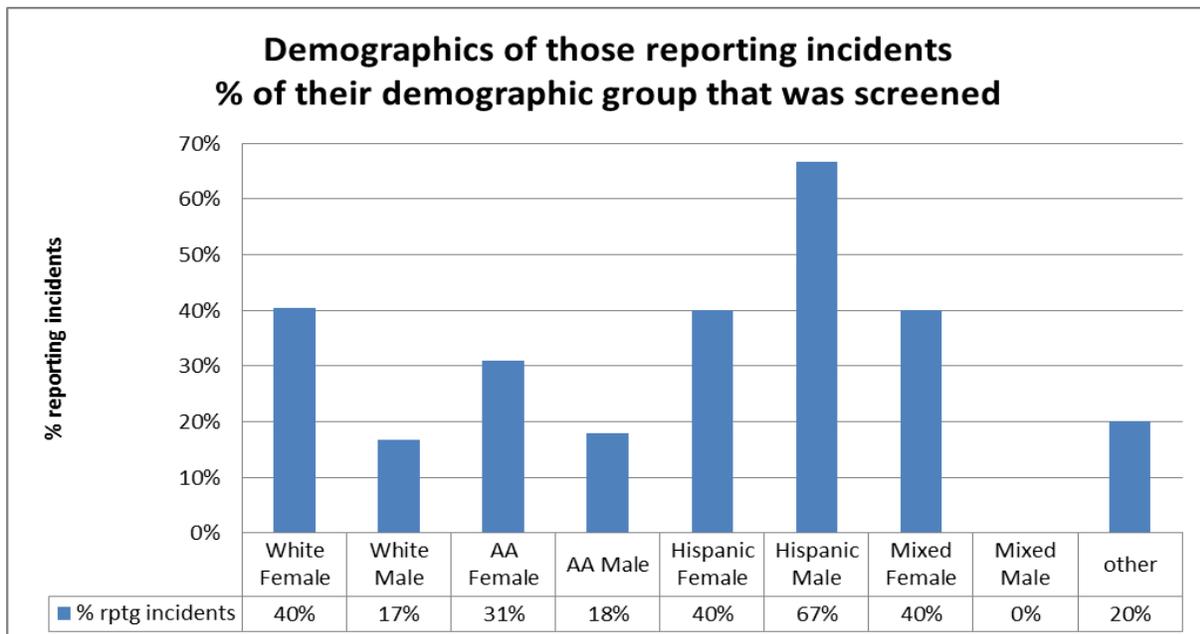
The following graphs provide a baseline of those who reported incidents:



The next graph shows the race and gender of those who reported that they had experienced intimidation or intimate partner violence. For example, of the 98 people who reported this experience, 37% of them were white females.



The next graph shows the relative percent of the screened demographic who reported experiences. For example, of the 89 white females who were screened, 40% of them reported experiencing intimidation or intimate partner violence. Note that the Hispanic female and male and mixed female results are skewed by their small sample size.



Looking at the data from a racial equity lens, the incidence rate for people of color is somewhat lower than their representation in the overall population screened, i.e. of the people screened, 67% were African American, mixed race, or Hispanic, and of those reporting incidents, 61% were people of color.

From an age distribution standpoint, the 25-45 age group reported incidents at a rate higher than their representation in this study, but that may be because that group covers the largest time span and it is the group most likely to be pursuing job training and employment.

Conclusions:

Despite the variation in positive results between the agencies (and even within sites or programs at a given agency), the pilot results were surprisingly and disturbingly high and showed intimidation and intimate partner violence are being experienced by both women and men. From a workforce perspective, the magnitude of these results means that *it is just as important for our region to work on responding to, and reducing, these incidents of intimidation and intimate partner violence as it is for us to reduce the skills gap*. While the topic is uncomfortable and solutions will be challenging, we simply can no longer leave this issue “hidden in plain sight”.

This pilot accomplished its objective of providing data to dimension the incidence rate of intimidation and intimate partner violence being experienced by people seeking workforce training. However, like other studies on this topic, the pilot group feels that this data is likely underestimating the true incidence rate given the sensitivity of the topic and the feedback we got that indicated this behavior/dynamic is considered “normal”. Another factor that may cause people to not self-disclose is that they are told that if they have children in their home and they report an incident of some form of domestic violence, the agency personnel who receives this information is required to report it.

The results also showed that this can happen at any point along a person’s journey to employment i.e. past history of abuse, when they are considering getting into a program, when they actually enroll, when they are nearing completion, when they get a job, etc. Importantly, many of those affected by this intimidation consider this “normal” behavior based upon their childhood experiences and/or what they currently see in their extended families and neighborhoods. Additionally, they consider “domestic violence” to mean the extremes of physical violence, not the power and control tactics that can be used to keep people economically dependent on others. Not all people who experience these power and control tactics see them as preventing them from achieving their goals.

Because of the magnitude of these results and the impact to our collective work and the community, every agency involved in the pilot will likely be continuing to screen participants, especially since the addition of these screening questions to current intake and orientation processes was considered fairly easy to do. However, agency staff must be trained by the appropriate resources to ensure the proper procedures are being followed, and to increase their comfort level with these very sensitive discussions. The agency staff does not need formal clinical training, but they do need something along the lines of what the YWCA provided for this pilot in order to ensure that appropriate, supportive responses are provided and safety is promoted.

In this pilot, we did not see a correlation between the reported incidence rate and the timing of when the screening was reported i.e. the program that waited months to screen had similar results to one of the programs that screened within the first week. It also raised the general awareness level, and concern, by the staff at the participating agencies and the need to ensure that our region (community based organizations, colleges and universities, career technical schools, employers, etc.) has sufficient support systems and responses to the issues when they arise. The YWCA and other organizations (e.g. Women Helping Women etc.) have established best practices and procedures already developed, but we need to raise awareness of the issue first and then deploy these best practices broadly. Please note that this pilot was not intended to have any focus on prevention strategies, but you will see below that as a key next step.

While this pilot focused on those in the community who tend to come from lower income backgrounds and who may have multiple barriers to employment, it is incumbent on us to remind the reader that intimidation and intimate partner violence cuts across all socio-economic levels and has huge impacts to the workplace. Studies have been conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Maine Department of Labor, Workplaces Respond, Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence and many others that show the negative business impact due to reduced productivity and absenteeism of not only the victims, but also the victimizer who may be intimidating their partners while they themselves are at work.

Next Steps:

The team who participated in this pilot identified the following next steps, grouped by when they could be implemented:

Short term i.e. could be implemented soon:

- Raise awareness by sharing this information with all workforce training and education providers and more broadly, perhaps via Women's Fund Exchange sessions and/or in conjunction with Child Poverty Collaborative events because of the number of children being directly affected.
- Assess overall, and especially with a racial equity lens, if the existing system of supports and responses are adequate, effective, accessible, utilize national best practices, etc. and if not, what changes need to be made.
- Now that we know the scale of this issue, consider training the intake/orientation staff at all workforce training and education providers on how to screen for intimidation and intimate partner violence and the appropriate responses.

Longer term i.e. will take time and/or resources to implement:

- Raise funds to conduct a formal study to increase the sample size and number of reporting agencies/organizations, increase the technical rigor of the study, benchmark results to national data/peer regions, learn possible triggers for episodes of intimidation or violence i.e. when does it tend to happen (or was it in the past), identify early warning and prevention strategies, and

track participants over time to assess longer term impacts to program completion, job retention, advancement, education attainment.

- Consider how we as a region can react to this at a cultural level i.e. how the impact of racism creates toxic stress that may trigger violence, how to change the culture of what is and isn't considered "women's work or women's roles", how to impact the cultural definitions of what it means to be "masculine", how to impact the culture of generational poverty where a person is influenced to not "rise above your raising", etc.

If you have questions or comments about this study, please contact Janice Urbanik, Janice.urbanik@uwgc.org or 513-762-7160.