

## **Domestic Violence Grant from the National Science Foundation and the National Institute for Justice**

Project Title: Family Court Decisions About Child Custody in the Context of Intimate Partner Violence

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Question under examination: Intimate partner violence (IPV) is common among divorcing parents who are unable to develop custody and visitation agreements on their own. Despite mandates requiring courts to factor IPV into their decisions, they often fail to do so. We propose a two-phase study to examine decisions made in family courts regarding custody and visitation when IPV has been documented. Phase I will examine publicly available administrative records for 620 divorce cases. Phase II will incorporate previously collected self-report data for a subset of 190 divorcing mothers named in these cases. In Phase I, data will be extracted from four sets of administrative records: (1) divorce, (2) family court, (3) protective order, and (4) criminal. Bivariate and multivariate analyses will be conducted to examine patterns of IPV documentation and factors associated with custody and visitation agreements and the safety of those agreements. In Phase II, we will merge the administrative data with additional variables collected during a recently completed study of mothers recruited within 12 weeks of a divorce filing. Self-report variables (e.g., self-reported IPV, controlling behaviors, mothers' attitudes) will be analyzed to identify additional risk and protective factors associated with custody and visitation agreements and the safety of those agreements.