



New York State Comptroller
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Economic and Policy Insights

Domestic Violence: Recent Trends in New York

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Introduction

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, a time to recognize and give voice to domestic violence victims. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 10 men have experienced sexual violence, physical violence and/or stalking by an intimate partner during their lifetime.¹ In 2021, the United Nations described increased violence against women during the pandemic as a “shadow pandemic,” and the National Commission on COVID-19 and Criminal Justice reported an 8 percent increase in domestic violence in the United States in 2021.²

In 2022, the number of domestic violence victims increased by 8.5 percent in New York City and 8.7 percent in the rest of the State, relative to 2019. While domestic violence cuts across all communities, women are disproportionately impacted and Black victims are overrepresented in the most severe form of domestic violence: domestic homicide. Effective outreach, funding and accessible programming are critical to addressing this crisis.

Background

Domestic violence is marked by abuse among intimate partners and other family members that can take many forms, occurring in families living together or currently separated, between intimate partners, as well as in teen dating abuse and college campus assaults. Perpetrators often use threats or actions as a pattern of behavior to control their victim, leading to physical, emotional, financial, and/or sexual abuse. Often the abuse is criminal, with victims suffering assault, stalking, strangulation, stabbings or homicide. Frequently, forms of emotional and financial abuse leave victims dependent on their abusers, isolated from friends and family, and without an avenue of support in the criminal justice system. In addition, domestic violence contributes to homelessness.³

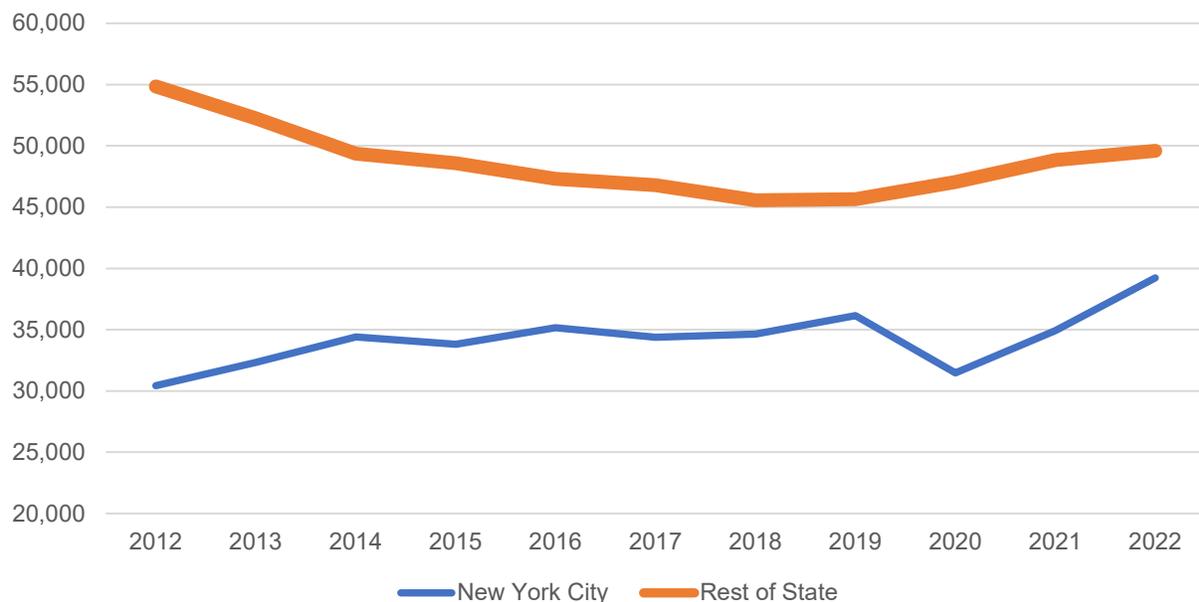
The State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) collects information on victims of domestic violence reported through the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program.⁴ Victim counts are categorized by their relationship to the offender as: Intimate Partner or “Other Family” (such as siblings, parent-child, or other blood or in-law relationships); and are reported for the following underlying offenses: Aggravated Assault, Simple Assault, Sex Offenses, and Violations of Protective Orders.⁵ The New York City Police Department (NYPD) uses different classifications: Felonious Assault, Third Degree Assault & Related Offenses, Sex Offenses and Violations of Protective Orders. Therefore, data for New York City and the rest of the State cannot be combined to derive statewide counts.

Two additional factors should be noted about these data. First, there are inherent difficulties for victims in the reporting of domestic violence, and tracking trends relies on reporting. Police must make a subjective judgement as to whether an offense qualifies as domestic violence, and data are only collected at the time of incident or when a victim attempts to access services. Thus, it is commonly understood that not all domestic violence victims are captured in the DCJS data. Second, while it is widely understood that the isolating impacts of COVID-19 exacerbated domestic violence, it also had an impact on victims’ ability to access shelter and other non-residential services.⁶ Therefore, collection and reporting of statistics in both 2020 and 2021 may not reflect actual numbers of victims during these years.

Recent Rise in Domestic Violence

Between 2012 and 2019, reports of domestic violence appeared to be on different trajectories in New York City versus the rest of the State. While reports declined steadily in the rest of the State, they grew to reach a high in 2019 in the City. In 2020, reports dropped sharply in New York City, potentially due to increased barriers to reporting or accessing services during the height of the pandemic. The number of reported domestic violence victims in the City then increased in both 2021 and 2022; by 2022, the number was 8.5 percent greater than 2019 levels. In contrast, reports in the rest of the State rose in 2020, and continued to grow to 8.7 percent over 2019 levels. Over the period that was examined, reported domestic violence victims dropped by 10 percent in areas outside of New York City, while in the City, the overall number grew by 29 percent. The difference may be partially attributable to enhanced awareness campaigns in New York City encouraging victims to seek support.

Figure 1
Domestic Violence Victims Reported in New York City and Rest of State, 2012-2022

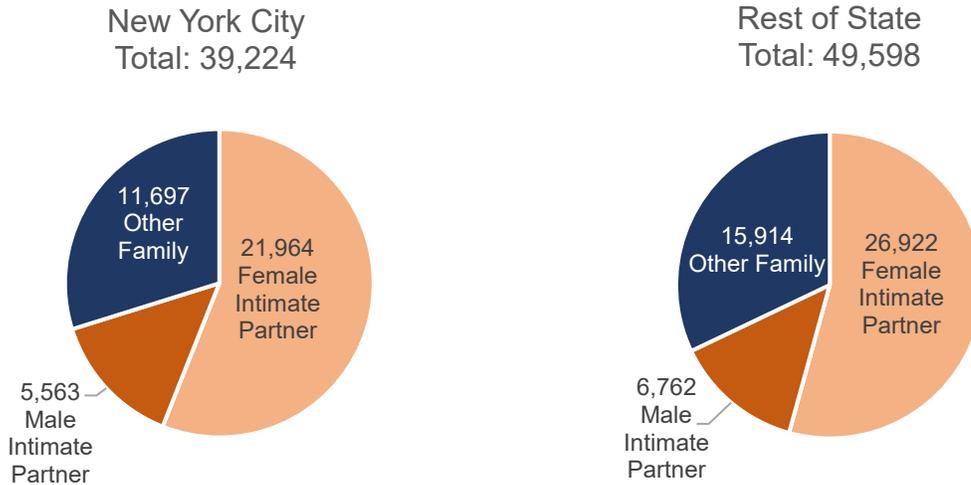


Source: DCJS

Types of Victims and Underlying Offenses

In 2022, DCJS reported 39,224 domestic violence victims in New York City (an increase of 4,297 or 12 percent from 2021) and 49,598 in the rest of the State (an increase of 766 or 2 percent from 2021). In both the City and the rest of the State, close to 70 percent of all domestic violence victims were hurt by their intimate partner, while 30 percent were victimized by another family member. Eighty percent of intimate partner victims are female. These trends have remained relatively constant in the past decade.

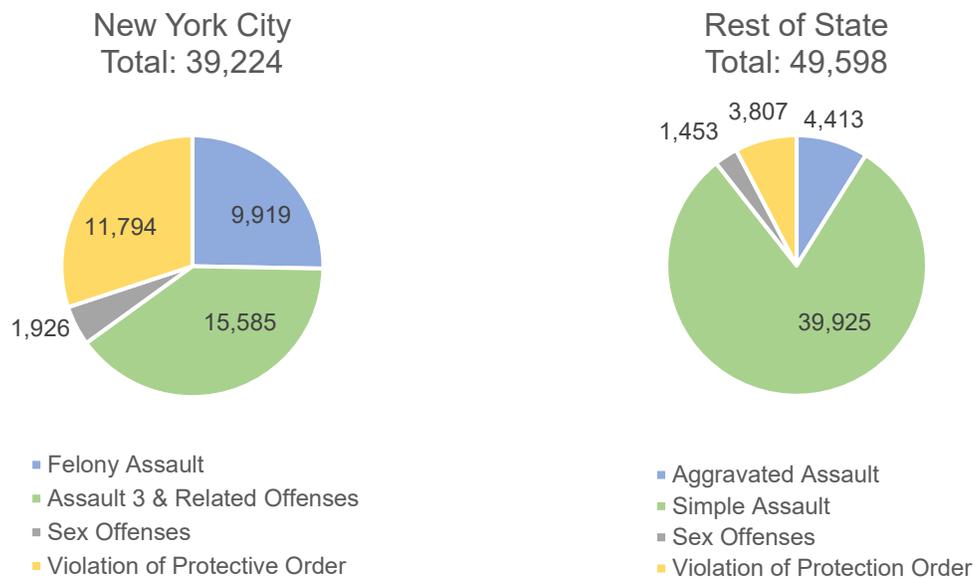
Figure 2
Share of Total Victims by Victim Type, New York City and Rest of State, 2022



Source: DCJS

Simple Assault accounts for 80 percent of the reports in counties outside of New York City. In the City, where reports of domestic violence victims are classified under different charges, Assault Third Degree & Related Offenses accounts for 40 percent of all domestic violence reports in 2022, with Felony Assault (which is more severe) and Violations of Protective Orders representing a larger share in New York City than in the rest of the State.

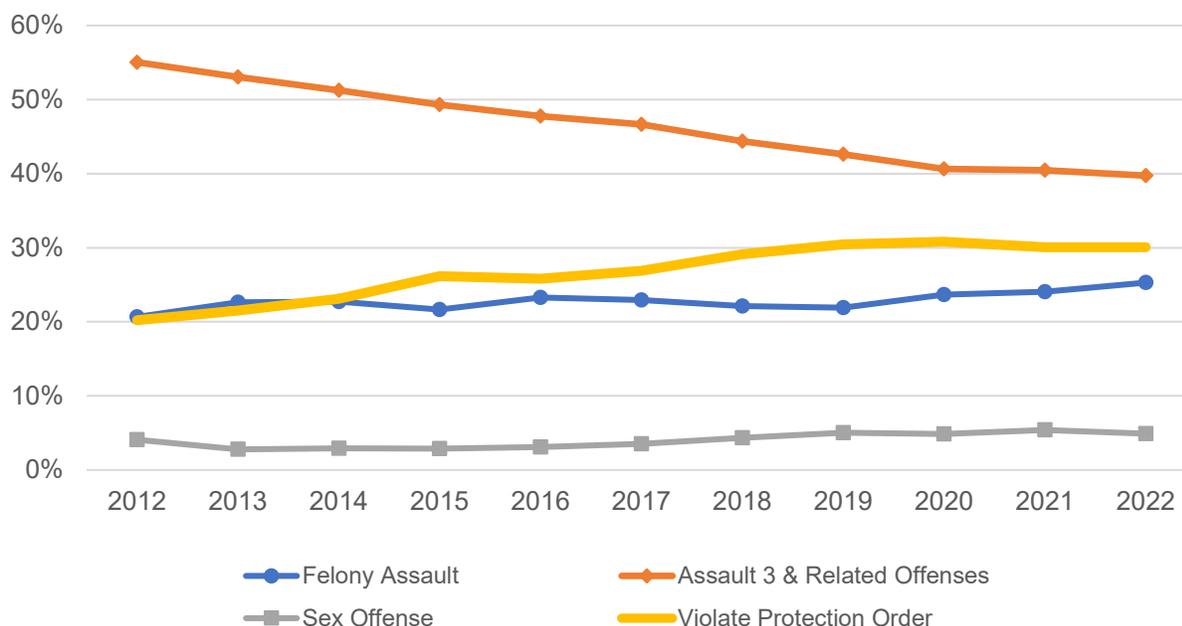
Figure 3
Share of Total Victims by Underlying Offense, New York City and Rest of State, 2022



Source: DCJS

In New York City, Assault Third Degree & Related Offenses have decreased from 55 percent of domestic violence reports in 2012 to 40 percent in 2022, with Violations of Protective Orders growing from 20 percent to 30 percent and Felony Assault growing from 21 percent in 2012 to 25 percent in 2022. Sex Offenses have accounted for 3 to 5 percent of reports over the past 10 years. In counties outside of New York City, Simple Assault has accounted for roughly 80 percent of domestic violence reports over the past decade and, in 2022, only 8 percent were Violations of a Protective Order.

Figure 4
Share of Total Victims by Underlying Offense, New York City, 2012-2022



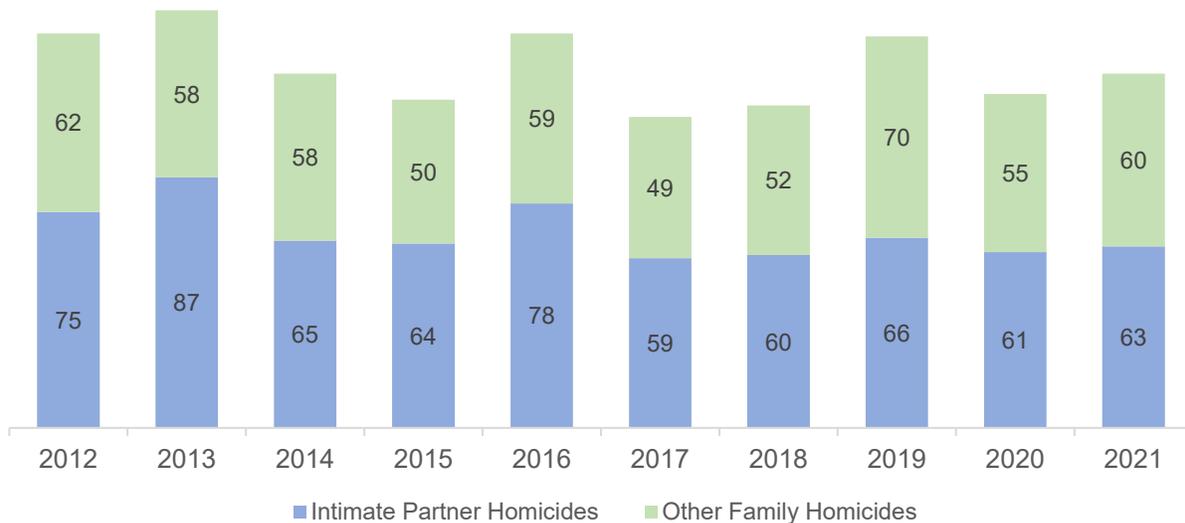
Source: DCJS

In the period prior to the pandemic, orders of protection were on the rise in New York City. Research has shown that protective orders are effective in deterring future abuse and encouraging victims to contact police for intervention.⁷ According to data published by the New York State Unified Court System’s (UCS) Domestic Violence Registry, in New York City, the number of orders of protection required to be filed in the State Registry (i.e., those involving intimate partners or other family members) increased by 10 percent between 2015 and 2018. Those numbers declined by 6 percent in 2019 and fell by 40 percent in 2020.⁸ Although counties outside the City issue roughly the same (or, in the past three years, even more) protective orders involving intimate partners or family members than New York City, the lower share of reported violations accounting for domestic violence incidents may merit further investigation.

Domestic Homicide

DCJS also prepares an annual report on domestic homicide in New York State that includes comparable statewide data.⁹ Domestic homicide is a murder in which the victim had an intimate or other family relationship with the offender. In 2021, there were 123 domestic homicides statewide, accounting for 14 percent of all homicides that year (123 of 882).¹⁰ Half of these (63) were committed by the victim's intimate partner, a trend in domestic homicide that has remained consistent over the past 10 years.

Figure 5
Total Domestic Homicides in New York, by Type, 2012-2021

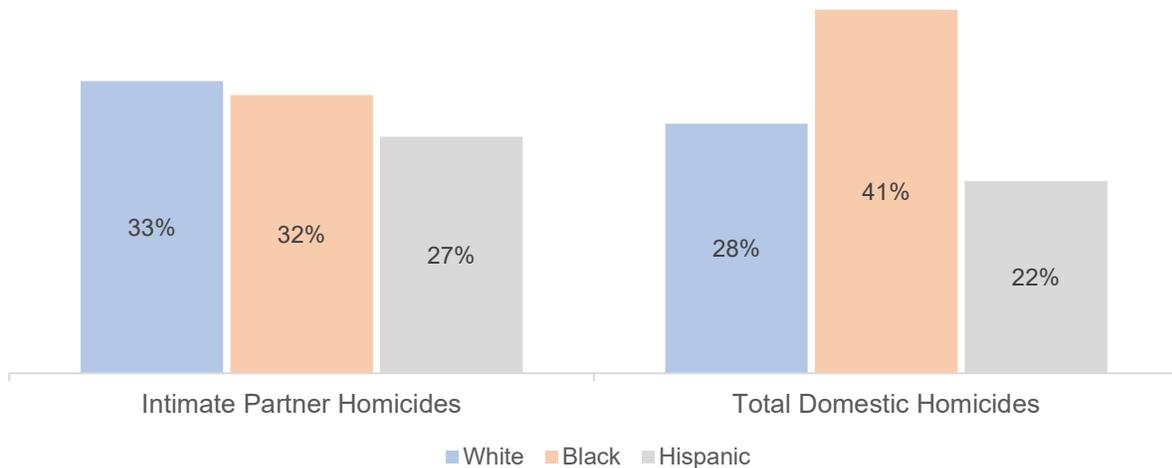


Source: DCJS

The largest share of victims of domestic homicide in 2021 were in their 20s and 30s (40 percent). However, a large portion of domestic homicide victims in 2021 were children and aging population groups, with 15 percent age 60 and older, and 21 percent age 19 or younger.

Women were 54 percent of domestic homicide victims – a rate nearly 5 times greater than for non-domestic homicides. Among intimate partner homicides (a subset of domestic homicide), 76 percent of victims were female (48 out of 63). Victims of domestic homicide were more often Black than other racial or ethnic categories (41 percent, compared to 28 percent White and 22 percent Hispanic).¹¹

Figure 6
Share of Intimate Partner and Total Domestic Homicides in New York by Race of Victim, 2021



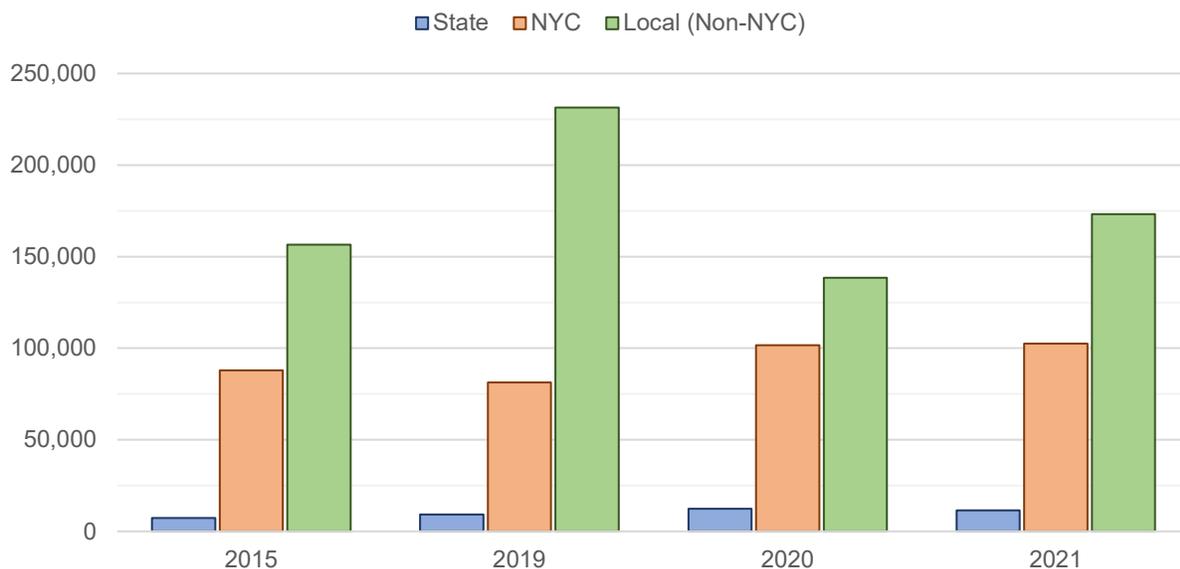
Source: DCJS

The Need for Domestic Violence Services is on the Rise

Every county in New York State has a domestic violence program that offers safe housing and other services to victims, including counseling, transportation, legal advocacy, mental health treatment, and other support to receive public benefits and financial assistance.

The New York State Domestic and Gender-Based Violence Dashboard is published by the New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV) and the State's Domestic Violence Advisory Council. The Dashboard is an annual compilation of statistical information regarding the State's response to domestic violence and shows methods of assistance provided by State agencies and the courts. OPDV Dashboard data show the number of calls received by domestic violence and sexual assault hotlines statewide increased by 28 percent from 2015 to 2019. During 2020 and 2021, State Domestic & Sexual Violence Hotline calls increased by 32 percent¹² and calls to the New York City Domestic Violence Hotline grew 26 percent. Calls to other local domestic violence hotlines declined by 40 percent in 2020, resulting in an overall decrease in hotline calls during the pandemic.

Figure 7
Domestic Violence Hotline Calls, 2015, 2019, 2020 and 2021



Source: OPDV New York State Domestic Violence Dashboard

Utilization of domestic violence shelters was also on the rise between 2015 and 2019, showing an 8 percent increase in admissions. While the available data show a 13 percent decrease in those numbers during the pandemic, 2022 annual data has not yet been published by OPDV or the State Office of Children and Family Services (the State agency that oversees residential domestic violence programs) to show if these numbers are on the rise again.

The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) also conducts a “Domestic Violence Counts” Survey: a one-day, unduplicated count of adults and children who sought domestic violence services in a single 24-hour period.¹³ The most recent survey revealed in a single day in 2022:

- 9,157 adult and child victims of domestic violence received services by domestic violence programs in New York State;
- 5,673 victims found refuge in emergency housing; and
- hotline staff received 1,572 calls, averaging nearly 66 calls per hour.

On the same day, it was reported that 951 requests for help went unmet due to a lack of available resources by local providers of domestic violence programs.¹⁴ NNEDV reports that the number of victims reported in the survey has increased 22 percent since 2018, hotline contacts are up 19 percent and unmet service requests are also up 19 percent. In addition, victims who received emergency housing on the NNEDV survey has increased by 41 percent.

Conclusion

With nearly 90,000 reported victims of domestic violence statewide in 2022, significant work remains to reduce the number of these destructive incidents and to ensure the availability of resources to assist victims.

In New York State, OPDV is responsible for advising the Governor and Legislature on policies and best practices, training professionals across the State and serving as a resource on domestic violence issues. Under OPDV's enabling statute, the Domestic Violence Advisory Council was created to bolster the work of OPDV, make recommendations on strategies to prevent domestic violence and help develop appropriate policies and priorities for effective intervention.¹⁵ The Advisory Council membership includes a broad cross-section of service providers, advocates, State agencies, judges and State Police. The Council is directed to meet twice annually.¹⁶

From a local perspective, the Domestic Violence Regional Councils (DVRCs) initiative was launched in 2020 after a series of listening sessions with domestic violence service providers to examine how domestic violence services were being delivered on a regional basis.¹⁷ The DVRCs are comprised of representatives from local service providers, local Departments of Social Services, law enforcement, court systems and health providers, each of whom provides specialized input from the myriad of systems that help victims of domestic violence.

The result of the first two rounds of regional meetings were published in a report by [OPDV](#) that includes a range of findings, including a widespread lack of prevention work, weak relationships between systems, and barriers to economic stability, among others. The information gained from all 10 regional meetings will be compiled on an ongoing basis and presented to the Domestic Violence Advisory Council for their consideration when making policy and program recommendations.

The Office of the State Comptroller is engaged in an audit focused on whether domestic violence programs and services are effectively coordinated between agencies to provide needed resources and support to domestic violence victims. While the audit has not yet been concluded, the Acting Commissioner of the State Office of Children and Family Services and the Executive Director of OPDV testified in the October 3, 2023 Public Hearing of the New York State Senate Standing Committee on Domestic Violence that streamlining the administrative structure for domestic violence service programs was underway.

The impact of domestic violence is profound, often causing permanent physical injury and emotional trauma. It is important to know how to get help and spot signs of distress in others who may need it, and State and local agencies should make seeking help and receiving services as easy as possible for victims.

Resources and Support

If you or someone you know is suffering from domestic violence, help is available. In case of an emergency, or if you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 911. You can call or text the New York State Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Hotline to get connected to immediate help in your area – it's confidential and available in most languages 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

New York State Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Hotline

Call: 800-942-6906 or Text: 844-997-2121

Live Chat: opdv.ny.gov

Parent Help Line: 800-342-7472

If you live in New York City, additional citywide hotlines are available:

New York City Domestic Violence Hotline

800-621-HOPE (4673)

Text: 866-604-5350

New York City Rape and Sexual Assault Hotline 212-227-3000

Text: 866-604-5350

Every county in the State provides domestic violence services to its residents that can provide the help needed to get free from a domestic abuser. To find a domestic violence program in your area, visit the New York State Office of Children and Family Services' (OCFS) website at <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/domestic-violence/providers.php>.

Endnotes

- ¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2015 Data Brief* (updated November 2018), at <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/2015data-brief508.pdf> (accessed on September 5, 2023). See also National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, *Domestic Violence in New York* (2020), at https://assets.speakcdn.com/assets/2497/ncadv_new_york_fact_sheet_2020.pdf (accessed on September 5, 2023).
- ² UN Women, *Measuring the Shadow Pandemic: Violence Against Women During COVID-19*, at <https://data.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/documents/Publications/Measuring-shadow-pandemic.pdf> (accessed on September 18, 2023); Council on Criminal Justice, *Impact Report: COVID-19 and Domestic Violence Trends*, February 23, 2021, at <https://counciloncj.org/impact-report-covid-19-and-domestic-violence-trends/>.
- ³ National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV), *Domestic Violence, Housing, and Homelessness*, at https://staging.nnedv.org/wp-content/uploads/mdocs/THousing_Handout_Domestic-violence-housing-and-homelessness.pdf (accessed on September 28, 2023).
- ⁴ The Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR) is a nationwide, cooperative, statistical effort of more than 18,000 law enforcement agencies voluntarily reporting data on crimes brought to their attention. DCJS oversees the UCR program for New York State and reports crime and arrest data to the FBI (see <https://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/crimnet/ojsa/stats.htm>, accessed on September 5, 2023).
- ⁵ An Aggravated Assault refers to an attack for the purpose of inflicting severe bodily injury and is usually accompanied by use of a weapon. Simple Assaults are those that do not result in serious physical injury and include harassment, stalking and intimidation of the victim. Sex Offenses include rape, statutory rape, sodomy, incest, and sexual abuse; and violations of protective orders are counted where the offender violated a court order that was previously imposed for the protection of the domestic violence victim at issue (see DCJS Domestic Violence Data Definitions, at <https://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/crimnet/ojsa/definitions.htm> (accessed on September 5, 2023)).
- ⁶ See e.g. New York City Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence, New York City Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee: *2021 Annual Report*, Preface: The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Domestic Violence in New York City, at <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/ocdv/downloads/pdf/2021-FRC-Annual-Report.pdf>.
- ⁷ CL Kothari, et al., *Protection Orders Protect Against Assault and Injury: A Longitudinal Study of Police-Involved Women Victims of Intimate Partner Violence*, *J Interpers Violence*, September 27, 2012, at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4151113/>.
- ⁸ The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on victims' access to courts starting in March 2020.
- ⁹ See DCJS Annual Reports and Publications, at <https://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/crimnet/pubs.htm> (accessed on September 5, 2023).
- ¹⁰ See DCJS, *Domestic Homicide in New York State 2021*, at <https://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/crimnet/ojsa/FINAL%202021%20Domestic%20Homicide%20Report%207-18-23.pdf>.
- ¹¹ The same is true for all other (non-domestic) homicides in 2021 (67 percent of victims were Black, compared to 19 percent Hispanic and 12 percent White).
- ¹² In 2020, OPDV developed a new text and chat feature for the State Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Hotline (State Hotline) to provide more options for victims during the pandemic to reach out for help.
- ¹³ NNEDV, *17th Annual Domestic Violence Counts Report*, March 2023, at <https://nnedv.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/17th-Annual-Domestic-Violence-Counts-Report-Full-Report-March-2023.pdf> (the 17th annual survey was conducted on September 7, 2022 and 97 out of 107 [91 percent] of identified domestic violence programs in the State participated in this national count of domestic violence services. The 2023 count was conducted on September 6, 2023, and the results are currently being collected and analyzed by NNEDV. This will be the 18th consecutive year that NNEDV has conducted this project, see <https://nnedv.org/content/domestic-violence-counts-18th-annual-report/>).
- ¹⁴ NNEDV, *17th Annual Domestic Violence Counts Report: New York Summary*, March 2023, at <https://nnedv.org/resources-library/17th-annual-domestic-violence-counts-report-new-york-summary/> (accessed on September 5, 2023).
- ¹⁵ See Executive Law § 575(4).

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ 2020-2021 Domestic Violence Regional Councils (DVRCs), *Cross-Regional Needs and Current Efforts*, May 2022, at <https://opdv.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2022/05/dvrc-report.pdf>.

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