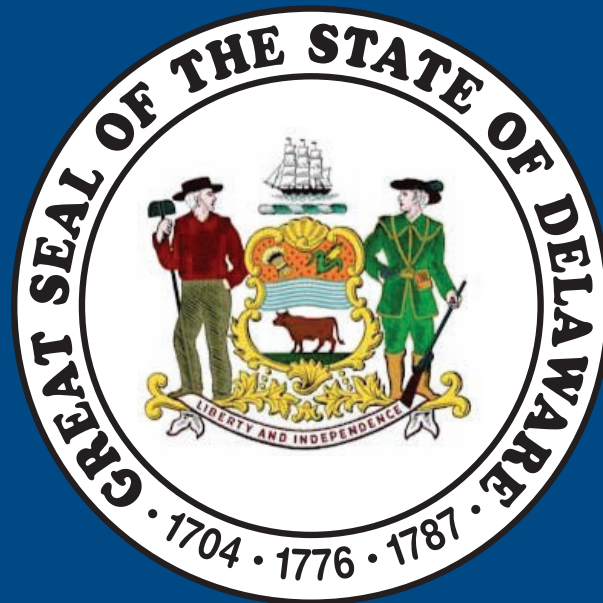


DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
COORDINATING COUNCIL



2010

ANNUAL REPORT

and

FATAL INCIDENT REVIEW TEAM
REPORT

Domestic Violence Coordinating Council

2010 Annual Report

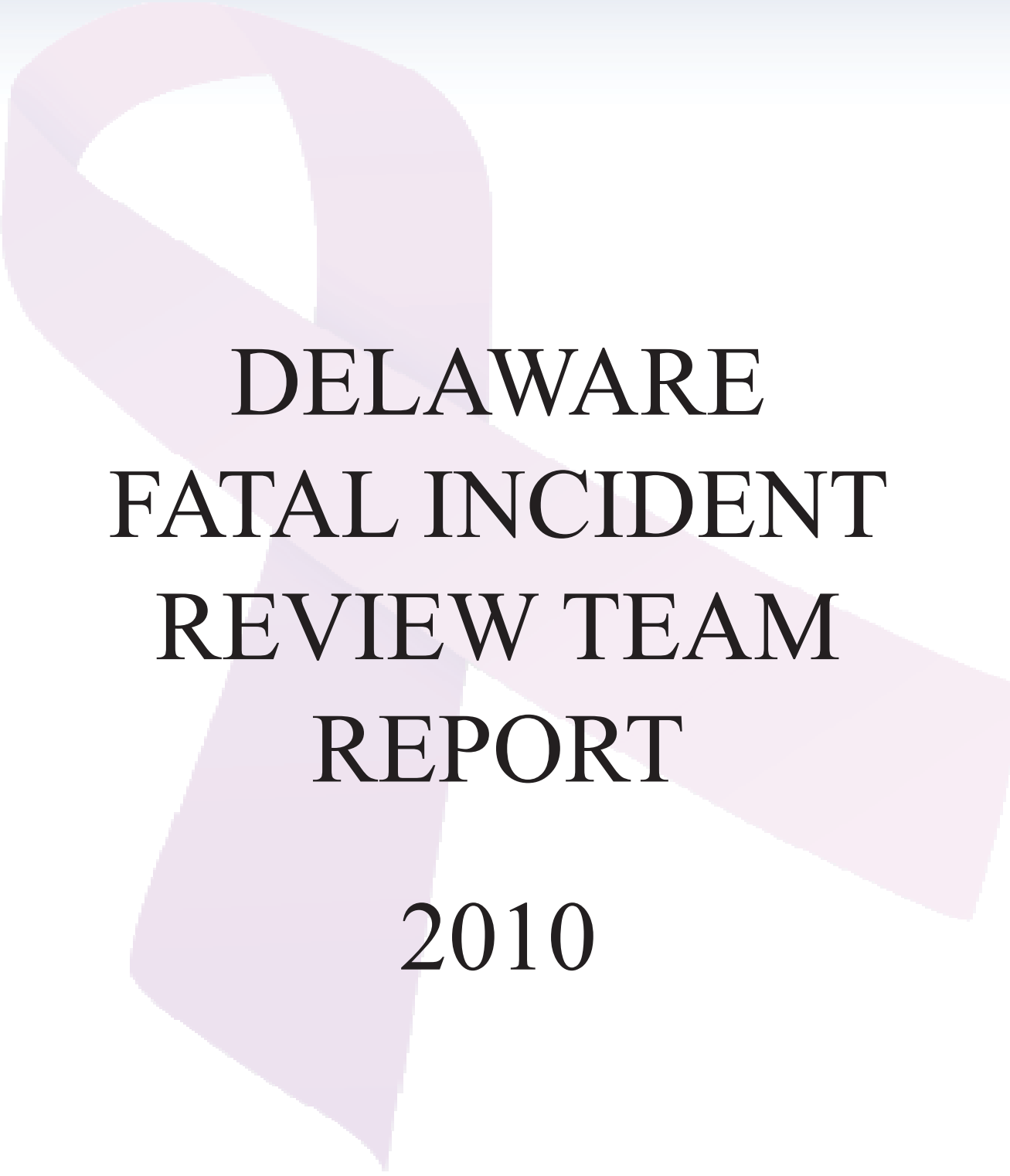
and

Fatal Incident Review Team Annual Report

To:

Honorable Jack A. Markell
Governor, State of Delaware

Honorable Myron T. Steele
Chief Justice
Supreme Court
State of Delaware



**DELAWARE
FATAL INCIDENT
REVIEW TEAM
REPORT
2010**

The History of the Purple Ribbon

The Battered Women's Movement twenty-two years ago designated the Purple Ribbon as the emblem that represents countless lives lost to domestic violence. The explanations of why the Movement chose this color and when the formal use of the ribbon became widespread are various. However, one narration, believed by many, is as follows:

“There was a woman from the Midwest in the 1980s, who had left her abusive relationship and had worked her way to being a director of the battered women's program in her community. Her batterer was in jail, but he had been released on a temporary furlough. During his release, he crossed state lines and found her and killed her in her home. The woman's name was Lisa Bianco, and she was loved and sorely missed by those who knew her. Her friends and family wanted to remember the life of this beloved woman and chose to wear her favorite color in her honor - the color purple.”

This tragic and unfortunate incident led to the Purple Ribbon's unofficial use by domestic violence advocates before any awareness campaign ever existed.

From small beginnings are borne great fruits, and this is very much the case with the Purple Ribbon. At the beginning, scant numbers of communities used the Purple Ribbon to support the victims of domestic violence and their families. Today its widespread use has propelled the visibility of the movement to end domestic violence - regardless of age, gender identity, religion, race, ethnicity, nationality, income, or education.

Importantly, it shattered the silence about domestic violence, family violence, and violence in society. The message that the Ribbon puts into words is that domestic violence should be and must be stamped out of our global culture. Its presence in homes, churches, schools, workplaces and communities helps empower the message behind the Ribbon. In speaking for victims, survivors, and families, the Purple Ribbon ultimately represents the undying commitment of many women and men not to let those deaths and abuses continue. ¹

¹ Mountain Times, “October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month” October 2004

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Introduction

Domestic violence continues to be a devastating problem and deaths resulting from this crime are the ultimate acts of abuse. In 2009, the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) identified 10 domestic violence fatal incident cases, resulting in 14 deaths. In some of these cases the victims had taken steps to protect themselves and/or their families from their abusive partner. Despite their efforts, some victims and/or the people they loved died from the hands of the abusive partner.

The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council's Fatal Incident Review Team's purpose is to review domestic violence fatalities, once prosecution has been completed, in order to reduce domestic violence deaths in the future.

The Review Team members are dedicated professionals who conduct system audits of State agencies and private organizations that had contact with the deceased victim and/or the alleged perpetrator to assess the system's response. Other relevant persons are invited to serve on an ad hoc basis and participate as full members of the Team when it is determined that they possess pertinent information in a particular case. Ad hoc members can include, but are not limited to, private attorneys, public defenders, probation and parole, therapists, victim service workers, caseworkers, and representatives from other relevant agencies.

Team members (or their designee) are responsible for providing information documented by their agency or discipline which is specific to the case under review. Team members also serve as a resource by providing general information regarding their agency or discipline; such as, explanation of legal issues, types of services available for victims, or overview of court procedures.

Although the domestic violence fatality reviews are retrospective in nature, their purpose is prospective. Reviews focus on identifying trends, patterns and obstacles in services, assessing agency interventions, and, most importantly, developing practical recommendations aimed at improving the system and preventing future injury and death.



Review Team Members & Participants

Co-Chairs

Honorable Vincent J. Poppiti, Domestic Violence Coordinating Council

Dana Harrington Conner, Domestic Violence Coordinating Council

Members and Participants

Honorable Joseph R. Biden, III, Attorney General

Vivian Rapposelli, Secretary, Dept. of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families

Honorable Chandlee Johnson Kuhn, Chief Judge Family Court

Lillian Lowery, Secretary of the Department of Education

Honorable Alan Davis, Chief Magistrate Justice of the Peace Courts

Cindy Mercer, Victim Advocate Appointed by the DVCC

Rita M. Landgraf, Director of the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Chief Michael Capriglione, Delaware Police Chiefs' Council

Maria Knoll, Attorney General's Office

Leann Summa, Family Court

Perry Alfater, Probation and Parole/Dept. of Correction

Alan Grinstead, Department of Correction

Sgt. Scott McCarthy, Delaware State Police

Sgt. Patricia Davies, New Castle County Police

Det. Anthony Harris, Wilmington Police Department

Linda Shannon, Division of Family Services

Cheryl Stallman, Justice of the Peace Courts

Lynda Lord, Division of Health and Social Services

Debbie Reed, Delaware State Police, Victim Services

Kathy Goldsmith, Department of Education

Cara C. Sawyer, Domestic Violence Coordinating Council



Review Team Process

In an attempt to ensure that no domestic violence fatality escapes review, the Fatal Incident Review Team has adapted the following broad definition of domestic violence, which is similar to the definition used by the Department of Justice.

Domestic Violence is any abusive act between family members, husband and wife, ex-husband and wife, intimate cohabitants, former intimate cohabitants, dating couples, and former dating couples. Abusive acts include physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, threats of abuse, and destruction of property. Domestic violence shall also include abusive acts in which an individual who has a relationship with the domestic violence victim is killed as a result of the offender's actions. The offender and victim in a domestic violence case may be of the same sex. The death of a minor will only be reviewed where the minor's parents or guardians were involved in an abusive relationship and the minor's death is directly related to that abuse.

The Review Team meets monthly; however, no case may be reviewed until prosecution is completed in criminal cases and authorized by the Attorney General's Office. During a review, each team member completes a data sheet providing information regarding his/her agency's contact with the victim and/or perpetrator. Prior to the review, members also provide any documents maintained by their agency concerning a particular case to staff. Staff then reviews all documents and provides the team with a time line of events. In addition, staff provides copies of each participating agency's documents which are available one hour prior to the meeting for review by panel members. Files are confidential and therefore cannot be distributed.

Legislation mandates confidentiality requirements in the review process and any records created therein are exempt from the provision of the Freedom of Information Act. Therefore, all records of the reviews are confidential and are maintained in the DVCC office and may only be used by the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council in the exercise of its proper function.



Domestic Violence Fatal Incident Cases

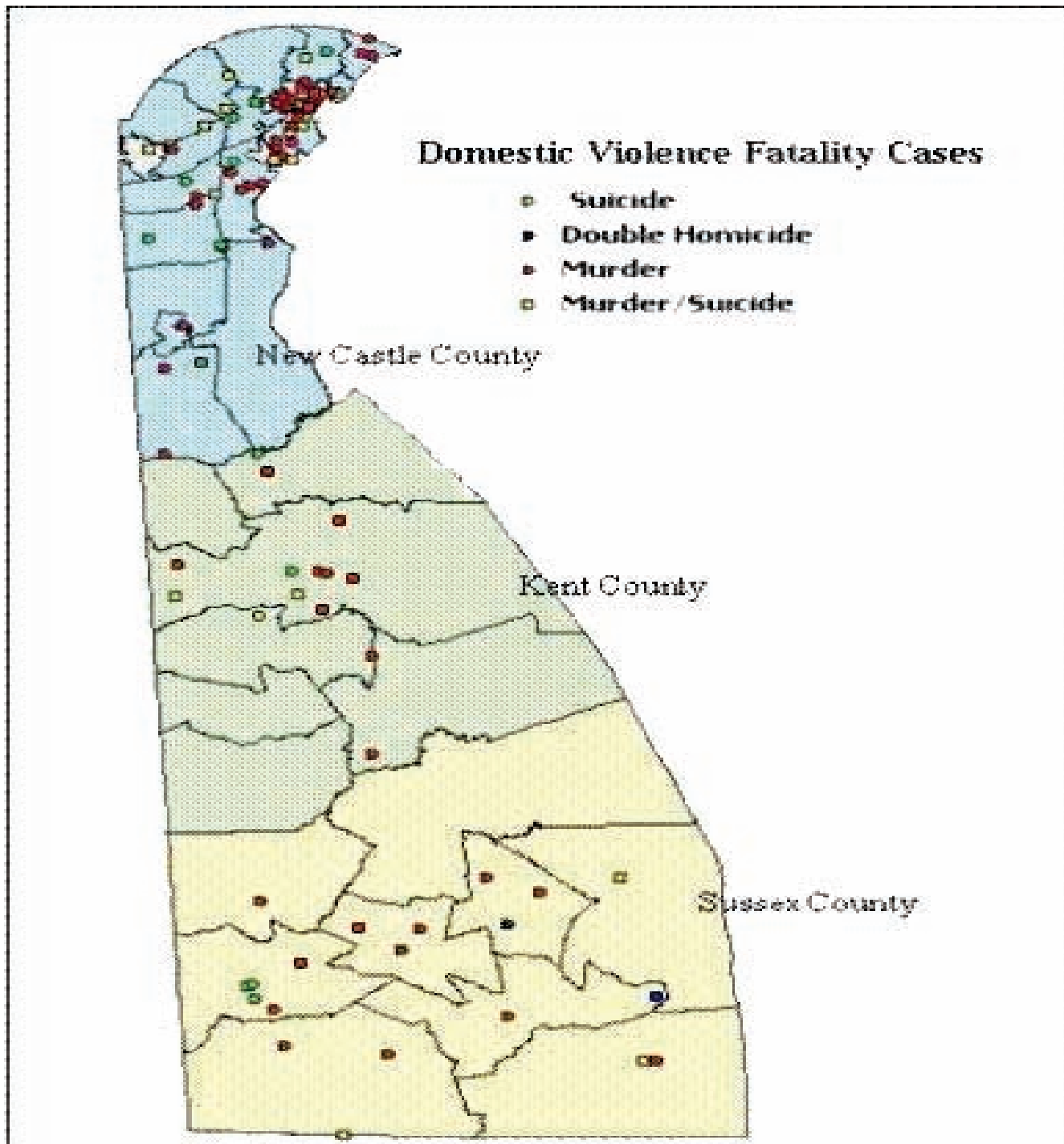
The information contained in this report represents cumulative data collected from 98 case reviews, which occurred over a period of 13 years. The fatality cases contained in this report occurred between 1996 and 2009. However, because cases cannot be reviewed until prosecution is completed, not all of the cases that occurred between 1996 and 2009 appear in this report (13 Del. C. Section § 2105). Included in this report are ten additional cases since last year's report. The ten cases resulted in 14 deaths. This report includes those ten cases as well as cumulative data from all the past cases the Fatal Incident Review Team has investigated.

98 Domestic Violence Fatal Incident Cases Resulting In 125 Deaths

Homicide Victims	Perpetrator Suicides Following Homicide	Suicides	Undetermined Victim Deaths
88	21	15	1

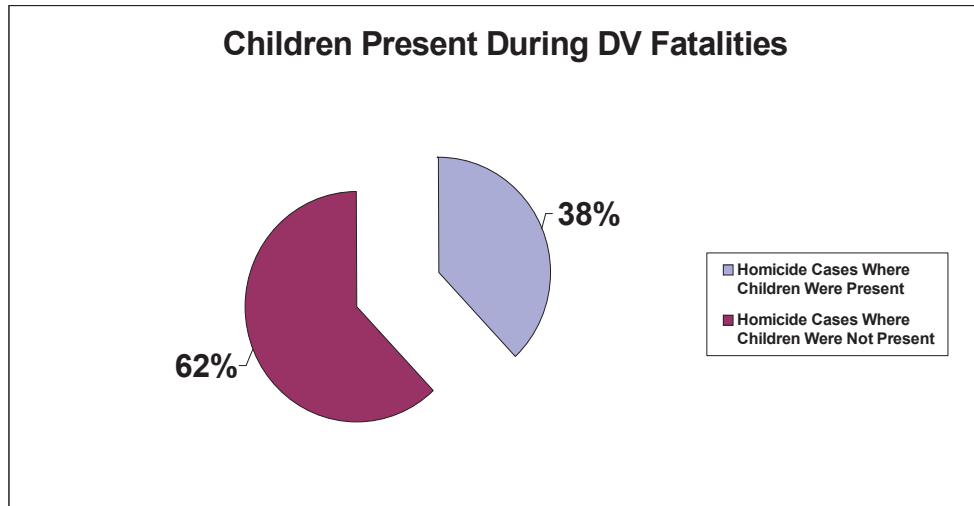


Location of Fatal Incidents Included in this Report

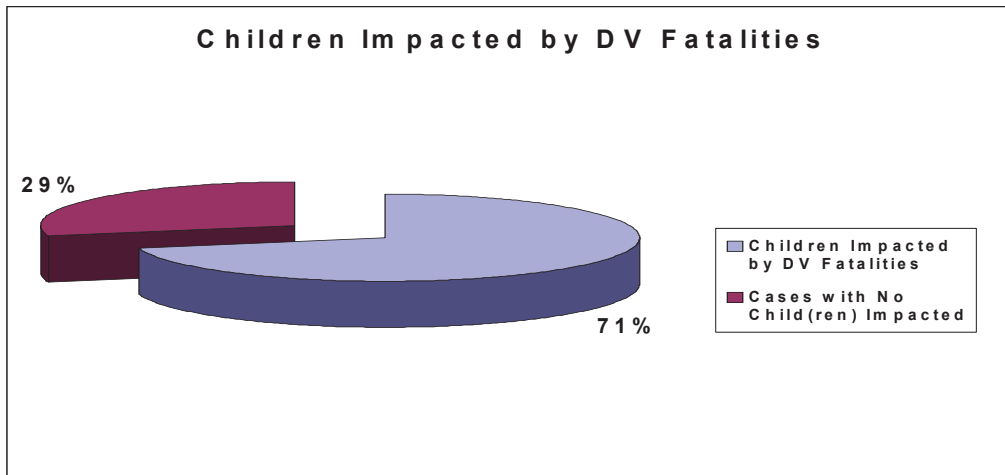




Impact of Domestic Violence on Children



In 37 or 38% of the 98 cases reviewed in this report, children were present when the fatality occurred. This represents a total of 58 children present when the fatality occurred.

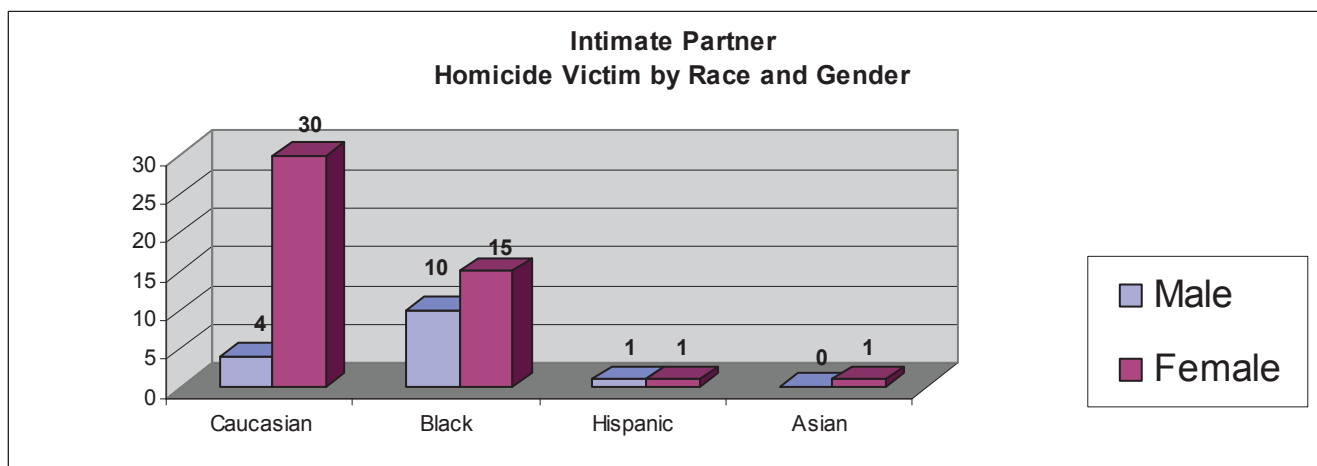


Children were impacted in 70 or 71% of the 98 cases reviewed in this report. This represents a total of 95 children who lost a parent(s) due to domestic violence.

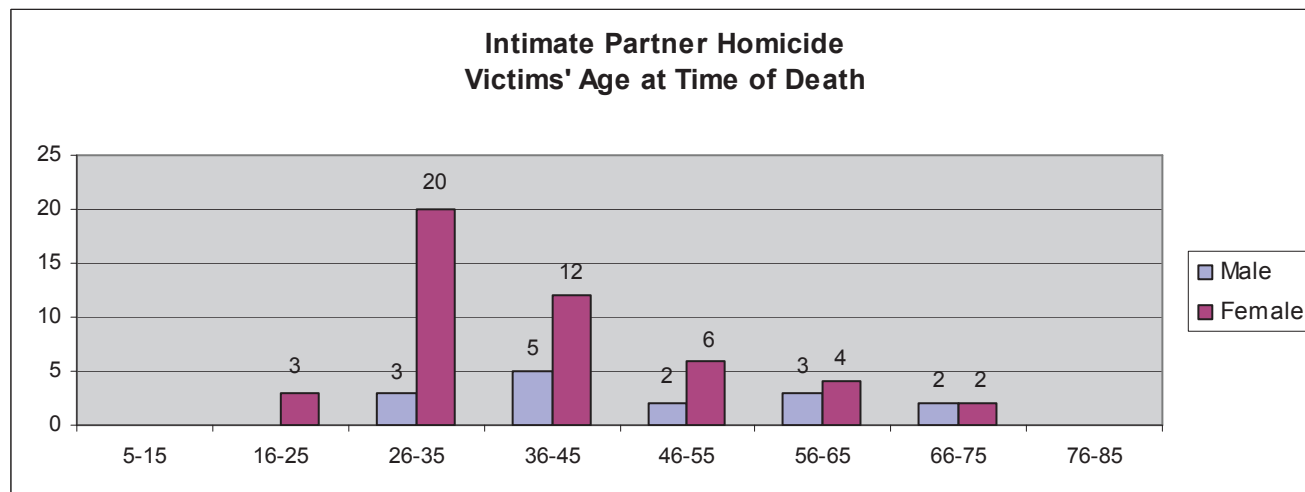


Intimate Partner Data

The term “Intimate Partner” includes current and former spouses, current and former dating couples with or without a child in common and dating couples. Intimate partners may be the same gender.



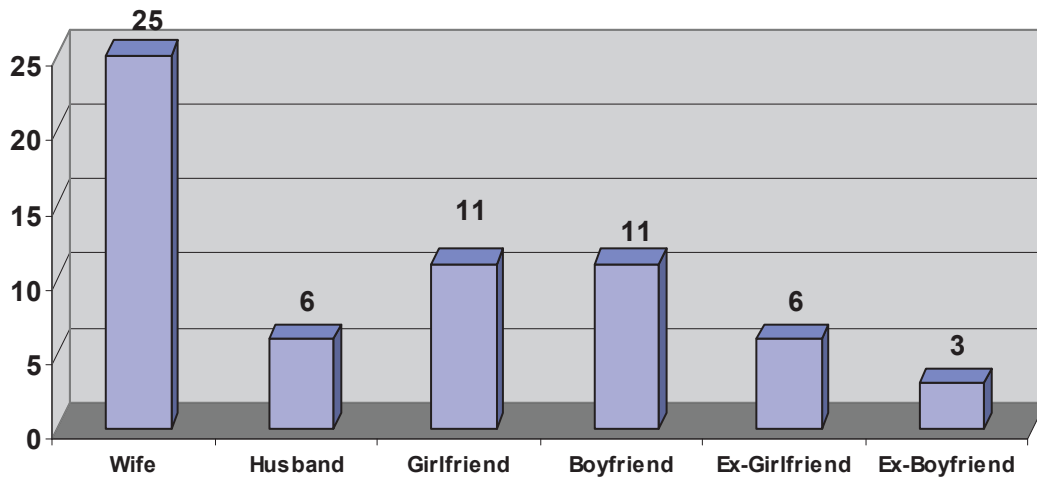
Of the 88 homicide deaths included in this report, 62 were the result of “Intimate Partner” homicide.



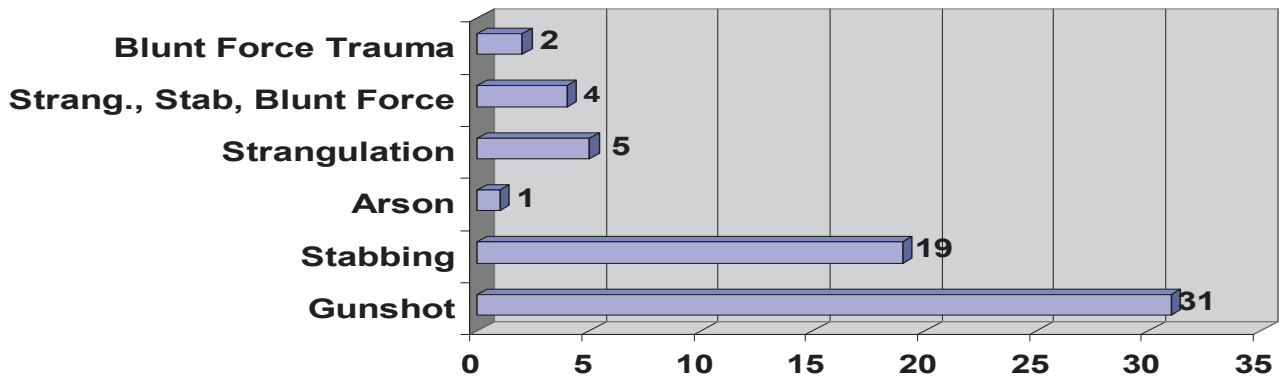


Intimate Partner Data

Intimate Partner Homicide Victims



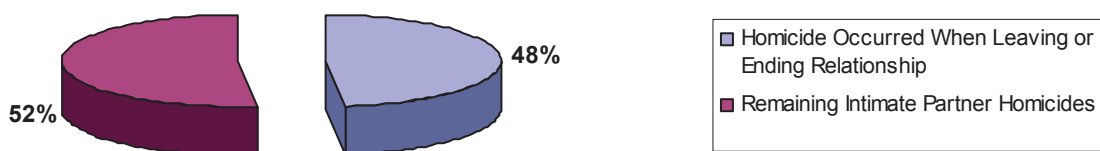
Intimate Partner - Cause of Death (From One or Multiple Causes)





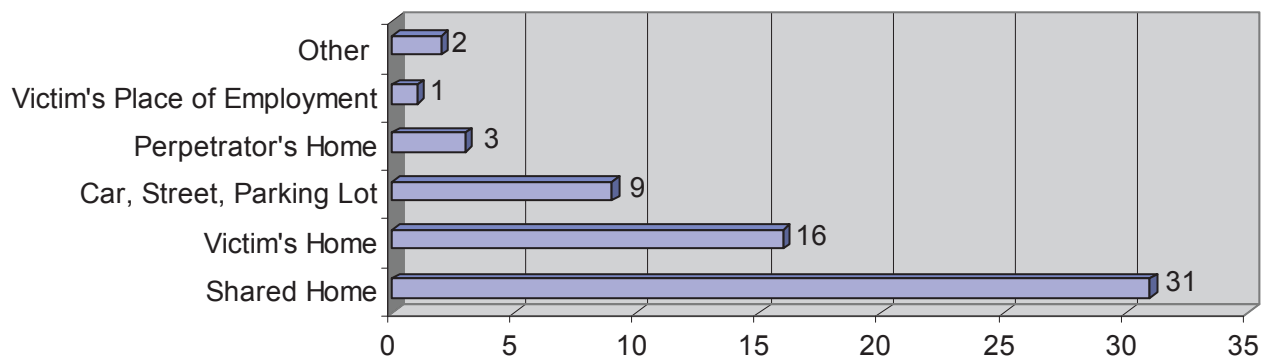
Intimate Partner Data

Intimate Partner Attempting to Leave/End Relationship



Of the 62 “Intimate Partner” homicides, 30 or 48% of the homicides occurred when the victim attempted to leave or had ended the relationship with the perpetrator.

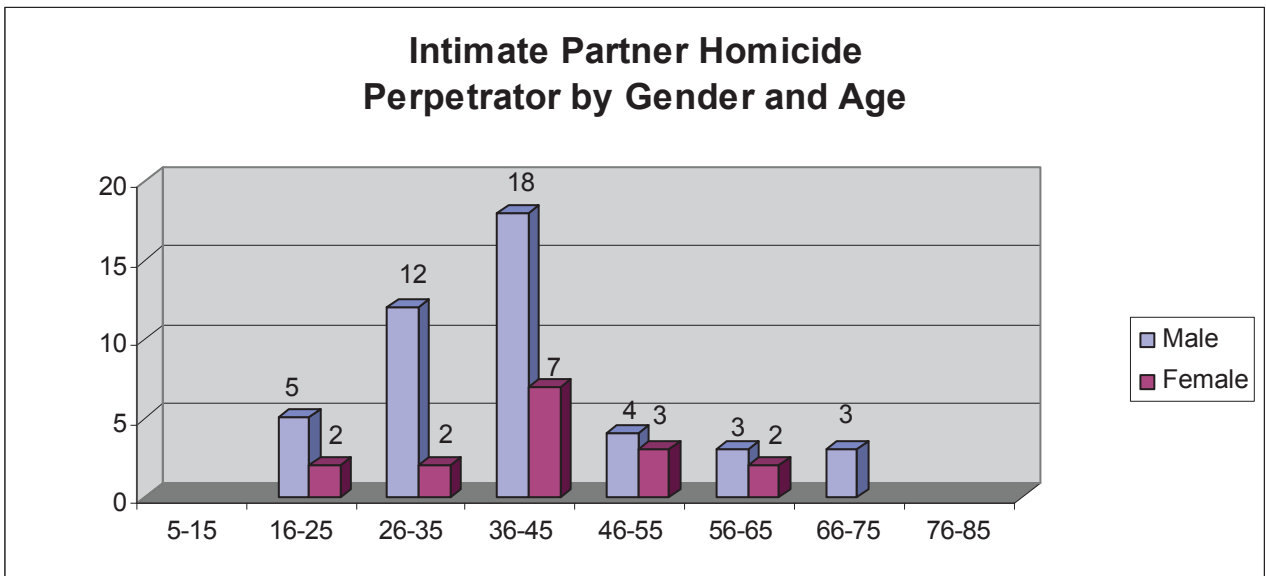
Intimate Partner - Location of Death



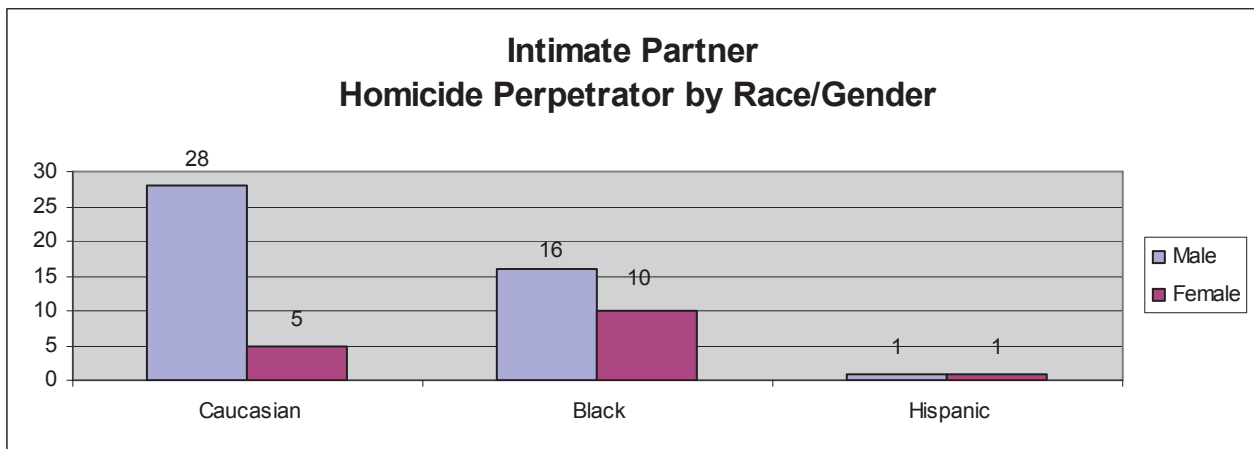


Intimate Partner Data

61 perpetrators were responsible for the 62 “Intimate Partner” homicides in this report.



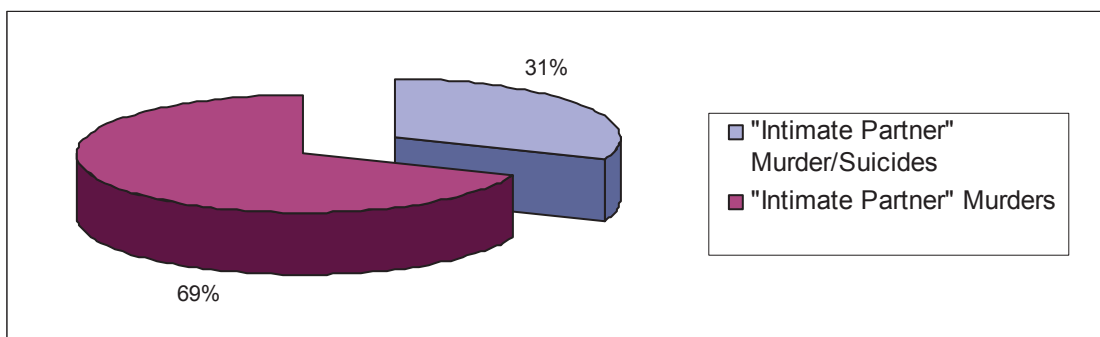
There are 61 “Intimate Partner” homicide perpetrators in this report. Of those, 45 or 74% of the perpetrators were male and 16 or 26% of the perpetrators were female.



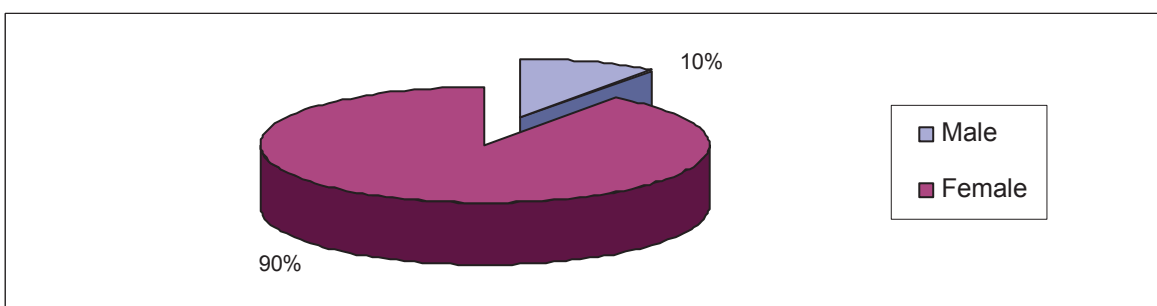


Intimate Partner Data

The term "Murder/Suicide" refers to those cases where the perpetrator murdered the victim and then committed suicide.



Of the 62 "Intimate Partner" fatalities, 19 or 31% resulted from murder/suicide.



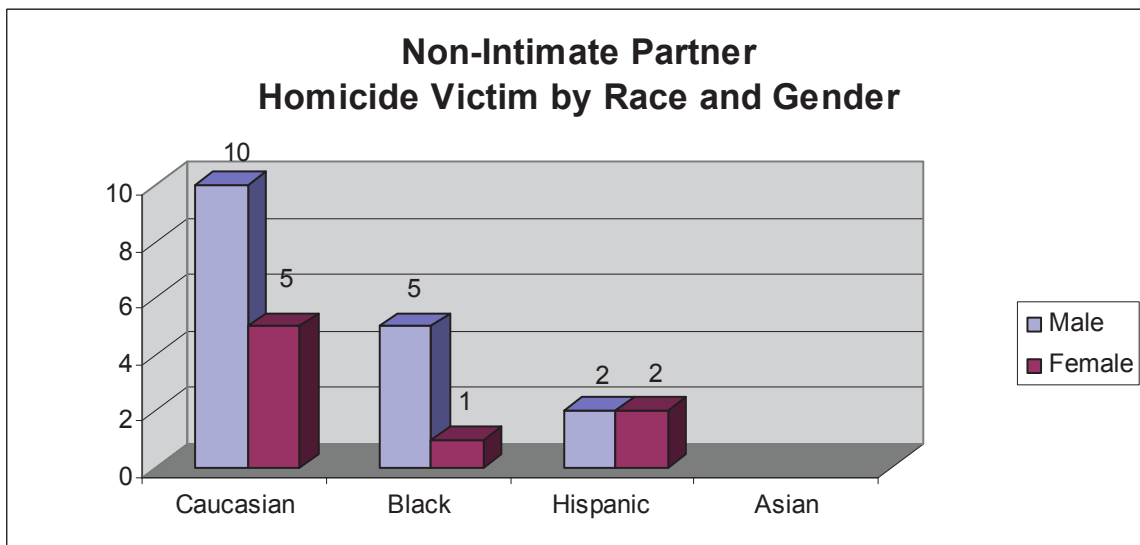
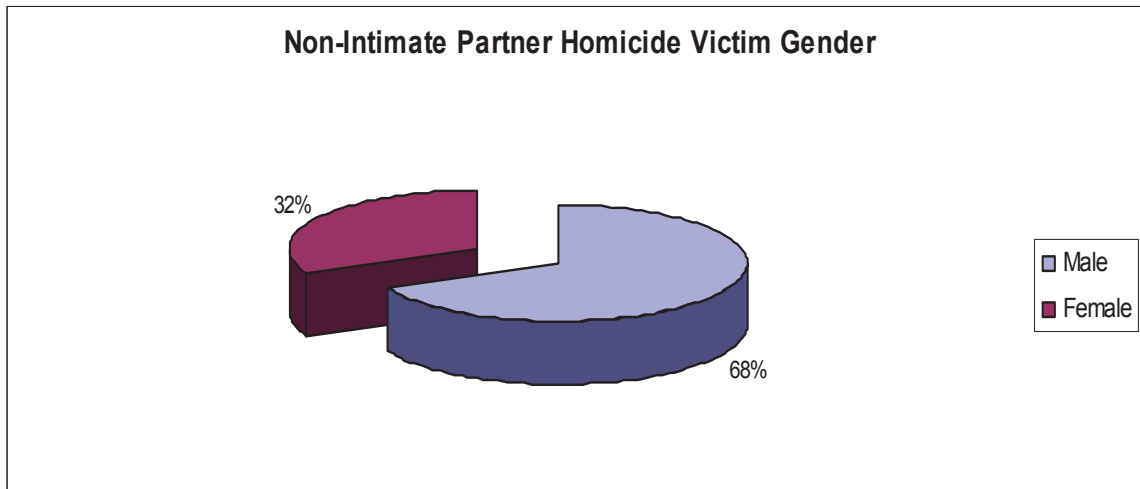
There were 21 murder/suicide cases. Of those, 19 or 90% of the perpetrators were male and 2 or 10% were female.



Non-Intimate Partner Data

A “Non-Intimate Partner” is an individual not included as an intimate partner; such as parent/child, brother/sister.

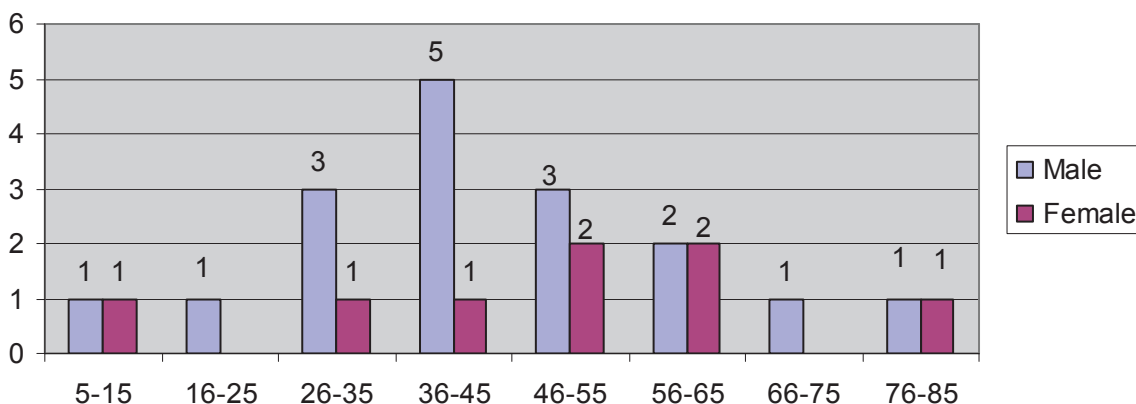
Of the 88 homicides included in this report,
25 or 28% were “Non-Intimate Partner” homicides.



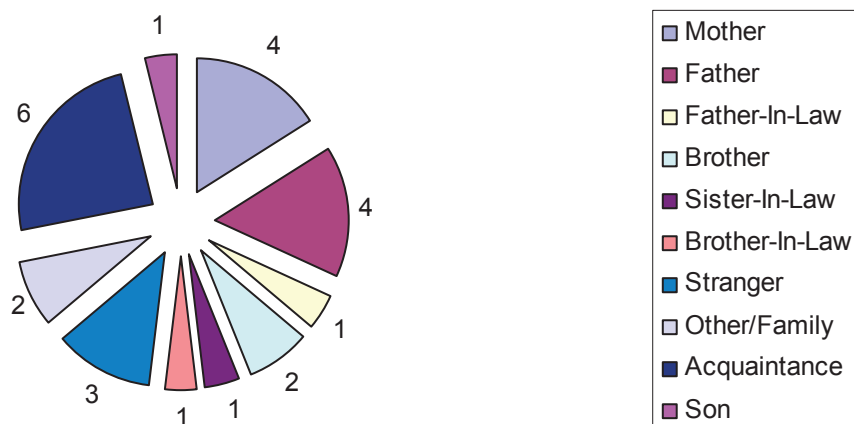


Non-Intimate Partner Data

Non-Intimate Homicide Victims' Age at Time of Death



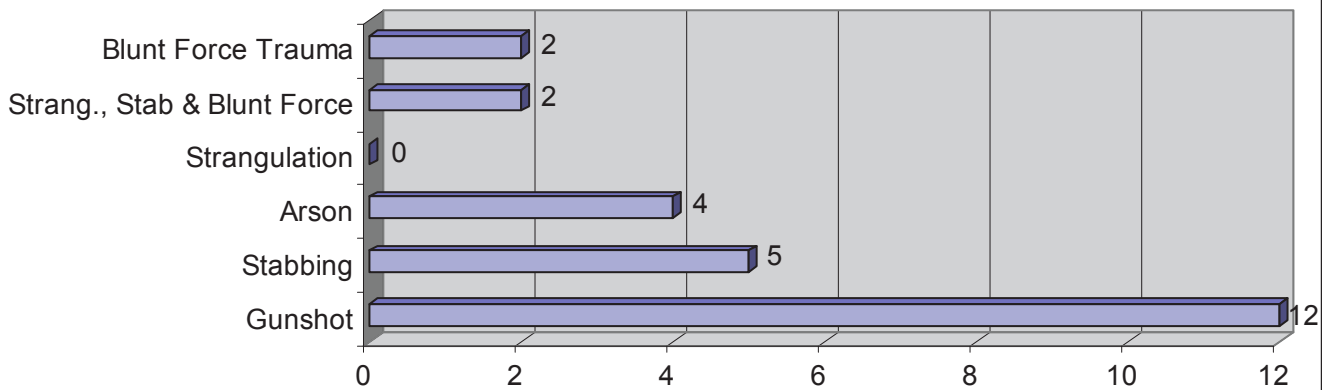
Non-Intimate Homicide Victims



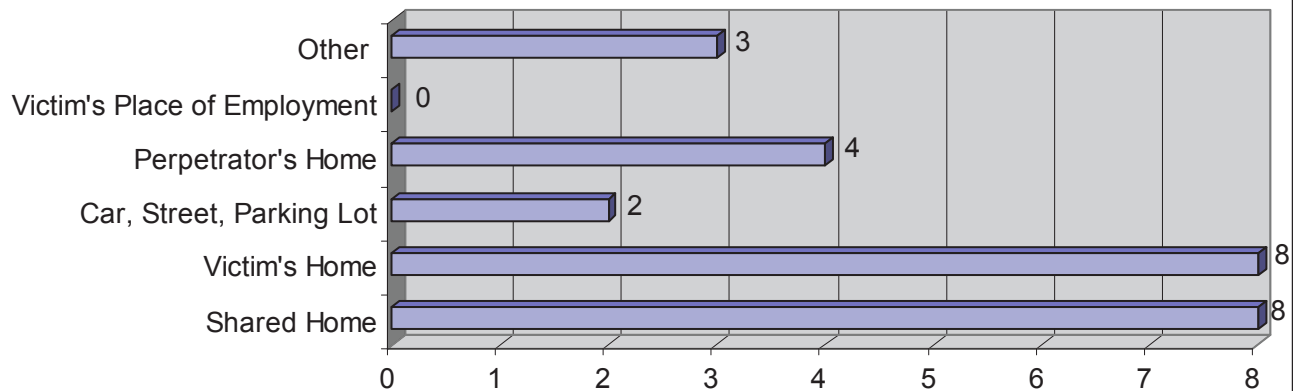


Non-Intimate Partner Data

Non-Intimate Homicide - Cause of Death

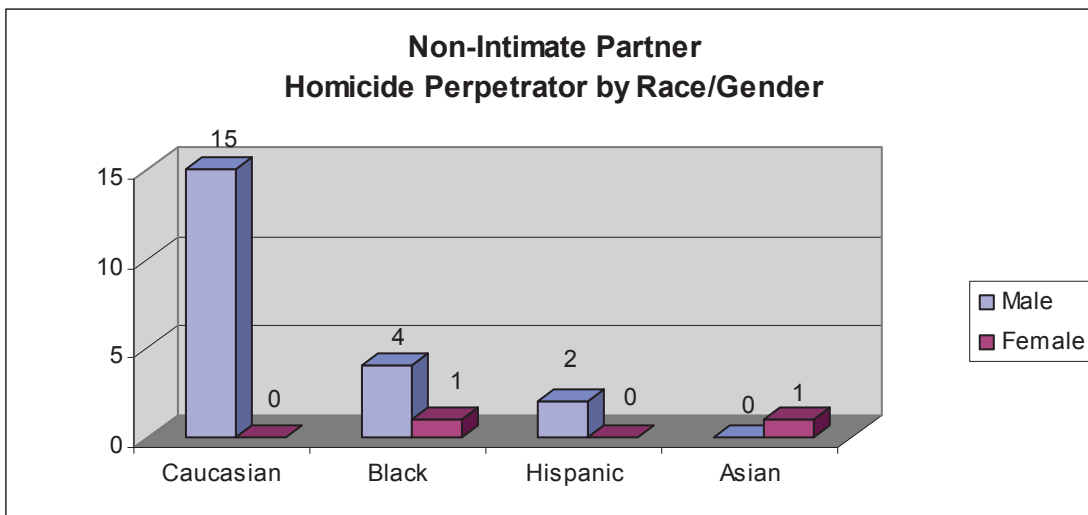


Non-Intimate Homicide - Location of Death



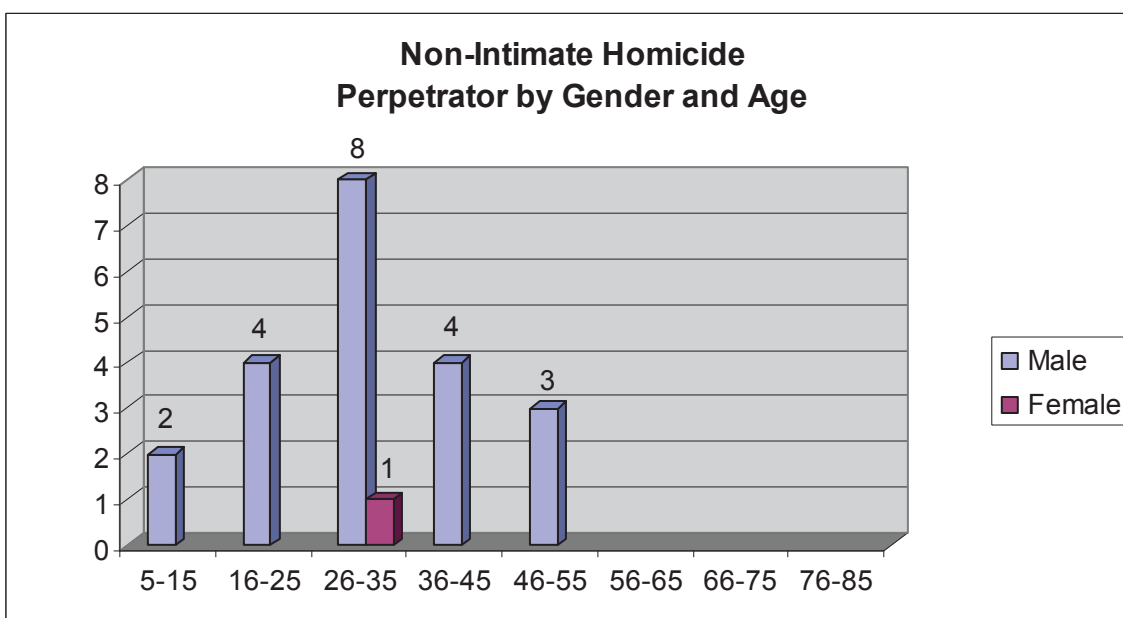


Non-Intimate Partner Data



There are 25 “Non-Intimate Partner” homicides in this report.
There were 23 perpetrators responsible for these deaths
and 21 were male.

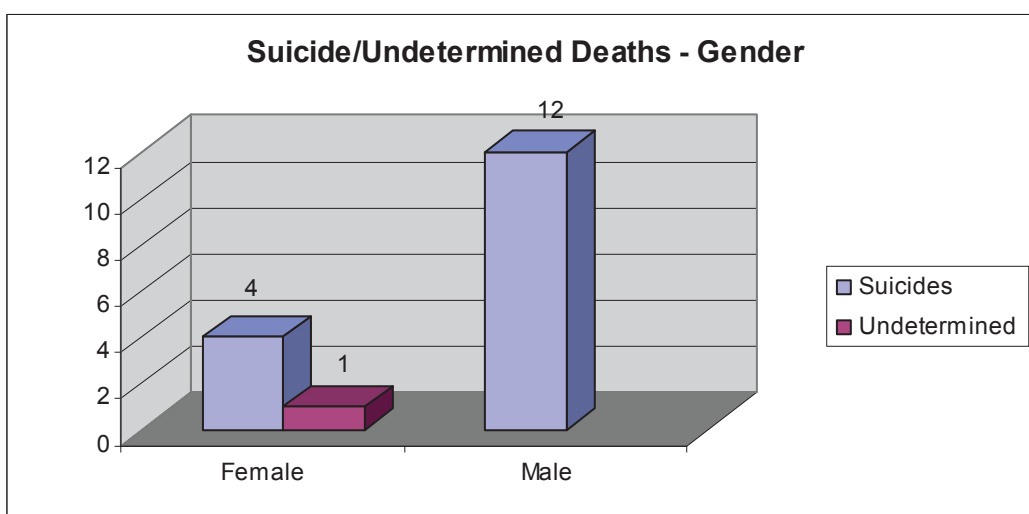
Of the 21 male perpetrators, 15 or 71% were Caucasian



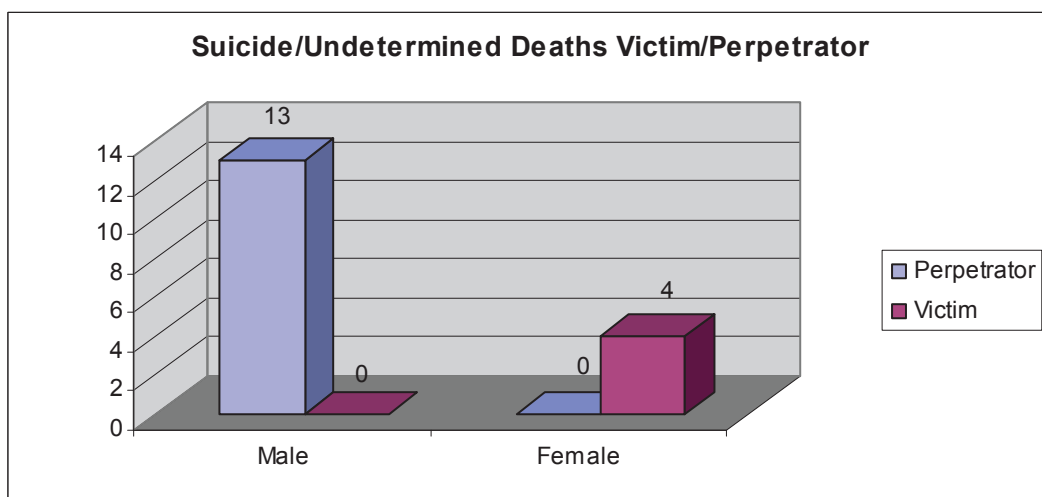


Domestic Violence Related Suicides/Undetermined Deaths

“Domestic Violence Suicides” are victims or perpetrators who have taken their own lives and who have had a significant history of abuse by/towards their loved one.

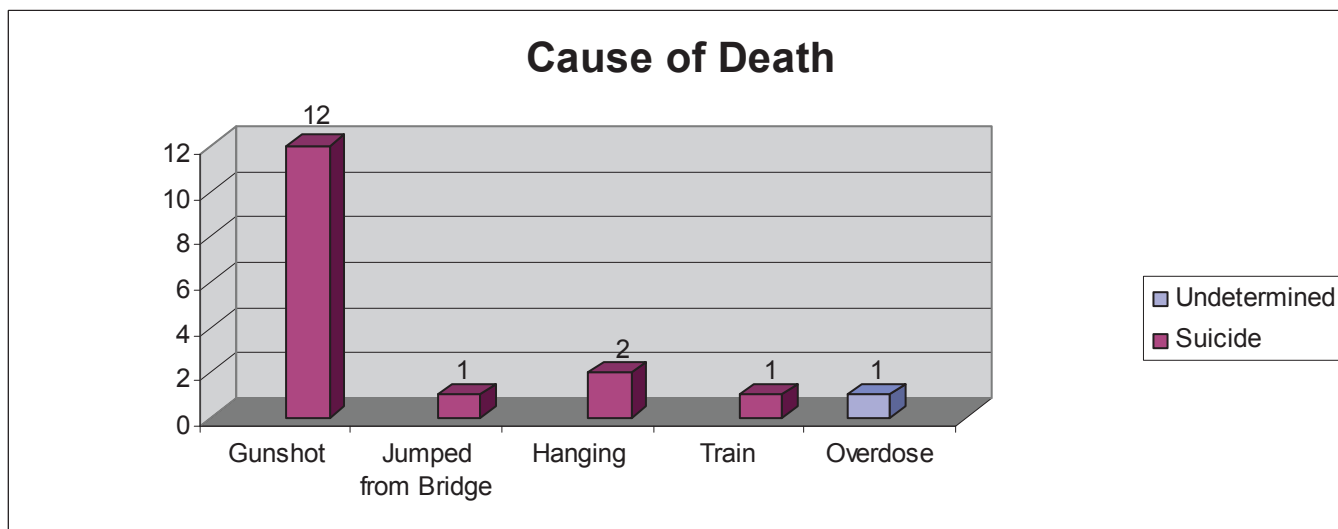


This report includes 17 domestic violence suicides, including one undetermined death



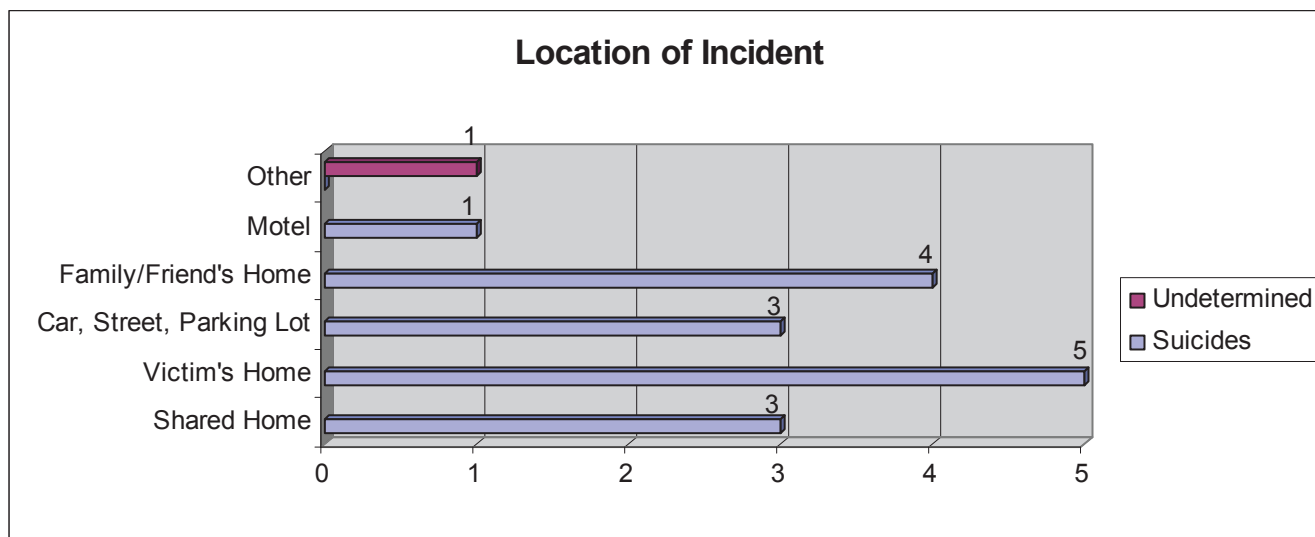


Domestic Violence Related Suicides/Undetermined Deaths



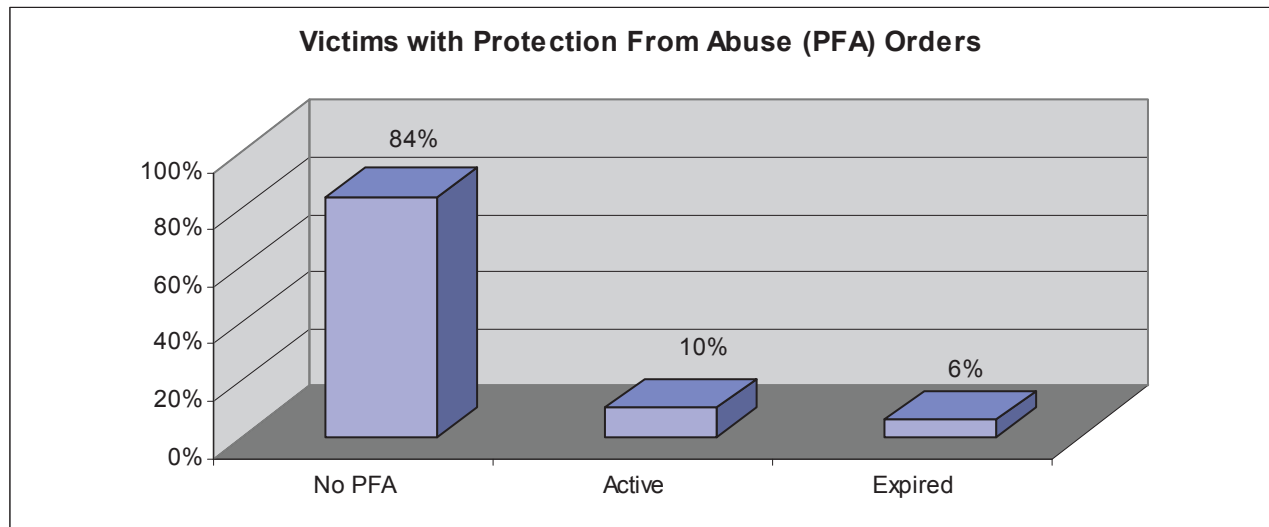
There were a total of 17 domestic related suicides, including one undetermined death.

Of those 17 domestic violence related suicides/undetermined deaths, the victim's death was a result of a firearm in 12 or 71% of the cases.





Accessing the System Victims With Protection Orders



Of the 98 cases reviewed in this report,
84% of the victims never had a Protection From Abuse Order.

A Protection From Abuse Order (PFA) is issued by Family Court ordering someone to stop abusing another person, and may include other relief, such as ordering the abuser to stay away from the person being abused. Abuse is defined as any threatening or harmful conduct including serious emotional harm.



Domestic Violence Fatality in Delaware

An Overview of the 2010 Report

Children and Domestic Violence Fatality

- ◇ Children were impacted in 71% of the cases reported. Of the 98 cases reviewed, 95 children lost one or more parent due to domestic violence.

Victims of Domestic Violence Homicide

- ◇ 70% of the homicides recorded in this report were Intimate Partner homicides. 76% of those deaths were female victims. Of those females, 53% were current or former wives. 43% of the female victims were between the ages of 26 and 35.
- ◇ 48% of the Intimate Partner homicides in this report occurred when the victim ended the relationship or attempted to leave.
- ◇ 76% of the Intimate Partner homicides included in this report occurred in the victim's own home or the shared home of the victim and the perpetrator.
- ◇ 28% of the homicides in this report were Non-Intimate Partner homicides, 68% of those victims were male and of those males, 29% were between 36 and 45 years old.
- ◇ 64% of the reported Non-Intimate Partner homicides occurred in the victim's own home or the shared home of the victim and perpetrator.

Perpetrators of Domestic Violence Homicide

- ◇ 74% of the Intimate Partner homicide perpetrators in this report were male. Of those males, 67% were between the ages of 26 and 45.
- ◇ 91% of the Non-Intimate Partner homicide perpetrators in this report were male. Of those males, 38% were between the ages of 26 and 35.
- ◇ 31% of the reported Intimate Partner homicides were the result of murder/suicide. 90% of the perpetrators of Intimate Partner murder/suicides included in this report were male.

Firearms and Domestic Violence Fatalities

- ◇ 50% of the Intimate Partner homicides in this report were the result of a shooting.
- ◇ 48% of the Non-Intimate Partner homicides in this report were the result of a shooting.
- ◇ 75% of the Domestic Violence Related Suicides in this report were the result of a shooting.

Domestic Violence Related Suicide

- ◇ 75% of the Domestic Violence Related Suicides in this report were male victims. 76% of these suicides were the perpetrator in their domestic violence situation, and 24% were the victims in their domestic violence situation.
- ◇ 31% of the Domestic Violence Related Suicides in this report occurred in the victim's home.

Protection From Abuse Orders

- ◇ 88% of the homicide victims included in this report did not have an active PFA at the time of the fatality.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL

Domestic Violence /Rape Crisis ***24-Hour Hotline Numbers***

New Castle County

Domestic Violence	302-762-6110
Rape Crisis	302-761-9100

Northern Kent

Domestic Violence	302-678-3886
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Kent and Sussex

Domestic Violence	302-422-8058
Rape Crisis	800-262-9800
Bi-lingual Hotline	302-745-9874

DVCC **Main Office**

New Castle
County Courthouse
Suite 9425
500 N. King Street
Wilmington, DE 19801

Phone: 302-255-0405
Fax: 302-255-2236

www.dvcc.delaware.gov

DVCC **Kent and Sussex** **County Office**

Milford State
Service Center
Suite 105
13 S. W. Front Street
Milford, DE 19963

Phone: 302-424-7238
Fax: 302-424-5311

www.dvcc.delaware.gov

Domestic Violence Coordinating Council

www.dvcc.delaware.gov