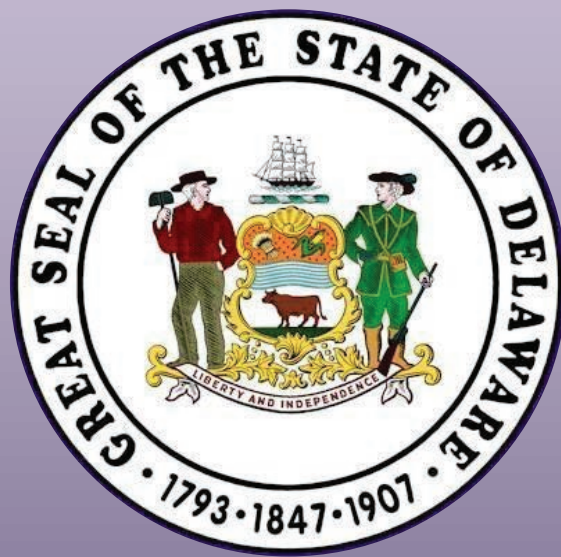


# Domestic Violence Coordinating Council



2014

Annual Report  
&  
Fatal Incident Review Team Report



# **Domestic Violence Coordinating Council**

## **2014 Annual Report**

**And**

## **Fatal Incident Review Team Report**

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To:  
Honorable Jack A. Markell  
Governor, State of Delaware

Chief Justice Leo E. Strine, Jr.  
Supreme Court  
State of Delaware

General Assembly

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## Message from the Chairs

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Hon. Patricia M. Blevins  
State Senate  
Chair



Dana Harrington Conner, Esq.  
Member-at-Large  
Vice Chair

On behalf of the members of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council, we are pleased to present the 2014 Annual Report and the Fatal Incident Review Team Report. The Annual Report provides statewide data on the incidence and response to domestic violence during the 2013 calendar year. The Report also highlights initiatives undertaken by the DVCC and its committees to address domestic violence issues in Delaware. The Fatal Incident Review Team (FIRT) Report includes a compellation of statistics from the 123 fatal and near fatal cases that have been reviewed by FIRT since 1996. The Report also outlines findings and recommendations from the reviews conducted in Calendar Year 2013. The FIRT recommendations are directed to specific agencies and organizations in hopes that through enhanced education, knowledge and resources we can collectively work towards reducing domestic violence and domestic violence deaths.

In the upcoming year, the DVCC will continue to support initiatives that promote the safety of victims and hold offenders accountable. Through the work of its committees, the Council offers a forum for specific domestic violence issues and identifies needs within our community. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with law enforcement, advocates, the courts, healthcare and other community partners in the efforts to reduce the occurrence of domestic violence in our communities and improve Delaware's response to domestic violence and sexual assault.

As Chairs of the DVCC, we wish to thank all the stakeholders for their commitment to addressing domestic violence in Delaware. We hope that both reports provide information that can be used to implement changes in policy and practice in order to improve Delaware's response to domestic violence.

## Executive Summary

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Last year the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) celebrated twenty years as a state agency dedicated to improving Delaware's response to domestic violence and reducing the occurrence of domestic violence in all its forms. The DVCC, through the work of committees lead by Council members, has collaborated with law enforcement, the courts, state agencies, service providers, healthcare providers and community members to identify areas of need and implement policies and procedures to address those needs.

For Calendar Year 2013, statistics provided by the State Bureau of Identification, Family Court, the Division of Family Services, and domestic violence service providers indicate that domestic violence incidents in Delaware decreased along with the number of calls to the domestic violence hotlines, and the number of Protection from Abuse (PFA) petitions filed. These statistics, while indicating a reduction in domestic violence reports last year, demonstrate the work that still needs to be done to assist the thousands of victims of abuse, the children witnessing that abuse, and the domestic violence fatalities and near-deaths that continue to occur in our state.

During the upcoming fiscal year, the DVCC will identify focus areas for each of the Council's committees. Issues involving children that have witnessed domestic violence will be specifically highlighted in the coordination of several statewide initiatives. Additionally, the fatality review process will be a focus this fiscal year in an effort to identify system problems and trends in a timely manner and to provide substantive recommendations to stakeholders.

# Domestic Violence Coordinating Council Members

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## Chairs

Hon. Patricia M. Blevins  
Member of the Senate  
Council Chair

Dana Harrington Conner, Esq.  
Member-at-Large  
Council Vice Chair

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## Members

Hon. Michael Barbieri  
Member, House of  
Representatives

Hon. Joseph R. Biden, III  
Delaware Attorney General

Warden Wendi Caplé  
Member-at-Large

Hon. Catherine Cloutier  
Member of the Senate

Hon. Robert M. Coupe  
Commissioner,  
Dept. of Correction

Dawn Culp, MSN, RN  
Member-at-Large

Hon. Carl C. Danberg  
Judge, Court of Common Pleas

Ms. Diane Glenn  
Member-at-Large

Matthew Hoffman, M.D.  
Representative, Health Care  
Community

Chief Jeffrey Horvath  
Representative, Law  
Enforcement Community

Hon. Deborah Hudson  
Member, House of  
Representatives

Hon. Chandlee Johnson Kuhn  
Chief Judge, Family Court

Hon. Brendan J. O'Neill  
The Public Defender

Hon. Vincent J. Poppiti  
Member-at-Large

Hon. Jennifer B. Ranji  
Secretary, Dept. of Services for  
Children, Youth and Their  
Families

Ms. Margaret Reyes  
Member-at-Large

Hon. Lewis D. Schiliro  
Secretary, Dept. of Safety and  
Homeland Security

Hon. James T. Vaughn, Jr.  
President Judge,  
Superior Court

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## **DVCC Staff**

### **Contact Information**

Eleanor Torres  
Executive Director

Patricia Kwetkauskie  
Trainer/Educator

Kathleen Vahey  
Administrative Specialist

Natasha Smith  
Senior Administrator

Aimee V. String  
Project Coordinator

DVCC Agency Main Number  
302-255-0405

# Domestic Violence Coordinating Council Committees

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Much of our work is accomplished through committees made up of Council members, DVCC staff, first responders, service providers, policy-level officials, and community members. This collaborative approach has helped establish supportive ties in the community for victims of violence, identify areas of need, and implement policies and procedures that respond to those needs.

## **Children and Domestic Violence**

Chairs: Hon. Deborah Hudson and Hon. Jennifer Ranji  
Staff: Natasha Smith

## **Criminal Justice**

Chairs: Hon. James T. Vaughn, Jr., Chief Jeffrey Horvath and Hon. Brendan O'Neill  
Staff: Natasha Smith

## **Elderly and Domestic Violence**

Chairs: Hon. Joseph R. Biden, III and Hon. Lewis Schiliro  
Staff: Patricia Kwetkauskie

## **Executive**

Chairs: Hon. Patricia M. Blevins, Hon. Deborah Hudson, Dana Harrington Conner, Esq.,  
Margaret Reyes and Dawn Culp, MSN, RN  
Staff: Eleanor Torres

## **Immigration**

Chair: Margaret Reyes  
Staff: Aimee V. String

## **Legislative Drafting and Review**

Chairs: Hon. Patricia M. Blevins and Hon. Joseph R. Biden, III  
Staff: Eleanor Torres

## **Medical**

Chair: Matthew Hoffman, M.D. and Dawn Culp, MSN, RN  
Staff: Aimee V. String

## **Public Awareness/Education**

Chairs: Hon. Carl C. Danberg  
Staff: Patricia Kwetkauskie

## **Treatment**

Chairs: Hon. Brendan O'Neill and Hon. Robert Coupe  
Staff: Aimee V. String

## **Other DVCC Committees**

Batterers' Intervention Certification Panel (Staff: Aimee V. String)

Downstate Domestic Violence Committee (Staff: Aimee V. String)

Fatal Incident Review Team - Chairs: Hon. Vincent J. Poppiti, Hon. James T. Vaughn, Jr. and  
Dana Harrington Conner, Esq. (Staff: Natasha Smith)

## Background and Purpose

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The Mission of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council is to reduce the occurrence of domestic violence and abuse in all its forms.

The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council was statutorily created in 1993 as a state agency dedicated to improving Delaware's response to domestic violence. The Coordinating Council brings together domestic violence service providers and policy-level officials to identify and implement improvements in system response through legislation, education, training and policy development.

The statutory duties of the DVCC are to:

- 1) Continuously study court services and procedures, law enforcement procedures and protocol, and criminal justice data collection and analysis as it relates to domestic violence;
- 2) Effectuate coordination between agencies, departments and the courts with victims of domestic violence and abuse;
- 3) Promote effective prevention, intervention, and treatment techniques which will be developed based upon research and data collection;
- 4) Recommend standards for treatment programs for perpetrators of domestic violence to the Department of Health and Social Services, Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families and the Department of Correction;
- 5) Review and comment upon legislation relating to domestic violence introduced in the General Assembly at the request of any member of the General Assembly or on its own initiative; and
- 6) Improve the response to domestic violence and abuse so as to reduce the incidents thereof.

(13 Del. C. § 2103)



# Legislative Update

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Two pieces of legislation from the DVCC Legislative Committee were signed into law in FY 2014.

House Bill 181 added child support cases to the Family Court proceedings in which mediation is prohibited when one of the parties has been found by a court to have committed an act of domestic violence against the other party, has been ordered to stay away or have no contact with the other party. Representative Barbieri was the primary sponsor of this bill which was signed by the Governor on June 18, 2014.

House Bill 382 was signed by the Governor on July 21, 2014. The law removes the six month limitation on the extension of Family Court protective orders in circumstances where there has been additional domestic violence since the entry of the original order, a violation of the order has occurred, or the respondent consents to a modification. Representative Barbieri was the primary sponsor of this bill.

## DVCC Accomplishments

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### **Certified Batterers' Intervention Programs**

An important role of the DVCC has been the certification of batterers' intervention programs to promote consistency of intervention services statewide. The eleven member Batterers' Intervention Certification Panel certifies professional providers by establishing standards, approving applications for certification and monitoring existing programs. The central purpose of this program is to increase victim safety by using intervention practices that focus on holding the offenders accountable for their behavior. Those practices include teaching new skills and monitoring offender behavior while they are participating in the intervention programs.

In 2013, certified treatment providers in Delaware included Catholic Charities, CHILD Inc., Crossroads of Georgetown, Dover Air Force Base Family Advocacy Program, and Turning Point at People's Place. These providers, using the Domestic Violence Intervention Standards, offer group programs throughout the State of Delaware thereby ensuring a consistency of services statewide. In early 2014, Crossroads discontinued batterers' intervention services in Georgetown; however, Turning Point at People's Place now provides services to all of Sussex County.

### **U.S. Department of State Training Agreement**

In 2013, the lead U.S. Government agency on overseas criminal justice sector reform, the Office of Criminal Justice and Partnership with the U.S. Department of State's Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, requested that the DVCC develop a training geared towards combating domestic violence in other nations. The Bureau works with host countries to develop domestic violence courts or provide legal and social services to domestic violence victims. The DVCC and the Bureau entered into an agreement whereby the DVCC will provide training, mentoring and advising on judicial matters to international personnel should the Bureau receive a request from international personnel. The DVCC developed a 40-hour curriculum for this training.

# Accomplishments

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## Protection From Abuse (PFA) Statewide Survey

In 2012, the DVCC surveyed PFA petitioners in Family Court throughout the State of Delaware in hopes of assessing whether victims felt that their needs were being met in the PFA process. The survey sought to gather information about what areas are currently working well and those areas which could benefit from an improvement in services to victims. The surveys, which utilized both qualitative and quantitative measures, were randomly administered in all three counties over a six week period. The goal was to interview a statistically significant population of all PFA petitions filed in each county which was determined to be five percent of all petitions (after dismissals) filed the previous year. Petitioners were surveyed both before their PFA hearing and after the hearing. A total of 168 petitioners were surveyed, although half of those surveyed only completed the “before hearing” survey.

Overall, the survey revealed that petitioners were satisfied with the Domestic Violence Advocacy Programs (DVAP) and 64% of those petitioners interviewed indicated that Family Court Intake referred them to DVAP. Petitioners felt supported through the process by the advocates and more knowledgeable about the process. Almost 68% of the petitioners also reported feeling that Family Court Commissioners listened to them during their hearings and answered their questions.

Petitioners recommended improvement in the following areas:

### Law Enforcement

- Continued education on the dynamics of domestic violence, lethality factors, victim safety, stalking, and PFA violations
- Increase referrals to hotline and victim services

### Family Court Intake

- Increase referrals to DVAP

### Family Court

- Address issues with service of petitions and multiple continuances of hearings

### Legal Services

- Increase availability of legal assistance to victims

The survey revealed that 75% of the petitioners had contacted law enforcement regarding the incident that brought them to Family Court for a civil protective order. The PFA hearing and administration of the survey occurred prior to the resolution of the criminal proceedings which made it difficult to capture information regarding the petitioner’s participation and feelings about the criminal process. The DVCC identified the need for a subsequent survey which would focus on the domestic violence victim’s experience in the criminal court system as well as the PFA process.

In the past year, after analyzing the survey data, the DVCC presented the data to advocates, law enforcement, healthcare providers and other interested partners to collaborate with them as we work to improve the PFA system for victims.

# Accomplishments

## It Shouldn't Hurt to Go Home – Delaware Domestic Violence Resources Posters

The DVCC continues to conduct outreach to the community and inform the public about the services and assistance available to victims. From January 2013 through June 2014, more than 165 Domestic Violence Resource posters were distributed to locations throughout Delaware. Locations include Family Courts and Justice of the Peace Courts, hospitals, community-based health and mental health centers, school based health centers, social service agencies, police departments, faith-based organizations, community centers, and businesses such as fitness centers, laundromats, barbershops, restaurants, and retail outlets.

The posters include contact information for domestic violence and sexual assault hotlines in Delaware as well as numbers or contact information for court-based advocacy services, Adult Protective Services, the Child Abuse Hotline, and the 24-Hour Delaware Victim Center. The National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline is also included.

We would like to thank the volunteers, including students from the Delaware Civil Clinic at Widener University School of Law, along with other community partners, who were instrumental in assisting with poster distribution to community centers and businesses.



## Conferences

From January 2013 to June 2014, DVCC staff was able to participate in the following conferences, workshops and trainings:

- THRIVE Delaware Conference
- Symposium on Trauma and the Justice System
- Implementing Evidence-Based Practices in Community Corrections
- Healthy Women Celebration
- Leadership Development Program
- Responding to Crime Victims with Disabilities
- Teen Dating Violence: Economic Impacts– Employment and Education
- Efforts to Combat Violence Against Women U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)
- Institutional Betrayal-Higher Education, the Military, and the Criminal Justice System
- Custody Challenges for Battered Women: Research & Practice
- DCADV's 17th Annual Advocates' Retreat - Grounding our Work in Context and Community
- DCADV Powerful Partnerships Conference
- Innovative Partnerships to Reduce Gender-based Violence on Delaware Campuses
- Violence in our Communities: Healing the Hurt—Delaware Tech, Stanton

## Training and Public Awareness

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Training fulfills an important function by increasing public awareness about domestic violence and the resources available to assist victims and their families. From June 2013 through June 2014, a total of 745 persons were trained. The DVCC provided 56 trainings for healthcare professionals, law enforcement, judicial branch employees, schools, and members of the community. The DVCC collaborates extensively with community partners statewide by participating in public awareness events and skill based workshops. For example:

- Thomas Edison Charter School-Family Fun Day
- New Castle County Police Advisory Councils, Western District-National Night Out
- Union Baptist Church, Wilmington - Health Fair
- Christiana Care DV Prevention Forum
- Dover Air Force Base - Wellness Expo
- DE Victims Rights Task Force - 2014 Victims Tribute

In addition, DVCC is invited by community partners to conduct skill-focused workshops for program participants. Workshop topics include understanding the dynamics of domestic violence including stalking and stalking using technology, safety planning, characteristics of healthy relationships and when requested, positive parenting techniques. DVCC has conducted workshops through:

- Mentoring Program Pre-Release Classes, Baylor Women's Correctional Institution
- YWCA Home Life Management Center
- Habitat for Humanity, Sussex County

### **Domestic Violence Training for Health Care Providers**

Following the development of the *Domestic Violence Resource Manual for Healthcare Professionals*, the DVCC has implemented instruction for clinicians on the scope and dynamics of domestic violence; risk factors; laws and recommendations; signs and symptoms; interventions; as well as screening tools and resources found in the medical manual. The Delaware Nurses Association approved the *Domestic Violence Resources Manual for Healthcare Professionals* training and education activity for 1.25 contact hours.

In addition to training nurses, social workers, residents and intake staff in hospitals statewide, the DVCC has also provided training to the Delaware Department of Public Health and Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health.

## Training and Public Awareness

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### **Domestic Violence Awareness Training to Family Court Staff**

In October 2013, DVCC staff provided training to mediators and other non-judicial Family Court staff. The three-hour training sessions conducted statewide were sponsored by the Administrative Office of the Courts. Participants examined the prevalence, dynamics and impact of domestic violence on victims and their children. Through an interactive exercise, they explored the risks, challenges and obstacles victims of domestic violence encounter when seeking safety for themselves and their children. In addition, those in attendance were afforded the opportunity to dialogue with local community-based service providers while they explained the wide range of services and programs available to victims of domestic violence including services provided through the Family Visitation Centers.

### **Promoting Healthy Teen Dating Relationships**

The DVCC continued its efforts to promote awareness and education about healthy relationships, dating violence and resources available to assist teens to be safe in their dating relationships. This was accomplished through a variety of approaches. The DVCC was instrumental in encouraging Delaware's public and charter high school administrators to include a "respect" announcement during morning announcements and on high schools' websites during February which is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. The "respect" announcement is part of a national initiative and Delaware high school students were reminded that everyone deserves a safe and healthy relationship.

In addition, the DVCC co-sponsored a statewide photo contest. High school students throughout Delaware were asked to post photographs that represented safe and respectful relationships on Instagram. Entries were received from students across the state. The winners were announced during the Governor's Proclamation signing recognizing Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month.

In order to familiarize students with local resources that provide information and assistance with dating violence issues, the DVCC distributed Domestic Violence Resource posters to all of Delaware's high school-based wellness centers. The DVCC also conducted "lunch and learn" sessions, classroom presentations, workshops and table exhibits to inform students about the dynamics of teen dating violence including digital abuse, safety planning, resources available to teens, and ways to help a friend who is experiencing abuse in their dating relationship. The DVCC provided education to students in the following high schools:

Christiana High School  
Delaware Adolescent Program, Inc.  
Howard High School  
John Dickinson High School  
Middletown High School

POLYTECH High School  
Sussex Tech High School  
Smyrna High School  
William Penn High School  
Woodbridge High School

## 2013 - 2014 Events - DVCC Celebrates 20 Years



On September 9, 2013, the DVCC marked its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a commemorative event held at the West Side Entrance of Legislative Hall in Dover. The event was attended by approximately 50 people who came to recognize the accomplishments of the Coordinating Council over the past 20 years. Speakers included Senator Patricia Blevins, Chief Jeffrey Horvath, Mary Davis, and Raina Fishbane, the Council's first Executive Director.

Senator Blevins received a tribute from the Governor to honor her 20 years of exemplary service as Council Member and Chair. In conjunction with the event, the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council released the *20 Year Report* highlighting the work of the Coordinating Council and its many partners.



## 2013–2014 Events



**Domestic Violence Awareness Month Proclamation  
Signing, October 2013**



**Domestic Violence Coordinating Council  
Outstanding Community Service Awards  
April 2014**

Ellie Torres, Cindy Mercer,  
Senator Patricia Blevins, Jim McGiffin



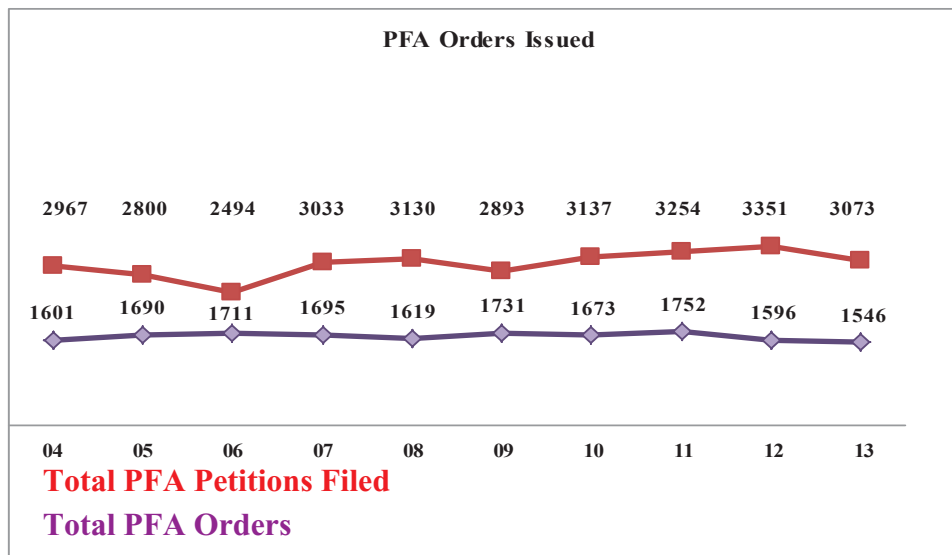
**Instagram Photo Contest Winner, February 2014**

High school students throughout Delaware competed by posting pictures on Instagram that represent safe and respectful relationships

# Protection From Abuse Statistics

An order of protection from abuse (PFA) is a civil order issued by the Family Court. In addition to family and household members, persons living separate and apart with a child in common, or persons in a current or former substantive dating relationship may file for a PFA. The Court may order no contact; award temporary custody, child support or spousal support; payment of expenses, or provide exclusive use of the home or possessions. Additionally, the offender may be ordered to surrender firearms, or to seek treatment from a DVCC certified Batterers' Intervention Program. The Family Court will issue an order of protection from abuse if the Court finds by a preponderance of the evidence that domestic violence has occurred, or if the respondent consents to the entry of a protective order.

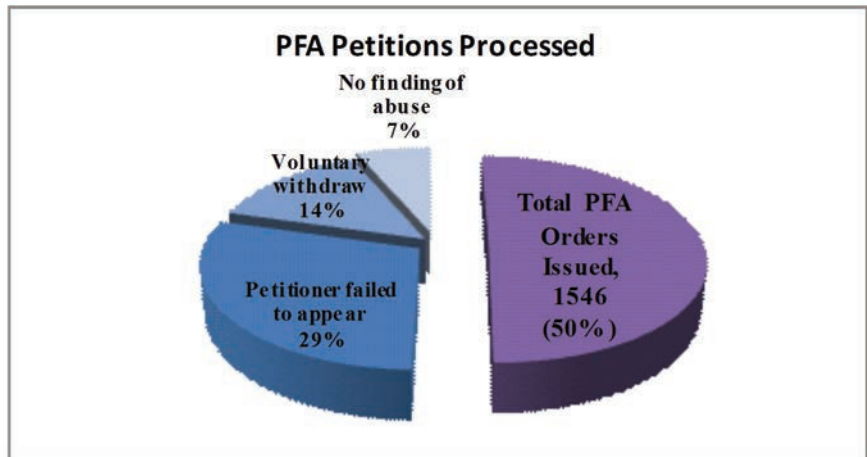
In Delaware, domestic violence is defined as the occurrence of one or more acts of abuse including causing or attempting to cause injury or sexual offenses; placing or attempting to place a person in fear of physical injury or sexual offense; damaging, destroying, or taking property of another; trespassing; child abuse; kidnapping, unlawful imprisonment, or interference with custody; or any other conduct which a reasonable person under the circumstances would find threatening or harmful. 10 Del. C. §1041.



In calendar year 2013, Family Court processed 3,073 petitions for Protection From Abuse (PFA) statewide. Of those petitions filed, 1,546 PFA orders were issued and 1,527 petitions were dismissed.

A PFA petition can be dismissed in one of three ways:

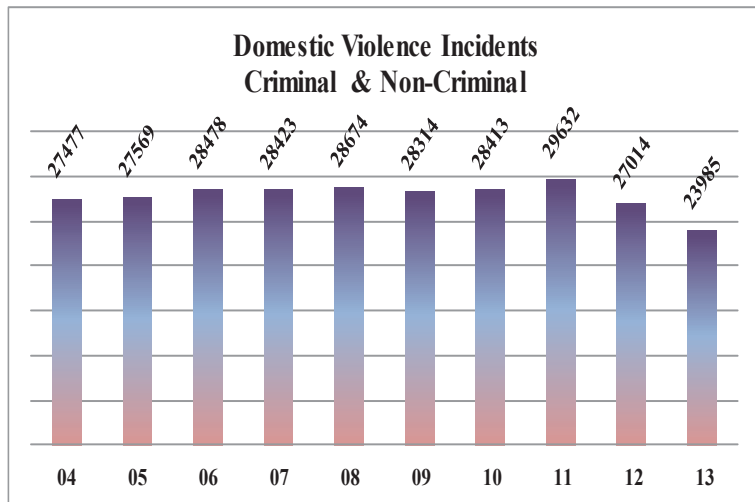
- The Petitioner fails to appear for the hearing
- The Petitioner voluntarily withdraws the petition before the hearing
- Abuse was not found by a preponderance of evidence following a hearing



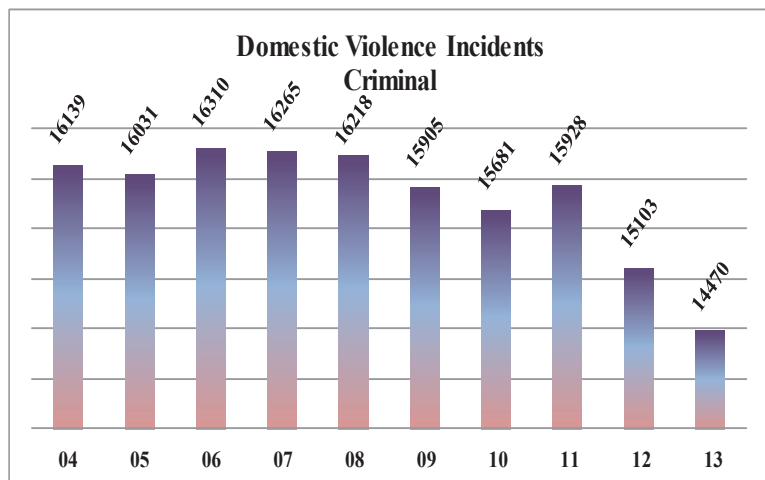


# Domestic Violence Criminal Statistics

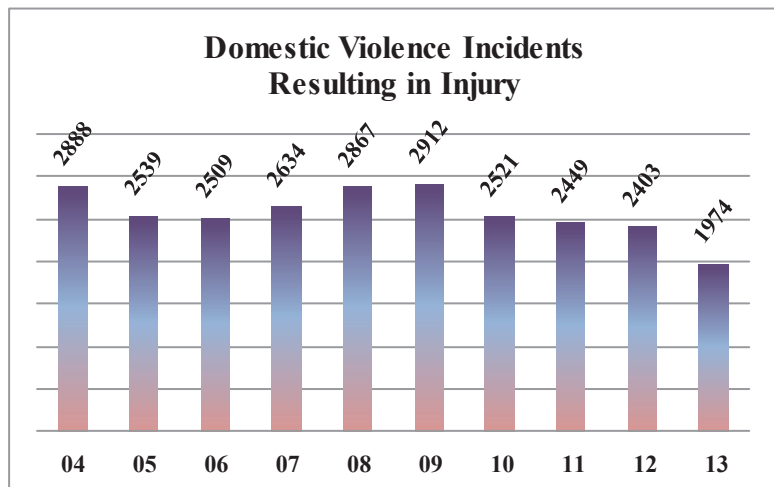
In calendar year 2013, the total number of domestic violence incidents reported in Delaware by the State Bureau of Identification was **23,985** (combined criminal and non-criminal).



In calendar year 2013, the total number of reported domestic violence criminal incidents was **14,470**. Criminal domestic violence incidents are those incidents where a crime is committed or alleged. Non-criminal domestic violence incidents are those in which there is police contact, but no crime was committed or alleged, i.e. a verbal argument without any threats.



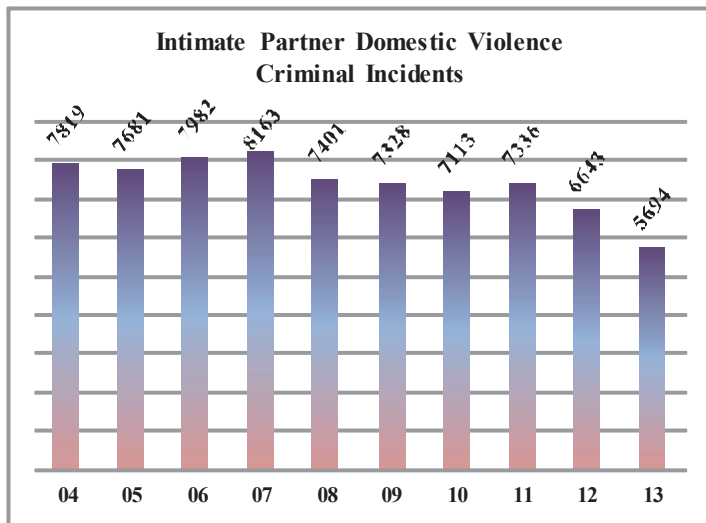
Of the **14,470** reported criminal domestic violence incidents, **1,974** (**14%**) resulted in physical injury to the victim.



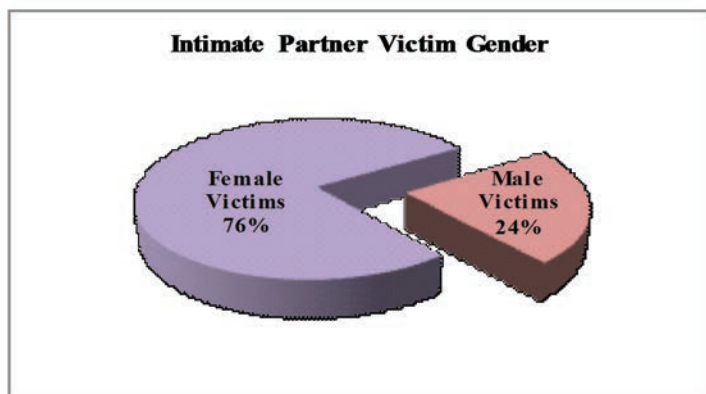
# Intimate Partner Statistics

Incidents of domestic violence can be perpetrated against an intimate partner or a family member. Intimate partners can include current and former spouses, current and former dating couples with or without a child in common and teen dating couples. Intimate partners may be the same gender. There were 23,985 domestic violence incidents reported in 2013. Of all the domestic violence incidents reported, 42% involved intimate partners. Intimate partner violence is tracked by the State Bureau of Identification.

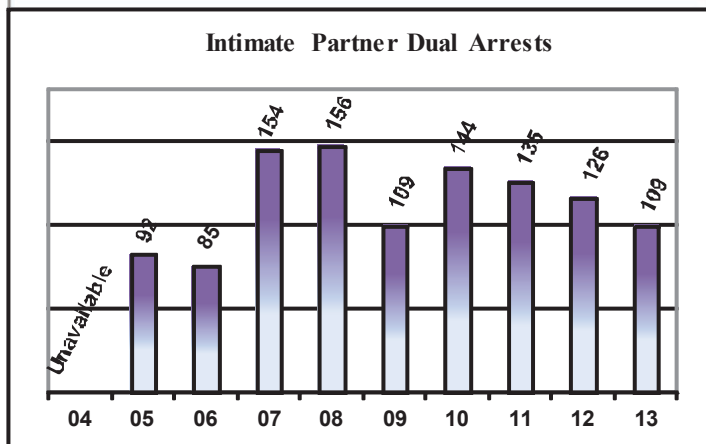
In 2013, there were **5,694** criminal reports that occurred between intimate partners.



Of the intimate partner incidents reported, **76%** of the victims were female.



Dual Arrests occur when police officers arrest both intimate partners involved in a domestic violence incident. In 2013, there were **109** dual arrests made by law enforcement.

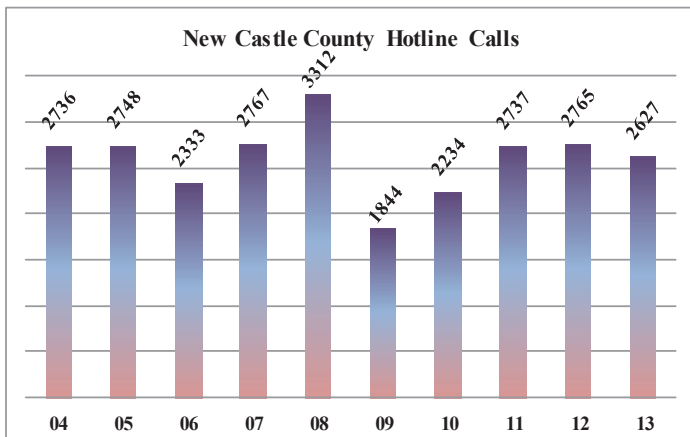
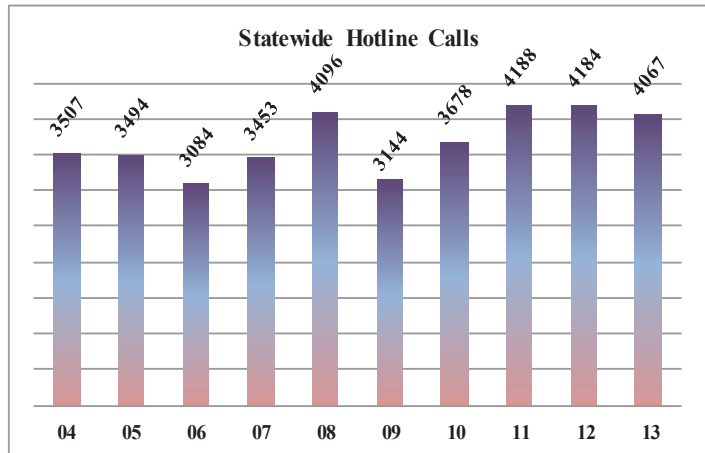


# Domestic Violence Hotline Statistics

The Domestic Violence Hotlines are an important resource available to victims of domestic violence in Delaware. The hotlines, which are available in all three counties, are confidential and available 24 hours a day/7 days a week. Hotlines are staffed by trained professionals who will assist in safety planning, offer emergency shelter when appropriate and refer victims to available resources. Services are available for victims who do not speak English and to those who are hearing impaired.

In 2013, there were a total of **4,067** calls received by Domestic Violence Hotlines statewide.

Over a ten year span, the average number of hotline calls was **3,690** per year.

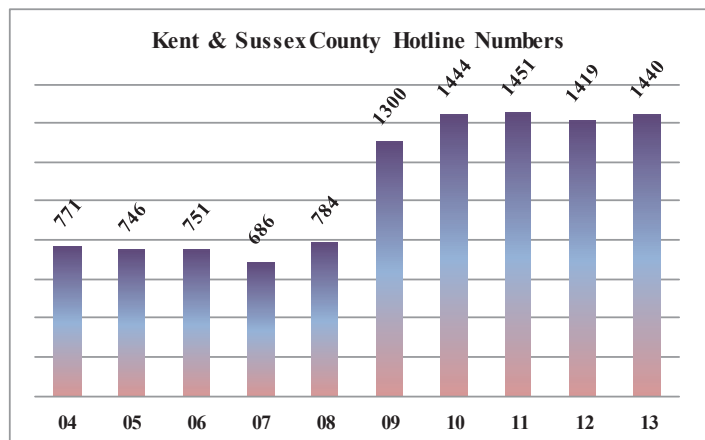


In 2013, there were **2,627** calls to the Domestic Violence Hotline in New Castle County.

This is a **5%** decrease from 2012.

In 2013, there were a total of **1,440** calls to Domestic Violence Hotlines in Kent and Sussex Counties.

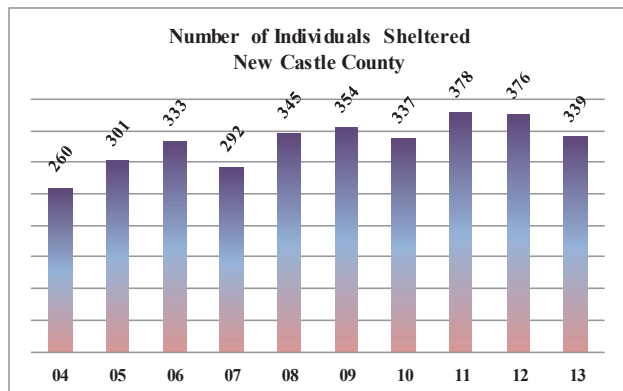
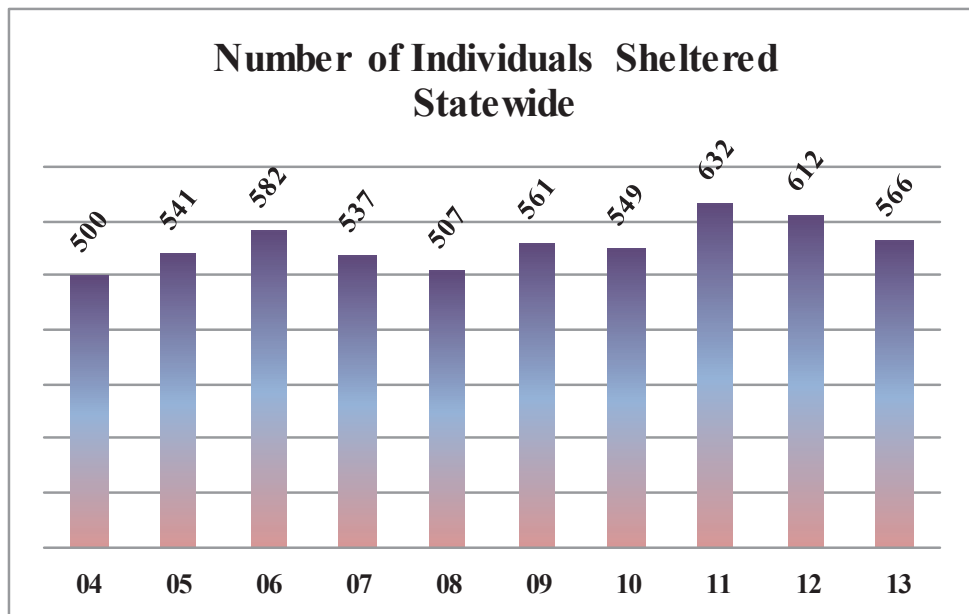
This is a **1%** increase from 2012.



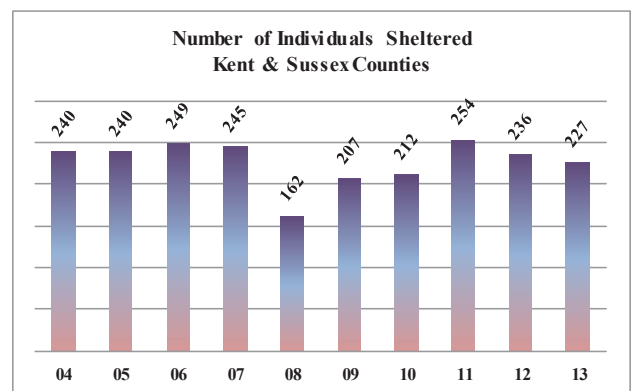
# Shelter Statistics

Two agencies, People’s Place and CHILD, Inc., offer shelters and transitional housing in confidential locations throughout Delaware. In addition to providing emergency shelter in a trauma-informed setting, domestic violence shelters offer safety planning, case management, advocacy, counseling, child care, job assistance and more.

In 2013, 566 individuals were sheltered statewide (277 women, 283 children and 6 men). This represents an 8% decrease in the number of individuals sheltered from the previous year.



In New Castle County, 339 individuals were provided shelter in 2013. Of the 339 individuals sheltered, 171 were women, 162 were children, and 6 were men.

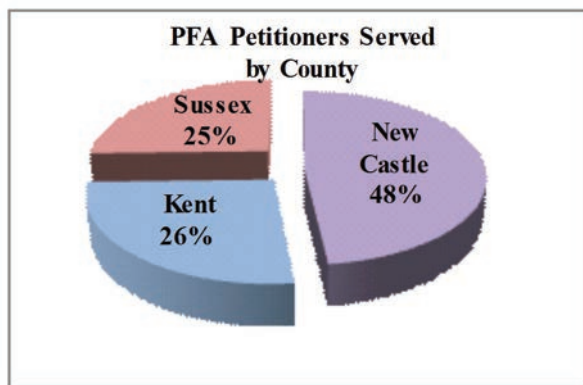


In Kent and Sussex Counties, the total number of individuals sheltered in 2013 was 227. Of the 227 provided shelter, 106 were women and 121 were children.

# Agency Statistics

## Domestic Violence Court -Based Advocacy Programs

The Domestic Violence Advocacy Programs provide free services to help intimate partner victims of domestic violence navigate their way through the court system. CHILD, Inc. is the statewide provider of these services, with an advocate located at the Family Court in each county. CHILD, Inc. trains advocates to assist victims with safety planning, answer questions about the court process, file petitions and provide a supportive presence at court hearings. In 2013, there were 1,445 domestic violence victims served by the court-based advocacy program.



## Family Visitation Centers

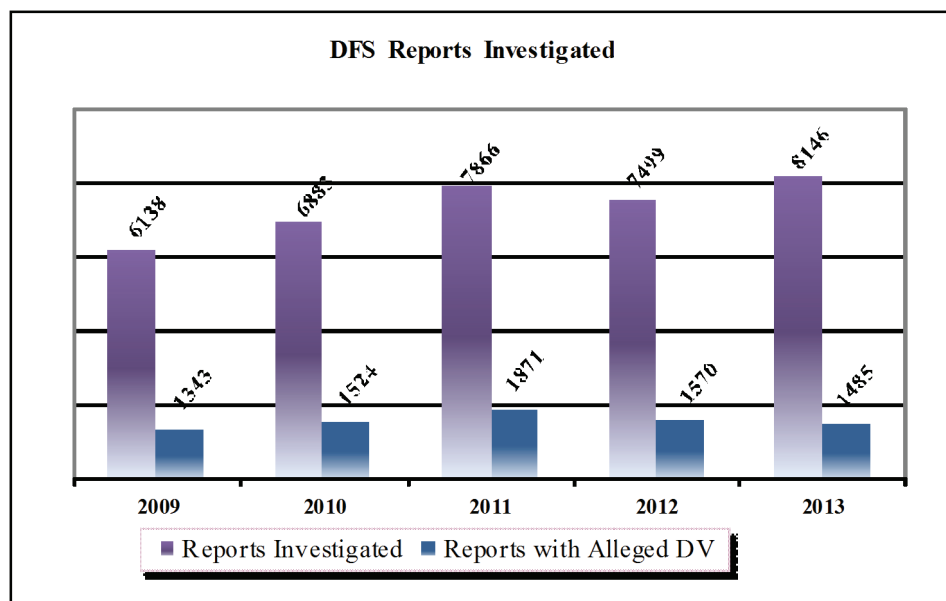
Delaware’s five Family Visitation Centers are a collaborative project between DHSS’ Division of State Service Centers, CHILD Inc. and People’s Place. The Family Visitation Centers provide for the safe exchange of children between parents with a history of domestic violence when off-site visits are permitted by the court, or on-site supervision of visits when court ordered. In 2013, the centers provided the following services:

	CHILD, Inc. New Castle County	People’s Place Kent & Sussex County	Statewide
Visitation Exchanges:	273	812	1085
Group Visits:	508	463	971
Individual Supervised Visits:	583	590	1173
Children Served:	171	146	317
Parent/Caregivers Served:	279	98	377

# Agency Statistics

The Division of Family Services (DFS) screens for domestic violence when an allegation of child abuse or neglect is reported to the DFS hotline. In calendar year 2013, DFS received 17,946 reports. Of those, 8,146 (45.6%) were accepted for investigation. Of those reports accepted for investigation, 1,485 (18.2%) also alleged domestic violence.

Out of those reports accepted for investigation, 1,189 were substantiated\* and 394 of the substantiated cases had domestic violence.



Since 2002, domestic violence advocates from CHILD, Inc. and the SAFE Program of People’s Place have been located at DFS to assist victims referred by DFS. These DFS advocates provide safety planning and advocacy services and continue to work with the victims as needed.

## New Castle County

### CHILD, Inc.

Victims Served by  
DFS Liaisons: 122

## Kent County

### People’s Place

Victims Served by  
DFS Liaisons: 110

## Sussex County

### People’s Place

Victims Served by  
DFS Liaisons: 42

\*Substantiated means that following an investigation, DFS found support for the allegation of maltreatment or risk of maltreatment.

# Agency Statistics

## Services for Children Exposed to Domestic Violence

Trauma-informed therapeutic services are essential to help children who have witnessed domestic violence recover from the trauma it causes. Counselors providing these clinical services use age appropriate techniques, including play therapy for younger children. Safety planning, working through feelings related to the violence, and developing skills to break the intergenerational cycle of violence are the focus of this healing therapy. In New Castle County, services are provided by CHILD, Inc. In Kent County, Turning Point at People’s Place provides these services to children.

### New Castle County

#### **Helping Children Heal (CHILD, Inc.)**

Children/  
Adolescents  
Served: 78

Parent/Caretakers  
Served: 107

**Total: 185**

### Kent County

#### **Turning Point (People’s Place)**

Children/  
Adolescents Served: 123

Parent/Caretakers  
Served: 51

**Total: 174**

## **Child Development Community Policing Program**

The Child Development Community Policing (CD-CP) Program provides immediate post-trauma counseling and referrals to children who have been impacted by witnessing homicides, rapes, assaults, domestic violence and other life threatening events. The CD-CP provides its services through collaboration between the Wilmington Police Department and the DSCYF’s Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services.

In 2013, the CD-CP Program received 253 domestic violence referrals. Of those, 50 children received clinical services for domestic violence-related incidents. Some families referred to the program declined services or were already receiving clinical services. All of the families received written information about reactions to trauma as well as information about resources.

# Agency Statistics

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## Department of Correction Probation & Parole Supervised Domestic Violence Offender Data

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Probation and Parole has a specialized Domestic Violence Unit in each county with probation officers specially trained in the dynamics of domestic violence. Domestic violence cases are assigned to the DV Unit based upon criteria including offense, victim/offender relationship, and active PFA orders. The philosophy of the Probation and Parole DV Unit is to hold the offender accountable and maintain victim safety. Victim Service Agents are available to serve as liaisons between victims and probation officers and provide guidance through the criminal justice system once an offender is placed on community supervision.

### New Castle County Domestic Violence Supervision

Number of DV Offenders Supervised:	421
Number of Probation Officers Assigned to DV Cases	9
Probationer/Probation Officer Ratio	47:1
Number of Victims Served by Victim Liaison:	223

### Kent County Domestic Violence Supervision

Number of DV Offenders Supervised:	320
Number of Probation Officers Assigned to DV Cases	6
Probationer/Probation Officer Ratio	53:1
Number of Victims Served by Victim Liaison:	238

### Sussex County Domestic Violence Supervision

Number of DV Offenders Supervised:	322
Number of Probation Officers Assigned to DV Cases	5
Probationer/Probation Officer Ratio	64:1
Number of Victims Served by Victim Liaison:	0*

\*There is no victim liaison in Sussex County.



# 2013 Calendar Year Statistics

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## Domestic Violence Statistics

- 23,985 DV total incidents (criminal and civil); a decrease of 11% from the previous year
- 14,470 total of reported DV criminal incidents; a decrease of 4% from 2012
- 1,974 total of reported DV criminal incidents resulting in physical injury; a decrease of 18% from the previous year

## Protection From Abuse Statistics

- Family Court processed 3,073 petitions for Protection From Abuse (PFA)
- There were 1,546 PFA orders issued statewide. This is a decrease of 3% from 2012.
- 50% of PFA petitions were dismissed
  - \*201 PFA petitions were dismissed because abuse was not found by a preponderance of the evidence following a hearing
  - \*431 PFA petitions were dismissed because the petitioner voluntarily withdrew the petition before the hearing
  - \*895 PFA petitions were dismissed when the petitioner failed to appear for the hearing

## Intimate Partner Statistics

- 42% of all reported domestic violence criminal incidents took place between intimate partners
- 5,694 total reported criminal incidents of intimate partner domestic violence; a decrease of 14% from 2012
- 109 intimate partner dual arrests were made statewide, representing less than 2% of all intimate partner criminal domestic violence incidents
- 76% of the victims of the intimate partner incidents reported were female

## Hotline Statistics

- 4,067 Domestic Violence Hotline calls were received statewide in 2013; a decrease of 3% from the previous year
  - \*2,627 Domestic Violence Hotline calls were received in New Castle County
  - \*1,440 Domestic Violence Hotline calls were received in Kent and Sussex Counties

## Shelter Statistics

- 566 individuals received domestic violence shelter services statewide; an 8% decrease from 2012
  - \*In New Castle County, 171 women, 162 children and 6 men were sheltered for a total of 339 individuals
  - \*In Kent and Sussex Counties, 106 women and 121 children were sheltered for a total of 227 women and children

\*SBI does not collect data on domestic violence homicides.



Delaware  
Fatal Incident  
Review Team  
Report

2014



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# Introduction and Membership

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The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council's Fatal Incident Review Team (FIRT) was established by statute in 1996 and became the first statewide team in the country. FIRT members are dedicated professionals who conduct system audits of State agencies and private organizations that had contact with the deceased victim and/or the perpetrator to assess the system's response. Although 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.

In 2009, the General Assembly granted FIRT the authority to conduct near-death reviews. These reviews enhance the team's ability to improve Delaware's response to domestic violence with the wealth of knowledge that can be gained from speaking directly with the domestic violence survivor about the incident, the history of violence, system involvement, and awareness of resources. FIRT successfully conducted two near-death reviews in 2013 and the recommendations from those reviews are included in this year's report.

## **FIRT Co-Chairs**

The Honorable Vincent J. Poppiti  
Dana Harrington Conner, Esq.  
The Honorable James T. Vaughn, Jr.

## **FIRT Members**

In accordance with 13 Del. C. § 2105, in addition to the co-chairs, the Review Team shall consist of seven core members:

- The Attorney General or the Attorney General's designee
- The Director of the Division of Family Services or the Director's designee
- A victim advocate appointed by the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council
- The Chief Judge of the Family Court or the Chief Judge's designee
- The Chief Magistrate of the Justice of the Peace Courts or the Chief Magistrate's designee
- The Director of the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, or the Director's designee
- A law-enforcement officer to be appointed by the Delaware Chiefs of Police Council

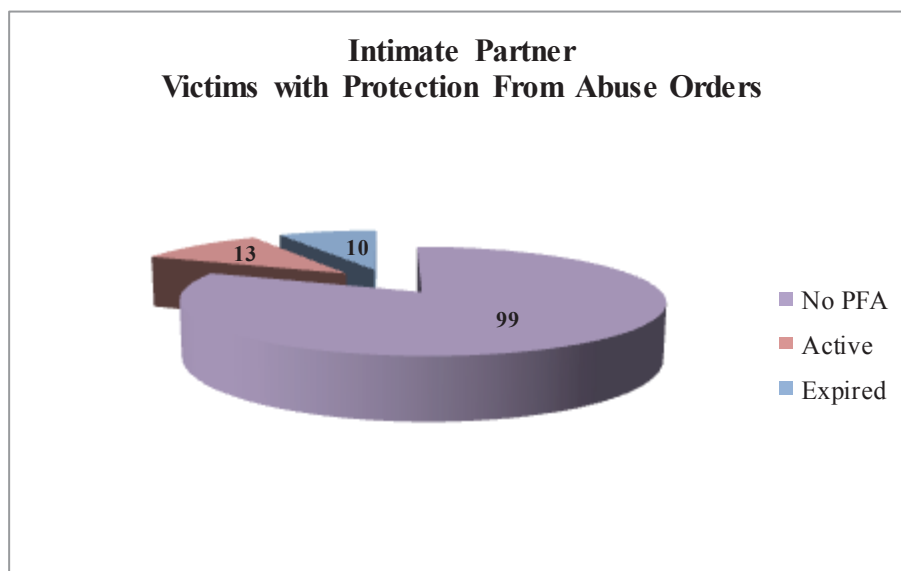
All members of the Review Team, plus other individuals invited to participate, are considered part of the review panel for a particular case or incident. The Review Team frequently invites law enforcement personnel to participate in any case in which his or her agency investigated the death, near death or had involvement with the victim prior to the domestic violence incident under review. The Review Team may also invite the participation of individuals with particular expertise that would be helpful to the review panel, or representatives from organizations or agencies that had contact with or provided services to the individual prior to that individual's own death or near death, that individual's abusive partner or family member and/or the alleged perpetrator of the death or near-death.

# Domestic Violence Fatal Incident Cases

This report is a compilation of data from 123 domestic violence fatal incident reviews conducted by FIRT between 1996 and 2013. These reviews included cases where prosecution was completed and the Department of Justice authorized FIRT to conduct a final review. The cases reviewed between 1996 and 2013 do not reflect all domestic violence homicides or near deaths since 1996. Of the 123 fatal incident reviews, there were 154 deaths and two near deaths.

Homicide Victims	103
Perpetrator Suicides Following Homicides	28
Suicide Only	22
Undetermined Victim Deaths *	1
Near-Death	2

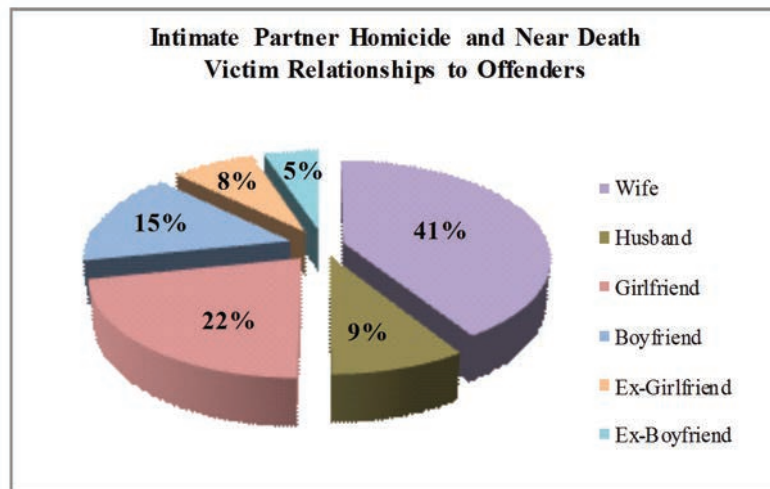
Of these 123 cases reviewed, 81% of the victims never obtained a Protection From Abuse Order from Family Court.



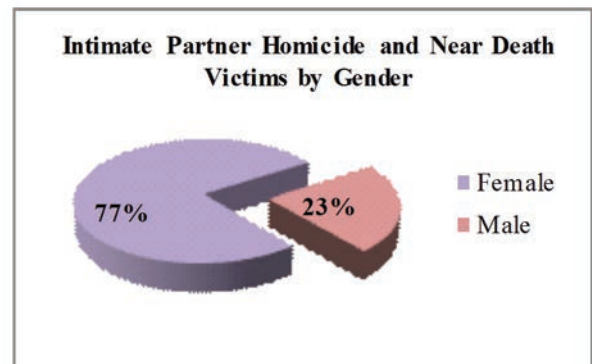
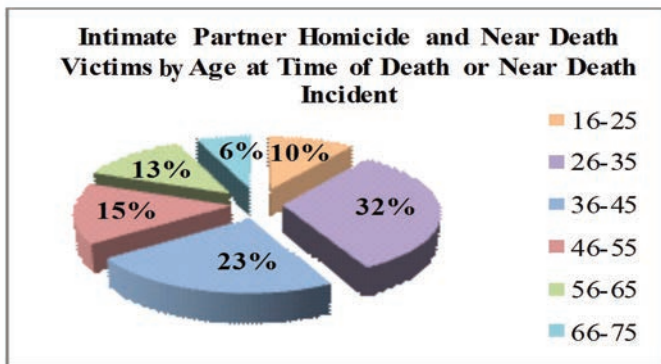
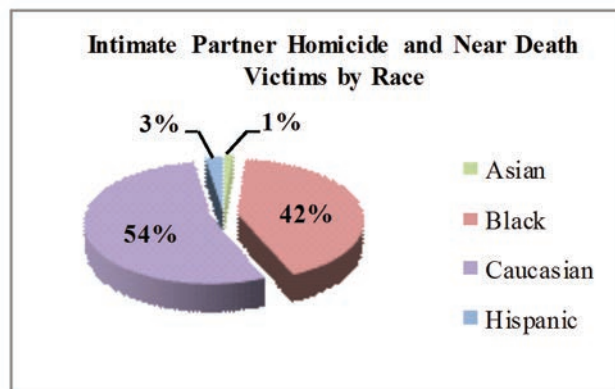
\*Manner of death is the classification of categories used to define whether a death is from intentional causes, unintentional causes, natural causes, or undetermined. If a case lacks a clear indicator as to whether or not the death was intentionally caused by another or accidental, the case will remain suspicious in nature and the exact manner of death will be undetermined.

# Intimate Partner Victim Data

Of the 103 homicide victims and 2 near-death victims reviewed by FIRT, 74% occurred in a past or present intimate partner relationship. The term intimate partner includes current and former spouses, current and former dating couples with or without a child in common, and teen dating couples. Intimate partners may be of the same gender.

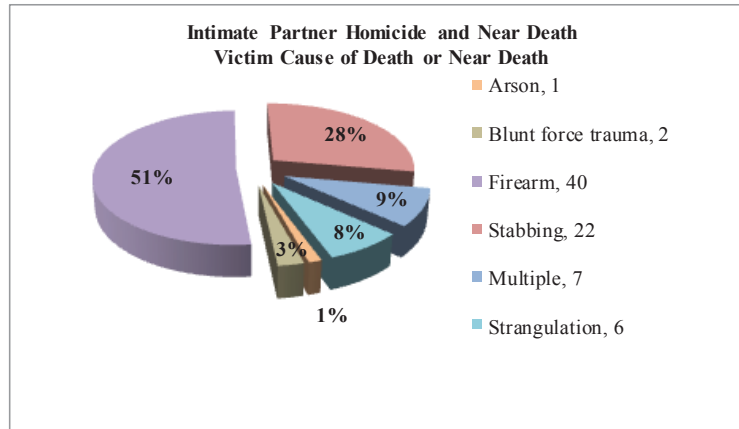


The following data represents the demographic information of the victims of the intimate partner homicides and two near-deaths that were reviewed since 1996:



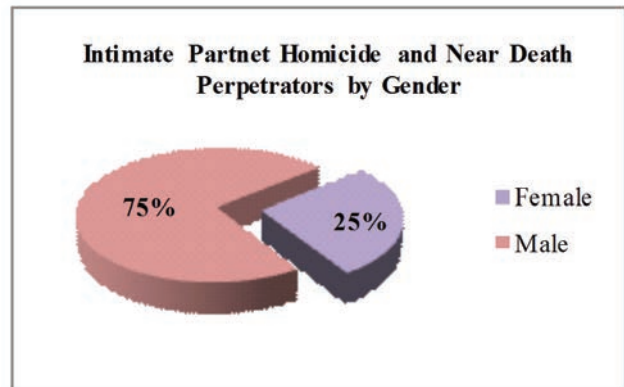
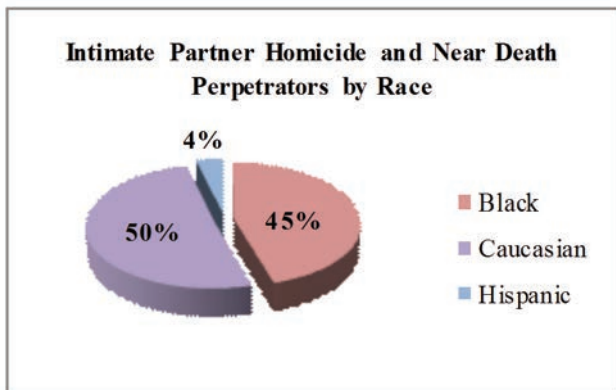
## Intimate Partner Victim Data

Of the 78 intimate partner homicides and near deaths, 46% of the homicides occurred when the victim attempted to leave or had ended the relationship with the perpetrator.



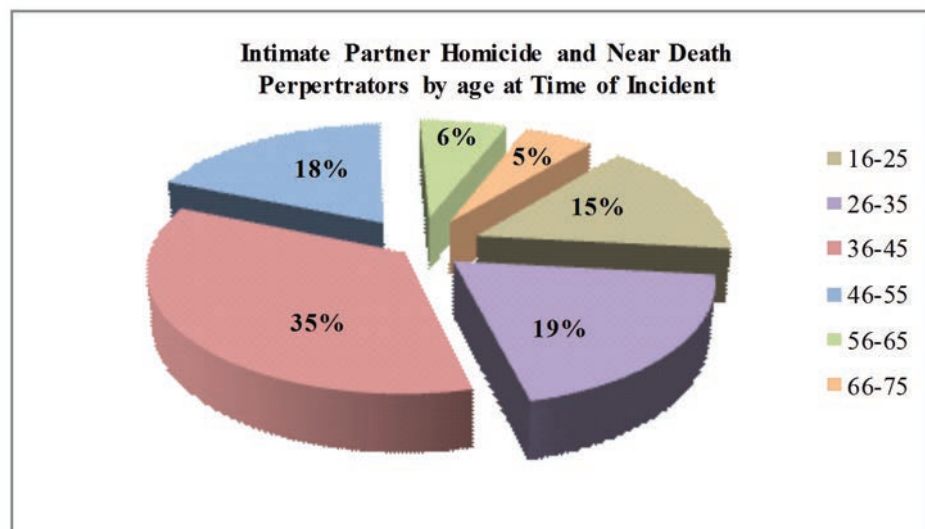
## Intimate Partner Perpetrator Data

Of the 78 intimate partner homicides and near deaths reviewed, there were 77 perpetrators. Of those perpetrators, 58 were male and 19 were female.



# Intimate Partner Perpetrator Data

More than a third of the perpetrators were between the ages of 36 and 45 at time of incident.



## Impact of Domestic Violence on Children

In the 123 cases reviewed by FIRT, 110 children lost a parent to domestic violence homicide and two children were impacted by the near death of a parent. In 34% of the cases reviewed, children were present at the time of the incident.

According to Delaware law, a person is guilty of endangering the welfare of a child when he or she commits any violent felony, or reckless endangering second degree, assault third degree, terroristic threatening, or unlawful imprisonment second degree against a victim, knowing that such felony or misdemeanor was witnessed, either by sight or sound, by a child who is a member of the person's family or the victim's family.

11 Del. C. 1102 (a)(4)



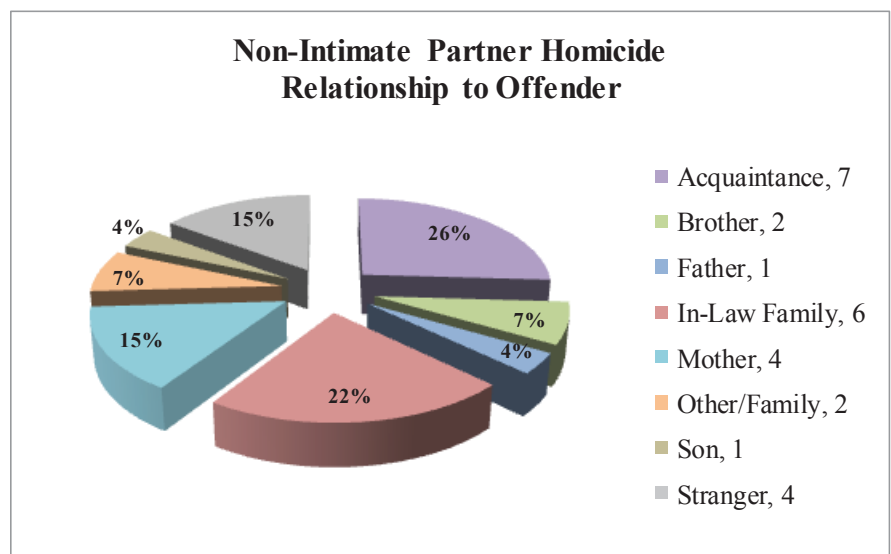
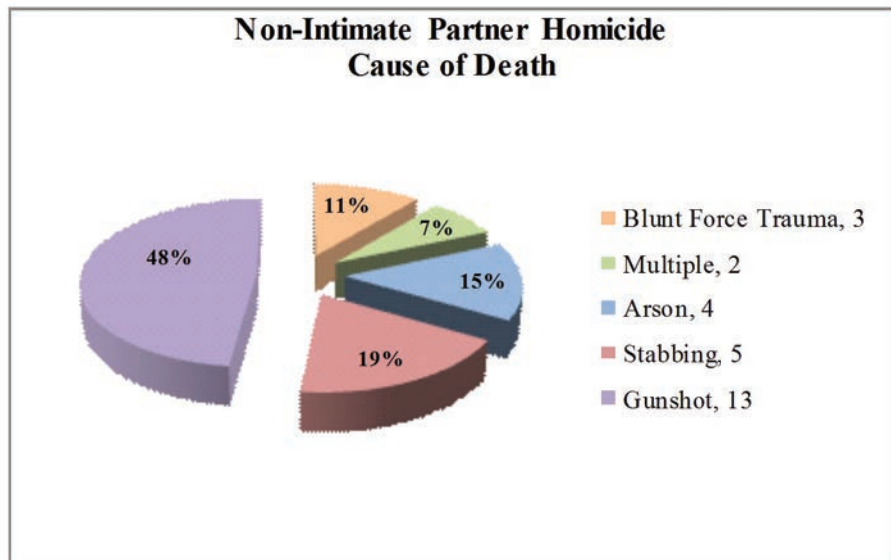
# Non-Intimate Partner Data

## Location of these Non-Intimate Homicides:

- 8 of the deaths occurred at the shared home of the victim and the perpetrator
- 8 of the deaths occurred at the victim's home
- 4 of the deaths occurred at the perpetrator's home
- 2 of the deaths occurred in a car, on the street or in a parking lot
- 2 at an acquaintance/friend's home
- 1 at the home of the perpetrator's girlfriend
- 1 at the victim's place of employment
- 1 at the victim's boyfriend's home

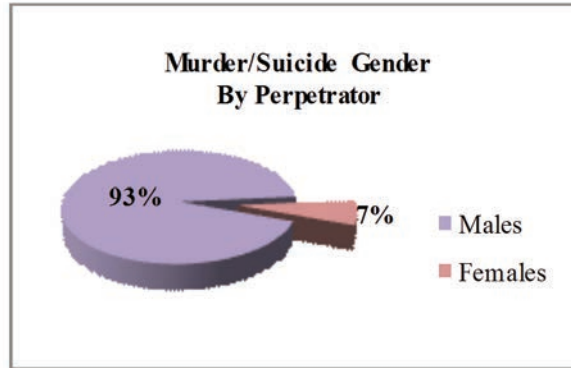
“Non-Intimate Partners” are individuals that have a familial relationship, such as mother/adult son or siblings.

Of the 103 homicides included in this report, 27 were “Non-Intimate Partner” homicides. Also included in these homicide numbers are victims who were bystanders (friends, acquaintances or strangers).



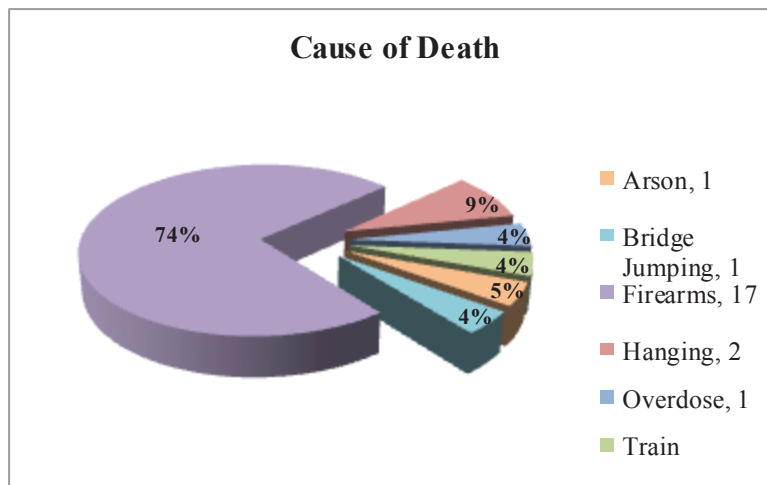
# Suicide Data

Of the 154 domestic violence deaths included in this report, there were 28 perpetrator suicides following homicide or murder/suicide cases. Out of the 28 murder/suicide cases reviewed, 26 of the perpetrators were male and 2 were female.



“Domestic Violence-related Suicides” are victims or perpetrators who have taken their own lives and have a significant history of abuse by or toward their partner.

There were a total of 23 domestic-violence related suicides, including one undetermined death. Of those 23 domestic violence-related suicides, the death was caused by a firearm in 17 of the cases. Two of the deaths resulted from hanging. One death each resulted from jumping from a bridge, suicide by train, overdose and arson.



# FIRT Statistics at a Glance

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## **8 Cases were reviewed in 2013**

- 4 Homicides
- 2 Near Deaths
- 1 Murder/Suicide
- 1 Suicide

## **From 1996 - 2013**

- 123 Cases Reviewed
- 103 Homicides
- 28 Murder/Suicides
- 23 Suicides
- 2 Near Deaths

## **Intimate Partner Domestic Violence Homicide**

- 78 of the homicides and near-death victims recorded in this report were classified as intimate partner homicides or near-deaths
  - 75% of intimate partner victims were female
  - Of those females, 53% were current or former wives of the perpetrator
  - 32% of the victims of intimate partner homicide were between the ages of 26 and 35
- 46% of the intimate partner homicides and near death incidents included in this report occurred when the victim ended the relationship or attempted to leave
- 77% of the intimate partner homicides and near death incidents included in this report occurred in the victim's own home or the shared home of the victim and the perpetrator
- 75% of the intimate partner homicide and near death perpetrators in this report were male
- 55% of the intimate partner violence perpetrators in this report were between the ages of 26 and 45
- 36% of the deaths in this report resulted from murder/suicide
- 93% of the perpetrators of intimate partner murder/suicides were male

## **Firearms and Domestic Violence Fatalities and Near-Death Incidents**

- 51% of the intimate partner homicides and near-death incidents 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
- 76% of the domestic violence-related suicides in this report were the result of a shooting
- A total of 50% of the 123 cases were the result of a shooting

## **Protection From Abuse Orders**

- 81% of the homicide victims in this report did not have an active PFA at the time of fatality

## **Children and Domestic Violence Fatality**

- In 34% of the 123 cases in this report, there were children present during the crime
- 110 children lost a parent due to domestic violence

# FIRT Recommendations & Responses for Improving System Response

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The ultimate purpose for reviewing domestic violence fatalities is to reduce the incidence of such deaths. Following the presentation of information, at each case review, team members discuss recommendations for improving the system response to domestic violence.

The 2013 FIRT recommendations were sent to relevant agencies and organizations throughout the State. The responses to those recommendations are listed below in **BOLD**.

The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council is extremely grateful to the participating agencies for their commitment towards the mission to improve the system's response to domestic violence. We are fortunate to have the high level of cooperation demonstrated by the agencies' responses to the Fatal Incident Review Team's recommendations.

## Administrative Office of the Courts

### Recommendation:

The Chief Justice and the Administrative Office of the Courts should require that domestic violence training be a part of the continuing legal education process for the judiciary.

### The Administrative Office of the Courts Response:

**The judiciary is supportive of this training approach. After receiving the FIRT Recommendation letter, the Chief Justice sought input from President Judge Vaughn and Chief Judge Kuhn, as members of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council, concerning the request and to obtain their recommendations about establishing a long-term plan for the Judiciary related to domestic violence issues. While waiting for additional input about a long-term domestic violence training plan, we are working with Family Court and others to seek VAWA grant funding to support a statewide domestic violence conference for members of the Judiciary, court staff, and others involved in domestic violence matters, within the next year.**

## Community Legal Aid Society, Inc.

### Recommendation:

Free legal representation for domestic violence victims seeking a Protection from Abuse order or those needing assistance with legal matters ancillary to the Protection from Abuse order are essential. DVLS and CLASI should continue to explore avenues to increase the availability of these services to domestic violence victims.

# FIRT Recommendations & Responses for Improving System Response

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## **Community Legal Aid Society, Inc. Response:**

At Community Legal Aid Society, Inc., we are committed to searching for ways to increase the valuable services we provide victims of domestic violence. In addition to seeking increases in funding provided through Federal and State sources, we are continually looking for new sources of funding through corporations and foundations. Though not always successful in receiving grants, we will continue to try to identify new sources of funding with which we can provide our free services to victims of domestic violence.

## **Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence**

### **Recommendation:**

Stalking is often overlooked by law enforcement when responding to domestic violence calls and during investigations of domestic violence incidents. Trainings provided for advocates, police-based victim services, and law enforcement officers should routinely incorporate information about Delaware's stalking statute and the increased risk lethality to victims who are stalked.

### **Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence Response:**

The Coalition supports the need for law enforcement to understand the significance of stalking and how to properly investigate such crimes and is a willing partner to work with the DVCC and others on how best to offer such training. Currently, the Coalition references the risks associated with stalking and the complexity of investigating such a case in our DV 101. Police officers often participate in those semi-annual trainings. DCADV does not currently offer stand-alone, in depth training on stalking and, unfortunately, we are not in a position to offer such specific training to law enforcement at this time. However, if an opportunity is presented to do so, we would gladly work with the relevant partners (law enforcement, medical, legal, DVCC) to ensure an effective training on this subject.

## **Delaware State Police**

### **Recommendation:**

Stalking is often overlooked by law enforcement when responding to domestic violence calls and during investigations of domestic violence incidents. Trainings provided for advocates, police-based victim services, and law enforcement officers should routinely incorporate information about Delaware's stalking statute and the increased risk lethality to victims who are stalked.

# FIRT Recommendations & Responses for Improving System Response

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## Delaware State Police Response:

The Delaware State Police, as the recipient of the OVW STOP Grant funding for Law Enforcement Training, collaborates with other partner agencies from both law enforcement and community advocacy, to identify training needs, and investigate issues and growing trends in the field of domestic violence. This collaboration falls under the auspices of Law Enforcement Training Working Group. In 2011, due to the growing trend of suspects utilizing ever-increasing technologies to stalk domestic violence victims, the Working Group elected to provide training on Stalking at the Annual Delaware Law Enforcement Domestic Violence Conference. This annual training is always open to all law enforcement agencies throughout the state and is provided free of cost to all attendees. The training allowed for national experts in the field of stalking to come to Delaware to present updated and helpful information to assist officers with recognizing and investigating stalking incidents. In 2012, the Working Group identified a need to provide training on Lethality Assessment at the Annual Delaware Law Enforcement Domestic Violence Conference. Subsequently, the coordinator for the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, the national architects of the Lethality Assessment Program, presented on Lethality Assessment at the annual conference. The Law Enforcement Training Working Group continues to meet throughout the year to identify new or recurring training needs in the area of domestic violence.

## Department of Services for Children, Youth & Their Families

### Recommendation:

The Fatal Incident Review Team recognizes the importance of providing a comprehensive assessment to children entering into the custody of the Division of Family Services (DFS) and commends DFS for making it their standard operating procedure that children in care receive this assessment. The Division of Family Services should not discontinue its policy that every child who enters into DFS custody receives this trauma-focused comprehensive assessment as well as the clinical services identified by the assessment. The Fatal Incident Review Team further recognizes that children who have witnessed felony level domestic violence that do not enter into the custody of DFS would benefit from a trauma-focused comprehensive assessment and access to necessary clinical services. Any children who are witnesses to felony level domestic violence that come to the attention of DFS and did not receive an assessment from the Office of Evidence-Based Practice or the Children's Advocacy Center should be referred to one.

### Department of Services for Children, Youth & Their Families Response:

The Division of Family Services recognizes the importance of assessing children in DFS custody for clinical services when they have witnessed felony level domestic violence. Assessing children that are not in DFS custody is problematic due to insurance constraints when children are in the custody of a parent or guardian. DFS will continue to encourage workers to talk with the parents or guardians of the children about the importance of a trauma-focused assessment for children that

# FIRT Recommendations & Responses for Improving System Response

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have witnessed felony level domestic violence. DFS will also have the workers make a recommendation to the parents or guardians that they have the child seen by a provider who is covered by their private insurance or Medicaid.

## Department of Justice

### Recommendation:

The Attorney General's Office should review cases involving high risk offenders who have a domestic violence history because of the likelihood of these offenders committing serious domestic violence crimes. These cases should be reviewed to reduce plea bargains and dismissals, as well as to increase offender accountability.

### Department of Justice Response:

The Attorney General's Office is an active member of the Fatal Incident Review Team and supports its recommendation. Cases involving repeat and violent offenders currently receive rigorous review by prosecutors, and the arrests of certain high risk offenders are flagged at the time of arrest so that prosecutors can help build strong cases, advocate for pre-trial detention beginning with a defendant's initial appearance in court, and ultimately seek aggressive sentencing to better protect the public. Prosecutors review outcomes of cases against repeat high risk offenders in order to enhance the Department of Justice's handling of cases, identify trends, and improve strategies to secure victim participation under very difficult and traumatic circumstances.

## Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC)

### Recommendation:

The DVCC should initiate a meeting with the Police Chiefs' Council to discuss the provision of annual trainings to be provided by or co-facilitated by law enforcement officers for law enforcement officers regarding responding to domestic violence calls. The topic of responding to calls involving recidivist callers should be included. The DVCC should help develop these trainings in collaboration with officers.

### Domestic Violence Coordinating Council Response:

The DVCC has begun a dialogue with the Police Chiefs' Council to discuss the provision of annual trainings to be provided by or co-facilitated by law enforcement officers for law enforcement officers regarding responding to domestic violence calls. In addition to communicating with the Police Chiefs' Council, the DVCC is an active member of the Law Enforcement Training Workgroup. It is through this workgroup that the issue of responding to recidivist callers has been discussed as a training topic for law enforcement. Along with the Law Enforcement Training Workgroup, the DVCC has law enforcement training as a standing agenda item for the Criminal Justice Committee. The DVCC

# FIRT Recommendations & Responses for Improving System Response

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**supports having a continued collaboration with law enforcement in order to develop training and address training topics for law enforcement.**

Recommendation:

The DVCC should collaborate with the President of the Delaware Bar Association to invite stakeholders to a meeting to discuss solutions to the problem of the lack of pro bono attorneys assisting domestic violence survivors in custody cases.

**Domestic Violence Coordinating Council Response:**

**The DVCC supports the recommendation to collaborate with the President of the Delaware Bar Association to discuss possible solutions to the lack of pro bono attorneys assisting domestic violence survivors in custody cases. The DVCC has corresponded with the President of the Delaware Bar Association to invite stakeholders to discuss solutions concerning this issue.**

Recommendation:

Many victims reach out to their faith communities for help with domestic violence. The DVCC should continue its faith-based collaborations and training efforts in these communities. Any training provided to faith-based communities should emphasize lethality risk factors.

**Domestic Violence Coordinating Council Response:**

**The DVCC recognizes the impact that faith communities can have on victims when seeking help with domestic violence. Because of the connection between victims of domestic violence and the faith community, the DVCC is promoting a concentrated effort to continue collaboration with faith-based communities throughout the state. The DVCC will continue to provide training that emphasizes lethality risk factors for victims of domestic violence.**

Recommendation:

Stalking is often overlooked by law enforcement when responding to domestic violence calls and during investigations of domestic violence incidents. Trainings provided for advocates, police-based victim services, and law enforcement officers should routinely incorporate information about Delaware's stalking statute and the increased risk of lethality to victims who are stalked.

**Domestic Violence Coordinating Council Response:**

**The DVCC will continue to include stalking in its training provided to advocates, police-based victim services and law enforcement. The DVCC consistently incorporates information about Delaware's stalking statute and the increased risk of lethality to victims who are stalked.**



# FIRT Recommendations & Responses for Improving System Response

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## Delaware Volunteer Legal Service, Inc. (DVLS)

### Recommendation:

Free legal representation for domestic violence victims seeking a Protection From Abuse order or those needing assistance with legal matters ancillary to the Protection From Abuse order are essential. DVLS and CLASI should continue to explore avenues to increase the availability of these services to domestic violence victims.

### Delaware Volunteer Legal Service, Inc. Response:

DVLS recognizes the ongoing need for additional resources for the provision of legal services to victims of domestic violence, in particular with respect to ancillary matters. The Combined Campaign for Justice, which provides funding for all of the legal services agencies, will be launching a new fundraising initiative. If this initiative is successful as it has been in other jurisdictions, one of DVLS' priorities for any additional funding that results would be to hire an additional staff attorney to handle these types of matters.

## Family Court

### Recommendation:

Family Court should explore avenues to reduce the number of times Protection From Abuse petitioners must personally appear in court to obtain an order.

### Family Court's Response:

Family Court has and will continue to review our procedures, rules and statutes relating to obtaining protection in domestic violence cases in an effort to streamline the process for victims while ensuring procedural safeguards for all parties. We will explore avenues to reduce the number of times a petitioner must appear for court hearings as well as with respect to appearing to file or to access resources to file for protection. We look forward to working with the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council on this issue as well as other issues related to domestic violence in Delaware.

# FIRT Recommendations & Responses for Improving System Response

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## Victim Compensation Assistance Program (VCAP)

### Recommendation:

The Fatal Incident Review Team commends recent efforts to increase funds to VCAP because these funds enhance victim safety and stability. VCAP should continue to strive to maintain sufficient funding to assist domestic violence victims with necessary expenses.

### Victim Compensation Assistance Program's Response:

The Victims' Compensation Assistance Program strives to help as many victims as possible. In FY 2013, our program received 1280 applications and awarded more than \$3 million to victims and their families. Since 2009, the number of applications we have received has nearly doubled – 689 in FY2009 to 1280 in FY2013. Our ability to help victims, efficiently and effectively, is unparalleled across the nation. At the same time, however, we remain mindful of the continued financial stability of the program. Our program is funded through the 18% surcharge on criminal fines, restitution paid by the defendant and a federal grant. Our expenditures, meaning that which we pay to victims and their families, continues to exceed our revenue. The changes we recently made to our statute, providing for the 18% surcharge or \$10, whichever is greater, was incredibly important. The legislation went into effect at the end of September 2013, but year to date our revenue has increased and we are very hopeful that this trend continues.



Notes:



Notes:



Notes:



Notes:

If you are in danger, please call 911.

## Domestic Violence/Rape Crisis 24 –Hour Hotline Numbers

### New Castle County

Domestic Violence	302-762-6110
Bi-Lingual	302-762-6110
Rape Crisis	302-761-9100
TTY	800-232-5460

### Northern Kent

Domestic Violence	302-678-3886
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### Kent & Sussex

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

## DVCC Main Office

New Castle County Courthouse  
Suite 700  
500 N. King Street  
Wilmington, DE 19801

Phone: 302-255-0405

Fax: 302-255-2236

[www.dvcc.delaware.gov](http://www.dvcc.delaware.gov)

## DVCC Kent & 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](http://www.dvcc.delaware.gov)

# Domestic Violence Coordinating Council

[www.dvcc.delaware.gov](http://www.dvcc.delaware.gov)