



NEBRASKA

**DOMESTIC ABUSE
DEATH REVIEW TEAM**

2026 ANNUAL REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

In 2020 and 2021, Hailey Christensen and Brooke Koch were murdered by their partners in Nebraska. In the wake of their deaths, their families advocated for the passage of LB1009, which created the Domestic Abuse Death Review Act. This Act created the Domestic Abuse Death Review Team (DADRT). Family members testified before the Judiciary Committee of the Nebraska Legislature and collaborated with Senator Tom Brandt, the Nebraska Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence, the Women's Fund of Omaha, and the Nebraska Attorney General's Office. The Act went into effect on July 21, 2022.

DADRT Mission:

Comprised of a diverse group of professionals and survivors, we examine all domestic abuse deaths statewide. By examining the causes and contributing factors to these deaths, the Team will provide recommendations for public, private, community, and system improvements to enhance victim safety and prevent future domestic abuse fatalities.

DADRT Vision:

The Team envisions safe communities where public and private agencies, institutions, and systems work collaboratively to support survivors and ultimately reduce domestic abuse fatalities.

DADRT Guiding Principles:

- The Team focuses its work on honoring victims, families, and communities impacted by domestic violence.
- Reviews are conducted with respect, integrity, sensitivity, and compassion.
- The Team values survivor-led leadership.
- The Team refrains from making accusations of blame or fault-finding.

OVERVIEW

The 2026 Annual Report of the Nebraska Domestic Abuse Death Review Team presents a comprehensive overview of the Team's work between July 21, 2022, and December 31, 2025. This report also includes specific data from the 41 finalized case reviews completed by the Team. It offers insights into the scope, nature, and systemic gaps associated with domestic abuse-related fatalities in Nebraska.

Highlights and Initiatives:

- **Children, Prevention, and Healthy Relationships:** Case reviews continue to demonstrate the lasting impact of childhood exposure to violence. The DADRT remains focused on prevention, healthy relationships, and early intervention efforts for youth.
- **Lack of System Contact:** Many victims and perpetrators had little or no contact with traditional intervention systems prior to a homicide. In contrast, family members, friends, and coworkers were often aware of the abuse, highlighting the need for broader community education and engagement.
- **Strengthening Nebraska's Response Through Training:** The DADRT partnered with the Nebraska Attorney General's Office to develop a free statewide interdisciplinary training series focused on domestic violence dynamics, lethality, trauma-informed response, and multidisciplinary collaboration.
- **Legislative Progress:** The DADRT supported legislation requiring domestic violence training for mental health professionals and establishing confidential peer support protections for first responders and public safety personnel.
- **Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) Pilot Project:** Buffalo County and Scotts Bluff County were selected as pilot sites for LAP implementation, which aims to improve identification of high-risk victims and strengthen connections to advocacy services.
- **Firearms & Protection Orders:** The DADRT continues to examine firearm relinquishment, protection order processes, and other strategies to improve victim safety in high-risk situations.
- **System Capacity & Funding Challenges:** Increased awareness and referrals have heightened demand for victim services at a time when many providers face funding reductions, staffing shortages, and growing case complexity.

In the year ahead, DADRT will continue its core work of reviewing cases, expanding data collection, supporting and educating system response providers and the community, and implementing the Lethality Assessment Program at selected pilot sites. The Team will also launch a statewide training initiative, explore enhancements to firearm and protection order policies, and assess prevention strategies in schools. Ongoing collaboration with survivors, professionals, and community partners will guide efforts to strengthen systems, improve victim safety, and prevent future domestic abuse deaths.

DATA REPRESENTED

The information presented in this report has been compiled from available documentation, public records, and interviews with family members and loved ones. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy and completeness; however, the data is limited to what was accessible at the time of reporting. As such, this report may not reflect all possible information or perspectives.

Throughout this report, we may refer to statistics by case or victim deaths. Cases may include multiple victims' deaths.

Pages 8-12 include data from 89 identified domestic abuse deaths that occurred in Nebraska from July 21, 2022, to December 31, 2025. Pages 13-18 include data from the 41 cases (46 victims) reviewed by the DADRT between July 2022 and December 2025.

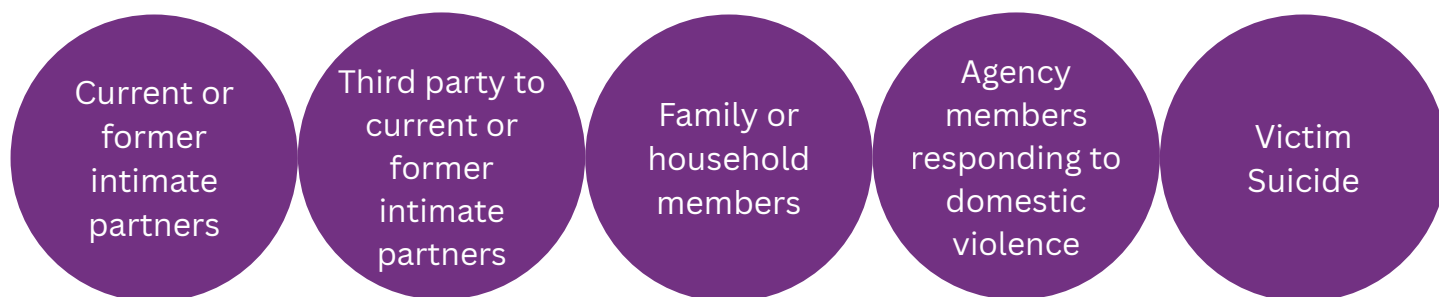
Per statute, perpetrator deaths are not tracked or included in the number of victim deaths throughout this report.

Five victim suicides have been identified since July 21, 2022. Based on national data, we expect additional victim suicides to exist as a result of domestic violence, but these are difficult to identify. The DADRT accesses data collected by the Nebraska Violent Death Reporting System to better identify victim suicides and other domestic abuse deaths. The DADRT Coordinator, in collaboration with the Omaha Police Department and Lincoln Police Department, works to identify suicide cases in which the victim had prior contact with law enforcement or had filed a domestic abuse protection order within the past two years to enhance the identification and understanding of suicides potentially linked to domestic abuse.

CASE SELECTION AND REVIEW PROCESS

Domestic Violence Fatalities Defined

The DADRT examines deaths that occur as a result of domestic violence. The Team may review deaths of the following five categories:



BACKGROUND

The DADRT collaborates and conducts a multidisciplinary analysis of the victims' experiences, perpetrator behaviors, and general circumstances surrounding domestic abuse deaths. Through the review process, the Team identifies contributing factors related to the decedents, perpetrators, and systems responsible for supporting, assisting, and protecting victims from domestic abuse. The collaborative efforts of the review process provide an opportunity to improve the State's response to address the needs of domestic violence victims. Domestic abuse cases are reviewed only after the criminal case has been finalized or a perpetrator's death occurs.

Each year, the Team conducts two comprehensive reviews while gathering records and generally reviewing all domestic abuse deaths in Nebraska. As more data is gathered, the Team will continue to gain insights to provide recommendations.

CASE SELECTION AND COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

Domestic Abuse Death Occurs

Team Coordinator Identifies Domestic Abuse Death

Criminal Justice Response to Death is Completed

Team Coordinator Gathers Relevant Records

Team Coordinator Conducts General Case Review

DADRT Selects Case(s) for Team Comprehensive Review

Team Coordinator Distributes Case File to Team

Interviews with Relevant Parties: family, friends, & case professionals

Team Meets for Review in City Where Death Occurred

Recommendations Developed and Compiled by Team Coordinator

The Team reviews many types of records, including law enforcement, health and human services, employment, school, medical, mental health records, and many more.

Interviews are conducted with family, friends, loved ones of victims and perpetrators, and professionals with whom they had contact.

During the comprehensive review process, local professionals in each city where the death occurred are invited to talk about their experiences with domestic violence, share their successes and barriers to success, and identify gaps in the system in serving victims and investigating cases. Team members consider this information when forming recommendations.

Data and recommendations in this annual report are submitted to the Governor, Legislature, and Attorney General.

At least two comprehensive reviews are completed by the DADRT each year.

Every domestic abuse death receives a general review where the coordinator gathers information and data from records.

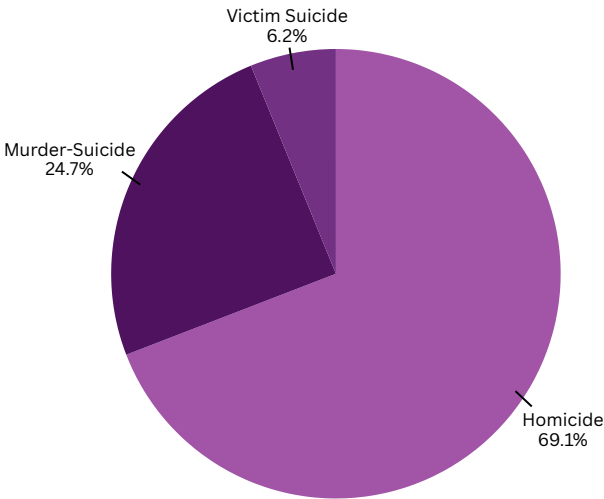
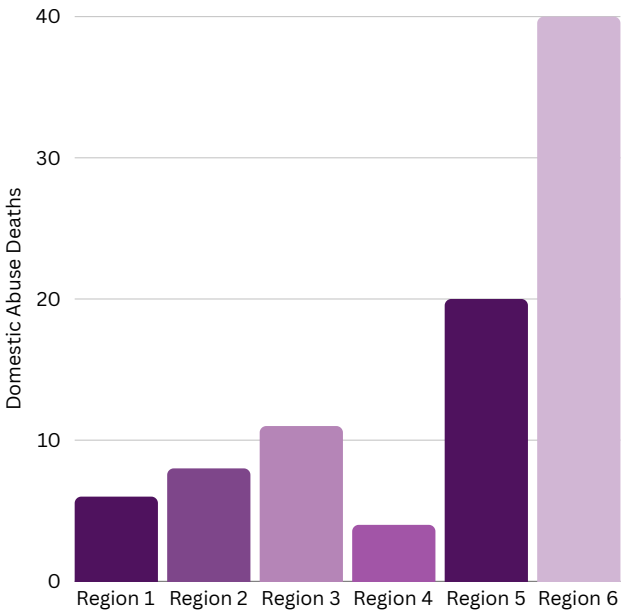
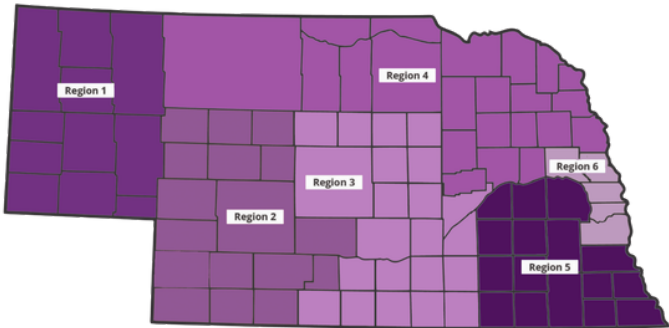
NEBRASKA STATISTICS

The following information on pages 8-12 includes all identified domestic abuse deaths that have occurred in Nebraska from July 21, 2022, to December 31, 2025.

Domestic Abuse Deaths

July to Dec 2022	2023	2024	2025	Total
14	30	15	30	89

Domestic Abuse Deaths by Region



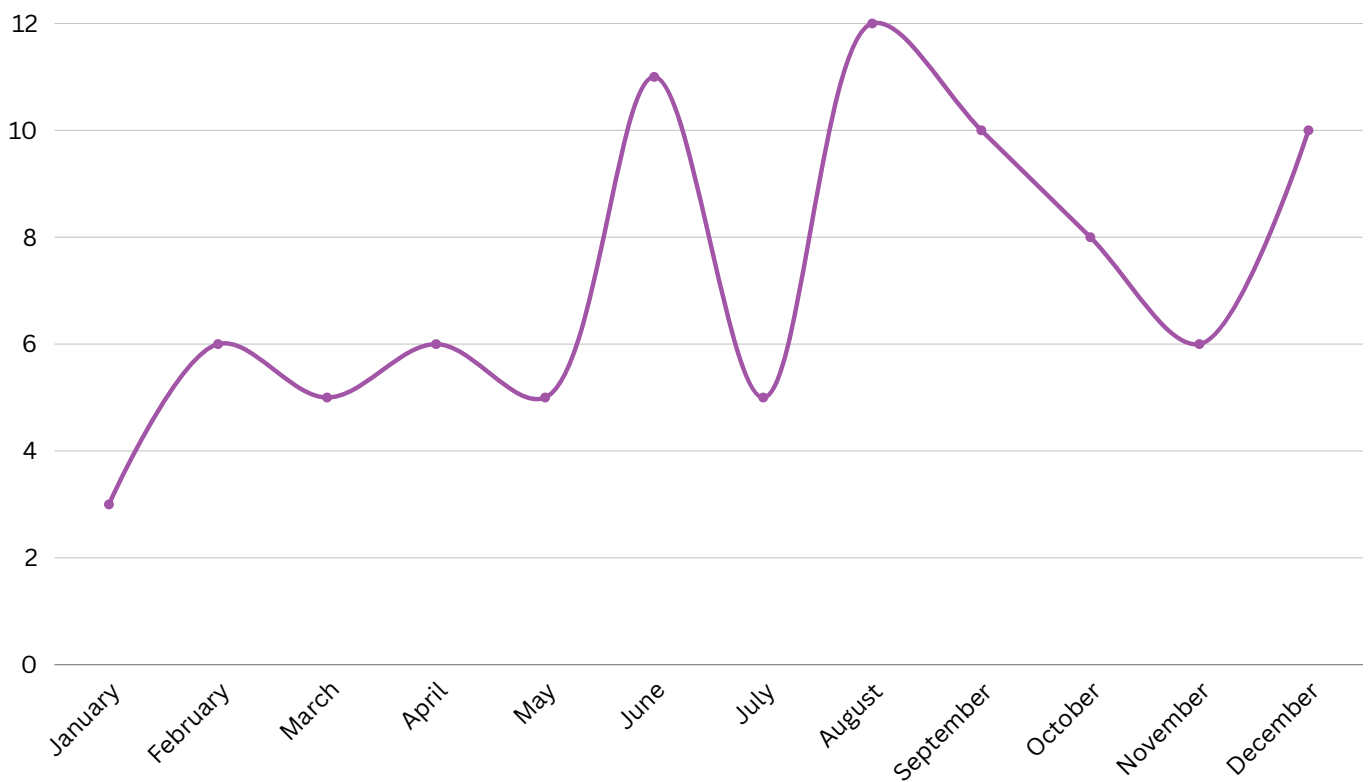
Domestic Abuse Death Types

All victim suicides were female.

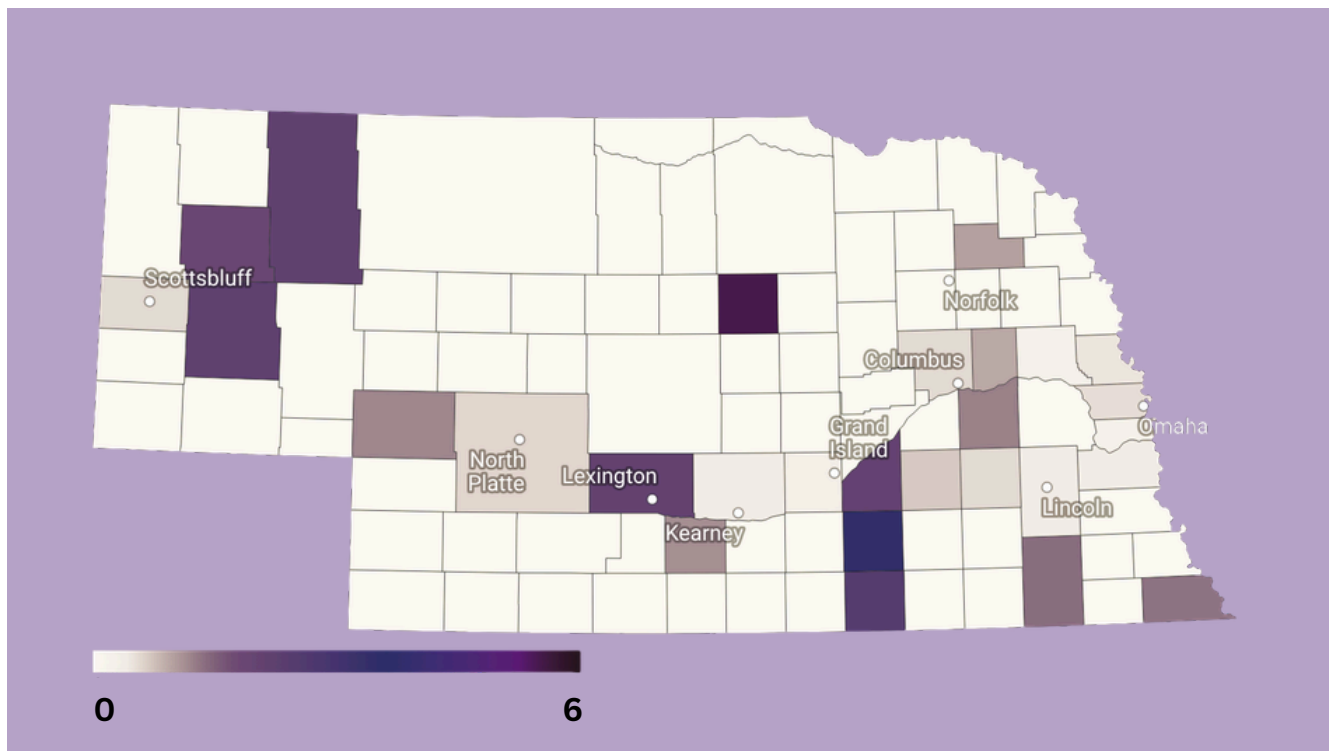
Five victim suicides have been identified since July 21, 2022.

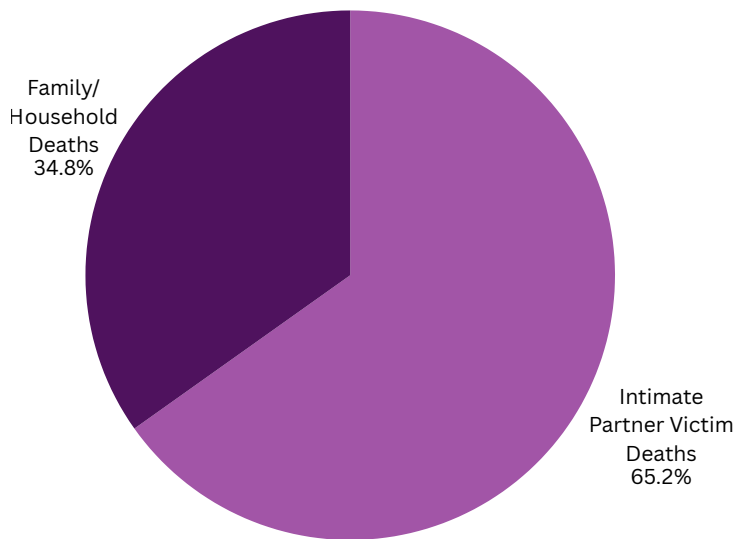
Victim suicides are extremely difficult to identify.

Domestic Abuse Death Incidents by Month from July 21, 2022, to December 31, 2025



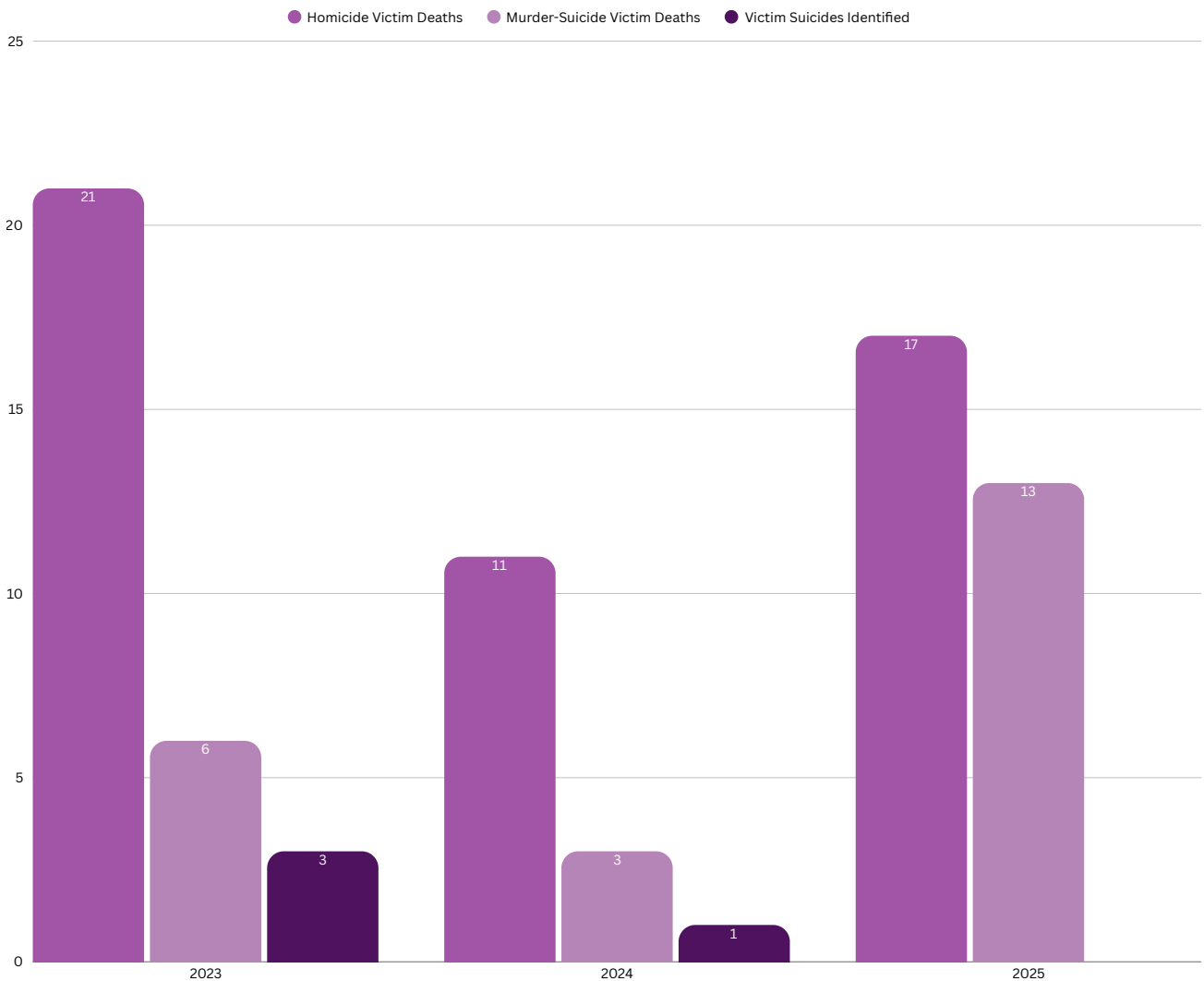
Domestic Abuse Victim Deaths Per Capita



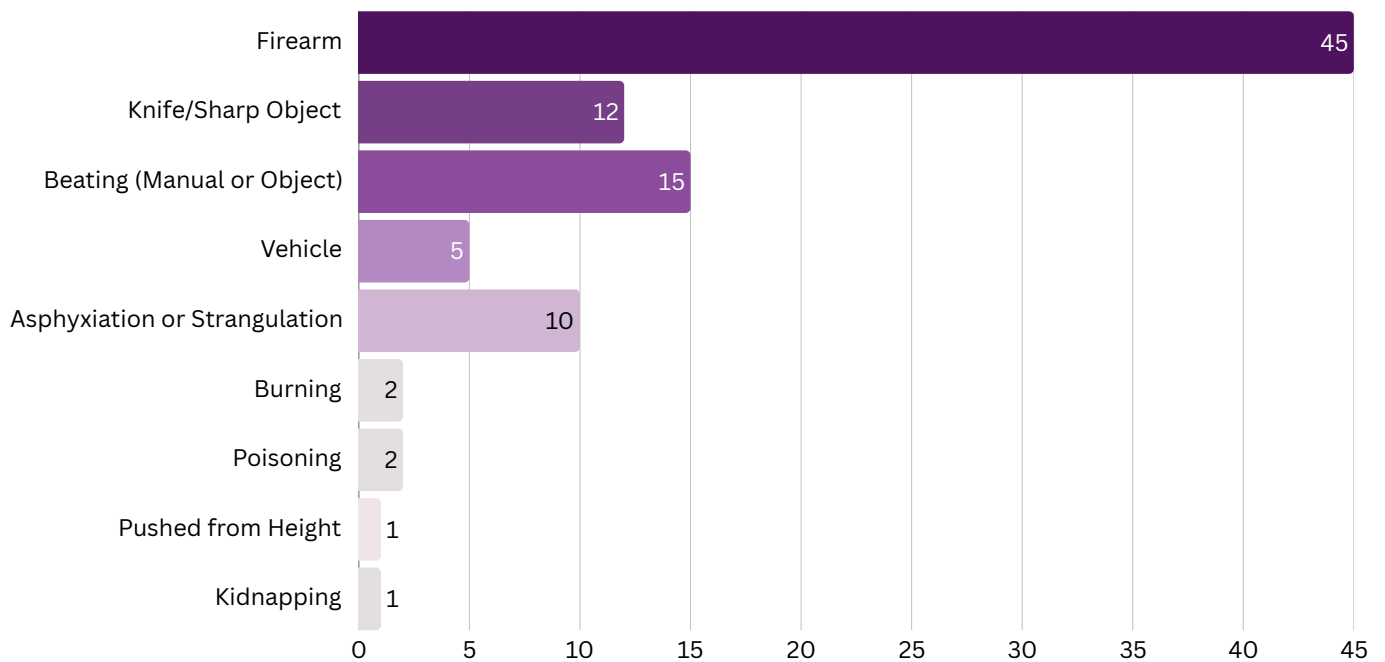


In 2025, there were more intimate partner murder-suicides than 2023 and 2024 combined.

Homicide vs. Murder-Suicide



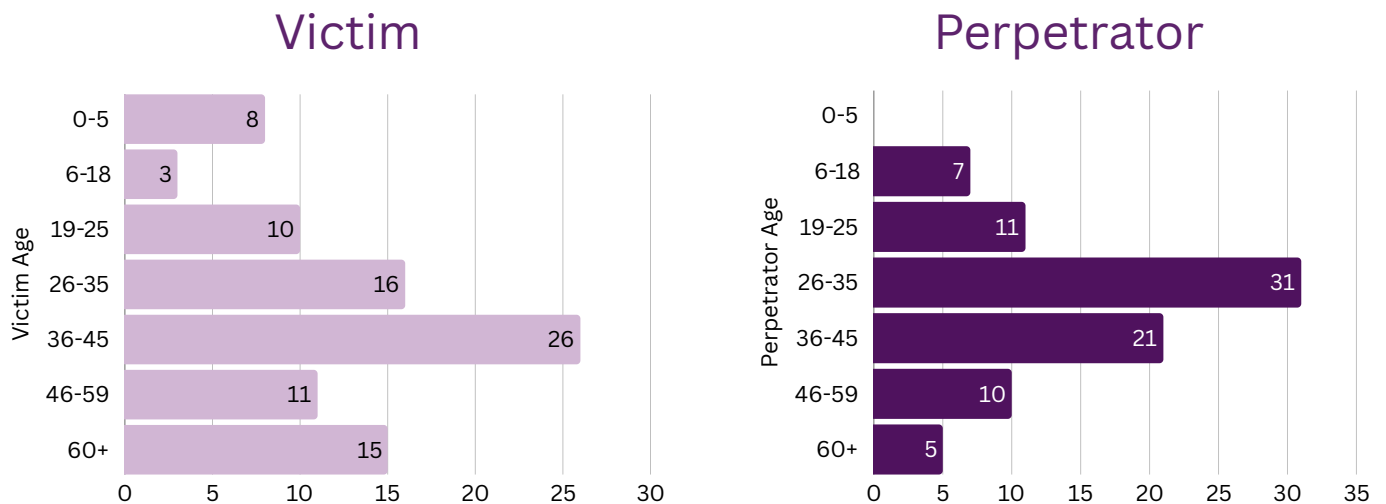
Methods of Violence Utilized in Death Incidents



Multiple methods of violence may be used by perpetrators in the same death incident.

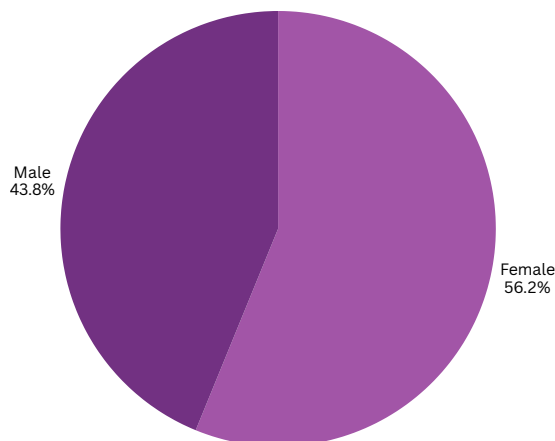
Case Progress	Court/Investigation In Progress	Completed Cases Reviewed
July to Dec 2022	2	13
2023	12	16
2024	9	6
2025	17	6
2026 (to date)	4	0
Total	44	41

Age at Time of Victim's Death

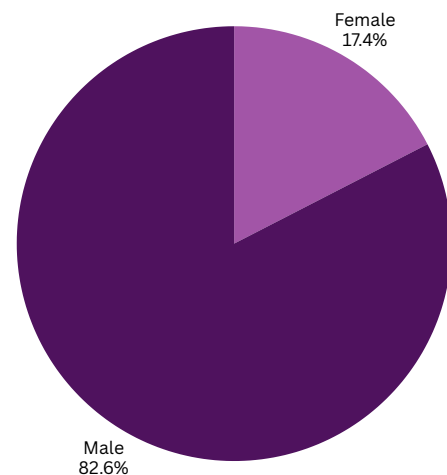


Intimate partner relationships with age gaps were identified. In cases where victims were killed by an intimate partner, five victims were at least 10 years younger than their perpetrator and another five victims were between five and nine years younger than their perpetrator.

Victim Gender



Perpetrator Gender



82.2% of female victims were killed by a current or former intimate partner.

71.8% of male victims were killed by a family or household member, and 28.2% were killed by a current or former intimate partner.

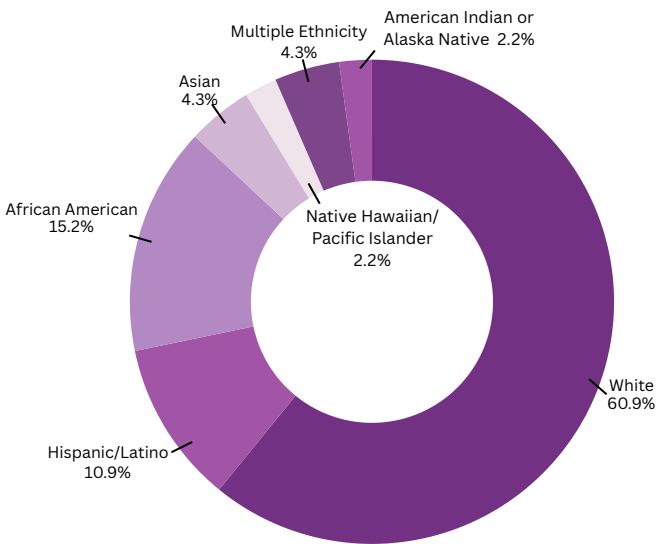
**95% of murder-suicides involved current or former intimate partners.
In all recorded cases, the perpetrators were male.**

VICTIMS

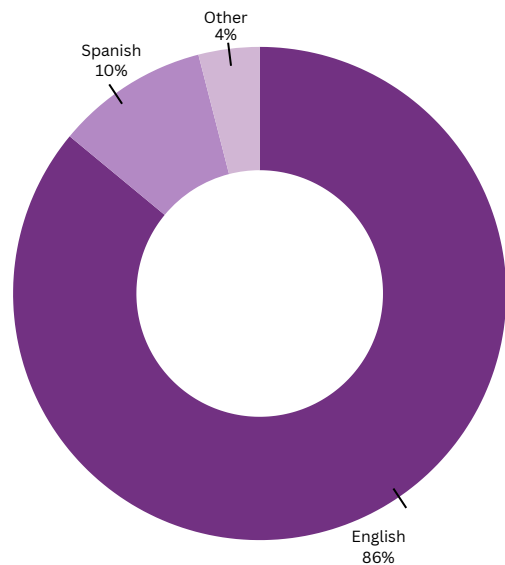
Data Scope and Limitations

The following statistics and findings on pages 13-18 are based solely on data from the 41 case reviews completed (46 victims) by the DADRT between July 2022 and December 2025. While this approach ensures the accuracy and integrity of the findings, it is important to note that the data may not reflect all domestic abuse-related deaths during this period due to statutory limitations, ongoing case reviews, or pending determinations.

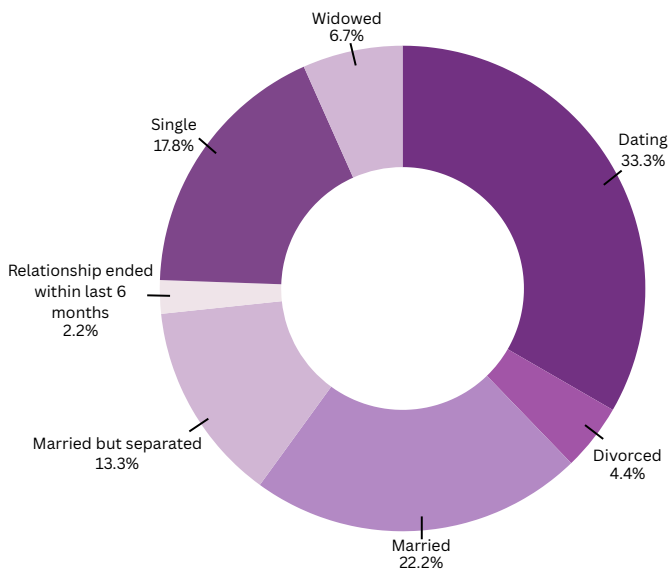
Ethnicity



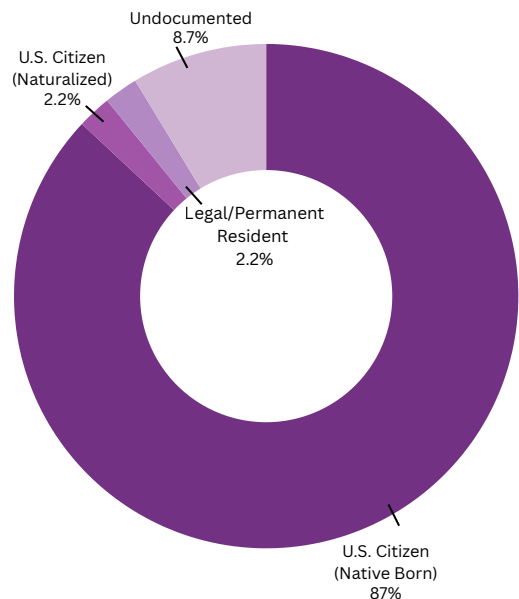
Language



Relationship Status

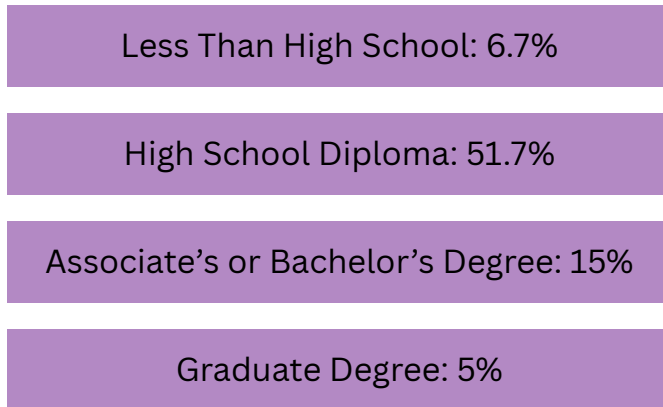


Immigration Status

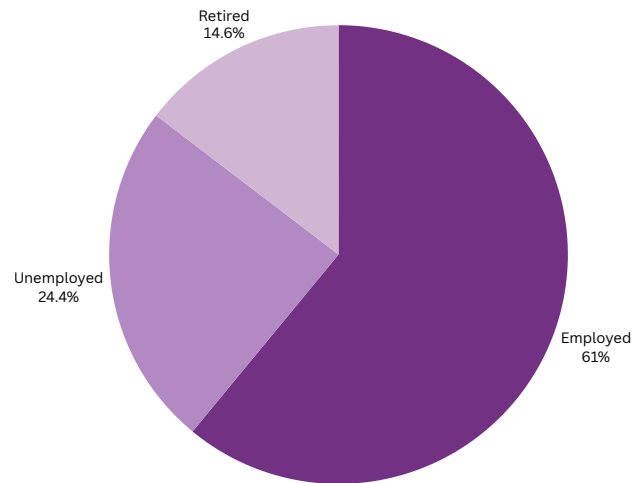


VICTIMS

Highest Level of Education

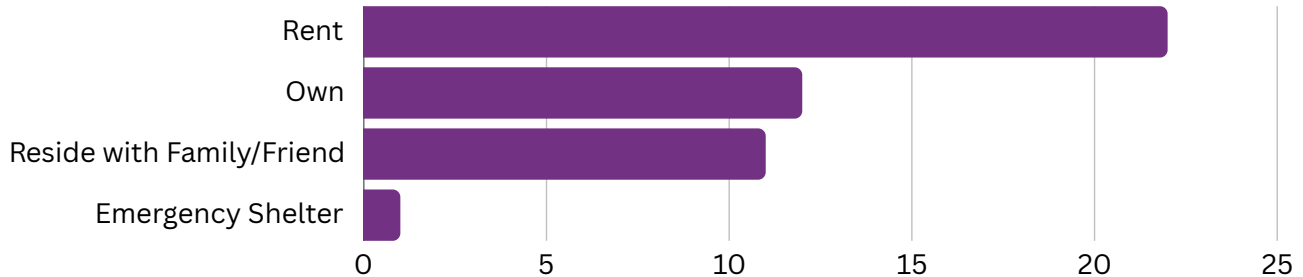


Employment Status

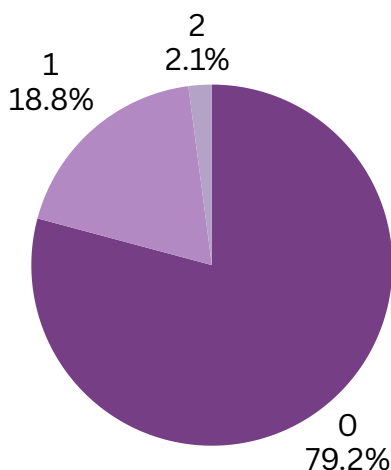


23.9% of victims were receiving public assistance at the time of their deaths.

Housing Status



Total Nebraska Protection Orders Filed by Victims Against Current or Past Perpetrators



Protection orders can establish legal boundaries but cannot prevent all violence and may increase risk.

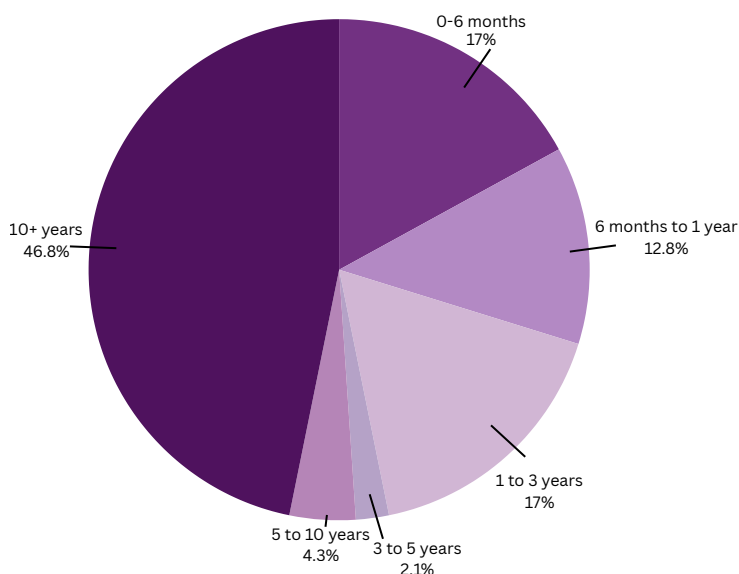
Advocates can help survivors determine whether an order is appropriate and develop a broader safety plan.

VICTIMS

System Contact in Year Prior to Victim's Death

Church	4.3%	Law Enforcement	19.6%
Child Protective Services	13%	Mental Health Provider	26%
Civil Court	21.7%	School	36.9%
County Court	4.3%	Substance Use Provider	4.3%
Criminal Court	8.6%	Support Group	2%
Domestic Violence Agency	2%	Other	23.9%
Hospital/Clinic	30.4%	Unknown	4.3%
Juvenile Court	2%	None of the Above	8.6%

Length of Relationship to Perpetrator

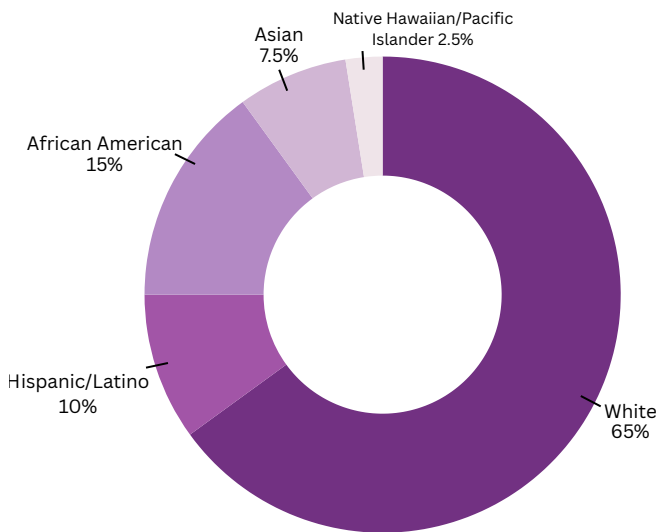


In 74% of cases, family members were aware of violence prior to the victim's death.

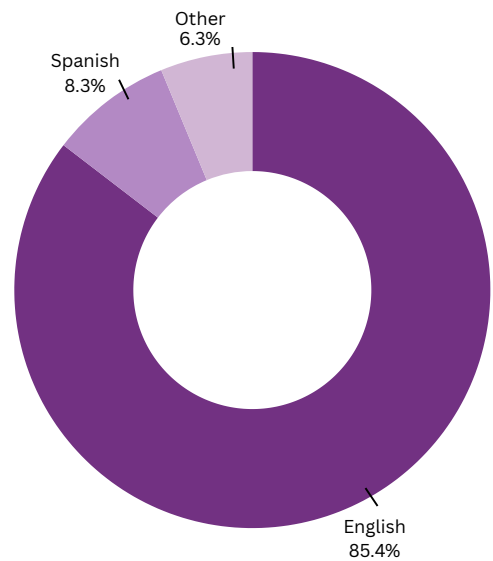
Others close to victims were also aware of violence before the victim was killed. Friends were aware in 65% of cases and coworkers were aware in 17% of cases.

PERPETRATORS

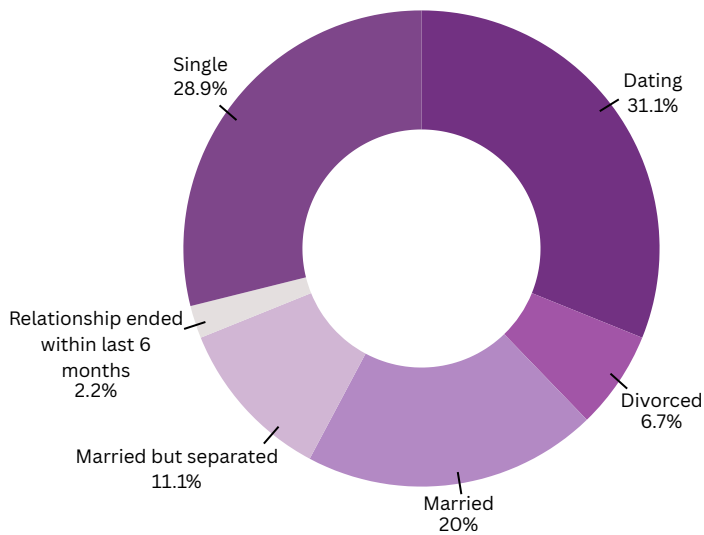
Ethnicity



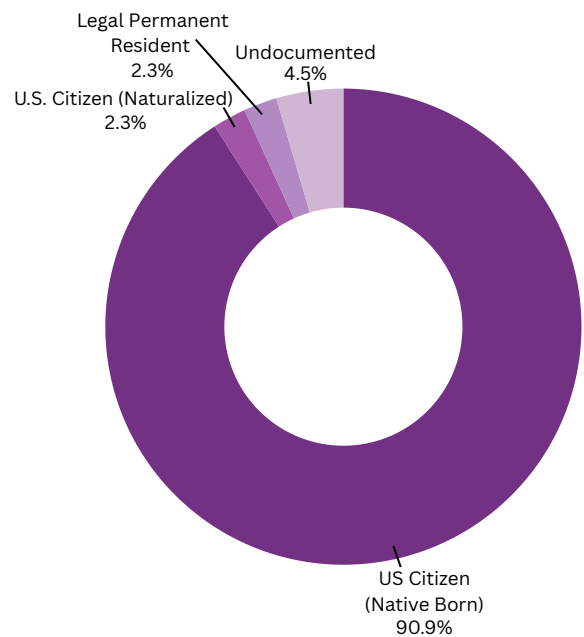
Language



Relationship Status

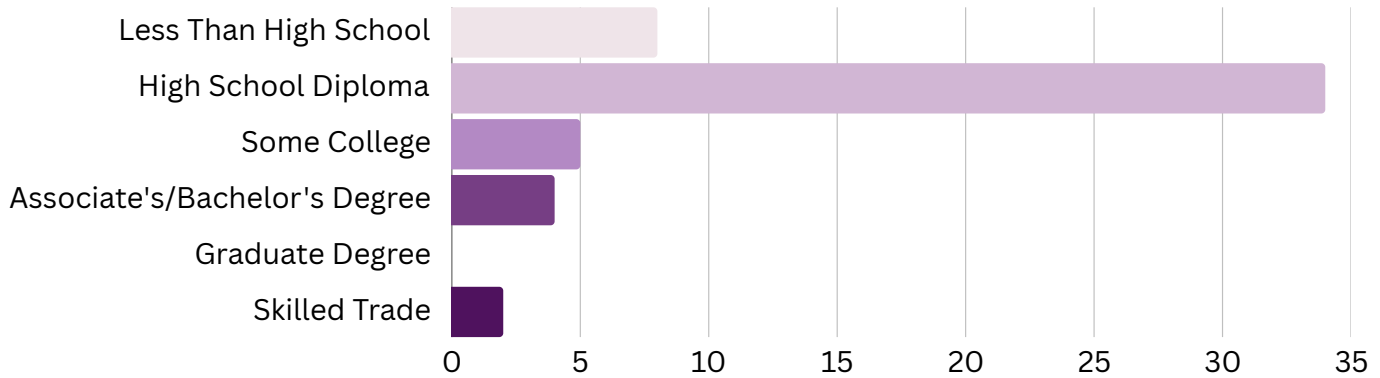


Immigration Status



PERPETRATORS

Highest Education Level



22.7% of perpetrators were unemployed, 52.2% were employed, and 20.4% were receiving public assistance at the time of the death incident.

At the time of the victim's death, 6.8% of perpetrators had an active protection order filed against them. Over the course of their lives, 29.5% had at least one protection order granted against them in Nebraska, and three perpetrators had three or more protection orders filed against them.

79% of previous protection orders filed in Nebraska against the perpetrators in reviewed cases were granted.

The majority of perpetrators (65.9%) had no prior convictions for violent offenses. However, 13.7% had one prior violent offense, and 20.4% had two or more.

63.6% of perpetrators had no history of incarceration. 22.7% were incarcerated for six months or less. 13.7% of perpetrators were incarcerated for more than 1 year.

System Contact in Year Prior to Victim's Death

Law Enforcement: 36.3%

Child Protective Services: 18.1%

Civil & Criminal Court: 27.2%

Hospital/Clinic: 18.2%

TREATMENT & MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health

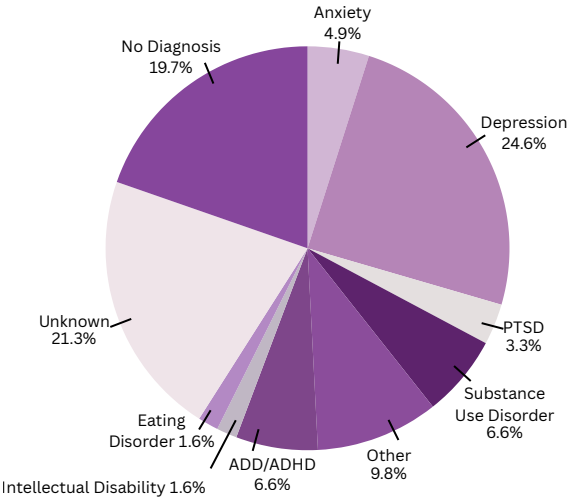
Substance Use

	Victims	Perpetrators
No Treatment	19.5%	18.1%
Last 6 Months	28.2%	13.6%
Last 1-2 Years	6.5%	11.3%
5+ Years	4.3%	11.3%
Unknown	26%	34.1%
Not Applicable	8.7%	6.8%

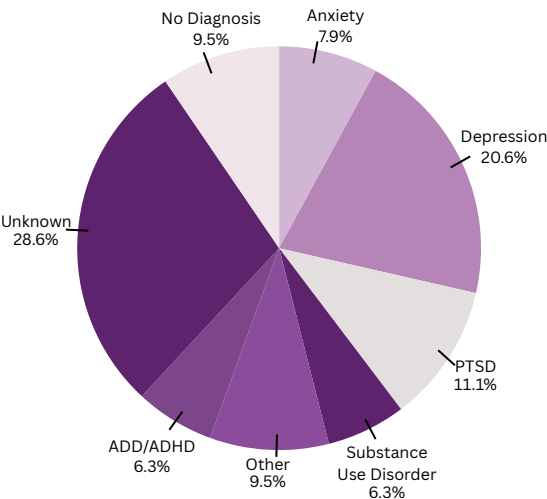
	Victims	Perpetrators
No Treatment	21.7%	40.9%
Last 6 Months	28.2%	2.2%
Last 1-2 Years	2.1%	2.2%
5+ Years	4.3%	2.2%
Unknown	26%	15.9%
Not Applicable	41.3%	34%

Mental Health Diagnosis

Victim



Perpetrator



Mental health diagnoses reflected here likely underestimate the true prevalence of mental conditions. Suspected or presumed conditions are not included in this data. A mental health diagnosis may be a factor in domestic violence deaths, but is not the sole cause.

IMPACT ON CHILDREN

Unhealthy Relationships

DADRT reviews show that many victims and perpetrators in their childhood lacked healthy relationship models and encountered violence before middle school. A prevention subcommittee will identify evidence-based programs, address gaps, strengthen effective efforts, and partner with schools and communities.

Identification, Reporting, and Support

Domestic abuse can harm children's emotional, behavioral, physical, academic, and social development, even when they are not directly abused. DADRT's 2026–2027 training series will help professionals recognize warning signs and support affected children and families. It is critical to support parents in order to support children.

Nebraska's Mandatory Reporter Training, available through the Nebraska DHHS, also helps professionals identify concerns, determine when reporting is required, and consider appropriate informal support.

In the Aftermath

Domestic abuse deaths may leave children grieving, relocating, changing schools, and facing lengthy custody or probate proceedings. In most cases, there were no clear wills or final wishes in place, resulting in conflict over custody, property, and debt for families. Surviving family members often lack knowledge of how to navigate probate or juvenile court systems while coping with the tragic loss of a loved one.

32

Children were present when their parent or caregiver was murdered

10

Children were killed by a family member during a domestic abuse incident

80+

Children were directly impacted by a domestic abuse death

HOMICIDE RISK FACTORS

Of all perpetrators:

- 46.7% had a known history of domestic violence.
- 40.9% experienced abuse during childhood, pointing to long-term cycles of violence.
- 40.9% had a criminal record, indicating patterns of harmful behavior beyond intimate partner violence.
- 31.8% had made explicit threats to kill their victim prior to the homicide.
- 29.5% threatened their victim with a weapon.
- 25% of perpetrators had experienced a recent relationship separation.
- 22.7% of perpetrators had a documented history of abusing or neglecting children.
- 15.9% purchased a weapon shortly before committing the homicide.



A 2024 Purdue study found that 88% of beauty and wellness professionals reported interacting with victims of intimate partner violence.

These findings suggest that community-based professionals are uniquely positioned to recognize signs of abuse and serve as trusted points of connection to resources and support.



Increased awareness and identification efforts must be paired with adequate funding and staffing for victim service organizations.

As more victims are identified and referred, domestic violence programs need the capacity to respond effectively.

BARRIERS TO SAFETY

Basic Needs

DADRT continues to identify unmet basic needs—including housing, childcare, transportation, healthcare, mental health services, and financial stability—as major barriers to victim safety. These challenges can prevent victims from leaving abusive relationships.

Fear of the Unknown and Shame

Housing, custody, financial, employment, and system-related concerns can prevent victims from seeking help. Shame and fear of judgment may create added barriers in smaller communities, highlighting the need for clear information and practical guidance.

Manipulation and Children

DADRT finds that perpetrators often use manipulation, misinformation, and children to maintain control. Victims may distrust systems or fear custody consequences and harm to their children's relationship with the offender.

Access to Services

Rural, minority, and low-income victims face added barriers to services, including transportation, cultural challenges, limited awareness, and scarce resources. DADRT stresses the need for 24/7 support and clear guidance.

Early Intervention Considerations:

- How can early-intervention programs support behavior change before formal Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP) services are needed?
- How can communities recognize, reinforce, and promote healthy relationship behaviors to encourage positive change and prevent violence before it occurs?
- How can outreach encourage people to seek help before harmful behavior escalates?
- How can communities support change through mentoring, accountability, connection, and restorative approaches while protecting victims?
- How can communities engage people who do not recognize the harm caused by their abusive behavior?

LACK OF SYSTEM CONTACT

Nebraska domestic abuse trends continue to demonstrate that many victims and perpetrators of domestic violence are not coming into contact with traditional systems and services prior to a homicide. In the 12 months preceding a victim's death, only 36.3% of perpetrators had contact with law enforcement, with even lower levels of engagement identified within child protective services, court systems, and healthcare settings. Similarly, only 20.4% of homicide victims had contact with law enforcement and 13.6% had contact with child protective services.

Just one of 46 victims had contact with a domestic violence program in the year prior to their death.

Prior to the homicide, family members were aware of violence in 74% of cases, friends were aware in 65% of cases, and coworkers were aware in 17% of cases. This highlights the need for stronger service referrals and community education so trusted individuals can recognize abuse and connect victims with help. Family members, friends, coworkers, and community members may represent critical opportunities for early intervention when equipped with the knowledge and resources to recognize abuse, respond supportively, and connect victims with services.

The findings also raise concerns regarding perpetrator accountability. With limited contact between perpetrators and investigative or intervention systems, opportunities to identify abusive behavior, hold offenders accountable, and provide intervention are often missed.

The DADRT recommends that victim-serving agencies and outreach programs explore strategies to increase community awareness, improve victim referrals, and strengthen support networks for survivors. Particular attention should be given to training non-traditional community professionals who regularly interact with the public, including salon professionals, librarians, community center staff, hospitality workers, delivery personnel, trades professionals, customer service representatives, and healthcare providers outside of emergency settings.

DOMESTIC ABUSE DEATH CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

Prior Violence & Intimate Partner Violence: 68.8%

Physical, financial, emotional abuse, or stalking perpetrated by a current or former intimate partner, family member, friend, acquaintance, or stranger.

Note: Not all domestic abuse deaths involve intimate partners - homicides between any members of the same household, bystanders, etc. are considered domestic violence deaths.

Trauma: 62.2%

One or more case participants experienced trauma or abuse in their lives.

Substance Use: 62.2%

One or more case participants used legal or illegal substances prior to or during the incident or experienced long-term substance abuse.

Access/Financial Barriers: 48.9%

Systemic barriers, such as lack or loss of health insurance, lack of transportation, financial duress, or lack of nearby providers impacted their ability to care for themselves

Mental Health Conditions: 48.8%

Case participants had a documented or suspected diagnosis of a psychiatric disorder.

Unstable Housing: 40.7%

Case participants lived “on the street,” in a homeless shelter, or in transitional or temporary circumstances with family or friends.

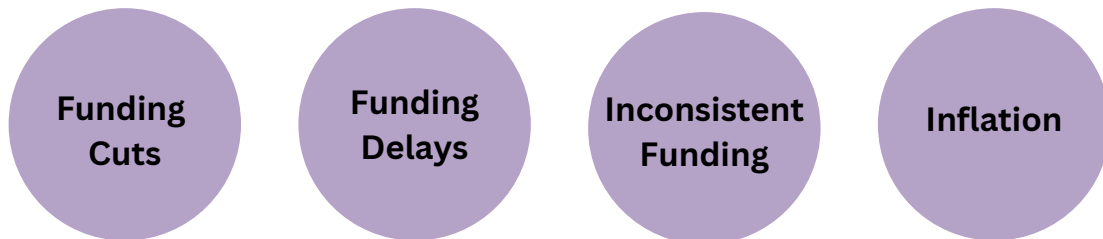
Assessment: 35.5%

Factors placing the individual at risk for abuse and violence were recognized, and they were not transferred/transported to a provider able to give a proper level of care.

STRAINED SYSTEMS AND INCREASED RISK

How Funding Cuts Affect Victims and Providers

Across Nebraska’s domestic violence response system, a consistent theme has emerged through case reviews, stakeholder discussions, and lethality assessment conversations. As awareness and education improve, referrals and identified need increase. This is a critical and positive development; more professionals are recognizing risk factors, survivors are more frequently being identified earlier, and systems are becoming more skilled at asking the right questions. However, this progress also brings a necessary reality into focus: increased identification of need must be met with adequate service capacity.



At the same time, domestic violence service providers across Nebraska are operating under significant financial strain. Funding reductions and shifting funding priorities have resulted in substantial cuts statewide, forcing programs to make difficult operational decisions. **These reductions directly affect the ability of programs to maintain consistent emergency and long-term support for survivors.**

VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) 2023: 40% cut \$2.5 million loss 2025: 40% cut	Inflation Up 20% between 2021 & 2023, impacting costs for shelter, transportation, food, & other necessities.
COVID-19 27% of survivors reported escalated violence and 26% reported experiencing new abuse.	Increased Need Domestic violence programs saw over a 12% increase in survivors reaching out for services & a 12% increase in survivors needing shelter.

INCREASE IN LETHALITY

Feedback from victim service providers and law enforcement agencies indicates that not only has the demand for victim services increased, but the severity and lethality of domestic violence incidents have also escalated in both rural and metropolitan areas.



- 53% increase in survivors served from 2024 to 2025; a 104% increase over the past four years
- Strangulation reports increased from 59% (2021) to 65% (2025)
- Threats to kill increased from 53% to 57%
- Stalking, monitoring, or surveillance increased from 60% to 71%
- Loss of \$586,664 annually due to funding cuts.



**56% decrease in
VOCA funding since
2021**

- Closure of the Valentine, NE satellite office, eliminating local advocacy services and requiring survivors to travel more than two hours to access in-person support
- Closure of three shelter locations, including an ADA-accessible and pet-friendly facility
- Loss of \$15,000 annually designated for emergency hotel and motel housing for survivors



**Lost four full-time
staff due to June
2025 cuts**

LAW ENFORCEMENT DV POLICY REVIEW

The DADRT partnered with the University of Nebraska at Omaha to review domestic violence response policies across Nebraska law enforcement agencies. The review found strong safety procedures, evidence collection, documentation, and victim service partnerships, while identifying opportunities for greater consistency in victim-centered practices, referrals, and tools such as lethality assessments.

In response, the DADRT will work with statewide partners to build upon existing efforts made by law enforcement and develop an evidence-informed best practice policy that agencies can adapt to local needs. The policy will promote consistent responses, stronger investigations, victim safety, officer guidance, collaboration, and offender accountability.

Highlights

- **Topics mentioned included in policies included:**
 - Stalking: 18%
 - Strangulation: 15%
 - Intoxication: 12%
 - Children: 38%
 - Property disputes: 8%
- **Victim safety and service referrals varied across agencies, with the majority (68%) discussing some victim considerations in their policy.**
- **65% of policies included the last revision date of the policy, which ranged from August 2002 to January 2026**
- **49% of policies specified protocols when officers arrive at the scene of a DV call.**
- **33% outlined safety protocols for officers.**
- **38% of policies discussed resource referrals. Referrals were often discussed in the context of arrest and varied from providing information to facilitating a warm handoff.**

LETHALITY ASSESSMENT

Pilot Project: Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) in Nebraska

The Nebraska Domestic Abuse Death Review Team (DADRT) has identified lethality assessments as an underused tool in the state's response to high-risk domestic violence. To address this gap, DADRT selected Buffalo and Scotts Bluff Counties to pilot the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP), based on their strong partnerships between law enforcement and victim service agencies and their differing rural and metropolitan settings.

This 24-month project, conducted in partnership with the University of Nebraska at Omaha, will implement and evaluate LAP's feasibility and short-term outcomes. LAP uses an 11-question screening tool during domestic violence calls. When a victim is identified as high risk, officers immediately connect the victim with a local advocacy program for support and safety planning.

The evaluation will draw on surveys, interviews, incident reports, screening data, and victim service records. It will examine the effects of LAP training, implementation challenges, collaboration and sustainability, victim connections to services, and immediate offender outcomes such as arrest decisions.

The pilot project is expected to benefit victims, families, law enforcement, service providers, and local communities while providing guidance for possible statewide expansion. The project is pending grant funding, with a goal of launching before the end of 2026. Adequate funding, staffing, and service capacity will be essential to ensure high-risk victims receive timely support without overwhelming local providers.

DADRT SUBCOMMITTEES

DADRT subcommittees are created when trends are identified through case review and need further exploration, expertise, and discussion. Subcommittees are comprised of select DADRT team members, community professionals with specific expertise and experience, and survivors. The team would like to thank all of our subcommittee members for their time, dedication, and expertise they provide to these subcommittees.

Firearms & Protection Orders Subcommittee Efforts:

- Review Nebraska firearm and protection-order laws and processes.
- Analyze successful out-of-state policies for possible consideration.
- Encourage improved compliance with federal firearm safe storage and transfer laws where appropriate.
- Support victim safety while maintaining due process protections.

FEDERAL LAW PROHIBITS DOMESTIC ABUSERS FROM BUYING AND POSSESSING GUNS IN THREE CIRCUMSTANCES:

- An abuser is subject to a domestic violence restraining order.
- An abuser has been convicted of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence.
- An abuser has been convicted of a felony (regardless of whether the crime involved domestic violence).

Nebraska currently does not have a formal firearm safe storage or transfer process for these circumstances.

DADRT SUBCOMMITTEES

Prevention & Healthy Relationship Subcommittee Goals:

- Address gaps in current prevention programming.
- Identify evidence-based programs on healthy relationships, dating violence, and domestic abuse.
- Expand prevention opportunities in schools and communities.
- Equip adults who work with youth to recognize concerns, respond appropriately, and connect them with resources.
- Review the Lindsay Ann Burke Act's implementation, impact, and opportunities for improvement.

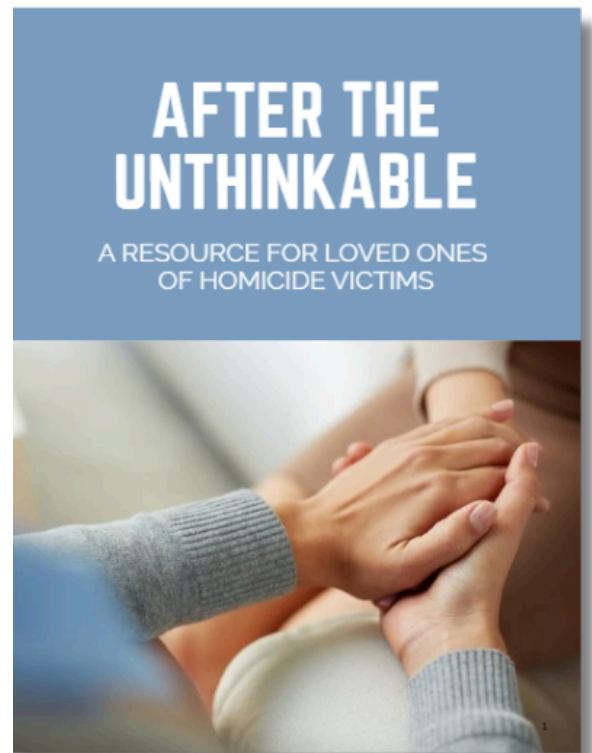
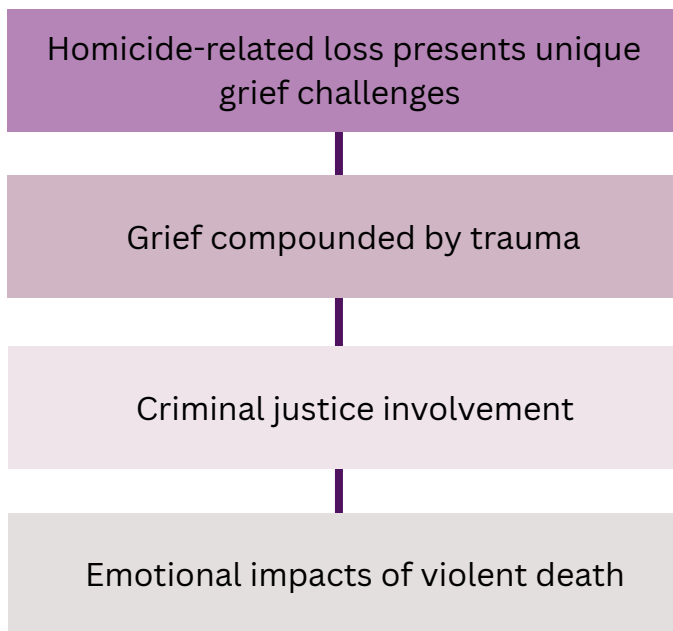
Education & Awareness Subcommittee Goals:

- Identify statewide gaps in domestic abuse training and education.
- Develop targeted training and awareness campaigns to strengthen Nebraska's response.
- Explore legislation that supports domestic abuse services and victim-serving professionals.
- Use case review trends to highlight the need for child abuse prevention programs.
- Explore opportunities to increase awareness in places where victims and perpetrators frequent, since many are not coming into contact with established systems.

HOMICIDE SUPPORT GROUP AND GUIDE

Feedback from homicide victims' loved ones and multidisciplinary agencies identified a need for expanded specialized grief support. Homicide loss is often compounded by trauma, criminal justice involvement, and barriers such as distance, travel, and cost, especially in rural areas. This initiative supports co-facilitators with lived experience of homicide-related loss who are certified, or willing to become certified, as grief facilitators. The peer-professional model builds trust while providing informed, compassionate support. DADRT is working with the Omaha Homicide Support Group and other partners to launch a virtual support group, which will overcome statewide financial and distance barriers.

The support group assists with:



After the Unthinkable: A Resource Guide for Loved Ones of Homicide Victims provides trauma-informed, step-by-step guidance from death notification through the months that follow. It explains investigations, autopsies, funerals, court processes, victim compensation, and available grief and support services.

Originally developed by the Omaha Police Department, the guide was expanded statewide by DADRT in an editable format for local use. It supports loved ones of all homicide victims and incorporates feedback from surviving family members.



Request a copy

NEW VIRTUAL TRAINING SERIES

Strengthening Nebraska's Response to Domestic Violence: 2026–2027 Interdisciplinary Training Series

Nebraska doesn't currently have consistent domestic abuse training requirements for many professionals who work with victims and perpetrators, in part due to insufficient funding. Without specialized education, providers may unintentionally increase risk or weaken coordinated responses.

To address this gap, DADRT partnered with the Nebraska Attorney General's Office to develop a free, virtual interdisciplinary training series. The five-session program will cover abuse dynamics, stalking, prosecution, investigation, trauma-informed practices, perpetrator accountability, Nebraska laws and data, lethality, and coordinated response. Quarterly trainings will be offered live, with continuing education credit offered.

REGISTER TODAY!



October 22, 2026

Understanding the
Landscape: Dynamics,
Stalking, & Survivor-
Centered Practice

January 21, 2027

Accountability &
Documentation:
Perpetrators, Protection, &
System Response

April 22, 2027

Risk & Collaboration:
Lethality, Injury, &
Coordinated Community
Response

July 29, 2027

Advanced Case Strategy:
Investigation, Homicide
Review, & Prosecution

September 23, 2027

Building Trust & Safety: Domestic
Violence Response in Tribal,
Immigrant, & Diverse Communities

DV AWARENESS & MEDIA

Over the past year, the Nebraska Domestic Abuse Death Review Team (DADRT) received significant media attention, increasing awareness of domestic violence and related systemic issues. Statewide outlets highlighted the 2025 and 2026 annual reports, which were also widely shared by victim service agencies and nonprofits. Coverage from Nebraska Public Media, WOWT, and KLKN emphasized rising domestic violence fatalities and the need for a coordinated statewide response.

In January 2026, DADRT Coordinator Amy Cirian and team member Christon MacTaggart joined a bipartisan group of Nebraska legislators at the State Capitol to support legislation strengthening protections for domestic abuse victims.



The increased visibility of the DADRT in media and legislative forums has elevated public discourse on domestic violence, fostered broader understanding of the Team's work, and supported collective efforts to prevent future deaths. The DADRT hopes that this heightened awareness will build trust with survivors, communities, and system partners alike, strengthening collaboration and reinforcing shared commitment to ending domestic abuse in Nebraska.

LEGISLATION

2025-2026 Legislation

LB 912

DADRT case reviews highlighted the critical role mental health professionals and social workers play in identifying domestic violence, protecting victims, and promoting accountability. When abuse dynamics or coercive control are missed, opportunities for intervention and safety planning may be lost. Many Nebraska clinicians have requested additional training and guidance on screening, risk, documentation, reporting, confidentiality, and victim-centered planning.

In response, DADRT partnered with the Nebraska Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence and Senator Beau Ballard to advance training requirements for mental health practitioners. Enacted through LB 912 in 2026, the law requires licensed practitioners to complete two hours of domestic abuse education every two years and provisional applicants to complete three hours beginning September 1, 2027.



LB 816

DADRT identified concerns about cumulative trauma among first responders handling domestic violence, high-risk calls, and homicides. A major barrier to seeking help was the lack of confidentiality for peer support communications.

DADRT members worked with first responder and peer support organizations to help shape LB 816, introduced by Senator Tanya Storer and signed into law in 2026. The law protects peer support communications for public safety personnel while preserving safety and reporting exceptions. These protections encourage earlier support, reduce burnout, and strengthen responses during high-risk incidents.

LOOKING FORWARD

DADRT goals for next year:

- Complete at least two case reviews and collect data on 12 additional cases.
- Develop a lethality assessment implementation plan, secure funding, and prepare pilot sites.
- Expand, encourage, and support collaboration with professionals in Nebraska and nationally.
- Launch statewide domestic abuse training for professionals and communities.
- Explore evidence-based violence prevention and healthy relationship education.
- Review firearm laws and identify opportunities to increase victim protections while upholding due process.
- Engage new community partners and expand targeted domestic violence education.
- Continue gathering input from victims, survivors, people who use abuse, families, and service systems to guide data-driven recommendations.

Closing

The Nebraska Domestic Abuse Death Review Team extends its sincere gratitude to the dedicated criminal justice and community service professionals across the state whose support and record contributions made comprehensive case reviews possible. We also offer a heartfelt thank you to the community professionals and family members who courageously shared their experiences with our team. Their voices continue to inform and strengthen our efforts to prevent future domestic violence tragedies.

The DADRT remains committed to reducing domestic abuse-related deaths and strengthening support systems for victims across the state. As we reflect on the past year, we honor and remember those whose lives were tragically lost to domestic abuse. It is our hope that this report—and those to come—will inform and inspire meaningful changes in policy, practice, and prevention efforts throughout Nebraska.

DADRT MEMBERS



Nebraska Attorney General's Office

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State Forensic Nursing Coordinator

Amy Cirian, LIMHP
DADRT Coordinator

George Welch
Assistant Attorney General

Macy Meyer
Victim/Witness Coordinator

Survivor Leaders

Candi Jones

Amber Harper

**Tia Manning, MS, LMHP,
PLC, LADC**

Research

Tara Richards, Ph.D.
Interim Director and
Distinguished Professor
School of Criminology
& Criminal Justice
University of Nebraska
Omaha

Appointment

Team members are
appointed according to the
requirements in Nebraska
Revised Statute § 71-3416.

Advocacy

Hilary Wasserburger
Executive Director
The DOVES Program

Leah Droge
Chief Executive Officer
Friendship Home

Christon MacTaggart
Executive Director
Nebraska Coalition to
End Sexual Assault and
Domestic Violence

Jamie Vetter
Executive Director
Family Advocacy Network

Prosecution and Probation

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Domestic Violence
Specialist
Administrative Office of the
Courts and Probation

Ashley Bohnet
Deputy Lancaster County
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Healthcare Professionals

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DHHS

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**Lieutenant Brent
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Omaha Police Department

Captain Paul Koerner
Buffalo County Sheriff's
Office

**Detective Elizabeth
Abramson**
Omaha Police Department
LGBTQ+ Representative

**Chief Deputy Kreighton
Baxter**
Clay County Sheriff's Office