

# Family and Intimate Partner Homicide

**A descriptive analysis of the characteristics and circumstances surrounding family and intimate partner homicide in Virginia, 2009**

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## Introduction

The Family and Intimate Partner Homicide Surveillance Project is a public health effort for understanding the scope of fatal domestic violence in Virginia. It provides a standardized monitoring method for reviewing all domestic related homicides in the state. By collecting demographic information about victims of domestic violence, the project identifies which groups are at risk and common risk factors that shape lethal domestic relationships. With this data we can identify the magnitude of the most dangerous domestic violence in Virginia.

The project is coordinated at the Virginia Department of Health, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME). Cases are identified by newspaper surveillance and through OCME records. Cases in the project are deaths deemed by the OCME as a homicide after a medico-legal death investigation. Since deaths are identified by newspaper surveillance and OCME records, numbers may be different from other data reported by law enforcement agencies and the Virginia Division of Health Statistics. Information about each homicide is drawn from death certificates, autopsy reports, police reports and other records compiled during the death investigation, as well as court records, and internet searches.

## Technical Notes

To provide a sense of where domestic violence deaths occur in Virginia, two types of regional breakdowns are provided. Health Planning Regions (HPR) describe where the fatal injury occurred, revealing areas of the Commonwealth where prevention efforts are most needed. Cases in which the decedent was fatally injured in Virginia but died in another state are also included in the project.

OCME Districts portray where the death investigation took place, which may be different from the district where injury occurred.

Rates are calculated for every 100,000 persons in the population. Therefore, if a homicide rate is 2, then for every 100,000 people in that population group, there were 2 people that were killed. Population data are from the Virginia Department of Health's Division of Health Statistics.

Ethnicity is separate from Race in this report, as Hispanic persons can identify as a member of any race and are a separate ethnic group.

Table 1: Virginia Population by Race, Ethnicity and Sex: 2009

Race	Female		Male		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
White	2,927,191	37.1	2,875,769	36.5	5,802,960	73.6
Black	841,411	10.7	774,935	9.8	1,616,346	20.5
Other	239,123	3	224,161	2.8	463,284	5.8
Total	4,007,725	50.8	3,874,865	49.2	7,882,590	100
Ethnicity						
Hispanic	267,637	3.4	302,284	3.8	569,921	7.2

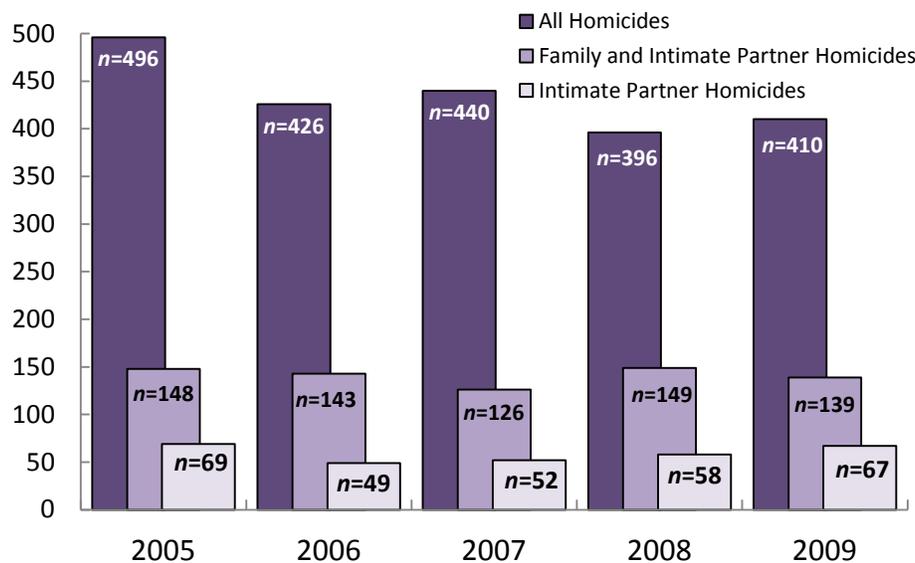
### **All Virginia Homicide**

This report focuses on Family and Intimate Partner (FIP) homicide in Virginia in 2009. To understand the context of FIP homicides, characteristics of all 2009 homicides are provided.<sup>1</sup>

- In 2009, there were 410 homicides in Virginia with a rate of 5.2. This was more than 1 homicide a day, and reflects a 2.8% increase between 2008 and 2009.
- Most victims were male making up 75.4% of victims with a rate of 7.1. Females had a rate of 2.5.
- Most victims were black making up 53.7% of victims at a rate of 14.5. Whites made up 35.9% of victims at a much lower rate of 2.5.
- Seventy percent of all homicide victims were killed with a firearm.
- The highest number of victims was between the ages of 25-34 (22.9%). Homicide victims' ages ranged from <1 day to 90 years old.

**In 2009, family and intimate partner homicides comprised 33.9% of all Virginia homicides**

*Figure 1: Number of Homicides, Family and Intimate Partner Homicides, and Intimate Partner Homicides in Virginia between 2005 and 2009*



<sup>1</sup> Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Virginia Department of Health (2011). Office of the Chief Medical Examiner's Annual Report, 2009. Retrieved November 17, 2011 from <http://www.vdh.state.va.us/medExam/documents/2011/pdfs/AnnualReport09.pdf>

**Family and Intimate Partner (FIP) Homicide**

FIP homicide includes the following 6 categories of what is often called “domestic violence”: Intimate Partner Homicide, Intimate Partner Associated Homicide, Child Homicide by Caregiver, Elder Homicide by Caregiver, Other Family Homicide, and Family Associated Homicide (see appendix for more specific definitions). In this project, that larger category is broken down into more detail based on the relationship between the alleged offender and the victim to explore the different circumstances and characteristics of FIP homicide.

- In 2009, there were 130 family and intimate partner homicide events with 139 homicide victims in Virginia. The rate of FIP homicide was 1.8. FIP victims made up 33.9% of all homicide victims.
- FIP homicide decreased 6.7% between 2008 and 2009.
- Seventy-six females were killed from FIP homicide with a rate of 1.9 and 63 males were killed from FIP homicide with a rate of 1.6.
- More females ( $n=54$ ) than males ( $n=13$ ) were killed from intimate partner violence. More males ( $n=26$ ) than females ( $n=4$ ) were killed from intimate partner associated violence. Also, more males ( $n=8$ ) than females ( $n=3$ ) were killed from family violence.
- White Virginians were more frequently killed ( $n=73$ ) than black Virginians ( $n=60$ ). However, black Virginians had a higher FIP homicide rate at 3.7 than white Virginians at a rate of 1.3.
- FIP victims were most likely to be killed with a firearm (49.3%).
- The most common age group of a victim was between the ages 15-24 ( $n=26$ ). Infants were the most vulnerable age group with the highest FIP rate of 13.1.
- Alcohol use was evident in 28.1% of cases, and other substance use was evident in 18.7% of cases.
- The majority of FIP homicides ( $n=119$ , 85.6%) occurred at a residence.

**FIP Homicide Victim Age**

- The mean age of FIP homicide victims was 32.
- The mean age of alleged offenders was 39.
- Female infants had the highest homicide rate at 15.3 followed by male infants at 11.
- Among adults, women aged 25-34 years old had the FIP highest homicide rate at 4.3.

Figure 2: Number of FIP Homicide Victims by Age and Sex in Virginia (N=139): 2009

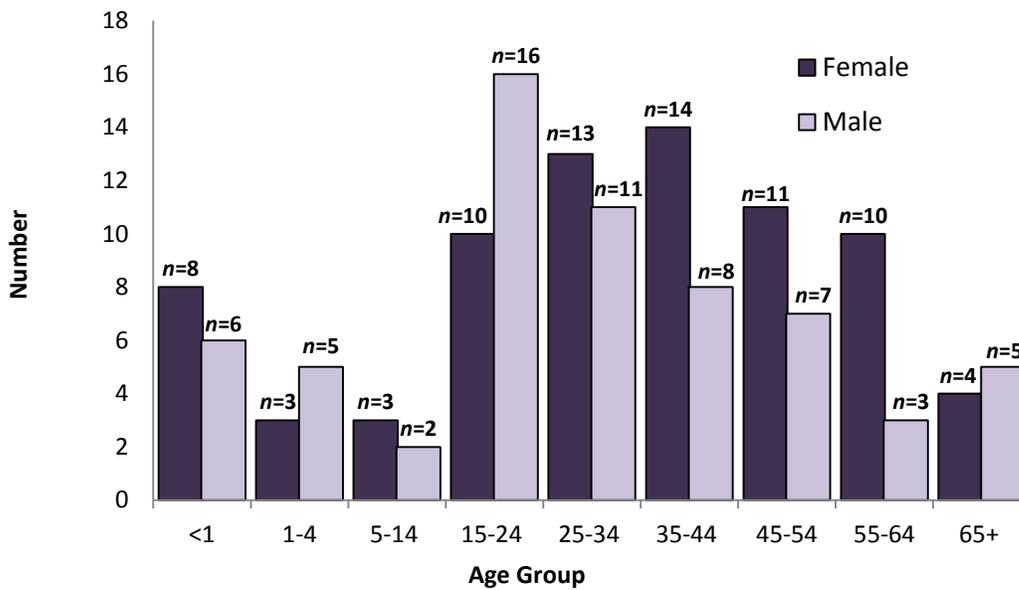
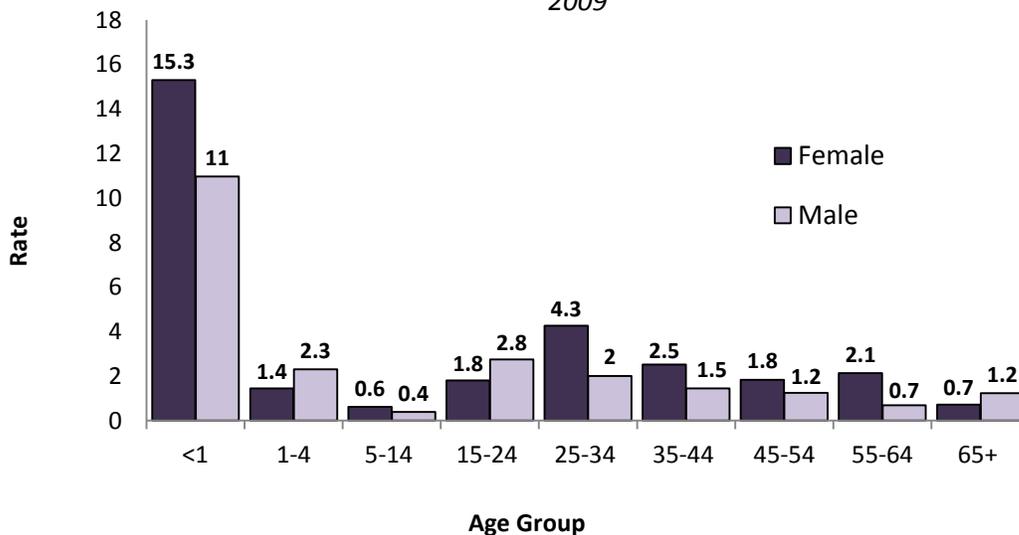
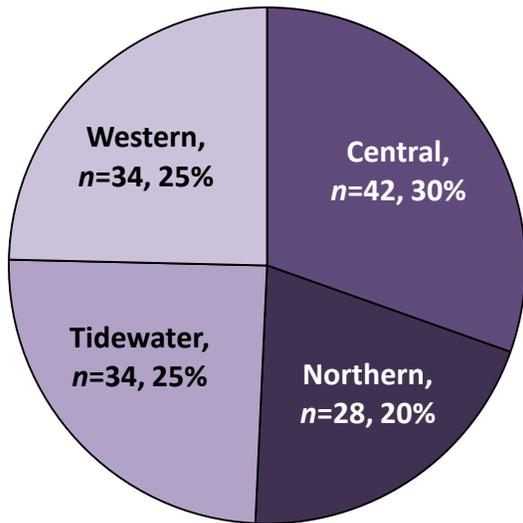


Figure 3: Rate of FIP Homicides by Age and Sex in Virginia (N=139): 2009



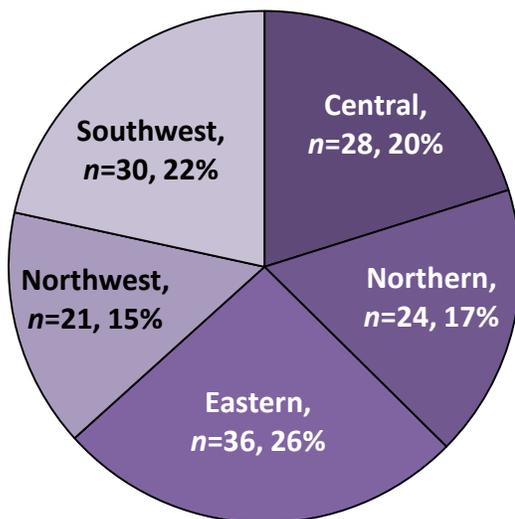
**Locality**

Figure 4: Percentage of FIP Homicides by Office of the Chief Medical Examiner District in Virginia (N=138): 2009\*



\*In one case the fatal injury occurred in Virginia, but the death occurred in another state and was not investigated by the OCME.

Figure 5: Percentage of FIP Homicides by Health Planning Region in Virginia (N=139): 2009



**OCME District**

- Both the Tidewater and the Western District had 34 deaths, and each had a rate of 2.1.
- The Central District had the highest number of FIP homicides with 42 deaths, and a FIP death rate at 2.
- The Northern District had 28 deaths and the lowest rate at 1.1.

**Health Planning Region**

- The Southwest HPR had 30 deaths and the highest FIP homicide rate at 2.3.
- The Central Region had 28 deaths and the second highest rate at 2.1.
- The Eastern Region had 26 deaths with a rate of 2, and the Northwest Region had 21 deaths with a rate of 1.7.
- The Northern Region had 24 deaths and the lowest rate with 1.1.

**Homicide Victim Race and Ethnicity**

- Black Virginians had a homicide rate (3.7) almost three times higher than white Virginians (1.3).
- Black males had the highest rate at 4.3, followed by black females at 3.2.

*Table 2: FIP Homicides by Race, Ethnicity and Sex in Virginia (N=139): 2009*

	Female			Male			Total		
Race	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate
White	44	57.9	1.5	29	46	1	73	52.5	1.3
Black	27	35.5	3.2	33	52.4	4.3	60	43.2	3.7
Other	5	6.6	2.1	1	1.6	0.5	6	4.3	1.3
Total	76	100	1.9	63	100	1.9	139	100	1.8
Ethnicity									
Hispanic	2	2.6	0.8	2	3.2	0.7	4	2.9	0.7

**Fatal Agency**

*Table 3: FIP Homicides by Fatal Agency and Sex in Virginia (N=139): 2009\**

	Female		Male		Total	
Fatal Agency	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Firearm	38	50	35	55.6	73	52.5
Sharp Instrument	14	18.4	9	14.3	23	16.5
Personal Weapon (e.g. using hand/foot)	11	14.5	11	17.5	22	15.8
Strangle/Choke	10	13.2	3	4.8	13	9.4
Blunt Instrument	6	7.9	3	4.5	9	6.5
Smother/Suffocate	2	2.6	0	0	2	1.4
Drown	1	1.3	0	0	1	0.7
Poison/Carbon Monoxide	0	0	1	1.6	1	0.7
Other/Unknown	3	3.9	1	1.6	4	2.9

\*Note that more than one fatal agency can be used in a homicide. Among these 139 FIP homicides, there were 148 separate fatal agencies used.

- The most common fatal agency used in FIP homicides was a firearm, used in over half the homicides (52.5%).
- Sharp instruments and personal weapons (hands/feet) were each used in over 15% of FIP homicides.
- Females were more likely than males to be strangled or choked, and males were more likely than females to be killed by a personal weapon.
- All males were fatally injured with 1 fatal agency. Nine females were fatally injured with 2 or more fatal agencies.

**Other Victims**

- During the 130 FIP homicide events, 20 other people were attacked and survived the event.
- At least 58 children were present at an FIP homicide event. The type of exposure varied but included a child visually witnessing the event, hearing the event, finding the homicide victim, being on the premises during the event, or some combination of these.
- Thirty-two events involved more than one decedent. Twenty-seven of these were a homicide-suicide event.

**Type of Family and Intimate Partner Homicide**

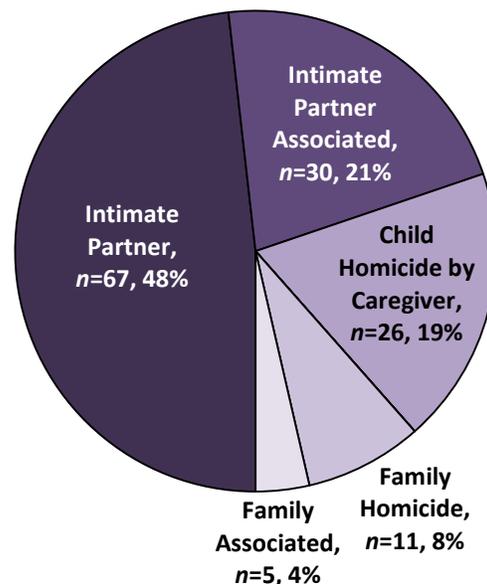
*Table 4: FIP Homicides by Type and Sex in Virginia (N=139): 2009\**

Type	Female			Male			Total		
	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate
IPH	54	71.1	1.3	13	20.6	0.3	67	48.2	0.9
IPA	4	5.3	0.1	26	41.3	0.7	30	21.6	0.4
CHC	14	18.4	0.4	12	19.1	0.3	26	18.7	0.3
EHC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OFH	3	3.9	0.1	8	12.7	0.2	11	7.9	0.2
FAH	1	1.3	<0.1	4	6.3	0.1	5	3.6	0.1
Total	76	100	1.9	63	100	1.6	139	100	1.8

\*See appendix for definitions of each type of FIP homicide.

- Females more commonly died as a result of intimate partner violence (80.6% female 19.4% male), and males more commonly died from intimate partner associated violence (86.7% male, 13.3% female) and family violence (75% male, 25% female).
- In 2009, there were no elder homicides by caregiver in Virginia.
- Among victims under the age of 18, 26 were CHC victims, 3 were IPA homicide victims, 1 was an IPH victim, and 1 was a FAH victim.

*Figure 6: Percentage of FIP Homicides by Type in Virginia (N=139): 2009*



**Intimate Partner Homicide (IPH)** is classified as a homicide in which a victim was killed by a spouse (married or separated); former spouse; current or former boyfriend/girlfriend or same sex partner; or where one partner perceived a relationship with the other and there was a history of rejection, threats, harassment, stalking, possessiveness, or issuance of a protective order.

- There were 67 intimate partner homicides in Virginia at a rate of 0.9.
- Fifty-four females were killed from IPH with a rate of 1.3, and 13 males were killed with a rate of 0.3.
- IPH in Virginia increased 15.5% between 2008 and 2009.

**IPH Victim Age**

Figure 7: Number of IPH Victims by Age and Sex in Virginia (N=67): 2009

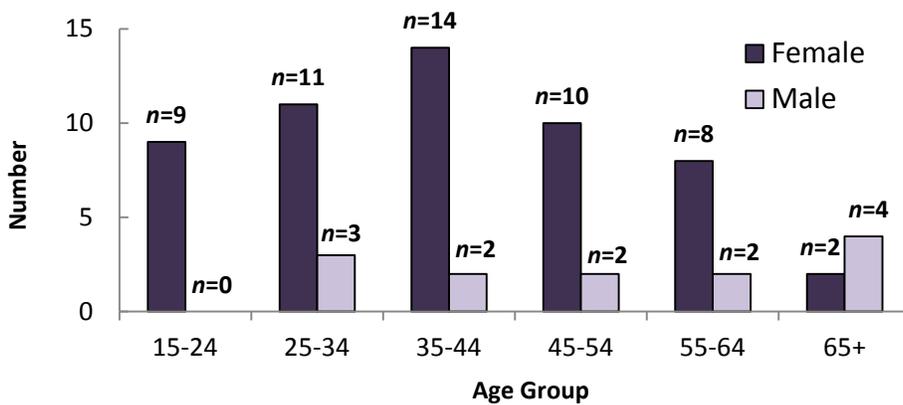
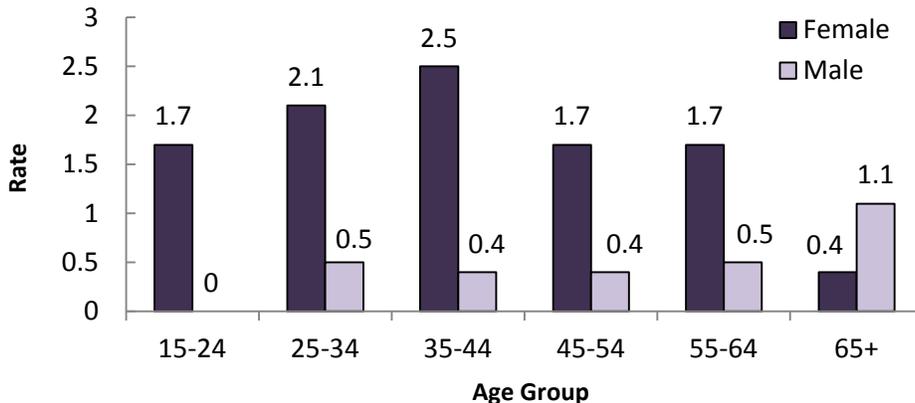


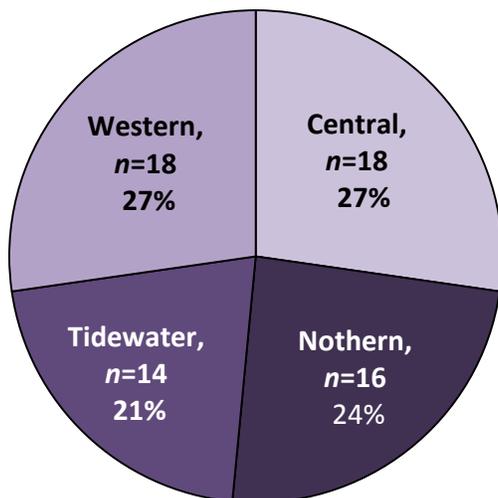
Figure 8: Rate of IPH by Age and Sex in Virginia (N=67): 2009



- The mean age of IPH victims was 42.
- The mean age of alleged offenders was 43.
- IPH victim's ages ranged from 16 to 72.
- Females between the ages of 35-44 years had the highest rate of IPH at 2.5.

**Locality**

*Figure 9: Percentage of IPH by Office of the Chief Medical Examiner Districts in Virginia (N=66): 2009\**

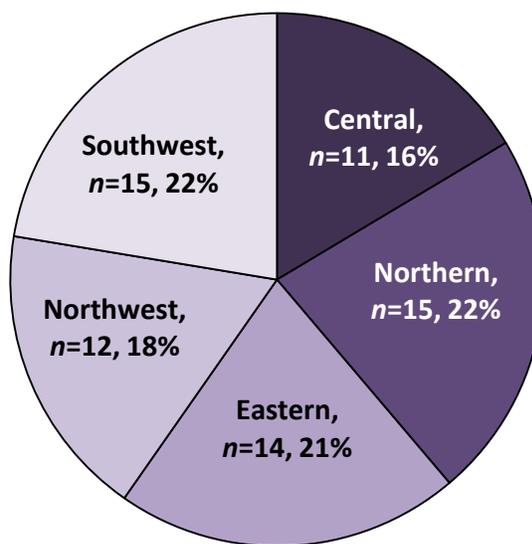


- The Western OCME District had the highest rate of IPH at 1.1.
- The Central and the Tidewater Districts each had a rate of 0.9.
- The Northern District had the lowest rate at 0.6.

\*In one case the fatal injury occurred in Virginia, but the death occurred in another state and was not investigated by the OCME.

*Figure 10: Percentage of IPH by Health Planning Region in Virginia (N=67): 2009*

- The Southwest HPR had the highest rate of IPH at 1.1.
- The Northwest Region had a rate of 1.0
- The Central and Eastern Regions each had a rate of 0.8.
- The Northern Region had the lowest rate at 0.7.



## Homicide Victim Race and Ethnicity

- Black Virginians were at a much higher risk for intimate partner homicide with a rate of 1.6 ( $n=25$ ), while white Virginians had a rate of 0.6 ( $n=36$ ).
- Black females had a rate of 2.1 ( $n=18$ ) and were almost twice as likely to be killed by an intimate partner when compared with white females, who had a rate of 1.1 ( $n=30$ ).

Table 5: IPH by Race, Ethnicity and Sex in Virginia (N=67): 2009

Race	Female			Male			Total		
	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate
White	31	57.4	1.1	6	46.2	0.2	37	55.2	0.6
Black	18	33.3	2.1	7	53.8	0.9	25	37.3	1.6
Other	5	9.3	2.1	0	0	0.0	5	7.5	1.1
Total	54	100	1.3	13	100	0.3	67	100	0.8
Ethnicity									
Hispanic	2	3.7	0.8	0	0	0.0	2	3	0.4

## Fatal Agency

- A firearm was used in 62.7% of all IPH (N=67).
- Females were more likely than males to be killed by being strangled/choked or smothered/suffocated, and males were more likely than females to be killed by a sharp instrument.

Table 6: IPH by Fatal Agency and Sex in Virginia (N=67): 2009\*

Fatal Agency	Female		Male		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Firearm	35	64.8	7	53.8	42	62.7
Sharp Instrument	13	24.1	5	38.5	18	26.9
Personal Weapon	0	0	0	0	0	0
Strangle/Choke	8	14.8	1	7.7	9	13.4
Blunt Instrument	2	3.7	0	0	2	3
Smother/Suffocate	1	1.9	0	0	1	1.4
Drown	0	0	0	0	0	0
Poison/Carbon Monoxide	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other/Unknown	1	1.9	0	0	1	1.5

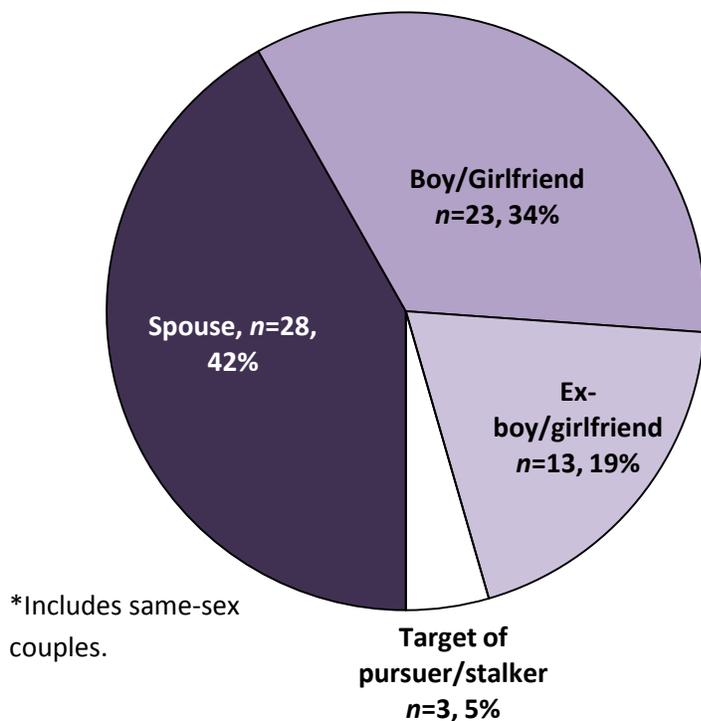
\*Note that more than one fatal agency can be used in a homicide. Among the 67 IP homicides, there were 73 separate fatal agencies used.

**Other Victims**

- Over a third of intimate partner victims ( $n=24$ , 35.8%) were killed in a homicide-suicide event.
- In almost a quarter of cases ( $n=15$ , 22.4%) children or a child was present during the event. At least 27 children were exposed to an intimate partner homicide.
- In addition to the 67 intimate partner homicide victims, 5 people were attacked and survived the event.

**Homicide Victim to Perpetrator Relationships**

Figure 11: Type of Relationship between Victim and Alleged Offender in IPH in Virginia (N=67): 2009\*



- IP homicides were most often committed by a spouse (42%) or by a boy/girlfriend (34%)
- Thirteen ex-boy/girlfriends committed homicides.
- Three homicides (5%) involved people who had never been in a relationship. However, in each case, one person perceived or desired a relationship, and the other person did not reciprocate.

**Intimate Partner Associated Homicide (IPA)** is categorized as a homicide in which a victim was killed as a result of violence stemming from an intimate partner relationship including abusers killed by law enforcement and people caught in the crossfire of intimate partner violence, such as old/new intimate partners, neighbors, co-workers, friends, relatives, or bystanders.

- In 2009, 30 IPA homicides occurred in Virginia with a rate of 0.4.
- IPA homicide decreased 27% between 2008 and 2009.
- Males are much more likely to die from IPA homicide than females. Twenty-six males were killed at a rate of 0.6, and 4 females were killed at a rate of 0.1.

**IPA Homicide Victim Age**

Figure 12: Number of IPA Homicide Victims by Age and Sex in Virginia (N=30): 2009

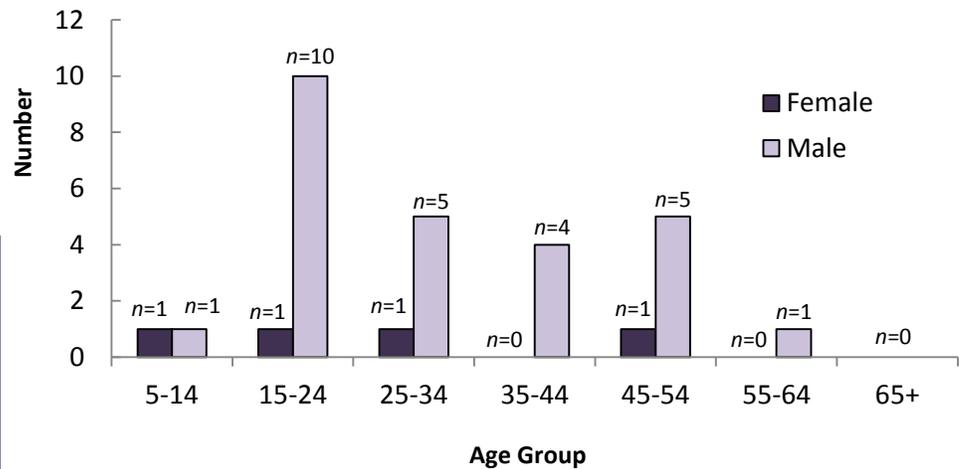
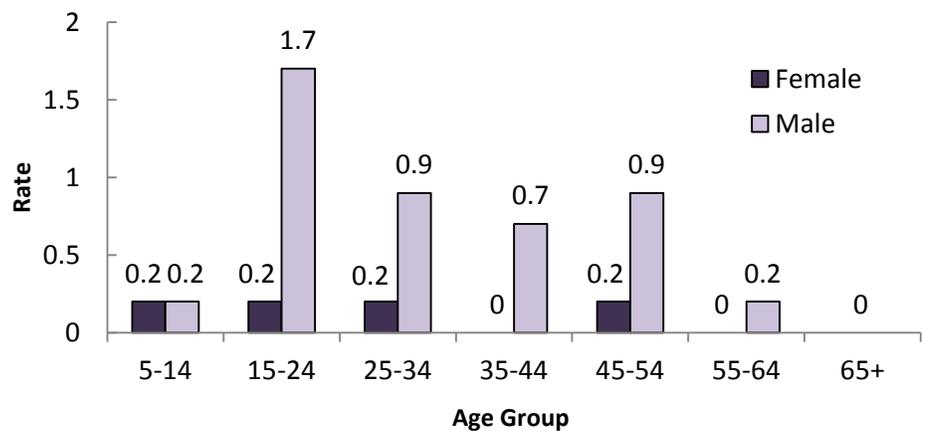


Figure 13: Rate of IPA Homicides by Age and Sex in Virginia (N=30): 2009



- The mean age of IPA homicide victims was 31.2.
- The mean age of alleged offenders was 36.3.
- Males aged 15-24 years had the highest IPA homicide rate at 1.7.

Locality

Figure 14: Percentage of IPA Homicides by Office of the Chief Medical Examiner District in Virginia (N=30): 2009

- The Central and Tidewater OCME Districts each had a rate of 0.6.
- The Northern District had a rate of 0.3.
- The Western District had a rate of 0.1

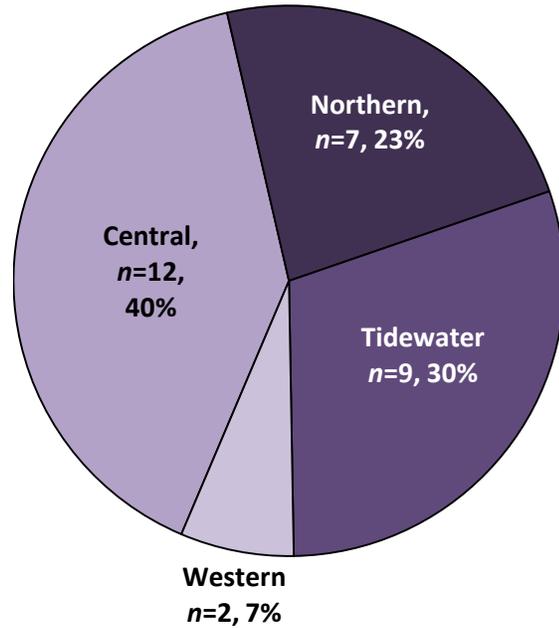
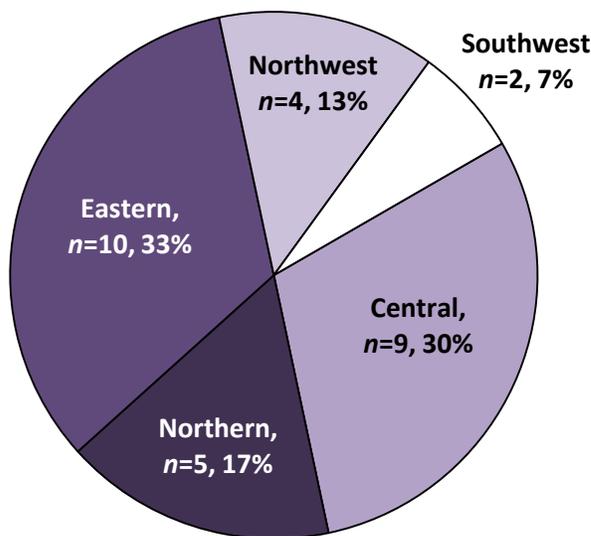


Figure 15: Percentage of IPA Homicides by Health Planning Region in Virginia (N=30): 2009



- The Central HPR had the highest rate of IPA at 0.7.
- The Eastern Region had a rate of 0.6.
- The Northwest Region had a rate of 0.3
- The Northern and Southwest Regions each had the lowest rate at 0.2.

### Homicide Victim Race and Ethnicity

- Fifteen white Virginians and 15 black Virginians died from IPA homicide.
- Black males had the highest rate at 1.8, followed by white males with a rate at 0.4.
- There was 1 Hispanic victim of IPA homicide with a rate of 0.2.

*Table 7: IPA Homicides by Race, Ethnicity and Sex in Virginia (N=30): 2009*

Race	Female			Male			Total		
	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate
White	3	75	0.1	12	46.2	0.4	15	50	0.3
Black	1	25	0.1	14	53.8	1.8	15	50	0.9
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	4	100	0.1	26	100	0.7	30	100	0.4
<b>Ethnicity</b>									
Hispanic	0	0	0	1	3.8	0.3	1	3.3	0.2

### Fatal Agency

- IPA homicide victims were most likely to be killed with a firearm (73.3%).
- The second most common fatal agency was a blunt instrument (13.3%)
- Females were as likely to be killed with a firearm (50%) or a blunt instrument (50%), and males were most likely to be killed with a firearm (76.9%).

*Table 8: IPA Homicides by Fatal Agency and Sex in Virginia (N=30): 2009*

Fatal Agency	Female		Male		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Firearm	2	50	20	76.9	22	73.3
Sharp Instrument	0	0	2	7.7	2	6.7
Personal Weapon	0	0	2	7.7	2	6.7
Strangle/Choke	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blunt Instrument	2	50	2	7.7	4	13.3
Smother/Suffocate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Drown	0	0	0	0	0	0
Poison/Carbon Monoxide	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other/Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0

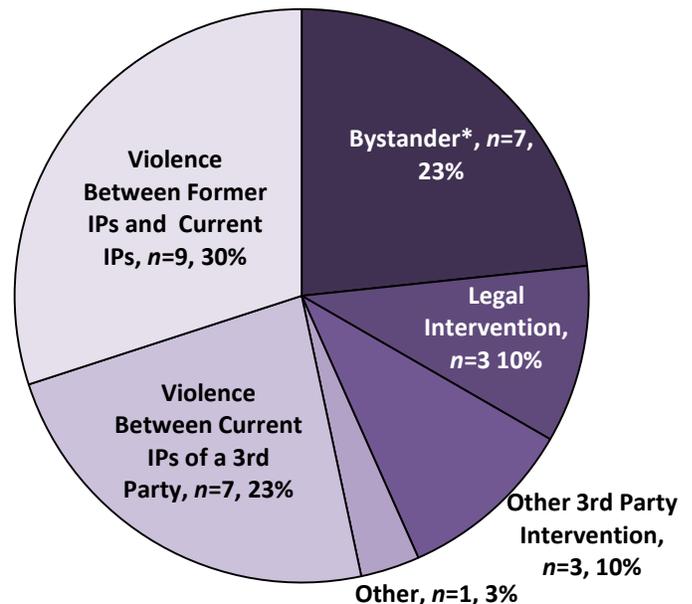
## Other Victims

- In addition to the 30 IPA homicide victims, 9 people were attacked and survived the event.
- In the 22 IPA homicides, where the victim was the primary decedent, 36.4% had a child (or children) present, with at least 8 children exposed.
- Seven events involved more than one decedent, including 2 cases of homicide-suicide.
- Three decedents were killed after threatening a law enforcement officer.

## Decedent and Alleged Offender Relationship

- IPA homicides commonly occurred when a third party was in an intimate relationship with both the decedent and the alleged offender ( $n=7$ ).
- In 7 cases, the decedent was a bystander killed in the crossfire of intimate partner violence.
- Six decedents were killed either by a law enforcement officer ( $n=3$ ) or another third party ( $n=3$ ) in the midst of intimate partner conflict.
- IPA homicides commonly occurred when a decedent was in a relationship with the alleged offender's past intimate partner ( $n=6$ ). Alternatively, homicides also occurred when the decedent had a past relationship with the alleged offender's current intimate partner ( $n=2$ ).

Figure 16: Percentage of IPA Homicides by Type in Virginia (N=30): 2009



\*Bystanders include family members, friends, or children that were killed subsequent to an intimate partner homicide.

**Precipitating Characteristics** are the circumstances occurring immediately before or during the homicide event that could be considered a trigger of the homicide. This information provided is valuable but likely provides a conservative estimate of the true magnitude of the characteristics involved in these events. Information regarding precipitating characteristics was obtained for 93 out of 97 IP and IPA homicide cases (95.9%).

- A total of 154 separate characteristics were identified in 93 homicide cases.
- The most common precipitating characteristics were the end or ending of a relationship (37.6%), a new relationship or a perception of a new relationship (32.2%), and substance use by either the alleged offender or the victim (30.1%).
- It was more common for females to be killed due to financial hardships, in accidental shootings, and in arguments over a child. It was more common for males to be killed when fighting over an intimate partner, getting shot by a law enforcement officer during an episode of domestic violence, and when the alleged offender acted in self defense.

*Table 9: Most Common Precipitating Characteristics of IP and IPA Homicide in Virginia (N=93): 2009*

Precipitating Characteristic	Female Victim	Male Victim	Total	% Occurring in IP and IPA Homicides
Relationship had ended or was ending	20	15	35	37.6
New Relationship or a perception of a new relationship	15	15	30	32.3
Alcohol or illegal substances being used	17	11	28	30.1
Financial hardships	15	3	18	19.4
Argument regarding the custody or safety of a child	5	2	7	7.5
Accidental shooting	4	0	4	4.3
Two people fighting over the same IP	0	4	4	4.3
Alleged offender acting in self defense	0	3	3	3.2
Decedent shot by law enforcement	0	3	3	3.2
Argument regarding property	2	1	3	3.2
Decedent or alleged offender was rejected by the other	2	1	3	3.2
Alleged offender had a contributing mental illness	2	0	2	2.2

**Risk Factors** are characteristics that were present in an IP or IPA relationship prior to the occurrence of a homicide which might have placed the victim at an increased probability for lethal violence. Information regarding risk factors was obtained for 83 out of 97 IP and IPA homicides (85.6%).

- In 45.8% of known cases, a third party knew of the abuse and/or the potential for abuse.
- Prior to the event, 19.3% of IP and IPA homicide victims had some type of civil court involvement with their IP. This included proceedings related to divorce, child support, child visitation or custody, and/or protective orders.
- There was a history of physical violence between the IPs in 32 cases (38.6%).

*Table 10: Number of Common Past Risk Factors for IP and IPA Homicide in Virginia (N=83): 2009*

Risk Factor	Female Victim	Male Victim	Total	%
A third party (e.g. friend, family, law enforcement, etc.) knew of the abuse or potential for abuse	26	12	38	45.8
Alleged offender arrested and/or convicted of a non DV-offense	18	15	33	39.8
The relationship was ending or had ended	19	13	32	38.6
There was known previous violence between the IPs	18	14	32	38.6
Alleged offender abused alcohol	16	16	32	38.6
Alleged offender believed the victim began a relationship with a new IP	14	16	30	36.1
Past financial hardships	20	1	21	25.3
Past 911 or police department calls regarding domestic violence	12	6	18	21.7
Alleged offender showed controlling behavior	10	7	17	20.5
Victim had a child who was not the biological child of the IP	9	7	16	19.3
Intimate partners had civil court proceedings	11	5	16	19.3
Alleged offender was violent outside of relationship	5	10	15	18.1
Alleged offender used illegal drugs	9	6	15	18.1
Alleged offender showed jealous behavior	8	5	13	15.7
Decedent used illegal drugs	7	5	12	14.5
Alleged offender threatened or attempted suicide	5	6	11	13.3
Victim had previously been threatened to be killed	9	2	11	13.3
Victim was previously threatened with a weapon	7	3	10	12
Alleged offender was unemployed and/or recently lost a job	7	2	9	10.8
Victim was previously choked or strangled	5	1	6	7.2
Victim had been stalked by alleged offender	4	1	5	6

**Child Homicide by Caregiver (CHC)** is classified as a homicide in which the victim was under the age of 18 and killed by their caregiver, such as parents, relatives, babysitters, and daycare workers.

- A total of 31 people under 18 years old were killed due to FIP homicide, 26 of whom were killed by a caregiver and are classified as a CHC.
- CHC increased 73.3% between 2008 and 2009.
- The 14 female victims had a rate of 1.6. The 12 male victims had a rate of 1.3.
- At least 19 other children were exposed to CHC.
- In 5 cases, the immediate family of the victim was known or investigated by Child Protective Services.

**Victim and Alleged Offender Age**

Figure 17: Number of CHC Victims by Age and Sex in Virginia (N=26): 2009

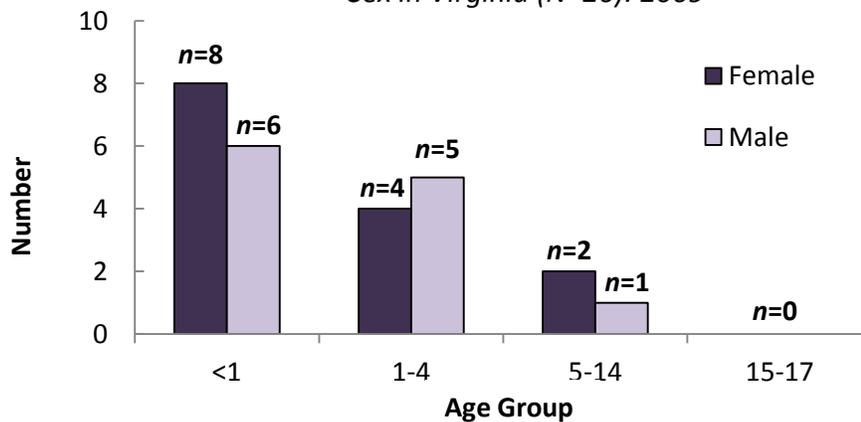
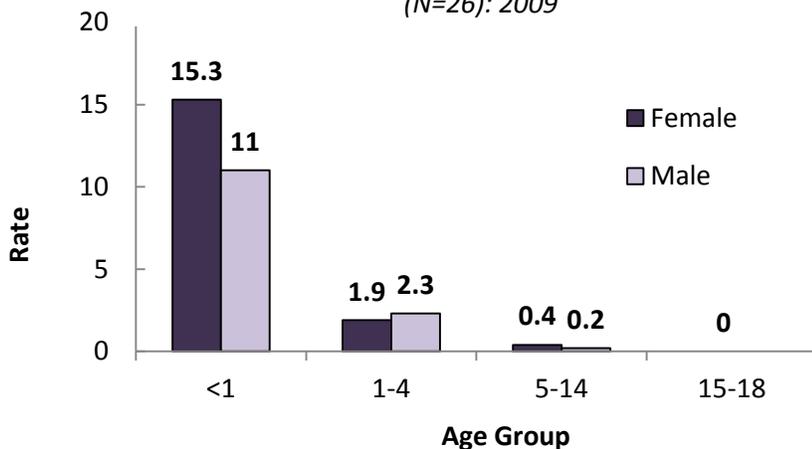


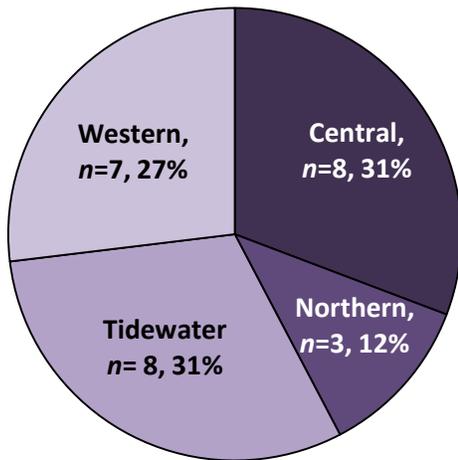
Figure 18: Rate of CHC by Age and Sex in Virginia (N=26): 2009



- Infant (<1 year old) females had the most deaths (n=8) and the highest rate at 15.3, followed by infant males (n=6) with a rate of 11.
- CHC victim ages ranged from <1 day to 13 years old.
- The mean age of alleged offenders was 30.2 years old, and the ages ranged from 17 through 57.

**Locality**

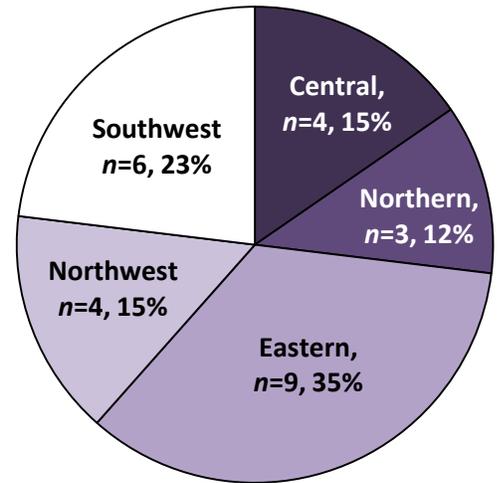
Figure 19: Percentage of CHC by Office of the Chief Medical Examiner District in Virginia (N=26): 2009



The Western and Tidewater OCME Districts each had a rate of 2.1, followed by the Central District at a rate of 1.6, and the Northern District at a rate of 0.7.

The Eastern HPR had a CHC rate of 2.8, followed by the Southwest Region at a rate of 2.2, the Northwest Region at a rate of 1.4, the Central Region at a rate of 1.3, and the Northern Region at a rate of 0.6.

Figure 20: Percentage of CHC by Health Planning Region in Virginia (N=26): 2009



**Homicide Victim Race and Ethnicity**

- Black females and black males each had a rate of 3.2.
- Black children were at a much higher risk than white children with a CHC rate almost 4 times as high.
- Females had a slightly higher rate than males.

Table 11: CHC by Race, Ethnicity and Sex in Virginia (N=26): 2009

Race	Female			Male			Total		
	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate
White	7	50	1.1	4	33.3	0.6	11	42.3	0.9
Black	7	50	3.2	7	58.3	3.2	14	53.8	3.2
Other	0	0	0	1	8.3	1.7	1	3.8	0.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1.4</b>
<b>Ethnicity</b>									
Hispanic	0	0	0	1	8.3	1	1	3.8	0.5

**Fatal Agency**

- The most common fatal agency was a personal weapon, including being shaken or beaten ( $n=19$ ), seen in 67.8% of all CHC.
- Females and males were almost equally as likely to die from a personal weapon.
- No males had more than 1 fatal agency. Two females had 2 or more fatal agencies.
- Fatal agencies classified as 'other' include environmental exposure and medical and/or nutritional neglect.

*Table 12: CHC by Fatal Agency and Sex in Virginia (N=26): 2009*

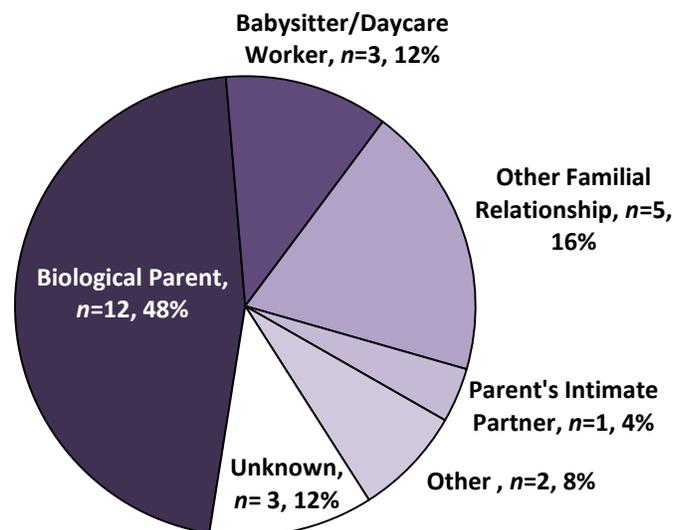
Fatal Agency	Female		Male		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Firearm	0	0	1	8.3	1	3.6
Sharp Instrument	0	0	1	8.3	1	3.6
Personal Weapon	11	68.8	8	66.7	19	67.8
Strangle/Choke	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blunt Instrument	1	6.3	1	8.3	2	7.1
Smother/Suffocate	1	6.3	0	0	1	3.6
Drown	1	6.3	0	0	1	3.6
Poison/Carbon Monoxide	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other/Unknown	2	12.6	1	8.3	3	10.7

\*Note that more than one fatal agency can be used in a homicide. In these 26 homicides, 28 separate fatal agencies were used.

**Relationship to Alleged Offender**

*Figure 21: CHC by Relationship to Alleged Offender in Virginia (N=26): 2009*

- Most children ( $n=12$ ) were killed by a biological parent (48%).
- Of the biological parents, 75% were the father of the victim.
- In 3 cases, the alleged offender was a caregiver, but the specific relationship was unknown.



**Family Homicide (OFH)** is classified as a homicide in which a victim was killed by an individual related to them biologically or by marriage, and which does not meet the criteria for the other previous categories.

- Eleven people were killed due to family homicide at a rate of 0.1.
- Eight males were killed with a rate of 0.2 and 3 females were killed at a rate of <.1.
- There were 2 OFH homicide-suicides.
- At least 2 children were exposed to OFH.
- The most frequent OFH relationship was a sibling relationship (27.3%).
- OFH decreased 62.1% between 2008 and 2009.
- A total of 16 precipitating characteristics were identified, the most common being substance use ( $n=6$ ), self defense ( $n=3$ ), and accidental shooting ( $n=2$ ).

**OFH Victim Age**

- The mean age of OFH victims was 41.7.
- The mean age of OFH alleged offenders was 33.6.
- Ages of male victims had a broader range from 18 to 71, and ages of female victims ranged from 59 to 82.

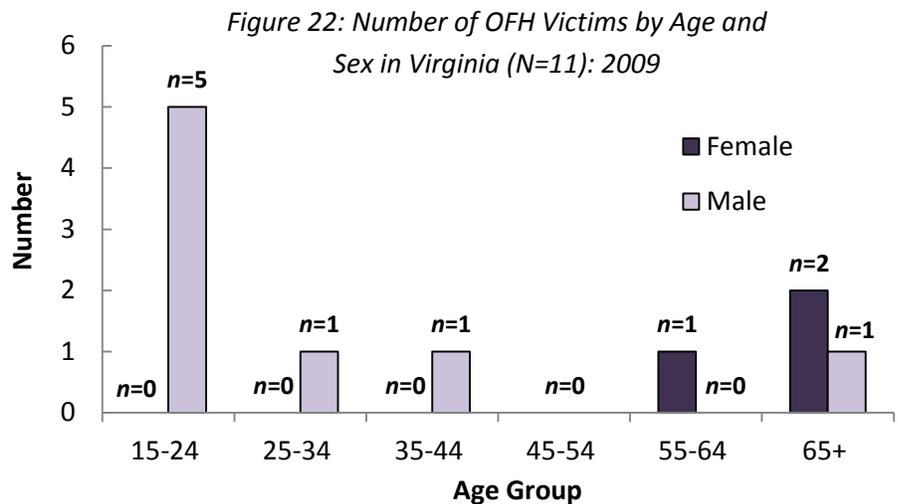
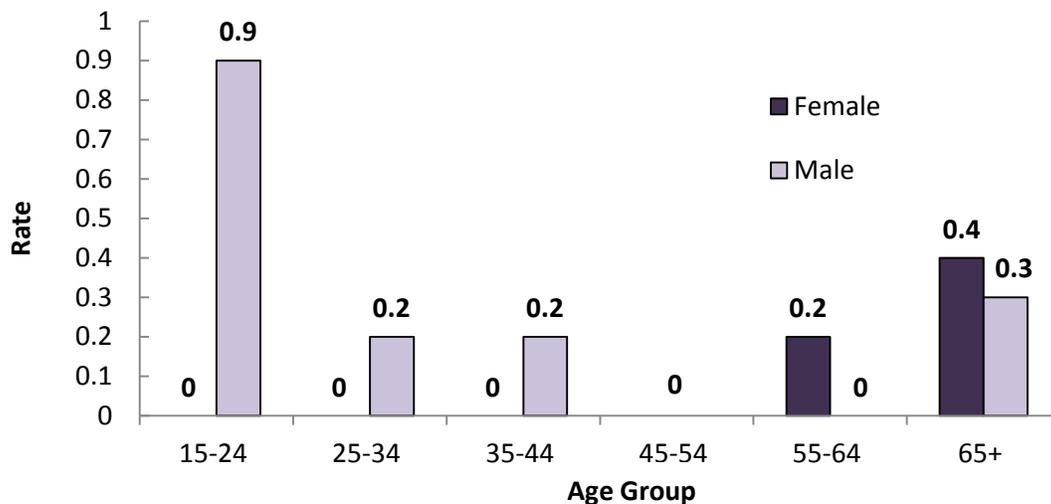
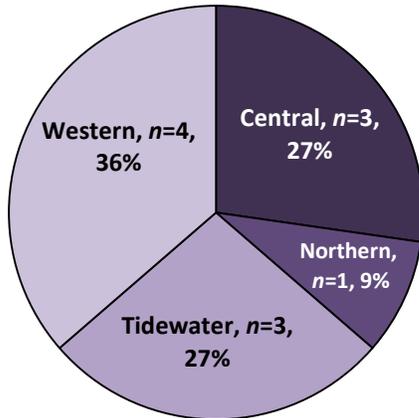


Figure 23: Rate of OFH by Age and Sex in Virginia (N=11): 2009



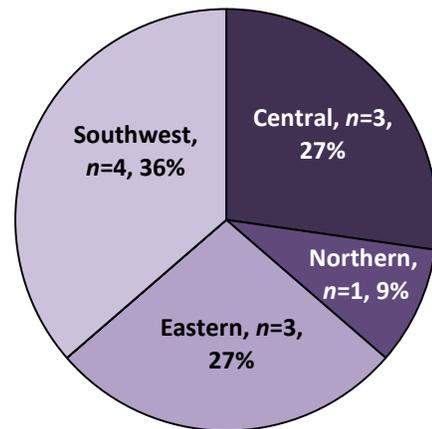
**Homicide Locality**

Figure 24: Percentage of OFH by Office of the Chief Medical Examiner District in Virginia (N=11): 2009



The Western and Tidewater OCME Districts both had the highest OFH rate at 0.2, followed by the Central District at 0.1, and the Northern District at <0.1.

Figure 25: Percentage of OFH by Health Planning Region in Virginia (N=11): 2009\*



\*There were no OFH in the Northwest Region in 2009.

The Southwest HPR had the highest OFH rate at 0.3, followed by the Central and Eastern Regions each at 0.2. The Northern Region had the lowest rate at <0.1.

**Race and Ethnicity**

- Black males had the highest rate of OFH at 0.5, followed by white males at 0.2.
- Blacks were 3.7 times more likely to be killed from family violence than whites.
- In 2009, there were no Hispanic victims of family homicide.

Table 13: OFH by Race, Ethnicity and Sex in Virginia (N=11): 2009

Race	Female			Male			Total		
	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate
White	3	100	0.1	4	50	0.1	7	63.6	0.1
Black	0	0	0	4	50	0.5	4	36.4	0.2
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>&lt;0.1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0.2</b>
<b>Ethnicity</b>									
Hispanic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

**Fatal Agency**

- The most frequent fatal agency in OFH was strangulation/choking, occurring in 33.3% of family homicides.
- The second most common fatal agency was a firearm, occurring in 25% of OFH.
- There were no males with more than 1 fatal agency. There was 1 female with 2 fatal agencies.

*Table 14: OFH by Fatal Agency and Sex in Virginia (N=11): 2009\**

Fatal Agency	Female		Male		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Firearm	0	0	3	37.5	3	27.3
Sharp Instrument	1	33.3	1	12.5	2	18.2
Blunt Instrument	1	33.3	0	0	1	9.1
Personal Weapon	0	0	1	12.5	1	9.1
Strangle/Choke	2	66.6	2	25	4	36.4
Smother/Suffocate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Drown	0	0	0	0	0	0
Poison/Carbon Monoxide	0	0	1	12.5	1	9.1
Other/Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0

\*Among the 11 homicide events, there were 12 separate fatal agencies used.

**Family Associated Homicide**

2009

**Family Associated Homicide (FAH)** is a homicide in which a victim was killed as a result of violence stemming from a familial relationship.

- In 2009 there were 5 FAH, with 4 male victims and 1 female victim.
- Victim ages ranged from 15 to 59 years old.
- Three cases were in the Western OCME District, 1 in the Northern District, and 1 in the Central District. Similarly for Health Planning Regions, 3 cases were in the Southwest Region, 1 in the Northwest Region, and 1 case in the Central Region.
- Three victims were white, and 2 victims were black. No victims were Hispanic.
- All victims were killed with a firearm.
- At least 2 children were exposed, and 8 people were attacked and survived the event.

# Appendix

Table 15: Five Year Family and Intimate Partner Homicide Summary						
	2005			2006		
	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate
<b>Sex</b>						
Female	73	49.3	1.9	62	43.4	1.6
Male	75	50.7	2	81	56.6	2.2
<b>Race</b>						
White	80	54.1	1.4	71	49.7	1.3
Black	63	42.6	4.1	70	49	4.5
Other	5	3.4	1.2	2	1.4	0.5
<b>Ethnicity</b>						
Hispanic	7	4.7	1.5	9	6.3	1.9
<b>Age</b>						
<1	8	5.4	7.6	15	10.5	14.5
1-4	10	6.8	2.5	8	5.6	2
5-14	5	3.4	0.5	4	2.8	0.4
15-24	20	13.5	1.9	21	14.7	2
25-34	25	16.9	2.5	23	16.1	2.2
35-44	36	24.3	3.1	29	20.3	2.5
45-54	20	13.5	1.8	22	15.4	1.9
55-64	11	7.4	1.2	13	9.1	1.6
65+	13	8.8	1.5	8	5.6	0.9
<b>Fatal Agency</b>						
Firearm	79	53.4	--	82	57.3	--
Sharp Instrument	30	20.3	--	29	20.3	--
Blunt Instrument	8	5.4	--	7	4.9	--
Personal Weapon	19	8.3	--	9	6.3	--
Strangle/Choke	8	5.4	--	3	2.1	--
Motor Vehicle	1	0.7	--	0	0	--
Drown	3	2	--	0	0	--
Fire/Smoke Inhalation	0	0	--	1	0.7	--
Smother/Suffocate	0	0	--	9	6.3	--
Poison	0	0	--	2	1.4	--
Other	5	3.4	--	3	2.1	--
Unknown	1	0.7	--	2	1.4	--
<b>OCME District</b>						
Central	48	32.4	2.3	33	23.1	1.6
Northern	23	15.5	1	33	23.1	1.4
Tidewater	34	23	2.2	44	30.8	2.9
Western	43	29.1	2.7	33	23.1	2.1
<b>Type of Homicide</b>						
Intimate Partner	69	46.6	0.9	49	34.3	0.6
Intimate Partner Associated	35	23.6	1.2	48	33.6	0.6
Child by Caregiver	20	13.5	0.5	18	12.6	1
Elder by Caregiver	1	0.7	1.1	2	1.4	0.1
Family	22	14.9	0.3	24	16.8	0.3
Family Associated	1	0.7	<0.1	2	1.4	<0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1.9</b>

	2007			2008			2009		
	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate
<b>Sex</b>									
Female	61	48.4	1.6	77	51.7	1.9	76	54.7	1.9
Male	65	51.6	1.7	72	48.3	1.9	63	45.3	1.6
<b>Race</b>									
White	64	50.8	1.1	75	50.3	1.3	73	52.5	1.3
Black	58	46	3.7	70	47	4.4	60	43.2	3.7
Other	4	3.2	0.9	4	2.7	0.9	6	4.3	1.3
<b>Ethnicity</b>									
Hispanic	12	9.5	2.4	4	2.7	0.8	4	2.9	0.7
<b>Age</b>									
<1	7	5.6	6.6	10	6.7	9.3	14	10.1	13.1
1-4	5	4	1.2	6	4	1.4	8	5.8	1.9
5-14	5	4	0.5	3	2	0.3	5	3.6	0.5
15-24	21	16.7	1.9	34	22.8	3.1	26	18.7	2.3
25-34	23	18.3	2.2	24	16.1	2.3	24	17.3	2.2
35-44	26	20.6	2.2	25	16.8	2.2	22	15.8	2
45-54	12	9.5	1	22	14.8	1.9	18	12.9	1.6
55-64	17	13.5	2	14	9.4	1.6	13	9.4	1.4
65+	10	7.9	1.1	11	7.4	1.2	9	6.5	0.9
<b>Fatal Agency</b>									
Firearm	75	59.5	--	74	49.7	--	38	27.3	--
Sharp Instrument	22	17.5	--	36	24.2	--	14	10.1	--
Blunt Instrument	9	7.1	--	11	7.4	--	6	4.3	--
Personal Weapon	11	8.7	--	16	10.7	--	11	7.9	--
Strangle/Choke	5	4	--	10	6.7	--	10	7.2	--
Motor Vehicle	2	1.6	--	1	0.7	--	0	0	--
Drown	1	0.8	--	0	0	--	1	0.7	--
Fire/Smoke Inhalation	2	1.6	--	2	1.3	--	0	0	--
Smother/Suffocate	2	1.6	--	1	0.7	--	2	1.4	--
Poison	1	0.8	--	0	0	--	0	0	--
Other	1	0.8	--	3	2	--	2	1.4	--
Unknown	1	0.8	--	1	0.7	--	1	0.7	--
<b>OCME District</b>									
Central	42	33.3	2	62	41.6	3	42	30.4	2
Northern	21	16.7	0.9	23	15.4	0.9	28	20.3	1.1
Tidewater	31	24.6	2	21	14.1	1.3	34	24.6	2.1
Western	32	25.4	2	43	28.9	2.7	34	24.6	2.1
<b>Type of Homicide</b>									
Intimate Partner	52	41.3	0.7	58	38.9	0.7	67	48.2	0.9
Intimate Partner Associated	41	32.5	0.5	41	27.5	0.5	30	21.6	0.4
Child by Caregiver	11	8.7	0.6	15	10.1	0.8	26	18.7	0.3
Elder by Caregiver	1	0.8	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Family	20	15.9	0.3	29	19.5	0.4	11	7.9	0.2
Family Associated	1	0.8	<0.1	6	4	0.1	5	3.6	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1.8</b>

- Cases in which it was identified that the victim was killed by, or due to a relationship with, a current or past intimate partner, caregiver or family member were placed into one of these six mutually exclusive categories.

<b>Intimate Partner Homicide (IPH)</b>	A homicide in which a victim was killed by one of the following: spouse (married or separated), former spouse, current or former boyfriend, girlfriend or same-sex partner, or dating partner. This group could include homicides in which only one of the parties had pursued a relationship or perceived a relationship with the other, where at least one of the following was historically noted: rejection, threats, harassment, stalking, possessiveness, or issuance of a protective order.
<b>Intimate Partner Associated Homicide (IPA)</b>	A homicide in which a victim was killed as a result of violence stemming from an intimate partner relationship. Victims could include alleged abusers killed by law enforcement or persons caught in the crossfire of intimate partner violence such as friends, co-workers, neighbors, relatives, new intimate partners, or bystanders.
<b>Child Homicide by Caregiver (CHC)</b>	A homicide in which a victim was a child under the age of 18 killed by a caregiver.
<b>Elder Homicide by Caregiver (EHC)</b>	A homicide in which a victim was an adult 55 years or older who was killed by a caregiver.
<b>Other Family Homicide (OFH)</b>	A homicide in which a victim was killed by an individual related to them biologically or by marriage (e.g. grandparent, [step]parent, [step]sibling, cousin, in-laws) and who does not meet the criteria for one of the four groups above
<b>Family Associated Homicide (FAH)</b>	A homicide in which a victim was killed as a result of violence stemming from a familial relationship. Victims could include persons killed by law enforcement during a familial conflict or persons caught in the crossfire, such as friends, co-workers, neighbors, relatives, or bystanders.

**Alleged Offender-** A person suspected of *or* charged (by law enforcement) with the commission of a homicide.

**Caregiver-** A person responsible for the care and/or supervision of another person.

**Child-** A person under the age of 18.

**Elder Homicide by Caregiver-** Victims 55 years of age or older who were killed by a caregiver.

**Exposure-** Refers to child exposure to FIP homicide, and includes visually witnessing the event, hearing the event, finding the injured or dead decedent, on the premises of the event, was a surviving victim, or some combination of these.

**Fatal Agency-** The instrument or method causing the injury which led to the death of a victim (e.g., firearm, poison, strangling).

**Homicide-** The intentional killing of a person by another.

**Homicide Event-** Information describing the characteristics and circumstances of homicides is provided in two ways, by individual *case* and *event*. For instance, if two persons are killed in a car accident, there are two victims and one event. This process of coding allows individual demographic information to be collected while providing an unduplicated count of the circumstances surrounding the event.

**Homicide-Suicide Event-** A homicide followed within seven days by the alleged offender's suicide.

**Legal Intervention-** An injury caused by the actions of a law enforcement officer while intervening during a domestic violence event.

**Neglect –** Fatal agency characterized as providing inadequate supervision, medical, and/or nutritional care by a caregiver.

**Personal Weapon-** A type of fatal agency characterized as a part of the body; for example, hands or feet used to beat a victim. This is classified as the fatal agency in cases of shaken baby syndrome.

**Precipitating Characteristic-** A circumstance identified during the death investigation that occurred immediately before or during the homicide event and could be considered a trigger of the violent act.

**Primary vs. Secondary Decedent-** A primary decedent is considered the one decedent who was the target during the homicide event. A secondary decedent is a person who was present during the event but was not the main target. These victims are often considered bystanders, to the event, including friends, children, strangers, etc., and are killed in the crossfire of domestic violence.

**Risk Factors-** Characteristics present prior to the occurrence of a homicide which might have placed the victim at an increased probability for violence.

**Surveillance-** The systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data regarding health events of interest for purposes of intervention and the creation of prevention strategies.

### Medical Examiner (OCME) Districts

Central: **Counties** of Albemarle, Amelia, Brunswick, Buckingham, Caroline, Charles City, Charlotte, Chesterfield, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Essex, Fluvanna, Gloucester, Goochland, Greene, Greensville, Halifax, Hanover, Henrico, James City, King and Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Louisa, Lunenburg, Mathews, Mecklenburg, Middlesex, Nelson, New Kent, Northumberland, Nottoway, Powhatan, Prince Edward, Prince George, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Surry, Sussex, Richmond, and Westmoreland. **Cities** of Charlottesville, Colonial Heights, Emporia, Fredericksburg, Hopewell, Petersburg, Richmond, South Boston, and Williamsburg.

Northern: **Counties** of Arlington, Clarke, Culpeper, Fairfax, Fauquier, Frederick, Loudoun, Madison, Manassas, Manassas Park, Orange, Page, Prince William, Rappahannock, Shenandoah, and Warren. **Cities** of Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax, Falls Church, and Winchester.

Tidewater: **Counties** of Accomack, Isle of Wight, Northampton, Southampton, and York. **Cities** of Chesapeake, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach.

Western: **Counties** of Alleghany, Amherst, Appomattox, Augusta, Bath, Bedford, Bland, Botetourt, Buchanan, Campbell, Carroll, Craig, Dickenson, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Grayson, Henry, Highland, Lee, Montgomery, Patrick, Pittsylvania, Pulaski, Roanoke, Rockbridge, Rockingham, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, and Wythe. **Cities** of Bedford, Bristol, Buena Vista, Covington, Danville, Galax, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Lynchburg, Martinsville, Norton, Radford, Roanoke, Salem, Staunton, and Waynesboro.

### Health Planning Regions (HPR)

Central: **Counties** of Amelia, Brunswick, Buckingham, Charles City, Charlotte, Chesterfield, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Goochland, Greensville, Halifax, Hanover, Henrico, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, New Kent, Nottoway, Powhatan, Prince Edward, Prince George, Surry, Sussex. **Cities** of Colonial Heights, Emporia, Hopewell, Petersburg, and Richmond.

Northern: **Counties** of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William. **Cities** of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, and Manassas Park.

Eastern: **Counties** of Accomack, Essex, Gloucester, Isle of Wight, James City, King and Queen, Lancaster, Mathews, Middlesex, Northampton, Northumberland, Richmond, Southampton, Westmoreland, and York. **Cities** of Chesapeake, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, and Williamsburg.

Northwest: **Counties** of Albemarle, Augusta, Bath, Caroline, Clarke, Culpeper, Fauquier, Fluvanna, Frederick, Greene, Highland, King George, Louisa, Madison, Nelson, Orange, Page, Rappahannock, Rockbridge, Rockingham, Shenandoah, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Warren. **Cities** of Buena Vista, Charlottesville, Fredericksburg, Harrisonburg, Staunton, Waynesboro, and Winchester.

Southwest: **Counties** of Alleghany, Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Bland Botetourt, Buchanan, Campbell, Carroll, Craig, Dickenson, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Grayson, Henry, Lee, Montgomery, Patrick, Pittsylvania, Pulaski, Roanoke, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, and Wythe. **Cities** of Bedford, Bristol, Covington, Danville, Galax, Lynchburg, Martinsville, Norton, Radford, Roanoke, and Salem.

**For additional information on the Family and Intimate Partner  
Homicide Surveillance Project contact:**

**Family and Intimate Partner Homicide Surveillance Coordinator**

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