Domestic Violence Claimed **96 Lives** in Wisconsin in 2022

End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin Homicide Report 2022

published
October 2023

When I was a child,
I learned to count to five
one, two, three, four, five.
but these days, I've been counting lives, so I count

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because each time
is the first time
that that life
has been taken.

Adapted from "The Pedagogy of Conflict" Originally published in Sorry for your Troubles (Canterbury Press, 2013). Copyright © 2013 by Pádraig Ó Tuama

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Foreword

The 2022 Wisconsin Domestic Violence Homicide Report is our 21st publication of this document.

We release this to honor the lives lost to domestic violence in our state each year, and to draw attention to the pervasiveness of domestic violence and the loss of loved ones that countless numbers of Wisconsinites have experienced.

According to the data we have gathered since we began tracking this information in 2000, at least **1,268** individuals have been killed in domestic violence homicides in Wisconsin.

Consistent with past years' reports, our sources shared that many victims were killed after the relationship ended or when one person in the relationship was taking steps to end the relationship, illuminating, once again, that leaving does not equate to safety.

Consistent with past years' reports, firearms remain the most common weapon used by perpetrators to kill their partner, family, and other community members.

Consistent with past years' reports, predictable patterns of behavior precipitated the homicides and murder-suicides.

Consistent with past years' reports, we urge the same legislative solutions.

Consistent with past years' reports, we publish and begin counting again.

Methodology

Our definition of homicide is the killing of one human being by another. This encompasses criminal, justifiable, self-defense, and reckless homicides. We consider a homicide domestic violence-related if:

- The victims and perpetrators were spouses or partners, former spouses or former partners, adults with children in common, or adults or teens who had been in a dating relationship.

- It was a homicide of a person other than an intimate partner, and it occurred within the context of domestic violence. This encompasses cases where the circumstances of the murder included obsessive control of the perpetrator's current or former partner that extended to their new partner. We also include the homicide of a bystander or someone who attempted to protect a domestic violence victim from future harm.

- The homicide was a child's death that occurred as an extension of or in response to ongoing abuse between adult intimate partners. For example, when a partner or estranged partner killed their children to exact revenge on their partner, it is considered domestic violence related.

- A responding officer was in a position in which they needed to use deadly force against an individual to prevent the homicide or assault of another person. The count of domestic violence homicide victims occasionally includes perpetrators killed by responding law enforcement officers (also referred to as homicide by legal intervention).

- Beginning with the report for 2010, we include cases that involve a parent or grandparent killed by an adult child or grandchild, as well as adult stepchildren or step-grandchildren killing a stepparent or step-grandparent. We do not include these cases, however, if the defendant was found not guilty by reason of mental illness or lacked the capacity to stand trial. See the Limitations section on page 14 for an extended explanation of this criteria.

The report also accounts for overall deaths related to domestic violence homicide, including perpetrator deaths. **Most perpetrator deaths are suicides.** In each case of homicide-suicide, the heading lists the murdered person as the homicide victim.

We seek to be as consistent and accurate as possible year to year in determining which homicides to include in the report. Our summaries of domestic violence homicides are compiled from information that is readily available via public sources and limited follow-up inquiries. The amount of attention such sources pay to one domestic violence-related homicide in comparison to another varies greatly.

We request Uniform Crime Report (UCR) data submitted to the Department of Justice, criminal complaints, and police reports obtained from the jurisdiction in which the homicide occurred. The UCR does not always include all homicides that we include in our report, and therefore we supplement with data from other sources. The sex, race, and ethnicity classifications of victims and perpetrators are obtained from the above listed sources that we use to compile our report.

Executive Summary

Since 2000, End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin has chronicled deaths due to domestic violence in our state. **In 2022, 96 individuals died in Wisconsin due to domestic violence at a rate of approximately one death every 3.8 days.** The basic findings contained in this report are outlined below. An additional 10 cases of fatal family violence are included in a supplemental section where intimate partner violence was not a factor.

2022 Compared to 2021	2022	2021
All domestic violence-related homicide deaths	68	65
Incidents of domestic violence homicide	73	54
Self-defense	3	0
Victims of domestic violence homicide (excluding by legal intervention)	68	65
Homicides by legal intervention (responding law enforcement)	3	0
Perpetrator suicide after committing homicide	18	11
Perpetrator suicide during LE response	3	0
Attempted homicide incidents with perpetrator suicide	1	4
Total deaths (victim and perpetrator)	96	80

Other findings in the 2022 Wisconsin Domestic Violence Homicide Report include:

- Perpetrators of domestic violence homicide incidents were overwhelmingly male. **In 2022, 88.7% of perpetrators were male.**

- The ages of victims in this report range from 20 months to 92 years old. Perpetrators' ages ranged from 17 to 79 years old. The average age for perpetrators was 40 years old, and **the average age for victims was 37 years old.**

- Homicides occurred in **25 counties** in Wisconsin. **Approximately 47 (49%) of the homicide incidents occurred in rural areas and 49 (51%) in urban areas,** according to how both are defined in US Census data.

- Firearms remain the most common means of perpetrating domestic violence homicides. **In 2022, firearms were the weapons used in 88.5% of domestic violence deaths.** There were **22 perpetrator suicides** in 2022. Perpetrator suicides in our report are connected to the homicide they committed or attempted to commit just prior to their suicide. This reflects the **connection between homicidality and suicidality** in domestic violence cases and should thus be considered when discussing domestic violence and homicide prevention.

- There were 18 murder-suicides, and 4 other perpetrator suicides in 2022. This reflects the **connection between homicidality and suicidality** in domestic violence cases and should thus be considered when discussing domestic violence and homicide prevention.

- Many of the 2022 homicide cases reflect the **risk factors that research has found to be associated with lethal violence.** These include, among other factors: threats to use or actual use of a weapon, threats to kill, stalking, strangulation, obsessive jealousy, and sexual assault.

Historical, National, and Global Context

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, from 1980 to 2005, intimate partner homicides declined by 44% and homicides among other family members decreased by 26%. Similarly, nonfatal domestic violence decreased by about 63% from 1994 to 2010. Yet, the decline has varied significantly for different populations. The data indicate that between 1976 and 2005, "the number of Black males killed by intimates dropped by 83%, white males by 61%, Black females by 52%, and white females by 6%." This downward trend has been attributed to increased awareness, services, and intervention[1].

In 2017, the Centers for Disease Control released an analysis on the prevalence and circumstances surrounding female homicide deaths in the United States. Their study analyzed the deaths of 10,018 women from 18 states between the years 2003 and 2014 by looking at data from the National Violent Death Reporting System. In addition to the finding that **over half of female homicides in the US are intimate partner violence (IPV) related and perpetrated with a firearm,** the study found that **non-Hispanic Black and American Indian/Alaska Native women are killed at nearly three times the rate of non-Hispanic white women**[2]. Despite the aforementioned downward trend in the number of homicides, **disparities in the number of victims of certain racial and ethnic groups still persist.**

On a global level, a systematic review published in The Lancet in 2013 reported that **one in seven homicides overall are committed by an intimate partner**[3]. Though domestic violence homicide victims are both males and females, the latter experience higher risk and mortality. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime issued a report in 2019 titled, "Global Study on Homicide: Gender-related killing of women and girls", which provides insights into the issue of femicide on a worldwide scale. They report that **58% of women who were killed intentionally in 2017 were killed by their intimate partner or a family member.** This equals approximately 50,000 women globally who were victims of domestic violence homicide in 2017, which rose from 48,000 in 2012[4].

2022 Key Findings

Overview

KEY FINDINGS	2022
Domestic Violence Homicide Incidents	**73**
Victims of Domestic Violence Homicide	**68**
Homicides by Legal Intervention (responding Law Enforcement)	**3**
All Domestic Violence Homicide Related Deaths	**68**
Homicide Incidents with Perpetrator Suicides	**18**
Attempted Homicide Incidents with Perpetrator Suicide	**1**
Suicides during Law Enforcement Response	**3**
Self Defense	**3**
Homicide Incidents with two or more Victims	**5**
Total Deaths	**96**
Female Homicide Victims	**49**
Male Homicide Victims	**22**
Female Perpetrators	**8**
Male Perpetrators	**63**

Perpetrator Suicide

Perpetrator Suicides	2022
Homicide Incidents with Perpetrator Suicide	18
Homicide-Suicide Incidents Involving Firearms	17
Male Perpetrators of Homicide Suicide	17
Attempted Homicide with Perpetrator Suicide	1
Female Perpetrators of Homicide-Suicide	1
Suicides During Law Enforcement Response	3

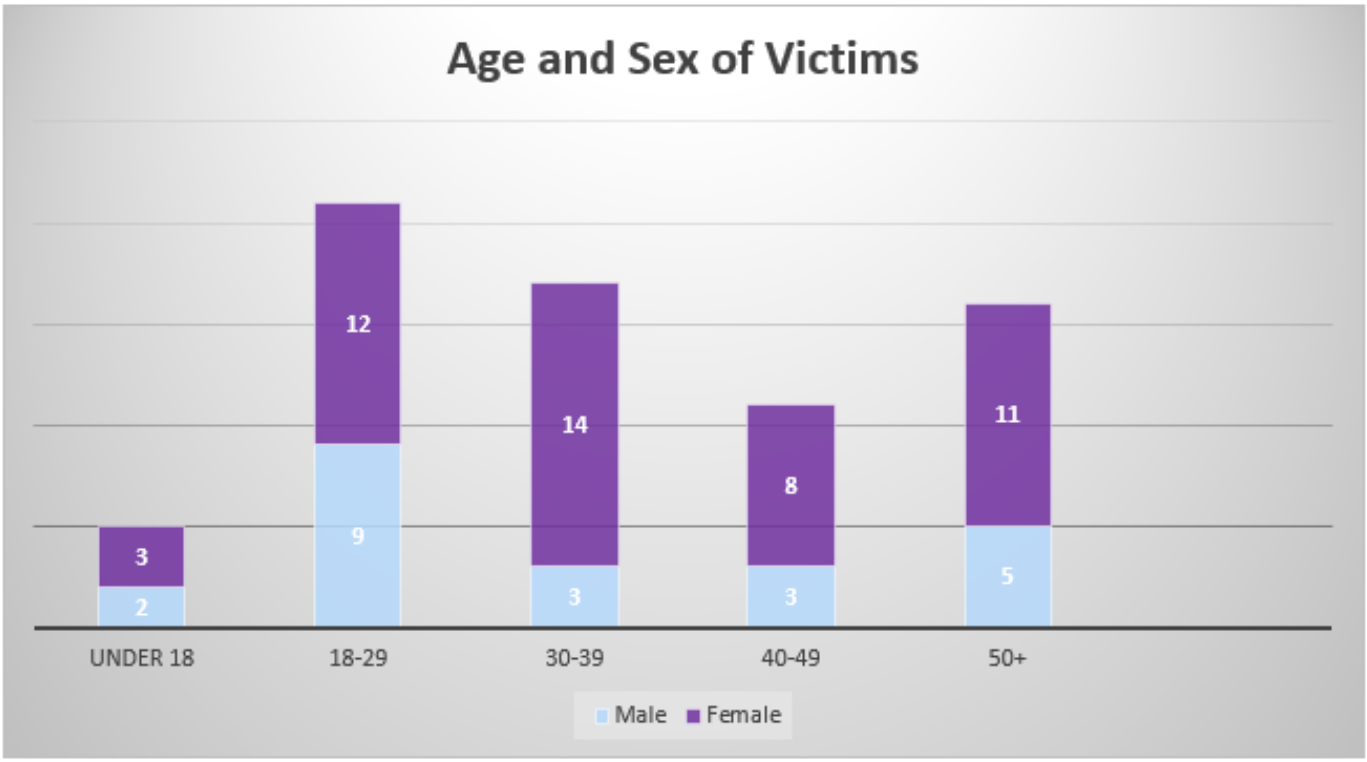
Relationship of Victim to Female Perpetrator

When The Perpetrator Was Female	2022
Current Or Former Male Intimate Partner	8

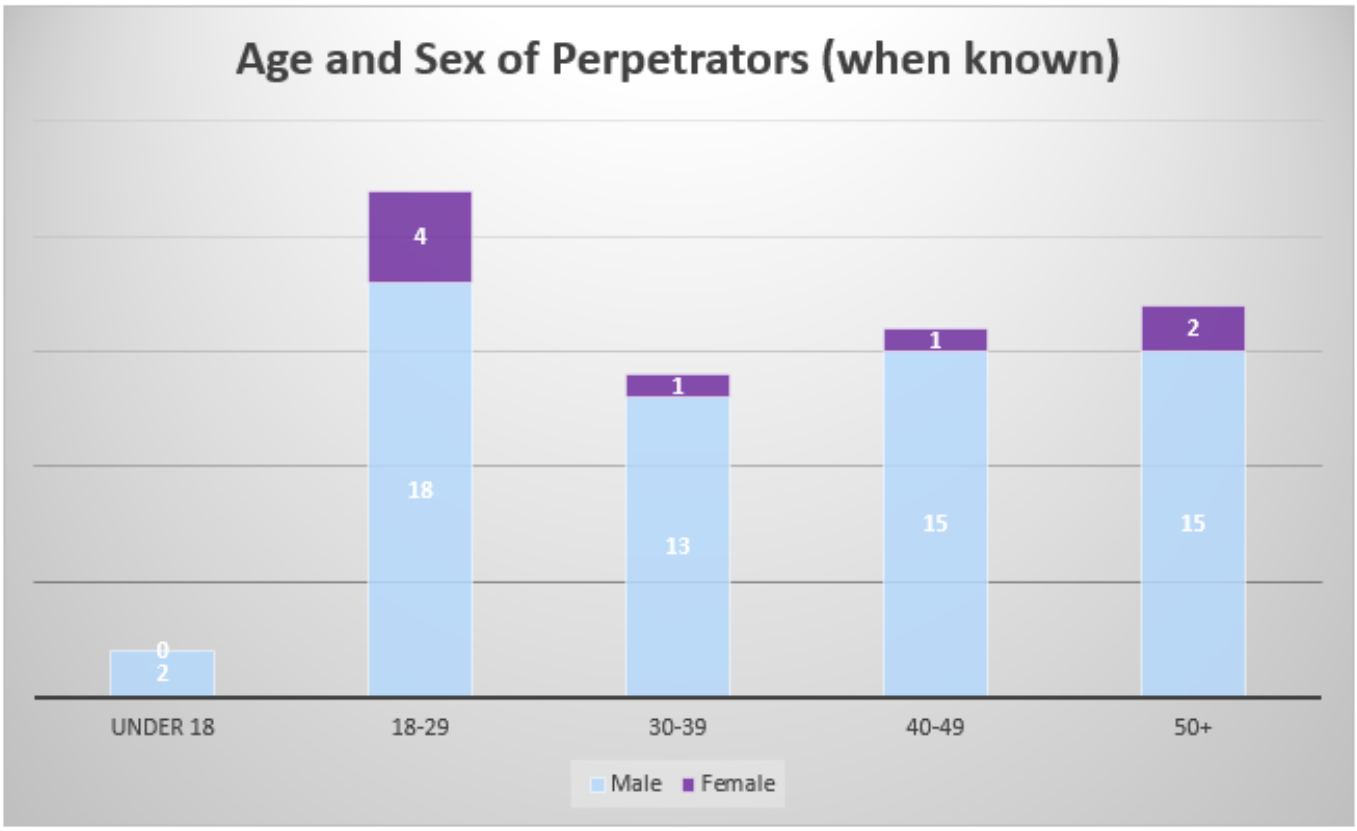
Relationship of Victim to Male Perpetrator

When The Perpetrator Was Male, The Victim Was:	2022
Victim Was Abused Girlfriend's Best Friend	1
Victim Was Abusive Boyfriend Killed by GF's Brother	2
Victim Was Abusive Brother-In-Law	1
Victim Was Abusive Ex-Boyfriend Killed by GF's Brother	1
Victim Was Acquaintance	1
Victim Was Bystander	1
Victim Was Child	2
Victim Was Child of Girlfriend	1
Victim Was Daughter's Abusive Boyfriend	1
Victim Was Ex-Girlfriend	5
Victim Was Girlfriend	28
Victim Was Girlfriend's Daughter	1
Victim Was Mother's Boyfriend	1
Victim Was Intervening Bystander During DV Incident	1
Victim Was Neighbor	1
Victim Was Parent	3
Victim Was Parent of Current Partner	1
Victim Was Wife	9
Victim Was Step-Child	2
Victim Was Step-Parent	1
Victim Was Ex-Wife	1

Age and Sex of Victims



Age and Sex of Perpetrators



Method of Homicide

Method Of Homicide	Incidents
Asphyxiation	1
Blunt & Sharp Force Trauma, Vehicular Suicide	1
Blunt Force Trauma	1
Fire	1
Gun	63
Personal Weapon	1
Stabbing	6
Strangulation	3
Unknown	1

- Firearms remain the most common means of perpetrating domestic violence homicides. In 2022, **firearms were the weapons used in 88.5% of domestic violence deaths. That is an increase of 21.5% since 2021.**
- Domestic violence assaults involving a gun are **12 times more likely to result in death** than those involving other weapons or bodily force.

Race/Ethnicity and Sex of Victims

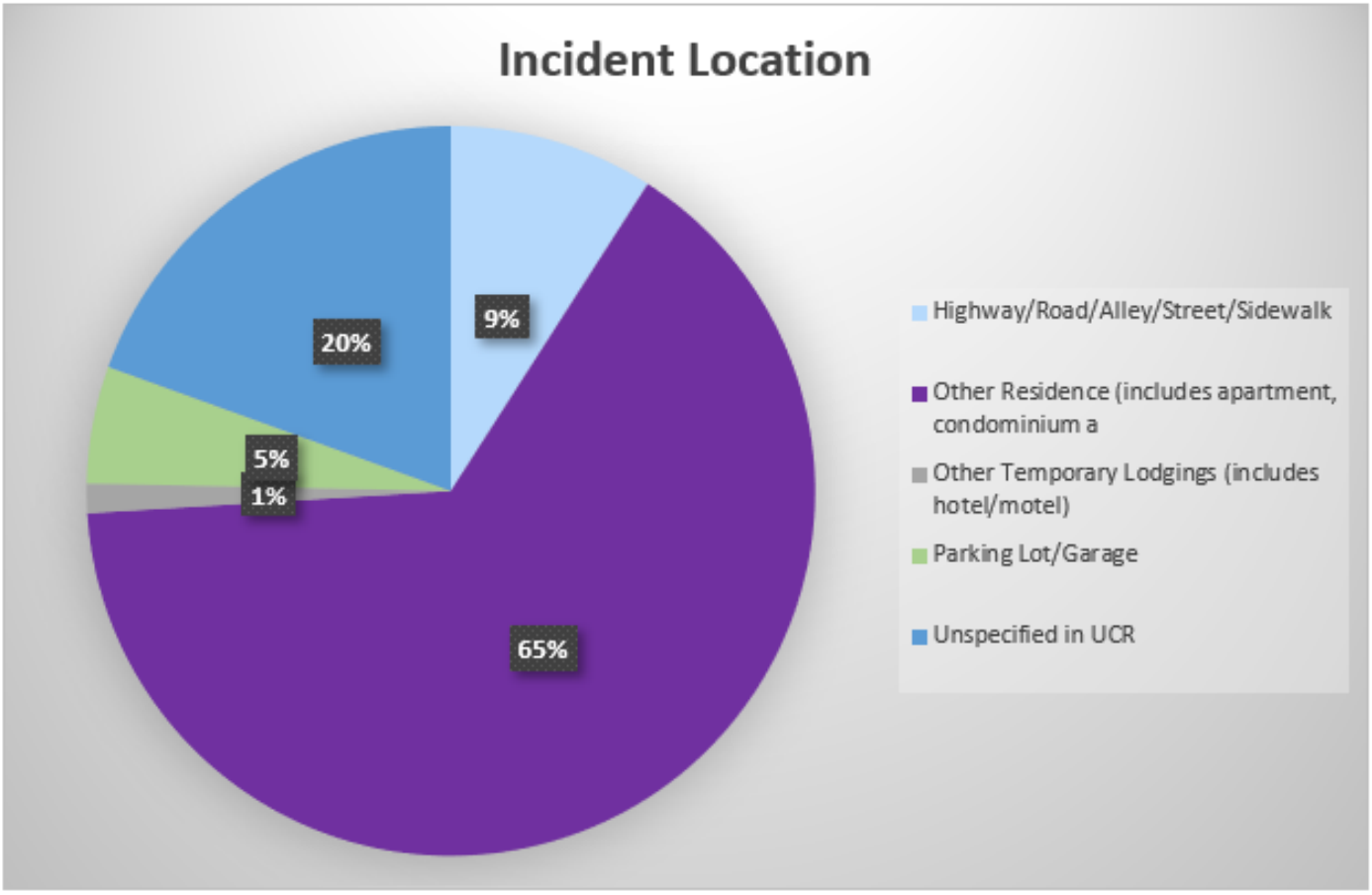
Victim Race	Female	Male
Unknown	1	0
Asian	1	0
Black	20	12
Latinx	2	1
White	25	9
Total	49	22

Race/Ethnicity and Sex of Perpetrator*

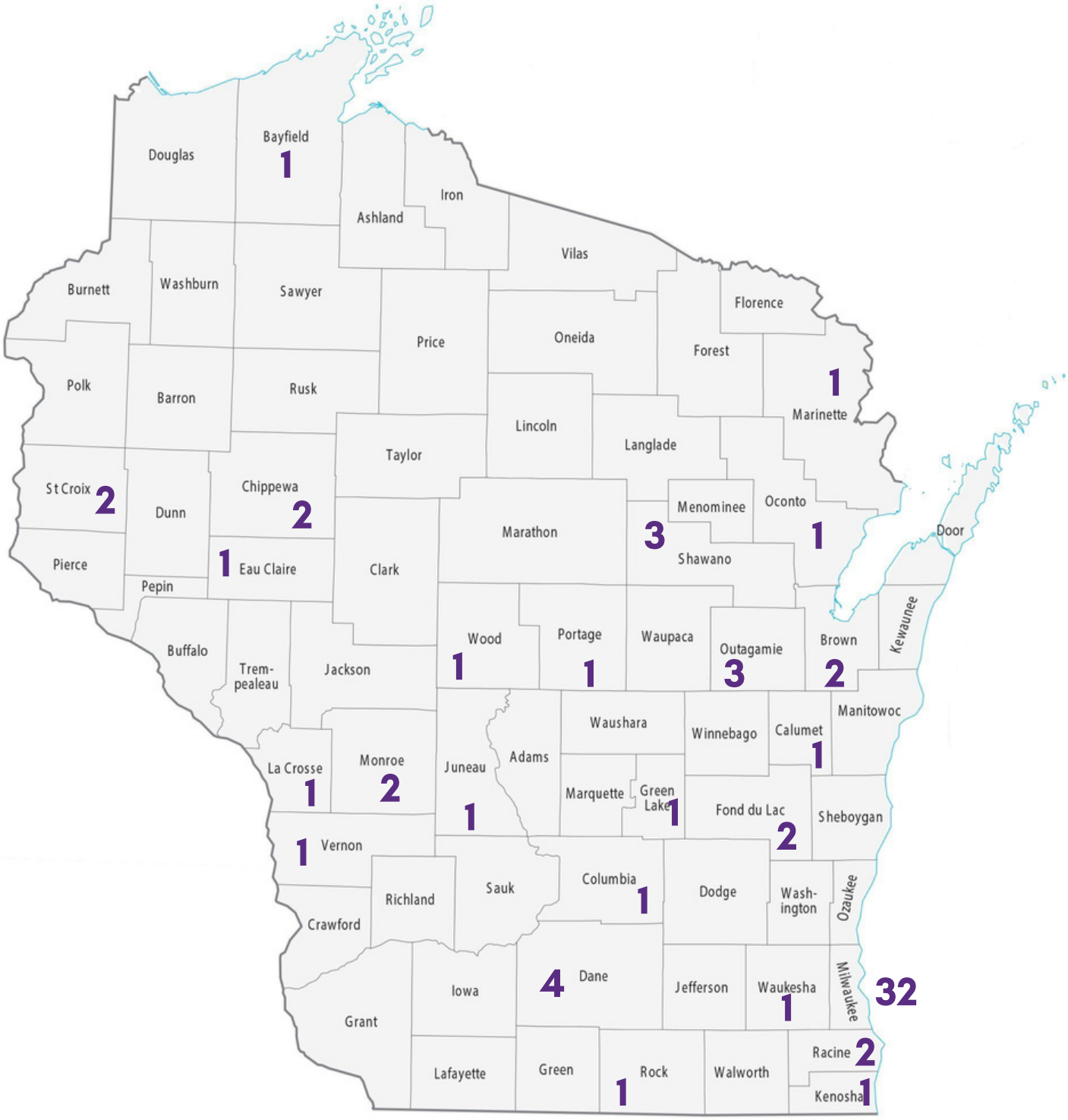
*Excludes perpetrators who died by suicide alone or during Law Enforcement involvement

Perp Race	Male	Female
Unknown	3	1
Asian	1	0
Black	32	2
Latinx	2	0
White	26	5
Total	64	8

Location of 2022 Homicides



2022 DV Homicide Map



Limitations

We summarize the limitations of the data we report annually in the paragraphs below. Consistency in how we define and therefore report data is important so that comparisons can be made from year to year and trends can be examined.

Availability and Accuracy of Data Obtained

We rely on gathering information from publicly available sources and acknowledge we may have missed cases in 2022 that would meet our report's criteria. During our review of the Uniform Crime Report, we discovered multiple cases that we suspected were domestic violence related that are not included in this report. The reasons for this are as myriad and complex as the cases themselves.

One involved the murder-suicide of two same-sex long time roommates. Due to the potential dangers of coming out to family, friends and other community members, many LGBTQ folks keep their relationships secret. This fear has a chilling effect and prevents those in abusive relationships from seeking supportive and lifesaving services.

Another involved a case where a pregnant woman was killed in what was determined a homicide and, because of a technicality, the suspected perpetrator was released, and the case was dropped. Homicide is the leading cause of death among pregnant women in the United States. 50-75% of women abused before pregnancy are abused during pregnancy." Seventy-seven percent (77%) of pregnant homicide victims are killed early (during the first trimester) in the pregnancy.

An ambiguous case between elderly partners was included in the total figures, but not detailed in the narrative due to lack of data. The couple were found dead, with preliminary evidence suggesting they died as a result of a planned mutual suicidal. Homicide or homicide-suicide in older adults is often attributed to a "mercy killing" in which it's perceived to be a pact between the couple due to the victim's poor health or pain. Research has shown that almost all cases involve men killing women, one-third had a history of domestic violence, and quite often, the woman was unaware of the "pact." Media reports of homicide-suicide in later life often describe the motive as a "mercy killing" without proper investigation into the specifics of the case, especially regarding victim consent.

Wisconsin Residents Killed Outside of Wisconsin

Our homicide report details domestic violence homicides that occur in the state of Wisconsin almost exclusively. Exceptions in past reports have been made to include deaths of Wisconsin residents that occur within hours or minutes of leaving Wisconsin. Often domestic violence-related deaths of Wisconsin residents who are killed outside of our state do not end up on our radar. There are undoubtedly homicides that fit this definition that our limited research for producing this report would not have captured.

Most states produce similar reports; however, the methodology and criteria for inclusion in such reports vary widely from state to state. Homicide incidents involving Wisconsin residents, but occurring in other states, are relatively rare.

Expanded 2010 Definition

As noted on page 6, beginning with the report for 2010, we include cases that involve a parent or grandparent killed by an adult child or grandchild, as well as adult stepchildren or step-grandchildren killing a stepparent or step-grandparent. We began including these cases in 2010 at the advising of advocates for victims of elder abuse at the National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life, which is an initiative of End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin. We included these cases in our report because the preceding dynamics of violence in families in which adult parents or grandparents are killed by their adult children or grandchildren often exhibit similar characteristics of power and control. The perpetrator's ongoing abuse frequently relies on tactics of coercion, intimidation, and unique vulnerabilities inherent in a close familial relationship.

Because our original motivation to include these cases stemmed from an acknowledgement that intentional use of power and control tactics is a pattern in family abuse outside of intimate partner relationships, we excluded cases in which there was a clear indicator that mental health issues were a predominant factor in the homicide.

Therefore, we have excluded cases in which the defendant was found not guilty by reason of mental illness or lacked the capacity to stand trial.

In making these distinctions, we are aware that our effort to categorize homicides is imperfect and may exclude cases that could illuminate potentially significant aspects of violence that happens in families. For instance, our definition does not include situations in which an adult parent or stepparent causes the death of an adult child or stepchild, nor cases where the perpetrator was a minor child who killed a parent or stepparent, or grandparent or step-grandparent. These homicides appear to be rare and thus difficult to generalize; however, we would be challenged to give a satisfying reason as to why one type of case is included, and another is not. Our exclusion of patricide and matricide cases that seem closely related to mental illness reflects our belief that the analogous cases of intimate partner homicide—that is, intimate partner violence homicides primarily attributed to mental illness—are relatively rare. We know from research and experience that mental illness alone rarely explains why an abusive person kills their partner; yet we acknowledge that these efforts to conceptually cordon off cases that are closely linked to mental illness may prevent us from attending to the complex etiologies of domestic violence homicide.

Child Homicides

We include child killings that occurred as an extension of or in response to ongoing abuse between adult intimate partners against others as domestic violence homicides. For example, when a partner or estranged partner killed their children or their partner's children in order to exact revenge on their partner, it is considered domestic violence related.

We believe our limited ability to recognize these cases likely results in an undercount of these homicides. Homicide of a child is often viewed as an isolated incident of child abuse. An investigation of a child homicide can often overlook domestic violence, or domestic violence might not be included in the public record. While we believe that a larger number of child deaths are directly related to an ongoing pattern of domestic abuse, our current methods of tracking homicides do not allow us to consistently identify children killed by perpetrators of domestic violence. These cases are not included because we lack the information necessary to link the killings to intimate partner violence (and thus to the report's definition of domestic violence homicide).

Cold Cases

In our years of gathering domestic violence homicide information, we have learned that not every homicide case is initially recognized as such. Some domestic violence homicides are ruled suicides or inconclusive, turning cold and forgotten. The perpetrator faces no consequences and is often treated as a victim who lost a loved one, perhaps receiving a life insurance check for the life they ended. Recently, due to developments in technology and evidence processing, these crimes have renewed hope of being solved. We honor the lives of those included in this report, and the lives of those lost in years in which our data included homicides that we have not yet been able to attribute to domestic violence.

Please see the 2017 Wisconsin Domestic Violence Homicide Report, page 41, for additional information on cold cases.

2022 Domestic Violence Homicides

Our brief descriptions in no way reflect the complexity and circumstances of each person's death. They certainly do not capture the complexity and fullness of their lives and the impact that each homicide or suicide has on surviving family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers, communities, and those responding and attempting to help during the immediate event or in the time preceding it.

A compelling aspect of this report is that we include the stories behind the statistics. Many of the cases below were reported in the media, which made public the names of both victim and perpetrator. Beginning with the 2021 Homicide Report, we have chosen to exclude this information, despite it being publicly available, out of respect for the homicide victims, their surviving family members, and others mentioned in the case narratives.

Noted in bold text throughout the case narratives connected to intimate partner violence are the known lethality risk factors[1] present prior to the homicide, and/or any known history of domestic abuse that we discovered while researching the cases. While not noted with bold text, risk of lethality is inherent in each intimate partner homicide case involving a firearm, due to the accessibility and availability of the firearm coupled with violence in the home.

NOTE: Case status reflects information available at the time of publication of this report. The status of an open case can be found via Wisconsin Circuit Court Access at: http://wcca.wicourts.gov. Individuals' ages are listed as of the date of the homicide.

County	
Bayfield	**February 3 | Town of Kelly** **ES, 29-year-old female** Media coverage of this incident indicates that the Sheriff's Office reported the discovery of a murder victim on Thursday, February. 3, in Bayfield County – ES, 29, Ashland – and the suicide of a person of interest – GS, 43, Ashland County – connected to the murder victim on Friday, February 4, in Ashland County. On February 3 the dispatch received a call reporting a vehicle in the in the Town of Kelly. First responders found the female driver dead in the vehicle with what appeared to be a gunshot wound. Authorities say around 1:00 a.m. Friday a deputy identified the husband's vehicle and began to pursue the vehicle. The driver accelerated at a high speed and stopped suddenly in the middle of the road almost causing the deputy to collide with the back of the suspect's vehicle. Backup was called and when deputies approached the vehicle they found the male occupant, identified as the spouse of the deceased female, dead from an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound. E.S. had **filed for divorce** January 25, nine days before her death.There does not appear to be a recorded criminal history of violence.

County	
Brown	**February 23 | Green Bay** **ST, 25-year-old male** Media coverage of this incident indicates that ST, 25, Green Bay was **strangled** by TS, 24, in the basement of his mother's home. TS is charged with 1st Degree Intentional Homicide, Mutilating a Corpse and 3rd Degree Sexual Assault. TS was put on probation 7 weeks before the crime and was supposed to be wearing an electronic monitoring bracelet but apparently removed it. Police were called to the mother's home after she found parts of her son's body in a container. TS indicated that she and ST had been smoking meth. During sex she began strangling him with a chain. After, she sexually assaulted and dismembered his corpse.

April 25 | Green Bay
MG, 31-year-old female

MG and husband WG were dead in a home the couple had once shared. MG had continued to live in the home, with the couple's sons, after the **separation**. Police said WG shot and killed his wife. Both died of gunshot wounds. Two other people were in the house at the time, but were not physically hurt.

County	
Calamet	**January 19 | Chilton** **JM, 78-year-old female** Chilton police say the deaths of two people in a home January 19 were a murder-suicide involving a son and his mother. Police say based on the final autopsy report, 78-year-old JM and 54-year-old MM both died from a single gunshot wound. Through physical evidence and witness interviews, police pieced together that MM shot his mother and then himself. Police say the two lived together. Their bodies were found on January 19 by a visiting home health worker who was making a regular visit to the house.
County	
Chippewa	**May 14 | Chippewa Falls** **SL, 29-year-old male** A man killed in a domestic abuse incident Saturday in Chippewa Falls was identified as 29-year-old SL. A call came in just before 6 a.m. that a man was chasing the victim and had collapsed. The man died shortly after police responded. A preliminary investigation indicated there was a violent altercation prior to the critical injury in which the woman sustained facial injuries. She told police that she feared for her life, grabbed a knife and tried to escape the home. Officials said evidence at the scene indicated the final altercation happened near the door to the house. The pair has a history of domestic violence. The 23-year-old woman who stabbed SL will not be charged, the District Attorney's Office announced. There is not enough evidence to show that LM did not act in self-defense when she stabbed SL.

July 27 | Chippewa Falls
LS, 55-year-old female

LS was found after a fire was extinguished in the home she shared with her boyfriend, SV. He is charged with homicide, arson, mutilating a corpse, and bail jumping. According to the criminal complaint, he was out on bond for threatening a law enforcement officer when he allegedly committed these crimes.

County	
Columbia	**OCTOBER 6 | Wyocena** **AL, 76-year-old female** A man has been arrested after almost a year of investigation following the death of a 76-year-old Wyocena woman. The Columbia County Sheriff's Office arrested LM, 79, in connection with the murder of AL. LM has been charged with First Degree Intentional Homicide. On Oct. 6, Officers found AL with a gunshot wound to the head. An investigation has been ongoing since. LM and AL were living together and in a long-term relationship. AL was **planning to end the relationship** and move out of the home.

County	
Dane	**April 25 | Madison** **Unnamed daughter, 20-month-old female** Officers responded to an apartment complex on Madison's west side after neighbors heard a woman screaming for help and saying a man had killed her baby. The woman, who was the baby's mother, had also been attacked. The toddler was sped to the hospital where she was pronounced dead. Her mother was taken to the hospital having suffered serious injuries. Police detained a 23-year-old man at the scene who was reportedly in a relationship with the child's mother. Police described MG as someone with a long criminal history and noted that a recent Department of Corrections warrant warned authorities to consider him "armed and dangerous." Officers were dispatched to the same unit a week earlier for the abuse of the baby girl's older sibling.

May 24 | Town of York
DZ, 39-year-old female

71-year-old LG was arrested and charged with first-degree intentional homicide in connection with the death of a 39-year-old woman DZ, who was found dead in her home in the Town of York on May 24. According to a criminal complaint filed with the Dane County Circuit Court, an autopsy found that DZ was killed by a gunshot wound to the head. The complaint alleges that LG's vehicle was seen at DZ's house on the day she was killed. DZ and LG had been dating for about a year. Cellphone records detailed in the complaint allegedly show that LG traveled to DZ's home and stayed for about 20 minutes. Texts between the pair in the days leading up to her death also allegedly show that the two were in a romantic relationship, but that she was **trying to leave him**. DZ told him "I hope that I don't get killed" and "You scared me."

June 12 | Madison
TDW, 23-year-old-male

The Dane County Medical Examiner's Office has identified the man who died after police found him with a chest wound on Madison's far east side. Authorities received a report of a disturbance. When they arrived, officers found a man with a chest wound, who later died at a local hospital. The medical examiner has identified him as 23-year-old TDW of Dodgeville. According to a preliminary autopsy report, he died of a stab wound. Madison police said TDW and the woman taken into custody as a person of interest in his death had a child together.

September 11 | Madison
JW, 45-year-old female

The Dane County Medical Examiner's Office on Wednesday said JW, 45, died from blunt force and sharp force trauma, while her husband, JW, also 45, died from injuries he sustained when he stepped into the path of a semitrailer on the Interstate. Police say JW killed his wife earlier that day in the home they shared. Officers had not been called to the home before.

County	
Eau Claire	**April 14 | Altoona** **DS, 79-year-old male** 45-year-old BG and 54-year-old TC were charged in the death of 79-year-old DS. BG and TC were charged with 1st degree intentional homicide and hiding a corpse as a party to a crime. DS's body was found in the Rock River in Rockford. The cause of death was asphyxiation. The homicide took place in the City of Altoona. Police described the homicide as "financially-motivated." According to court documents filed with the charges, investigators believe TC and BG were in an apparent relationship. TC had been living with DS since 2019 and had known him for about 22 years.

County	
Fond du Lac	**August 1 | Taycheedah** **Perpetrator Suicide** A man was found dead of aself-inflicted gunshot wound during a SWAT situation. A woman called police to report a domestic dispute in which a man was armed with a rifle. The woman was able to escape the home unharmed. SWAT, K-9 units, negotiators and drone units were called to the scene. The man was later found dead. No law enforcement or citizens were hurt. There was no use of force according to the Sheriff's Office. **November 12 | Fond Du Lac** **JR, 51-year-old female** A Fond du Lac woman was stabbed multiple times and suffered head trauma in a domestic violence killing. JR, 51, was found dead in her apartment. GD, 57, was charged with 1st Degree Intentional Homicide, Mayhem, and Hiding a Corpse. Police say he had been in an intimate relationship with JR. Police were called to perform a welfare check on JR after she failed to show up to appointments. Officers found JR wrapped in a sleeping bag and covered in blankets and debris. An autopsy revealed she was stabbed more than 12 times in the torso, sustained three separate skull fractures from blunt force trauma, and a broken jaw. Police say JR may have been **trying to end the relationship**.

County	
Green Lake	**August 10 | Berlin** **Perpetrator Suicide** Dispatchers received a 911 call from a woman that her ex-boyfriend was in her home and was not supposed to be there. Responding Law Enforcement heard a single gunshot about a quarter-mile from the home. The man was found dead with an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound.

County	
Juneau	**December 28 | Elroy** **LJ, 66-year-old female** A man and woman died in a domestic-related murder-suicide near Elroy on December 28. LJ, 66, was the victim of a homicide and 69-year-old GJ died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Dispatch received a call about a potential domestic disturbance at the home; during the incident, officials learned a gun was involved and shots were fired. When deputies got to the scene, they found both people dead.

County	
Kenosha	**MAY 25 | Kenosha** **MM, 30-year-old female** Officers were dispatched to a hotel. Housekeeping staff located 30-year-old MM lying unconscious on the floor of the hotel room. Emergency responders arrived and attempted lifesaving measures, but MM was pronounced deceased. TB said he became upset and grew tired of her arguing with him, so he picked up a gun, and shot her. TB admitted he fled the hotel and took her car.

County	
La Crosse	**February 2 | La Crosse** **AR, 25** Officers responded to a possible deceased call. Two people and a dog were found dead inside the residence, and the individuals were identified as 25-year-old AR and 26-year-old JG. Preliminary evidence from police suggests the pair died as a result of a murder-suicide incident of domestic violence, during which JG shot AR and the dog before taking his own life.

County	
Marinette	**December 1 | Marinette** **EA, 32-year-old female** Officers responded for a report of a woman with gunshot wounds. The woman was found in the hallway of the apartment building with gunshot wounds and a knife in her hand with blood on it. The woman was identified as 32-year-old EA, who was taken to the hospital where she died from her injuries. Dispatch received a second 911 call from 31-year-old NS, who reported he had been stabbed and he thought he shot someone. The district attorney's office determined the shooting was justified.

County	
Milwaukee	**JANUARY 6 | Milwaukee** **QW, 41-year-old female** SH shot and killed his 41-year-old girlfriend, QW, and then shot his 14-year-old daughter. Officers discovered QW pulseless after being called for reports of a shooting. Officers also found a teenaged girl suffering from gunshot wounds. Police say the girl told officers that her father had shot her.

January 15 | Milwaukee
ES, 44-year-old female

A Milwaukee man and woman died from gunshot injuries on the city's southwest side on January 15 according to the Milwaukee Police Department. A 44-year-old woman and a 48-year-old man sustained "fatal gunshot injuries," police said.

January 17 | Milwaukee
ES, 44-year-old female

A Milwaukee man, 29, died as the result of a domestic dispute. DB went to high school with both KR and his girlfriend and was friends with both of them. KR and his girlfriend dated off and on, and DB was aware of domestic violence issues between the two. On the day of the shooting, he observed KR forcing his girlfriend into a vehicle. KR and his girlfriend eventually came back into the residence, and an argument ensued between DB and KR. KR pulled out a gun. Out of fear for his safety, DB shot KR before KR could shoot him. KR was found not guilty.

January 25 | Milwaukee
RP, 40-year-old male

A Milwaukee man was charged with First-Degree Reckless Homicide. Prosecutors accuse RP, 22, of shooting his father in the head, killing him. The victim, 40, was taken to the hospital for treatment and was declared dead hours later. A woman said she heard RP say "I'm tired of this" before he fired a single gunshot.

February 5 | Brown Deer
AR, 23-year-old female
MA, 31-year-old male

Police said three people died and another was injured after a shooting in Brown Deer on February 5. According to law enforcement, the shooter was among the dead. Police believe he killed himself. Another person was shot in the leg but survived. AR, 23, was shot and killed by her ex-boyfriend. According to family, she was there to drop off her two-year-old son with his father. The suspect fired on responding officers, but no police were injured. The shooting began as a domestic dispute between two people and the other people shot were trying to help. There was a child in the apartment with the shooter, but that child is now safe with family.

January 26 | Milwaukee
DJ, 56-year-old male

IW, 17, was found guilty of second-degree intentional homicide in the shooting death of DJ, a 56-year-old man. IW was arguing with SM, the mother of his child, on the street. He was shaking her. DJ, who was driving by and witnessed the argument, pulled over his car and intervened. DJ was shot six times. DJ was a passerby who did not know either IW or his girlfriend, SM.

February 10 | Milwaukee
ST, 22-year-old male

CA, age 22, was found guilty of Second Degree Reckless Homicide in the stabbing death of a 22-year-old male. Court documents say CA had recently moved in with a second woman and that CA had been dating the victim, but they **recently broke up**. CA, the second woman, and the victim were at the residence. An argument unfolded between CA and the victim. The victim had CA in a headlock, punching her in the head and stomach. Eventually the victim let CA go and she went to get a knife from the kitchen. CA walked over to the victim and swung the knife two times. The victim was trying to take the knife, grab the defendant, and punch her. The second woman said the victim pulled a gun from his pocket, tried to rack it, then hit the defendant on the side of the head with the gun. The woman also told police she saw the victim had been stabbed and told him to leave. Moments later, he fell to the floor. The second woman called 911.

March 17 | Milwaukee
SO, 24-year-old male

RP, age 44, was found guilty of first-degree intentional homicide and possession of a firearm by a felon. Police were dispatched for a shooting complaint. Officers arrived on the scene and located in a car a 24-year-old man, SO, dead. Detectives spoke with a woman on the scene. She said SO was the father of her child, that they had been in a relationship for several years, and **had broken up**. The woman said SO had been **threatening her**, hitting her, and damaging her property. The woman was in a car with her child when SO pulled up next to her and told her to roll down the window. The woman did not do this and drove off. SO kept following her, so she called her brother, RP. The woman said that she asked RP to escort her inside of her house because she was scared, but

RP told her he wasn't nearby. When the woman went back toward her house, she noticed SO's car parked at the intersection. She saw the car was stopped and couldn't see SO so she drove up to his car and saw him slumped over and bleeding. She called 911 and said that RP may have shot SO but that she did not witness the shooting.

March 30 | Milwaukee
AL, 29-year-old female

EM, age 42, was found guilty of First-Degree -Reckless Homicide in the shooting of his girlfriend, 29-year-old AL. EM told officers that he was turning himself in because he had shot his girlfriend while the two were horse-playing. He said it happened a day-and-a-half earlier at his house. Police went to the residence and found the victim deceased from a single gunshot wound to the head. Mitchell later spoke with detectives about how the incident unfolded. The complaint says the victim cursed at EM and he jokingly removed the pistol from his pocket and pointed it at her head with his finger on the trigger. She slapped at it, and it went off. The defendant told the detectives he had considered suicide. Instead, the complaint says he put the pistol into a garbage can, called his sister and had her drive him to the police station, where he turned himself in.

April 23 | Milwaukee
LD, 19-year-old female

A Milwaukee man has been sentenced to life in prison in the fatal shooting of 19-year-old LD. KR, 21, was found guilty of First-Degree Intentional Homicide. After 35 years in prison, KR will be eligible to petition for extended supervision.

Milwaukee police responded to a shooting. Officers went to the apartment and located a woman who had suffered multiple gunshot wounds. Despite lifesaving measures, LD died from her injuries.
LD and KR had been dating since the fall of 2020. The defendant, KR, was described at the trial as " **possessive and overprotective**" and it was stated that LD and KR **had broken up just three weeks ago**. LD had told police in September 2021, that the defendant **made threats to kill her and had purchased a gun to do so**.

April 27 | Milwaukee
ER, 23-year-old female

35-year-old NM was charged with first-degree reckless homicide and hiding a corpse. Although NM denied responsibility in interviews with police, a pair of brothers who are friends with him told investigators he "lost it" and strangled ER **after being told the relationship was over**. One of them said NM admitted to breaking ER's neck inside her home. The other brother told police NM admitted to strangling ER after learning she was leaving him. The brother then helped NM move her body, wrapped in a rug tied with an extension cord. After driving to the location, MP rolled the body down a slope near a pond. She was found concealed underneath a discarded Christmas tree. An autopsy by the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office said she died from asphyxiation.

May 11 | Milwaukee
AW, 32-year-old male

A Milwaukee man was found guilty of First-Degree Reckless Homicide after a fatal shooting on the city's south side. RM, 24, shot and killed his brother-in-law during a financial dispute. RM said he intervened in an argument between his wife and AW. RM told police, according to the complaint, that AW was taunting him and the two of them began arguing - resulting in the shooting. RM said he shot AW one time but "kind of blacked out" and the next thing he knew he had fired all 10 rounds.

May 18 | Greenfield
JW, 50-year-old female

48-year-old BW was found guilty of First-Degree Reckless Homicide in the stabbing death of his wife, JW, in the home they shared. BW claimed he was helping his wife because she suffered from chronic pain and asked him to help end her life. BW told officers when JW went into the shower, he stabbed her in the neck and she died approximately four minutes later. BW said he killed the victim 10 days earlier, then set up fans and washed his wife's decomposing body after it began to smell.

May 28 | Milwaukee
JC, 36-year-old male

Milwaukee Police were called to a homicide of a 36-year-old man, JC. Officers arrested DP, a 22-year-old man, and a woman, 33, both of Milwaukee, and seized two guns. JC shared children with the woman, the suspect's sister. JC threatened her with a firearm. She called her brother, DP, for help. DP intervened by shooting JC.

June 26 | Milwaukee
BC, 25-year-old male

AG's daughter was in a relationship with BC. BC and AG's daughter have two children in common. There was a **history of domestic violence** between BC and the mother of his toddlers. The homicide occurred in the context of AG's concern about his daughter being abused by BC. He became upset when BC stopped over with gifts for the children. They engaged in an argument, and AG shot BC several times.

July 8 | Milwaukee
CW, 66-year-old female
EH, 50-year-old male

AG, 62, was found guilty of two counts of First-Degree Reckless Homicide. AG got into an argument with his neighbor, EH, age 50. EH's girlfriend and their son heard the two men arguing in the hallway, followed by several shots.

Shortly thereafter, AG shot CW, 66, in the head while she was sitting on her daughter's front porch. **CW had moved in with her daughter about a month earlier from the home she had shared with AG**. CW left because the couple had developed problems.

July 14 | West Allis
OR, 42-year-old female
LP, 19-year-old female

Two women, 42-year-old OR and her daughter 19-year-old LP, were shot and killed at a Milwaukee home. Neighbors heard a man yelling, followed by gunshots. LP was trying to protect her mother from a domestic violence situation.

July 18 | West Allis
NL, 24-year-old female

25-year-old WMC was found guilty of first-degree reckless homicide for the shooting of 24-year-old NL, with whom he had children in common. WMC shot NL while she was cleaning out a pool in the backyard for the kids to play in. Two of her children witnessed the incident.

July 19 | Milwaukee
AM, 20-year-old female

Officers responded to a welfare check at a home. Inside, officers found two people dead in what appeared to be a "domestic-related" shooting. The homicide victim was identified as 20-year-old AM and the suicide victim as 26-year-old IH. Both lived in the home where they were found.

July 20 | Milwaukee
LD, 49-year-old female

Police reported the fatal shooting of a 49-year-old woman, LD. Milwaukee police said the suspected shooter, 62-year-old BS, shot himself in the head after officers discharged a "non-lethal weapon" in his direction. The man was transported to a hospital, where he later died. BS and his wife, VS, **had divorced on July 12**.

July 25 | Milwaukee
BS, 31-year-old female

31-year-old BS was found shot to death inside her home after numerous calls for help. BS **repeatedly told authorities about allegations of domestic violence**. Her ex-boyfriend, NH, was a convicted felon still on supervision who had an open warrant. NH was charged in 2023 with first-degree reckless homicide, stalking and felony victim intimidation, as well as misdemeanor disorderly conduct and battery. Before this case, he had never been charged with abusing BS. She made 9 reports to Law Enforcement about the abuse. He was not questioned or arrested until after her death.

July 31 | Milwaukee
DH, 51-year-old female

51-year-old DH was found with fatal gunshot injuries. DH had been an Advocate for the ASHA Project, a domestic violence support program that is culturally specific to Black women. KA, age 44, was charged with First-Degree Reckless Homicide and Use of a Dangerous Weapon in her death.

August 12 | Milwaukee
EG, 20-year-old female

EG, 20, was shot and killed August 12. Milwaukee police have not released any official information on the suspect. AG's family says she was the victim of domestic violence, killed by her ex-boyfriend.

August 25 | Milwaukee
NR, 36-year-old female

A man has been charged in connection to a homicide and house fire. Prosecutors accuse 47-year-old EB of shooting and killing his ex-girlfriend before setting the home they shared on fire. **NR was in the process of moving out**. All charges against EB in this case were dismissed after he was killed by Law Enforcement on September 2.

August 26 | Milwaukee
Perpetrator Suicide

Police were looking for 43-year-old DA, for violating a domestic violence-related restraining order. An officer was hit by a bullet that likely came from DA's gun after that suspect had already shot himself in the head. DA died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. The officer, who was hit in the leg, recovered.

September 2 | Milwaukee
Perpetrator shot by Law Enforcement

47-year-old EB was shot and killed by police in the downtown bar district following a lengthy high-speed chase around the city. A bystander was also shot and wounded during the incident. That bystander, a 22-year-old woman, was taken to a hospital for treatment.

September 24 | Milwaukee
0W, 31-year-old female

28-year-old DR was found guilty of second-degree reckless homicide in the fatal shooting of OW. According to the criminal complaint, Milwaukee police were dispatched to a shooting. When detectives arrived, they found a woman with a gunshot wound. Despite life-saving measures, the victim died at the hospital.

DR admitted that he was struggling with OW over a gun when OW suddenly was shot. DR admitted he engaged in a physical struggle with OW to take the gun away. During the struggle, he twisted the gun so that it was pointed at her, and the gun went off, shooting her. According to her father, OW and DR were in a relationship. "It was very toxic for years," her father said.

September 24 | Milwaukee
KB, 20-year-old female

KB, age 20, was killed by a married 52-year-old man, SS, whom she had been seeing. SS reached out to KB's mother and said, "I want to be done messing with your daughter but she's reaching out to my wife." A friend of SS called 911 after he saw SS on top of the victim in SS's car. The friend reported that the female stated, 'he cut my throat,' and that she was screaming and pleading for help. Police responded to an alley where KB had been tied, shot, and then set on fire.

October 10 | Milwaukee
KS, 40-year-old-female

KS's body was discovered in a trash can. She had been fatally shot. Police reported the husband of the woman is the suspect. Investigators said they had made an arrest, but a week later, they said they were looking for a person of interest. Her daughter believes her mother was a victim of domestic violence and has a message for anyone who sees signs of abuse. "Even if you respect that person, and respect their relationship, and know they're going to go back chance after chance, you still need to speak up."

October 12 | Milwaukee
JR, 24-year-old male

LC, a 17-year-old male, is charged with Second-Degree Reckless Homicide in the fatal shooting of JR, age 24. LC lived with JR and his mother. JR entered the kitchen of their home and "suddenly began to swing" at another person, LC told police. There had been a **history of abuse** between LC's mother and JR. The complaint says LC did not know what to do, saw a gun on the table, picked it up and shot JR.

October 20 | Milwaukee
CL-R, 26-year-old male

CL-R, age 26, was shot and killed during an argument with the brother of a woman with whom CL-R had an abusive relationship. SS and CL-R had been in a verbal argument all day, which turned physical. SS called her mother, who brought along SS's brothers. One brother said, "You're not going to beat on my sister any longer!" Five shots were fired, and the brothers fled the area. The shooting was later determined to be self-defense.

December 7 | Milwaukee
MB, 34-year-old-female

LJ, age 41, was charged with First-Degree Intentional Homicide in the shooting death of 34-year-old MB. According to the criminal complaint, police were dispatched to a residence after a man called 911 and said he had "just shot a lady and she is dead.' He further said, 'the gun is in a holster on the kitchen table and no one else is in the house.' When officers arrived on the scene, the defendant answered the front door with his hands up. The complaint says he "made statements to the effect that he had asked the woman to leave, she had not left, and he had messed up." Police entered the house and found the victim in the kitchen, dead from a gunshot wound. Officers also spotted the gun inside a holster on the kitchen table. MB came over to LJ's house and he made dinner. They were joking back and forth, and at some point, he became upset with her and told her to leave. When she refused, LJ said he shot the woman three times.

County	
Monroe	**April 22 | Ridgeville** **Homicide/Suicide** WB, age 76, and KB, age 75 were found dead in their residence in an apparent murder/suicide. Dispatchers received a 911 call early in the morning reporting that a person in the residence was dead. The caller indicated they had caused the death, and planned to commit suicide. Responding officers found the couple dead. **May 10 | Sparta** **SL, 32-year-old female** According to the criminal complaint, an autopsy showed SL died of blunt force trauma due to multiple head and facial injuries. She also had injuries on her arms and legs that were consistent with defensive wounds. SH had a **history of violence** against SL, including domestic abuse convictions for cases that were filed in 2020 and 2021. SH was sentenced in April to three years of probation for these prior incidents. SL was the victim in these earlier cases as well, in which her injuries were similar.

County	
Oconto	**October 2 | Little Suamico** **LS, 55-year-old female** **PB, 75-year-old male** DS, 27, is charged with two counts of first-degree intentional homicide in the deaths of 55-year-old LS and 75-year-old PB. He is also charged with one count of possession of a firearm by a felon. DS shot his mother and her husband. Police had been to the home previously, with an investigator describing DS's relationship with PB as "contemptuous." DS **had threatened his mother's life in the past**.

County	
Outagamie	**April 4 | Kaukauna** **AH, 24-year-old female** The bodies of AH, 24, and AV, 19, were discovered after officers made a welfare check to a home due to family concerns about not being able to contact them. Based on evidence and autopsy reports, police said AH died of a gunshot wound and AV died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Police said they lived at the address and were in a relationship. **June 6 | Appleton** **SS, 35-year-old female** Officials released the names of two people found dead in a murder-suicide in Appleton on June 6. Police identified them as SS, 35, and MK, 32. Police say they were found dead in the home they shared. The investigation found MK shot SS, and then MK died by suicide with the same firearm. **August 12 | Appleton** **Law Enforcement-Involved Death** Police shot and killed an armed male while responding to a domestic disturbance call. Officers attempted negotiations and later shot him.The male was taken to a local hospital, where he died.

County	
Portage	**November 27 | Amherst** **CB, 92-year-old male** MB was found guilty of First-Degree Intentional Homicide in the shooting of his long-term companion's 92-year-old father. MB had been living with CB's daughter for twenty years. He was **angry over the amount of time she had been spending with her father**. During an argument, MB pointed a gun at her. She asked MB if he was going to shoot her. He said, "No, I'm going to shoot your dad." MB said CB was ruining their relationship. CB's daughter tried to block MB from going downstairs to where her father slept. CB awoke to the noise of them arguing and started up the steps. MB leaned over the stair's railing and shot CB in the head.

County	
Racine	**February 13 | Racine** **Perpetrator Suicide after mass shooting, 5 wounded** NM was one of five people shot and wounded at a bar just after closing. NM was shot three times, once in the arm and twice in the leg, but survived. JB, 50, then turned the gun on himself. JB was the father of NM's two children. **April 24 | Racine** **BB, 30-year-old female** TJ attacked his girlfriend and her friend, BB, with a claw hammer in February. BB, a mother of six, was **trying to help her friend escape an abusive relationship** with TJ. Two months later, TJ returned to BB's home and assaulted her in front of her children. He forced her into her vehicle, where she was later found dead of a gunshot wound to the head. He has been charged on 23 counts, including first degree intentional homicide, Attempted first-degree intentional homicide (2 counts), Strangulation and suffocation, Substantial battery, Kidnapping, Stalking, False imprisonment, and Felony intimidation of a victim.

County	
Rock	**January 26 | Beloit** **SG, 31-year-old female** A suspect was arrested after the shooting death of a 31-year-old woman. The suspect, AR, was booked on a single count of First-Degree Homicide, with a domestic violence enhancer, and Possession of a Stolen Weapon. AR and the woman were involved to some degree prior to the shooting. AR was later released due to conflicting reports on a personal recognizance bond with conditions not to possess any weapons, have no contact with SG's family or her residence, and not to leave Wisconsin.

Shawano

March 31 | Richmond
Female, unknown age/name

According to the Shawano County Sheriff's office, a deputy was dispatched to a residence for a domestic disturbance after a woman at the home called 911. A deputy arrived and saw a man shoot a woman and then fire at the deputy. The deputy exchanged gunfire with the man, who was later determined to have died by a self-inflicted gunshot. The sheriff's office said both the man and the woman died.

June 25 | Wescott
SL, 59-year-old female

MI called 911 and said, "I just woke up and I checked on my girlfriend and she's dead." An autopsy determined the 59-year-old woman had been strangled. The complaint cites **a case two years earlier when MI was charged with Strangulation, Second-Degree Recklessly Endangering Safety and Operating a Firearm While Intoxicated**; the same woman was the victim in that case.

November 19 | Shawano
Law Enforcement-Involved Death

Officers were called to a home for a "shots fired" incident. The couple who owned the residence were **in the process of a divorce**, and LC was **living elsewhere at the time**. Officers had previously investigated incidents of **harassment** with LC directed at his estranged wife. Officers were let into the home, where they could hear yelling coming from the basement. LC was in the basement with his estranged wife and was armed with a shotgun. Officers could hear them struggling, and LC was not responding to directives to come out. When an officer heard the pump shotgun cycling the action, he moved into position and could observe LC pointing the weapon at him. The officer fatally shot LC.

County	
St. Croix	**May 13 | New Richmond** **KM 36-year-old female** A 42-year-old man, BM, and a 36-year-old woman, KM, were found deceased inside of a home in a manner that police said is consistent with a murder-suicide. According to the New Richmond Police Department, officials were called to reports of an odor coming from a home. Officers arrived to find two adults with apparent gunshot wounds. **August 27 | New Richmond** **SL, 48-year-old male** A 53-year-old woman was charged with homicide for the death of SL. MS was charged with First-Degree Intentional Homicide and two counts of Resisting or Obstructing an Officer. SL, 48, her fiancé, was found on the floor with multiple puncture wounds. The scene had been partly cleaned of blood prior to law enforcement arriving. MS said she attempted CPR and that she had argued with SL that morning when he was doing dishes. MS said that they fought over a knife, and that SL fell on it during the fight. An autopsy found that SL had two stab wounds and that his cause of death was homicide.

County	
Vernon	**June 19 | Coon Valley** **RS, 48-year-old male** A Vernon County woman apparently shot her husband several times before killing herself. The sheriff's office said 47-year-old TS was found dead with a self-inflicted wound when deputies were called to her Coon Valley area home. They later found the body of TS's husband, 48-year-old RS. Online records indicate the couple had been **going through divorce proceedings** since late last year. RS died from multiple gunshot wounds, and TS had one self-inflicted wound.

County	
Waukesha	**August 23 | Delafield** **SP 44-year-old female** MP was charged with killing his girlfriend, SP, in August 2022 and hiding her body in the woods in Delafield. She was last seen two and a half weeks before her body was found. The medical examiner could not determine the exact cause of death. **October 21 | Hartland** **CM, 3-year-old male** **LM, 3-year-old male** **SK, 12-year-old female** **NK, 14-year-old female** **JM, 33-year-old female** The six people found dead after an apartment fire in the village of Hartland Friday likely died in a murder-suicide incident. All victims had one gunshot wound. CM, who was a father and stepfather to the four children, had a self-inflicted gunshot wound. An ignitable liquid and multiple firearms were also found in the unit where the family resided.

County	
Wood	**November 15 | Marshfield** **MW 41-year-old female** Police responded to a home for a welfare check of 41-year-old MW. A coworker called police concerned after MW did not show up for work. When police arrived at the home they found a vehicle registered to 48-year-old HH parked in the driveway. The front door was damaged consistent with a break-in. Officers performed a protective sweep of the home and found both dead. HH shot and killed MW and then turned the gun on himself. The couple **divorced in 2020**. They had two children. The children were not physically injured in the incident.

Chippewa Falls County
April 24, Chippewa Falls
IP, 10-year-old female

10-year-old IP was reported missing when she did not return from her aunt's house. Her father found her bike that evening. The following morning, IP was found in the woods.According to the autopsy, there was evidence of sexual assault and confirmed the blunt force trauma to her face. She was fatally strangled by a fourteen-year-old family member.

Dane County
November 22, Madison
SR, 36-year-old male

36-year-old SR was fatally shot by his step-brother during an afternoon argument in a residential Madison neighborhood. The two had pulled over in an SUV and had a physical altercation. Upon getting back into the vehicle, ES shot SR and drove away.

Milwaukee County
January 15, Milwaukee
TH, 8-year-old female

After drinking two pints of tequila, MH, age 47, shot and killed his 8-year-old daughter. He told detectives his daughter was "in the wrong place at the wrong time." He was found guilty of neglecting a child, consequence of death, and possession of a firearm by a felon. He had a **prior history of domestic violence**.

Milwaukee County
January 25, Milwaukee
RP, 40-year-old male

RP, 22, was found guilty of 2nd Degree Reckless Homicide for shooting RP, his 40-year-old father in the head, killing him. A woman who lived at the residence told investigators that RP has had been having more frequent "outbursts." The woman and several others tried to separate father and son. The complaint states that, once the two were separated, RP went back inside the residence but then ran out through the front door, along the side of the house and pointed a gun toward the victim. The woman said she heard RP say "I'm tired of this" before he fired a single gunshot.

Milwaukee County
February 10, Milwaukee
JC, 10-year-old female

HR, age 46, was found guilty of First-Degree Reckless Homicide in the killing of her 10-year-old daughter, JC. HR and JC had been arguing that morning about braiding JC's hair. JC's sister told police she heard a loud bang from the bathroom. When she went inside, she saw JC laying on the ground at the feet of HR, the sink was loose from the wall and had fallen, and HR was holding a mirror that had fallen off the wall. JC's sister did not see any injuries on JC and helped her into her bedroom. JC's sister and brother found JC dead when they returned home after school.

Milwaukee County
February 12, Cudahy
AE, 5-month-old female

An incident involving 5-month-old AE was reported on February 10th. She was removed from life support on February 12th.Police said an autopsy revealed hemorrhaging of the brain, spinal cord and optic nerve. The baby's cause of death was determined to be blunt force trauma and it was ruled a homicide. Her father, D E-J, age 24, was the suspect.

Milwaukee County
August 21, Milwaukee
RC, 44-year-old male

23-year-old BG was found guilty of First-Degree Reckless Homicide in the shooting death of his 44-year-old uncle, RC.

Milwaukee County
November 21, Milwaukee
QM, 44-year-old female

A 10-year-old boy is accused of shooting and killing his 44-year-old mother, QM, because she woke him up early and would not buy him a virtual reality headset. Initially, Milwaukee police ruled the shooting accidental, saying the boy was playing with the gun and it went off. Due to his age, they let the boy stay with his family. The next morning, the boy's family contacted police with serious concerns. The boy's 26-year-old sister told police her brother had "rage issues" and had been seeing a therapist who gave him a "concerning diagnosis." The boy's mother set up cameras in the home before the deadly shooting. Those cameras then became unplugged.

Milwaukee County
December 8th, Milwaukee
Homicide/Suicide
TJ, 7-year-old female

A 25-year-old mother and her 7-year-old daughter who were found dead in a lake. KB, 25, died by suicide. The cause of death listed for her daughter, TJ, is homicide. Mother and daughter were in a car submerged in a lake. Their deaths come after KB's mother called 911 to report that her daughter was possibly suicidal and threatening to drive a car into the lake.

St. Croix County
February 4, Hudson
Unnamed son, 7-week-old male

A seven-week-old baby died after going into cardiac arrest, and sustaining multiple injuries. Doctors found the baby's cardiac arrest was caused by head trauma, and they also had a broken leg, ribs and skull fractures. The infant also no longer had any brain activity.

The baby passed away days later. His cause of death was a traumatic brain injury, and ruled a homicide. The baby's father, PM, 37, was charged with first degree reckless homicide, physical abuse of a child, recklessly causing harm to a child and intentionally causing bodily harm by conduct.

No Immediate Danger Exists to the Community Where We are Drowning in a Sea of Violence

Murder-Suicide & the Violence of the Gender Binary

Tegan Nia Swanson, Systems Change Coordinator

A son kills his mother with a gun and then turns the gun on himself.

A young man with violent felony firearms convictions shoots his girlfriend and then himself.

Nine days after a woman files for divorce, her husband shoots her and then shoots himself.

Twelve days after his divorce case is filed, a man shoots and kills his new girlfriend and then himself.

Three people die when a man shoots the mother of his child, two neighbors, a police officer, and then himself, in what the media refers to as "a gun battle."

An elderly couple in their eighties are found dead of gunshot wounds in a park; an investigation indicates a "planned mutual suicidal act," though only the elderly man has self-inflicted wounds.

A nineteen-year-old boy who had been raised in a home with domestic violence turns his gun on his girlfriend and then kills himself; newspapers report "authorities say there is not believed to be any danger to the public."

Someone calls the police and says they have killed their partner and plan to do the same to themselves; both are dead when emergency responders arrive.

A judge denies a woman the restraining order she petitions for and the court handling her divorce refers their case to "family education." Within a month, she and her husband are both dead when he kills her and then himself with his gun.

Another man, whose Wisconsin Circuit Court Access (CCAP) court record indicates only traffic violations and eviction, shoots and kills his girlfriend and himself in a community "**drowning in a sea of violence**."

For another couple, there is no record — of them or his violence toward her, of the gun he will use to kill them both — in CCAP at all.

A man files for divorce, though court record indicates both he and his wife are reluctant to move forward with the final hearing; she shoots him and then herself before the case is either dismissed or finalized.

A man shoots his girlfriend just a few city blocks from a domestic violence shelter, which has reported a 30% increase in victim needs since 2020.

In a tiny, rural town, where residents report there is dire need for mental health and domestic violence resources, a man shoots his wife and kills himself.

One man brutally beats and stabs his wife to death in their home, then walks in front of a semi on the highway and leaves their three young children orphaned; loved ones and strangers donate nearly $160,000 to care for them in their parents' absence.

Another man breaks into his ex-wife's home and shoots her and then himself, leaving their children orphaned, too.

After shooting his teenaged stepdaughters, his three-year-old twin sons, and his wife, a man lights their apartment building on fire and then kills himself. The other occupants of the building — a single mother, a young family, and a couple — escape the fire but are left homeless. Still, "**no immediate danger exists to the community**."[6]

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Forty-one people died in 18 identified instances of domestic violence murder-suicide in Wisconsin in 2022. All but one perpetrator was identified as male. Sixteen of eighteen involved a firearm [7]. These grim statistics extend nationally: in its 2020 analysis, the Violence Policy Center (VPC) reported an average of 11 people lost their lives to murder-suicide each day in the United States — two-thirds of the deaths were related to domestic violence [8]. Though a new VPC report has not been published since the pandemic and its rippling economic impacts, according to the Gun Violence Archive, 2022 was the highest year on record for national rates of murder-suicides involving a firearm, and reportage from 2023 is on track to easily surpass that record [9]. Again and again, the data reiterates: most of this violence is committed by men, with a firearm, against an intimate partner. Of these cases in 2022, 95% of victims were women whose partners murdered them with a gun, 92% of the time.

And yet, ***there is no continuing threat to the public, no immediate danger exists to the community, no reason to believe the community is at risk.*** A common refrain, often quoted from systems authorities in media coverage after domestic violence homicides or murder-suicides. The phrasing itself is varied, but invariably contains denial that there remains any potential for present or future violence. In reference to the lack of an active shooter, it is at least momentarily factual — though instances of gun violence continue to proliferate generally unchecked by legislative measures or law enforcement, everywhere and on most days and nights in public: at grocery stores, sports events, and dance clubs; at houses of worship, college campuses, and elementary schools; in hateful reaction to the flight of an LGBTQIA+ affirming progress flag at a gift shop [10]. It is more the subtle implication about the potential for future violence, that which is not a risk to the public, that is troubling. Who is included in the public, and who amongst them is safe from harm?

We must not ignore the public context of state and federal policy, or the deeper message that it manifests in our private spaces. In 2022 and 2023, state legislatures across the United States introduced more than 300 bills attacking the rights of our trans, non-binary, and genderqueer communities, including here in Wisconsin [11]. On June 24, 2022, in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned 50 years of precedent, overruling Roe v. Wade. Eight months later, on February 2, 2023, in their decision in United States v. Rahimi, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit deemed federal law prohibiting individuals from possessing a firearm while under a domestic violence restraining order to be unconstitutional; the case now sits before the Supreme Court, too.

In combination, these three examples indicate a terrifying paradigm in policy. Hate groups like Promise to America's Children have co-opted gender-based movement language to market their bills as crucial protections for the safety of girls and women, but anti-trans legislation is actually policy-based enforcement of the white, colonial patriarchy that must be maintained for structural power and control [12].

In Dobbs, the State dictates to people who may become pregnant that they do not have the right to make decisions about their health or their own bodies. In Rahimi, the State may not infringe on the right to possess firearms, not even to protect the life or well-being of someone whose intimate partner may use said firearm against them[13].

When does the government have the right to dictate private decisions in order to protect the lives of its citizens, and when shall the government not infringe?

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In the Rahimi decision, judicial officials cite "our ancestors would never have accepted" a law restricting access to firearms because of domestic abuse, and their violent logic holds – the ancestors they refer to were white men who asserted it was their Biblical right to enslave Black people; who held women and children were to be considered property, without rights to ordinary bodily autonomy; who believed Indigenous communities, and queer and trans people, must not even exist at all.

"White supremacy is not the shark," says poet-activist-educator Kyle "Guante" Tran Myhre, keynote speaker at End Abuse's 2021 Teen Summit conference. "It is the water." What else floats in the ***sea of violence*** drowning our communities? As other activist-scholars like Alok Vaid-Menon remind us, the gender binary was invented to justify colonization and brutally enforce white supremacy, too[14].

The oppressive construct of a patriarchal gender binary leads to the devaluation of women, femmes, transmasculine folks, and non-binary people, and far too often, to their murders. But as bell hooks said, "the first act of violence that patriarchy demands of males is not violence toward women. Instead, patriarchy demands of all males that they engage in acts of psychic self-mutilation, that they kill off the emotional parts of themselves." Our ***sea of violence*** inherently devalues anyone who exists in the Patriarchy at all, including those who expect themselves to meet the impossibly violent, lonely, cis-heteronormative standard for men. Failing at that, they have two choices – harm themselves or harm another – a message ingrained early, often, and with heartbreaking results.

According to Impact Justice's 2023 report on the higher rates of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) experienced by formerly incarcerated men who have been convicted of violent felonies, their witnessing or experiencing violent behavior from a caregiver aligned closely with a decrease in their self-worth and their feelings of safety, as well as an increase in reactive violence and feelings of isolation, shame, and suicidality[15]. The report also posits that, based on medical diagnostics, a majority of these formerly incarcerated men could be suffering from undiagnosed, untreated Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. We know most sexual and domestic violence goes unreported, and of those incidents that are, most cases do not end in convictions; this does not mean the violence is not happening.[16] How many others who have never been involved in the criminal legal system have similar histories of trauma?

Our socio-political discourse amplifies misogynist and transphobic relational norms that enforce violence and strict binaries, and devalue emotional intelligence and fluidity. Our economic system is designed to keep more and more people in poverty. Young people experience compounding, generational social-emotional destabilization. All of this exists in the context of a historic imbalance of access to environmental resources.

The result of these combined conditions is pervasive harm to the global majority; ***we drown in a sea of violence***. It is no wonder men and boys are dying by suicide at unprecedented rates – four times the rate of women and girls[17],[18]. It is no wonder men are killing their partners and then themselves in a proliferation of guns [19].

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A family annihilator is a person who murders their entire family and then sometimes dies by suicide themselves, like the Wisconsin man who killed his four children and his wife, then shot himself after he set his apartment building on fire, carelessly endangering the lives and homes of three other families. At least in part, the title reveals the controlling, shameful motivation behind such breathtaking violence: *if none of us exist any longer, no one can discover what I've done*.

National trends in authoritarian legislation attempt to erase our state-sponsored histories of racialized and gender-based violence – like the Wisconsin Legislature's proposal to defund diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in higher education. All of them reflect the power-and-control that an abusive partner might inflict upon a survivor. *Do not tell anyone the truth of what I've actually done*, they say, *or I'll erase us both to make sure you regret it*.

In a society where we discourage truth-telling, the refrain ***no reason to believe the community is at risk*** reiterates the pernicious, patriarchal narrative that domestic violence is a private issue, not a public one. Murder-suicide is a tragedy, surely, but it is one confined and contained to the home. These victims and perpetrators were individuals experiencing private violence; now that this private, individualized violence is over, public safety prevails. We must ask, were they and their social networks never included in community? Are future victims of domestic violence murder-suicide members of community? In this narrative, lives extinguished by individualized, patriarchal rage and easy access to firearms are erased from the we.

Of course, both research and anecdotal stories reveal otherwise. Just because the individuals themselves no longer breathe or speak or dream, their memories linger *in community*. We remember them. Court records refer obliquely to obituaries or probate hearings. GoFundMe campaigns for surviving loved ones, especially children, rise, bloom, and wither with the whiplash attention of a distractable, petulant news cycle. Candles are lit. Names are spoken tearfully aloud at memorials or left unspoken in awkward, shameful silence. Thoughts and prayers are shared on social media by elected officials, but no common sense gun regulation or safety reform is ever, ever codified. The trauma does not dissipate quickly. Their memories linger in the amplified fears of other as-of-now survivors, in the bodies of young ones who have witnessed violence they do not understand but will internalize. How do they wait in the homes of men whose economic despair or untreated depression might yet rear itself in suicidal rage?

When we refuse to acknowledge the public responsibility for private harm, that rage waits like a bullet in the chamber of a gun, ready at any perceived emasculation.

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From its roots *ad* and *nihil* in the Latin, annihilate comes from two words that mean "toward" and "nothing." During advocacy for the 2023-2025 biennial state budget for Wisconsin, a coalition of coalitions – American Indians Against Abuse, Black and Brown Womyn Power Coalition, End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin, and the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault – requested necessary, evidence-based resources in accordance with the recommendations our member programs made for the 2023-2029 Long Range Plan to Address Sexual and Domestic Violence in Wisconsin[20].

Governor Evers saw fit to include such items in his Executive Budget, including unprecedented increases to DV/SA program funding that still would not have filled oncoming VOCA shortfalls [21], nor fully meet the growing demand for services. He also funded the Wisconsin Department of Children & Families' own LIFE initiative that supported struggling families to pay their bills [22]. These life-saving supports were cut by the Joint Finance Committee and were not included in the final budget.

It is impossible that ***no immediate danger exists to the community*** when ***we are drowning in a sea of violence***, so which of the two statements is true? There have never been more domestic violence homicides on record in Wisconsin than in 2022. The same is true for murder-suicides. Both are preventable - when policies are enacted and programs are sustained that meet the needs of our most vulnerable communities. Housing, red flag laws, health and well-being resources, thriving wages, and non-carceral responses to harm are both homicide and suicide prevention strategies.

No immediate danger exists. Every time their helpline rings, we wonder about advocates being asked to do more and more with less and less, amidst the news of the woman murdered just blocks from their DV shelter. ***Drowning in a sea of violence***. We wonder how the neighbors of a couple mourn, when they still live in a tiny, rural town where everyone knows everyone, and everyone knows that he killed her and then himself when they both needed resources that still are not available. People who are low-income, and those currently or formerly impacted by the criminal legal system, experience many structural and societal barriers to basic needs: housing, mental healthcare, social services, and civic engagement opportunities. All of these basic needs are essential to healing from complex, often generational trauma and to preventing future harm.

No immediate danger exists in a sea of violence. We think of the three children orphaned when their father beat their mother to death and then walked in front of a semi on the highway. We think of the $160,000 raised by loved ones and strangers. We think of the community where *gun battles* are habitual, where too many young men will be evicted and too many will grow up believing violence is their only norm. Where children of every gender learn that to be a man means to be powerful at all costs. We think of the funds cut by the State, and the families who will never have a GoFundMe. *Toward* and *nothing*.

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"Gender is a story," says Alok Vaid-Menon. "Not just a word. There are as many ways to be a woman as there are women….as many ways to be a man as there are men…as many ways to be non-binary as there are non-binary people. This complexity is not chaos, it just is. We do not need to be universal to be valid."

For too long, the dominant narratives that we tell about ourselves, to ourselves and each other, have been limiting, oppressive, and incomplete [23]. Binaries exist in a simplistic mathematical sense, but humans cannot be distilled into numerical categories and still retain the truthful complexity of our full selves. Even scientists agree that the dominant narrative about gender and sex being a binary is false [24].

Whether we cause harm to others or we experience it at their hands is also a false binary, and everyone who exists under the patriarchal gender binary internalizes the cognitive dissonance between our holistic selves and this simplistic, oppressive universal. When we weaponize those pieces of us that we must reject, erase, or annihilate to fit into the simplistic one, we can cause harm.

In this way, gender-based violence is the logical result of a dominant narrative that demands a false and violent hierarchy of race and sex. Existing systems and structures of power enforce a singular, damaging story: it is the individual who causes harm, separate from the context in which they live. We each exist within an interrelated, overlapping social ecosystem. To blame only the individual for the systems that enable and reinforce violence is to erase the ecosystem; to expect changes only from an individual who has caused harm is to dismiss the connections and responsibility we each share for our collective well-being.

Beyond resourcing our communities to ensure every family has the ability to live whole, safe, and healthy lives, we must tell – not one, but many – different stories to our children, our partners, our neighbors and loved ones as well as to those in positions of power: our legislators, community leaders, We must listen for different stories, and support people in telling their own [25].

Representation in storytelling matters if the narrative and solutions we are building are to reflect the varied experiences of all. The story of each individual life, taken by self or other, matters. The details of these lives are the key to the solutions, including the (lack of) access they had to basic needs, to tangible resources for healing, and to narratives that celebrate and reflect their authentic selves by feeding connection to others. When individuals can thrive in their genuine, layered identities and in connection to those whose lives are intertwined with their own, our ecosystem will thrive.

It is our work to create conditions that allow liberation of all, not a privileged few. It is our work to keep the stories of individuals prominent in our minds as we demand and create an ecosystem that refuses to accept norms of violence, individualism, false binaries, and silence. It is our work to grieve the lives and stories lost, to resource solutions that uplift those most impacted by violence, and to commit to cultivating the honest conditions of what it takes to end violence in ourselves and our communities.

Disproportionate Impact on Black, Indigenous, and POC Communities

Jenna Gormal, Public Policy Director and Antonia Norton, Director of the ASHA project

As in previous years, our report has found that BIPOC folks are disproportionately impacted by domestic violence homicide. Anyone may experience IPV, but the burden of relationship violence disproportionately affects Black and Indigenous women from communities with histories of racial discrimination and higher poverty rates, with 45% of Black women nationally experiencing physical violence, sexual violence, and stalking in their lifetime. An abundance of research has shown, "Violence against women in intimate relationships occurred more often and was more severe in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. Women living in disadvantaged neighborhoods were more than twice as likely to be the victims of intimate violence compared with women in more advantaged neighborhoods"[1] Research indicates this increased exposure is due to structural and racial inequalities[2][3]

It should, therefore, be no surprise that in 2022, in Milwaukee, the most segregated city in the United States, a city which a recent study argued "represents the archetype of modern day metropolitan racial apartheid and inequality", we saw a sustained and alarming increase in domestic violence homicide.

Racial disparity in Milwaukee impacts Black people from segregation to economics to housing to incarceration[4]. Unequal systems exist and persist unabated, and the impacts of structural racism are so pervasive that, in 2016, Milwaukee's County and City officials declared racism a public health crisis.

Antonia Norton, Director of the ASHA Project in Milwaukee stated, "Survivors we see often present with a litany of psychological and emotional challenges including anxiety, abuse of substances/addiction, PTSD, depression, somatic disorders, and fear, along with the historical racialized trauma of daily lived experiences in Milwaukee as well as extreme financial/housing hardship."

"***For the seventh time in little more than three weeks, Milwaukee police reported another woman was killed in a domestic violence-related shooting Sunday.***

The victim was identified as Desiree D. Harris, of Milwaukee, by the county medical examiner's office.

The shooting comes after six women of color were also killed under domestic violence-related circumstances between July 8 and 20 in Milwaukee County. Three men have since been charged in those incidents, and all were legally barred from possessing a gun and had other pending court cases."

- excerpt from the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Aug 2022

Since the passage of the 1994 crime bill, increased policing, prosecution, and imprisonment have been heralded as the primary policy solutions to end gender-based violence. This response has proven inadequate and harmful, since BIPOC communities are disproportionately targeted by police, resulting in many survivors choosing not to call for help, in fear that they or their partner will be harmed or killed during police intervention. Since BIPOC survivors are less likely to engage with the system, a response to DV that relies primarily on criminalization and legal responses is most likely to exclude them. State intervention can never guarantee safety for survivors so long as fear and active harm result from engagement with it. Carceral responses also overlook the importance of exit options, support, and healing.

Laws criminalizing abuse do not help survivors with nowhere to go:

The unique barriers to reporting violence are compounded by a lack of available culturally-specific services[1]. Many victims of domestic and intimate partner violence do not seek services outside of their communities. It is widely known and documented that many victims from BIPOC communities or those who identify as LGBTQ will not use a mainstream program for a variety of reasons, including bias or unequal treatment, racism, and mistrust of systems based in historical systemic oppression and injustice.

Domestic violence programs are chronically underfunded, and many BIPOC-focused programs have been left out of funding opportunities, particularly those that apply transformative and restorative justice techniques, operate outside of the criminal legal apparatus, or focus on prevention or those who have harmed. This underfunding means that there are fewer BIPOC led services available, and limited resources for community engagement to spread word of their existence.

The violence in Milwaukee is a product of decades of racially targeted policies that create concentrated poverty and income inequality. The structural disadvantages in Milwaukee's neighborhoods mean inadequate access to protective services that reduce the risk of lethal violence, such as social services, schools, housing, and healthcare.

To be unequivocal; the relationship between community income levels and intimate partner violence is not a function of who lives in low-income neighborhoods or the individual characteristics of community members. The relationship is instead a result of the neighborhood context — living in a low-income neighborhood in and of itself increases the risk of intimate partner violence.

With this knowledge, we can prevent violence from occurring by changing the social conditions that allow it to thrive. Resourcing social services, schools, housing, healthcare, and local antiviolence groups will foster the growth of safer communities and prevent future homicides.

Police had a warrant to arrest the man she accused of abuse. They didn't. Now she's dead.

By: Ashley Luthern, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Editor's note: *A version of this story was published in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel on April 10, 2023. Since publication, the Milwaukee Police Department has opened a review into all contacts Bobbie Lou Schoeffling had with the agency prior to her death. The original piece has been edited and condensed to fit the space allotted here.*

Bobbie Lou Schoeffling asked for help.

Over and over again, she called 911.

She told Milwaukee police her ex-boyfriend beat her, ripped her hair out, held her hostage, threw rocks at her house and pulled a gun on her.

She pleaded with dispatchers, officers, his probation agent — anyone — to arrest him. They'd had the authority to do so for months: He had an open felony warrant for fleeing police in a high-speed chase. He could be put in jail without her cooperating or testifying or picking him out of a lineup.

She was afraid he would kill her if she talked to police and shoot any officers who tried to arrest him. She said he had made it clear he would never go back to prison.

Still, Schoeffling walked into a Milwaukee police district station in June 2022 and told an officer her ex-boyfriend had attacked her 30 minutes earlier, while they were in her car with her two young sons.

"I've been here a million times, nothing ever happens," she told the cop. "He goes on high speeds, you guys don't catch him. He pulls guns out, you guys don't catch him."

"I'm really scared," she said in an exchange captured by security cameras.

Her ex-boyfriend was finally arrested July 27, 2022 — one day after Schoeffling was found dead with multiple gunshot wounds. She was 31.

Police officers, prosecutors and probation agents who had contact with Schoeffling over the final 10 months of her life missed the full picture of an escalating series of domestic violence allegations and calls for help, a Milwaukee Journal Sentinel investigation found.

The news organization interviewed those closest to Schoeffling, reviewed hundreds of pages of public records, uncovered video of Schoeffling reporting the abuse to police, pushed public officials for answers and asked several experts who work with domestic violence victims to review materials.

The results show how a system that is supposed to protect people like Schoeffling and the wider community failed to arrest or even question the person she repeatedly accused of violence.
Schoeffling's ex-boyfriend, Nicholas Howell, 29, was charged in March with first-degree reckless homicide in her death. He has pleaded not guilty and is scheduled for trial this fall.

Among the evidence cited in the charging document is video uncovered by the Journal Sentinel. That video — showing Schoeffling walking into a police station and reporting abuse — vividly illustrates the uphill battle domestic abuse victims face when seeking help and accountability for those who hurt them, experts said.

Antonia Drew Norton, founder of The Asha Project in Milwaukee and a national expert in domestic violence, watched the video and called it "disturbing."

"They blamed her," she said of the police response. "This woman, she's terrified," she continued.

"Because if you fail to put him away, he's going to come back and she could be dead.

"Which she is."

‘Honest, loving and caring’: Bobbie Lou Schoeffling remembered as devoted mom, sister.

Tia Schoeffling set the photos down one by one.

There’s Tia and her sister, Bobbie Lou, sitting in a car wearing pink tank tops and sunglasses, both still in elementary school.

There’s Tia and Bobbie Lou on horseback a few years later.

There’s Bobbie Lou posing with a diploma and roses.

There’s Bobbie Lou with her sons — in a sunflower field, in a pool and in a selfie.

“She was the most honest, loving and caring person,” Tia said. “I looked up to her like my mom. She was my older sister, as well as my best friend.”

The sisters and their brother were raised by their maternal grandmother in a rural community about 30 miles outside of Milwaukee. Bobbie Lou worked as a certified nursing assistant taking care of elderly people and as a hairstylist.

She had her first child when she was 21. Her second arrived two years later. Bobbie Lou had primary custody of her boys throughout her life. Her relationship with the father of her youngest son was abusive. He was convicted of child abuse and domestic violence during their time together, according to court records.

In 2020, she started talking to Howell, whom she had met on Facebook.

Tia noticed a change in her sister as the relationship with Howell progressed. Bobbie Lou was constantly on her phone, answering Howell’s calls and texts. He wanted to know where she was and who she was with, often accusing her of cheating.

Tia pleaded with her sister to end things with Howell and Bobbie Lou tried to do so — at least eight times that Tia remembered.

Howell would leave the house, only to return a few days or weeks later.

People stay in abusive relationships for many complicated reasons. They might financially depend on their abuser or share children. Experts say one of the key reasons is safety. It might sound counterintuitive to people who have not experienced abuse. To them, leaving seems safer. For those living with abuse, it often is not.
Domestic violence is about power and control. When a person leaves, an abuser loses both of those things and might take dangerous steps to regain them.

"People choose to stay because the alternative could mean homicide," said Jenna Gormal, co-director of prevention and engagement for End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin. "It can be a very tactical decision."

A long list of warning signs

The Journal Sentinel found multiple reports made to authorities about Howell during his relationship with Schoeffling and while he was wanted in the fleeing case:

In October 2021, Schoeffling and her sister called Milwaukee police to report Howell had beaten them and threatened them with a gun. Howell left before officers arrived; he was not arrested. Prosecutors did not file charges.

Schoeffling did not want to move forward while Howell was out of custody and still free to harm her, her sister said. The Department of Corrections was notified of the assault allegation.

In January 2022, a Butler police officer tried to pull over a black Mazda for a traffic violation. The car sped away. The officer used security footage and facial recognition software to identify the driver as likely Schoeffling and passenger as Howell.

When the officer questioned Schoeffling months later, she said her passenger held her at gunpoint and forced her to flee with two children in the backseat. She provided a different name than Howell's for her passenger. The officer did not find that individual and did not attempt to locate or question Howell, according to public records.

On June 2, 2022, Tia called 911 to report a man had threatened her at gunpoint. She said the man was wanted by police and her sister was in danger before the call disconnected. When police called her back, she said the man had left.

On July 11, 2022, a 911 caller told police a friend's boyfriend is hitting her. The line was disconnected. The call came from Schoeffling's West Hampton Avenue address. Two officers responded and found Schoeffling and a friend.

An officer's body camera captured Schoeffling's response when police asked the name of her ex-boyfriend: "I can't tell you guys because he really will come kill me. I've tried this before, I've tried this before and I'm sorry but like I can't ever." The officers did not file a report.

The body camera also captured footage of Bobbie Lou's friend hugging her and telling her they were going to fix the situation. Bobbie Lou responded: "No, we're not. I'm gonna die. He's gonna kill me."

Schoeffling called police later that night to say her ex-boyfriend had threatened to burn down the house. Officers responded but did not find Schoeffling at her house and did not file a report.

On July 15, 2022, Schoeffling, a friend and her two sons walked into Milwaukee Police District 3. Schoeffling said her ex-boyfriend had beaten her. The officer who took the report asked if she was really going to follow through this time, referring to the October case, and said "what happens next" was up to her. After Schoeffling left, the officer was heard on security video calling her vulgar names.

On July 18, 2022, Schoeffling called 911 to report Howell was outside her house with a gun and had thrown rocks at her window. She said he had earlier followed her in his car and beaten her. The officers filed a report. Howell was not arrested that night.

On July 18 and July 20, 2022, the probation/parole agent monitoring Howell received a call that Howell had been seen with a gun and then received a letter about "recent incidents" with him.

A mother trying to protect her sons leaves a legacy

Bobbie Lou sent her sons to stay with her grandmother the last weekend in July 2022.
Her sister believes she knew the danger she faced.

Bobbie Lou started a new job at an office on July 25. She was making plans to move and had an appointment the next evening to view a house she wanted to buy.
She never made it.

On July 26, the same friend who'd gone with Bobbie Lou to District 3 called 911 and asked police to check on Bobbie Lou after she could not reach her. The friend also called Tia, who immediately left work and drove to her sister's house.

Tia was driving when the friend called back to tell her Bobbie Lou was dead. Tia called Howell's probation agent and screamed at him.

She has two babies. This isn't right. She begged you to catch him!

In the days after her sister's death, Tia scrolled through her phone and read messages from her sister. Amid the love and jokes between sisters, she saw a record of Bobbie Lou's relationship.

The day in March when Howell got a car and Bobbie Lou hoped it meant he would leave their duplex more often. Another day in May when he moved out.

And a message in July when Bobbie Lou said she had made him leave again — this time, she hoped, for good.

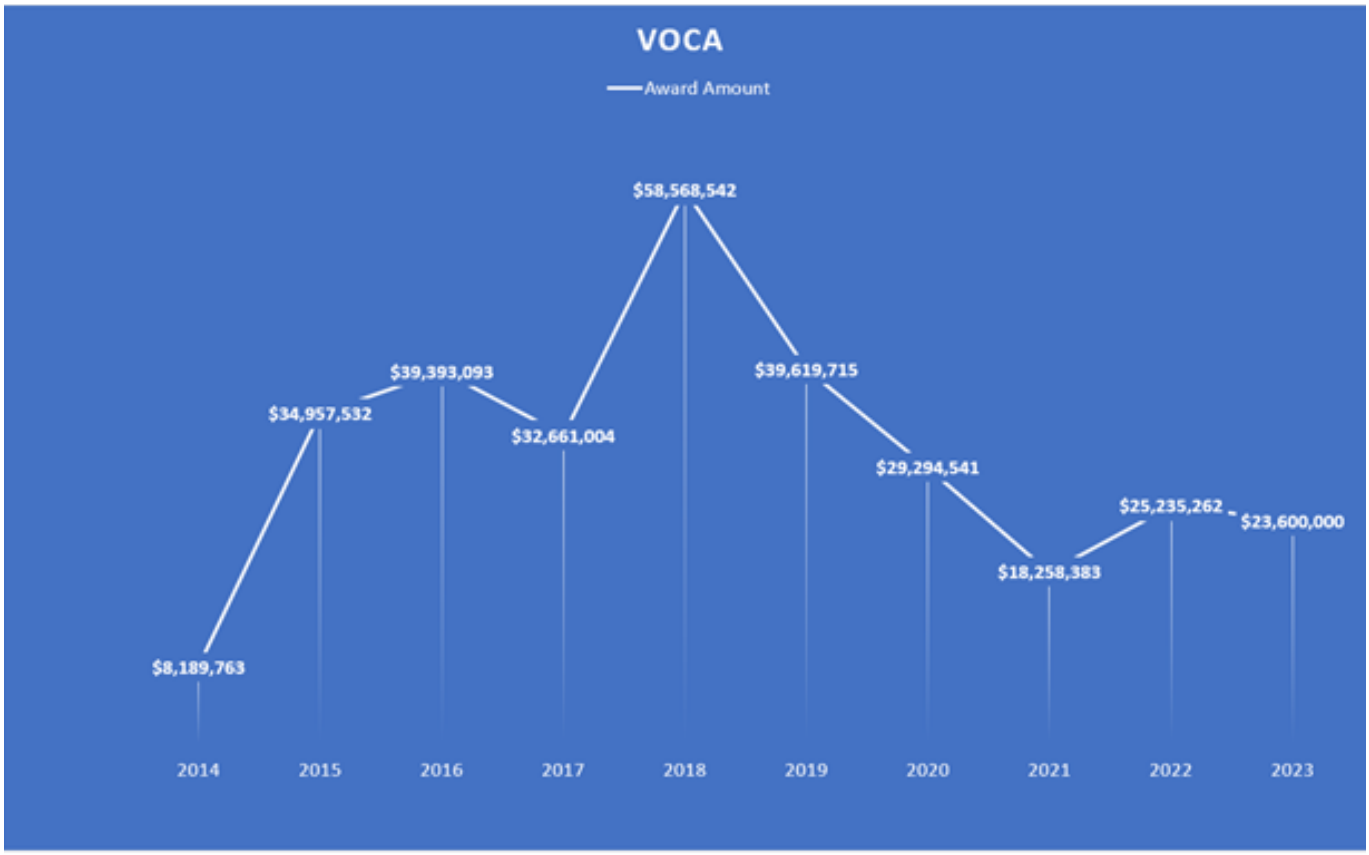
Funding Cuts as Homicides Rise

By: Jenna Gormal, Public Policy Director

Domestic violence homicide is escalating in the context of a series of federal funding cuts and state reallocations, leaving Wisconsin's local domestic violence programs struggling to meet the needs of survivors.

Federal cuts

The Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) has steadily declined since 2018. As a result of the last VOCA competitive grant in 2019, the Office of Crime Victim Services (OCVS) awarded approximately $44.5 million annually, for a 5-year funding cycle. Budget forecasting indicates that OCVS will be able to award only an approximate $13.5 million annually in the 2024 competitive grant, for a 3-year funding cycle. This is devastating 70% cut for the programs across the state who rely upon VOCA to provide core operating funds and fund shelter, advocacy, legal assistance, economic supports, housing, culturally specific services, and prevention.



"Wisconsin programs desperately need funding for basic operation. Pending cuts to VOCA grants, along with cuts in Wisconsin state funding, have placed many programs on the brink of closing, at a time when costs and survivors' needs are increasing." – Wisconsin advocate, NNEDV report.

From guaranteed funding to a competitive process

In addition to federal cuts, programs are grappling with a change to the Basic Services Grant funding administered by the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Prior to this change, mainstream domestic violence programs reliably received DCF funding without competing with other programs in a typical grant process. Relatively newer and often culturally specific programs did not receive this funding. Switching to a competitive grant process meant that all programs in Wisconsin were able to apply for the Basic Services Grant for the first time. This rebalance was long due; however, the total funding distribution for programs did not change.

FUND TYPE	PROGRAMS AWARDED	PROGRAMS NOT AWARDED
CORE SERVICES	58	20
SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES	38	18
TOTAL	96	38

These events further highlight what we've known for decades in this movement: there is not enough funding to meet the basic needs of domestic violence and sexual assault survivors in Wisconsin.

One Wisconsin Program Director remarked; *"We can barely keep our doors open. I stay up at night wondering how many more victims will die before Wisconsin meaningfully funds our services. This is an absolutely desperate situation."*

Cuts in context: rising homicide rates in Wisconsin

Wisconsin ranks 8th in the nation for the number of women killed by men, with North Dakota and Missouri tied at 6th place[1]. The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence released a report in 2021 stating that 467 people were killed by intimate partners in the U.S. that year — 80 of those were in Wisconsin[2]. That means 1 in every 6 domestic violence deaths in the U.S. happened in Wisconsin.

In 2022, Wisconsin broke the record, again, for the highest number of domestic violence related homicides since End Abuse began recording in 2000, with a 20% increase in homicides from the year before. This constitutes a public health crisis.

The costs of domestic violence to Wisconsin are high. The greatest among these costs are not quantifiable: the loss of human potential, dignity, and liberty. Domestic violence robs victims of the ability to live safe, peaceful, and fully actualized lives. In the most severe lethal cases, it robs their ability to live at all. Beyond the moral and ethical imperative to act, there are over $657 million in annual economic losses[3].

Data show that funding services for survivors helps by increasing awareness of options to access safety and community resources:

- 90% of survivors report that as a result of receiving services, they know more ways to plan for their safety[1].
- 85% of survivors surveyed responded that as a result of receiving services, they know more about community resources[2].
- According to the CDC, it is estimated that Wisconsin domestic violence service providers prevent about 85,000 missed days of work a year. That's about 340 years of productivity gained in one year.

The most dangerous time in survivors' lives is when they take steps to leave a violent relationship. In fact, leaving violent relationships account for over 40% of all domestically violent homicides annually. Domestic violence is an economic problem; the fear of economic instability is the primary reason survivors stay in or return to violent relationships.

Governor Evers included historic investments in domestic violence services in his 2023-24 state budget, however, the Joint Finance Committee chose to cut these investments in survivor safety, leaving domestic violence agencies across the state without enough of the critical funds required to keep doors open and lifesaving programs running.

Wisconsin has the power to help end this deadly cycle by investing in survivors and service providers now. No survivor in Wisconsin should have to take the courageous step of leaving an abusive relationship without the safety & support offered by domestic violence victim advocates & programs, and without the benefit of a coordinated community response.

What next?

We urge you to talk to your friends and family about this crisis, and advocate for change at the state and federal level. Send your representative this report and share why this moves you to action. Storytelling is powerful and we must elevate this public health crisis to prevent future homicides. People are killed needlessly every year in Wisconsin, with alarming frequency, and we know how to prevent it. We just need the political will from our elected officials to do so. Our communities deserve better.

The victims in our report deserved better.

Topic Index to Previous Homicide Reports

Each year, the homicide report includes a discussion of various topics. Below is an index of the topics that have been addressed. The page number follows the report year in parentheses. Each year's report is available at http://www.endabusewi.org/homicide-reports.

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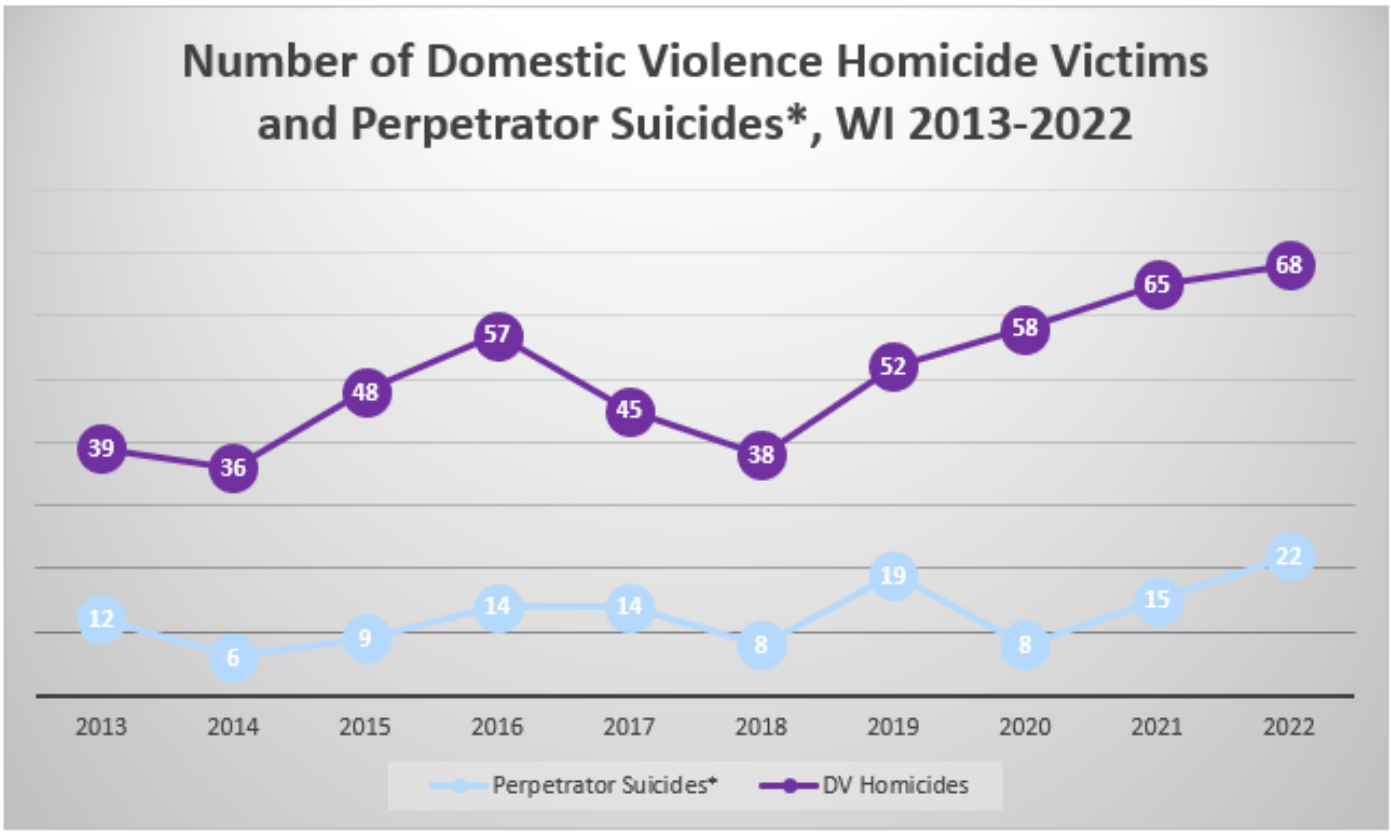
Welfare reform, 2000 (3)
Wisconsin Domestic Violence Homicides: A Review of 20 Years of Data, 2019 (39)
Workplace violence, 2011/12 (37), 2013 (42)

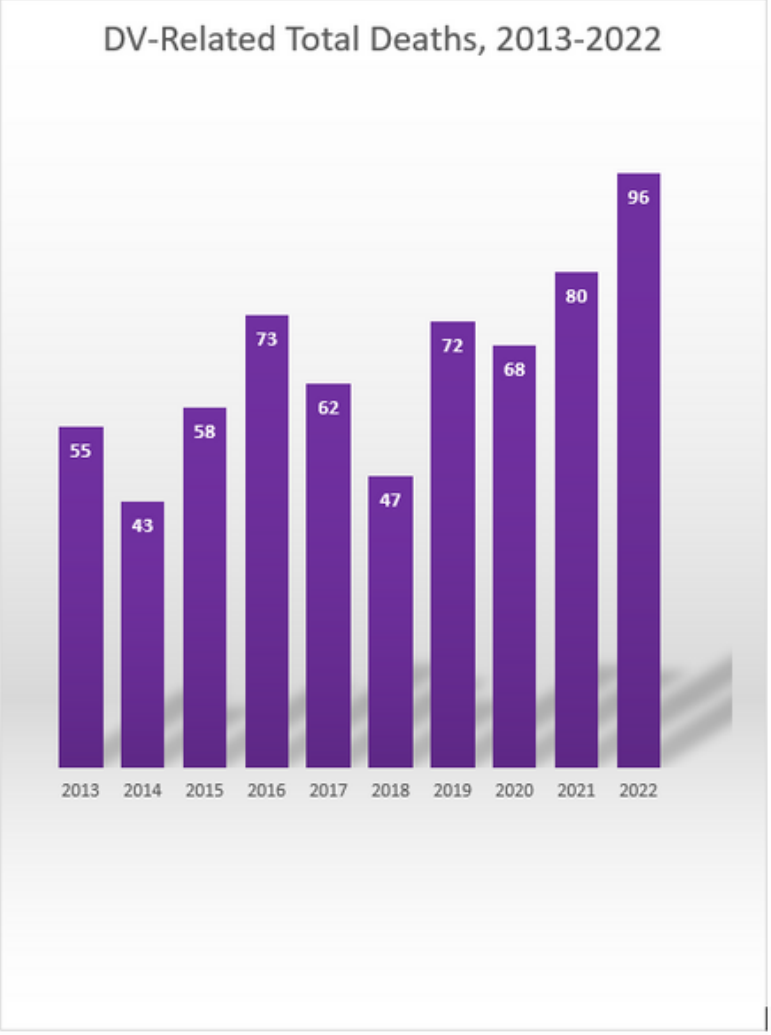
2000 to 2022 Totals

Year	Total Homicide Deaths	Homicides *Pre 2010 Definition	Perpetrator Suicides	Total
2022	68	64	22	96
2021	65	53	15	80
2020	60	53	8	68
2019	53	52	19	72
2018	39	37	8	47
2017	48	44	14	62
2016	59	54	14	73
2015	49	43	9	58
2014	37	33	6	43
2013	43	41	12	55
2012	48	47	4	52
2011	34	29	3	37
2010	45	37	7	52
2009	52	52	15	67
2008	37	37	10	47
2007	41	41	10	51
2006	28	28	8	36
2005	40	40	6	46
2004	28	28	5	33
2003	45	45	16	61
2002	38	38	11	49
2001	33	33	9	42
2000	33	33	8	41
Total	1,023	962	239	1,268

*See Methodology section

Ten Years: 2013-2022





*Includes homicide deaths, perpetrator suicides, and those killed by responding law enforcement

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[1] National Institute of Justice, "The Decline of Intimate Partner Homicide," July 1, 2005, nij.ojp.gov: http://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/decline-intimate-partner-homicide.
[2] Petrosky E, Blair JM, Betz CJ, Fowler KA, Jack SP, Lyons BH. Racial and Ethnic Differences in Homicides of Adult Women and the Role of Intimate Partner Violence — United States, 2003-2014. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2017; 66:741-746.
[3] Stöckl, H., Devries, K., Rotstein, A., Abrahams, N., Campbell, J., Watts, C., & Moreno, C. G. (2013). The global prevalence of intimate partner homicide: a systematic review. The Lancet, 382(9895), 859-865.
[4] UNODC, Global Study on Homicide 2019 (Vienna, 2019).
[5] From the lethality screen utilized in the Lethality Assessment Program, which is implemented in 38 Wisconsin counties. Due to our limited ability to gather information, this is not a comprehensive illustration of all lethality risks present in the 2022 WI domestic violence homicide cases. For an extensive discussion about lethality risk factors, see the 2014 Wisconsin Domestic Violence Homicide Report, starting on page 27:
https://edaw-webinars.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/07163234/2014_Wisconsin_Domestic_Violence_Homicide_Report_print1qYBBFw.pdf
[6]Quoted phrases in the above section come from Wisconsin Circuit Court Access records and local reportage, including interviews with law enforcement and DV/SA program leadership. I am intentionally not including these sources here, so as to offer a layer of anonymity for victims in this context. Please connect with me directly for questions or concerns.
[7]In one instance, it is suspected but not confirmed that the perpetrator was male, the method for which has also not been identified.
[8]American Roulette: Murder-suicide in the United States. 7th addition.
[9]Gun Violence Archive
[10]The Gun Violence Archive reported a record 690 mass shootings in 2021.
[11] Wisconsin Republicans reintroduce bills to ban transgender girls and women from female athletics.
[12] Hate groups are making it easier than ever to introduce anti-trans bills.
[13]Do people subject to domestic abuse orders have the right to be armed?
[14]Alok Vaid-Menon on the role of colonization in establishing the gender binary.
[15]The Things They Carry: Understanding Trauma, Men, and Cycles of Violence. The title of this report is also likely in reference to The Things They Carried, a collection of short stories by Vietnam War veteran Tim O'Brien that explores the impacts of complex PTSD and gender-based violence in a colonial, military-industrial context.
[16]A majority of the men who committed murder-suicides in Wisconsin identified for this report did not have criminal legal histories in CCAP.

[17]More women attempt suicide. More men die by suicide.
[18]Trans and gender diverse folks are at significantly increased risk of suicidal ideation, even after accounting for age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and insurance status. They are not, however, murdering their partners in tandem.
[19]The Trace estimates that between 2020 and 2022, Americans bought 60 million firearms – a historic surge, nearly twice as many sales as 15 years ago.
[20]2023-20239 Long Range Plan to Address Sexual and Domestic Violence in Wisconsin.
[21]For more information on VOCA and the funding crisis for victims of crime, see the National Network to End Domestic Violence's September 2023 letter to Federal elected officials.
[22]End Abuse applauds Governor Evers for an historical investment in domestic violence victim services and prevention.
[23]The essential power of challenging dominant narratives.
[24]Sex and gender are binaries? Sorry, that's a scientific falsehood.
[25]Creating narrative power for long term equity and justice.
[26]Social change ecosystem map from the Building Movement Project.
[27]https://nij.ojp.gov/library/publications/national-institute-justice-annual-report-2004
[28]Stockman JK, Lucea MB, Bolyard R, Bertand D, Callwood GB, Sharps PW, Campbell DW, Campbell JC. Intimate partner violence among African American and African Caribbean women: prevalence, risk factors, and the influence of cultural attitudes. Glob Health Action. 2014
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[31]2023-20239 Long Range Plan to Address Sexual and Domestic Violence in Wisconsin.
[32] https://vpc.org/when-men-murder-women/
[33] https://edaw-webinars.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/27162158/2021-WI-DV-Homicide-Report_Final_09.27.22.pdf
[34]https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5d39f654dfc553000198b222/t/6345b7f7fc2276703a2bf19d/1665513464758/Economic+Impact+of+DV+FINAL.+10.11.2022.pdf
[35]WI DCF Domestic Abuse Program Client and Service Data 2021
[36]WI DCF Domestic Abuse Program Client and Service Data 2021

About End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin

For advocates, survivors, and allies, End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin is the only statewide coalition led by social policy advocates, attorneys, and experts working to support, connect, equip, empower, and lead organizations for social change to end domestic abuse, because everyone deserves dignity and safety

Acknowledgements

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