

Measuring Safety

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN ILLINOIS

2020 REPORT



The Network
ADVOCATING AGAINST
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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Executive Summary

“The violence took over my life. He used everything he had to harm me...but I couldn’t let him break me like before. As soon as I was leaving, I felt safe and comfortable.”

— SURVIVOR

IMPACT OF COVID



Calls to the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline received from individuals in Illinois **increased by 16%** from 2019 to 2020.¹



The number of individuals who reached out via text message in Illinois **increased by 2,738%**.²



There were **109 days with no shelter beds in Chicago and 49 days with no shelter beds** in Illinois.³



40,030 adults and 7,172 children received various domestic violence related services in Illinois, **a 16% decrease** from 2019.⁴



2,535 adults and 2,158 children were turned away from shelter.⁵

DECREASING TRUST OF POLICE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT



Calls to the Chicago Police Department for **domestic violence related incidents decreased by 18%** from 2019 to 2020.⁶



There were **62 domestic violence related homicides documented** by the Chicago Police Department, **a 121% increase from 2019**.⁷



Over 83% of these homicide victims were Black individuals.⁸

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND UNDERSERVED SURVIVORS



Nearly 80% of callers to the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline were individuals of Color.⁹



70% of surveyed providers reported providing culturally specific services.¹⁰



Black, Hispanic/Latinx, Asian and Pacific Islander Survivors, and LGBTQ+ survivors were considered underserved by service providers.¹¹

Guided by client interviews and information from service providers who see a majority of immigrant clients, **this report highlights the challenges faced by immigrant survivors**, including Language barriers, fear of interference with immigration case, lack of employment opportunities, financial needs, need for legal services, fear of law enforcement, cultural misunderstandings, and DCFS involvement.¹²

RECOMMENDATIONS



Adequately Fund Outreach and Services to Increase Capacity



Increase and Promote Community-Based Services



Support Prevention Programming



Expand Culturally Competent Programs and Development



Expand Definitions of Safety

Introduction

THE NETWORK: ADVOCATING AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Advocating Against Domestic Violence (The Network) is a coalition of over 30 diverse organizations that provide gender-based violence services in the Chicago metropolitan area.

The Network is dedicated to improving the lives of those impacted by domestic violence through education, public policy and advocacy, and the connection of community members to direct service providers.

In 2020, The Network moved beyond the Domestic Violence Outcomes Measures Project to launch a more comprehensive analysis of data on the Statewide response to domestic and sexual violence. This inaugural report included key data from 2019 related to gender-based violence through the lens of the criminal and legal system, healthcare, and direct service provision.

In our second edition, the report examines the needs of survivors, both met and unmet, in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and increased awareness of systemic racism.

While comparative analyses are often important for benchmarking, 2020 was a year beyond comparison. The world was faced with a global pandemic leading to quarantines and economic downfalls. This report will review how gender-based violence was impacted by COVID-19 and how service providers adapted their services to accommodate social distancing and shelter in place mandates.

COVID-19 was not the only tragedy of 2020 that impacted survivors of gender-based violence and the providers who empower them. The murder of George Floyd once again brought national attention to police brutality. The gender-based violence community responded by launching into nation-wide conversations around the history of carceral ties and how to more effectively serve survivors of Color who are not well served by criminal and legal responses to gender-based violence. This report highlights the racial disparities seen by those experiencing gender-based violence, beginning with a regional breakdown of gun violence and homicide trends throughout the State of Illinois. This is followed by a larger overview of racial disparities connected to gender-based violence, including the specific needs of immigrant survivors in Illinois.

The report concludes with recommendations for better serving communities of Color and immigrant communities and addressing the continuing adjustments in service provisions as the wider community recovers from the most acute effects of the pandemic.

Methods

The data analyses conducted throughout the report draw on data collected from the following resources:

- **Survivor Interviews**
- **Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline**
- **InfoNet**
- **Police Departments throughout Illinois**
 - Chicago
 - Bloomington
 - Downer's Grove
 - Metropolis
 - Auburn
 - Mount Vernon
- **Sheriff's Departments throughout Illinois**
 - Cook
 - Champaign
 - Hardin
 - Madison
 - Massac
 - Sangamon
- **News Articles**
- **Service Provider Surveys, Interviews, and Reports**
- **News Articles**
- **Secondhand data from relevant studies**

Each source is cited throughout the report where appropriate and detailed notes regarding the collection processes are noted as relevant. Below is a brief overview of the collection and analysis procedures.

SURVIVOR INTERVIEWS

The Network worked with its membership to be paired with clients who identified as immigrant or refugee survivors of gender-based violence in order to learn about their unique experiences. Eight interviews were conducted. The Network also sought out survivors who had faced criminal charges in connection to their experiences of gender-based violence, but due to the stigma around this issue and many survivors having ongoing cases, there were no willing or able participants. All survivors were compensated for their interviews with gift cards and several shared they wanted to use it to buy new clothes or toys for their children.

ILLINOIS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE

The Network operates the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline in partnership with the City of Chicago’s Department of Family and Support Services. The Hotline is a 24 hour, 7 days a week resource for survivors throughout the state. The Network staff reviewed all relevant data for this report. The hotline data is collected by Victim Information Resource Advocates while on calls utilizing iCarol, a web-based hotline software. As the safety and security of survivors is the first priority on any call, many questions will go unanswered. Additionally, survivors are never required to answer demographic questions. These procedures limit the data available for analysis.



INFONET

InfoNet is a web-based system run by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA). Domestic and sexual violence service providers throughout the state enter data into the database. The Network staff submitted a request for InfoNet data for the year 2020 to capture this information. Some data is divided by region. The region refers to the center’s location rather than the location origin of the individual receiving services. Some providers have multiple locations but enter data into the same account. For these locations, the region was based on where the majority of their services were conducted. For survivor safety, any value that is less than ten is omitted from the reports. These regions are derived from the labels used by the Illinois Department of Human Services with Chicago including the city, the Suburbs including suburban and collar counties, the North including the Northern and Northwest Regions, Central including the West Central, North Central, Central, Northeast Central, Southeast Central, and Southwest Central regions, and the South encompassing the Southern region.¹³

POLICE AND SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENTS

Data was collected through Freedom of Information Act Requests according to availability. The requested departments were identified to achieve variation in state geography, region, population, demographics, and past crime data according to the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) Index Offense Explorer (ICJIA Research Hub). Some restrictions on collection occurred due to limited data availability and department capacity. Additionally, The Network chose not include all Police Departments throughout Illinois due to capacity and instead selected a representative sample of the state.

SERVICE PROVIDER SURVEYS, INTERVIEWS, AND REPORTS

The Network staff developed surveys which were distributed to member organizations. The Network received 26 responses. Staff then conducted follow-up interviews with survey respondents to receive clarification and additional information on their responses. Additionally, upon request, The Network received reports on special issues including immigrant survivors and runaway counting to supplement the information in this report.

NEWS ARTICLES

News articles were collected from a variety of sources for 2019 and 2020. Articles were identified using Google News by date with key search terms “domestic,” “homicide,” “Illinois,” “Chicago,” “disturbance,” “murder,” “shooting,” “dating,” “dated,” “married,” “girlfriend,” “boyfriend,” and “family.”

Complete List of Sources

The Chicago Tribune, The Chicago Sun-Times, CBS Chicago, Block Club Chicago, ABC7 Chicago, WGN, Fox 32 Chicago, Washington Post, The Journal Star (Peoria), Rockford Register Star, WREX, Northwest Indiana Times (NWI), Lake and McHenry County Scanner, Patch, WCIA, WAND 17, WSPY News, People, WGLT, and Daily Journal. Priority in coverage was given to The Chicago Tribune and The Chicago Sun-Times, when available.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Additional research was gathered to supplement the above data as needed. It is cited throughout the report.



Definitions and Language

DEFINING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence or intimate partner violence (IPV) describes a pattern of harmful behavior used by one partner to maintain power and control over another within intimate partnerships. The type of harm that occurs in relationships is not always physical; it can also be emotional, psychological, verbal, financial, economic, social, reproductive, institutional, and health based. The Illinois Domestic Violence Act (IDVA) uses a more expansive definition of domestic violence. The IDVA provides remedies for those who have experienced harm from a family or household member; relationships eligible for these protections include: “spouses, former spouses, parents, children, stepchildren and other persons related by blood or by present or prior marriage, persons who share or formerly shared a common dwelling, persons who have or allegedly have a child in common, persons who share or allegedly share a blood relationship through a child, persons who have or have had a dating or engagement relationship, persons with disabilities and their personal assistants, and caregivers.”¹⁴ Law enforcement, court personnel, and service providers rely on the IDVA definition of domestic violence. Therefore, data cited in this report from these sources reflects this definition.

“SURVIVOR” AND “VICTIM”

The terms “victim” and “survivor” are both used to describe a person who has been harmed. “Survivor” has become the increasingly preferred term within the domestic violence community, as it moves away from the passive connotation of “victim” to better reflect the perseverance and resilience of those who have been impacted by violence. Ultimately, however, the preferred term should be determined by the individual who directly experienced harm.

PERSON WHO CAUSES HARM

The terms “abuser” and “perpetrator” are often used to describe a person who has harmed someone else. However, defining an individual solely in terms of their actions erases their humanity and subjectivity, as well as their own previous experiences of trauma or victimization. Such terms imply a permanency and pathology to an individual's identity, with no space for restoration. In contrast, a “person first” approach positions the person before their actions, allowing individuals to be perceived as more than their actions. “A person who harms” suggests the individual can transform their behavior and make amends.



IDENTITY CATEGORIES

The lack of appropriate language in research often fails to encompass the lived experiences of those who are affected by relationship violence. In addition to silencing or further marginalizing individuals, these failures can have significant implications for advocacy efforts around funding, resource allocation, and service provision. In order to better articulate the varying identities of those affected by IPV, this report will use the primary preferred terms of individuals being referenced. A few data points have also been edited to reflect this consensus language. That said, some reported data employ a limited number of categories and may not, therefore, reflect the varied experiences of those impacted. Some additional language distinctions to note:

The historically varying classifications and distinctions between “Hispanic” and “Latino/a/x” as an ethnic or racial category often limit the comparability of data across systems.¹⁵ Data provided by law enforcement agencies cited in this report vary with respect to “Hispanic” as its own racial category. In general, however, this report will use the non-gendered term “Hispanic/Latinx” to include varying preferences.

This report uses the term “American Indian” when possible. While many prefer using tribal names to more accurately reflect the diversity across this group, the data reported here is limited by the classifications of its data source and therefore cannot make these distinctions.¹⁶

While relationship violence affects people of all genders, it disproportionately impacts trans and gender nonconforming (TGNC) individuals. Many of their experiences are systemically excluded, silenced or misrepresented in research and data systems, as evident in terminology used, which ultimately contributes to a lack of advocacy for more appropriate services as well as further stigma, discrimination, and harm.¹⁷ Data cited in this report uses a limited set of categories for representing gender identity/expression in order to demonstrate the limitations of current systems. Where possible, this report will use language that is conscious of varying gender identities and expressions in order to help articulate a more expansive understanding of the varied experiences of those impacted by intimate partner violence.

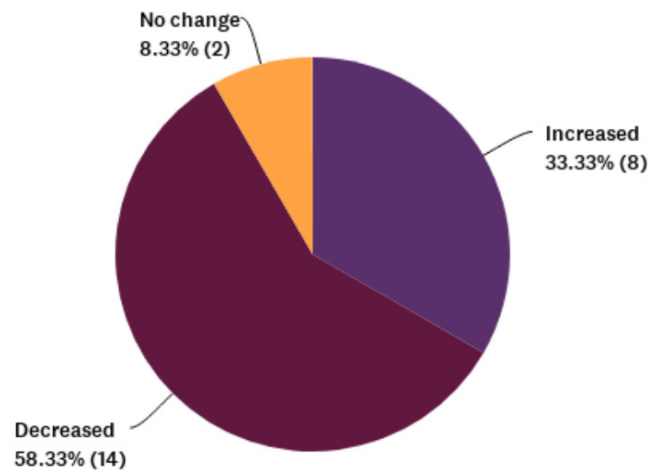
Help Seeking During the Pandemic

While the world fought against the COVID-19 pandemic, many others were fighting a secondary pandemic: gender-based violence.

NUMBER OF CLIENTS SERVED

For many service providers, this meant a spike in the number of individuals seeking services and the severity of abuse survivors experienced before reaching out. However, many providers experienced a decrease in calls for service due to the increased accessibility challenges. To demonstrate the nuances of the impact of COVID-19 on gender-based violence this section will draw on data from the Hotline, InfoNet, and survey responses from service providers in Illinois.

Impact of COVID-19 on Number of Clients Served by Service Providers



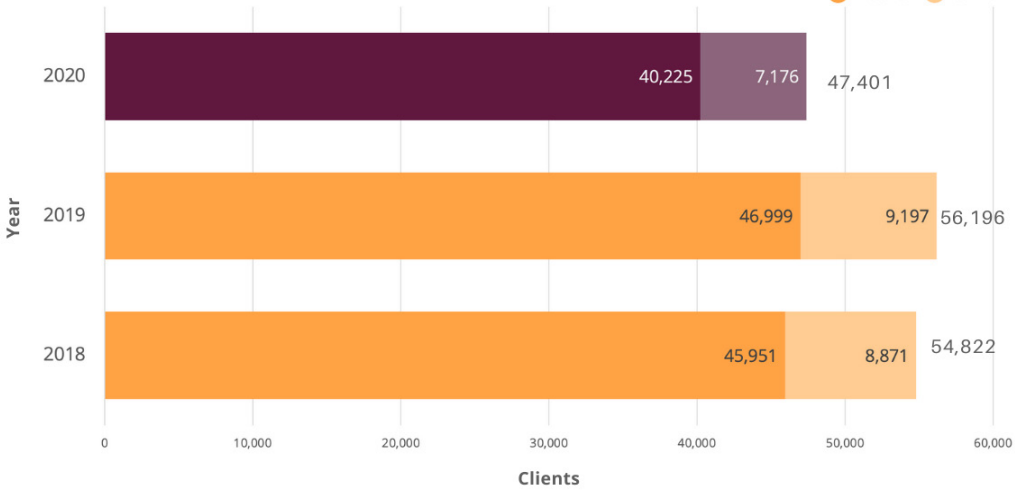
Source: Network membership survey, 2021.

As shown above, service providers throughout the state saw different impacts from COVID-19 on the number of survivors they were serving. The primary reason for providers who were able to serve an increased number of survivors was the increased need for their services. Over 50% of surveyed providers reported receiving increased requests for services. Additionally, new uses of technology and remote services helped some service providers reach more individuals.¹⁸

Many service providers faced barriers in reaching survivors. Many survivors faced additional safety concerns in reaching out for help and leaving their homes. While remote services worked well for some, **35% of surveyed service providers reported that many of their clients faced additional difficulties accessing services during the pandemic.** This was particularly true of service providers who work within the courts. Additionally, shelter providers reported decreased capacity as a major factor in the resulting decrease of clients served. Providers also reported difficulties with funding and staffing during this time. Service providers themselves were facing the pandemic and were not immune to falling sick and being unable to assist others.¹⁹

Data from InfoNet, shows that throughout Illinois, overall, service providers were able to serve fewer individuals. From 2019 to 2020, the total number of individuals served decreased by 16%, as shown on the next page.²⁰

Number of Client Cases, 2018-2020






Source: InfoNet Data System, ICJIA and domestic violence service providers

“While overall service numbers were lower due to people’s capacity to access services, service hours did not go down, they increased. [Survivors] had higher needs.”

— CAROL GALL, SARAH’S INN

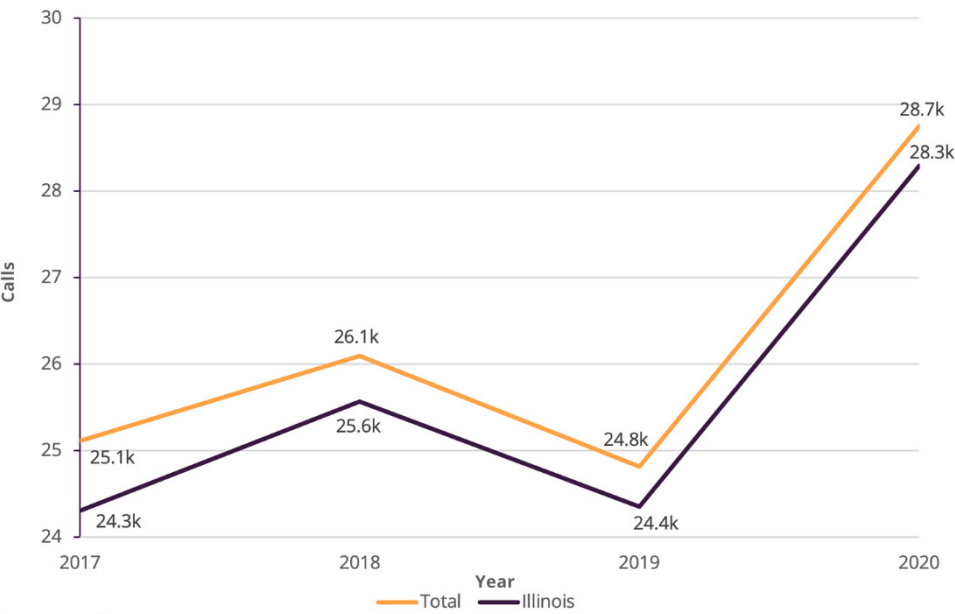


Despite limitations in service providers ability of service providers to assist survivors, there was a large need for services in 2020. As shown below, the Hotline received 56 chats, 938 text conversations, and 28,749 calls. Of these, 75%, 63%, and 39% came from Chicago, respectively.²¹

	Illinois	Chicago	Total
 CALLS	28,292	11,161	28,749
 TEXTS	824	593	938
 CHATS	55	42	56

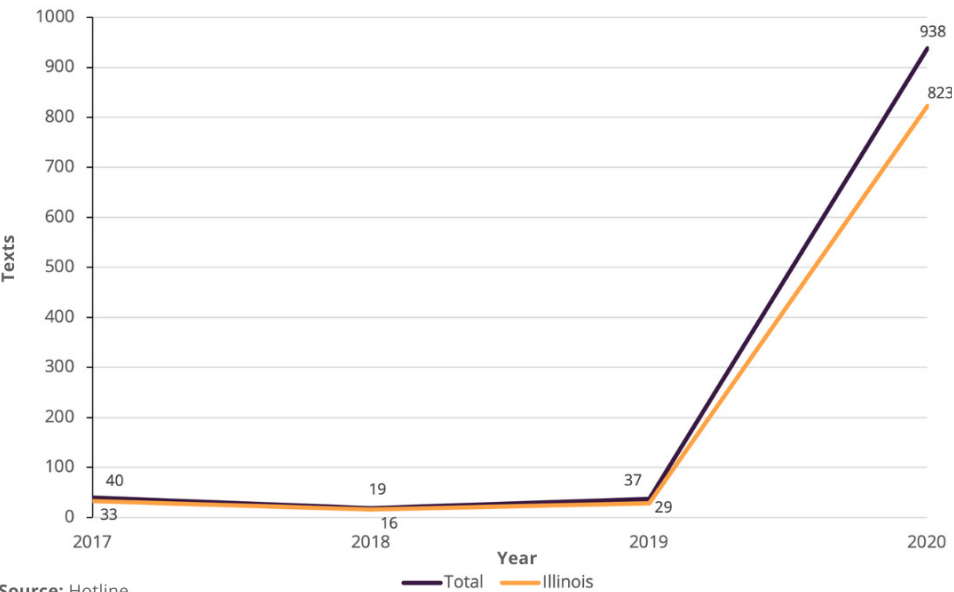
The Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline saw substantial increases in both calls and texts received in 2020. As shown below, **the calls received from individuals in Illinois increased by 16% from 2019 to 2020**. In Chicago, this increase was 6%.²²

Number of calls to Hotline for Illinois and total, 2017-2020

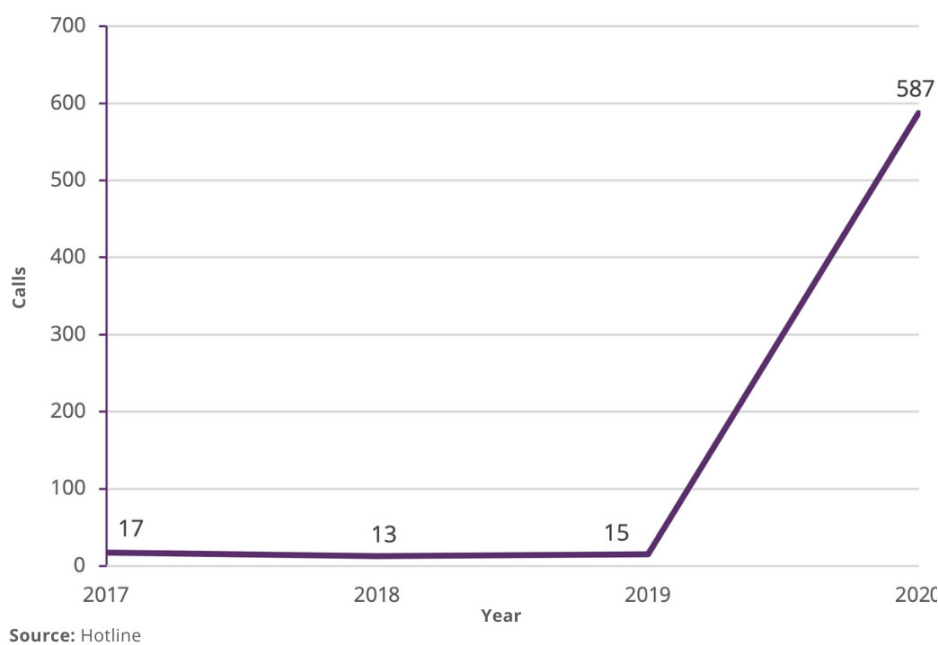


The number of individuals who reached out via text message in Illinois increased by 2,738% and 3,813% for individuals in Chicago.²³ This substantial increase in text volume highlights the difficulties of individuals at home with those causing them harm. For many experiencing harm, they will wait for the person causing harm to go to work or leave the house to call service providers. With stay-at-home orders in place, these calls were more challenging for survivors to make. Text messaging could be done more securely than making a call.

Number of texts to Hotline for Illinois and total, 2017-2020



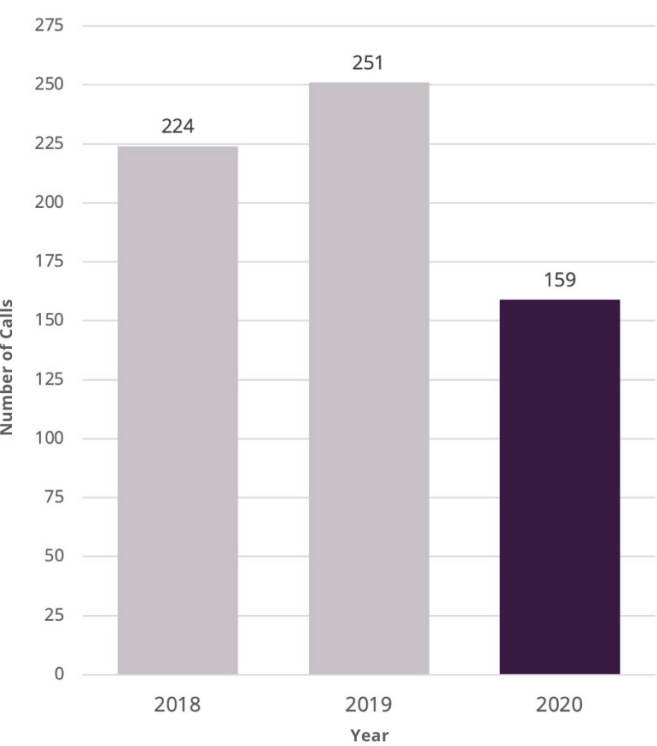
Number of texts to Hotline for Chicago, 2017-2020



CALLS FROM A PERSON WHO HARMS

Every year, there are several calls to the Hotline from a person who causes harm. As the following graph indicates, **the number of calls from people who harm decreased by 37% in the last year**, from 251 in 2019 to 159 in 2020.²⁴ Those who cause harm may not recognize that their behavior is wrong or may fear punitive responses. Methods of accountability that protect survivors and work with those whose cause harm to prevent future violence without relying on criminal systems must be supported.

Calls to Hotline by Person Who Causes Harm, 2018-2020



Callers with Dependents, 2020

4,610 YES 213 NO

Source: Hotline (calls and texts only)
Notes: Based on 16 - 18% of callers who provided an answer.

SHIFTING NEEDS OF SURVIVORS

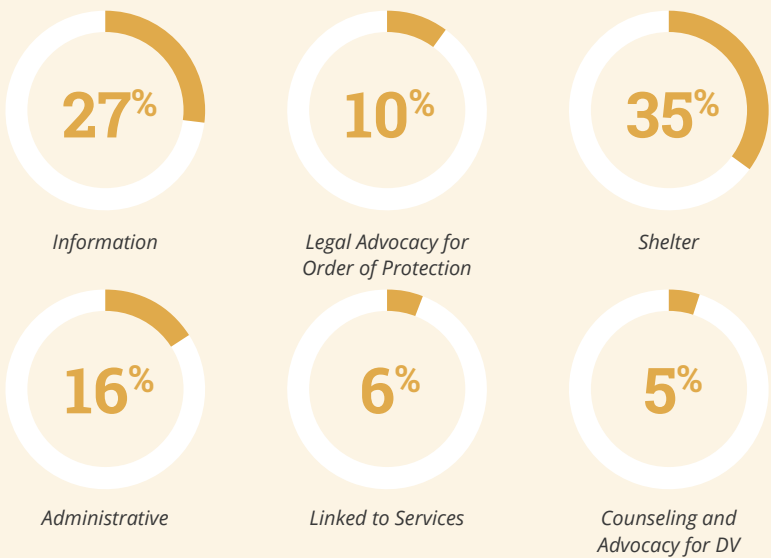
The number of clients who received services was not the only change caused by the pandemic.

Clients reaching out for help also reported different needs than in a typical year. Survivors now had needs for technology to meet the new requirements of remote work, schooling, and services. Additionally, survivors reached out to service providers with questions about the pandemic itself, how to access healthcare, vaccines, and safety concerns. Service providers also reported seeing increased need for pre-pandemic needs including food security, housing, employment, childcare, mental health services, and addressing exasperated inequalities. By far the most commonly reported need was financial assistance for survivors, demonstrating the additional consequences of COVID-19.²⁵

Changes in the types of services requested were also seen in calls to the Hotline. **In 2020, the Hotline received calls with varying service needs. It is important to note that these data only include calls for services that are offered.** For example, the Hotline receives calls from individuals in crisis who may not want to contact law enforcement, but as there is not a current alternative crisis response these individuals are redirected and their service needs are not recorded. The most frequently requested services that the Hotline can provide are discussed below.

Service Needs

Percent of Services Requested by Survivors to Hotline in 2020 Illinois



Source: Hotline (based on calls and texts only)

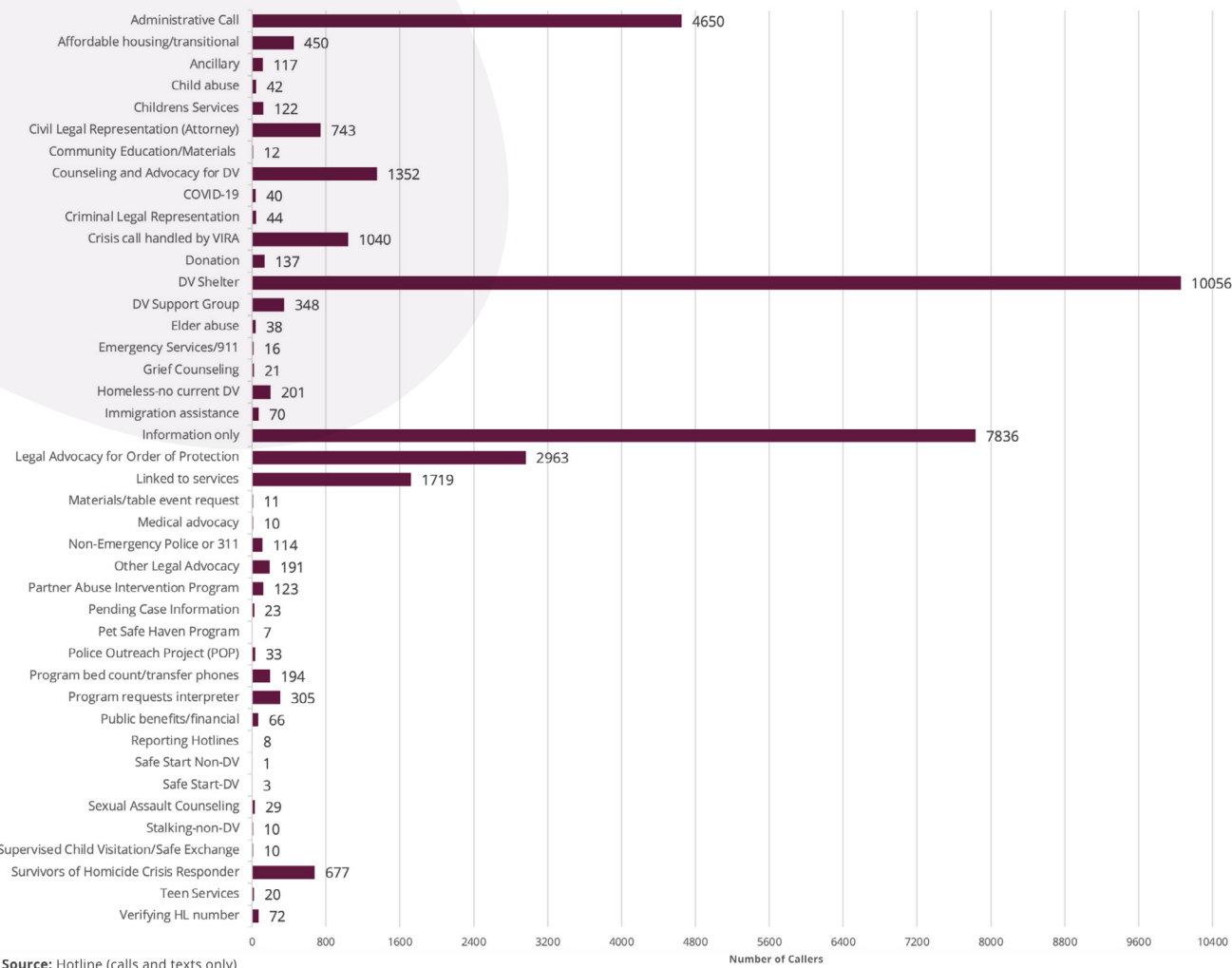


The greatest need from callers to the Hotline in 2020 was for shelter: **35% of all Illinois callers and 22% of all Chicago callers were in need of shelter.** A substantial number of callers in 2020 requested information, accounting for **27% of Illinois calls and 13% of Chicago calls.** The types of calls to the hotline vary, and some service providers call in need of pertinent information or data. In 2020, **16% of Illinois calls and 6% of Chicago calls to the hotline were administrative.**²⁶ Calls from information includes questions about court procedures, safety of shelters during COVID-19, and other questions from survivors, but most often involve safety planning. Administrative calls include calls from individuals with questions about the hotline itself and internal procedures. These calls also include technical errors, wrong numbers, and individuals who hang up.



In addition to shelter and information, the top service needs in 2020 for Illinois included the following: **10% of callers were seeking legal advocacy or Orders of Protection, 6% were linked to services, and 5% needed counseling and advocacy** for domestic violence. Common service needs in 2020 were similar in Chicago, with **13% of callers seeking legal advocacy or Orders of Protection, 3% were linked to services, and 4% needed counseling and advocacy** for domestic violence.²⁷

Hotline Service Needs in 2020: Illinois



Source: Hotline (calls and texts only)

CASE STUDY 1

Angelica* is a 32-year-old undocumented immigrant from Mexico, heterosexual, single, mother of two minors and she was brought to the USA by her uncle when she was 15 years old. Her uncle started to sexually abuse her when she arrived in the USA and in exchange was giving her money to help her family (mother and brother). During this time, she also became pregnant multiple times, and her uncle took her to clinics for abortions.

Angelica was prohibited by her family from attending school and they told her it was due to fears of deportation. Later, she started a relationship with her children's father who was very abusive towards her. One mechanism she found in coping with her pain was through drinking, which later led to addiction. Due to the abusive and unhealthy environment and housing instability that her and her children were facing, DCFS removed her children from her custody. She was then referred to engage in a member service provider's domestic violence and parenting support and substance abuse services.

Angelica disclosed that fear of being deported and losing her children permanently silenced her for many years.

She is currently not working. Her partner broke her leg, previously prohibiting her from being able to work. She recently started a job at a fast-food chain, but then later got sick with COVID so she is currently out of work.

Angelica is eight months behind in rent, but ineligible for unemployment insurance or any federal stimulus checks due to her immigration status.

Immigration status played a role in the violence experienced as her options for resources were extremely limited because of her status (employment, education, housing, primary care clinics, mental health, financial assistance, and other important resources to assist them in this transition of leaving the abuser).

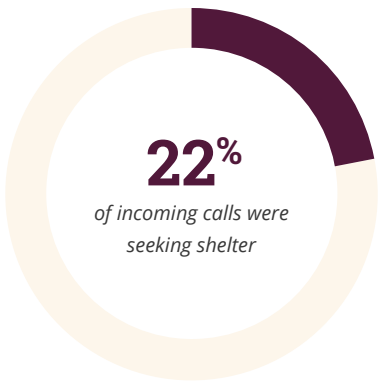
* All names changed

HOUSING

Those who were ready and able to leave their relationships were in need of safe housing. Throughout the state, survivors reported a need for emergency shelter. This need is shown in both calls to the Hotline and survivors who contacted service providers.

Percent of Hotline Callers Seeking Shelter Service in 2020

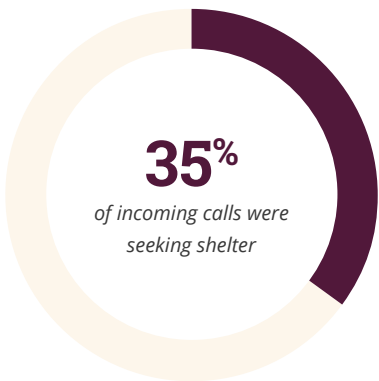
Chicago



Source: Hotline (based on calls and texts only)

Percent of Hotline Callers Seeking Shelter Service in 2020

Illinois

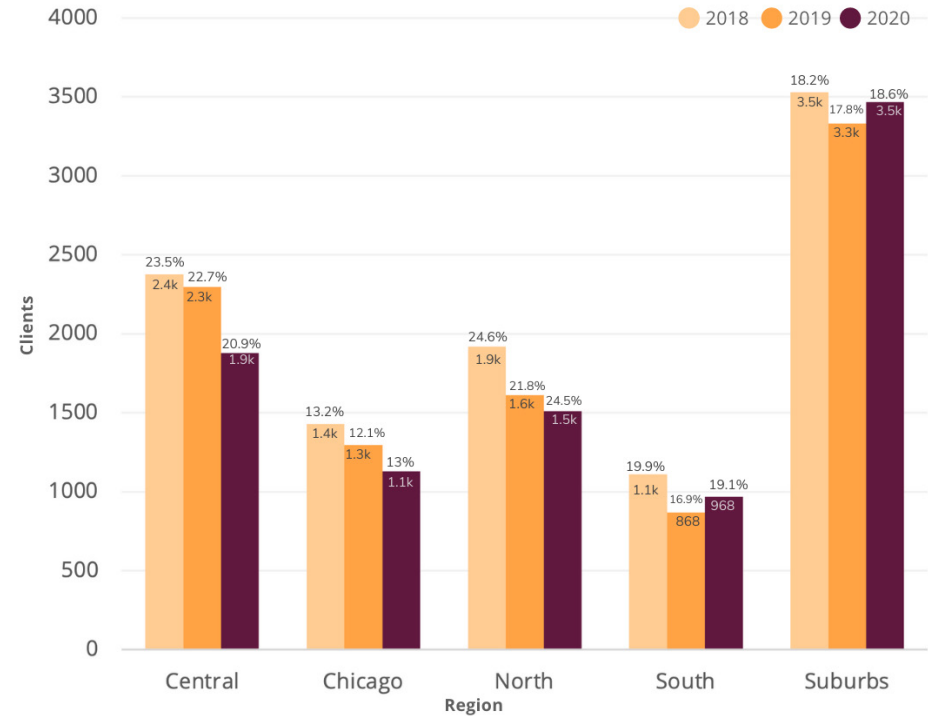


Source: Hotline (based on calls and texts only)

In particular, while the trends in shelter needs varied throughout the state, housing needs increased in percentage across the entire state.²⁸ This consistent trend highlights that survivors do not just need somewhere to go; they need long term solutions. While shelters help to provide immediate solutions, there are typically limitations to how long a survivor can stay at a shelter. When individuals leave shelters, often they are still in need of a place to go.

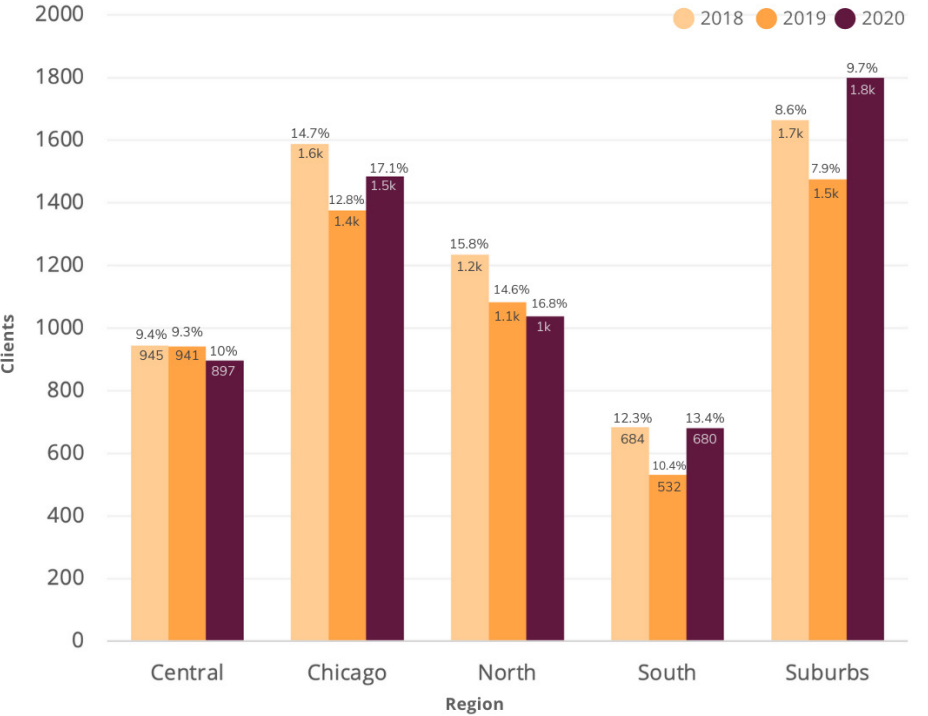
Survivors need housing.

Clients who indicated shelter need at intake, by region, 2018-2020



Source: InfoNet Data System, ICJIA and domestic violence service providers
Notes: Clients reflect the number of unique clients receiving services or shelter from a center located in that region. Data regarding shelter/housing needs above only reflect primary victims of domestic violence (adults). And they reflect a client's needs upon first contact with the center, which might have occurred prior to 2020.

Clients who indicated housing need at intake by region, 2018-2020



Source: InfoNet Data System, ICJIA and domestic violence service providers
Notes: Clients reflect the number of unique clients receiving services or shelter from a center located in that region. Data regarding shelter/housing needs above only reflect primary victims of domestic violence (adults). And they reflect a client's needs upon first contact with the center, which might have occurred prior to 2020.

Despite the high need for shelter and housing, COVID-19 meant shelters had to limit the number of beds available to abide by safety guidelines. This factor, combined with the increased housing needs, meant there were many days in 2020 where no beds were available at domestic violence shelters. As a result, many families were turned away from shelters.

109
DAYS

with no available beds
at emergency shelters
in Chicago

29.8%
106 out of 366 days
in 2020

20
DAYS

with no available beds
at emergency shelters
in Illinois

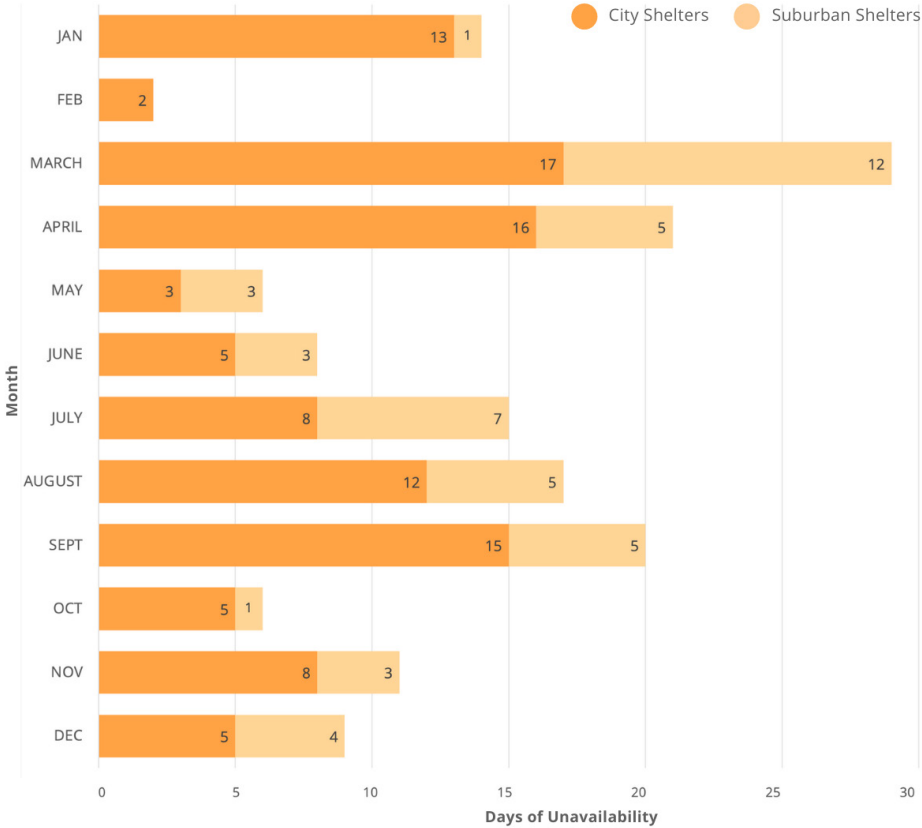
5.5%
20 out of 366 days
in 2020

80
DAYS

with no available cribs
at emergency shelters
in Illinois

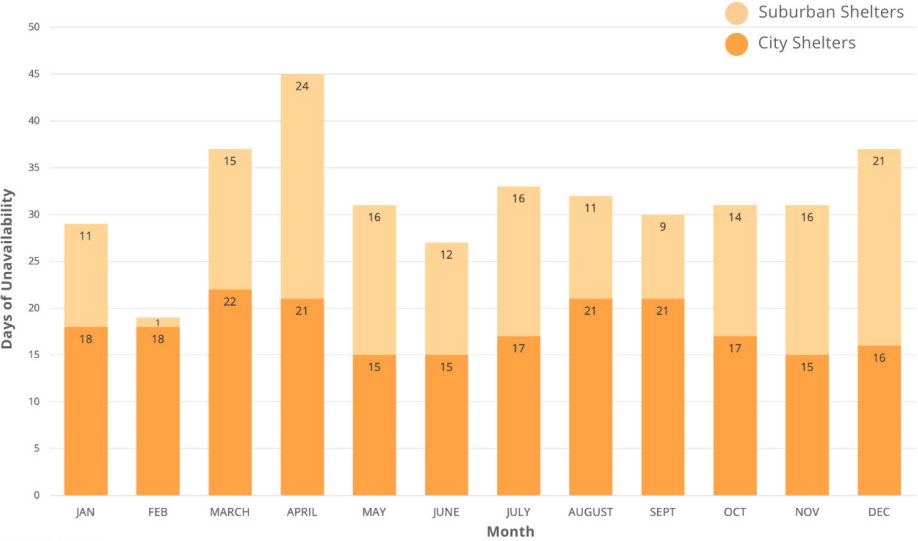
21.9%
158 out of 366 days
in 2020

Days per month in 2020 in which no shelter beds were available, City and Suburban Shelters



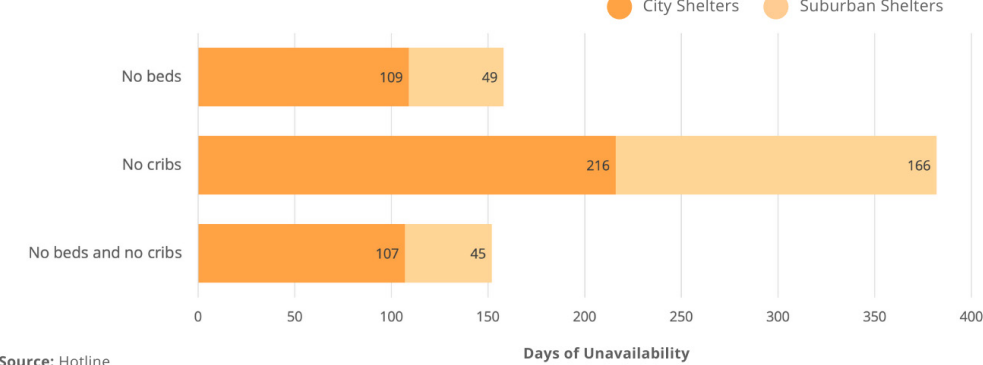
Source: Hotline

Number in which no shelter cribs were available in 2020, per month



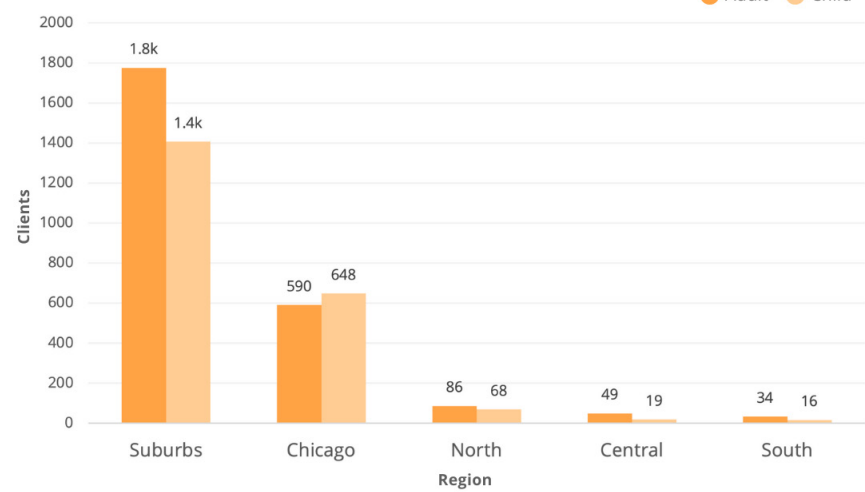
Source: Hotline

Number of days in 2020 in which no beds, no cribs, and no beds and no cribs were available in City and Suburban Shelters, per month



Source: Hotline

Adults and children turned away from emergency shelter due to lack of bed space in 2020, by region



Source: InfoNet Data System, ICJIA and domestic violence service providers
Notes: Not all providers may have completed entering 2020 Turnaway data. A single person may be counted multiple times for Turnaways, if they were turned away from multiple centers.

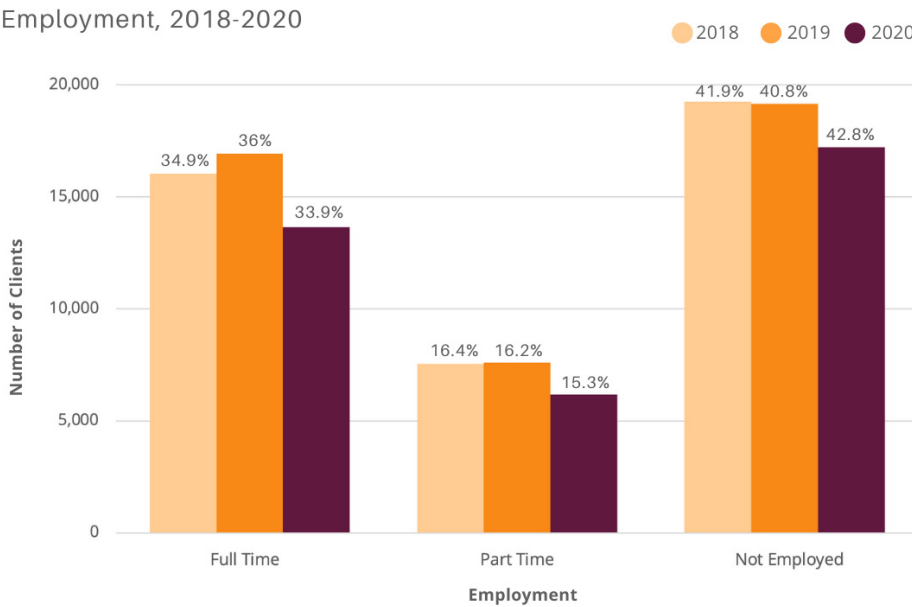
In total, **2,535 adults and 2,158 children were turned away from shelter.**²⁹ In 2019, these numbers were 4,033 adults and 4,018 children.³⁰ This decrease is reflective of the fact that people felt confined to their home due to the public health crisis and many did not feel safe reaching out for help. Many individuals called the Hotline to safety plan but were not ready to access a local service provider.

ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

Due to COVID-19, many individuals lost their jobs in 2020, leaving many relying on other sources of income and benefits. More than ever, survivors in 2020 needed flexible financial assistance. The following sections highlight the frequent unemployed or low-income status of survivors needing assistance.

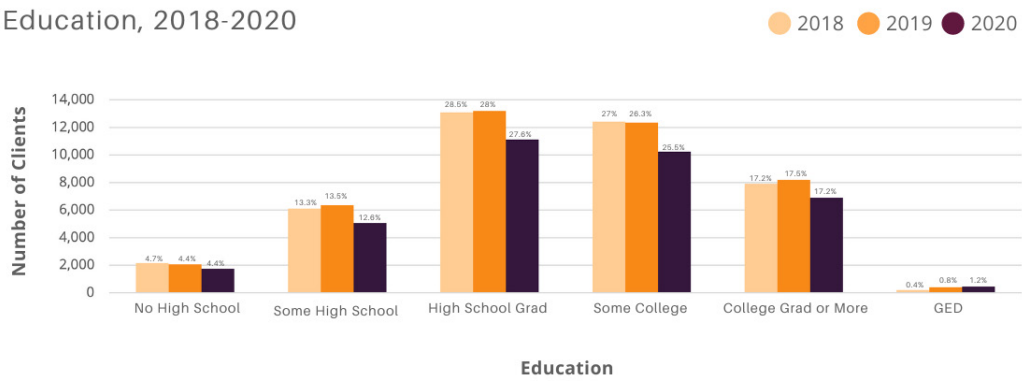
EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The following InfoNet data on employment status and educational attainment represent two key measures of socioeconomic status for survivors. For the past three years, the largest portion of survivors seen by service providers are not employed. This trend has continued into 2020 in which **43% of clients were not employed**, with **15% of survivors employed only part time**.³¹



Source: InfoNet Data System, ICJIA and domestic violence service providers
Note: Graph does not include "Unknown" and "Unassigned" which constituted 6.8% of clients in 2018, 7% in 2019, and 8% in 2020.

The educational attainment for survivors in 2020 follows those of previous years as well. As shown below, **28% of survivors seen by providers in 2020 graduated high school**, with **26% having had some college**. More survivors had graduated high school than graduated college. **17% of clients had a college degree or more**, while another **17% had not completed high school** at the time of service.³²

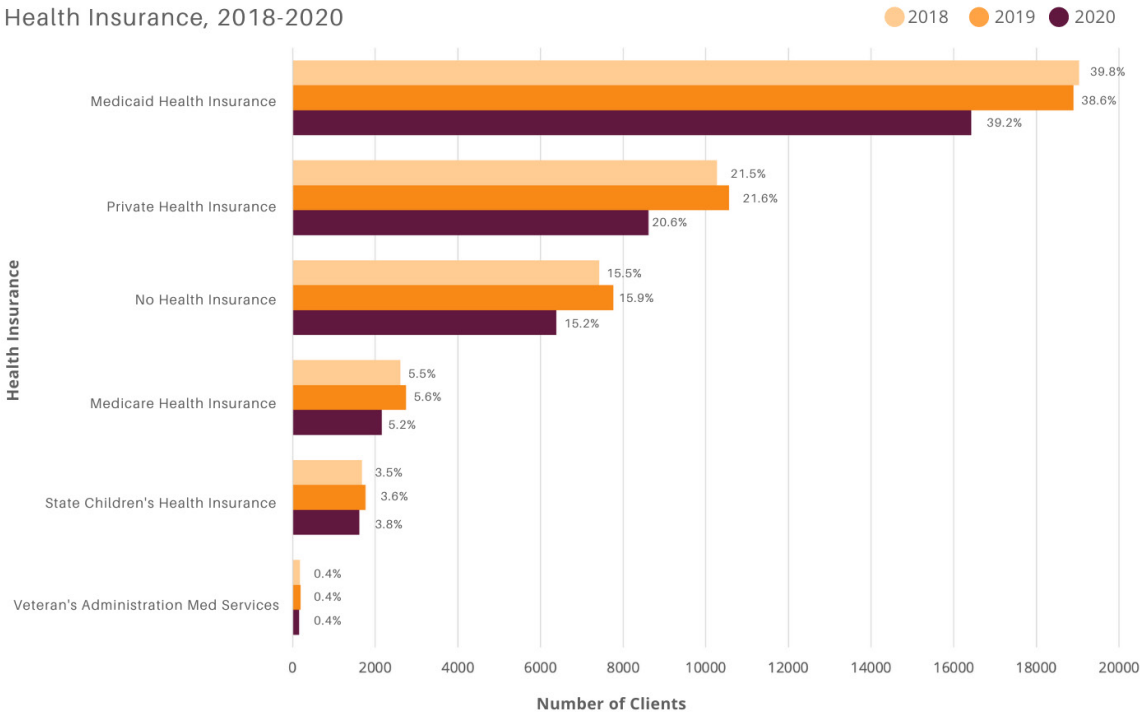


Source: InfoNet Data System, ICJIA and domestic violence service providers
Note: Graph does not include "Unknown" and "Unassigned" which constituted 8.6% of clients in 2018, 9.5% in 2019, and 11.6% in 2020.



HEALTH INSURANCE

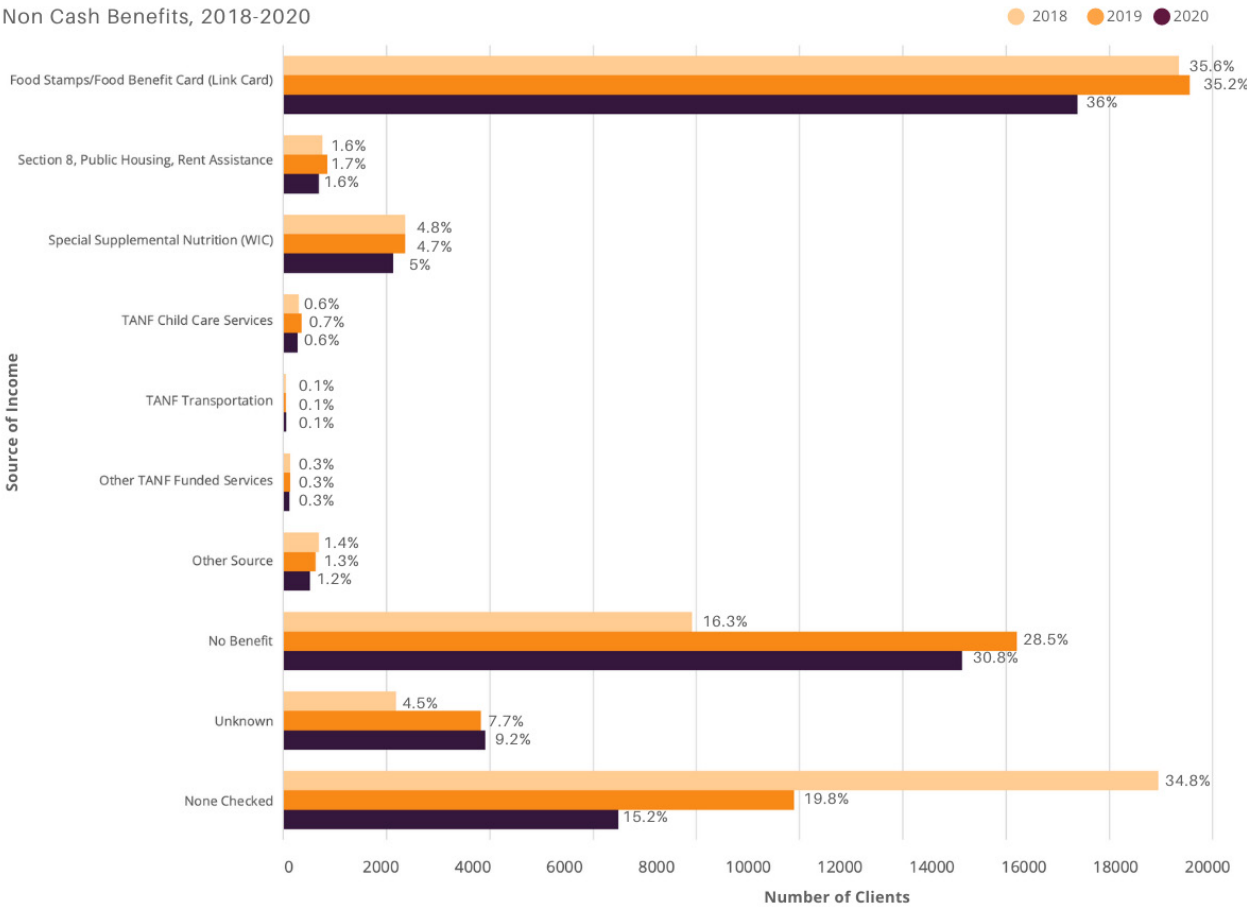
The insurance status of survivors is another measure of socioeconomic status. The following InfoNet data follows trends demonstrated throughout this section. In 2020, **39% of survivors had Medicaid, 21% had private insurance**, while **15% of survivors had no insurance**.³³ The types of health insurance have been similarly proportioned for clients over the past three years, as evident by the graph below.



Source: InfoNet Data System
Note: Not mutually exclusive (except No Health Insurance, Unknown, & Unassigned).
Graph does not include "Unknown" and "Unassigned" which constituted 13.9% of clients in 2018, 14.3% in 2019, and 15.6% in 2020.

NON-CASH BENEFITS

The following graph demonstrates the range of non-cash benefits utilized by survivors in InfoNet. Similar to previous years, **the most commonly used benefit was food stamps, accounting for 36% of survivors** served in 2020. **Housing assistance, such as Section 8, public housing, or rental assistance, has remained consistently low in the past three years, with less than 2% of survivors** accessing these benefits. However, the context of this data should be considered, as many of the service providers who provide client data to InfoNet are shelters; survivors accessing their services, therefore, are less likely to be accessing housing benefits at the time of collection. 2020 data from InfoNet also suggests an upward trend in the percentage of **clients served who do not receive any benefits, making up 16% of clients in 2018 to 31% of clients in 2020**.³⁴



Source: InfoNet Data System
Note: Not mutually exclusive (except No Benefits, Unknown, or None Checked)

CASE STUDY 2

Sofia* is a 24-year-old undocumented women from El Salvador, who came to a member service provider seeking domestic violence services. During that time Sofia was experiencing emotional, physical, and economic abuse from her husband.

During Sofia’s engagement in individual counseling for domestic violence she shared how her husband would intimidate her by telling her that he would take full custody of their 2-year-old daughter because he was a citizen, and she was not. Her abuser would mention things like “court will look at who can provide a better life for our daughter” or “you are not able to work legally so the judge will know you will never have a stable job.”

Sofia shared that after arguments with her husband he would tell her that he was going to call immigration on her and that they will be waiting for her in the bus stop or her job. She shared that many times she

would avoid making eye contact with him or try her best to not “disobey” him to avoid the threats he would make about her immigration status.

Now she shares that she tolerated most of the abuse because she was afraid to lose her daughter and afraid that her husband would call immigration while being at work or on her way home from work.

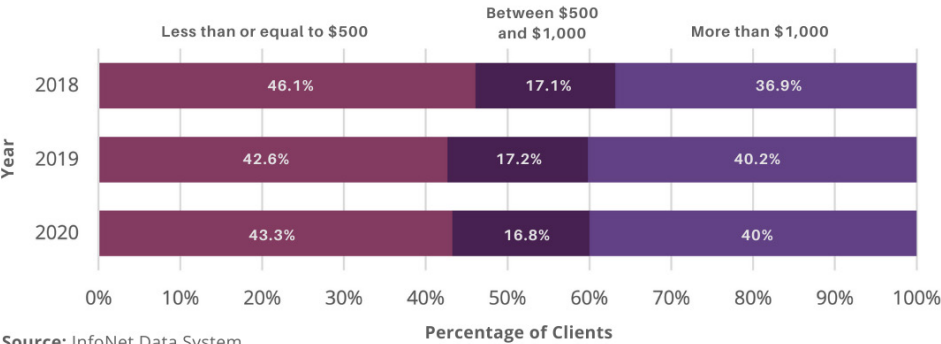
Sofia was referred to a member service provider where she is currently working on her immigration case and is close to obtaining her green card through a VAWA petition.

*All names changed

MONTHLY INCOME

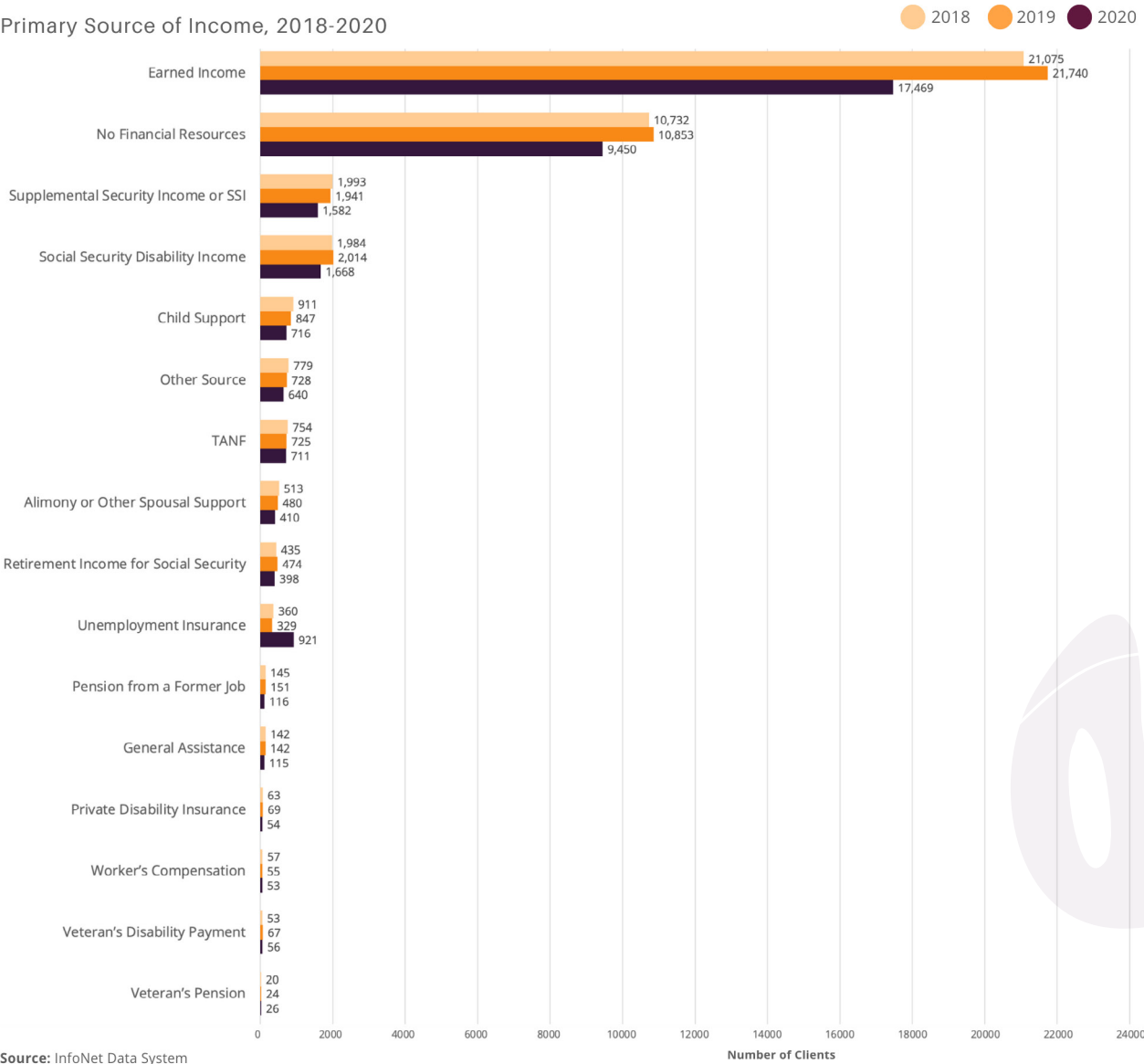
According to InfoNet data on monthly income and income source, many survivors would likely be considered as having a “low socio-economic status.” This composition has been consistent for the past three years, where **over 40% of survivors accessing services receive less than or equal to \$500 a month.** In 2020, **the majority of clients (14,218) fell within this monthly income range.**³⁵

Monthly Income Ranges, 2018-2020



PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME

Survivors reported various sources of income in 2020 as demonstrated by the following graph. According to InfoNet, 43% of survivors reported their primary income source was earned income. This is consistent with previous years in which earned income accounted for 46% of clients' primary income source in both 2019 and 2018. In 2020, 23% of survivors reported no financial resources at all, which was the same in 2019 and 2018.³⁶



Source: InfoNet Data System

According to data collected from InfoNet, **the percentage of survivors whose primary source of income was unemployment insurance tripled from 0.7% in 2019 to 2% in 2020**, indicating 592 more clients relied on unemployment insurance as their primary income source. This increase is significant considering the total number of survivors who accessed services in 2020 was lower than previous years.³⁷ This increase likely reflects the substantial job losses seen by individuals due to COVID-19 as well as the resulting expansion of unemployment insurance.

Unemployment Insurance, 2018-2020



Source: InfoNet Data System

PROVIDING FLEXIBLE FUNDING

The Network's Emergency Response Fund

In response to the growing need for financial assistance during COVID-19, The Network launched the Emergency Response Fund for survivors. This funding is granted directly to survivors to address critical gaps in the social safety net. It has helped ensure survivors are well-fed, adequately housed, and access to childcare.

Launching in March of 2020, the Emergency Fund was able to provide over **\$460k in funding** by the end of the year. These funds helped assist over 460 families. Nearly \$350,000 went towards assisting with rent, \$93,000 towards other household bills, nearly \$14,000 towards utilities, and close to \$12,000 to assist with technology needed for e-learning.

The Network intends to keep this funding beyond the pandemic to continue to meet the critical needs of survivors.

CHANGES TO SERVICE PROVISION

Decreased shelter capacity was not the only change to services in response to the pandemic. Service providers found new ways to reach clients remotely using a variety of technology.

Additionally, to address the need for shelter and abide by public health guidelines, many service providers turned to hotels to house survivors.

Of the surveyed members, six members reported using hotels, allowing them to house over 200 additional survivors in 2020.³⁸ The Network worked with service providers to house families in hotels, housing over 467 individuals over the summer through connection and referrals to service providers. Hotels help reach survivors who may not be served well by a traditional shelter, particularly male and LGBTQ survivors. During The Network’s hotel program run through the Hotline, **calls to the Hotline from male survivors increased by 139% and male survivor calls for shelter increased by 421%** compared to the same time period in 2019.³⁹

FOR ARAB AMERICAN FAMILY SERVICES, IT OPENED THE DOOR TO CONSIDERING THE QUESTION OF

“Why do we have to force clients to come to us?”

Court programs also saw significant changes to how they provided services to clients. As courts grappled with public health guidelines, protocols were constantly changing and advocates worked to keep up. In general, providers reported the hearing processes taking more time and becoming more complex. Instructions for how and when advocates could be involved were often unclear. Clients had longer waits for court dates. Services were often provided through online portals, allowing for clients to receive assistance without needing transportation or childcare. The online platforms, however, made it more challenging to obtain interpretation services and to walk clients through documents.

One service provider described navigating the courts during this time as “general chaos.”⁴⁰

To help survivors navigate the constantly changing court procedures, advocates have developed two legal hotlines. Theses hotlines work independently from and collaboratively with the Hotline. They connect survivors to help them navigate the courts and file for Orders of Protections and other legal remedies.

The changes to services had a variety of impacts on survivors. The flexibility of the services provided some benefits, but the changes also created challenges.

Benefits

- More ability to reach services
- No travel time
- No childcare needed
- Support with economic assistance
- Some survivors felt more comfortable opening up
- Help is only a call or text away

Challenges

- Some services were hard to adapt
- Concerns regarding confidentiality and privacy
- Competing responsibilities at home
- Court clients had to wait for hours for cases to be called
- Some survivors felt less emotional connection online
- Additional barriers to leaving a relationship

Despite the challenges, due to these benefits, all providers surveyed indicated a desire to keep some of these new programs in place to allow survivors the flexibility to receive services in the way that works best for them.

ITEDAL SHALABI REPORTED HEARING FROM CLIENTS THAT REMOTE SERVICES MEANT THEY

“Don’t have to look and beg [their] neighbor to bring [them] to [services] and don’t have to spend [their] last pennies on transportation to get to [services].”

“It does feel like we are reaching folks that we might otherwise might not be able to reach.”

— MARGARET DUVAL, ASCEND JUSTICE

CASE STUDY 3

Julia* is an undocumented survivor of domestic violence. Although she met and married her husband in her home country, Julia's husband later moved to the United States to find higher-paying work. He pressured Julia to join him in the United States. Soon after Julia arrived in Chicago to reunite with her husband, he became physically and verbally abusive.

After the birth of their first child, Julia's husband repeatedly told her that if she tried to divorce him, he would get custody of their child because she had no job and no money. After enduring years of abuse, Julia moved out, taking her children with her. She has worked hard to support herself and her children in the years since, but without any support system in the United States, 2020 was an especially difficult year for Julia: She lost her job, contracted COVID, and even had her electricity disconnected for days this past fall after she fell behind on utility bills.

On some of the hardest days, Julia wishes she could return to her home country to be closer to her extended family, but her children are U.S. citizens and their father would never give her permission to take them out of the country.

A member service provider has filed a U-Visa application for Julia that, if approved, will provide her with lawful status and a path to citizenship.

** All names changed*

2020 REPORT

Help Seeking from the Criminal and Legal System

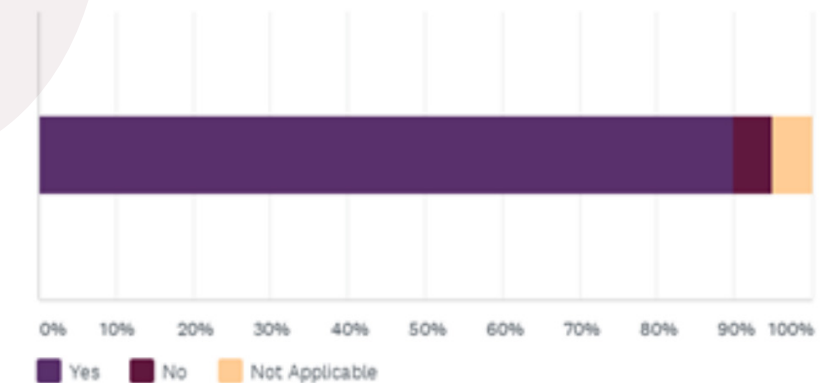
As covered earlier in this report, due to the pandemic individuals were less equipped to leave their relationships and often did not feel safe calling for help.

In 2020, the city was also responding to nationwide protests to police brutality and highlighting concerns of many when it comes to calling the police.

Unfortunately, all too often survivors have a justified distrust in the police that prevents them from calling 911. As shown below,

90% of surveyed service providers reported receiving calls from individuals who did not want to call the police.⁴¹

Does the Service Provider Receive Calls from Survivors who do Not Want to Call 911



Source: Network membership survey, 2021.

When providers receive these calls, they work with survivors to safety plan and provide them with options for other services such as shelter and counseling. It is always up to the survivor to make the decision, but unfortunately, sometimes there are no other options.⁴²

“We try to empower them and look at their strengths and talents; look at what they can control and what they can’t.”

— CAITLYN TUPPER, CENTER ON HALSTEAD

In order to better understand the context that leads to domestic violence related homicides, the authors of this report reviewed a collection of 50 news articles. Unfortunately, the coverage of these tragic events was quite limited. What was consistent is that the **victims in these events had not previously contacted the police or a service provider**. Many were trying to leave the relationship on their own.⁴³

When individuals do not feel safe calling law enforcement, and service providers are at capacity or survivors face barriers accessing them, they are forced to either remain in an unsafe situation or try to leave on their own. Both are options that place them at an increased risk of death. This puts survivors of Color, immigrant survivors, and others who have historically been harmed by the criminal legal system, at risk. This risk is reflected in the outcomes shown in this section.

Tragically, an increasing number of individuals facing domestic violence will never make it to services. Their lives will be lost to the violence, often through the use of a firearm. Firearms will be used by someone causing harm to threaten, coerce, and harm individuals. A woman in a domestic violence relationship is five times more likely to be killed if the person causing harm has access to a gun.⁴⁴

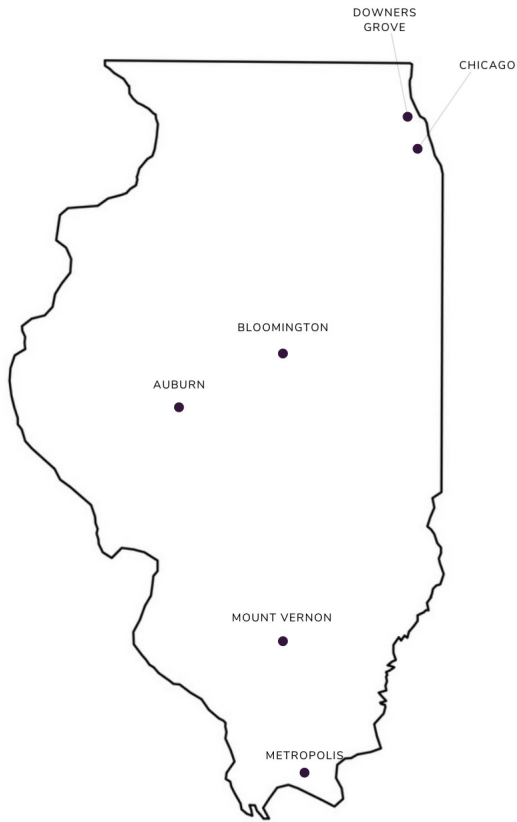
“My husband had a gun. He said he ‘had it for a reason and wasn’t afraid to use it.’”

— SURVIVOR, SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

To highlight this issue, this section of the report draws on data from police and sheriff departments throughout the state, client interviews, and news articles.

POLICE DEPARTMENTS

The police departments were chosen to represent diverse communities throughout the state, as people in small rural areas as well as the biggest cities are impacted by this violence. The map on the right highlights the cities in which departments provided data. Each department was asked for data on shooting and homicides related to domestic violence, calls for domestic violence, and domestic violence related arrests, broken down by race where possible. Each department had differing data available, reflected in what is reported in this section. Several departments collected no data relevant to the requested information.



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW

As detailed throughout this section, domestic violence related homicides occurs throughout the state. Drawing a sample of locations, this report demonstrates that there are many unknown factors that contribute to the occurrence of these events.

To better understand what leads to these homicides and what interventions can help prevent them, legislation has been drafted to develop a statewide Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission and Regional Domestic Violence Fatality Review Teams (DVFRT).

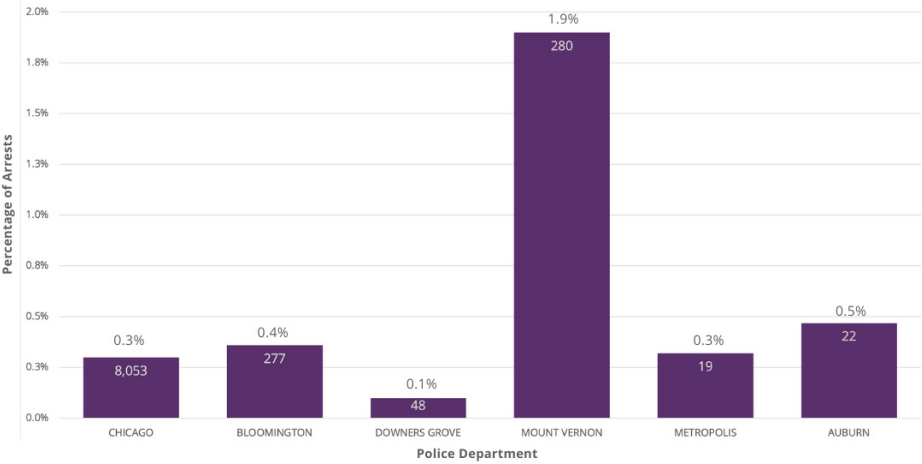
A **DVFRT** is a multiagency and multidisciplinary group whose purpose is to review domestic violence related fatalities and near-fatalities to identify potential obstacles or breakdowns in systemic interventions, barriers to safety, and gaps in community services and consider alternate or more effective systemic responses in order to prevent future fatalities.

DVFRTs develop recommendations for greater coordinated community responses and systemic reform to reduce the occurrence, frequency and severity domestic violence and prevent fatalities.

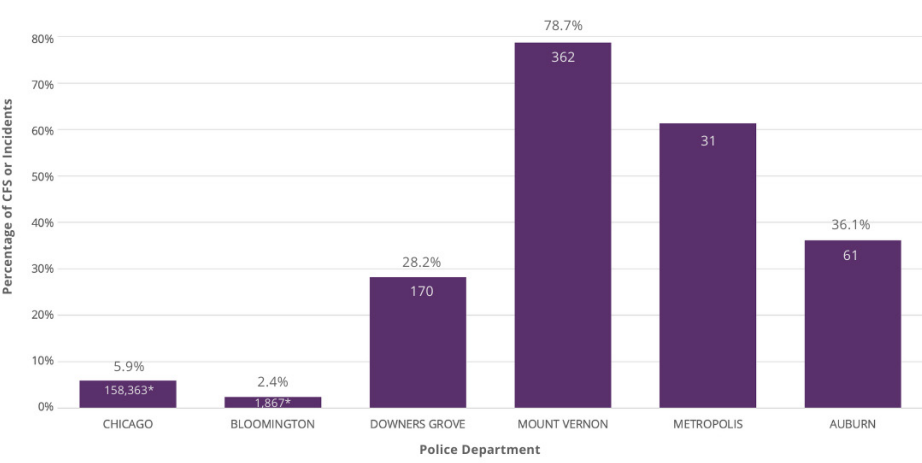
The following graphics provide an overview of the data from each of the police departments, highlighting the number of arrests and domestic violence incidents or calls for service scaled to population. These graphics demonstrate that these issues are widespread across the state, but the decision to make an arrest is not as straightforward.

Factors such as race and age have been shown to play a role in the response of police to domestic violence related calls. Young women of Color are less likely to be provided the same services as their white counterparts. Police are also less likely to make an arrest if the person causing harm in a cisgender female. Dual arrests are more likely to occur in cases involving LGBTQ+ couples.⁴⁵ Understanding the arrest rates throughout the state means looking at the contributing factors such as race, gender, and sexuality.

Number of Arrests in 2020, Scaled to Population

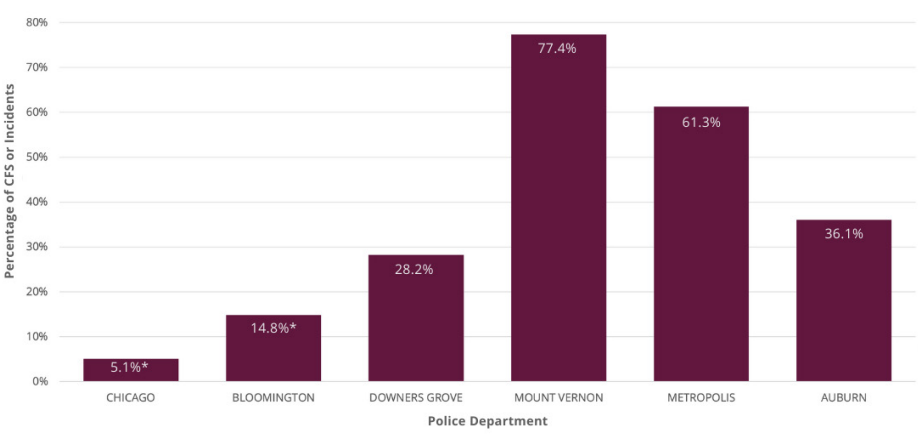


Number of Incidents or Calls for Service in 2020, Scaled to Population



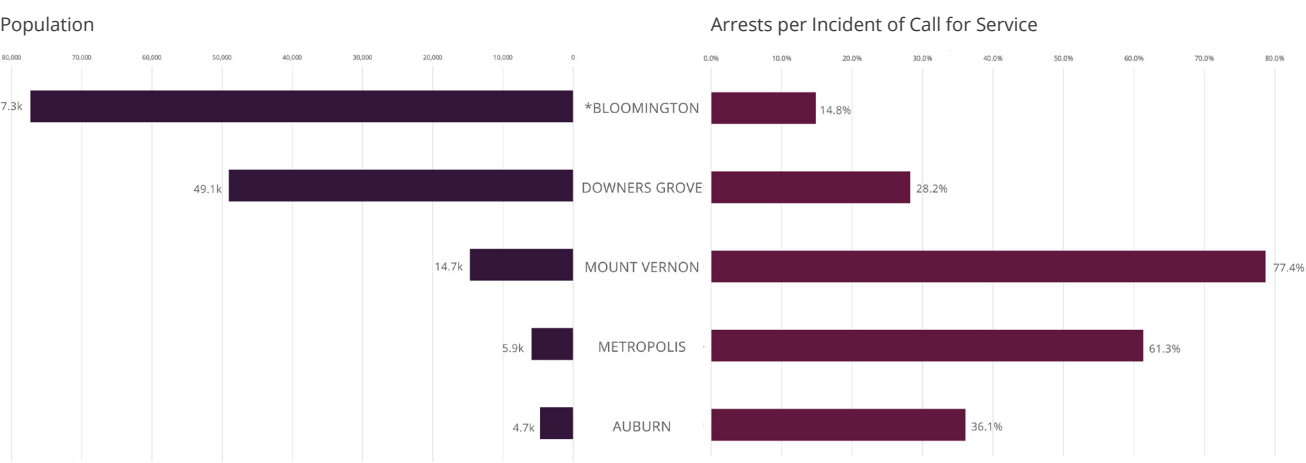
Sources: Chicago Police Department, Bloomington Police Department, Downers Grove Police Department, Mount Vernon Police Department, Metropolis Police Department, Auburn Police Department, U.S. Census Bureau 2019 and 2008
Note: Police Departments selected based on data available and provided. Numbers of incidents refer to those classified as Domestic Battery and Aggravated Domestic Battery
*Chicago and Bloomington represent Calls for Service.

Percent of Incidents or Calls Resulting in an Arrest in 2020



Sources: Chicago Police Department, Bloomington Police Department, Downers Grove Police Department, Mount Vernon Police Department, Metropolis Police Department, Auburn Police Department, U.S. Census Bureau 2019 and 2008
Note: Police Departments selected based on data available and provided. Numbers of incidents refer to those classified as Domestic Battery and Aggravated Domestic Battery
*Chicago and Bloomington represent Calls for Service.

Arrests per Incident or Call for Service in 2020, Relative to Population



Sources: Chicago Police Department, Bloomington Police Department, Downers Grove Police Department, Mount Veronon Police Department, Metropolis Police Department, Auburn Police Department, U.S. Census Bureau 2019 and 2008
Note: Police Departments selected based on data available and provided. Numbers of incidents refer to those classified as Domestic Battery and Aggravated Domestic Battery.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Auburn

Central Illinois
2020

4,697

POPULATION

61

INCIDENTS

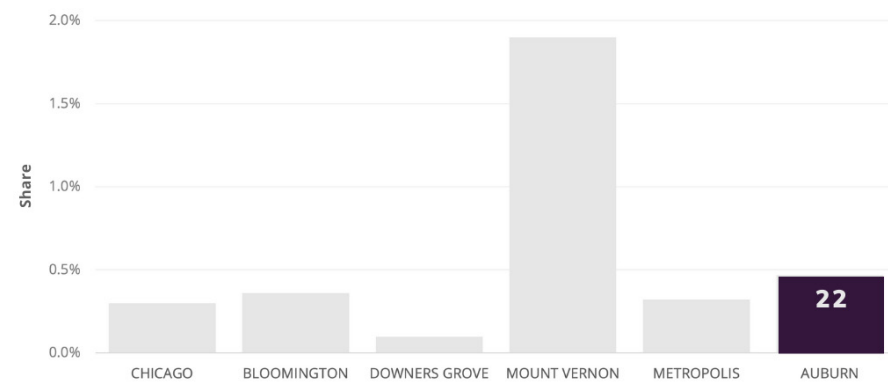
0

DV SHOOTINGS

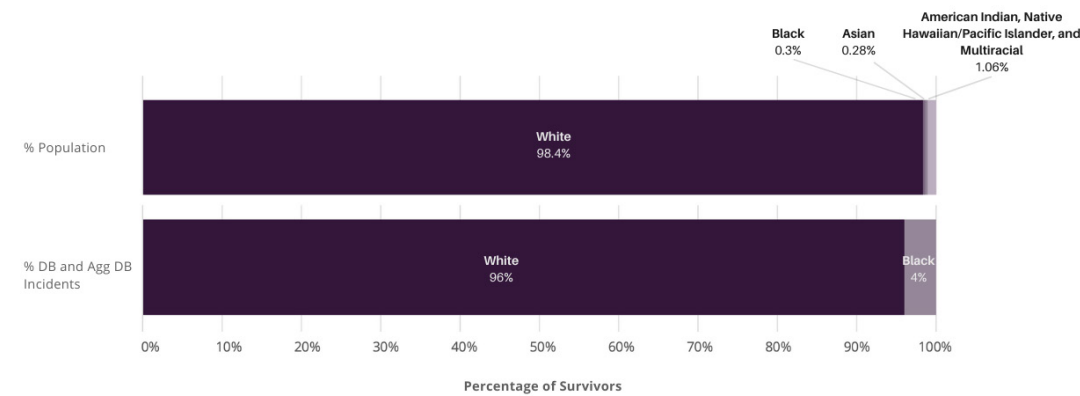
0

DV HOMICIDES

NUMBER OF ARRESTS



Survivors of DB or Aggravated DB in relation to Population by Race in Auburn, 2020



Source: Auburn Police Department, 2008 U.S. Census Bureau

Notes: Incidents identified as 'Domestic Violence/Battery.' Racial categorization reflects data provided.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Bloomington

Central Illinois
2020

77,330

POPULATION

1,867

INCIDENTS

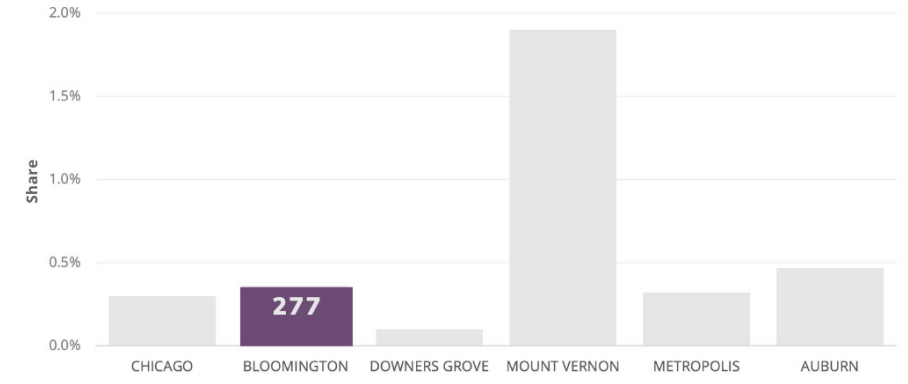
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DV SHOOTINGS

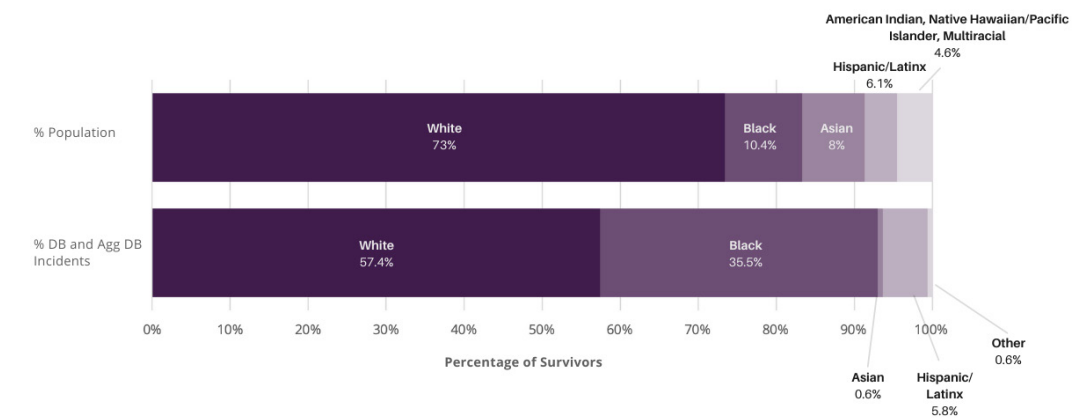
0

DV HOMICIDES

NUMBER OF ARRESTS



Survivors of DB or Aggravated DB in relation to Population by Race in Bloomington, 2020



Source: Bloomington Police Department, U.S. Census Bureau 2019

Notes: City's data is compared relative to its population, per 2019 Census data.

Victims represent incidents identified as either Domestic Battery or Aggravated Domestic Battery. In several incidents (170), more than one victim was identified. All victims were included in % count.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chicago

Northern Illinois
2020

158,363
POPULATION

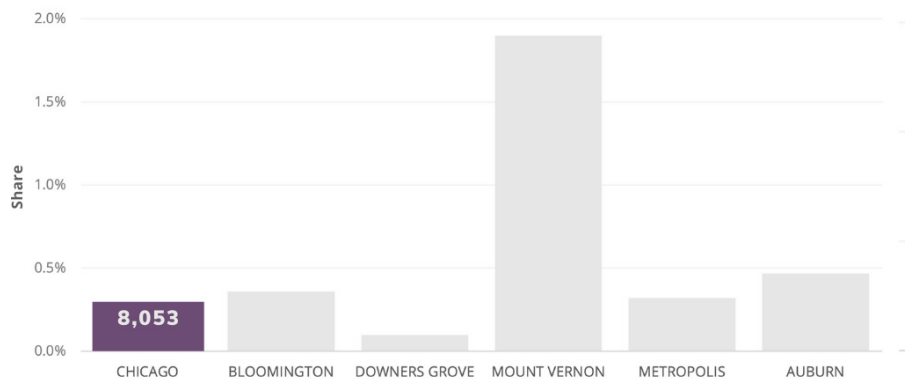
8,053
INCIDENTS

27
HOMICIDES
CAUSED BY
A FIREARM

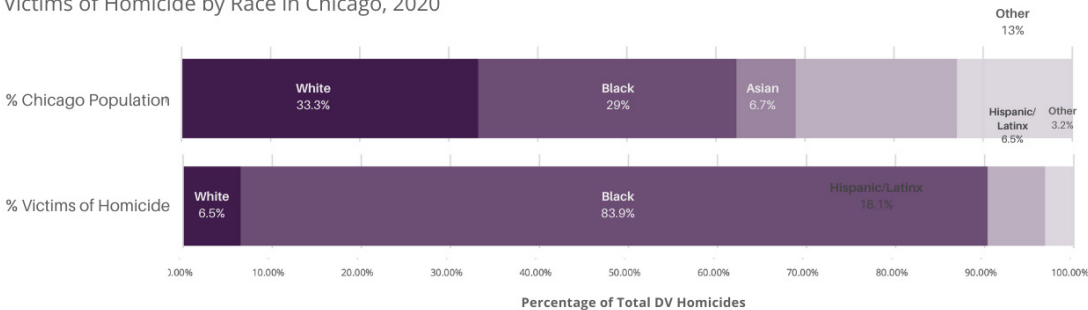
71
DV SHOOTINGS

62
DV HOMICIDES

NUMBER OF ARRESTS



Victims of Homicide by Race in Chicago, 2020



Source: CPD, Population data from the Census Bureau, ACS 1-year Estimate.
Note: "Black" includes "Black Hispanic"

POLICE DEPARTMENT

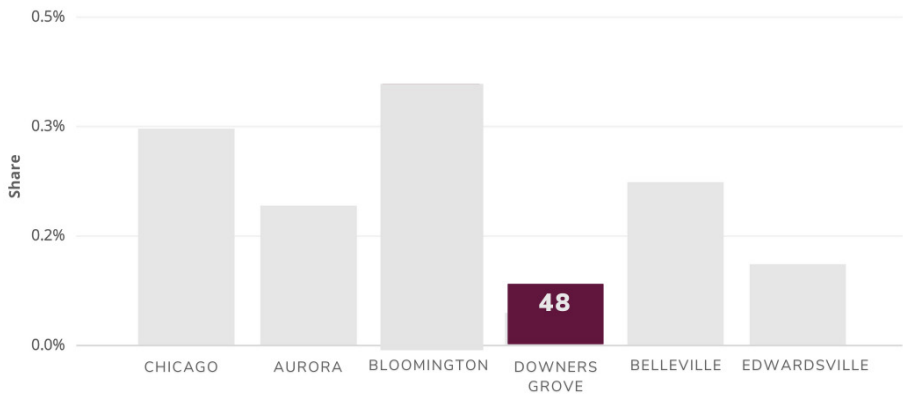
Downer's Grove

Northern Illinois
2020

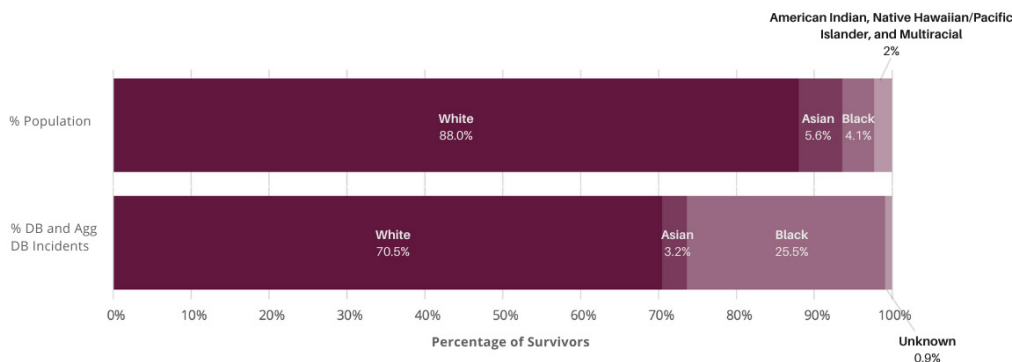
49,047
POPULATION

170
INCIDENTS

NUMBER OF ARRESTS



Survivors of DB or Aggravated DB in relation to Population by Race in Downers Grove, 2020



Source: Downers Grove Police Department, 2019 U.S. Census Bureau
Notes: Data is compared relative to its population, per 2019 Census data.
Incidents were identified as either Domestic Battery or Aggravated Domestic Battery. In several incidents (170), more than one victim was identified. All victims (220) were included in % count. Racial categories reflect department's coding system which includes the following: Asian, Black or African American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Other

POLICE DEPARTMENT

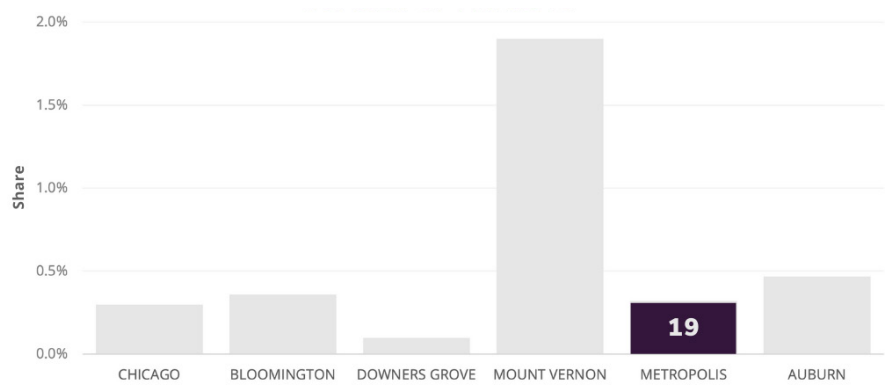
Metropolis

Southern Illinois
2020

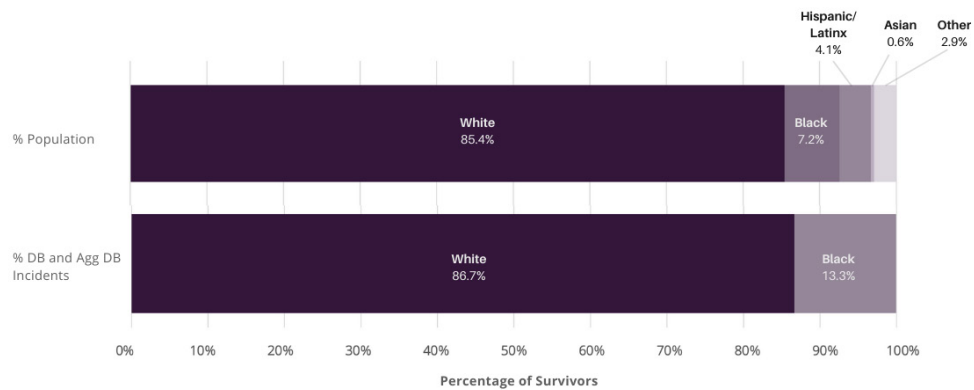
5,945
POPULATION

31
INCIDENTS

NUMBER OF ARRESTS



Survivors of DB or Aggravated DB in relation to Population by Race in Metropolis, 2020



Source: Metropolis Police Department, 2019 U.S. Census Bureau
Notes: Incidents identified as either Domestic Battery or Aggravated Domestic Battery. Incident and arrest counts do not include violations of Orders of Protection. Arrests do not include potential arrests that occurred following prosecution. Racial categories reflect department's coding system.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Mount Vernon

Southern Illinois
2020

14,743
POPULATION

362
CALLS FOR DV/BATTERY

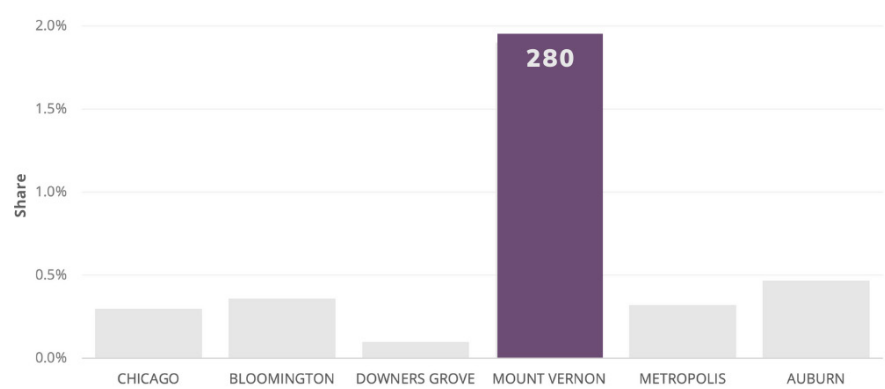
356
CALLS FOR DOMESTIC TROUBLE INCIDENTS

1
DV SHOOTINGS

1
DV HOMICIDES

1
HOMICIDES CAUSED BY A FIREARM

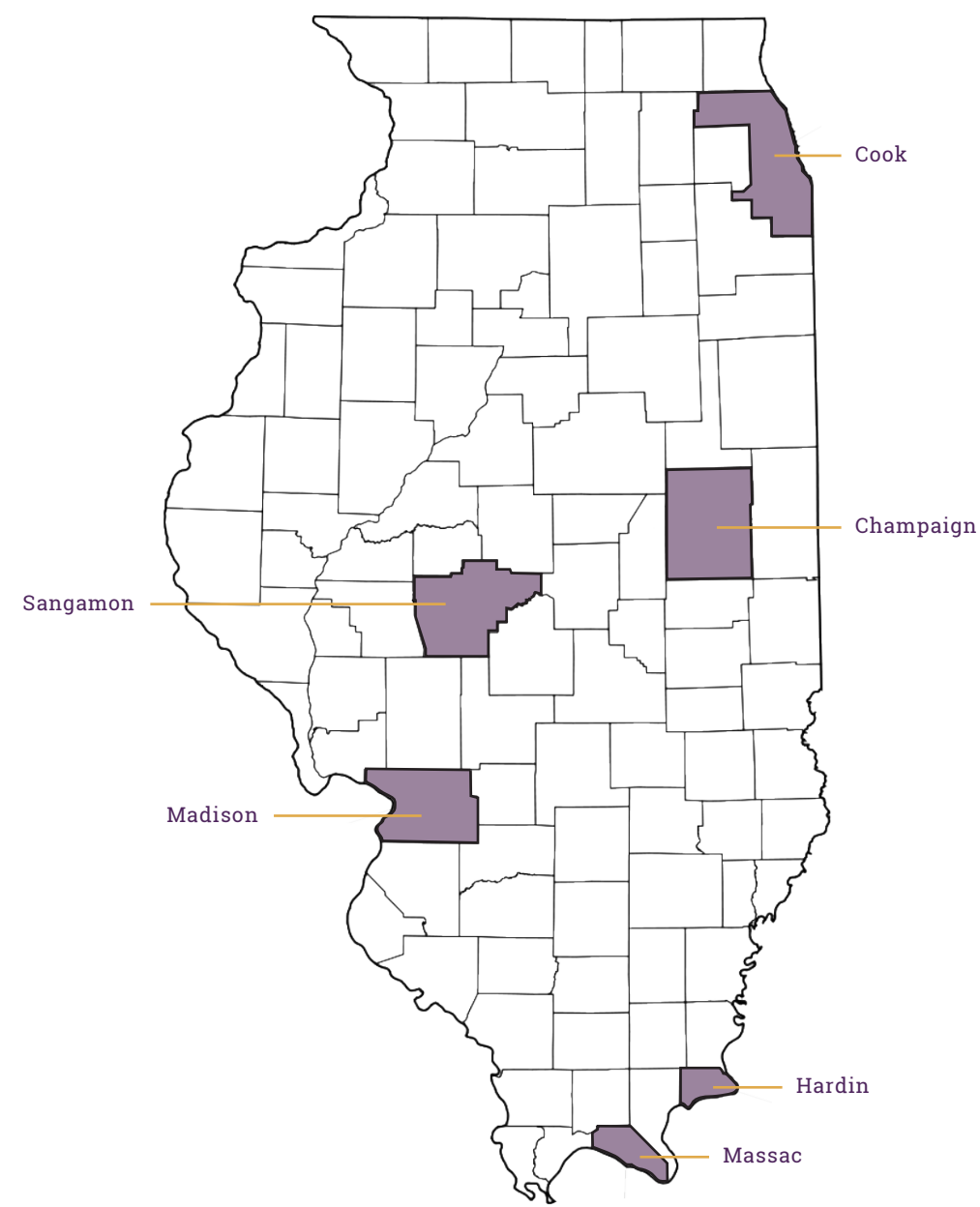
NUMBER OF ARRESTS



Source: Mount Vernon Police Department, 2019 U.S. Census Bureau
Notes: Arrests classified as "Domestic Violence." Department not provide racial breakdown of incidents.

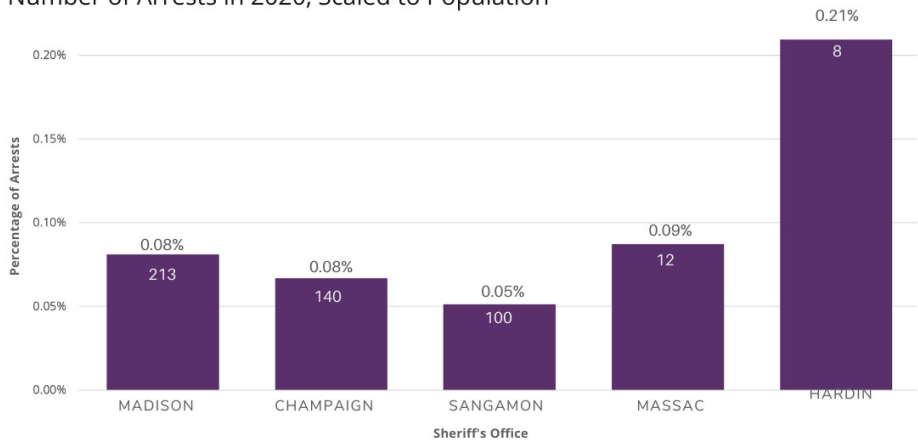
SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENTS

The sheriff’s departments were also chosen to represent diverse areas throughout the state. The map below highlights the offices that provided data. Each office was asked for data on shooting and homicides related to domestic violence, calls for domestic violence, and domestic violence related arrests, broken down by race where possible. Data collection was inconsistent throughout the state. The available data is reported in this section.

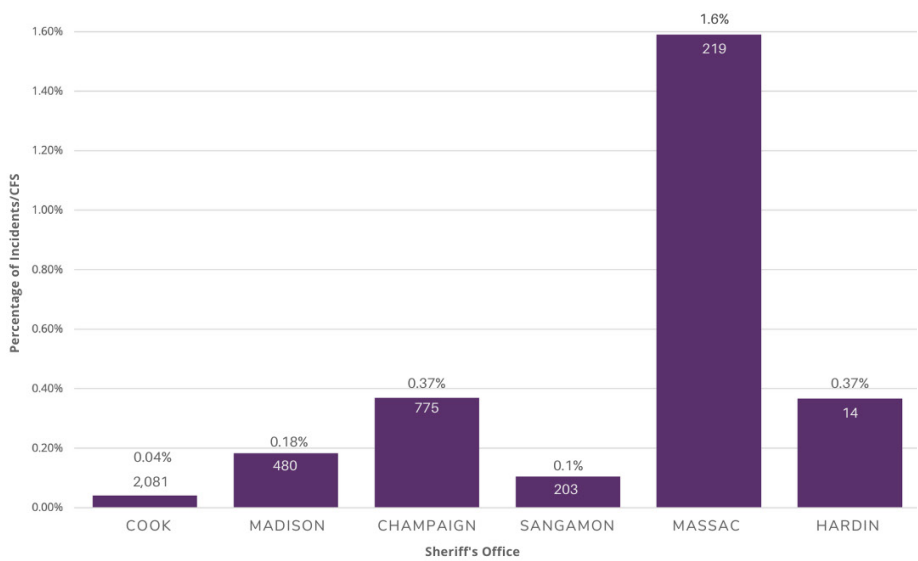


The following graphics provide an overview of the data from each of the selected sheriff’s departments, highlighting the number of arrests and domestic violence incidents or calls for service scaled to population. As described earlier in this section, there are multiple factors that go into domestic violence related arrests.

Number of Arrests in 2020, Scaled to Population

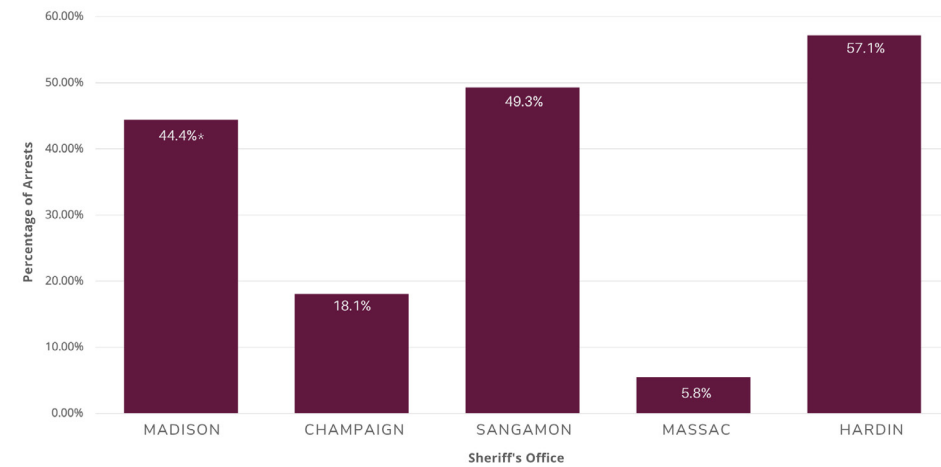


Number of Incidents or Calls for Service in 2020, Scaled to Population



Sources: Madison Sheriff's Office, Champaign Sheriff's Office, Sangamon Sheriff's Office, Massac Sherrif's Office, Hardin Sherrif Office, U.S. Census Bureau 2019
Note: Sheriff's Offices selected based on data available and provided. Data for Cook refers to 2,081 domestic trouble incident Data for Madison refers to 480 domestic disturbance incidents. Data for Champaign refers to "calls for service DV incidents." Dat for Sangamon includes 203 calls for domestic violence/battery. Massac data includes 207 calls for domestic disturbances and 1 calls for domestic battery. Data for Hardin refers to number of calls related to domestic violence.

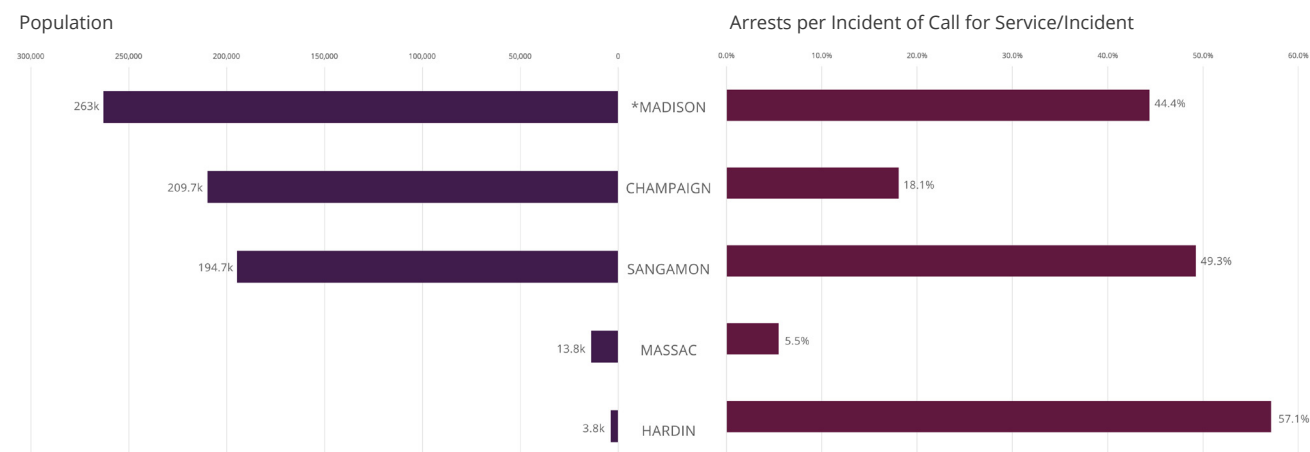
Percentage of Arrests for Every Call for Service or Incident in 2020, Scaled to Population



Sources: Madison Sheriff's Office, Champaign Sheriff's Office, Sangamon Sheriff's Office, Massac Sheriff's Office, Hardin Sheriff's Office, U.S. Census Bureau 2019
Note: Sheriff's Offices selected based on data available and provided.
 *44.4% refers to Domestic Disturbance Incidents for Madison County.

Arrests per Incident or Call for Service in 2020, Relative to Population

Arrests per Incident or Call for Service in 2020, Relative to Population



Sources: Madison Sheriff's Office, Champaign Sheriff's Office, Sangamon Sheriff's Office, Massac Sheriff's Office, Hardin Sheriff's Office, U.S. Census Bureau 2019
Note: Sheriff's Offices selected based on data available and provided. *44.4% refers to Domestic Disturbance Incidents for Madison County.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Champaign

Central Illinois
2020

209,689

POPULATION

779

CALLS FOR SERVICE

2

DV SHOOTINGS

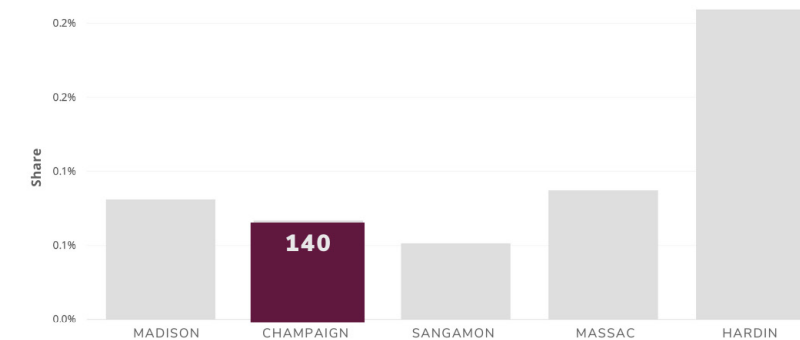
3

DV HOMICIDES

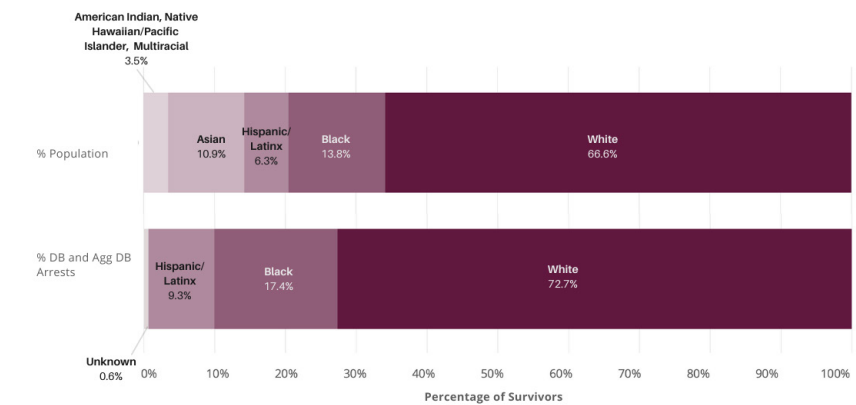
3

HOMICIDES CAUSED BY A FIREARM

NUMBER OF ARRESTS



Survivors of DB or Aggravated DB Arrests in relation to Population by Race in Champaign, 2020



Source: Champaign Sheriff's Office, 2019 U.S. Census Bureau
Notes: 775 refers to Calls for Service for Domestic Violence Incidents. Total arrests (140) include Domestic Battery (121) and Aggravated Domestic Battery (19). Victim Race refers to DB and Aggravated DB cases, out of 161 total. Racial categories reflect office's coding system which includes the following: Black, Hispanic, Unknown, White.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Cook

Northern Illinois
2020

5.15M

POPULATION

2,081

DOMESTIC TROUBLE
INCIDENTS

563

DOMESTIC BATTERY
INCIDENTS

Source: Cook Sheriff's Office, 2019 U.S. Census Bureau
Notes: 563 includes total incidents of Domestic Battery (546) and Aggravated Domestic Battery (17).

The data above is the only data provided by Cook County. As noted at the beginning of this section, each department received a request for the same information. Many responded by stating that their offices do not collect that data. The size of Cook County would indicate that likely track more data than many of their counterparts throughout the state. However, given the many unique challenges of 2020 many reporters and researchers sought out data this year. The Network received many requests throughout the state for extensions on the FOIA requests and spoke to many individuals who stated they were behind in fulfilling requests for the first time in their careers due to the large increase in these requests. While it is unclear why Cook County did not provide additional data, it is likely that they also saw an additional increase in requests and their staffers did not have the ability to complete the more detailed pieces. Given the importance of data collection and transparency, these departments must work to dedicate the adequate staffing and resources to support these requests.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Hardin

Central Illinois
2020

3,821

POPULATION

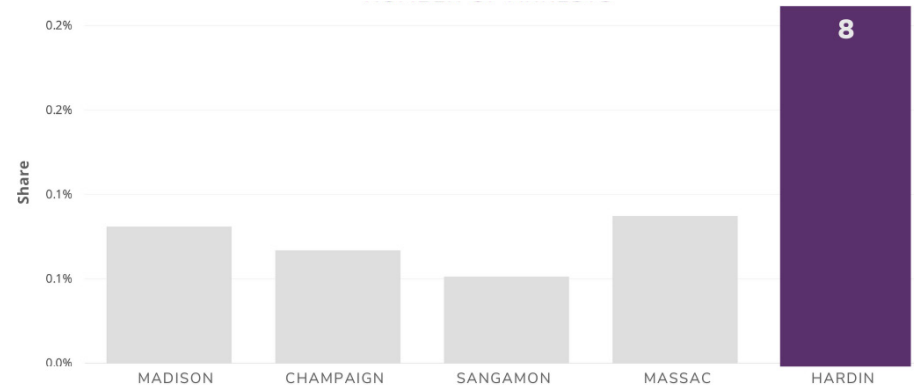
14

CALLS FOR
SERVICE

0

DV HOMICIDES

NUMBER OF ARRESTS



Source: Hardin Sheriff's Office, 2019 U.S. Census Bureau



SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Madison

Southern Illinois
2020

292,966

POPULATION

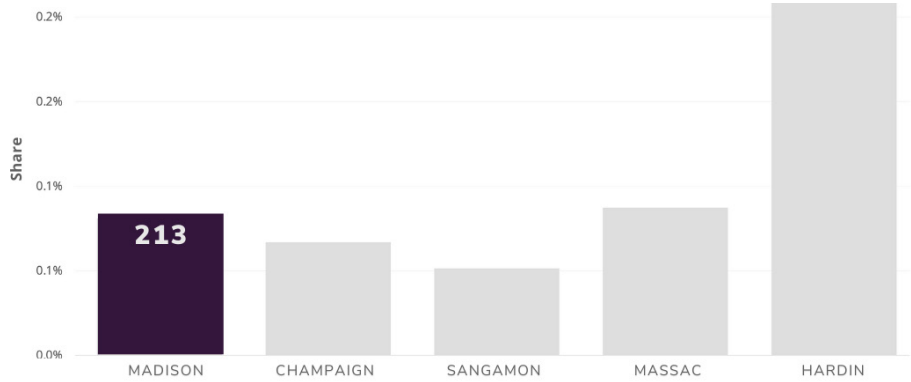
480

CALLS FOR
SERVICE

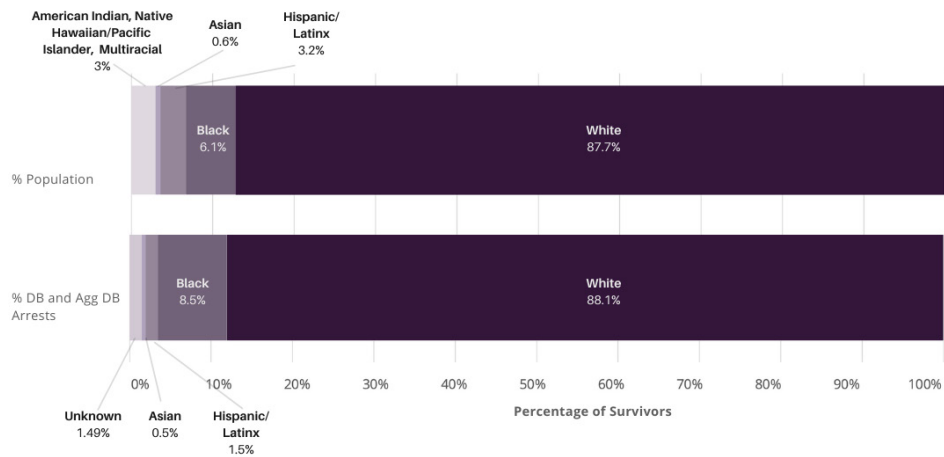
0

DV HOMICIDES

NUMBER OF ARRESTS



Survivors of DB or Aggravated DB Arrests in relation to Population by Race in Madison, 2020



Source: Madison Sheriff's Office, 2019 U.S. Census Bureau
Notes: 480 refers to Domestic Disturbance incidents. Arrests include charges for Domestic Battery and Aggravated Domestic Battery. Victim Race reflects 201 arrest cases with categorizations: White, Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic or Latino, Multiracial, and Unknown.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Massac

Southern Illinois
2020

13,722

POPULATION

207

CALLS FOR
SERVICE

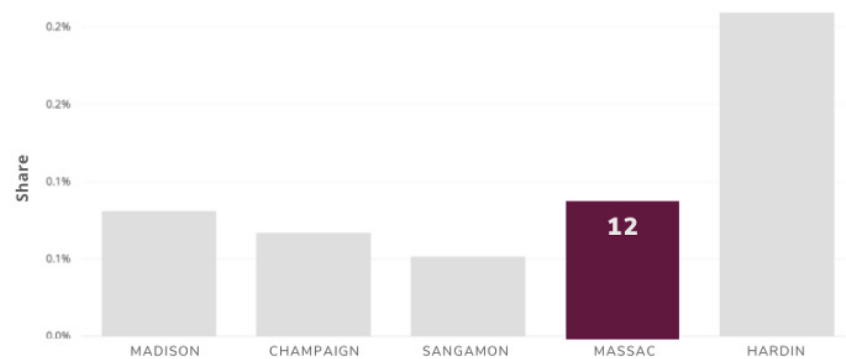
12

CALLS FOR
DOMESTIC
BATTERY

0

DV HOMICIDES
OR SHOOTINGS

NUMBER OF ARRESTS



Source: Massac County Sheriff's Office, 2019 U.S. Census Bureau
Notes: 2017 refers to calls for Domestic Disturbances. There were 12 Calls for Domestic Battery. Arrests do not distinguish between DB and Aggravated DV. Racial breakdown not provided.

As shown above, Massac County separated their calls for service and calls for domestic battery in the data provided. They define calls for service as calls for domestic disturbance not including calls where arrests are made for domestic battery.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sangamon

Central Illinois
2020

194,672 203

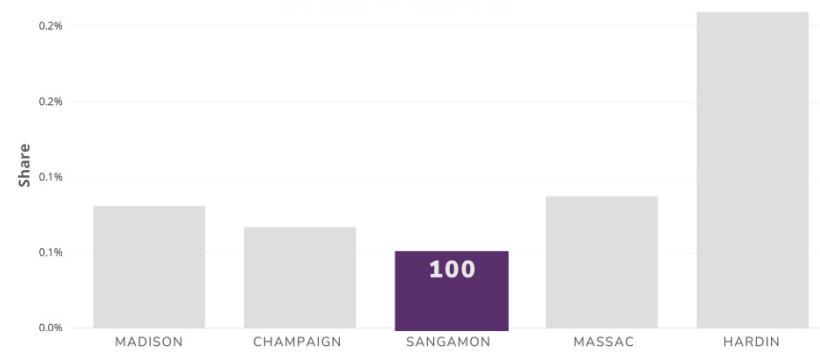
POPULATION CALLS FOR SERVICE

0

DV SHOOTINGS DV HOMICIDES

0

NUMBER OF ARRESTS



Source: Sangamon Sheriff's Office, 2019 U.S. Census Bureau
Notes: 203 refers to the number of calls for Domestic Violence/Battery. Racial breakdown of victims was not provided.

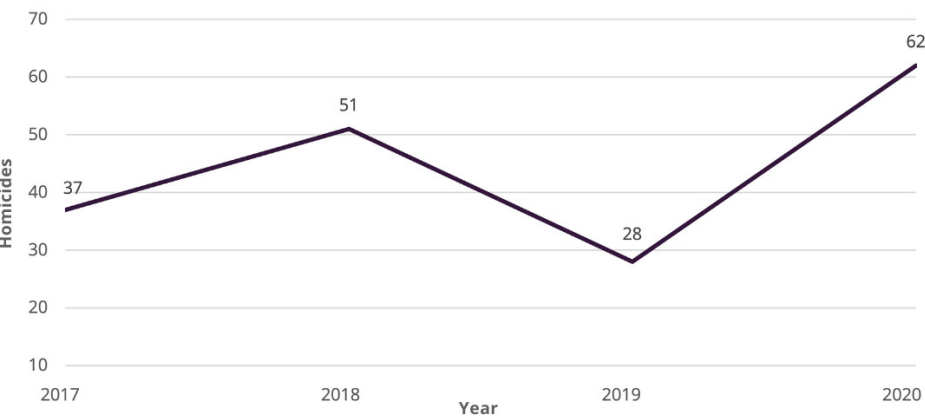
These data demonstrate that domestic violence incidents happen throughout the state. While domestic violence related homicides and shootings varied in occurrence, it is important to note that these cases are identified based on labeling by law enforcement, which may not be consistent throughout the state.

The results in this section are reflective of a year that was not like others. Just as calls to the Hotline rose, so did homicides and shootings. To review these trends and gain a better understanding of the victims of these events, this section takes a deeper dive into data provided by the Chicago Police Department.

As shown below, **domestic violence related homicides in Chicago increased by 121%** from 2019 to 2020 and shootings (including both fatal and non-fatal incidents) increased by 87%.⁴⁶

Those not killed using a firearm may have been killed with a knife, through strangulation, blunt force trauma, or other method. In 2020, homicides by firearm accounted for 44% of homicides. This proportion is a substantial increase from 2019 where homicides by firearms accounted for less than a third of domestic violence related homicides. The increase in homicides as well as the increase in proportion involving firearms, demonstrates a need for enhanced gun safety measures and additional work to address the specific intersection of gun violence and domestic violence.

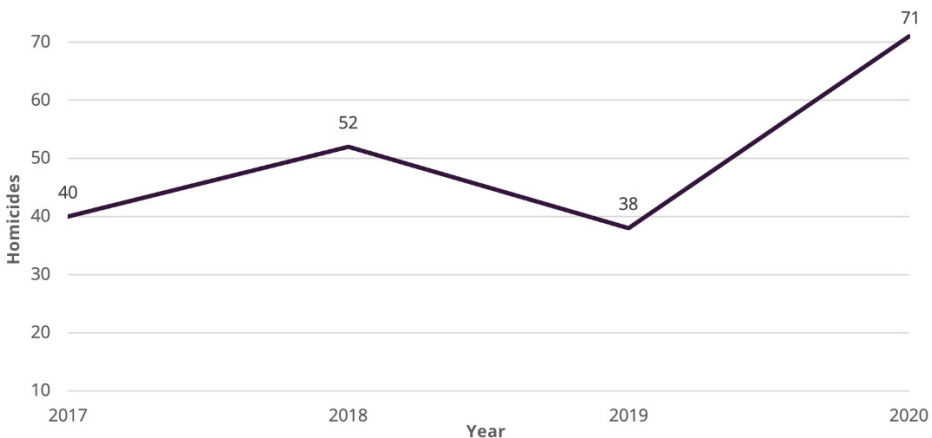
Domestic Violence Related Homicides in Chicago, 2017-2020



Source: Chicago Police Department (CPD)

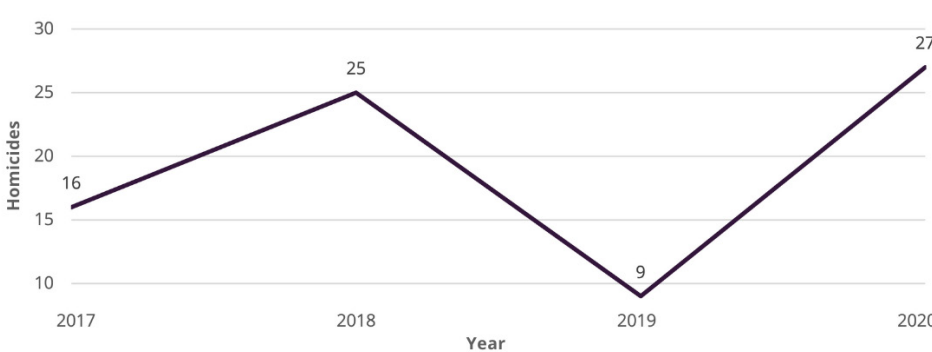
Domestic violence related arrests decreased by 20% and calls for service decreased by 18%.⁴⁷

Domestic Violence Related Shootings (Fatal & Non Fatal) in Chicago, 2017-20

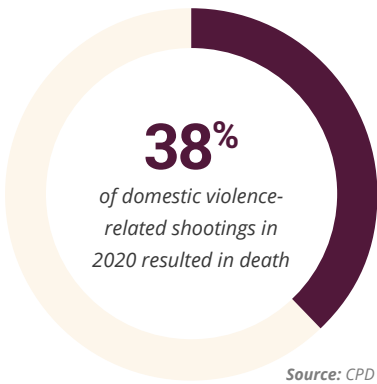


Source: CPD

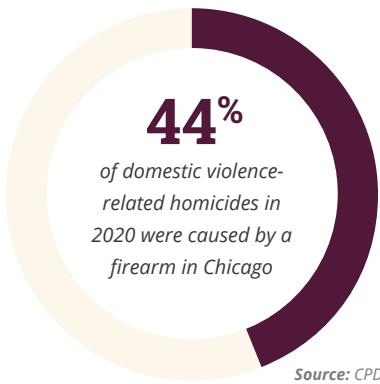
Domestic Violence Related Homicides by Firearm in Chicago, 2017-2020



Source: CPD



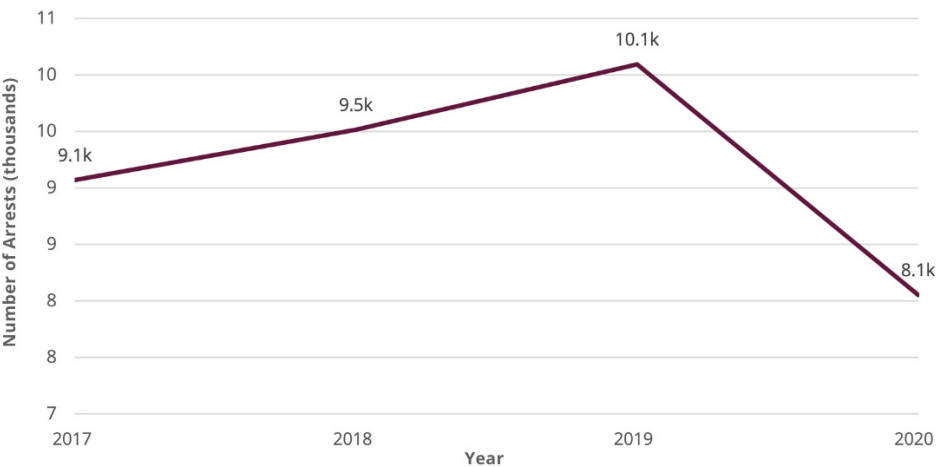
Source: CPD



Source: CPD

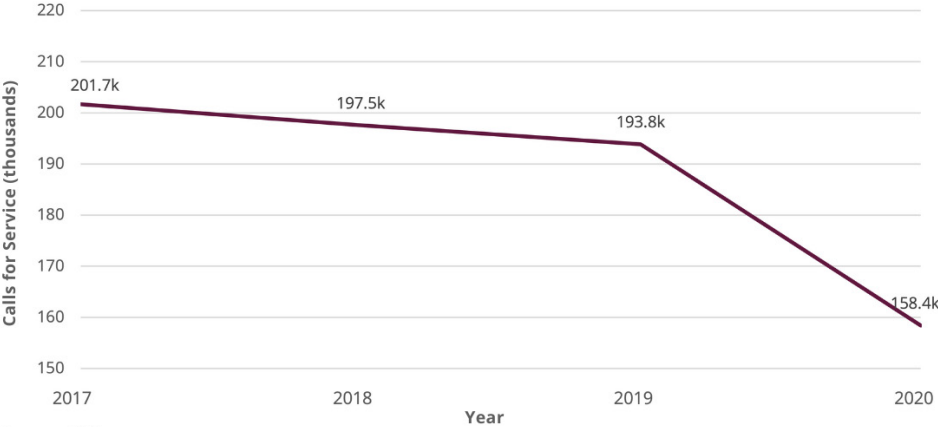
This trend, however, was not reflected in arrests or calls for service.

Domestic Violence Related Arrests in Chicago, 2017-2020



Source: CPD

Domestic Related Calls for Service in Chicago, 2017-2020



Source: CPD

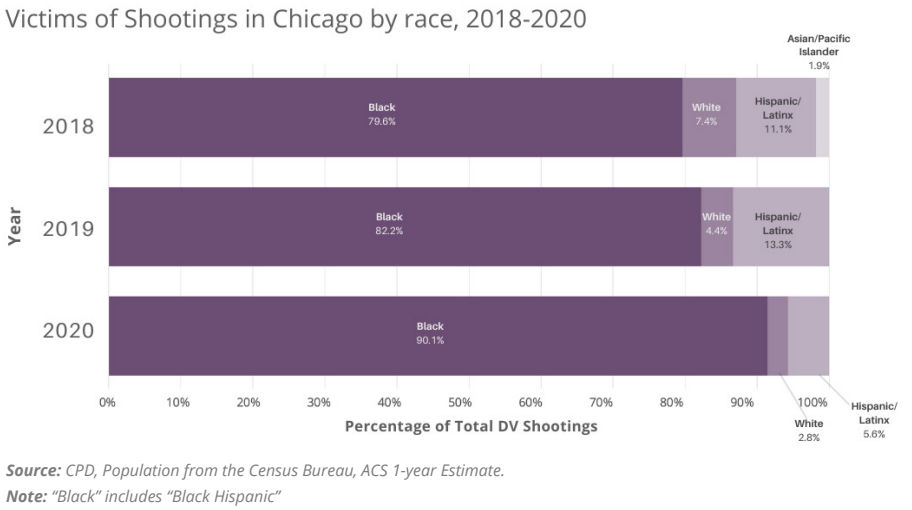
Calls for Service in Chicago in 2020, by month



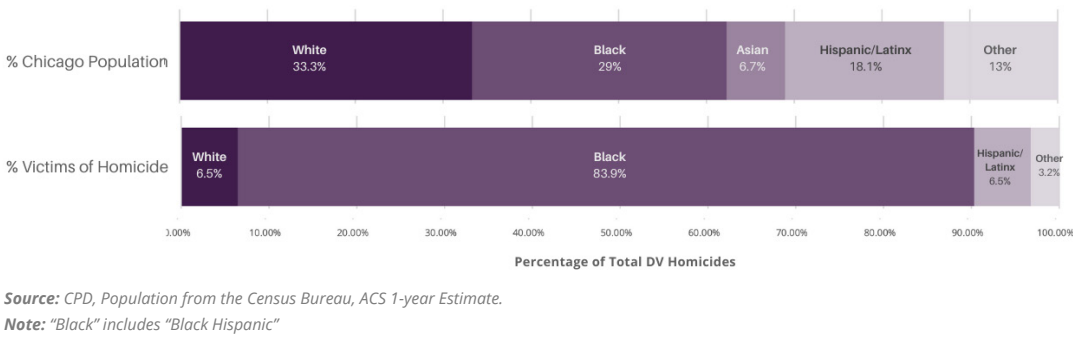
Source: CPD

The data throughout this section have shown the disproportionate impact of both domestic violence and the criminal and legal system on people of Color, particularly Black individuals, and Chicago is no exception.

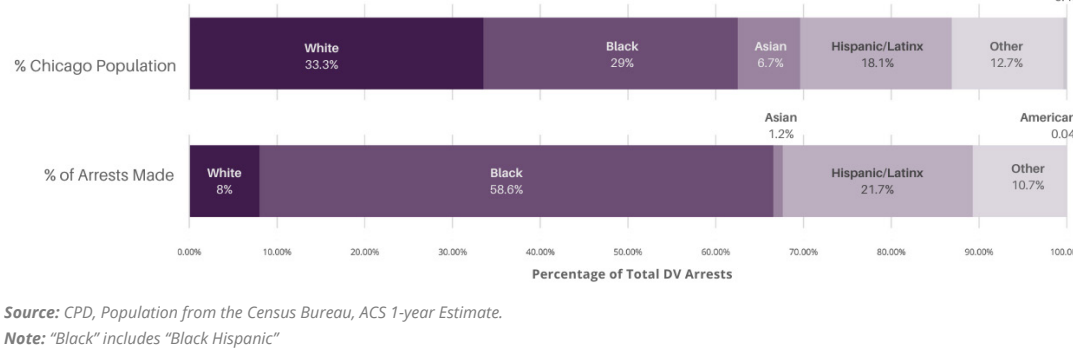
As shown below, victims of domestic violence are more likely to be Black and the percentages of victims who are Black has grown over the last 3 years.⁴⁸ In 2020, Black individuals made up a proportion of domestic violence related homicides nearly 3 times their proportion of the population.⁴⁹ This over representation is consistent with national data, which show Black women are 2.5 times more likely to be killed by their partners than their white counterparts.⁵⁰ Domestic homicides are not the only area where racial disparities are seen in connection to domestic violence as will be discussed in the following section.



Victims of Homicide by Race in Chicago, 2020



Percent of Arrests Made by Race in Chicago, 2020



Help Seeking from Underserved Individuals

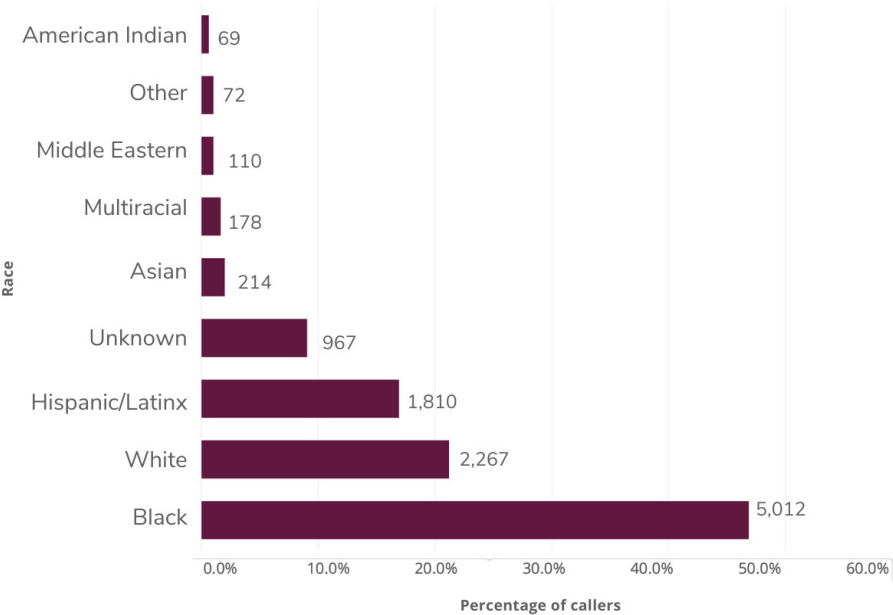
While domestic violence can impact anyone, these experiences are often shaped by factors such as race and ethnicity.

Individuals of Color experience domestic violence at rates higher than their white counterparts.⁵¹ Cultural and institutional barriers make leaving a violent relationship and receiving help often more challenging for survivors of Color. The Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence defines underserved survivors as those who encounter one or more barriers to receiving services.⁵²

This section will review the racial disparities seen in domestic violence cases throughout the state, explore ways service providers work to provide adequate services for these individuals, and the barriers that still remain.

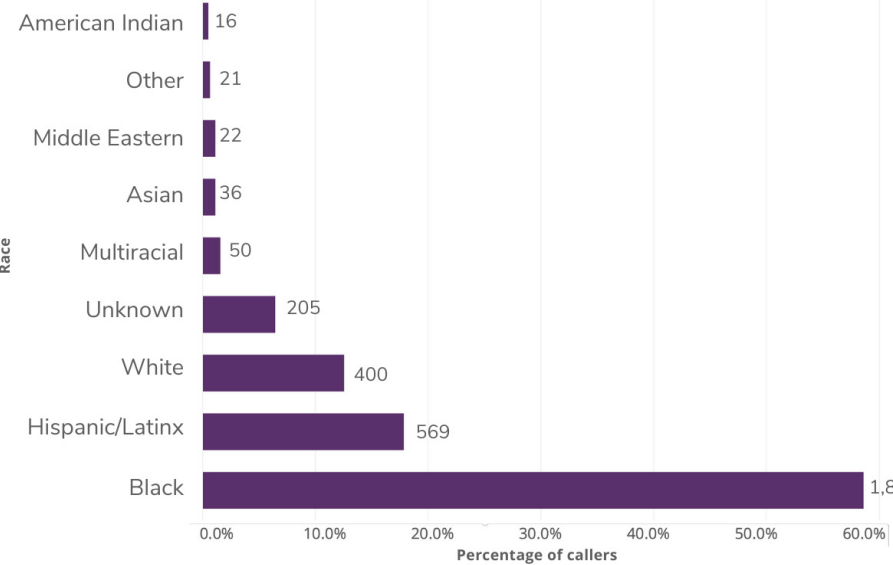
The following graphs show the racial and ethnic breakdown of survivors who contacted the Hotline in 2020. For Illinois callers, **47% were Black, 21% were white, 17% were Latinx, 9% were unknown**, and the remaining **4% were categorized as Asian, Multi-Racial, Middle-Eastern, American Indian, or other**. In Chicago, **59% of survivors who contacted the hotline were Black, 18% were Latinx, 13% were white, 6% were an unknown race**, and **4% in the remaining categories**.⁵³

Number of survivors who called Hotline in 2020 by race: Illinois



Source: Hotline (calls and texts only)
Notes: Percentage based on 36.7% (10,699) of all Illinois texts and calls (29,116).

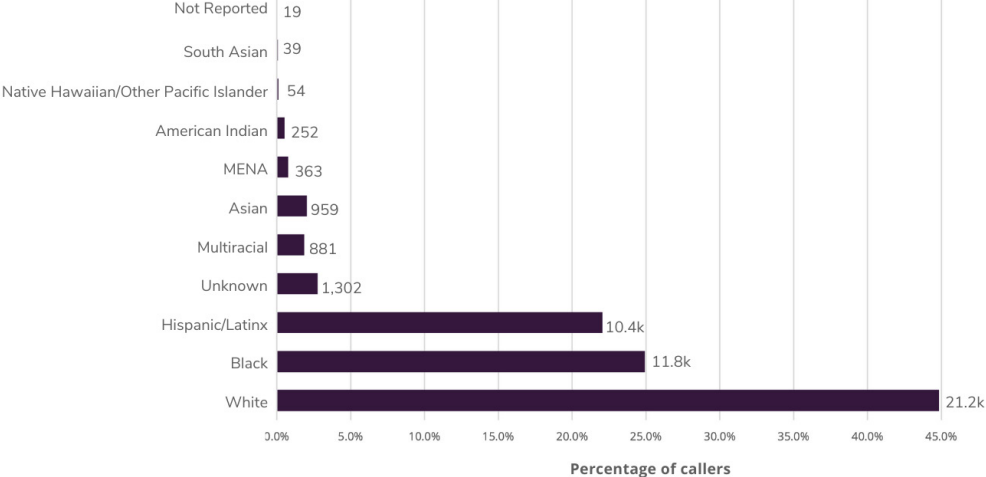
Number of survivors who called Hotline in 2020 by race: Chicago



Source: Hotline (calls and texts only)
Notes: Percentage based on 27.1% (3,187) of all Chicago texts and calls (11,754).

The graph below shows the racial and ethnic makeup of survivors in InfoNet. This data has a larger proportion of white survivors compared to the calls received at the hotline. This difference is likely representative of the Statewide population served. The hotline receives around a third of calls from the Chicago area, which has a larger proportion of individuals of Color than many of the surrounding areas that are better represented in the InfoNet data. However, as will be explored further in this section, individuals of Color also face barriers to services that may also play a role in the breakdown of who receives services.

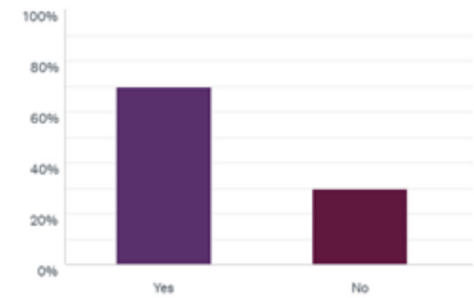
Adult and Child Clients who received services in 2020 by race



Adult and Child Clients who received services in 2020 by race
Source: InfoNet Data System, ICJIA and domestic violence service providers
Includes secondary survivors such as children/witnesses
The categories are mutually exclusive

70% of surveyed providers reported providing culturally specific services that help address these barriers and help meet the unique needs of survivors. These services include offering assistance in multiple languages, training staff on religious and cultural sensitivity, centering the voices of those from the communities these services are seeking to serve, and finding other ways to meet any unique needs of survivors.⁵⁴

Does the Service Provider Provide Culturally Specific Services



Source: Network membership survey, 2021.

BLACK SURVIVORS

Black individuals, particularly Black women, have an increased likelihood of experiencing sexual or domestic violence in their lifetimes. Within this demographic, this risk is greatly connected to economic factors and employment status. Increased poverty rates and unequal access to health care access increase risk and impact of domestic violence for Black individuals.⁵⁵

Despite their increased risk of experiencing domestic violence, Black individuals are less likely than their white counterparts to access services.⁵⁶ Illinois service providers have identified the marginalization and discrimination experienced by these individuals as barriers to services, leading to this group being underserved throughout the state.⁵⁷

In addition to not accessing social services, this group of individuals is unlikely to contact law enforcement. This unwillingness to call the police stems largely from justified distrust in law enforcement due to the history of overpolicing and violence against Black individuals.⁵⁸ This distrust has been exacerbated by the lack or arrests of those who are accused of perpetrating domestic violence by Black women.⁵⁹ As shown in the previous section, Black individuals are more likely to be victim of domestic violence homicides within Chicago and throughout Illinois. These diverging factors highlight the need for investment in community-based alternatives that these survivors can turn to in times of crisis.

Black survivors are less likely to be believed and face structural biases. This combination often leads to the criminalization of this group.⁶⁰

CRIMINALIZATION OF SURVIVORS

Unfortunately, one shared characteristic of incarcerated women is previous experiences of gender-based violence.

Survival strategies are often criminalized, including self-defense or coercion into criminal activities. According to the ACLU, on average 60-94% of incarcerated women have experienced gender-based violence.⁶¹ A study of Illinois prisons has shown an even higher rate, with 98% of incarcerated women having experienced some physical abuse in their lifetimes.⁶²

Those with marginalized identities are at a higher risk of becoming criminalized, including women of color, immigrant individuals, and LGBTQ+ individuals.⁶³ They are more likely to be part of dual arrest cases or arrested due to allegations by the individual who was causing them harm. These individuals are more likely to be convicted for acts of self-defense. Black women are convicted of killing those who were causing them harm at double the ratio of white individuals who also kill in self-defense.⁶⁴

Despite many studies into the connection of gender-based violence and incarceration, there is still more research needed. Many survivors are still in active cases or facing stigma connected to their involvement in the legal system that prevents them from sharing their own stories. We must continue to work to support these individuals and ensure that the vital gender-based violence services are inclusive of this population.

ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER SURVIVORS

The API community is one that captures a large population of over 40 countries, numerous religions, and dozens of languages. Therefore, experiences of domestic violence vary quite broadly across the API population but none are immune. An estimated 41-60% of surveyed API individuals reported experiencing domestic violence in their lifetimes.⁶⁵ A different survey, estimated 81.1% had experienced domestic violence.⁶⁶

Specific cultural factors often play a role for this group of survivors including the role of emotional control, acceptance of suffering, respect for authority, and self-blame.⁶⁷ These factors lead to increased victimization amongst this group and a decreased likelihood of these individuals reporting the violence. This group in particular faces risk of “honor killings, contract killings, dowry related deaths; killing of family members in the home country; and being driven by one’s husband and in-laws into committing suicide.”⁶⁸

One AAPI survivor interviewed for this report had attempted to take her own life. She described feeling isolated,

“I didn’t have family here, I didn’t have a degree, a job or anywhere to go. The violence wouldn’t stop. The police knew the truth about my relationship, but they didn’t help.”

With the rise of hate crimes towards Asian individuals during the pandemic, survivors have experienced increased isolation and decreased feelings of safety. This fear of facing racist violence has likely kept many survivors in this group from seeking assistance. Those who did find services, expressed to providers the fear they had based on their own experiences and based on what they were seeing on the news. They feared for the safety of their children and how to protect them.⁶⁹

Additionally, around 32% of AAPI individuals have limited-English proficiency. Lack of services provided in their primary language creates barriers to services including counseling, housing, or legal services.⁷⁰ This issue will be explored further in the following section on immigrant survivors.

Similar to Black individuals, Asian individuals were identified as being amongst underserved populations in Illinois by service providers. In particular they highlighted limited access to interpretation as a barrier. Throughout the state, most service providers shared that despite knowing of neighboring communities of AAPI individuals, they had limited interactions with individuals from this population.⁷¹

AAPI individuals may also be reluctant to call the police. Service providers who serve large groups of AAPI survivors reported calls from individuals in crisis who were fearful of calling the police. Kan-Win shared the story of one client in this situation.

One client’s husband was very dangerous as he had frequently been physically violent and owned a gun. The client didn’t want to call the police or file and order of protection. Kan-Win did not push her towards any specific path or decision. They gave her more time and then tried to give her information that could help her make her decision. Her neighbors had started building relationship. They had become aware of the violence in her relationship and were good allies. With support from Kan-Win and a new support system, she was able to move out of her apartment. This move was largely possible due to the support of her neighbors and the decrease in violence that came when her husband realized she had additional allies.

This story demonstrates the need to build out community services and supports for these survivors, so that all who find themselves in these situations can find their own safety.

HISPANIC/LATINX SURVIVORS

The National Violence Against Women Survey estimates that 23% of Hispanic/Latina women experience domestic violence within their lifetimes.⁷² These women are overrepresented in low-paying occupations and are more likely to experience financial barriers to trying to leave their relationships.⁷³ These issues were exacerbated with COVID-19. Many of these individuals live in multigenerational families and many were deemed essential workers and had to work in risky situations.

LatinX were also among the populations identified by service providers as underserved in Illinois.⁷⁴

One Latina client shared her story with The Network. She came to the US as a child from Mexico. She reported feeling scared most of her life in the living here as she didn’t know what rights she had, something her husband used against her. The violence began with controlling behaviors, but slowly increased to severe physical violence following the birth of her children. She avoided calling the police and instead turned to family for assistance. She reached out to her mother who did her best to support her, but did not have the resources to get her to safety. She started working so she no longer was financially dependent on her husband and connected with a service provider. Despite these efforts, she still struggles financially. She has been waiting to receive benefits for over a year. She said having support and knowledge of her rights earlier on could have prevented the violence.

AMERICAN INDIAN SURVIVORS

American Indian individuals experience domestic violence at the highest rate than any other racial or ethnic group.⁷⁵ Over 70 percent of this violence is perpetrated by non-Native individuals. Historically, jurisdictional loopholes have left American Indian individuals particularly susceptible to experiencing violence and often uncertain of where to report.⁷⁶

Individuals living on reservations face additional challenges. They are likely to live in poverty, have limited access to transportation, face potential language barriers, and many have limited resources available to them.⁷⁷

Additionally, societal oppression of these individuals has led to a distrust in service agencies, often run by white individuals. Service providers may not have the cultural competency needed to meet the needs of these survivors.⁷⁸

Despite once having a large tribal presence in Illinois, colonization has led to a substantial decrease. Recent measures, show American Indians as less than 1% of Illinois' population, which is reflected in the number of individuals from this community receiving services.⁷⁹

Immigrant Survivors

Currently immigrants account for approximately 19% of the population of the Chicago metropolitan area. In recent years, these individuals have come from numerous countries, but the top 5 countries of origin for immigrants in the area are Mexico, India, Poland, Philippines, and China.

These numbers include naturalized citizens, legal permanent residents, and undocumented immigrants. These individuals hold a wide range of jobs, but the top three fields they hold positions in are housekeeping, metal and plastic work, and packaging.⁸⁰

While factors such as country of origin, citizenship status, and others can play a role in experiencing domestic violence, immigrant individuals often experience higher rates of domestic violence than those who are born in the country.⁸¹ In fact, one study found that 51 percent of victims of domestic violence related homicides were immigrant individuals.⁸² Providers reported seeing an increase in immigrant survivors in 2020 compared to 2019. There was an increase in housing advocacy, counseling, economic assistance, and direct cash support for these individuals.⁸³

In addition to experiencing higher rates of violence, immigrant individuals often have different experiences stemming from their immigration status. Their cultures may have differing levels of acceptance of domestic violence, less access to services, language barriers, or the incorrect belief that legal protections apply to them. These factors create barriers to services. Illinois service providers identified immigrant individuals as one of the underserved groups throughout the state for this reason.⁸⁴

This section will provide an overview of the unique experiences of immigrant survivors in Illinois, bringing data from service providers who work with large portions of immigrant survivors and from survivors themselves.

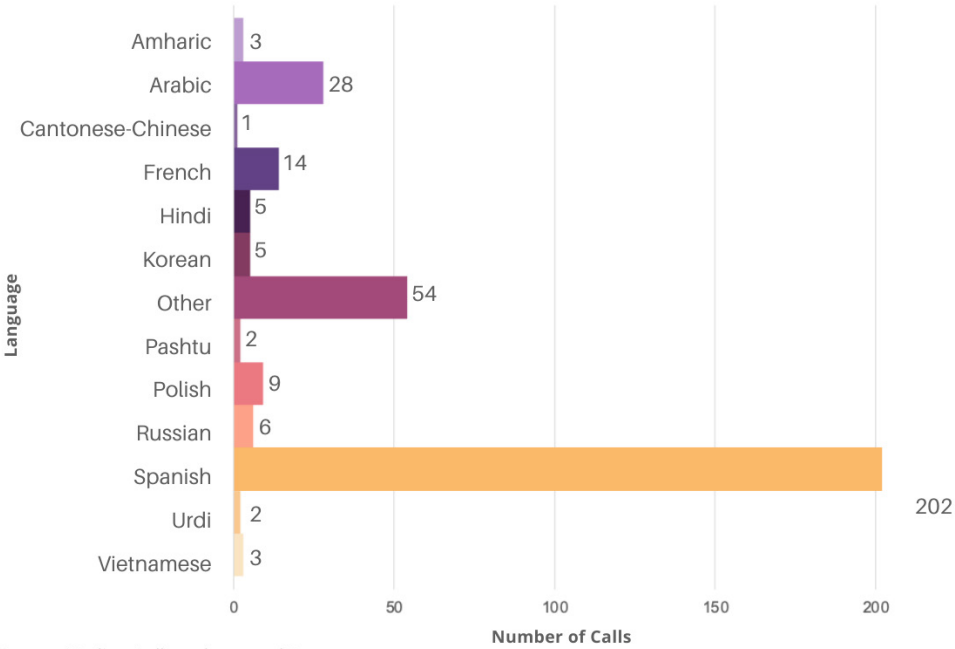
LANGUAGE BARRIERS

One of the major challenges facing immigrant survivors is language barriers.

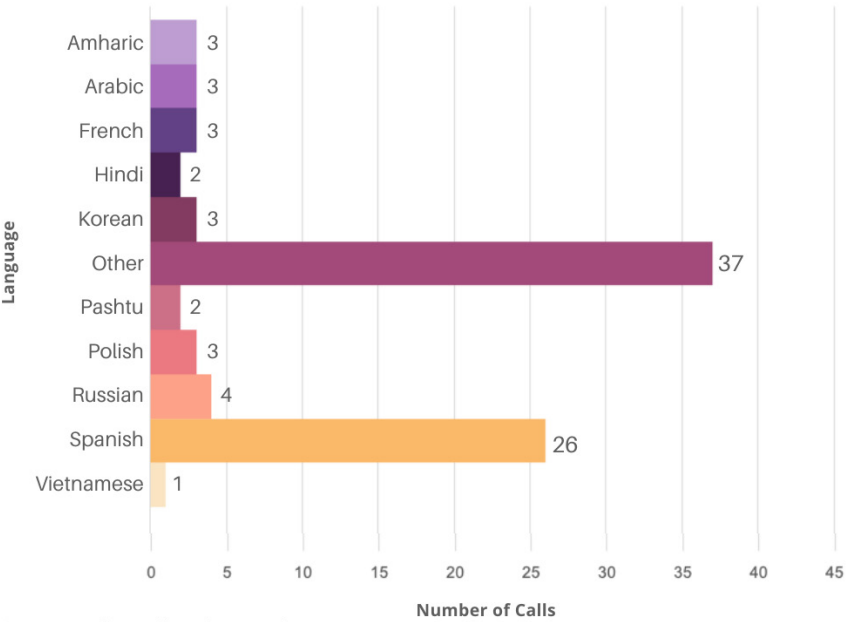
Survivors who have limited English proficiency may not be able find services that meet their language needs. This can prevent immigrant survivors from leaving their relationships, if they feel they have nowhere to go.⁸⁵

Service providers work to accommodate language needs, but there are numerous languages spoken throughout the state. Below are the languages spoken by individuals who called the Hotline in 2020.⁸⁶ Many individuals, however, may not be aware that the Hotline can accommodate their language needs and chose not to call, despite efforts by the Hotline to promote these services.

Languages for Services in 2020: Illinois



Languages for Services in 2020: Chicago



Local services providers described the issues finding interpretation services for survivors. In the courts, translators are required for those who need them, but often this right is not fully accorded, leaving survivors with limited access to justice. Translation services are not sufficient and clients can be misrepresented.⁸⁷

Accessing government resources can be particularly challenging. Even with an understanding of English, the system can be very difficult to navigate. Many government organizations have translator services that do not accommodate all of languages spoken by clients. Providers also report having difficulty finding interpreters in time for meetings. This limits the ability of service providers to explain options to clients and meet the cultural needs of these individuals.⁸⁸

ROLE OF IMMIGRATION STATUS

“I felt scared most of my life growing up in the US.”

— SURVIVOR

Unfortunately, a survivor’s status as an immigrant can be used as a way for their partner to maintain power over them. Individuals who cause harm may threaten deportation or inhibit their immigration procedures.⁸⁹ One study showed that 48% of Latina immigrants report an increase in violence after moving to the US.⁹⁰

“He threatened that he would call immigration on my family.”

— SURVIVOR

Illinois service providers reported that their clients often felt isolated and threatened. When immigrant individuals arrive in the US, they need to build new support systems. Building this community can be extremely challenging, especially with rising hate crimes against many immigrant populations. Providers reported hearing their clients were afraid to go out into the community. They were afraid to go into public spaces, due to fear of deportation and physical or verbal abuse from racist individuals.⁹¹ Immigrants may also fear that receiving services would jeopardize their immigration procedures. This fear often makes them hesitant to seek medical and social services.

“The violence began after her husband received a green card; he said “I don’t need you anymore.”

— SURVIVOR

CASE STUDY 4

Sara* came to the United States on a tourist visa. While she was here, Sara discovered she was pregnant; she decided to stay in the United States with the father of her child.

She moved in with a relative in Chicago after that relationship turned violent, but the relative abused Sara’s trust by sexually assaulting her.

With the assistance of a service provider social worker, Sara was able to sort through her assault-related medical bills, cooperate in the successful prosecution of the assailant, and connect with much-needed housing support and counseling resources. Sara now spends most of her time working to support herself and her child.

Since the pandemic began, Sara has had to spend almost all of her income on rent and childcare. During a single month in 2020, Sara lost several days of wages—first, when her employer shut down for a COVID-related cleaning, and second, when she had

to quarantine while awaiting COVID test results. Sara knew her employer was treating her unfairly and possibly illegally by denying her paid sick leave, but she felt she could not afford to complain and risk losing her job. Sara fell behind on rent and childcare payments.

Although she received rental assistance in the form of a one-time grant from a neighborhood housing non-profit, Sara continues to live month-to-month; she remains very concerned about getting sick at work and making ends meet.

The service provider has filed a U-Visa application for Sara. Approval of Sara’s U-Visa application will enable her to achieve greater stability for herself and her child.

** All names changed*

2020 REPORT

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Service providers reported that many of their immigrant clients struggle with lack of employment opportunities. Non-citizen individuals struggle to find work, especially if they have limited English proficiency.⁹²

Many clients may not have worked prior to the relationship, leaving them with little to no experience when they try to support their families. Many will take on low paying jobs such as housekeeping or babysitting. The inability to become financially independent forces individuals to stay in violent relationships longer. When the individuals who cause harm recognize this limitation, they may increase use of violence.⁹³

When immigrant survivors do find work, often it conflicts with school schedules. They are unlikely to be able to afford childcare and do not have social networks to rely on.⁹⁴

Service providers have seen these problems increase over the past year. Like many, survivors faced job loss and economic hardship.⁹⁵



ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

Another common theme amongst reports from service providers serving immigrant survivors, was that these survivors often need economic assistance.⁹⁶

Clients who are undocumented can't receive public benefits. They do not have access to many economic and rental assistance programs, which often require social security numbers. Even documented immigrants often struggle paying the bills and face food shortages.⁹⁷

Often, due to language barriers, the person causing harm will have control over financial documents and may even open a credit card in the survivor's name. Many clients come to service providers with large amounts of debt and low credit for this reason.⁹⁸

Many immigrant survivors do not have financial literacy because their former partner or their families have made all the financial decisions previously.

“Financial dependence on their abuser is one of the biggest reasons why our clients go back to living with their abusers.”

— SERVICE PROVIDER

Survivors who are undocumented or otherwise unauthorized to work in the United States have been hit especially hard by the economic fallout from the pandemic. Many are essential workers and have contracted or are highly vulnerable to COVID-19, do not have paid sick leave or vacation, and may be single-parent earners. Not only are such survivors typically ineligible for unemployment insurance due to their immigration status, but they are also ineligible for federal stimulus payments and other pandemic relief efforts.⁹⁹



LEGAL SERVICES

Many individuals need services specifically related to their immigration. In particular, service providers report high demand for assistance with U-Visas in addition to their typical family law services.

Places that offer free legal services often won't take complicated asylum/undocumented cases, which forces many non-citizen clients to seek private attorneys. In many cases, clients became undocumented after their partners refused to sign paperwork or did not provide transportation to their citizenship interviews. Applying for citizenship or asylum is extremely costly, and that is without the additional legal charges an immigration attorney requests. Many clients have to pay for these expenses out of pocket and often struggle to find the money or abandon the process when they cannot afford it.¹⁰⁰

Many other clients are seeking legal services connected to their relationships such as seeking divorce, child support, or orders of protection. Some clients are manipulated into dropping charges against their partners, or people from the community intervene saying that they should not want to "ruin" their lives. Many clients cannot afford divorce attorneys if pro bono services are not provided, so they do not pursue a divorce or they want to get divorced but cannot due to immigration status being tied to their marriage. Survivors often face difficulty accessing courts because of lack of government identification.¹⁰¹

FEAR OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

“Here I'm afraid to say anything.”

— SURVIVOR

“Anything I say is going to be used against me.”

— SURVIVOR

Often immigrant survivors do not trust law enforcement and are fearful of contacting the police. They may not call due to language barriers or fear of repercussions against them, most often deportation. Undocumented survivors may not call, not only for their own safety, but for fear of repercussions against their spouse and family. Providers reported clients not wanting to call because they did not want the father of their child deported.¹⁰²

“For Arab American and Muslim women, calling the police is a shame.”

— ITEDAL SHALABI, ARAB AMERICAN FAMILY SERVICES

When survivors do call the police, or perhaps a neighbor calls, they often report negative interactions. Law enforcement are not trained adequately on domestic violence and do not always respond appropriately. Officers often will wrongfully rely on the person causing harm or the children in a household to translate. This can lead to survivors being criminalized or inaction. Survivors have even reported being charged with kidnapping for trying to take their children away from violent homes.¹⁰³

“If they have immigration work, they're not going to jeopardize that and call the police.”

— SERVICE PROVIDER

“A lot of times we have situations where a husband had a scratch, he spoke better English, and [the survivor] was arrested.”

— SERVICE PROVIDER

CULTURAL MISUNDERSTANDINGS

“He would tell me ‘This is how you raise a family; I’m allowed to do this.’”

— SURVIVOR

Immigrant survivors may not understand the culture and laws in the US. Those causing harm will lie to them and convince them that the violence is acceptable. Arab American Family Services specifically shared the challenges their clients face connected to their faith. Many of their clients will seek Islamic rights for their divorce, not recognizing that the US court system does not follow the divorce rules in Islam.¹⁰⁴

Survivors who do seek out services, may not be able to find service providers with cultural understanding or face larger institutions that are not culturally competent. Services may be translated by an external provider, but the cultural understanding of a survivor’s lived experiences is missing. Service providers need to understand the cultural, religious, and family systems of the survivors they serve. Mental health services, in particular, often do not account for the specific challenges immigrants face including the traumatic events they may have faced when coming to the US or escaping violence in their native countries. Many culturally specific service providers have formed to meet these needs, but they are unable to provide services to all who need them.¹⁰⁵

DCFS INVOLVEMENT

“I called the police and DCFS showed up.”

— SURVIVOR

“Abuser speaks better English than the woman. She will go to visit family back home and he will report her, or family will report her, to say that she is abandoning the children.”

— SERVICE PROVIDER

Threats towards children are often used in domestic violence relationships by one parent to hold power over the other. When survivors are unaware of the cultural norms in the US, these threats are more common. For example, one service provider reported a client taking antidepressants being called “crazy” by her husband and threatening to call DCFS. Commonly, survivors fear the loss of their children and their partners will use this to prevent reports against them. They will say “If you report me, I will tell DCFS that you hit the children and they will take the children away no questions asked.” For Middle Eastern North African (MENA) communities, those causing harm will threaten to send the children back to the MENA region, where the Hague Convention does not apply.¹⁰⁶

Unfortunately, DCFS often does become involved in cases involving immigrant survivors. This can occur due to differing cultural norms, such as leaving children alone while going to work. When survivors call the police or attempt to access court services, DCFS often becomes involved. All interviewed survivors who had called the police in response to the violence they were experiencing reported a DCFS investigation following the call.¹⁰⁷

These allegations of neglect or abuse stood contrast to the common concern survivors expressed in interviews with Network staff for this report. Interviewing many of these individuals over Zoom, Network staff witnessed the care and concern for these children directly through the screen.

One survivor speaking about her kids described them as nice and good kids. She said **“I raised them.”**

“My main concern was that he couldn’t get to the kids or hurt them.”

— SURVIVOR

“I just want to make sure my daughter is safe and stays safe.”

— SURVIVOR

HOW SERVICE PROVIDERS HELP

Despite the challenges, service providers are able to provide a great deal of assistance to survivors. Even survivors who have studied English struggle with the court system. Service providers help provide translation. They also provide transportation, financial support, counseling, housing support, and other services.

One survivor talked about having to start her career over after her divorce. She was working minimum wage jobs, but KAN-WIN provided her housing, allowing her to finish her degree. She wants to make sure everyone knows about KAN-WIN “it really turned [my] life 360”. It helped her to process the trauma she experienced after the divorce. She hopes one day to contribute to KAN-WIN and be able to help other survivors like her.¹⁰⁸

“KAN-WIN has been like a family.”

Other survivors reported receiving assistance with managing cases with DCFS, going through divorce procedures, and connecting to other services. They find support and community.

WORK TO BE DONE

Despite the great work done by many service providers, there is still much work to be done.

When one survivor was asked if there were any services she could have received to help prevent the violence she responded with a resounding “oh yes.”¹⁰⁹

A common theme amongst survivors was not knowing what services exist. One survivor reported feeling that if she had known where she could go that she wouldn’t have stayed. There needs to be more targeted outreach to immigrant communities. The Network, with funding from private philanthropy, developed and ran a digital, bilingual outreach campaign on behalf of domestic and sexual violence service providers in the greater Cook County area. This campaign succeeded in connecting users to service providers throughout the area, with the Spanish language ads having a higher engagement rate than the ads in English. Consistent and wide-ranging public engagement across all communities is necessary in ensuring all survivors who need and want services can access them safely.

Additionally, survivors still face barriers when attempting to secure benefits. Survivors reported needed additional assistance parenting, managing finances, and connecting to a supportive community. One survivor reported calling a lot of organizations before she found one that could help.¹¹⁰



Violence in the LGBTQ+ Community

Another population that faces unique challenges when seeking services for domestic and sexual violence are those in the LGBTQ+ community. Similar to other groups discussed, LGBTQ+ individuals were identified as underserved in IL.¹¹¹ Many LGBTQ+ individuals will not reach out to service providers due to lack of cultural competency.¹¹²

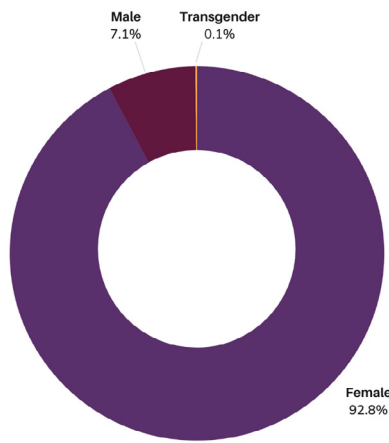


GENDER IDENTITY/EXPRESSION

The following graphs provide the gender breakdown of callers to the Hotline based on calls and texts. In 2020, **92% of calls in Illinois and 93% of all Chicago callers to the hotline identified as female.** In both Illinois and Chicago, less than 8% of callers identified as male. Female identified callers have been more represented in previous years as well, constituting around 94-95% of hotline calls in 2017, 2018, and 2019.¹¹³ National trends confirm the disproportionate impact of relationship violence on female identified individuals, with one survey indicating **25% of women compared to 11% of men in the U.S. have experienced IPV at some point in their lifetime.**¹¹⁴

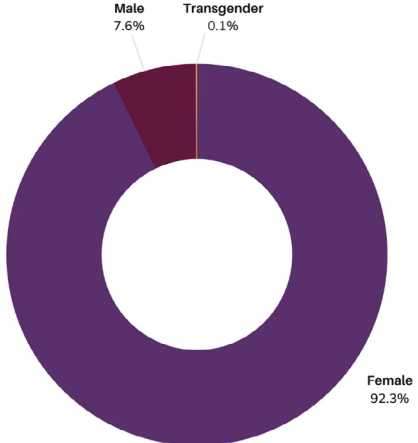
That said, the gender composition based on data from the Hotline data does not necessarily provide an accurate representation of the gender characteristics of all survivors. At the hotline, information about gender identity was collected from less than half of all Illinois calls (43%) in 2020.¹¹⁵ While this information is not requested on every call, callers may also not feel safe reporting the information if asked. Safety concerns around reporting are particularly pronounced for survivors who identify as trans or gender-nonconforming (TGNC). The gender categories provided may also not match callers' gender identity/expression, with some TGNC survivors being denied or simply not feeling comfortable accessing certain services at all.¹¹⁶ Despite accounting for less than 0.1% of calls to the hotline, IPV is significant if not more prevalent for TGNC individuals. One national survey found that over half (54%) of trans respondents had experienced IPV at some point in their lives.¹¹⁷ Another study found trans survivors experience IPV or dating violence at even higher rates, at more than 31% for trans people compared to 20% of cisgender people.¹¹⁸ Given the multitude of obstacles facing trans survivors, the data reported here may ultimately capture how services are not being accessed by survivors who do not identify as cisgender.

Percentage of survivors who called Hotline by gender in 2020: Illinois



Source: Hotline (calls and texts only)
Notes: Percentage based on only 31.2% (3,668) of all Chicago texts and calls (11,754).

Percentage of survivors who called Hotline by gender in 2020: Chicago



Source: Hotline (calls and texts only)
Notes: Percentage based on only 43.3% (12,557) of all Illinois texts and calls (29,116).

The TGNC community often faces work discrimination and struggle to find trans affirming job opportunities. They also fear violence in the community. Transgender individuals may have their status as a transgender individual used against them by their partner with threats of outing, misgendering, and additional threats and intimidation.¹¹⁹

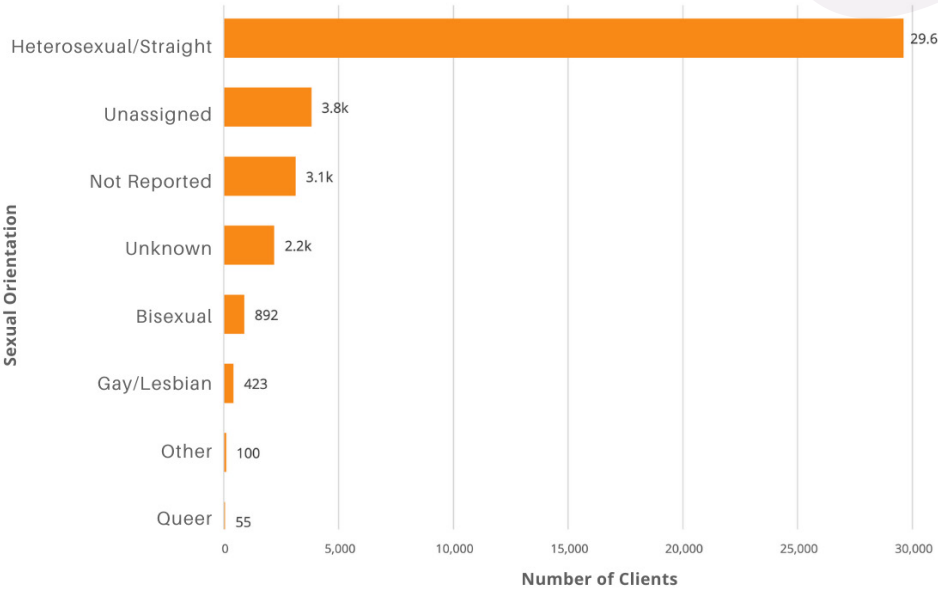
2020 was the deadliest year for transgender and gender non confirming individuals. These victims were disproportionately Black trans women, many facing intersections of domestic violence and anti-trans violence.¹²⁰ This increase in violence against these individuals has highlighted the need for more culturally specific services including acceptance and commitment therapy, and trans and gender non-conforming therapy groups.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

InfoNet gathers data on sexual orientation. In 2020, **74% of clients identified as heterosexual/straight**. For almost one fourth of clients (23%), sexual orientation was *unknown, unassigned*, or not reported. According to data provided, only **1% of clients reported identifying as gay/lesbian**, with **2% identified as bisexual**, **0.1% identified as queer**.

Violence within queer relationships has been historically invisible and unrecognized in mainstream domestic violence-related discourse. However, research has shown violence within queer relationships occurs at rates equal or higher than among straight couples.^{121 122} According to a national survey by the CDC, queer female identified individuals experience higher levels of IPV in their lifetime compared to heterosexual women, with ‘bisexual women’ experiencing IPV at disproportionate levels.¹²³ While data from InfoNet provides an informative representation of survivors who received services in 2020, it is important to note that it is not necessarily representative of the reality and prevalence of IPV in all communities. LGBTQ+ survivors are less likely to report the violence they experience due to fears of disbelief.¹²⁴ When these survivors do reach out for services, they are more likely to pursue services at a culturally specific service provider. Of the providers who provide culturally specific services for LGBTQ+ individuals, only one utilized InfoNet.

Sexual Orientation, 2020



Source: InfoNet Data System, ICJIA and domestic violence service providers

Conclusion and Recommendation

As highlighted in this report, gender-based violence is a pervasive issue throughout Illinois.

While service providers work hard to meet the needs of survivors, there are still substantial gaps that remain. In order to help fill these gaps and strengthen the response system, **The Network has the following recommendations:**



ADEQUATELY FUND SERVICES TO INCREASE CAPACITY

Nationally, only 18% of domestic violence survivors receive victim services.¹²⁵ Given that 47,200 survivors received services last year in Illinois, this would indicate that there were an additional 262,200 survivors in the state who never did. In order to expand the reach of service provision, Illinois must increase its investment in these services. Survivors should not be turned away from services. Funding must be provided to ensure that this does not happen. Services that work to address both short-term and long-term support for survivors must be fully funded.



INCREASE AND PROMOTE COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES

This report demonstrated the fact that many survivors do not know their rights or understand what services are available to them. Funding should be allocated to support programs that target underserved populations. Connecting to these individuals and providing services can not only help them leave violent situations but can help to prevent severe violence.



SUPPORT PREVENTION PROGRAMMING

The Network seeks an end to gender-based violence. This goal requires the support of prevention efforts. This report has highlighted the prevalence of domestic violence and the unfortunate increase in incidents resulting from the pandemic. Current prevention efforts including educational programs should be expanded and supported. Additionally, new prevention methods must continue to be explored. For many survivors, prevention comes from receiving basic services before violence begins.



EXPAND DEFINITIONS OF SAFETY

We must continue to expand what it means to provide safety to survivors. As shown in this report, traditional models of public safety, particularly those that rely on law enforcement, do not work for many survivors. Therefore, many survivors do not engage in these systems. These survivors deserve assistance and need someone to call in times of crisis. Gender-based violence service providers must look for ways to separate from law enforcement and provide for these survivors. Chicago and Illinois must invest in alternative solutions.



EXPAND CULTURALLY COMPETENT PROGRAMS AND DEVELOPMENT

This report has also demonstrated the need for more culturally specific programs. While all communities experience gender-based violence, access to resources and programming looks different for different communities. Some of the populations with the highest likelihood of experiencing domestic violence also experience the most barriers to service. Service providers must work with these communities directly to break down these barriers. Supporting these survivors also means investing in the communities themselves and uplifting the resources within them. While community based and specific services are necessary and essential, all advocates and providers in Illinois should be able to effectively engage with all survivors in their community. The State of Illinois should extend the Healing Illinois and Racial Equity funding to support professional development and accountability in gender-based violence services.

How Do Survivors Define Safety?



Source: Network membership survey, 2021.

ENDNOTES

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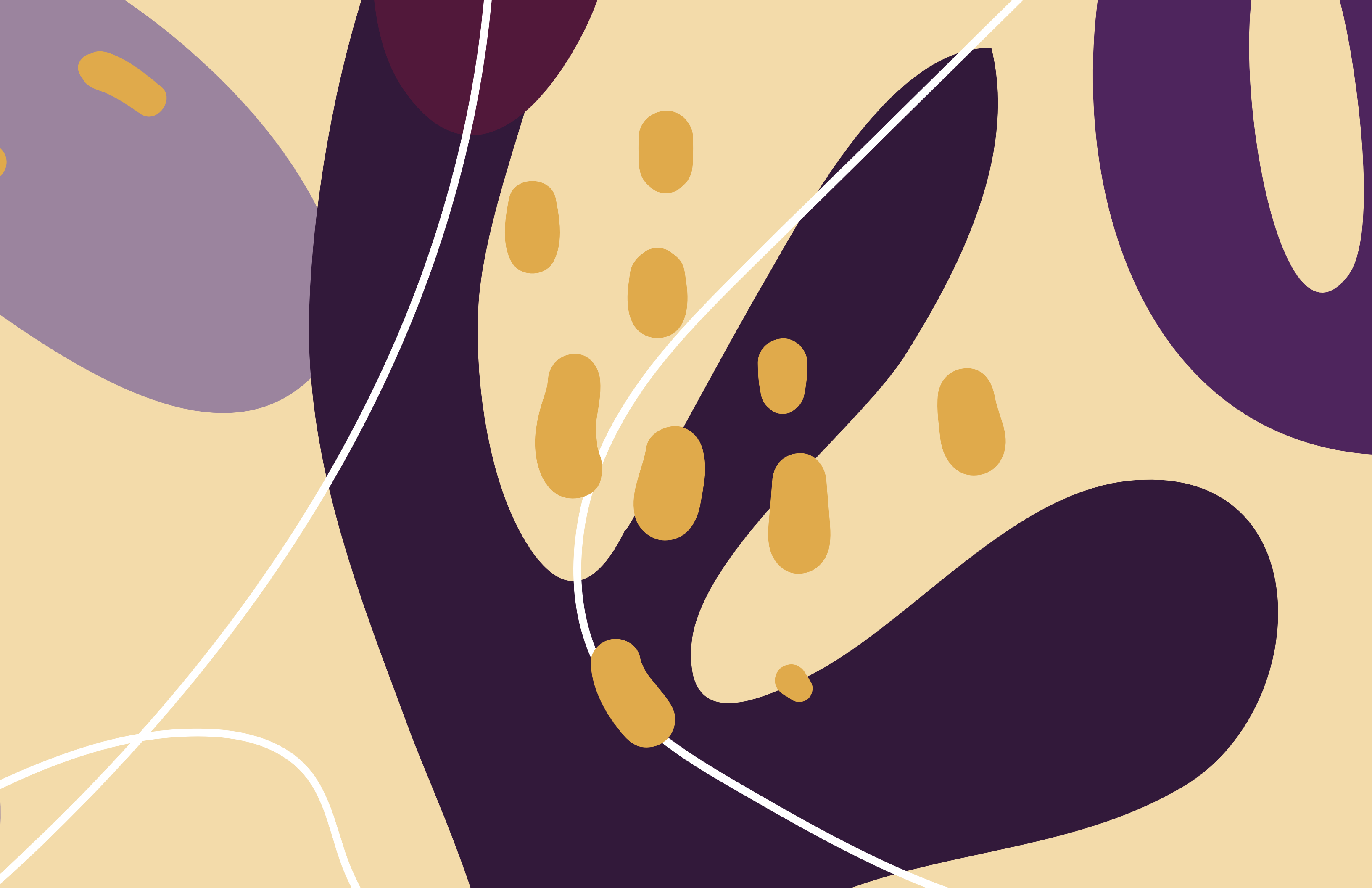
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