



# **2011** **GEORGIA** **DOMESTIC** **VIOLENCE** **FATALITY** **REVIEW** **ANNUAL REPORT**

Georgia Commission on Family Violence  
Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence



# how to use this report

## the basics

**CONTENTS** pages are divided into **DATA** (charts) and **NARRATIVE** (essays)

**NARRATIVE** portion is divided into **9 MODULES**

2011 report EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

about ESCALATING FACTORS

about the GEORGIA CRIME VICTIMS  
COMPENSATION PROGRAM FUNDS

about WOMEN'S USE OF VIOLENCE

about KEY FINDINGS...a Snapshot

about DV in the WORKPLACE

about FAITH FOLLOW-UP

about ROLL CALL TRAININGS

about IMPLEMENTING CHANGE

## pressed for time?

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** orients you  
to the 2011 Report and provides an overview: page 4

**SCAN REPORT FOR BOLD TEXT:** major points,  
take-home messages, and conclusions

**KEY POINTS** are noted in **DATA** section;  
significant findings are highlighted in chart notes

**TEAROUT on TECHNOLOGY-RELATED VICTIM SAFETY**  
is a perforated page at the back of this report, with USEFUL  
information, resources, and reminders to post or pass along

executive  
summary

escalating  
factors

crime victim  
compensation

women's use  
of violence

key findings  
2004-2011

DV in the  
workplace

faith  
follow-up

roll call  
trainings

implementing  
change



## charts

*answer questions about location, gender, employment, income, cause of death, witnesses, perpetrators' behaviors, prosecution outcome, age at time of homicide, and agencies involved*

Data	
Chart 1: Domestic Violence Deaths in Georgia by County 2003-2010	35
<i>How Many Died from Domestic Violence in Each Georgia County by Year?</i>	
Chart 2: Gender, Employment, and Income in Cases Reviewed 2004-2011	36
<i>What Was the Gender of the Victims and Perpetrators, How Were Both Employed, What Were Their Sources of Support?</i>	
Chart 3: Types of Incidents in Cases Reviewed 2004-2011	36
<i>Was It a Single Homicide, a Suicide, or Were Others Killed or Hurt?</i>	
Chart 4: Cause of Death in Cases Reviewed 2004-2011	37
<i>How Were the Victims Killed?</i>	
Chart 5: Who Else Was Present or a Witness to the Fatality in Cases Reviewed 2004-2011	37
<i>Who Else Was There When It Happened?</i>	
Chart 6: Perpetrator's History as Known by the Community in Cases Reviewed 2004-2011	38
<i>What Was the Perpetrator's Behavioral or Criminal History?</i>	
Chart 7: Victim's Age (When Known) When Relationship Began in Cases Reviewed 2004-2011	38
<i>How Old Was the Victim When This Lethal Relationship Began?</i>	
Chart 8: Details of Investigation and Prosecution Outcomes of Cases Reviewed 2004-2011	39
<i>What Was the End Result of Contacts with 911 and Law Enforcement?</i>	
Chart 9: Victim and Perpetrator Ages at Time of Homicide in Cases Reviewed 2004-2011	39
<i>What Proportion of Victims and Perpetrators Were in Each Age Range at Death?</i>	
Chart 10: Agencies and Services Involved with Victims or Perpetrators in the Five Years Prior to the Fatalities in Cases Reviewed 2004-2011	40
<i>Which Agencies and Services Interacted with Victims and/or Perpetrators?</i>	

**About methodology:** Please refer to page 33, inside back cover, and prior reports for methodology notes of case reviews.  
**About previous reports:** Copies of this report and all previously published reports can be downloaded online from the following websites: [www.gcfv.org](http://www.gcfv.org), [www.gcadv.org](http://www.gcadv.org), [www.fatalityreview.com](http://www.fatalityreview.com)



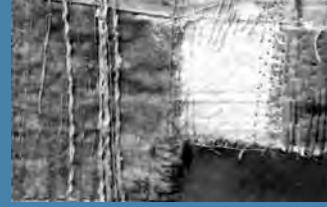
**essays** *frame problems, describe processes, reveal trends, note system failures, offer practical guidance, explore resources, examine solutions, and disclose best practices*

Narrative	
Executive Summary	4
Escalating Factors & Vignettes	5
The Intersection of Child Support Issues and Domestic Violence	5
2011 New Resources & Where to Get Them	12
The Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program Funds	13
What You Can Do to Help Link Survivors with the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program	19
Women's Use of Violence	20
Georgia Fatality Review Key Findings 2004-2011	22
Domestic Violence in the Workplace	23
Faith Follow-Up	24
Roll Call Training	26
Implementing Change	30
Fatality Review Methodology	33
Dedication	34
TEAROUT: Basic Technology-Related Safety Tips: Please Tear Out and Post or Pass Along	41
Acknowledgements	42





# executive summary



You have in your hands the 2011 Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project Annual Report. We invite you to use this report as a tool for change in your community. This eighth annual report contains information of value to all Georgia communities, whether or not they have participated in the Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project (the Project). Eight years of fatality reviews have generated our road map for change; we have identified unmistakable trends, learned universal lessons, and we continue to make clear recommendations for necessary change.

Fatality review is an in-depth examination of domestic violence-related deaths; this process exposes and illuminates the gaps in community response to domestic violence (DV). Fatality review leads to recommendations for change in services, resources, policy, practice, information, collaboration, and training with the purpose of preventing future incidents of DV and DV-related deaths. Since the Project began in 2004, 20 communities across the state have partnered with the Project to form Fatality Review Teams, courageously undertaking the complex task of evaluating their system's response to DV.

We begin our 2011 report with the topic of **escalating factors**, tracing the most pressing situational or environmental factors that influence abusers to take extreme and lethal measures. Loss of economic stability, the decline of the perpetrator's health, and the perceived or real imminent loss of intimate relationships may all **escalate the risk of a DV fatality**. The intersection of child support and DV issues merits its own subsection, which explains the unique and special risks to victims who must navigate this system.

The Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program offers survivors of DV-related crimes financial assistance following attacks or fatalities. This program's goal is to connect eligible family members and survivors with the financial remedies earmarked for exactly such use. **This section clearly explains who is eligible, what services are covered and**

**for whom, and the limits of funding.** The maximum payout is \$25,000 per eligible person, and application guidelines are provided. Stories of those who lacked this support and those who have received support are included.

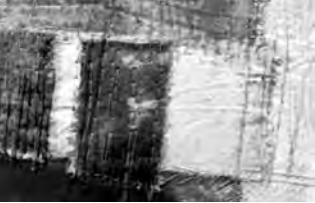
When women engage in DV, police, prosecutors, judges, advocates and corrections may all react to her violent acts in a way that endangers her more. There are solid reasons why DV advocates view women's violence as a gendered issue: women's increased risk of injury, negative health outcomes, impaired economic independence, and fatality. Closest to the victims, they tend to see DV as a social problem that is deeply situated in our cultures, but executed by choice on the part of the perpetrator. Because of our commitment to creating safer lives for DV victims, we begin, in 2012 to analyze cases that will further our understanding of women's use of violence.

2011 held advances for three topical areas highlighted in last year's report: dealing with **DV in faith communities, DV in the workplace, and law enforcement Roll Call trainings**. All three topics return, with details on extending and implementing previous years' findings. Finally, real changes have been implemented in the field as a direct result of the Fatality Review work undertaken by multiple groups around Georgia; see the "Implementing Change" section for details.

As in recent reports, we include a useful tearout in the back of this report; this is a postable or pass-along sheet of **tips on technology-related issues** that may affect victim safety.

**As always, the first purpose of this report is to increase safety for all victims of domestic violence in Georgia.**





## 8 YEARS OF FATALITY REVIEW: TRENDS IN ESCALATING FACTORS IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMICIDES

To gain better insight and understanding regarding the lives of domestic violence (DV) victims and perpetrators, we recently reexamined all 86 fatalities and near-fatalities reviewed by fatality review teams in Georgia since the Project's beginning in 2004. We identified a number of trends in exacerbating factors leading up to DV homicides and near-homicides in Georgia. While these factors were not always present in the cases we have reviewed, they are important components of the discussion on DV; they speak to the necessity of holistically reviewing the lives of both DV victims and perpetrators.

DV is always a choice made by the perpetrator, but it is important to recall that we are complex beings influenced by a variety of elements in our lives. Many factors affect an individual's decision to act with violence against their partner. When looking to explain (not excuse) DV fatalities and near-fatalities, we consider the environment within which the perpetrators and victims are operating, the context of their actions, and their intentions. **What are the perpetrators experiencing in their lives that could be contributing to their sense of vulnerability and need to gain or regain control?** To increase effective safety planning with victims of DV, it is imperative to explore and understand what is happening in the lives of some perpetrators that could affect their behaviors and choices. In this way, we may identify new lethality factors.

### LOSS EXPERIENCED BY PERPETRATORS

In our review, we isolated three **perpetrator-based** situational or environmental factors that seem to have escalated the risk of a DV fatality:

- ❶ felt loss of financial or economic stability
- ❷ felt loss of health
- ❸ felt loss of intimate relationships

While these experiences of loss are not the causes of DV, they can exacerbate abuse in a relationship.

### Loss of Economic Stability

In this current economy, many families and individuals are experiencing the pressure of higher living expenses and lower or stagnant income. The added stress of financial difficulties in families and dating relationships can affect a perpetrator's use or increased use of physical violence or other controlling behaviors within a relationship. DV is more than three times as likely to occur when couples are experiencing high levels of financial strain as when they are experiencing low levels of financial strain (Benson & Fox, 2002). Women whose male partners experienced two or more periods of unemployment over a five-year study were almost three times as likely to be victims of intimate violence as were women whose partners were in stable jobs (Benson & Fox, 2004).

In Georgia's 81 reviewed fatalities:

- ▶ 14 perpetrators were unemployed at the time of the homicide
- ▶ Four perpetrators had part-time employment at the time of the homicide
- ▶ Two perpetrators were disabled at the time of the homicide
- ▶ 14 perpetrators had unknown employment at the time of the homicide

### THE INTERSECTION OF CHILD SUPPORT ISSUES AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Economic dependence is a reality in the lives of many survivors who remain with or return to an abusive partner because they cannot survive financially without them. For these survivors, access to money and resources means safety and financial independence from their abuser. Connecting survivors with the Division of Child Support Services (DCSS), Georgia's state child support agency, can be a positive step toward economic security and can ensure that survivors and their children have access to the economic resources that they need. Child support can offer survivors and their children the financial means necessary to separate from the abusive partner without the risks of poverty.



However, filing for child support may put survivors at risk of retribution from their abusive partners. Child support requires a parent to provide for their child or children financially, and may add increased financial responsibilities to the perpetrator's possibly strained financial situation. It may also signal to the perpetrator that they are losing control over the survivor and their child or children. Perpetrators may retaliate against efforts to establish paternity, the involvement of DCSS in their lives, or possible enforcement actions. Perpetrators may gain access to a survivor's whereabouts through the child support process and thus gain access to their children. Threats to seek custody of children may also escalate.

There are serious advantages and disadvantages to engaging the child support system in Georgia that must be evaluated. Each survivor faces varying levels of risk and must individually weigh their safety against child support benefits. For survivors to remain safe during this complex decision process, they need to be informed about options, resources, and confidentiality protections available to them when applying for child support. Survivors should know that paternity must be established if the parents were not married at the time of any child's birth, and that attendance at court proceedings may be required. Usually, court papers with names and addresses of both parents may be sent to each party, and a range of enforcement strategies may be employed to secure child support payments. Thus, the risk of violence could be increased through the child support process. **Advocates should help survivors understand the process and incorporate any risks into safety planning.**

For examples of how state child support programs are collaborating with other agencies and organizations to prevent family violence, please see: ***Promoting Child Well-Being & Family Self-Sufficiency: Family Violence Collaboration***, Child Support Fact Sheet Series Number 7, published by the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/pubs/factsheets/child\\_support/family\\_violence\\_collaboration.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/pubs/factsheets/child_support/family_violence_collaboration.pdf)

### Loss of Physical Health

Diagnosis of a life-threatening illness or suffering a physical injury can affect a perpetrator emotionally and physically. When experiencing physical illness, perpetrators may have feelings of depression, rage, and fear. Illness may reduce a perpetrator's sense of security and safety; their feelings of productivity may be threatened. Eventually, the effects of physical illness can lead to clinical depression, exacerbating a DV situation. **From past fatality reviews, families and friends observed the perpetrators' depressed behaviors before the homicide in about 30% of cases.**

Examining Georgia's 86 reviewed fatalities and near-fatalities for perpetrator's physical illnesses or health concerns that could be related to the homicide, we found the following:

- 10 perpetrators (12%) suffered a physical illness and/or had health concerns at the time of the homicide. These physical illnesses ranged in types and severity: a heart attack, surgery to remove a brain tumor 3 years prior to the homicide, diabetes, cirrhosis of the liver, cancer, and paralysis resulting from an auto accident.

### Loss of Intimate Relationships

Victims are at the highest risk of being killed by their abusive partners when they separate from them; both rates and seriousness of physical abuse increase during periods of separation or divorce (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). When examining DV fatalities and near-fatalities in Georgia, this is supported by the stories of many of the victims in cases we have reviewed.

Even when a victim's desire to leave is not spoken aloud, any increase in their behaviors or steps to gain independence may signal loss to their partner, placing the victim at high risk for violence. Many victims had mentioned to a family member, friend, or co-worker that they were considering leaving their abusive partner.



Taking a new job, increasing social activities, saving money, and changing locks on doors can all signal to a DV perpetrator that the victim is serious about leaving and is actively taking steps to separate from them.

In Georgia's 86 reviewed fatalities and near-fatalities:

- ▶ 34 victims had ended their relationship with their abusive partner or had made steps to leave their partner
- ▶ 13 victims had told someone in their lives that they were considering leaving their abusive partner
- ▶ Three victims had begun saving money
- ▶ Three victims had recently started new jobs
- ▶ Three victims had recently attended or had planned to attend a social event the perpetrator did not approve of
- ▶ Two victims had recently begun socializing with a new group of friends

## PERPETRATOR'S ACTION TO RE/GAIN CONTROL

When the perpetrator loses control of their economic or financial situation, their health, or their primary relationship, they may feel intense pain, embarrassment or shame, and loss. When these feelings combine with overarching systems of patriarchy, sexism, and personal beliefs about gender roles, power, and control, the perpetrator may target their partner in reaction. Even when the victim is not the source of the threat or loss, (it may be a boss, an illness or the economy) perpetrators may choose to assert power over victims in a desperate effort to **gain or regain control**. Fatality reviews show that this compounding of feelings of loss works like a mechanism, a moving part in the life of the perpetrator that may lead to a predictable outcome. Perpetrators escalate their controlling activities by surveilling their partner's actions, sabotaging their partner's work or finances, or disabling their partner's car. Attempts to **assert or reassert dominance** and to control one component of painful, confusing, embarrassing,

or life-altering situations tend to target the victim. Why? Because control over the victim is actually feasible (as opposed to a boss, an illness, or the economy).

## Surveillance, Technological Monitoring, Stalking

Technology can have a profound impact on the lives of both victims and perpetrators of DV. While technology can be very helpful for victims of DV, it can also be used as a tool by some abusers to monitor and stalk their partner's behaviors.

**It is important for advocates and service providers working with victims of DV to be aware of the various ways that technology can be abused by DV perpetrators to stalk their partners.** Please see page 41 for guidance on how to safety plan with victims around technology.

In Georgia's 86 reviewed fatalities and near-fatalities:

- ▶ 56% of perpetrators exhibited monitoring and controlling behaviors
- ▶ Stalking was a known factor in 44% of cases
- ▶ **Eight perpetrators had utilized surveillance and technology to monitor** their partner's activities: recording phone conversations, tape-recording and video recording the victim, placing a baby monitor under the victim's bed, keeping the victim's house "under surveillance," and using a GPS tracking device to track the victim's activities.

## Disabling of Victim's Automobile

Disabling a victim's car is a method that some perpetrators use to control their partner's ability to physically leave a location. The perpetrator may also use their own ability to repair the car as a bargaining tool to further control their partner's actions, as seen in Tiffany's story on page 8.

In Georgia's 86 reviewed fatalities and near-fatalities:

- ▶ Seven perpetrators had disabled their partners' cars prior to the homicide or attempted homicide. Disabled spark plugs were a common method, but tires were cut and sugar was added to gasoline, as well.





*Situational factors can affect perpetrators of DV, leading them to act out to gain or regain control or dominance. These controlling actions can escalate in a fatality, near-fatality and/or suicide.*

## OUTCOME

When these actions do not achieve the sense of control that the perpetrator is looking for, their actions may escalate. For example, disabling a victim's car may delay how and when a victim leaves a situation or the perpetrator, but in many of the reviewed cases, responding law enforcement repaired the car within a few hours. One victim whose car was disabled by her abusive partner was able to gather her belongings and leave the location by foot to seek safety at a neighbor's house.

Similarly, surveillance of a partner's activities allows the perpetrator to know where the victim is and what they are doing, but it cannot keep the victim from doing those activities. Surveillance may influence what a victim does (if they are aware that it is taking place), but it does not take away the victim's ability to engage in activities or go anywhere. The perpetrator's awareness of their partner's actions increases with surveillance and stalking, but the victim still has freedom and control over their actions.

If these controlling actions fail to bring about the perpetrator's intended outcome (control over their partner's behaviors) and do not prevent the victim from moving on with their

life or continuing to work towards achieving independence from their abusive partner, the perpetrator's actions may continue to escalate. We see the intent of the perpetrator's actions shift out of desperation. In a final attempt to control their partner and the circumstances in their life, the perpetrator may use the ultimate act of control and violence to achieve their absolute outcome: fatally attacking his or her partner and possibly him or herself.

## TIFFANY'S STORY\*

Tiffany and Tommy had been married for eight years. Tiffany had a 10-year-old daughter from a previous marriage, and she had been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Tommy was frequently jailed throughout his marriage to Tiffany for non-payment of child support for his two daughters from an earlier marriage.

According to friends and family, Tiffany and Tommy's marriage was rife with conflict and DV. The couple was frequently seen and heard arguing in the front yard. Tommy was very suspicious of Tiffany and fearful that she and "her people" were scheming against him to "take everything he owned," including his small business. He frequently accused Tiffany of having affairs with men from his store. After the homicide, Tommy's family reported that Tommy had audiotaped Tiffany's phone conversations in an effort to document her infidelity.

During an argument, Tiffany called 911 because Tommy had taken a coil from her car and it would not start. Tommy told the officer that he would not replace the coil unless Tiffany talked to him. Tiffany refused and the officer replaced the coil. She filed for a TPO and a divorce that day. Through the TPO, Tommy was ordered to have no contact with Tiffany or her daughter. Tiffany was also given possession of their home and temporary possession of three of their cars. Then, the two reconciled and Tiffany requested that the TPO be dismissed. They continued to live and work together. Eight months later, Tiffany filed for another TPO based on Tommy's verbal and physical abuse; she stated that she was frightened because Tommy owned a gun.



Tommy was charged with simple battery and was incarcerated. Tiffany filed for divorce four days after that. Later that month she asked the court to drop any petitions she had made. A year later, police responded to a domestic dispute regarding Tiffany's sister being at the home, but no arrests were made. Five years later, Tommy and Tiffany separated and Tommy moved out of their home and started living with his family. Tommy told his sister that Tiffany had said she would no longer be working for him at his business and that she had accepted a job with another company. Tommy was fearful that Tiffany would take everything he owned. He had also been summoned to court for non-payment of over \$2,000 in child support to his former wife. Additionally, Tiffany had told Tommy that he had not paid the proper taxes on his business. Within the next few days, Tommy shot and killed Tiffany and Tiffany's daughter. Tommy then shot and killed himself.

#### **ASHLEY'S STORY\***

Ashley and Paul had been married for 25 years and had two children. They were described as private people with no close friends or acquaintances. He was employed outside of the home and she was self-employed. Paul was described by those who knew him as bossy and controlling; he disliked that Ashley was employed, and he routinely called her multiple times during the day. He searched through her car on occasion.

Three years before the homicide, Ashley began disclosing information to her mother about the abuse she was experiencing. Through interviews with family and friends, it was revealed that Ashley had endured several years of verbal abuse and shoving by Paul. Paul was also abusive towards their children, although these allegations were never reported. Neighbors and friends had seen the couple engage in arguments outside of the house, but were unaware of the extent of the problem.

Paul was diagnosed with cancer eight months before the homicide. Ashley had health insurance for the family through her job and when Paul was diagnosed, she decided to

stay with him until the doctors declared him in remission. Paul's brother reported that he spoke with Paul a few weeks before the homicide and that Paul sounded depressed. Paul's family reported that he threatened to commit suicide a number of times after his diagnosis.

Paul was arrested for pushing Ashley to the ground four months after his cancer diagnosis. As well, during the argument, Paul had taken Ashley's checkbook and disabled both of the family cars to keep her from leaving the residence. Ashley worked with the local DV agency and a TPO was issued, ordering Paul to attend a Family Violence Intervention Program (FVIP) while Ashley went to individual counseling.

Paul was living in the basement of their marital house as part of the TPO, allowing him access to the upstairs bathroom one time per day. Paul continuously violated the TPO order, entering the upstairs portion of the house during hours that were not permitted. During this time, Ashley's father removed Paul's rifle, a handgun, and several rounds of ammunition from their residence.

One neighbor reported speaking with Paul just prior to the homicide and that Paul seemed hopeless; he expected to die from his cancer. The neighbor had been told by Ashley around the same time that Paul's cancer was believed to be gone. Family and friends reported that through Ashley's participation in counseling, she had gained confidence in herself and had begun to stand up for herself in her interactions with Paul. Three weeks after Ashley told Paul she wanted a divorce, he shot and killed her in their home, then took his own life.

#### **INCORPORATING THESE FINDINGS INTO SAFETY PLANNING WITH VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

While we do not see these specific controlling behaviors or situations involving loss in all cases of DV-related homicides, Tiffany and Ashley's stories highlight the importance of looking for these factors when safety planning with victims of abuse. We can incorporate findings of these escalating factors into safety



planning conversations with victims and explore their situations for experiences of loss in perpetrators' lives and escalating behaviors of control. Exploring these factors can assist DV advocates, friends and family, law enforcement, other systems involved with the survivors, and the survivors themselves gain a better understanding of the level of risk that they may be subject to and highlight some key factors that may put them at a greater risk of being harmed by their abusive partners.

*\*Pseudonyms used*

Benson, M. L. & Fox, G. L. (2002). *Economic Distress, Community Context and Intimate Violence: An Application and Extension of Social Disorganization Theory, Final Report*. Washington, DC: Department of Justice, NCJ 193434.

Benson & Fox, (2004, September). *When Violence Hits Home: How Economics and Neighborhood Play a Role, Research in Brief*. Washington, DC: Department of Justice, NCJ 205004.

Tjaden, P. & Thoennes, N. (2000, July). *Extent, nature, and consequences of intimate partner violence – Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

## escalating factors vignettes

14 different situations with separate examples  
of escalating factors leading to fatalities

### Loss of Economic Stability

Case # 1: She endured seven years in an abusive relationship, was staying at a DV shelter and working to obtain transitional housing. He had mounting expenses related to legal problems for charges of family violence battery, and child support obligations of over \$400 a month. In an email to her, he told her that he had lost his job and that he would be looking for her. He was awarded temporary possession of their residence in a TPO, but he would not have been able to maintain the residence on

his income alone. She met him for visitation with their son at their residence. He shot her in front of their son before shooting himself. He had been ordered to surrender his firearms through a TPO.

### Child Support

Case # 2: She was employed outside of the home and the mother of two children, one of whom was from this marriage. During this marriage, the couple separated several times, and at the time of the homicide, they were going through a divorce. She filed for a TPO and a divorce after he had left a threatening phone message, warning her to take him seriously and stop playing games “because women have gotten killed or hurt” doing so. The judge heard the phone message; the petition noted that it exhibited both the threat and seriousness of the defendant’s state of mind. Records indicate that the victim was given safety planning information while she was in court that day. However, the TPO was dismissed by the judge at the hearing because of her failure to prove by a preponderance of evidence the allegations in the TPO petition. Two months later, she filed for a child support case against him. Five days after that, on the day of the rule nisi hearing for the child support case, he kidnapped, shot, and killed her before killing himself.

### Loss of Physical Health

Case # 3: A few months before the murder, he had developed diabetes and had early signs of cirrhosis of the liver. His life was in a “downward spiral” and 10 days before the attempted murder and suicide, he was arrested for his fourth DUI.

Case # 4: He was a veteran who had lost his job months before the homicide and was unable to maintain steady employment. He was evicted from their marital residence after she moved out and it was foreclosed on; he blamed her for losing the house. He was diabetic and his health was declining rapidly due to a heart attack he suffered in the months prior to the homicide. He had attempted to commit suicide at least once before and had been admitted to a hospital for treatment of depression and



suicidal ideation. He called her to take him to get his prescriptions filled because he had no transportation. While she was leaving the motel where he was staying, he ran after her into the parking lot, shot and killed her.

Case # 5: He had a history of abusing his previous partners and had a felony history of aggravated assault. After enduring years of physical, emotional, and economic abuse, she filed for a TPO. Then she discovered that he had thyroid disease and so she requested that the TPO be dismissed. A few months later, she filed for another TPO after he attempted to kill her, raped her, and continued to stalk her. Four days after she was granted a 12-month TPO and filed for a divorce, he shot and killed her before killing himself. Her daughter found a letter in the mail the next day notifying the victim that he had been served with the divorce papers and there was a hearing scheduled in Superior Court.

## Loss of Intimate Relationships

Case # 6: The day of the murder, she wanted to go to her pastor's home to watch a sports game. Her pastor stated that she had a secret plan to leave with their three children. According to the batterer, she told him that she wanted to leave him for good that day. She was making far more money than he was and had been saving a lot of money around the time of the homicide.

Case # 7: In the months before she was murdered, she moved back to Atlanta for better employment opportunities and to get away from her abuser. He then began stalking her and came to Atlanta and moved back in with her. Friends reported that she had a plan to leave him. It is believed that he overheard her stating that she was going to leave him and go back to her home state as soon as she got a check she was expecting any day.

Case # 8: According to friends, he got upset with her because she was saving money, which he believed she was doing so that she could leave him. Several weeks before the homicide, she had told others that she planned to ask

him if she could go to an out-of-state wedding with a friend; some speculate this request may have led to her murder. Additionally, she had recently told a friend she was going to leave him because he was not treating her right.

Case # 9: She changed the locks on the door several times in the months prior to her death. She told a friend that he had placed a baby monitor under her bed to eavesdrop on her phone conversations. Two weeks before the homicide, he tried to strangle her. She beat her feet on the floor, alerting her neighbors who called 911. Her leasing manager confirmed seeing red marks on her neck. However, she was afraid to take out a warrant due to possible repercussions. Finally, he gained access to her apartment by rigging the back door; he entered and strangled her.

## Surveillance, Technological Monitoring, Stalking

Case # 10: She had recently filed for divorce and had changed the locks on her doors. She had bought a gun and begun spending a lot of time with her friends during the weeks before her death. He was described as paranoid and was known to record his conversations with people. A day before the homicide, he asked one of his coworkers to drive him to a club in another state where she was going to be with her friends. He had a pistol and a camcorder with him that night. The coworker testified that he had told him he hoped to catch her with another man and use the recording against her in the divorce. He waited outside her house for her to return from the club and then shot her. Conversations he had recorded between them were found after the homicide. He was taking medication for depression at the time of the shooting.

Case # 11: The perpetrator had attached a GPS device to the bottom of the victim's car to track where she was going and to find out where her new partner lived.

Case # 12: He was a convicted felon and was self-employed as an electrician. He had installed cameras around the house so that he could watch her and installed a tape recorder in



her car to eavesdrop on her conversations. Weeks before the attempted homicide, she had left him and gone to stay with her mother. She filed for a TPO and was awarded possession of their house.

## Disabling the Victim's Automobile

Case # 13: He refused to allow her to leave in her car. She went to a neighbor's house and called for a police escort so she could pick up her things. When police arrived at the house, she gathered some of her belongings and the officer noticed that a coil wire was missing from the car. He told the officer that he removed the coil because he did not want her driving in the snow. The officer asked him to retrieve the coil wire, which he did; the wire was replaced and she was able to leave in her car.

Case # 14: She reported to the police that he would not let her leave the house and he had fixed her vehicle so that it would not run. The responding officer checked under the hood of her car and noticed that one spark plug was displaced. The officer fixed the plug, then she and her son left to stay with a friend.

# new resources & where to get them



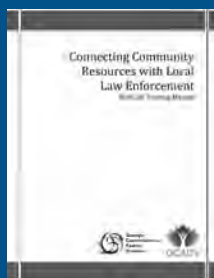
**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FRIENDS AND FAMILY BROCHURE**  
This trifold, 2-color brochure offers **tips on how to best support someone** who is being abused. It covers definitions, how friends and family can help, signs that signal increased danger, and finally, what to say and what not to say to the person you suspect is being abused. Companion to the poster below. Contact GCADV.



**"I BROKE MY SILENCE, I MADE A CALL, I SAVED A FRIEND'S LIFE" COLOR POSTER**  
This dramatic, **4-color poster** is designed to encourage family and friends to speak up when someone they care about is being abused. Its **compact size** makes it ideal for posting in restroom stalls, community bulletin boards and other common areas. Directs people to call Georgia's 24-hour statewide hotline for help. Contact GCADV.



**FATALITY REVIEW TEAM POLICIES & OPERATING PROCEDURES MANUAL**  
If your community is interested in participating in the Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project, this 43-page guide can help you coordinate a successful team to review DV fatalities. Please contact GCADV or GCFV for a copy.



**ROLL CALL TRAINING MANUAL**  
This manual is part of a Roll Call Training Program which Family Violence Task Forces can use while working with their local law enforcement agencies. Contact GCFV for more information.



**SAFE SACRED SPACE TRAINING MATERIALS AND INFORMATION**  
For resources and materials on the intersection of faith, sacred communities, and DV. Contact GCFV.



# georgia crime victims compensation program funds

## **IMPACT OF HOMICIDE: NEED FOR SERVICES AND RESOURCES**

Survivors of domestic violence-related crimes often face a long emotionally and physically painful road to recovery. For surviving friends and family members, the grieving process is extensive, complicated, and often compounded by a variety of factors. In the aftermath of a devastating crime that has taken or nearly taken a loved one, expenses can quickly pile up and survivors and surviving family members can be revictimized through mounting debt that they accumulate while receiving the medical attention and counseling services that they need following a traumatic experience. Additionally, for the families of those killed, funeral services are another added expense that has to be handled.

For a child or children left without a parent, grandparents or other family members often step in and raise them, taking on the added financial responsibility. Some of these children may have witnessed abuse in their home before their parent was murdered and might have been present at the time of the homicide. Because of this, these children are often in need of wraparound services to address the traumatic experiences that they have survived and the grief they are experiencing. However, these services are not always put into place before the Department of Child and Family Services closes their case and the guardianship or adoption is finalized. Then the financial responsibility to provide counseling services for the children falls on the surviving family members, who may also need counseling themselves.

For eligible applicants, the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program funds can mean the difference between economic security and economic devastation. It is a goal of this Project to connect as many eligible survivors of DV-related crimes and their family members with the monetary resources that may be available to them. While there is no amount of economic assistance that can lessen the pain that survivors of DV-related crimes and fatalities

experience, the financial resources available to these victims of crime through this program can assist survivors in paying for the treatment and services necessary for their recovery.

**We hope the following information and overview of the program will provide a clear outline of who might qualify for the funds, how to apply for them, and what is needed for the application process.** We also provide an overview of what to expect through the process and how to appeal a denial of compensation funds. With the financial assistance available through this program, we hope that survivors can work towards repairing their lives without the added stress and burden of depleted financial resources and rising debt.

## **GEORGIA CRIME VICTIMS COMPENSATION PROGRAM**

With the enactment of the Georgia Crime Victims Bill of Rights, O.C.G.A. 15-17-1, in 1995, individuals who are victims of certain violent crimes have specific rights and are allotted certain services to enable them to take steps toward recovery and restitution.

Administered by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program assists victims and their families through the aftermath of a violent crime by easing the financial responsibilities placed upon them and their surviving family members. The program provides monetary compensation for expenses such as:

- ▶ medical bills
- ▶ loss of earnings
- ▶ funeral expenses
- ▶ mental health counseling
- ▶ crime scene clean-up

## **CONNECTING SURVIVORS OF DV TO GEORGIA CRIME VICTIMS COMPENSATION PROGRAM FUNDS**

Many victims of domestic violence crimes and their families are made aware of Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program funds through



# crimes covered

victim witness assistance programs. However, when district attorneys' offices and victim witness assistance programs are not involved in the DV-related fatality or near-fatality, usually because the offender has taken their own life, many who qualify for the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program are not connected to this valuable economic resource. Once DFCS cases are closed, many families are unsure how surviving children can access monetary assistance for ongoing counseling services.

Domestic violence advocates, attorneys, counselors and mental health providers, doctors, social workers, funeral home directors, and employers can refer survivors of DV-related crimes to the program and assist them in securing the funds for which they may qualify. Also able to provide this assistance are other systems, service providers, and companies involved with survivors and surviving family members.

## **ELIGIBILITY FOR THE GEORGIA CRIME VICTIMS COMPENSATION PROGRAM**

Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program funds are available for victims of a wide gamut of violent crimes. The following chart presents an overview of the crimes most commonly offering compensation, but it is not a complete list. An arrest or conviction is not required for the victim to be eligible for compensation. Also, you do not have to be a U.S. citizen to qualify.

## **CRIMES COVERED UNDER THE GEORGIA CRIME VICTIMS COMPENSATION PROGRAM**

- \* Domestic Violence
- \* Sexual Assault
- \* Assault
- \* Child Abuse
- \* Robbery
- \* Kidnapping
- \* Vehicular Homicide
- \* Hit and Run

- \* Child Pornography
- \* Homicide
- \* Child Exploitation
- \* DUI/DWI

Please Note: The above list does not show all covered crimes. Please contact the CJCC if you have questions.

## **ELIGIBILITY FOR GEORGIA CRIME VICTIMS COMPENSATION PROGRAM FUNDS**

- \* You are physically injured as a result of a violent crime.
- \* You personally witnessed or were threatened with a violent crime.
- \* You were injured while helping a victim of a violent crime.
- \* You are a parent, guardian, spouse, or sibling of a person killed or injured as a result of a crime.
- \* You are a dependent or child of a homicide victim who relied on the victim for support.
- \* You are a DV victim who is dependent on financial support from your abuser.
- \* You were not a victim of the crime but you have taken responsibility for the debt incurred as a result of the crime.

*Please Note: Eligibility is determined by the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program. Please contact the CJCC to see if you qualify. Telephone 404-657-2222, toll-free: 800-547-0060.*

## **Ineligible Applicants**

Victims or witnesses are ineligible for compensation if they were on parole or probation for a felony of an injurious nature when the crime occurred or if they were incarcerated when the crime occurred. They are also ineligible if they provoked or consented to the events that led to the crime.

## **Eligibility Timeframes**

The crime must have been reported to the proper authorities within 72 hours of the crime, unless good cause is shown. For victims of DV, Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program will also accept a Temporary Protective



# georgia crime victims compensation program funds (continued)

Order that was filed within 72 hours of the victimization.

The victim must file an application within one year of the crime unless good cause is shown. A claim submitted three years after the victimization cannot be considered.

## Eligibility and Location of Crime

If the assault happened in a state other than Georgia, the victim should apply for victim's compensation in the state where the crime occurred. The victim does not have to be a Georgia resident to apply for Crime Victims Compensation Program funds if the crime occurred in Georgia.

## Available Funds

The funds that are available through the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program can provide survivors of DV-related crimes with up to \$25,000 to cover medical and dental care, mental health counseling, economic support, crime scene clean-up, and funeral expenses when the costs are not covered by other sources. Without these funds, some survivors would have to pay out-of-pocket for these expenses. In other cases, in order to avoid incurring more debt, some would not seek the help they need to recover from the crime.

The Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program does not compensate for pain and suffering and does not cover personal property losses, except for the medically necessary replacement of items such as eyeglasses, dentures, prosthetics, wheelchairs, or other assistive devices.

The Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program is the payor of last resort. Before compensation can be provided through the program, the victim or witness must have an expense or loss not covered by other sources such as insurance, social security, annual or sick leave, disability insurance, workers' compensation, unemployment, or funds from other government agencies. You can apply for crime victims' compensation up to two times per year.

## MAXIMUM COVERAGE BY CATEGORY GEORGIA CRIME VICTIMS COMPENSATION PROGRAM

<u>Medical/Dental Expenses</u>	<u>\$15,000</u>
<u>Counseling Expenses</u>	<u>\$3,000</u>
<u>Funeral Expenses</u>	<u>\$3,000</u>
<u>Economic Support for</u>	
<u>Lost Wages and/or</u>	
<u>Loss of Support</u>	<u>\$10,000</u>
<u>Crime Scene Clean-Up</u>	<u>\$1,500</u>

*Please Note: These are categorical caps for the expenses that are covered through the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program. The maximum payout is \$25,000 per victim per victimization incident.*

## APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. Fill out the application form clearly and legibly. Be sure to include an original signature on your application. You can download the application form from <http://www.cjcc.ga.gov>.
2. Provide at least two telephone numbers where you can be reached or where someone from the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program can leave a message during business hours. Always inform the program if you change your address or telephone number.
3. Be sure to provide a secondary contact who has a different address or telephone number from you where the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program can send information about your claim or leave messages for you regarding your claim.
4. Submit the completed and signed application, at least one itemized bill, and a copy of the police report, incident report, TPO, or warrant.
5. If you would like assistance filing your claim, or if you have questions, you can call the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council at 404-657-2222 or 800-547-0060.



# georgia crime victims compensation program funds (continued)

Send the completed application to:  
Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program  
104 Marietta Street NW, Suite 440  
Atlanta, GA 30303

*Please Note: Verify the current application procedures, phone number and address by visiting [www.cjcc.ga.gov](http://www.cjcc.ga.gov) before filing for compensation.*

## **Needed Items When Filing for Compensation**

It is important to follow all of the instructions and gather all of the necessary documentation to complete the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program application form. The following items should be included in a completed application form:

- ▶ **Itemized Bills** – When applying for crime victim’s compensation, the applicant will need itemized bills showing the requested reimbursable amounts. This includes any itemized pay stubs along with medical, counseling, funeral, burial, and crime scene clean-up bills. The Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program is very specific about what qualifies as an itemized bill, and an explanation of what needs to be included on the bill can be found on their website.
- ▶ **Police Report** – The applicants must include a police report, warrant, or TPO form detailing the crime with their application.
- ▶ **Insurance Information** – The program will need any insurance information, such as a copy of an insurance card, and information regarding any Medicaid and/or Medicare benefits the applicant may be receiving.
- ▶ **Counseling Services** – For counseling benefits, the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program will need a completed psychological service report after the applicant’s first visit that documents and verifies that the services that will be or have been rendered by the

counselor are directly related to the crime listed on the investigative report. The report must be submitted by this licensed mental health professional that provided the service.

- ▶ **Lost Wages** – To be reimbursed for lost wages, the program will need proof of gainful employment at the time of the victimization, official documentation showing earning history 60 days prior to the victimization, an official document from an employer showing how much work was missed and pay was lost due to the victimization, and records from a physician or licensed mental health professional that provided treatment at the time of the victimization stating that the applicant should not be working.

All forms to verify employment, loss of support, and law enforcement involvement can be found at [www.cjcc.ga.gov](http://www.cjcc.ga.gov).

## **PAYMENTS AND REIMBURSEMENTS**

Once a completed application is received and the survivor is approved for Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program funds, they can expect to be reimbursed within 90 days. Applicants will receive a letter of acknowledgement of their application for compensation funds within five days of the program receiving their application. Applicants can also expect to be notified over the entire process of any developments regarding their application.

Once reimbursement is approved, payments go to the applicant for out-of-pocket expenses. Then reimbursements are paid directly to service providers, such as hospitals, doctors, and counselors. When an applicant’s expenses exceed benefit categories they have the right to decide how their reimbursements are divided between service providers.



## APPEAL REQUESTS

If a survivor or their family members are denied Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program funds, they should not be discouraged. They can file an appeal within 30 days of receiving notification of the denial. The denial may be overturned in-house by the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program division director or may be heard and voted on by the board. If the denial is overturned by the division director, the application process continues on to the eligibility process. If the appeal must be heard by the board, the applicant is notified of the date and time of the appeals hearing. The victim can attend the appeals hearing but their attendance is not mandatory. The applicant will be notified via mail of the board's decision, which is final. The appeal request form can be found on the CJCC's website at

[www.cjcc.ga.gov](http://www.cjcc.ga.gov).

# Lori's story

## Lori's Story\*

Lori is a mother of two who was 41 when her husband attempted to kill her, then shot and killed himself. After 23 years of marriage marked by frequent physical and mental abuse, Lori had been preparing to end the marriage. A year before the shooting, Lori had sought a divorce, but was unable to finalize it due to financial barriers. After a series of escalating events, Lori obtained a TPO. That very night, her husband came to her house, extremely depressed and intoxicated. He told Lori that

he loved her; Lori suggested they talk in the morning. He broke down the door, entered the house, and shot Lori in the side of the head, her neck, and her hand. Lori called 911 as her husband put the gun to his own head and pulled the trigger, however, the gun did not fire. Later that night, on his friend's porch, he shot and killed himself.

After the shooting, Lori plunged into debt. She says that she was "instantly drowning" from her post-shooting medical bills. Unfortunately, no one connected Lori to any helping resources and no one told her about the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program options available to her.

While Lori says that it was helpful to be able to tell her story to investigators, she was unable to afford counseling for herself or her two children to talk about what happened to them. The fatality review team interviewed Lori just after the three-year mark of the attack by which time she was ineligible for Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program funds.

Today, Lori wonders how the abuse she suffered and the traumatic experience of her husband attempting to kill her and then killing himself has affected and will continue to affect her children. She worries about how they are coping with it all. Had Lori been connected to program funds, she may have been able to avoid falling so deeply into debt. The funds could have helped cover some of her medical bills, lost wages, and assisted her in getting counseling services for herself and her children.

## Josephine's Story

For survivors such as Josephine who are connected to the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program funds, the trauma experienced in the aftermath of a DV-related crime may be lessened through financial assistance. With less economic anxiety or stress, victims can concentrate on healing rather than how they are going to afford the services they need in order to recover.

As Josephine was getting ready for work one morning, her estranged boyfriend and father



# Josephine's story

of her two children waited outside her home. As she left for work, he attacked her with a stun gun, then shot her and her 16-year-old daughter. Josephine suffered four gunshot wounds, one of which left a bullet lodged behind her eye; as a result, she is now legally blind. Her daughter was shot in the face; a bullet still remains in her jaw. The perpetrator was apprehended shortly after the shooting and was sentenced to 60 years in prison.

After the incident, Josephine felt lost and directionless. She quickly lost her health insurance as she was not able to work; she had to pay for her medical expenses out-of-pocket. She had purchased a home just before the shooting, but lost it because she was unable to continue making payments. Even though she found it difficult to live where the shooting had happened, Josephine had worked hard, saving for years to buy her home; losing it was awful.

Josephine was connected to the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program through the victim witness assistance program at the district attorney's office. The VWAP explained to her the process of applying for the program and the funds for which she might qualify. The VWAP also assisted Josephine in gathering the needed documentation for her application and delivering some documents directly to the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program office.

Josephine says that applying for compensation was easy for her because the program only required her to include standard information related to the incident. Program staff made themselves available to her and they came through with the financial resources she needed to recover from the incident. They also kept her informed throughout the entire process of any developments with her case through letters and phone calls.

Through the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program, Josephine has been able to receive the medical care that she needs for her eyes as well as crucial counseling services. Program funds allowed her to arrange surgery to remove a bullet that remained in her chest, a source of pain and discomfort. Josephine's daughter received financial assistance with her own medical bills and counseling sessions, and Josephine's son has received counseling sessions, as well.

Without the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program funds, Josephine says things would have been very difficult for her; she feels she would not have been able to go on with her life or progress past the incident. She says that she would have had to move in with her parents if not for this financial support.

Josephine wants more survivors of DV-related crimes to know about the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program. "You can't utilize something you don't know about," she says, and when she tells her story of surviving DV, she always mentions the program to increase awareness of the resources available to survivors.

As the two-year mark of the incident approaches, Josephine still wonders, "Did this really happen?" She continues to regain her independence and rebuild her life, and wants other survivors of DV-related crimes to know how integral counseling was to her recovery. Without counseling, Josephine would not have been able to cope with what happened. "You cannot heal on your own," Josephine explains, noting that counseling helped her figure out how to live again after the incident.

*\* Pseudonym used.*



# georgia crime victims compensation program funds (continued)

## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO LINK VICTIMS WITH THE GEORGIA CRIME VICTIMS COMPENSATION PROGRAM

While the process to apply for Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program funds appears to be straightforward, it may be difficult or confusing for victims and surviving family members to gather all of the needed documentation and itemized receipts to complete their application. The number one reason that applications are denied by the program is because of “lack of cooperation,” which is usually a result of an application not having the proper documentation. Proper documentation includes:

- ▶ a police report with details of the crime or a TPO
- ▶ an original signature on the application form
- ▶ properly itemized bills

Assisting a victim or surviving family members navigate this process may help to ensure eligibility for reimbursement. The Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program also has advocates available to assist victims through this process.

**You can assist victims of DV-related crimes with the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program funds in the following ways:**

1. Know what types of crimes qualify an individual and their family members for the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program and become knowledgeable about the application process.
2. Refer victims and their family members to the CJCC as soon as possible after a crime occurs and is reported.
3. Keep forms, files, and copies of applications in your office.
4. When making a safety plan, encourage victims to also set aside important financial documents needed to show financial dependency on the perpetrator.
5. Reach out to and inform other agencies in your community who may be in contact with victims of DV-related crimes about the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program.
6. Follow up with victims and their family members before the one-year mark of the homicide or domestic violence incident to see if they are still interested in applying for compensation funds or if they need any assistance with their application.
7. Offer to review their application before the victim sends it in to the program.
8. Assist victims and their family members in collecting itemized receipts for services they have received which might be eligible for reimbursement by the program.
9. If you or your agency would like more training on this valuable resource for victims of crimes, please contact the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council at **(404) 657-2222** or **(800) 547-0060** or visit their website at **[www.cjcc.ga.gov](http://www.cjcc.ga.gov)**.



# women's use of violence

Beginning  
with the  
2012 Georgia  
Domestic  
Violence  
Fatality  
Review  
Annual  
Report, we  
will examine  
women's use  
of violence  
in intimate  
relationships.

Fatality review is a tool used by service providers, policy makers, local family violence task forces, and state agencies to identify, address, and reduce gaps in response to domestic violence. Since 2004, each annual report has worked to increase victim safety and give voice to victims killed, survivors of near fatalities, and survivors. The 2011 Annual Report continues to present the voices of victims and survivors; it is our intention to present findings and recommendations that, when implemented, will create safety at home for all Georgians.

In a continued effort to formulate recommendations and increase understanding around the complexities of DV, the project will begin examining women's use of violence in intimate relationships in a more focused way. Women's use of violence emerged as an issue in several of the cases we have reviewed in the last 8 years. There are instances of women killing male partners, women killing female partners, and women who had been arrested for using violence against their partner who were later killed by that same partner. In the instances where women killed male partners and those where women were arrested for using violence then later killed, there are numerous indicators that suggest that some of these women were the victims in their relationships.

## **VAWA's primary goals**

Since the passage of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in 1994, state and federal funding has aimed to widen social understanding of DV as more than a private, individual family issue. VAWA continues to send a clear message that funding, research, and multiple system responses are needed to address this serious public health behavioral epidemic. VAWA's primary goals were originally to criminalize acquaintance rape, domestic assaults, stalking, and other acts of violence against women, as well as to increase penalties for these serious offenses (Boba & Lilley 2009).

The original VAWA legislation was born out of the battered women's movement and focused on men's violence against women. While VAWA has evolved to include an awareness of violence within same-sex intimate partner relationships and the need to protect the small percentage of men battered by women, the primary focus remains on male violence against women. The related criminal justice efforts to protect victims were generated within the context of the understanding that the majority of family violence is perpetrated by men against women and children.

## **Who is most affected?**

From the Project's perspective, this gendered analysis of family violence still makes sense. After all, women and children are disproportionately affected by family violence. For example:

- ▶ 41.6% of women reported being injured by their partner as compared to 13.9% of men (three times greater for women)
- ▶ 62% of women reported being concerned for their safety as compared to 15.7% of men (four times higher for women)
- ▶ 72% of women as compared to 18% of men reported being frightened as a result of the violence they experienced (four times greater for women)
- ▶ Women are over three times more likely than men to experience threats against someone they love (parents, children, friends)
- ▶ Women are more than 13 times more likely to be raped and twice as likely to experience other forms of sexual violence than men
- ▶ 1 in 6 women (16.2%) and 1 in 19 men (5.2%) have experienced stalking victimization at some point in their lifetime during which they felt fearful or believed that they or someone close to them would be harmed or killed (Black et al 2010)

Still, the DV community must continually wrestle with the reality that women do use violence against men. Multiple studies indicate that women use violence at the same rate as men, though researchers note that these studies primarily "count blows," failing to measure the context, effects, and meaning of the violence and abuse for the participants. They also ignore key factors such as fear and control. In Georgia, both advocates and practitioners are reporting increases in dual arrest for family violence and in the numbers of arrests of women. Family Violence Intervention Programs in Georgia report an increased number of women ordered to attend such programs.

Some of the women arrested for violence against men are likely to have been using violence in self-defense and are victims of the unintended consequences of pro-arrest policies. Indeed, **recent and conclusive research looking at trends at female-to-male violence reveal that changes in criminal justice systems practices explain the increase in women's arrests for family violence.**



The policies designed to control this crime have changed, thereby increasing women's vulnerability for arrest (Schwartz, Steffensmeier & Feldmeyer 2009).

To increase women's safety and protect victims, we need to further our understanding of women's use of violence. The Fatality Review Annual Report is committed to embracing and examining this complex issue. We know that some women use violence within their relationships; we are interested in confronting the difficult and uncomfortable questions that many service providers face as they work to provide adequate services for **all victims of DV**.

Some women's behaviors fall into the classic definition of battering, involving a pattern of intimidation, coercion, and oppression for the purpose of controlling their intimate partner, but these are statistical rarities. The list below identifies some helpful categories or ways in which women's use of violence can be defined:

**Immediate Self-Defense:** Violence used during an assault to protect self or children.

**Delayed Self-Defense:** Violence used soon after an assault, when the victim feels she is still in imminent danger.

**Retaliatory Violence:** Violence used when imminent danger has passed; with the goal of demonstrating power for the purpose of stopping a partner's violence.

**Hyper-Vigilant Violence:** Violence usually used by women who have been victims of trauma across their life span by multiple offenders. Victims perceive a new threat or likelihood of abuse in the current environment; their response is often disproportionate to the current situation to ensure they are "never again" a victim.

**Anticipatory, Preemptive Violence:** Another form of violence used by women abused by multiple offenders across their life span; violence used before any signal of a new threat, used to establish themselves as off-limits to any possible offender, real or perceived.

This report does not intend to minimize the effects that homicide has on any surviving family or friends of a homicide victim, regardless of the gender of the

offender or the victim. We encourage a regrouping in the evidence of uneven social, economic, and personal playing fields between women and men.

We hold strongly that all individuals have a right to be safe at home. In an effort to better understand and prevent women's use of violence, the Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project is committed to a process of talking about and exploring this issue. We encourage each of you to join us in this effort by considering the following questions:

- ▶ Do our systems do more damage to women that come to us for support if they are known to have used violence in the past?
- ▶ How do generalized announcements about women's equal use of violence increase the danger for women? Does our insistence that there is not a gender difference place men in more danger?
- ▶ How do we explain why there are still many more women killed by men?
- ▶ Are we looking at the context of women's violence or reacting to single, visible incidences of violence?
- ▶ Are women responding to violence or are they attempting to gain power and control over their partner by the use of violence?
- ▶ Are we looking at key indicators of the primary abuser's use of control by considering whose life and freedoms are constricted as a result of the violence?
- ▶ Are we considering precipitating violent events which preceded the violence used by women?

---

Boba, R. & Lilley, D. 2009. "Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) funding: A nationwide assessment of effects on rape and assault." *Violence Against Women* 15(2):168-185.

Black, M.C., Basile, K.C., Breiding, M.J., Smith, S.G., Walters, M.L., Merrick, M.T., Chen, J. & Stevens, M.R. 2011. *National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2010 Summary Report*. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved from [http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pdf/NISVS\\_Report2010-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pdf/NISVS_Report2010-a.pdf)

Schwartz, J., Steffensmeier, D.J. & Feldmeyer, B. 2009. "Assessing trends in women's violence via data triangulation: Arrests, convictions, incarcerations, and victim reports." *Social Problems* 56(3):494-525.



# georgia fatality review

## key findings 2004-2011

*Our recent scan through cases reviewed from 2004 to 2011 yielded these key findings on 8 critical topics...*

### leaving

In almost every reviewed case the victim was leaving or making plans to leave the relationship. In some cases the victim was taking obvious steps to separate such as filing a TPO, moving out, or “breaking up.” In several cases the victim was emotionally separating from the abusive partner and taking steps to gain independence such as furthering her education, changing her locks, or receiving a promotion at work.

### gunshot

56% of the domestic violence deaths were caused by gunshot, twice as many as the next-highest cause of death, which was stabbing (26%), and more than all other means combined.

### suicide

Thirty eight percent of perpetrators were known to have either threatened or attempted suicide prior to the homicide. This significant correlation between DV perpetrators’ suicidal thoughts or threats and their danger to others may be seen as an opportunity for intervention. DV perpetrators’ suicidal thoughts and threats are critical homicide risk factors.

### teenagers

Over one quarter (30%) of victims were teenagers when they began their relationship with the person who eventually killed them. This finding indicates that we must increase knowledge about teen-dating violence and young people’s access to appropriate services and interventions.

### workplace

In 75% of cases, the victim was employed. However, the majority of employers do not have A DV in the Workplace Policy. The workplace is an ideal location for victims to receive information about domestic violence resources and support, safely and confidentially.

### no contact

Only 17% of victims was known to have contact with a DV program or “shelter” in the five years prior to their death. Victims and their support systems are often either not aware a DV program exists in their community or are not aware of the full range of services these programs provide. Additionally, when these programs are referred to as “shelters” it furthers the idea that they can only be utilized by individuals seeking shelter.

### faith

Family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, and people who belong to the same faith community as the victim consistently know more than anyone else about the dynamics of the relationship and the events that indicated danger leading up to the homicide. Victims of DV are far more likely to turn to these informal systems for support, whether they disclose the abuse or not, than they are to reach out to any other system.

### children

In 4% of cases reviewed, children were also killed. In 19% of cases, children witnessed the homicide. In cases where children witnessed or were present at the time of the homicide, the children rarely receive specialized trauma and grief counseling or other necessary wraparound services.





## Engaging the business community in domestic violence work

### how to talk to people in business about DV so they can hear you

Engaging the business community in the work to end domestic violence is a prime strategy to increase survivor safety. The economic stability that comes from earning personal wages is essential to living a safe, independent, violence-free life. Turmoil caused by abuse puts survivors at increased risk for financial problems in a number of ways. One clear way that abuse affects survivors' economic stability is through tactics that abusers use to prevent their partners from securing and maintaining employment. Abuses that happen outside of the workplace include but are not limited to:

- ▶ *inflicting visible injuries*
- ▶ *turning off the alarm clock*
- ▶ *keeping the victim awake all night*
- ▶ *sabotaging transportation*
- ▶ *refusing to allow or provide child care*

Other abuses that directly affect victims at work include showing up or threatening to show up, harassing phone calls, and other stalking behaviors. All of these behaviors jeopardize the victim's ability to perform and succeed at work. Their performance may decline—they may be frequently late or use sick time due to injuries or from illness resulting from the impact of abuse on their health. These factors can lead to disciplinary action or even firing. The loss or lack of income can severely limit a survivor's options when it comes to leaving a relationship and staying free—abusers know this.

**Employers are uniquely positioned to link survivors to support and resources;** time at work may be the only time the victim is away or free from the abusive partner's direct influence. If employers are willing to make reasonable accommodations for people experiencing DV,

they often find that by doing so they have cultivated a very loyal employee.

Convincing the business community that DV is an important issue that they can and should be addressing is a big hurdle. When talking with business owners and administrators, you are persuading hearts and minds, assuring them that a pro-active approach to DV is good for business and for people. **Here are some effective talking points to help you with that conversation:**

- ▶ The annual cost of domestic violence to the US economy is more than \$8.3 billion. This cost includes medical care, mental health services and lost productivity.
- ▶ According to the US Department of Justice, 1 in 4 Americans will experience domestic violence in their lifetime. Women make up almost half of the US workforce. It is safe to assume that domestic violence is affecting the American workforce at home and work.
- ▶ Domestic violence is a workplace wellness issue. Health care costs are 42% higher for women in ongoing abusive relationships compared to women who are not abused. Domestic violence awareness and resources can be incorporated into workplace wellness activities with only moderate adjustments to current practices.
- ▶ A proactive approach to social issues like domestic violence shows corporate social responsibility and leads to increased employee engagement and morale.
- ▶ When a workplace culture is created where employees feel they can come forward to seek help without being fired or penalized, a company's overall workplace safety preparedness is increased.

One way to reach employers in your community is to **host a breakfast for them**. Partnering with the Chamber of Commerce, suggesting that they sponsor or co-host an event, is a proven tactic to gain access to businesses. The breakfast or program should last about 1-1 ½ hours and ideally be sponsored by a noteworthy local business. The goal of an event like this is to create connections with employers and encourage them to begin addressing DV



in their workplace. Their level of involvement will need to be tailored to their existing environment and structure. Provide them a menu of activities with different levels of commitment that they can build on, and be clear about what you are asking employers to do. Here are some suggestions.

- ▶ Place posters and brochures in Human Resources offices, employee break rooms, and restrooms.
- ▶ Host a cell phone drive—an easy way to build awareness and support survivors.
- ▶ Host a domestic violence “Lunch & Learn.”
- ▶ Provide ongoing training to managers and supervisors.
- ▶ Develop and implement a **model Domestic Violence in the Workplace Policy** (see the 2010 Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Annual Review Report, page 18, for more information at [www.fatalityreview.com](http://www.fatalityreview.com)).
- ▶ Create policies and protocols that aid and support survivors.
- ▶ Practice ongoing training of supervisors and managers on policies and protocols related to domestic violence.
- ▶ Make their commitment to a safe workplace visible to employees on an ongoing basis.
- ▶ Develop connections with local domestic violence programs and other resources in their local area.

In 2012, the Project will be rolling out a **DV in the Workplace Tool Kit** to help you in your work to engage local businesses. This toolkit will include power point presentations, handouts, and model DV in the workplace policies. It will be made available to any DV program, organization, fatality review team, or task force that is interested in this work.

# faith

## safe sacred space: 2011 interfaith domestic violence response training

Each year the fatality review confirms that victims are more likely to turn to their faith community (sometimes disclosing their abuse, sometimes not) for support or help, yet we also find that faith communities are often unprepared to respond effectively. In 2009, the fatality review developed the **Interfaith Initiative on Domestic Violence Response** to communicate with faith and lay leaders about their opportunities to provide safety and support for their congregants and other people experiencing domestic violence. The truth is that people in faith communities are hurting, though many are not willing to admit to or seek help for DV openly, and few faith and lay leaders have the training to recognize or address the issues. This gap has become our focus over the years, and this year we built on insight from survivors, family members, and clergy and lay leaders to develop **a new training model and resources focusing on building connections between faith communities and DV experts in Georgia.**

**SAFE SACRED SPACE** builds on local resources to create a shared learning experience between advocates, clergy, sacred community, lay leaders, and community organizers. While addressing the basics of DV response and protocols, the curriculum also cultivates interfaith dialogue on faith as a resource and/or barrier. The model's primary goal is to educate and support connections between the faith community and DV experts, crossing lines of faith, ethnicity, race, class, and orientation. We introduced the model to over 50 participants from various racial and ethnic backgrounds, including **Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, and Sikh.** Key learning points from the Safe Sacred Space model, including highlights from the training breakfast follow.



## Acknowledge The Violence

The first step in responding to DV involves acknowledging that it is actually happening in faith communities. This begins with keeping survivor's stories of faith and survival front and center in the learning space.

### ► *What does this look like in a Safe Sacred Space training?*

Barbara Maples and Chyna McGarity opened this year's event with scriptures from the Christian tradition that have been crucial in their lives as they escaped and lived beyond intimate violence. Following Barbara and Chyna's testimonies, three other survivors reminded us of a group that is often overlooked. Reyna Perez-Garcia, Viviana Aguilera and Jaime Landeros (youth survivors ranging in age from 16- to 21-years-old from Caminar Latino Domestic Violence Agency) spoke about the significance of holding DV programs at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church. For them, the church setting demonstrated the religious community's commitment to safety in the home. The importance of acknowledging these young people as adults (no longer children), who are also survivors when DV occurs, was a key learning moment for many attendees.

## Learn the Role of Faith in the Dynamics of DV

In 2009 the Religious Institute for Faithful Voices on Sexuality and Religion studied 36 leading seminaries and rabbinical schools in the country. Of these institutions, only three required a course in sexual assault/DV to graduate. Yet, these leaders are still expected to respond knowledgeably and effectively to DV in their communities.

### ► *How does Safe Sacred Space address this gap in knowledge?*

Jasmine Williams Miller (Partnership Against Domestic Violence) presented an intensive "Domestic Violence 101" session on the visible and invisible dynamics of intimate violence, lethality/separation violence, the role of DV advocates in

safety planning, and faith as a resource and/or roadblock. Rabbi Elana Zelony (Congregation Shearith Israel) took a closer look at clergy's role in DV response. A key aspect of her story involved the safety information she received from a DV advocate. Combining this practical advice with her religious training has prepared her to uphold important spiritual values while also maintaining a safe space for worship.

## Be Accountable and Hold Others Accountable

Survivor safety is the first priority in DV response. The next step involves engaging communities in the work of accountability.

### ► *How does Safe Sacred Space address accountability?*

Sulaiman Nuriddin (Men Stopping Violence Domestic Violence Agency) discussed the role of state-certified Family Violence Intervention Programs in holding men who use violence accountable for abuse. He stressed that FVIPs work when: 1) men take on the responsibility of holding other men accountable for their violence; 2) other men become invested in their brothers' work to learn non-violent ways of being in relationships; and 3) faith communities support healthy relationships and families by making accountability for people who use violence a priority in their collective communal agenda.

## Lesson Learned

This year we recognized the importance of creating space for participants to engage one another about cultural practices and sacred traditions that support safe and accountable DV response. One of the most powerful moments in the training occurred at the end when a Jewish rabbi, Hindu priest and Muslim imam shared texts in Hebrew, Sanskrit, and Arabic about the importance of non-violence in the home. Moments like this provided opportunities for networking across religious traditions, which strengthens the interfaith movement to end DV in the state of Georgia.



**Safe Sacred Space** materials are available **in electronic format** to communities wanting to engage clergy and lay leaders about their **role in DV response and prevention**. Training materials include discussion of faith as a resource and/or barrier, DV 101 analysis and best practices, diverse and culturally responsive power and control wheels, exposure of DV myths (including same-sex myths), tips on clergy accountability (including mandatory reporting), and in-depth discussion of what it looks like for faith communities to hold people who use intimate violence accountable. For information on organizing a Safe Sacred Space Interfaith Training and training materials, visit [www.gcfv.org](http://www.gcfv.org).



*In 2011, this logo was created to illustrate the importance of understanding the intersections of faith and domestic violence. The logo also reflects the coming together of various faith leaders who are learning how to address the issue of domestic violence within their own traditions. From left to right, the symbols represent the Jewish, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Sikh, Islam, Buddhist, and Bahai traditions.*

## domestic violence victims and law enforcement

**Of all of the systems and agencies involved in the lives of domestic violence victims, law enforcement had the most contact with and access to victims who were later killed by their partners in Georgia. In 2011, victims had reached out to law enforcement at a rate of 78%, yet only 17% had contacted DV programs. It is clear that law enforcement plays a primary role in delivering crucial information to DV survivors about life-saving services available to them in their communities. How can DV agencies make contact with those victims who are only reaching out to law enforcement? One way is through informing law enforcement about available local resources, so that they can pass that information on to victims they encounter on the scene.**

**For victims of DV knowing about their local resources can be critical to their survival, regardless of the outcome of their call to 911. Law enforcement officers are mandated by state statute to notify DV victims of available services and remedies, both governmental as well as non-governmental, when they respond to 911 calls. In order to do this, law enforcement officers must possess this knowledge themselves.**

Some law enforcement officers may not know the full scope of victim services offered by DV programs in their community, such as shelter and safe house resources, safety planning, and legal advocacy. Informing law enforcement officers about the community resources for victims is a vital part of linking victims with life-saving DV resources. **Victims may ask officers what the shelter is like, how long they can stay, and if they can bring their children.** For victims who cannot or do not want to leave their homes, officers can share with them information about DV advocates



available through the local 24-hour hotline and support groups at local DV agencies.

In Georgia, a state with over 159 counties divided into 49 judicial circuits, there are over 1,000 law enforcement agencies employing close to 55,000 certified law enforcement officers. It is a goal of the Project to reach these law enforcement officers and empower and support them with knowledge, resources, and best practices to assist and connect DV victims to the critical services that Georgia DV programs provide. By connecting law enforcement with other agencies working to end DV in Georgia communities, we hope to increase all victims' access to and use of DV agency services and to decrease DV fatalities.

## **CONNECTING LAW ENFORCEMENT AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGENCIES THROUGH ROLL CALL TRAININGS**

The Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence (GCADV) and the Georgia Commission on Family Violence (GCFV) have partnered with Mike Mertz, retired law enforcement officer and trainer, to create 6 Roll Call trainings for communities to implement with their law enforcement officers. These Roll Call trainings better prepare officers to assist victims in securing safer lives. Each Roll Call training topic has grown directly out of Domestic Violence Fatality Review findings from DV task forces around the state of Georgia.

Just as victims and perpetrators of DV exist across multiple systems in our communities, solutions to DV are found within and between multiple systems. Roll Call trainings promote system collaboration and encourage community partnerships to end DV while linking survivors with local resources. Roll Call trainings also serve to foster trusting relationships between law enforcement, DV task forces, DV program advocates, prosecutors, and judges.

Through Roll Call trainings, DV task force members (including advocates from DV programs and representatives from Family Violence Intervention Programs, school systems, US armed forces, faith-based organizations, and mental health providers) and officers from law enforcement agencies have

a chance to form personal relationships and professional partnerships within the community. Roll Call trainings give law enforcement officers a chance to learn directly from community agency staff, and community agency staff can come to better understand law enforcement's experiences with DV victims and perpetrators.

## **ROLL CALL TRAINING DESIGN AND TRAINING MANUAL**

Roll Call trainings are designed to be presented to local law enforcement agencies by community DV task force members. They are formatted to last 10 minutes and to deliver pertinent and specialized information to community law enforcement agencies during agency briefings.

GCADV and GCFV have developed a training manual (see page 12) for family violence task forces in Georgia for preparing and conducting Roll Call trainings. The training manual includes an instructional video featuring Mike Mertz, detailed training topic information, step-by-step training instructions, presentation materials, activities, and tips for conducting successful Roll Call training sessions. Family violence task forces can contact GCFV to receive these materials.

Roll Call trainings use targeted presentations to present a consistent and concise message across the state to local law enforcement officers and agencies. This training strategy effectively broadcasts crucial information while promoting multiple system collaboration and community partnerships.

## **ROLL CALL TRAINING TOPICS**

Family violence task forces and community advocates can help law enforcement agencies in their communities link victims with life-saving DV services. Task forces can also work to ensure that victims are not further victimized by the law enforcement system through dual arrests and police reports that do not fully capture the extent and severity of the DV situation. Family violence task forces can help law enforcement in identifying primary aggressors, thereby preventing victims from being unjustly arrested and further harmed. Additionally, they can provide training on police



reports to ensure that reporting is thorough and contains the necessary, mandated information so victims later have sufficient information about their abuse for use in court proceedings. Further, family violence task forces can train law enforcement on the correct procedures for filing a Family Violence Temporary Protective Order so officers can assist victims in petitioning the court in this manner. The six Roll Call trainings were developed to address critical areas to support victim safety and offender accountability (see chart on page 29).

## ROLL CALL TRAININGS IN GEORGIA THIS YEAR

In 2011, GCADV and GCFV presented Roll Call trainings in three communities in Georgia (Dalton, Cornelia, and Macon). Through providing training to family violence task forces and modeling the 10-minute Roll Call training sessions for community advocates and law enforcement, Task forces have gained experience and confidence in hosting Roll Call trainings and can begin to implement these trainings with their local law enforcement. If you are interested in having Mike Mertz or a Fatality Review Project Coordinator present information to your Task Force, please contact us.

### Dalton, Georgia

At the Fifth Annual Domestic Violence Conference hosted by the Conasauga Family Violence Alliance in October 2011, Mike Mertz presented a session on Roll Call training for law enforcement. This event provided a chance to introduce Roll Call training opportunities to attending DV task forces and law enforcement and highlighted the findings of the Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Annual Reports as they inform training needs. Mike Mertz modeled the 10-minute Roll Call training on Primary Aggressor Identification.

### Macon and Cornelia, Georgia

In July 2011, Crisis Line and Safe House of Central Georgia in Macon, Georgia, and in August 2011, Circle of Hope in Cornelia, Georgia, held "Implementing Roll Call Trainings: A Conversation with Mike Mertz." DV advocates from these areas as well as DV task force members were invited to participate. Participants got a chance to observe a

10-minute Roll Call training and discuss the fatality review findings that shaped the Roll Call training topics. Mike Mertz shared with the attendees tips on how best to approach law enforcement and key topics to cover during Roll Call trainings. Advocates in attendance also had a chance to ask questions and share their recent success stories.

*"As first responders, law enforcement officers are often the first people that victims of domestic violence come into contact with after an incident of violence. As such, it is imperative that they are well versed in the community resources available to victims of this crime."*

Dee Simms  
Executive Director  
Crisis Line & Safe House of Central Georgia, Inc.  
Macon, Georgia

## ROLL CALL TRAININGS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Roll Call trainings are **a great way for your community to implement crucial changes**, connect law enforcement with the DV community, work to prevent DV fatalities and keep victims safe from their abusers. There is no charge for Roll Call trainings. Please consider arranging Roll Call trainings as part of your Task Force's implementation of fatality review findings in your community this year!

## IMPLEMENTING ROLL CALL TRAININGS

### Law Enforcement

- If you are interested in receiving Roll Call training, please call **GCFV** at **404-657-3412** to arrange a training for your agency.

### Task Forces

- If you are interested in hosting Roll Call training, please contact **GCFV** at **404-657-3412** for the Training Manual and technical assistance.



## Quick reference: roll call training topics, findings, deliverables & presenters

Topic	Findings	Deliverables for Participants	Presenters
<b>Mandated Family Violence Response</b>	The professional and consistent response of law enforcement to DV incidents is a critical first step towards survival for many victims.  Adherence to state statutory requirements and department policy with regard to DV response is an effective deterrent to further violence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of the Family Violence Act in GA</li> <li>• Understanding what the state requires of officers when responding to family violence incidents</li> <li>• Clarity on definition of family violence in GA</li> <li>• Example/outline of an ideal on-the-scene investigation of a family violence incident</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law Enforcement</li> <li>• Prosecutors</li> <li>• DV Advocates</li> </ul>
<b>Primary Aggressor Identification</b>	Jurisdictions with primary aggressor department policies or state laws reported 1/4 the number of dual arrests as jurisdictions without such policies or laws. These primary aggressor laws and policies state that officers should identify and arrest only the main offender in an incident. <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge about primary aggressor identification when responding to family violence incidents</li> <li>• Training in assessing evidence on family violence incidents as outlined in the Georgia Code Section 17-4-20.1</li> <li>• Training which addresses the ways in which women use force and elements of defense, and defensive injuries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law Enforcement</li> <li>• Prosecutors</li> </ul>
<b>Victim Services and Law Enforcement</b>	78% of DV fatality victims reviewed had contact with law enforcement in the five years prior to the homicide. <sup>2</sup>  17% of these same victims had contact with DV agencies (non-governmental resources, such as family violence center emergency shelter, safety planning, or counseling services). <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on local community services available to DV survivors, enabling officers to empower survivors</li> <li>• Agency-tailored, updated, community specific information on all services for both residents and non-residents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DV Advocates</li> <li>• DV Center Directors</li> <li>• Legal Advocates</li> </ul>
<b>Incident Reporting</b>	Aggressive investigation and arrest coupled with concise and comprehensive documentation helps the criminal justice system provide for the safety of victims and the accountability of offenders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge regarding DV incident reporting in compliance with Georgia law to better assist victims of family violence related crimes</li> <li>• Explicit training on the content of the incident report and evidence to include in the report</li> <li>• Directives on gathering crucial evidence beyond testimony at the scene</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law Enforcement</li> <li>• Prosecutors</li> <li>• Judges</li> </ul>
<b>Family Violence Protection Orders</b>	In one study, half (50%) of victims experienced no violations of the TPO in the 6 months following the order. For victims who did experience violations, every type of violence was significantly reduced. <sup>3</sup> Victims living in rural areas experienced more barriers to obtaining orders and to the enforcement of orders than victims living in urban areas. <sup>3</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge about Family Violence Protective Order protocol to better assist victims of DV</li> <li>• Exposure to appropriate statutes to enforce in the event of a TPO violation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law Enforcement</li> <li>• Legal Advocates</li> </ul>
<b>Stalking</b>	76% of female homicide victims were stalked prior to their death. <sup>4</sup> In reviewed fatalities in Georgia, stalking was a factor in 44% of cases; 56% of cases had monitoring and controlling behaviors exhibited by the perpetrator. <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge about state stalking statutes, responding to victims of stalking, and the differences between stalking and aggravated stalking</li> <li>• Training to cover appropriate investigation and arrest decisions regarding stalking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law Enforcement</li> <li>• Prosecutors</li> <li>• DV Advocates</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Hirshel, D. 2008. *Domestic Violence Cases: What Research Shows About Arrest and Dual Arrest Rates*. National Study by NIJ. Retrieved from <http://www.nij.gov/publications/dv-dual-arrest-222679/ch3/welcome.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Georgia Fatality Review Project findings.

<sup>3</sup> Logan et al. 2009, September. *The Kentucky Civil Protective Order Study: A Rural and Urban Multiple Perspective Study of Protective Order Violation. Consequences, Responses, and Cost*. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/228350.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> MacFarlane, J., Campbell, J.C., Wilt, S., Sachs, C., Ulrich, Y Xu, X. 1999. "Stalking and Intimate Partner Femicide." *Homicide Studies* 3(4):300-16.



# change

## implementation: where the visible work begins

The Georgia Fatality Review Project (the project) is jointly led by project coordinators from the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence (GCADV) and the Georgia Commission on Family Violence (GCFV). The project coordinators provide technical assistance and support to local Fatality Review teams as they conduct fatality reviews. For the last eight years, 20 fatality review teams all over Georgia have worked closely with the project coordinators to examine their community's response to DV through the lens of fatality review. This process reveals and illuminates gaps in systemic responses in a way that cannot be ignored. While this method of reviewing deaths is painstaking and emotional itself, a different sort of work begins when a community asks themselves "now what?" **A key goal of fatality review is to turn grief into action, and this is where implementation—the visible work—begins.**

Several fatality review teams and task forces are actively implementing fatality review findings. It is important to note that **a community does not have to participate in the project or actually conduct a review of a DV-related fatality in their community in order to implement findings from fatality review.** The review of 81 fatalities and the 5 near fatalities from across the state have yielded universal lessons that can be implemented by any community in Georgia seeking to strengthen their response to domestic violence. We highlight examples of both in the following text.

On page 32 of the 2009 Fatality Review Annual Report, we highlighted the efforts of the **Savannah-Chatham County Fatality Review Team** to implement their fatality review findings. Early in 2009, the **Savannah-Chatham Metro Police Department** applied for a grant to take part in the Domestic Violence Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) for First Responders, a program created by the

Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence. The goal of the LAP program is to increase collaboration between first responders and DV advocates so that victims are immediately connected with supportive services while police are on the scene. Savannah-Chatham County was selected as a pilot site for this project in March 2009. This effort was spearheaded by **Sgt. Robert Gavin, Special Victims Unit, Savannah-Chatham Metro Police**, with support from his superiors.

In 2011, GCFV and GCADV partnered with the **Rockdale County Family Violence Task Force** and **Hope Harbour** DV program in Columbus to host two separate Lethality Assessment Program trainings led by Sgt. Gavin. The trainings were for law enforcement officers, court, and victim advocacy personnel. The trainings were attended by over 125 individuals from both the **Rockdale and Chattahoochee Judicial Circuits** and from neighboring jurisdictions.

**Rockdale State Court Judge Nancy Bills** stated, *"The Lethality Assessment Training, although geared primarily toward law enforcement, was valuable for each discipline represented at the training. As a judge, it gives me another tool for evaluating the facts of each case that comes before me for sentencing, so that the proper level of supervision can be given to the offender and a more informed decision can be made as far as a 'no contact' provision as it relates to the safety of the victim."*

**Diane Sinkule Hett, Executive Director for Hope Harbour in Columbus** stated, *"The Lethality Assessment Program for law enforcement and advocates in the Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit provided valuable training that has strengthened our collaborative efforts and resulted in each agency being better informed about the work of the other. Following this training, Hope Harbour worked with the Family Violence Unit of the Columbus Police Department to create a Domestic Assault Response Team. To date, all responders of the Columbus Police Department conduct a lethality assessment at each DV call. The officer phones*



*the 'on call' volunteer/staff member of Hope Harbour when risk for lethality is determined, thereby connecting the victim with services. We have seen a marked increase in the number of victims that are being served both at the shelter and as outreach clients."*

In response to fatality review findings around DV homicide victims' high level of contact with law enforcement and low level of contact with community DV resources, GCADV and GCFV partnered with **Mike Mertz**, retired law enforcement agent and trainer, to create six Roll Call trainings for task forces to implement in their communities. At three different Georgia venues, Mertz modeled a 10 minute Roll Call training and hosted a discussion around the importance of implementing the trainings in communities and the findings that guided the creation of the trainings. Roll call events were held at **Dalton's Fifth Annual Domestic Violence Conference**, hosted by the **Conasauga Family Violence Alliance** in October, at the **Crisis Line and Safe House of Central Georgia** of Macon, in July 2011, and at **Circle of Hope** in Cornelia in August 2011. Please see page 26 for more information on Roll Call trainings.

Based on the FR Report findings about faith and domestic violence, many task forces and fatality review teams conducted trainings to connect faith leaders and advocates. For example, in 2011 alone, **Kris Jones** and **Tomieka Daniel** of **GA Legal Services Program** worked with task forces and DV programs to conduct Faith and Domestic Violence Breakfasts in Laurens County, Houston County, Fannin County, Jackson County, and Stephens County. With support from the Project, the **Cherokee Family Violence Center**, **Shalom Bayit of JF&CS**, and the **Partnership Against Domestic Violence** also conducted faith and DV trainings in 2011.

**Sisters Empowerment Network, Inc.**, Riverdale, GA, partnered with the Project to co-host a **Domestic Violence in the Workplace** breakfast for employers in their community. This three-hour program focused

on educating business leaders about the impact domestic violence has on their business both from an economic perspective and from a human interest issue. A key goal was to create connections between the local domestic violence program and employers with the hope that businesses would engage with the local program for individual training and assistance.

*"The true beauty of collaboration was exhibited in our Faces & Shades of Domestic Violence Workplace Initiative Breakfast, which took place in October 2011. Representatives from the business community, law enforcement, and other organizations that are committed to addressing violence in the workplace were on hand to share their experiences. The speakers presented tangible, practical ways to address workplace domestic violence. We are appreciative for the accomplishments of the day."*

Veda Brown  
Founder/Executive Director  
Sisters Empowerment Network, Inc.

## HAVE YOU IMPLEMENTED FATALITY REVIEW REPORT FINDINGS?

The activities we highlighted here are the ones we are aware of; we are certain that more communities are implementing findings from the fatality review reports. We would love to hear about the exciting work in your community as well.

## Dublin-Laurens Spotlight-Using the fatality review reports as a roadmap for change

The life of a family violence task force can take many twist and turns. A task force can be very active and high functioning, then suddenly fall off and stop meeting for several years. This is exactly what happened in the Dublin Judicial Circuit. The Dublin-Laurens Domestic Violence Task Force has experienced resurgence, thanks in large part to **Tomieka Daniel**, Managing



# change

**Attorney, at Georgia Legal Services.** In 2010 Georgia Legal Services received a one-year grant from the **Rural Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking Assistance Program** that enabled Ms. Daniel to focus on assisting the Dublin community in reorganizing the family violence task force.

Since the grant began, the members of the Dublin-Laurens Domestic Violence Task Force have used past Fatality Review Annual Reports as their guide to implementing change in their community.

*"The Fatality Review Annual Report is more than just numbers and stats. It helps us to know what work we need to be doing in our community to prevent domestic violence-related homicides."*

*Cheryl Banks  
Dublin-Laurens Task Force Chairperson  
Assistant District Attorney*

Acting on the report's key findings, the task force held a **Faith-Based Roundtable** discussion that brought over 20 ministers from the local community to discuss the intersection of faith and DV. Task force members presented critical information about DV and participants discussed the urgency of the faith community's effective and informed response to this issue.

**The Dublin-Laurens Domestic Violence Task Force** has also hosted a two-day training for approximately 90 law enforcement personnel. This training was designed to educate officers and staff on DV and the resources available in the local community. The task force also hosted another training for the Laurens County Human Resources Association to discuss the role that employers have to play in addressing DV.

## how we conduct fatality reviews

### The Fatality Review Process & Data Collection

#### Committee Formation

The family violence task force in each participating community forms a multi-disciplinary fatality review team to function as a sub-committee. Representatives from the following systems are invited to join these teams:

- \* community and prosecution-based advocates
- \* corrections
- \* prosecution
- \* judicial
- \* law enforcement
- \* Family Violence Intervention Programs
- \* Department of Family and Children's Services (DFCS)
- \* faith-based organizations
- \* mental health, alcohol, and drug counseling providers
- \* employers
- \* culturally specific organizations
- \* animal welfare and control agencies
- \* hospitals and medical care providers
- \* schools

#### Case Selection

The teams select domestic violence-related homicide cases for review with three criteria in mind:



# methodology of fatality review

- ▶ All civil and criminal proceedings relating to the victim and the perpetrator have been closed with no pending appeals.
- ▶ The perpetrator has been identified by the criminal justice system.
- ▶ When possible, the date of the homicide does not extend beyond 3-5 years.

Homicides are defined as DV-related if the victim and perpetrator are current or former intimate partners. Cases involving the homicide of a victim other than the intimate partner, such as a friend, current partner, child or family member of the DV victim, were also considered DV-related.

## **Case Information Collection**

Once the cases are selected, the team gathers all public records pertaining to the case. The majority of the information is located in the prosecutor's file and/or the homicide file. Only information that can be obtained pursuant to the Open Records Act is collected.

## **Family & Friends Interviews**

When applicable and appropriate, the Project Coordinators and Teams seek out interviews with surviving family and friends of the victim, who in turn provide incredible insight not gleaned from the public documents. The discussions are open-ended, with family members and friends being invited to share what they want the Team to know about their loved one, the steps the victim took to try to be safe, and the victim's perceptions of the options available in the community.

## **Case Chronology Development**

A chronology for each case is developed by the team, with assistance from the project coordinator, with a focus on all prior significant events leading up to the death. These include prior acts of violence perpetrated by the person who committed the homicide (whether against this victim or another), previous attempts by the victim to seek help, previous criminal and civil history, etc. A completed chronology is distributed to each team member.

## **Fatality Reviews**

The teams, after signing a confidentiality statement, have a moment of silence for the victim(s), and, conducting an oral reading of the chronology, go through the chronology item by item to see where the community could have stepped in, and how the system response could have been more effective. With a strong trust in each other and a commitment not to blame one another, each team identifies gaps in local response, areas where practice did not follow protocol, and innovative ideas to make the system response more effective, so as to increase victim safety and offender accountability.

## **Development and Implementation of Findings and Recommendations**

The teams then compile their findings about the factors in each case that appeared to contribute to the death, or they identify actions which, if taken, might have prevented the death. Teams are always focused on reviewing the systems' response: what types of resources were available in each system for victims and offenders, what the policy and protocol for response were, whether they were followed or not, and what monitoring, training and accountability existed in each system for workers responding to families. From the findings, each team makes recommendations for changes to system responses that will improve victim safety and offender accountability with the goal of preventing future homicides.

## **Data Analysis**

Data is entered into an electronic database designed for this project, adapted from the work of data collection tools used around the country. The data is then aggregated and comprises the data findings in this report.

In this current report, the sum of individual data fields may not total 100% due to rounding.

For more detailed information regarding the methodology of the Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project, please see pages 10-11 in our 2005 Annual Report.



# dedication of the 2011 Review to victims, survivors, and those left behind

*This report is  
dedicated to all those  
who lost their lives  
to domestic violence  
and to their family  
members, friends, and  
surviving children  
who must go on  
without them.*

## About Chart 1

Chart 1 includes only Georgia counties in which a DV homicide is known to have occurred between 2003 and 2010. Statistics have been compiled by GCADV and GCFV from media monitoring services and from reporting DV programs statewide. This count represents all the DV-related deaths known to us at the time of this report, including intimate partner victims and related persons such as new partners, children, and other family members. Statistics also include alleged perpetrator deaths; most of whom committed suicide after killing or attempting to kill the victim(s). Deaths of alleged perpetrators are included to show the full scope of loss of life due to DV.

## Causes of Death in Chart 1

Cause of Death in All Known Cases in 2010	number of deaths	percent-age of deaths
Gunshot	99	75%**
Stab wounds / lacerations	20	15%
Blunt or sharp force trauma	5	4%
Strangulation / Asphyxiation	1	1%
Burns	1	1%
Medical neglect	1	1%*
Unknown manner	5	4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*\*Firearms continue to be the leading cause of death for victims in reviewed cases, greater than all other methods combined, indicating the urgent need to use all legal means possible to remove firearms from the hands of perpetrators.

\*2010 marks the first year we have begun tracking "medical neglect" as an official cause of death. As the population ages and when distinctions between DV and elder abuse become blurred, we can anticipate increases in reported cases of deaths due to medical neglect.



## How Many Died from Domestic Violence in Each Georgia County by Year?

Chart 1: Domestic Violence Deaths in Georgia by County 2003-2010

County of Fatality	total annual deaths				
	'10	'09	'08	'07	'03-'06
Appling					4
Baldwin	2	2		1	6
Barrow					3
Bartow				1	6
Ben Hill	1			2	3
Berrien				1	
Bibb		7		6	13
Bleckley			1		2
Brantley			1		1
Brooks	1				
Bryan	2				
Bulloch		2			1
Burke			3		3
Butts	2			2	1
Calhoun				1	3
Camden					3
Carroll		3		1	4
Catoosa		1		1	
Chatham	2	4	4	2	19
Chattooga		1			
Cherokee		4	4	3	6
Clarke	1	10	2	1	7
Clay	2	2			
Clayton	2	1	5	7	27
Cobb	5	7	4	5	28
Coffee				1	1
Colquitt	5			1	6
Columbia			1		3
Cook				1	2
Coweta	2	1	3	2	1
Crawford	1				
Crisp	1			1	3
Dawson					1
Decatur		3	1		
DeKalb	5	9	13	7	33
Dodge		1			1
Dooly					1
Dougherty	3	1	1	2	4
Douglas			2		2
Early	3				
Echols	1				

County of Fatality	total annual deaths				
	'10	'09	'08	'07	'03-'06
Effingham	4				1
Elbert		1			2
Emmanuel	2				
Fannin			1	2	2
Fayette				3	5
Floyd	2	2	2	1	5
Forsyth	1		3		6
Franklin		1			1
Fulton	12	11	3	10	36
Gilmer					1
Glascocok					1
Glynn			1	2	3
Gordon	1	2		1	5
Grady	2			1	1
Gwinnett	13	12	6	7	42
Habersham	2				1
Hall	1			3	4
Hancock					1
Haralson					4
Harris		2			3
Henry	1		1		11
Houston	4		7		4
Jackson	3	2	1		9
Jeff Davis			1		
Jefferson					4
Jenkins				1	1
Lamar			1		2
Lanier	1				
Laurens			2		6
Lee			1	2	
Liberty	1				10
Lincoln	2				
Lowndes	1	5			10
Lumpkin					1
Macon			1		1
Madison					2
McDuffie	1		2		3
Meriwether			1		
Monroe		2			1
Montgomery					1
Murray		1			

County of Fatality	total annual deaths				
	'10	'09	'08	'07	'03-'06
Muscogee	3	1	8	5	13
Newton	5		2	4	7
Oconee					1
Oglethorpe	1	1			1
Paulding		2			3
Peach	3		2		
Pickens				1	1
Pierce			1		
Pike	2	3			
Polk				2	3
Pulaski		1			
Rabun	1				
Randolph	1				
Richmond	5	4	4	4	13
Rockdale		2		1	7
Schley				1	
Screven					1
Seminole					1
Spalding	3		1	3	
Tattnall		2			3
Telfair		2	2		4
Thomas	2			2	1
Tift			1	5	1
Towns					2
Troup		2	1	1	1
Twiggs					1
Union		2	2		
Upson					3
Walker	1			1	2
Walton	2	1	1		2
Ware				1	1
Warren				1	
Washington			2		2
Wayne			2	3	4
Webster					1
Wheeler			1		1
White			2		3
Whitfield	4				6
Worth	3		2	1	
Undisclosed	1				3
YEAR	'10	'09	'08	'07	'03-'06
TOTAL DEATHS	132	123	113	118	480



## What Was the Gender of the Victims and Perpetrators, How Were Both Employed, What Were Their Sources of Support?

Chart 2: Gender, Employment, and Income in Cases Reviewed from 2004-2011

CHARACTERISTIC	Victim		Perpetrator	
	Number	%	Number	%
<b>Gender</b>				
Female*	77	95%	4	5%
Male	4	5%	77	95%
<b>Employment Status</b>				
Employed	61	75%	48	59%
Employed full-time	42	52%	33	41%
Employed part-time	5	6%	4	5%
Employed, unsure if full-time or part-time	8	10%	6	7%
Self-employed	4	5%	5	6%
Employed part-time and student	2	2%	0	0%
Unemployed	7	9%	14	17%
Retired	2	2%	1	1%
Disabled	2	2%	2	2%
Unemployed student	1	1%	2	2%
Unknown	8	10%	14	17%
<b>Sources of Financial Support</b>				
Personal wages	63	78%	48	59%
No personal income, <b>reliant on perpetrator</b> for financial support	3	4%	0	0%
No personal income, <b>reliant on victim</b> for financial support	0	0%	8	10%
Family support, retirement payments, SSI/SSDI, WIC, Food Stamps, alimony, death benefits, illegal income	11	14%	10	12%
Unknown	10	12%	17	21%

\*Note: Three female perpetrators killed male partners; one female perpetrator killed a female partner. One male perpetrator killed a male partner. All remaining homicides were men killing women.

### Chart 2 Key Points

In line with national statistics, the overwhelming number of homicide victims in reviewed cases were women; the overwhelming number of perpetrators were men. 75% of victims were employed. 52% were full-time employees at the time of their death. Employers and co-workers have the potential to increase victim safety through training on recognizing symptoms, supporting victims, and making referrals.

## Was it a Single Homicide, a Suicide, or Were Others Killed or Hurt?

Chart 3: Types of Incidents in Cases Reviewed from 2004-2011

TYPES OF INCIDENTS	Aggregate % for cases reviewed 2004-2011
Single victim homicide	53%
Victim suicide	1%
Incidents where victim is killed and perpetrator kills, attempts to kill, or wounds others	16%
Incidents where perpetrator commits or attempts to commit suicide	37%

### Chart 3 Key Points

In 37% of the cases reviewed, the perpetrator attempted or completed suicide at the homicide scene or soon thereafter, in addition to killing or attempting to kill one or more persons. This finding indicates a significant correlation between domestic violence perpetrators' suicidal thoughts or threats and their danger to others.

- \* In 16% of the cases reviewed, the perpetrator killed, attempted to kill, or injured someone other than the primary victim. Perpetrators do not limit their violence to their intimate partner. Often, other people close to the primary victim are targeted either because they are with the primary victim at the time of the attack or because the perpetrator intends to cause additional anguish to the primary victim by harming her friends or loved ones.
- \* A perpetrator's threat of suicide is one of the strongest indicators for imminent lethal violence. The Project promotes training of first responders, advocates, attorneys, parole officers, court personnel, social services, and health care personnel to increase vigilance and recognition of this extreme risk factor.

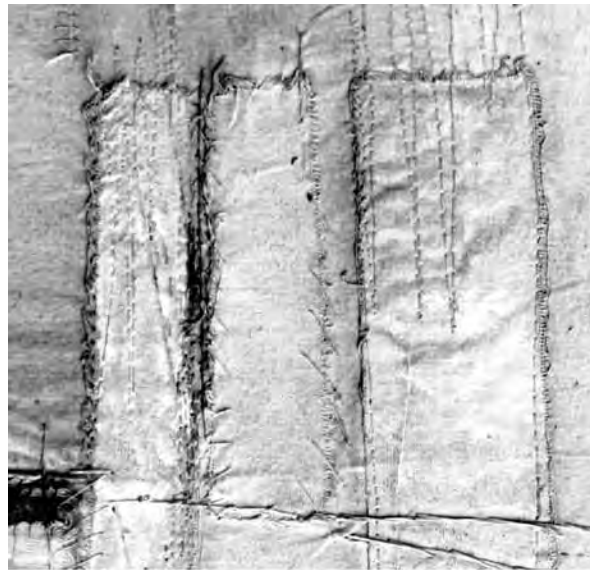




## How Were the Victims Killed?

Chart 4: Cause of Death in Cases Reviewed 2004-2011

CAUSE OF DEATH	Aggregate % for cases reviewed 2004-2010
Gunshot	56%
Stab wounds / Stab wounds and lacerations	26%
Strangulation	10%
Blunt or sharp force trauma	6%
Asphyxiation due to smoke inhalation	1%
Multiple traumatic injuries	1%



### Chart 4 Key Point

Firearms continue to be the leading cause of death for victims in reviewed cases, greater than all other methods combined, indicating the urgent need to use all legal means possible to remove firearms from the hands of perpetrators.

## Who Else Was There When It Happened?

Chart 5: Who Else Was Present or a Witness to the Fatality in Cases Reviewed 2004-2011

PRESENT AT OR WITNESSED THE FATALITY	Present		Witnessed	
	Actual number of people	% of total 2004-2011 cases reviewed	Actual number of people	% of total 2004-2011 cases reviewed
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>47%</b>
<b>Children</b>	66	41%	50	19%
Family members	23	23%	14	7%
Friends	5	5%	4	4%
New intimate partners	3	4%	2	2%
Co-workers	3	2%	3	1%
Acquaintances or neighbors	17	9%	14	9%
Strangers	72	9%	71	9%

### Chart 5 Key Points

For the purpose of this chart, individuals labeled as “present” are those who were in the same area where the homicide occurred but did not hear or see the homicide. Those individuals who did have a sensory experience of the homicide have been determined to have “witnessed” the homicide.

- \* 2004-2011 data indicate that in 57% of cases someone in addition to the victim and the perpetrator was present at the scene of the fatality. 47% of the time someone witnessed the homicide. In 9% of cases, someone other than the primary victim was killed.
- \* In 41% of cases, children were present at the

homicide, and other adult family members were present in 23% of all cases we have reviewed.

- \* Contrary to popular understandings of DV as a “private” issue, it is often the case that people other than the victim and the perpetrator are present at, witness to, or are killed during a domestic violence homicide. The violence absolutely spills over to affect family, friends, and bystanders.
- \* There is a critical need to assist children dealing with the traumatic effects of witnessing a homicide and losing one or both parents. See article on the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program funds, pages 13 to 19, in this report.



## What Was the Perpetrator's Behavioral or Criminal History?

Chart 6: Perpetrators' History as Known by the Community in Cases Reviewed 2004-2011

PERPETRATORS' BEHAVIORS		Percentage of reviewed cases where this factor was present
Violent or criminal behavior	History of DV against victim	89%
	Threats to kill primary victim	58%
	Violent criminal history	52%
	Stalking	44%
	Threats to harm victim with weapon	40%
	Child abuse perpetrator*	32%
	History of DV against others*	29%
	Inflicted serious injury on victim*	25%
	Sexual abuse perpetrator	22%
	Strangulation	21%
	Threats to kill children, family, and/or friends*	21%
	Harmed victim with weapon*	14%
	Hostage taking*	7%
Controlling behavior	Monitoring and controlling	56%
	Isolation of victim*	34%
	Ownership of victim*	23%
Mental health issues and substance abuse	Alcohol and drug abuse	53%
	Suicide threats and attempts	38%
	Depression*	30%

\*Includes cases reviewed in 2005-2011 data only.

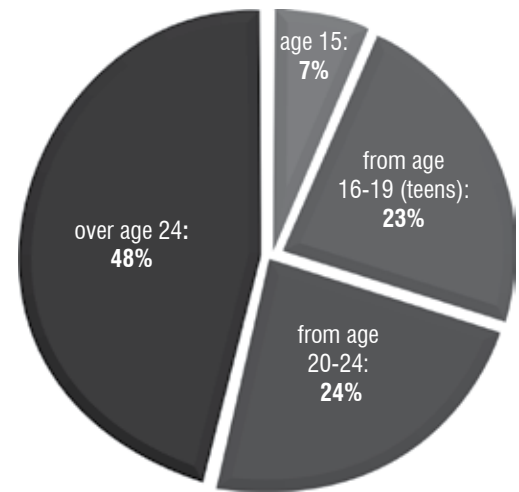
### Chart 6 Key Points

Information for this chart was gathered primarily through available protective order petitions, police reports, prosecutor files, homicide investigations, and interviews with family and friends. Project coordinators then categorized these behaviors based on commonly used guidelines for lethality indicators.

- \* In 89% of the cases reviewed, the perpetrator had a history of some DV against the victim prior to the homicide. A good indicator of future and possibly lethal violence is past violence.
- \* In only 25% of the cases did the perpetrator inflict serious injury on the victim in an incident prior to the homicide. This suggests that while serious or visible injury is a predictor of future and possibly lethal violence, it will not always be present in cases where victims are later killed.
- \* 38% of perpetrators were known to have either threatened or attempted suicide **prior to the homicide**.

## How Old Was the Victim When This Lethal Relationship Began?

Chart 7: Victim's Age (When Known) When Relationship Began in Cases Reviewed 2004-2011

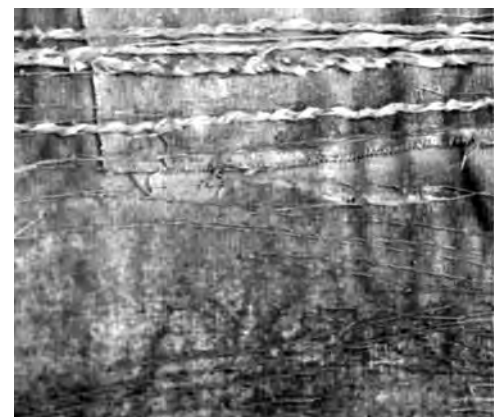


Statistics were gathered through convenience sampling of 79 homicide victims and 75 perpetrators.

### Chart 7 Key Points

- \* 54% of victims were 15-24 years old when they began their relationships with the partners who eventually killed them.
- \* 30% of victims were teenagers (ages 15-19) when they began relationships with the partners who eventually killed them.
- \* 26% of victims were in their high school years (ages 15-18) when they began relationships with the partners who eventually killed them.
- \* Five of the victims were just 15 when their relationships began.

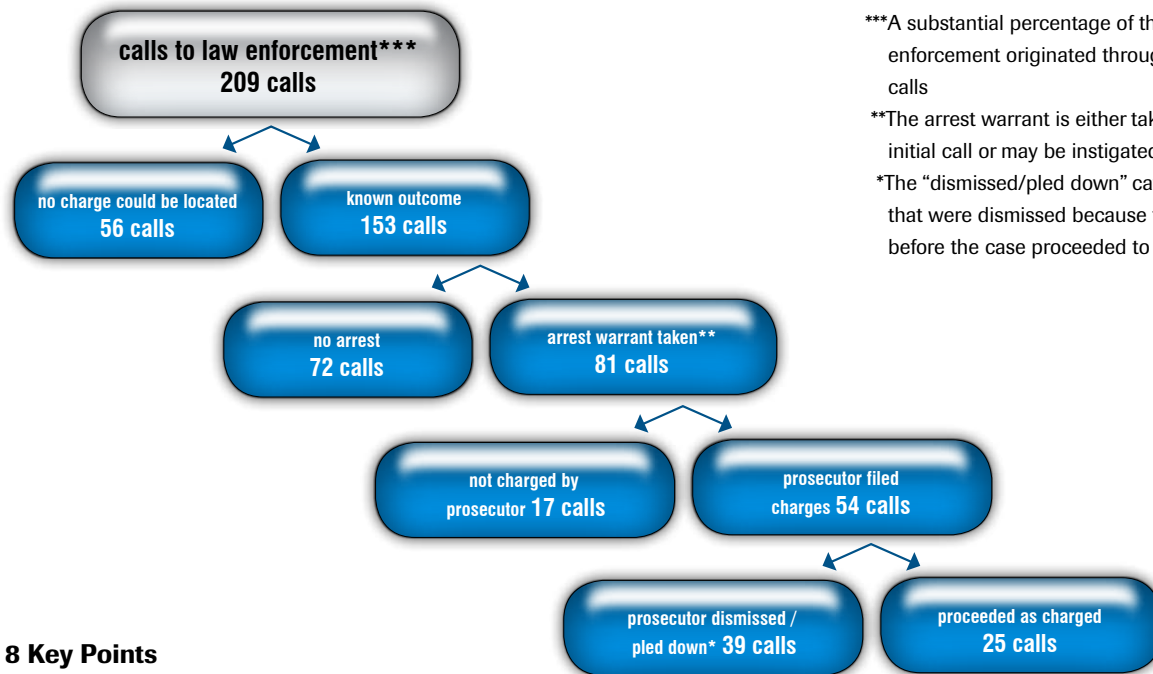
Our lack of recognition of, resources for, and effective responses to teen dating and young relationship abuse represent critical missed opportunities for preventive interventions.





## What Was the End Result of Contacts with 911 and Law Enforcement?

Chart 8: Detail of Investigation and Prosecution Outcomes for Cases Reviewed 2004-2011



\*\*\*A substantial percentage of these contacts with law enforcement originated through means other than 911 calls

\*\*The arrest warrant is either taken on site during the initial call or may be instigated by victim at a later date

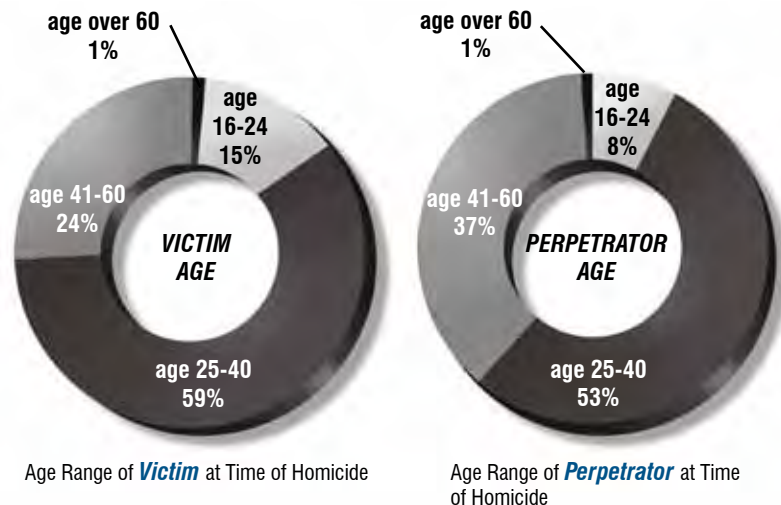
\*The "dismissed/pled down" category includes cases that were dismissed because the victim was killed before the case proceeded to prosecution.

### Chart 8 Key Points

- \* When law enforcement was called to the scene, 61% of the time no arrest warrant was taken or no evidence of a charge could be located. This percentage includes cases where the law enforcement officer did not take a warrant because the perpetrator had left the scene. It also includes cases where the perpetrator remained on the scene and the officer advised the victim to take the warrant herself.
- \* These practices send a message to the victim that the crime committed against her is not being taken seriously by the criminal justice system. Additionally, they send the message to perpetrators that the criminal justice system will not hold them accountable for their behavior.
- \* A review of the case histories reveals that calling law enforcement does not always result in increased safety, justice, or perpetrator accountability. In those cases where law enforcement was called and the outcome is known, only 35% were charged by the prosecutor, and 72% of those were subsequently either dismissed or pled down.

## What Proportion of Victims and Perpetrators Were in Each Age Range at Death?

Chart 9: Victim & Perpetrator Ages at Time of Homicide for Cases Reviewed 2004-2011



### Chart 9 Key Points

- \* In our reviews, the average age of victims at death was 35 years; perpetrators' average age was 39 years at the time of the homicide.
- \* Statistics were gathered through convenience sampling of 79 homicide victims and 75 perpetrators.



## Chart 10 Key Points

- \* Law enforcement had the most contact with both victims and perpetrators prior to the homicide. Continued law enforcement training on the dynamics of DV and how and where to refer DV victims for services is needed. See section on Roll Call trainings (page 26) for information on strategies for change.
- \* Only 17% of DV homicide victims were in contact with a DV shelter or safehouse in the five years prior to their death. DV programs need to take proactive steps to ensure that their full range of services are known, accessible, culturally relevant, and inviting to DV victims.
- \* A significant number of perpetrators and victims interacted with a religious community, church, temple, or mosque in the five years prior to the homicide.
- \* Faith communities have great potential for offering resources, referrals, and safety to congregants.

## Which Agencies and Services Interacted with Victims and/or Perpetrators?

Chart 10: Agencies and Services Involved with Victims or Perpetrators in the Five Years Prior to the Fatalities in Cases Reviewed 2004-2011

AGENCY / SERVICE / PROGRAM		VICTIMS		PERPETRATORS	
		Number	% total cases	Number	% total cases
Justice System Agencies	Law enforcement	63	78%	68	84%
	County and city prosecutors	31	38%	44	54%
	Superior court	25	32%	31	38%
	Magistrate court	24	30%	32	40%
	State court	19	23%	17	21%
	Civil court, including juvenile court	19	23%	18	22%
	Local DV advocacy program	13	17%	1	1%
	Court-based legal advocacy	13	16%	2	2%
	Probation	7	9%	29	36%
	Municipal court	5	6%	9	11%
	Legal aid	4	5%	0	0%
	Parole	1	1%	9	11%
Social Service Agencies	Child protective services (DFCS)	9	11%	9	11%
	Child care services	4	5%	2	2%
	TANF or Food Stamps	4	5%	2	2%
	WIC	3	4%	0	0%
	Homeless shelter	2	3%	1	1%
	Medicaid	3	4%	0	0%
	Substance abuse program	2	2%	4	5%
	Peachcare	1	1%	0	0%
Health Care Agencies	Hospital care	16	20%	14	17%
	Private physician	16	20%	14	17%
	Emergency medical service (EMS)	13	16%	6	7%
	Emergency room medical care	13	16%	6	7%
	Mental health provider	8	10%	19	23%
Family Violence Agencies	Domestic violence shelter/safe house	14	17%	0	0%
	Community-based advocacy*	14	17%	4	5%
	Family Violence Intervention Program (FVIP)	1	1%	10	12%
	Sexual assault program	1	1%	0	0%
Miscellaneous Agencies	Religious community, church, temple, or mosque	26	32%	16	20%
	Immigrant resettlement	2	2%	1	1%
	English as a Second Language (ESL) program	1	1%	0	0%
	Anger management	0	0%	5	6%

\*"Community-based advocacy" is defined as non-residential domestic violence services.



# technology safety planning tips

## tips

*to discuss if someone you know is in danger: Call 1-800-33-HAVEN (1-800-334-2836)*

please tear out and pass along or post

- 1 Trust your instincts.** If you suspect the abusive person knows too much, it is possible that your phone, computer, email, driving or other activities are being monitored. Abusers, stalkers, and perpetrators can act in incredibly persistent and creative ways to maintain power and control.
- 2 Plan for safety.** Navigating violence, abuse, and stalking is very difficult and dangerous. Advocates at the National Domestic Violence Hotline have been trained on technology issues, and can discuss options and help you in your safety planning. Local domestic violence and rape crisis hotline advocates can also help you plan for safety.
- 3 Take precautions if you have a "techy" abuser.** If computers and technology are a profession or a hobby for the abuser/stalker, trust your instincts. If you think he/she may be monitoring or tracking you, talk to hotline advocates or the police.
- 4 Use a safer computer.** If anyone abusive has access to your computer, he/she might be monitoring your computer activities. Try to use a safer computer when you look for help, a new place to live, etc. It may be safer to use a computer at a public library, community center, or Internet café.
- 5 Create new email or IM accounts.** If you suspect that anyone abusive can access your email or instant messaging (IM), consider creating additional email/IM accounts on a safer computer. Do not create or check this new email/IM from a computer the abuser could access, in case it is monitored. Look for free web-based email accounts, and strongly consider using non-identifying name & account information. (example: bluecat@email.com and not YourRealName@email.com)
- 6 Check your cell phone settings.** If you are using a cell phone provided by the abusive person, consider turning it off when not in use. Also many phones let you "lock" the keys so a phone won't automatically answer or call if it is bumped. When on, check the phone settings; if your phone has an optional location service, you may want to switch the location feature off/on via phone settings or by turning your phone on and off.
- 7 Change passwords & pin numbers.** Some abusers use victim's email and other accounts to impersonate and cause harm. If anyone abusive knows or could guess your passwords, change them quickly and frequently. Think about any password protected accounts—online banking, voicemail, instant messaging, etc.
- 8 Minimize use of cordless phones or baby monitors.** If you don't want others to overhear your conversations, turn baby monitors off when not in use and use a traditional corded phone for sensitive conversations.
- 9 Use a donated or new cell phone.** When making or receiving private calls or arranging escape plans, try not to use a shared or family cell phone because cell phone billing records and phone logs might reveal your plans to an abuser. Contact your local hotline program to learn about donation programs that provide new cell phones and/or prepaid phone cards to victims of abuse and stalking.
- 10 Ask about your records and data.** Many court systems and government agencies are publishing records to the Internet. Ask agencies how they protect or publish your records and request that court, government, post office and others seal or restrict access to your files to protect your safety.
- 11 Get a private mailbox and do not give out your real address.** When asked by businesses, doctors, and others for your address, have a private mailbox address or a safer address to provide. Try to keep your true residential address out of databases.
- 12 Search for your name on the Internet.** Major search engines such as "Google" or "Yahoo" may have links to your contact information. Search for your name in quotation marks ("Full Name"). Check phone directory pages because unlisted numbers might be listed if you gave your number to anyone.

**Technology can be very helpful to victims of domestic violence, sexual violence, and stalking, but it is important to also consider how technology might be used against them.**



# acknowledgements

## acknowledgements

The Georgia Commission on Family Violence (GCFV) and the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence (GCADV) are grateful to the many individuals who continue to make the Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project possible.

**Jenny Aszman**, Co-Coordinator, Fatality Review Project, GCFV

**Jan Christiansen**, Associate Director, GCADV

**Nancy Dickinson**, LMSW, Editor, Creative Director

**Jennifer Thomas**, Program Manager, GCFV

**Taylor Thompson Tabb**, Co-Coordinator, Fatality Review Project, GCADV

For part of the project year, **Greg Loughlin**, Executive Director, GCFV

**The Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence (GCADV)** brings together member agencies, allied organizations, and supportive individuals who are committed to ending domestic violence. Guided by the voices of survivors, we work to create social change by addressing the root causes of this violence. GCADV leads advocacy efforts for responsive public policy and fosters quality, comprehensive prevention and intervention services throughout the state. Being a coalition means working together for a common cause. We know that now and in the years to come, we will be up against enormous challenges that promise to test our capacity for conviction and perseverance. It is as vital as ever that we remember that the foundation for the future success of this Coalition lies in our hands, all of us, collectively. As we coalesce around our common cause, we do so with the voices of domestic violence survivors and their needs for safety always in the forefront of our minds. To learn more or get involved, please visit [www.gcadv.org](http://www.gcadv.org).

**The Georgia Commission on Family Violence (GCFV)** is a state agency that was created by the Georgia General Assembly in 1992 to develop a comprehensive state plan for ending family violence in Georgia. GCFV works throughout the state to help create and support task forces made up of citizen volunteers working to end domestic violence in their communities. In addition, GCFV conducts research and provides training about domestic violence, monitors legislation and other policies impacting victims of domestic violence, certifies all of Georgia's Family Violence Intervention Programs, and coordinates the Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project with GCADV. Please visit [www.gcfv.org](http://www.gcfv.org) for more information.

## special thanks

A special acknowledgement goes to the **family members and friends of homicide victims** who were willing to share with us the struggles their loved ones faced.

We are especially grateful to **Allison Smith**, GCADV, who again conducted data analysis for the project, allowing us to display aggregate data in this report.

Our special thanks to **Debbie Lillard Liam**, MSW, LCSW, Mosaic Counseling, Inc., who provided the Project with trauma expertise.

We are grateful to the following individuals who lent their time and expertise to drafting, editing, or reviewing content contained in this report: **Mike Mertz**, C&M Consulting and Training Services, LLC; and **Stephanie Crumpton**, Stephanie M. Crumpton and Associates LLC.

We are grateful to our vendors: **Canterbury Press LLC**, Atlanta, GA; **Gwen Hedley** with **Cheryl Papasaian**, Sandgate, Folkestone, Kent, UK; and **Mary Sommers**, Typographic Solutions, Stone Mountain, GA.

## financial support

The project was supported by subgrant No. W10-8-033 and W10-8-052 awarded by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council administering office for the STOP Formula Grant Program. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council or the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

## review teams

We acknowledge the commitment of the fatality review participants from around the state who devoted their time, energy, and expertise to work towards creating safer communities. The teams listed below are those who reviewed a case this year.

### Atlanta Judicial Circuit

**Laura Barton**, Partnership Against Domestic Violence

**Dustin Davis**, Marshall's Office

**Paul Guerrucci**, Atlanta Police Department

**Charlisa Herriott**, Superior Court

**Shannon Hervey**, District Attorney's Office

**Alice Johnson**, Atlanta Police Department

**Steven R. Jones**, Tangu

**Liane Lacoss**, Atlanta Police Department

**Jamie Mack**, Solicitor-General's Office

**Sulaiman Nuriddin**, Men Stopping Violence

**Deirdre Orange**, Marshall's Office

**Amanda Planchard**, Solicitor-General's Office, Chair

**Lindsey Siegel**, Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation

**Shermela J. Williams**, District Attorney's Office

**Liz Whipple**, Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation

The case reviewed by the Atlanta Judicial Circuit involved cross-over with the Clayton Judicial Circuit. The following representatives from Clayton County attended the review and provided additional information and valuable insight.

**Susan Bass**, District Attorney's Office

**Coretta Cotton**, District Attorney's Office

**Kathryn Powers**, District Attorney's Office

**Mike Thurston**, District Attorney's Office

**Conasauga Judicial Circuit**



**Larry Ballen**, Coroner  
**Lynne Cabe**, Dalton State College  
**Kevin Caylor**, District Attorney's Office  
**John Cherry**, Murray County Sheriff's Office  
**Rose Geer**, Northwest Georgia Family Crisis Center  
**Sue Jordan**, Northwest Georgia Family Crisis Ctr, Chair  
**Kermit McManus**, District Attorney  
**Scott Minter**, District Attorney's Office  
**Marcy Muller**, Georgia Legal Services  
**Jim Sneary**, The RESOLV Project  
**Danielle Wise**, District Attorney's Office

#### **Houston Judicial Circuit**

**Shawn Carter**, Sentinel Probation Office  
**Gloria Cissé**, Southern Center for Choice Theory  
**Tomieka Daniel**, Georgia Legal Services  
**Al Elvins**, Sheriff's Office  
**Tina Greenlee**, Georgia Mentor  
**George Hartwig**, District Attorney  
**David Hill**, Perry Police Department  
**Mary Hodgkins**, Robins Air Force Base  
**Frank Mack**, Family Counseling Center of Central GA, Chair  
**Joanie Oxley**, Dept. of Family & Children Services  
**Nicole Poss**, HODAC  
**Tamara Rodriguez**, District Attorney's Office  
**Rev. Daryl Vinning**, Hebron Fellowship Church  
**Erikka Williams**, District Attorney's Office

#### **Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit**

**Judge Berryl Anderson**, Magistrate Court  
**Dick Bathrick**, Bathrick Consulting  
**Lakeysia Cofield**, Magistrate Court  
**Jean Douglas**, Women's Resource Center  
**Victoria Ferguson**, Magistrate Court  
**Sgt. Marnie Mercer**, DeKalb County Police Dept.  
**Jenni Stolarski**, Solicitor-General's Office  
**Betsy Ramsey**, Solicitor-General's Office  
**Jennifer Waindle**, DeKalb Probation  
**Lt. Michael Wilder**, Sheriff's Office  
**Natasha L. Williams**, Department of Veteran Affairs

The Augusta Judicial Circuit prepared a near-fatality case for review but put the review on hold until a pending appeal is resolved. Many other fatality review teams and task forces were active in implementing findings. For information on their activities see page 30.

#### **The Domestic Violence and Faith Initiative**

We continued making progress this year with implementing fatality review findings related to the faith community. Progress this year was largely due to the following ad hoc team of advocates and faith leaders who advised us and pushed our initiative forward. Thank you; we look forward to building on what we have accomplished together.

**Aparna Bhattacharyya**, Raksha, Inc.  
**Alice Davidson**, DV Task Force, Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta

**Lynda Goodwyn**, Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church  
**Rev. Sara Hayden**, Tri-Presbytery New Church Development Commission  
**Karria James**, Community Volunteer  
**Dr. Gus Kaufman, Jr.**, Licensed Psychologist, Oakhurst Psychotherapy  
**Wendy Lipshutz**, Shalom Bayit of Jewish Family and Career Services  
**Hadayai Majeed**, Baitul Salaam Network  
**Barbara E. Maples**, DV Task Force, Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta  
**The Rev. Patricia Merchant**, DV Task Force, Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta  
**Furquan Muhammad**, Masjid Al-Mu'minin  
**Navneet Narula**, UNITED SIKHS  
**Dr. Julia Perilla**, Caminar Latino  
**Kevin Spears**, Consultant, KRSpears, LLC  
**Bilal Stroud**, Muslim Men Against Domestic Violence  
**Jan Swanson**, Faith Alliance of Metro Atlanta  
**Rabbi Elana Zelony**, Congregation Shearith Israel

A special thanks goes to **Stephanie Crumpton**, GCFV contractor, for her work in coordinating and planning the 2011 Interfaith Training on Domestic Violence Response. Her knowledge and commitment to both issues of faith and domestic violence moved this work forward in a significant way. We would also like to thank **Rev. Dr. Marie Fortune** and **Jane Frederickson** of FaithTrust Institute ([www.faithtrustinstitute.org](http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org)), **Rev. Dr. Anne Marie Hunter** and **Alyson Morse Katzman** of Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence ([www.interfaithpartners.org](http://www.interfaithpartners.org)), and **Dick Bathrick**, Bathrick Consulting, for generously sharing their expertise, insights, and experience with us.

Fatality review is difficult work, both for the review teams and for the project staff. We want to acknowledge that the project staff could not have successfully conducted their work and completed this report without the support, analysis, and feedback from our colleagues. We thank our co-workers for their support on this project:

#### **Special thanks to GCFV coworkers for support**

**Jameelah Ferrell**, Project Assistant  
**Greg Loughlin**, Executive Director  
For part of the project year **Maggie Reeves**, Research and Communications Coordinator  
For part of the project year **Erin Oakley**, former FVIP Compliance Coordinator.

#### **Special thanks to GCADV coworkers for support**

**Heather Balom**, Communications Coordinator  
**Angie Boy**, Project Connect Coordinator  
**Christy Cardina**, Director of Training and Membership  
**Alexis Graf**, Training Coordinator  
**Shenna Johnson**, Community Resource Coordinator  
**Nicole Lesser**, Executive Director  
**Penny Rosenfield**, Director of Finance  
**Allison Smith**, Director of Public Policy





### REGARDING GENDER LANGUAGE IN THIS REPORT

The majority of domestic violence homicides in Georgia are men killing women in heterosexual relationships. However, it is important to acknowledge that domestic violence exists in same-sex relationships at roughly the same rates as in heterosexual, and lives are lost in those cases as well. Also, some men are battered by women, although this is an extremely small percentage of cases. Thus, while the language in the report reflects this reality, it should not be construed to suggest that all victims are female, and all perpetrators are male.

### CONTACT US:



Georgia Commission on  
Family Violence (GCFV)  
244 Washington Street, Suite 300  
Atlanta, GA 30334  
Phone: 404-657-3412  
Fax: 404-656-3987  
[www.gcfv.org](http://www.gcfv.org)



Georgia Coalition Against  
Domestic Violence (GCADV)  
114 New Street, Suite B  
Decatur, GA 30030  
Phone: 404-209-0280  
Fax 404-766-3800  
24-Hour Statewide Crisis Line:  
1-800-33-HAVEN (1-800-334-2836)  
[www.gcadv.org](http://www.gcadv.org)

### CLARIFICATION REGARDING DATA IN THIS REPORT

**Rounding:** In this report, the sum of individual data fields may not total 100% due to rounding.

**Total cases reviewed:** The Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project began in 2004. Since its inception, we have reviewed 86 total cases. This total of 86 includes 81 fatality cases and 5 near-fatalities in which the primary victim survived the attack.

**Chart 1** refers to all known DV-related deaths in Georgia, whether reviewed by the Project or not. All other charts include only data collected from the 81 fatality cases reviewed by the Project. Data from the near-fatality reviews is not included in the charts.

**Chart 1** begins in 2003. All other charts begin in 2004, the first year of the Project. Also, Chart 1 includes data through 2010 data; all others include data through 2011.

**Chart 1** counts all deaths, where each primary victim, secondary victim, and perpetrator is counted individually. All other charts count cases, where each case is counted as one unit, even if the case included multiple deaths.

### Disclaimer:

The views, opinions, findings, and recommendations expressed in the Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Annual Report do not necessarily reflect the views of individual GCFV Commission members, all GCADV member programs, funders, or individual Team members, and are the product of analysis by the joint GCFV and GCADV Project Team.