

GEORGIA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW PROJECT

SUPPLEMENT TO 2017 | 14TH ANNUAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, the Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project Annual Report contains aggregated data and charts for all cases reviewed by the Project. In 2017, the Project focused on the connection between domestic violence and stalking, and to highlight the trends specific to stalking cases, the data in the Report was segmented for comparison against itself. This document is a supplement to the 2017 Annual Report and provides the aggregated data that our readers use for developing training content, conducting community outreach and education or when writing grant proposals.

Charts 1–3 of this document are also included in the 2017 Annual Report. These charts are generated using statewide data sourced from media monitoring and stakeholders and are not reflective of reviewed cases. Because of this method of collection, the Project does not have complete information for all cases in Georgia and acknowledges our data is an undercount of the true number of domestic violence-related fatalities in our

state. That may be particularly true in certain types of domestic violence-related deaths including: children killed by domestic violence abusers as part of an ongoing pattern of abuse in the home, same-sex relationships, homicides mistakenly classified as suicide or accident, missing persons and unsolved homicides, victims who lived in Georgia and were killed in a different state, and suicides of domestic violence victims or perpetrators. We welcome new sources of information on domestic violence-related deaths known to our readers and encourage you to contact the Project to contribute information from your area.

Charts 4–15 contain aggregate data for all cases reviewed by the Project between 2004 and 2017. Each chart includes key points designed to summarize some of the important findings of the chart or graph. If you have not received a copy of the 2017 Annual Report you can download your copy from our website, GeorgiaFatalityReview.com.

This document was developed by the Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project and was revised on 03/01/18. When using this data, please cite the 2017 Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project. For more information or questions, please contact Tylor Tabb at ttabb@gcadv.org or Niki Lemeshka at niki.lemeshka@dcs.ga.gov.

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1 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RELATED DEATHS IN GEORGIA: 2017

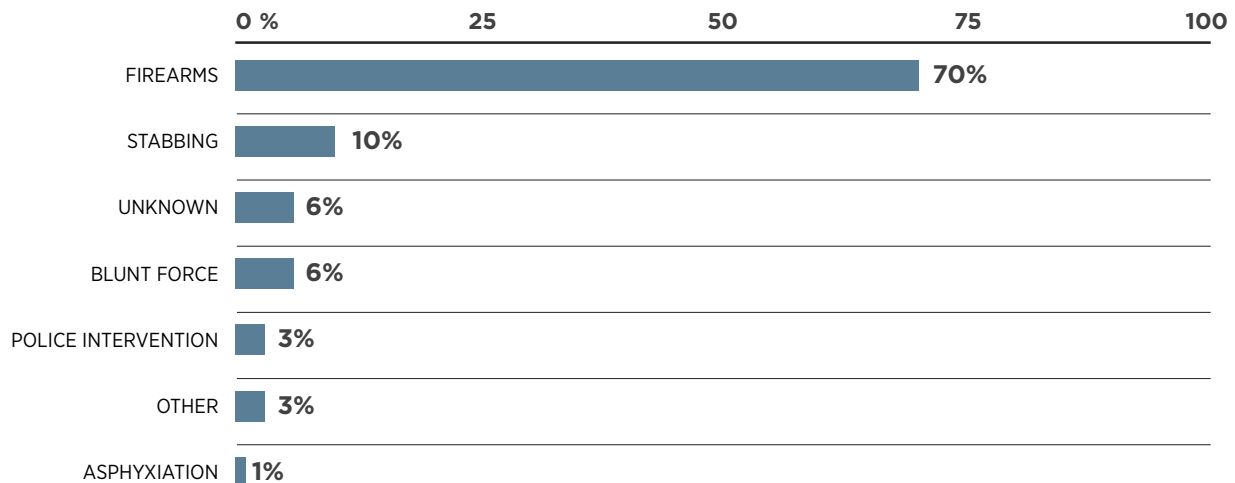
COUNTY	NUMBER OF DEATHS	COUNTY	NUMBER OF DEATHS
Baldwin	1	Gordon	2
Barrow	1	Gwinnett	10
Ben Hill	2	Habersham	2
Bibb	3	Hall	3
Bulloch	2	Hancock	2
Calhoun	1	Haralson	1
Camden	1	Houston	1
Carroll	5	Jackson	3
Chatham	1	Laurens	3
Cherokee	3	Lumpkin	1
Clarke	4	Murray	1
Clayton	2	Muscogee	5
Cobb	11	Newton	4
Coffee	2	Oconee	2
Colquitt	1	Paulding	1
Coweta	2	Pickens	2
Crawford	1	Rockdale	3
DeKalb	11	Spalding	4
Dougherty	7	Taylor	1
Elbert	1	Telfair	1
Fayette	2	Toombs	1
Floyd	1	Troup	1
Forsyth	6	Twiggs	1
Franklin	2	Upson	1
Fulton	11	Walker	1
Gilmer	1	Warren	1
Glynn	5	White	1

Chart 1 and Chart 2 Key Points:

Chart 1 includes only Georgia counties in which a domestic violence-related death is known to have occurred in 2017. Chart 2 captures the cause of death in those incidents. Previous versions of this chart included a category called “suicide by cop.” The category is now called “police intervention” and includes instances where abusers were killed by law enforcement officers responding to a domestic violence incident. Most incidents are consistent with “suicide by cop,” in which abusers threaten officers or victims with deadly violence to provoke a lethal response.

TOTAL: 149

2 CAUSE OF DEATH IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE-RELATED DEATHS IN GEORGIA: 2017



3 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE-RELATED DEATHS IN GEORGIA BY COUNTY PER CAPITA: 2013-2017

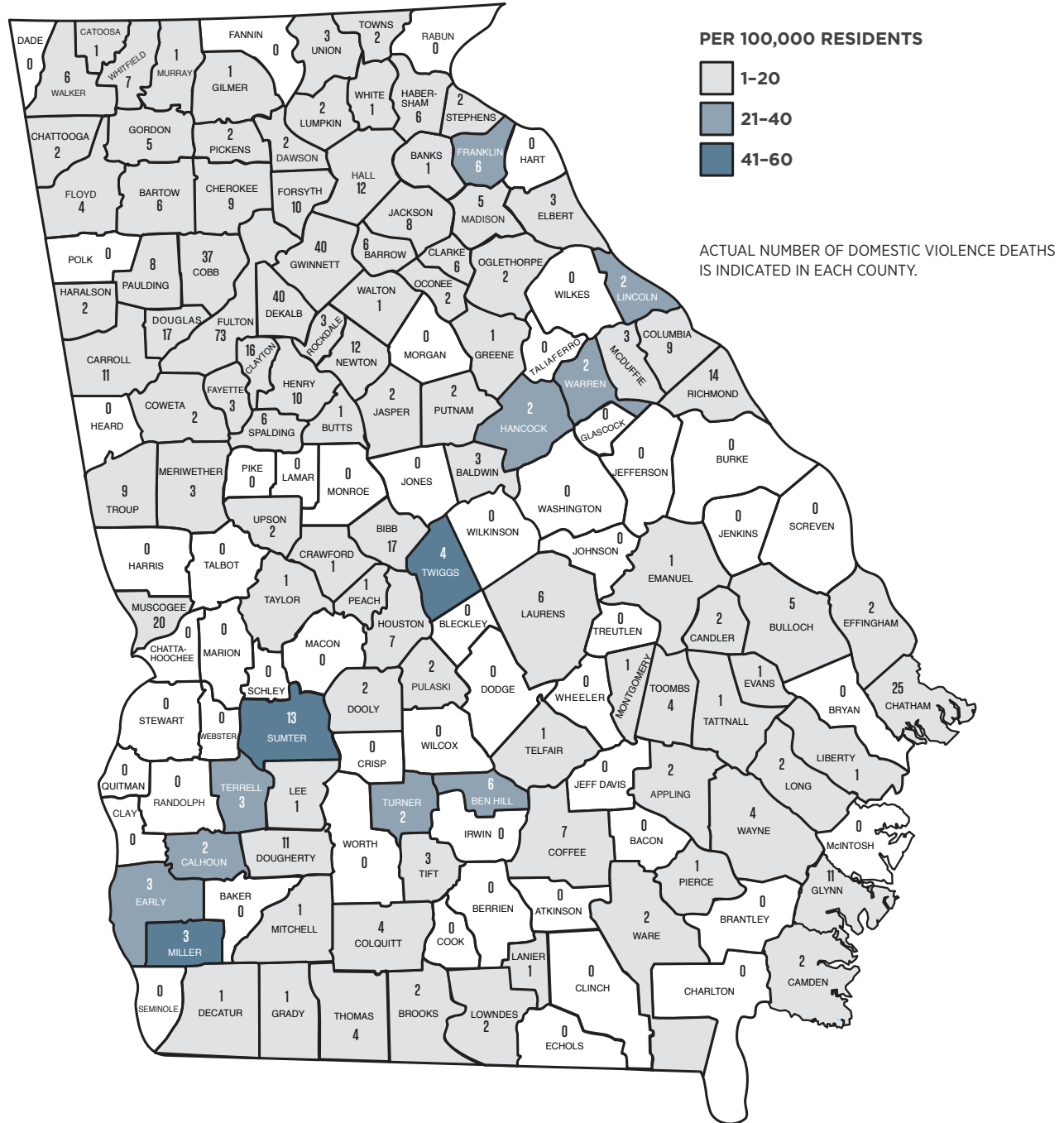


Chart 3 Key Points: Chart 3 shows both the per capita homicide rate and actual numbers of deaths by county known to have occurred from 2013–2017. The Project compiled statistics using media monitoring and reports from domestic violence programs and District Attorney’s offices statewide; information was normalized using 2010 census data. This count represents all domestic violence-related deaths known to us at the time of the Report, including intimate partners and related persons, such as

new relationship partners, children and other family members. To show the full scope of lives lost due to domestic violence, statistics also include deaths of alleged perpetrators, most of whom committed suicide after killing or attempting to kill the victim(s). Numbers in these charts are subject to change slightly from year to year as new information on individual cases is reported or known to us.

4 VICTIM CAUSE OF DEATH IN REVIEWED CASES: 2004-2017

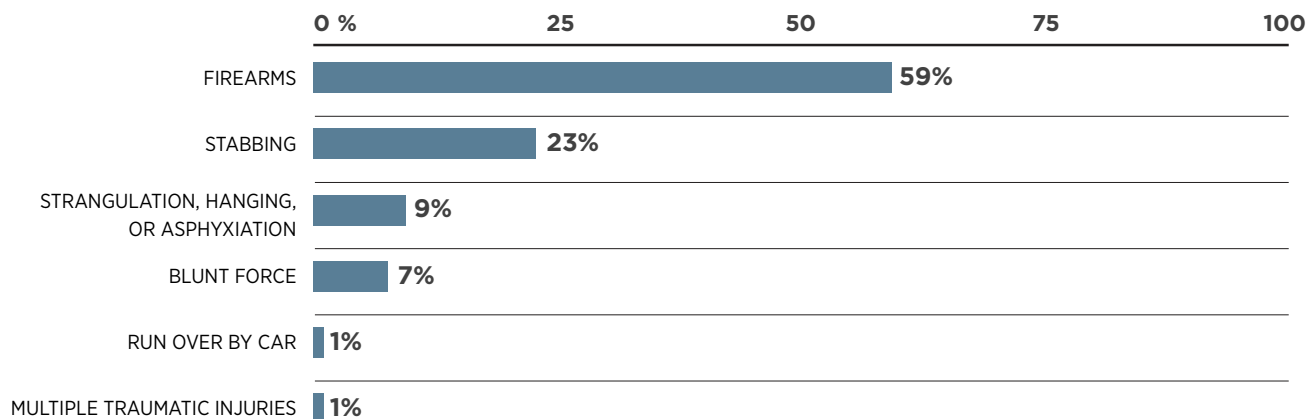


Chart 4 Key Points: Outnumbering all other means combined, firearms (59%) were the leading cause of death for victims in cases reviewed between 2004 and 2017. The presence of a firearm in domestic violence situations increases the risk of

homicide, regardless of who owns the gun. The Project's ongoing finding of firearms as the leading cause of death underscores our repeated recommendation to use all legal means possible to remove firearms from the hands of domestic violence abusers.

5 TYPES OF INCIDENTS IN REVIEWED CASES: 2004-2017

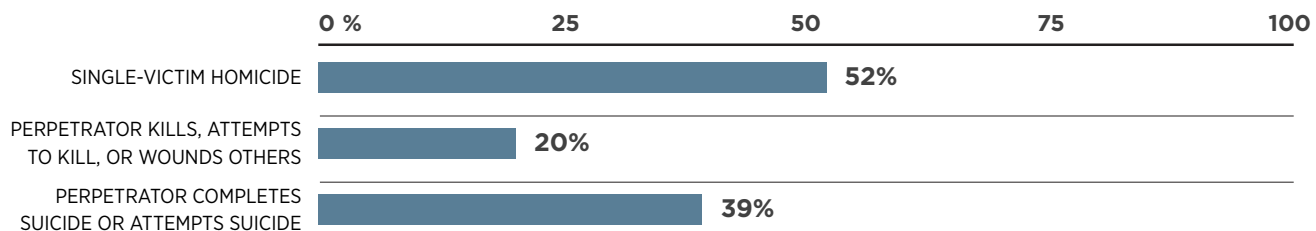


Chart 5 Key Points: The majority of the cases reviewed by the Project (52%) between 2004 and 2017 have been single-victim homicides. Thirty-nine percent of reviewed cases are classified as attempted or completed murder-suicides. This homicide-suicide connection was the focus of the 2016 Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project Annual Report and includes additional information on how to address the issue of suicide in domestic violence cases. The report can be downloaded from GeorgiaFatalityReview.com.

Abusers do not limit their violence to their intimate partner. In 20 percent of reviewed cases, someone other than an intimate partner was killed. This includes children of the intimate partner, new dating partners, family members, law enforcement responders, and bystanders. Often, other people close to the victim are targeted 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.

6 LOCATION OF FATAL INCIDENT: 2004-2017

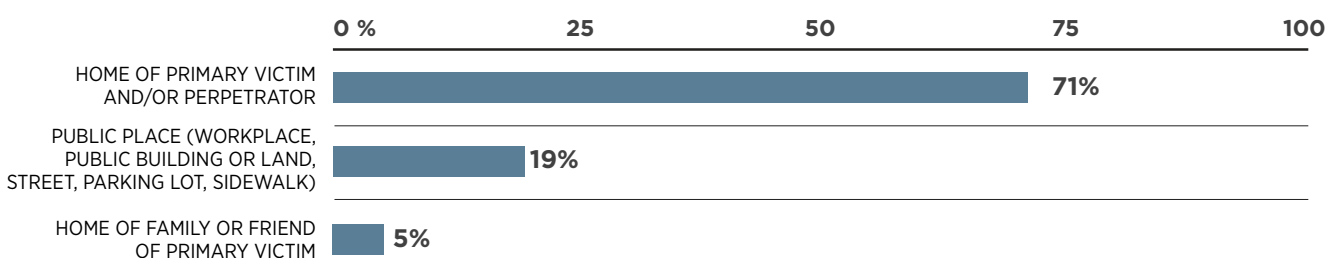


Chart 6 Key Points: Most fatal incidents reviewed by the Project occurred in the home (71%), a space where everyone deserves to be safe. Often, children and other adults also shared these living spaces — homes that are now crime scenes. Beyond the disruption and potential trauma of families not being allowed in these spaces during the investigation, after the investigation is complete, some families return to a home filled with memories and tragedy to retrieve belongings and handle the estates of their deceased loved ones. Neighbors and communities may also be impacted by the violence that took place within a house in their neighborhood. Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program can assist surviving families with the cost of crime

scene cleanup and counseling. Please see its website for more information: crimevictimscomp.ga.gov.

In nearly one-quarter of reviewed cases (24%), the homicide occurred in someone else's home or a more public space, which inherently increases the risk of bystanders being injured or killed. The 2017 Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project Annual Report focuses on intimate partner stalking. The Report notes a trend that fatal incidents in reviewed cases which involved stalking were at an increased likelihood to occur in a public space. You can read more about that trend by downloading the report from GeorgiaFatalityReview.com.

7 RELATIONSHIP STATUS AT THE TIME OF THE FATAL INCIDENT: 2004–2017

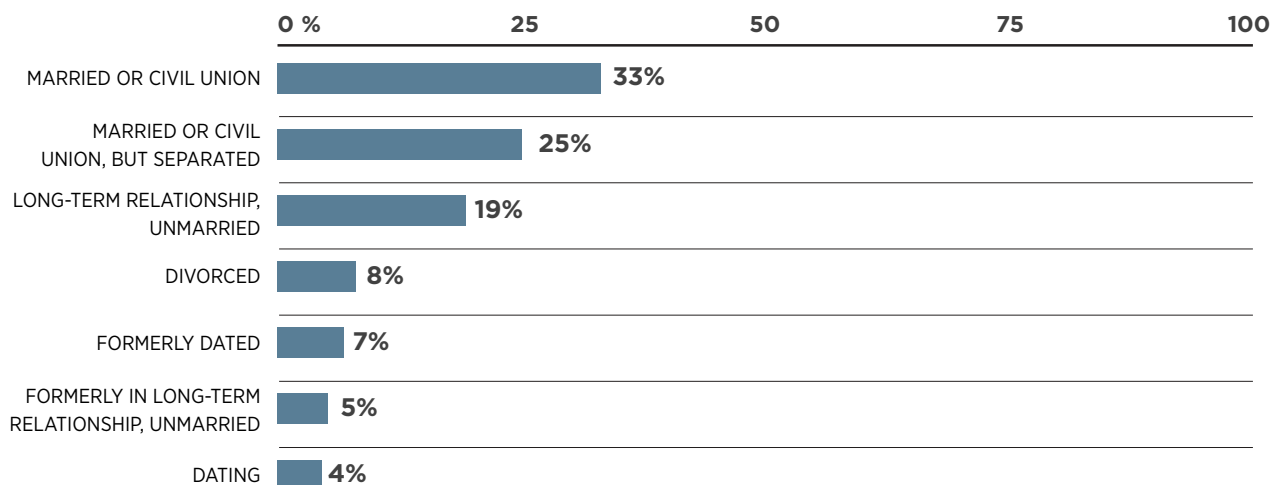


Chart 7 Key Points: The majority of fatal incidents involve current or former intimate partners who were in a long-standing relationship. In only four percent of reviewed cases were the parties involved in a shorter-term dating relationship at the time of the fatal incident; more than half (52%) of couples were in a long-term relationship (married or civil union (33%) or long-term relationship but unmarried (19%)) at the time of the fatal incident.

In just under half (45%) of reviewed cases the relationship had ended or the couple had separated (divorced (8%), married or civil union but separated (25%), formerly long-term relationship (5%) or formerly dated (7%)). However, this chart does not reflect

the fact that almost all victims were contemplating leaving the relationship or taking steps to do so. Victims are at the highest risk of being killed by their abusive partners when they separate from them; both rates of, and severity of, physical abuse increase during periods of separation and divorce. Even when a victim's desire to leave is not spoken aloud, any increase in behaviors or steps to gain independence may signal to the partner that they are losing control over the victim. Taking a new job, increasing social activities, saving money, and changing locks on doors can all signal to a domestic violence abuser that the victim is serious about leaving and is actively taking steps to separate.

8 SHARED CHILDREN BETWEEN VICTIM AND PERPETRATOR: 2004-2017

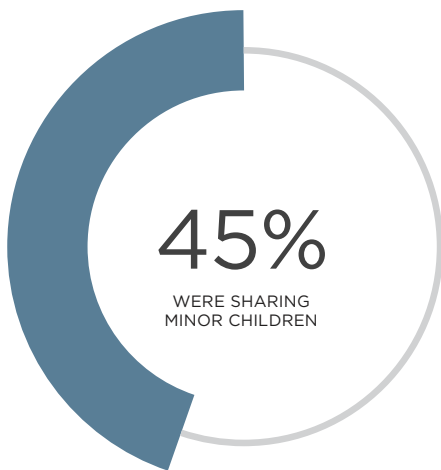


Chart 8 Key Points: In 45 percent of reviewed cases, the perpetrator and victim had at least one minor child together. Sharing children can significantly increase victims' barriers to safety, including their decision to leave the relationship, their ability to support themselves and their children away from the abuser, and continued interactions with the abuser regarding custody arrangements. In some cases, the fatal incident occurred in the presence of the children during a custody exchange. Supervised visitation and safe exchange locations are important options for maintaining the safety of victims and their children. You can read more about the impact of domestic violence on children in the 2015 Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project's Annual Report, available for download at GeorgiaFatalityReview.com.

9 TEMPORARY PROTECTIVE ORDER IN EFFECT AT TIME OF FATAL INCIDENT: 2004-2017

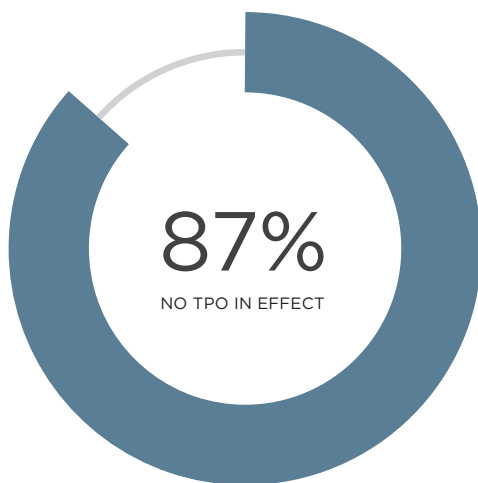


Chart 9 Key Points: In reviewed cases, 24 percent of victims had previously obtained a TPO against their perpetrator. Thirteen percent of those victims had a Temporary Protective Order (TPO) in place at the time of the fatal incident. TPOs are a highly useful tool for victims seeking safety from abuse, but they must be considered only one portion of a complete safety plan. Obtaining a TPO is a multi-step process, which in turn may lead to an escalation in threatening or violent behavior by the perpetrator. It is imperative that all victims of domestic violence seeking relief from the courts be referred to a domestic violence advocate who can explore the potential risks associated with filing a TPO, conduct risk assessment and safety planning, and offer additional resources and support.

10 AGE OF VICTIMS IN REVIEWED CASES: 2004-2017

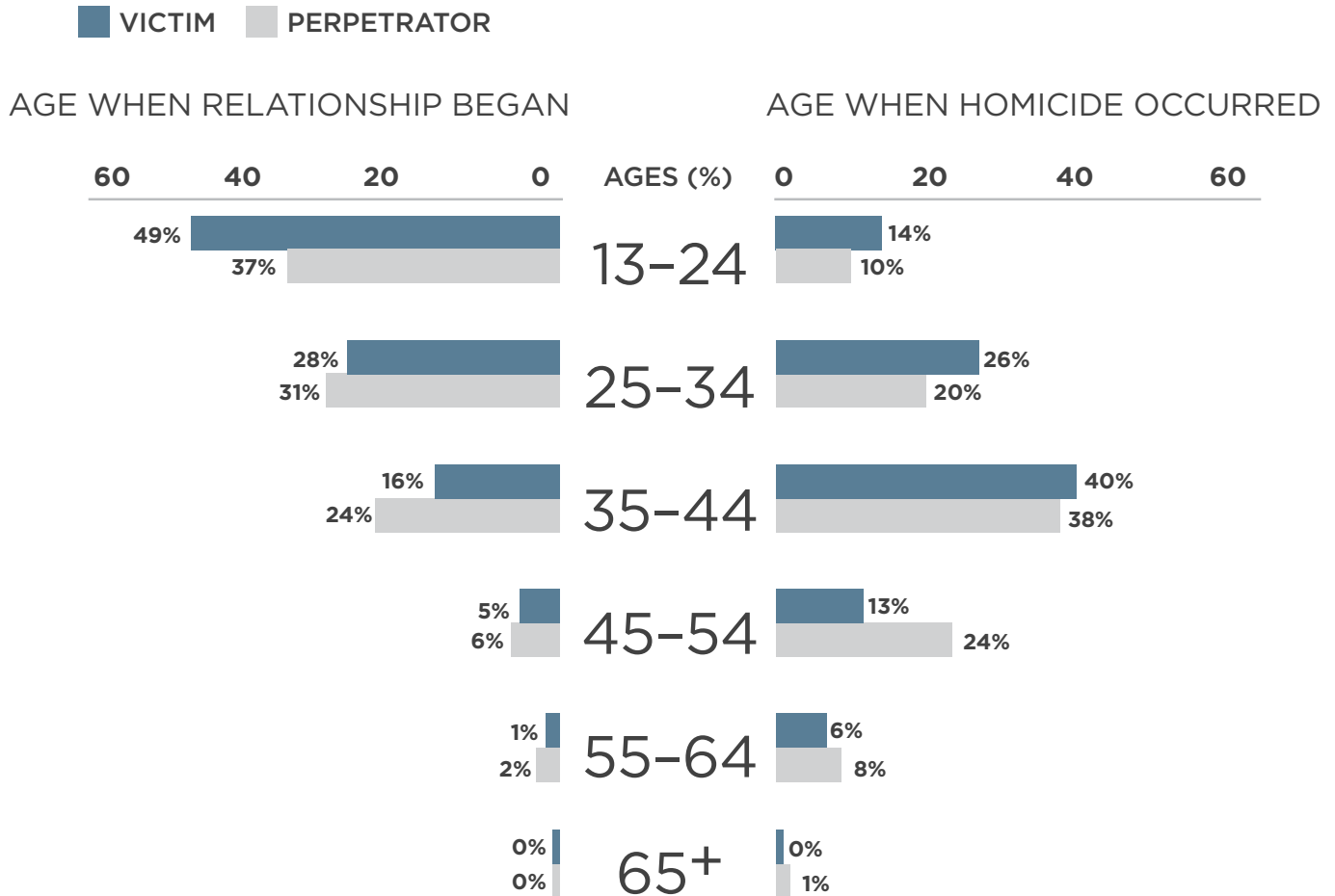
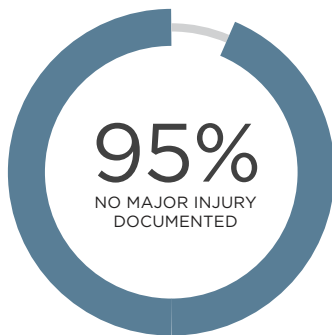


Chart 10 Key Points: While the Project has reviewed cases involving victims and perpetrators who comprise a wide range of ages, many of these relationships began when the parties were quite young. In nearly half (49%) of reviewed cases, the victim was between the ages of 13 and 24 when the fatal relationship began. Twenty-four percent of victims of victims were between the ages of 13 and 19.

Although a considerable number of relationships started when the victim was young, many of these relationships spanned several years. The Project found that 40 percent of victims were killed when they were between the ages of 35 and 44. These numbers demonstrate that many of the relationships lasted well beyond 10 years and highlight the need for early intervention for teens experiencing dating violence.

11A HISTORY OF DOCUMENTED INJURY TO THE VICTIM: 2004–2017



11B HISTORY OF DOCUMENTED VISIBLE INJURY TO THE VICTIM: 2004–2017

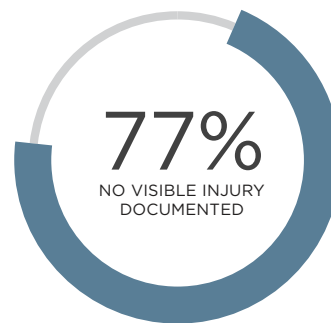


Chart 11a and 11b Key Points: Although 72 percent of reviewed cases had known contact with law enforcement, in only 23 percent of those incidents was a visible injury documented when law enforcement responded to a domestic violence incident involving the parties. In only five percent of incidents involving the parties was a major injury documented at the time of law enforcement’s response. These findings suggest

that prior physical violence may not be the most pertinent indicator for victims at risk for intimate partner homicide. To identify high-risk victims and provide appropriate intervention, advocates and law enforcement conducting risk assessments must consider the comprehensive combination of the victim’s experiences, beyond solely physical violence.

12 PERCENTAGE OF CASES WHERE OTHERS WITNESSED THE FATAL INCIDENT: 2004–2017

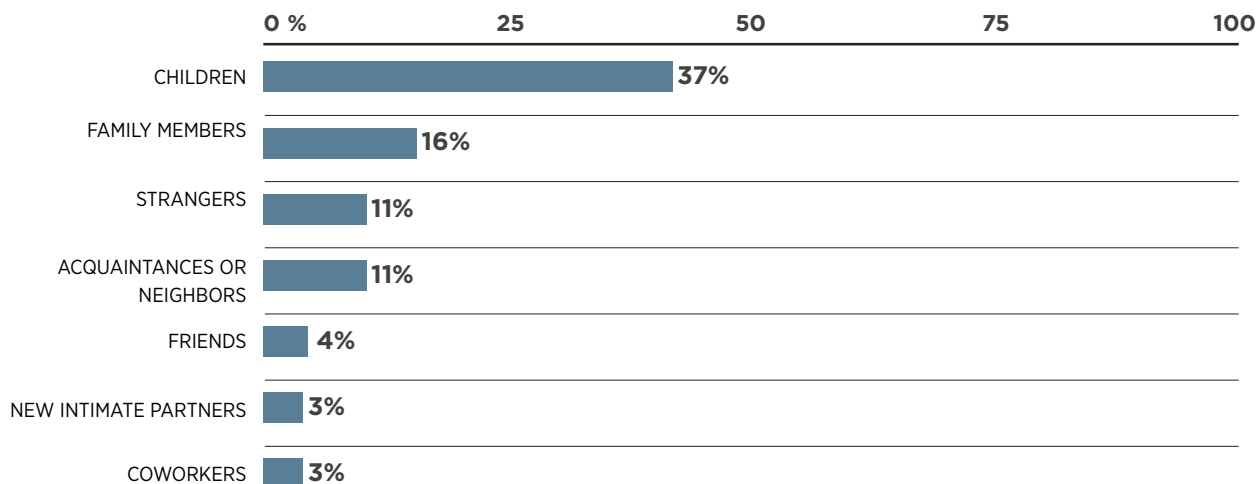


Chart 12 Key Points: It is not uncommon for bystanders to witness the fatal incidents of abuse in reviewed cases. Witnesses to the fatal incident were present in 52 percent of cases reviewed by the Project. In 37 percent of reviewed cases, one or more children witnessed the fatal incident. Often, if the children did not directly witness the homicide, they were the first to discover their deceased parent or caregiver. There is a critical need to assist children dealing with the traumatic effects of witnessing

a fatal incident, losing one or both parents or caregivers, and witnessing domestic violence. In particular, the Project has found that children and surviving family members of murder-suicides are less likely to be aware of available resources. Given that finding, the Project now offers the “Support for Survivors of Murder-Suicide” brochure available for download at GeorgiaFatalityReview.com/resources.

13 INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OUTCOMES: 2004–2017

AGENCY / SERVICE / PROGRAM		VICTIMS		PERPETRATORS	
		#	% TOTAL CASES	#	% TOTAL CASES
JUSTICE SYSTEM AGENCIES	Law enforcement	84	79%	88	83%
	Prosecutor	42	40%	58	55%
	Magistrate court	32	30%	42	40%
	Municipal court	6	6%	9	8%
	State court	22	21%	38	36%
	Superior court	35	33%	42	40%
	Civil court, including juvenile	24	23%	23	22%
	Court-based legal advocacy	14	13%	2	2%
	Protection order advocacy	16	15%	2	2%
	Legal Aid or Georgia Legal Services	3	3%	0	0%
	Probation	12	11%	40	38%
	Parole	2	2%	11	10%
	Supervised visitation	1	1%	0	0%
SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES	Child protective services (DFCS)	13	12%	11	10%
	TANF or Food Stamps	8	8%	3	3%
	Medicaid	6	6%	2	2%
	Child care services	5	5%	2	2%
	Homeless shelter	2	2%	1	1%
	PeachCare	1	1%	0	0%
	WIC	6	6%	0	0%
HEALTH CARE AGENCIES	Private physician	25	24%	20	19%
	Emergency medical service (EMS)	14	13%	10	9%
	Hospital	24	23%	21	20%
	Emergency medical care	20	19%	9	8%
	Mental health provider	12	11%	25	24%
	Substance use program	3	3%	7	7%
FAMILY VIOLENCE AGENCIES	Community-based advocacy	18	17%	4	4%
	Domestic violence shelter or safe house	15	14%	0	0%
	Family Violence Intervention Program (FVIP)	2	2%	11	10%
	Sexual assault center	1	1%	1	1%
MISCELLANEOUS AGENCIES	Religious community	34	32%	25	24%
	Immigrant resettlement	2	2%	1	1%
	Anger management	1	1%	5	5%
	Animal control	1	1%	0	0%
	English as a Second Language (ESL)	1	1%	0	0%

Chart 13 Key Points: In reviewed cases, 83 percent of perpetrators and 79 percent of victims had contact with law enforcement in the five years prior to the fatal incident. In contrast, during the same time frame, victims in reviewed cases had contact with a domestic violence program in only 14 percent of cases. This gap in the rate of contact represents the essential role law enforcement personnel can play in ensuring that victims receive referrals to the vital services that are offered by domestic violence programs throughout Georgia.

In reviewed cases, both victims (32%) and perpetrators (24%) had significant contact with religious communities, highlighting a largely untapped opportunity for intervention by the couple's faith leaders. Religious communities have great potential for offering resources, referrals, and safety to their congregants. Materials on outreach to the faith community on the issue of domestic violence, including "Safe Sacred Space: A Manual for Faith Leaders" and "Safe Sacred Space: A Training Guide for Family Violence Task Forces," are available for download at GeorgiaFatalityReview.com.

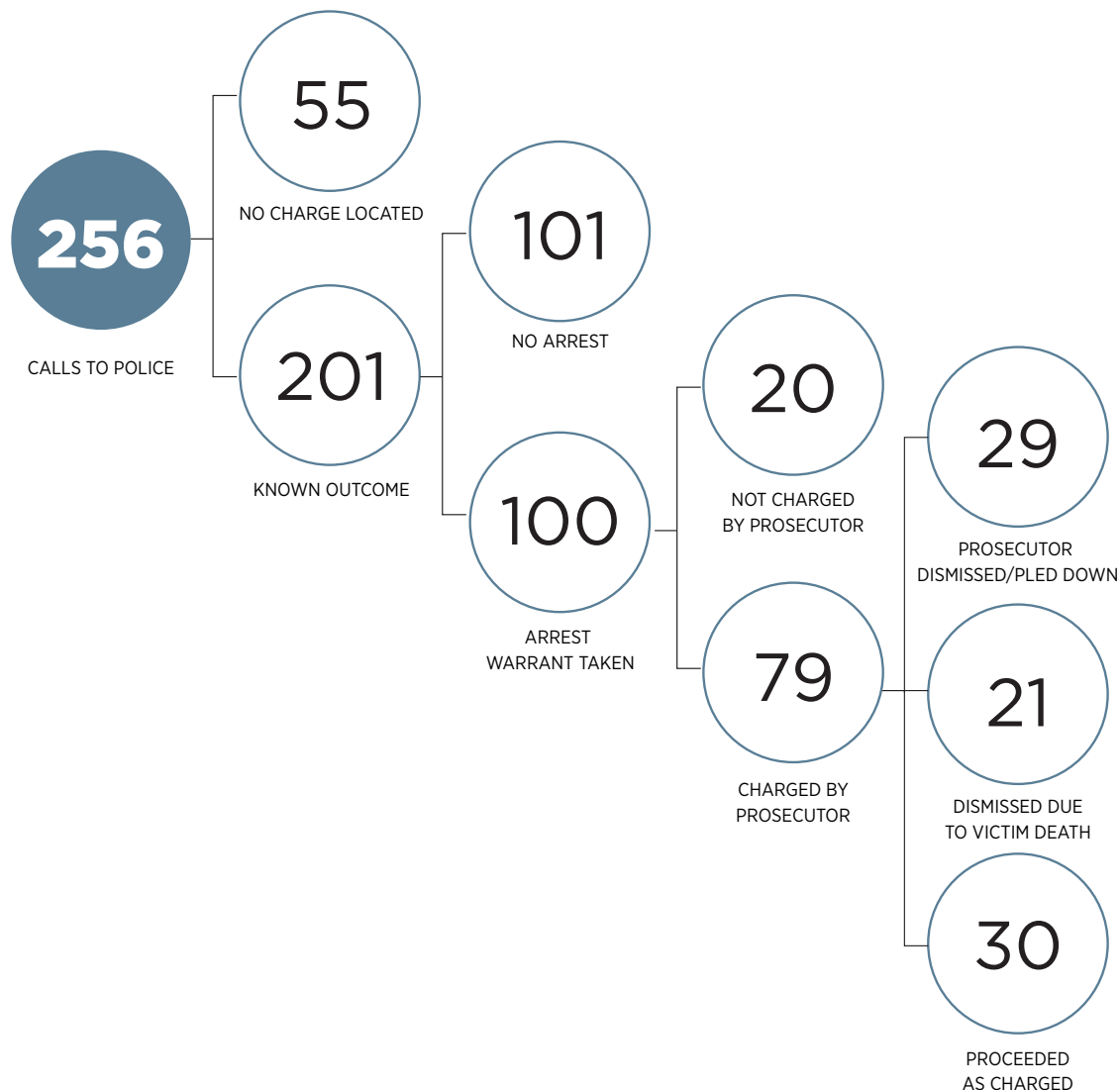
14 INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OUTCOMES: 2004–2017

Chart 14 Key Points: In reviewed cases, 256 calls were made to law enforcement regarding a domestic violence incident prior to the fatal incident. Because law enforcement often acts as the first point of contact between the victim and the criminal legal system, officers have a unique opportunity to influence victim safety. It is crucial for law enforcement officers to both make arrests and make effective referrals for victim services on-scene. Fatality Review Teams located outcomes for only 79 percent of calls made to law enforcement, indicating a gap between written policy (requiring officers to write family violence incident reports after each call of alleged domestic violence to which they respond) and practice.

In the 201 known outcomes, half showed no arrest was made by law enforcement or there was no record of charges against the accused abuser. Most often, officers did not make arrests because they did not find probable cause or because the

perpetrator fled the scene. While thankfully the practice has slowed over time, in cases reviewed between 2004 and 2017, 34 percent of victims were advised to apply for their own arrest warrants. Referring the victim to seek their own warrant increases barriers to justice and safety risks for victims.

Of the cases where law enforcement was called and an arrest was made, prosecutors pursued a majority (79%) of family violence arrests. However, of the cases where charges were pursued by prosecutors, a significant number (37%) were later dismissed or pled down. In 27 percent of cases charged by the prosecutor, charges were dismissed because the victim was killed prior to the case proceeding to prosecution. This suggests that the period following a perpetrator's arrest is one of heightened risk to the victim and may warrant an expedited prosecutorial process.



15 **PERPETRATOR'S KNOWN LETHALITY INDICATORS: 2004–2017**

		% OF CASES WHERE THIS FACTOR WAS PRESENT
VIOLENT BEHAVIOR	History of domestic violence against victim	91%
	Threats to kill the primary victim	55%
	Violent criminal history	48%
	Stalking	58%
	Threats to harm victim with weapon	38%
	Child abuse perpetrator	26%
	History of DV against others	26%
	Inflict serious injury on victim	25%
	Sexual abuse perpetrator	21%
	Strangulation	23%
	Threats to kill children, family and/or friends	16%
	Harmed victim with weapon	12%
	Hostage taking	8%
CONTROLLING BEHAVIORS	Monitoring and controlling	56%
	Isolation of victim	32%
	Ownership of victim	26%
MENTAL HEALTH/ SUBSTANCE USE ISSUES	Alcohol and drug abuse	52%
	Suicide threats and attempts	37%
	Depression	34%

Chart 15 Key Points: In 91 percent of reviewed cases, there was a known history of domestic violence against the victim, including physical and emotional abuse. While a past history of abuse is often considered to be one of the best indicators of future harm, many tactics of abuse known as “lethality indicators” also contribute to increased risk.

The greatest indicator of increased risk of lethal violence is a cluster of indicators, and evaluating the prevalence of the tactics of abuse used by perpetrators gives us a window into the victim’s experience. Often the picture that is painted of domestic violence is one that centers on physical abuse, but Project findings indicate that non-violent tactics were much more prevalent in reviewed cases. In 58 percent of reviewed cases, the perpetrator had stalked the primary victim, and the perpetrator had exhibited monitoring and controlling behavior toward the victim in 56 percent of reviewed cases.

Perpetrators in reviewed cases also regularly utilized threats to themselves and others. In 55 percent of reviewed cases, the perpetrator had threatened to kill the primary victim and in nearly 40 percent, the perpetrator threatened to harm the victim with a weapon. In 37 percent of reviewed cases, the perpetrator had a history of suicide threats and attempts.

Also of interest, the perpetrator had a history of substance abuse issues in 52 percent of reviewed cases. While this factor is associated with increased risk of lethal violence, it is also important to acknowledge that substance abuse is not the cause of domestic violence. To properly mitigate risk of lethal violence, a perpetrator who is experiencing issues of addiction must be referred for treatment for the substance abuse as well as Family Violence Intervention Program.



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