
Dallas Domestic Violence Taskforce

Annual Summary Report: 2015-2016

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Introduction

For 30 years the City of Dallas Domestic Violence Taskforce has served the community by combatting domestic violence and raising awareness about this public health and safety issue. Composed of elected officials and representatives of law enforcement, courts, and corrections, as well as members of advocacy, religious, media, and volunteer organizations, the Taskforce has established itself as the clear voice of community safety concerns and activism. This Annual Summary Report builds on the first by providing updates and trend information on the activities and membership of partners in the Taskforce, all in an effort to show Dallas's systemic response to the threat of domestic violence.

The City of Dallas Domestic Violence Taskforce was created in 1987 to investigate and monitor the city's response to domestic violence. It is made up of representatives from family violence advocacy organizations, including The Family Place, Genesis Women's Shelter, and New Beginnings, and the Dallas Police Department (DPD). Although the Taskforce was instructed to meet for two years only, the group quickly realized the impact of their coordinated efforts in helping victims. Strong working relationships have been formed within the group, which has been meeting quarterly since 1986; the Taskforce's general meetings are open to the public.

In addition, the Executive Committee, composed of a small number of partners, meets monthly to discuss detailed metrics and guide city policy. Recently, the Taskforce has received renewed attention, especially in the form of its Annual Report, under the leadership of Mayor Mike Rawlings. Following the brutal murder of Karen Cox Smith in 2013, Mayor Rawlings launched the Men Against Abuse Campaign and appointed Council Member Jennifer Gates to chair the Domestic Violence Taskforce, mobilizing the community to do more to address domestic violence.

Council Member Gates was charged with gathering metrics to highlight community and governmental efforts in raising awareness. Toward this end, in 2014 she invited Dr. Denise Paquette Boots (associate professor of criminology and senior research fellow at the Institute for Urban Policy Research at the University of Texas at Dallas) to join the Executive Committee and general Taskforce and spearhead its data collection. Accordingly, Dr. Boots met with these partners over an 18-month period to ensure reliability and rigor in these measures, as these agencies and organizations have voluntarily expended significant efforts and manpower in informing the inaugural report, which was released in Fall 2015.

This report builds on that of the previous year, employing similar surveys for both general Taskforce and Executive Committee partners. Furthermore, it includes updated metrics from local government agencies, particularly law enforcement and judicial partners. Similar to the previous report, the timeframe for reporting is June 2015 through May 2016. Together, these data present a cumulative picture of the systemic response to domestic violence in our community and offer a preliminary glimpse into the year-over-year changes that would impact policy and criminal justice issues moving forward.

A General Overview of the Systemic Response to Domestic Violence

In 2016, all attendees of the general Domestic Violence Taskforce meetings were invited by email to participate in a brief electronic survey about their organizations and levels of involvement. In all, 60 invitations were distributed to individual email addresses. Of those, 44 started the survey, and 36 completed it, yielding a 73 percent response rate and an 82 percent completion rate. These rates are outstanding considering that all attendees of general Taskforce meetings were invited to return the survey, regardless of whether they had attended once or were regular participants.

About the Survey

The survey asked respondents for information about themselves, their organizations (if applicable), and their involvement in the Domestic Violence Taskforce. Those who indicated they represented the interests of an organization such as a non-profit or government agency were asked about their organizations’ employment, characteristics, and mission and purpose. Respondents whose organizations provided shelter services were asked about shelter capacity. As in any survey instrument, respondents were free to answer all, some, or none of the questions. This caused total sample size to vary across tables and figures. To maintain integrity, missing data were not imputed, and no entries were changed from the original.

This year’s survey represents an attempt to integrate responses across both the general membership and the metrics-reporting members. Metrics-reporting members represent the executive committee and have each agreed to provide detailed monthly performance metrics on domestic violence-related functions in their agencies. The resulting data set comprises 2,569 variables, providing unparalleled information about the scope and scale of domestic violence in the City of Dallas. The magnitude of this data set, however, produced its share of difficulties. Staff spent 20 hours cleaning and coding the data to produce the results contained in this report.

Survey Findings

As shown in Figure 1, together non-profit organizations and the representatives of elected officials and their staff represented two-thirds of respondents in program year 2015-2016, accounting for 43.2 percent and 24.3 percent of respondents, respectively. This represents an increase in their combined share from the previous year. Meanwhile, the share of respondents representing non-elected government agencies was half of that of the previous year.

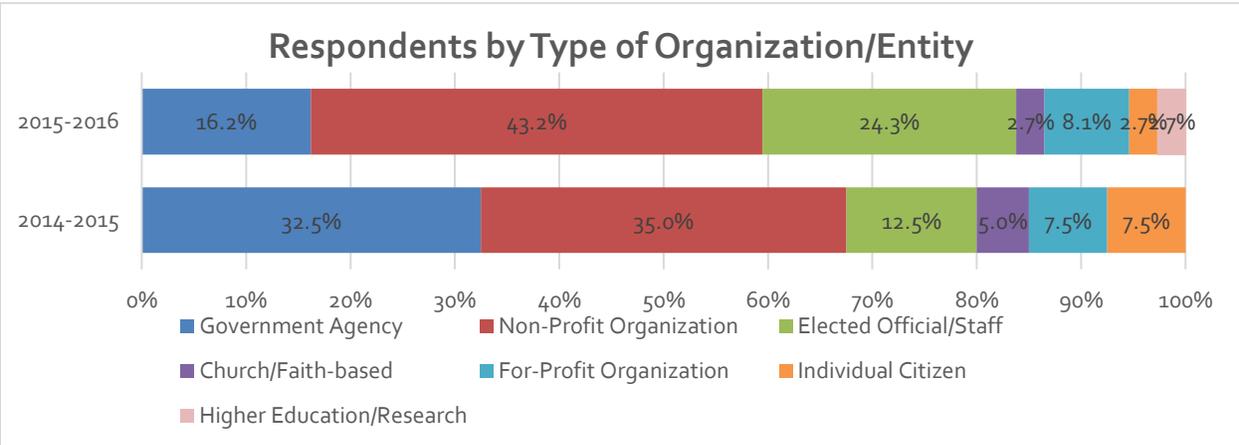


Figure 1. Percent of respondents by organization or entity type

Table 1 presents the distribution of survey respondents by type of organization and length of membership with the Dallas Domestic Violence Taskforce. Of the 35 who responded to this question, the majority have been on the Taskforce for two years or fewer. This pattern was consistent across the variety of organizations represented, with elected officials and for-profit representatives expressing slightly longer tenures.

Table 1. Distribution of survey respondents by type of organization and length of membership

	Govt. Agency	Non-Profit	Church / Faith Based	Elected Official	For-Profit	Higher Ed / Research	Individual	Total
Less Than One Year	2 33%	4 27%	0 0%	3 33%	1 33%	0 0%	1 100%	11 31%
1-2 Years	2 33%	5 33%	0 0%	3 33%	1 33%	1 100%	0 0%	12 33%
3-4 Years	1 17%	3 20%	1 100%	3 33%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	8 22%
5-9 Years	1 17%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 3%
10 or More Years	0 0%	2 13%	0 0%	0 0%	1 33%	0 0%	0 0%	3 8%
Total	6	14	1	9	3	1	1	35

Table 2 presents, among respondents representing organizations, the distribution of organizational membership in the Dallas Domestic Violence Taskforce by type of organization. While the modal category for individuals was two or fewer years, 78 percent of reporting organizations have been participating for fewer than five years. Combined, the results suggest that tenure has decreased among participating agencies. Last year, 44 percent of reporting agencies had been participating for five or more years; that figure has dropped to 17 percent in this year's report.

Table 2. Distribution of organizations by type of organization and length of membership

	Government Agency	Non-Profit	Church / Faith Based	For-Profit	Total
Less Than One Year	1 20%	4 27%	0 0%	1 50%	6 26%
1-2 Years	1 20%	5 33%	0 0%	1 50%	7 30%
3-4 Years	1 20%	3 20%	1 100%	0 0%	5 22%
5-9 Years	0 0%	1 7%	0 0%	0 0%	1 4%
10 or More Years	1 20%	2 13%	0 0%	0 0%	3 13%
Not Applicable	1 20%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 4%
Total	5	15	1	2	23

Services Provided by Agencies

Respondents representing agencies were asked about the services their agencies provide to victims of domestic violence. Figure 2 through Figure 9 demonstrate that the range of services provided has changed modestly since the previous year: The number of responding agencies that provide media services, medical services, and education increased, and the most frequently co-occurring services were education and counseling/therapy services. Three in four counseling/therapy providers also provide education services. Similarly, 90 percent of shelter organizations also provide counseling/therapy services.

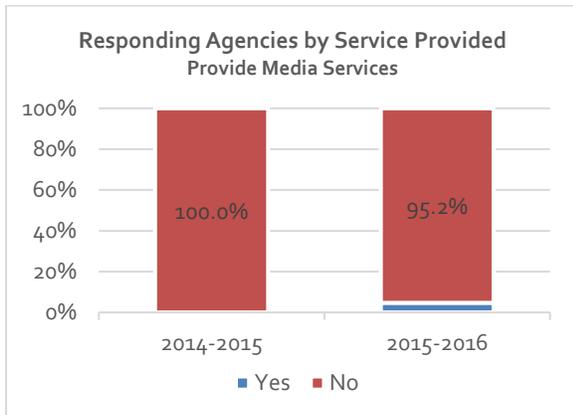


Figure 2. Agencies providing media services

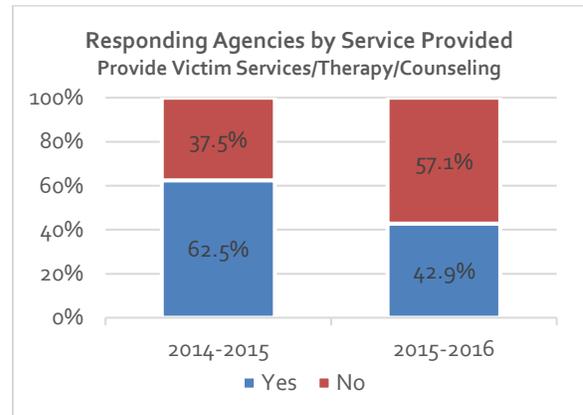


Figure 4. Agencies providing victim services, therapy, or counseling

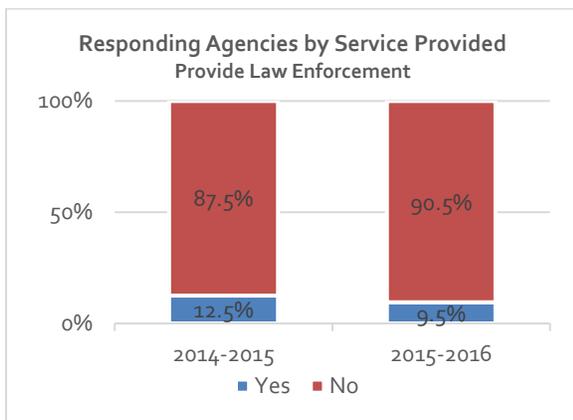


Figure 3. Agencies providing law-enforcement services

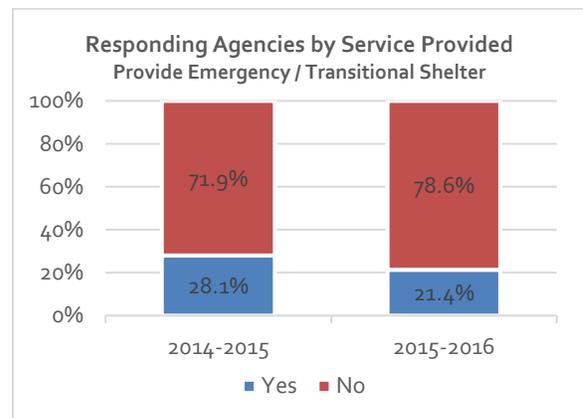


Figure 5. Agencies providing emergency or transitional shelter

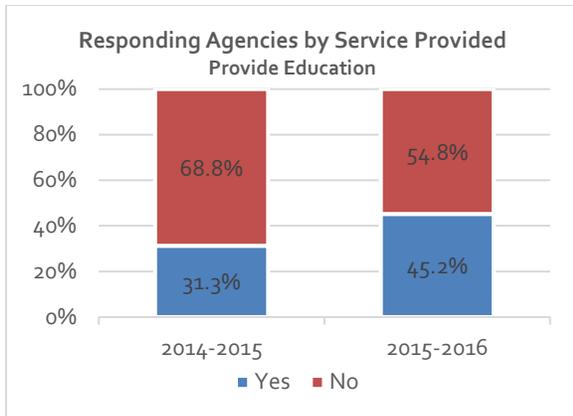


Figure 6. Agencies providing education

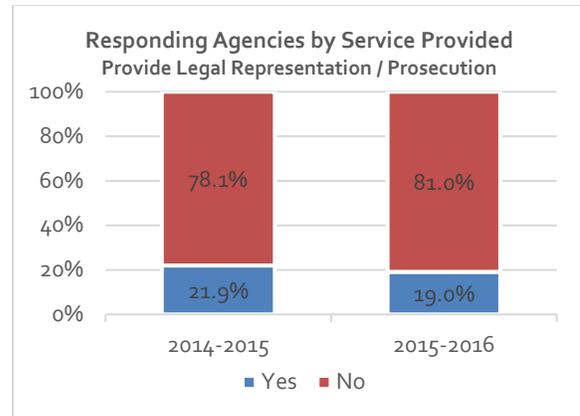


Figure 8. Agencies providing legal representation or prosecution

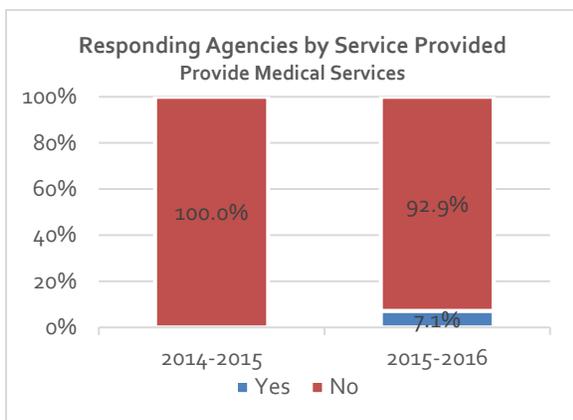


Figure 7. Agencies providing medical services

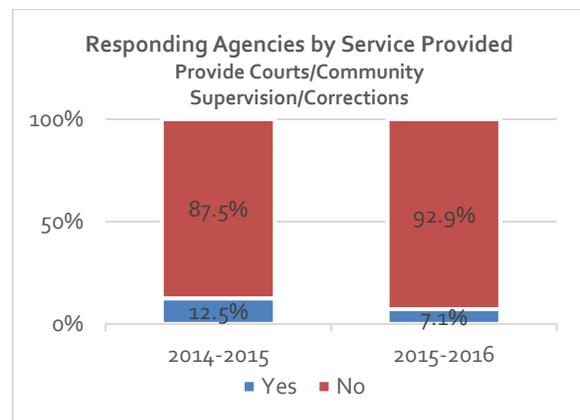


Figure 9. Agencies providing courts, community supervision, or corrections

Agency Employment

Survey respondents representing organizational entities were asked about the number of employees working with them, as well as the number who focus on issues of domestic violence. Figure 10 presents the distribution of total organizational employment. Small employers represent the modal response, with 30 percent of respondents employing fewer than five people. Midsized employers dominate the distribution, however, with two-fifths of respondents employing between 20 and 250 persons. Figure 11 presents the distribution of total employment by type of organization. This demonstrates that large employers are limited to the government segment of respondents. Among the non-profit sector, the small and midsized categories are evenly represented, while faith-based and for-profit sectors are small employers.

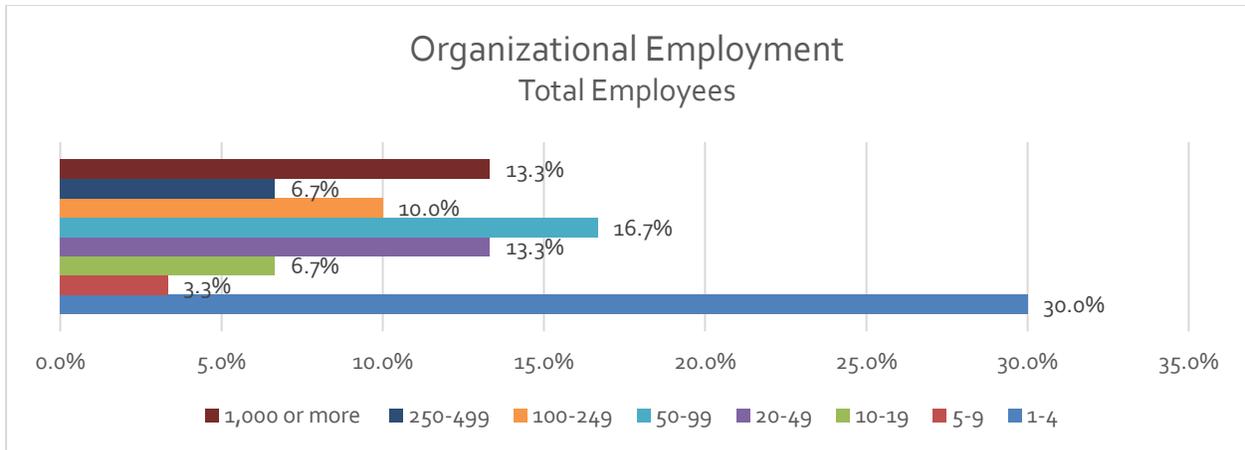


Figure 10. Total organizational employment

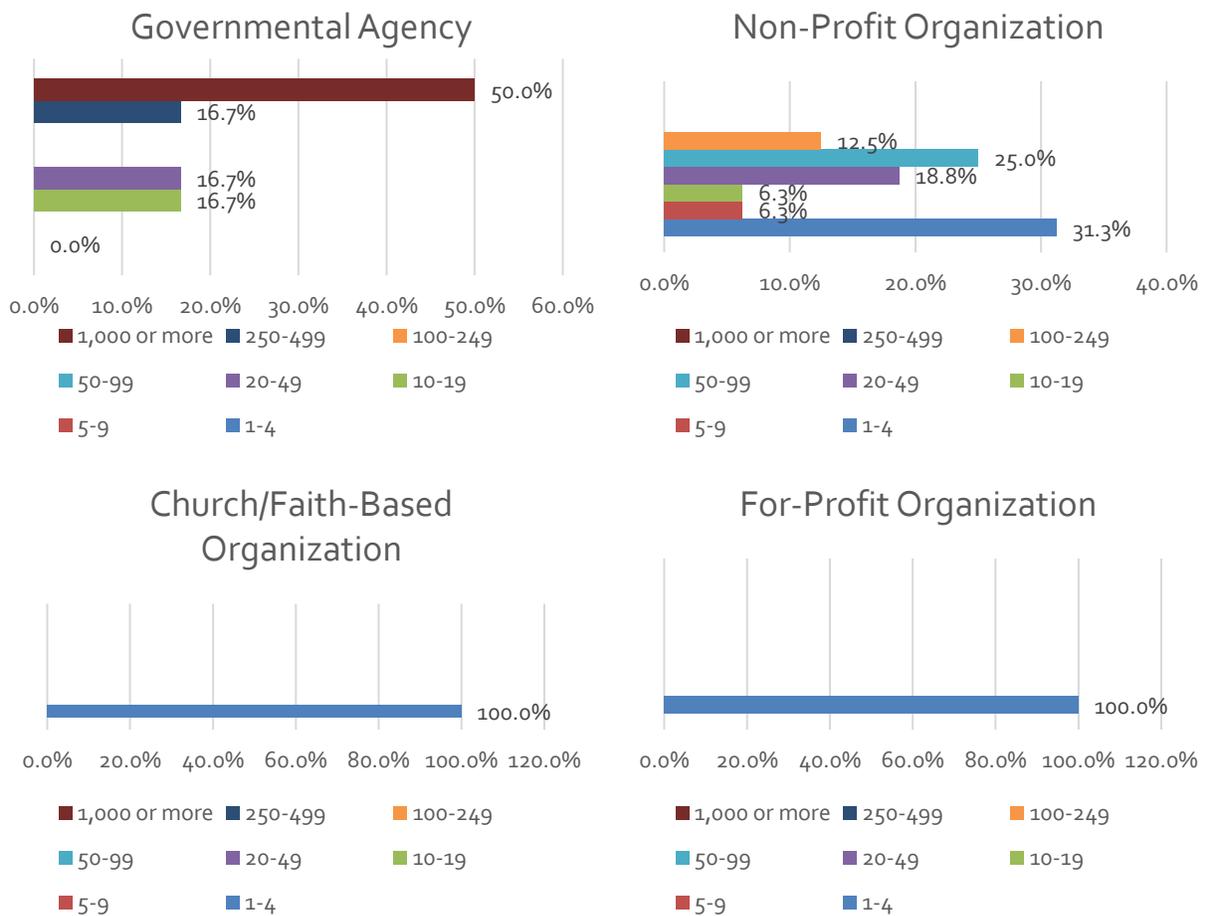


Figure 11. Total organization employment by organization type

Figure 12 presents the distribution of domestic violence-focused employment among survey respondents. It demonstrates that the modal category is between one and four employees. One in five survey respondents employs between 20 and 49 employees who focus on domestic violence issues.

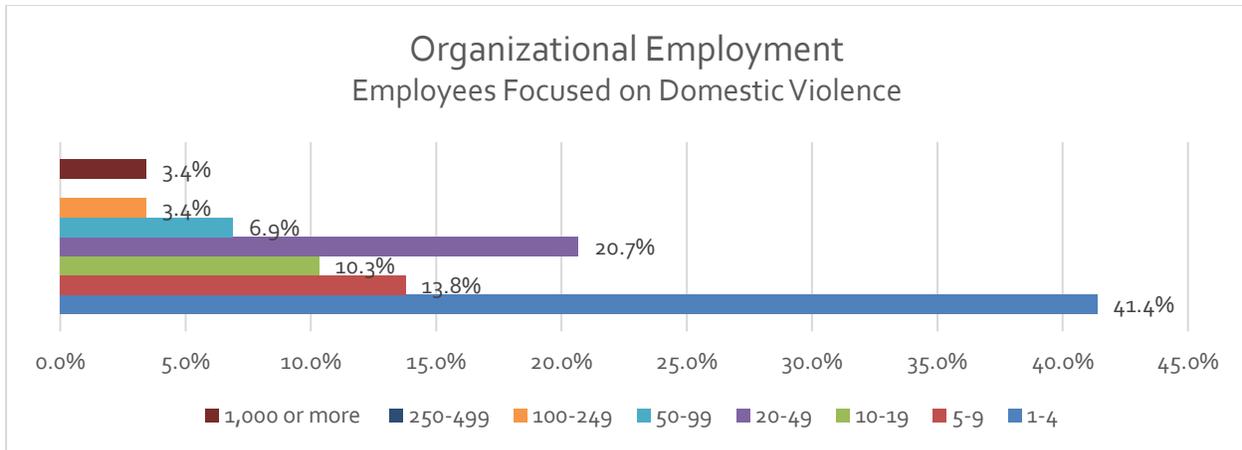


Figure 12. Total domestic violence employment

Figure 13 represents the distribution of domestic violence-focused employment by organization type. For all types of organizations, the modal response was between one and four employees focusing on domestic violence. Yet one in four non-profit organizations employ 20 to 49 employees focused on domestic violence. Table 3 presents a cross tabulation of domestic violence and total agency employment. The table suggests that the smaller organizations in the sample were largely domestic violence organizations.

Table 3. Cross tabulation of domestic violence and total employment

Total Employees	Domestic Violence Employees							Total
	1-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50-99	100-249	1,000 or More	
1-4	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
5-9	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
10-19	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
20-49	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	4
50-99	0	0	1	3	1	0	0	5
100-249	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	3
250-499	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
1,000 or More	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	4
Total	12	4	3	6	2	1	1	29

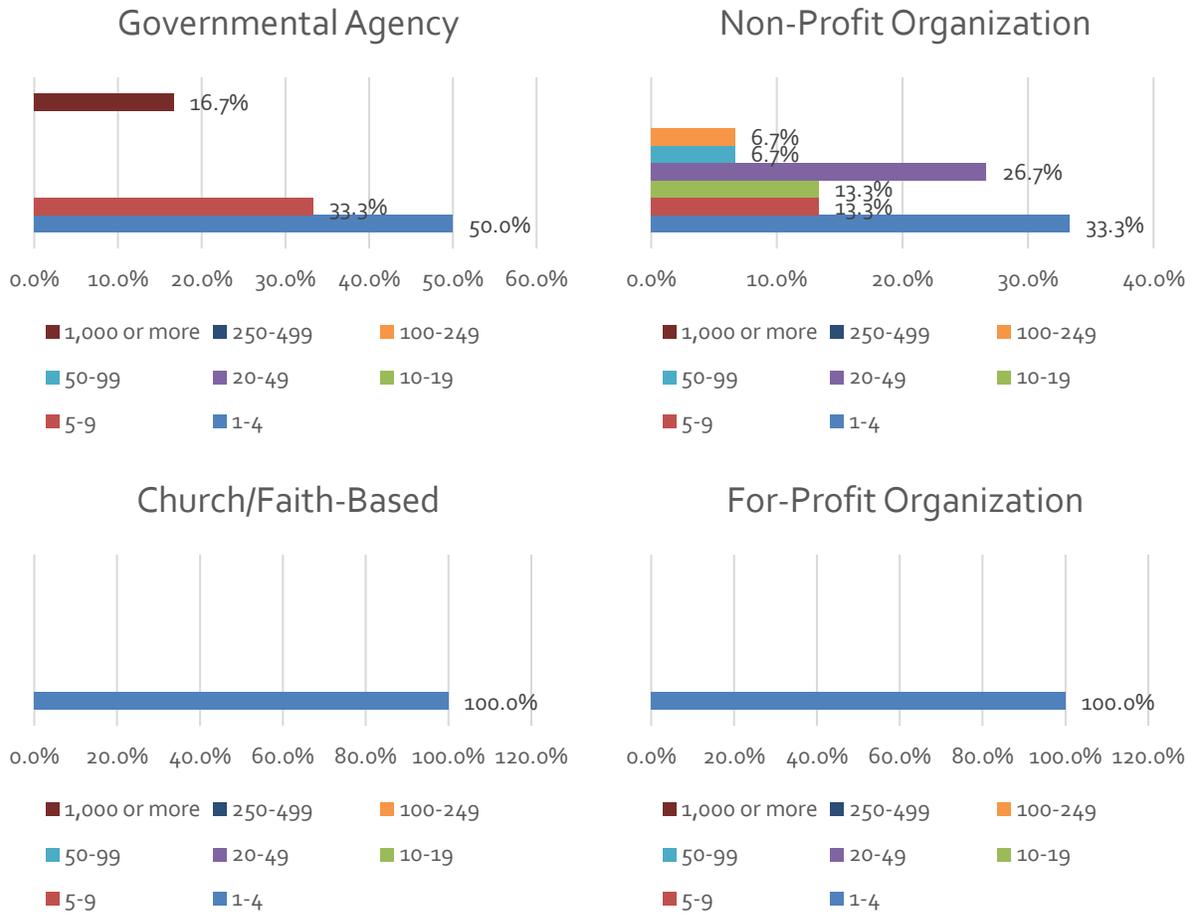


Figure 13. Total domestic violence employment by organization type

Transportation Services Provided

Organizational respondents were asked about the types of transportation they provide to victims of domestic violence. Figure 14 presents the distribution of responses in each service year. In the 2015-2016 reporting period, 15 (35.7 percent) organizations provided transportation services, an increase from the 11 (26.8 percent) organizations of the previous year. Both the number and proportion of respondent organizations that provide transportation services has increased in the most recent year of reporting.

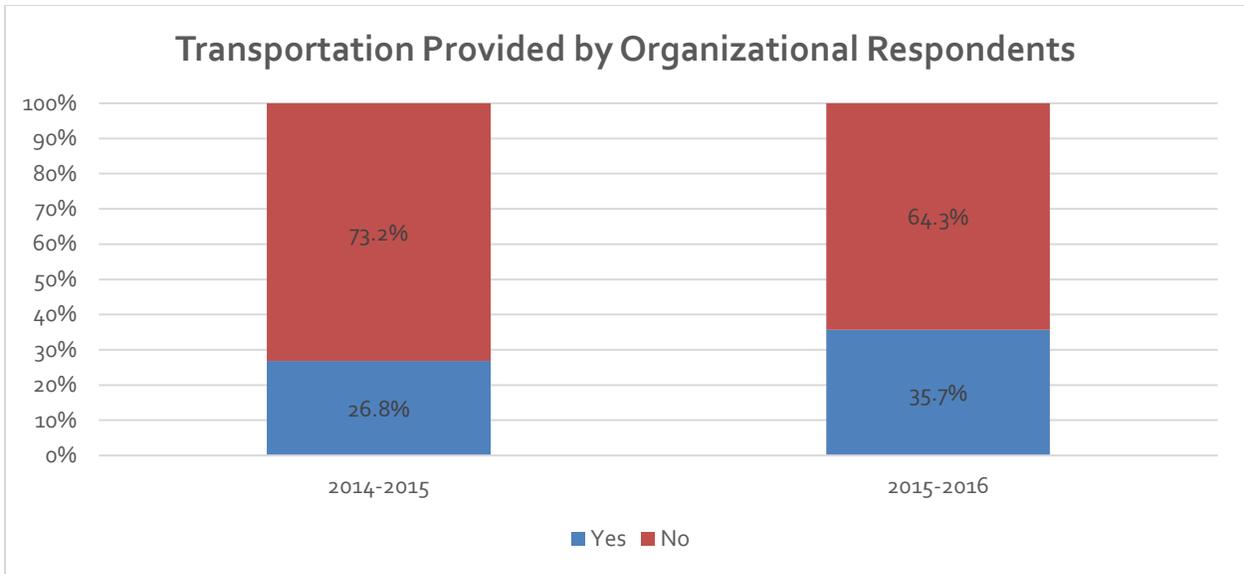


Figure 14. Respondent organizations providing transportation

Among organizations that provide transportation, the distribution of transportation modes from the first program year to the second has changed significantly. The share of transportation provided by public means fell by one fourth, from 81.8 percent to 60 percent, and is no longer the most common mode. Conversely, private car nearly doubled in utilization, from 45.5 percent to 80 percent, and is now the most common mode of transportation. Inter-city bus or rail (e.g., Amtrak and Greyhound) and airfare continue to be the least-utilized modes of transportation, which is not surprising considering the relative expense. On the other hand, taxi services fell from 54.5 percent in 2014-2015 to 33 percent in 2015-2016.

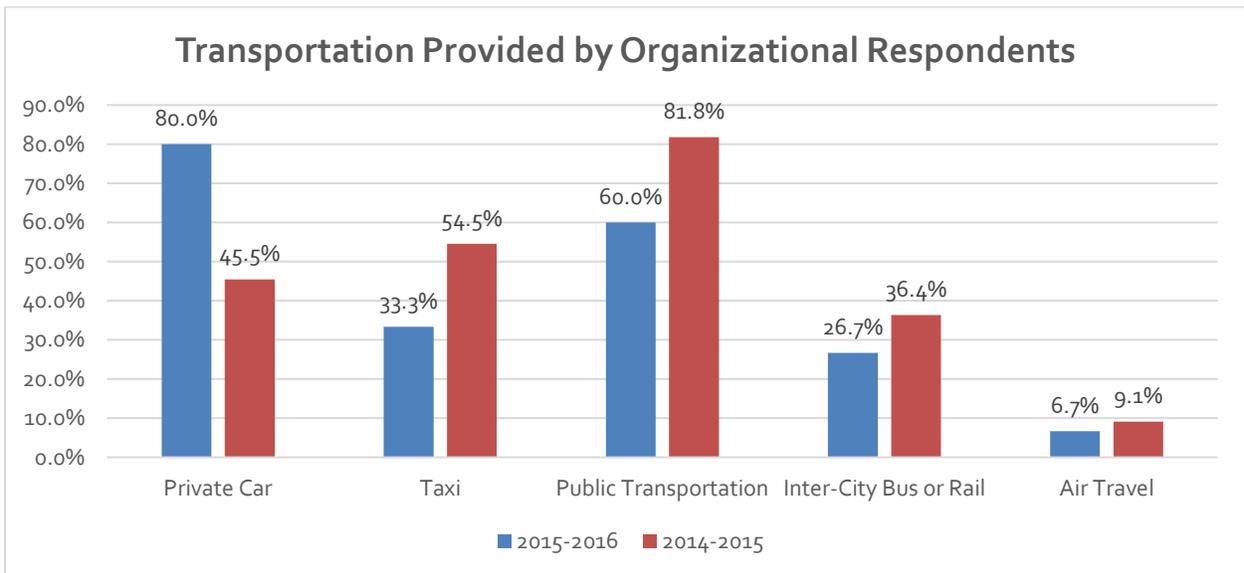


Figure 15. Types of transportation provided by organizational respondents

Among the organization respondents who reported providing transportation, 80 percent provide transportation within Dallas County, and 93 percent provide transportation to Dallas County and/or the

North Texas Region. Figure 16 provides an in-depth view of the availability of transportation. Among those organizations that provide a private car, two-thirds (nine agencies) reported that they provide the service in Dallas County, while half (six agencies) provide private cars in greater North Texas. The next most common type of transportation—public—also is largely provided within Dallas County and North Texas. On the other hand, the few agencies providing intercity bus or rail or airfare primarily provide it throughout the state and to other states.

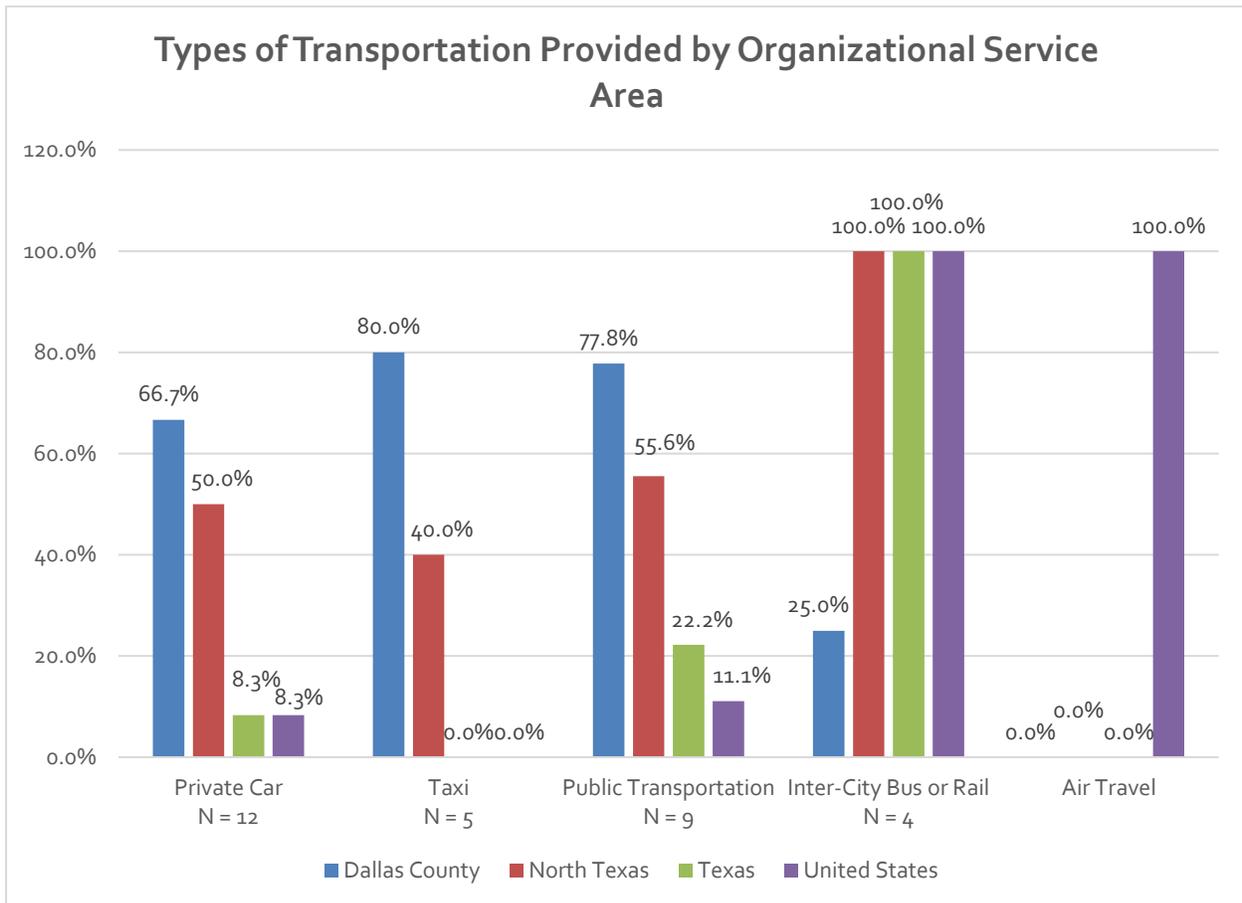


Figure 16. Types of transportation by organizational service area

Reported Shelter Capacities

All Taskforce members who responded to the survey and identified sheltering as one of their top three services were also asked to report on their capacities to serve victims. Table 4 demonstrates the data provided for the most recent reporting year. The table is broken into two main columns, On-site Capacity and Off-Site Capacity. “On-site” refers to the capacity to house victims of domestic violence within the facility itself; on-site arrangements are owned and managed by the individual reporting organizations. “Off-site” refers to the capacity available within facilities neither owned nor managed by the agencies. For the majority of reporting organizations, the off-site capacity refers to motel or hotel rooms that were reserved and paid for by the organizations as needed.

The tables are broken further down into Emergency and Transitional Shelter categories. An “emergency shelter” is defined as the capacity to provide victims of domestic violence with immediate shelter directly after an incident has occurred. “Transitional shelter,” in contrast, refers to more long-

term housing assistance that is provided to clients, affording them subsidized housing and services to rebuild their lives after leaving abusive relationships.

Due to the change in definition of the question regarding rooms and beds between reporting years, the data reported according to the previous methodology were omitted to prevent confusion and misinterpretation of data. Although reporting year-over-year data is important, the change in definitions more accurately reflects shelter capacity and will allow for improved reporting and analyses moving forward in future annual reports.

Table 4. 2015-2016 Reported emergency and transitional shelter capacity in rooms and beds for men, women, and children

2015-2016	On-Site				Off-Site			
	Emergency		Transitional		Emergency		Transitional	
	Rooms	Beds	Rooms	Beds	Rooms	Beds	Rooms	Beds
Women & Children	80	235	69	163	1	3	7	7
Men & Children	4	4	0	0	6	7	0	0
Total	84	239	69	163	7	10	7	7

The data displayed represents an aggregation of all shelters that have responded to the general survey distributed to the Taskforce. Table 4 presents self-reported data from all six sheltering organizations who responded to the survey and participate in the taskforce, including: Genesis Women’s Shelter, Mosaic Family Services, Salvation Army, The Family Place, Hope’s Door, and Brighter Tomorrows. The shelters reported a total emergency shelter capacity of 81 rooms and 238 total beds available for women and children, along with and 10 rooms and 11 total beds available for men and children; these numbers include both on-site and off-site capacities. Additionally, when counting both on-site and off-site locations, agencies reported a total transitional shelter capacity of 76 rooms and 170 total beds available for women and children. Note that Genesis Women’s Shelter, Mosaic Services, Salvation Army, and The Family Place have also reported more detailed data monthly metrics as Executive Committee shelter partners, which will be discussed in detail in later sections.

This year’s shelter capacities may have varied from previous years’ due to some shelters experiencing decreases in federal or state funding, which significantly impacted their ability to provide shelter services. Other shelters experienced an increase in capacity due to the merging of existing facilities and the opening of new facilities resulting from new or increased funding. With the anticipation of increased funding and the completion of new construction, shelter capacities could change significantly in future reports. While shelter capacity is a fairly difficult metric to collect and track, changes in the data collection and reporting strategies, beginning with this report, should improve the monitoring of year-over-year changes in future reports.

Shelter Support and Referral Services

In efforts to widen the scope of the report, the general survey has been expanded to collect information regarding a wider range of services that responding agencies provide. As part of these expanded metrics, this report now tracks shelter placement services provided by non-shelter organizations, Women Called Moses Coalition and Outreach and Families to Freedom. While these organizations do not provide shelter themselves, they assist in the placement of women and children (and an occasional male victim) in Dallas County and in other areas of North Texas; these services are summarized in Table

5. Throughout the reporting year, two organizations were able to place a total of 374 victims into available rooms in Dallas emergency shelters. Of those 374, 360 were women, 13 were children, and one was male. They also were able to place 75 women into transitional shelters. Despite their efforts, not all victims were able to be placed into shelters. The organizations reported a total of 300 victims—225 women and 75 children—whom they were unable to place in emergency shelters. An additional 325 women who sought transitional shelter could not be placed. Although the combined figure of 625 unplaced victims may provide further insight into the total number of unserved victims in Dallas County, even when considered along with the total number of victims reported by Executive Committee members in later sections, they cannot provide the full picture of domestic violence victims needing assistance or the demand for beds and rooms. Moreover, caution is warranted in adding the total number of unserved victims across various sections of this report, as the metrics do not reflect unique victims and it is unclear if these victims were able to find placement at a later time or in a different geographical area. This report does not track any identifying information on adult or child victims, so it is impossible to know the full extent of double counting across sources or areas of the report.

Table 5. 2015-2016 Total number of victims placed and not placed by shelter support and referral services

2015 - 2016	Placed		Not Placed	
	Emergency	Transitional	Emergency	Transitional
Women	360	75	225	325
Children	13	0	75	0
Men	1	0	0	0
Total	374	75	300	325

Restrictions to Service

While shelters and non-profit organizations collaborate to provide necessary shelter and support services for victims of domestic violence, some shelters place certain restrictions on the types of clients they will accept. Some are limited by federal mandates based on their acceptance of federal funds, while others are able to place individualized restrictions on client acceptance because they are privately funded. It should not be interpreted that these shelters are trying to block service to certain victims: Some restrictions, in addition to possible funding constraints, are driven by concern for victim safety and the ability to address needs in specific subpopulations.

Restrictions to shelter services not only impact the shelters themselves, but also the referral agencies that assist in placing victims. The two shelter referral agencies that reported service restrictions in this survey were Women Called Moses Coalition and Outreach and Families to Freedom. Between these two organizations, they reported active drug use or dependency and the presence of teenage children—particularly teenage males—as common barriers to shelter placement. The issue of restrictions with placement of victims with older male children (generally over the age of 10) is also noted by the shelter partners in the sections that follow. Shelter referral agencies also reported difficulty in placing victims with five or more children in their custody. Another key barrier for shelter referral organizations is the reluctance of shelters to provide the number of available beds in real time, making it difficult for referral agencies to know whether or not shelters have sufficient space for victims. This issue in Dallas has been mitigated with the emergence of a new sharing system in Google Docs, whereby shelters report the number of rooms and beds that are available. Similarly, with victims traveling to seek shelter—sometimes from across North Texas or even from across the state—shelters

are not always able to reserve space during the necessary travel time. Other shelters may only accept “imminent threat” victims at certain times or may even place geographic restrictions on their services, making emergency placement more challenging.

Six shelters have reported metrics on emergency shelter restrictions specifically; these shelters include Genesis Women’s Shelter, Mosaic Services, Salvation Army, Brighter Tomorrows, Hope’s Door, and Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd. Each of these shelters reported having restrictions on the types of victims they admit, most of which are similar to restrictions reported by referral agencies. Out of these six self-identifying shelter organizations, four indicated placing restrictions on victims who reported active drug use or drug dependency and two reported restrictions on victims who had custody of teenage children. Three agencies reported an inability to accept male victims, and one reported an inability to accommodate known sex offenders. At least one agency reported restrictions on placing victims with severe physical or emotional disabilities, or significant medical conditions.

Additionally, three shelters have reported metrics on transitional shelter restrictions, including Genesis Women’s Shelter, Mosaic Family Services, and Brighter Tomorrows. Out of these three organizations, two reported restrictions on victims with active drug use or dependency. One reported restrictions on victims that had older children with them while seeking shelter. Another reported an inability to accept male victims, and at least one places income restrictions on the victims it services due to its partnership with the local housing authority, which also places criminal history restrictions on potential clients. Much like the restrictions required by the housing authority, many of the restrictions placed on emergency and transitional shelters are directly due to funding sources and other service provider and resource partnerships.

A Detailed Analysis of Agency Metrics

Lead Researcher Dr. Denise Paquette Boots has met with agencies and individuals in the general taskforce and on the Executive Committee for the Dallas Domestic Violence Taskforce to coordinate and oversee the collection of various metrics over the past three years. She also attends all general and Executive Committee meetings throughout the year to incorporate ongoing partner feedback into future iterations of the report. A wide variety of metrics on police, court, and victim services have been collected for the past two years. Domestic violence shelters and victim advocates submitted detailed metrics and activity summaries were submitted by domestic violence shelters and victim advocates such as: Mosaic House, The Family Place, Salvation Army, and Genesis Women’s Shelter and Support. Additional detailed metrics were collected from Dallas Police Department, the Dallas County District Attorney’s Office, the Dallas City Attorney’s Office, Judges Roberto Cañas (Misdemeanor Division) and Rick Magnis (Felony Division), and the City of Dallas Council Office and Dallas Mayor’s Office.

The following section breaks down the detailed metrics that have been collected for the 2014-2015 years, as well as the 2015-2016 years, to offer a comparison and analysis of change when applicable, as well as more detailed annual summaries across these metrics which represent the systemic response to domestic violence across all these coordinated community response partners involved in the Dallas Domestic Violence Taskforce.

Shelters

The shelter metrics reported in this section of the report originate from four non-profit organizations in the Dallas area: Genesis Women’s Shelter and Support, Mosaic Services, Salvation Army, and The Family Place. (Note that although six organizations reported information in the general survey portion

of this report, only four shelter organizations provided the monthly detailed metrics displayed in this portion of the report, meaning these separate areas of the summary report are not comparable). These four emergency and transitional shelters primarily serve female victims and their children, as these survivors make up the majority of those needing shelter and support services. In response to a lack of resources across the City of Dallas allocated for male and LGBT populations, select shelter partners are expanding or are in the process of addressing how to serve those populations. Currently, women and children make up the largest portion of each metric category, which includes the number of total unserved victims due to lack of space, the facility capacity percentage, average nightly census in shelter, average nightly census in transitional housing, and the number housed in hotels/outside facilities.

The data found in Table 6 is similar in nature to that found in Table 4; however, these tables only show the room and bed capacities for the Executive Committee Taskforce shelter members. As with the prior figures, on-site refers to the capacity available to house victims of domestic violence within a facility that is owned and managed by the organization themselves, while off-site refers to the capacity available in shelter arrangements that fall outside of the agencies' ownership or control—typically hotel and/or motel rooms. An emergency shelter is defined as the capacity available to provide victims of domestic violence with immediate shelter directly after an incident has occurred, while transitional shelter refers to more long-term housing assistance that is provided to clients, which allows them subsidized housing and services to rebuild their lives after leaving an abusive relationship.

Across the 2015-2016 reporting period, agencies reported a combined total of 57 emergency shelter rooms available (51 for women and children, six for men and children), and 223 beds available (216 for women and children, seven for men and children) across both on-site and off-site locations. The same shelters reported a combined on-site and off-site capacity of 76 transitional shelter rooms (all for women and children); those rooms account for a combined total of 170 beds.

Due to a necessary modification in definitions for the specific questions regarding beds and rooms, the data for 2014-2015 are not comparable, and therefore the previous year's data are excluded from this analysis. The new collection and reporting methodology is anticipated to be replicated in future reports, thus allowing for more accurate trend analyses. Accurate year-over-year reporting will be crucial over the next few years as organizations push for greater access to beds for male victims, LGBT victims, and other special population victims.

Table 6 2015-2016 Reported emergency and transitional shelter capacity in rooms and beds for men, women, and children

2015-2016	On-site				Off-site			
	Emergency		Transitional		Emergency		Transitional	
	Rooms	Beds	Rooms	Beds	Rooms	Beds	Rooms	Beds
Women & Children	50	213	69	163	1	3	7	7
Men & Children	0	0	0	0	6	7	0	0
Total	50	213	69	163	7	10	7	7

Figure 17 presents the total number of victims by month seeking shelter but who were unable to be accommodated. A serious problem faced by Dallas County is a lack in shelter space; from June 2015 to May 2016, a total of 10,154 men, women, and children across all four shelters were unserved due to lack

of space. That represents a 34 percent increase from the previous reporting period, which saw only 7,567 clients unserved due to space. During the 2015-2016 period, the month of September saw the highest number of victims turned away, with a total of 1,199 unserved. This total is well above the 2015-2016 monthly average of 846, and the 2014-2015 monthly average of 631. Additionally, this number is also twice the amount of unserved victims from the same month during the previous year. Along with the number of unserved increasing substantially from the previous reporting year, the month-to-month trends have remained largely consistent across years, although the 2015-2016 numbers were much higher in June through November, while converging with the 2014-2015 numbers from December through May.

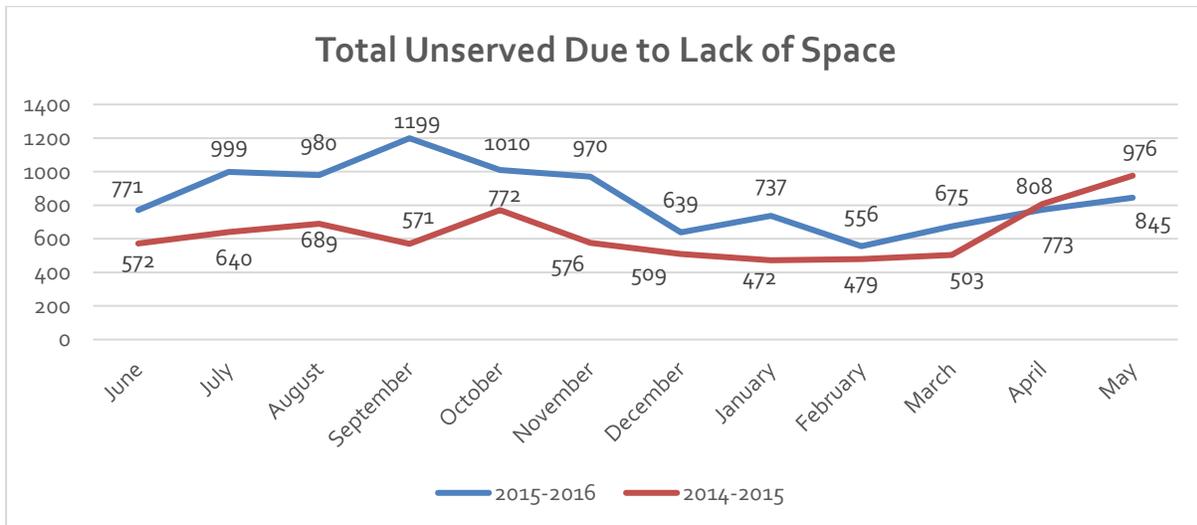


Figure 17. Total unserved due to lack of space

While the overall numbers were higher in 2015-2016, the reasons behind this increase or the sustainability of this trend in the number of victims unserved are impossible to assess. A higher demand for space among victims and shelters may exist, and/or shelters may have improved their tracking and reporting of data, especially in response to the City of Dallas’s increased focus on domestic violence and collection of metrics. Any rise in unserved clients also may be due to the increased public outreach and increased services of these shelter partners, which may have increased their visibility among victims and the numbers of victims seeking shelter support. There could also be unknown factors that influenced these numbers. Ultimately, there is not enough data over two years to point to the exact reasons the figure has risen. This annual report now tracks the data and determines trends over time, and this specific trend should be monitored until further information is available and an adequate recommendation can be made.

The inability of a shelter to serve a person or family is largely based on the capacity of each shelter. Since individual shelters reported their own numbers of how many victims they have turned away per month, without any identifying information for the victims, it is impossible to know if some of these numbers have been duplicated, with the same victim turned away at multiple locations. A victim denied housing at one shelter (and counted as unserved) also may have been able to find emergency housing at another shelter partner’s location (becoming an active occupant there). However, it is noteworthy that our shelter partners reported that duplicates are likely small in number, especially in light of the sharing of rooms and beds in more real time via the Google Docs program they are now utilizing.

While the total number of unserved victims is an important proxy of demand and need, the reality is that it is only a small portion of the battered population who actually seeks shelter. The non-residential components of the shelter partners' programs are critical in the fight against domestic violence. Indeed, for those victims who have not left and/or who have alternative residential or social support resources, the non-residential programs and counseling centers play a significant role.

Figure 18 indicates the average monthly capacity filled across the four reporting shelters. Overall, the 2015-2016 reporting period experienced an average of 95 percent of its capacity filled, a small increase from the previous reporting period of 94 percent. When compared to the previous reporting year, 2015-2016 consistently remains near 100 percent facility capacity, which again demonstrates the high demand for beds and rooms across all metric partners'. However, these numbers can be challenging to interpret with respect to capacity. For example, while some shelters opt to house multiple single female victims in a room with multiple beds, others do not house multiple victims together due to privacy concerns. In the latter case, a single woman may seek shelter and occupy one room and bed while a woman and her three children would take up one room but four beds. This impacts the perception of how full these shelters become and why victims may not be able to be accommodated. This room-to-bed ratio may create the impression that the shelter has a lower capacity, but it is actually more complex since the composition of victims and their families directly impacts need-to-supply ratios. An additional caveat is that space and types of housing vary from shelter to shelter, as does the policy on the allocation of rooms and beds. Another factor that can impact bed utilization is the presence of a male child over the age of 10 in a family. For a shelter that houses multiple families in a bedroom when demand requires, the presence of a male child over 10 prevents that, therefore limiting maximum bed utilization.

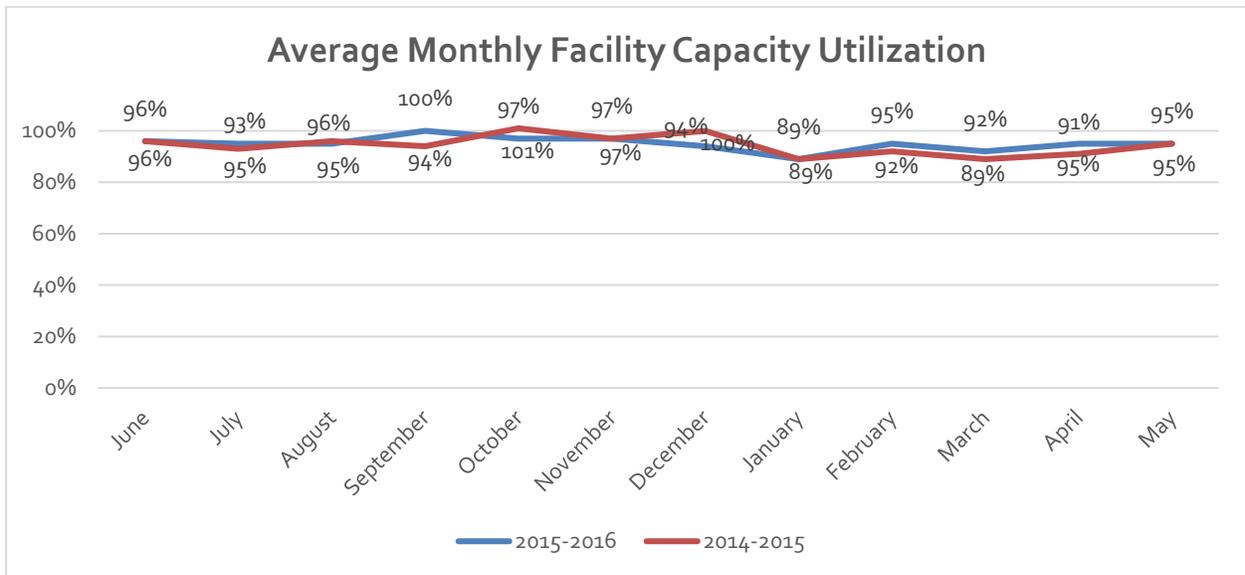


Figure 18. Average monthly facility capacity utilization

Figure 19 presents the nightly average emergency shelter populations across the four Executive Committee reporting shelters in Dallas County. The average monthly number of victims in emergency shelter during the most recent reporting period was 179, an increase by an average of 27 per month (or 18 percent) from the previous reporting year.

For the safety of victims, shelters are not open to the public. Shelters balance facilitating therapeutic healing with providing safety. Different shelters house victims in varying ways. If a victim arrives at a shelter without any children, in one shelter he or she will occupy a full room, thereby creating the appearance of low-capacity utilization. In other shelters, multiple single victims may be housed together in one room with multiple beds. The personal dynamics of victims and their dependents vary across circumstances, which impacts the metrics reported here. In addition, male victims both with and without children have few options to be housed in emergency or transitional shelter in Dallas County due to the fact that the majority of shelter providers designate adult females and their children as their primary populations (adult females are most often targets of domestic violence, and they make up the vast majority of victims who seek safety).

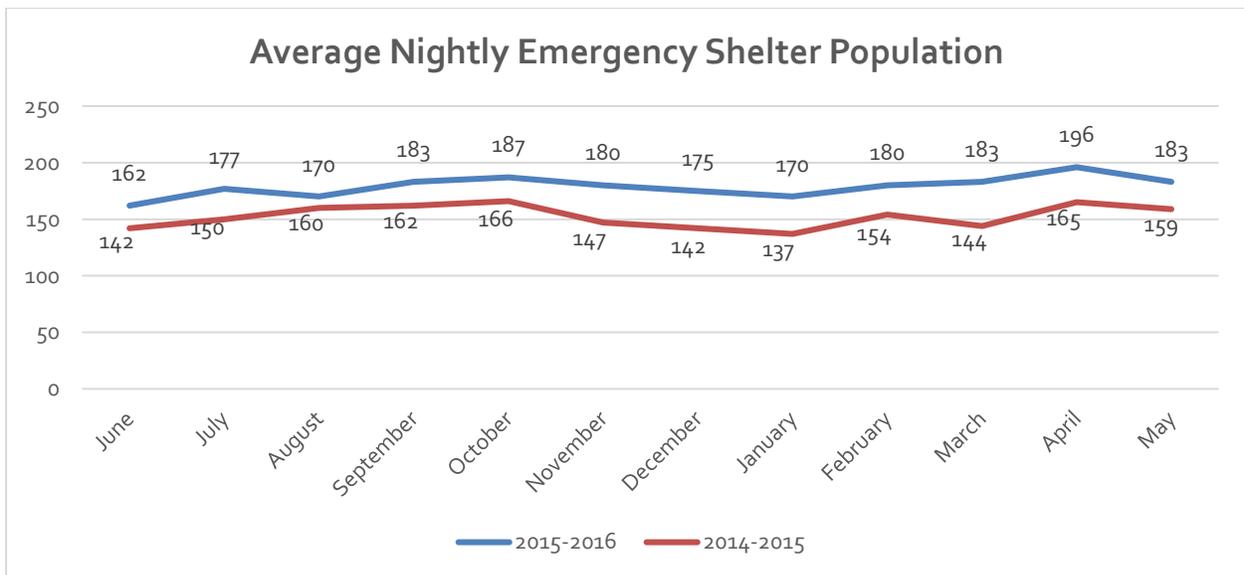


Figure 19. Average nightly emergency shelter capacity

While providing shelter for all populations of victims is critical, mixing adult females and their children with male victims (with or without children) is impossible due to safety and privacy issues. Additional services are needed to accommodate transgender victims in the likely case they cannot be accommodated in on-site facilities for emergency and transitional housing and support. Mosaic has received increased funding to hire additional staff and provide increased response to the currently overwhelming caseload. The Family Place has launched a \$16.5 million capital campaign to build a new counseling center, emergency shelter, clinic, and kennel. On November 1, 2016, the Family Place will open a new shelter for male victims of domestic violence. In the interim, victim safety and the delivery of victim services remain much more difficult, as these victims are housed off-site in hotels or rented apartments and are unable to fully benefit from on-site treatment.

Along with emergency shelter services, several shelters also provide transitional shelter services to victims of domestic violence. They provide long-term housing, job training, financial education, and counseling support to victims, helping them reenter their normal lives and avoid homelessness. Many victims were so heavily controlled by their abusers that they were not able to form many social ties, and some were unable to work outside of the home. Many clients in transitional housing are still at risk of danger. In some cases, the abuser has not been arrested, and in others they are still engaged in the criminal or civil legal systems. These factors make transitional housing crucial for victims. Victims who

receive transitional housing services are often long-term clients or patients, with services lasting from several months to years, depending on the capacity of the shelter and the needs of the victim. As reported in Figure 20, during the 2015-2016 reporting period, an average of 179 clients received transitional housing shelter, a 32 percent increase from the previous year's average of 136.

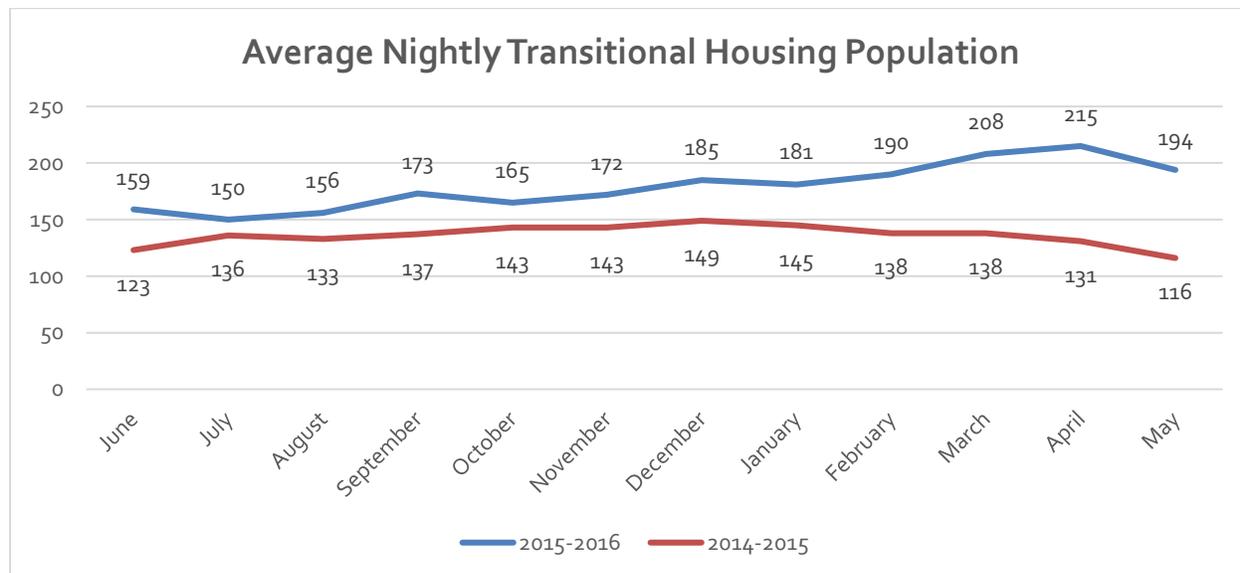


Figure 20. Average nightly transitional housing population

Dallas County has an active, progressive, and growing group of shelters, partners, and advocates. They continue to perform invaluable services to the community in the form of daily outreach, awareness events, and education to break down the myths surrounding family violence and the stigmas that prevent victims from seeking the help they need. The Family Place, Genesis Women’s Shelter and Support, and Mosaic Services shelters have also actively trained religious leaders in handling domestic violence cases. Advocacy partners such as The Family Place and Genesis are actively involved in Dallas Independent School District, addressing teen dating violence and bullying education from elementary to high school. These non-profit partners play a salient role in combatting domestic violence and providing long-term healing for adult and child victims, thereby making a long-term contribution to the health of our greater community. Continuing to fund these non-profits and the Taskforce enables them to collaborate in making progressive strikes toward putting an end to domestic violence.

Police Response

For the past two years, the Dallas Police Department (DPD) has provided detailed metrics to the Domestic Violence Taskforce on the following variables: numbers of reported offenses assigned as domestic violence; domestic violence arrests (broken down by misdemeanor and felony); family violence cases filed; protective order violation offenses; and family violence and intimate-partner murders. In addition, DPD provided metrics for the number of home visits/high-risk victim contacts that were made monthly and the number of actual contacts.

During the 2015-2016 reporting year DPD has experienced significant organizational changes. Police Chief David Brown announced his retirement—effective October 22, 2016—ending a 33-year career as a

member of the department.¹ Even before the retirement of Chief Brown, DPD experienced a significant change to its Domestic Violence Unit, when in October the lieutenant in charge, Miguel Sarmiento, took leave and eventually retired in January 2016. In his absence, Lieutenant Cecilia Hinojo was transferred to the Domestic Violence Unit, becoming the unit commander. She then retired in September 2016. Lieutenant Pamela Starr is now assigned to the Domestic Violence Unit, with Sergeant Debra Echols serving acting Lieutenant in her absence. Additionally, the DPD Taskforce representative reported that Major Magdalen Boyle, who was transferred in November 2015 to supervise the Youth Services Section, which includes the Domestic Violence Unit, went on leave in Spring 2016 before retiring in August 2016. Lieutenant Fred Diorio has been acting in the major's and chief's absences and has since been promoted to Major and has been assigned to the Domestic Violence Unit. Other bureau deputy chiefs have intermittently been acting in Chief Randall Blankenbaker's absence, as he was promoted from Deputy Chief to Assistant Chief. Additionally, one domestic violence detective has retired, and five other detectives have been absent due to either extended leave or special assignment at various points during the year. Before September 2016 the Domestic Violence Unit was under the Crimes Against Persons (CAPERS) Division. However, after reorganization in September 2016, the Domestic Violence Unit is now under the Specialized Investigations Division and Malik Aziz is currently the Division Commander.

Over the past two years, 29,905 calls for service reported through 9-1-1 and other reporting sources (e.g., officer initiated investigations and non-emergency calls) were investigated by DPD responding officers and were found to be domestic violence related. It should be noted that DPD revised their data metric recording methods for this year and submitted new data regarding their 2014-2015 domestic violence related calls. The original metric, 11,047, represented only cases assigned to Domestic Violence Unit Detectives. The new metric includes all calls received, regardless of assignment, resulting in a 2014-2015 call volume of 14,781. This also includes Class C misdemeanor and MIR (Miscellaneous Incident Reports), which are calls involving domestic violence but not resulting in a domestic violence incident report. In 2015-2016 alone, 15,124 calls were found to be domestic violence related, representing a 2 percent increase from the 14,781 reported in the previous year. Calls to 9-1-1 may not be immediately classified as domestic violence related, as there are many offense codes that can have a domestic violence origin and require further examination. For instance, a 9-1-1 report of people fighting might later be determined to be domestic in origin. Likewise, a 9-1-1 report of a loud noise disturbance may, upon further investigation, be found to be related to a domestic violence complaint. Despite this modest rise in calls, Figure 21 demonstrates that the month-to-month trend over the past two years has remained relatively consistent.

¹ Gonzales, R. (2016, September 1). Dallas Police Chief David O. Brown announces his retirement. NPR. Retrieved from <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/09/01/492296164/dallas-police-chief-david-o-brown-announces-his-retirement>

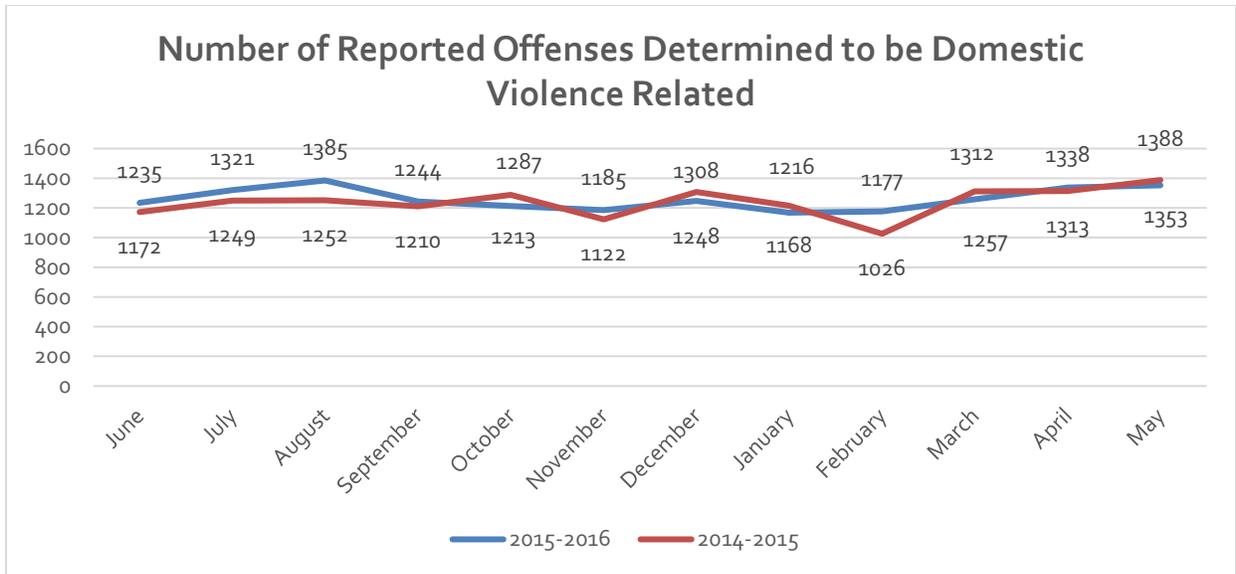


Figure 21. Reported offenses determined to be domestic violence-related

DPD filed a total of 7,844 family violence cases over the previous two years, and those reported in 2015-2016 made up 51 percent (4,011) of them. Figure 22 demonstrates that the month of May had the highest number of cases filed for 2015-2016, with 418 cases filed. In contrast, December was the month with the highest number of cases filed for 2014-2015, with 389 cases filed.

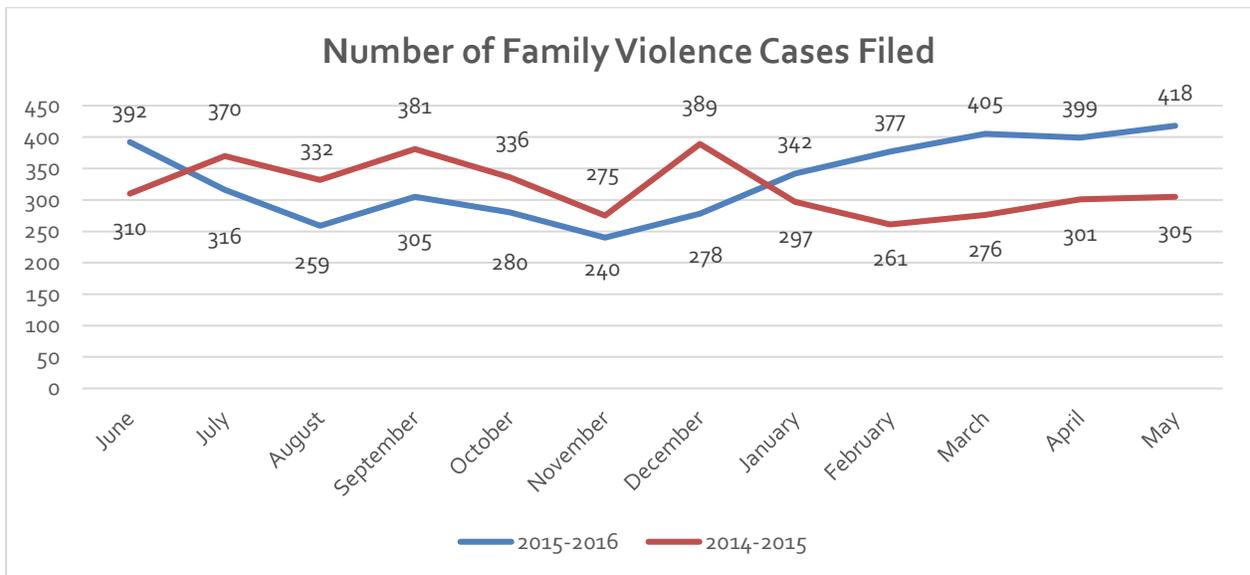


Figure 22. Number of family violence cases filed by DPD, June 2014 – May 2016

Over the past two years, the total number of protective order violations was 327; 178 of those occurred during the 2015-2016 reporting period. This represents a 19 percent increase from the 149 reported during the 2014-2015 reporting period. Protective order violations occur whenever a victim holds a court-granted protective order and the perpetrator violates the requirements on the order; these orders could include limitations on communication, distance between the victim and the perpetrator, and other stipulations determined by the court. Figure 23 presents the monthly distribution of protective

order violations during the previous two years. The highest number of violations in 2015-2016 occurred in both February and March, with 21 violations each, which did not exceed the high mark of 2014-2015, which was 26 in May.

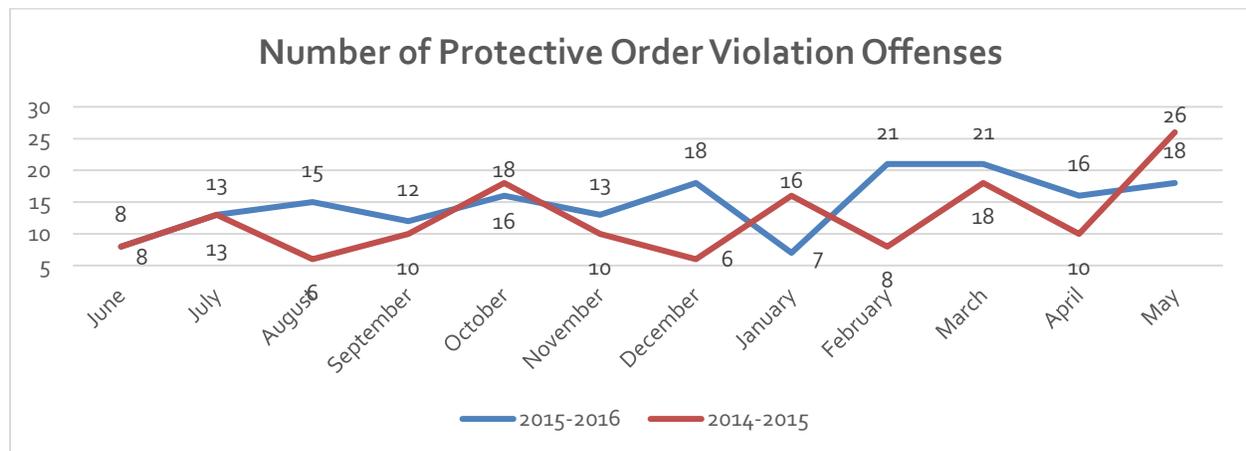


Figure 23. Number of protective order violations reported, June 2014 – May 2016

Figure 24 presents the monthly trends in the previous two years for all homicides between family members investigated by DPD. Family violence-related murders comprise all family-involved murders, not just those committed by former or current intimate partners. Over the past two years, 30 family violence-related murders have occurred within the City of Dallas. Of those, 14 occurred in the 2015-2016 reporting period, down from 16 in the previous 12-month period. For the most recent reporting period, February had the highest number of family violence homicides, with four of the 14 murders occurring in this month, or 35 percent. This drop in family violence murders stands in contrast to the overall murder and violent crime rates in the city over the past year. That is, DPD reports that murder rates are up 25 percent from this time last year, and the violent crime rate (which includes rape, robbery, assault, and murder) is up 10 percent from the same period last year.²

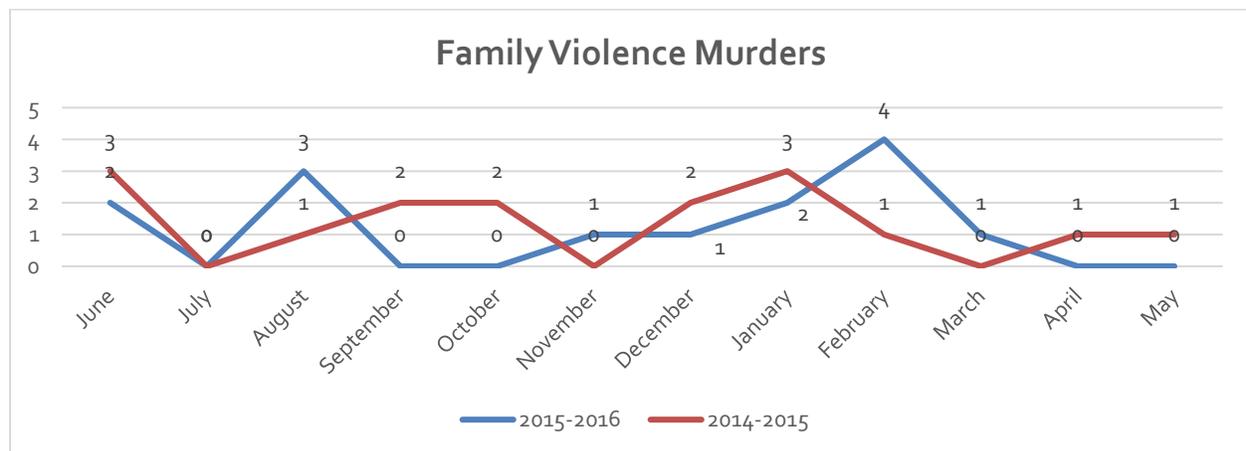


Figure 24. Number of family violence murders, June 2014 – May 2016

² Lopez, R. (2016, September 23). Dallas' violent crime rate up 10 percent, year-to-year. *WFAA*. Retrieved from <http://www.wfaa.com/news/local/dallas-county/dallas-violent-crime-rate-up-10-percent-year-to-year/324775036>

When analyzing only the intimate-partner homicides that were reported by DPD in the 2015-2016 reporting period, five of the 14 homicides (36 percent) involved intimate partners. Figure 25 compares monthly trends in intimate-partner homicides across the previous two years. Comparing the reporting periods demonstrates there were five fewer intimate-partner homicides reported in the City of Dallas in 2015-2016. This number corresponds to a 50 percent reduction from the 10 reported in the previous 12-month reporting period.

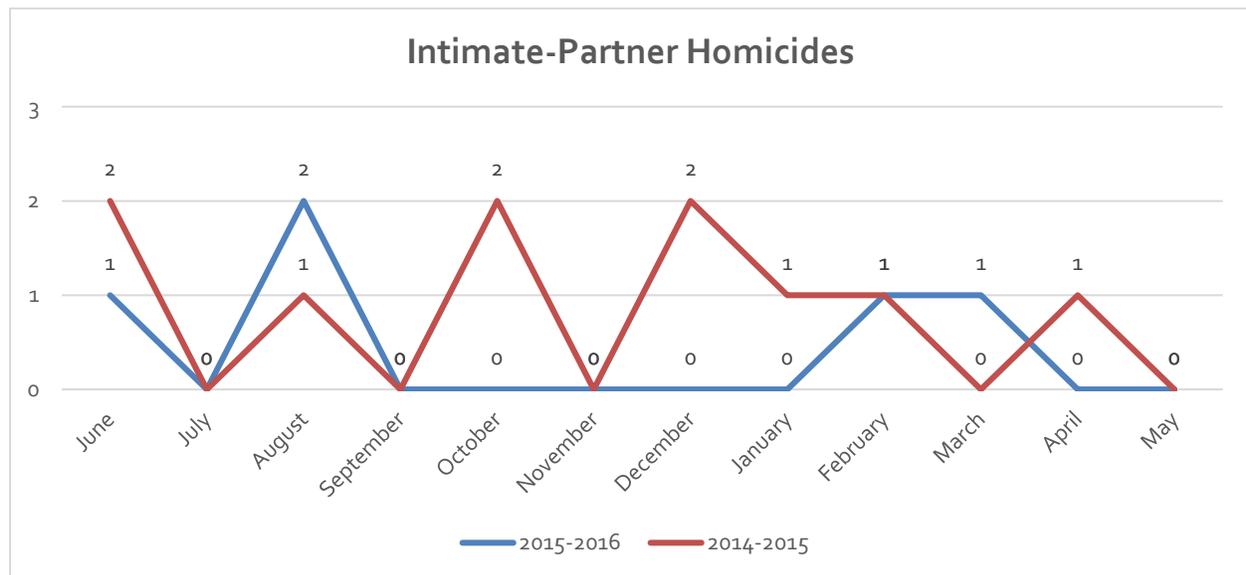


Figure 25. Number of intimate-partner homicides, June 2014 – May 2016

Figure 26 and Figure 27 display side-by-side hierarchy charts breaking down the intimate-partner homicides for both reporting years by victim and offender characteristics. In both years, the gender distributions of victims were identical: 80 percent female and 20 percent male. However, the gender distribution of offenders changed from 70 percent male in 2014-2015 to 80 percent male in the current year. This finding can be attributed to the fact that there was one same-sex intimate-partner murder in 2014-2015, where a female victim was murdered by her girlfriend. When examining victim-offender relationships in the two reporting years, nine of the 10 murders in 2014-2015 were committed by current spouses or intimate partners. In contrast, all intimate-partner murders in the 2015-2016 reporting period were committed by current spouses or significant others. Another major difference across the two-year reporting period concerns the racial and ethnic composition of the victims. During 2014-2015 reporting period, 40 percent of victims were Hispanic; there were no Hispanic victims reported during the most recent reporting year. In future years, it would expand our understanding of the unique dynamics surrounding these intimate-partner homicides to be able to link these victims and offenders back to 9-1-1 calls, arrests, and other forms of criminal justice and social service involvement with DPD and other local agencies. Determining if lethality assessments were conducted on any of these victims and reporting that data here also would be valuable. While extensive detailed domestic violence homicide lethality reviews are conducted by the Dallas County Intimate Partner Violence Fatality Review Team (IPVFRT), the review team’s inaugural report focused on 34 homicides from 2009 to 2011. Data reporting with more detailed case information will allow for more real-time assessment that might be considered in such cases. While such long-term and nuanced analyses that the Fatality Review Team are conducting are quite meaningful in understanding the etiology and course of intimate-partner homicides and the unique dynamics surrounding them, such retrospective case

studies do not allow for immediate policy changes that might positively impact system response to victim safety.

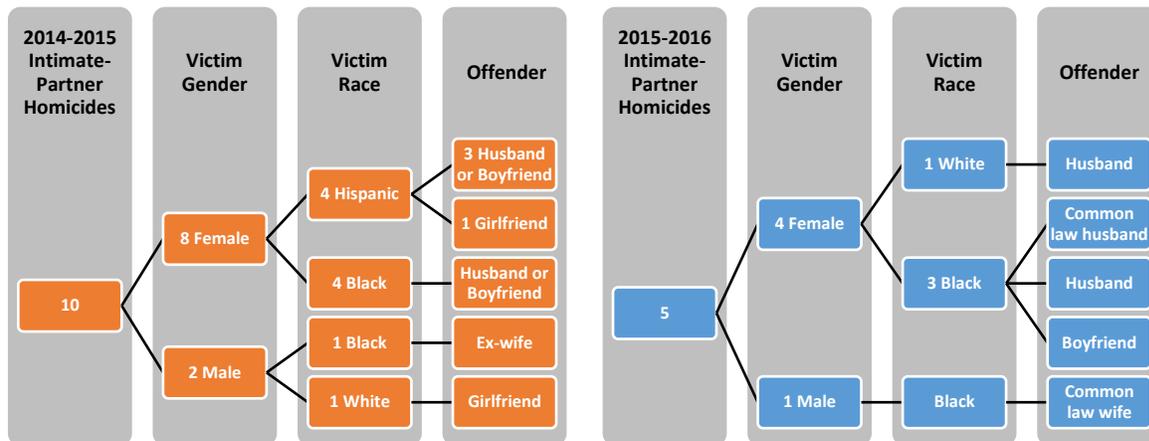


Figure 26. Intimate-partner homicide victim hierarchy chart

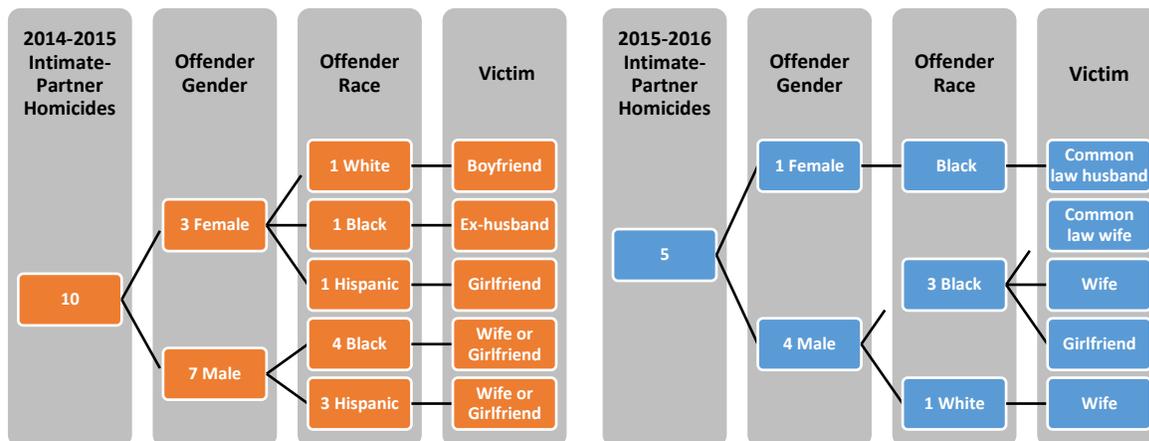


Figure 27. Intimate-partner homicide offender hierarchy chart

Both reporting years demonstrate a number of trends involving intimate-partner homicides. Figure 28 demonstrates that females make up 80 percent of intimate-partner homicide victims across both years. Of those 12 female victims, 58 percent (7) were Black. For the 15 murders reported by DPD in the combined two-year period, 93 percent of victims (14) were killed by their current spouses or significant others. In 2015-2016, all of the victims and offenders cohabitated, and 80 percent of the murders (4) took place at the victim's residence; this information was not available for the previous year.

The empirical research on domestic homicide conducted to date points to the relevance of numerous victim-offender characteristics and offense specifics that are critical to better understanding the dynamics of these crimes.³ Although information on salient homicide victim-offender characteristics were requested from DPD (i.e., murder location, whether children witnessed the crime, whether bystanders witnessed the crime, whether the offender attempted or committed suicide, whether the victim threatening or leaving, whether there was a protective order in effect, whether the offender was under the influence, and whether the offender had a prior history of intimate-partner violence), time

³ Dobash, R. E., & Dobash, R. P. (2015). *When men murder women*. New York: Oxford University Press, USA.

constraints limited our partner’s ability to give us full details on these domestic homicides. In future reporting years, it would be meaningful to retroactively obtain information across all the variables mentioned here and others that are relevant to domestic homicides to provide greater insight into Dallas’s domestic homicides and allow for analyses of trends. As more years of data are added and the sample size grows, our analysis will become more complex and informative on matters related to risk of, and strategies to reduce, lethality in domestic violence cases.

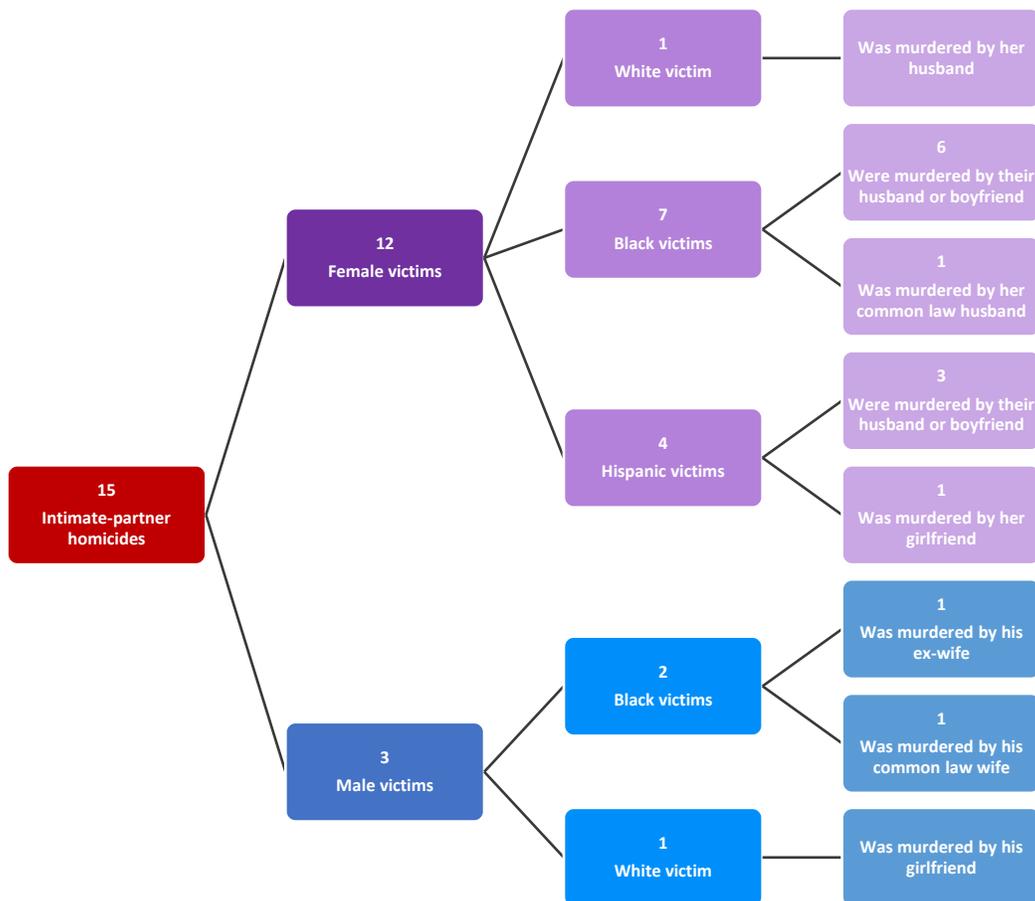


Figure 28. 2014-2016 intimate-partner homicide hierarchy chart

The number of misdemeanor domestic violence arrests made by DPD over the previous two years totaled 11,698, as shown in Figure 29. In 2015-2016 alone, DPD made 5,765 misdemeanor domestic violence arrests; this is 168 fewer arrests, or a modest 3 percent decrease from the previous year. Figure 29 shows that in 2015-2016, the month of August had the highest volume of misdemeanor domestic violence arrests, 540, whereas the lowest level was in February, with 435. In 2014-2015, the highest level of reported misdemeanor domestic violence arrests occurred in December, with 559, which also represents the highest monthly number when looking across both reporting cycles.

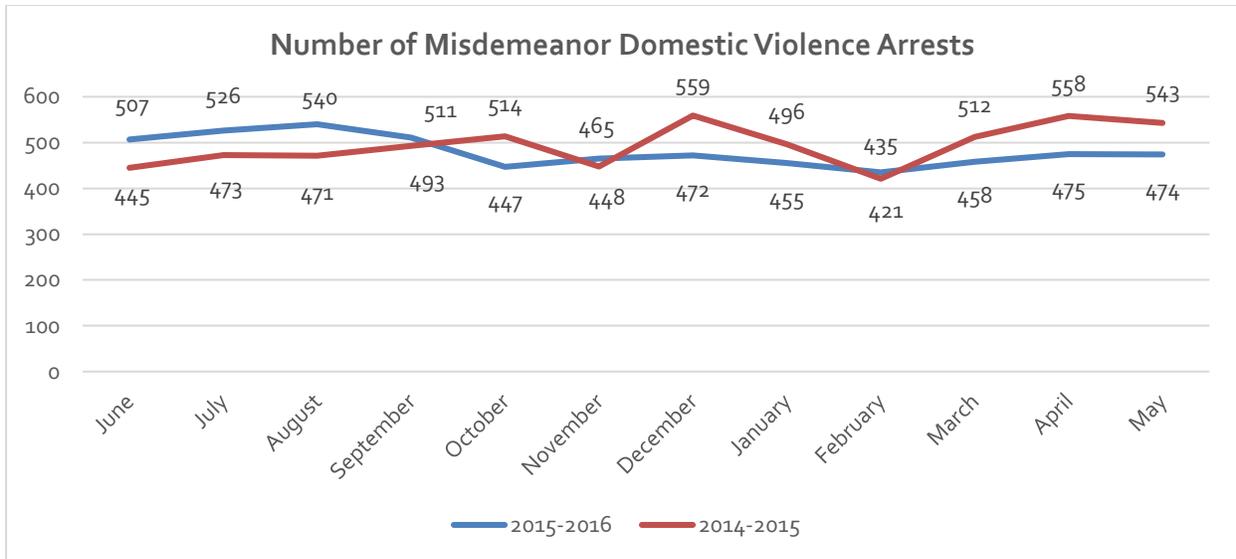


Figure 29. Misdemeanor arrests for domestic violence, June 2014 – May 2016

DPD has made 3,123 felony domestic violence arrests over the past two reporting periods. In 2015-2016 alone, 1,458 felony arrests were made, with December accounting for the highest number of arrests (144) and May accounting for the lowest (76). The total number of felony domestic violence arrests in 2015-2016 decreased by 12 percent from the previous year.

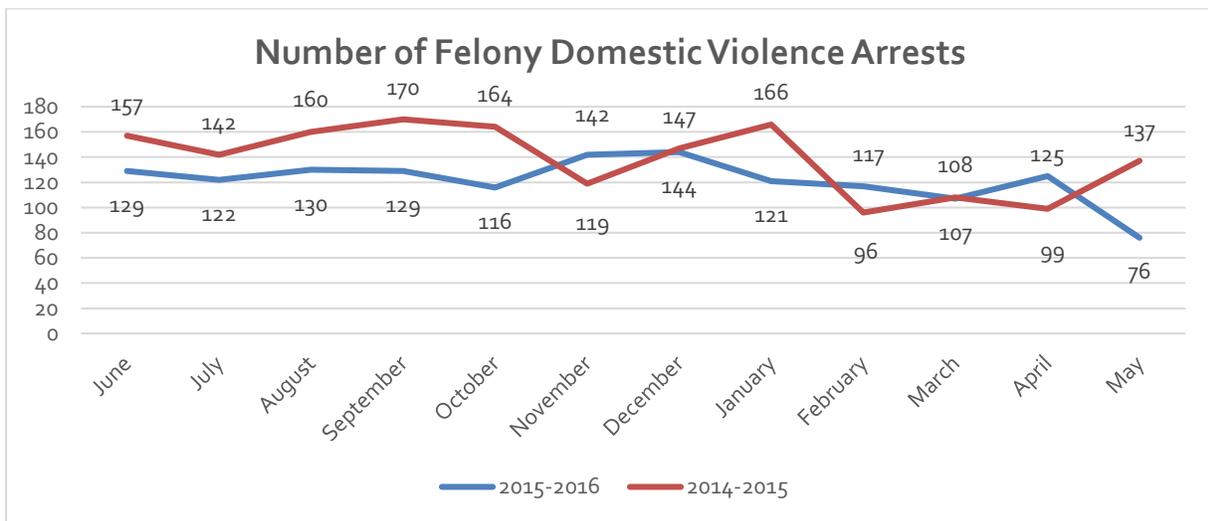


Figure 30. Felony arrests for domestic violence, June 2014 – May 2016

In the two combined reporting periods, DPD made 772 home visits and/or contact attempts to victims identified as high-risk from a combination of eight factors taken from the NYPD assessment model. In 2015-2016 alone, DPD conducted 418 home visits and/or contacts while completing 102 of them. The completion rate for home visit contacts was 24 percent. The month of April had the highest number of attempted home visit contacts (67) whereas the months of December and February accounted for the lowest number of attempted home visit contacts (24). The month of May reported the highest success rate for home visits with 40 percent of attempted home visits completed. Figure 32 –Figure 33 provide

side-by-side comparisons of completed and attempted home visit contacts for the 2015-2016 reporting year.

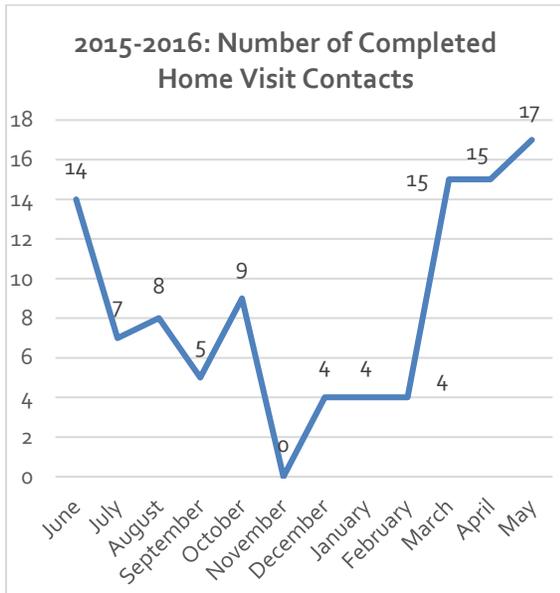


Figure 31. Number of completed home visit contacts

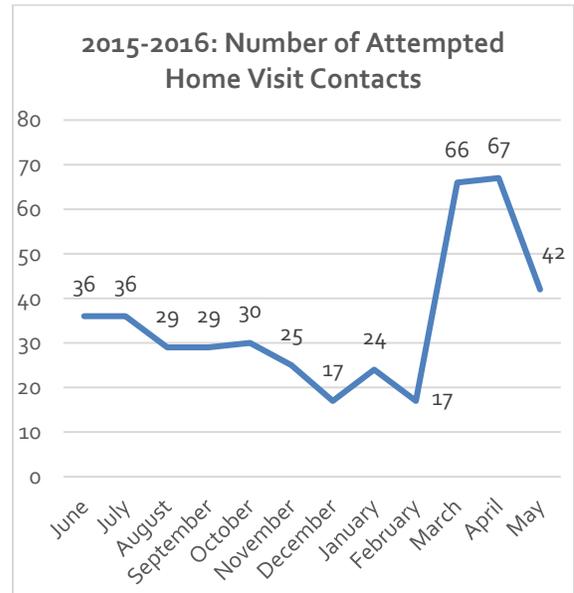


Figure 32. Number of attempted home visit contacts

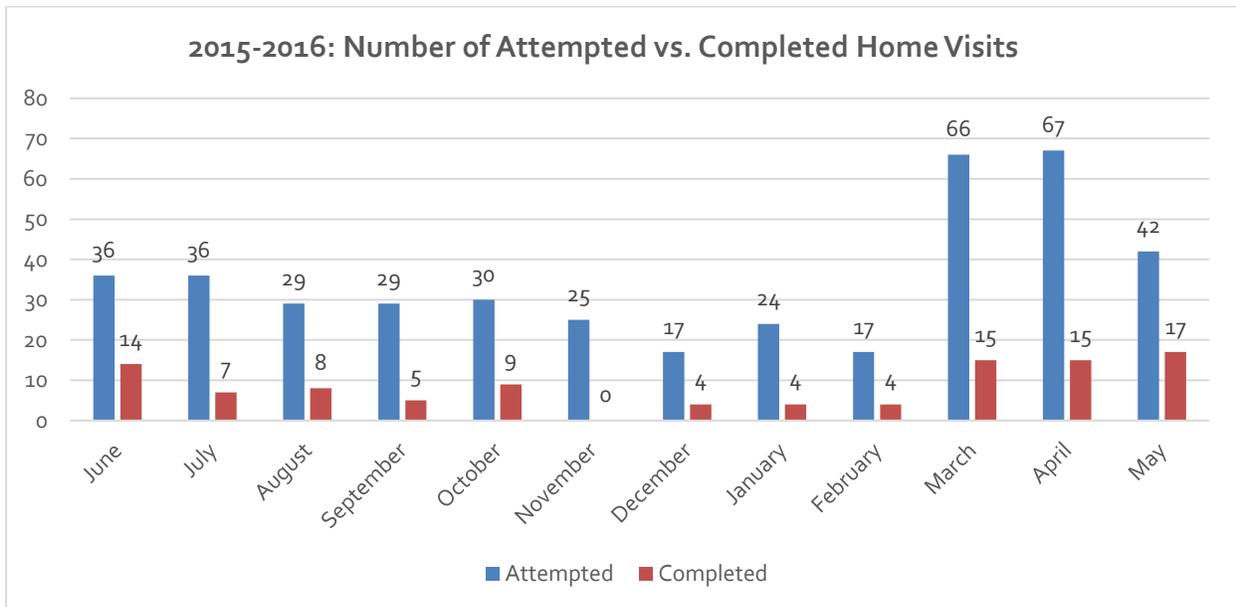


Figure 33. Number of attempted and completed home visits

One of the eight factors taken from the NYPD model is the lethality assessment conducted on-site by DPD personnel. These assessments are considered a best practice in the prevention of intimate-partner homicides and represent a critical policy lever for DPD in reducing the likelihood of domestic homicides and identifying high-risk cases in the community. In 2015-2016, 7,161 lethality assessments were

completed. The month of August accounted for the highest number of lethality assessments completed (n = 754), while February marked the lowest (n = 467).

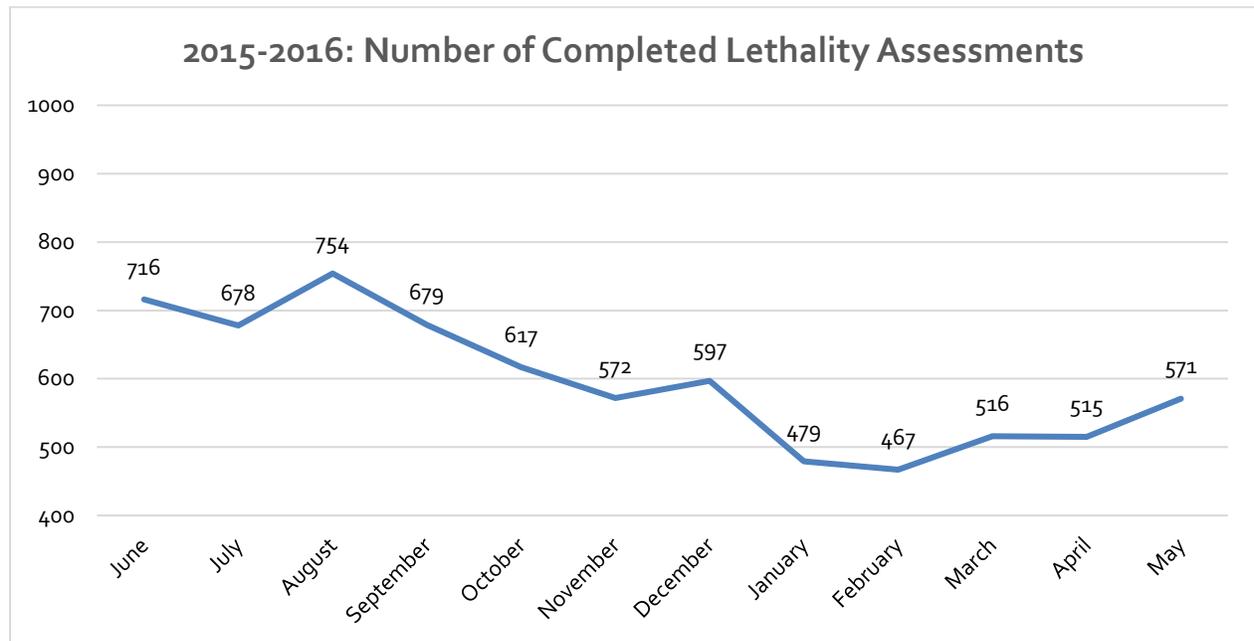


Figure 34. Number of completed lethality assessments

Prosecution

Prosecution of domestic violence cases in the City of Dallas is handled by two different prosecutorial entities. The Dallas County District Attorney's Office prosecutes defendants charged with any offense that is a Class B misdemeanor or higher. When police are unable to secure sufficient evidence to file at least a Class B misdemeanor, Dallas Police have the option of filing Class C misdemeanor charges with the City Attorney's Office, which handles those prosecutions through the Municipal Court.

Dallas County District Attorney

The last program year saw major changes in the Office of the District Attorney, with Susan Hawk assuming office in January 2015, followed by a major reshuffle in personnel structure and prosecutorial priorities. Susan Hawk was the first District Attorney to fully support sharing metrics with the Taskforce, and the research team is grateful for her office's transparency and cooperation, along with those of other lead attorneys and data analysts who have assisted in data management and reporting.

On September 6, 2016, District Attorney Hawk resigned from office after struggling with prolonged health issues. The now vacant district attorney position will be filled by the Governor's Appointments Office.⁴ The Taskforce looks forward to continuing its collaboration with the District Attorney's Office to help combat domestic violence and improve reporting of domestic violence-related incidents.

For the 2015-2016 reporting period, metrics were obtained from the Dallas County District Attorney's Office for eight measures: misdemeanor and felony family violence cases received, misdemeanor and

⁴ Lutz, E. M. (2016). Abbott will pick Susan Hawk's replacement as Dallas County DA. *The Texas Tribune*. Retrieved from <https://www.texastribune.org/2016/09/06/susan-hawk-dallas-county-district-attorney/>

felony family violence cases rejected, felony family violence cases no-billed, felony family violence cases indicted, protective orders, and prosecutions involving family violence enhancements.

The Dallas County District Attorney's Office reported receiving 2,802 misdemeanor domestic violence cases during the 2015-2016 reporting period, a drop of 3.5 percent from the total number of cases received in 2014-2015. As Figure 35 demonstrates, the number of domestic violence cases received remained between 200 and 300 per month, except for the months of February, March and April, when they fell below 200.

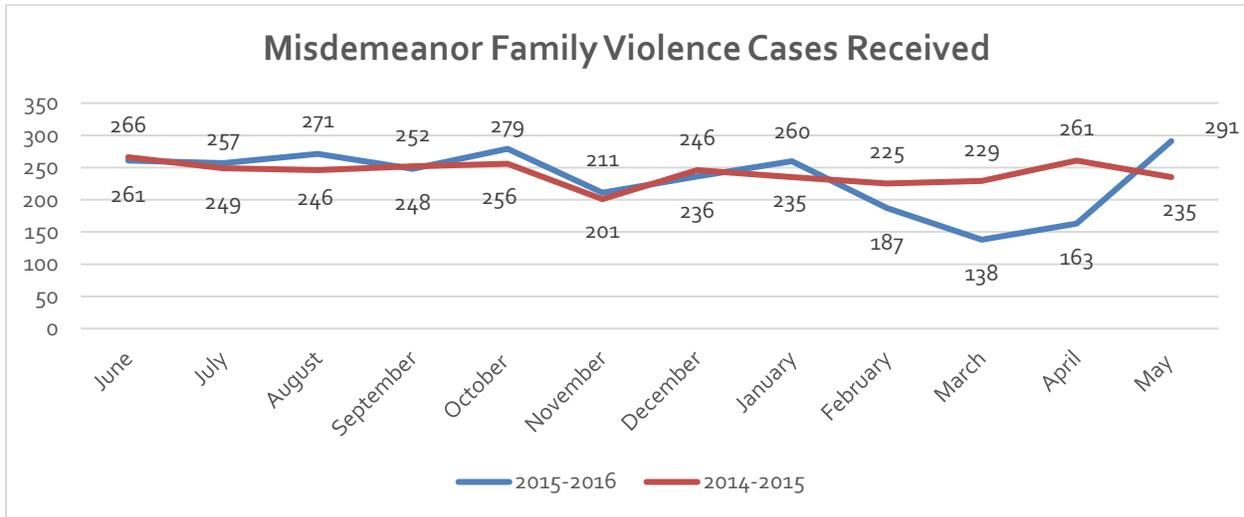


Figure 35. Misdemeanor family violence cases received

During the reporting period, the Dallas County District Attorney's Office rejected a total of 213 misdemeanor cases, down from 229 in the previous year. The trend analysis in Figure 36 demonstrates that the highest number of cases were rejected in the months of September and February. An average of 18 cases were rejected per month in 2015-2016.

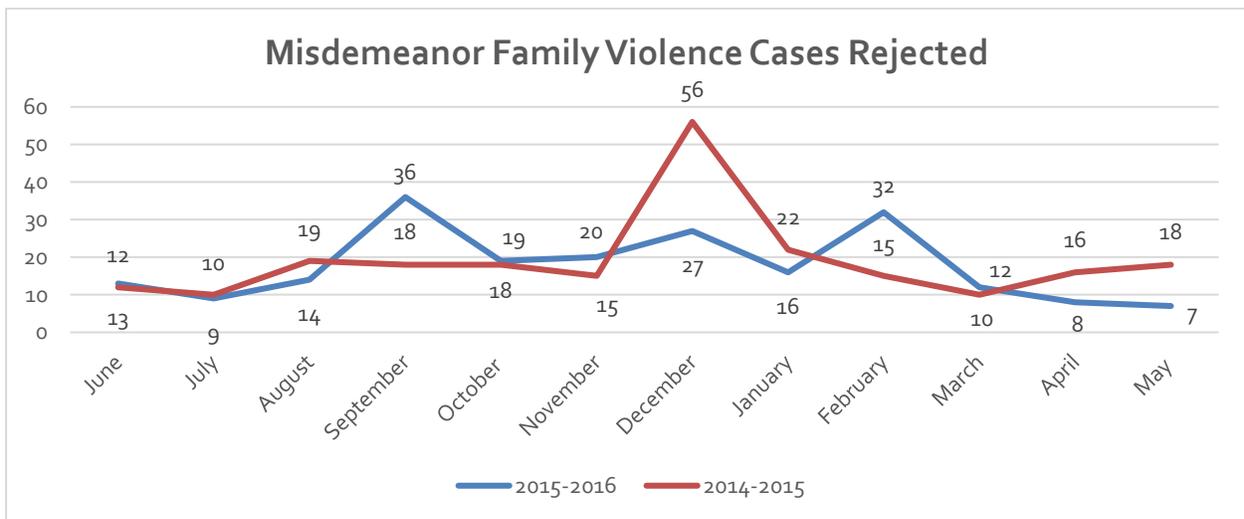


Figure 36. Misdemeanor family violence cases rejected

Figure 37 shows the number of felony family violence cases received in 2015-2016. During the reporting period, the Dallas County District Attorney's Office received 2,643 felony family violence cases, or an average of 220 cases per month. This is slightly less than the 2,728 cases received the previous year. The highest number of cases (272) was received in the month of October and the lowest number (153) in July. Again, these data represent the collective enforcement action of all law enforcement agencies in the County that are assigned for prosecution to the Felony Family Violence Division. The metric only represents intimate partner violence cases and excludes other forms of family violence committed by siblings, parents, or other relatives.

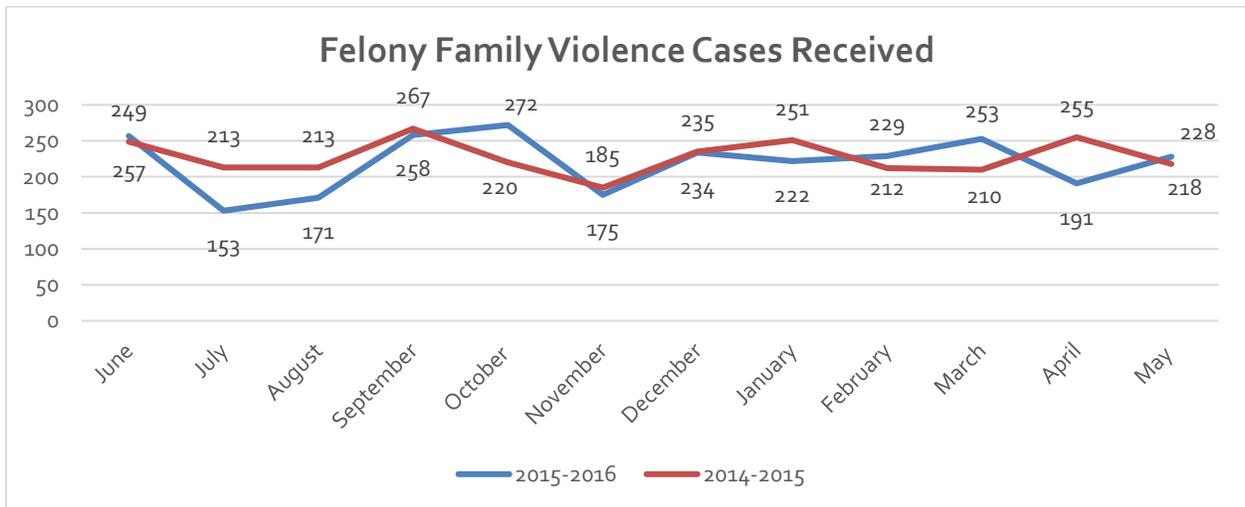


Figure 37. Felony family violence cases received

The Dallas County District Attorney's Office rejected 107 felony family violence cases during the 2015-2016 reporting period due to a variety of procedural and administrative reasons. The highest number of family violence case rejections was made during the months of March, April and May, as Figure 38 indicates.

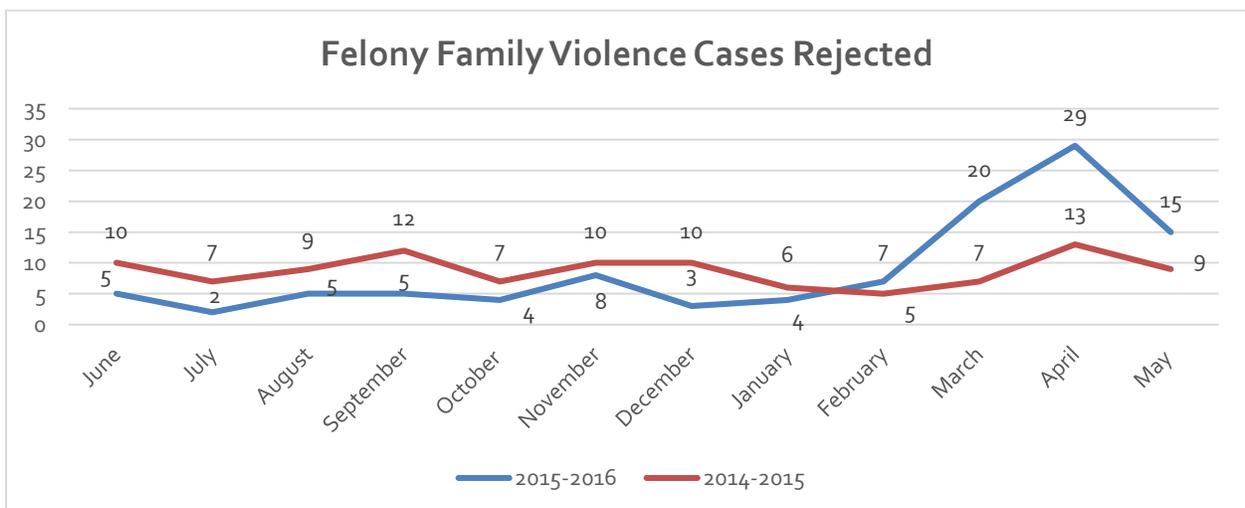


Figure 38. Family violence cases rejected

During the reporting period, the Dallas County District Attorney's Office took 2,029 felony domestic violence cases before the Grand Jury – an average of 169 per month. Of those, 1,458 (72 percent) were indicted, while the Grand Jury returned no bill of indictment on 571 cases (28 percent). These cases do not include those that were received as felony but reduced to misdemeanors, those felony cases that were rejected by the District Attorney's Office, or those that were returned to the originating law enforcement agency for further investigation. Figure 39 and Figure 40 depict the monthly trends in the number of no-billed and indicted felony family violence cases.

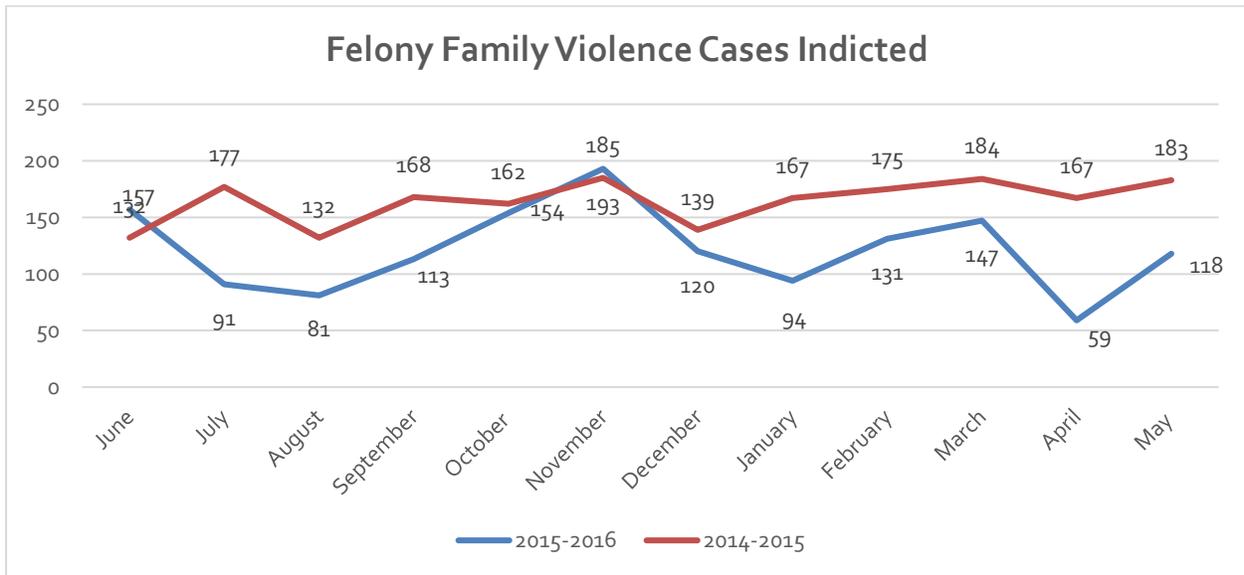


Figure 39. Family violence cases indicted

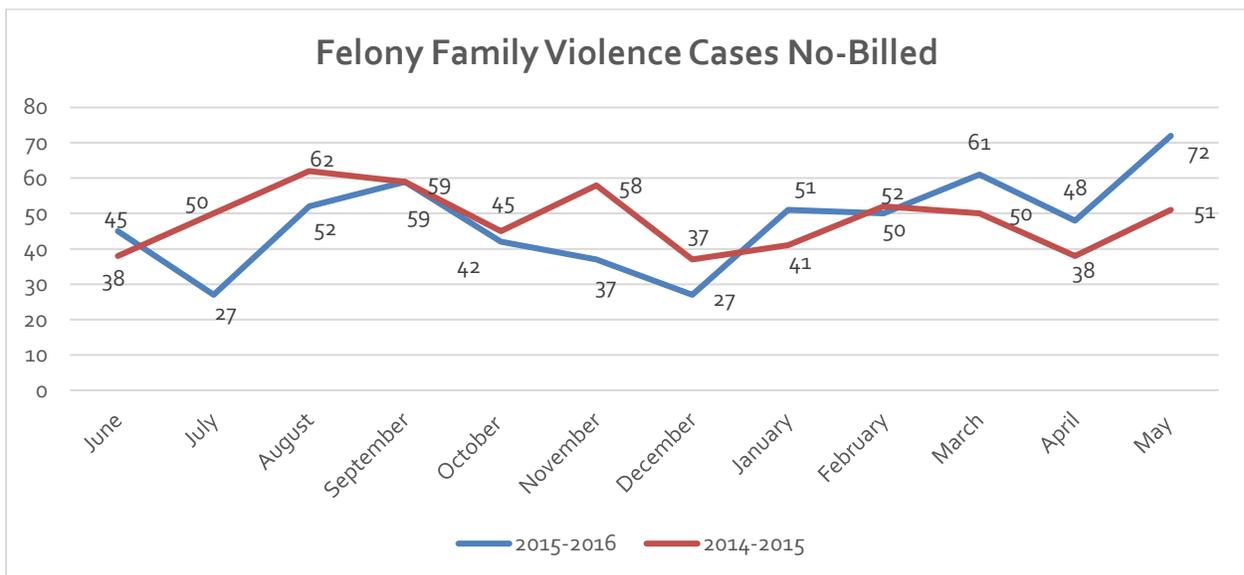


Figure 40. Felony family violence cases no-billed

Penalties for domestic violence crimes can be enhanced when another crime has been committed that carries extra considerations for sentencing. The following categories of enhancements have been identified:

1. Continuous Family Violence Enhancement: This occurs with a history of 2 or more arrests for assault against a family member during a 12-month period, enhancing the offense to a third-degree felony;
2. Assault Enhancement: This occurs when a misdemeanor family violence assault offense is enhanced by a prior family violence conviction, enhancing the offense to a third-degree felony;
3. Impeding Enhancement: This occurs when there is evidence of strangulation with a previous family violence conviction, increasing the offense to a second-degree felony;
4. Stalking: Incidents of stalking over a period of time can enhance an offense to a third-degree felony;
5. Misdemeanor Violation of Protective Order: A non-violent violation of a protective order can enhance an offense to a Class A Misdemeanor; and,
6. Felony Violation of a Protective Order: A violent violation of a protective order can enhance a crime to a third-degree felony.

Figure 41 depicts the monthly trend in the Dallas County District Attorney’s Office application of domestic violence enhancements to the cases it handled. A majority of enhancement cases during the year were due to assault or impeding enhancements.

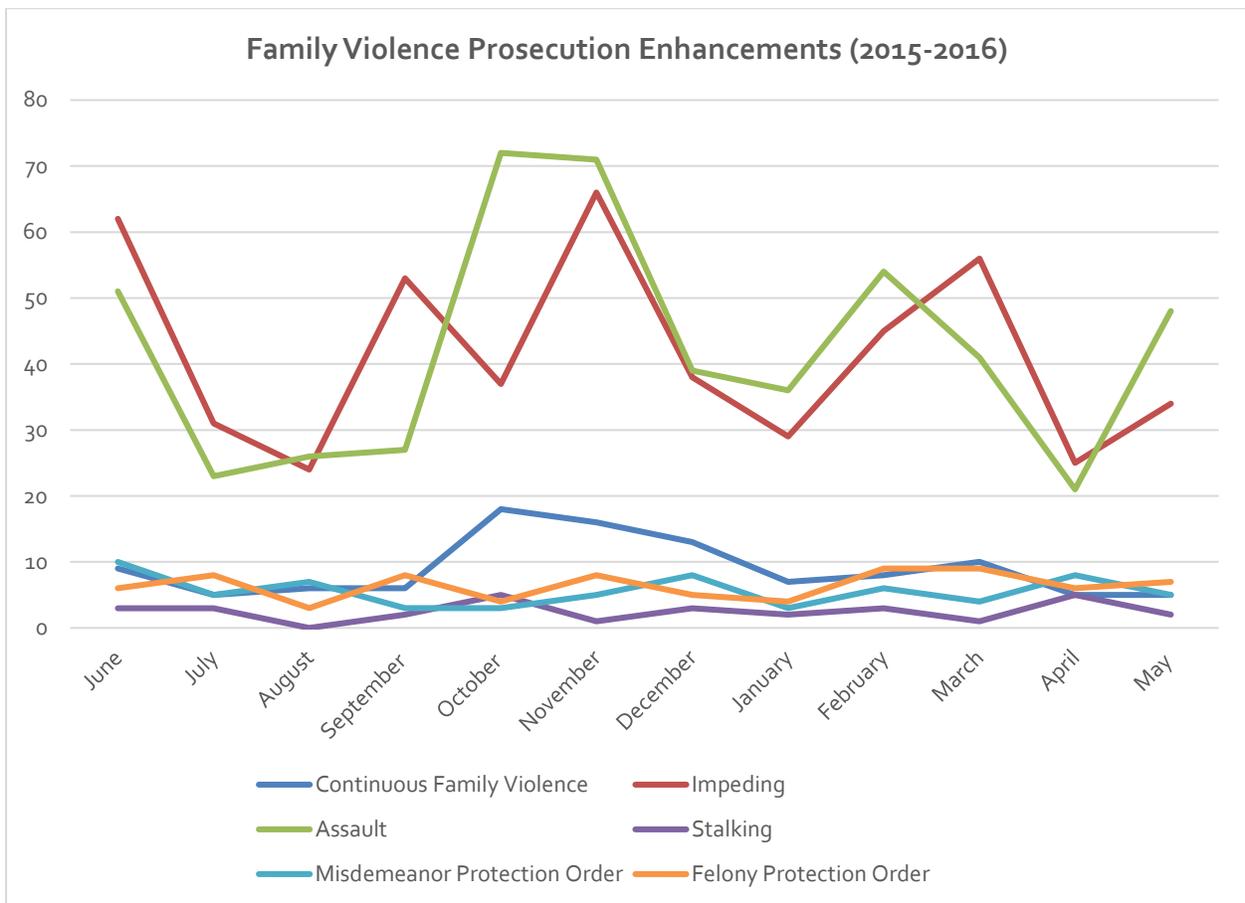


Figure 41. Family violence prosecution enhancements (2015-2016)

Table 7 illustrates the annual data totals across each enhancement category. In 2015-2016, there were a total of 1,291 cases of enhancements to family violence offenses, a 13 percent increase from the previous year. The most notable increase in enhancement cases occurred among impeding enhancements, which increased by 198 percent over the previous reporting period. Accordingly, the number of cases involving impeding enhancements rose from 168 in 2014-2015 to 500 in 2015-2016. Impeding enhancement cases are of particular interest to law enforcement agencies and prosecutors, as these offenses present a high risk of lethality due to presence of strangulation in the offense. Assault remained the most popular category of enhancements in 2015-2016, although the total number of cases dropped from the previous year. Changes in the number of enhancements for misdemeanor and felony violations of protection orders were moderate. Specifically, the number of enhancement cases due to misdemeanor and felony violations of protection orders rose from 61 to 67 and 65 to 77, respectively, over the reporting period.

Table 7. Enhancements to family violence offenses

Type of Enhancement	2014-2015	2015-2016
Continuous Family Violence Enhancement	156	108
Impeding Enhancement	168	500
Assault with Previous Conviction Enhancement	668	509
Stalking Enhancement	29	30
Misdemeanor Violation of Protection Order Enhancement	61	67
Felony Violation of Protection Order Enhancement	65	77

The District Attorney's Office reports data regarding orders of protection and the number of cases that were granted, dropped, dismissed, and denied. In 2015-2016, 400 orders of protection were granted, 64 were dropped, 89 were dismissed and 27 were denied. Table 8 illustrates the monthly numbers of orders of protection that were granted, dismissed, dropped, and denied in the Dallas County in 2015-2016.

Table 8. Orders of protection by disposition, 2015-2016

Orders of Protection by Disposition	Granted	Dismissed	Dropped	Denied
June	42	16	7	1
July	36	15	8	4
August	31	10	5	4
September	46	6	10	3
October	43	10	3	1
November	24	6	5	1
December	31	8	6	2
January	31	5	4	3
February	30	5	3	2
March	28	4	4	2
April	28	3	3	1
May	30	1	6	3
Total	400	89	64	27

Compared to 2014-2015, the total number of orders of protection that were granted remained approximately the same in 2015-2016 (400 in 2015-2016, compared to 387 in 2014-2015). The number of orders of protection that were dropped increased by 77 percent (from 36 in 2014-2015 to 64 in 2015-2016), and the number that were denied increased by 145 percent (from 11 in 2014-2015 to 27 in 2015-2016). A 12 percent decrease was observed in the number of orders of protection that were dismissed (89 in 2015-2016, from 101 in 2014-2015).

Figure 42 graphs the monthly trends in orders of protection for each disposition in 2015-2016. The total number of orders of protection of any disposition peaked in the months of June, July, August, September and October, with 50 or more orders of protection granted, dismissed, dropped, or denied in each month. The highest number of orders of protection of any disposition were observed in the month of June (66).

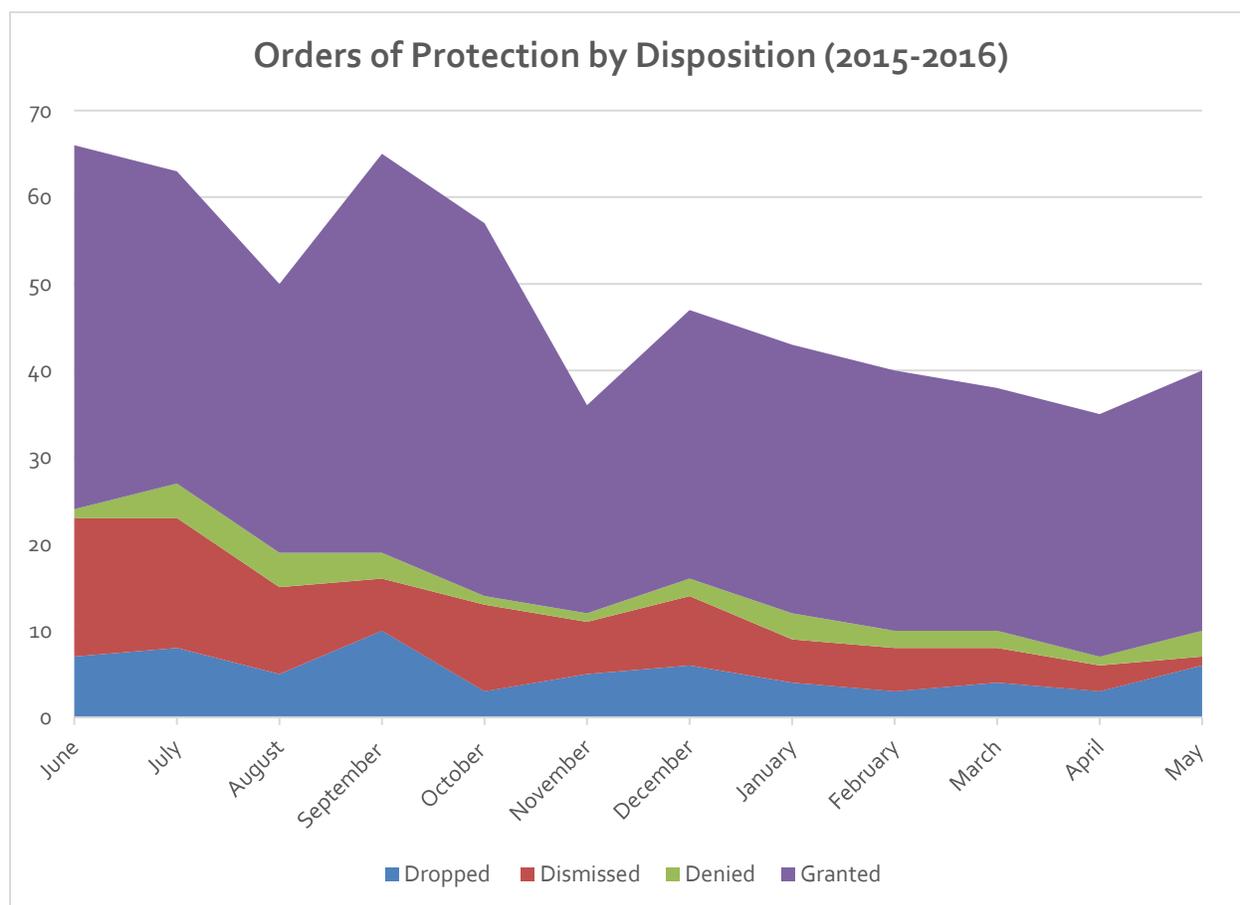


Figure 42. Orders of protection by disposition

The charts in Figure 43 compare trends in orders of protection for each disposition separately. On average, 33 orders of protection were granted each month in 2015-2016. The average number of monthly orders of protection that were dismissed, dropped, and denied were seven, five, and two, respectively. The beginning of 2016 saw an increase in the monthly numbers of orders of protection that were dropped, dismissed, or denied, relative to the previous year. The average number of monthly protective orders that were granted remained almost the same as in the previous year.



Figure 43. Orders of protection by disposition and year

While these statistics are useful, they do not reveal information about the number of arrests, sentences, or recidivism in cases related to violations of protective orders. While beyond the scope of the current report, a comprehensive research project in which staff gather detailed arrest information through disposition data on each domestic violence misdemeanor and felony case would allow for a more nuanced analysis of the variables significantly impacting outcomes.

City of Dallas Attorney's Office

The City of Dallas Attorney's Office has jurisdiction over Class C misdemeanors, including Class C misdemeanor domestic violence cases. Usually involving low-risk offenses that do not pose significant danger to victims, they are punishable by fines up to \$500 and do not entail jail time. During the 2015-2016 reporting period, a total of 4,065 Class C misdemeanor family violence cases were received by the Municipal Court in the City of Dallas, an increase of 11 percent from the previous year. Figure 44 demonstrates a steady trend in the number of Class C misdemeanor family violence cases received per month by the City Attorney's Office. The average number of cases received per month in the 2015-2016 reporting period was 339.

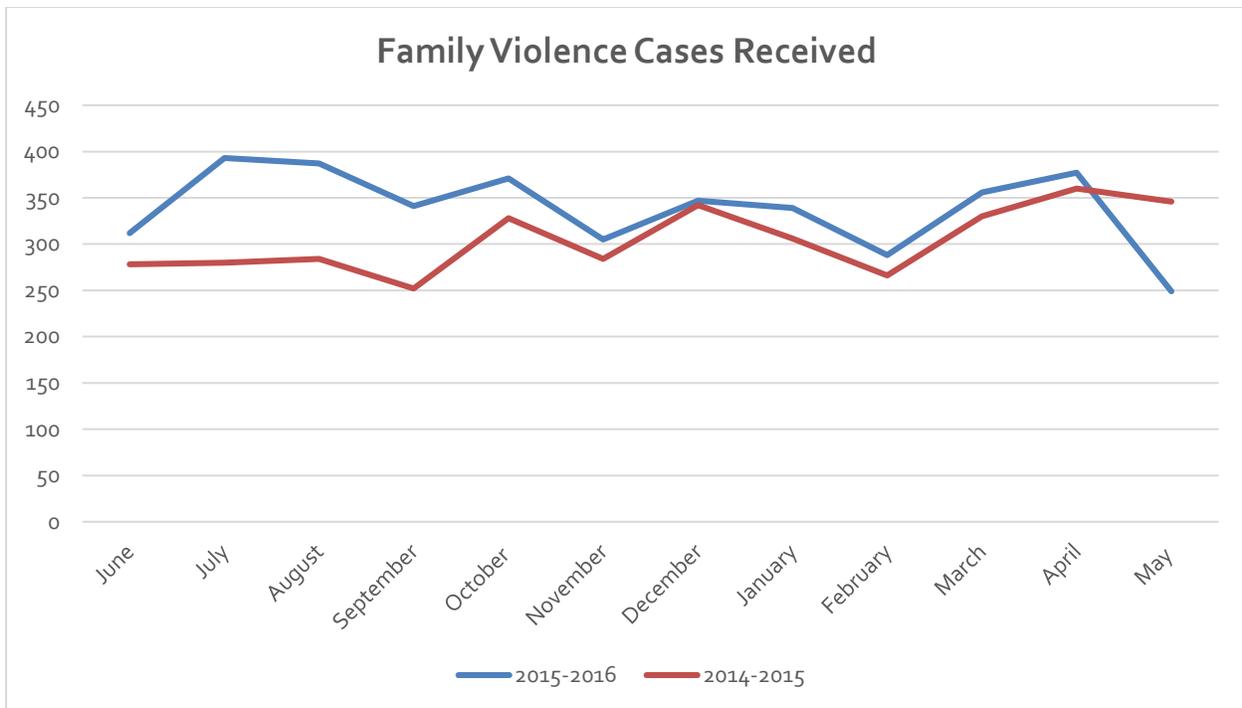


Figure 44. Family violence cases received

Figure 45 and Figure 46 illustrate the relative proportions of family violence case dismissals by cause in the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 reporting periods. Not shown in these figures are the actual numbers of dismissals, which more than doubles from 449 in 2014-2015 to 1,172 in 2015-2016. While the number of dismissals may have increased for every category, the proportion of dismissals attributed to each category has changed. In 2014-2015, 45 percent of dismissals were made due to a lack of outside witnesses, and 30 percent were made due to deferred adjudication. This is in contrast to 35 percent of dismissals made due to no outside witness and 54 percent due to deferred adjudication in 2015-2016. These two categories, no outside witness and deferred adjudication, represent both the largest proportion of dismissals and the largest changes from one year to the next. However, the increase in deferred adjudication is a positive change. Deferred adjudication in fact holds the defendant accountable for his/her actions by requiring classes and fines to earn the dismissal. Additionally, the court monitors whether the defendants are charged with any new family violence offenses for a period of no less than 90 days prior to ordering a dismissal in any case. In the 2014-2015 reporting period, these two categories accounted for 75 percent of all dismissals; for the 2015-2016 reporting period, they now account for 90 percent of all dismissals.

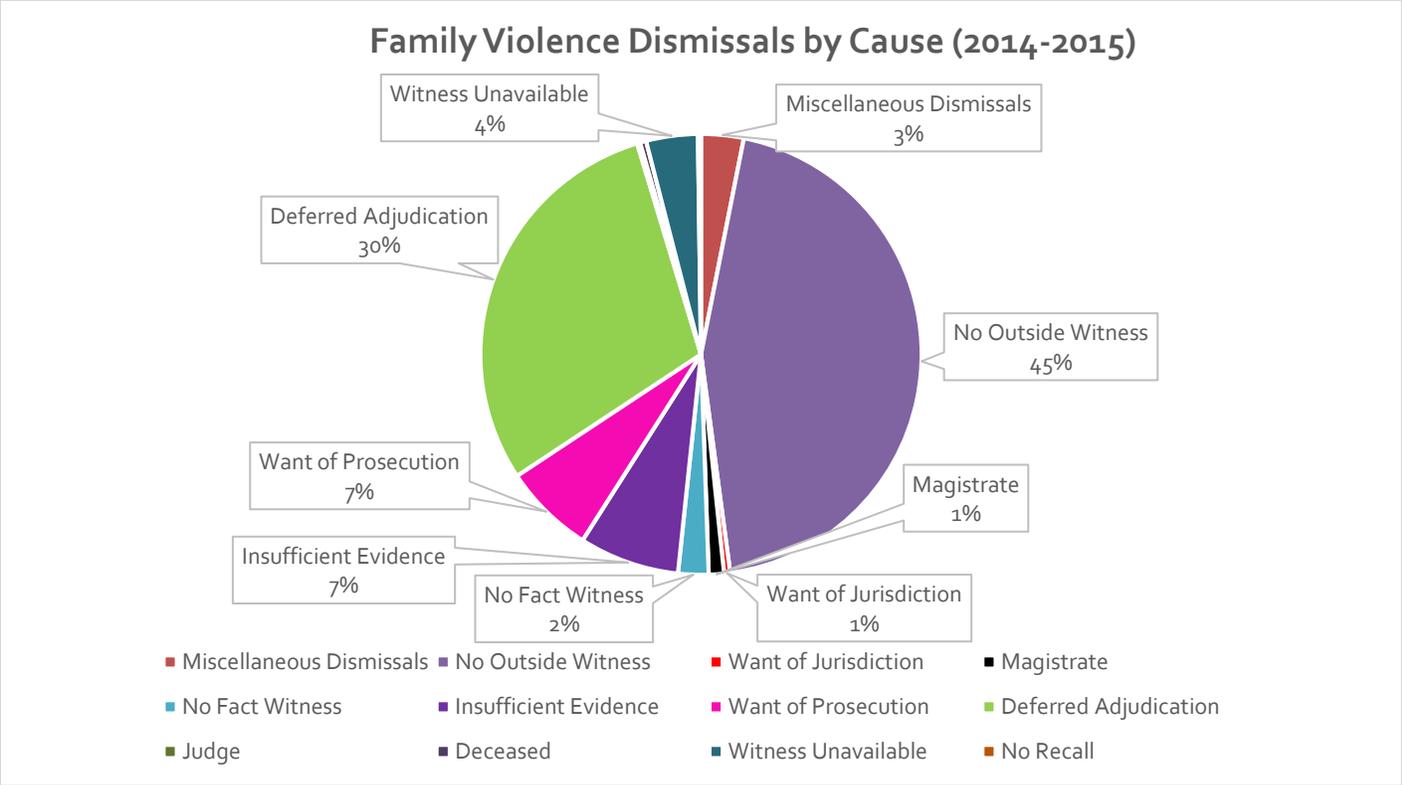


Figure 45. Family violence dismissals by cause (2014-2015)

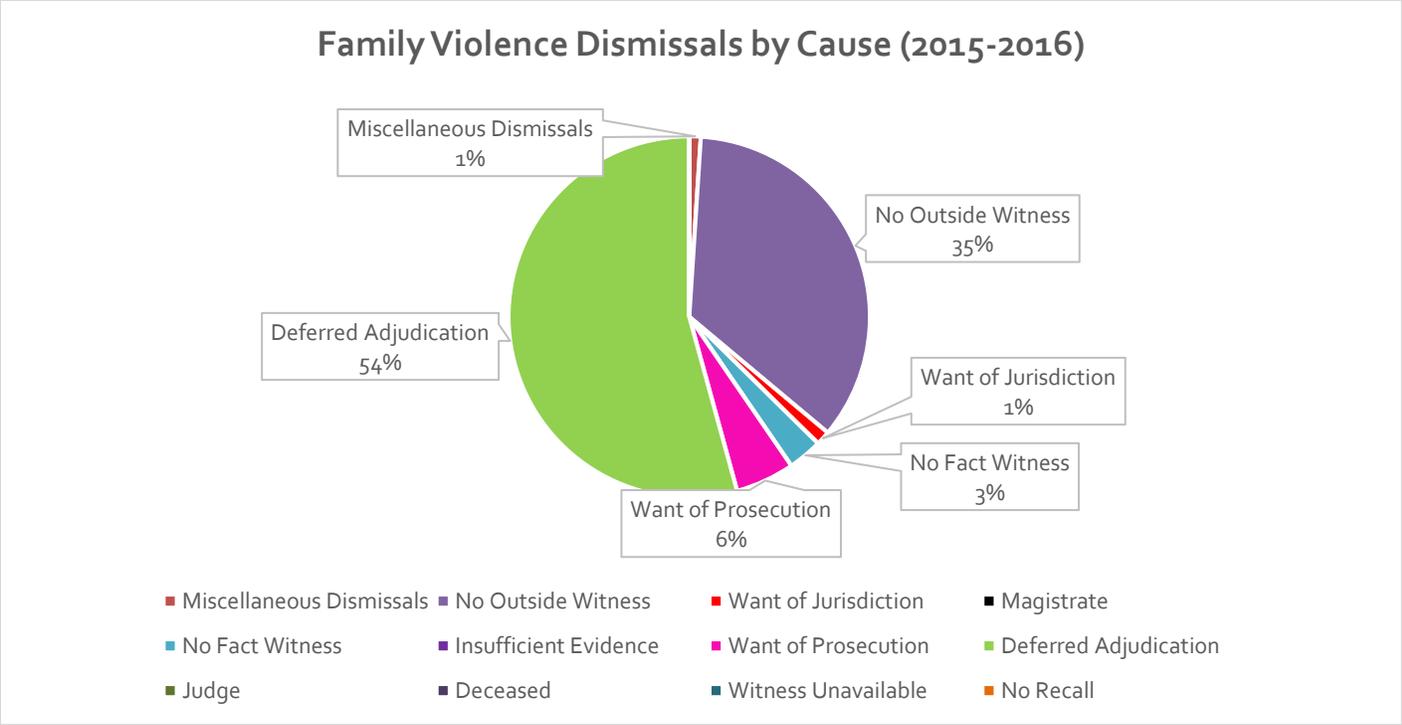


Figure 46. Family violence dismissals by cause (2015-2016)

Dallas County Courts

Like police officers and prosecutors, judges play a major role in the fight against domestic violence. In 2014, Judge Rick Magnis established the Dallas County Felony Domestic Violence Court (FDVC) to promote victim safety by increasing accountability, monitoring, and support of offenders who have been placed on probation for felony offenses committed against an intimate partner. The FDVC program focuses on creating opportunities for personal insight, behavioral change, and non-violent living by delivering Batterers Intervention Programming and Prevention (BIPP), substance abuse treatment, employment counseling, and psychological services. Victim safety is enhanced by electronic monitoring, drug testing, alcohol monitoring, and strict accountability including swift and immediate sanctions for noncompliance with FDVC program requirements. The FDVC team consists of the judge, a dedicated probation officer, the Family Place (which supplies a BIPP provider), a prosecutor, a public defender, the Genesis Women's Shelter (which provides a victim advocate), a team of forensic assessors (employed by Dallas County Community Supervision and Corrections Department), a substance abuse counselor with a community vendor, a vendor that provides electronic monitoring services, a data collection specialist with CSCD, and a law enforcement officer (a detective with the DPD Domestic Violence unit).

Since its inception, the Family Domestic Violence Court (FDVC) program has provided 498 Forensic Domestic Violence Risk Evaluations to the 17 Dallas County Felony Courts and has referred 218 individuals to the FDVC program. FDVC has had the capacity to accept only 98 of the assessed domestic violence high-risk probationers. To date, 22 have successfully graduated the program, and 20 have been revoked. There are seven pending motions to revoke probation (six of these were absconders). All the individuals who were revoked have received prison sentences ranging from two to 15 years. Four probationers were removed from the FDVC program but continued on probation in other specialized programs. One individual was transferred out of county, and seven are currently absconded with active warrants. Following a large graduation, the FDVC program has 30 active participants, and eight of these are currently in residential treatment.

Judge Roberto Cañas of County Criminal Court 10 has also spearheaded the Dallas County Gun Removal Program, which ensures that domestic violence offenders are in compliance with laws relating to possession of firearms. Through the program, a person convicted of domestic violence cannot legally keep a firearm and is required, by law, to surrender the firearm to the Dallas County Sheriff's Office or to a court-approved third party. In 2015-2016, 27 firearms were taken in, and 10 were released through the program. Currently, the program stores 27 firearms apprehended from domestic violence offenders. The program also plans to make "bench cards" available to judges when following firearm surrender policies. These cards would provide judges with an overview of domestic violence laws with regards to possession of firearms, promoting consistency and informed decision-making.

To further victim safety and batterer accountability, Judge Cañas is in the process of appointing a pretrial compliance officer to monitor persons accused of domestic violence to ensure that they are following the court bond conditions (such as compliance with protective orders and prohibition of firearm possession). The officer also would monitor offenders' participation in the Batterers Intervention Program, thereby adopting a proactive rather than a reactive approach to the victim's safety situation. The position is to be filled by a peace officer who has the power to make arrests in case the accused is not complying with court orders. Judge Cañas has also begun an initiative to bring on-board a victim advocate who is professionally trained in supporting victims of domestic violence. The advocate would provide assistance to domestic violence victims by finding information, seeking support, connecting resources, and filling out paperwork. The advocate's loyalty would rest primarily

with the victim, and the advocate's feedback would be used to improve the administration of justice within the system.

City of Dallas and the Mayor's Office

Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings initiated the Dallas Men Against Abuse Campaign in 2013, following the death of Karen Cox Smith, whose estranged husband shot her the day before Dallas police planned to arrest him on a family violence warrant.⁵ Because most domestic violence perpetrators are men, the Mayor's campaign encourages solidarity among men across the community in speaking out against domestic battering and abuse. Mayor Rawlings spoke about domestic violence at the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership (NNIP) conference held in Dallas in October 2015.

At the beginning of the City Council Meeting on Wednesday, October 7, 2015 Councilmembers Jennifer Gates and Tiffinni Young proclaimed October the Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and announced the Domestic Violence Taskforce Report for the 2015-2016 year. That same month, the Dallas City Council, in collaboration with the City of Dallas Parks and Recreation Department, hosted the "Purple Porch Light Week" to increase awareness of domestic violence and gain public support to prevent such incidents. The week-long event, sponsored by Walmart, Lauren Elliot, and Lowe's Home Improvement, donated purple lightbulbs to each council district, where citizens used them to light their front porches. The initiative was publicized on social media and encouraged participants to also donate or volunteer with domestic violence shelters and agencies. An estimated 5,000 people participated in this awareness campaign.

Council Member Gates and members of the Dallas Domestic Violence Taskforce asked businesses in Downtown Dallas to "Paint the Town Purple" and spread awareness about domestic violence issues. Several Dallas landmarks, including The Omni Hotel, Reunion Tower, the Bank of America Plaza, the Hunt Oil Tower, and the 1400 Hi Line building, turned lights purple to show solidarity with the event. Neiman Marcus Downtown created a purple window display, the Renaissance Tower encouraged its tenants and employees to wear purple, and the City of Dallas employees wore purple. Additional participants in the "Paint the Town Purple" event include the University of North Texas System, HNTB Companies, One Arts Plaza, Genesis Women's Shelter, the Family Place, AT&T, and the Dallas Convention and Visitors Bureau.

On October 21, 2016, Dr. Denise Paquette Boots and Dr. Timothy Bray from the Institute for Urban Policy Research at the University of Texas at Dallas hosted a reception to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Institute on the Continental Bridge in downtown Dallas. As part of the anniversary event, and to mark the public release of the first annual Summary Report for the Dallas Domestic Violence Taskforce, the City of Dallas and all Taskforce partners were invited to attend. Over 200 people attended the event, and the entire Dallas skyline was lit in purple against the setting sun as the featured speakers took to the stage to discuss the critical findings from the inaugural Taskforce report. Speakers included Mayor Mike Rawlings, Councilmembers Gates and Young, Drs. Boots and Bray, Dallas Police Chief Brown, and representatives from the Dallas District Attorney's Office and shelter partners. Media for the event and inaugural summary report were extensive, with over 20 interviews and stories reported across North Texas.

⁵ Mervosh, S. (2013). Dallas Mayor reveals that campaign against domestic violence is personal. *The Dallas Morning News*. Retrieved from: <http://www.dallasnews.com/news/news/2013/03/17/dallas-mayor-reveals-that-campaign-against-domestic-violence-is-personal>

As part of their duties as co-chairs of the Dallas Domestic Violence Taskforce Councilmembers Gates and Young also held quarterly general taskforce meetings. These meetings were open to the public and included members from the non-profit sector, Dallas Police Department, Dallas County District Attorney's Office, City of Dallas Attorney's Office, county judges, elected officials, members of the media, private citizens, and the lead researcher on the annual summary report, Dr. Denise Boots. The meetings offered an opportunity for taskforce partners to share resources, event information, outreach activities, and organizational efforts across Dallas that seek justice and support for victims of domestic violence. In addition, Councilmembers Gates and Young hosted meetings of the executive committee members.

Organizational Priorities and Policy Suggestions

As part of the general survey, respondents were asked to list three things that would improve their organization's ability to serve victims of domestic violence. Forty-two respondents answered the question, and their 74 responses were placed in the 11 categories Figure 47 summarizes.

Among the responses given, funding, shelter capacity, and victim services were most frequently cited as areas for improvement; 13.5 percent of responses fell into each of these categories. The desire for improved funding and increased shelter capacity are largely self-explanatory, but for those seeking to improve funding, most respondents spoke primarily of their own agencies, while increased shelter capacity was a priority even for those agencies not providing shelter services.

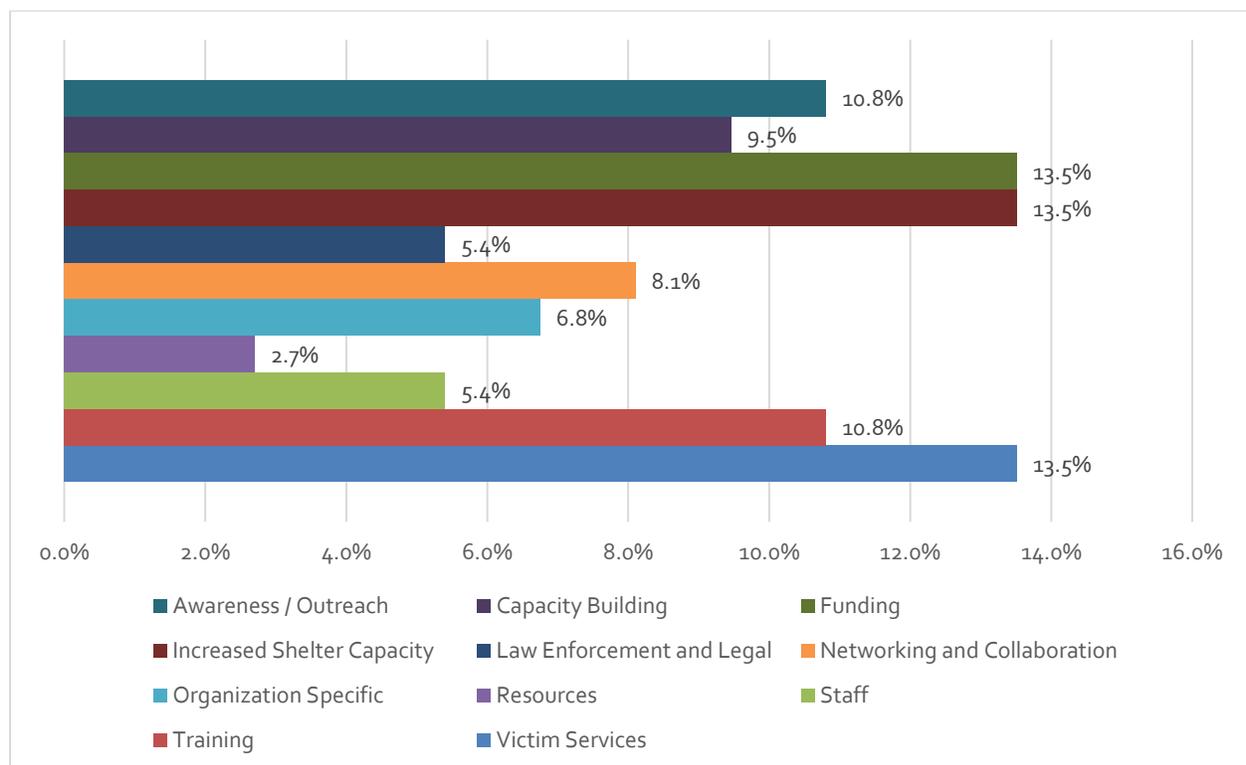


Figure 47. Areas for organizational improvement

In responses reporting a need for improved victim services, respondents focused on services for victims living outside of shelters, especially those who have left shelters recently. Furthermore, respondents

were particularly interested in improving mental health, counseling, and crisis prevention services to victims of domestic violence.

The next most-cited improvement needs for respondents were to expand awareness and outreach programs and to increase training opportunities; each made up 10.8 percent of responses. Respondents citing these needs reported substantially similar reasoning for increasing both awareness and training opportunities. Respondents expressed a need for both increased awareness and outreach among LGBT communities and additional training focused on serving this population. Results suggest that these two issues could be resolved jointly: by providing training in serving LGBT victims, outreach to these communities might become easier to accomplish. Similarly, those citing the need for increased awareness and outreach were also concerned with outreach efforts in multilingual environments. This is driven by the concern that outreach efforts are not connecting with non-English, non-Spanish speaking populations; respondents were concerned not only with language acquisition, but with cultural competency. Again, responses regarding awareness and outreach and training coalesce around similar issues that could perhaps be addressed in conjunction.

Making up 9.5 percent of responses, improved capacity building efforts was the next most common response. Among those requesting capacity building, a majority of respondents cited case management, client tracking, and other data and technology-related needs. Similarly, the 8.1 percent of responses citing networking and collaboration as an organizational priority mentioned share case management and client tracking as part of the solution to increasing cross-system relations and knowledge of service availability.

Challenges for Shelter Providers

While all the organizations that responded to the general survey were asked to provide their three highest organizational priorities for improvement, organizations that provide shelter services were asked to discuss their biggest challenges more specifically. The challenges reported by shelter providers largely coincided with the priorities of the larger group, which indicates a relatively cohesive understanding of the needs in the sector.

Every shelter provider identified lack of space as a major challenge in their operation. They reported that their facilities are either at or near capacity for much of the year, forcing them to refer victims to other agencies, many of whom are also experiencing space shortages. In addition to the lack of space in emergency and transitional housing, agencies also report difficulty with the procurement of safe, affordable, permanent housing for victims. Much like the general survey respondents, the shelters also cited a variety of other common challenges, especially the need for reliable, unrestricted funding, quality staff, and access to important resources such as mental health and legal services.

Policy Suggestions

Respondents to the general survey were asked to suggest important policy changes that would advance their work in preventing and ending domestic violence. Among the responses offered, most fall into one of two categories: public policy and general organizational policy suggestions.

Public policy suggestions generally require legislative actions. Some, however, could simply indicate the need for changes to non-legislative rules carried out and enforced by bureaucratic state and local agencies such as police departments.

The other type of policy suggestion respondents offered frequently fall under the general organizational policy category. Organizational policy changes are suggestions for the internal operating procedures of non-governmental organizations. Figure 48 summarizes respondents' suggestions in the general survey.

Public Policy Suggestions

- Create a dedicated, problem-solving court for protective orders.
- Focus DV prevention efforts (funding) on teenage audiences.
- Create legal protections for employees to prevent DV victimization from affecting employment.
- Provide accessible DV shelters for victims with disabilities.
- Invest the public safety budget in community violence prevention.
- Promote homicide unit participation in DV Taskforce.
- Require mandatory ongoing education for DV offenders.
- Include DV "flag" at every step, from incident to final disposition, regardless of the eventual charge.
- Serve warrants within 30 days of offense.
- Bring cases to trial within six months of offense.
- Enforce bond amounts significant enough to prevent offenders from accessing victims.
- Require victim advocates to be present when responding to a DV call.
- Require mandatory DV training for law enforcement.

Organizational Policy Suggestions

- Create continuity of service enrollment to prevent victims from completing multiple registration processes.
- Promote the availability of wraparound services (legal, counseling, employment) for victims outside the shelter environment.
- Promote rideshare opportunities for victims who lack transportation to shelters.
- Provide accessible DV shelters and other needed services for victims with disabilities.
- Increase accommodations for victims with children, especially older boys.
- Require staff training in cultural competency and issues within the LGBT community.
- Provide solutions for victims with additional basic needs like active drug use, dependency, and homelessness.

Figure 48. Public and organizational policy suggestions

Summary and Future Considerations

Reducing domestic homicides and increasing the efficacy of community responses to domestic violence requires a concerted, open, and dedicated spirit of communication and cooperation across the social, criminal justice, and government sectors of the community. Dallas prides itself in a long history of accomplishments and dedication to prioritizing issues such as domestic violence, as demonstrated by the strides the Dallas Domestic Violence Taskforce and its diverse membership have taken in advocating progressive, long-term solutions. Under the leadership of Mayor Rawlings and the Dallas City Council, Dallas is setting critical precedents with creations of the annual report. This transparency and sharing of various metrics and data across many different non-profits, agencies, organizations, and elected officials in the social and criminal justice systems is an ideal model for other cities seeking to establish a coordinated community response team to domestic violence issues. This report offers a glimpse into the systemic response to domestic violence in the Dallas area and the great efforts of the Taskforce members who serve victims, provide education and support services, fund research and programs aimed at helping victims of domestic violence, and who lead the community in initiatives to bring light to the fight against domestic violence in this community.



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