



**Georgia
Commission on
Family
Violence**

**FAMILY VIOLENCE
STATISTICS AND TRENDS
IN JUDICIAL DISTRICT NINE
2013-2017**

JUDICIAL CIRCUIT(S)

**APPALACHIAN
BELL-FORSYTH
BLUE RIDGE
ENOTAH
GWINNETT
MOUNTAIN
NORTHEASTERN**

PUBLISHED DECEMBER 2020

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Family Violence is a systemic issue that impacts all of us and requires a coordinated community response to address. The Georgia Commission on Family Violence (GCFV) recognizes the need for reliable, timely and targeted data about the problem of family violence. We are working to make family violence data accessible to key stakeholders by analyzing specific regions and creating reports reflecting the unique needs of those regions.

The data contained in this report represent only reported incidents of family violence in Judicial District Nine within the State of Georgia, which is comprised of the Appalachian, Bell-Forsyth, Blue Ridge, Enotah, Gwinnett, Mountain and Northeastern Judicial Circuits. This data should be considered an undercount of the true number of incidents. Due to the intimate nature of family violence, cultural practices and social stigma, family violence is often not reported. Regardless, the trends highlighted in this report can be utilized to inform evidenced-based family violence policies and practices.

ABOUT GCFV

The Georgia Commission on Family Violence is a state agency created by the Georgia General Assembly in 1992 to develop a comprehensive state plan for ending family violence in Georgia. The mission of GCFV is to provide leadership to end family violence by promoting safety, ensuring accountability, and improving justice for generations to come.

Charged with the study and evaluation of needs, priorities, programs, policies, and accessibility of services relating to family violence in Georgia, GCFV is led by 37 appointed Commissioners and a staff of seven. GCFV is administratively attached to the Georgia Department of Community Supervision (DCS).

**DISTRICT NINE
Judicial Circuits**

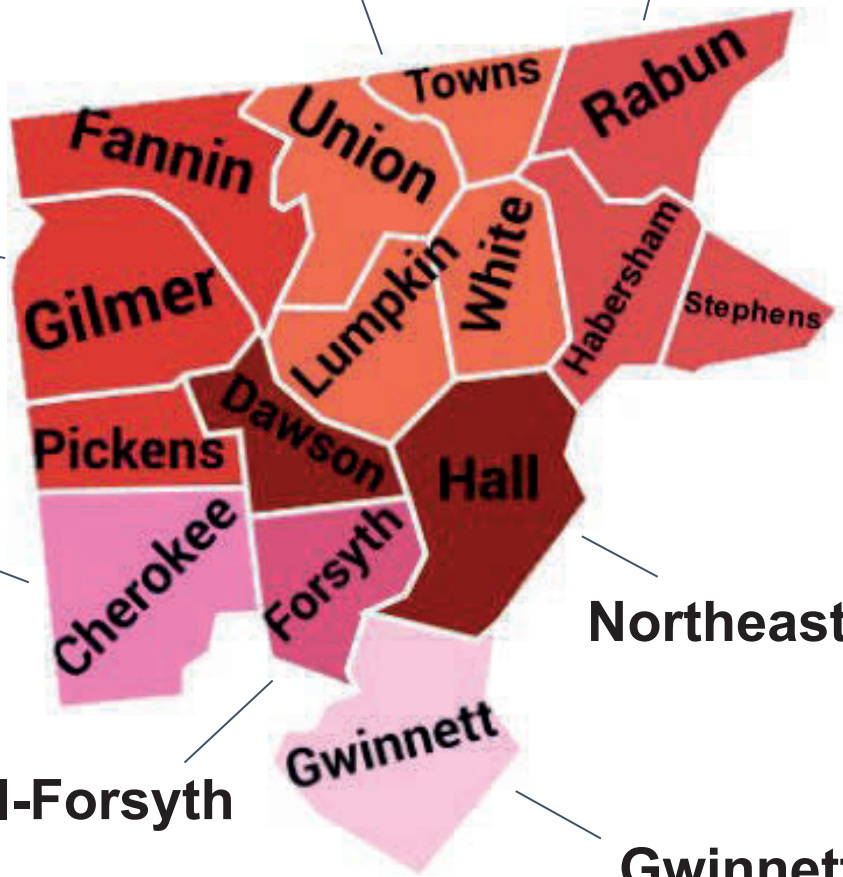
Appalachian

Blue Ridge

Bell-Forsyth

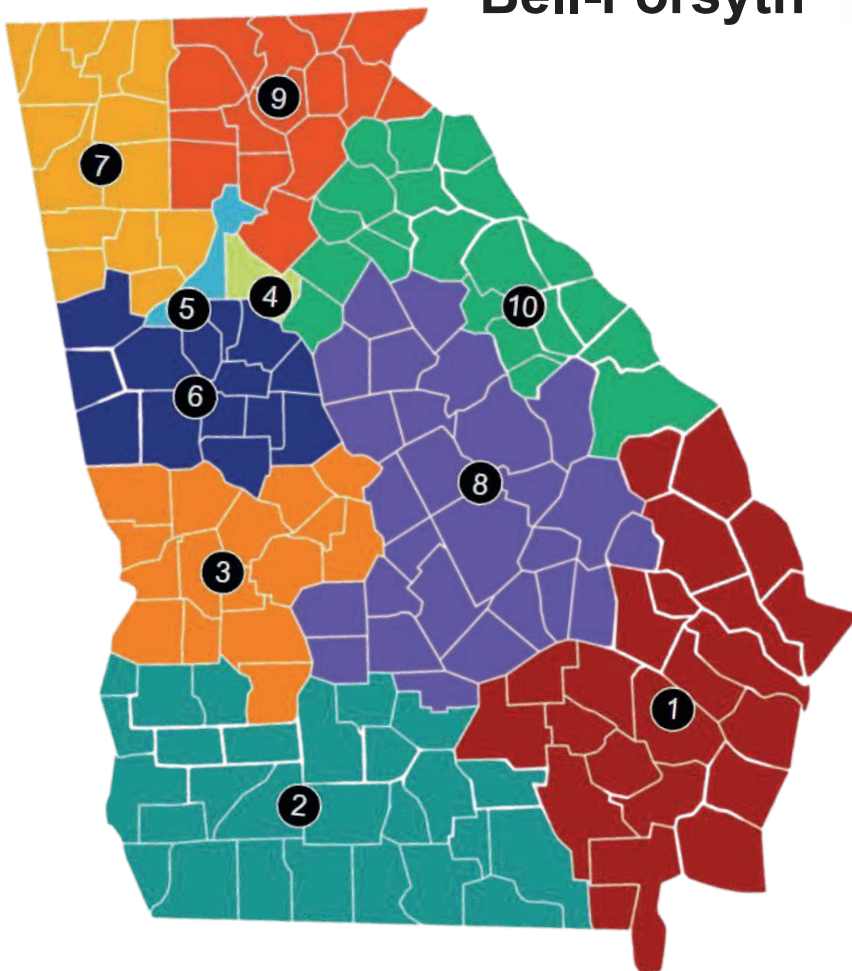
Enotah

Mountain



Northeastern

Gwinnett



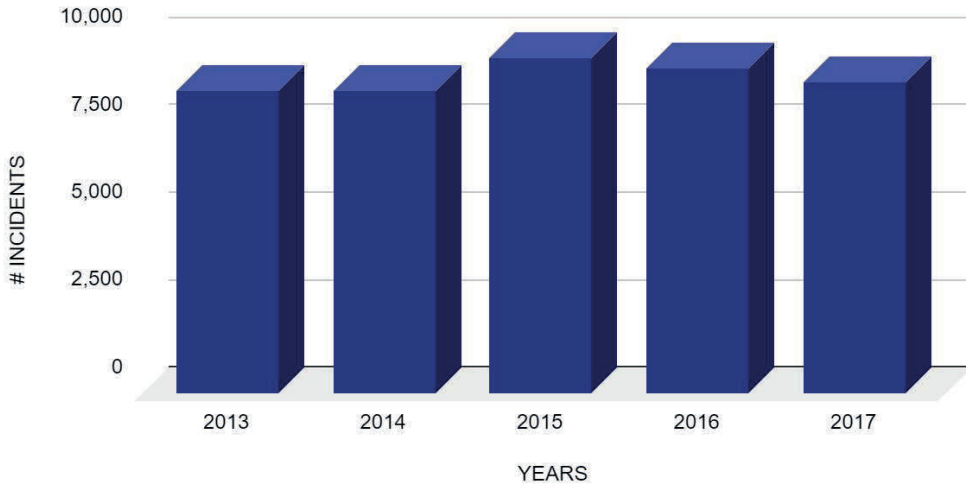
**STATE OF GEORGIA
Judicial Districts**

Judicial District Nine (2013-2017)

Reported Incidents of Family Violence

Reported Incidents of Family Violence

Judicial District Nine 2013-2017



Over the course of the five-year reporting period, the rate of family violence incidents reported to law enforcement rose 3.2%. There were 44,921 family violence incidents reported in Judicial District Nine from 2013-2017.

YEARS	# INCIDENTS
2013	8,606
2014	8,608
2015	9,536
2016	9,285
2017	8,884

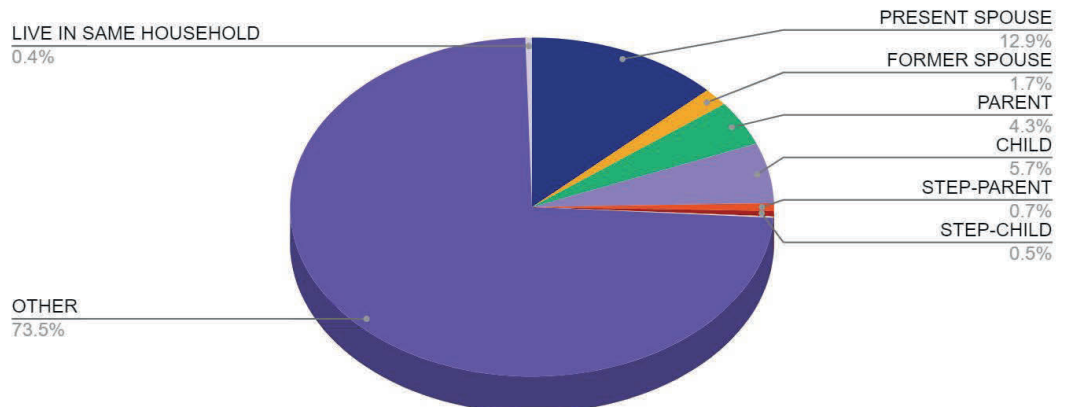
Relationship of Parties in Reported Incidents of Family Violence

Georgia's family violence incident report includes multiple fields with the option for an officer to select "other." The definition of "other" has not been properly defined, and the contents of this catch-all category within the data are otherwise unspecified. Clarifying the selection criteria for the category "other" is an area for improvement within the data. This is particularly true given that the response "other" was selected 73.5% of the time as it pertains to the relationship of the parties involved in a family violence incident.

RELATIONSHIP	TOTAL INVOLVED
Present Spouse	9,647
Former Spouse	1,295
Parent	3,196
Child	4,304
Step-Parent	550
Step-Child	383
Foster Parent	46
Foster Child	60
Live in Same Household	329
Other	55,069

Relationship of Parties in Reported Family Violence Incidents

Judicial District Nine 2013-2016

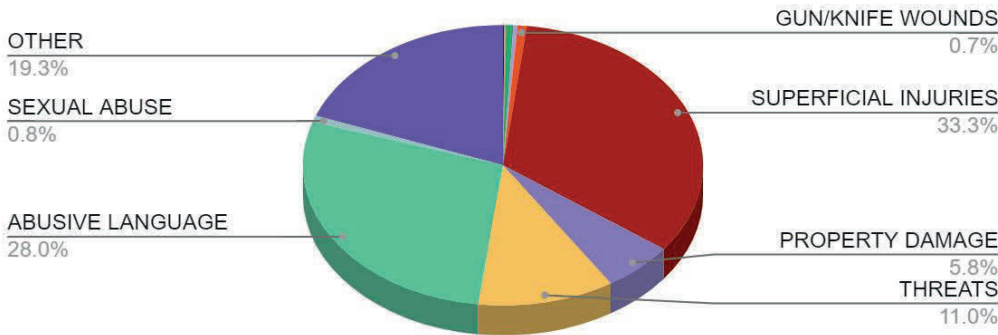


Judicial District Nine (2013-2017)

Abuse Types in Reported Family Violence Incidents

Abuse Types in Reported Family Violence Incidents

Judicial District Nine 2013-2017



ABUSE TYPE	# INCIDENTS
Superficial Injuries	21,559
Abusive Language	18,152
Threats	7,149
Property Damage	3,737
Gun/Knife Wounds	474
Sexual Abuse	486
Temporary Disability	382
Broken Bone	223
Permanent Physical Injury	86
Fatal Injury	71
Other	12,475

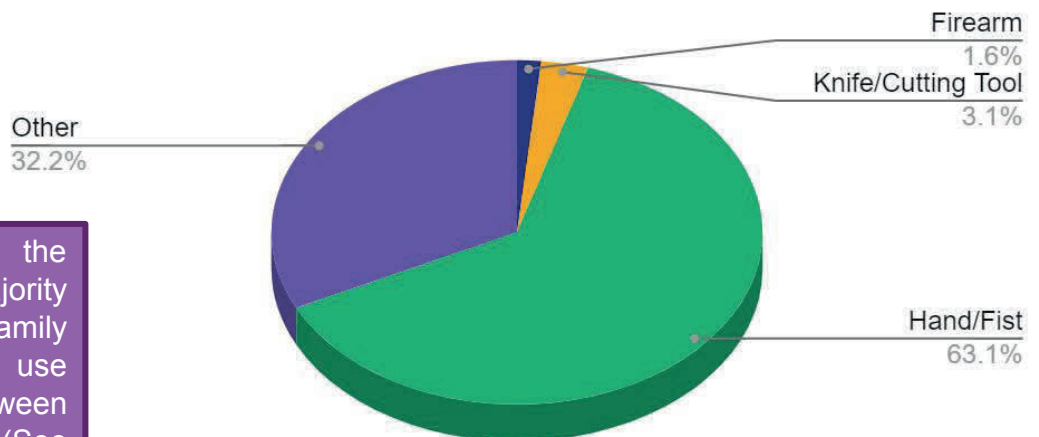
Public awareness campaigns often highlight the physical aspects of family violence, featuring images of blackened eyes and bruised bodies. This ignores many other prevalent aspects of family violence. During the five-year reporting period, more than three quarters (78.1%) of the incidents involved either no injuries to the victim (abusive language 28.0%, threats 11.0%, property damage 5.8%) or superficial injuries (33.3%).

Weapons Use in Reported Family Violence Incidents

WEAPON	TOTAL
Hand/Fist	28,335
Knife/Cutting Tool	1,401
Firearm	709
Other	14,176

Weapons Use in Reported Family Violence Incidents

Judicial District Nine 2013-2017



Abusers' hands and fists are the weapon of choice in the majority (63.1%) of all reported family violence incidents. Weapons use patterns vary significantly between non-fatal and fatal incidents. (See page 13 for more information.)

Judicial District Nine (2013-2017)

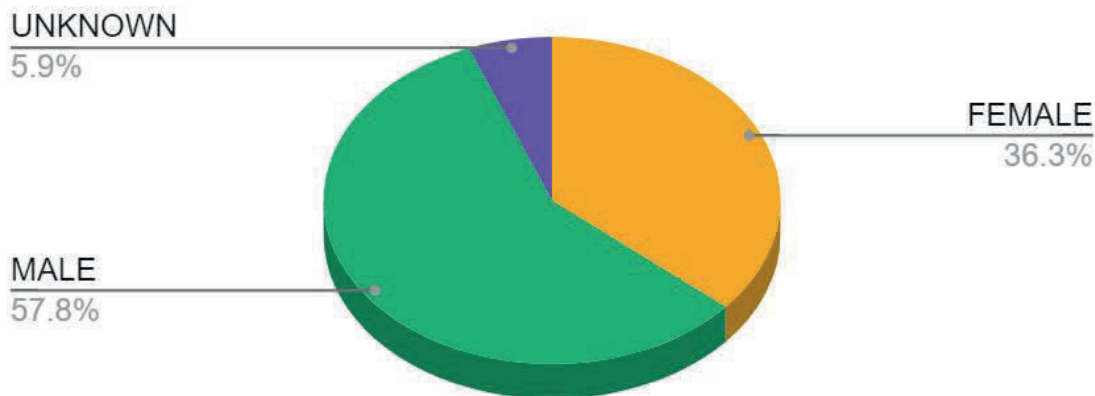
Gender of Offender and Victim in Reported Incidents of Family Violence

GENDER	# OFFENDERS	# VICTIMS
Female	15,091	28,807
Male	24,045	17,466
Unknown	2,475	216

Georgia's definition of family violence, and therefore the family violence incident data contained in this report, includes intimate partner violence along with incidents involving other relationships including parent/child and roommates, but our overall trend falls in line with national research which has revealed that victims of intimate partner violence are disproportionately female¹ and offenders are disproportionately male.

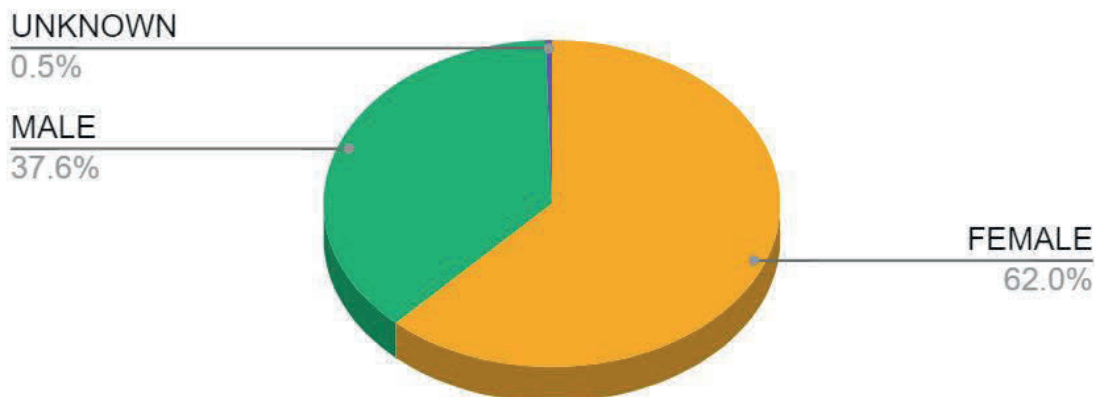
Gender of Offender in Reported Family Violence Incidents

Judicial District Nine 2013-2017



Gender of Victim in Reported Family Violence Incidents

Judicial District Nine 2013-2017



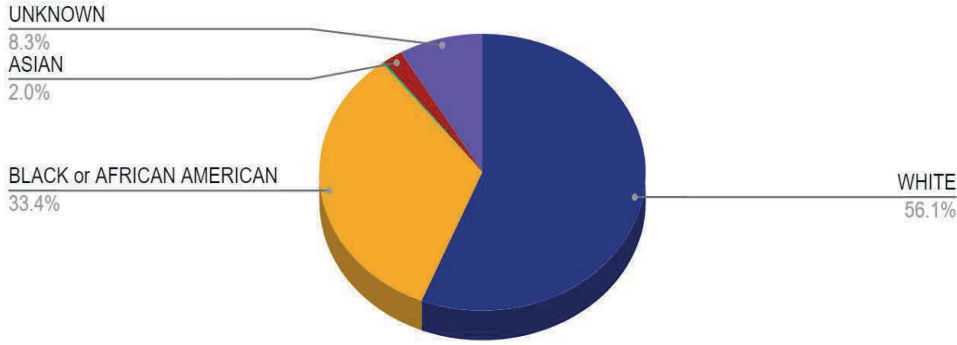
Footnote references are available on page 18.

Judicial District Nine (2013-2017)

Race of Offender and Victim in Reported Incidents of Family Violence

Race of Offender in Reported Family Violence Incidents

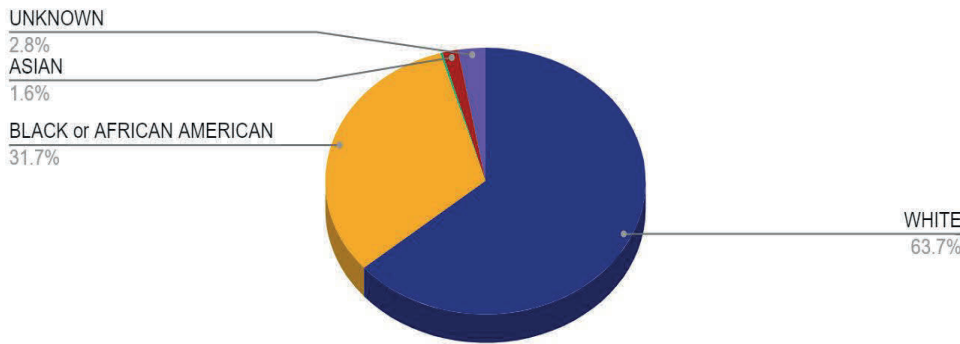
Judicial District Nine 2013-2017



RACE	# OFFENDERS
American Indian or Alaska Native	99
Asian	941
Black or African American	14,275
White	23,975
Unknown	3,570

Race of Victim in Reported Family Violence Incidents

Judicial District Nine 2013-2017

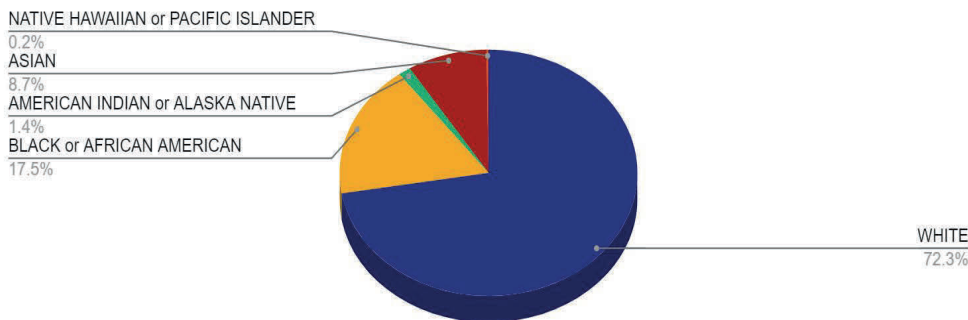


RACE	# VICTIMS
American Indian or Alaska Native	111
Asian	735
Black or African American	14,812
White	29,761
Unknown	1,292

Race in Population in District Nine

Race in Local Population

Judicial District Nine 2017



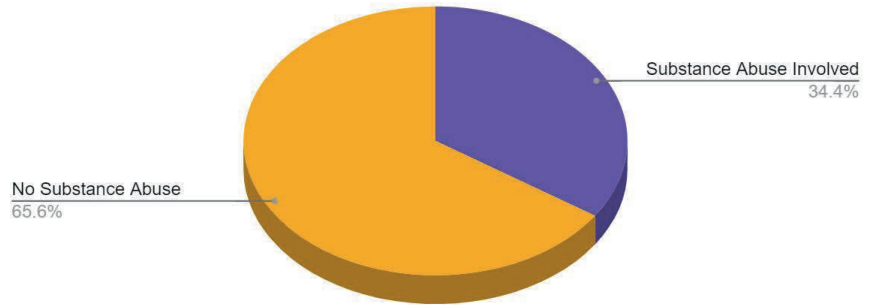
Research on the intersection of race and intimate partner violence is limited, but the victim data in Judicial District Nine shows that while African Americans are a smaller percentage of the total population, they are victimized at higher rates than their peers of different racial backgrounds. This finding is in line with national research about the disparate impacts of abuse on Black communities.²

Judicial District Nine (2013-2017)

Substance Abuse in Reported Incidents of Family Violence

SUBSTANCE ABUSE	# INCIDENTS
Offender Drug	1,853
Offender Alcohol	8,295
Offender Drug and Alcohol	541
Victim Drug	547
Victim Alcohol	4,020
Victim Drug and Alcohol	197
Offender Substance Abuse (Total)	10,689
Victim Substance Abuse (Total)	4,764

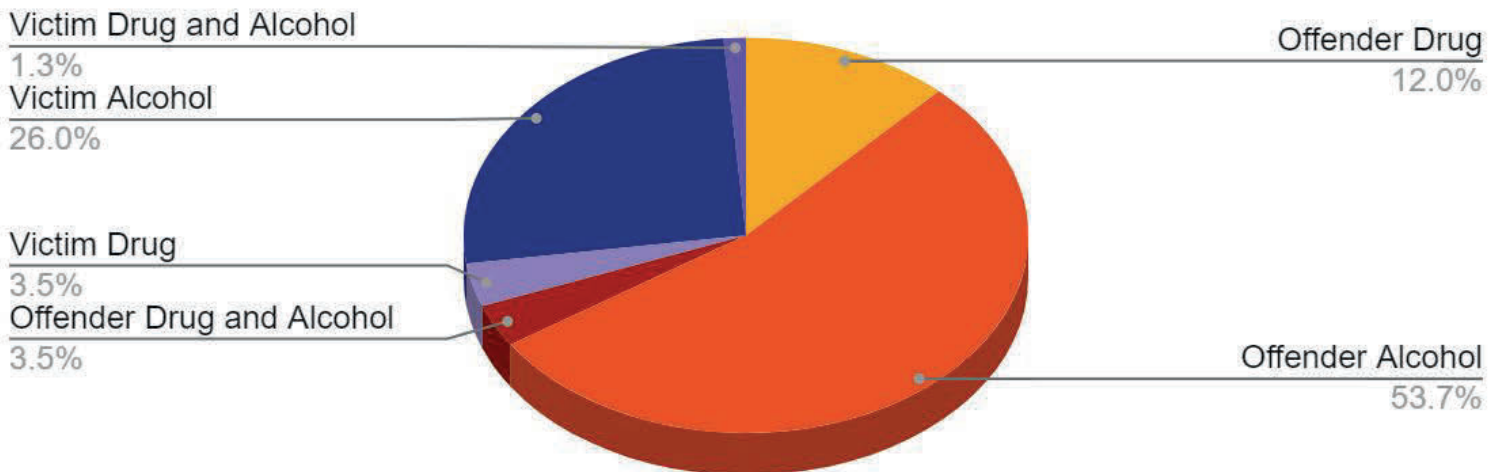
Substance Abuse in Reported Family Violence Incidents
Judicial District Nine 2013-2017



While the co-occurrence of substance abuse and intimate partner violence is common, we must acknowledge that one issue does not cause the other. In fact, less than half (34.4%) of family violence incidents in District Nine involve alcohol or drug use. Of those that do, it is the abuser that is under the influence 69.2% of the time. More research is warranted in this area of family violence given that local, state and national research all show that abuse is more likely to occur if the offender is under the influence of alcohol³ or drugs.⁴

Substances Used in Reported Family Violence Incidents with Substance Abuse Involved

Judicial District Nine 2013-2017



Judicial District Nine (2013-2017)

Child Involved or Present in Reported Family Violence Incidents

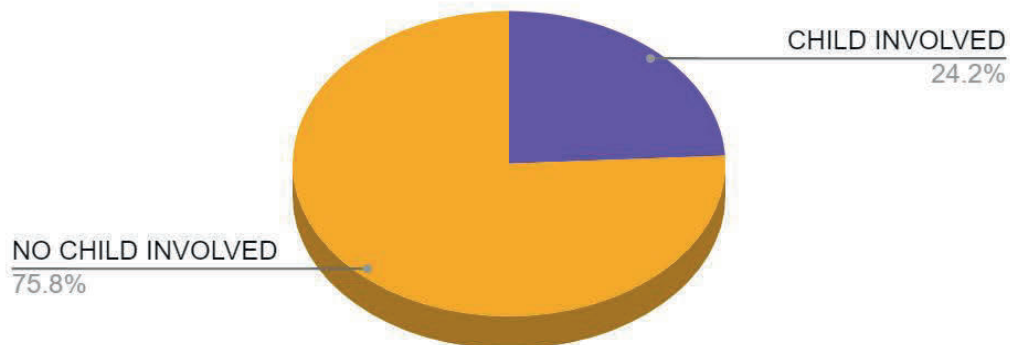
CHILD INVOLVED	# INCIDENTS
Child Involved	10,859
No Child Involved	34,062

CHILD INVOLVED	# INCIDENTS
Child Involved	15,275
No Child Involved	29,646

For children, the impact of exposure to intimate partner violence is long-lasting and significant.⁵ Unfortunately, the full extent of their exposure to family violence incidents cannot be accurately measured using the law enforcement reporting systems in place during the five-year reporting period. Georgia plans to address this issue under its transition to the NIBRS reporting system in 2018. NOTE: The data included do not reflect the number of children exposed, rather the data reflect the number of reported incidents where one or more children were present or involved.

Child Involved in Reported Family Violence Incidents

Judicial District Nine 2013-2017



Child Present in Reported Family Violence Incidents

Judicial District Nine 2013-2017



Judicial District Nine (2013-2017)

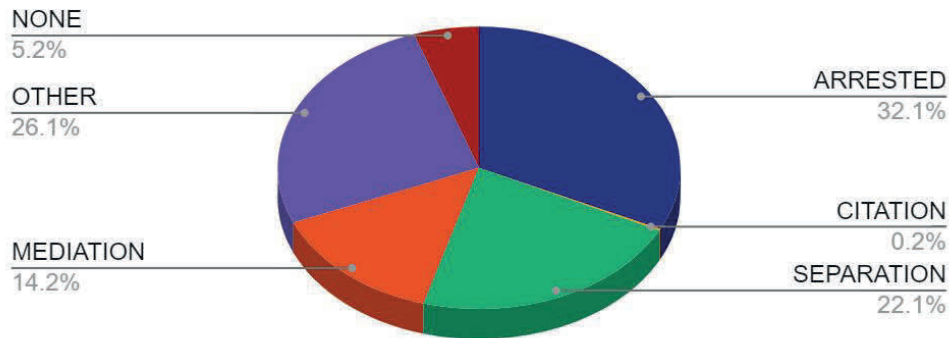
Police Action Taken in Family Violence Incidents

POLICE ACTION TAKEN	Arrested	Citation	Mediation	None	Separation	Other
TOTAL	16,014	104	7,084	2,607	11,011	13,010

As a preferred arrest state, Georgia officers are not mandated to make an arrest in all family violence incidents.⁶ The statute clearly allows officers to arrest one party, even if both parties have used violence. Appropriately identifying the predominant physical aggressor and charging that person is the most effective intervention in family violence incidents. The Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) data on police action taken in family violence incidents does indicate that arrest is the most frequently occurring outcome, however, arrests represent only 32.1% of reported police responses. This means that in more than half of responses, preference was given to a different outcome. When we examine these responses by year, the trends show a small increase (1.7%) in the rate of arrest. Even more disconcerting, there has been a significant rise (33%) in the rate of reports in which “none” (no action taken) was the officer’s reported response.

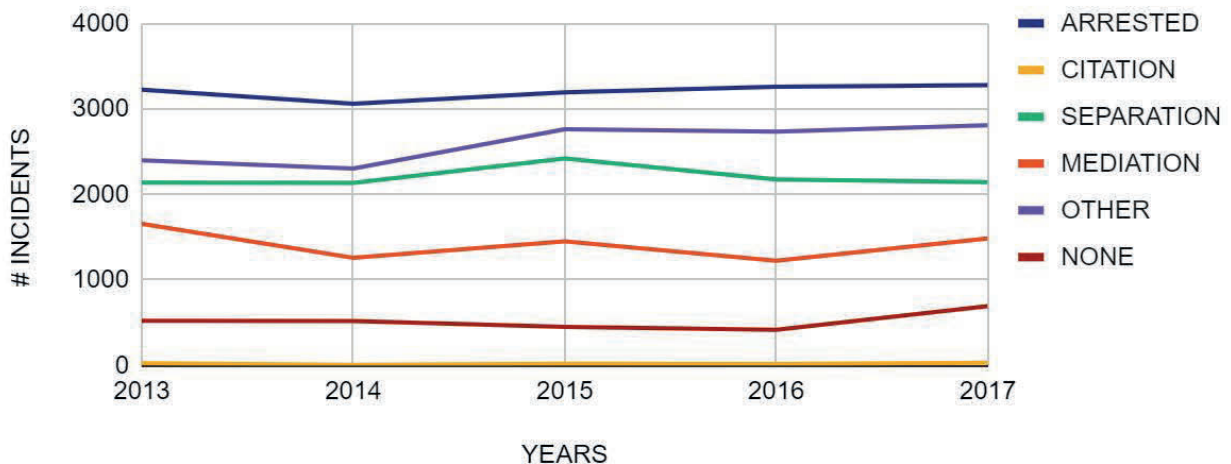
Police Action Taken in Reported Family Violence Incidents

Judicial District Nine 2013-2017



Police Action Taken in Reported Family Violence Incidents

Judicial District Nine 2013-2017

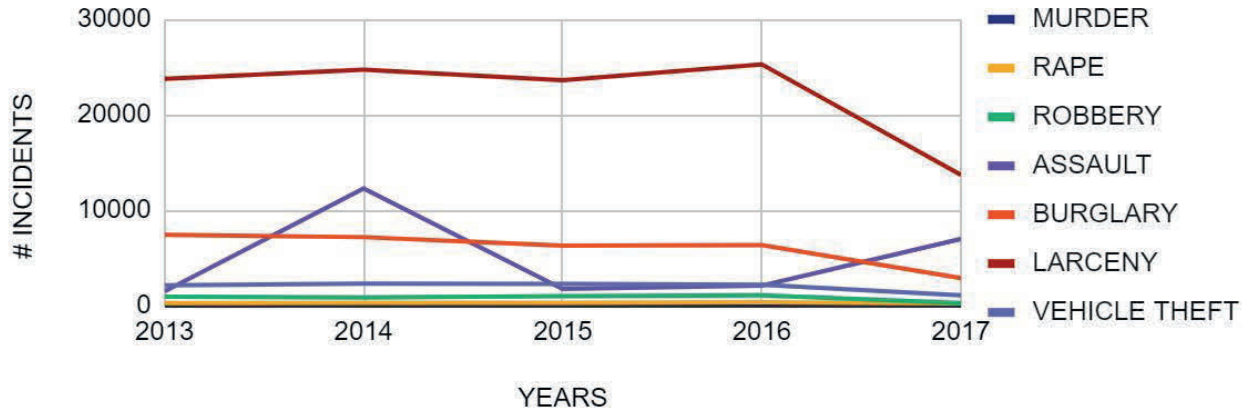


Judicial District Nine (2013-2017)

Crime Trends

Index Crimes

Judicial District Nine 2013-2017

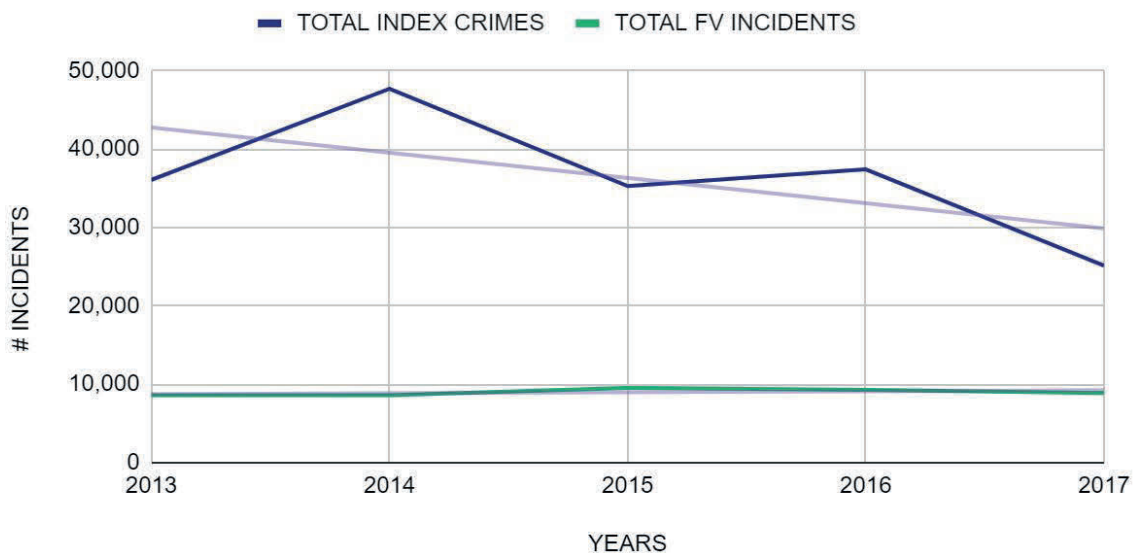


Index crimes, including assault, burglary, larceny, murder, rape, robbery, and vehicle theft, are used as an indicator of the rate of violent crimes nationally. In Georgia, index crime data are generated from uniform crime reports (UCR) completed by law enforcement officers. These reports are also the source of family violence incident information statewide. Many family violence incidents also qualify as index crimes. Despite some duplication given that overlap, comparing the trendlines of index crimes and family violence incidents provides great insight into our state and local efforts to reduce violent crime. In Judicial District Nine, index crimes decreased by 30.4% and family violence incidents increased by 3.2% during the five-year reporting period.

YEARS	TOTAL INDEX CRIMES	TOTAL FV INCIDENTS
2013	36,090	8,608
2014	47,868	8,608
2015	35,290	9,536
2016	37,411	9,285
2017	25,127	8,884

Crime Trends

Judicial District Nine 2013-2017



Judicial District Nine (2013-2017)

Temporary Protective Orders (TPOs) by Type

ORDER TYPE	EX PARTE TPO	6-MONTH TPO	12-MONTH TPO	3-YEAR TPO	MISCELLANEOUS / CRIMINAL ORDER	TOTAL TPOs (ALL TYPES)
FAMILY VIOLENCE	10,099	292	4,128	193	1,160	15,872
STALKING	2,867	49	1,210	259	12	4,397

Temporary Protective Orders (TPOs) by Type

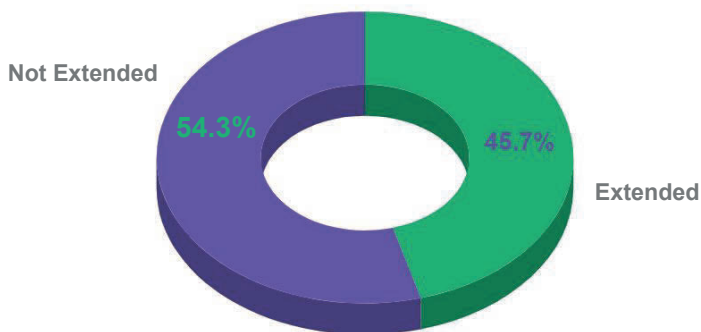
Judicial District Nine 2013-2017

■ EX PARTE TPO
 ■ 6-MONTH TPO
 ■ 12-MONTH TPO
■ 3-YEAR TPO
 ■ MISCELLANEOUS / CRIMINAL ORDER



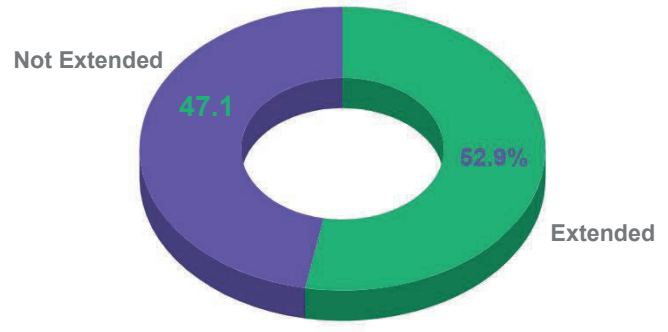
Extension Rate From Ex Parte to Longer-Term Family Violence TPO

Judicial District Nine 2013-2017



Extension Rate From Ex Parte to Longer-Term Stalking TPO

Judicial District Nine 2013-2017



Temporary Protective Orders (TPOs) are an effective tool for victim safety. Research shows the majority of victims report their TPO ended the violence.⁷ In many cases, the longer the protective period, the better the outcomes. Between 2013 and 2017, 20,269 family violence and stalking TPOs were issued in Judicial District Nine. The overall “extension rate,” or the rate at which an emergency (Ex Parte) TPO is extended into a longer-term (6-Month, 12-Month, 3-Year) order, is 47.3%. The “extension rate” is 7.2% higher for stalking cases than for family violence cases. In both types, the “extension rate” is impacted by judicial discretion, failure to legally serve notice of the proceeding to the abuser, lack of legal representation, and victim decisions as to how or whether to proceed with a follow-up hearing.

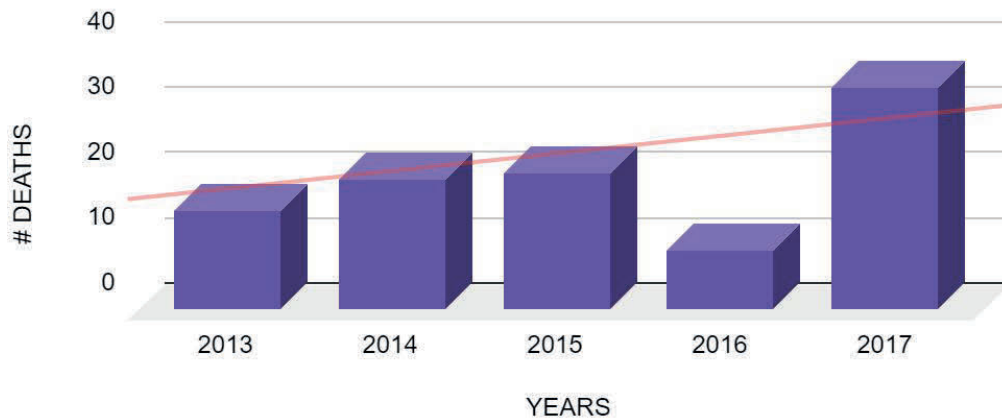
Judicial District Nine (2013-2017)

Domestic Violence-Related Deaths

YEARS	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
# Fatal Incidents	10	13	13	6	25
# Victim Deaths	8	12	9	5	17
# Perpetrator Deaths	7	8	6	2	9
# Bystander Deaths	0	0	4	1	3
# Deaths Resulting From Incidents	15	20	21	9	34

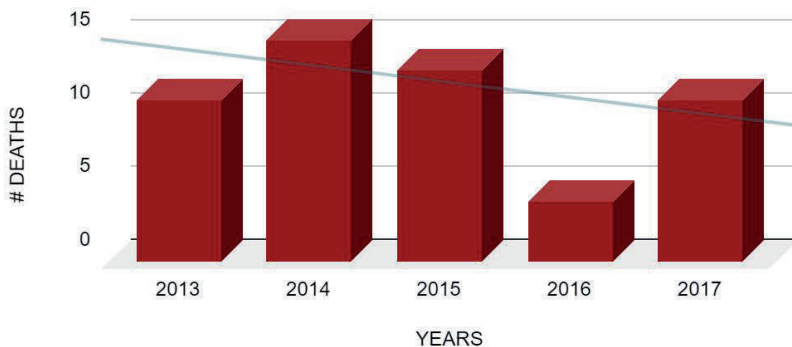
Domestic Violence-Related Deaths

Judicial District Nine 2013-2017



Domestic Related Deaths in Murder Suicide Incidents

Judicial District Nine 2013-2017



Murder-Suicide Incidents

YEARS	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
# Completed Murder-Suicide Incidents	5	7	4	2	5
# Attempted Murder-Suicide Incidents	1	1	1	0	1
# Deaths Resulting From Incidents	11	15	13	4	11

The homicide-suicide connection in lethal incidents of domestic violence has been well established and represents a prevalent problem in Georgia.⁸ Murder-suicides represent 40.3% of fatal incidents of domestic violence in Judicial District Nine, but account for 54.6% of all domestic violence-related deaths in the District. These numbers highlight a need for collaboration between domestic violence and mental health stakeholders.

Judicial District Nine (2013-2017)

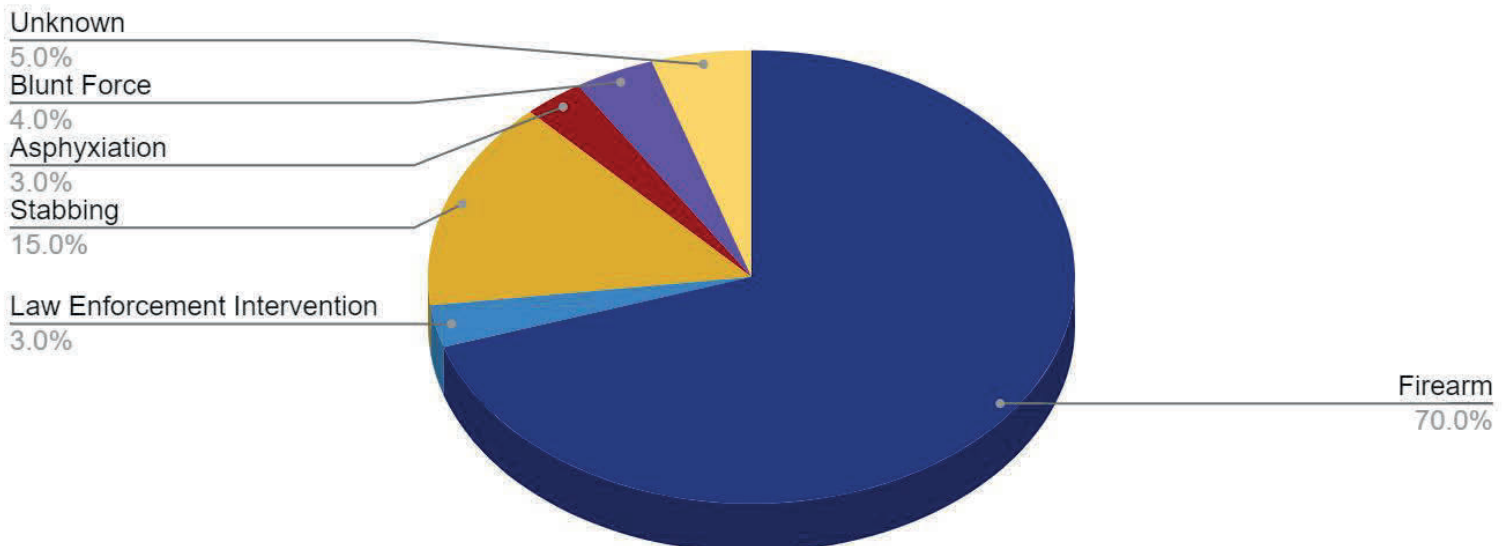
Cause of Death in Domestic Violence-Related Deaths

YEARS	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Firearm	14	13	17	6	20
Stabbing	0	5	1	2	7
Blunt Force	0	0	0	0	3
Asphyxiation	0	0	2	0	1
Law Enforcement Intervention (Firearm)	0	1	0	1	1
Vehicle	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	1	1	0	3

Firearms were the leading cause of death in fatal incidents of domestic violence during the five-year reporting period, accounting for nearly three quarters of all known domestic violence deaths in Judicial District Nine [70.0% firearm, 3.0% law enforcement intervention (firearm)]. The high rate of firearms use in fatal incidents of abuse is in sharp contrast to their presence in only 1.6% of reported family violence incidents in the District, allowing the conclusion that when firearms are present in a family violence incident, the risk of a fatal incident is increased exponentially. This finding has been consistently noted locally⁹ and in national research, which reveals a 500% increase in the risk of homicide when an abuser has access to a firearm.¹⁰ NOTE: In some circumstances multiple causes are attributed to a single death. Given that, the total numbers reflected for each cause of death, may be in excess of the numbers of statewide deaths occurring in a given year.

Cause of Death in Fatal Incidents of Domestic Violence

Judicial District Nine 2013-2017



HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

In June 2020, GCFV published “Family Violence Statistics and Trends in the State of Georgia 2013-2017.” The report outlined the prevalence of family violence crimes in Georgia and highlighted the vast numbers of individuals impacted by this issue. Our goal in publishing the statewide statistics was to provide a baseline understanding of the current status of family violence in Georgia.

This report contains aggregate data* for Judicial District Nine of Georgia, delineating the data according to geographic region to facilitate targeted responses to family violence on the local level. The goal of this report is to provide local leaders with factual information about family violence in their communities, and in turn foster conversations about how to work with your stakeholders to address the issue and prevent future domestic violence related fatalities.

The multifaceted nature of family violence requires rigorous use of data on the state and local level to ascertain the systemic gaps that exist in family violence response. Providing comprehensive and targeted reports on family violence throughout Georgia offers an opportunity to cultivate change and develop innovative responses to the issue of family violence.

Family violence is a complex issue that requires a coordinated community response to implement change. GCFV's mission is to end family violence in Georgia; the participation of key stakeholders is integral to the success of this mission. Family violence is a systemic issue that needs to be addressed in a multidimensional, data driven, evidence-based manner. This report is a step towards equipping local leaders to do so effectively.



**Georgia
Commission on
Family
Violence**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PROJECT STAFF

“Family Violence Statistics and Trends in Judicial District Nine 2013-2017” was written by Carolynn Brooks (Fatality Review Coordinator) and Niki Lemeshka (Program Manager) of the Georgia Commission on Family Violence.

Data Analysis and project support was provided by Samar Abdelmageed, GCFV Data Analyst, and Doug Bailey of Performance Vistas, Inc.

SPECIAL THANKS

Special thanks go to GCFV’s data partners including:

- The Georgia Bureau of Investigation for their ongoing support, particularly Director Vic Reynolds, Assistant Director John Melvin, CJIS Operations Manager Lisa Weaver-Johnson, CJIS Analyst Supervisor Crystal Lockhart, and former Georgia Protective Order Registry Program Manager Daryl Beggs
- District Attorney’s Office Victim Witness Assistance Program directors statewide
- Domestic violence programs statewide
- The Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- The Criminal Justice Coordinating Council’s Statistical Analysis Center

This project would not be possible without the financial support of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council and the project support of current and former GCFV staff and Commission members, particularly former GCFV Executive Director Jennifer Thomas and current Chairwoman Stephanie Woodard.

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DATA SOURCES AND LIMITATIONS

UNIFORM CRIME REPORTS (pages 3-10)

Family Violence Crimes

Data on reported incidents of family violence, weapons use, abuse types, relationship of the parties, gender, race of offender and victim, substance abuse, children, and police action taken (henceforth referred to as “UCR data”) were obtained from the Uniform Crime Reporting system administered by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI). GCFV acknowledges that, as law enforcement agencies report outcomes on a rolling basis, UCR data can and will shift over time as reported data comes closer in line with actual rates of occurrence.

We are also aware that the UCR data set contained in this report is incomplete. Over the course of the five years studied, a number of counties reported zero incidents or failed to submit a family violence report to the GBI. Those counties include: Baker (2013, 2015-2017); Clay (2013-2015); Evans (2015); Glascock (2013, 2015, 2016); Jenkins (2014, 2015); Johnson (2013-2017); Lincoln (2016, 2017); Marion (2013); McIntosh (2013-2017); Montgomery (2013-2017); Quitman (2013-2015, 2017); Stewart (2013-2017); Taylor (2014); Telfair (2017); Treutlen (2017); Warren (2016, 2017); and Webster (2014, 2015, 2017).

Further, the data pertaining to the relationship between victim and offender is not known for 2017. That year only, the GBI changed the way it calculated incidents in which the parties “live in the same household.” In order to ensure continuity with the previous four years’ data, GCFV extrapolated the total it used from 2013-2016 using a linear projection to obtain a figure for 2017. We acknowledge that the 2017 figures on relationships are projections, not actual counts.

Index Crimes

Index crime data were provided by the GBI. The index crime data set contained in this report is substantially complete but, over the course of the five year reporting period, law enforcement agencies in seven of Georgia’s 159 counties reported zero index crimes or failed to submit index crimes to the GBI. The following counties failed to report their statistics during one or more years between 2013 and 2017: Baker (2015, 2016, 2017); Chattahoochee (2017); Clay (2013, 2015); Glascock (2013); Jenkins (2014); Johnson (2017); and Montgomery (2013, 2015, 2016, 2017).

Data on “Race in Population of Georgia” were obtained from the US Census Bureau’s projections for the year 2017.

TEMPORARY PROTECTIVE ORDERS (page 11)

Temporary Protective Order (TPO) data was obtained from the Georgia Protective Order Registry, administered by the Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC) of the GBI.

The “extension rate” from Ex Parte to longer-term TPO, assumes that each Ex Parte order is eligible to qualify for extension to a longer-term order. The rate is determined through comparison of the total of longer-term orders, including 6-Month, 12-Month, and 3-Year orders of each type, family violence and stalking, to the total number of Ex Parte orders of each type within the reporting period. The rate represents a general trend within the report types, and GCFV acknowledges that individual case outcomes were not tracked.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE-RELATED DEATHS (pages 12-13)

Domestic violence-related death data, including murder-suicide data, and cause of death in fatal incidents is collected through GCFV’s Fatality Review Project using media monitoring and independent verification of deaths, supported by domestic violence programs and Victim Witness Assistance Programs in District Attorney’s Offices statewide.

The data consist of intimate partner violence-related deaths, including those in which one intimate partner kills another intimate partner, a bystander is killed during an active domestic violence incident, an intimate partner completes suicide during or immediately following a domestic violence incident, or an intimate partner is killed by law enforcement responding to a domestic violence incident or while serving a family violence warrant or TPO.

For our purposes, the term “intimate partner” is intended to reflect that the domestic violence victim and perpetrator fall into one of the following relationships: dating or formerly dated, married or formerly married. This definition varies from state statute as it pertains to family violence, in that current Georgia law excludes dating partners from those categorized as “family violence” unless those parties have a common child or have resided in the same home.

The data also include information on domestic violence incidents that resulted in the death of a bystander. These deaths are most often reported to involve an act of revenge by the perpetrator, or the individual being present during the homicide of the intimate partner victim. Bystanders most often fall into one of the following groups: a new partner/spouse, family member, friend, child, public bystander/witness, or intervener such as law enforcement.

CITATIONS

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