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NEW YORK STATE COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Testimony Of The New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence To The Joint Budget Hearing Of The Senate Finance Committee And Assembly Ways And Means Committee Regarding Public Protection

**Testimony Delivered In Person by Connie Neal, Executive Director
February 26, 2015**

My name is Connie Neal and I am the Executive Director of the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (Coalition). On behalf of the Coalition, I want to thank Senator DeFrancisco, Assemblyman Farrell, and all committee members for the opportunity to convey comments regarding the budget and public protection issues as they impact victims of domestic violence in New York.

The New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence is a statewide membership organization which consists of local domestic violence service providers and allied organizations. Together, we share a commitment to create and support the social change necessary to prevent and confront all forms of domestic violence.

Across the State of New York there are 162 domestic violence shelters who serve over 15,500 victims of domestic violence and their children. In addition, there are 87 non-residential domestic violence programs which serve more than 41,600 victims annually.¹

If I were to summarize my message to you in a single sentence, it would be this: I am deeply concerned for the safety of thousands of New Yorkers from urban, suburban, and rural communities across our state.

Over the past year, it is clear that high profile cases of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking have focused unprecedented attention on the experiences of victims and subsequent system responses. Also, with emerging spotlights on college campuses, professional sports, and the military, across the nation more victims are coming forward for help, at the same time that victim service providers are facing serious gaps with available resources.

OVERVIEW OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN NEW YORK STATE

As we are meeting here today, domestic violence advocates are answering hotline calls, and providing life-saving support in shelters and non-residential programs across the State. And simultaneously, victims of domestic

¹ New York State Office of Child And Family Services. 2013. *Domestic Violence Prevention Act 2013 Annual Report to the Governor and Legislature*. Retrieved on February 3, 2015 from <http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/reports/2013%20DV%20annual%20report.pdf>

violence are dialling 911, requesting orders of protection, are fleeing their homes for safety, or are too afraid to do anything.

In the first two months of 2015, a brief scan of news headlines across New York State are disconcerting, and emphasize domestic violence as a significant public protection issue.

Some of those headlines include the following:

- TV Tech Responding To Service Call Uncovers Domestic Disturbance
- Troy Man Arrested On Multiple Charges Following A Domestic Dispute
- Domestic Attack At Attica Supermarket
- Man Kills Girlfriend, Her Daughter, Then Self In Suffolk County Murder-Suicide
- Cornell Sophomore Indicted In Shotgun Slaying Of CEO Dad – Lawyer Says Father Abusive To Family
- NYC Reports of LGBTQ Intimate Partner Violence See 26% Increase
- Slayings Put Spotlight On Domestic Violence
- Jealous Ex Pleads Guilty In Shooting At Wal-Mart
- Ossining Man Accused Of Stalking Ex-girlfriend With GPS
- Deaf Man Stabbed Teen Girlfriend 38 Times, Stuffed Her In A Drum

Tragically, these headlines represent only a small fraction of what is happening across the state every day. A New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services Research Report² found that 144 domestic homicides³ were committed in New York State in 2013, accounting for almost a quarter of all homicides in New York State.

A report from the NYS Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence⁴ found that while homicides decreased statewide by 6.5% in 2013, intimate partner homicides increased by 16%. Data from the same report also revealed that in 2013 police across New York State responded to 468,241 domestic incident calls. And, of the 300,236 orders of protection issued by courts in New York State in 2013, 209,729 were required to be registered in the Unified Court System's Domestic Violence Registry.

HIGH DEMAND FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES IN NEW YORK STATE

To place some of these statistics in context, data collected in the 2013 yearly census conducted by the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) shows that **New York State is #3 in the country regarding demand for domestic violence services**. In the course of one day, more than 1,158 hotline calls were answered, and more than 2,487 domestic violence victims found refuge in emergency shelters and transitional housing programs. On that same day, there were **572 requests for services that went unmet** due to a lack of available staff and

² Fernandez-Lanier, A. (2014). *Domestic Homicide in New York State 2013*. Division of Criminal Justice Services Office of Justice Research & Performance. Albany, NY. Retrieved on January 22, 2015 from <http://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/crimnet/ojsa/domestic-homicide-2013.pdf>

³ Domestic homicide involves a murder or non-negligent manslaughter in which the victim was known to have a domestic relationship with the offender, including an intimate partner or another family member. An "intimate partner" relationship includes spouse, ex-spouse, heterosexual or same-sex partner as well as an ex-partner, whether or not the victim and offender resided together at the time of the incident or previously. "Other family member" includes child, parent, sibling or other family relationship.

⁴ New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (2014). *New York State Domestic Violence Dashboard Project: 2013 Data*. Retrieved on January 22, 2015 from <http://www.opdv.ny.gov/statistics/nydata/2013/nys2013data.pdf>.

funding. This is especially concerning in light of the fact that 119 domestic violence advocate staff positions in New York State were eliminated during the course of that same year.⁵

In addition to the NNEDV Census, the National Domestic Violence Hotline (which is based in Texas), has also indicated that **New York is ranked #3 in the country** for calls to the National Hotline. In 2014, the National Hotline received 7,548 contacts from New Yorkers whose top three requests were for domestic violence shelter, legal advocacy, and individual counseling.⁶

THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The needs of victims of domestic violence in New York are significant, and now is precisely the time to affirm our collective commitment to ending domestic violence by increasing investments in these vital programs.

Domestic violence is an issue that crosses through all systems in our communities. Survivors may need police assistance; criminal and/or civil court assistance; emergency shelter; social welfare assistance to provide them the financial support to be independent from their abuser; and health care services to address physical injuries or long term health consequences that result from abuse and trauma.

Throughout all of this, survivors need support and guidance from advocates at local domestic violence programs that provide survivor-centered, trauma-informed services. Sadly, the New York State Executive Budget contains little state originating funding to support these services, and relies heavily on federal funding sources. And, clearly that funding is not enough.

THE REQUEST FOR SUPPORT FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES IN NEW YORK STATE

My request for support for domestic violence services in the public protection budget involves two components: civil legal services and stable funding for domestic violence programs.

1) Civil Legal Services

The Executive Budget proposes to eliminate the Legal Services Assistance Account⁷, and proposes a new funding stream of \$5.5 million for civil and criminal legal services. This funding would be distributed by the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). At face value, this seems to be a reasonable reallocation of funds, but the constant reallocation of funding can create instability for legal service programs dedicated to victims of domestic violence. I ask the legislature to stabilize the funding of civil legal services, so that programs can focus on the services they provide to victims rather than concerns related to unpredictable funding streams. As a part of the stabilization process, I ask the legislature to ensure that there is a specific and stable line dedicated to civil legal services for domestic violence victims, and that the distribution of such funding be done in a way that ensures services in each county are adequately funded.

⁵National Network to End Domestic Violence (2014) Domestic Violence Counts: Census 2013 Report – US State/Territory Summaries Compiled. Retrieved on January 22, 2015 from <http://nnedv.org/downloads/Census/DVCounts2013/AllStateSummariesMerged.pdf>

⁶ National Domestic Violence Hotline. 2014. *New York State Report*.

⁷ Civil and criminal legal services and domestic violence civil and criminal legal services – \$3.9 million; indigent parole program - \$600,000; statewide indigent legal services for persons leaving prison program - \$1 million.

Civil legal services, like all critical core domestic violence services, should be consistently and broadly supported through the use of formula grants. Competitive RFP processes place a significant burden on the limited staff capacity of domestic violence programs across the state. Most successful proposals require the undivided time and attention of professional grant writers. As many domestic violence programs simply do not have the resources to support specialized grant writers, the competitive RFP process creates an uneven playing field, and may place vital services in jeopardy in many communities around the state.

2) Stable Funding For Domestic Violence Services

Lessons from an August 2014 report entitled “Domestic Abuse Grant Programs and Practices in Nine States” indicates the following:

“...It is important to ensure that emergency services are stable and available for victims throughout a state. That is, victims, their communities, and states are best served by the presence of a network of local programs whose sole purpose is to ensure that services and support for victims and their children exist, and that gaps and needs are identified and met. Frequently, this includes the need for victims to flee their homes and communities in order to remain safe. This is a complicated situation that is best handled when the network of local programs see this situation as part of their collective responsibility. It is difficult to achieve these goals when programs are competing with one another for limited funds, are constantly facing the threat of losing funding and grant administrators view local programs as vendors instead of as experts that offer comprehensive solutions to a serious social problem.”⁸ (Lauby, 2014)

The consequences and costs of domestic violence homicides can be devastating not only for the victims and their families, but also for neighborhoods and communities in which the murders occur. The average cost per murder can exceed \$17.25 million when considering medical care costs, lost future earnings, public program costs, property damage and losses, and quality of life losses.⁹

A clear goal for the legislature to consider is a public protection budget allocation in the amount of \$17.25 million that can provide a stable and continuing funding stream for domestic violence programs across the state. State originating funds in many states include a combination of general fund support, marriage license fees, divorce fees, perpetrator fines, and court fees. Also, innovations in the work to end domestic violence “have come largely from states with reliable, non-competitive funding practices and strong state coalitions. Furthermore, it is observable that constant changes to funding levels and cuts to agencies have a deleterious affect on the ability of programs to meet the needs of victims.”¹⁰

CONCLUSION

In September 2014, Vice President Biden spoke at an event honoring the 20th Anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act. Back in 1994, he noted that advocates from shelters, coalitions, and rape crisis centers were operating on ‘no more than bake sales and good intentions.’

⁸Lauby, Mary R. 2014. Domestic Abuse Grant Programs and Practices in Nine States.

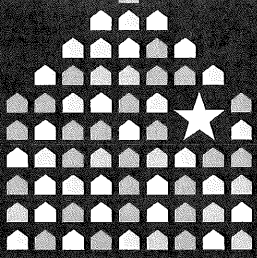
⁹ Delisi, Kosloski, Sween, et. al. 2010. Murder by Numbers: Monetary Costs Imposed by a Sample of Homicide Offenders. The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology. 21(4). P 501-503.

¹⁰ Lauby, Mary R. 2014. Domestic Abuse Grant Programs and Practices in Nine States.

Over the past twenty years, we have seen incredible progress with policies and additional legislation to support efforts to end domestic violence. However, we still have much work in front of us.

I urge you to explore and implement strategies within the budget to meet the goal of providing resources to the extent that no one asking for shelter or other domestic violence services will ever be turned away. Quite simply, if we are not able to reach this goal, we will continue to see preventable tragedies across our state.

I look forward to working with you on these issues, and want to thank you again for the opportunity to present this testimony.



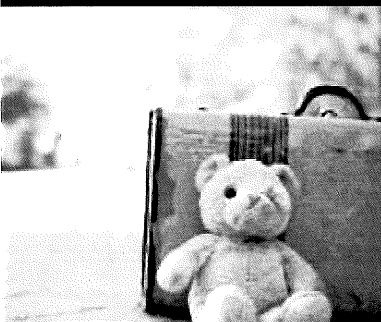
NNEDV

Domestic Violence Counts 2013

A 24-Hour Census of Domestic Violence Shelters and Services



NATIONAL NETWORK TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



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Domestic Violence Counts New York Summary

On September 17, 2013, 74 out of 92 (80%), of identified local domestic violence programs in New York participated in the 2013 National Census of Domestic Violence Services. The following figures represent the information reported by the 74 participating programs about services provided during the 24-hour survey period.

4,589 Victims Served in One Day

2,487 domestic violence victims (1,424 children and 1,063 adults) found refuge in emergency shelters or transitional housing provided by local domestic violence programs.

2,102 adults and children received non-residential assistance and services, including counseling, legal advocacy, and children's support groups.

This chart shows the percentage of programs that provided the following services on the Census Day.

Services Provided by Local Programs:	Sept. 17
Individual Support or Advocacy	100%
Children's Support or Advocacy	82%
Emergency Shelter	76%
Court/Legal Accompaniment/Advocacy	70%
Advocacy Related to Public Benefits/TANF/Welfare	68%
Transportation	64%
Group Support or Advocacy	50%
Advocacy Related to Housing Office/Landlord	47%

1,158 Hotline Calls Answered

Domestic violence hotlines are a lifeline for victims in danger, providing support, information, safety planning, and resources. In the 24-hour survey period, domestic violence programs answered more than 48 hotline calls every hour.

918 Educated in Prevention and Education Trainings

On the survey day, 918 individuals in communities across New York attended 54 training sessions provided by local domestic violence programs, gaining much needed information on domestic violence prevention and early intervention.

572 Unmet Requests for Services in One Day, of Which 33% (186) Were for Housing

Victims made more than 150 requests for services, including emergency shelter, transitional housing, and nonresidential services, that could not be provided because programs did not have the resources to provide these services. The most frequently requested non-residential service that couldn't be provided were counseling, housing, legal representation, and financial assistance.

Impact of Unmet Requests for Help

Domestic violence programs do not always know what happens when a survivor courageously calls a stranger to ask for a bed or other help and the services aren't available however 61% of programs report that victims are forced to return to their abuser, 30% report that victims become homeless, and 7% report that the families are forced to live in their cars.

Cause of Unmet Requests for Help

- 23% reported not enough available staff.
- 22% reported reduced government funding.
- 12% reported private funding cuts.
- 8% reported reduced individual donations.

Across New York 119 (5%) staff positions were eliminated in the past year and most of these positions were direct services, such as shelter or legal advocates, so there were fewer advocates to answer calls for help.

We were able to help out a client who was looking for support in her own language and whose English was very limited. This woman was so afraid of her husband and for her children that she was hysterically crying and felt helpless. When an advocate spoke to her in her own language and told her about the available services and did the safety planning with her, she was ready to call the local shelter and get the much needed help.

— Advocate



Summary Data

State or Territory	Response Rate	Adults Served	Children Served	Total People Served	Unmet Requests for Services	Hotline Calls Answered	Total People Trained	Served in Shelter	Served in Transitional Housing	Non-Residential Served
AK	95%	337	281	618	51	97	221	268	68	282
AL	83%	357	208	565	26	155	658	249	105	211
AR	79%	216	298	514	29	150	318	245	88	181
AS	100%	6	3	9	1	0	18	0	0	9
AZ	81%	1,098	698	1,796	187	269	294	806	375	615
CA	100%	2,996	2,267	5,263	872	1,703	1,232	1,690	1,455	2,118
CO	80%	610	368	978	205	361	625	374	143	461
CT	93%	734	121	855	103	183	209	245	58	552
DC	100%	351	202	553	52	48	142	71	247	235
DE	100%	127	87	214	10	19	4	52	54	108
FL	100%	2,122	1,149	3,271	154	739	615	1,613	410	1,248
GA	70%	1,142	833	1,975	284	465	368	588	423	964
GU	100%	15	11	26	2	13	1	3	14	9
HI	70%	376	199	575	45	113	116	104	113	358
IA	92%	437	257	694	87	228	150	300	171	223
ID	100%	329	190	519	124	286	462	138	59	322
IL	100%	1,668	706	2,374	408	828	1,134	635	365	1,374
IN	100%	972	736	1,708	128	581	1,817	759	348	601
KS	100%	460	267	727	296	333	384	241	125	361
KY	100%	753	344	1,097	90	252	499	371	223	503
LA	100%	365	356	721	167	334	149	322	103	296
MA	98%	1,539	695	2,234	343	560	527	380	522	1,332
MD	87%	812	251	1,063	215	392	176	251	125	687
ME	100%	332	167	499	23	122	393	86	140	273
MI	65%	1,267	1,026	2,293	200	409	773	801	713	779
MN	60%	699	597	1,296	276	372	398	488	129	679
MO	94%	1,348	815	2,163	344	385	368	1,125	267	771
MP	50%	21	23	44	13	4	0	9	30	5

State or Territory	Response Rate	Adults Served	Children Served	Total People Served	Unmet Requests for Services	Hotline Calls Answered	Total People Trained	Served in Shelter	Served in Transitional Housing	Non-Residential Served
MS	100%	224	217	441	20	134	384	178	94	169
MT	71%	182	101	283	15	144	99	104	37	142
NC	58%	750	396	1,146	101	592	757	573	22	551
ND	95%	139	126	265	28	90	39	104	69	92
NE	100%	307	225	532	257	299	268	169	66	297
NH	100%	220	79	299	52	189	68	65	65	169
NJ	100%	911	420	1,331	112	545	603	314	158	859
NM	85%	480	471	951	162	110	404	411	258	282
NV	80%	244	115	359	20	86	66	150	19	190
NY	80%	2,907	1,682	4,589	572	1,158	918	1,772	715	2,102
OH	100%	1,265	752	2,017	180	786	876	693	347	977
OK	76%	615	264	879	45	193	137	445	71	363
OR	71%	801	386	1,187	312	442	490	229	309	649
PA	100%	1,749	675	2,424	364	787	1,224	740	428	1,256
PR	100%	175	129	304	107	78	33	106	95	103
RI	100%	219	65	284	223	108	40	64	53	167
SC	92%	249	226	475	16	135	131	220	75	180
SD	45%	168	137	305	14	78	61	173	8	124
TN	100%	517	319	836	73	313	350	264	141	431
TX	88%	3,244	2,679	5,923	1,311	1,907	2,285	2,279	1,548	2,096
UT	100%	362	486	848	130	190	86	339	275	234
VA	88%	708	450	1,158	114	443	738	458	180	520
VI	100%	38	31	69	7	20	22	21	15	33
VT	100%	128	55	183	21	89	47	42	45	96
WA	79%	1,343	739	2,082	382	837	391	560	491	1,031
WI	97%	1,327	745	2,072	247	858	763	629	295	1,148
WV	100%	343	88	431	10	160	8	113	42	276
WY	96%	173	91	264	11	95	50	88	37	139
Total	87%	41,277	25,304	66,581	9,641	20,267	23,389	23,517	12,831	30,233





The National Domestic Violence
HOTLINE

1.800.799.SAFE (7233) • 1.800.787.3224 (TTY)

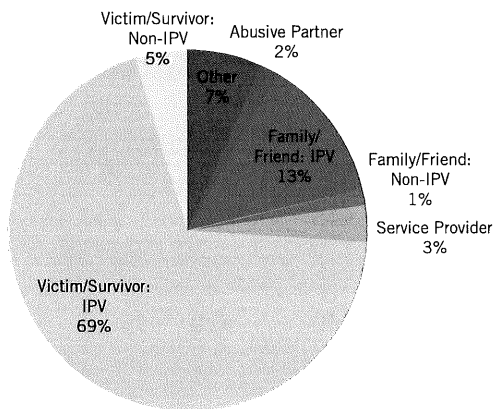
New York State Report

Based on Hotline contacts documented in 2014

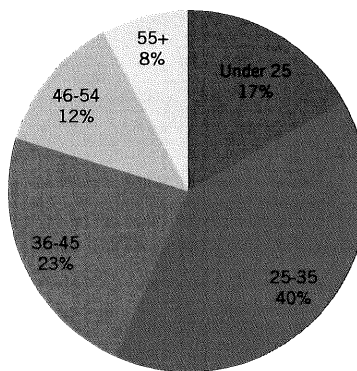
In 2014, the National Domestic Violence Hotline documented **7,548 contacts** from New York. The state ranks third in terms of Hotline contact volume. The Hotline provides Crisis Intervention, Safety Planning, Referrals and DV Education for these contacts.

	Phone	6,979
	Chat	559
	E-Mail/Mail	8
	TTY	0
	Total	7,548

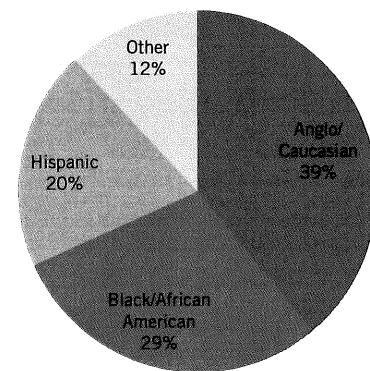
Who is calling from New York?



Caller Type



Victim Age



Caller Ethnicity

Caller Type Definitions:

Victim/Survivor: IPV (Intimate Partner Violence) – a victim or survivor of abuse from his/her partner or spouse

Friend/Family: IPV (Intimate Partner Violence) – a friend or family member of a victim/survivor of IPV

Victim/Survivor: Non-IPV – a victim or survivor of abuse by anyone else: parent, sibling, caretaker, etc.

Friend/Family: Non-IPV – a friend or family member of a victim of any other type of abuse, such as child or elder abuse

Service Provider – a caller from any agency, including other domestic violence agencies, which provides social services

Abusive Partner – a caller who identifies as abusive or who an Advocate believes to be an abusive partner

Other – any caller about whom an Advocate is able to gather info, but who does not fit into an above category; this might include callers like law enforcement or medical professionals

Top 10 Cities in Contact Volume

1. New York	29%
2. Brooklyn	12%
3. Bronx	9%
4. Queens Village	3%
5. Long Island City	2%
6. Albany	2%
7. Rochester	2%
8. Buffalo	2%
9. Staten Island	2%
10. Syracuse	1%
Total:	63%

The National Domestic Violence Hotline is a 501c3 organization that relies on generous contributions from the public, government and corporations to continue operation.

What are victims experiencing?

97%

Emotional/Verbal Abuse

degradation, threats, insults, humiliation, isolation, etc.

70%

Physical Abuse

hitting, biting, choking, etc.

8%

Sexual Abuse

rape, exploitation, coercion, etc.



Referrals to Service Providers

6,773

Offers to Direct Connect

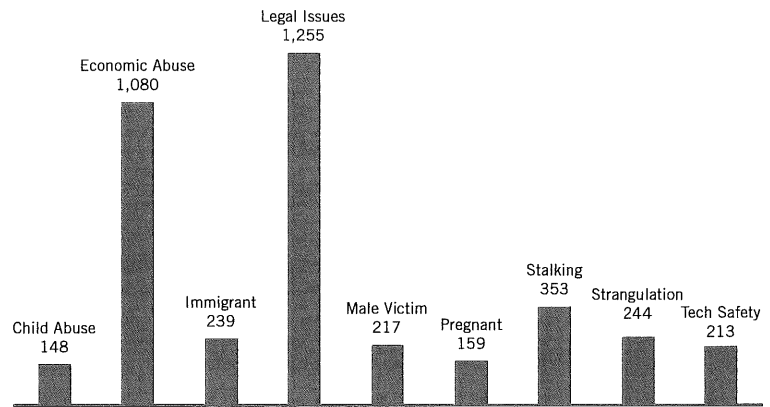
4,302

Referrals to Other Resources

7,548



Most Commonly Disclosed Special Factors in Victims' Experiences



Those disclosing legal issues:

Custody/Visitation	411	33%
Divorce	271	22%
Immigration	123	10%
Interstate Custody	56	4%
Other	214	17%
Protective Orders	705	56%

Commonly Requested Hotline Services:

Legal Representation	682	9%
DV Nonresidential Services	1,397	19%
DV Support Groups	1,449	19%
Individual Professional Counseling	1,718	23%
Legal Advocacy	1,603	21%
Domestic Violence Shelter	2,605	35%

Top Resource Referrals

New York (5 boroughs) Bed Line

Womenslaw.org

211 - United Way

Legal Resource Center on Violence Against Women

Connecticut Statewide Bed Line

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