

Domestic Violence Claimed 73 Lives in Wisconsin in 2016



Wisconsin Domestic Violence
Homicide Report
2016

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Foreword

This is the fifteenth edition of the Wisconsin Domestic Violence Homicide Report. End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin has been tracking and analyzing all incidents of domestic violence homicide that have occurred in Wisconsin since 2000. This report documents fatalities from 2016.

Sadly, the 2016 report contains more names – that is, it records more lives lost – than any previous Wisconsin Domestic Violence Homicide Report.* This report documents that domestic violence deaths occurred at a record pace in 2016 in our state: one death for every five days. As each life is unique and precious, the full magnitude of these tragedies is impossible to fathom. As we struggle to apprehend what has been lost in 2016, we also shudder to think what we are losing. The elevated number of domestic violence homicides come at a time when progress towards equality and human dignity seems to be eroding. And while one cannot make a claim about cause, conceptually, these two trends are not unrelated. Domestic violence happens because one person denies the human dignity of another and believes he or she is entitled to dominance over that other human being. In our current moment, beliefs that seek to divide people and treat the others as “less than” appear to be ascendant. These attitudes have and will continue to cause suffering far beyond what could be contained in any report.

Neither progress nor decline is natural. They are driven by what humans believe and, ultimately, the ways in which they behave. Many people who have lived and struggled before the current moment – people who were advocates before there were “Advocates,” women who were domestic violence survivors before there was a term “Domestic Violence” – brought us to a point at which progress appeared to be moving by its momentum. We dare not forget that advances were won through their hope, sacrifice and effort. They carried us here and, if it feels like we are slipping backwards, despair will not catch our fall. They have shown us we can rise to the challenge. We can be what they were to us, for those who will come after us.

* See page 31, A Stark Trend Continues, for a more detailed discussion.

Executive Summary

Since 2000, End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin has chronicled deaths due to domestic violence that occur in our state. In 2016, individuals died in Wisconsin due to domestic violence at a rate of 1 death every 5 days. The basic findings contained in this report are outlined below.

2016 compared to 2015	2015	2016
Incidents of domestic violence homicide	41	51
Victims of domestic violence homicide (excluding by legal intervention)	48	57
Homicides by legal intervention (responding law enforcement)	1	2
All domestic violence-related homicides	49	59
Perpetrator suicide (excluding by legal intervention)	9	12
Attempted homicide incidents with perpetrator suicide	0	2
Total deaths (victim and perpetrator)	58	73

Other findings of the *2016 Wisconsin Domestic Violence Homicide Report* include:

- Perpetrators of domestic violence homicide incidents were overwhelmingly male. In 2016, 42 of 51 (82%) of perpetrators were men. This figure excludes the two homicides that occurred during legal intervention. These incidents have also been excluded from other perpetrator demographic statistics.
- In 2016, over one third of the victims of intimate partner-related homicides were killed after the relationship ended or when one person in the relationship was taking steps to leave the relationship. This figure demonstrates that leaving does not equal safety. It also supports the main message of this report: no victim in Wisconsin should have to take the courageous step of leaving an abusive relationship without the safety and support offered by domestic violence victim advocates, and without the benefit of a coordinated community response that is designed to protect victims and hold perpetrators accountable.
- Victims reflected the span of life; their ages range from less than 1 year old to 72 years old. The average age of victims was 36 years old. Perpetrators ranged in age from 18 to 76. The average age for perpetrators was 38 years old.

- In 2016, homicides were committed in 22 separate counties in Wisconsin. About 59% of the homicide incidents occurred in urban areas, and roughly 41% happened in rural communities.
- Consistent with the findings throughout this report's history, firearms remain the most common means of perpetrating domestic violence homicides. In 2016, a firearm was the weapon used in 53% of domestic violence homicide incidents. In at least six of these domestic violence shooting deaths, the gunmen were legally prohibited from possessing firearms.
- Many of the 2016 homicide cases include the risk factors that research has found to be particularly associated with lethal violence. These include: threats to use or actual use of a weapon, threats to kill, stalking, strangulation, obsessive jealousy, and sexual assault.

National and Historical Context

Domestic violence homicide rates overall have declined nationally for all race and gender groups in the past thirty years. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), from 1980 to 2005, intimate partner homicides declined by 44% and homicides among other family members decreased 26%. Similarly, nonfatal domestic violence has decreased by about 63% from 1994 to 2010. This downward trend has been attributed to increased awareness, services and intervention. However, the decline has varied significantly for different populations. The data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics indicate that between 1976 and 2005, "the number of black males killed by intimates dropped by 83%, white males by 61%, black females by 52%, and white females by 6%." Unfortunately, more recently updated historical data from the BJS is not available.

Key Findings

Overview

	2016
Domestic violence homicide incidents	51
Victims of domestic violence homicide (excluding by legal intervention)*	57
Homicides by legal intervention (responding law enforcement)	2
All domestic violence-related homicides	59
Homicide incidents with perpetrator suicides	12
Attempted-homicide incidents with perpetrator suicides**	2
Total deaths (victims and perpetrators)	73
Homicide incidents with two or more victims	5
Female victims	38
Male victims	20
Female perpetrators	9
Male perpetrators	42

*One female victim was in the early stages of pregnancy. The fetal death is counted in our total victim count here but is not included in other tables and statistics related to victim demographics contained elsewhere in this report.

**These perpetrator demographics are not included in the rest of the tables and percentages found elsewhere in this report.

Relationship of victim to female perpetrator

When perpetrator was female, victim was:	2016
Current male partner	6
Former or estranged male partner	1
Mother	1
Step-mother	1
Step-brother	1

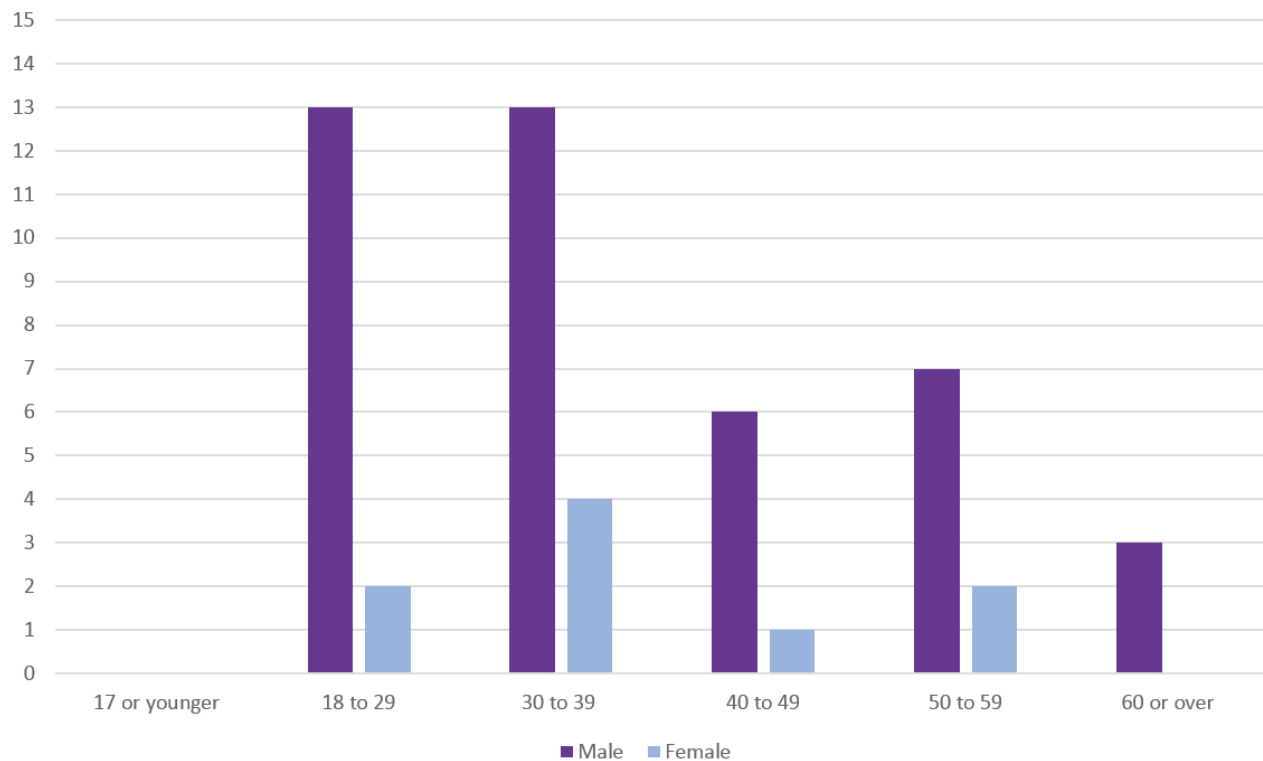
Relationship of victim to male perpetrator

When perpetrator was male, victim was:	2016
Current female partner	24
Former or estranged female partner	6
Perpetrator's child (and child of current or former female partner)	3
Child of perpetrator's current or former female partner	3
Parent of perpetrator's current or former female partner	2
Male friend of perpetrator's current or estranged female partner	2
Father	2
Mother	1
New male partner of perpetrator's former or estranged female partner	1
Bystander	1
Perpetrator's brother-in-law	1

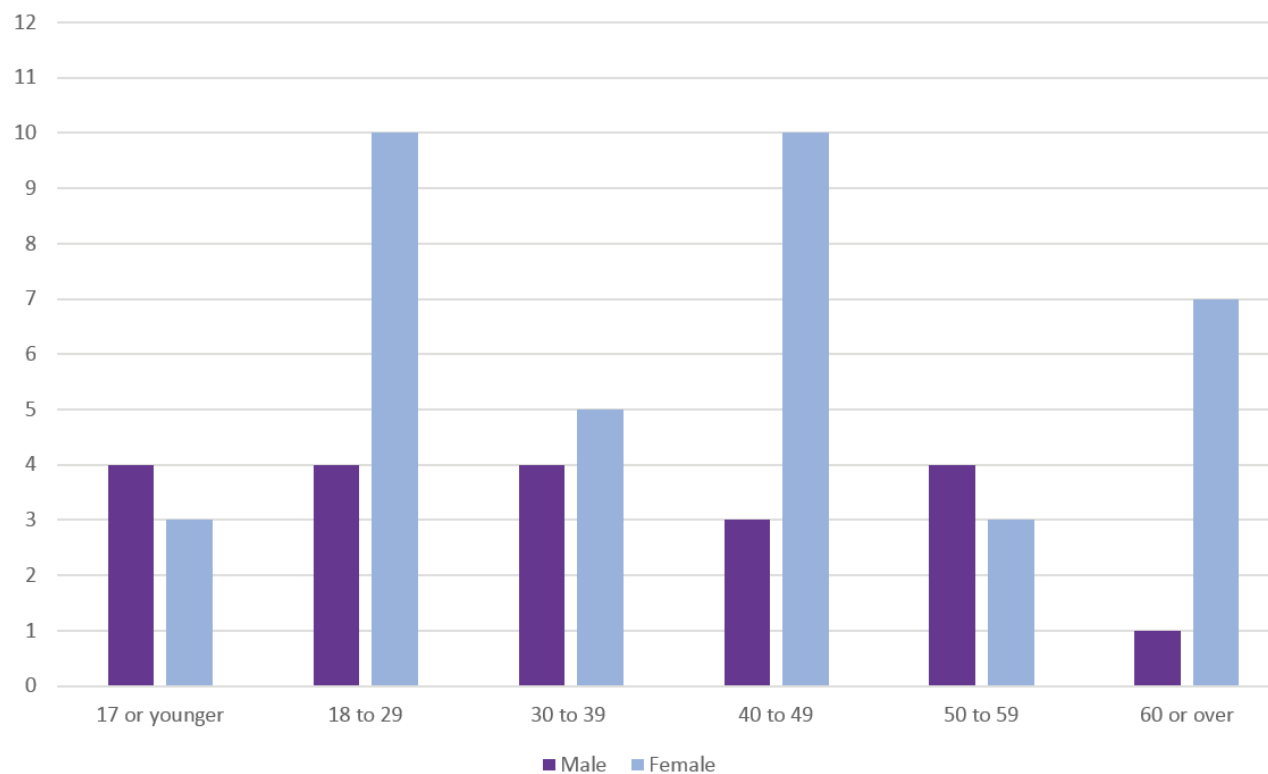
Suicide

	2016
Homicide incidents with perpetrator suicide	12
Homicide-suicide incidents involving firearms	11
Male perpetrators of homicide-suicide	10
Female perpetrators of homicide-suicide	2

Age and gender of perpetrators



Age and gender of victims



Method of homicide

Firearm

27 52%

Since 2005, firearms have accounted for more domestic violence homicides than all other methods of killing combined.

Domestic violence assaults involving a gun are 12 times more likely to result in death than those involving other weapons or bodily force.ⁱ

The presence of a gun in domestic violence situations increases the risk of homicide for women by 500%.ⁱⁱ

There are 46-percent fewer intimate partner gun homicides of women in states that require background checks for private handgun sales than in states like Wisconsin that do not.ⁱⁱⁱ

Stabbing or Cutting

11 21%

Note percentages based on 51 incidents. One double murder-suicide incident included two homicide methods

Blunt Force

6 12%

i. Saltzman, Linda E., James A. Mercy, Patrick W. O'Carroll, Mark L. Rosenberg, and Philip H. Rhodes. "Weapon Involvement and Injury Outcomes in Family and Intimate Assaults." JAMA 267, no. 22 (1992): 3043-3047.

ii. Campbell, Jacquelyn C., Daniel Webster, Jane Koziol-McLain, Carolyn Block, Doris Campbell, Mary Ann Curry, Faye Gary et al. "Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results from a Multisite Case Control Study." American Journal of Public Health 93, no. 7 (2003): 1089-1097.

iii. Everytown for Gun Safety. *State Background Check Requirements and Rates of Domestic Violence Homicide*. 2014. Accessed September 20, 2016. <http://everytown/1y3kxCb>.

Strangulation or Suffocation

5 10%

Drowning

1 2%

Arson

1 2%

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

1 2%

Location of homicide incidents

	2016
Home of victim and/or perpetrator	42
Public space	4
Home of a third party	2
Vehicle	1
Victim's workplace	1
Unknown	1

Race and gender of victims

	Asian	Black	Latino	Native American	White
Male	0	7	1	0	12
Female	2	11	1	1	23

Race and gender of perpetrators

	Black	Latino	Native American	White
Male	18	1	0	23
Female	3	0	1	5

2016 Domestic Violence Homicides

...she was a person, she wasn't just a victim of a crime. [Her daughter] wasn't just some little girl that was killed. They were people. They were so much to so many people. They were people who had lives and people who cared for them.

The accounts and discussions of the homicides included in this report should be read with these words from surviving family members in mind. It is far too easy to reduce people's lives to either a sensational story or a dry statistic.

The information surrounding domestic violence homicides included in this report, as in past reports, is compiled from information that is readily available via public sources and limited follow-up inquiries. The amount of attention such sources pay to one domestic violence-related homicide in comparison to another varies greatly. Hence, the detail available to address each homicide varies greatly. See *Methodology* for an extended discussion of this shortcoming.

Clearly, these brief descriptions in no way reflect the complexity and circumstances of each person's death. They certainly do not capture the complexities and fullness of their lives and the impact that each homicide or suicide has on surviving family members, friends, neighbors, coworkers, communities and those responding and attempting to help during the immediate event or in the time preceding it.

BARRON

Stacy Witkowski, 43, New Auburn – April 9, 2016

Stacy Witkowski was badly beaten by her then 27-year-old husband, Troy Birkenmeier, in June of 2012. She had seven major brain surgeries and struggled with strokes, seizures and infections for the next four years. She lived her remaining days in a nursing home, struggling to move and communicate, before succumbing to her injuries in April of 2016.

According to the criminal complaint, the night of the beating Birkenmeier returned home from a day out golfing and drinking, and questioned his wife about why she hadn't answered the phone when he called from the golf course. Witkowski's children heard Birkenmeier yelling profanities at their mother before hearing numerous loud thumps coming from the couple's bedroom. Witkowski's 12-year-old daughter attempted to call 911,

but Birkenmeier ripped the phone from her hand. She then biked to the neighbor's house to call for help.

Birkenmeier was charged with first-degree reckless injury and aggravated battery for the 2012 incident, and he was sentenced to ten years in prison in 2013. It is possible that more charges will be brought against Birkenmeier following Witkowski's death.

BAYFIELD

Shelly Johanik, 44, Town of Kelly – April 17, 2016

Bayfield County officers found the bodies of Shelly Johanik and her husband Randy Loppnow, 59, in the front yard of the couple's home. Investigators believe Loppnow deliberately shot his wife, called dispatch to report the shooting and then fatally shot himself. The couple allegedly had marital problems in the past. Shelly filed for divorce in 2015, but a month later the couple asked the court to dismiss the petition.

BROWN

**Heesun "Sunny" Teague, 63 and Sabrina Teague, 25
Village of Hobart – June 7, 2016**

After getting into an argument with his father, Jacob Cayer, 26, rode his bicycle to his ex-girlfriend Sabrina Teague's house, broke in to the home and proceeded to ambush Sabrina, her mother and Sabrina's new boyfriend by attacking them with a kitchen knife. Sabrina and her mother did not survive the attack. Sabrina's boyfriend was stabbed in the arm but survived. According to court records, Cayer has a history of domestic violence, including numerous misdemeanor and felony charges. Cayer was charged with first-degree intentional homicide in the deaths of Sabrina and Heesun. The case has not concluded.

Patricia Hayden, 60, Green Bay – November 22, 2016

Joseph Kiefer, 55, shot his girlfriend Patricia Hayden before turning the gun on himself. A pet cat was also found shot to death in the home. Police records indicate that a note was left by Kiefer, citing Patricia's declining state of health and his recent OWI arrest as catalysts for the homicide and suicide.

COLUMBIA

Tracy Krueger, 41, Portage – February 15, 2016

Kevin Krueger, 51, shot and killed his estranged wife, Tracy Krueger, in a motel parking lot after learning she was staying there with her boyfriend. The couple was scheduled to appear in court later in the week to determine placement of the children and division of their assets. A convicted felon,

Krueger was prohibited from possessing a firearm. He obtained the weapon used in Tracy's homicide from a family friend without permission. Krueger was charged with four felonies in relation to this incident, including first degree intentional homicide. The case has not concluded.

CRAWFORD

Linda Kline, 53, Town of Bridgeport – October 5, 2016

Jimmy McDaniel, 48, killed his girlfriend of one year, Linda Kline, by inflicting blunt force injuries to her head and face. The autopsy also found evidence of manual strangulation and defensive wounds on Kline. McDaniel attempted to make Kline's death look like a suicide by suspending her from a tree with an extension cord in Kline's sister's backyard before calling 911. After speaking with authorities, McDaniel attempted to flee the state but was apprehended before he could do so. He has pleaded guilty to first-degree reckless homicide, but he has not yet been sentenced.

DANE

Christina Hatcher, 24, Madison – February 23, 2016

Christina Hatcher's body was discovered in her home by authorities after her mother reported her missing. Jose Vazquez-Garcia, 39, Hatcher's fiancée, strangled her and fatally stabbed her in the neck with a pair of scissors. He then attempted to kill himself by setting Hatcher's car on fire while sitting inside of it at a city park. A co-worker of both Hatcher and Vazquez-Garcia told authorities that two weeks prior to the homicide Hatcher confided in her that Vazquez-Garcia strangled her several times. For Hatcher's death, Vazquez-Garcia was charged with first-degree reckless homicide to which he pleaded guilty. He was sentenced to 22 years in prison and 18 years extended supervision.

TuNeija Tornai, 19, Madison – May 24, 2016

Mike Jackson, 39, killed his step-daughter, TuNeija Tornai, before killing himself. Madison Police records show officers had responded to the Jackson's home several times over the past five years including some domestic disturbance calls. Investigators believe a text message exchange between Jackson and his wife, TuNeija's mother, about her desire to get a divorce may have prompted Jackson to kill himself, and that he may have killed Tornai simply because she was the only other person home at the time.

DODGE

Sesalie Dixon, 27, Fox Lake – December 5, 2016

LaVerne Ware Jr., 36, shot and killed his girlfriend, Sesalie Dixon. After killing Dixon, Ware and his mother began discussing a plan to cover it up. Ware's

mother's boyfriend was the one who eventually reported the homicide to police by calling 911 from a nearby gas station. During questioning, the mother's boyfriend told police that the relationship between Ware and Dixon was volatile. According to the criminal complaint, there was a history of domestic violence-related calls to the couple's household. Ware has a lengthy criminal history, including domestic violence-related charges. He is also a convicted felon and as such, was prohibited from possessing a firearm at the time of the homicide. Ware was charged with first-degree intentional homicide in addition to four other felony charges for his role in Dixon's death. The case has not concluded.

DUNN

Justin Ogden, 32, Town of Weston – December 2, 2016

Jerad Jones, 30, shot his brother-in-law, Justin Ogden, after Ogden physically assaulted his wife, Jones' sister. According to the criminal complaint, Ogden and Jerad Jones had gotten into a verbal altercation earlier in the day, prompting Jones to leave the house he shared with his sister and Ogden. When Jones returned an hour later, he heard his sister crying and calling his name from down the street. Jones' sister told him that Ogden beat her up and told their daughter that she would not have a mommy in the morning because she was going to die. Jones and his sister returned to the home and barricaded themselves in a bedroom where Jones armed himself with a shotgun. At one point Jones' sister needed to leave the bedroom for something, and Jones, armed with a shotgun, went to keep watch. Ogden then emerged from a bedroom and advanced on Jones, prompting him to shoot Ogden once in the shoulder, killing him. Jones was charged with first-degree reckless homicide but was found not guilty at a jury trial.

EAU CLAIRE

Edward Kohls, 50, Town of Washington – December 27, 2016

25-year-old Cody Kohls had several drinks before getting into a physical altercation with his father. Cody told authorities that his father was attacking him, and, in response, he put his father in a "choke hold" for 15 to 20 seconds. When his father passed out, Cody took a photo of him slumped over and posted it to Snapchat. The elder Kohls died from his injuries two days later.

Cody Kohls was charged with five felonies related to this incident including first-degree reckless homicide. In April 2017, Kohls' attorney filed a motion to introduce testimony from Cody and his mother that would show there was a history of anger and violence towards them from the elder Kohls. The judge denied much of that motion but asked for more information, including specific dates when Edward Kohls was violent toward his son and ex-wife. The case has not concluded.

KENOSHA

Michael Gayan, 51, Kenosha – July 4, 2016

Donna Matthews, 50, and her brother, Derrick Matthews, 55, were charged in the homicide of Michael Gayan, who was Donna Matthews' ex-boyfriend. According to the criminal complaint, Donna asked her brother to help her deal with Gayan, saying she feared for her life. Derrick agreed to sell Donna his gun for \$500. Donna bought the gun from her brother and went to Gayan's house where she shot at him five times, hitting him twice in the chest. Both Donna and Derrick were charged with first-degree intentional homicide as party to a crime. The case has not concluded.

Donna Matthews was granted a restraining order against Gayan in July of 2015. In the petition, Donna wrote that, after she broke up with Gayan, he stole her belongings and stalked her. In November of 2015, she asked the court to dismiss the order.

LA CROSSE

Jessica Joyner, 29, La Crosse – March 6, 2016

Haron Joyner, 35, stabbed his wife Jessica Joyner to death in front of her five children. On cell phone video captured by Jessica in the moments before the stabbing, Haron approached her in the kitchen of the family's apartment before swinging a folding knife into her temple, arm and neck, delivering a fatal wound that severed her jugular vein and carotid artery. Haron Joyner was found guilty of first-degree intentional homicide at a jury trial. He was sentenced to life in prison with eligibility for parole in 40 years.

Barbara Kendhammer, 46, West Salem – September 16, 2016

Todd Kendhammer, 46, claimed a pipe crashed through the windshield of his car while driving, impaling and killing his wife Barbara Kendhammer. An autopsy found that Barbara's injuries were inconsistent with the story Todd told authorities, and he was arrested 81 days later for her death. Barbara had multiple injuries to her head and neck consistent with strangulation. Todd Kendhammer was charged with first-degree intentional homicide to which he pleaded not guilty. The case has not concluded.

LINCOLN

Kevin Monroe, 55, Merrill – January 12, 2016

Tyler Monroe, 19, stabbed his father, Kevin Monroe, more than two dozen times, killing him. Friends of Kevin became concerned when they hadn't seen him for several days. His body was found on the floor of a bedroom in his home. An autopsy revealed that Kevin Monroe had been dead for more than a week before his body was discovered on January 12. Tyler was not

charged for his father's homicide until late July of 2017. He faces first-degree intentional homicide among numerous other felony charges.

MARATHON

Patricia Sturm, 62, Town of Berlin – February 28, 2016

On February 28, Mark Sturm, 62, called 911 and reported that his wife had suffered a seizure and died. When police arrived, they found Patricia Sturm dead with a single gunshot wound to the head. Sturm claimed that his wife sent him a text message implying she was going to commit suicide, but the placement of the weapon indicated to investigators that explanation was a fabrication. When Sturm was questioned, he admitted to a detective that he had been having an affair with another woman. That woman told investigators that a few weeks prior to Patricia's death she told Sturm that their relationship could not continue until he separated from his wife. The Sturms' son told investigators he suspected his father was poisoning his mother and causing her seizures, but he couldn't prove it. Sturm was initially charged with first-degree intentional homicide to which he pleaded not guilty. This charge was dismissed after Sturm committed suicide in jail on March 19, 2016.

Oswald Mattner, 42, Wausau – April 30, 2016

On April 30, officers responded to a domestic call for assistance from the girlfriend of Oswald Mattner, 42. As officers were attempting to place Mattner under arrest, he armed himself with a knife and threatened them with it, prompting officers to use deadly force. According to online court records, Mattner has a criminal history that includes felonies and misdemeanors in Kenosha County. In 2015, Mattner was found guilty of false imprisonment and criminal damage to property, and was placed on four years of probation for a domestic abuse charge. He was still on probation at the time of this incident.

MILWAUKEE

Lauren Johnson, 32, Wauwatosa – January 11, 2016

In response to a 911 call placed by a neighbor, police were summoned to the apartment of Jerry Hubbard, 34, and his live-in girlfriend, Lauren Johnson. As officers arrived, Hubbard fatally suffocated Johnson and threw her body off a second-story balcony. Hubbard then stabbed a police officer during the subsequent pursuit, prompting another officer on the scene to shoot Hubbard, who survived. Hubbard pleaded guilty to one count of first-degree reckless homicide and one count of first-degree recklessly endangering safety. He was sentenced to 37 years in prison and another 19 years of extended supervision.

MILWAUKEE

Ilona Gonzalez, 30, Milwaukee – February 1, 2016

In the early morning of February 1, 2016, Jose Gonzalez-Ramirez, 35, called 911 and reported that he had shot his wife. When authorities arrived and questioned him further, Gonzalez-Ramirez told them that the incident was prompted by suspicions that his wife was having an affair. Gonzalez-Ramirez shot his wife and struck her several times with an aluminum softball bat as she slept, then disconnected various vents and hoses and turned on the oven in an attempt to kill himself and the couple's nine-year-old son, who was sleeping. When the attempt didn't work, Gonzalez-Ramirez drove the child to his grandparent's home and called 911. Gonzalez-Ramirez pleaded guilty to first-degree reckless homicide for his role in Ilona's death, and will spend 40 years in prison and another 20 on extended supervision.

**Hermalinda Arvelo, 45, and Arturo Arvelo, 12
Milwaukee – March 5, 2016**

Carmen Arvelo-Schwingle, 41, shot and killed her stepmother and half-brother before killing herself. According to family members, the day started with Carmen's father giving her \$1,500 to find her own apartment. He then left for a time and came home to discover the crime scene. Family members told the media that Carmen had a history of mental illness and a recent suicide attempt.

Julie Rozewicz, 68, Hales Corners – March 16, 2016

Robert Rozewicz, 40, killed his mother, Julie Rozewicz, by suffocating her and stabbing her once in the heart. Her body was found three days later when police were called to do a welfare check. Robert initially denied seeing his mother but then confessed to killing her. Investigators were able to track Julie's cell phone to a landfill where they subsequently found her body. According to the criminal complaint, when asked for a motive, Robert told police he killed his mother because she was always looking for little ways to hurt him and this was affecting his life. He was charged with first-degree intentional homicide. The case has not concluded.

**Jessica Ellenberger, 28, and Madyson Marshel, 4,
Milwaukee – March 19, 2016**

On March 19, 2016, fire officials responding to a call for service discovered two bodies, later determined to be Jessica Ellenberger and Madyson Marshel. Patrick Fowler, 31, initially denied any involvement in the death of his girlfriend and her daughter, but eventually confessed to police that he killed them both. Fowler claimed that he and Ellenberger were in a verbal

MILWAUKEE

altercation, and he felt he was being disrespected, prompting him to stab Ellenberger 26 times and to slit her throat. Marshel was screaming for her mother during the attack. Fowler then proceeded to stab Marshel twice and light the house on fire with coloring books. Afterwards, he attempted to flee to Texas with the assistance of his mother, but was apprehended at a bus stop in Arkansas. Fowler was charged with two counts of first-degree intentional homicide for his role in Ellenberger's and Marshel's deaths. Despite confessing to the murders initially, Fowler attempted to reclaim his innocence and the case was brought before a jury. He was found guilty of both homicide charges and sentenced to life in prison.

Fowler has a lengthy and violent criminal history. At the time of the homicides, Fowler was on probation for assaulting and threatening to kill his ex-fiancée and her son after she broke off their engagement.

Audrea Williams, 18, Milwaukee – March 30, 2016

Frank Lopez, Jr., 19, fatally shot the mother of his two-month-old child, Audrea Williams. A person in the home at the time of the incident stated that they overheard Williams and Lopez arguing before hearing a single gunshot. Lopez emerged from the room the two were in and stated, "I just shot my baby's mama!" He then fled the scene on foot. Lopez previously faced domestic violence-related charges involving Williams. Eight months prior to the homicide, Lopez was charged with false imprisonment and battery, both involving use of a dangerous weapon. Williams was listed as the victim in that case, which was ultimately dismissed. For his role in Williams' homicide, Lopez was charged with first-degree reckless homicide. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 20 years in prison and 10 years extended supervision.

Lazarus Gray, 22, Milwaukee – March 31, 2016

Dominique Boseman, 24, attempted to convince authorities that her boyfriend, Lazarus Gray, had tripped and fallen on a butcher knife causing his death. However, the autopsy and investigation found Boseman was responsible for delivering the fatal stab wounds. Boseman was the only other person in the residence at the time, and Gray had been stabbed twice in a downward motion, eliminating the possibility that he tripped and fell on the knife. Boseman was charged with first-degree reckless homicide and the case has not concluded.

Theresa Saxon, 57, Milwaukee – April 20, 2016

Robert James, 54, fatally suffocated his live-in girlfriend, Theresa Saxon, during an argument. He then proceeded to hide her corpse in the basement, where she was discovered when police responded to a welfare check on July

MILWAUKEE

7th. James was charged with substantial battery and hiding a corpse and sentenced to nine years in prison and seven years of extended supervision.

Virginia Wilcox, 72, West Allis – May 6, 2016

Paul Wilcox, 71, and his wife, Virginia Wilcox, allegedly had made a plan to commit suicide together. A suicide note written by Paul indicated that Virginia's dementia was worsening to the point where she was having trouble recognizing him, and he was running out of strength and capacity to care for her. The couple died of carbon monoxide poisoning from a charcoal grill burning in their enclosed vehicle.

Teneya Little, 40, Milwaukee – May 22, 2016

Arnell Gilmer, 38, fatally shot his girlfriend, Teneya Little, once in the head at close range with a revolver while her two teenage children were in the home. Gilmer then told the children: "I just blew your mamma's brains out. I forgot it was loaded. I shouldn't have put the bullets in." Little's children called 911.

After the homicide, Little's sister told reporters that she could tell her sister was recently pulling away from the family and appeared to be more stressed and losing weight. Just two months prior to the homicide, Gilmer was charged with substantial battery for allegedly heating a kitchen knife on the stove and using it to burn Little on her arm. According to Little's sister, Gilmer threatened that he would kill Little if she did not drop the charges from this incident. Gilmer was evading arrest for this incident at the time he killed Little.

Gilmer has a lengthy criminal history and is a convicted felon, thereby prohibiting him from possessing a firearm. He was charged with first-degree intentional homicide and possession of a firearm by a felon for his role in Little's death. The case has not concluded.

Alexandria Taylor, 26, Milwaukee – June 11, 2016

The day before she was stabbed to death by her boyfriend, Fredrick Ramsey, 30, Alexandria Taylor confided in her friend that she was going to leave him. On June 11, the pair engaged in a struggle over a purse near a gas station. Law enforcement intervened and separated the two, but Ramsey found Taylor some time later sitting on a porch and approached her. Taylor attempted to enter the residence, but before she could, Ramsey spun her around and stabbed her once in the chest and once in the head, and left the scene. Ramsey was charged with first-degree reckless homicide in the death of his girlfriend, and the case has not concluded.

MILWAUKEE

Judy Smith, 49, Milwaukee – June 11, 2016

Terry Bolden, 47, killed his girlfriend, Judy Smith, during a physical altercation by hitting her with a baseball bat repeatedly. Sources indicate that Smith was planning to leave Bolden. He was charged with second-degree reckless homicide to which he pleaded guilty and is awaiting sentencing.

Eric Franklin, 38, Milwaukee – June 15, 2016

Eric Franklin, 38, was fatally stabbed by a woman with whom he lived and had a child in common. The Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office did not issue charges against the woman, citing justifiable self-defense. Franklin had a lengthy criminal history.

Melody Helgren, 48, Milwaukee – June 16, 2016

After a night out drinking together, Tony Nollie, 52, and his girlfriend Melody Helgren returned home and began arguing. Helgren told Nollie that she was going to leave the residence. At which point, Nollie retrieved his gun from his dresser and told her that "she wasn't going anywhere." He then shot her once in the head, killing her. Nollie was charged with second-degree reckless homicide to which he pleaded guilty. He was sentenced to 17 years in prison and eight years extended supervision.

Lamont Shields, 35, Milwaukee – June 19, 2016

Lamont Shields, 35, was stabbed to death by his wife. Circumstances surrounding that homicide are not publically available, and the District Attorney's Office did not prosecute Shields' wife. Court records show Shields had a violent history.

Jovonte Daniels, 22, Milwaukee – July 23, 2016

Jovonte Daniels was shot and killed by his girlfriend's ex-boyfriend, Lorainz Johnson, 21. According to the criminal complaint, Johnson confronted Daniels about dating his ex-girlfriend outside a convenience store. Daniels appeared to challenge Johnson to a fight before Johnson pulled a small silver revolver from his pocket and fired one shot into Daniels' chest. Johnson was charged with first-degree reckless homicide and pleaded not guilty, but was found guilty at a jury trial. He was sentenced to 14 years in prison and 10 years extended supervision.

MILWAUKEE

Sean Flowers III, 3 months, Milwaukee – July 30, 2016

Sean Flowers, Jr., 25, killed his 3 month old son, Sean Flowers III, by drowning him in Northridge Lakes in Milwaukee. A witness was in the water and attempted to wrestle the baby away from Flowers when police arrived and ordered both Flowers and the witness to put their hands up. Instead, Flowers swam out further, holding the baby over his head, and then dropped him into the water. Officers entered the water and apprehended Flowers while other officers recovered the deceased baby's body.

Flowers was at a family gathering the day of the homicide with his girlfriend, the baby's mother, when he became upset at the attention his girlfriend was getting while dancing. According to the criminal complaint, Flowers told his uncle that her dancing at the party upset him because "she wants to do all this dancing around the family, but she don't work, and she don't want to take care of the kids." Flowers' uncle told police that he knew him to be a very jealous person.

Flowers was charged with first-degree reckless homicide to which he pleaded guilty. He was sentenced to 38 years in prison and 12 years extended supervision. Court records show that a temporary domestic abuse restraining order was filed against Flowers in April of 2015, but was dismissed at the injunction hearing when both the petitioner and Flowers failed to appear.

Shelby Manriquez, 63, Milwaukee – August 14, 2016

During an argument about money, Vicenta Manriquez, 35, followed her mother, Shelby Manriquez, outside and struck her in the head with a lamp causing her to collapse. Shelby died from her injuries over two weeks later. Vicenta was charged with second-degree reckless homicide in the death of her mother and pleaded guilty. She was sentenced to 10 years in prison and 5 years extended supervision. It is notable that Vicenta Manriquez was the respondent in a harassment restraining order that was granted in 2013, which was still in effect at the time of the homicide. There was a domestic abuse restraining order granted against Vicenta in 2009 as well.

Worth Rathsack, 68, Milwaukee – August 16, 2016

Susan Luitink, 59, shot and killed her husband Worth Rathsack before killing herself.* Both parties had filed domestic abuse temporary restraining orders in 2006 but neither order was granted at the final hearing. Other circumstances surrounding this murder-suicide are unknown.

*We based our understanding of this case on the Wisconsin Department of Justice Uniform Crime Report data. The limited media coverage of

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this incident offered conflicting information with regard to which party committed the homicide. End Abuse filed a request for records with the Milwaukee Police Department, however, at the time of this report's publication that request has not yet been fulfilled.

Nya Hammond, 19, Glendale – September 26, 2016

Pierre Gardner, 21, gunned down his ex-girlfriend, Nya Hammond, who was the mother of his two young children, in the parking lot of the hospital where she worked. Three weeks prior to the homicide, Gardner physically assaulted Hammond by whipping her with an extension cord. Hammond left and went to stay with her grandmother. Hammond told her grandmother about the history of abuse. She also told her boss that Gardner had threatened to shoot her in the past and showed the boss some of the injuries that he had inflicted. Gardner was charged with first-degree reckless homicide and the case has not concluded.

Kortni Thornton, 30, Milwaukee – November 14, 2016

Dexter Gardner, 32, shot his wife, Kortni Thornton, 18 times, killing her. Gardner was a convicted felon and was prohibited from possessing a firearm.

The day of the homicide, Thornton asked a friend to give her a ride to Gardner's mother's house to pick up her children. Shortly after they arrived, Gardner confronted Thornton and asked her to come inside to talk. When Thornton refused, Gardner told the kids to go back inside and blocked Thornton from closing the car door. He then pulled a gun from his waistband and began shooting her. Gardner also shot Thornton's friend multiple times in the legs; she survived.

Two months before the homicide, Gardner was charged with battery while using a dangerous weapon, criminal damage to property, and disorderly conduct while using a dangerous weapon. The incident occurred just two weeks after Thornton filed for divorce. Gardner was released on \$500 bail and was ordered to have no contact with Thornton. This case was pending at the time of the homicide.

Melanie Johnson, 15, Milwaukee – December 12, 2016

Melanie Johnson was killed when two teenagers, one provoked by jealousy of Johnson's brother's relationship with an ex-girlfriend, opened fire into her home. She was nine weeks pregnant. Alex Dixon, 18, was upset that his ex-girlfriend was dating Johnson's brother. According to the criminal complaint, Dixon told police that they were walking by Johnson's house when Dixon's

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accomplice, 19-year-old Martaouse Holloway, produced a single shot sawed off shotgun and handed it to Dixon. Holloway then took out a large revolver and said they were going to “air out the house”.

For his role in the death of Melanie Johnson, Holloway was charged with second-degree reckless homicide and being a felon in possession of a firearm. He was found guilty of both charges at a jury trial and sentenced to 15 years in prison and seven years of extended supervision for the reckless homicide charge and four years in prison and five years of extended supervision for the felon in possession of a firearm charge. Dixon was charged with second-degree reckless homicide and pleaded guilty. He was sentenced to 12 years in prison and eight years of extended supervision.

Terrance Tucker, 27, West Allis – December 21, 2016

Brittany Baier, 28, fabricated a story for police involving an intruder that assaulted her and killed her boyfriend, Terrance Tucker. She later told police that the two were arguing and that Tucker had beat her. Afterwards, she grabbed his gun, which was sitting next to him on the couch and shot him twice. She then left for Oshkosh and called to report him missing two days later. Baier was a convicted felon and, therefore, was prohibited from possessing a firearm at the time of the homicide. She was charged with first-degree intentional homicide and felon in possession of a firearm. The case has not concluded, and court records show a motion was filed in June 2017 to admit evidence of Tucker’s prior acts of violence at trial.

Nicole Weinkauff, 40, West Allis – December 30, 2016

After going to his ex-girlfriend Nicole Weinkauff’s home with dozens of roses and refusing to leave, 35-year-old Caleb Klein fatally shot her before turning the gun on himself. The pair had dated on and off for over two years, but Weinkauff had officially ended the relationship and began to date someone new approximately a month prior to this incident. A person close to Weinkauff told police that Klein bought Weinkauff an engagement ring in response to her ending the relationship. After they split up, Klein continued to go to her house and leave flowers and also began placing threatening phone calls to Weinkauff’s new boyfriend.

MONROE

Sparta – February 6, 2016

In this attempted murder-suicide, 41-year-old Carlos Bothel shot 23-year-old Nicholas Johnson, his wife’s friend, before fatally shooting himself. Bothel and his wife had been talking about getting a divorce after Bothel retired from the military. His wife had recently begun spending time with Johnson,

and Bothel was aware of the relationship. On the night of this incident, Bothel's wife received messages from her husband stating that he left something at the house for her. This prompted Bothel's wife to return home to check and make sure Bothel locked the doors to the house. Johnson went with her. After Bothel's wife went inside the residence, Bothel shot Johnson while he sat in the vehicle in the driveway before turning the gun on himself. Johnson survived. Bothel's self-inflicted gunshot wound was fatal.

OUTAGAMIE

Chad Hafeman, 35, Appleton – May 27, 2016

Tina Hafeman, 34, stabbed her husband, Chad Hafeman, twice, killing him. After a night out celebrating Chad's raise at work, the couple returned home, continued drinking and began to argue. Tina told authorities that she blacked out and could only remember seeing blood on Chad. The couple's youngest child witnessed the incident. Tina was charged with first-degree reckless homicide and pleaded guilty. She was sentenced to eight years in prison and four years of extended supervision.

RACINE

**Kimberly Howe, 43, and Nicholas Chaulkin, 17
Burlington – May 14, 2016**

Two days after Kimberly Howe and her son, Nicholas Chaulkin, had temporarily left the home they shared with Craig Lambert, 41, Howe told a friend she planned to return to the home and ask Lambert to pack up and leave. Within 45 minutes of being there, a fire was reported to authorities, and, subsequently, there was an explosion. The bodies of Howe, Chaulkin and Lambert were discovered in the debris. Through their investigation, authorities were able to determine that Chaulkin had been killed by a gunshot to the back of the head, and Howe and Lambert died in the fire.

Anthony Jones, 28, Racine – November 11, 2016

Anthony Jones confronted the mother of his children and her friend, Phalon Hunter-Barker, 25, while the two were out together at a bar. When Hunter-Barker and the woman left in an attempt to avoid conflict, Jones began following them. He eventually knocked the woman to the ground before Hunter-Barker shot him. Hunter-Barker was charged with first-degree intentional homicide and being a felon in possession of a firearm. He was legally prohibited from possessing a firearm at the time of this incident. The case has not concluded.

RICHLAND

Rachael Pauls, 32, Town of Orion – February 20, 2016

Andrew Weeden, 29, caused the death of his girlfriend, Rachael Pauls, by hitting her with his fists repeatedly in her head and torso. Weeden told investigators that they had been drinking and got into an argument when Pauls armed herself with a steak knife. Weeden said he “freaked out” and hit Pauls in the head and elsewhere. Weeden initially told investigators he had hit Pauls in the past, but later recanted that statement. Weeden’s court records illustrate a lengthy history of violent offenses including domestic abuse. For his role in Pauls’ death, Weeden was charged with felony murder and aggravated battery, to which he pleaded guilty. He was given the maximum sentence of 32 years and six months in prison.

RUSK

Richard Larson, 49, Ladysmith – April 23, 2016

Thomas Martin, 25, stabbed his girlfriend’s father, Richard Larson, killing him. Martin and Larson’s daughter were going through a breakup and were arguing when Martin smashed a candle. Upon hearing the noise, Larson went to investigate, and a physical altercation between Larson and Martin ensued, ending with Martin stabbing Larson. Martin was charged with first-degree intentional homicide, and the case has not concluded. In March of 2017, while out on bond for the homicide charge, a domestic abuse injunction was filed against Martin. The order was granted for 10 years, the maximum time allowed under state law.

SAWYER

Claudia Burgan, 56, Hayward – July 27, 2016

Dennis Meyer, 58, shot and killed his wife, Claudia Burgan, before fatally shooting himself outside of their home. Meyer’s brother told news reporters that his brother was terminally ill and his health had been declining in the past year, although he was unsure if that may have contributed to the incident. At the time of her death, Burgan was serving as the Clerk of Court for Sawyer County.

TAYLOR

Kristina Knopp, 20, Medford – March 23, 2016

Chad Mayes, 27, shot and killed his girlfriend, Kristina Knopp, before fatally shooting himself. When police searched Mayes’ apartment they found at least nine firearms. An additional two were located at Knopp’s apartment, where Knopp’s parents found the couple’s bodies.

WASHINGTON

Helmut Wihowski, 58, Village of Jackson – July 1, 2016

Helmut Wihowski, 58, was killed by officers responding to a call for help from a woman who stated that Wihowski was threatening to kill her. The woman managed to call police from an office in the home before Wihowski, her boyfriend, cornered her. When police arrived, they found Wihowski holding a knife to his girlfriend’s chest while cornering her in a shower. Officers fatally

shot Wihowski. The woman told investigators she would have died had the responding officers not used force against Wihowski.

WAUKESHA

Christina Schuster, 34, Oconomowoc – September 5, 2016

Christina Schuster's body was found by her brother, who was staying with her and her boyfriend, Jessie Lee, 40. When police arrived on the scene they found Schuster's body with a gunshot wound to the head. Schuster's brother told authorities about Schuster's plans to leave Lee, which she did not think would go well. According to court records, Lee has a history of violent crimes and is a convicted felon, which prohibited him from carrying a firearm when he committed the homicide.

Karen Krueger, 71, New Berlin – November 23, 2016

William Krueger, 76, shot and killed his wife before killing himself. Evidence collected from the scene suggested that Karen's health was failing and William did not want to live without her.

WINNEBAGO

Town of Utica – July 18, 2016

The lone fatality in this case is that of 29-year-old Luke Smith, who shot his girlfriend and then turned the gun on himself. A neighbor reported hearing the couple argue, followed by several gunshots. Three dogs were also found shot to death at the residence. Smith's girlfriend underwent surgery and survived.

WOOD

**Paige Bohn, 5, and Devon Bohn, 3
Wisconsin Rapids – April 27, 2016**

After sending family members a disturbing e-mail saying good-bye, Justin Bohn, 36, shot and killed his two young children before killing himself. According to police records, the children's mother had left the family home about three weeks prior to this incident. She confided in friends and family that Justin was becoming increasingly controlling and was monitoring her whereabouts and text messages on her cell phone. Justin had given his firearms to family members to hold on to earlier in the month, but went back to retrieve them the day before this incident.

Richard Flynn, 42, Grand Rapids – September 15, 2016

Mark Kusters, 58, killed Richard Flynn with a shotgun wound to the abdomen and chest. Flynn was having a relationship with Kusters' wife, which Kusters was aware of. The night of the homicide, Flynn showed up at the Kusters' residence and was peeking in their front door. Upon noticing this, Kusters went and retrieved a shotgun and, after exchanging expletives outside, shot Flynn as he was backing away from their yard. Kusters was charged with first-degree intentional homicide and the case has not concluded.

Lethality Assessment Program Update

This is the fourth consecutive report in which we have highlighted updates to expansion of a research-based homicide prevention strategy, the Lethality Assessment Program – Maryland Model or “LAP.” The LAP involves law enforcement’s use of an 11-question⁴ lethality screen, and providing an immediate connection to domestic violence services for victims who are assessed as being at high risk for homicide.

The LAP screening questions were developed out of a body of research led by Dr. Jacquelyn Campbell at Johns Hopkins University that examined fatal and near-fatal femicide cases. The LAP draws upon this research to help first responders better identify the most dangerous cases of intimate partner violence they encounter. For example, research has shown that, for 28 to 33% of victims, the homicide or attempted homicide was the first act of physical violence, illustrating that physical violence is not necessarily the most accurate predictor of homicide. Yet, threats or use of physical violence often becomes what law enforcement responders are intuitively most concerned about when on the scene of a domestic call, as that is what dictates whether a mandatory arrest is triggered. The LAP ensures that first responders are looking for and asking about other, non-physical tactics that abusers use and that indicate the victim is in danger of being killed.^{5,6} Research also found that in the year prior to the homicide, more than 44% of abusers were arrested but only 4% of victims had accessed a domestic violence hotline or shelter. These statistics illustrate the need to capitalize on the point at which law enforcement first makes contact with a victim, since those at the gravest risk are likely not reaching out for help on their own. Implementing the LAP helps communities formalize their referral process to ensure high-risk victims are not falling through the cracks once law enforcement leaves the scene.

In the past year, implementation of the LAP has grown exponentially across Wisconsin. Milwaukee County was the first to implement the LAP in Wisconsin in 2015. Dunn County was trained next and began implementing in early 2016. Last September, End Abuse partnered closely with the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) to bring the LAP to jurisdictions in 9 additional counties (see the map on the following page). These jurisdictions received training and began implementing the LAP protocol in early 2017. In May of 2017, End Abuse was notified that the Wisconsin Department of Justice Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Advisory Council prioritized LAP expansion in the statewide VAWA implementation plan, allowing us to expand our staff capacity to meet the growing demand for the LAP.

At the time of this report’s publication, End Abuse and MNADV are once again partnering to plan another round of LAP train-the-trainer sessions for 14 law enforcement jurisdictions and seven domestic violence service providers, among other community partners. Moving forward, End Abuse will be the primary entity to assist Wisconsin communities with their LAP training and technical assistance needs. Our efforts will focus both on bringing new communities on board with the program as well as developing opportunities to support sustainability in communities

4 See 2014 *Wisconsin Domestic Violence Homicide Report* for an in-depth discussion of these lethality factors.

5. Nicolaidis, C., Curry, M.A., Ulrich, Y., Sharps, P., McFarlane, J., Campbell, D., Gary, F., Laughon, K., Glass, N., & Campbell, J.C. (2003). Could we have known? A qualitative analysis of data from women who survived an attempted homicide by an intimate partner. *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 18, 788-794.

6. Sharps, P. W., Koziol-McLain, J., Campbell, J. C., McFarlane, J., Sachs, C., & Xu, X. (2001). Health care providers missed opportunities for preventing femicide. *Preventive Medicine* 33, 373-80.

that are already implementing the protocol. Our hope is that Wisconsin communities are more quickly and easily able to access LAP training and receive local ongoing support should they need it.

The death toll for 2016 is unfortunately the highest in the history of this report's production. We continue to set our sights on the LAP because it is effective at reducing severe assaults and homicides.

"The LAP has increased use of victim services and positive response toward law enforcement officers. I think the LAP is instrumental in helping DV victims get the services they need."

Janelle Jurkiewicz
Patrol Officer
Cudahy Police Department

"I think the LAP is critically important; we know that there were many victims who either didn't know about our services, or had never reached out. Now we know that those most at-risk are being offered needed services. At least a third of them are coming in for restraining orders, to discuss safety planning, or just to meet with someone to discuss their situation."

Naomi Cummings
Executive Director
The Bridge to Hope,
Menomonie



"I believe in the LAP and its ability to reduce intimate partner homicide. The old way of doing things was to leave a PAVE handout with victims. The LAP engages the officer to go beneath the surface with victims and get them into services when appropriate."

Ryan Vossekuil
Acting Chief of Police
Mayville Police Department

A Stark Trend Continues in 2016

Sadly, 2016 saw the highest number of total deaths and homicides since this report's inception in 2000. This is a continuation of an alarming trend, as 2015 had the third-highest number of homicides and total deaths in the history of the report. Before discussing possible factors behind this increase, it is important to mention some aspects of our data collection that may be influencing the record numbers.

First, prior to 2010, this report did not consistently track and record the killing of parents by their adult children as domestic violence homicides. The report shifted to categorically include these cases at the urging of advocates for older adult victims who convincingly argued that the dynamics of power and control that are present in intimate partner abuse also underlie abuse to elders by their children or grandchildren.

Second, our ability to more accurately identify domestic violence homicides has improved over the last several years, particularly when compared to the first decade of the report. In terms of this report, characterizing a homicide as a domestic violence homicide requires establishing the nature of the relationship between the victim and perpetrator and, in some cases, understanding the motive. The amount of accessible and relevant information has grown exponentially over the years. With virtually all news content published and archived online, in addition to being broadcast or physically printed, and with the advent of social media's capacity to reveal networks of relationships between individuals and other relevant details, there is now simply much more information available to understand the context of and motive behind homicide incidents. Therefore, the increase in domestic violence homicides identified in 2015 and 2016 may be attributable, at least in part, to a greater amount of available information, rather than solely an actual increase in violence.

Regardless of the precise nature of the trend, advocates continue to search for both an understanding of what makes victims vulnerable and possible sources of safety.

Economic stability has a profound effect on victims' options for safety. An inability to survive financially apart from abusers is a main reason victims stay in abusive homes or are often forced to return to abusers. The last several years have seen a very disparate economic outlook for Wisconsinites. While the economy in Wisconsin has slowly grown since the end of the Great Recession, recovery has been weaker in Wisconsin than in other comparable states and the benefits of economic recovery have not been shared equally. About one quarter of Wisconsin workers earn wages that are too low to keep a family of four above the poverty level.⁴ Wisconsin is the third worst state for racial disparities in the employment rate between white and Black workers.⁵ These economic inequalities are set against government policies that cut or restrict social safety net programs. These cuts force children and families into desperate situations. Thus, many victims of domestic abuse in Wisconsin and their children victims are vulnerable because they cannot afford stable housing and struggle to have basic necessities.

In addition, research shows that the one of the single biggest risk factors for death in domestic

4. Center on Wisconsin Strategy. *Raise the Floor*. 2014. Accessed September 20, 2016. http://www.cows.org/_data/documents/1660.pdf.

5. Center on Wisconsin Strategy. *The State of Working Wisconsin*. 2015. Accessed September 20, 2016. http://www.cows.org/_data/documents/1733.pdf

violence cases is the presence of firearms in the home of the victim. By all accounts, gun sales nationally in 2015 and 2016 were significantly higher than in any previous years.⁶ Gun dealers in Wisconsin noted the frenetic sales also occurred in our state. The rise in the presence of guns comes in tandem with changes in state laws that make it easier for individuals to buy and carry firearms. Additionally, gun safety legislation that would lower the domestic violence homicide rate in Wisconsin was blocked. For instance, states with background checks on all gun sales have a 46% lower gun-related domestic violence rate than states like Wisconsin that allow loopholes in the background check system.⁷ A bill to provide background checks was introduced in Wisconsin in 2015, but did not advance because of opposition from the NRA and other gun-lobby groups. Throughout this report's history, the number of domestic violence homicides from gun violence represent more deaths than all other methods of homicide combined.

Progress on gun safety and economic equality is necessary, but beneficial shifts in these areas may take years. More immediately, we hope that the increased number of domestic violence homicides reported in 2015 and 2016 will prompt more communities in Wisconsin to proactively adopt best practices and evidence-informed strategies to save lives. (See for example page 29.) These strategies are most effective when implemented in collaboration on a community-wide basis.

"We urge Coordinated Community Response Teams to examine their community's response to domestic abuse and to consider how they can adopt best practices and enhance collaboration. According to national data, over 40 percent of domestic violence homicide perpetrators were arrested within a year prior to the killing. Once the warning signs of lethal violence are recognized, communities can focus resources and attention on these families."

- End Domestic Abuse Executive Director, Patti Seger

Government funding for services for domestic abuse victims increased significantly during the period of 2015 and first half of 2016. This is a positive development; research indicates that better access to and availability of services for victims of domestic violence will save lives. It is important to note that, while this increased funding was committed to the cause of domestic violence victim services during the 2015 calendar year, the actual funding was generally not available to be utilized by service providers until well into 2016. The positive impact of this increased investment in victim safety would not be expected to significantly register in this report.

Therefore, holding the individual tragedies and pain that occurred in 2015 and 2016 in our hearts, we look to the future. We remember all of the important work done each day in Wisconsin by victim advocates, social service providers, community members, law enforcement and, of course, survivors themselves to save lives — with thanks this work will continue and grow. We recommit ourselves to promoting the steps we know would reduce domestic violence homicides: attention

6. Taschler, Joe. "Gun sales in Wisconsin continue at rapid-fire pace." *The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Accessed September 20, 2016. <http://archive.jsonline.com/business/gun-sales-in-wisconsin-continue-at-rapid-fire-pace-b99651767z1-365313501.html>. Greenwood, Max. "Gun sales hit record high in 2016." *The Hill*. Accessed September 18, 2017. Gun sales hit record high in 2016. <http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/312645-gun-sales-hit-record-high-in-2016>

7. Everytown for Gun Safety. *State Background Check Requirements and Rates of Domestic Violence Homicide*. 2014. Accessed September 20, 2016. <http://everytown.org/1y3kxCb>.

to the known risk factors, economic stability for survivors, commonsense gun safety laws, changing a culture that supports power and control in intimate relationships, and connecting survivors and their families to advocacy services.

Perpetrator Suicide

The 12 homicide-suicide cases in this report illustrate the strong correlation between suicidal and homicidal ideation in highly lethal abusive partners. Abusers, contrary to what some may believe, often harbor feelings of low self-esteem and self-worth. They may use threats or attempts of suicide as a way to convince the victim to stay with them. The abuser may want the victim to feel as though he or she would be responsible for the suicide. The risk that abuser suicidality poses is centered on their ability, or lack thereof, to control the circumstances in their lives. When abusers feel like they have lost control, they become the most dangerous. If an abuser's maladaptive thinking patterns and coping skills can be identified and addressed earlier on, there is a greater chance of identifying and breaking the cycle of abuse before it escalates to a lethal level.

Wisconsin experiences a number of domestic-violence related “murder-suicide” incidents each year, in which the perpetrator kills someone (usually the victim or someone close to the victim) and then commits suicide. Since this report's inception, we have included 153 perpetrator suicides in our total count of lives lost due to domestic violence. Fourteen of the perpetrator suicides happened in 2016 alone – the third highest number of perpetrator suicides that we have recorded in our 17 years of collecting homicide data.⁸ Usually the precipitating factor in a murder-suicide incident is the victim attempting to break free from the abuser's unrelenting control. The ending of an abusive relationship appears to have been a factor in seven of the 12 or 58% of the murder-suicide cases in 2016. Leaving a suicidal abuser is more dangerous than leaving a non-suicidal one, for both a victim and others close to the victim. Independently, this risk factor does not have a high correlation with perpetrating a domestic violence homicide; however, when coupled with other risk factors that are often present in abusive relationships, the lethality risk multiplies.

Each year our report includes one or more murder-suicide incidents involving an older adult couple. In many of these cases, failing health of one or both of the partners is often the suspected motivation, but rarely is anyone privy to the full story behind these incidents. In many of these cases, there is no way of knowing what, if any, history of abusive or controlling dynamics were present in the relationship.

8. There were 16 perpetrator suicides in 2003; 15 in 2009.

A Wave of Anti-Immigrant Sentiment Gains Strength

A number recent events in 2016 and 2017 have detrimentally affected the safety of immigrant domestic violence victims and the general public. End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin's Immigration and Poverty Law Attorney Megan Sprecher recounts some of these events and explains the connection they have to victim and community safety.

Survivors of domestic abuse face many barriers to getting help, including shame, fear, financial dependence, and societal pressure. Immigrant survivors of domestic abuse often face many additional barriers to accessing help such as fear of deportation, limited English proficiency, experience with corrupt law enforcement in their home country, unfamiliarity with the U.S. legal system, and discrimination. As a result of these barriers, immigrant survivors access assistance from domestic abuse agencies at a lower rate than non-immigrant survivors and are more hesitant to report crimes to law enforcement.

A highlight for immigrant survivors in Wisconsin was the summer 2016 opening of a Mexican Consulate branch in Milwaukee which covers 53 of Wisconsin counties (12 counties in western Wisconsin fall under the Mexican Consulate in St. Paul, Minnesota's purview). The Mexican Consulate includes a Protection Department whose duties include assisting domestic abuse survivors. This increased access to services and assistance for Wisconsin's Mexican population was a bright spot for the year.

However, the 2016 presidential campaign included negative rhetoric about immigrants that stoked fear in the immigrant community, including immigrant survivors. Then-candidate Donald J. Trump said of Mexican immigrants, "They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people." Of Muslims, he said "Donald J. Trump is calling for a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States." After Candidate Trump's election win in November 2016, domestic abuse advocates reached out to End Abuse for assistance with immigration issues for their clients at an increased rate. Advocates reported increased fear and apprehension in the immigrant survivor community.

The fear in the immigrant community reached a fever pitch after early actions taken by President Trump's administration, including the issuance of executive orders calling for increased enforcement action by Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE), doubling the number of ICE agents, and temporarily banning the entry of refugees and immigrants from several Muslim-majority countries. Advocates reported that as a result, many of their survivor clients were too afraid to send their children to school or take their children to the doctor, fearful of emboldened ICE agents.

In February 2017 domestic abuse advocates expressed dismay, outrage, and feelings of helplessness when ICE agents arrested an undocumented survivor at an El Paso, Texas courthouse at a restraining order hearing, apparently tipped off about her presence by her abuser. This incident and the new administration's early actions taken against immigrants lead Wisconsin's immigrant community to live in increased fear. Advocates report a drastic decrease in their immigrant survivor clients' willingness to access assistance from law enforcement or the justice

system. One advocate reported a sharp decrease in the number of attendees at her agency's Spanish-speaking support group; participants no longer felt comfortable driving or taking the bus to the meetings for fear of being stopped and detained by law enforcement or ICE agents. Advocates were at a loss in how to help their immigrant survivor clients.

More recent policy actions taken by President Trump, including the presidential pardon of former Maricopa County, Arizona Sheriff Joe Arpaio for a conviction related to years of racial profiling of Latinos and the elimination of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) continue to take a toll on immigrant communities' sense of safety and belonging. The rescinding of DACA, a program to provide certain immigrant youth with employment authorization and a low enforcement priority, was an especial blow to immigrant families. Under DACA, immigrant families saw their children realize their educational and professional dreams. With the rescinding of DACA, these same families now fear that their children will be shunted from DACA to removal proceedings. Immigrant youth who had DACA now fear they put their families in danger by applying for status.

Anti-immigrant policies are not limited to the federal level. In Wisconsin this legislative session saw the introduction of 2017 Assembly Bill 190, an anti-sanctuary jurisdiction bill. Among other things, AB 190 would hamper local law enforcement from engaging in effective community policing geared at making all community members feel comfortable and safe reporting crimes. Former Milwaukee County Sheriff David Clarke vowed to sign up for the 287g program, which would deputize him and his deputies to act as federal immigration agents, questioning and detaining people solely for perceived immigration violations.

This deluge of anti-immigrant sentiment and policies makes Wisconsin's immigrant survivor community more isolated and less safe. Abusers are emboldened, being reasonably assured that their victims will not feel safe seeking assistance. Domestic abuse programs are hampered, not having tools like restraining orders and the criminal justice system at their disposal because of their clients' fear.

For these reasons, we must strive to make services more accessible to immigrant survivors through improved language access in social service agencies and government agencies (bilingual staff, use of interpreters and translated documents), emphasizing and honoring confidentiality, partnering with agencies trusted by immigrant communities, and speaking out against hateful xenophobic comments and policies. Our state as a whole is stronger when all members feel safe reaching out for help.

Moving the Legal System to Understand the Impact on Children

In this year's homicide report, seven youth under the age of 18 were victims of domestic violence homicides. This number of young victims is not an outlier and is similar to previous years' totals. The loss of life because of domestic abuse at such a young age serves as a painful reminder that the threat posed by violent and abusive partners encompasses a wider set of individuals than the direct victims of domestic abuse and that very often the children of the domestic abuse victims are also in life and death danger. The killing of children in domestic violence homicides often occurs under circumstances that evince clear motives: to commit a brutal, almost unthinkable, act of revenge, to take from the abused partner something that is even more precious than her life, to enact an ultimate form of control.

Domestic abuse victims with children many times know that these otherwise unthinkable acts of violence are very real possibilities, especially if they attempt to separate from their perpetrators. The Lethality Assessment Program, which is mentioned elsewhere in this report, asks domestic abuse victims about threats the abuser makes to kill children. The very act of threatening to kill children, often one's own child or children, is highly disturbing and intuitively an indicator of dangerousness.

Sadly, throughout the years, this report has chronicled numerous instances in which these threats, whether they were explicit or subtle, became realities. As examples, in 2015, a 39-year-old man stabbed his five-month-old daughter to death in a jealous rage about the mother's new relationship. Also in 2015, another man killed two children by setting the family home ablaze. The mother had recently attempted to divorce the perpetrator. In 2016, Paige Bohn, 5, and Devon Bohn, 3, of Wisconsin Rapids were killed by their father before he killed himself. According to police records, the children's mother had left the family home about three weeks prior to this incident. She confided in friends and family that Justin was becoming increasingly controlling and was monitoring her whereabouts and text messages on her cell phone.

These tragic cases point to one of the most crucial and often overlooked venues in which children's safety is a stake. Child custody and placement actions in family law proceedings have enormous consequences for victims and their children. Taking place in the midst of separations, child custody and placement court cases can be inherently volatile. And for victims and children, these court proceedings can be unlike any other ordeal related to the abuse. Rather than finding a system that supports a victim's decision to leave the abuser, many victims and children encounter a family law system that regards their legitimate safety concerns with suspicion and seems to consider the right to safety as just one of many competing – and conflicting – concerns. It is not uncommon for family law officials to be more concerned with the parents' cooperation skills or with a goal of dividing the child's time equally between the parents than with investigating and accounting for domestic abuse.

In Wisconsin, Guardians ad litem or "GALs" are commonly key decision makers in contested family law actions. GALs are licensed attorneys who have completed six hours of training related

to guardian ad litem work. GALs are charged with representing the best interests of the child or children involved in the family law case. In practice, the GAL's recommendation can have a significant impact on the final outcome of the case. Many judges and court commissioners give deference to the GAL's recommended outcome based on the assumption that GAL has a better opportunity to know the facts and circumstances and to evaluate the parties.

Because GALs can have significant sway on the outcome of family law cases and because GALs have only very minimal training requirements, End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin, in partnership with the Wisconsin Governor's Council on Domestic Abuse, released the *Domestic Abuse Guidebook for Wisconsin Guardians ad Litem: Addressing Custody, Placement, and Safety Issues* in 2017. The Guidebook is a comprehensive, step-by-step manual for approaching the consequential issue of domestic abuse in child custody and placement actions. The Guidebook offers easy access to important legal definitions and concepts, tools for understanding how domestic abuse affects children and practical guidance to make informed recommendations to the court. The Guidebook walks GALs through a four-step process when approaching a case, giving the GAL the knowledge to:

- Identify whether or not domestic abuse has occurred;
- Define the nature and context of domestic abuse;
- Evaluate the implications of domestic abuse in the family; and
- Make informed recommendations that account for domestic abuse.

At every step in the analysis, the Guidebook relates the applicable concepts to the Wisconsin State statutes, making it easier for GALs to harmonize appropriate concern for the safety of victims and children with the relevant legal standards. End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin encourages all GALs in the State of Wisconsin to read the Guidebook and use it in their practice. Reflecting the gravity of GALs' roles, the Guidebook includes this statement from a domestic violence survivor who was nearly killed by her abusive ex-husband:

When I went through my divorce, I tried to get the guardian ad litem and judge to understand my ex-husband's controlling and jealous behavior, his history of violence, and the continuing harm he was causing my family. I remember the guardian ad litem only interviewing my ex-husband once and the guardian ad litem coming away from that meeting convinced the man who would later try to kill me was a great person and deserved more time with his children. There was plenty of information available that would have allowed the guardian ad litem to identify the seriousness of the domestic abuse that was committed against me. There were many warning signs that could have been used to predict what could happen to me and my children. But, that information was not investigated and taken seriously. As a result, my ex-husband was given the opportunity to continue the abuse and ultimately attempt to kill me. If I hadn't been ordered to have ongoing contact with him during exchange of our kids, I could have stayed away.

The work that you are doing as a guardian ad litem can help ensure that other victims of domestic abuse and their children are not put in the same position as my family. When you gather complete information, when you recognize controlling behavior and risks of

lethality, when you make custody and placement recommendations that prioritize the safety of children and victims, you will be preventing continued abuse, and you will be giving children the best chance to be resilient and move past the abuse they experienced in their families. Thank you for taking on this life-changing and potentially life-saving work. Know that you can make all the difference for the children and families you encounter as a guardian ad litem.

End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin also encourages Coordinated Community Response Teams, local legal system players and court officials to improve the processes by which the family law system identifies and accounts for the potential existence and implications of domestic abuse in all family law cases involving children. The Domestic Abuse Guidebook for Wisconsin Guardians ad Litem provides a solid foundation to achieve better outcomes for victims and their children and, therefore, to prevent fatal domestic violence against adults and children.

Near Homicides

While we do not track non-fatal attacks systematically, such cases quickly come up in the search for homicide cases. These ‘near homicides’ are distinguished by the severity of the attack or an apparent intention to kill the victim that is thwarted by the victim’s actions, intervention by others, a shot or blow that did not do as much damage as it could have, or prompt medical attention. If we could identify all near homicides that occur in Wisconsin, the range and impact of domestic violence would be even wider and more visible than it already is. For every assault that ends in death, research has shown that there are 8-9 near homicides, leaving victims traumatized and in many cases, severely hurt.

Near homicides, like completed homicides, often result in injuries to family members, neighbors, friends or others attempting to intervene on behalf of the victim. In 2016 there were two attempted murder-suicide incidents, where timely medical attention and swift action by law enforcement officers may have saved the victim’s life. There were also cases in 2016 involving friends, family members and police officers becoming injured during the homicide incident, some severely.

It is easy for us to categorize cases into ‘homicides’ or ‘near homicides’ for purposes of our data collection and this report. Homicides we capture meticulously, ‘near homicides’ are more cursory. Near-fatal domestic assaults are all too often and much more easily lost on the public consciousness. A prime example is the case of Stacy Witkowski. Severely beaten by her husband in June of 2012, she had seven major brain surgeries and struggled with strokes, seizures and infections for nearly four years before succumbing to her injuries in April of 2016. Stacy’s name now rests on a page within this year’s report.

We must continue to challenge ourselves to view near homicides as not only a close call for the survivor but also a wake-up call for interveners, family and friends. If we do this, we have an opportunity to learn from what went awry and change our responses and actions accordingly to protect survivors from further harm.

Domestic Violence Fatality Review

One method that states and localities have turned to for identifying missed opportunities prior to a domestic violence homicide is a fatality review process. In other states, statutes often govern the way in which fatality reviews take place and prescribe who must be a part of the process. In Wisconsin, we have no such statute. A fatality review is different from a homicide report in that a homicide report looks more broadly at trends and themes in homicide incidents that have occurred and provides some details on each case based on what is gathered from readily available public information. A fatality review goes much more in depth to consider the following for each fatality that occurs:

- What was the timeline of events leading up to the tragedy?
- What were possible red flags or risk markers in the relationship?
- Which agencies and community entities were involved?
- What was the degree of coordination and communication among the agencies and community entities?
- Is there anything that could have been done differently to improve the systemic and/or community response to the victim and/or the perpetrator?

Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission

The Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission (MHRC) was formed in 2005 with the aim of reducing the occurrence of homicides in Milwaukee using a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency homicide review process. The review process uses a public health approach to violence reduction which includes defining the problem, identifying risk and protective factors, developing and testing prevention strategies and ensuring widespread adoption. The MHRC has three goals: 1) to gain a better understanding of homicide through strategic problem analysis, 2) to develop innovative, effective responses, and 3) to focus limited enforcement and intervention activities on identifiable risks. The homicide review has created an environment for many disciplines and agencies to share information and work collectively and collaboratively on violence prevention strategies. In 2014, the review process was rated “effective” at reducing homicides by CrimeSolutions.gov.

In the beginning, the MHRC would review fatal domestic violence cases alongside other homicide cases. Partners quickly realized that domestic violence cases had their own set of unique challenges, and it would be more appropriate to review these cases separately. In response to this, the MHRC formed the Domestic Violence Review (DV Review) in 2006. The DV Review started out reviewing fatal domestic violence cases but has branched out to review both fatal and nonfatal cases today. Like the homicide review, partners from criminal justice agencies and community service providers meet monthly to review domestic violence cases, exchange information and make actionable recommendations based on identified trends. Recommendations range from micro-level, case-specific strategies to macro-level policy changes. The DV Review provides the opportunity to build a multidisciplinary response aimed at preventing future domestic violence, expediting domestic violence suspect arrests, advancing the prosecution of domestic violence offenders and improving domestic violence services for victims.

At the September 2017 DV Review, the multidisciplinary group reviewed two fatal domestic violence cases from 2016. The recommendations from the case review are below. It is important to note that recommendations are only a starting point. They are meant to start the discussion around certain issues. The next steps, working with partners, are to further refine the recommendation, develop action steps, create a timeline for implementation and identify partners required. This action plan is presented to executive leadership for support and approval to move the implementation forward. In practice, as we begin the discussion of implementation, it may be determined that a recommendation is not feasible in its current form and needs to be adjusted.

Recommendations from September 2017 DV Review:

Recommendation #1: Raise awareness about domestic violence with employers.

Do employers feel equipped to identify and support employees who are victims of domestic violence? Do they have policies and procedures regarding what to do if one of its employees is a victim of domestic violence? We believe raising awareness about domestic violence with employers can help reduce stigma, broaden opportunities for support to the victim, and ensure the safety of the victim and other employees. These efforts could include partnering with service providers such as the Sojourner Family Peace Center to develop and deliver training for both employees and HR personnel.

Recommendation #2: We need a statewide model for training law enforcement on domestic violence.

Many local jurisdictions provide domestic violence training for law enforcement. We recommend developing a statewide training model that would be implemented consistently across the state. This training would include both in-depth training as well as regular “refreshers.” Recognizing that each agency has its own unique challenges, the curriculum may need to include modules that address these differences (e.g., urban vs. suburban vs. rural jurisdictions, small vs. large agencies, etc.) Additionally, a “train the trainer” model where representatives from local jurisdictions are trained to provide ongoing training and oversight to officers locally may be appropriate. One critical topic we recommend for this training cover is writing domestic violence police reports. This could include providing templates for domestic violence police reports and/or implementing a report writing certification and recertification process.

These two recommendations are in the first stage of development. From what has been presented, a subcommittee of the DV Review will meet and further discuss the recommendations, refine the language and develop action steps for implementation. Once a finalized recommendation is complete, the recommendation will be presented to leadership for implementation.

The MHRC DV Review provides the opportunity to build a multi-disciplinary response to domestic violence in Milwaukee. Through this collaboration, the MHRC will continue to work tirelessly together to craft and implement strategies aimed at preventing domestic violence and improving the services provided for victims of domestic violence. The MHRC is grateful for the continued support and participation of the partners around the table for DV Reviews.

Methodology

Our definition of homicide is the killing of one human being by another. This encompasses criminal, justifiable, self-defense and reckless homicides. Homicides are considered domestic violence-related if:

- The victims and perpetrators were spouses or partners, former spouses or former partners, adults with children in common, and adults or teens that had been in a dating relationship.
- Beginning with the report for 2010, we also include cases that involve a parent or grandparent killed by an adult child or grandchild. We do not include these cases, however, if the defendant was found not guilty by reason of mental illness or lacked the capacity to stand trial.
- It was a homicide of a person other than the intimate partner and it occurred within the context of domestic violence. This encompasses cases where the circumstances of the murder included obsessive control of the perpetrator's current or former partner that extended to her or his new partner. We also include the homicide of a bystander or someone who attempted to protect a domestic violence victim from future harm.
- The homicide was a child death that occurred as an extension of or in response to ongoing abuse between adult intimate partners. For example, when a partner or estranged partner killed his or her children in order to exact revenge on his or her partner, it is considered domestic violence-related.

The report also accounts for overall deaths related to domestic violence homicide, including perpetrator deaths. Most perpetrator deaths are suicides. The count of domestic violence homicide victims occasionally includes perpetrators killed by responding law enforcement officers (homicide by legal intervention) or killed by someone in defense of another person who was under attack. The victim count also includes law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty when responding to domestic violence. There were no homicides in 2016 that fell into the latter category.

In each case of homicide-suicide, we listed the murdered person in our heading as the homicide victim. We seek to be as consistent and as accurate as possible year to year in determining which homicides to include in the report.

In compiling our summary data, we seek to include the total number of homicides committed in Wisconsin in a given year. As previously noted, we use UCR data submitted to DOJ and, if available for the year in question, information from Bureau of Health Information (BHI) from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. Each agency compiles its data from various reporting methods including death certificates, police reports, coroner, medical examiner and hospital records. For example, BHI counts homicides of Wisconsin residents that occur in other states, as well as traffic fatalities from intoxicated driving; DOJ counts homicides in the Wisconsin county

in which they occur and conforms to UCR standards that omit intoxicated driving deaths. DOJ does not include homicides by legal intervention. The BHI figure is therefore usually higher than the UCR-based count.

A Note about Child Homicides

As noted above, we include as domestic violence homicides, child killings that occurred as an extension of or in response to ongoing abuse between adult intimate partners. For example, when a partner or estranged partner killed his or her children in order to exact revenge on his or her partner, it is considered domestic violence-related.

We believe our limited ability to recognize these cases likely results in an under-count of these types of homicides. Homicide of a child is often viewed as an isolated incident of child abuse. An investigation of a child homicide can often overlook past domestic violence or the domestic violence might not be included in the public record. While we believe that a larger number of child deaths are directly related to an ongoing pattern of domestic abuse, our current methods of tracking homicides do not allow us to consistently identify children killed by perpetrators of domestic violence.

Each year there are a number of homicides of children we do not include but in which domestic abuse appears to be a salient characteristic or risk factor. These cases are not included because we lack the necessary information to link the killings to intimate partner violence (and thus to the report's definition of domestic violence homicide). Below is an example of this type of incident.

Waupaca County

On June 14, John Brush's girlfriend left her three-year-old son in his care. About an hour later, he called her to say the boy was not breathing. Brush told the mother that he called 911, but when she arrived back at the house she found Brush and his parents standing around the severely injured child. Brush said he did not want to call 911 because he had warrants out for his arrest. The mother rushed the boy to the hospital. The child was in critical condition for about two weeks before he died.

Brush claimed the child fell down the stairs, but medical investigators determined the injuries were not consistent with that story. Prosecutors initially charged Brush with reckless homicide and six other charges. He pled no contest to first-degree recklessly endangering safety. He has not yet been sentenced for that crime.

As documented by court records, Brush had a long history of violent behavior, including a substantial history of domestic abuse. He was charged with domestic abuse in separate cases in 1999, 2000, 2003, 2007 and 2010. Some of the charges were for felony-level offenses. He also was a respondent in two separate restraining order cases brought by different women.

However, the case is not classified as a domestic violence homicide because we did not find

documented evidence that Brush was violent to his current girlfriend, the child's mother.

While the Brush case does not meet our definition of domestic violence homicide, the death of this child is connected to, or likely connected to, domestic abuse in a number of ways. First, domestic abuse perpetration is often a repeat behavior, particularly by an individual with Brush's long, documented history. Thus the lack of documentation of Brush having engaged in abuse in relationship with the child's mother may simply be because most incidents of domestic abuse do not come to light in public sources, not because the abuse was not occurring. Second, at the time of the homicide, Brush was wanted on a warrant. He had violated a condition of probation that was imposed for a conviction related to a restraining order violation. Therefore, taking a broad view, the child's death may not have occurred had Brush faced greater accountability for past domestic abuse behavior.

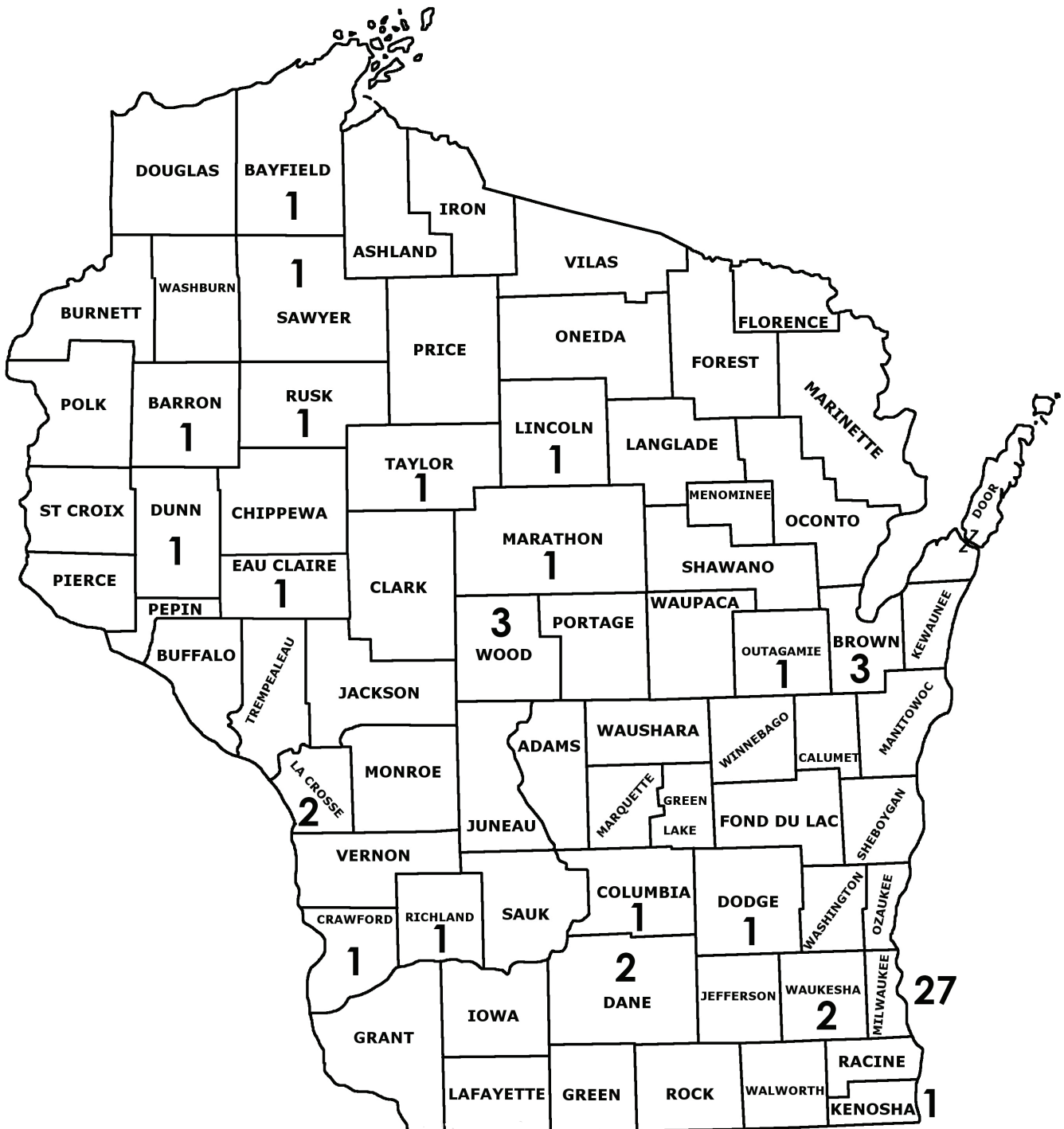
The Brush case is just one example of how the fatal consequences of domestic abuse extend beyond the particular cases that meet our definition of a domestic violence homicide. Domestic abuse is a pervasive epidemic that has directly victimized well over one million Wisconsinites. Therefore, it is not surprising the cases included in any year's report only show a portion of the various ways domestic abuse has life and death implications in our state.

2000 to 2016 Totals

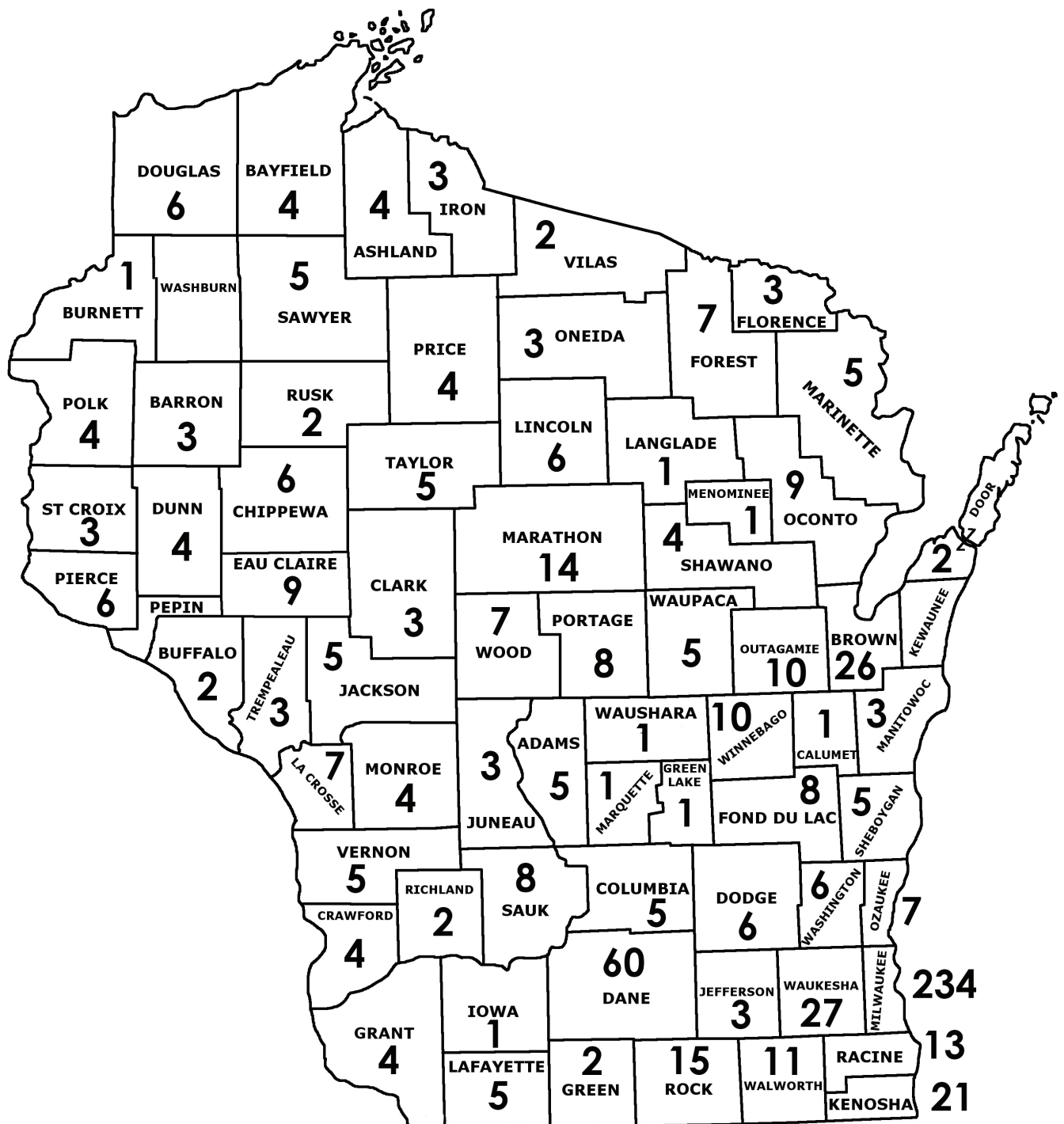
Year	Homicide Deaths	Suicides	Total
2016	59	14	73
2015	49	9	58
2014	37	6	43
2013	43	12	55
2012	48	4	52
2011	34	3	37
2010	45	7	52
2009	52	15	67
2008	37	10	47
2007	41	10	51
2006	28	8	36
2005	40	6	46
2004	28	5	33
2003	45	16	61
2002	38	11	49
2001	33	9	42
2000	33	8	41
Totals	690	153	843

2016 DV Homicide Map

Domestic violence homicide victims by county.



Domestic violence homicide victims by county.



Topic Index to Previous Homicide Reports

Each year, the homicide report includes a discussion of a variety of topics. Below is an index of the topics that have been addressed. Each year's report is available at: <http://www.endabusewi.org/homicide-reports>.

African-American communities, Impact on, 2005 (16), 2008 (23), 2009 (34), 2010 (37), 2011/12 (42), 2013 (46)

Bystander risk, 2002 (8), 2003 (10), 2004 (6), 2005 (11)

Child custody, connection to, 2001 (7), 2006/7 (23), 2009 (25)

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Hmong and Lao communities, impact on, 2006/7 (30), 2009 (33), 2011/12 (43), 2013 (39)

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Latin@ communities, impact on, 2009 (34), 2011/12 (42), 2013 (29)

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LGBTQ communities, impact on, 2010 (30), 2011/12 (44), 2013 (43), 2015 (32)

Law enforcement, homicides by, 2010 (35)

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Northcentral Wisconsin, a closer look, 2006/7 (17)

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Rural communities, impact on, 2009 (32)

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Separation, increased risk, 2001 (7), 2002 (7), 2003 (8), 2004 (7), 2006/7 (26), 2008 (20), 2009 (26), 2010 (32), 2014 (34)

Sexual assault, 2004 (8), 2005 (13)

Suicide, 2003 (9), 2005 (9), 2014 (35)

Stalking, 2001 (6), 2002 (8), 2003 (8), 2005 (13), 2006/7 (27), 2008 (21), 2009 (27), 2010 (33), 2011/12 (34), 2014 (36)

Strangulation, 2005 (13), 2006/7 (29), 2008 (22), 2009 (29), 2010 (34), 2014 (32)

Teen dating violence, 2013 (40)

Ten-year retrospective, 2009 (41)

Tribes, impact on, 2009 (32), 2011/12 (43), 2013 (41)

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Welfare reform, 2000 (3)

Workplace violence, 2011/12 (37), 2013 (42)

About End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin

At End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin, we strive to be the statewide voice for survivors of domestic violence.

- We educate shelter and program volunteers and advocates, law enforcement, legislators and community members to provide safety and support to victims.
- We strive to shift Wisconsin from the attitudes and beliefs that cause domestic violence to values of mutual respect and equality.
- We partner with communities in the effort to prevent and end domestic abuse.

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www.endabusewi.org

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