

New Orleans Domestic Violence Fatality Summary 2020

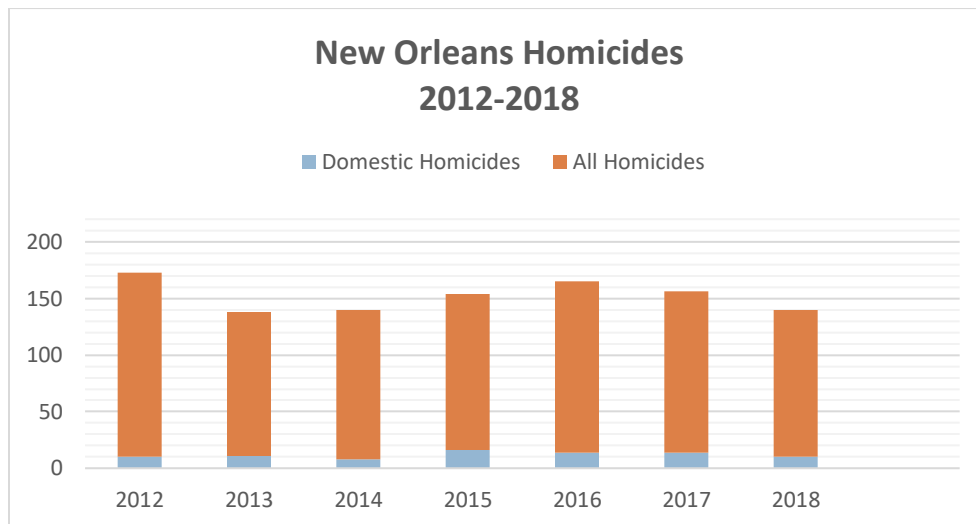
Introduction

Domestic violence (DV) affects millions of people in the United States each year and can take many forms, including physical violence, psychological aggression, sexual violence, and in the most serious cases, homicide.¹ Capturing the most extreme outcomes, domestic homicides make up only a small fraction of all domestic violence-related offenses. However, the impact that domestic homicides have on families and communities can be devastating.

For the purpose of this summary, the definition of DV includes both intimate partner violence (IPV) and other family violence (FV). An intimate partner is defined as a current or former girlfriend/boyfriend, dating partner, past or ongoing sexual partner, or spouse and includes same-sex partners. Other family members are defined as individuals who are parents/children, siblings, grandparent/grandchild, cousins, or in-laws.

In New Orleans, from 2012-2018, there were a total of 83 domestic homicides. Domestic homicides accounted for 8.4% (83 of 983)² of homicides that occurred in New Orleans during that time period. Of the 83 domestic homicides, 62 were identified as intimate partner homicides. Intimate partner homicides accounted for 74.7% (62 of 83) of all domestic homicides and 6.3% (62 of 983) of all homicides that occurred in New Orleans from 2012-2018.

Figure 1. New Orleans Homicides: by Domestic Homicides and All Homicides (2012-2018) (N=983)



¹ National Center for Injury Prevention, Division of Violence Prevention. "Intimate Partner Violence." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Accessed October 14, 2019. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/index.html>.

² New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) Analytics Unit. 2019.

Methodology

Eighty-three cases from 2012-2018 in which DV was identified as the root cause of the homicide were compiled for this review. Eighty-one cases were identified as domestic by the Office of Criminal Justice Coordination (OCJC), the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD), and the Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence (LCADV). Two cases were not identified by any of the previous agencies but were identified while reviewing domestic homicides on NOLA.com. Five cases classified by OCJC as domestic homicides were omitted from this report as further details could not be gathered about the incidents. Components used for the purposes of this summary included victim and perpetrator demographics, incident characteristics, police report details, media report details, and civil and criminal court records and minutes, including prosecution outcomes and sentencing.

It is important to note, there are several limitations to the data reported in this summary:

1. Due to the nature of DV, it is likely that this is not an extensive list of all homicides that occurred in New Orleans from 2012-2018 in which the root cause was DV. It is possible that other homicides, in which the relationships between the victims and perpetrators were unknown, were not classified as domestic at the time of the incident and were therefore unknowingly excluded from this report.
2. Some child abuse fatality data is included in this summary as this data was reported as domestic by LCADV, OCJC, or NOPD. Due to the data source restrictions, it is important to note this report may not reflect every child abuse fatality that was rooted in FV.
3. Victim demographic data obtained from law enforcement, the media, and court reports may not accurately reflect how individual victims would self-identify their gender, race/ethnicity, or relationship status.
4. Much of the incident-related data summarized in this report was gathered from publicly available media reports. Therefore, cases that garnered less media coverage led to a limited availability of information related to those cases.
5. Unless it was noted in a media report, data on the IPV victim's and IPV perpetrator's criminal and civil legal histories outside of Orleans Parish are not included in this summary.
6. Usual measurement of domestic violence risk factors does not consider historic inequities in access to resources and gender-based attitudes about power and control and a history of policies that deny resources to Blacks/African Americans and people of color. Rich integration of those causes, however, are beyond the full scope of this summary. Therefore, the data presented lacks full representation of social or contextual interpretations.

Acknowledgements

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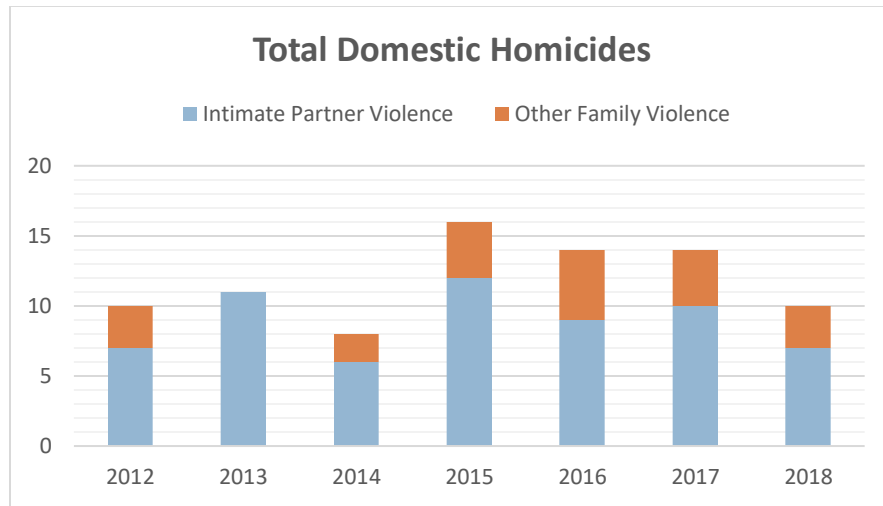
Disclaimer

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Findings: All Domestic Homicide Incident Characteristics

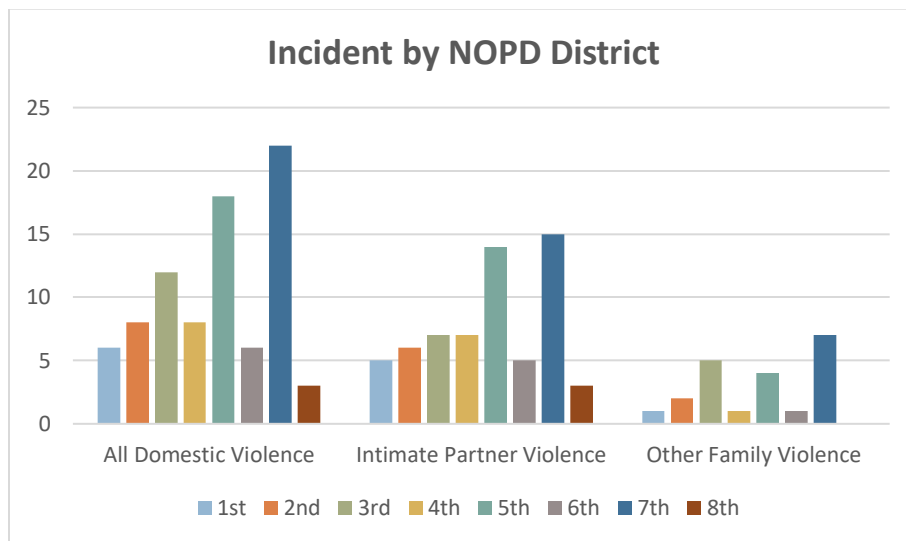
Intimate Partner Violence vs. Other Family Violence

Figure 2. New Orleans Domestic Violence Homicides by Intimate Partner vs. Family Violence (2012-2018) (N=83)



- In 17% of domestic homicides, reports noted that in addition to the homicide victim(s), other individuals were injured at the scene. This resulted in 19 additional injured victims.
- Children were present at the time and scene in 13% of all domestic homicides.

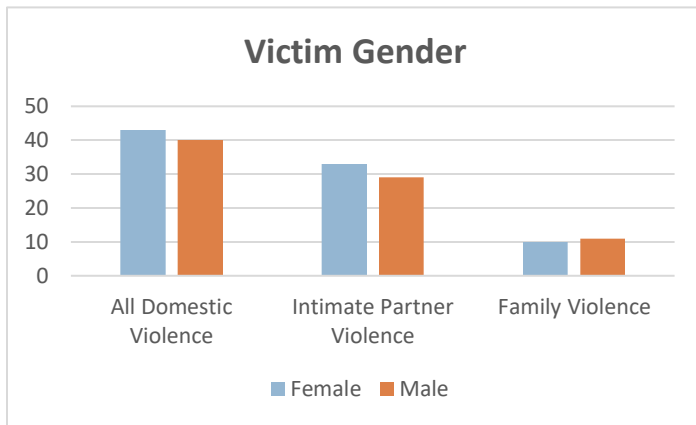
Figure 3. New Orleans Domestic Homicides by District and Subgroups (2012-2018) (N=83)



- Districts with the highest numbers of domestic related homicides were the 7th and 5th districts. In 2019, NOPD reported that the districts with the highest calls for service related to DV were the 7th and the 5th.³

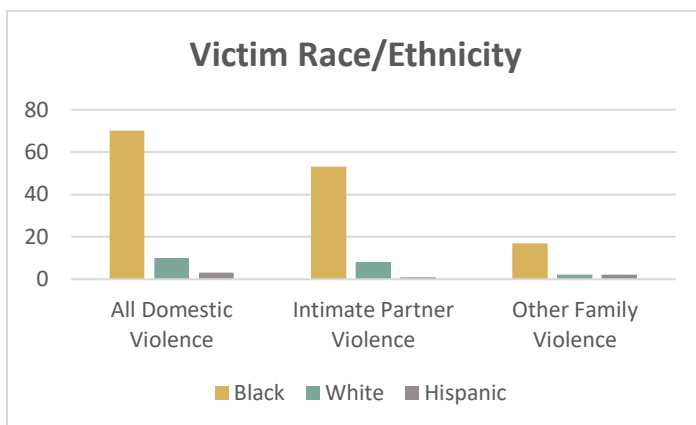
³ City of New Orleans. "Electronic Police Reports 2019." <https://data.nola.gov/PublicSafety-andPreparedness/Electronic-Police-Report-2019/mm32-zkg7>

Figure 4. New Orleans Domestic Homicides by Gender/Subgroups (2012-2018) (N=83)



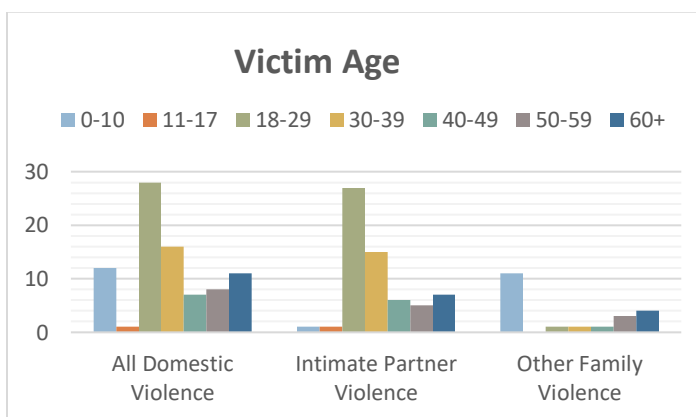
Nationally, women are far more likely to be the victims of violent crimes committed by intimate partners, the most fatal violent crime being the act of homicide. In New Orleans, homicide data indicates that women and men are victims of homicide as a result of DV at similar rates.

Figure 5. New Orleans Domestic Homicides by Race/Ethnicity/Subgroups (2012-2018) (N=83)



Victims were identified as being either Black/African American, White, or Hispanic. This data does not include Native American or Alaskan Native, Asian, or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders, as there were no documented incidents involving victims who were identified with these groups. In New Orleans victim race and ethnicity percentages are not consistent with demographic data for the general population. Most notably, while Black/African American residents make up 59% of the population,⁴ 84% of domestic homicide victims were identified as Black/African American.

Figure 6. New Orleans Domestic Homicides: by Age/Subgroups (2012-2018) (N=83)



National data suggests that women between the ages of 18-24 experience the highest rates of intimate partner violence.⁵ It is noteworthy to mention that women between the ages of 18-29 also experienced the highest rate of IPV homicide in New Orleans.

⁴ The Data Center. (2019). "Who lives in New Orleans and Metro parishes now?: Race/Ethnicity." <https://www.datacenterresearch.org/data-resources/who-lives-in-new-orleans-now/>

⁵ Truman, Jennifer, and Rachel Morgan. (2014) "Nonfatal domestic violence, 2003-2012." Office of Justice Programs: Bureau of Justice Statistics. <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ndv0312.pdf>

Findings: Intimate Partner Homicide Incident Characteristics

From 2012-2018 there were a total of 62 homicides in which the root cause was identified as IPV.

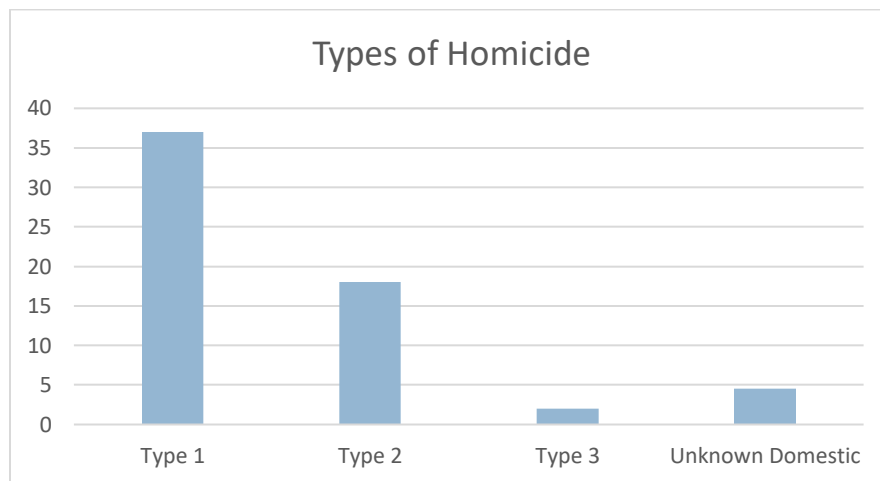
Defining Victim, Perpetrator, and Suspect

- **IPV Victim:** the partner in the intimate relationship who is the target of violence perpetrated by an intimate partner.
- **IPV Perpetrator:** the partner in the intimate relationship who has committed violence against an intimate partner.
- **Victim:** the person who is the victim of the homicide.
- **Suspect:** the person who is the suspected perpetrator of the homicide.

Defining Types of Intimate Partner Homicides

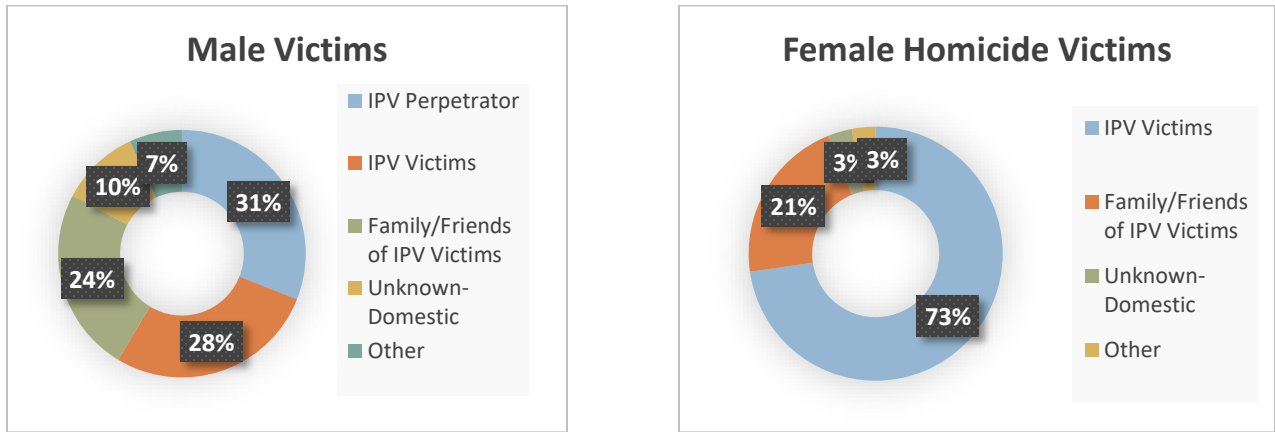
- **Type 1: IPV Homicide:** incidents in which an individual is killed by a current or former intimate partner (as defined above).
- **Type 2: IPV Related Homicide:** incidents do not involve a person killing a current or former intimate partner but do include a homicide that is directly related to a current or former intimate relationship. That is, the homicide would not have occurred in the absence of the intimate partner relationship.
- **Type 3: IPV Associated Homicide:** incidents where the homicide is committed against a third party and is directly related to an intimate partner relationship, but there is no evidence of violence in the intimate partner relationship itself.
- **Unknown Domestic:** incidents identified as “domestic homicides” by NOPD, OCJC, or LCADV, but the type of victim/suspect relationship is unknown or unclear.

Figure 7. New Orleans Intimate Partner Homicides: by Type (2012-2018) (n=62)



- Most intimate partner homicide incidents were classified as Type 1 IPV Homicides (n=37). Seventy percent of Type 1 Homicides were committed by suspects who were identified as current spouses or dating partners (n=26). Nineteen percent were committed by suspects who were identified as former spouses or dating partners (n=7) and 11% were committed by suspects who were identified as suspected dating partners (n=4).

Figure 8 and 9. New Orleans Intimate Partner Homicide Incident Characteristics: by Victim Gender and Relationship to Suspect (2012-2018) (N=62)



- Almost half (n=30) of intimate partner homicide victims were not identified as the primary IPV victim. The other half (n=32) of intimate partner homicide victims were identified as the IPV victim.
- Twenty-nine percent (n=18) of intimate partner homicide victims were family members or friends of the IPV victim, bystanders, or a law enforcement officer.
- Fifteen percent (n=9) of victims were identified as IPV perpetrators. Eight of these victims had a documented criminal history of perpetrating other incidents of IPV. One victim had a reported history of IPV by the media.

Table 1. New Orleans Intimate Partner Homicide Victims: by Gender and Race/Ethnicity (2012-2018) (N=62)⁶

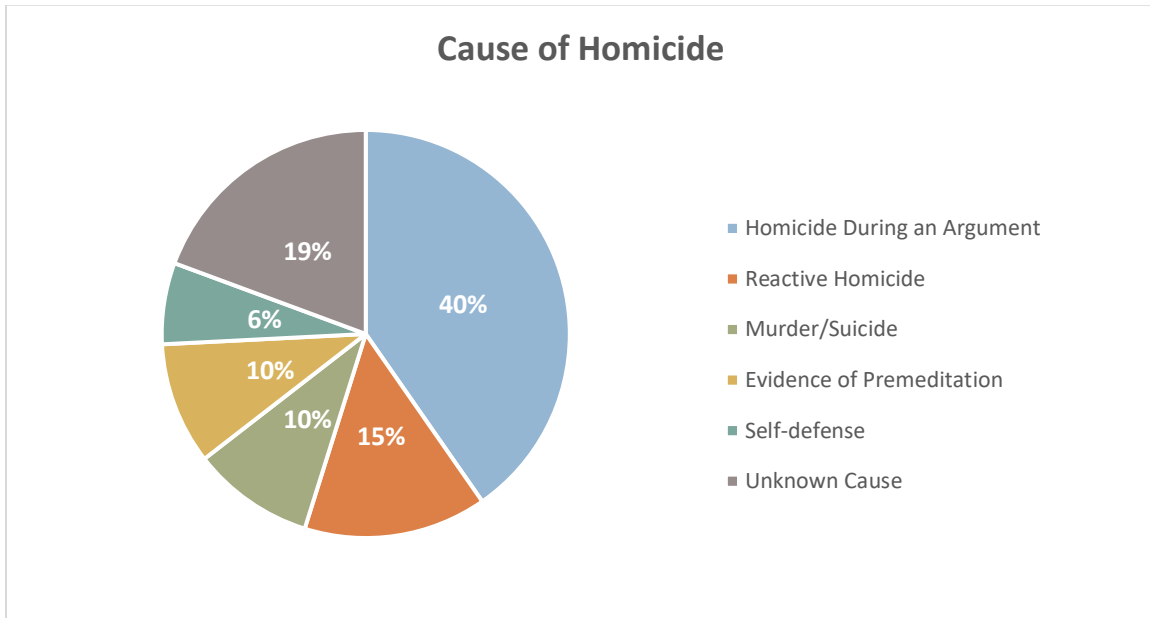
	No. of Intimate Partner Homicide Victims (2012-2018)	7-Year Total Rate Per 100,000 Residents (2012-2018) ⁷
Male	29	2.36
Black	28	3.83
White	1	0.24
Female	33	2.44
Black	25	2.87
White	7	1.7

- Women and men have similar rates of being murdered as a result of IPV in New Orleans.
- Black/African American men are over 2 times as likely to be murdered as a result of IPV than White women and over 15 times more likely to be murdered as a result of IPV than White men.
- Black/African American women are over 1.5 times more likely to be murdered as a result of IPV than White women and over 11 times more likely to be murdered as a result of IPV than White men.

⁶ This data does not include Native American or Alaskan Native, Asian, or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders, as there were no documented incidents involving victims who identified with these groups.

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. 2018. American Community Survey. <https://data.census.gov>.

Figure 10. New Orleans Intimate Partner Homicide Incident Characteristics: by Cause (2012-2018) (n=62)



Defining Causes of Intimate Partner Homicide:

- **Homicide during an Argument:** Forty percent (n=25) of intimate partner homicides occurred during an argument.
- **Reactive:** The homicide occurred by a third party in reaction to violence against an IPV victim. Fifteen percent of intimate partner homicides were classified as reactive. In 4 cases, victims were murdered as a result of a romantic rivalry. In 3 cases, an IPV victim contacted a friend or family member for help or protection during a domestic dispute. In 2 cases, family members murdered IPV perpetrators as acts of retaliation for causing harm to IPV victims.
- **Evidence of Premeditation:** Ten percent (n=6) of IPV homicides appeared to have involved premeditation or advance planning.
- **Murder-suicide:** Ten percent (n=6) of IPV homicides were classified as murder/suicide incidents.⁸ All IPV murder/suicide incidents were committed by current dating or spousal partners. In 83% (n=5) of murder/suicide incidents, there was no previous reported history of intimate partner violence.
- **Self-defense:** Six percent (n=4) of IPV homicides were committed as acts of justifiable self-defense by IPV victims. In all identified self-defense homicides, IPV victims had a history of domestic violence with the IPV perpetrator.
- **Unknown Cause:** The homicide occurred as a result of IPV, but any precursor to the homicide was unknown. In 19% of cases (n=12), the cause or reason for the homicide was unknown. In 58% (n=7) of unknown cause cases, there was a documented criminal history of IPV between the IPV victim and IPV perpetrator.

⁸ This report does not include the suicide of the perpetrator as a domestic fatality. This report only includes the murder of the victim in the data.

Figure 11. New Orleans Intimate Partner Homicides by Place of Occurrence (2012-2018) (N=62)

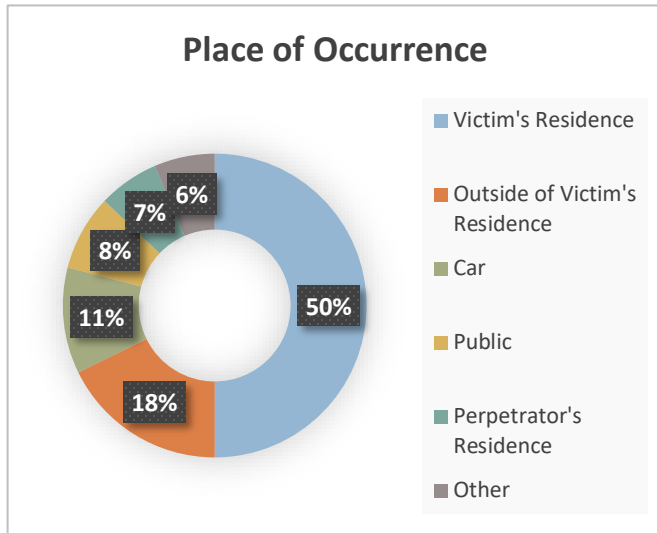
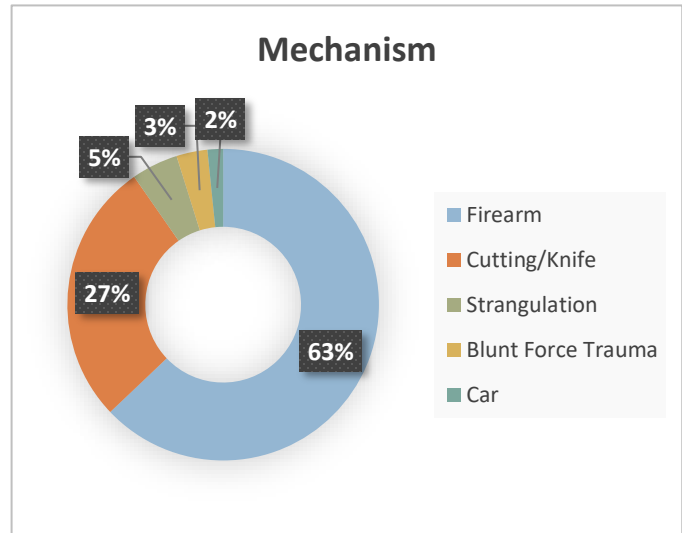


Figure 12. New Orleans Intimate Partner Homicides by Mechanism (2012-2018) (N=62)

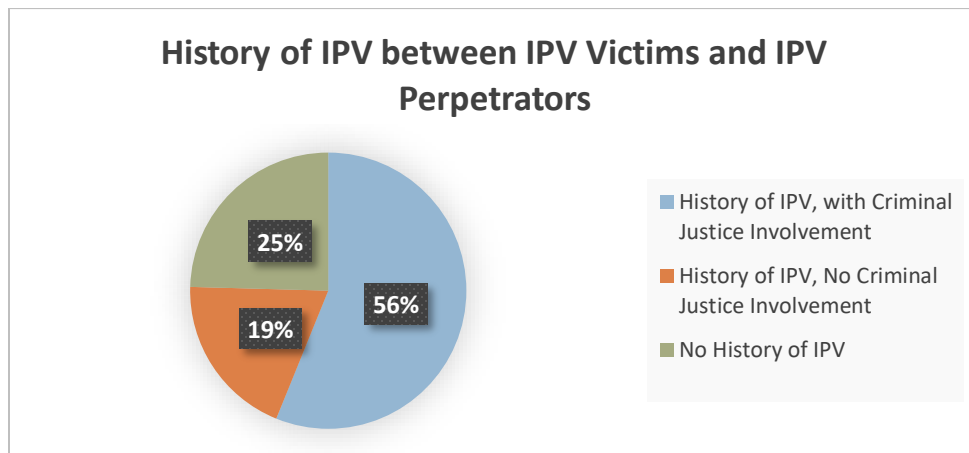


- National data collected from the Federal Investigation Bureau found that slightly over half of all female victims of IPV homicide in the US are killed by a gun.⁹ In comparison, 64% (n=21) of New Orleans female victims of IPV homicide were killed by a firearm.
- In 21% (n=8) of IPV homicides that involved a firearm, the perpetrator was identified as a felon illegally in possession of a firearm.

History of Intimate Partner Violence

Out of 62 intimate partner homicides, 57 relationships between an IPV victim and IPV perpetrator were identified as the root causes. The following data follows the primary IPV victims and IPV perpetrators and their reported histories of IPV.

Figure 13. History of Intimate Partner Violence among IPV Victims and IPV Perpetrators (N=57)



- In 25% (n=14) of intimate partner homicide cases, there was no reported history of IPV between the IPV victim and IPV perpetrator.

⁹ Everytown for Gun Safety. 2019. "Guns and violence against women: America's uniquely lethal domestic violence problem." <https://everytownresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/IPV-for-WEB-112519B.pdf>

- In 75% (n=43) of intimate partner homicides, a history of IPV from the IPV perpetrator, IPV victim, or both, were reported by the media, court records, or police reports.
- Of the 75% of intimate partner homicides where a history of IPV was reported, in 56% (n=32) of incidents, the IPV victim, IPV perpetrator, or both, had a documented history of IPV charges in either Orleans Parish Criminal District or Municipal Courts. In those cases, domestic charges included Domestic Abuse Battery, Domestic Abuse Battery (Strangling), Acts of Domestic Violence, Criminal Property Damage (Domestic), Criminal Trespassing (Domestic), Stalking, Violation of Protection Order, Aggravated Assault, and Simple Battery.
- In 19% (n=11) of intimate partner homicides where IPV was reported, although there were no documented criminal histories of IPV, there were documented civil legal histories or reports of IPV noted in the media by family members, friends, or neighbors.

Discussion and Next Steps

Initial findings from this summary are necessary to contextualize and document domestic homicides in New Orleans, but more information and analysis are needed to identify gaps in systemic interventions and determine recommendations aimed at preventing fatalities in the future. While this public health issue affects families and communities across the city, it is noteworthy to recognize the extreme racial disparities present in the data: Black/African American people represent over 84% of those who were murdered as a result of DV. A deeper integration of the data is needed as we aim to dismantle systemic and structural inequalities that exist to perpetuate community and domestic violence. Domestic Violence Fatality Review Teams (DVFRTs) have been established in cities across the country to better understand how systems can more effectively meet the needs of victims and survivors and thus reduce fatalities in the community.¹⁰ An important component of this process incorporates cultural awareness in order to adequately address racial disparities when analyzing data and providing recommendations.¹¹ The following steps are recommended to establish a DVFRT in New Orleans:

- Local system and community leaders will be identified by NOHD for participation in a DVFRT aimed at further reviewing domestic homicides and developing recommendations for enhanced coordinated community prevention and intervention initiatives.
- All DVFRT members will receive on-going cultural sensitivity training to ensure the team considers community characteristics, historical factors, and contemporary realities of discrimination while analyzing case information and determining recommendations.¹²
- The DVFRT will initially conduct an asset mapping exercise to identify community strengths and limitations to help determine local assets and recognize limitations that can help the DVFRT better understand the context of a victim's situation and future recommendations.
- All findings of the DVFRT will be documented in a report shared with the community. Supplemental materials, such as fact sheets and infographics, will be created and disseminated publicly to help spread awareness about resources for survivors and provide more information about DV and lethality indicators.
- The DVFRT will engage with additional community organizations and faith-based communities to develop a shared and culturally appropriate understanding of how to respond to survivors and utilize information gained from the review to strategize for an improved coordinated community approach to addressing DV.

¹⁰ Websdale, N. Town, M. & Johnson B. (1999). Domestic violence fatality reviews: From a culture of blame to a culture of safety. *Juvenile & Family Court Journal*, 50(2), 61-74.

¹¹ Bent-Goodley, T. B. (2013). Domestic violence fatality reviews and the African American community. *Homicide Studies*, 17 (4), 375-390.

¹² Ibid.