

Calls For Help (911)

STATE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE 2015 -2022

Calling 911 to report an incident of domestic violence is one option to report domestic violence situations, and is often the first interaction a survivor has with the criminal legal system. However, survivors may not always use this option for a variety of reasons. Understanding what happens when a 911 call is made is useful in deciding when to use this resource. *See chart on page 2.*

Douglas County 911 provides call support to all law enforcement agencies throughout the county. The type of call is often categorized by the 911 operator, based upon the available information. Once the 911 operator receives a call, they distribute the call to the appropriate law enforcement agency based upon geographic location. **People who call 911 may be the victim of a domestic violence incident but may be witnesses to the incident as well.** For example, some professions, such as Emergency Room physicians, are required to call 911 when severe injuries are thought to be the result of a crime.

Two officers respond to all domestic violence/intimate partner violence-related calls. At this point, an investigation is started to determine if there is a probable cause to arrest the offender. Victims will always have a say on whether they want to share information with the investigator(s) or not, but arrests and charges are outside of their control.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE *Calls to 911* IN DOUGLAS COUNTY, NEBRASKA

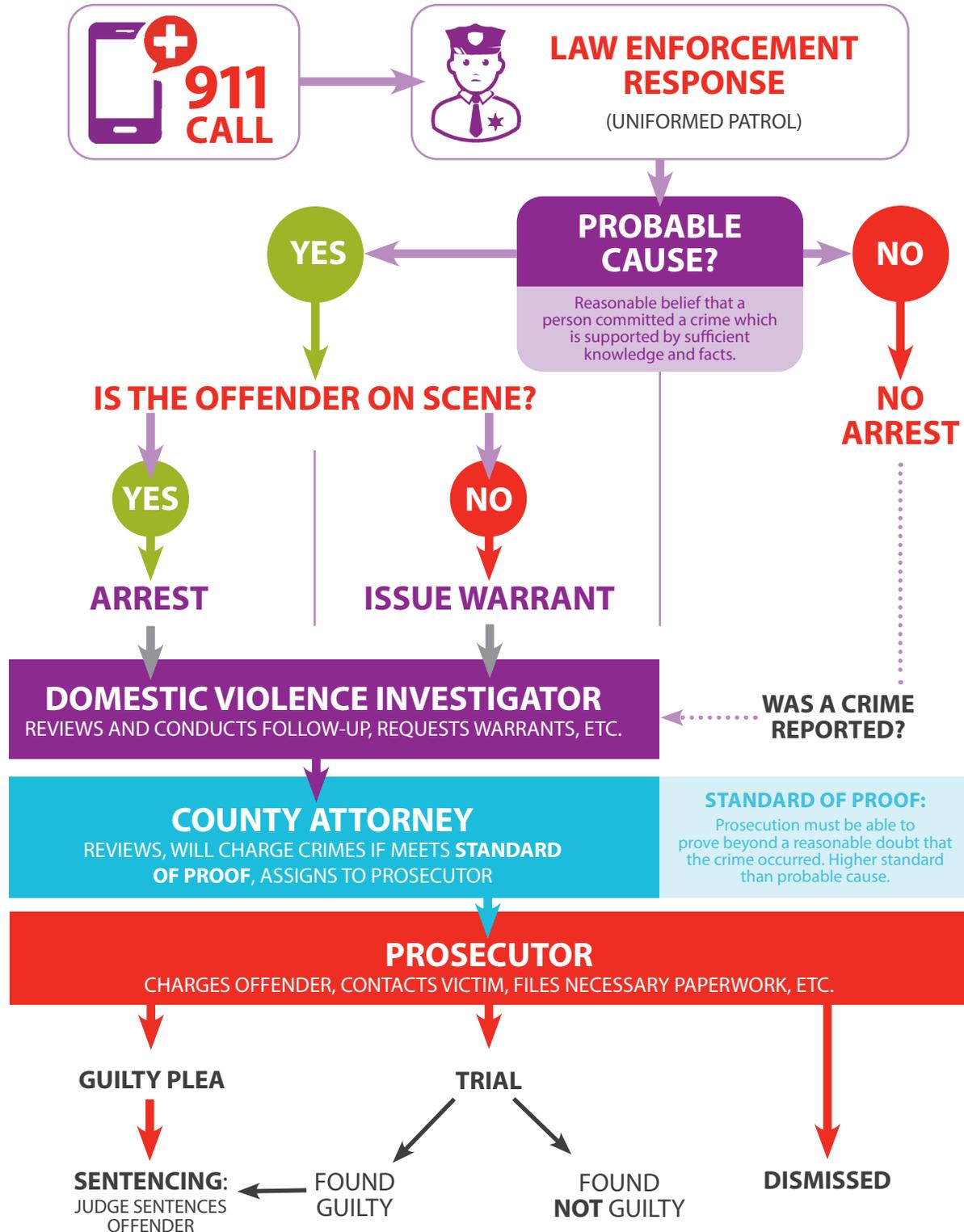
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
911 Domestic Violence Calls	17,867	17,637	17,023	16,550	16,320	17,609	18,774	18,656
Domestic Violence Calls— as Percent of All 911 Calls	3.8%	3.7%	3.6%	3.4%	3.2%	3.7%	3.8%	3.8%

Source: Douglas County 911 Emergency Communications

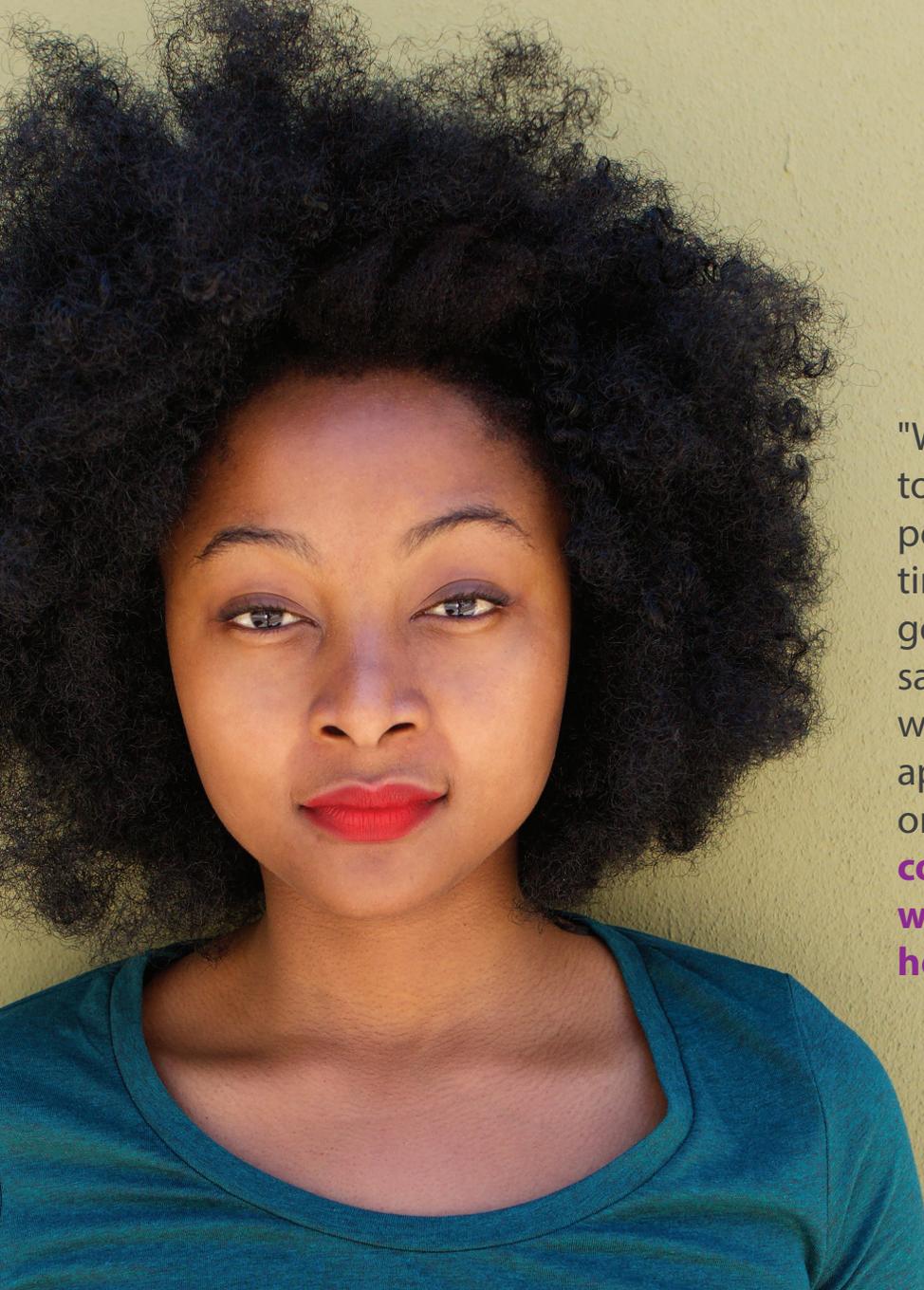
After gradually decreasing from 2015-2019, the number and percentage of domestic violence-related 911 calls have increased slightly from 2020 onwards, with an average of about 51 calls per day. Substantial research has established that COVID-19 introduced conditions (e.g., social isolation, economic insecurity) that created environments conducive to more and exacerbated forms of violence.¹ Thus, COVID-19 likely contributed to the increase in domestic violence-related 911 calls from 2020 onward. It will be important to continue to monitor trends to consider the extent of this influence over longer periods of time.

It is likely that the recorded number of domestic violence-related 911 calls is an underrepresentation of the actual number of domestic violence calls. For example, law enforcement may arrive at a call that was first identified as a theft or property damage, but then find that the offender and victim are current or former intimate partners. In these situations, the calls may not always get reclassified as a domestic violence call in the 911 call operator data.

HOW A 911 CALL CAN INITIATE THE CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM PROCESS*



*All cases are different. This is a simplified illustration to show a generalized overview of the criminal legal system in Douglas County, Nebraska.



"When the abuse became too much to bear, I called the police. He was arrested 12 times in one year. He would go to jail and I would feel safe until I came home from work and he would magically appear from under my bed or out of a closet. **I was convinced that no matter what I did, or who I called, he would never leave me.**"

**KEY
TAKEAWAY:**

If a survivor calls for help, it may not be a call to 911. It may be a call to a domestic violence advocacy agency, family member, friend, or another community support. Survivors are the experts in what they need to do to feel safe when experiencing domestic violence.

NOTES

1. McCrary, Justin and Sanga, Sarath, The Impact of the Coronavirus Lockdown on Domestic Violence (June 2, 2020). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3612491> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3612491>