

Law Enforcement Response + Arrests

STATE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE 2015 -2022

Of the 911 calls identified as domestic violence, only a portion of those will result in domestic violence-related arrests. There are several reasons for this including:

- Law enforcement may arrive and find that the situation was not between intimate partners, and thus, does not meet the definition of domestic violence;
- The situation may be a verbal altercation¹ and/or no crime was reported²; or,
- Law enforcement may not determine they have probable cause.

After investigation, if the offender is present at the scene and probable cause exists, the officers will make an arrest of the predominate aggressor. Certain requirements are followed when determining who the predominant aggressor is in addition to information that is relevant to the situation. Both the Douglas County Sheriff and Omaha Police Department operate under a mandatory arrest policy. Officers will arrest only the predominate aggressor and not make dual arrests except under extenuating circumstances.

Officers fill out an Incident Report with photographs regardless of if an arrest is made. If there are serious injuries, the crime lab may be contacted to take additional photographs and provide information regarding the availability of forensic medical exams for victims. Reports of incidents where children are present are also sent to the Health and Human Services Douglas County Domestic Violence Unit for further assessment.

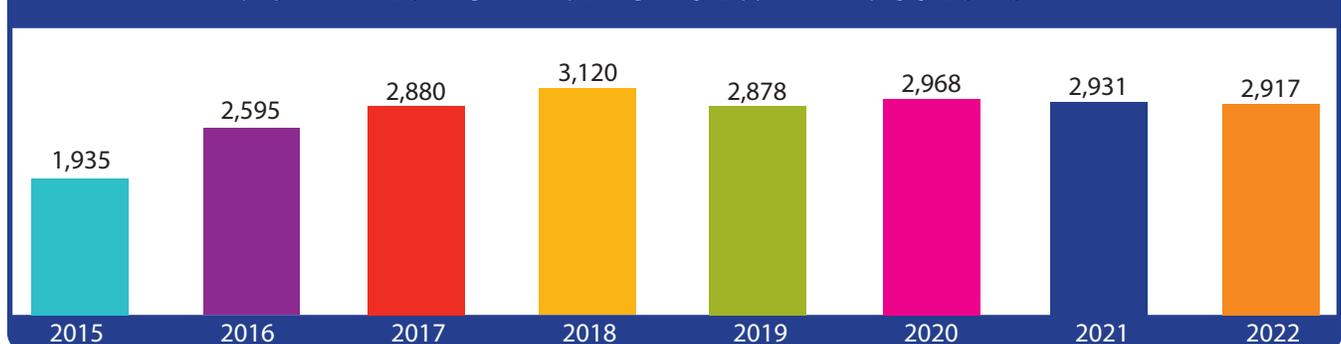
When officers arrive, a **Victim Information Card** is provided along with a referral to the Women's Center for Advancement (WCA).

When an arrest is made, the offender is transported to the Douglas County Correctional Facility and an arrest bond is set. If the offender leaves the scene prior to law enforcement arrival, active attempts are made to locate the offender. A warrant may be requested so that the offender can be arrested when they are located. The warrant process requires collaboration between law enforcement and prosecutors in the Douglas County Attorney's Office. **Victims are encouraged to call 911 if the offender returns.**

The number of domestic violence-related arrests across Douglas County have recently leveled off, after an increase from 2015-2018 (Figure 1). This may be partly due to enhanced law enforcement response resulting from a significant commitment to training. In 2016, more than 1,000 police officers county-wide were provided domestic violence training. This included the entire Omaha Police Department and Ralston Police Department, all first responding officers from the Douglas County Sheriff's Office and a portion of Valley and Waterloo Police Departments.

Also in 2016, the Omaha Police Department remodeled their 40-hour new recruits training on domestic violence to be trauma-informed with a focus on the overall community response. This training provided an understanding of what trauma looks like, how to respond to the variety of ways trauma presents itself and how their role as law enforcement influences a larger community response to domestic violence. In 2017, national trainers on trauma-informed investigations—and use of neuroscience to understand trauma—trained 75 community members in the Omaha metro area, including approximately 35 law enforcement investigators from eight local law enforcement agencies.

FIGURE 1 **TOTAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RELATED ARRESTS** IN DOUGLAS COUNTY



Source: Douglas County Omaha Technology Commission



"I was able to gain strength from the people who offered me their friendship and support, without ever asking questions about why I was so jumpy and didn't trust anyone. I was able to learn about healthy relationships in my classes, and saw people modeling what that looked like. **I was able to experience love and acceptance as a member of the LGBTQIA community, as well as someone who carried severe trauma.** And, even though I had other abusive relationships after her, the one thing that helped me navigate through and actively leave those relationships was friends who accepted me for who I am and didn't judge me for what I was or where I had been."

KEY TAKEAWAY:

If law enforcement responds and no arrest is made, it does not mean domestic violence did not occur. It may mean that law enforcement did not find probable cause to make an arrest, or an offender is not present at the scene of the incident.

NOTES

- ¹ While a verbal altercation is not considered a crime, it DOES NOT mean a victim is not experiencing domestic violence. Domestic violence includes emotional and mental abuse and is not limited to physical abuse.
- ² Some ways offenders exercise power and control in a relationship are not against the law and so no crime occurred. As a result, law enforcement cannot respond. Even if law enforcement does not respond, that DOES NOT mean the victim isn't experiencing domestic violence.