

Service Provider Data

STATE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE 2015 -2022

How Does the Community Help Victims Achieve Safety and Well-Being?

The ability to connect with local domestic violence advocates can provide a lifeline to someone being abused.

Survivors seek services with providers based on where they live, work, attend school or where certain services are provided, among other reasons. They also seek services where shelter is available, which can be a challenge because there is not always shelter available close to where they reside. Local providers serve all victims that come to them, regardless of where the victim may live. Because of this, information was gathered from four domestic violence programs within the Omaha metro area including:

- Catholic Charities Omaha**—The Shelter (Douglas County)
- Catholic Charities Iowa**—Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Program (Pottawattamie County, Iowa)
- Heartland Family Service** Domestic/Sexual Abuse Program (Sarpy County)
- Women's Center for Advancement** (WCA) (Douglas County)

These four programs provide free, confidential services to victims and strive to meet victims where they are in their journey to safety. This means advocates do not try to persuade victims to make certain decisions, including leaving or staying in the relationship or calling law enforcement. Advocates work with victims experiencing a variety of different types of abuse such as physical, emotional, financial and stalking. Advocates discuss all options and then support the decisions of the victims as the person who knows best what they need.

TABLE 1	SERVICE USAGE ACROSS ALL COMMUNITY-BASED AGENCIES	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
	Number of Crisis Calls	9,704	8,398	11,989	10,027	10,127	13,387	10,063
Number of Survivors Accessing Services	5,134	4,493	5,197	5,431	4,781	4,759	4,080	
Number of Adults Using Shelter Services	-	204	311	197	254	222	198	
Number of Children Using Shelter Services	-	135	303	293	310	267	224	

Source: Program Data from Community-Based Agencies

Advocacy and Resources

Advocates' primary services focus on safety planning with victims and providing resources based on individual needs. This process involves creating a plan for staying safe from emotional and physical abuse and stalking. Safety planning may include strategies to stay safe at work, at home, at school, or how to keep their children safe from the offender, as well. It may include planning for multiple situations and scenarios that could be dangerous for the victim and their children.

Advocates address the range of issues that victims must negotiate including but not limited to: housing, physical and mental health needs, financial support, children's issues, etc., and the additional resources and connections needed. In order to make this possible at all times, service providers have 24/7 hotlines that provide assistance over the phone anonymously from a local advocate.



"One night my phone was in my back pocket and I accidentally called my sister. She thought it was a distress call and rushed over. He put a gun to her head. She ran to her car and called police. They arrested him and he was sentenced to four years in prison. **That's when I got my life back.**"



TABLE 2	LEGAL SERVICES USAGE ACROSS ALL COMMUNITY-BASED AGENCIES	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
	Protection Orders	523	594	546	711	659	393	678	609
	Civil Legal Issues (<i>Divorce, Custody, Separation</i>)	257	511	627	773	958	982	1,251	1,083
	Immigration Related Issues	174	291	398	773	722	648	748	861

Source: Program Data from Community-Based Agencies

Legal Representation

In addition to assistance from the criminal justice system and service providers, domestic violence survivors also often need a variety of legal assistance to stay safe and move on from relationships where they are being harmed. Four local programs, that provide free legal services to domestic violence victims, contributed to this report.

- Catholic Charities Omaha
- Immigrant Legal Center
- Legal Aid of Nebraska
- Women's Center for Advancement (WCA)

These services provide critical help with related legal issues that may hinder women from leaving abusive relationships, such as child custody, immigration status, divorce/separation or housing. The specific legal services available differ some with each agency. **Many survivors access legal services through community-based agencies (Table 2).**