

# 2026

## FATAL INCIDENT REVIEW TEAM ANNUAL REPORT

Prepared by Lauren Cuevas

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**Domestic Violence Coordinating Council**  
State of Delaware

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The 2026 Fatal Incident Review Team (FIRT) Annual Report provides a summary of the Review Team’s activities and accomplishments over the last year. This report contains statistical data for the domestic violence deaths and near-deaths that occurred in calendar year 2025. This report is a supplement to the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council’s (DVCC) Annual Report, which is published in the fall of each year.

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# THE FATAL INCIDENT REVIEW TEAM

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## Overview

The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council's Fatal Incident Review Team (FIRT) was established by statute in 1996 and became the first statewide team in the country. FIRT members are dedicated professionals tasked to "investigate and review, through a review panel, the facts and circumstances of all deaths and near deaths that occur in Delaware as a result of domestic violence." (13 Del. C. §2105).

Domestic violence fatality reviews are a deliberative process of identifying and examining the circumstances of both homicides and suicides caused by domestic violence with the goal of averting future domestic violence related deaths. Although domestic violence fatality reviews are retrospective in nature, their purpose is prospective. Reviews focus on identifying trends, patterns and obstacles in services, assessing agency interventions, and, most importantly, developing practical recommendations aimed at improving the system and preventing future injury and death.

All members of the Review Team, as well as other individuals invited to participate, are considered part of the review panel for a particular case or incident. The Review Team frequently invites law enforcement personnel to participate in any case in which the agency investigated the death, near-death or had involvement with the victim prior to the domestic violence incident under review.

# THE FATAL INCIDENT REVIEW TEAM

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## What are Domestic Violence Related Deaths?

Insight from National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative (NDVFRI):

“Intimate partner homicide usually involves a man killing his female partner, often after a long and escalating pattern of abuse. When women kill male partners, they typically do so in self-defense, although such defense may not qualify as such in a court of law. However, deaths attributable to domestic violence far transcend intimate partner killings. Non intimate partner family members also kill each other in so called ‘family homicides’.”

“Men sometimes kill other men over a woman they sexually compete for. These ‘sexual competitor killings’ are much smaller in number than either intimate partner or family homicides.”

“Many more Americans die from suicide than homicide. Most of these suicides involve male victims, some of whom kill their female intimate partners before taking their own lives. Research suggests that a significant number of women who commit suicide each year do so because of their violent victimization at the hands of an intimate male partner.”

- [NDVFRI Website](#)

FIRT tracks and reviews fatal and near-fatal incidents related to domestic violence, including a large range of case types. Those case types include intimate partner & non-intimate partner (familial, sexual competitor, etc.) homicides, homicide/suicides, suicide only cases, and attempted homicides/other domestic violence incidents resulting in life threatening injuries.

# THE FATAL INCIDENT REVIEW TEAM

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## Important Definitions

- **Domestic Violence Related Death:** A death that occurs as a result of domestic violence or is traceable to domestic violence. This includes both homicides and suicides.
  - **Intimate Partner Homicide:** A homicide in which the victim and perpetrator are current or former intimate partners. This could include current/former spouses, dating partners, or any individuals involved in a romantic or sexual relationship.
  - **Non-Intimate Partner Homicide:** A homicide that occurs in a domestic violence context but does not involve an intimate partner. This could involve a family member or a sexual competitor.
    - **Familial Homicide:** A homicide in which the victim and the perpetrator are family members, including parents, children, siblings, or other relatives.
    - **Sexual Competitor Homicide:** A homicide that occurs due to jealousy or rivalry over a sexual or romantic partner. Typically, the perpetrator kills someone whom they view as a "competitor" for their partner's attention or affection. Though not directly an intimate partner homicide, this is a form of homicide where the motive revolves around possessiveness or controlling behavior over a past or present intimate relationship.
  - **Murder/Suicide or Homicide/Suicide:** An incident in which the perpetrator commits homicide (usually against an intimate partner or family member) and then ends their own life.
    - **Perpetrator Suicide:** A suicide by a person who has committed an act of domestic violence (such as homicide or assault) before taking their own life.
  - **Domestic Violence Related Suicide:** A suicide that is traceable to or influenced by domestic violence, such as a victim taking their own life due to distress caused by the abuse, or an abusive partner who threatens suicide as a means of emotional manipulation then follow through on the threat.
- **Domestic Violence Related Near-Death:** An incident in which a victim survives but is critically injured or in immediate danger of death due to domestic violence. Our statute defines near-death as "a victim who has suffered life-threatening injuries."

# THE FATAL INCIDENT REVIEW TEAM

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## Membership

In accordance with 13 Del. C. §2105, in addition to the co-chairs, the Review Team shall consist of:

- The Attorney General or the Attorney General's designee;
- The Chief Defender or the Chief Defender's designee;
- The Director of the Division of Family Services or the Director's designee;
- The President Judge of the Superior Court, or the President Judge's designee;
- The Chief Judge of the Family Court or the Chief Judge's designee;
- The Chief Magistrate of the Justice of the Peace Courts or the Chief Magistrate's designee;
- The Director of the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, or the Director's designee;
- The Commissioner of the Department of Correction or the Commissioner's designee;
- A law-enforcement officer to be appointed by the Delaware Police Chiefs' Council;
- A treatment provider from a certified batterers' intervention program appointed by the Council;
- Two victim advocates appointed by the Council;
- A victim of domestic violence appointed by the Council; and,
- A licensed health-care professional knowledgeable in the screening and identification of domestic violence cases appointed by the Council.

# THE FATAL INCIDENT REVIEW TEAM

## Current Members

### Co-Chairs

**Dana Harrington Conner**

Professor Widener Law  
DVCC Member

**Jenna Milecki**

Deputy Attorney General  
Department of Justice

**Lisa Hudson**

Sussex Operations Administrator  
Department of Correction

### Members

**Katelyn Will**

Staff Attorney  
Superior Court

**Erica Davis**

Director of Special Court Programs  
Family Court

**Gerald Ross**

Magistrate Judge  
Justice of the Peace Court

**Dr. Dyanne Simpson**

Chief of Psychiatry  
Division of Substance  
Abuse & Mental Health

**Vicki Pierce**

Assistant Public Defender  
Office of Defense Services

**Trenee Parker**

Director  
Division of Family Services

**Ann Altemus**

Program Director  
CHILD, Inc.

**Stephanie Rodriguez**

Program Director  
Turning Point

**Veronica Colombo**

Victim Services Manager  
Delaware State Police

**Marvin Mailey**

Executive Director  
Delaware Association  
of Chiefs of Police

**Pamela Brooks-Grimes**

Survivor of DV, appointed  
by Council

**Amy Stier**

Forensic Nurse Examiner  
Christiana Care

**Cpl. Andrea Warfel**

Delaware State Police  
DVCC Member

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RELATED DEATHS & NEAR-DEATHS

## 2025 Incident Summary

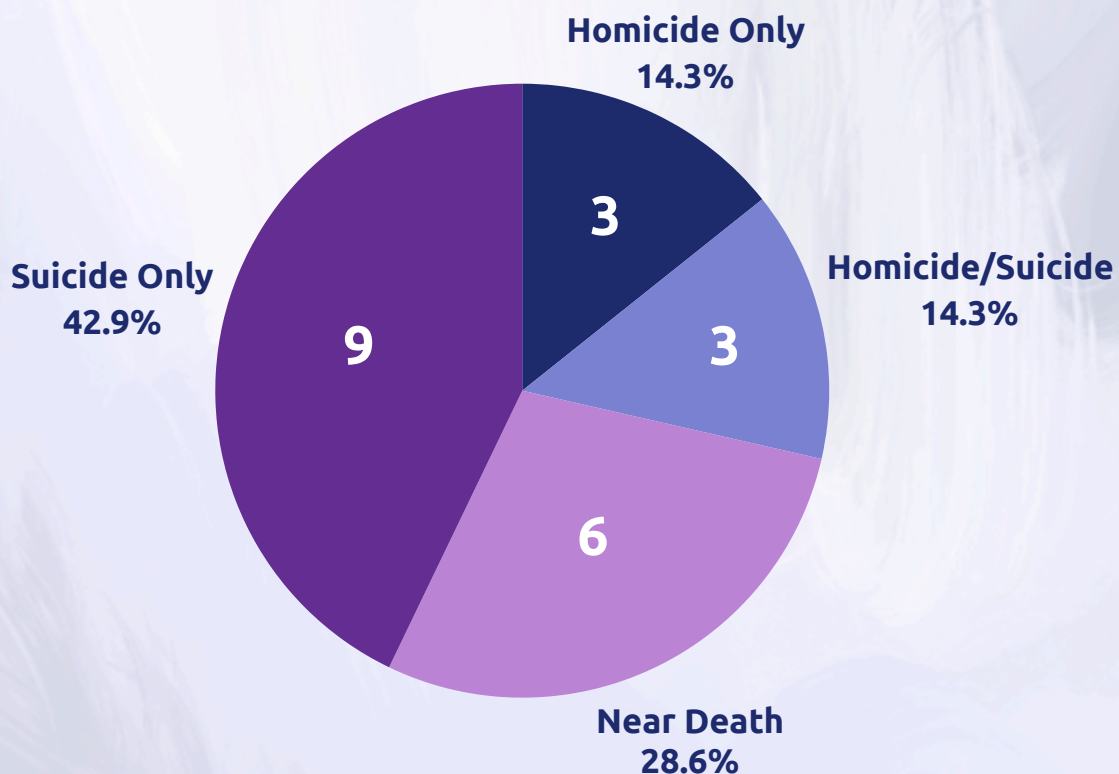
In 2025, there were a total of **twenty-one** domestic violence related death and near-death incidents tracked.

**Three** of those incidents were homicides and **three** were homicide/suicide incidents. That is a total of **six** incidents involving a homicide.

There were **six** near death only incidents and **nine** suicide only incidents tracked.

All together, Delaware saw a total of **nineteen** deaths and **six** near-deaths related to domestic violence in the **twenty-one** incidents tracked in 2025.

### Breakdown by Incident Type



# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RELATED DEATHS & NEAR-DEATHS

## 2025 Victim Summary

There were a total of **six** victims of domestic violence homicide in 2025. There were **thirteen** total suicides, **four** of which were perpetrator suicides following the commission of a homicide or attempted homicide and **nine** were suicide only incidents.

There were **six** victims in near-death only incidents. All together there were a total of **nineteen** deaths and **six** near-deaths related to domestic violence in Delaware in 2025.

### Breakdown by # of Victims

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#### 19 DV RELATED DEATHS



#### 6 HOMICIDES



#### 13 SUICIDES

(INCL. 4 PERP SUICIDES)



#### 6 NEAR-DEATHS



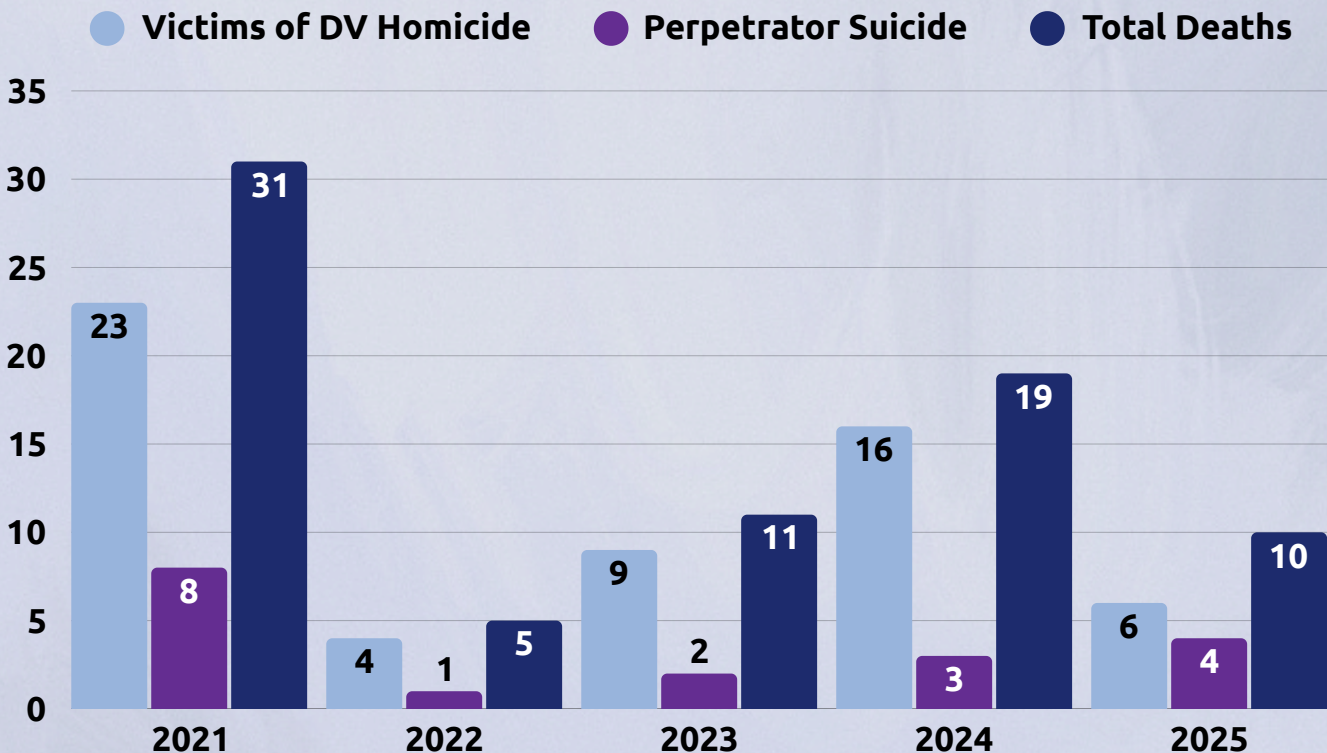
# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RELATED HOMICIDES

## Comparing to Previous Years

In 2025, there were **six** incidents involving a domestic violence homicide (**three** homicide only, **three** homicide/suicides). This is a **57.1%** decrease from 2024. There was **one** additional perpetrator suicide resulting from an attempted murder/suicide where the victim survived but the perpetrator did not (this case was tracked as a near-death incident, but the perpetrator suicide is included here) for a total of **four** perpetrator suicides.

That is a total number of **ten** deaths (homicide victims & perpetrator suicides) related to domestic violence homicide & attempted homicide incidents in 2025, which is a **47.4%** decrease from last year.

### Homicide Related Incident Deaths 2021-2025



# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RELATED HOMICIDES

## 2025 Victim & Perpetrator Data

### Limitations in Demographic Data Collection

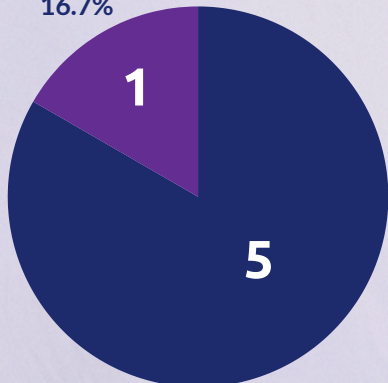
Demographic data including sex, race, and ethnicity are gathered from police and medical examiner reports. This data may not accurately reflect every victim or perpetrator's gender identity or how they classify their race/ethnicity.

In 2025, all **six** homicide incidents involved a single victim and a single perpetrator. All six victims were female; **five** victims were white, non-Hispanic females and **one** victim was a black, non-Hispanic female.

All six perpetrators were male; **five** were white, non-Hispanic males and **one** was a black, non-Hispanic male.

### Victim Race & Ethnicity

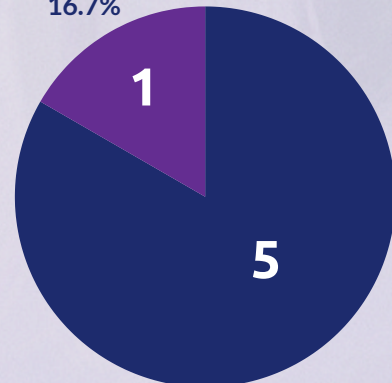
Black Non-Hispanic  
16.7%



White Non-Hispanic  
83.3%

### Perpetrator Race & Ethnicity

Black Non-Hispanic  
16.7%

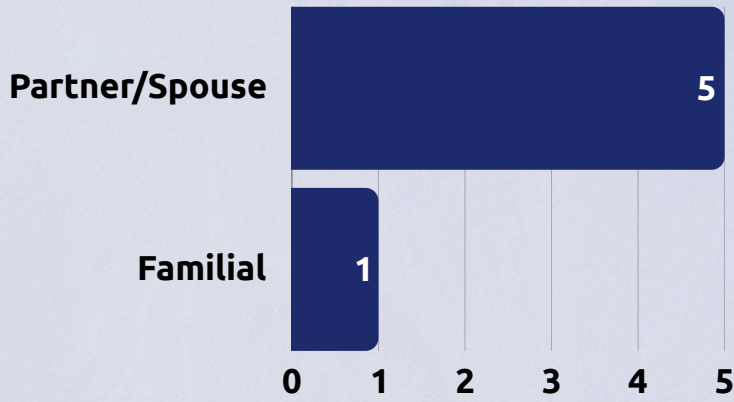


White Non-Hispanic  
83.3%

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RELATED HOMICIDES

## 2025 Victim & Perpetrator Data

### Victim & Perpetrator Relationship



The chart to the left depicts the relationship between each of the **six** homicide victims and the perpetrator who killed them. **Five** victims were killed by their current intimate partner. **One** victim was killed by a family member - a parent who was killed by their child.

### Cause of Death



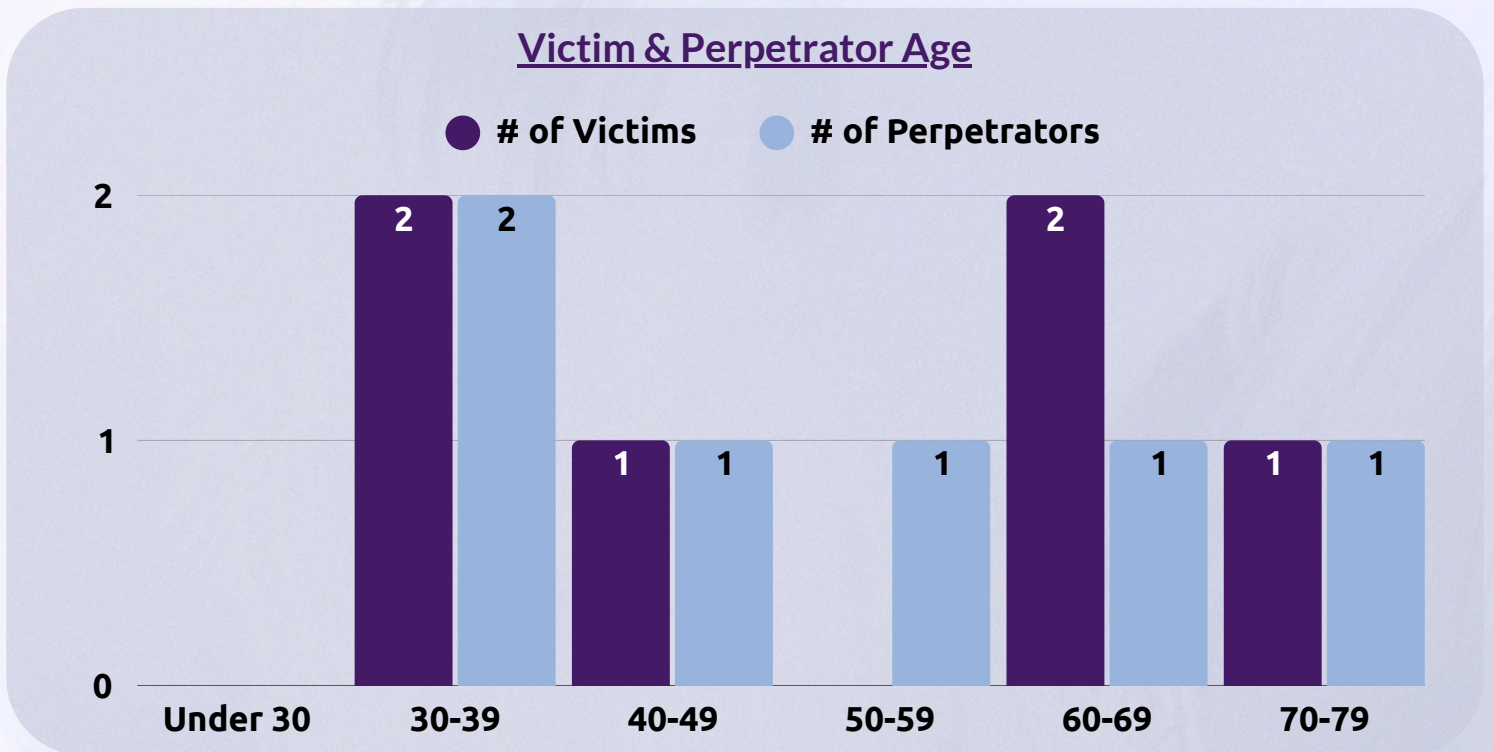
This year, **three** homicide victims were killed by firearms. **Three** deaths were caused by a combination of strangulation and blunt force trauma.

**Two** of the homicides occurred in New Castle County, **one** in Kent County, and **three** in Sussex County. This data includes the three murder/suicide incidents; **one** in Kent County and **two** in Sussex County.



# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RELATED HOMICIDES

## 2025 Victim & Perpetrator Data



The average age among the six homicide victims was **fifty-two**.

The youngest homicide victim was **thirty-three** years old, and the oldest victim was **seventy-five**.

The average age among the six homicide perpetrators was **fifty-three**.

The youngest homicide perpetrator was **thirty-five** years old, and the oldest was **seventy-seven**.

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RELATED NEAR-DEATH INCIDENTS

## 2025 Victim & Perpetrator Data

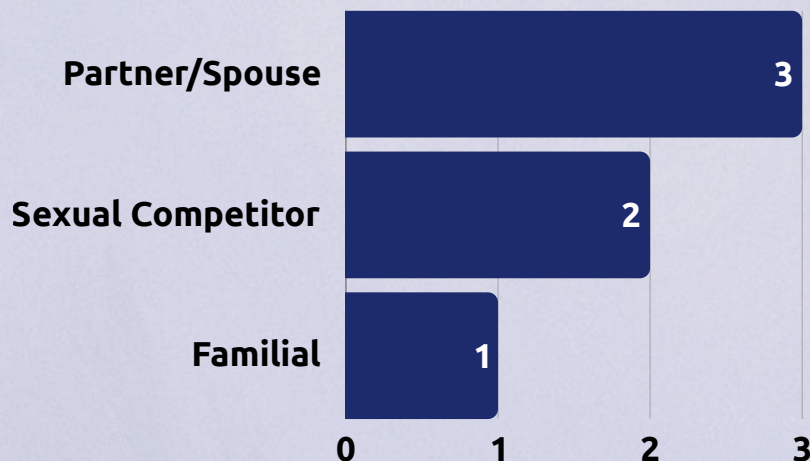
There were **six** cases tracked as domestic violence related near-death incidents in 2025, including an incident in which the perpetrator committed suicide after severely injuring the victim. Each incident involved a single victim, so in total there were **six** near-death victims and **one** perpetrator suicide.

The chart below depicts the relationship between each of the six near-death victims and the perpetrators who injured them. **Three** victims were injured by their current intimate partners. **Two** victims were potential “sexual competitors” to the perpetrator (new partners to the perpetrators’ ex) and **one** was injured by a family member.

In the incident involving the perpetrator suicide, the victim & perpetrator’s mutual child witnessed her father assault her mother prior to him taking his life.

**One** of the near-death incidents occurred in New Castle County, **three** in Kent County, and **two** in Sussex County. The **one** near death incident that involved a perpetrator suicide occurred in Kent County.

### Victim & Perpetrator Relationship



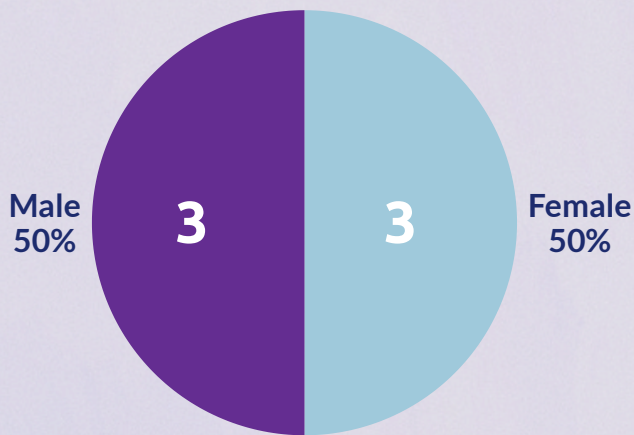
# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RELATED NEAR-DEATH INCIDENTS

## 2025 Victim & Perpetrator Data

The demographics of the **six** near-death victims and perpetrators in 2025 were as follows:

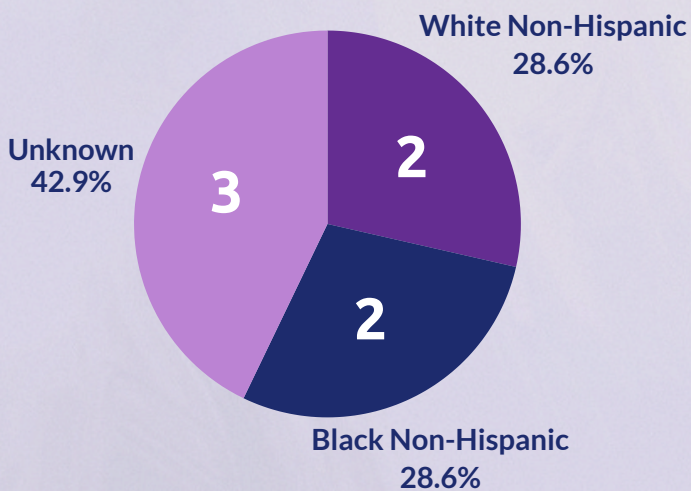
### Victim Sex, Race, Ethnicity

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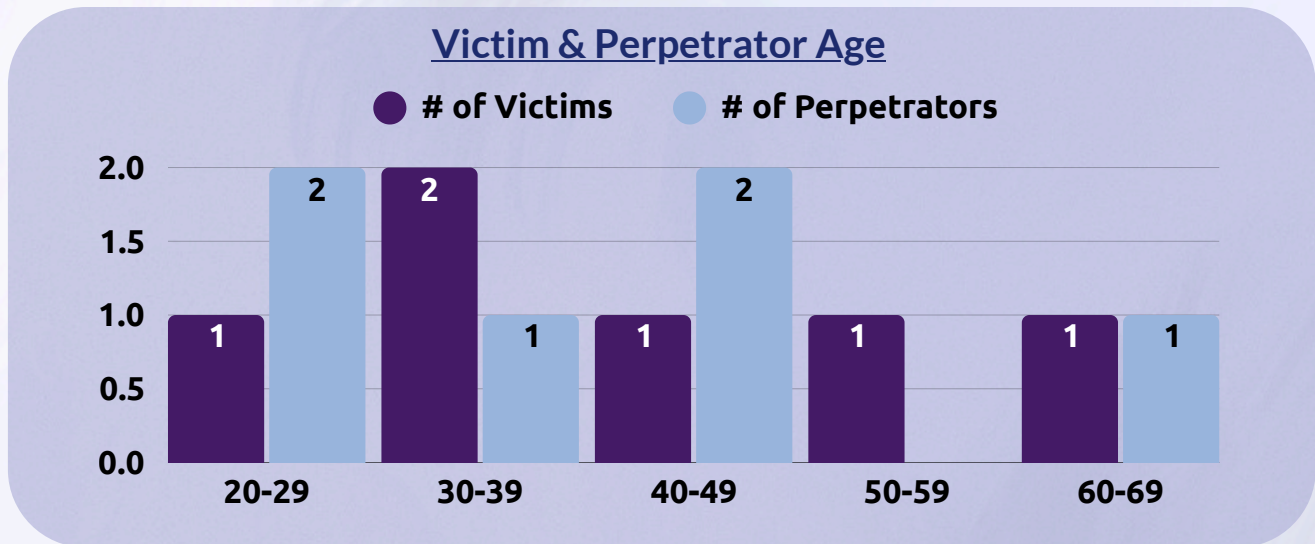
### Perpetrator Sex, Race, Ethnicity

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# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RELATED NEAR-DEATH INCIDENTS

## 2025 Victim & Perpetrator Data



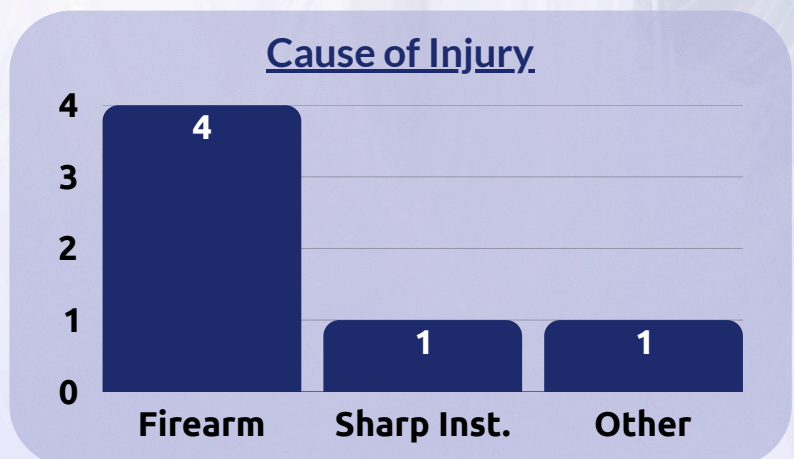
The average age among the six near-death victims was **forty-four**.

The youngest victim was **twenty-two** years old, and the oldest victim was **sixty-seven**.

The average age among the six near-death perpetrators was **thirty-eight**.

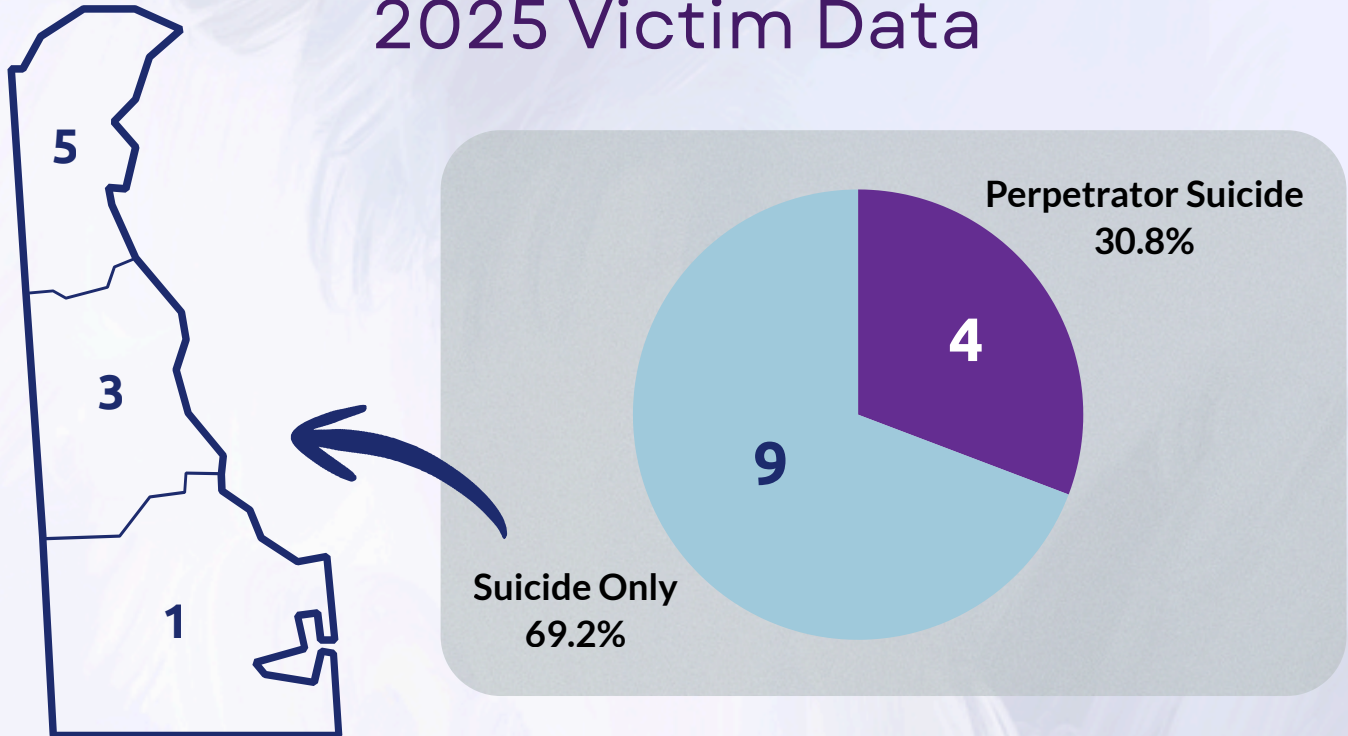
The youngest perpetrator was **twenty-three** years old, and the oldest was **sixty-three**.

This year, **four** near-death victims were injured by firearms, **one** was injured by a sharp instrument (i.e. stabbing), and **one** victim suffered injuries from being set on fire.



# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RELATED SUICIDES

## 2025 Victim Data



Of the **thirteen** total domestic violence related suicides in 2025, **four** were perpetrator suicides following the commission of a homicide or attempted homicide and **nine** were suicide only incidents.

**Three** of the perpetrator suicide incidents were homicide/suicide incidents and **one** was a near-death incident where the victim survived being shot with a firearm.

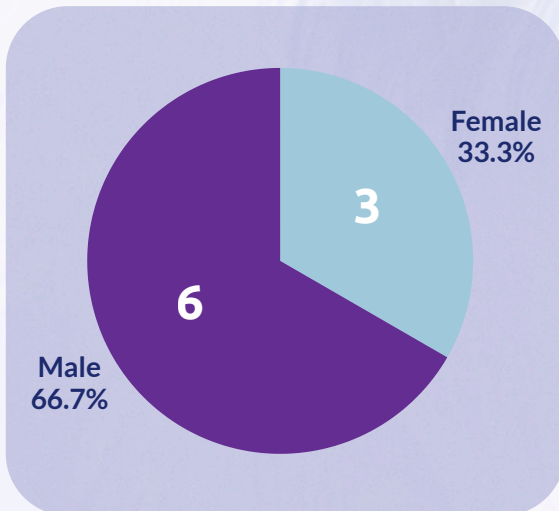
**All four** perpetrator suicides were committed by men, **two** who were white and non-Hispanic and **two** who were black and non-Hispanic. **All four** perpetrator suicides were committed using a firearm.

**Five** of the nine suicide only incidents occurred in New Castle County, **three** in Kent County, and **one** in Sussex County. The county where the perpetrator suicides occurred is reflected in the homicide & near-death incident data each was associated with.

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RELATED SUICIDES

## 2025 Victim Data

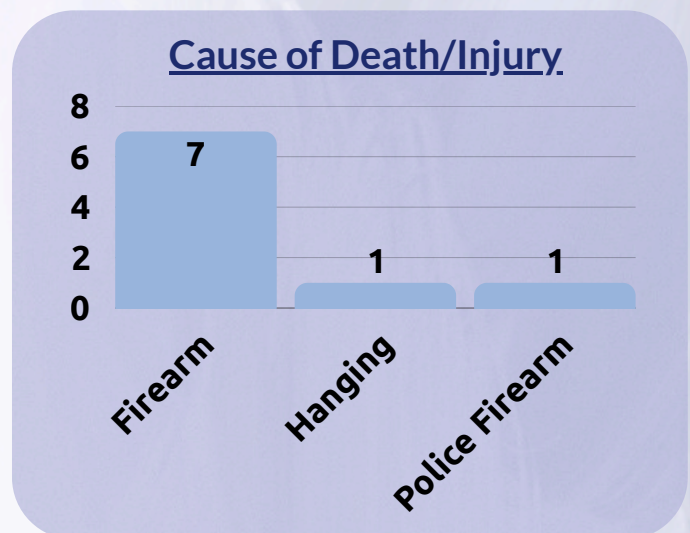
The demographics of the domestic violence related suicide incidents in 2025 were as follows:



The term “victim” is utilized on this page to refer to victims of a suicide, but it does not necessarily reflect that someone was a victim of domestic violence. DV suicides include those completed by individuals who were victims of domestic violence as well as individuals with histories of being a predominant aggressor or perpetrator of domestic violence who completed suicide in a domestic violence context.

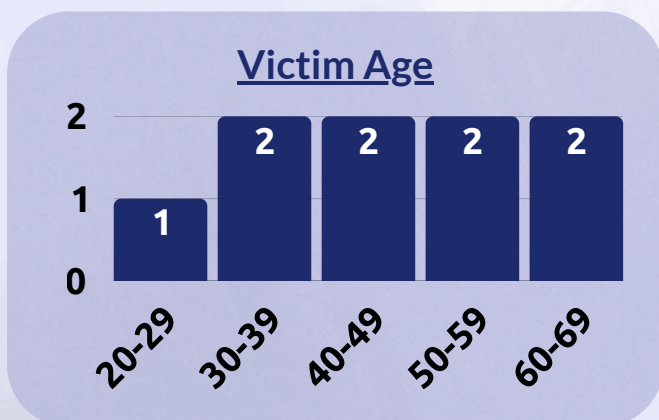
Of the thirteen domestic violence related suicides in 2025, **nine** were suicide only incidents. Of those nine suicides, **six** were completed by men and **three** by women.

**Seven** of the suicide only incidents were completed by firearm, one by hanging, and one was a law enforcement forced assisted suicide in which the individual shot at police and was killed.



The average age among the suicide victims was **forty-seven**.

The youngest victim was **twenty-four** years old, and the oldest victim was **sixty-eight**.

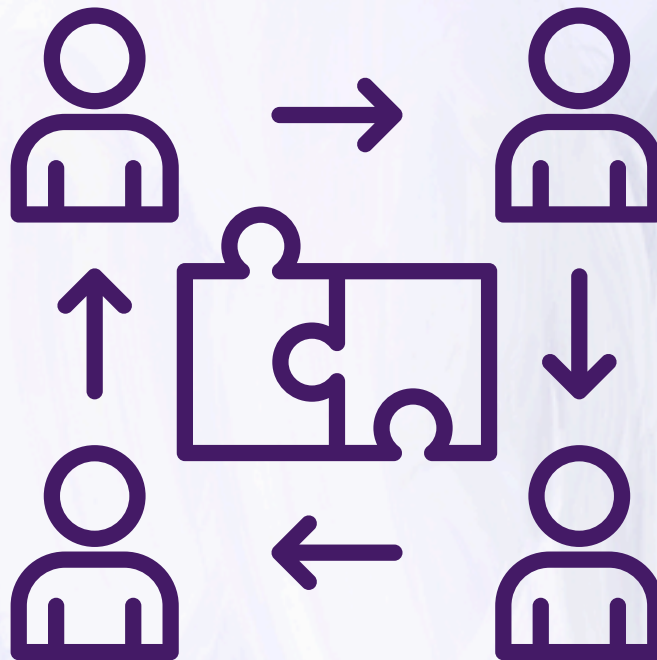


# RECOMMENDATIONS & RESPONSES

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## What are Recommendations?

The ultimate purpose for reviewing domestic violence fatalities is to reduce the incidence of such deaths. At the end of each case review and following the presentation of information, review team members work collaboratively to draft recommendations for improving the system response to domestic violence.



The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) is extremely grateful to the participating agencies and their commitment towards improving system response to domestic violence. We are fortunate to have the high level of cooperation demonstrated by the agencies' responses to the Fatal Incident Review Team's recommendations.

# RECOMMENDATIONS & RESPONSES

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## 2025 Recommendations

FIRT held **three** case reviews in 2025 and issued a total of **three** recommendations following these reviews.

### DELAWARE ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE

The Fatal Incident Review Team recommends that Delaware law enforcement agencies implement a policy that requires all DV intimate partner cases, whether criminal or non-criminal, be referred to Victim Services for their review. The goal of this recommendation is to provide follow up and connection to services in domestic violence incidents regardless of whether or not a primary victim or suspect are identified, or a crime is committed.

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL

The Fatal Incident Review Team (FIRT) recommends the DVCC form a workgroup to improve the interdisciplinary approach to suspicious death investigations where there are domestic violence markers. To that end, FIRT recommends that the workgroup explore legislation similar to California Senate Bill 989 ([SB989](#)) to ensure that suspicious deaths and suspected suicide cases, where there are markers of domestic violence, are adequately investigated. Moreover, FIRT recommends the workgroup identify potential trainings on identifying staged homicides utilizing an interdisciplinary approach for investigators, prosecutors, and medical examiners.

# RECOMMENDATIONS & RESPONSES

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## 2025 Recommendations

### DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT VICTIM SERVICES

The Fatal Incident Review Team recommends that law enforcement victim services and Department of Justice victim services make direct referrals for families impacted by domestic violence fatalities or near-fatalities to domestic violence–specialized providers. This includes not only the children of the primary victim or perpetrator, but any family members, particularly children, who may have been exposed to the incident by witnessing, hearing, or otherwise being affected by it. Ensuring access to specialized services for adult and child victims recognizes the broad ripple effects of domestic violence fatalities and promotes trauma-informed, developmentally appropriate interventions to support healing and safety.



# RECOMMENDATIONS & RESPONSES

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## Responses to Last Year's Recommendations

### 2024 RECOMMENDATION TO DVCC

The Fatal Incident Review Team recommends the DVCC collaborate with Delaware Criminal Justice Information System (DELJIS) to explore accessibility to No Contact Orders and Protection from Abuse Orders for schools and daycares. The goal of this recommendation is to improve access to this information to reduce incidents of violence and violations of protective or criminal no contact orders.

### RESPONSE FROM CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

"The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) appreciates the thoughtful consideration behind this recommendation and shares FIRT's commitment to reducing incidents of violence and violations of protective orders. The DVCC's Criminal Justice Committee was tasked with exploring this recommendation. The Committee has carefully reviewed this recommendation, and following thorough discussion and consideration, has determined that pursuing this recommendation is not feasible at this time.

There are significant concerns related to privacy, data security, and the potential unintended consequences of expanding access to sensitive protective order information without a comprehensive statewide framework and safeguards in place. There are concerns of how this would comply with the Victims' Bill of Rights and the guarantee that a petitioner's autonomy and confidentiality are respected. It is unclear what schools could do with the information and we also do not want it to have a negative impact on children that may be in private school settings where there is not protection for a student potentially being removed from the school because the school doesn't want to have to comply and navigate the complexities that often exist with protective orders are in effect.

While DVCC is unable to advance this recommendation as proposed, we remain supportive of the underlying goal of enhancing safety and preventing future incidents of violence. DVCC continues to participate in interagency discussions related to protective orders, information sharing, and system coordination, and welcomes continued dialogue with FIRT regarding alternative approaches that align with existing legal and operational constraints."

# RECOMMENDATIONS & RESPONSES

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## Responses to Last Year's Recommendations

### 2024 RECOMMENDATION TO DIVISION OF FAMILY SERVICES (DFS)

The Division of Family Services should establish a workgroup to explore developing policies, procedures, and/or programs to address the long-term case management needs of children and their families who have been impacted by the death or life-threatening injury of a caregiver as a result of domestic violence.

### RESPONSE FROM DFS DIRECTOR, TREENEE PARKER

“[The Division of Family Services] convened a workgroup to explore the following recommendation. The workgroup was comprised from members of the domestic violence support community, the KIDS Department, the Office of the Child Advocate and the Delaware State Police. Central to the discussion were two elements- support versus compliance and funding. While the discussions yielded a great amount of information about services that are available to families, such as the Trauma Response Program for Youth (TRY) and Take Care Delaware, it was clear that these programs do not have capacity to provide case management. Various phases of Victim Services agencies from law enforcement jurisdictions to the Department of Justice were also mentioned, but they also lack capacity and referrals to these agencies do not capture all cases that could benefit from case management supports. To the same end, not all these situations result in a referral to the Division of Family Services (DFS) so becoming involved with the families would be an overstep of statutory authority for DFS. A similar concern was expressed regarding exploring the use of the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program of the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA). It was highlighted that the DFS and the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services do provide initial support through various programs (Pathway 1, Promoting Safe and Stable Families and Intensive Family Consultation), but none of these programs are intended to provide long term case management. Additionally, long term case management is voluntary so families could choose to not engage in the service, just as they have chosen, for whatever reason, to not keep children connected to services such as therapy.

# RECOMMENDATIONS & RESPONSES

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## Responses to Last Year's Recommendations

### DFS RESPONSE CONTINUED

Regarding compliance, there was discussion about modifying the Victim's Bill of Rights to ensure that families are required to keep children connected to services. A review of the practices other states did not reveal any process to require parents or caregivers to keep children connected to services. Many states have legislation to allow minors to access services through their parents' health insurance without parental consent or notification, but these laws were targeted towards teens. The discussion of the workgroup was around creating an amendment for the Victim's Bill of Rights that would specify that children would have access to services and oversight of those services would be monitored by an ombudsman, attorney for the child or a case manager. This would be where fiscal implications must be considered as a budget initiative would need to be created to support the agency that would house this program. It was recommended that this new program be housed at an agency that receives referrals from other agencies that intersect in situations of domestic violence. The largest referral sources would likely be law enforcement, Department of Justice, DFS and Victim Services. The consensus is that this service would likely best fit with the Family Justice Center since it promotes support and collaboration which seem to be in line with the principles of the Family Justice Center. The DVCC should consider replicating a program that is comparable to the Arizona Child & Adolescent Survivor Initiative. This program is funded by the Office of Juvenile and Delinquency Prevention and, unfortunately, this grant is no longer available. Perhaps other federal programs would have grant funds available that could be pursued to limit the need for state general funds. The workgroup feels that this program provides the level of ongoing monitoring of services through case management that would be a true support to children and families who experience domestic violence.

While this was a short-term workgroup, I believe that the participants engaged in robust discussions that demonstrate their commitment to making services available for children and families who experience domestic violence. I would like to express my appreciation to the members... The years of experience shared by this group allowed for great discussions that informed the recommendation. I am thankful that each person committed their valuable time to be a part of the workgroup."

# RECOMMENDATIONS & RESPONSES

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## Responses to Last Year's Recommendations

### 2024 RECOMMENDATION TO DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

The Department of Justice should explore the possibility of having Domestic Violence Unit prosecutors on call and available to officers statewide to make charging decisions. The goal of this recommendation is to reduce instances of dual arrest or mistakenly charging the victim in domestic violence cases.

### RESPONSE

[Pending response from AG's office.]

2026

**IF YOU ARE IN DANGER,  
PLEASE CALL 911**

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Domestic Violence/Rape Crisis

New Castle County:

Domestic Violence	302-762-6110
Bilingual	302-762-6110
Rape Crisis	1-800-773-8570
TTY	1-800-232-5460

Kent & Sussex Counties:

Domestic Violence	302-422-8058
Bilingual	302-745-9874
Rape Crisis	1-800-262-9800
	1-800-773-8570

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DVCC Main Office

900 North King Street, Suite 300

Wilmington, DE 19801

Phone: 302 255-1700

[dvcc.delaware.gov](http://dvcc.delaware.gov)



# **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL**

[dvcc.delaware.gov](http://dvcc.delaware.gov)