

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COUNTS

## the National Census of Domestic Violence Services

### Executive Summary

On November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2006, 1,243 out of 2,016 identified local domestic violence programs (62%) participated in the National Census of Domestic Violence Services (NCDVS). Designed to address the safety and confidentiality needs of victims, the Census collected an unduplicated, non-invasive count of adults and children who received critical services from local domestic violence programs during the 24-hour survey period. Since some local programs did not participate, this Census provides a powerful glimpse but remains an undercount of the actual number of victims who sought and received services.

"This was a relatively normal day. Group and individual counseling, children's groups and activities, safety planning, goal planning, shelter intakes, helpline calls and court advocacy all took place. There was nothing out of the ordinary, just the amazing strength demonstrated by battered women seeking to regain their lives and the dedication of our advocates to empowering victims to do just that."  
-An urban program in the Mid-Atlantic

#### VICTIMS SERVED

During the 24-hour survey period more than 22,000 victims of domestic violence received housing services from a domestic violence program, either in emergency shelters or transitional housing.

**47,860 adults and children were served.**

- **14,344** adults and children found refuge in emergency domestic violence shelters
- **7,933** adults and children were living in transitional housing programs, designed specifically for domestic violence survivors
- **25,587** adults and children received non-residential services such as individual counseling, legal advocacy, and children's support groups

#### LIMITED RESOURCES

Programs reported a considerable unmet demand for services due to a lack of resources, including limited staffing and overflowing shelters. **5,157 requests for services** were tragically unmet due to a lack of resources.

- **1,740** unmet requests for emergency shelter
- **1,422** unmet requests for transitional housing
- **1,955** unmet requests for non-residential services

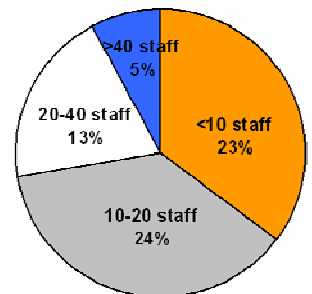
"Today a victim was shot after leaving the shelter to move into her home. A mother with six children called the hotline requesting services. Our central heating unit broke in the shelter and we needed to move families to a warm location. Three families needed transportation to scheduled appointments and an urgent crisis call is on the hotline. We have limited staff coverage and resources to assist with these daily crises."  
-An urban program in the South

#### HOTLINE CALLS

Domestic violence hotlines provide critical support and information for victims in danger. During the 24-hour survey period, local and state hotline advocates answered 15,431 calls and the National Domestic Violence Hotline answered 1,213 calls. In total, advocates responded to almost 17,000 hotline calls in the survey period, which equals *more than 11 hotline calls every minute.*

#### LIMITED STAFF

Most programs operate with relatively few staff: 47% of the participating local programs employ less than 20 paid staff positions. The chart reflects the information provided by 65% of participating local programs.



#### PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

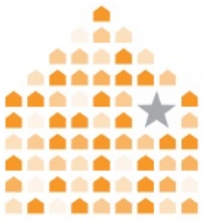
Local domestic violence programs provide school prevention and early intervention sessions, and awareness trainings in the workplace and broader community.

**40,120 people** were trained during the survey day by local domestic violence programs.

#### COMMUNITY POPULATIONS

Across the US, local programs provide support to victims of domestic violence in a variety of communities. Participating programs that shared this information report:

- **39%** of local programs are primarily rural
- **17%** of local programs are primarily suburban
- **8%** of local programs are primarily urban
- **35%** of local programs – information not provided



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# LA VIOLENCIA DOMÉSTICA CUENTA

## El Censo Nacional de Servicios de Violencia Doméstica

### Resumen Ejecutivo

El dos de noviembre de 2006, 1,206 de los 2,016 programas de violencia doméstica identificados en los Estados Unidos (62%), incluyendo a Puerto Rico, participaron del Censo Nacional de Servicios de Violencia Doméstica (NCDVS, por las siglas en inglés). Diseñado para atender las necesidades de seguridad y confidencialidad de las víctimas, el Censo llevó a cabo un conteo no duplicado, no invasivo, de las adultas y niños que recibieron servicios críticos de los programas de violencia doméstica locales en el periodo de 24 horas de la encuesta. Como algunos programas no participaron, este censo ofrece una noción significativa pero constituye un conteo menor al número real de víctimas que solicitaron y recibieron servicios.

“Éste fue un día relativamente normal. Se ofrecieron consejerías grupales e individuales, actividades y grupos de niños, planificación de seguridad y de metas, admisiones de albergadas, llamadas de línea de emergencia e intercesorías legales. No hubo nada fuera de lo ordinario, sólo la fuerza maravillosa demostrada por las mujeres maltratadas buscando recuperar sus vidas y la dedicación de nuestras intercesoras al empoderamiento de las víctimas para que lo logren.” – Un programa urbano de la costa media del Atlántico

#### LAS VÍCTIMAS ATENDIDAS

Durante el periodo de 24 horas de la encuesta más de 22,000 víctimas de violencia doméstica recibieron servicios de vivienda de un programa de violencia doméstica, en albergues de emergencia o viviendas transitorias.

#### Se atendieron 47,860 mujeres y niños

- Se ofreció refugio a **14,344** mujeres y niños en albergues de emergencia
- **7,933** mujeres y niños estaban ubicados en programas de vivienda transitoria, diseñados específicamente para sobrevivientes de violencia doméstica
- **25,587** mujeres y niños recibieron servicios ambulatorios tales como consejería individual, intercesoría legal y grupos de apoyo para niños

#### RECURSOS LIMITADOS

Los programas informaron una considerable demanda de servicios no satisfecha debido a la falta de recursos, incluyendo personal limitado y albergues casi hacinados.

Trágicamente se dejaron de ofrecer **5,157 solicitudes de servicio** por falta de recursos.

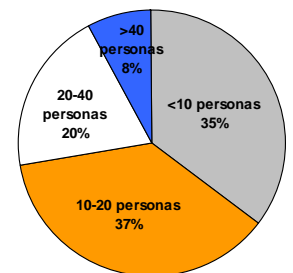
- **1,740** fueron solicitudes de albergue de emergencia
- **1,422** fueron para vivienda transitoria
- **1,955** fueron solicitudes de servicios ambulatorios no atendidas

#### LLAMADAS A LA LÍNEA DE EMERGENCIA

Las líneas de emergencia de violencia doméstica proveen un apoyo e información críticos para las víctimas en peligro. Durante el periodo de 24 horas de la encuesta, las intercesoras de líneas de emergencia estatales y locales atendieron 15,431 llamadas y el Servicio Nacional de Línea de Emergencia de Violencia Doméstica atendió 1,213 llamadas. En total, las intercesoras respondieron a casi 17,000 llamadas en el periodo de la encuesta, lo que equivale a **más de 11 llamadas de emergencia cada minuto**.

#### ESCASEZ DE PERSONAL

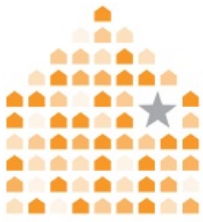
La mayoría de los programas operan con poco personal: 47% de los programas locales participantes emplean menos de 20 personas. La gráfica refleja la información sobre el personal de 65% del total de los programas locales participantes.



#### PREVENCIÓN Y EDUCACIÓN

Los programas locales de violencia doméstica proveen sesiones de prevención e intervención temprana en las escuelas, y adiestramientos de concienciación en el trabajo y en la comunidad en general. Durante el día de la encuesta **40,120** personas recibieron adiestramiento de los programas locales de violencia doméstica.

“Hoy asesinaron a una víctima cuando salió del albergue para irse a su casa. Una madre con seis hijos llamó a la línea de emergencia solicitando servicios. En el albergue se nos rompió la unidad de calefacción central y tuvimos que mudar las familias a un local con calor. Tres familias requirieron transportación a citas y ahora mismo tenemos una llamada de crisis en la línea de emergencia. Tenemos personal y recursos limitados para ayudar con estas crisis diarias.” – Un programa urbano en el sur



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## the National Census of Domestic Violence Services

### Unmet Demand for Services

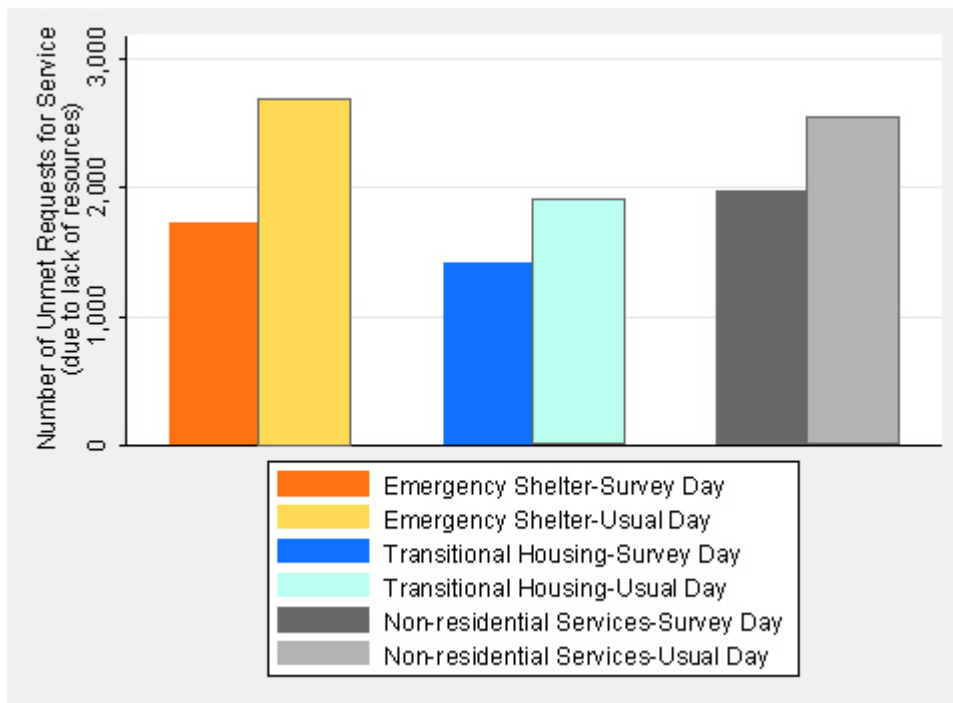
Despite the prevalence and danger of domestic violence, local programs are typically underfunded and understaffed. As a result requests for services sometimes go unmet due to lack of resources. Many local programs explained that they never “turn away” victims – instead they work tirelessly to find another local program with available bed space or with available non-residential services.

“I believe these numbers will be able to help us reflect how many people we are serving, but I think it will only scrape the surface on the underserved communities. I don’t think many people who don’t speak English, are not citizens, or are male or are Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender are aware that services are available. I think considerable outreach needs to happen to these communities.”

-A rural program in the Midwest

Based on information provided by local programs, it appears that housing, both emergency and transitional, is particularly hard to find.

- Over **5,000** requests for services went unmet due to lack of resources. More than 50% of these requests were for some form of housing (either emergency shelter or transitional housing).
- Nearly **2,000** requests for non-residential services went unmet. This represents a range of requests, including individuals seeking time with an advocate and victims requesting court accompaniment. Over 200 programs had to turn away between 1 and 20 requests for service on the survey day.



“We always find ways to serve victims no matter how tight our resources are.”

-A suburban program in the Pacific Region

These numbers do not reflect individuals who did not seek services because they were either unaware of the existence of such services or because they believed the services were full or unavailable. As such, the study data likely underestimates the demand for domestic violence services.



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## The National Census of Domestic Violence Services

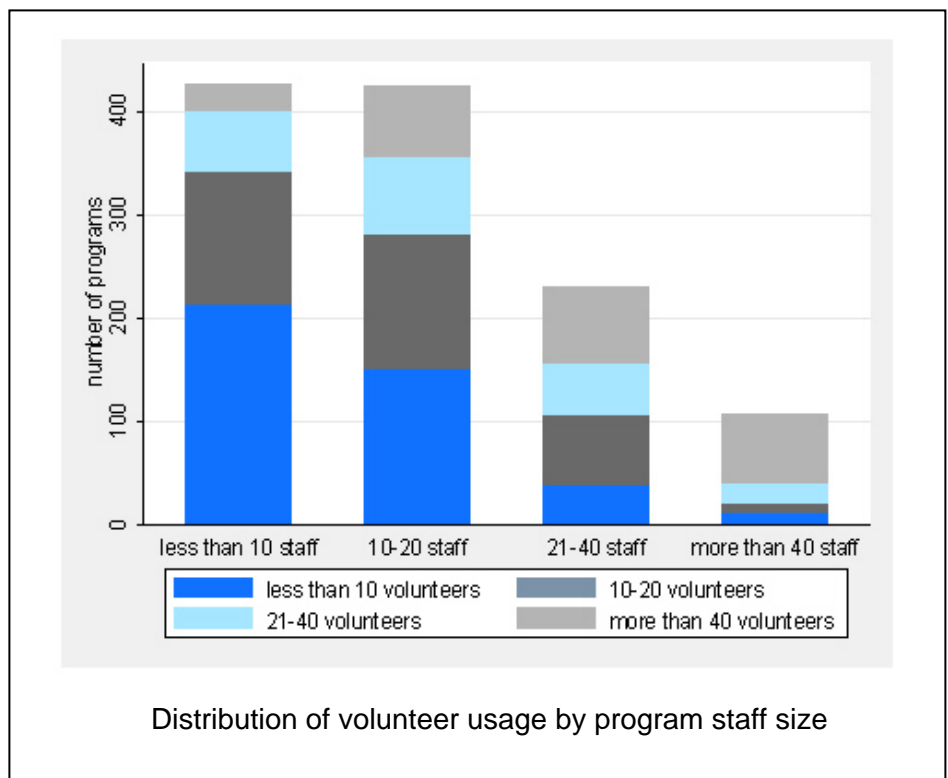
### Staff and Volunteer Counts

"We are really struggling with capacity issues right now. After having had a few years of lower utilization of the shelter due to more services being available in Court, we've had two months of turning people away more often than not. The Court docket is up from a high of 40-45 on a day in civil court to a high of 60 cases. We have one full-time Crisis Counselor to respond to referrals from 90+ Dept of Social Service Workers, who are our biggest referral source, but certainly not our only one. I don't know how much more staff can take on."

- A suburban Program in the South

In order to meet the demands for service, local programs use both paid staff and trained volunteers. Despite the difficulty of the job and the typically low salaries, these staffers provide life-saving support and advocacy for survivors of domestic violence and their families. Volunteers also play a critical role in creating the capacity for programs to respond to victims in crisis.

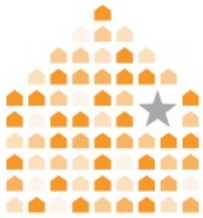
- Most programs have small staffs with more than one third employing less than 10 people, and over 70 percent employing fewer than 20 people.



- More than half of domestic violence programs use fewer than 20 paid staff and volunteers and nearly 20 percent have fewer than 10 paid staff members and volunteers.
- Programs rely on a large number of volunteers, with 20 percent of programs relying on over 40 volunteers. Nearly half of all programs have more than 20 volunteers. As illustrated above, regardless of staff size, volunteers are critical to allowing local programs to provide services to victims.
- Many programs struggle with meeting the needs of survivors because of the high demand for services and relatively low number of paid staff.

"We have NO paid staff. We are a small shelter in an area with a large need. We function with all volunteers and they are getting tired. We need much financial assistance so that we can hire a couple of paid staff people."

-A suburban program in the Midwest



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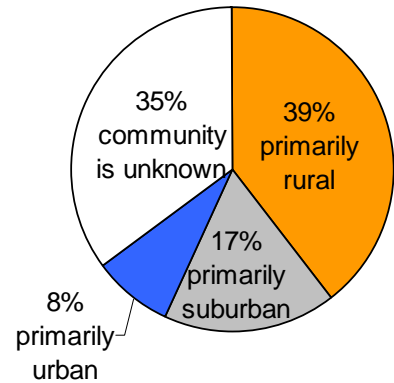
## the National Census of Domestic Violence Services

### Communities and Individuals Served

#### Communities Served

- Across the US, local domestic violence programs provide support to victims in a variety of communities.
- On the survey day over 20,000 individuals were served by urban programs, over 9,000 by suburban and over 16,000 by rural programs.

Participating programs that shared this information report that the communities they serve are:



“After a presentation given to 8th grade girls on Teen Dating Violence and Sexual Assault, a 13 year old girl requested help with a Civil Protection Order against a former boyfriend. She did not know about our state’s law that enables teens to seek protection orders. She was relieved and grateful for the presentation and assistance from our agency.”

– A rural program from the North West Region

#### Services Provided by Age and Gender

**Table 1. Services provided to Adults and Children on the Survey Day**

	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Non-residential Services
Total Adults	7,103	3,081	19,641
Children	7,241	4,852	5,946

- While male victims of domestic violence represent a small fraction of overall clients, programs provide crisis services to these victims as well. See Table 2

“On the survey day a man contacted the agency and asked for assistance in leaving his long-time male partner. He was assisted with safety planning, and offered case management and counseling.”

– An urban program in the Midwest

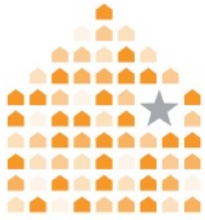
- Nationwide, a wide range of services were provided to adults and children on the survey day. See Table 1.
- The gender distribution is consistent with research that demonstrates that women are more likely to be victims of intimate partner violence. This research includes, but is not limited to: the National Crime Victimization Survey, crime reports data,<sup>1</sup> the General Social Survey and the National Violence Against Women Survey<sup>2</sup>.

**Table 2. Services provided by Gender to Adults on the Survey Day**

	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Non-residential Services
Women	7,058	3,059	18,569
Men	35	21	1,054
Transgender	10	1	18

<sup>1</sup> Rennison and Welchans (2000).

<sup>2</sup> Bachman, 1998; Dobash et al., 1992; Rennison & Welchans, 2000; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000



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### Explanation of Methods

In an effort to safely and non-invasively collect an unduplicated count, the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) administered the National Census of Domestic Violence Services (NCDVS) from November 2, 2006 until November 3, 2006. The NCDVS uses a snapshot approach to count the total number of people served in domestic violence programs around the country during a single 24 hour period.

#### What is a "Snapshot" Count?

A snapshot count provides an unduplicated head count of the people using services in a single 24-hour period, without providing identifying information about any individual survivor. This method provides an unduplicated count across states and across the nation, operating on the assumption that no one will use the services of more than one local domestic violence program in a single 24-hour period. This assumption is quite reasonable, because it is impossible for one person to be sheltered in two programs at the same time, and, given travel times and scheduling complications, it is rare that a survivor will travel from one program to another in the same day.

"The complexity of the issues is very diverse -- the lives we touch on a daily basis. How does one capture the joy of a woman finding a job? How does one capture in one day the numerous systems we interact with, to advocate, to seek change? And how we do that today is different than how it will look tomorrow."

-An urban program in the North Central Region

#### Why do we need a "Snapshot" Count?

A "snapshot" count provides a safe alternative to the use of victim-identified data collection methods. Such methods can be extremely risky for survivors of domestic violence and any person perceived to be abetting their flight as well as methodologically inappropriate, and arguably illegal. Other methods to determine service usage such as phone surveys may place survivors at risk by inquiring about abuse when an abuser is present. Such phone surveys may also systematically undercount service usage and incidence because many individuals do not feel safe or comfortable enough to respond honestly.

#### What are the advantages of a "Snapshot" Count over other methods?

In general, domestic violence is highly dangerous for its victims, especially when the victim is leaving her or his abuser. Knowing this, victims often take a great deal of care to avoid detection by their abuser including moving, changing names, and other behaviors that make tracking difficult at best and impossible at worst.

Data collection efforts that track victims may make victims less willing to use the services of local domestic violence programs for fear that their names or more generally identifying information can be used by abusers to track them.

Confidentiality laws in several states as well as the recent reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (2006) establish a legal right for victims to have confidential information that is not shared in other databases.