

# Domestic Violence Counts:07

A 24-hour census of domestic violence  
shelters and services across the United States



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# National Summary

On September 25, 2007, 1,346 out of 1,949, or 69%, of identified domestic violence programs in the United States participated in the 2007 National Census of Domestic Violence Services. The following figures represent information provided by the 1,346 participating programs about services they provided during the 24-hour survey period.

## 53,203 Victims Served in One Day

- **25,321** domestic violence victims found refuge in emergency shelters or transitional housing provided by local domestic violence programs.
- **27,882** adults and children received non-residential services, including individual counseling, legal advocacy, and children's support groups.
- In just one day, **92%** of local programs provided individual counseling or advocacy but only **35%** were able to provide transitional housing. Services provided by programs include:

92%	Individual Counseling or Advocacy
74%	Emergency Shelter
71%	Legal Accompaniment/Services
64%	Advocacy with Social Services
60%	Children's Counseling/Advocacy
60%	Group Counseling or Advocacy
42%	Childcare
35%	Transitional Housing

## 7,707 Unmet Requests for Services

Many programs reported a critical shortage of funds and staff to assist victims in need of services, such as housing, childcare, mental health and substance abuse counseling, and legal representation.

### NOT ENOUGH STAFF

Programs reported that lack of staffing was a reason that they could not meet victims' requests for services. Nearly 69% of programs have fewer than 20 paid staff, and 35% of those programs have less than 10 paid staff.

## 20,582 Hotline Calls Answered

Domestic violence hotlines answered more than 14 hotline calls every minute, providing support, information, safety planning, and resources.

## 29,902 People Trained

Programs provided more than 1,500 trainings, where community members gained much needed information on prevention and early intervention.

During the 24-hour survey period, our program was still coping with the aftermath of a domestic violence homicide that occurred in our community a few weeks ago. Advocates from the program provided support to grieving friends and family and are working to create community change.

—Wisconsin DV program

We took a crisis call from a victim that was being discharged from the hospital. She had fled from another state because of domestic violence and waited until she got far away enough to feel safe going to the emergency room. The hospital was ready to release her and called us for shelter. We were full but were able to transfer her to the nearest safe shelter about 100 miles away.

—Georgia DV program

# Domestic Violence Counts:07

## A 24-hour census of domestic violence shelters and services across the United States

**O**n September 25, 2007, a woman arrived at a shelter in Nevada with her two young children. She was wearing little clothing, and the duct tape that her abuser had bound her with was still hanging from her wrists and ankles. As she approached the front door of the shelter, her husband, who had followed her, ran up, grabbed one of the children from her arms, and quickly left. Shelter staff helped her inside and called the police. As of two days after this event, neither her abuser nor her child has been located.

This woman and her children were among more than 53,000 victims of domestic violence across the United States who reached out for services on September 25th. Her story vividly depicts the abuse and violence inflicted upon tens of thousands of adults and children every day, as well as the critical role that domestic violence programs play in saving lives and helping survivors find safety and refuge from violence.

For the second consecutive year, the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) conducted the National Census of Domestic Violence Services (Census). Designed to protect the safety and confidentiality of victims, the Census collects an unduplicated count of adults and children seeking domestic violence services during a single 24-hour period.

NNEDV identified 1,949 domestic violence programs in the United States that were eligible to participate in the Census. Of those programs, 1,346 programs participated, representing a participation rate of 69 percent. During the 24-hour period of the Census, these programs provided support and services for 53,203 adults and children, answered a total of 19,432\* crisis hotline calls, and offered prevention training and education for 29,902 members of the community.

Despite assisting more than 53,000 adults and children, participating programs were unable to meet 7,707 requests for services due to a lack of resources. Many programs reported shortages in critical services such as housing, transportation, childcare, legal representation, and counseling services for victims. As stated by a domestic violence program in Missouri, "The more resources and advocacy victims receive, the better the chance they have. Cuts in funding eventually cost lives."

\* The National Domestic Violence Hotline answered an additional 1,150 calls during the 24-hour Census period.

**"We cover over 5,000 square miles in service delivery area. We only have enough funding for 4 rural outreach workers. It is difficult for them to provide services in all these areas. Often the adult survivors are seen, especially those who need assistance with restraining orders, but it is impossible to meet the individual advocacy needs of their children."**

—Louisiana DV program

**"Our program has received more hotline calls than usual lately because of a highly publicized dating violence case in our community that ended in death."**

—Pennsylvania DV program



# Victims Served

Domestic violence programs across the country work hard to meet the full range of victims' needs. "In an average day, we try and help clients in all aspects of their lives," reported an Oregon program. "We help them with legal matters, including restraining orders, divorce, and immigration issues. We also help clients find employment, better their education, find housing, and arrange for childcare." In addition to providing advocacy services, programs also answer hotline calls and offer community education and outreach.

On the day of the survey, the 1,346 participating domestic violence programs provided critical services to 53,203 adults and children. The chart on the right shows a breakdown of the number adults and children who received services on the survey day.

## Housing and Shelter

One of the key services programs provide is shelter for victims fleeing domestic abuse. "During the survey period, we were able to provide shelter to a woman and her many children in our new shelter facility that was purchased with some private grant funding. This is something that was not available in our rural community before," writes an Idaho DV program. "It gave this family a safe haven until the perpetrator was apprehended."

On the day of the Census, more than 25,000 victims requested and received housing, either in emergency shelters or in transitional housing.

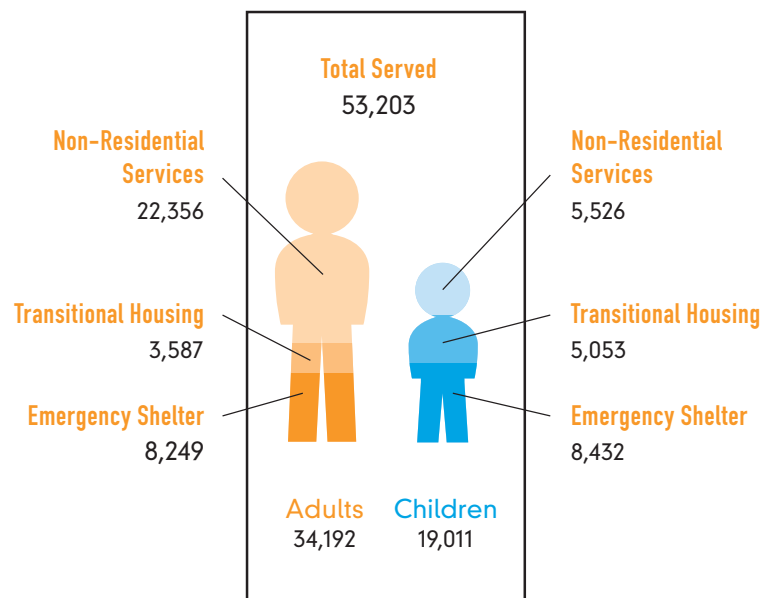
**Emergency Shelter:** Emergency shelters are intended to provide a short-term living space for victims in response to an immediate crisis and include both safe houses and paid hotel rooms. Participating programs reported that the average length of stay for emergency shelter is 36 days.

### ON THE CENSUS DAY:

- 74% of the participating programs offered emergency shelter
- 8,249 adults and 8,432 children stayed in emergency shelters

"The local police department called our program today and requested an advocate for a victim whose abuser had just been arrested after holding a gun to her head. Our advocate provided crisis intervention, safety planning, assisted the victim in obtaining a protection order, and bought the victim some groceries."

—Nebraska DV program



**Transitional Housing:** Transitional housing is temporary shelter designed to house residents after their stay in emergency shelter and before they make permanent living arrangements. Many transitional housing options last up to 24 months. Participating programs reported that the average length of stay for transitional housing is 300 days.

**ON THE CENSUS DAY:**

- 35% of the participating programs offered transitional housing
- 3,587 adults and 5,053 children were living in transitional housing

**Advocacy Services**

More than 22,000 adults and 5,000 children obtained non-residential services on the Census day. Participating programs reported providing the following services for both residential and non-residential victims:

Service Provided	Percent of Programs
Individual counseling and advocacy	92%
Emergency shelter (including safe houses and hotels)	74%
Legal accompaniment/services	71%
Advocacy with social services/TANF/welfare	64%
Transportation	64%
Children’s counseling and advocacy	60%
Group counseling and advocacy	60%
Advocacy with housing office/landlord	53%
Advocacy with school system	49%
Advocacy with child welfare system/Child Protective Services	48%
Childcare	42%
Financial/budgeting skills	38%
Transitional housing	35%
Medical services/accompaniment	32%
Job training/employment assistance	31%
Advocacy with disability service providers	24%

Domestic violence programs provide one-on-one advocacy for individuals as well as group advocacy. Individual advocacy includes one-on-one counseling, case management, safety planning, job counseling and training, housing support, legal services, accompaniments, and other services provided for individuals.

Group advocacy includes support groups for adults or children, group job-training and financial skills programs, group counseling services, and more; is usually moderated by staff, volunteers or peers; and is attended only by survivors.

**“We succeeded in placing a mom and her three children in a rental apartment after they had been in the shelter for 48 days. We got furniture and other necessities through a local church, whose volunteers assisted in helping this family move.”**

—North Carolina DV Program

**“We are the only program providing intensive economic advocacy and credit counseling to women. We are unable to serve all who are referred to us; no one else in the region offers specialized services similar to ours.”**

—Missouri DV program

“A woman came in today so badly beaten that she was coughing up blood. We were able to help her obtain a protection order against her abuser that afternoon.”

—Arkansas DV program

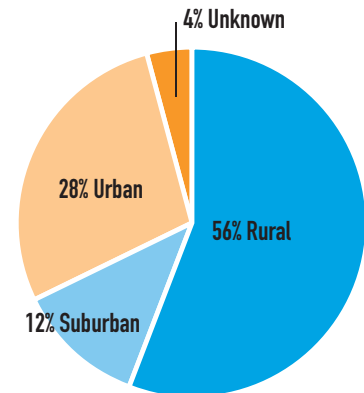
“I met with a client at the sheriff’s office who had been badly beaten. It was not safe for her to come to our office, so I met her there for crisis counseling, needs assessment, and assistance filing for relocation benefits.”

—Florida DV program

Staff and volunteers spend countless hours advocating on behalf of survivors. As a Georgia local program described, “By the end of the survey day, one of our advocates had met with 11 women and 14 children. She advocated for their financial needs, car repairs, doctor appointments, and found extra funding to help them purchase medicine.”

### Primary Population Served

Across the United States, local programs provide support to victims of domestic violence in a variety of communities. The chart on the right represents the primary population programs reported serving.



### Crisis Hotlines

Domestic violence crisis hotlines are a lifeline for victims in danger, allowing individuals to access services around the clock. Hotline calls are often victims’ first point of contact with domestic violence programs. “A victim of domestic violence came into our Thrift Store and picked up a brochure. She called the hotline from her car outside the store,” reported a Texas DV program.

On the Census day, local and state hotline operators answered 19,432 calls. In addition, the National Domestic Violence Hotline answered 1,150 calls during the survey period. In total, advocates responded to 20,582 hotline calls in the 24-hour period, equivalent to more than 14 calls every minute.

### Prevention and Community Education

Because outreach and education are essential to ending violence, domestic violence programs offer trainings to their communities as part of their mission.

#### ON THE CENSUS DAY:

- Participating programs provided 1,521 training and education sessions to the community.
- 29,902 individuals in communities across the United States attended training and education sessions.

Community outreach and education also link domestic violence programs to an essential resource—volunteers. Volunteers help programs answer telephones, assist in shelters, provide transportation for clients, collect donations, provide childcare, and assist in many other ways.

#### ON THE CENSUS DAY:

- 33% of participating programs had more than 20 volunteers, and 18% of those programs had more than 40 volunteers.

# Unmet Needs

“A woman called our program today looking for shelter. Our shelter was full and all of our funds had been expended. There were no available resources in the community. We tried to refer her to a local mission, but they were full and she was turned away. Later that evening, she was raped. After we got a call from the emergency room, our sexual assault counselor went to provide crisis counseling at the hospital. If our community had more resources, this could have ended differently.”

On the survey day, 7,707 requests for services were unmet due to a lack of resources, including limited funds for critical services and supplies, lack of shelter space, and insufficient program staff.

## ON THE CENSUS DAY:

- Approximately 61% of unmet requests were for housing (2,923 unmet requests for emergency shelter and 1,753 unmet requests for transitional housing)
- 39% were for non-residential services (3,031 unmet requests)

Programs face multiple barriers that prevent them from providing services to all victims who seek assistance. Many programs identified the following areas as barriers:

## Funding

Programs cited lack of funding as the number one reason they were unable to serve victims on the survey day. Forty-two (42) percent of domestic violence programs reported budgets of less than \$500,000 a year.

## Staff

The majority (69 percent) of domestic violence programs that participated in this survey employed fewer than 20 paid staff, and approximately half of those programs operated with fewer than 10 paid staff members. Lack of sufficient staffing critically impacts programs' ability to meet victims' needs since most programs provide services and shelter 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## Housing

Programs reported being unable to meet 4,676 requests for emergency shelter and transitional housing on the survey day. Lack of shelter is a significant issue. A Florida program noted that, “We have to turn away approximately 76 people each month because of lack of space in our shelter,” while a Kansas program is “forced to turn away more than 600 women and children seeking shelter each year.”

**“We lack sufficient funds for staffing. We are understaffed even when we have every position filled, and our salaries are so low that we have constant turnover. This affects our services because we are operating with skeleton crews who lack sufficient experience to deal with the needs of our population.”**

— California DV program

**“A client had to turn down a job interview because she did not have a vehicle, and bus transportation is not available to the job site.”**

—Connecticut DV program

**“Affordable childcare and housing still continue to be one of the greatest unmet needs.”**

—Illinois DV program

**“It would be helpful to have more public information and public service announcements to educate the public about this issue. We would like to believe that the public knows how serious the problem of domestic violence is, but there is still a lot of silence and stigma about reporting it or getting help for victims.”**

—Texas DV program

## Transportation

Programs across the country pointed to transportation as an area where more resources are needed. This problem is particularly acute for rural programs, many of which cover hundreds or even thousands of square miles with little or no public transportation options.

## Legal Services

Many programs report a need for more legal services, particularly pro bono representation of clients in need of assistance with restraining orders, divorces, and child custody cases. An Arkansas program was unable to provide an attorney for a woman who came in scratched from head to toe after being dragged through a thorn bush by her husband. “We don’t have grant money for an attorney, so we were not able to help her with legal counsel.”

## Childcare and Children’s Services

Many victims of domestic violence have children who also need assistance. One rural program “had to make serious cuts to children’s services due to the pressing nature of crisis services.” Another suburban program reported that “children are waiting four weeks or longer see a counselor due to limited availability of counseling services.”

## Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services

Survey participants from all parts of the country pointed to a need for more substance abuse and mental health services for victims of domestic violence. “There is nowhere in our community to refer clients with severe mental illness and/or drug addiction,” reported an Idaho program.

## Language Barriers

Programs reported several cases where they were unable to adequately serve non-English speaking victims on the survey day because of a lack of bilingual staff or translation services.

## Basic Necessities

Some programs lacked the resources to provide even basic necessities for victims. One Utah program described, “We are running low on towels and had no pillows. I know this may seem small, but it was sad that we did not even have the simple comfort of a pillow for our newest resident.”

## Community Education

Because of rising expenses and lack of funding, many programs reported a cut in community education and outreach. Programs in Alaska reported eliminating community outreach positions, and in North Carolina the Safe Date program has been discontinued in some local middle schools.



# Conclusion

The National Census of Domestic Violence Services, administered by the National Network to End Domestic Violence, revealed that 53,203 adults and children in the United States received services and support from 1,346 local domestic violence programs during a 24-hour period in September 2007. While a great number of domestic violence victims accessed and received services, a total of 7,707 requests by victims for services went unmet due to inadequate funding and resources for local domestic violence programs.

This unmet demand highlights the need for additional funding and support. Given the dangerous and potentially lethal nature of many victims' circumstances, insufficient funding of domestic violence programs and services should be acknowledged as a serious barrier to those seeking help and safety. Domestic violence programs across the country struggle every day to serve victims who contact them. However, the reality is that with limited resources, funding and staffing, these programs are unable to meet the needs of every victim who calls or comes to their doors seeking help.

To read state summaries or to learn more about the upcoming 2008 Census, please visit: [www.nnedv.org/census](http://www.nnedv.org/census)

**“On the survey day, a transitional housing guest exited our transitional housing program. She left this note: “I came here a year ago with nothing. I did not even have myself. You showed me that I have a future and there is always hope.”**

—Pennsylvania DV program



## Appendix 1:

# Methodology & Understanding the Census Data

The Census is a point-in-time count that provides a noninvasive, unduplicated count of individuals who access domestic violence services during a single 24-hour period. Developed in 2006 by a team of experts in the field of domestic violence service providers, the goal was to survey how many individuals contacted domestic violence programs in search of assistance.

The “snapshot” methodology is unduplicated, operating on the assumption that a victim is unlikely to access services at more than one domestic violence program in a 24-hour period. It is impossible for a victim to be sheltered in two programs simultaneously, nor is a victim likely to travel from one primary purpose domestic violence program to another in the same day. Programs are often located far apart and serve a wide geographic area.

The Census is noninvasive and takes into account the dangerous nature of domestic violence and the need to prioritize victim safety and confidentiality. It is an aggregate, state-wide count of the number of victims who sought services, and an aggregate count of the number of services programs provided.

Although this is the second annual count of domestic violence services, the data cannot be compared to the previous year’s Census. The Census relies on voluntary self-reporting of primary purpose domestic violence programs. Without a 100 percent participation rate from year to year, straight line data comparisons do not hold much significance. Furthermore, extrapolating the current data to project the total number of victims seeking services on this day would likely produce an inaccurate total count. Any attempt at extrapolation or projection would require a much closer analysis of non-participating programs than this study intends or attempts to make.

The data reported in this Census is a 24-hour period “snapshot,” thus multiplying the 1-day total by 365 to create a yearly number would be inaccurate. Some victims might only use services once a year, while others may access support many times over the course of a year. In addition, most programs experience days where many victims seek services and some days where few victims seek services.

**“What I liked best about participating in the Census was seeing the number of folks who couldn’t be served because we don’t have enough resources—maybe someone will see those numbers and realize how much it matters.”**

—Connecticut DV Program

## Appendix 2:

# Summary Data

“It is very frustrating to have to turn down women who have no place to go and are afraid for their safety.”

—Colorado DV Program

State	Response Rate	Adults Served	Children Served	Total People Served	Unmet Requests for Services	Hotline Calls Answered	Total People Trained	Served in Shelter	Served in Transitional Housing	Non-Residential Served
AK	100%	309	187	496	15	113	90	220	80	196
AL	63%	338	194	532	4	102	926	155	97	280
AR	54%	180	161	341	35	72	1,277	161	65	115
AZ	56%	539	516	1,055	110	182	181	621	140	294
CA	61%	1,961	1,088	3,049	571	794	1,370	874	631	1,544
CO	70%	596	465	1,061	301	621	364	235	206	620
CT	63%	718	117	835	97	217	200	141	45	649
DC	78%	132	35	167	10	18	35	7	17	143
DE	86%	90	55	145	6	26	0	46	13	86
FL	69%	1,401	1,036	2,437	75	888	769	818	580	1,039
GA	60%	792	858	1,650	392	428	579	498	369	783
HI	58%	115	54	169	8	45	16	100	10	59
IA	100%	546	267	813	114	460	1,036	340	93	380
ID	43%	229	123	352	50	144	169	113	65	174
IL	90%	1,687	766	2,453	607	1,063	437	627	474	1,352
IN	42%	457	387	844	93	306	644	332	275	237
KS	85%	778	285	1,063	141	300	1,194	214	60	789
KY	100%	838	351	1,189	106	462	712	448	119	622
LA	65%	428	300	728	121	135	349	263	80	385
MA	78%	992	324	1,316	309	675	341	275	212	829
MD	92%	626	233	859	139	392	2,836	216	95	548
ME	100%	325	146	471	34	128	220	66	162	243
MI	76%	1,273	898	2,171	256	1,151	557	778	625	768
MN	36%	504	338	842	110	321	195	239	42	561
MO	100%	1,239	877	2,116	375	552	676	906	213	997
MS	60%	130	148	278	53	242	274	155	42	81
MT	50%	133	97	230	129	88	41	45	54	131

To download state summaries, please visit: [www.nedv.org/census](http://www.nedv.org/census)

## Appendix 2:

# Summary Data

“Our program was able to help a woman who was severely beaten and held hostage for two days in her house. We helped the victim through her police interview and her medical examination.”

—Michigan DV program

State	Response Rate	Adults Served	Children Served	Total People Served	Unmet Requests for Services	Hotline Calls Answered	Total People Trained	Served in Shelter	Served in Transitional Housing	Non-Residential Served
NC	65%	984	413	1,397	165	542	1,384	449	97	851
ND	100%	177	119	296	25	82	415	87	57	152
NE	96%	375	227	602	77	245	433	186	60	356
NH	100%	165	70	235	19	89	57	76	18	141
NJ	80%	825	587	1,412	187	464	461	516	172	724
NM	35%	275	198	473	24	131	66	138	123	212
NV	60%	171	120	291	214	152	44	165	5	121
NY	40%	1,913	772	2,685	259	729	541	431	415	1,839
OH	100%	1,537	615	2,152	141	684	1,752	661	244	1,247
OK	91%	555	255	810	67	335	455	289	61	460
OR	55%	579	274	853	212	333	153	190	171	492
PA	100%	1,874	661	2,535	209	892	1,546	716	355	1,464
RI	100%	239	53	292	32	129	125	54	22	216
SC	77%	312	126	438	4	108	132	177	35	226
SD	45%	144	105	249	66	147	231	108	5	136
TN	83%	849	476	1,325	53	343	762	413	103	809
TX	63%	2,332	1,630	3,962	656	1,750	2,819	1,513	808	1,641
UT	100%	298	322	620	125	290	483	252	205	163
VA	83%	679	356	1,035	178	586	981	439	106	490
VI	67%	21	4	25	7	24	51	4	0	21
VT	93%	158	49	207	26	73	90	37	15	155
WA	48%	675	480	1,155	328	470	106	293	344	518
WI	58%	1,062	498	1,560	263	682	481	463	233	864
WV	100%	356	227	583	48	120	229	82	78	423
WY	75%	281	68	349	61	107	617	49	44	256
<b>Total</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>34,192</b>	<b>19,011</b>	<b>53,203</b>	<b>7,707</b>	<b>19,432</b>	<b>29,902</b>	<b>16,681</b>	<b>8,640</b>	<b>27,882</b>

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