

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STATISTICS

## **Domestic Violence Fatalities in Washington State**

- Between January 1, 1997 and June 30, 2004, at least 281 people were killed by domestic violence abusers in Washington state. (This number most likely represents an undercount, as a significant portion of homicides are unsolved, some homicides may be mistakenly classified as accidents, and some missing persons cases may actually be homicides.) The homicide victims included domestic violence victims, their friends, family members, new partners and intervening law enforcement officers. The majority of the homicide victims (63%) were women killed by their current or former husband or boyfriend.<sup>6</sup>
- In 2003, at least 44% of women who were murdered in Washington state were killed by their current or former husband or boyfriend.
- Some domestic violence abusers killed their children along with their partner, or instead of their partner. Between January 1, 1997 and June 30, 2004, abusers killed at least 21 children in the context of violence towards their intimate partner.
- Homicide-suicides comprised a significant portion of domestic violence homicides. Almost a third (32%) of the 260 abusers who committed homicides between January 1, 1997 and June 30, 2004, committed homicide-suicides. An additional six abusers killed themselves after attempting homicide.
- Firearms were the most common weapon used in domestic violence homicides. Between January 1, 1997 and June 30, 2004, domestic violence abusers used firearms to kill 57% of domestic violence homicide victims.

Source: *Every Life Lost Is a Call for Change: Findings and Recommendations from the Washington State Domestic Violence Fatality Review*, Kelly Starr, Margaret Hobart and Jake Fawcett for the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2004.

## **Domestic Violence in Washington State**

- Washington Police Departments responded to 52,055 domestic violence calls in 2004. These included homicides, rapes, assaults, robberies and arsons (see Appendix A for breakdown by crime and county).
- Victims of domestic violence reported 13,034 violations of protection orders in 2004 (see Appendix A for breakdown by county).

Source: Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, *Crime In Washington 2004*.

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<sup>6</sup> The Washington State Domestic Violence Fatality Review (DVFR) defines a domestic violence fatality as any fatality caused by a domestic violence abuser's efforts to gain power and control over their intimate partner. This differs from Washington's legal definition of domestic violence; thus, the DVFR's statistics differ from those reported by official legal resources, such as the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs.

- In Washington state fiscal year (FY) 2005,<sup>7</sup> domestic violence programs provided emergency shelter to a total of 6,324 battered women and children. Because of space and funding limitations, domestic violence programs had to refuse 34,824 requests for shelter.
- Washington state domestic violence programs served 21,929 adults and children in FY 2005. Services provided include: support groups, help obtaining protection orders, legal advocacy, shelter and individual counseling.
- The Washington State Domestic Violence Hotline answered 26,694 calls in FY 2005.

Source: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Children's Administration, Division of Program and Policy.

### **General Facts about Domestic Violence**

- In a national survey, almost 25% of women reported having been physically assaulted and/or raped by a current or former intimate partner at some point in their lifetime.
- Approximately 1.5 million women are physically assaulted and/or raped by an intimate partner annually in the United States. Since many women experience multiple victimizations every year, an estimated 4.8 million intimate partner rapes and physical assaults are perpetrated against U.S. women annually.

Source: *Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*, Patricia Tjaden and Nancy Thoennes for the National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2000.

- Women are the victims of intimate violence significantly more often than men. In 2001, women accounted for 85% of the victims of intimate partner violence and men accounted for approximately 15% of the victims. In 2001, intimate partner violence made up 20% of violent crime against women. The same year, intimate partners committed 3% of all violent crime against men.

Source: US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Crime Data Brief, *Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2001*, February 2003.

- Approximately one in five female high school students reports being physically and/or sexually abused by a dating partner.

Source: Jay G. Silverman, PhD; Anita Raj, PhD; Lorelei A. Mucci, MPH; and Jeanne E. Hathaway, MD, MPH, "Dating Violence Against Adolescent Girls and Associated Substance Use, Unhealthy Weight Control, Sexual Risk Behavior, Pregnancy, and Suicidality," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol. 286, No. 5, 2001.

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<sup>7</sup> Washington state fiscal year 2005 covers dates July 1, 2004 – June 30, 2005.

- A significant number of women murdered by their current or former intimate partners were either estranged, separated or in the process of leaving the relationship. In Washington state, at least 44% of the domestic violence fatalities occurred after or as the battered woman was attempting to leave. In a Florida study, 60% of the women killed were separated or in the process of leaving.

Source: *Every Life Lost Is a Call for Change: Findings and Recommendations from the Washington State Domestic Violence Fatality Review*, Kelly Starr, Margaret Hobart and Jake Fawcett for the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2004, and Neil Websdale, *Understanding Domestic Homicide*, Northeastern University Press, 1999.

- The U.S. Department of Justice reported that 37% of all women who sought care in hospital emergency rooms for violence-related injuries were injured by a current or former spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend.

Source: Michael R. Rand, *Violence-related Injuries Treated in Hospital Emergency Departments*, U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, August 1997.

- Fifty percent of men who frequently assault their wives also frequently assault their children, and the U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect suggests that domestic violence may be the single major precursor to child abuse and neglect fatalities in this country.

Source: M. Straus, R. Gelles, and C. Smith, *Physical Violence in American Families: Risk Factors and Adaptations to Violence in 8,145 Families*, 1990, and U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect, *A Nation's Shame: Fatal child abuse and neglect in the United States: Fifth report*, Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, 1995.

The Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence can provide local, state and national statistics on domestic violence. Interviews with Coalition staff can assist journalists in accurately reflecting the context of domestic violence crimes, local resources available for victims and abusers, and the opinions of experts in the field. Please contact Nan Stoops, Executive Director, at 206-389-2515 ext. 103 or by email at [nan@wscadv.org](mailto:nan@wscadv.org).