



## Domestic Violence Impact on Women & Families

Domestic violence, or intimate partner violence, can impact anyone, however according to data published by the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, in 2021 70% of victims were women, and 72% of perpetrators were men. On average, victims of domestic violence are women between the ages of 20 and 34, and perpetrators are men between the ages of 20 and 34. In Kansas in 2021, nearly 70% of all domestic violence cases occurred between people who are or were romantically involved. Domestic violence can include physical violence, sexual violence, and verbal and emotional abuse.

### Impact

Domestic violence can impact victims' education opportunities, work prospects, and financial stability. Abusive partners use a variety of tactics to prevent their partners from attending classes or maintaining employment. These tactics can include making harassing phone calls or showing up at a victim's workplace, depriving victims of sleep, and interfering with childcare. Many victims are left with debts incurred by their abusers, and many are left with poor credit that limits their ability to achieve financial independence.

The cost of missed work days, physical injuries, and criminal justice contact accumulate over the lifetime of domestic violence victims. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), domestic violence costs female victims \$103,767 over the course of their lives, and male victims \$23,414.

Medical costs, including the cost of mental health care, contribute to the financial challenges facing many victims of domestic violence. Data from the CDC show that 35% of female domestic violence victims suffer some kind of physical injury, and 71% suffer symptoms of PTSD. The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control estimated that in 2017, the average treatment cost for a domestic violence related injury was \$4,273.

The financial impacts of domestic violence can make it difficult for victims to leave their partners. Many victims who do leave end up becoming homeless. According to the 2022 Johnson County Homelessness Point in Time Count, nearly 30% of those experiencing homelessness in Johnson County became homeless while fleeing domestic violence. Nationally, it is estimated that 57% of all women who are homeless are fleeing domestic violence.

Children who grow up in abusive households can experience the impacts throughout the course of their lives. A 2021 report from the U.S. Office on Women's Health estimates that in the United States, more than 15 million children live in households where at least one incident of domestic violence has taken place. According to the same report, adults who experienced or witnessed abuse are more likely to have physical and mental health conditions including anxiety, depression, heart disease, and diabetes.

### What is Domestic Violence?

- **Physical violence** is when a person hurts or tries to hurt a partner by hitting, kicking, or using another type of physical force.
- **Sexual violence** is forcing or attempting to force a partner to take part in a sex act, sexual touching, or a non-physical sexual event (e.g., sexting) when the partner does not or cannot consent.
- **Stalking** is a pattern of repeated, unwanted attention and contact by a partner that causes fear or concern for one's own safety or the safety of someone close to the victim.
- **Psychological aggression** is the use of verbal and non-verbal communication with the intent to harm a partner mentally or emotionally and/or to exert control over a partner.

A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INCIDENT  
WAS REPORTED EVERY  
**23** MINUTES, **16** SECONDS  
IN KANSAS IN 2021



A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ARREST  
WAS MADE EVERY  
**47** MINUTES, **22** SECONDS  
IN KANSAS IN 2021

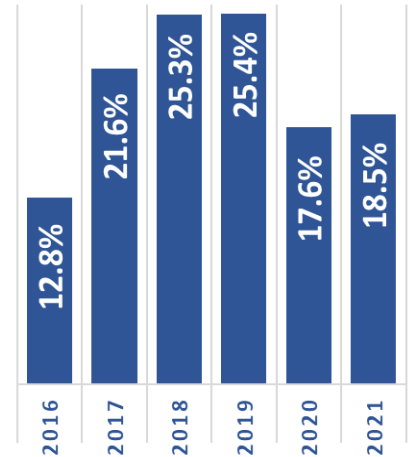
## Lethal Risk

Domestic violence also has the potential to end in homicide. More than 18% of all homicides in Kansas in 2021 were classified as domestic violence homicides. Of these, 84% were committed by a male suspect. In 72% of cases, a firearm was the weapon used to commit the homicide.

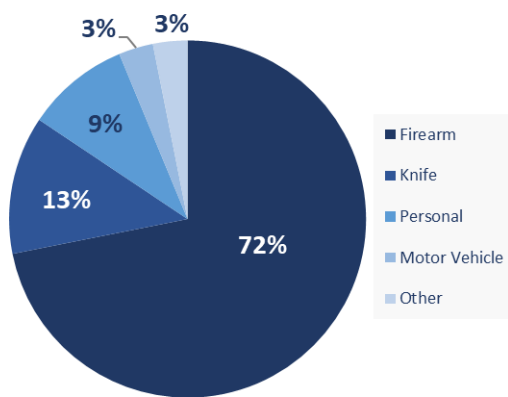
In Johnson County, law enforcement officers are trained in the implementation of the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP). The LAP is an evidence-based protocol designed to identify domestic violence victims who are at high risk of being killed by their intimate partners. When officers respond to domestic violence calls, victims are asked a series of questions as part of the LAP. If they are identified as being at high risk for domestic violence homicide, they are connected to a local domestic violence service program. In Johnson County in 2018, 660 high risk domestic violence cases were filed with the District Attorney’s office. In 2021, that number was 709, a 7% increase.

One high risk indicator included in the LAP is non-fatal strangulation. Domestic violence victims who have been strangled by their partners are 600-700% more likely to be a victim of attempted homicide, and 750% more likely to be murdered by their partners. Johnson County began categorizing non-fatal strangulation as its own criminal offense in 2018; that year 91 cases were charged. In 2021, Johnson County saw a 109% increase in non-fatal strangulation, with 191 cases charged.

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMICIDES AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL HOMICIDES IN KANSAS 2016-2021**



**WEAPONS USED IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMICIDES IN KANSAS 2021**



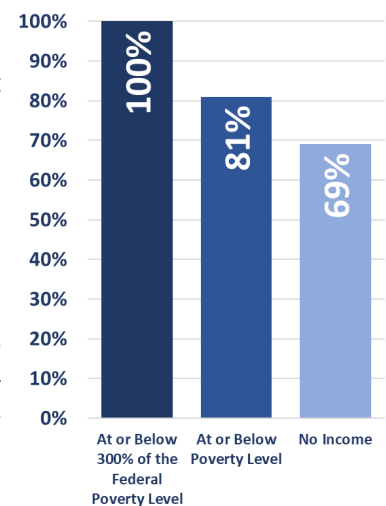
## Offender Accountability

Accountability for domestic violence offenders in Kansas is limited, and most offenders receive probation rather than jail time. If a domestic violence offender does receive a jail sentence, they will be sentenced to less time than someone convicted of a non-violent felony drug possession. Misdemeanor convictions for domestic battery can accumulate to a felony charge, but only if the offender were convicted three times in a *five-year period*. In comparison, drug possession charges accumulate over the offender’s lifetime, meaning that an offender with two prior drug possession convictions *any time in their adult life* can be charged with a felony on the third offense.

Johnson County has one domestic violence service agency that provides shelter for those fleeing domestic violence. Safehome was established in 1980 and served approximately 2,384 individuals in 2021. Services include emergency shelter, individual and group counseling, court and legal support and community engagement. In 2021 Safehome received 2,792 crisis hotline calls and sheltered 129 women, 2 men, and 120 children. To-date in 2022, Safehome has received 3,472 crisis hotline calls.

According to data provided by Safehome, 81% of the households they served in 2021 were living below the poverty level, and 69% had no source of income when they arrived for services. The 2021, Federal Poverty Level for a family of three was \$21,960, or \$1,830 per month. Women represented nearly 60% of Johnson County residents living in poverty in 2021. Female headed households with children under five in Johnson County were nearly four times more likely to be living in poverty than male headed households with children under five.

**SAFEHOME SHELTER CLIENT SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS 2021**



## Prevention

The Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence identifies risk and protective factors that can help to prevent domestic violence. Strategies for domestic violence prevention include reducing known risk factors and strengthening protective factors. Risk factors may include unhealthy family relationships, beliefs in strict gender roles, and weak community domestic violence policies and responses. Protective factors can include quality relationships with a protective parent or trustworthy and caring adults, and social norms that promote gender equity.

## Policy Solutions

**Offender Accountability:** Domestic violence offenses should be treated as the dangerous, life-threatening crimes that they are. Revising the Kansas state statutes to require that domestic violence charges accumulate over a perpetrator's lifetime would increase the likelihood of offender accountability. In addition to promoting victim safety, this revision could also potentially prevent other violent crimes. For example, a study conducted by the Journal of Injury Epidemiology found that 68% of mass shootings between 2014 and 2019 were domestic violence incidents or were perpetrated by shooters with a history of domestic violence. (*The Federal Bureau of Investigation defines a mass shooting as involving four or more victims*).

**Safety Net:** Public assistance programs, often referred to as safety net services, have the potential to help victims of domestic violence meet the cost of basic needs and provide a bridge to long-term safety and stability. Not all people in need are able to benefit from these programs, however. Income eligibility requirements and application processes vary between programs, and many poor and low-income domestic violence victims do not qualify for benefits that could keep them from sinking deeper into poverty or returning to an abuser. Safety net services including food and nutrition programs, cash assistance, job training opportunities, child-care assistance, tax incentives, affordable housing, health and wellness programs should be expanded and streamlined to improve access and eligibility.

**Federal Prevention Funds:** The Violence Against Women Act ([VAWA](#)), Victims of Crime Act ([VOCA](#)) and Family Violence and Prevention Services Act ([FVPSA](#)) provide essential funding for communities and service agencies to prevent and respond to domestic violence. Expanding funding for these programs and increasing public awareness of their impact will enable communities and agencies to broaden the scope and reach of life saving domestic violence services.

*Sources: Safehome 2021 Impact Report; Kansas Bureau of Investigation 2020 Domestic Violence, Stalking, and Sexual Assault in Kansas; Johnson County Office of the District Attorney; Effects of Domestic Violence on Children, 2021 U.S. office on Women's Health; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; U.S. Census 2021 1-year American Community Survey estimates; Johnson County Homelessness Point in Time Count fact sheet; Journal of injury and Epidemiology Geller, L.B., Booty, M. & Crifasi, C.K. The role of domestic violence in fatal mass shootings in the United States, 2014–2019, 38 (2021).*

- Teach safe and healthy relationship skills**
  - Social-emotional learning programs for youth
  - Healthy relationship programs for couples
- Engage Influential adults and peers**
  - Men and boys as allies in prevention
  - Bystander empowerment and education
  - Family-based programs
- Disrupt the developmental pathways toward partner violence**
  - Early childhood home visitation
  - Preschool enrichment with family engagement
  - Parenting skill and family relationship programs
  - Treatment for at-risk children, youth, and families
- Create protective environments**
  - Improve school climate and safety
  - Improve organizational policies and workplace climate
  - Modify the physical and social environments of neighborhoods
- Strengthen economic supports for families**
  - Strengthen household financial security
  - Strengthen work-family supports
- Support survivors to increase safety and lessen harms**
  - Victim-centered services
  - Housing programs
  - First responder and civil legal protections
  - Patient-centered approaches
  - Treatment and support for survivors of IPV, including teen dating violence

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Injury Center*

**PUBLISHED OCTOBER, 2022**