

# Honoring Texas Victims

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*Family Violence Fatalities in 2022*

ANALYSIS REPORT



# Honoring Texas Victims

ANALYSIS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE FATALITIES

*In memory of the Texas women and men killed  
by their intimate partners in 2022*

# CONTENTS

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- 03** FORWARD
  - A message from TCFV's Chief Executive Officer, Gloria Aguilera Terry**
  
- 04** SECTION I
  - Honoring Texas Victims: 2022**
  
- 05** SECTION II
  - Family Violence in Texas: 2022 Statistics**
  
- 07** SECTION III
  - An Analysis of Intimate Partner and Stalking Homicides in 2022**
  
  - 07** WOMEN KILLED
  - 08** MEN KILLED
  - 08** LGBTQ+ VICTIMS
  - 09** HOMICIDE PERPETRATORS
  - 10** HOMICIDE SUICIDES & FAMILY ANNIHILATIONS
  - 10** INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDES ACROSS TEXAS COMMUNITIES
  
- 12** SECTION IV
  - Recognizing Lethal Risk Factors During Separation and Help-seeking**
  
  - 12** SEPARATION
  - 12** HELP-SEEKING
  - 12** POST-SEPARATION ABUSE
  - 13** LEGISLATION SUPPORTING POST-SEPARATION SAFETY
  
- 14** SECTION V
  - A Shifting and Perilous Landscape: Legal Obstacles to Survivor Safety and Well-being**
  
- 17** SECTION VI
  - Calls to Action**
  
  - 17** SUPPORT URGENT ACTION ON FIREARM SAFETY
  - 19** PROMOTE PREVENTION FOR ALL
  - 22** CHANGING THE TRAJECTORY IN TEXAS
  
- 24** APPENDIX I
  - BY THE NUMBERS: HHSC-FUNDED FAMILY VIOLENCE PROGRAMS**
  
- 25** APPENDIX II
  - FIREARM PROHIBITIONS APPLICABLE IN TEXAS**
  
- 26** Methodology
  
- 28** Report Contributors

## FORWARD

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Now in its 45th year of creating safer communities and freedom from family violence, the Texas Council on Family Violence embraces its pioneering past, vibrant present and unstoppable future.

Our foundation is inextricably tethered to our values and beliefs of being a trauma-informed, transformative, systems change organization that operates with integrity and transparency. We unapologetically look at intersectional factors and prioritize being responsive, collaborative, and innovative.

*Honoring Texas Victims has been and continues to be a crucial instrument of social change. It continues to inform changes to policy, practice, and training. Only by fully understanding the very conditions that permit violence to occur can we truly change the trajectory.*

In 2022, TCFV reviewed over 300 homicide cases and found 216 Texans killed in an intimate partner or stalking homicide. This represents an increase of eight percent compared to 2021. We agonize over homicides not included in the report for technical reasons; as a result, we know the real number is higher.

TCFV acknowledges, and research corroborates, that outcomes after a natural disaster, mark increases in family violence and intimate partner homicides. In 2020 and 2021, TCFV warned of coming increases in violence. In 2023, after the winter storms and the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic, those warnings materialized as calls to law enforcement on family violence and survivors' need for safety and shelter dramatically rose.

Simultaneously, we cannot disregard a current environment fraught with pronounced risks to survivors. Restrictions to reproductive health and choice, the ramifications of the Rahimi decision, which found the prohibited possessor protection under the Violence Against Women Act unconstitutional, and an attack on the LGBTQ+ community, already vulnerable to violence. All of these erode the bedrock of safety.

For some, this report is a mirror to hold up and identify your role in creating the change we as humanity envision. For others, this report is a magnifying glass that amplifies far too many systemic failures and gaps that may be easily remediated. Lastly, as you read the report, we invite you to consider each woman, man, and child referenced as a homicide victim when the stark reality is they were Mothers, Fathers, Sisters, Sons, and Daughters. We honor them in this report.

Prevention remains the beacon for TCFV. We are unwaveringly committed to strategies and approaches centered on healthy relationships and safety for everyone.

*Together we can imagine a society free of violence and help create it.*



Wishing you peace today and every day thereafter,

*Gloria Aguilera Terry*

**Gloria Aguilera Terry**  
CEO, TEXAS COUNCIL  
ON FAMILY VIOLENCE

SECTION I

# Honoring Texas Victims: 2022

# 216

TEXANS WERE KILLED BY THEIR INTIMATE PARTNERS ACROSS 64 COUNTIES IN 2022.

Counties indicated in white had one or more family violence fatalities where a victim was killed by an intimate partner or stalking perpetrator. No fatalities were documented in counties indicated in purple.

In 2022, TCFV recorded the deaths of 179 women and 37 men killed by an intimate partner or stalking perpetrator across 64 Texas counties. This includes 176 women killed by male partners, 34 men killed by female partners, and three women and three men killed by same-gender partners. Six LGBTQ+ victims and two women killed by a stalking perpetrator who sought unwanted relationships with them are among those killed.

The 216 Texans who lost their lives at the hands of an intimate partner can never fully and truly be represented in this report. Their lives reflected the richness and diversity of our state, and their deaths represent an incalculable loss to their families and communities. In their memory, we publish a record of the narratives of intimate partner homicide victims and offer this report as an analysis of demographics and risk factors to identify potential systemic gaps for survivor safety and offer holistic approaches to addressing domestic violence in Texas communities. In addition, this analysis provides a critical lens that examines domestic violence issues in the state, as well as tools and strategies for predicting lethality and preventing violence.

“It’s not only a loss for us... it’s a loss for everyone.”

— FAMILY MEMBER OF HOMICIDE VICTIMS

TCFV promotes cultural and systemic changes to prevent and end intimate partner abuse and uplift healthy, safe, respectful relationships. We stand with our partners in communities across the state who mobilize to improve outcomes for survivors and their families. As you read the following pages and the narratives of victims in 2022, we hope you will amplify our calls to action in your communities. Connect with TCFV to learn more.

INDIVIDUALLY WE POWER CHANGE.  
TOGETHER WE POWER A MOVEMENT.

SECTION II

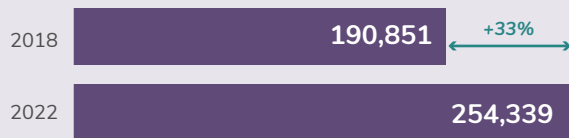
# Family Violence in Texas: 2022 Statistics

In 2022, the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) reported 254,339 family violence offenses compared to 231,207 in 2021, a 10% increase in just one year. This continues a longer-term increase in family violence offenses. The increase over the past five years is staggering, with 33% more cases in 2022 compared to 2018. Importantly, family violence homicides nearly doubled in the same five-year period. Current or former intimate partners comprised 52% of victims reported to DPS through the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Fourteen percent of family violence assaults (n=35,322) were classified as aggravated assault, typically involving weapons, strangulation, or other serious and injurious assaults; this represents a slight decrease from 2021.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, family violence centers reported increases across many metrics during the same time. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, 63,812 Texans received services at a family violence agency funded by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, a slight increase from the prior year.<sup>2</sup> Texas crisis lines responded to 275,481 calls for domestic violence, an increase of more than 20,000 calls compared to 2021.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, shelters offered 25% more nights of safety in FY 2022.<sup>4</sup> This percentage is a nearly direct correlation to data from The National Domestic Violence Hotline, which answered 25% more contacts in 2022 than in 2021 nationally, and a 20% increase in calls from Texas for that same period.<sup>5</sup>

*Over 275,000 calls were placed to a Texas crisis hotline for domestic violence in 2022.*

**Reported incidents of family violence in Texas, and homicides in particular, have increased significantly over the last five years.**



Type of offense %	2018	2022
ASSAULTS	96.0%	93.6%
HOMICIDES	.1%	.2%
KIDNAPPING	.5%	.6%
ROBBERIES	.4%	.6%
SEX OFFENSES	3.0%	4.3%

Battering Intervention and Prevention Programs (BIPPs) serve as an alternative to incarceration and an intervention for people who harm their partners to critically examine their belief systems connected to their choices to use violence and promote positive behavioral change. In the FY 2020-2021 biennium, there were 6,671 BIPP referral placements of domestic violence offenders in Texas made by system partners, such as from pretrial services, probation, and parole.<sup>6</sup> This number is remarkable considering that most BIPPs have seen reduced referrals due to slowdowns in court activities. The Texas Judicial Council estimated in 2021 that the court backlog is at three to five years, with jurisdictions all over the state reporting significant backlogs

1 Texas Department of Public Safety, Crime in Texas Online, Family Violence Summary Reports (2021, 2022), available at: <https://www.dps.texas.gov/section/crime-records/crime-texas>.  
 2 "Family Violence Program Statistics – Fiscal Year 2022." Texas Health and Human Services Commission Family Violence Program, Available upon request.  
 3 Ibid.  
 4 Ibid.  
 5 "A Year in Impact 2021 and 2022 reports." National Domestic Violence Hotline, <https://www.thehotline.org/stakeholders/impact-and-state-reports/>.  
 6 Texas Department of Criminal Justice. Battering Intervention and Prevention Program Evaluation Report. September 2022.

into 2022.<sup>7</sup> The Texas Judiciary reported that in FY 2022, there were more than 7.3 million filings, and judges disposed of more than 7.4 million cases — a 15% increase over FY 2021.<sup>8</sup> With the rise in data from other sources and the continued work of courts to clear backlogs, BIPPs should also be prepared for a large influx of referral placements.

***Battering Intervention and Prevention Programs (BIPPs) promote behavioral change for people who harm their partners.***

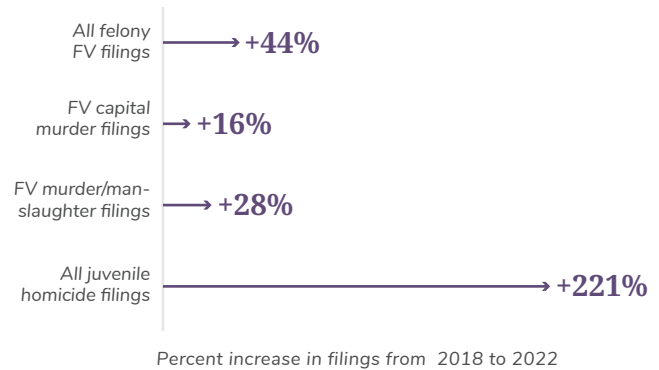
Domestic Violence High-Risk Teams (DVHRT) promote coordination between criminal legal, advocacy, and community partners to provide enhanced support to survivors at the highest risk for lethal violence. In FY22, TCFV awarded small grants to seven communities through funding from the Office of the Attorney General and the Criminal Justice Assistance Division of the Office of the Governor. The seven funded programs identified 478 high-risk cases in 2022.<sup>9</sup>

***Domestic Violence High Risk Teams (DVHRTs) provide enhanced support to survivors with the highest lethality risk.***

The Texas Office of Court Administration (OCA) produces the Annual Statistical Report for the Texas Judiciary and reported increases over five years like other data sources. The number of new felony family violence cases filed increased one percent from 2021 to 2022. However, the number of cases filed increased 44% over a five-year period. Following

the pattern of 2021, homicide filings for capital murder and murder/manslaughter increased by 4%. In five years, capital murder filings increased 16%. and murder/manslaughter filings increased 28%. Among juveniles, new homicide filings were alarmingly high, increasing by 57% between 2021 and 2022 and 221% since 2018. This includes all homicides, not specifically family violence-related homicides.<sup>10</sup>

**Statewide felony filings in Texas Courts have dramatically increased over the past five years.**



Family violence cases comprise the highest acquittal rates by a jury. In district courts, 40% of criminal family violence assaults were acquitted; in statutory courts, it is even higher at 69%. While each case has a unique set of factors, this high prevalence indicates a critical need for survivor support and a focus on prevention efforts that address the root causes of violence to interrupt the persistence of family violence and to mitigate lack of support for survivors in courts and other systems.<sup>11</sup>

**“ She leaves a huge emptiness in the hearts of all of us who loved her. ”**

7 Stinson, P., (2021, May 24) Texas Court Backlog Could Last Five Years Without More Funding. Bloomberg Law. Available at: <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/us-law-week/texas-court-backlog-could-last-five-years-without-more-funding>

8 “Annual Statistical Report for the Texas Judiciary - Fiscal Year 2022.” Office of Court Administration, <https://www.txcourts.gov/statistics/annual-statistical-reports/>

9 Domestic Violence High Risk Teams 2021 Statewide Report. Texas Council on Family Violence.

10 “Annual Statistical Report for the Texas Judiciary - Fiscal Year 2022.” Office of Court Administration, <https://www.txcourts.gov/statistics/annual-statistical-reports/>

11 Ibid.

SECTION III

# An Analysis of Intimate Partner and Stalking Homicides in 2022

## WOMEN KILLED

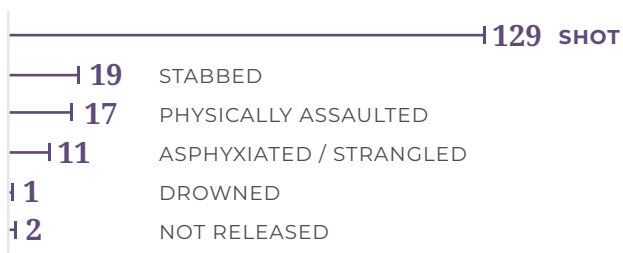
In 2022, 179 women were killed by an intimate partner or a stalking perpetrator. The number of women killed by men increased 6% from 169 women in 2021. Male-identified intimate partners killed 174 women, two women were killed by men who pursued unwanted romantic relationships and stalked them, and female-identified intimate partners killed three women.

The relationship status with the highest number of victims was **GIRLFRIEND**, followed by **WIFE**.



In 2022, 127 men and two women shot and killed their female intimate partners. Eighteen men and one woman stabbed their victims, and 11 men strangled or asphyxiated their victims. Seventeen men physically assaulted and killed victims. One man drowned his female-identified partner. The means of death were not released in two cases. In nine cases, multiple types of violence occurred.

Most female-identified victims (72%) were killed by **firearm**, making it the most common means of death.



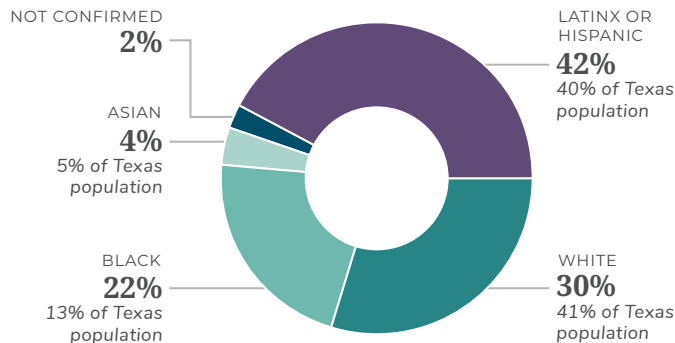
The ages of women and girls killed in 2022 ranged from 13 to 89. The highest age groups represented were women between 30 and 39, which increased 10% from 50 victims in 2021 to 55 in 2022. Women and girls under 19 increased from eight in 2021 to 15 in 2022. The number of women between the ages of 50 and 59 increased from seven in 2021 to 15 in 2022. Seven percent of women killed were over 60, a decrease from 12 percent of victims in 2021.

The highest age groups represented were female victims between 30-39 and 20-29, respectively.



In Texas in 2022, victims included 53 White women, four White women with an unknown ethnicity, 76 Latinx or Hispanic women, 39 Black women, and seven Asian women. There were no identified Native American victims in 2022.

Latinx or Hispanic women comprised **42%** of the victims, followed by **White women at 30%**

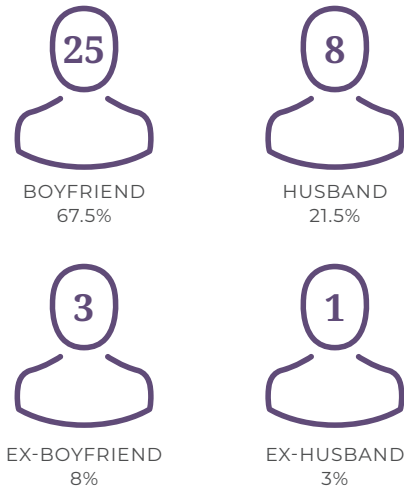




## MEN KILLED

In Texas in 2022, 37 men were killed by an intimate partner. The number of men killed by women increased 21%, from 28 in 2021 to 34 men in 2022. Three men were killed by same-gender partners, a 57% decrease from seven men killed by same-gender partners in 2021.

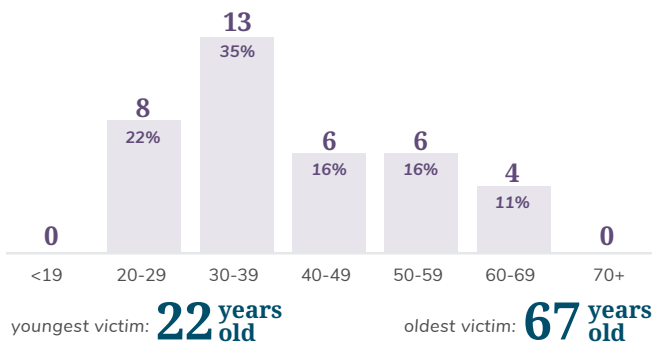
The relationship status with the highest number of victims was **BOYFRIEND**, followed by **HUSBAND**.



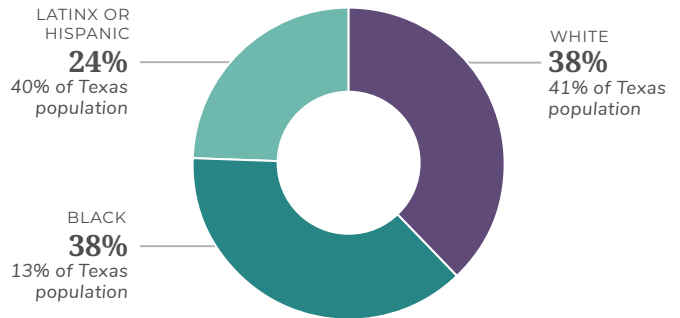
In 2022, 22 women and two men shot and killed their male intimate partners. Seven women stabbed their victims. Five women and one man used other means to kill their partners, including fire or arson, vehicular assault, physical assault, drowning, and strangulation.

The ages of men killed in 2022 ranged from 22 to 67. The highest age groups represented were men between the ages of 30 to 39, followed by those ages 20 to 29. Men between the ages of 30-39 saw the most significant increase, 6.5% higher than in 2021. Men over 70 also saw the largest decrease, with no victims over 70 in 2022 compared to three men in 2021.

The highest age groups represented were male victims between **30-39**, followed by those between **20-29**.



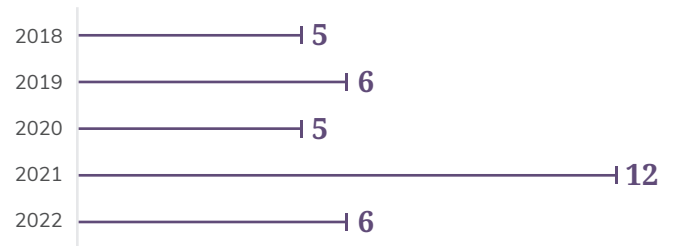
In Texas in 2022, victims included **14 White men (3 with an unknown ethnicity)**, **14 Black men**, and **9 Latinx or Hispanic men**.



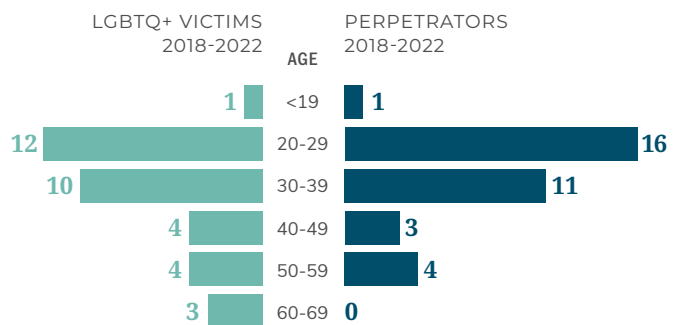
## LGBTQ+ VICTIMS

In 2022, six LGBTQ+ Texans were killed by their current or former intimate partners. This is a decrease from the highest number of 12 LGBTQ+ intimate partner homicides reported in 2021. Between 2018 and 2022, this report has documented 34 LGBTQ+ victims.

**Thirty-four LGBTQ+ victims have been documented since 2018, with 2022 seeing a decrease from 2021.**



Between 2018 and 2022, 35% of LGBTQ+ victims were between 20 and 29, and 29% were between 30 and 39. During that same time, 47% of homicides perpetrators were between 20 and 29, and 32% were between 30 and 39. In 2022, two LGBTQ+ victims were 20 to 29 years, two victims were 30 to 39, one victim was 50 to 59, and one victim was 60 to 69. Two perpetrators who killed LGBTQ+ victims were 20 to 29, three were 30 to 39, and one was 50 to 59.



Over the last five years, 68% of LGBTQ+ victims were shot and killed by their partners, which matches the percentage of firearm deaths for all intimate partner homicides reported during the same period. In 2022, three men were killed by their boyfriends, two women were killed by their girlfriends, and one woman was killed by her spouse. Four perpetrators used firearms to kill their partners, one perpetrator stabbed her partner, and one perpetrator physically assaulted his partner. Each of these cases is accounted for in the total number of women and men killed in the previous sections.

*LGBTQ+ survivors face barriers in help-seeking and reporting violence due to systemic intolerance and discrimination.*

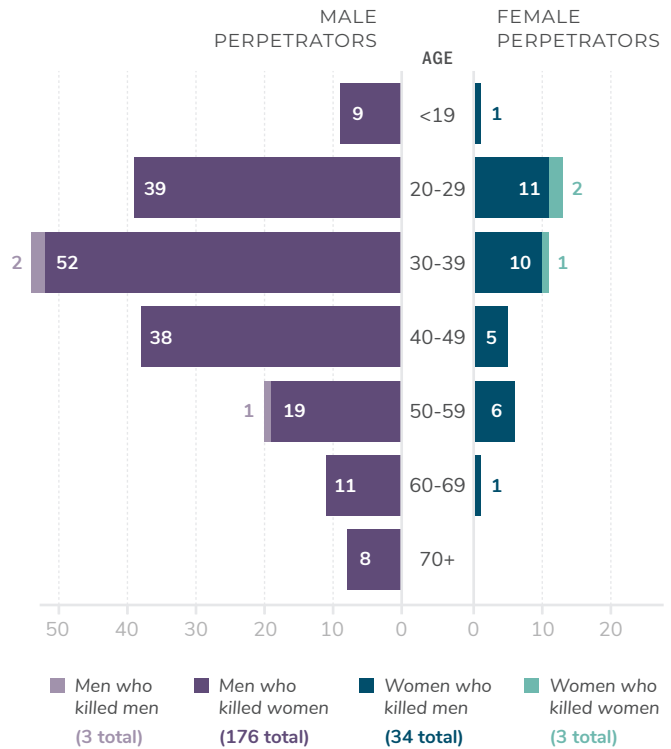
Encountering bias or lack of understanding regarding gender identity and sexual orientation limits the accessibility of community and systems-based services. Anti-trans and anti-LGBTQ+ policies and legislation reinforce the isolation and vulnerabilities that LGBTQ+ survivors experience.<sup>12</sup> To mitigate this higher risk of victimization and isolation, targeted outreach, partnerships with community-based LGBTQ+ organizations, and mobile advocacy can assist service providers in increasing access to advocacy and resources.<sup>13</sup>

**HOMICIDE PERPETRATORS**

The youngest perpetrator of intimate partner homicide was a teen boy, age 15, who shot and killed his girlfriend. The oldest was a man, age 87, who shot and killed his wife. In 2022, nine teen boys and men under 19 killed their female partners, a staggering increase compared to 2021, when only one perpetrator under 19 was reported. The most prevalent age group represented are perpetrators between 30 and 39. Thirty-nine men and 13 women between 20 and 29 killed their partners. Fifty-four men and 11 women between 30 and 39 killed their partners. Thirty percent of men who killed their partners were in this age group. Thirty-eight men and five women ages 40-49 killed their partners. Twenty men between the ages 50-59 killed their

partners, with nineteen female victims and one male victim. Eight men ages 70 and above killed their wives in 2022.

**The most prevalent age group represented are perpetrators between 30-39.**



Four men had a history of violence against a previous female partner and 45 had a history of violence against the women they ultimately killed. Three women had a history of violence against a previous male partner and two women had a history of violence against the male homicide victims they ultimately killed. One woman who killed her girlfriend had a history of abusive behavior.

Authorities charged 108 men who killed their partners with capital murder, murder, or manslaughter. Of those charged, five men remain at large and eight have been convicted and sentenced. Sixty-nine men died by suicide after killing their partners, including four men killed by law enforcement responding to the homicides, and two men died by other means. Authorities charged 33 women who killed their partners with capital murder, murder, or manslaughter. Three women died by suicide after killing their partners. A victim's family member killed one woman while she was released on bond.

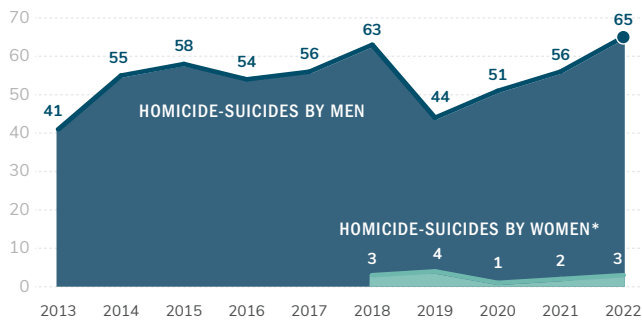
12 Understanding intimate partner violence in the LGBTQ+ community. (2022). Human Rights Campaign. <https://www.hrc.org/resources/understanding-intimate-partner-violence-in-the-lgbtq-community>

13 Brereton, A. I., Serrata, J. V., & Hurtado Alvarado, M. G. (2019). Understanding the needs of underserved communities in Texas. <https://texas-state-plan.tcfv.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Understanding-the-Needs-of-Underserved-Communities-8.20.pdf>. Texas Council on Family Violence.

## HOMICIDE-SUICIDES & FAMILY ANNIHILATIONS

In Texas, homicide-suicides increased seventeen percent from 2021 to 2022. Forty-two percent of perpetrators killed themselves following intimate partner homicides. An additional two percent engaged law enforcement in an armed stand-off and were killed by police. Men are much more likely to perpetrate homicide-suicides. In 2022, only two homicide-suicides were perpetrated by women.

**The number of men who died by suicide was higher in 2022 than any year in the last decade.**



Prior to 2020, a strong correlation between aging perpetrators and the prevalence of homicide-suicides was noted in this report. However, in recent years, that has begun to shift. While the percentage of men over 70 who perpetrate homicide-suicides has remained high at 75% in 2022, the percentage of perpetrators between 50 and 69 decreased by nearly half between 2018 and 2022. The number of men between 40 and 49 who perpetrate homicide-suicides has doubled over the same five-year period. Twenty-eight percent of men between the ages of 30 and 39 died by suicide following the homicides, and 31% of men between the ages of 20 and 29 died by suicide. In 2022, three teens under 19 died by suicide following an intimate partner homicide. Teens have perpetrated no homicide-suicides since 2018, when one teen perpetrator died by suicide. Women ages 24, 41, and 52 died by suicide after they killed their partners.

Underscoring the dangerousness of separating from an abusive intimate partner, women killed in homicide-suicides are commonly divorcing, separating or leaving their

relationship. Prior national research identified 40% of victims killed in homicide-suicides had separated or ended their relationships.<sup>14</sup> In 2022, 58% of Texas homicide-suicide victims had either ended or were in the process of ending their relationships with their abusive partners when they were killed.

A recent investigative analysis reported that Texas had more incidents of family annihilations, where a perpetrator killed more than one family member in a single incident, than any other state since 2020. Thirteen cases of intimate partner family annihilation are recorded in this report. These cases resulted in 40 deaths, including 34 homicides and six suicides. Most of those homicides were perpetrated by men and teen boys with firearms, and the majority included killing an intimate partner, children, and in-laws.<sup>15</sup>

*In 2022, Texas had more incidents of family annihilations than any other state since 2020.*

Prior domestic violence, access to guns, and substance use are common risk factors identified in this investigation of family annihilation homicides. Suicidal ideation is often coupled with possessiveness, controlling behaviors, and objectifying of one's partner and family, with a perpetrator planning the death of his family to co-occur with his own suicide.<sup>16</sup> These mass violence cases are devastating to Texas families and communities. Partnerships between domestic violence, suicide, and gun violence prevention organizations can promote awareness, access to resources, and strategies that mitigate these lethality risk factors for survivors and their families.

## INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDES ACROSS TEXAS COMMUNITIES

The 216 homicides documented in this report occurred in 64 Texas counties in 2022. Fifty-six percent of homicides occurred in the ten most populous counties in the state, except for Fort Bend County, where no intimate partner homicides were reported. Fifty-one fatalities occurred

14 Eliason S. (2009). Murder-suicide: a review of the recent literature. *The Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*, 37(3), 371–376.

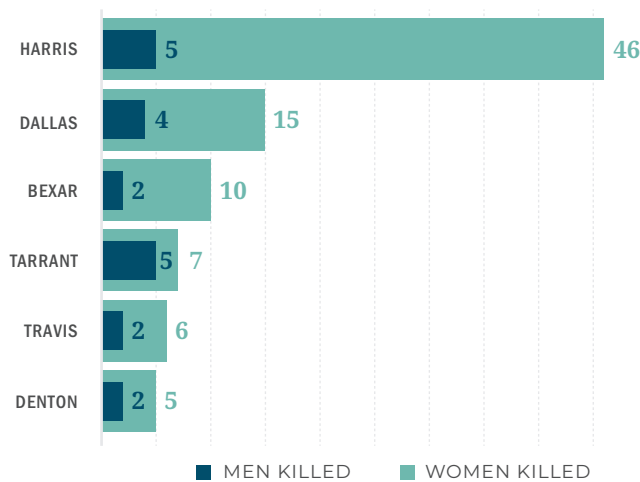
15 Austin American-Statesman. (2023). Family Annihilation. Austin American-Statesman. <https://data.statesman.com/family-annihilation/?page=1&searchtext=texas>

16 Molloy, M. C. (2023, September 1). American Annihilation: US families face a unique danger – murder from within. *The Indianapolis Star*. <https://www.indystar.com/story/news/investigations/2023/07/13/family-annihilation-investigation-domestic-violence-murder-suicide/69937389007/>

in Harris County, an increase from 46 deaths in 2021. Fatalities in Dallas County decreased 17% from 2021 to 19 fatalities in 2022. Twelve fatalities were reported in both Tarrant and Bexar Counties. Eight fatalities occurred in Travis County, and seven occurred in Denton County. Four fatalities occurred in Collin, Hidalgo, and El Paso Counties.

Montgomery, Potter, and Bastrop Counties each reported five fatalities in 2022. Four fatalities each occurred in Lubbock, McLennan, Jefferson, Midland, and Ector Counties. Twenty-three fatalities occurred in rural-designated counties with populations of 50,000 or less.

**Texas counties with the largest populations report the highest number of fatalities.**



County	Men Killed	Women Killed	Population
ANDREWS	0	1	18,610
ANGELINA	1	2	86,395
ARANSAS	0	1	23,830
AUSTIN	1	0	30,167
BASTROP	0	5	97,216
BELL	0	3	370,647
BEXAR	2	10	2,009,324
BRAZORIA	0	1	372,031
BURNET	0	1	49,130
CHAMBERS	0	1	46,571
COLLIN	1	3	1,064,465
COLORADO	1	0	20,557
CORYELL	0	1	83,093
DALLAS	4	15	2,613,539
DENTON	2	5	906,422
DIMMIT	0	1	8,615
ECTOR	1	3	165,171

County	Men Killed	Women Killed	Population
EL PASO	0	4	865,657
ELLIS	1	0	192,455
ERATH	0	1	42,545
FAYETTE	0	1	24,435
FRIO COUNTY	0	1	18,385
GALVESTON	1	2	350,682
GONZALES	1	0	19,653
GRAYSON	0	1	135,543
GREGG	0	1	124,239
HARRIS	5	46	4,731,145
HAYS	0	1	241,067
HIDALGO	1	3	870,781
HOOD	0	1	61,598
HOWARD	0	1	34,860
JACKSON	0	1	14,988
JEFFERSON	1	3	256,526
KLEBERG	0	1	31,040
LIBERTY	0	1	91,628
LLANO	0	1	21,243
LUBBOCK	1	3	310,639
MCLENNAN	1	3	260,579
MIDLAND	0	4	169,983
MONTGOMERY	0	5	620,443
NACOGDOCHES	0	1	64,653
NAVARRO	0	1	52,624
NUECES	0	1	353,178
PARKER	1	0	148,222
PARMER	0	1	9,869
POLK	1	0	50,123
POTTER	2	3	118,525
RANDALL	1	1	140,753
REAGAN	0	1	3,385
ROCKWALL	0	1	107,819
SAN JACINTO	0	1	27,402
SMITH	0	2	233,479
TARRANT	5	7	2,110,640
TAYLOR	0	1	143,208
TOM GREEN	0	2	120,003
TRAVIS	2	6	1,290,188
VAN ZANDT	0	2	59,541
VICTORIA	0	1	91,319
WARD	0	1	11,644
WEBB	0	1	267,114
WICHITA	0	2	129,350
WILLACY	0	1	20,164
WILLIAMSON	0	3	609,017
WILSON	0	1	49,753

## SECTION IV

# Recognizing Lethal Risk Factors During Separation and Help-seeking

---

It is evident that “Why don’t they just leave?” is the wrong question when considering intimate partner violence. Ending an abusive relationship is incredibly dangerous, even in relationships with no known prior physical violence. Survivors experience extreme risk, especially in the first few weeks and months after separating from an abusive partner. That risk can remain high as contact is necessary because children are involved or when the abusive partners continue harassment, monitoring, and stalking long after their relationships end.

### *Abusive partners often escalate violence and threats post-separation.*

The case narratives published with this report illustrate the danger domestic violence offenders pose to their partners, particularly post-separation. People who harm their partners commonly escalate violence and threats to exert power and control in their relationships after attempts to separate. Homicide victims experienced stalking, digital abuse, threats, and coercion to drop charges or protective orders after separation.

Communities need to shift from asking why a survivor does not leave to asking what we can do to mitigate the risk individuals who harm their partners pose to survivor safety and well-being.

## SEPARATION

TCFV identified that 51% of victims killed in 2022 by an intimate partner had taken steps to address the abuse. Eighty-two victims had ended or taken steps to end their relationships, including relocating, filing for divorce, seeking a protective order, or telling someone they planned to end their relationship. Twelve victims had told their partners that they wanted to end their relationships immediately prior to being killed. Seven victims were killed within days or weeks of ending their relationships. In total, 23%

of victims who were identified as ending their relationship were killed within four weeks of ending their relationship.

## HELP-SEEKING

Forty-two victims discussed relationship abuse with friends or family members. Law enforcement responded in 21 identified cases prior to the murders. Six perpetrators had family violence cases that were pending investigation or adjudication. In one case, a prior strangulation charge resulted in deferred adjudication and stay-away orders, and in another, the homicide perpetrator had pled guilty to felony aggravated assault. Three identified prior cases resulted in no charges. Eleven victims had received Magistrates Orders of Emergency Protection (MOEPs) or planned to apply for protective orders. Seven victims sought protection by other means, including reporting parole or probation violations and seeking mental health services for their abusive partners. Information regarding domestic violence advocacy services is not available due to confidentiality and privacy protections.

“ *She made each day better with her positive attitude, witty sense of humor and amazing work ethic.* ”

## POST-SEPARATION ABUSE

Twelve homicide victims had experienced stalking and digital abuse prior to their murders. One perpetrator tracked the victim’s vehicle with a GPS device. In 28 cases, homicide perpetrators made prior threats to kill the victims, to harm children or others, or threatened victims with weapons. Some of the homicide perpetrators escalated harassment and abuse through child custody and divorce proceedings, using frequent filings and court requests to be in proximity or to challenge their ex-partners. In several case narratives, homicide perpetrators used luring tactics, such as exchanging belongings, to be in closer proximity to their ex-partners.

## Legislation Supporting Post-Separation Safety

In 2022 many victims sought support to end the abuse or to leave the relationship. With research showing that leaving is the most dangerous time for survivors, protections that bolster privacy and safety can be imperative. In the 88<sup>th</sup> Regular Legislative Session, many measures that supported survivor privacy rights were successfully passed.

- » **HB 2715 (Hull/Alvarado)**  
allows courts to address and prohibit tracking an individual physically or electronically in protective orders, temporary divorce orders, and conditions of bond, and includes the same list of behavior as the harassment statute in the Penal Code.
- » **SB 578 (Zaffirini/ Thompson)**  
provided an avenue for survivors to request to keep their county of residence confidential in the protective order process, adding to protections already present for home addresses and further limiting locating information.

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Along with these measures, Texas became one of a few states to regulate data brokers in 2023. Data brokers gather personal information that has become publicly available and synthesize it into personally identifying reports on individuals. These represent a significant safety risk for survivors attempting to protect identifying information such as their address.

- » **SB 2105 (Johnson/ Holland)**  
requires the Secretary of State to host a data broker registry and for all data brokers conducting business in Texas to register, allowing survivors a streamlined way to opt-out and protect their data.

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Finally, two measures protect survivors' information on occupational licenses and further survivor safety and economic support.

- » **SB 510 (Perry/Longoria)**  
protects Texans, including survivors, by prohibiting disclosure of identifying information related to their occupational license, such as home address and telephone.
- » **HB 3130 (Guerra/ Zaffirini)**  
furthered this protection for survivors of family violence, sexual assault, or human trafficking allowing them to request that all information held by the occupational licensing board be confidential.

## SECTION V

# A Shifting and Perilous Landscape: Legal Obstacles to Survivor Safety and Well-being

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Recent changes in state and federal law, largely driven by recent federal court decisions, are impacting safety risks for survivors in Texas. These court rulings have limited options for survivors and exacerbated vulnerabilities to abuse. When individual rights and options are restricted, safety decreases and the risk of lethal violence increases.

### REDUCING HEALTHCARE OPTIONS DECREASES SAFETY

When the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* in June 2022, authority for making decisions on how to regulate abortion was granted to individual states.<sup>17</sup> A law passed by the Texas Legislature in 2021 immediately prohibited all abortions in Texas, with exceptions for pregnancy-related life-threatening conditions.<sup>18</sup> The narrow exceptions have created confusion, fear, and disparate practice among medical providers, leading to some women's lives being held in a dangerous balance while providers determine the course of treatment considering the law and their licensure.

Abuse that begins or escalates during pregnancy is a significant lethality risk indicator.<sup>19</sup> Research indicates that homicide is the leading cause of death among pregnant and postpartum women in the U.S., and those homicides are most often linked to domestic violence and firearms.<sup>20</sup> In Texas, between 2017 and 2021, 50 women were killed by their intimate partners when they were pregnant or within

one year postpartum. In 2022, 17 pregnant or postpartum women were intimate partner homicide victims.

Healthcare providers are a critical link to information and safety for pregnant and postpartum patients. Routine visits throughout pregnancy allow healthcare providers to build rapport, assess changes, and provide universal education to patients. Reducing options from healthcare providers adds to the barriers already prevalent for pregnant survivors seeking routine healthcare.

*Limiting healthcare options adds to barriers already prevalent for pregnant survivors seeking routine healthcare and exacerbates disparities.*

In Texas, the rates of reproductive coercion occur at three times the national average, translating to more survivors having restricted reproductive and contraceptive choices by abusers and making pregnancy prevention challenging.<sup>21</sup> Texas also has persistent and significant health disparities, as evidenced by our state's particularly high rates of maternal mortality among Black women.<sup>22</sup> Removing abortion care as a legal option in Texas exacerbates health disparities and vulnerabilities for survivors experiencing domestic violence.

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17 *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, No. 19-1392, 597 U.S. (2022) [https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/21pdf/19-1392\\_6j37.pdf](https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/21pdf/19-1392_6j37.pdf)

18 87(R) HB 1280 - Introduced version - Bill Text. (n.d.). <https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/87R/billtext/html/HB01280I.htm>

19 Campbell, Jacquelyn C., et al. "Risk factors for femicide in abusive relationships: results from a multisite case control study." *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 93, no. 7, 2003, pp. 1089-97, doi:10.2105/ajph.93.7.1089.

20 *Homicide leading cause of death for pregnant women in U.S.* (2022b, October 21). News. <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/homicide-leading-cause-of-death-for-pregnant-women-in-u-s/>

21 Wood, L., Backes, B.L., McGiffert, M., Wang, A., Thompson, J. & Wasim, A. (2019). *Texas state plan 2018: Availability of services at Texas family violence programs and assessment of unmet needs of survivors of family violence*. Austin, Texas: The University of Texas at Austin Steve Hicks School of Social Work and Texas Council on Family Violence.

22 Texas Health and Human Services Commission, Department of State Health Services. (2022, December). *Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee and Department of State Health Services Joint Biennial Report 2022*. <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/legislative/2022-Reports/Joint-Biennial-MMMRC-Report-2022.pdf>

## PREVENTION TOUCH POINTS WITHIN MATERNAL HEALTHCARE

According to the Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee, 27% of pregnancy-related deaths in Texas resulted from suicide or homicide, with intimate partner violence, firearms, and impeding breath (strangulation, asphyxiation) as leading contributors.<sup>23</sup> Recognizing the extreme risk intimate partner violence poses to pregnant and postpartum individuals, the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) sought and received a federal grant to form the Texas Strategic Action Partnership to Reduce Violent Pregnancy-Associated Deaths in 2021. Under DSHS leadership, in collaboration with HHSC Family Violence Program and TCFV, the Partnership will develop a strategic action plan and implement evidence-based, sustainable interventions for prevention.<sup>24</sup> This Partnership represents an opportunity to further engage healthcare providers in addressing intimate partner violence in prenatal, delivery, and postpartum care.

Texas has the highest number and highest percentage of uninsured residents in the nation.<sup>25</sup> A giant step forward for maternal health and coverage came through legislation in the 88<sup>th</sup> Session, championed by Rep. Toni Rose (Dallas). HB 12 extends postpartum Medicaid coverage for an entire year.<sup>26</sup> This expanded access provides vital points for intervention within healthcare settings. Increased funding for access to healthcare offers an opportunity for protective and preventive engagement and, importantly, to address racial disparities in maternal health outcomes.

## UNCERTAINTY AND LACK OF CLARITY ON FIREARMS PROHIBITIONS INCREASE RISKS

Compounding the impact of the Dobbs decision was a recent decision around firearms and prohibited possessors. In February 2023, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit struck down a provision of federal law created through the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) that prohibits people subject to domestic violence protective orders

from possessing firearms. The Court's jurisdiction impacted the federal firearm prohibition enforcement in Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Texas has a state law that also prohibits the possession of firearms for respondents during the valid period of the protective order. Section 46.04 (c) of the Texas Penal Code remains in effect while the Rahimi case proceeds to the US Supreme Court.<sup>27</sup>

Protective orders are a key remedy available for survivors. Notably, criminal legal system involvement is not required for protective orders. They are a mechanism for survivors to directly petition for a civil court order to address and protect them from abuse. The Rahimi decision weakens the protection afforded through protective orders to survivors and accountability for respondents by removing the firearm prohibitions.

*The Supreme Court ruling on the Rahimi case will determine whether or not firearm prohibitions will remain in place for possessors subject to domestic violence protective orders.*

The Rahimi decision has caused alarm across the nation. Anecdotal reports have been cited of judges refusing to employ state-codified prohibited possessor admonishments for protective orders. Calls to the National Domestic Violence Hotline specifically citing firearms have increased dramatically, a 47% increase in Texas when comparing similar timeframes in 2022 to 2023.<sup>28</sup> These prohibited possessor laws were rarely implemented due to a lack of firearms transfer protocols statewide and now represent an unkept critical safety promise to survivors at the most dangerous time in their relationship. The U.S. Supreme Court will hear the Rahimi case in the fall of 2023, and in the meantime, TCFV expresses grave concern about its devastating impact on survivor safety.

23 Ibid.

24 Texas Health and Human Services Commission. (2022). State Efforts to Address Maternal Depression, Mortality and Morbidity in Texas. <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/state-efforts-maternal-mortality-morbidity-dec-2022.pdf>

25 Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, Grubbs, S., & Wright, B. (2020, October). Uninsured Texans. <https://comptroller.texas.gov/economy/fiscal-notes/2020/oct/uninsured.php>

26 Clark, P. (2023). Governor signs HB 12 to extend TX moms' postpartum health coverage to 12 months. Texans Care for Children. <https://txchildren.org/posts/2023/6/15/governor-signs-hb-12-to-extend-tx-moms-postpartum-health-coverage-to-12-months>

27 United States v. Rahimi. (2023). [https://www.supremecourt.gov/DocketPDF/22/22-915/259334/20230317174308399\\_Rahimi%20Pet%20-%20final.pdf](https://www.supremecourt.gov/DocketPDF/22/22-915/259334/20230317174308399_Rahimi%20Pet%20-%20final.pdf)

28 "National Domestic Violence Hotline Firearm Data Analysis." (2022) National Domestic Violence Hotline.



In 2022, prior to the Rahimi ruling, TCFV reported over 70% of intimate partner homicides involved a firearm. Further compounding this tragic outcome is a continued upward trend of full Texas domestic violence shelters. In 2011 just over 20% of survivors were denied shelter simply because the shelter was full. By 2022, 50% of survivors seeking shelter were denied due to capacity. The number can be as high as 75% in some major metro areas.<sup>29</sup> Shelters reaching capacity have dire consequences for survivors. While fleeing abusive relationships, survivors can choose to seek support at community centers or with friends and family. However, thousands of survivors with dire safety concerns, such as having an abusive partner who has a firearm, must seek safety at a shelter each year.

“ *The person who is abusing always covers their tracks because others believe what they say, that they are not violent people, but once you have done this and gotten no help, you will fall back into your ways.* ”

— FAMILY MEMBER OF VICTIM

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29 Family Violence Program Statistics. Texas Health and Human Services Commission Family Violence Program. Available upon request.

## SECTION VI

# Calls to Action

### SUPPORT URGENT ACTION ON FIREARM SAFETY

Research, including this report, has demonstrated that firearms in abusive relationships lead to devastating, lethal outcomes for victims, law enforcement, and communities. Increased access to guns is linked to more women murdered by intimate partners.<sup>30</sup> Women are more likely to die at the hands of someone they know in states with greater proportions of gun owners.<sup>31</sup>

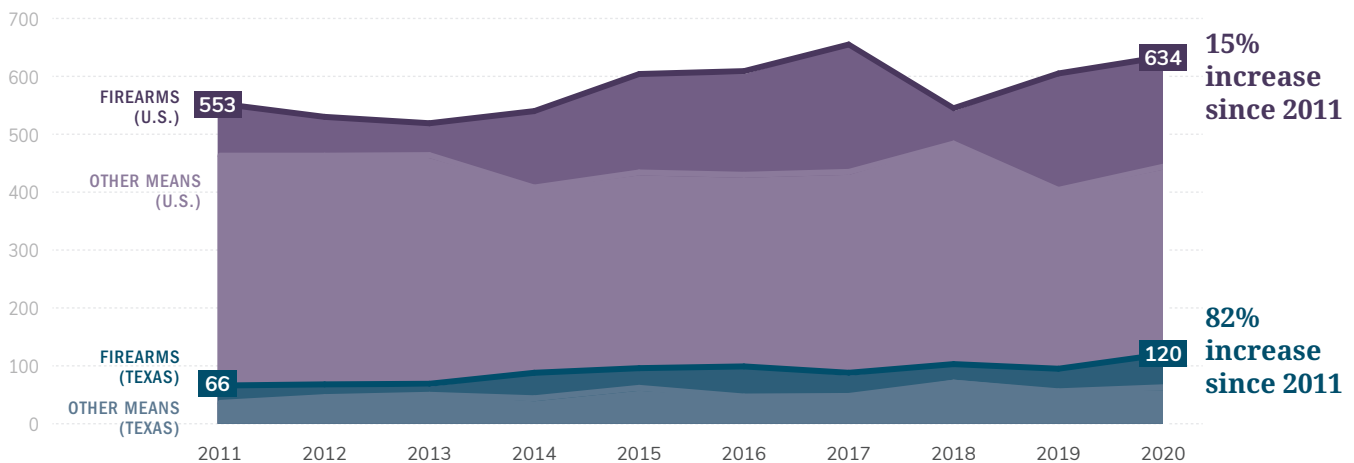
Over the last decade, the number of firearm holders in Texas has tripled, while the number of women killed by an intimate partner has nearly doubled. Between 2011 and 2020, there was a 15% increase in firearm-perpetrated intimate partner homicides in the U.S. and an 82% increase in Texas. In a recent study of intimate partner homicides in one Texas county from 2010 to 2014, 55% of intimate partner femicides and 43% of intimate partner male homicides were committed with a firearm between 2010 and

2014.<sup>32</sup> By 2022, firearms account for the means of death in over 70% of intimate partner homicides.

*Firearms account for the means of death in over 70% of intimate partner homicides.*

In 2022, TCFV identified that 18 victims were killed by someone who was a prohibited possessor. This number is likely underestimated because there is no single data source to publicly access this information. Many more victims had sought help addressing histories of violence in their relationships, which indicates there is likely more criminal legal system involvement that would trigger firearm prohibitions. In data from a sample of over 475 family violence incidents taken from seven Domestic Violence High-Risk Teams (DVHRTs) funded across the state in 2022, nearly

**Between 2011 and 2020, there was a 15% increase in firearm-perpetrated intimate partner homicides in the U.S. and an 82% increase in Texas.**



30 Campbell, Jacquelyn C., et al. "Risk factors for femicide in abusive relationships: results from a multisite case control study." *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 93, no. 7, 2003, pp. 1089-97, doi:10.2105/ajph.93.7.1089.

31 Siegel, M. B., & Rothman, E. F. (2016). Firearm Ownership and the Murder of Women in the United States: Evidence That the State-Level Firearm Ownership Rate Is Associated with the Nonstranger Femicide Rate. *Violence and Gender*, 3(1), 20–26. <https://doi.org/10.1089/vio.2015.0047>

32 Koppa, V., & Messing, J. T. (2021). Can justice system interventions prevent intimate partner homicide? An analysis of rates of help seeking prior to fatality. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 36(17–18), 8792–8816. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260519851179>

half (n=193) of offenders had a gun and guns were directly involved against the victim in 52 cases.<sup>33</sup>

The link between the prevalence of firearms in Texas domestic violence cases and the heightened risk firearm possession is clear. Yet in Texas, less than ten counties have addressed firearm prohibitions through a structured firearm transfer protocol. TCFV has called for state and local leadership to strengthen firearm prohibition enforcement and extended funding opportunities for local communities to develop protocols. Still, implementing firearm transfer protocols and proactively removing firearms from domestic violence offenders remains one of the leading homicide prevention efforts needed in Texas.

It also stands to unify Texas advocates helping survivors safely navigate an ever-changing and increasingly uncertain legal terrain. We must emphasize our commitment to survivor safety via effective firearms transfer implementation. We must also continue building our tertiary prevention strategies and support enhanced access to services, Battering Intervention and Prevention Programs (BIPPs), Domestic Violence High-Risk Teams (DVHRTs), and Lethality Assessment Protocols (LAP) statewide.

Working collaboratively across systems is imperative. A clear understanding of available resources and relevant law and consistent application of laws and resources meant to protect survivors increase survivor safety. Developing sus-

**While gun violence prevention requires implementation of multiple strategies, firearm transfer protocols represent a practical opportunity to significantly reduce intimate partner homicides.**

TCFV has previously identified in a sample study that between 35-40% of homicide perpetrators who used a firearm to kill their partners were prohibited possessors.<sup>34</sup> The case narratives published with this report demonstrate the urgent need for firearm prohibition admonishment and enforcement. These tragic outcomes show just how important firearm transfers are to the safety of survivors.

- » Maceo White had been charged with assault family violence, terroristic threat, and convicted of a third-degree felony for family violence before he shot and killed Shiakar Brantley in April 2022. He had previously pointed a firearm at Shiaker and threatened to kill her when she was pregnant, and he was prohibited from possessing firearms.
- » Devin Allen was prohibited from possessing firearms due to criminal history and bond conditions when he shot and killed Amber Butler, days before she was scheduled to deliver her baby.
- » In September 2021, James Ochoa was arrested for assaulting Victoria Robles, who was six weeks pregnant. An emergency protective order was issued and his legal ability to possess firearms suspended under conditions of release. His firearms, ammunition, and concealed carry license were seized. In February 2022, the case was no-billed by a grand jury, and Ochoa's firearms were returned to him in March 2022. Less than two months later, in May 2022, he shot and killed Victoria when her daughter was one month old. An effective firearm transfer protocol removed firearms for the period of Ochoa's restrictions tied to his criminal legal case and, unfortunately, the firearms were returned when the restrictions were lifted.

This confluence of factors, and the clear presence of identifiable risk factors for so many of the victims killed in 2022, raises deep concerns for survivors at high risk in Texas.

tainable practices for asking about firearms and transferring them away from prohibited possessors is a solution that does not require policy or legislative change, but that

33 "Domestic Violence High-Risk Teams: 2022 Statewide Report." (2023) Texas Council on Family Violence, [www.tcfv.org](http://www.tcfv.org)

34 See Appendix II for further information on firearm prohibitions in Texas.

will quite literally save the lives of hundreds of Texans. In the absence of legislative action, community leadership must be the road to design protocols that can save lives and demonstrate the potential to be replicated statewide. Having regular and routine cross-systems collaborative conversations provides opportunities to increase clarity, reduce confusion, and build safety nets that support survivors effectively navigating multiple systems.

## PROMOTE PREVENTION FOR ALL

Prevention is a cornerstone of the movement to end intimate partner violence. Through strategies encompassing primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention, great strides have been made to ensure everyone has access to life-saving education and services. Prevention education addresses the myriad of individual, relational, community and societal risk factors at the root. Making information available about healthy relationships and options for addressing abuse across the lifespan is fundamental to reversing the alarming trend of increasing intimate partner homicides in Texas.

### Youth Education

The threat of violence is real for young people navigating dating relationships. In 2022, 19 young people between the ages of 13-21 were murdered in the context of dating violence or stalking. Addressing firearm safety and healthy relationships with young people is equally critical, as 16 of the 19 young people were killed by a perpetrator with a firearm. All victims were female or non-binary individuals. All the young people who perpetrated the violence were male-identified. Three of those who killed partners with a firearm were under 18.

Consider the case of Frank DeLeon Jr., 17, who shot Diamond Alvarez 22 times in January 2022. DeLeon had previously assaulted Diamond and threatened her with a firearm. Diamond had ended the relationship with DeLeon. In another case, Christian Ramirez, 15, was prohibited from possessing a firearm because of his age and his probation status when he shot and killed Kiera Blackshear in June 2022. These tragic losses of life and incarcerations of young people can certainly be prevented. Directing young people who threaten or abuse their partners to appropriate interventions and addressing firearm safety and prohibitions are critical components to be paired with universal education on healthy relationships.

## *Educating young people on healthy relationships is a critical component to prevention.*

One of the most important aspects of supporting youth who experience violence is creating a whole school community centered on healthy relationship education and support for youth. Texas has long been a leader in this education, becoming one of the first states in the nation to pass required dating violence policies and education in 2007. Recent law changes, however, have created new layers of administrative burden making it challenging to continue to create access for youth to this key education on healthy relationships.

These changes, brought forward by SB 9 in the Second Special Session of the 87<sup>th</sup> Legislature, had some well-intentioned positive changes, but have also resulted in barriers as well. Chiefly SB 9 created parental opt-ins to education

around dating violence, domestic violence, and child abuse, which are likely to impact the most vulnerable children in schools. The importance of parents' role in healthy relationship education is essential given the importance of supportive adults in young people's lives, and having the ability to opt out would give parents a mechanism for

addressing any concerns that may arise. However, there are significant administrative barriers to getting many parents to opt in to healthy relationship education, which are considerably diminishing the number of students who participate. TCFV raises this critical issue for consideration: How do we promote healthy relationship education and violence prevention with youth who have not opted-in to these school-based resources? These barriers go against a growing call from survivors for violence prevention and call to question how young Texans would know to get support and resources when experiencing violence.

Family violence programs have been steadfast, creating solutions for school partners to capitalize on, but in some areas, extensive barriers exist. As a result, some Texas cities, towns, and neighborhoods completely lack healthy relationship education for young people.

When navigating challenging situations, especially in their dating relationships, young people often turn to each other for help and advice before speaking with an adult. Universal

“ *She loved dancing and doing TikToks, listening to music, and hanging out with her friends.* ”

prevention education is a powerful tool to provide unbiased, accurate information about healthy and unhealthy relationships and the available resources. Depriving young people and adults in their networks of this life-saving education is irresponsible and dangerous. Empowering youth with this information to support each other and to increase their confidence in approaching trusted adults for help (along with training educators in best practices and safety planning) creates safer communities.

*Universal education empowers youth with information to support each other, while increasing their confidence in approaching trusted adults for help.*

Prevention experts have worked to innovate their prevention practice in response to these new barriers in partnering with schools. From engaging with new partners to using social media and other technological means to offering parenting support in various modalities, prevention educators are leaving no stone unturned. Through it all, programs have been working to rebuild their relationships with school campuses and meet the unique administrative needs. During this time, young people may be without life-saving education that can change their lives and the lives of those in their community. With a significant rise in youth homicide, we must seek to start this dialogue in our schools and other youth supporting agencies.

Healthy relationship education should be available universally to support youth who have never experienced or witnessed violence and those who already have to empower all of them with accurate information and helpful resources. The outcomes of youth engaged in these programs are remarkable. The strategy to offer universal education to youth has increased the ability of youth to seek help in the event of a dating violence emergency. Additionally, experts utilize strengths-based approaches to support a positive and healthy understanding of masculinity among male students. Additionally, educators can help young male students connect with helping resources if they find they use power and control or are victims of dating violence.

***Laws Supporting Prevention in Texas Schools***

A holistic strategy for creating safer communities prioritizes providing healthy relationship education on school campuses. Strong partnerships between K-12 schools and local family violence programs have provided education about developing and maintaining healthy relationships and facilitated direct connection to advocacy and resources for young people and families experiencing dating abuse or domestic violence.

Laws require this access for all youth needing help. When a young person experiences violence they should be able to speak to a counselor, teacher, or other school professional and expect action to be taken that prioritizes their safety. School leaders should readily engage with family violence programs to get resources and help directly to the young person and their family. Many school districts are misinterpreting these same laws, and some schools are choosing to eradicate their relationship with local family violence programs in fear of backlash from misinformed parents and community members.

***Section 37.0831, Texas Education Code***

This section has been in place for over 15 years and established a requirement for school districts to have dating violence policies, including safety planning and training for teachers and administrators at all campuses with sixth grade or higher among other key provisions. Notably, SB 9 in the 87th 2nd Special Called Session amended this section to require school districts to make available “age-appropriate educational materials that include information on the dangers of dating violence; and resources to students seeking help.”

***Section 28.004 (8), (j-2), (q-1-6), Texas Education Code***

These sections were added in 2021 by SB 9 in the 87th 2nd Special Called Session and an overview of this law and its impacts on TCFV’s website. It represents curricula a district may offer focused on child abuse, family violence, dating violence, and sex trafficking.

## Partner Abuse Intervention and Prevention

Ending intimate partner-related family violence must include addressing the person using violence. Intimate partner violence-related homicides are underpinned by perpetrators' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, commonly violent jealousy, possessiveness of their partners, stalking, and other controlling behaviors. Texas communities need all levels of the criminal legal and support services systems to hold those harming their partners accountable. The most effective and appropriate referral for someone abusing their partner is to a Battering Intervention and Prevention Program (BIPP) accredited by Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Community Justice Assistance Division (TDCJ-CJAD).

Accountability represents one of the strongest steps towards changing abusive behavior. Accredited BIPPs maintain accountability and promote positive behavioral change by directly challenging, educating, and addressing the attitudes, beliefs, and entitlements contributing to their violent behavior. Accredited BIPPs require participants to commit to being non-abusive and non-controlling with their intimate partner and a not using violence as a form of control with their intimate partner, children, and household. Accredited BIPPs also encourage participants to commit to repairing past harm committed toward the victim, their family, and community in a way that does not infringe on their autonomy.

*“ She was one of the most loving, fun and empathetic people I've ever met. You could share absolutely anything with her in complete confidence. ”*

## BIPP Effectiveness

Program completion is strongly linked to violence prevention. Three Texas-based studies demonstrated when domestic violence offenders did not complete BIPP, they were twice as likely to commit a subsequent violent offense than participants who completed the programs.<sup>35</sup> In addition, offenders whose intimate partner violence charge was dismissed were 95% more likely to be arrested again within 12 months.<sup>36</sup> The lowest recidivism rates were demonstrated when an offender was referred to an accredited BIPP and completed program requirements in comparison to those who did not complete.<sup>37</sup> In the fiscal year 2021, the state of Texas reported BIPP completion rates as 65%.<sup>38</sup>

In reviewing available background information, TCFV identified that 55 homicide perpetrators had known histories of violence against the homicide victim or a prior intimate partner, yet only two had been previously ordered to attend a BIPP. Successful program completion was not confirmed in either case. However, one of the offenders ordered to BIPP had his probation revoked for non-compliance with his supervision requirements. Ensuring participants complete is a coordinated community effort that contributes substantially to reducing future violence.

35 Miciak, Jeremy Ph.D. (2012). *Program Report: Battering Intervention and Prevention Program (BIPP): Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse* ADVA, Harris County. Texas Institute for Measurement, Evaluation, and Statistics (TIMES). Department of Psychology. The University of Houston.

36 Boots, D. P., Wareham, J., Bartula, A., & Cañas, R. (2016). A Comparison of the Batterer Intervention and Prevention Program With Alternative Court Dispositions on 12-Month Recidivism. *Violence Against Women*, 22(9), 1134–1157.

37 Hollier, V. (2017). *Batterer's Intervention and Prevention Program Recidivism (BIPP) Study. Calendar Years 2014-2016. Justice Planning and Counseling and Education Services (CES)*.

38 Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). (2022). *Battering Intervention and Prevention Program Evaluation Report*. TDCJ – Community Justice Assistance Division. [www.tdcj.texas.gov](http://www.tdcj.texas.gov)

## CHANGING THE TRAJECTORY IN TEXAS

Domestic violence and intimate partner homicides are predictable and preventable. When survivors are wrapped in supportive services as they navigate complex legal, economic, and relational issues, they have opportunities to thrive. When systems respond to high risk factors with trauma-informed, survivor-centered approaches and accountability for abusive behaviors, survivors and their families have much better outcomes. When people who harm their partners have opportunities to change, it impacts future generations. Together, we can build a safer Texas. Join TCFV in promoting access to safety for survivors and transformational accountability for people who harm their partners by acting now.

*“ She would encourage us all to randomly help and care for others, and above all, always try to do better. ”*

### Community-level Actions:

- » Invite prevention educators from family violence centers into the organization or community group you are involved in.
- » Institute youth advisory boards to build youth engagement and leadership; recruit a diverse group of young people who represent your community in various ways; recognize and if possible, financially compensate the young people for their contributions.
- » Promote awareness of partner abuse red flags and resources available in your schools, faith communities, workplaces, and community programs.
- » Listen to the survivors in your community and actively ask them what they need.
- » Identify people experiencing partner abuse and connect to service providers in your community.
- » Encourage people harming their partners to seek services at an accredited Battering Intervention and Prevention Program.

- » Tell your elected officials and community leaders that firearm safety matters to you and urge them to enforce firearm prohibitions.

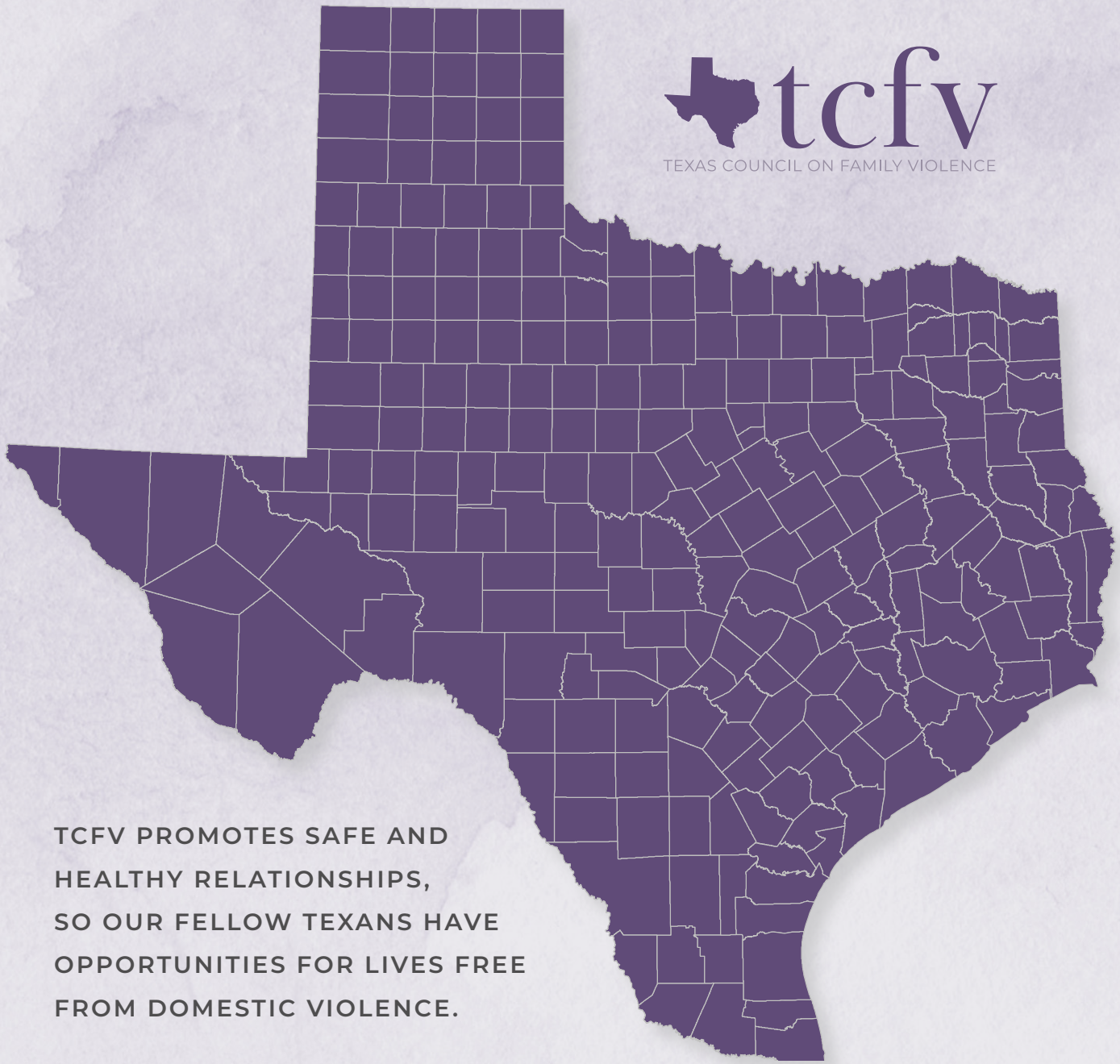
### Systems-level Actions:

- » Work collaboratively with systems partners to implement risk assessment protocols and trauma informed responses to people experiencing partner abuse.
- » Review and adopt evidence-based prevention education curricula in School Health Advisory Councils or School District Boards.
- » Order people who harm their partners to accredited BIPPs and monitor their completion.
- » Increase accountability for prohibited possessors and enhance safety for survivors by developing or enhancing protocols to enforce firearm prohibitions.
- » Promote gun safety measures to prevent youth gun violence.
- » Create barrier-free services that allow survivors to participate as needed.

### Policy-level Actions:

- » Engage in policy action by voting; your elected officials represent you and your community and there is no stronger action than your vote.
- » Meet with those elected officials and share what you know about survivor needs in your community.
- » Adopt meaningful guidance on firearm prohibition enforcement legislatively. Listen to Texans impacted by gun violence and mobilize action to prevent future fatalities.
- » Allocate funds to address the capacity crisis in domestic violence services, focusing on housing and direct cash assistance.
- » Make prevention education accessible in K-12 schools.

INDIVIDUALLY WE POWER CHANGE.  
TOGETHER WE POWER A MOVEMENT.



TCFV PROMOTES SAFE AND  
HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS,  
SO OUR FELLOW TEXANS HAVE  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR LIVES FREE  
FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

Please join our efforts to create a safer Texas:

[tcfv.org/membership](https://tcfv.org/membership)



APPENDIX I

**BY THE NUMBERS: HHSC-FUNDED FAMILY VIOLENCE PROGRAMS**

**83 programs** funded by the Texas Health and Human Services (HHSC) Family Violence Program provided services to survivors of family violence across the state.

*Family Violence Centers received 275,481 hotline calls in 2022, an increase of over 20,000 calls from 2021.*

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, these programs:

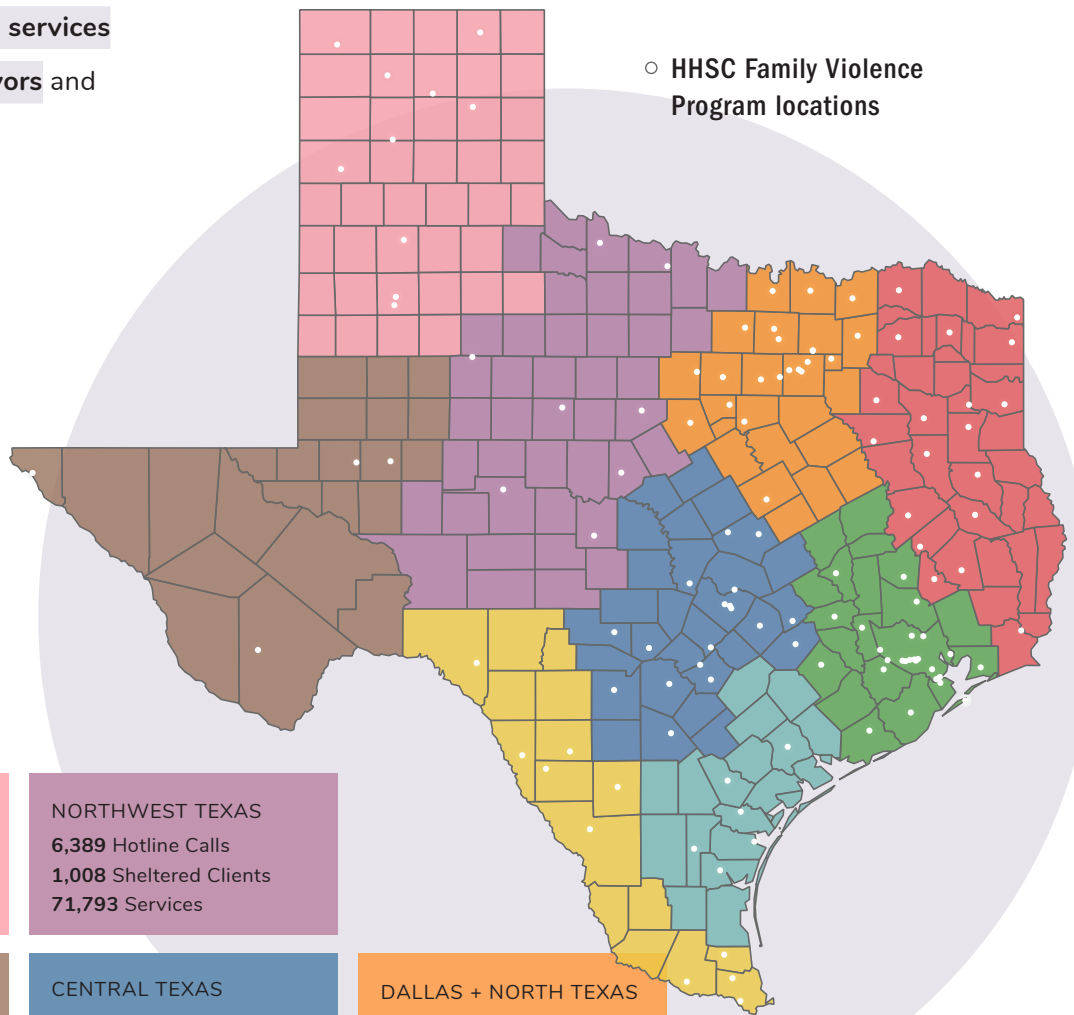
- » Provided **~1.5 million services**
- » Served **63,812 survivors** and their families

Most common services:

**691,630**  
**Intervention Services**  
*includes advocacy, support, and safety planning*

**205,744**  
**Information and Referral to Community Services**

**163,845**  
**Child Services**  
*includes activities for children and child care*



**PANHANDLE**  
 12,957 Hotline Calls  
 1,152 Sheltered Clients  
 161,290 Services

**NORTHWEST TEXAS**  
 6,389 Hotline Calls  
 1,008 Sheltered Clients  
 71,793 Services

**WEST TEXAS**  
 5,697 Hotline Calls  
 1,543 Sheltered Clients  
 109,943 Services

**CENTRAL TEXAS**  
 47,345 Hotline Calls  
 4,253 Sheltered Clients  
 256,210 Services

**DALLAS + NORTH TEXAS**  
 47,345 Hotline Calls  
 4,253 Sheltered Clients  
 256,210 Services

**RIO GRANDE VALLEY**  
 15,383 Hotline Calls  
 1,133 Sheltered Clients  
 131,948 Services

**GULF COAST**  
 3,188 Hotline Calls  
 833 Sheltered Clients  
 43,885 Services

**HOUSTON + GALVESTON**  
 112,521 Hotline Calls  
 3,767 Sheltered Clients  
 317,878 Services

**EAST TEXAS**  
 12,732 Hotline Calls  
 1,780 Sheltered Clients  
 133,002 Services

For more statistical information on domestic violence in Texas, please review TCFV's 2022 State of the State: Creating a Safer Texas, an annual update to the Texas State Plan at <https://tcfv.org/publications/>

## APPENDIX II

### FIREARM PROHIBITIONS APPLICABLE IN TEXAS

Texas and federal law currently prohibit firearm ownership under four different measures:

- 1 Under Texas statute, a person convicted of a felony cannot possess a firearm for five years after release from confinement or community supervision.<sup>39</sup> After five years, a person convicted of a felony may only possess a gun on their own property. Under federal statute, an individual convicted of a felony may never legally possess a firearm again.<sup>40</sup>
- 2 Under Texas statute, an individual convicted of a Class A misdemeanor assault against a family or household member cannot possess a firearm within five years of sentencing. After five years, a person convicted of a misdemeanor family violence charge may legally possess a gun anywhere in Texas.<sup>41</sup> Under federal statute, a person convicted of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence may never legally possess a firearm again.<sup>42</sup>
- 3 Texas law states anyone currently the respondent of a final protective order may not possess a firearm. A respondent may legally possess a firearm anywhere in Texas after the protective order has expired.<sup>44</sup> The U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the federal prohibition could not apply to a respondent of a protective order. Currently, federal law enforcement cannot enforce the prohibition; this decision is pending an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court in the fall of 2023.<sup>45</sup>
- 4 A judge may restrict someone from possessing a firearm through other methods, such as through conditions of bond.

Condition	Texas Prohibition	Federal Prohibition	Duration
<b>Person convicted of a felony crime</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not allowed to possess a firearm for five years after the completion of their criminal sentence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permanent bar from legally possessing firearm.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May only possess on their own property after five years of completing their sentence under Texas statute.</li> <li>Lifetime prohibition under federal statute.</li> </ul>
<b>Person convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not allowed to possess a firearm for five years after release from confinement or community supervision.</li> <li>Applies only to Class A misdemeanor assaults against a family or household member.</li> <li>Does not apply to current or former dating partners outside of the same household.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permanent bar from legally possessing firearm.</li> <li>Applies to convictions of any level misdemeanor, including Class C's, domestic violence against a family or household member, and, as of 2022, includes current or former dating partners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May possess a gun legally anywhere in Texas after five years post release from confinement or community supervision under Texas Statute.</li> <li>Lifetime prohibition under federal statute.</li> </ul>
<b>Respondent to a Protective Order (PO)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not allowed to possess a firearm for the duration of the final PO.</li> <li>May possess a firearm anywhere in Texas after the protective order expires.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not enforceable following Rahimi decision.</li> <li>Pending a U.S. Supreme Court decision.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently in Texas, until the Protective Order expires.</li> </ul>

39 Weapons, TX Penal Code § Sec. 46.04 (a)

40 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(1)

41 Weapons, TX Penal Code § Sec. 46.04 (b).

42 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(9)

44 Weapons, TX Penal Code § Sec. 46.04 (c).

45 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(8).

# Methodology

## HISTORY

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TCFV has recorded, honored, and published the names of women killed by their intimate partners each year for over 44 years. For the last fourteen years, TCFV has published Honoring Texas Victims: Family Violence Fatalities annually to share the stories of Texans killed by their intimate partners.

Originally, the report focused on women, including transgender women, killed by their male partners. In 2018, TCFV expanded the scope to include family violence homicides of men killed by their female partners and men and women killed by their same-sex intimate partners.

## RESEARCH PROCESS

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TCFV conducts key steps to collect homicide data and case information. TCFV identifies cases that meet the report parameters by:

- » Reviewing the Texas Department of Public Safety’s Supplemental Homicide Report in the Crime in Texas portal.
- » Monitoring press media and social media in all 254 Texas counties.
- » Reviewing law enforcement and County and District Attorneys’ communication releases.
- » Researching homicide cases with local and state partners.
- » Confirming the accuracy of information through law enforcement, County and District Attorneys, the Department of Public Safety, victim advocates, and family violence service providers.
- » Partnering with an attorney with family violence expertise to conduct a legal review of the case narratives.

## REPORT TERMINOLOGY

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The terms “family violence,” “domestic violence,” and “intimate partner violence” are used in the public vernacular interchangeably. This report focuses on intimate partner homicides and intimate partner homicide-suicides and uses the terminology “domestic violence”, “intimate partner violence”, “family violence”, and “partner abuse” because they are used more broadly in criminal legal and advocacy frameworks. The State of Texas uses the term “family violence” in criminal legal settings and in other statutory

languages to describe the violence that occurs not only between dating or intimate partners but also members of the same household or family. When referring to people accused of homicides, TCFV uses the terms “perpetrator,” “offender,” or “suspect,” and when referring to people who harm their partners, TCFV uses the term “abusive partners” most frequently. When incorporating contributions from external authors, TCFV may allow for additional terminology outside these terms.

## REPORT PARAMETERS

The 2022 report includes intimate partner and stalking homicides from January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022, for cases where the perpetrators have been charged with murder or manslaughter or ruled homicide-suicide. Due to the report's publication date, TCFV includes cases with closed investigations by August 31, 2023. Cases are included if 1) the homicide victim and perpetrator were previously or currently in an intimate relationship of any length, 2) the victim was killed by a person who stalked or actively pursued a relationship, even if the victim did not engage in a relationship, 3) the intimate partner violence victim was killed, and 4) criminal charges are brought against the perpetrator.

TCFV acknowledges that not all intimate partner violence-related fatalities and homicides are included within the report parameters. In situations where the intimate

partner violence victim is not killed, but family members, bystanders, law enforcement responding, or others are killed, those cases are not documented in this report. Additionally, cases are excluded if criminal charges are not brought against the perpetrator or if they are dismissed before the publication date.

TCFV diligently reviewed twenty-five cases that fell outside the report parameters. Those include cases that were accidental or not criminally charged because they were deemed justifiable or self-defense. Cases that remained open and unsolved are excluded as well as domestic violence related cases where the intimate partner is not killed. Additionally, several cases were reported to DPS but law enforcement agencies did not respond to TCFV requests for confirmation and identification.

## INTIMATE PARTNER RELATED DEATHS NOT INCLUDED

Type of Case	Key Factors	Victims Identified
Justifiable or Self-Defense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 cases resulted in no indictment by grand jury or dismissed</li> <li>• 2 cases pending grand jury review; no preliminary charges or arrests</li> </ul>	6 men 1 woman
IPV Related Deaths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IPV history</li> <li>• Indictments for lesser charges than murder or manslaughter</li> </ul>	1 man 1 woman
Accidental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IPV not indicated in the incident</li> <li>• 1 case charged with manslaughter</li> <li>• 1 case with unknown criminal outcomes</li> </ul>	1 woman 1 female teen
Unsolved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open investigations or no arrests</li> <li>• Intimate Partners last known person with victims or unknown relationship between victim and perpetrator</li> <li>• Missing victims and case not determined to be homicide</li> </ul>	1 man 6 women
Not Confirmed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cases reported by law enforcement agencies to DPS in NIBRS that were not confirmed by the agencies</li> </ul>	3 men 4 women

# Report Contributors

THIS REPORT WAS WRITTEN BY THE TEXAS COUNCIL ON FAMILY VIOLENCE.

TCFV appreciates the support from professionals around the state who responded to our requests for information and thereby ensured the accuracy of this report.

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*This project was funded by Grants awarded by the Administration for Children and Families U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Grant No. 90EV0443-01-00; by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission Grant No. HHS0004483000001; Grant No. 3073106 awarded by the Governor’s Criminal Justice Division, and Grants No. 227-002 and 227-003 awarded by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Community Justice Assistance Division.*

*The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this program are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the above agencies.*



TEXAS COUNCIL ON FAMILY VIOLENCE PROMOTES SAFE AND  
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FACILITATING STRATEGIC PREVENTION EFFORTS, AND CREATING  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR FREEDOM FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

