Utah Department of Public Safety
Statewide Information and Analysis Center
Intelligence Bulletin

SIAC@ Utah.gov Phone: 801-965-3838 Fax: 801-969-0808

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(U) Analysis of Domestic Violence in Utah

Release: 22 August 2023

(U//FOUO) ***Scope:*** *This Analysis of Domestic Violence in Utah prepared by the Utah Statewide Information & Analysis Center (SIAC) assesses the prevalence of domestic violence in the State of Utah from January 2017 to April 2023. This assessment is intended for Federal, State, Local, and Tribal partners responsible for mitigating domestic violence threats and highlights domestic violence data, inconsistencies with reporting, and trends in victims and perpetrators. The information cutoff date for this assessment is 22 August 2023.*

(U) Executive Summary

(U) Domestic Violence (DV) in Utah saw a decrease in 2022. However, the implementation of a new Intimate Partner Violence Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP) in July 2023 may lead to an increase in reporting of DV cases between intimate partners. The new LAP intends to compile DV intimate partner incidents into one database, but does not capture all DV cases, leaving some instances unaccounted for. Data for 2022 continues showing similar trends to those observed from 2019-2021, with the most common relationships between a victim and offender as a boyfriend, girlfriend, or child.

(U) Key Judgments

- (U) The SIAC assesses Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) numbers are likely to rise in the next year because of changes in Utah law that now require lethality assessments for IPV incidents. As Utah law enforcement submits lethality assessments for IPV cases, data not previously recorded will be collected, leading to an apparent increase in reported cases.

- (U) The SIAC assesses there will likely continue to be a gap in Utah's DV data due to inconsistencies in reporting, which make it difficult to determine the full scope of DV in Utah. While the new LAP collects IPV data, it does not gather information on DV cases of non-intimate partners nor outcomes of victims and aggressors.

- (U) The SIAC assesses victims are likely to continue to be a boyfriend, girlfriend, or child due to these being the most common relationships of victims and offenders since 2019.

This report addresses DHS HSEC codes: HSEC- 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.5.1, 3.10.1
This report addresses SIAC Standing Information Requirements: UTSIAC-05-01

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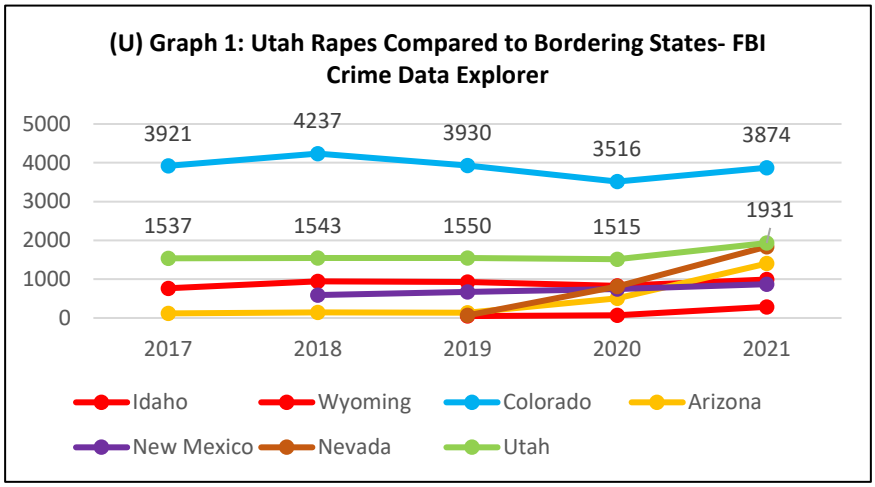
(U) Background

(U) The State of Utah defines DV as any criminal offense between one cohabitant against another that involves violence or physical harm or the threat or solicitation to commit violence or physical harm. Aggravated assault, homicide, harassment, kidnapping, stalking, sexual offenses, child abuse, and unlawful distribution of an intimate image are some, but not all forms of domestic violence. Another example of DV is IPV Violence, or violence between two people in an intimate relationship.[1, 2]

(U) One in three Utah women (33.6%) will experience sexual or physical violence and/or stalking by an intimate partner.[3] Nationwide the average number of rapes is 42.6 per 100,000 people while Utah's average is 55.5 rapes per 100,000 people.[4] Rape, which can occur in both DV or IPV incidents, is one of the only violent crimes in Utah that is higher than the national average.[5] Compared to bordering states, Utah consistently ranked the second state with the most rapes per year between 2017-2021 (See Graph 1). Utah also ranked third in comparison to bordering states for the most aggravated assaults and homicides over that same 5-year period. It is unknown how many of the rapes, homicides, and aggravated assaults have a DV or IPV relation.[6]



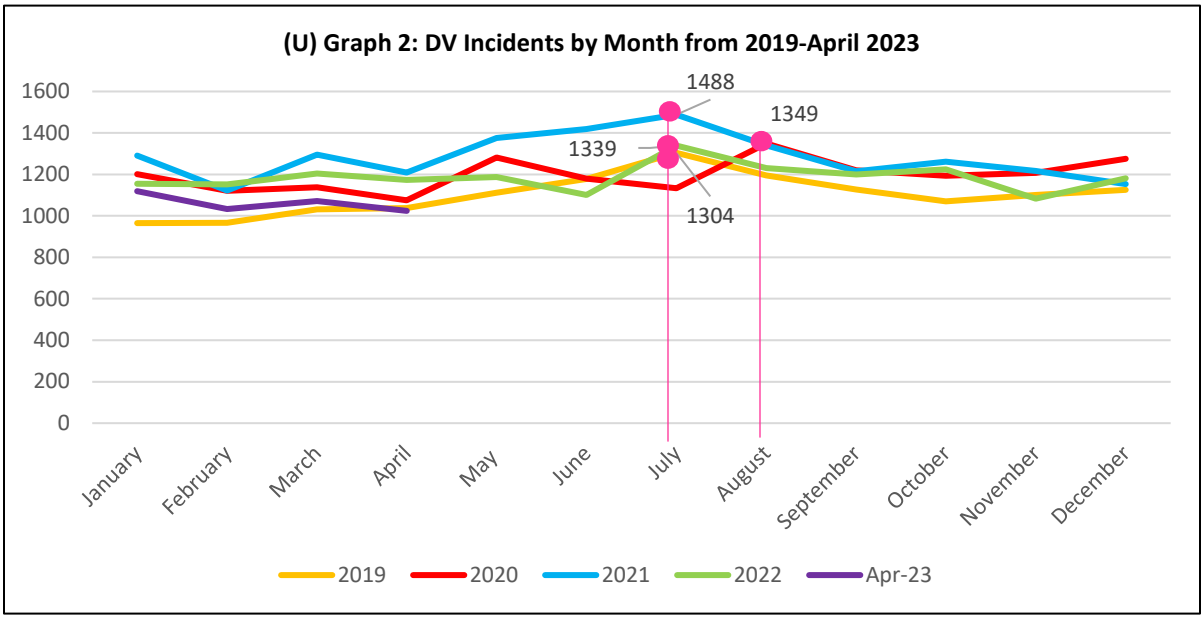
(U) On 1 July 2023, Utah Senate Bill (S.B.) 117 went into effect requiring all Utah law enforcement to conduct lethality assessments when responding to domestic incidents involving intimate partners. Prior to 2023, the Utah Department of Public Safety (DPS) and Utah Domestic Violence Coalition (UDVC) ran their own, separate lethality assessment programs. In 2022, UDVC partners conducted 4,534 LAP screens with 3,516 of those being high risk for lethality. 2,316 victims said they were strangled at one point in time and in 446 cases law enforcement believed the situation was lethal.[7] The new LAP is now co-operated by Utah's DPS and UDVC along with 16 community-based service providers who assist law enforcement when a lethality assessment is high risk. This updated LAP will enable better collaboration between agencies, ensure all Utah law enforcement are screening IPV victims for lethality, and compile IPV data into one source. LAP data, however, does not include all DV incidents as the assessment is only required for DV cases involving intimate partners. A trial run of the new LAP began in May 2023. During May, 48 agencies submitted a total of 206 LAPs. Of the 206 LAPs, 28 were categorized as being a potentially lethal situation for the victim. In June 2023, 510 LAPs were submitted from 77 agencies with 309 being potentially lethal.[8, 9]

(U) Utah Domestic Violence Data

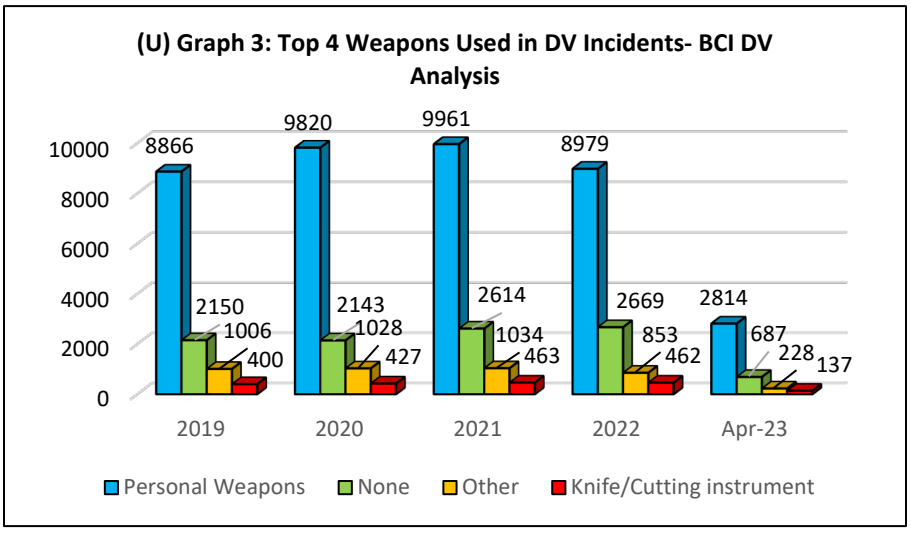
(U) Domestic Violence data was analyzed from Utah BCI's Crime in Utah DV Analysis, the FBI Crime Data Explorer, and the Utah Office for Victims of Crime grant funded programs Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and Violence of Crime Act (VOCA). Data from these sources are not aggregate and reported as separate numbers, with the possibility of some DV incidents being reported in multiple data sources.

(U) BCI Crime in Utah Dashboard- 2022 Domestic Violence Analysis

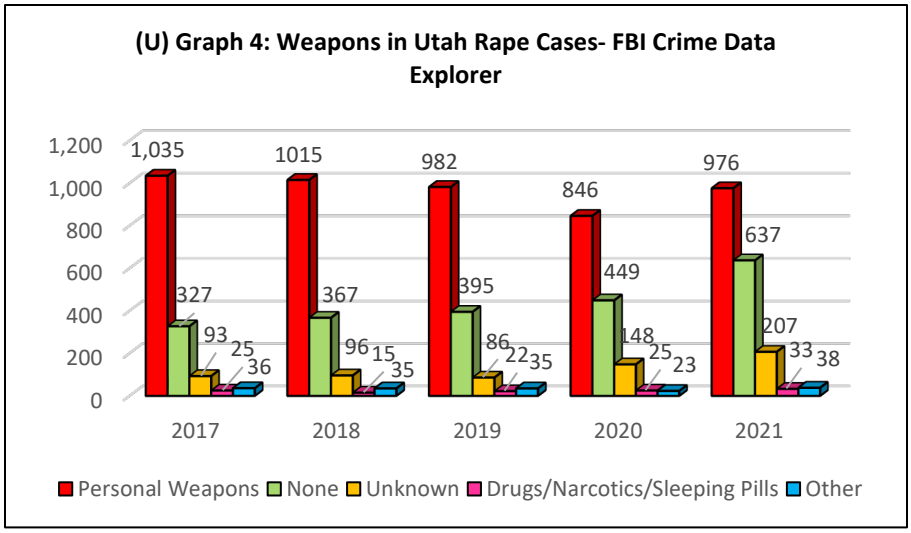
(U) There were 14,230 incidents of DV in Utah during 2022. This is an eight percent decrease from 2021's 15,384 DV incidents. Over a four-year period, 2019-2022, Salt Lake County had the most DV cases ranging from 5,270 to 7,134. Weber County had the second most DV cases ranging between 1,893 to 2,110 cases. July and August were the months with the most DV cases each year within the same four-year period (See Graph 2).[a, 10]



(U) Personal weapons[b] over a four-year period are consistently the most common weapon in DV incidents.[11] This is similar to numbers from the FBI Crime Data Explorer that show between 2017-2021, personal weapons are most used during rapes (See Graphs 3 & 4).[12] Utah DV incidents with firearms consistently ranged between 2-3% of all cases involving a weapon from 2017-April 2023.[13]



[a] The pink circles in the graph represent the months with the highest number of LAPs between 2019-2022.
[b] BCI classifies personal weapons as hands, feet, arms, teeth, and more.



(U) FBI Crime Data Explorer

(U) The number of Utah rapes increased 21.5% (1,931) compared to 1,515 incidents in 2020. Prior to 2021, the number of Utah rapes was fairly consistent ranging from 1,515 to 1,550 between 2017-2020. Reasons for the 21.5% increase in 2021 are unknown.[14]

(U) According to the FBI Crime Data Explorer, there was a slight increase each year in the number of aggravated assaults within Utah. From 2019 to 2020 there was an 11% increase (3,267 to 3,613) and from 2020 to 2021 there was a 10% increase (3,613 to 3,989). Utah homicide reports decreased in 2021 by 12.5% (81 to 72 homicides).[15] Since the FBI Crime Data Explorer does not categorize whether each rape, homicide, or aggravated assault relates to DV that data is unknown. However, as rapes and aggravated assaults increase overall, the number of those with a DV relation is likely to increase.

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and Violence of Crime Act (VOCA) Data

(U) The VAWA provides funding for 25 Utah agencies[c] under a Services Training Officers and Prosecutors (STOP) grant. This grant is overseen by the Utah Office for Victims of Crime (UOVC). Agencies receiving VAWA funding have a few employees who work under the grant and can only focus on crimes with domestic violence, dating violence, sexual violence, and stalking. Funding from VOCA is also overseen by UOVC and provided to 100 Utah agencies, including tribal, government, and non-profit agencies. VOCA funding is used for a wider range of crimes that may not necessarily be categorized as domestic violence.[16]

(U) The number of new victims from 1 October 2021 to 30 September 2022 who received services in Utah from VOCA funding totaled 93,673. The number of victims who received services based on presenting victimization for cases possibly involving DV are[17, d]:

- 64,037 - domestic and/or family violence
- 16,713 - child sexual abuse/assault
- 269 - kidnapping (custodial)
- 7,166 - stalking/harassment

[c] (U) Of the 25 VAWA funded agencies there are 7 law enforcement agencies, 1 court agency, 4 prosecution agencies, 9 victim services, and 4 discretionary agencies. Discretionary agencies do not fall into one of the other categories.
[d] (U) These numbers may include duplicates of the same victim. If the victim was assisted by numerous agencies or provided services each quarter that victim's count may be included multiple times.

- 611 - teen dating victimization
- 18,026 - adult physical assault (aggravated and simple assaults)
- 9,681 - adult sexual assaults

(U) Law enforcement received 587 calls for DV/dating violence, 85 for sexual assaults, and 133 for stalking according to VAWA's STOP Administrators 2021 report. The number of protection orders issued for DV/dating violence was 336, 18 for sexual assaults, and 9 for stalking.[e] Of cases from VAWA prosecutors. and/or agencies, received and accepted for prosecution, 90%-100% of cases for a misdemeanor or felony DV/dating violence, DV homicide, sexual assaults, stalking, and violation of a protective order were disposed.[18]

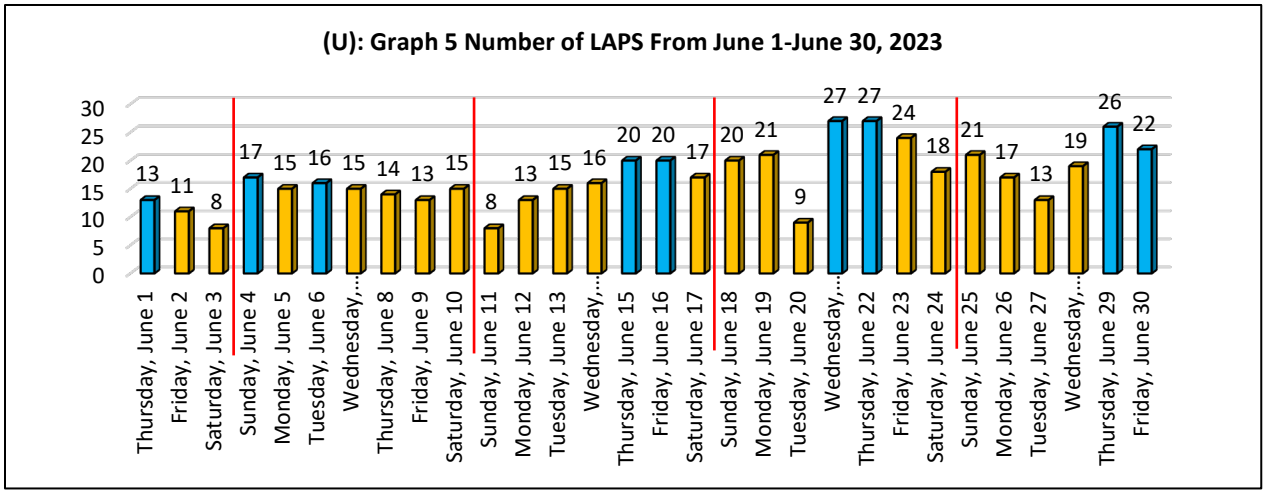
(U) LAP Analysis - June 2023

(U) The SIAC assesses IPV numbers are likely to rise in the next year because of changes in Utah law that now require lethality assessments for IPV incidents. As Utah law enforcement submits lethality assessments for IPV cases, data not previously recorded will be collected, leading to an apparent increase in reported cases. It is essential to note that DV incidents in 2022 actually decreased as reported by Utah BCI's DV Analysis. However, the SIAC reviewed multiple databases that showed increases and decreases in various Utah DV crimes from 2017 to April 2023. With the new LAP it may help to identify if DV increases for 2023 versus comparing the fluctuations observed in DV crimes during 2022.

(U) LAP Trial Run Data- June 2023

(U) Lethality assessment victims' most common concern was the idea that the aggressor would come back or show up unexpectedly. Other concerns expressed by victims to law enforcement were fear the aggressor would harm others, the aggressor's friends or family would harm the victim, retaliation for calling police, not being able to get away from the aggressor, threats by the aggressor, and the aggressor's reactions in different moods.[19]

(U) The day of the week with the most LAPs submitted was Thursday. During June 2023, four out of five Thursdays in the month had the most LAPs submitted. Friday was the second most likely day for LAP submissions, with 3 out of 4 Fridays having the highest or second highest number of lethality assessments. Both Thursday and Friday are shown by blue bars in the graph below (See Graph 5)[f]. The time of day with the most LAPs submitted was between 2200-2259 and 0000-0059 hours with a total of 72 LAPs submitted those hours.[20]



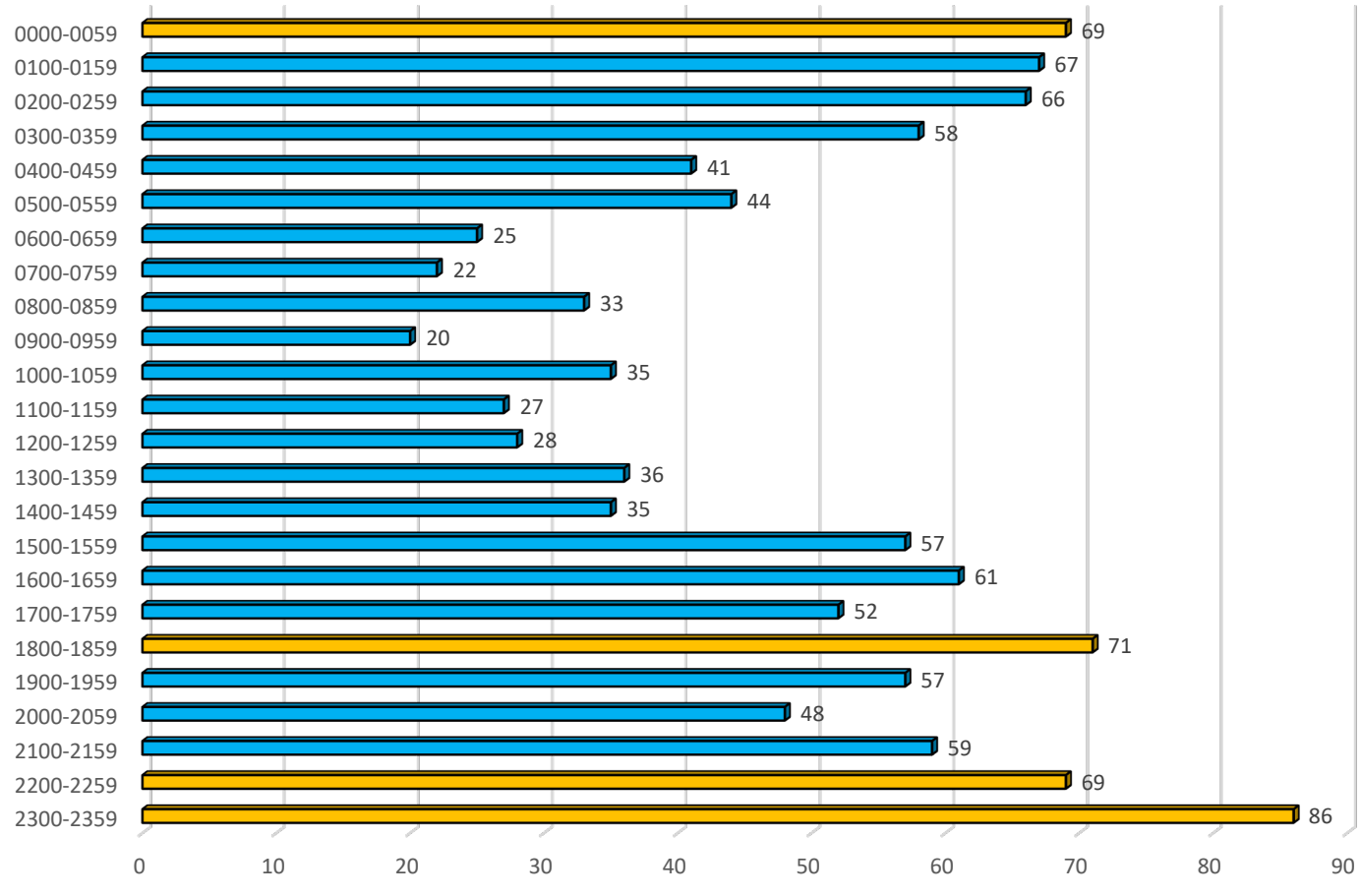
[e] (U) The number of protective orders issued by law enforcement in 2021 does not include temporary restraining orders. The total number of temporary restraining orders served according to the 2021 STOP Administrators Report was 14 and all were for DV/dating violence.
[f] (U) Days highlighted in blue represent the two days each week (Sunday through Saturday) with the highest number of LAPs submitted for that week. The graph's red lines show the start and end of each week.

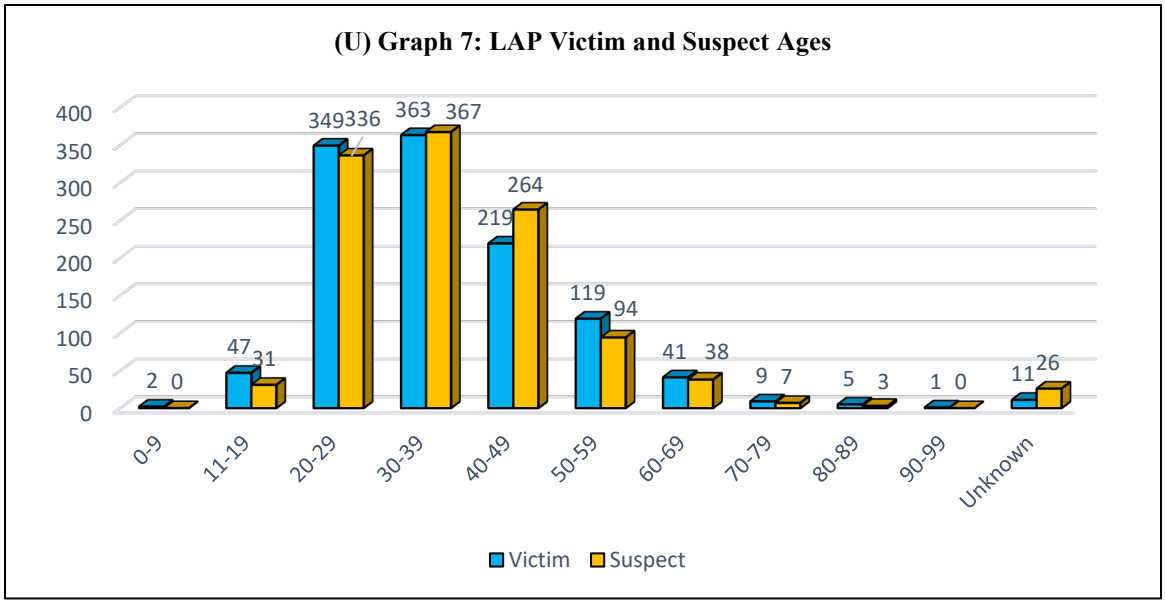
(U) The number of victims who reported the aggressor at some point in time used a weapon against them was 115 (23%). 134 victims (26%) believed the aggressor would kill them, while 293 (57%) did not believe their aggressor would kill them. In 146 incidents (29%) the victim indicated their aggressor has at some point threatened to kill them or their children. In 178 cases (35%) the victim has been choked by their aggressor and in 167 incidents (33%) the victim stated their aggressor has a gun or can easily get one (See Graphs 6-10).[21]

(U) LAP Analysis - July 2023

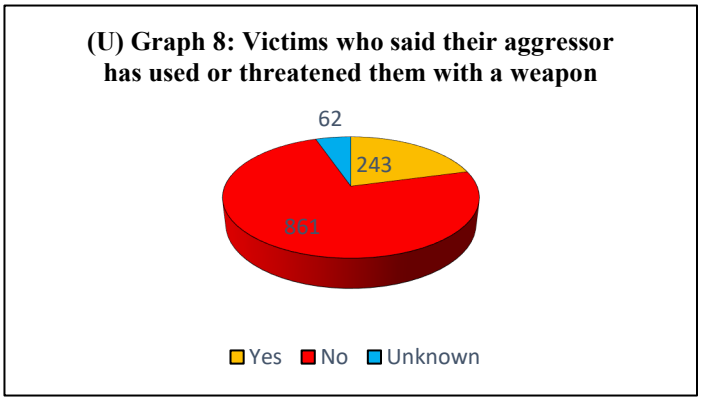
(U) The new LAP officially began July 2023 and had 1,166 lethality assessments conducted by 112 agencies. 63%, or 731, of the assessments submitted were potentially lethal with 383 (33%) not potentially lethal. Lethality assessments were mostly submitted on Sundays, with 4 out of 5 Sundays in July having the most LAPs submitted during the week. Lethality assessments were primarily submitted between 2200-0059 hours with a total of 224 (19%) LAPs being submitted during those hours (See Graph 6). Victims and suspects were most likely to be between the ages of 20-39 with 60-61% of all suspects and victims falling in that age range (See Graph 7).

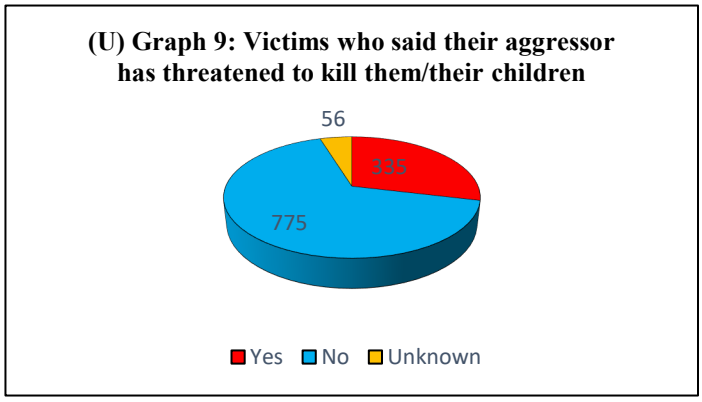
(U) Graph 6: Times LAPs were submitted each day- July 2023

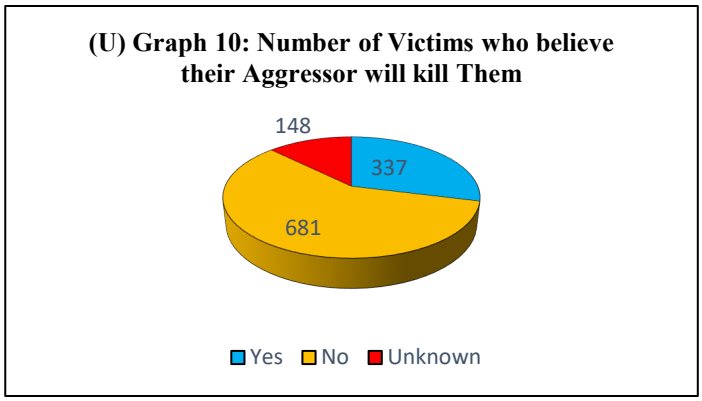


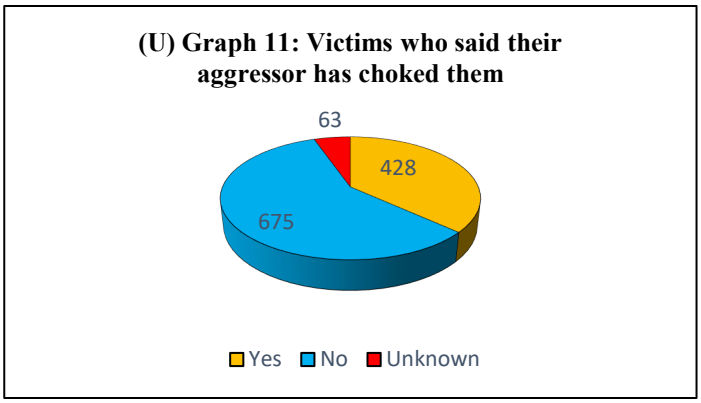


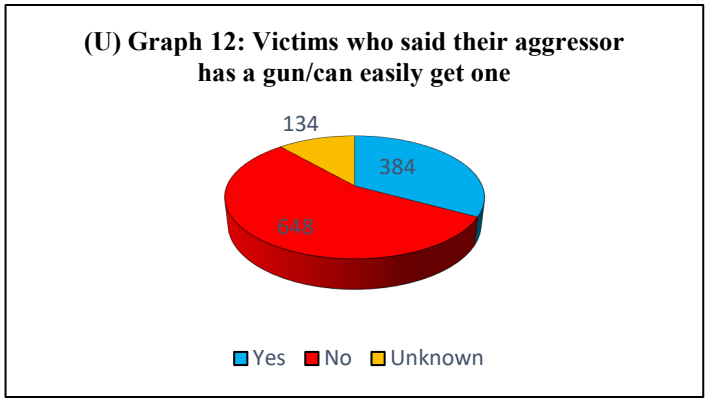
(U) Of those who responded to the LAP, 243 victims (21%) said their aggressor has at some point in time used or threatened them with a weapon. 335 victims (29%) said their aggressor has threatened to kill them and their children, while 29% of victims also believed their aggressor will try to kill them. 428 (37%) told law enforcement their aggressor has tried to choke them and 33% said their aggressor has a gun or can easily get one (See Graphs 8-12). These statistics are fairly similar to the LAP trial run in June where the percent of victims responding yes to each of these questions ranged from 23%-35%.











(U) Discrepancies in Domestic Violence Data

(U) The SIAC assesses there will likely continue to be a gap in Utah's DV data due to inconsistencies in reporting, which make it difficult to determine the full scope of DV in Utah. While the new LAP collects IPV data, it does not gather information on DV cases of non-intimate partners nor outcomes of victims and aggressors. The public also does not have a full understanding of DV's scope in Utah which can lead to misreporting and individuals not realizing they are DV victims.

- (U) While the new LAP provides IPV data, it does not include DV cases of non-intimate partners. This information will not be captured in a yearly analysis unless agencies report it to another database. The new LAP also does not provide a summary of what occurred in the current IPV situation. Not knowing what happened in the current IPV incident makes it difficult to capture increases or decreases in types of offenses. Law enforcement may also have a hard time determining the aggressor and victim on scene, which can skew data if the wrong person is deemed the aggressor or victim.

    - (U) The new LAP does not provide information on the outcome of victims and aggressors. Without that information, it is difficult to assess the LAP's full impact. The LAP does not tell how it effects an aggressor's jail pre-trial release, sentencing, or intervention efforts. Similarly, it does not capture details on the success of services or intervention efforts provided to victims.

    - (U) A 2022 needs assessment by University of Utah's Gender Based Consortium found of 283 individuals surveyed, 42.5% said DV does not occur often and 40.1% said sexual violence does not occur often.[22] Data collection on how the LAP impacts aggressors and victims can help educate the public on DV, resources, reduce stigma, and encourage early intervention and reporting.

- (U) Prior to 2016, the FBI recorded all same-sex couples under the category "homosexual" relationship. With changes in the federal marital law that category was removed, and same-sex couples are now listed under boyfriend or girlfriend if not married, or spouse if married. This makes it difficult to determine the number of DV incidents among same sex couples.[23]

- (U) Some databases do not specify if an incident is DV related. One example is the FBI Crime Data Explorer where they provide information on violent crimes that can have a DV relation, but do not specify if it is DV related. DV cases from military bases, tribal lands, and other federal entities in Utah are also not captured as these agencies may not report to local RMS systems.

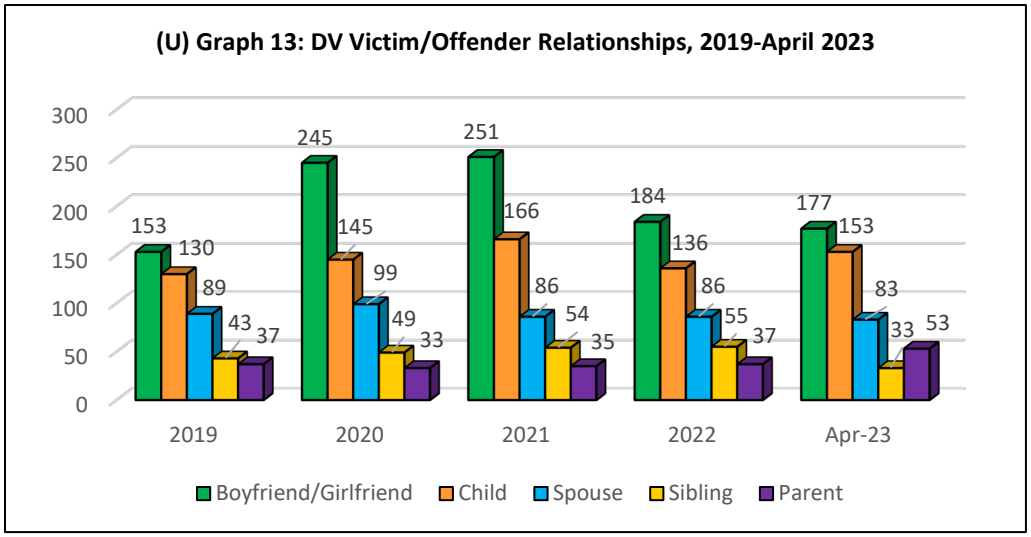
- (U) UOVC representatives indicated their VAWA grant reporting only provides data from those working under VAWA funding. Some agencies will have employees who work on DV related cases under VAWA and others who work DV cases not under VAWA. Employees from the same agency who do not fall under VAWA do not report their numbers to UOVC. Therefore, VAWA's DV statistics do not provide a full scope of DV in Utah.[24]

    - (U) UOVC representatives also mentioned many agencies do not differentiate between IPV, DV, or family violence cases. The data is included under one category. Non-criminal DV offenses like emotional abuse are also not included in overall data.[25] Similarly, DV incidents involving cybercrimes like cyber stalking may be clumped into stalking, but do not capture the full scope of the crime and that it is cyber related.

(U) Victim and Offender Profiles

(U) The SIAC assesses victims are likely to continue to be a boyfriend, girlfriend, or child due to these being the most common relationships of victims and offenders since 2019.

- (U) According to BCI's DV Analysis, from 2019 - April 2023, the most common DV offender to victim relationship each year was a boyfriend or girlfriend. There were 184 DV incidents in 2022 between a boyfriend or girlfriend. This is a 36% decrease from 2021. The second most common relationship of a victim to offender was a child with 136 DV reports in 2022 where the victim was a child (See Graph 13).[26]



- (U) In 2022, Utah's Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) had 38,494 reports of child abuse and neglect. Of those reports, 22,580 were new cases and 9,695 were confirmed to be child abuse and neglect. The most common forms of child abuse were domestic violence-related (22%) and child endangerment (21%). The child's parent was often the perpetrator. Sixteen percent of cases involved child sex abuse and the perpetrator was mainly a non-parent relative or someone not related.[27, 28]

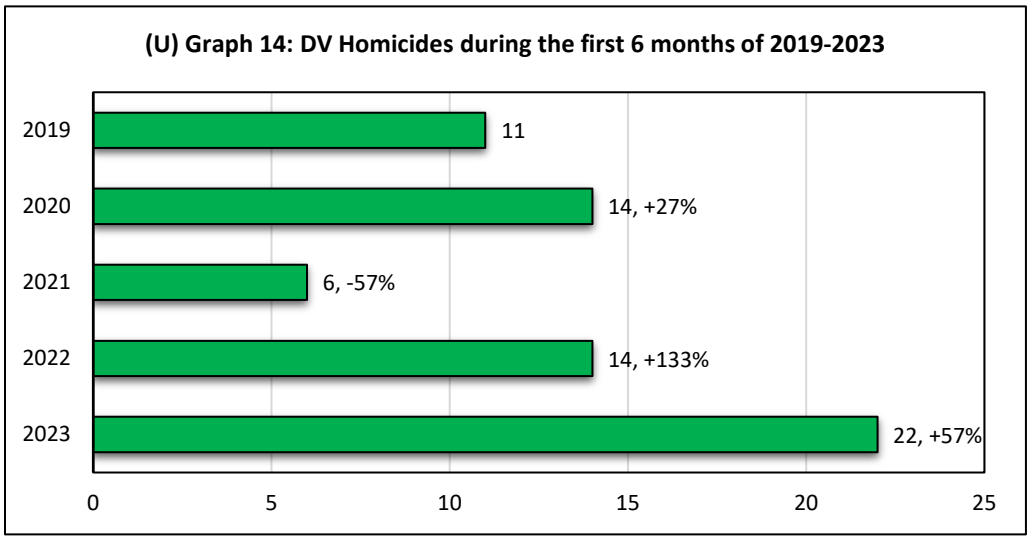
- (U) 36.1% of child victims were between 12-17 years of age, 29.8% were 6-11 years old, and 25.7% were 1-5 years old according to DCFS.[29, 30]

- (U) The number of domestic violence/dating violence victims who received full and partial services in 2021 was 1,391, with 1,065 of those being new victims according to Utah VAWA's 2021 STOP Administrator's Report. There were also 1,290 victims of sexual assault and 111 stalking victims that were fully or partially served. Of victims who sought services in 2021, the relationship to the offender was mainly a current/former spouse or intimate partner with 854 (69%) incidents of DV or dating violence inflicted by someone in that category.[31]

- (U) In 2021, the most common age groups for Utah rape victims was between 10-19 (829 cases) and 20-29 (544 cases) according to the FBI Crime Data Explorer. Rape offenders were most likely to be between 10-19 years old and accounted for 455 rape cases in 2021.[32]

    - (U) 562 rape cases in 2021 occurred between an acquaintance and 170 occurred between a boyfriend or girlfriend. Between 2017-2021, the most common location of rape each year was in a residence/home.[33] According to the Utah Women & Leadership Project, 62.6% of sexual assaults take place in a house/apartment.[34]

- (U) According to a local news article, 22 people were killed in DV homicides during the first six months of 2023. This is a 57% increase from DV homicides in the first six months of 2022. 82% (18) of the 2023 DV homicides were direct family members with 18% (4) supposedly committed by a boyfriend.[35] (See Graph 14) In 2021, the most common age group for a homicide offender was 10-19 (40 out of 106 cases) according to the FBI Crime Data Explorer. Between 2017-2021, the number of homicides in a residence/home ranged between 32-44 and was the most common location for homicides each year.[36]



(U) Outlook

(U) With the implementation of Utah's new LAP program, 2023 will likely see an increase in the number of recorded IPV incidents. Since the new LAP is only for intimate partner incidents and does not provide in-depth information on each case, there will continue to be gaps in data making it difficult for law enforcement and other public officials to fully understand the scope of DV in Utah. In 2023, Utah law enforcement can also expect the offender to victim relationship to continue being either a boyfriend, girlfriend, or child.

(U) Contact Information

(U) Any questions related to this assessment should be directed to the SIAC by calling 801-965-3838 or emailing SIAC@utah.gov

(U) Sources

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