



ILLINOIS COALITION
AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



ICADV HOMICIDE REPORT 2025

**A Comprehensive Analysis of Domestic
Violence Fatalities in Illinois**



The Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV) is the federally designated statewide domestic violence coalition that brings together over 50 member agencies that serve survivors of domestic violence and their children to build stronger systems of response across the entire state.

Since 1978, ICADV has been leading efforts to make this network stronger, together, as we amplify the voices of survivors and their children from all 102 Illinois counties to advance **One Mission with our One Voice**.

ICADV provides training to domestic violence service providers and the public; provides technical assistance for service providers; serves as a pass-through for state and federal funding to domestic violence agencies across the state; leads policy and systems advocacy efforts for survivors and the agencies who serve them; and increases public awareness of the prevalence and impact of domestic violence.

This report provides information about domestic violence homicides in Illinois during 2025. We honor these victims' lives, and our heartfelt condolences go out to the families and friends of these homicide victims. We express gratitude for the domestic violence service providers throughout Illinois who assist survivors 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.



Content Warning: *This report includes heavy topics such as domestic violence, domestic violence homicides, suicide, means of death, and Lethality risk factors. Please take care of yourself as you read through this report. **Help is available through resources provided at the end of this report.***





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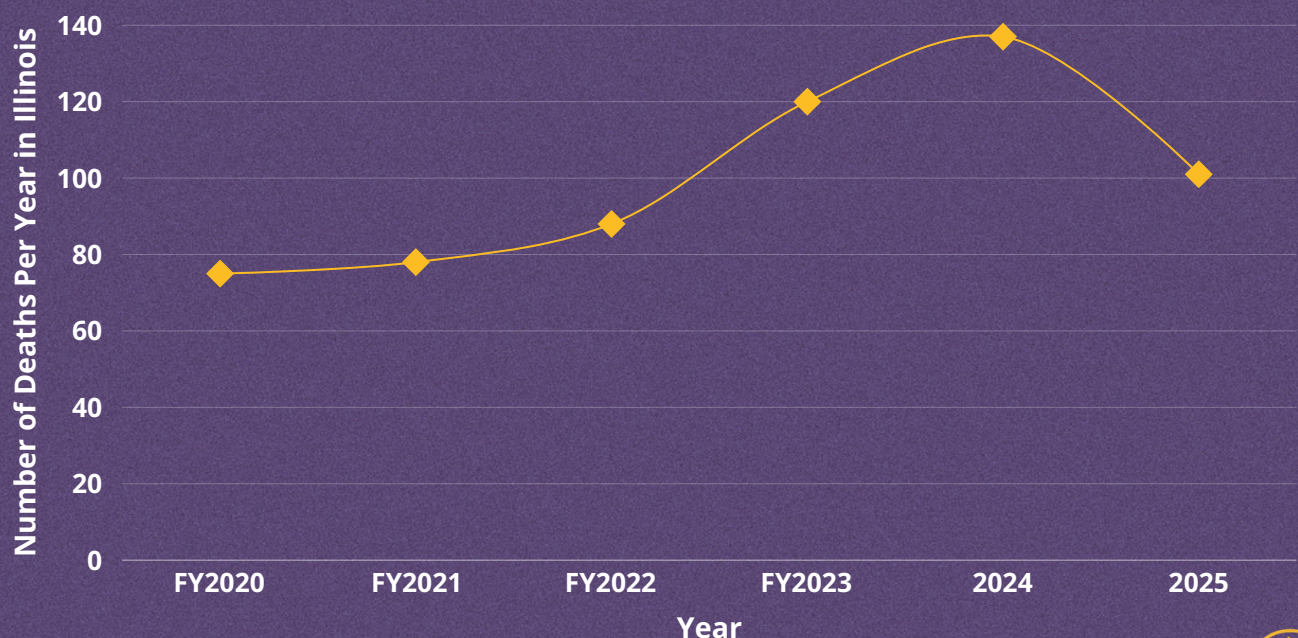
2025 AT A GLANCE

101

Total Deaths

72 Incidents | 83 Homicides
18 Perpetrator Suicides

FY2020-2025 Domestic Violence Deaths in Illinois





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2025, Illinois saw a significant shift in domestic violence trends. After a staggering **140% increase** in fatalities between 2022 and 2024, ICADV recorded a **26% decrease** in total deaths this year.

KEY FINDINGS

- **72 Incidents** resulting in **101 total deaths** (83 homicides; 18 perpetrator suicides).
- **26% Decline** in fatalities compared to the 137 deaths reported in 2024.
- **17% Increase in Help-Seeking:** The Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline received **69,748 contacts**, signaling that more survivors are reaching out than ever before.

LEGISLATIVE IMPACT

The enactment of **Karina's Law** in May 2025 and other legislative initiatives strengthened firearm removal remedies and heightened statewide awareness of domestic violence. The resulting increase in help-seeking and improved systems response are critical steps towards our goal of zero preventable deaths.

METHODOLOGY

ICADV improved this report by building a more robust data partnership with the Illinois State Police and utilizing available data from the Gun Violence Archive.





INTRODUCTION

During the period from January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025, there were 72 incidents of domestic violence homicide, which led to 101 total deaths in Illinois. Of these deaths, 83 were the result of homicide and 18 were perpetrators who died by suicide after committing a domestic violence homicide. **The total deaths for 2025 are a 26% decrease from the 97 incidents of domestic violence homicide that led to 137 deaths reported for 2024.**

In recent years, domestic violence homicides had been steadily increasing in Illinois. ICADV previously reported that from 2022 to 2024, there was a 140% increase in deaths related to domestic violence in Illinois.

Thereafter, Karina's Law, which strengthened the firearm removal remedy available for survivors with orders of protection under the Illinois Domestic Violence Act, went into effect on May 11, 2025. Karina's Law was named in honor of Karina Gonzalez and her daughter Daniela Alvarez who were killed in Chicago as a result of domestic violence in 2023. Statewide advocacy efforts relating to passage of Karina's Law raised awareness about domestic violence in Illinois.

More survivors are reaching out for help in Illinois than ever before.

In 2025, the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline reported receiving 69,748 calls, texts and chats.¹ This was a 17% increase in contacts from 2024.²

ICADV believes even one homicide because of domestic violence is too many. Our hope is that domestic violence incidents and homicides will continue to decrease as Karina's Law is further implemented across the state and as our state implements additional legislation to increase protection for survivors.





For this year's report, ICADV expanded the data sets to not only include news media reports relating to domestic violence homicides, but to also include information obtained from the Gun Violence Archive and the Illinois Uniform Crime Reporting (I-UCR) Program of the Illinois State Police.

Also included in this report is a list of critical risk factors known to increase the likelihood of lethality in domestic violence situations. It is important for systems working with survivors to understand these risk factors as a form of violence prevention.

With this annual report, ICADV intends to shed light on the prevalence of domestic violence homicides in our state, which we believe are preventable. Our ultimate goal is not only to save lives, but to ensure that survivors and their children have the resources to lead safe and healthy lives free from harm.





LETHALITY RISK FACTORS

There are several factors known to increase the risk of lethality, or likelihood of fatality, in domestic violence situations. ICADV is committed to helping law enforcement, courts, and other systems recognize and understand the increased risk of fatality stemming from these risk factors, so we can collectively decrease harm and homicide.



Access to Firearms

An abusive partner's access to firearms is a critical risk factor for intimate partner homicide.³ Firearms are used more often in intimate partner homicides than all other weapons combined.⁴ Moreover, access to a firearm makes it 5 times more likely that an abusive partner will kill his female victim.⁵ Domestic violence assaults involving a gun are 12 times more likely to result in death than those involving other weapons or bodily force.⁶ An abuser's access to guns also increases the risk of multiple homicide victims including children, other relatives, and bystanders.⁷



Pregnancy Abuse and Reproductive Coercion

Homicide is a leading cause of death among pregnant women in the U.S., causing more maternal deaths than any other event.⁸ The presence of pregnancy abuse and reproductive coercion within a domestic violence situation are important lethality risk factors for intimate partner homicide, because they indicate a heightened level of control and manipulation within an abusive relationship.⁹



Recent Separation

Recent separation or attempting to leave an abusive partner is a critical lethality risk factor for intimate partner homicide.¹⁰ Lethality risk increases with the combination of physical and legal separation from a highly controlling abusive partner.¹¹ Studies show that approximately half of women killed by their intimate partners are killed within the first two months of separation, with the majority killed within the first year after separation.¹²



Stalking

Experiencing stalking within an abusive relationship is a significant risk factor for intimate partner homicide, as it often indicates escalating violence and a heightened level of danger within the relationship.¹³ One study found that 76% of intimate partner homicides and 85% of attempted homicides of women were preceded by at least one incident of stalking within the year prior to the attack.¹⁴ Stalking increases the risk of intimate partner homicide by three times.¹⁵ It is common for abusive partners to misuse technology to stalk, track and monitor survivors. Many advocates in Illinois have shared instances with ICADV where abusive partners are using technology to stalk survivors, for example, by attaching tracking devices to cars, tracking a survivor's location via their phone, texting from apps that use a fake number, etc.¹⁶



Strangulation

Experiencing strangulation is a critical lethality risk factor for intimate partner homicide, as it signifies a highly dangerous level of physical violence and control within an abusive relationship.¹⁷ Victims of strangulation are seven times more likely to be killed by their abusive partner.¹⁸

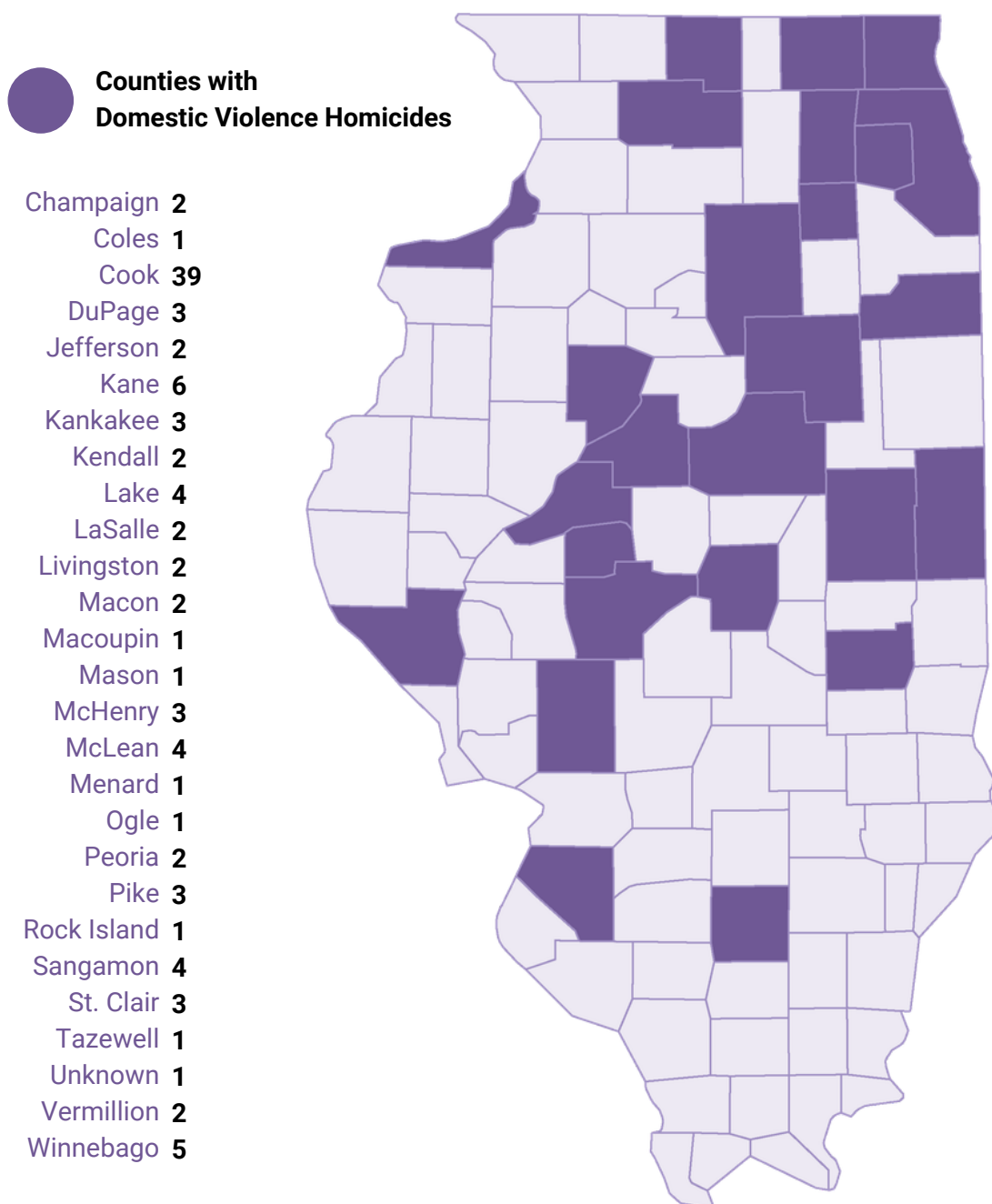






LOCATION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMICIDES

Domestic violence homicides occurred in 26 out of 102 counties in Illinois in 2025. This means that approximately one quarter of counties in Illinois experienced domestic violence homicide. Most domestic violence homicides occurred in Cook County, which also has the largest population.





MEANS OF DEATH

Top 3 Means of Death

68%

Firearms

17%

Stabbing

8%

Physical Force

The majority, or 68%, of domestic violence homicides in Illinois in 2025 involved the use of a firearm. This is a slight increase from 2024, in which firearms were the means of death in 63% of domestic violence homicides. Further, 88% of suicides by perpetrators following a domestic violence homicide in Illinois in 2025 used a firearm as the means of death. Nearly 7 in 10 intimate partner homicides in the U.S. are committed with a firearm.¹⁹

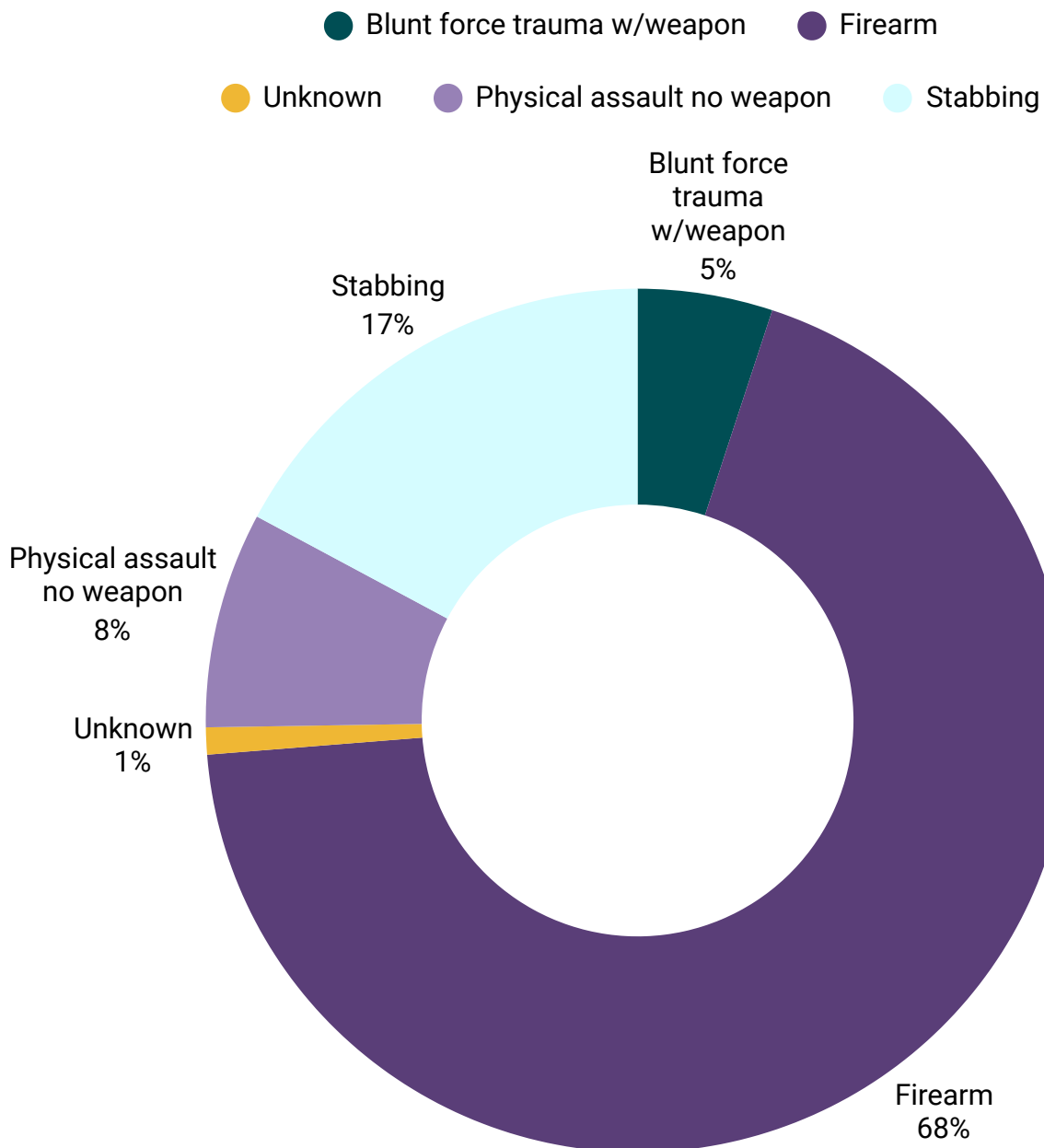
Data demonstrates that an abuser's access to a firearm is a critical lethality risk factor. The presence of a gun in a domestic violence situation correlates with a five times increase in the risk of homicide for victims. This finding directly highlights the necessity of fully implementing the firearm legal remedies under Karina's Law, which provide the exact mechanisms needed to remove weapons from high-risk situations and prevent domestic violence fatalities in Illinois.

The second leading means of death was stabbing at 17%. It is important to note that the third highest means of death, or 8% of domestic violence homicides, were caused by physical violence without a weapon. This demonstrates why it is important to consider the presence of strangulation within an intimate partner relationship as a lethality risk factor.





Means of Death for Domestic Violence Homicides





ABOUT THE VICTIMS

41%

**Current or Former
Intimate Partners**

10%

**Friend, Acquaintance
or Family Member of
the Victim**

ICADV honors all the victims who were tragically killed as a result of domestic violence. We respect the privacy of the victims' families and keep their identities anonymous in this report.

The victims of domestic violence homicide in Illinois in 2025 spanned across all life stages, from a newborn baby to an 89-year-old victim. The majority of homicide victims were female. The relationship between the victim and perpetrator varied, with approximately 41% of the victims identified as the current or former intimate partner of the perpetrator.

It is important to highlight that nearly 10% of domestic violence homicide victims were identified as a friend or acquaintance, or family member of the perpetrator's current or former intimate partner. This reminds us that domestic violence not only threatens the safety of the person experiencing harm, but also their children and other family members, new intimate partners and bystanders.

ICADV maintains that domestic violence is a public health and public safety issue that affects everyone in our communities.





GENDER OF VICTIMS

69%
Female

31%
Male

In 2025, the majority or 69% of domestic violence homicide victims in Illinois identified as female. This is consistent with national statistics, where 77% of intimate partner firearm homicide victims are women.²⁰ This translates to an average of more than 70 women shot and killed by an intimate partner every month in the U.S.²¹ It is reported that although intimate partner violence affects people of all genders and sexual orientations, the impact of abuse, including rates of severe physical violence and violence inflicted with a firearm, is predominantly experienced by women with male partners.²²

Further, in Illinois in 2025, out of the total 101 deaths relating to domestic violence homicide, 18 deaths were perpetrators who died by suicide after committing a domestic violence homicide. 100% of these perpetrators who died by suicide were male.

Nationally, there is a known connection between intimate partner homicide and suicide. One study found that from 2014 to 2020, 5,450 women were killed by an intimate partner, and in one in three of these instances, the perpetrator then died by suicide.²³



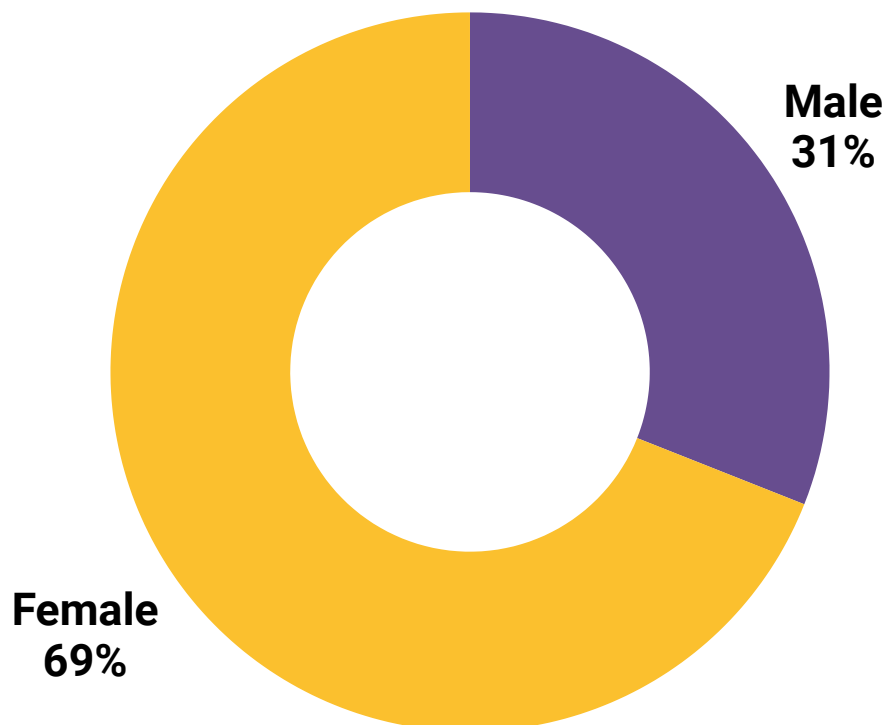


GENDER OF VICTIMS

The majority of male victims of domestic violence homicide in Illinois in 2025 were either acquaintances or family members of the perpetrator or of the perpetrator's intimate partner. This demonstrates that an abuser's access to firearms also increases the risk of homicide to children, relatives, and bystanders. In fact, recent research identified a link between mass shootings and domestic violence. An analysis of mass shooting incidents from 2015 to 2022 revealed that in at least 46% of these incidents, the perpetrator shot a current or former intimate partner or family member.²⁴

This demonstrates how domestic violence is a public health and public safety issue that puts everyone in our communities at risk.

Gender of Domestic Violence Homicide Victims





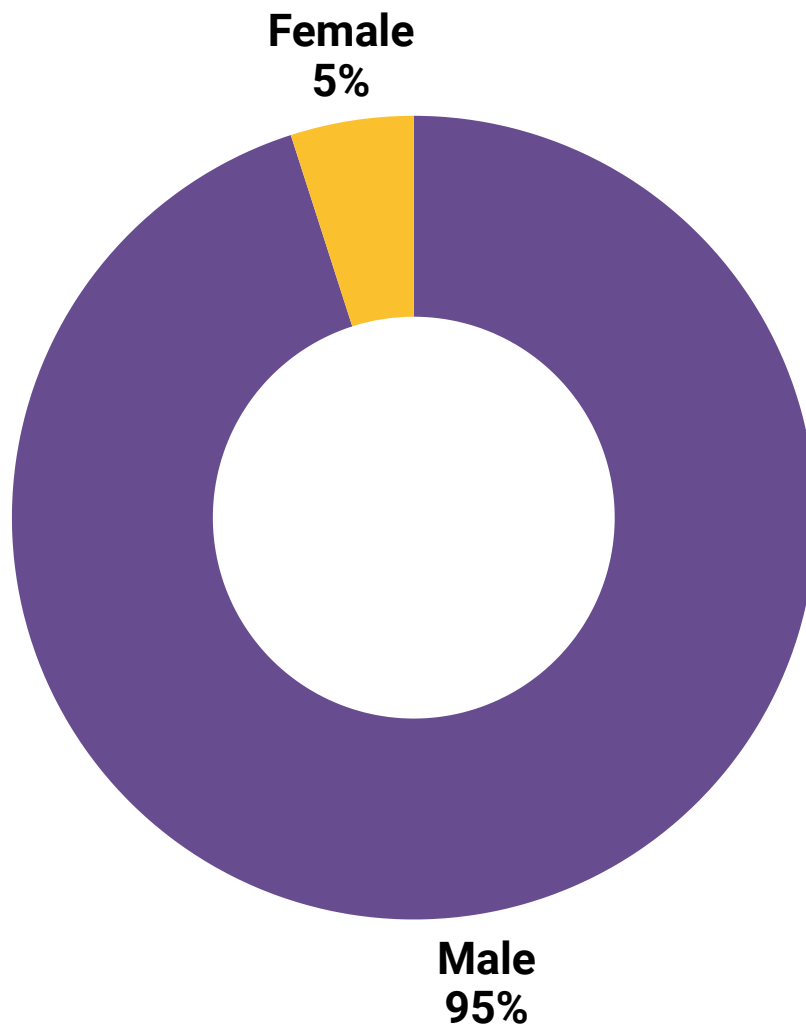
GENDER OF PERPETRATORS

5%
Female

95%
Male

The vast majority, or 95% of perpetrators of domestic violence homicide in Illinois in 2025 identified as male.

Gender of Perpetrators





AGE OF VICTIMS

89 Years Old

Oldest Age of Victim

44 Years Old

Average Age of Victim

There was a wide age range of victims of domestic violence homicide in 2025. The youngest involved a pregnant woman who was killed and her baby survived only for a few days following the mother's homicide. The oldest victim was 89 years old. The average age of victims was 44 years old.

RELATIONSHIP OF VICTIM TO PERPETRATOR

41%

**Current/Former Intimate Partners
of the Perpetrator**

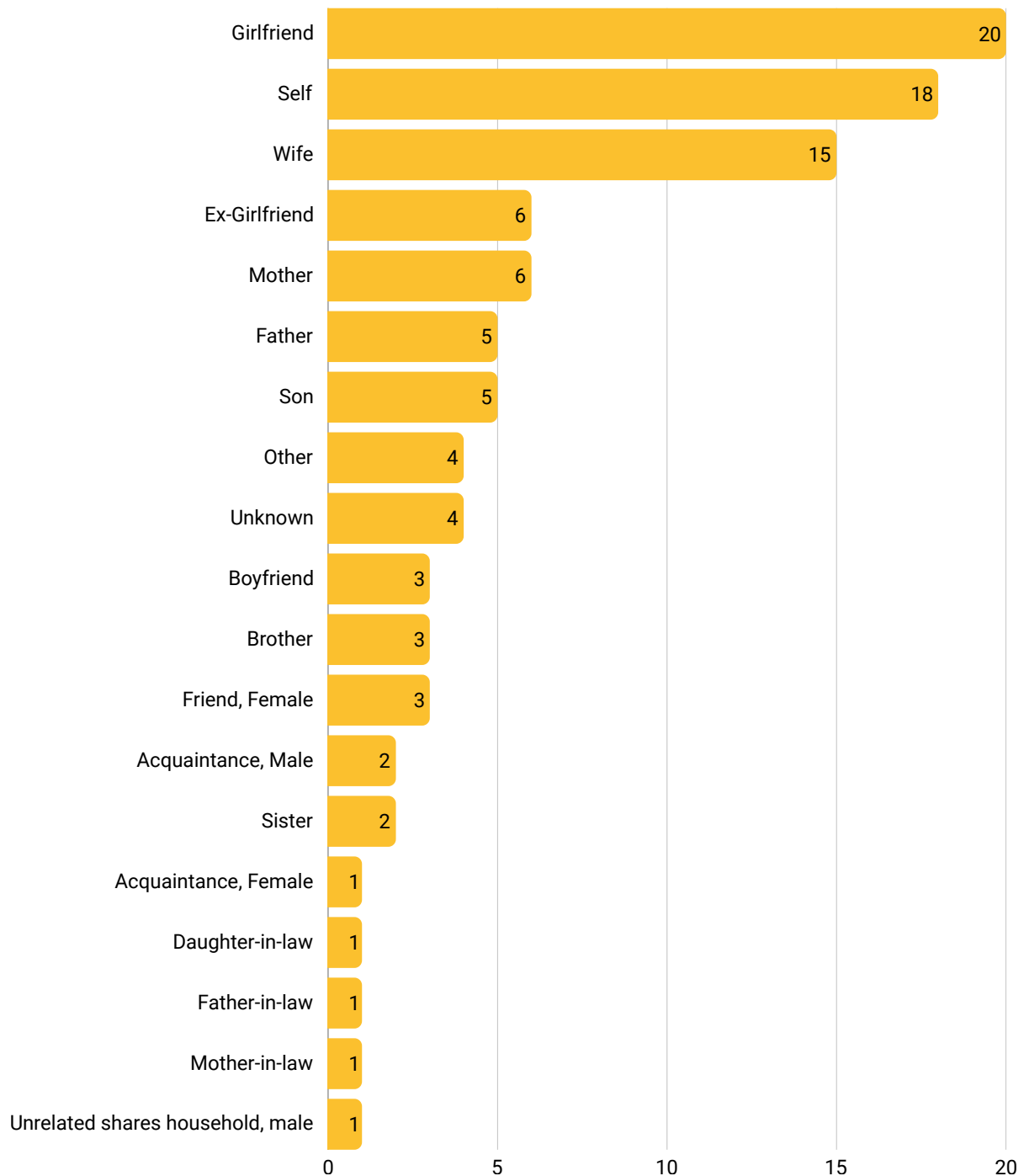
The relationship between the victim and perpetrator varied. Approximately 41% of the homicide victims in Illinois in 2025 were current or former intimate partners of the perpetrator. The most common relationship, or 20 homicide victims, were identified as the girlfriend of the perpetrator.

The second most common at 18 was self, or suicide of a perpetrator following a homicide. The third most common relationship, or 15 homicide victims, were identified as the wife of the perpetrator.





Relationship Between Perpetrator and Victim







METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

For this report, ICADV staff analyzed data from three primary sources, outlined below.

1. The Illinois Uniform Crime Reporting (I-UCR) Program of the Illinois State Police, which serves as the state repository for the collection of crime statistics: <https://ilucr.nibrs.com>
2. The Gun Violence Archive, an online archive of gun violence incidents collected from law enforcement, media, government and commercial sources daily: <https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/>
3. The Meltwater News online system was used to identify articles related to domestic violence homicides in Illinois. Domestic violence agency staff throughout the state also occasionally submitted articles to ICADV.





ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Illinois Violent Deaths Dashboard, operated by Illinois Department of Public Health, with data contributed by the Illinois Violent Death Reporting System (IVDRS), which is operated by Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine: <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/prevention-wellness/gun-safety/dashboards/il-violent-deaths.html>
 - Please note that data from IVDRS was not included in this report, as the most recent IVDRS data available at the time of publication is from 2023.
- The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, "Domestic Relationships and Violent Crimes, 2020-2024," released February 2026: <https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/resources/reports/Domestic%20Relationships%20and%20Violent%20Crimes%202020-2024.pdf>
- National Network to End Domestic Violence 20th Annual Domestic Violence Counts Report – Illinois Summary: <https://nnedv.org/resources-library/20th-annual-domestic-violence-counts-report-illinois-summary/>
- Domestic Violence Resource for Increasing Safety and Connection (DV RISC), a national resource center that provides training and technical assistance on intimate partner violence risk assessments and models to prevent intimate partner homicide: <https://dvrisc.org/>





CITATIONS

¹ The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence. (April 2026). Measuring Safety: Gender-Based Violence in Illinois 2025, Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline Report, available at: <https://the-network.org/measuring-safety-2025/>

² Id.

³ Domestic Violence Resource for Increasing Safety and Connection (DV RISC), Lethality Risk Factors Animated Series: Firearms, (October 28, 2025), available at: <https://dvrisc.org/resource/lethality-risk-factors-animated-series-firearms/>

⁴ Id.

⁵ Campbell, J. C. et al. "Risk factors for femicide in abusive relationships: results from a multisite case control study." American Journal of Public Health. (2003), available at: <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.93.7.1089>

⁶ Linda E. Saltzman, et al., "Weapon Involvement and Injury Outcomes in Family and Intimate Assaults," JAMA 267, no. 22 (1992): 3043–3047, cited by Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, "Domestic Violence & Firearms," available at: https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-laws/policy-areas/who-can-have-a-gun/domestic-violence-firearms/#footnote_3_5621

⁷ Kivisto, A. J., & Porter, M. (2020). Firearm use increases risk of multiple victims in domestic homicides. Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and The Law, 48(1), 26–34, cited by Stalking Prevention, Awareness & Resource Center (SPARC), Stalking & Firearms Factsheet, available at: <https://www.stalkingawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/SPARC-Stalking-and-Firearms-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

⁸ Domestic Violence Resource for Increasing Safety and Connection (DV RISC), Lethality Risk Factors Animated Series: Pregnancy Abuse and Reproductive Coercion, (October 28, 2025), available at: <https://dvrisc.org/resource/lethality-risk-factors-animated-series-pregnancy-abuse-and-reproductive-coercion/>

⁹ Id.

¹⁰ Domestic Violence Resource for Increasing Safety and Connection (DV RISC), Lethality Risk Factors Animated Series: Recent Separation, (October 28, 2025), available at: <https://dvrisc.org/resource/lethality-risk-factors-animated-series-recent-separation/>

¹¹ Id.

¹² Id.

¹³ Domestic Violence Resource for Increasing Safety and Connection (DV RISC), Lethality Risk Factors Animated Series: Stalking, (October 28, 2025), available at: <https://dvrisc.org/resource/lethality-risk-factors-animated-series-stalking/>

¹⁴ Judith M. MacFarlane et al., "Stalking and Intimate Partner Femicide," Homicide Studies 3, no. 4 (1999), available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1088767999003004003>

¹⁵ Spencer, C. M., & Stith, S. M. (2018). Risk factors for male perpetration and female victimization of intimate partner homicide: A meta-analysis. Trauma, Violence, and Abuse, 21(3), 527–540, available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1088767999003004003>

¹⁶ For more information and resources, see <https://nnedv.org/content/technology-safety/>

¹⁷ Domestic Violence Resource for Increasing Safety and Connection (DV RISC), Lethality Risk Factors Animated Series: Strangulation, (October 28, 2025), available at: <https://dvrisc.org/resource/lethality-risk-factors-animated-series-strangulation/>

¹⁸ Id.

¹⁹ Everytown for Gun Safety, "Guns and Violence Against Women: America's Uniquely Lethal Intimate Partner Violence Problem," (March 18, 2026), available at: <https://everytownresearch.org/report/guns-and-violence-against-women/>

²⁰ Id.

²¹ Id.

²² Id.

²³ Everytown for Gun Safety, "Dual Tragedies: Domestic Violence Homicide-Suicides with a Firearm," (October 2, 2025), available at: <https://everytownresearch.org/report/dual-tragedies-domestic-homicide-suicides-with-a-firearm/>

²⁴ Everytown for Gun Safety, "Mass Shootings in the United States," (March 2023), available at: <https://everytownresearch.org/mass-shootings-in-america/>





ICADV Membership Map

See next page for directory





NORTH COLLAR REGION

- A Safe Place
- Community Crisis Center, Inc.
- Family Shelter Services of Metro Family Services DuPage
- Guardian Angel Community Services
- Mutual Ground, Inc.
- Remedies Renewing Lives
- Safe Passage
- Turning Point, Inc.

NORTH RURAL REGION

- Family Resources, Inc.
- Freedom House, Inc.
- HOPE of Ogle County
- Kankakee County Coalition Against Domestic Violence (Harbor House)
- Mercer County Family Crisis Center
- Riverview Center, Inc.
- Safe Journeys
- VOICES of Stephenson County
- YWCA Sauk Valley

CENTRAL REGION

- Center For Prevention of Abuse
- Courage Connection
- Crisis Center Foundation
- Crosspoint Human Services
- Dove, Inc.
- Fulton-Mason Crisis Service
- HOPE of East Central Illinois
- QUANADA
- Mid Central Community Action, Inc.
- Safe Harbor Family Crisis Center
- Sojourner Shelter and Services, Inc.
- Western Illinois Regional Council - Community Action Agency Victim Services (WIRC-CAA)

SOUTH REGION

- Cairo Women's Shelter, Inc.
- Oasis Women's Center
- SWAN (Stopping Woman Abuse Now)
- Survivor Empowerment Center
- Violence Prevention Center of Southwestern IL

COOK COUNTY REGION

- Anew: Building Beyond Violence & Abuse
- Apna Ghar, Inc.
- Arab American Family Services
- Ascend Justice
- Between Friends
- Connections for Abused Women and Their Children (CAWC)
- Crisis Center for South Suburbia
- Family Rescue
- KAN-WIN
- Life Span
- Metropolitan Family Services
- Mujeres Latinas en Accion
- Neopolitan Lighthouse
- Pillars Community Health
- Sarah's Inn
- SHALVA
- WINGS Program, Inc.
- YWCA Evanston/North Shore



COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Love and Protect Wisdom
- Endeavor Health's Pathways Program
- Alliance of Social Service Organizations (ALSO)
- Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago
- Center for Advancing Domestic Peace, Inc.
- Chicago Hearing Society (CHS)
- Domestic Violence Outreach
- DVSA Communities
- Group Interventions
- HOPE Family Services/The Resurrection Project
- Janice Vision Homes
- Mercy Housing Lakefront
- Trinity Services
- Aman Human Services
- Polish American Association
- KLEO Community Family Life Center
- Children's Advocacy Center - CAN Hope





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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESOURCES

If you are experiencing domestic violence and are looking for support, help is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

- To find a service provider near you, visit: <https://www.ilcadv.org/get-help/>
- The Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline is available at (877) 863-6338 for calls or chat.
- The National Domestic Violence Hotline is available at (800) 799-7233, TTY (800) 787-3224.

To find out how you can help support your local domestic violence agency or ICADV, visit: <https://www.ilcadv.org/everyone-can-be-an-advocate/>



ILLINOIS COALITION
AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



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LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/ilcadv/>

X (formerly Twitter): <https://x.com/ilcadv>

TikTok: <https://www.tiktok.com/@ilcoalitionagainstdv>

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