

# The Economic Impact of Domestic and Sexual Violence on the State of Vermont

April 2021



VERMONT  
NETWORK

*A report of the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence*





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*Special thanks to:* Jen Horwitz, Dana Paull, Cary Brown, Tiffany Bluemle, Karen Tronsgard-Scott, Chani Waterhouse, Ellie Brietmaier, Julie Ryley, Amy Torchia, Kara Casey, Becky Gonyea, Sarah Phillips, Kelli Risitano, Raenetta Liberty, Amanda Cochrane, Ingrid Jonas, Ericka Reil and all of the survivors who played a role in making this report possible.

**Content warning: This report contains graphic stories and descriptions of violence.**

*All featured photos courtesy of:* Kelli Risitano

The development of this report was supported by the Vermont Department of Health through a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Rape Prevention and Education Program. The opinions expressed in this report are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Vermont Department of Health or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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### Rae

Rae (he/him) relocated to Vermont with his young child fleeing a violent relationship. When they arrived in Vermont, they had nothing but the clothes on their backs, and nowhere to go. Rae found that having a small child made accessing services much harder. "Children aren't allowed in the day rooms of warming/cooling shelters. I had to leave her in the shelter office so I could wash laundry. There is no place for families to go. There is a place for teens and older kids but not for families."

Soon after arriving, Rae was connected with a domestic violence shelter program and his life began to turn around with the support of the services they provided. "The program staff said 'Welcome home,' and I felt like it was my home. They supported me and didn't rush me out. I was able to put posters up, sit down and take my time and breathe. They treated me like a human."

Rae identifies the shelter's biggest issue as a lack of enough flexible funding to cover the needs of survivors. "I ran around without shoes for a week and they knew I needed shoes but they didn't have the funds to help me get them. If they don't have it in their tiny donation closet, they didn't have it and couldn't get it for you.

They generally have funding for Christmas and other big things but they need more flexible funding for the little things that make you feel human again."



"Vermont is amazing at taking care of its people. I am so happy to be here, I really am. Once Vermont has people in their care, it does good things for them, but there needs to be better protections in place so victims don't have to go to the shelter to know they are safe."

– Rae (He/Him)

## Executive Summary

Domestic and sexual violence impacts all Vermonters. The harm of this violence begins with individual victims and survivors and ripples out to families and communities—until it reaches each one of us. While the human toll of this violence is increasingly understood, the financial cost of this violence is often unexplored.

This report is designed to examine the economic impact of sexual and domestic violence on the state of Vermont through public expenditures. It seeks to provide an estimate of what violence costs the state using well established research methodologies and available data from 2015-2019. All costs are calculated using 2018 dollars. **Based on these analyses, our conservative estimates are that the public cost of sexual and domestic violence in Vermont totals over \$111 million per year. The per capita cost of domestic and sexual violence to each Vermonter is \$177.67 annually and approximately \$2,655 per victim in Vermont.** We estimate that each year there are more than 40,000 victims of domestic or sexual violence in Vermont, though research indicates that most survivors do not report abuse.

Statewide data on expenditures related to domestic and sexual violence is inconsistent and often unavailable, so use and extrapolation from national data is necessary. Further data collection is required to fully grasp the scope of state spending on domestic and sexual violence. There are a myriad of policy options to reduce costs by addressing domestic and sexual violence in Vermont. We hope that this report provides an opportunity for stakeholders and policymakers to consider these options for our state.



## Introduction

Thousands of Vermonters experience sexual or domestic violence each year. In 2019, Vermonters made almost 19,000 hotline calls to ask for help due to domestic and sexual violence. During the same year, the 15 nonprofit independent Member Organizations of the Vermont Network provided in-person support for over 9,000 individuals.<sup>1</sup> Three hundred and eighty-five Vermonters accessed the help of an advocate to access acute, specialized medical care in the wake of violence. While these rates vary over time, the number of people reaching out for help and assistance remains stable with a slight upward trend. Though the prevalence of domestic and sexual violence can be obscured by its often hidden nature, Vermonters are experiencing violence at high rates each and every year.

The long-term toll that this violence has on our state is especially difficult to calculate. Research on Adverse Childhood Experiences has well established the long-term physical and mental health issues that are associated with experiencing sexual or physical violence as a child, or experiencing domestic violence in the home. Early adversity caused by domestic and sexual violence has lasting health and mortality consequences.<sup>2</sup> For adults, the effects of violence are no less pervasive. Those who experience domestic or sexual violence are more likely to experience a myriad of health and mental health consequences.<sup>3</sup>

The impacts of violence are not only felt on a personal level by victims—our communities suffer as well. Violence has significant impacts on the economy through lost productivity, wages and earning potential.<sup>4</sup> Businesses experience losses when their employees are unable to work due to violence or are working under extreme duress and fear. Communities are shattered when they mourn the loss of one of their own.

Domestic and sexual violence is pervasive and impacts all of us. Highlighting the financial cost and public expenditures related to domestic and sexual violence is one way to demonstrate how this violence impacts every Vermonter. This report attempts to examine the public expenditures related to domestic and sexual violence on the state of Vermont—and in doing so, to remedy a common misperception that domestic and sexual violence only impacts a small number of our citizens living on the margins of our society. Domestic and sexual violence has deleterious consequences for every Vermonter. With this understanding, we can move forward together to find solutions.

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<sup>1</sup>Vermont Network 2019 Data Snapshot <https://vtnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/2019-VT-Network-Data-Snapshot-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>Felitti, V. J. (1998). Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction to Many of the Leading Causes of Death in Adults: The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 14(4). [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0749-3797\(98\)00017-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0749-3797(98)00017-8)

<sup>3</sup>Thurston, Rebecca C.; et al. Association of Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault with Midlife Women's Physical and Mental Health. *JAMA Intern Med*. 2019;179(1):48-53

<sup>4</sup>Peterson, Cora; et al. Lifetime Economic Burden of Rape Among U.S. Adults. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. June 2017.

## Methods & Limitations

In order to estimate the cost of domestic and sexual violence in Vermont, we utilized the best available data on how many Vermonters were victimized, and the costs associated with responding to this violence. We analyzed the costs of domestic and sexual violence in five key sectors:

- **health care;**
- **victim supports and services;**
- **law enforcement;**
- **the judiciary system; and**
- **the corrections system.**

These sectors and the costs associated with them do not represent the full scope of services or costs associated with domestic and sexual violence. These five sectors were chosen due to the available research on victim utilization of these resources and services as well as the available cost data.

Estimates for the number of adult and child victims of domestic and sexual violence were extrapolated from frequently cited national and state surveys. When data was determined to be less reliable due to small sample sizes or lack of complete annual estimates, national data was used in place of Vermont data. Costs associated with victims' interactions with various systems are based on publicly available data and reporting on the budgets of these services and systems. All costs in this report are in 2018 dollars.

The data limitations for this report were extensive because of a lack of research that has been conducted to address these topics in Vermont. As a result, estimates in this report almost certainly significantly underrepresent the impact of domestic and sexual violence. Most data sources for cost areas such as victim services, law enforcement and the judiciary did not allow for disaggregation by gender or age. Comprehensive health care costs and the costs of child protective services were not available and as such are not projected in this report. These represent a significant gap in projections.

One significant limitation was the inability to capture many of the costs associated with supporting and protecting child victims of sexual and domestic violence. The most reliable source of Vermont specific data regarding child victimization, the *Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey*, is a survey of high school students. This data looks at lifetime victimization of a small age cohort of students but it does not necessarily reflect the breadth of child victims within the span of a single year. More research and data are needed on the costs of protecting children through the Child Protective Services system, as well as the additional physical and mental health care needed by child victims.

This report is also unable to address the critically important disproportionate impact on people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, persons with disabilities, and other populations. Research has thoroughly established the disproportionate numbers of victims among these population groups. The data that is available is compelling, yet incomplete. For example, Vermont's Youth Risk Behavior Survey finds that students of color, and to a larger extent LGBTQ+ students, are more likely than white non-Hispanic and heterosexual students to experience domestic and sexual violence.<sup>5</sup> The data limitations in this area represent an essential area for future inquiry.

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<sup>5</sup>(see 2018 YRBS High School Results: [https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/HSVR\\_YRBS\\_2019\\_HSReport.pdf](https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/HSVR_YRBS_2019_HSReport.pdf) Small population sizes often limit availability of data (see Table 5).

Vermont health care data was particularly challenging to access and assess. The average per capita health care costs in Vermont in 2018 are used as a proxy to estimate the amount attributed to domestic and sexual violence. However, these average numbers include both those who have and have not experienced violence. Therefore, in order to have a truly accurate estimate, a Vermont-specific study would need to be done on health care costs.

Finally, there were a number of limitations with regard to the data we could access from the Department of Corrections. In addition to not being able to categorize victimization data by adult or child victims, we were unable to access data about community supervision costs. Currently the Department of Corrections has a contract with out of state facilities for a number of incarcerated individuals and these per capita costs are higher than for individuals who are incarcerated in state facilities. How many of these individuals are domestic or sexual violence offenders is not public information. As a result, all of our calculations use the costs of in-state incarcerations to identify per capita costs.

Given these significant data limitations, this report provides conservative estimates only. It is highly likely that the projections are substantially underestimated and that the true public costs are much higher than projected here. As such, this report is not intended to be a complete and accurate picture of the true cost of violence in Vermont and instead should be used as a guide to aid further examination and policy discussions.

For a detailed list of data sources, estimate and cost methodology, see the Appendix.



## Prevalence of Violence

To determine the costs of domestic and sexual violence to the state of Vermont, it is first necessary to determine the number of annual victims in Vermont. U.S. Census data provides the number of Vermont residents. Table 1 below provides the most recent estimate, averaging over a five-year period.

**Table 1: Estimated Number of Vermont Residents**  
2015 Population Estimates using Annual Estimates of the  
Resident Population for Selected Age Groups by Sex for Vermont  
U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, June 2020

AGE	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
under 14	43,701	46,692	90,393
14–17	14,459	15,199	29,658
18 or older	258,375	246,790	505,165
Total	316,535	308,681	625,216

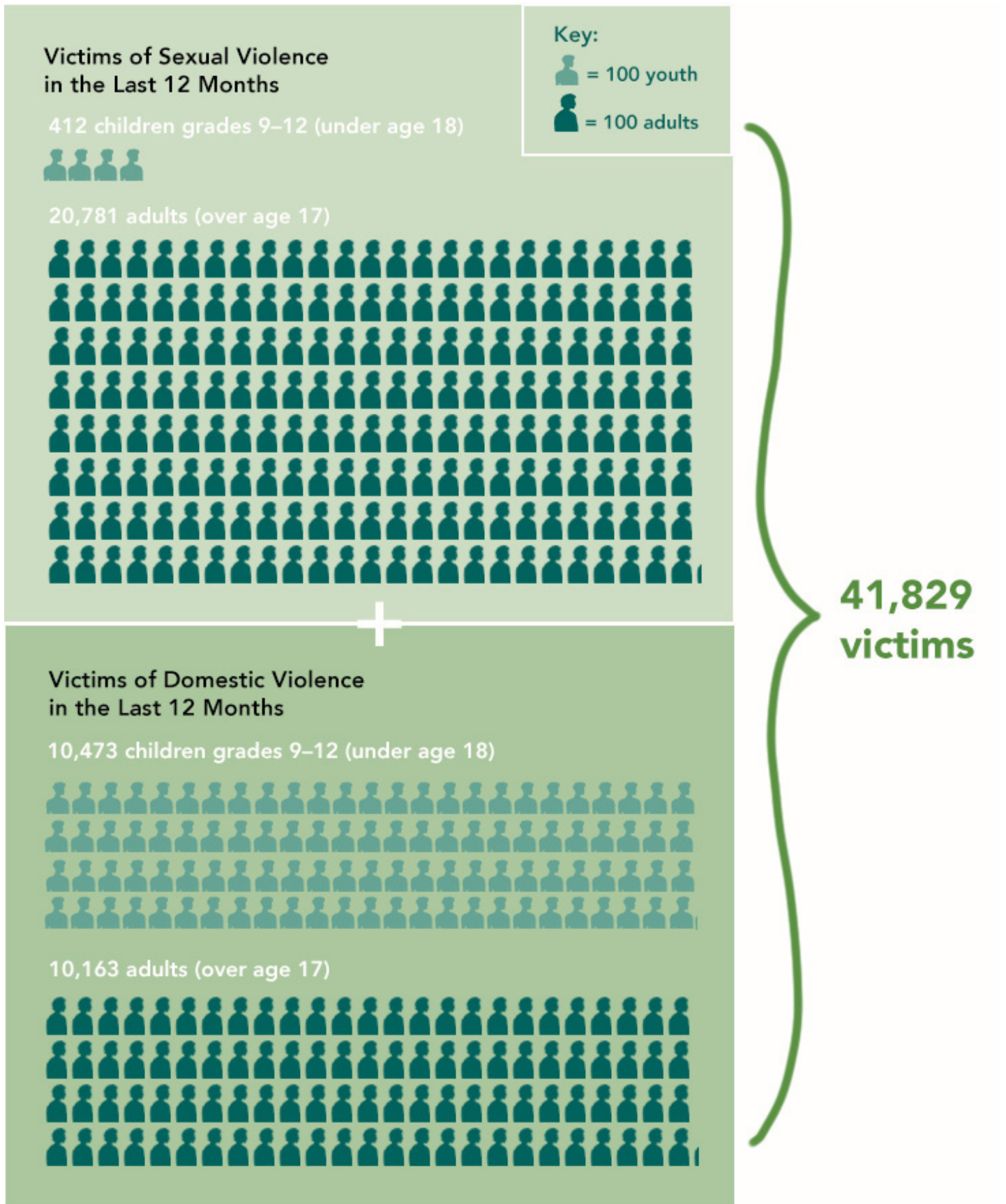
We reviewed several sources providing prevalence data regarding the number of child and adult victims. Sources differ from one another in many ways, two of which are of particular note: first, differences in definitions of sexual and domestic violence; second, in data reflecting lifetime victimization versus within 12 months prior to data collection. The sources selected came closest to Vermont-specific estimates and are identified under the following tables estimating numbers of child and adult victims of sexual violence and intimate partner violence. When considered less reliable (either outdated or less statistically or analytically rigorous), we selected national level data and applied it to the Vermont population.

**Using these methods, we calculated the total number of yearly victims in Vermont to be 41,829 people. Of that population, 30,944 are adult victims and 10,885 are child victims.** We also estimated that approximately 3,288 more children experience domestic violence in the home but aren't the victim of record.

►► See Tables 13 & 14 in Appendix.

<sup>6</sup>U.S. Census Bureau (2020). *Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Selected Age Groups by Sex for Vermont: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019* (SC-EST2019-AGESEX-50). Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2010s-state-detail.html>

Table 2: Estimated Number of Victims of Domestic & Sexual Violence in Vermont





### Including Children in the Conversation

Amy Torchia (she/her) is the Children's Advocacy Coordinator at the Vermont Network and has made it her life's work to support children who have experienced domestic or sexual violence. Amy reports, "There is so much silence and secrecy around these issues, and kids quickly pick up on the message to not talk about it. They often believe that it is dangerous for them and it could be dangerous for their families if they talk about it."



**"Children are still considered 'secondary' in many ways in our society, but also in the movement to end sexual and domestic violence. We need to focus more on serving kids and hearing directly from them about what they are experiencing and what they need to thrive."**

**– Amy Torchia (she/her)**

Service providers often have a limited ability to support or intervene in instances when a child is experiencing domestic violence in the home. This makes it even harder to get an accurate picture of how many children are exposed to domestic violence.

Amy explains, "Usually when kids are witnessing domestic violence, they are also experiencing other risk factors such as unstable housing or parental substance abuse, and these complexities build up and make it hard for kids to develop resilience."

More awareness about the impacts on children will enable a broader array of systems to understand the needs of children experiencing domestic violence, and will better prepare those systems to support the children across multiple points of entry.

The lifelong physical, emotional, and financial impacts of domestic and sexual violence can be mitigated with the right supports and interventions. "Children of all ages need a caring, trusted adult they can talk to, who will listen and support them through their experiences," says Amy. She envisions a future that includes more holistic opportunities for parents and their children to heal and grow together.

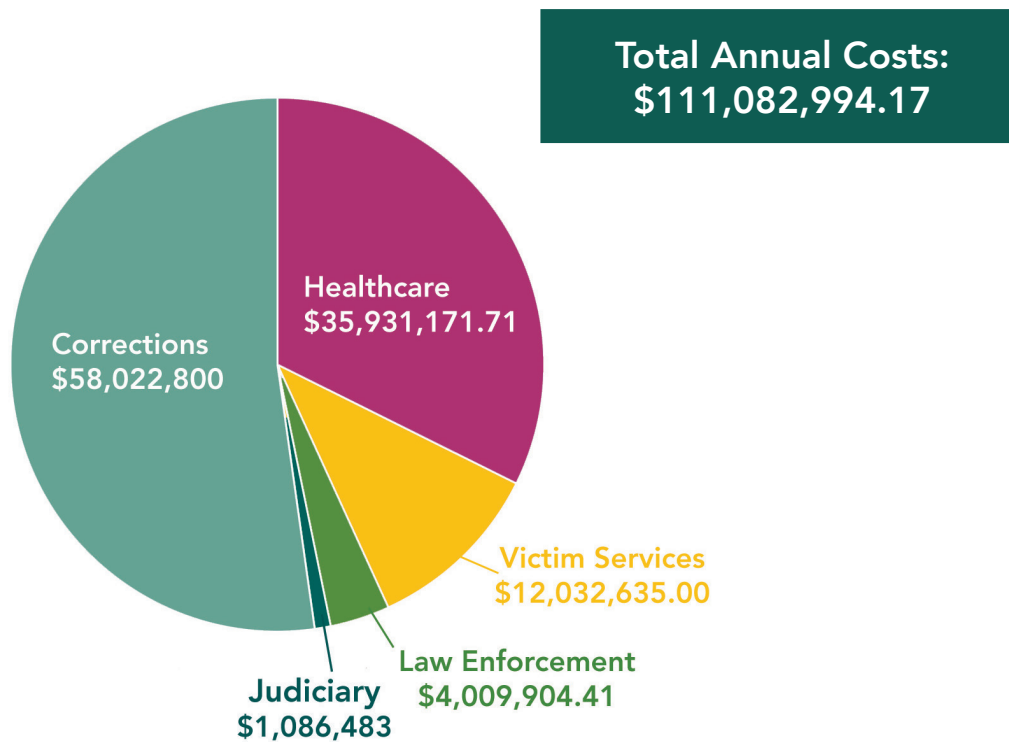


## Public Costs

Table 3 outlines the specific cost areas we used to estimate annual public expenditures as a result of domestic and sexual violence. Public expenditures refers to direct dollars from the state and federal governments. **The total cost estimates in 2018 dollars is \$111,082,996.17 per year, or approximately \$2,655 per victim. This translates to \$177.67 per capita annually.** This cost was derived from analyzing the costs related to five key service areas:

- Health care
- Victim services
- Law enforcement
- Judiciary
- Corrections

**Table 3: Estimated Public Costs of Domestic and Sexual Violence**



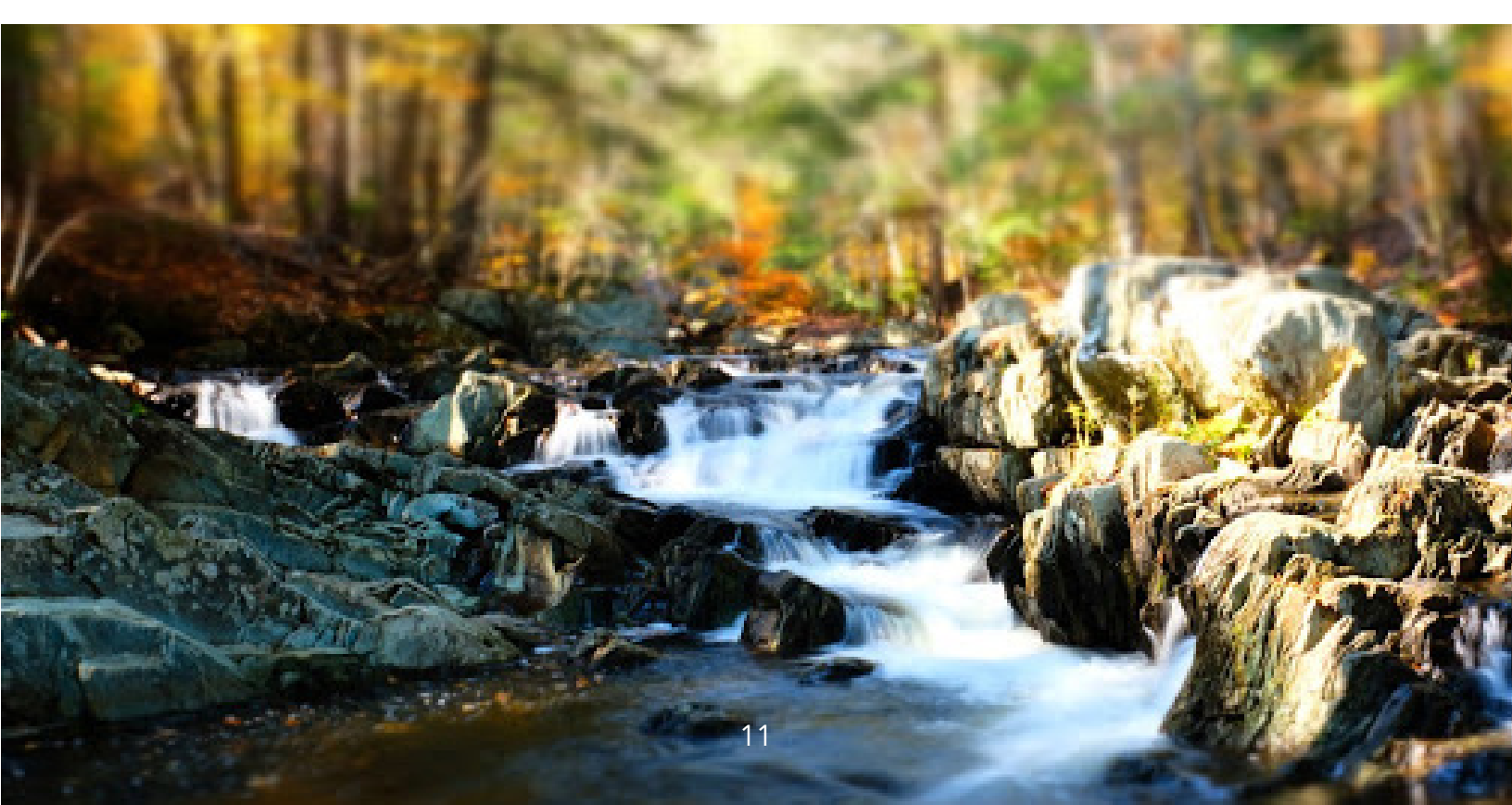
►► See Table 15 in Appendix

This report focuses only on direct public expenditures from state and federal sources for a single year. There are a myriad of other “public” costs associated with domestic and sexual violence that this report could not calculate. Some of the many different costs that could be defined as such include:

- Harm from previous years and its long-lasting traumatic impacts
- Mental health services
- Substance misuse

- Educational system impacts
- Graduation rates and academic potential
- Special education, behavioral and counseling services
- Housing assistance (beyond shelter)
- Social/emotional costs that aren't quantifiable
- Lost wages and earning potential
- Impact to businesses:
  - Loss of productivity and days off due to injury or court appearances
  - Incarceration of an employee
- Loss of property
- Loss of credit, financial standing due to economic abuse
- Loss of life
- Public benefits systems
- Civil courts around parentage, contested divorce and litigation that happens that drains resources, office of child support, supervised visitation programs
- Treatment programming paid by the individual participants
- Risk reduction programming for sex offenses
- Domestic Violence Accountability programming
- McKinney Vento and other services for homeless youth
- Hiring private attorneys
- Lock changes, security cameras and other safety measures
- Relocation costs
- Safe at Home program through the Secretary of State's office
- Changing one's social security number
- Child care costs
- Specialized care to support children who have experienced trauma

*And so much more.*



## Health Care

Domestic and sexual violence result in significant health care costs for victims, survivors and the health care system. Victims of domestic and sexual violence utilize routine health care, as well as accessing health care for treatment of injuries or complications due to assault. Research indicates that domestic and sexual violence can cause acute health care needs and can also be a contributing factor in chronic health conditions.<sup>8</sup>

Although studies indicate that health care costs of victims of violence are significant, they are also under researched. There are minimal sources for state-level or Vermont-specific data regarding the health care costs attributable to domestic and sexual violence. Vermont's unique health care system, including our commitment to population health improvement and payment reform efforts, present a significant opportunity to gather improved data in the future.

**We estimate the approximate health care costs of domestic and sexual violence in Vermont to be \$35,931,171.76.** This estimate is derived from estimates regarding the total Medicaid expenditures for adult victims of sexual and domestic violence and total state spending on the Vermont Forensic Nursing Program.

**Table 4: Estimating The Total Health Care Costs  
Attributed To Adult Victims Of Domestic Violence**

Estimated # of Adult Victims of DV in VT (See table 2)	Estimated # of Adult Victims of DV Covered by Medicaid in VT	Estimated Additional Per Capita Health Care Costs for Victims of DV	Estimated Total Additional Annual Health Care Expenditures of Victims Covered by Medicaid Attributable to DV
10,163	2,033	\$3,811.92	\$7,749,633.36

**Table 5: Estimating The Total Public Health Care Costs  
Attributed To Adult Victims Of Sexual Violence**

Estimated Number of SV Adult Victims in VT (See table 2)	Estimated # of Adult Victims of SV Covered by Medicaid in VT	Estimated Additional Per Capita Health Care Costs for Victims of SV	Estimated Total Additional Annual Health Care Expenditures of Victims Covered by Medicaid Attributable to SV
20,781	4,156	\$6,737	\$28,000,319.40

<sup>8</sup> *Understanding and Addressing Violence Against Women: Health Consequences*, World Health Organization, 2012



## Total Costs of Vermont Forensic Nursing Program

Some victims of intimate partner and sexual violence are able to access specialized, trauma-informed medical care and forensic evidence collection. This medical care is provided by highly trained nurses who collect evidence in accordance with a standardized evidence kit.

Information regarding these costs was provided by the Vermont Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence on total funding annually for years 2017 through 2019. Funding covers the cost of evidence kits, tracking of the kits, and nurse training. **The average annual public cost for the Vermont Forensic Nursing program was \$181,219.**

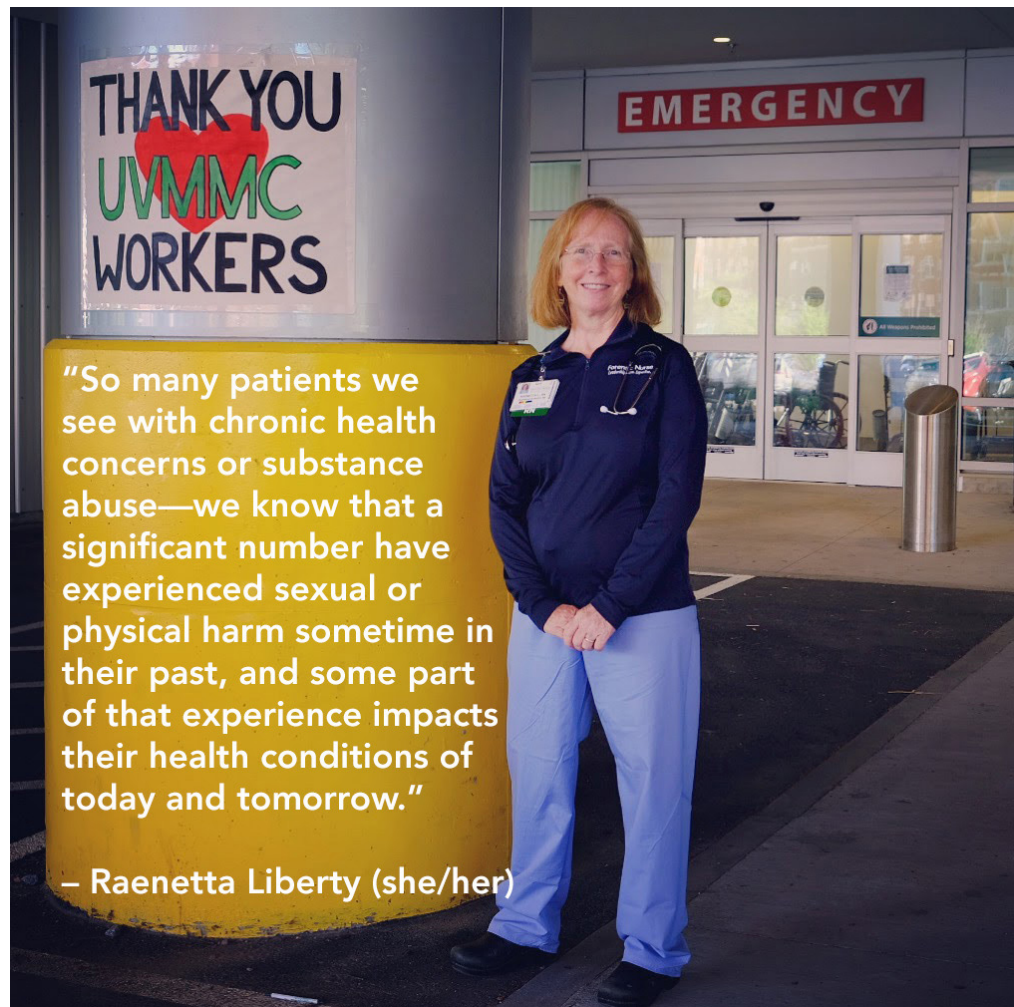


### Hidden Health Care Costs of Violence

Raenetta Liberty (she/her) is a Registered Nurse working in the Emergency Department at University of Vermont Medical Center (UVMHC). As a Forensic Nurse, she has specialized training to care for patients who present with sexual harm, domestic violence, or assault. In her work as a Forensic Nurse she treats patients ranging from small children to elders. Raenetta reports that many patients come in with injuries consistent with violence but don't always disclose that violence to a medical provider. Over the course of her week, Raenetta cares for multiple patients who seek medical care after experiencing domestic or sexual violence and receive what is known as a forensic exam. During these visits, Raenetta provides medical care, documents any injuries with photos and descriptions, collects physical evidence and makes referrals to community organizations for follow-up services.

"From my experience, my biggest frustration is the lack of support and advocacy for patients. I have examples of patients who [need support] and that is not something we as nurses can help them with. More resources for increased victim support and advocacy are needed. It would be wonderful to have a full-time advocate in person in the Emergency Department," says Raenetta.

Raenetta notes that housing is often a particular concern for her patients experiencing domestic or sexual violence. "Oftentimes victims will leave in the middle of the night and if they don't have any identification, they are unable to get safe housing. We can get them food and provide them with a safe place overnight, but we can't do anything that requires being with the patient outside of the hospital. We get creative in finding solutions, but that isn't our strength. Once, we worked with registration and actually printed out a license so they could get access to housing. This is not what nurses should be navigating. We need more resources and support for the patients once they leave the ED."



## Victim Services

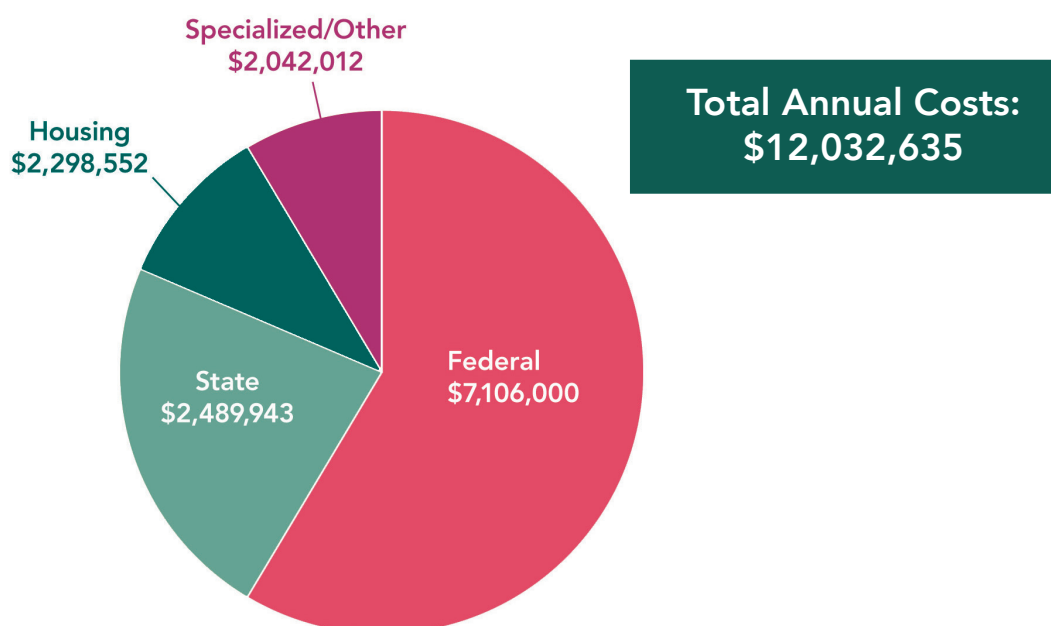
In Vermont, victim services for individuals experiencing domestic and sexual violence are provided by the 15 Member Organizations of the Vermont Network. These organizations provide support to every town in Vermont and operate 24/7, 365 days a year.

The public funding for these critical services includes federal funds, state funds, specialized funding, and housing funding for victims in need of safe and secure housing support. Many of these programs are also supported by the philanthropy of their communities. State funding includes contracts with the Vermont Network that provide critical programming; crisis and hotline responders and services; shelter coordinators; family court advocates; safety planning; civil legal advocacy; and more. State funding also helps support direct compensation to eligible victims and the prosecution of domestic violence, along with other services. Federal funds support the work of the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services' STOP program to support law enforcement and prosecution of domestic and sexual violence crimes; direct compensation payments for eligible victims; programming to support those facing rural sexual assault and domestic violence; the Vermont Department of States' Attorneys and Sheriffs to improve the criminal justice responses program; and more.<sup>9</sup>

**Total annual costs for victims services and compensation are estimated to be \$12,032,635.**

These calculations do not include some critical victims services that are publicly funded due to lack of available data on costs. These include but are not limited to the victims advocate positions housed in all of the States Attorneys' offices; Victim Services Specialists through the Department of Corrections; and child abuse specific services and organizations, such as Prevent Child Abuse Vermont.

**Table 6: Estimated Public Costs of Victim Services**



<sup>9</sup>Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services (2018). *Programs Supported by Vermont's General Fund*. Retrieved from <https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2018/WorkGroups/Senate%20Appropriations/Prior%20Year%20-%20FY%202018%20Budget/02%20%20Protection/W~Center%20for%20Crime%20Victim%20Services~FY%202018%20Proposed%20Budget%20Request%20-%20General%20Fund%20Request~4-5-2017.pdf>



## Essential Advocacy

Amanda Cochrane is the Executive Director of Umbrella, an advocacy organization serving victims of domestic and sexual violence in the Northeast Kingdom. Amanda reports that housing is often one of the greatest barriers for people escaping violence. People leaving violence need safe, affordable places to live free from their abusive partner and this is often difficult to find. Often, clients who come to Umbrella have been precariously housed to begin with, or are renting and either cannot afford the current rent, or their partner holds the lease. Amanda reports, "In the absence of helpful solutions, victims face being forced into situations where they are re-victimized by landlords or roommates expecting or demanding sexual favors in exchange for housing."



"Vermont should do more to ensure that victims have access to basic needs and affordable housing, as both of those are protective against further victimization."

– Amanda Cochrane, Umbrella (she/her)

The financial challenges of being a victim service organization are many. Amanda says, "As a service provider, we manage several state and federal grants related to domestic and sexual violence. We are, of course, very grateful for the funds we receive to support survivors. While we work to diversify funding in order to meet our mission, the fact that our costs to run programs continue to increase while public funds stay the same makes our financial situation a challenging one year to year."

Despite the many challenges facing Umbrella and the individuals they serve, Amanda has a hopeful vision of a violence-free future for Vermont. Getting to this future involves interrupting the patterns of violence before someone shows up at Umbrella's doorstep. She says, "Vermont should consider doing more to address accountability of people who cause harm in ways that have been proven to be effective. Victim services are absolutely essential and we will never make inroads into solving the problem without a meaningful form of accountability, as well as an increased investment in prevention."

## Child Protective Services (DCF)

As part of Victim Services, this report attempted to calculate the annual costs associated with Child Protection Services, provided in Vermont through the Department for Children and Families Services Division. Using data from the Department for Children and Families and the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission<sup>10</sup>, we calculated an annual average of 182 substantiated cases of child abuse due to domestic violence (see Table 7, below).

It is important to note that reports of domestic violence occurring in a home do not automatically cause an assessment or investigation to commence. When domestic violence is occurring in a home, there is often a parent creating safety for the child that can mitigate the risks to the child/ren. Examples of situations when cases are commenced include a child in close proximity to physical violence or a child intervening in an assault of their caregiver. There must be a valid allegation of harm or risk of harm to a child caused by abuse or neglect as defined by 33 V.S.A. Chapter 49, or a pattern of concerns or reports suggesting a child may be in need of care and supervision as defined in 33 V.S.A. Chapter 51.<sup>11</sup>

**Table 7: Number of Vermont Domestic Violence Related Child Protection Cases**

YEAR	INTAKE CALLS	ACCEPTED FOR INTERVENTION	SUBSTANTIATED
2019	3056	861	159
2018	2938	942	212
2017	2904	898	183
2016	2850	960	151
2015	2888	954	181
2014	3163	1074	205
AVERAGE:	2967	948	182

<sup>10</sup>Vermont Attorney General's Office (2019). Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission Annual Reports (2015 to 2018).

<sup>11</sup> <https://dcf.vermont.gov/sites/dcf/files/FSD/Policies/56.pdf>

We used data from the Department for Children and Families<sup>12</sup> to calculate an average annual rate of substantiated sexual abuse from 2014 to 2019.

**Table 8: Number of Vermont Sexual Violence Related Child Protection Cases**

YEAR	CPS SUBSTANTIATED SEXUAL ABUSE
2019	319
2018	382
2017	341
2016	295
2015	306
2014	365
AVERAGE:	335

**Taken together, an average of 517 (182 + 335) children are involved with Child Protective Services each year due to domestic or sexual violence.**

The average cost of child protection services per child served is needed to calculate public costs. Unfortunately, information on the cost per child served is not publicly available, so these numbers are not represented in the final cost analysis. This number would likely have a significant impact on the overall cost analysis in this report.

<sup>12</sup>(Department for Children and Families (2018). Annual Child Protection Report 2018. Retrieved from <https://dcf.vermont.gov/sites/dcf/files/Protection/docs/2018-CP-Report.pdf>





### Anonymous

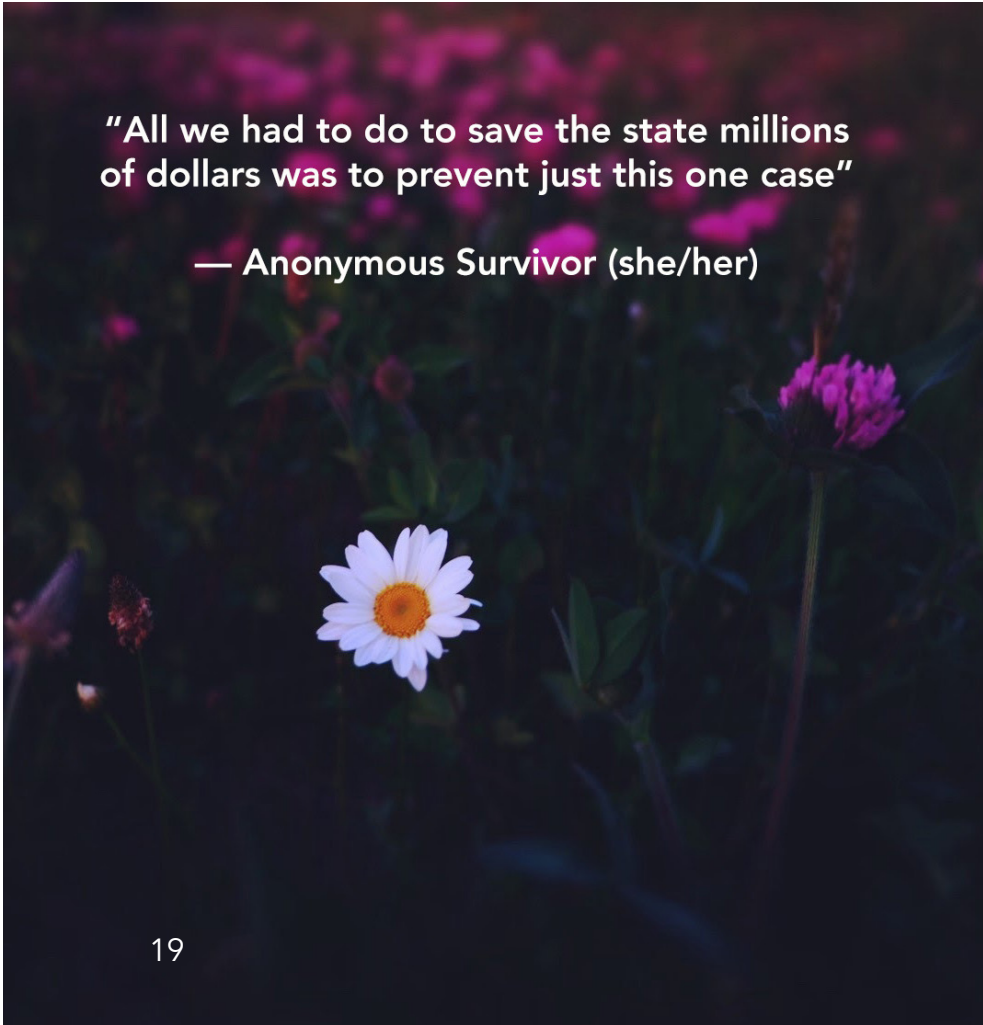
Anonymous survivor (she/her), now an adult Vermont resident, was sexually assaulted by her mother's boyfriend from the time she was very young to age 14, when she became pregnant from her abuser and gave birth alone in a bathroom at her home. She suffered medical complications following the birth and was taken to the hospital. Once at the hospital she was taken into DCF custody and was discharged to the care of a foster home with her newborn child.

This survivor reported that individuals at her school system reported her family to DCF multiple times, but they were never sufficiently investigated to this survivor's knowledge. While the school was able to provide some stability for her through clothing and food assistance, they were limited in the help they could provide for her. This survivor reported, "Adults knew bad things were happening, but no one was able to do anything about it because I was too scared to ask for help. Why is it up to the child to ask for help?"

This survivor has lifelong physical injuries from her abuse and her unassisted birth. The physical and emotional costs of her trauma are something she and her family will live with for their entire lives. Taxpayers have thus far covered all medical and mental health costs for both this survivor and her child. While the total costs involved in this case are unknown to this survivor, they are likely substantial between the costs of her care, the judiciary costs, and the cost of incarcerating her abusers.

This survivor demonstrates incredible resilience and is thriving with consistent support from a team of dedicated service providers. Yet she still lives in fear of her abuser and what will happen to her when he is released from incarceration back into her community.

"We benefit from him being out of state. If they bring him back to Vermont, I do not know what we will do." She reported that when that day eventually comes, it is likely that she will relocate out of state and lose all of the connections and supports she has worked hard to build over the years.



**"All we had to do to save the state millions of dollars was to prevent just this one case"**




**— Anonymous Survivor (she/her)**

## Law Enforcement

While we know that not all survivors choose to engage with law enforcement, many do. Law enforcement officers are often called to respond when domestic or sexual violence is or has occurred. Anecdotally, many officers report that a large percentage of their time is devoted to responding to domestic calls and that these are some of the most challenging calls they receive. The cost projections here are based on wage projections for the time spent on cases related to domestic and sexual violence. Also included in this projection is the \$110,042 spent on the domestic violence trainer position at the Criminal Justice Training Council. There are many other public expenditures that could not be calculated in this section including the many specialized law enforcement positions in the Special Investigation Units (SIUs) who investigate the most egregious cases of domestic and sexual violence in our state.

Total law enforcement costs were calculated at \$4,009,904.41 annually.

**Table 9: Law Enforcement Costs of Sexual and Domestic Violence Offenses**

Rape Offenses (Average annual number between 2016 and 2018)		Domestic Violence Offenses (Average annual number between 2016 and 2018)	
			
155 Children (under 20 years old)	109 Adults	137 Children (under 20 years old)	1,130 Adults
Total annual rape offenses:	264	Total annual domestic violence offenses:	1,267
Average cost per arrest for sex crimes:	\$13,524 (\$14,406.36 update to 2018 dollars)	Average law enforcement wage paid per case:	\$76.23
	X	Domestic violence trainer:	\$110,042
			+
TOTAL COST: = \$3,803,279.00 (updated to 2018 dollars)		TOTAL COST: = \$206,625.41	
Total Law Enforcement Costs = \$4,009,904.41			

Source for rape offenses: FBI Crime Data Explorer using National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) 2016 to 2018.

Source for domestic violence offenses: Crime Research Group (CRG) from NIBRS for the years 2016 to 2018.



### The Domino Effect of Domestic & Sexual Violence



**"We still do not communally understand the wide reach of this type of violence nor make it the priority it needs to be. I feel like there needs to be a statewide commitment to identifying and responding effectively with a comprehensive team approach to this widespread violence."**

**– Ingrid Jonas (she/her),  
Vermont State Police**

Major Ingrid Jonas (she/her) is a commander in the Vermont State Police and she also chairs the agency's Domestic Violence Task Force. When asked how this violence impacts her organization, she reported, "The impact of this violence, which permeates our society, is felt across the department in ways that we often fail to recognize. I could put some of it on a continuum, as follows: First, we strive to eliminate any police applicants with belief systems that support intimate partner violence and ask specific questions about history of violence in the polygraph and background investigations. Then, we train all new recruits on the importance of understanding and working effectively with crime victims and why it is some of the most important work they will do. There is legislatively mandated domestic violence training as well as formal policies and procedures for how we investigate service calls for domestic or sexual violence.

Finally, we have policies and procedures that address when members of our own department are perpetrating or are the victim of domestic or sexual violence."

Law Enforcement officers across the state respond to domestic and sexual violence toward adults and children every single day. They also respond daily, without even realizing it, to the types of events borne from a history of fear and trauma: everything from drug and alcohol related issues to suicide and homicide. Ingrid mused, "I sometimes wonder: If we did more comprehensive and far-reaching work with domestic and sexual violence, would we reduce what we define as crime in general?"

Half of all Vermont's homicides are domestic violence related and the Vermont State Police investigates most of these major crimes in Vermont. The training, overtime, and secondary trauma associated with these deeply disturbing cases are just some of the ways that this violence financially impacts the Vermont State Police. When asked about the financial impacts to their organization, Ingrid also highlighted an impact this report was unable to assess. She said, "We have terminated the employment of officers involved in domestic violence and that, too, costs us money, and, worse, erodes the trust we rely on from the people we serve."

## Judiciary

Some survivors pursue justice for the harm done to them through the civil or criminal legal system. Most survivors never file a criminal complaint about the violence they experience. For those who do report, it is even more rare that a case is prosecuted. While navigating a court process is difficult for most survivors, achieving accountability through this process can be meaningful and even bring healing for others.

The direct costs of domestic and sexual violence cases on the judiciary are significant. The *Vermont Trial Court System Judicial Officer and Court Staff Weighted Caseload Study*<sup>13</sup> provided a structure for calculating judicial costs for responding to domestic and sexual violence. Total cost estimates are based on hours spent by median wages. These costs do not include costs related to divorce or parentage cases where domestic or sexual violence may be a factor. **The estimate for the direct costs to the Judiciary for domestic and sexual violence cases is \$1,086,483 annually.**

**Table 10: Judicial System Cost Estimates for Domestic Violence Incident**

	AVG # OF MINS		TOTAL # OF HOURS	AVG ANNUAL # OF CASES	TOTAL # OF HOURS ANNUALLY	COST (median wage \$33.10 <sup>13</sup> x hours)
	Judicial Officers	Court Staff				
Relief from abuse	31	170	3	3,279	10,985	\$363,614
Civil protection against sexual assault/stalking	24	106	2	1,482	3,211	\$106,284
Felony DV	130	352	8	854	6,788	\$224,688
Misdemeanor DV	28	177	3	1,181	4,034	\$133,524
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6,787</b>	<b>25,018</b>	<b>\$828,110</b>

**Table 11: Judicial System Cost Estimates for Non-DV Sexual Assault and Stalking**

	AVG # OF MINS		TOTAL # OF HOURS	AVG ANNUAL # OF CASES	TOTAL # OF HOURS ANNUALLY	COST (median wage \$33.10 <sup>13</sup> x hours)
	Judicial Officers	Court Staff				
Sexual assault/stalking (non-DV related)	24	106	2	3,603	7,806	\$258,373

<sup>13</sup>Court Consulting Division, National Center for State Courts (2016). Vermont Trial Court System Judicial Officer and Court Staff Weighted Caseload Study, 2015. Retrieved from <https://www.vermontjudiciary.org/sites/default/files/documents/FINAL%20WCS%20Final%20Report%201.9.16.pdf>





### Annie

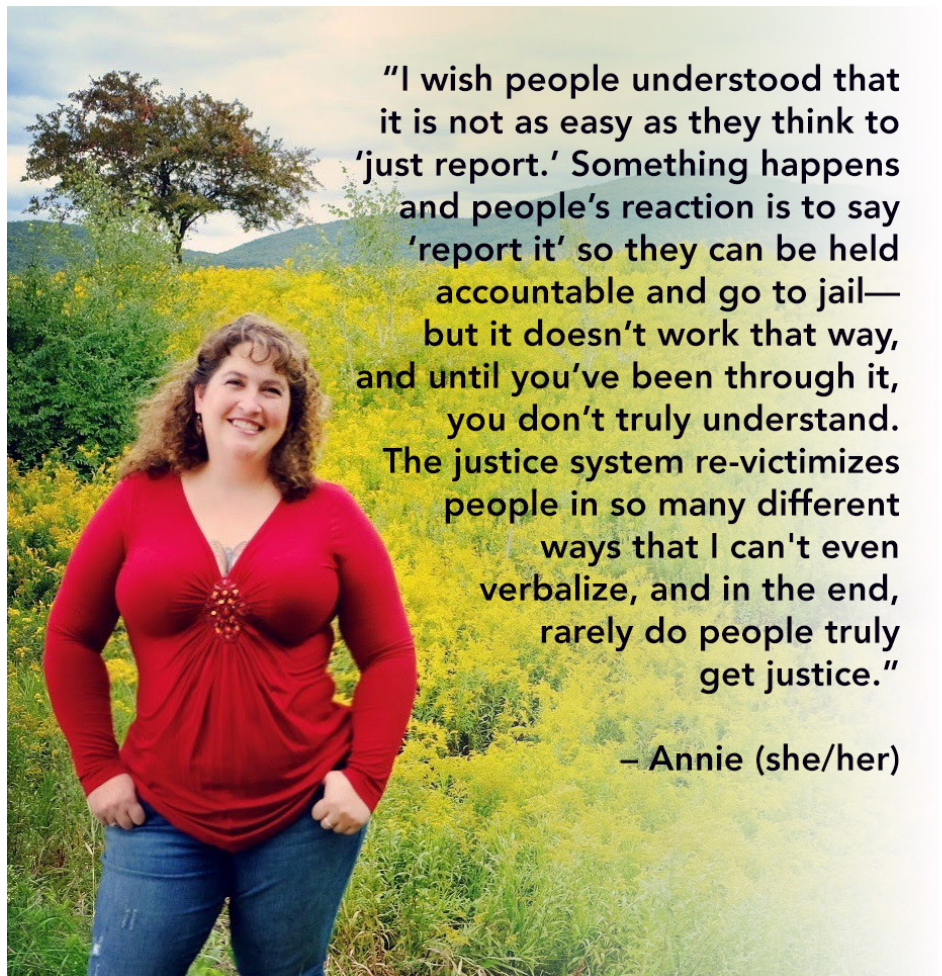
Annie (she/her) is a rape survivor. Following her experience, she confided in a friend who encouraged her to get a forensic exam at the hospital. She had the exam but initially did not want to report her experience to law enforcement and instead tried to forget about it and move on with her life.

Annie reported, "I tried to forget but I was having nightmares almost daily. My anxiety level was through the roof." Eventually she sought out the State's Attorney to talk about her experience and they assured her that she had a solid case. She describes the next two years of her life as absolute hell.

Initially, the prosecutors told Annie that her case would most likely settle with a plea deal but it ended up going to trial. The trial ended in a mistrial and the prosecutors encouraged Annie to pursue another trial because they had such a strong case. After many months, the second trial ended with a "not guilty" verdict. She recalled that moment as being one of the worst in her life, "It completely destroyed me. And he was free to go. There is no appeal process for the victim. No chance of him being retried for the same crime. Any progress I had made in therapy was gone in a heartbeat."

In the week following her trial, Annie met with the State's Attorney. The prosecutors indicated that the trial was a success because the jury deliberated for a long time. The prosecutor told Annie that there had not been a guilty verdict in that county in an adult rape case in over 12 years. Annie reports that hearing this information after all she had gone through was like being violated all over again.

Annie has turned her horrific experiences into action. She is now volunteering with a victim services organization and has gone back to school so she can support others. "Somehow, some way, I *will* make changes because this simply cannot happen to anyone else. And if I can help others to not go through what I did, then I will be able to say that my own hell was worth it."



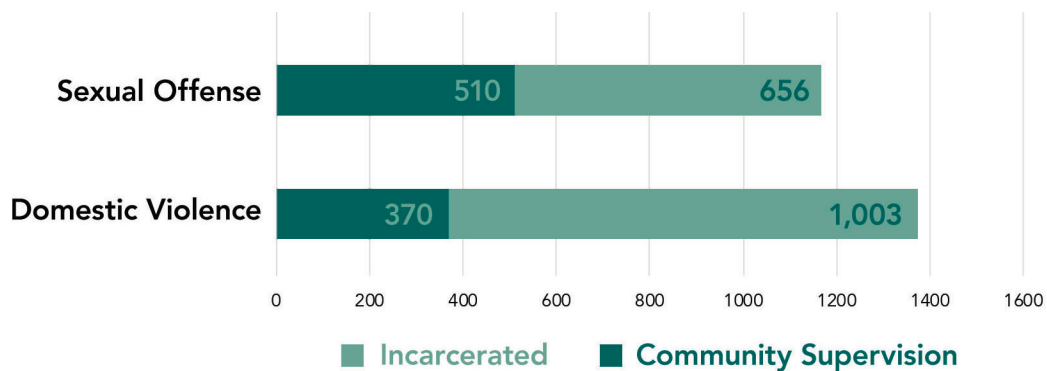
## Corrections

Corrections costs related to domestic and sexual violence are significant. Incarceration is costly and often doesn't lead to a reduction in violence. Instead, incarceration often leads to conditions that perpetuate recidivism of violence, including the dehumanizing of the individual, the loss of their earning potential and the destruction of their community supports.<sup>14</sup> It is not possible or effective to incarcerate our way out of the community issues of domestic or sexual violence.

Estimates of the direct costs of domestic and sexual violence associated with the correctional system can be roughly calculated by determining the number of individuals sentenced for domestic or sexual violence offenses, the average length of sentence, and average cost per day for incarceration (including programming) or community supervision.

Calculations from the most recent *Vermont DOC Facts and Figures*<sup>15</sup> covered FY14 (2013-2014). The number of individuals in Department of Corrections (DOC) custody during that period are presented in Table 12.

**Table 12: Number of Individuals With at Least One Charge of Domestic Violence or Sexual Offense in DOC Custody (2013-2014)**



*DOC FY15 Annual Report* indicates per capita cost for in-state incarceration at \$62,224. Updated to 2018 dollars, this equals \$65,935 in state costs. Costs for community supervision were not included. These figures also do not account for the number of out of state offenders or the cost of community supervision. Total DOC costs for sexual violence in-state incarceration is \$33,626,850. For domestic violence, the DOC spends \$24,395,950. **Taken together, the total annual costs associated with incarceration total \$58,022,800 annually.**

<sup>14</sup> Goodmark, L. (2019). *Decriminalizing Domestic Violence: A Balanced Policy Approach to Intimate Partner Violence*. University of California Press.

<sup>15</sup> Vermont Department of Corrections (2015). *Facts and Figures FY 2013*. Retrieved from [https://ljfo.vermont.gov/assets/docs/appropriations/fy\\_2015/Department-Budgets/5832e533b6/DOC-Facts-and-Figures-FY-2013-Final.pdf](https://ljfo.vermont.gov/assets/docs/appropriations/fy_2015/Department-Budgets/5832e533b6/DOC-Facts-and-Figures-FY-2013-Final.pdf)






## Amanda

At the time of her interview, Amanda (she/her) was serving a year in the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility (CRCF) on a charge of aggravated domestic assault. The night she was arrested, she and her partner were fighting, and she grabbed the knife that she kept by her bedside and stabbed her partner. This led to her being charged with attempted murder, which was later adjusted to an aggravated domestic assault.

This was not the first time that police had been called to Amanda's house. The first time, her partner tied her up and sexually assaulted her. That night, the police brought her to the hospital against her wishes and she received a resisting arrest charge when she tried to leave. Her partner was arrested for felonious sexual assault and false imprisonment, but the charges were ultimately dropped. "The officers had their own assumptions on what was happening that didn't align with my experience. They made quick decisions about what was going on. They just made up their own fairy tale and went from there," said Amanda.

Once incarcerated, Amanda began to work with a program called Discussing Intimate Partner Violence and Accessing Services (DIVAS)<sup>16</sup>. She said, "DIVAS has actually helped me through this entire experience. I was approached in a sexual manner by an officer in CRCF and was asked to be an escort. If it wasn't for DIVAS I wouldn't have been able to report it. In here there is no support. After I reported, the correctional officer was suspended for a few months and just returned. They did an investigation but it didn't seem very thorough."

Amanda wishes her experience with law enforcement was different and that she could have been offered support and services instead of incarceration. She stated, "I wish they had thought that no normal person would have a knife beside their bed. That a normal relationship doesn't have fear to that extent. If they had picked up on that, I might not have lost a year of my life over it."



**"I'm not ashamed or proud but it is part of my life and I have to accept it and move forward. I have big dreams for what comes next for me."**

**– Amanda (she/her)**

<sup>16</sup>DIVAS is a program of the Vermont Network that serves incarcerated survivors.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Domestic and sexual violence has a profound impact on the state of Vermont, our communities and our citizens. It personally affects thousands of Vermonters each year and their friends, families, employers, and communities. The reach of violence is far and wide. **Based on these analyses, our conservative estimates are that the public cost of sexual and domestic violence in Vermont totals over \$111 million per year. The per capita cost of domestic and sexual violence to each Vermonter is \$177 annually and approximately \$2,655 per victim in Vermont.** While we estimate that each year there are more than 40,000 victims of domestic or sexual violence in Vermont, research indicates that most survivors do not report abuse. The statewide data available was inconsistent and often unavailable so some extrapolation from national data was necessary. Further data collection is required to fully grasp the scope of state spending on domestic and sexual violence. There were numerous stumbling blocks to accessing the data needed to fully present the economic impact of violence to the state of Vermont.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER INQUIRY

This report highlighted the significant gaps in data collection and research on the costs of domestic and sexual violence at the state level. Recommendations for further research include:

- The impact of domestic and sexual violence on children warrants further examination and consideration.
- Future Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) assessments conducted by the Department of Health should include questions pertaining to witnessing domestic violence in the home. This could provide a more complete picture of what children in Vermont are experiencing.
- Annual data collection regarding the costs of protecting children impacted by domestic violence through the child protective services system, as well as the additional physical and mental health care needed by child victims is essential.
- Much more research and data collection is needed on the disproportionate domestic and sexual violence that BIPOC and LGBTQ+ Vermonters experience.
- To better understand the full economic impact of violence to our state so that the legislature and state government may make accurate budget proposals, a Vermont-specific health care cost analysis should be completed.
- The publicly available Department of Corrections data is cumbersome and often out of date. More research is required to better understand how domestic and sexual violence impacts our populations in facilities and on community supervision and the effectiveness of various interventions.

This report demonstrates that domestic and sexual violence impacts all Vermonters, not only in their families and communities, but economically as well. The data paints a stark picture of pervasive and costly violence within Vermont.

We can create a different future for Vermont—a future where Vermonters can thrive, free from violence. There are myriad policy options that can reduce costs by addressing domestic and sexual violence in Vermont.

Uplift VT is a new grassroots campaign that seeks to address the findings of this report through policy recommendations. The campaign looks forward to engaging with policymakers and communities in the coming years to address the economic impact of domestic and sexual violence to the state of Vermont.





## Ericka

Ericka Reil (she/her) is a person with a disability who has experienced sexual abuse. She is an advocate for a disability rights organization and works with individuals with disabilities who experience domestic and sexual violence. She doesn't identify as a survivor. "I don't like the word survivor so much because I believe that those of us who have been exposed to abuse live with it every day and it is always present—we are constantly living with it."

Ericka takes great pride in her work as an advocate. "Being an advocate, I help people to feel not alone, and I felt very alone. Disabilities are already isolating, and this puts you in another isolation, and people don't know how to connect."

She reports that a large part of her job is reaching out and bridging the gaps in systems for her clients. She reaches out to everyone she can from service organizations to lawyers and law enforcement.

"I want people to know that people with disabilities are a silent minority and if there is a way to make systems safer and better for people with disabilities, I want to be that conduit. Vermont needs to take its blinders off. Violence happens to kids, adults, and elders. There is no age limit when it comes to abuse. You are not alone. Keep talking and someone will listen. It took me six years to get someone to listen and it took a lot of screaming, but eventually someone did listen."



*"If I could wave my magic wand,  
I would say that people need to  
see that it happens here, it isn't  
just a big city thing."*

*It happens here.*

*– Ericka (she/her)*

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## Appendix: Detailed Methodology

### Overview

In order to estimate the cost of sexual violence and intimate partner violence in Vermont, we utilize the best available data on how many Vermonters were victimized, and the costs associated with the systems these victims and those who cause harm interact with. In an effort to capture the full scope of these costs for the state of Vermont, we analyze the financial impact of sexual and domestic violence on: health care costs, victim services costs, law enforcement costs, judiciary system costs, and the costs associated with the corrections system.

### Population and Victim Estimates

We start with Vermont population estimates from the U.S. Census, using an average of estimates over 5 years to calculate an estimate for the Vermont population, broken down by age and reported sex. These population estimates are then used to calculate the number of victims, based on the percentages of incidences found to be statistically probable in national surveys.

We utilize a Vermont-specific annually conducted survey to provide an estimate of Vermont youth experiencing sexual violence. The *Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey* (YRBS) is a statewide report conducted in all high schools in the state. Their questions allow us to extrapolate estimates of those experiencing unwanted sexual contact, contact sexual violence, dating violence, and emotionally abuse/controlling relationships. Data from the *National Study of Children's Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence* allows us to understand more about the number of children who witness family violence, although the costs of these interactions and experiences, remains largely unknown, further contributing to the conservative nature of our cost estimates.

We estimate the number of adult victims of violence, using 2015 data from the *National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey* (NIPSVS). Here, we utilize national data, as it is deemed more consistent and reputable than the Vermont data, which was less consistently available in annual estimates for our years of study. We estimate the number of victims of sexual violence based on the rate of contact sexual violence in a 12-month period. The 12-month prevalence estimates reflect the proportion of the population who reported experiencing victimization in the 12 months prior to taking the survey. Using the same NIPSVS survey data, we use 12-month prevalence of domestic violence to extrapolate Vermont estimates, subtracting the average percent of incidences (18.3%) associated with contact sexual violence, according to the same study. We do this to prevent and limit any possible double-counting of victims.

*See Tables 13 & 14 on next page*



## Child Victims Of Sexual Violence

**Table 13: Estimating Number of Sexual Violence Child Victims in Vermont  
Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS): Grades 9–12<sup>32</sup>**

TIMEFRAME	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL	
	% population	# victims	% population	# victims	% population	# victims
In the past 12 mos <sup>1</sup>	2%	317	1%	95	3%	412
In their lifetime	28%	4,049	8%	1,216	36%	5,265

<sup>1</sup>The 12-month estimates were calculated as follows: Lifetime rate (e.g., 28%) divided by average age of YRBS respondents (16.5) multiplied by years of episodes (1.29). For example: 2% = (.28/16.5) x 1.29

## Adult Victims Of Sexual Violence

**Table 14: Estimating the Number of Adult Victims of Sexual Violence in Vermont  
2015 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 18 years or older<sup>33</sup>**

TIMEFRAME	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL	
	% population	# victims	% population	# victims	% population	# victims
In the past 12 mos	4.7%	12,144	3.5%	8,638	8.2%	20,781
In their lifetime	43.6%	112,652	24.8%	61,204	68.4%	173,856

Note: Lifetime rates and 12-month rates are reported national rates, which are deemed to be more reliable given the small sample size in Vermont.

**Table 15: Estimated Public Costs of Domestic and Sexual Violence**

Total Estimated Number of Victims in the Past 12 Months:	Sexual Violence		Intimate Partner Violence		Total Number of Victims
			Dating Violence + IPV	IPV	
	Children <18	Adults >17	Children <18	Adults >17	
	412	20,781	10,473	10,163	41,829
Public Spending Costs	Sexual Violence		Intimate Partner Violence		
	Children <18	Adults >17	Children <18	Adults >17	Total
<b>Healthcare</b>					
Public spending on healthcare associated with sexual violence (SV) & domestic violence (DV)		28,000,319.00		7,749,633.36	39,749,952.71
SANE	50,741.32	130,477.68			181,219.00
<b>Total Healthcare Costs</b>	50,741.32	28,130,797.08		7,749,633.36	35,931,171.71
<b>Victims Services &amp; Compensation</b>	<b>Federal Funding</b>	<b>State Funding</b>			
Victims Services	7,106,000.00	2,216,524.00			9,322,524.00
Housing (HOP & GA)				2,298,552.00	2,298,552.00
VCCVS		159,281.00		114,138.00	273,419.00
DV Council Coordinator				17,640.00	17,640.00
Specialized funding	120,500.00				120,500.00
<b>Total Victims Services Costs</b>	7,226,500.00	2,375,805.00		2,430,330.00	12,032,635.00
<b>Law Enforcement</b>					
Law enforcement costs				96,583.41	3,899,862.41
DV Trainer budget at CJTC				110,042.00	110,042.00
<b>Total Law Enforcement Costs</b>					4,009,904.41
<b>Judiciary</b>					
Non-DV sexual assault & stalking		258,373.00			258,373.00
Civil protection against sexual assault & stalking		106,284.00			106,284.00
Relief from abuse				363,614.00	363,614.00
Misdemeanor DV				133,524.00	133,524.00
Felony DV				224,688.00	224,688.00
<b>Total Judiciary Costs</b>					1,086,483.00
<b>Corrections</b>					
DOC Incarceration/. Supervision		33,626,850.00		24,395,950.00	58,022,800.00
<b>TOTAL SPENDING</b>					<b>111,082,994.17</b>
<b>Per Victim:</b>					<b>2,655.65</b>
<b>Per Capita:</b>					<b>117.67</b>

## Public Health Care Expenditures for Adult Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence

The costs in this report attributed to adult domestic violence are estimated based on data provided in two widely cited studies which look at the increased health care costs for victims of domestic and sexual violence.

The domestic violence costs were calculated according to Bonomi, et al. (2009). Health care utilization and costs associated with physical and nonphysical-only intimate partner violence. This study is widely cited and can be used to provide a proxy for the average additional percent of increased physical and mental health care costs attributed to domestic violence. The Bonomi study found that the total annual health care costs for adult victims experiencing physical intimate partner violence was 42% higher than those not experiencing abuse. In 2018, the average Vermont health care spending per capita was \$9,076. This figure is used as a proxy for the average cost of those not experiencing abuse. Using these estimates, the average health care costs for adult victims experiencing physical intimate partner violence in Vermont is estimated to be \$12,887.92, which is \$3,811.92 higher than average per-capita health care spending.

The sexual violence costs were calculated according to Tennessee, et al. (2017): *The Monetary Cost of Sexual Assault to Privately Insured US Women*. This study is also widely cited, though it looked at the health care costs attributable to sexual violence for women who were privately insured. There are no comprehensive studies on annual or per assault costs for publicly insured survivors. The Tennessee study found that payors (insurance and patient) incur a total average of \$6,737 for each adult sexual assault.

In both cases, we use data from the Office of the Vermont State Auditor on per capita health care costs in combination with these studies to provide an estimate for increased costs. While there are other studies and methods to provide such a calculation, this methodology honors the particulars of the Vermont health care system and ACO model.

*Note: Vermont Medicaid covers 20% of adults 18 to 65.*

### Victim Services

In order to account for the expenditures in the state for victim services, we gathered available data on state and federal budget allocations for these services between 2017 and 2019, creating an average for this time period. We used data provided by the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services to calculate an average for their average annual expenditures (between 2016 and 2018) for victims of domestic and sexual violence.

Reports of funding received by the Network, its members, and others serving victims yield the following information:

- Average annual federal funding (2017 through 2019) = \$7,106,000
- Average annual state spending (2017 through 2019) without housing = \$2,216,524
- Specialized funding (DOC DIVAS, THP, ICJR, Trafficking) = \$ 120,500
- Housing (average annual HOP funds \$759,435 and GA housing \$1,539,117) = \$2,298,552

Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services reported on average annual expenditures for victims of domestic and sexual violence, averaged across 2016 to 2018:

- Sexual assault victims = \$159,281
- Domestic violence victims = \$114,138

The estimated cost is the total of all these expenditures.

## **Child Protection Services**

Using data from the Department for Children and Families and the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission, we calculated an average of Child Protection Services cases with a substantiated case of child abuse attributed to domestic violence between 2014 and 2019. We also used data from the Department for Children and Families over this same period to find an average of substantiated cases of child sexual abuse. Taken together, these averages would have been multiplied by the average cost of serving a child in CPS in the state of Vermont. However, this data was unavailable to us, and a strong proxy could not be determined.

## **Law Enforcement**

In order to calculate the costs of law enforcement that can be attributed to sexual and domestic violence, we utilize reporting on the number of incidents between 2016 and 2018 from the FBI Crime Data Explorer using National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) for the average number of rape offenses, and data from the NIBRS analyzed for us by the Crime Research Group for the average number of domestic violence incidents. Both sets of data give us details about the number of offenses committed against adults and children that involve law enforcement. Our team then used research from Schlueter et al (2014), who report that law enforcement officers spend an average of 3 hours on domestic assault cases to calculate an estimate for the cost of law enforcement for these incidents. This same research provided an estimated cost per arrest for sexual violence. These two figures, along with an hourly median rate for law enforcement officers in Vermont from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, are used to create an estimate for the total cost of law enforcement associated with domestic violence and sexual assault. The Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services also provided us with the 2018 cost of the domestic violence trainer position at the Criminal Justice Training Council. We calculated law enforcement costs using the following data:

### **Number of incidents reported to law enforcement**

- **Average annual number of incidents of rape offenses reported to Vermont law enforcement** (Source: FBI Crime Data Explorer using National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) 2016 – 2018)
  - ▶ 109 annual average number rape offenses
  - ▶ 155 annual average number of child (under 20 years old) rape offenses
  - **Total = 264 incidents (includes children and adults)**
- **Average annual number of DV incidents reported to law enforcement in Vermont** (Using data provided by Crime Research Group (CRG) from NIBRS for the years 2016–2018.)
  - ▶ 137 annual average number of child physical assault incidents (by parent or parent partner)
  - ▶ 1,130 annual average number of IPV or ex IPV incidents
  - **Total = 1,267 incidents**



### Average time spent on cases

- Schlueter et al (2014) report that law enforcement officers spend an average of **3 hours** on domestic assault cases.

### Per hour wage for law enforcement

- Median wage for Vermont Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers: **\$25.41** (Median Hourly Wage)

### Domestic violence law enforcement cost

- 1,267 (average annual number of incidents) X 3 hours X \$25.41 = **\$96,583**

### SEXUAL ASSAULT LAW ENFORCEMENT COST:

\$13,524 average cost per arrest for sex crimes x 264 average annual incidents = \$3,583,860

> updated to 2018 dollars = **\$3,803,279**

### Judicial System

*The Vermont Trial Court System Judicial Officer and Court Staff Weighted Caseload Study* provided a structure for calculating judicial costs for responding to domestic and sexual violence, including an estimate of the average number of minutes of staff time spent on various types of cases. We pulled data from Vermont Judiciary annual statistical reports from 2015 to 2019 to provide the average annual number of domestic violence cases only, both misdemeanors and felonies. Separate data for felony sexual assault was not available, so a proxy was calculated based on the percent of estimated domestic violence incidents (combined number of children and adults) that reach the judicial system. Based on the average annual cases, it was determined that a figure of 16.9% (of estimated non-domestic violence sexual assault) was an appropriate proxy. We use data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' *May 2019 State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates* for Vermont to estimate an average hourly wage for judicial officers and court staff who oversee domestic and sexual violence proceedings. The median hourly wage for "Administrative Law Judges, Adjudicators, and Hearing Officers" of \$33.10 was used. Combined, these data provide us an estimate of the costs attributed to sexual and domestic violence that are associated with the judicial system. One limitation associated with these methods and data sources, is that we are unable to distinguish these cases and therefore costs, between adult and child victims.

### Corrections Costs

Estimates of costs associated with DV/SV convictions can be calculated by determining the number of offenders sentenced for domestic violence and/or sexual assault, the average length of sentence, and average cost per day for incarceration (including programming) or community supervision. We utilize the most recent *Vermont Department of Corrections' Facts and Figures* which was FY14 (2013-2014). They haven't published this level of detailed reporting on inmates in the same way since this time, making this outdated data a limitation of our methods. A Department of Corrections *FY15 Annual Report* is used to calculate costs per inmate and indicates per capita cost for in-state incarceration at \$62,224. Updating these figures to 2018 dollars we use an amount of \$65,935 for in-state inmates as the cost associated with each domestic violence and sexual assault offender determined to be incarcerated; we were unable to determine the proportion of these inmates in-state verses out-of-state and thus, use in-state costs across the board. Costs for community supervision were not able to be estimated and are thus not included. Similar to other cost categories we provide estimates for, we are unable to distinguish between costs associated with child and adult victims when it comes to the incarceration of offenders.



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