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Official Reports of Domestic Violence Victimization in WV: 2000-2005

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Domestic violence (DV), including intimate partner violence, continues to be recognized as a major issue by justice policy planners and public officials.¹ It is a crime that is often used as a means to exert power and control over intimate partners, family members, and others. As a result, it not only affects those who are abused but also other family members and children exposed to the abuse.

Given the consequences of domestic violence, many national and state initiatives have begun to reduce the incidence of domestic violence across the country. At the national level, for instance, the federal government established an initiative called Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) to target the reduction of violent crimes, including domestic violence. In 2004, the Office of the U.S. Attorney General began a new PSN public service announcement campaign targeting the problem of domestic violence and firearms.

Similar to the efforts at the national level, the PSN initiative in the northern district of West Virginia focused its efforts on the problem of domestic violence. Started in early-2003, the northern PSN district known as Project Safe Homes (PSH), established the goal of reducing the incidence of domestic

violence in the district as well as gun-related crime. Rooted in a deterrence philosophy, the northern district developed a media awareness campaign and began prosecution efforts designed to convey the message that persons convicted of domestic violence would lose their right to own/possess guns.

This report supports the northern district's efforts by providing statistics on the trends of domestic violence in the state and across federal judicial districts. In addition, county-level analyses highlight concentrations of high domestic violence rates in the state. It is anticipated that this information will assist the PSN planners in the northern district in refining their efforts and developing a more targeted approach for their domestic violence reduction strategies.

This report analyzes trends in the state using incident-based crime data from 2000-2005. The WV Incident Based Reporting System (WVIBRS) is maintained by the West Virginia State Police and includes information on DV offenses, victims, and arrests.

The WVIBRS, a revised version of the UCR, provides some insight into the victim-offender relationships in offending. As a result, the use of the

State of West Virginia
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Report Highlights

- Between 2000 and 2005, the total number of DV victims reported to law enforcement declined by 4.1%.
- Between 2000 and 2005, DV victims averaged 17.4% of all crime victims known to police.
- By far, the majority of DV victims known to law enforcement were victims of simple assault in 2000 and 2005.
- The total number of violent crime DV victims known to law enforcement declined by 33.6% between 2000 and 2005, from 2,056 to 1,366 reported victims.
- Females comprised 51.1% of WV's population in 2005, but accounted for 75.3% of all DV victims reported to law enforcement in 2005.
- Only 4.8% of WV's population consisted of nonwhite residents in 2005, however, minorities comprised 7.5% of all DV victims reported to law enforcement.
- Youth under the age of eighteen made up 10.9% of all DV victims reported to law enforcement in 2005.
- Of the 12,621 DV victims reported in 2005, a total of 8,626 or 68.3% were victims of intimate partner violence.
- The rate of persons victimized by an intimate partner was 4.7, or approximately 5 victims per 1,000 residents compared to 2.2 for non-intimate partners in 2005.

Report Highlights

- Between 2000 and 2005, the southern region of WV accounted for 66.2% to 72.1% of all victims of intimate partner violence known to law enforcement.
- The use of strongarm tactics was by far the most common weapon used in all weapon-related DV offenses in 2005, except in the case of murder.
- In 2005, 97.8% of reported DV victims incurred no or only minor injuries.
- Of the 27 DV-related fatalities reported to law enforcement in 2005, a total of 15 or 55.6% were comprised of females.
- Non-domestic homicides accounted for over two-thirds or 67.5% of all homicides between 2000 and 2005.
- Of the 27 domestic fatalities that occurred in 2005, 13 were caused by an intimate partner and 14 by a non-intimate partner.

WVIBRS data allows for a more detailed examination of DV incidents. In examining the crime of domestic violence, this report provides information on demographic characteristics of domestic violence victims, the geographic distribution of domestic violence in the state, and the injuries and fatalities that occur due to the occurrence of domestic violence.

Domestic Violence and the Use of Official Reports: A Cautionary Note

Given that this report utilizes official crime reports to law enforcement as its data source, it is important to specify that our analysis *only provides*

information on incidents known to law enforcement.

A common assumption among researchers, professionals and the general public is that it is often difficult to know the precise magnitude of the domestic violence problem because many incidents often go unreported (Frieze and Browne, 1989; Herzberger, 1996; Pagelow, 1984). There is clearly evidence to support this notion. For instance, a 2005 report on family violence published by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) concluded that only 60.0% of all family violence victimizations were reported to police between 1998 and 2002 (Durose et al., 2005).

In addition, there are some commonly identified reasons why domestic violence victims choose not to report such incidents. These reasons often include but are not limited to the fear of reprisals, police leniency, and privacy concerns. According to the BJS report on family violence, victims most often cited that the incidents were a “private/personal matter.” Moreover, many victims indicated that they did not report the crime in order to “protect the offender” (Durose et al., 2005).

However, recent studies that examine the effects of victim-offender relationship on victim reporting suggest that the relationship may be more complex than previously thought (Felson, Messner, Hoskin, and Deane, 2002). Contrary to early assumptions, “the evidence as to whether victims of domestic violence are in fact less likely to call the police than are victims of strangers is mixed” (Felson et al., 2002: 617-618).

Based on a study using National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) data, for instance, Felson, Messner, and

Hoskin (1999) discovered that once people considered themselves to be crime victims (in this case victims of assault), they were just as likely to call the police on family members, or someone else they knew, as they were on strangers. Similarly, in a more recent study, Felson and Paul-Philippe (2005) found that victims were just as likely to report domestic assaults as they were to report assaults by other people they know.

Furthermore, there is reason to believe that many forms of violence generally go unreported (e.g., Gottfredson and Gottfredson, 1980). For instance, many simple assaults involving young men do not get reported to the police (Felson and Paul-Philippe, 2005). Thus, it is more a matter of whether victims of domestic violence incidents are less likely to notify police compared to victims of other violence.

Nevertheless, while recent studies seek to determine whether domestic violence incidents are more or less likely to be reported compared to other forms of violence, it is important to be cognizant of the potential limitations of official police reports. There is a rather substantial consensus among many domestic violence professionals that, regardless of the source (i.e., official, self-report, etc.), domestic violence estimates tend to undercount the number of domestic violence incidents and the actual level of violence involved in the perpetration of these crimes. Against this backdrop, we begin this report with an examination of recent trends in domestic violence victimization based on official reports.

Recent Trends in DV Victimization

This section of the report examines the distribution of DV victims by type of offense as well as recent trends in victimization. Trends in domestic violence between 2000 and 2005 are shown and the demographic characteristics of victims are briefly described. The discussion begins with an examination of the proportion of DV victims in relation to all crime victims known to law enforcement in the state.

Table 1 presents the total number of crime victims and DV victims recorded in the WVIBRS between 2000 and 2005. Overall, the number of DV victims in 2005 was 4.1% less than what was reported to law enforcement in 2000. In 2000, a total of 13,162 DV victims were reported compared to 12,621 in 2005. However, the number of total crime victims increased by 2.1% during this same period.

While there was reduction in DV victims between 2000 and 2003, the number of reported victims began to increase in 2004 and continued to increase into 2005. Total crime victims increased by 4.8% from a low of 68,954 in 2003 to a high of 72,286 in 2005. Likewise, the number of reported DV victims also increased from a low of 11,260 in 2003 to 12,621 in 2005. This translated into a 12.1% increase in DV victims since 2003.

The number of victims has fluctuated over the past six years, however, the DV proportion of total crime victims has remained relatively stable (see Table 1). Between 2000 and 2005, DV victims averaged 17.4% of all crime victims known to police. In recent years, however, DV victims

Table 1
Total Crime versus Domestic Violence Victims, 2000-2005

	<u>Total Crime Victims</u>	<u>Total DV Victims</u>	<u>DV Proportion of Total Crime Victims</u>
2000	70,803	13,162	18.6%
2001	68,820	12,729	18.5%
2002	69,162	11,989	17.3%
2003	68,954	11,260	16.3%
2004	71,737	11,634	16.2%
2005	72,286	12,621	17.5%

Note: Figures represent cases where the reported victim was an individual, as opposed to a business or society.

have comprised a slightly smaller proportion of all victims in the state. At the beginning of this six year period, the proportion of DV victims comprised over 18.0% of all crime victims.

Distribution of DV Victims by Type of Person Offense

Acts of domestic violence can result in a wide range of offenses. DV offenses can range from simple assaults and intimidation to kidnapping/abduction and sexual assault.

Table 2 displays a count of DV victims by the most serious person offense, comparing 2000 and 2005. According to national estimates, simple assault and intimidation are overwhelmingly the most common DV offenses reported by law enforcement (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2004; Durose et al., 2005). This also appears to be the case in WV. Simple assault is the most common DV offense known to law enforcement in WV.

In 2000 and 2005, the largest proportion of DV victims were victims of simple assault, at 64.4% and 73.9% respectively. Thus, simple assault victims accounted for nearly two-thirds of all DV victims known to law

enforcement in 2000 and almost three-quarters of DV victims in 2005.

The second and third most common offenses resulting in DV victims were intimidation and aggravated assault. In 2000, nearly seventeen percent of DV victims were victims of intimidation (16.9%), while almost fifteen percent were victims of aggravated assault (14.9%). To a slightly lesser extent, intimidation and aggravated assault were also the second and third most common offenses reported in 2005. In 2005, roughly twelve percent of DV victims reported being subjected to intimidation (12.7%) while approximately 1 in 10 were victims of aggravated assault (10.1%).

Examining the percent change in DV victims by person offense, it is clear that there have been substantial reductions since 2000. As shown in Table 2, substantial percent reductions in reported DV victims were found for many violent crimes and other sex offenses.

For instance, the total number of violent crime DV victims declined by 33.6% between 2000 and 2005, from 2,056 to 1,366 reported victims. Most of this decline was due to substantive

reductions in the number of persons who reported being victims of aggravated assault. There was a 35.4% reduction in the number of DV victims of aggravated assault, from 1,963 in 2000 to 1,268 in 2005.

Although fewer in number, DV victims of other sex offenses also declined by 27.8% during this period. A total of 342 victims were reported as a result of other sex offenses in 2000, compared to only 247 in 2005. The number of reported victims declined for nearly all of the other sex offenses, including forcible sodomy, forcible fondling, incest, and statutory rape.

At the same time, however, there were increases in the number of reported DV victims for the most

prevalent crime categories during this period. Other violent crimes increased slightly in 2005. Nearly all of this increase was due to a greater number of reported simple assault DV victims. There was a 10.1% increase in the number of simple assault DV victims between 2000 and 2005. This occurred during a time when most other violent crimes were on the decline.

Demographic Characteristics of DV Victims

Table 3 examines the demographic characteristics of DV victims known to law enforcement in 2000 and 2005. Most DV victims known to police were comprised of white females between the ages of 18 and 44 years of age.

National statistics routinely show that females are much more likely to report being victims of domestic violence compared to males (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2004; Durose et al., 2005). Consistent with such national figures, females comprised over three-quarters of DV victims in WV in 2000 and 2005. As a result, females were substantially overrepresented as DV victims in the state.

According to U.S. Census population estimates for WV, females made up 51.1% of the state's population in 2005. At the same time, females comprised 75.3% of all DV victims reported to law enforcement in 2005. Alternatively, males comprised only

Table 2
Domestic Violence Victims by Most Serious Person Offense, 2000 and 2005

	2000		2005	
	# of DV Victims	% of DV Victims	# of DV Victims	% of DV Victims
Violent Crimes	2,056	15.6	1,366	10.8
Murder/Nonnegligent Manslaughter	15	0.1	27	0.2
Negligent Manslaughter	1	0.0	0	0.0
Forcible Rape	66	0.5	60	0.5
Robbery	11	0.1	11	0.1
Aggravated Assault	1,963	14.9	1,268	10.1
Other Violent Crimes	11,106	84.4	11,255	89.2
Other Assaults	10,693	81.2	10,938	86.7
Simple Assault	8,475	64.4	9,332	73.9
Intimidation	2,218	16.9	1,606	12.7
Other Sex Offenses	342	2.6	247	2.0
Forcible Sodomy	35	0.3	26	0.2
Sexual Assault with an Object	41	0.3	44	0.4
Forcible Fondling	182	1.4	135	1.1
Rape of a Male	1	0.0	1	0.0
Incest	28	0.2	14	0.1
Statutory Rape	55	0.4	27	0.2
Kidnapping/Abduction	71	0.5	70	0.6
Total	13,162	100.0	12,621	100.0

Note: Percentages may not total to 100.0% due to rounding.

one-quarter (24.7%) of all DV victims in 2005.

Further analysis of victimization trends by offense show that females are substantially more likely to be victims of sexual assault while males are more likely to be victims of kidnapping/abduction. Of the 306 total victims of sex offenses in 2005, nearly ninety percent (87.9%) or 269 were female. Female victims accounted for roughly two-thirds (65.4%) of all forcible sodomy offenses. Meanwhile, all forcible rape and statutory rape victims were also female. In contrast, males were more likely to be victims of kidnapping/abduction in domestic incidents.

In addition, a vast majority of the DV victims in WV tend to be white and

between the ages of 18 and 44. Regardless of the year, more than 9 out of every 10 DV victims are white in WV. In 2005, 92.5% of DV victims known to law enforcement were white.

Despite the fact that most DV victims known to law enforcement are white, minorities tend to be overrepresented in DV incidents in WV. According to U.S. Census estimates for 2005, only 4.8% of WV's population consisted of minority or nonwhite residents. Meanwhile, nonwhite residents accounted for 7.5% of all DV victims reported to law enforcement in 2005. As a result, the nonwhite population is slightly overrepresented in official DV victimization statistics in WV.

In terms of age, Table 3 clearly shows that most DV victims are between the ages of 18 and 44, with the modal category falling between 25 and 34 years of age. Only 1 in 10 DV victims reported to law enforcement were 18 years of age or younger. In the same regard, the number of DV victims falls sharply for persons 45 years of age and older. Only 16.4% of all DV victims reported to law enforcement were 45 years of age or older in 2005.

Juvenile DV Victimization

Table 4 examines the juvenile proportion of DV victims, those under 18 years of age, by most serious person offense. The percentages in this table are based on the total number of adult

Table 3
Demographic Characteristics of Domestic Violence Victims, 2000 and 2005

	2000		2005	
	N	%	N	%
Gender				
Male	2,928	22.3	3,116	24.7
Female	10,223	77.7	9,477	75.3
Total	13,151	100.0	12,593	100.0
Race				
White	11,736	91.6	11,505	92.5
Nonwhite	1,073	8.4	931	7.5
Total	12,809	100.0	12,436	100.0
Age				
Under 18 years	1,527	11.9	1,338	10.9
18 - 24 years	2,978	23.2	2,780	22.6
25 - 34 years	3,705	28.9	3,543	28.9
35 - 44 years	2,864	22.3	2,600	21.2
45 - 54 years	1,231	9.6	1,343	10.9
55 - 64 years	313	2.4	452	3.7
65 years & over	213	1.7	222	1.8
Total	12,831	100.0	12,278	100.0
Age Descriptives				
Mean	30.7		31.5	
Standard Deviation	13.1		13.4	

Notes: 2000, N= 13,162 and 2005, N= 12,621. Some demographic information was missing. Figures only include cases where gender, race/ethnicity, and age were reported. The "nonwhite" racial category includes Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaskan Native.

and juvenile victims, where age was known (12,278). A total of 1,338 juvenile DV victims were reported to law enforcement in 2005. As a result, youth under the age of eighteen made up approximately eleven percent of all DV victims known to law enforcement in 2005.

As shown in Table 4, it is apparent that juveniles comprise a vast majority of sexual assault victims in the state. More than half of forcible rape victims and approximately two-thirds of all victims of forcible sodomy and sexual assault with an object were 17 years of age or younger. Likewise, all statutory rape, incest, and rape of male victims reported to law enforcement were juveniles in 2005.

In terms of other offenses, juveniles comprised roughly 4 out of every 10 kidnapping/abduction victims as well as 2 out of every 10 aggravated assault and murder/nonnegligent manslaughter victims. In comparison to adults, juveniles were much less likely to be victims of simple assault and intimidation. Juveniles comprised less than ten percent of all simple assault and intimidation DV victims.

Geographic Distribution of DV Victimization

This section examines the geographic distribution of DV victims reported to law enforcement in 2005. County rates for all DV victimization are reported, as well as intimate partner and other domestic forms of victimization.

Map 1 displays county level rates of DV victims reported to law enforcement across the state in 2005. The total DV victim rate for the state was 6.9 persons per 1,000 WV residents. Of the 55 WV counties, a

Table 4
Juvenile Proportion of Domestic Violence Victims, 2005

	<u>Total # of DV Victims</u>	<u># of Juvenile Victims</u>	<u>% of Juvenile Victims</u>
Murder/Nonnegligent Manslaughter	27	5	18.5
Forcible Rape	60	32	53.3
Robbery	11	0	0.0
Aggravated Assault	1,227	273	22.2
Simple Assault	9,095	708	7.8
Intimidation	1,548	84	5.4
Forcible Sodomy	26	18	69.2
Sexual Assault with an Object	43	26	60.5
Forcible Fondling	133	124	93.2
Rape of a Male	1	1	100.0
Incest	12	12	100.0
Statutory Rape	27	27	100.0
Kidnapping/Abduction	68	28	41.2
Total	12,278	1,338	10.9

Notes: 2005, N= 12,621. A total of 343 incidents contained missing information on the victim's age. Victim counts are based on the most serious person offense.

total of 13 counties had DV victim rates higher than the state average. Of these 13 counties, all but three were located in the southern region of the state.

As shown in Map 1, a cluster of counties located in the southern region of the state had rates of reported DV victims higher than the state average. These counties include Boone (12.4), Cabell (7.1), Kanawha (13.9), Lincoln (7.6), Logan (9.9), Mercer (11.0), Putnam (8.2), and Raleigh (14.3). Other counties in the southern region with rates higher than the state average include Nicholas (8.3) and Wood (9.3). Both Wayne and McDowell counties approximated the state average at rates of 6.8 and 6.9 per 1,000 WV residents.

Generally, the northern region of the state had substantially lower rates of DV victimization reported to law

enforcement in 2005. Only three counties had rates of DV victims higher than the state average. These include Hardy (7.4), Ohio (9.3), and Pocahontas (8.2) counties. Both Harrison and Hampshire counties had a rate of 6.5 DV victims per 1,000 residents.

The vast majority of counties with the lowest rates in the state in 2005 were located in the northern region of the state. A total of 11 of the 15 counties with the lowest reported rates of DV victims were located in the northern region. Only four counties in the southern region had very low rates of DV victimization. These included the counties of Greenbrier, Fayette, Summers, and Wyoming.

Victim-Offender Relationship by County and Geographic Region

Research has shown that victims in general are more likely to be victimized by someone intimately close to them, or within their immediate family (Doerner & Lab, 2002). Moreover, females are far more likely to experience harm by an intimate partner (Doerner & Lab, 2002). WV is no exception to these findings.

In 2005, over two-thirds or 68.3% of all DV victims were victimized by an intimate partner. Of the 12,621 DV victims reported in 2005, a total of 8,626 were victims of intimate partner

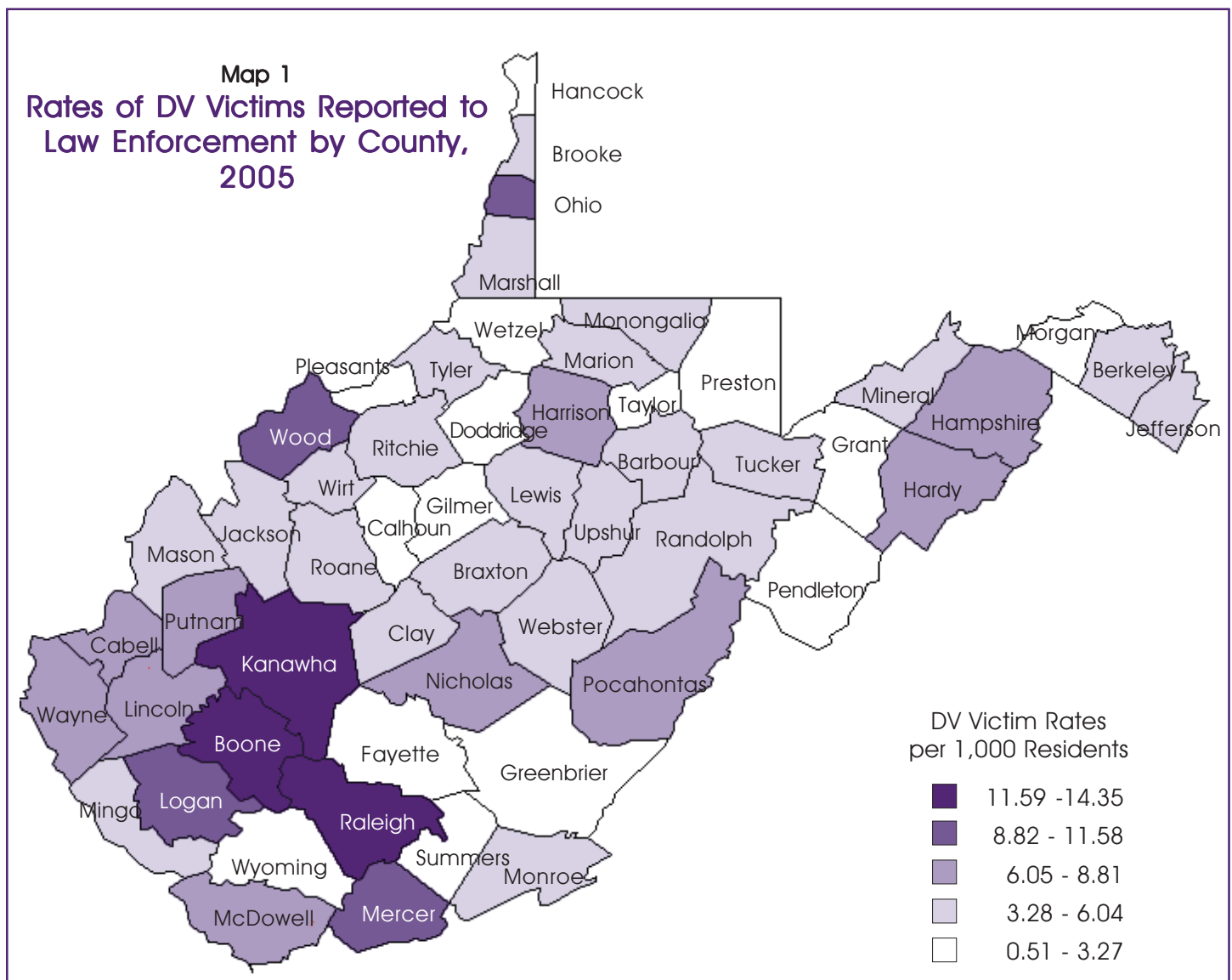
violence. This is compared to 3,995 people or 31.7% of DV victims that were victimized by someone other than an intimate partner.

In addition, females were more likely to be victimized by an intimate partner. Three-quarters of all intimate partner victims reported to law enforcement in 2005 were female. In contrast, males were slightly more likely to report being a victim of non-intimate partner violence. Just over fifty percent of male DV victims had been victimized by person that was not their intimate partner (52.1%).

Table 5 further examines the rates of DV victims by type of relationship

(i.e., intimate partner and non-intimate partner) and county. Most DV victims reported being victims of intimate partner rather than non-intimate partner violence. In fact, the statewide rate of victimization by an intimate partner was twice that of other types of domestic incidents. The rate for persons victimized by an intimate partner was 4.7, or approximately 5 victims per 1,000 residents compared to 2.2 for non-intimate partners.

Several counties had victimization rates by an inmate partner higher than the statewide average of 4.7 per 1,000 residents. Both Kanawha and Raleigh counties had intimate partner DV rates



of approximately 10 persons per 1,000 residents. Boone (8.1), Logan (6.1), Mercer (7.9), Ohio (6.0), and Wood (6.2) counties reported intimate partner victims at a rate greater than 6 persons per 1,000 residents. Three counties had rates less than 1.0 per 1,000 residents. These counties were Hancock (0.4), Wyoming (0.8), and Pleasants (0.9).

Many of the counties that had high intimate partner DV rates also tended

to report higher rates of non-intimate partner violence. In terms of non-intimate DV victims, the counties of Raleigh, Boone, Kanawha, and Logan had the highest rates of reported non-intimate partner DV victims. However, only one county had a rate twice the state average of 2.2 victims per 1,000 residents. Raleigh County had the highest rate at 4.5, followed by Boone

(4.2), Kanawha (3.8), and Logan (3.8) counties.

A total of ten counties had non-intimate partner DV victim rates lower than 1.0. Similar to intimate partner violence, Hancock county had the lowest DV victim rate for non-intimate partners at 0.1. Hancock was followed by Wyoming with a non-intimate partner DV rate of 0.2 per 1,000 residents. The counties of Grant, Calhoun, Wetzel,

Table 5
Domestic Violence Victims' Relationship to Offender and Rates by County, 2005
(N=12,621)

	Intimate Partner		Non-Intimate Partner		Total Rate per 1,000		Intimate Partner		Non-Intimate Partner		Total Rate per 1,000
	N	Rate	N	Rate			N	Rate	N	Rate	
Barbour	65	4.1	23	1.5	5.6	Mineral	83	3.1	25	0.9	4.0
Berkeley	297	3.2	120	1.3	4.5	Mingo	89	3.3	43	1.6	4.9
Boone	209	8.1	109	4.2	12.4	Monongalia	283	3.4	119	1.4	4.8
Braxton	31	2.1	19	1.3	3.4	Monroe	36	2.7	16	1.2	3.8
Brooke	64	2.6	37	1.5	4.1	Morgan	32	2.0	13	0.8	2.8
Cabell	481	5.1	190	2.0	7.1	Nicholas	140	5.3	79	3.0	8.3
Calhoun	13	1.8	5	0.7	2.4	Ohio	270	6.0	148	3.3	9.3
Clay	20	1.9	17	1.6	3.6	Pendleton	14	1.8	8	1.0	2.8
Doddridge	10	1.3	6	0.8	2.1	Pleasants	7	0.9	5	0.7	1.6
Fayette	80	1.7	62	1.3	3.0	Pocahontas	51	5.8	22	2.5	8.2
Gilmer	9	1.3	7	1.0	2.3	Preston	48	1.6	33	1.1	2.7
Grant	17	1.5	7	0.6	2.1	Putnam	295	5.4	150	2.8	8.2
Greenbrier	69	2.0	40	1.1	3.1	Raleigh	772	9.8	359	4.5	14.3
Hampshire	85	3.9	59	2.7	6.5	Randolph	85	3.0	45	1.6	4.6
Hancock	13	0.4	3	0.1	0.5	Ritchie	33	3.1	26	2.5	5.6
Hardy	63	4.7	35	2.6	7.4	Roane	38	2.5	20	1.3	3.8
Harrison	282	4.1	162	2.4	6.5	Summers	27	2.0	14	1.0	3.0
Jackson	74	2.6	43	1.5	4.1	Taylor	20	1.2	13	0.8	2.0
Jefferson	134	2.7	62	1.3	4.0	Tucker	20	2.9	12	1.7	4.6
Kanawha	1,943	10.0	742	3.8	13.9	Tyler	21	2.2	12	1.3	3.5
Lewis	59	3.4	32	1.9	5.3	Upshur	73	3.1	50	2.1	5.2
Lincoln	111	5.0	58	2.6	7.6	Wayne	192	4.6	93	2.2	6.8
Logan	220	6.1	139	3.8	9.9	Webster	21	2.1	12	1.2	3.4
Marion	209	3.7	77	1.4	5.1	Wetzel	20	1.2	12	0.7	1.9
Marshall	116	3.4	46	1.3	4.7	Wirt	19	3.2	12	2.0	5.3
Mason	97	3.8	36	1.4	5.2	Wood	544	6.2	269	3.1	9.3
McDowell	117	4.8	51	2.1	6.9	Wyoming	20	0.8	6	0.2	1.1
Mercer	485	7.9	192	3.1	11.0	Total	8,626	4.7	3,995	2.2	6.9

Pleasants, Morgan, Doddridge, Taylor, and Mineral all had rates between 0.6 and 0.9 per 1,000 residents.

In further examination of victim-offender relationships, Graph 1 illustrates the trends in the victim-offender relationship for different regions of the state. Graph 1 clearly illustrates that intimate partner violence, especially in the southern district of WV, has consistently generated a greater number of DV victims compared to non-intimate partner forms of domestic violence.

Between 2000 and 2005, the southern district accounted for 66.2% to 72.1% of all intimate partner DV victims known to law enforcement. In 2005, there were 8,626 intimate partner DV victims reported to law enforcement. Of these 70.5% occurred

in the southern district compared to 29.5% reported in the northern region.

Regardless of the district, however, more than two-thirds of all DV victims reported to law enforcement were the result of intimate partner violence between 2000 and 2005. In fact, intimate partner DV victims accounted for 68.0% to 70.7% of all DV victims between 2000 and 2005.

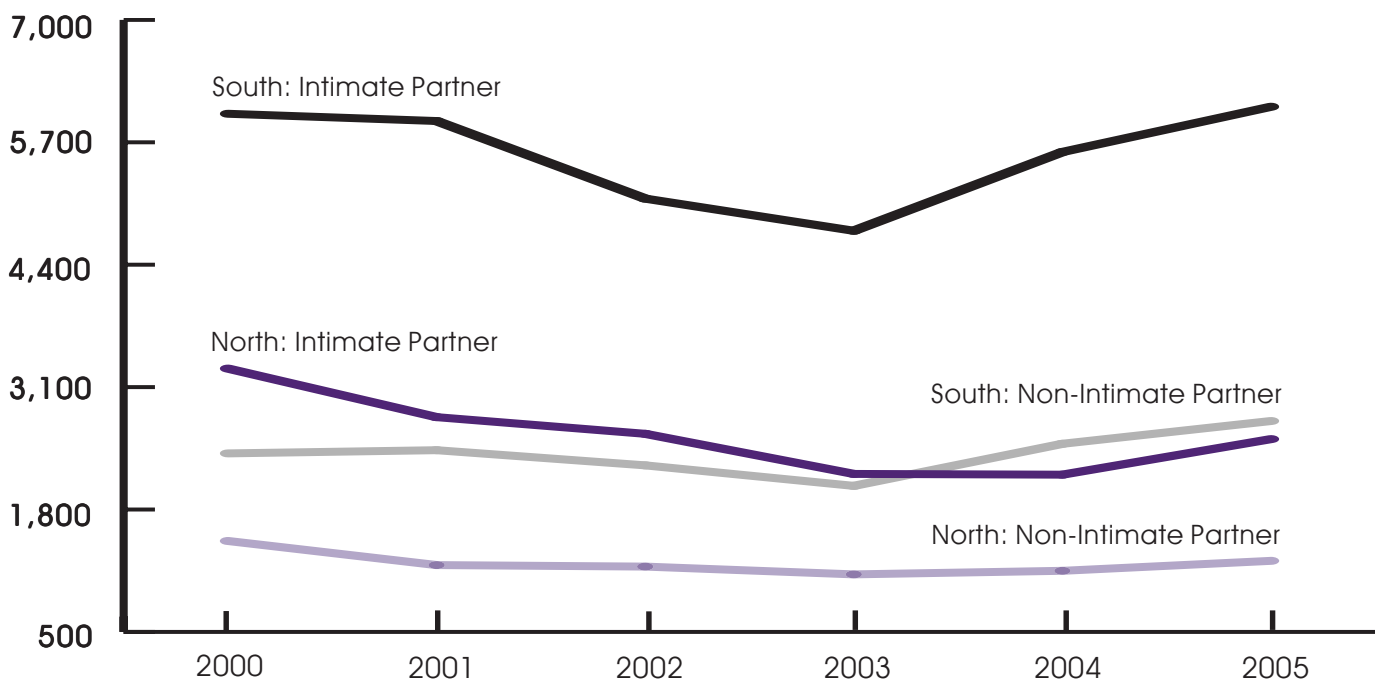
While intimate partner violence remains the most prevalent form of domestic violence reported to law enforcement, the number of victims actually declined between 2000 and 2005. In 2000, there were a total of 9,300 victims of intimate partner violence known to law enforcement. This number declined to 8,626 in 2005. This translates into a 1.0% decline in the *average* annual growth rate over past six years.

As shown in Graph 1, the six-year trend reveals that approximately one-third of all domestic victimizations involve non-intimate partner violence. Over the six year period, the northern region of the state has experienced an *average* annual decline of 4.3%. The southern region has shown a 0.9% increase in the average annual growth for victims of non-intimate partner violence since 2000.

Weapon Use in DV Offenses

The previous discussion focused on the number and characteristics of DV victims reported to law enforcement. Now we turn to an analysis of DV offenses. For each DV offense, it is important to note that there can be multiple victims. Trends in DV offenses reported to law enforcement as well as

Graph 1
Victims' Relationship to Offender by Geographic Region, 2000 - 2005



Notes: Southern and northern regions of the state are based on federal judicial districts established by the U.S. Congress. Approximately 55.0% of WV's population resides in the southern district and 45.0% resides in the northern district.

Table 6
Domestic Violence Offenses by Most Serious Weapon Type, 2005
(N = 8,176)

	Total	Firearm	Knife	Strongarm	Other
<u>Violent Crimes</u>	1,032	19.1%	16.9%	44.7%	19.4%
Murder	24	62.5%	0.0%	16.7%	20.8%
Forcible rape	38	5.3%	2.6%	86.8%	5.3%
Robbery	11	9.1%	0.0%	72.7%	18.2%
Aggravated assault	959	18.7%	18.0%	43.4%	19.9%
<u>Other Violent Crimes</u>	7,144	0.0%	0.0%	94.3%	5.7%
Simple assault	7,012	0.0%	0.0%	94.4%	5.6%
Forcible sodomy	15	0.0%	0.0%	93.3%	6.7%
Sexual assault with an object	29	0.0%	0.0%	89.7%	10.3%
Forcible fondling	72	0.0%	1.4%	90.3%	8.3%
Kidnapping/Abduction	16	0.0%	6.3%	68.8%	25.0%

Notes: These figures only include cases where the weapon is known. Other violent crimes does not include intimidation, incest, or statutory rape as these crimes do not require a weapon to be reported. "Other" weapon type includes such weapons as blunt objects, motor vehicles, drugs, poisons, fire/incendiary devices, explosives, and asphyxiation. The figures represented in this table are not a count of victims, but a count of the offenses involved in the domestic violence incident. Percentages may not total to 100.0% due to rounding.

weapon use and victim injuries are discussed.

DV Offenses Involving Weapons

This section examines the use of weapons in DV offenses reported to law enforcement. Weapon involvement in offenses is only recorded for certain types of offenses in NIBRS data.² Of these eligible offenses, a total of 10,199 were reported to law enforcement in 2005. A total of 1,816 or 17.8% did not involve a weapon. In addition, 207 or 2.0% had a weapon but the type of weapon was unknown. The information displayed in Table 6 is based on the number offenses reported to law enforcement in which the type of weapon was known.

As shown in Table 6, a total 8,176 weapon-related DV offenses were reported to law enforcement in 2005. In terms of most serious weapon type,

strongarm tactics were by far the most common weapon used for all offenses, except murder. Among the four most violent offenses involving a weapon (i.e., murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault), more than 4 out of every 10 involved the use of strongarm tactics. Strongarm tactics were used in over eighty-five percent of forcible rapes (86.8%) and nearly three-quarters of robberies (72.7%). Just over forty percent of aggravated assaults (43.4%) also involved strongarm tactics.

On the other hand, of the 24 DV murders reported to law enforcement in 2005, nearly two-thirds (62.5%) involved a firearm. None involved the use of a knife. "Other" weapons such as blunt objects, drugs, motor vehicles, or fire/incendiary devices were used in 20.8% of these murders reported to law enforcement. Only 16.7% involved the use of strongarm tactics.

For most other violent crimes, strongarm tactics constituted the most serious weapon reported to law enforcement in roughly ninety percent of DV cases in 2005. Ninety percent of simple assaults, forcible sodomy, sexual assault with an object, and forcible fondling offenses involved strongarm tactics as the most serious weapon used. Strongarm tactics also constituted the most serious weapon used in over two-thirds of kidnapping/abduction offenses (68.8%) in 2005.

Graph 2 illustrates the changes in weapon use in DV offenses from 2000 through 2005. For presentation purposes, simple assaults are excluded from this analysis. The vast majority of simple assaults involved the use of strongarm as a weapon with an average of 95.6% annually. As shown in Graph 2, the use of weapons in DV offenses generally declined between 2000 and

2002. As a result, fewer DV offenses involved the use of weapons by 2002.

During this period, the most dramatic decline occurred in the use of strongarm tactics in DV offenses. Between 2001 and 2002, the number of DV crimes involving the use of strongarm tactics declined by 31.5%. DV offenses involving knives, firearms, and “other” types of weapons also experienced a modest decline between 2000 and 2002.

Weapon-related DV offenses began to increase for most categories after 2002. DV offenses involving firearms, however, continued to decline through 2003. DV offenses involving firearms decreased by 11.9% between 2002 and 2003. In 2004 and 2005, there

were again annual increases for most types of weapons involved in DV offenses. However, offenses involving strongarm tactics experienced a decline between 2003 and 2004, only to increase once again in 2005.

In spite of the various fluctuations in DV offenses involving weapons over the past six years, fewer weapon-related offenses were reported in 2005 compared to 2000. DV offenses involving strongarm tactics experienced the most pronounced decline from 991 offenses reported in 2000 to only 577 in 2005. This corresponded to a 41.8% decline in DV offenses involving strongarm tactics.

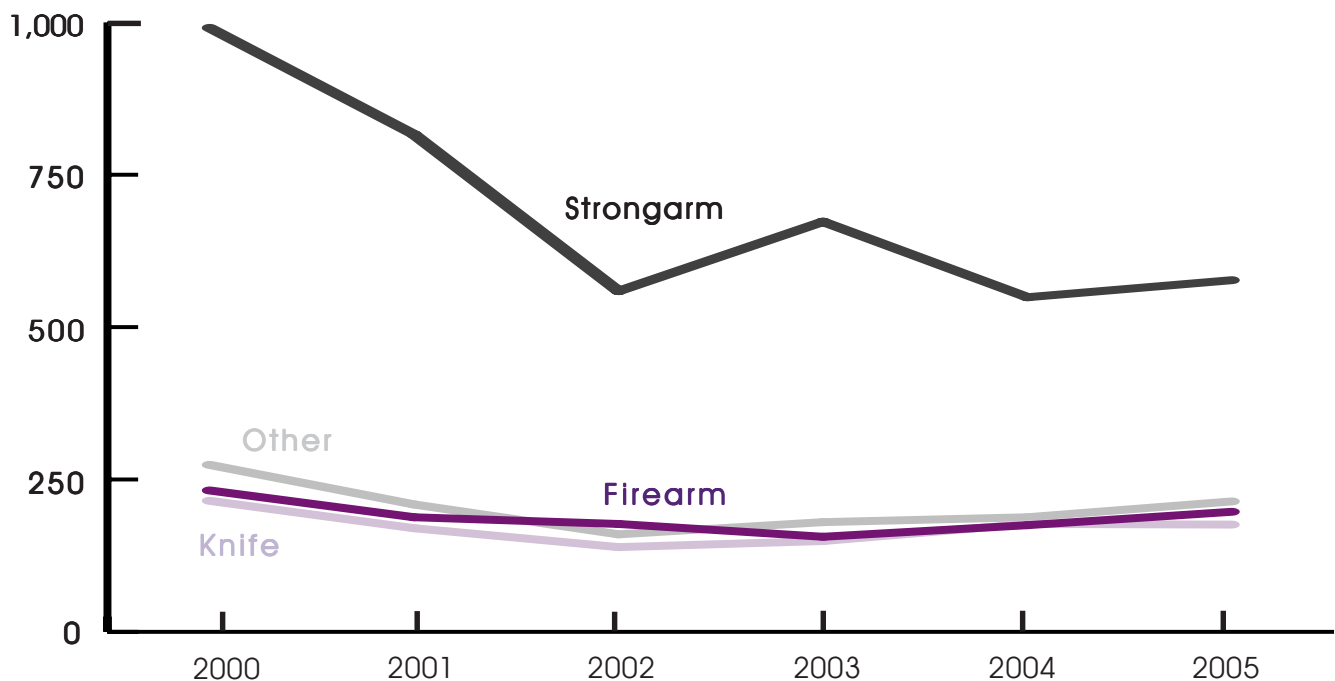
These offenses were followed by offenses involving the use of “other”

weapon types with a decrease of 21.9% from 274 to 214 reported offenses. Offenses involving knives followed with a decrease of 18.1% from 215 to 176. DV offenses involving the use of a firearm, experienced the smallest decline (15.1%), from 232 to 197 for these two years.

Proportion of Weapon Use by Geographic Region

Table 7 examines the proportion DV offenses, including simple assault, by the most serious weapon used and geographic region. While the total number of weapon-related DV offenses declined slightly between 2000 and 2005, the types of weapons used has remained stable.

Graph 2
Trends in Domestic Violence Offenses by Most Serious Weapon Type 2000-2005



Notes: These figures only include cases where the weapon is known. These DV offenses do not include intimidation, incest, or statutory rape as these crimes do not require a weapon to be reported. For presentation purposes, simple assault was excluded from this analysis. “Other” weapon type includes such weapons as blunt objects, motor vehicles, drugs, poisons, fire/incendiary devices, explosives, and asphyxiation. The figures represented in this table are not a count of victims, but a count of the offenses involved in the domestic violence incident.

Table 7
Proportion of Domestic Violence Offenses by Most Serious Weapon Type and Geographic Region, 2000 and 2005

	2000				2005			
	North		South		North		South	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Firearm	83	2.8	149	2.8	75	2.8	122	2.2
Knife	71	2.4	144	2.7	64	2.4	112	2.0
Strongarm	2,580	87.8	4,716	88.5	2,363	87.5	4,835	88.3
Other	203	6.9	321	6.0	198	7.3	407	7.4
Total	2,937	100.0	5,330	100.0	2,700	100.0	5,476	100.0

Notes: The DV offenses in this table do not include intimidation, incest, or statutory rape as these crimes do not require a weapon to be reported. Simple assault is included in these figures. These figures only include cases where the weapon is known. "Other" weapon type includes such weapons as blunt objects, motor vehicles, drugs, poisons, fire/incendiary devices, explosives, and asphyxiation. The figures represented in this table are not a count of victims, but a count of the offenses involved in the domestic violence incident.

As shown in Table 7, a vast majority of DV offenses involved the use of strongarm tactics, regardless of the year or region. Roughly eighty-eight percent of all DV offenses reported to law enforcement in each district involved the use of strongarm tactics. Both districts experienced less than a one percent decline in the percentage of DV cases involving strongarm tactics between 2000 and 2005.

The use of weapons such as blunt objects, motor vehicles, drugs, poisons, fire/incendiary devices, explosives, and asphyxiation was the second most commonly reported type of weapon used in DV offenses. These weapons were involved in roughly 6.0% to 7.0% of all DV offenses in 2000 and 2005. The proportion of DV offenses that involved "other" weapons increased slightly for both districts between these two years. The southern district experienced the largest increase at 1.4% between 2000 and 2005.

Table 7 further illustrates that the proportion of weapon-related offenses involving a firearm remained virtually unchanged from 2000 to 2005. Less than three percent of all weapon-related

DV offenses involved a firearm, regardless of the district. Only the southern district had a slight reduction in the proportion of DV offenses involving a firearm during this time. There was no change in the proportion of offenses involving a firearm in the northern district between 2000 and 2005.

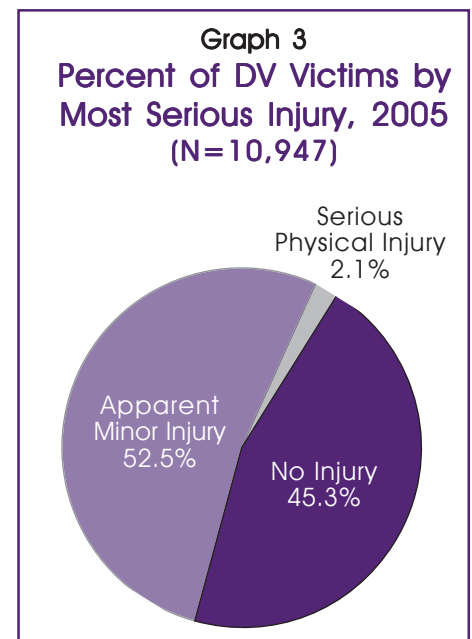
Similar to the use of firearms, a very small percentage of weapon-related DV offenses involved the use of a knife. Moreover, there was little change in the proportion of offenses involving a knife between 2000 and 2005. The proportion of weapon-related DV offenses that involved a knife did not change for the northern district during this time period and the southern district experienced a reduction of less than one-percent. As a result, the nature of weapon use in DV offenses has not changed in recent years.

Victim Injuries and Fatalities in DV Offenses

This final section of the report focuses on the types of injuries suffered by victims of domestic violence, including death. Type of injury is

recorded by law enforcement only for certain offenses.³ Documentation of the type of injury also includes no injuries. Given that a victim can have multiple injuries analyses were conducted based on the most serious injury incurred.

As shown in Graph 3, where injury type was reported there were a total of 10,947 DV victims in 2005. The vast majority of victims (97.8%) incurred no or only minor injuries. A total of 4,962 or 45.3% of victims reported no injury at all. Meanwhile, over one-half



(52.5%) or 5,752 victims received an apparent minor injury. Only 2.1% or 233 victims incurred a serious injury as a result of their victimization.

Further analysis on the nature of injuries in 2005, indicates that victims were more likely to have recorded a single injury as opposed to multiple injuries. Of those victims who received an apparent minor or serious physical injury (5,985), more than ninety-eight percent had a single injury. Slightly over 1.0% of victims had multiple injuries, ranging from two to four.

Table 8 describes the demographic characteristics of victims injured and killed in DV incidents in 2005.

Regardless of the type of injury, the most frequently reported victims included white females between the ages of 18 and 44 years of age.

In terms of minor injuries, 75.0% of victims reported to law enforcement were female. At the same time, over ninety percent of victims were white (92.1%). One-quarter of victims were between the ages of 18 and 24 years of age. Three-quarters of all victims that incurred apparent minor injuries were between the ages of 18 and 44 years of age.

The gap between gender was less prominent for victims who received a serious physical injury in 2005. Females

continued to comprise more than one-half of victims reported to law enforcement with a serious physical injury (58.8%). Males accounted for roughly 4 in 10 DV victims that incurred serious physical injuries. Meanwhile, victims that received serious physical injuries tended to be more evenly spread across age groups. For instance, nearly fifteen percent of victims were under 18 years of age (14.7%) compared to only 9.7% of victims with minor injuries.

It is interesting to note, however, that females with injuries (minor or serious) were more likely to be victimized by an intimate partner versus a non-intimate partner, at 77.8% or 3,481

Table 8
Demographic Characteristics of Injury and Fatality Victims, 2005
(N = 6,012)

	<u>Apparent Minor Injury</u>		<u>Serious Physical Injury</u>		<u>Fatalities</u>	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Gender						
Male	1,404	24.5	96	41.2	12	44.4
Female	4,335	75.5	137	58.8	15	55.6
Total	5,739	100.0	233	100.0	27	100.0
Race						
White	5,236	92.1	201	87.0	25	92.6
Nonwhite	450	7.9	30	13.0	2	7.4
Total	5,686	100.0	231	100.0	27	100.0
Age						
Under 18 years	550	9.7	33	14.7	5	18.5
18 - 24 years	1,412	25.0	37	16.4	2	7.4
25 - 34 years	1,643	29.1	63	28.0	6	22.2
35 - 44 years	1,185	21.0	54	24.0	9	33.3
45 - 54 years	614	10.9	25	11.1	2	7.4
55 - 64 years	170	3.0	6	2.7	1	3.7
65 years & over	77	1.4	7	3.1	2	7.4
Total	5,651	100.0	225	100.0	27	100.0
Age Descriptives						
Mean	31.2		31.5		32.8	
Standard Deviation	12.7		15.6		19.2	

Notes: Figures represented in this table only include those where gender, race, and age were known. The injury figures reported in this table are those for the victim's most serious injury. The "nonwhite" race category includes the following races: Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaskan Native.

victims. On the other hand, males with injuries were more likely to be victimized by a non-intimate partner. Over one-half of male victims with injuries (51.7%) were victims of non-intimate partner violence.

In terms of fatalities, most victims were white and female between the ages of 25 and 34 years of age. Of the 27 fatalities reported to law enforcement in 2005, a total of 15 or 55.6% were comprised of females. Over ninety percent of DV fatalities were white (92.6%). One-third of DV fatalities were between the ages of 35 and 44. Nearly twenty percent of DV fatalities were under the age of 18 (18.5%).

Trends in Intimate Partner and Non-Intimate Partner Fatalities

Graph 4 illustrates the changes in intimate partner and non-intimate partner domestic homicides from 2000 through

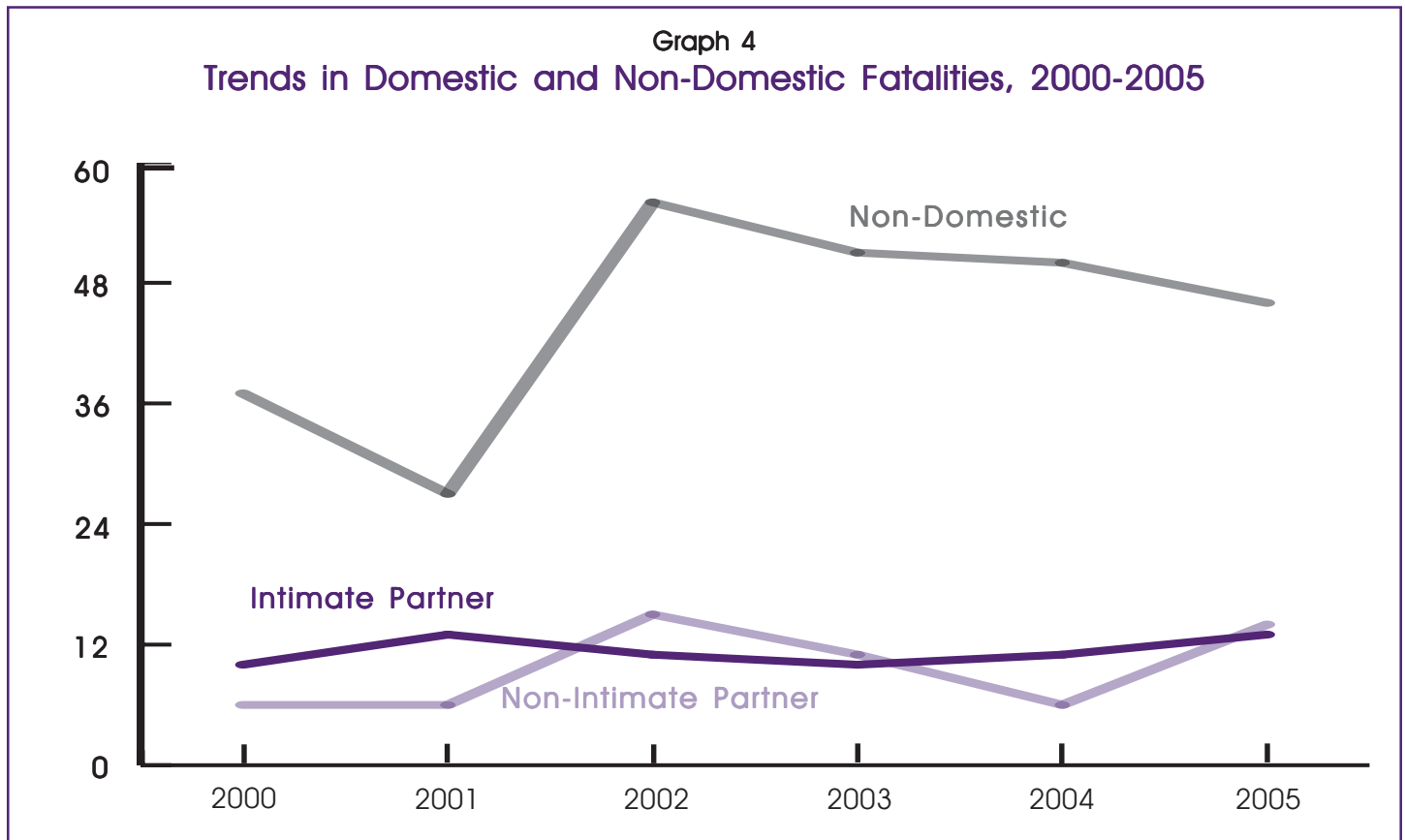
2005. For comparison purposes, non-domestic fatalities are also displayed. Between 2000 and 2005, there was an average of 66 homicides per a year. Domestic homicides (both intimate partner and non-intimate partner) comprised slightly over one-third of all homicides reported to law enforcement. However, non-domestic homicides were reported at a rate twice that of domestic homicides. On average, non-domestic homicides accounted for over two-thirds or 67.5% of all homicides during this six-year period.

The lowest number of non-domestic homicides occurred between 2000 and 2001, at 37 and 27 respectively. However, non-domestic homicides more than doubled to 56 in 2002 from the previous year. From 2002 to 2005, the number of homicides were well above the six-year average. The number of homicides during this time ranged from a high of 56 in 2002, to a low of 46 in

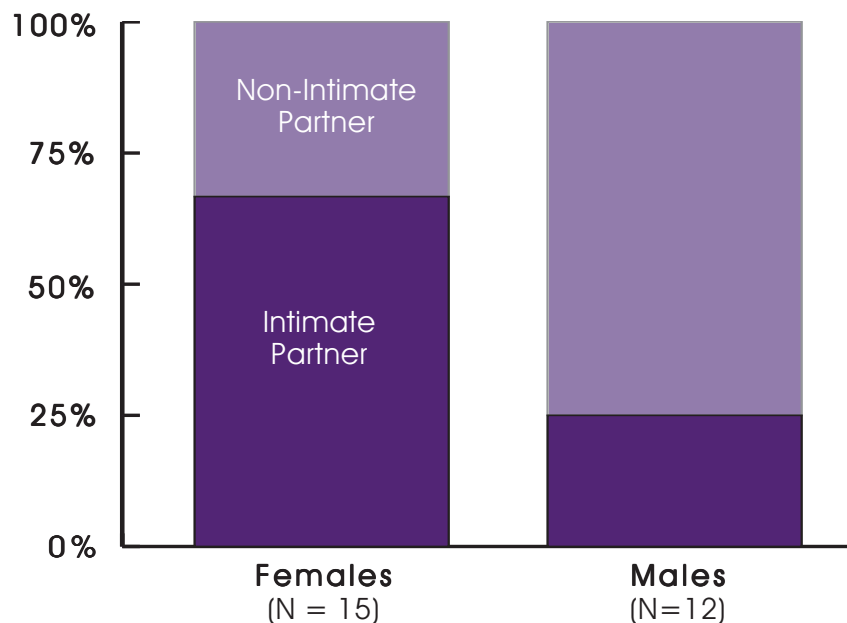
2005. Non-domestic homicides have been slowly decreasing since 2002 (see Graph 4).

Among the domestic homicides, those involving intimate partners have remained more steady, with a six-year average of 11. In 2001, homicides by an intimate partner was above the average with 13 total deaths. Over the next two years, these types of homicides ranged between 11 and 10. In 2005, intimate partner homicides rose in number above the average to 13 per year.

Non-intimate partner domestic homicides varied to a greater extent between 2000 and 2005. Over this six-year period, there was an average of 9 homicides per year. The number of non-intimate homicides ranged from a low of 6 to a high of 15 in a given year. The peak number of non-intimate partner homicides occurred in 2002 at 15, well above the six-year average. These



Graph 5
Domestic Violence Homicides by Gender and Relationship to Offender, 2005



types of homicides were also reported to law enforcement officers at a rate higher than the six-year average in 2003 and 2005, at 11 and 14 respectively.

DV Homicides by Gender and Relationship

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, females are considerably more likely to be murdered by an intimate partner than males (Fox and Zawitz, 2006). In WV, the number of male domestic fatalities has grown by 50.0%, from 8 in 2000 to 12 in 2005. The number of female fatalities has grown by 87.5%, from 8 in 2000 to 15 in 2005. Of the 27 domestic fatalities that occurred in 2005, 13 were caused by an intimate partner and 14 by a non-intimate partner.

Graph 5 examines DV fatalities further by gender and victim-offender relationship. In 2005, females were

approximately three times more likely than males to be murdered by an intimate partner. Among females, 10 or 66.7% were murdered by an intimate partner. In contrast, only 5 or 33.3% were murdered by a non-intimate partner.

Males were nearly twice as likely to be murdered by an offender considered to be a non-intimate partner (see Graph 5). Among males, 9 or 75.0% were murdered by a non-intimate partner. Meanwhile, 3 or 25.0% were murdered by an intimate partner.

Methodology

The data for this report was obtained from the WV Incident Based Reporting System (WVIBRS) maintained by the West Virginia State Police, Uniform Crime Reporting Section. WVIBRS is a comprehensive system that collects information on offenses, victims, offenders, property,

and arrests within a single incident. The WVIBRS system is considered to be 100.0% representative of the state's population. However, reporting practices do vary among law enforcement agencies across the state and over time.

WVIBRS is continuously updated by law enforcement agencies and the state repository. Thus, the dates in which the data sets were received by the CJSAC are important to note, as the data analyzed only includes submissions through the date extracted from the system. The data sets covering 2000-2002 were obtained in December of 2003. The data set for 2003 were received in December of 2004. The 2004 data were received in June of 2005. The 2005 data were received in April of 2006.

For the present report, most of the reported statistics were derived from the victim segment of the WVIBRS. Moreover, these data were analyzed by the victim's most serious person offense. Some of the victims may have experienced a more serious property offense. The statistics on weapon-related DV offenses were derived from the offense segment of the WVIBRS.

Missing Data

Due to the presence of missing data, statistical adjustments were necessary at both the state and county level. For example, Wheeling Police Department only fully reported to WVIBRS in 2000 and 2005. This resulted in an apparent underreporting for Ohio County. Similar reporting inconsistencies were found in Berkeley and Raleigh counties.

To account for a more accurate number of victims over time, historical comparisons of agency distributions within the county were examined. In

addition, the average of those years with complete data was substituted where known error existed. These adjustments ensured that agencies and counties were more accurately represented within the county and state, respectively. These adjustments only apply to Table 1 of this report.

Definitions

Domestic. The relationship between the victim and offender determines whether a particular incident is domestic. Domestic relationships were divided into two categories — intimate partner and non-intimate partner.

Non-Domestic. These incidents or offenses include the following types of relationships: acquaintance, friend, neighbor, babysittee (baby), child of boyfriend/girlfriend (not an intimate), employee, employer, otherwise known, relationship unknown, stranger, and victim was offender.

Intimate Partner. This domestic relationship includes all of the following types of relationships: spouse, estranged spouse, cohabitating partner, intimate partner, boyfriend/girlfriend, and homosexual relationship.

Non-Intimate Partner. This type of relationship includes the following: parent, child, child of an intimate partner, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, in-law, step parent, step child, step sibling, other family member, and other household member.

Domestic Violence Victims. This represents a count of the number of individual victims in a given domestic violence incident. More than one victim can be involved in a single incident.

Victimization Rates. This is the number of victims known to law enforcement per 1,000 residents. Rates were calculated by dividing the number of reported victims by the estimated population and then multiplying by 1,000.

Federal Judicial Districts. The state is divided into two federal judicial districts (northern, southern) defined by the U.S. Congress. The northern judicial district or region consists of 32 counties. These counties include: Barbour, Berkeley, Braxton, Brooke, Calhoun, Doddridge, Gilmer, Grant, Hampshire, Hancock, Hardy, Harrison, Jefferson, Lewis, Marion, Marshall, Mineral, Monongalia, Morgan, Ohio, Pendleton, Pleasants, Pocahontas, Preston, Randolph, Ritchie, Taylor, Tucker, Tyler, Upshur, Webster, and Wetzel. The remaining 23 counties comprise the southern judicial district. In terms of WV's 2005 estimated population, approximately 45.0% (823,269 residents) reside in the northern district and 55.0% (993,587 residents) reside in the southern district.

Domestic Violence Offenses. This represents a count of the number of offenses in a single domestic violence incident. This is not a count of the number of victims. A count of offenses differs in that there can many victims associated with a given offense.

Person Offenses. Person offenses include the following: murder and/or nonnegligent manslaughter, negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, simple assault, intimidation, forcible sodomy, sexual assault with an object, forcible fondling, rape of a male, incest, statutory rape, and kidnapping/abduction.

Type of Victim Injury. Victim injuries consist of apparent minor injury, serious physical injury, or no injury. Officers are responsible for recording the type of injury incurred by victims. The presence of serious physical injury may be identified by broken bones, possible internal injury, severe lacerations, other major injuries, loss of teeth, and unconsciousness.

Population Estimates

State population estimates for gender and race are based on 2005 estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. In addition, 2005 population estimates were used to calculate county victimizations rates.

Notes

¹ For the purpose of this report, the term “domestic violence” refers to incidents between intimate partners or family members (i.e., non-intimate partners). The West Virginia Code specific to domestic violence includes: Chapter 48 *Domestic Relations*, Article 27 *Prevention and Treatment of Domestic Violence* and Chapter 61 *Crimes and Their Punishment*, Article 2 *Crimes Against the Person*.

² Documentation of a weapon is required to be reported by law enforcement for the following offenses: murder/nonnegligent manslaughter, negligent homicide, justifiable homicide, kidnapping/abduction, forcible rape, forcible sodomy, forcible fondling, sexual assault with an object, robbery, aggravated assault (felonious assault or malicious wounding), simple assault (misdemeanor assault or battery), extortion/blackmail, and weapon law violations.

³ There are specific offenses for which an injury type must be documented by

law enforcement officers. These offenses include: kidnapping/abduction, forcible rape, forcible sodomy, sexual assault with an object, robbery, forcible fondling, aggravated assault (felonious assault or malicious wounding), simple assault (misdemeanor assault or battery), and extortion/blackmail.

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The Division of Criminal Justice Services is the designated state criminal justice planning agency. The Division is responsible for fostering public safety in West Virginia by providing planning, system coordination, grant administration, training & technical assistance, monitoring, research, statistical services, and law enforcement training.

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