



# 2017 LEGISLATIVE GUIDE

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN LOUISIANA

In 2016, there were **46** incidents resulting in **51** domestic homicides in Louisiana.

Louisiana ranks **2nd in the nation** for the number of women murdered by men.<sup>1</sup> Reducing domestic homicide requires a sustained commitment to victim safety and offender accountability.

### 2017 RECOMMENDATIONS

Close Dangerous Loopholes  
in Offender Accountability

Provide Adequate Resources  
for Victim Safety

Recognize the Dangers  
of Strangulation

### CLOSE DANGEROUS LOOPHOLES

*Safety For **All** Victims. Accountability For **All** Offenders.*

Domestic abusers should be held accountable for their actions, whether they are married to their victim or not.

- ◆ Domestic violence offenders pose great danger to their victims, whether the couple is married, share children, live together or are simply dating.
- ◆ Victims who suffer abuse at the hands of a dating partner or a cohabiting partner of the same sex do not have adequate protections under Louisiana law.
- ◆ A victim's access to safety and an offender's accountability should be based on the offender's behavior, not marital status.

**In 2016, 60% of Louisiana's intimate partner homicide victims were not married to their abuser.**

- ◆ Access to firearms increases the risk of intimate partner homicide by over **500%**, compared to instances where there are no weapons.<sup>2</sup>
- ◆ Abusers who possess guns tend to inflict the most severe abuse on their partners.<sup>2</sup>

**66% of Louisiana's domestic homicides in 2016 were committed with firearms.**

## PROVIDE ADEQUATE RESOURCES FOR VICTIM SAFETY

In 2015, LCADV member programs were unable to meet **3,748** service requests from victims due to lack of resources.

This turn away number has increased **106%** since 2012.

- ◆ Every year in Louisiana, approximately **100 children** lose a parent to domestic homicide.
- ◆ Preventing domestic violence homicides requires an adequate network of safety resources for victims.

### Louisiana's Domestic Violence Services

*A glimpse at what our 15 domestic violence programs provide each year:*

**20,000** victims served  
**90,000** shelter nights provided  
**33,000** crisis calls answered

- ◆ Louisiana's domestic violence programs work diligently and efficiently to meet an increasing need for services despite uncertainty of resources.
- ◆ Louisiana needs at least 700 shelter beds to house the number of women and children seeking shelter. We currently have **380**.
- ◆ Louisiana's domestic violence programs are funded in part through the Department of Children and Family Services. Most of the resources supporting these services are federal, including FVPSA and TANF funds. Less than 3% are state general fund dollars.
- ◆ **45%** of Louisiana parishes already have very limited access to services for victims. Only 35 parishes have permanent physical points of access to domestic violence services (either outreach offices or shelters).
- ◆ To meet the current need for shelter, state funding for domestic violence services would need to be increased by a minimum of \$10 million.
- ◆ A decrease from current funding levels would cause a reduction in safety resources that Louisiana's domestic violence victims cannot afford.

**An 84% increase** in the number of shelter beds would be required to meet the current demand for shelter.

## RECOGNIZE THE DANGERS OF STRANGULATION

- ◆ Strangulation is one of the most lethal forms of violence in domestic abuse cases. Unconsciousness occurs within seconds.
- ◆ The long-term effects of strangulation are staggering: it can cause permanent brain damage, upper respiratory illness, miscarriage, heart attacks, and death, days or even weeks after the assault.
- ◆ **Almost half** of all domestic homicide victims had experienced at least one episode of attempted strangulation prior to their death.<sup>3</sup>

**Strangulation is one of the best predictors of domestic violence homicide.**

Victims of prior attempted strangulation are **7 times** more likely to become a homicide victim.<sup>3</sup>

- ◆ Studies show that **47%** of female domestic violence victims reported having been strangled.<sup>4</sup>
- ◆ Louisiana law recognizes strangulation as a felony offense when perpetrated against a family or household member. Dating partners who perpetrate strangulation crimes are not held equally accountable.
- ◆ Recognizing the true lethality of strangulation could prevent many domestic homicides in Louisiana.

### ABOUT LCADV

#### Our Mission

The Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence (LCADV) is a statewide network of programs, organizations, and individuals who share the goal of ending domestic violence in Louisiana. LCADV empowers its members and communities through advocacy, education, resource development, and technical assistance.

#### Our Work

The Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence is the federally designated statewide coalition of programs and individuals working to end domestic violence in Louisiana. Our programs serve people from everywhere in Louisiana and who come from all backgrounds. LCADV is dedicated to bringing about change in our institutions, laws, politics, attitudes, and beliefs which will allow individuals to live free of violence.

#### References

- 1 Violence Policy Center, *When Men Murder Women*, 2016.
- 2 J. C. Campbell, D; Webster, J; Koziol-McLain, C. R; et al. Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results From A Multi-Site Case Control Study. *American Journal of Public Health*. 93(7). 2003.
- 3 Non-Fatal Strangulation is an Important Risk Factor for Homicide of Women. *The Journal of Emergency Medicine*. 35(3). 2008.
- 4 C. Block. The Chicago Women's Health Risk Study: Risk of Serious Injury or Death in Intimate Violence. Washington, DC: Department of Justice. 2000.

## Louisiana Domestic Violence Programs

Program Name	Parishes Served	Office Number
Chez Hope	Assumption, St. Mary, Iberia, St. Martin	337.828.4200
Jeff Davis CADA (Communities Against Domestic Abuse)	Jefferson Davis	337.616.8418
DART (Domestic Abuse Resistance Team)	Bienville, Claiborne, Jackson, Lincoln, Union, Winn, Grant	318.513.9373
Faith House	Acadia, Evangeline, Lafayette, St. Landry, Vermilion, Avoyelles, Rapides	337.267.9422
The Haven	Lafourche, Terrebonne	985.872.0757
Iris Domestic Violence Center	Ascension, Iberville, East Baton Rouge, West Baton Rouge, Pointe Coupee, East Feliciana, West Feliciana	225.389.3002
June N. Jenkins Women's Shelter	Beauregard, Vernon	337.462.1452
Metropolitan Center for Women and Children	Jefferson, St. Charles, St. James, St. John	504.837.5455

Program Name	Parishes Served	Office Number
New Orleans Family Justice Center	Orleans	504.866.9554
Oasis, A Safe Haven	Allen, Calcasieu, Cameron	337.436.4552
Safe Harbor	St. Tammany, Washington	985.626.5740
St. Bernard Battered Women's Program	Plaquemines, St. Bernard	504.277.3177
SAFE (Southeast Advocates for Family Empowerment)	Livingston, St. Helena, Tangipahoa, Washington	985.542.8384
Taylor House, Project Celebration	DeSoto, Sabine, Natchitoches, Bossier, Caddo, Red River, Webster	318.256.3408
The Wellspring Alliance for Families	Caldwell, East Carroll, Franklin, Morehouse, Ouachita, Madison, Richland, Tensas, West Carroll, LaSalle, Concordia, Catahoula	318.651.9314



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