

**Colorado Department of  
Human Services**



**Office of Behavioral Health  
and Housing**



**2008**

**Domestic Violence Program**

***Annual Report***

*Michelle, who has been a long-term victim of domestic violence, made the decision to leave her abusive partner. The community-based domestic violence services organization worked with her for almost four years, providing education, support, and safety planning. The violence escalated after the birth of Michelle's first child, and as she began to recognize the impact on her daughter, she felt ready to make a change. The advocates spent many hours with her to provide support when she finally reported the violence to law enforcement, helping her to complete an application to the Crime Victim's Compensation Board, obtain art therapy for her daughter and short-term counseling for herself, and prepare for and attend the criminal proceedings. This is an example of a program that helped a client, over the course of years, to move from being a victim to being an empowered woman who is going forward with her life. Michelle is now doing well in both her personal life and at her job. Her abusive partner remains on supervised probation after serving jail time.*



## The Issue of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence continues to be a pervasive problem throughout the United States and Colorado. The National Violence Against Women Survey (2000) reports that 25% of women and 7% of men were victims of intimate partner violence in their lifetime. According to this same survey, approximately \$1.5 million women and 835,000 men are physically assaulted annually in the United States. Violence against women is often accompanied by emotionally abusive and controlling behaviors, indicating that violence is a likely predictor of physical violence. Additionally, 3 – 4 million children are exposed to domestic violence annually, either by hearing or seeing an abusive incident or witnessing its aftermath.

The Colorado Bureau of Investigation reported over 11,000 incidences of domestic violence in 2007, including assaults, homicides, and other violent crime involving intimate partners. The Colorado Department of Human Services 2007 Child Maltreatment Fatality Report found that 70% of the reviewed families had a history of domestic violence, and that domestic violence co-occurs in 30 – 40% of all reported incidents of child maltreatment.

As the economy in the United States and the world started to recede in 2008, victims of domestic violence and the community-based organizations that provide them with emergency services were hit extremely hard. While a bad economy does not cause domestic violence, it can certainly exacerbate the problem in a number of ways. Victims who need economic resources like stable, affordable housing or employment to leave an abusive relationship face limited choices in a sinking economy. Community-based domestic violence victim services organizations (CBDVVSOs) face declining donations, cuts to their funding, and thus have fewer resources to offer to victims and their children. Despite these setbacks, CBDVVSOs worked tirelessly in 2008 to support victims.

This report documents the services provided by these CBDVVSOs as well as many of the stories of real victims who used the services.

## Overview of the Domestic Violence Program

The Domestic Violence Program (DVP), located within the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS), is the sole government entity in the State of Colorado dedicated entirely to funding and sustaining community-based domestic violence victim services organizations (CBDVVSOs) across the state. DVP ensures that services to victims of domestic violence and their children are readily available throughout Colorado's diverse communities.

More than just a funding administration, DVP is responsible for:

- Taking the lead for CDHS and state government to address domestic violence policy and legislative initiatives;
- Working collaboratively and developing partnerships with state entities and community stakeholders;
- Ensuring that programmatic and administrative standards for CBDVVSOs are met and level of service provision is optimal;
- Conducting regular monitoring of CBDVVSOs through site visits and desk audits;

- Tracking statistical data related to CBDVVSOs service delivery;
- Analyzing data and developing relevant reports for program stakeholders; and,
- Delivering domestic violence-related training to CDHS and county departments of human/social services personnel.

## History of the Domestic Violence Program

In 1983, the Colorado General Assembly authorized the formation of the DVP (formerly known as the Domestic Abuse Assistance Program) and located it in the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS). The legislation also created the Colorado Domestic Violence Fund (CDAF), a voluntary check-off on Colorado individual income tax forms. The funds from the CDAF encourage the development and maintenance of community-based domestic violence programs across Colorado. DVP uses these funds from the CDAF to support community-based domestic violence victim services organizations (CBDVVSOs).

In 1984, DVP began receiving funds from the federal Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA). DVP also distributes these funds to community-based domestic violence programs. Nationally, and in Colorado, FVPSA is the largest funding source for emergency services for victims and their children.

For two years, 2002 and 2003, DVP received State general fund dollars designated for distribution to CBDVVSOs. Due to budget shortfalls, this funding was eliminated in 2004.

DVP secured additional funding in 2004 from Colorado's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant to distribute to CBDVVSOs.

Each year, DVP funds support at least 40 CBDVVSOs across Colorado. This funding sustains a network of domestic violence programs and services available to victims and their families 24-hours a day.

Until 2004 the DVP was located in the Division of Child Welfare. In 2004 the DVP was reassigned to the Colorado Works Division and in 2008, was again relocated to the Office of Behavioral Health and Housing.

## Committees of the Domestic Violence Program

DVP operates with the guidance of two groups – the Advisory Committee and the Funding Recommendation Committee. DVP's Advisory Committee, which meets monthly, provides guidance with regard to the overall direction of the program. Members during year 2008 include:

- June Angole, Safehouse Denver
- Alicia Calderon, Colorado's Attorney General's Office
- Mary Clair, CDHS Child Support Enforcement
- Kenya Lyons, Colorado Division of Criminal Justice
- Jacque Morse, SHARE, Inc.
- Peggy Rogers, CDHS Aging and Adult Protective

*Kara, age 26, had been with her abusive husband for 10 years. After a period of separation and an eventual reconciliation, his behavior continued to be erratic, verbally abusive, and physically violent. Kara felt she had to get away or the violence would continue to get worse. She came to the shelter with her three sons (ages 8, 5 and 3). While she was there, Kara worked hard to maintain her job, get the kids to and from school and daycare, and access as many available community resources as possible. During the evenings, Kara met with the overnight advocate to obtain case management and support. During these sessions, she learned the cycle of domestic violence, the red flags of an abusive relationship, and the effects of the exposure to the batterer's violence on her three young sons. Due to the advocacy support, Kara was able to find affordable housing and moved from the shelter to a new apartment. Kara was able to break free from the violence of her batterer and provide a safe home for herself and her children.*



*Monique, age 58, came to the shelter seeking help. She felt helpless and alone and didn't know what she was going to do. Monique was very depressed and she felt like there was no hope for her situation. She described 26 ½ years of domestic abuse during which her husband undermined her self-worth, denigrated her belief system, and sexually assaulted her. Monique reached out to the shelter to change the way she felt about herself and be safe. Through the shelter's Personal Empowerment Training, Monique set personal goals for herself and began to feel like she had value and worth. Monique's empowerment has led to a new life where she treats herself with respect and dignity, and empowers others to do the same. Monique spoke at a fundraiser for the shelter and stated that if it wasn't for the shelter, that she would not be alive today.*

#### Services

- Ana Soler, Front Range Earth Force
- Carol Wahlgren, CDHS Child Welfare
- Denise Washington, Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence

DVP's Funding Recommendation Committee is responsible for reviewing all applications for funding and making recommendations to CDHS. Members during year 2008 include:

- Margaret Abrams, Denver District Attorney's Office
- Art Atwell, CDHS Workforce Development
- Donna Bailey, Violence Prevention Coalition of Southwest Colorado
- Debora Beck-Massey, Advocate
- Kelli Bennett, CDHS Responsible Fatherhood Program
- Mary Clair, CDHS Child Support Enforcement
- Nancy Feldman, Colorado Department of Public Safety, Division of Criminal Justice, Office for Victims Programs
- Angela Gover, University of Colorado, Program on Domestic Violence
- Paula Hammond, Project Safeguard
- Spiro Koinis, Denver Adult Probation Department
- Levetta Love, El Paso County Department of Human Services
- Mary McGhee, CDHS Division of Boards and Commissions
- Judy Page, Colorado's Attorney General's Office
- Ana Soler, Front Range Earth Force
- Emily Steed, Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence

### **Collaborative Work of the Domestic Violence Program**

In Colorado, victims of domestic violence seek services from a myriad of programs and systems. As such, DVP strives to ensure programs and systems work together to provide a seamless array of support. DVP participates in a variety of collaborative efforts to improve services for victims. Statewide committees, groups, advisory councils or task forces that enhance collaboration of funding distribution, system response to domestic violence, and training, include:

- Governor's Victims Compensation and Assistance Coordinating Board (also known as VOCA)
- Colorado Domestic Violence Offender Management Board (DVOMB)
- Colorado's Victim's Right Act Committee (VRA)
- State Domestic Violence and Child Protection Coordinating Council
- Colorado Fatherhood Council
- Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance (COVA) Conference Planning Committee
- Secretary of State's Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) CDHS Policy Development Committee



## **Collaborative Work with the Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence**

The DVP maintains a collaborative and cooperative relationship with the Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV), the statewide membership organization for community-based domestic violence victim services organizations. The CCADV Executive Director serves on the DVP Advisory Committee, and CCADV is represented on the DVP Funding Recommendation Committee. In 2008, the DVP provided funding to the CCADV for its First Annual Conference, and assisted CCADV with planning for the conference. The conference offered three full days of informative workshops divided into three tracks, Advanced Advocacy, the Executive Director Institute, and the New Worker Institute. 112 people attended the conference, representing many of the CBDVVSOs funded by DVP.

## **2008 Accomplishments of the Domestic Violence Program**

DVP serves as the State lead on domestic violence issues. DVP works collaboratively with other State and CDHS programs, counties, and other non-governmental agencies to develop state domestic violence policy, address legislative issues, and measure the effectiveness and quality of community-based domestic violence victim services organizations. To accomplish this, the DVP:

- Developed two websites for the DVP to increase visibility and communication to the general public and stakeholders;
- Partnered with the Colorado State Employees Assistance Program and the Colorado Bar Association to provide domestic violence in the workplace awareness;
- Developed and delivered domestic violence training for community and faith-based responsible fatherhood programs;
- Developed and delivered advanced domestic violence trainings led by subject-matter experts for county human services staff in the Denver-metro region and La Plata County;
- Provided eight Family Violence Option (FVO) training sessions for county human services staff in Colorado Works (TANF) and Workforce Development Programs;
- Honored a CBDVVS0 with the Second Annual Domestic Violence Program Award to recognize their amazing achievements;
- Conducted eleven site visits to CBDVVS0s receiving DVP funds; and,
- Offered technical assistance to assist CBDVVS0s with completing the application for funding, to orient new CBDVVOs receiving DVP funds to the DVP funding, and to introduce the new reporting requirements for outcome measurements.

*Joanna first came in contact with a domestic violence advocate in the police station after her partner physically assaulted her and threatened their infant. Following his arrest, Joanna and her two children came to stay at the shelter. During her six-week stay, the shelter provided food, clothing, and most importantly, advocacy. Even the family pet was safe from abuse via a foster care for pets program. Joanna received a free attorney from the shelter's legal program to help her file for child custody, assistance with an application to the address confidentiality program, and emotional support to deal with the grief and fear associated with leaving her abusive partner for the first time. At the end of six weeks, Joanna and her children moved into their own apartment. Joanna and her children continue to meet with an advocate and attend a weekly support group. Joanna still struggles emotionally and financially at times, but she knows that her children and she have a safe and positive future.*



*Suzie left the state she had been living in for twelve years in order to escape from her abuser. After arriving in Colorado, she had nowhere to stay and called the shelter to find out what her options were. While at the shelter, she actively worked with the advocates to find resources for housing, and continued to push herself physically to recover from her injuries. Suzie regularly met with a counselor to work on anger management, stress management, and appropriate expression of emotions. She even reconnected with a close family member. The support she received at the shelter led her to work with other community resources to secure rental assistance. Suzie now lives on her own, safe from abuse.*

## **Domestic Violence Program Funding Sources**

DVP funding is a compilation of three different funding sources that are pooled to distribute to community-based domestic violence victim services organizations (CBDVVSOs) across Colorado. Funding has remained nearly stable for the past seven years, while many programs have faced an increase in demand for their services and new programs have requested funding from DVP to provide services to victims and their families. Annually, DVP distributes approximately \$2.2 million to CBDVVSOs.

### ***The Colorado Domestic Violence Fund ([www.domesticviolencefund.org](http://www.domesticviolencefund.org))***

Colorado taxpayers elect to make donations through their state income tax return refunds to the Colorado Domestic Violence Fund. The first tax return donations for DVP were collected in the 1983 income tax year. Amounts collected annually range from \$200,000 to \$400,000. Each year, DVP uses these funds to support CBDVVSOs.

### ***The Family Violence Prevention and Services Act***

In 1984, the Federal Congress approved the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA), which created a formula grant for each state to assist in establishing, maintaining, and expanding programs and projects to prevent family violence and to provide immediate shelter and related assistance for victims of family violence and their dependants. Additionally, FVPSA funds support State Domestic Violence Coalitions, the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, special-interest resource centers, and the National Domestic Violence Hotline. These funds go directly to CBDVVSOs and provide training and education for workers in domestic violence programs across Colorado. These funds are intended to provide shelter for victims and their children, as well as other services that enhance safety. Colorado receives approximately \$1.4 million annually.

### ***Temporary Assistance for Needy Families***

To meet the increased need for domestic violence services in Colorado, additional funding for CBDVVSOs funded by the DVP was secured in 2004 through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) monies. In addition, in 2004, DVP also relocated within CDHS to the Colorado Works program, having previously been located in Child Welfare Services. The DVP distributes \$650,000 annually in TANF funds.

## **Community-Based Domestic Violence Victims' Services Organizations**

In 2008, DVP administered funds and provided oversight to 44 community-based domestic violence victim services organizations (CBDVVSOs). These programs are located throughout the state and represent the majority of CBDVVSOs in Colorado. These CBDVVSOs provide crisis intervention, advocacy, prevention, and various support and skill-building to assist victims in re-stabilizing their lives, as well as prevention through community education. CBDVVSOs funded by DVP represent rural and urban, shelter and non-shelter, and general and specialized services. Programs also provide direct services to victims in traditionally underserved areas and populations.



## 2008 Community-Based Domestic Violence Victims' Services Organizations

CBDVVSOs listed below received DVP funding to provide domestic violence advocacy and services to victims and their children. Awards ranged from approximately \$10,000.00 to over \$100,000.00. Funding for CBDVVSOs is based on a state fiscal year, and programs listed below may have received a partial or full award during calendar year 2008.

<u>Program Name</u>	<u>City</u>
A Woman's Place	Greeley
Advocate Safehouse Project	Glenwood Springs
Advocates Against Battering and Violence	Steamboat Springs
Advocates Against Domestic Assault	Trinidad
Advocates Crisis Support Services	Craig
Advocates for Victims of Assault	Frisco
Advocates of Lake County	Leadville
Advocates Victim Assistance Team of Grand County	Hot Sulphur Springs
Alliance Against Domestic Violence	Salida
Alternative Horizons Corporation	Durango
Alternatives to Family Violence	Commerce City
Alternatives to Violence	Loveland
AMEND	Denver
Archuleta County Victim Assistance Program	Pagosa Springs
Arkansas Valley Resource Center	La Junta
Asian Pacific Development Center	Aurora
Bright Future Foundation	Avon
Clear Creek County Advocates	Georgetown
Colorado Anti-Violence Project	Denver
Crossroads Safehouse	Fort Collins
Denver Center for Crime Victims	Denver
Domestic Safety Resource Center	Lamar
DOVE Advocacy Services for Violenced Deaf Women	Denver
Estes Valley Victim Advocates	Estes Park
Family Crisis Services	Canon City
Family Tree	Wheat Ridge
Gateway Battered Women's Services	Aurora
Help for Violenced Partners	Sterling
Jubilee House	Gunnison
Latimer House Counseling and Advocacy Center	Grand Junction
Mountain Peace Shelter	Bailey
Renew	Cortez
RESPONSE: Help for Survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault	Aspen
Safe Shelter of St. Vrain Valley	Longmont
Safehouse Denver	Denver
Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence	Boulder
San Miguel Resource Center	Telluride
SHARE	Fort Morgan
TESSA	Colorado Springs
Tri-County Resource Center	Montrose
Tu Casa	Alamosa
Volunteers of America Brandon Center	Denver
Volunteers of America Southwest Safehouse	Durango
Women's Crisis and Family Outreach Center	Castle Rock
YWCA Family Crisis Shelter	Pueblo

*Betty contacted the local domestic violence services organization when she was ready to leave her marriage after 15 years of emotional and physical abuse. A risk assessment determined that Betty's level of risk was very high. A court advocate assisted Betty with an order of protection, and developed a safety plan with Betty to take steps to increase her safety at work. The advocates worked with law enforcement, who began daily observations on Betty's place of work and home. The advocates connected Betty with other community agencies who could assist her financially with rent and other costs that were now going to be more difficult for Betty to cover without her husband's financial help. Most importantly, the advocates provided extensive emotional support to Betty throughout this process.*



## Program Services Overview

All DVP-funded programs provide confidential services via their crisis line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Programs offer a wide array of domestic violence advocacy services to victims and their children. Most programs have bilingual staff or translators available.

**General Services** - Programs offer supportive advocacy to victims in crisis as well as those in need of long-term support. These services include safety planning, support groups, counseling, case management, transportation, information and referrals, and other programming as described below.

**Residential Services** - Many programs have residential shelters where victims and their children can stay in a comfortable home while receiving supportive advocacy. Shelter stays are usually around 45 days, and can be as long as 90 days in some programs, depending on need and availability. Several programs offer transitional housing where victims and their children can stay for up to two years. Programs without a shelter or transitional housing may be able to provide short-term safehousing in a motel.

**Children** - Residential shelters offer children's programming such as group support, safety planning, healthy communication, skill-building and recreation for children living in the shelter. Some programs also offer parenting skills classes. Childcare is usually available for victims who are attending domestic violence counseling or support groups.

**Advocacy** - Court-based advocacy such as accompaniment to hearings for civil orders of protection are widely available. Other legal services such as support with immigration issues, divorce or child custody may be directly available in some programs or by referral. General advocacy is available to help victims access resources such as victim compensation, affordable housing, food stamps, welfare, and other community supports.

**Teens** - Teen dating violence education services are available in many programs that collaborate with local schools to promote healthy relationships and recognize the signs of an abusive relationship.

**Community Education** - Programs have staff who are available to speak to community groups about domestic violence. Presentations have been made to schools, churches, hospitals, social services, businesses, law enforcement, civic groups and others interested in learning more about the dynamics and prevention of domestic violence.

Programs vary considerably in terms of size and type of regions served. The majority of DVP-funded programs are in rural communities (see Table 1) and have ten or fewer staff members (see Table 2). The majority of DVP-funded programs have a budget of less than \$500,000 (see Table 3).

**Table 1**

Service Region Type		
Urban	10	22%
Suburban	7	16%
Rural	19	42%
Remote Rural	9	20%

**Table 2**

Number of Staff		
0 – 5	18	40%
6 – 10	10	22%
11 – 15	5	11%
16 – 20	2	4%
21 – 25	2	4%
25 – 30	2	4%
31 or more	6	13%

**Table 3**

Budget Size		
Less than \$100,000	1	2%
\$100,000 - \$200,000	13	29%
\$200,00 - \$499,000	17	38%
\$500 - \$1,000,000	5	11%
More than \$1,000,000	9	20%

## Innovative Strategies to Respond to Domestic Violence

Despite challenges, programs constantly improve upon existing services in a variety of ways. Examples include:

- A weekly protection order clinic for victims seeking support from the courts. (A Woman's Place)
- Outreach centers that increase the programs' ability to reach and serve more victims and their children. (A Woman's Place and Family Crisis Services)
- Outreach to seasonal ski industry workers from Jamaica and Africa. (Advocates Against Battering and Violence)
- Three weekly therapy groups for youth ages 11 – 18 providing a safe environment for youth to talk about the violence in their lives. (Alternative Horizons)
- An economic independence group to help women develop micro-business ventures and employment options. (Alternatives Against Family Violence)
- A parenting education group for victims to work toward

*A.J., a 34-year-old married Korean woman, was a victim of physical, sexual, verbal, financial, and emotional abuse at the hands of her husband of seven months. A.J.'s abusive husband restricted A.J.'s activities outside of the home and took possession of her clothing, legal documents, jewelry, and money. A.J. was forbidden from talking with others, including neighbors, or from going anywhere alone. A bilingual/bicultural advocate provided education about victims' rights, court advocacy, counseling, community resources, and short and long-term safety planning. The advocate assisted A.J. in filing a police report, an order of protection, immigration paperwork, and finding a safe place to stay.*



*While Marta was receiving domestic violence counseling, her husband severely beat her, leaving her bruised over her entire body. After the beating, she contacted her domestic violence counselor who accompanied her to the police station to file a report and obtain an order of protection. The counselor encouraged Marta to work with a Violence Against Women immigration clinic, who could help her obtain legal immigration status. Marta's husband often threatened that if she attempted to leave the relationship, he, a U. S. citizen, would obtain custody of their children. The staff at the immigration clinic assisted her in filing for a U Visa - a special temporary visa for crime victims who have cooperated with law enforcement. As a result, Marta has obtained a work permit and will eventually be able to apply for permanent resident status. Marta has taken bold steps to ensure her and her children's safety and security, including accessing mental health services, a court order granting her full custody of her children, and calling the police if her ex is following her or threatening her.*

- disrupting the generational pattern of violence. (AMEND)
- Use of two vehicles for program staff and volunteers to pick up victims who live in isolated rural communities who need to come to shelter and to transport victims already in shelter who need to access community services. (Crossroads Safehouse)
- A “How to Help” support group for friends and family to learn how they can respond to victims in their lives. (Family Tree)
- “Time Out for Kids” support group for youth to talk about the effects of domestic violence, safety planning, and self-esteem while the non-abusive parent attends a peer group to discuss the impact of the violence on their children and how to maintain healthy relationships with them. (Family Tree)
- Distribution of Spanish brochures for the first time in Gunnison County. (Jubilee House)
- Increased support group attendance from 3 to 30 in one year. (Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence)
- Establishment of a youth advocate position in the shelter to work with teens to address healthy relationships, employment and success after they leave the shelter. (Women’s Crisis and Family Outreach Center)

## Shelters & Transitional Housing

Victims of domestic violence and their children need safe housing to rebuild their lives in the wake of violence. Shelters provide a temporary respite and opportunity for families to heal. In 2008, DVP-funded programs provided 98,044 nights of shelter to 5,087 individuals. Compared to 2007, this is a slight increase in the number of shelter nights provided of approximately 2%. However, the actual number of individuals receiving shelter has actually decreased marginally from 5,117 in 2007 to 5,087 in 2008. This is part of a growing trend over the past several years, which shows the number of shelter nights increasing overall, and the number of individuals sheltered decreasing. These results demonstrate that individuals residing in temporary shelter use the shelter as a bridge to permanent housing for longer periods of time. Most shelters in Colorado limit stays to 30 – 45 days (see Table 4). During this time, victims must secure all the economic resources necessary to live independently. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the increase in the number of shelter nights and fewer individuals sheltered is related to a lack of affordable housing in many communities.

**Table 4**

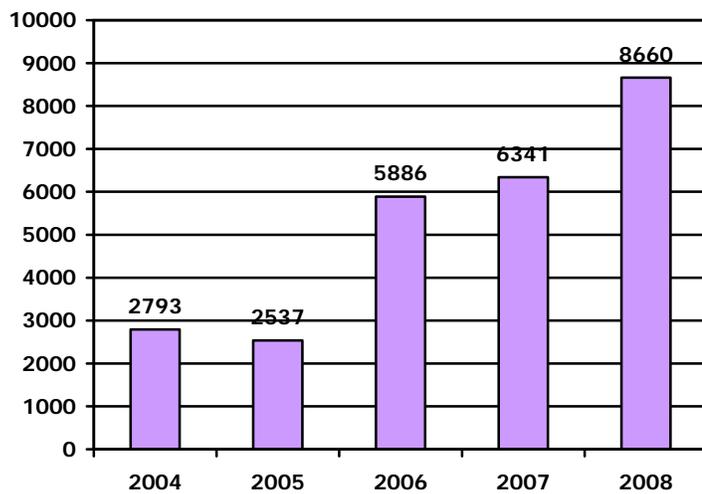
Maximum Stay Permitted in Shelter		
14 days or less	3	10%
30 – 45 days	18	62%
60 – 90 days	5	17%
120 days or more	3	10%
*One shelter does not have a maximum stay		



### Graph 1

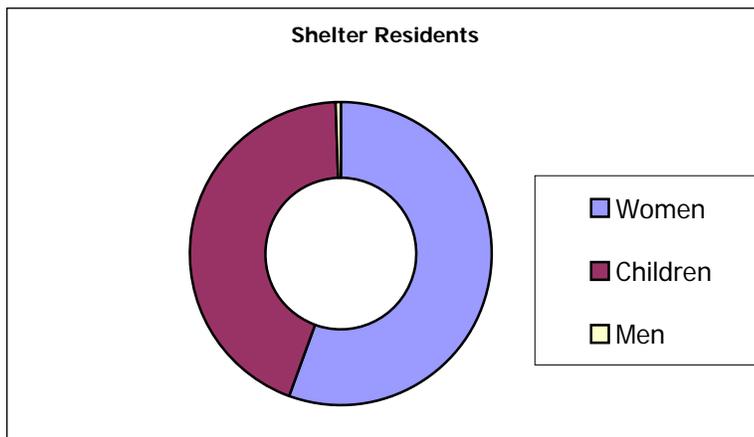
In 2008, 8,660 individuals were turned away from shelters in Colorado due to a lack of capacity, a 36% increase from 2007, where 6,341 individuals were turned away. These figures are part of a growing trend which has seen the number of individuals turned away from shelters steadily increase over the past several years (see Graph 1), despite the fact that many programs have increased the number of beds available in their shelter or opened new shelter facilities in communities where they were previously lacking.

Individuals residing in shelter programs received a wide range of supportive services, including individual and group counseling, and general advocacy. In 2008, DVP-funded programs provided 91,197 individual counseling sessions, 31,813 group counseling session contacts and 55,957 advocacy sessions to support victims in their efforts to heal from the emotional trauma of domestic violence, navigate the criminal justice system, and/or secure economic resources to build self-sufficiency.



### Graph 2

Nearly half the residents in shelter during 2007 were children, age 18 and under (43%) (see Graph 2). Advocates for children provide counseling (individual and group), opportunities for child-centered play and respite care for mothers in counseling. Children who are exposed to domestic violence feel safe at shelter and learn healthy ways to communicate about the violence.



*Grace, a 28-year-old Latina woman, and her ten-month-old daughter, escaped from her extremely violent home by bus to seek safety at a domestic violence shelter. Grace's husband had physically abused her with his fists, a bat, and a 2 x 4 piece of wood, and had even tried to kill her with a pickaxe. He threatened to take their daughter and disappear with her if Grace did not obey his controlling rules. While he was at work, Grace called the crisis line and asked for help. She came to the shelter scared, short on money and personal belongings. While at the shelter, Grace attended counseling and educational groups surrounding the issues of domestic violence. Through access to community resources, Grace was able to secure day care so she could seek housing and employment during the day. Grace successfully obtained housing at a two-year transitional housing program. She plans to finish her college degree. She is filing for divorce and is working through the child custody process.*



*Laura came to the shelter after escaping a life-threatening domestic violence situation. Her abuser locked her in their home each day when he left for work and placed bars on all the windows, preventing her escape. On top of the abuse, Laura suffered from diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, and heart disease. The abuser regularly prevented her from getting the medication she needed. Laura escaped by moving a large piece of furniture that blocked the only window without bars. Once at the shelter, she needed health care in addition to safety planning and counseling. The domestic violence advocates were able to provide services during Laura's hospital stay, and after leaving the hospital, Laura moved into the domestic violence transitional housing program. With the assistance of the advocates, Laura eventually received a Section 8 Voucher to move into her own apartment. Through the supportive services provided by the shelter, Laura was enveloped in care, from daily case management to frequent counseling, referrals for medical care and transportation.*



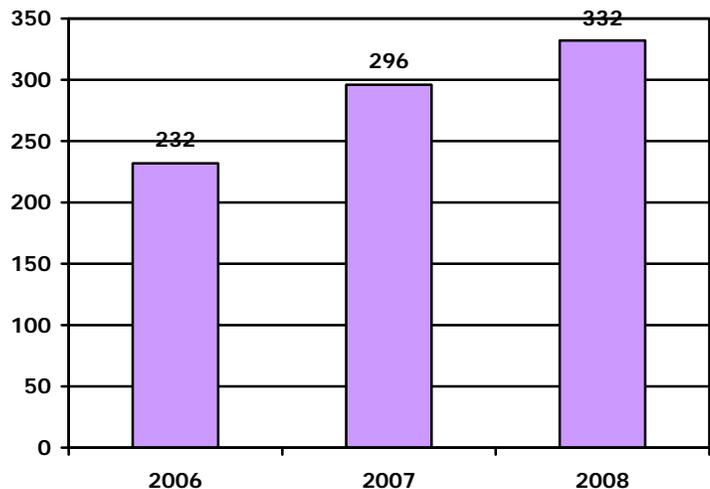
Across the state, DVP-funded shelters vary in size. The majority of shelters have fewer than ten beds, although many have more than 20 (see Table 5). Shelters often coordinate services with each other and furnish victims with transportation to access available shelter.

**Table 5**

Number of Beds Available		
10 or Less	10	33%
11 – 15	4	13%
16 – 20	5	17%
21 – 30	8	27%
31 or more	3	10%

In 2008, fifteen DVP-funded programs provided transitional housing to 332 women, a 12% increase as compared to 2007, when 296 women received services through transitional housing programs (see Graph 3). This increase is due largely in part to the greater number of transitional housing programs available to meet the need for victims to bridge the gap between emergency shelter and permanent housing.

**Graph 3**



Transitional housing programs provide housing for about 18 months, allowing families an extended period of time to receive supportive services, to heal from violence, and to secure the economic resources necessary to live independently (see table 6). Transitional housing is offered through units owned by DVP-funded programs or through a tenant-based rental assistance program, where victims can find housing in the private market and the DVP-funded program contributes to their rent and other housing costs.

**Table 6**

Maximum Stay Permitted in Transitional Housing		
1 – 12 months	6	40%
13 – 24 months	8	53%
25 or more months	1	7%

## Other Services

Victims and their children often need long-term supportive services beyond what is provided during a short-term shelter stay. For victims who either live too far from the nearest shelter or are turned away due to a lack of capacity, there is still a wide range of services available. Many programs provide teen dating violence education, parenting education, court-based advocacy, and other necessary programming. Most programs have bilingual and bicultural staff and all programs have access to interpreters. One Front Range domestic violence program has started a support group specifically for friends and family of victims of violence. Another has a legal services program to assist immigrant victims in obtaining visas.

In 2008, DVP-funded programs answered 46,780 emergency crisis intervention phone calls, an increase of 20% over 2007, when programs responded to 38,863 calls. For many victims, a crisis line is their first link to resources to assist in attaining safety. All DVP-funded crisis lines in Colorado are answered 24-hours a day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year. Crisis line workers engage victims in safety planning and provide appropriate referrals to community resources. All domestic violence services are confidential and free of charge.

In addition to crisis line calls and shelter-based services, DVP-funded programs provided individual and group counseling and advocacy/supportive services to individuals not residing in shelter programs. Programs provided 30,372 sessions of individual counseling, 26,495 group counseling session contacts, and 57,156 advocacy/support services contacts to support victims and their families.

DVP funds one program that provides services to individuals who are court-ordered to attend Batterer Treatment. DVP funds the portion of the program that offers victim advocacy to the partners of batterers who attend the batterer intervention counseling. The confidential victim advocacy provided allows victims access to information about their partners' or ex-partners' progress in treatment.

## Profiles of Domestic Violence Victims

**Age** — Victims of violence can be of any age. Children who are exposed to domestic violence often become targets and are significantly impacted. Teenage victims need safety planning and supportive services to help develop new and healthy dating relationships. Victims of violence in later life are often subject to financial exploitation or neglect from those who are caring for them. 46% of victims in 2008 were between the ages of 25-29, and 18% were between the ages of 0-12 (see graph 4).

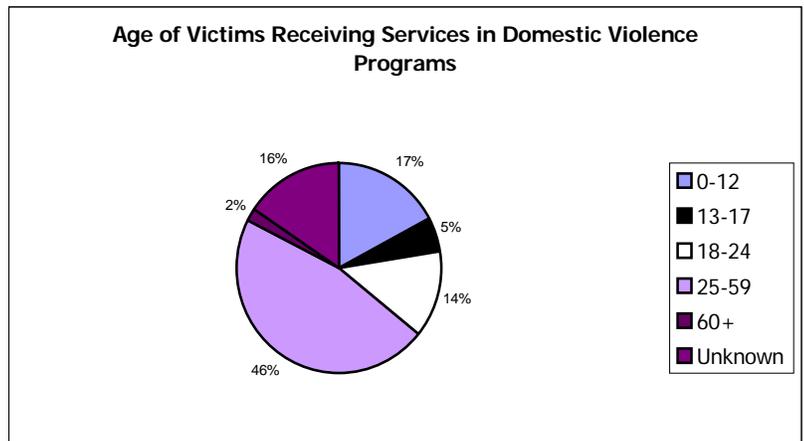
*Jill and her four children came to the shelter to seek refuge. Jill's eldest daughter, seven year old Tina, had seen her mother beaten numerous times, and finally went to her school principal for help. Tina's school told Jill that there was a safe place she could go, and with the school's help, Jill had the courage to bring her family to the shelter. For the first time in many years, she and her children had a safe, quiet and welcoming place to sleep at night. Jill stayed at the shelter for three months, during which time she found emotional support through counseling, worked with numerous community agencies to ensure her family's safety and basic needs, found full-time employment and secured a safe and affordable house for her and her children. Numerous community collaborations occurred to support this family's needs, including childcare, transportation, financial assistance and permanent housing.*



Several years ago, a domestic violence program provided shelter and services to Abby, who had severe disabilities. Abby lived in a very remote area of the county, had no transportation, and also had a two-year-old son. Twelve years later, Abby returned to the shelter, stating she was still in an abusive relationship and was tired of living in fear. She was now ready to leave. The domestic violence program staff worked extensively with Abby, assisting her in filing for divorce, helping her with the myriad of paperwork necessary for applying for public assistance, and finding her an apartment that would fit her unique needs. The process seemed to move slowly and often she would get discouraged, yet she never lost sight of her goal to be free from violence. After several weeks, the program was able to find Abby income-based housing that also offered some supportive services. In addition, the program was able to link Abby with other services that provide her with an aide for several hours a week. Abby is now living free from violence and has started to participate in community activities.



**Graph 4**



**Rural Victims of Domestic Violence** — Colorado is world renowned for its impressive mountains and natural beauty. Colorado’s geographic diversity is an asset to many, but becomes a barrier to safety for many victims who must travel a great distance to reach the safety of a shelter or the supportive services of an advocate, leaving their employment, support system and children’s schools. Poor weather and adverse road conditions restrict victims’ access to help. In demonstrating greater efforts to reach rural victims, many programs have two or more office locations in remote areas. In 2008, DVP-funded programs provided services to 7,884 victims residing in rural communities.

**GLBT Victims of Domestic Violence** — In 2008, DVP-funded programs provided services to 325 individuals who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender (GLBT). This is a 100% increase from 2007, and a nearly 300% increase from 2006. This significant increase does not necessarily indicate a rise in domestic violence among this population. DVP-funded programs increasingly improve their ability to reach out to the GLBT population, eliminating some of the barriers GLBT face in coming forward to report the violence.

**Victims with Limited English Proficiency** — Many programs have made incredible strides in serving monolingual, non-English speaking victims. In addition to serving monolingual Spanish-speaking victims, programs also assist victims whose primary languages are Arabic, German, Japanese, Korean and Russian. Although most programs have bilingual staff, many communities lack bilingual attorneys, therapists or law enforcement officers. One program receiving DVP funds however, does provide services to victims seeking self-petitions and U-Visas under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), and has reported a 95% success rate in obtaining legal permanent status for their clients. Many communities in Colorado have an agriculturally based economy, which results in a large number of migrant workers from Mexico, Central America and even South America. In 2008, DVP-funded programs provided services to 2,645 victims with limited English proficiency, which is a nearly 30% increase in the number of served during 2007.

**Victim Race / Ethnicity** — Victims of domestic violence cross all racial and ethnic lines. DVP-funded programs are equipped to address violence in a diverse setting. Programs diversify staff to reflect the make-up of their communities and provide services in culturally and

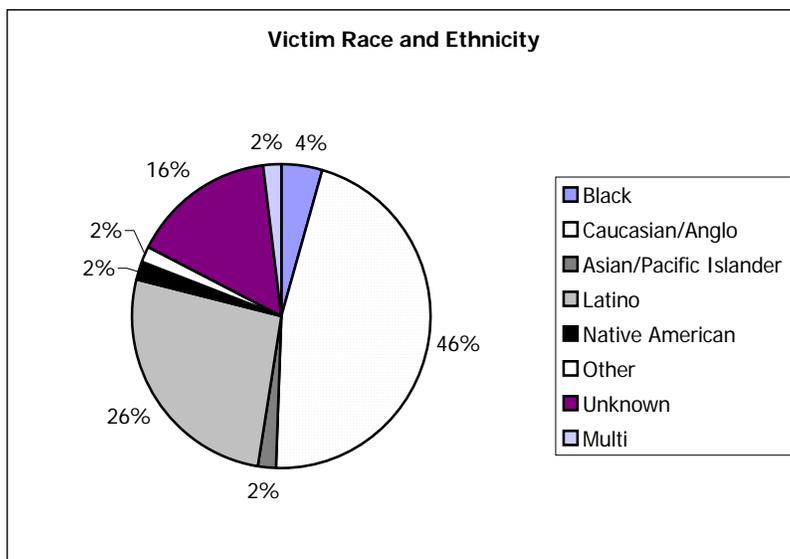
linguistically appropriate settings. 46% of the victims receiving services in DVP-funded programs during 2008 were Caucasian or Anglo, 27% were Latino, 5% were Black, 4% were Multi-Racial, 2% were Asian-Pacific Islander, and 2% were Native American (see Graph 5). 16% of victims did not reveal their race or ethnicity to DVP-funded programs, which is most likely to protect their anonymity.

**Graph 5**

**Victims with Disabilities** — In 2008, DVP-funded programs provided services to 1,536 victims with a known disability. Disabled victims face additional barriers to safety, as they are often physically unable to leave an abusive partner and are reliant on their partner for care. Most shelters in Colorado are fully accessible to disabled victims and advocates are trained to provide a full-range of services to disabled victims.

**Community Collaborative Profile**

**Community Involvement** — DVP-funded programs are reliant on



the support of community volunteers who answer crisis line calls, provide advocacy to victims, and offer a wide range of supportive services to program staff. In 2008, 3,915 volunteers provided 306,585 hours of community service to programs. Their support is crucial to victims' ongoing efforts to reach safety.

**Community Education and Technical Assistance** — Many domestic violence programs focus their prevention efforts on community education. Their work includes outreach to the general public to change societal perceptions regarding the acceptance of violence. DVP-funded programs target a wide range of audiences such as students, businesses and civic organizations. In 2008, they provided 2,277 presentations to 72,850 individuals. In addition, DVP-funded programs provided 809 training and technical assistance presentations to 13,525 individuals. These presentations target law enforcement, clergy, medical professionals and others who encounter victims in their professions.

*Lucinda made the decision to leave her abusive live-in boyfriend after meeting with the domestic violence program advocate several times. An Alaskan native, and Native American, Lucinda wished to return to her family on the reservation in her home state. Since the county where Lucinda lived lacked a domestic violence shelter, the program provided three nights of temporary shelter in a motel, allowing Lucinda some time to pack her belongings, and gather additional resources to prepare to relocate to Alaska. Before leaving for Alaska, Lucinda worked with the advocate and another domestic violence shelter in a neighboring county to secure additional safe shelter before she could permanently relocate. Local law enforcement assisted Lucinda with transportation to the next county. This is one example of the obstacles faced in remote rural areas, and the creative measures used to overcome these challenges.*



*Megan came to an emergency domestic violence shelter as a result of fleeing an abusive relationship with her husband of twelve years. The most recent incident that led her to seek services involved her two-year-old daughter. Megan's husband tried to take her daughter during an abusive incident, and was arrested for domestic violence and for child abuse. Megan was encouraged by law enforcement to seek shelter as they were concerned about her husband's lethality when he posted bail. She immediately came to shelter and stayed for approximately two months. During that time, she participated actively in groups and was a leader among her peers. During her stay, her husband began a legal battle for custody of her daughter. He was winning his case in court even with a child abuse charge against him. This was a struggle for Megan, and she was very worried that she may lose custody of her daughter. Megan was able to keep a positive attitude throughout this tough case and during her time at shelter. She stated that she learned a lot about boundaries and now believes that she can raise her child herself without the negative influence that was previously in their lives.*



## Future Initiatives

During 2009, the DVP will be engaged in several new initiatives to support government and community efforts to end domestic violence throughout Colorado. The DVP will be leading a Pilot Project that will place domestic violence advocates at county departments of human/social services TANF programs. The passage of Senate Bill 68, signed into law on May 15, 2009, will improve services to victims by increasing funding available to CBDVSOs. In addition, DVP has engaged in a statewide effort to collect service outcome data.

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## Contact Us

### **Domestic Violence Program**

Colorado Department of Human Services  
Office of Behavioral Health and Housing  
1575 Sherman Street, 3rd Floor  
Denver, CO 80203  
(303) 866-3321  
[www.domesticabusefund.org](http://www.domesticabusefund.org)  
[www.colorado.gov/cdhs/dvp](http://www.colorado.gov/cdhs/dvp)

### **Other Resources**

#### **Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence**

(303) 831-9632  
1 (888) 778-7091  
[www.ccadv.org](http://www.ccadv.org)

#### **National Domestic Violence Hotline**

Provides crisis hotline assistance for domestic violence victims across the country.

1 (800) 799-SAFE (7233) or 1 (800) 787-3224 (TTY)  
[www.ndvh.org](http://www.ndvh.org)

#### **National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline**

1 (866) 331-9474  
1 (866) 331-8453 TTY  
[www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org)

#### **Family Violence Prevention Fund**

[www.endabuse.org](http://www.endabuse.org)

#### **National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence**

[www.dvalianza.org](http://www.dvalianza.org)

#### **National Network to End Domestic Violence**

[www.nnedv.org](http://www.nnedv.org)

#### **National Coalition Against Domestic Violence**

[www.ncadv.org](http://www.ncadv.org)