



More than 20% of all reported violent offenses in the United States are committed by intimate partners, immediate family members, and other relatives. Domestic violence accounts for 50% of female homicides and 10% of male homicides in the United States.¹ Victims often initiate contact with the criminal justice system in the months and years preceding their death, creating potential opportunities to prevent these tragedies. Recognizing the threat of escalating and even lethal violence in these cases, jurisdictions are seeking ways to better assess risk and target resources towards effective interventions.

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INTERVENTIONS

- **Risk and Danger:** Many victims of intimate partner and domestic violence underestimate the danger they are in, preventing them from taking intermediate safety measures, like making long-term safety plans.
- **Reporting and Prosecution:** Only a fraction of domestic violence cases are reported, let alone successfully prosecuted; published dismissal rates are as high as 90%.² Research shows that increasing the probability of punishment is an effective way to deter and prevent crime.
- **Proven Interventions:** High-quality studies have identified several promising interventions that can reduce domestic violence victimization:
 - › The Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) is a low-cost intervention designed to reduce intimate partner homicides. It involves a first-responder-administered questionnaire to flag individuals at the highest risk and help create a personalized safety plan. LAP implementation in Maryland reduced annual female homicides by 2.5-3 per million people, a reduction of 37-44%.³
 - › The Target Abuser Call (TAC) program is a specialized domestic violence prosecution initiative that provides a comprehensive, coordinated response to domestic violence cases through a multi-disciplinary team of trained prosecutors, investigators, victim advocates, and civil attorneys. Its goal is to improve collaboration and address victims' constraints to increase their participation in the criminal prosecution process. In Chicago, for victims on the margin of receiving these services, the TAC program reduced homicide by as much as 90%. Impacts were immediate and persisted for almost 10 years.⁴
- **New Approaches:** Policymakers are trying many new approaches to combat domestic violence that have not yet been rigorously evaluated. These include increased use of pretrial detention for domestic violence offenses, emergency funding to support victims' immediate needs, and expanded witness protection services.

WHAT POLICYMAKERS SHOULD FOCUS ON

- Partnering with researchers to pilot and replicate promising domestic violence interventions, including the LAP and TAC programs described above.
- Partnering with researchers to test the impact of other interventions that target resources to intervene more deeply with high-risk domestic violence cases, such as the new approaches listed above.



ENDNOTES

- 1 Arora, A., Beberman, X., Jelveh, Z., & Motta, A. (2024). *Targeted interventions for high-risk domestic violence victims*. University of Chicago Crime Lab. <https://crimelab.uchicago.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2024/01/UChicago-Crime-Lab-High-Risk-DV-Paper-Jan2024.pdf>.
- 2 Moreno, H. (2019, December 3). *City council data shows over 90% of domestic violence cases dropped by prosecutors in municipal court; conviction rate merely 6%*. New Orleans City Council. <https://council.nola.gov/news/archive/2019/december-2019/city-council-data-shows-over-90-of-domestic-violen/>.
- 3 Koppa, V. (2024). *Can information save lives? Effect of a victim-focused police intervention on intimate partner homicides*. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 217, 756–782. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jebo.2023.11.001>.
- 4 Arora, A., Beberman, X., Jelveh, Z., & Motta, A. (2024). *Targeted interventions for high-risk domestic violence victims*. University of Chicago Crime Lab. <https://crimelab.uchicago.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2024/01/UChicago-Crime-Lab-High-Risk-DV-Paper-Jan2024.pdf>.

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