



Numbers Now

Criminal Justice in Oklahoma

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While many COVID-19 restrictions are being lifted as vaccinations increase and new cases decline, it is important to evaluate the potential impact COVID-19 and related mitigation strategies have had on crime statistics. [A study conducted by the National Commission on COVID-19 and Criminal Justice](#) suggests that domestic abuse rose by an average of 8.1% nationally following the implementation of stay-at-home orders. This increase can be attributed to numerous factors: increased unemployment, stress, and an unfavorable financial climate. Domestic abuse affects all ages, genders, and backgrounds, and steps should be taken to identify and assist those trapped in abusive relationships.

Domestic Abuse Awareness

Domestic abuse takes many forms, ranging from psychological and emotional abuse to sexual and physical abuse. Domestic abuse perpetrators rely on an imbalanced power dynamic to control their victims, preventing many victims from recognizing the abusive pattern they are in. This pattern erodes their self-confidence, making it difficult to leave the abusive relationship once it is identified. Many battered partners are afraid to leave their children or pets alone in the abuser's household and may avoid seeking help from family and friends out of concern it would place them in danger.

Leaving an abusive relationship is never easy and it often takes time and resources to assist victims in leaving. Due to increasing societal awareness, several organizations now exist that can assist victims with access to counselors, information packets, helplines, and help in creating a safety plan. More information is available from:

YWCA (Oklahoma City):

405-948-1770,

<https://www.ywcaokc.org/>.

Domestic Violence Intervention Center (Tulsa):

918-743-5763 (HELP.ME)

Text SAFE to 207-777

<https://dvis.org/>

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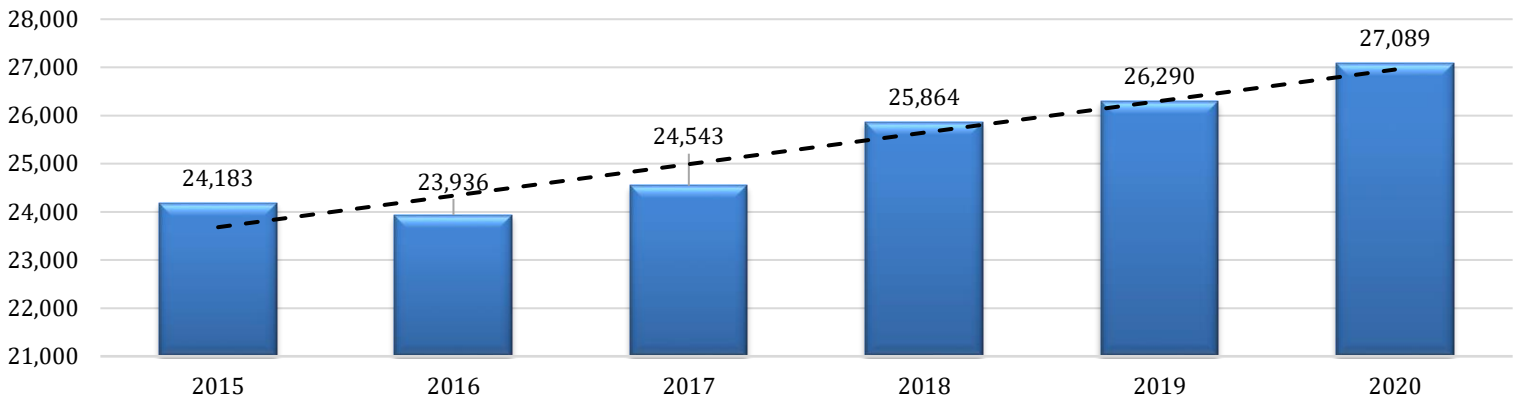
For more information, please visit: [OCJS/Oklahoma-Statistical Analysis Center](#)

COVID-19 Impact on Domestic Abuse in Oklahoma

Many advocacy groups and governmental organizations warned that COVID-19 lockdowns would force victims to be trapped at home with their abusers, leading to a potential spike in domestic abuse reports. In order to evaluate the impact, the Oklahoma Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) compared the number of domestic abuse incidents for 2015 through 2020.

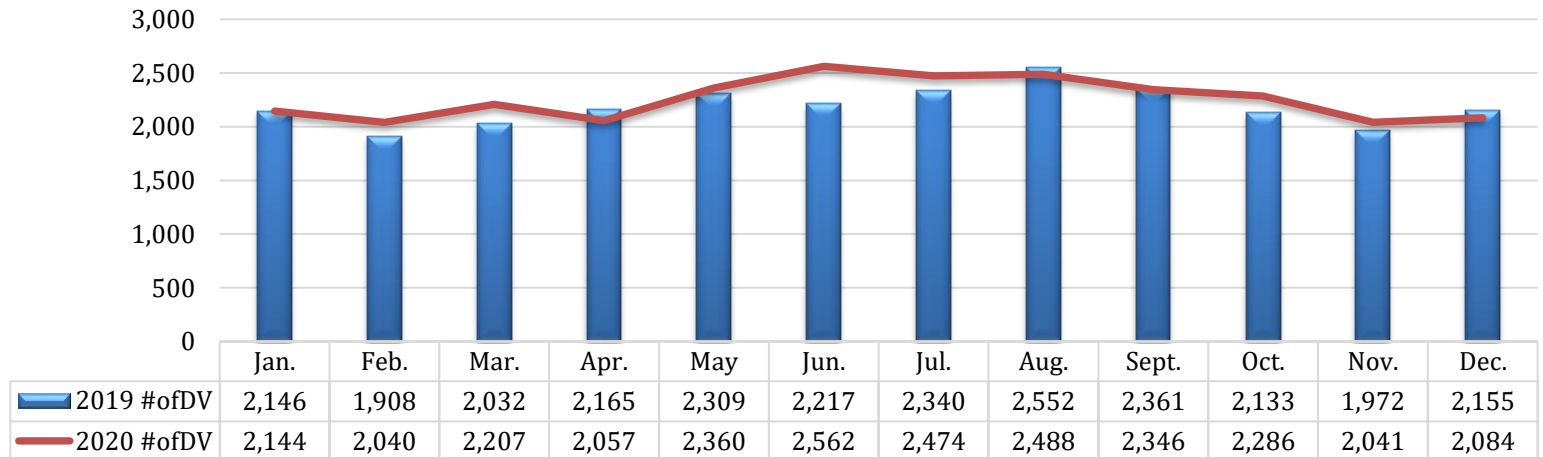
Apart from 2015 to 2016, Oklahoma has seen a gradual increase in reported domestic abuse incidents, with each year since 2017 seeing a one to three percent increase as shown in Figure 1. The largest increase (5.5%) occurred from 2017 to 2018, and when comparing 2020 to 2015, domestic abuse has increased by 11.2%.

Figure 1: Total Domestic Abuse Incidents by Year



The SAC also analyzed the change in the number of incidents reported monthly from 2019-2020. As seen in Figure 2, there was little change noted in a month to month comparison between 2019 and 2020 despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The SAC found that five months experienced a decrease from 0.06 – 5.0%, with the largest decrease in April. The remaining seven months had an increase from 2.2-15.5%, with the largest increase in June when Oklahoma removed the majority of its social distancing measures.

Figure 2: Comparison of Domestic Abuse 2019-2020



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To collect, analyze, and disseminate criminal justice research to educate and assist law enforcement and the citizens of Oklahoma.

Signs of Abuse

Domestic abuse affects millions of Americans annually, and thousands of Oklahomans suffer from it every year. Domestic abuse is not limited to physical abuse and can take on a variety of forms. The CDC estimates that about [1 in 4 women and 1 in 10 men](#) have experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner. Some or all of the following actions could indicate someone is in a domestic abusive relationship.

Some signs are:

- Obvious injuries
- Unsuitable attire
- Emotional distress
- Minimization of injuries or harassment
- Changes in job performance

If a friend, family member, or colleague regularly has any of the above signs, it is possible they are a victim of domestic abuse and may need help. For more information on the possible signs of domestic abuse, visit the [Domestic Violence Hotline's Warning Signs of Abuse](#) or [DomesticShelters.org](#). A comprehensive document on the definitions of domestic abuse, as well as information on resources and legal assistance can be found in the [Oklahoma Domestic Violence Awareness Guide](#).

Ways to Provide Support

DomesticShelters.org provides the following advice for those who suspect abuse and want to provide assistance:

- Be kind, but direct
- Avoid assumptions and accusations
- Ask about signs of abuse observed
- Offer to listen
- Help locate resources

The Oklahoma Coalition Against Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault (OCADVSA) and the National Domestic Violence Hotline both provide points of contact for victims looking to leave their abusers and resources on how to protect children and pets. OCADVSA provides a list of shelters and crisis centers in a [public directory](#) and also presents [events and training seminars](#) for victim service advocates. The National Domestic Violence Hotline provides a 24/hr. service for victims looking to get help, tools for creating a safety plan, and resources for those looking to get involved in victim advocacy.

National Domestic Violence Hotline:
1.800-799-7233 (SAFE),
<https://www.thehotline.org/>

OCADVSA:
1-800-522-7233 (SAFE)
<https://www.ocadvsa.org/>



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