

City of Chicago

Domestic Violence Help Line

2009 Report Highlights

Help Line Overview

The City of Chicago, Domestic Violence Help Line is a 24 hour, 7 days a week, toll-free telephone service that functions as a clearinghouse to domestic violence (DV) services in Chicago and throughout Illinois. The service is confidential and multi-lingual.

Established in 1998, the Help Line (HL) is a service of the City of Chicago, Department of Family and Support Services, Division on Domestic Violence and operates under a partnership agreement with the Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women's Network.

Help Line advocates provide callers with general domestic violence information, safety planning support, and referrals/linkages to domestic violence agencies. Advocates have access to over 400 agencies that provide a variety of domestic violence services in Chicago and throughout Illinois.

All Domestic Violence Calls 2009

32,336 Calls to the Help Line in 2009

75% DV related calls (*victim service, information, link-only*)

66% DV victim related calls (*victim service, link-only*)

Calls were classified as requests for DV victim services (34%), DV information (9%), such as materials or volunteer/internship opportunities, or to be linked (32%) with a previously identified agency for repeat callers. Other calls to the HL included non-DV information requests (5%) for housing or non-emergency services, administrative calls (15%), such as a hang-up, wrong number, or call transfer, and calls that were missing information (5%) used for classification.

9,650 Comprehensive Victim Calls for Service

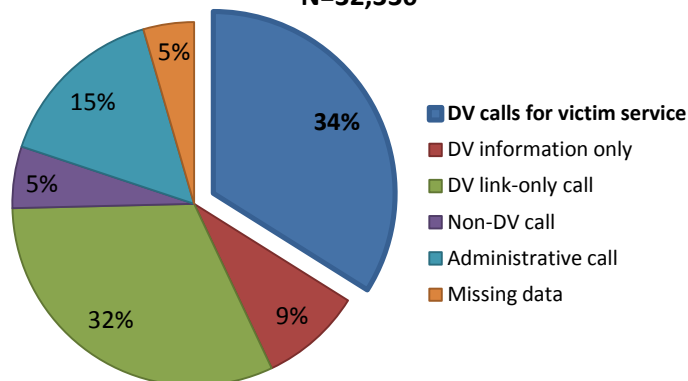
Calls for domestic violence victim services could be placed by any caller seeking service referral/information on behalf of a victim. 9,650 of those calls included the collection of comprehensive information about a victim including characteristics, violence experience, service requests, and needs.

➤ *Victim Characteristics*

Victims were mostly female (92%) between 12-90 years old (average 34). More than half of victims were Black (52%), followed by White (24%) and Hispanic (20%).

Classification of All Help Line Calls

N=32,336



Almost half of victims had dependent children 0-18 years of age, 20% were young children 0-5 years of age, and 7% of victims were pregnant when a call was made to the Help Line.

Victim service calls were primarily taken in English (94%), followed by Spanish (6%) language calls. Calls were also taken in Polish, Urdu, Hindi, Mandarin Chinese, Russian, French, Japanese, and Serbian.

➤ *Victim Violence Experience*

Most victims experienced multiple forms of abuse. 75% were both physically and emotionally abused and 14% were physically, sexually, and emotionally abused. Only 15% of victims had an order of protection against their abuser when they called the Help Line.

Abusers were mostly male (89%), between 11-87 years old with an average age of 36. More than half of abusers were Black (57%) followed by White (22%) and Hispanic (18%). Most abusers were an intimate partner (90%), followed by a family or household member (10%).

➤ *Referral Source*

The majority of victim service callers reported that the police (57%) referred them to the Help Line, followed by domestic violence/social service agencies (22%).

➤ *Service Needs*

Callers mostly (97%) requested one service (range 1-4). Shelter (41%) and legal support (23%) were the most frequent service requests.