

***Domestic Violence Help Line  
1-877-TO END DV  
1-877-863-6338  
1-877-863-6339 (TTY)***

***2011***

**CITY OF CHICAGO**  
***DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
HELP LINE REPORT***



**City of Chicago  
Department of Family and Support Services  
Division on Domestic Violence**

## **Domestic Violence Help Line**

The Domestic Violence Help Line is a 24 hour-7 days a week, toll-free telephone service that functions as a clearinghouse to domestic violence services in Chicago and throughout Illinois. The service is confidential, multi-lingual, and accepts inquiries from all members of the public.

The Domestic Violence Help Line was established in 1998 and is a service of the City of Chicago, Department of Family and Support Services, Division on Domestic Violence. It is a partnership with the Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women's Network. The Help Line staff complete a state required 40-hour domestic violence training program before they interact with callers.

These domestic violence workers, called VIRAs (Victim Information and Referral Advocates), determine callers' needs, provide support that can include general domestic violence information, safety planning, and referrals to domestic violence services, and can complete a 3-way transfer to link a caller and a domestic violence service agency. Referrals are made to over 400 agencies that provide domestic violence services in Chicago and throughout Illinois. VIRAs can assist callers in over 170 languages via the Language Line.

## **The 2011 Report**

The Domestic Violence Help Line Report presents a summary of information collected for all calls taken by the Help Line during the calendar year 2011. In addition, characteristics of calls for victim services and characteristics of domestic violence victims are summarized by two statewide classifications. The first is a 3-area classification which displays call counts from a) Chicago; b) Cook County, excluding Chicago; and c) Illinois, excluding Cook County. The second classification displays calls counts for a 5-region cluster of counties.<sup>1</sup>

Information contained in this report reflects Help Line callers and their service needs. It is not an indicator of prevalence or incidents of domestic violence in Chicago or Illinois. It is intended as a resource to inform the community about victims of domestic violence and the role of the Help Line in connecting victims with service and support.

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<sup>1</sup> County clusters are based on Illinois Department of Human Services classification. See Glossary for counties that correspond with each region.

## **Data Source and Methods**

The Domestic Violence Help Line operates on multiple databases that allow VIRAs to record case specific information about a call, a victim, as well as search for domestic violence service provider programs in Chicago and Illinois. These databases are a unique and comprehensive data source for examining characteristics, referral source, and/or service needs of victims of domestic violence in Chicago and throughout Illinois. Each database can be analyzed separately and/or linked to facilitate a comprehensive analysis of the experiences of domestic violence victims. Descriptive analysis of this data occurs annually in the Domestic Violence Help Line Report. Unidentified or missing data are excluded from total counts. This is common in survey research methodology involving sensitive subject matter and occurs when callers decline or are unable to respond to questions.

## **Other Reports and Publications**

Visit the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS), Division on Domestic Violence website - [www.cityofchicago.org/domesticviolence](http://www.cityofchicago.org/domesticviolence) - to access the current and other Help Line Reports.

This Domestic Violence Help Line Report 2011 was prepared by Ebony M. Dill, Coordinator of Research and Evaluation of the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services. Report guidance and contributions were provided by:

Jennifer Welch	Chicago Department of Family and Support Services
Gwyn Kaitis	Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women's Network
Dawn Dalton	Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women's Network
Gregg Kedzior	Chicago Police Department
Jennifer Hiselman	Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

## Summary of Findings

The Domestic Violence Help Line Report presents a summary of information collected for all calls taken by the Help Line during the calendar year 2011. Below is a summary of selected findings for all calls and victim calls.

### *All calls summary:*

- ❖ Over 300,000 callers have received information and support from the Help Line since inception in 1998.
- ❖ A total of 26,063 calls were received in 2011.
- ❖ On average, over 2,000 calls were answered each month in 2011.
- ❖ Most callers to the Help Line were from Chicago (70%).

### *Victim calls summary:*

- ❖ A total of 8,108 victim service calls were received in 2011.
- ❖ Victims (86%) represented the majority of callers seeking victim services.
- ❖ Victims were on average: 34 years of age; female (93%); Black (51%); and spoke English (91%).
- ❖ Nearly half (46%) of domestic violence victims were parents of a minor child 0-18 years of age and nearly a quarter (21%) had a minor child 0-5 years of age.
- ❖ Victims were most often abused by an intimate partner (90%) who was living with them (31%), a spouse (30%) or an ex-partner or ex-spouse (28%); victims reported both emotional (99%) and physical (90%) forms of abuse; and 15% had an order of protection against their abuser at the time they called the Help Line.
- ❖ Victims were referred to the Help Line by the police (62%) and were seeking shelter (39%) and legal services (26%).

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*A woman called and said that she can't take it anymore. She is abused and feeling suicidal. Caller contacted the Help Line from a gas station. The VIRA called 911 and stayed on the line with the caller until the fire department arrived.*

*August Call Summary*

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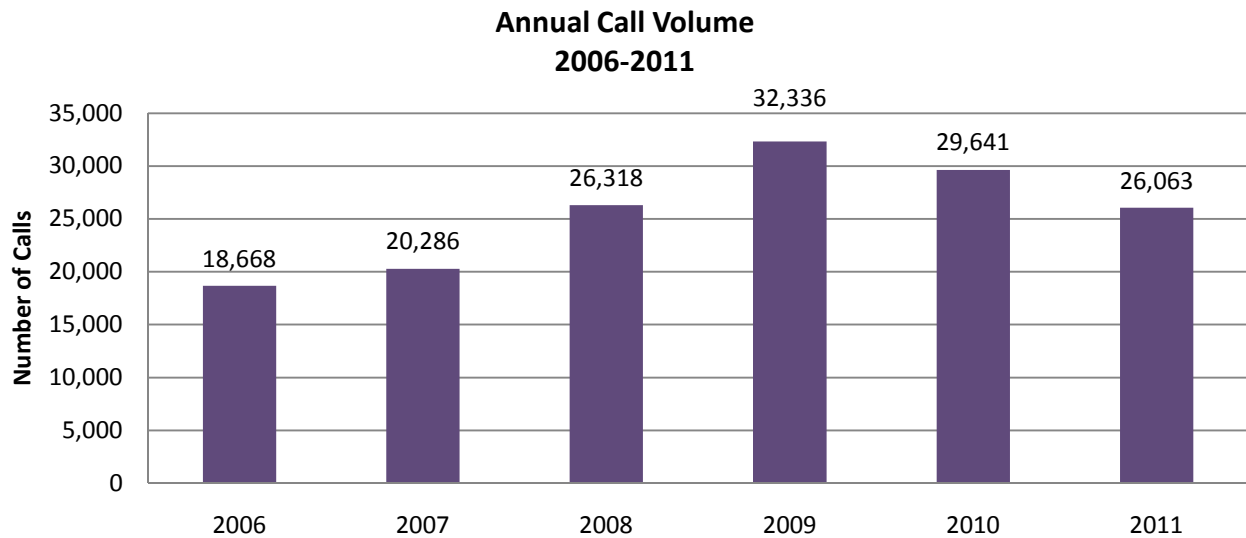
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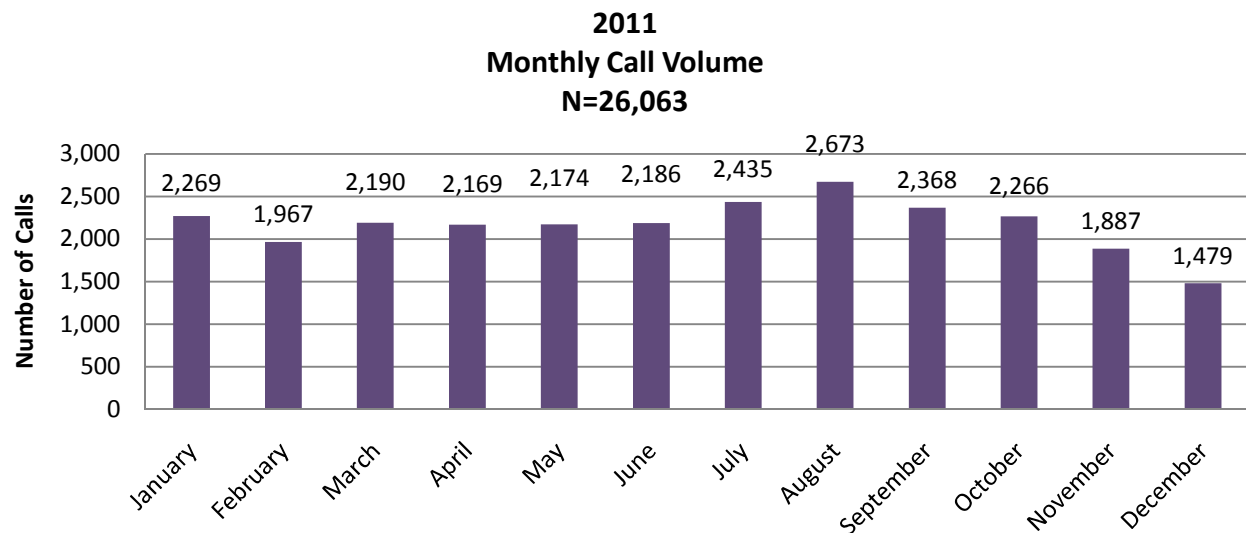
**SUMMARY**

# *Total Call Volume*

# Total Call Volume



- ❖ The Domestic Violence Help Line answered and tracked 26,063 calls in 2011.
- ❖ Since inception in 1998, the Help Line has answered over 300,000 calls.<sup>2</sup>

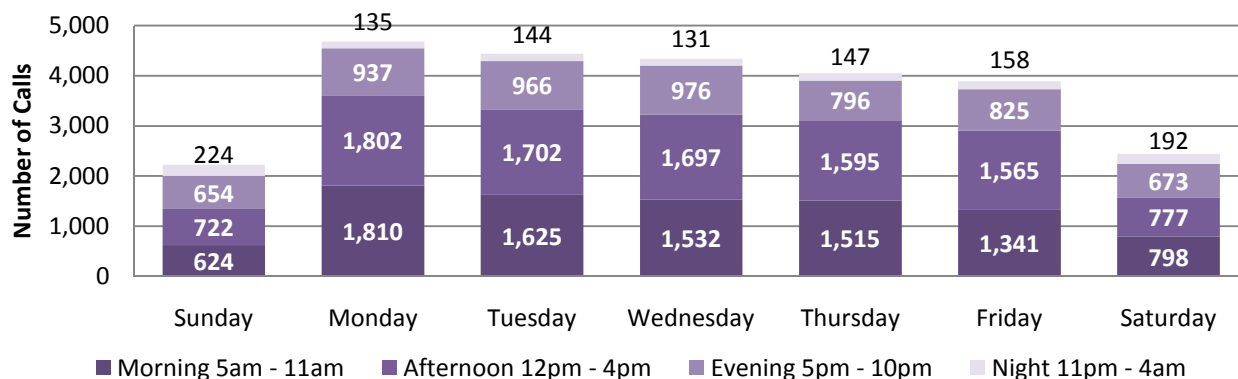


- ❖ The Help Line answered an average of 2,172 calls per month in 2011.
- ❖ Monthly call volume was highest in August (n=2,673).
- ❖ The fewest number of calls were received in December (n=1,479).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Call volume has increased 5%, on average, since inception. The dramatic increase in calls after 2007 and subsequent downturn in 2009 coincide with US economic recession and recovery forecasts. It is speculated that annual call volume may return to normal levels as the economic stabilizes.

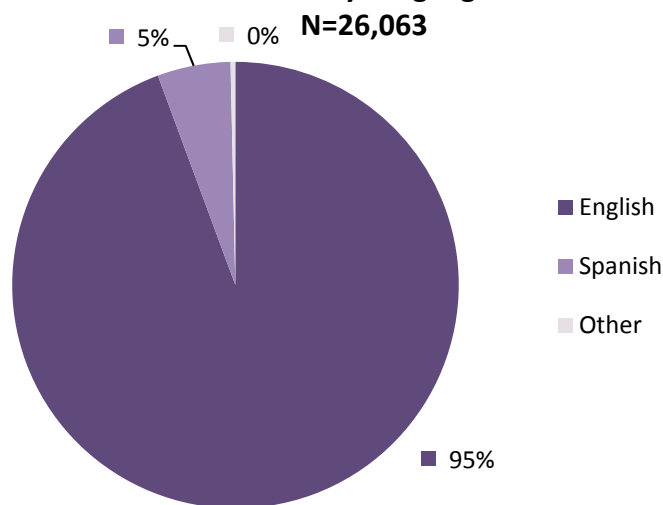
<sup>3</sup> The Help Line experienced electrical service interruptions in December 2011.

### Daily Call Volume N=26,063



- ❖ Help Line call takers answered an average of 71 calls per day in 2011.
- ❖ Daily call volume was highest on Mondays (n=4,684) and afternoons between the hours of 12 noon and 4 pm (n=9,860).

### Call Volume by Language Used N=26,063



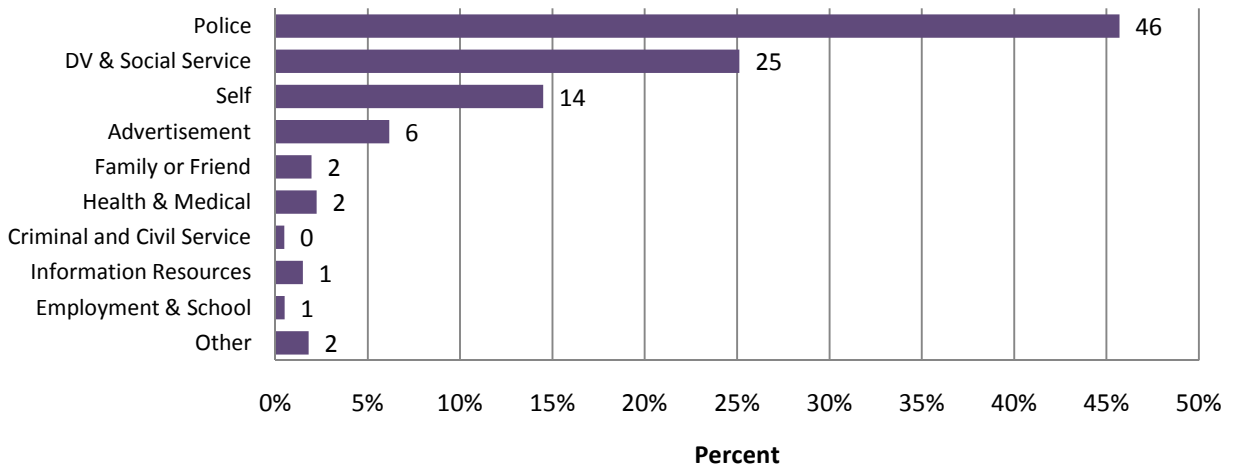
- ❖ Calls were primarily conducted in English (95%) followed by Spanish (5%).
- ❖ Less than half a percent of calls were taken in the following other languages, in order of frequency: Polish, Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, Bosnian, TTY,<sup>4</sup> Urdu, Hindi, Vietnamese, Korean, French, Japanese, Other Chinese, Russian, Punjabi, Cambodian, Creole, Filipino, and Other.

<sup>4</sup> A TTY is a special device that lets people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-impaired use the telephone to communicate, by allowing them to type messages.



### Call Volume by Referral Sources

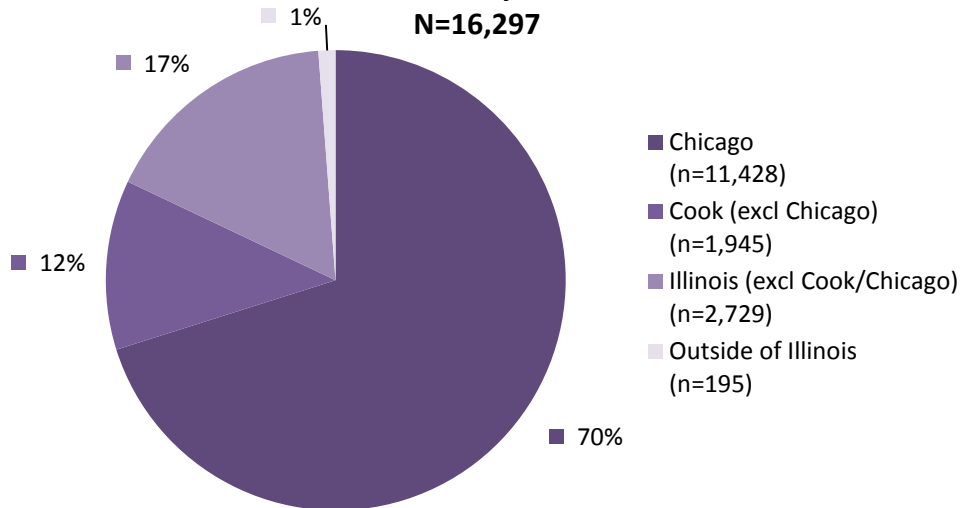
N=12,153



- ❖ Referral source information was collected for 47% of the total call volume that resulted in service, information, and/or transfer.
- ❖ Callers most often learned about the Help Line from the police (46%), followed by domestic violence and social service providers (25%) and self referrals (14%).

### Call Volume by Location

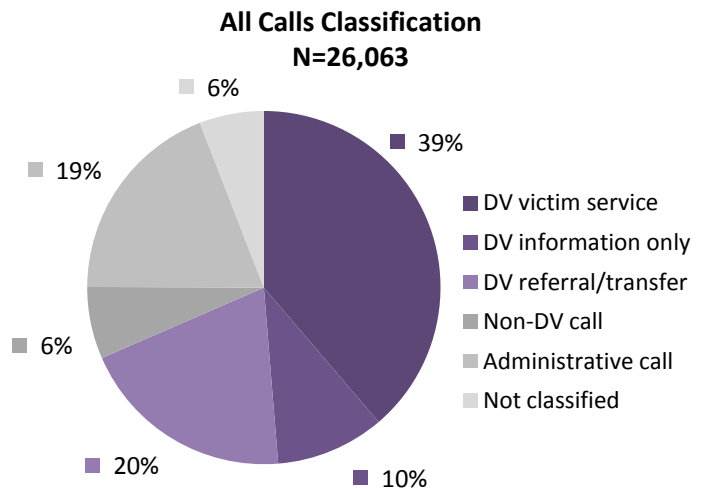
N=16,297



- ❖ Location information was relevant and collected for 63% of the total call volume that resulted in service and/or transfer support.
- ❖ The majority of callers to the Help Line were from Chicago (70%).

## Classification of Calls

The total volume of calls to the Help Line was grouped to describe the type of service provided to callers. The following classifications depict calls for: 1) domestic violence (DV) victim services; 2) domestic violence information only; 3) transfers to service providers for repeat victim callers; 4) non-DV related support; or 5) administrative support. The remaining calls received were not classified because they were missing information.<sup>5</sup>



Nearly 70% of callers were seeking domestic violence service, information, or transfer support.

- ❖ Callers seeking domestic violence victim services (39%) provided information that is used to examine victims' characteristics, service needs, and to make appropriate service referrals.
- ❖ Calls for domestic violence information only (10%) included: requests for general information about domestic violence; requests for the total number of shelter beds or available shelter beds; individuals checking the phone number; requests for information about the Help Line; requests to make donations to shelters, victims, or of cell phones; requests for a list of DV referral agencies, DV materials, volunteer or internship opportunities; or for educators to make DV presentations.
- ❖ Callers receiving transfer services (20%) were directly linked to a service provider. These callers were victims who had previously called the Help Line and were invited to call back for new/additional information or when they needed to be (re-)connected with an agency. VIRAs facilitate a 3-way telephone linkage with these callers and the provider agency.

The following sections of this report summarize characteristics and violence experiences for victim service calls only where a zip code or county designation was provided. This information is displayed primarily in graphs to aid area comparisons and in aggregate summaries for the total location, with attention to notable area specific distinctions.

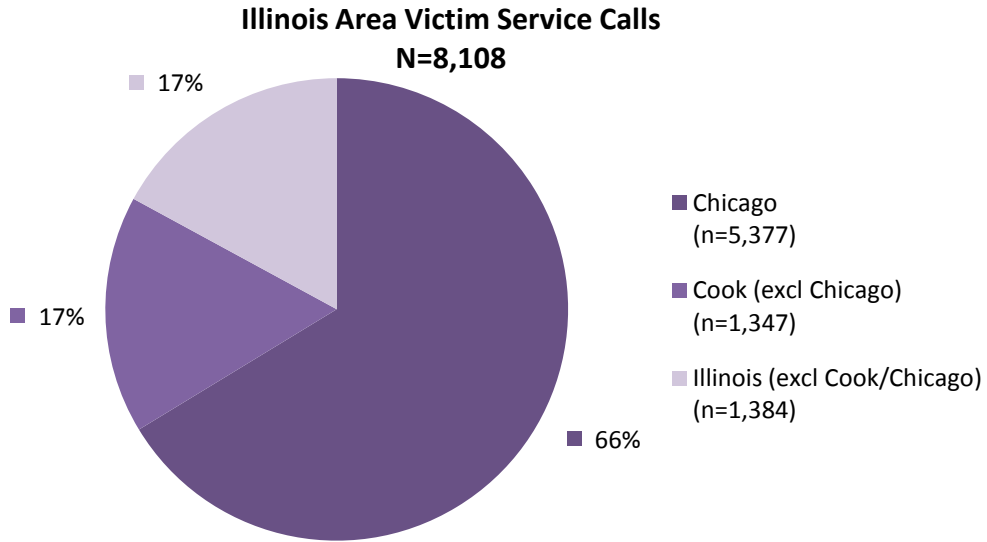
<sup>5</sup> It is not uncommon that survey research collecting sensitive subject matter will include missing data. This occurs when callers decline or are unable to respond to questions.

**CHICAGO  
COOK COUNTY  
ILLINOIS**

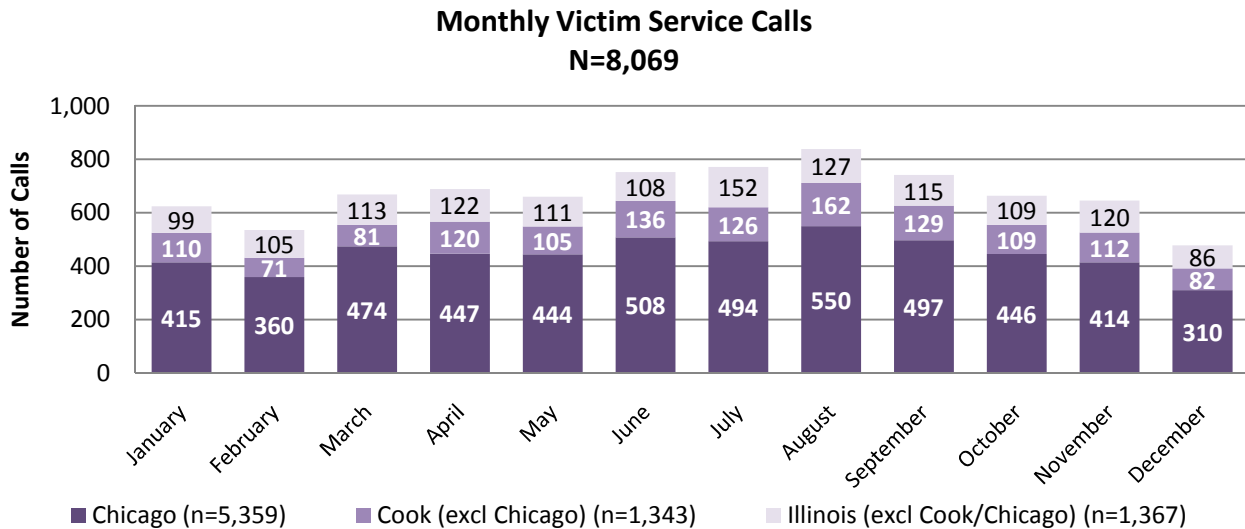
*Service Calls*

## Victim Service Calls - Call Volume

Victim characteristic and violence experience information was collected for 31% of the total call volume that requested victim service information.



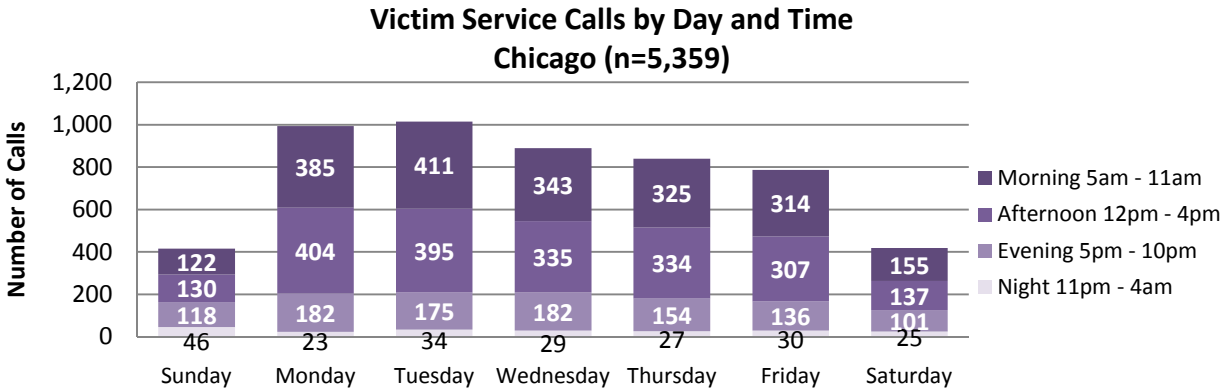
- ❖ The majority of victim service callers to the Help Line were from Chicago (66%) and 34% were from Illinois locations outside of Chicago.



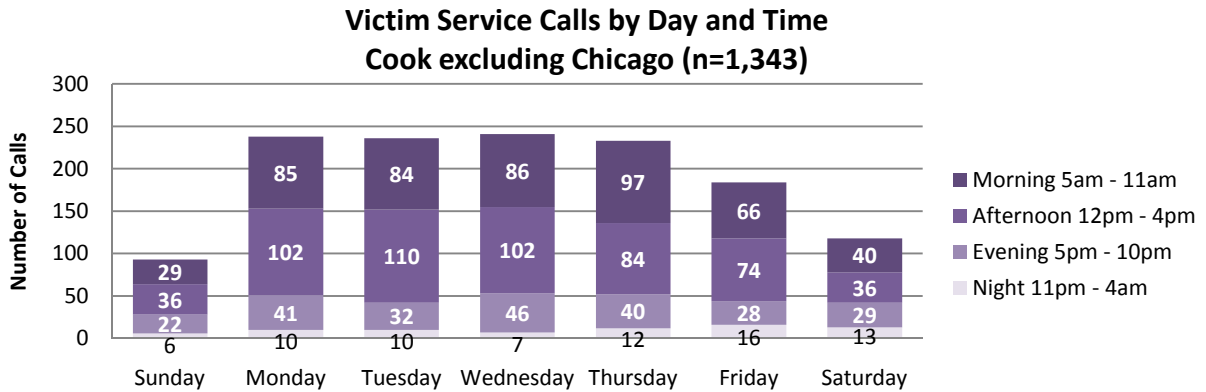
- ❖ The Help Line answered an average of 672 victim service calls per month in 2011.
- ❖ The highest volume of victim service calls were in August (n=839).
- ❖ The fewest number of calls were received in December (n=478).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The Help Line experienced electrical service interruptions in December 2011.

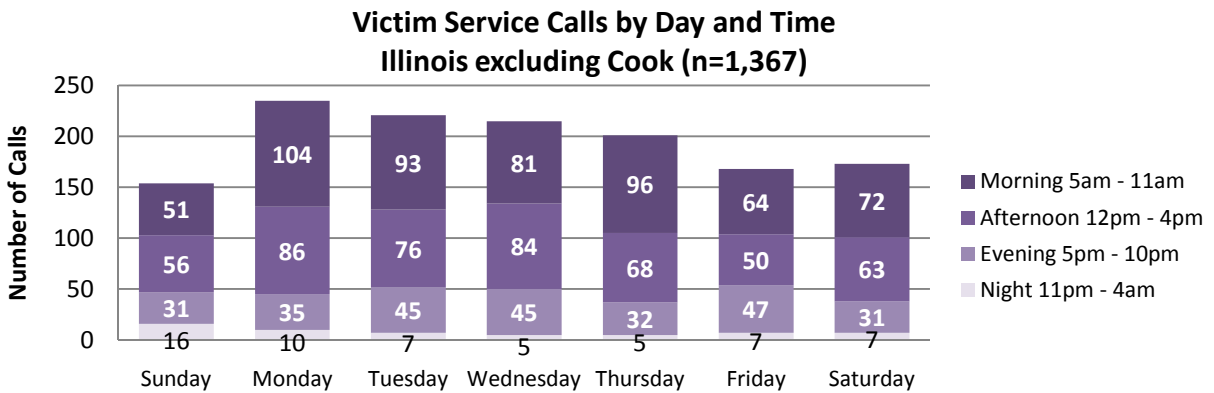
- ❖ Statewide, the Help Line answered an average of 22 victim service calls per day.



- ❖ On average, 15 victim service calls were answered daily from Chicago callers.
- ❖ Chicago's daily call volume was highest on Tuesdays (n=1,015) and in the mornings (n=2,055).

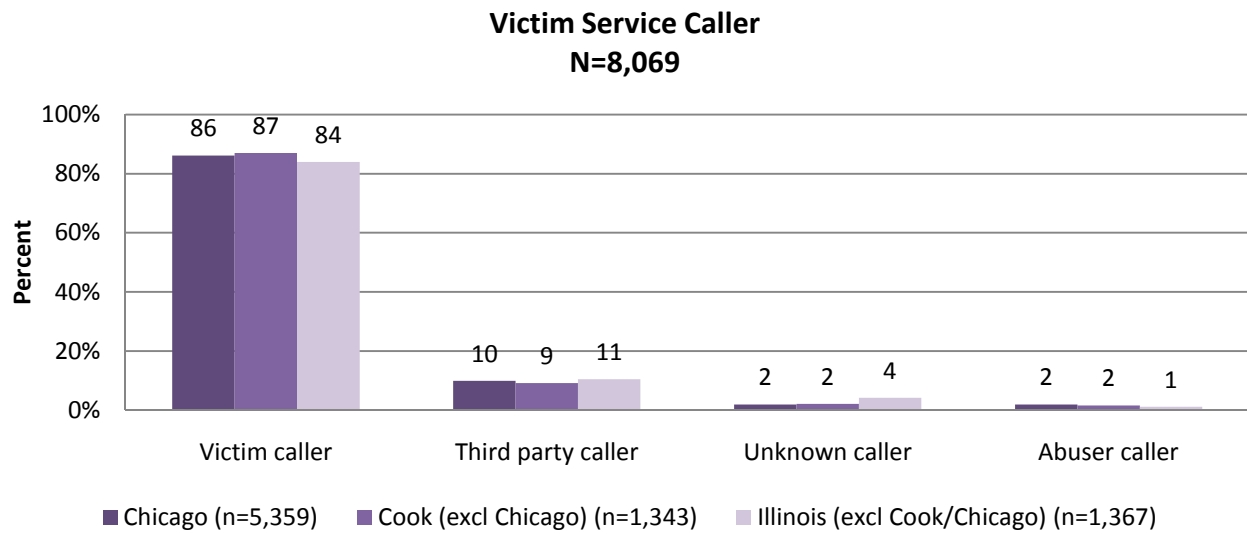


- ❖ On average, 4 victim service calls were answered daily from Cook County callers.
- ❖ Cook County's daily call volume was highest on Wednesdays (n=241) and in the afternoons (n=544).

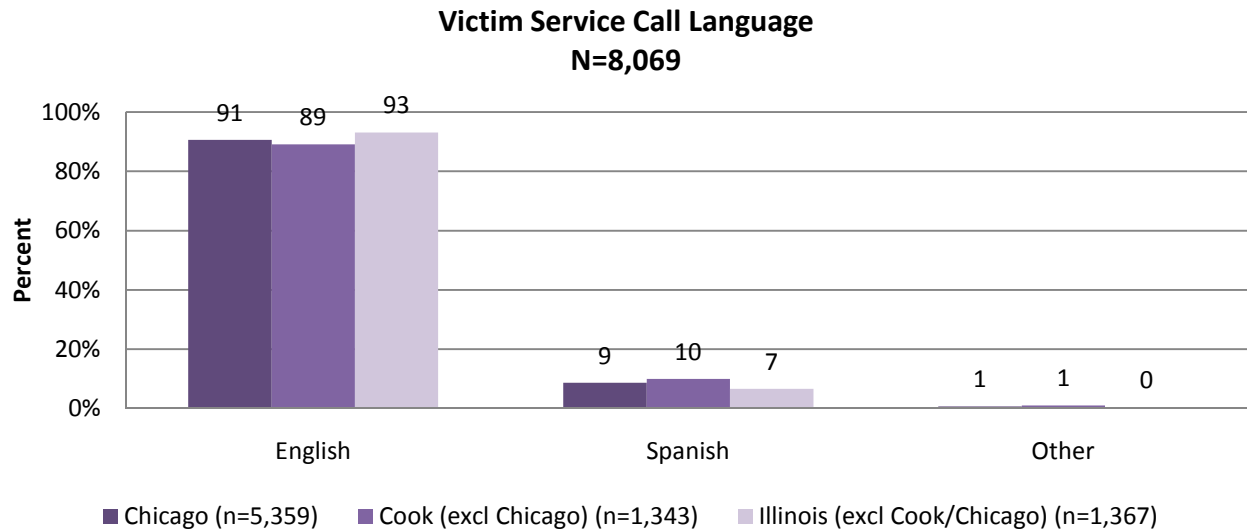


- ❖ On average, 4 victim service calls were answered daily from Illinois callers outside of Cook County.
- ❖ Illinois call volume was highest on Mondays (n=235) and in the mornings (n=561).

## Victim Service Calls – Victim Characteristics



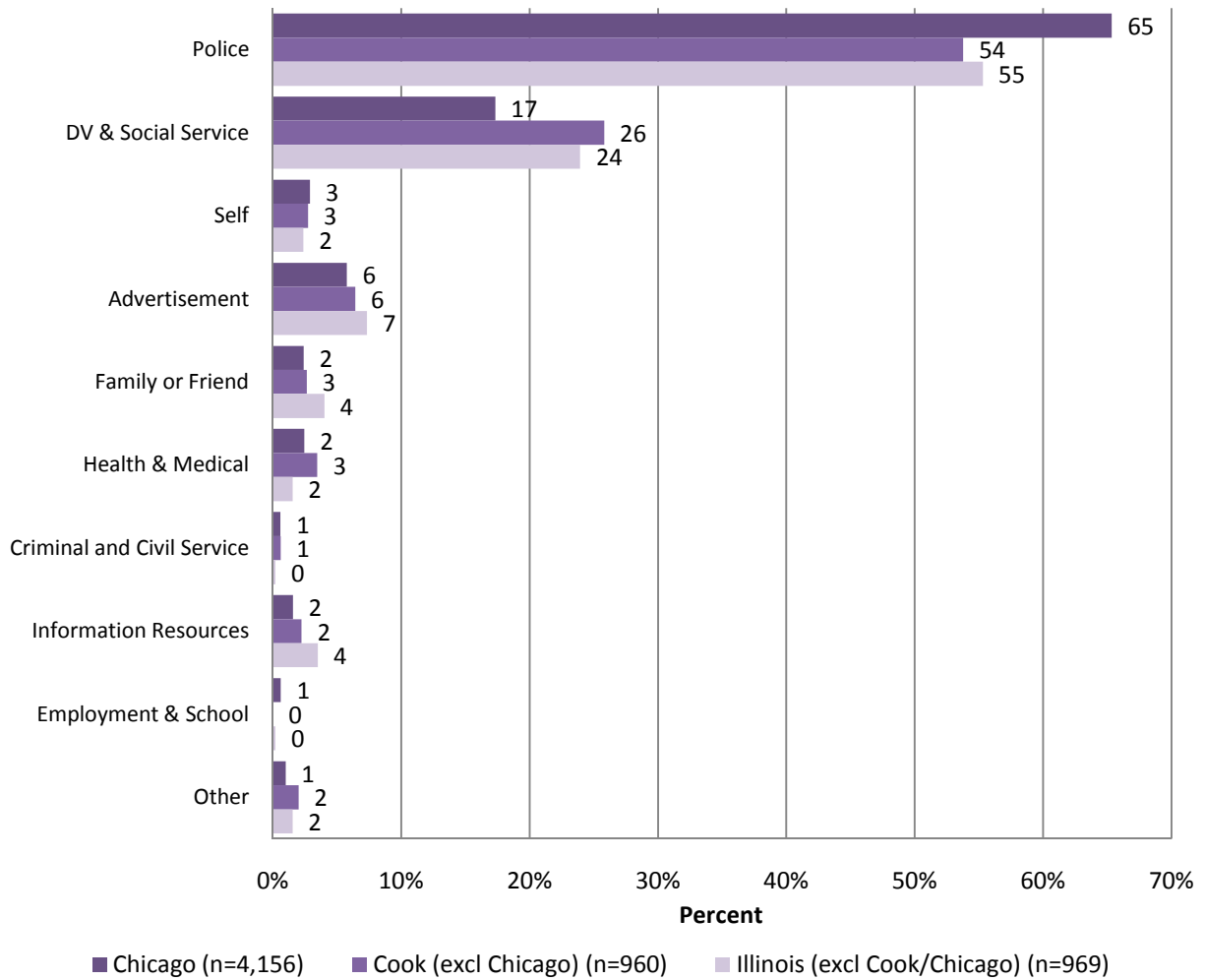
- ❖ Calls for victim services were most often placed by victims themselves (86%).
- ❖ Abusers called the Help Line for themselves or for a victim and represented 2% of service callers.<sup>7</sup>



- ❖ Victim service calls were primarily conducted in English (91%) followed by Spanish (8%).
- ❖ One percent of victim service calls were taken in the following other languages, in order of frequency: Polish, Mandarin Chinese, Arabic, TTY, Bosnian, Vietnamese, Japanese, Urdu, Hindi, French, and Cambodian.

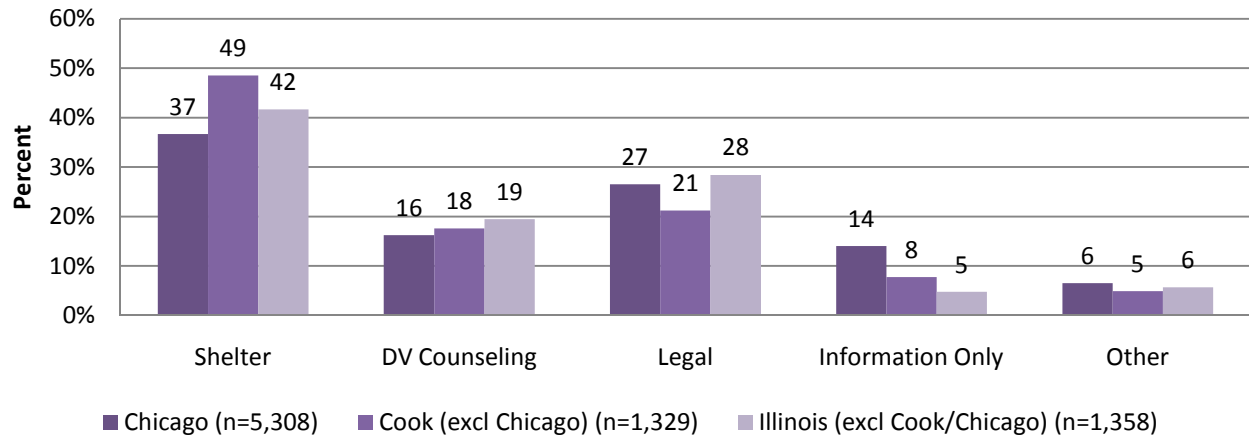
<sup>7</sup> Abuser service callers sought information about partner abuse intervention programs (40%), legal advocacy (15%), and information only (11%).

**Victim Service Calls by Referral Source**  
**N=6,085**



- ❖ Victim service callers most often identified the police (62%) as their referral source to the Help Line followed by domestic violence and social service providers (20%).
- ❖ Chicago (65%) victim service callers identified the police as the referral source more often than Cook (54%) and Illinois (55%) callers.

**Victim Service Requests**  
N=7,995



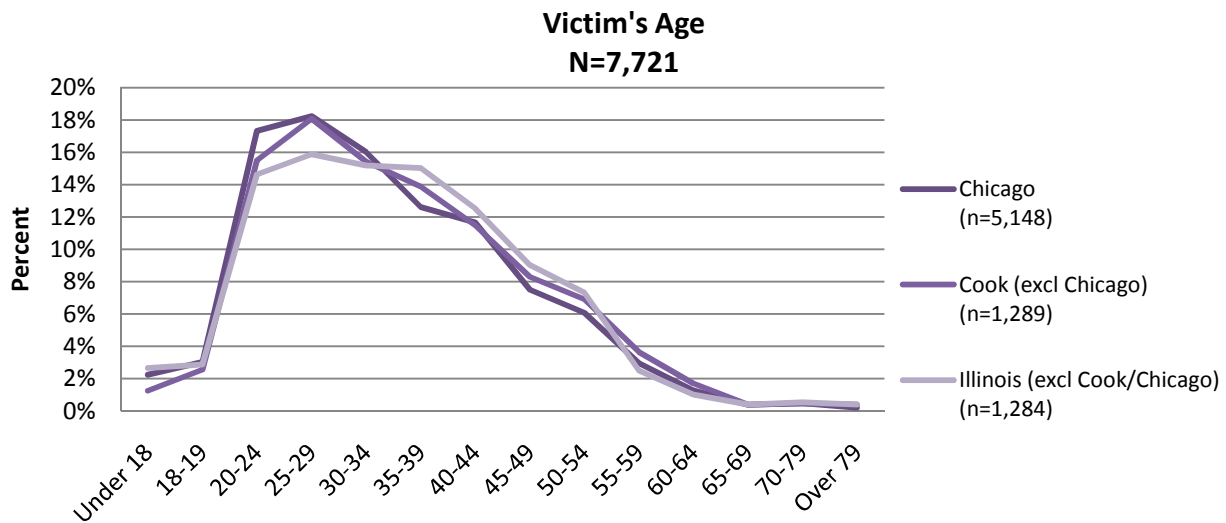
- ❖ Most victim service callers were looking for shelter (39%) and legal (26%) services.
- ❖ Victim service callers requested between 1 and 6 services.
- ❖ More Cook (48%) and Illinois (42%) victim service callers requested shelter than Chicago (37%) callers.
- ❖ More Chicago (27%) and Illinois (28%) victim service callers requested legal services than Cook (21%) callers.

*A caller stated that she is disabled and was sexually assaulted by a man she once considered a friend. She is frightened to remain in her apartment. She was provided with information about the Safe Housing Act and the possibility of breaking her lease. She was linked to the Women with Disabilities program for counseling and advocacy.*

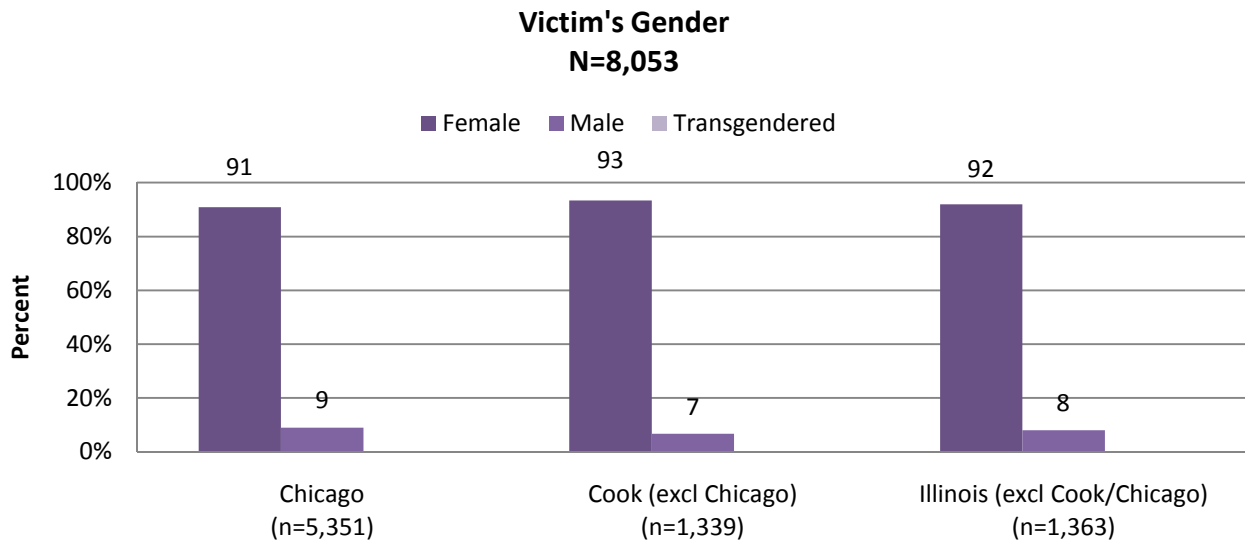
*March 2011*



## Victim Service Calls – Victims’ Characteristics



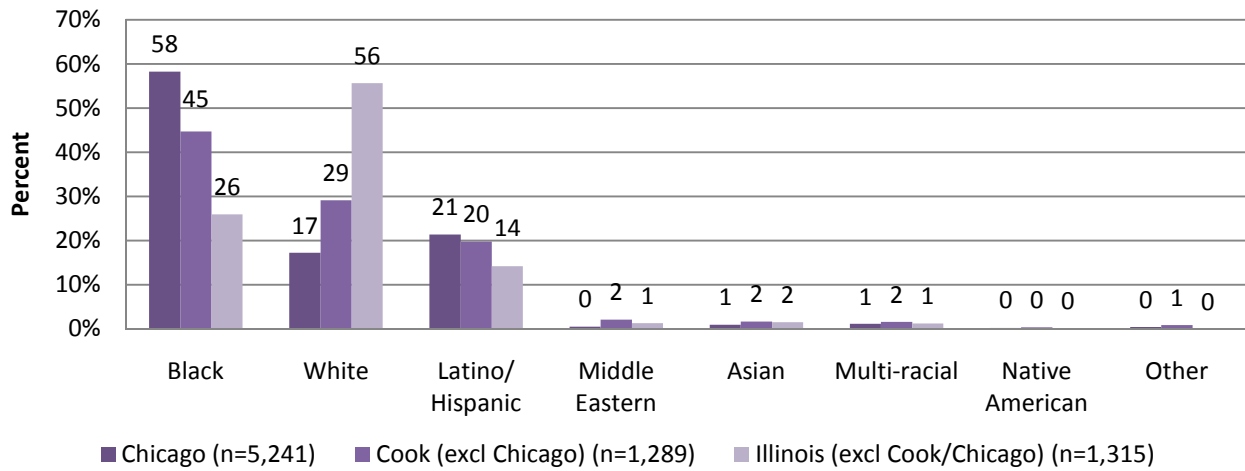
- ❖ The average age of victims was 34 (median=33).
- ❖ Two (2%) percent of victims were 17 and younger and 5% were 55 and older.
- ❖ Victims’ ages ranged between 1 and 93 years of age.<sup>8</sup>
- ❖ Chicago (median=32) victims were younger than Cook and Illinois victims (median=34).



- ❖ Domestic violence victims were mostly female (93%).
- ❖ Three (3) victims were identified as transgendered.

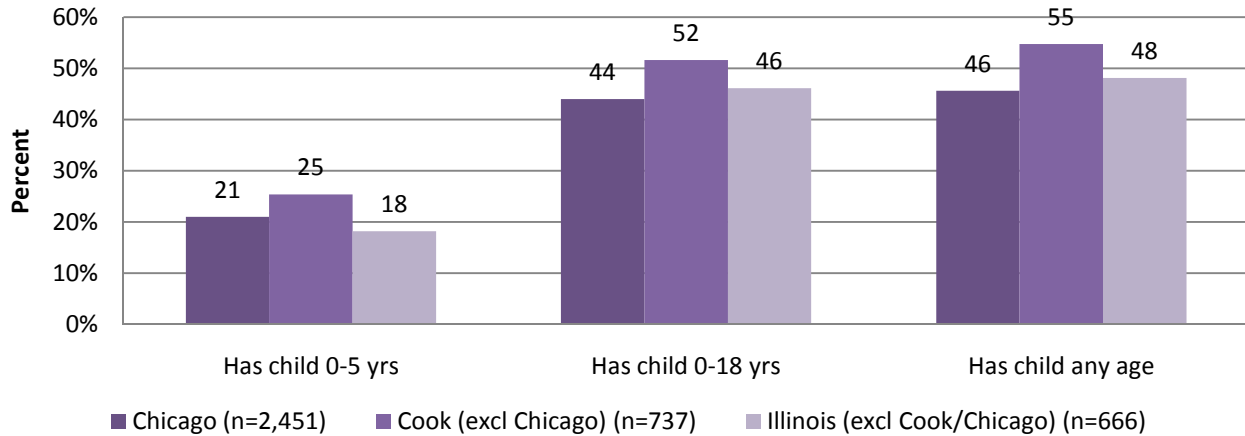
<sup>8</sup> Callers can report information for victims of any age. Staff and contracted delegates of the City of Chicago who serve children and their families are mandated reporters and are legally required to report cases of suspected child abuse.

**Victim's Race/Ethnicity  
N=7,845**



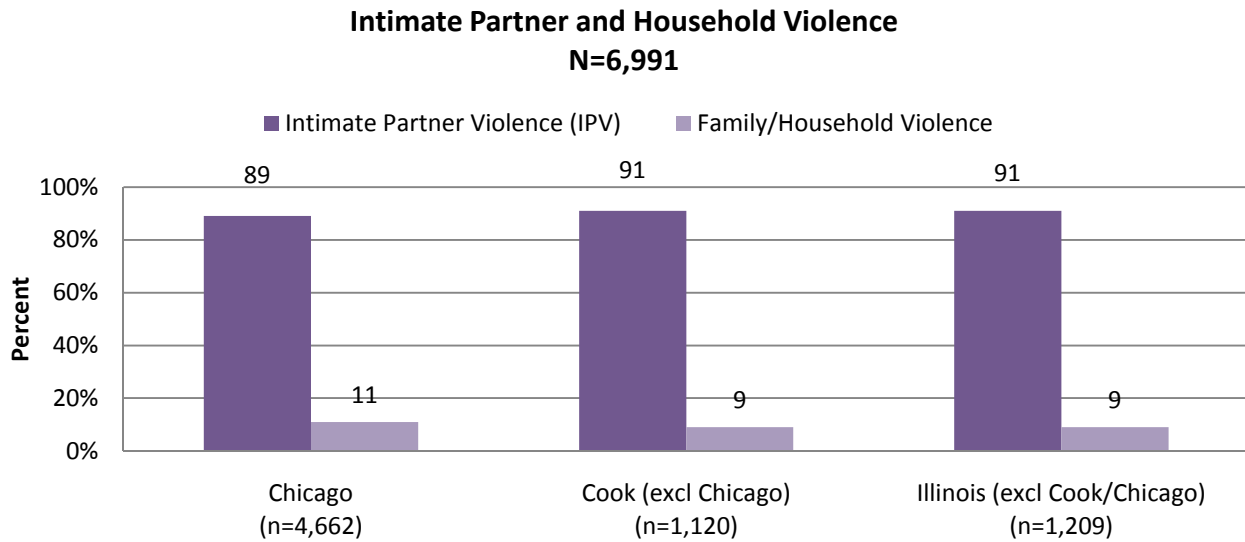
- ❖ More than half of all victims were Black (51%), followed by White (26%) and Hispanic (20%).
- ❖ Victims were mostly Black (58 %) in Chicago, Black (45%) and White (29%) in Cook, and mostly White (56%) in Illinois.

**Parentage  
N=3,854**



- ❖ Forty-eight percent of all victims reported information for a dependent, of any age, in their care (range=0-41).
- ❖ Twenty-one percent (21%) of victims had a minor child 0-5 years of age which is a subset of the 46% that had a minor child 0-18 years of age.
- ❖ Victims had an average of 2 children in their care, reported having between 1-14 children, and the average age of a minor child between 0-18 years of age was 7 (median=6).
- ❖ Six percent (6%) of victims were pregnant at the time a call was made to the Help Line.

## Victim Service Calls – Victims’ Violence Experience

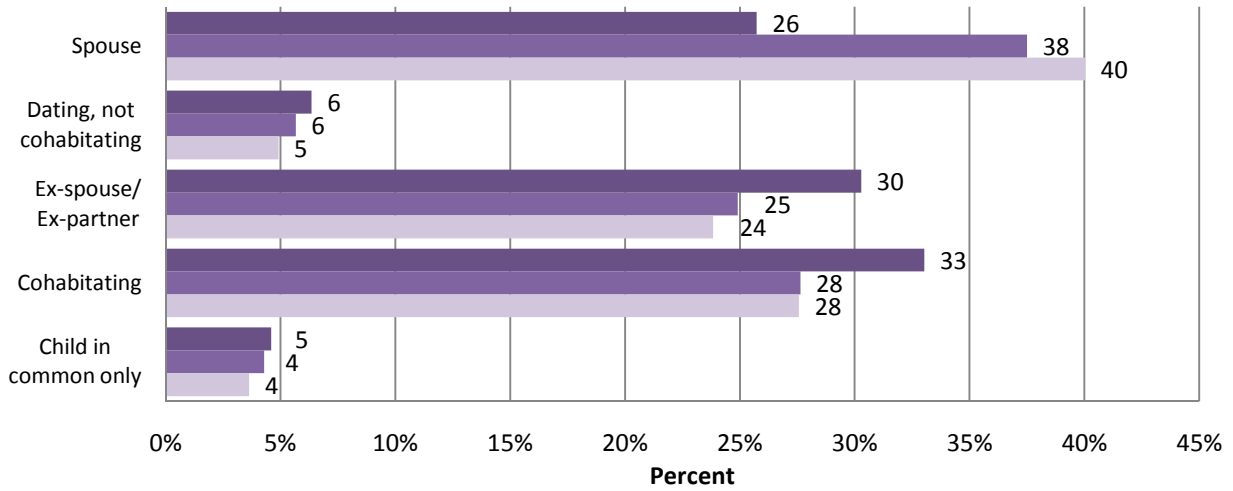


❖ Victims were abused by an intimate partner (90%) or a family/household member (10%).

*A 35 year old caller with 2 young children said that she needed to get away from her mother’s home. Her mother takes all of her money and will not allow her to leave the house. Caller was linked to a counselor.*

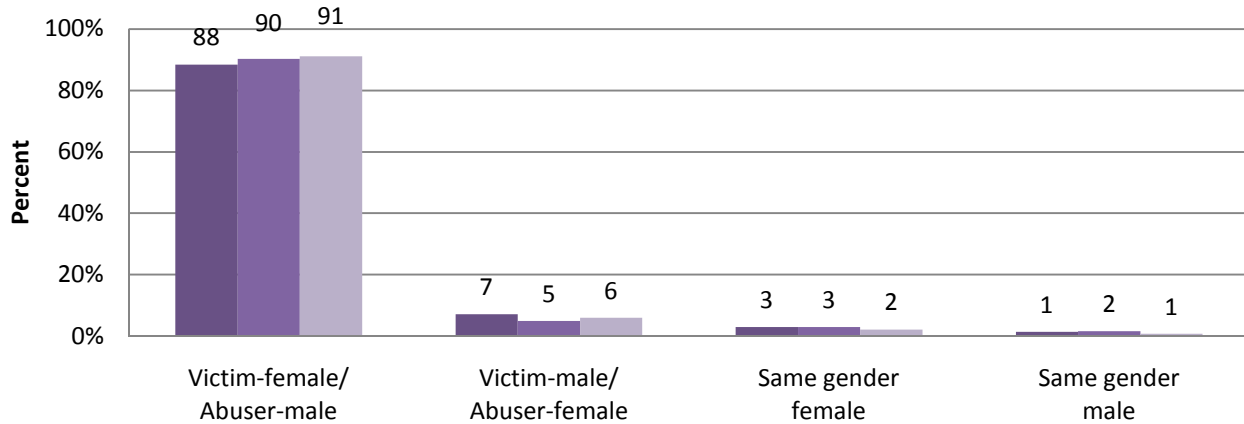
*April 2011*

**Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Abuser**  
N=6,277



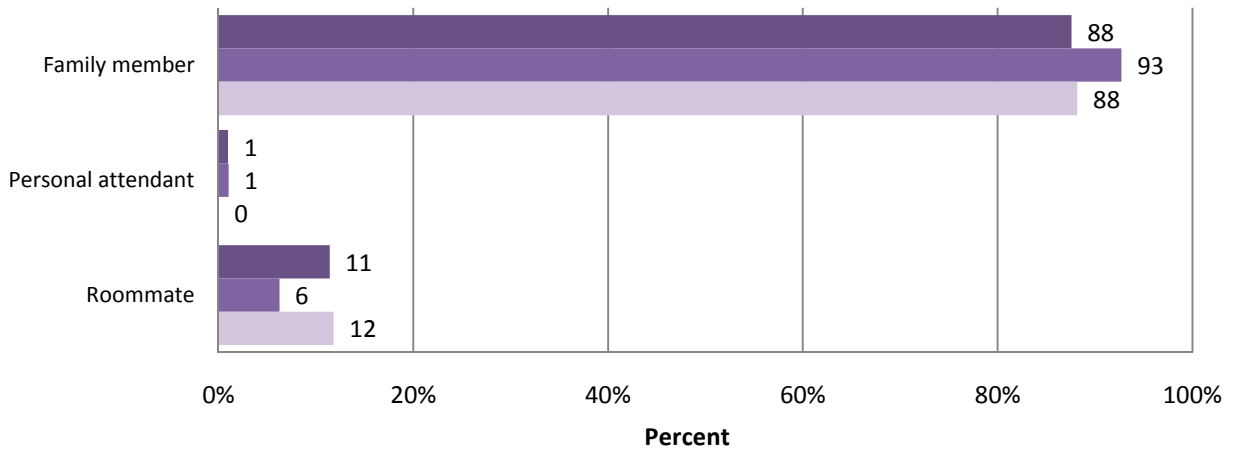
- ❖ Victims of intimate partner violence were most often abused by a cohabitating partner (31%), spouse (30%), or an ex-spouse/ex-partner (28%).
- ❖ Intimate partner violence victims in Cook (38%) and Illinois (40%) were abused by a spouse more often than Chicago victims (26%) who were more often abused by a cohabitating partner (33%).

**Intimate Partner Violence Victim/Abuser Gender**  
N=6,277



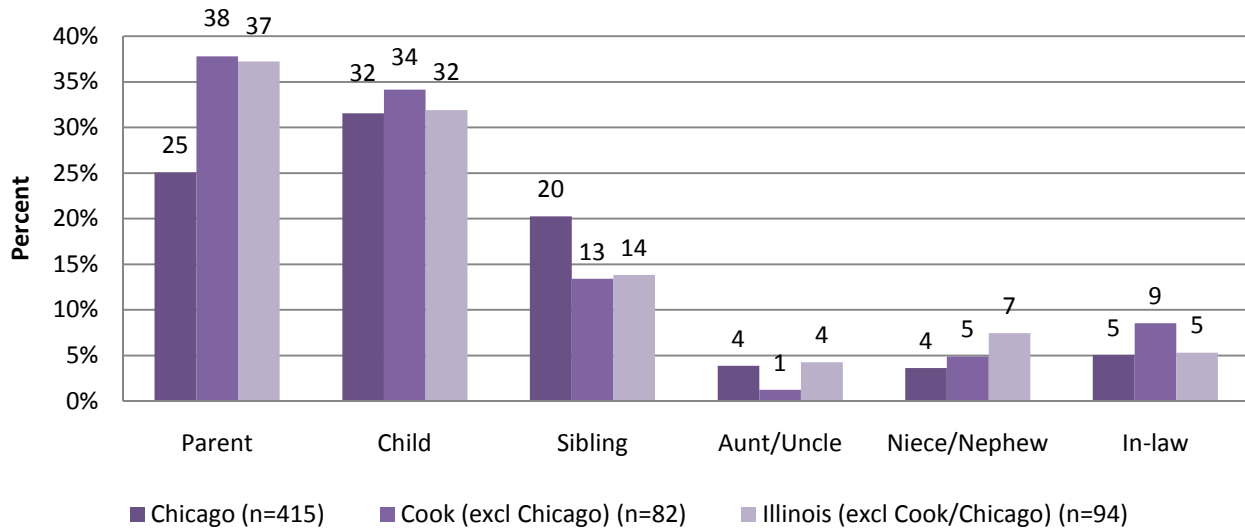
- ❖ Intimate partner violence most often occurred between a female victim and a male abuser (89%) with 6% of male victims abused by a female.
- ❖ Four percent (4%) of IPV occurred in same gender relationships between female (3%) or male (1%) partners.
- ❖ Less than ½% of IPV occurred among other partner relationships that included a transgendered victim or abuser.

**Family/Household Abuser  
N=714**

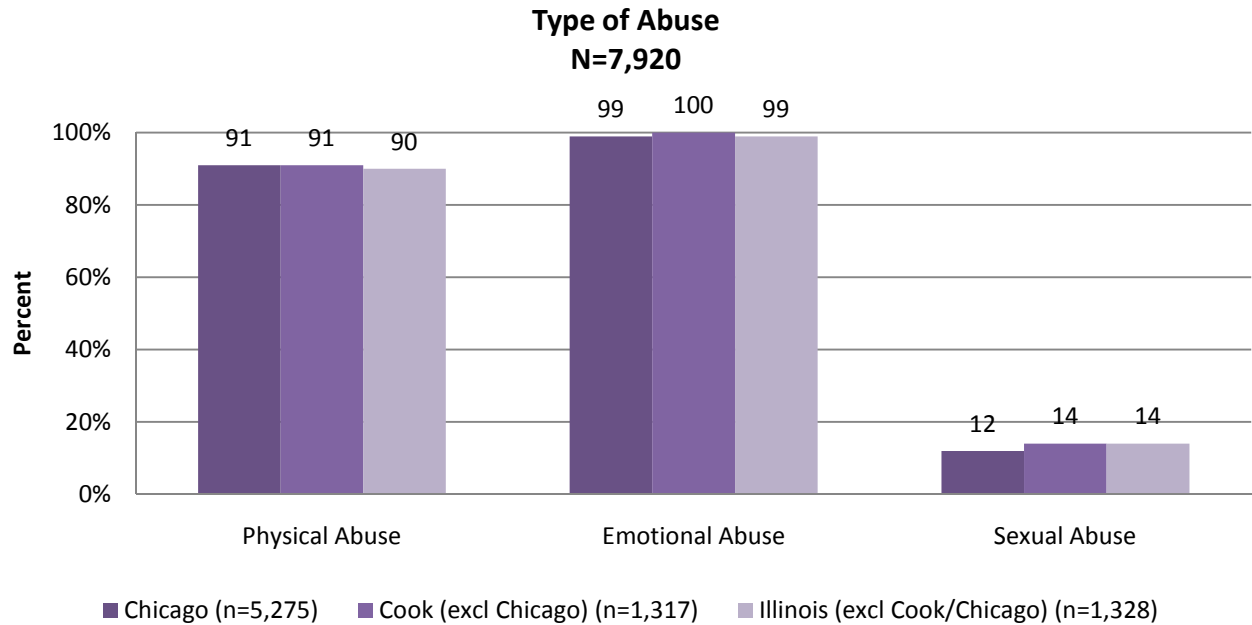


- Chicago (n=508)    ■ Cook (excl Chicago) (n=96)    ■ Illinois (excl Cook/Chicago) (n=110)
- ❖ Victims of family/household violence were primarily abused by a family member (88%).
- ❖ More Cook (93%) victims were abused by a family member than Chicago (88%) and Illinois (88%) victims.

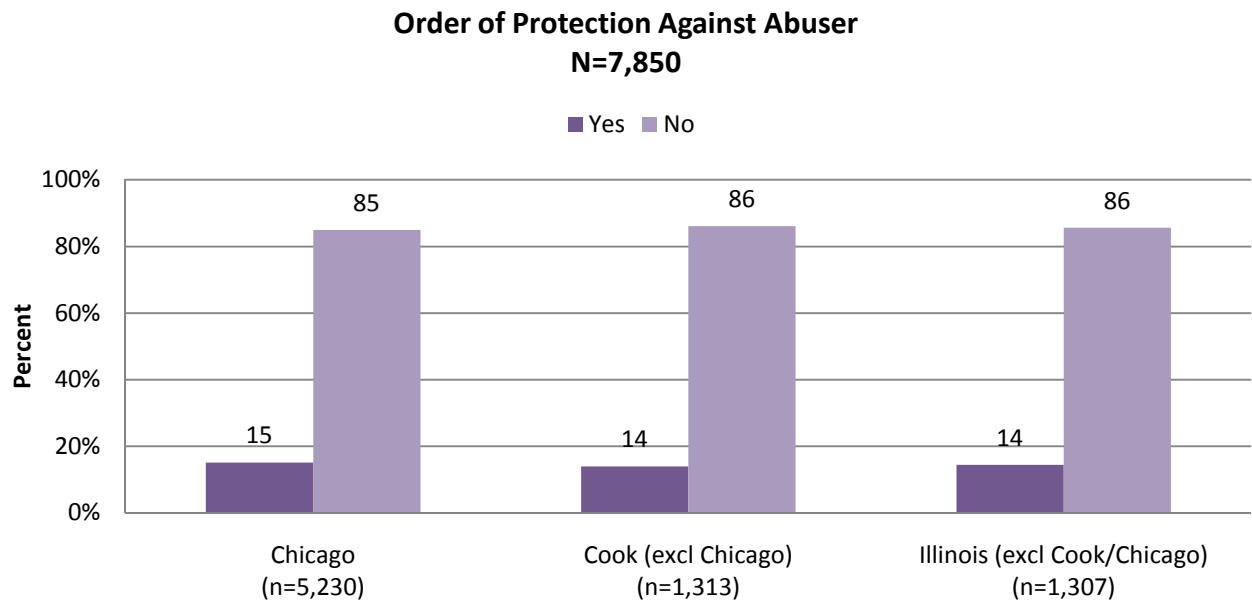
**Family Member Abuser  
N=591**



- Chicago (n=415)    ■ Cook (excl Chicago) (n=82)    ■ Illinois (excl Cook/Chicago) (n=94)
- ❖ Family member abusers were most often a child (32%), parent (29%), or a sibling (18%).
- ❖ Cook (38%) and Illinois (37%) victims were abused by a parent more than Chicago (25%) victims who were more often abused by a child (34%).



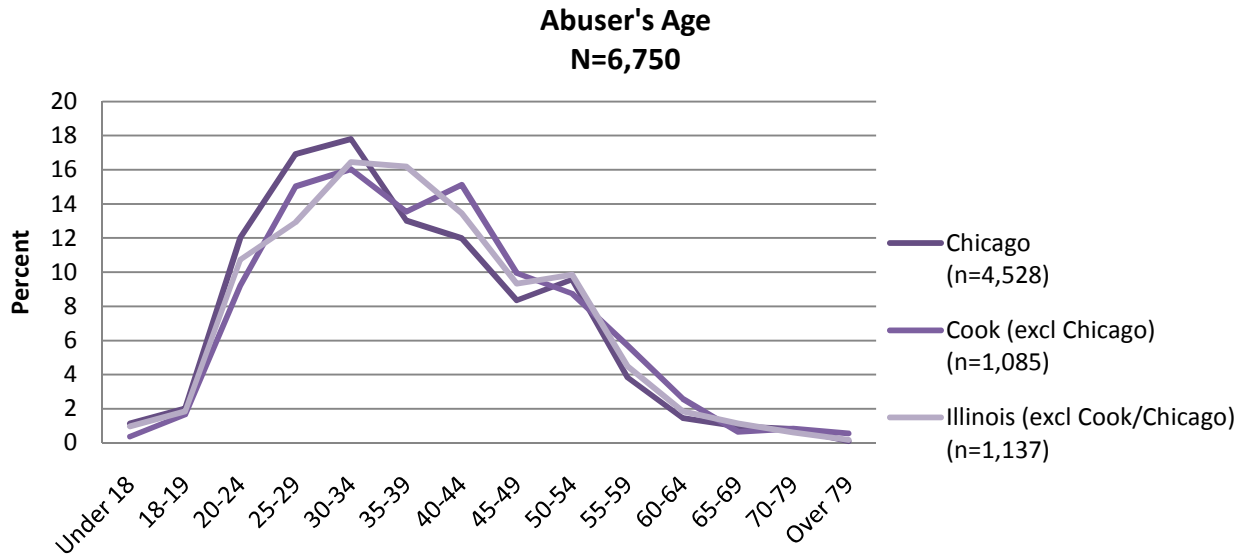
❖ Most victims mentioned emotional (99%) and physical (90%) forms of domestic abuse.<sup>9</sup>



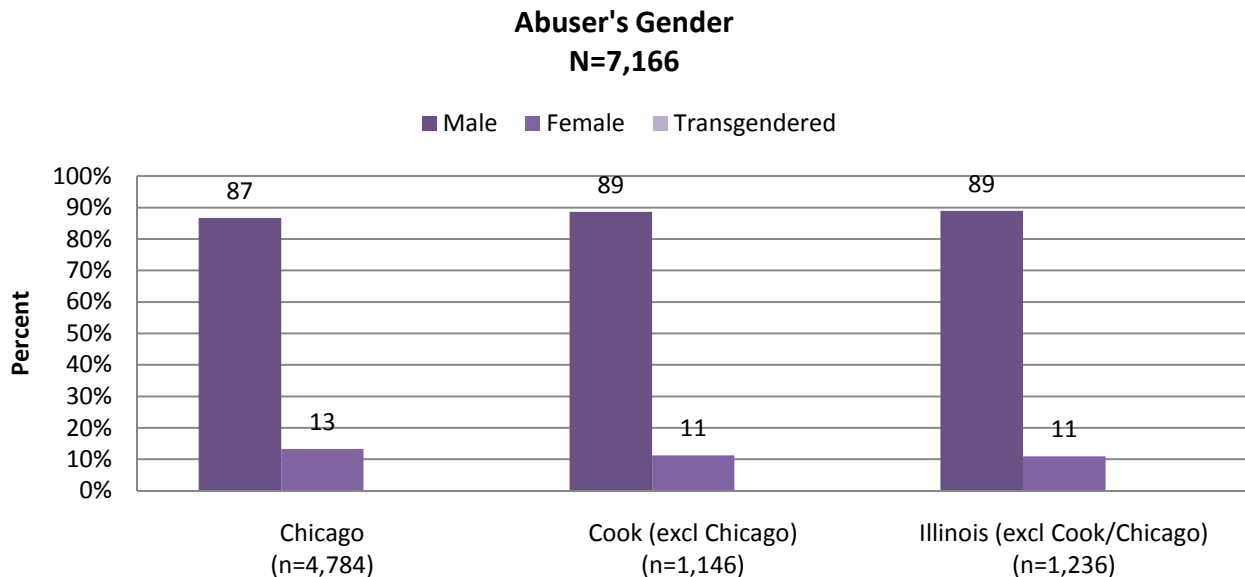
❖ Fifteen percent (15%) of victims had an order of protection against their abuser at the time a call was made to the Help Line.

<sup>9</sup> The type of abuse that victims experience was determined during a discussion of “what happened.” One or multiple forms of abuse may be recorded. It is believed that the experience of sexual violence in DV situation is much higher; however due to stigma and many other concerns, it is believed that victims were less likely to report this form of violence.

## Victim Service Calls – Abusers’ Characteristics



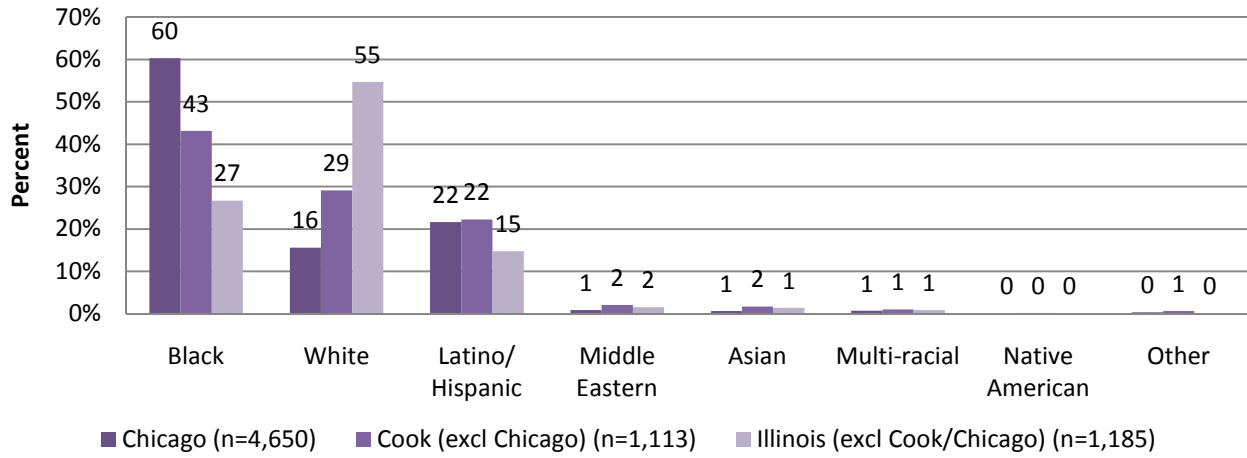
- ❖ Victim service callers reported the average age of abusers was 37 (median=35).
- ❖ One (1%) percent of abusers were 17 and younger and 8% were 55 and older.
- ❖ Abusers’ ages ranged between 11 and 87 years of age.<sup>10</sup>
- ❖ Chicago (median=35) abusers were slightly younger than Cook and Illinois victims (median=37).



- ❖ Most domestic violence abusers were male (87%).
- ❖ Two (2) abusers self identified as transgendered.

<sup>10</sup> Callers can report information for victims of any age. Staff and contracted delegates of the City of Chicago who service children and their family are mandated reporters and are legally required to report cases of suspected child abuse.

**Abuser's Race/Ethnicity**  
**N=6,948**



- ❖ More than half of abusers were Black (52%) followed by White (24%) and Hispanic (21%).
- ❖ Abusers were mostly Black (60%) in Chicago, Black (43%) and White (29%) in Cook, and mostly White (55%) in Illinois.

*A caller who said she is terrified of her ex-husband and already has an order of protection against him wanted to know how she could buy a guard dog so that she would feel safer in her home. The caller was assisted in locating an agency that trains and sells guard dogs.*

*January 2011*



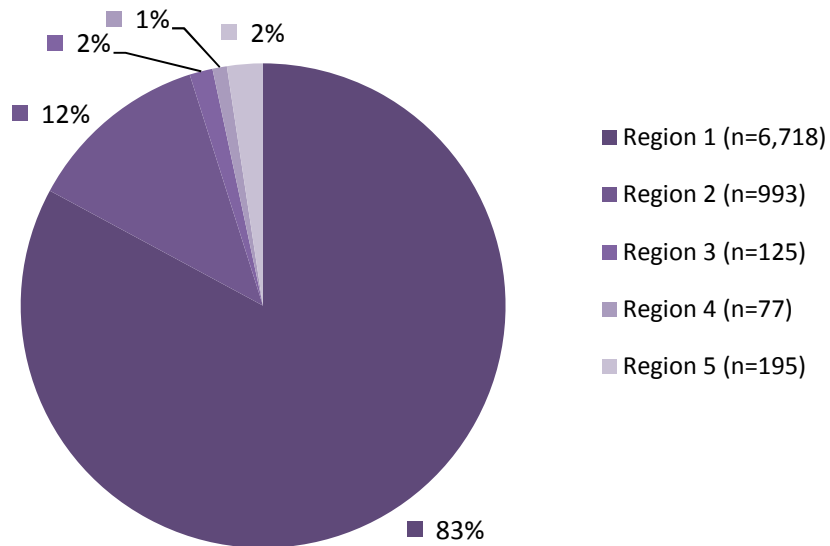
**REGIONAL  
CLUSTERS**

*Service Calls*

## Region Clusters<sup>11</sup>

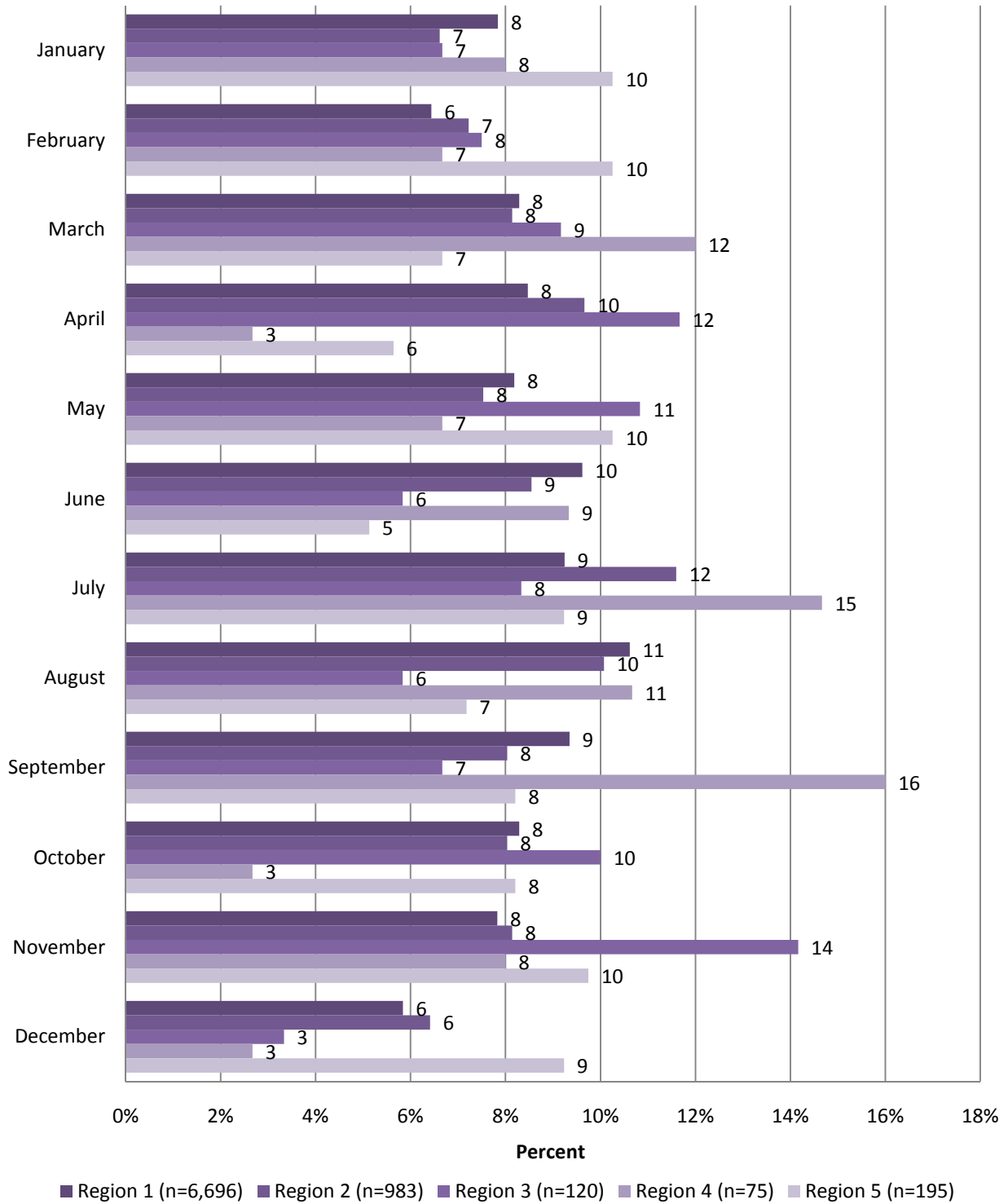


**Call Volume by Region**  
N=8,108

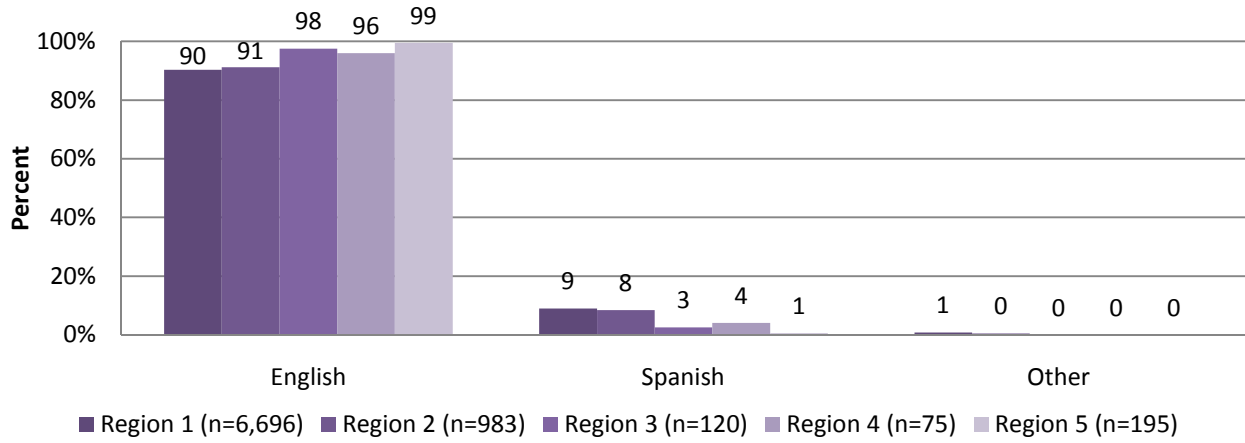


<sup>11</sup> See Glossary for list of counties by regional groupings

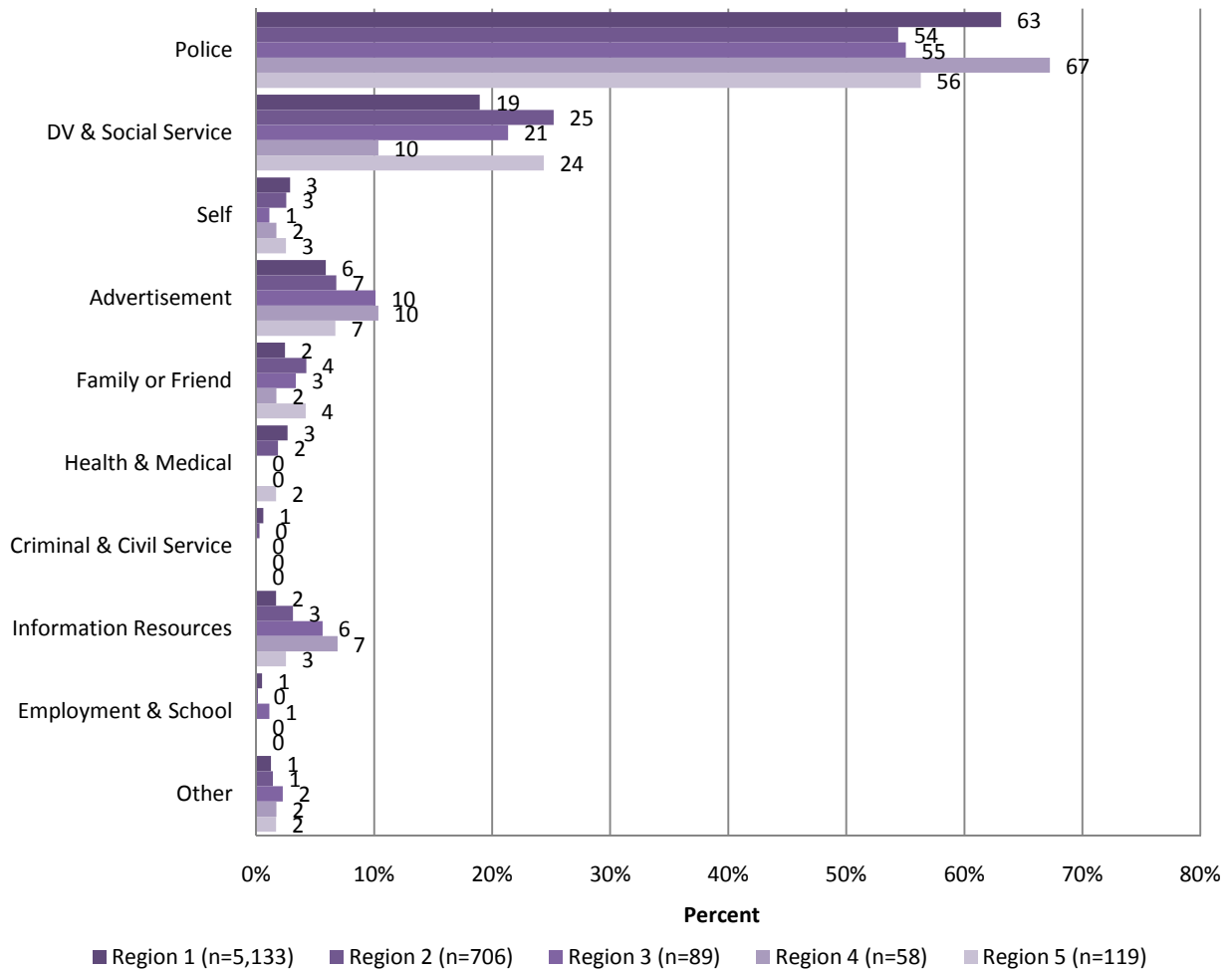
**Victim Service Calls by Month**  
**N=8,069**



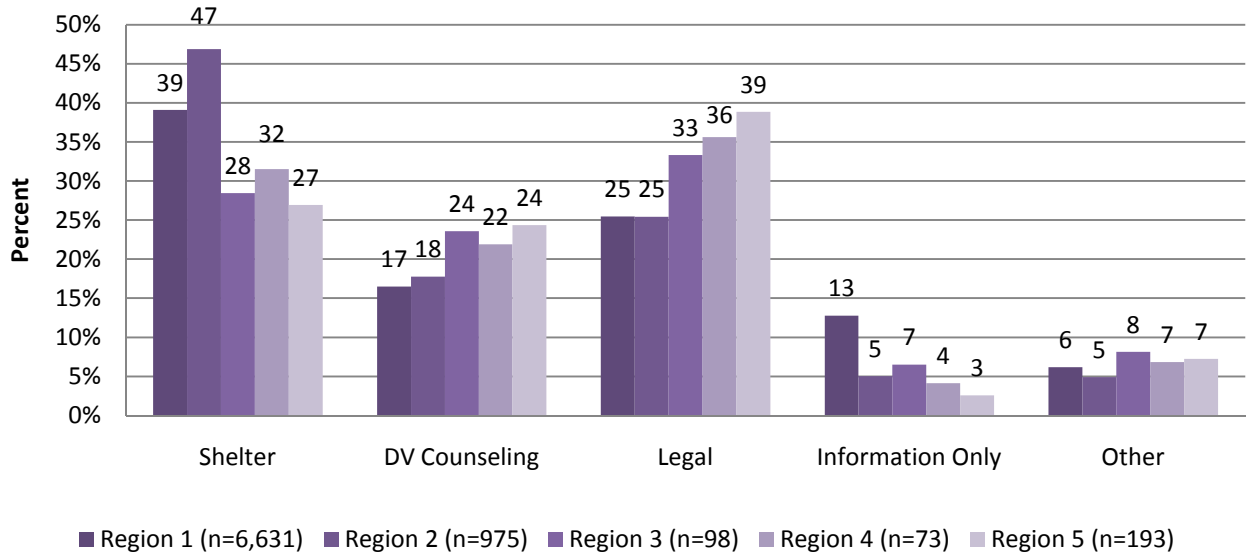
**Victim Service Call Language**  
**N=8,069**



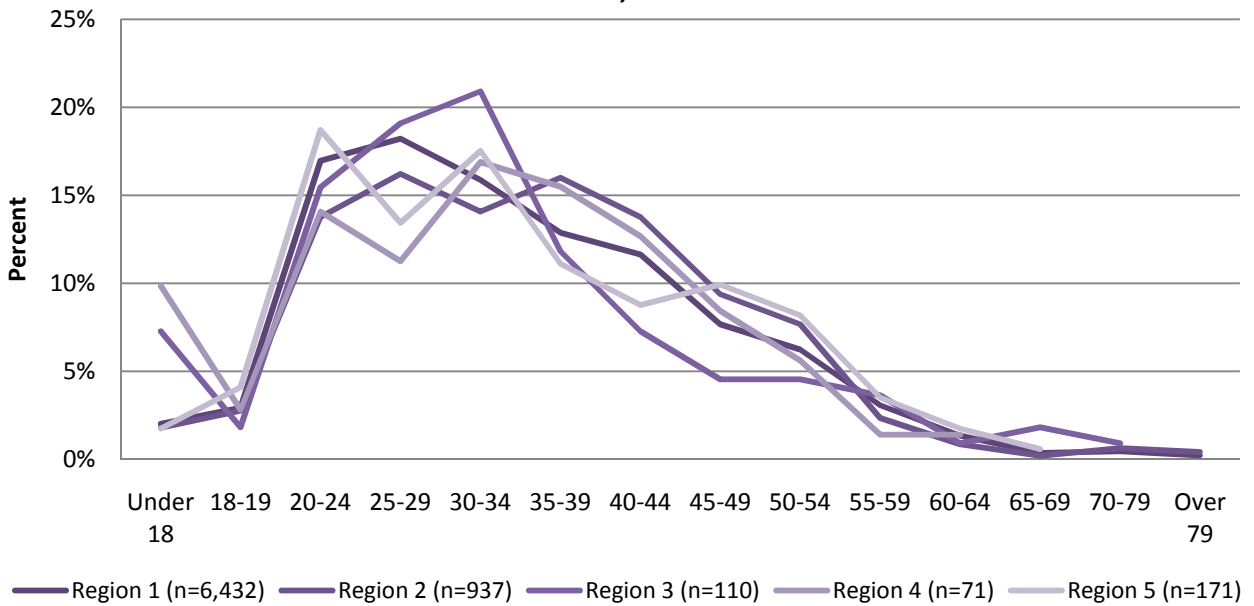
**Victim Service Calls by Referral Source**  
**N=6,105**



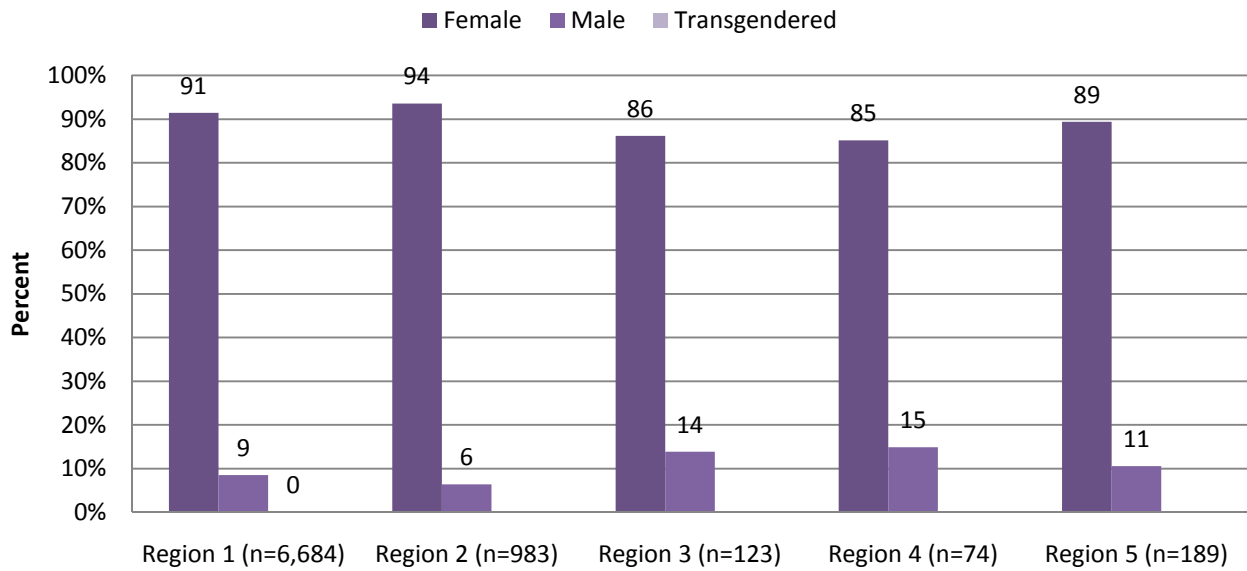
### Victim Service Requests N=7,970



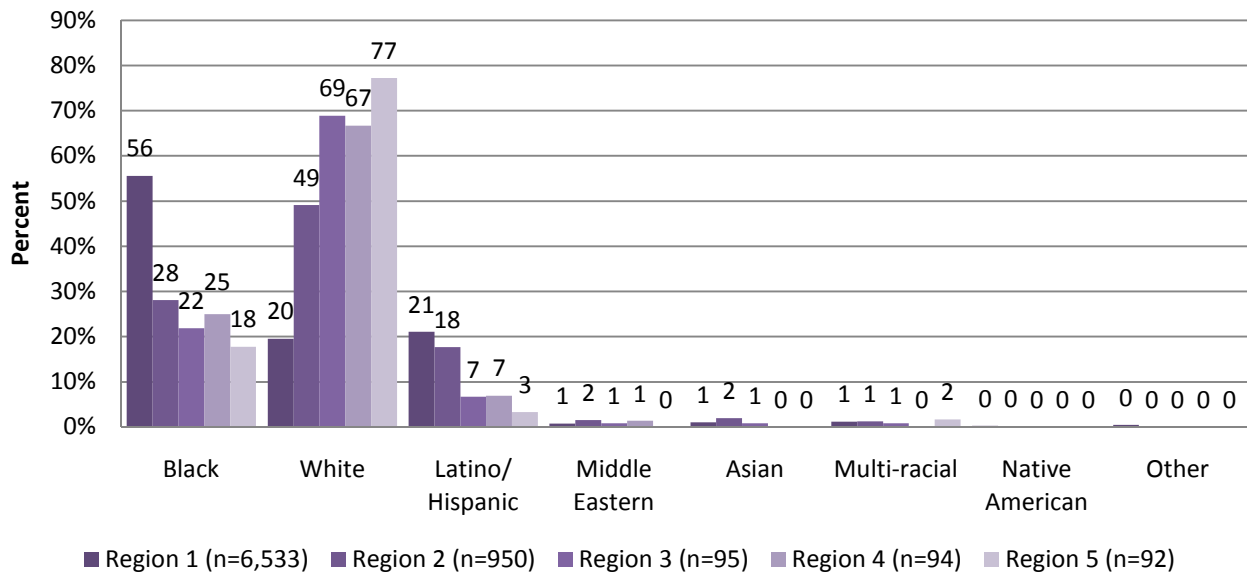
### Victim's Age N=7,721



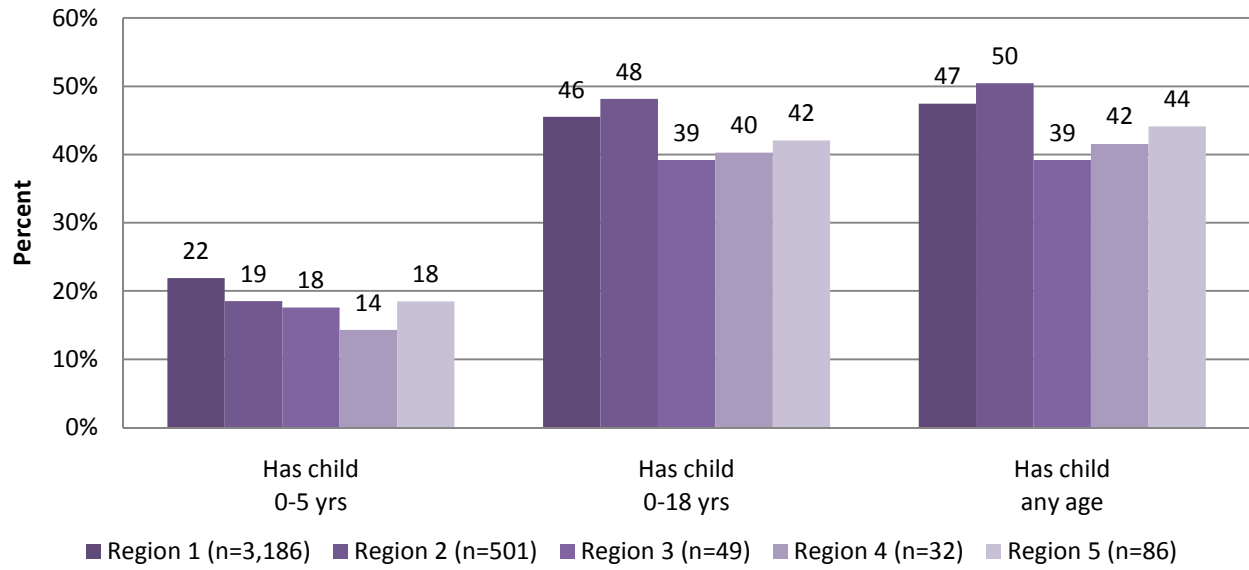
**Victim's Gender**  
N=8,053



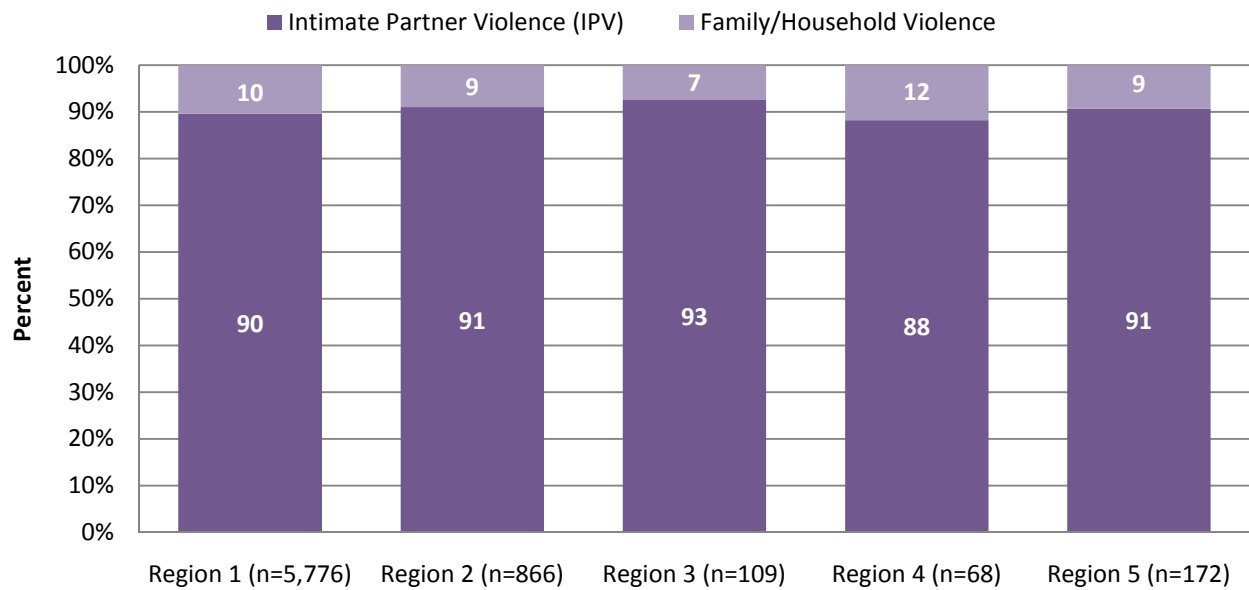
**Victim's Race/Ethnicity**  
N=7,764



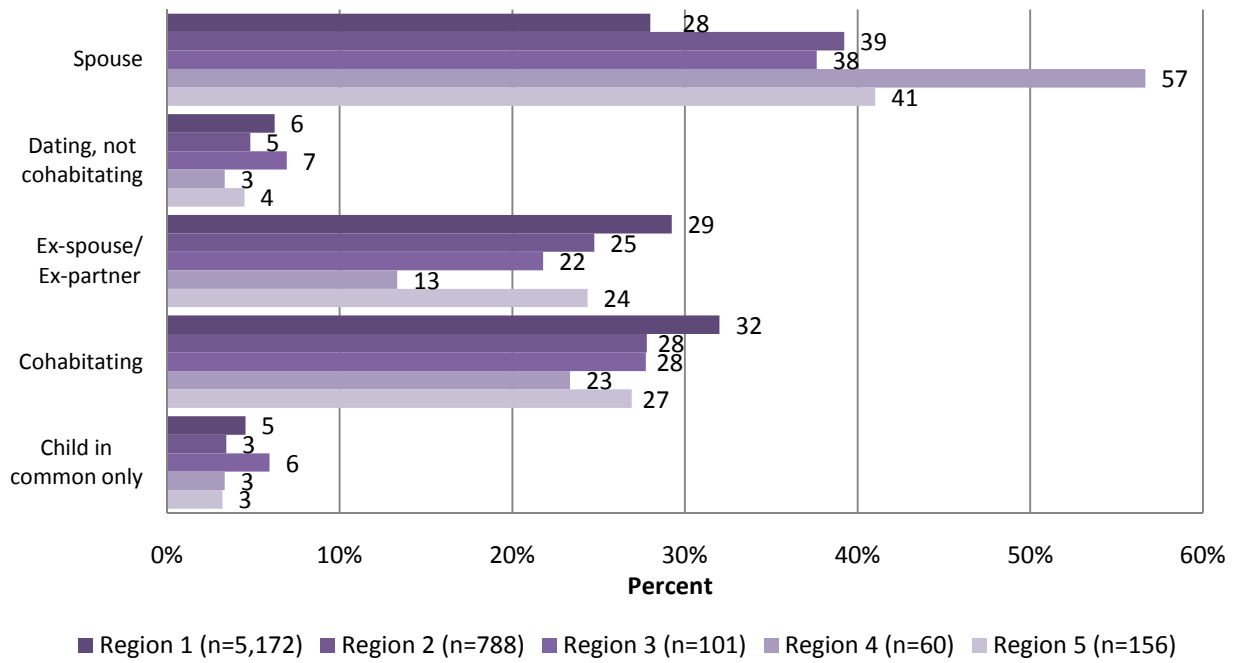
**Parentage  
N=3,854**



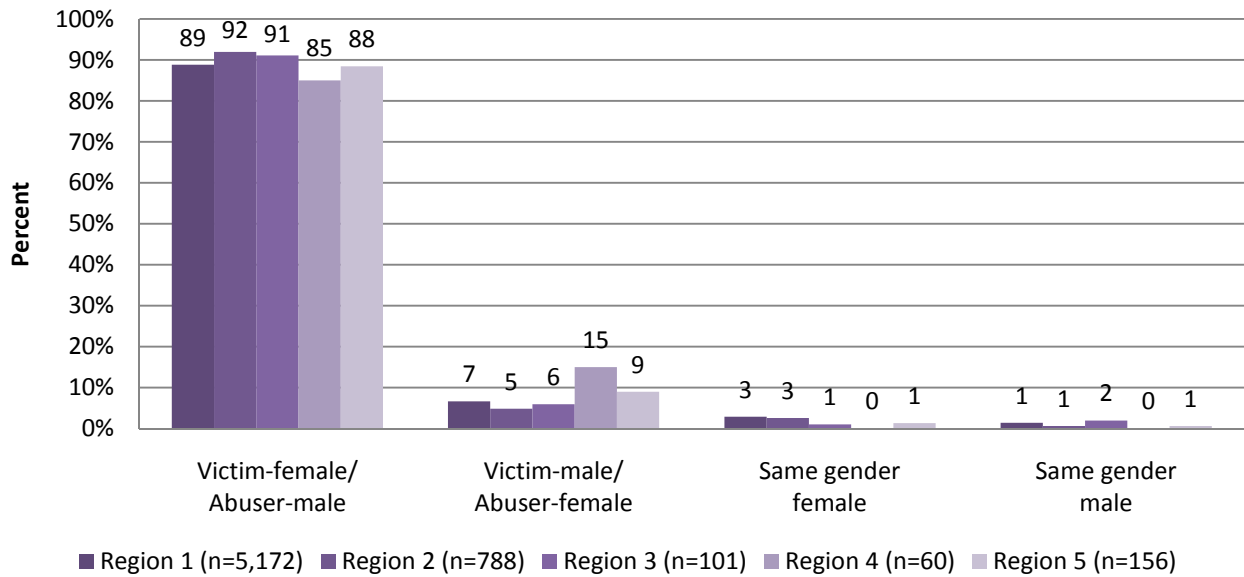
**Intimate Partner and Household Violence  
N=6,991**



**Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Abuser**  
**N=6,277**

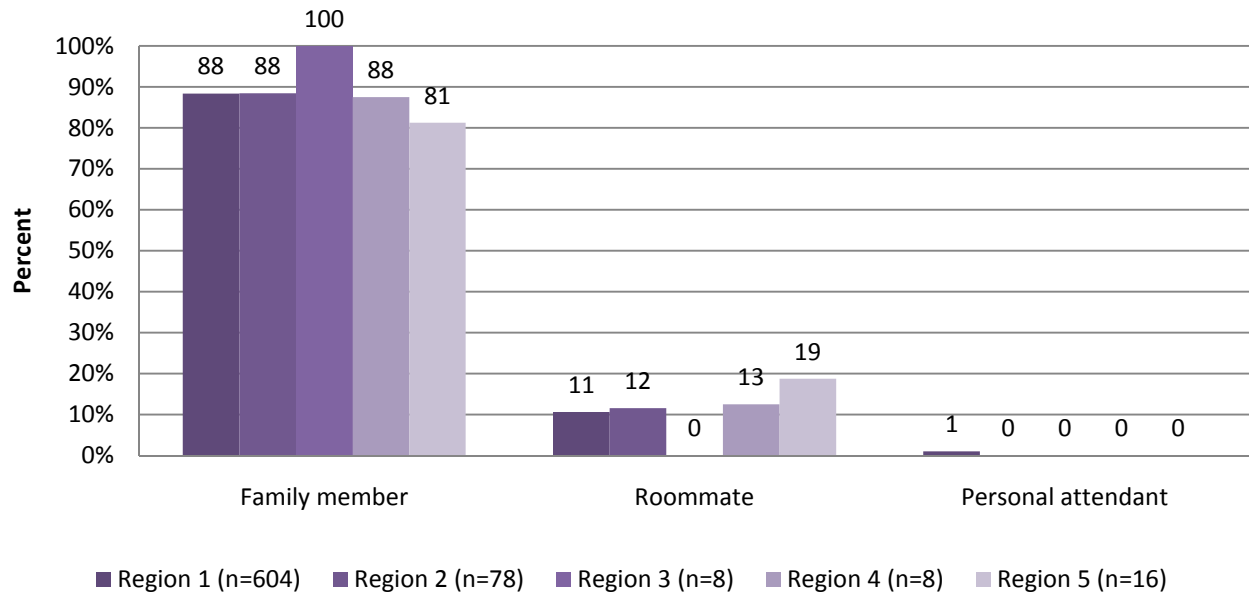


**Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Victim/Abuser Gender**  
**N=6,277**

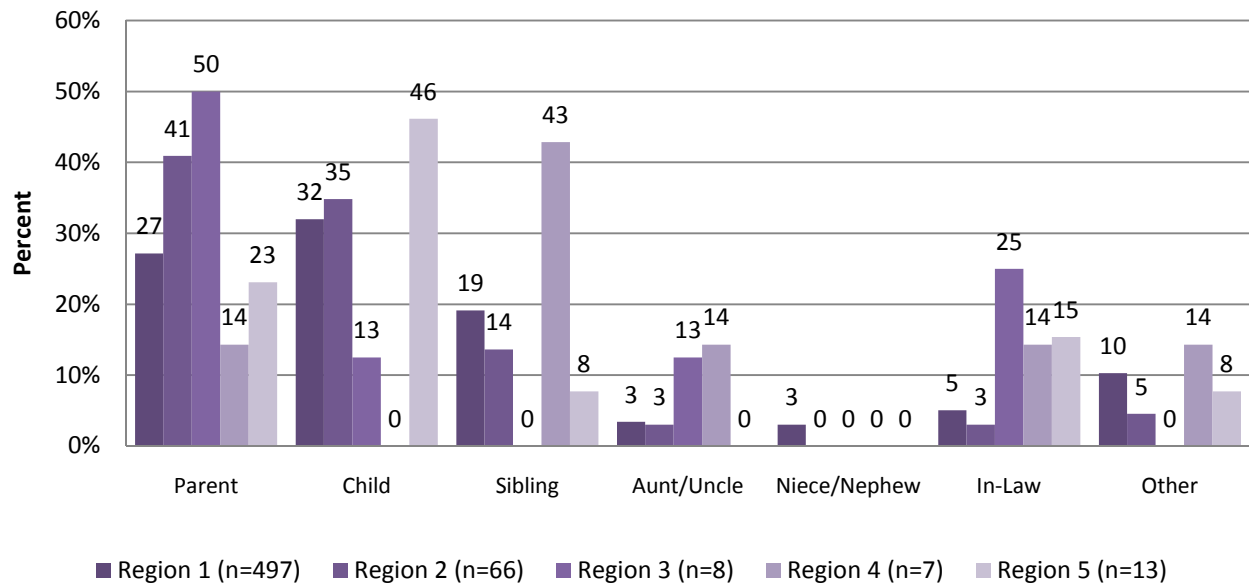




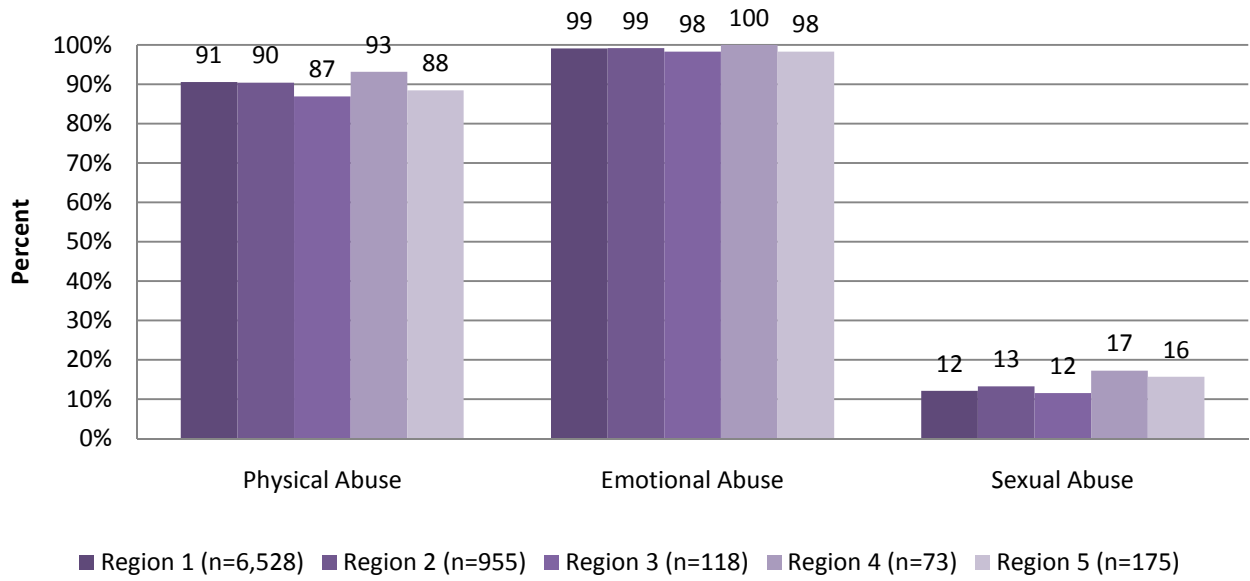
**Family/Household Abuser  
N=714**



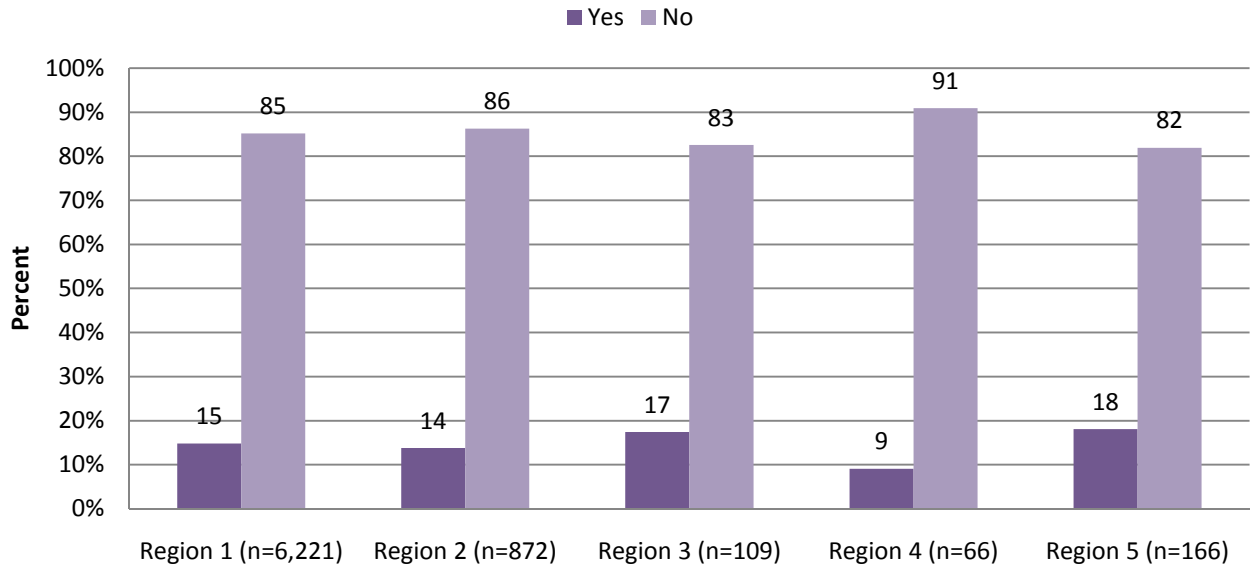
**Family Member Abuser  
N=591**

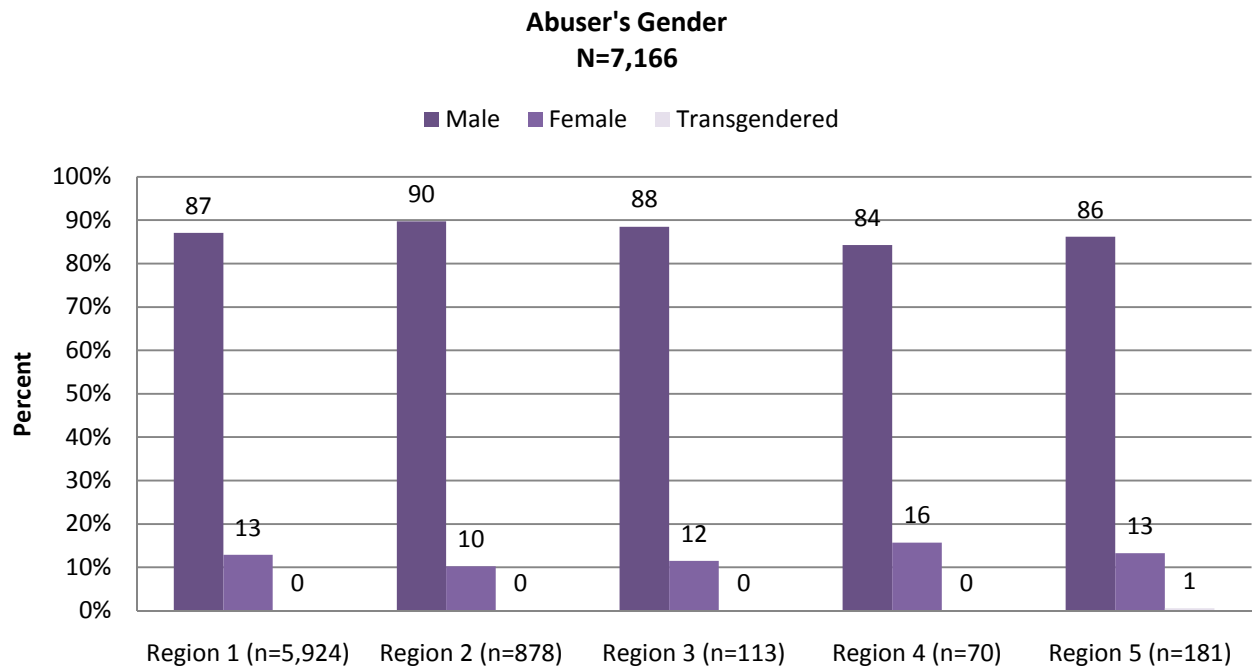
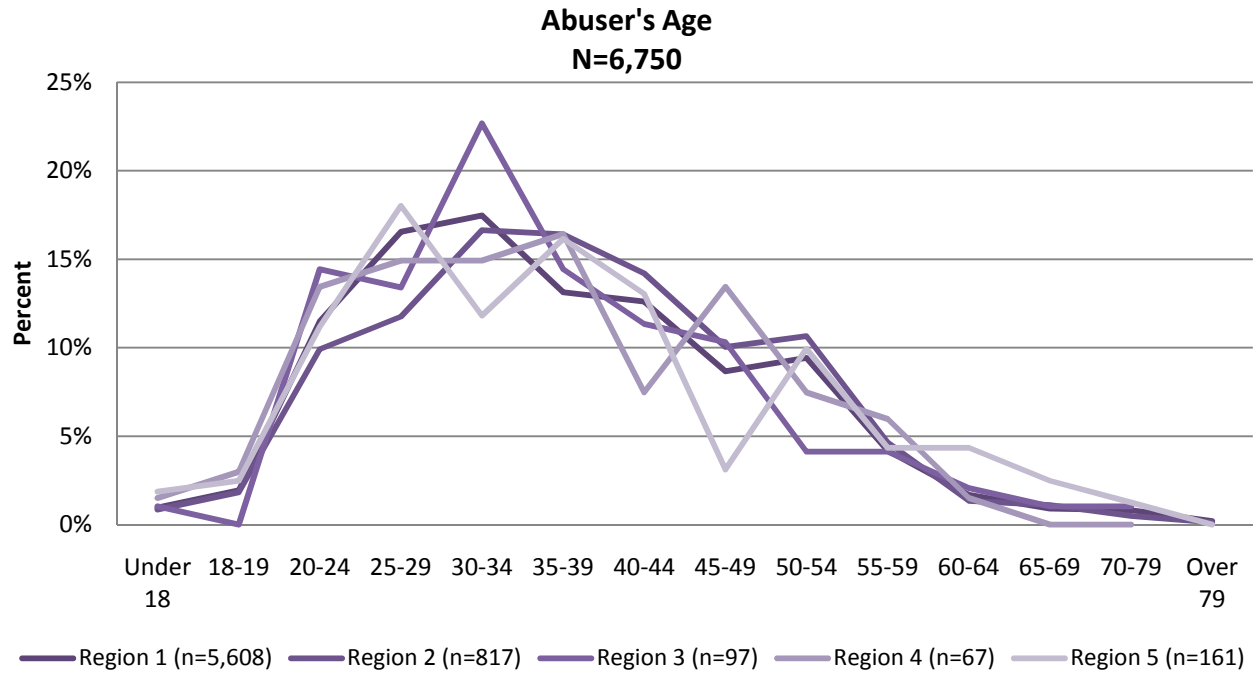


**Type of Abuse**  
N=7,849

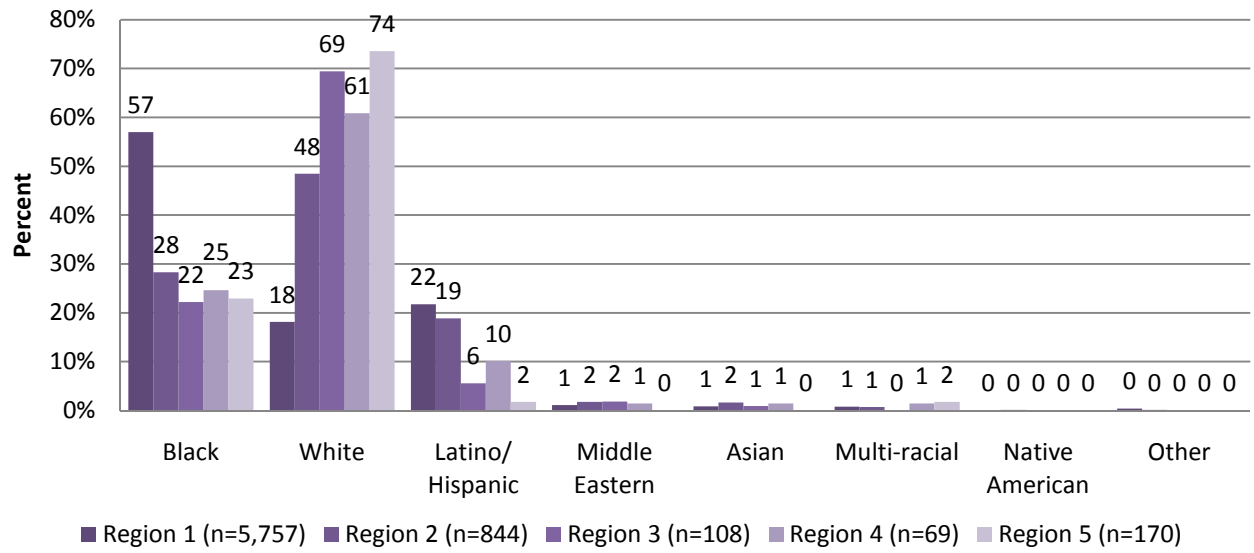


**Order of Protection Against Abuser**  
N=7,434





**Abuser's Race/Ethnicity**  
**N=6,948**



# *Glossary*

# Glossary

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<b>Abuser</b>	Callers provide demographic information (age, sex, and race) about the victim’s abuser.
<b>Abuse Type</b>	Callers report domestic abuse that includes physical, emotional, and sexual violence.
<b>Age</b>	Age is presented as an average, median, or age group. Where used, the median represents the middle point in the range of ages and is useful when there are few data points.
<b>Call Classification</b>	Calls are classified as requests for domestic violence (DV) victim services, DV information only, transfers to service providers, non-DV information, or administrative support to describe the type of service provided to callers.
<b>Call Volume</b>	The total number of calls reported for a given time period.
<b>Children</b>	Callers are asked to provide the age and gender of all dependent children living with the victim. Dependent children can be a minor child as well as an adult child.
<b>County</b>	Callers are asked for county designations to connect them with services and to approximate the caller’s location for statistical purposes.
<b>Language</b>	Language reflects the language used during the call. Callers can however be connected with services in their primary language, if requested and available.
<b>Location</b>	Calls are classified by location to aid across area comparisons.
<b>N</b>	N represents the total count or the sub-population of the total count. Missing data account for total count variations.
<b>Race</b>	Callers identify the victim’s race/ethnicity and the call taker records it as Black/African American, White, Latino/Hispanic, Middle Eastern, Asian, Multi-racial, Native American or Other.
<b>Referral Source</b>	Callers are asked how they learned about the Help Line. Referral sources are grouped into seven broad categories.
<b>Region Clusters</b>	Five regions were created based on county clusters as organized by the Illinois Department of Human Services. The county/counties that make up each region are listed below.

<i>Region 1</i>	Cook
<i>Region 2</i>	Boone, Carroll, DeKalb, DuPage, Grundy, Jo Daviess, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, Lee, McHenry, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside, Will, Winnebago
<i>Region 3</i>	Bureau, Champaign, Ford, Fulton, Henderson, Henry, Iroquois, Knox, La Salle, Livingston, McDonough, McLean, Marshall, Mason, Mercer, Peoria, Putnam, Rock Island, Stark, Tazewell, Vermilion, Warren, Woodford

*Region 4* | Adams, Brown, Calhoun, Cass, Christian, Clark, Coles, Cumberland, De Witt, Douglas, Edgar, Effingham, Greene, Hancock, Jersey, Logan, Macon, Macoupin, Menard, Montgomery, Morgan, Moultrie, Piatt, Pike, Sangamon, Schuyler, Scott, Shelby

*Region 5* | Alexander, Bond, Clay, Clinton, Crawford, Edwards, Fayette, Franklin, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Johnson, Lawrence, Madison, Marion, Massac, Monroe, Perry, Pope, Pulaski, Randolph, Richland, St. Clair, Saline, Union, Wabash, Washington, Wayne, White, Williamson

- Relationship** Callers are asked to identify the relationship of the abuser to the victim. This relationship can be between intimate partners or a family/household member.
- Service Request** Callers request services based on their needs. They receive referral information or are transferred via a 3-way telephone link with a service provider. Identification of needed services does not necessitate service connection or receipt. For presentation purposes, these services are grouped into four broad categories.
- Victim** A domestic violence victim is anyone who has experienced abuse in a domestic relationship such as from an intimate partner or a family/household member.
- Victim Service Call** Callers seeking service information for a victim. These calls can be placed by the victim or any caller on behalf of the victim.
- Zip Code** Callers are asked for zip code designations to connect them with services and to approximate the caller's location for statistical purposes.
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