

# A Safe Haven from All Forms of Violence and Abuse



Bellevue Police  
Department Violence  
Victim Advocate  
averaged a caseload of **24**.

**Life Wire**  
reported turning away  
**19** households for every  
**1** they serve in  
emergency  
housing



**2019 Count Us In**  
**337** counted in EKC  
**7%**  
currently DV



**1134** reports  
indicating Domestic  
Violence in  
Bellevue



**229** cases of  
human trafficking  
were reported in  
2018 in Washington



# Goal #3

## A Safe Haven from All Forms of Violence and Abuse

This chapter includes data about:

- Domestic Violence
- Sexual Assault
- Child Abuse & Neglect
- Human Trafficking

This chapter discusses these topics as they pertain to the broader community. For more information about how this goal area relates to specific populations (Older Adults, Refugees and Immigrants, People with Disabilities, School-Aged Children and Youth, and Veterans) within our community, please see their respective chapters.

### Key Findings

- Survivors of Domestic Violence (DV) are faced with barriers to housing and legal services. The high cost of housing in Bellevue creates a serious challenge for survivors who want to remain in the community to maintain their jobs and support systems. More shelter beds as well as more affordable permanent housing options with services are needed. Pro-bono or affordable legal representation for child custody, protection orders, immigration, and financial issues is another huge challenge. Without these services, it becomes much harder for survivors to maintain their safety, return to employment, and become self-sufficient.
- Child abuse occurs in approximately 70% of families experiencing domestic violence. Holistic programs including prevention and earlier interventions are needed to break the cycle of abuse for future generations. Also, for children and youth who have witnessed abuse, programs that include support groups and individual counseling need to be available to address the resulting trauma.
- Sexual assault continues to be a public safety issue. It is critical to support community education about sexual assault, rape, child sexual abuse, and consent workshops for youth.
- There is a strong connection between early, untreated child sexual abuse and homelessness and trafficking. Upwards of 40% of youth who are homeless experience sexual assault prior to becoming homeless. It is important that conversations about homelessness and trafficking include the issue of sexual assault.
- Poverty can be a correlating factor in child abuse and neglect. Parents and caregivers experiencing economic hardship have challenges in providing the basics for their children. With the challenges that many families are experiencing in day to day life, it is even more important to offer basic needs assistance to families with children, provide outlets for stress, and supportive services.

# Domestic Violence

Domestic violence (DV), specifically intimate partner violence (IPV), profoundly affects the lives of survivors as well as the entire community. DV incidents involve family or household members; traditionally the term has referred to altercations between spouses and former spouses, but legally it includes roommates with or without a romantic relationship, and parents or children. Individuals may be of the same gender.

## Community voice

Over the past 20 years, phone/online survey results indicate that Bellevue residents feel DV is not a significant community or household problem. The number of respondents rating it as a moderate or major community problem experiencing DV was at its highest in 1995 at 33%; in 2019, 18% rated it as such.

## Prevalence

- Calls for DV shelter remained similar with 1,651 calls in 2017 and 1,665 calls in 2018. The top unmet needs for Bellevue callers experiencing DV were for emergency shelter, permanent housing and rent assistance.<sup>1</sup>
- As Figure 1 indicates, the number of reports of domestic violence to the Bellevue Police Department has remained relatively steady since the large drop in 2013. From 2014 to 2018, the average amount of reports indicating domestic violence per year was 1,119. Note: The data collected reflects reports where domestic violence was indicated - which includes all case types, not just assaults.<sup>2</sup>

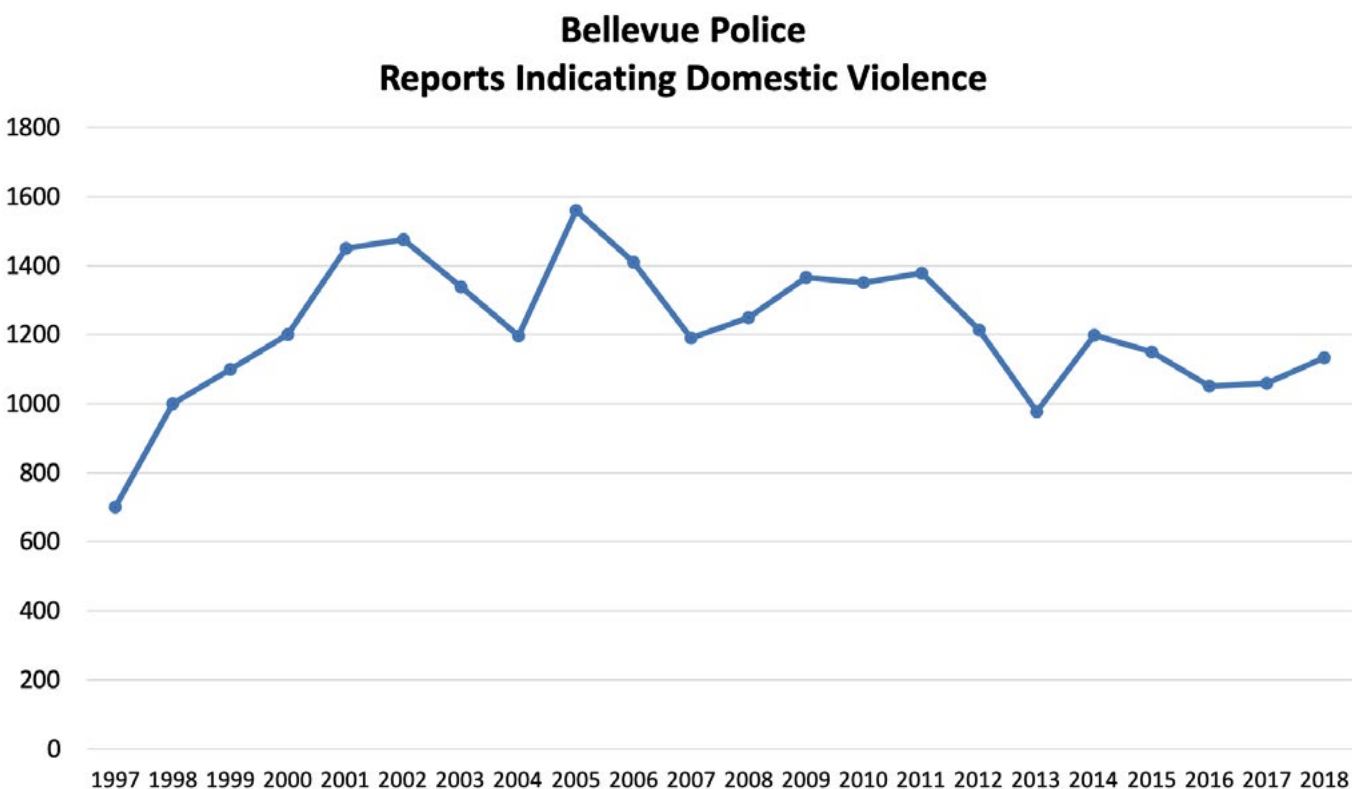


Figure 1 Source: Bellevue Police Department

- According to the Center for Disease Control, IPV is a significant public health problem. The National Intimate Partner Violence Survey (NIPVS) indicates that about 1 in 4 women and nearly 1 in 10 men have experienced sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner. Over 43 million women and 38 million men in the U.S. have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner in their lifetimes.<sup>3</sup>
- Between 2016 and 2018, the number of reported DV offenses statewide increased 8.9%. DV offenses made up 49% of all crimes in Washington against persons in 2018.<sup>4</sup> The Bellevue Police Department recorded 1,134 domestic violence offenses.<sup>5</sup>
- On the day of DV count in 2018, 1,938 DV survivors were in emergency shelter and transitional housing in Washington. Eight hundred and six individuals received non-residential assistance and services (counseling, legal, advocacy, and children’s support groups). Five hundred twenty six individuals had unmet requested services and 441 (84%) of the requests were related to housing.<sup>6</sup>
- Housing is a major concern for DV survivors and their families. In 2019, the Count Us In report (formerly One Night Count) found 11,199 people experiencing homelessness in King County; 337 were counted in East King County. Seven percent (7%) of survey respondents reported that they were currently experiencing domestic violence.<sup>7</sup>
- LifeWire reports that their service levels reflect their capacity, rather than demand; because of this, the number of clients served has not increased significantly over time. However, LifeWire has to turnaway 19 households for every 1 they serve in emergency housing.
- Many of the families LifeWire is serving are in their rental assistance and housing stability programs, thereby reducing the turn away rate to 4 to 1. In 2017, 274 families (746 individuals) were served in their housing programs.<sup>8</sup>
- For more information about older adults and domestic violence, please see the section Older Adults.
- For more information about refugee and immigrants and domestic violence, please see the section Refugee and Immigrants.

“We are seeing an increase of domestic violence with students in the Work Force Ed Program. About 30% of our students have some connection to domestic violence.”

~Participant, Bellevue College Staff  
Community Conversation

## Service trends

- The Bellevue Police Department (BPD) works closely with and relies heavily on LifeWire’s services. In all cases of domestic violence where the police are involved, an advocate works with the person identified as the victim, explaining the complicated justice system, providing them with information on No Contact and Protection Orders, and planning for safety. The advocate accompanies the victim to court, works closely with the city attorney’s office, and is in weekly contact with the prosecutor’s office. In 2017, the BPD Domestic Violence Victim Advocate worked with 299 cases with an average caseload of 25 cases per month. The average case load in 2018 was 24 per month with a total of 289 cases. The biggest challenges are lack of shelter, affordable housing, access to free/reduced fee legal services, and financial resources.<sup>9</sup>

- LifeWire provides a 24-hour Helpline, which provides safety planning and short-term advocacy, as well as a gateway to all LifeWire services. In 2017, the Helpline received 9,671 calls. Of those calls, 1094 survivors participated in LifeWire’s advocacy services.<sup>10</sup>
- Included in the full range of services needed for survivors is mental health counseling. Providers report that many survivors are experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and suicidal ideation as a result of their abuse. LifeWire added a second mental health therapist in 2017, but there is still typically a 1 to 2 month wait to access services. 161 survivors utilized LifeWire’s mental health services in 2018.<sup>11</sup>
- In 2018, 3,835 East King County residents received services supported by the County’s MIDD behavioral health sales tax fund. MIDD initiatives provided DV Mental Health Services within domestic violence agencies and served 104 individuals.<sup>12</sup>
- Legal assistance remains a primary need for survivors of domestic violence. LifeWire has two full-time legal advocates and partners with Eastside Legal Assistance Program to facilitate pro bono legal services. The agency still has to keep a waiting list and it typically takes about 3 months to meet with a legal advocate, except in cases of serious emergency. In 2018, 260 survivors accessed legal advocacy services for issues ranging from DV protection orders to marriage dissolution and parenting plans.<sup>13</sup>

## Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is unwanted sexual activity, with perpetrators using force, making threats or taking advantage of victims not able to give consent. Most victims and perpetrators know each other. Long-term symptoms include anxiety, fear or post-traumatic stress disorder.<sup>14</sup> Sexual assault occurs in all communities and among all socio-economic groups.

### Prevalence

- Every 92 seconds an American is sexually assaulted. On average, there are 321,500 reported victims (age 12 or older) of rape and sexual assault each year in the United States.<sup>15</sup>
- In Washington, there were 2,852 rapes reported, resulting in 544 arrests. Eighty-three percent (1090) of rape victims were under 17 years old.<sup>16</sup>
- The majority of sexual assault victims are under age 30. With child sexual abuse, 66% of victims are between ages 12 and 17, and about 34% are under age 12.<sup>17</sup>
- Twenty-one percent of transgender, genderqueer, and/or nonconforming (TGQN) college students have been sexually assaulted, compared to 18% of non-TGQN females and 4% of non-TGQN males.<sup>18</sup>
- Individuals who have been sexually assaulted or raped have a likelihood of suffering negative health consequences, including depression, suicide, and alcohol abuse. Ninety-four percent of women who are raped experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) during the two weeks following the rape.<sup>19</sup> 33% of women who are raped contemplate suicide.<sup>20</sup> They are also 13 times more likely than other women to abuse alcohol.<sup>21</sup>
- Bellevue Police Department’s annual count for reported rapes have generally remained between 20 and 25 for the last 10 years. Reported rapes dropped from 25 in 2015 to 15 in 2016, and then rose again in 2017 to 24. In 2018, there were 25 rapes reported. On average (over the past 10 years), Bellevue Police Department has 19 rapes reported per year.<sup>22</sup>

## Service trends

- Harborview Sexual Assault and Traumatic Stress Services (HSATS), provides a full range of services, including crisis response, advocacy, counseling for child and youth victims of sexual assault and assistance for parents/caretakers. In 2018, they provided 795 hours of counseling, with 218 of the hours working with 50 Bellevue residents. They have locations located in both Bellevue and Redmond.<sup>23</sup>
- Sexual assault can lead to significant mental health problems, and downstream consequences, such as substance abuse or involvement in the juvenile justice or criminal justice system, which are more costly to address. In East King County, King County Sexual Assault Resource Center (KCSARC) added counselors to increase on-site access for survivors. Using “best practice” interventions for children and adults, this coordinated effort is seen as a much-needed systems-change approach.<sup>24</sup>
- King County Sexual Assault Resource Center (KCSARC) provides services to children, youth, and adult victims of sexual violence and their families. These advocacy services, include legal advocacy, helping the victims navigate the criminal justice system, connections to needed services, and building the skills to support their loved ones who have been victimized. In November and December of 2017, King County Sexual Assault Resource Center reported a 54% increase in the number of calls to their 24-hour resource line and a 35% increase in new advocacy clients. The numbers have remained steady since November 2017 through 2018. In 2018, they provided 20,625 hours of advocacy in King County and 852 hours to Bellevue residents.<sup>25</sup>

## Child Abuse & Neglect

Child abuse is the physical, psychological, sexual mistreatment of children, or neglect of children. Neglect is the most common form of child abuse, but rates are hard to establish because neglect is often unreported.

### Prevalence

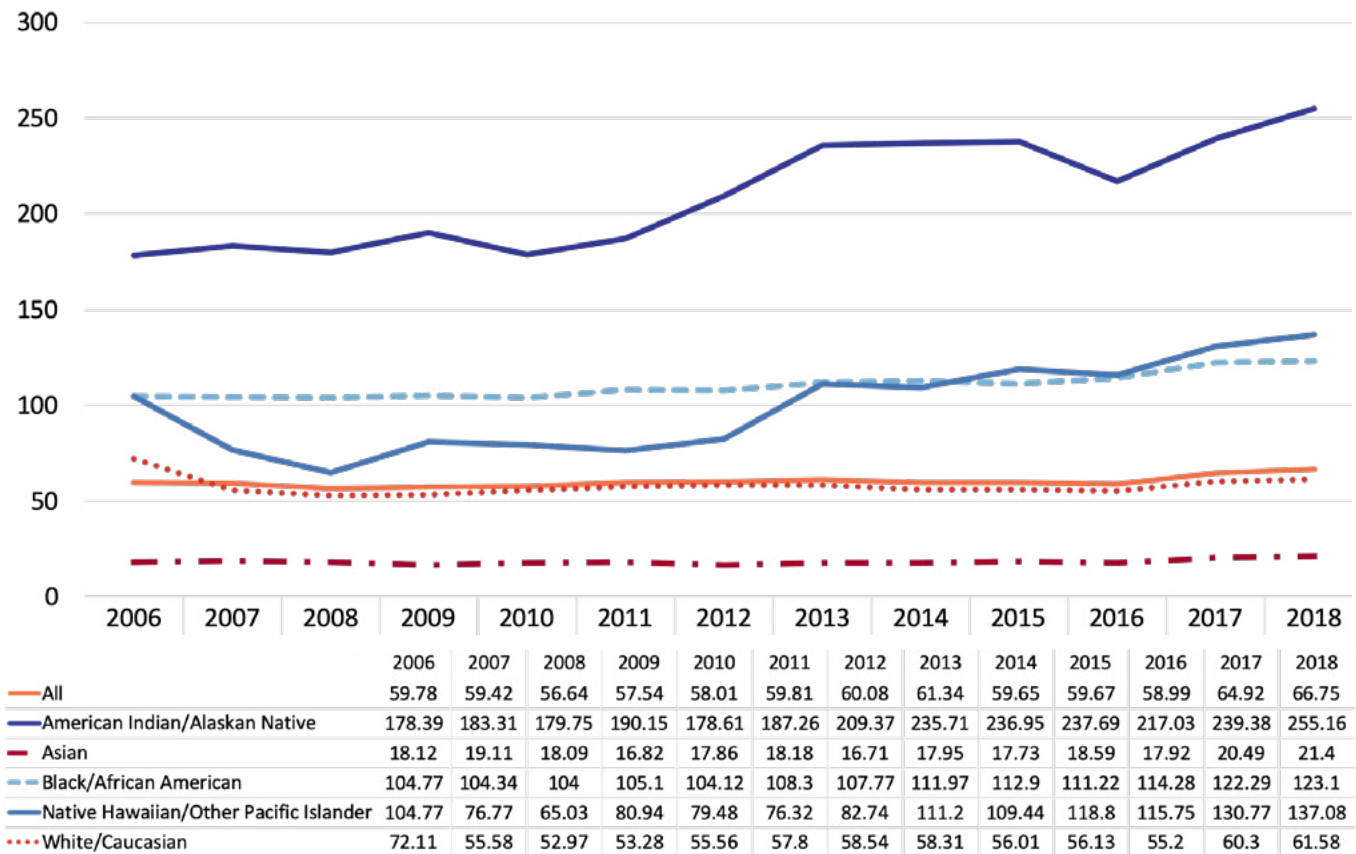
- Studies show that 3 to 4 million children ages 3 to 17 are at risk of exposure to DV each year. Research indicates that children who witness DV show similar emotional and developmental difficulties as children who are direct victims of abuse, including anxiety, low self-esteem, depression, anger and temperament problems. These disturbances can impede healthy development, cause school difficulties and physical health problems, which can continue to be a problem into adulthood.<sup>26</sup>
- Undergoing abuse or neglect in childhood can have lifelong effects. In King County, Child Protective Services (CPS), a state agency, responds to reports of suspected abuse involving children. In 2016, a total of 8,238 households in King County were investigated. This has declined from a high of 9,756 in 2007.<sup>27</sup>
- In 2015, about 30 out of every 1,000 households in King County were investigated or assessed by CPS. Households of the following racial and ethnic groups were most likely to be investigated or assessed in 2015, American Indian/Alaska Native (145 per 1,000 households), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (80 per 1,000) and Black/African American (77 per 1,000). Looking across all demographics, Asian and white households were the least likely to be investigated or assessed.<sup>28</sup> Research shows that racial disparities exist at almost every stage in the systems of child welfare, education, and mental health systems, and that racial bias could account for the difference in outcomes between non-White and White youth.<sup>29</sup>

- Adults abused as children who receive no treatment experience psychological distress many years after the abuse. These traumatic childhood experiences, which are examples of Adverse Childhood Experiences or ACEs, become significant risk factors for serious dysfunction later in life (substance abuse, depression, suicide, parenting problems). Without intervention or help for the child, normal psychological development can be negatively affected.<sup>30</sup> Eighteen percent of children in Washington have two or more ACEs.<sup>31</sup>

## Service trends

Children living in LifeWire’s shelter or transitional housing programs participate in weekly children’s groups which create a safe space for children and youth who have experienced trauma. They work with an advocate to develop emotional intelligence, healthy ways to express themselves, positive communication skills, and healthy relationship skills. In 2018, 38 children and youth participated in support groups. In addition, LifeWire Children’s and Youth advocates provide DV advocacy services for children and youth who have witnessed DV and teens who have experienced dating violence. One hundred and ninety-eight children and youth received one-on-one advocacy in 2018.<sup>32</sup>

**Child Protective Services Investigation and Assessments by Race/Ethnicity  
(Rate per 1,000 Households), King County (2006-2018)**



Source: Washington State Child Welfare.

# Human Trafficking

Human Trafficking is defined as the inducement of a person to perform a commercial sex act, labor, or services, through force, fraud, or coercion. Human trafficking can also occur if a person under 18 years old of age has been induced or enticed, regardless of force, fraud, or coercion, to perform a commercial sex act.<sup>33</sup>

## Prevalence

- Human Trafficking is a modern-day form of slavery. Victims are coerced to prostitute or to work without pay and often subjected to physical and psychological dangers, such as severe beatings, rape, drug addiction and other forms of violence.<sup>34</sup> In Washington, 229 cases of human trafficking were reported in 2018, and 1,184 have been reported in the state since 2007.<sup>35</sup>
- The International Labour Organization estimates that there are nearly 21 million victims of human trafficking globally; 68% are trapped in forced labor, 26% are children, and 55% are women and children.<sup>36</sup>

“Human trafficking continues to plague our nation. We have found the best method for us to intervene is by an alert resident notifying the local police of suspicious behavior,”  
Bellevue Assistant Police Chief

~Carl Kleinknecht,  
Assistant Police Chief



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## Endnotes

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