



DV Hotline Calls, Homicides, and Police Reports during the COVID19 Pandemic

Submitted July 28, 2020

Summary

KCADV's 15 primary service domestic violence shelter programs have remained open throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue to provide life-saving shelter and supportive services. Programs have expanded online and remote service provision, provided more intense case management, and worked to decrease shelter population density by transferring clients to hotels and permanent housing solutions.

KCADV programs **received 26% fewer domestic violence crisis calls** in March-June 2020, compared to March-June 2019. The most dramatic decreases in call volume occurred in April and May 2020, when shelter-in-place orders were most strict (see Figure 1). Programs have reported that victims are having more difficulty safely reaching out for help while their abusers are quarantined with them at home. Programs have found that, while call volume decreased, the intensity and severity of victim circumstances increased dramatically. Programs have also noticed an increase in calls from out-of-state (primarily TN). Decreases in crisis call volume follow national trends, as reported by the National Domestic Violence Hotline (see Figure 2).

The decrease in crisis contacts is echoed in data provided by the Kentucky State Police (KSP) and the Lexington Police Department (LPD). According to KSP and LPD, both the number of DV-related cases and DV-related calls have decreased in the period from March – June 2020, as compared with the same period in 2019 (see Figure 5). Kentucky has also seen a slight increase in incidence of DV-related homicides since March 2020, as compared to the same period 2019 (see Figure 4).

Figure 1: KCADV Programs' Hotline Calls Comparison, 2019 v. 2020

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>% Change</u>
March	2811	2277	19% decrease
April	2679	1737	36% decrease
May	2941	2027	31% decrease
June	2816	2336	17% decrease
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>11,247</u>	<u>8,377</u>	<u>26% decrease</u>

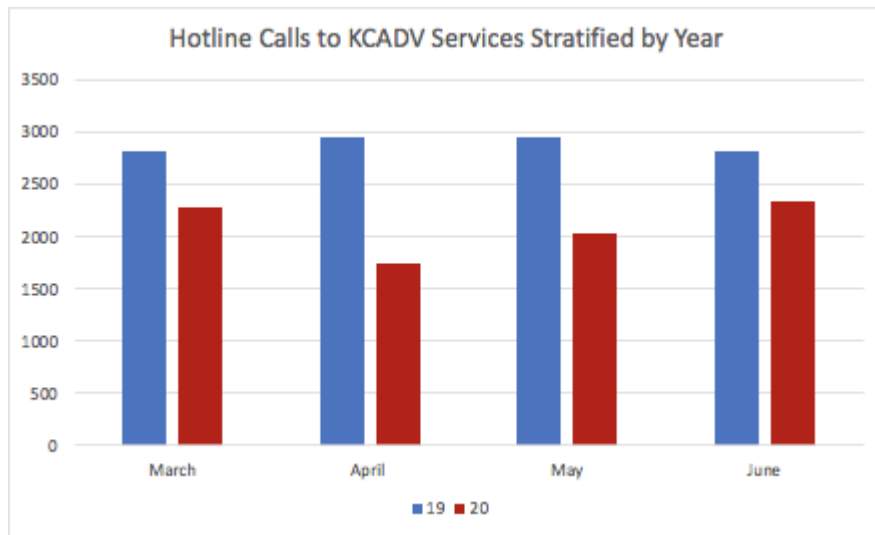
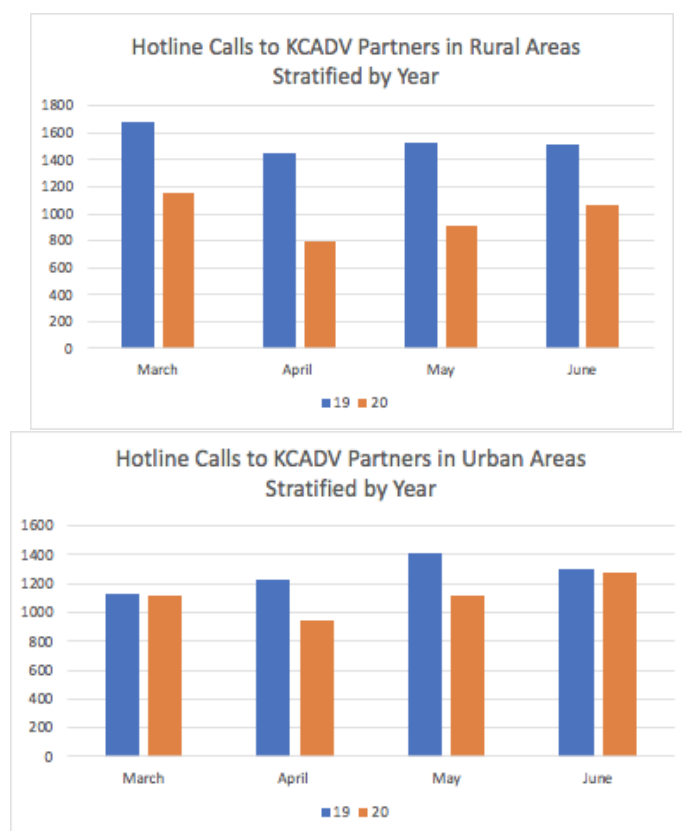


Figure 2: National Domestic Violence Contacts (Phone, text, chat) Comparison, 2019 v. 2020

	<u>National</u> <u>2019</u>	<u>National</u> <u>2020</u>	<u>National</u> <u>% Change</u>	<u>KY</u> <u>2019</u>	<u>KY</u> <u>2020</u>	<u>KY</u> <u>% Change</u>
March	12,234	17,351	29% increase	158	136	14% decrease
April	18,020	13,490	25% decrease	174	142	18% decrease
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>37,089</u>	<u>30,783</u>	<u>17% decrease</u>	<u>332</u>	<u>277</u>	<u>17% decrease</u>

Kentucky contacts to the National Domestic Violence Hotline decreased in March, while contacts increased drastically nation-wide; however, Kentucky appears to follow national trends in March and April with a 17% total decrease in contact volume.

Figure 3: KCADV's Program Hotline Calls, 2019 v. 2020 and Urban v. Rural



Programs considered urban are GreenHouse17, Center for Women and Families, BRASS INC., WCC-NKY, and OASIS. Programs considered rural are Bethany House, CVDVS, DOVES, WCC- Buffalo Trace, Merryman House, Safe Harbor, Sanctuary Inc., Turning Point, and SpringHaven.

While the programs located in urban areas experienced a decreased volume of calls in April and May, when shelter-in-place orders were most strict, call volumes in March and June of 2020 remained constant with levels recorded in March and June of 2019. In contrast, programs located in rural areas experienced a significant decrease in calls in March-June 2020 as compared with the same period in 2019.

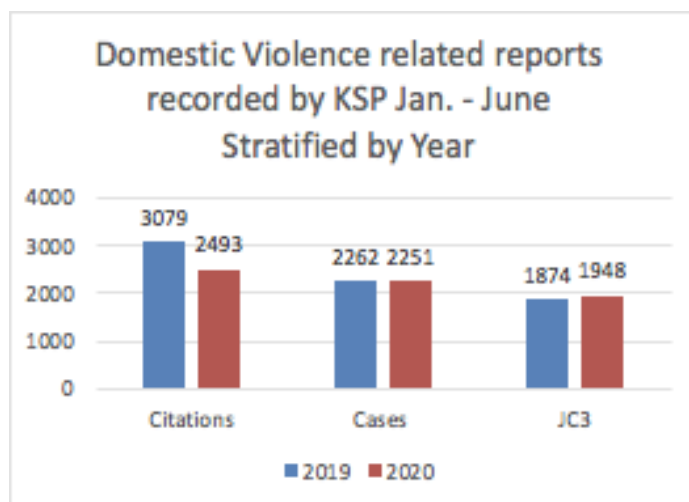
Figure 4: Known DV-related Homicides in KY, 2019 v. 2020

<u>March-July 2019</u>	<u>March-July 2020</u>
10 known homicides	13 known homicides*

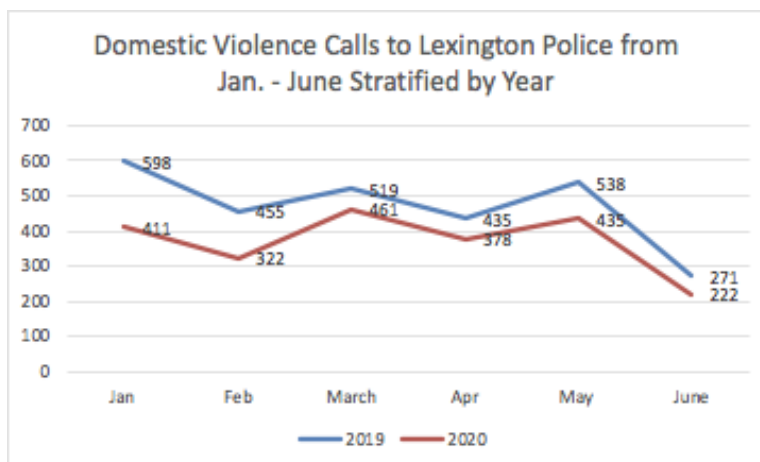
*This reporting does not account for 3 exceptionally violent attacks during March-July 2020, in which those individuals victimized through Domestic Violence survived.

Figure 5: DV-related Reports to Police in KY, 2019 v. 2020

From March -June of 2020, KSP recorded 2,251 cases that were opened involving a domestic violence related offense code. During this same period in 2019, 2,262 cases were opened. While there was a slight decrease (about 1%) in 2020, it seems that COVID-19 did not greatly change the frequency at which Kentucky State Police were contacted for Domestic Violence or Domestic Violence related incidents.¹



During COVID-19, there was a 34% decrease in the volume of DV calls made to the Lexington Police when compared to the same period in 2019. Interestingly, the general pattern of Domestic Violence calls made to police from January to June appear to be the same across 2019 and 2020.



When considering this data, it is important to recall that less than 40% of women who experience violence seek help of any sort. From that group of women who seek help, less than

¹ The Nelson County Sheriff, Louisville Metro Police Department, and Winchester Police Department are excluded from these numbers because they don't report their data to the state system.

10% of women seek help from the police.² The fact that the number of people seeking help from the police went down should not be taken as an indication that the frequency of DV incidents is going down but rather as a possible indication of how much survivors trust the police or are able to contact the police.

² "The World's Women 2015." Accessed June 29, 2020.
<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/chapter6/chapter6.html>.