

Kentucky's Justice Reinvestment Initiative

Interim Joint Committee on Judiciary

August 29, 2025



Justice Center
THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS



**Justice
Reinvestment
Initiative**
Kentucky



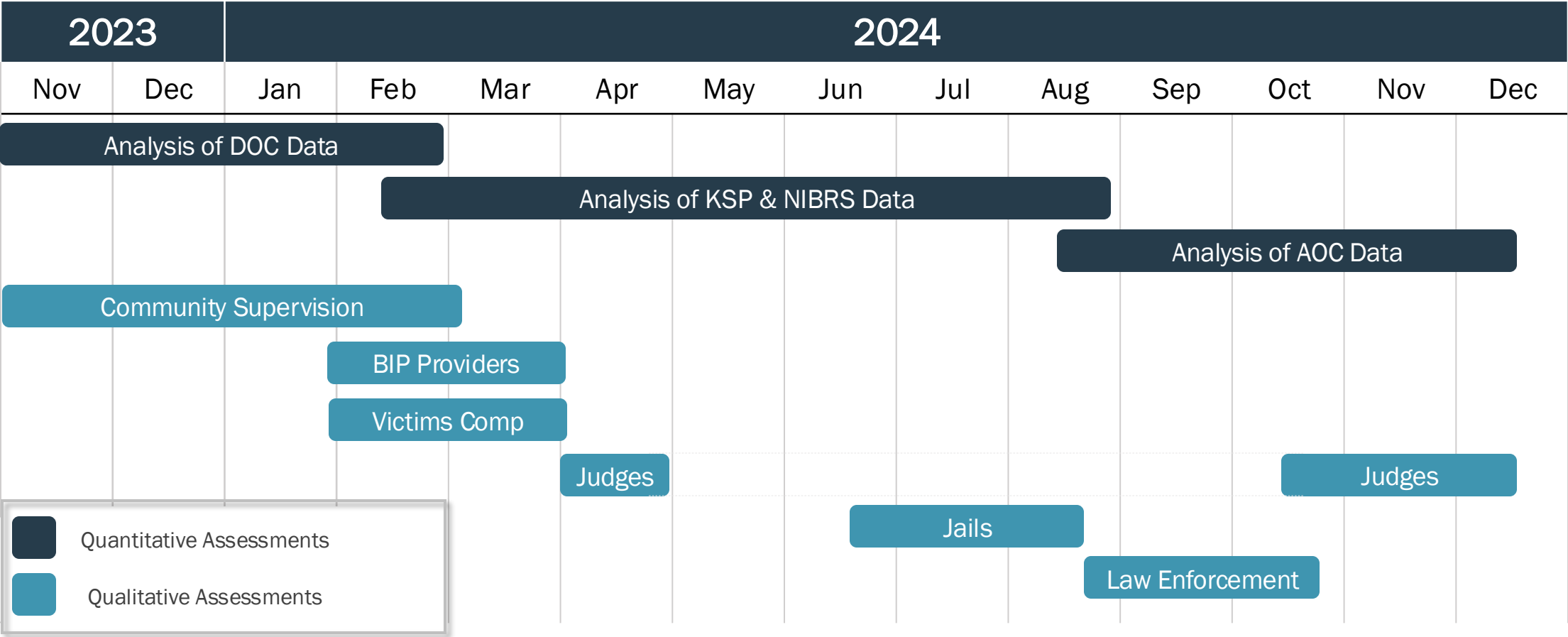
To address its domestic violence (DV) challenges, Kentucky leaders requested a Justice Reinvestment Initiative to identify data-driven solutions.



**Justice
Reinvestment
Initiative**
Kentucky

In 2023, Kentucky leaders partnered with the CSG Justice Center to understand the challenges of DV and intimate partner violence (IPV) and identify data-driven solutions that work.

Starting in 2023, CSG Justice Center staff conducted a variety of qualitative and quantitative assessments.



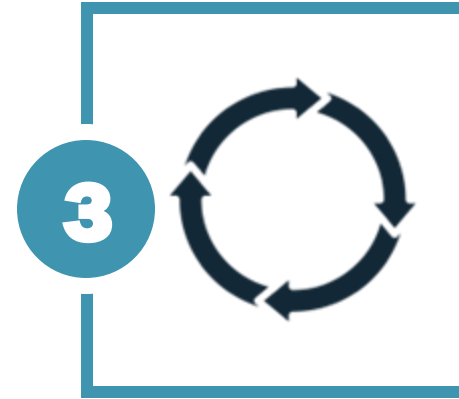
Key Challenges



There is a high prevalence of domestic violence (DV) and victimization



DV is a major driver of violent crime



DV contributes to recidivism

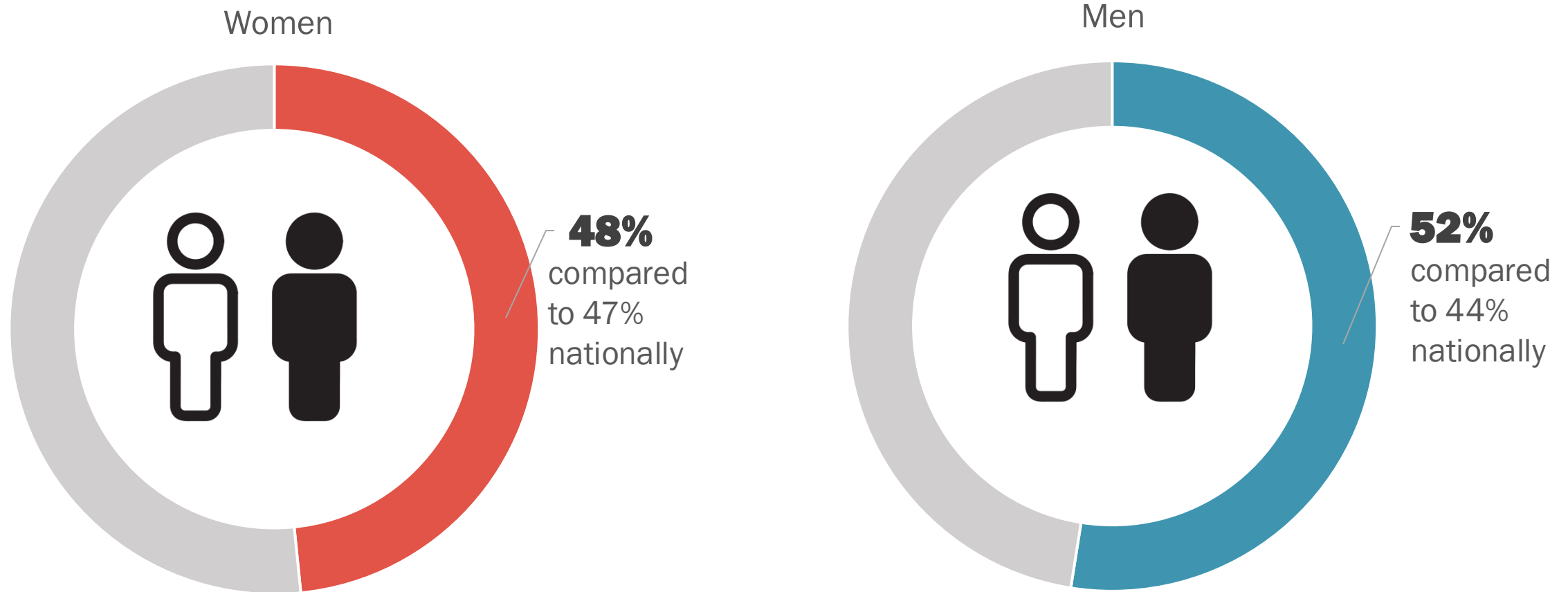


DV consumes significant resources

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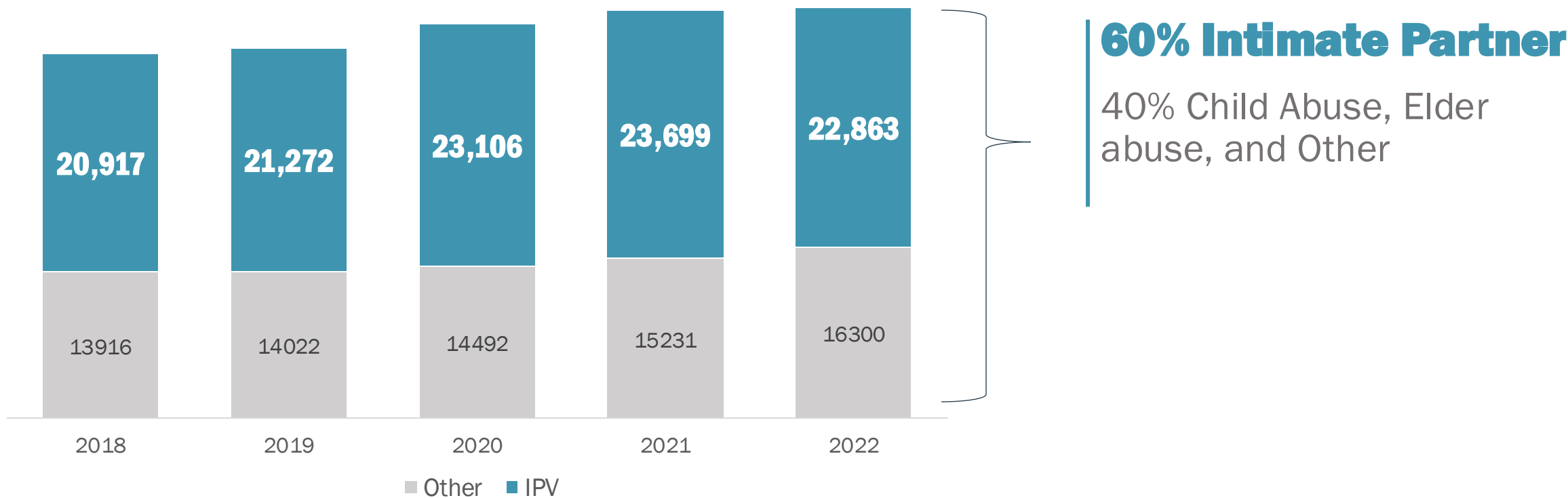
There is a high prevalence of domestic violence (DV) and victimization

In Kentucky, half of all adults will experience contact sexual violence, physical violence, or stalking in their lifetimes.



Our analyses show that an average of 22,000 incidents of IPV occurred from 2018 to 2022.

Number of Incidents by DV Type, 2018–2022

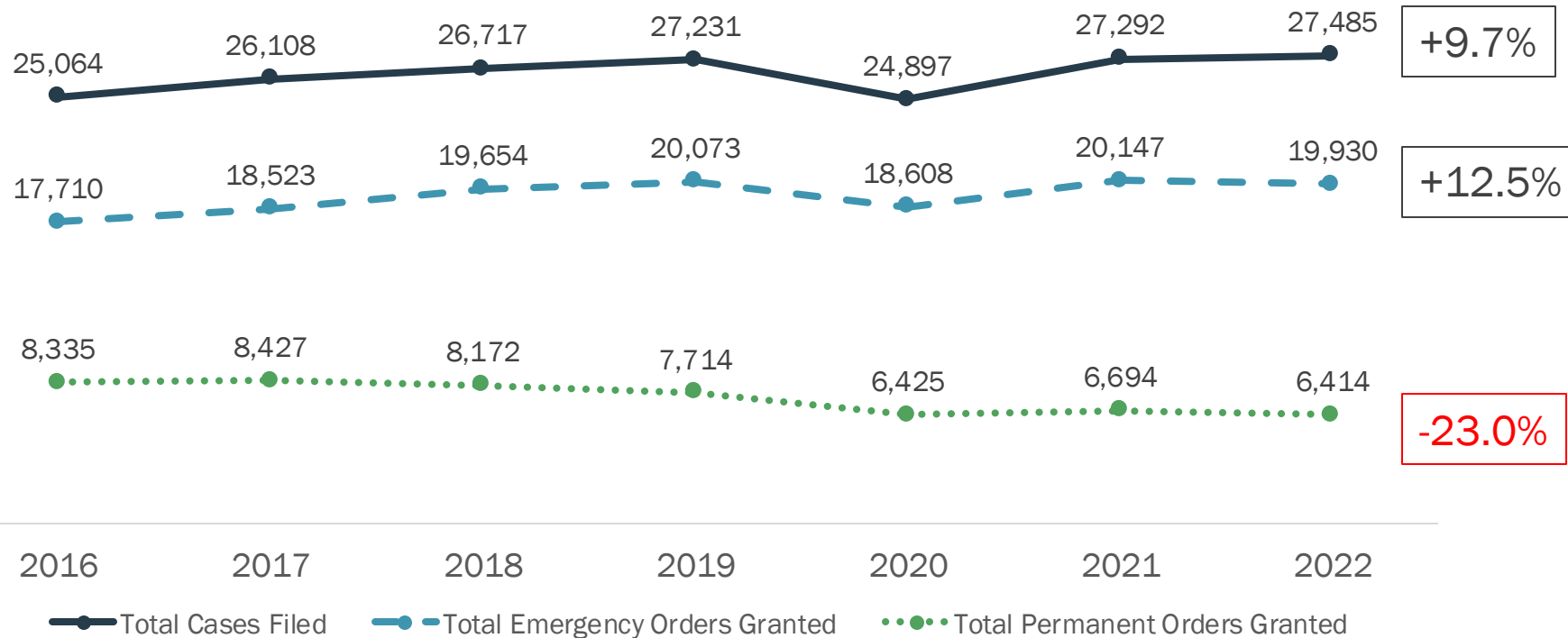


CSG Justice Center analysis of JC-3 data provided by Kentucky State Police, June 2023.

“Other” includes abuse, neglect, or exploiting an adult by "self" or "other" family (not a partner or children) and adult/elder abuse, which includes abuse, neglect, or exploiting an adult who is a parent or grandparent (by child caretaker).

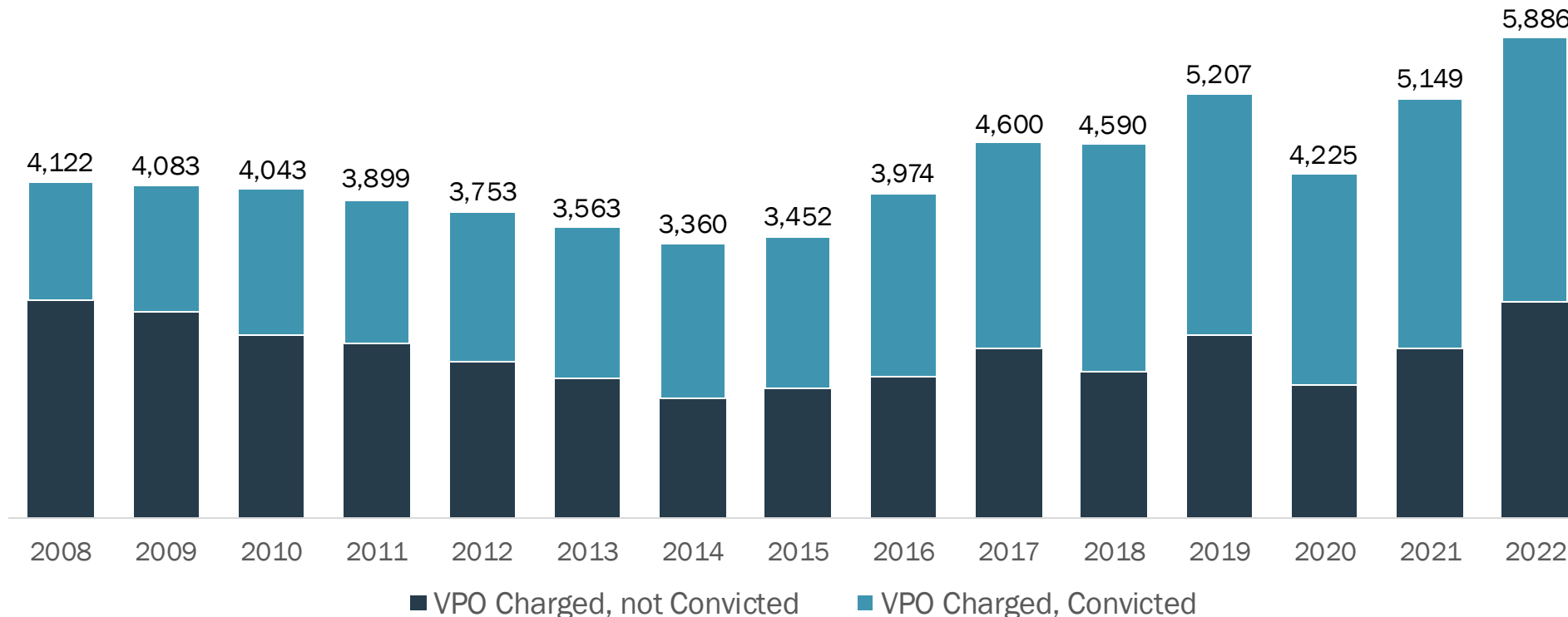
While there has been an increase in recent years in case filings and temporary protective orders, the number of granted permanent orders has declined.

Total Emergency and Permanent Protection Orders Granted:
2016–2022



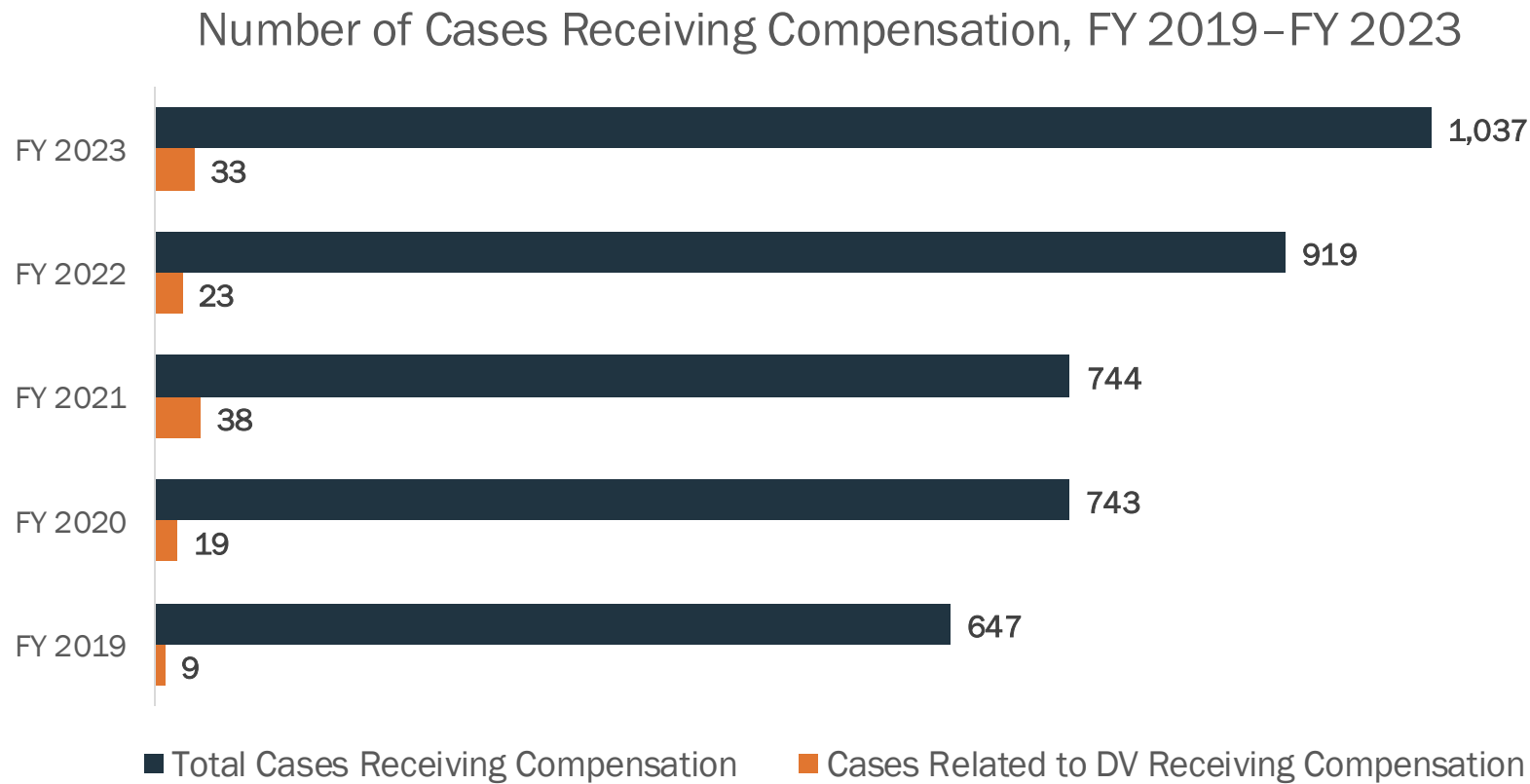
Charges involving violations of protective orders (VPOs) have increased 43 percent since 2008.

Charges Filed for Violations of Protective Orders
2008–2022



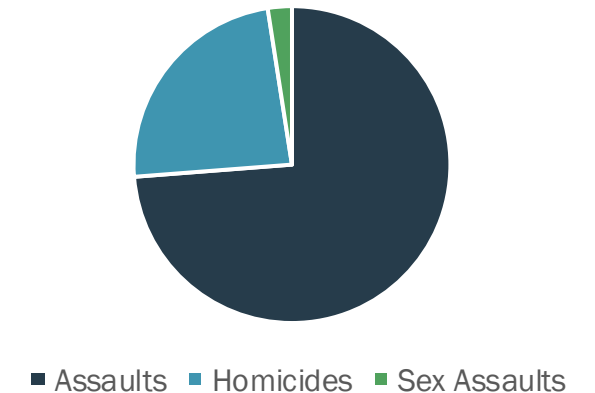
Convictions
for VPOs
have
increased
124%
since 2008.

A small number of victims of DV receive compensation through the Office of Victims of Crime.



Kentucky has been increasing compensation payments to victims of domestic and family violence over the past 5 fiscal years.

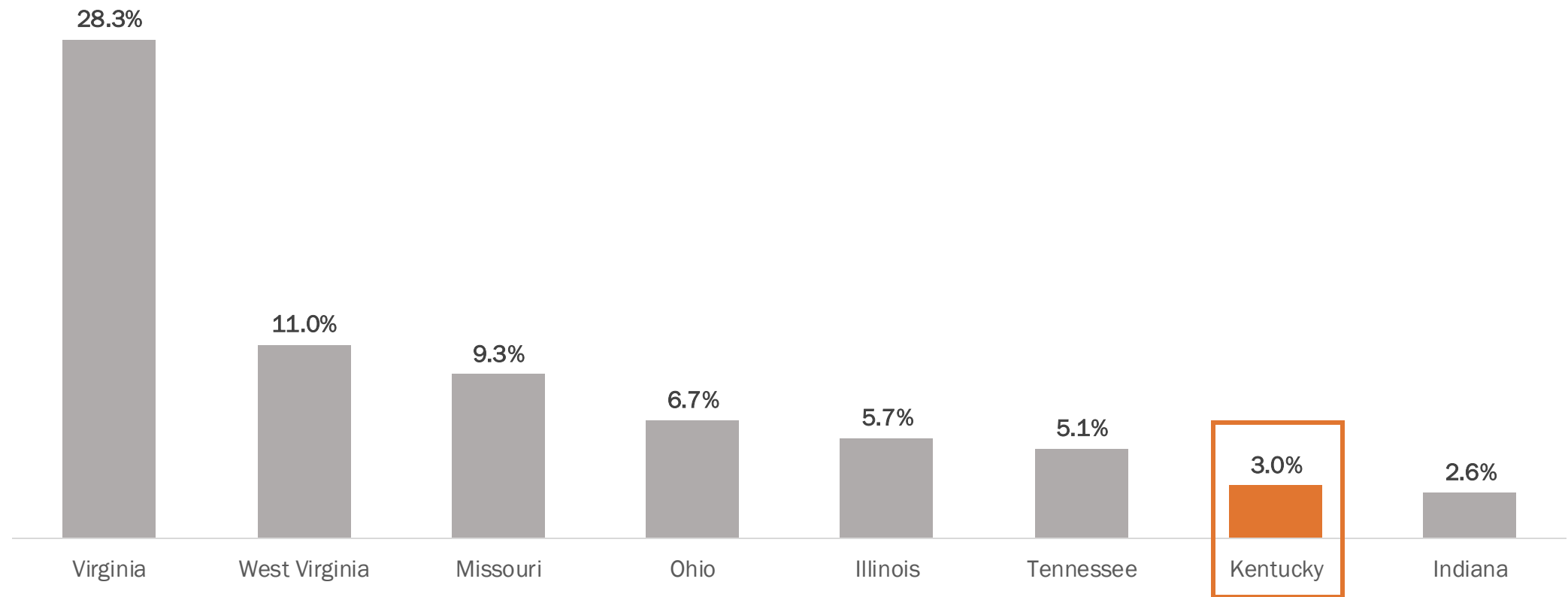
Type of Offenses in DV Compensation Claims



The majority of payments cover costs associated with assault.

Kentucky ranks near the bottom among surrounding states in the percent of victim compensation for DV-related claims.

Percent of DV-Related Compensation Payments, FY 2019–FY 2023





Key Takeaway

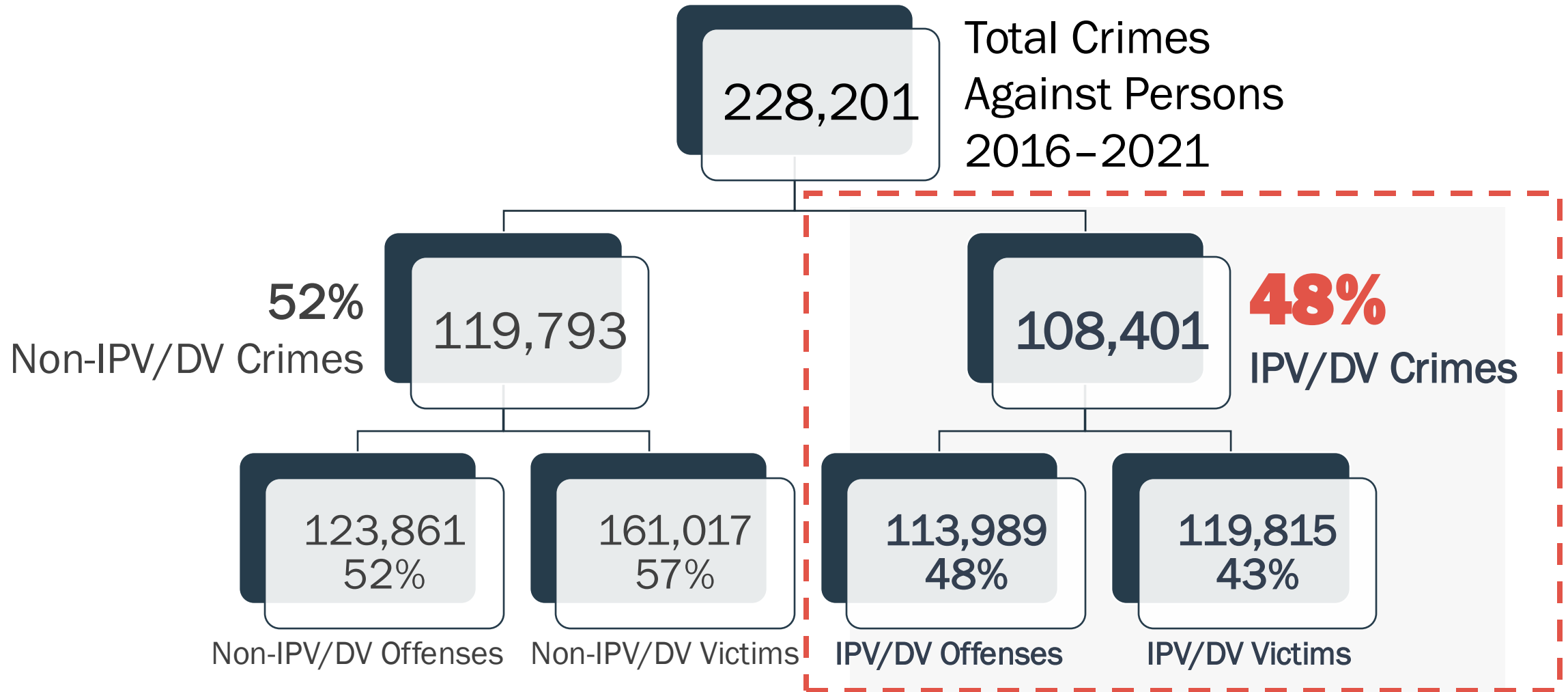
There is a high prevalence of domestic violence (DV) and victimization

Data indicates that KY has a very high prevalence of DV and IPV and that there is significant room for improvement in how the commonwealth supports and provides resources to victims.

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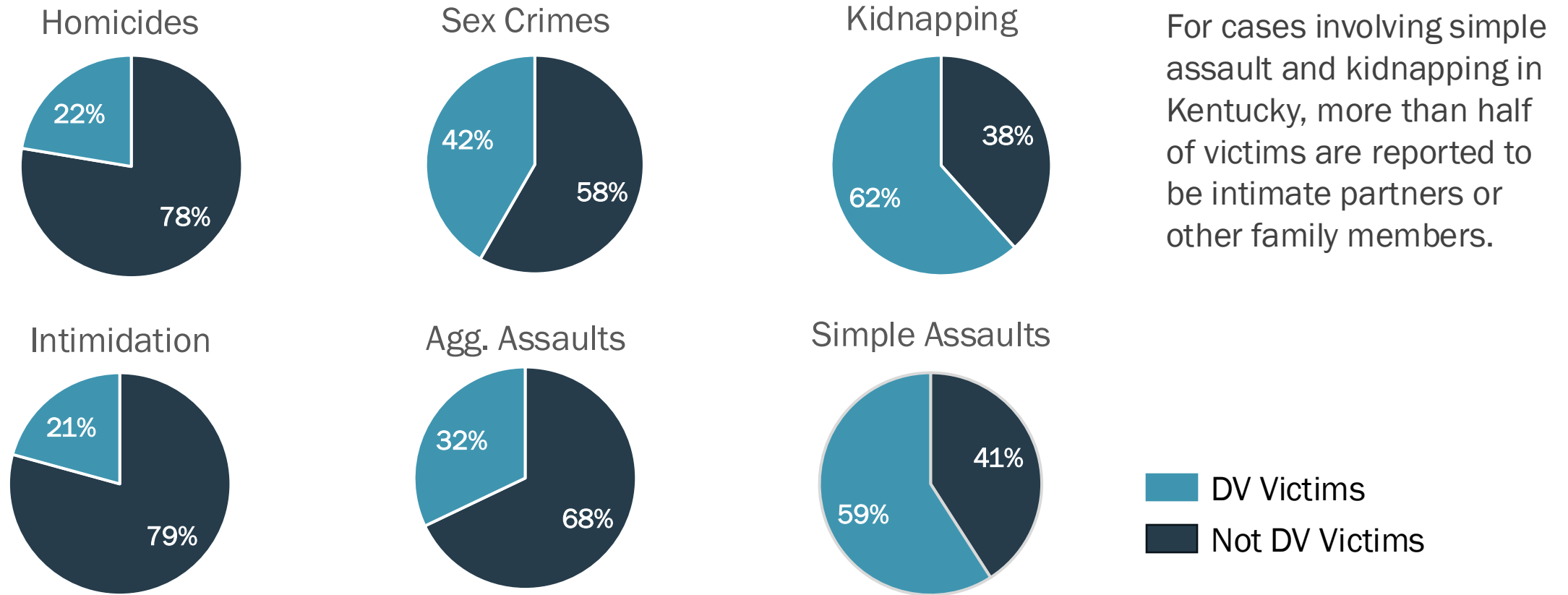
**DV is a major
driver of
violent crime**

Over a 6-year period, almost half of all person (violent) crimes in Kentucky involve DV.



Victims of IPV are seen across all person offense types.

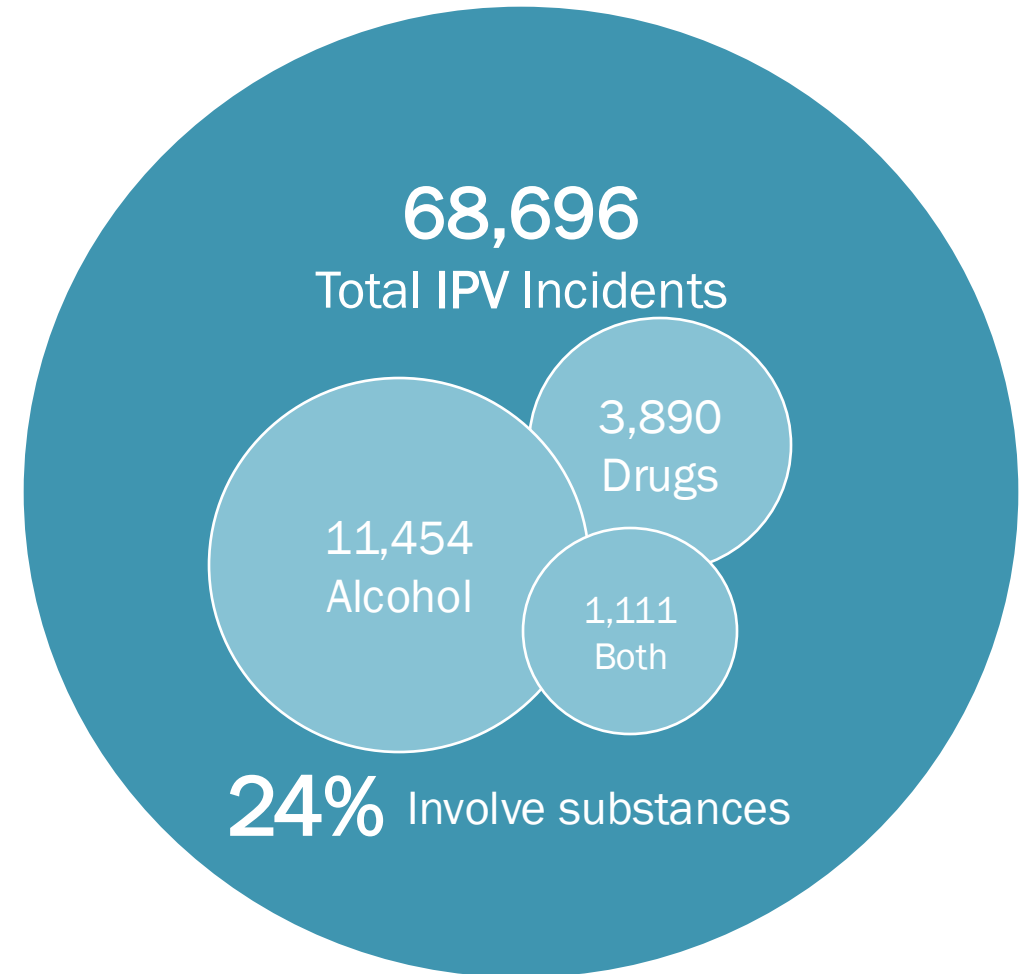
Percent of Victims in Kentucky Identifying as Intimate Partner/Family Violence for Selected Offenses
2016–2021



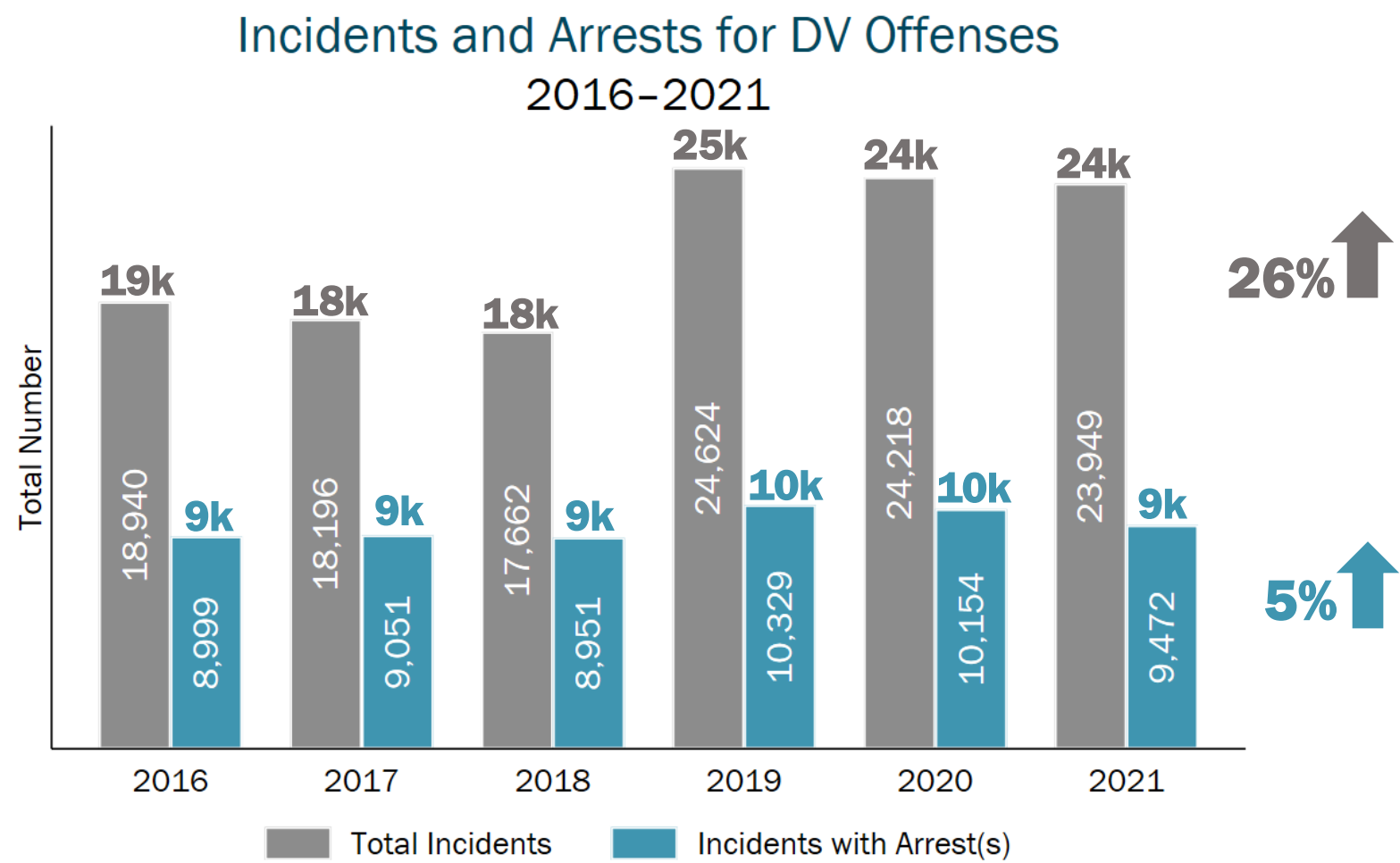
Alcohol and/or drugs were involved in at least 24 percent of all reported IPV incidents in the commonwealth.

Research suggests that there is significant under-reporting in NIBRS of incidents where alcohol or drugs were involved.

Proportion of IPV Incidents in Kentucky Involving Drugs or Alcohol: 2016–2021



Annually, the number of reported incidents and arrests for DV offenses in Kentucky has been increasing compared to 2016.



How were law enforcement officers prepared to respond to DV incidents?



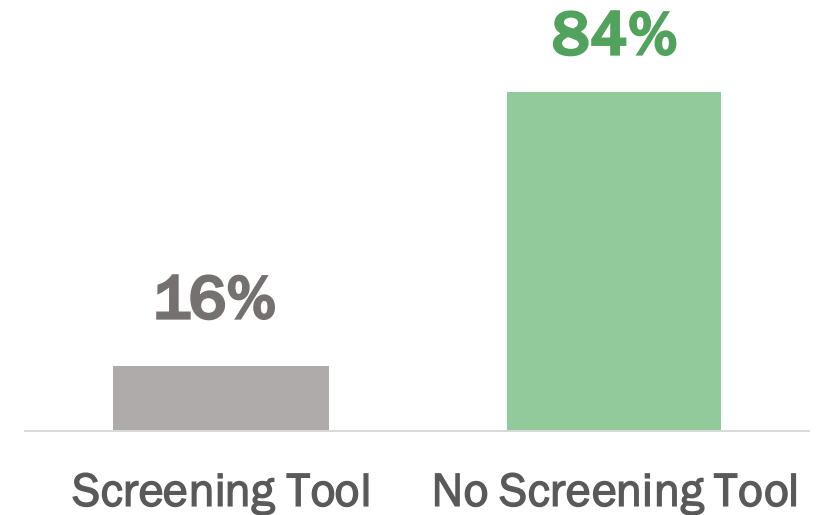
Have adopted model policies on how to respond to incidents of DV

Only two indicated that they didn't have a policy



Received some guidance on how to interview and respond to victims

Most officers do not have screening tools to gauge whether victims are at risk of serious injury.





Key Takeaway

DV is a major driver of
violent crime

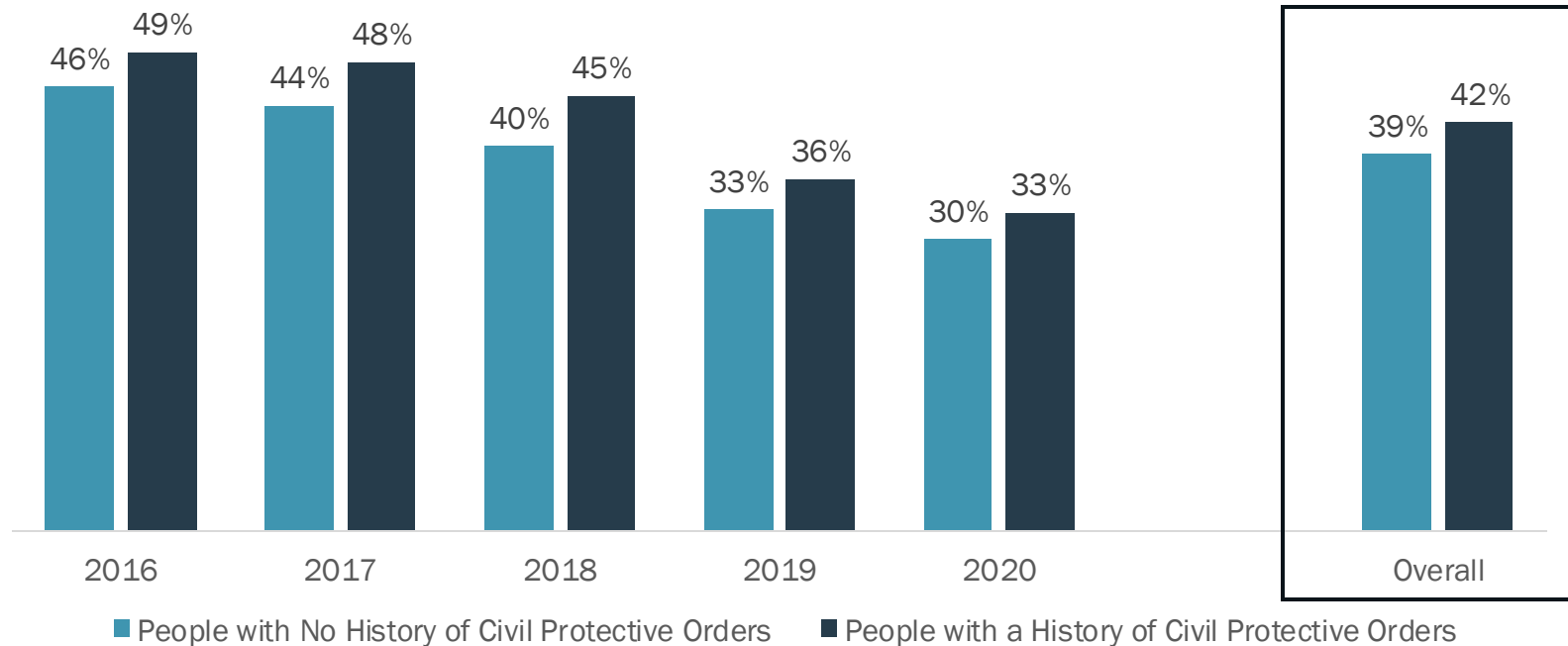
DV is linked to nearly half of all violent crimes in Kentucky, with IPV driving a significant share of homicides and sex crimes. The issue continues to grow, with reported DV cases up and arrests rising annually, often compounded by drugs and alcohol.

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DV contributes to recidivism

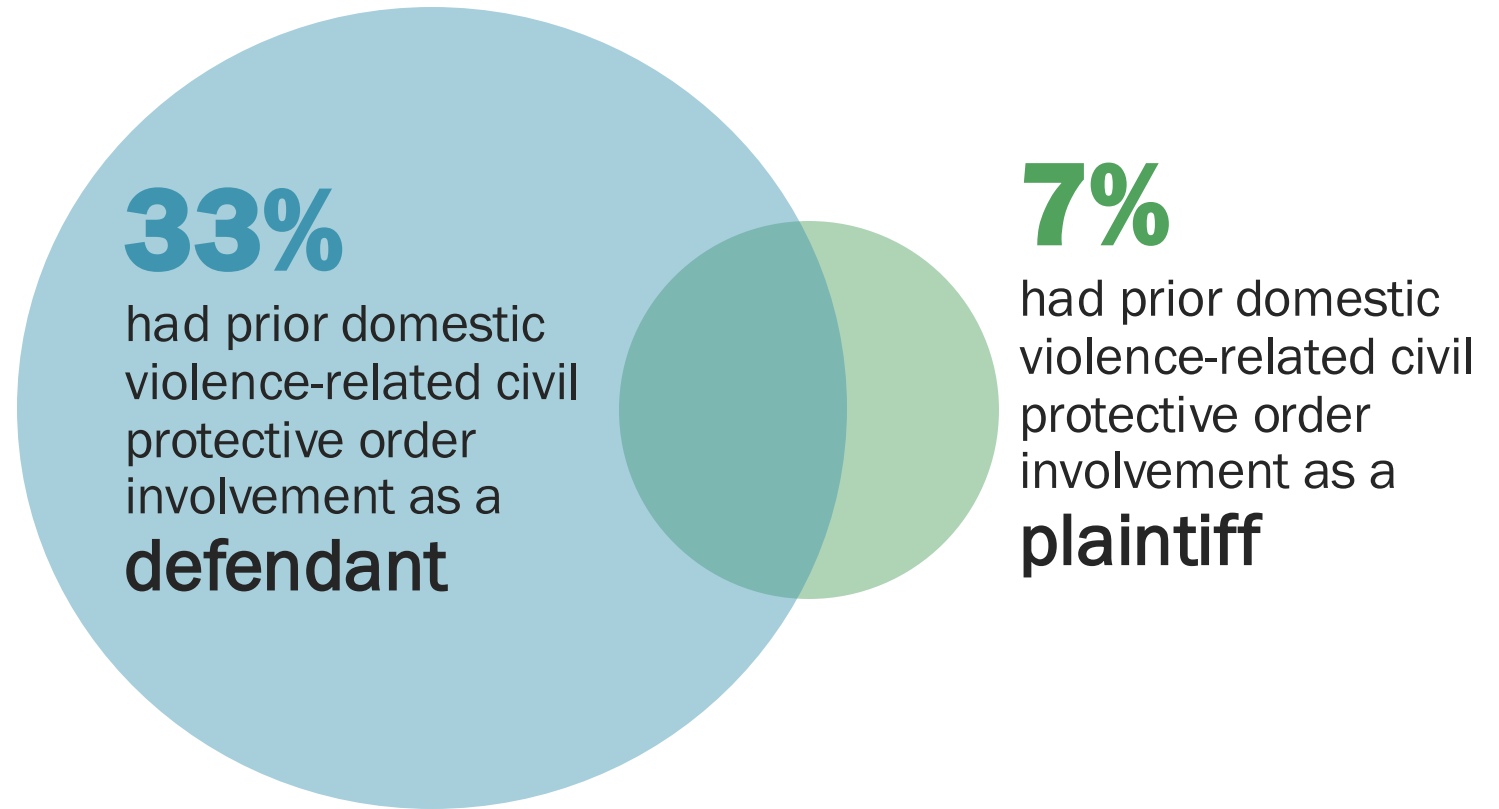
An analysis of two-year reincarceration trends shows that people with a history of civil protective orders recidivate at a slightly higher rate than people without such history.

Two-Year Reincarceration Rates for DOC:
Releases for 2016–2020

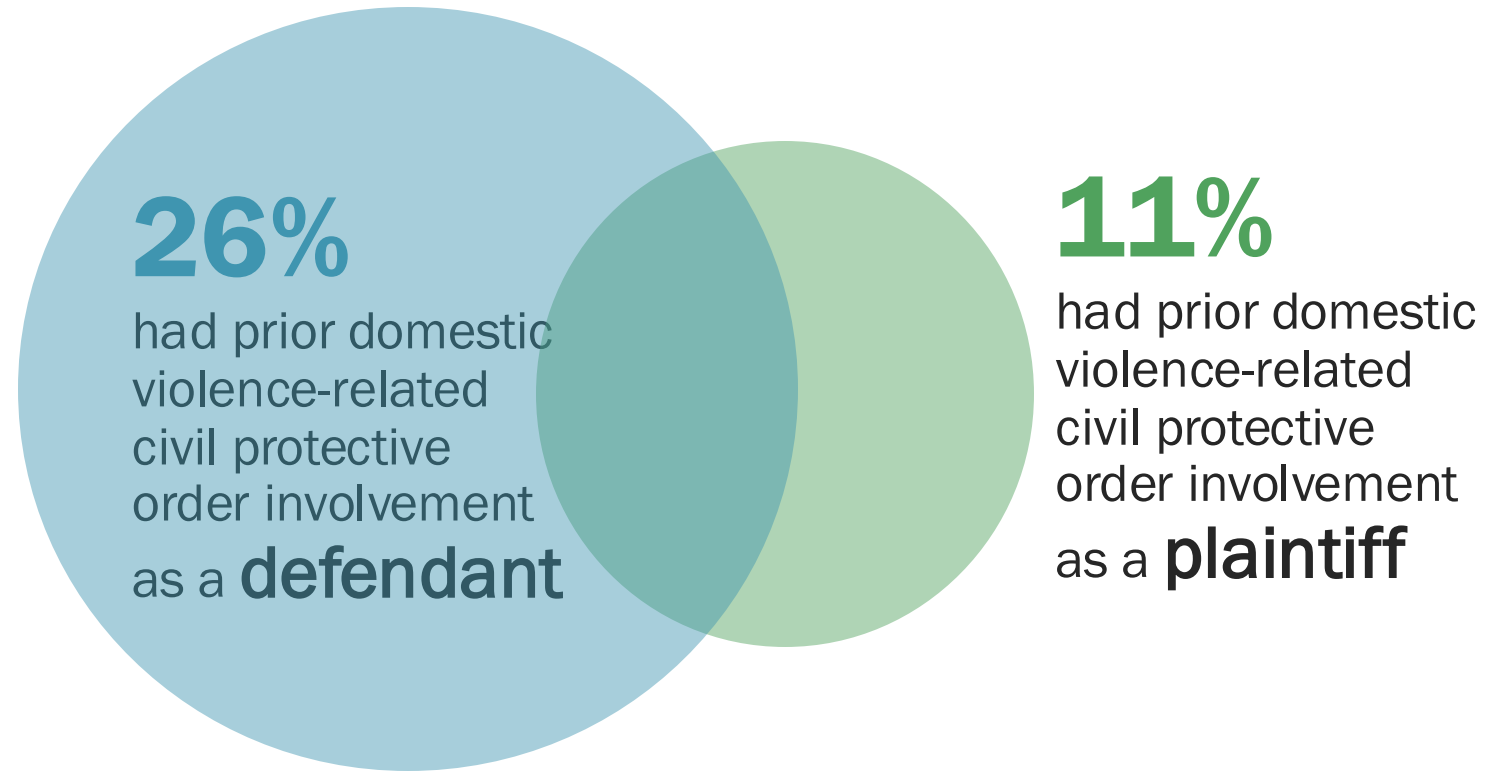


For each release year in the analysis, people with a history of civil protective orders are returning to DOC custody at higher rates than people without this history.

In 2022, more than one-third (37%) of all people admitted to DOC custody had prior domestic violence-related civil protective order involvement as either a defendant or plaintiff.

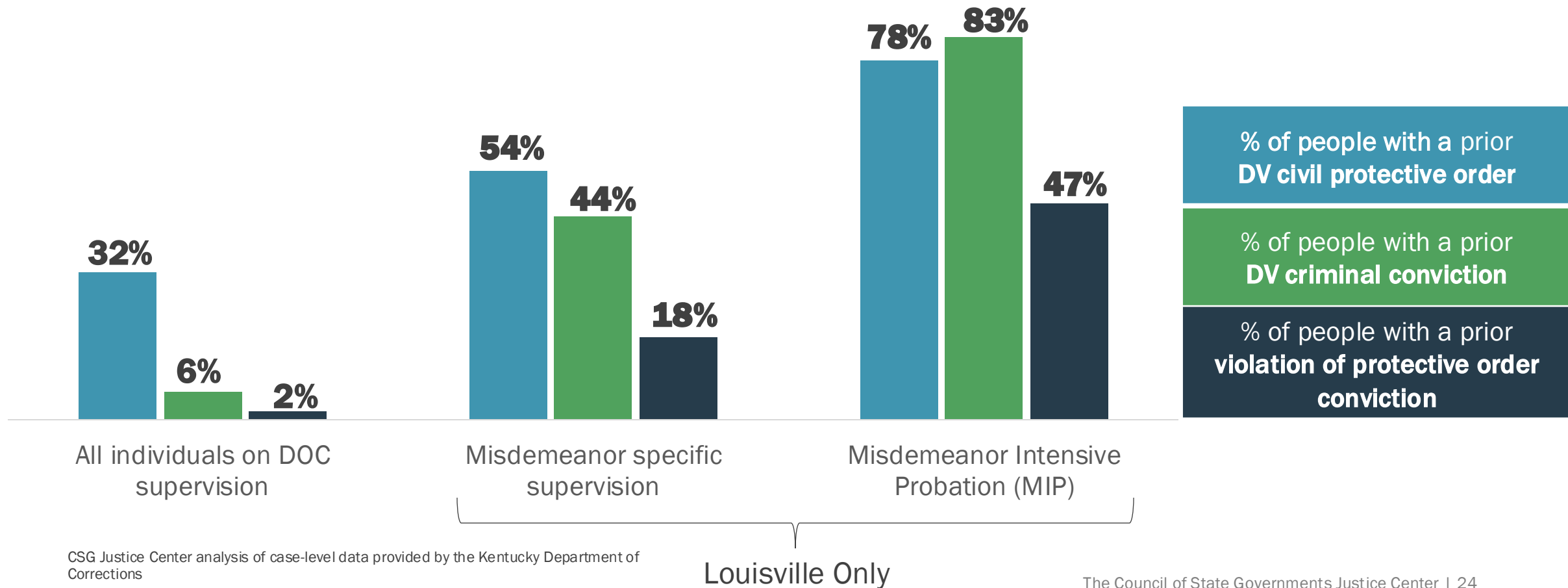


Nearly one-third (32%) of people on DOC supervision have been a party to a civil DV case.

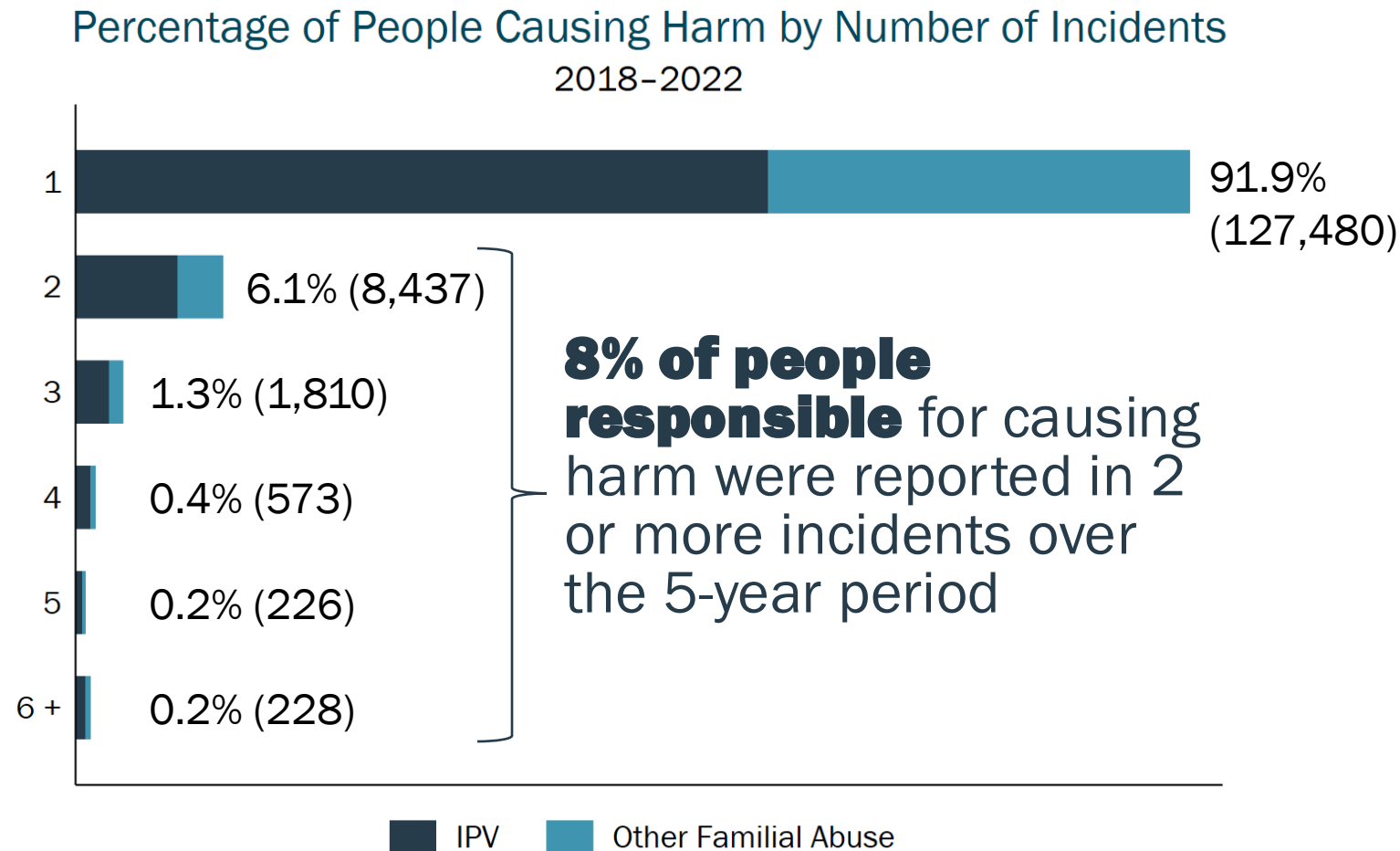


The misdemeanor population in Louisville supervised by DOC has a higher proportion of both civil and criminal DV history than people with felony convictions on DOC supervision.

DOC Supervised Population with a History of Civil Protective Orders, Criminal Convictions for DV Offenses, and Violations of Protective Orders: 2022



Law enforcement reported that repeat calls to the same address are a key issue in DV incidents.



Targeted responses for the 8% of people responsible for causing harm who have 2 or more contacts with law enforcement could *reduce recidivism rates among this population.*



Key Takeaway

DV contributes to
recidivism

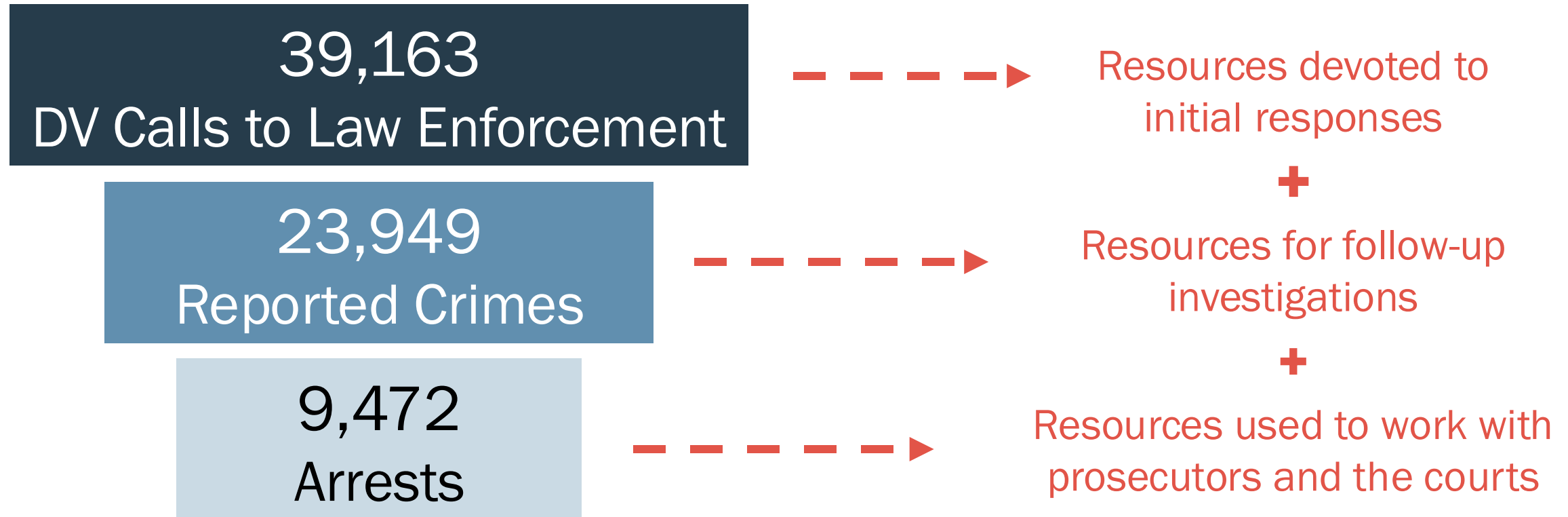
Over one-third of people entering KY DOC custody and nearly a third under supervision have DV-related histories. A small but impactful group of people who repeatedly commit DV offenses drives ongoing harm, presenting a key opportunity for targeted interventions to break cycles of violence.

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**DV consumes
significant
resources**

In 2022, there were approximately 39,000 law enforcement responses to DV, requiring resources devoted not only to the initial response but also to any follow-up investigations.

Estimated DV Contacts with Law Enforcement



When surveyed, officers reported that DV calls place a substantial demand on law enforcement resources, requiring significant time, personnel, and coordination.



Respondents indicated that they generally sent two officers to respond to an incident.

- This created issues for small offices that might have fewer than three officers on duty.
- 80 percent of respondents indicated that the size of staff was the major barrier hindering the agency from effectively responding.

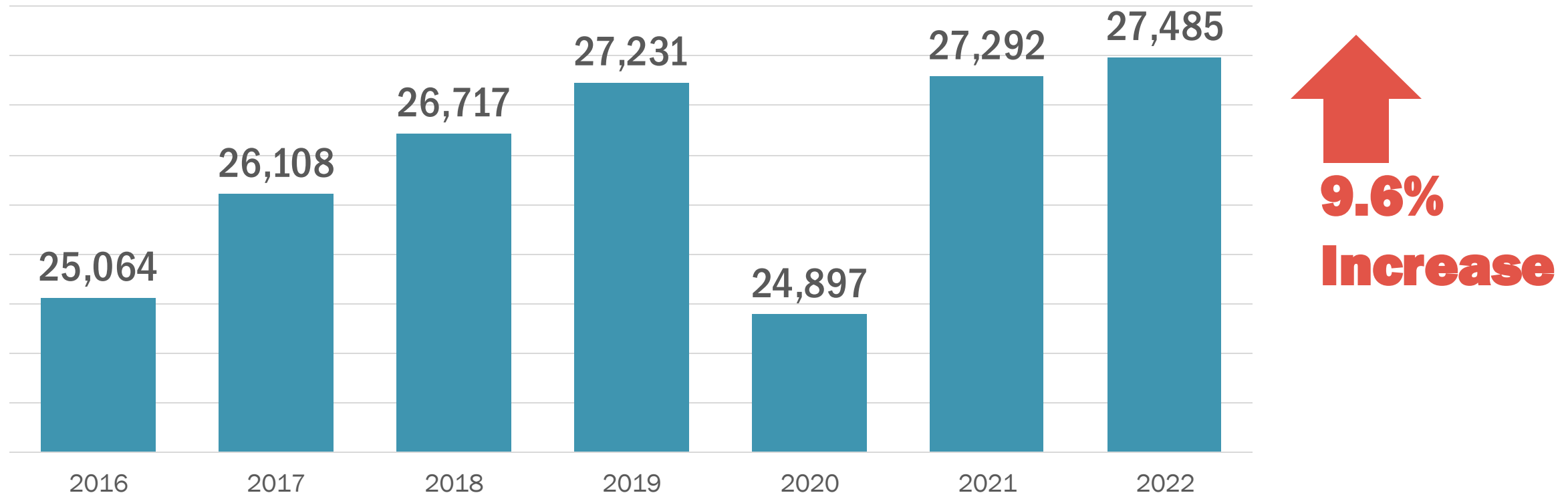


Officers reported that responses to DV calls generally took at least an hour for the initial response.

- In addition, officers sometimes spent extended time on scene to help ensure the victim's safety.
- After the initial call, secondary investigations require additional time and resources.

Between 2016 and 2022, there was a 10 percent increase in the number of case filings for permanent and temporary protective orders.

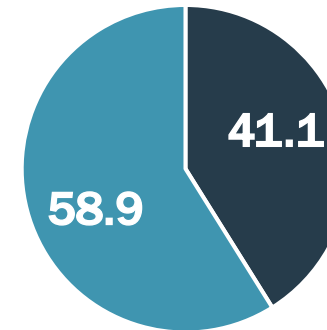
Total Emergency and Permanent Protection Orders Filed: 2016–2022



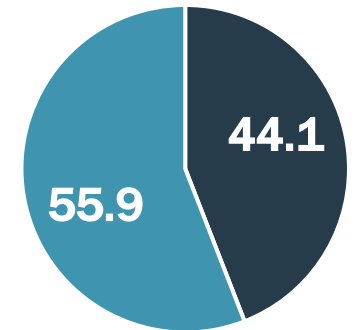
DV affects all regions, highlighting a potential resource disparity where rural systems may be under-equipped despite high demand.

DV Cases Disposed Out of All Violent Cases by Population Size: 2008–2022

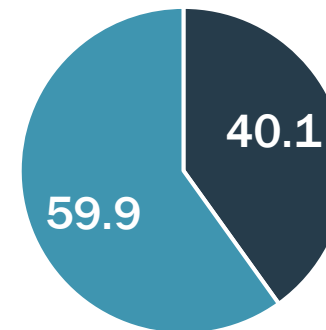
Louisville Metro



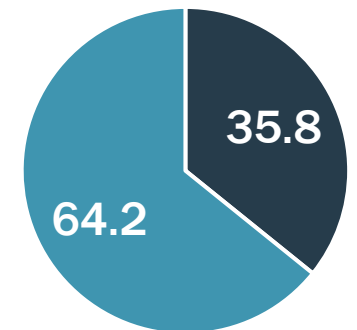
Other Metropolitan Areas



Micropolitan Areas



Rural Areas



Cases involving DV



Cases not involving DV



Key Takeaway

DV consumes significant
resources

DV is straining KY's law enforcement and courts, with 39,000 calls in 2022 and more protective order filings. Rural areas are hit especially hard with high demand but fewer resources—making DV both a safety crisis and a big drain on system costs. However, Kentucky should be proud that attention is being paid to this very serious issue.

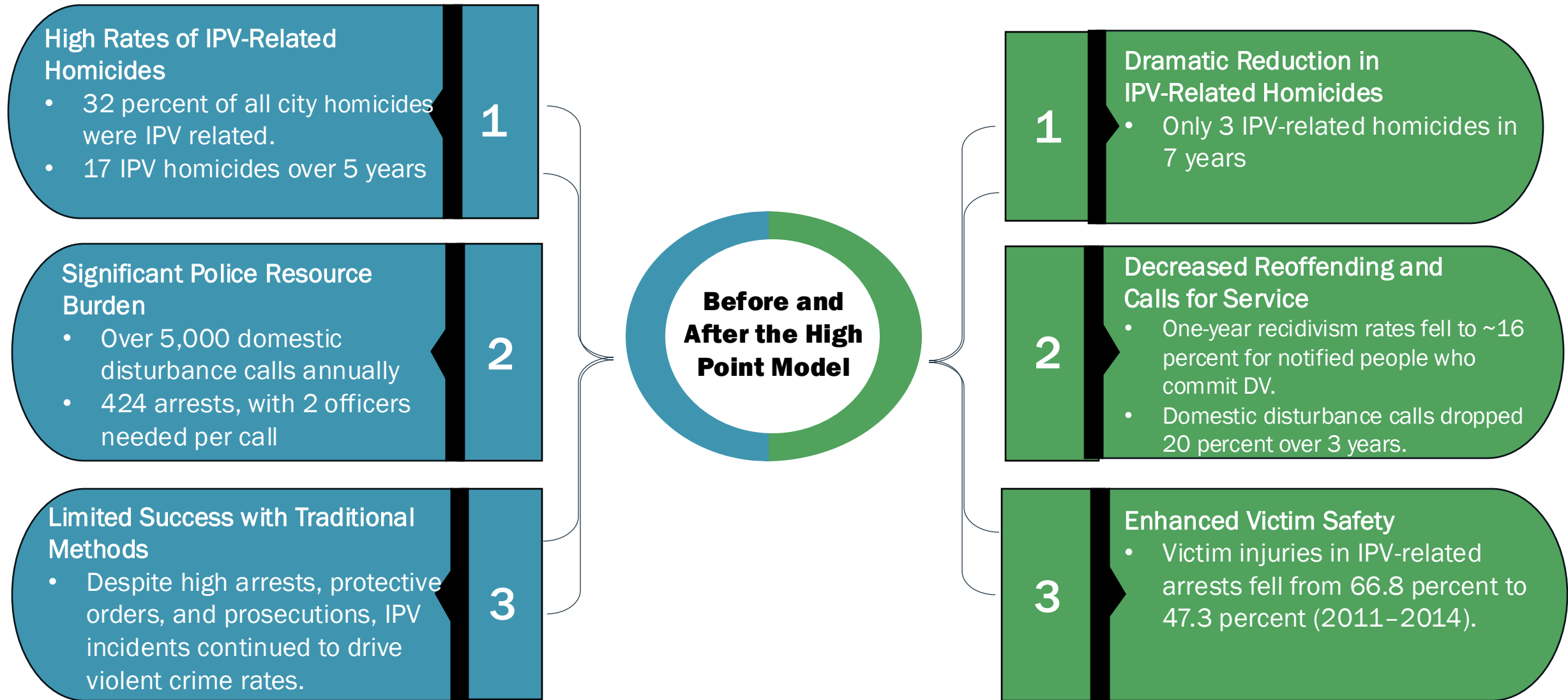
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State Policy Examples & Considerations

The High Point Police Department in North Carolina has achieved substantial reductions in DV re-offenses by implementing targeted interventions for people who repeatedly commit DV.



What have been the impacts of the High Point Model?



The 2020 Violence Against Women Act Statewide Needs Assessment highlighted several recommendations.

Training & Education

Institutionalize a training curriculum to address the topics identified throughout this report for judges, circuit court clerks, and the larger court community.

Access

Collaborate with the Department of Language Access at the AOC to assess gaps and priorities to provide meaningful language access for all Kentuckians accessing the court system.

Protective Order

Collaborate with local law enforcement agencies to address barriers that prevent timely service of protective orders, especially in rural communities.

Safety

Courts should partner with law enforcement and local victim service organizations to develop security strategies and protocols for cases involving DV, IPV, sexual violence, and stalking.

Offender Accountability

The court system should partner with local BIP providers and service providers to understand each other's roles and implement a process for referrals and court-ordered participation.

Reducing DV incidents and DOC commitments by 25 percent would have large state impacts.

- In Kentucky, a 25 percent reduction of reported DV incidents would lower the number of victimizations by nearly 5,000 people per year.
- Additionally, an annual 25 percent reduction of DV reported incidents would lower the state's overall total person crimes by 12 percent.
- Reducing by 25 percent the number of admissions to the DOC for felony C and D domestic violence offenses would result in an average of 36 fewer commitments and avert approximately \$2 million per year.
- Over a 5-year period, there would be over 180 fewer commitments and over \$10 million in averted costs.

Estimated impacts associated with reducing reconvictions for DV offenses in Kentucky.

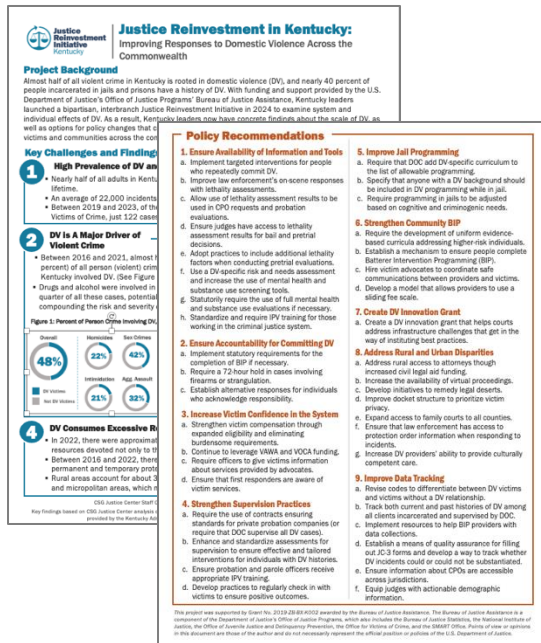
- Analysis of the AOC data indicated that the annual number of reconvictions for DV offenses of people who had been convicted of a DV offense within the prior 2 years is approximately 965 people.

- A targeted goal of reducing reconvictions could yield results in the following way:

5% reduction	48 fewer reconvictions
10% reduction	97 fewer reconvictions
15% reduction	145 fewer reconvictions
20% reduction	193 fewer reconvictions
25% reduction	241 fewer reconvictions

- These figures represent an estimate of the potential impact of reducing reconvictions for DV offenses, potentially through improvements in BIP courses that reduce future intimate partner violence. Note that it is not known how many people who were reconvicted for a DV offense within 2 years of a conviction had been ordered to participate in a BIP course. The number of people required to complete a BIP course as a condition of their sentence was not available in the data received for this analysis.

You can find additional information on the Kentucky Justice Reinvestment Initiative web page.



<https://csjusticecenter.org/projects/justice-reinvestment/current-states/kentucky/>

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