

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICE SNAPSHOT DURING COVID-19 - LAP & RESTRAINING ORDERS

(Update #4)

Below is a snapshot of services provided related to the **LETHALITY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (LAP) & RESTRAINING ORDERS** during COVID-19.

## LAP - Number of screens increase while percentage of high danger screens remain consistent...

CCADV's **LETHALITY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (LAP)** is an innovative partnership with law enforcement. At the scene of an intimate partner violence incident, law enforcement ask victims a series of **11 EVIDENCE-BASED RISK ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**. When a victim screens as being in **"HIGH DANGER"** for potentially fatal violence, the police officer **IMMEDIATELY CALLS & CONNECTS** them to the local domestic violence advocate, which a victim may choose to decline. Additionally, the advocate will follow-up for further services and support the next day regardless of whether they connect with the victim at the scene.

When comparing March - June of 2020 to 2019, we saw...



7% ↑

TOTAL SCREENS COMPLETED



NO CHANGE

TOTAL HIGH DANGER SCREENS



9% ↑

CALLS MADE BY POLICE TO ADVOCATES

The total number of **HIGH DANGER SCREENS** has **REMAINED CONSISTENT** both years at **54%**, which was only a slight increase above the total high danger screens in 2018, which was 50%. **OVERALL, LAP DATA HAS REMAINED CONSISTENT THROUGHOUT COVID.**

## Restraining Orders - Number of applications dropped dramatically when courts closed...

On March 12, 2020, the Connecticut Judicial Branch announced that it would begin hearing only "Priority 1 Business Functions," which includes family violence restraining orders. On March 18, 2020, courthouses began to be closed in response to COVID. According to data provided by the Branch, there was an immediate drop in the number of restraining order applications they received.

|                                      |                  |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| 3.9.20 - 3.13.20 (5 business days)   | 147 applications |
| 3.16.20 - 3.27.20 (10 business days) | 180 applications |

On April 3, 2020, following an executive order issued by Governor Lamont, the Branch began accepting the remote filing of restraining order applications. There began to be a slight increase in the number of applications filed, although it remained over 50% less when compared to the same timeframe in 2019. At the same time, Safe Connect began working with victims to file the applications on their behalf, while all victims were able to remotely file on their own if they chose. Between April and June, **SAFE CONNECT** filed **172 APPLICATIONS** on behalf of victims, while our **18 MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS** provided assistance with **236 APPLICATIONS**. According to data provided by the Branch, as courts began to reopen in June, there was a sharp increase in the number of applications received.

|            |                  |     |            |                  |
|------------|------------------|-----|------------|------------------|
| April 2020 | 265 applications | vs. | April 2019 | 677 applications |
| May 2020   | 294 applications |     | May 2019   | 678 applications |
| June 2020  | 478 applications |     | June 2019  | 674 applications |

It is important to note that while at no point during COVID did the Branch stop accepting restraining order applications, court closures did impact the ability of victims to access this legal remedy, possibly due to limited court locations and potential transportation challenges to access them. This summer, CCADV has been assessing how the pandemic affected restraining order applications and the advocacy adjustment to an online option through data collection and input from survivors, advocates, court clerks, and marshals. The report will be forthcoming early this fall.

# OUR MEMBERS

Our members, the state's 18 domestic violence organizations, provide critical services to survivors across the state 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Services include:

- Safety planning and risk assessment
- Emergency shelter, transitional housing & rapid rehousing
- Individual counseling and support groups
- Advocacy to access basic needs
- Court-based advocacy in criminal and civil court
- Age-appropriate advocacy and support services for children & teens
- Community education



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