



1855 E. Dublin-Granville Road, Suite 301
Columbus, Ohio 43229
Phone: 614-781-9651
www.odvn.org

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Contact: Micaela Deming, micaelad@odvn.org or 614-373-6899

131 people died from domestic violence in Ohio, a 20% spike over last year

Fifteen young victims killed, according to ODVN's annual fatality count

Guest speaker AG Dave Yost celebrated increased state funding for DV services

COLUMBUS, Ohio (Oct. 5, 2021) – Ohio suffered 131 domestic violence fatalities in the year ending June 30, 2021, a 20% increase in fatalities over the same time period last year, and a 62% increase from two years ago, according to the Ohio Domestic Violence Network's (ODVN's) [sixth annual count of DV fatalities](#).

Fifteen young victims were killed, the largest yearly number of minors to die in domestic violence fatalities since the coalition began counting. Two of the young victims were killed by their older male partners in fatal dating violence incidents. In two separate incidents, a man with a history of domestic violence shot and killed his or his girlfriend's two young children. In three separate cases, a father shot and killed his wife and all of their children in their family home. Children were at the scene in 16 additional cases.

ODVN released the [fatality count](#) at its annual Domestic Violence Awareness Month event. More than 250 people were registered to attend this year's event in the Atrium of the Capitol and online.

Guest speaker Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost celebrated Ohio's increased state funding for domestic violence programs, the result of a successful grass-roots advocacy campaign organized by ODVN. Ohio's 2-year budget includes \$7.5 million for DV services, a significant increase over the last biennium.

This year's event honored eight legislators who led legislative efforts to increase Ohio's domestic violence line item. Two legislators -- Sen. Nickie Antonio and Rep. Cindy Abrams -- received the annual Croucher Family Award. Six legislators received ODVN's new Leadership in Policy Award: Rep. Laura Lanese, Rep. Phil Plummer, Rep. Rick Carfagna, Rep. Janine Boyd, Sen. Stephanie Kunze and Sen. Matt Dolan.

The fatalities, occurring between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021, were compiled from media reports and information provided by ODVN's 75 member programs. At least 86% of the fatalities were caused by guns, and 34% of the cases involved a perpetrator suicide. Thirty cases involved multiple fatalities, with one case resulting in five deaths, and three cases resulting in four deaths each.

“Ohio’s domestic violence fatalities strike a resounding chord of tragedy in the hearts of Ohioans year after year,” said ODVN’s Policy Director and Staff Attorney Micaela Deming. “But this year’s dramatic increase in the deaths of Ohio youth is truly shocking.”

The findings support victim advocates’ concerns that the bail reform bills in the Ohio Legislature do not include enough protections for domestic violence survivors.

Of particular note this year, at least six incidents involved a domestic violence perpetrator with pending criminal charges related to domestic violence. At least two offenders had explicit pre-trial release conditions ordering them to have no contact with their victims. At least two of the offenders had outstanding warrants and another two offenders had upcoming court dates.

“These deaths, including both the victim and the abuser, took place when the criminal justice system had been alerted to the danger and had an opportunity to intervene,” Deming said. “As we look to criminal justice reforms, these situations should serve as a reminder that, when domestic violence is at issue, the criminal justice system must pay attention to the safety needs of victims and their children.”

ODVN also unveiled its new text assistance line.

About the Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN): ODVN provides a strong statewide voice for Ohio’s domestic violence programs that serve all 88 counties, and advocates on domestic violence-related issues at the state and federal level. The network’s 75 member programs served more than 111,000 survivors and their children in 2020. ODVN runs a training institute for advocates and allies that trained 13,199 individuals last year, a legal assistance program, and a statewide prevention program.

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