

Survivors of Crime in Harris County

An initial survey of data, services, and needs
February 2021

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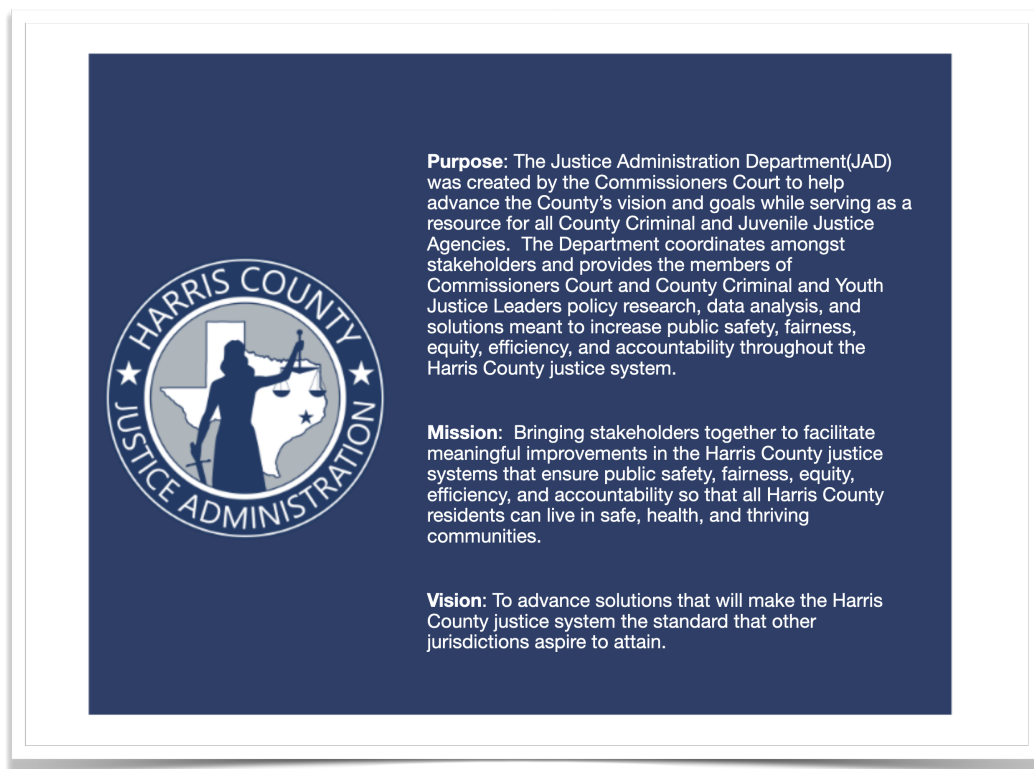
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1 Overview

Harris County, Texas, founded in 1836, is not only the largest county in the state of Texas but the third most populous county in the United States. From the county seat of Houston to the smallest cities of Spring Valley Village and Stafford City, Harris County is home to over 4.7 million people who speak over 145 different languages.¹

The administration of justice and enforcement of public safety in Harris County are dependent on the complex interplay of over 60 different law enforcement agencies, 90 different courts, three jails, and hundreds of legal and social service providers.

The Justice Administration Division (JAD), established in 2019, was created by the Commissioners Court to act as a resource for all agencies involved in the complex justice system of Harris County.



¹ Kriel, L. (2015, November 5). Just how diverse is Houston? 145 languages spoken here. Houston Chronicle. <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/article/Houstonians-speak-at-least-145-languages-at-home-6613182.php>

From the earliest days of the agency, JAD has included survivors of crime as essential stakeholders in accomplishing its mission. As a part of its work to establish the office and to fulfill its mandate, JAD commissioned this survey to help collect information related to three key issues:

- 1. What do victim service stakeholders think JAD can do to support survivors of crime in Harris County?**
- 2. What public data are available, or not available, that can help describe crime victimization in Harris County?**
- 3. How are victim services supported and funded in Harris County?**

In addition to conducting an analysis of public records related to victimization data and service funding, we spoke with 30 agencies that provide either direct victim services or support for agencies that provide direct service in Harris County.

This survey represents only an initial overview of information about victimization data, service funding, and process improvement. For this initial survey, we focused on data related to the most common crime victim service categories: homicide, domestic violence, sexual assault, DUI, and trafficking. Despite over 35 hours of interviews with victim service providers, there are still many agencies and crime types that remain to be explored and are not within the scope of this initial document.

Without fail, service providers were generous with their time and deeply committed to serving survivors of crime in Harris County. We are thankful for their gracious and passionate contributions to this report and the ongoing work of the Justice Administration Division.

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Victim Service Provider Recommendations

Over the course of interviews with representatives of the 30 agencies listed below, victim service providers offered advice about how JAD could support their work.

- Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse
- Baker Ripley
- Bo's Place
- Boat People SOS
- Bridge Over Troubled Waters
- Catholic Charities
- Children's Assessment Center
- Constable, Precinct 5
- Crime Survivors for Safety & Justice
- Daya
- Harris County Crime Stoppers
- Harris County District Attorney
- Harris County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (HCDVCC)
- Harris County Sheriff's Office
- Houston Area Women's Center
- Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative

- Houston Police Department
- Houston Sheriff's Office Victim Services
- Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)
- Office of Attorney General (CVCC)
- Parents of Murdered Children
- Partnership for Safety and Justice
- Rice University Police Department
- Survivors of Crime, Precinct 1
- Survivors of Crime, Precinct 5
- Tahirih Justice Center
- Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (TAASA)
- Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV)
- The Bridge over Troubled Waters
- United Way of Harris County

What can JAD do to support your work with survivors of crime?

1. Collect, compile, and synthesize data about victimization

Service providers described their challenges with acquiring and aggregating data about victimization from the myriad of service providers and responders who work with survivors of crime in Harris County and across the state. In particular, victim service providers feel they would benefit from data that:

- ♦ Helps providers understand the incidence of crime, regardless of reporting
- ♦ Helps describe the needs of un/underserved populations

- ✦ Aggregates and visualizes data collected from law enforcement agencies in real-time
- ✦ Maps and visualizes processes that survivors engage with (such as judicial hearings or relief petitions) to help understand potential delays or service bottlenecks
- ✦ Generates more understanding about how victimization impacts different communities in Harris County, particularly those who have not traditionally been identified by past data collection measures

2. Examine emerging areas of concern for survivors

JAD's mandate to work across criminal justice sectors creates the opportunity to examine how emerging issues and changes in practice impact survivors of crime. In particular, providers identified two key policy areas they felt needed more analysis from JAD:

- ✦ Delays and inconsistencies related to T/U Visa certification
- ✦ The occurrence of violent crime after individuals are released on bond

3. Identify model policies and interventions that can improve survivor-access to services

Survivors of crime in Harris County can benefit from the identification and examination of innovative approaches to intervention and service provision. JAD's ability to analyze policy, collaborate across disciplines, and convene public and private sector partners puts the agency in a key position to help identify policy that can improve survivor outcomes. In particular, service providers identified:

- ✦ The establishment and implementation of trauma recovery centers
- ✦ The use of specialty courts
- ✦ T/U Visa Certification models

4. Promote the availability of victim services

Victim service providers were universally concerned about survivors of crime who were in need of services but didn't know how to access available support. Providers felt that JAD could:

- ◆ Help raise the visibility of services available to the community and work with other county agencies to share information about services through their networks
- ◆ Assist agencies to develop, host and/or disseminate multi-lingual service information for victims of crime

5. Provide a platform for information sharing and collaboration between victim service agencies and other local-government responders

There are currently very few opportunities in Harris County for victim service providers to communicate across the silos of crime types and geography that operate within on a daily basis. While several agencies host conversations within a particular crime concern (e.g., domestic violence or immigration issues), providers felt that there is not enough collaboration across crime types and disciplines. Providers felt that JAD could help support convening that:

- ◆ Helps the community develop a shared language around their work
- ◆ Provides a forum to discuss issues of concern related to larger criminal justice reform initiatives
- ◆ Builds partnerships between law enforcement, medical service providers, judiciary and other parts of local government and victim service providers

6. Share information to build capacity

JAD's access to information and expertise could be used to help victim service providers:

- ◆ Build new skills
- ◆ Identify funding and programming opportunities
- ◆ Build cross-sector partnerships

Challenges for Victims Service Providers

Victim service providers identified challenges they face when providing services to survivors of crime. As a matter of context, it is important to note that interviews were conducted during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which has profoundly impacted survivors of crime and the agencies that serve them. While the pandemic has made service provision to survivors increasingly difficult, many of the challenges outlined in this section were evident before COVID-19.

COVID-19 has increased victimization and the demand for services.

- ✦ Service providers are overwhelmed by requests for service and have been trying to make do with limited resources and remote work. For example, emergency shelter turn-away rates are over 70% — one program that generally received ten calls a day has been fielding 100 calls per day.
- ✦ In addition to the volume of survivors increasing, the severity of injury also seems to be increasing.
- ✦ Housing and employment resources, which were scarce before the pandemic, are nearly impossible to find.
- ✦ In particular, providers are struggling to find sources of flexible funding that can help scarce resources stretch farther. One provider noted, “even if a person has a housing voucher, how can they come up with \$1,200 for a rent deposit?”
- ✦ Exceptionally limited access to the courts has dramatically delayed necessary proceedings.
- ✦ Programs are concerned about how they are going to fund resources and services. One program noted “demand is up, donations are down, and fundraising is almost impossible right now.”

Many survivors do not feel safe when trying to report.

- ✦ Survivors who experience violence but do not have documentation of legal residence are more reluctant to report.
- ✦ Survivors who have had prior experience with law enforcement are reluctant to report.
- ✦ Communities that have had adverse historical interactions with law enforcement are reluctant to report.

Services targeted for underserved or marginalized communities are struggling to find resources.

- ✦ New providers are struggling to establish and fund services for survivors who may have difficulty finding and accessing services such as individuals returning home from prison, members of many ethnic and cultural communities, sex workers and trafficking survivors, members of the LGBTQA+ community, and youth.
- ✦ New providers find it challenging to access existing funding streams.

Language access is difficult.

- ✦ Even with some resources available in some language, there are still significant gaps.
- ✦ The judicial system is not prepared to provide translators.
- ✦ Informal translators are often not specifically trained to discuss victimization issues.

Policies across the county are inconsistently implemented.

- ✦ Programs such as lethality assessment are used only intermittently.
- ✦ T/U Visa certification practices vary from agency to agency, which creates confusion and delays.
- ✦ There is a lack of shared language between agencies and programs around key metrics like recidivism.

Victim Service Provider and Data Usage

During the interviews conducted for this survey, service providers were asked about how they use, or wish they could use, data to inform their work. Every participant indicated that they collect some sort of service provision data about their clients and referrals. Outside of the data that their agency generated, however, their use and access to data about victimization in Harris County became more challenging.

Service Data

- ✦ Generally, the most available form of service data that providers routinely use is generated within their own agency.

- ✦ Some of that data is reported to funders such as the Texas Attorney General, which provides yearly reports that detail expenditures by county but do not detail service provision or victim demographic information by county.² Even when examining activity reports submitted from the state to federal agencies related to a particular funding stream, such as Victim of Crime Act (VOCA) funding, data was aggregated statewide and not by county.³
- ✦ Several providers noted that while they felt clear about the work their agency was conducting, they didn't have access to the data agencies within their same service category.
- ✦ Because data is collected in agency-specific silos (in part, to protect confidentiality), it is incredibly difficult to disaggregate duplicated services or even to understand how survivors might use services across multiple agencies.
- ✦ There is also a lack of interoperability (the ability for systems to share and use data) between service systems such as the HMIS database used for housing and victim services. While some of these challenges stem from the need to protect survivor confidentiality, providers felt there was the potential for some information exchange.

Reporting Data

- ✦ Providers strongly articulated the need to have access to timely, aggregated reporting data. In particular, victim service providers wanted access to data that might help them respond to potentially high-risk systemic issues such as violent crime after release on bond and temporary restraining order violations.
- ✦ Providers felt that it was incredibly difficult to get real-time data from first responses to crime. County and local law enforcement reporting data is fragmented across 22 courts and over 50 law enforcement jurisdictions, and it is made inconsistently available depending on the agency providing data or the agency requesting.
- ✦ Providers indicated that they do not have the capacity or expertise to try to aggregate the partial information they can only occasionally access.
- ✦ As it is currently being collected, arrest data doesn't clearly break out some crimes such as domestic violence, doesn't include information about survivors, and doesn't include enough demographic data (specifically race and ethnicity data) about victim/survivors and those accused of crimes.

² Office of the Attorney General, Crime Victim Services 2020 Annual Report, 2020

³ Office of the Attorney General, TX Annual State Performance Report: Victim Assistant Formula Grant Program, 10/1/18 - 9/30/2019

Incidence Data

- ♦ While providers felt that national incidence reports were useful, they expressed concern that nationally-generated reports didn't reflect populations in Harris County.
- ♦ Providers found it challenging to respond to trends, identify hotspot areas of service need, or to target services.
- ♦ Providers are using their agency-generated data to target and develop services.

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Victimization Data Analysis

Community advocates, local governments, and public safety officials are continually working to determine the best methods to prevent, respond to, and ameliorate criminal behavior and its impact on survivors. Pilot projects and new initiatives are constantly being implemented to respond to violent crimes, in particular, such as murder, domestic violence, and sexual assault. At the same time, initiatives are often hampered by limited resources, fractured data systems, and limited evaluation.

Incidence and Reporting

Arrest data underestimates the prevalence of many types of crime, especially interpersonal violent crime that does not result in fatality. According to the *National Crime Victimization Survey* conducted by the US Department of Justice, victims generally only report 40.9% of the violent crime and 32.5% of the property crime they experience.⁴ Furthermore, reported crime is generally calculated using the criminal behavior as the index, not the number of people who have been harmed by that behavior. For example, one domestic violence arrest could have caused harm to that individual's partner as well as any children or extended family who might have also witnessed that event. In essence, reporting data usually only tells us about one side of a subset of harmful behaviors.

Recognizing the gap between reported and unreported crimes, incidence and prevalence studies have been designed to help us understand victimization from the context of the person who has experienced harm. Incidence studies measure how many times a crime has occurred within the timeframe of the study and prevalence studies are designed to understand the number of individuals who have experienced crime in any given sample population. Prevalence rates can describe how many people have been victimized by crime over the timeframe of a study, incidence rates can identify the number of victimizations per person. These two measures tell us very different information about crime, both of which can be important for determining service and response capacity. For example, in 2010, the US Department of Justice

⁴ National Crime Victimization Survey, USDOJ Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2019

found that there were 2,753,160 victims of violent crime that had experienced 4,935,980 victimizations, which results in a violent crime incidence rate of 19.3 victimizations per 1,000 people but a violent crime prevalence rate of 10.8 victims per 1,000 people. This dataset indicates that 17% of the victims in this survey have experienced multiple victimizations.⁵ While each survivor of crime has individual needs and faces unique challenges, an individual who has suffered from multiple victimizations may require different support than an individual who has experienced a single victimization.

Incidence and prevalence studies give us a better picture of the occurrence of crime in the United States, but they have limitations in design and generalizability for state and local jurisdictions. For example, the National Crime Victimization Survey, our most complete national measure of criminal victimization, does not track victimization for children under 12 years old, people who are homeless, or people who are institutionalized — which are all populations that experience significant rates of harm. In addition, the National Crime Victimization Survey does not track victimization experiences related to homicide, trafficking, and sexual offenses other than forcible rape, among others.

While a national incidence sample can provide context around the experience of crime, it can not provide rich and detailed data about how survivors in a particular state or county experience crime. National incidence studies are also designed to be generally representative of the population of the United States, which may not be statistically representative of state or county populations. This issue of generalizability is particularly relevant for Harris County, which has one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse populations in the United States.⁶

While reporting data does not describe the entirety of victimization that occurs within a jurisdiction, it is valuable to help describe how systems identify and respond to crime. Arrest data is most helpful when it is descriptive, timely and helps first-responders and service providers respond to trends and spikes in incidence.

⁵USDOJ, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Measuring the Prevalence of Crime with the National Crime Victimization Survey, 2013

⁶Understanding Houston, The Greater Houston Community Foundation, <https://www.understandinghouston.org/topic/community-context/diversity/#overview>

The crime summaries attempt to parse out the incidence and prevalence of a selection of crimes in Harris County that mirrored the interview sample. We began by looking at publicly-available national, state, and (limited) county data. In some cases, prevalence data was not available at a county level, so we used national or state data and number of incidents per 100,000 to make a county estimation of prevalence. In all instances, we have relied on public data sources.

Incidence and prevalence data can help us understand how crime happens, but it does not describe what services or resources survivors of crime require to address the harm of victimization. For some crime categories, crime victim advocates have been able to conduct and publish assessments of those needs, and we have included that information where available.

Cause

In addition to available data, we have included general information related to what has been cited in recent research about some of the causal factors related to that crime. Unsurprisingly, causal factors of different crimes are varied. In one jurisdiction, violent crime may spike because of high levels of gang affiliation. In others, it may be the result of a high level of intimate partner violence, a direct correlation to the poverty level, or related to the availability of firearms creating higher rates of murder in what may have been a violent, but not life-ending event. And of course, in many areas it can be any combination of the above and many other issues. We look at known causal factors and correlations below. While it is difficult to always know which of the above (or what combination thereof) may be driving the crime rate in a particular area, it is possible to look at what causal and correlative factors are related to many types of crime.

Victim Impact and Effective Responses to Survivors

All crime creates a victim impact. In any crime that does not result in death (which still creates secondary victims and victim impact), the survivor of the crime may suffer financial, emotional, health, or psychiatric damage. The degree of damage is partially related to the crime and partially related to the individual; that is, many survivors may suffer long-term negative impacts even if the crime is seen as a less serious crime—for example, a person who is a survivor of exhibitionism or of emotional abuse may suffer as long or longer than someone who is a survivor of a contact sexual crime or violent offense. While one can look at the general types of victim impact as discussed below,

each person who has been impacted by crime should be viewed as an individual, and the degree of harm they experience should be assessed rather than assumed. Effective responses to a survivor impacted by crime may include financial supports, but almost always also include additional emotional, safety, and health supports.

Prevention of and Responses to Crime

There are many crime prevention strategies that have evolved with varying degrees of success. More successful strategies tend to target community-wide issues rather than just responding to an individual. For example, gang intervention programs tend to be more effective when the community is the area of focus rather than a smaller subgroup of the community (e.g., a few key gang members). Ultimately, many types of violent crime, in particular, are a combination of societal and individual interactions, and intervention that target societal factors tend to be more successful and sustainable.⁷

At the same time, most criminal behavior committed by individuals with high criminogenic (crime-causing) factors can be ameliorated with the use of cognitive-behavioral intervention.⁸ Many of the most effective interventions are not offense-specific, but rather are used if the individual is assessed to have a number of risk factors that increase their risk of recidivism. Thus, whether an individual has stolen a car or has sold drugs, the success of the intervention may depend less on the nature of the specific crime and may be more related to general criminal risk factors.⁹ The exception to this would be in the areas of domestic and sexual violence, where specialized curricula and interventions are required. In some instances, such offenders may need to participate in both general cognitive programming and specialized, offense-specific cognitive programming.

⁷Lorenc, T., Petticrew, M., Whitehead, M., Neary, D., Clayton, S., Wright, K., Thomson, H., Cummins, S., Sowden, A., & Renton, A. (2014). Crime, fear of crime and mental health: synthesis of theory and systematic reviews of interventions and qualitative evidence. *Public Health Research*, 2(2), 1–398.

Bonta, J., & Andrews, D. A. (2016). *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct* (6th ed.). Routledge. NIBRS. (2021, January 13). Federal Bureau of Investigation. <https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/ucr/nibrs>

⁹ Ibid

Summary Recommendations for Improved Victimization Data Collection and Assessment

As in most jurisdictions, one of the biggest challenges that Harris County faces is data collection. These challenges include what data is being collected; where that data is kept; how that data is shared (if at all), and how the data is used to inform policies and practices.

Data Collection Issues

- ✦ There are currently multiple data systems in Harris County that do not always clearly delineate sub-categories of crimes; e.g., in some cases violent crime is not adequately distinguished between general violence and domestic or interpersonal violence.
- ✦ Many of the systems do not interact with one another; e.g., data in one police department or in the sheriff's department are not easily accessible.
- ✦ It is unclear if each system is using the same definition / method of categorization regarding domestic violence and sexual assault cases; thus,
- ✦ It is all but impossible to get an accurate count of domestic violence and sexual assault cases, and there is no way to determine why so few cases are cleared, especially in the Sheriff's Department. The low rate of charging, both at the city and county levels, is cause for concern.
- ✦ Harris County is an incredibly diverse county, but the data collection regarding race and ethnicity is inconsistent and generally unavailable.
- ✦ The availability of data on human trafficking in Harris County appears to be limited, or at least we have been unable to locate accurate prevalence data.
- ✦ The available Harris County data on crime and victimization related to people with disabilities is very limited. While captured in various areas, there is no breakdown by type of crime; sexual assault and domestic violence issues are captured under those areas, but without a delineation that allows the system to specifically track the incidence and prevalence of such crimes against those who have physical or intellectual disabilities, including those brought on by age, injury, or mental health disorders.




Data Collection Recommendations

- ◆ Consider the utilization of a county-level victimization incidence study to help establish a shared understanding of baseline victimization across crime categories.
- ◆ Assess the county's current ability to gather accurate data on interpersonal crime, especially violent crime of all types.
- ◆ Assure that the data collected is more granular than what is currently collected. Instead of just labeling something as domestic violence or defining it by the statute, domestic violence can and should be broken down into the following categories: nature of the assault (physical, sexual, both), specifics of the injuries, whether the survivor(s) are adults or children (or both), the specific relationship between the parties (relative, spouse, partner, friend, acquaintance), opposite or same-sex violence, type of weapon used (if any), perpetrator, and survivor ages, race, ethnicity, etc.
- ◆ Develop one uniform county-wide reporting data system, or develop the ability for each system to be accessed or to have the ability populate the data from other systems (e.g. police, sheriff, prosecutor's office). At the very least determine a uniform set of reporting requirements that each system needs to report to the county so that each entity collects the same needed data.
- ◆ Track the following for those who are convicted of an offense: referrals to programming when relevant, successful completion of programming and/or supervision, amount and type of recidivism.
- ◆ Collect data on race and ethnicity, both of those victimized and those who have victimized others.
- ◆ Collect and analyze data on the impact of crime related to individuals with physical or intellectual disabilities.
- ◆ Given the multiple data reporting sources and the differences in data point descriptions and in what is captured, develop a unified data collection system that provides the same definitions across reporting agencies and codifies an agreed-upon set of data points to be collected.
- ◆ Given the large disparity between the past incidence and prevalence survey and the sexual violence data gathered from law enforcement and the courts, update the incidence and prevalence study from 2016.

Selected Crime Data Detail

Homicide

Data Sources

National	National Prevalence (reported 2019) ¹⁰ : 16,425
	
Texas	Texas (reported 2019) ¹¹ : 1,409 Statewide change (2018-2019) ¹² : +6% Statewide clearance rate (2019) ¹³ : 58.7%
	
Harris County	Harris County (reported) ¹⁴ : 456 Clearance rate for counties (with a population of +100,000) ¹⁵ : 67.1%
	

Harris County Patterns¹⁶

- ◆ Over 370 of the 456 murders were the results of gunshot wounds.
- ◆ Over 90% of victims were people of color.

¹⁰ NIBRS. (2021, January 13). Federal Bureau of Investigation. <https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/ucr/nibrs>

¹¹ Number of murders in the U.S. by state 2019. (2021, February 2). Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/195331/number-of-murders-in-the-us-by-state/>

¹² Texas Department of Public Safety. (2019). *Crime In Texas*.

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ *Houston Chronicle Homicide Report: Stories of the Departed*. (2020, February 6). Houston Chronicle. <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/homicide-report/>

¹⁵ Texas Department of Public Safety. (2019). *Crime In Texas*.

¹⁶ *Houston Chronicle Homicide Report: Stories of the Departed*.

- ✦ In 2019 there were 35 intimate partner fatalities.¹⁷ According to 2020 data, the murder rate has increased during COVID-19.¹⁸

Data Challenges and Limitations

- ✦ FBI-UCR data almost always undercounts actual incidence due to inconsistency among police agencies providing the data.¹⁹
- ✦ Current data does not track the number of secondary victims who may require services or support for each fatality.
- ✦ There is a lack of clarity regarding the nature of the murders (i.e., whether it is gang-related, domestic violence-related, or committed in the commission of another crime).
- ✦ While there is data from multiple sources, there does not appear to be a reliable way to roll up the data into one system that will allow easy extrapolation by age, gender, race, ethnicity, sub-nature of crime, hotspot locations, and frequency.

Global Patterns / Causal Factors²⁰

- ✦ Personal conflicts are the biggest cause of murder, not random crime.
- ✦ Inequality is one of the most powerful predictors of murder – more powerful than gun ownership.
- ✦ Witnessing or suffering from domestic abuse predisposes many youth to become adults who are more likely to use violence.
- ✦ Guns are the most commonly used weapons in murders – they are used in more than 60% of murders and nearly 80% murder/suicides.
- ✦ Primary precipitating factors include intimate partner violence, mental health issues, substance use disorders, and recent crises.
- ✦ Murder rates are more than three times higher for males than for females.
- ✦ About 35% of women who are murdered are killed by a former spouse or partner, compared to about 5% of men.
- ✦ Blacks make up the majority of homicide deaths.

¹⁷ Texas Council on Family Violence. (2019). Honoring Texas victims: Family violence fatalities in 2019.

¹⁸ Khou-11 News (2020) <https://www.khou.com/article/news/investigations/houston-murder-rate-rising/285-38e131a4-09e8-49c0-a1f2-b72397c17d53>

¹⁹ *Flaws in the FBI Uniform Crime Reports Regarding Homicide and Weapons Use* | Office of Justice Programs. (n.d.). OJP.Gov. Retrieved February 12, 2021, from <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/flaws-fbi-uniform-crime-reports-regarding-homicide-and-weapons-use>

²⁰ Cooper, A., & Smith, E. L. (2011, November). *Homicide Trends in the United States, 1980-2008*. BJS.Gov. <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/htus8008.pdf>

- ◆ The highest rate of cleared incidents were related to situational characteristics that included under-the-influence offenders, non-stranger offenders, contact weapons, and concomitant serious offenses.
- ◆ Murder offenders tend to be recidivist offenders, having been involved in other crime types prior to the commission of murder.

Victim Impact

Victims' family members and significant others may experience significant and long-term social, emotional, and health impacts as the result of a loved one's murder. Other individuals who witness murder may also require support and assistance.

Effective Responses for Secondary Victims

The ability to access supportive services, mental health, or substance use programming as needed can benefit the significant others of murder victims.

Effective Prevention Efforts²¹

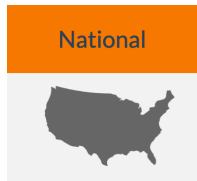
Best Practices for the prevention of homicide include:

- ◆ Collaboration between the police, public works, and housing authorities to develop a crime reduction planning process focusing on community pride
- ◆ Collaboration between the police department and the public schools to develop an elementary school training program and a middle-school mentoring program
- ◆ Collaboration between the police department, rape crisis centers, and domestic violence groups
- ◆ On-scene arrests of domestic abusers
- ◆ Where there is a gang presence, hotspot policing and monitoring by community workers, probation and police officers where there is a gang presence
- ◆ Drug Courts starting the first-time someone has a drug-related offense

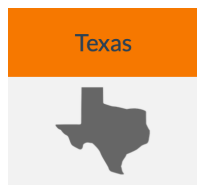
²¹ *Strategies for reducing homicide*. (1997, March). OJP.Gov. <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles/168100.pdf>

Domestic Violence / Intimate Partner Violence

Data Sources



National Prevalence²²: 10 million people yearly
 National Prevalence²³: 43 million women (lifetime), 38 million men (lifetime)
 Number of UVISA applications (2019)²⁴: 47,225
 Number of VAWA Self Petitions (2019)²⁵: 13,944



Texas Lifetime Prevalence²⁶: 5,353,434
 Intimate Partner Fatalities (2019)²⁷: 185
 Number of Dating Violence or Stalking reports on Campus²⁸: 1,473
 Percent of individuals turned away from shelter due to lack of space (2019)²⁹: 48%



Harris County Incidents (2018 data)³⁰: 41,300
 Intimate Partner Fatalities (2019)³¹: 35

Harris County Patterns

- ◆ Arrests for domestic violence in Harris County have increased dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic. In one 5-day period of April 2020 the Harris County District Attorney's office filed 139 domestic violence charges and has indicated that DV/IPV cases have increased by 50% in the last six months of 2020.

²² National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

²³ CDC, National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS), 2015

²⁴ UCIS Annual Report, 2019

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, University of Texas at Austin, 2011

²⁷ Texas Council on Family Violence. (2019). Honoring Texas victims: Family violence fatalities in 2019.

²⁸ VAWA Trends in Texas, US Department of Education (2018)

²⁹ Texas Council on Family Violence. (2019). Honoring Texas victims: Family violence fatalities in 2019.

³⁰ Texas Department of Public Safety <https://www.dps.texas.gov/section/crime-records-service/crime-texas>

³¹ Texas Council on Family Violence. (2019). Honoring Texas victims: Family violence fatalities in 2019.

- ◆ Service providers have indicated that their client loads have increased, demand for shelter and emergency services have increased, and there has been an increase in the severity of injury that the survivors of intimate partner violence are experiencing.
- ◆ Service providers that work with immigrant survivors of domestic violence have indicated that there have been extended delays related to attempts to certify and process T/U Visa applications.
- ◆ Service providers have indicated an increased demand for language access services.

Data Challenges and Limitations

- ◆ Most available data related to incidence and prevalence is collected and extrapolated from national sources or from multiple sources rather than from a centralized county or state collection system.
- ◆ The last statewide domestic violence incidence study was conducted in 2012 and should be updated. Focus group participants indicated that there were plans to conduct another study, but the timeline for completion has not been confirmed.
- ◆ For reported data, is difficult to disaggregate domestic violence offenses from other assault data because domestic violence charges may be listed as a general assault charge, which means there is no way to further delineate the nature of the offense though easily accessible data. The shift to the NIBRS-based data collection system (National Incident Based Reporting System) will help address some of this issue.
- ◆ Reported data only describes individuals who were charged, not the total number of individuals who may be impacted by a domestic violence offense, including children or extended family members.
- ◆ Reports come from multiple systems that do not necessarily match one another in what they collect or how they define events.
- ◆ Data collection methods do not track intersectional or cross-complicating factors that present significant challenges to intervention and service delivery, such as immigration status.

Victim Impact

The results of domestic violence or abuse can be very long-lasting. People who are abused by a spouse or intimate partner may experience:³²

- sleeping problems
- depression
- anxiety attacks
- low self-esteem
- lack of trust in others
- feelings of abandonment
- anger
- sensitivity to rejection
- diminished mental and physical health
- inability to work
- post-traumatic stress disorder
- poor relationships with their children and other loved ones
- substance abuse as a way of coping
- death, if physical abuse escalates and the victim is unable to leave the relationship.

The Creating a Safer Texas Report drafted by The Texas Council On Family Violence describes the needs and availability of domestic violence services across Texas. Visiting the interactive website for this report also allows for visualizations by county.³³

Effective Responses for Survivors

Best Practices that support survivors of intimate partner/domestic violence include:³⁴

- ◆ Effective pre-arrest procedures and specialized police units
- ◆ Specialized prosecution units
- ◆ Victim advocacy centers, hotlines, shelters, and crisis centers
- ◆ Domestic violence specialty courts or domestic violence dockets
- ◆ Coordinated Community Responses that provides wraparound services for survivors that include victim services, medical and mental health agencies, and criminal justice agencies

³² *National Statistics on Domestic Violence*. (n.d.). NCADV. Retrieved January 2021, from <https://ncadv.org/STATISTICS>

³³ website: <https://tcfv.org/texas-state-plan/>

³⁴ National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2020

Effective Prevention Efforts

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends the following actions for prevention and education:³⁵

- ✦ Strengthen national commitment and action by promoting gender equality and women's human rights.
- ✦ Promote primary prevention, including giving higher priority to child sexual abuse.
- ✦ Involve educators.
- ✦ Strengthen healthcare provider response.
- ✦ Provide support services for women living with violence.
- ✦ Sensitize the criminal justice system to issues related to domestic battery and its impacts
- ✦ Support research and collaboration and increase donor support.

Effective (or Promising) Responses to Domestic Violence Perpetrators

- ✦ Domestic violence courts or specialized dockets
- ✦ Prohibition against owning deadly weapons
- ✦ Criminal justice supervision and manualized education accountability programs for low-risk offenders³⁶
- ✦ Criminal justice supervision and manualized criminogenic cognitive-behavioral intervention,³⁷ potentially paired with trauma-informed cognitive-behavioral intervention.³⁸

³⁵ World Health Organization. (2018, March 15). *Intimate partner and sexual violence (violence against women)*. https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/sexual/en/




³⁶Reliable Research. Real Results. (n.d.). CrimeSolutions, National Institute of Justice. Retrieved January 2021, from <https://crimesolutions.ojp.gov>

³⁷Polaschek, D. L. L., Yesberg, J. A., & Chauhan, P. (2018). A year without a conviction: An integrated examination of potential mechanisms for successful re-entry in high-risk violent prisoners. *Criminal Justice & Behavior*

³⁸ Creech, S. K., Macdonald, A., Benzer, J. K., Poole, G. M., Murphy, C. M., & Taft, C. T. (2017). PTSD symptoms predict outcome in trauma-informed treatment of intimate partner aggression. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 85(10), 966–974. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ccp0000228>

Driving Under the Influence (DUI)

Data Sources

<div>National</div> 	<p>National Incidence³⁹: 112 million episodes National Arrests (2010)⁴⁰: 1.4 Million</p>
<div>Texas</div> 	<p>Texas Arrests (2018)⁴¹: 73,978 Driving fatalities (2015)⁴²: 1,323</p>
<div>Harris County</div> 	<p>Harris County Arrests (2019): 26,000⁴³</p>

Harris County Patterns

- ◆ During the period of COVID lockdown, DUI's dropped significantly in Harris County and then skyrocketed in May when bars and other establishments serving liquor reopened, leading local authorities to suspect that establishments are over-serving customers and also serving minors.⁴⁴

³⁹ *Drunk Driving by the Numbers*. (2013). Bureau of Transportation Statistics. https://www.bts.gov/archive/publications/by_the_numbers/drunk_driving/index

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ *DUI Arrests*. (2018). Texas Department of Public Safety.

⁴² Texas Department of Transportation, 2017

⁴³ Arnold, R. (2019, December 15). 'A catastrophic problem': Tracking DWI arrests in Harris County. KPRC. <https://www.click2houston.com/news/investigates/2019/12/10/a-catastrophic-problem-tracking-dwi-arrests-in-harris-county/>

⁴⁴ Delaughter, G. (2020, August 31). Pandemic Shutdowns Give Insight Into Harris County's High DWI Rates. Houston Public Media. <https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/news/in-depth/2020/08/31/380445/pandemic-shutdowns-give-insight-into-harris-countys-high-dwi-rates/>

Data Challenges / Limitations

- ✦ Lack of real-time data to inform service response
- ✦ Lack of information about survivors

Global Patterns

Alcohol is involved in:⁴⁵

- ✦ 47.2% of pedestrian fatalities
- ✦ 39.9% of vehicle fatalities
- ✦ 33.8% of cyclist fatalities
- ✦ 22.9% of boating fatalities

Victim Impact

The most significant impact from driving under the influence is the death of those in the vehicle or of those whom the vehicle comes into contact with, including passengers in other vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians.⁴⁶

Effective Prevention Efforts⁴⁷

- | | |
|--|---|
| ✦ Responsible alcohol service | ✦ Reduction of underage access to alcohol |
| ✦ Risk-based enforcement | |
| ✦ Priority inspection | ✦ Community-based programs |
| ✦ Promotion of transportation alternatives | |

Effective Responses to Perpetrators⁴⁸

- ✦ Alcohol screening and brief interventions
- ✦ Alcohol problem assessment and treatment programs
- ✦ Multi-component treatment interventions
- ✦ Ignition interlocks

⁴⁵ *Drunk Driving by the Numbers*. (2013b). Bureau of Transportation Statistics. https://www.bts.gov/archive/publications/by_the_numbers/drunk_driving/index

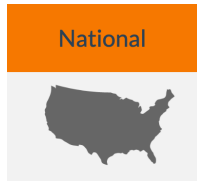
⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ Texas Department of Transportation, 2017 Texas Impaired Driving Plan

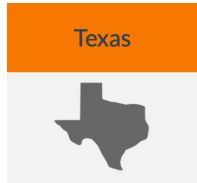
⁴⁸ What Works: Strategies to Reduce or Prevent Alcohol-Impaired Driving | Motor Vehicle Safety | CDC Injury Center. (n.d.). CDC. Retrieved December 2020, from https://www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/impaired_driving/strategies.html

Rape and Sexual Assault

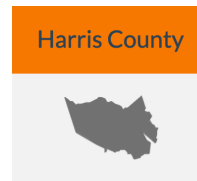
Data Sources



National Prevalence⁴⁹: 734,630
 National Arrest (2019)⁵⁰: 240,532
 Assaults while incarcerated⁵¹: 9.6%



Texas Prevalence(one year)⁵²: 413,000
 Texas Prevalence (lifetime)⁵³: 6.3 million
 Texas Crime Index (2019)⁵⁴: 14,656
 Law Enforcement Clearance rate (2019)⁵⁵: 23.3%
 Reporting rate (2015)⁵⁶: 9.2%
 PREA Reports (2019)⁵⁷: 378



Harris County Reported Incidents (2019)⁵⁸: 2,868
 Law Enforcement Clearance Rates (Large County, TX)⁵⁹: 22%

⁴⁹ CDC, National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 2015

⁵⁰ NIBRS. (2021b, January 13). Federal Bureau of Investigation. <https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/ucr/nibrs>

⁵¹ Sexual Victimization Reported by Former State Prisoners, 2008

⁵² *Texas Statewide Sexual Assault Prevalence Survey*. (2015, August). University of Texas. <https://sites.utexas.edu/idvsa/files/2019/03/TX-SA-Prevalence-Study-Final-Report.pdf>

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ Texas Department of Public Safety. (2019). *Crime In Texas*.

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ Ibid

⁵⁷ TDCJ Prea Ombudsman Report, 2019

⁵⁸ Texas Department of Public Safety

⁵⁹ Texas Department of Public Safety. (2019). *Crime In Texas*.

Harris County Patterns

- ◆ According to a 2019 Houston Channel 2 investigation, fewer than half of rape allegations result in charges being filed⁶⁰. The Houston Police Department reported that 40% of sexual assault cases saw files charged, and the Sheriff's Office reported that 10% of its cases led to charges. At the same time, the statewide reported rate of rape to sheriff's departments increased 6.1%. At the same time, Harris County reported over a 30% increase in rape offenses between 2018 and 2019.
- ◆ According to focus group responses, there is unequal access to resources for survivors, and as a result of systemic/structural racism there is a significant racial disparity when it comes to arrests and convictions.

Limitations

- ◆ There are multiple systems reporting data with significant disparity between reporting systems.
- ◆ There is no systematic collection of incidence and prevalence data.
- ◆ There is a lack of consistency on how incidents brought to the attention of law enforcement are labelled and how determinations about whether or not to charge are decided.
- ◆ The significant difference between the incidence and prevalence numbers and the number of arrests suggests a systemic problem related to the investigation and arrest of people committing sexual violence.
- ◆ The difference between the national incidence and prevalence estimates for Texas compared to the 2015 Texas study strongly indicate a need to replicate that study today with a county-by-county breakdown.
- ◆ There is limited data available related to institutionalized or incarcerated populations.

Global Patterns / Causal Factors

Perpetrators of rape are often serial criminals:⁶¹

- ◆ Only seven of every 1,000 suspected rape perpetrators referred to prosecutors.
- ◆ 370 have at least one prior felony conviction, including 100 who have 5 or more

⁶⁰ Arnold, R. (2019, February 22). *Fewer than half of Houston-area sexual assaults lead to charges*. KPRC. <https://www.click2houston.com/news/2019/02/22/fewer-than-half-of-houston-area-sexual-assaults-lead-to-charges/>

⁶¹ Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) - Felony Defendants in Large Urban Counties, 2009 (2013)

- ✦ 520 will be released—either because they posted bail or for other reasons—while awaiting trial.
- ✦ 70 of the released perpetrators will be arrested for committing another crime before their case is decided.

National Women's Study found that:⁶²

- ✦ Twenty-nine percent of all forcible rapes occurred when the victim was less than 11 years old.
- ✦ Another 32% occurred when the victim was between the ages of 11-17.
- ✦ Slightly more than one in five rapes (22%) occurred between the ages of 18-24.
- ✦ Seven percent of rapes occurred between the ages of 25-29.
- ✦ Only six percent of rapes occurred when the victim was older than 29 years old.
- ✦ Over two-thirds (70%) of victims reported no physical injuries.
- ✦ Only four percent sustained serious physical injuries.
- ✦ Twenty-four percent received minor physical injuries.
- ✦ Almost half of all rape victims (49%) described being fearful of serious injury or death during the rape.

The National Violence Against Women Survey found that:⁶³

- ✦ 21.6% of first or only rape experienced by women happened before age 12.
- ✦ 32.4% of such cases happened between the ages of 12 and 17.
- ✦ 29.4% happened between the ages of 18 and 24.
- ✦ 16.6% happened at age 25 or greater.

The National Survey of Adolescents found that of adolescents between 11 and 17 who had been sexually assaulted:⁶⁴

⁶² Kilpatrick, D. G., Resnick, H. S., Ruggiero, K. J., Conoscenti, L. M., & McCauley, J. (2007, July). *Drug-facilitated, Incapacitated, and Forcible Rape: A National Study*. Office of Justice Programs. <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/219181.pdf> Tjaden, P. G. (2000, November 1). *Full report of the prevalence, incidence, and consequences of violence against women*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/21948>

⁶³ Tjaden, P. G. (2000, November 1). Full report of the prevalence, incidence, and consequences of violence against women. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/21948>

⁶⁴ Kilpatrick, D. G., Ruggiero, K. J., Acierno, R., Saunders, B. E., Resnick, H. S., & Best, C. L. (2003). Violence and risk of PTSD, major depression, substance abuse/dependence, and comorbidity: Results from the National Survey of Adolescents. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 71(4), 692–700. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-006x.71.4.692>

- ✦ 29.9% had been assaulted before age 11.
- ✦ 16.3% had been assaulted between the ages of 11 and 12.
- ✦ 20.8% had been assaulted between the ages of 13 and 14.
- ✦ 20.8% had been assaulted between the ages of 15 and 16.
- ✦ 1.7% had been assaulted at age 17.

Victim Impact⁶⁵

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ✦ Medical complications | ✦ Eating disorders |
| ✦ Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder | ✦ Substance use disorder |
| ✦ Flashbacks | ✦ Somatic disorders |
| ✦ Panic attacks | ✦ Adverse psychological impacts |
| ✦ Depression | ✦ Adverse impacts on well-being |
| ✦ Self-harm / Suicide | |

Effective Responses for Survivors⁶⁶

- ✦ Developing an informed support system among loved ones and significant others
- ✦ Entering into one of several forms of therapy that have shown benefit for survivors to heal
- ✦ Teaching various self-care strategies
- ✦ Identify types of media to avoid consuming
- ✦ Managing of home /physical space
- ✦ Travel planning
- ✦ Safety planning

⁶⁵ *Statistics* | RAINN. (n.d.). Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network. Retrieved Dec 2020, from <https://www.rainn.org/statistics> & Texas Statewide Sexual Assault Prevalence Study, University of Texas at Austin, 2015

⁶⁶ Ibid

Effective Prevention Efforts⁶⁷

The Centers for Disease Control has identified essential prevention strategies to reduce the occurrence of sexual violence.

Strategy	Approach
Promote Social Norms that Protect Against Violence	Bystander Approaches Mobilizing men and boys as allies
Teach Skills to Prevent Sexual Violence	Social-emotional learning Teaching healthy, safe dating and intimate relationship skills to adolescents Promoting healthy sexuality Empowerment-based training
Provide Opportunities to Empower and Support Girls and Women	Strengthening economic supports for women and families Strengthening leadership and opportunities for girls
Create Protective Environments	Improving safety and monitoring in schools Establishing and consistently applying workplace policies Addressing community-level risks through environmental approaches
Support Victims/Survivors to lessen Harms	survivor-centered services Treatment for survivors of SV Treatment for at-risk children and families to prevent problem behavior including sex offending

Effective Responses to Rape Perpetrators⁶⁸




- ✦ Cognitive-behavioral treatment programs based on a manualized curriculum combined with substance use and/or mental health treatment needed
- ✦ Medication, including antiandrogens, gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH), antipsychotics, and serotonergic antidepressants (SSRI's).

⁶⁷ *Prevention Strategies*|Sexual Violence|Violence Prevention|Injury Center|CDC. (2021). <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/sexualviolence/prevention.html>

⁶⁸ Cochrane Database Systemic Review. 2015 Feb; 2015(2): CD007989. Omar Kahn, Michael Ferriter, Nick Huband, Mealnaie J. Powney, Jane A. Dennis, and Conor Duggan

Human Trafficking

Data Sources

<div>National</div> 	<p>National Prevalence Estimate (yearly)⁶⁹: 600,000 - 800,000 TVISA Applications Submitted (2019)⁷⁰: 2,253</p>
<div>Texas</div> 	<p>Texas Prevalence Estimate (2016)⁷¹: 300,000</p>
<div>Harris County</div> 	<p>Harris County Cases Filed (2019)⁷²: 266</p>

Harris County Patterns / Data Limitations

- ◆ While we were unable to find specific Harris County estimates, multiple reports indicate that the Houston area is identified as one of the two largest human trafficking centers in Texas.⁷³
- ◆ Many data systems do not track trafficking as a separate crime or instance.
- ◆ Cases can be misidentified as other criminal conduct.

⁶⁹ Characteristics of Suspected Human Trafficking Incidents, 2008-2010 | OVC. (2011, April 1). Office for Victims of Crime. <https://ovc.ojp.gov/library/publications/characteristics-suspected-human-trafficking-incidents-2008-2010>

⁷⁰ UCIS 2020

⁷¹ Human Trafficking by the Numbers -The Initial Benchmark of Prevalence and Economic Impact for Texas. (2016, December). University of Texas. <https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/44597/idvsa-2016-human-trafficking-by-the-numbers.pdf>

⁷² Rice, J. (2020, January 14). The Number Of Human Trafficking Cases Has More Than Doubled In Harris County. Houston Public Media. <https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/news/2020/01/13/357138/the-number-of-human-trafficking-cases-has-more-than-doubled-in-harris-county/>

⁷³ Texas Human Trafficking Fact Sheet. (2013). Center for Public Policy. <http://www.htcourts.org/wp-content/uploads/TX-HT-Fact-Sheet-2.13.13.pdf?Factsheet=HT->

Victim Impact⁷⁴

According to the CDC, trafficking “exploits women, men, and children across the United States and around the world. Trafficking victimization and perpetration share risks and consequences associated with [child abuse and neglect](#), [intimate partner violence](#), [sexual violence](#), and [gang violence](#). Perpetrators of human trafficking often target people who are poor, vulnerable, living in an unsafe situation, or searching for a better life. Survivors can come from all backgrounds and become trapped in different locations and situations”⁷⁵. Trafficking:

- ✦ Deprives people of their human rights
- ✦ Creates significant health risks to the individual, including the use of addictive drugs to control the victim
- ✦ Results in the sexual abuse of victims
- ✦ Can result in the death of victims
- ✦ Fuels the growth of organized crime

Effective Responses for Survivors⁷⁶

- ✦ Safe shelters
- ✦ Strong confidentiality
- ✦ Crisis intervention and trauma-informed interventions⁷⁷
- ✦ Intensive case management services
- ✦ Transportation
- ✦ Assistance in completing required paperwork
- ✦ Working flexibly on the client’s timeline
- ✦ Survivor education regarding all available legal remedies

⁷⁴ *Facts About Human Trafficking*. (2004, May). Department of Homeland Security. <https://2001-2009.state.gov/documents/organization/33216.pdf>

⁷⁵ *Sex Trafficking|Sexual Violence|Violence Prevention|Injury Center|CDC*. (2021, January 28). <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/sexualviolence/trafficking.html>

⁷⁶ *Evaluation of Comprehensive Services for Victims of Human Trafficking: Key Findings and Lessons Learned*. (2007, April). Office of Justice Programs. <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/218777.pdf>

⁷⁷ Clawson, H. J., Salomon, A., & Goldblatt Grace, L. (2017, February 21). *Treating the Hidden Wounds: Trauma Treatment and Mental Health Recovery for Victims of Human Trafficking*. ASPE. <https://aspe.hhs.gov/report/treating-hidden-wounds-trauma-treatment-and-mental-health-recovery-victims-human-trafficking>

Effective Responses for Perpetrators⁷⁸

- ◆ Multi-disciplinary task forces at the state and/or county level
- ◆ Training and awareness of law enforcement to recognize a broad range of human trafficking activity
- ◆ Protocols to guide task force activity once a survivor has been identified (as Harris County has developed)
- ◆ Continued updating of the definition of human trafficking
- ◆ Training, awareness, and development of specialized prosecution caseloads

⁷⁸ Farrell, A., McDevitt, J., & Fry, S. (2008, December). *Understanding and Improving Law Enforcement Responses to Human Trafficking: Final Report*. Office of Justice Programs.
<https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/222752.pdf>

4 Funding for Victim Services

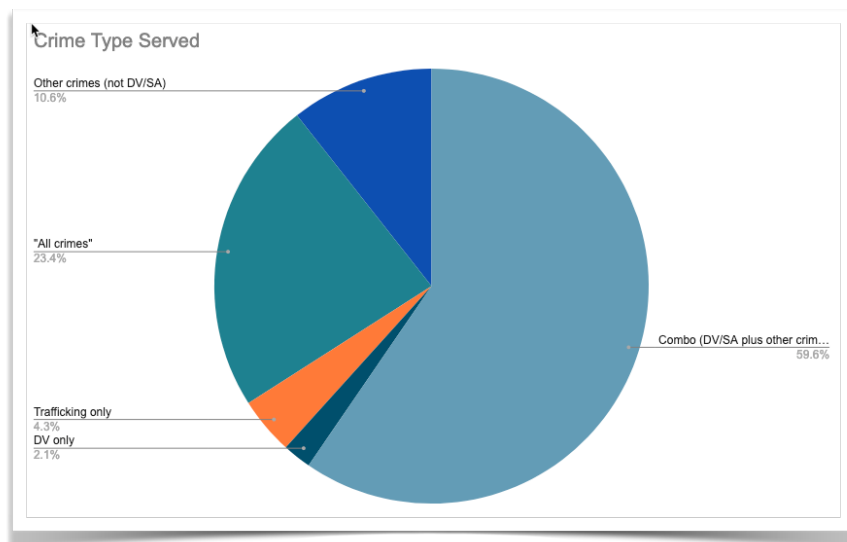
Public Data about Victim Services in Harris County

Providers

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice lists 57 entities providing victim services in Harris County. Other sources indicate an additional nine victim service providers.⁷⁹ Eleven organizations have multiple locations; four are located in federal offices; two are located in state government offices; and two are in hospital systems.⁸⁰ This totals **47 victim service providers** excluding multiple offices, hospitals, and federal and state government departments or offices.⁸¹

Crime Types

Survivors of all types of crimes can find support services in Harris County, though the bulk of the funding addresses domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking.



79 Texas Office of the Attorney General. (2020). Crime victim services: Annual report 2020. https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/sites/default/files/files/divisions/crime-victims/ CVS_ANNUAL_REPORT_2020.pdf

80 Texas Department of Criminal Justice. (n.d.). Texas victim resource directory. Retrieved January 27, 2021 from <https://ivss.tdcj.texas.gov/resource-search/?filter=¤tdatetime=2021-1-27%204:13:4&cty=HARRIS>.

81 It should be noted that this number represents in some cases more than one office of the same organization, and that two of the organizations serve other counties in addition to Harris County.

Of the 47 Victim Service Providers in Harris County noted earlier, 28 provide services for a combination of crime types, including domestic violence and/or sexual assault. One solely provides domestic violence services, two solely provide services to survivors of human trafficking, 11 provide services to survivors of all types of crime (and are based in law enforcement offices or the county attorney's office), and five provide services to survivors of crimes other than domestic violence, sexual assault, or trafficking.⁸²

Services

Services in Harris County are provided by nonprofit organizations, local and county criminal justice organizations' victim services, faith communities, higher education student services, and limited state-level organizations with chapters or headquarters in Harris County. Services (not all funded by federal or state dollars) include:⁸³

- ✦ Assistance with crime victims' compensation
- ✦ Clothing / immediate Needs
- ✦ Community outreach / Education
- ✦ Criminal justice accompaniment
- ✦ Crisis intervention / Counseling / Mental health services
- ✦ Crisis line
- ✦ Emergency financial assistance
- ✦ Emergency legal advocacy
- ✦ Follow-up
- ✦ Forensic interviews
- ✦ Information & referral
- ✦ Medical services
- ✦ Personal advocacy
- ✦ Prevention
- ✦ Safety planning
- ✦ Shelter
- ✦ Supervised Visitation
- ✦ Support groups
- ✦ Transportation
- ✦ Victim advocacy

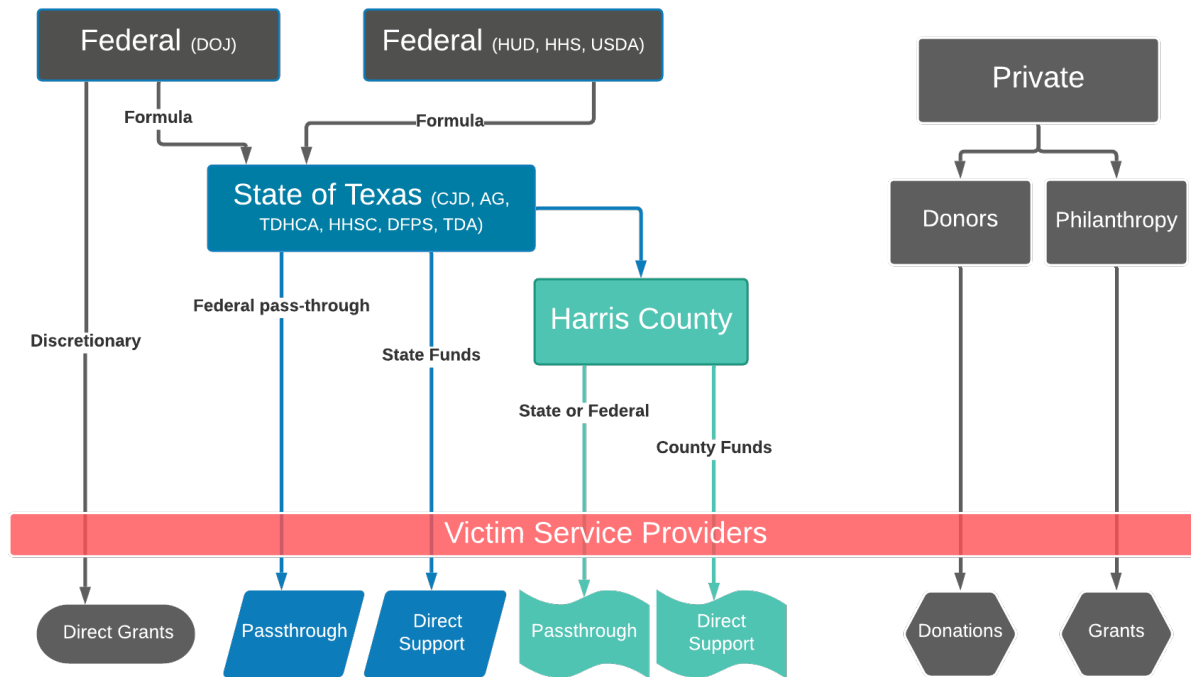
82 Texas Department of Criminal Justice. (n.d.). Texas victim resource directory. Retrieved January 27, 2021 from <https://ivss.tdcj.texas.gov/resource-search/?filter=¤tdatetime=2021-1-27%204:13:4&cty=HARRIS>.

83 Ibid

Funding Summary

Sources of Public Funding

Funding for victim services in Harris County comes from federal, state, and county sources, and from private donations or philanthropy. This survey will focus on public funding sources.



Federal

Federal funding for victim services in Harris County comes primarily through funding from the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) through the US Department of Justice (DOJ). A small portion of those funds comes through direct applications to five of the six program offices of the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), including the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), National Institute of Justice (NIJ), Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), and Office on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Office of Justice Programs. (n.d.). Support for the states: Texas. United States Department of Justice. Retrieved October 11, 2020 and February 22, 2021 from <https://ovc.ojp.gov/states/texas#b5p>.

The larger portion of federal VOCA and VAWA funding is passed through the Texas Criminal Justice Division (CJD) of the Governor's Office and the Office of the Attorney General (OAG). It is important to note that federal VOCA funds are forecasted to be reduced dramatically due to lower deposits to the Crime Victims Fund from offender fines and fees. This reduction in funding will impact victim services in Harris County and across the nation.

Table 1. Direct Federal DOJ Grants to Harris County, 2005-2020

Program Office, US DOJ BJP	Total Awarded, 2005-2020	Grant Recipient(s)
OVC	\$6,353,450	YMCA of Greater Houston, City of Bellaire, Lone Star Legal Aid, City of Houston, United Against Human Trafficking, FamilyTime Crisis & Counseling Center, Santa Maria Hostel
OVW	\$600,00	Tahirih Justice Center
NIJ	\$3,054,330	University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston
BJA	\$659,558	Harris County, City of Baytown, City of Pasadena
OJJDP	\$1,695,527	Pasadena Independent Schools, Change Happens

In addition to funds administered by the DOJ, some victim service providers in Harris County receive funding from the following federal and state sources:

- ◆ Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- ◆ Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), including funding from the Family Violence and Prevention Act (FVPSA)
- ◆ Department of Agriculture (USDA) funding passed through the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA)
- ◆ Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)
- ◆ Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA)
- ◆ Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA)
- ◆ Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, special funding was made available that included support for victim services. Three victim service providers received \$180,245 in 2020 from the Coronavirus Relief Fund.⁸⁵ That funding is not likely to be sustained once the pandemic has passed.

State of Texas

In addition to federal funds administered by state offices and agencies, the state of Texas also funds victim services throughout the state, including in Harris County. In FY2018, the combined payments from CJD, the OAG, HHSC, and TDHCA through the Comptroller totaled \$17,688,347. In FY2019 the amount was \$16,731,777, and in FY2020 payments totaled \$17,301,040.⁸⁶

Table 2. Payments to victim service providers in Harris County, FY18-FY20

	CJD	OAG	HHSC	TDHCA
FY2018 Total: \$18,009,209	\$12,494,436	\$1,551,599	\$3,628,236	\$334,938
FY2019 Total: \$17,225,515	\$10,151,929	\$1,730,020	\$4,849,828	\$290,738
FY2020 Total \$17,767,094	\$10,928,641	\$1,791,674	\$4,580,725	\$466,054

⁸⁵ Totals reflect payments categorized as Coronavirus Relief Fund - Grants to Community Service Programs viewable from the Comptroller's open data visualization tool, cross-referenced with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice's directory of service providers in Harris County.

Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. (n.d.). Data visualizations. Retrieved October 11, 2020, October 14, 2020, October 15, 2020, January 14, 2021, January 20, 2021, January 24, 2021, January 27, 2021, and February 22, 2021 from https://bivisual.cpa.texas.gov/CPA/opendocnotoolbar.htm?document=documents%5CTR_Master_UL.qvw,

Texas Department of Criminal Justice. (n.d.). *Texas victim resource directory*. Retrieved January 27, 2021 from <https://ivss.tdcj.texas.gov/resource-search/?filter=¤tdatetime=2021-1-27%204:13:4&cty=HARRIS>

⁸⁶ Public Safety Office. (2019). Biennial report to the legislature 2019. Office of the Texas Governor. <https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/organization/criminal-justice/PSO-Biennial-Legislative-Report-2017-2018.pdf>.

Between September 2016 and August 2018, CJD provided \$270 million in funding for victim services across the entire state, of which \$120 million was allocated for Crimes Against Children, \$93 million for Violence Against Women, \$24.5 million for Criminal Justice Advocacy, and \$23 million for General Victim Services. The CJD reports receiving \$364,637,391 during FY2017 and FY2018 in federal VOCA, VAWA and Sexual Assault Service Program (SASP) funding. State Appropriations during those two fiscal years was \$67,267,546 for the Criminal Justice Planning Account, Crime Stoppers Assistance Account, Child Sex Trafficking Team, and Internet Crimes Against Children.⁸⁷

The OAG administers federal and state funds for victim services through the following grants: Crime Victims Civil Legal Services (CVCLS), Sexual Assault Prevention and Crisis Services (SAPCS), Statewide Automated Victim Notification Service (SAVNS), Other Victim Assistance Grants (OVAG), the Victim Coordinator and Liaison Grant Program (VCLG), and the Domestic Violence High Risk Team Grant Program (DVHRT).⁸⁸ The Comptrollers report indicates a total of 37 total grants in FY 20⁸⁹.

Table 3. Grants to victim service providers in Harris County, FY20 (source: OAG Annual Report)

Grant Program	Number of Grants	Total Amount FY20
CVCLS	5	\$696,711.00
DVHRT	1	\$55,000.00
OVAG	17	\$710,593.00
SAPCS	11	\$1,887,261.00
SAVNS	1	\$118,673.63
VCLG	2	\$84,000.00
	TOTAL FY20	\$3,552,238.63

⁸⁷ The Public Safety Office's Biennial Report to the Legislature, 2019. <https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/organization/criminal-justice/PSO-Biennial-Legislative-Report-2017-2018.pdf>

⁸⁸ A full list of Attorney General's office grants for victim services can be found in the FY2020 OAG Crime Victim Services Annual Report.

⁸⁹ Texas Office of the Attorney General. (2020). Crime victim services: Annual report 2020. https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/sites/default/files/files/divisions/crime-victims/ CVS_ANNUAL_REPORT_2020.pdf.

Taken as a snapshot, payments in FY2019 show the number of victim service providers in Harris County that received federal and/or state funding, and the amount from each state agency (figures for grants from the OAG are for FY2020).⁹⁰

Table 4. Number of victim service providers receiving funding by funding stream, FY19 (source: Comptroller)

19 of 47	Victim Service Providers received funds from CJD in FY19, totalling \$10,151,929
23 of 47	Victim Service Providers received funds from the OAG in FY20, totalling \$3,552,239
8 of 47	Victim Service Providers received funds from HHSC in FY2019 totalling \$4,849,828
3 of 47	Victim Service Providers received funds from TDHCA in FY2019 totalling \$290,738
1 of 47	Victim Service Provider received funds from DFPS in FY2019 totalling \$20,144
3 of 47	Victim Service Providers received COVID Pandemic Emergency Funds through the State in 2020, totalling \$180,245

⁹⁰ Totals reflect payments viewable from the Comptroller's open data visualization tool, cross-referenced with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice's directory of service providers in Harris County. https://bivisual.cpa.texas.gov/CPA/opendocnotoolbar.htm?document=documents%5CTR_Master_UI.qvw

The portion of funding disbursed to Harris County appears to be smaller relative to the county's portion of the state population.⁹¹ According to the US Census Bureau, Harris County makes up 16.25% of the state population,⁹² but in FY19 Harris County received 13.65% of funds from CJD,⁹³ 10.45% of grant funds from the OAG,⁹⁴ 0.40% of funds from HHSC,⁹⁵ and 0.21% of funds from TDHCA's Community Service Programs grants through the Federal Community Affairs account.⁹⁶ The difference in percentage from CJD may be explained by the fact that a portion of CJD funds go to statewide victims organizations which are located outside of Harris County. The difference in funds from the OAG may be explained by that office's administration of direct CVC payments to survivors.

The vast disproportion in funds going to victim service providers in Harris County versus the total payments statewide from HHSC and TDHCA may be explained by these agencies providing funds for a wide array of programs and services largely outside of victim services (e.g. foster care). It is challenging to delineate the portion of funding administered by these two agencies, as well as DFPS and TDA, that truly supports survivors and victim services in Harris County. Most of these funds are not designated specifically for survivors or victim service providers, though some victim service providers are among recipients of that funding in Harris County (as noted above). In addition, these funding streams almost certainly indirectly support survivors who may not have sought services as survivors per se, though their victimization or trauma may have contributed to them seeking services. Further analysis may provide clarity.

⁹¹ This paragraph considers funding through CJD, the OAG, HHSC, and TDHCA. It excludes TDA and DFPS.

⁹² US Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/TX> and <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/harriscountytexas,TX/PST045219>, retrieved Jan 14, 2021. Harris County: 4,713,325; Texas: 28,995,881.

⁹³ Data from the Comptroller shows CJD payments statewide in FY19 as \$74,372,252. Harris County received \$10,151,929.

⁹⁴ The OAG FY20 Annual Report states that "the OAG awarded \$33,979,678.48 to organizations that provide essential victim services in the state of Texas." Harris County received \$3,552,239.

⁹⁵ Data from the Comptroller shows HHSC payments statewide in FY2019 as \$1,212,192,473. Harris County received \$4,849,828. DFPS, not included in table payments statewide in FY2019 were \$198,354,588, of which one VSP in Harris County received \$20,144.

⁹⁶ TDHCA - statewide FY2019 \$136,360,457; Harris Co. \$290,738

Harris County

County funding for nonprofit victim service providers was \$525,548 in calendar year 2018, \$399,293 in 2019, and \$300,598 in 2020 according to data from the county auditor's office.⁹⁷ These amounts included payments to Crime Stoppers of Houston from fines and fees. An analysis of county and local agencies budgets could shed greater light on victim services housed within law enforcement agencies.

Questions & Limitations

- Public funding data does not completely describe the scope and span of victim service providers in Harris County. Information contained in this survey should be updated when parallel efforts to document service provision in the county are completed.
- We were unable to determine if the data accessible from the Comptroller was a complete representation of the funds issued by the CJD, as the annual report to the Legislature does not break down funds by county.
- We were not able to identify federal or state funding specifically for victim services in higher education (i.e. Campus Services). It is possible that those funds may be folded into more general state funding streams for the University of Houston and other institutions.
- We are not able to determine precisely the amount of funding allocated by crime type, service type, or by survivor demographics. It is possible that an analysis of sources such as annual reports or budgets might yield this data.
- Funds for immigration services are not included in this summary.
- As noted in the above summary, it is challenging to delineate the portion of funding administered by HHSC, TDHCA, DFPS, and TDA that supports survivors and victim services in Harris County.
- This summary does not include private and philanthropic funding for victim services.

⁹⁷ Harris County Auditor. (n.d.) *Vendor payment search*. Retrieved January 20, 2021 from <https://auditor.harriscountytexas.gov/Pages/VendorPaymentSearch.aspx>.

Recommendations for Victim Service Funding Data Collection

1. **Request a *customized data tool*** from the Comptroller that would summarize funding for crime victims services from all relevant accounts. Currently, information about payments to organizations in Harris County is available, but access is labor-intensive and may not account for all relevant funding. The Comptroller's open data site offers several options, including dashboards and reports. Partnering with the Comptroller to customize a data tool could help ensure a full, accurate, and consistently updated picture of funding for victim services in Harris County.
2. **Research funding at institutions of *higher education*** to determine current capacity for victim services for students, staff, and faculty. Available data did not reveal funding for victim services in higher education in Harris County. This funding may be available through an examination of institutional budgets, or through requests to those institutions.
3. **Develop a data tool to *analyze and summarize crime victim services*** in Harris County. This analysis might include the portion of service units or hours devoted to each crime type (noting possible co-occurrence of crimes experienced by an individual survivor), each type of service provided (again noting multiple services delivered to an individual), and by victim demographics.
4. **Research federal and state funding for *immigration services*** that supports survivors of crime in Harris County.
5. **Research the proportion of total funding for victim services that comes from *private donations or grants*** versus public sources.

5 Appendix

Victim Service Agencies

	Dept. of Criminal Justice	OAG Grants	HHSC Funded	Fed OVC Funded
Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse (AVDA)	Y	Y	Y	
Arrow Child and Family Ministries	Y			
Asians Against Domestic Abuse	Y			
Bay Area Turning Point, Inc.	Y	Y		
Baytown Police Department - Victim Services	Y			
Boat People SOS-Houston, Inc.		Y		
The Bridge Over Troubled Waters	Y	Y	Y	
Cabrini Legal Services	Y			
Catholic Charities of Galveston-Houston - Guadalupe Center	Y	Y		
Child Advocates Inc.	Y	Y		
The Children's Assessment Center	Y	Y		
Crime-Stoppers of Houston	Y			
The Crisis Center (Bay City)			Y	
Daya Houston	Y			
Deer Park Police Department	Y			
Family Ties Family Resource Services	Y	Y		
FamilyTime Crisis & Counseling Center	Y	Y	Y	Y
FBI Victim Services	Y			
Focusing Families	Y		Y	
Fort Bend County Women's Center	Y		Y	
Fraud Aid, Inc.	Y			

	Dept. of Criminal Justice	OAG Grants	HHSC Funded	Fed OVC Funded
Harris Co.		Y (SAVNS)		Y (COVID, PREA, Trafficking FY10)
Harris County District Attorney's Office	Y			
Harris County Constable's Office	Y			
Harris County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council		Y		
Harris County Hospital District	Y			
Harris County Sheriff's Office - Victim Services	Y			
Houston Area Women's Center	Y	Y	Y	
Houston Chapter Parents of Murdered Children, Inc.	Y			
Houston Police Department - Victim Services	Y			Y
Humble Police Department - Victim Services	Y			
ICE Victim Services	Y			
Innovative Alternatives, Inc.	Y			
Justice for Children		Y		
Katy Christian Ministries	Y	Y		
Katy Police Department - Victim Services	Y			
La Porte Police Department - Victim Services	Y	Y		
Lone Star Legal Aid		Y		Y
Memorial Hermann Hospital System	Y			
Montgomery County Women's Center	Y		Y	
The Montrose Center	Y	Y	Y	
Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) - Southeast Texas Region	Y			
Northwest Assistance Ministries' Family Violence Center	Y	Y	Y	
The Parris Foundation		Y		
City of Pasadena Police Department		Y		Y
Restorative Justice Alliance	Y			
The SAFE Program	Y			
South Texas College of Law Houston, Inc.		Y		

	Dept. of Criminal Justice	OAG Grants	HHSC Funded	Fed OVC Funded
Tahirih Justice Center	Y	Y		Y
Texas Center for the Missing	Y			
TX Dept Criminal Justice - Victim Svcs	Y			
TX Dept of Public Safety Victim Services	Y			
University of Houston Law Foundation		Y		
US Attorney's Office Victim/Witness	Y			
YMCA International Services	Y			Y