



Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

LETHALITY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

2018 - 2019 Update

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The Connecticut Lethality Assessment Program (LAP), which is administered by the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV), is modeled after the original Maryland lethality assessment program created by Dr. Jacquelyn Campbell. The evidence-based screening tool that emerged from Dr. Campbell's study of 2,500 intimate partner homicides has been the standard in identifying potential lethal behaviors in violent intimate partner relationships across the country.

After five years of expanding LAP across Connecticut through partnerships with law enforcement and CCADV's 18 member organizations, CCADV released the first [LAP report in 2017](#) highlighting 100% of Connecticut's law enforcement voluntarily adopting the program into their department's response to family violence policies. Ansonia Police Chief Kevin J. Hale in concert with CCADV member organization, *The Umbrella Center for Domestic Violence Services*, were the first to pilot the program in Connecticut.

The program includes:

- 93 municipal police departments
- CT State Police, which provides primary law enforcement services for 82 of the state's 169 towns
- 14 colleges and universities
- Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Police and Mohegan Tribal Police
- South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority
- CT State Environmental Conservation Police (ENCON)

A critical component of LAP requires that for all high danger screens a phone call be placed at the scene of the incident by the officer to the local domestic violence organization's dedicated LAP-Line. Placing a call at that point in time is an enhanced measure that previously did not occur. Before making the call, the officer informs the victim of the high danger screen and the importance of immediate safety planning. The officer encourages the victim to speak to the certified domestic violence counselor who will offer the following services:

- Short-term safety planning
- Crisis intervention
- Safe housing and housing advocacy
- Court-based legal advocacy
- Medical advocacy
- Advocacy and support to children exposed to family violence
- One-on-one counseling and support groups
- Information and referral

“ I am concerned about your safety. People who have answered yes to similar questions are at a higher risk of being killed or seriously injured. I am going to contact the local domestic violence program so they can provide you with tailored safety planning. ”

- Typical Officer response to a high danger screen

TRAINING & SUPPORT

The initial groundwork of LAP began concertedly in 2014 and, in 2017 as LAP expanded across the state, CCADV led the development of a number of initiatives to support law enforcement and advocates in their work as LAP Coordinators. The first resource developed was the monthly training bulletin that covers three core responsibilities - Investigative Support, Supervisors Corner, and the LAP Process. These bulletins along with quarterly regional meetings, short format roll call style training videos, and ongoing train-the-trainer classes became a staple in maintaining the LAP protocol while supporting key stakeholders.

Previously released training videos and bulletins are hosted on the CTLAP.ORG website, allowing 24-hour access for law enforcement and advocates working during the overnight hours. These resources also support police officer recruit training at the Police Officer Standards and Training Academy.

2018 - 2019 DATA

The calendar years of 2018 and 2019 produced Connecticut's first two years of complete statewide LAP data resulting in 19,496 victims of intimate partner violence being screened by law enforcement. The data reveals 52% of the victims screened were experiencing circumstances within their relationship that indicated a high danger risk of being seriously injured or killed. Of the 7,009 victims who were identified as high-danger, 54% of them spoke to the LAP-line advocate and received tailored safety planning and awareness of services available.

In 2019, the LAP data indicated that 112% of the high-danger victims who spoke to a LAP-line advocate engaged in services. A review of this anomaly indicated that two situations caused this elevated percentage rate. First, some departments began the practice of calling the LAP-line for all screens whether the screen indicated high-danger or non-high danger. Some of those non-high-danger victims engaged in services resulting in an increase of the "went to services" percentage. The second situation that increased the victim engagement percentage is that some victims chose not to speak to the LAP-line advocate in the presence of the officer but called the domestic violence program immediately after the officer left the scene. Both situations are the exception but are significant enough to raise the engagement compared to high-danger screens by 10% to 15%.

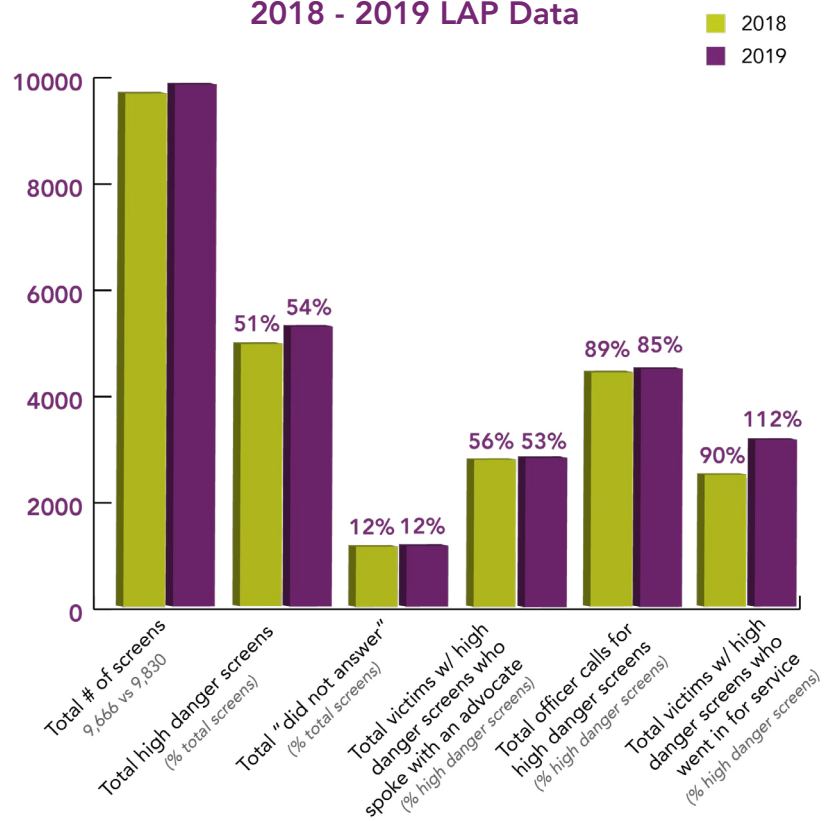
The LAP database is a basic indicator of participation and engagement that does not measure outcomes or the depth of the engagement by a victim. In July 2019, changes were made to the client reporting system that CCADV member organizations utilize to record victim engagement. These changes will allow for a de-identified understanding of the depth and outcomes of victim engagement in future reports.

Certain acts of violence such as strangulation and stalking significantly increase the level of potential danger present in a relationship. These acts coupled with attempts or recent separation are

When to initiate a LAP screen:

- When an intimate relationship is involved AND you believe an assault has occurred,
- You sense the potential for danger is high,
- Names of parties or location are repeat names or locations, or
- You simply believe one should be conducted.

2018 - 2019 LAP Data



red flags for law enforcement and advocates. In addition to information gathered at the scene, LAP questions 5, 7, and 11 will help officers assess for history or previous occurrence of strangulation, separation, or stalking. This additional information is critical for advocates to be aware of so they can tailor a safety plan based on the victim's circumstances.

LAP Questions:

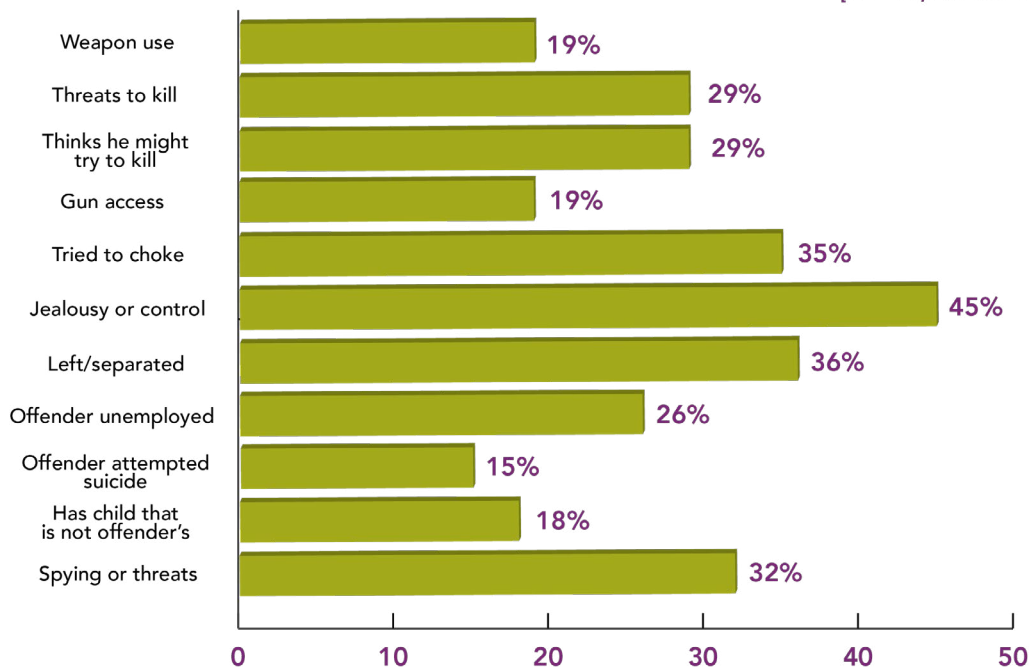
- 5. Has he/she ever tried to choke you?
- 7. Have you left him/her or separated after living together or being married?
- 11. Does he/she follow or spy on you or leave threatening messages?

An analysis of the frequency in which the 11 risk factors received a positive response reveals that:

- 1) Jealousy or control factors were the most pervasive component at 45%
- 2) Prior and/or pending separation was second at 36%
- 3) Attempted strangulation was third at 35%
- 4) Stalking behaviors was fourth at 32%

11 LAP Risk Factors and Rate of Positive Responses (2018 - 2019)

[n = 13,710 screens]



2020 COVID IMPACT

In the first four months of the pandemic, mid-sized and smaller towns across the state experienced lower numbers of family violence calls for service and arrests, while some larger cities experienced pockets of increased family violence calls for service and arrests. A review of the LAP data during these first four months (March-June), reveal intimate partner family violence LAP screens have been consistent across the state during this same period in 2019.

- 2019 - 3,358 screens, 54% high-danger, 34% non-high-danger
- 2020 - 3,612 screens, 54% high-danger, 32% non-high-danger

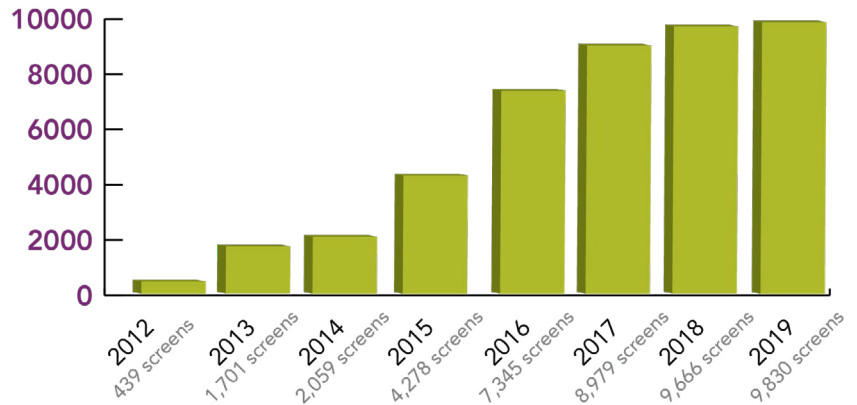
Unfortunately, during this same time, law enforcement saw a decrease in the number of victims participating in the LAP screening process. Additional training and resources will be developed to support victim engagement in the process. We are also developing new training videos to support learning opportunities for officers and advocates. We will continue to track engagement and circumstances that may affect the utilization of the LAP screen.

2012 - 2019 DATA

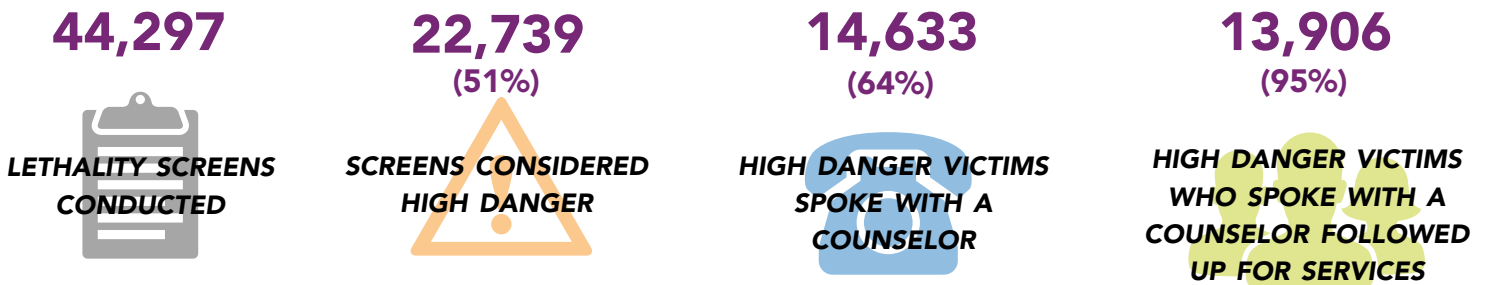
Since the introduction of LAP in Connecticut in 2012, law enforcement has conducted over 44,000 screens, and connected over 14,000 victims who scored high-danger with advocates who provided immediate safety planning based on the victims circumstances and informed them of services available.

Each year, as more departments were trained and commenced LAP participation, more screens were ultimately completed. In 2018 and 2019, with full statewide participation, approximately 9,600 - 9,800 screens were completed each year.

Total Screens 2012 - 2019



LAP data from the commencement of the statewide rollout beginning in September 2012 through December 2019 demonstrates:



CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

The statewide implementation of LAP has opened greater opportunities to identify some of the most dangerous abusive behaviors victims are experiencing. Of those behaviors, strangulation or attempted strangulation may contribute to cognitive medical complications that may not be apparent immediately. Because of this, CCADV will explore collaborating with the medical community to adopt specialized awareness training for nurses in the examination of intimate partner strangulation cases.

CT law enforcement continues to lead the nation in helping victims of intimate partner violence assess their potential danger. This un-mandated initiative has assisted thousands of victims and developed strong collaborations and partnerships between law enforcement, CCADV, and our 18 member domestic violence organizations. We are thankful for the tremendous leadership and daily efforts by our law enforcement and advocates who have contributed to this systemic transformation.

Interested in bringing LAP to your state or county?

CT remains the only state in the country to have full participation in LAP by its state police department and all municipal police departments. States or counties interested in learning more about incorporating LAP into their law enforcement response to intimate partner violence can contact Daniel Cargill, CCADV's Director of Law Enforcement Services, at dcargill@ctcadv.org.



Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LETHALITY SCREEN FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

When to Initiate a Lethality Assessment? When an intimate relationship is involved; **AND** You believe an **assault** has occurred, You sense the potential for **danger** is high, Names of parties or location are **repeat** names or locations, **OR** You simply believe one should be done.

LAP-Line #:

Officer:	Dept./Town:	Date:
Victim:	Offender:	Case #:
<input type="checkbox"/> Victim has been informed that any responses to the following questions could be used in the criminal or civil court process.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Check here if victim declined to be screened.		
▶ A "Yes" response to any of Questions #1-3 automatically triggers the High-Danger referral.		
1. Has he/she ever used a weapon against you or threatened you with a weapon?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Ans.
2. Has he/she threatened to kill you or your children?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Ans.
3. Do you think he/she might try to kill you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Ans.
▶ Negative responses to Questions #1-3, but positive responses to at least four of Questions #4-11, trigger the High-Danger referral.		
4. Does he/she have a gun or can he/she get one easily?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Ans.
5. Has he/she ever tried to choke you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Ans.
6. Is he/she violently or constantly jealous or does he/she control most of your daily activities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Ans.
7. Have you left him/her or separated after living together or being married?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Ans.
8. Is he/she unemployed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Ans.
9. Has he/she ever tried to kill himself/herself?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Ans.
10. Do you have a child that he/she knows is not his/hers?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Ans.
11. Does he/she follow or spy on you or leave threatening messages?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Ans.
▶ An officer may trigger the High-Danger referral, if not already triggered above, as a result of the victim's response to the below question, or whenever the officer believes the victim is in a potentially lethal situation.		
Is there anything else that worries you about your safety? (If "yes") What worries you?		
Check one:	<input type="checkbox"/> Victim is High-Danger based on score <input type="checkbox"/> Victim is High-Danger based on officer belief <input type="checkbox"/> Victim is not assessed as High-Danger	High Danger Screen, call the LAP-Line with victim <input type="checkbox"/> Officer called LAP-Line with victim present
If victim screened High-Danger: Did the victim speak with the LAP-Line advocate? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Advocate First Name: _____		

Officer's Signature: _____ **Supervisor's Signature:** _____

Note: The questions above and the criteria for determining the level of risk a person faces is based on the best available research on factors associated with lethal violence by a current or former intimate partner. However, each situation may present unique factors that influence risk for lethal violence that are not captured by this screen. Although most victims who screen "positive" or "high danger" would not be expected to be killed, these victims face much higher risk than that of other victims of intimate partner violence.

Admin Only	<input type="checkbox"/> Sent to DV Agency	<input type="checkbox"/> Sent to State's Atty	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Authorized Agency) _____	_____
				Name