



Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

**For Immediate Release
April 23, 2020**

Member Organizations

*The Umbrella Center for
Domestic Violence Services*
Ansonia, CT

The Center for Family Justice
Bridgeport, CT

Women's Center
Danbury, CT

*Domestic Violence Program
United Services*
Dayville, CT

The Network
Enfield, CT

*Domestic Abuse Services
Greenwich YWCA*
Greenwich, CT

Interval House
Hartford, CT

Chrysalis Domestic Violence Services
Meriden, CT

New Horizons
Middletown, CT

Prudence Crandall Center
New Britain, CT

*The Umbrella Center for
Domestic Violence Services*
New Haven, CT

Safe Futures
New London, CT

Domestic Violence Crisis Center
Norwalk, CT

Women's Support Services
Sharon, CT

Domestic Violence Crisis Center
Stamford, CT

Susan B. Anthony Project
Torrington, CT

Safe Haven
Waterbury, CT

*Domestic Violence Program
United Services*
Willimantic, CT

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**Domestic Violence Snapshot in Connecticut During COVID-19
Update 4.5.20 – 4.18.20**

Glastonbury, CT – Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) offers the following update on data available from various stakeholders within Connecticut’s domestic violence response system during COVID-19.

“During the first two weeks of April we saw a marked increase in calls to the state’s domestic violence hotline,” said Karen Jarmoc, chief executive officer, CCADV. “We continue to see the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on victims as they cope with issues such as unemployment and decreased access to basic necessities. Our service system feels the ripple effect but we continue to adjust to ensure that the needs of victims are met. We want victims and survivors to know that all domestic violence services remain operational 24/7 throughout this public health crisis and we will do everything we can to ensure their families have what they need to stay safe.”

CT Safe Connect/Statewide Hotline

Safe Connect, Connecticut’s centralized domestic violence resource hub, served 483 individuals between April 5 and April 18, 2020. Compared to the first two weeks of March 2020, this is approximately a 52% increase in the total individuals seeking assistance from Safe Connect before being referred to their local CCADV member organization for ongoing support and services. Of those individuals, 48% had never reached out to CCADV, Safe Connect, or our 18 member organizations. During the same time period in April, 18% of individuals contacting Safe Connect expressed concerns related to COVID-19, which is an 11% increase over the final two weeks of March.

Safe Connect advocates assisted 21 victims with e-filing restraining order applications through the CT Judicial Branch. Following an executive order issued by Governor Lamont in early April, restraining order applications can now be completed entirely online by the victim or through a third party on behalf of the victim. Safe Connect advocates guide victims through the process, scribe and submit the application on their behalf, and coordinate service of process with a state marshal. Advocate are also able to provide safety planning for the victim so that she or he may stay as safe as possible while awaiting the hearing.

Said Jarmoc, “It is critical for victims to know that CT Safe Connect is available to assist them with the online restraining order process. Victims are often dealing with a significant amount of trauma if things have escalated to the point that they feel they need to seek judicial remedies. The restraining order process can be overwhelming, but Safe Connect advocates can guide them through the process and provide the emotional support they need to stay safe.”

Shelter Services

Shelters operated by CCADV’s 18 domestic violence member organizations are currently operating at 118% capacity. This is a slight decrease in overall capacity,

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which had been running at 121%. Approximately 96% of sheltered victims are staying within shelter, while approximately 22% are currently housed in hotels to ensure that shelters can comply with social distancing guidelines and allow for quarantine space if needed.

Said Jarmoc, "We continue to work with our funders to be flexible in how housing dollars can be used to meet the unique needs of victims during this public health crisis. We are awaiting funding provided in the CARES Act through the US Department of Health and Human Services and guidance on when or how this funding can be spent."

Domestic Violence Rapid Rehousing

Connecticut's Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking Rapid Rehousing program is currently working with 96 families, including 30 families that were housed just during the last two weeks of March. Advocates are providing ongoing case management via phone and virtual visits to ensure that families can remain in safe, stable housing as many are dealing with unemployment and other financial disruptions during COVID-19.

Law Enforcement

CCADV continues to work with our partners at the CT State Police and municipal police departments across the state to assess calls for law enforcement intervention and ensure that victims all across the state can access help and services when needed. Law enforcement continue to utilize the lethality assessment screening tool at the scene of an intimate partner violence call, completing a total of 876 screens during March 2020 which is an 8% increase in the number of screens completed during March 2019. Data year-over-year indicates that approximately 50% of victims consistently screen as high danger, which allows law enforcement to quickly connect them to their local domestic violence advocate for immediate safety planning at the scene.

Statement from Chief Keith Mello, President of the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association:

"The Connecticut Police Chiefs Association has collected data from 61 municipal police departments, including some of our larger communities, for the period of April 1st to April 15th of this year and compared it to the data from the same period in 2019. Of the reported family violence incidents, we are seeing a 4% decline overall in those calls to law enforcement. While most municipalities are reporting a decline, there are some departments that are showing an increase from 2019."

"We in law enforcement have paid particular attention to the issue of family violence during this difficult time. We understand that people are spending more time in the home, some are feeling frustrated and anxious. We encourage everyone to be kind to one another, be patient and remember that there are resources available to them to help them through these times."

The CT State Police, which covers eighty-five towns, has seen a 12% decrease overall in the total calls received across the state during the first two weeks of April 2020 compared to 2019. Similar to municipal police departments, some individual state police troops are seeing slight increases in calls.

Statement from Trooper First Class, Christine Jeltema, CT State Police Public Information Office:

"The Connecticut State Police remains committed to its partnership with CCADV in ensuring the safety of victims and survivors across the state. We are tracking all family violence calls that the Connecticut State Police respond to during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to assist our partners within the domestic violence service system to better understand and assess where resources and services might best be focused. The safety of victims is our highest priority and we continue to inform victims of the services that are available to them."

Domestic violence services are accessible through CT Safe Connect 24 hours per day, 7 days per week via call, chat and email at www.CTSafeConnect.org or (888) 774-2900 (please note that texting is temporarily unavailable). Advocates can provide counseling, safety planning, risk assessment, assistance with a restraining order application, and a safe connection to the local CCADV member domestic violence organization for ongoing support and services. Bilingual services are available. All services are confidential, safe, free and voluntary.

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Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Inc. is the state's leading voice for victims of domestic violence and those organizations that serve them. We are a membership organization of the state's 18 domestic violence organizations. Help is available to victims 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by visiting www.CTSafeConnect.org or by texting/calling (888) 774-2900. For more information about CCADV, please visit www.ctcadv.org.