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SILENCE IS VIOLENCE

SILENCE IS VIOLENCE
Victim Allies Project
2012-2017 Summary Report
New Orleans, LA

Released: April 1, 2018

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BACKGROUND

New Orleans' rate of violence is higher than the U.S. national average, including elevated rates of murder, assault, and other types of interpersonal violence. Violence is not randomly dispersed throughout the city. Neighborhoods characterized by high rates of violence are also impacted by higher rates of unemployment, lower percentage of residents earning a wage or salary, lower household income, increased rates of people living below the poverty line, decreased rates of educational attainment, and higher rates of single-parent homes. These neighborhoods, which are predominantly African-American, are further impacted by high cycles of incarceration, release, and recidivism which have a profound impact on neighborhood, family, and individual stability and cohesion.

Building upon these community realities, we believe that violence can be viewed holistically across multiple levels: structural/systemic, contextual/environmental/community, interpersonal, and individual. Research and practice that conceptualizes violence as a public health, rather than criminology, issue facilitates novel ways of thinking about violent crime from a socio-ecological perspective. This perspective posits that effective violence reduction programs must be comprehensive, holistic, and address the underlying causes of violence (e.g., poverty, social norms that support violence) from a multi-level framework (e.g., structural, contextual, interpersonal, individual). Violence prevention research has traditionally been conducted within a criminology, sociology, or psychology framework. In contrast, a public health framework will ensure the focus remains squarely on addressing **root** causes of violence in order to **prevent** its occurrence within families and communities in Louisiana and in New Orleans.

One such agency that epitomizes this holistic, preventive approach to the reduction of violence is Silence is Violence. ***"The mission of Silence is Violence is to call upon both citizens and public officials to achieve a safe New Orleans across all communities. We engage youth in positive expressions and actions to counter the culture of violence. We demand respect for every life, and justice for every citizen in our city."*** Toward this end, Silence is Violence offers programs aimed at helping families and friends of victims of violent crime cope with grief and trauma, promoting peace and violence reduction in communities most affected by the negative outcomes associated with community violence, and serving as a community resource.

This report summarizes intake data from the **Victim Allies Project**. Services provided by this project include grief support, financial advocacy, and help navigating the Orleans and Jefferson parish criminal justice systems. Staff assess individual needs of each victim, then summon appropriate resources and attention to each case in coordination with the DA's office, NOPD, Department of Justice, Crime Stoppers, and other local agencies. The program's primary focus is homicide, but Silence is Violence staff members are trained to address any violent crime, including domestic violence and sex crimes. All services are free to victims and victim-survivors.

METHODS AND SOURCE OF DATA

A data base of all Silence Is Violence (SIV) quantitative intake data for the Victims Allies Project from January 1, 2012 – December 31, 2017 was created for the Summary Report. The database utilized intake data that was thorough, detailed, and complete, located in client files maintained by SIV staff. Data collection and analyses activities were conducted as a service for Silence Is Violence and not for research purposes. The data and this report remain property of Silence Is Violence. All data was de-identified for analytic purposes.

Quantitative data in the Summary Report has been summarized and examined for trends and key outcomes, using standard statistical procedures. The report provides incidence data (e.g., the time, location, type of violent incident, and weapon used), as well as data on the contextual environment of the murders and non-fatal shootings. Victim demographic background (e.g., age, sex, race, education) is provided along with Survivor/Witness demographic background data.

Included in the Summary Report are Victim/Witness responses to a client mental health and life circumstances needs assessment, the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Check List-Civilian Version (Weathers et al, 2013), and the Becks Depression Inventory (BDI; Beck et al., 1996). SIV began using these screening tools in 2015 to further evaluate clients' needs. The client needs assessment assessed 30 items. Key domains included questions about (1) life circumstances (e.g., housing, transportation, employment, child care), (2) parenting, (3) stress, coping, and support, (4) Veteran status, and (5) mental health needs. For most questions, clients answered (1) yes, (2) no, or (3) unsure.

The PTSD Check List is a standardized self-report rating scale comprised of 17 items that correspond to the key symptoms of PTSD. The Check List is self-administered and respondents indicate how much they have been bothered by a symptom over the past month using a 5-point (1–5) scale marking their responses in provided boxes. Responses range from “1” Not at All to “5” Extremely. In this report, we present client scores relative to scaling for the general population, Veteran's, and mental health clients.

The BDI is a 21-item, self-report rating inventory that measures characteristic attitudes and symptoms of depression (Beck et al., 1996). Each of the items is ranked in terms of severity and scored from 0 to 3 with the lowest possible score being 0 and highest possible score 63. Level of depression are categorized as followed: (0-10) considered normal, (11-16) mild mood disturbance, (17-20) borderline clinical depression, (21-30) moderate depression, (31-40) severe depression, and (over 40) extreme depression.

Citations:

Beck, A.T., Steer, R.A., & Brown, G.K. (1996). Manual for the Beck Depression Inventory-II. San Antonio, TX: Psychological Corporation.

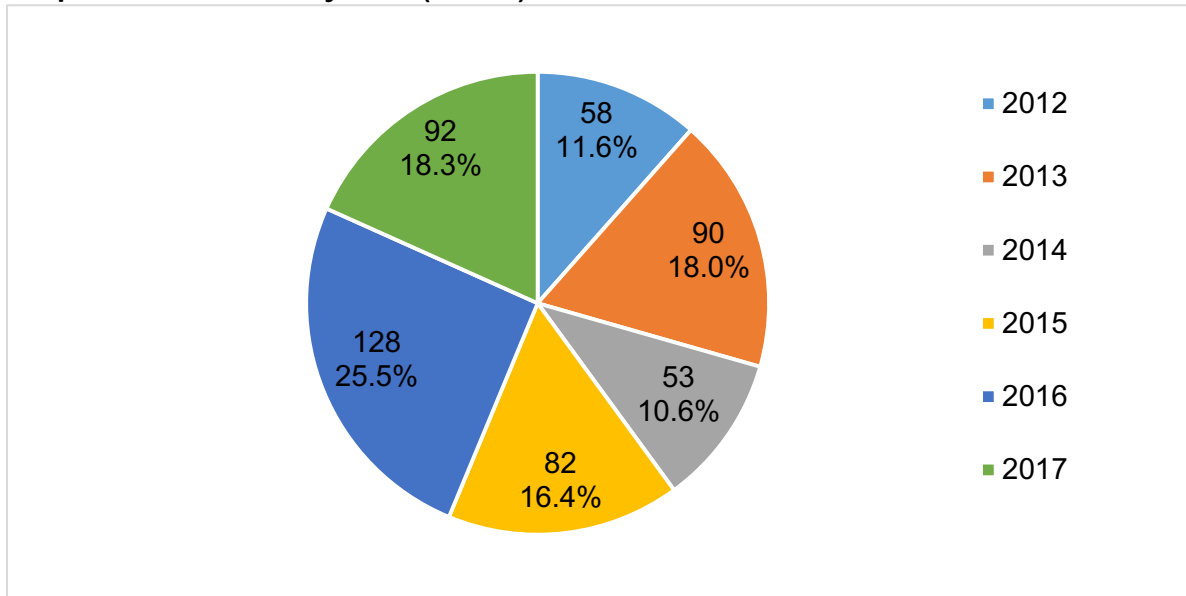
Weathers, F.W., Litz, B.T., Keane, T.M., Palmieri, P.A., Marx, B.P., & Schnurr, P.P. (2013). The PTSD Checklist for *DSM-5* (PCL-5). Scale available from the National Center for PTSD at www.ptsd.va.gov.

MURDER AND/OR NON-FATAL SHOOTING INCIDENT

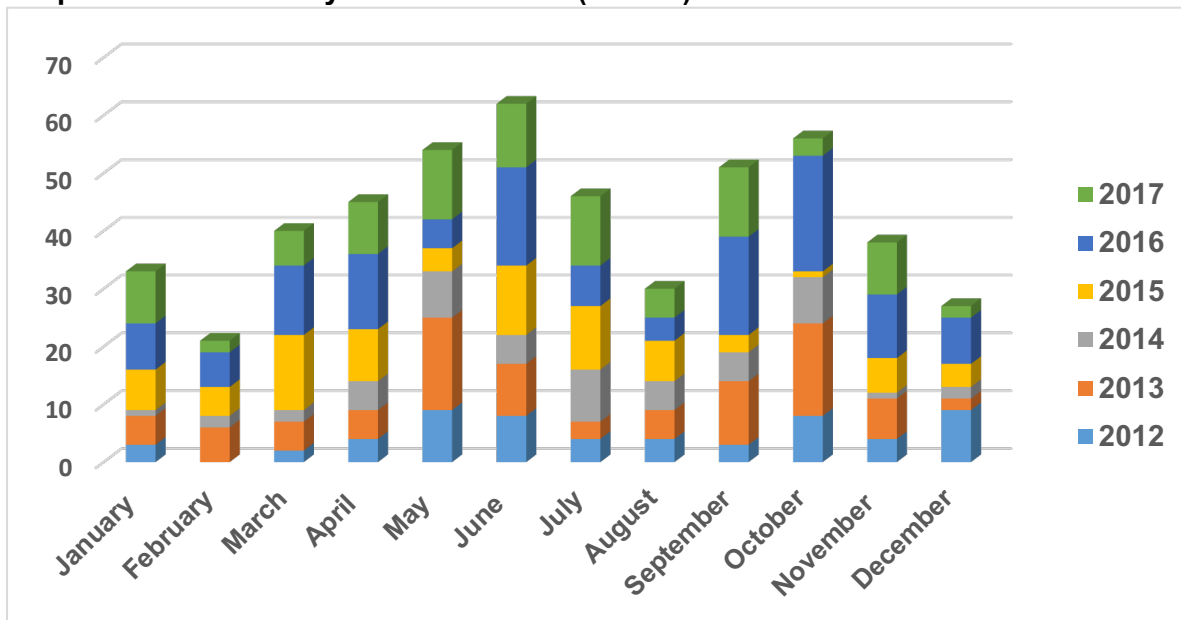
Incident by Year, Month, and Day

From 2012-2017 Silence is Violence provided services for 503 clients. As reflected in Graph 1, the number of cases per year has gradually increased over the 6 year period. There are small spikes in the number of SIV cases across the months, most notably May, June, and October (Graph 2). The incident by days of the week are equally distributed and do not show a spike in cases for any specific day (Graph 3).

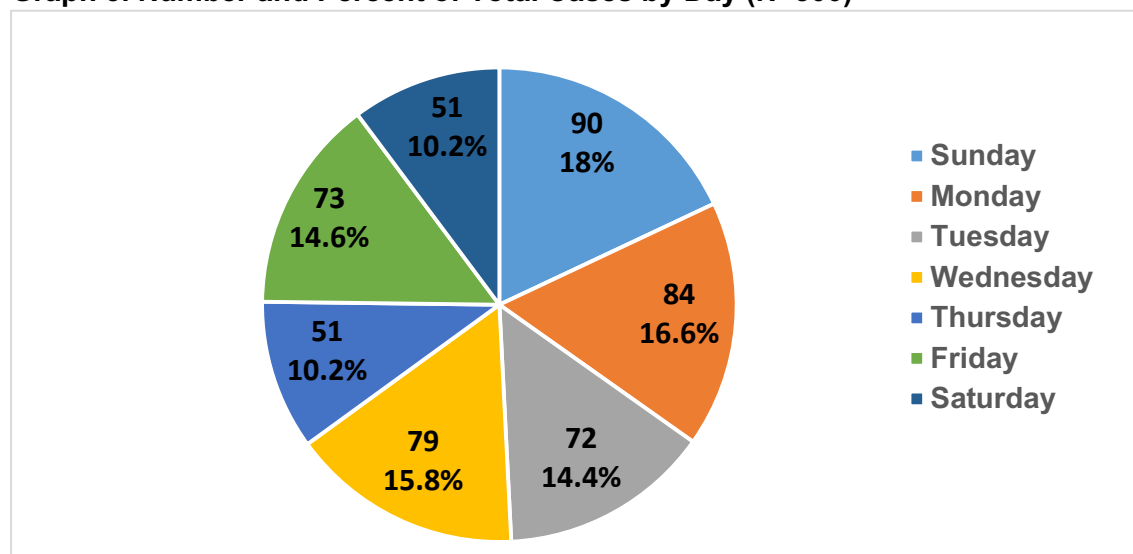
Graph 1. Total Cases by Year (N=503)



Graph 2. Total Cases by Month and Year (N= 503)



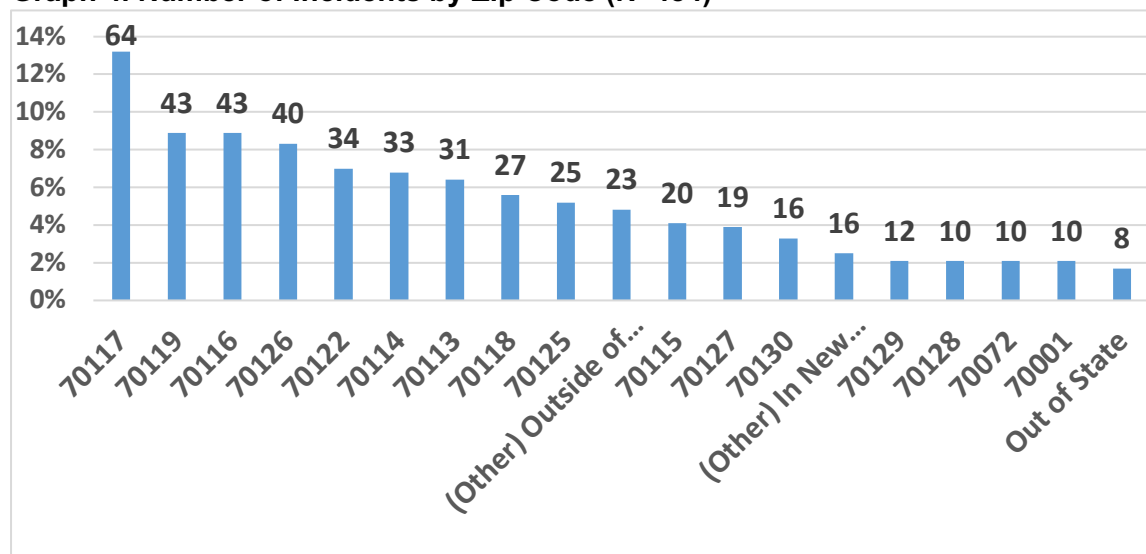
Graph 3. Number and Percent of Total Cases by Day (N=500)



Context and Environment of Incident

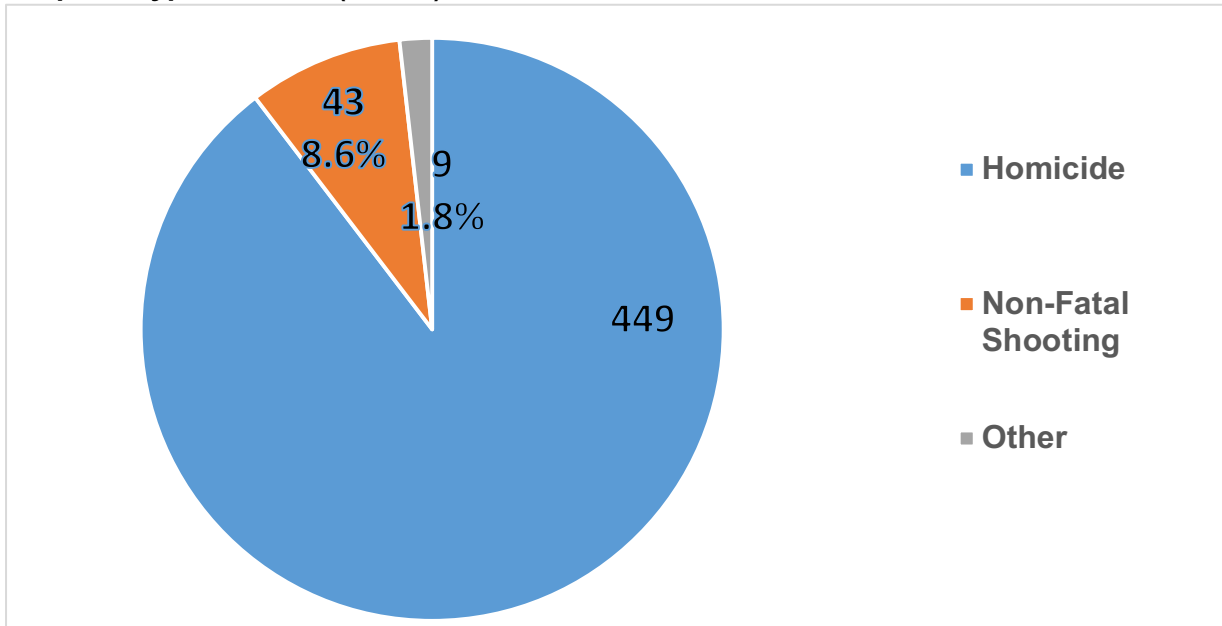
The majority of incidents (89.5%) occurred in New Orleans Parish with 10 zip codes accounting for 74.3% of the cases serviced by SIV (Graph 4). A number of cases occurred outside of New Orleans Parish in surrounding Parishes and a small number of cases occurred outside of the state. The majority of SIV cases were related to homicide (Graph 5) that involved a firearm (Graph 6). These cases most often occurred in the street followed by a vehicle or a house/apartment (Graph 7). These data parallel analyses of similar NOPD data.

Graph 4. Number of Incidents by Zip Code (N=484)

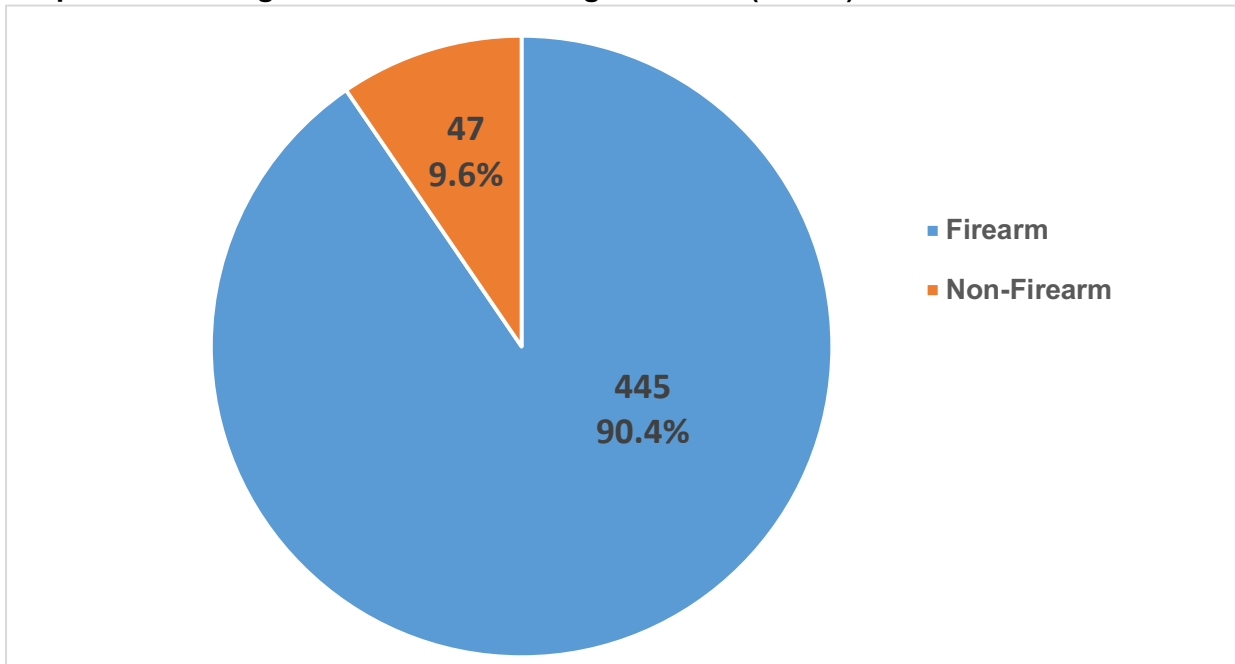


¹ *Other* is the total across all other zip codes in New Orleans Parish and Non-New Orleans Parishes that are represented and make up less than 10 cases for each zip code.

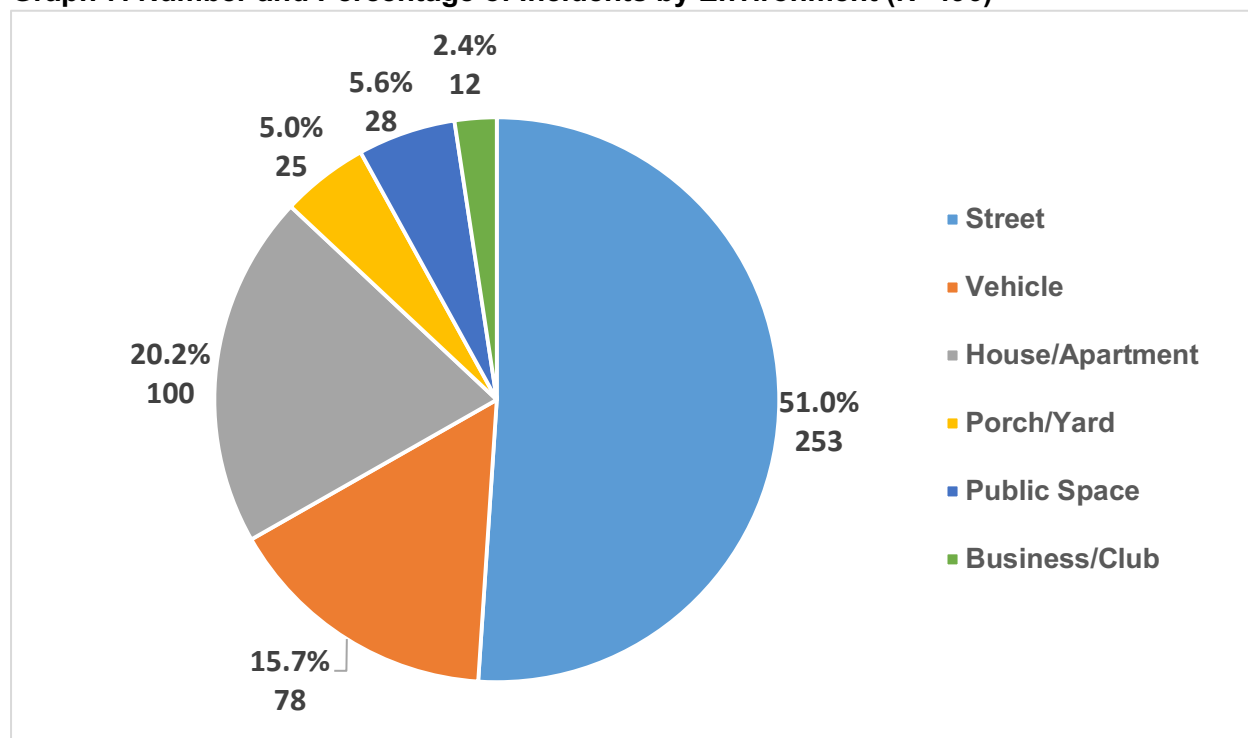
Graph 5. Type of Crime (N=501)



Graph 6. Percentage of Incidents Involving a Firearm (N=492)



Graph 7. Number and Percentage of Incidents by Environment (N=496)



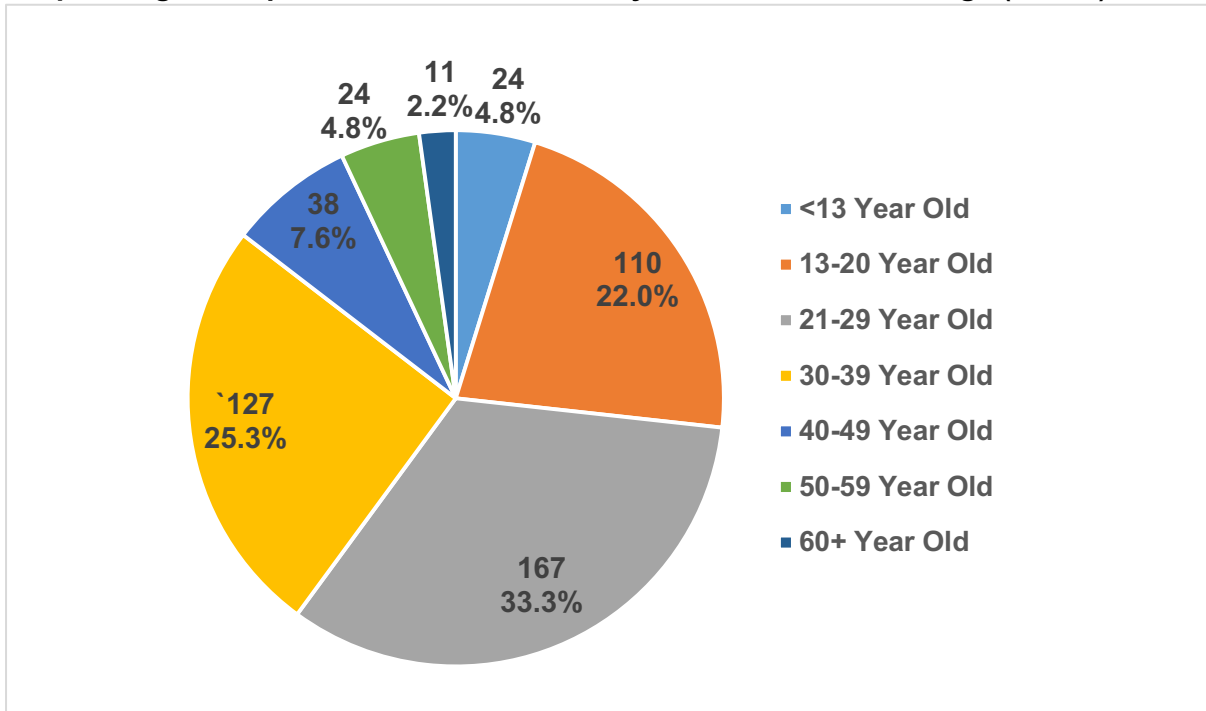
VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS

The majority of murder and/or non-fatal shooting incidents involved only one Victim (Table 1). A large number of Victims were between the age of 21-29 years followed by Victims 30-39 years old and 13-20 years old (Graph 8). The majority of victims reported were African American (94.8%; Graph 9) and male (79.3%; Graph 10). Most Victims had one or more children (85.7%; Graph 11). The highest level of educational attainment for the majority of Victims was a GED or High School diploma (38.6%) followed by some high school (33.4%; Graph 12).

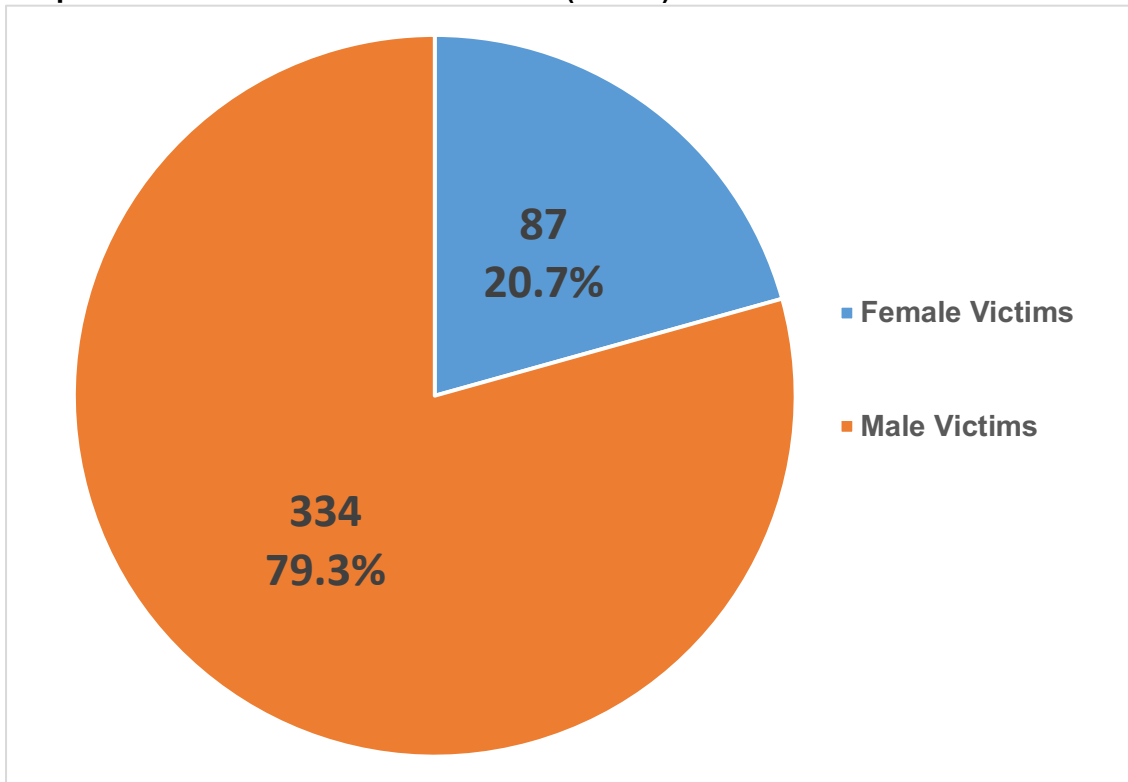
Table 1. Percentage of Single Victim Cases

Single Victim	(N=496)	Percentage
Yes	400	80.6%
No	96	19.4%
Missing	7	NA

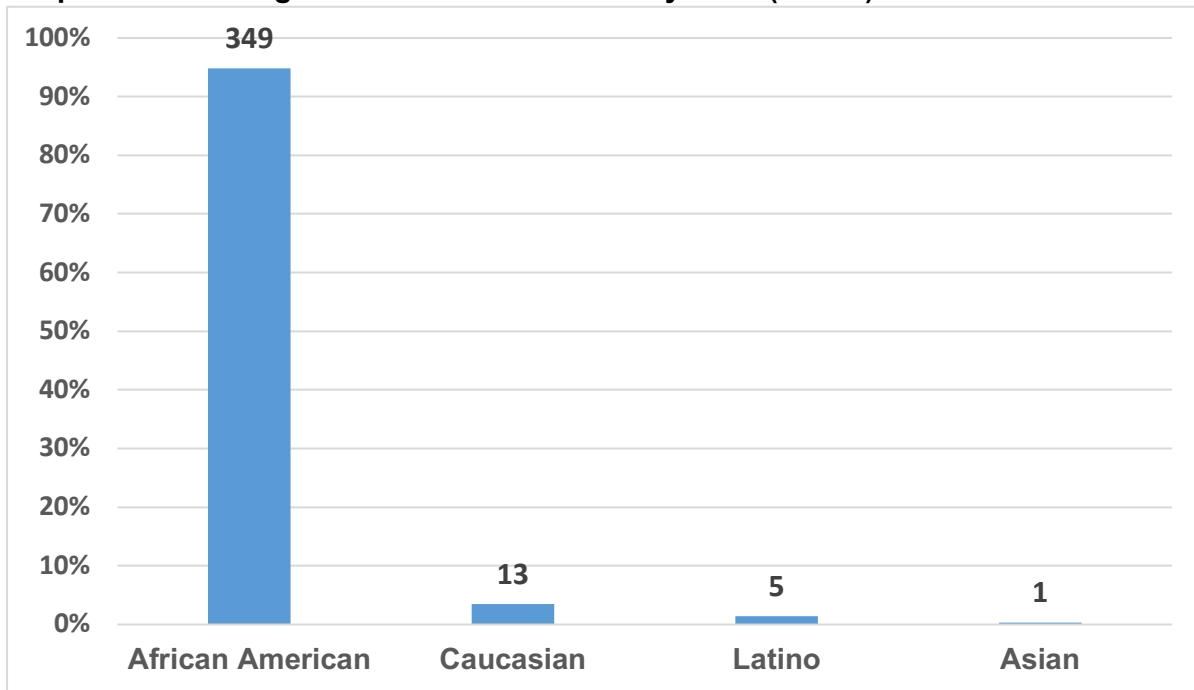
Graph 8. Age Group Distribution of Victims by Number and Percentage (N=501)



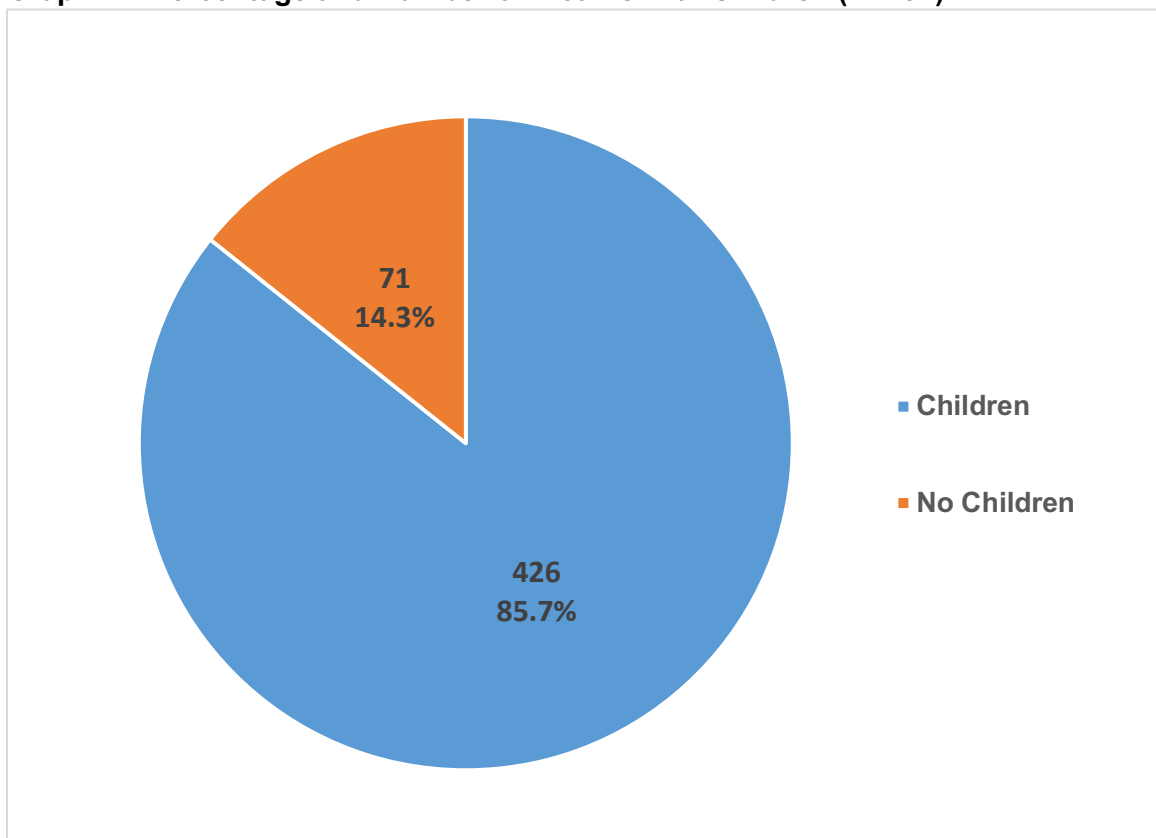
Graph 9. Gender Distribution of Victims (N=421)



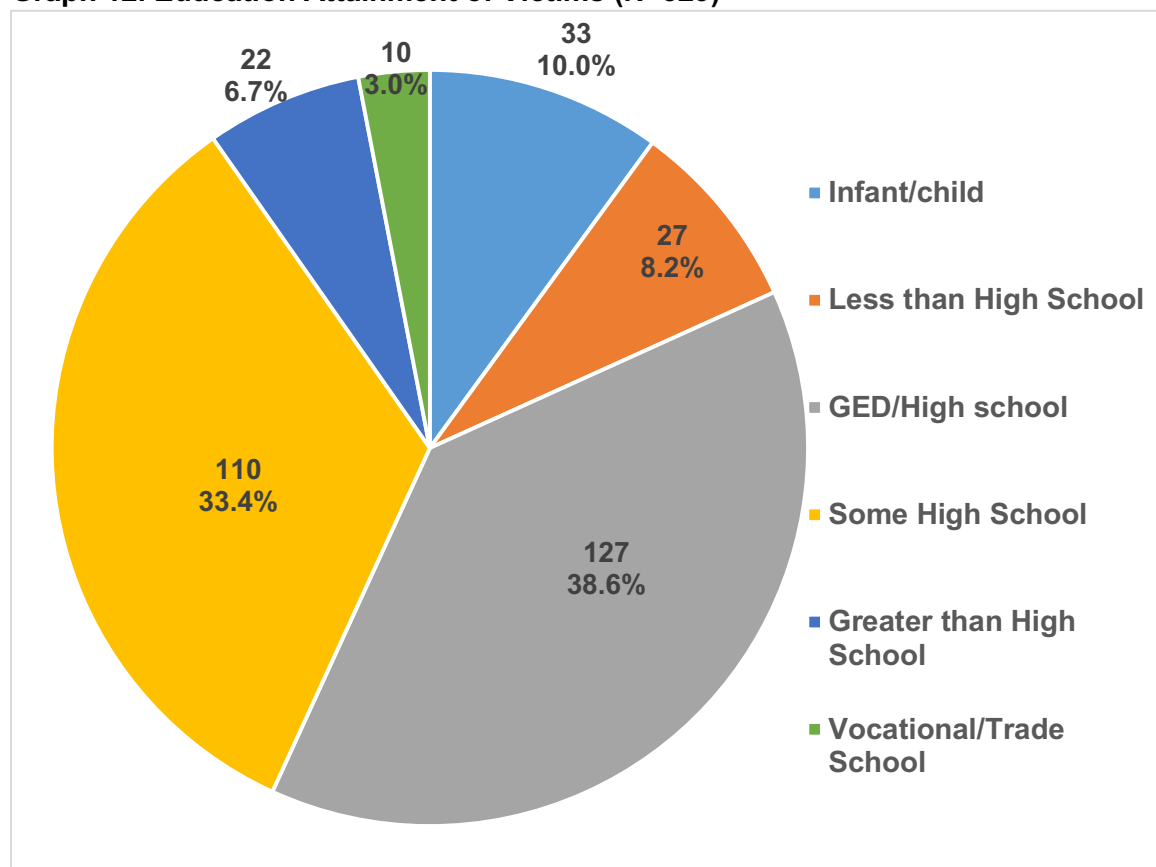
Graph 10. Percentage and Number of Victims By Race (N=368)



Graph 11. Percentage and Number of Victims with Children (N=497)



Graph 12. Education Attainment of Victims (N=329)



SURVIVORS AND WITNESSES

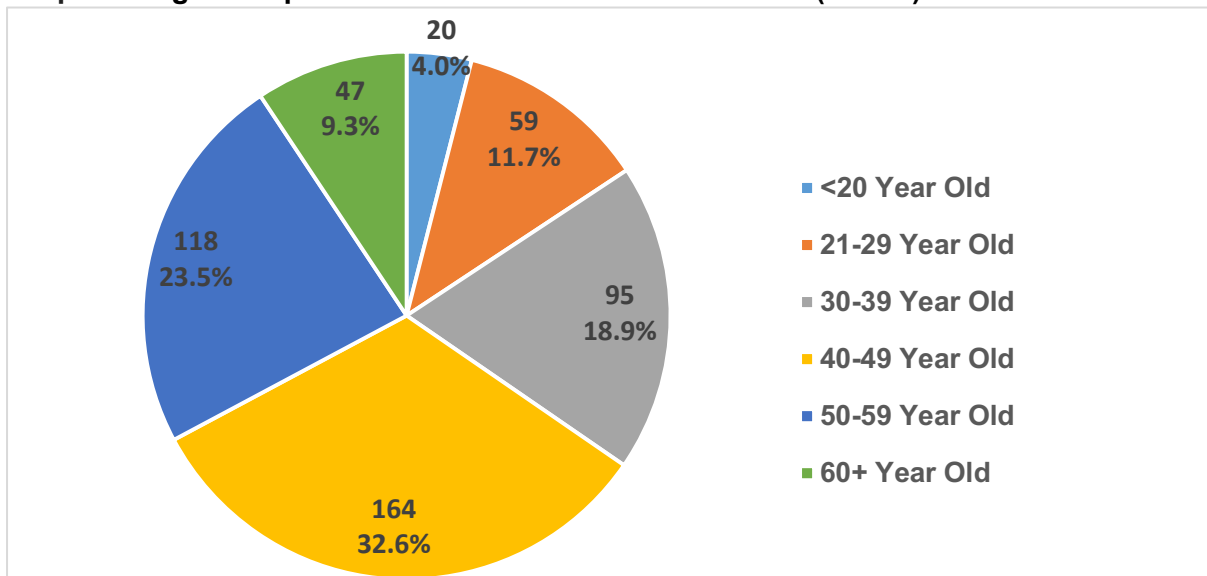
Survivor or Witness Characteristics

The median age of a Survivor/Witness seeking services at SIV was 45 years old with the majority of Survivors/Witnesses seeking services between the ages of 30-59 years old (Graph 13). Among Survivors/Witnesses seeking services, the majority were women (82.1%; Graph 14) and were either single (43.2%) or reported being married or having a domestic partner (36.9%; Graph 15), and had one or more children (85.7%; Graph 16). The highest level of educational attainment for the majority of Survivors/Witnesses was a GED or High School diploma (36.8%) followed by some high school (29.3%; Graph 17). Almost half of the Survivors/Witnesses reported having no income (47.9%) or income totaling less than \$1,000 per year (22.6%; Graph 18). About one-fourth (25.6%) said they did not have reliable transportation (Graph 19).

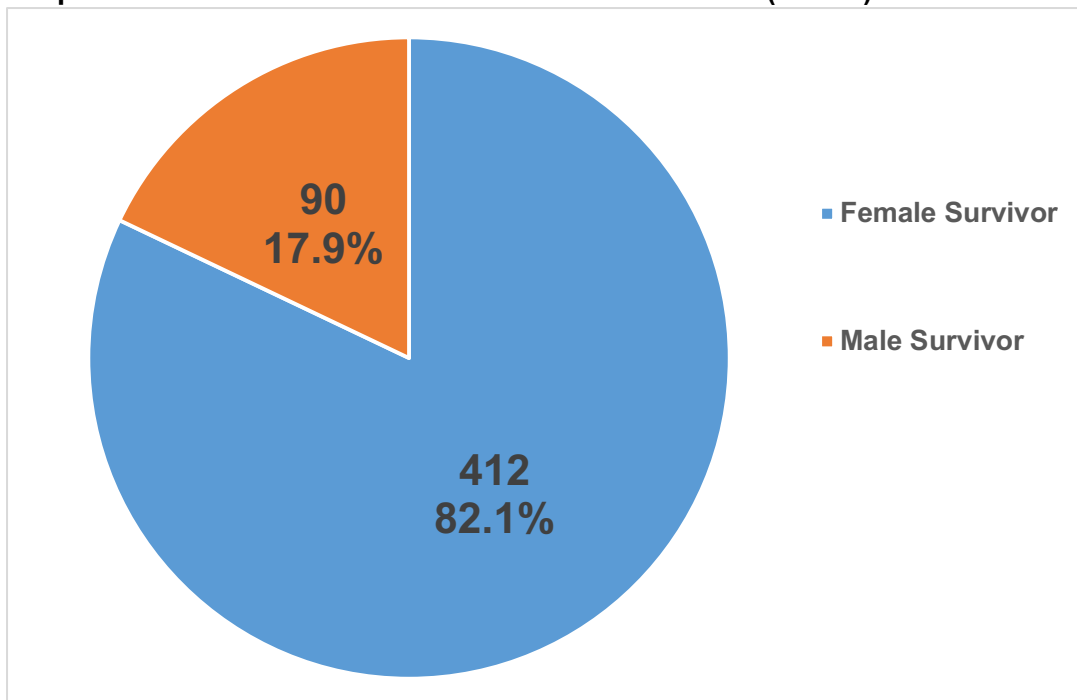
The Survivors/Witnesses came from an array of neighborhoods both within New Orleans Parish and from outside of the Parish (Table 2). Within New Orleans Parish, the largest number of Survivors/Witnesses living in Little Woods, Central City Algiers, or Gentilly Terrace. Similarly, Survivors/Witnesses were spread across numerous zip codes (Table 3). Within New Orleans Parish, the largest number of Survivors/Witnesses reported living in the 70126, 70117, 70119 or 70127 zip codes. The majority of clients seeking services with SIV were identified as “survivors,”

having been a part of the violent incident or having lost a loved one or friend in the incident (94.6%; Graph 20). A small percentage reported being a “witness” to a violent incident. About half of the Survivors/Witnesses were the mother or stepmother of the victim (50.2%), followed by a sibling or child, spouse/girlfriend, or an extended family member (Graph 21). Among Survivors/Witnesses seeking services, the majority learned about SIV from a friend, co-worker, named person or a client referral (28.3%) followed by a law enforcement referral (23.7%; Graph 22).

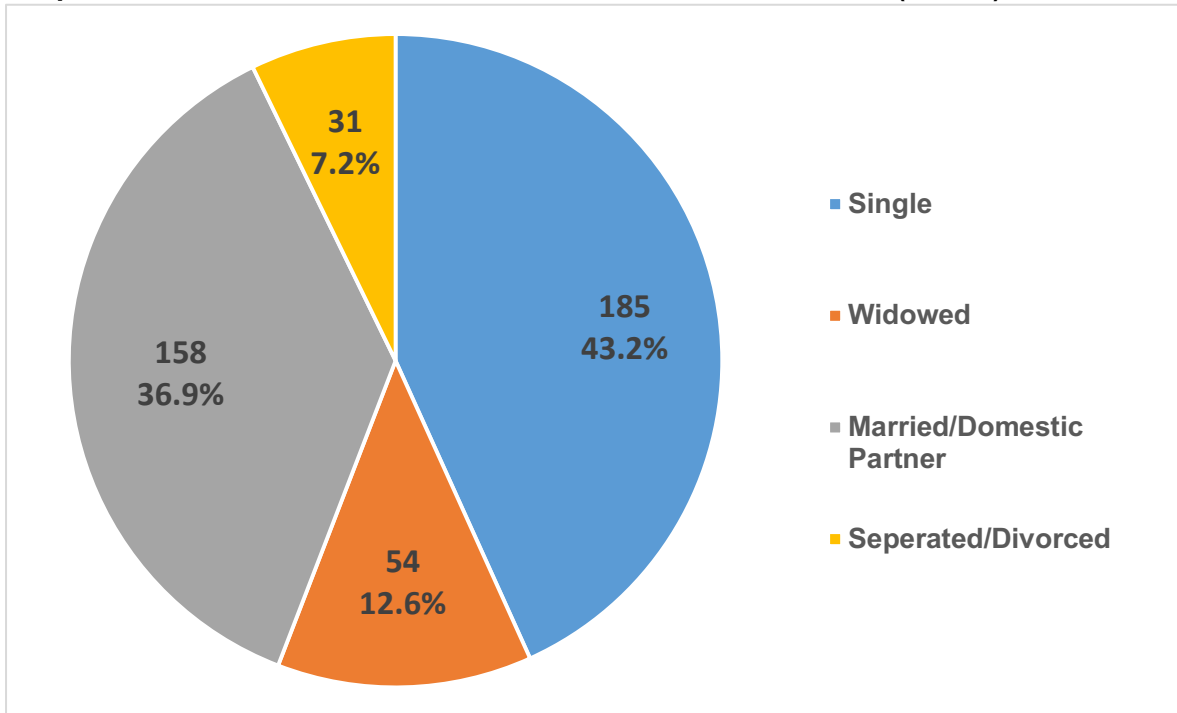
Graph 13. Age Group Distribution of Survivors/Witnesses (N=503)



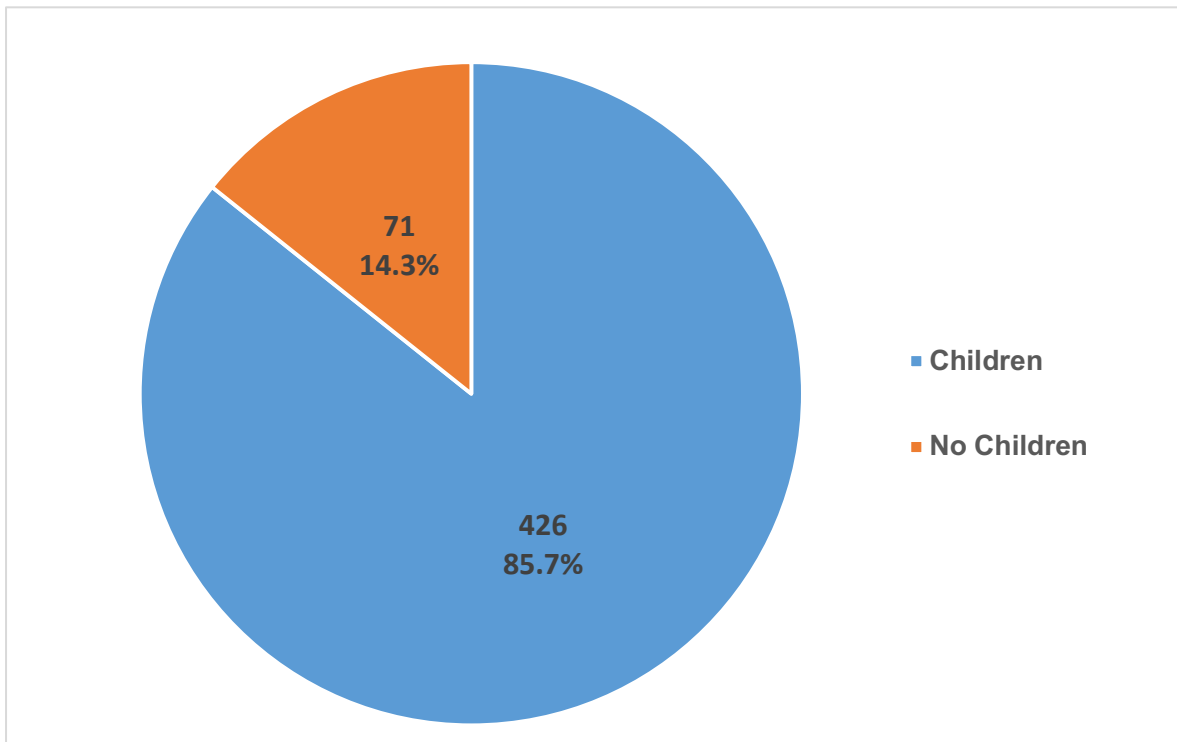
Graph 14. Gender Distribution of Survivors/Witnesses (N=502)



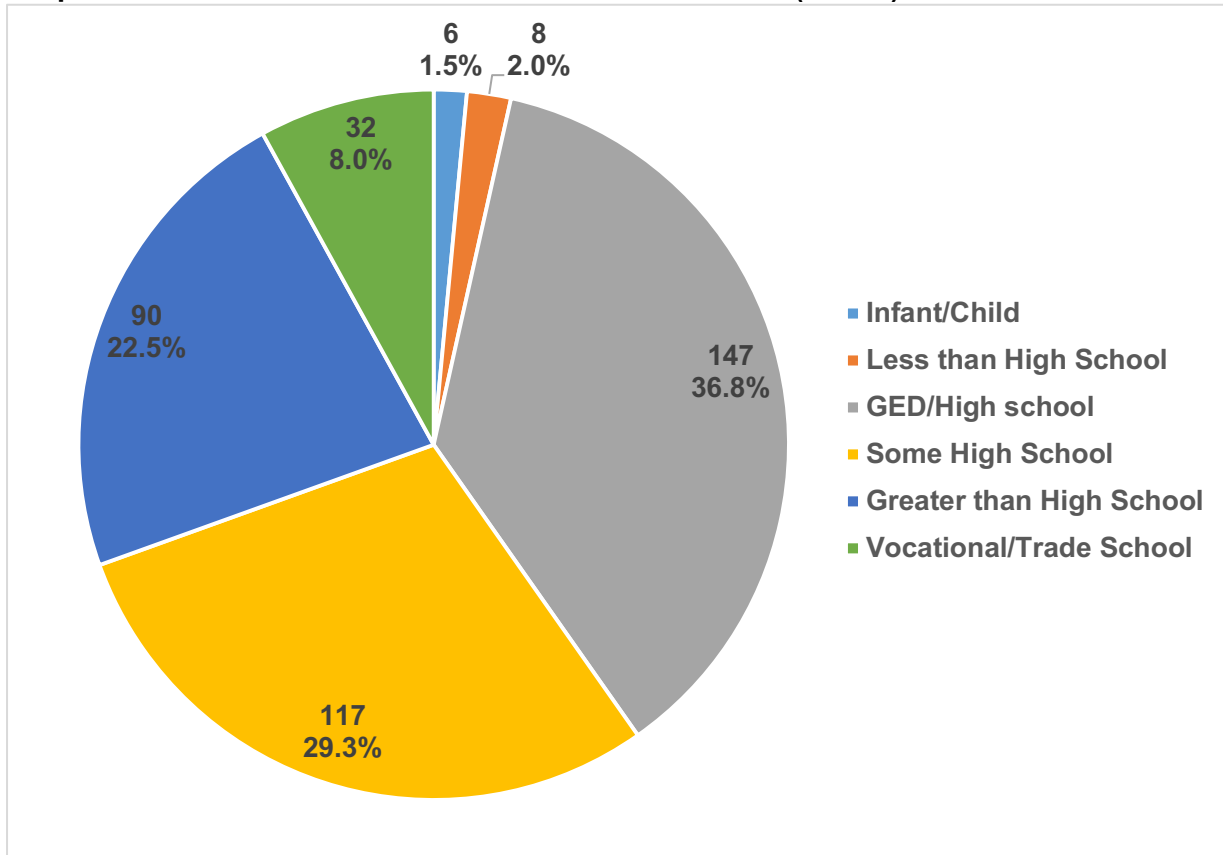
Graph 15. Distribution of Marital Status Of Survivors/Witnesses (N=428)



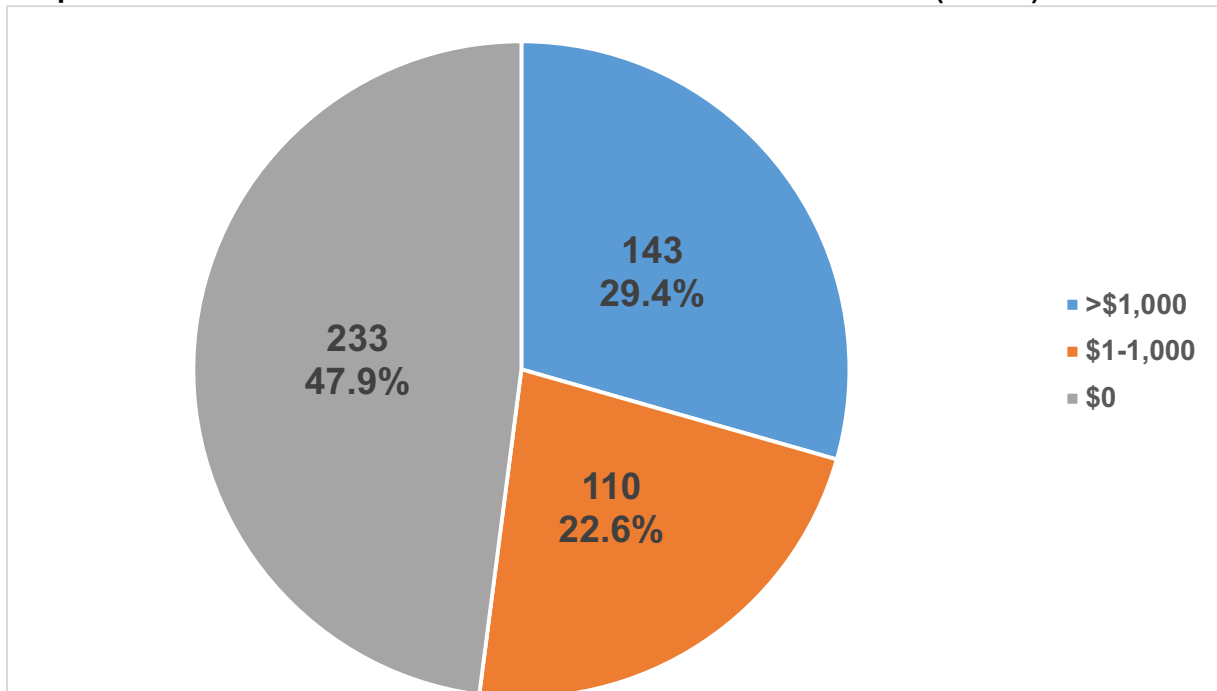
Graph 16. Number and Percentage of Survivors/Witnesses with Children (N=497)



Graph 17. Education Attainment of Survivors/Witnesses (N=400)



Graph 18. Distribution of Declared Income of Survivors/Witnesses (N=486)



Graph 19. Number and Percentage of Survivors/Witnesses with Reliable Transportation (N=473)

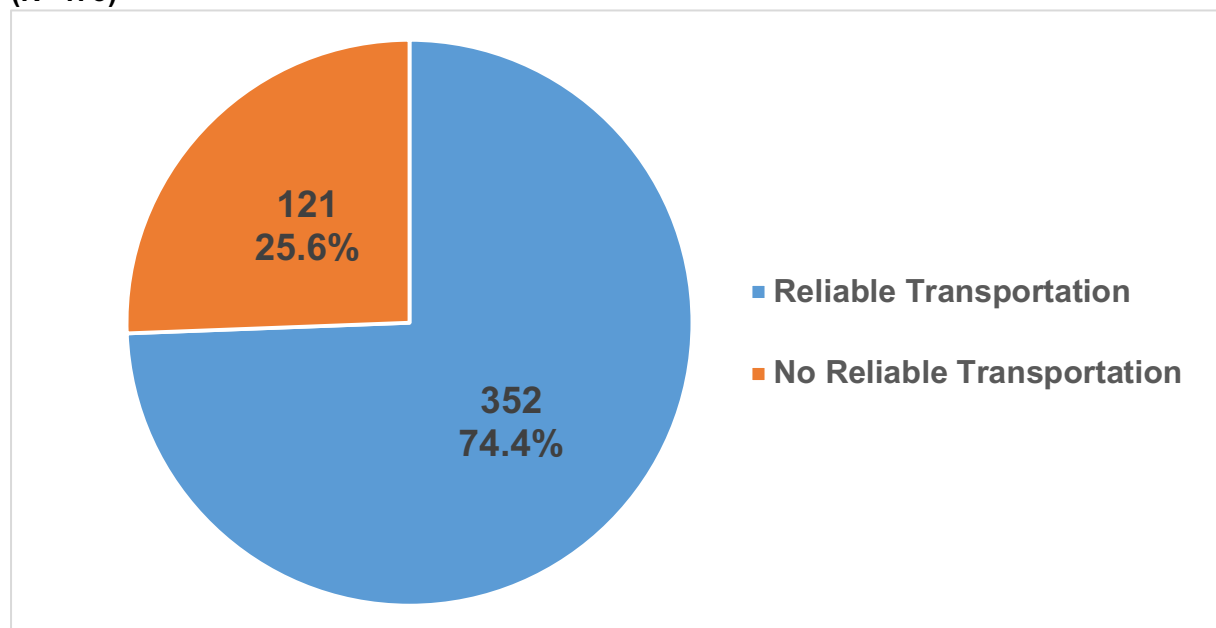


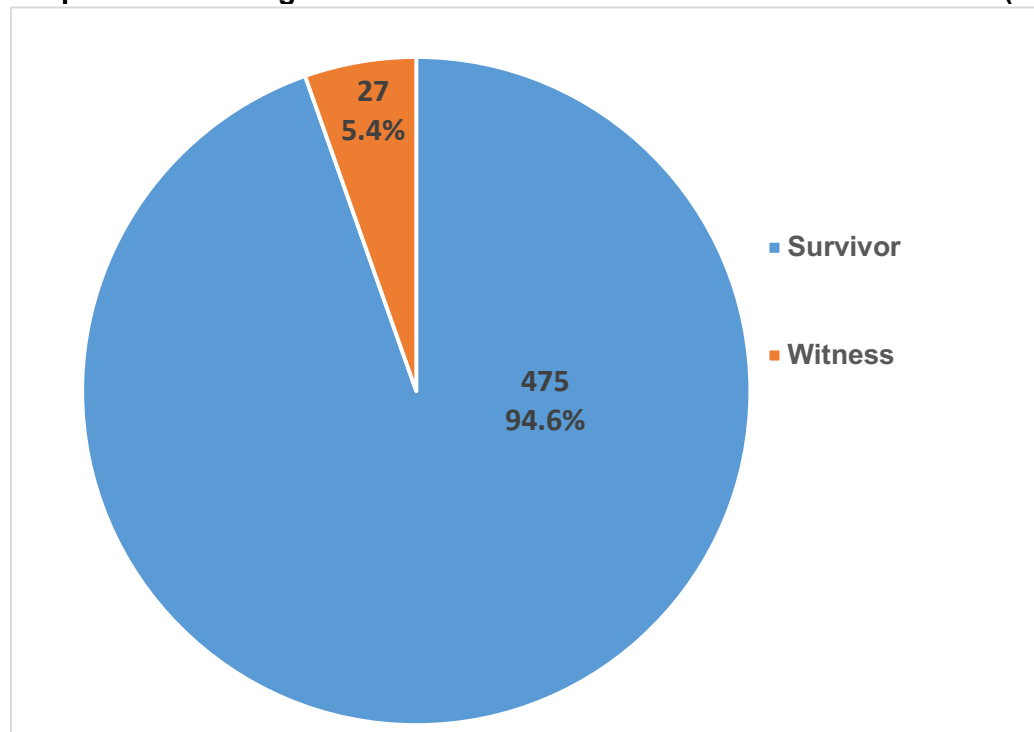
Table 2. Neighborhood of Survivors/Witnesses

Neighborhood of Survivor/Witness	(N=497)	Percentage
Little Wood	45	9.1%
Central City	31	6.2%
Algiers	31	6.2%
Gentilly Terrance	30	6.0%
Out of Parish	30	6.0%
Out of State	23	4.6%
St. Roche	21	4.2%
Marrero	19	3.8%
St. Claude	17	3.4%
7 th Ward	16	3.2%
Gretna	15	3.0%
Holly Grove	14	2.8%
Mid City	13	2.6%
Treme	13	2.6%
Lower 9 th Ward	11	2.2%
Metairie	11	2.2%
Read Blvd East	11	2.2%
Total Across Neighborhoods with 5-9 Survivors (N=11)	71	14.3%
Total Across Neighborhoods with 0-4 Survivors (N=36)	75	15.1%

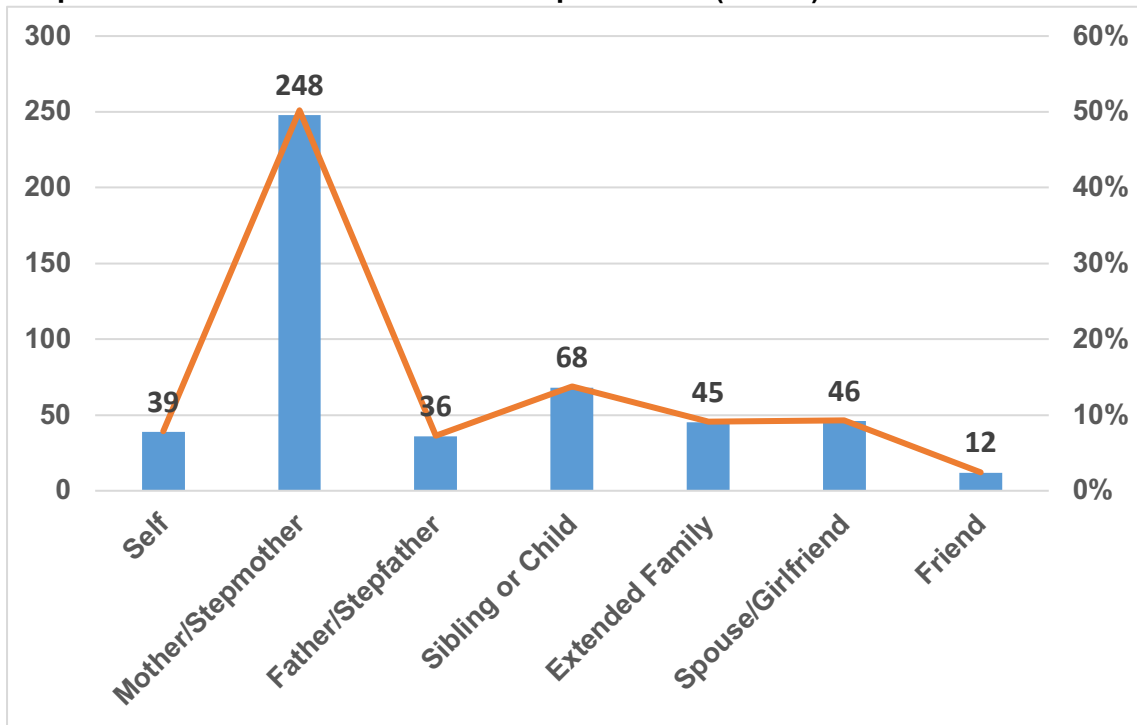
Table 3. Zip Codes of Survivors/Witnesses

Zip Code of Survivor/witness	(N=496)	Percentage
70126	46	9.3%
70117	46	9.3%
70119	38	7.7%
70127	30	6.1%
70114	29	5.9%
70122	29	5.9%
70118	26	5.3%
70072	18	3.6%
70115	18	3.6%
70113	17	3.4%
70056	16	3.2%
70128	16	3.2%
70094	15	3.0%
70116	13	2.6%
70125	13	2.6%
70131	11	2.2%
Total Across Zip Codes with 5-9 Survivors (N=6)	37	7.5%
Total Across Zip Codes with 0-4 Survivors (N=49)	78	15.5%

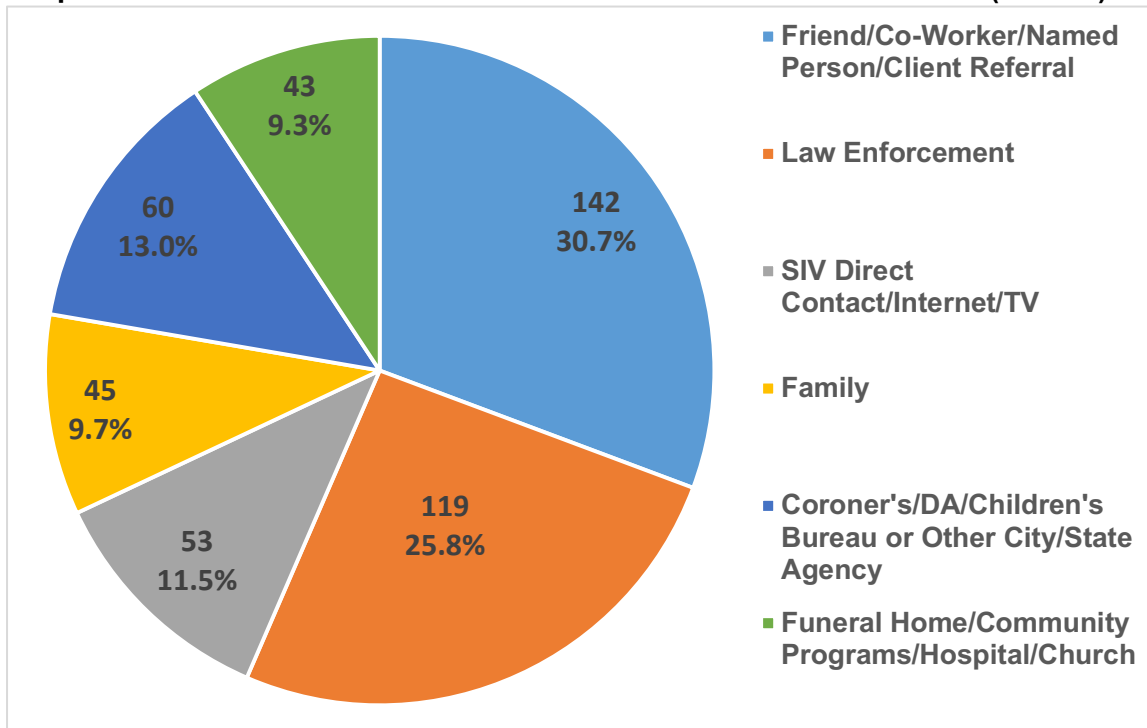
Graph 20. Percentage of Clients who were Survivors versus Witnesses (N=502)



Graph 21. Survivor/Witness Relationship to Victim (N=494)



Graph 22. Distribution of Survivors/Witnesses Referral Sources to SIV (N=462*)



*Numbers add to 505 due to clients who mentioned multiple sources.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Beginning in 2015, Silence Is Violence asks each client to complete a Needs Assessment form during intake to better evaluate their concerns and needs. Additional questions have been added to the assessment since its inception. The assessment can be filled out independently by the client or with the assistance of a SIV staff member. The assessment currently consists of 30 questions.

As shown in Table 4, few Survivors/Witnesses (6.4%) reported serving in the military or being a veteran. About two-fifths of Survivors/Witnesses reported having a household member who was physically or mentally disabled (39.0%) and a majority of whom (74.1%) received disabilities services. Most Survivors/Witnesses (70.8%) reported that their home was safe, affordable, and adequate for their family's needs. Most Survivors/Witnesses reported that there were 3 people in their household, while 17.8% reported living alone, 13.3% reported two people living in their residence, and 13.3% reported 5 or more people living in their residence (data not shown). Slightly over one-fourth of Survivors/Witnesses reported lifetime homeless (27.2%). Among those who reported homelessness, an equal number reported being homeless for less than 1 year or 1-3 years (41.2%), while 17.6% reported being homeless for 3 or more years in their lifetime.

A large percentage of Survivors/Witnesses reported experiencing times when it is difficult to provide enough food for their family (43.9%), 37.7% reported they did not have health insurance, and 46.1% did not have employment. Among those who did report employment, slightly over half (55.8%) reported being satisfied with their current job. Almost half of the Survivors/Witnesses (47.6%) expressed interest in job training or career development. Few Survivors/Witnesses reported having underage children at home who were not in school (15.9%). However, only 21.5% reported having any type of child care. Among those who did have child care, two-thirds (66.6%) said it was affordable.

Few Survivors/Witnesses reported having visual or hearing impairments (5.6%), no one reported that they were living with HIV/AIDS, 7.6% reported current substance abuse, and 13.8% reported childhood trauma and/or abuse. Almost one-fifth (19.0%) reported lifetime mental health treatment and 35.8% said they had been a victim of violent crime in their lifetime.

Examining coping and social support, 31.5% of Survivors/Witnesses said they were unable to cope with the stress of everyday family while 22.8% said they were unsure of their ability to cope. One-fourth (25.3%) of Survivors/Witnesses said they did not have someone to go to for support. However, most individuals (86.9%) indicated that their family got along well and were confident in their parenting skills (86.4%).

Table 4. Needs Assessment Summary (N varies across items)

Need Assessment Item	# of Clients	% No	% Yes	% Not Sure
MILITARY SERVICE				
Have you ever served in the military?	78	93.6%	6.4%	0.0%
Are you a veteran?	78	93.6%	6.4%	0.0%
LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES				
Are you or anyone in your household physically or mentally disabled?	164	60.4%	39.0%	0.6%
If yes, does this individual receive disabilities benefits?	58	25.9%	74.1%	0.0%
Is your home safe, affordable, and adequate for your family's needs?	154	24.7%	70.8%	45.0%
Are you homeless or have you ever been homeless?	81	69.1%	27.2%	3.7%
If yes, when and how long have you experienced homelessness?	17	41.2%	41.2%	17.6%
Are there times when it is hard for you to provide enough food for your family?	164	52.4%	43.9%	3.7%
Do you have health insurance for your entire family?	162	37.7%	57.4%	4.9%
Do you currently have a monthly budget?	165	37.0%	55.8%	7.2%
Are you employed?	165	46.1%	53.9%	0.0%
PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH				
If yes, are you satisfied with your current job?	86	26.7%	55.8%	17.4%
If not, are you interested in job training or career development?	63	47.6%	47.6%	4.8%
Do you have underage children that are not in school?	164	84.1%	15.9%	0.0%
Do you have childcare?	158	76.6%	21.5%	1.9%
If yes, is it affordable?	30	26.7%	66.6%	6.7%
Are you visually or hearing impaired?	36	94.4%	5.6%	0.0%
Have you been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS?	36	97.2%	0.0%	2.8%
Need Assessment Item	# of Clients	% No	% Yes	% Not Sure

Do you currently use or have a history of substance abuse?	79	92.4%	7.6%	0.0%
Do you have a history of childhood trauma and/or abuse?	80	85.0%	13.8%	1.3%
Are you receiving any mental health services currently or have you ever in the past?	79	81.0%	19.0%	0.0%
Have you ever been a victim of violent crime in the past?	81	63.0%	35.8%	1.2%
COPING AND SUPPORT				
Are you able to cope with the stress of everyday family?	162	31.5%	45.7%	22.8%
Do you have someone to go to for support?	162	25.3%	69.1%	5.6%
Do the members of your household get along well?	168	7.1%	86.9%	6.0%
Do you feel confident in your skills as a parent?	161	6.8%	86.4%	6.8%

MENTAL HEALTH SUMMARY

As shown in Table 5, the majority of Silence Is Violence Survivors/Witnesses report symptoms of depression. Over one-half (54.8%) of the clients reported moderate to extreme depression on the Beck Depression Inventory (Table 5). Further, nearly a third (30.9%) reported severe to extreme depressive symptomology.

Similar findings are evident for the distribution of scores on the PTSD Checklist. As shown in Table 6, over two-thirds (68.1%) of Survivors/Witnesses reported above normal PTSD symptoms when scaled against civilian and general population norms. Even if scaled against specialized medical clinic or VA primary care norms (53.9%) or mental health clinic norms (47.5%), around half of the clients reported above normal PTSD symptoms. These data suggest that experiences of PTSD are high among SIV clients.

Table 5. Distribution of Survivor/Witness BDI Scores (N=42)

BDI	# of Clients	Percentage
Normal	9	21.4%
Mild Mood Disturbance	6	14.3%
Borderline Clinical Depression	4	9.5%
Moderate Depression	10	23.8%
Severe Depression	9	21.4%
Extreme Depression	4	9.5%

Table 6. Distribution of Survivor/Witness PTSD Scores x Comparison Group Cut-Offs (N=141)

PTSD SCORES	# of Clients	Percentage
PTSD-Scale for Civilian/General Population		
None	35	24.8%
Borderline PTSD Symptoms	10	7.1%
PTSD Symptoms	96	68.1%
PTSD-Scale for Specialized Med Clinic/VA Primary Care		
None	45	31.9%
Borderline PTSD Symptoms	20	14.2%
PTSD Symptoms	76	53.9%
PTSD-Scale for VA/Mental Health Clinic		
None	65	46.1%
Borderline PTSD Symptoms	9	6.4%
PTSD Symptoms	67	47.5%

CLOSING SUMMARY

During the 6-year analysis period of this report (2012-2017), Silence is Violence served 503 Survivors or Witnesses to violent crime, predominantly murder. Their clients come from diverse neighborhoods and zip codes, including residents who live outside of New Orleans Parish or even Louisiana. SIV clients were predominantly women, over half of whom were mothers or stepmothers of the victim(s). Most had children, a high school degree/Ged or lower educational attainment, and an annual income of less than \$1,000. Many clients faced an array of life challenges, including having people with disabilities in their household, difficulties at time providing food for their household, a lack of health insurance, unemployment, and a lifetime history of homeless, mental health treatment, and being a victim of violent crime. Not surprisingly, a significant percentage of their clients reported difficulty coping with everyday family life and obtaining needed support. High rates of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder were observed on the BDI and the PTSD scales, respectively.

In sum, we conclude from our analyses that Silence Is Violence is providing an invaluable service to a marginalized clientele who have serious service needs. SIV provides a unique service that addresses an important mental health need in the greater New Orleans region.