

New statewide research reveals the staggering economic cost of intimate partner violence in Louisiana

|
Stacey Plaisance splaisance@tulane.edu

[View PDF](#)



April 21, 2024

A [new study](#) conducted by Tulane University's [Newcomb Institute](#) has uncovered the staggering economic toll of intimate partner violence experienced by women in Louisiana.

The report, titled "[The Costs of Intimate Partner Violence in Louisiana](#)," found that intimate partner violence cost the state \$10.1 billion in medical expenses, lost productivity and criminal justice spending in 2022 alone.

The monetary costs per survivor amounted to approximately \$105,602 annually, or 2.5 times more than the average wage earned by women in Louisiana.

“We believe that the data make an undeniable economic case for increased investment in prevention programs and reforms to effectively respond to domestic violence.”

— Anita Raj

This is the only cost analysis of its kind for a single U.S. state outside of California.

“Most states have no idea what they’re spending on intimate partner violence, which further illustrates the urgent need for action,” said [Anita Raj](#), executive director of Newcomb Institute and co-author of the report. “We believe that the data make an undeniable economic case for increased investment in prevention programs and reforms to effectively respond to domestic violence.”

The economic toll in Louisiana, which is based on data from the Newcomb Institute’s recent Louisiana Violence Experiences Survey (LaVEX), found the fiscal impact of intimate partner violence amounts to almost a quarter of the state’s annual budget.

“Widespread domestic abuse is a major breach of women’s rights first and foremost, but it also incurs huge economic costs,” said [Jeni Klugman](#), an economist based at the Brookings Institution and co-author of the report. “After working at the international level on the costs of violence, I welcomed the opportunity to investigate Louisiana in partnership with Newcomb Institute.”

More than half of Louisiana residents experience physical violence in their lifetime, with one in five individuals being threatened or harmed with a firearm, according to the [LaVEX survey](#) released last summer.

Quantifying the extent and nature of intimate partner violence, the survey found that half of Louisiana adults have encountered some form of violence from a current or former romantic or sexual partner, with more than 200,000 adults experiencing such violence within the past year.

The research also highlights the disproportionate impact on women, who are three times more likely than men to experience severe and potentially fatal forms of intimate partner violence. Alarming, one in four women who experienced such violence reported suicidal thoughts within the past year.

The new cost analysis for Louisiana draws attention to the underreporting of intimate partner violence to the authorities, which is a common challenge across the country and around the world that is often attributed to women's fear of consequences from reporting and lack of trust in the criminal justice system. The authors point out that statewide prosecution and conviction rates for domestic violence are not available. To fully understand the scope of the problem, more and better data are needed.

"Our current estimates are likely conservative," Raj said. "A total annual cost of \$10 billion is obviously a massive number for Louisiana that should get everybody's attention, but I want to emphasize that the repercussions of intimate partner violence against women in Louisiana are even greater — both from an economic and a human perspective — and warrant immediate and much larger state and national policy responses."