

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE IN LOUISIANA: STATEWIDE FINDINGS FROM THE LAVEX 2023 SURVEY

SUMMARY

We conducted a statewide survey of Louisiana adults' experiences of intimate partner violence (IPV), including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. We found that half (52%) of Louisiana adults have experienced some form of IPV in their lifetime, with more than 200,000 Louisiana adults having experienced some form of IPV in the past year. Women are 3x more likely than men to experience severe and potentially fatal forms of IPV. One in every 25 women has experienced gun-related IPV. Further, young adults, lesbian, gay, and bisexual people, and individuals living with a disability all experienced higher rates of IPV. Financial deprivation, housing instability, and exposure to violence in childhood are associated with higher risk for IPV, which in turn is associated with poorer mental health outcomes. We found that 1 in every 50 Louisiana adults report that they perpetrated physical or sexual IPV in the past year, and that 84% of IPV perpetrators own a gun. These findings highlight the importance of IPV prevention and intervention, including financial and social protections and red flag laws, as well as the importance of trauma-informed care for those who have experienced IPV or childhood violence.

METHODS

The Louisiana Violence Experiences (LaVEX) survey is a statewide online survey assessing adults' experiences of physical violence, sexual violence, intimate partner violence (IPV), discrimination, mental health, and socioeconomic circumstances. The survey is offered in English and Spanish. The 2023 round of LaVEX was conducted with 1,081 Louisiana residents age 18 and older in May–June 2023. This brief focuses on IPV data.

We used a 22-item measure of IPV which covered a broad range of abusive behaviors including physical, sexual, economic, and emotionally controlling behaviors as well as threats of violence against self or a pet from a current or former romantic or sexual partner. We present findings for the adult Louisiana population overall and by participant self-reported gender. We also share associations of IPV with socioeconomic indicators and mental health. We applied survey weights to all analyses to yield population-based estimates for the state. For more details on this study and findings across all areas of violence, please see the [LaVEX full report](#).

FINDINGS

Lifetime prevalence of IPV and IPV fatality risk in Louisiana

- Half (52%) of all Louisiana adults have experienced IPV, including 55% of women and 47% of men
- Women are more likely than men to report severe and lethal forms of IPV
 - More likely to report physical and sexual IPV (42% vs 29%)
 - 3x more likely to report lethal forms of IPV:
 - Choked or suffocated by a partner (21% vs 6%)
 - Knife or gun violence from a partner (6% vs 2%)
- Violent crime data in the state correspond with LaVEX data, suggesting higher severity of IPV against women
 - [FBI crime data](#) demonstrate that in 2022, 22% of all violent crimes in the state were IPV crimes, and 8% of all homicides were IPV-related homicides.
 - Most IPV crimes are against women. A review of [data on homicides against women in Louisiana](#) found that more than 2 in every 5 female homicides occur at the hands of an intimate partner.

Past year IPV prevalence

- 1 in 16 Louisiana adults – more than 200,000 Louisianans – experienced IPV in the past year
- Among Louisianans who experienced any physical or sexual violence in the past year – from a partner or someone else – only 18% filed an official complaint or report

Demographic and family risk factors for past year IPV

- *Youth*: Louisianans aged 18-24 years were most likely to report past year IPV (15%); rates declined steadily with age, with 1% of those 65 years and older reporting IPV
- *Parenthood*: Louisianans with a child <18 years were 3x more likely than those without a child to report past year IPV (11% vs 4%)
- *Minoritized sexual identities*: Louisianans identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or another self-described sexual identity were more likely to report past year IPV relative to straight respondents (10% vs 6%)
- *Disability status*: Louisianans with a disability were 3x more likely than those without to report past year IPV (11% vs 3%)
- *Witnessing IPV in childhood*: 22% of Louisianans witnessed IPV against their mother in their childhood. Those who witnessed IPV were more likely to have experienced IPV in the past year (12% vs 4%)

Financial and social stressors associated with past year IPV

- *Past year eviction*: 6x more likely to report past year IPV (32% vs 5%)
- *Past year economic deprivation* (e.g., food insecurity): 4x more likely to report past year IPV (12% vs 3%)
- *Homelessness ever*: 6x more likely to report past year IPV (18% vs 3%)
- *Incarceration ever*: 3x more likely to report past year IPV (14% vs 4%)

Mental health concerns associated with past year IPV

Those who experienced IPV in the past year were more likely to report:

- *Current moderate to severe depression/anxiety* (54% vs 20%)
- *Suicidality in the past year* (24% vs 8%)
- *Past 30-day substance use* (70% vs 30%)

Past year IPV perpetration

- 1 in 50 Louisiana adults report physical or sexual IPV perpetration in the past year, which is likely an under-report
- Those who committed acts of IPV in the past year were 2x as likely to own a gun, compared with those who did not report IPV perpetration in the past year (84% vs 41%)

Conclusions and Implications:

- **IPV is at epidemic proportions** in Louisiana, with the majority of people in the state having experienced IPV.
- **Women face greater risk for more severe and lethal forms of IPV.** Young women, often mothers, are at greatest risk. IPV is linked with financial vulnerability and mental health consequences that not only harm women but **cost the state in labor productivity, healthcare costs, and effective parenting.**
- As most people do not report violence, and reports to police may only come after an increase in severity, **prevention and intervention efforts cannot solely or primarily rely on the criminal justice system.**
- For those facing IPV, **financial and social supports are needed.** We must prioritize young adults, parents, lesbian, gay, and bisexual people, and people living with a disability for both prevention and intervention. Primary prevention should include **youth development programs with social support and counseling.**

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