



Estimating the Local Impact of Intimate Partner Violence

A Case Study of Collier County, Florida

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Dedication

The following work is dedicated to all those affected by the terror of domestic violence during the pandemic.

While we may not know when COVID will go away, given its devastating economic toll, it's safe to say the spike of domestic violence (and the need for significant support) will not stop anytime soon.





Summary

The Shelter for Abused Women & Children, located in Collier County Florida, is on the front-lines of this epidemic as the primary provider and certified center for prevention and intervention of domestic violence. This study examines both the impact that domestic violence has on Collier County and the value of the services provided by The Shelter.

A comprehensive evaluation of domestic violence's economic cost on the citizens of Collier County reveals that the total economic impact is nearly \$200 million a year in crime-related costs and an additional \$44 million in costs to employers. While the effects of domestic violence take a devastating toll on the community, there is hope. The Shelter programs, including emergency shelter and counseling services, are effective in helping survivors get and stay safe. While the value of each life touched cannot be measured, the economic impact can. Based on this study, it was determined that each year, The Shelter saves Collier County taxpayers an estimated \$13M by intervening and preventing further abuse and economically empowering survivors to live safely.



The Shelter provides Collier County donors and taxpayers **a return of 4 times the amount invested** by reducing the impact of domestic violence in the community.



THE ECONOMIC TOLL

INTRODUCTION: IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING LOCAL NUMBERS AND IMPACT

In the United States, an abuser assaults their partner every 9 seconds. The cumulative cost of intimate partner violence is estimated at \$8.3 billion a year. In the state of Florida, more than 1 in 3 women (34.2%) and more than [1 in 4 men \(24.6%\)](#) reported having experienced rape, physical violence, and stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV), 2019). These national statistics are frequently used by local communities when they discuss the impact of domestic violence because local data is not readily available. This lack of local data dilutes social change efforts that seek to communicate how devastating domestic violence can be on the local economy and citizens. While domestic violence programs have worked to demonstrate their impact in ways other than numbers of individuals served, having access to formulas that make calculating economic and other effects has not been readily available. Because of this, rarely do we hear about the positive economic benefits that local domestic violence shelters have on the community.

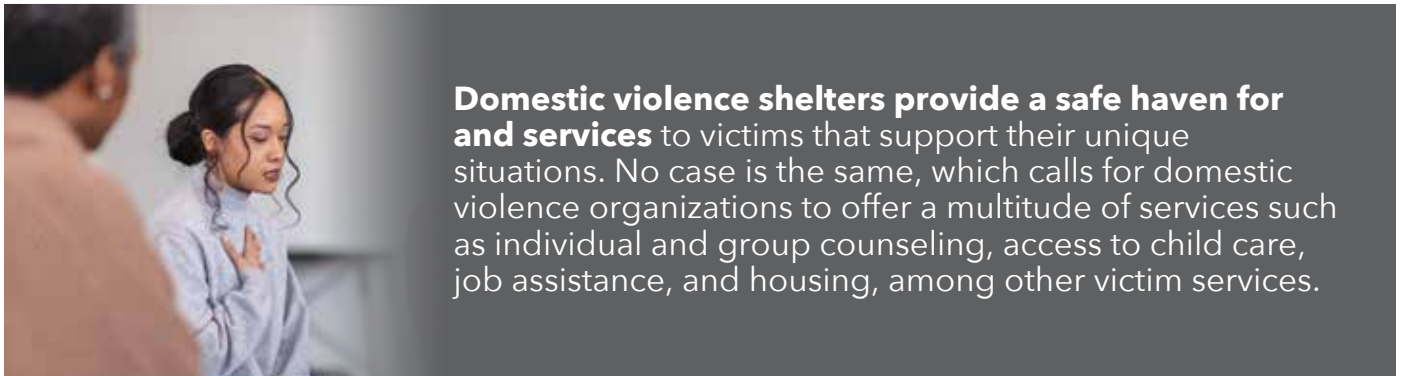
Domestic violence shelters provide a haven and services to victims that advocate for their unique situations. No case is the same, which calls for domestic violence organizations to offer a multitude of services such as individual and group counseling, access to child care, job assistance, and housing, among other victim services.

Organizations like The Shelter provide services to survivors daily. Understanding the value of these services and the impact they have on not only survivors and their children, but the local economy is critical to ensuring there is adequate support. In one day, there were reported nearly [9,183 unmet requests](#) for services across the country due

to lack of funding (National Network to End Domestic Violence, 2018). By understanding the need and value of the services provided by organizations like The Shelter, funders and government officials can see how funding programs for survivors provides an incredible return on investment.

In March of 2020, Sharity, Inc. was contracted by The Shelter in Collier County, Florida, to replicate a 1998 study that measured the return on investment of domestic violence programs. Sharity then worked on updating the economic measures and added data from two additional tools to show impact to businesses and the cost of domestic violence as a crime. This report provides a more robust picture of the devastating effect that abusers and their actions have on local communities, as well as the value that domestic violence services provide in mitigating this impact. This study seeks to provide a template for local programs to utilize in order to show the impact that intimate partner violence has on the local economy as well as the value of the services they provide beyond the numbers of individuals served. This study attempts to evaluate three main components: the scope of the local problem, the impact of services, and the value of services.

The research by [Chanley, Chanley, and Campbell](#) (2001) was used as a template to better understand the impact that The Shelter brings to the fight against domestic violence. The [Texas Health Resources Domestic Violence Cost Calculator](#) provides data and cost calculations for the cost to employers, as well as estimated number of victims. The [CPI Inflation Indicator](#) determines the current valuation of data cited to ensure 2018 values are accurate across all estimations. Other sources are shown in the reference list.



Domestic violence shelters provide a safe haven for and services to victims that support their unique situations. No case is the same, which calls for domestic violence organizations to offer a multitude of services such as individual and group counseling, access to child care, job assistance, and housing, among other victim services.



THE ECONOMIC TOLL

ECONOMIC TOLL OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON COLLIER COUNTY

We know from national studies that domestic violence does not just affect the family. The effects of an abuser ripple through the economy with a stunning toll. The economic cost of domestic violence, for this study, is calculated in two ways: The impact of businesses and the impact to the community as a whole. This study takes into account both the effect that abuser’s actions cause survivors at work, therefore impacts productivity and employer costs, and the impact of abuser’s actions that involve the criminal justice system.

ECONOMIC COST OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RELATED CRIMES

In the state of Florida, the definition of domestic violence falls under Florida Statute 741.28. It is important to note that each state defines domestic violence differently and that in Florida and for available data, this definition is not limited to intimate partner violence and may include violence between family members. Data shows that 60% of all domestic violence in Florida is intimate partner violence, but the data is not currently available by relationship.

The [RAND Cost of Crime Calculator](#) estimates the economic impact of the crimes committed in any community. The Calculator uses both direct and indirect costs of crime

such as investigation and legal costs as well as perceived costs associated with safety and wellbeing. This tool was initially developed in 2010 to determine the economic impact that adding or reducing law enforcement officers has on overall crime. The data is broken down into individual types of crime which allows for an evidenced-based calculation of cost by type of crime.

Data from [Florida’s County and Jurisdictional Reported Domestic Violence Offenses](#) (2018) provided a breakdown of the crimes under the Florida statute of domestic violence for murder, manslaughter, rape, fondling, aggravated assault, aggravated stalking, simple assault, threat/intimidation, and stalking.

In calculating the data, cost per crime was updated to 2018 dollars and crimes were grouped into three categories for input into the Rand Calculator: murder (murder and manslaughter), rape (rape and fondling), and aggravated assault (aggravated assault, aggravated stalking, simple assault, threat/intimidation, and stalking) to align with the Rand Calculator categories. While the Rand Calculator provides for all crimes to be used, some such as auto thefts, were omitted because they did not fall into the Florida definition of domestic violence related crimes.

This calculation determined that Collier County taxpayers spend an estimated \$200 million each year in criminal justice system costs for crimes committed by abusers.

Cost of Domestic Violence as a Crime to Taxpayers

Based on 2018 Adjust Rand Cost of Crime Calculator

Crime type	Cost per crime	Cost per Year	Crime costs
Murder & Manslaughter	\$9,914,127	3	\$29,740,000
Rape & Fondling	\$249,727	70	\$17,480,000
Aggrevated Assault, Stalking, etc	\$99,996	1,525	\$152,490,000
Domestic Violence Crime Cost			\$199,710,000



THE ECONOMIC TOLL

ESTIMATED ECONOMIC IMPACT ON BUSINESSES

Domestic violence takes a significant toll on businesses. While some companies are aware of the problem and have implemented strategies to support survivors and increase safety, many remain unaware of the impact. The costs come from a variety of areas and involve expenses due to additional access to medical and mental health services as well as lost productivity. Utilizing the [Texas Health Resources Domestic Violence Cost Calculator](#) and 2018 census data available for Collier County, it is

estimated that the total impact on Collier County businesses is nearly \$44 million annually.

This economic toll on community employers shows the importance of a county wide coordinated effort to address the effects of domestic violence on the workforce. This data does not take into account men who are victims nor the economic impact of survivors who are terminated due to absenteeism or productivity issues when the root cause is violence caused by their partner. The costs of turnover should also be a consideration for employers.

Impact of Domestic Violence on Collier County Employers

Based on 2018 Census Calculations and Adjusted Texas Health Cost Calculator

Victimization	
8,778	Expected number of employed female DV victims per year
29,845	Total expected victimizations/year

Medical Cost	
11,595	Total expected victimizations resulting in injury
3,426	Predicted number of DV victims seeking medical care per year
6,509	Predicted total number of medical visits by DV victims
\$20,503,987	Total predicted medical costs

Mental Health	
8,864	Estimated number of victimizations resulting in mental health service usage
112,129	Total predicted mental health visits
\$10,320,240	Total predicted mental health cost

Loss of Productivity	
47,084	Total estimated lost workdays due to DV
\$12,812,535	Total estimated productivity lost
\$43,636,762	Total Impact to Collier County Businesses



SOCIAL COST

COST-BENEFIT OF THE SHELTER

In 2018, Collier County law enforcement responded to [1,611 crimes classified under the domestic violence statute in Florida](#). However, the scope of the problem is much more extensive than the number of arrests and calls to 911. The Shelter provided intervention and crisis services to 427 children and 1,004 adults in that same year. Research tells us that [80% of incidents of domestic violence go unreported](#), and estimates show this may be true in Collier County as well.

This study determines value by estimating the number of survivors who would be able to leave their abuser and be economically stable, injuries and assaults avoided, and the cost of specific services provided to survivors. Accessing an emergency domestic violence shelter offers a critical safety resource and can often mean the difference between life and death when fleeing an abuser.

COST OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

One way to calculate the benefit of The Shelter economically, is to determine the number of adults who do not return to their abuser or become homeless. Long term follow-up for domestic violence survivors has proved difficult nationally. Until this can be measured safely, other determinants of value are needed. [Chanley \(2001\)](#) used multiple studies for minimum and maximum calculations of benefit. This study follows the same process with dollars adjusted from the original research to 2018 dollars. These guidelines estimate that about 25% of shelter residents are eligible to receive public assistance for programs that help leave their abuser permanently. This assistance includes cash, housing, food stamps, medical and mental health care. The value of per-person costs of public support for 2018 in Florida is \$36,111 annually. The number of eligible adults who took refuge at The Shelter in 2018 (34 to 44) is multiplied with the annual costs of public assistance, resulting in the lower estimate (\$1,227,791), and upper estimate (\$1,588,906) for the total of public assistance value.

Public Assistance Costs	
Adults in emergency shelter in 2018	213
Per-person costs of public assistance	\$36,111 annually
Residents qualifying for public assistance	39
Annual value of public assistance	\$1,408,348

ECONOMIC COST OF IMMEDIATE AND LONG TERM AVERTED ASSAULTS

Domestic violence programs help survivors get and stay safe with the result that the abuser is no longer able to assault them. Injuries averted would result in fewer legal and medical system costs. Research consistently shows that 80% of domestic violence incidents go unreported. It is also assumed that many survivors when seeking

medical advice, do not inform their provider that the injury is a result of domestic violence. Using the Texas Health Cost Calculator, it can be estimated that Collier County had 18,585 victims of 63,189 assaults resulting in [24,549 injuries in 2018](#). These injuries required 13,783 medical visits at a community cost of \$33,399,655. This demonstrates the critical importance of screening by medical providers each time a patient over the age of 16 is seen.

Estimated Impact of Medical Costs on Collier County	
Total Number of Estimated Female DV Victims per Year in Collier County	18,585
Estimated Assaults Per Year	63,189
Estimated Injuries from Assaults	24,549
Required Medical Visits	13,783
Total Economic Impact of Assaults	\$33,399,655



VALUE

COST OF ASSAULTS

The cost per injurious assault and per non injurious assault averted is \$45,107 and \$29,127 respectively. This generates a total cost for assaults of \$74,235. This cost includes immediate direct health costs, opportunity costs from forgone productivity, and the cost of pain and suffering incurred by the victim ([Chanley et al, 2001](#)).

Emergency shelters can reduce injuries in up to 95% of survivors. For The Shelter, this would correspond to 202 immediate assaults avoided. Estimating the number of women in The Shelter annually in this category results in between 212 and 1,484 future assaults averted. Combined with the initial 202 immediate assaults averted, the emergency shelter successfully prevents between 414 and 1,686 assaults a year for an annual community cost savings of \$20,199,192 for immediate assaults.

Collier County Criminal Justice System Costs	
Immediate assaults avoided due to emergency shelter use	202
Cost of immediate assault per person	\$99,996
Savings for immediate assaults	\$20,199,192
Assaults avoided per survivor due to assistance by The Shelter	4 to 28 annually
Future assaults averted Collier County	212 and 1,484 annually
Total assaults averted annually	414 and 1,686

ECONOMIC VALUE OF COUNSELING SERVICES

Through individual counseling, support groups, crisis intervention, and even casual conversations, advocates at domestic violence centers help survivors and their children understand that they are not alone in their experience and are not responsible for their victimization. They also help them understand common responses to trauma (e.g., trouble concentrating, sleep problems, being easily startled) and provide them with the knowledge and skills to heal. In 2018, The Shelter provided 23,907 hours of counseling to survivors and their children in Collier County. The actual budgeted cost of counseling services was \$225,682 or \$9.44 per hour of counseling. The social adjusted value of those services is \$346,173 or \$14.48 per hour. For every hour of counseling The Shelter provides, they save taxpayers \$5.04.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

For the purposes of this section, Sharity calculated the net efficiency (social benefits minus social cost) of the programs from The Shelter, in order to measure their total net economic effects on Collier County. We also calculated a benefit-cost ratio analysis, to indicate how much economic benefit is gained from each dollar of investment in the program. The benefit-cost ratio expresses economic efficiency in a way that is easily understood and therefore useful in policy deliberations ([Chanley et al., 2001](#)). In relation to The Shelter, social costs are defined as the costs to Collier County arising from the production or consumption of their services. Whereas social benefits are defined as the total benefit to the Collier County community from producing or consuming the services at The Shelter ([Economics Help, 2020](#)). Therefore, if the total social benefits of services provided by The Shelter are greater than the total social costs, the program improves overall social welfare and, from a social cost-benefit perspective, has value ([Chanley et al.,2001](#)).



VALUE

In order to obtain the **annual net minimum social benefits**, Sharity subtracted the lower estimate of total social benefit (\$12,939,479) from the upper estimate of total social cost (\$7,474,995), including wages adjusted to the 2018 market value. The annual net minimum social benefit is \$5,464,484 that The Shelter provides to the Collier County community. Return on investment is a tool commonly used by philanthropists before donating to a nonprofit. It shows how efficiently the organization will use the money

they invest in the fight for their cause. Using the formula provided by Chanley (2001), the low range benefit-cost ratio for The Shelter for Abused Women & Children is 2:1 and 7:1 is the upper estimate. For every \$1.00 invested in programs, The Shelter returned between \$1.80 and \$7.00 in positive social impact for every dollar they received. Another way to consider this is that, for every \$1.00 invested with The Shelter for combating domestic violence in Collier County, Taxpayers save an average of \$4.40.

Summary of Social Costs and Benefits (in U.S. dollars)

Social Costs	Lower Estimate	Upper Estimate
Social Costs	\$5,860,774	\$5,886,090
Program operating costs	\$1,227,791	\$1,588,906
Public Assistance	\$7,088,565	\$7,474,995
Social Benefits	Lower Estimate	Upper Estimate
Injurious assaults averted	\$1,849,423	\$7,623,230
Non-Injurious assaults averted	\$10,864,375	\$44,185,674
Mental health services	\$225,682	\$346,173
Total social benefits	\$12,939,479	\$52,155,078
Average net social benefits	\$25,265,498	
Net social benefits	\$5,850,915	\$44,680,082
Net minimum benefits	\$5,464,484	
Benefit-Cost Ratios (in U.S dollars)	Benefit-Cost Ratios (in U.S dollars)	Benefit-Cost Ratios (in U.S dollars)
	<i>Lower Estimate</i>	<i>Upper Estimate</i>
Total social benefits (+)	\$12,939,479	\$52,155,078
Total social costs (-)	\$7,088,565	\$7,474,995
Benefit-cost ratio	2	7

THE SOCIAL BENEFIT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE SHELTER

The social benefit of a domestic violence center comes from averting injuries, providing economic stability and mental wellness but most importantly in the lives saved. (Source: Chanley et al, 2001).

**PROVIDING
23,907
HOURS**



The Shelter provided 23,907 hours of counseling to survivors and their children in Collier County.

**COUNSELING
SAVES TAXPAYERS
\$120,000 A YEAR**

For every hour of counseling The Shelter Counseling saves taxpayers \$120,000 a year.



↓95%

**THE EMERGENCY SHELTER CAN
REDUCE INJURIES/ASSAULTS
BY UP TO 95%**

**PROVIDING
OVER \$52M
IN BENEFITS**

The Shelter provided over \$52M in benefit to the community in 2018.*

FOR EVERY \$1

UP TO \$7 WAS RETURNED

For every \$1 invested in The Shelter, up to \$7 was returned in impact.*



Conclusion

Domestic violence is a topic that many deem a private issue that only affects a small number of people a year. Domestic violence organizations have tried for years to tell the larger story of this hidden epidemic with mixed results. This study is an attempt to quantify the magnitude of the problem on a local level, and the data reveals a different story. In Collier County, it is clear that domestic violence's economic impact is significant, and the numbers will no doubt be surprising to many.

This analysis shows that in the battle against domestic violence, the support of shelters is essential and an excellent value for the money. Organizations like The Shelter are making a significant difference not only to those they serve but also to the community as a whole. It also shows that a small investment can have a considerable return, and be a wise use of tax and philanthropic dollars.

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About the Authors



Carol Wick has advised nonprofits her entire career and understands its unique challenges. First, as a therapist for abused children and later as an award-winning CEO of one of the nation’s largest domestic violence centers. She’s since formed Sharity, a global consulting firm with a mission to empower nonprofits to take control of their future and fundraising. She is recognized as a foremost expert at turning around struggling organizations – using her business acumen to achieve financial stability and her advocacy to engage the community as partners.



Ariadna Parada is a recent graduate of Rollins College with a degree in International Business. She works as a research associate for Sharity and played a critical role throughout the study gathering data points that show the significant value that shelters provide to local communities. of their future and fundraising.

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