



**2020 Statewide
Alaska Victimization Survey
Final Report**

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Prepared for the
Alaska Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
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Alaska's Council on
Domestic Violence
& Sexual Assault

Acknowledgements

We sincerely thank the 2,100 women who invested time and effort to participate in this victimization survey. They re-lived horrendous experiences that no one should be subjected to to help us understand the extent of intimate partner and sexual violence in Alaska.

Funding for this project was provided by the Alaska Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. The survey was administered by GMA and Pacific Market Research in Washington state. Data were analyzed by the UAA Justice Center.



Purpose and Methods

Purpose of the Alaska Victimization Survey

Every human being has the right to be safe and free from violence in their own homes, relationships, and communities. The Alaska Victimization Survey provides comprehensive statewide and regional data to guide planning and policy development and to evaluate the impact of prevention and intervention services. The 2020 survey was designed to provide estimates that could be compared to previous statewide estimates from 2015 and 2010. Results are used to support prevention and intervention efforts that reduce violence against women.

Methodology

A total of 2,100 adult women in Alaska participated in the 2020 survey. Respondents were randomly selected and contacted by phone (using both land lines and cell phones) from July through November 2020.

Respondents were asked behaviorally specific questions about physical intimate partner violence. Intimate partners included romantic and sexual partners. Respondents were also asked about alcohol- or drug-involved sexual assault and forcible sexual assault. These questions were not limited to intimate partners.

Procedures were designed to maximize the safety and confidentiality of all respondents. The survey was approved by the UAA institutional review board and was supported by the Alaska Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.

All estimates were weighted to control for selection and coverage.

More detail on the methodology is included in the Appendix.

Important Limitations

The survey excluded non-English speaking women and women without phone access. Estimates may be higher among women excluded from the survey. Estimates may also be conservative because of the continuing stigma of reporting victimization. This survey measured the number of victims, not the number of victimizations. Not all forms of intimate partner violence or sexual violence were measured.

Key 2020 Results

The following figure shows the number of adult women out of every 100 who reside in Alaska who have experienced intimate partner, sexual violence, and either or both forms of violence in their lifetimes.

Figure 1. Lifetime estimates of adult women's experiences with intimate partner violence and sexual violence.



The following table shows the percentage and number of adult women who reside in Alaska who experienced each form of violence in their lifetimes and in the past year.

Table 1. Lifetime and past year estimates of adult women's experiences with specific forms of intimate partner violence and sexual violence.

Type of Violence	Lifetime		Past year	
	%	N	%	N
Intimate partner violence (composite)	48.0	127,248	6.9	18,314
Threats of physical violence	28.5	75,347	2.6	6,873
Physical violence	46.8	123,987	6.5	17,198
Sexual violence (composite)	40.5	106,937	3.4	8,791
Alcohol- or drug-involved sexual assault	27.5	72,654	2.1	5,596
Forcible sexual assault	27.7	73,203	2.2	5,712
IPV, SV, or both (composite)	57.7	152,556	8.1	21,217

Intimate Partner Violence Estimates:

Referring to Table 1 on page 4, the intimate partner violence composite includes threats of physical violence and physical violence. Below is a summary of these estimates.

- 48% of adult women (or 127,248) experienced intimate partner violence in their lifetime, with:
 - 28.5% (or 75,347) experiencing threats of physical violence, and
 - 46.8% (or 123,987) experiencing physical violence.
- 6.9% of adult women (or 18,314) experienced intimate partner violence in the past year, with:
 - 2.6% (or 6,873) experiencing threats of physical violence, and
 - 6.5% (or 17,198) experiencing physical violence.

Sexual Violence Estimates:

Referring to Table 1 on page 4, the sexual violence composite includes alcohol- or drug-involved sexual assault and forcible sexual assault. Below is a summary of these estimates.

- 40.5% of adult women (or 106,937) experienced sexual violence in their lifetime, with:
 - 27.5% (or 72,654) experiencing at least one alcohol- or drug-involved sexual assault, and
 - 27.7% (or 73,203) experiencing at least one forcible sexual assault.
- 3.4% of adult women (or 8,791) experienced sexual violence in the past year, with:
 - 2.1% (or 5,596) experiencing at least one alcohol- or drug-involved sexual assault, and
 - 2.2% (or 5,712) experiencing at least one forcible sexual assault.

Intimate Partner Violence, Sexual Violence, or Both:

Referring to Table 1 on page 4, the IPV, SV, or both composite includes intimate partner violence, sexual violence, or both. Below is a summary of these estimates.

- 57.7% (or 152,556) experienced intimate partner violence, sexual violence, or both in their lifetime.
- 8.1% (or 21,217) experienced intimate partner violence, sexual violence, or both in the past year.

Changes Over Time: 2010 - 2020

The following table shows how the 2020 lifetime and past year estimates of women’s experiences with violence compared to the 2010 and 2015 estimates.

Table 2. Past year and lifetime intimate partner and sexual violence victimization experiences changes over time (2010-2020).

Type of Violence	Lifetime (%)			Past Year (%)		
	2010	2015	2020	2010	2015	2020
Intimate partner violence (composite)	47.6	40.4	48.0	9.4	6.4	6.9
Threats of physical violence	31.0	25.6	28.5	5.8	3.0	2.6
Physical violence	44.8	39.6	46.8	8.6	5.9	6.5
Sexual violence (composite)	37.1	33.1	40.5	4.3	2.9	3.4
Alcohol- or drug-involved sexual assault	26.8	22.6	27.5	3.6	2.0	2.1
Forcible sexual assault	25.6	23.5	27.7	2.5	1.6	2.2
IPV, SV, or both (composite)	58.6	50.3	57.7	11.8	8.1	8.1

The percentage of women experiencing intimate partner violence in their lifetimes declined between 2010 (47.6%) and 2015 (40.4%), and then increased between 2015 and 2020 (up to 48%). Regarding experiences with intimate partner violence in the past year, the percentage declined between 2010 (9.4%) and 2015 (6.4%), and remained relatively unchanged from 2015 to 2020 (up to 6.9%).

The percentage of women experiencing sexual violence in their lifetimes declined between 2010 (37.1%) and 2015 (33.1%), and then increased between 2015 and 2020 (up to 40.5%). Regarding experiences with sexual violence in the past year, the percentage declined between 2010 (4.3%) and 2015 (2.9%), and increased slightly from 2015 to 2020 (up to 3.4%).

The percentage of women experiencing IPV, SV, or both in their lifetimes declined between 2010 (58.6%) and 2015 (50.3%), and then increased between 2015 and 2020 (up to 57.7%). Regarding experiences with IPV, SV, or both in the past year, the percentage declined between 2010 (11.8%) and 2015 (8.1%), and remained unchanged from 2015 to 2020 (at 8.1%).

Adding Context to Understand 2020 Violence Prevalence

Given the slight fluctuation downwards in lifetime experiences with violence between 2010 and 2015 but then back up between 2015 and 2020, and the stagnation of past year rates, additional analyses were conducted to understand more about these persistently high rates. Additional analyses included the relationship between adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), age, and COVID-19 impacts on past year experiences with violence.

Adverse Childhood Experiences and Past Year Violence

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are well established in existing research as being a strong predictor of later victimization experiences. ACEs were not measured in the 2010 and 2015 iterations of the AVS, and therefore analyses with these measures were only conducted with the 2020 data. Figure 2 presents adult women’s histories of ACEs.

Figure 2. Percent of adult women in Alaska who experienced each type of adverse childhood experience.

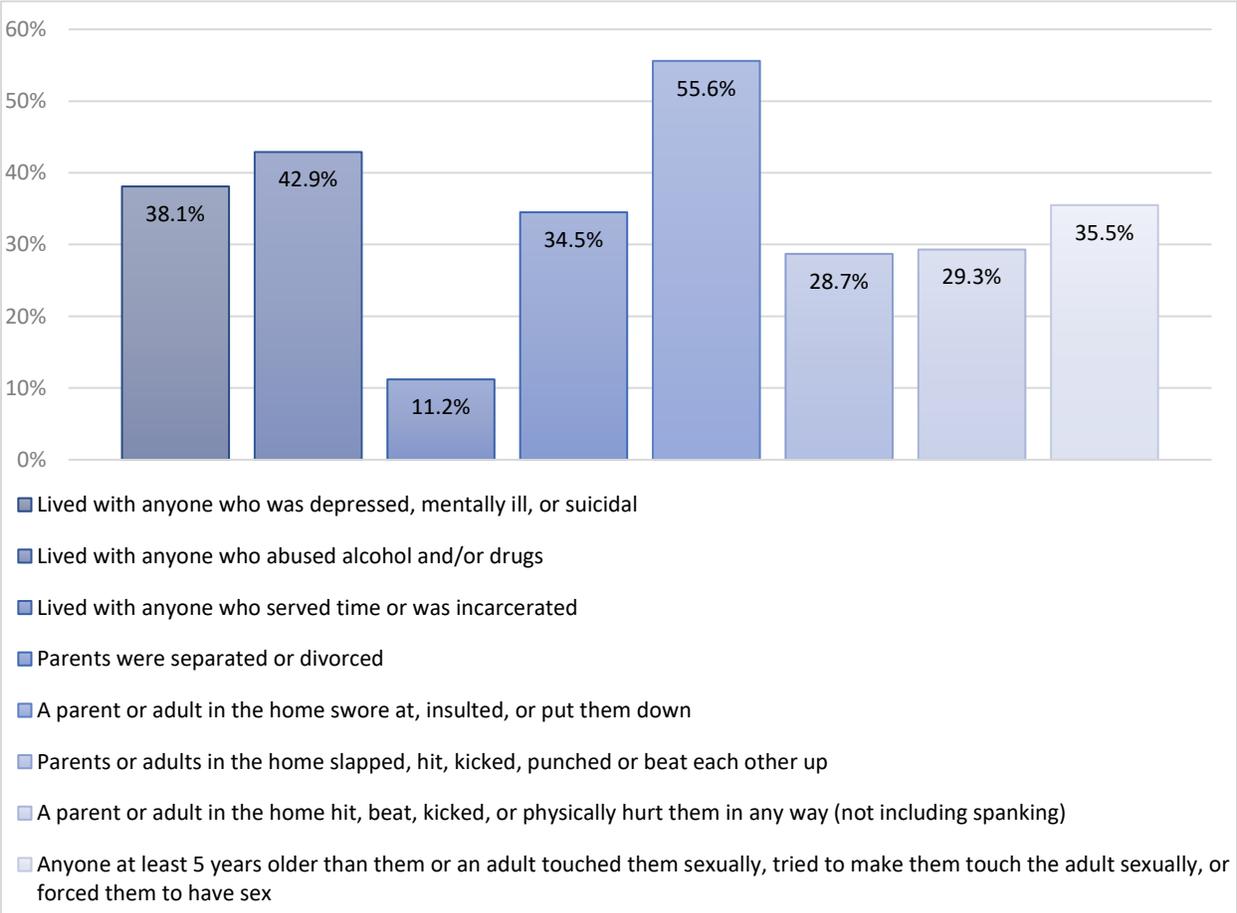


Figure 2 shows that ACEs are very common among adult women in Alaska. Before age 18:

- 55.6% (over half) had a parent/adult in the home verbally abuse them;
- 42.9% (over two-fifths) lived with anyone who abused alcohol and/or drugs;
- 38.1% (over one-third) lived with anyone who was depressed, mentally ill, or suicidal;
- 35.5% (over one-third) were sexually abused;
- 34.5% (over one-third) had parents who separated or divorced;
- 29.3% (over one-quarter) were physically abused by a parent/other adult in the home;
- 28.7% (over one-quarter) lived with adults who physically assaulted each other; and
- 11.2% (over one-tenth) lived with anyone who served time or was incarcerated.

Next, Table 3 shows the relationship between experiencing each adverse childhood experience or not and experiencing past year intimate partner violence, sexual violence, or both.

Table 3. Percent of adult women in Alaska experiencing each type of adverse childhood experience or not who subsequently experienced past year IPV, SV, or both.

Before age 18...	Experienced past year IPV, SV, or both (%)	
Lived with anyone who was depressed, mentally ill, or suicidal?	No	5.6
	Yes	12.5
Lived with anyone who abused alcohol and/or drugs?	No	5.0
	Yes	12.4
Lived with anyone who served time or was incarcerated?	No	6.1
	Yes	24.0
Parents were separated or divorced?	No	6.4
	Yes	11.4
A parent or adult in the home swore at, insulted, or put them down?	No	2.9
	Yes	12.4
Parents or adults in the home slapped, hit, kicked, punched or beat each other up?	No	5.0
	Yes	16.0
A parent or adult in the home hit, beat, kicked, or physically hurt them in any way (not including spanking)?	No	5.5
	Yes	14.6
Anyone at least 5 years older than them or an adult touched them sexually, tried to make them touch the adult sexually, or forced them to have sex?	No	6.5
	Yes	10.6

Note. All differences between women who experienced each ACE and those who did not were significant at the $p < 0.05$ threshold except for the final ACE item on sexual abuse.

Table 3 shows that when comparing past year victimization experiences between women who experienced each ACE or not, women with ACEs were significantly *more likely* to have experienced past year violence than those without ACEs (for all ACEs except for sexual abuse before age 18):

- 12.5% of women who (before they were 18) lived with anyone who was depressed, mentally ill, or suicidal experienced past year IPV, SV, or both compared to 5.6% of women without that ACE (meaning women with this ACE were *more than twice as likely* to experience past year IPV, SV, or both);
- 12.4% of women who (before they were 18) lived with anyone who abused alcohol and/or drugs experienced past year IPV, SV, or both compared to 5.0% of women without that ACE (meaning women with this ACE were *more than twice as likely* to experience past year IPV, SV, or both);
- 24.0% of women who (before they were 18) lived with anyone who served time or was incarcerated experienced past year IPV, SV, or both compared to 6.1% of women without that ACE (meaning women with this ACE were *almost three times as likely* to experience past year IPV, SV, or both);
- 11.4% of women whose parents were separated or divorced (before they were 18) experienced past year IPV, SV, or both compared to 6.4% of women without that ACE (meaning women with this ACE were *almost twice as likely* to experience past year IPV, SV, or both);
- 12.4% of women who (before they were 18) were verbally abused by a parent/adult in the home experienced past year IPV, SV, or both compared to 2.9% of women without that ACE (meaning women with this ACE were *more than three times as likely* to experience past year IPV, SV, or both);
- 16.0% of women who (before they were 18) lived with adults who physically assaulted each other experienced past year IPV, SV, or both compared to 5.0% of women without that ACE (meaning women with this ACE were *more than three times as likely* to experience past year IPV, SV, or both); and
- 14.6% of women who (before they were 18) were physically abused by a parent/other adult in the home experienced past year IPV, SV, or both compared to 5.5% of women without that ACE (meaning women with this ACE were *almost three times as likely* to experience past year IPV, SV, or both).

Because of the strong relationship between ACEs and past year experiences with IPV, SV, or both, the next set of analyses sought to determine whether shifts in ACEs over different age groups might contribute to shifts in the trends of adult experiences with violence. Therefore, two sets of analyses were conducted: one examining the relationship between age and experiences with IPV, SV, or both, and one examining the relationship between age and ACEs. Both are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Percent of adult women in Alaska who experienced past year violence and adverse childhood experiences, by age group (under 40 and 40+).

	Under 40 (%)	40+ (%)
Experienced lifetime IPV, SV, or both	57.8	57.7
Experienced past year IPV, SV, or both	11.7	5.6
Before age 18...		
Lived with anyone who was depressed, mentally ill, or suicidal*	50.4	29.3
Lived with anyone who abused alcohol and/or drugs*	49.5	38.4
Lived with anyone who served time or was incarcerated*	17.6	6.8
Parents were separated or divorced*	41.9	29.1
A parent or adult in the home swore at, insulted, or put them down*	63.0	50.6
Parents or adults in the home slapped, hit, kicked, punched or beat each other up*	32.6	25.9
A parent or adult in the home hit, beat, kicked, or physically hurt them in any way (not including spanking)	30.3	28.5
Anyone at least 5 years older than them or an adult touched them sexually, tried to make them touch the adult sexually, or forced them to have sex*	31.1	38.4

Note. Experiences marked with an asterisk (*) were significantly different between women under 40 and those 40 and older at the $p < 0.05$ threshold.

Two important findings emerge from Table 4.

First, women under 40 were *more than twice as likely* as those 40 and older to experience IPV, SV, or both in the past year (11.7% compared to 5.6%; significant at the $p < 0.05$ threshold), but equally as likely to experience lifetime IPV, SV, or both.

Second, women under 40 were significantly *more likely* than those 40 and older to have experienced most types of ACEs ($p < 0.05$).

COVID-19 and Past Year IPV, SV, or Both

The last set of analyses in this report take into account that 2020 was an exceptional year that placed an unprecedented amount of strain on numerous individuals, relationships, and households. A series of questions related to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact were included in the 2020 AVS to assess how these impacts might be related to experiences with past year IPV, SV, or both.

Table 5. General COVID-19 pandemic impact on adult women in Alaska

43.2%	36.7%	84.2%
Self or other primary breadwinner in home experienced unemployment or reduction in work hours as a result of COVID-19	Household’s financial stability negatively or very negatively affected by COVID-19 pandemic	More members of household home on a regular basis than would be otherwise during COVID-19 work and social isolation restrictions

Table 5 shows that COVID-19 had a wide ranging impact on adult women in Alaska. Table 6 presents the relationships between COVID-19 impacts and past year IPV, SV, or both.

Table 6. Percent of adult women in Alaska experiencing each type of COVID-19 impact or not who also experienced past year IPV, SV, or both.

	Experienced past year IPV, SV, or both (%)	
Self or other primary breadwinner in home experienced unemployment or reduction in work hours as a result of COVID-19	No	5.7
	Yes	11.5
Household’s financial stability negatively or very negatively affected by COVID-19 pandemic	No	6.1
	Yes	11.9
More members of household home on a regular basis than would be otherwise during COVID-19 work and social isolation restrictions	No	10.6
	Yes	7.9

Note. Both un/underemployment and negative financial impact were significantly related to experiencing past year IPV, SV, or both at the $p < 0.05$ threshold.

When comparing past year experiences with IPV, SV, or both between women who experienced negative impacts from COVID-19 and those who did not, women who were negatively impacted by COVID-19 in the form of un/underemployment or a negative financial impact were significantly *more likely* to have experienced past year IPV, SV, or both than those who were not impacted in those ways by COVID-19.

Appendix

Overview and history of AVS

Funded by the Alaska Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault and implemented by the University of Alaska Anchorage Justice Center, the AVS has provided estimates of the lifetime and past year prevalence of sexual violence and intimate partner violence against women in Alaska since 2010. Statewide surveys were conducted in 2010, 2015, and 2020, with the goal of conducting the survey every five years (quinquennially). Regional surveys were conducted between 2011 and 2015. Overall, almost 13,000 women in Alaska have been surveyed about their experiences with sexual violence and intimate partner violence.

Details of AVS 2020 data collection

The AVS is a general population survey of adult (18 years of age and older), non-institutionalized, English-speaking women residing in Alaska. The survey was modeled after the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey administered by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Survey procedures were designed to maximize the safety and confidentiality of all respondents.

For the 2020 AVS, a Washington state-based team of market researchers was contracted to conduct data collection. The project manager was GMA Research of Bellevue. Pacific Market Research of Renton hired, trained, and supervised the phone interviewers. The phone interviewers included a team of roughly 12 women and the team experienced minimal attrition over the duration of the project.

Respondents were randomly selected and contacted by landlines and cell phones between July and November 2020. 2100 agreed to participate and almost all participants completed the survey. Participants were paid for their time. There were six cases of significant distress due to the content of survey and one case of significant distress due to being called (unrelated to content of the survey). These cases of distress were managed with great sensitivity and were reported to the UAA Institutional Review Board to ensure all ethical standards of research were being considered in the continuation of the project.

Data weighting

Each case was weighted to match their relative prevalence in the general adult Alaska female population (265,572) using three “strata” and 120 possible weights:

- Geographic region (6)
 - Gulf Coast (Kenai, Kodiak, Valdez, Cordova)

- Northwestern, Western, and Southwestern (Nome, North Slope, Northwest Arctic, Aleutians East and West, Bethel, Bristol Bay, Dillingham, Kusilvak, Lake & Peninsula)
- Interior (Denali, Fairbanks Northstar, Southeast Fairbanks, Yukon-Koyukuk)
- Southeast (Haines, Hoonah-Angoon, Juneau, Ketchikan, Petersburg, Prince of Wales-Hyder, Sitka, Skagway, Wrangell, Yakutat)
- Anchorage
- Mat-Su Valley
- Racial identity (4)
 - American Indian/Alaska Native
 - Asian/Black/Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
 - White
 - Two or more racial identities
- Age (5)
 - 18-24 (Gen Z)
 - 25-39 (Millennials)
 - 40-54 (Gen X)
 - 55-74 (Boomers)
 - 75+ (Silent)

Violence measures

- **Intimate partner violence** includes two measures:
 1. Threats of physical violence by intimate partners
 - Have your romantic or sexual partners made threats to physically harm you?
 2. Physical violence by intimate partners
 - Have your romantic or sexual partners...
 - Slapped you?
 - Pushed or shoved you?
 - Hit you with a fist or something hard?
 - Kicked you?
 - Hurt you by pulling your hair?
 - Slammed you against something?
 - Tried to hurt you by choking or suffocating you?
 - Beaten you?
 - Burned you on purpose?
 - Used a knife or gun on you?
- **Sexual violence** includes two measures:
 1. Alcohol- or drug-involved sexual assault

- When you were alcohol or drug intoxicated and unable to consent, has anyone...
 - Had vaginal sex with you?
 - Made you receive anal sex?
 - Made you perform oral sex?
 - Made you receive oral sex?
- 2. Forcible sexual assault:
 - Has anyone used physical force or threats to physically harm you to...
 - Make you have vaginal sex?
 - Make you receive anal sex?
 - Make you perform oral sex?
 - Make you receive oral sex?
 - Put their fingers or an object in your vagina or anus?
 - Try to have vaginal, oral, or anal sex with you?

Table 7. Details of main violence estimates included number of eligible cases from sample used for each estimate, the estimated percent of the population experiencing each type of violence, the standard error (S.E.) for each estimate, and the 95% confidence interval (CI) for each estimate.

Measures of Violence	Lifetime				Past Year			
	n	%	S.E.	95% CI	n	%	S.E.	95% CI
Intimate partner violence (composite)	2091	48.0	0.015	45.1-51.0	2083	6.9	0.010	5.0-8.8
Threats of physical violence	2088	28.5	0.013	25.9-31.1	2088	2.6	0.006	1.4-3.8
Physical violence	2092	46.8	0.015	43.9-49.8	2087	6.5	0.009	4.7-8.3
Sexual violence (composite)	2082	40.5	0.015	37.6-43.4	2056	3.4	0.007	1.9-4.8
Alcohol- or drug-involved sexual assault	2088	27.5	0.014	24.7-30.2	2074	2.1	0.006	1.0-3.2
Forcible sexual assault	2085	27.7	0.013	25.1-30.4	2071	2.2	0.006	1.0-3.4
IPV, SV, or both (composite)	2083	57.7	0.015	54.8-60.6	2045	8.1	0.010	6.1-10.2