

# Boulder County Domestic-Violence Enforcement: Public Evidence, Case-Data Acquisition, and Testable Hypotheses

Research working paper

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## Abstract

This working report evaluates claims that Boulder County, Colorado agencies disproportionately arrest, refer, file, convict, or sentence men in domestic-violence-related matters, or underenforce comparable allegations against women. It separates descriptive concentration, differential treatment, false-positive criminalization, false-negative underenforcement, and downstream disparity. Public Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI) data provide aggregate incident context, and City of Boulder public calls-for-service data provide a limited public view of Boulder Police Department call dispositions. They do not contain the narratives, probable-cause facts, opposing-complaint assessments, referrals, DA filing decisions, count histories, or sentence/treatment outcomes needed to test the stronger propositions. Current public evidence supports only limited descriptive statements. The recent aggregate premise has not yet been verified as an authoritative public claim after initial provenance search.

## 1 Scope and Status

The objective is an exhaustive, nonpartisan analysis of Boulder County domestic-violence enforcement over the last ten years, including relative prevalence, gender distribution of charges, all cases, outcomes, subsequent charges, divorce linkage, and rehabilitation or treatment outcomes. The present report is a current-state evidence report. It is not the final case-level report because the public web does not expose the complete court/DA case universe.

Artifacts already obtained include:

- 100 CBI public table-lookup pages and 100 processed CSVs covering Colorado and Boulder County, 2016–2025.
- 10 CBI county-rate tables covering all reporting Colorado counties, 2016–2025.
- A one-day Colorado Judicial public docket sample for Boulder County on June 24, 2026.
- A full public candidate cohort from City of Boulder Open Data for Boulder Police Department calls and offenses matching preregistered screening terms.
- Ready-to-submit data requests to the Colorado Judicial Branch and Boulder County District Attorney.
- A case-level data dictionary, linkage protocol, and submission checklist for the court/DA data phase.

## 2 Data Sources

### 2.1 Public CBI Incident Data

The CBI explains that Colorado Crime Statistics are submitted by Colorado law-enforcement agencies through the Uniform Crime Reporting program and that incident-based pages are produced under FBI NIBRS reporting and counting guidelines [1]. These data are useful for reported incident, victim, offender, clearance, and county-rate patterns. They are not prosecution data.

The public dataset used here is stored in:

- `data/processed/cbi_public_dv_summary_2016_2025.csv`
- `data/processed/cbi_county_dv_rates_2016_2025.csv`
- `data/processed/cbi_boulder_county_rate_rank_2016_2025.csv`

CBI warns that current-year data may not contain a full twelve months and that Colorado Crime Stats is updated over time [2]. Because this report uses completed calendar years 2016–2025, the main time series avoids the visibly incomplete 2026 reporting period. Future refreshes should preserve extraction dates.

### 2.2 Court and DA Case Data

Colorado Judicial states that compiled or aggregate data related to case filings, charges, and sentences should be requested through the court data request process [3]. The Access Guide further explains that compiled/aggregate court, probation, or financial data requests require the Addendum A process and lists the court-data email address [4]. The same Access Guide warns that direct online court-record searches are available through third-party vendors, not directly from the Colorado Judicial Branch website, and that those vendor records do not represent all cases or all case types filed with Colorado courts [4]. That warning is central: third-party searches may validate records, but they are not by themselves an exhaustive universe. Boulder County DA’s Discovery and Records Unit directs criminal-case records or information requests to the Open Records Portal under CCJRA review [5].

These sources establish that the case universe is obtainable through formal channels, but it is not currently downloadable as a public bulk dataset.

### 2.3 City of Boulder Public Calls and Offenses

The City of Boulder public safety dashboard states that open-data offerings include public offenses back to 2015 and calls for service back to 2018, with dashboard pages linking to source data [6]. This analysis uses the underlying ArcGIS feature services rather than visual transcription. Processed outputs omit raw public case identifiers and exact addresses, replacing source keys with hashes.

The current public cohort is a screen, not a validated domestic-violence cohort. It includes Boulder Police Department calls whose public problem label contains domestic, civil, harassment, assault, restraining-order, disturbance, welfare, trespass, or threat terms, and offense rows whose public NIBRS description contains assault, trespass, property, stalking, kidnapping, or sex terms. Because the public call layer lacks party sex/gender, narratives, relationship, probable-cause facts, and referral status, it can describe call labels and call dispositions but cannot test gender disparity.

### 3 Legal and Policy Context

Colorado domestic-violence law makes domestic violence a factual designation attached to an underlying offense rather than a single standalone charge. Colorado statutory summaries identify domestic violence sentencing provisions at section 18-6-801 and related provisions at 18-6-800.3 et seq. [7]. Colorado’s duties-of-peace-officers provision is commonly summarized as requiring arrest when an officer determines probable cause for an offense involving domestic violence [8]. The practical result is that arrest and charging patterns are shaped by statewide law, local law-enforcement practice, prosecutor screening, and court disposition decisions.

Colorado also has a specialized treatment framework. The Domestic Violence Offender Management Board standards describe treatment and monitoring of court-ordered domestic-violence offenders with goals that include cessation of abusive behavior and victim safety [9]. Case-level rehabilitation analysis therefore requires probation/treatment completion and revocation data, not merely charge data.

### 4 Prior Boulder-Specific Research and Public Coverage

The most relevant Boulder-specific academic work located so far is Sarah McCullar’s CU Boulder honors thesis, *Domestic Violence in Boulder County: Gendered Trends in Case Outcomes*. The thesis analyzed arrest and sentencing data from the Boulder County Domestic Violence Research Team and interviewed Boulder legal professionals. Its abstract reports that gender was related to criminal history, type of abuse, and case dismissal likelihood [10]. This is directly relevant but predates the requested 2016–2026 window and should be treated as hypothesis-generating rather than dispositive.

Public web searches found defense-oriented and advocacy claims that Boulder domestic-violence cases are handled aggressively, as well as Boulder DA materials stating that domestic-violence cases are a significant share of county filings [11]. Boulder County’s DA materials also include a National Association of Counties award release stating that the office prioritizes domestic-violence prosecution and had developed an enhanced victim-centered DV protocol in 2020 [12]. Boulder Weekly coverage in 2020 framed domestic violence as rising in the pandemic period and directed readers to Boulder County and CU Boulder victim-service resources [13]. These materials establish that domestic violence is a salient local justice issue. They are not substitutes for complete case-level court data.

## 5 Public Findings

### 5.1 Relative Prevalence

Table 1 reports Boulder County’s CBI domestic-violence victimization rate and rank among reporting Colorado counties. Rank is descending, so rank 1 would indicate the highest reported county victimization rate.

Across 2016–2025, Boulder County ranked between 26th and 53rd among reporting counties, with an average rank of 35.3. The 2016–2025 average Boulder victimization rate was 246.3 per 100,000. On this public prevalence measure, the phrase “domestic violence capital” is not supported.

Table 1: Boulder County CBI Domestic-Violence Victimization Rate Rank

Year	Boulder DV victimization rate	Colorado rate	Boulder rank	Counties ranked
2016	256.5	320.7	35	60
2017	225.3	327.2	41	61
2018	269.4	330.4	31	61
2019	237.3	333.6	38	61
2020	263.6	351.4	35	59
2021	287.3	364.0	34	61
2022	264.4	358.8	31	60
2023	286.2	355.3	26	58
2024	247.8	353.5	29	59
2025	125.4	339.6	53	59

## 5.2 Victims, Clearance, and Public Offender-Gender Pattern

Table 2 summarizes CBI public counts and gender shares. The offender-gender measure is the share of known related offenders in CBI incident data. It is not the gender distribution of defendants charged by prosecutors.

Table 2: CBI Public Domestic-Violence Summary

Year	Boulder victims	CO victims	Boulder clearance	Boulder male offenders	CO male offenders
2016	794	17,532	79.1%	74.4%	75.6%
2017	710	18,395	72.5%	74.5%	74.8%
2018	880	18,819	74.8%	73.8%	74.8%
2019	780	19,208	70.9%	74.3%	74.4%
2020	864	20,411	67.8%	74.7%	75.1%
2021	937	21,156	63.5%	73.7%	75.4%
2022	868	20,954	59.7%	75.2%	75.0%
2023	940	21,116	59.8%	74.2%	74.0%
2024	822	21,303	59.2%	74.7%	73.6%
2025	416	20,466	66.1%	72.3%	73.1%

From 2016–2025, Boulder County’s public CBI tables contain 8,011 domestic-violence victims. The mean known related-offender share was 74.2% male in Boulder and 74.6% male statewide. The mean known victim share was 74.5% female in Boulder and 75.1% female statewide. These public incident data show that Boulder resembles statewide gender patterns; they do not establish whether Boulder prosecutors file, dismiss, plead, sentence, or treat male and female defendants differently.

## 5.3 Boulder Police Public Call Screen

The Boulder Police public call screen produced 45,361 candidate call rows for 2023–partial 2026 and 13,732 candidate offense rows for 2020–partial 2026. Domestic-labeled calls were a small subset of the broader screen: 835 in 2023, 845 in 2024, 808 in 2025, and 374 in partial 2026. Arrest-coded dispositions occurred in 12.30–13.41% of domestic-labeled calls in the observed years. Civil-labeled calls rarely had arrest-coded dispositions, from 0.28% to 1.30%. These are call-disposition labels, not verified arrests, referrals, charges, or findings of probable cause.

Table 3: Boulder Police Public Candidate Call Screen

Year	Candidate family	Calls	Arrest dispositions	Arrest disposition rate
2023	broader_validation_screen	9,323	244	2.62%
2023	civil_label	725	2	0.28%
2023	domestic_label	835	112	13.41%
2023	person_offense_screen	2,819	62	2.20%
2023	protection_order_label	272	17	6.25%
2024	broader_validation_screen	8,708	281	3.23%
2024	civil_label	646	3	0.46%
2024	domestic_label	845	110	13.02%
2024	person_offense_screen	3,104	53	1.71%
2024	protection_order_label	280	22	7.86%
2025	broader_validation_screen	8,066	246	3.05%
2025	civil_label	564	3	0.53%
2025	domestic_label	808	101	12.50%
2025	person_offense_screen	2,673	61	2.28%
2025	protection_order_label	267	27	10.11%
2026	broader_validation_screen	3,487	106	3.04%
2026	civil_label	230	3	1.30%
2026	domestic_label	374	46	12.30%
2026	person_offense_screen	1,225	28	2.29%
2026	protection_order_label	110	9	8.18%

## 6 Hypotheses for the Case-Level Phase

1. **H1: Prevalence hypothesis.** Boulder County’s reported DV prevalence is not unusually high relative to Colorado counties after population normalization. Public CBI county-rate data currently support this hypothesis.
2. **H2: Gender composition hypothesis.** Boulder County’s reported offender/victim gender patterns are similar to statewide CBI patterns. Public CBI data currently support this hypothesis at the incident level.
3. **H3: Prosecutorial-aggressiveness hypothesis.** Boulder County prosecutes DV cases more aggressively than comparison counties, measured by filing rate conditional on arrest/referral, dismissal rate, plea-to-conviction rate, trial rate, sentence severity, DV treatment orders, and probation revocations. Public data do not yet test this hypothesis.
4. **H4: Male-defendant disparity hypothesis.** Male defendants experience higher filing, conviction, sentence, or treatment-burden rates than similarly situated female defendants after controlling for offense type, injury, weapon, prior history, victim relationship, and evidence strength. Public data do not yet test this hypothesis.
5. **H5: Rehabilitation hypothesis.** Treatment completion and subsequent-charge outcomes vary by offense severity, prior history, and supervision terms more than by defendant gender after controls. Public data do not yet test this hypothesis.

## 7 Critical Limitations

The public CBI data are incident data, not court data. They cannot identify every criminal case, filed charge, amended charge, dismissal, plea, sentence, treatment order, treatment completion, subsequent criminal case, or divorce case. CBI offender sex is not defendant sex. CBI victimization rates measure law-enforcement reports, not prevalence of all underlying abuse, which is affected by reporting behavior, agency data quality, and NIBRS counting rules.

The one-day docket sample proves that the public docket search can collect hearing-calendar case numbers, but it is not a complete case-history source and it has no domestic-violence flag. It should be used only for supplemental checks or live docket monitoring.

## 8 Required Case-Level Retrieval Plan

The next phase must obtain structured court and DA data through authorized access:

1. Submit `requests/colorado_judicial_case_data_request.md` to the Colorado Judicial Branch court-data request process.
2. Complete Addendum A using `requests/colorado_judicial_addendum_a_prefill.md`. Locally saved source forms:
  - `requests/colorado_judicial_cjd_05_01_public_access_media_4320.pdf`
  - `requests/colorado_judicial_cjd05_01_2025_11_10.pdf`
3. Submit `requests/boulder_da_cora_ccjra_request.md` through Boulder County DA's Open Records Portal.
4. Use any CU Boulder institutional access to Colorado State Courts Data Access, LexisNexis Colorado Courts, CoCourts, or equivalent court-record systems to validate the case universe and fill missing fields where public-records exports are insufficient.
5. Request or derive a stable deidentified person key to link subsequent criminal cases without publishing personally identifying information.
6. Separately request or query domestic-relations case metadata to test divorce filing after DV case initiation. This requires a privacy-preserving linkage protocol and should not publish party names.
7. Request probation or DVOMB/treatment-provider completion fields where lawfully available. Court sentencing terms alone do not prove rehabilitation.

### 8.1 Case-Level Data Model

The normalized data model is specified in `analysis/case_level_data_dictionary.csv`. The minimum tables are:

- **Case:** court case number, DA case number, court type, filing date, DV flag, case status, and final case outcome.
- **Person:** deidentified defendant key, defendant sex/gender, race/ethnicity if releasable, age at filing, and prior-case count.
- **Victim:** deidentified victim key if releasable, victim sex/gender, and relationship category.
- **Charge and disposition:** statute, offense description, charge stage, DV enhancer/flag, disposition type, conviction/dismissal flag, and trial indicator.
- **Sentence and rehabilitation:** jail/prison/probation terms, treatment ordered, protection order, treatment completion, probation termination reason, and revocation.

- **Subsequent case and domestic-relations linkage:** later public criminal cases and lawful domestic-relations/divorce case links.

The analysis protocol is specified in `analysis/case_level_analysis_protocol.md`. A case universe should not be considered exhaustive until court and DA counts reconcile by filing year, excluded categories are documented, and every charge/disposition/sentence record references a valid case key.

## 8.2 Statistical Tests Planned After Data Receipt

The public CBI results will be treated as ecological context. The case-level export will support:

1. Logistic models for dismissal/no conviction, with defendant sex as a predictor and controls for year, offense severity, prior history, victim sex, relationship, agency, and court type.
2. Logistic or multinomial models for conviction, deferred judgment, trial outcome, and charge reduction.
3. Sentence-severity models for jail, prison, probation, DV treatment orders, and protection-order terms.
4. Survival or discrete-time models for subsequent criminal filing and subsequent DV filing at one-, two-, and three-year windows.
5. Domestic-relations linkage analysis for divorce/dissolution filings after index DV cases, reported only where linkage is lawful and reliable.

The principal fairness test is not whether men are the majority of defendants. Given the public incident data, that would be expected. The test is whether male defendants have worse filing, disposition, sentencing, or treatment outcomes than similarly situated female defendants after case-mix controls.

## 9 Interim Conclusion

The public evidence supports limited descriptive context only. Boulder County does not appear exceptional in CBI county-rate rankings or aggregate incident-level sex patterns. Boulder Police public call data show that domestic-labeled calls have higher arrest-coded disposition rates than civil-labeled or broader validation-screen calls, but the public layer lacks sex/gender, legal sufficiency, relationship, narrative, and referral fields. Differential treatment, false-positive criminalization, false-negative underenforcement, and downstream disparity remain unresolved pending incident-level police records, DA Action extracts, court compiled data, and independent legal-sufficiency review.

## References

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