

Research Brief



Intimate Partner Violence in Idaho, 2020

December 2021

KEY FINDINGS

5-Year Victimization Trend

9%

Decrease in rate of intimate partner violence victims known to law enforcement

36%

Increase in number of intimate partner violence victims who received grant-funded services

Victim Service Agency Needs

- Resources for staff retention and training
- Resources for combatting COVID-19
- Housing/shelter for victims

According to data collected from state and local law enforcement agencies, the rate of intimate partner violence (IPV) victimization has remained fairly stable over the last five years. However, agencies that provide services to IPV victims have been warning that victimization is actually increasing. This research brief examines recent trends in IPV victimization, as well as the needs of non-profit agencies that provide services to IPV victims.

Measures of Victimization

Idaho Incident-Based Reporting System

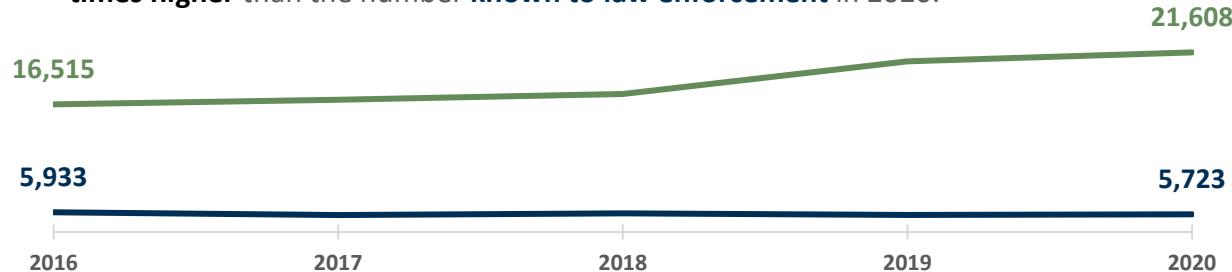
State and local law enforcement agencies report data on criminal incidents to the Idaho Incident-Based Reporting System (IIBRS), housed at the Idaho State Police. In 2020, 5,723 victims of IPV were known to law enforcement, a 4% decrease since 2016. The victimization rate was 3.21 victims per 1,000 Idaho residents, down 9% from 2016. IPV victims accounted for 32% of all victims of crimes against persons in 2020. See Figure 2 for more county-level victimization rate information.

Grant-Funded Victim Services

The State of Idaho manages multiple federal grant programs that provide funding to agencies serving victims of crime. These programs include the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Victim Assistance, STOP Violence Against Women Act (STOP VAWA), and Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP) federal grants. In 2020, these funds enabled victim service providers to serve 21,608 IPV victims, up 36% from 2016. In 2020, the number of IPV victims who accessed services via programs funded with federal dollars was 3.8 times higher than the number of IPV victims known to law enforcement (up from 2.8 times higher in 2016).

Figure 1.

The number of IPV victims who **received grant-funded services** was **3.8 times higher** than the number **known to law enforcement** in 2020.



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Historically Underserved Populations

Hispanic/Latino Victims

Individuals who identify as Hispanic/Latino were victimized at higher rates than the general population in 2020, according to IIBRS data. The rate of sexual assault among Idaho's Hispanic/Latino population was 7.93 per 1,000 Hispanic/Latino residents, compared to 3.20 overall. While Hispanics/Latinos accounted for 13.0% of Idaho's population in 2020, they accounted for 33.3% of Idaho's IPV victims. Hispanic/Latino victims tended to be concentrated in southern Idaho, where they make up a larger share of the overall population due to their significant presence in the agricultural labor force. See Figure 3 for 2020 county-level victimization rates among Idaho's Hispanic/Latino population.

American Indian/Alaska Native Victims

Individuals who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native were victimized at higher rates than the general population in 2020, according to IIBRS data. The rate of sexual assault among Idaho's American Indian/Alaska Native population was 4.22 per 1,000 American Indian/Alaska Native residents, compared to 3.20 overall. While American Indians/Alaska Natives accounted for 1.4% of Idaho's population in 2020, they accounted for 1.9% of Idaho's IPV victims. American Indian/Alaska Native victims tended to be concentrated in counties that overlap with a reservation and in urban areas, where they make up a larger share of the overall population. See Figure 4 for 2020 county-level victimization rates among Idaho's American Indian/Alaska Native population.

Victim Service Agency Needs

Victim service agencies are regularly provided opportunities to communicate agency needs to the Planning, Grants & Research (PGR) Department of the Idaho State Police, which serves as the State Administering Agency for the STOP VAWA and SASP grants. Additionally, in 2019, the Idaho Statistical Analysis Center (ISAC; a component of PGR) surveyed victim service providers as part of a larger criminal justice system needs assessment. Three of the most commonly cited needs by victim service agencies are discussed below.

Resources for Retaining/Training Staff and Expanding Services

85% of respondents to ISAC's 2019 survey who work in victim service agencies indicated that increased pay for staff was a "moderate" or "high" need. Additionally, six agencies that receive STOP VAWA and/or SASP funding noted in their 2020 annual reports that additional funding, staff, or expanded services were a "significant area of remaining need".

"Additional and/or on-going training for our Victim Services Advocate, Patrol Officers and Detectives to recognize and respond to victims of Domestic Violence, Stalking or Sexual Assault. Training should be trauma-informed to most effectively assist victims so they can have positive, productive interactions with law enforcement. Building trust in this way allows us to better assess victims risk level and assist them in creating more effective safety plans, to include referrals to applicable Additional advocacy resources."

Resources/Strategies for Mitigating the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic

In their 2020 annual reports, nine agencies that receive STOP VAWA and/or SASP funding reported that the COVID-19 pandemic was having multiple adverse effects on their ability to reach and serve IPV victims. These impacts included a reduction in the agency's ability to conduct outreach and educational activities,

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reductions or significant changes in service provision, adverse effects on victims' mental health, and increased victim dissatisfaction with the criminal justice system due to the slowing of case processing in law enforcement agencies and the courts.

"We also saw an increase in the needs of our survivors around basic needs during the pandemic. Many of our survivors work in the hospitality industry and lost their jobs. We were able to help provide them and their families basic needs around food, shelter and supplies such as diapers. Increased awareness around the very difficult choices survivors are often left with would help in the enhanced safety of our survivors in our community."

Housing/Shelter for IPV Victims

Idaho's population growth in recent years has put a strain on all residents, and that strain is magnified for victims of IPV. 97% of respondents to ISAC's 2019 survey who work in victim service agencies said that housing/shelter for victims was a "moderate" or "high" need. STOP VAWA and SASP recipients echoed that sentiment in their 2020 annual reports. The need for housing was further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We are in a very under served community and most of our victims have seen very hard times financially this year especially. We lack in resources to offer these victims. Finding affordable housing has been a problem, jobs, and often times transportation. Finding safety and housing options for domestic violence victims has been very difficult this year."

Conclusion

Two measures of IPV victimization in Idaho are trending in opposite directions. Although law enforcement agencies seem to be seeing fewer IPV victims, demand for services is rising rapidly. More information is needed to definitively explain why this is happening, but one prominent explanation that arises from agency feedback is that the COVID-19 pandemic has severely hindered the justice system's ability to find and help those stuck in abusive relationships. This should be a focus area for both law enforcement and victim service agencies going forward. Additionally, for service agencies, other focus areas should include finding ways to increase agency capacity to handle higher caseloads, retain and train staff, provide safe housing or shelter for victims, and respond to the evolving effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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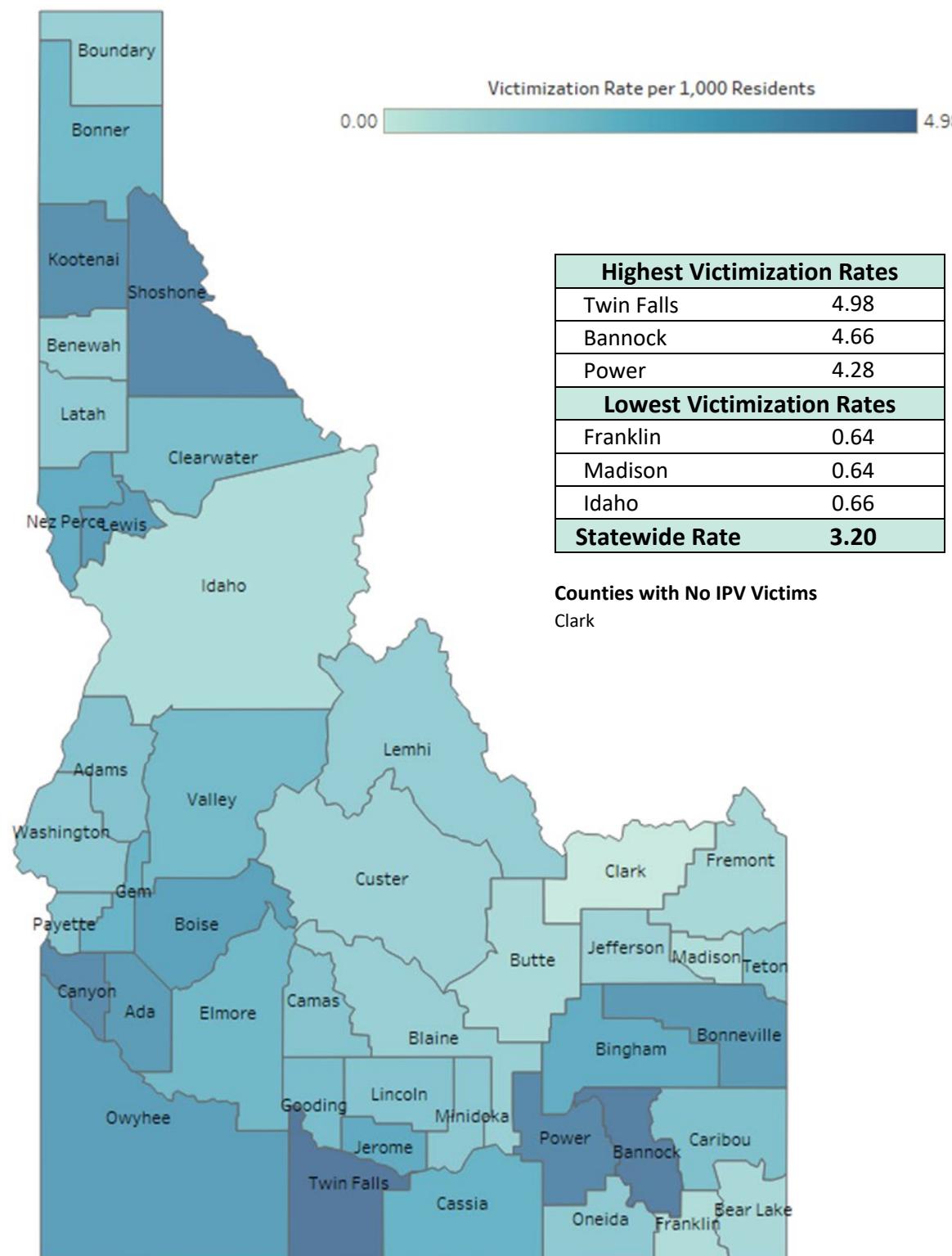
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Figure 2. Total Victims of Intimate Partner Violence, 2020



Source: Idaho Statistical Analysis Center analysis of Idaho Incident-Based Reporting System data

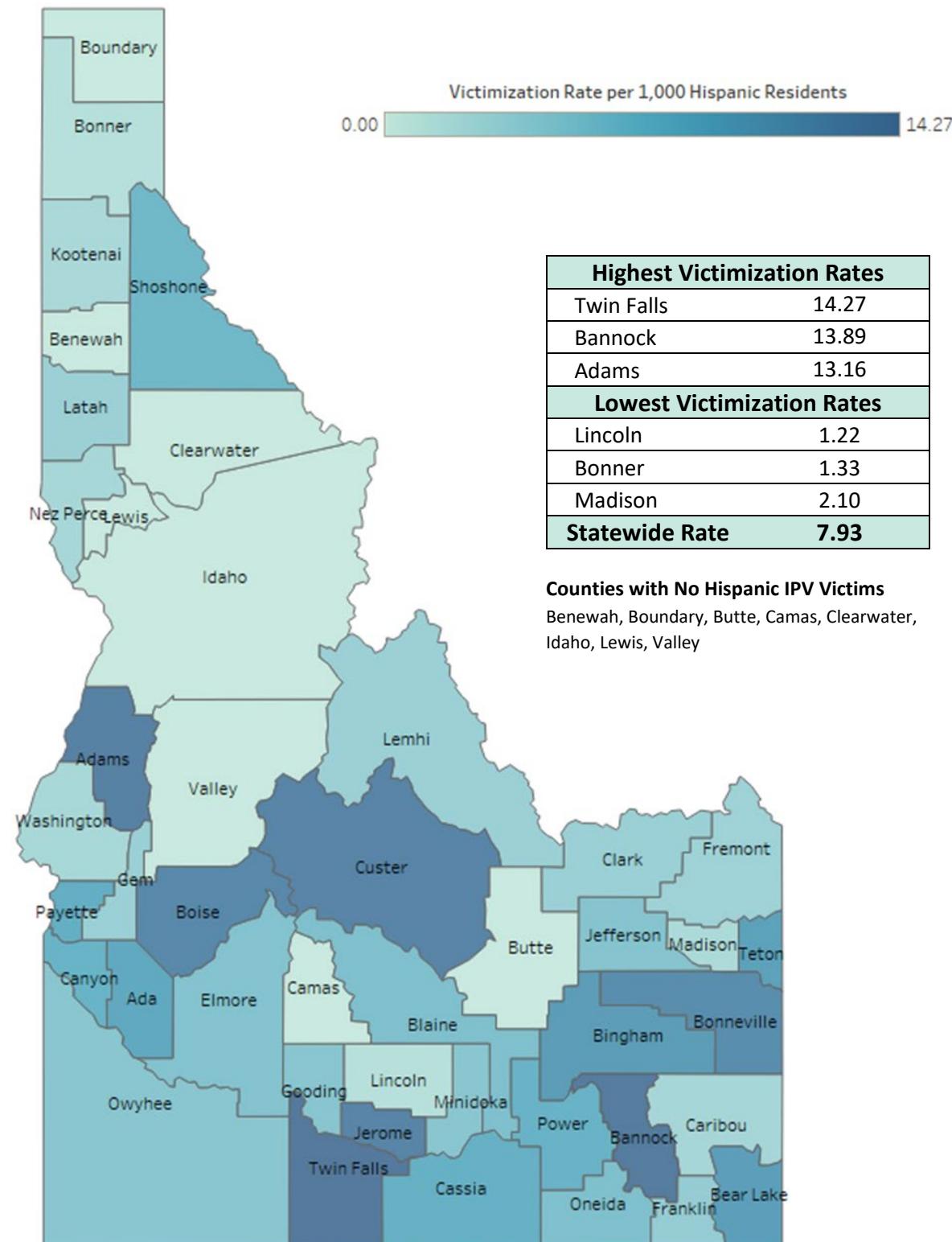
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Figure 3. Hispanic/Latino Victims of Intimate Partner Violence, 2020



Source: Idaho Statistical Analysis Center analysis of Idaho Incident-Based Reporting System data

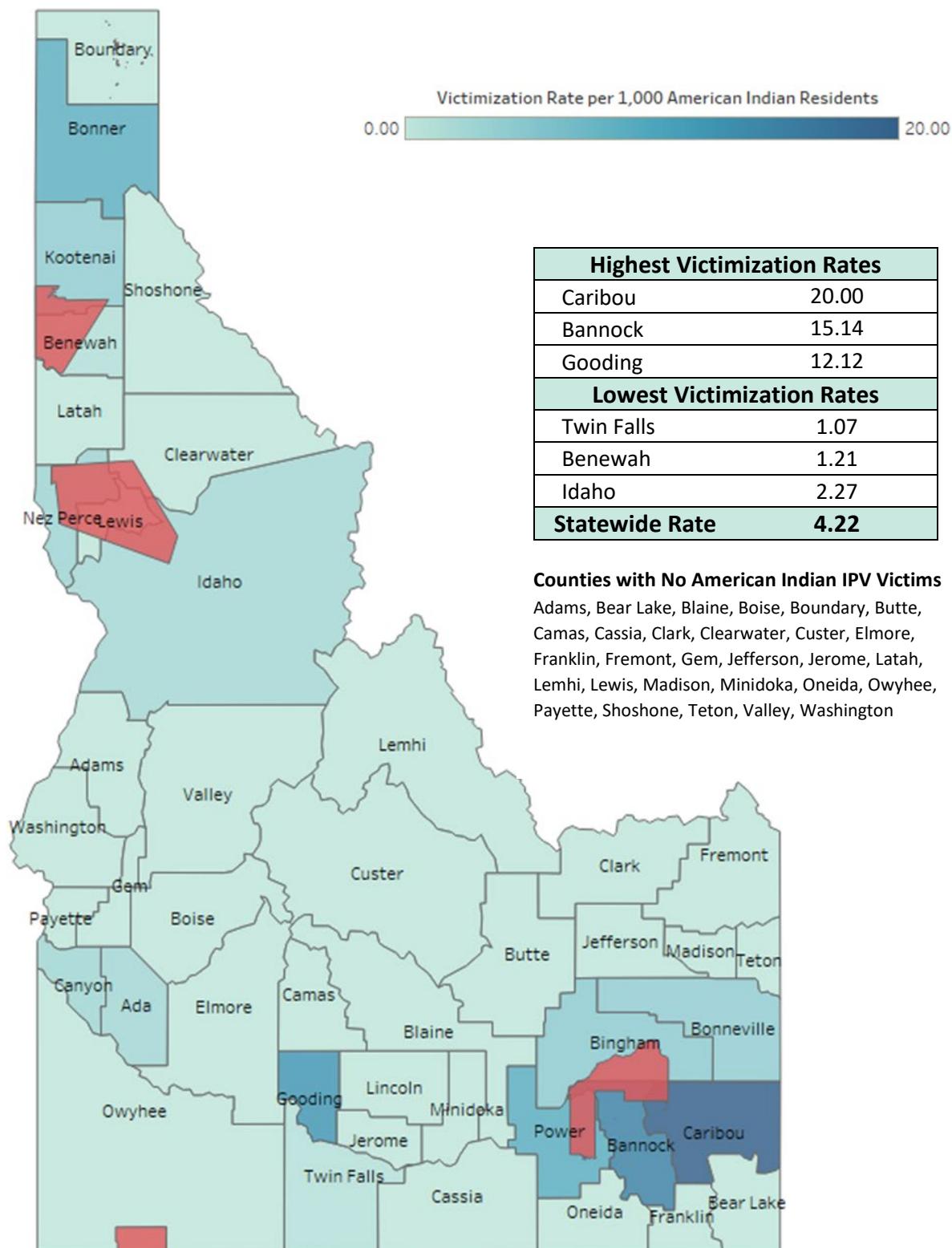
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Figure 4. American Indian Victims of Intimate Partner Violence, 2020



NOTE: Red areas indicate reservations.

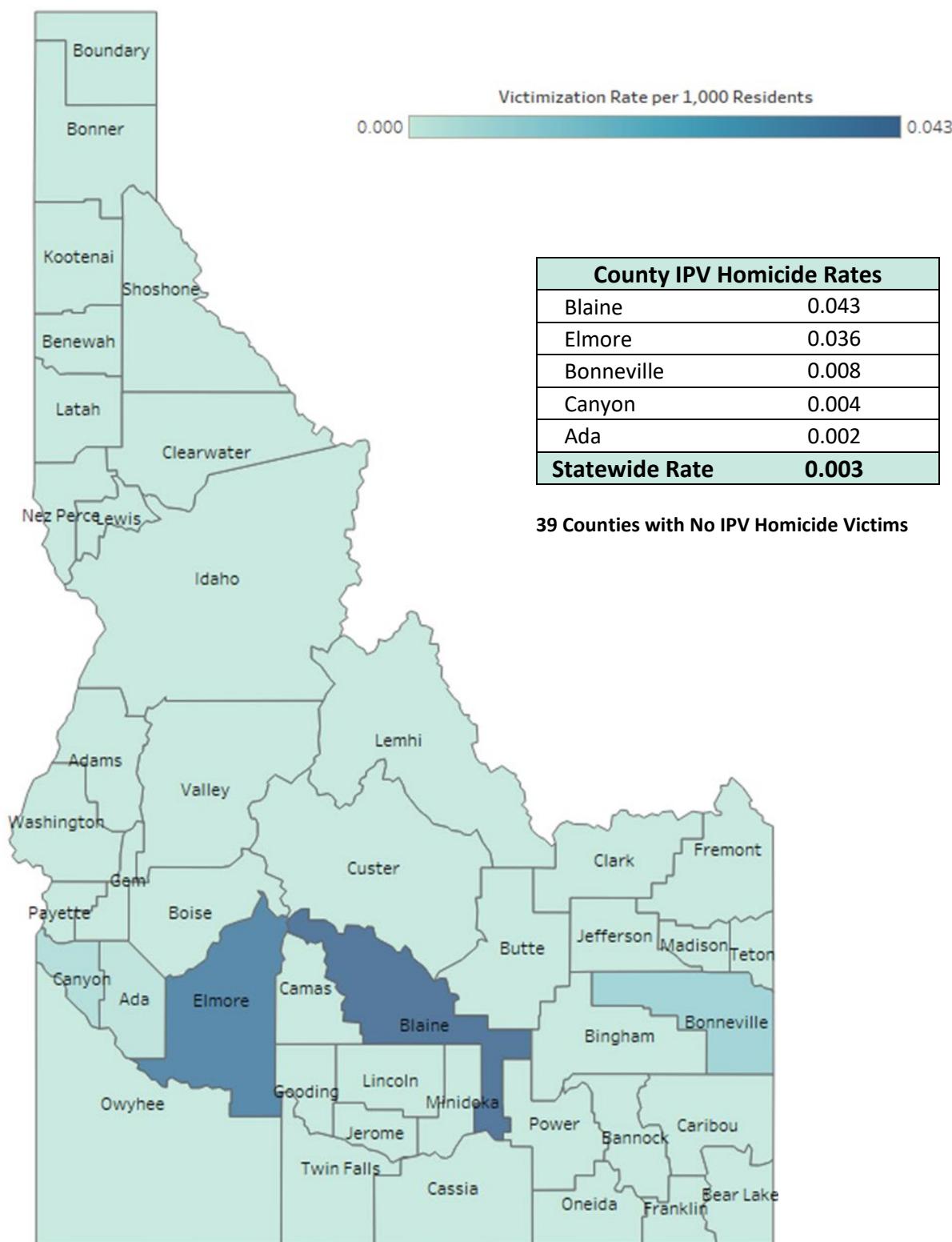
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Figure 5. Victims of Intimate Partner Homicide, 2020



Source: Idaho Statistical Analysis Center analysis of Idaho Incident-Based Reporting System data