

AZ-VDRS Stakeholder Survey Summary Report, 2023

Arizona Violent Death Reporting System

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By the

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Introduction

The Arizona Violent Death Reporting System (AZ-VDRS) is meant to provide data to state and local violence prevention practitioners to help guide prevention programs, policies, and practices. However, the number of individuals who use the AZ-VDRS database was previously unknown. The purpose of this report is to understand the awareness and use of the AZ-VDRS resources through a quantitative online survey that was distributed to stakeholders and outside organizations (n=19). Respondents (n=15) included administrators, law enforcement officials, researchers, and other community partners. Current stakeholder awareness and AZ-VDRS use were assessed. The survey evaluated AZ-VDRS resources, including annual reports, fact sheets, special topic reports, the website, and the data request process. Analysis shows that stakeholders and community members were most aware of the website and least knowledgeable regarding fact sheets, special topics, and data requests. The most common reason for not using the AZ-VDRS resources was because of lack of awareness, which suggests the need for improved data dissemination methods. By understanding the levels of awareness and usage of the AZ-VDRS, steps can be taken to improve in terms of developing efficient data-driven programming.

Methods

Two sources informed the final quantitative survey: (1) survey questions were obtained and adapted from the quantitative survey created by the NC-VDRS, and (2) guidance was provided by staff at ASU's Center for Violence Prevention and Community Safety.

Research Objectives

The quantitative survey centered on three questions:

- What is the current level of awareness of the AZ-VDRS resources?
- How do current stakeholders and outside organizations use the AZ-VDRS resources?
- What changes could be made to improve the AZ-VDRS resources?

Participants

The survey was distributed through Qualtrics to 12 key stakeholders and seven outside nonprofit organizations through email. After three weeks, individuals who had not responded to the initial email were contacted directly to encourage participation. All recipients were sent four follow-up emails. Of the 19 individuals who were contacted, 15 respondents completed the questionnaire.

Demographic variables were recorded for most of the respondents who completed the survey. Respondents were primarily identified as being 25 to 44 years old (n=6, 40.0%), White (n=11, 73.3%), and female (n=11, 73.3%) and holding a master's or doctorate degree (n=13, 86.7%). The occupations of each respondent were either self-identified or classified among the eight different categories. Most respondents identified their job type as being a director (n=7, 46.7%), with the next highest being

administration (n=2, 13.3%) and data analysis (n=2, 13.3%). Researchers, government officials, healthcare workers, and law enforcement each accounted for 6.7% of the total population. No one classified themselves as an assistant director. For the full survey results, see Table 1: *Participant-Reported Demographics*.

	n	%
Job Type		
Director	7	46.7
Assistant Director	0	0.0
Research	1	6.7
Administration	2	13.3
Government	1	6.7
Healthcare	1	6.7
Law Enforcement	1	6.7
Data Analysis	2	13.3
Education		
High school, Some college, Bachelor's	1	6.7
Master's or Doctorate	13	86.7
Unknown	1	6.7
Age		
25–44	6	40.0
45–54	5	33.3
55+	3	20.0
Unknown	1	6.7
Gender		
Female	11	73.3
Male	3	20.0
Other	0	0.0
Unknown	1	6.7
Race		
White	11	73.3
Black/African American	0	0.0
Hispanic or Latinx	0	0.0
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	6.7
Asian or Pacific Islander	3	20.0

Data Analysis

Descriptive analyses of the data were either calculated manually or conducted via Excel for the following measures:

- Participant Demographics

- Use of AZ-VDRS Resources
- Use of AZ-VDRS Resources Disaggregated by Job Title
- Purposes for Which AZ-VDRS Resources Were Used
- Reasons for Not Using AZ-VDRS Resources
- Suggested Improvements to AZ-VDRS Resources

Findings

Reported Use of AZ-VDRS Resources

Participants were asked how often they used each of the following AZ-VDRS resources: the website, annual reports, fact sheets, special topic reports, and data requests. The most popular AZ-VDRS resource that was used was the website, which was used by 60.0% (n=9) of the total population. The next most used resource was the annual reports (n=8, 53.3%). The remaining three resources were each used by 33.3% (n=5) of respondents. For the full survey results, see Table 2: *Reported Use of AZ-VDRS Resources*.

Resource	n	%
Website	9	60
Annual report	8	53.3
Fact sheet	5	33.3
Special topic report	5	33.3
Data request	5	33.3
Any resource	11	73.3

The data for the usage of AZ-VDRS resources was further disaggregated by the job type of each respondent. Sixty percent (n=9) of respondents reported using the website. By job title, 42.9% of directors (n=3), 100.0% of researchers (n=1), 100.0% of administrators (n=2), 100.0% of government workers (n=1), 100.0% of healthcare employees (n=1), and 100.0% of law enforcement officials (n=1) had used the AZ-VDRS website. The next most popular resource was the annual reports, which were used by 53.3% (n=8) of respondents, including all researchers, administrators, law enforcement personnel, and crime analysts. Additionally, 28.6% of respondents who were directors had used an AZ-VDRS annual report. The special topic reports and the data request resources were the least used by

directors (n=1, 14.3%), while the fact sheet resource was one of the most used by directors (n=3, 42.9%). For the full survey results, see Table 3: *Reported Use of AZ-VDRS Resources Disaggregated by Job Type*.

Table 3

Reported Use of AZ-VDRS Resources Disaggregated by Job Type (n=15)

	Annual Report		Fact Sheet		Special Topics		Website		Data Request	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Director (n=7)	2	28.6	3	42.9	1	14.3	3	42.9	1	14.3
Researcher (n=1)	1	100	0	0	1	100	1	100	0	0
Administration (n=2)	2	100	1	50	1	50	2	100	1	50
Government (n=1)	0	0	1	100	0	0	1	100	1	100
Healthcare (n=1)	0	0	0	0	1	100	1	100	1	100
Law enforcement (n=1)	1	100	0	0	1	100	1	100	0	0
Data analyst (n=2)	2	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	50
Total	8	53.3	5	33.3	5	33.3	9	60.0	5	33.3

Reported Purpose for Which AZ-VDRS Resources Were Used

The 11 (73.3%) respondents who reported using one or more of the AZ-VDRS resources were further asked to select from an array of answers describing the purpose(s) for which they utilized those resources. Among the nine respondents that have used the AZ-VDRS website, 66.7% (n=6) reported using the resource for work aimed at decreasing the number of violent deaths, 44.4% (n=4) for program measures and evaluations, 44.4% for other purposes (n=4), and 33.3% (n=3) for needs assessments.

Of the eight respondents that have previously used the AZ-VDRS annual reports, 75.0% (n=6) of respondents reported using it for work aimed at decreasing the number of violent deaths, 50.0% (n=4) for program measures and evaluations, 37.5% (n=3) for needs assessments, and another 37.5% (n=3) for other purposes. Of the 11 respondents, only five used fact sheets, special topic reports, and data requests. Among respondents who used the fact sheets, 80.0% (n=4) indicated using it for work aimed at decreasing the number of violent deaths, 60.0% (n=3) for a needs assessment, 40.0% (n=2) for program measures and evaluations, and 40.0% (n=2) for grant/other funding applications. Among respondents who used special topic reports and those who used data requests, 40.0% (n=2) described using these resources for needs assessments, 40.0% (n=2) for work aimed at decreasing the number of violent deaths, and 40.0% (n=2) for other purposes.

Work aimed at decreasing the number of violent deaths was the most frequently reported reason for using each AZ-VDRS resource with the exception of the special topic reports and data requests. For those two resources, this purpose was tied for most frequently cited with needs assessments and other purposes. The second most frequently reported reason for using the AZ-VDRS resources was using them

for a needs assessment, followed by other purposes and program measures and evaluations. Media requests were the least frequently reported reason for using any of the resources, accounting for just one instance for fact sheets and the website. For the full survey results, see Table 4: *Reported Purpose for Using AZ-VDRS Resources*.

Table 4

Reported Purpose for Using AZ-VDRS Resources (n=11)

Purpose of use	Annual report (n=8)		Fact sheet (n=5)		Special topic report (n=5)		Website (n=9)		Data request (n=5)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Needs assessment	3	37.5	3	60.0	2	40.0	3	33.3	2	40.0
Work aimed at decreasing the number of violent deaths	6	75.0	4	80.0	2	40.0	6	66.7	2	40.0
Program measures and evaluation	4	50.0	2	40.0	1	20.0	4	44.4	1	20.0
Grant/other funding application	1	12.5	2	40.0	0	0.0	2	22.2	1	20.0
Advocacy	1	12.5	1	20.0	0	0.0	2	22.2	0	0.0
Report/manuscript writing	2	25.0	0	0.0	1	20.0	1	11.1	0	0.0
Media request	0	0.0	1	20.0	0	0.0	1	11.1	0	0.0
Other	3	37.5	1	20.0	2	40.0	4	44.4	2	40.0

Reported Reasons for Not Using AZ-VDRS Resources

When asked to provide reasons for not using any of the resources, a majority of respondents stated that they had no knowledge of the AZ-VDRS resources, indicating low awareness of them. Of the seven respondents who had not used an annual report, 57.1% (n=4) reported that they had not heard of it. A full 90% (n=9) of respondents who reported not having used the fact sheets (n=10) stated that they did not know about the resource. Additionally, 70.0% (n=7) of those who reported not having used the special topic reports were unaware of them. The most reported reason for not using the website was uncertainty regarding whether or how the information on the website could contribute to their work (n=3; 50.0%).

The only other issues that surfaced for respondents' lack of use of the AZ-VDRS resources were related to the timeliness of data availability and the data's relevance to the respondent's work needs. For the full survey results, see Table 5: *Reported Reasons for Not Using AZ-VDRS Resources*.

Reason	Annual report	Fact sheet	Special topics	Website
	n=7 n (%)	n=10 n (%)	n=10 n (%)	n=6 n (%)
I didn't or don't know about it	4 (57.1)	9 (90.0)	7 (70.0)	2 (33.3)
I wasn't sure how it could contribute to my work	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (50.0)
I have other source(s) that I prefer using	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
I don't use data very often	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Information provided is not timely/up to date	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (10.0)	1 (16.7)
Data are not interactive	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
I don't need these data	0 (0)	1 (10.0)	1 (10.0)	0 (0)
Other	3 (42.9)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)

Suggested Improvements to AZ-VDRS Resources

For the annual reports, fact sheets, special topic reports, and website, respondents were asked to suggest improvements that should be made for each resource. Common responses for the fact sheets, special topic reports, and website was that the resource was fine as it was (fact sheets n=3, 37.5%; special topic n=2, 28.57%; website n=4, 21.05%). For all resources, there were indications that the appearance and the ability to interact with the resource need improvement. The annual reports had the greatest number of suggestions for improvement. Among the eight respondents, 37.5% (n=3) suggested updating the information more frequently, and 37.5% (n=3) suggested other improvements such as making them easy to export and being able to interact with the data to combine fields and look at cross samples.

Across all of the AZ-VDRS resources, respondents suggested improving the appearance of the resource and increasing the ability to interact with it. For all resources, no respondents requested less frequent distribution, provision of different content, or provision of less content. For the full survey results, see Table 6: *Suggested Improvements to AZ-VDRS Resources*.

Table 6

Suggested Improvements to AZ-VDRS Resources

Suggested Improvement	Annual report n=8		Fact sheet n=5		Special topic report n=5		Website n=9	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Formatting	1	12.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	11.1
Appearance	2	25.0	1	20.0	1	20.0	2	22.2
Organization	1	12.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	11.1
More visual representations of data	2	25.0	0	0.0	1	20.0	1	11.1
More key/summary points	2	25.0	0	0.0	2	40.0	3	33.3
More frequent distribution	1	12.5	1	20.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Less frequent distribution	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Update information more frequently	3	37.5	1	20.0	0	0.0	3	33.3
Increase ability to interact with it	2	25.0	2	40.0	1	20.0	2	22.2
Different content	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Less content	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
More content	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	11.1
Other	3	37.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	11.1
Resource is fine as it is	2	25.0	3	60.0	2	40.0	4	44.4

Reported Ease of Use

On average, 75.1% of respondents who used any of the AZ-VDRS resources reported that they were easy or extremely easy to use. On average, 24.9% of respondents who used AZ-VDRS resources reported that they were neither easy nor difficult to use.

Conclusion

Awareness of the AZ-VDRS was below the expected level. Although more than half of the respondents had used either the website or the annual reports, less than 35% had used any of the fact sheets or special topic reports or submitted custom data requests. It is important to consider that 12 of the respondents were key stakeholders who already knew about some of the AZ-VDRS resources. Of the seven respondents who were associated with non-profit organizations, two had used an AZ-VDRS resource. It should also be noted that during the COVID-19 pandemic, there were few opportunities to spread awareness of the AZ-VDRS resources.

A high number of respondents stated that the AZ-VDRS resources were either easy to use or neither easy nor difficult to use. Therefore, the lack of use of AZ-VDRS resources does not arise from the

difficulty of the resources themselves but, rather, a lack of awareness of those resources. Additionally, 75% of the respondents who had used the AZ-VDRS annual reports, 60% of the respondents who had used the special topic reports, and 56% of the respondents who had used the AZ-VDRS website suggested making improvements. The most commonly suggested improvement for both the website and the annual reports was to update the information more frequently as well as to provide more key/summary points on both resources. Overall, respondents suggested improving the appearance of resources and finding methods to increase the ability to interact with each resource.

There were several limitations to the methodology employed for the present study. The sample size (n=15) was small. Thus, it may be difficult to extrapolate the data with individuals who may use any of the AZ-VDRS resources in the future. Disaggregating responses by job type showed that there was an overrepresentation of those who held a director position and limited representation of other job categories. Therefore, some findings may not be representative of the overall users experience for individuals in a particular field of work. Emails were distributed to individuals who were directly involved with using the AZ-VDRS resources as well as a variety of nonprofit agencies. The nonprofit organizations may have not heard of or used any of the AZ-VDRS resources. Thus, it cannot be concluded for certain that there are no respondents who are simply uninterested in or have never used the AZ-VDRS resources. Therefore, the sample may not be representative of all AZ-VDRS stakeholders.

In conclusion, resource awareness was relatively low, as expected, due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Improvements could be made to both the AZ-VDRS annual reports and the website by updating the information more frequently and adding more summary points. Overall improvements to the resources include updating their appearance and making them more interactive. However, because few source users reported using the other AZ-VDRS resources and the majority of users indicated that they had not heard of a given resource, it is assumed that low utilization of AZ-VDRS resources is also a result of a lack of awareness. Thus, recommendations based on the results presented in this report include not only to summarize and update the information in the resources more frequently but also to make specific improvements to AZ-VDRS data dissemination methods to increase awareness.