



# Policy Platform

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The Network  
ADVOCATING AGAINST  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

# Policy Platform

## The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence

### **Introduction**

The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence, is a collaborative, membership-based organization created to end domestic violence and the underlying oppression that sustains it. Active since 1980, the Network educates, organizes, and advocates on behalf of domestic violence victims, survivors, and service providers in the Cook County area.

The Network, in collaboration with membership, has created a policy platform to inform the decision making of the organization and guide elected and appointed community leaders in creating policies and programs that prioritize victims and survivors of domestic violence.

# We Are For Survivor Centered Services

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Services funded through State directed domestic violence funding or Federal VOCA and VAWA pass through funding should be utilized for individuals who are currently victims of domestic violence and evidence-based strategies to prevent domestic violence.

Funding of services should prioritize providers that are culturally competent to the communities they serve and trauma-informed.

Funding should adequately meet the needs of victims and providers in Cook County. The Network will advocate for increased funding for services to meet the emerging and ongoing needs of victims.

# We Are For All Survivors

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The Network believes all victims and survivors deserve access to services and justice, regardless of documentation status. The Network advocates for and supports laws and policies that protect immigrant victims of domestic violence.

Services provided to domestic violence victims and survivors should be inclusive of all genders and relationships. Staff should be trained and competent in inclusive service delivery.

Services provided to domestic violence victims and survivors should be fully accessible to survivors of all abilities. Staff should be trained and competent in inclusive service delivery.

The Network supports all victims and survivors of domestic violence equally, regardless of age or status in a family. The Network supports and promotes the understanding of the impact of domestic violence on children and child development. The Network advocates for and supports laws, policies, services and practices that include and support children who witness and/or experience domestic violence.

In addition, the Network recognizes the increased isolation of individuals in later life and the risk of domestic violence experienced by individuals as they age. The Network advocates for and supports laws, policies, services and practices that are inclusive and available to those in later life.

# We Are For Empowerment And Choice

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The Network believes all victims and survivors have the right to make their own healthcare decisions. We advocate for and support laws and policies that support a person's right to access reproductive health care. Staff working with victims and survivors should be trained on the impact of reproductive coercion.

The Network believes survivors should be able to afford to flee a violent and abusive relationship. We advocate for and support laws and policies that support a survivor's economic independence, such as a living wage, affordable housing, and accessible child care.

# We Are For Safety

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The Network believes the legal system should protect victims and survivors from the crime of domestic violence and seek justice on their behalf. The Network advocates for and supports laws and policies that include the victim's input in risk assessment, prosecution, release decisions, and other legal proceedings.

The Network recognizes that criminal prosecution is not something that is sought by all victims. The Network supports victims who choose to seek protection in the civil court system, primarily but not exclusively through orders of protection and/or family law proceedings. The Network advocates for and supports laws and policies that recognize how domestic violence impacts families and support survivors and their children after separation.

The Network believes that all judges who regularly encounter victims of domestic violence should receive training on domestic violence and how it impacts victims and their families.

The Network recognizes that not all victims feel safe utilizing the legal system. Where appropriate, the victim's views and feelings regarding declining to participate in any legal proceeding should be considered in the decision making process.

The Network advocates for funding for programs that provide victims and survivors access to safety and independence. We recognize that the criminal justice system cannot be the only avenue for victims and survivors to move to safety. The Network understands that the criminal justice system continues to disproportionately harm communities of color and advocates for policy and legal reforms that protect victims and survivors, without exacerbating the racial inequities within the justice system or contributing to mass incarceration.

Victims or survivors who are forced to physically defend themselves from domestic violence should not be charged with a crime. The Network will advocate on behalf of survivors charged with a crime while acting in self defense.

The Network recognizes and promotes the understanding of the connection between gun violence and domestic violence. Individuals who use violence or who have domestic violence orders of protection against them should not have access to a firearm, and should have their firearms and firearm licenses removed. The Network advocates for and supports laws and policies that keep victims and survivors safe from gun violence.

# We Are For Addressing The Needs Of Abusers

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Batterer intervention services should be fully funded through criminal justice funding designated to reduce the prison population and increase restorative justice programs. Batterer intervention services funded by the State should target the specific needs and experiences of those who perpetrate domestic violence. Funding for this specific population should not be provided for anger management counseling.



# We Are For Racial Justice And Equity

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The Network is anti-racist and believes organizations providing services to domestic violence victims and survivors should be anti-racist. The Network advocates for and supports laws and policies to create racial equity and reduce the harm that has been caused to communities of color, in particular the harm that has been caused to victims and survivors of color.

# We Are For the Illinois Domestic Violence Act

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The Network supports the enforcement of the Illinois Domestic Violence Act, which recognizes domestic violence as a serious crime and provides the legal definition of domestic violence. This Act also provides victims and survivors with the ability to have confidential, protected relationships with a domestic violence counselor and/or advocate. The Network supports the requirement that all domestic violence counselors and advocates be trained according to the Act and would advocate that training and education on the Act be expanded to all legal personnel working with or making decisions affecting victims and survivors of domestic violence. Any changes made to the Act must be done in consultation with domestic violence advocates.

# 2019-2020 Advocacy Priorities

## **Legislative & Municipal Advocacy**

*A review of the statewide provision of orders of protection 24 hours per day, 7 days per week in coordination with ICADV.*

*Tracking and rapid response to legislation that impacts survivors in Cook County.*

*Advising on the drafting of legislation impacting survivors*

## **Judicial Advocacy**

*Coordinating case submission to the Appeals Project*

*Media Advocacy*

## **Enforcement of Victims' Rights Laws**

## **Review of Subpoenas Received by Providers and the Compliance with IDVA**

For more information, visit our website at <https://the-network.org>



# The Network

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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The Network is a collaborative membership organization dedicated to improving the lives of those impacted by domestic violence through education, public policy and advocacy, and the connection of community members to direct service providers.

[www.the-network.org](http://www.the-network.org)