



## 2021 POLICY & ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

### LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

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#### STATE

##### *Repeal or amend HB 2309 Order of Protection or No Contact Order Availability*

When a petition for an emergency order of protection, emergency stalking no contact order, or a civil no contact order is filed or granted, it is no longer publicly available until service on the respondent. HB 2309 has limited the ability of court professionals and advocates to access documentation needed to provide specific support for survivors seeking legal remedies. The law creates challenges for departments relying on documented proof of a civil order to determine critical outcomes including decisions about child safety.

##### *Ensuring Success in Schools Law (ESSL)*

ESSL works to support elementary and secondary students who are survivors of gender-based violence. Under ESSL, at least one staffer in each school would be trained to respond to disclosures of GBV or harassment. Schools would be required to implement confidentiality procedures for students to disclose their experiences as well as grievance procedures if student accommodations are denied. The bill also clarifies what proofs are required in order to minimize retraumatization and limit the number of times child survivors are questioned.

##### *Criminal System Reform Legislation*

The Network supports relevant legislation to reform the criminal and legal systems that prioritizes the safety of survivors without increasing police presence or financial investment in law enforcement interventions. This includes legislation helping to build equitable accountability systems and practices that facilitate restoration and healing within families and communities. The Network supports the Pretrial Fairness Act which ends the use of money bond so that pretrial release is no longer determined by one's access to wealth.

##### *The Real Education for Healthy Youth Act (REACH Act)*

REACH Act provides students with comprehensive sex education programming that promotes lifelong sexual health and healthy relationships. Evidence-based curriculum provides students information about the prevention of unintended pregnancy, STIs, dating violence, and sexual assault, helping to create a culture of consent and promote the development of healthy relationships. Programs cover a broad range of topics including gender roles, gender stereotyping, and socio-cultural influences surrounding sex and sexuality.

#### FEDERAL

##### *Legislation to sustain Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding*

Recent declining deposits into VOCA's non-taxpayer funding source (Crime Victims Fund) threatens to reduce vital funding for many survivor service organizations. Amending the law to deposit penalties and fines from non-prosecution and deferred prosecution settlements into this fund would help prevent a reduction in the amount allocated to states for these services.

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#### *Budget Advocacy*

##### City of Chicago

Survivor services rely on continuously increased levels of funding to support survivors of gender-based violence. Yet, frequent capacity and resource limitations force these providers to turn away those in need. The Network advocates for the prioritization of gender-based violence service provision and requests a designated line item in the City's budget to secure vital funding support for existing gender-based violence prevention and intervention programming. In 2020 the Network requested \$35 million be reallocated from CPD to gender-based violence services and will continue to push for this redistribution in 2021. This redistribution would allow service providers to assist in reaching more survivors and addressing the high call volume CPD receives for domestic violence incidents.

##### Cook County

The Network plans to expand city level advocacy efforts to Cook County. County-based budget advocacy will target similar concerns but focus on a broader geographic area while working with different stakeholders. Many Network members serve areas outside of City limits and face similar issues of capacity and resource limitations. The Network will seek funding sources for these service providers to reach survivors throughout the County.

##### State of Illinois

State general revenue funding has been stagnant for several years while the need for services and associated costs continue to rise. This funding is key in providing vital services to survivors without the restrictions of federal funding. There have been recent increases, but this funding still falls below 2009 levels. In the coming year, funding for gender-based services stands to be at risk of significant cuts in the State budget, with State and Local governments unlikely to receive assistance from the Federal government. The Network will continue to push to avoid cuts and advocate for increased funding to meet the high need for services throughout the state.

The Network advocates for flexible funding that supports practical, survivor-based approaches that help to build better system responses to problems. Some of the possible innovative uses of funding are outlined in The Network's Meeting the Needs of Survivors report.

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#### *Criminalized Survivors*

In some instances, survivors seeking police intervention are arrested and forced into the criminal and legal systems by the police officers who responded to the call. Many survivors are charged with crimes related to the abuse--as a result of physically defending themselves or engaging in criminalized activities in response to the trauma they have experienced. In fact, research indicates the majority of female-identifying people experiencing incarceration have also experienced sexual violence or intimate partner violence at some point in their lives. In particular, women of color, transgender and gender nonconforming individuals, as well as many others who deviate from racialized gender norms are criminalized at a disproportionate rate. The Network advocates for advocacy, research, programming, and support for survivors who are charged with crimes.

#### *Expanding Non-Carceral Services*

The Network supports the development of alternative responses to gender-based violence for survivors who do not use law enforcement. Many survivor services rely on law enforcement as the primary intervention response to interpersonal violence. However, police involvement can also escalate and exacerbate these situations. Despite efforts to reform this system, law enforcement interventions can place survivors at a greater risk for harm while also perpetuating structural inequalities that limit future support. Given survivors' underutilization of these traditional systems, support for the development of alternatives to the police would help expand what supportive options are available to all survivors.

The gender-based violence community can explore alternatives to the police by supporting service provision models that do not rely on law enforcement. Uplifting and investing in the capacity and sustainability of community-based intervention and prevention efforts that center the needs of individuals, families, and communities is crucial for building this alternative infrastructure. The Network also supports the collaboration of cross-sector working groups to foster model programs that prioritize the safety needs of survivors while working to interrupt the cycle of violence. Trauma-informed and culturally responsive models allow for more impactful support to individuals affected by interpersonal violence.

#### *Cook County/Chicago Legal System Advocacy*

Many survivors still rely on the legal system. The Network will work to address issues within this system to improve services for survivors who utilize these services. The Network will work with court advocates and court professionals to address issues related to court access and judicial challenges. This work will include judicial advocacy on access to civil orders of protection and remote access to the court, prosecutorial advocacy, and the implementation of criminal justice reform bills.

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