Measuring Safety

Gender-Based Violence in Illinois

DATA REPORT 2022
Executive Summary
THANK YOU

Thank you to The Network’s team members, including but not limited to our interns Marissa Martinez, Madalynn Lagatuz, and Grace Hague, for their diligent work in collecting, analyzing, and writing about the data in this report.

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Finally, thank you to the many survivors who took the time to speak to The Network about their experiences for this report. Without their voices, these statistics would fail to tell us the full story of survivorship in Illinois. For their safety, they remain anonymous.
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Annually, The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence (The Network) publishes this report to assess the documented instances of gender-based violence and responding service providers in Illinois. The Network gathers experiences from survivors and gender-based violence service providers to depict both a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the types of challenges and safety nets survivors encounter through their experiences.

The goal of each annual report is to learn from survivors and providers about the nature of violence, the gaps in services and systems, and the steps needed to repair harm as well as prevent further violence.

This report analyzes survivors’ interactions with key systems across the state, highlighting areas where they need improvement to effectively support survivors. However, the primary focus of the Measuring Safety 2022 data report is to provide a blueprint for public and private stakeholders to invest in services, programs, policies, and systems change that increase safety for survivors.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Increasing Lethal Violence Demands Non-Police Alternatives

A snapshot of Chicago Police Department data shows domestic violence related homicides and homicides involving firearms have increased in the last three years. This increase in lethality disproportionately affects communities of color. Contacts to Chicago Police Department related to domestic violence continue on a downward trend, reflecting an 12% decrease in 2022 compared to 2020, even as contacts and referrals to the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline increase. Together, this suggests that non-police response systems are needed to intervene for survivors who do not feel police are the right tool to meet their needs.

Growing Contacts to the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline Outside of Chicago

Calls to the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline continue to increase. In 2022, there was a 15% increase in contact from 2021 and a 50% increase in contact compared to 2019. Contacts continue to grow from outside of Chicago and Cook county demonstrating an increasing awareness of the Hotline across the state.
Housing and Financial Independence are Top Survivor Needs
Survivor needs continue to be centered around housing and financial independence. Shelter requests composed 34% of all calls to the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline, continuing to be the highest need for three years in a row. Contacts requesting financial assistance increased by 475% in 2022 compared to 2021 totals, likely due to several factors, including the reduction of COVID-19 related financial support systems like extended unemployment benefits.

Legal Advocacy and Counseling Services Widely Provided
Legal advocacy and counseling client cases outpace all other client services in 2022. The constant need for mental health support and services is also reflected in the 74% increase in calls to the Hotline requesting group counseling services, underscoring both the limited capacity of individual counseling but also the desire for mental health services.

Housing Accessibility for Survivors
Federal and local regulations related to housing, including Crime Free Ordinances, continue to layer the challenges survivors experience and the systems which they are required to navigate when depending on publicly funded housing options.

Improving Data Collection and Accessibility Practices
Data can make barriers to survivor safety visible or invisible. Public entities like the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts can support systemic improvements by making order of protection filing data publicly available. Gender-based violence service providers would benefit from expanding data collection on growing issues like the presence of firearms in client cases.
General Recommendations
Gender based violence service providers have also reported recruitment challenges due in part to budget restraints but also workforce availability. These challenges further threaten their ability to keep up with the increased demand for services our data reflects survivors are incredibly reliant on. Stabilizing the workforce for gender based violence service providers is essential to survivor safety.

While data is not publicly available on the number of survivors who return to the field to work as staff, this is known anecdotally amongst the community as many survivors return to work in the gender-based violence services as a method of healing from their survivorship and serving others.

PipeLine Programs to Direct Service & Workforce Capacity Building

While service provider budget restraints directly impact survivors, they also affect the workforce that provides these essential direct services. In 2022, The Network commissioned a compensation report by collecting salary and benefits data from member organizations.

This report concluded key takeaways that underscore the importance of offering direct service provider employees market rate salaries and benefits to increase the workforce and remain competitive in the job market:

- 34% of all positions by direct service providers require bilingual staff
- Direct service staff including advocates and case managers manage the daily casework for survivors, with salaries ranging from $24,960 to $61,200 annually
- The need for other benefits outside of competitive salaries includes increased paid time off, paid medical benefits including mental health services to address vicarious trauma and flexible schedules
Increasing the competitiveness of these positions in the job market is vital to address workforce needs; however, expanding the pipeline to the gender-based violence field as a career is also required. This includes ensuring all stakeholders, such as service providers, community leaders, elected officials, educators, and training programs promote these career opportunities in educational programs as well as in job training and workforce development programs focused on client services. High need areas, in particular, such as therapy and counseling and case management should be emphasized.

**Providing a clear pathway from training to gender-based violence services is pivotal to addressing workforce concerns systemically.**

**PRIORITIZE NON-CARCERAL SOLUTIONS**

As has been discussed in previous sections of this report, there are vast areas of needed improvement to the current carceral systems and criminal legal system as it relates to survivors and specifically, criminalized survivors. Our current carceral system and criminal legal systems do not provide systemic solutions to address the cycle of violence and provide restorative and rehabilitative alternatives for the individuals who have been harmed and have caused harm.

The Network promotes the establishment and expansion of non-carceral solutions that allow for families to stay intact and offer community-based wrap-around services. While current community-based and corresponsive models to address gender-based violence and community violence are still being built up and expanded on, it is important to continue to lean on these models to promote them to stakeholders across all sectors.

Addressing the root causes of systemic violence is also a fundamental part of prioritizing non-carceral solutions.

**As gender-based service providers, emphasizing and expanding programs such as prevention education, teen dating violence, counseling and therapy services, and partner abuse intervention programs are essential.**
IMPROVE DATA COLLECTION

Data collection from gender-based service providers should continue to be expanded and improved upon. While the vast majority of providers use Infonet as a data collection platform, The Network encourages providers to collect information even on non-essential or required categories. Providers that do not participate in the use of a platform for data collection should explore options such as Infonet to capture and report on client services and programs.

This data collection serves as the foundation of advocacy and systemic change when providers are able to easily identify and recognize survivor needs in both a quantitative and qualitative manner.

Data accessibility from external stakeholders is an area of vast opportunity for improvement. Data reporting on survivorship and survivor needs are rarely collected when optional and are increasingly difficult to access. Although, much of the data included in this report was obtained through Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, some of the most crucial entities that collect data on survivors and their needs, especially the court system, are not subject to FOIA. This includes the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts (AOIC). Orders of protection are specifically designed to be comprehensive of survivor needs as they pursue the criminal legal system; however, there is no publicly available data reflecting which remedies survivors are requesting and which of those are being granted in the process. Standardizing data collection is also an area of opportunity to ensure public entities such as law enforcement and emergency call centers are using standardized definitions and reporting methods to track requests related to domestic violence and sexual violence. While databases use data tracking methods such as UCR codes for law enforcement, the use of these platforms is largely optional, making large scale data collection and analysis cumbersome and inaccessible.