

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF CHICAGO

Domestic violence is pervasive. Approximately 1 in 3 women have experienced physical violence by an intimate partner in the United States.<sup>1</sup> It is estimated that more than 2 million Illinoisans have experienced domestic violence in their lifetime.<sup>2</sup> Domestic violence impacts individuals and communities throughout Chicago. A comprehensive assessment of the domestic violence response system, however, has not been conducted in Chicago since 2007.<sup>3</sup> In light of changes in service capacity and practice over the past decade, as well as the protracted state budget crisis, a needs assessment serves to document the existing domestic violence response system and highlight gaps that need to be filled. To this end, Crown Family Philanthropies, Polk Bros. Foundation, and Michael Reese Health Trust came together and hired Heartland Alliance's Social IMPACT Research Center (IMPACT) to conduct a domestic violence needs assessment. To identify the scale of need for domestic violence services in Chicago, IMPACT partnered with local researchers and service providers to access, analyze, and present secondary data. The study also includes primary data collection and analysis to illustrate prevalence, survivor experience, service capacity, and outstanding needs.



### *What is the scale of the problem?*

In 2016, **Chicago police responded to 46,301 reported incidents of domestic violence**; a rate of 1,704 domestic incidents per 100,000 Chicagoans.<sup>4</sup> On average, Chicago police responded to 127 incidents and made 23 domestic-related arrests per day in 2016.<sup>5</sup>



### *Where is violence happening?*

Domestic violence incidents occurred in every community area of Chicago; domestic violence crime rates by community area ranged from 0.2% to 6.0%.<sup>6</sup> However, survivors have disparate access to services. In fact, **communities with some of the highest rates of domestic violence have the least physical access to services in Chicago.** Importantly, communities with high rates of domestic violence are some of the same communities experiencing high rates of community violence and poverty.<sup>7</sup>

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### *Who is impacted?*

**Women and their children are, overwhelmingly, the recipients of domestic violence services in Chicago.** In 2016, 10,194 individuals, including more than 1,000 children, received domestic violence services.<sup>8</sup> Survivors were most likely to be women (96.4%), between the ages of 30 and 64, and either single (47.0%) or married (42.4%).<sup>9</sup> Individuals accessing domestic violence services in 2016 were diverse; 50.4% of survivors were white and 42.0% were black, and 43.9% of all survivors receiving services were Latino in 2016.<sup>10</sup> In 2016, 93.1% of survivors had dependents.<sup>11</sup> **Data indicate that survivors of domestic violence have significant financial barriers to reaching safety and stability.** In 2016, 43.8% of domestic violence survivors reported a monthly income of \$500 or less, and 30.8% reported no financial resources.<sup>12</sup>



### *What is the service response?*

Existing domestic violence service providers offer a wide-range of services to survivors of domestic violence. While the unique needs of survivors may vary, there are trends in service requests and utilization. In total, there were 26,389 calls from Chicago to the domestic violence Hotline, a 24/7 resource connecting Illinoisans to needed services. More than half of the calls were from survivors themselves.<sup>13</sup> **Hotline callers most commonly requested information, domestic violence shelter, or were linked to other support services.**<sup>14</sup> In 2016, 28.1% of domestic violence Hotline calls in Chicago requested information, and 25.2% requested domestic violence shelter.<sup>15</sup> These services are offered in multiple languages; in 2016, the Hotline provided services in 32 languages.<sup>16</sup>

Eighteen organizations provide most of the domestic violence supports available in Chicago. **In total, survivors received 149,864 hours of direct services in 162,022 unique service contacts in 2016.**<sup>17</sup> On an average day in 2016, 411 hours of direct services were provided by the 18 domestic violence service providers in Chicago. A total of 10,194 individuals received domestic violence services in 2016.<sup>18</sup> In addition to direct services, domestic violence service providers deliver advocacy, education, and training to a variety of community and institutional actors.<sup>19</sup>

**There is a network of strong providers offering services to survivors of domestic violence in Chicago, and, overwhelmingly, providers report working together to meet the diverse needs of survivors.** The service providers surveyed for this needs assessment identified 95 unique organizations that they have strong or established partnerships with in order to meet the needs of survivors.<sup>20</sup> However, stakeholders identified the persistent need for improved and continued collaboration with systems actors, including the police, judges, and other government entities.



### **What are the service gaps?**

Despite strong networks and service provision, there remain significant gaps in services for survivors of domestic violence. A reinvestment in *all* communities and services is imperative to support short- and long-term solutions and to provide needed domestic violence services. Additional research is needed to better understand the needs and barriers for survivors who do not interact with the existing domestic violence response system.

**There are insufficient resources to meet the counseling needs of survivors.** In-person counseling was the most common direct service provided to survivors of domestic violence in both 2015 and 2016.<sup>21</sup> Importantly, research suggests that counseling services are used by survivors even after they have reached immediate safety. Twenty-seven percent of service providers surveyed reported that, of the needs they could not meet, counseling was in high demand.<sup>22</sup>

**Emergency and permanent housing are pressing needs for survivors.** The demand for shelter consistently outweighs the supply in Chicago. In 2016, for every 1 person sheltered, 5 were turned away.<sup>23</sup> Nearly 5,000 individuals—2,292 adults and 2,556 children—were turned away from shelter in 2016.<sup>24</sup> However, housing needs are not limited to emergency shelter. Stakeholders identified the persistent need for affordable permanent housing options for survivors. A recent local study found that 31% of survivors had a need for permanent housing 6 months after initial service receipt.<sup>25</sup>

While legal services are commonly used by domestic violence survivors, additional outreach and support may be needed. Only a fraction of survivors that called the Hotline in 2016 had an order of protection or previously had an order of protection.<sup>26</sup> Many of these survivors receive assistance in obtaining an order of protection or with other legal needs, however additional legal needs remain. **In addition to the immediate civil and criminal legal needs reported by survivors, there are also longer-term legal needs for people experiencing domestic violence.**

**Research indicates that abusers often use tactics of economic abuse.<sup>27</sup> Financial needs related to repairing credit, building assets, or other financial needs are common for survivors.<sup>28</sup>** As illustrated in the Survivor Demographics section of this report, survivors of domestic violence in Chicago have significant economic needs. Continued support of comprehensive case management and referrals to other economic and financial services is needed for survivors to reach safety and stability.



### ***How can the response to domestic violence be strengthened?***

Domestic violence is pervasive and occurs in every community throughout Chicago. There is an active network of strong providers offering services to survivors of domestic violence in Chicago, and providers work together to meet the needs of survivors. However, there remain significant gaps in services for survivors, and funding for these critical services is at risk. Different players within the response system should use the included findings and recommendations to guide relevant strategy and intervention and to promote a cohesive approach to advancing the domestic violence response system in Chicago.

In order to better meet survivors' needs and continue to strengthen the domestic violence response system, IMPACT recommends the following changes to funding, policy, and practice to bolster the domestic violence response in Chicago:

#### **Continue to fund services aimed at meeting the immediate needs of survivors, and invest in long-term solutions that address barriers to safety and stability.**

Current services are heavily used by survivors of domestic violence. These service types overwhelmingly match those requested by survivors, and appear to consistently operate at or over capacity. When an individual organization cannot meet a survivor's needs, either due to capacity or service offering, service providers rely on networks and referrals to meet the needs of survivors. The demand for existing emergency services is unrelenting. In addition to continued support of these vital services, additional support strategies should be developed in order to understand and meet the longer-term needs of survivors, e.g. support of both emergency shelter and permanent housing solutions.

#### **Support and encourage flexibility in response and service provision to allow for individualization of response to meet the wide range of supports needed to reach safety and stability.**

Funding for domestic violence services is provided by a complex web of federal, state, and foundation dollars. These funds are often restricted to specific service categories or forms of delivery. While this strategy ensures funding for important services and model fidelity, it does not allow for innovation or flexibility to meet the unique needs of survivors. Service providers reported that, at times, they have limited ability to respond to the individual needs in a way that could promote safety and stability. Funders should consider supporting diverse services, flexible funds, and continued research and data collection that can help document and assess persistent needs of survivors.

**Support policies and programs that will contribute to long-term safety and stability of survivors, including policies to address poverty and the economic needs of survivors.** There are demonstrated persistent economic needs among survivors seeking services in Chicago. In 2016, 43.8% of survivors had a monthly income of \$500 or less.<sup>226</sup> The median gross rent in Chicago is \$985.<sup>227</sup> In addition to this demonstrated economic need among service recipients, economic abuse is commonly used in domestic violence, contributing to the financial needs of survivors.<sup>228</sup> The economic barriers for survivors must be addressed in order to support long-term safety and stability of survivors and their children.

**Address the systemic inequities that exist in the availability and access to domestic violence services and support.** All communities in Chicago experience domestic violence. However, not all communities are resourced in the same way to respond to this pervasive issue. In fact, some of the communities with the highest rates of domestic violence have some of the least physical access to services. Furthermore, communities with the least access are, overwhelmingly, communities of color and/or communities experiencing high rates of poverty. The inequities in access to domestic violence services must be situated within the context and history of racism, segregation, and poverty in Chicago.

**Continually assess and improve coordinating efforts among relevant stakeholders in order to ensure a cohesive response to domestic violence.** Networks of providers and systems are critically important to the domestic violence response, and these networks have continually evolved in Chicago to meet the needs of survivors. However, continual commitment and support of these networks is necessary to ensure a healthy and comprehensive response system. Renewed effort and support of ongoing assessment and education of these networks is needed. These efforts should include systems and the diverse set of service providers that ultimately meet the needs of survivors.

**The State of Illinois must adequately and consistently fund human services.** Illinois just recently passed a budget for the first time in more than two years. Despite the fact that this bill should help stabilize Illinois and ameliorate some of the most drastic consequences of operating without a budget for years, the revenue generated by this bill is simply not enough. Ongoing work is needed to rebuild the damaged infrastructure of human services in Illinois, and the state must ensure adequate revenue to pay bills in a timely manner. During the protracted budget crisis in Illinois, service providers had to tap into lines of credit, reduce services, or even close. Coupled with the state budget, the new federal administration has threatened significant cuts to domestic violence related funding. Taken together, leaders at all levels of government must raise and allocate the funds necessary to support this system.

**Support research aimed at uncovering the needs and experiences of domestic violence survivors who do not engage with traditional response systems.** Many survivors of domestic violence do not access services or are not represented in available domestic violence data for a myriad of reasons. Additional research is needed to better understand why some survivors do not engage with the formal domestic violence response system, and determine if existing services can and should adapt to meet the needs of these survivors. Research explicitly targeting survivors that are absent from these data will allow for an expanded assessment of service needs and barriers for survivors that do not engage with the traditional domestic violence response system, and contribute to general knowledge of domestic violence.

# ENDNOTES

1 Black, M.C., Basile, K.C., Breiding, M.J., Smith, S.G., Walters, M.L., Merrick, M.T., Chen, J., & Stevens, M.R. (2011). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Summary Report. Atlanta, GA: *National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*.

2 National estimates measure 5 types of intimate partner violence: sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner. Smith, S.G., Chen, J., Basile, K.C., Gilbert, L.K., Merrick, M.T., Patel, N., Walling, M., & Jain, A. (2017). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010-2012 State Report. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

3 Landis, L. (2007) *Assessment of the Current Response to Domestic Violence in Chicago*. [Available here](#).

4 These data only represent incidents that police responded to and categorized as domestic violence. This does not represent police calls. Author's analysis of *Police Crime Data Portal*, 2016.

5 *Ibid*.

6 Author's analysis of *Police Crime Data Portal*, 2016 Author's analysis of 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, *U.S. Census Fact Finder*, [available here](#).

7 Buitrago, K., Rynell, A., & Tuttle, S. (2017, March). Cycle of Risk: The Intersection of Poverty, Violence, and Trauma in Illinois. Heartland Alliance. Available at [www.heartlandalliance.org/povertyreport](http://www.heartlandalliance.org/povertyreport).

8 Author's analysis of *InfoNet Data provided by ICJIA*, 2016.

9 *Ibid*.

10 Race and ethnicity are collected separately in these data. Author's analysis of *InfoNet data provided by ICJIA*, 2016.

11 Author's analysis of *InfoNet Data provided by ICJIA*, 2016.

12 *Ibid*.

13 *Ibid*.

14 *Ibid*.

15 *Ibid*.

16 *Ibid*.

17 *Ibid*.

18 *Ibid*.

19 *Ibid*.

20 Author's analysis of *Survey of Service Providers*, Survey Administered February- March, 2017.

21 Author's analysis of *InfoNet Data provided by ICJIA*, 2015 and 2016.

22 Author's analysis of *Survey of Service Providers*, Survey Administered February- March, 2017.

23 Author's analysis of *InfoNet Data provided by ICJIA*, 2016.

24 *Ibid*.

25 Riger, S., George, C., Byrnes, B., Durst-Lee, L., & Sigurvinsdottir, R. (2016, September). *Domestic Violence Outcome Measures Project*.

26 Author's analysis of *State of Illinois Hotline Data*, 2016.

27 National Resource Center on Domestic Violence (2017). *Building Credit and Assets: Helping Survivors Recover from Economic Abuse*; [available here](#).

28 *Ibid*.