

# SERVICE PROVISION & UTILIZATION 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. In light of changes in service capacity and practice over the past decade, as well as the protracted state budget crisis, IMPACT carried out a needs assessment to document the existing domestic violence response system and highlight gaps that need to be filled. This factsheet presents one component of the needs assessment and is designed to be used as a stand-alone summary of the specific topic covered. For more information please see the full report, *Connecting to Safety and Stability: Domestic Violence Needs Assessment of Chicago* available at [www.heartlandalliance.org/research](http://www.heartlandalliance.org/research).

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## SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO SERVICE PROVISION AND UTILIZATION:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Address the systemic inequities that exist in the availability and access to domestic violence services and support.
5. Support research aimed at uncovering the needs and experiences of domestic violence survivors who do not engage with traditional response systems.

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For additional information, please see the full report, [\*Connecting to Safety and Stability: Domestic Violence Needs Assessment of Chicago\*](#). This project was made possible with the generous support of Crown Family Philanthropies, Polk Bros. Foundation, and Michael Reese Health Trust.

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# DATA AND DEFINITIONS: SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Understanding the scope and prevalence of domestic violence and domestic violence services is complex. In addition to the varying definitions of domestic violence, data capturing experiences of domestic violence have limitations. Namely, individuals are only counted in domestic violence data if they self-identify as a survivor of domestic violence or if they interact with a system that both correctly recognizes their experience as domestic violence and then also captures these data. Notably, there are survivors who may never call the police, receive services, or otherwise be identified in any of the available datasets, and therefore will not be counted in rates of domestic violence or service utilization. Therefore, within data that count individuals who experience domestic violence, it should be assumed that *at least* that many individuals are experiencing domestic violence in Chicago.

Individuals experiencing domestic violence have a wide range of needs and, therefore, receive services from diverse organizations across the city. To this end, the research team conducted a provider scan to identify agencies that provide services to individuals experiencing domestic violence that may not be captured within existing data. The provider scan identified 107 organizations that either directly provide services to individuals experiencing domestic violence or are part of the referral network for individuals experiencing domestic violence. Organizations identified in the provider scan range from city agencies to economic support services to youth programs. In order to better understand these services and the ways they support survivors of domestic violence, all agencies identified in the scan were invited to participate in a survey. In total, 44 agencies participated in the survey, a 41% response rate.<sup>3</sup> Forty-eight percent of survey respondents identified that they primarily serve survivors of domestic violence. Other respondents most commonly served perpetrators of domestic violence, all survivors of violence, low-income individuals and families, women and girls, or offered culturally specific services. These data complement existing data on services use and needs of survivors.

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: WHAT IS THE SERVICE RESPONSE?

Services, such as counseling, case management, and legal advocacy, are available to individuals experiencing domestic violence in Chicago. InfoNet, managed by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, is a standardized database used by state-funded victim service providers in Illinois.<sup>5</sup> Sixty-seven domestic violence centers in Illinois use InfoNet, 18 of which were located in Chicago in 2016.<sup>6</sup> These 18 agencies comprise the majority of the domestic violence services offered in Chicago. While the individual needs may vary, there are trends in service requests and use for survivors of domestic violence.

## TOP SERVICE NEEDS REPORTED TO THE HOTLINE

### 2015 Top 5 Service Needs

- DV Shelter
- Information only
- Legal Advocacy for Order of Protection
- Linked to services
- Counseling and Advocacy

### 2016 Top 5 Service Needs

- Information only
- DV Shelter
- Linked to services
- Crisis call handled by VIRA
- Legal Advocacy for Order of Protection

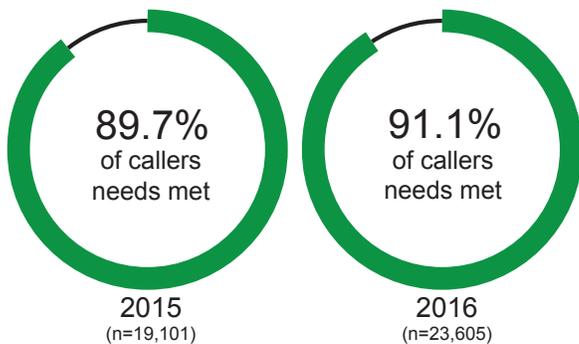
### Hotline callers request a wide range services.

Top needs requested in 2016 include information, domestic violence shelter, administrative calls, requests to be linked to services, and a crisis call handled by a Victim Information and Referral Advocate. In 2016, 28.1% of domestic violence Hotline calls in Chicago requested information and 25.2% requested domestic violence shelter.<sup>7</sup> Callers also commonly requested legal advocacy for an order of protection in 2015 and 2016 (7.6% and 6.0% respectively).<sup>8</sup>

### The Hotline overwhelmingly connects callers to services and information.

Survivors, advocates, and community members are able to connect to a number of services through the Hotline. Importantly, these data can also show where there are discrepancies in requests for services and actual service receipt. Hotline data determines that 91.1% of callers in 2016 and 89.7% of callers in 2015 had their needs met by the Hotline.<sup>9</sup> Of these, 28.1% of callers received information and 39.2% were linked to services or given a phone number (21.2% and 18.0%, respectively) for needed services in 2016.<sup>10</sup> In 2016, 4.3% of callers received crisis intervention from Hotline staff.<sup>11</sup> Only 0.4% of Hotline callers declined the referral provided by staff in 2016.<sup>12</sup>

## NEEDS MET BY HOTLINE



# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: WHAT IS THE SERVICE RESPONSE?

## NUMBER OF SURVIVORS RECEIVING SERVICES FROM DV SERVICE PROVIDERS

Direct Client Services	2015	2016
In-Person Counseling	4,997	4,541
Civil Legal Advocacy/OP	4,349	4,187
Other Advocacy	3,301	3,486
Collaborative Case Management	2,766	2,992
Telephone Counseling	2,480	2,587
Criminal Legal Advocacy/Charges	2,239	1,823
Legal Advocacy/Advocate	1,432	1,694
Legal Services/Attorney	1,748	1,670
Adult Group Counseling	1,437	1,362
Criminal Legal Advocacy/Obtain OP	1,717	1,346
IDVA Legal Services/Attorney	997	1,058
Life Skills	949	963
Economic Assistance	974	892
Individual Children's Counseling	740	694
Conflict Resolution	682	626
Housing Advocacy	602	595
Group: Children's Counseling	584	559
Transportation	587	529
Family Counseling	514	511
Evaluation/Assessment	487	500
Parental Services	336	445
Educational Assistance	424	400
Employment Assistance	414	391
Substance Abuse Services	316	381
Medical Assistance	310	358
Legal Services/Attorney Type 2	328	357
Group: IDVA Advocacy	218	296
Child Care	210	172
Individual Therapy	106	164
Art Therapy	110	125
Group Therapy	77	80
DV Court Orientation	14	7

In total, survivors received 149,864 hours of direct services in 162,022 unique service contacts in 2016.<sup>13</sup> In 2016, 10,194 individuals (adults and children) received services from 18 domestic violence organizations in the city of Chicago.<sup>14</sup> On an average day in 2016, 411 hours of direct services were provided by the 18 domestic violence service providers in Chicago. The five most utilized services were: 1. in-person counseling; 2. civil legal advocacy/order of protection; 3. other advocacy; 4. collaborative case management; and 5. telephone counseling.<sup>15</sup>

A point-in-time survey found that, on one day in 2016, 2,361 survivors received domestic violence services in Illinois; 1,166 survivors received housing services, and 1,195 received non-residential services and assistance.<sup>16</sup>

Domestic violence agencies provide advocacy, education and training to a variety of community and institutional actors. In 2016, a total of 66,898 individuals received 5,143 hours of training and/or education.<sup>17</sup>

Domestic violence services are offered in multiple languages. Domestic violence services are provided to survivors with varying language needs. In 2016, Hotline calls were provided in 32 different languages.<sup>18</sup> In 2016, the top three languages used were English, Spanish, and Arabic.<sup>19</sup> Eighty-two percent of Service providers surveyed offer services in multiple languages.<sup>20</sup>

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: WHAT IS THE SERVICE RESPONSE?

**Counseling is a highly used service by survivors.** In-person counseling was the most common direct service provided to survivors of domestic violence in both 2015 and 2016 in Chicago.<sup>21</sup> Forty-five percent of survivors received in-person counseling in 2016, and 25% received telephone counseling.<sup>22</sup> Importantly, research suggests that counseling services are used by survivors even after they have reached immediate safety. The Domestic Violence Outcomes Measure Project, a local research study, found that counseling/therapy was the primary need for 46% of survivors 6 months after initial service contact.<sup>23</sup>

There is an outstanding need for counseling services in Chicago. Sixty-four percent of all service providers surveyed offer counseling services, and 80% of the service providers that primarily serve survivors of domestic violence offer counseling services.<sup>24</sup> However, 27% of service providers surveyed reported that, of the service requests that they could not meet, counseling was in high demand.<sup>25</sup>

**Survivors commonly access legal services.** Domestic violence service providers are co-located in the domestic violence courthouse in Chicago to provide legal representation and assistance, accompaniment, referrals and information, and other needed civil and criminal legal advocacy.<sup>26</sup> Forty-one percent of clients received direct services related to civil legal advocacy for an order of protection, and 31% received direct services related to criminal legal advocacy for an order of protection or charges in 2016.<sup>27</sup> One stakeholder identified a court project focused on enhancing the use of child related remedies in orders of protection as an important advancement in the field. Additional data is needed to better understand the most commonly used remedies included in orders of protection or other trends in other service use within the civil and criminal legal system.

Of Hotline callers seeking services, only 2.3% reported having an order of protection, and an additional 0.3%, or 38 individuals, previously had an order of protection in 2016.<sup>28</sup> These numbers were consistent in 2015, with 2.3% of victim caller reporting having an order of protection and 0.3% previously having an order of protection.<sup>29</sup>

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: WHAT IS THE SERVICE RESPONSE?

**Collaborative case management supports survivors with diverse needs.** Twenty-nine percent of survivors received collaborative case management services, or the comprehensive coordination of services, in 2016.<sup>30</sup> Among Service providers surveyed, 57% provide case management to individuals and/or families experiencing domestic violence.<sup>131</sup> Survivors have significant economic needs that may require additional services to reach safety and stability. Furthermore, the long-term needs of survivors may require additional case management and coordination of services, e.g. custody related need or supervised visitation.

**Survivors use the domestic violence housing and shelter available.** While not among the top services provided, shelter and housing are consistently identified as a critical need for survivors of domestic violence.<sup>31</sup> In 2016, 25% of all Hotline calls—or 6,647 calls—were requesting domestic violence shelter.<sup>32</sup> In total, 1,001 clients spent a total of 36,067 days in Chicago-based domestic violence shelters in 2016.<sup>33</sup> Clients that used shelter services spent, on average, 36 days in shelter in 2016.<sup>34</sup> These data demonstrate that the demand for safe housing outweighs the current supply in Chicago. An additional 113 clients, 39 adults and 74 children, received transitional housing services in 2016.<sup>35</sup> Survivors and their children spent, on average, 243 days in transitional housing.<sup>36</sup> The Hotline recorded that 93.2% of dependents went to domestic violence shelter with survivors in 2016; 53% of dependents were identified as female and 47% were identified as male.<sup>37</sup>

Survivors also have long-term housing needs. In one study, fewer than 5% of survivors reported a need for shelter services six months after initial service receipt.<sup>38</sup> However, help finding permanent housing was identified as a need by 31% of survivors six months after initial service receipt.<sup>39</sup> Stakeholders consistently identified safe and affordable housing as a need for survivors. Among service providers surveyed, only 9% reported providing emergency housing, and 11% of respondents provide transitional or temporary housing. Of those that primarily serve survivors of domestic violence, 20% provide emergency housing and 20% provide temporary or transitional housing.<sup>40</sup>

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES: WHERE ARE THE GAPS?

***“We have to talk about the fact that you have to fund DV, but you also have to fund substance abuse, and mental health and child care and job training. These are all critical needs of the families that we serve—so we cannot stand by ourselves. We can’t do that, it just doesn’t work for the people we serve.”***

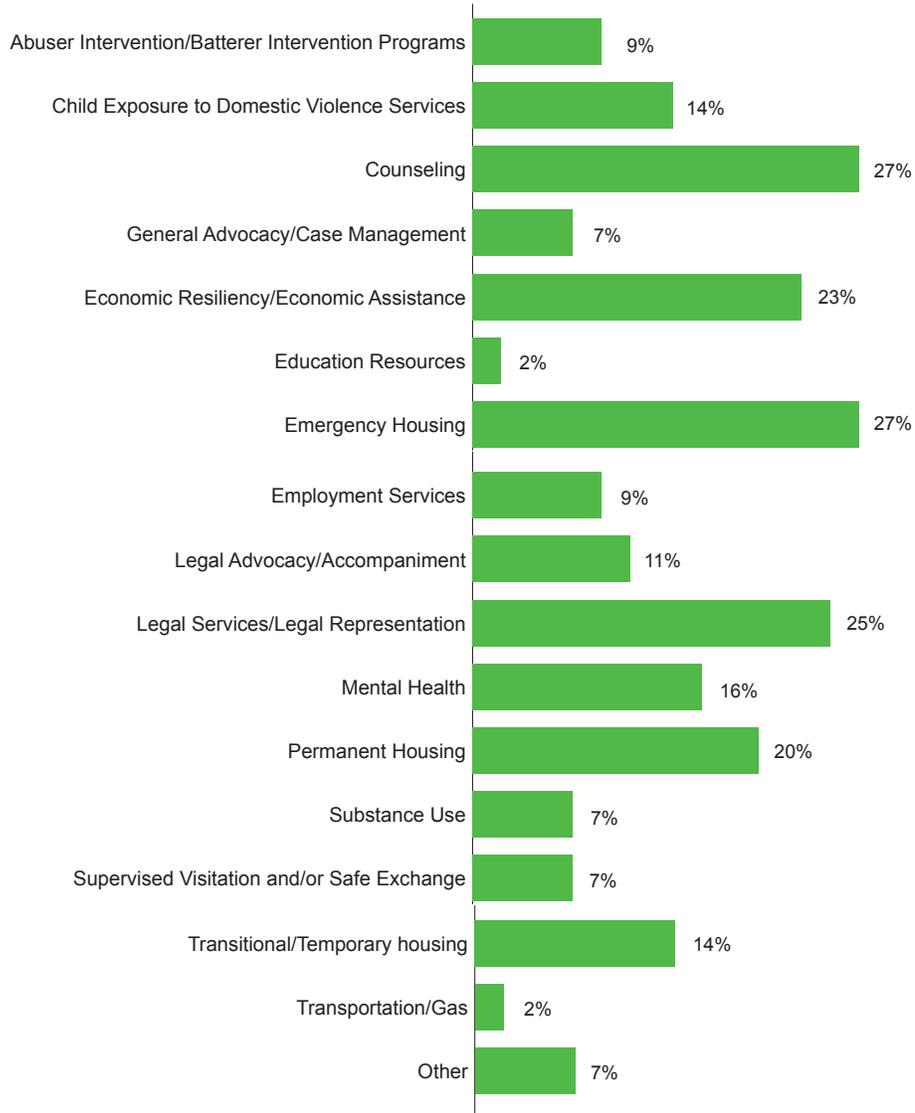
Service providers offer a wide-range of services that meet the needs of survivors. However, there is a demonstrated unmet need. Importantly, a survivor’s needs may change as they transition from safety to stability. While much of the existing available data focuses on short-term safety needs, it is critical that the domestic violence response community continue to further uncover long-term solutions that will ultimately lead a survivor to stability. A survivor may have different short- and long-term safety needs based on whether they decide to stay, leave, or return to a relationship with their abuser; domestic violence support services can offer strategies and supports aimed at safety and stability for all survivors.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, experiences of poverty may limit options available to survivors in both short- and long-term safety planning.<sup>42</sup> Local efforts have begun to document the long-term needs of survivors. One study found that survivors’ primary needs 6 months after initial service receipt were counseling/therapy and financial or other material needs, including employment, permanent housing, financial planning, and assistance with credit, food, and clothing.<sup>43</sup> Continued research is needed in order to ensure appropriate support of the services that will ultimately contribute to long-term safety and stability for survivors.

Even at the initial service contact, survivors are not always linked to needed services. In 2016, 14,412 survivors called the Hotline in Chicago and only 9,143 adults received any type of service from a domestic violence service provider.<sup>44</sup> Additional data and research is needed to better understand why some survivors are not receiving services from domestic violence organizations after reaching out. Furthermore, 3.2% of all calls in 2016 resulted in a survivor being put on a wait list or informed that a program was full.<sup>45</sup> In 2015, 4.8% of all calls had an outcome of full or wait list.<sup>46</sup> Just over 1% of calls in 2016 and 1.5% of calls in 2015 resulted in no answer, no program staff available to take the call, the caller being ineligible for services, or the service requested not existing.<sup>47</sup>

## SERVICES: WHERE ARE THE GAPS?

InfoNet does not track the number of clients who requested services and did not receive them—except for emergency shelter.<sup>48</sup> Among service providers surveyed, the top five requests for services that could not be met were: 1. counseling (27%); 2. emergency housing (27%); 3. legal services and/or legal representation; (25%), 4. economic resiliency (23%); and 5. permanent housing (20%).<sup>49</sup> While there are a number of requests that individual service providers cannot meet, 48% of service providers surveyed report that they have to turn survivors away or put them on a waitlist less than 10% of the time.<sup>50</sup> This suggests that service providers are most often able to refer clients to needed services through their network and referral system—perhaps to agencies that do not primarily address domestic violence. Additional research is needed to understand if and how survivors’ needs are being met at other agencies.

### REQUESTS FOR SERVICES THAT COULD NOT BE MET



\*Survey respondents were able to check all that apply, so percents may not add up to 100%.

## SERVICES: WHERE ARE THE GAPS?

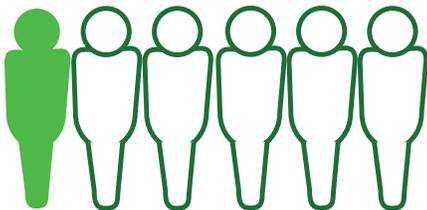
One of the most consistent unmet needs identified by stakeholders was safe and affordable housing and shelter.<sup>51</sup> Housing needs range from emergency housing to affordable permanent housing for survivors. In total, there are 170 emergency shelter beds dedicated to domestic violence survivors in the city of Chicago.<sup>52</sup> In total, 494 adults and 507 children (1,001 individuals) received domestic violence shelter in 2016.<sup>53</sup>

However, a significant number of individuals are turned away from emergency shelter in Chicago each year. In fact, for every one person sheltered, approximately 5 are turned away.<sup>54</sup> In 2016, 4,848 individuals—2,292 adults and 2,556 children—were turned away from domestic violence shelter in Chicago.<sup>55</sup> Shelter turn away, the count of individuals who could not be sheltered, is collected at the individual provider level, and there is likely some duplication in the aggregate. However, key stakeholders familiar with shelter services and these data suggest that duplication is likely minimal.

Stakeholders reported that, in addition to domestic violence shelters consistently operating at capacity, there are few options for a survivor who does not want to go to shelter. Nationally, there has been a shift to apply a Housing First approach to the domestic violence field, or the promotion of permanent housing as quickly as possible.<sup>56</sup> Washington State has seen success with the model, reporting that survivors have improved safety and stability using the Housing First approach.<sup>57</sup>

There is a persistent need for counseling services. Forty-five percent of survivors received in-person counseling in 2016, and 25% received telephone counseling.<sup>58</sup> However, 27% of service providers reported that counseling was a top need they could not meet, either due to capacity or service offering.<sup>59</sup> Importantly, counseling needs are ongoing for survivors—46% of survivors surveyed 6 months after initial services receipt indicated that they had a current or ongoing need for counseling services.<sup>60</sup>

**FOR EVERY 1 PERSON  
THAT RECEIVES SHELTER,  
5 ARE TURNED AWAY**



## SERVICES: WHERE ARE THE GAPS?

***“...one of the biggest barriers facing our clients is financial dependence on their abuser...”***

In addition to the immediate civil and criminal legal needs of survivors, there may be longer-term legal needs for people experiencing domestic violence. In 2016, 41% of clients received direct services related to civil legal advocacy/order of protection, and 18% received direct services related to criminal legal advocacy/charges.<sup>61</sup> While the legal system may not be the right path for all survivors, there may be the need for additional outreach or education related to legal services and available remedies. Six months after service receipt, one study found that 16% of survivors needed help with immigration and 23% needed help with divorce.<sup>62</sup> In addition to the legal needs of survivors, stakeholders report that abusers have pressing legal needs that must also be addressed.

Survivors of domestic violence have significant financial barriers to reaching safety and stability. Research suggests that abusers often use tactics of economic abuse, and financial needs related to repairing credit, building assets, or other financial needs are common for survivors.<sup>63</sup> As seen in demographic data, survivors of domestic violence in Chicago have significant economic needs. In 2016, the majority of survivors receiving services from domestic violence agencies reported a monthly income of \$1,000 or less; 43.8% of survivors reported a monthly income of \$500 or less in 2016.<sup>64</sup> Top needs identified 6 months after initial service receipt include several related to financial or material need, including credit history (29%), financial planning and/or financial literacy (28%), help with food (29%), clothing (30%), and getting work (25%).<sup>65</sup>

***“...we have always organized by topic, such as housing and childcare. For a city like Chicago, it makes no sense. We should look at individual neighborhoods.”***

There is disparate access to domestic violence services in Chicago. Domestic violence occurs throughout the city of Chicago, but there is disparate access to services for survivors. In fact, communities that have some of the highest rates of domestic violence crimes have the least physical access to domestic violence services. In addition to physical location in the city, further analysis reveals that currently available domestic violence services are predominantly located in majority white communities and/or higher-income communities. The inequities in access to domestic violence services and ultimate solutions must be situated within the context and history of racism, segregation, and poverty in Chicago.

# ENDNOTES

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4*bid.*

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27 Author's analysis of *InfoNet data* provided by ICJIA, 2016.

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

29 Author's analysis of *State of Illinois Hotline Data*, 2015.

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

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

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