

Education, Training, and Enhanced Services to End Violence Against and Abuse of Women with Disabilities Grant Program

The Education, Training, and Enhanced Services to End Violence Against and Abuse of Women with Disabilities Grant Program (Disability Program) recognizes the need to focus on sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking against individuals who are Deaf and/or disabled.

THESE CHALLENGES SIGNIFICANTLY COMPOUND PROBLEMS FACING those seeking support to end the violence in their lives. They also complicate the criminal justice system's ability to investigate and prosecute cases, and create difficulties for victim service providers to assist victims.

41 Grantees Reporting

Between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2017, 41 unique grantees reported activities funded by the Disability Program.

10,205 People Trained

Grantees trained a total of 10,205 people.

58 Victims Served

On average, grantees served or partially served 58 victims during each 6-month reporting period.

The Disability Program enhances the safety of victims of domestic/sexual violence by supporting projects uniquely designed to address and prevent these crimes against individuals with disabilities.

People with disabilities may be even more susceptible to domestic/sexual violence, due to key risk factors, such as lower socioeconomic status (e.g., more poverty, less education and income), increased isolation, and increased dependency on others (Hahn et al., 2014).



OH • Grantee Perspective

Since receiving its first OWW grant in 2007, Project CARE has been operating as a strong cross-sector program that addresses the intersection of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking against individuals with disabilities. CARE has improved the policies, practices, organizational culture, and service delivery to survivors with disabilities. Furthermore, CARE has designed and implemented screening for abuse against individuals with disabilities, developed accessible safety plans for survivors with disabilities, and trained individuals with intellectual disabilities on healthy relationships, risk-reduction, and violence prevention education.

YWCA OF GREATER CINCINNATI, OHIO



SD • Grantee Perspective

During this reporting period alone, we have continued increasing our knowledge across disabilities, sexual assault, and domestic violence; toured two crisis shelters separated by nearly 200 miles; learned about independent living center resources and programs that serve nearly half of South Dakota; begun to conduct safety and access reviews of our collaboration agencies; begun to develop training at the intersection of sexual assault, disabilities, and deafness; attended awareness activities for Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Awareness Day and Disability Awareness Day; become more aware of policies and legislation that affect sexual assault and disability work; developed resources to expand cross-disciplinary referrals; and begun to engage member agency programs in increasing safety and accessibility in their daily work.

SOUTH DAKOTA NETWORK AGAINST FAMILY VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT



OH • Grantee Perspective

With the Disability Program funding, we are able to provide direct advocacy services via the community outreach specialist/Deaf advocate. Previously, we were not able to provide the necessary community education to promote engagement and community buy-in to support the victims. Now that the training is complete and new staff has been on-boarded, we are having greater outreach within the Deaf community.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER, OHIO

Grantees engage in the following purpose areas:

- Provide personnel, training, technical assistance, advocacy, intervention, risk reduction, treatment, counseling, advocacy, and other assistance;
- Conduct outreach activities to ensure that individuals with disabilities receive appropriate assistance;
- Conduct cross-training for victim service organizations about risk reduction, intervention, and prevention;
- Provide technical assistance to help with modifications to policies, protocols, and procedures to ensure equal access to services;
- Provide training and technical assistance on the requirements of shelters and victim services organizations under federal anti-discrimination laws;
- Modify facilities, purchase equipment, and fund personnel so that shelters and victim service organizations can accommodate the needs of individuals with disabilities;
- Provide advocacy and intervention services for individuals with disabilities; and
- Develop model programs providing advocacy and intervention services within organizations.

In addition, VAWA 2013 clarified that victim services and legal assistance include services and assistance to **victims of domestic/sexual violence who are also victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons.**

General Grant Information

Information for this report was submitted by **41** individual grantees for the July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2017 progress reporting period.

- No grantees reported that their grants specifically addressed tribal populations.

Grantees most frequently addressed the following purpose areas:

- Provide personnel, training, technical assistance, advocacy, intervention, risk reduction, treatment, counseling, advocacy, and other assistance;
- Conduct cross-training for victim service organizations about risk reduction, intervention, and prevention; and
- Develop model programs providing advocacy and intervention services.

Staff

Grant-funded staff provide training, consultation, and information to service providers about responding to violence against women with disabilities. **Being able to hire staff is critical to the overall function and success of programs.**

- **41** (100%) grantees used funds for staffing needs.
- Grantees funded an average of **45** full-time equivalent (FTE) staff during each 6-month period.
- Grantees most often used these staffing funds to support program coordinators and administrators.

Table 1 | Staff supported with Disability grant funds, July 2015–June 2017:
Selected groups

Staff funded	6-month average	
Total FTE staff funded	45	
Program coordinators	24	53%
Administrators	6	13%
Disability advocates	5	11%
Victim advocates	4	9%

Training

Grantees train professionals in the service-delivery system to respond more effectively to victims with disabilities by providing information on the unique needs of these individuals and the special challenges they face when they become victims of violence. **This training improves the professional response to victims and increases offender accountability.**

- **24** (59%) grantees used funds for training.
- Grantees convened a total of **302** training events.
- Grantees trained a total of **10,205** people.
- Most often these trainings reached disability organization staff (**23%**), domestic violence program staff (**17%**), and sexual assault program staff (**11%**).



WA • Grantee Perspective

Without funding from the Disability Program, it would not be possible for the Coalition Ending Gender-Based Violence (formerly the King County Coalition Against Domestic Violence) to dedicate a full-time staff person to lead the Domestic Violence and Mental Health Collaboration Project, and it would not have been possible for us to create the transformational changes that we have been able to make through this project. Work group members shared that having a full-time project manager has helped with the continuity of the project and the sustainability of our initiatives over time, even as staff at the partner agencies have changed. We are very grateful that we have been entrusted with these resources and are able to make a critical difference.

COALITION ENDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, WASHINGTON



KY • Grantee Perspective

This grant has allowed the MOU partners to receive 163 hours of webinar trainings that they would not have been exposed to but for this grant. The MOU partners were able to participate in a Vera Immersion Training in Kansas City which provided not only significant education but the opportunity to network with other OWW-funded grantees. This immersion training also provided the opportunity to visit both a DV Shelter and a Disability organization both of which were prior grantees of this grant program.

MOUNTAIN COMPREHENSIVE CARE CENTER, KENTUCKY



MI • Grantee Perspective

With Disability Program funding we were able to provide training to dual victim service agencies across the state on physical, attitudinal, and programmatic barriers to accessibility of services for individuals with multiple disabilities. This training increased advocates' confidence, which will benefit survivors with multiple disabilities seeking and receiving services.

MICHIGAN COALITION TO END DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE



TX • Grantee Perspective

The program has allowed us to conduct outreach to and engagement of the Deaf community through social media, and will allow us to develop productions in American Sign Language to educate, inform, and increase community dialogue on topics related to community accountability and supporting Deaf sexual/domestic violence survivors.

TRAVIS COUNTY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVAL CENTER, TEXAS



WA • Grantee Perspective

The Alliance was able to produce two statewide conferences, an online classroom, two videos, a resource booklet, and several trainings and presentations. We also developed tools that organizations can use to audit their policies for improvements in universal design, accommodation provision, trauma-informed advocacy provision, confidentiality, and navigation of advocacy barriers specific to long-term care. The Alliance increased its own awareness of issues intersectional with disability, long-term care, and sexual violence, and was subsequently able to bolster the technical assistance it provided to disability, long-term care, and sexual assault advocates who can reach survivors of sexual violence in long-term care settings. The Alliance was able to build ties to advocates throughout the state who are interested in working on these issues going forward.

DISABILITY RIGHTS WASHINGTON



OH • Grantee Perspective

Since 2013, Project CARE has directly served more than 2,770 survivors with disabilities experiencing domestic or sexual violence in Hamilton County. Project CARE has also provided technical assistance, training, and tools to over 28 organizations nationally. Survivors who receive services from any of Project CARE's partner agencies are getting the same trauma-informed and accessible message.

YWCA OF GREATER CINCINNATI, OHIO

Community Education

Grant-funded staff provide general information to the community to increase awareness of domestic/sexual violence. **Community education can be used as a tool to connect people who have a common goal of building safe, supportive, and accountable communities.**ⁱ

- **13** (32%) grantees used funds for community education.
- Grantees hosted a total of **299** education events.
- Grantees provided education to a total of **3,371** people.

Table 2 People educated with Disability grant funds, July 2015–June 2017: Selected groups		
People educated	2-year total	
Total people educated	3,371	
Deaf individuals	1,461	43%
Parents/guardians of individuals with disabilities	1,107	33%
People with disabilities	523	16%
Community groups	228	7%

NOTE: Data presented for the most frequently reported categories only (≥5%).

Technical Assistance

In addition to training, grantees provide technical assistance to service providers to enable them to improve services to individuals with disabilities who are victims of domestic/sexual violence. Technical assistance may be provided through site visits, consultations, information responses, referrals, or other collaboration, and may include guidance on collaboration and cross-training for responding to victims with disabilities; responding to violence against women with mental illness; accessible communication (ASL interpreters/communication devices); and managing disclosure, confidentiality, and safety.

- **18** (44%) grantees used funds for technical assistance.
- Grantees provided a total of **1,353** technical assistance activities.

ⁱ Community education involves providing general information that will increase public awareness of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Community education is not the same as training. Training involves providing information on sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking that enables a professional to improve their response to victims as it relates to their role in the system.

Victim Services

Grantees provide an array of services to victims. All victims receive safety planning, referrals, and information as needed. **These comprehensive support services address a wide variety of needs to help victims become and remain safe from violence.**

- 5 (12%) grantees used funds for victim services.
- Grantees provided services to an average of **58** victims during each 6-month period.
- **96%** of victims who sought services received them during each 6-month period.

During each 6-month period, on average, grantees provided:

- Counseling/support group services to **53** victims;
- Peer support services to **40** victims;
- Victim advocacy services to **25** victims;
- Crisis intervention to **22** victims;
- Case management to **11** victims;
- Personal planning to **9** victims; and
- Employment services to **2** victims.

Other services:

- Grantees received a total of **7** hotline calls; and
 - **100%** of these calls came from victims.

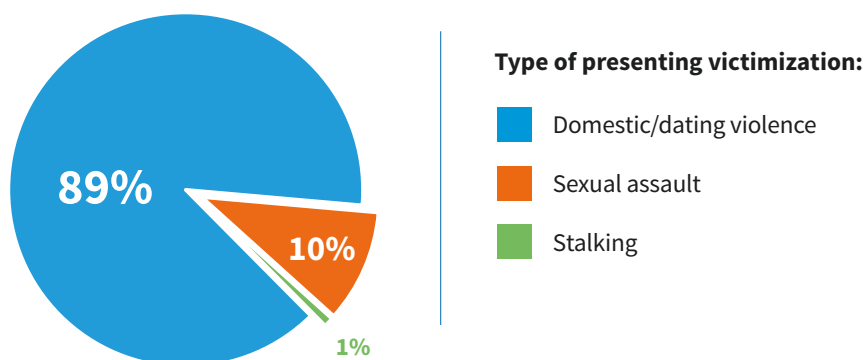
Victims Seeking Services

Grantees serve victims of domestic/sexual violence. Between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2017:

- The majority of victims served or partially served were victims of **domestic/dating violence** (89%).

Figure 1 | Provision of victim services by Disability Program grantees, by type of presenting victimization

Victims served and partially served by type of victimization (6-month average)



FL • Grantee Perspective

The funding has allowed us to convene the important stakeholders in our community both in the DV/SA arena and the Disability arena in order to evaluate current services, identify gaps, and create a strategic plan. This community has never had the funding necessary to convene all of the important players so that this much-neglected issue, the intersection of DV/SA and disability, can be addressed.

DISABILITY INDEPENDENCE GROUP, INC., FLORIDA



PA • Grantee Perspective

This grant has allowed our partnership to collaborate at the state level to address individuals with complex communication needs as an unserved population. We have the opportunity to meet and learn from each other the most effective ways to address gaps in services and learn about the dynamics that create barriers for survivors to access services. The project has strengthened relationships and collaboration outside of this project. Additionally, we are able to engage individuals with complex communication needs in how best to provide services to survivors. Including the voices of the individuals that this project is intended to benefit is critical, and taking the time to craft focus group and survey questions to address their needs has been beneficial. This grant funds five statewide agencies to participate in a project that they would not otherwise have the opportunity to come together to spend time on.

PENNSYLVANIA COALITION AGAINST RAPE

Men with disabilities are more likely than those without disabilities to report having been victimized by sexual violence during their lifetimes (Mitra et al., 2016).



TX • Grantee Perspective

The Disability Program funding has allowed us to develop a safety planning guide for people with disabilities living in staffed institutional settings. Traditional safety planning protocols are simply not effective in working with individuals living in staffed settings where choice/decision-making can be very limited and where staff are significantly involved in the person’s everyday life. This is an especially critical need when a person with very limited social skills is planning to transition from an institutional setting to a smaller and less restrictive community residence.

TRAVIS COUNTY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVAL CENTER, TEXAS



MN • Grantee Perspective

Disability Program funding continues to advance the relationship between The Arc and the Sexual Violence Center (SVC). With this funding we have learned what the strengths and gaps are in both organizations and how together we can better serve victims/survivors with I/DD. This funding has been critical to creating sustainable organizational change. We have appreciated having the technical assistance representatives from the Vera Institute of Justice to provide us with insight and feedback as we moved into implementation of our strategic plan. We created six trainings as well as a safety plan tool which will develop and enhance staff and volunteer skills and abilities at both organizations to better support persons with I/DD who experience sexual violence. Sustainability has been a focus of the collaboration from the beginning; both agencies are committed to making the initiatives sustainable beyond the grant period.

THE ARC GREATER TWIN CITIES, MINNESOTA

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Total victims seeking services	61	
Victims served	56	92%
Victims partially served	3	4%
Victims not served	3	4%

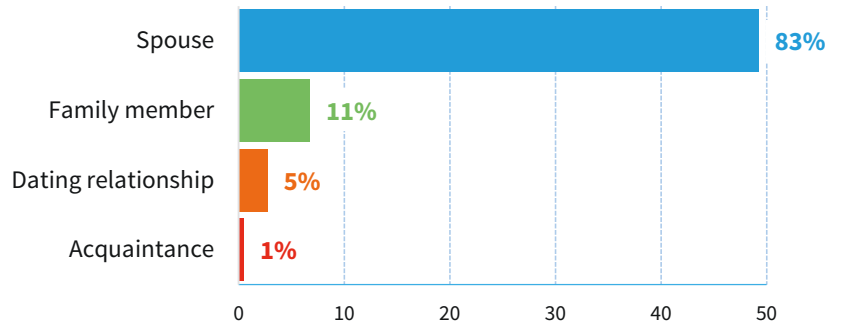
NOTE: “Partially served” represents victims who received some but not all of the service(s) they requested, provided those services were funded under the Disability Program grant. “Not served” represents victims who sought services and did not receive the service(s) they were seeking, provided those services were funded under the Disability Program grant.

Victims’ Relationship to Offender

Grantees serve victims of domestic/sexual violence. Between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2017:

- The majority of victims served or partially served were victimized by a **spouse or intimate partner** (79%).
- The remaining victims were most commonly victimized by a **family or household member** (11%), or in the context of a **dating relationship** (4%).

Figure 2 Type of victimization by relationship to offender: **Domestic violence** (6-month average)



NOTE: Numbers for relationship to offender were too small to compute for sexual assault victimization.

Reasons Victims Were Not Served or Were Partially Served

During each reporting period, grantees noted the following barriers as reasons why victims were not served or were only partially served:

- Services were inappropriate or inadequate for victims with substance abuse issues;
- Hours of operation;
- Services were inappropriate or inadequate for victims who are Deaf or hard of hearing;
- Transportation; or
- Victim did not meet eligibility or statutory requirements.

Demographics of Victims Served and Partially Served

Grantees served or partially served an average of **58** victims during each 6-month period. The victims most frequently served or partially served were **Hispanic or Latina** (37%), **female** (97%), and between the ages of **25 and 59** (82%).

Figure 3 | Demographics of victims served and partially served: **Race/ethnicity** (6-month average)

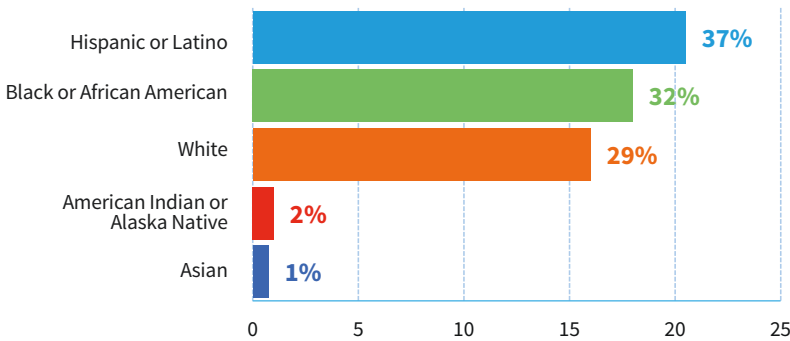


Figure 4 | Demographics of victims served and partially served: **Gender** (6-month average)

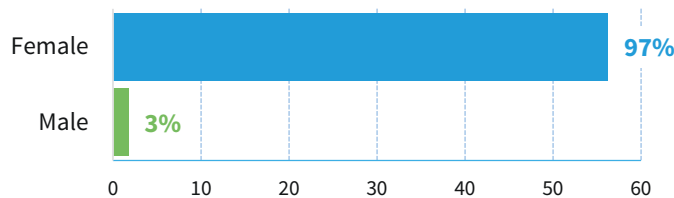
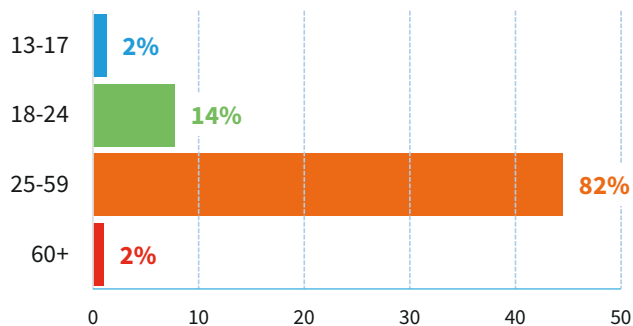


Figure 5 | Demographics of victims served and partially served: **Age** (6-month average)



NJ • Grantee Perspective

Prior to receiving this funding, Middlesex L.E.A.D.S. (Listen, Educate, Advocate and Demand Safety), was not able to dedicate time or money to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment. With the support of OWW and the Vera Institute of Justice, we were able to hear first-hand from the people we serve. By participating in the needs assessment process, our clients and consumers have provided us with invaluable information and insight. In turn, we hope to use their contributions to make our services safer and more accessible going forward.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY CENTER FOR EMPOWERMENT, NEW JERSEY



NC • Grantee Perspective

The most important area the Disability Program funding has allowed us to focus on is building community relationships that we would not otherwise have had the time, staff, or resources to cultivate. Through this collaborative effort, we have updated our websites to include referral information for the other collaborating agencies. The collaborative partners also developed a statement of values for working with clients/members and implemented this across multiple areas in the agencies (on websites, in performance evaluations, and in job descriptions) to incorporate it as an agency-wide value and part of the agencies' cultures.

RESOURCE CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING, NORTH CAROLINA



NY • Grantee Perspective

The Safety and Accessibility Review provided us with a unique opportunity to first-hand review our organizations through the lens of the Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines. It allowed us to pay attention to the rights of people with disabilities and how beneficial it is to us as a whole society to utilize the universal design concept. Without the funds from OWW, our organizations would never have been able to do this thorough examination of our organizations and our service provision.

WESTCHESTER COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM, INC., NEW YORK



TX • Grantee Perspective

We have been able to engage in curriculum development and in forming and convening advisory committees and work groups focused on improving services and cultural awareness to all community members. We have been able to focus in particular on people with disabilities, people who are Deaf, and Black/African-American and LGBTQIA community members.

TRAVIS COUNTY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTER, TEXAS



WI • Grantee Perspective

Both Domestic Violence programs and Sexual Assault programs struggle with supporting and advocating for people with disabilities, especially those with psychiatric disabilities and developmental disabilities. DV/SA programs find themselves often as a last resort stop for victims/survivors when they are seeking out safety and services. Program staff feel overworked, undereducated, and limited in resource choices. This often leaves victims, especially victims with disabilities, feeling unwelcome and unable to access the help they need. Of course this is not the case for all DV/SA programs but the fact that accessible, responsive services and support to victims/survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors are not consistent statewide demonstrates the need for continued work at the intersection of disabilities and interpersonal violence.

DISABILITY RIGHTS WISCONSIN

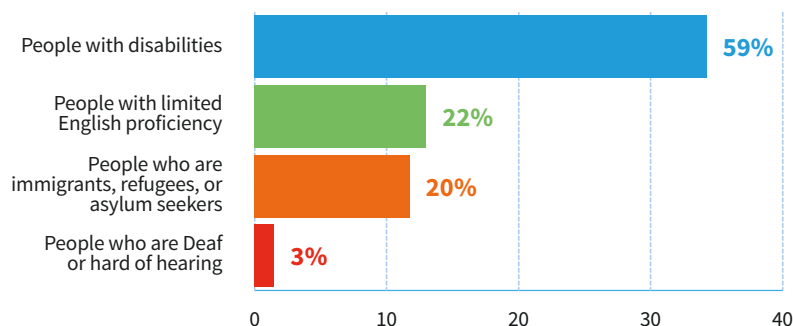


IL • Grantee Perspective

Lack of education and knowledge regarding healthy relationships, sexuality and sexual violence is an issue statewide. Rape crisis centers and self-advocates have partnered with disability organizations and schools to address this need, but there is much more work to be done. We hear too often from self-advocates about never having the opportunity to learn about their bodies or intimate relationships resulting in a tremendous risk. Family members and service providers may be uncomfortable with the topic or want to discourage any interest in intimate relationships, especially for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Figure 6 Demographics of victims served and partially served: **Other** (6-month average)



Remaining Areas of Need

Grantees noted that **service providers and victim advocates need specialized training and technical assistance to better serve victims with disabilities**, including the ability to:

- Understand and accommodate the communication needs of Deaf and hard of hearing victims;
- Understand patterns of abuse in care settings;
- Communicate with individuals with cognitive disabilities;
- Provide better accessibility for victims with physical disabilities;
- Work with victims with severe mental illness and/or substance abuse; and
- Collaborate with adult guardians in order to provide care to victims.

Without the proper tools to serve victims with disabilities, grantees felt that victims with disabilities **would hesitate to report** abuse and therefore put themselves in further danger.

Grantees also pointed to the need for more **community education and outreach to victims with disabilities, caretakers, and community members**, including:

- Creating awareness of available DV/SA services for people with disabilities;
- Educating the community about violence against people with disabilities;
- Combating social stigmas and discrimination against people with disabilities, which prevent victims from getting the help they need; and
- Educating people with intellectual disabilities about sex, consent, and healthy relationships.

Noting that disability rights organizations and DV/SA service providers often work in silos, grantees called for **more collaboration between service providers** to serve the unique needs of victims with disabilities, as well as **proper training to service providers and the criminal justice system on:**

- The use of appropriate language and terminology when working with victims with disabilities;
- Accommodating the unique needs of clients with physical, intellectual, or developmental disabilities; and
- Trauma-informed practices for working with victims with disabilities.

Grantees emphasized the importance of **meeting the basic needs of victims with disabilities**, including:

- Safe and accessible shelter and long-term housing;
- Transportation;
- Employment
- Child care; and
- Mental health services.

Grantees reported the **need for community education** in order to:

- Raise awareness about the prevalence of domestic violence and sexual assault against people with disabilities; and
- Combat social stigmas and discrimination against people with disabilities, which prevent victims from getting the help they need.

Finally, grantees pointed to the need to **ensure better collaboration between providers** serving victims with disabilities.



OR • Grantee Perspective

The criminalization of people with disabilities speaks to a much larger need to change myths and attitudes about disabilities, including the fact that people with disabilities are not often believed when they disclose abuse. When the system views survivors with disabilities as not credible, it then doesn't prosecute crimes against them. Abuse against people with disabilities becomes minimized or even accepted.

MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON



MI • Grantee Perspective

Better communication needs to happen across interconnecting systems, such as healthcare, law enforcement, and the criminal justice system. While education and community awareness of resources is of critical importance in addressing obstacles faced by people with disabilities, it is imperative that the resources and systems in place to serve people with disabilities are functioning collaboratively and have a common language and understanding of how to provide trauma-informed and accessible services.

YWCA WEST CENTRAL MICHIGAN



MN • Grantee Perspective

Further complicating lack of autonomy for people with I/DD is lack of reliable, efficient, and free/low-cost transportation. This leaves people with I/DD dependent on others for meeting their transportation needs. ASHC recognizes that although we may improve our services for victims/survivors of sexual violence with I/DD, we cannot have a large impact unless victims/survivors can easily get to physical locations for services.

THE ARC GREATER TWIN CITIES, MINNESOTA

