

Grants for Outreach and Services to Underserved Populations

The Grants for Outreach and Services to Underserved Populations Program (Underserved Program) funds projects to develop and implement outreach strategies and enhanced services to adult and youth victims of domestic/sexual violence in underserved populations.

GRANTEES DO THIS BY BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF BOTH MAINSTREAM organizations and organizations specifically serving underserved populations to provide culturally appropriate and inclusive services, and increasing training and outreach activities of organizations providing services to underserved populations.

50 Grantees Reporting

Between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2019, 50 unique grantees reported activities funded by the Underserved Program.

1,839 Victims Served

On average, grantees served 1,839 victims during each 6-month reporting period.

46% Served LGBTI Victims

Nearly half (46%) of grantees served victims who identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or intersex.

Survivors from underserved populations face challenges in accessing comprehensive and effective victim services that are accessible, culturally relevant, and responsive. The Underserved Program supports projects that address these gaps.

The term “underserved populations” means populations who face barriers in accessing and using victim services, and includes populations underserved because of geographic location, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, underserved racial and ethnic populations, populations underserved because of special needs (such as language barriers, disabilities, alienage status, or age), and any other population determined to be underserved by the Attorney General or by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, as appropriate (Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013).





NY • Grantee Perspective

This grant allows us to continue offering specialized elder advocacy work in our community. We have been able to look at how advocacy for an older adult may have to differ from advocacy for a younger victim. This grant also continues to support our local Elder Justice Committee (CCR) and our Enhanced Multidisciplinary Team (E-MDT), which has been used to look at complex cases of elder abuse. The CCR provides an excellent opportunity to network with other service providers, learn more about the issue of abuse in later life, and build partnerships to improve system response to the issue. As a result of the E-MDT meetings, we always learn about additional options for the victims and can discuss ways in which community partners can work better together. We are excited to be reaching out to underserved older adults with this grant and refining the strengths in outreach that we already have. We hope to create new materials and new CCR members to continue to broaden our knowledge of how to best work with older victims in underserved communities.

VERA HOUSE, INC., NEW YORK



PA • Grantee Perspective

This funding has allowed us to hire two FTE positions to focus on the issue of LGBTQ sexual violence. It has allowed both agencies in this partnership to exchange expertise, skills, and referrals that would have never happened if not for this formalized partnership. WOAR - Philadelphia Against Sexual Violence now has all of their staff trained in LGBTQ-affirming care, does significant outreach to the LGBTQ community, and offers a sexual violence support group specific to LGBTQ community members. The agency is aware of the LGBTQ community as an underserved population and is actively working to combat that. This grant allows for us to make these strides possible.

This funding has enabled Mazzoni Center to train all of their staff on how to receive disclosures of sexual violence, proper reporting methods, and bystander intervention for sexual harassment. Together our agencies have formed a strong alliance that we can model for other providers when advocating for the care of LGBTQ victims and survivors of sexual violence.

MAZZONI CENTER, PENNSYLVANIA

The Underserved Program fills gaps that survivors from underserved populations face in seeking to obtain accessible, culturally relevant, and responsive victim services. Purpose areas include:

- Work with federal, state, tribal, territorial, and local governments, agencies, and organizations to develop or enhance population-specific services;
- Strengthen the capacity of underserved populations to provide population-specific services;
- Strengthen the capacity of traditional victim service providers to provide population-specific services;
- Strengthen the effectiveness of criminal and civil justice interventions by providing training for law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, and other court personnel on domestic/sexual violence in underserved populations; and
- Work in cooperation with underserved populations to develop and implement outreach, education, prevention, and intervention strategies that highlight available resources and the specific issues faced by victims of domestic/sexual violence from these populations.

The Attorney General may use up to 25% of funds available under the Underserved Program to make one-time planning grants to eligible entities to support the planning and development of specially designed and targeted programs for adult and youth victims of domestic/sexual violence in one or more underserved populations.

General Grant Information

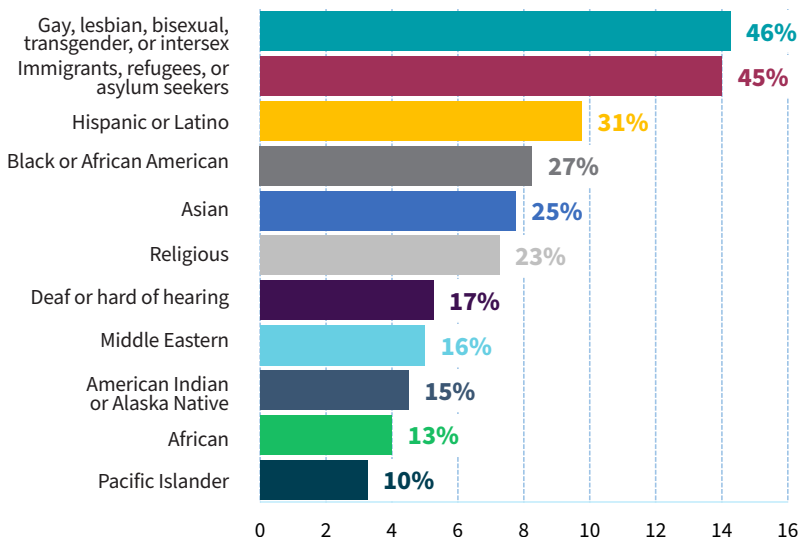
The Underserved Program was authorized by VAWA 2013. Information for this report was submitted by **50** individual grantees for the July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2019 progress reporting period.

- Grantees frequently (**46%**) served victims who identified as LGBTI.



Figure 1

Grantees serving culturally specific populations by type of population, July 2017–June 2019 (6-month average)



LGBTQ victims of intimate partner violence face numerous barriers to accessing and receiving appropriate services. These barriers include stigma and the general lack of understanding and bias about the dynamics of LGBTQ experiences with violence that victims may encounter in criminal justice, healthcare, and social services systems. Further, diversity within LGBTQ populations necessitates more research and practice interventions that account for differences of experience based on gender, race, class, and culture (Calton et al., 2016; National Sexual Violence Resource Center, 2019).

IL • Grantee Perspective



Prior to this funding, the program consisted of a program manager who was responsible for seeing all patients, developing programming, and addressing all administrative concerns. The demands of that position resulted in about 12-15 patients being seen in one month. The addition of the 2 case managers funded by this grant helped increase access exponentially; in just January 2019 we were able to serve 59 people. This grant has allowed us to reach patients that never would have accessed medical or case management care outside of our agency. We have had patient after patient report how life changing the program has been. We have helped people who were living on the train find and keep stable housing, patients whose partner assaulted them find safe housing on their own, gotten patients access to SNAP benefits, and coordinated care with mental health providers. These are just a few of the real and tangible outcomes for our patients.

HOWARD BROWN HEALTH CENTER, ILLINOIS

NM • Grantee Perspective



This funding has been so helpful to Casa Fortaleza, allowing us to be here in the community providing necessary culturally specific services. It has allowed us to grow, become more stable, and ultimately to provide more therapy services and advocacy case management services to Spanish speaking sexual assault survivors. It is allowing CF to say it is here and will be around for the needs of Spanish speaking survivors. Culturally and linguistically specific sexual assault services that would not otherwise be available for Spanish speaking survivors are available because of this funding. This grant has made a huge impact on our ability to offer services and to function well as an organization, to further grow and become sustainable as an organization in central New Mexico.

CASA FORTALEZA, NEW MEXICO

Staff

Grant-funded staff provide victim services, training, outreach, advocacy, counseling, court and medical accompaniment, and community education to increase victim safety and offender accountability. **Being able to hire staff is critical to the overall function and success of programs.**

- 49 (98%) grantees used funds for staffing needs.
- Grantees funded an average of 52 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff during each 6-month period.
- Grantees most often used these staffing funds to support victim advocates and program coordinators.

Table 1 | Staff supported with Underserved grant funds, July 2017–June 2019: Selected groups

Staff funded	6-month average	
Total FTE staff funded	52	
Victim advocate	15	29%
Program coordinator	12	23%
Trainer	7	13%
Administrator	6	12%
Counselor	5	10%
Outreach worker	3	6%

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



Many victims of domestic/sexual violence belong to religious or spiritual communities. Some may turn to these communities as trusted supports, while others may hesitate to seek guidance due to stigma or fear. Emerging research shows that training faith leaders in the dynamics of domestic/sexual violence may result in better outcomes for victims and communities (Drumm et al., 2018; Oyewuwo-Gassikia, 2019).



WA • Grantee Perspective

Funding from the Underserved Program is a critical source of support for our advocacy work in LGBTQ communities. It has allowed us to continue offering and expanding meaningful support to a broad range of LGBTQ survivors of sexual violence through one on one advocacy-based counseling, including medical, legal, crisis, and long-term support for all survivors.

Funding has enabled us to strengthen our partnerships, collaborations, and referrals with other SA service providers, especially regarding legal and medical advocacy. The Underserved program has increased our ability to provide systems advocacy, court accompaniment, medical advocacy, and in person support to SA and DV survivors. Finally, funding has increased our ability to do public awareness and community outreach that expand knowledge about the unique experiences of LGBTQ+ survivors and increase knowledge about the resources and support we can offer our community.

THE NW NETWORK OF BISEXUAL, TRANS, LESBIAN, AND GAY SURVIVORS OF ABUSE, WASHINGTON

Training

Grantees train victim advocates, law enforcement officers, prosecutors, court personnel, probation officers, child protection staff, mental health and other professionals how to develop an effective coordinated community response to violence. **This training improves the professional response to victims and increases offender accountability.**

- **41** (82%) grantees used funds for training.
- Grantees convened a total of **581** training events.

In the two years covered by this report, Underserved Program grantees trained:

13,516

PROFESSIONALS

across **multiple systems:**



**VICTIM
ADVOCATES**



**LAW
ENFORCEMENT**



**HEALTH
PROFESSIONALS**



**SOCIAL SERVICE
ORGANIZATIONS**

Community Education

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

- **41** (82%) grantees used funds for community education.
- Grantees hosted a total of **998** education events.
- Grantees provided education to a total of **23,397** people.

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 his or her response to victims as it relates to their role in the system

Table 2

People educated with Underserved grant funds, July 2017–June 2019:
Selected groups

People educated	1-year total	
Total people educated	23,397	
Community members	8,376	36%
Victims	3,930	17%
Middle/high school students	3,354	14%
Faith-based groups	2,493	11%
University/college students	2,221	9%
Community groups	1,476	6%

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

Victim Services

Underserved victims of domestic/sexual violence may face unique barriers to seeking and utilizing assistance. Supporting these victims with a wide range of services may include providing advocacy and support to a victim who is seeking a protection order; accompaniment during medical procedures, such as a sexual assault forensic examination; providing interpretation or translation services; assistance with safety planning; accompaniment to court; shelter and transitional housing assistance; or immigration assistance. **These comprehensive support services address a wide variety of needs to help victims become and remain safe from violence.**

- **42** (84%) grantees used funds for victim services.
- Grantees provided services to an average of **1,839** victims during each 6-month period.
- Nearly **100%** of victims who sought services received them during each 6-month period.

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

- Crisis intervention services to **951** victims;
- Support group/counseling services to **945** victims;
- Victim advocacy services to **914** victims;
- Civil legal advocacy services to **198** victims;
- Transportation services to **177** victims;
- Material assistance (e.g. clothing, food, or personal items) to **167** victims; and
- Language services (i.e. interpretation or translation) to **104** victims.

Other services:

- Victim-witness notification/victim outreach services were used a total of **2,855** times; and
 - Grantees used English, Spanish, and American Sign Language (ASL) for these activities.

MA • Grantee Perspective



TOD@S funding has enabled the Violence Recovery Program to provide training and support to communities of color and underrepresented individuals from the queer and trans people of color community. The funding has also allowed the organization to implement trainings and presentations in both English and Spanish in several areas outside of the health center. In addition, the TOD@S funding has allowed survivors of color to receive services such as culturally specific therapeutic approaches that are sensitive to their identities. Funding also allowed staff to purchase culturally sensitive materials such as books and program brochures to reach out to the communities targeted with this grant.

FENWAY COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER, INC., MASSACHUSETTS

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of VAWA (2019), interviews with 72 leaders who work in domestic/sexual violence service provision, justice responses, advocacy, and research revealed wide agreement that victim-centered, culturally informed, community-based collaborations should be at the heart of efforts to respond to violence (White et al., 2019)



NY • Grantee Perspective



OWV funding continues to allow In Our Own Voices, Inc. (IOOV) the opportunity to be a vital lifeline to LGBT victims/survivors (primarily Black/African-American and Latin@ victims/survivors) through culturally specific and affirming, comprehensive, wrap-around services. These services include providing much needed mental health support, as well as advocating in systems that have been historically exclusive to these communities. It allows IOOV the opportunity to be at “the table” where discussions are being held and add the voices of our communities where they would otherwise go unheard. OVV funding allows IOOV the opportunity to train and educate providers, the community, first responders, and others on the unique issues and cultural barriers impacting our communities so that they can be informed allies as we work towards equity in victim services and society as a whole.

IN OUR OWN VOICES, INC., NEW YORK



Studies have shown that the provision of trauma-informed, culturally sensitive services can significantly improve victims' sense of well-being (Serrata et al., 2020).

- Grantees received a total of **7,754** hotline calls;
 - The majority of these calls (**55%**) came from victims; and
 - Grantees used English, Hebrew, Russian, Spanish, and ASL when responding to these requests for information or assistance.

Victims Seeking Services

Grantees serve victims of domestic/sexual violence. Between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2019:

- The majority of victims served or partially served were victims of **sexual assault** (53%).



VT • Grantee Perspective

This funding has allowed us to intentionally focus on creating a network of support for immigrant farmworkers in Vermont and enhancing our capacities to more adequately and comprehensively serve LGBTQ+ and immigrant farmworker survivors. Each of our partner organizations brings unique knowledge and expertise to this collaboration, but we also had gaps in our service provision when it came to serving these specific populations. We have spent a substantial amount of time building rapport and learning about one another's work and communities, while also working to create sustainable change within our organizations. We have learned and are continuing to learn more about various barriers and challenges that immigrant farmworkers and LGBTQ+ survivors face, and have done work in our organizations to address and mitigate some of these barriers. We have participated in workshops, webinars, and conversations; looked at our policies and practices; assessed our language accessibility; and made relevant changes. These funds allowed our organizations to make inroads with communities and advocates that we otherwise would not have been able to with such focused efforts. We were able to work towards the creation of outreach materials, complete professional trainings, sit in community with target populations, and further build a network of response and care in the aftermath of violence. We have had access to more resources and support around working with immigrant farmworkers and LGBTQ+ survivors and we are striving to continually learn and improve upon our services.

PRIDE CENTER OF VERMONT

Figure 2 Provision of victim services by Underserved Program grantees, by type of presenting victimization

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

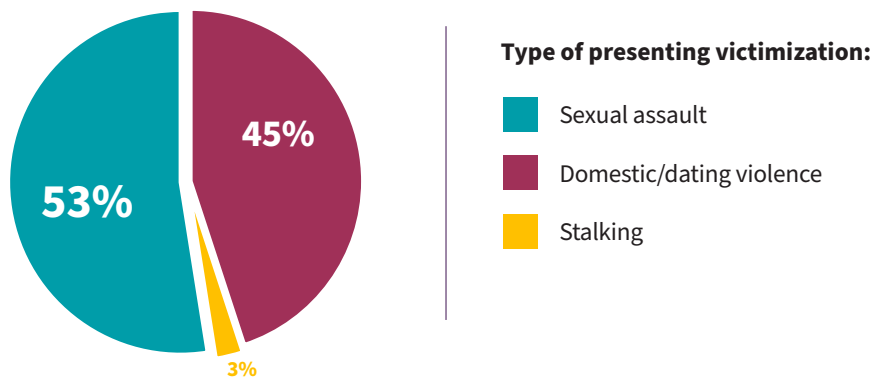


Table 3 | Victims seeking services with Underserved grant funds, July 2017–June 2019

Victims seeking services	6-month average	
Total victims seeking services	1,844	
Victims served	1,823	99%
Victims partially served	16	1%
Victims not served	6	0%

NOTE: "Partially served" represents victims who received some but not all of the service(s) they requested, provided those services were funded under the Underserved 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 Underserved Program grant.

Victims' Relationships to Offenders

Grantees serve victims of domestic/sexual violence. Between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2019:

- The majority of victims served or partially served were victimized by a **spouse or intimate partner** (57%).
- The remaining victims were most commonly victimized by a **family or household member** (19%), or in the context of a **dating relationship** (12%).



TX • Grantee Perspective

This funding allowed our Deaf SHARE staff to hire a staff interpreter who will increase SAFE's ability to serve Deaf survivors. Deaf survivors now have the choice to choose between Deaf staff, staff who are fluent in ASL, and hearing staff who will use the on-staff interpreter for effective communication. This allows them the full range of possible choices for their own comfort and privacy.

THE SAFE ALLIANCE, TEXAS

Figure 3 | Type of victimization by relationship to offender: **Domestic/dating violence** (6-month average)

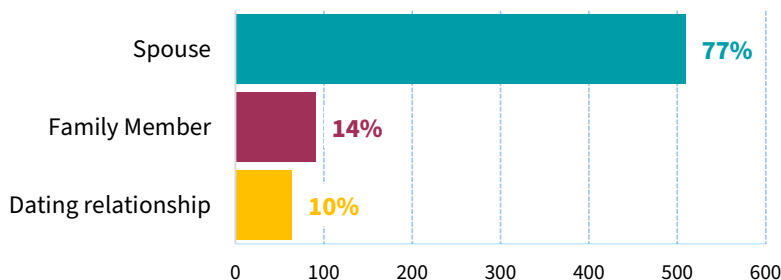


Figure 4 | Type of victimization by relationship to offender: **Sexual assault** (6-month average)

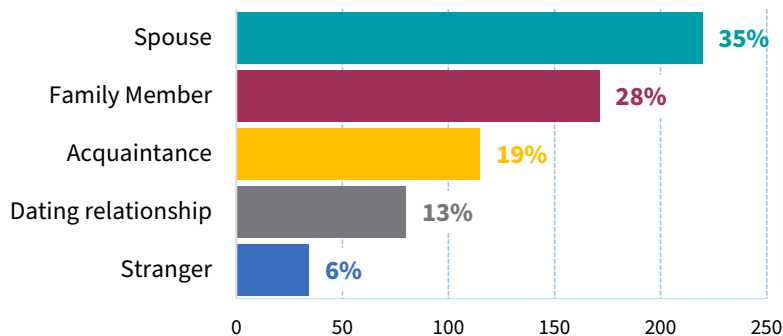
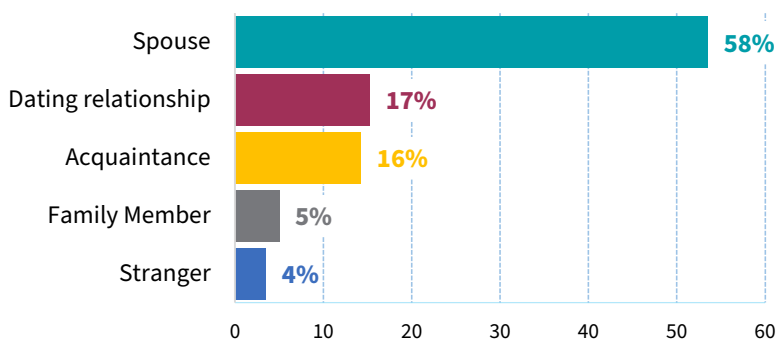


Figure 5 | Type of victimization by relationship to offender: **Stalking** (6-month average)



Research indicates that the general population of people with disabilities are two to five times more likely to experience domestic/sexual violence than people without disabilities (Breiding & Armour, 2015; McGilloway et al., 2018). The consequences of high rates of domestic/sexual violence among individuals who are Deaf and/or disabled are severe. People with disabilities may face significant barriers to disclosing abuse, such as dependence on caregivers who may be perpetrating the violence. They may experience other compounding forms of abuse such as destruction of their adaptive equipment and financial exploitation by their perpetrator (Curry et al., 2009; Shah et al., 2016). When these victims disclose abuse, they may risk protective intervention that could result in losing their independence or being compelled to leave their own homes, particularly if the abuser is also their caregiver (Curry et al., 2011; Robinson et al., 2017).





Spoken language and sign language interpreters can make a critical difference in a victim's experience, from the moment of disclosure through the justice process and healing from violence. Those who are specially trained in a trauma-informed approach can help ensure that Deaf, hard of hearing, and low English proficiency victims may communicate with service providers in a clear and transparent way and prevent re-traumatization (Bancroft et al., 2017).



NM • Grantee Perspective

This funding has enabled us to have a Community Promotora Coordinator Educator (CPOE) who has organized a Promotora program. We have fully trained four community member Promotoras who have been out in their own communities presenting on SA and advocating for survivors. Another group of eight Promotoras will begin training in July 2018. The CPOE is also out in the community providing education and information about sexual assault and resources. This brings in many survivors because when people in the community hear about the services we offer, they call to request them or call to ask how they can help. This resource is invaluable because it gives community members information about sexual assault and sexual assault resources and gets the word out in the community that people have the right to not be sexually assaulted and if it happens, they can call someone for help.

ENLACE COMUNITARIO, NEW MEXICO

Demographics of Victims Served and Partially Served

Grantees served or partially served an average of **1,839** victims during each 6-month period. The victims most frequently served or partially served were **white** (48%), **female** (79%), and between the ages of **25 and 59** (60%).

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

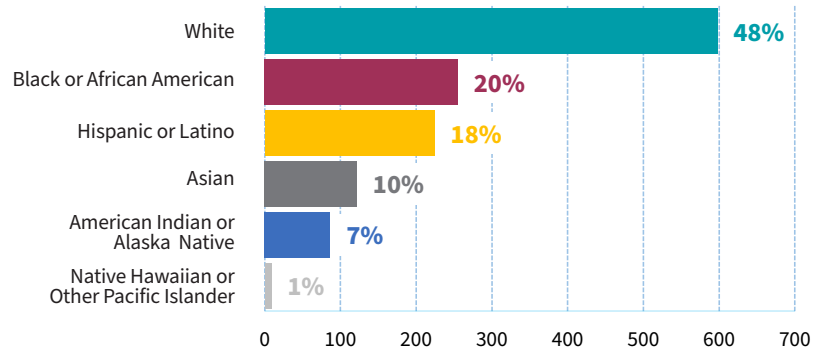


Figure 7 Demographics of victims served and partially served: **Gender** (6-month average)

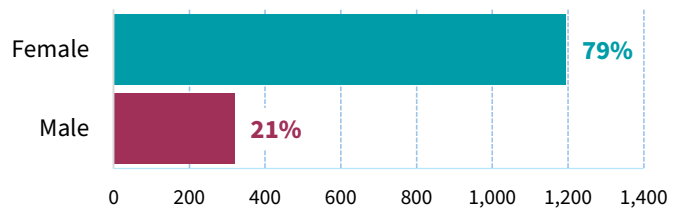


Figure 8 Demographics of victims served and partially served: **Age** (6-month average)

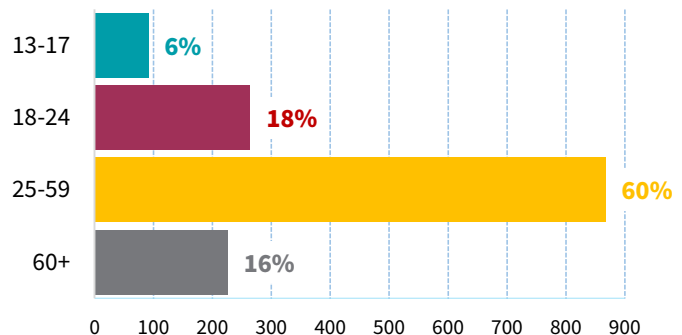
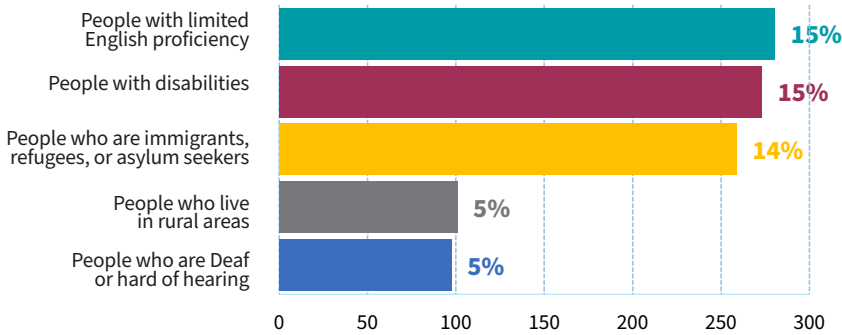


Figure 9 | Demographics of victims served and partially served: **Other** (6-month average)



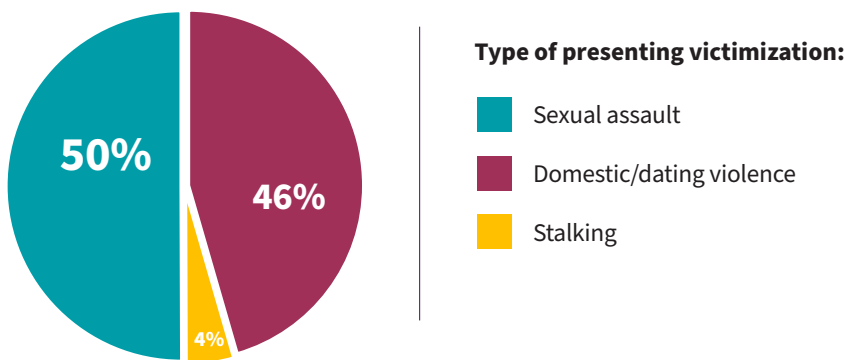
Secondary Victims

Secondary victims are individuals who are indirectly affected by domestic/sexual violence, including children, siblings, spouses or intimate partners, parents, grandparents, other relatives, friends, and neighbors.

- Grantees provided services to an average of **232** secondary victims during each 6-month period.

Figure 10 | Provision of services to secondary victims by Underserved Program grantees, by type of presenting victimization

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



Remaining Areas of Need

Grantees cited **access to culturally and linguistically competent victim services** as their biggest area of unmet need. They noted that **mainstream victim service providers sometimes struggled to properly meet the needs of underserved groups** due to:

- A lack of training in cultural sensitivity and working with marginalized groups;
- Individual biases and institutional discrimination against people from marginalized communities; and
- Insufficient coordination between social justice organizations and victim services providers.

IL • Grantee Perspective



This funding has allowed KAN-WIN and partners to increase our capacity to serve sexual assault survivors. It allows us to maintain an active advisory committee on sexual violence in the Asian American/immigrant community; to reach out to a greater number and variety of people in the Asian American/immigrant community; and to develop trainings for staff and volunteers on advocacy skills, empathetic listening, and trauma-informed practices for sexual assault victim advocacy.

KAN-WIN, ILLINOIS

NY • Grantee Perspective



The Underserved funding has helped us fill a gap and ensure that the victim advocate can holistically assist callers in cases where the attorney does not have the capacity to represent a victim-survivor. For example, the victim advocate has been instrumental in assisting callers who were unable to get full representation for their child support cases. The victim advocate assisted one victim-survivor in applying for an upward modification of child support and another in filing a violation petition for non-payment of child support. The advocate attended numerous court appearances with both of these victim-survivors who were tasked with representing themselves. She worked to emotionally support them on the day of their court appearances and passed on legal advice in the weeks leading up to the appearance.

SHALOM TASK FORCE INC., NEW YORK

IL • Grantee Perspective



The criminal justice system is becoming less and less an option for communities of color, especially for those who have concerns or mistrust of law enforcement due to police brutality, those who have immigration concerns, or those who are financially dependent on their abusers. As such, it is crucial to explore alternative mechanisms of community accountability, such as restorative justice, and what that looks like in situations of sexual violence.

HEART WOMEN AND GIRLS, ILLINOIS



OH • Grantee Perspective

Currently, the most significant area of need with regard to improving services continues to be cultural competence and humility training for providers to learn about and create safe and accessible resources for LGBTQI victims/survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking. SafeZone Member programs that have received SafeZone Project training have implemented LGBTQI-inclusive policies for staff and victims, have LGBTQI-specific resources, and practice inclusive and welcoming language that creates accessible programs and spaces for all survivors. However, as high turnover rates continue at many rape crisis and domestic violence programs, there is a need for ongoing training, technical assistance, and assessment of best practices for programs to utilize.

BUCKEYE REGION ANTI-VIOLENCE ORGANIZATION, OHIO



NJ • Grantee Perspective

Financial assistance continues to be a significant area of need for the older adults in our community. Many are on a fixed income and when a family member is financially abusing them, it is near impossible for them to get out of the situation and back on their feet without support. Many agencies that do offer financial assistance are limited on what they can provide and have many regulations and qualifications that an individual needs to meet before being eligible for assistance.

PROVIDENCE HOUSE-CATHOLIC CHARITIES, NEW JERSEY

Grantees reported that **service providers, religious leaders, judges, and law enforcement agencies need better cultural competency training in order to enhance services to victims.**

Many grantees also reported difficulty serving victims due to the **underreporting of domestic violence and sexual assault.** Victims were often hesitant to come forward due to:

- Fear of deportation;
- Fear of law enforcement and the criminal justice system;
- Fear for personal safety;
- The shame and stigma in their communities surrounding domestic violence/sexual assault; and
- A lack of culturally and linguistically responsive services.

Grantees highlighted the need to **help victims achieve self-sufficiency** through the provision of:

- Shelter and housing;
- Trauma-informed and culturally specific mental healthcare;
- Financial support; and
- Legal services.