



Little Hoover Commission Testimony
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California Partnership to End Domestic Violence
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About the Partnership

On behalf of the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence (the Partnership) and our network of domestic violence service providers, the survivors they serve, and allied organizations, thank you for soliciting our testimony regarding **California's response to intimate partner violence. The Partnership is California's recognized domestic violence coalition**, representing over 1,000 advocates, organizations and allied individuals across the state. Working at the local, state and national levels for nearly 40 years, the Partnership believes that by sharing resources and expertise, advocates and policymakers can end domestic violence. Every day we inspire, inform and connect all those concerned with this issue, **because together we're stronger.**

Intimate partner violence, also frequently referred to as domestic violence, is a pervasive and preventable issue impacting millions of Californians. An estimated 3.3 million California women and 1.6 million men experience contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking with intimate partner violence-related impact in their lifetime. The estimated lifetime economic burden of this violence is \$379 billion.¹ There were 110 domestic violence homicides in California in 2018, accounting for 10.7% of all California homicides where the contributing circumstance was known.² Responding to this need, domestic violence organizations answered over 170,000 crisis hotline calls, provided over 627,000 bed nights of safe shelter, and served nearly 55,000 new clients in FY 2017-18, the most recent year of available data.³ On just *one day in 2018*, **California's domestic violence programs served nearly 7,000 survivors**, including providing safe housing for 3,351 survivors and providing 3,552 adults and children with non-residential assistance and services, including counseling, legal advocacy, **and children's support groups.**⁴

At the Partnership, our work is focused on four primary approaches: 1) capacity building, training and technical assistance to support the field of domestic violence service providers in meeting the needs of the survivors and communities they serve; 2) advancing prevention efforts through state level work and supporting community-based efforts across California; 3) public policy change focused on improving laws, policies and systemic responses to the needs of survivors and communities; and 4) communications and public awareness work to shift the public discourse and social norms on the topic of domestic violence. These strategies collectively advance our vision of a California free from domestic violence.

At the forefront of our work are the over 200 domestic violence service providers and allied organizations within our Membership, who have a key role in guiding and informing our work. The voices of survivors are also present through the work of our Members and the **Partnership's Survivor Advisory Committee**. Our work reflects the full range of issues impacting survivors and the domestic violence service providers working across the state. This includes ensuring ongoing, stable and appropriate levels of funding for prevention and survivor services, as well as addressing intersections with housing, poverty and economic justice, immigration, the child welfare system, family law, firearms,

¹ Victim estimates: Smith, S., Chen, J., Basile, K., Gilbert, L., Merrick, M., Patel, N., et al. (2017, September 25, 2017). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010-2012 State Report. Retrieved October 2018 from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/nisvs/summaryreports.html>. Lifetime cost per victim estimates: Peterson, C., Kearns, M. C., McIntosh, W. L., Estefan, L. F., Nicolaidis, C., McCollister, K. E., et al. (2018). Lifetime Economic Burden of Intimate Partner Violence Among U.S. Adults. *Am J Prev Med*, 55(4), 433-444.

² "Homicide in California 2018." California Department of Justice, Division of California Justice Information Services, Bureau of Criminal Information and Analysis, Criminal Justice Statistics Center: 2019.

³ Joint Legislative Budget Committee Report, January 2019. California Office of Emergency Services.

⁴ National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEVDV). (2019). Domestic Violence Counts 2018: A 24-hour census of domestic violence shelters and services across the United States. Washington, DC.

and accountability and change for those who have caused harm, as well as work to prevent violence and abuse from ever occurring.

Survivors' lives are multi-dimensional, and every day we strive to reflect the fullness of those needs in our work. As such, who we work with is similarly wide and varied. We believe strongly that by working in coalition and partnership we can create more impactful and sustainable change. Just a few examples of the external partners central to our work are:

- California Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CALCASA), which provides leadership, vision and resources to rape crisis centers, individuals and other entities committed to ending sexual violence.
- Western Center on Law and Poverty, with whom we work to advance anti-poverty policy change and ensure CalWorks and CalFresh are more responsive to the needs of survivors. We also work closely with the Western Center on housing policy change to address the intersection of housing insecurity and homelessness as a result of domestic violence.
- National Housing Law Project, a key partner in state and federal housing protections for survivors.
- Work & Family Coalition, with whom we work to advance paid leave policies and benefits to support **California's families and reduce economic stress which can lead to violence.**
- **PolicyLink's Alliance for Boys and Men of Color**, who we work with to advance the intersections of racial and gender justice in our work to prevent and end domestic violence.
- Legal Aid At Work, our partner in addressing workplace protections for survivors of violence.
- California Immigrant Policy Center & Asian Americans Advancing Justice, two of our partners working to **address the needs of California's immigrant communities.**

In FY 17-18, over 60% of the **Partnership's funding came** from state and federal government grants, private foundation grants comprised just over a quarter of our budget, and event registration, contributions and sponsorships, membership dues and miscellaneous income rounded out our total annual income. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization our financials and annual report are available and can be accessed at <https://www.cpedv.org/annual-reports-financials>.

Interactions with state government agencies and officials

The Partnership consistently engages with state government agencies and officials to provide expert recommendations and a statewide perspective on the needs of domestic violence organizations and survivors. We participate as members of the following:

- **California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) Services*Training*Officers*Prosecutors (STOP) Violence Against Women (VAWA) Implementation Plan Committee**, a multi-disciplinary committee which advises Cal OES on its plan for administering federal VAWA funding to address domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking with funding for victim services, law enforcement, prosecution, and court responses.
- Cal OES Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Steering Committee. The VOCA Steering Committee was established to identify additional victim service needs, including training needs for those who work with crime victims, and to assist Cal OES in developing a strategic plan for victim assistance in California.
- Cal OES Domestic Violence Advisory Council (DVAC), as a non-voting member. The mission of the DVAC is to collaborate with Cal OES to ensure the safety and security of all Domestic Violence victims through the development of policies, procedures and priorities which promote effective and accessible services for victims.
- **Judicial Council of California's Violence Against Women Education Project (VAWEP) Planning Committee**. The goal of VAWEP is to provide current education and program support in the areas of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, and human trafficking. **The project's planning committee is composed of tribal court judges, state judicial officers, prosecutors, defense attorneys, attorneys with expertise in the field of**

domestic violence, victim advocates, and other subject matter experts. The planning committee guides the project staff in identifying key areas of focus and developing appropriate educational programming.

In addition to these formal councils and committees, the Partnership also engages with state government agencies through participation with Cal OES, California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Injury and Violence Prevention Branch Center for Healthy Communities, and CALCASA in a statewide prevention collaborative. Cal OES and CDPH also participate in a multi-**disciplinary statewide Leadership Team for the Partnership's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention intimate partner violence prevention grant.**

Finally, the Partnership is a partner to the legislature and administration in developing budget and legislative proposals to advance the needs of survivors. We educate and inform policy makers and regularly testify at committee hearings.

Challenges in Interactions with the State

The Commission specifically requested that we address any challenges or "pain points" in interactions with the state, from our perspective and that of our Members. **To begin, it's important to note that domestic violence service providers interact with a range of state agencies, and that survivors' lives are directly impacted by these systems every day.** My testimony here will touch on several key areas, but we recognize that this is a non-exhaustive list. We look forward to the additional comments and feedback that direct service providers and other expert stakeholders will submit to address additional challenges and areas of need, from CalWORKs and CalFresh to batterer intervention programs, victim compensation, and many topics in between.

Grant Fund Disbursement: We consistently hear from our Members about their positive interactions and relationships with Cal OES' **grant administration team**, and there is much to praise in how Cal OES has administered the funds they are responsible for. One challenge we do regularly hear from Cal OES-funded organizations about is the process and length of time that can take to receive their grant payments. The grants operate on a reimbursement basis, meaning that nonprofit organizations must spend grant funds and then submit for reimbursement. The payment request process requires a reimbursement form to be completed with physical signatures of the authorized Project Director and **Financial Officer, and mailed to Cal OES' Accounting in Sacramento.** Cal OES then has 30 days to process the request, and the **State Controller's office another 15 days,** not including mailing time. By contrast, grants received directly from the federal Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women allow grantees to submit their reimbursement request online and receive funds through electronic funds transfer, typically within 72 hours. Changing to such a structure could simplify processes and provide a far more timely payment for organizations.

Many domestic violence programs receive multiple Cal OES grants, are expending significant funds to serve their communities, and face a significant wait to receive payment. Cal OES does allow community based organizations with cash flow challenges to request an advance, but the advance amount is capped at 17% if the organization submits monthly billing, and 25% if they submit quarterly. These wait times, especially if further delayed for any reason, can require programs to tap into lines of credit and other financial reserves, **and strain organization's budgets. This also** presents a significant barrier to entry for community based programs that do not have the financial resources or reserves to operate for an extended period of time without payment.

It should be noted that these challenges are not necessarily specific to Cal OES. Federal and state funds frequently **operate on a reimbursement structure, and changing that is beyond Cal OES' ability.** The Partnership is unaware of which components of the requirements for original signatures, forms and payments sent via the mail, and the timeline for processing payments are the decisions of Cal OES, or if they are dictated by other components of the state government. Nonetheless, whether specific to Cal OES or widespread among state agencies, these are areas that could be streamlined to provide a less burdensome process and faster reimbursement times.

State's Response to Homelessness: Domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness among women. Between 22 and 57% of all homeless women report that domestic violence was the immediate cause of their homelessness.⁵ Additionally, 38% of all victims of domestic violence become homeless at some point in their lives.⁶ A victim of domestic violence will often leave an abuser multiple times before finally escaping the violence, therefore experiencing multiple periods of homelessness.⁷

Given this context, it is unsurprising that homelessness and the lack of affordable housing are among the most urgent and pressing issues that survivors and service providers face. Domestic violence organizations are working to meet this need through emergency shelter, transitional housing, and domestic violence housing first programs. Cal OES administers the following grant programs which address these specific housing needs:

- Domestic Violence Assistance Program (DV): This program funds 102 domestic violence organizations which provide 14 mandated **services, including emergency "safe" homes or shelters for victims and families.** Grantees provided 18,446 victims and children with emergency shelter for a total of 627,410 bed nights in FY 17-18. In FY 18-19, the program was funded through:
 - \$28.6M State General Fund (including \$8M one-time funds)
 - \$235,503 California Voluntary Tax Contributions
 - \$24.7M Federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)
 - \$664,000 Federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)
 - \$7.7M Federal Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA)
- Transitional Housing (XH) Program: This program was developed to create, and/or enhance, transitional housing for crime victims, including transitional housing, short-term housing assistance, and supportive services that allow victims to move into permanent housing via a path that best fits their needs. It funds 38 grantees, including seven specifically serving youth and transitional age youth, providing safe housing and supportive services to victims of crimes such as domestic violence, human trafficking, and child or elder abuse. Grantees provided 2,027 clients with transitional housing, for a total of 430,234 bed nights. In FY 18-19, the program was funded through:
 - \$8.9M Federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)
- Domestic Violence Housing First (XD/KD) Program: This funds 65 organizations to implement a service delivery model that focuses on helping survivors get into safe and stable housing as quickly as possible, and on providing services to help them move forward with their lives. The three pillars of the DVHF model, designed to promote housing stability, are: survivor-driven, trauma-informed mobile advocacy, flexible funding assistance, and community engagement. In FY 17-18 the program served 3,505 survivors and for the period of July 1, 2016 when the program began through December 31, 2019 the program is funded through:
 - \$19.5M Federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)⁸

These programs are almost entirely funded through federal formula grants – of the \$90 million in funding for these three grant programs, the state general fund contributes just 32%. Were we to add in all of the additional victim services

⁵ Wilder Research Center, Homelessness in Minnesota 2003 22 (2004); Center for Impact Research, Pathways to and from Homelessness: Women and Children in Chicago Shelters 3 (2004); Nat'l Center on Family Homelessness & Health Care for the Homeless Clinicians' Network, Social Supports for Homeless Mothers, 14 26 (2003); Inst. For Children & Poverty, The Hidden Migration: Why New York City Shelters Are Overflowing with Families (2004); Homes for the Homeless & Inst. For Children & Poverty, Ten Cities 1997-1998: A Snapshot of Family Homelessness Across America 3 (1998); Virginia Coalition for the Homeless, 1995 Shelter Provider Survey (1995)(out of print), cited in Nat'l Coalition for the Homeless, Domestic Violence and Homelessness: NCH Fact Sheet #8 (1999).

⁶ Charlene K. Baker, Cook, Sarah L., Norris, Fran H., "Domestic Violence and Housing Problems: A Contextual Analysis of Women's Help-seeking, Received Informal Support, and Formal System Response," *Violence Against Women* 9, no. 7 (2003): 754-783.

⁷ A. Browne & S. Bassuk, Intimate Violence in the Lives of Homeless and Poor Housed Women, *American Journal Orthopsychiatry*, 67 (2) 261-278 (April 1997).

⁸ Joint Legislative Budget Committee Report, January 2019. California Office of Emergency Services.

grant programs administered by Cal OES, the state's relative contribution only shrinks. These federal funds are essential to the important work happening across California, but such heavy reliance on federal funding leaves programs vulnerable to delays during federal shutdowns and to funding cuts whether targeted or through across-the-board mechanisms such as sequestration.

Separately, the state has provided significant funding in the past two years to address California's continued homelessness crisis. In the most recent state budget, \$650 million in one-time funding to continuums of care. However, what we consistently hear from domestic violence service providers is that those dollars will not make their way to programs dedicated to survivors. The state has an important role to play in ensuring that funding reach this population of homeless individuals, and should consider taking steps such as requiring that set percentage of homelessness funds go to programs serving survivors. The state could also allocate an increased amount of funding to domestic violence shelter-based programs as well as provide state funds to the Transitional Housing and Domestic Violence Housing First grant programs.

Law Enforcement Response: In 2018, California law enforcement agencies responded to 166,890 domestic violence-related calls for assistance, including 1,383 calls involving a firearm.⁹ While law enforcement has a critical role as a first responder to incidents of domestic violence, this system can cause increased harm for survivors, and in many communities survivors are unwilling to reach out to law enforcement. We must, as a state, support the development of and invest in alternatives to criminal justice responses and provide options for survivors seeking safety and accountability.

A 2015 study by the National Domestic Violence Hotline explored the effect that law enforcement has on reporting partner violence. The study found that more than half of women experiencing partner abuse said calling the police would make things worse. One in four women who experienced domestic violence said that they would not call the police in the future. Two-thirds or more said they were afraid the police would not believe them or do nothing. For those who had previously contacted police for partner violence, 44 percent reported no impact on their safety, and 31 percent said that they felt less safe.¹⁰

In conversation with our Members, we also continue to hear a common theme of law enforcement not appropriately responding to the severity of restraining order violations. The Partnership has developed tools to support domestic violence service providers in addressing this issue with their local law enforcement agencies, but it remains a persistent challenge statewide.

Another specific area of concern and challenge with respect to law enforcement response is responding to the needs of immigrant survivors. In a 2017 nationwide survey of domestic violence advocates and legal service providers, 78% of respondents indicated that immigrant survivors were sharing that they had concerns about contacting law enforcement. **As one respondent shared, "clients are afraid of calling the police because they believe that they will be deported if they do, especially if their abuser is a U.S. citizen. They think law enforcement will listen to someone who is a citizen of this country more than to an undocumented person."**¹¹ In March 2017, Los Angeles Police Chief Charlie Beck reported that **reports of domestic violence from the city's Latino residents had fallen by 10% since the beginning of the year amid immigration concerns.**¹²

⁹ "Crime in California 2018." California Department of Justice, Division of California Justice Information Services, Bureau of Criminal Information and Analysis, Criminal Justice Statistics Center: 2019.

¹⁰ T.K. Logan and Roberta Valente, "Who Will Help Me? Domestic Violence Survivors Speak Out About Law Enforcement Responses," *The National Domestic Violence Hotline*, Washington, D.C., 2015, <http://www.thehotline.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/09/NDVH-2015-Law-Enforcement-Survey-Report.pdf>

¹¹ 2017 Advocate and Legal Service Survey Regarding Immigrant Survivors, Available at: <http://nationallatinonetwork.org/images/2017%20Advocate%20and%20Legal%20Service%20Survey%20Key%20Findings.pdf>

¹² "Latinos are reporting fewer sexual assaults amid a climate of fear in immigrant communities, LAPD says", *Los Angeles Times*, March 21, 2017. Available at: <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-in-immigrant-crime-reporting-drops-20170321-story.html>.

Firearms Prohibitions Enforcement: The presence of firearms in a domestic violence situation increases the likelihood of fatal violence and the severity of non-lethal violence. An abusive **partner's** access to a firearm is a serious threat, making it five times more likely that a woman will be killed.¹³ Of all women shot to death by others in the U.S., half were shot by their intimate partners.¹⁴ This includes mass shootings: in 54% of mass shootings where four or more people were killed, the shooter killed an intimate partner.¹⁵

Even when the presence of a firearm does not lead to death, the traumatic impacts can be devastating. Nearly 1 million women alive today report being shot or shot at by an intimate partner.¹⁶ About 4.5 million women alive today report that an intimate partner threatened them using a gun.¹⁷ In nearly two thirds of cases in which a gun was present in the home in which the abuser and victim cohabitated, the abuser used the firearm against the victim, usually threatening to injure or kill her.¹⁸

Recognizing this dangerous and deadly intersection, individuals who are subject to a domestic violence restraining order or have been convicted of domestic violence are prohibited from owning or possessing firearms. However, enforcement of this prohibition, particularly following the issuance of a domestic violence restraining order, is lacking. Once a restraining order is issued, the individual must either surrender their firearms, or they must be seized by law enforcement. We consistently hear from our Members about a lack of follow up from the courts, or seizure and enforcement by local law enforcement. In some communities, dedicated funding for enforcement has been beneficial. For example, San Mateo County has a firearms compliance unit run by the Sheriff with one assigned deputy who reviews **all restraining orders to check for the presence of firearms, contact respondents, and if they haven't voluntarily surrendered their weapons**, the deputy will go out to seize the weapons.

Later this fall Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence will be hosting two regional convenings on the implementation of firearms relinquishment and seizure policies. These convenings will address best practices and challenges surrounding implementation, building on ongoing statewide efforts to prevent gun violence. We are looking forward to seeing what strategies and approaches can emerge to support work across our communities. Recommendations from these sessions may be of interest to the Commission.

Civil Court Responses: Survivors access the court system seeking justice and relief on a range of issues. Two systemic challenges that survivors frequently experience as barriers are the lack of court reporters and a lack of interpreters. In some counties, court reporters are not available for domestic violence proceedings, and even when courts do have court reporters available, many survivors cannot afford the cost of purchasing a transcript. Providing court reporters in all proceedings, and making transcripts more easily available to those unable to pay would significantly benefit survivors.

With respect to interpreters, there are consistently not enough interpreters, especially for any language other than Spanish. There is a particular need for more interpreters at self-help centers. In some counties, the wait can be all day, **and can lead to a survivor's case being heard at the end of the calendar or rescheduling to another day. For a survivor in crisis, these delays are exceedingly challenging. When interpreters are provided, they do not always meet the survivor's needs, either not knowing key legal terms relevant to the domestic violence proceedings or using legal terms that clients don't understand and not providing a full explanation to the survivor.** While interpreters may be provided for the domestic violence calendar, it can be challenging to have them provided for other parts of family law proceedings. **Ensuring that interpreters are provided in a timely manner can improve a survivor's ability to access our courts.**

¹³ J.C. Campbell, et al., "Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results from a Multisite Case Control Study," *American Journal of Public Health* 93, no. 7 (2003): 1089–1097.

¹⁴ Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reporting Program: Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR), 2012-2016.

¹⁵ "Mass Shootings in the United States: 2009–2017," Everytown for Gun Safety, December 6, 2018, <https://everytownresearch.org/reports/mass-shootings-analysis/>.

¹⁶ Susan B. Sorenson and Rebecca A. Schut, "Nonfatal Gun Use in Intimate Partner Violence: A Systematic Review of the Literature," *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 19, no. 4 (2018): 431–442.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Susan B. Sorenson and Douglas J. Wiebe, "Weapons in the Lives of Battered Women," *American Journal of Public Health* 94, no. 8 (2004): 1412–1417.

For undocumented immigrant survivors, barriers in accessing interpretation services can be just one component of their fear and reluctance to seek legal remedies. These survivors also deal with the fear that seeking such remedies could expose them to immigration consequences and put them at risk of detention and deportation. These are threats survivors often hear from their abuser, and that our current climate makes all too real. In a 2017 nationwide survey of domestic violence advocates and legal service providers, 3 out of 4 advocates reported that immigrant survivors have concerns about going to court for a matter related to the abuser/offender. Echoing feedback we have received from **many California advocates, a respondent to the survey shared**, “after the news broke that a woman who was filing for an order of protection against her abuser was deported, many of my clients became concerned that something similar **would happen to them.**” 43% of the survey respondents had worked with survivors who dropped civil or criminal cases because they were fearful to continue.¹⁹

Multiple changes in federal policies and practice have chipped away at the protections our systems have built to ensure a survivor of domestic violence could access services and the legal system without such fear. While California has taken several steps to address these issues, it remains an area in need of continued attention.

Custody proceedings: We frequently hear from members about challenges with **the ways in which survivors’ experiences** of abuse are discounted throughout the custody process. Themes include survivors being pressured to mediate and settle cases and/or being forced to do parenting classes or other remedial activities in the same way as the abusive parent, and custody orders that lean in the favor of the abusive parent, despite the abuse. One of the most devastating experiences **that survivors can encounter is the charge of “failing to protect” the children from witnessing the domestic violence or** living in a home where domestic violence abuse occurs. This can lead to survivors losing custody of their children, and even to criminal charges and jail time. Such situations, and the role of our court systems and child welfare in failure to protect cases was highlighted in a recent Capital & Main article, *Child Law Penalizes Moms for Abusive Partners.*²⁰ Criminalizing survivors for the abuse they experience is not how California should address this issue.

Gaps in Services

Gaps in Intervention

Domestic violence service providers do exceptional work in their communities, and stretch limited funds to have the maximum impact possible. Despite their dedicated efforts, gaps remain between the demand for services and the **program’s capacity. While on one day in 2018 programs served nearly 7,000 survivors, on that same day nearly 700** requests went unmet, including 571 requests for housing.²¹ When survivors reach out for help, we must ensure that the services they need are available.

Gaps exist in all communities, and in a state as populous and diverse as California, the specific gaps look different in each community. Some populations of survivors who are especially likely to experience challenges in accessing appropriate services include:

- LGBTQ+ survivors – California has only a small number of LGBTQ+ organizations providing dedicated programming to address intimate partner violence. Many mainstream domestic violence organizations have developed LGBTQ+ programming and worked to ensure their services are inclusive of this community, but more work is needed. As one advocate shared, **“A transgender woman called our agency to learn about our support program for LGBTQ+ people. It was hard for her to navigate support and resources that are culturally competent and friendly towards her. She did not feel safe at a homeless shelter and the only LGBTQ+ shelter had a two-to-three-month waitlist.”**²²

¹⁹ 2017 Advocate and Legal Service Survey Regarding Immigrant Survivors, Available at:

<http://nationallatinonetwork.org/images/2017%20Advocate%20and%20Legal%20Service%20Survey%20Key%20Findings.pdf>

²⁰ Angelika Albaladejo. *Child Law Penalizes Moms for Abusive Partners.* Capital & Main. Published on October 16, 2019. Available at: <https://capitalandmain.com/child-law-penalizes-moms-for-abusive-partners-10-16>.

²¹ National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEVDV). (2019). Domestic Violence Counts 2018: A 24-hour census of domestic violence shelters and services across the United States. Washington, DC.

²² Ibid.

- Culturally specific programming – **it’s essential for survivors to be able to access services that are grounded in their culture**, and there are a limited number of programs that are specific to racial and ethnic communities.
- Native survivors – American Indian and Alaska Native women experience domestic violence at rates higher than any other population in the United States. Tribal lands and native communities in California are often isolated and rural, compounding barriers to providing the services these survivors and communities deserve.
- Immigrant survivors face specific barriers in accessing services, including overcoming fear and threats from their abuser that seeking help will lead to deportation. Immigration status adds an additional complicating **layer to a survivor’s case, and not all programs have the legal resources or expertise to fully address these** items. Like with all survivors from specific cultural communities, it can be important for immigrant survivors to connect with programs that understand their cultural background and context. For survivors for whom English is not their primary language, locating an advocate who can support them in their primary language can be an additional barrier.
- Individuals with disabilities experience domestic violence at higher rates than those without disabilities,²³ and can experience barriers when reaching out for help, including communication, physical, programmatic and attitudinal.²⁴ While service providers actively work to remove barriers and serve survivors with disabilities, there is more to do to ensure that survivors with disabilities can receive the services they need in environments that fully meet their needs.

In addition to these identities, survivors in rural communities face unique barriers in accessing services. Large geographic distances and a lack of public transportation can make simply travelling to an appointment with a counselor, attending a court hearing, or any other of a number of activities challenging for any survivor without reliable transportation.

California’s rural communities also often experience shortages of job opportunities and available housing for survivors to access. Programs in these communities often dedicate significant funding to providing transportation for survivors, and in supporting their own staff in traveling long distances to support survivors. While the total number of individuals served by a rural program is often lower than that of their urban counterparts, the costs for transportation and other services can be significantly higher. We hear often that their lower service numbers are a significant disadvantage in securing competitive grants or other funding, since their impact may not appear as large as more urban programs. But in counties the size of some small states, there is often only one domestic violence program. They are a lifeline, quite literally, for those in their area. Another compounding issue impacting rural programs is the reality of fewer financial resources at the county level to support the programs’ work. Domestic violence shelter based programs across California receive funding through marriage license fees and fees assessed to individuals convicted of domestic violence, and both of these fees are collected and distributed at the county level. Smaller population sizes result in lower amounts of funding.

Conversely, California’s urban areas face their own challenges, including the sheer size of the population within their service delivery area, the diversity of cultures, languages, and needs to address. The state’s homelessness crisis is especially acute in many urban areas, as is a lack of affordable housing.

The Violence Against Women Act has a dedicated funding stream for traditionally underserved communities, and defines **underserved populations to include “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).” Cal OES has utilized** federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds to create a California-specific grant program to address a wide range of underserved crime victim communities. More resources dedicated to

²³ E. Harrell, “Crimes Against Persons with Disabilities, 2008–2010 - Statistical Tables,” Bureau of Justice Statistics, last modified February 25, 2014, <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/capd10st.pdf> (accessed June 17, 2015).

²⁴ Nancy Smith, Sandra Harrell, Jaclyn Smith, and Ashley Demyan. Measuring Capacity to Serve Sexual Assault Survivors with Disabilities: Residential Domestic Violence Programs. New York, NY: Vera Institute of Justice, 2015.

traditionally unserved and underserved communities would benefit the state's ability to provide services by and for those communities, in ways that are culturally responsive and culturally grounded.

As was discussed earlier, there are steps that the state can take to simplify grant management and provide funds in a timelier manner. Even with those changes, at the core there is simply not enough funding to meet the need. Like most nonprofits, domestic violence programs are experts at trying to do more with less. But the simple reality is that doing more requires more. The most direct way the state can create a positive change is to invest more state dollars into responses, and into prevention. The state general fund currently invests only \$20.6 million towards domestic violence services, divided among 102 programs. At barely 50 cents per Californian, this is not nearly enough to address the complex needs of survivors. In addition to increasing funding, California can provide increased flexibility for those funds. Currently, to receive the state funds, programs *must* provide 14 mandated services, including operating a 24/7 emergency shelter. This required structure for services locks many programs out of state funds, and limits current **grantees' ability to consider any alternate structures. California must continue to support the essential work of the currently-funded programs, and also invest in other service delivery models.**

Lack of Prevention Funding

One of the most glaring gaps in the state's response to domestic violence is the lack of support for prevention efforts.

The state general fund provides no ongoing funds dedicated to prevention. In the FY 18-19 budget, California provided \$5 million in one-time funding for domestic violence prevention and the FY 19-20 budget provides \$5 million in one-time funding to address both domestic and sexual violence. In addition to this, the California Department of Public Health utilizes a portion of fees collected from those convicted of domestic violence to support their prevention work. This is not nearly enough to meaningfully address such pervasive social conditions, and the lack of ongoing investment limits the ability of programs to generate the social changes needed.

Failing to invest in prevention only ensures that the conditions, norms, attitudes and behaviors that lead to domestic violence will continue to exist. We will continue to need greater investments in crisis intervention services, and face the lifelong impacts of trauma and abuse being perpetrated on so many Californians. Survivors and their families will continue to bear emotional, physical, and economic impacts, and our communities and the state will continue to bear costs from the impact on our healthcare system, lost economic productivity, and the costs of law enforcement response, prosecution, incarceration, and probation. It is financially inefficient for Californians to continue shouldering such costs, and unacceptable for us not to do more to prevent this violence. Thriving communities and healthy relationships can prevail over domestic violence. To achieve this vision, California needs to make strategic investments and provide funding for prevention projects. While such a change will not be immediately achievable, this is the long-term focus that we need from the state, and the investment which makes the most long-term economic sense for the state.

Strategic Planning

Cal OES already undertakes state planning as part of their federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) and Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) state grants, which provide the majority of funding available to California for victim services and prevention. The goal is for these plans to align and collectively create a road map for how to best distribute funding, and to include considerations of geographic diversity and the needs of underserved communities, among other topics. These state planning processes also include required consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. As the FVPSA State Administrators Guide describes the FVPSA State Plan, **"The goal is to collaboratively develop a comprehensive plan that is reflective and responsive to the holistic needs of victims of domestic violence and their children, taking into consideration service levels, priorities and economic conditions within the state. Survivors experience many consequences of victimization, including financial instability, unemployment, chronic illness, damaged credit, homelessness, chemical dependency, and mental and behavioral health issues. All of these should be considered when administrators are developing the state's application and state plan."**²⁵

²⁵Navigating the Family Violence Prevention and Services Program: A Guide for State and Territorial Administrators", U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families. November 2012.
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fysb/fvpsa_admin_guide_20121119_0.pdf

When discussing the idea of further strategic planning with domestic violence service providers across the state, many raised questions about the goal of such a process beyond what has already been done, and expressed that the benefit of such a process was not immediately apparent. Several service providers raised the idea that planning at more of a local level is often more impactful and allows for better addressing the nuances of a particular community's dynamics and needs. This local level planning is already occurring in many communities, and allows for the coordination of services within a particular region. In a state as large and diverse as California, those community-specific dynamics may be lost at the state level. We heard this as a concern specifically from our rural communities, and from those working with traditionally unserved or underserved and culturally specific communities.

The development of an additional strategic plan is not something that we recommend as a priority at this time. However, should a strategic plan be undertaken, we would urge the state to ensure that the voices of survivors, service providers and community stakeholders working in communities all across California be included in a meaningful way, and especially from communities that have historically been marginalized. The state plan requirements for VAWA, VOCA, and FVPSA provide a clear starting point for the stakeholders to include. We also recognize that there is no substitute for in person conversation, especially when held in the community that you are hoping to address. At the Partnership we conducted a series of 11 listening sessions in communities all across California in 2016 and 2017, very intentionally travelling to all geographic areas of the state, and holding a series of sessions in various rural areas of California.²⁶ This yielded far richer discussion, and impressed upon us the particular needs of various communities in ways that convening people on a conference call or in Sacramento ever can. We would strongly recommend that the state consider a similar model of engagement if they conduct a strategic plan.

Prioritizing Resources

The limited investment that California already makes towards victim services is already stretched to its limits. Any re-prioritization of these funds would mean reducing dollars from an area of need to serve another, and we do not recommend this strategy. Instead, we recommend that the state make a significant additional investment of resources and prioritize:

- 1) Increasing funds to support victim services and ensuring those dollars can reach a range of programs, not limited to only those whose services include a 24/7 emergency shelter;
- 2) Dedicating homelessness funding to domestic violence programs addressing the housing needs of survivors; and
- 3) Providing ongoing funding for prevention efforts.

Investments in these ways are smart uses of the state's resources in the long term, as the state can significantly reduce the \$379 billion estimated lifetime economic burden of this violence.²⁷

Additional Recommendations

We have laid out a number of recommendations for the state throughout this testimony, which provide a broad view of key areas of focus for the state. We are grateful for the range of partners and direct service providers who will undoubtedly also submit a range of recommendations within their areas of expertise. We trust that the commission will seriously consider and incorporate all of their feedback into the final report and recommendations.

We hope it has become clear throughout this testimony that **survivors' lives and their needs in healing from trauma and building lives safe and free from harm are multifaceted and complex. They and the programs which serve them are impacted by a wide range of state government agencies. We must continue to strengthen our state's responses, and also build a meaningful state focus and investment in prevention.**

²⁶ Blue Skies Listening Tour Summary Report. California Partnership to End Domestic Violence. 2017. Available at: <https://www.cpedv.org/publication/blue-skies-listening-tour-summary-report>

²⁷ Victim estimates: Smith, S., Chen, J., Basile, K., Gilbert, L., Merrick, M., Patel, N., et al. (2017, September 25, 2017). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010-2012 State Report. Retrieved October 2018 from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/nisvs/summaryreports.html>. Lifetime cost per victim estimates: Peterson, C., Kearns, M. C., McIntosh, W. L., Estefan, L. F., Nicolaidis, C., McCollister, K. E., et al. (2018). Lifetime Economic Burden of Intimate Partner Violence Among U.S. Adults. *Am J Prev Med*, 55(4), 433-444.