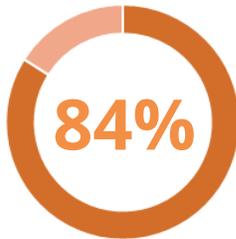


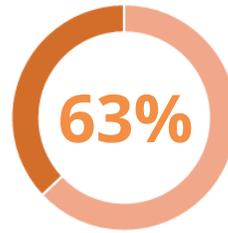
# SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS IN MASSACHUSETTS MUST BE PRIORITIZED

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, SDV program needs supported a budget increase request of \$5.38M in Massachusetts state funding to increase advocacy and outreach for every rape crisis center (RCC), community based SDV provider and DV emergency shelter provider. These needs are all the more present and growing amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

**A 2019 survey of 49 JDI member programs providing sexual assault and domestic violence services revealed that:**



Programs experienced an increase in request for services between FY18 - FY19



Programs were unable to meet the demand for services

## Bilingual and bicultural staff are critical for survivor-centered programming

"When seeking services, if served in their language by someone who truly understands their culture [victims] will accept services."

240

Languages are spoken throughout the Commonwealth

61%

Programs faced challenges meeting the needs of immigrant and/or limited English proficiency populations

**COVID-19 has laid bare inequities of access to services and resources. Vulnerable populations need access to culturally relevant and trauma-informed SDV resources in their communities.**

100% of programs expressed a need to increase services to survivors who are:

- Black women
- LGBTQ
- Immigrants
- Deaf and hard of hearing
- Have Limited English Proficiency
- Have an intellectual and/or developmental disability



"Outreach goes hand in hand with direct services. If informed in their language victims know where to seek services."

Too many survivors are forced to quarantine with persons causing them harm. Programs expect a surge in request for all services in the coming months as our communities have more mobility.

## A CUT TO FUNDING WOULD BE DEVASTATING

For questions please contact JDI Policy Director Hema Sarang-Sieminski at [hsarang-sieminski@janedoe.org](mailto:hsarang-sieminski@janedoe.org) or 617-557-1808

# THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

## A closer look at the impact of COVID-19 on victims and survivors of sexual and domestic violence reveals:

### Adults and youth quarantining in unsafe homes

- Stay at home orders have unintentionally created situations where people are quarantining in unsafe homes with someone causing them harm.
- Stay at home orders and closures of non-essential businesses have cut survivors off from points of social connection -- a hallmark of abuse exacerbated by this pandemic.
- School closures means youth in violent homes are more likely to be exposed to violence. Likewise, youth who are at risk of violence at home now lack a safe place. Many LGBTQQI+ youth report feeling unsafe in unsupportive homes.

**More than one half of survivors of sexual assault report being assaulted by someone they know. (NISVS 2012)**

### Increased calls, increased severity of violence

- Victim calls to hotlines now express greater urgency and increased severity of violence.
- SDV programs report an increase in requests for services since the stay-at-home order
- Rape crisis centers have reported a decrease in requests for medical advocacy--survivors are afraid to seek services from hospitals.

**Sexual violence increases at times of disasters. (NSVRC)**

### A housing and shelter system in need of change

- Already full shelters expect an increase in request for shelter as victims of violence seek to leave violent relationships exacerbated by the pandemic.
- The risk of losing permanent housing due to inability to pay rent or mortgage is exacerbated by the economic impact of COVID-19.
- Programs need specialized housing advocates to help survivors navigate and enter permanent housing--depopulating shelters helps shelters to better adhere to social distancing requirements.

**Survivors need access to safe and stable permanent housing.**

