

WOMEN'S FUND FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE INITIATIVE

This document summarizes mid-year grantee reports for the Freedom from Violence Initiative of the Women's Fund. Eight grantees and community partners (Magdalene Omaha, Immigrant Legal Center, WCA, Youth Emergency Services, Survivors Rising, Nebraska Alliance of Child Advocacy Centers, Project Harmony, Nebraska Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence) submitted mid-year grantee reports describing their work from January to December 2018. Key accomplishments are described below.

Key Accomplishments to Date

Infrastructure Building

For many organizations, activities focused on recruiting, hiring, onboarding and training new staff. Across organizations, 10 new staff were hired. In preparation of the implementation of new programs and partnerships, organizations focused on clarifying practices and policies such as the development of medical clinic processes, referral processes, screening tools, process for responding to survivors afterhours, and social media policies. Other organizations conducted community listening sessions to inform program design and niches within the larger service provider community. A survivor-led small business, Thistle Lights, officially launched, including securing office space and initiating retail operations.

Front Line Staff Support

To be inclusive of the needs and availability of multiple agencies and individuals, providers have the opportunity to participate in varying-intensity resilience strategies grounded in mindful-based stress reduction, trauma-informed care, circle practice, and psycho-education provided by Julie Luzarraga and Abra Poindexter. These resilience strategies are designed to support individual providers, agency teams and the interconnected provider community engaging survivors of sexual exploitation and sexual assault/domestic violence.

Trainings

Organizations also spent significant time developing training standards and implementing trainings for professional audiences. This process includes researching best practices, social justice approaches to trafficking, impacts on particular populations (LGBTQ+, Latinx, Indigenous, Black and other people of color, male-identifying and immigrant populations), and the development of legal training for legal professionals. Survivors shared their stories and lived experiences with college and medical students, criminal justice professionals and forensic nurses.

Survivors Served

Expanded services became available for survivors seeking holistic supports and legal services and increased efforts were made for early identification of youth at risk of exploitation.



Additional and Continued Support Needed

Grantees reported the following opportunities for additional and ongoing support.

Continued and Expanded Funding to Meet Ongoing and Emergent Community Needs

- Staff experience tension between meeting immediate client needs and investing in long-term strategies, such as targeted outreach efforts and efforts to increase identification of youth and adult survivors not actively seeking services.
- High demand for Spanish-speaking staff exceeds available resources: therapists, trained advocates, attorneys, and other legal staff.
- Additional discretionary funds to help meet the needs of families.

Leadership in Policy and Community Awareness for the Needs of Immigrant Survivors

It is crucial to defend and advance immigrants' interests through policy and advocacy work, as well as through outreach and direct services. Grantees recommend prioritizing implications for immigrant victims when advocating for effective policy solutions at the state and local levels.

