



The Impact of COVID-19 Intensifies the Shadow Pandemic of Domestic Violence in New Jersey

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Domestic violence rates have increased in New Jersey since the advent of the COVID-19 crisis despite a robust response by our State government and social services agencies to combat this rise in intimate partner abuse. While domestic violence is a longstanding problem, it now co-exists as a kind of shadow pandemic with COVID-19, and, like COVID-19, disproportionately affects low-income and marginalized individuals. Partners for Women and Justice and the Seton Hall Law School Center for Social Justice examined the reasons for the rise in the frequency and severity of domestic violence during COVID-19 in New Jersey as well as our State and social service agencies' responses to date. We draw upon extensive fact investigation and research to offer our recommendations for promoting safety for domestic violence survivors and their children as the pandemic continues and during the recovery.

KEY FINDINGS:

- The economic impacts of COVID-19, including job losses, housing instability, and lack of child care, are increasing the risk of domestic violence especially for survivors of color. At the same time, pandemic-related economic stressors have limited the ability of survivors to leave abusive relationships. (Section I)
- COVID-19 has enabled people who abuse their intimate partners to use longstanding power and control tactics such as isolation, coercion, and threats, in new and chilling ways to prevent domestic violence survivors from seeking help to escape abuse. (Section II)
- Domestic violence indicators, including crisis hotline and police calls in a number of cities, point to a significant increase in the frequency of incidents of domestic violence as well as an escalation in the severity of those incidents. (Section III)
- New Jersey has acted quickly in response to the pandemic to provide critical resources for survivors and the agencies that serve them while the agencies themselves have pivoted smoothly and rapidly to serve survivors remotely and to reconfigure shelter systems to house survivors safely during COVID-19. Nonetheless, more support is needed to address this crisis and the long-term needs of survivors. (Section IV)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

We urge New Jersey lawmakers and government officials to seek to prevent domestic violence during the pandemic and beyond by acting to:

- Allocate financial resources to address the long-term affordable housing needs of domestic violence survivors;
- Provide financial support to maximize access for survivors and their children to mental health treatment including services which meet their linguistically and culturally diverse needs;
- Increase transparency in reporting of domestic violence related data and examining data collection practices to ensure that timely review of comprehensive data will inform best practices and policy choices; and
- Pursue policies designed to address structural economic and racial inequalities which contribute substantially to the problem of domestic violence.

The second part of this project will be released in early 2021 and will focus on how COVID-19 has impacted domestic violence victims who seek help through the family and criminal legal systems.

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 INTENSIFIES THE SHADOW PANDEMIC OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence is currently “acting like an opportunistic infection, flourishing in the conditions created by the pandemic.”¹ All available indicia demonstrate that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, both the rates and severity of domestic violence have increased substantially in New Jersey. Calls to New Jersey domestic violence hotlines in the first four months of the year came in at rates similar to those in 2019, but then exploded after the initial stay-at-home restrictions were lifted.² Meanwhile, in the first nine months of 2020, reports of domestic violence to police rose by double digit percentages in a number of cities.³ Indeed, domestic violence in New Jersey represents a kind of “shadow pandemic,” and, like the COVID-19 pandemic itself, disproportionately affects low-income and marginalized individuals. In particular, the economic impact of COVID-19 has increased stress in intimate partner relationships and exacerbated abusive behaviors while diminishing the financial resources that a domestic violence survivor⁴ could use to escape abuse.

In the Recommendations Section, this Report addresses four essential areas in which New Jersey lawmakers and government officials should look to continue, or to undertake, action to promote safety for domestic violence victims and their children during the second wave of the pandemic and beyond. Sections I and II of this Report examine how the economic consequences of COVID-19 are increasing the danger for domestic violence victims, and how COVID-19 has allowed people who abuse their intimate partners to exercise power and control in new ways. We then review the available data, as well as anecdotal information, in Section III, which indicate that New Jersey is experiencing significant increases in the rates and severity of domestic violence. In Section IV, we offer an overview of the federal, state and social services agency responses to the needs of victims in this pandemic. Section IV also highlights the critical financial support provided by New Jersey, and the rapidity and effectiveness of the numerous adaptations that domestic violence agencies have made to continue to serve survivors during the pandemic. New Jersey’s aid to domestic violence survivors during the pandemic is nonetheless insufficient to meet the long-term challenges facing survivors, including the shortage of affordable housing, as we seek to help survivors escape abuse.

Domestic violence, also referred to as intimate partner violence,⁵ is defined as “[a] pattern of behaviors used by one partner to maintain power and control over another partner in an intimate relationship. . . . That includes behaviors that physically harm, intimidate, manipulate or control a partner, or otherwise force them to behave in ways they don’t want to, including through physical violence, threats, emotional abuse, or financial control.”⁶

People of all gender identities experience domestic violence, but women, regardless of their sexual orientation, are far more likely to experience intimate partner violence than cisgender heterosexual men.⁷ For that reason, this Report focuses on the experiences of women during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁸ Moreover, we recognize that the pandemic has disproportionately harmed communities of color and, correspondingly, Black and Brown women face a particularly heightened danger of domestic violence during COVID-19. This Report seeks to use an intersectional frame in analyzing the impact of COVID-19 on domestic violence survivors, noting the particular vulnerabilities of people contending with multiple forms of marginalization and structural oppression.⁹

The authors of this Report, Partners for Women and Justice (“Partners”) and the Seton Hall Law Center for Social Justice (“Center for Social Justice”), work with domestic violence victims on a daily basis, including by providing pro bono legal assistance to low-income victims in the Family Part of the New Jersey Superior Court. Most litigants who utilize the family court system are unable to afford counsel. Partners and the Center for Social Justice, along with many other organizations, attempt to fill this gap in legal services for lower income New Jersey residents, which has increased during the pandemic. As legal service providers, Partners and the Center for Social Justice frequently observe the interplay between the needs of survivors for housing, food, employment, child support and other resources, and their ability to effectively utilize the legal system and permanently break free of abusive relationships. Thus, Part One of this Report focuses on the social services and other basic needs of survivors because, without a holistic approach to aiding survivors, even the best legal representation is ultimately insufficient to combat domestic violence. In Part Two of this Report, to be published in 2021, we will focus on how COVID-19 has impacted domestic violence victims who seek help through the family and criminal legal systems. We will give particular attention to the ways in which virtual courtroom proceedings are transforming the legal process for survivors, defendants, and counsel.

This Report draws on research, fact investigation, and institutional expertise as well as interviews with government officials, service providers in many of New Jersey’s domestic violence agencies, and victims themselves.¹⁰ This Report would not have been possible without the critical assistance provided by McCarter & English, LLP, and the authors are grateful for their invaluable support.

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND THEIR CHILDREN AS THE PANDEMIC CONTINUES AND BEYOND

We wish to begin by acknowledging the tremendous work done by so many social service providers, as well as leaders and personnel in all branches of government in New Jersey to respond quickly in providing assistance to meet many basic needs, including food and shelter, of domestic violence victims and their children since the onset of the COVID-19 crisis.

The incidence of domestic violence has nonetheless increased during the pandemic and the pandemic will have impacts on victims long after vaccines are widely received. Our recommendations call for some of the resources that we anticipate will be most effective in aiding victims in this next, and perhaps most deadly, phase of the pandemic and beyond as we work towards recovery.

The physical, psychological and financial consequences of COVID-19 are long-term, especially for marginalized communities, and the Garden State cannot simply return to business as usual. One of the lessons learned from the differential impact of COVID-19 on New Jersey residents living in deep poverty is that the State needs to do more to address structural inequality. This means that certain increases in funding to benefit poor people secured as a result of the pandemic, need to be expanded, or at the very least sustained, even after a vaccine is widely distributed.

RESOURCES TO EMPOWER VICTIMS TO LEAVE ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS – HOUSING FIRST

Emergency funds authorized for shelters and transitional housing represent an important contribution to the fight against domestic violence.¹¹ However, shelters and transitional housing offer only temporary solutions for the housing issues facing many victims who require more long-term options. Moreover, shelters are not appropriate for some victims and their children based on their experiences with trauma and related privacy needs.

We urge officials at all levels of government in New Jersey, whether State, county or local, to **expand the Housing First model adopted by New Jersey to address homelessness in general, and work to adapt this model to better meet the specific needs of domestic violence victims.**

Housing First programs aim to reduce homelessness by providing immediate access to permanent, affordable and supportive housing for homeless individuals and families.¹² Housing First programs have been successful throughout the country, including in Trenton as well as in Bergen and Hudson counties.¹³ The New Jersey Attorney General, through federal funding, has made \$10 million available to assist with preventing homelessness of domestic violence victims using the Housing First model as part of the State's response to the pandemic,¹⁴ and we support the continued expansion of such initiatives.

We support targeted housing programs aimed at assisting victims of domestic violence with long-term affordable housing.¹⁵ At the same time, we wish to echo the voices of housing advocates in the State about the urgent need to expand access to affordable housing for all residents of New Jersey. The high cost of housing in New Jersey means that very low-income residents working full-time jobs are devoting half of their income to rent with little money left to live on.¹⁶

On a related note, we join the many other advocates concerned with poverty law issues in New Jersey to support a range of legislation seeking to ameliorate the financial devastation brought about by the pandemic through currently pending State legislation: S2340/A4034 (authorizing an array of financial relief measures including eviction protection for tenants); S2480/A4171 (offering one time payments to some undocumented tax filers); and S2953/A4785 (eliminating the lifetime ban on receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (“TANF”) for persons with a drug conviction). We recognize that a robust legislative agenda of anti-poverty measures, as reflected in our recommendations below regarding issues for future consideration, will aid many domestic violence victims along with other indigent residents of New Jersey. Economic independence for survivors of domestic violence will only be possible with bold action for economic justice in New Jersey.

RESOURCES TO HELP VICTIMS AND THEIR CHILDREN HEAL: INCREASED ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

Domestic violence victims and their children, like many others during the pandemic, have increased needs for mental health assistance and simultaneously decreased access to therapeutic services.

To address this gap in counseling services for victims, we urge Governor Phil Murphy, the Legislature, and local governments to **allocate funds to enable domestic violence victims and their children to more effectively access mental health services through a number of avenues**. Specifically, we support allocation of additional government funding to the following:

- Employment of additional mental health staff at domestic violence victim service agencies, reflecting the reality that health insurance reimbursements do not cover staffing costs;
- Maintenance of insurance reimbursements through state programs for telehealth at the same level as in-person appointments;
- Development and implementation of a plan to expand the number of and access to multilingual therapists to reflect the full range of diverse languages spoken by New Jersey residents; and
- Supplemental training of all domestic violence victim services agency staff to meet the additional, new mental health challenges that the pandemic presents.¹⁷

Investing in the emotional well-being of victims and their children plays a key role in breaking the cycle of violence.

DATA COLLECTION AND UTILIZATION: IMPROVEMENTS TO INFORM VICTIM SERVICES

This Report demonstrates that there is a critical need for greater access to available data on the incidence of domestic violence in New Jersey and greater consideration of data as a means of continuously improving the justice system’s response.¹⁸

With respect to data from the New Jersey State Police and the Department of Children and Families' Division on Women, discussed in more detail in Section III, we recommend that these **government agencies work toward monthly publication of their data on their websites for general public access.**¹⁹ As an interim measure, we urge these agencies to post their data for the previous calendar year no later than March 1st of the following year. In addition, we recommend **examination by stakeholders of their current data collection practices** to determine areas in which those practices might benefit from adjustments to improve accuracy, comprehensiveness, and utility.²⁰

Data should not simply be collected to fulfill statutory mandates. Rather, domestic violence data should be publicly released in a consistent and timely manner to help ensure that police departments, prosecutors, and the Attorney General, along with advocates for survivors, review that data to measure compliance with State and local policies and to spur best practices.

Policy decisions impacting domestic violence victims should be based upon comprehensive, recent, and accurate data on victims' actual experiences. Public awareness and understanding of the plight of domestic violence victims and their children should likewise be informed by reliable and readily available data on abuse.

ISSUES FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

We recognize that ending domestic violence requires a multi-faceted approach designed to also address poverty, which contributes substantially to the problem of domestic violence, as well as racial and social justice. Issues of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity, among others, present additional challenges for many victims seeking to escape abuse. As domestic violence victim advocates, we acknowledge the need in particular to look in New Jersey for ways to promote:

- Expanded employment opportunities that pay a living wage for low-income individuals;
- Access to affordable childcare;
- Development of meaningful workforce training programs to prepare individuals who are currently low-income to take skilled jobs to support their families;
- Improvements in fair employment practices and increased enforcement of anti-discrimination laws in all sectors including employment and housing;
- Overhauling TANF, known as Work First New Jersey, to raise benefit levels, overhaul job training, increase the child support pass-through, and reduce work requirements and sanctions;
- Increased funding for the provision of culturally specific social services in all areas, including counseling and legal advocacy;
- Improvements to mass transit to promote broader access to jobs and enhanced services; and
- Expanded digital access and digital education for low-income residents of New Jersey.

I. THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACTS OF COVID-19 HAVE INTENSIFIED THE “SHADOW PANDEMIC” OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE²¹

Poverty and domestic violence have long been a life-threatening combination even in the absence of a global pandemic.²² Research has repeatedly shown that low-income women endure more severe and disproportionate levels of intimate partner violence than better resourced victims.²³ As many as two-thirds of low-income women are survivors of domestic violence, and survivors who have the fewest resources experience the highest rates of repeat abuse.²⁴

Extreme poverty is correlated with more severe domestic violence.

COVID 19 's economic impacts are increasing poverty for those already disadvantaged; marginalized survivors are experiencing unemployment, housing instability, hunger, and decreased ability to work with children at home.

The cumulative impact of these pressures is both increased risk of domestic violence and fewer options for victims wishing to leave their partners.

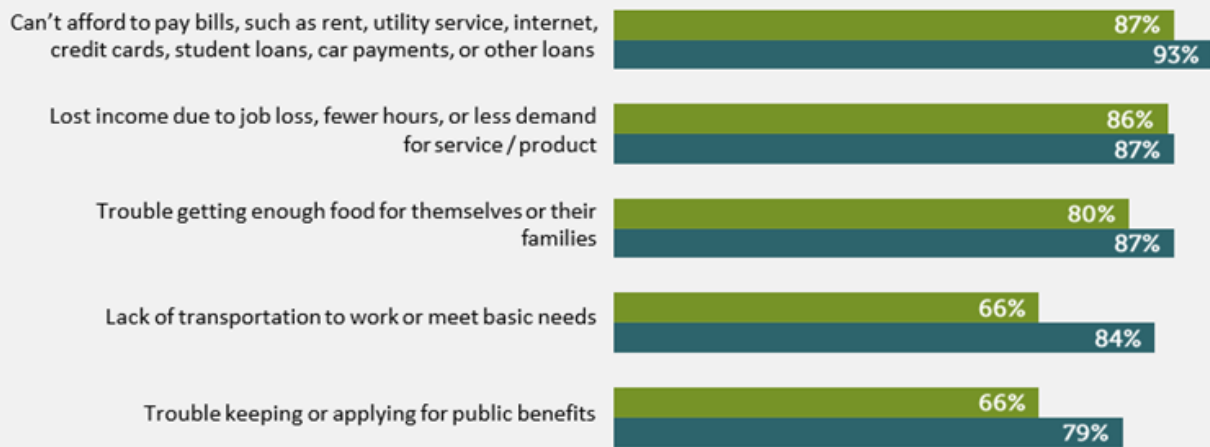
The economic impacts of COVID-19 have increased the number of survivors trapped in the domestic violence cycle, particularly those living at or near the poverty level. Indeed, a national survey of over six-hundred domestic violence service providers revealed that survivors almost universally reported heightened economic challenges due to the pandemic.²⁵

The economic impacts of COVID-19, which disproportionately affect women and people of color, are exacerbating already profound racial and gender inequalities. Assessing family finances six months into the pandemic, the Urban Institute found that “[m]ore than one-third of Hispanic/Latinx adults and nearly three in ten Black adults reported that their families were worse off financially in September than they were at the beginning of March.”²⁶ Overall, people from marginalized communities are enduring more significant financial setbacks than their White counterparts. Domestic violence survivors, who identify as members of one or more marginalized communities, including women of color, immigrants or LGBTQ, often face additional challenges in seeking to escape abuse as compared to other survivors. Structural racism and economic disadvantage result in the “disproportionate [levels] of domestic violence experienced by African American women [which are] directly correlated to being economically disadvantaged.”²⁷

Money & Resource Challenges Survivors Face by Community Served
 (% respondents who reported the following challenges)

Respondents working at organizations who say they serve:

- General Population
- Communities of Color



Source: Center for Survivor Agency & Justice
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FINANCIAL STRESS INCREASES OBSTACLES FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS IN NEW JERSEY SEEKING TO ESCAPE ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Perhaps the most obvious economic impact of the pandemic is the exponential increase in unemployment rates. In New Jersey, the unemployment rate more than quadrupled in the initial months of the pandemic, going from 3.8% in February to its highest rate of 16.8% in June before falling to an estimated rate of 8.2% in October.²⁸ During the early months of the pandemic, job losses disproportionately affected women, with mothers three times more likely than fathers to have lost their jobs.²⁹ One reason for those higher unemployment rates among women is that women account for the majority of workers in the leisure, hospitality, and education services sectors, which were hit hardest by layoffs in the first phase of the pandemic.³⁰ In New Jersey, both before and during the pandemic, people of color have experienced higher unemployment rates than White people.³¹ In fact, in households with incomes below \$35,000, approximately 61% of Latina women and 57% of Black women reported losing their sources of income.³² Despite overall improvements in employment in recent months, low-income adults who were laid off due to the coronavirus are less likely to be working now than middle and upper class adults.³³

Unemployment makes it more arduous for survivors to leave abusive relationships.³⁴ When a survivor has no source of income independent of an abusive partner, she may not have the funds necessary to support herself and any children on her own unless she has family or friends willing to help, or access to a shelter. In addition, unemployment directly increases rates of abuse in that men facing job losses or other financial setbacks are more likely to commit acts of domestic violence, especially when there is a prior history of abuse.³⁵

While increased unemployment benefits have helped many individuals and their families, the percentage of people going hungry and missing housing payments has risen dramatically throughout this crisis.³⁶ Domestic violence agencies have been flooded with clients who cannot afford groceries.³⁷ Nationally, survivors have struggled with access to sufficient food for a number of reasons, including lack of transportation and low grocery stocks, as the following survey graphic shows:

472 (78%) direct service providers from All organizations said survivors have trouble getting food. Here are the barriers they deal with:



Source: Center for Survivor Agency & Justice
Reprinted with Permission

Financial vulnerability and related food insecurity often force domestic violence victims to make very difficult choices. As Lisa Roskos, Senior Staff Attorney at Partners, explained: “Many of Partners’ clients depend financially on their abusers and face enormous challenges in providing for their families on their own. Victims will prioritize food and safety for their children over their own physical safety.”

Victims often feel trapped with an abusive partner because of the myriad of seemingly almost insurmountable challenges they face when they leave, as the following example illustrates:

Tamika lost her job soon after her husband threatened her with knives, and she called the police and obtained a temporary restraining order. She applied for unemployment benefits in the spring but did not receive benefits until November. She is now struggling to make rent, while the restraining order litigation has continued over several months. She has applied for Medicaid but has been unable to reach the right staff to cure deficiencies in her application. Because she does not have health insurance, getting counseling has been hard as well. With so much chaos and fear in her life, she has not been able to find work, and she fears becoming homeless.

The federal government's passage of the CARES Act, an element of which was a one-time stimulus payment to households, is discussed in more detail in Section IV of this Report. However, many domestic violence survivors never saw these government relief funds, either because their abusers kept relief checks from them or because they encountered structural hurdles in qualifying for assistance.³⁸ Even some domestic violence survivors recently separated from their abusers may never have received their relief funds for a variety of reasons.³⁹ The lack of a second stimulus check, coupled with the impending expiration of federal supplemental employment benefits,⁴⁰ is acutely affecting those who are struggling to stay afloat financially as COVID-19 cases are once again surging.⁴¹

The federal government's targeting of immigrants, including the disqualification of non-citizens from receipt of stimulus funds and unemployment benefits, has escalated violence for some immigrants in abusive relationships while simultaneously increasing the obstacles to leaving. Set forth below is one anecdote provided by Make the Road New Jersey:

Felipe and Marisol are married and are immigrants. Felipe has always struggled to find safe and reliable work, and he has been very resentful of Marisol that she has a work permit and he does not. This tension escalated during COVID-19 when Felipe found it even harder to find work. Because of their status, they are excluded from stimulus aid and Felipe is ineligible for unemployment, which exacerbated the financial stress and made the situation worse. Felipe started drinking more and took out his anger on Marisol. On one occasion, he became irate and slammed her against the wall. Marisol was in a lot of pain all through her chest and back but did not have insurance and was unsure how to find a doctor.

In short, economic stress has created additional barriers for many domestic violence survivors when they seek to leave abusive relationships.

RISING HOUSING INSECURITY DURING THE PANDEMIC HAS INCREASED THE VULNERABILITY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS

Domestic violence survivors who seek escape from abusive relationships have always faced extremely difficult decisions about whether to stay and endure continued abuse or try to leave and risk an escalation of violence from their abusive partners.⁴² A domestic violence victim seeking to escape a home she shares with an abusive partner must have somewhere to go. Even before the pandemic, researchers documented the fact that some domestic violence survivors chose to move back in with their abusive intimate partners after finding that their only other option was homelessness.⁴³ But the risks of transmission of COVID-19 associated with increased contact outside one's household have dramatically reduced the housing options available for people attempting to leave abusive relationships. For example, domestic violence survivors in need of housing have traditionally turned to shelters to escape abuse but, during the pandemic, not all survivors have felt safe going to shelters due to virus-related concerns.⁴⁴

Moreover, housing insecurity has made survivors with children vulnerable to new forms of coercion and control as the following example illustrates:

Johanna had a restraining order that gave her physical and legal custody of her daughter, Maria, which Partners had helped her obtain. When Johanna lost her job, she had no choice but to move into temporary housing with Maria. Her abusive partner filed for custody of Maria, using the legal system in an effort to leverage the effects of the pandemic on Johanna's vulnerable economic situation. Partners successfully represented Johanna in opposing any modification to her restraining order granting her custody. She and her daughter remain together and safe.

Meanwhile, renters throughout New Jersey, domestic violence survivors among them, received a temporary reprieve from any immediate housing insecurity in March 2020 when New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy issued an Executive Order suspending evictions throughout the state in response to growing concerns regarding a potential homelessness crisis.⁴⁵ The eviction moratorium, which states that no tenant may be removed from her home through an eviction proceeding, is currently scheduled to last until late February 2021.⁴⁶ Unfortunately, despite this moratorium, many domestic violence survivors report that their landlords have taken unlawful action in response to their failures to pay rent, including posting eviction notices and locking them out.⁴⁷ Moreover, tenants throughout New Jersey face the possibility of post-pandemic evictions since the statewide moratorium bars actual evictions but not court case filings.⁴⁸ Housing advocates are pressing for state funding and other measures for the benefit of both landlords and tenants to prevent displacement on a massive scale when the moratorium lifts.⁴⁹ Such legislation would benefit domestic violence survivors along with other New Jersey renters. However, as discussed in more detail in Section IV and in our Recommendations, targeted state funding to facilitate access to long-term housing options for domestic violence survivors is an absolutely essential measure to aid them in leaving abusive relationships.

REMOTE SCHOOL INCREASES FINANCIAL PRESSURES AND LIMITS OPTIONS FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS

Women throughout New Jersey have also been disproportionately affected by increases in additional unpaid care work during the pandemic, whether that be caring for children no longer in school or elderly relatives no longer able to receive in-home nursing assistance.⁵⁰ One study found that in households with dual earnings, mothers have reduced their work hours four to five times as much as fathers since the onset of the pandemic.⁵¹ As a result, in many instances, women are either no longer able, or have decreased abilities, to undertake paid work, which has only increased their financial stress.⁵² A survey of survivors of color found that eighty-three percent reported that lack of child care was an obstacle to employment.⁵³ While expanded COVID-19 unemployment protection was intended to cover those unable to work because of childcare, implementation has fallen short, leaving many workers without benefits.⁵⁴

Low-income parents are also less likely to have employment that they can engage in from home. This means that those who can least afford to reduce work are left with no choice but to do so, as the same survey found:

Low-income people of color are hit the hardest, not only are they more likely to change their work schedule so they can be home when their child is not in school (25% low-income Black and Latinx) than parents overall (18%) but [they] are also more likely to say that they or their spouse will take time off or leave their job to stay at home (22% low-income Black and Latinx, 14% overall).⁵⁵

Meanwhile, despite programs to increase food aid to help compensate for the loss of school breakfast and lunch programs, parents and children are skipping meals and do not have enough food. An October survey of six hundred New Jersey parents of school age children found that schools and government need to do more to prevent hunger:

A staggering 35% of parents in New Jersey say that they have skipped meals or reduced the number of meals they consume personally or reduced/skipped their child's meals because of the pandemic. Low-income parents (51%) – specifically low-income Latinx parents (56%) and low-income Black parents (52%) – are particularly likely to have skipped or reduced their family's meals because of the coronavirus pandemic.⁵⁶

In conclusion, additional pandemic-related child and family care burdens have multiplied the obstacles for many women who seek to leave abusive relationships.

II. ABUSIVE PARTNERS ARE EXERCISING NEW COERCIVE CONTROL TACTICS BASED ON COVID-19

The coronavirus pandemic has allowed people who abuse their intimate partners to utilize new variations on “traditional” coercive control tactics.⁵⁷ Coercive control is a term used to describe the pattern of behaviors employed by one intimate partner to gain and maintain power and control over the other partner in a domestic violence relationship.⁵⁸ The power and control wheel—used throughout the United States, including by New Jersey courts and domestic violence service providers—illustrates those coercive control tactics that people who abuse utilize to control their intimate partners.⁵⁹ With the advent of the pandemic, people who abuse are using power and control wheel tactics, including isolation and coercion/threats, in new ways to try to keep domestic violence survivors from seeking help.⁶⁰

Those who abuse their intimate partners are using new methods of coercive control.

COVID-19 accentuates isolation and becomes a justification for partners to restrict the movements of victims.

Anecdotal information suggests the pandemic has resulted in increased intimidation of victims to prevent victims from seeking help.

Abusive partners are using coercion and threats of exposure to illness against their victims.

The following example shows how COVID-19 is not fundamentally changing well-known patterns of power and control. Rather, in many instances, COVID-19 gives abusers greater power over more vulnerable victims who face challenges of housing and food insecurity, as a result of the pandemic:

Sandra lost her job because of COVID in March and it took her many weeks to begin receiving unemployment benefits. Nevertheless, when her male friend, Martin, was having a hard time with housing because of COVID, Sandra helped him out by giving him a place to stay. Shelters were full and Sandra wanted to be there for a friend in need. Martin found work and began contributing financially while Sandra was still waiting for unemployment benefits. Martin then became interested in her. Tensions rose during the shutdown as they were stuck inside together along with Sandra’s children, and Martin began hurting her. When Sandra’s unemployment benefits finally started to arrive, Martin took control of her money, sometimes taking her debit card. She began begging him to leave, but he used violence and fear to control Sandra. He raped her and hit her repeatedly. He told her he had a gun. She was afraid what he would do to her if she didn’t please him. Finally, one day, Sandra agreed to drive Martin somewhere as a favor, but when they got to the drop off

location, he tried to take her car from her. This was “the straw that broke the camel’s back” and Sandra called the police. Ultimately, with representation from Partners, Sandra obtained a restraining order.⁶¹

ISOLATION

Many people have felt isolated during COVID-19.⁶² However, prior to COVID-19, isolation was already a key coercive control tactic utilized by abusive partners to convince domestic violence survivors that their partners were the only people they needed as well as to block potential avenues of assistance.⁶³ In the context of domestic violence, people who abuse may control who victims are “allowed” to see and talk to, and where they are “allowed” to go.⁶⁴ Now abusive partners can invoke the pandemic as a justification to restrict most or all visitors as well as to limit survivors’ activities outside the home.⁶⁵ Since the advent of COVID-19, domestic violence call centers have reported hearing threats such as, “[i]f you go out, you’ll get sick, and then you’ll come back and make all of us sick, so you can’t leave the house.”⁶⁶ Lisa Roskos, Senior Staff Attorney at Partners, explains that “[a]busers may demand that certain family members or friends of the victim keep away from the family, no matter what safety precautions are taken, claiming that they want to prevent exposure to the virus, when the real motivation is continued isolation and control of the victim.” People who abuse can also use the pandemic to rationalize refusing to allow survivors to work outside the home, rendering them financially dependent and leaving them even more isolated.⁶⁷

COERCION AND THREATS

Abusive partners also use coercion and threats to gain and maintain control in their relationships by, for example, threatening to do something to hurt their partners or to commit suicide.⁶⁸ Threats during COVID-19 now include threats to infect family and loved ones with the virus or to cough in survivors’ faces.⁶⁹ Coercion during the pandemic encompasses statements such as, “if you don’t do what I want, I’ll put you out on the street and you’ll get COVID.”⁷⁰ Conversely, COVID-19 creates new opportunities to manipulate a victim regarding appropriate protective measures by, for example, seeking custody of children following a separation on the grounds that the victim is working outside the home and thus, exposing the children to a heightened risk of COVID-19. Victoria Nicholson, Pro Bono Director at Partners observed: “Many victims working in service fields, such as grocers, food service, sanitation, and health care workers feel coerced into choosing between their livelihoods and maintaining custody of their children.”

III. STATISTICS POINT TO A SIGNIFICANT RISE IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Since the advent of the pandemic in New Jersey, hotline calls, police data, and the number of criminal complaints with domestic violence indicators all point to a significant rise in domestic violence.⁷¹ Additionally, there are chilling indicia that the severity of domestic violence has risen over the course of the pandemic. Lisa Roskos observes: “In our intake, we are seeing more clients who report that their partners tried to ‘choke’ them. Nonfatal strangulation is a significant indicator of future lethality in domestic violence cases and can cause traumatic brain injury without leaving any visible marks.” Moreover, while New Jersey does not collect emergency room data on domestic violence injuries, partial information from New Jersey and other states indicates increases in the severity of abuse after lags in hospital utilization during the first months of the pandemic. Doctors are seeing evidence of an increase in the severity of physical abuse by intimate partners.⁷² As of October 2020, a local hospital in Morris County had reported an increase in the severity of domestic violence related injuries (including nonfatal strangulation, stabbings, burns, and use of weapons) since the early spring noting twenty-eight serious domestic violence injuries in the year to date compared to five such injuries in the same period during the prior year.⁷³

Hotline calls began to spike as more victims were able to seek help beginning in May, 2020, and anecdotal information suggests increasing severity of violence.

Police data is incomplete, but in two major cities (Elizabeth and Newark) domestic violence criminal call outs have risen over 40% compared to the same months in 2019.

Criminal domestic violence complaints statewide rose 17% after the shelter-in-place order was lifted compared to the first quarter of the year.

HOTLINE DATA

In the initial months of the pandemic, namely March and April 2020, data from the statewide domestic violence hotline operated by Womanspace Inc. showed virtually no change in the number of calls during the same months in the previous year.⁷⁴ However, as the pandemic wore on, domestic violence survivors in New Jersey began calling advocacy organizations at much higher rates than during the same period in 2019.

Beginning in May 2020, domestic violence calls to the hotline started to spike. By September 2020, the Womanspace Inc. hotline had experienced a 45% increase in total number of calls compared to the same time frame in 2019.⁷⁵

Each county in New Jersey has its own domestic violence hotline. As of August 2020, New Jersey counties had collectively recorded a substantial increase in calls by domestic violence survivors to service providers since March 2020, with a 15% rise, representing a total of over 4,000 additional calls compared to the prior year.⁷⁶

Under normal circumstances, “domestic violence survivors seek help when they’re outside the home, at work or visiting with friends. . . . Cooped up, they may no longer be able to call [a] hotline without fear of being discovered.”⁷⁷

Shelter directors across the country state that survivors generally reach out to shelters, families, or co-workers when their abusive partner is not home. Stay-at-home orders and other pandemic related circumstances (i.e. working remotely and unemployment) have narrowed that window of opportunity so many survivors have few chances to call for help because their abusive partners are always present. Survivors have frequently reported to domestic violence service providers during COVID-19 that it is not safe for them to talk on the phone. In response, many domestic violence service providers now offer text and social media information and referrals. These avenues, which supplement traditional telephone hotlines, include texting and social media messaging, which survivors can more discretely access. For example, Manavi, an organization serving South Asian gender violence survivors, has seen an increase in communications through social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook.

POLICE DATA ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Over the last few years, State Police reporting on domestic violence crimes has lagged. The State Police website updated its reporting with 2017 and 2018 data in October of this year. The authors appreciate the tremendous effort of the State Police and the Office of Attorney General to update reporting and to share with us data from January through September of 2019 and 2020. Upon review, however, year-to-date data from the State Police is incomplete at this time with many jurisdictions not yet reporting; moreover, the data that is available is of questionable reliability.⁷⁸ The overall limitations of the State Police data are a by-product of the time-consuming system for collecting that information. Because individual police officers record data by hand, according to Elizabeth Ruebman, Special Advisor for Victim Services to the Attorney General, there is variability in compliance with regard to reporting of data. Whether the law enforcement community utilizes the data that it collects to measure compliance with domestic violence policies is unclear.

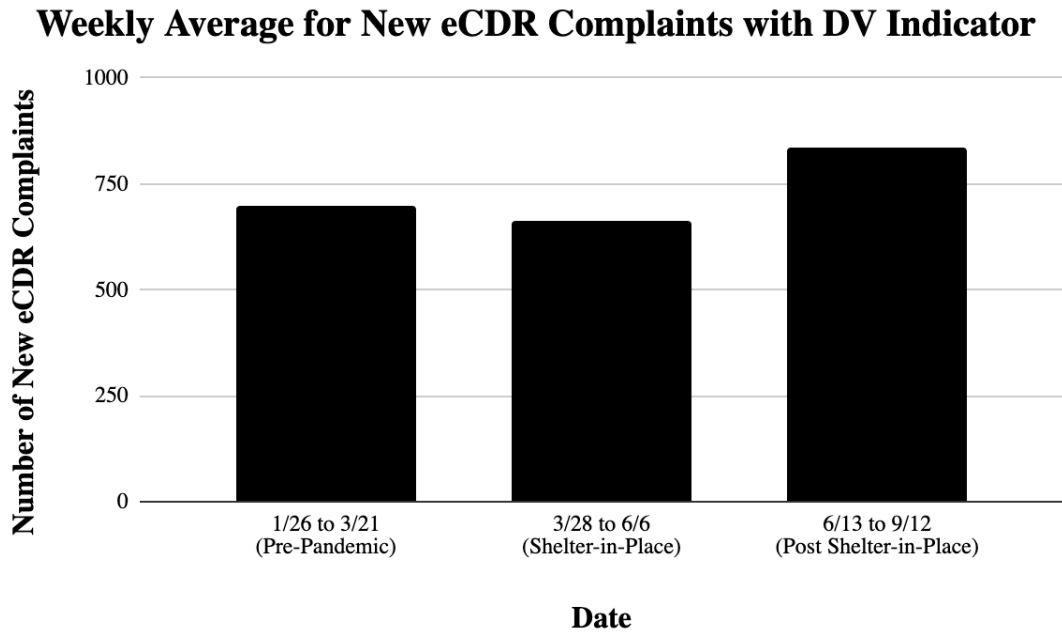
Even with those limitations, a review of data from four of the ten most populous cities⁷⁹ in New Jersey indicates an overall increase in domestic violence reporting to police since COVID-19. The increase is especially significant given the barriers to help seeking during the shelter-in-place order.

SELECTED CITIES' POLICE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CALLS

Total DV Incidents	2019 (Jan.-Sept.)	2020 (Jan.-Sept.)	% Change
Camden	1966	2191	11%
Elizabeth	585	848	45%
Newark	2385	3384	41%
Toms River	561	678	20%

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) maintains data with respect to applications for restraining orders as well as information regarding domestic violence-related criminal charges.⁸⁰ Data supplied by the AOC shows a substantial rise in new criminal domestic violence offenses following the lifting of the shelter-in-place order.⁸¹ Between January 26 and March 21, New Jersey averaged 698 criminal domestic violence complaints per week. During the period of the shelter-in-place order (March 21-June 6), that number fell to an average of 664 cases, a decrease of 4 percent. In contrast, looking at the time from the week ending June 13 until September 12, the average

number of complaints rose to 837 per week, an increase in 17% over the pre-COVID figures from the first quarter of the year.



Part Two of this Report will include a discussion of the judiciary’s initial decision to delegate responsibility for civil domestic violence restraining order applications to the police and any implications upon access to court-ordered protection. For now, we note that COVID-19, initial courthouse location closings, and the inability of many survivors to safely leave the home, among other factors, have all led to a drop in the utilization of restraining orders by survivors during the first months of the pandemic.

IV. STATE AND SOCIAL SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS RALLY TO MEET THE GROWING NEED

Both federal and state responses to the pandemic to date have included meaningful support for domestic violence victims and the agencies serving them.⁸² Given that issues of domestic violence and COVID-19 are multi-faceted, multiple agencies have responded, including but not limited to, the United States Departments of Health and Human Services, Justice, and Housing and Urban Development as well as the New Jersey Departments of Human Services and Community Affairs. This section provides a short overview as to how federal and, particularly, the New Jersey state government have supported victims and agencies that serve them.⁸³

Funding secured through the CARES Act, VCCO, and FVPSA have been critical to support both survivors and the agencies that serve them.

Domestic violence programs across the state have rallied to respond to and provide relief for victims.

The pandemic is accentuating the need for mental health services, both now and for years to come, for both survivors and their children.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING IN RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC

The Federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) contained provisions that offered both one-time and longer-term financial benefits to families to offset some of the financial losses from the pandemic. Those benefits included, among other things, one-time stimulus payments of up to \$1,200 for individuals and, \$2,400 for married couples, as well as \$500 for each qualifying child; increased unemployment insurance payments; and a significant influx of federal dollars to help continue essential state services at risk in light of the diversion of resources caused by the pandemic.⁸⁴ While those federal payments and related state measures have provided temporary relief to citizens, including domestic violence victims, domestic violence service providers had hoped that the anticipated Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions Act (HEROES Act) would provide further much-needed stimulus, as well as build upon provisions contained in the CARES Act specific to domestic violence issues, if passed by the Senate.⁸⁵

Turning to programs targeting domestic violence victims, the Departments of Health and Human Services, Justice, and Housing and Urban Development together fund the Domestic Violence Housing Technical Assistance Consortium for the purpose of providing technical assistance for housing and domestic violence services.⁸⁶ In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress appropriated \$4 billion for Emergency Solutions Grants to be distributed to states. Those funds were then redistributed “to support the costs of shelters, including hotel and motel rooms; for supportive services; and for short- and medium-term rental assistance and stabilization services . . . for people who become homeless.”⁸⁷

Using federal Victims of Crime Compensation Act (VCCO) funds, New Jersey has provided \$10,000,000 in funding for

emergency shelter for domestic violence victims during the pandemic.⁸⁸ Shelters and related service providers across the State received these funds and act “as the primary source of funding for emergency housing needs for victims in their respective counties.”⁸⁹

New Jersey, through the Department of Children and Families’ Division on Women, has also been awarded supplemental funding through the Family Violence Prevention Services Act (FVPSA) Grant to support culturally specific domestic violence services.⁹⁰ This Grant, through the CARES Act, provided approximately \$935,000 to “augment the Division on Women’s . . . prevention efforts, particularly among traditionally marginalized groups that may be unaware of or distrustful towards government intervention or assistance,” as well as to “enhance emergency shelter capacity, counseling services and access to community-based programs.”⁹¹

For one group of victims, however, much of this commendable governmental response is out of reach. Victims who are undocumented are explicitly excluded from federally-funded cash assistance programs.⁹² In light of federal restrictions on funding and in response to some of the unmet needs of the immigrants in New Jersey, the New Jersey Pandemic Relief Fund, founded and chaired by First Lady Tammy Murphy, has given out more than \$4,000,000 in gift cards to undocumented immigrants based on contributions from private donors. Thanks to this special program, approximately one percent of New Jersey’s undocumented population have received gift cards ranging in value from \$500 to \$1000.⁹³ In addition, the Pandemic Relief Fund has provided \$29 million in housing, food and other relief including a small number of grants to agencies serving domestic violence victims and support for legal services for tenants facing eviction.⁹⁴

Governor Murphy’s budget for Fiscal Year 2021 has sustained current levels of domestic violence funding, notwithstanding the fiscal and budgetary issues exacerbated by the pandemic.⁹⁵ As noted by Pamela Jacobs, Executive Director of the New Jersey Coalition to End Domestic Violence, “[i]n a time of economic crisis, [these budgetary decisions] mean[] that our state understands the value and importance of domestic violence services.”⁹⁶

INITIAL ADAPTATIONS OF SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS DURING THE PANDEMIC

When the lockdown began, social services providers needed to quickly adapt in order to provide relief for domestic violence victims. The operational challenges for organizations serving victims of domestic violence during the pandemic have been enormous. The New Jersey Coalition to End Domestic Violence (NJCEDV), the statewide advocacy and umbrella organization for 31 domestic violence member programs, moved rapidly to meet the needs of survivors remotely. The NJCEDV transformed its website into a hub of advice providing guidance to advocates and safety planning for survivors.⁹⁷ Some of the advice and services provided have included technology tips for remote access to files; instant messaging; and video calls for survivors to help maintain domestic violence program operations, while allowing staff to work remotely.⁹⁸ While these transitions have been successful, remaining open for clients, who have increasingly complex needs, and keeping staff and clients safe has been challenging. Staff are struggling with burnout and managing their own personal needs with school children at home.

In addition to supporting the transitions of its member agencies to remote operations, the NJCEDV’s initial focus during the pandemic was getting the necessary supplies, (*i.e.*, hand sanitizer, masks, and toilet paper for their member programs’ operations, sometimes resulting in NJCEDV staff driving hundreds of miles to make deliveries of resource items.⁹⁹

The NJCEDV further assumed responsibility for managing hotel placements of domestic violence victims unable to utilize shelters due to social distancing limiting capacity for the State with costs as of late October, totaling approximately \$300,000.¹⁰⁰ When possible, the NJCEDV has used their best efforts to find survivors placements that would allow for extended stay hotels; and getting food to victims in hotels given the pandemic and managing the hotel billings have been complex undertakings.¹⁰¹ The NJCEDV has also provided technical assistance and safety planning for those going into hotels. For example, NJCEDV has provided directions for survivors on how to create new and secure email addresses to use when ordering prepared food through mobile apps and delivery platforms.¹⁰²

Family Justice Centers and other service providers also pivoted adeptly to remote services in response to COVID-19. The Center for Hope and Safety in Hudson County, like many domestic violence organizations in New Jersey, struggled at the beginning of the pandemic with a number of challenges, particularly in reaching victims who were unable to contact them directly for safety reasons.¹⁰³ In response to this challenge, the Center for Hope and Safety created a community safety program focusing on supporting victims still with abusive partners during this pandemic.¹⁰⁴

Finally, another significant hindrance to aid for many victims, which will be further explored in Part Two of this Report, is the lack of technology needed to use remote services effectively, a phenomenon sometimes called the “digital divide.” Those who are living in poverty often lack the resources to secure “basic” technology, including reliable internet connections, access to a computer, and sometimes even email accounts. According to Michele Lefkowitz, Legal Director at Partners, “[a]ll of these factors combine to drastically increase the challenges faced by low-income victims seeking to leave abusive relationships during a pandemic.”

PANDEMIC RELATED RESOURCES TARGETING THE HOUSING NEEDS OF SURVIVORS FLEEING VIOLENCE

For many years, domestic violence has been a leading cause of homelessness.¹⁰⁵ The pandemic has only amplified the importance of considering this issue and the need for support directed towards housing for victims seeking to escape abuse.¹⁰⁶ The pandemic has also made it much more difficult and complex to meet the shelter needs of individuals.¹⁰⁷ Due to social distancing requirements, congregate models of shelter service were suddenly no longer feasible without substantial modifications. Entering a shelter to find relief could mean potential COVID-19 exposure. According to Patricia Hart, Executive Director of Womanspace, reopening shelters required major modifications, and the State provided operational and financial help to achieve that objective, in addition to two separate grants for housing.¹⁰⁸

Despite all of these efforts to continue to provide housing for victims, while working to prevent the spread of COVID-19, shelter design and inherent space constraints in current buildings have limited traditional shelter capacity during the pandemic. Many shelters feature very large rooms, with shared spaces, but efforts to slow the spread of the virus required that shelters cease using shared rooms, cutting capacity for some shelters in half.¹⁰⁹ According to Claudia Ratzlaff, Chief Executive Officer of AVANZAR (formerly The Women’s Center), the pandemic has made it abundantly clear that the old housing model of extended stays in shelters, already recognized as unhelpful for many victims of trauma and their children who need privacy in their recovery from abuse, is now unsafe in terms of victims’ physical health.¹¹⁰

As a result, hotels, long an alternative, albeit a less frequently utilized, source of shelter for victims have been repurposed on a large scale to provide additional housing. Womanspace and nineteen other domestic violence service providers across the State have also received assistance to place victims in hotels during the pandemic.¹¹¹ However, hotels are a much more expensive source of shelter and present challenges in terms of the provision of services, including counseling, as well as meals, which victims traditionally receive from onsite shelter staff. Moreover, the security provided at hotels does not generally match the level of security provided by safe houses.¹¹² In short, the pandemic has underscored the critical need for victims to have access to affordable, long-term housing in order to ensure that they are able to successfully flee abusive partners and end the cycle of violence.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS' NEED FOR INCREASED ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The pandemic has magnified everyone's mental health needs.¹¹³ However, domestic violence survivors frequently face additional mental health challenges, in comparison to the general population, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety as a result of years of abuse.¹¹⁴ During the pandemic, victims have often been unable to go to counseling sessions due to constant monitoring by their abusive partners and, in some phases of the pandemic, due to lockdown restrictions.¹¹⁵ Diane Squadron, CEO of Jewish Family Services of MetroWest New Jersey, believes that the trauma from COVID-19 will persist for years to come: "A vaccine cannot fix the harm to our clients. COVID has created a chronic trauma, among an already traumatized population. This is an extended crisis, as trauma takes years to resolve."¹¹⁶

Social services providers have moved to offering remote counseling, although there are, of course, limitations and shortcomings with virtual counseling platforms. For example, many clients are self-conscious on camera or lack privacy at home for telehealth sessions.¹¹⁷ For some providers, in-person services resumed over the summer, but many others have continued to offer only remote services throughout COVID-19.¹¹⁸ In this second wave of the pandemic, it seems safe to assume that even providers who have been able to resume in person therapy have now, or will soon be, reverting to remote counseling.

Most importantly, since September 2020, agencies have been experiencing increased demand for counseling services and, as a result, community partners now have long waiting lists to provide mental health care to domestic violence survivors.¹¹⁹ The current need for mental health services exceeds the resources available through most programs and thus presents a critical need for additional financial support for victim services during this pandemic and beyond.¹²⁰

SECONDARY TRAUMA FOR CHILDREN AND THE NEED FOR EXPANDED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Like their parents, children who have lived in homes in which domestic violence has occurred have heightened counseling needs. Exposure to family violence contributes to lifelong harm.¹²¹ The inter-generational ramifications of domestic violence underscore the critical importance of supporting policies, including specifically robust financial support for therapeutic services, to prevent and mitigate family violence.

Children are secondary victims of domestic violence and studies have shown there is a correlation between domestic violence and child abuse.¹²² Adverse childhood experiences are linked to negative, long-term outcomes for children, and domestic violence is a prominent adverse childhood experience and risk factor for children in their future life experiences.¹²³ Children exposed to domestic violence exhibit more aggressive and antisocial, as well as fearful and inhibited behaviors, show lower social competence, and have weaker academic performances than children who have not suffered from similar exposure to violence in the home.¹²⁴

The likelihood of children bearing witness to domestic violence occurring in their homes has greatly increased during the pandemic with schools transitioning to remote learning as well as workplace and governmental measures encouraging, and at times requiring, individuals to stay home. At the same time, access for children as well as adults to therapeutic treatment has diminished; some abusive partners have revoked consent to treatment with the transition to virtual mental health care because they do not want therapists to see what is happening in the home.¹²⁵ In addition, even when they have access to virtual counseling, children are likely to find remote services less engaging than traditional, in person therapy.¹²⁶ As we look to end the intergenerational cycles of abuse suffered by many families we recognize that treatment for the child and parent are protective factors and thus more financial support for children's mental health services is urgently needed.

NOTES

¹Amanda Taub, *A New Covid-19 Crisis: Domestic Abuse Rises Worldwide*, N.Y. TIMES (Apr. 14, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/06/world/coronavirus-domestic-violence.html>.

²See *infra* Section III.

³See *infra* Section III.

⁴Throughout this Report, we use the terms “victim” and “survivor” interchangeably to refer to people who have experienced violence and/or other forms of abuse by an intimate partner. We use both terms intentionally because individuals who have experienced intimate partner abuse have differing views on which term best reflects their own experiences.

⁵This Report does not address elder abuse or other forms of abuse in the household or family, outside of an intimate partner relationship.

⁶*Understanding Relationship Abuse*, NAT’L DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE, <https://www.thehotline.org/identify-abuse/understand-relationship-abuse/> (last visited Dec. 8, 2020).

⁷See *Domestic Violence*, NATIONAL COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE 1 (2020), https://assets.speakcdn.com/assets/2497/domestic_violence-2020080709350855.pdf?1596828650457 (noting that “1 in 4 women and 1 in 10 men experience sexual violence, physical violence and/or stalking by an intimate partner during their lifetime with an ‘IPV-related impact’”); N.J. ADMIN. OFFICE OF THE COURTS, ANNUAL REPORT ON THE PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT 5 (2017) (stating that 23% of applicants for restraining orders are men); The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, *NISVS: An Overview of 2010 Findings on Victimization by Sexual Orientation*, https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/cdc_nisvs_victimization_final-a.pdf (noting that “[s]exual minority respondents reported levels of intimate partner violence at rates equal to or higher than those of heterosexuals”).

⁸We note here that transgender individuals experience high rates of domestic violence, and lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons face disproportionate life-time risks of intimate partner violence as well. See generally National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and HIV-Affected Hate and Intimate Partner Violence in 2017* (2018), <http://avp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/NCAVP-HV-IPV-2017-report.pdf>; The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, *supra* note 7.

⁹Death and illness have disproportionately harmed these same communities, contributing greatly to stress and anxiety. See Brittany Holom-Trundy, *Unprecedented and Unequal: Racial Inequities in the COVID-19 Pandemic*, NEW JERSEY POLICY PERSPECTIVE (Oct. 14, 2020), <https://www.njpp.org/publications/report/unprecedented-and-unequal-racial-inequities-in-the-covid-19-pandemic/>. We recognize that other marginalized groups including undocumented immigrants and LGBTQ individuals have faced particularized harms from COVID-19 that we regret that we are unable to fully address in this Report due to resource limitations.

¹⁰Attached as Appendix A is a list of interviews conducted. In several places in the body of this Report, client accounts have been included to illustrate a specific problem. Identifying details of these narratives have been changed to protect the safety and privacy of the individuals. The authors thank all of the interviewees for sharing their expertise and time in support of this project. Further acknowledgements are contained at the conclusion of this Report.

¹¹See *infra* Section III.

¹²*Fact Sheet: Housing First*, NAT’L ALLIANCE TO END HOMELESSNESS (Apr. 2016), <http://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/housing-first-fact-sheet.pdf>.

¹³See *id.* at 2; *Housing First*, N.J. COALITION TO END HOMELESSNESS, <https://www.njceh.org/housing-first> (last visited Dec. 8, 2020) (providing examples of Housing First programs in New Jersey).

¹⁴See *infra* Section IV.

¹⁵The need for more affordable housing throughout New Jersey for domestic violence survivors has only become more critical since the New Jersey Supreme Court's decision in *Bisbing v. Bisbing*, 230 N.J. 309 (2017), wherein the Court modified the legal standard for relocation in child custody cases making out-of-state moves more difficult. Now many domestic violence victims with children seeking to leave New Jersey for states with more affordable housing may no longer be able to do so.

¹⁶The John S. Watson Inst. for Public Policy of Thomas Edison State Univ., *The Cost of Poverty: The Perpetuating Cycle of Concentrated Poverty in New Jersey Cities*, 5, 10, 12–13, 35 (2016), <http://www.antipovertynetwork.org/resources/Documents/Cost%20of%20Poverty%20Report.pdf>; Kate M. Kelly, *19% of New Jerseyans Spend More Than Half of Their Income on Housing Costs*, MONARCH HOUSING ASSOCS. (Mar. 25, 2019), <https://monarchhousing.org/> (follow "Public Policy" hyperlink; then follow "Public Policy Posts").

¹⁷See Interview with Diane Squadron, CEO, Jewish Family Serv. MetroWest N.J. (Dec. 4, 2020) (providing recommendations).

¹⁸Where possible, data should be drawn from sources beyond the justice system. Consideration should be given to the feasibility of collecting emergency room data on injuries connected to domestic violence incidents, looking to practices with respect to data collection on sexual assault hospitalization as a possible model.

¹⁹Part Two of this Report will address our recommendations with respect to data on court filings and outcomes.

²⁰For example, the State recently enacted legislation requiring the Attorney General to collect more comprehensive criminal justice data in a manner that is easily accessible to the public. See *Governor Signs Kean Bill to Ensure Fairness of NJ Criminal Justice System*, INSIDER NJ (Nov. 9, 2020, 5:57 PM), <https://www.insidernj.com/press-release/governor-signs-kean-bill-ensure-fairness-nj-criminal-justice-system/>.

²¹*The Shadow Pandemic: Violence against women during COVID-19*, UN WOMEN, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response/violence-against-women-during-covid-19> (last visited Dec. 8, 2020).

²²See N.J. Domestic Violence Fatality and Near Fatality Review Bd., *Intimate Partner Violence in New Jersey's African American Community 1* (Oct. 2013), <https://www.nj.gov/dcf/news/reportsnewsletters/taskforce/DVFNFRB%20Report.pdf> ("Intimate partner homicide is the leading cause of death among African American women between the ages of 15-45 years old."). The toll on women's health extends far beyond the physical risk of violence as severe intimate partner violence triggers chronic lifelong health conditions. See Jamila K. Stockman et al., *Intimate Partner Violence and Its Health Impact on Disproportionately Affected Populations, Including Minorities and Impoverished Groups*, 24 J. OF WOMEN'S HEALTH No. 1 (Dec. 31, 2014).

²³See, e.g., Leigh Goodmark, *Decriminalizing Domestic Violence: A Balanced Policy Approach to Intimate Partner Violence* 36-37 (2018).

²⁴See *id.*; Mindy B. Mechanic et al., *Mental Health Consequences of Intimate Partner Abuse: A Multidimensional Assessment of Four Different Forms of Abuse*, 14 VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN 634, 648 (2008).

²⁵*Economic Impact of Covid-19 on Survivors Survey*, CNTR. FOR SURVIVOR AGENCY & JUST. (last accessed Dec.8, 2020), https://csaj.org/Covid-19_DataDashboard. The authors gratefully acknowledge the Center for Survivor Agency & Justice for permitting us to include their data charts in subsequent pages of this Report.

²⁶Michael Karpman et al., *Uneven Recovery Leaves Many Hispanic, Black, and Low-Income Adults Struggling*, URBAN INST. 3 (Oct. 2020), <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/103105/uneven-recovery-leaves-many-hispanic-black-and-low-income-adults-struggling.pdf>.

²⁷N.J. Domestic Violence Fatality and Near Fatality Review Bd., *supra* note 22.

²⁸N.J. Dep't of Labor & Workforce Dev., *Private Sector Employers Continue to Hire in October* (Nov. 19, 2020), <https://www.nj.gov/labor/lpa/pub/emppress/pressrelease/prelease.pdf>. Labor market fluctuations reflect not only hiring statistics but are also being driven by trends in those leaving or returning to the workforce.

²⁹Tim Henderson, *Mothers are 3 Times More Likely Than Fathers to Have Lost Jobs in Pandemic*, PEW TRUSTS (Sept. 28, 2020), https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2020/09/28/mothers-are-3-times-more-likely-than-fathers-to-have-lost-jobs-in-pandemic?utm_campaign=2020-10-05+SW&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Pew.

³⁰See Rakesh Kochhar, *Unemployment Rose Higher in Three Months of COVID-19 Than it Did in Two Years of the Great Recession*, PEW RESEARCH CTR (June 11, 2020), <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/06/11/unemployment-rose-higher-in-three-months-of-covid-19-than-it-did-in-two-years-of-the-great-recession/>. Many immigrants also work in the service sectors hit hardest financially during COVID-19, including hospitality and restaurants, creating additional economic pressures to many households. See Katie Shepherd, *Immigrant Survivors of Domestic Violence Face Unique Risks During Coronavirus*, IMMIGRATION IMPACT (Apr. 14, 2020), <https://immigrationimpact.com/2020/04/14/coronavirus-domestic-violence/#.X2tVTmhKg2w>.

³¹See Vineeta Kapahi, *Labor Day Snapshot: How New Jersey can Honor Workers and Improve Economic Security*, N.J. POLICY PERSPECTIVE (Sept. 7, 2020), <https://www.njpp.org/publications/report/labor-day-snapshot-how-new-jersey-can-honor-workers-and-improve-economic-security/>.

³²Ladonna Pavetti & Helah Robinson, *LIFT Voices Describe Hardships Among Black and Latina Mothers in Pandemic*, CTR. ON BUDGET & POL'Y PRIORITIES (July 20, 2020), <https://www.cbpp.org/research/family-income-support/lift-voices-describe-hardships-among-black-and-latina-mothers-in>.

³³Kim Parker et al., *Economic Fallout From COVID-19 Continues to Hit Lower-Income Americans the Hardest*, PEW RESEARCH CTR (Sept. 24, 2020), <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2020/09/24/economic-fallout-from-covid-19-continues-to-hit-lower-income-americans-the-hardest/>.

³⁴Melissa Godin, *As Cities Around the World Go on Lockdown, Victims of Domestic Violence Look for a Way Out*, TIME (Mar. 18, 2020), <https://time.com/5803887/coronavirus-domestic-violence-victims/>; Julie Bosman, *Domestic Violence Calls Mount as Restrictions Linger: 'No One Can Leave'*, N.Y. TIMES (last updated Aug. 7, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/15/us/domestic-violence-coronavirus.html>; see also Camille Carey & Robert A. Solomon, *Impossible Choices: Balancing Safety and Security in Domestic Violence Representation*, 21 CLINICAL L. REV. 201 (2014).

³⁵Claire M. Renzetti, *Economic Stress and Domestic Violence*, VAWNET.ORG, at 3 (Sept. 2009), https://vawnet.org/sites/default/files/materials/files/2016-09/AR_EconomicStress.pdf. The loss of a job, foreclosure on a home, or bankruptcy correlates with an increased risk of intimate partner homicide. See Chelsea Diem & Jesenia M. Pizarro, *Social Structure and Family Homicides*, 25 J. FAMILY VIOLENCE 521–32 (2010).

³⁶Jennifer Liu, *Unemployment Recipients Share Why They Returned to Work During the Pandemic Despite \$600 Weekly Boost*, CNBC (Aug. 4, 2020), <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/08/04/research-600-unemployment-boost-didnt-discourage-returning-to-work.html>; Community Food Bank of New Jersey, *COVID-19's Impact on Food Insecurity in New Jersey*, (Sept. 2020), <https://cfbnj.org/covidimpact/>.

³⁷Interview with Adela Caceres, Dir., Union Family Just. Ctr. (Sept. 14, 2020); Interview with Navneet Bhalla, Exec. Dir., Manavi (Oct. 12, 2020).

³⁸See Megan Divine, *Not Everyone Is Safer At Home: The Harsh Reality that Many Domestic Violence Victims Face in Light of COVID19 "Stay at Home" Orders*, CHLB SCHOLARSHIP 78 (2020); Meera Jagannathan & Andrew Keshner, *Domestic Abusers are Taking Survivors' Stimulus Checks—and Lawmakers Want the IRS to do Something About It*, MARKETWATCH (Aug. 4, 2020). Structural hurdles include immigration status rendering a victim ineligible. Darla Mercado, *These 9 Million Americans Haven't Received a Stimulus Check. How They Can Get One*, CNBC (Sept. 8, 2020), <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/09/08/these-9-million-americans-havent-received-their-stimulus-checks.html>. People with low-income who do not pay federal taxes are still eligible for the check, but have to take additional steps in order to receive it.

³⁹See Christopher Connelly, *How Abusers Use Finances and Coronavirus to Control Victims*, KERA NEWS (June 24, 2020), <https://www.keranews.org/news/2020-06-24/how-abusers-use-finances-and-coronavirus-to-control-victims>. (noting that many abusers have sole access to bank accounts and will not give survivors' their share while other survivors have moved to a family member's or friend's home and did not get the physical check that was sent to their previously-reported permanent address).

⁴⁰See Ben Casselman, *Millions Face Loss of Jobless Aid: 'Without It, I'm Dead in the Water'*, N.Y. TIMES (Nov. 11, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/11/business/economy/unemployment-benefits-cutoff.html?searchResultPosition=2>.

⁴¹See Kori Hale, *A Second Stimulus Check Could Be Coming. Can Low-Income Households Wait?*, FORBES (Sep. 8, 2020), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/korihale/2020/09/08/a-second-stimulus-check-could-be-coming-can-low-income-households-wait/#16cae81547bc>.

⁴²Divine, *supra* note 38.

⁴³Amanda Stylianou & Gretchen Hoge, *Transitioning Out of an Urban Domestic Violence Emergency Shelter: Voices of Survivors*, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (Sept. 2020).

⁴⁴Divine, *supra* note 38; Marissa J. Lang, *Domestic Violence Will Increase During Coronavirus Quarantines and Stay-at-Home Orders, Experts Warn*, WASH. POST (Mar. 27, 2020), https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/domestic-violence-will-increase-during-coronavirus-quarantines-and-stay-at-home-orders-experts-warn/2020/03/26/04e63d6a-6d37-11ea-b148-e4ce3fbd85b5_story.html.

⁴⁵N.J. Exec. Order No. 106, (Mar. 19, 2020), <https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/pdf/EO-106.pdf>.

⁴⁶See N.J. Exec. Order No. 200, (Nov. 22, 2020), <https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/pdf/EO-200.pdf>.

⁴⁷Interview with Adela Caceres, *supra* note 37; Interview with Renee Koubiadis, Exec. Dir., NJ Anti-Poverty Network (Dec. 2, 2020).

⁴⁸Symposium, *The Impending Eviction Crisis: A Latent Effect of the COVID-19 Pandemic*, SETON HALL UNIV. SCHOOL L. (Oct. 7, 2020); see also Paula J. Franzese et al., *There'll be a tragic wave of evictions unless legislators act soon*, NJ.COM (June 26, 2020), <https://www.nj.com/opinion/2020/06/therell-be-a-wave-of-evictions-unless-legislators-act-soon-opinion.html>; Karen Yi, *NJ Landlords Keep Filing Eviction Proceedings Despite Moratorium On Lock Outs*, WNYC (Aug. 11, 2020), <https://www.wnyc.org/story/landlords-keep-filing-evictions-nj-court-despite-moratorium-lock-outs/> (noting that from April to July 2020, there were 21,000 landlord-tenant filings in New Jersey).

⁴⁹See Franzese, *supra* note 48. Otherwise, evictions will overtake the courts in the aftermath of the pandemic. See *The Potential Impact of COVID-19 Related Evictions in New Jersey*, STOUT (July 23, 2020), https://fairsharehousing.org/images/uploads/NJ_COVID_Eviction_Impact_Report_2020.07_23_.pdf (noting that approximately 40% of all New Jersey renter households would not be able to pay August rent). New Jersey could experience 304,000 eviction filings in the coming four months, an estimated 600% increase from pre-COVID-19 levels. See *id.* At the national level, “[t]he United States may be facing the most severe housing crisis in its history. According to the latest analysis of weekly U.S. Census data, as federal, state and local protections and resources expire and in the absence of robust and swift intervention, an estimated 30–40 million people in America could be at risk of eviction in the next several months.” Emily Benfer et al., *The COVID-19 Eviction Crisis: An Estimated 30-40 Million People in America are at Risk*, THE ASPEN INST. (Aug. 7, 2020), <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/blog-posts/the-covid-19-eviction-crisis-an-estimated-30-40-million-people-in-america-are-at-risk/>. “In the Household Pulse Survey from the Census Bureau, Black and Latinx households in New Jersey . . . were more likely to report being behind on rental payments than white or Asian residents.” Holom-Trundy, *supra* note 9.

⁵⁰Peterman et al., *Pandemics and Violence Against Women and Children*, CTR. FOR GLOBAL DEV. (Apr. 2020); Kate Power, *The COVID-19 Pandemic has Increased the Care Burden of Women and Families*, 16 SUSTAINABILITY: SCIENCE, PRACTICE & POL’Y 67 (2020).

⁵¹See Caitlyn Collins et al., *COVID-19 and the gender gap in work hours*, GENDER, WORK & ORG. (July 2, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12506>.

⁵²Peterman, *supra* note 50.

⁵³*Economic Challenges for Survivors of Domestic and Sexual Violence During COVID-19*, CNTR. FOR SURVIVOR AGENCY & JUST., https://csaj.org/document-library/DVSA__Covid_-_Communities_of_Color.pdf (last accessed Dec. 8, 2020).

⁵⁴Joan Williams, *Real Life Horror Stories From the World of Pandemic Motherhood*, N.Y. TIMES (Aug. 6, 2020) <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/06/opinion/mothers-discrimination-coronavirus.html?referringSource=articleShare>. Even temporary decisions to leave the workforce may have longer-term consequences for the financial success and independence of women. Julie Kashen, *How COVID-19 Sent Women's Workforce Progress Backward*, CNTR. FOR AM. PROGRESS (Oct. 30 2020), <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2020/10/30/492582/covid-19-sent-womens-workforce-progress-backward/#:~:text=This%20report%20estimates%20that%20if,to%20%2464.5%20billion%20per%20year..>

⁵⁵*Parents' Survey Identifies Stark Racial and Income Disparities This Fall Semester*, GLOBAL STRATEGY GRP (Nov. 17, 2020), <https://njchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/NJ-Public-School-Parents-Memo-Updated-F11.16.20.pdf>.

⁵⁶*Id.*

⁵⁷See *Coercive Control during COVID-19: New Tactics*, BATTERED WOMEN'S JUST. PROJECT, <https://www.bwjp.org/news/coercive-control-covid-19.html> (last accessed Dec. 8, 2020).

⁵⁸See *Covid-19 Tactics*, BATTERED WOMEN'S JUST. PROJECT, <https://www.bwjp.org/news/covid-coercive-control-wheel-combined.pdf>.

⁵⁹*Id.*

⁶⁰See *id.*

⁶¹Sandra's account of what followed after she called the police will be included in Part Two of this Report to be published in 2021.

⁶²See *As Stay-at-Home Orders Increase, so do Feelings of Loneliness and Depression*, UCLA HEALTH (Mar. 23, 2020) <https://connect.uclahealth.org/2020/03/23/as-stay-at-home-orders-increase-so-do-feelings-of-loneliness-and-depression/>.

⁶³Cesia Guerra, *Isolation and Domestic Violence*, BTSADV (<https://breakthesilencedv.org/isolation-and-domestic-violence/> (last visited Sept. 27, 2020).

⁶⁴Power and Control Wheel, NAT'L CTR. ON DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE, <http://www.ncdsv.org/images/PowerControlwheelINOSHADING.pdf> (last visited Nov. 1, 2020).

⁶⁵Interview with Adela Caceres, *supra* note 37; Godin, *supra* note 34.

⁶⁶Connelly, *supra* note 39; Interview with Diane Williams, Exec. Dir., JBWF (Oct. 9, 2020) (COVID-19 created a new power & control wheel; i.e. inducing more panic (catching the virus) and patterns of control (isolation due to COVID)).

⁶⁷Coercive Control during COVID-19: New Tactics, *supra* note 57.

⁶⁸Power and Control Wheel, *supra* note 64.

⁶⁹Connelly, *supra* note 39.

⁷⁰*Id.*

⁷¹We note that as a general matter, the reported number of domestic violence offenses is only a fraction of the actual number of domestic violence incidents. By all indications, this disconnect between report and reality is only more profound now, as a direct consequence of the shelter-in-place orders and other features of the COVID-19 pandemic.

⁷²Melissa Healy, *Domestic Violence Rose During Lockdown—and Injuries are Dramatically More Severe, Study Finds*, L.A. TIMES (Aug. 18, 2020) <https://www.latimes.com/science/story/2020-08-18/intimate-partner-violence-spiked-80-after-pandemic-lockdown-began> (citing Babina Gosangi & Hyesun Park et al., *Exacerbation of Physical Intimate Partner Violence during COVID-19 Lockdown*, RADIOLOGICAL SOC'Y N. AM. (Aug. 13, 2020)) <https://pubs.rsna.org/doi/10.1148/radiol.2020202866>).

⁷³Interview with Diane Williams, *supra* note 66.

⁷⁴*New Jersey Statewide Hotline Statistics*, WOMANSPACE, INC. (2019 & 2020) (showing a 14.74% decrease).

⁷⁵*Id.*

⁷⁶The Division on Women New Jersey Department of Children and Families reported an increase in calls from March through August 2020, compared to the same period in 2019. A copy of this data is attached as Appendix B. The authors have not independently verified the data. Since initial release of this Report, the authors have been informed that the Union County 2019 data is incorrect. The YWCA Union County indicates that Union reported 1,206 calls for March to August 2019, not the 296 calls listed on the table.

⁷⁷Ann Givens, *Surging Gun Sales and Shelter in Place Orders Make a Dangerous Mix for Domestic Violence*, The Trace (Apr. 1, 2020) <https://www.thetrace.org/2020/04/domestic-violence-gun-sales-coronavirus/>.

⁷⁸The authors express appreciation to the State Police and Office of the Attorney General for sharing preliminary data. We have not attempted to assess domestic violence homicide because of omissions in year-to-date homicide information and because New Jersey does not count or report murder-suicides, estimated to comprise 20-60 % of intimate partner homicides, greatly limiting the understanding of the true toll of intimate partner homicide in the State. See April M. Zeilo, *Multiple Victim Homicides, Mass Murders, & Homicide-Suicide as Domestic Violence Events*, SAFER FAMILIES. SAFER COMMUNITIES. at 9 <https://www.bwjp.org/assets/documents/pdfs/webinars/1-24-19-full-page-slides.pdf>.

⁷⁹See *New Jersey Cities by Population*, CUBIT https://www.newjersey-demographics.com/cities_by_population (last visited Dec. 8, 2020). Paterson and Clifton did not report police domestic violence incidents. Edison's reporting was approximately the same for both time periods; Jersey City and Lakewood preliminarily are reporting steep drops in domestic violence, but this appears to the authors more of a reporting error, rather than reflective of actual crime reporting from these municipalities); see also Interview with Vishni Khemraj, Assistant Prosecutor, City of Jersey City (reporting that domestic violence has spiked during the pandemic with a significant increase in criminal cases).

⁸⁰The authors thank the AOC for sharing their statistics for the purposes of this Report.

⁸¹The difference between the State Police data and the AOC data is that the police data tracks domestic violence calls, many of which do not result in charges. The AOC's data, generated by their database, identifies complaints, also known as eCDR complaints.

⁸²See Interview with Patricia Hart, Exec. Dir., WomenSpace, (Oct. 14, 2020) ("I can't say enough how the State of New Jersey supported us (providers of services to victims) to deliver our services throughout the pandemic in a way that was unbelievably helpful.").

⁸³The Report does not address changes in SNAP and state anti-hunger efforts or programs to cover uninsured and under-insured individuals who have COVID-related medical expenses.

⁸⁴FAQ: *How does the CARES Act stimulus package help me or my business? How do I get my economic impact payment?*, N.J. COVID-19 INFOHUB <https://covid19.nj.gov/faqs/nj-information/assistance-and-benefits/how-does-the-cares-act-stimulus-package-help-me-or-my-business-how-do-i-get-my-economic-impact-payment>; Sen. Cory Booker, *THE CARES ACT AND NEW JERSEY*, <https://www.booker.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/The%20Cares%20Act%20and%20New%20Jersey.pdf> (last visited Dec. 8, 2020). As we complete this Report, on December 21, 2020, Congress has reached a compromise for a second stimulus bill.

⁸⁵See *The Hotline Welcomes the Passage of the HEROES Act in the House, Urges Senate to Follow Suit*, NAT'L DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE <https://www.thehotline.org/news/the-hotline-welcomes-the-passage-of-the-heroes-act-in-the-house/> (noting specific provisions in draft of HEROES Act that support survivors of domestic violence).

⁸⁶*Federal Support for Providing Housing to Individuals Experiencing Domestic Violence*, CONG. RESEARCH SERV. at 1 (July 2020).

⁸⁷*Id.* at 2.

⁸⁸Office of the Attorney Gen, Public Notice: Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2019 Victims of Crime Act Grant Program, https://www.nj.gov/oag/grants/FFY19-VOCA%20Covid-Housing-Concompetitive-Programs_NOAF.pdf.

⁸⁹*Id.*; see also Interview of Pamela Jacobs, Exec. Dir., NJCEDV (Oct. 23, 2020) (stating that this money can be used for sustainable housing expenses, relocation, housing coordinators, and childcare in order to seek permanent housing as opposed to temporary shelter).

⁹⁰Press Release, Dep't of Children & Families, *DCF Division on Women has been awarded the Family Violence Prevention Services Act (FVPSA) Grant* (Oct. 15, 2020)

⁹¹*Id.*

⁹²See *Essential and Excluded: A Survey of Immigrants in New Jersey under COVID-19*, MAKE THE ROAD N.J. at 5, 7, 12 (Apr. 23, 2020).

⁹³See N.J. PANDEMIC RELIEF FUND, <https://njprf.org/>; Noah Cohen, NJ Advance Media, *Coronavirus relief fund to help undocumented immigrants in N.J.*, N.J.com (July 31, 2020) <https://www.nj.com/coronavirus/2020/07/coronavirus-relief-fund-to-help-undocumented-immigrants-in-nj.html>; Email from Sara Cullinane, Executive Director, Make the Road NJ (Nov. 14, 2020).

⁹⁴See N.J. PANDEMIC RELIEF FUND, <https://njprf.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/NJPRF-ALL-grants-9.2020.pdf>

⁹⁵Office of Management and Budget, FY2021 Revised Budget Proposal, at 34 (August 25, 2020) (sustaining funding for sexual violence prevention and intervention services)

⁹⁶Interview with Pamela Jacobs, *supra* note 89.

⁹⁷*Resources on the Response to the Coronavirus* (COVID-19), NJCEDV (updated Apr. 3, 2020) <https://njcedv.org/covid19/>.

⁹⁸*Tips for Remote Counseling and Advocacy*, NJCEDV, <https://njcedv.org/tips-for-remote-counseling-advocacy/> (last visited Nov. 17, 2020).

⁹⁹Interview with Pamela Jacobs, *supra* note 89.

¹⁰⁰*Id.*

¹⁰¹*Id.*

¹⁰²*Id.* (noting that the NJCEDV also negotiated free transportation for victims and survivors through transportation platforms such as Uber and Lyft).

¹⁰³Interview with Juley Myner, Exec. Dir., Center for Hope & Safety (Oct. 8, 2020).

¹⁰⁴*Id.*

¹⁰⁵*Domestic Violence and Homelessness: Statistics (2016)*, FAMILY & YOUTH SERVICES BUREAU (June 24, 2016) <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/resource/dv-homelessness-stats-2016>; see also Matthew Desmond, Northeast New Jersey Legal Services Pro Bono event (Oct. 27, 2020) (“Eviction is something like incarceration for Black women. Far too many low-income African American men are locked up. Far too many low-income African American women are being locked out.”) (Oct. 27, 2020), <https://www.northeastnjlegalservices.org/celebrateprobono> at 24 minutes.

¹⁰⁶Interview with Claudia Ratzlaff, Chief Exec. Officer, AVANZAR (Oct. 13, 2020).

¹⁰⁷*Interim Guidance for Homeless Service Providers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019*, CTR. FOR DISEASE CONTROL & PREVENTION (COVID-19) (updated Nov. 3, 2020), <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/plan-prepare-respond.html> (Center for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines for coalitions to adapt to needs during COVID-19).

¹⁰⁸Patricia Hart, *A Message from Patricia Hart, Executive Director of Womanspace*, CMTY. NEWS (Apr. 2, 2020) <https://communitynews.org/2020/04/06/a-message-from-patricia-hart-executive-director-of-womanspace/>; see also Notice of Availability and Award of Funds, Office of the Attorney General, https://nj.gov/lps/grants/FFY19-VOCA%20Covid-Housing-Concompetitive-Programs_NOAF.pdf (outlining the availability and award of funds for New Jersey statewide emergency shelter for domestic violence victims during the COVID-19 pandemic).

¹⁰⁹Interview with Joaneileen Coughlan, Dir., Domestic Violence Services for Women Rising (Oct. 5, 2020).

¹¹⁰*Id.*

¹¹¹Interview with Patricia Hart, *supra* note 82.

¹¹²Interview with Claudia Ratzlaff, *supra* note 106.

¹¹³See e.g. Jan Hoffman, *Young Adults Report Rising Levels of Anxiety and Depression in Pandemic*, N.Y. TIMES (Apr. 13, 2020) <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/13/health/Covid-mental-health-anxiety.html>

¹¹⁴Interview with Pamela Jacobs, *supra* note 89.

¹¹⁵Interview with Dianne Williams, *supra* note 66.

¹¹⁶Interview with Dianne Squadron, *supra* note 17.

¹¹⁷Interview with Joaneileen Coughlan, *supra* note 109.

¹¹⁸*Id.*

¹¹⁹Interview with Pamela Jacobs, *supra* note 89; Interview with Diane Squadron, *supra* note 17.

¹²⁰Investments in mental health services and expanded access to such services are also critical.

¹²¹See generally Lyungai F. Mbilinyi et al., *Exposure to Domestic Violence & Childhood Emotional Abuse: Childhood Domestic Violence Exposure Among a Community Sample of Adult Perpetrators: What Mediates the Connection?*, 21(2) J. AGGRESSION, MALTREATMENT & TRAUMA (explaining how men who grew up to engage in patterns of violence are likely to be exposed to violence in their own childhood); see, i.e., Justine van der Leun *Confinement and Contagion*, NEW YORK REVIEW (Oct. 8, 2020) (estimating that 88% of women in prison were previously victims of abuse and explaining that most women in prison today have been victims of either intimate partner or childhood violence).

¹²²*The Facts on Children's Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence*, FUTURES WITHOUT VIOLENCE.

¹²³Jeffrey L. Edleson & Barbra A. Nissley, *Emerging Responses to Children Exposed to Domestic Violence*, NAT'L ONLINE RESOURCE CTR. ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (last updated July 2011).

¹²⁴*Id.*

¹²⁵Interview Diane Squadron, *supra* note 17.

¹²⁶*Id.*

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED*

Name	Organization	Title	Date
Maria Betanzos	Women Aware (Middlesex County)	Chief Operating Officer	09/09/20
Navneet Bhalla	Manavi	Executive Director	10/12/20
Adela Caceres	YWCA Union County Family Justice Center	Director	09/14/20
Valencia Coleman	Child Protection & Permanency	Assistant Area Director for Essex County	11/09/20
Karen Escalante	Division on Women	Director of Program Development	09/17/20
Michele Frank	Rachel Coalition	Essex County DVRT Coordinator	11/29/20
Tourae Freeman	Child Protection & Permanency	Essex County Service Specialist	11/09/20
Patricia Hart	Womenspace (Mercer County)	Executive Director	10/14/20
Andrea Hetling	Rutgers Bloustein School of Planning & Public Policy	Associate Professor & Public Policy Program Director	12/04/20
Robin Hughes	Morris Family Justice Center	Advocate	10/15/20
Pamela Jacobs	NJ Coalition to End Domestic Violence	Executive Director	10/23/20
Maliha Janjua	Women Aware (Middlesex County)	Director of Client Services	09/09/20
Stephanie Jimenez	Union County Prosecutor's Office	Municipal Advocate Program	08/13/20
Renee Koubiadis	Anti-Poverty Network of NJ	Executive Director	12/03/20
Maria Lagattuta	Morris Family Justice Center	Director	10/15/20
Janice Lilien	YWCA Union County	CEO	09/01/20
Hilda Marrero-Ladik	Catholic Charities	Staff Attorney, Providence House, Burlington County	10/19/20
Julye Myner	Center for Hope and Safety (Bergen County)	Executive Director	10/08/20
John Nardi	Department Children & Families	Program Coordinator, NJ Domestic Violence Fatality-Near Fatality Review Board	10/08/20
Claudia Ratzlaff	Avanzar (Atlantic County)	CEO	10/13/20
Leslie Rodriguez	Ironbound Community Corp. (Newark)	Program Manager/Advocate	11/13/20
Elizabeth Ruebman	Office of the Attorney General	Special Advisor for Victim Services	09/30/20
David Sims	Child Protection & Permanency	Essex Area Director	11/09/20
Silena Shuta	Hudson County Prosecutor's Office	Victim/Witness Advocacy Coordinator	10/19/20
Diane Squadron	Jewish Family Service of MetroWest New Jersey	Executive Director	12/04/20
Ulana Tatunchak	Division on Women	Assistant Director of Program Development	09/17/20
Mildred Torres	Women Aware (Middlesex County)	Coordinator of Advocacy Services	09/09/20
Kimberly Vargas	Family Justice Center (Morris County)	Legal Advocacy Manager	10/15/20
Deborah Wentz	NJ Association of Mental Health & Addiction Agencies	Executive Director	12/03/20
Diane Williams	JBWS (Morris County)	Executive Director	10/09/20

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DIVISION ON WOMEN



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Data on Domestic Violence Victims Served in 2019 & 2020

In calendar year 2019, there were **14,293** individuals served by DCF's domestic violence providers (**2,663** residential and **11,630** non-residential). There were **37,531** hotline (crisis and non-crisis) calls. There were **14,047** sexual violence hotline calls in 2019.

Location	March - August 2019		March - August 2020	
State	Residential: 1414 Non-Residential: 5930	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 27,820	Residential: 1176 Non-Residential: 4445	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 32,028
Atlantic	Residential: 48 Non-Residential: 147	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 2093	Residential: 28 Non-Residential: 143	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 2514
Bergen	Residential: 97 Non-Residential: 207	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 3873	Residential: 128 Non-Residential: 99	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 3313
Burlington	Residential: 87 Non-Residential: 115	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 533	Residential: 64 Non-Residential: 62	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 361
Camden	Residential: 117 Non-Residential: 256	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 2189	Residential: 78 Non-Residential: 182	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 1958
Cape May	Residential: 35 Non-Residential: 46	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 3311	Residential: 39 Non-Residential: 356	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 3424
Cumberland	Residential: 46 Non-Residential: 75	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 552	Residential: 44 Non-Residential: 28	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 1110











DIVISION ON WOMEN



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Data on Domestic Violence Victims Served in 2019 & 2020

Location	March - August 2019		March - August 2020	
 Essex	Residential: 178 Non-Residential: 1034	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 1062	Residential: 226 Non-Residential: 335	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 658
 Gloucester	Residential: 34 Non-Residential: 90	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 364	Residential: 11 Non-Residential: 92	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 1787
 Hudson	Residential: 53 Non-Residential: 76	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 1498	Residential: 21 Non-Residential: 714	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 1985
 Hunterdon	Residential: 28 Non-Residential: 224	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 1004	Residential: 0* Non-Residential: 0*	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 0*
 Mercer	Residential: 92 Non-Residential: 146	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 1164	Residential: 47 Non-Residential: 64	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 1004
 Middlesex	Residential: 107 Non-Residential: 812	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 2101	Residential: 76 Non-Residential: 571	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 2006
 Monmouth	Residential: 78 Non-Residential: 1153	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 1109	Residential: 71 Non-Residential: 627	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 1101
 Morris	Residential: 93 Non-Residential: 190	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 1260	Residential: 80 Non-Residential: 103	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 1324










DIVISION ON WOMEN



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Data on Domestic Violence Victims Served in 2019 & 2020

Location	March - August 2019		March - August 2020	
 Ocean	Residential: 108	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 678	Residential: 76	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 1006
 Passaic	Residential: 39	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 1069	Residential: 46	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 1544
 Salem	Residential: 6	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 762	Residential: 32	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 880
 Somerset	Residential: 34	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 429	Residential: 7	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 963
 Sussex	Residential: 32	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 685	Residential: 20	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 472
 Union	Residential: 79	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 296	Residential: 7	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 1292
 Warren	Residential: 23	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 818	Residential: 81	Crisis and Non-Crisis Calls to the Hotline: 1277

*2020 Data yet to be obtained

Please note that for residential/shelter in March-August 2020, the numbers are down in the actual shelters. Due to physical distancing, shelters needed to limit their capacities. NJCEDV worked on placing victims in hotels during COVID-19.

ABOUT PARTNERS FOR WOMEN AND JUSTICE AND THE SETON HALL LAW SCHOOL CENTER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Partners for Women and Justice provides free legal assistance to low-income victims who seek domestic violence and sexual assault restraining orders and orders of protection and related relief regarding child custody, safe visitation, and child support. Partners provides these services through in-house staff attorneys, as well as working with private attorneys who volunteer to represent or advise individuals on a *pro bono* basis. In 2017, drawing upon its expertise in representing thousands of victims of domestic violence, Partners decided to increase its impact by deepening its role in advocacy to address systemic problems faced by low-income and often self-represented victims of domestic violence. We wish to recognize and thank McCarter & English and its partners, Trustee Adam Saravay and Gerard Brew, former Partners trustee, for their unwavering support for our clients and Partners' mission. Jessica Miles and Kevin Kelly, see below, have each provided critical support to Partners, since its founding in 2002.

The Seton Hall Law School Center for Social Justice undertakes direct legal services, impact cases, and advocacy work on behalf of low-income clients and community organizations. The Family Law Clinic, directed by Professors Jessica Miles and Kevin Kelly, provides wide-ranging legal assistance to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, and their families, including representation in hearings to seek final restraining orders, child support disputes, and divorce proceedings. The Center also assists with immigration cases for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault through the Immigrants' Rights/International Human Rights Clinic.

Partners and the Center for Social Justice are both part of statewide efforts to protect the legal rights of low-income victims of domestic violence, as well as others who lack the resources to afford counsel, during COVID-19, through the New Jersey State Bar Association's Statewide Legal Response Team; a coalition of attorneys representing domestic violence victims; and participation in multiple bench and bar committees.

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