

One of Jane Doe Inc.'s highest priorities is to advocate for adequate state funding for community-based services to meet the needs of sexual and domestic violence survivors throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In conjunction with our budget advocacy, JDI also advocates for best practices and responsive policies to support victims and survivors in the entirety of their lives.

JDI's current policy efforts fall into three broad areas for advocacy and change: *Education/Prevention*; *Economic Justice*; and *Immigrant Rights*. Additionally, we monitor and provide information and input on many other areas of policy that affect the lives, choices and safety of survivors. Some of our policy efforts focus on specific provisions related to sexual and/or domestic violence; many are issues that address broader policies that are critically important to the lives of survivors and their families and to supporting healthy and safe communities.

### **Key grounding principals**

- JDI and our member programs work on behalf of **all** victims and survivors of sexual and domestic violence.
- Multiple factors impact survivors and contribute to further marginalization and victimization—including sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia and multiple other oppressions.
- Support of those individuals and communities that are the most unserved, underserved and inadequately served will improve outcomes for all of those who experience violence in their lives. Underlying all of our policy efforts is a focus on these communities.
- In upholding the dignity and human rights of all people, we carefully assess the impact of public policy on oppressed communities that are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system.
- Adequate state funding is essential to support the life-saving (free and confidential) efforts of community-based sexual and domestic violence programs in order for them to support survivors in their communities, as well as to promote safe and violence-free communities.
- Our work cannot be achieved in a vacuum; it requires collaborations, partnerships and communications with multiple stakeholders.

### **Education and Prevention**

A key strategy to ending sexual and domestic violence is to increase access to education and prevention resources so that sexual and domestic violence does not occur in the first place. This includes social norms change and broad based education for youth, parents, educators and all community members. Prevention and intervention go hand in hand in the work of community based sexual and domestic violence organizations, and funding must be available for children and adults across the lifespan in order to reduce violence and to promote a vision for non-violence and equity

#### Target issues:

- Prevention funding based at local RCC and DV community based programs.
- Addressing sexual assault on campuses and in educational systems, ensuring Title IX protections in Massachusetts educational institutions, services for victims and survivors, and training and prevention education. Adequate funding for rape crisis centers is critical to provide access to services and partnerships with local institutions of higher education.
- Healthy, school based sexuality education that is medically accurate and age-appropriate.

## Economic Justice and Anti-Poverty

Economic justice is critical for all individuals in the Commonwealth, including victims and survivors who face significant economic barriers after experiencing violence. Economic inequality fosters an imbalance of power and contributes to creating advantages for those who choose to exert control over another. To ameliorate these barriers, JDI supports and champions a broad range of policy and legislative changes to improve survivors' access and outcomes related to employment, public benefits, housing, and health care.

### Target issues:

- Health Care Access
  - Health Care Confidentiality
  - Reproductive Justice
  - Female Genital Cutting and Mutilation
- Employment protections
  - Defense Against Abusive Waivers
  - Paid family and medical leave
  - Minimum wage
- Housing and public benefits
  - Housing stability sexual and domestic violence survivors through HomeBASE and other housing programs as well as access to affordable housing.
  - TAFDC without Family Cap
  - Housing Courts across the Commonwealth
  - Expansion of Earned Income Tax Credit

## Immigration

Immigrant survivors of sexual and domestic violence face incredible barriers to supports and safety; these barriers may include language and information access as well as risk of deportation and detainment, regardless of immigration and documentation status. In the current political climate, immigrant survivors are more in fear than ever of coming forward to access services, to call police or utilize other systems to intervene when violence is occurring.

### Target issues:

- Funding for language access and culturally specific outreach and services within immigrant communities
- Protection of the civil rights and safety of all Massachusetts residents—including safe access to services and law enforcement without the threat of deportation or other repercussions.

## Additional Systems Change

The above policy areas do not contain all of the systems and issues that affect survivors in Massachusetts. JDI is committed to supporting institutional and structural changes that benefit survivors and promote healthy and safe communities.

### System areas:

- Criminal justice reform
- Human trafficking
- Parental rights & supports for victims and survivors of sexual and domestic violence and their children