

njcoalition

against sexual assault

ANNUAL REPORT 2024





A LETTER FROM OUR TEAM

Dear Friends,

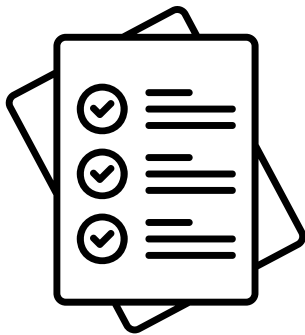
2024 was a busy year for the New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NJCASA), full of achievements rooted in collaboration, community, and enhanced service provision. Some of these achievements included hosting our biannual two-day virtual conference, expanding our membership, implementing recommendations from our Staff Experiences Study conducted in 2023, and launching a Survivor Assistance Funding program. Through these efforts, we have made meaningful strides in supporting sexual violence service providers, empowering survivors, and actualizing our shared vision of a world free from sexual violence. Throughout, we continued to prioritize anti-oppression, accessibility, and equity in all facets of our work.

As we step into 2025, we know that many uncertainties lie ahead. The landscape of social and political shifts may seem daunting, but the road to justice is rarely linear, and our movement is a resilient, powerful collective. All of us at NJCASA proudly reaffirm our commitment to survivors and advocating for systemic change that dismantles all forms of oppression. We will continue to deepen our partnerships, empower our communities, and advance our mission of promoting equity, justice, and healing.

Now more than ever, we must remain united and resolute in our efforts to prevent sexual violence and support survivors. We're so grateful for your continued support!

In Solidarity,
The NJCASA Team

PROMOTING ACCESSIBILITY



In July, we published our Conducting an Accessibility Audit Report, which we developed after completing a comprehensive internal accessibility audit in 2023 that helped us glean insights about how to streamline and improve equity-building practices in our organization. By systematically evaluating our programs, facilities, and digital platforms, we can uncover and mitigate barriers that prevent survivors from accessing the help they need. This report details key features of the audit, including data collection and analysis, creation of an accessibility charter, development of the audit template, and other actions and resources that have informed our work thus far. We created this report to support and encourage other programs to implement their own accessibility audits by providing guidance and recommendations that may help increase understanding about the purpose of such a project, as well as simplify the process.

Additionally, we launched a newly redesigned website with enhanced navigation features to make information about our programs, resources, and events as accessible as possible. We also continued our ongoing work with our Community Council, launching a new cycle specifically focused on accessibility.



PROMOTING EQUITY

We know that all forms of oppression (such as rigid gender norms, toxic masculinity, and white supremacy) contribute to the ongoing issue of sexual violence, as these constructs condone and actively enable violence and harm, particularly against individuals with historically marginalized and minoritized identities, such as people with disabilities; Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC); and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, plus (LGBTQ+) community—all of who face disproportionate rates of sexual violence and increased barriers to accessing care. As such, we continued to center anti-oppression and anti-racist principles in our programming, and we engaged in ongoing conversations as a team about how we can continue to advance these principles in our individual and collective work.

Additionally, for the first time in NJCASA's 40-year-plus history, we expanded our membership to include a cohort of eight culturally specific partners, recognizing how essential these tailored services are to meeting the specific needs of historically marginalized and minoritized communities. Our new members are Community Affairs and Resource Center, Harambe Social Services, Hispanic Family Resource Center, Jewish Family Service's Project SARAH, Manavi, Mercy Center, Partners (formally Partners for Women and Justice), and Wafa House.

SUPPORTING SURVIVORS



We know sexual violence can impact many aspects of a survivor's life and that the effects of trauma vary greatly. This is why, in partnership with The Department of Children and Families/Division on Women (DCF/DOW), we launched a Survivor Assistance Fund, through which our member programs can provide financial support directly to survivors and their loved ones in New Jersey to cover the cost of rent, legal fees, groceries, transportation, car repairs, utilities, and a host of other expenses. By issuing funds to meet a wide range of needs, survivors are given the opportunity to receive support that is most meaningful to them, allowing them more time, energy, and resources to focus on healing.

In 2024, we distributed over \$175,000 and supported over 130 survivors and their families through our Survivor Assistance Fund.

Additionally, as a result of continuous advocacy for improving the rights of survivors in New Jersey, Attorney General Directive 2024-02 was released in April. This directive expanded the standard activation period for sexual assault response teams (SART) from the initial five days to seven days after the incident of sexual violence is reported, and survivors who choose to wait to make a disclosure of sexual violence can now access forensic examinations beyond the initial seven days, to up to nine days post-assault, if determined by a forensic nurse examiner that viable evidence may still be available for collection.

SUPPORTING OUR MEMBER PROGRAMS

Our 30 member programs provide robust direct services to survivors and their loved ones, including free, confidential services, such as a 24-hour hotline, counseling and support groups, and crisis accompaniments to hospitals and police stations as part of county-based SARTs. As such, supporting our member programs is an essential facet of our work. We know that by strengthening the capacity of our advocates, we are ultimately better equipping them to meet the diverse needs of survivors.

IN 2024, NJ'S SEXUAL VIOLENCE PROGRAMS:

- Served more than **30,000 survivors**
- Answered over **19,000 hotline calls**
- Offered counseling services to more than **9,500 survivors and their loved ones**
- Responded to over **1,100 crisis accompaniments** to emergency rooms and police stations as part of county-based SART
- Fulfilled **1,300 outreach requests** to approximately **96,000 individuals**, including many from underserved communities.



SUPPORTING OUR MEMBER PROGRAMS

(CONTINUED)

At the start of 2024, we incorporated new quarterly data questions related to fostering affirming, inclusive workspaces to increase collective accountability. Additionally, we maintained our Staff of Color Affinity Group and created a new Pride Affinity Group to foster opportunities for community, dialogue, and enrichment for colleagues with historically marginalized identities to support each other and celebrate their contributions to the movement.

We also created a new Development Committee with the goal of connecting development professionals in the membership to resources related to grant writing and fundraising best practices. Though the funding landscape has become increasingly challenging, we're deeply committed to exploring every opportunity on behalf of our programs and the communities they serve.

Additionally, we invited staff across the membership to take part in the full-day Decolonizing Mental Health Treatment: Culture as Generational Medicine conference with keynote speaker Dr. Jennifer Mullan. Combined with several lunch-and-learns hosted throughout the year, including our financial literacy series brought to us by Kearny Bank and our new Rhythms of Care Series designed to address direct and vicarious trauma, these activities have helped engage and support membership staff by contributing to their professional and personal growth and well-being.





SUPPORTING OUR MEMBER PROGRAMS (CONTINUED)

We helped programs enhance the quality of their services by collaborating with Esperanza International to share a glossary of trauma-informed language and terms for bilingual service providers, releasing a report on pocket translators, and offering the opportunity for eligible programs to pilot the Recite Me accessibility toolbar for free on their websites. We also provided individual reports to all programs that took part in our 2023 hotline evaluation, and we continued to offer individualized technical assistance to each program to address unique challenges.

Finally, we opened registration for a brand-new mentorship program that will allow seasoned staff members across a range of roles to support newer colleagues in similar positions throughout our membership. This is an exciting opportunity to foster leadership skills and promote collaboration. By supporting and investing in each other, we're strengthening our movement and expanding our capacity to serve survivors.

HOSTING SPECIAL EVENTS



OPEN HOUSE

We kicked off 2024 by hosting an in-person Open House event, which was an exciting way to celebrate the expansion of our membership and welcome colleagues and community members to our new office space located in Trenton, NJ. Featuring a workshop facilitated by the SOAR Collective, this event focused on themes of radical welcome and hospitality, inclusivity, and community-building.

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

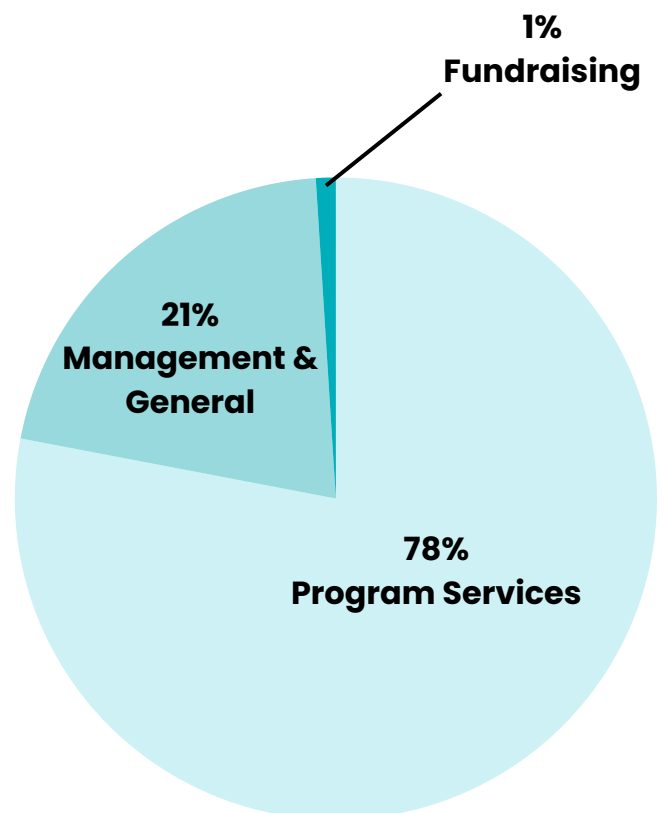
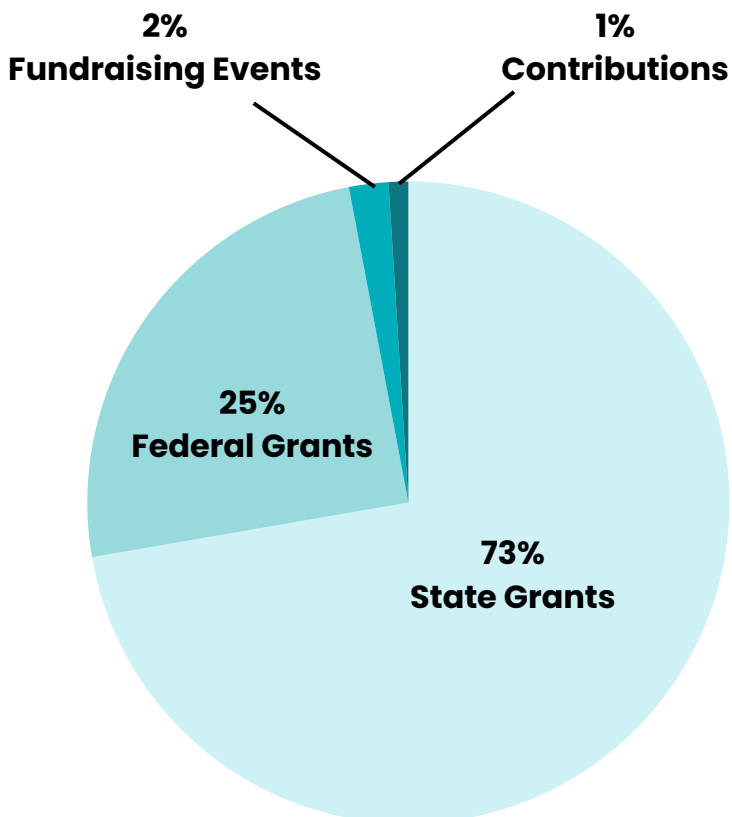
In May, we hosted our bi-annual two-day virtual conference centered around how to unite stakeholders from diverse sectors to help prevent sexual violence and build collaborative, resilient systems of support for survivors, with a special focus on those with historically marginalized identities who often experience increased instances of sexual violence and face barriers to accessing care. We were pleased to offer this completely free of charge for all participants, as we know cost is often a barrier to participating in events like this.

The conference featured a guided conversation with New York Times bestselling author and trauma specialist Resmaa Menakem and a combination of panels and workshops led by experts in the anti-sexual violence movement and allied sectors. With over 600 participants, the conference resulted in rich dialogue and received overwhelmingly positive feedback.

SECURING ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Though the funding landscape has become increasingly challenging, we conducted robust legislative budget advocacy that resulted in an additional \$1 million in state funding for sexual violence services for fiscal year 2025.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS



THANK YOU TO OUR 2024 SUPPORTERS!



