



# women aware

MOVING BEYOND ABUSE

## 2018 Impact Report

### Exceptional Services

In a single year, domestic violence agencies in New Jersey serve over 18,000 victims of abuse. In Middlesex County alone, Women Aware supports 1 out of every 8 of those victims. With 21 counties in New Jersey, this achievement speaks to the enormous community support that you give Women Aware every year. Your time, encouragement, and generosity changes lives. This report highlights some of the ways you make a difference to the victims who walk through our doors.

Women Aware's mission is to promote the safety and self-sufficiency of individuals and families affected by domestic violence in Middlesex County, New Jersey. In 2018, we fulfilled our mission by serving a total of 2,126 victims of domestic violence who found safety and support at Women Aware, a 7% increase from last year. We also answered 4,935 hotline calls, a 3% increase from last year. These numbers speak to the accessibility of Women Aware's comprehensive services for all victims of domestic violence.

### Addressing Barriers

In 2018 Women Aware provided 7,483 bednights for women and children in imminent danger. That's the equivalent of 1 out of every 14 bednights in the state. This speaks to the enormous work our shelter does in the state. Furthermore, Women Aware's emergency shelter is one of the few ADA-compliant domestic violence shelters in New Jersey. Thanks to our commitment to accessibility, we served 1 out of every 4 mobility impaired and visually impaired victims in the state.

Women and children residing at Women Aware's emergency shelter for domestic violence received 4 times more services than the state average,<sup>1</sup> thereby increasing the likelihood that they remain independent and safely housed upon their exit.<sup>2</sup> Because of Women Aware's comprehensive services, there was a 20% increase of clients establishing a new residence upon leaving the shelter compared to last year.

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<sup>1</sup> New Jersey Coalition to End Domestic Violence (2018).

<sup>2</sup> Gondolf, E.W., Fisher, E., McFerron, J.R. (1992). The helpseeking behavior of battered women; An analysis of 6000 shelter interviews. Harrisburg, PA.

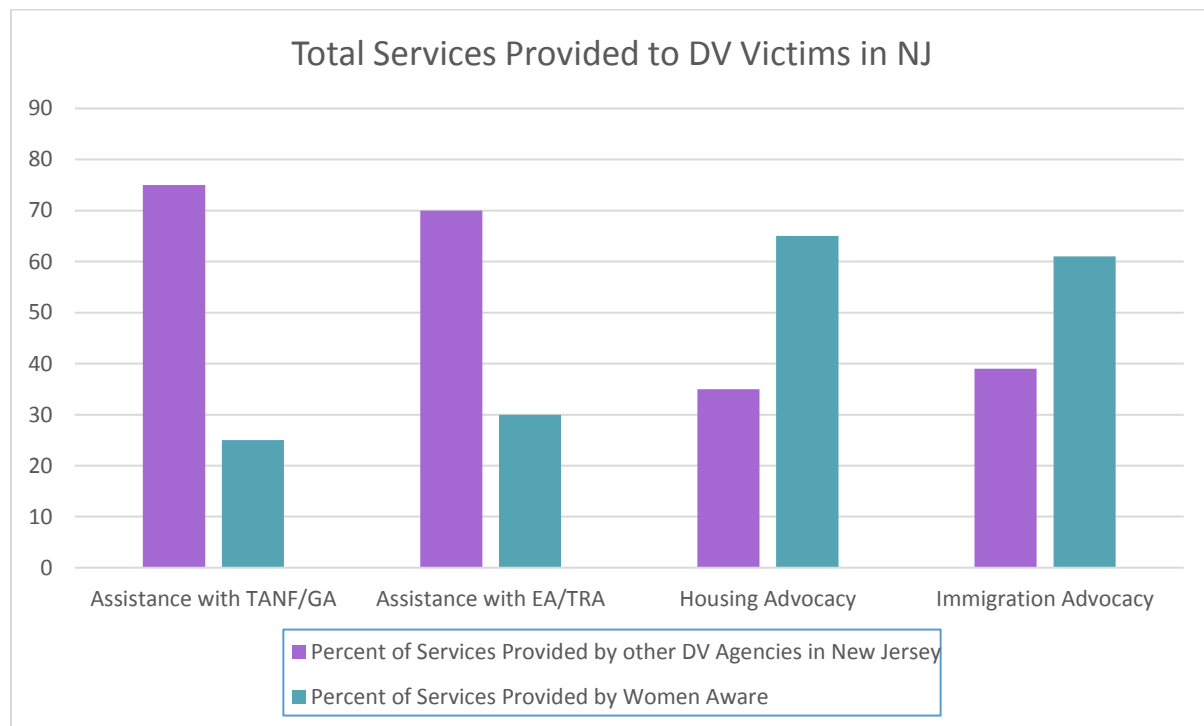


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***“Thank you for your support. Women Aware helped me and you were my foundation to look at myself and learn that I deserve more for me and my son. The road has been hard and I’m still suffering from the after effects of the abuse mentally but I am so grateful for Women Aware for being there as a safety net when I was not sure that when I took that leap how I was going to land. I was so scared. I’m crying right now writing this. I just want to say thank you...thank you.”***

Between 94%-99% of victims have experienced financial abuse.<sup>3</sup> Financial abuse separates domestic violence victims from their own resources, rights, and choices. Women Aware supports survivors as they establish their independence by leveraging nearly 1 million dollars in client assistance. Moreover, Women Aware’s annual holiday gift shop supported a total of 328 people, which include 94 women and 234 children who received over 1,000 toys and almost 5,000 dollars in gift cards.



<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ncadv.org/files/Domestic%20Violence%20and%20Economic%20Abuse%20NCADV.pdf>



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Our legal advocates broke barriers to service by meeting victims at the Middlesex County Courthouse every day, providing nearly 20% of all legal options sessions in the state. They helped secure 629 legal protections for victims in court.

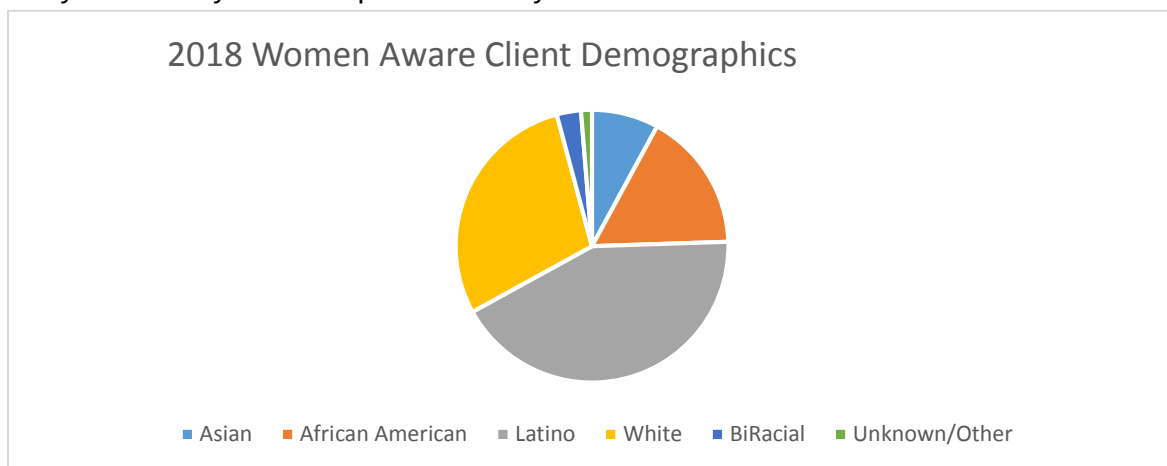
***“I could never have done this alone. I would not know how to proceed. You were so helpful. Thank you”***

In New Jersey, children are involved or present during 28% of all domestic violence offenses.<sup>4</sup> Our trained staff helped 236 children process this trauma. Furthermore, Women Aware provided nearly 30% of all children’s domestic violence counseling in the state.

### Meeting the Cultural Needs of Our Community

Middlesex County has the second-highest number of immigrants in the state, with over 30% of the population born outside of the United States.<sup>5</sup> Providing culturally sensitive and accessible programs is a priority for Women Aware.

In 2018 Women Aware served over a quarter of all non-English speaking victims in New Jersey, including 20% of Hindi speaking victims, 30% of Spanish speaking victims, and 33% of “other” language-speaking victims. Furthermore, we provided nearly 40% of all immigration advocacy for victims of domestic violence in the state. Overall we increased our immigration advocacy services by 15% compared to last year.



<sup>4</sup> New Jersey State Police (2017). 33rd Annual Domestic Violence Offense Report, 2015. Domestic Violence in New Jersey for the Year Ending December 31, 2015. Trenton: New Jersey.

<sup>5</sup> Census.gov. Foreign born persons, percent, 2011-2015. Accessed June 2017.

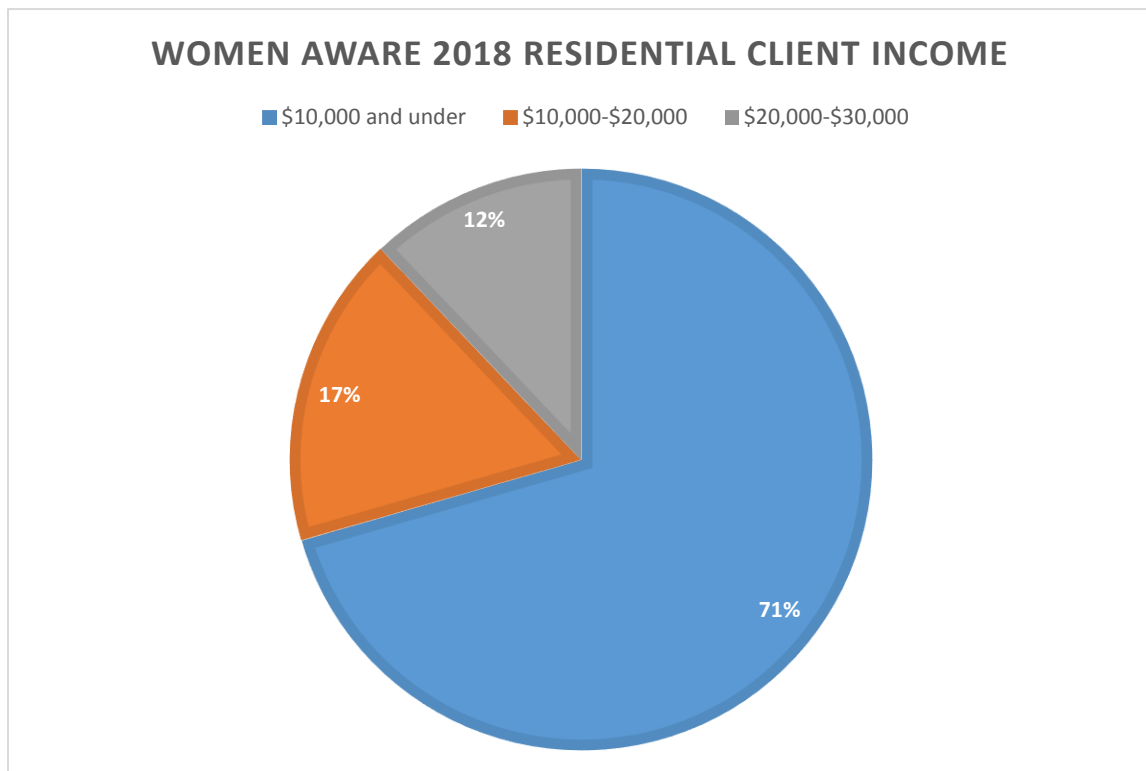


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Middlesex is one of the most diverse counties in New Jersey and our staff reflects this diversity. 50% of our service team are bilingual and all receive annual cultural competency training. Last year 47% of our clients were Hispanic, and we counseled victims in 16 different languages.

Moreover, 70% of our clients residing in our emergency shelter had incomes under \$10,000, and we keep our services free and confidential. These numbers speak to our priority of working with underserved, low-income, and minority victims of domestic violence to ensure health and safety for all.





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## In Summary

Thanks to your generous support, Women Aware:

- Served a total of 2,126 domestic violence victims, a 7% increase from last year
- Of those we served, 324 were children
- Answered over 4,900 hotline calls, a 3% increase compared to last year
- Assisted 1 out of every 8 domestic violence victims seeking services in New Jersey.
- Delivered 4 times more services to victims in domestic violence shelters than the state average.
- Provided nearly 40% of all immigration advocacy statewide.
- Served over a quarter of all non-English speaking victims in the state including 20% of Hindi speaking victims, 30% of Spanish speaking victims, and 33% of “other” language-speaking victims.
- Served 1 out of every 4 mobility-impaired and visually-impaired victim seeking services in New Jersey.
- Provided nearly 20% of all legal options sessions in the state.
- Provided nearly 30% of counseling services to children affected by DV in the state



*A child's artwork symbolizing love created in Women Aware's trauma reduction program*