

As the state coalition, one of Jane Doe Inc.'s (JDI) 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 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 **Human Rights**. Legislation and policy efforts may fit into more than one of these categories. JDI engages in many areas of policy that affect the lives, choices, and safety of survivors. Some policy efforts will focus on specific provisions related to sexual and/or domestic violence; many will address broader policies that are critically important to the lives of survivors and their families and to supporting healthier and safer communities.

Key grounding principles

- JDI and our member programs work on behalf of **all** victims and survivors of sexual and domestic violence.
- Multiple factors affect survivors and contribute to further marginalization and victimization. These include, but are not limited to, sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia and ableism.
- Support of the most unserved, underserved and inadequately served individuals and communities will improve outcomes for all of those who experience violence in their lives. Focus on these communities will inform all policy efforts.
- 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 and harmed by 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 to support survivors and 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 do 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 are interconnected components of the work of community-based sexual and domestic violence organizations. Funding must be available for prevention efforts across the lifespan in order to reduce violence and to promote a vision for non-violence and equity.

Focus areas:

- Increasing prevention funding at local rape crisis centers and community based domestic violence programs.
- Addressing sexual assault on campuses and in educational systems, ensuring Title IX protections in Massachusetts educational institutions, enhancing services for victims and survivors, and providing 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.
- Ensuring 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 inequity and abuse is often a tool to disempower and trap survivors in abusive and unsafe situation. To remove these barriers, JDI supports a broad range of policy and legislative changes to improve survivors' access and outcomes related to employment, public benefits, housing, and health care.

Focus areas:

- Health Care Access
 - Health Care Confidentiality
 - Reproductive Justice
 - Female Genital Cutting and Mutilation
- Employment protections
 - Defense Against Abusive Waivers
 - Paid family and medical leave and an economically just minimum wage
- Housing and public benefits
 - Access to affordable housing and housing stability for S/DV survivors.
 - TAFDC without Family Cap
 - Housing Court expansion across the Commonwealth
 - Expansion of Earned Income Tax Credit

Human Rights

Human rights for all people are essential to a world free of violence and oppression and to addressing societal inequities. Survivors who are members of communities of color, immigrant communities, LGBTQ/T communities, Muslim communities, and/or are persons living with disabilities, and other marginalized identities face additional barriers to accessing support, safety, and healing. In our current political climate, immigrant survivors from all communities and cultural backgrounds face heightened risk of deportation and detainment. Immigrant victims are more terrified than ever of calling police, seeking restraining orders or seeking other help when their communities are under attack. Language and cultural barriers exacerbate these challenges.

Focus areas:

- Funding for language access and culturally specific outreach and services within immigrant communities.
- Protection of the civil rights and safety of all Immigrant communities—including safe access to services and law enforcement without the threat of deportation or other repercussions.
- Equitable access to support and services for LGBTQ/T communities and maintenance of critical public accommodations rights for transgender people.

Additional Systems Change

The above policy areas are not inclusive of all systems and issues that affect survivors in MA. JDI is committed to supporting institutional and structural changes that support survivors and promote safer and healthier communities.

System areas:

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