

# ADDRESSING SERVICE GAPS FOR UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: INSIGHTS FROM A MIDWESTERN STATE NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

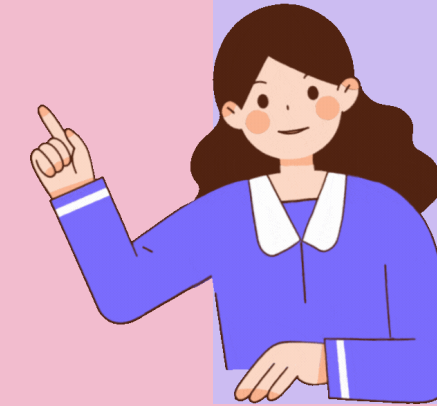


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## LITERATURE REVIEW- HIGHLIGHTS

- **Prevalence of Gender-based Violence Among Underserved Populations:**
  - GBV encompasses physical, psychological, and financial abuse, affecting various relationships.
  - Economic costs exceed \$8.3 billion annually in the U.S., including lost wages and healthcare expenses.
  - COVID-19 exacerbates GBV, leading to underreporting and disproportionately affecting women and certain communities.
- **Prevalence of Gender-based Violence in Rural Communities:**
  - Rural areas lack services, victim-blaming cultures, and geographic isolation.
  - Essential support services like shelters are often lacking, compounded by language barriers and inadequate transportation.
  - Stigma and cultural norms discourage victims from seeking help.
  - Note: Specific details regarding survey questions and analysis techniques are not included in bullet points for brevity.



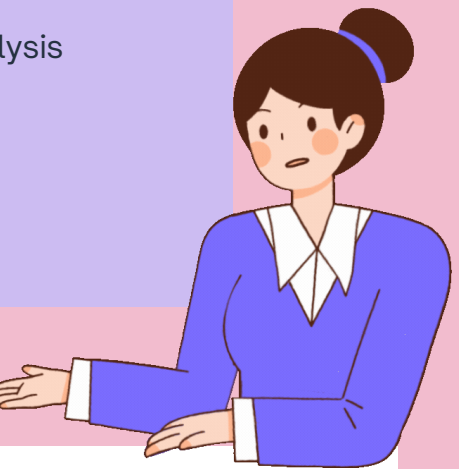
## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To address this pressing issue, the researchers established two major questions:

- 1). What are the most needed services for underserved populations?
- 2). What policy recommendations can be devised and put into action to effectively meet the needs of GBV victims, ultimately to enhance the response to and prevention of gender-based violence within the state?

## MATERIALS AND PROCEDURES SUMMARY:

- Survey Instrument:**
- Designed to gain insights into specific needs of underserved populations affected by GBV.
  - Covers organizational roles, preferred training topics and formats, legal system changes, needs of LGBTQ victims, communities in need of support, service needs for GBV victims, housing needs for DV victims, financial and educational needs, and forms of direct assistance.
  - Participants encouraged to share survey with relevant professionals and provide additional thoughts or comments.
- Analysis Approach:**
- Descriptive-analytical approach utilized due to small sample size.
  - Analytical framework by Vetter (2017) employed to address questions of "who, what, when, where, and so what."
  - Descriptive statistics used to identify key characteristics, priorities, temporal trends, and geographical disparities.
  - Qualitative data from ranking information and open-ended questions systematically analyzed to identify patterns, themes, and recommendations.
  - Summary table provided in later sections to organize and present key findings derived from content analysis.
- Note: Specific details regarding survey questions and analysis techniques are not included in bullet points for brevity.



## DEMOGRAPHICS

- Respondents from various agencies working directly or indirectly with GBV victims.
- Leadership roles (Domestic Violence Management/Program Coordinators or Directors) and frontline support roles (Domestic Violence Advocates) are prominent.
- Diverse backgrounds of respondents, including Shelter Support Staff, Case Managers, Law Enforcement, Hospital staff, and legal professionals.

## LEGAL SYSTEM CHANGES

- Strong support for increased police training, effective prosecution, and offender accountability.
- Disparities in understanding and resources across different police departments and legal entities.
- Emphasis on systemic reform and transformative justice approaches to address shortcomings in the legal system.

## SERVICE NEEDS AND SUPPORT

- High importance placed on needs-based services for underserved populations, particularly in rural areas.
- Call for culturally competent and inclusive services for gender-nonconforming populations.
- Challenges in accessing financial assistance, safe housing, and trauma-informed care highlighted. Key assistance options include rent, gas cards, groceries, and payment of back utility bills.
- Employment placement and provision of new cell phones also deemed crucial for survivor.

## SPECIFIC SERVICES

- High importance placed on housing, mental health care, legal services, childcare, and transportation.
- Moderate importance attributed to language services, healthcare, employment opportunities, education, skill training, pet care, and immigration services.
- Need for more lower-income housing accommodating pets and long-term support beyond shelter services emphasized.

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Table 2 Key Measures for Community Support and Service Needs

Category	N	Mean Score (highest=9 and lowest =1)	SD
<b>Legal System Changes</b>			
Increased police training (e.g., trauma-informed)	41	7.68	1.41
More effective prosecution	41	7.20	1.77
Increased accountability for offenders	41	7.00	1.44
Greater number of custody/divorce attorneys	41	6.64	2.35
Increased supervised visitation	41	5.8	2.86
Reduced arrest of victims	41	5.64	2.26
<b>Community Support Needs</b>			
		<b>Mean Score (highest=9 and lowest =1)</b>	
Rural Population	41	7.29	2.41
Other (including various subpopulations): Children, mothers fleeing with children; Persons with Intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), individuals experiencing extreme poverty, and human trafficking victims	5	7.00	2.10
Women of Color	41	6.65	1.95
Teens and Young Adults	41	6.56	2.08
Victims experiencing physical disabilities	41	5.88	1.90
Elderly	41	5.00	2.28
		<b>Mean Score (highest=9 and lowest =1)</b>	
Service Needs for Gender-nonconforming Populations			
Proficient staff with LGBTQ expertise and inclusive language	24	7.08	1.71
LGBTQ community-based support services	25	6.83	1.91
Community outreach and LGBTQ awareness training	25	6.20	2.83
Inclusive visual elements in agency materials	25	6.25	2.28
		<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>	
Rent	40	20.19%	NA
Gas cards	40	16.35%	NA
Groceries	32	15.38%	NA
Payment of back utility bills	36	15.38%	NA
Employment placement	41	11.54%	NA
New cell phones	40	12.50%	NA
Tuition assistance	36	2.88%	NA

## CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

### Systemic Legal Changes:

- Specialized training for law enforcement personnel in responding to domestic violence calls is crucial, particularly in adopting a trauma-informed approach.
- Legal reforms prioritizing offender accountability and streamlining the prosecution process for sex crimes are essential.
- Enhanced legal support is needed for victims navigating the complexities of the family court system.

### Focusing Resources on Communities in Greatest Need:

- Rural populations face persistent service disparities, emphasizing the importance of addressing these disparities.
- Teens and young adults require special attention for sexual violence prevention and early intervention.
- Service needs for gender-nonconforming populations highlight the limited experience in working with LGBTQ+ victims and the urgent need for collaboration with queer-friendly therapists and organizations to establish safe spaces and improve support services.

