
THE INITIATIVE

VICTIM ADVOCACY

Survivors with Disabilities Who Have Experienced Abuse

2020 Annual Statistic and Performance Report

CLIENT DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

The Initiative served 393 primary and 360 secondary survivors, a total of 753 primary and secondary survivors in 2020. Statistical data is provided for primary survivors only:

In 2020, 393 clients reported one or more forms of victimizations.

Number of Victimizations by Type/Percent of Clients Experiencing Specific Victimizations			Number of victimizations per clients (domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, elder abuse, caregiver abuse, family violence, financial abuse, and human trafficking):		
Domestic Violence	321	82%	278 clients reported	1 form of victimization	71%
Stalking	46	12%	78 clients reported	2 forms of victimization	20%
Sexual Assault	54	14%	23 clients reported	3 forms of victimization	6%
Caregiver Abuse	9	2%	11 clients reported	4 forms of victimization	3%
Elder Abuse	18	5%	3 clients reported	5 forms of victimization or more	1%
Human Trafficking	10	3%			
Family Violence	43	11%			
Financial Abuse	12	3%			
Other	11	3%			

Thus, our 393 clients experienced a total of 563 victimizations, an average of 1.5 victimizations per client.

In addition, 16% of the clients reported childhood emotional, psychological, and or physical abuse; 11% of the clients reported childhood sexual abuse. It is important to note that, as these questions regarding childhood trauma can be very triggering for our survivors, our staff did not ask every survivor, nor did every survivor choose to answer. We imagine the actual statistics for our survivors who have experienced childhood emotional, psychological, physical, or sexual abuse is actually much higher, as multiple national studies corroborate.

Of the 393 clients served in 2020, many of these clients reported experiencing multiple disabilities within and across disability categories—such as physical, sensory, cognitive, mental health, and health-related. 393 clients reported a staggering 1,047 disabilities, an average of 2.6 disabilities per client. Physical disabilities accounted for 20% of total disabilities, sensory disabilities accounted for 5% of total disabilities, cognitive disabilities accounted for 11% of total disabilities, traumatic brain injury accounted for 8% of

Number of Disabilities by Type/Percent of Specific Disability from Total Disability		
Physical Disabilities	208	20%
Sensory Disabilities	56	5%
Cognitive Disabilities	111	11%
Brain Injury	82	8%
Mental Health Disabilities	427	41%
Health Related Disabilities	256	21 %

total disabilities, mental health disabilities accounted for 41% of total disabilities, and health-related disabilities accounted for 21% of total disabilities.

The Initiative’s research also shows that 40% of the clients have reported short-term and long-term disabilities due to victimizations from their adulthood and does not count for the disabilities that have been caused by childhood victimizations.

Race	% of Clients
Caucasian	51%
African-American	14%
Hispanic	21%
Native-American	6%
Asian American	1%
Multi-racial	8%
Other	1%
Pacific Islander	>1%

Gender	% of Clients
Female	92%
Male	7%
Transgender	>1%

Age	% of Clients
18-24	5%
25-59	82%
60+	9%
Unknown	4%

- 81% of The Initiative’s clients fall under the Low to Moderate Income Guidelines.
- 38% of the clients reported being homeless.
- 54% of the clients were TANF (Temporary Aid for Needy Families) eligible.
- 64% of the clients reported not feeling safe calling police for assistance.

CRISIS CALLS BY JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Judicial District	County	# of Crisis Calls	% of Crisis Calls
1st	Jefferson	104	13%
2nd	Denver	257	32%
18th	Arapahoe/Douglas	81	10%
17th	Adams	59	7%
20th	Boulder	83	10%
	Rural Counties	82	10%
	Latinx	56	7%
	Out of State	3	.3%
		Total #: 797	

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Name of Program	# of Clients	% of Total Clients
Rural Advocacy	77	20%
Bicultural Advocacy	42	11%
LGBTQ+	15	.4%

INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY-DIRECT SERVICES

The Initiative provides extensive services to abuse survivors with disabilities in order to address their complex and shifting needs. In 2019, The Initiative **provided 4,687 services, an average of 11.9 services per family**. Many services have multi-generational affects when the majority of our clients are parents with children.

- **277** clients received Action Plan Folder: A personalized information and referral folder for the client that also includes a pen and notebook. This folder is provided to clients to educate them on the best way to navigate and take advantage of all the community resources available to them.
- **393** clients received information about the Victim Right’s Act (VRA), which lays out crucial rights for crime victims in the criminal legal system, namely that crime victims have the right to be treated with fairness, respect, dignity, and to be informed and present through the criminal justice process.
- **393** clients received information on the Crime Victim Compensation Program which is a fund to help crime victims, and 22 clients received assistance filling out and submitting the proper paperwork and documentation.
- **286** clients received information and referrals to community organizations and assistance with navigation through these resources.
- **189** clients received information and referrals to victim services organizations and assistance with navigation through these resources.
- **317** clients received Peer Advocacy, during which The Initiative advocates will negotiate and discuss issues in behalf of clients' request and best interest to state entities and systems, as well as other community organizations, victim-survivor services organizations, health providers, and more.
- **52** clients received support in advocating with their landlord or employer.
- **54** clients received assistance navigating benefits, such as food assistance and TANF, and related human services paperwork.

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- **346** clients received Self-Care Counseling, as The Initiative believes that, in order to break the cycle of violence; one must love, empower, and invest in themselves.
 - **204** clients received Domestic Violence Awareness education in hopes that the survivor will be able to break the cycle of violence through awareness and provide counseling on warning signs of domestic violence.
 - **222** clients received Crisis Counseling in order to support them in, and eventually de-escalate, their crisis.
 - **393** clients received Safety Planning in all three phases of living or leaving the abuser
 - **180** clients received Affordable Housing Counseling, in which The Initiative advocates provide, inform, and assist with the most updated information on complex housing systems and how to navigate them to ultimately find stable and accessible housing.
 - **76** clients received Relocation to Safety, which includes intense planning and financial assistance with airline, bus, train tickets, food & gas, and hotel costs.
 - **99** clients received Emergency financial assistance: financial assistance totaling \$28,683.55, including help with transportation, food, clothing, blankets, mattresses, household items, ring doorbell cameras, cellphones, internet, laptops, hotel stay, medications, hygiene products, diapers, relocation to safety, birth certificates, utility assistance, rental and deposit assistance, moving storage, p.o. boxes, as well as services that will help the victim secure employment such as haircuts, a nursing license, etc.
 - **22** clients received Address Confidentiality Program enrollment, which assists domestic violence, sex assault, and stalking victims in keeping their address confidential.

DIRECT SERVICE EVALUATION

Our clients submitted 43 surveys, reflecting their satisfaction with the services provided by The Initiative’s advocates. Clients’ comments reflect the ways in which their relationships with The Initiative have impacted their lives.

- ❖ 100% reported that they received the service they were seeking from The Initiative
- ❖ 90% know more ways to plan for safety
- ❖ 92.3% know more about community resources
- ❖ 91% are better aware of cycle of violence and warning signs
- ❖ 88.2% know more about their rights and options.

The hallmarks of The Initiative’s accomplishments in individual advocacy are reflected in survivors’ very own words:

“Kashundra is excellent at demonstrating compassion. I would like to give super Kudos to Kashundra. This young lady played a huge role in not letting the light of my faith burn out. She gave me hope, she made me feel that she genuinely cared. She would call me when no one else would. Domestic violence is a dark lonely road, and Kashundra showed up and shed the light for me. She is a true asset to the Initiative. Eternally grateful.”

“The entire Initiative staff were there for me. I felt comfortable with every conversation.”

“Emma Martin is amazing! Emma Martin is AMAZING as well as Ashlee and Zoey! Maria too. They have done so much for me. I consider them my family! They not only helped me, but encouraged me to save my life. I see myself in a better light and know I am worth it!”

“I would like to inform you that Kashundra has kept in contact with me. I have spoken with her several times. She has been amazing. She has shown compassion towards my situation and has been an incredible source for me during this chapter of my life.

Not only has she been a listening ear she has also provided me with possible resources.

She has made me feel cared for during this long lonely journey (domestic violence).

I thank every single one of you for what you do, but I would like to single Kashundra out for she has risen above the occasion.

She gets the Team GOLD STAR ★.

Please relay this message to her superiors for this young lady needs to be recognized and encouraged to keep shining the light for those of us in very dark places.”

“Muchas gracias por su ayuda”

“I just wanted to thank you for being so kind to me the other day and listening to me. This has been really hard for me, to know that there are kind people like you out in this crazy world just made me smile inside and out. Stay well and safe!”

“I loved working with Emma she is so nice and helpful!! You guys are amazing, and I appreciate you so much! Thank you for being support through the worst experiences in my life”

“I could not gone through the court process and other things without the help of the initiative employees. Zoe was so prepared in giving me resources, phone numbers, even having a pen and paper for me at court. And when I was distraught over the abuse I suffered and was unable to write Zoe did it for me. I cant recall how to spell my other advocates name, Isaura, was also so very prepared. Zoe and Isaura were ALWAYS respectful, professional to every person along the way. I cannot say enough about the Initiative. I feel I would have been just another statistic homeless or worse if the Initiative didnt help me!!! Thank you to Emma who always followed up. Even to this day. Because of the employees at the Initiative I've had a second chance on life. I am now in my own place, in Christian counseling, have MOST of relationships restored and my faith in God is unwavering. I can go on and on but I'm typing in a small box here and it's quite difficult. My road to coming out of abuse and the trauma continues. Thank you..”

“I want to say thank y'all for everything that y'all have done for me, I couldn't have done it without your help and support. Thanks so much”

“Zoe is a true go getter. Her passion to never give up is a quality I wish others carried. Zoe calls back, listen, not afraid to say if its just not possible. I love my room at the Extended Stay and working to stay focused.”

“ Ms. Isaura Thank you for responding to my call and listening to my barriers, helping to find a solution. I really appreciate you. Much gratitude and Blessing upon you. Thankyou”

“Thank you for responsiveness and making sure my needs were met.”

“She made me feel safe and comfortable when my life was falling apart.”

“Zoe was amazing she spent a lot of time with me and made me feel validating in what was happening to me at that time, she never gave up in finding resources for me which was beneficial, when I felt like there was no hope and I'd never be free from the abuse she paved a way and opened doors I thought were closed, I will always remember her compassion and kindness!”

“Excelente apoyo, Me gustó mucho la atención de mi Navegadora, muy buena y linda persona. Muchas gracias!!”

“I would like to thank you, she went above and beyond and make me like I actually had a voice.”

“I felt so cared for and respected by the staff I worked with. It was very enjoyable experience for me. I am so grateful there are organizations like this to help me on my path to fulfilling my dreams.”

“Maria was the best, efficient, self-educating to suit my uniqueness, that I’ve experienced until now. I hope it’s the beginning of drawing such skilled and motivated people in my life to work with from now on. I’ve been really needing this hand up for years and i feel like I’m living again, not just alive.”

“She was so wonderful! Very responsive, kind, and informative! You guys are amazing. Please keep up the good work!”

SYSTEMS ADVOCACY-COMMUNITY OUTREACH

In 2020, The Initiative has provided **56 trainings** on our specific services and collaboration processes (Cross Training), with an audience of 1,426 people, **13 trainings** on the intersections of disability and abuse, with an audience of 280 people, **8 trainings** on gender and sexuality (including at the CAIA Conference 2020), with an audience of 315 people, **6 trainings** on the Latino/x community and barriers to safety, with an audience of 45 people, and **1 training** on Partner Inflicted Brain Injury at the COVA Conference to an audience of over 145 people. We presented to well over 83 agencies during these trainings (we don’t have a specific number because we only began tracking agency attendance in the second half of the year).

Type of Training	# of Trainings	# of Attendees
Cross-Training on Services	56	1,426
Disability and Abuse 101	13	280
The Latino/x Community 101	6	45
Gender and Sexuality 101	8	315
Brain Injury and Survivors	1	145+
Totals	61*	1,437+*

*Audience/training totals vary because some audiences were **part of one or more trainings**.

Training By County	# of Trainings*
Statewide/National	19
1 st JD - Jefferson County	5
2 nd JD - Denver County	15
6 th JD – Archuleta/La Plata/San Juan County	4
8 th JD – Jackson/Larimer County	1
17 th JD - Adams/Broomfield County	11
18 th JD - Arapahoe/Douglas County	3
20 th JD - Boulder County	3

*Some trainings fall in multiple county categories, for example, trainings for organizations that serve all of Denver Metro

The Initiative provided training on the intersections of disability and abuse, on barriers to safety, the Latino/x community, the LGBTQ+ community, Brain Injury, and on our specific services and collaboration processes to a diverse group of organizations, such as:

- ❖ Salesforce
- ❖ Denver District Attorney VAU
- ❖ Denver Police Department VAU
- ❖ Rocky Mountain Victim Law Center
- ❖ Brighton/Commerce City Police Department VAU
- ❖ Seven Stars Collective
- ❖ District Attorney VAU
- ❖ Jefferson County Sheriff's Department VAU
- ❖ Johnson & Whales Criminology Class
- ❖ Glendale VAU
- ❖ COVA Internship Program
- ❖ Roots of Courage – Family Tree
- ❖ Rise Above Violence
- ❖ Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) - Adams and Broomfield
- ❖ Mothers Against Drunk Driving
- ❖ 2020 Virtual Colorado Advocacy In Action (CAIA) Conference
- ❖ Sexual Assault Victim Advocate (SAVA) Center - Fort Collins
- ❖ LINC Navigators
- ❖ The Reciprocity Project
- ❖ COVA Conference
- ❖ COVA Staff
- ❖ Community Reach Center
- ❖ Adams County Sheriff's Office
- ❖ Westminster Police Department
- ❖ Federal Heights Police Department
- ❖ Thornton/Northglenn Police Department
- ❖ Brighton/Commerce City Police Department
- ❖ 17th District Attorney's Office VAU
- ❖ Jefferson County Police Department
- ❖ Aurora Police Department
- ❖ Arc of Aurora
- ❖ Littleton Police Department
- ❖ Englewood Police Department
- ❖ 18th Judicial District Probation
- ❖ Arapahoe County District Attorney's Office
- ❖ Servicios de la Raza
- ❖ Sungate Kids
- ❖ Castle Rock Police Department
- ❖ 18th District Attorney's Office
- ❖ Devereux Behavioral Health
- ❖ UC Health Forensic Nurses (SANE)
- ❖ PAVE
- ❖ Guided By Humanity
- ❖ MESA – Moving to End Sexual Assault (Boulder)
- ❖ Phoenix Center

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- ❖ Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado
 - ❖ 4 Corners Rainbow Youth Center
 - ❖ Team Select
 - ❖ Broomfield Police Department VAU
 - ❖ STAR Program with Denver Police Department
 - ❖ Denver Safehouse
 - ❖ 17th Judicial District Victim Coordinators
 - ❖ Denver Rescue Mission STAR
 - ❖ 18th Judicial District Sexual Assault Response Team
 - ❖ Colorado Women’s Bar Association
 - ❖ Puzzles Conference – Chrysalis Network
 - ❖ Ralston House
 - ❖ Colorado Legal Services
 - ❖ CASA 8th JD
 - ❖ Safe Shelter of St Vrain Valley
 - ❖ SAVA Weld County
 - ❖ Warren Village
 - ❖ Denver Police Department VAU
 - ❖ Children’s Hospital
 - ❖ Alternatives to Violence
 - ❖ CU Denver Office of Equity
 - ❖ Longmont Police Department VAU
 - ❖ Mexican Consulate
 - ❖ OVA CU Boulder
 - ❖ Peak Neuro Care
 - ❖ Harm Reduction Action Center
 - ❖ Colorado Poverty Law Project
 - ❖ Community Shares
 - ❖ Porchlight Family Justice Center

OUTREACH EVALUATION

Cross Training: The Initiative has met its goal to provide education and resources to the community so that they may better access our services. These questions are included in the surveys for all other presentations.

- ❖ “I better understand what The Initiative does and what their services are.” - **99.6% agree.**
- ❖ “I better understand best practices for referrals and collaboration with The Initiative.” – **98% agree.**
- ❖ “I would refer/collaborate with The Initiative in the future.” – **97% agree.**

“I felt like this area was one of my weak points so I am so happy we received this training! I feel like I have a better understanding of the community and what this agency can help with! I look forward to bringing this to my agency.”

“This was a great refresher on your services!”

“This was amazing. The Initiative is the first organization that I have heard of focusing on survivors with disabilities. This perspective and knowledge is so helpful and beneficial to all.”

“I thought it was an excellent training, and I would be very interested in participating in future trainings offered by The Initiative.”

“Excellent presentation. Excited about what The Initiative can provide to the people we serve in our community.”

Disability and Abuse 101: The Initiative has met its goal in providing deep, intersectional, and comprehensive education regarding disability and abuse.

- ❖ “I have a better understanding of disabilities” – **96% agree.**
- ❖ I have a better understanding of the link between abuse and disability.” - **94% agree.**
- ❖ “I can better advocate for survivors of abuse with disabilities.” – **95% agree.**
- ❖ “I understand the importance of screening survivors for brain injury.” – **89.4% agree.**

“I learned a lot of important conceptual and practical information from this training that I have never been exposed to before. I loved the lens that the presentation took. This will be immensely important in my professional work and personal interactions.”

“This presentation was very informative. Zoe did an amazing job with presenting the information and answering any questions we had. I will always remember The Initiative when I am on the job.”

“Safe & comfortable space to spend an hour in. Thank you.”

“This was a fantastic presentation about those with disabilities and the different ways of abuse they may encounter. Personally having someone in my life who is disabled, it was nice knowing there are organizations that dedicated to overlooked issues like these. It was a great experience in learning more about the Initiative and how they help those in need.”

“This was an AMAZING training. I wish everyone could be required to watch it. Thank you for all you do!”

“Discussions about easy/creative accommodations and appropriate language were really helpful!”

“I loved the training! It was so insightful and it really impacted the way I see things at work and in my personal life. Thank you!”

Gender and Sexuality 101: The Initiative has met its goal in providing deep, intersectional, and comprehensive education regarding gender, sexuality, disability, and abuse.

- ❖ “I have a better understanding of key terms relating to LGBTQ+ communities.” – **97% agree.**
- ❖ “I have a better understanding of systems of power as they relate to LGBTQ+ communities.” – **97% agree.**
- ❖ I have a better understanding of best practices for serving LGBTQ+ communities.” – **97% agree.**

“This is an AMAZING presentation! Zoe did an incredible job catering to all knowledge levels and putting together a thought-provoking presentation. She is awesome!”

“The trainer and materials were fantastic! I feel so much better grounded in how I can think of gender and sexuality and others varying experiences. Thank you!”

“I love how this covered so much information without feeling overwhelming!”

“Second time taking the training, and still got a lot out of it! Thank you - so helpful in challenging culturally-ingrained ways of thinking.”

❖ CAIA Conference: We were unable to distribute our own survey. Below are the questions CAIA collected data on.

- “The presenter was knowledgeable, prepared and professional.” – **93.46 agree.**
- “The information provided at this session gave me a broader understanding of my work or advocacy work in general.” – **82% agree, 14.5% neutral.**
- “The information provided at this session has increased my ability to work with survivors.” – **83% agree, 13% neutral.**
- “The session materials were useful.” **79.33% agree, 13.33% neutral.**
- “Would recommend the presentation to others.” **84.77% agree, 12% neutral.**
- “Presentation matched description.” – **85.5% agree, 9.87% neutral.**

“Great, practical, specific information and I appreciated the clear presentation.”

“Was helpful to learn about certain terms (i.e. using "pronouns" vs "preferred pronouns" "sex assigned at birth" vs "born as" and "transgender" vs "transgendered")”

“Loved this session! It was my favorite! Will be using handout with our volunteers and staff.”

The Latino/x Community 101: The Initiative has met its goal in providing deep, intersectional, and comprehensive education regarding the Latino/x community, disability, and abuse.

- ❖ “I have a better understanding of who Latino/x people are.” – **94% agree.**
- ❖ “I have a better understanding of what abuse may look like in Latino/x communities.” – **91% agree.**
- ❖ “I better understand the barriers that Latino/x survivors might face in reaching safety.” – **91% agree.**
- ❖ “I can better advocate for Latino/x survivors of abuse.” – **91% agree.**

“Thank you Maria. It warms my heart to know that there are agencies and advocates who are dedicated to this work and are educating our community on the impacts of what our society does/has done to minority communities.”

“Thank you for having this training available. As a Latina Woman, I am pleased to see that there is education being put out there!”

“Maria is very knowledgeable; learned a lot from this presentation.”

Brain Injury and the Hidden Impact on Survivors (COVA Conference): We were unable to hand out our own survey, but below are the questions COVA asked attendees.

- ❖ Effectiveness of presentation: 4.85/5
- ❖ Speakers' knowledge: 4.91/5

"The workshop was very informative and shed light on an issue that many of us don't think of. I would like to learn more about this and its effects upon survivors."

"Very informative and great information to have to properly educate victims and help them appropriately."

"I appreciated how the content actually related to victims of brain injuries and the helpful tactics to help victims in this situation."

"You did a phenomenal job with this presentation. By far the best!"

"Super useful! Will definitely be watching it again & putting together some notes to take back to work with me!"

"Fantastic presentation skills- well done! Most informative presentation I have been to in my 3 years at COVA."

NEW ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

In 2020, The Initiative **created over 78 rewarding partnerships** with diverse organizations, **especially in key focus areas of rural communities, Latinx communities, and LGBTQ+ communities**. The Initiative would like to highlight a few particularly exciting and innovative partnerships, including:

- ❖ *Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado* - We have strengthened our co-advocacy efforts, working together on multiple long term, difficult cases in 2020. We also worked closely together to create and provide the Partner Inflicted Brain Injury training at the COVA Conference 2020.
- ❖ *The Colorado Poverty Law Project* - They offered to be a personal resource for our advocates to ask legal questions, and for referrals of anyone with legal issues related to poverty.
- ❖ *The Seven Stars Collective* – an ongoing partnership through the monthly meetings, to network and learn about the indigenous communities throughout Colorado.
- ❖ *The Colorado Public Health Department Sexual Violence Prevention* - They personally invited us to sit on their advisory board.
- ❖ *Porchlight Family Justice Center* - We have a continued and evolving partnership with them, which will grow and change as they open their facility and COVID ends.

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- ❖ *Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) in 17th JD* – They had us for 4 trainings with their advocates in 2020.
 - ❖ *Promoting Awareness through Victim Empowerment (PAVE)* - A national organization who brought us in to do a summer workshop series with their members, and is a continued partner in referrals and continuing education opportunities.
 - ❖ *The Harm Reduction Action Center* – They trained our staff on harm reduction techniques, and who will be referring their folks over to us, as there is a lot of overlap in our communities.
 - ❖ *The Chrysalis Network*, a national prevention training organization – They invited us personally to present at their conference. We have an ongoing relationship with them to share resources and networking opportunities.
 - ❖ *Moving to End Sexual Violence (MESA) in Boulder* – They have invited us to return for their hotline training each semester.
 - ❖ *Rocky Mountain Victim Law Center* - Continues to be a strong community partner.
 - ❖ *The Colorado Women’s Bar Association* - Coordinating high-quality, low-cost legal advice and representation for The Initiative’s clients across several focus areas, including housing, custody, and divorce. They featured us as one of their spotlighted donations, and matched all donations from their members for a total of \$2,000.
 - ❖ *The Mexican Consulate*, on their Group Against Domestic Violence meetings and deepened community outreach.

COMMITTEES

In 2020, The Initiative staff remained involved in several committees and meetings, in order to grow our presence in our communities and engage in creative and strategic collaboration with other organizations. The Initiative staff participated in committees and meetings such as:

- ❖ Domestic Violence Project Advisory Committee
- ❖ Denver Forensic Collaborative for Abuse of Elders and At-Risk Adults
- ❖ ACRTI (Accessible, Culturally Responsive, and Trauma-Informed) Committee
- ❖ Legal Information Network of Colorado Navigator meetings
- ❖ Crime Victim Services Committee meetings
- ❖ Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition board meetings
- ❖ Guided by Humanity board meetings
- ❖ Victim Services and Advocacy Network Steering Committee
- ❖ Victim Services and Advocacy Network policy meetings
- ❖ Seven Stars Collaborative meetings
- ❖ Jefferson County High-Risk Team meetings
- ❖ Colorado Sexual Violence Prevention Advisory Board
- ❖ Ralston House Diversity Advisory Board

NEW CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS AND EVENTS

- ❖ The Colorado Women's Bar Association
- ❖ Sexy Pizza

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Initiative's internship and volunteer program evolved in 2020, becoming available not only in-person but also remotely. The Initiative hosted 13 interns over the course of 2020, our largest and most diverse group of interns to date. Our interns worked diligently to provide comprehensive, trauma-informed, anti-oppression-based advocacy for our survivors with disabilities who have experienced abuse.

Our interns managed their own full caseloads, engaged in projects such as a presentation on male-identified survivors, and built partnerships with new organizations. Further, we hired two interns, first Kashundra Smith, as a full time Victim Advocate, in May 2020, and second Nayeli Flores, as our Spanish Bilingual Victim Advocate, in August 2020.

Our interns provided a **staggering 2,163 hours of in-kind donations** of their time and compassionate advocacy skills. Further, for the first time in 2020, The Initiative implemented a structured, onboarding checklist and training curriculum for our new interns held entirely remotely to our Fall 2020 internship team. The training curriculum included material on confidentiality, safety planning, vicarious trauma, mandatory reporting, disability and abuse, gender and sexuality, as well as specific direct services tasks, such as intakes, crisis de-escalation, creating Action Plan Folders, and how to use our case management system, how to represent The Initiative, and more.

SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS

2020 was truly a transformative and ever-evolving year for The Initiative. 2020 marked a year of great strength, as The Initiative stayed standing through the impacts and challenges of COVID-19. The Initiative staff adapted to moving between the office and working from home depending on various safety levels, and we explored new ways of making connections, building relationships, and meeting our clients' needs remotely. While it has not been an easy transition, The Initiative staff is proud of the ways in which we have shown vulnerability and courage and have offered each other unconditional care and support during these uncertain times.

Our Executive Director worked tirelessly during the first months of quarantine to secure The Initiative additional funding, allowing us to bring on two additional advocates to support our

mission, Kashundra Smith, and Nayeli Flores, both of whom were former interns. While we welcomed new hires, The Initiative also had to say fare-well to two truly inspirational individuals; Maria Manriquez and Emma Martin, as they embarked on new career journeys. The Initiative then introduced two of their growing advocates, Zoe Collins and Isaura Cardenas into Director positions. In March 2020, Zoe began her new role as Director of Communications and Outreach, and in August 2020, Isaura began her new role as Program Director of Direct Services.

Our Special Programs; Bicultural Advocacy and Rural Advocacy, have maintained their creative and untiring efforts to continue relationship-building in each of these diverse communities, and to build out The Initiative’s services to meet these communities in their specific needs, experiences, and histories. At the end of 2020, our **Rural Program accounted for 20% of our clients, and the Bicultural Program accounted for 11%**. The Initiative also established a Latinx Marketing plan for the Bicultural Advocacy Program with remarkable goals and aspirations set to help the program expand and grow.

The Initiative’s Outreach program truly flourished in 2020. The Initiative’s **number of presentations grew by 133.33%** as compared to 2019, and **our audience reach grew by 192%** as compared to 2019. The ability to provide training across the state and country without being bound by time and financial costs has made a remarkable impact on the reach of our program. We have been able to provide trainings to rural areas of Colorado that previously would have required multiple days of travel, all at the touch of a button. The Initiative’s training curriculum also expanded in 2020, from four trainings to nine trainings, and growing in the ability to tailor trainings to specific audiences’ needs. We now offer “Cross Training”, “Disability and Abuse 101”, “Accessibility during COVID19 and Beyond”, “Gender and Sexuality 101”, “The Latino/x Community 101”, “Rurality, Disability, and Abuse 101”, “What is Abuse? Violence Through an Intersectional Lens”, “Brain Injury and the Hidden Impact on Survivors”, and “Mandatory Reporting.” The Initiative also presented at three conferences in 2020, and despite the challenges of virtual education, each was met with overwhelmingly positive feedback.

The Initiative has seen our staff stabilize, flourish, and deepen our relationships to one another, our communities, and our clients. For The Initiative staff, 2020 feels truly encapsulated in a quote by Black American poet and activist, Amanda Gorman:

“While we might feel small, separate, and all alone, our people have never been more tightly tethered. The question’s not if we will weather this unknown, but how we will weather the unknown together.”

-Amanda Gorman

