



BEYOND SILOS

Harnessing Collaboration to
End Gender-Based Violence



bwjp.org



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was shaped by the people who gathered in Chicago and the momentum they continue to build across communities and systems. As co-hosts, the Battered Women's Justice Project (BWJP) and the Centre for Public Impact (CPI) are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed their experience, insight, and leadership.

We thank the survivor leaders, advocates, community-based and culturally specific organizations, researchers, funders, practitioners, and government partners who joined us. Your honesty, courage, and clarity grounded every conversation in what matters most: the safety, dignity, and well-being of people and communities.

We also acknowledge the national partners supporting the development of the MOSAIC Initiative – Ujima, Esperanza United, ValorUS, the Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence (API-GBV), and the National Domestic Violence Hotline – whose decades of movement-building, expertise, and advocacy continue to shape the field.

This convening and report were made possible through the dedication of colleagues across BWJP (Lynn Rosenthal, Rosie Hidalgo, Amy Sánchez, Amalfi Parker Elder, and Sujata Warrior) and CPI (Kandice Louis-Wilson, Elysa Neumann, Maurisa Li-A-Ping, Carmella Grace De Guzman, and Vicky Gomes). We thank them for their leadership in shaping the event, supporting participants, and guiding the development of this report.

Over two days, participants spoke openly about exhaustion, loss, and the strain of navigating systems never designed for the realities survivors face. Yet they also brought resilience, determination, and creativity. Survivor leaders challenged us to shift agendas in real time. Culturally specific organizations reminded us of the expertise held within communities. Advocates, private funders, and government partners demonstrated what it looks like to stay at the table and help envision a better future, even in moments of uncertainty.



We offer this report with gratitude and humility, in the hope that these insights will strengthen survivor-centered, community-rooted, and coordinated approaches across states, Tribes, and localities, and support the continued work of building safety, healing, and justice.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In October 2025, the Battered Women's Justice Project (BWJP) and the Centre for Public Impact (CPI) hosted a 2-day summit in Chicago to:

- Share lessons from [Chicago's Citywide Strategic Plan to Address Gender-Based Violence and Human Trafficking](#);
- Explore how the framework of the [U.S. National Plan to End Gender-Based Violence: Strategies for Action](#) can guide local, state, and Tribal efforts; and
- Strengthen cross-sector collaboration, align resources, and highlight data-driven, evidence-based practices.

Beyond these objectives, the summit became a space for shared storytelling, support, and re-imagining, enriched by individuals with decades of lived experience and expertise, as well as by younger generations bringing fresh perspectives and vision. Survivor leaders, advocates, community-based and culturally specific organizations, Tribal partners, researchers, funders, practitioners, and government partners came together with a shared commitment to systemic reform and community empowerment. Throughout the gathering, a shared sense of purpose, collaboration, and hope coalesced, creating a mosaic of intertwined ideas and lived realities that propelled the group forward.

Over two days, participants spoke honestly about what is needed to advance safety, healing, dignity, and justice for people impacted by intimate partner violence, sexual assault, stalking, trafficking, and other interconnected forms of harm (collectively referred to as gender-based violence, or GBV). Survivors modeled truth-telling and shared leadership, reminding us that systems change begins with listening and shifting power. Culturally specific organizations emphasized that community-rooted approaches are essential for survivors to access meaningful options for safety and healing, particularly for those who cannot safely engage with mainstream systems. Cross-sector partners – from housing, public health, education, economic empowerment, philanthropy, community violence intervention, and immigrant and refugee organizations – affirmed that GBV is connected to every system and requires a whole-of-society response.

Chicago's comprehensive, multi-sector approach demonstrated how coordinated local innovation can take shape, including compensated survivor leadership, sustainable public and private funding strategies, collaboration between community-based organizations and city agencies, and community-informed data to guide action.

Together with promising work highlighted by participants from other areas of the country, these approaches offer relevant lessons for communities nationally and globally and helped inform the recommendations that emerged.



Participants identified several priorities for the work ahead:

- Increase investment in effective prevention strategies.
- Strengthen community-driven responses.
- Expand multi-sectoral approaches.
- Deepen collaboration between civil society, local government, and philanthropy to expand pathways to safety, healing, and well-being.
- Support and sustain the GBV workforce through fair compensation and well-being practices.
- Expand culturally grounded healing and embed survivor leadership across policy and practice.
- Address emerging harms, including online and AI-enabled abuse.
- Use data for learning, improvement, and community accountability, not compliance alone.

The convening also affirmed the promise of the [MOSAIC Initiative](#), which helps communities advance local and state strategies through coordinated, equitable, and community-led approaches. With tools, planning guides, capacity-building support, and a learning portal launching in early 2026, MOSAIC will strengthen alignment and collaboration across sectors and geographies.

This report reflects the insights and momentum shared at the summit in Chicago. It is offered to support communities across the United States and globally working toward safety, healing, justice, and lasting transformational change.



INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence: A global challenge with local solutions

Gender-based violence (GBV) includes domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, trafficking, online abuse, and other interconnected forms of violence. While GBV takes different forms across communities and countries, common challenges persist. Survivors navigate systems that were never designed to meet their complex realities; culturally specific organizations remain underfunded despite being essential sources of safety; and frontline workers face burnout, secondary trauma, low wages, and resource shortages. Community violence, housing instability, economic insecurity, lack of access to essential services, and digital harms further shape what safety means and how it is accessed. Yet GBV is often addressed in silos, rather than through coordinated, multi-sector approaches.

Across communities in the U.S. and around the world, people are building survivor-centered, culturally grounded, and prevention-focused approaches. These efforts are centering leaders with lived experience and reshaping coordination across public health, public safety, housing, youth-serving systems, immigration services, and community-based organizations. They demonstrate that many solutions already exist, but to grow and endure, they need connection, investment, and structural support.

About the summit

In October 2025, the Battered Women’s Justice Project (BWJP) and Centre for Public Impact (CPI) co-hosted “Reimagining a Whole-of-Society Approach to Ending Gender-Based Violence: Strategies for Action” in Chicago. Survivor leaders, advocates, culturally specific and community-based organizations, Tribal partners, researchers, funders, government partners, practitioners, and national experts gathered to learn about the development and implementation of [Chicago’s Citywide Strategic Plan to Address Gender-Based Violence and Human Trafficking](#) and to explore how the guiding principles and framework of the [U.S. National Plan to End Gender-Based Violence](#) can enhance coordinated responses at the local, state, and Tribal levels.

The structure of the convening reflected this commitment:

Day 1

Focused on **Chicago’s citywide strategic approach**, led by local government and civil society; a survivor-driven leadership model; public-private funding mechanisms; cross-sector partnerships; and data-informed decision-making.

Day 2

Introduced the **MOSAIC Initiative** and brought together survivors, culturally specific organizations, researchers, and government partners to discuss systems transformation, prevention, and reimagined coordinated community responses, centered on both public health and public safety.

Survivor leaders shaped both the substance and flow of the convening, prompting agenda adjustments that modeled shared power and survivor leadership in real time and enabled deeper dialogue.

A pivotal moment for the movement

The event took place at a pivotal moment. Shifts in federal priorities, funding reductions, rising digital harms (including AI-generated abuse), a strained workforce, and persistent inequities have left many across the field feeling as though they are starting over. Participants spoke openly about protecting progress made, maintaining community, and sustaining energy amid mounting pressures.

Yet the convening also reflected momentum and hope. Several intentions were shared for the convening and the collective work ahead:

- Creating a space for policy and moral imagination, centered on the belief that we can design a world free from violence and that collective creativity is one of our most powerful tools;
- Creating space for connection across cities, sectors, and stories, recognizing that no single institution can end GBV, but together we can build networks strong enough to hold healing and justice: and
- Creating space for courage, the kind that moves beyond conversation to commitment and from insight to action.



INTRODUCTION (CONT.)

A pivotal moment for the movement (cont.)

Participants brought these intentions to life, challenging one another to address the issues most important to survivors and their communities:

- Chicago-based survivors and community leaders discussed the importance of fostering meaningful relationships and building trust across different sectors and with government partners.
- GBV advocates highlighted the need to coordinate with organizations that promote trauma-informed engagement with boys and men.
- A Chicago-based artist brought creative insight, lifting joy as a source of healing and resilience.
- Survivor leaders from across the country shared powerful reflections on lived experiences, highlighting persistent and emerging issues that require urgent attention.
- Representatives from marginalized and underserved communities shared strategies for supporting criminalized survivors, immigrant, refugee and LGBTQ+ communities.
- Culturally specific organizations underscored the critical role of funding directed to culturally specific community-based organizations to expand pathways to safety, justice, and healing.

Chicago's Citywide Strategic Plan: A model for coordinated, multi-sectoral, and survivor-centered action

[Chicago's Citywide Strategic Plan](#) provides a powerful example of what coordinated, survivor-centered, and community-driven work can look like, supported by strong city government leadership:

- **A compensated Survivor Leadership Working Group** shaping policy and priorities
- **Cross-sector partnerships** involving city agencies, community violence intervention (CVI) groups, culturally specific organizations, housing providers, and public health departments
- **Expanded funding models** through the allocation of supplemental federal funding under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), as well as the city's Home Share surcharge, philanthropic investments, and the Survivor Fund
- **Data-driven decision making**, including mapping where survivors seek help and identifying neighborhoods with the greatest barriers to safety
- **Improved VAWA Emergency Housing Transfers** based on community-informed data
- **Community-defined priorities and expanded partnerships**, grounded in the reality that most domestic violence homicide victims never contacted police nor sought a protection order

These lessons are relevant far beyond Chicago and can support adaptation at the local, Tribal, and state levels, as well as globally.

The MOSAIC Initiative: Advancing a Whole-of-Society Approach

MOSAIC, developed by BWJP in collaboration with national partners, advances a whole-of-society approach rooted in seven keystones:



Inspired by the goal of “advancing state and local comprehensive strategies,” MOSAIC offers tools, learning structures, and peer support networks that help communities strengthen and expand coordination to prevent and respond to GBV. [The National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence](#) (National Action Plan), launched in 2023, builds on decades of work across the GBV movement and reflects input from thousands of stakeholders, offering a comprehensive framework to improve public health and safety across the lifespan. As stated in the National Action Plan, “Ending gender-based violence is, quite simply, a matter of human rights and justice.” Rooted in the core principles of the National Action Plan, MOSAIC supports local, state, and Tribal efforts to adapt this framework to their specific contexts and provides relevant lessons for communities globally.

Grounded in survivor leadership, community partnership, and equity, MOSAIC helps communities identify priorities, center survivors’ voices and leadership, align data, expand cross-sector partnerships, build trust, develop shared strategies, and work toward sustained, community-led transformation.



How this report can support your work

This report distills insights from the convening into practical guidance that communities across the United States and globally may use to enhance their work in one or more of the following ways:

- Transforming systems through collaboration
- Local innovation and data-driven solutions
- Centering survivors and supporting healing
- Culturally specific and community-rooted leadership
- Building a prevention infrastructure for the future
- Sustaining the movement and strengthening the workforce

The wealth of knowledge and depth of reflection generated at the summit lay a powerful foundation and springboard for meaningful transformation – provided we continue to expand a “whole of society” approach to prevent and address GBV.

WHAT WE HEARD: INSIGHTS SHAPING THE FUTURE

Over two days at the summit in Chicago, participants spoke with honesty, urgency, and imagination about what it will take to transform the systems designed to prevent and respond to GBV and to advance a “whole of society” approach that moves beyond an overreliance on existing systems. Their insights reflected exhaustion and strain, but also deep expertise, resilience, and commitment. The themes that follow distill the most compelling lessons offering concrete, survivor-centered, and community-informed pathways to strengthen GBV prevention and response across roles, geographies, and contexts.

Transforming systems through collaboration

Participants emphasized that systems must transform at both visible (policies, data practices, and funding structures) and invisible levels (beliefs, norms, and power dynamics).

“

We can't just fix broken systems, we must reimagine them entirely.

– Participant

As Kandice Louis Wilson, Interim Senior Director of CPI, shared in her opening remarks, **“Gender-based violence touches every system we know: education, health care, housing, law enforcement, justice. Yet for too long, our responses have been fragmented and based on outdated models that treat symptoms rather than root causes.”** She highlighted the importance of working alongside cities, states, and communities to challenge the status quo in order to **“shift mindsets, bridge divides, and create spaces where people and government can build trust and act together.”**

Participants noted that coordinated responses are often episodic and crisis-driven rather than sustained, and much of the work unfolds in silos. Strong collaboration requires shared accountability among public health, public safety, housing, health and mental health services, economic supports that address survivors' financial insecurity, philanthropy, community partners, and systems change leaders.

Federal legislation and resources remain essential, but leaders noted that meaningful change has always required state, Tribal, and local leadership, as well as diversified, private funding sources. Local innovation can inform national policy and highlight promising practices, while investment at the national, state, and local levels can strengthen community practice. This moment demands continued influence in both directions.

“

When national advocacy stalls, it's time to increase the focus locally.

– Amy Sánchez, BWJP CEO



From left: Amy Sanchez (BWJP), Rosie Hidalgo (MOSAIC), Lyn Rosenthal (MOSAIC), Kandice Louis Wilson (CPI) and Cinnamon D. Pelly, MS (BWJP).



From left: Garien Gatewood (Chicago Deputy Mayor of Community Safety) and Cinnamon D. Pelly, MS (BWJP).

Transforming systems through collaboration (cont.)

Darci Flynn, who led Chicago’s mayoral initiative to develop the city’s first strategic plan on GBV and trafficking in 2021, convened stakeholders across city agencies and civil society organizations – many of whom had never previously engaged in GBV discussions. This effort was catalyzed by increased awareness from then-Mayor Lightfoot of the heightened struggles, safety risks, and isolation survivors faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. It led to the creation of a GBV Task Force, where community organizations and survivor leaders informed both the development and implementation of the plan. Darci remarked, **“It was community telling government what to do.”**

Darci also recounted meeting commissioners and department leaders who initially did not see how their work connected to GBV, but who ultimately recognized its relevance. This realization led to directives requiring each department to establish concrete action steps and goals, along with clear accountability and transparency measures.

Throughout the convening, participants reiterated that survivors and culturally specific organizations are too often sidelined in coordination efforts, even though they should be at the center of system design and community change. As BWJP CEO Amy Sánchez reminded the room, **“Though organizations may be facing many challenges, we need to put survivors at the front of our minds – they need us right now.”** Others emphasized the importance of honestly examining what systems are designed to produce, and having the courage to reimagine them rather than simply try to repair them.



Participants also highlighted the need to engage community foundations, local businesses, and philanthropic partners more directly, to allow for greater innovation and so that progress on safety is not constrained by federal funding cycles. Even if federal implementation slows, [the U.S. National Plan to End Gender-Based Violence](#) remains a practical roadmap. It outlines clear principles—centering survivor voices, working across sectors, drawing on culturally informed expertise, strengthening public health and safety across the lifespan, embracing a rights-based approach, and focusing on local solutions—that together support a coordinated, society-wide response.

Goals and next steps



Build and strengthen whole-of-society approaches across government, philanthropy, GBV service providers, culturally specific and other community-based organizations, survivors, researchers, and cross-sector partners working in housing, health and mental health, substance use, economic opportunity, and community safety.



Use [MOSAIC’s keystones](#) to guide comprehensive, survivor-centered, innovative, and community-led coordination.



Strengthen data collection and data sharing across systems to illuminate and address barriers, support learning, guide policy, and increase accountability.



Engage community and regional foundations and local businesses to support innovation and long-term sustainability.

WHAT WE HEARD: INSIGHTS SHAPING THE FUTURE (CONT.)

Lessons from Chicago: Local innovation and data-driven solutions

[Chicago's Citywide Strategic Plan](#) demonstrated how survivor leadership, cross-sector collaboration, and increased investment can shift systems in practical, replicable ways.

The city's establishment of a Survivor Leadership Working Group (SLWG), which compensates members and empowers them to shape policy and practice, has helped shift culture and embed lived experience in decision-making. Kimberly, a member of the SLWG, said, **“Remember that survivor engagement isn't a checkbox you can check off your list. It's about real relationships and requires humility, transparency, and a willingness to be changed by what you hear.”** Trust between the SLWG and the city has evolved, sustained by dedicated efforts from survivor leaders, other civil society partner organizations, and city officials to foster a meaningful partnership.

Chicago has also invested in diverse and expanded funding pathways, including:

- Establishment of the Home Share Fund, built on a 2% surcharge on short-term rentals (such as Airbnb and VRBO);
- the allocation of \$12 million for a Survivor Fund that provides flexible financial assistance;
- targeted American Rescue Plan (ARP) investments that filled critical gaps identified by community members on the GBV Task Force, and demonstrated what sustained GBV funding could make possible; and
- collaboration with philanthropic partners, including the Michael Reese Health Trust's support for accountability services for people who cause harm and the Crown Family's safe housing pilot program.

These investments allowed the city to expand rapid transfer housing, culturally grounded supports, and community-based prevention efforts.

Cross-sector partnerships were a defining strength. Chicago's approach brought together housing agencies, Community Violence Intervention (CVI) organizations, public health teams, culturally specific groups, and grassroots partners, among others, to address overlapping forms of harm and strengthen community safety.

The “Intersections Project”, which bridges community violence outreach workers and domestic violence advocates, demonstrates the power of these networks. When a survivor sought help from a neighborhood organization, they assisted her in obtaining shelter. When her children were kidnapped by her abusive partner, they reached out to a domestic violence advocacy organization whose partnership with community violence leaders facilitated an immediate plan to intervene.

Data was another lever for change. In a follow-up webinar, [‘Harnessing Research & Data to Advance City and State Actions to End Gender-Based Violence’](#), Darci Flynn shared how analyzing neighborhood-level data in Chicago on domestic violence calls, alongside conversations with survivors, revealed patterns of repeated law enforcement involvement among survivors unable to leave unsafe housing situations. These insights informed a redesign of the VAWA Emergency Transfer process to better support relocation while maintaining public housing support. This example illustrates how systems can change when data and policy are intentionally linked to survivors' lived experiences.

As one member of the SLWG noted, all programs must be shaped with survivor input, recognizing that survivors are not just recipients of services but also experts in survival, resilience, and system responses. While data is essential, it only has meaning when it reflects lived reality.



Lessons from Chicago: Local innovation and data-driven solutions (cont.)

Participants also referenced data analysis that was undertaken in Chicago indicating that the majority of domestic violence homicide victims had never contacted police or sought protective orders. While figures vary, the insight is consistent: many survivors seek safety outside formal legal systems, reinforcing the need for multiple pathways to support, including health services and culturally specific, community-led approaches.



Goals and next steps



Strengthen data collection and data sharing across systems to illuminate and address barriers, support learning, guide policy, and increase accountability.



Strengthen partnerships with culturally specific organizations and CVI providers to address interconnected forms of harm.



Use data and survivor input to identify neighborhoods where survivors face inequitable access to mainstream services and instead rely on trusted, community-based, and culturally specific organizations.



Invest in early intervention approaches, including community-rooted programs for people who cause harm, that do not rely on involvement with the criminal legal system.

WHAT WE HEARD: INSIGHTS SHAPING THE FUTURE (CONT.)

Centering survivors and supporting healing

Survivor leaders shared powerful stories that illuminated the importance of survivor leadership and the critical missing responses that expose survivors to greater risks. Storytelling emerged as a crucial theme, with Beth Ritchie reminding us that progress is impossible without storytelling. Across narratives, vulnerability and courage stood out as survivor leaders spoke not only for themselves but for countless others silenced by “shame, fear, or social pressures.”

Kimberly from SLWG captured this spirit with her declaration:

“

I have the audacity to survive...

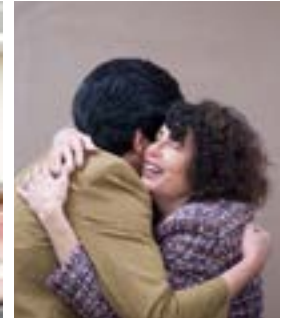
– Kimberly, SLWG

emphasizing that rejecting shame and owning her truth are essential to her healing and sustaining her advocacy.

These stories revealed lived experiences far more complex than current systems and responses are equipped to address. Christina Love shared a personal history that captured how the responses of service providers and systems often separate and further marginalize survivors with substance use and criminal histories. She urged embracing approaches that are both trauma-responsive and culturally responsive to survivors’ real needs, even when these approaches challenge familiar practices.

Christina emphasized that many survivors experience multiple victimizations starting in childhood and are often revictimized while seeking help. For survivors carrying unaddressed trauma, she noted, substance use can be a form of survival, particularly when the alternative may be suicide.

Participants also spotlighted urgent emerging harms, including AI-generated deepfakes, sextortion, online misogyny, and rapidly evolving technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), which disproportionately targets women.



Sabrina Javellana shared how her advocacy helped [pass legislation in Florida](#) establishing criminal penalties and civil remedies for the creation or distribution of non-consensual, AI-generated sexually explicit images (deepfakes) of an identifiable person. Her work is fueled by her experience as a young elected official targeted by technology-facilitated, misogynistic abuse, and by her understanding of the heavy toll this violence takes on survivors’ health, mental health, economic opportunities, and public lives – harms that are escalating faster than safeguards and protections.

Amalfi Parker Elder mapped her family’s intergenerational trauma involving multiple forms of violence that neither systemic nor community-based responses were able to prevent or adequately address.

She reminded the room that:

“

There are no labels in real life.

– Amalfi Parker Elder



When harm spans lifetimes and generations, there may be no single survivor to center. Our response must be as nuanced as survivors’ lives, which are interwoven with the experiences of their families, children, partners, and communities.

Centering survivors and supporting healing (cont.)

Both Amalfi and Sabrina reflected on the chilling reality that, despite their relative privilege and connection to experts in the GBV field, they were unable to prevent the violence that harmed them and their families.

Kimberly shared that truly centering survivors means allowing ourselves to be changed by their stories. Survivor leaders echoed that real transformation requires changing the way we work, moving beyond “making better Band-Aids,” as Amy Sanchez said. Beth Ritchie urged service providers to “move ourselves,” rather than expect survivors to do so, and to center our work where “survivors live and exist.”

This requires making space for the complexity and messiness of real life. Without this shift, survivor leaders cautioned, systems and other responses will continue to fail the most vulnerable survivors.

Participants emphasized that centering survivors requires redistributing power, compensating lived expertise, and designing structures that protect agency, choice, and psychological safety. They also called for community-based supports for people who cause harm, noting that many individuals have nowhere to seek help before a crisis. Prevention must include early healing-centered pathways for accountability that do not rely solely on criminal legal responses.

After survivor leaders shared their stories, Christina shared a culturally personal, healing act of love with Amalfi – making her a cup of tea – to offer comfort, sisterhood, and care. In doing so, she symbolized that centering survivors begins with showing up as whole human beings and responding to one another with compassion.

Goals and next steps



Normalize survivor leadership in state, local, and Tribal policy design and implementation, with compensation and shared decision-making.



Strengthen protections against tech-facilitated violence through survivor-designed tools, laws, supportive services, and reporting systems.



Expand supports for criminalized survivors, including healing-centered diversion models that recognize and respond to trauma and systemic inequities.



Invest in community-based models for people who cause harm, emphasizing early intervention, accountability, and healing.

Culturally specific and community-rooted leadership

Culturally specific and community-based organizations reach survivors who may not trust or feel safe accessing mainstream systems, or who seek different pathways to healing, safety, and wellbeing. As Carla Gutiérrez from Mujeres Latinas en Accion explained, “We can’t heal in spaces where we feel invisible.” Their work is holistic, multilingual, culturally grounded, and rooted in long-term relationships. As one leader said, “Community members hold the solutions.”

Many immigrant survivors seek support outside government systems due to concerns about deportation, custody, language barriers, and discrimination, reinforcing the need for trusted, accessible pathways to safety, healing, and support. Sandra Henriquez, CEO of ValorUS, described their work supporting farmworkers and janitorial workers by ensuring language access and providing tailored trainings and materials so community members can lead prevention and response efforts. She emphasized the importance of building trust and sustaining that commitment, even during periods of limited funding.

WHAT WE HEARD: INSIGHTS SHAPING THE FUTURE (CONT.)

Culturally specific and community-rooted leadership (cont.)

Federal funding through the American Rescue Plan (ARP), allocated to support GBV programs and reach communities disproportionately impacted, enabled new approaches to funding culturally specific community-based organizations. Larger national culturally-specific organizations served as pass-throughs for smaller, community-embedded organizations, while also providing capacity-building assistance and peer learning opportunities. Monica Khant, CEO of the Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence, also highlighted the impact of the Allstate Foundation's additional \$2,500 grants to community-based organizations to support frontline staff wellness and healing.

Monica also announced the release of a new report, [“Stronger Organizations, Stronger Field: Experiences from the ARP Support for Survivors Program.”](#) The report highlights how culturally-specific programs build trust with survivors, foster healing, and support survivors' agency in seeking safety, justice, and well-being. It also emphasizes the need to reduce administrative burdens and increase flexible, long-term public and private investment that reflects the true value of holistic, culturally-grounded support. As Monica stated, **“With sustained support, these organizations can save more lives, grow their leadership to strengthen communities, and build a future free from violence.”**

Karma Cottman, CEO of Ujima: The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community, highlighted the importance of collective work, “standing on the backs, hips, and shoulders of those who came before us.” She stressed the need to center the specific needs of Black women and girls, including the impacts of the carceral and child welfare systems, and to move beyond listening to acting on what is already known. This includes investing in culturally specific services in ways that are more accessible, and challenging harmful narratives.

Before emphasizing expectations that survivors should be strong and resilient, it is important to create spaces for healing and joy. As Karma reminded participants, **“Living and surviving is not enough; thriving needs to be the threshold.”**

Achieving this requires breaking out of silos to expand access to housing, thriving wages, healing spaces, and leadership opportunities.

Participants described a range of community-led and identity-affirming strategies, including storytelling, arts-based work, and culturally grounded programming developed by farmworker, janitorial, Black, Latina, Indigenous, and LGBTQ+ communities. These approaches advance healing and prevention through culture, connection, and collective action.



Goals and next steps



Advocate for unrestricted, multi-year funding that reflects the real cost of culturally specific, holistic support.



Reduce administrative burdens by aligning reporting requirements across public and private funders.



Build capacity and provide support for organizations serving groups disproportionately impacted by system gaps, such as communities of color, immigrant communities, LGBTQ+ survivors, criminalized survivors, and youth.



Elevate culturally specific leadership in designing and evaluating coordinated community responses.

Building a prevention infrastructure for the future

Participants were clear: prevention must be prioritized at the national, state, Tribal, and local levels to expand and strengthen efforts that have long been underfunded, fragmented, and never fully embraced as a core strategy.

[MOSAIC](#) frames prevention as a long-term, whole-of-society effort that begins early across schools, youth programs, digital spaces, faith communities, workplaces, and families, and continues across generations.

Reaching men and boys was an important focus of the dialogue. Participants described how many boys are navigating online spaces shaped by misogyny, isolation, and mental health challenges. Effective prevention promotes healthy masculinity, responsibility, connection, and belonging, without pathologizing boys.

Juan Carlos Arean, Program Director at Futures Without Violence, emphasized the need to scale effective programs in schools, faith communities, and neighborhoods to reach boys and young men and help them understand how embracing positive masculinity supports both their own well-being and that of others. Participants also highlighted prevention efforts engaging gamers, influencers, and filmmakers to promote positive messages.

One participant noted that men are harmed by other men at very high rates through community violence, and that many boys experience child sexual abuse and carry the trauma of that harm into adulthood. Participants emphasized the need to connect the dots between GBV, community violence, and other forms of violence.

As one participant stated:

“

Patriarchy hurts everyone in society in different ways. When we convince young men that this isn't working for everyone, that is when change will start.

– Participant

“

We believe in Black love and Black joy. And you don't have to be Black to get involved.

– Tony Porter, *A CALL TO MEN*

Scheherazade Tillet offered a powerful keynote, using her photography to bear witness to the lives of Black girls and women and the survivors of sexual violence. A nationally recognized artist, Tillet leads the nonprofit **A Long Walk Home**, which uses creative expression to end GBV. Her work demonstrated how visual storytelling can serve as both a memorial for those lost and a roadmap for prevention and youth empowerment.



From left: Rosie Hidalgo (MOSAIC) and Scheherazade Tillet (A Long Walk Home)

Prevention and response are not separate ecosystems; an effective system connects healing, accountability, belonging, safety, and community wisdom. Participants emphasized that prevention and survivor support must advance together, as the field cannot rely solely on crisis response. Long-term healing and violence reduction require sustained investment in both.

Participants also underscored the need for evaluations that surface promising practices to help communities invest in and scale prevention. This aligns with MOSAIC's focus on learning-oriented, community-informed data practices.

Goals and next steps



Invest in comprehensive, evidence-informed prevention strategies across state, local, and Tribal contexts.



Partner with youth, educators, and digital platforms to shape positive norms and counter online harms.



Build research and data capacity to measure prevention outcomes over time, including early indicators.



Prioritize prevention in comprehensive community approaches, rather than treating it as separate or optional.

WHAT WE HEARD: INSIGHTS SHAPING THE FUTURE (CONT.)

Sustaining the movement and strengthening the workforce

Participants spoke openly about burnout, trauma exposure, and chronic underfunding. Salaries and benefits often do not reflect the complexity of the work, contributing to high turnover, which undermines capacity building for advocates and erodes the trusted relationships survivors rely on.

Participants emphasized the need for ongoing spaces to learn and collaborate, including communities of practice, interactive online training, convenings, and digital tools such as the MOSAIC portal. Sustaining momentum requires robust connections, mentorship, and accessible pathways for new advocates to adopt effective practices.



Movement leaders also spoke about the importance of supporting new leadership, creating opportunities to re-imagine coordinated community responses, and broadening pathways to safety and healing, while building upon decades of work that have shaped the field and important lessons learned along the way.

Despite the challenges, participants expressed determination and optimism, underscoring a commitment to protecting progress, recognizing barriers and ongoing harms, and securing the structural and societal changes survivors and communities need.



Goals and next steps



Prioritize workforce well-being and organizational sustainability through fair compensation, benefits, trauma-informed supervision, and mental health supports.



Expand cross-sector learning environments, including convenings, trainings, and communities of practice.



Use data to illuminate impact and guide learning, not just compliance.



Continue building shared vision and coordination across prevention, survivor support, and community-rooted approaches.

SUPPORTING THE WORK AHEAD: FROM INSIGHTS TO ACTION

The conversations in Chicago underscored a shared belief: communities already hold much of the wisdom, relationships, and lived experience needed to advance safety, healing, and justice. What many need now is structure, support, and alignment to turn insights into sustained action. This is where MOSAIC, BWJP, and CPI can help.

Participants emphasized the importance of long-term coordination across public health, public safety, housing, economic security, youth development, education, CVI, culturally specific organizations, and philanthropy. This whole-of-society approach is central to MOSAIC's mission to advance state and local strategies that strengthen and reimagine coordinated responses to GBV.

Advancing local and state strategies through MOSAIC

[MOSAIC](#) provides a flexible, scalable model that meets communities where they are. It is inspired by the [U.S. National Plan to End Gender-Based Violence](#) and the decades of learning that shaped it, reflecting more than 40 years of experience and the voices of thousands of stakeholders. Rather than a top-down model, MOSAIC supports communities and local officials to advance this work through grounded, place-based action. These efforts have the greatest chances of success when there is a strong, shared commitment from both city leaders and the advocacy sector. These approaches offer relevant lessons for communities worldwide, including countries developing or advancing National Action Plans.



Co-designed with survivors, culturally specific organizations, practitioners, researchers, and government partners, MOSAIC's emerging tools include planning guides, self-assessments, capacity-building resources, and a learning portal launching in early 2026.



These resources aim to address fragmented, siloed approaches by supporting coordination across seven interconnected keystones: prevention; survivor health and well-being; housing and economic security; legal and alternative justice responses; online safety; emergency preparedness; and research and data.

MOSAIC collaborates with Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and Center for Global Women's Health and Gender Equity to anchor its mission in high-quality data and research. Johns Hopkins is developing tools and resources to help states and cities identify and analyze data to inform community needs, drive policy, and support best practices across the keystones. Together, MOSAIC and Johns Hopkins seek to advance data-driven approaches aligned with strategies and needs defined by survivors and communities.

BWJP, in collaboration with national partners, continues to advance the MOSAIC Initiative. Key partners include the Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence, Esperanza United, the National Domestic Violence Hotline, UJIMA: The National Center on Violence in the Black Community, and VALOR US.

These partnerships are invaluable in grounding MOSAIC in community accountability and survivor-centered work.

SUPPORTING THE WORK AHEAD: FROM INSIGHTS TO ACTION (CONT.)

How MOSAIC can support communities

CPI brings expertise in reimagining government. The organization specializes in systems transformation, cross-sector collaboration, and convening, supporting communities around the world in strengthening partnerships, building learning environments, and designing coordinated approaches to complex challenges.

BWJP offers legal and technical expertise, survivor-engagement models, and guidance on applying the [National Plan's](#) principles at local and state levels. Through the MOSAIC Initiative, in collaboration with national partners, BWJP also provides tools, frameworks, and learning structures to help communities strengthen coordination and build more equitable, survivor-centered responses.

Together, their distinct contributions provide communities in the U.S. and globally with multiple entry points to advance this work. As Chicago policy advisor Madeleine Pattis noted, **“We are in a time where everyone needs to be considered a partner.”**

Opportunities for engagement

Communities, funders, culturally specific and mainstream DV/SA organizations, researchers, government partners, and other nonprofits working across housing, health, and economic security can:

- Join [MOSAIC's learning community](#) and peer-to-peer exchanges.
- Use the [Learning Community to End Violence](#) and the MOSAIC portal to access key resources, trainings, promising practices, and virtual collaboration spaces.
- Use MOSAIC's community assessment and strategic planning tools, along with technical assistance, to support the development and implementation of comprehensive strategic plans at the local, state, and Tribal levels.
- Use the Johns Hopkins [GBV Data & Policy Resource Repository](#) and other resources to access data about the incidence and prevalence of GBV, identify interconnected needs across the keystone areas, analyze gaps in the response to GBV, and inform shifts in policy and programming.
- Connect with [CPI](#), [BWJP](#), and MOSAIC's project partners for technical assistance on the design of survivor-led solutions.
- Explore local and philanthropic funding innovations, including through local and regional foundations.
- Broaden efforts to raise awareness through national campaigns during specific months in the United States focused on preventing and ending domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and trafficking.
- Strengthen connections with global advocacy movements, including through the [UN Commission on the Status of Women](#), [International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women](#), [International Women's Day](#), and the annual [16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence](#) (which runs from Nov. 25th, International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, through December 10th, Human Rights Day).

Supporting the work ahead means committing to long-term, coordinated action, anchored in survivor leadership, community wisdom, and the belief that safety, healing and the right to live free from violence are possible when we build the future together.

CONCLUSION OR A CALL TO ACTION

The summit in Chicago demonstrated what is possible when survivors, culturally specific leaders, community organizations, researchers, government partners, funders, and practitioners come together with honesty and care. Over two days, participants centered shared values of safety, healing, dignity, and justice and brought a collective commitment to building systems and community responses that reflect these principles.

Survivor leaders modeled truth-telling and courage, expanding conversations in real time and reminding us that systems change begins with listening and shifting power. As Christina Love shared, **“Healing is not hard, it’s soft. You will know healing by the way it feels.”** Their leadership grounded the convening in humanity and possibility.

Culturally specific organizations underscored that community-rooted approaches are essential for safety and healing. Cross-sector partners from CVI, housing, and public health to education, philanthropy, legal services, and immigrant and refugee support affirmed that GBV touches every part of community life. Addressing it requires coordination, shared responsibility, and a whole-of-society approach.

Chicago’s example showed that survivor-centered, coordinated innovation is achievable and scalable. Its approach to sustainable funding, compensated survivor governance, strong partnerships, and community-informed data and accountability mechanisms offered a practical path for others to follow.

Looking ahead, the moment calls for imagination and long-term commitment: building a comprehensive prevention infrastructure, strengthening community-led responses, sustaining the workforce, expanding culturally grounded healing, and embedding survivor leadership across policy, practice, and research. These priorities reflect the MOSAIC Initiative’s vision to advance local and state strategies through coordinated, equitable, community-led approaches.

The convening affirmed a shared readiness to keep learning and building together through MOSAIC’s learning community, future convenings, and deeper cross-sector collaboration. Participants emphasized the importance of using data to understand and drive action, and of sustaining investment in culturally specific and community-based organizations that are central to safety and well-being.

As this report closes, we leave the final word to Karla Altmayer, whose reminder captured both the purpose and courage needed for the work ahead:

“

Remember your purpose – ending GBV always – and don’t be afraid to take up space.

– Karla Altmayer



ABOUT BWJP

The [Battered Women's Justice Project \(BWJP\)](#) works at the intersection of gender-based violence and the legal systems that shape survivors' lives. We advance practical, forward-looking solutions that center survivors, strengthen justice responses, and create lasting change in communities.

We believe the greatest impact for survivors occurs when legal systems are designed to promote healing, accountability, and long-term safety. To advance this vision, BWJP operates a coordinated network of seven centers that include four projects and two organizational initiatives. Each is focused on a distinct area of work, and together they are united in the mission to end gender-based violence through systems change.



ABOUT CPI

The [Centre for Public Impact](#), a not-for-profit founded by Boston Consulting Group (BCG), supports government, civil society, and public sector organizations across the globe to redesign systems, work, and cultures. By helping them embrace complexity, value relationships, and prioritize learning, we are shaping a new future of government, reimagined so that it works for everyone.







BWJP HEADQUARTERS
540 Fairview Avenue N, Suite 208
St. Paul, MN 55104
communications@bwjp.org
(612) 824-8768



bwjp.org



centreforpublicimpact.org

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