



Mayor's Office to
End Domestic and
Gender-Based Violence

2020 Annual Report



Message from Commissioner Noel

Dear Colleagues,

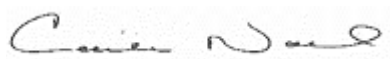
2020 was a difficult and challenging year. The COVID-19 pandemic put into sharp focus the vulnerabilities that many people in our city face every day, especially gender-based violence survivors; and it highlights the barriers and challenges that we know keep people from seeking help and finding safety.

COVID-19 has changed our lives, and it has changed how we do our work. In response to COVID-19, we made the difficult decision to temporarily close our Family Justice Centers for in-person visits in order to maintain social distancing. ENDGBV was able to quickly set-up remote operations and continued to provide services for survivors virtually. This year's annual report highlights the many ways we were able to creatively reach and assist survivors.

Switching to remote operations produced a variety of impactful service delivery options with our agency partners, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders. We will continue to build upon our services and partnerships to ensure that survivors in New York City have access to critical resources and services.

The City was here for survivors during this crisis and will continue to be here for them beyond the crisis.

Sincerely,



Cecile Noel

Commissioner, Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence

ENDGBV COVID-19 Response

With almost 400,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 occurring in New York City in 2020, the COVID-19 global pandemic has impacted the lives of everyone in our City and the world. The pandemic especially intensified inequities and risk factors for survivors of domestic and gender-based violence (DV/GBV).ⁱⁱ As New Yorkers were urged to stay at home to prevent the spread of COVID-19, there was widespread concern among DV/GBV service providers and policy makers about how sheltering in place with an abusive partner or family member may increase risk for DV/GBV survivors and further isolate them from critical support systems and accessing services.

Over the past year, our priority remained supporting survivors: ensuring continuity of services and access to resources.

Pivoting to Remote Work

The number of survivors accessing services at the FJCs for the first-time increased by 32.5% during the pandemic.

To protect the wellbeing of survivors, service providers and our staff, ENDGBV immediately shifted to working remotely and providing services remotely when New York State's stay-at-home orders were issued.

- The New York City Family Justice Centers (FJCs), operated by ENDGBV in every borough, **transitioned to a fully remote service model** on March 18, 2020, answering phones and meeting with clients through phone and video appointments. Throughout the pandemic, the FJCs continued to provide services, including **case management, shelter and housing advocacy, criminal justice advocacy, economic empowerment programming, digital privacy checkups, counseling services, and legal appointments** through nonprofit service providers, and directly linked clients with crucial crisis support and advocacy. In 2020, the FJCs assisted 20,500 clients virtually, including at least 9,600 new clients.

We're still here for you

FJCs are available by phone

Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Bronx, 718-508-1220

Brooklyn, 718-250-5113

Manhattan, 212-602-2800

Queens, 718-575-4545

Staten Island, 718-697-4300

In Evenings/Weekends:

- Call NYC's 24-hour DV Hotline: 1-800-621-4673
- Visit the NYC HOPE Resource Directory: nyc.gov/NYCHOPE

- o During COVID-19, FJCs found client engagement through the **virtual service model** greater than before the pandemic with certain services, such as legal consultations, mental health counseling, and economic empowerment programming. When the Economic Empowerment Program transitioned an eight-week financial literacy program (W!SE) to a virtual model, the service provider found client attendance becoming more consistent. In addition, over 25 participants attended the last cycle of virtual classes, which is a higher attendance than many pre-pandemic in-person sessions.
- o The FJCs held additional check-ins with on-site providers, and transitioned wellness programming to a virtual model. Yoga, provided through a partnership with Exhale to Inhale, and mediation classes, provided through the David Lynch Foundation, were offered to nonprofit service providers and FJC clients.
- In Summer of 2020, ENDGBV began working with onsite FJC partners to develop a comprehensive plan for the safe reopening of the City's FJCs. Three work groups met regularly for two months to develop a collaborative reopening plan that resulted in the decision to move forward with a phased reopening of the City's FJCs. The Manhattan FJC opened three days a week in Fall of 2020, for client appointments for survivors who could not safely or effectively engage in remote services. With the resurgence of COVID-19 in December, the Manhattan FJC reduced services to two days per week. A focus on supporting worker wellness was integrated into the reopening process from the beginning, with one work group specifically focusing on best practices for supporting staff wellness as the FJCs reopened. To that end, ENDGBV conducted an FJC-specific wellness survey of partner staff working at the FJCs, to gather their feedback on the usefulness of specific wellness activities offered at the FJCs.

94% of FJC clients that received virtual services would recommend the FJC to others.



Virtual trainings created new learning communities and cross-learning for providers, expanding accessibility and the number of people able to attend trainings.

- During the pandemic's crucial early days, ENDGBV conducted widespread outreach with partners to make clear two key messages: services remained available to survivors; and how to connect survivors to those services. Within weeks, ENDGBV **created and distributed new COVID-19 specific materials** about how to connect to FJC remote services and support. Materials were hand delivered or mailed to New York City Department of Education (DOE) food distribution centers, food pantries, and other essential businesses and over 900 notification calls were made to essential businesses to alert them to the continued availability of remote services through the FJCs.
- **ENDGBV's Training Team transitioned to a virtual model** and conducted live trainings and provided technical assistance to build the capacity of NYC agencies and community-based organizations. Training curricula was enhanced with engagement activities specifically designed to keep participant attention and enhance learning for online trainings. In 2020, ENDGBV conducted 78 total trainings, including 45 virtually.
- The **NYC Healthy Relationship Training Academy** also went virtual, creating original videos and leading virtual trainings and workshops to stay engaged with young people during an incredibly chaotic and disruptive time for students, schools, and other youth serving organizations. In addition, a series of convenings was held with educators and coordinators from the Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (RAPP) and the Early Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (Early RAPP), to create a supportive professional space with other youth violence prevention educators across the city during the pandemic. In 2020, ENDGBV provided 119 workshops, including 41 virtually.
- ENDGBV's **Early Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (Early RAPP)** providers (Day One, Rising Ground's STEPS to End Family Violence, and Urban Resource Institute) were able to pivot to online workshops and trainings for young people, providing 1,145 workshops to 8,218 youth across 43 DOE middle schools in 25 different City Council Districts in all five boroughs. Fifty-six percent of the DOE middle schools reached by Early RAPP are in neighborhoods most impacted by COVID-19.
- Throughout the pandemic and during stay-at-home orders, ENDGBV continued to engage young people committed to addressing dating and gender-based violence. **ENDGBV's Youth Leadership Council** had its largest cohort of over 15 members who during such an unprecedented school year met regularly online to build up their knowledge and skills around responding to these issues in their communities and helped to inform our prevention programming.
- The **Safe Families NYC, Supervised Visitation Program**—a network of free supervised visitation resources in the Bronx, Staten Island and Queens, operated by Safe Horizon and providing a safe space for children to attend court-ordered visitation with a noncustodial parent—provided virtual supervised visitation. ENDGBV, in collaboration with Safe Horizon, engaged Inspire Action for Social Change, a national technical assistance provider for supervised visitation programs, to safely transition the program to virtual visitation using phone and video conferencing. This partnership enhanced remote programming in the three boroughs, with 64 families served through 456 supervised visits through the virtual program.
- For the annual **16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign**, **ENDGBV shifted to an online art exhibition.** ENDGBV, partnering again with the Escape Artists Collective, launched *Connect, Care, Create: Healing Collective Trauma Through Art* in commemoration of the global campaign to eradicate gender-based violence. The exhibit's grand finale went virtual, and included breakout rooms where featured artists led movement, music, and therapeutic, arts-based activations.

Connecting to Community

During COVID-19, ENDGBV employed digital platforms, outreach to essential businesses, texts sent through New York City Emergency Management (NYCEM) Notify NYC updates, paid advertising, in addition to public service announcements placed on LinkNYC kiosks, to highlight survivor resources such as the City's NYC HOPE online resource directory and 24-hour NYC Domestic Violence Hotline.

In 2020, during the pandemic, NYC HOPE had over 115,000 visitors.

- On April 6, 2020, NYCEM released the **first domestic violence-related text message through Notify NYC**. Following the text messages, ENDGBV recorded immediate increases in traffic to the NYC HOPE Resource Directory. Over an almost twenty-week period, April 6 to August 17, 2020, Notify NYC sent ten citywide alerts to nearly one million subscribers. Over that period, NYC HOPE received a total of 104,881 visits from 82,318 visitors, of whom 31,020 were new visitors – experiencing 21 times more visits and 44 times more new visits compared to the same period in 2019.ⁱⁱⁱ
- ENDGBV ran a paid social media campaign, “We Understand,” from April 1 to June 30, 2020. The campaign featured reasons why the solution to gender-based violence is not as simple as “just leaving”—in English, Spanish, and Simplified Chinese. ENDGBV purchased advertising on Google search, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The **campaign correlated to 13 times more visits to NYC HOPE through links on Google search, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram** compared to the same time frame in 2019—marking 63 average daily visits during the campaign, compared to 5 average daily visits during the same period the year before. In addition, ENDGBV partnered with Shared Value Media to work with 17 community-based partners to amplify the “We Understand” campaign on their social platforms with hyperlocal messaging.
- ENDGBV facilitated the **placement of multilingual posters** with information about NYC HOPE and the NYC Domestic Violence Hotline **in convenience stores and check cashing locations** citywide.
- ENDGBV partnered with NYC+CO to place public service announcements **at over 1,700 LinkNYC Kiosks across NYC**,^{iv} highlighting NYC HOPE, the City's 24-hour Domestic Violence Hotline, and the continued operation of domestic violence shelters during the pandemic. The campaign ran May 1 through August 31, 2020.
- ENDGBV partnered with First Lady Chirlane McCray to release a public service announcement on April 15, 2020 to let survivors know that help is available and to connect them to resources. **The PSA was shared on multiple platforms, including social media and the City's NYC Life and NYC Gov television channels.**
- To amplify messaging around the availability of gender-based violence services, ENDGBV shared their **social media toolkit with all City agencies and Councilmembers, and regularly posted and re-posted resource information on its Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram pages.**



<https://www.vecteezy.com/free-photos>

Extending and Creating New Partnerships

ENDGBV continued to carry out our mission of collaborating with City agencies and community stakeholders to ensure access to inclusive services for survivors of DV/GBV. During the pandemic, ENDGBV participated in working groups and meetings with stakeholders and sought feedback from survivors of domestic and gender-based violence to develop an understanding of survivor and service provider needs that should be addressed.

- From April through September 2020, **ENDGBV held regular calls with over 180 nonprofit** services providers and City agency staff to maintain open lines of communication, identify challenges, troubleshoot issues, and share best practices, achievements, and technical assistance.

ENDGBV held bi-weekly calls with 180+ providers to open lines of communication, troubleshoot issues, and share best practices, achievements, and technical assistance.

- **ENDGBV led a COVID-19 Response Work Group** that met regularly from May to July 2020, to identify challenges in serving survivors, coordinate public awareness efforts, and highlight best practices. The workgroup engaged a diverse group of more than 20 providers representing multi-disciplinary services and included providers serving culturally specific populations, as well as representation from community-based organizations of all sizes, City agencies, and NYC Councilmember Helen Rosenthal. The goal of the Response Work Group was to identify actionable steps in three areas: (1) Public Awareness Efforts – explore ways to enhance and adapt efforts to share information and resources, knowing that survivors may have few outlets outside of their homes during COVID-19; (2) Best Practices for Remote Services – identify best practices in delivering services remotely and explore how the City can support providers during the shift in practice models; and (3) Survivor Needs – explore ways to enhance and expand existing resource and service systems, with a focus on prevention, disruption, and intervention, to meet survivor needs during COVID-19. The Response Work Group report can be accessed [here](#).
- Community-based organizations, survivors, and the FJCs **collaborated to create a series of virtual survivor-led town halls** in each borough to identify critical needs of survivors during COVID-19, particularly as the pandemic created new barriers for engagement with services and systems.
- The FJCs closely **collaborated with their respective legal services partners and the Office of Court Administration** to ensure that survivors could still access emergency temporary orders of protection during the pandemic. Each FJC trained case managers from their borough location to support clients with e-filing petitions for temporary orders of protection and with appearing in court proceedings. The FJCs also developed a new relationship with each borough's 18B attorney panel to ensure that survivors eligible for a free attorney were connected to their attorney before initial court appearances.

- In partnership with the Los Angeles-based organization Peace Over Violence, **NYC hosted the first-ever virtual rally for Denim Day** in 2020. As a longstanding leader of the NYC Denim Day Planning Committee, ENDGBV worked with our committee partners to mark the occasion during the height of the pandemic, including organizing numerous virtual events and amplifying Denim Day on social media. Social media efforts included videos filmed by ENDGBV staff, advocates, and survivors across NYC, tagged with the theme #AViolenceFreeFutureNeeds.



Meeting Challenges Through Innovative Solutions

ENDGBV worked with our community-based partners, City agencies, nonprofits, and other organizations to meet the needs of survivors during the pandemic, ranging from immediate short-term financial assistance and technology safety for survivors, to training for frontline staff.

The microgrant program disbursed a total of \$468,750 to 377 survivors.

- In partnership with the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City (Mayor's Fund), through a contract with Sanctuary for Families, ENDGBV launched a first-of-its-kind microgrant initiative to assist domestic and gender-based violence survivors experiencing safety, economic, and housing challenges exacerbated by COVID-19. **The microgrant program disbursed a total of \$468,750 to 377 survivors, with grants averaging \$1,243.37.** Almost all the program's clients were female; 40% of clients were Latina/Latino/Latinx, 32% were Black, 13% were Asian, 10% were White, 3% were Middle Eastern, and 1% were American Indian/Alaska Native/Native American; 95% made less than \$40,000 annually; 83% had two or more people in their household; and 65% were immigrants. An evaluation conducted by ENDGBV found that increased housing stability was a critical impact of the program, with 35% of all grants disbursed, over \$163,000, supporting rent, short-term housing, or other housing needs. Significantly, 48% of clients reported feeling safer after participating in the program; 44% reported that their children felt safer; and 46% reported that their mental health had improved.^v The evaluation report can be accessed [here](#).
- To ensure that survivors are using technology safely, ENDGBV began distributing **free anti-spyware software licenses** to 2,000 FJC clients through a public/private initiative through the Mayor's Fund with partner Norton LifeLock, to help survivors secure their devices and reduce spyware/malware threats.
- **ENDGBV trained frontline staff in city agencies with the skills** to identify and respond to GBV during the COVID-19 crisis. ENDGBV's Training Team collaborated with city agencies, including NYC Health + Hospitals, the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), and the NYC Department of Homeless Services (DHS) to create critical learning opportunities for staff during COVID-19. They also worked closely with DHS in the development and piloting of a training to better support Transgender and Gender Nonconforming (TGNC) clients living in homeless shelters, providing remote learning opportunities to DOHMH nurses while they were awaiting activation to COVID-19 related work.
- An in-person conference for **Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April 2020 evolved into the #NoStepsBack digital campaign.** What was originally planned as a day-long conference became the #NoStepsBack digital campaign, which included a toolkit, virtual events, and social media activities to raise awareness about the impacts of racism on sexual violence survivors, particularly Black survivors. Three virtual panels held in July and August each included over 100 participants and culminated with a keynote address from author and scholar Beth Richie.

Looking Forward

Switching to remote operations has inspired ENDGBV and our partners to think creatively about how to reach survivors and deliver services. Now that the City is beginning to move past the immediate impact of COVID-19, we will continue to build upon our services, partnerships, and communication developed during COVID-19 to support DV/GBV survivors.

Endnotes

- ⁱ NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, COVID-19: Data Trends - NYC Health, <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-data-trends.page#epicurve> (accessed June 15, 2020)
Data downloaded from: coronavirus-data/cases-by-day.csv at master · nychealth/coronavirus-data · GitHub
- ⁱⁱ Fisher, A. and Ryan, M. (2021). Gender inequalities during COVID-19. *Journal of Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, 24(2), 237-245. Accessed at <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1368430220984248> on June 16, 2021.
- ⁱⁱⁱ For more information about the NYC HOPE resource directory visit trends through ENDGBV's social media outreach and paid advertising initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic see the report, "ENDGBV Social Media Outreach, Paid Advertising, and the NYC HOPE Resource Directory", <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/ocdv/downloads/pdf/ENDGBV-Social-Media-Outreach-Paid-Advertising-and-the-NYC-HOPE-Resource-Directory-during-COVID-19.pdf>
- ^{iv} According to the LinkNYC website (<https://www.link.nyc/find-a-link.html>), there were 1,778 active Links in NYC as of August 31, 2020.
- ^v For more information about the evaluation conducted by the Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV) on the emergency financial relief microgrants program for survivors of domestic and gender-based violence see, "Evaluation Summary Report: Emergency Financial Relief Microgrants Program for Survivors of Domestic and Gender-Based Violence", <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/ocdv/downloads/pdf/Emergency-Financial-Relief-Microgrants-Program-Evaluation-Summary-Report.pdf>

