

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Your support means so much to all of us at the **New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault** (NJCASA), and now, perhaps more than ever, we're so grateful for you. 2021 marks our 40th anniversary, and we can't think of a better occasion to reflect on our accomplishments, acknowledge our opportunities for growth, and recommit ourselves to strengthening our organization with a greater focus on embracing true equity in our work.

In this spirit, NJCASA is hitting the "pause" button on traditional fundraising throughout the year. Instead, over the course of the coming months, we will turn inward to look at ourselves closely, dismantle our privilege, work with our partners, and seek the resources and support we need to foster meaningful, sustainable change that will make our organization stronger. Arriving at this decision was incredibly difficult, but we know it's the right thing to do. In fact, we consider it the necessary step in the long journey towards our transformation.

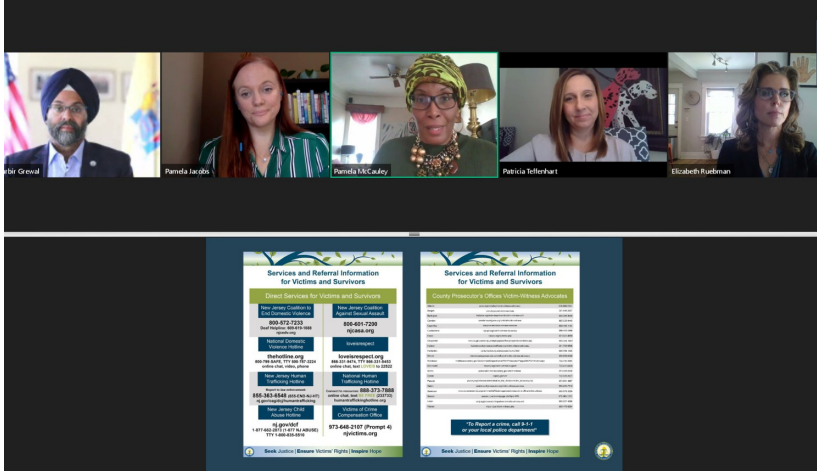
We look forward to keeping you updated about our progress and sharing with you, our closest supporters, what we are learning about ourselves and our work along the way, as we know that transparency is critical to making real, substantive change. As we embrace this responsibility—knowing that it will make us better leaders, partners, and allies—we want to share our 2020 Annual Report with you. In it, you will learn more about the great strides we made last year, as well as about our shortcomings. Sharing in this way is another example of the kind of transparency to which we're committed – we see it as essential to our growth and integrity.





SUPPORTING OUR MEMBERSHIP

During the COVID-19 pandemic, NJCASA has worked with all county-based sexual violence programs to support their quick and efficient adaptation of services to survivors. This has included amplifying the work of our colleagues at the local programs across New Jersey's (N.J.'s) 21 counties. For instance, on April 22, our Executive Director, Patricia Teffenhart, participated in a **statewide Virtual Town Hall with the Attorney General**, highlighting the availability of services for survivors during COVID-19.



Executive Director Patricia Teffenhart participated in a statewide Virtual Town Hall with N.J.'s Attorney General.

Additionally, NJCASA's Executive Director facilitated a briefing for U.S. Sen. Menendez, providing space for four programs (Avanzar in Atlantic County, Middlesex County Center for Empowerment, SAVE of Essex County, and Hudson SPEAKS) to share how survivors have been directly impacted by COVID-19 and how services have shifted in response. A similar conversation highlighting the work of Domestic Abuse & Sexual Assault Crisis Center in Warren County, Passaic County Women's Center, and Middlesex County Center for Empowerment was also hosted for all members of the **State Legislature and Federal Delegation**, with the Senate President, Steve Sweeney, offering opening remarks.

CREATING NEW RESOURCES

NJCASA developed a fact sheet for the Sexual Assault Bill of Rights that outlines the rights of sexual assault victims in an accessible, reader-friendly format and includes valuable information on how to apply for financial compensation. [Individual fact sheets](#) were created for each of our member programs.



Additionally, recognizing that sexual violence is 100 percent preventable, in late 2019, NJCASA launched a [public education campaign](#) entitled **NJCASA C.A.R.E.S.** (Community. Autonomy. Reflection. Empathy. Society.). This campaign focuses on five foundational blocks of sexual violence prevention and emphasizes how each of us has a sphere of influence and spaces in our lives where we can effect positive change. In 2020, we also introduced a [PSA](#) on the topic and continued with our awareness campaign, with content in both English and Spanish.

CENTERING SURVIVORS

Following continued reporting on incidents of sexual harassment, assault, and misogyny in the N.J. political sphere, the statewide Working Group on Harassment and Misogyny in N.J. Politics held hearings for members of the public and experts to share on the record. Our Communications Manager, Marissa Marzano, delivered testimony on behalf of NJCASA to the Working Group, where she highlighted initial findings from **NJCASA's Survey on Misogyny & Harassment in N.J. Politics** and proposed steps that the Working Group could recommend, including formal/informal complaint procedures.



NJCASA's survey was created to help us better understand the prevalence of misogyny and sexual misconduct in the NJ political arena, and, with support from The Fund for New Jersey, these findings were released in a report entitled "['It's Everywhere, It's Everything.' NJCASA's Report on Sexual Harassment & Misogyny in N.J. Politics.](#)" On August 13th, following the release of the report, NJCASA hosted a live panel event featuring several local leaders and breathing life into the 500+ anonymous survey responses we received.



COLLECTING DATA

In 2019, NJCASA's member programs began sharing monthly service delivery statistics. Between February and April of 2020, our Manager of Strategic Initiatives, Aaron Potenza, conducted qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data gathered and wrote a public-facing report, "[Who are We Serving: A Statewide Review of Sexual Violence Services in 2019.](#)" The report focused on serving all survivors, including identifying critical gaps in services. At the same time, it demonstrated the tremendous work being done by providers across the state who continue to provide lifesaving support with limited funding.

Furthermore, in 2019, we surveyed nearly 400 survivors as part of **N.J.'s first-ever Statewide Sexual Violence Needs Assessment**, a project conducted with generous support from the **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF)**. During 2020, we worked on compiling and assessing survey data. A final report will be released soon, and, with continued support from RWJF, we will launch a conference workshop series in April 2021. Be on the lookout for more information!

LAUNCHING NEW INITIATIVES

NJCASA launched an **Engaging Communities, Preventing Violence Project**, working with three local sexual violence programs—the Center for Family Services in Camden County, the Center for Empowerment in Middlesex County, and the Domestic Abuse & Sexual Assault Crisis Center in Warren County—to create safer communities across N.J. Together, NJCASA and each local sexual violence program hosted brainstorming sessions where mental health professionals, athletic leaders and coaches, and parents and caring adults could learn how to promote sexual violence prevention at work and in their communities.

Also, with support from a **Planned Parenthood Advocacy Alliance grant**, NJCASA launched the **Sexual Violence Prevention Policy Project**, an outreach series geared towards deepening policy makers' understanding of sexual violence and its causes. This successful program featured: distribution of monthly policy updates that highlighted the ways in which sexual violence prevention relates to and intersects with the current policy landscape; coordination of quarterly “lunch-and-learn” conference calls to facilitate more in-depth conversations with policy partners; and a virtual “State of the State” policy meeting with all project partners.

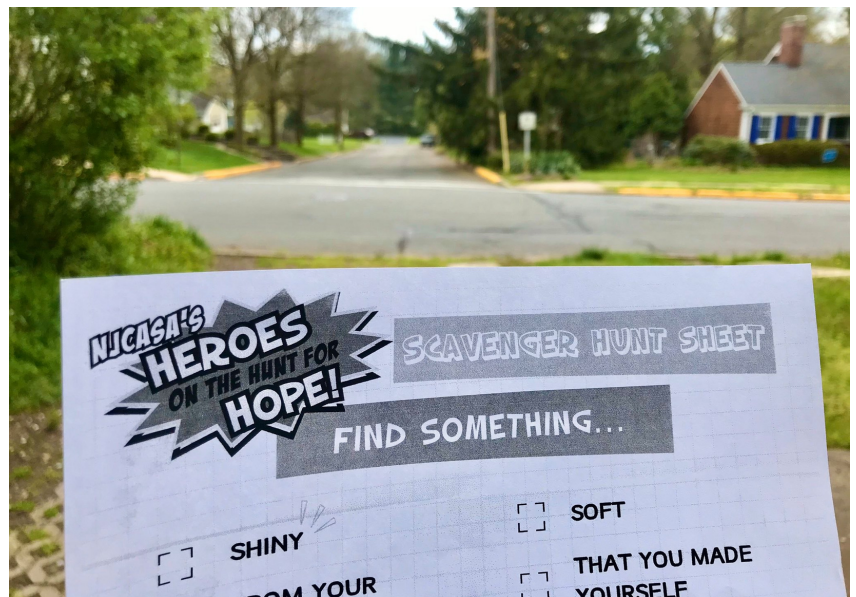
Additionally, with generous support from the **New Jersey Pandemic Relief Fund**, NJCASA created a robust awareness campaign that included a [PSA](#) in English and Spanish featured online as well as on television and radio to inform survivors about our safe, confidential services both during and in the aftermath of the pandemic. Additionally, we partnered with community organizations to distribute 4,000 postcards about sexual violence program services across N.J. There was an essential need for building greater awareness of available support at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and we are grateful for the opportunity to disseminate this important message.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

From April 28 to May 2, NJCASA hosted its first ever **Heroes on the Hunt for Hope**, a unique virtual scavenger hunt that replaced our beloved annual 5K, Heroes for a Safer Garden State. Despite the challenges of holding a fundraiser at this time, our event brought together a group of 211 participants and over 270 donors across the state, enabling us to raise nearly \$43,000.

On Friday, September 25, NJCASA hosted our **third annual September Celebration of Champions**, honoring

six county-based leaders working on the frontlines to make sure survivors and their families have access to free, compassionate care, even during these challenging times. We had a total of 160 guests register and raised over \$20,000. Despite the challenges of holding a fundraiser virtually, our community gathered for an evening of camaraderie, awareness, and inspiration.



More than 200 New Jerseyans participated in our first-ever scavenger hunt, sharing photos of their finds across social media.

ADVOCATING FOR AN INCREASED ALLOCATION IN THE STATE BUDGET

After a historic budget-making season impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, Gov. Phil Murphy signed the FY21 State Budget, including a full re-appropriation of \$6.6M in funds for sexual violence services in N.J., with an additional \$6M in funding for NJCASA. With the passing of this budget, both the Governor and the Legislature reaffirmed their commitment to survivors of sexual violence and the service providers who support them, even during a global pandemic. This investment will allow N.J.'s network of professionals to continue meeting the needs of our communities and expand services whenever possible.

PROMOTING BETTER PROTECTIONS FOR SURVIVORS

On December 11, an eight-bill package protecting the rights of survivors, improving police and judicial case management and training, and putting state harassment and discrimination policies into law moved unanimously through the Senate. Included was a three-year "Sexual Violence Restorative Justice Pilot Program" bringing survivors and those who cause harm together to seek collective healing solutions outside of the criminal legal system.



COMMITTING OURSELVES TO RACIAL EQUITY

In June, in the wake of George Floyd's murder, NJCASA released a [public statement](#) committing to be more intentional in how we, as a coalition, work to disrupt white supremacy and oppressive systems, while acknowledging that we have not done enough. On October 30, a former employee published a [blog](#) addressing her experience of racism and discrimination at NJCASA. Together with the work we had begun doing with our board and across the membership around promoting racial equity, this statement underscored an urgent need to be more critical of the ways in which bias and racism impact our work and more intentional in how we combat privilege within our own organization.

To this end, we contracted with a third-party firm to conduct an independent internal review, with the goal of strengthening policy and practice and better supporting our staff and our member programs. We are in the process of hiring an external human resources firm to ensure that our staff has access to the support they need and benefits they deserve. Also, over the course of 2021, we will be working closely with diversity, equity, and inclusion experts to ground our work more deeply in these principles and to identify ways to uplift the voices of our colleagues of color at NJCASA and throughout the State. We know that this is just the beginning, but we are eager to embark on this journey, confident that we will emerge a better, stronger organization on the other side.

ONWARDS!