MEETING THE NEEDS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS IN DANE COUNTY

DAIS (Domestic Abuse Intervention Services) collected information in 2015 that assessed the needs of domestic violence victims and survivors in Dane County in order to inform strategies for community collaboration and program planning.
Community Needs Assessment:
Meeting the Needs of Domestic Violence Survivors in Dane County

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Foreword

A Letter from Domestic Abuse Intervention Services Executive Director

DAIS (Domestic Abuse Intervention Services) is proud to have administered the 2015 Community Needs Assessment to help us better understand the challenges facing domestic violence survivors and to inform our ongoing strategies for community collaboration and program planning.

In August 2014, DAIS opened the doors to our new facility at 2102 Fordem Avenue representing a number of momentous changes. Not only did it expand the emergency shelter capacity but it also marked a new era by sending a public message that Dane County is a community that openly and visibly supports victims of domestic violence.

One year out from the Community Needs Assessment, DAIS is proud of the impactful strategies that have been made to preserve an organization that operates from a position of strength and stability. DAIS has improved our service model to provide a service continuum to help victims become free of violence in their lives by enhancing the cultural competence of our organization, prioritizing the hiring of bilingual staff to meet the immediate needs of all individuals who come to our doors, and expanding prevention programming to promote a nonviolent community throughout Dane County.

We are grateful to our community partners and DAIS staff and volunteers who took the time and energy to complete the community needs assessment surveys with such care to ensure the quality of the results. Their tireless dedication to help victims of domestic violence does not go unnoticed.

I’d like to share my particular appreciation for the survivors of domestic violence who completed the surveys and described their experiences. Reaching out for support following domestic violence takes an immense amount of courage and their voice is crucial to our community’s understanding on how we can best support those in need.

The Community Needs Assessment validates many of the approaches that DAIS programs take in our service model since moving into our new facility and before that. It also serves as a reminder that as a community we must continue to address and support the fear and stigma that are strong barriers to victims when they consider reaching out for help. It is only by working together that we can transform Dane County into a community of hope and safety.

Shannon Barry
Executive Director
Domestic Abuse Intervention Services
Section 1: Overview of the Community Needs Assessment

Introduction and Purpose

As part of Domestic Abuse Intervention Service’s (DAIS) 2015 Strategic Framework, the DAIS board of directors and executive staff team included an initiative to complete an assessment of the needs of domestic violence victims in Dane County in order to inform community collaboration strategies as well as program planning.

Domestic violence victims interact with many different organizations and systems on their journey to safety and healing. When a community has a coordinated response to domestic violence in which these systems and organizations are working together, it is more likely that when a victim takes the courageous step to reach out for help, they will receive the support and protection they need. This needs assessment is intended to determine how the community’s response is currently functioning.

The goal of the assessment was guided by a framework of 4 main focus areas:

1. What are the most pressing needs of victims and survivors of intimate partner domestic violence and their children?
2. Of the most needed services, which are the hardest to access in our community?
3. Are there any specific populations of intimate partner domestic violence victims and survivors in our community that are currently underserved by the different systems and service providers available?
4. What are the main barriers that victims and survivors face when trying to access needed services?

Snapshot of Domestic Violence in Dane County

Domestic violence is the intentional use of power and control tactics by one intimate partner over the other in order to create an environment of fear and intimidation. Across the nation, one in four women will be a victim of physical or sexual assault by an intimate partner at some point in her lifetime. We also know that one in seven men will experience physical or sexual assault by an intimate partner. Of the 253,000 women and girls who call Dane County home, over 63,000 of them have been or will be the victim of domestic violence at some point in her life.

Each year, more than 3,000 referrals (approximately a third of all referrals) to the Dane County District Attorney’s office from law enforcement agencies are domestic violence related. However, only one quarter of domestic violence incidents are even reported to law enforcement so it is likely that about 9,000 more incidents occur that we never hear about. DAIS estimates that there are 12,000 incidents of domestic violence in Dane County annually, or 33 every day.
Methodology

The community needs assessment focused on gathering information from a wide variety of stakeholders in order to learn about the four main areas listed above.

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Feedback from three main stakeholder groups was gathered from a total of 216 individuals through one on one in-person and phone interviews, focus groups, and written and online surveys.

![RESPONSE NUMBERS BY STAKEHOLDER TYPE](image)

**Survivors:**

Current and former DAIS clients were invited to participate in sharing their experiences of how the community responded to their needs. All information was gathered or documented anonymously and confidentially. The survivors came from four main groups:

1. Survivors United For Nonviolence (SUN) Group: Made up of former DAIS clients, the SUN group serves an advisory function and provides input to the organization on program planning and other organizational decisions.
2. Current Support Group Clients: DAIS offers weekly support groups for anyone who identifies as female in Dane County. Support groups include Survivors of Violence,
Spanish-speaking Support Group, Women who have Experienced Intimate Partner Violence, and Women with Vision to serve specific needs of survivors 50 and older.

3. Spanish-speaking Legal Program clients: DAIS Legal Program provides support, information, advocacy and court accompaniment to people who are experiencing intimate partner violence or stalking.

4. DAIS Emergency Shelter Residents: DAIS operates the only domestic violence shelter in Dane County with a capacity of 56 beds.

Additional questions were included in the survivor survey in order to gather more detailed information and gain a better understanding of the experiences victims had not only as they accessed DAIS services, but other community services as well. These questions asked what specifically prompted them to reach out for services at DAIS, whether DAIS met their expectations, what community resources they were referred to and how those resources met their needs, what role their cultural identity and language played in accessing services, and what would make services more accessible in general.

Through the written surveys, 1:1 interviews and focus group, survivor input was gathered from 30 people.

To note: Individuals who experience domestic violence may identify with either the word “victim” or “survivor,” both words, or neither word. In an effort to be inclusive and respectful of their experience regardless of how they identify, the words “victim” and “survivor” will be used interchangeably throughout this document.

Community Partners:

An online community partner survey was created and shared with over 125 community partners identified by a group of DAIS staff members. The list was created based on identifying the different systems and organizations in the community that frequently interact with victims, and the relationships that DAIS currently has within those systems or organizations. In addition to being sent via individual email, the survey was sent to three list serves in which DAIS frequently participates: 1) the Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Violence Task Force; 2) The Latino Children and Families Council; and 3) The Homeless Services Consortium. All survey information was gathered anonymously.

In addition, the DAIS Executive Director and Director of Services conducted key informant interviews with community partners who have a unique perspective in terms of the community’s response to domestic violence. The interviews were conducted with:

1) Karen Potnek and Melissa Sorensen of The Salvation Army (Homeless Services Provider)
2) Marlys Howe of the District Attorney’s Office, Domestic Violence Unit (Criminal Justice System)
3) Pastor Phil Haslinger of Memorial United Church of Christ (Faith leader)
4) Fabiola Hamdan, Bilingual Social Worker with Joining Forces for Families (Community-Based Social Work)
5) Torrie Kopp Mueller of the YWCA (Housing and Community Services Provider)

Through this outreach, 118 responses from community partners were gathered.
**Organizational – DAIS Staff and Volunteers:**

An online survey was emailed to DAIS staff as well as our volunteer advocates all whom interact with victims and survivors or the community in different capacities. Survey data was gathered anonymously.

In addition to the online survey, a staff workgroup on the topic of community advocacy and outreach met monthly to identify pressing issues facing victims and their barriers to safety, in addition to community-based strategies DAIS might employ to address these issues. The work group has participants from a wide range of departments and programs, including Prevention & Education, Shelter, Children's, Crisis Response, Legal, and Development. Work group participants shared information based on their experiences working within the community and with survivors of domestic violence.

Input from 30 DAIS staff members and 39 volunteers was gathered.
Section 2: What the Data Tells Us about Domestic-Violence Related Services in Dane County

Key Findings

In order to understand the context of the results, the findings are broken down into the three stakeholder groups: Survivor-Specific Findings, Community Partner-Specific Findings, and Organizational (DAIS)-Specific Findings.

Survivor Key Findings

Survivors were asked to identify the most important support services that they needed to achieve safety after experiencing domestic violence. In general, housing-related needs were listed as the most pressing when results for emergency shelter, transitional housing, and general affordable housing were combined. After housing, the top five greatest needs survivors indicated were support groups for adults, a 24 hour domestic violence help line, legal advocacy services, in-person support and safety planning, and mental health services. It is important to note that survivor’s feedback on services most needed often correlated with the services they were receiving from DAIS.

While support groups, a 24 hour help line, legal advocacy and in-person support were listed as the highest need, they were not listed as hardest to access. Services in the community that were listed as very much needed for safety but hardest to access were housing-related (emergency shelter, transitional housing and low-income housing combined), with low-income housing listed as the
service that is very hardest to access in Dane County. After housing, the hardest to access yet highly rated as needed were mental health services, emergency financial assistance, case management, and support groups for children.

To note: Of the survivors who participated, 20% spoke Spanish as their primary language, so while the numbers for language access aren’t listed as being high in the chart compared to other needs, it is important to note that of the Spanish speakers who responded, language access was cited as a main need as well as a barrier to reaching out for services community-wide.

**Survivor Input on Culture and Identity**

Domestic violence is an issue that impacts individuals from all walks of life, including all races, ethnicities, ages, genders, primary languages, sexual orientations, disability status, financial status, etc. It is critical that when a victim reaches out for help, that the organization or system they interact with understands the needs related to that victim’s identity in order provide the most useful and responsive support. 30% of survivors surveyed identified culture and language as having an impact in how they reached out for services and what kind of services they needed. Some survivors cited a lack of trust in different systems or organizations based on feeling marginalized or misunderstood. One survivor shared that her involvement in the criminal justice system prevented her from trusting others and another said “Sometimes it feels like the law is against me.” Another survivor shared that for her as a survivor who identifies as a transgender individual, it can be hard to attend a group that is not transgender-specific.

When Spanish-speaking survivors talked with the DAIS bilingual Latina advocate about their experiences, they said that fear of lack of language access is one reason that reaching out for help to various community services is hard and may result in them taking longer to contact a service provider. However, they did not cite culture as a main concern. Some expressed that the cultural identity of an advocate is irrelevant as long as the advocate speaks Spanish. Overall, they said that the level of empathy and support they felt was far more important than the cultural background of the advocate or service provider.

**Survivor Input on Barriers to Accessing Services**

Reaching out for support following domestic violence takes an immense amount of courage, as there are many very complex and real barriers to doing so. The responses received from survivors about barriers to reaching out underscore that the emotional toll of domestic violence, as well as societal pressures and the community’s lack of understanding of the issue, plays a large role. While there were survivors who identified more logistical or resource-based barriers such as childcare, transportation, and immigration status, the large majority of the survivors identified that the top barriers for them were 1) fear of seeking services; 2) stigma or feelings of shame; 3) knowledge of services available; 4) feelings of isolation; and 5) lack of trust in the system.

**Community Partner Key Findings**

It is not uncommon for domestic violence to affect most areas of a victim’s life. Many victims may not reach out to the local domestic violence program but may seek support from their faith leader, healthcare provider, the court system, or other organizations or systems. As a result, community
partners who work with victims have a key perspective in identifying what they are seeing as victim needs and what needs are not fully satisfied by available services.

Survey results show that community partners widely cited housing-related needs as the highest priority, with emergency housing being the first, low income housing the second, and transitional housing last. Besides housing, the top five most pressing needs for victims they have worked with include emergency financial assistance, legal advocacy, case management, and in-person support and safety planning.

These are partially in line with the needs that are hardest to access in Dane County. Housing was identified as the need hardest to access, with low income housing being the most difficult, transitional housing being second hardest, and emergency housing being third. Following housing, emergency financial assistance is perceived to be the hardest to access and from there, the top needs are mental health services, child care, and transportation. While case management services and in-person support and safety planning were identified as two of the very highest needs, they ranked as 12th and 15th when it comes to being hardest to access.

When looking more closely at the open-ended questions in the survey as well as the key informant interviews, they indicated a major need for immediate in-person support and safety planning (in other words, that an advocate be available right when a victim is in crisis). This was also identified as a need that is currently not being met. Responses indicate that this is necessary to provide safety planning and support—and that ongoing support from trained domestic violence advocates is also needed. Many victims interact with a number of systems, and during moments of crisis, it can be very difficult to track the different services being offered, professionals to be in contact with, paperwork to complete, etc. Having an advocate who can help victims navigate these systems and coordinate their services through the crisis would be helpful. Legal advocacy services were also identified as an area in which a more immediate response would be helpful, ideally with advocates available on-site at the courthouse or within close proximity to the courthouse.
An area mentioned in the open-ended questions was that DAIS only serves victims of intimate partner domestic violence, and there is a gap in services within the community for victims of non-intimate partner domestic violence, such as abuse that occurs from a sibling, parent, caregiver or child.

**Community Partner Input on Barriers to Accessing Services**

When asked what barriers survivors of domestic violence face in accessing and receiving needed services, community partners identified similar top barriers as victims did. The top four were 1) knowledge of services available, 2) fear of seeking services, 3) lack of trust in the system, and 4) stigma/feelings of shame. Other top barriers cited included transportation and childcare.

Also cited were cultural barriers (23%) and language (20%). Some partners identified barriers within the values of their culture, such as religious beliefs, family values, beliefs about gender roles, etc., as reasons they believe it is difficult for victims to reach out for help. Cultural barriers were identified as also being a barrier in terms of the community’s lack of understanding or responsiveness to the cultural needs of varying populations.

Community partners also cited immediate access to services as being a barrier, as there is often a wait time for access to emergency shelters or other support services throughout the community. As one partner indicated “When someone decides to call for help, if they sense there is no real opportunity for them to get away right away, they lose faith in the ‘rest’ of any process.” Another stated, “Most people I work with won’t call a second time.” As was identified in the pressing needs section above, one partner identified the maze of services throughout the broader community that a victim often needs to maneuver as a barrier.

One community partner stated that when the DAIS shelter is full there seems to be no other services available in the community for immediate access. Regarding DAIS specifically, a few people indicated that they believed DAIS’s model of the victim requesting services directly (as opposed to a service provider enrolling a victim in services) is a barrier, because due to the victim’s crisis state, they often won’t take the step to reach out on their own.

**Organizational Key Findings**

DAIS staff and volunteers work with survivors of domestic violence and their children on a daily basis or are in the community working with various stakeholders and partners. As a result, they are keenly attuned to the needs of victims and where there are gaps in services available to meet those needs.

Responses from staff and volunteers around key needs are consistent with needs identified by survivors and community partners: the major need continues to be housing, all the way from emergency shelter to transitional housing to low income housing. These three areas were identified as the top needs as well as the hardest to access. Aside from housing, the top needs identified by DAIS staff and volunteers were legal advocacy, a 24 hour DV helpline, and in-person support and safety planning. While these were all identified as high needs, they were identified as among the easiest services to access. The response time needed for in-person support varied, with some saying 1-2 days is acceptable and others saying that an immediate response is what is needed.
DAIS Community Advocacy and Outreach Workgroup members identified a gap related to community-based case management services, in that DAIS services are crisis-based and many referral partners focus on long-term work (ie: therapy), leaving the period in between crisis and stability as a time in which many survivors continue to need support and assistance.

Based on survey responses, the next highest set of needs identified as hard to access were mental health services, emergency financial assistance, case management, and legal representation. Ranked in the survey as moderately high need and moderately difficult to access were basic needs resources such as job placement, childcare, and transportation. Basic need resources were also highlighted by workgroup staff, as services such as transportation/gas cards, food, and clothing are often difficult to access but highly necessary as survivors work on their plans for long term safety.

Organizational Input on Barriers to Accessing Services

When asked about barriers to accessing and receiving needed services, barriers around the victim’s emotional state ranked higher than logistical barriers, with 1) knowledge of services available, 2) lack of trust in the system, 3) fear of seeking services, and 4) stigma/feelings of shame ranking the highest. Transportation and child care were also identified as main barriers.

While language and cultural barriers ranked 10 and 11, in the comments section, staff and volunteers repeatedly reinforced that language access directly to an advocate and not through an interpreter makes a significant difference in the victim’s feeling comfortable working with DAIS. As one person said “It is difficult to call the Help Line if you don’t speak English, have an advocate struggle to figure out what you’re asking, tell you (in English) that you have to wait until they can call the language line, and then offer you support.” One staff member or volunteer explained that even when DAIS has language access, victims fear that the community resources that we make referrals to will not, which makes them less likely to access those other needed services.
Cultural barriers and language access are also identified as main barriers to receiving responsive services. Similar to the concerns expressed in the staff/volunteer online survey, referring Spanish-speaking victims to community resources in which there aren’t bilingual staff or the use of interpreters is also a high concern. For DAIS specifically, crisis response services are needed for Spanish speaking victims but the use of the language line or in-person interpreters makes it much harder to provide all support needed than if there was a bilingual Crisis Response Advocate.

**Input on Underserved Populations**

From the perspective of community partners and DAIS staff and volunteers, the top ten populations of domestic violence survivors in Dane County that are currently underserved are:
Section 3: Conclusions and Moving Forward

Conclusions

The Community Needs Assessment provided a wealth of information about the specific needs and barriers facing domestic violence victims in Dane County. Through the voices of DAIS advocates, community partners and most importantly survivors we, as a community, are able to identify and begin addressing the needs most pressing to victims of domestic violence.

Conclusions from the Community Needs Assessment are listed below in no particular order.

Results indicate that there are many pressing needs facing survivors in Dane County that are currently being met. Services such as a 24 hour help line, support groups for adults, in-person support and advocacy, and legal advocacy are ranked as highly needed services for victims and services that are easiest to access in the community. That said, results show that there is inconsistent awareness of services available to meet those needs- sometimes the data show that there are very pressing needs that are being met, such as in the case of the 24 hour DV help line. In other cases, there are pressing needs and existing services to meet those needs, but stakeholders don’t seem to be aware, such as in the case of services available to male victims. Similarly, it is clear that there are community partners who lack understanding of the organization’s focus on intimate partner domestic violence and the organization’s service model of empowerment advocacy, and the reasons why.

All stakeholder groups identified a need for domestic violence victims to have in-person support immediately following a crisis. There are high-risk situations that occur in which law enforcement, social service organizations, or other systems are pulled into providing immediate safety. In these cases, some responses to the assessment survey and interviews identified the need for an advocate who can provide support to the victim and help them navigate the different organizations, departments, professionals, and systems they are interacting with. Some community partners and DAIS staff and volunteers have worked with victims who struggle to track what is going on, and identified that having someone to walk through that process with them would make a big difference.

In addition to in-person support, ongoing support in the form of case management was also identified as a need. Domestic violence victims are often left to pick up a lot of pieces and may need to start over in various aspects of their life, from their housing situation, child’s needs (childcare, education, health, mental health needs, etc.), employment, public benefits, transportation, food access, and more. The impact of chronic trauma as well as potential ongoing safety concerns make this very difficult for some victims to do without case management support.

A common issue that was brought up was the overall challenges that exist in the community around access to basic needs assistance such as transportation, childcare, and emergency financial assistance. These resources are available in the community but in some cases the issue may be the victim’s lack of knowledge of available resources. It’s also clear that survivors, community partners and advocates feel there aren’t enough of these resources to meet the needs. Many domestic violence victims are essentially starting their lives over and may have very few personal resources due to the fact they are fleeing from abuse. Due to the effects of long-term financial abuse or living...
with chronic trauma, it’s not uncommon that victims may need to rely on the community’s support while they get on their feet.

While language access and cultural barriers did not show up as high in the rankings from the open ended survey question, through DAIS staff workgroup input and key informant interviews, these issues came up frequently as needs not sufficiently being addressed across the community. This is true in particular for language access. For Spanish-speakers, reaching out for support took much longer because of the fear of not being understood due to the language barrier. Additionally, even if Spanish speakers were connected to DAIS services, when they were referred to community resources, they were hesitant to reach out for fear that the other organization or system would not have language access. DAIS staff and volunteers highlighted the need for bilingual staff because while the use of interpreters both in-person and over the phone is sometimes necessary and better than no interpreters, having bilingual staff would be much more accommodating to victims’ language needs. Further, when someone doesn’t speak English, they may need more intensive assistance navigating complex community resource and legal systems, which is harder to do when utilizing interpreters.

Access to immediate and long term housing is known to be critically tied to a victim’s ability to increase their safety, and assessment results clearly show that the current availability of emergency, transitional and low income housing is not sufficient to meet the community’s needs. For all three stakeholder groups, housing was listed as the greatest need that victims have and the hardest resource to access. It’s important to note that emergency housing, such as the shelter services provided by DAIS, were clearly identified as only one piece of the puzzle. Stakeholders similarly cited access to both transitional and housing assistance/low income housing as high needs and hardest to access. The lack of availability of housing resources throughout the community is detrimental to victim’s short term and long term safety. As one survivor put it, she needs “an easier path to a safe place to live, but that has to do more with Madison. DAIS did all it could for me and I respect that, but it was frustrating.”

Finally, the chart below illustrates that when asked about the greatest barriers to accessing services, all three stakeholder groups identified the survivor’s feelings about the abuse and their situation above resource-based or other logistical barriers. Knowledge of services available and fear of seeking services were identified most frequently. This indicates that the general community—which includes current victims, potential victims, and social and professional support systems of victims—needs more information and communication about the resources available for victims and their children. Cited third most frequently was a lack of trust in the system, indicating that service providers need to focus on relationship building with all communities in Dane County in order to build trust. The fourth most frequently cited reason was stigma/feeling of shame by victims, bringing attention to the need for strategic communication and providing community education so victims better understand the dynamics of domestic violence and that they are not to blame for the abusive choices of their partner. Such a response would also demonstrate that the broader community understands the need to support victims and hold abusers in a manner that doesn’t reinforce feelings of victim blame and shame.
Barriers to Accessing Needed Services: Input from All Three Stakeholder Groups

- Lack of privacy at clinic/center
- Hours of operation
- Cultural barriers
- Immigration status
- Client isolation
- Transportation
- Lack of trust in the system
- Knowledge of services available
Recommendations for Next Steps:

Based on the findings presented in this needs assessment, the following recommendations outline potential next steps for DAIS as an organization as well as the larger community in order to increase Dane County’s response to the needs of victims of domestic violence and their children.

Strategic Communication.

In multiple contexts, the information gathered points to a need for DAIS to be more strategic in its communication both externally to the community as well as internally among program staff. While most internal respondents have a deep understanding of the organization and its service delivery model, further developing this understanding within the DAIS staff and volunteer base will serve to create stronger ambassadors throughout the community. To do this, DAIS has identified eight pillars that are core to our operating philosophy in addressing the needs of survivors of domestic violence and ensuring DAIS services are client-centered. These eight pillars are empowerment theory, strengths-based approach, trauma-informed care, family systems theory, social ecological model, survivor safety, feminist theory, and cultural competency.

Similarly, while many external partners have a solid understanding of the services offered by DAIS and felt that the organization was meeting victim needs, a segment of respondents seemed to have misinformation in this regard. Findings indicate that in particular, communication around what services DAIS offers, how those services are accessed, what the eligibility criteria is, resource limitations, and the reasons for our services and the criteria would be useful both externally and internally.

In addition to more strategic information sharing about services, increasing communication within the community to address the main barriers to accessing services is also an area to consider. In recent years, DAIS has focused on increasing the visibility of the organization and raising community awareness about domestic violence. The findings from the needs assessment indicate the need to continue to emphasize not only the availability of services, but also the fear and stigma that are such strong barriers to victims as they consider reaching out for help. DAIS is evolving its messaging to reinforce the ongoing and changing needs of victims of domestic violence in a way that is engaging the Dane County community in this issue.

Evaluation of Current DAIS Community Services.

Currently, the Community Services Program at DAIS carries out 3 main services:

1) The 24 hour help line is the gateway to all DAIS services. Help line advocates provide supportive listening, safety planning, and referrals to community resources and other DAIS programs.

2) Community response appointments are face to face meetings with an advocate offered 1-3 times per crisis and are typically available within 24 hours of calling the Help Line. Services offered at community response appointments include supportive listening, safety planning, and community resource referrals.

3) Support groups are peer-based groups facilitated by paid or volunteer advocates that focus on decreasing isolation and increasing safety.
The findings from the needs assessment indicate that there is a need in some cases for an advocate to be immediately available to provide intensive support to victims after a major crisis. In addition, there is a need for some victims/survivors with particularly complex situations or trauma responses to have more on-going support and active connection to community resource referrals.

**Explore strategies to actively support the housing advocacy work of community partner agencies.**

Results from all three stakeholder groups indicate that emergency shelter, transitional housing, and low income housing are all resources in which need outpaces availability, and that this is a community issue. According to a 2008 study by the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, immediate access to emergency shelter is paramount to domestic violence victims and their long term safety. These findings show that while the responsibility for resolving the housing issue in Dane County does not belong to one organization alone and is a larger issue that the community needs to commit to address, access to homeless services as well as general housing services are highly connected to the long term safety of the victims served by DAIS.

The majority of victims who seek emergency shelter at DAIS (Dane County’s only emergency domestic violence shelter) have very few resources. Although, DAIS Family Advocates work with shelter clients to find long term housing, the emergency nature of the housing services provided by DAIS doesn’t address the long term safe and stable housing needs that are typically met within a community’s housing availability.

Despite DAIS more than doubling the domestic violence emergency shelter beds available in Dane County in 2014, there is still a need for immediate access that isn’t being met due to high demand and a waiting list. There is a connection between the lack of transitional or overall low income housing available throughout the community and the reality that many DAIS clients need to come back to shelter multiple times because they still have high safety risks and don’t have other housing options. Finding ways to support the efforts of housing partners will positively impact the safety of victims of domestic violence.

**Reduce barriers and increase access to needed services by exploring opportunities to co-locate services offered by community partners with DAIS.**

Results of the assessment indicate that there are many services that were identified as highly needed but not always easy to access. Additionally, victims cited lack of awareness of available resources as being one of the top barriers to accessing services. The new DAIS building has already provided opportunities to work more effectively with community partners on site at DAIS to make services easier to access for the victims with whom we are working. Some steps might include exploring additional services that would be easier for our clients to access if co-located with DAIS in order to increase awareness of all available resources and decrease barriers to access.
Appendix 1: Survivor Survey

Dear Survivor,

DAIS is conducting a community needs assessment to learn how service providers and different systems that work with victims and survivors of domestic violence in Dane County are meeting victim needs.

*We are looking for your help - your input is really important to this project!* We are gathering information from survivors, victim services advocates and community partners. The responses you provide in this survey will be invaluable in helping us to identify areas of strengths as well as unmet needs related to Dane County’s ability to best support survivors in our community. 

THANK YOU for your time and feedback!

1. How did you first hear about DAIS?

2. What were you hoping would happen when you first called DAIS?
   a. Were your expectations met?

3. What services did you receive from DAIS?

4. Was there help you needed that DAIS couldn’t provide?

5. Did the advocate you worked with make referrals to other services? If so, what?
   a. Did you access those services? Why or why not?
   b. After receiving support from DAIS and community resources that DAIS referred you to, were there any needs that you had that weren’t met?

6. When it comes to your specific cultural identity or language, does that impact how you reach out for help? If so, in what way?
   a. Does it impact what help you need? If so, in what way?
   b. Based on your specific cultural identity or language, are there ways DAIS could better support you?

7. What are ways that domestic violence impact your financial security?
   a. Are there ways that DAIS could help you get on your feet specifically in regard to your financial security?

8. Do you live in a Dane County city or rural area?
   a. Were services easy for you to access? Why or why not?
   b. What would help make services more accessible?
9. As you think about the most important support services that you needed to achieve safety after domestic violence, which are the main ones? (Mark all that apply.) (This section included space for explanation.)

[ ] 24-Hour Domestic Violence Help Line
[ ] In-person support and safety planning (Crisis Response)
  What response time was necessary to support the victim?
[ ] Support Groups for adults
[ ] Support Groups for children
[ ] Case management services
[ ] Education/Outreach
[ ] Language Access
[ ] Mental Health Services
[ ] Emergency Shelters
[ ] Transitional Housing
[ ] Transportation Services
[ ] Housing Assistance or Low-Income Housing
[ ] Child Care
[ ] Legal Advocacy
[ ] Legal Representation
[ ] Adult Education
[ ] Elder Abuse Advocates
[ ] Job Training
[ ] Job Placement
[ ] Emergency Financial Assistance (i.e.: lock changes, relocation assistance, etc)
[ ] Other economic empowerment support or services:
[ ] Drug/Alcohol Treatment
[ ] Other:
[ ] Other:
[ ] Other:

10. Based on the most needed services you listed above, which services are the hardest to access in Dane County? (Mark all that apply.) (This section included space for explanation.)

[ ] 24-Hour Domestic Violence Help Line
[ ] In-person support and safety planning (Crisis Response)
  What response time was necessary to support the victim?
[ ] Support Groups for adults
[ ] Support Groups for children
[ ] Case management services
[ ] Education/Outreach
[ ] Language Access
[ ] Mental Health Services
[ ] Emergency Shelters
[ ] Transitional Housing
[ ] Transportation Services
[ ] Housing Assistance or Low-Income Housing
[ ] Child Care
[ ] Legal Advocacy
[ ] Legal Representation
[ ] Adult Education
[ ] Elder Abuse Advocates
[ ] Job Training
[ ] Job Placement
[ ] Emergency Financial Assistance (i.e.: lock changes, relocation assistance, etc)
[ ] Other economic empowerment support or services:
[ ] Drug/Alcohol Treatment
[ ] Other:
[ ] Other:
[ ] Other:

11. As you were thinking about reaching out for help, what were the main barriers you faced? (Mark all that apply)

[ ] Knowledge of services available
[ ] Fear of seeking services
[ ] Stigma or a feeling of shame
[ ] Lack of privacy in your clinic/center
[ ] Child care
[ ] Transportation
[ ] Hours of operation
[ ] Language barriers (please describe below)
[ ] Cultural barriers (please describe below)
[ ] Lack of trust in the system
[ ] Feelings of isolation
[ ] Immigration status
[ ] Lack of proper identification/documents
[ ] Did not identify as a victim of violence
[ ] Other:
Appendix 2: Community Partner Survey

Dear Community Partner,

DAIS is conducting a community needs assessment and gathering information from survivors, victim services advocates and community partners to assess how service providers and different systems that work with victims and survivors of domestic violence are meeting victim needs. The responses you provide in this survey will be invaluable in helping us to identify areas of strengths as well as unmet needs related to Dane County’s ability to best support survivors in our community.

1. What is your role in working with survivors of intimate partner violence? (Mark all that apply.)

- Victim services advocate
- Court system personnel
- Law enforcement
- Mental health provider
- Health care provider
- Community services – children’s/family focus
- Community services – adult focus
- County Human Services
- Elected official
- Other

2. As you think about all of the domestic violence survivors that you have worked with, what are the most pressing services they have needed? (Mark all that apply.) (Depending on survey monkey functionality, this section included space for explanation.)

- 24-Hour Domestic Violence Help Line
- In-person support and safety planning (Crisis Response)
- Support Groups for adults
- Support Groups for children
- Case management services
- Education/Outreach
- Mental Health Services
- Emergency Shelters
- Transitional Housing
- Transportation Services
- Housing Assistance or Low-Income Housing
- Child Care
- Legal Advocacy
- Legal Representation
- Adult Education
- Elder Abuse Advocates
- Job Training
- Job Placement
- Emergency Financial Assistance (ie: lock changes, relocation assistance, etc)
- Other economic empowerment support or services:
- Drug/Alcohol Treatment
- Other:
- Other:
- Other:

3. Based on the most needed services you listed above, which services are the hardest to access in Dane County? (Mark all that apply.) (Depending on survey monkey functionality, this section included space for explanation.)

- 24-Hour Domestic Violence Help Line
- In-person support and safety planning (Crisis Response)
- Support Groups for adults
- Support Groups for children
- Case management services
- Education/Outreach
- Language Access
- Mental Health Services
- Emergency Shelters
4. Thinking about survivors of intimate partner violence, are there any populations that you feel are currently underserved by the service providers and different systems within Dane County? (Mark all that apply.) (Depending on survey monkey functionality, this section included space for explanation.)

- Children (10 years old and younger)
- Adolescents (11-18 years old)
- Adult victims who are mothers
- Single women
- Adult victims who are fathers
- Single men
- Elderly (65+)
- LGBTQ individuals
- Deaf/hard of hearing
- Hispanic/Latina
- Whites
- Blacks/African Americans
- Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders
- Native Americans
- Immigrants
- Limited English-proficiency clients
- Survivors with mental health issues
- Drug/alcohol dependent clients
- Survivors located in rural Dane County
- Human Trafficking Survivors
- Sex Workers
- Other:

5. What barriers do potential clients/participants who have experienced violence face in accessing and receiving needed services? (Mark all that apply) (Depending on survey monkey functionality, this section included space for explanation.)

- Knowledge of services available
- Fear of seeking services
- Stigma or a feeling of shame
- Child care
- Transportation
- Hours of operation
- Language barriers (please describe below)
- Cultural barriers (please describe below)
- Lack of trust in the system
- Client isolation
- Immigration status
- Lack of proper identification/documents
- Does not identify as a victim of violence
- Other:
Appendix 3: DAIS Staff and Volunteer Survey

Dear DAIS Staff or Volunteer,

DAIS is conducting a community needs assessment and gathering information from survivors, victim services advocates and community partners to assess how service providers and different systems that work with victims and survivors of domestic violence are meeting victim needs. The responses you provide in this survey will be invaluable in helping us to identify areas of strengths as well as unmet needs related to Dane County’s ability to best support survivors in our community. Thank you for your time!

1. What is your role at DAIS?
   [ ] Volunteer
   [ ] Program staff
   [ ] Development staff
   [ ] Administrative staff

2. As you think about all of the domestic violence survivors that you have worked with, what are the most pressing services they have needed? (Mark all that apply.) (Depending on survey monkey functionality, this section included space for explanation.)
   [ ] 24-Hour Domestic Violence Help Line
   [ ] In-person support and safety planning (Crisis Response)
   [ ] Support Groups for adults
   [ ] Support Groups for children
   [ ] Case management services (non-shelter)
   [ ] Education/Outreach
   [ ] Language Access
   [ ] Mental Health Services
   [ ] Transportation Services
   [ ] Emergency Shelter
   [ ] Transitional Housing
   [ ] Housing Assistance or Low-Income Housing
   [ ] Child Care
   [ ] Legal Advocacy
   [ ] Legal Representation
   [ ] Adult Education
   [ ] Elder Abuse Advocates
   [ ] Job Training
   [ ] Job Placement
   [ ] Emergency Financial Assistance (ie: lock changes, relocation assistance, etc)
   [ ] Other economic empowerment support or services
   [ ] Drug/Alcohol Treatment
   [ ] Other:
   [ ] Other:
   [ ] Other:

3. Based on the most needed services you listed above, which services are the hardest to access in Dane County? (Mark all that apply.) (Depending on survey monkey functionality, this section included space for explanation.)
   [ ] 24-Hour Domestic Violence Help Line
   [ ] In-person support and safety planning (Crisis Response)
   [ ] Support Groups for adults
   [ ] Support Groups for children
   [ ] Case management services
   [ ] Education/Outreach
   [ ] Language Access
   [ ] Mental Health Services
   [ ] Emergency Shelters
   [ ] Transitional Housing
   [ ] Transportation Services
   [ ] Housing Assistance or Low-Income Housing
   [ ] Child Care
4. Thinking about survivors of intimate partner violence, are there any populations that you feel are currently undeserved by the service providers and different systems within Dane County? (Mark all that apply.) (Depending on survey monkey functionality, this section included space for explanation.)

[] Children (10 years old and younger)  
[] Adolescents (11-18 years old)  
[] Adult victims who are mothers  
[] Single women  
[] Adult victims who are fathers  
[] Single men  
[] Elderly (65+)  
[] LGBTQ individuals  
[] Deaf/hard of hearing  
[] Hispanic/Latina  
[] Whites  
[] Blacks/African Americans  
[] Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders  
[] Native Americans  
[] Immigrants  
[] Limited English-proficiency clients  
[] Survivors with mental health issues  
[] Drug/alcohol dependent clients  
[] Survivors located in rural Dane County  
[] Human Trafficking Survivors  
[] Sex Workers  
[] Other:

5. What barriers do potential clients/participants who have experienced violence face in accessing and receiving needed services? (Mark all that apply) (Depending on survey monkey functionality, this section included space for explanation.)

[] Knowledge of services available  
[] Fear of seeking services  
[] Stigma or a feeling of shame  
[] Child care  
[] Transportation  
[] Hours of operation  
[] Language barriers (please describe below)  
[] Cultural barriers (please describe below)  
[] Lack of trust in the system  
[] Client isolation  
[] Immigration status  
[] Lack of proper identification/documents  
[] Does not identify as a victim of violence  
[] Other:

6. Are there any services that you wish DAIS provided to victims of domestic violence in addition to what we are already providing?