

Serving Survivors, Sustaining Organizations

*What We Learned from the
2023 and 2025 Needs Assessments of
Culturally Specific DV/SA Organizations*

FALL 2026 | RESEARCH AND EVALUATION



Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

Culturally specific domestic violence and sexual assault (DV/SA) organizations are a critical source of support for survivors within Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) and Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) communities. Often serving as trusted points of contact, these community-based organizations provide culturally and linguistically responsive services that can reduce barriers to seeking and receiving support. Their work extends beyond crisis response to include prevention, community engagement, advocacy, and long-term support for individuals and families navigating complex systems. Understanding the strengths and needs of these organizations is therefore important to strengthening the broader response to DV/SA.

The Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence (API-GBV), a national resource center that provides training and technical assistance to strengthen DV/SA prevention and response in AANHPI and MENA communities, conducted national needs assessments with culturally specific DV/SA organizations in 2023 and 2025. The 2023 needs assessment included 79 responses representing 60 organizations, while the 2025 needs assessment included 110 responses representing 72 organizations. Across both years, 103 unique organizations participated, including 29 represented in both assessments. This report examines patterns across the findings related to survivor needs, service gaps, and prevention activities, as well as organizational strengths, wellness, and sustainability.

Not all findings are directly comparable because the organizations represented, survey questions, and response options differed across years. Several questions were expanded or revised in 2025 to capture survivor and organizational needs in greater detail, while others changed between open-ended and predefined response formats. As a result, differences between years may reflect changes in measurement or the respondent pool as well as changes in organizational or community needs. The findings should be understood as a multi-year view of patterns across the organizations represented rather than a direct measure of change over time.

Key Findings on Survivor Needs and Service Gaps

Across both years, housing instability, systemic navigation barriers, and the need for culturally tailored supports emerged as prominent concerns affecting AANHPI and MENA survivors. In 2023, the most frequently reported needs included rental assistance, housing and shelter, mental health services, food assistance, and utilities assistance. The expanded 2025 survey captured survivor needs through a broader set of categories, with the most frequently reported needs including housing and shelter, advocacy for civil or immigration matters, interpretation or cultural liaison support, information and referral assistance, and transportation. Several of these 2025 categories were not measured separately in 2023 and should not be interpreted as needs that increased over time.

Gaps remain between the services survivors need and what the organizations represented are able to provide. In 2023, the largest gaps involved medical services, mental health services, and housing and shelter. In 2025, the largest gap involved employment support, which was identified as a need by 75% of respondents but provided by 34%, a 41-percentage-point difference, followed by childcare, medical services, job training, and dental services.

Many of the largest service gaps involve needs that extend beyond the traditional scope of DV/SA organizations and require specialized expertise or substantial resources. Culturally specific organizations may help survivors navigate these needs without being positioned to provide every service directly. The findings point to the importance of strong cross-sector partnerships and accessible community resources alongside investment in culturally specific DV/SA organizations. Addressing these gaps is therefore a shared responsibility across the broader ecosystem of survivor support.

Key Findings on Prevention

Prevention was an important component of the represented organizations' work in both survey years, reported by 99% of respondents in 2025 and 58% in 2023. In 2025, the most common strategies included community education and awareness campaigns (93%), trainings for professionals and community partners (80%), and healthy relationships education (74%). Many respondents also reported prevention strategies focused on social media campaigns, policy or systems change advocacy, and school- or youth-focused programming. Together, these findings show that prevention extends across multiple audiences, settings, and approaches alongside organizations' direct service work.

Differences in how prevention was measured limit direct comparison between years. In 2023, prevention activities were collected through an open-ended question asked only of respondents who reported their organizations provided prevention programming, while respondents selected from predefined strategies in 2025. Even with these differences, community education and youth-focused efforts were evident in both needs assessments. Less frequently reported strategies, including engaging men and boys and faith-based prevention, represent areas where prevention efforts could be further developed.

Key Findings on Organizational Strengths and Needs

Respondents consistently described strong cultural alignment between their organizations and the communities they serve. Across both years, the vast majority agreed that staff reflect the cultural groups served, understand differences within ethnic groups, speak community languages, and affirm cultural traditions (2023: 85%-94%; 2025: 92%-95%). In 2025, respondents also identified partnerships with grassroots and faith organizations, support for community health workers and leaders, and local or state policy advocacy as notable strengths. These

findings highlight culturally responsive practice and community engagement as defining features of the organizations represented.

Accessibility remains an area for continued attention. Agreement that programs and services are accessible to survivors with disabilities was lower than agreement with other measures of culturally responsive practice in both years (48% in 2023 and 54% in 2025). Interpreter availability was reported more frequently in 2025 (57% in 2023 and 73% in 2025), although language access continues to warrant attention given the diversity of the communities represented. Strengthening accessibility while maintaining strong cultural and linguistic responsiveness can help organizations reach a broader range of survivors.

Respondents identified several areas where additional support could help sustain their work. In 2023, respondents identified substantial needs related to burnout prevention and organizational resources, though these topics were measured differently across years. In 2025, respondents most frequently identified staff wellness and addressing vicarious trauma, organizational sustainability, and legal, housing, or immigration advocacy as priorities for training and support. Ultimately, these priorities span direct advocacy, staff support, and organizational development, reflecting the multiple roles culturally specific DV/SA organizations play.

Actions to Strengthen Culturally Specific DV/SA Organizations

The findings support sustained and flexible investment in culturally specific DV/SA organizations, including resources for staff well-being, organizational sustainability, prevention, and specialized advocacy. Funding approaches should recognize the breadth of culturally responsive work and the myriad roles organizations play in preventing and responding to DV/SA within AANHPI and MENA communities. Support for organizational infrastructure can help DV/SA organizations sustain this work while building on their existing cultural expertise, community trust, and partnerships. Training and technical assistance should similarly reflect the range of organizational and practice needs identified across the 2023 and 2025 needs assessments.

Stronger connections to housing, healthcare, employment, and legal and immigration systems are also needed. Investments in partnerships and cross-sector coordination can help culturally specific DV/SA organizations connect survivors with services that may fall outside their direct scope. Policies and systems should also strengthen language access as well as accessibility for survivors with disabilities. Including culturally specific DV/SA organizations in policy development, implementation, and systems-level planning can help ensure that broader responses to DV/SA reflect the experiences and priorities of AANHPI and MENA communities.

Introduction

Purpose of This Report

Culturally specific DV/SA organizations play a critical role in supporting AANHPI and MENA survivors. Their work responds to the specific cultural and linguistic needs of survivors and communities they serve, addressing both immediate needs and the broader conditions that contribute to DV/SA. To better understand the realities facing these organizations, API-GBV conducted national needs assessments in 2023 and 2025 (see the [2023](#) and [2025](#) Needs Assessment reports). While each needs assessment offers a snapshot in time, examining the findings across both survey years provides an opportunity to identify areas of consistency and change and consider their implications for the field.

This report is designed to be accessible and useful for providers and partners working in or alongside culturally specific DV/SA organizations. Rather than presenting all findings in detail, it focuses on the most meaningful themes that can inform practice, resource allocation, and future efforts. The emphasis is on clarity and relevance, with findings translated into plain language and grounded in real-world implications. Throughout the report, the aim is to support understanding while also honoring the complexity of the work these organizations do every day.

Findings in this report are presented separately for 2023 and 2025 and combined across all respondents within each year, rather than broken out by specific AANHPI and MENA communities served. While culturally specific DV/SA organizations serve diverse communities with distinct experiences and needs, this kind of detailed breakdown was beyond the scope of the current report. Future work by API-GBV will draw on the 2025 needs assessment data to explore community-specific findings in greater depth.

About the Data

Across both years, the surveys collected information on survivor needs, service provision, prevention activities, organizational strengths and challenges, and priorities for additional support. The 2023 needs assessment included 79 responses representing 60 organizations; while the 2025 needs assessment included 110 responses representing 72 organizations (see the [2023](#) and [2025](#) reports for additional methodology details). In total, 103 unique organizations were represented across both years, of which 29 appeared in both needs assessments. The organizations represented were not identical across survey years, so differences between 2023 and 2025 may reflect changes in the respondent pool as well as changes in organizational or community needs.

The 2025 survey builds on the 2023 instrument and reflects updates based on community feedback, including expanded response options and more detailed questions in certain areas.

Some updates were also informed by findings from the 2023 needs assessment, such as revising how prevention activities were measured to better capture the range of strategies organizations use. These updates allow for a more nuanced understanding of survivor and organizational needs, particularly in areas such as service provision and system navigation, but also mean that some topics are measured differently across years.

Note on Interpreting Year-to-Year Comparisons

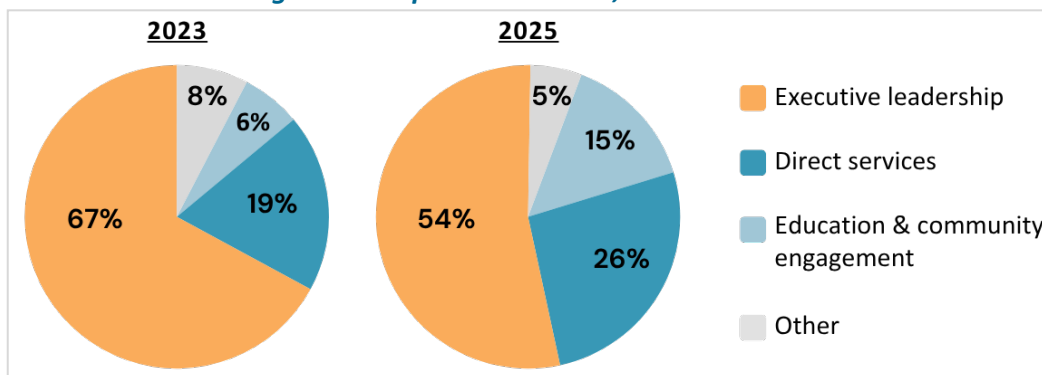
Some survey questions and response options changed between 2023 and 2025, which limits direct comparison for certain findings. In some cases, questions were revised or expanded to capture survivor and organizational needs in greater detail. In other cases, the response format changed, such as moving between open-ended and predefined options. Where possible, responses were grouped into common categories to support comparison across years, and relevant differences in measurement are noted alongside individual findings where they affect interpretation.

Who Participated

Overview of Respondents and Organizations

The 2023 and 2025 needs assessments drew participation from a broad range of culturally specific DV/SA organizations serving AANHPI and MENA survivors across the United States. In 2023, the survey included 79 responses representing 60 organizations, while in 2025, participation increased to 110 responses representing 72 organizations. Across both years, respondents represented a mix of leadership, direct service, and community engagement roles, providing perspectives from multiple levels of organizational work (see Figure 1). While leadership respondents made up the majority in both years (67% in 2023 and 54% in 2025), direct service and community engagement roles represented a larger share of respondents in 2025.

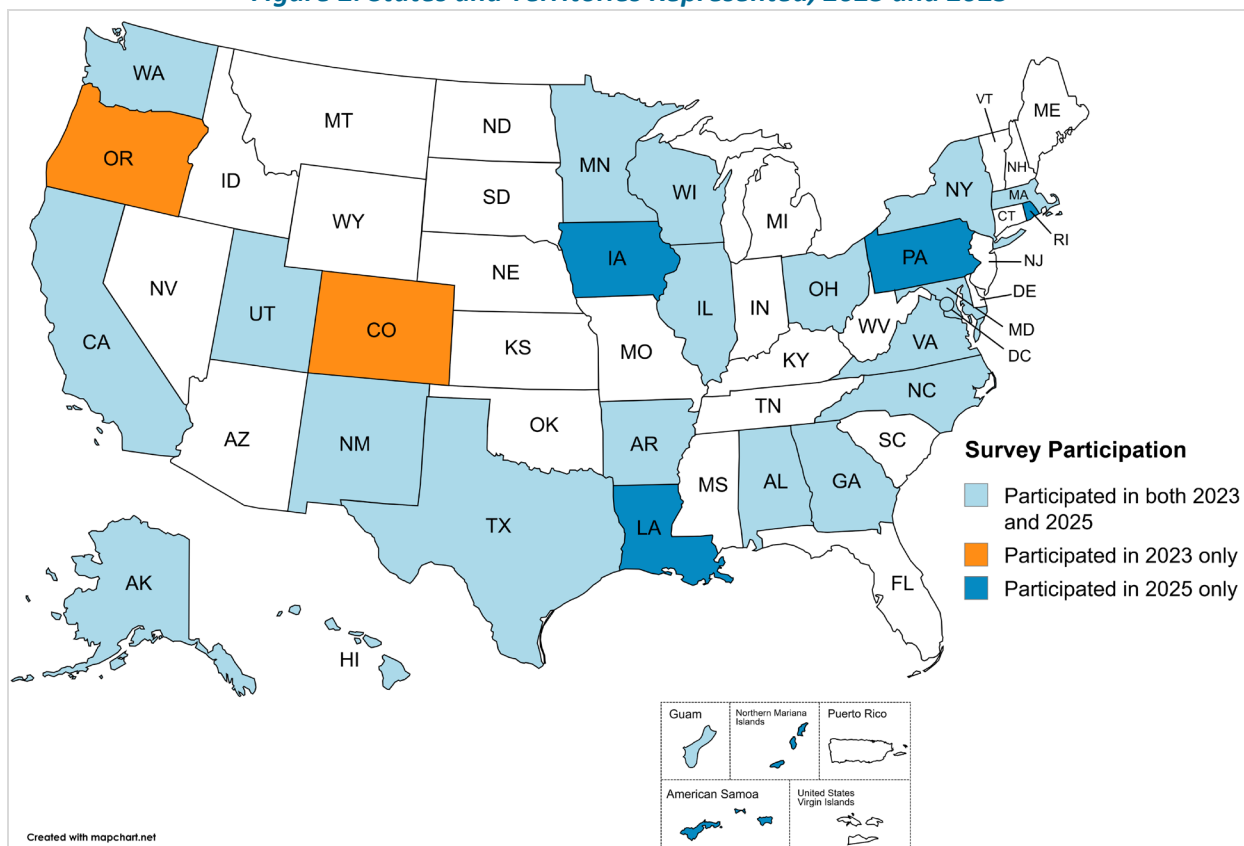
Figure 1. Respondents' Roles, 2023 and 2025



The types of organizations represented were largely consistent in each survey year. Respondents could select multiple categories to describe their organizations, with most identifying as domestic violence organizations (82% in 2023 and 68% in 2025) and a substantial portion identifying as sexual assault organizations (47% in 2023 and 40% in 2025). Responses also included legal service providers, trafficking-focused organizations, and mental health centers, reflecting the range of services needed to support survivors. In addition, many respondents reported that their organizations serve large numbers of clients annually, with over half indicating they serve more than 500 clients per year in both 2023 (57%) and 2025 (59%). These findings suggest that the organizations represented operate at a significant scale while addressing complex and varied needs.

Respondents' organizations were located across a wide geographic range (see Figure 2). In both years, the largest share was located in the West (42% in 2023 and 36% in 2025), followed by the South, Midwest, and Northeast. The share located in U.S. territories increased from 3% in 2023 to 9% in 2025. In total, respondents' organizations were located in 29 states and territories across both surveys, including 23 states and territories represented in 2023 and 27 in 2025.

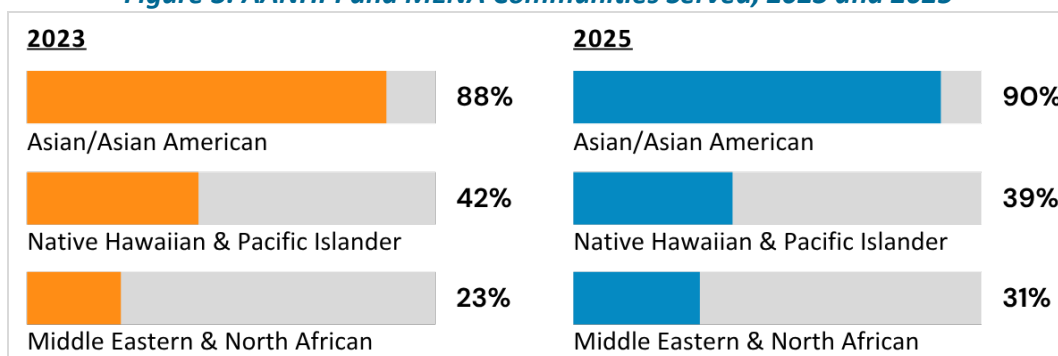
Figure 2. States and Territories Represented, 2023 and 2025



Communities Served

Across the two needs assessments, Asian/Asian American communities were the most commonly served, reported for 88% of organizations in 2023 and 90% in 2025 (see Figure 3). Many organizations also served Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities (42% in 2023 and 39% in 2025) and Middle Eastern and North African communities (23% in 2023 and 31% in 2025), alongside other underserved populations such as Black and Latin@ communities. These findings reflect how many of the represented organizations serve multiple, often overlapping communities.

Figure 3. AANHPI and MENA Communities Served, 2023 and 2025

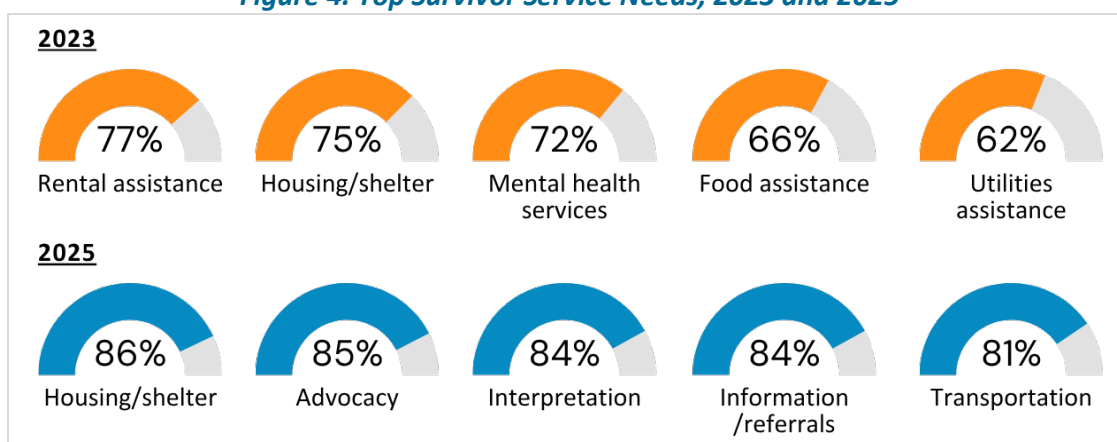


Within the broader Asian/Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and Middle Eastern and North African categories, organizations served a wide range of specific ethnic groups. When broken down further, the most frequently reported groups in 2023 were Asian Indian, Pakistani, Samoan, and Afghan; in 2025, they were Asian Indian, Filipino, Native Hawaiian, and Arab. This diversity underscores the importance of culturally specific approaches that respond to differences within communities, rather than treating them as uniform groups.

What Services Survivors Need

In both 2023 and 2025, respondents identified a broad range of services that survivors needed, with housing-related support among the most frequently reported needs across both years (see Figure 4). In 2023, the five most commonly reported needs included rental assistance (77%), housing/shelter (75%), mental health services (72%), food assistance (66%), and utilities assistance (62%). These findings reflect the central role that stable housing, economic security, and mental health support play in survivors' lives.

Figure 4. Top Survivor Service Needs, 2023 and 2025

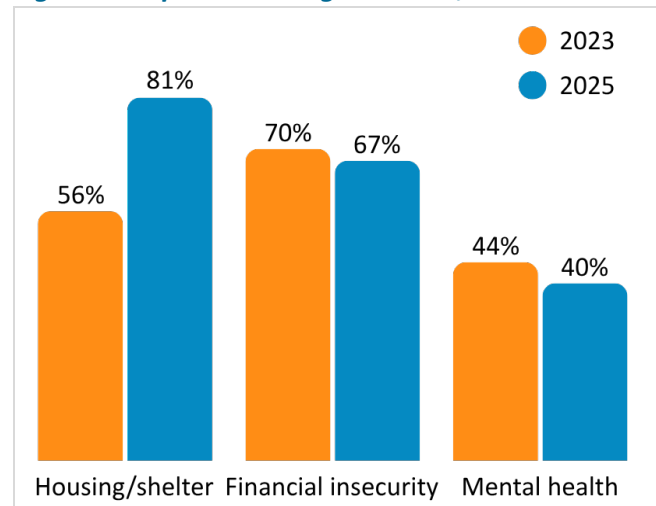


Note. Service categories differed across years (e.g., rental assistance was incorporated into housing/shelter); percentages do not represent direct changes over time.

The 2025 survey captured survivor needs through a broader and more detailed set of service categories. The most frequently reported needs were housing/shelter (86%), advocacy for civil or immigration matters (85%), interpretation or cultural liaison support (84%), information and referral assistance (84%), and transportation (81%). Advocacy, interpretation or cultural liaison support, and information and referral assistance were measured explicitly for the first time in 2025, added based on community feedback and 2023 responses to related questions. Their prominence offers new detail about survivor needs rather than evidence of an increase, and these areas also showed relatively small gaps between need and service provision, suggesting the organizations represented have built strong capacity in these forms of support. Other frequently reported needs in 2025 included support groups, legal services, mental health services, and employment assistance.

Intersecting needs provide additional context for understanding the challenges affecting survivors (see Figure 5). In 2023, the most commonly identified concerns were financial insecurity (70%), housing/shelter (56%), and mental health (44%). These same three issues were among the most frequently reported in 2025, including housing/shelter (81%), financial insecurity (67%), and mental health (40%). Legal systems navigation (26%) and immigration-related barriers (20%) were also identified in 2025, further illustrating the range of issues affecting survivors.

Figure 5. Top Intersecting Concerns, 2023 and 2025



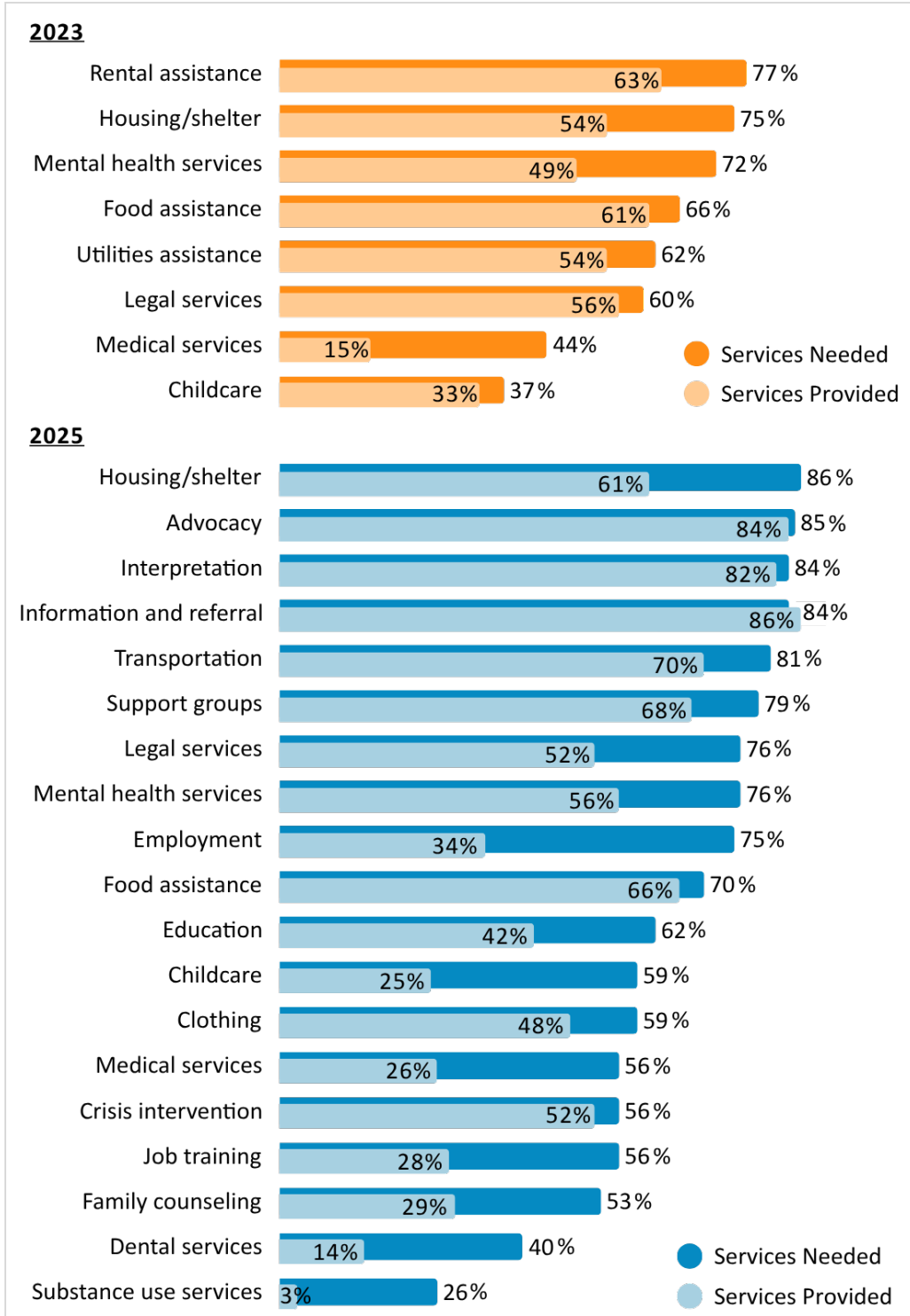
Note. Intersecting survivor needs were collected via predefined options in 2023 and an open-ended question in 2025, limiting direct comparison.

Where the Gaps Are

Gaps between Survivor Needs and Available Services

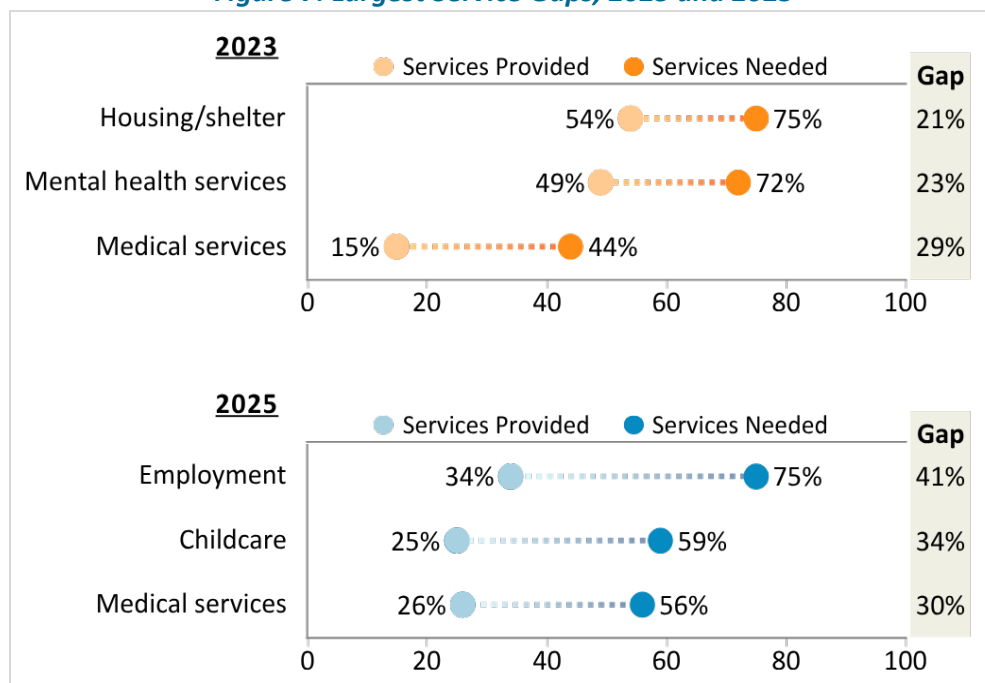
Across both needs assessments, gaps emerged between the services survivors needed and what the organizations represented were able to provide (see Figure 6). These gaps spanned a wide range of service areas, including medical care, mental health services, housing/shelter, employment, childcare, job training, dental care, legal services, and family counseling. The size of these gaps varies by service area, but the largest gaps consistently involved services that depend on specialized expertise, substantial resources, or broader systems of support.

Figure 6. Services Needed Versus Services Provided, 2023 and 2025



The largest gaps in each year reflect this pattern (see Figure 7). In 2025, survivor needs and services provided were measured using directly aligned categories, offering the clearest picture. The largest gap was in employment support, identified as a need by 75% of respondents but provided by only 34% – a 41-percentage-point difference. This was followed by childcare (59% needed versus 25% provided; 34-point gap) and medical services (56% needed versus 26% provided; 30-point gap), with substantial gaps also evident for job training, dental services, housing/shelter, legal services, and family counseling.

Figure 7. Largest Service Gaps, 2023 and 2025



A similar pattern was evident in 2023. The largest gap was in medical services, with 44% of respondents identifying it as needed compared with 15% reporting that their organization provided it – a 29-percentage-point gap. Mental health services showed a 23-point gap (72% needed versus 49% provided), followed by housing/shelter with a 21-point gap (75% needed versus 54% provided). Overall, both needs assessments show mismatches between survivor need and service availability across multiple service areas, though differences in service categories limit direct comparison of gap sizes across years.

What These Gaps Reveal

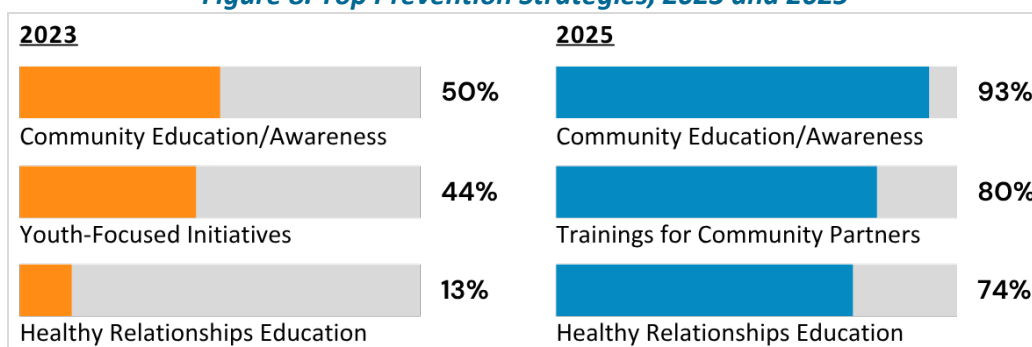
Several of the largest gaps involve services such as employment, childcare, medical care, mental health services, and housing. These services often extend beyond the traditional scope of many DV/SA organizations and may require coordination with other providers and systems. The findings reinforce the importance of strong referral networks, cross-sector partnerships, and accessible community resources alongside investment in culturally specific DV/SA organizations.

Addressing these gaps is therefore a shared responsibility across the broader ecosystem of support. Investment in culturally specific DV/SA organizations remains important, while strengthening the systems that shape survivors' access to housing, healthcare, employment, childcare, and other resources can help ensure that organizations have viable options for connecting survivors to needed services. A stronger network of community and systems-level resources can support culturally specific DV/SA organizations in meeting survivor needs without expecting individual organizations to provide every type of service directly.

How Organizations Are Responding Through Prevention

Prevention was an important component of the represented organizations' work in both survey years, reported by 99% of respondents in 2025 compared with 58% in 2023. This increase reflects, in part, a revision to the survey question in 2025 intended to capture prevention work more comprehensively. Across the findings, respondents described a range of prevention strategies spanning education, professional training, and community-level change (see Figure 8). In 2025, the most frequently reported were community education and awareness campaigns (93%), trainings for professionals and community partners (80%), and healthy relationships education (74%). Additional approaches included social media campaigns (69%), policy or systems change advocacy (59%), and school-based or youth-focused programming (58%). In 2023, respondents whose organizations provided prevention programming identified similar themes in an open-ended question, particularly community education (50%) and youth-focused efforts (44%).

Figure 8. Top Prevention Strategies, 2023 and 2025



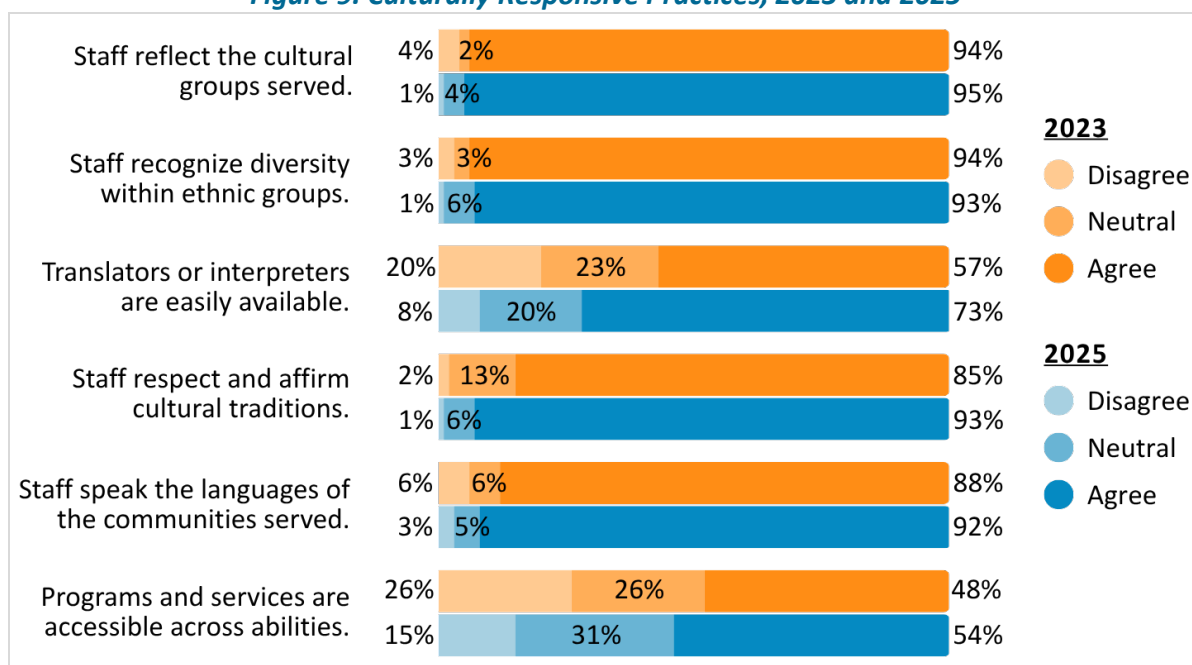
Note. Prevention activities were collected via an open-ended question in 2023 and predefined options in 2025, limiting direct comparison.

The range of strategies reported in 2025 shows that prevention work extends across education, professional training, youth engagement, and systems-level advocacy, alongside organizations' direct service work. Less frequently reported strategies, including engaging men and boys and faith-based prevention, represent areas where prevention efforts could be further developed. Continued support for prevention can help organizations sustain and expand this range of approaches as part of their broader response to DV/SA.

Organizational Strengths and Needs

In both 2023 and 2025, organizations demonstrated strong alignment with the communities they served (see Figure 9). The vast majority of respondents agreed that staff reflected the cultural groups they served (94% in 2023 and 95% in 2025), spoke community languages (88% in 2023 and 92% in 2025), recognized diverse experiences within ethnic groups (94% in 2023 and 93% in 2025), and affirmed cultural traditions (85% in 2023 and 93% in 2025). Agreement was lower for accessibility-related items, including accessibility for survivors with disabilities (48% in 2023 and 54% in 2025) and interpreter availability (57% in 2023 and 73% in 2025), though respondents were still more likely to agree than disagree. Overall, these findings highlight culturally responsive practice as a defining strength of the organizations represented while pointing to continuing gaps in accessibility and language access.

Figure 9. Culturally Responsive Practices, 2023 and 2025



Additional findings on organizational capacity (e.g., community engagement, partnerships, and staff well-being) reflect both strengths and areas requiring ongoing attention, though these domains were measured differently across years. In 2023, respondents rated each area as a critical need, some need, or not a current need. Staff well-being emerged as a particularly prominent concern: 52% identified burnout prevention and secondary trauma support as a critical need, and another 41% identified it as an area of some need. Community engagement and advocacy also represented areas where organizations sought additional support. For example, 40% identified training or ongoing support for community health workers and leaders as a critical need, and 36% identified support for local or state policy advocacy as a critical need.

In 2025, the survey was revised to capture both organizational strengths and needs, so results should not be interpreted as direct changes from 2023. Within this updated framing, community-based and advocacy approaches emerged as notable strengths: 74% of respondents identified partnerships with grassroots and faith organizations as an organizational strength, 68% identified training or ongoing support for community health workers and leaders, and 66% identified support for local or state policy advocacy. Another 61% identified having a community advisory board that informs programs or strategy as a strength. Staff well-being, however, remained an area requiring attention: 26% identified burnout prevention and secondary trauma support as a critical need, 41% as some need, and 33% as a strength. Overall, the 2025 findings show substantial strengths in community engagement, partnerships, and advocacy, alongside continued need for staff well-being support.

What Support Organizations Need

Respondents also identified areas where additional support could strengthen their work, including staff well-being, organizational sustainability, advocacy, and other priorities needed to sustain culturally specific services (see Figure 10). In 2025, the most frequently identified priorities for training and support were staff wellness and addressing vicarious trauma (65%), organizational sustainability (64%), and legal, housing, or immigration advocacy (57%). Other priorities included engaging men and addressing harm within communities (46%) in addition to trauma-informed advocacy and safety planning (44%). These categories were not measured in the same way in 2023, though earlier findings similarly pointed to substantial need related to burnout and organizational resources.

Figure 10. Top Priority Topics for Training and Support, 2025



These priorities span direct advocacy, staff support, and organizational development, reflecting the myriad roles culturally specific DV/SA organizations play. Support for staff well-being and organizational sustainability may be particularly important for helping organizations maintain the community-based strengths identified elsewhere in the survey. The range of priorities also shows that organizations are seeking support not only for the services they provide, but for the organizational structures and staff needed to sustain that work. Training and technical assistance from API-GBV that reflects these different areas can help organizations build on existing strengths while addressing where additional support is needed.

What This Means for the Field

Implications for Practice

The findings support holistic service approaches that recognize the overlapping needs AANHPI and MENA survivors face. Housing instability, financial hardship, and trauma recovery often intersect with systemic barriers, making cross-sector partnerships important. While culturally specific DV/SA organizations already excel at providing legal advocacy, language support, and referrals, external partnerships help survivors access specialized resources that may fall outside an organization's direct scope, such as stable housing, medical care, and workforce development. These collaborative connections help ensure survivors can safely navigate complex external systems in ways that remain accessible and culturally responsive to their experiences.

Prevention should also remain an important component of culturally specific responses to DV/SA. Organizations reported using a range of strategies in 2025, including community education, healthy relationships education, youth-focused programming, trainings for community partners, and policy advocacy. These findings support sustaining existing prevention efforts while strengthening less-reported approaches, such as engaging men and boys and working with faith communities, to address both immediate concerns and longer-term violence prevention.

The findings also point to areas where service accessibility can be strengthened. While organizations reported high levels of cultural and linguistic alignment with the communities they serve, accessibility for survivors with disabilities remained lower than other measures of culturally responsive practice. Language access also warrants continued attention, even though reported interpreter availability was higher in 2025. Building on their strong cultural and community connections while improving accessibility can help culturally specific DV/SA organizations reach a broader range of survivors.

Implications for Funders

The findings support sustained and flexible investment in culturally specific DV/SA organizations, particularly in areas respondents identified as ongoing priorities: staff wellness and vicarious trauma support, organizational sustainability, and legal, housing, and immigration advocacy. Resources that can be adapted to community priorities may help organizations maintain services, strengthen partnerships, and respond to changing survivor needs. Funding approaches that recognize the breadth of culturally specific work can also better reflect the multiple roles these organizations play in supporting AANHPI and MENA survivors.

Investment in organizational infrastructure is also important for sustaining this work over time. Support for staff well-being, leadership development, evaluation capacity, and other areas of organizational development can help strengthen the conditions needed to maintain effective

programs and services. These investments are especially relevant given the continued need for burnout prevention and secondary trauma support identified across the 2023 and 2025 needs assessments. Funders can also recognize community trust, cultural expertise, and strong partnerships as important organizational assets, even when these strengths are not easily captured through traditional service measures.

Funding decisions can also help strengthen connections between culturally specific DV/SA organizations and the broader systems survivors rely on. Several of the largest service gaps involved areas such as employment, childcare, healthcare, mental health services, and housing, which may require resources or expertise beyond what individual organizations can provide directly. Supporting partnerships and coordination across service systems can therefore complement investments in organizational capacity. This broader approach can help ensure that culturally specific DV/SA organizations are not expected to address every dimension of survivor need on their own.

Implications for Policy and Systems Change

Several of the largest service gaps identified across both surveys involve needs that extend beyond the scope of individual DV/SA organizations. Housing, healthcare, employment, childcare, and mental health services often depend on broader systems that determine whether survivors can access affordable and appropriate support. Addressing these gaps will require coordination across housing, healthcare, social service, legal, and economic systems, in addition to investment in culturally specific DV/SA organizations. Strengthening access across these systems can reduce the burden on organizations that are currently helping survivors navigate services that may be limited or difficult to reach.

Policy and systems change efforts should also strengthen access to services for AANHPI and MENA survivors. The findings point to the continued importance of language access, culturally responsive services, and accessibility for survivors with disabilities. Policies and systems that account for these needs can help reduce barriers to services and improve connections between survivors and trusted DV/SA organizations. Efforts to improve accessibility should therefore be considered alongside broader investments in housing, healthcare, legal services, and economic stability.

Culturally specific DV/SA organizations also bring strengths that can inform broader systems change. Respondents reported strong community partnerships, engagement with community leaders, and support for local and state policy advocacy, particularly in the 2025 findings. These relationships can provide valuable insight into how policies and services are experienced within AANHPI and MENA communities. Including culturally specific DV/SA organizations in policy development, implementation, and systems-level planning can help ensure that broader responses to DV/SA are more responsive to the communities they are intended to serve.