

COMMUNITY CRIME VICTIM SERVICES

COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT



INTRODUCTION

The Latino Coalition for Community Leadership (LCCL) acts as the third-party administrator for the Community Crime Victims Services Program (CCVS). The General Assembly created CCVS through House Bill 18-1409 in 2018 to provide culturally relevant, community-based services to crime survivors, with a particular focus on historically underserved populations, including people of color, men, and youth at risk of revictimization.

This report seeks to provide an overview of the victims services landscape in Colorado and illustrate the widespread community impact of the CCVS program during its first five years, spanning from 2018 to 2022. Through the presentation of participant stories, outcomes, and program data, this report both recounts CCVS' achievements and casts a vision for the future of victims services in Colorado.

COMMUNITY CRIME VICTIMS SERVICES (CCVS) PROGRAM

In 2018, the General Assembly created the Community Crime Victims Services (CCVS) grant program through House Bill 18-1409 to provide a community-based, public health approach intended to reach crime victims that traditionally struggle to access services, with specific emphasis on people of color, men, and young adults at risk of repeat victimization.

OBJECTIVES

The CCVS grant program is funded by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and administered by the LCCL. The CCVS program aims to achieve the following overarching objectives:

- Support and strengthen community-led crime prevention and rehabilitation through provision of crime survivor services;
- Provide culturally relevant and trauma informed crime survivors services through a delivery model that is accessible to historically underserved crime survivor;
- Increase awareness of and access to crime survivor services, with an emphasis on historically underserved populations;
- Reduce the long-term destabilizing effects of trauma and other negative consequences resulting from victimization and reduce the risk of revictimization.

W

hile CCVS Community Partner organizations have distinctive skill sets and program models, they do not work in isolation. To cultivate a community of practice and encourage ongoing collaboration across the state, the LCCL organizes Quarterly Meetings, trainings, and regional convenings in which Community Partners are

invited to connect, exchange information, disseminate best practices, and co-navigate challenges. CDPHE is an ever-present partner and collaborator in these settings, providing an essential opportunity for bi-directional learning and open communication between systems stakeholders. This approach fosters close collaboration between all stakeholders to complement existing public health efforts, supplement current victims services programming, engage in community-based research, and effective strategies to reduce repeat victimization. Within its first five years from 2018-2022, CCVS has made substantial strides in elevating community-led practice and increasing the well-being of both crime victims and their wider communities.

Participant Testimonial:

I don't have to just survive. I don't have to be afraid all the time. I am cautious. But the fear you have of everything, fear of being hurt again, the fear of people finding out. Or judging you. In healing you can breathe. You walk taller. You smile easy again. In healing you care about your life.

Who is the Latino Coalition for Community Leadership (LCCL)?

The Latino Coalition for Community Leadership (LCCL) was formed in 2004 to bridge the gap between funding sources, government systems and nonprofits serving historically under-resourced communities of color and rural communities. While the LCCL is formally categorized as a third party administrator under Colorado law, since its inception the LCCL functioned as a community oriented intermediary. LCCL should not be mistaken for a pass-through entity; through intentional funding, immersive capacity building, and intensive relationship building, LCCL drives resources deeply into community- and faith-based organizations (CBFOs) to promote long-term, community-led impact.

The LCCL's method is described by **Find, Fund, Form** and **Feature**:



Find

The LCCL seeks to Find grassroots CFBOs serving low-income youth and families in historically under-resourced communities.



Fund

The LCCL seeks to Fund CFBOs by competing for federal and state grants to drive resources deeply into communities.



Form

The LCCL seeks to Form CFBOs by providing technical assistance, training, and capacity building. CFBOs work closely with LCCL staff to develop long-term sustainability, performance, and accountability.



Feature

The LCCL seeks to Feature CFBOs by elevating community voices through storytelling.

What is the impact of the LCCL? What do they do?

The LCCL's contribution as a community oriented intermediary is pivotal to Colorado's community reinvestment initiatives. By leveraging funding to generate and sustain community-led solutions to public health and safety, prison re-entry, victims services, and mass incarceration, the LCCL is reducing racial disparities and co-elevating the power of grassroots leadership. Guided by the belief that historically under-resourced communities have innate wisdom and deserve to be equitably resourced and included to take a bold and influential role in shaping the future of their respective communities, the LCCL works to channel public investments from policy reforms into high-impact community settings.

Specifically, the LCCL supports community and faith based organizations working in under-resourced communities of color and rural areas. While deeply connected to local issues and solutions, these organizations are often overlooked and under-resourced due to a lack of infrastructure and organizational capacity.

The LCCL provides hands-on support, administrative oversight, and technical assistance to build community capacity, ensure compliance to contractual obligations, and promote performance achievement. The support of the LCCL can be the difference between sustainable community-based programs and those that struggle to survive. An overall goal of this model is coordinating relationships between community and government agencies that encourage mutual accountability and advance cross sector engagement in community reinvestment initiatives.

Trauma Recovery & Public Safety

Victimization constitutes a deeply traumatic event that can lead to substance use, mental health issues, and other negative health impacts that disrupt quality of life, erode social connectivity, and contribute to poor outcomes. In data collected by the Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition (CCJRC), 86% of crime survivors in Colorado reported experiencing symptoms associated with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).¹ The same survey found that people of color were the least likely to seek treatment following victimization, with Black men and male victims reporting the lowest rates on service engagement, despite experiencing a high prevalence of victimization.²

Victims of crime face significant challenges in trauma recovery and healing. In addition to navigating the adverse mental health impacts of victimization, crime survivors often struggle with socioeconomic and interpersonal consequences, such as diminished financial security, housing instability, social isolation, and decreased personal safety. When these needs are left unmet and untreated, survivors can suffer from repeat victimization. Victims are highly susceptible to revictimization, with recent figures estimating that 63% of crime victims have experienced repeat victimization.³ Research suggests that untreated trauma can contribute to the emergence of mental

¹ Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition. (2018). *Victims Speak: Better Understanding the Needs and Experiences of Crime Survivors*.

² See Footnote 1

³ National Survey of Victims' Views of Safety and Justice. (2022). *Crime Survivors Speak*. Alliance for Safety and Justice.

illness, emotional dysregulation, reduced cognitive functioning, substance use problems, and other comorbidities.⁴

Expanded access to culturally responsive, community-led, trauma-informed care is a critical matter of public safety for Coloradans. The provision of healing services and trauma recovery programs led by people of color is indispensable to improving the health of Colorado communities.

Inequitable Access To Services

The risk of violence can be shaped by intersecting experiences of racism, sexism, and economic opportunity across the lifespan.⁵ Among victims of crime, people of color are the most underserved and most likely to encounter barriers to accessing services. Recent research suggests that significant disparities exist in violent victimization, “with the greatest burden falling on Black men and women.”⁶ Due to structural disparities in victims resources and access to care, the health ramifications of violent victimization disproportionately affect people of color and other disadvantaged intersectional groups.⁷

Colorado-based data confirms these findings. A 2016 survey commissioned by CCJRC found that, despite being interested in receiving services, male and Black crime victims were the most unaware of how to access them, with nearly 53% of Black respondents and 45% of male respondents reporting that they did not know where to find help or whom to ask.⁸ This acute lack of awareness and access is attributable in part to the paucity of community-based, culturally informed victims service providers. Participatory research conducted by Voces Unidas for Justice found that, among underserved victims of crime in Colorado Springs and the Denver Metro area, 80% felt it was important for their service providers to have an understanding of their cultural backgrounds.⁹

80% of underserved crime victims surveyed in Colorado Springs and the Denver Metro area felt it was important for their service providers to have an understanding of their cultural backgrounds.

Although the need for accessible and responsive interventions is high, victims services in Colorado have not historically reflected the cultural and racial identities of impacted communities. A report released by CCJRC in 2021 called attention to inequities in victims services leadership statewide, concluding that “African American leaders in Colorado hold less than 4% of all leadership

⁴ Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. (2014). *Trauma Informed Care in Behavioral Health Sciences*. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (US).

⁵ Semenza D, Testa A, & Jackson, DB. (2022). *Intersectional differences in serious violent victimization trajectories across the life course*. Preventive Medicine Reports, Vol 26(101732).

⁶ See Footnote 5

⁷ See Footnote 5

⁸ See Footnote 1

⁹ Huitron K, Rodriguez R, Garcia J. (2022). *Finding a Healing Way: Experiences of un/underserved BIPOC victims of multiple crimes in Denver and Colorado Springs*. Voces Unidas for Justice.

positions in the victim services field.”¹⁰ Such stark racial disparities in Colorado’s victims services landscape point to the need for programs that are designed, delivered, and led by communities of color.

CCVS Service Models

The CCVS program extends grants for two distinct yet highly interrelated approaches:

APPROACH 1: DIRECT SERVICES

Direct services provides culturally relevant, community-based services to victims of crime. This encompasses six categories:

Case Management

Case Management is a mandatory service category and program component that must include program information (eligibility determination, intake, services, activities, and supportive services).

Healing Services

Healing Services includes a wide variety of healing arts, such as traditional behavioral health services, counseling, AcuDetox, and somatic therapies.

Advocacy & Coordination

Advocacy and Coordination includes a wide variety of services and activities that assist victims with system navigation and advocacy, including intensive case management, resource coordination, language translation, and referral to legal services.

Prevention & Intervention

Prevention & Intervention focuses on reducing the risk of repeat victimization in areas such as domestic violence, sexual violence, child abuse and neglect, elder abuse, and sex trafficking.

Awareness & Engagement

Awareness & Engagement includes strategies that promote awareness and engagement of victim crime services, such as outreach, partnership development, and other activities that substantially encourage engagement of the target population.

¹⁰ Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition. (2021). *Victim Services in Colorado Examined from an Equity Perspective*.

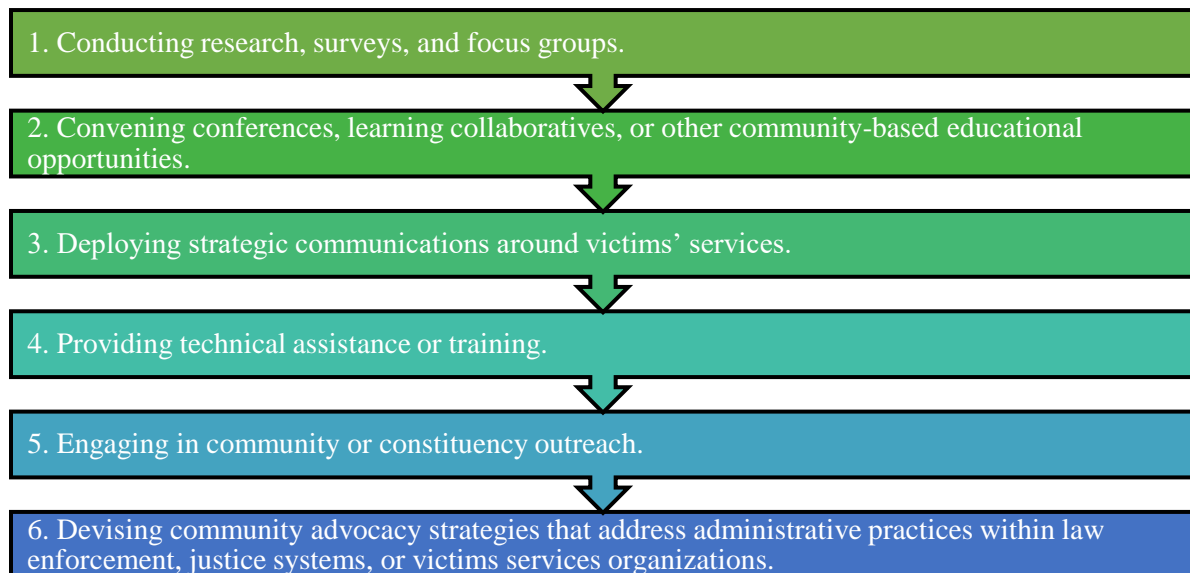
Other Allowable Services

Other Allowable Services includes services such as financial assistance, employment readiness and job placement, stress management, anger management, basic life skill development, restorative justice, and document acquisition.

APPROACH 2: SUPPORTING INTERVENTIONS

Supporting Interventions is a grant component aimed at iterating broader community-based strategies and best practices that promote innovation in the victims' services field. This strategy is intended to advance community-led, participatory research and aid contributions to the existing body of victims services scholarship, practice, and policy.

This category includes any combination of the following activities:



Through this two-pronged approach, the CCVS grant program works to both:

- 1) *provide direct culturally responsive and highly accessible services that mitigate the destabilizing impacts of crime; and*
- 2) *strengthen the repertoire of community-based research and evidence-based practice in the victims services field, particularly for communities of color.*

These strategies work in tandem to support community health, advance innovation in the broader victims services discipline, and cultivate new public safety paradigms that center the wisdom and lived expertise of historically under-resourced communities of color.

Community Partners

LCCL's role as a third-party administrator has been pivotal to engaging smaller community and faith-based organizations that have historically been unable to access traditional funding sources, but who have a deep commitment to and competence in serving communities most impacted by crime victimization. In alignment with its goal to serve people who have been historically excluded from victims' programs, LCCL has intentionally and specifically sub-granted CCVS funds to organizations and programs that reflect the identities of the target population. As of 2022, CCVS grantees include:

Supporting Interventions Community Partners

○ *Denver Health/Denver Foundation – Public Health for Public Safety (Denver Metro)*

- Carrying out research and disseminating findings that will enhance understanding of crime survivors' key needs and the challenges they experience in accessing health and social services.



○ *Voces Unidas for Justice – Finding a Healing Way (Colorado Springs)*

- Producing findings to support the field of victims' services by identifying trauma informed, culturally embedded, and gender responsive strategies with practical service applications.



Voces Unidas for Justice

Direct Service Community Partners

○ *Element of Discovery – Therapist of Color Collaborative (Denver Metro)*

- The Therapist of Color Collaborative is a collective of therapists licensed by the Department of Regulatory Agencies who have come together to provide culturally relevant, gender sensitive, trauma informed mental health treatment. Therapists share a common commitment to increasing access to mental health for people of color and creating experiences where the therapist and participant share cultural identity. The collaborative consists of over 50 clinicians who are all people of color, representing men and women, LGBTQ, and bilingual services.



○ *Kingdom Builders Family Life Center – My Brother/Sister's Keeper Project (Colorado Springs)*

- Kingdom Builders provides physical, spiritual, and emotional support through a variety of educational, counseling, and outreach services. My Brother/Sister's Keeper Program provides a 12-week domestic violence education



and support group for victims of domestic violence, including men and their family members.

○ *Life-Line Colorado – Communities with Intentions (Denver)*

■ Life-Line offers Communities with Intentions at their physical location and in collaboration with Struggle of Love and La Casita. This project provides free evidence-based National AcuDetox Detoxification Association (NADA) protocol to address the impacts of trauma through focus on specific auricular points on the body. AcuDetox offers somatic healing to victims of crime who might be leery of engaging in traditional cognitive-based “talk” therapies.



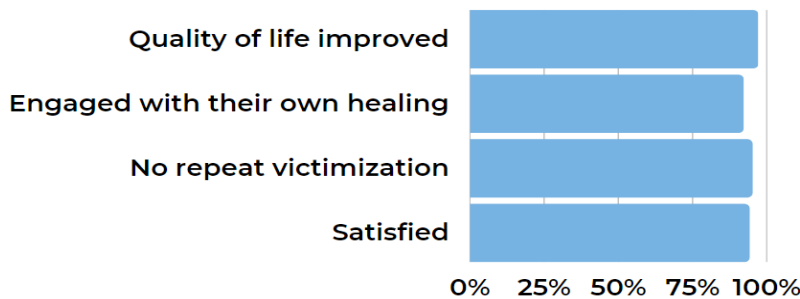
Over 90% of the victims served by CCVS funded programs met the target population [and] 100% of Executive Directors of programs funded are people of color.

In a 2021 report entitled “Victims Services in Colorado Examined from an Equity Perspective” CCJRC found that, though less than \$1 million was initially allocated to CCVS, “over 90% of the victims served by CCVS funded programs met the target population... [and] 100% of the Executive Directors of programs funded are people of color.”¹¹ This level of community leadership and representation of people of color is unprecedented in Colorado’s victims services field.

Program Data

The strong performance of CCVS can be largely attributed to its intentional community-based approach and deliberate focus on culturally relevant service provision and leadership by trusted community members. The data below illustrates some of the participant demographic information and outcomes achieved by CCVS:

**PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK FROM CCVS EXIT SURVEY
(FEBRUARY 2021 - OCTOBER 2022)**



**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
(2018 - 2022)**

1128

people served by CCVS community Partners

40%

participants reported that they have experienced crime more than 10 times

¹¹ See Footnote 5

In a survey of underserved victims of crime across Denver and Colorado Springs, the “*Finding a Healing Way*” research project by Voces Unidas for Justice found that:

80%

of respondents felt it was important for service providers to have a deep understanding of their ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds

<25%

ever disclosed their experience to a victim service worker or advocate

43%

identified strategies for healing that fall outside of counseling or traditional therapy, including music, spiritual practices, and mindfulness

Quotes from CCVS participant(s)

We recently had one [event] at a local housing project where most of the residents have experienced repeated trauma. As soon as we arrived, we were flooded with questions on what we had to offer. Soon thereafter we had a waitlist of willing participants. This was in a community that does not trust outsiders easily. However, due to the previous relationships that our staff has built over the years, we were accepted and trusted to provide our services. Throughout the day, participants cried, smiled, talked and sighed with heavy relief and [gratitude] of the joy and happiness they felt from their individual experience. To this day, they continue to ask us to return and provide more services. - CCVS Community Partner

As a result of participating in the program, I've learned more... techniques on dealing with my own victimization and trauma. I'm learning how to help others voice and deal with theirs as well.

– CCVS Participant

There is not one area of my life that the experience of sexual assault has not affected. The impacts still haven't ended, even though both men who hurt me have since died. From my perspective, the crimes committed against me and the harm they caused requires ongoing attention. I never know when the trauma will revisit my every day. Having access to resources and services helped me to find a path from trauma to liberation. Treatment helped me recover; treatment helped me understand I am a survivor. – CCVS Participant

COVID: Community is the First Responder

The COVID-19 pandemic strongly illustrated the power and importance of funding and sustaining community-based victims services programs. While necessary to protect human health and safety, public health responses to COVID-19 disrupted service delivery across Colorado, exacerbated cases of abuse and interpersonal violence, deeply fractured social connectivity, and upended community mental health and well-being.

Despite such unprecedented public health perils, CCVS providers acted as first responders by addressing community needs in a time of crisis, uncertainty, and upheaval. When stay-at-home orders were issued, CCVS partners quickly pivoted to digital program delivery models and implemented staffing structures to preserve continuity of service to participants. Communities of color were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, and many populations served by CCVS faced acute mental health needs and challenges. Due to their high level of trust among communities of color, CCVS partners were able to respond quickly to mental health crises, meet basic needs, increase access to vaccinations when they became available, and offer support throughout the pandemic's volatile and unpredictable trajectory.

The resilience demonstrated by CCVS partners in the COVID-19 crisis cannot be overstated. Many CCVS staff became sick or struggled with secondary trauma from serving on the front lines of community care. LCCL provided support to CCVS partners by facilitating weekly COVID-19 calls and deploying a "Caring for Care Managers" program to enable free access to virtual mental health services for case managers. CCVS' trust with and embedment in communities of color allowed many victims of crime to access services that would have otherwise been out of reach during the pandemic. The swift, skillful, and courageous response of CCVS partners throughout COVID-19 affirms the invaluable and essential role that community-based providers play in effectively mobilizing resources, advancing public health, and strengthening community resilience.

What would make community feel safer?

In my younger days, my peer groups were male youth and young men who resolved conflict through violence... [violence] was an expectation. Violence could pop off at any moment at school, at a party, or anywhere, and that was just a daily reality that I came to accept as normal. It is a reality for a lot of young men that the world is not safe for people who look like me. – CCVS Participant

So many of our police are responding to issues related to homelessness, substance use and addiction, or mental health problems or crimes of poverty. There are better solutions to these problems. – CCVS Participant

Redefining Public Safety: A New Way of Being

The CCVS program shows us that another future for public safety is possible. By actively centering the leadership, wisdom, and expertise of historically under-resourced communities of color, CCVS is transforming service delivery paradigms and innovating on the frontier of victims services research. Community-driven services and research projects incubated through CCVS have yielded impressive outcomes for populations who struggle to access or find substantive healing in traditional victims services programs or other systems of care. Through elevating community voices, intentionally investing in communities of color, and providing critical resources to underserved victims of crime, CCVS has taken significant strides towards interrupting violence, advancing health equity, and promoting public safety for all Coloradans.