

## We Are Here MKE Seeks Community Partner Commitment to Racial Equity

Written by End Domestic Abuse WI, Jenna Gormal  
Friday, 17 July 2020 10:00 -

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***Initiative by collective to end domestic abuse looking for folks to promote culturally specific programs in their respective communities.***

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MILWAUKEE – We Are Here MKE is a collective comprising the culturally specific domestic and sexual violence programs in Milwaukee, WI. The collective includes:

- [The Asha Project](#) , an initiative under [End Domestic Abuse WI](#) ;
- Our Peaceful Home, a project of the the [Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition](#) ;
- [UMOS Latina Resource Center](#) ;
- The [Hmong American Women's Association](#) ;
- [Diverse & Resilient](#) 's [Room to Be Safe Anti-Violence Program](#) ;
- [HIR Wellness Institute](#) for Native populations; and
- [Black Health Coalition of WI \(BHCW\)](#)

The initiative was created to amplify the expertise of culturally specific programs in their respective communities and bolster awareness of culturally specific programs' existence, so that survivors from those communities - who for reasons including bias, racism, and mistrust of systems based in historical systemic violence do not feel comfortable utilizing mainstream programs - know that alternatives exist, and finding safety is possible.

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At present, culturally specific programs do not have access to the vital data necessary to meet the needs of their communities, and they are not equitably represented or meaningfully heard in decision-making conversations about funding and the policies and protocols that directly impact victims and survivors they are designed to serve. This results in mainstream programs receiving higher levels of funding and awareness, leaving culturally specific programs underfunded and under-resourced, despite their expertise.

The We Are Here MKE initiative has 3 primary goals:

1. Access data in an ongoing fashion regarding domestic violence (DV) and sexual assault (SA) incidents responded to by the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) that strengthens collaborative efforts with all DV/SA service providers.
2. Strengthen coordination with MPD district stations serving culturally specific communities.
3. Develop and launch a multilayered campaign featuring the culturally specific programs' presence and expertise.

"This is not about taking money away from mainstream programs," says Antonia Vann, Executive Director of The Asha Project. "We don't have a deficit mindset. We know that there is enough money for all of our programs to meet the needs of survivors. Milwaukee is diverse and all organizations have a role to play in serving victims in the city. This is us saying that we are here, we exist, we want to help, and we need the data, the collaboration, and the funding to do it."

We Are Here MKE is taking initial steps to move forward with their three goals, which serve to fulfill their vision of a world where ALL survivors can have access to safety and live fully in their dignity with love and respect in Milwaukee. Because this essential vision cannot come to fruition without the committed support of community partners, the collective urges key stakeholders to fund and elevate the work of Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) leadership in serving the community. They invite folks who are ready to demonstrate their commitment to racial justice work to reach out to The Asha Project Executive Director Antonia Vann at [antoniav@ashaproject.org](mailto:antoniav@ashaproject.org).

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End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin: The Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence is the leading voice for victims of domestic abuse in Wisconsin. At End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin, we educate shelter and program volunteers and advocates, law enforcement, legislators, and community members to provide safety and support to survivors. We strive to shift Wisconsin from the attitudes and beliefs that cause domestic violence to values of mutual respect and equality, and we partner with communities in the effort to prevent and end domestic abuse. We encourage reporters to include the National Domestic Violence Hotline number [1-800-799-SAFE(7233)] in their stories for victims who need help. A list of local Wisconsin domestic violence victim service providers can be found at <http://www.endabusewi.org>.