

Sharing Our Stories

2020 Year-End Report



STRONGHEARTS
Native Helpline

Mission Statement

We exist to restore power to Native Americans impacted by domestic, dating and sexual violence by weaving together a braid of safety, sovereignty and support.

"No matter what a victim has been through, it does not define the person they were or who they want to become," Vanessa, a StrongHearts advocate said.

"It is my job to be that listening ear and be that calm voice for victim-survivors when they need it. I want them to feel safe with whatever it is they need to share with me. I want them to find the help they need."



Vision Statement

We envision a return to our traditional lifeways where our relatives are safe, violence is eradicated and sacredness is restored.

2020 StrongHearts Native Helpline Staff



Lori Jump
*Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of
Chippewa Indians*
Director



Rita Bricker
Chief Financial Officer



Anna Nicolosi
Operations Manager



Liz Carr
*Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of
Chippewa Indians*
Senior Native Affairs Advisor



CC Hovie
*Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of
Chippewa Indians*
Communications Manager

Additional staff* includes:

21 Advocates including Supervisors
1 Administrative Assistant
2 Communications Coordinators
2 Data Coordinators
1 IT Coordinator
1 Services Manager

**Names are protected for safety and security purposes.*

*"Being a StrongHearts advocate makes me feel so good. I can help our relatives who are struggling to know that they are going to be okay and that we are here for them."
--Vanessa, a StrongHearts Advocate.*

Promotions

7 advocates successfully moved to higher-level positions

Operations Manager
Services Manager
Communications Coordinator

About StrongHearts Native Helpline

In 2012, the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center (NIWRC) and the National Domestic Violence Hotline began discussing the need for a domestic violence hotline to support tribal communities across the United States.

With input from tribal leaders, a Native women's council, domestic violence experts, and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Program, the two organizations began laying the groundwork to develop a Native-centered hotline staffed by advocates with a strong understanding of Native cultures, as well as issues of tribal sovereignty and law.

Their vision became a reality with the creation of the StrongHearts Native Helpline in March 2017, made possible by support from the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. StrongHearts is a partnered effort, combining the technology and infrastructure of The Hotline with NIWRC's expertise and community connections, as well as the trust of Native advocacy groups. StrongHearts staff serve on the NIWRC team.

StrongHearts Native Helpline, which is available for free nationwide, is a culturally-appropriate, anonymous, confidential service dedicated to serving Native American and Alaska Native survivors of domestic, dating and sexual violence and concerned relatives and friends. Knowledgeable advocates provide peer support, crisis intervention, personalized safety planning, and referrals to Native-centered support services.

Phone 1-844-7NATIVE or visit our website for chat advocacy 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



A special thank you to the Family Violence Prevention and Services Program (FVPSA) for providing immense support for the development of the StrongHearts Native Helpline. This project described was supported by Grant Number 90EV0459--01-01 from the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The opinions, findings, conclusions and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

From the Desk of the Director

Dear Advocates, Survivors, Allies and Donors,

In a year when a global pandemic has impacted every aspect of daily life, it became critical that those who need us know that we continue to be available to answer their call. Outreach continues on a national scale and takes a Native-centered approach that focuses on the message that Native victim-survivors can trust StrongHearts and find healing by connecting with an advocate.

The StrongHearts team transitioned to fully remote work in March 2020 without any disruption in services. StrongHearts Native Helpline was able to provide domestic, dating and sexual violence advocacy services throughout the pandemic. Additionally, we expanded advocacy services to include Chat Advocacy, allowing those who felt less safe making a phone call to chat with us online.

Domestic violence looks different in every situation and Covid-19 added another tool to an abuser's toolbox. Any external factors that add isolation, financial strain, or stress can create circumstances where a survivor's safety is further compromised -- this pandemic had elements of all three.

To best serve our contacts during this unprecedented time, StrongHearts advocates relied heavily on their safety planning and emotional support skills. Our advocates focus on the risks associated with isolating with an abusive partner, having limited access to an emotional support network, and potentially limited access to safe shelter. Our advocates also work with the victim-survivor to come up with ways to stay as safe as possible that are unique to them and centered around what they are ready, able, and willing to do.



We continue to be here and available to our relatives who are hurting. StrongHearts is open, available and taking calls and chats from across the country.

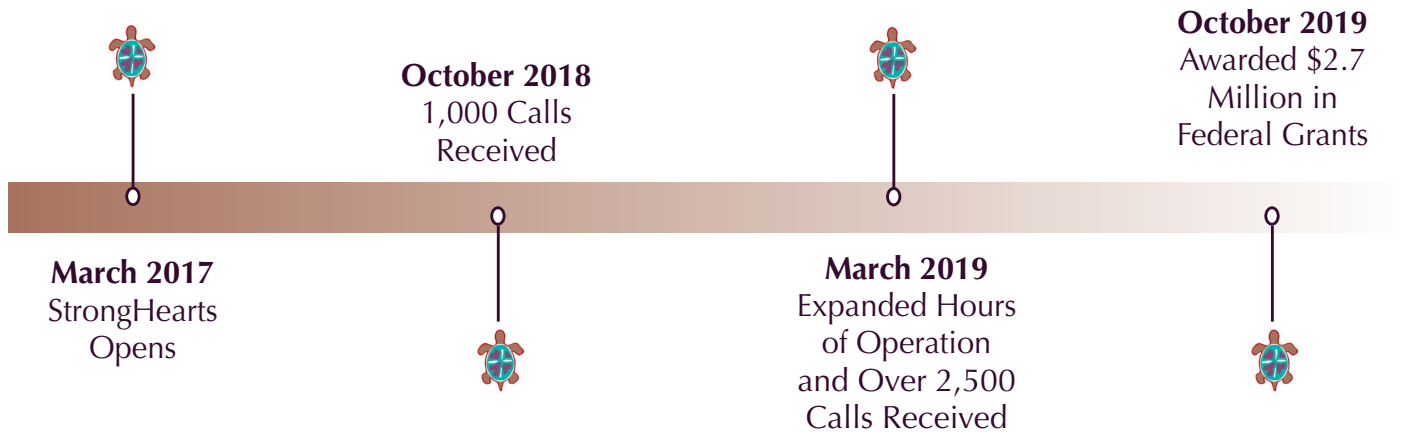
In gratitude and resilience,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lori Jump'.

Lori Jump
Director

StrongHearts Story

2017-2019



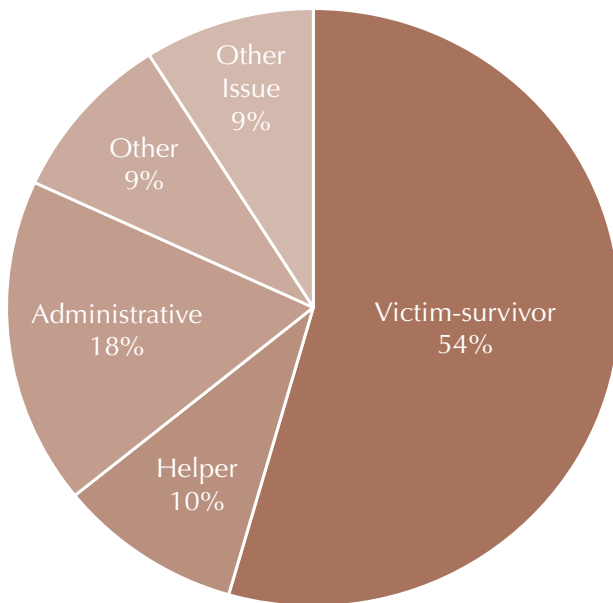
2020 Accomplishments

- February** | Added eight staff and promoted three existing staff members
- March** | 7,000 calls received
Staff transitioned to full-time remote work
- May** | Launched chat advocacy
- August** | Launched sexual violence advocacy
Received Heroes in Health National Impact Award from the National Indian Health Board
Reached Twitter follower goal: 2,563
- September** | Reached Instagram follower goal: 2,539
- October** | Created a YouTube page
- November** | 10,000 calls received
Received Marsy's Law Challenge Coin Award
- December** | Added nine staff members
Reached 14,274 Social Media Followers



Violence is Not Traditional

Types of Contacts



“Contacts” includes calls and chats.

Victim-survivor: a contact who is a victim of abuse and is seeking support

Helper: a contact reaching out on behalf of or to help a person who has either perpetrated abuse or been the victim of abuse

Administrative: a contact seeking basic information rather than advocacy

Other Issues: any contact who is not currently experiencing violence and is seeking services

Intimate Partner Violence, Colonization and Historical Trauma

At StrongHearts Native Helpline we understand that the disparate rates of violence against Native people can be attributed to the historical and intergenerational trauma caused by colonization. StrongHearts advocates are able to connect with callers as peers to help them understand the dynamics of intimate partner violence (IPV) and understand how colonization continues to play an integral role in that violence.

Types of Abuse Disclosed by Native IPV Victims

87% Emotional Abuse
78% Physical Abuse
31% Financial Abuse
19% Digital Abuse
19% Sexual Abuse
10% Cultural Abuse

What do Native IPV Victims need?

68% Peer Support
35% Shelter
27% Legal Advocacy
11% Transportation
19% Emergency Financial Aid

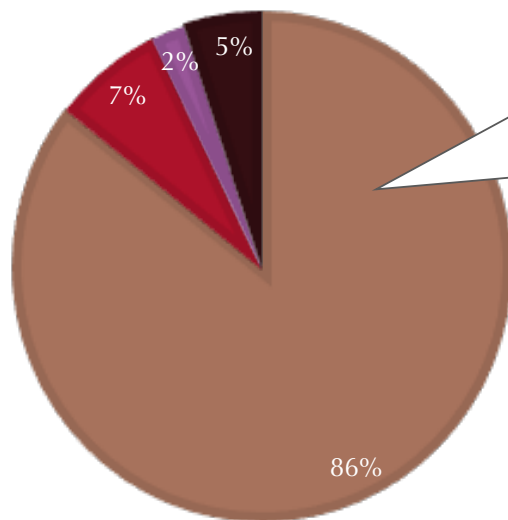
What are Native IPV Victims facing?

39% disclosed they or their abusive partner have child dependents
12% disclose being stalked
12% of Native victim-survivors have been strangled by their abusive partner
11% Disclosed experiencing cultural abuse
54% Experience abuse at the hands of a non-Native partner
7% Native victim-survivors say their abuser has access to a firearm

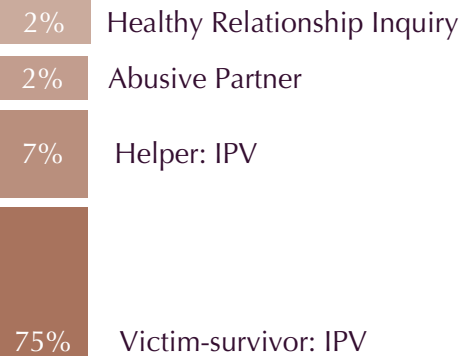
Covid-19 Impacts and Observations

Contacts Impacted by Covid-19

■ IPV ■ Non IPV ■ Sexual Violence ■ Other



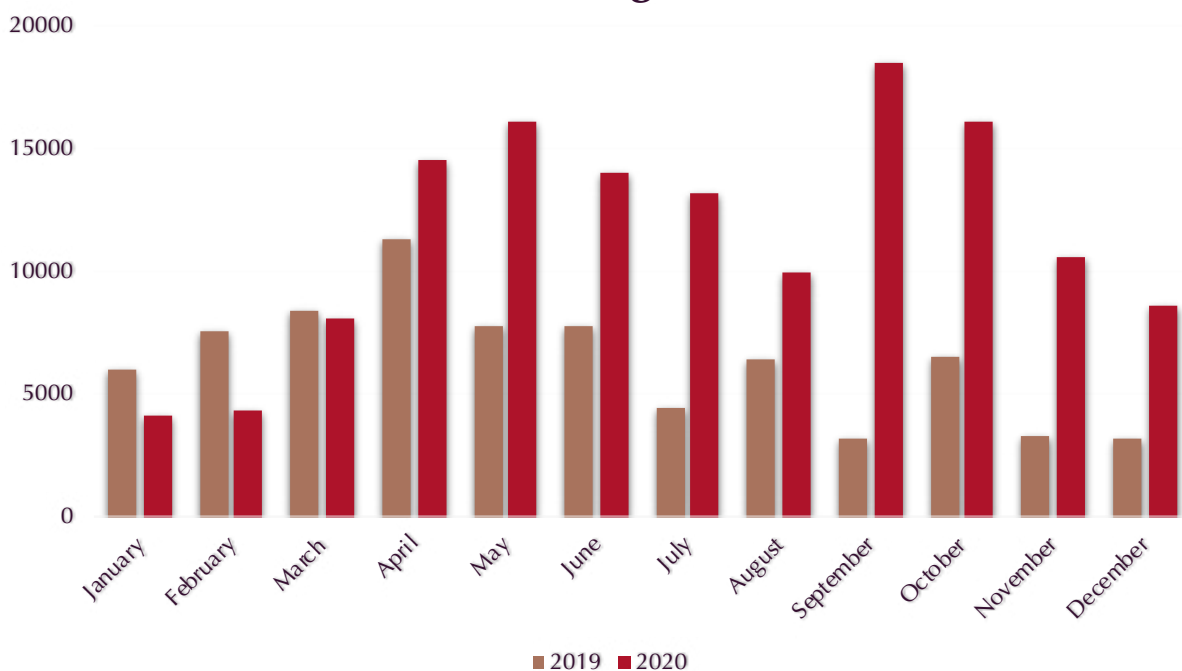
IPV Breakout



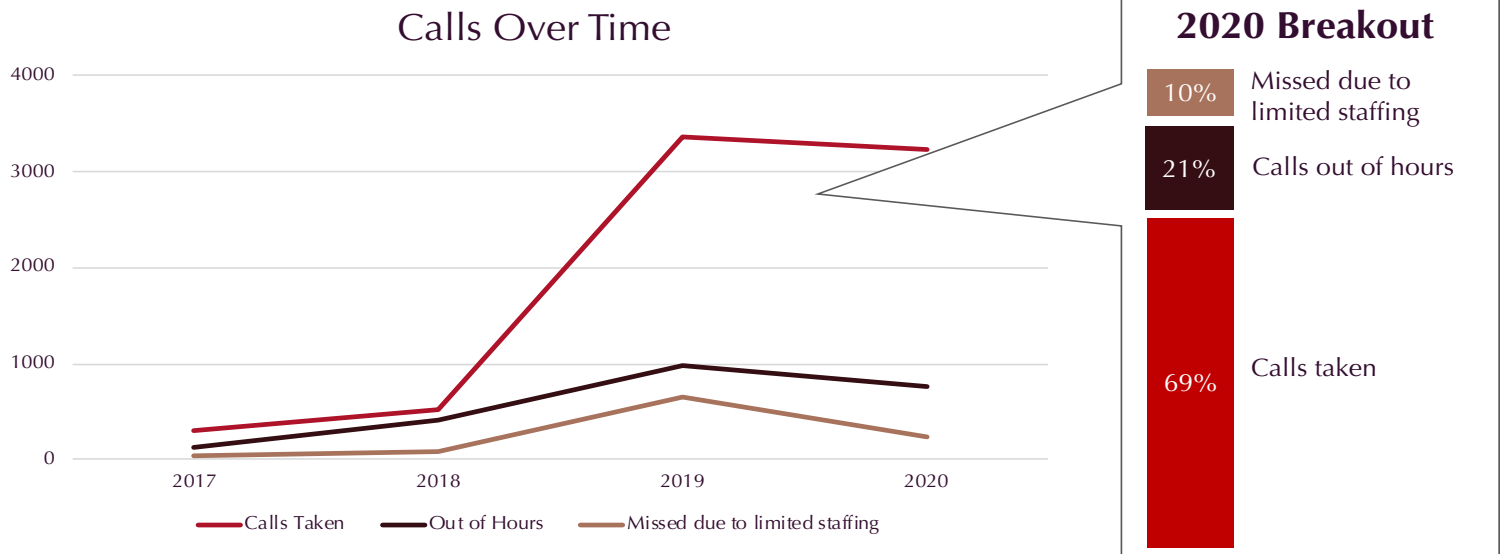
Observations

In March and April, when victim-survivors had to shelter in place, we saw a drop in the number of contacts reaching out to us. During this time, we saw an increase in activity on our website and social media channels. We believe that this decrease in call volume was not due to a decrease in need but rather an inability to access our services; at the time our advocacy was only available over the phone. We can assume, if victims are sheltering in place with their abusive partner, they will feel less safe reaching out for support via phone call. Thus we saw an additional need to launch chat advocacy.

Website Pageviews



3,074 Calls Answered in 2020

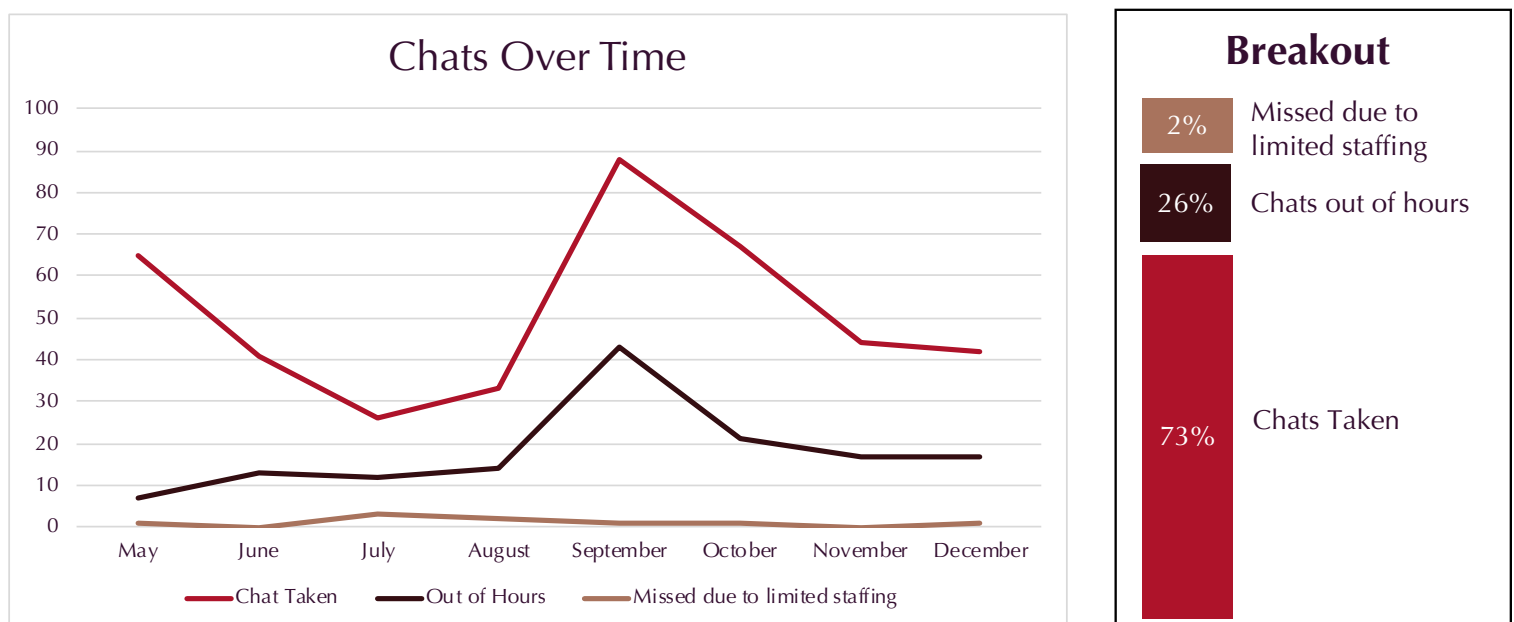


Zero callers chose to transfer to The Hotline for out of hours or overnight calls. They would rather wait for a StrongHearts Native advocate during business hours.
Native callers prefer to work with a Native-centered organization.

406 Chats Answered in 2020

Chat advocacy launched on May 18, 2020.

This new tool increases accessibility for individuals who may be hearing impaired or those who may be uncomfortable or unable to vocalize a call for support.

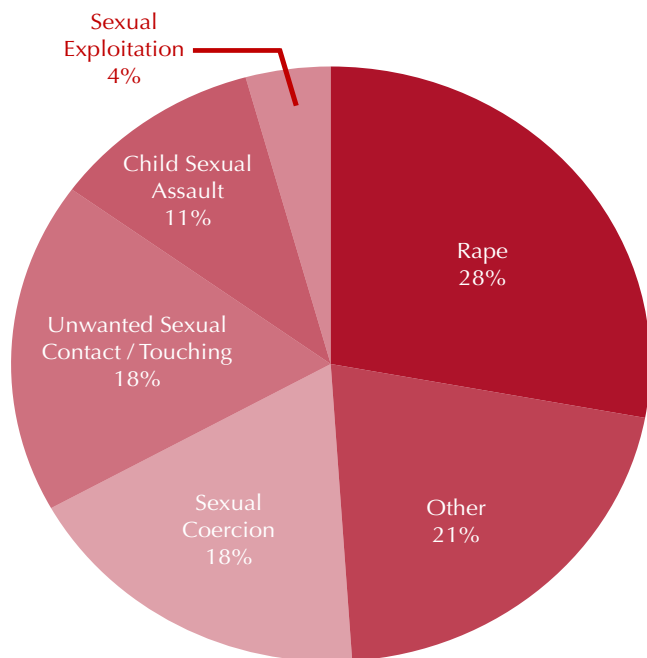


Sexual Violence Advocacy

Sexual violence advocacy launched on August 3, 2020.

StrongHearts Native Helpline developed additional advocacy training to prepare advocates to meet the unique needs of Native Americans and Alaska Natives affected by sexual violence.

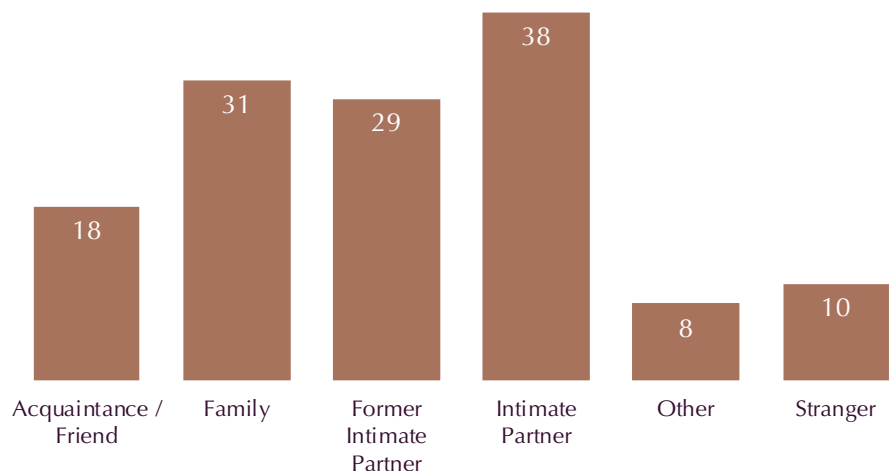
Sexual Violence Type Experienced



Upon launching sexual violence advocacy, StrongHearts Advocates began assessing for sexual violence type experienced.

Rape is the most common experience our contacts face.

Sexual Violence Perpetrator Relationship Number of Contacts



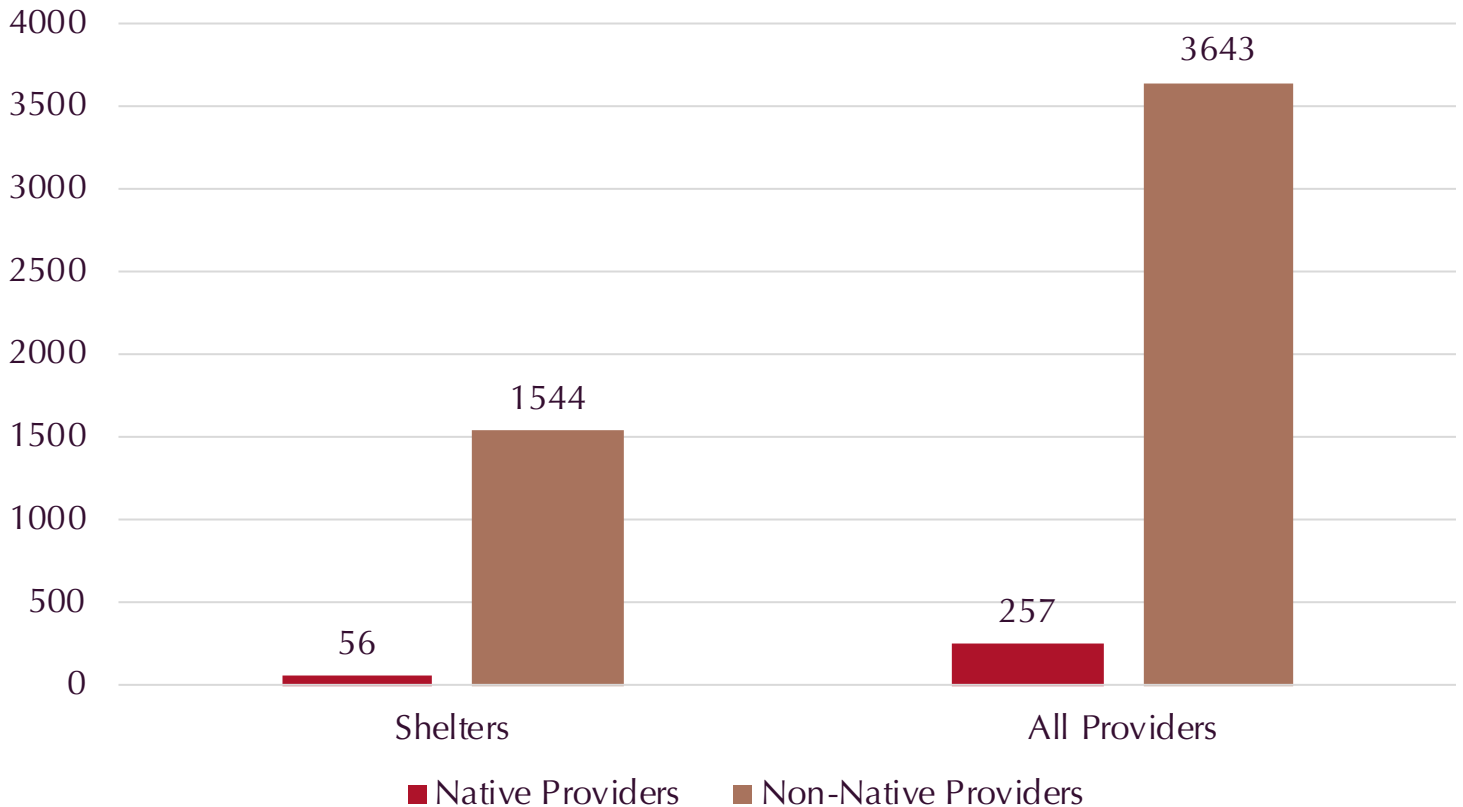
Further assessment for sexual violence experiences reveal the victim-survivor's relationship to the perpetrator.

An intimate partner is the most common perpetrator of sexual violence. The second most commonly reported perpetrator is a family member.

Resource Disparity

Tribes, as sovereign nations, face significant jurisdictional hurdles when addressing violent crimes in their communities. Gaps in Native-centered supportive services create unique barriers for Native victims seeking help. Without cultural and Native-centered services to support Native victim-survivors in their journey to healing, American Indian and Alaska Native people will continue to experience domestic and sexual violence at disproportionately high levels.

Native vs. Non-Native Service Providers in the U.S.



Referral Database

5,038

Advocate Referrals
Made

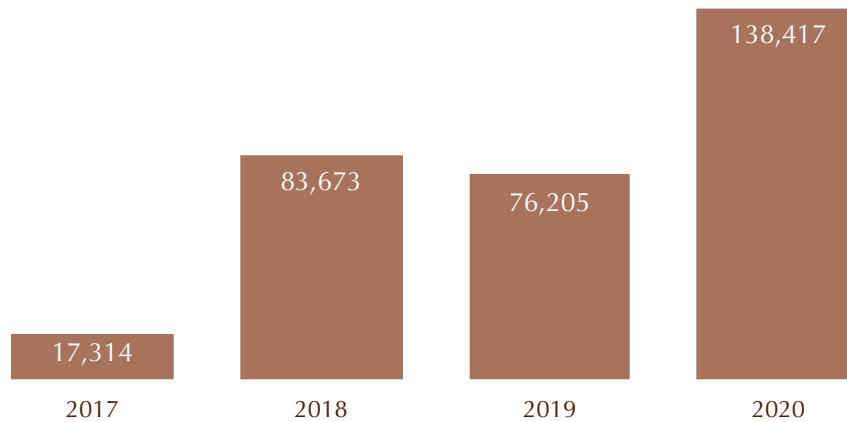
257

Current Active
Native Providers*

**Native-centered services for American Indian and Alaska Natives.*

Digital Media Platforms

Website Pageviews



Via StrongHeartsHelpline.com

"I want to congratulate the efforts of many people to help put an end to any kind of abuse. My thoughts and prayers are for the workers that they may maintain strength and courage to fight for those who at times think there is no hope. Stay strong always. Respectfully yours, Alice"

Instagram Images



Via StrongHearts' Twitter Page

"I sincerely want to say thank you for all that you do! I've literally witnessed the effect of your marvelous[ness] within my own community. This works is not easy and it take[s] such a toll on advocates and practioner. Therefore, the fact that you all keep at it day in and day out, is such a testimony to your committment. Mvto from my heart and pls take care, stay healthy and stay safe! --@LeMiller26"

Social Media Increase in Followers from 2019

 27% Facebook

 24% Twitter

 52% Instagram

Via StrongHearts' Facebook Page

"So sad when victims of abuse believe it is their fault. Thank you for the help your organization provides. --George Oothoudt"