



Annual Report

2020

01

About LIFT

The Equality Model

LIFT's Model & Programs

Financials

Recognitions

Looking Ahead



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Words **Matter.**

The way community leaders and media outlets talk and write about the sex trade matters.

Throughout this report, we have inserted definitions at the bottom of pages in hopes that we'll all start to become more aware of what we're saying, more cognizant to listen to Survivors, and advocate together with a shared vocabulary.



Survivor - A force to be reckoned with, the personification of strength, hope, and growth. A leader, confidant, changemaker, and innovator. A fearless advocate.

lift living
in freedom
together

Part 1:

About LIFT

LIFT 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

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Ally - One who supports Survivors, holds their community accountable to recognizing Survivors as experts, leaders, and changemakers, calls-in other allies to make space and promote survivors, while calling-out pseudo-allies angling to take credit for Survivor work.



Nicole Bell, President & CEO

Letter from the CEO

The year 2020 was unprecedented. No life, no institution, no community went untouched by COVID. Healthcare systems were pushed to breaking points, families struggled to balance work-at-home life with virtual schooling, and communities scrambled to respond to the needs of their members in an environment no one had navigated before. Critical to community responses were nonprofits, especially small nonprofits who are much better suited to respond to crisis, able to pivot quickly and efficiently to meet evolving needs, and always ready to rise to the occasion.

In a time of crisis, LIFT remained committed to our vision to build a community that works to heal trauma by placing the humanity and dignity of Survivors above all else, always.

It is their experiences, and voices, that have shaped our programming, challenged us to do better, and have us show up when and where others will not.

We are very proud of how we supported prostituted people throughout all phases of the pandemic, from **mobilizing our Drop-In Center**, to **opening the Emergency Women's Shelter** in response to the Governor's shelter-in-place order, to **getting access to the vaccine for our participants**. In 2020, LIFT cemented its ability to lead in a time of crisis, to raise the bar when doing the bare minimum was acceptable, and to rise to the occasion of providing meaningful programming to a population most people at best won't acknowledge exists, and more often than not awfulize and demonize.

continued on next page

Unconditional Positive Regard - Showing complete support and acceptance of a person no matter what that person says or does.



This success was not without challenges, heartbreak, and significant losses. COVID highlighted critical gaps in resources and support for the organizations providing services. **The majority of funds we receive are from sources outside of Worcester.** While this is disheartening, we will continue to ask our community to be a part of making meaningful change for prostituted people. We will continue to invite you to join us in serving Worcester's most vulnerable population.

We will continue to show up with unconditional positive regard for our participants, and change the systems that are failing us, no matter how difficult.

We look ahead with hope that our community will see, truly acknowledge, and support prostituted people, no matter where they are on their journey, and continue to eliminate barriers, as well as change the many systems that are rendering people vulnerable to the violence and abuse of prostitution.

Prostitution isn't sex, and sex isn't work. Prostitution is sexual violence. Prostitution is privileged men masturbating in and on the bodies of those at the intersection of vulnerabilities. LIFT is committed to ending this system of violence and oppression that impacts the lives of so many around us who people refuse to even acknowledge exist.

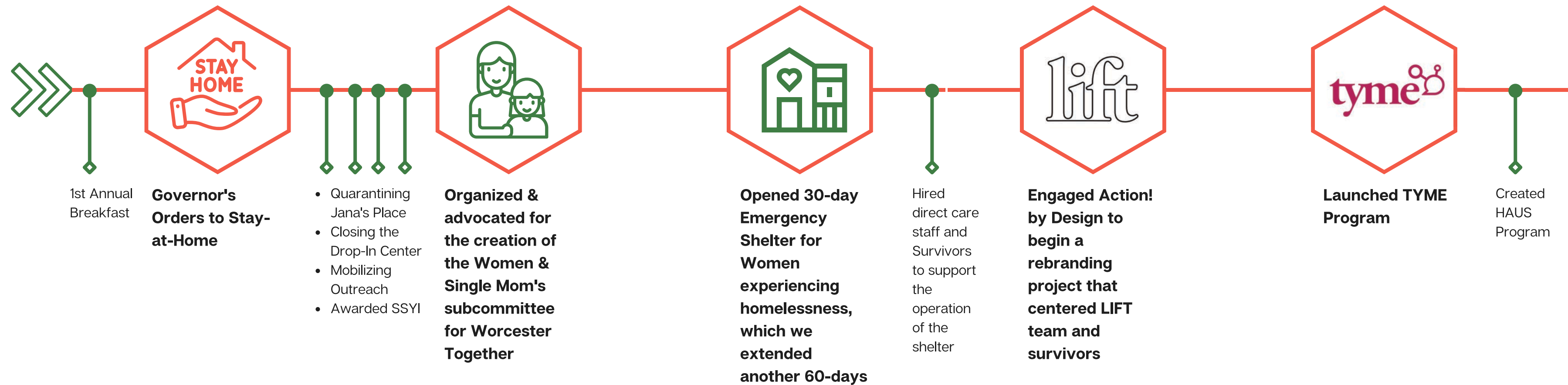
At LIFT, we support all people in prostitution. We believe that privileged men buying access to your body in exchange for a sandwich because you were hungry and poor is not liberating but oppressive and violent. **We need to listen to Survivors. Our voices matter. Our community matters. The work we do every day matters.** We invite you to be part of the solutions - to make history - to show prostituted people that you see us, and that we are valued. Most importantly, that you are investing in real change. Join the movement.

Nicole Bell, President & CEO
Living in Freedom Together, Inc. (LIFT)

Recovery - A process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live self-directed lives, and strive to reach their full potential.

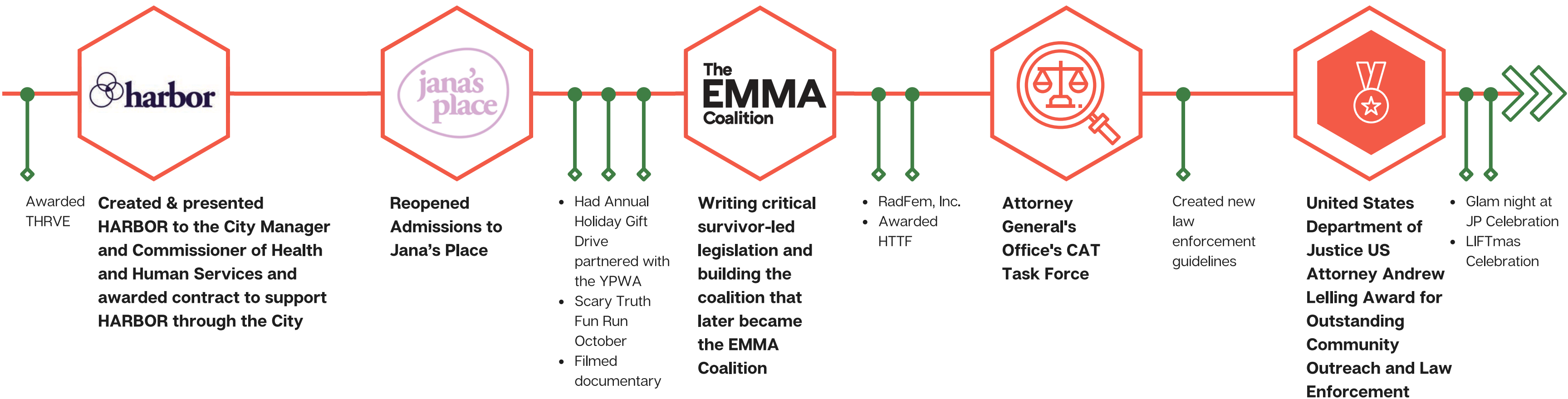
LIFT 2020 Timeline

An overview of some of LIFT's key moments over the year from challenges to celebrations.



Sex trade - The trade that involves people's bodies being bought for one-sided sexual pleasure, such as prostitution.

LIFT 2020 Timeline Cont.



Systems of Prostitution - Discrimination, exploitation, and abuse by an individual man or men that also includes a structure reflecting and maintaining inequality between men and women. Prostitution is the sexualization of power based on gender, class, race, and ethnicity and negatively impacts society's view of women.



Organization, Mission, & Focus

LIFT was founded in 2014 by Nikki Bell, who herself survived prostitution. Nikki found her pathway out of the sex trade through social justice work. As she was forced to navigate exiting “the life” with dismal support and no access to safety, sleeping on a mat on the kitchen floor of the shelter, she recognized the need for quality support and exit programs for prostituted people in our community. Nikki then started a support group where Survivors could come together to heal and share resources, began showing up at the District Court as an advocate for Survivors being criminalized, and began a drop-in center that operated unfunded with an all-volunteer team.

Through her relentless advocacy work and tireless dedication to her Sisters, Nikki has grown her one-woman operation into a multi-million dollar abolitionist organization with numerous programs and a team of almost 30 Survivors and allies working together to support prostituted people, abolish the systems that are failing Survivors, and change how our community responds to those exploited in the sex trade.

LIFT is a Survivor-led nonprofit organization. All of our programming and curriculum is created and implemented by Survivors, over 70% of our staff are Survivors and/or people in recovery. Our focus is on our connection to the individuals we serve and commitment to our values system:



Community



Autonomy & Choice



Transparency & Trust



Safety



Valued as a Human Being

Trafficking – The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act.” It involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to make an adult engage in commercial sex acts or the victim is under 18.



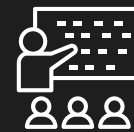
Our mission is to provide quality exit programming and supports to prostituted individuals with the goal of ending prostitution.



Advocating for social change and justice for Survivors and specific marginalized populations at greater risk of entering the sex trade



Leading legislative initiatives at national, state, and local levels



Providing training and consulting services to community-based partners, including medical providers, social services agencies, and law enforcement



Developing and delivering education and outreach services for community members and academic institutions

“John” “Sex Buyer” – A perpetrator of sexual violence, including rape, and assault. One who takes advantage of vulnerable populations to meet their sexual and violent self-interests.

LIFT Leadership



Nicole Bell
FOUNDER, PRESIDENT & CEO



Courtney Ross Escobar
COO & INHOUSE LEGAL COUNSEL



Karen Riley-McNary
VP OF OUTREACH & ADVOCACY



Audra Doody
SENIOR DIRECTOR, OUTREACH
& ADVOCACY



Lori Ciprari
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE &
OPERATIONS



Alina Bluto
CO-PROGRAM DIRECTOR,
JANA'S PLACE



Angelique Martinez
CO-PROGRAM DIRECTOR,
JANA'S PLACE



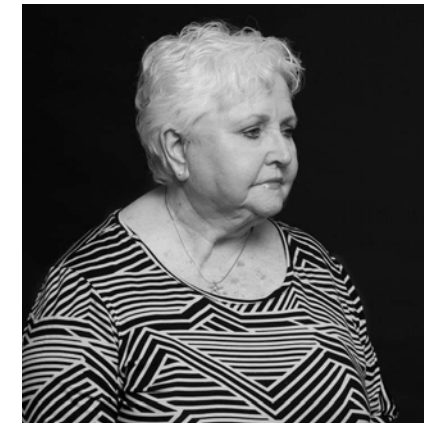
Desiree Demos
PROGRAM MANAGER,
HARBOR

Advocate - A person who publicly supports or recommends a particular cause or policy. See Audra Doody on Page 39.
Advocacy - Public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy.

LIFT Board of Directors



Vednita Carter
CO-CHAIR OF THE BOARD



Kathleen Mitchell
CO-CHAIR OF THE BOARD



Lauren Sparks
TREASURER



Susan Hafty
BOARD MEMBER



Rachel Neimic
BOARD MEMBER



Kyla Pacheco
BOARD MEMBER



Joshua Croke
BOARD MEMBER

Low-Barrier – A service or provider that prioritizes ease of accessibility to programming and or resources in order to expand access to support for more people.

Zero-Barrier – No questions, all are welcome.



Part 2:

The Equality Model

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Privilege - Inherent advantages possessed by a person or group of people based on race and/or socioeconomic status providing unfair societal advantages in a society characterized by racial and gender inequality and systemic injustice.

Solidarity - Standing with not for; mutual support within a group.



The Buyer

Sex buyers are disproportionately white men of wealth and privilege.

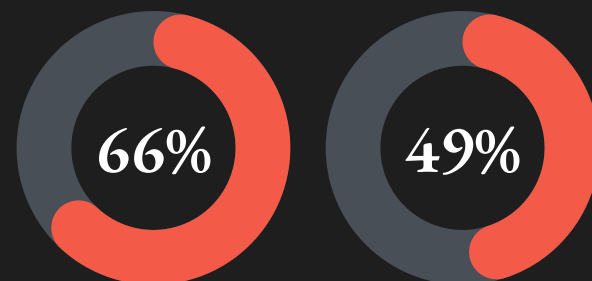


Close to **90% of buyers are white** with the average age of 49 and an average income of \$141,500.



16% of men in the US have paid for sex.

Research done in the US in 2019 among a nationally representative sample of men found that over 20% of men who had never paid for sex reported that they would consider doing so if the circumstances were right.



66% of buyers are married.

49% of sex buyers in one sample had never discussed their buying of sex with anyone else.

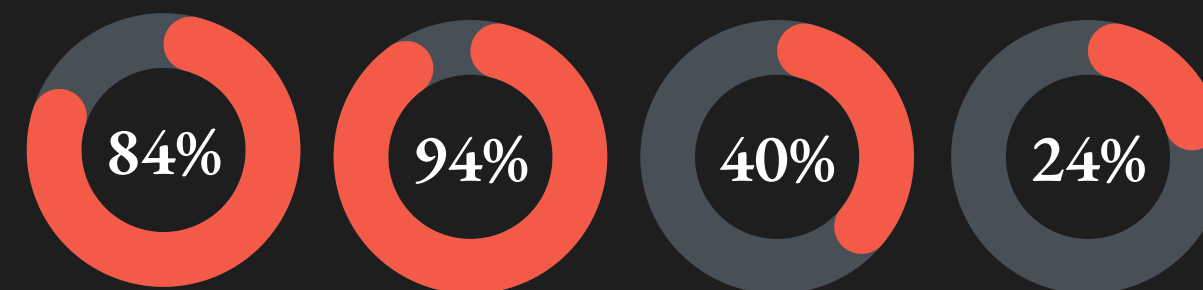


The Prostituted Person

Women and girls of color and/or low income backgrounds and LGBTQ+ youth are disproportionately impacted by the sex trade.



In 2014, 570 children were arrested for "prostitution" and seventy-five of them were under 15 years old.



Up to 84% of prostituted women and girls are also survivors of childhood sexual abuse, according to multiple studies.

94% of sex trafficking victims were female.

40% of sex trafficking victims were Black.

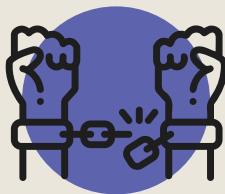
24% of sex trafficking victims were Latinx.

The EVA Center, a Boston-based exit program, reports that of the people they support, over 50% have been systems involved and aged out of DCF without housing or employment options, and 30% of that group are young moms whose children end up going back into the very systems they aged out of.



The Equality Model

We work to end systems of prostitution through the implementation of the Equality Model.



Full decriminalization of prostituted people

Eliminating crimes such as sex for a fee and common night walking ensuring no one will be arrested for their own exploitation.



High-quality programs for people in the sex trade

Survivor-developed and led programming that addresses the unique needs of this population.



Buying sex remains criminalized

Sex buyers (johns) are penalized for purchasing access to the bodies of vulnerable people.



Decreasing on-ramps to, and increasing exit-ramps from, the sex trade

Addressing “Push Factors” that funnel young people into the sex trade (poverty, racism, misogyny, failed child welfare systems) and investment in Survivor-led programming to address housing, employment, and other related needs.



Coordination of this holistic approach

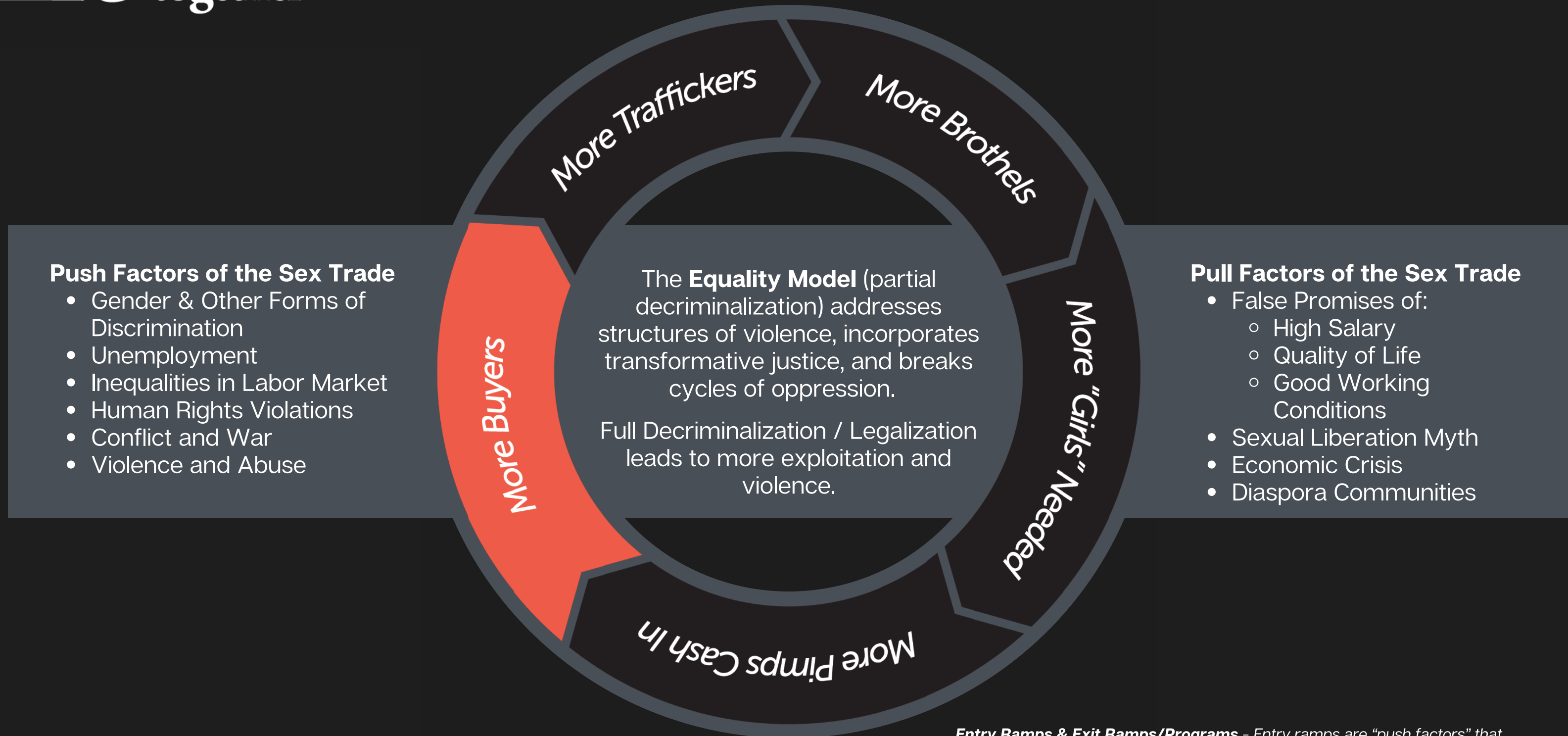
Public information campaigns, education and training, legislative and penal code changes, and services must be present and coordinated to support the common goal.



Anti-sex trafficking legislation enforced or strengthened

Laws to penalize third-party exploiters and protect prostituted people are strengthened

Exploiter - An unethical person; a user—one who takes advantage of other people for their own gain in a way that is wrong and damaging. One who uses a person’s vulnerabilities against them for the purpose of control and profit.





The EMMA Coalition

The Equality Model in MA (EMMA) Coalition is a Survivor-led, community effort that works to dismantle systems of violence against prostituted people through the implementation of the Equality Model. We are part of a growing global network of Survivors providing resources and supporting Survivors to step into their own power and voice.

The challenges that women in particular faced during COVID are immeasurable. As we look around our country, women's rights are at significant risk, and we believe it is paramount that we pass **“An Act to Strengthen Justice and Support for Sex Trade Survivors” H1761 S940**, the *Equality Model Bill* currently in the Massachusetts State Legislature. This *Bill* was written using a gender equality framework; a model that has helped make significant advances for all women in the countries it has been implemented, including those being prostituted. A first-of-its-kind law created, drafted, and supported by Survivors across our state.

Legislative change is critical to ending systems of prostitution and providing viable pathways out of “the life”. Massachusetts would be the first state to implement this type of legislation.

This *Bill* has already gained significant support from the Worcester Community. The *Bill* was introduced by LIFT's longtime Ally and champion Senator Harriette Chandler, as well as Representative Mary Keefe. The majority of the Worcester Delegation has signed on in support including Representative O'Day and Rep Lebof. We have also received a unanimous endorsement from the Worcester City Council, District Attorney Joe Early's Office, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Human Rights Commission, and the Mass Nurses Association. This is a common-sense bill and we have our community standing with Survivors advocating for this legislation.

To learn more about this *Bill* and our legislative work with the EMMA Coalition visit **EqualityModelMA.org** or scan this QR code:



“The Life” - A phrase used as slang to describe systems of prostitution.



Part 3:

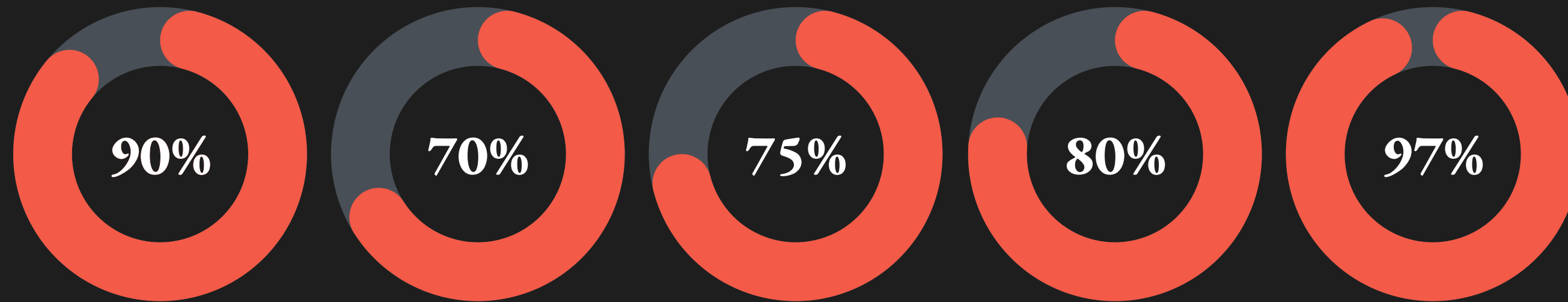
LIFT's Model & Programs

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Survivor-led Organizations/Programs - The opposite of "rescue" programs. An organization led by Survivors with lived experience not only at the top but in leadership roles throughout the organization.
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The reality of prostitution is that it disproportionately impacts people at intersections of vulnerability and marginalization.



90%+ of our participants were sexually assaulted as children.

70% of sexually exploited women meet the criteria for PTSD.

75% of prostituted people have faced homelessness.

80% of those in the sex trade were victims of rape and sexual assault.

97% of participants have Substance Use Disorder (SUD).

Cross Victimization Data in Worcester

97% 97% of participants have reported experiencing sexual assault/rape.

35% 35% of participants have experienced stalking.

62% 62% are currently experiencing violence from an intimate partner.

In three of these instances, the abusive partners are identified as high-risk perpetrators* by the Worcester Domestic Violence High Risk Team and are being continually monitored by team members within the criminal justice system.

*High risk for lethality as measured by Jacquelyn Cambell's Danger Assessment

Meaningful engagement - Investing time and incorporating flexibility in developing trusting relationships with stakeholders (LIFT participants) using multiple ways to enable connection and engagement. Requires sustained effort.



Words Matter.

Sex Work/er vs Sex Trade/Prostituted Person

In the age of “alternative facts,” the importance of communicating facts and relying on experts, and most importantly; those with lived experience, has been elevated. The way we speak about issues, the way we value data, qualify outcomes, and present outwardly to the community is important. In short, words matter.

The realities that the sex trade negatively impacts and harms people and the movement to abolish systems of prostitution may be new to most people, it is important to understand that this is a global issue addressing multiple intersections of vulnerability.

Prostitution relies on capitalism, patriarchy, colonialism, racism, and the marginalization of minority populations (LGBTQIA+, disabled and neurodivergent folx, and immigrant communities), and is fueled by male-directed violence and gender inequities.

For instance, many folx think the words “sex work” and “sex worker” are innocuous neutral terms used to refer to prostitution and prostituted people. We Know better. Sex work and sex worker are terms coined by the Pro-Sex Work lobby in an attempt to sanitize the violence inherent in the sex trade. The Pro-Sex Work lobby works in direct opposition to the movement to abolish prostitution. It is supported by sex buyers and traffickers and pushes legislation to fully decriminalize prostitution; making selling access to the bodies of, disproportionately, black and brown women and girls decriminalized creating an unchecked and unregulated market. Full decriminalization codifies vulnerabilities as commodities, eliminating programs to support prostituted people, and makes exiting prostitution incredibly difficult, if not impossible.

Survivors of systems of prostitution are the experts in how to talk about this issue, support individuals involved in the sex trade, train frontline providers to assist in exiting services, lead the drafting of legislation, and should lead the movement to abolish the sex trade. When you talk about the sex trade or when media outlets cover stories regarding people in the sex trade, it is of the utmost importance that you use proper language. If you aren't sure what the proper language is, consult an expert; a Survivor of prostitution (not Google).

LIFT understands that the words we use matter; they impact how and where we show up for people. In 2020, LIFT worked with Action! by Design to reflect on the language we were using, how that language impacts the Survivors we support, and how it informs the work we do in our community. We evaluated the terms we were using, their ability to resonate with key audiences, deliver the intended message, and, most importantly, how they were heard by Survivors. This collaborative process involved members of the LIFT team across all programs, included allies, but was centered on Survivors.

We moved away from language that contained implications of power-over structures, insinuated rescue mentalities, or terms suggesting Survivors need to be given credibility by allies. Terms like “empower” - which is defined as giving (someone) the authority or power to do something - were removed. We believe Survivors hold their own power and authority, and our role is to respect that autonomy not bestow it. We removed the butterfly image from our logo as societal views say that “beautiful” butterflies transform from “ugly” caterpillars. We believe the caterpillar and the Survivors we support are inherently good, strong, and capable as is. This is an example of the structures of worthiness organizations impose on marginalized populations. Structures of worthiness do not align with our value system. People are worthy, as they are, at every moment.

Victim - A person who is tricked or duped, harmed, injured, or killed as a result of a crime.



LIFT's Model of Connection

The LIFT Model of Connection™ (MOC) recognizes that exiting systems of prostitution is a journey. It is not linear, and it is not limited to one outcome – sobriety quantified only by an arbitrary number of days data point, for example. Though exiting looks different for everyone, elements of successful support systems remain the same: comprehensive programming and connection to community. LIFT works with participants at all stages of exiting no matter where they are in that process. Most importantly, all LIFT programs are designed and implemented by Survivors ensuring that support is specific to the needs of the population we serve - a critical component to producing positive outcomes.

The LIFT MOC utilizes the **Assertive Engagement Model**, which is a synthesis of evidence-based practices including motivational interviewing, strength-based practices, and assertive community engagement. *Assertive Engagement* also incorporates concepts of trauma-informed care, anti-oppression work, and unconditional positive regard. We believe that individuals and communities are inherently capable. Examples of how the LIFT MOC demonstrates this synthesis and shows up in our work are:

- Prostituted people can exit and remain exited if we leverage existing community-based programs coupled with support from LIFT Survivor Case Managers;
- Recognize that different points in people's exiting journey come with different sets of vulnerabilities;
- Understand that the marginalization of prostituted people makes connection to community that much more important;
- No set "end of service" timeline. LIFT is a community of unconditional support that Survivors can access as much and as often as they choose.

Bias - Unfair prejudice for or against someone or something usually resulting from a lack of education about the thing or person against whom the bias is held.



"Every time Nikki saw me walking on the street she would always yell over and say "Hi, Emma*." That sounds insignificant, but to me it meant the world. I had lost my own identity. I was a mother, a daughter, a sister, a cousin, but the streets stripped me of my own identity and without someone taking the time to simply remember my name I worried I could have been lost forever to the "life."

– LIFT Participant

**Name changed to protect identity of participant*

Mobilization of Outreach & Advocacy Services

LIFT's Drop-In Center provides access to Survivor-mentors healthcare, harm reduction resources, advocacy, and supplies.

LIFT had to adapt our Drop-In Center to a 100% mobile approach:

- Outreach & Advocacy increased our street outreach and delivery of supplies and meals to accommodate for limited resources or closed doors at other social service agencies.
- LIFT was able to maintain a vital connection to our community's most vulnerable members and ensure that their needs were not being forgotten amidst the pandemic.
- Our funding asks shifted to supplies, transportation expenses, protective equipment, and technology to support virtual case management.

Mental Health Disorder – a mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder.



“Many survivors are recruited into ‘the life’ at an early age. Our prevention work includes identifying what recruitment looks like as well as working with youth to figure out how to meet their needs and reduce vulnerabilities.

– Alex Powell, TYME Youth Mentor

Transitional Youth Mentoring and Exiting (TYME) Program

TYME offers one-on-one Survivor peer mentor support to youth aged 16- 25 with histories of commercial sexual exploitation (CSE), are currently being exploited, or are vulnerable to CSE.

- TYME launched in July of 2020 despite a global health pandemic
- Successfully connected with over **63% of youth** referred to our program in Q3-4 2020
- **110+ points of contact were made** with youth despite COVID limitations.
- Provided remote and in-person crisis response support and were able to successfully de-escalate 100% of crises successfully
- Mentors engaged in a significant level of network building
- Connected with **over 40 youth- and community-serving organizations**
- **Delivered ~150 resource/gift bags**
- Received numerous requests for further training
- Successfully **led a series of 5 youth psycho-education and support groups** at a youth recovery program

Post-traumatic growth - Positive change that survivors experience after a life crisis or traumatic event.



“The LIFT Program at the Western Mass Regional Women’s Correctional Center has had a transformative impact on the lives of the women we serve.”

– Patricia Murphy, Assistant Superintendent
WCC/Hampden County Sheriff’s Department

Support in the System to Exit and Recover (SISTER) Program

SISTER is a 4-week group curriculum offering a political education on prostitution for incarcerated women. SISTER provides the opportunity to create safety plans with a Survivor Case Manager, builds relationships and trust with prostituted women behind the wall, and provides connection to the survivor community post-release.

- In early 2020, all Massachusetts jails closed their doors to outside programs in an attempt to limit the spread of COVID.
- Despite this barrier, our relationship with Western Mass Women’s Correctional Center (WMWCC) remained strong and as critical as ever.
- COVID also caused prostituted people to be released from custody without any real safety or support plan.
- We were able to continue to support our sisters through our partnership to lessen the vulnerability upon release by hosting virtual groups.
- When restrictions began to lessen, most jails kept their no visit policy in place, however, we were the only organization admitted back in.
- WMWCC recognized the critical need for survivor-led programming since our inception and this partnership is an excellent example of the power of survivors and allies working together.

C-PTSD - A psychological disorder that can develop in response to the prolonged, repeated experience of interpersonal trauma such as having access to your body purchased to be masturbated on and in.



"Jana's Place has been a model of care throughout Massachusetts and the country."

– Dr. Matilde Castile, Commissioner of Health & Human Services for the City of Worcester

Jana's Place (JP)

Jana's Place is a 16-bed residential treatment program for individuals who have co-occurring mental health, substance use disorder, and a history of exploitation. Jana's Place is the first program of its kind in the nation and is a model of care for the Commonwealth.

- The model of Jana's Place and all LIFT programs rely heavily on connection to community and resources.
- Our VP of Outreach and Advocacy, Karen Riley McNary, stepped in as interim Program Director to ensure the program continued to run in the face of the unprecedented challenges COVID brought.
- COVID caused all of the resources that the participants relied upon to shut down and we had to pivot quickly to provide all the programming and treatment needed in-house.
- JP faced critical staff shortages across programming and our team worked double-time to keep our participants safe and healthy, with ever-changing guidance, and a shortage of PPE.
- At one point, we had a participant test positive for COVID and we had to make the decision whether to send her to an isolation site, which could have been deadly for her, or turn the third floor into a COVID unit and keep her in treatment and safe.
- We chose to weather the crisis together and the measures we took prevented an outbreak and to-date, we have only had two participants test positive for COVID.
- The team at Jana's Place was faced with unique challenges that caused many other large institutions to shut their doors.
- We did not, and our entire organization pulled together to support the needs of Jana's Place and our participants.

Treatment - A manner of treating someone. Treatment must be comprehensive, individualized, and holistic.



"The CATI program gave me a safe place to go where I was cared for and welcomed even at my worst. The women at LIFT played a much bigger role in my sobriety than they probably give themselves credit for."

— Victim Advocate, HARBOR

Creating Alternatives to Incarceration (CATI) Program

In partnership with the Worcester County District Attorney's office, CATI works to create pathways to recovery for prostituted individuals instead of incarceration by providing support and programming needed to begin thinking about exiting prostitution.

- COVID caused the criminal courts to shut down, limiting our connection to court-involved individuals and referrals to CATI.
- Our relationship with the DA's office and our mobile outreach still allowed us to work with court-involved individuals.
- Our Outreach and Advocacy team helped participants to clear warrants and access treatment when needed.
- We kept participants updated about changes at the court, and how they could access the restraining and prevention harassment orders that they still required and needed.

MAR (Medicated-assisted Recovery) - The use of medications, in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies, to provide a "whole-patient" approach to the treatment of substance use disorders.



"A lot of people say things like, 'just get a job.' How are you supposed to get job when you have no clothes and no phone number for them to call you? Let's say you manage to get a job. How are you going to shower and show up to work with clean clothes without housing? Sometimes we need safe housing before we can do anything else, and Nikki understands that."

— LIFT Participant

LIFT Housing and Unconditional Support Program (HAUS)

HAUS provides transitional housing assistance and Survivor Case Management for Survivors transitioning into housing. HAUS is a unique approach to homelessness prevention as it specifically addresses critical points of vulnerability experienced by Survivors in transitional stages in their recovery and/or exiting the life.

- LIFT watched participants transition out of programming into unsafe environments with catastrophic results which led us to create the Housing and Unconditional Support Program (HAUS).
- Through the creation of HAUS, we were able to support survivors with financial assistance and ensure that participants had access to ongoing case management to mitigate the risks.
- HAUS participants also worked on soft skills like time management, learned group facilitation skills, as well as on-the-job internship opportunities to help them grow while staying rooted in the community.

Human being - A person regardless of their race, sexual identity, intimate partner choices, housing, or socioeconomic status.

Woman - A human being. Trans women are women.



“In my work in 20 years in social services, I’ve never heard of a 90% success rate working with a highly vulnerable population.”

– Tim Garvin, United Way of Central MA

PROGRAM FEATURE

Emergency Shelter Opens

During the most critical phase of the pandemic, LIFT responded by piloting a 90-day emergency shelter (now: HARBOR) - supporting 36 women experiencing homelessness.

In addition to shelter/food, LIFT created an environment where guests’ achievements were celebrated; women found support/connection to a community they have felt ostracized from and marginalized by; and received individualized case management, resources, and re-housing support.

Another critical component of the Women’s Emergency Shelter and what made it so successful is it was staffed by women with lived experience. Survivors showed up for their sisters in unprecedented times, in unprecedented ways, with unprecedented outcomes. It was survivors who placed their health and the health of their families on the line, it was survivors who worked overtime and doubles to make sure their sisters were safe and had support, and it was the work of survivors who delivered outcomes never seen before.

It was also those same survivors who watched as other organizations were given recognition and funding for the work that was done by the team at LIFT. It was survivors who were mislabeled as clinicians because who could believe that lived experience experts delivered those outcomes? It was survivors who have been invisible for their entire lives and whose work and self was made invisible once again

90% of individuals in the emergency shelter were able to transition to a self-determined next step including appropriate levels of substance use disorder treatment, and transitional or permanent housing.

We did not need a pandemic to know HARBOR’s need to exist. Our LIFT family knows from experience that the days of just trying to get through 24 hours require expedited flexibility and adaptation. The most effective solutions are the simplest. And listening to Survivors, we find that to be straightforward and are willing to put in the hard work to design Survivor-led programs addressing those specific needs in a trauma-informed, respectful manner.

lift living in freedom together

Part 4:

Financial Highlights

LIFT 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

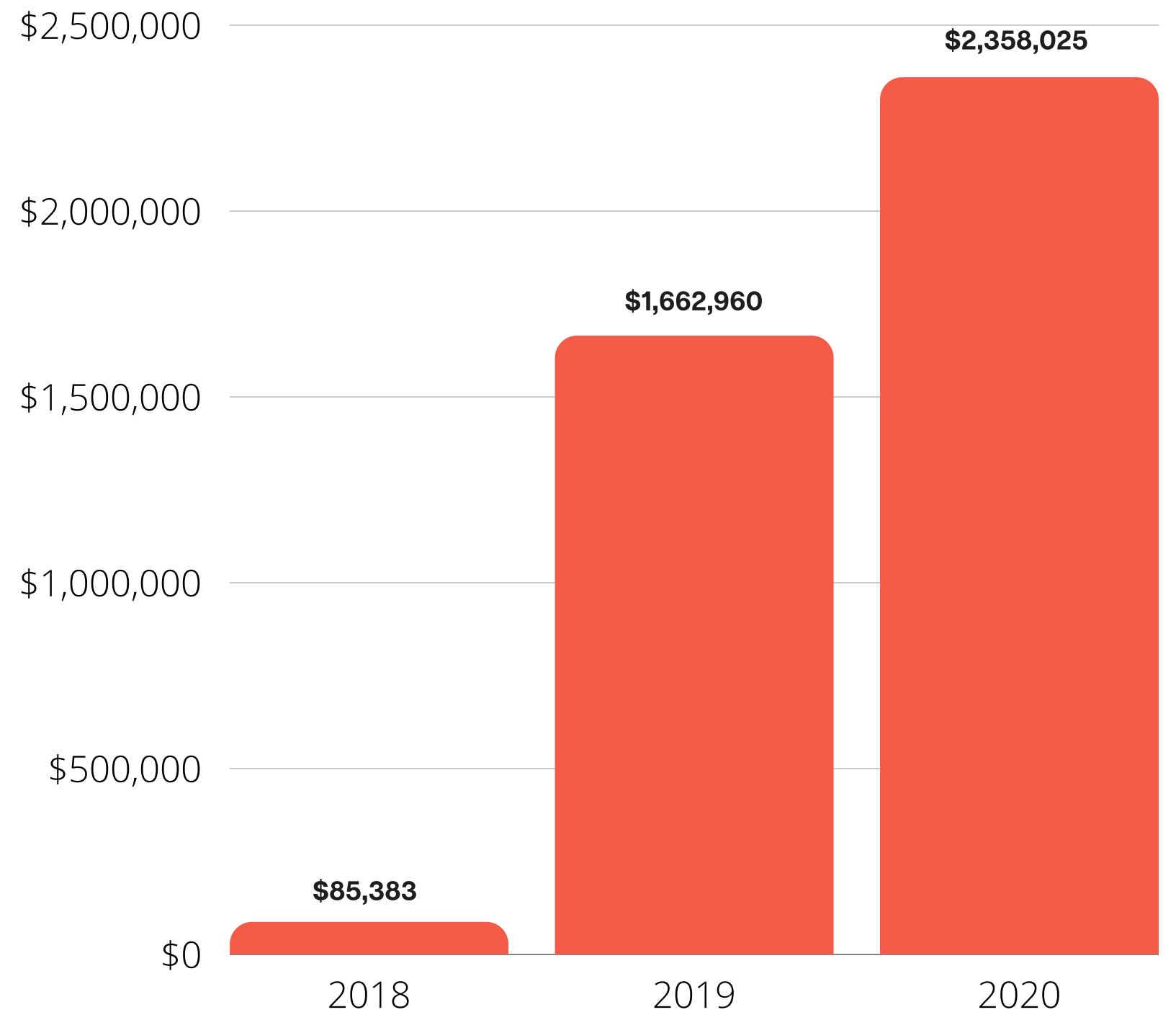
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Structures of worthiness - The belief that someone must do or be something in order to receive goods or services.



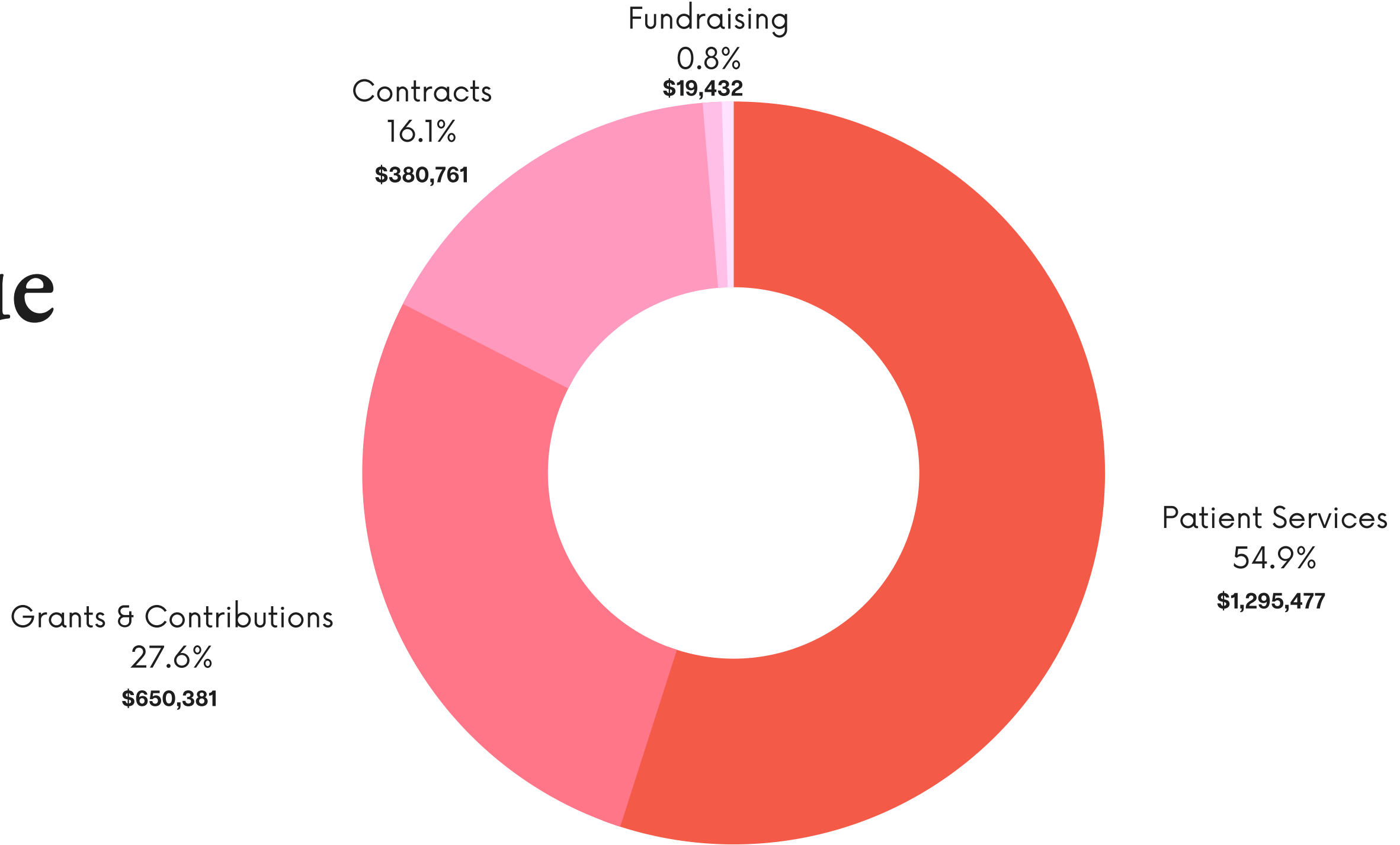
Year Over Year Revenue & Support

LIFT experienced 42% growth of our Annual Revenue in 2020 compared to 2019.



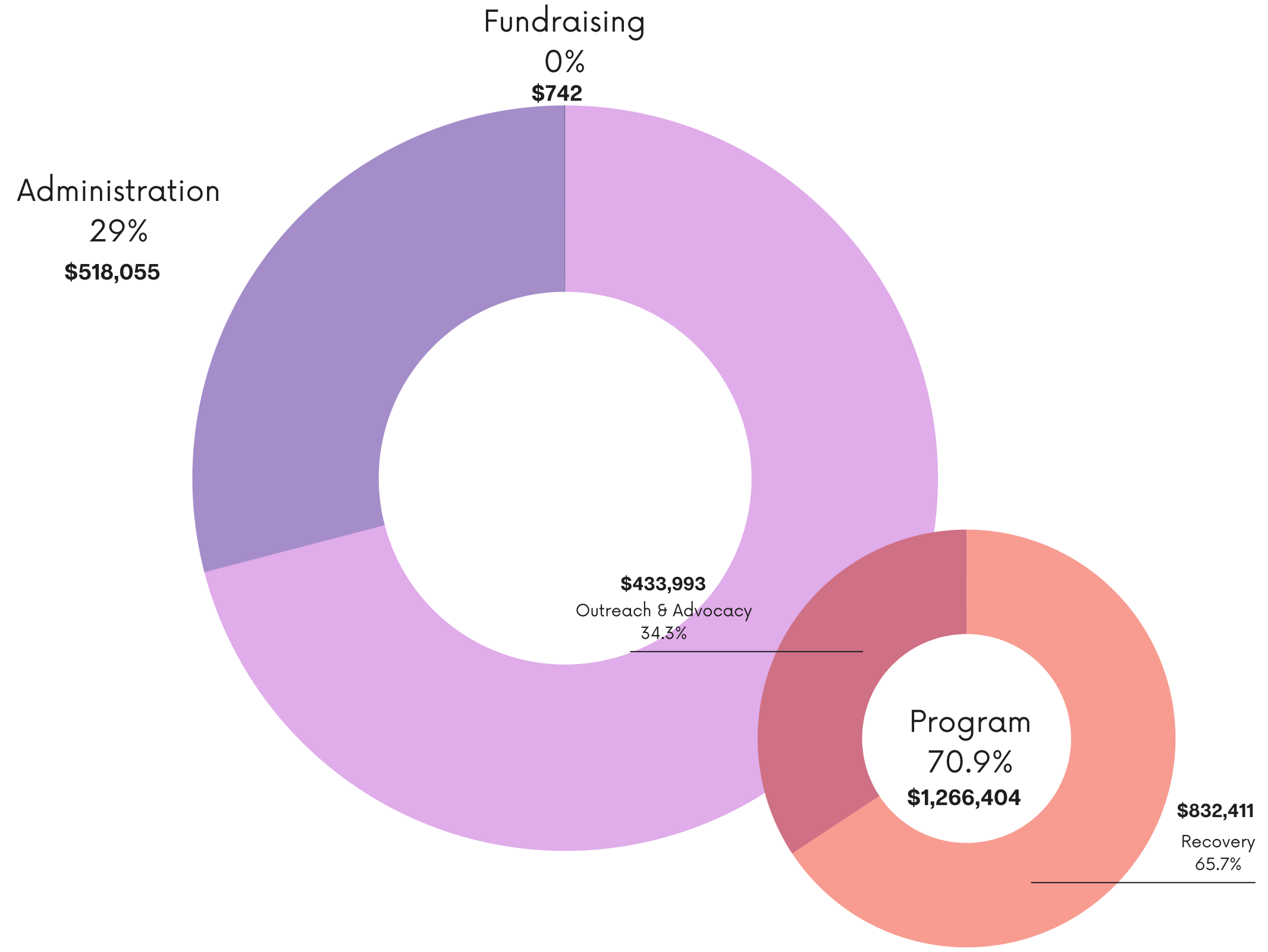
Male-perpetrated violence - Physical, emotional, and/or sexual abuse at the hands of men, usually against women and girls.

2020 Revenue by Category



Support - Give assistance to, advocate alongside, helping folx navigate barriers, holding space for.

2020 Expenses by Category



Brave/Safe Space - An environment that fosters a productive dialogue where participants are encouraged to speak honestly and critically from their own experience toward the end of mutual learning and liberation.

Part 5:

Supporter Recognition

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LIFT 2020 ANNUAL REPORT
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PUBLISHED OCTOBER 2021
.....



DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Massachusetts COVID-19 Relief Fund

During the height of the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, emergency shelters were opening across the city in an attempt to provide more space to shelter guests. The shelters were co-ed, and the women we serve at LIFT were opting to stay on the streets because staying in a co-ed shelter was frightening. LIFT immediately started organizing to open an **Emergency Shelter for Women** experiencing homelessness, exploitation, substance use disorder, and/or mental health disorders. Putting together a comprehensive shelter program to do more than offer a cot and a sandwich was the easy part. Finding the funds to support it in the middle of an unprecedented global health crisis that was spiraling out of control across the country was much more challenging. **Governor Baker** and **First Lady Lauren Baker**, in partnership with the **One8 Foundation**, had launched the **Massachusetts Covid-19 Relief Fund** (“Relief Fund”). We were directed to submit a funding request to the *Relief Fund* for operations support at the shelter.

Not only did the Relief Fund grant our first request for 30 days of operations, they granted our second ask for an additional 60 days of funding when we realized that the shelter was going to need to remain operational longer than initially anticipated.

Governor Baker and his administration, which includes the **Governor’s Council on Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence**, has always prioritized addressing the epidemic of sexual exploitation, making no exception during the pandemic. When we needed assistance to provide vital and immediate support to female survivors of violence it was Gov. Baker’s Relief Fund that stepped up.

When response times were critical, LIFT was the only organization in the state that opened a women’s shelter, something that would not have happened without the grant awards from the *Relief Fund*. Our incredible team of Survivor Case Managers were able to deliver phenomenal outcomes during a crisis. The work of Survivors at the shelter and the successes we achieved as a team led to the development and opening of HARBOR, which includes a 24/7, 365-day emergency shelter for women. Thank you Gov. Baker and Lt. Gov. Polito for your commitment to ensuring Survivors have access to safety and support and are not left behind in our most critical moments.



Radical Acceptance - Accepting ourselves, the people around us, the world around us, and the situations we are in exactly as they are.



OUTSTANDING ALLY

Maydee Morales

Silver linings appear unexpectedly. Out of the challenges of opening our Emergency COVID-19 Shelter for Women emerged many partnerships with other women-serving organizations in the city. Women throughout Worcester organized and advocated for opening and maintaining shelter operations. These collaborative relationships supported our finding a viable shelter location, delivering of supplies, and applying pressure to funders to recognize the urgent need to create and sustain a safe place for women experiencing homelessness, exploitation, substance use disorder, and/or mental health disorders during the worst health pandemic in history.

One of the partnerships we cherish most is with Maydee Morales. Maydee immediately organized a hot meal delivery system for our shelter guests. She reached out to volunteers in the community to prepare hot meals for the entire 90 days our shelter operated.

She arranged for the meals to be delivered, allowing our shelter Case Managers to stay focused on their work supporting our guests. She did all of this while managing her own organization, Catholic Charities. She worked double-time in the COVID-19 crisis to meet her organization's programming needs while ensuring meals were being made and delivered. Oftentimes, this meant Maydee was the one delivering the meals. Maydee is a true ally stepping up to support women in her community while balancing the same professional and personal challenges we all experienced during the first wave of the pandemic. Maydee didn't show up like this for recognition or bragging rights. She showed up because she is a champion for all women and an example to this community -- this is what an ally looks like. Thank you, Maydee. Thank you for showing up in a meaningful way to support our team and Survivors, allowing us to start and operate a brand new program in 72 hours, and deliver the phenomenal results of the shelter, when times were uncertain at best.



Joy - A feeling of true happiness, freedom, and hope.



PARTNER EXCELLENCE

Joshua Croke, Action! by Design

In a time where immediate access to honest and accurate information was critical, our Partner in Excellence, Joshua Croke, guided us through an evaluation of our messaging and branding. They took the LIFT vision and elevated it to amplify the voices of Survivors, created clear paths of communication and connection for our participants, and developed a brand that reflects the strength and compassion that LIFT's team and work embody. It's easy to pass off messaging and brand creation to the control of a third party in an attempt to save time, but words matter. Instead, LIFT chose to partner with Joshua and their company, Action by Design. Josh is invested in our mission and organization and it showed in the thoughtfulness of their approach in facilitating meetings and workshops guiding us through critical conversations. They parsed out our ideas and concepts into calls to action and a brand identity that resonates with the community we serve. Josh helped us use our time effectively and efficiently, focused our feedback on our new Brand Purpose Statement that encompasses who we are as an organization and the values we hold. The workshops they hosted with the LIFT Team kept us centered on who we work for every day; the exploited person on the street right now. Through the creation of our new website and our brand purpose statement we were able to renew our commitment, rethink our messaging and how it lands on Survivors, and bring our team together for meaningful conversations that shaped and shifted our programming and responses, now and into the future.

Josh used their time with LIFT to listen to the voices of survivors and helped shape their own personal views and position on systems of prostitution. Joshua then leveraged that learning to help create messaging and have conversations with folx who may have different views of the sex trade. That is what Allies do, they listen, learn, and leverage their position and influence to help shift the community's understanding on this issue, ensuring the messaging they use is in line with the voices of survivors.

Thank you, Joshua, LIFT is grateful to have your support and dedication to us, to our participants, and to our mission.



***Affinity (Spaces/groups)** - A place where learning happens amongst a group with shared identities or experiences.*



EMPLOYEE LEADER

Karen Riley-McNary

Karen is a true Ally and a truly magical, courageous woman. In a time where we had very limited guidance on how to protect ourselves and our participants from COVID and also experiencing critical staff shortages, Karen stepped up to lead the team at Jana's Place allowing us to continue to provide critical programming to our participants. Karen put her devotion to our participants and their recovery in front of her own health and safety. Karen was able to support Jana's Place participants in learning new skills such as group facilitation, staying committed to treatment during a pandemic, and really digging in to support them through trauma responses in a terrifying time for folx. As if being the interim Program Director at Jana's Place during a global health pandemic wasn't enough, Karen was simultaneously supporting the team at our **COVID-19 Emergency Shelter for Women** and working on developing and implementing our TYME Program. Karen and her team launched TYME amidst the first wave of the pandemic because delaying crucial programming and resources to exploited youth in our city couldn't wait for the pandemic to subside. These are just the accomplishments and supports Karen delivered over a few months.

Karen has been with LIFT since the beginning, like the beginning beginning. Karen truly supports our team of survivors and allies and is always the voice at the table encouraging everyone to do better and listen to survivors. Her contributions to LIFT staff and participants through her example and experience are invaluable.

The education she delivers in partnership with Survivors to our community members on our mission and the work we do that fills significant gaps in services to exploited people, most of whom are women, is vital. Thank you, Karen, for your work, your mentorship, your commitment to this movement, and for your magical brain.



Tokenism - Using survivors in a symbolic effort to show the inclusion of those with lived experience. Using survivors to speak at events, but not valuing their input and leadership.



EMPLOYEE LEADER

Alina Bluto

Wow. Alina. To say this woman is impressive is an understatement. Alina joined LIFT just days before the COVID shelter-in-place order was issued by Gov. Baker. We had already made the decision to quarantine Jana's Place and temporarily place a hold on admissions. This was a very scary and uncertain time. Mixed messages abounded from the CDC and from the former White House Administration. Guidance on effective protective measures was changing rapidly. It was an unprecedented situation. We lost staff at Jana's Place, and our VP of Outreach and Advocacy had to step in as Program Director. The Recovery Specialist job Alina applied for and accepted just weeks earlier looked very different in the face of the pandemic. But Alina didn't waiver. She dug into her new job, she continued to show up for Survivors at Jana's Place to provide consistent support for them and the program. Alina rose to the occasion and has continued to do so throughout her time at LIFT. In less than two years, Alina has been promoted twice. She is now Co-Program Director at Jana's Place. Her work ethic, perspectives on programming, and initiative supports the continued development of our treatment model at Jana's Place ensuring our work remains fresh, informed, and supportive.

Alina never hesitates to use her personal experiences as a Survivor to help provide hope for our participants; sharing that even though exiting is difficult, it is possible. From those experiences, Alina also helps to shift other providers' thoughts and views on prostituted people and how we respond and show up for them.

Thank you, Alina. Thank you for your vision, your dedication, and unconditional regard for our participants.



Peer mentorship - A relationship between survivors of prostitution in which one person has more experience than the other in the exiting/journey to liberation and can provide support as well as knowledge and skills transfer.



EMPLOYEE LEADER

Audra Doody

Audra was LIFT's first employee and we could fill this entire report writing about Audra; the work she does, the support she provides to our Sisters, her dedication, and her leadership. When we had to close the Drop-In Center due to COVID-19, she didn't skip a beat. She went outside and continued face-to-face outreach services with our participants. Through her work, Audra shows up as a leader in our organization and in the community demonstrating what a leader looks like. Courageously challenging systems that not only fail Survivors every day but failed her.

Audra is more than a mentor; she is a beacon of hope for our participants and an example for our community that not only is recovery possible but that people in recovery impact their communities and society in significant ways.

Audra managed our Emergency COVID-19 Shelter for Woman simultaneously meeting the demands of her role as Sr. Director of Outreach & Advocacy. She interviewed, hired, and trained staff, managed the schedule, ensured supplies were ordered, and shifts were covered – working doubles when necessary. Audra shows up consistently for our team, participants and staff alike. Her strength, compassion, and expertise show up in everything she does. You can't be near Audra without learning something. She keeps us laser-focused on our mission and vision by sharing her view on how and in which ways LIFT can grow and continue to better serve prostituted people. Thank you Audra for all that you do, for all that you represent, and for all the people and systems you impact every day.



MA Vacatur Law - Laws that recognize that trafficking victims are not responsible for criminal activity in which they have been forced to engage.



Our Amazing Sponsors & Donors

\$150,000 & Above

Haffty Foundation

Massachusetts COVID-19 Relief Fund

The NoVo Foundation

\$25,000 - \$50,000

Fred Harris Daniels Foundation

Thank you to our other individual contributors who donated through Facebook and other social payment platforms from which we do not receive a comprehensive list of names.

\$10,000 - \$24,999

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 United Way of Central Massachusetts Rockland Charitable Trust Foundation Cornerstone Bank

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 UMass Memorial Healthcare, Inc. Eastern Bank Steve Anderson
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Network of Victim Assistance GFWC Northboro JWC First Congregational Church
 Commonwealth of Massachusetts Harper Knight Richard Silva
 Gerald Zieff & Leslie Lockard Gina Dellolio Deborah Kelly
 Bowditch & Dewey, LLP Oakdale United Methodist Church Ryan Senn



Looking Ahead

In 2021, LIFT will continue to bravely take up space and create safe spaces. We will continue to advocate loudly alongside those who our community wishes to make invisible. We will stand beside prostituted people and work to make spaces and places where Survivors don't just feel, but truly are, welcomed and accepted. We will stand with Survivors as they find their footing in a world that has not been just, accessible, or equitable to them. We will continue to challenge systems, institutions, and organizations to do better for all of us. We will no longer allow prostituted people to be marginalized and erased, and we will no longer allow programs to throw prostituted people out as if they are something to discard – not human beings with aspirations and potential like the rest of us. We will continue to push for places, spaces, and people to truly be trauma-informed and Survivor-centered.

LIFT will continue to build genuine partnerships and bridges. We will continue to provide Survivor-led training and education, utilizing the lived experiences of many to push for real, necessary, and meaningful change. We will stand beside Survivors as they learn to advocate for themselves and fight for their rights including the right to have access to choices.

We will no longer watch as others make prostituted people beg to find shelter for a night. We will no longer watch quietly as prostituted people are screened out of vital services and die because of an unwillingness from people to be uncomfortable. LIFT will no longer lay down and allow other entities to build programs off our backs and exploit Survivors and treat them like arbitrary data points. We will listen to Survivors and work together to make change. We will resource share and cross-train so we as a community can all be better when participants show up and need support. With the support of this community, we can create viable pathways out of “the life” and combine that process with the critical resources and support Survivors need.

Scan to donate to our mission-based work or visit
LIFTWorcester.org/donate

