

Massachusetts Women of Color Network (MAWOCN)

FOUNDED: 2010

CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET: \$425,856

CONTACT: Kishana Smith, *Executive Director*

☎ 508-443-1990

✉ massswocn@gmail.com

🌐 www.mawocn.com



The Massachusetts Women of Color Network (MAWOCN) supports the leadership and sustainment of women of color (WoC) professionals working in the sexual assault and domestic violence (SDV) field. MAWOCN has witnessed the profound impact of racism and other systems of oppression on its service population. Founded in 2010 by seven women of color, MAWOCN shares knowledge and resources, provides peer-to-peer support and mentorship, and raises awareness about institutional racism, while challenging systems that uphold and perpetuate oppression.

Historically, WoC have predominantly occupied frontline direct service positions. Yet, they have limited access to leadership roles, support, and general services. In 2015, MAWOCN conducted market research and found that of the 69 participating SDV organizations, there were 81 individuals in executive leadership, of which only 3 were WoC. Today, 9 individuals hold leadership roles; MAWOCN has contributed to this profound and ongoing shift in the SDV movement. MAWOCN provides a culturally-specific space for skill-building and empowerment among its members, acknowledging the importance of supporting individuals who face multiple layers of discrimination in the SDV field.

Two-Year Goals

- Increase the number of members by 75%
- Increase staff by 6 FTE
- Expand resources: leadership development, training, holistic support
- Disseminate the Keeping Black Survivors Alive (KBSA) toolkit and facilitate statewide training to inform enhanced services for BIPOC survivors of violence
- Co-create an accountability process to better care for Women of Color in collaboration with Jane Doe Inc. and Caucasian executive directors in SDV organizations

Investment Opportunity

Over the next two years, MAWOCN is seeking \$1.6M to support the addition of 6 staff to meet the needs of its members, and to increase membership from 489 to 1,250 throughout Massachusetts. This investment will help MAWOCN expand member resources by increasing training and technical assistance for WoC in both frontline direct service and executive positions. Providing expanded training and holistic support, MAWOCN will help improve the quality of service for survivors of the sexual and domestic violence community.

Ways to Invest

- \$30K: For financial hardship and health and fitness training
- \$200K: Support KBSA statewide training
- \$10K: Laptops for staff
- \$5K: Gift cards for self-care supplies
- Space for community training

MAWOCN Model



Keeping Black Survivors Alive Project (KBSA)

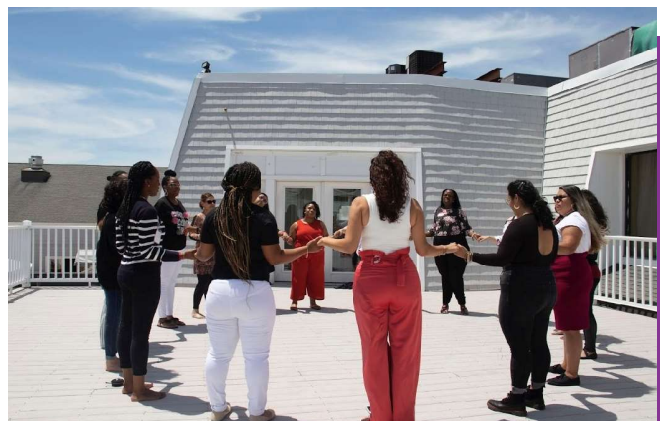
Many WoC in the SDV field serving survivors of violence also identify as survivors themselves. Their invaluable experiences, cultural competency, education, and humility guide their essential services. If this core group of workers is not adequately supported and recognized, the individuals needing these critical SDV services may not receive adequate care.

MAWOCN has established programs and initiatives that are making a significant impact in addressing the issue of support and sustainment for WoC working in the SDV field. These transformative programs include training and technical assistance in the form of quarterly meetings and conferences, confidential one-on-one counseling, and the groundbreaking signature project, **Keeping Black Survivors Alive (KBSA)**.

Since 2021, MAWOCN has partnered with 5 Black women-led community-based organizations in Massachusetts to develop a cohort of organizations currently serving Black survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV). The group comprises 16 Women of Color ranging from frontline staff to managers and executive directors. The cohort created a multimedia toolkit led by the voices and input of Black survivors of abuse who have received support services in Massachusetts.

The KBSA toolkit provides a curriculum, best practices, resources, and education on serving Black survivors of abuse, creating culturally-specific services, repairing harm in BIPOC communities, and decreasing the overreliance on law enforcement. The primary objective is the statewide distribution of this toolkit, which will include training for diverse stakeholders, such as SDV organizations, healthcare providers, law enforcement, places of worship, salons, and community businesses.

MAWOCN members gathered for a self-care activity at the MAWOCN "Beyond Self-Care to Leading Change" conference



Leadership Development: Breaking the Glass Ceiling

WoC service providers in the SDV field often hold entry-level positions as frontline workers. They are more likely to provide the most direct services to survivors while having less access to structural support than their White counterparts. Therefore, WoC are witnessing abuse and experiencing vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue at higher rates than their White counterparts; this leads to an increase in burnout. MAWOCN is committed to decreasing burnout rates by offering its network members access to various tools, skills, and support. These resources contribute to increased retention of the workers, benefitting the survivors they serve.

MAWOCN members also receive mentoring from senior and executive leaders in the SDV field. The mentors provide guidance and strengthen the skills of those seeking high-level leadership roles in their organizations. The quarterly trainings held by MAWOCN provide information and education on analyzing and preparing an organization budget, program development, creating work plans, and the importance of self-care. Confidential one-on-one counseling offers an opportunity for women experiencing institutional racism to address their feelings of isolation and invisibility and increase their feelings of hope and validation.

“MAWOCN provides inspiring, relevant, and compelling leadership for racial equity, igniting allies to action and creating transformative experiences for women of color in the field.”

— Debra Robbin, Jane Doe Inc. (JDI)

Leadership & Governance

Executive Director Kishana Smith brings 13 years of domestic and sexual violence work experience, a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, and a hunger for influencing positive change. Kishana has experience in advocacy, direct service, human resources, and nonprofit management. Kishana openly identifies as a survivor of domestic violence and sexual assault, and she believes that ending violence is in the hands of all of us. MAWOCN has a board of seven members who bring deep professional and lived experience to the organization.

Financial Sustainability

MAWOCN transitioned from operating as a community group in 2010 to becoming a registered 501(c)(3) organization. As a young organization with a small team, MAWOCN successfully cultivated funding from government contracts, foundation grants, and individual contributors. The annual awards gala has also become an additional funding source since its inception in 2022. MAWOCN will achieve overall organizational growth and sustainability with continued and increased funding.

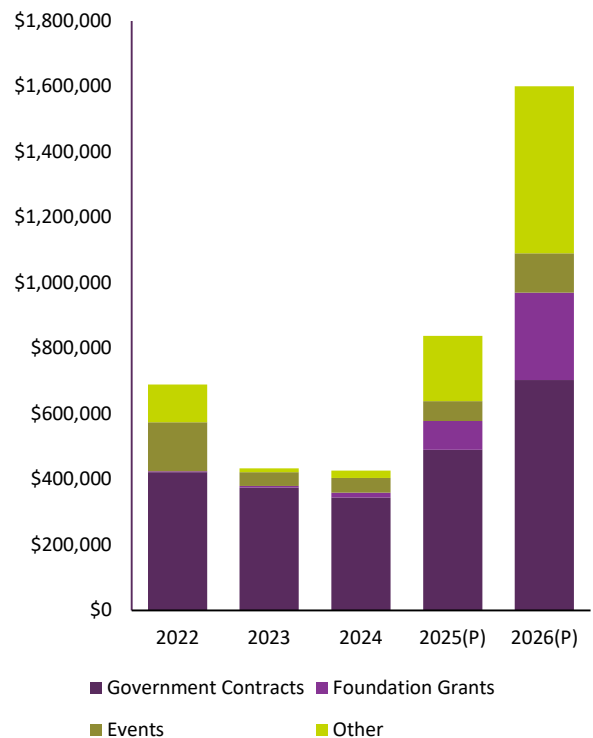
KEY INVESTORS

- Center for Hope and Healing, Inc.
- Jane Doe Inc.
- MA Department of Public Health

KEY SUPPORTERS

- Brookview House
- Love Life Now Foundation
- Transgender Emergency Fund of Massachusetts
- YMCA of Central Massachusetts

Revenue by Source





Success Story

ASIA THOMPSON

“MAWOCN holds a special place in my heart. This organization is truly a beacon of light.” — Asia Thompson, MAWOCN Board Member

MAWOCN uplifted, encouraged, and supported Asia through a very challenging period of her life, for which she is grateful. With the support of MAWOCN, Asia completed her studies and obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Rehabilitation, Advocacy, and Justice from Bay Path University. Through her participation in MAWOCN’s programs, she gained new skills, confidently attended interviews, and obtained new employment. Asia states that she has left with a “gem” for her personal treasure box after attending the MAWOCN conferences and events. She emphasizes the necessity of MAWOCN for the community and is thankful that the organization exists.

Program Performance and Organizational Health

Below is a summary of the key measures MAWOCN tracks to demonstrate progress, create internal accountability, capture lessons learned, and adjust strategy as necessary.

	FY 2024	FY 2025(P)	FY 2026(P)
Program Performance			
Members attending annual conference	150	200	250
Members attending trainings (including KBSA community members)	757	1,800	2,500
Members receiving professional development funds	0	750	1,250
# Hours of one-on-one counseling	1,037	1,895	3,700
Total membership	489	750	1,250
Organizational Health/Capacity-Building			
Number of full-time staff members	3	6	9
Number of Board members	7	11	11
Total Revenue	\$425,856	\$838,000	\$1,600,000

Social Impact

MAWOCN recognizes the importance of holistic support by investing in the team's and its members' well-being. These resources include flex funds for leadership development, financial assistance, health and fitness training, and a two-night retreat. These programs and resources are developed to combat burnout in a rewarding yet challenging field.

Below is a summary of the social impact that MAWOCN aspires to have on the staff and members, the BIPOC community, and its stakeholders in the next two years.

Indicator	Current Numbers	2026(P)
Members reporting improved mental health	92%	100%
Members in leadership positions	62%	85%
Members reporting decreased burnout	92%	100%
Members reporting improved physical health	80%	95%
Community members engaged in KBSA trainings	238	2,200