



Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response: **What Has Changed?**



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Enugu State

Coal City State

Michael Okpara Statue

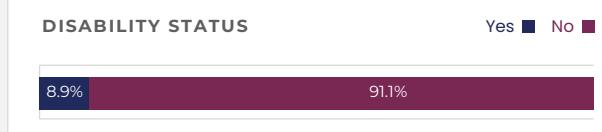
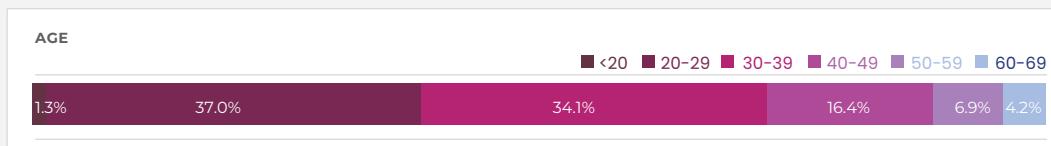
Enugu State

Population: 5,607,631

52.3% Female 47.7% Male

Overall Grade 60.8%

Respondents Demography (n = 1,080)



Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development

BUDGET ALLOCATION

₦339.96m

(This accounts for 0.1% of the total state budget)

BUDGET PERFORMANCE

₦191.77m

(This accounts for 56.4% of total allocation to the ministry)



Capital □ Personnel □ Overhead □



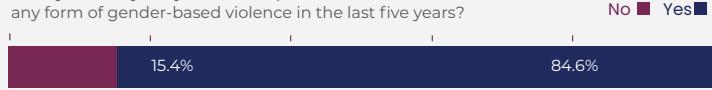
Per Capita Spending

₦65.44

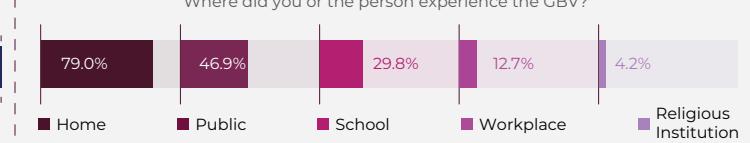
Indexes	Indicators	Total Grades
Laws and Policies	LP ₁ LP ₂ LP ₃	—
Access to Legal Justice	ALJ ₁ ALJ ₂ ALJ ₃	ALJ ₄
Support Services	SS ₁ SS ₂ SS ₃	SS ₄
Information and Awareness	IA ₁ IA ₂ IA ₃	IA ₄
Budget and Spending	BS ₁ BS ₂ BS ₃	—

GBV Context 2025

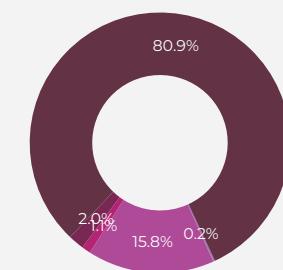
Have you or anyone you know experienced any form of gender-based violence in the last five years?



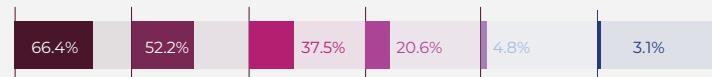
Where did you or the person experience the GBV?



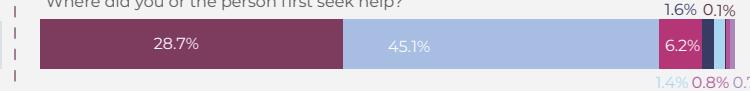
Why did you or the person choose where you sought help?

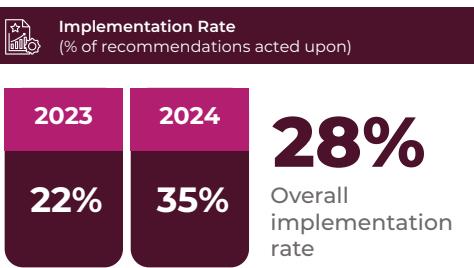
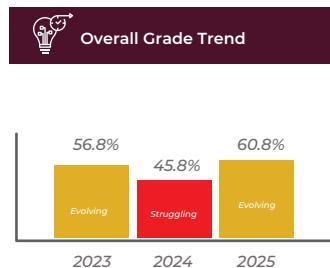


What form of GBV did you or the person experience?

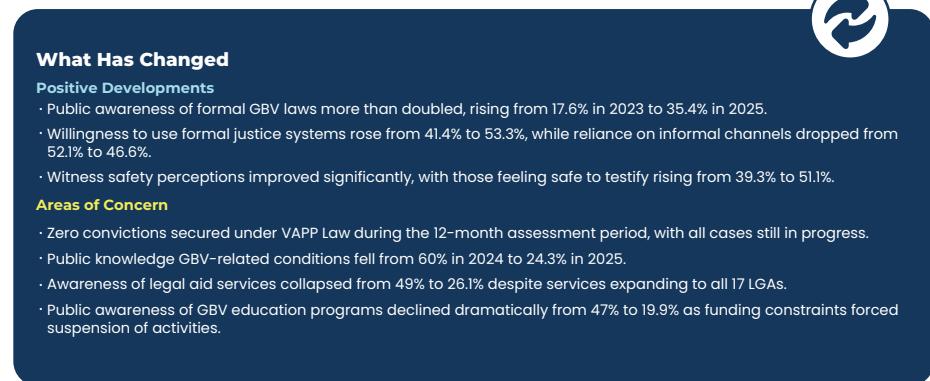


Where did you or the person first seek help?





Index	2023	2024	2025
Laws and Policies	LP 75.0%	-1 ▼ LP 58.3%	LP 50.0%
Access to Legal Justice	ALJ 61.3%	-1 ▼ ALJ 43.8%	+1 ▲ ALJ 56.3%
Support Services	SS 61.3%	SS 50.0%	SS 62.5%
Information and Awareness	IA 61.3%	-1 ▼ IA 43.8%	+1 ▲ IA 68.8%
Budget and Spending	BS 25.0%	+1 ▲ BS 33.3%	+1 ▲ BS 66.7%



- Produced and distributed VAPP law materials translated into English, Pidgin, and Igbo.

Access to Legal Justice



- A Survivor Legal Aid Network was established in June 2025, engaging 12 pro bono lawyers and formalizing MoUs across six LGAs to strengthen legal support for GBV survivors.
- In July 2025, the Enugu State Ministry of Children, Gender Affairs, and Social Development partnered with UNICEF to train 160 community-based child protection volunteers across three LGAs to strengthen grassroots detection and response to child abuse and GBV.

Support Services

- Provided economic support in "sympathetic" cases through the Commissioner's intervention with the state's First Lady.
- Established GBV desk officers in each LGA to coordinate referrals and reduce travel burden for rural survivors.

Information and Awareness

- Convened a major gathering of women from all 17 LGAs at Okpara Square in August 2024 to discuss GBV.
- Produced VAPP law booklets translated into English, Pidgin, and Igbo for distribution at community events

Change Spotlight

To overcome obstacles like distance and transport costs, the Ministry of Women Affairs deployed trained GBV focal persons in all 17 LGAs. These local officers serve as first responders, handling complaints and coordinating referrals, thus reducing the need for survivors to travel to Enugu for assistance. This decentralized approach has yielded measurable results, with the ministry reporting 18 new GBV cases in a single day during the assessment period. Previously, survivors spent ₦6,000-₦7,000 on transport from villages like Enugu Ezieke to the capital; now, they can walk to their local offices for immediate help.

The model has also sped up response times, allowing cases to be logged in communities rather than waiting for survivors to travel to Enugu. As one ministry official put it, survivors can now report directly to trained local government focal persons.



Enugu State GBV Assessment Survey

Overall Grade 60.8%

LAWS AND POLICIES



Are you aware of existing laws and/or policies that address gender-based violence (GBV) in the state?

Yes ■ No ■

40.7% 59.3%



Do you think customary or religious laws and/or practices are sufficient in preventing and responding to GBV in the state?

Yes ■ No ■

74.3% 25.7%



Do you know of anyone who has been convicted for GBV-related offenses?

Yes ■ No ■

27.1% 72.9%

SUPPORT SERVICES



Do you know of, or have you visited, any active shelters and/or Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) for GBV victims/survivors in the state?

Yes ■ No ■

21.1% 78.9%



Do you believe that these shelters and/or SARCs are effectively functional, adequately equipped, properly maintained, and sustainable over time?

Yes ■ No ■

67.5% 23.2% 9.2% 0.0%

■ Agree ■ Strongly agree ■ Indifferent ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree



Which of these processes and procedures for reporting GBV-related incidents are you aware of? (Referral Pathways)

Yes ■ No ■

76.6% 48.9% 7.1% 7.9% 0.7%

■ Police ■ Hospital ■ Support group ■ Legal ■ None



Do you think informal support systems such as family, friends, religious centres, community groups, etc., are helpful to GBV victims/survivors?

Yes ■ No ■

43.9% 56.1%

ACCESS TO LEGAL JUSTICE



Where would you seek justice if you, or anyone you know, experience GBV?

61.9% 37.9% 0.2%

■ Formal justice: e.g., police, courts, etc.
■ Informal justice: e.g., traditional or religious heads, community groups, etc.
■ I will not seek justice



If you witness GBV, would you feel safe serving as a witness during the investigation and trial?

58.3% 39.8% 1.9%

■ Yes, I would
■ It depends on the robustness and effectiveness of the witness protection program
■ No, I would not



Are you aware of legal assistance and services provided by the State to GBV victim/survivors?

■ Yes ■ No

28.4% 71.6%

INFORMATION AND AWARENESS



Do you know of any GBV information and/or education programs or materials in the state?

■ Yes ■ No

21.9% 78.1%



How useful is/was the content of the GBV awareness material in educating you on GBV?

70.9% 7.2% 19.0% 3.0%

■ Mostly useful ■ Completely useful ■ A little bit useful ■ Not useful at all



Which GBV information and education materials are you aware of for persons with disabilities?

82.0% 76.8% 43.1% 36.9% 50.2% 3.1% 4.2% 0.3%

■ Audio ■ Visual ■ Sign ■ Picture ■ Simplified ■ Subtitle ■ Braille ■ None

Enugu State GBV Context Trend (2024-2025)

Overall Grade

60.8%

Have you or anyone you know experienced any form of gender-based violence in the last five years?



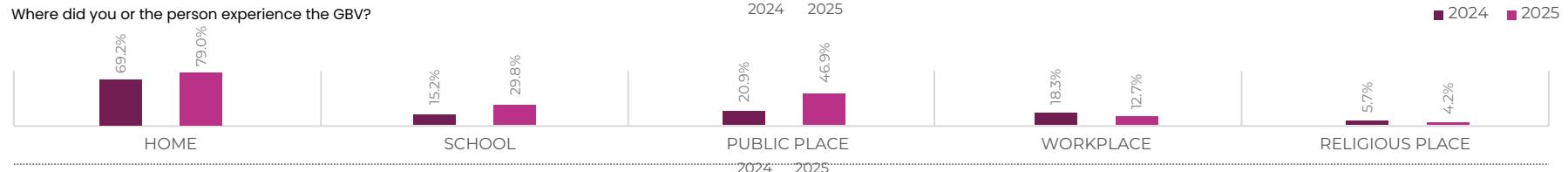
84.6%

of Enugu State population have either experienced GBV or knows someone who have experienced GBV

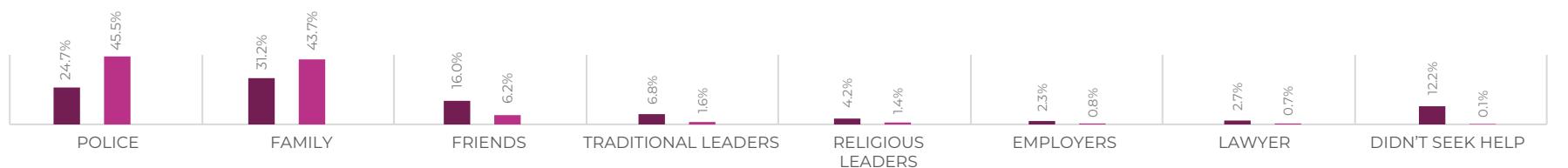
What form of GBV did you or the person experience?



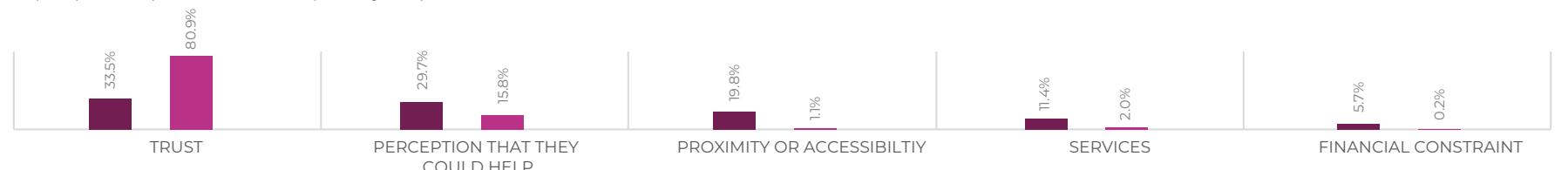
Where did you or the person experience the GBV?



Where did you or the person first seek help?



Why did you or the person choose where you sought help?



State Data Trend (2023-2025)

Overall Grade 60.8%





KEY INSIGHTS

Laws and Policies

Current State in 2025

Enugu State has enacted key legal frameworks to address GBV, most notably the VAPP Law, domesticated in 2019. While the law retains core elements of the federal Act, public awareness remains low: only 40.7% of residents are familiar with it. Perceptions of the law's effectiveness are split, with 49.5% seeing it as effective and 50.5% not. This skepticism likely stems from weak enforcement and the limited visibility of legal outcomes.

Convictions under the VAPP Act are rare. The Ministry of Justice reported no concluded cases within the assessment period, with all prosecutions still in progress. Legal Aid representatives and FIDA attributed delays to corruption, interference by perpetrators' families, prolonged trials, and frequent out-of-court settlements. Only 27.1% of respondents know of a GBV conviction, reinforcing the perception that justice is often elusive.

In contrast, informal systems enjoy broader public confidence. Although only 37.2% of residents are aware of customary or religious mechanisms addressing GBV, 74.3% believe these systems are effective. This preference may reflect their cultural familiarity and accessibility, despite known shortcomings in delivering accountability. Stakeholders noted that informal settlements often lead to case withdrawals, and that harmful traditional practices still persist. Examples include property disinheritance of widows, forced remarriage to deceased husbands' relatives, and public shaming rituals.

Some progress was reported. The traditional rulers' council has signed a bylaw against GBV, and officials report that female genital mutilation has been "completely eradicated." However, harmful religious messaging remains a barrier, as some faith leaders reportedly advise women to "endure and pray" rather than seek protection or legal redress.

Changes Over Time (2023–2025)

Between 2023 and 2025, public awareness of formal GBV laws increased overall, from 17.6% to 35.4%, peaking at 57.5% in 2024. This increase aligns with reported sensitization efforts across all 17 local government areas. The Ministry of Women Affairs confirmed conducting awareness programs, capacity building trainings, and community sensitization sessions in every LGA, including a major

gathering of women from all 17 LGAs at Okpara Square in August 2024. Civil society organizations have also contributed by producing and distributing VAPP law materials translated into English, Pidgin, and Igbo to improve accessibility across literacy levels.

In contrast, trust in customary and religious systems rose sharply, with the proportion of residents who see them sufficient holding steady at 33.6% in 2023 and 33% in 2024, before surging to 74.3% in 2025. This points to a growing reliance on informal mechanisms for GBV response. Stakeholders attribute this trend to faster resolution times and cultural familiarity of traditional justice processes. It also reflects frustration with formal systems, where cases can take months or years without resolution.

Meanwhile, the proportion of residents who knew of GBV convictions dropped from 60% in 2024 to 27.1% in 2025. This decline may reflect fewer publicized convictions or reduced transparency, potentially weakening confidence in formal justice processes.

Access to Legal Justice

Current State in 2025

Residents of Enugu State continue to navigate both formal and informal justice systems for GBV cases, with trust in formal mechanisms remaining fragile. The formal process involves several steps: survivors report to the police, who investigate and remand suspects; case files are then transferred to the Attorney General's office for legal review before proceeding to magistrate courts and, eventually, the High Court. This process can take months, during which complainants often lose interest or opt for out-of-court settlements.

Just over half of respondents (61.9%) say they would turn to police or courts, while 37.9% still prefer informal channels such as traditional or religious leaders. Notably, 75.7% believe informal mechanisms are effective in delivering justice. This aligns with earlier findings showing stronger public confidence in customary and religious responses to GBV. However, stakeholders report that community-level settlements remain common, despite government policy prohibiting mediation in criminal GBV cases.

Willingness to engage with formal processes is cautious. While 58.3% are willing to serve as witnesses in GBV cases, (39.8%) would do so only if there are effective protection mechanisms in place. This caution is justified by reports of threats and intimidation by perpetrators, highlighting the urgent need for stronger witness protection and accountability systems.

Stakeholders report functional Family Support Units or Human Rights Desks exist in some Police Commands (specifically at State CID level), and there is movement toward designated courts, but comprehensive coverage across all commands/divisions and formal designated GBV courts are not yet established.

Legal aid infrastructure exists across all 17 LGAs, including Human Rights Desks in police stations, social welfare departments, and trained GBV focal persons. Civil society organizations such as FIDA, the Legal Aid Council, and various NGOs also provide support, though many report that funding constraints limit their reach. Public awareness of these services remains low at 28.4%, pointing to a critical gap in information and outreach, which may further weaken public confidence in the formal justice system.

Changes Over Time (2023–2025)

Over the three-year period, there is a growing willingness among Enugu residents to engage with formal justice mechanisms for GBV cases. The proportion of those willing to turn to police or courts rose from 41.4% in 2023 to a peak of 71% in 2024, before settling at 61.9% in 2025. At the same time, reliance on informal channels declined from 52.1% in 2023 to 24% in 2024, before rising slightly to 37.9% in 2025, suggesting a fluctuating but overall downward trend, with no complete transition away from traditional systems. This shift coincides with increased training of law enforcement officers on GBV issues. Multiple stakeholders confirmed that police and judicial officers have received training within the past year. Though implementation gaps remain, some officers still blame survivors or favor perpetrators based on gender bias.

Perceptions of safety in serving as a witness improved over time, with 39.3% of residents feeling safe to testify in 2023, rising to 46% in 2024 and reaching 58.3% in 2025. However, concerns about personal risk increased. The share of residents who said they would only participate if strong witness protection measures were in place jumped from 11.4% in 2023 to 32% in 2024, and further to 40% in 2025. This highlights the urgent need to institutionalize safeguards that protect those who come forward.

Meanwhile, despite reports of state-provided legal aid services expanding, awareness of these services dropped sharply, from 49% in 2024 to just 28.4% in 2025. This expanded infrastructure has not translated to increased public awareness, indicating a communication failure rather than service unavailability. It underscores the need for renewed public education and outreach to ensure that legal support is visible and accessible.

Together, these findings affirm earlier observations that informal systems continue to fill critical gaps. They also point to the importance of strengthening formal structures, through better protections, improved visibility, and expanded legal support, to build public trust and ensure survivors can access justice safely and confidently.

Support Services

Current State in 2025

Enugu State has only one government-operated SARC located in the metropolis. It operates through collaboration among three ministries: Gender Affairs (counselors), Health (nurses and doctors), and Justice (legal officers), offering free medical, psychosocial, and legal services. The Ministry of Women Affairs provides additional economic support in “sympathetic” cases through the Commissioner’s intervention with the state’s First Lady. However, the concentration of these services in Enugu metropolis creates significant access barriers for rural populations across the state’s 17 LGAs. In addition to the government-run facility, civil society organization WACOL operates a separate SARC, also located in the urban center. Another CSO, Ihuoma Girls Foundation, runs a shelter providing support to survivors. Despite these efforts, all existing facilities remain concentrated in urban areas. Plans exist to establish three additional SARCs in Igbo-Eze North, Awgu, and Nkanu East, but these remain unimplemented.

Only 21.1% of respondents reported they knew of or visited a SARC or shelter, and just 26% were aware of available support services such as medical, legal, psychosocial, or economic aid. These low figures reflect earlier findings of limited public knowledge about state-supported services and reinforce the challenges survivors face in seeking timely, coordinated support.

The state has established a referral system with GBV focal persons in each LGA who receive cases and coordinate with the central ministry. The state supports a hotline for reporting, though it is not toll-free. However, implementation quality varies. While a majority of residents are familiar with reporting through police or community security (76.6%) and to a lesser extent through hospitals (48.9%), awareness of legal representation (7.9%) and support group pathways (7.1%) is extremely low. Some stakeholders described relying on “oral referral” only, admitting the government should provide written materials describing these pathways “to make things easier.”

The role of informal support systems remains strong, with 43.9% of respondents believing these are better than formal services. This mirrors earlier insights around greater trust in community-based structures and religious networks, especially in the absence of widespread, accessible formal services. These informal supports systems offer mixed outcomes for GBV survivors. While growing awareness has improved family and community-level support in some areas, harmful attitudes persist: some religious leaders advise prayer instead of action, and some traditional leaders tell women to return to their family homes. Strengthening and integrating informal and formal systems, through clearer referral pathways, capacity building, and public education, will be essential for improving survivor support and outcomes.

Changes Over Time (2023–2025)

Public awareness of active SARC remained consistently low over the three-year period: 26.4% in 2023, 20% in 2024, and 21.1% in 2025. This stagnation is concerning given the critical role SARCs play in supporting survivors with protection, care, and recovery.

In contrast, awareness of formal referral pathways has improved. From 43.0% in 2023, recognition of police and healthcare channels rose sharply, reaching 62.6% and 36.2% respectively in 2024, and further to 76.6% and 48.9% in 2025. This improvement corresponds with deliberate efforts to

strengthen referral mechanisms. The state established GBV desk officers at each LGA, distributed their contact information to communities, and conducted training for law enforcement and healthcare workers on GBV response. UNICEF, in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender Affairs, trained community-based child protection structures in three LGAs, creating volunteer networks that can make referrals. However, knowledge of legal referral pathways has declined steeply over three years, from 48% in 2023 to 24.3% in 2024, and further down to just 7.9% in 2025. This decline points to growing gaps in access to legal support, echoing previous findings on low awareness of legal aid services.

At the same time, reliance on informal support appears to be increasing. The share of residents who view informal systems, such as help from family, religious centres, and community groups, as helpful rose from 34.3% in 2023 to 43.9% in 2025. This shift may signal both accessibility challenges within formal services and the continued relevance of community networks. The trends underscore the need to expand and publicize formal services while building stronger, more accountable links with informal support systems.

Information and Awareness

Current State in 2025

Stakeholders report extensive GBV sensitization efforts, including capacity-building trainings, community outreach, and media campaigns led by the Ministry of Women Affairs across all 17 LGAs. A major event in August 2024 gathered women from all LGAs to discuss GBV prevention and response, while civil society organizations run regular radio and TV programs. Despite these initiatives, awareness remains critically low, only 19.9% of respondents know of any GBV education efforts, highlighting a disconnect between outreach strategies and public engagement.

Among those aware of GBV programs, family and friends (53%) and television (52.1%) were the main information sources, followed by social media (32.2%) and NGOs (20.3%). Traditional media and institutional platforms such as schools, healthcare facilities, and religious centers had minimal impact, signaling missed opportunities to leverage trusted community structures for broader awareness.

Public support for school-based GBV education is strong (98.6%), yet implementation appears inconsistent. While the Ministry of Women Affairs claims GBV content is integrated into Civic Education at primary and junior secondary levels, civil society actors remain unaware or skeptical, suggesting poor visibility and coordination. Efforts to make GBV information accessible to persons with disabilities are growing but limited, with sign language and simplified messaging more common than braille or screen subtitling, leaving critical gaps in inclusive communication.

Changes Over Time (2023–2025)

Awareness of GBV information programs declined precipitously from 36% in 2023 and 47% in 2024 to 21.9% in 2025. This erosion occurred despite qualitative evidence of continued IEC production and distribution, suggesting the issue is not material availability but rather dissemination strategy, media placement, or message saturation fatigue.

The usefulness rating of GBV materials showed interesting fluctuation: 71.9% found materials useful

in 2023, rising to 74% in 2024, then dropped to 73.5% in 2025 (combining completely and mostly useful categories). This improvement in perceived usefulness despite declining awareness may suggest that recent materials are better designed, more culturally relevant, or more action oriented.

Budget and Spending

Budget Analysis 2024

Enugu State allocated ₦340 million to GBV in 2024, representing 0.07% of its total state budget, one of the lowest budget prioritizations among Nigerian states. The state spent ₦191.8 million of the allocated amount, achieving a 56.4% implementation rate, which is relatively better than many states but still indicates underutilization of available resources. In 2024, the state recorded ₦65.44 in per capita spending on women affairs and GBV-related interventions, indicating persistent underfunding relative to need. While the state has established specific GBV budget lines within the Ministry of Women Affairs and relevant ministries, both the low budget allocation and moderate implementation performance suggest limited political prioritization of GBV interventions and the need for stronger advocacy to increase funding and improve service delivery for survivors.

Changes Over Time (2022–2024)

The 2024 budget marked the first time in the three-year assessment period that Enugu State included GBV-specific line items. These were: "Production and Erection of Billboards on GBV, Child Protection, Mental Health Seminars, and Drug Abuse," which received an allocation of ₦10 million but recorded 0% execution; and "Equipping the GBV Situation Room in the Ministry of Children, Gender Affairs and Social Development with a Server," allocated ₦8 million, of which ₦7.1 million was spent, representing an 88.8% performance. The introduction of these GBV-specific line items significantly influenced the state's overall score in the 2025 budget and spending domain of the Womanity Index. In addition, the state's score in the budget performance indicator also improved, as budget performance rose substantially from 27.0% in 2023 to 56.4% in 2024, the highest recorded in the South East region.

Per capita spending stood at ₦65.44 in 2024, ₦34.60 in 2023, and ₦51.00 in 2022. Although 2024 reflects an improvement compared to earlier years, the values are critically low and the fluctuations across the period indicate inconsistent investment in GBV-related interventions.

Human Angle Stories

A 100-level university student and her friend were gang-raped at a party, and the ordeal was recorded. Before her violation, the survivor was aware that rape is a crime under the law. She also knew about the law in Ekiti that addresses rape, imposing life imprisonment as punishment for perpetrators. This knowledge emboldened her to seek help.

KEY GAPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

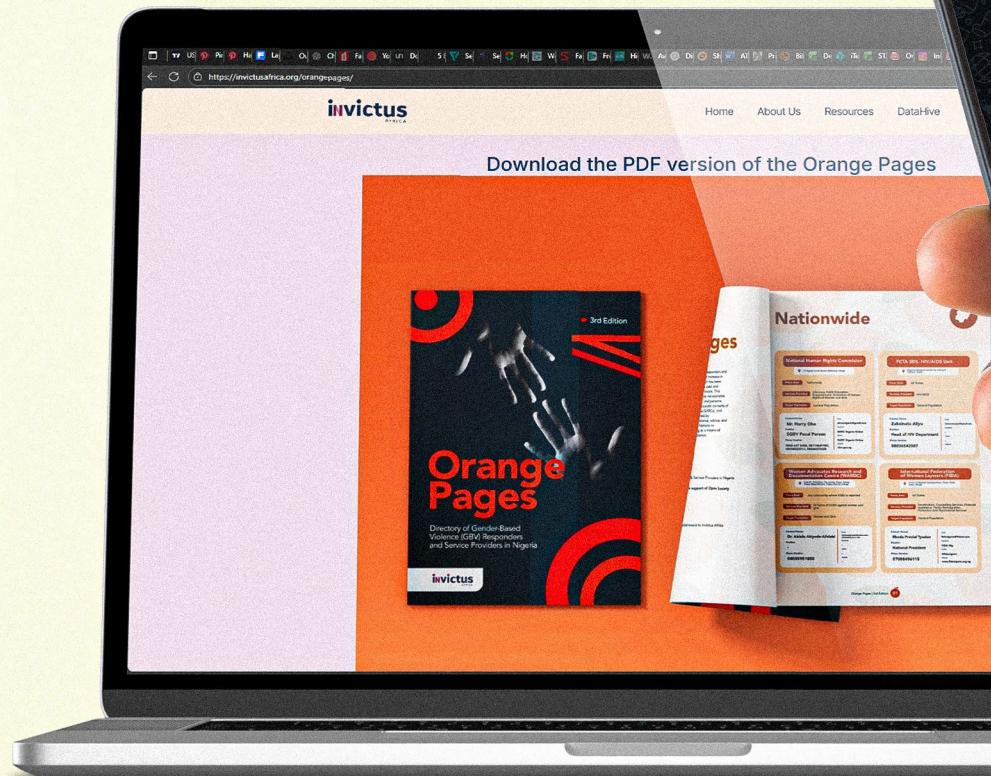
Index	Key Gaps	Recommendations
Laws and Policies	Only 40.7% of residents are aware of the state's VAPP Law, despite its domestication in 2019 and translation into English, Pidgin, and Igbo.	Deploy trained legal educators to all 17 LGAs with simplified materials in local languages. Prioritize market squares, religious gatherings, and community meetings to reach women and men in rural areas.
	The Ministry of Justice reported no concluded cases within 12 months. Delays are attributed to corruption, out-of-court settlements, case withdrawals, and prolonged trials. Only 27.1% of residents know of any GBV conviction cases.	Designate specialized GBV courts with dedicated judges to expedite case hearings. Implement strict timelines for case progression from arrest to judgment and monitor compliance through quarterly reports.
	Trust in customary and religious laws held steady at 33.6% in 2023 and 33% in 2024, before surging to 74.3% in 2025, while harmful practices such as widow disinheritance and forced remarriage persist in some communities.	Work with trusted traditional and religious leaders to end harmful practices by training them on the VAPP Act and setting clear rules that prevent the settlement of GBV crimes outside the formal justice system.
Access to Legal Justice	Only 26.1% of residents are aware of available legal aid, down from 49% in 2024, despite services existing across all 17 LGAs through Human Rights Desks, social welfare departments, and GBV focal persons.	Publicize the availability of legal aid more directly by using radio, community outreach, and posters in courts, police stations, and social welfare offices. Clearly explain that survivors can access free legal help and where to go in each LGA.
	While 58.3% are willing to testify, 39.8% would only do so with protection measures. This caution is justified by reports of threats and intimidation by perpetrators, aimed at silencing witnesses.	Establish a robust witness protection program to include, but not limited to, safe houses, police escorts, and financial support for transportation and lost income. Criminalize witness intimidation with mandatory prosecution and publicize penalties to deter perpetrators and their families.
Support Services	Only one government SARC exists, located in Enugu metropolis, serving all 17 LGAs. Civil society shelters are also concentrated in urban areas.	Fast-track establishment of facilities in Igbo-Eze North, Awgu, and Nkanu East with dedicated budgets, staff deployment, and functional medical equipment. Ensure each serves its senatorial zone to improve geographic coverage.
	Stakeholders identified survivor transportation as "the biggest gap" in support services. Survivors from villages cannot afford the transport fare to Enugu metropolis, resulting in underutilization of existing services.	Provide reimbursements for transportation to SARCs and court appearances. Alternatively, establish mobile service units that rotate through LGAs monthly to deliver medical exams, counseling, and legal consultations.
	43.9% of residents view informal support as helpful, and some religious leaders advise survivors to "endure and pray" while some traditional leaders still facilitate settlements rather than referrals.	Raise awareness among residents about the limits of informal support by engaging religious and traditional leaders in training on GBV referral protocols. Encourage them to prioritize formal referrals over settlements to ensure survivors receive proper assistance.
Information and Awareness	Awareness fell from 47% in 2024 to 21.9% in 2025, despite stakeholders reporting ongoing activities. Funding constraints forced suspension of media programs, school visits, and community outreach in some areas.	Allocate dedicated annual budget lines for GBV information dissemination across media, schools, and communities. Establish partnerships with private sectors to supplement government funding and ensure program continuity.
	While audio (83.9%) and simplified messaging (56.6%) have moderate reach, braille (4.1%) and screen subtitling (3.9%) are rarely used. Sign interpretation is only deployed at physical meetings, not integrated into media campaigns.	Mandate that all television programs include subtitles and sign interpretation. Produce braille versions of key materials for distribution through disability organizations. Partner with radio stations to create audio dramas and call-in shows that reach persons with visual impairments.
Budget and Spending	Enugu State's GBV allocation of 0.07% of total budget is among the lowest in Nigeria, resulting in per capita spending of just ₦65.44, insufficient to provide adequate services to survivors across the state.	The Ministry of Women Affairs should develop a costed plan detailing funding needs for survivor services and present it during the next budget cycle to justify increasing GBV allocation to at least 0.3% of the state budget.



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