MID-SHORE COUNCIL ON FAMILY VIOLENCE
Chesapeake Crisis to Self-Sufficiency Model®

From Crisis to Self-Sufficiency
Mid-Shore Council on Family Violence
FY2026 Impact Report

October 2026

Pamela Caudill Jordan, Ph.D.

WWW.MSCFV.ORG

During FY2026, Mid-Shore Council on Family Violence (MSCFV) provided comprehensive support to survivors and their children, responding to crises while helping survivors navigate safety, legal systems, and other challenges. Through hotline support, lethality screening, safety planning, protective order assistance, and ongoing case management, MSCFV helped survivors access resources and take steps toward greater stability. These services reflect MSCFV's commitment to supporting survivors not only in moments of crisis, but throughout their journey toward safety, healing, and self-sufficiency.



Domestic violence looks different in rural communities.

The five counties that MSCFV serves include 3% of Maryland's population. Yet 8% of the state's protective orders are adjudicated in these same counties.

Domestic violence survivors living in rural areas face several additional barriers to ending an abusive relationship and rebuilding their lives, compared to those living in more urban areas. For example, in the five counties that MSCFV serves, public transportation is nearly non-existent, and some areas are only accessible by boat during high tide.

Throughout the Mid-Shore region, the critical lack of available, affordable rental housing remains a profound obstacle for the individuals and families we serve. According to the Maryland Housing Needs Assessment, chronic housing underproduction has forced 50% of renters into cost-burdened environments, while a concurrent 16% drop in active regional housing inventory has made finding any vacant unit incredibly difficult. For a survivor escaping abuse, this means navigating a housing market with few opportunities (Brown, 2026).

A lack of well-paying, year-round employment presents another obstacle. The Upper Shore's workforce and economic development plans identify the region's employment and wage conditions as important workforce concerns. The region has a comparatively strong concentration of employment in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and food services, alongside substantial employment in retail trade and hospitality. These industries help sustain the local economy but can present challenges for workers seeking stable, family-supporting wages and year-round employment (Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board, 2024; Governor's Workforce Development Board, 2024).

Rural survivors also contend with challenges related to social cohesion in their communities. In these locations where everyone knows everyone, it can be difficult to

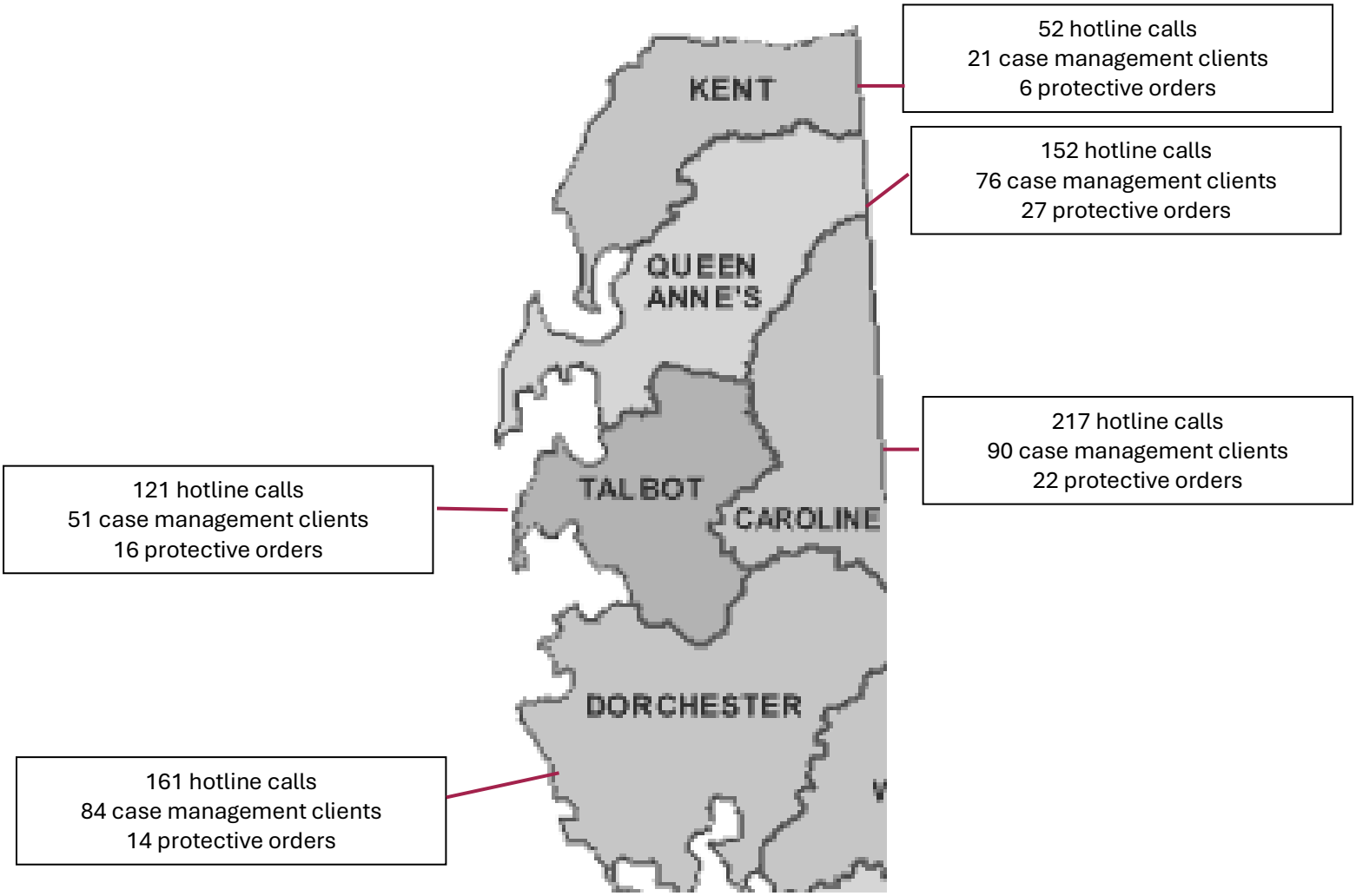
access help while navigating around their abusers' friends, high school buddies, co-workers, and relatives (Wood, Giesbrecht, Brooks, & Arisman, 2025).

Given all these barriers, rural survivors need a different response, one that goes beyond a hotline and a few nights of emergency shelter. Their ability to leave an abusive relationship and rebuild a safe and stable life depends on comprehensive and long-term support. MSCFV's Chesapeake Crisis to Self-Sufficiency Model (CCSSM) addresses this need. The CCSSM embodies a holistic approach to victim services, providing a continuum of comprehensive services and support to break the cycle of domestic violence and empower survivors. The CCSSM embodies a continuum of care covering all aspects of survivors' lives to help them achieve safety, emotional healing, and financial stability (Jordan, Yeager, Callaway, & Aylward, 2024).

Who We Serve

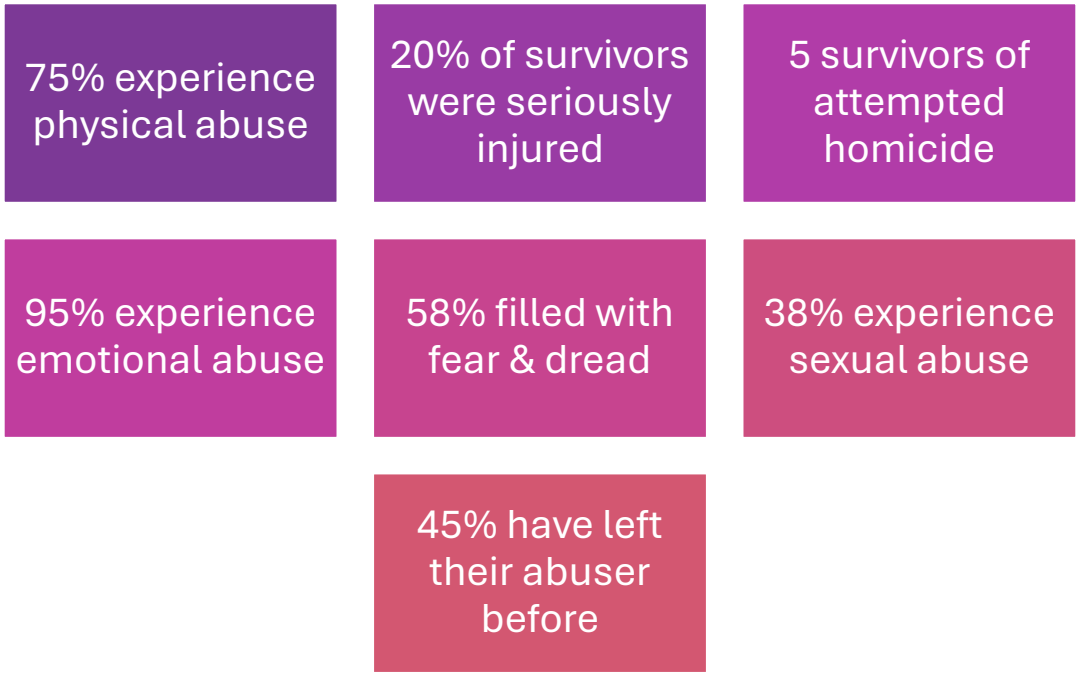
The survivors we serve come from Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's and Talbot counties. As the map illustrates, Caroline, Dorchester, and Queen Anne's account for most hotline calls and clients receiving case management services. While domestic violence can affect anyone, our typical client is a woman (96%) who is about 39 years old and has one or two children. Half have never married. Fifty clients (16%) are Spanish-speaking. A significant minority (15%) have a disability. Appendix A contains more details about who we serve in each county.

Calls, Clients & Protective Orders by County.



The Complexity of Domestic Violence

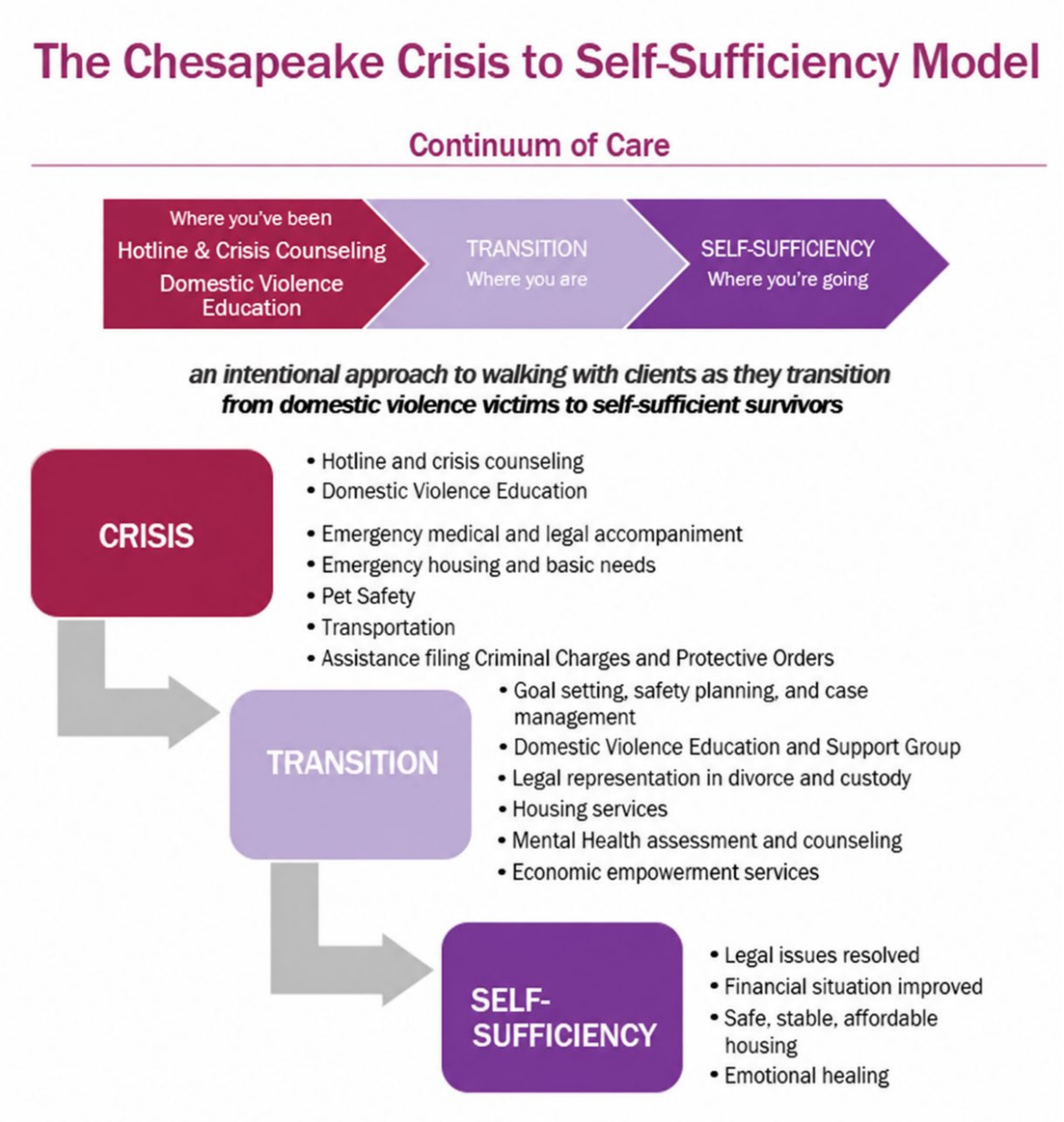
Survivors who come to MSCFV for services have frequently experienced multiple types of abuse. In Fiscal Year 2026 (July 2025 to June 2026):



These sobering numbers demonstrate why safety is the primary concern for our clients. They've experienced significant abuse at the hands of an intimate partner. Nearly half have tried to leave their abuser before. Dealing with the complexities of these survivors' situations requires a variety of supports and resources that extend beyond immediate safety.

How We Help

MSCFV's Chesapeake Crisis to Self-Sufficiency Model (CCSSM) grew out of feedback from rural survivors and advocates about what it takes to leave an abusive relationship and establish a new life. CCSSM recognizes three distinct stages for survivors: *Crisis, Transition, and Self-Sufficiency*. MSCFV case managers support survivors navigating through these stages, providing appropriate services and resources for each stage.



A cornerstone of MSCFV's case management approach is recognizing that each survivor has multiple, unique needs. The following figure illustrates the services MSCFV provided in FY2026, organized around survivors' safety, healing, legal, stability, and basic needs. More detailed numbers about services provided are available in Appendix B.

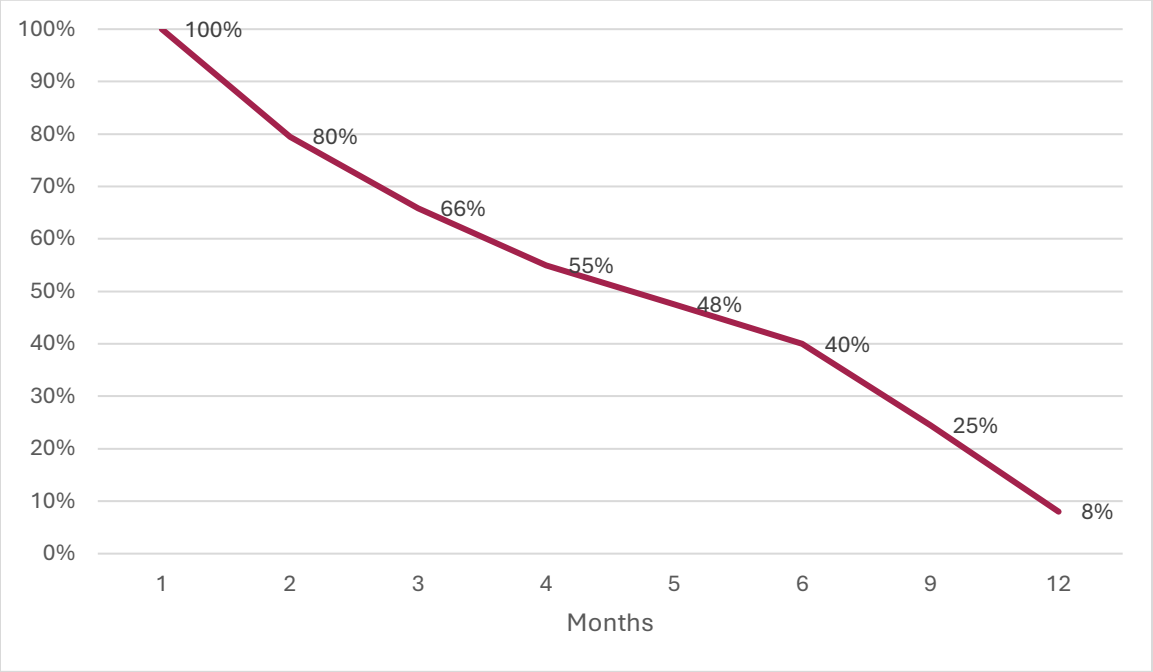


While some survivors need assistance for only a brief time, many remain connected with MSCFV for several months as they work through complex safety, legal, and housing challenges. The average client received services for 5 months in FY2026.

As the following figure illustrates:

- 80% remain connected at 2 months
- 66% remain connected at 3 months
- 55% remain connected at 4 months
- 40% remain connected at 6 months
- 25% remain connected at 9 months
- 8% remain connected at 12 months

How Long Clients Stay Connected.



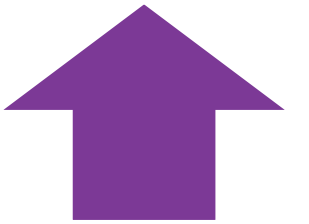
As immediate crisis needs are addressed, the intensity of service contacts decreases while ongoing support continues. While each survivor's journey is unique, the following graphic displays a typical client journey.


Month 1
Intensive Support
18 Service Contacts
• hotline call
•1 crisis counseling
•3 DV education/counseling
•6 follow up contacts
•1 safety planning
•3 legal advocacy
•1 court accompaniment
•1 personal advocacy
•1 food box
Month 2
Ongoing Support
15 Service Contacts
•3 DV education/counseling
•7 follow up contacts
•1 safety planning
•3 legal advocacy
•1 personal advocacy
Months 3-5
Ongoing Support
10-11 Service Contacts
per Month
•2 DV education/counseling
•5 follow up contacts
•3 legal advocacy
•1 personal advocacy

Outcome: Safety

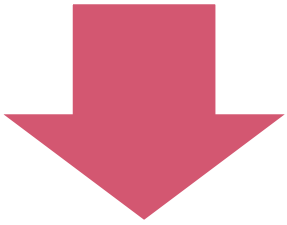
Safety is the first outcome that we focus on when working with a client. Through staff assessments and client feedback, we see that during their time with MSCFV survivors increase their long-term safety planning, move from crisis through transition to self-sufficiency, and increase their confidence in their ability to keep safe.

Safety Planning Scores reveal these improvements from Intake to Monthly Check-in:



Long-term safety planning: 11%, increased to 42%

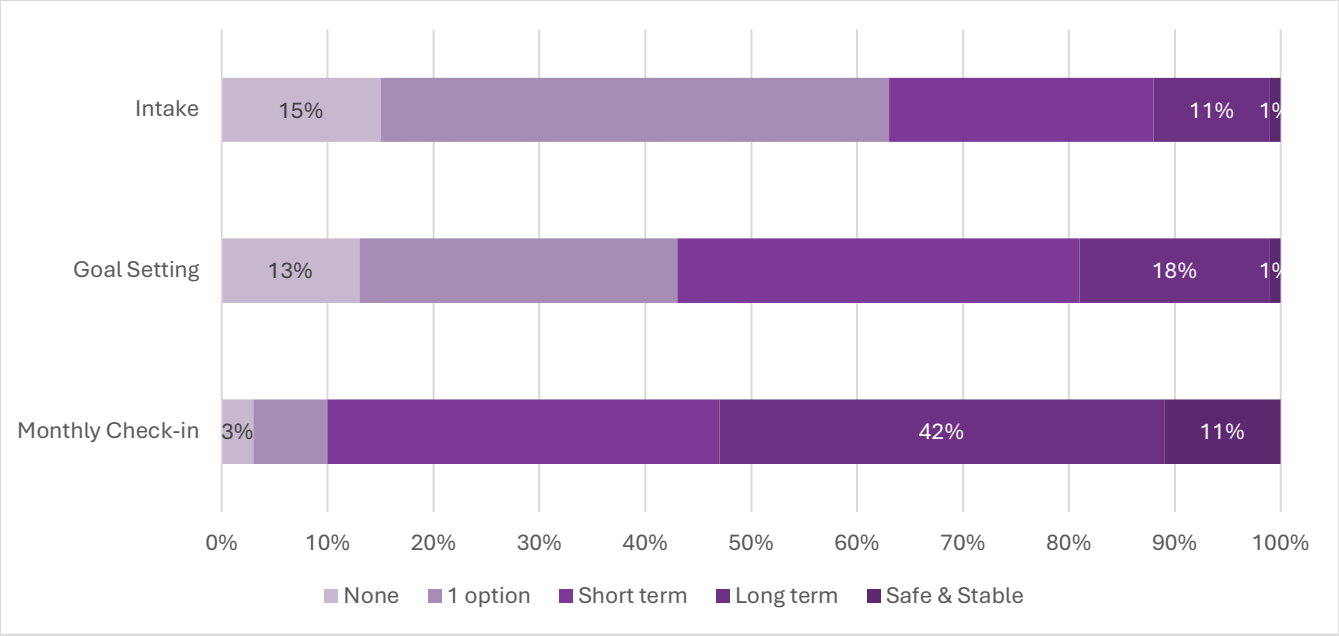
Safe & Stable: 1%, increased to 11%



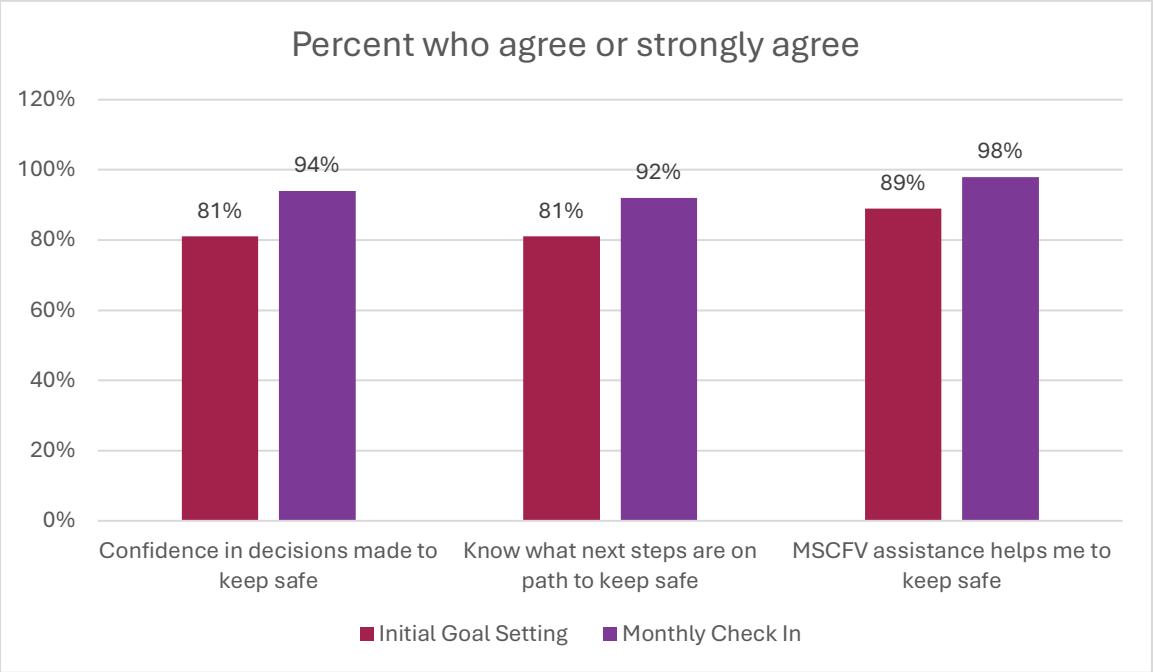
No safety planning: 15%, decreased to 0%

Only one option: 48%, decreased to 7%

The more detailed figure below further illustrates how survivors' safety planning evolves during their time with MSCFV. Initially most have just one option in their safety plan. By their Monthly Check-in, 42% are engaged in long-term safety planning with multiple options and another 11% are considered safe and stable.



Survivors provide their perspective on their journey through our Survivor Check-In. They are given the opportunity to complete this assessment at their case management meetings. These data reveal that the vast majority of clients feel safe, know what their next steps are in rebuilding their lives, and find MSCFV services helpful for maintaining their safety.

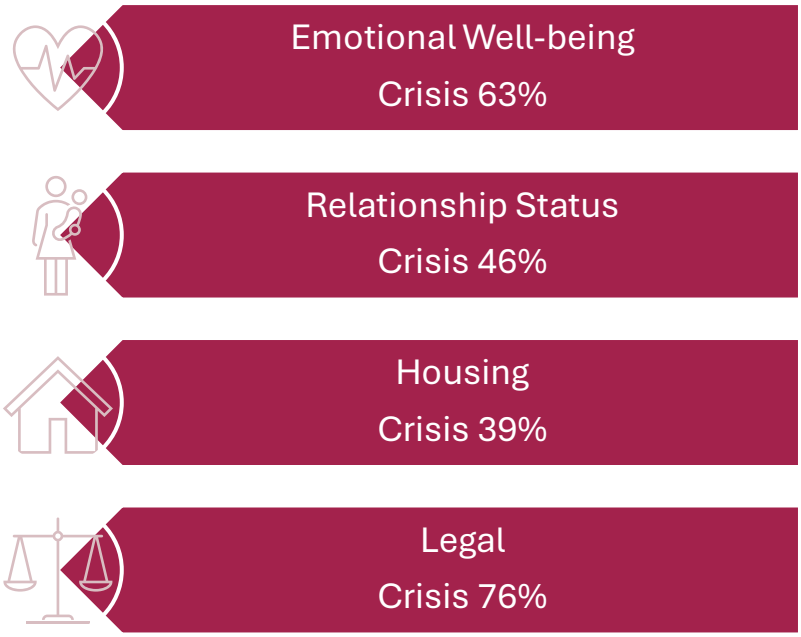


Outcome: Progressing from Crisis to Self-Sufficiency

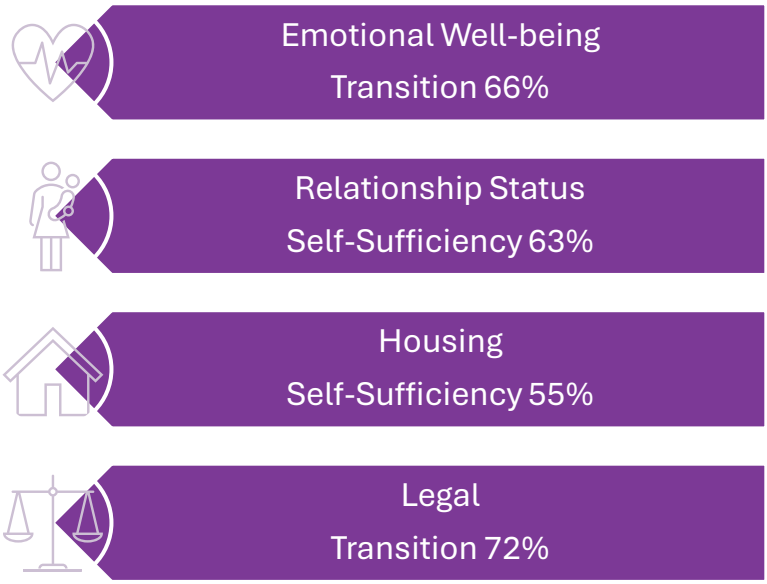
As we work with survivors to rebuild their lives, their stage informs the case management approach, ensuring we're providing services that meet their specific needs. Stage information also measures the impact of our services. Our case managers assess stage at several points along the survivors' journey and in several life domains:

Criteria	Crisis	Transition	Self-Sufficiency
Emotional State	Panicked, immobilized by fear	Some fear but able to think & plan	No fear, emotionally stable
Relationship status	Still involved or considering reconciling	No longer involved romantically	Moved on from the relationship
Housing	Still living with abuser, homeless, emergency shelter, unstable and/or unsafe	Stable & separate from abuser (e.g., with friends, transitional housing, etc.)	Safe, stable
Legal	No legal steps or only TPO	FPO, divorce may be in process but not finalized, custody in process or not started	Divorced (if applicable), custody established, all legal issues resolved except for enforcement of previous cases

It's not surprising that at Intake, most survivors are in the crisis stage in one or more areas of their life. The following graphic shows the percentage of survivors who are in crisis at intake.



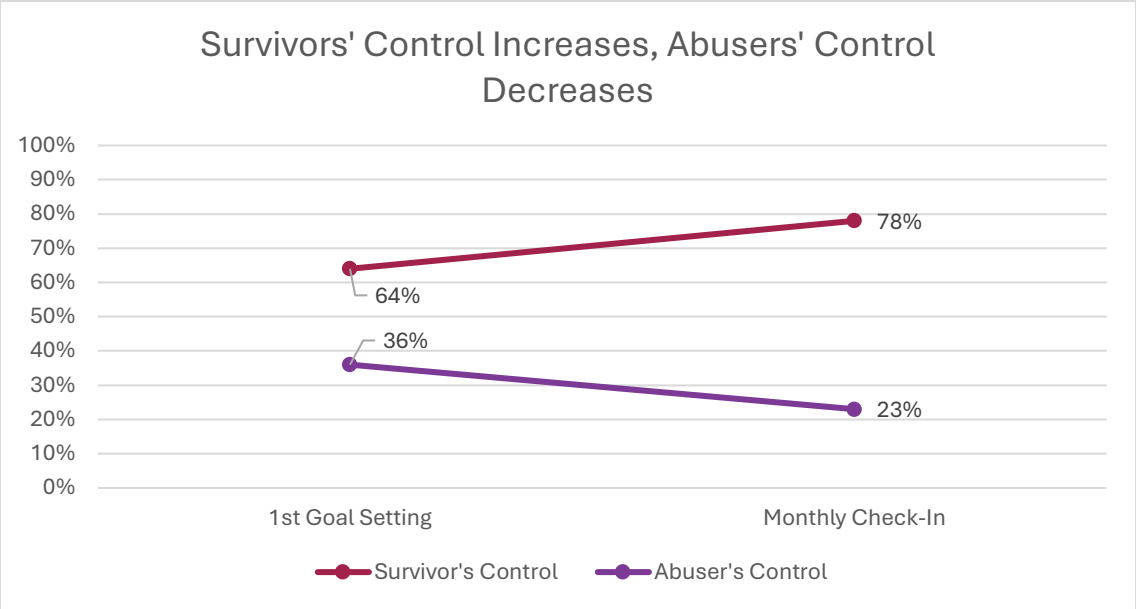
By their Monthly Check-in, most clients have successfully moved to Transition or Self-Sufficiency. The following graphic shows the most common stage for each life domain at Monthly Check-in.



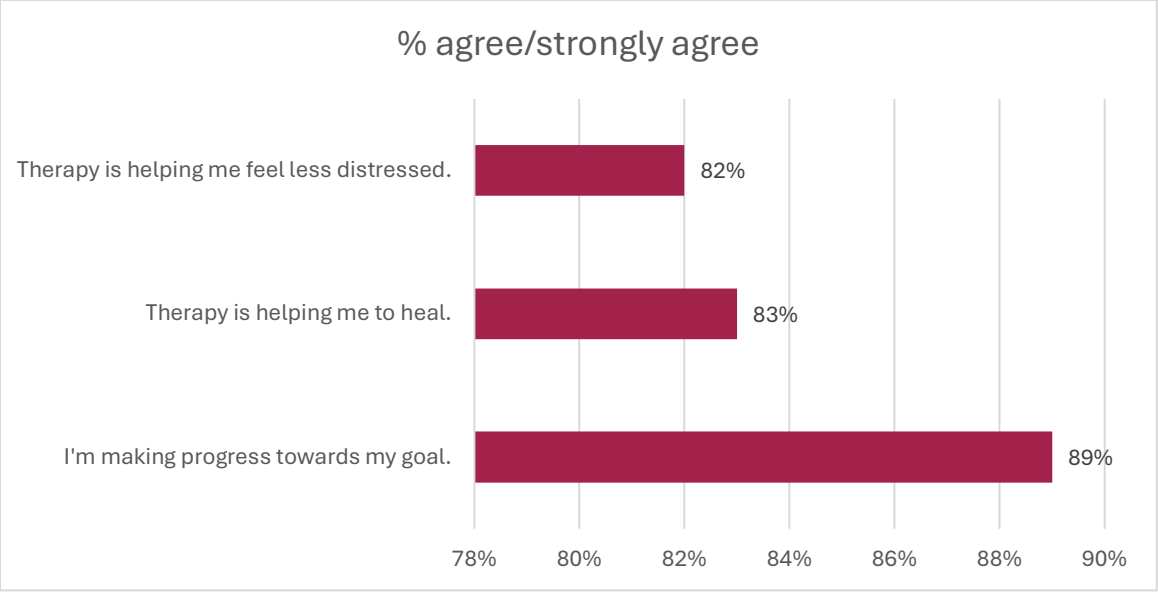
The movement through the stages demonstrates the positive impact MSCFV services have. More importantly, it shows how survivors can stay safe and rebuild their lives with the right support and resources.

Outcome: Healing

A key part of healing from domestic violence is regaining a sense of control over your life. The power and control dynamics in an abusive relationship result in the abusive partner having all the control and the survivor feeling powerless. Our outcome data reveal that when they are working with MSCFV survivors' control of their lives increases, while the control they feel their abusers have decreases.



Those participating in therapy through MSCFV provide additional feedback on their emotional healing. Most indicate that they are feeling less distress, making progress towards their goals, and healing.



Outcome: Stability

LAST TIME I ATTEMPTED TO LEAVE HIM I ENDED UP GOING BACK TO THE ABUSE BECAUSE IT WAS HARD FINANCIALLY TO SURVIVE. NOW I KNOW I AM NOT ALONE AND I HAVE RECEIVED SUPPORT SINCE I LEFT. – MSCFV CLIENT

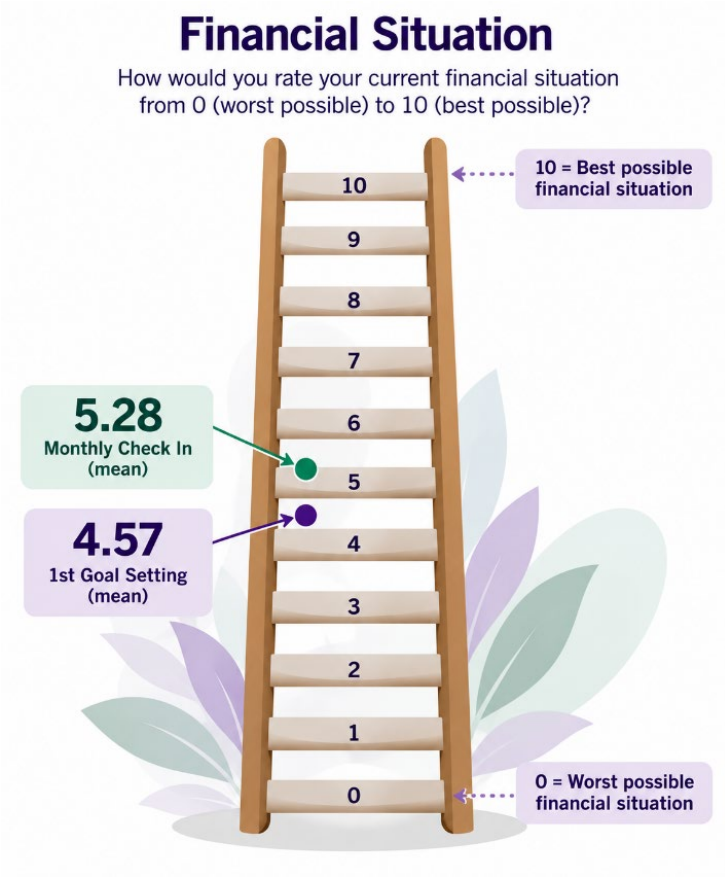
A significant body of research shows that financial factors highly influence a survivor's ability to permanently leave an abusive partner. If the partner is the primary provider, leaving can create a financial cliff where the survivor needs to cover a greater share of living expenses. Economic abuse can deliberately make leaving harder, with the abuser restricting the survivor's access to money or accounts, sabotaging employment, etc. On the other hand, access to independent income, safe housing, and financial resources can help survivors overcome these barriers and build greater economic independence (Johnson, Chen, Stylianou, & Arnold, 2022). This is why economic stability is our third critical outcome domain.

Our Survivor Check-in includes an "economic ladder" question. As the following figure illustrates, clients report improvements in their financial situation from initial goal setting to Monthly Check-in.

Survivors also report increases in their ability to meet their financial obligations and to stay on budget.



Housing plays a key role in economic stability and an area where many survivors need assistance. In FY2026, MSCFV assisted survivors with 9 security deposits, 49 nights of emergency shelter, and 54 months of rental assistance. On their Monthly Checkin, survivors report improved housing safety, affordability and stability.



I DON'T FEEL ALONE IN THIS PROCESS. I FEEL SAFE IN THE HOME I WAS PROVIDED. I HAVE RECEIVED A LOT OF HELP TO CONTINUE TO BECOME INDEPENDENT. – MSCFV CLIENT



Note: For the housing measures, 1 = unsafe/unaffordable/unstable and 5 = safe/affordable/stable

MSCFV's legal services impact survivors' economic stability as well, by securing legal protections. In FY2026, our legal advocacy and representation through panel attorneys resulted in more than $600,000 in lump-sum payments, $34,500 in ongoing monthly support, and nearly $17,000 in cost savings secured for survivors.

The Hotline: One Call Can Change What Happens Next

MSCFV's 24-hour crisis hotline often serves as the first point of contact with victims, directly or through referrals from other professionals such as law enforcement or therapists. In FY2026, we received 703 hotline calls, with 244 of those from law enforcement responding to a domestic violence incident.

Topics Discussed During Hotline Calls



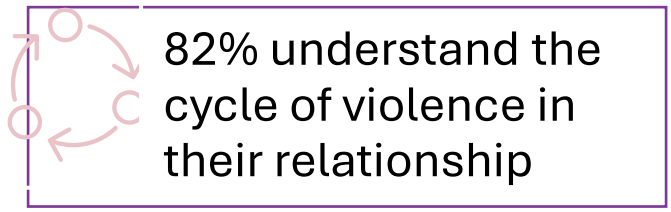
Trained staff help victims address their immediate crisis by providing services such as crisis counseling, safety planning, information & referral, emergency shelter, pet safety, food pantry, and accompaniment to protective order hearings. In fact, we find that a significant number of hotline callers and victims who've been screened for lethality by law enforcement go on to receive additional services from MSCFV. For example, among all hotline calls:

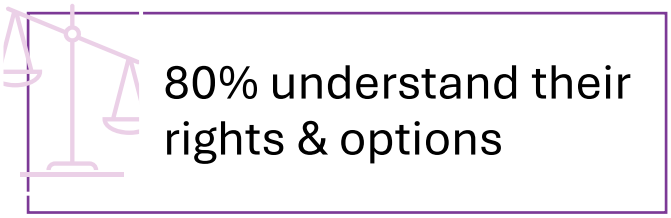
- One-third receive additional DV education & counseling from a case manager
- 37% receive follow-up contact
- 32% utilize our legal advocacy services
- 23% have an MSCFV staff member accompanying them to court

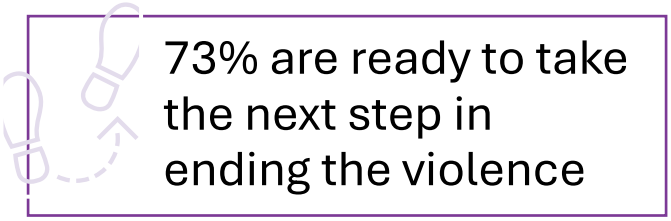
Staff tailor each call to the caller's specific needs. Typically, the discussion focuses largely on the survivor's rights and options. The most common topics discussed during hotline calls in FY2026 include:

- MSCFV resources 80%
- Safety planning 67%
- Legal options 62%
- Types of abuse 33%
- Community resources 31%
- Power & control methods 22%
- Shelter/housing concerns 20%
- Signs of an abusive partner 18%
- Empowerment, Self-Esteem, & Assertiveness 14%

To assess the impact of hotline call services, staff assess the callers' understanding of the cycle of violence in their relationship, their rights and options, and their next steps. Most callers end the call with these important outcomes:

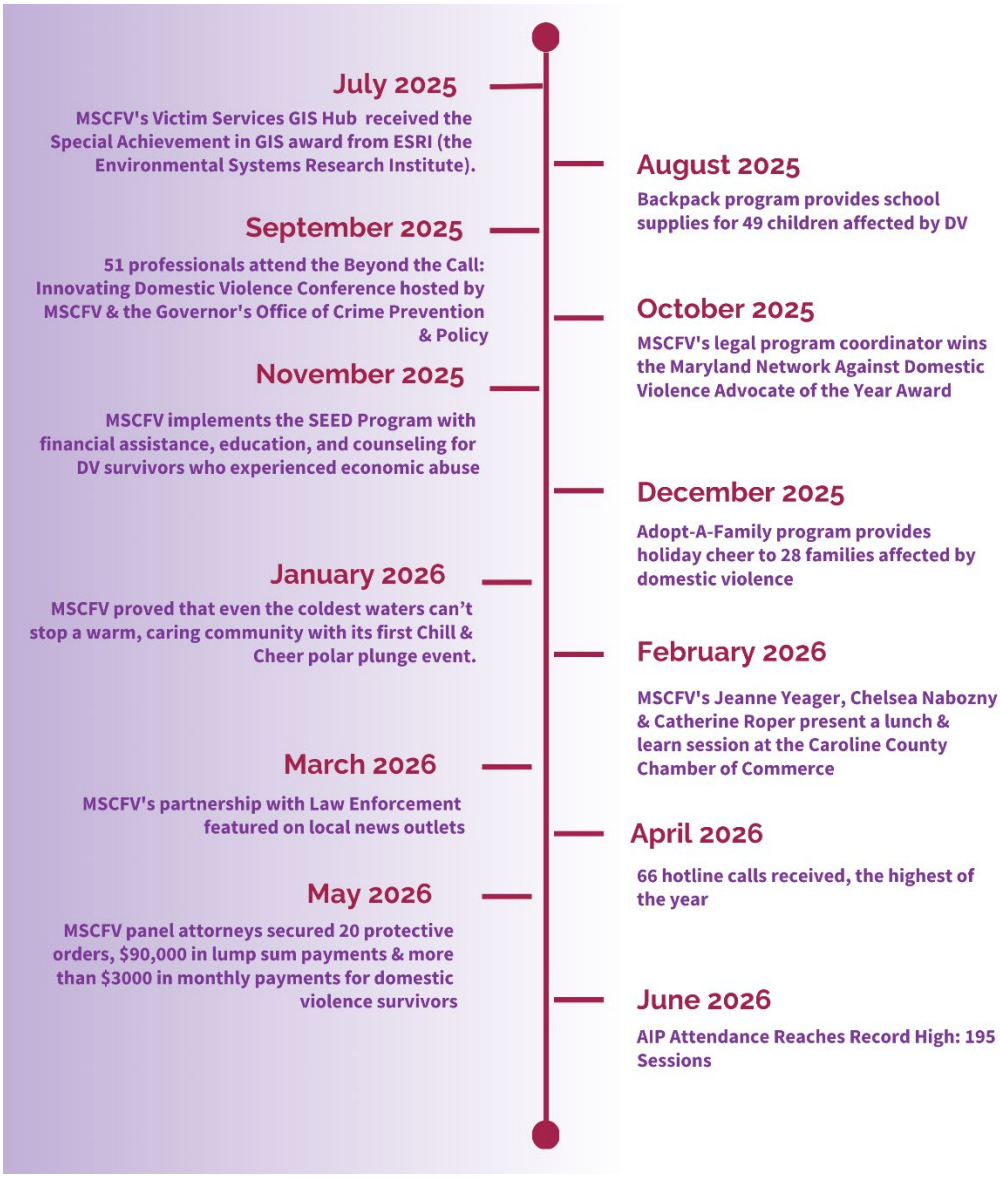






A Year in the Life at MSCFV

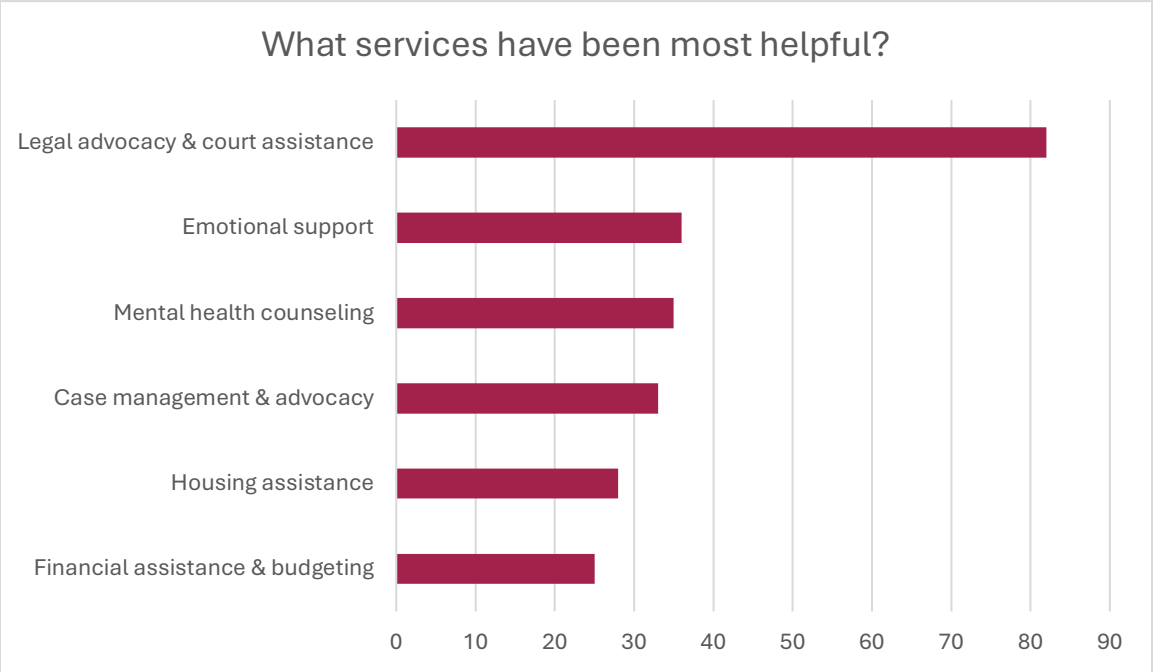
MSCFV's primary mission is to provide comprehensive services and advocacy to domestic violence survivors in our region. In addition, we operate an Abuser Intervention program, a 26-week psychoeducational program designed to reduce intimate partner violence. We also work with community partners to raise awareness about domestic violence and to improve our coordinated response. The timeline below highlights some of the key events each month in Fiscal Year 2026.



Survivors' Voices

The previous outcome sections focus largely on quantitative measures. While it's encouraging to see increasing safety, healing, and financial stability among our clients, we also greatly value letting the survivors' voices be heard.

On the Survivor Check-in, clients shared what services they found most helpful. Legal Advocacy & Court Assistance was mentioned most often, followed by emotional support.



Where we can hear survivors' voices best is in their responses when asked what difference MSCFV has made in their lives. Generally, they report changes in one or more of these ways: safety, emotional support, empowerment, and stability. The following figure illustrates these themes in more detail including quotes from our clients.

Safety

Able to leave abuser

Remain separated from abuser

Able to navigate complicated legal and social services systems

It gave me a way to get out when I didn't think I had one. I was able to go through the criminal case this time and I did not go back to the abuse.

The guidance and resources I have received this time after leaving has made the difference in me and my children being safe. I feel stronger and not alone in this process.

If it was not for MSCFV's help I would have been back to the abuse. Helped me to vent a couple times. Sometimes you just need someone to talk to. Setting and accomplishing goals; having access to resources

Helped me understand my rights regarded the TPO. You've been there for me, helping me to keep safe.

Healing

Increased confidence, empowerment, & self-determination

Feel less alone and more support

Decreased anxiety & stress

I dont feel alone in this process. I feel safe in the home i was provided, i have received alot of help to continue to become independent.

A big difference especially in early months. i did not have to go alone. It was nice to have someone that knew how the system worked.

It's literally shifted my entire life from feeling helpless to empowered again. Losing myself to coming back to myself.

Stability

Able to move forward with assistance that provided stability

Removing barriers to leaving through supports such as an attorney, housing assistance, etc.

I am able to feel supported, I have been able to save some money to pay for my immigration process, thanks to the rental assistance. I am able to receive therapy to help me with this process.

You made me feel not so alone. The Christmas gifts took a big weight off my shoulders.

One Year, Many Lives

In sum, MSCFV's FY2026 data tell the complex story of the challenges facing domestic violence survivors in our five rural counties and the importance of providing support that extends beyond the immediate crisis. Survivors came to MSCFV with significant safety concerns, histories of multiple forms of abuse, and barriers related to housing, finances, and legal concerns. Nearly half had attempted to leave an abusive partner before. For many, establishing safety required sustained support across multiple areas of their lives.

Throughout FY2026, MSCFV provided that continuum of support. The 703 hotline calls, 1,043 safety plans, 9,035 follow-up contacts, and thousands of counseling, advocacy, legal, and information-and-referral services reflect an approach that stays with survivors as their needs change. Clients typically remain connected for five months, with 80% still connected at two months and 40% at six months. This sustained engagement allows case managers to address immediate safety concerns while helping survivors navigate the longer-term challenge of rebuilding their lives.

The outcome data show encouraging movement across the three domains at the center of the Chesapeake Crisis to Self-Sufficiency Model: safety, healing, and stability. Survivors reported greater confidence in their ability to make decisions to keep themselves safe, greater understanding of their next steps, and strong agreement that MSCFV assistance helps them maintain their safety. Across life domains, survivors also moved from crisis toward transition and self-sufficiency. Measures of control, financial circumstances, ability to meet financial obligations, and housing safety, affordability, and stability all improved from Initial Goal Setting to Monthly Check-in.

Perhaps most importantly, the quantitative findings are reflected in survivors' own words. Clients described feeling less alone, regaining confidence and control, finding ways to leave abuse, and building the stability necessary to move forward. One survivor explained,

“It’s literally shifted my entire life from feeling helpless to empowered again. Losing myself to coming back to myself.”

These findings reinforce a central lesson: safety is not simply the absence of immediate danger. It is the ability to build a life in which a survivor can remain safe, make decisions for herself, heal from the effects of abuse, and achieve the stability needed to move forward. For rural survivors facing limited housing, transportation, employment, and other resources, that journey can be especially difficult. MSCFV's role is to provide sustained, comprehensive support that makes that journey possible.

Every number in this report represents more than a service delivered. It represents a survivor taking another step—from crisis toward safety, healing, stability, and self-sufficiency.

References

Brown, D. J. (2026, January 1). *In 2026, affordable housing is needed 'now more than ever,' but getting there is the challenge*. *Maryland Matters*. https://marylandmatters.org/2026/01/01/in-2026-affordable-housing-is-needed-now-more-than-ever-but-getting-there-is-the-challenge/

Governor's Workforce Development Board. (2024). Maryland statewide workforce development plan: WIOA combined plan 2024–2028.

Johnson, L., Chen, Y., Stylianou, A., & Arnold, A. (2022). Examining the impact of economic abuse on survivors of intimate partner violence: A scoping review. *BMC Public Health, 22*, Article 1014. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-022-13297-4

Jordan, P. C., Yeager, J., Callaway, C., & Aylward, J. (2024). Safety is just the first step: Implementing a holistic, survivor-centered program model for rural partner abuse survivors. *Partner Abuse, 15*(4), 488–510. https://doi.org/10.1891/PA-2023-0050

Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board. (2024). Upper Shore Area WIOA local plan 2024–2028.

Wood, K., Giesbrecht, C. J., Brooks, C., & Arisman, K. (2025). "I couldn't leave the farm": Rural women's experiences of intimate partner violence and coercive control. Violence Against Women, 31(12–13), 3330–3354. https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012241279117

Appendix A. Client Demographics by County.

	Caroline	Dorchester	Kent	Queen Anne's	Talbot	Total
Identified as high danger through Lethality Assessment	90%	93%	100%	85%	82%	88%
% Women	95%	95%	95%	96%	98%	96%
Ethnicity/Race						
African American	8%	36%	20%	9%	11%	18%
Caucasian	92%	63%	80%	91%	89%	82%
Spanish-speaking	8%	12%	0%	18%	29%	16%
Age						
18-25	9%	9%	10%	9%	8%	9%
26-35	37%	33%	29%	29%	30%	32%
36-45	32%	32%	43%	40%	39%	35%
46-55	15%	18%	5%	18%	12%	15%
56-65	1%	8%	5%	2%	7%	5%
66 and older	5%	1%	10%	2%	4%	4%
Marital Status						
Not Married	47%	53%	50%	46%	52%	50%
Married	44%	23%	30%	44%	41%	37%
Separated/Divorced	9%	24%	20%	10%	7%	13%
Disability	15%	15%	14%	14%	15%	15%

Appendix B. FY2026 Services Provided.

Service	Units Provided
Safety	
Crisis counseling	637
Safety planning	1,043
Follow-up contacts	9,035
Home security systems	71
Emotional Support	
DV Education/Counseling	4,264
Therapy	285
General Accompaniment	293
Advocacy	
Personal Advocacy	1,182
Consumer Advocacy	161
Housing Advocacy	505
Financial Advocacy	343
Medical Advocacy	19
Translation Services	669
Information & Referral	
General Info & Referral	7,875
Vine Protective Order	13
English as a Second Language	20
Housing	
GIS Housing Searches	16
Housing Referral	63
Emergency Shelter Bed nights	49
Months of Rental Assistance	54
Security Deposits	9
Legal Services	
Legal Advocacy	4,332
Legal Information & Referral	2,042
Administrative/Clerical Assistance	2,695
Case Preparation	838
Legal Representation	631
Assistance Filing Forms	212
Material Supports	
Food Assistance	237
Transportation	103
eLearning	90
Baby Supplies	76
Seasonal Supplies	74
Special/Medical Needs	90
Gas Cards	56
Phones	23