



Women's Advocates

ANNUAL REPORT



2019-2020
2020-2021

Message from the Executive Director



Dear Friends,

Reflecting on the past two momentous years and preparing to write this letter, I had to stop and ask — how do I even begin to sum up the ruptures in our world, our country, our cities, and our work that have defined these turbulent times? It's an impossible task, but a minor one compared to the dozens of crises the staff of Women's Advocates help victim/survivors of domestic violence navigate each day, as they work through systems that are not built to meet their needs in the best of times, much less during a global pandemic. Fundamentally the story boils down to one thing that has been at the core of Women's Advocates' work for 48 years — how we keep people safe, and how we help people create safety and well-being for themselves and their families.

Perhaps no moment better encapsulates this than one on May 29, 2020. We had already been dealing with COVID-19 in shelter for two months, and the advice from the Minnesota Department of Health was changing rapidly. Our staff leadership team was meeting daily to assess and absorb the guidance, and it was becoming clear that close quarters in shelter spaces like ours were not safe for our residents or staff. And then, the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer triggered uprisings across the Twin Cities.

At any one time, over 60 percent of the victim/survivors sheltering with us are Black, and the violence they have experienced in their relationships is compounded by the real threat of violence they face from our institutions. The question of where they would be safest at that pivotal moment was fraught.

Throughout the past two years, when no decision seemed like the right one, I have always been able to look to our advocates as a source of survivor focused, trauma-informed clarity. "Can we just move everyone out of here tonight?" I don't recall who asked the question, but it was the right one and it led to a decision that, like so many we've made these past two years, was action oriented and safety focused. That evening we completed the move of all our shelter residents to a suburban hotel, where we stayed until early 2021.

Though this was possibly the most momentous shift of the last two years, it's a single example out of hundreds of daily pivots. With each one, our staff, residents, and program participants showed their strength and resiliency — those superpowers that help victim/survivors overcome seemingly insurmountable challenges on a daily basis. I am honored to work alongside them, and I thank you, our supporters and community, for walking alongside all of us.

With gratitude,

Estelle Brouwer
Executive Director



Our Mission

Women's Advocates walks with victim/survivors and our community to break the cycle of domestic violence.

Staying Strong Through COVID-19

On March 18, 2020, a victim/survivor staying in Women's Advocates' emergency shelter was diagnosed with COVID-19. This was very early in the pandemic and not much was known about the virus, how to prevent transmission, and how to make our shelter as safe as possible for victim/survivors of domestic violence. Over the two years since then, Women's Advocates staff and board have worked nimbly to navigate the rapidly changing landscape of the pandemic. We are stronger because of it.

The pandemic, however, still has had a demonstrable impact on our outcomes. In some cases – the number of residents staying in our shelter, for example – you may notice our numbers have taken a dip. We are not alone in this. Across the Twin Cities, shelters extended average length of stay for shelter residents during the pandemic as a way to prevent the COVID transmission that would have occurred had victim/survivors had to relocate to other shelters or temporary housing arrangements.

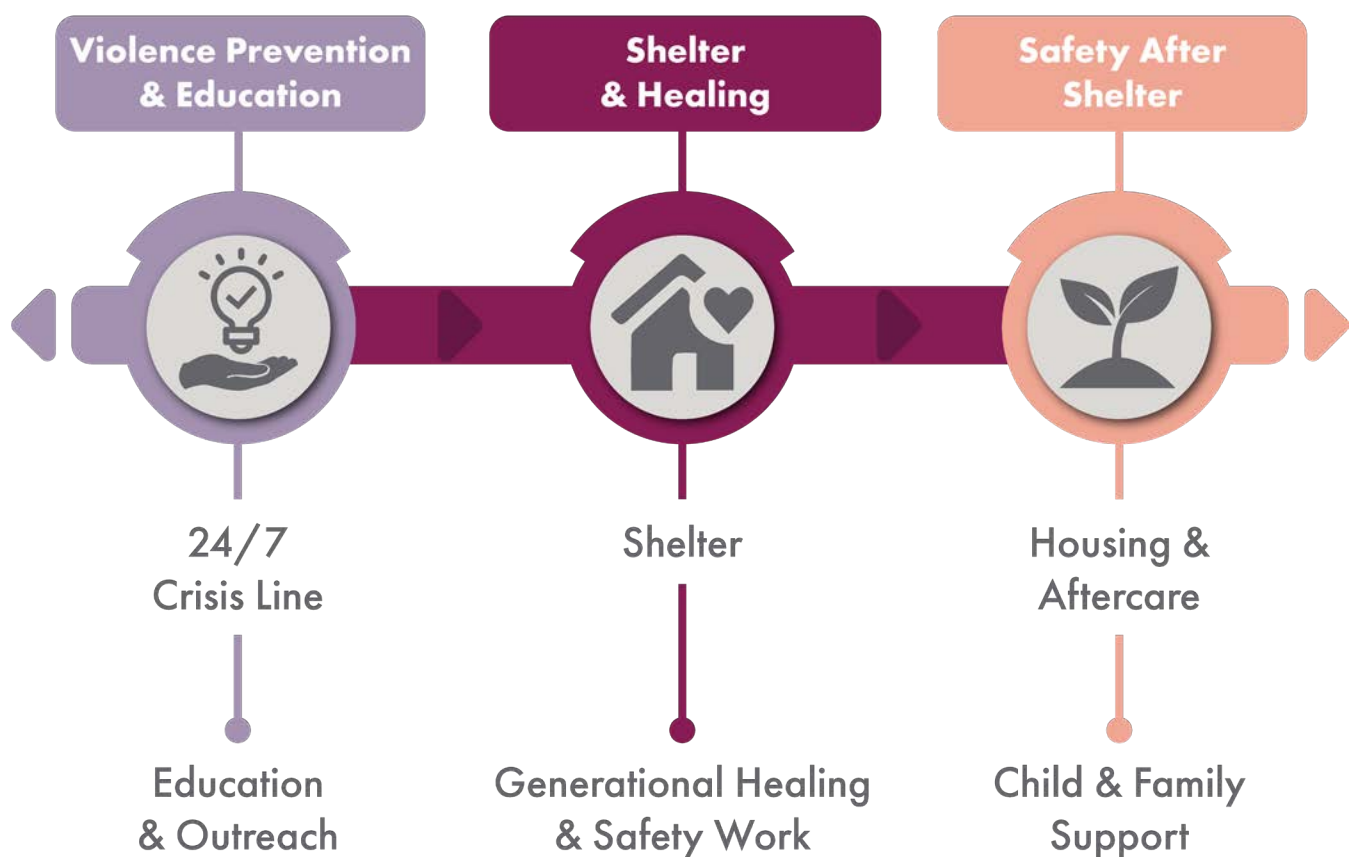
Still, other numbers have risen extraordinarily. When the pandemic closed classrooms, offices, and other traditional venues to our Outreach & Education program, we shifted these services to online delivery platforms. Our online offerings have reached viewers on six continents and received over 10,000 views — an incredible expansion that we could not have anticipated pre-pandemic. This report covers two very different years in the history of Women's Advocates, and you will see that in the side-to-side numbers. The impact of the pandemic and the opportunities and challenges it has presented will be felt at Women's Advocates for years to come.





Continuum of Safety from Abuse

Women's Advocates' programming comprises a continuum of safety that extends well beyond our shelter services. In addition to the healing space we provide in shelter, this continuum includes violence prevention work online and in the community through our Outreach and Education programming and intensive housing advocacy and rental supports for victim/survivors leaving shelter through our Housing and Aftercare program. A key goal of this continuum is to ensure that domestic violence-related homelessness is rare, brief, and nonrecurring by creating avenues to safety and stability before and after crises. Through our wraparound programs and services, we reduce the number of victim/survivors that cycle in and out of shelter. We strive to create paths to safety and housing stability for victim/survivors and affordable and sustainable avenues to violence prevention in the community and online.





Violence Prevention & Education

24/7 Crisis Line

Women's Advocates staff help to prevent domestic violence in the community by compassionately and expertly staffing our 24/7 crisis line. Crisis resource advocates provide crisis line callers with referrals to emergency shelter, safety planning services, and emotional support. Despite the increase in domestic violence in the community during the pandemic, we saw a noticeable decrease in the number of crisis calls we received. We attribute this in part to victims of abuse having less time away from their abusers during the pandemic. To help circumvent this, we established an online live chat feature on our website so survivors in need of assistance could reach out to us even if they can't get away for a phone call.

2019-2020

In the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year:
(Between July 1, 2019, and June 30, 2020)

824 people called our 24/7 crisis line for help.

Crisis Resource Advocates provided **525** crisis interventions and shelter referrals via our crisis line.

2020-2021

In the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year:
(Between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2021)

439 people accessed our 24/7 crisis resource services via phone or live chat.

Crisis Resource Advocates provided **315** crisis interventions and shelter referrals via our crisis line.

“I’ve gotten calls from people from the back of their closets, in the back room with the shower running, because they’re not alone,” says Mary Beth Becker-Lauth, Domestic Violence Community Educator with Women’s Advocates. “We have been told by the Saint Paul Police Department that the number of domestic related calls to 911 are up, but our calls to the crisis hotlines are down,” she says. “The pandemic has created a situation in which many victim/survivors are trapped at home with their abuser, making it difficult to find privacy to call for help.”



Violence Prevention & Education

Education & Outreach

Women's Advocates is committed to preventing domestic violence in our communities through virtual and in-person education. The goal of our program is for our participants to feel comfortable with their ability to recognize warning signs and dynamics of abuse along with their impacts. We equip participants with the knowledge and skills to engage in informed conversations about abuse with victim/survivors and people who abuse. This helps them gain confidence in their ability to share relevant community resource options available to victim/survivors as well.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, our educational programming had taken place entirely in-person in mostly small groups in schools, businesses, and community organizations. When lockdowns made this sort of outreach impossible, Women's Advocates staff turned their efforts online and began hosting webinars with attendees from Minnesota and beyond. Between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2021, Women's Advocates' Education and Outreach Coordinator hosted over 50 webinar events reaching thousands of community members live and through YouTube, expanding our reach beyond Minnesota to other parts of the world.

2019-2020

In the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year:
(Between July 1, 2019, and June 30, 2020)

7,012 professionals and community members attended **177** domestic violence and related trainings.

48,896 unique visitors accessed safety resources from Women's Advocates' website.

Outreach expenses for the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year were **\$88,880**, comprising **3%** of organizational expenses.

2020-2021

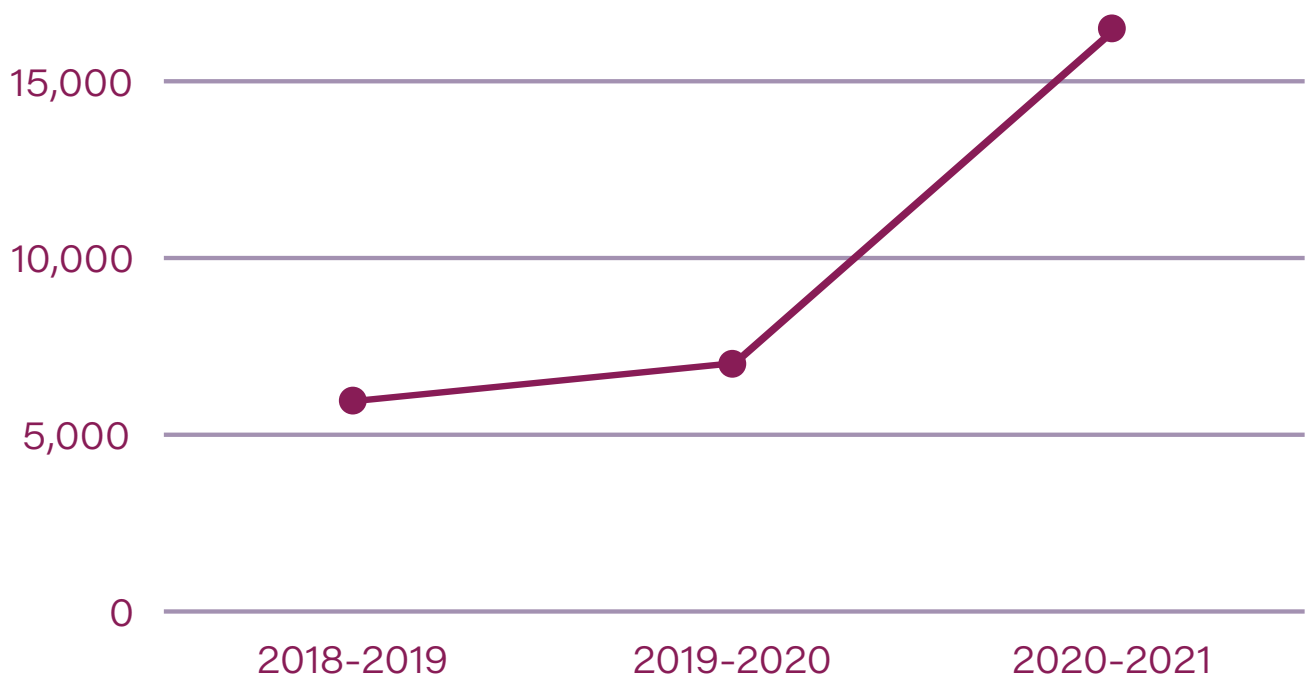
In the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year:
(Between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2021)

16,426 professionals and community members attended **80** domestic violence and related trainings.

58,641 unique visitors accessed safety resources from Women's Advocates' website.

Outreach expenses for the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year were **\$74,509**, comprising **2%** of organizational expenses.

Increase in Attendance at Women's Advocates Domestic Violence Trainings





Shelter & Healing

Shelter

For 47 years, providing safe shelter for victim/survivors of domestic violence has been at the heart of Women's Advocates' mission. Our shelter space consists of 15 bedrooms, 7 resident bathrooms, and a commercial kitchen where three meals each day are prepared for our residents seeking shelter and safety from abusive situations. Residents have access to laundry facilities, a computer center, a living room, dining room, and secure children's playground. Staff work the front desk 24/7 to ensure the safety and security of our building and the people who live here. Our shelter provides a secure, safe home for our residents as they begin the healing process.

The COVID-19 pandemic has tested the bounds of that security. Over the course of the first few weeks of the pandemic, it became clear that for the safety of our residents, it was important to "decompress shelter," which meant figuring out how to spread our residents apart to reduce the likelihood of transmission. In May 2020, in the midst of the uprisings surrounding the murder of George Floyd, Women's Advocates moved our entire shelter operation into a suburban hotel where residents could have their own rooms and some protection from the virus. Between May 2020 and December 2020, we hosted 32 adults and 36 children in our hotel operations before gradually returning to our shelter facility with masking and social distancing guidelines strictly in place.

2019-2020

In the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year:
(Between July 1, 2019, and June 30, 2020)

276 victim/survivors and children received emergency shelter through Women's Advocates.

44 days was the average length of stay for residents.

Residents received **12,713** nights of shelter.

Shelter/facility expenses for the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year were **\$862,140**, comprising **28%** of organizational expenses.

2020-2021

In the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year:
(Between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2021)

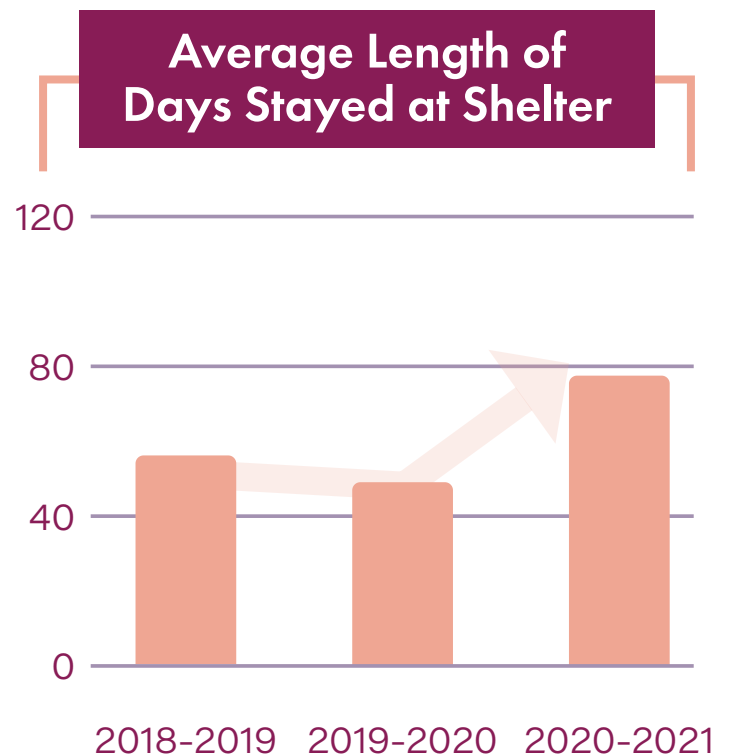
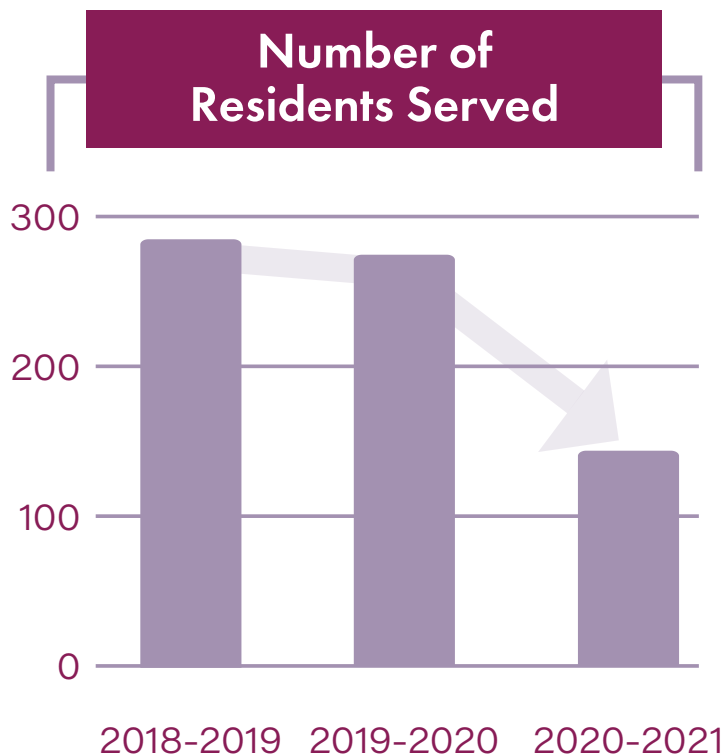
145 victim/survivors and children received emergency shelter through Women's Advocates.

79 days was the average length of stay for residents.

Residents received **12,687** nights of shelter.

Shelter/facility expenses for the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year were **\$982,059**, comprising **32%** of organizational expenses.

During the pandemic, the average length of stay of our residents in shelter increased. This was the result of a purposeful decision to keep our residents and their families housed to avoid COVID transmission between service providers. This had the corollary effect of reducing the total number of victim/survivors served in our shelter.



Creating New Avenues to Safety through the Joint Shelter Hotel Project

As average length of stay in shelter for survivors increased across the Twin Cities, it became increasingly clear that new, safe shelter space was needed for survivors seeking safety who were struggling to find shelter space. Women's Advocates teamed up with other domestic violence service providers from around the Twin Cities to create the Joint Shelter Hotel Project to give these families a safe alternative to conventional shelter in a suburban hotel. Women's Advocates dedicated one full-time staff member to help supervise the project and invested another **\$20,000** for added security at the hotel. The project helped **284 adults and 284 children** find safety from abuse between April 2020 and September 2021. In all, Women's Advocates provided direct case management services to **11 adults and 3 children** through this project.



Shelter & Healing

Mental Health, Wellness, & Legal Advocacy

Our emergency shelter residents are encouraged to start healing through our mental health and wellness programming which teaches self-care and mindfulness techniques that center the mind, body, and spirit. Regular support groups help residents cope with the trauma of their past and work to build positive futures for themselves and their families. Our Family & Legal Advocates work with victim/survivors to create personal goal plans, and work within the legal system to write orders for protection and negotiate lease terminations. While the pandemic has made this work more difficult and caused us to temporarily suspend in-person support groups, we are proud to say that our residents have continued to have access to all of these services throughout the pandemic.

2019-2020

In the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year:
(Between July 1, 2019, and June 30, 2020)

271 crisis interventions took place for victim/survivors staying at our shelter.

Family advocates dedicated **1,210** hours of support to residents.

Mental health, wellness, & legal advocacy expenses for the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year were **\$1,052,131**, comprising **34%** of organizational expenses.

2020-2021

In the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year:
(Between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2021)

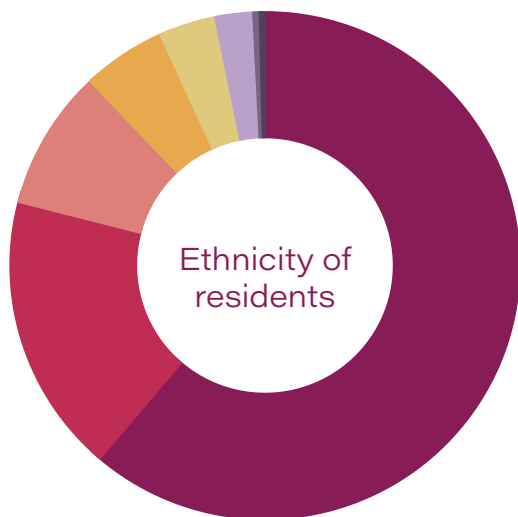
294 crisis interventions took place for victim/survivors staying at our shelter.

Family advocates dedicated **924** hours of support to residents.

Mental health, wellness, & legal advocacy expenses for the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year were **\$1,054,240**, comprising **34%** of organizational expenses.

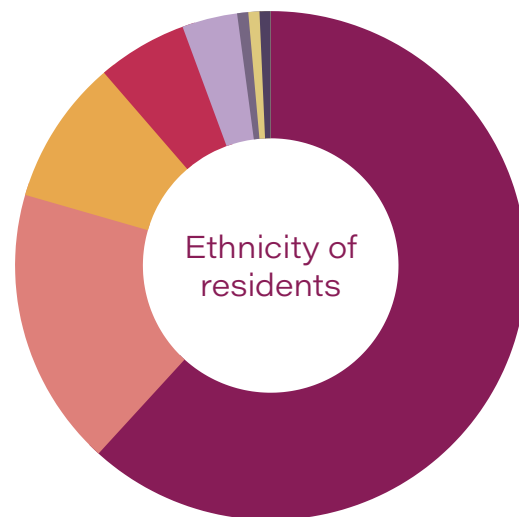
Over 80% of our residents identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

2019-2020



- 61.1% Black or African American
- 17.8% Multiracial
- 8.9% White
- 5.3% American Indian or Alaska Native
- 3.6% Asian
- 2.4% Hispanic/Chicano/Latino
- 0.4% African
- 0.4% Other

2020-2021



- 61.7% Black or African American
- 17.7% White
- 9.2% American Indian or Alaska Native
- 5.7% Multiracial
- 3.5% Hispanic/Chicano/Latino
- 0.7% African
- 0.7% Asian
- 0.7% Did Not Identify





Safety After Shelter

Housing & Aftercare

Finding affordable housing in the Twin Cities is difficult enough without the additional barriers faced by many victim/survivors. These can include previous eviction, low-wage employment, and criminal records, especially for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) people who have historically been disenfranchised from housing because of these issues. This is why our housing advocates play such a central role in facilitating the housing search process for participants in our Housing & Aftercare program. Over the last two years, through conversations with program participants and qualitative evaluation of participant outcomes, it became clear that the amount of financial support we provided to survivors who had no other rental subsidy was inadequate. We have now created a two-track system in which participants who have subsidies from government or other organizations receive rental assistance and advocacy over six months, and participants who have no additional subsidy receive rental assistance and advocacy over one year. This enhanced assistance helps survivors through occasional financial hardships that can derail their finances in the first year after leaving shelter when they are most vulnerable.

2019-2020

In the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year:
(Between July 1, 2019, and June 30, 2020)

122 victim/survivors and their children participated in Housing & Aftercare, across **41** households.

16 participating households maintained stable housing for **12** or more months.

21 participating households increased income through employment.

Housing & Aftercare Program expenses for the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year were **\$189,475**, comprising **6%** of organizational expenses.

2020-2021

In the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year:
(Between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2021)

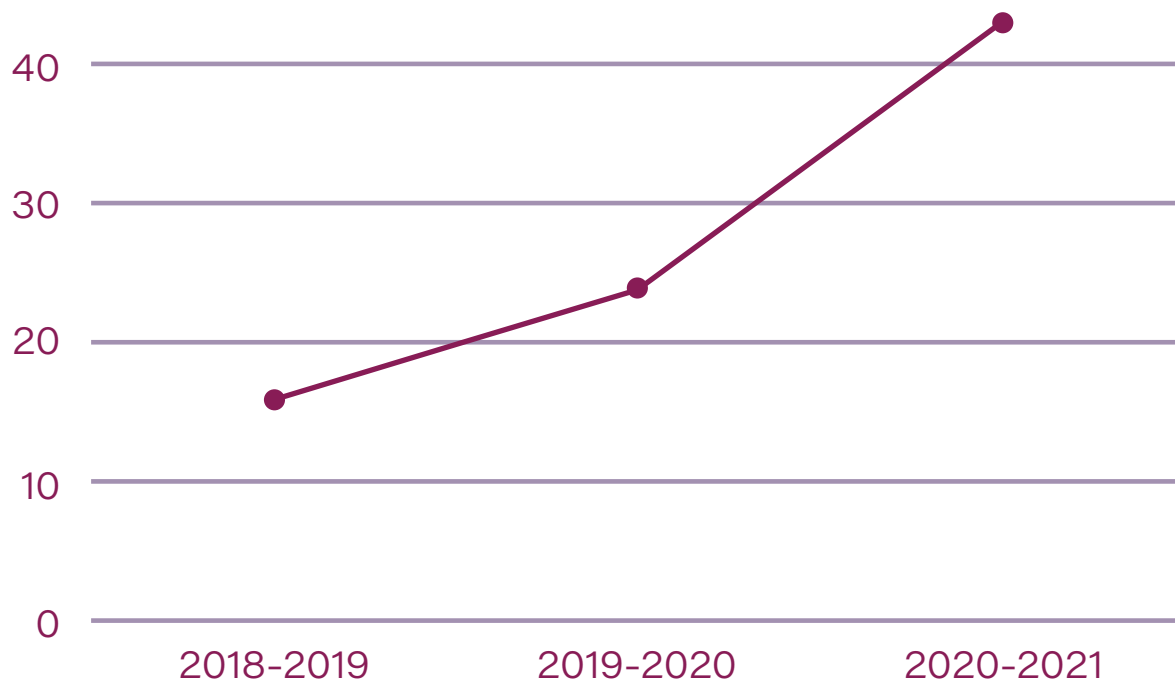
126 victim/survivors and their children participated in Housing & Aftercare, across **52** households.

19 participating households maintained stable housing for **12** or more months.

25 participating households increased income through employment.

Housing & Aftercare Program expenses for the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year were **\$281,132**, comprising **9%** of organizational expenses.

Total New Victim/Survivors Enrolled in Housing & Aftercare



Sheila Wellstone

The Sheila Wellstone Children's Program is a program in transition. The children who arrive at our shelter accompanied by their caregivers have experienced trauma and often witnessed or been the victim of violent acts. Children's Program staff work with each child and their caregiver at the shelter to nurture each child's development. The Sheila Wellstone Children's program is committed to offering safety planning, school support, special activities, and drop-in childcare services catering to the special needs of survivors and their children.

2019-2020

In the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year:
(Between July 1, 2019, and June 30, 2020)

146 children ages 0 to 17 stayed at Women's Advocates' emergency shelter.

Children's Program expenses for the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year were **\$208,046**, comprising **7%** of organizational expenses.

2020-2021

In the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year:
(Between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2021)

55 children ages 0 to 17 stayed at Women's Advocates' emergency shelter.

56 children enrolled in Women's Advocates Housing & Aftercare Program, marking the first time child-specific advocacy was available to children after they leave shelter.

Children's Program expenses for the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year were **\$158,303**, comprising **5%** of organizational expenses.



Children's Program

In 2019-2020, we contracted with Wilder Research to conduct focus groups with survivors in our Housing and Aftercare program. Participants responded that they would benefit from additional parenting and family support after leaving shelter. In response, we have increased our staffing in our Children's Program to provide support for parents and children for one year after leaving shelter. The 2020-2021 fiscal year was the first year that we offered child-specific advocacy for children in our program that extended beyond their stay in shelter.

A Program in Transition

— Since 1974 —→ 2016 —→ 2019 —→ 2020-2021 —



Women's Advocates has provided flexible childcare to survivors staying in shelter since our opening.



Children's Program begins offering therapeutic interventions and safety planning for children in shelter.



Wilder Research focus groups with survivors identify the need for parental support for survivors in Housing & Aftercare.



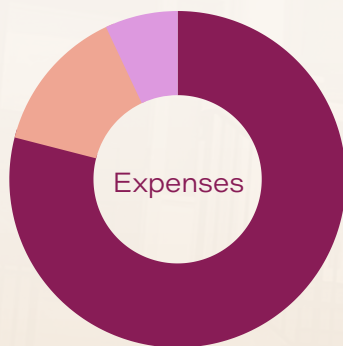
Children's Program expands to begin offering child-specific advocacy services to children after leaving shelter.



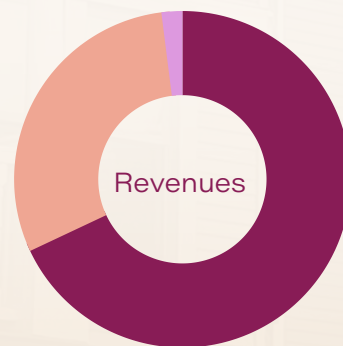
FINANCIAL REPORT

2019-2020

Audited Financial Statements		2019-2020	2018-2019
Assets	Total Current Assets	\$2,882,414	\$2,884,139
	Net Property & Equipment	\$983,876	\$947,675
	Total Assets	\$3,866,290	\$3,831,814
Liabilities	Total Current Liabilities	\$141,298	\$120,227
	Long Term Debt	\$432,312	\$100,891
Net Assets	Net Assets: Undesignated	\$1,161,618	\$1,407,150
	Net Assets: Designated	\$1,956,184	\$1,956,184
	Net Assets: Temporarily Restricted	\$174,878	\$247,362
	Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$3,866,290	\$3,831,814
Revenue	Program Service Revenue	\$1,839,829	\$1,795,017
	Contributions	\$824,476	\$745,710
	Debt Forgiveness	\$25,584	\$25,584
	Interest & Miscellaneous	\$30,604	\$56,801
	Total Support & Revenue	\$2,720,493	\$2,623,112
Expenses	Programs & Services	\$2,400,672	\$1,889,566
	Management & General	\$414,627	\$380,717
	Fundraising	\$223,210	\$189,144
	Total Expenses	\$3,038,509	\$2,459,427
Change in Net Assets		\$(318,016)	\$163,685
Net Assets - Beginning of Year		\$3,610,696	\$3,447,011
Net Assets - End of Year		\$3,292,680	\$3,610,696



- 79% Programs & Services
- 14% Management & General
- 7% Fundraising

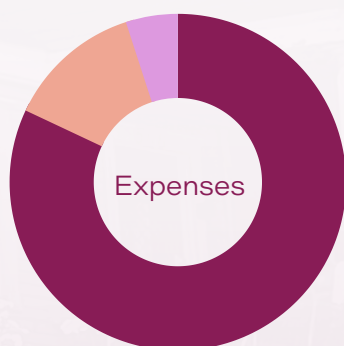


- 68% Government Revenues
- 30% Community Support
- 2% Debt Forgiveness, Miscellaneous

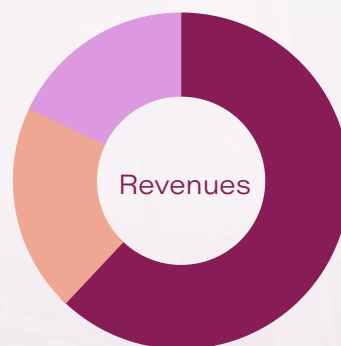
FINANCIAL REPORT

2020-2021

Audited Financial Statements		2020-2021	2019-2020
Assets	Total Current Assets	\$3,341,315	\$2,882,414
	Net Property & Equipment	\$960,972	\$983,876
	Total Assets	\$4,302,287	\$3,866,290
Liabilities	Total Current Liabilities	\$163,842	\$141,298
	Long Term Debt	\$50,135	\$432,312
Net Assets	Net Assets: Undesignated	\$1,554,054	\$1,161,618
	Net Assets: Designated	\$2,356,184	\$1,956,184
	Net Assets: Temporarily Restricted	\$178,072	\$174,878
	Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$4,302,287	\$3,866,290
Revenue	Program Service Revenue	\$2,404,681	\$1,839,829
	Contributions	\$788,889	\$824,476
	Debt Forgiveness	\$382,384	\$25,584
	Interest & Miscellaneous	\$303,191	\$30,604
	Total Support & Revenue	\$3,879,145	\$2,720,493
Expenses	Programs & Services	\$2,553,480	\$2,400,672
	Management & General	\$390,952	\$414,627
	Fundraising	\$139,083	\$223,210
	Total Expenses	\$3,083,515	\$3,038,509
Change in Net Assets		\$795,630	\$(318,016)
Net Assets - Beginning of Year		\$3,292,680	\$3,610,696
Net Assets - End of Year		\$4,088,310	\$3,292,680



- 82% Programs & Services
- 13% Management & General
- 5% Fundraising



- 62% Government Revenues
- 20% Community Support
- 18% Debt Forgiveness, Miscellaneous

2019-2020 Contributors

Donors of \$50,000+

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MN Department of Human Services
MN Housing Finance Agency
Greater Twin Cities United Way
Otto Bremer Trust

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Board of Directors

2019-2020

Board Members from November, 2019, through October, 2020

Elizabeth Boyd, Chair
Sgt. David McCabe, Chair Elect
Matt Fisher, Treasurer
Erica Lister, Secretary
Dennis Gerhardstein
Dr. Tanya Gladney
Mary Sue Godfrey
Maria Mitchell
William Moore
Kathy Moriarty
Cynthia Van Ort
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Estelle Brouwer, Executive Director

2020-2021

Board Members from October, 2020, through November, 2021

Dr. Tanya Gladney, Chair
Erica Lister, Chair-Elect
Matt Fisher, Treasurer
Paige Kahle, Secretary
Elizabeth Boyd, Immediate Past Chair
Trish DeAnda
Dennis Gerhardstein
Britt Gilbertson
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Maria Mitchell
William Moore
Kathy Moriarty
Rita Tajonar
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Thank you so much
to members of the



Donors who give more than \$1000 each year make an unbelievable impact on our ability to break the cycle of domestic violence. You inspire us.



2021 
In-Kind
Donation
Drive

Our History



1971

A small group of women set out to meet the needs of women in crisis with a divorce rights booklet and a legal assistance line.



1973

Volunteers began sheltering women and children in their own homes.



1975

The neighboring property is purchased and Women's Advocates helps form the Consortium for Battered Women.



1987

National Domestic Violence Awareness Month is observed for the first time.



1994

Congress passes the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in response to increasing domestic violence.



2003

The Junior League of Saint Paul introduces a model for volunteerism. By 2004, a record 472 volunteers helped at the shelter.



2009

Women's Advocates initiates housing assistance for families leaving the shelter through the Rapid Re-Housing national effort.



2020

Women's Advocates stays strong through COVID-19 pandemic by temporarily moving shelter services into a hotel setting.

1972

Women's Advocates is incorporated as a nonprofit.



1974

On October 11, 1974, Women's Advocates opens as the first shelter in the nation for victim/survivors of domestic abuse.



1978

Minnesota passed first-of-its-kind legislation that gave state funds to battered women's shelters.



1991

The third property is purchased. The three adjoining homes now shelter up to 50 victim/survivors and children.



1997

A group of Minnesota women launch the Silent Witness Initiative in memory of individuals who died as a result of domestic violence.



2007

The R.O.S.E. Aftercare Program was launched, and began advocacy services for families once they leave the shelter.



2016

Women's Advocates expands its children's programming to support therapeutic interventions and safety planning.





www.wadvocates.org