



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Aiin Friends and Relatives of Women's Advocates,

As we reflect on the fiscal year from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024, I am filled with gratitude for the progress we've made together. This year has been marked by resilience and dedication to our mission of supporting victim-survivors and breaking the cycle of domestic violence.

Key highlights from this year include:

MN Pet Coalition: A collaboration with Cornerstone, Tubman, The Bond Between, Animal Humane Society, and Four Winds Connections, we are providing foster care for pets of domestic violence victim-survivors, allowing them to escape abuse without leaving their pets behind.

Safe Harbor Funding: Women's Advocates received funding in June 2023 to support youth who are survivors of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking. Our team, including Mobile Case Managers, works alongside the Streetworks Collaborative and other partners to offer trauma-informed support to these young people.

Lean on Me: This program, developed in response to feedback from our Survivor Advisory Council, provides tailored services for older youth in shelter, addressing their unique emotional and developmental needs.

Alternative Shelter Program: We opened five community apartments to support cis males, LGBTQIA2S+, trans women and men, and survivors of domestic violence with disabilities, offering advocacy and essential services in a more accessible setting.

Capital Campaign Project 2024-2027: We are raising \$14.25 million for our two new buildings, adding 19 new apartments of Emergency Shelter to better support survivors. Thanks to generous donations, we've raised over 60% of our goal.

2024 marked our 50th anniversary as the very first shelter in the nation for victim-survivors of domestic violence. This historic milestone has allowed us to celebrate and strengthen our work and expand our services. The dedication of our team, the generosity of our supporters, and the resilience of the survivor community inspire me with hope for the future.

Chi miigwech (many thanks) for your continued support. As we move forward, I am hopeful and determined to continue advocating for a world where everyone can live free from violence, with dignity and respect.

Respectfully and Zhawenim (unconditional love),

Hollyn. His

Holly Henning, Executive Director

Photo Credit: Greene Photography LLC

OUR MISSION

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



Women's Advocates joined community partners at 2024 Action Day in the Capitol rotunda to advocate for policies that support victim-survivors and prevent violence.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT



June Blue, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, Board Member, reading our Land Acknowledgment at our 2023 First Light Fundraiser Women's Advocates is located on Dakota land, bordered on the west by Bdote (the sacred confluence) and on the east by Wakán Tipi (Dwelling Place of the Sacred). This land that holds Women's Advocates, and the community we serve, was stolen from the Dakota by the American government through centuries of wars, broken treaties, and acts of cultural genocide. Through incredible perseverance and resistance, the Dakota (and other Indigenous people of the Seven Council Fires) remain here today, caring for the land and the life it sustains.

As an organization dedicated to breaking the cycle of domestic violence, we know that Native women and girls face the highest risk of domestic violence, sexual assault, and intimate partner homicide. This, too, is a legacy of white settler colonization. We grieve and honor the missing and murdered. At the same time, we express our gratitude for those who are still among us, those Indigenous-led organizations who are fighting every day for a world without domestic and sexual violence.

While this acknowledgment cannot eliminate the sins of the past, we commit ourselves to sustaining meaningful partnerships with our Dakota and Anishinaabe neighbors now and in the future. We commit ourselves to supporting tribal sovereignty with the same fervor that we support the self-sovereignty of victim-survivors.

CONTINUUM OF SAFETY FROM ABUSE



As the first shelter in the nation for victim-survivors of domestic violence, Women's Advocates has been a leader in the movement to end domestic violence over the past five decades. Today, we honor that legacy while striving for innovation, recognizing that emergency shelter alone cannot break the cycle of domestic violence.

True healing requires a holistic approach; one that supports victim-survivors through every stage of their journey. That's why Women's Advocates created the Continuum of Safety, a network of our services designed to meet victim-survivors' emotional, legal, and financial needs before, during, and after their stay in our 24/7 **Emergency Shelter or Alternative Shelter Program.**

The Continuum of Safety begins with prevention and outreach-stopping violence before it starts and meeting victim-survivors where they are. Our Education and Outreach team engages the Twin Cities community and beyond with webinars, trainings, and Pop-Up Advocacy events at trusted sites in Saint Paul, providing immediate resources to those in need.

Our shelter offers a secure, welcoming environment where victim-survivors and their children can stabilize and heal after a crisis. Our Alternative Shelter Program offers flexible safety and support options for individuals who may not feel comfortable in a traditional women's shelter, including men, LGBTQIA2S+ individuals, and those with limited mobility.

Finally, through our Housing Stability program, victim-survivors and families receive financial assistance, therapy, and advocacy to transition from shelter to safe, stable housing. Together, these programs help ensure that every victim-survivor has access to the resources and support they need along their healing journey.

24/7 CRISIS LINE





"I don't know how hard it was for them to pick up the phone and call us, or what it took for them to get here. I want to make sure that they know, regardless of whatever situation they endured, we're happy that they're here now, and we're looking forward to helping them move forward in their journey."

Nisha Taylor, Housing Stability Manager

Crisis Resource Advocates fielded

contacts from victim-survivors and others in need of support in Fiscal Year 2024.

The first Women's Advocates hotline was staffed by volunteers and responded to callers seeking legal information on obtaining no-fault divorces. Today, our 24/7 crisis line and online chat service are operated by a team of trained Crisis Resource Advocates who provide callers with domestic violence safety planning, shelter referrals, and judgment-free emotional support.

Callers who do not fit the criteria for domestic violence shelter referral are directed to statewide Day One for shelter services, while callers whose needs cannot be met by our Emergency Shelter programs are connected with domestic violence shelters in their area.

EDUCATION

Women's Advocates believes that community education is a vital tool for breaking generational cycles of domestic violence. We provide both virtual and in-person community education and domestic violence training for professionals. The goal of our education and training work is to strengthen participant ability to recognize warning signs of domestic violence, understand the dynamics of abuse, and support and affirm victim-survivors. In the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year, we hosted community education sessions and professional trainings on topics such as:







Supporting Children Through Abuse Related Trauma



Mental Health &

Domestic Violence



Domestic Violence

101 & 201



All About

Safety Planning



Healthy Relationship **Building Blocks**

Education & Outreach expenses for the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year were \$195,420, comprising 5% of organizational expenses.

In the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year:



domestic violence and related trainings were hosted by Women's Advocates' **Education & Outreach team.**



professionals and community members attended domestic violence and related trainings.

POP-UP **ADVOCACY**

Women's Advocates' Pop-Up Advocacy brings resources directly to those in need. By partnering with trusted community spaces in Saint Paul and beyond, we meet victim-survivors where they are, providing immediate support like safety planning, advocacy, and referrals. These events break down barriers to accessing help, ensuring everyone has a safe place to turn, no matter their circumstances.



Pop-Up Advocacy through the Ramsey County Trusted Messenger program

Executive Director

Director of Outreach

the Resiliency Through

Community Conference in

Marquette, MI, addressing

the crisis of Missing and Murdered

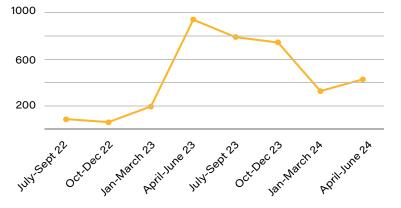
digenous Women & Relatives

human trafficking, housing, and

Alex McDougall (right) presenting at

Holly Henning (left) and

Number of People at Pop-Up Advocacy by Quarter



3,454 people have received resources, support, and referrals through Pop-Up Advocacy since its inception, with over 60% of those individuals receiving assistance during the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

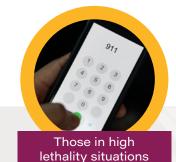
1974, our goal has been to offer our residents more than shelter. Rather, we strive to create a welcoming, warm, and homelike atmosphere that celebrates the resilience of victim-survivors and their children. Our Emergency Shelter space consists of 15 bedrooms, 7 resident bathrooms, laundry facilities, indoor and outdoor recreation areas, and a commercial kitchen where daily meals are prepared. Our Crisis Resource Advocates and shelter managers are available 24/7 to maintain shelter security, respond to resident needs, and intervene in crisis situations as needed. Through it all, our beloved Facilities staff keep the shelter running smoothly and cleanly.

For 50 years, our Emergency Shelter has functioned as the beating heart of all we do. Since our doors opened in

ALTERNATIVE SHELTER PROGRAM

As our Emergency Shelter facility cannot meet the needs of victim-survivors with physical disability or who feel uncomfortable using communal bathrooms, the Alternative Shelter Program hosts victim-survivors in scattered-site apartment units throughout Ramsey County. This innovative model ensures a safer, more inclusive environment for all victim-survivors, including cis men, members of the LGBTQIA2S+ community, trans women and men, and families with diverse needs. This model has proven so successful that we are now in the process of purchasing and rehabbing two apartment buildings that, when completed, will provide an additional 58 shelter beds that are ADA-compliant and pet-friendly.

Victim-survivors we serve in our **Alternative Shelter Program often include:**





20% Men/boys

EMERGENCY SHELTER &



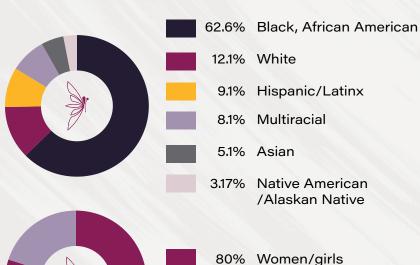


SAFE HARBOR

Women's Advocates became a recipient of Safe Harbor funding in June of 2023. This was a direct result of the feedback and input provided by the Survivor Advisory Council, which highlighted the overlap between domestic violence, commercial sexual exploitation. and human trafficking. Minnesota's Safe Harbor Law ensures sexually exploited youth are treated as victims, not criminals, and through the No Wrong Door model, they receive trauma-informed care.

With this funding, Women's Advocates supports youth aged 24 and younger by helping them secure housing, meet basic needs, and achieve their goals. Two Mobile Safe Harbor Advocates collaborate with the StreetWorks Collaborative, Regional Navigators, and other providers to serve unhoused youth in the Twin Cities.

Ethnicity of residents in our 24/7 Emergency Shelter or Alternative Shelter Program in the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year:



88% of our Emergency Shelter and Alternative Shelter Program residents identify as Black,





ONLINE SURVIVOR SUPPORT GROUP

To support the many domestic violence victim-survivors who cannot or will not attend an in-person support group, Women's Advocates hosts 10-week online peer support cohorts where survivors of domestic and sexual violence can connect with each other from anywhere in the world.

Since its inception in 2021, the Online Survivor Support Group has assisted victim-survivors in processing the impact of abuse, navigating their new independence, building healthy relationship skills, and validating each other's experiences of intimate partner violence. In the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year, Women's Advocates hosted eleven 10-week sessions of Online Survivor Support Group.

EMERGENCY SHELTER & ALTERNATIVE SHELTER PROGRAM

In the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year:











days was the average length of stay for residents.

239

people total
(127 adults and 112
children) received
emergency shelter
with us.

424

crisis interventions took place for victim-survivors staying at our shelter. 893

hours of support were provided by family advocates to residents. 19,728 nights of shelter

were provided **8 4** for residents.

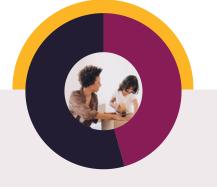
Facility expenses for the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year were \$485,705, comprising 14% of organizational expenses.

Food expenses for the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year were \$251,730, comprising 8% of organizational expenses.

HOUSING STABILITY SERVICES

After fleeing abuse, the biggest challenge facing victim-survivors is securing a permanent, safe place to live. Our Housing Stability program supports individuals and families in obtaining housing, sustaining safety for themselves and their children, and furthering their healing as they transition from unsafe housing situations and/or homelessness. Housing Stability program participants receive comprehensive housing navigation services and long-term advocacy support, including up to five years of rental assistance and culturally relevant mental health services. As part of this support, our Mental Health and Wellness Therapist provides mental health care by meeting with victim-survivors in the community to help them continue their healing journey after shelter.







84%

participating households maintained stable housing for 12 or more months.

206

people total (94 victim-survivors and 112 children) participated in the Housing Stability Program.

88%

of our Housing Stability program participants identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color.

Housing Stability program expenses for the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year were \$370,306, comprising 11% of organizational expenses.

MN Pet Coalition













Since launching in March of 2024, the MN Pet Coalition (MNPC) has continued to grow, removing a major barrier for victim-survivors fleeing domestic violence in the Twin Cities Metro. With 71% of women in shelters reporting their abuser harmed or threatened their pet, safe foster options are critical. This collaboration of three domestic violence and three animal welfare organizations (Animal Humane Society, The Bond Between, Cornerstone, Four Winds Connections, Tubman, and Women's Advocates), ensures no survivor has to choose between safety and their pet.

As of July 27, 2024, we received 40 foster care requests, highlighting the growing demand. In response, we're expanding foster placements and pet care services, making safety possible for more survivors and their pets. With 150+ volunteer fosters as of December 2024, MNPC offers short and long-term care while survivors secure shelter, legal support, or housing.



Scan to watch a short video about the MN Pet Coalition and get involved!



Physical safety is only the first step in a survivor's journey from abuse to self-sufficiency. In our shelter programs, Women's Advocates strives to create an environment that encourages long-term healing. Family & Legal Advocates work closely with residents during their stay, empowering and supporting them as they navigate complex legal, healthcare, and financial assistance systems. Our Mental Health & Wellness Counselors provide culturally relevant individual and family counseling for shelter residents and Housing Stability program participants. Likewise, all residents are encouraged to attend a wide variety of support groups, mindfulness activities such as meditation and yoga, and arts and crafts nights where they can share information, resources, and experiences to cultivate community and resilience.

In the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year, Women's Advocates received funding from the MN Department of Human Services to implement substance use intervention services for all of our direct service programs. One full-time Licensed Alcohol & Drug Counselor (LADC) now works with victim-survivors to identify substance use concerns, conducts assessment for treatment referral, and encourages those who are making efforts to address substance use concerns. This funding will also enable us to add a Clinical Director position in 2025, which will allow us to further expand this vital service department.

"Many participants don't have access to transportation or childcare, so being able to go out and meet them where they are is really important. I'm able to provide very low-barrier mental health support."

Anna Perrotta, Mental Health and Wellness Therapist

Mental health, wellness, & legal advocacy expenses for the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year were \$1,354,290, comprising 33% of organizational expenses.

SHEILA WELLSTONE CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

The Child & Family Advocates who operate Women's Advocates' Sheila Wellstone Children's Program are compassionate and dedicated to supporting our youngest victim-survivors, whether in our shelter or our Housing Stability program. Our advocates provide drop-in childcare, tutoring support, special activities, and support to victim-survivors struggling with parenting after an experience of abuse. Families enrolled in housing stability programming also have access to support from the Children's Program in the form of home visits, school-based advocacy, connections to community resources, and emotional support for children during the transition from shelter to permanent housing.





112 children ages 0 to 17 received services in our Emergency Shelter and in the community after they entered our Housing Stability Program.

Children's Program expenses for the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year were \$148,186, comprising 4% of organizational expenses.

SURVIVOR ADVISORY COUNCIL



Homeless Day on the Hill, March 2024

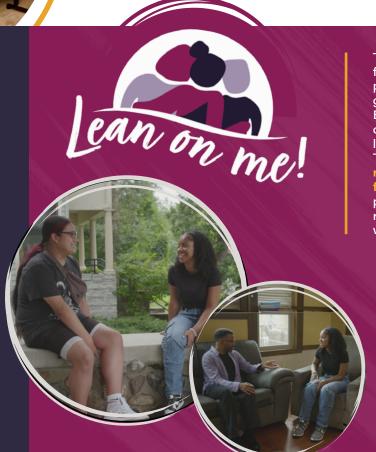
program participants are invited to join the SAC to ensure that our programming is grounded in the lived experience of domestic violence victim-survivors. The SAC meets monthly with the Executive Director, Associate Director, and Development Director to guide programming development, service priorities, and the overall direction of the organization.

The annual workplan and policy agenda set by SAC members

Our most vital avenue for engagement and evaluation is our Survivor Advocacy Council (SAC). All current and prior

drives much of Women's Advocates' innovative organizational decision-making and new programs. Our Pet Foster Program was developed specifically to meet the SAC's 2023 priority goal of eliminating concern for companion animal safety as a barrier to leaving an abusive situation. This program, launched in March 2023, has now expanded to become the MN Pet Foster Coalition.

In 2024, the SAC prioritized advocacy and mentorship opportunities for older youth with a particular focus on the needs of Black/African American boys. This has led to the creation of our Lean on Me program and the hiring of a full-time African American mentor and former schoolteacher to engage older youth staying in our shelter. Our work with the SAC demonstrates that when domestic violence survivors are given opportunities to lead, they help us do the work better.



The Lean on Me program was launched in 2024 based on feedback from the Survivor Advisory Council. Previous participants informed us that there was a lack of programming geared specifically toward older youth staying in shelter. Experiences of violence and trauma often complicate the already difficult emotions young people are experiencing, and this can lead to seclusion, lack of engagement, and low-self esteem. The Lean on Me program provides connections to culturally relevant mentorship and support for young people as the heal from their experience of domestic violence. Additionally, the program focuses on helping youth learn how to build healthy relationships with themselves and with others, empowering them with the tools and skills to form positive, supportive connections.

"Youth programming is crucial in breaking the cycle of domestic violence because it is a preventative measure and provides space for multi-generational healing."



Alex McDougall, Director of Outreach and Youth Engagement

Scan to support our youth programming!



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

2024-2027



Creating Safety \$4,824,200 Building acquisition & trauma-informed design



Building Hope \$6,792,454 Renovation & building transition



Ensuring Longevity \$2,633,346

Initial capacity building, facility services, and programming costs

Join us in creating a safer future, free from domestic violence.

Women's Advocates is undergoing a significant advancement in our mission to support victim-survivors of domestic violence and their families. We are raising \$14.25 million to acquire two new buildings to double our number of shelter beds.

With your investment, we will create 19 new apartments dedicated to victim-survivors totaling 58 beds. The buildings will offer a mix of ADA compliant 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom, and 3-bedroom units, providing diverse accommodations for victim-survivors of all genders, sexualities, and abilities.

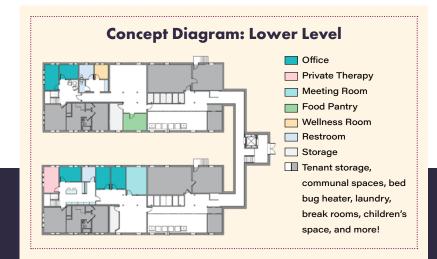
Additionally, we are proud to announce that this new facility will allow residents and their pets to live together in their rooms, providing invaluable comfort and support during times of crisis, while keeping the entire family safe.

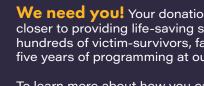




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We need you! Your donation will bring us one step closer to providing life-saving services and resources to hundreds of victim-survivors, families, and pets in our first five years of programming at our new buildings.

To learn more about how you can support this project, please email development@wadvocates.org.

50TH ANNIVERSARY





Women's Advocates started in 1972 as a divorce rights hotline, offering legal guidance to women seeking to leave abusive marriages. However, it soon became clear that the biggest obstacle these women faced was the lack of a safe place to go. Many were forced to choose between staying in violent homes or fleeing into homelessness. Recognizing this urgent need, a collective of individuals came together to expand the mission to include providing physical safety. In 1974, with community support, Women's Advocates opened the nation's first emergency domestic violence shelter, offering a sanctuary for victim-survivors and their children.

Over the decades, we've grown into a leader in the movement to end domestic violence. Each day, we provide emergency shelter and advocacy services for up to 50 victim-survivors and children. Our programs now include Housing Stability services, addressing homelessness as a key barrier to leaving abusive relationships, and innovative community-based services to reach those who may never enter a shelter. Across all our programs, we focus on empowering victim-survivors with practical support and emotional healing, helping them break free from abuse and rebuild their lives.

In October 2024, we honored our 50th Anniversary during Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The gala reflected on five decades of hope and healing while reaffirming our mission to support all victim-survivors, regardless of gender, sexuality, or ability. Highlights included: a proclamation from Governor Tim Walz designating October 17 as Women's Advocates Day in Minnesota, remarks from Senator Amy Klobuchar, an exhibit of our history and artists supporting our mission at the Landmark Center, and a

heartfelt reading of "a mother's devotion" by RikkiFuriosa The Artist.





Scan the QR code to see Women's Advocates in the news and highlights from our 50th anniversary gala!

Along with our gala, Women's Advocates was featured on KARE 11, the Pioneer Press, and the Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder, raising awareness about intimate partner violence and our mission to build a future free from abuse. This milestone month honored our legacy while paving the way for new ways to support victim-survivors.

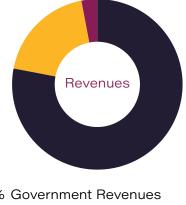
FINANCIAL REPORT

2023-2024

Audited Financial Statements		2023-2024	2022-2023
Assets	Total Current Assets	\$3,228,708	\$2,651,720
	Net Property & Equipment	\$5,136,190	\$885,107
	Total Assets	\$8,364,898	\$3,536,827
Liabilities	Total Current Liabilities	\$294,497	\$264,701
	Long Term Debt	\$0	\$0
Net Assets	Net Assets: Undesignated	\$5,822,745	\$655,182
	Net Assets: Designated	\$1,600,000	\$2,356,184
	Net Assets: Temporarily Restricted	\$647,656	\$260,760
	Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$8,364,898	\$3,536,827
Revenue	Program Service Revenue	\$7,036,727	\$3,130,298
	Contributions	\$1,696,961	\$1,084,793
	Debt Forgiveness	\$0	\$25,584
	Interest & Miscellaneous	\$231,269	\$124,095
	Total Support & Revenue	\$8,964,957	\$4,364,770
Expenses	Programs & Services	\$3,175,033	\$3,589,305
	Management & General	\$684,457	\$602,248
	Fundraising	\$307,192	\$366,071
	Total Expenses	\$4,166,682	\$4,557,624
Change in Net Assets		\$4,798,275	(\$192,854)
Net Assets - Beginning of Year		\$3,272,126	\$3,464,980
Net Assets - End of Year		\$8,070,401	\$3,272,126







78% Government Revenues 19% Community Support 3% Debt Forgiveness, Miscellaneous

THANK YOU, 2023-2024 CONTRIBUTORS

Donors of \$50,000+

356, 362 and 372 Cleveland Avenue 3M Community Fund Community Leadership Fund Otto Bremer Trust Pohlad Family Foundation

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THANK YOU, 2023-2024 CONTRIBUTORS

Karen Mahler

The Lutheran Church

Collaborative

Daphne Thompson

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The Real Estate

Jill Thompson

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Thank you to members of the Circle of Courage

Donors who give more than \$1,000 each year make an unbelievable impact on our ability to break the cycle of domestic violence. You inspire us.



Thank you to our volunteers We're so grateful for our

volunteers! Your time, energy, and commitment help us create a safer future for survivors. Thank you for being part of this mission.

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Marilynn Thaney and Tiana Daun

OURHISTORY



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.



Women's Advocates is incorporated as a nonprofit.



Volunteers began sheltering women and children in their own homes.



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



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



1978

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



1987

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



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



1994

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



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



2003

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



2007

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



2009

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



2016

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



2020

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



2021

Pop-Up Advocacy begins in the Saint Paul community.



2021

Women's Advocates' Survivor Advisory Council is established.



2023

Our Pet Foster program begins to provide safety for victim-survivors and their dogs and cats.



2024

Started a Safe Harbor and Alternative Shelter programs, youth programming, and a partnership with the MN Pet Coalition. We launched a capital campaign for two new buildings.







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