



# EMPOWER

# OUR

# FUTURE

**A Vision to  
End Domestic  
Violence  
In Minnesota**



# EMPOWER OUR FUTURE

## A VISION TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN MINNESOTA

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***Empower Our Future*** claims the future we desire for domestic violence victims, their families, our programs, our communities, and our movement overall.

For a number of years domestic violence programs expressed frustration, saying they felt the work was led by outside forces and funders which did not fully understand the needs of programs or survivors. Domestic violence survivors and advocates were no longer leading the work. We could not find the time nor space to create our own vision.

Over the past two years, Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women (MCBW) prioritized creating this plan for the future, this vision to guide us in the coming years. More than 100 people and 80 programs across Minnesota combined their great experience, wisdom, and passion to empower our future and end domestic violence.

This plan serves to empower our future. Our vision inspires us and all who work alongside us to take measurable actions towards ending domestic violence in Minnesota. Using all of our best selves, join us in beginning this work.



Liz Richards  
Executive Director



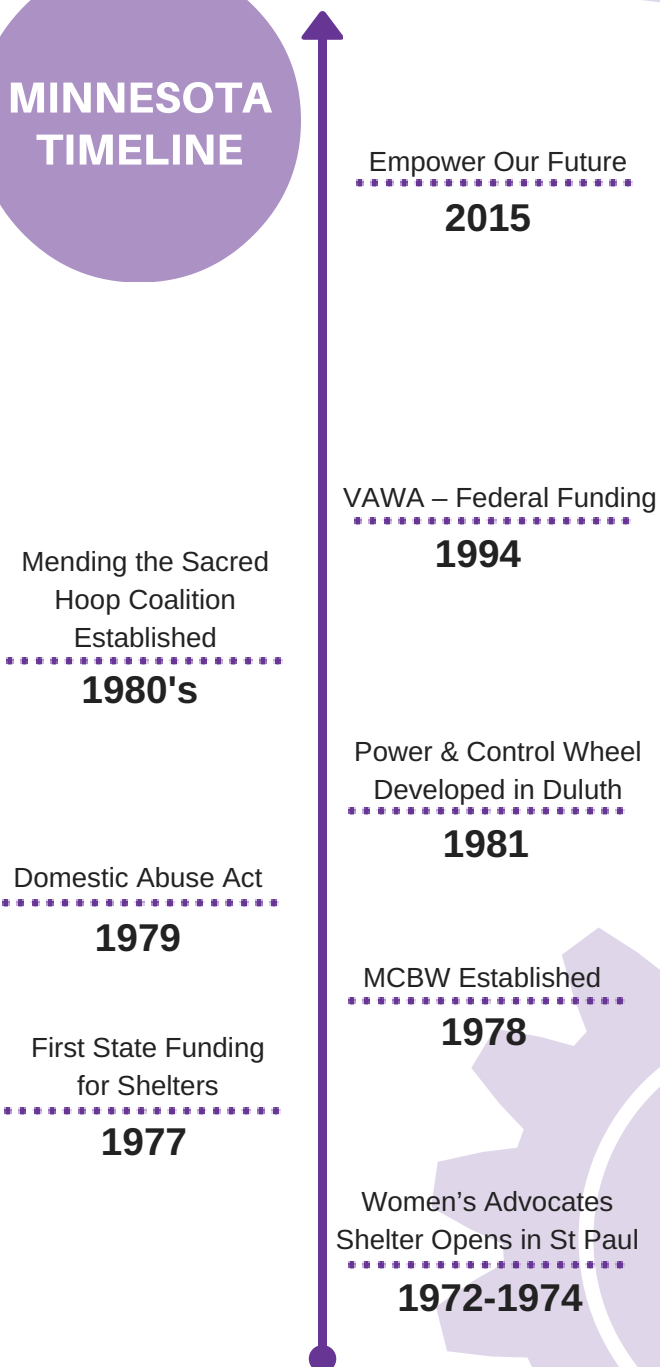
Sherry Sanchez Tibbetts  
Chair of Board of Directors

MCBW

# OUR PROCESS

## OUR HISTORY OF LEADERSHIP & INNOVATION

### MINNESOTA TIMELINE



Minnesota is a leading innovator with over 40 years of experience in the field of domestic violence. We are the site of one of the country's first domestic violence shelters, have some of the strongest government support, are often the first to enact protective legislation, and have created models used both nationally and internationally. But in recent years, the work to end domestic violence has plateaued --- economic strain eats away at program foundations, and programs are working with increasingly complex family situations, shifting the focus to crisis intervention.

Yet there is a moment of great opportunity to end domestic violence in Minnesota. Public awareness of domestic violence is at a never before seen level; the National Football League is airing awareness commercials during the Super Bowl, the Vice President is championing domestic and sexual violence work, and social media is facilitating conversations on a scale impossible a mere decade ago. It is time to re-ground our work as a movement and intentionally plan for the future.

**The Plan:** *Empower Our Future* results from two years of directed discussion among more than 100 people across the state.

**The Question:** "Based on where the field is today, how do we end domestic violence in Minnesota?"

**The Outcome:** We return to the principle that sparked this movement: ***all domestic violence work must be informed by and in response to survivors.*** This central principle informs the work of ending domestic violence.

This summary provides highlights from the plan to *Empower Our Future* with more detail contained in the full report. Minnesota has the people, resources, expertise, and passion to continue leading innovation in the movement to end domestic violence.

For more information and to access the full report, please visit [www.mcbw.org](http://www.mcbw.org)

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



**1 in 3** adult women have experienced domestic violence in their lifetime.

**1 in 6** men have experienced sexual abuse in their lifetime.



## MINNESOTA:

More than **65,000** adults receive domestic violence services from programs each year



**Less than 50%** of people who experience domestic violence ever reach out for services



**41.2% of youth** seen at Twin Cities teen health clinics report physical and/or sexual violence in their relationships

**Homicide is the leading cause of death during pregnancy.**

## MINNESOTA, 2015:

**29** domestic violence homicides.  
Victim ages: **14 to 76**.  
Homicides in **17** cities,  
**50%** in Greater Minnesota.

## SOURCES

American Journal of Public Health

Center for Disease Control

Full Frame Initiative

Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women

Minnesota Department of Public Safety

Minnesota Department of Health

Minnesota Office of Justice Programs

National Network to End Domestic Violence

Project Connect

## Minnesota's Domestic Violence Programs provide essential public safety services such as:

- 24-hour crisis line
- Transportation to safety
- Protective order assistance
- Housing & childcare assistance
- Support through legal proceedings
- Community outreach & education
- Support groups
- Child & youth services
- Access to hospital & clinic care





# ANTI- OPPRESSION

A WORLD FREE OF OPPRESSION IS  
WHERE THE VAST POTENTIAL OF  
HUMANITY WILL BE REALIZED.

**The Vision:** Every person will enjoy the basic human rights to healthy food, clothing, housing, education, healthcare, freedom of speech/movement/ideas, self-determination, and safety. Abuse of privilege will not exist, nor will domestic, sexual, interpersonal, or state violence.

**The Plan:** We have long understood the complexities of people's lives and how intersecting oppressions impact safety for those being battered; therefore we need to address oppression in all of its forms in order to end intimate partner violence. We will do this by using innovative strategies, collaborations, and initiatives.

**Context:** As the domestic violence movement shifts to more social service provision, we see less responsiveness to peoples' complex needs. Historically, when we have attempted to honestly and effectively address oppression and inequity, we have been met with resistance, alienation, criticism, and co-optation from systems, funders, and our communities. Despite being overwhelmed by the enormity and entrenched nature of oppression, we have hope and believe change is possible through processes of trust and innovation.



## STRATEGIES

**Work to re-frame media & policy maker messages to promote anti-oppression initiatives**

- Monitor major media outlets on their domestic violence framework and use of language; provide data to change coverage.

**Promote learning exchanges across cultural & geographic lines**

- Create diverse work groups on specific topics, such as healthcare access
- Develop advocate exchange program

**Facilitate survivor's participation in social action around issues that directly affect them**

- For example: poverty, domestic violence, racism

***“I ask,***  
*what would it be like to*  
*play with children who*  
*have never experienced*  
*violence?”*

***I want to ask,***  
*what would it be like to*  
*play with children who*  
*have never experienced*  
*discrimination or bias?”*

- Sandy Davidson

BOTH/AND/ALL



# COMPLEX UNITY

WE REMEMBER THE WHOLE IS  
GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS  
PARTS.

**The Vision:** Victim-survivor voices and perspectives are included at all levels of our unity and organizing. We join together, recognizing there are many paths to achieve our vision - not either/or, but both/and/all.

**The Plan:** This plan promotes collaboration both within the domestic violence movement and beyond. Complex Unity requires recognition of our many shared core values, and an ongoing receptiveness to new frameworks, approaches, and ways of doing our work.

**Context:** Domestic violence work and our formal organizing grew up separate from other anti-violence against women areas: domestic violence, sexual assault, sex trafficking, tribal work. We have had different funding, different ways of organizing, and different ways of thinking about the issues. Moving forward, with a common understanding of the complex & intersectional nature of our work, we intentionally join together to increase our influence.


WE VALUE THE COMPLEX GREATER  
WHOLE AND THE INDIVIDUAL PARTS.

## Complex Unity: Duluth Sex Trafficking Taskforce




### STRATEGIES


#### Dedicate resources for communications & collaboration

 Facilitated meetings or opportunities for networking & cross-learning

#### Listen, educate, and collaborate with youth

 Support youth in meaningful and appropriate roles that prioritize their experiences and expertise

#### Build relationships with “unusual partners” – identify who is not at the table and invite them into conversation

 Support unconventional partnerships, e.g. Disability Rights, Environmental Justice, Maternal Health & Wellness with Domestic Violence



EQUALITY:  
A NATURAL STATE OF BEING

# SOCIAL NORMS CHANGE

EQUITY, FREEDOM FROM DOMESTIC AND  
SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION  
AND ALL OTHER FORMS OF OPPRESSION,  
IS A NATURAL STATE OF BEING.

**The Vision:** Equality is a natural state of being and is institutionalized through policies and laws. We invest resources in educating each new generation about the values and mechanisms that sustain a world free of violence, where every individual is valued and cherished.

**The Plan:** Our work focuses on social change. We examine how our programs and our work are structured, supported, and evaluated to create social change. We address and shift the structures that enable domestic violence.

**Context:** A central principle at the inception of the domestic violence movement was to change social norms that promote and support intimate partner violence. It has proven difficult to focus on prevention and social norm change as funding and programming heavily prioritize crisis intervention.



## STRATEGIES



Broaden our message about gender based violence and draw the connection between all oppression/all violence and domestic violence



Promote research that defines the cost of domestic and sexual violence in order to "make the case" for prevention work



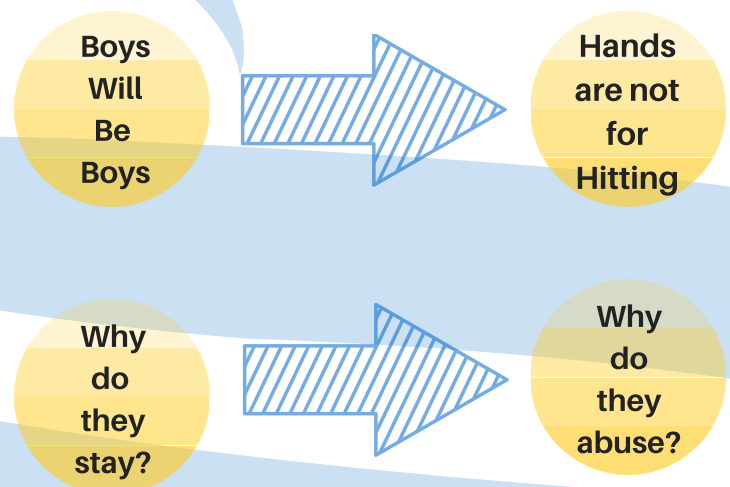
Engage broadly with men and boys on developing healthy relationships and their role in prevention – sports as one avenue for engagement



Establish early child domestic violence screening & intervention programs to interrupt patterns of power & control focused on perpetrators of violence



Employ a social justice worker in every domestic violence program







## HOUSING: A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT

# ECONOMIC JUSTICE

NO ONE WILL BE FORCED TO REMAIN  
IN A VIOLENT RELATIONSHIP  
BECAUSE OF A HOUSING NEED.

**The Vision:** Every person has access to the full range of safe and affordable housing options, no matter who they are or what issues they face.

**The Plan:** This plan focuses on the economic justice issue of safe, affordable, and appropriate housing. This is a "housing first" model that focuses on housing needs knowing full well that the full range of economic justice issues must be addressed and are linked to the ability to effectively address housing issues. For example, without access to living wage jobs, childcare, and transportation, survivors are unable to maintain housing.

**Context:** Historically, the domestic violence field has provided emergency shelter housing for battered women. We have expanded to include emergency shelter for all survivors of domestic violence/sexual exploitation. We have expanded into other types of housing – e.g. transitional housing, supportive housing, rapid rehousing models. Despite our housing work, there remain significant gaps that must be addressed to foster sustainable, violence free lives.

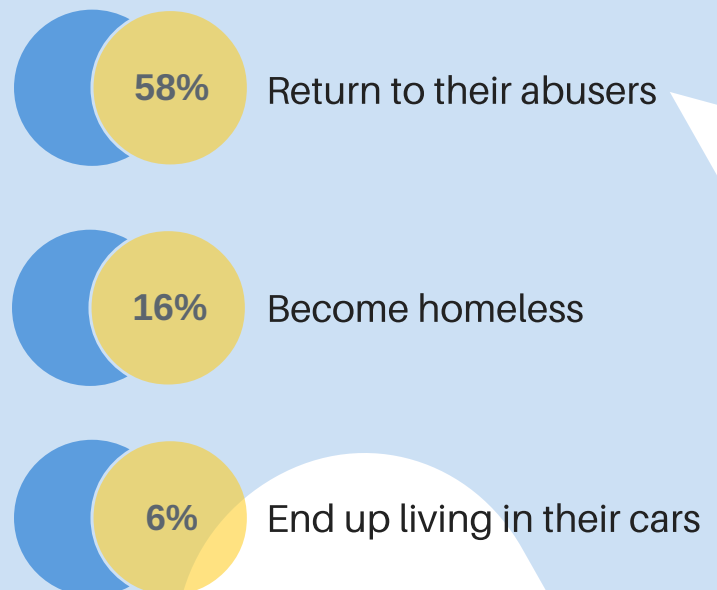
**Domestic violence is a leading cause of housing instability.**

**Housing advocacy services**

**#1 unmet need**

**for domestic violence survivors**

**Due to unmet housing requests, domestic violence programs report:\***



## STRATEGIES

**Name housing and economic justice as a part of the movement to end domestic violence in Minnesota:**

- Designate a domestic violence representative on all key housing committees/task forces
- Support every domestic violence program to develop housing advocacy

**Prevent housing instability:**

- Educate landlords about domestic violence and resources available for individuals, promote alternatives to eviction
- Create programs to work on problematic credit & criminal histories and with landlords to maintain housing
- Work to reduce policies/laws that penalize and/or evict victims.

**Prioritize domestic violence victims for housing options**

**Promote innovative housing models and flexible housing funding**

# EVALUATION

WE WILL TELL OUR STORY  
EFFECTIVELY USING DATA WHOSE  
PARAMETERS AND COLLECTION  
METHODOLOGY HAVE BEEN DEFINED  
BY THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FIELD.

**The Vision:** The field of domestic violence will work in partnership with funders to ensure that the evaluation process and requirements are in sync with the needs of victims/survivors and programs.

**The Plan:** Conduct robust data collection and evaluation that focuses on the victim experience and on the full spectrum of our communities. Victim confidentiality will be understood and respected through all data collection and evaluation. Programs must be given capacity assistance to develop evaluation tools that capture the full magnitude of the services provided and community impact.

**Context:** Currently, we conduct evaluation that is defined and required by funders. There are limited resources designated for research, data collection, or evaluation.



## STRATEGIES



Adapt and promote culturally diverse evaluation models



Evaluate innovative approaches recognizing the value of experimentation and failure



Broaden the partners, non-profit & governmental, who are gathering data on domestic violence and promote cross-sharing of that data



Use the power of the personal story – this work is not just numbers



Create best practices for evaluation that measure social norm and system change work and meet with funders for common application of those standards



Only **7%** of all survivors' definitions of success include leaving the abusive relationship.

Success means having a system [of services] available to survivors when they need it.

# THANK YOU

The Butler Family Foundation's financial support made this plan possible. They funded the Impact Initiative, a directed discussion led by MAP for Non-Profits. More significantly, Butler Family Foundation generously invested in MCBW to open the discussion to all of our domestic violence programs from across the state. MCBW has spent two years focused on the future of domestic violence work in Minnesota. We, along with many programs and individuals, actively engaged our imaginations to shape visions for the future. Our daily work is responding to violence and crisis. It is difficult to create the time and space needed for expansive thinking. Support from the Butler Family Foundation made it possible to create time and space for the discussions necessary to create the plan.

The depth and richness of the plan exists because of the work of many. The participants in the Impact Initiative, MCBW's board and staff, and advocates from Minnesota's domestic violence programs spent days in discussion to draw out the rich knowledge and expertise that exists in Minnesota.

Finally, our thanks extends to you; for both taking the time to read the plan to empower our future and working with us to implement recommendations and strategies to end domestic violence in Minnesota.

**Together, we can live violence free!**

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**Melani Suarez**

*Program Manager*

# MEMBER PROGRAMS

**360 Communities/Lewis House**, Dakota, Carver, Goodhue, Hennepin, Ramsey  
**Advocates Against Domestic Abuse**, Aitkin & Crow Wing  
**Advocates for Family Peace**, Itasca, Northern St. Louis County  
**Advocates for Human Rights**, International  
**Alexandra House**, Anoka  
**American Indian Community Housing Org.**, St. Louis, Koochiching, Lake, Cook, Itasca  
**Anna Marie's Alliance**, Sherburne, Benton, Stearns, Mille Lacs, Wright  
**AshaUSA**, Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey  
**Asian Women United of MN**, Hennepin, Ramsey  
**Aurora Center for Advocacy & Education**, University of Minnesota  
**Battered Women's Justice Project**, National  
**Battered Women's Legal Advocacy Project**, Statewide  
**Bluff Country Family Resources**, Filmore, Houston  
**Bois Forte Victim Services**, Nett Lake, Koochiching, St. Louis  
**Breaking Free**, Ramsey  
**Casa de Esperanza**, Hennepin, Ramsey  
**Committee Against Domestic Abuse**, Brown, Nicollet, Blue Earth, LeSuer, Sibley, Waseca, Watonwan, Faribault  
**Communication Service for the Deaf**, Statewide  
**Community Health Service**, Polk, Norman, Clay, Pennington  
**Community University Health Care Center**, Hennepin  
**Cornerstone Advocacy Services**, Hennepin  
**Crime Victim Crisis Center**, Freeborn  
**Crisis Resource Center of Steele County**, Steele  
**Dakota County Attorney's Office**, Dakota  
**Division of Indian Work**, Hennepin  
**Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs**, St. Louis  
**Domestic Abuse Project**, Hennepin  
**Down On Violence Everyday DOVE**, White Earth Reservation, Mahnomen, Becker, Clearwater  
**Equay Wiigamig**, Red Lake Reservation, Beltrami  
**Family Safety Network of Cass County**, Cass  
**Friends Against Abuse**, Koochiching, Lake of the Woods  
**Gender Violence Institute**, Statewide  
**Global Rights for Women**, International  
**Hands of Hope Resource Center**, Morrison, Todd  
**Headwaters Intervention Center**, Hubbard & Clearwater  
**Hmong American Partnership**, Ramsey  
**Hope Center**, Rice  
**Hope Coalition**, Goodhue  
**Isaiah's Domestic Violence Task Force**, Statewide  
**Lakes Crisis & Resource Center**, Becker and surrounding area  
**Lutheran Domestic Violence Initiative**, Ramsey  
**Mahnomen County Victim Services Office**, Mahnomen

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# MEMBER PROGRAMS

**Marshall County Victim Services**, Marshall  
**Men as Peacemakers**, St Louis  
**Mid-Minnesota Women's Center**, Crow Wing  
**Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless**, Statewide  
**Minnesota Elder Justice Center**, Statewide  
**Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center**, Hennepin  
**McLeod Alliance for Victims of Domestic Violence**, McLeod  
**Missions, Inc./Home Free**, Hennepin  
**New Horizons Crisis Center**, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Redwood  
**North Shore Horizons**, Lake  
**Northwoods Coalition for Family Safety**, Beltrami, Cass  
**Oasis of Love**, Hennepin  
**Outfront Minnesota**, Statewide  
**Pearl Crisis Center**, Mille Lacs  
**Pillsbury United Communities**, Hennepin  
**Praxis International**, National  
**Rape & Abuse Crisis Center of Fargo-Moorhead**, Clay, Wilkin  
**Refuge Network**, Chisago, Isanti, Kannebec  
**Rivers of Hope**, Wright & Sherburne  
**Ruth's House**, Rice  
**Safe Avenues**, Kandiyohi, Swift, Chippewa, Lac Qui Parle, Renville, Meeker, McLeod  
**Safe Haven Shelter**, St. Louis, Carlton, Aitkin, Itasca, Lake, Cook, Koochiching  
**Safe Journey at North Memorial**, Hennepin  
**SEWA-AIFW (Asian Indian Family Wellness)**, Hennepin, Ramsey  
**Sexual Violence Center**, Carver, Hennepin, Scott  
**Sojourner Project**, Hennepin, Carver, Dakota, Ramsey  
**Someplace Safe**, Big Stone, Grant, Pope, Stevens, Douglas, Traverse, Wilkin, Otter Tail, Wadena  
**Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services**, Southern MN  
**Southern Valley Alliance for Battered Women**, Carver, Scott  
**Southwest Crisis Center**, Noble, Pipestone, Rock, Cottonwood, Jackson  
**St. Paul and Ramsey County Intervention Project**, Ramsey  
**Tubman**, Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Washington  
**Violence Intervention Project**, Pennington, Polk, Marshall, Kittson, Roseau, Red Lake, Norman  
**Violence Prevention Center**, Cook  
**WATCH**, Hennepin, Ramsey, St Louis  
**WINDOW**, Carlton, Pine & Kanabec  
**Women of Nations**, Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Washington  
**Women's Advocates**, Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, Washington  
**Women's Resource Center**, Winona  
**Women's Rural Advocacy Programs**, Lincoln, Lyon, Yellow Medicine, Redwood  
**Women's Shelter, Inc.**, Dodge, Fillmore, Olmsted, Wabasha

MINNEAPOLIS



We ask that the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women be credited when information from this plan is used.

Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women

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