



# **Domestic Violence Advisory Board FY25 Budget Priorities**

Presented to the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners  
March 12, 2024

# Recommended FY25 Budget Priorities

Sheltering and Housing

Mental Health

Youth and Teen Supports

Communications and Awareness of Existing Resources



# Sheltering and Housing

## Findings

- 1,019 people who had a Coordinated Entry assessment during FY23 reported being a survivor of domestic violence; 324 reported experiencing domestic violence in the past 3 months
- Safe Alliance provided short-term emergency shelter or hoteling to 452 adults and 500 children during FY23
- Overall, demand for sheltering and housing solutions by domestic violence survivors continues to exceed the supply of resources
- Salvation Army Center of Hope often becomes the overflow location for domestic violence-impacted households who exhaust their time at Safe Alliance or cannot get a bed anywhere else



# Sheltering and Housing

## Findings

- Mecklenburg County invests in dedicated resources for domestic violence survivors who are seeking sheltering and housing:
  - Domestic Violence Fund for one-time housing stability expenses for individuals or families impacted by intimate partner violence
  - Housing for Good short-term and medium-term rental assistance and supportive services for families fleeing intimate partner violence
- County funding for these resources is fully utilized to provide rental assistance for at least 15 families and to provide one-time financial assistance for about 50 households each year



# Sheltering and Housing

## Findings

- Additional funding for domestic violence housing has come from the Continuum of Care, which is providing over \$800,000 during FY24
  - Supports over 30 additional households in rapid rehousing
  - Funds one Coordinated Entry social worker who is dedicated to conducting housing assessments with individuals and families whose circumstances are related to domestic violence



# Sheltering and Housing

## Recommendations

- Continue prioritizing Housing for Good and the Domestic Violence Fund. Consider increasing investment in these resources since current funding is fully utilized.
- Support investments in emergency shelter bed space and solutions that add capacity for emergency sheltering while keeping families together (e.g. domestic violence hoteling partnerships, pet-friendly sheltering programs)
- Support the efforts of the Continuum of Care to fully utilize federal domestic violence housing and supportive service funds that could be available to our community



# Mental Health

## Findings

- Although mental health is not a cause of domestic violence, it is frequently a co-occurring issue
- Mecklenburg County invests in clinical mental health services for child observers and adult or teen victims/survivors of intimate partner violence
  - Community Support Services served 646 adults in FY23 and 298 children/teens
- Mecklenburg County invests in non-clinical psychoeducation for abusive partners through NOVA (New Options for Violent Actions) as well as one licensed clinician
  - CSS NOVA program served 521 abusive partners in FY23
- There is usually no wait time for NOVA services or clinical mental health services for adult survivors provided by CSS
- Since FY20, the wait time for children's domestic violence clinical services has remained steady at about 5-7 months



# Mental Health

## Recommendations

- Continue existing County investments in mental health services related to domestic violence
- Support solutions to mitigate wait times for children's clinical mental health services
  - Subsidies to provide additional counseling sessions through contracted external providers
  - Strengthening of university-to-workplace pipeline to recruit qualified mental health clinicians, especially children's clinicians



# Youth and Teen Supports

## Findings

- Providing support for youth and teens is critical for lowering the risk of relationship violence continuing into adulthood
- Mecklenburg County invests in teen dating violence prevention and healthy relationships education for youth:
  - During FY23, Community Support Services LoveSpeaksOut program provided 337 presentations to 7,674 youth in schools and community settings
  - 6,456 youth were reached through CMS schools; 1,218 were reached through community nonprofits
  - 88% of youth surveyed showed increased knowledge of resources for teen dating violence



# Youth and Teen Supports

## Findings

- Parents Bill of Rights legislation (SB-49) passed in fall 2023 has impacted ability to reach youth and teens through CMS schools
  - LoveSpeaksOut had to cancel 53 sessions (1,855 student reach) to allow parents time to decide to opt in or not prior to January 12<sup>th</sup>
  - Since LoveSpeaksOut resumed sessions in CMS after January 12<sup>th</sup>, 6 sessions have been cancelled due to low opt-in rates; 4 schools have indicated they cannot schedule sessions due to low opt-in rates



# Youth and Teen Supports

## Recommendations

- Continue County investment in teen dating violence prevention and education programming. Consider increasing investment to expand the capacity and reach of current programming.
- Monitor impact of Parents Bill of Rights on ability to reach youth with early education and prevention services. Partner with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education to identify solutions.
- Support investments in services for parents of youth and teens, such as adult counseling and parenting education



## Findings

- Mecklenburg County and community nonprofits offer a wide array of services and assistance related to domestic violence
- Overall community awareness of existing resources seems to be low



## Recommendations

- Invest in ongoing communications strategy to raise awareness of existing community resources and new initiatives
- Consider periodic targeted campaigns aligned with national awareness months, paired with consistent regular marketing activities
- Diversify communication channels and formats to reach various populations



# Thank you!

Tanisha "Tya" Patterson-Powe, Chair



Domestic Violence Advisory Board

