



Domestic Violence Advisory Board FY27 Budget Priorities

Presented to the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners
February 10, 2026

Recommended FY27 Budget Priorities

Sheltering and Housing

Mental Health

Youth and Teen Supports

Communications and Awareness of Existing Resources



Sheltering and Housing

The need

- In FY25 there were 2,262 households experiencing homelessness in Mecklenburg County that reported a history of domestic violence at some time in their lives (754 of these included children)
- Safe Alliance provided short-term emergency shelter or hoteling to 775 adults and children fleeing intimate partner violence during FY25 (average 43 nights stay per person)
- 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 survivors who exhaust their time at Safe Alliance



Sheltering and Housing

What's being done

- Mecklenburg County invests in dedicated resources for domestic violence survivors who are seeking sheltering and housing:
 - Housing for Good Program (FY26 investment \$336,806)
 - 12-24 months of rapid rehousing assistance and supportive services for families fleeing intimate partner violence
 - Program originally served up to 15 families
 - Currently serves up to 12 families due to increased housing costs causing funds not to stretch as far
 - Program is accessed through Coordinated Entry



Sheltering and Housing

What's being done:

- Additional funding for domestic violence housing passes through Mecklenburg County:
 - HUD Domestic Violence Rapid Rehousing funds via Continuum of Care (\$440,540 in 2026)
 - Supports approximately 15 households with rapid rehousing (actual number of households served depends on housing costs)
 - HUD funds also support a dedicated Coordinated Entry social worker who assesses households experiencing homelessness due to DV
 - Federal Block Grant funds via DSS (\$104,000 in FY26)
 - Supports approximately 50 households via the Domestic Violence Fund - one-time financial assistance related to housing stability



Sheltering and Housing

Recommendations

- Continue investing in the Housing for Good program and allocating Block Grant funds for the Domestic Violence Fund
 - Consider increasing investment in these resources because current funding is fully utilized and increased housing costs have reduced how many households can benefit
- 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 available HUD dollars for domestic violence housing



Mental Health

The need

- Although mental health and domestic violence do not share a causal relationship, they are frequently co-occurring issues
- The high prevalence of domestic violence and intimate partner violence in Mecklenburg County suggests there is also high need for related mental health services and supports:
 - Between January 2022 and December 2024, CMPD – the largest law enforcement agency in Mecklenburg County – received on average 37,582 domestic violence citizen-initiated patrol calls for service each year
 - Between FY23 and FY25, Mecklenburg County Civil District Court saw an average of 3,761 ex-parte restraining orders filed each year
 - Between FY23 and FY25, the Greater Charlotte Hope Line received an average of 8,733 calls each year from survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and individuals in need of parenting support



Mental Health

What's being done

- Mecklenburg County invests in clinical mental health counseling for child observers and adult or teen victims/survivors of intimate partner violence
 - Community Support Services served 697 adults in FY25 and 220 children/teens
 - Often no more than 2 weeks wait for adult counseling
 - Wait for children's counseling is currently at about 2 months
- Mecklenburg County invests in non-clinical psychoeducation for abusive partners through NOVA (New Options for Violent Actions) as well as one licensed clinician for NOVA clients who need additional support
 - CSS NOVA program served 713 abusive partners in FY25
 - In FY25, evaluation of 179 NOVA clients who graduated from the program the year before found 172 with no record of recidivism since graduation (4% recidivism rate)



Mental Health

What's being done

- Mecklenburg County is a leading partner in the creation of The Umbrella Center
 - Family Justice Center model of services for people impacted by intimate partner violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, child maltreatment, elder abuse
 - Coming late 2026 off Albemarle Road
 - Public-private partnership initiative
 - Goals include increased victim/survivor safety and well-being, greater offender accountability
 - Mental health components envisioned include:
 - On-site counseling and clinical mental health services provided by Pat's Place Child Advocacy Center, Safe Alliance Sexual Trauma Resource Center, and Mecklenburg County Community Support Services
 - Off-site partnerships to assist with medication management, higher levels of care, psychiatric services



Mental Health

Recommendations

- Continue existing County investments in mental health services related to intimate partner violence
- Continue to support creation of The Umbrella Center (TUC). Consider leveraging TUC as an opportunity to expand investment in mental health services and supports for survivors.
- 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

The need

- Providing support for youth and teens is critical for lowering the risk of relationship violence continuing into adulthood
- Reaching children and youth with health-related education has become more difficult in recent years:
 - Local interpretation of the state's Parents Bill of Rights legislation (SB-49) passed in fall 2023 has impacted ability to reach youth and teens through CMS schools
 - Local interpretation requires that parent/guardian explicitly "opt in" their child for certain health-related classes



Youth and Teen Supports

What's being done

- Mecklenburg County and federal grant partners (FVPSA, PSN) invest in teen dating violence prevention and healthy relationships education for youth:
 - During FY25, Community Support Services' LoveSpeaksOut program reached 3,356 youth in schools and communities
 - 96% of participating youth survey respondents said they can more easily recognize warning signs of dating abuse as a result of the LoveSpeaksOut class
 - 42% of survey respondents said because of the class, they realized they have experienced or are currently experiencing an unhealthy relationship



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 ongoing impact of local interpretation of SB-49 legislation (Parents Bill of Rights) on youth access to programming in schools. Partner with CMS School Board and/or Intergovernmental Committee to share data and solutions.
- Support investments in programming for parents of youth and teens, such as adult counseling and parenting education to support development of healthy youth relationships



Findings

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



What's being done

- Mecklenburg County engages in domestic violence awareness, education, and outreach activities:
 - Community Support Services' Prevention Team
 - Fulfills resident requests for presentations, resources tables, and educational materials distribution
 - Coordinates the Domestic Violence Speakers Bureau to expand community outreach and build survivor leadership
 - Partnerships with local survivors to host events such as Domestic Violence Awareness Empowerment Walk
 - Public Information Office produces materials such as YouTube videos, digital billboards, social media posts



Recommendations

- Support development of intentional communications strategy to raise awareness of existing community resources and new initiatives (such as the upcoming Umbrella Center)
- Consider periodic targeted campaigns aligned with national awareness months, paired with consistent regular marketing activities
- Diversify communication channels and formats to reach various populations
- Support development of population-specific outreach materials (e.g. youth-focused QR Codes, posters, and resource guides)



Thank you!

Christine S. Hart, Co-Chair



Domestic Violence Advisory Board

