

THE FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND SERVICES ACT (FVPSA) YWCA IMPACT AND SUCCESS STORIES

“You have given me security. That is something I haven’t had much of in my life. My entire life has been full of tears and confusion. Every scar I carry, I wear as a badge. It gives me something to look at and tells me I can get through whatever comes my way. It is my strength! Every ounce of power and energy I gave to my husband I am now taking it all back! I can’t say thank you enough for the gifts you have given me. Don’t ever think you don’t make a difference in the lives of people that walk through your doors each day!”

~Survivor Statement from YWCA Pierce County, WA

OVERVIEW

- **YWCA USA reaches 2.3 million women, girls, and their families** through more than 200 local associations in 45 states and the District of Columbia. They provide critical programs, including domestic and sexual violence services, through 12,500 staff members and 52,000 volunteers.
- **Every year YWCAs provide more than 535,000 women with safety services**, which include domestic violence programs and services such as emergency shelter, transitional housing, crisis hotlines, counseling, court assistance, and other community and safety programs.
- Since 2014, **62 YWCAs in 29 states have received more than \$18.2 million in FVPSA funding** through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ (HHS) Family Violence Prevention and Services Program. YWCAs effectively use FVPSA funding together with local, state, and private funding from local foundations, private donations, and state agencies to prevent and respond to family, domestic, and dating violence.
- YWCA is the **largest network of domestic and sexual violence service providers in the country.**

FVPSA-SUPPORTED PROGRAMS

The Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) has been instrumental in preventing and responding to gender-based violence. Since its initial authorization in 1984 and subsequent reauthorizations, FVPSA has created the first and only federal funding stream dedicated to supporting domestic violence programs and shelters, thereby directly addressing the childcare, housing, community support, transportation, and other barriers that survivors of gender-based violence face in accessing safety and resources.

FVPSA funds have provided significant support to YWCAs as they work in communities across the country to meet the needs of survivors. The YWCA programs and success stories highlighted below have been supported by FVPSA funding, and are representative of the difference FVPSA makes in the lives of survivors.

Emergency shelter

- **Oklahoma:** **YWCA Oklahoma**'s Thelma Gaylord Emergency Shelter is the only certified emergency shelter for domestic violence victims in Oklahoma County. The shelter offers the capacity to house nearly 120 women and children, and provides free, comprehensive services such as counseling, medical treatment and exams, and economic empowerment programs.
- **Washington:** At 14, "Inez" was the only survivor of a fire that killed her entire family. Taken in by relatives, she was raped by her uncle at age 15 as "payment for her care." She gave birth to a son, Manuel, who was never allowed to call her "mother." At 16, she met Tomas who promised her and Manuel a life of love and security — but in reality, "security" meant a locked closet where she and Manuel were routinely starved and sexually assaulted. When her second son Miguel was born, Inez decided that she had to get away before he was victimized, too. Inez learned of the YWCA from women she worked with in the orchards. A co-worker called the YWCA and helped Inez and her children go to the **YWCA Walla Walla** shelter. She lived there for two years while she gained her U Visa and rebuilt her life, with the support of YWCA advocates, who helped her find services for her children. Inez now has her green card and a home of her own. Her boys are thriving in school and preschool.

Crisis hotlines

- **Massachusetts:** **YWCA Central Massachusetts**'s [YWCAHelp](#) is a daily chatline service, which provides emotional support, domestic violence advocacy, referrals to community resources, safety planning, and crisis intervention. The bilingual chatline is answered by trained advocates who offer thoughtful attention.
- **Montana:** "Allison" called **YWCA Missoula**'s 24-hour Crisis Line on a Friday from a neighbor's phone in a remote area of Montana after her partner had locked her out of the house with her infant child still inside. She spoke with the advocate for almost an hour. During that time, she shared that they moved to Montana from out of state only weeks before. The threats and intimidation had begun to escalate at the beginning of her pregnancy and had culminated with threats to her and her child that morning.

The advocate discussed safety planning steps with Allison and supported her through the process of calling law enforcement. Later, the neighbor called to thank us. She said Allison's partner had been arrested and that she was driving Allison and her child to the YWCA office. While she was at the shelter, Allison reconnected with family and talked to them about coming home. She was provided her with a voucher for the YWCA Secret Seconds Thrift Store, and she was excited to have clothes for her and her baby. She called her former boss and he offered to

rehire her. YWCA Walla Walla assisted her with contacting the Crime Victim Advocate closest to where her family lived, and she made an appointment to meet with them to talk about options and a parenting plan. After a couple of weeks, she felt stronger and she was ready to leave so YWCA Walla Walla purchased a bus ticket for her, and an advocate transported her to the bus depot to move back with her family.

Case management

- **Indiana:** YWCA Northeast Indiana's [Steps to Success](#) is a community-based case management program that provides long-term support to individuals or families that have survived domestic violence. Case managers are available to assist survivors and their families as they make decisions about their future for a period of two years. The program's goal is to provide survivors with help and support with goal-setting, which allows them to become economically, emotionally, and physically healthy. Steps to Success is about restarting life after abuse. Information provided may include, but is not limited to:
 - Personal safety plan
 - Effects of domestic violence on victims and children
 - Housing information
 - Life skills training (employment, education, budgeting, parenting, etc.)
 - Developing support systems
 - Coordination of services with other agencies
- **Utah:** After ten years of escalating abuse, Candace found her way to the safety of YWCA Utah's Women in Jeopardy shelter. She had just suffered an especially violent incident of physical abuse, conducted in front of their children. She was able to bring only one of her two children with her as her husband was keeping the other from her. With the welfare of her children and her pregnancy foremost in her mind, she summoned the strength to actively take advantage of all the resources the YWCA could offer. With the guidance and assistance of her YWCA case manager and advocates, she:
 - Pursued free legal advocacy, was reunited with the child her husband had been withholding, and began the process of obtaining a divorce and full custody of all the children.
 - Applied for Department of Workforce assistance to obtain critically important medical care for her high-risk pregnancy.
 - Enrolled herself and her children in therapy to help them recover from the trauma and emotional harm of the abuse they had suffered.
 - Ensured that her oldest child received academic support and enriching experiences through the YWCA's after-school program.
 - Maintained her full-time employment with the support of a safe and stable living environment and the YWCA's free drop-in child care.

- Applied and was approved for Section 8 housing and Rapid Re-Housing program assistance and moved her family to an affordable new apartment.

Counseling

- **Virginia:** “Helen,” an adult with intellectual disabilities, was living with her mother and her mother's boyfriend. She contacted **YWCA South Hampton Roads'** 24-hour hotline after being sexually assaulted by her mother's boyfriend in the middle of the night. YWCA arranged for immediate emergency shelter for Helen and her young daughter because she did not feel safe in her mother's home. While in shelter, Helen and her daughter received individual counseling services in order to cope with the trauma of sexual assault and relocation. The YWCA's Housing Specialist advocated on Helen's behalf to the Department of Social Services. As a result, Helen was able to obtain permanent supportive housing. As Helen and her daughter prepared to move into their own place, Helen expressed appreciation for the support that she received. She also expressed excitement and gratitude for the YWCA's role in her life.

Hospital/Medical Accompaniment

- **Maryland:** **YWCA Ann Annapolis and Anne Arundel County** maintains a relationship with Baltimore Washington Medical Center (BWMC) and is contacted in the event that a victim of sexual assault or domestic violence would like advocacy, including being present during the Sexual Assault Forensics Exam (SAFE). Highly trained advocates are available through the YWCA to assist victims through the process and provide clothing, referrals, and other resources necessary to assist in recover.