ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

JEANNE YEAGER, CAROL CALLAWAY
CONNIE KRATOVLIL-LAVELLE, ESQ.
ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT CENTER (EEC)

- Serving victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.
- Help clients achieve financial independence and self-sufficiency through legal and non-legal interventions.
OVERVIEW OF MSCFV

- 300-400 family violence victims and 500-600 children served annually
- 94% are women, the majority having at least one child
- About 2/3 are Caucasian, 16% are African-American, 15% are Hispanic
- Average age is 37, though ranges widely from 17 to over 70
- Face significant challenges related to limited financial resources; more than one-fourth (27%) have no income of their own
- 1/10 has a physical or mental disability
REGION MSCFV SERVES
VICTIMS HAVE BEEN EMOTIONALLY & PHYSICALLY ABUSED. MORE THAN HALF HAVE LEFT THEIR ABUSER BEFORE.
MSCFV’S PROGRAM MODEL

an intentional approach to walking with clients as they transition from family violence victims to self-sufficient survivors.
SERVICES PROVIDED BY MSCFV

- Crisis, including a 24/hr hotline, crisis shelter, basic needs, crisis counseling.
- Transitional – Four months up to 24 months housing.
- Legal, including attorney representation in Final Protective Orders and Divorce and Custody, Economic Empowerment Services.
- Mental Health Services.
- All services provided in Spanish through Bilingual Program.
INCREASING VICTIM SAFETY OVER TIME

- **Intake**: 15%
- **Protective Order Hearing**: 8%
- **First Goal Setting Meeting**: 11%
- **Monthly Check In**: 42%
THE NEED FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Victims of domestic violence often experience economic challenges that impede their ability to leave an abusive situation and achieve financial independence.
“The reciprocal relationship between intimate partner violence (IPV) and poverty is well documented. Batterers create economic instability for their partners through economic sabotage and control. And poverty, in turn, creates increased vulnerability to violence and additional barriers to safety.”

~ The Economic Ripple Effects of IPV
VOCA funded the project through Governor’s Office on Crime Control and Prevention (GOCCP).

Began October 1, 2016.

Provides services to victims from Talbot, Caroline, Queen Anne’s, Kent and Dorchester Counties, located on the Eastern Shore.

Partner with Citizens Assisting and Sheltering the Abused (CASA), Mid-Shore Pro Bono and Pro Bono Resource Center.
PURPOSE OF THE EEC

- To meet the unique legal and financial needs of family violence victims as they transition to a life free from abuse.

- To provide economic empowerment services including financial counseling, education, information & referrals, and legal representation in a variety of legal situations that impact victims’ financial well-being.
After clients receive assistance for their more emergent needs, such as shelter, immediate protection from an abuser through a Final Protective Order they are often still at risk and “not out of the woods”.
### Legal Issues Addressed by the EEC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bankruptcy</td>
<td>Expungement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreclosure</td>
<td>Sale/Partition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landlord/Tenant</td>
<td>MVA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consumer Protection Consultation</td>
<td>Legal Rights &amp; Remedies Overview</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debt Collection</td>
<td>Immigration - Family Contingency Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taxes, Tax Sale &amp; Property Redemption</td>
<td>Employment Discrimination, Wrongful Discharge &amp; Harassment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debt Renegotiation (non-litigation)</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt Management &amp; Credit Counseling</td>
<td>Student Loan Debt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Benefits</td>
<td>Social Security</td>
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</tbody>
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The Economic Empowerment Center utilizes staff attorneys, contract attorneys, and private panel attorneys.

In-house attorneys conduct a preliminary legal assessment for each client to determine the scope of a client's rights and possible remedies and relief within the law.

Often, the intervention of an attorney can head-off a client conflict or resolve the conflict without going to court.
TYPICAL CLIENT FLOW

Crisis
- Hotline call
- Emergency accompaniment
- Emergency housing

Transition
- Initial goal setting with case manager(s)
- Referral to EEC
- EEC intake
- Ability to meet basic needs assessment

Self-sufficiency
- Legal issues resolved
- Financial situation improved
- Safe, stable, affordable housing
- Emotional healing
109 victims
188 legal cases
Describe their family income as “not at all adequate” or “can meet necessities only”
43% had trouble meeting their basic needs in the previous 90 days (e.g., ran out of food, utilities disconnected, can’t afford medication)
## Victim Needs at EEC Entry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has a pending legal case</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applied for assistance</td>
<td>54.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debt difficulties</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has not seen her credit report</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has negative information on her credit report</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has difficulty paying utilities</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work issues</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child care issues</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>School issues</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landlord issues</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lender issues</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
$65,454
Total amount of monetary benefits & cost savings for victims

93% improve their family’s financial situation
EEC IMPACT

- Decreased financial worry: 73%
- Increased standard of living: 59%
- Increased ability to meet unexpected expenses: 59%
- Increased ability to save: 50%
- Increased ability to meet basic expenses: 82%
NEXT STEPS

Based on the Economic Empowerment work being implemented at MSCFV, the Center for Survivor Agency & Justice (CSAJ) has designated Maryland as the Fifth National Demonstration Pilot Project.
CSAJ’S ENVISIONS A WORLD WHERE ALL PEOPLE HAVE EQUAL ACCESS TO PHYSICAL SAFETY, ECONOMIC SECURITY, AND HUMAN DIGNITY.

- There is no safety for survivors without economic security.
- Access to economic justice and security for survivors cannot be achieved through individual-level legal advocacy alone.
- It requires building a partnership with domestic and sexual violence agencies and partnerships between domestic violence and other social justice advocates and movements.
DEMONSTRATION PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- To illuminate gaps and capacities related to survivors' economic security and develop models of collaborative economic justice.
- To engage MSCFV and partners to enhance current economic civil legal advocacy and expand partnerships across communities and across the state.
DEMONSTRATION PROJECT PLAN

- Phase I – Mapping the Economic Landscape (6 months)
  - Partners and Stakeholders.
  - Interviews with survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.
  - Organizational & Community Needs Assessment.

- Phase II – Learning Exchange & Strategic Planning (1 month)
  - Link research to action.
  - Articulate long-term and multilevel strategies for economic justice efforts throughout Maryland.
THANK YOU!

For more information about MSCFV and the Economic Empowerment Center

410-690-3222
ckratovil@mscfv.org
jyeager@mscfv.org