

Governor's Family Violence Council 2025 Annual Report

Executive Order 01.01.2012.05 F

Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy

November 10, 2025



WES MOORE
Governor

ARUNA MILLER
Lieutenant Governor

DOROTHY LENNIG
Executive Director

November 10, 2025

The Honorable Wes Moore
Governor of Maryland
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Executive Order 01.01.2012.05 F (MSAR #9421)

Dear Governor Moore:

As required by Executive Order 01.01.2012.05 F, please find an enclosed copy of the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy's report, titled *Governor's Family Violence Council 2025 Annual Report*. This report includes information regarding the status of family violence in Maryland and recommended improvements to the State's activities to prevent family violence.

Should you have any questions relating to the information provided in this report, please feel free to contact me at 410-697-9338.

As required, five color copies will be sent to the DLS Legislative Library.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dorothy J. Lennig".

Dorothy J. Lennig, Esq.
Executive Director

cc: Sarah Albert, Department of Legislative Services (5 copies)

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Acknowledgments

This *Governor's Family Violence Council 2025 Annual Report* is the result of hard work, valuable input, and dedication from numerous stakeholders, including government officials, law enforcement, legislators, community advocates, victims' rights representatives, state and local government representatives, and survivors. Everyone was generous with their time and supportive feedback. Their participation in the Governor's Family Violence Council and their feedback, suggestions, and recommendations were invaluable for the final report. This report would not have been possible without their active participation and support.



January 2025 Governor's Family Violence Council Meeting

Roster of Members

The Governor's Family Violence Council is composed of various members, led by a Chair and a Co-Chair, appointed by Governor Moore.

Lt. Governor Aruna Miller, Co-Chair

Lt. Governor of Maryland

Attorney General Anthony Brown,

Co-Chair

Maryland Attorney General

Lillian Agbeyegbe, DrPH

Survivor Advocate

Colonel Roland L. Butler, Jr.

Superintendent, Maryland State Police

Senator Mary Beth Carozza

Maryland Senate

Joseph Coale, Esq.

State's Attorney, Talbot County State's Attorney's Office

Jason Dowding

CASA, Inc.

Deborah Feinstein, Esq.

Chief, Special Victims Division,
Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office

Norwood Johnson

Survivor

Dorothy J. Lennig, Esq.

Executive Director, Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy

Rafael Lopez

Secretary, Maryland Department of Human Services

Pamela Love, PhD

President, DP Love Enterprises

Carmel Martin

Special Secretary, Governor's Office for Children

Lisa Nitsch, MSW

Director of Training and Education, House of Ruth Maryland

Katie O'Malley

The Women's Law Center

Leslye Orloff

American University, National Immigrant Women's Advocacy Project

Jennifer Pollitt Hill

Executive Director, Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence

Stacey Rice, Esq.

The Law Offices of Stacey B. Rice, LLC

Delegate April Rose

Maryland House of Delegates

Laure Ruth, Esq.

Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence

Carolyn Scruggs
Secretary, Department of Public Safety and
Correctional Services

Dr. Meena Seshamani
Secretary, Maryland Department of Health

David Shultie
Representative of the Maryland Judiciary,
designated by the Chief Judge of the Court
of Appeals

Delegate Karen Simpson
Maryland House of Delegates

Betsy Fox Tolentino
Secretary, Department of Juvenile Services

Dr. Carey Wright
Superintendent, Maryland State Department
of Education

Jeanne Yeager
Executive Director, Mid-Shore Council on
Family Violence

Ex-Oficio Representatives

Heather Amador
Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and
Policy

Andrea Barnes
Governor's Office for Children

Geri Byrd
Office of the Lieutenant Governor

Jessica Dickerson
Department of Juvenile Services

Lolita Gleaton
Department of Human Services

John McGinnis
Maryland State Department of Education

Zachary Norfolk, Esq.
Office of the Attorney General

Funsho Oparinde
Department of Public Safety and
Correctional Services

Jen Pauliukonis
Maryland Department of Health

Captain Brian Smith
Maryland State Police

Introduction

In accordance with Executive Order 01.01.2012.05, the Governor's Family Violence Council must submit a report to the Governor by December 1 of each year, as it relates to the status of family violence in Maryland and to recommend improvements to the State's activities to prevent family violence.

Pursuant to its charge, this *Governor's Family Violence Council 2025 Annual Report* includes information on abuse intervention program certification, access to benefits for immigrant survivors, stalking prevention, and the creation of a survivor advisory council. It also provides a follow-up to several reports submitted in prior years. To view these reports, please visit the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy's website at:

<https://gocpp.maryland.gov/reports-and-publications/>.



October 2024 Governor's Family Violence Council Meeting

Governor's Family Violence Council

Under the leadership of Co-Chairs Lieutenant Governor Miller and Attorney General Brown, and with the support of staff from the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy (GOCPP), the Governor's Family Violence Council (Council) embarked upon a variety of projects to improve accountability, awareness, and research in statewide family violence policy over the past year.

Building on the success from prior years, the Council utilizes a framework in which members choose, by majority vote, key areas of a family violence prevention strategy to focus on within the year. Historically, the member who raises the focus area or issue will lead the workgroup addressing that issue for one year. External stakeholders are invited to participate in the workgroups to ensure those with relevant expertise are included. At the conclusion of each year, the workgroups present their findings and recommendations to GOCPP for consideration and implementation.

In 2025, the following five workgroups addressed programs and activities related to preventing family violence:

- The [Abuse Intervention Program Certification Workgroup](#) hosted a technical assistance session on the certification process and application requirements.
- The [Abusers Not Meeting Conditions of Court Orders Workgroup](#) continues to collaborate with the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to increase oversight of offenders ordered to complete abuse intervention programs and collect data.
- The [Access to Benefits for Immigrant Survivors Workgroup](#) supported legislation that amended the Maryland U visa statute to align with federal law and the Department of Homeland Security guidelines, clarified certifier responsibilities, provided clarification on what to include in certification, and required a written explanation to the victim for denial of certification, among other provisions.
- The [Stalking Prevention Workgroup](#) continued to collect data on stalking trends.
- The [Survivor Advisory Council Workgroup](#) hosted a webinar to share focus group findings on who survivors turn to for help, what they find helpful, gaps in enhancing response to domestic violence and long-term survivor support, and elevating survivor voices.

FY 2025 Areas of Study

In FY 2025, the Council continued to address issues related to domestic violence to provide the Governor with timely and accurate information on family violence and to make recommendations to reduce and eliminate abusive behaviors. The Council also collaborated with

its partners to address abuse intervention program certification, defendants' noncompliance with court orders, access to benefits for immigrant survivors, stalking prevention, and a survivor advisory council (*as described below*).

Abuse Intervention Program Certification

The Abuse Intervention Program (AIP) Certification Workgroup, chaired by Dr. Lillian Agbeyegbe, reviews the Operational Guidelines for Abuse Intervention Programs annually and makes recommendations and updates when necessary.

The Workgroup hosted a technical assistance session for programs applying for certification in April 2025. The technical assistance session offered information on the application process, the certification requirements, and the opportunity to address questions.

The Workgroup will also continue to partner with the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence and the House of Ruth Maryland on statewide training efforts for referral sources and partners on the importance and efficacy of abuse intervention programs.

Abusers Not Meeting Conditions of Court Orders

The Abusers Not Meeting Conditions of Court Orders Workgroup, chaired by Lisa Nitsch, was created to address the issue of defendants in family violence cases who fail to meet the conditions of their probation or whose probation expires while enrolled in an AIP. These defendants face almost no consequences when their cases are closed. In August 2020, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services' (DPSCS) Offender Case Management System (OCMS) was updated to include additional fields to track AIP orders and completion. As of July 1, 2025, DPSCS reported that 2,292 individuals received court ordered AIP as part of their supervision. DPSCS also reported information on the AIP population under supervision as well as violation of probation (VOP) outcomes for the AIP population under supervision (*as described below*).

AIP Population Under Supervision

There are currently 2,292 individuals with court ordered AIP as part of their supervision. From this total, 53.6% (n = 1,228) have a drug treatment condition(s), 36.6% (n = 839) have an additional condition related to engagement in psychological treatment, and 6.5% (n = 150) have an anger management condition, and 1.4% (n = 32) are supervised as a sex offender or have conditions related to a sex offender conviction. The remaining 1.9% (n = 43) are unknown.

With regards to victim specific conditions, 84.6% (n = 1,938) have no contact conditions, 18.3% (n = 419) cannot be found near a victim, 4.6% (n = 105) cannot return to a specified location

where a victim is, 2.8% (n = 65) have all three victim conditions ordered (location, contact, proximity), and 1.6% (n = 36) have GPS monitoring conditions.

VOP Outcomes for the AIP Population Under Supervision

Of all VOP hearings that occurred since July 2024 with AIP related outcomes, there were a total of 94 VOP hearings recorded, which accounts for 89 individuals who violated. Most (84%) violations were for individuals under probation, followed by individuals under probation before judgement (14%).

Nearly half (46.8%) of the hearings were for technical violations, a new offense (37.2%), or absconding (15.9%). For hearings where the court found that the defendant had failed to complete court ordered AIP, the defendant was found in violation 75.3% of the time. In the past year, only one hearing resulted in the removal of an AIP condition. Of the cases where the defendant was found to have not completed the AIP program, 7% are still active, 77% had been closed, 9% are in delinquent status, and 7% are in a non-active status related to incarceration or pending arrest.

DPSCS is working to identify the best way to modify the OCMS to enable the measurement of AIP program completion while cases are open and continue to define standard elements for reporting as well as improved capture of outcomes. As data is developed, DPSCS will collaborate with the Workgroup to enable the Council to evaluate comparable trends over time.

Access to Benefits for Immigrant Survivors

The Access to Benefits for Immigrant Survivors Workgroup, chaired by Leslye Orloff, developed recommendations on benefit access for immigrant survivors of domestic violence. The Workgroup and the National Immigrant Women's Advocacy Project (NIWAP) conducted research and provided recommendations on improving access to the public benefits safety net in Maryland for immigrant crime survivors who have filed or are preparing to file for immigration relief. The Workgroup researched public benefits such as food assistance, cash assistance, healthcare, and Supplemental Security Income, as well as driver's licenses for people who are unable to provide proof of lawful status, specifically immigrant survivors of crime focusing specifically on domestic violence, child abuse, human sex and labor trafficking, sexual assault.

Two recommendations from the final report¹ that the Workgroup decided to focus on include:

- Expand the State-subsidized health care for immigrant survivors in Maryland. These resources will help survivors leave abusive environments, properly address survivors'

¹ Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy. (2024). *FVC Access to Benefits for Immigrant Survivors Workgroup's Recommendations: Expanding Access to Benefits for Immigrant Crime Victims*. <https://gocpp.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/Public-Benefits-MD-Workgroup-Recommendations.pdf>

crime victimization concerns to heal, and reassure survivors about the importance of seeking medical care without fear caused by either their immigration status or financial limitations.

- Provide State-funded Medicaid equivalent coverage that includes, but is not limited to, prenatal care to pregnant children and adults who would be eligible for Medicaid or Maryland CHIP but are not because of their immigration status and postpartum healthcare coverage for 12 months to all pregnant residents regardless of immigration status.

The Workgroup met with the Department of Health to discuss expanding healthcare access for immigrant survivors. Due to the current federal climate around immigration, it was decided to postpone pursuing these efforts at this time.

The Workgroup supported the efforts of Ms. Orloff to introduce Senate Bill 608/Chapter 114 (2025) - Criminal Procedure - U Nonimmigrant Status Petitions, which took effect on October 1, 2025.² The enacted legislation alters the requirements for certification of a U Nonimmigrant Status Petition. It also made several changes to the U Nonimmigrant Status Petition process, to include the following:

- Align Maryland statute with federal law and Department of Homeland Security guidelines;
- Clarify certifier responsibilities, including all federal certifiers except judges;
- Expand certification requests to be filed by attorneys, victim advocates, or other representatives;
- Require certification when a victim assists a certifying agency (e.g., law enforcement and child protective services);
- Provide directions on what to include in certification, including articulating helpfulness and criminal activity;
- Modify the time frame to a 45-day deadline to certify; and
- Require a written explanation to the victim for denials.

Stalking Prevention

The Stalking Prevention Workgroup, chaired by Debbie Feinstein, Esq., continued to gather data and examine stalking laws in Maryland and how they may be improved to enhance the safety of victims and survivors. The Workgroup collaborated with stakeholders about the possibility of felony stalking legislation yet ultimately determined to not move forward at this time.

² Maryland General Assembly. (2025). *Senate Bill 608/Chapter 114 (2025), Criminal Procedure - U Nonimmigrant Status Petitions*. <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/SB0608?ys=2025rs>

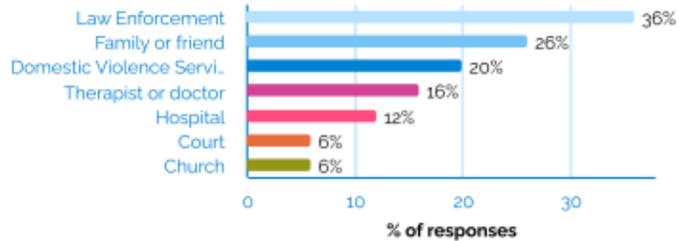
Survivor Advisory Council

The Survivor Advisory Council Workgroup, chaired by Dr. Lillian Agbeyegbe, focused on including survivors' voices to guide system reform and responses to domestic violence. In 2024, the Workgroup conducted 10 focus groups, led by Dr. Agbeyegbe and Dr. Pamela Jordan with Mid-Shore Council on Family Violence, with survivors which highlighted the need for continued education and awareness about the complexities of domestic violence and resources available, especially within law enforcement, providing holistic help for survivors, including follow-up and peer support from providers, increasing accountability for abusers, and including survivors' input in policy development and service improvement. The following infographic details the report's findings.³

³ To view the complete findings from the focus groups, please visit GOCPP's website at: <https://gocpp.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/FVC-Survivor-Focus-Group-Report-2024.pdf>.

Focus Group Report July 2024

Survivors' Perspectives on Improving Maryland's Response to Domestic Violence



Challenges to Reaching Out for Help

Dynamics of DV



Survivors often leave multiple times before making a permanent break. Intergenerational trauma limits families' ability to help.

Shame



Abusive treatment results in survivors feeling shame & guilt.

Culture



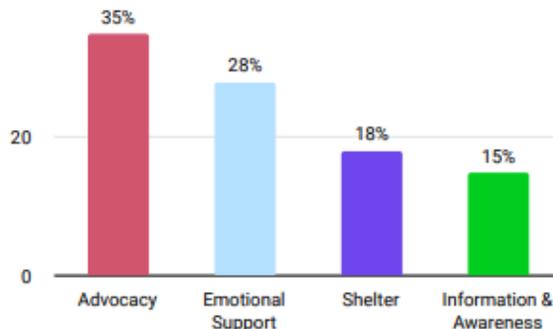
Language barriers and threats related to immigration status.

Religion



Religious views related to marriage and divorce pressure victims to stay.

What is most helpful?



I think that's really where we fall short in the system... We need people that are reaching out saying... the steps to take to get to a safe place, to get your life back in order, to not be harassed by our abuser... So we need a lot of help.

What should Maryland improve?



Professional Awareness

Dynamics of domestic violence
Characteristics of abusers



Proactive, holistic help

Guidance on next steps
Assistance beyond the protective order hearing
Follow up



Peer Support

Connecting with other survivors is healing

Scan to download the full report.



Recommendations



DV-Informed Education for ALL Professionals

Because survivors reach out to a variety of individuals and organizations for help, education and awareness about the complexities of domestic violence and resources available is an ongoing need.



Ongoing DV-Informed Training for ALL Law Enforcement

Law enforcement remains the first contact for survivors and as such, they require frequent training on intervening in domestic violence situations in DV-informed ways.



Expand DV Services to Be More Holistic & Include More Peer Support

For comprehensive domestic violence programs, survivors feel more holistic help, more follow up and more peer support are the most needed improvements.



Increase Accountability for Abusers

Providing stronger penalties for domestic violence, increasing consequences for subsequent violations, and enforcing those consequences consistently will go a long way towards decreasing domestic violence in our communities.



DV Prevention Requires Early & Often Education

Recognizing the signs will help youth to end relationships before they become abusive. They also emphasized the need to counter the "ride or die" culture and normalize for young people the idea of leaving a relationship that is unhealthy.



Survivors' Voices are Vital for Improving Our DV Response

Survivors are passionate about having their voice heard and making things better for those affected by domestic violence. The major need in this area appeared to be a designated entity to organize and coordinate opportunities for survivors to participate in ongoing policy development and service improvement.

Even if it's a different person, the standard seems to be...you hit your woman, you get a year in jail and then you move on.

So when I called the police, they told me, look our hands are tied. He can even come in and lay down beside you in your bed because that's his home just as much as it's your home.

And, you know, one thing I think that they could have done better is really help me bridge that safety plan gap to, what do I, who do I connect with next, and what do I do next?



In October 2024, the Workgroup hosted a webinar, *Survivors' Perspectives on Improving Maryland's Response to Domestic Violence*, to share focus group findings on who survivors turn to for help, what they find helpful, gaps in enhancing response to domestic violence and long-term survivor support, and elevating survivor voices. A total of 74 stakeholders participated in the webinar.

In response to the focus group findings, the Mid-Shore Council on Family Violence (MSCFV) decided to host domestic violence training for law enforcement. In September 2024, MSCFV, in collaboration with the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, hosted the *Law Enforcement Response to Domestic Violence Conference*. The conference offered presentations on strangulation, determining the primary aggressor, lethality assessment program, the neurobiology of trauma, working with prosecutors, and first line response to violence against women. National level speakers also presented on these topics.

The Workgroup is finalizing a checklist for survivors to address their safety and other needs once a protective order is obtained.

FY 2026 Areas of Study

In July 2025, members of the Council voted to continue the Abuse Intervention Program Certification Workgroup, the Abusers Not Meeting Conditions of Court Orders Workgroup, the Access to Benefits for Immigrant Survivors Workgroup, and the Survivor Advisory Council Workgroup.

Program Updates

The Council serves as the certifying body for all AIPs in Maryland. Specifically, the Council certifies AIPs for inclusion in the Administrative Office of the Courts' *Bench Book for Maryland Judges* to refer abusers to appropriate intervention programs.

In May 2025, the Council received 10 applications for AIP certification, including seven applications for recertification and three applications for new programs. Through a peer review process, the Council reviewed the applications, which resulted in the certification of eight AIPs, including one new program (*please refer to [Appendix A](#) for a list of the certified AIPs*). Two programs did not receive certification due to not meeting the guideline requirements.

AIP certification is valid for three years. Once certification has been issued, an audit may be conducted at any time during the three-year certification period to ensure programs remain in

compliance with the AIP Operational Guidelines for Abuse Intervention Programs in Maryland set forth by the Council.⁴

In late 2024, six programs received site visits, of which all were found to be in compliance. In addition, between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025, 1,070 participants⁵ completed an AIP in Maryland.

Legislation

The Council provided a letter of support for the following bill that took effect on October 1, 2025:

- Senate Bill 608/Chapter 114 (2025) - Criminal Procedure - U Nonimmigrant Status Petitions.⁶ Altering the requirements for certification of a U Nonimmigrant Status Petition; altering the individuals eligible to request a certain official to certify victim helpfulness relating to certification of a U Nonimmigrant Status Petition; altering the time periods within which a certain certifying entity shall certify or decline a certain form under certain circumstances; and requiring a certifying entity to develop protocols to assist certain petitioners to take certain actions.

Looking Ahead: Goals for 2026

To continue these efforts, and with the support of the Moore-Miller Administration, the Council identified several goals to pursue in FY 2026, to include the following:

- Deliver and accept workgroup recommendations on access to benefits for immigrant survivors.
- Prioritize judicial training on T and U visas, and visa certification for immigrant survivors.
- Deliver and accept workgroup recommendations on abusers not meeting conditions of court orders.
- Collaborate with the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to support oversight of defendants with court orders for abuse intervention programs. Deliver and accept workgroup recommendations on the survivor advisory council.
- Complete certification and review of the AIPs that are due for recertification and/or requesting certification for the first time.

⁴ Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy. (2019). *AIP Operational Guidelines for Abuse Intervention Programs*. <https://gocpp.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/fvc-aip-operational-guidelines.pdf>

⁵ This includes 22 certified programs. One program did not report and it does not include 360 Family Services because they were certified in 2025.

⁶ Maryland General Assembly. (2025). *Senate Bill 608/Chapter 114 (2025), Criminal Procedure - U Nonimmigrant Status Petitions*. <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/SB0608?ys=2025rs>

- Conduct audits of AIPs to ensure compliance with the operational guidelines.
- Build capacity of Maryland domestic violence organizations by collaborating with the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence.
- Advise the Governor, through the Executive Director of GOCPP, on workgroup topics and recommendations for the upcoming fiscal year.

Appendix A: Certified Abuse Intervention Programs

The following AIPs are certified in Maryland:⁷

360 Family Services

Abused Persons Program, New Beginnings Abuser Intervention Program

Alcohol & Drug Intervention (ADI)

Calvert County Health Department, Calvert Center for Change, Abuser Intervention Program

Catoctin Counseling Center

Center for Abused Persons

Citizens Assisting and Sheltering the Abused (CASA), Inc.

Dove Center, Abuser Intervention Program

Family Crisis Center of Baltimore County, New Behaviors Group Program

Family Crisis Resource Center, Abuser Intervention Program

HARBEL Community Organization, Inc., Harbel Prevention and Recovery Center

Heartly House, Abuse Intervention Program

House of Ruth Maryland, Gateway Project

Life Crisis Center, Inc.

Life Scout Counseling (formerly North Carroll Counseling Center)

Mid-Shore Council on Family Violence, Abuser Intervention Program

My Covenant Place, Alpha Project

Relational Excellence, Engaging Men's Program

Sexual Assault/Spouse Abuse Resource Center (SARC), Inc., Abuser Intervention Program

Southern Maryland Center for Family Advocacy

Springboard Community Services, Abuser Intervention Program

Synergy Family Services, Inc.

TurnAround, Abuser Intervention Program

YWCA of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County

⁷ Detailed information about the certified abuse intervention programs can be found at <https://gocpp.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/AIP-Certified-List-2025.pdf>.