

MNADV strives to approach legislative and policy reform from an anti-oppression and intersectional lens as we advocate for survivors of intimate partner violence. We want to centralize the voices of survivors in the margins and are committed to dismantling systems that further their oppression.

Sustainable and Equitable Funding: The Covid-19 pandemic has brought to the forefront the critical need for sufficient funding of Maryland's domestic violence service providers. Faced with an overwhelming demand for services combined with an increase in the severity and complexity of violence, we must ensure that service providers have sufficient resources to meet victim and survivor needs. The increase in victims seeking services coincides with a temporary dip in federal VOCA grant funding. ***MNADV prioritizes advocating for sustainable and equitable funding at all levels of government to meet both the urgent and long-term needs of domestic violence services providers and those they serve.***

Access to Safe and Affordable Housing: With more than a third of domestic violence victims experiencing homelessness after leaving their abuser, the ability to access safe and affordable housing is paramount for victims and survivors of domestic violence. An inability to access safe and affordable housing is often an insurmountable barrier for a victim attempting to leave a domestic violence situation. Victims often remain in abusive relationships and children are exposed to ongoing violence because they have nowhere safe to go and are at risk of homelessness or housing instability. ***MNADV supports legislation and policies that increase and improve access to safe and affordable housing and flexible funding that enables survivors the autonomy to meet their unique needs.***

Prevention: Our vision is that one day Maryland will be a state where families and relationships thrive on mutual trust and respect and where there is no place for violence. In furtherance of our vision, we support prevention and intervention measures for intimate partner violence that mitigate risk factors and enhance protective factors. While domestic violence impacts all communities regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status it disproportionately impacts communities of color.

In order to meaningfully prevent domestic violence, we must address the systemic and structural inequities that exist in our society in order to end all forms of oppression and violence. ***MNADV supports initiatives that further our vision of a safe and equitable society that prioritizes prevention efforts and mitigates the risk of domestic violence.***

Economic Justice: Domestic violence and economic instability are inextricably linked. While economic stress does not cause the power and control dynamics of domestic violence it can exacerbate the violence. In addition, many victims of domestic violence lack the financial stability and resources to leave an unhealthy or violent relationship and pursue safety. ***MNADV supports measures that promote economic justice and would enable victims of domestic violence to achieve financial independence such as affordable childcare, paid sick leave, and educational opportunities.***

Firearms: Maryland experienced its highest number of domestic violence homicides in five years during 2020. Firearms were used in 75% of those homicides. The risk of domestic violence homicide increases 500% with the presence of a gun in the home. ***MNADV advocates for reasonable restrictions on access to firearms.***

Systems Improvement: Historically the criminal justice system is the primary response to domestic violence receiving an overwhelming amount of funding and resources. However, criminalization does not effectively deter, prevent or repair harm caused by domestic violence. The focus of a criminal justice response can be to the detriment of victims of domestic violence, especially those from marginalized communities, who might find themselves the subject of criminal prosecution. ***MNADV supports victim-centered responses to domestic violence that seek to address the root causes of violence including non-carceral options and restorative and transformative justice.***

Intersectional Areas of Interest: There are numerous issues and systems that intersect and impact victims of domestic violence. MNADV will focus attention on an additional legislative measures that seeks to improve responses to domestic violence including civil remedies, family law, reproductive justice, and human trafficking. ***We are committed to ending systems of oppression and supporting responses to domestic violence that promote safety and equity and will support legislation that furthers that objective.***

What We Don't Support: MNADV will not support legislation or policies that will interrupt a pathway to safety for victims of domestic violence. We will analyze all legislation to ensure it is grounded in equity and there are no foreseen intended or unintended consequences for already marginalized populations.