



LIFE SPAN

DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE END HERE.

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2025



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

When I joined Life Span in 1998 as a staff attorney, I could never have imagined the profound impact the organization would have on my life, or the enduring difference it would make in the communities we serve. As Executive Director, I am honored every day to witness the dedication, skill, and compassion our staff bring to survivors and their families.

From July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025, Life Span experienced unprecedented growth in our programs and in our impact throughout the Chicagoland area. This year affirmed something core to who we are: expanding access to safety, justice, and healing is not just part of our mission—it is the very reason we exist.

While we are known for our legal representation, counseling, and advocacy, our work goes far beyond crisis response. We walk with survivors through every step of their journey toward safety. This year, we were proud to facilitate opportunities that nurtured connection and joy, including family movie nights, a holiday toy drive, and more.

Our holistic approach to ending domestic and sexual violence is only possible because of the generosity and support of people like you. Your commitment strengthens families, uplifts communities, and ensures that survivors do not walk their path alone.

Thank you for believing in our work and in the people whose lives are transformed by it. Together, we are building safer communities.

AMY FOX

Executive Director





WHO WE ARE

Founded in 1978, Life Span provides comprehensive services for survivors and their families, empowering them to live without violence. Nationally recognized, our integrated service model is the only in Illinois that provides survivors access to legal services, criminal court advocacy, and counseling free of charge. By defining domestic violence as a crime as well as a social injustice, we are committed to providing long-term safety and empowerment.

MISSION

Life Span empowers survivors of domestic and sexual violence to demand safety as a human right, delivering client-centered services and advancing social change through accountability, community engagement, and systemic advocacy.

VISION

Life Span works with survivors to build a society free of domestic and sexual violence.

33,089.5

Direct Service
Hours Provided

2,774

Clients Received
Services

5,070

Community
Members Educated

OUR WORK



LEGAL SERVICES

- Orders of Protection
- No Contact Orders
- Immigration
- Divorce & Parentage
- Criminal Court Advocacy
- Victims' Rights Enforcement



COUNSELING

- Survivors and their families (Group and Individual)
- Teens Affected by DV, SA, and/or Dating Violence (In-School Individual and Group Counseling)



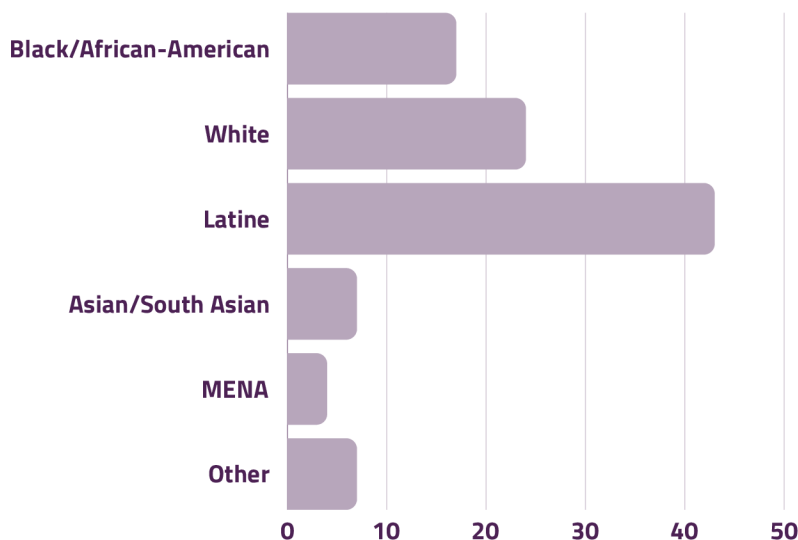
OUTREACH & PREVENTION

- Community-based Support Groups
- Professional Education
- In-school Group Education Workshops
- Policy & Systemic Advocacy

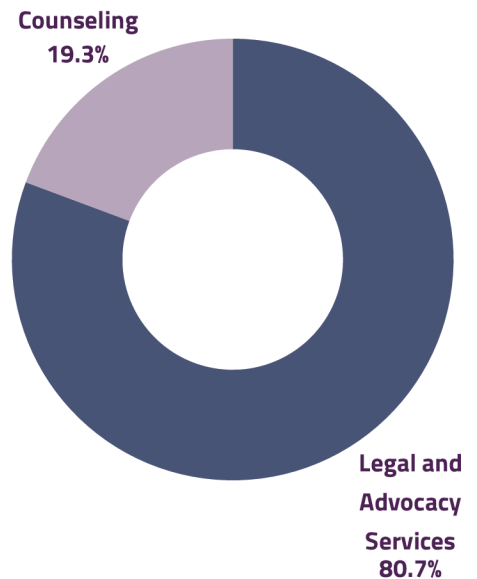
POPULATION SERVED

Life Span supports clients regardless of gender-identity, sexuality, race, or ethnicity, although most of our clients are working poor, low-income women and their families. We serve over 5,000 individuals annually from our downtown Chicago and Des Plaines offices. Our staff of lawyers, advocates, paralegals, and counselors are multilingual and multicultural, providing services in Spanish, Arabic, Assyrian, Greek, Czech, Polish, French, and English.

Clients by Race:



Client Service Usage:



A HISTORY OF SERVICE

1978

A group of community members, troubled by the lack of resources for domestic violence survivors, begin a 24-hour crisis hotline.

1991

Expanding beyond counseling, the Center for Legal Services & Advocacy Opens. Life Span grows to 12 employees providing 11,000 annual service hours.

2003

Life Span becomes an Illinois-certified domestic violence professional approved training & supervision site.

1982

After relying on volunteer efforts, Life Span is able to hire it's first paid employee: Executive Director & Fundraiser.

1996-98

Establishes the Police Program, the Target Abuser Call, & the Immigration Project. Expanded the Children & Teen prevention programs.

2005

Life Span staff grows to 22 employees providing 18,000 annual service hours, including an attorney hired to exclusively represent sexual assault survivors.

2016

Launches two new sexual assault/domestic violence multidisciplinary teams & VOICES, a college campus prevention program.

2023

The Human Trafficking project begins, in addition to legal advocacy, counseling, and outside community partnerships.

NOW

Life Span employs 48 staff, providing 5,500 individuals nearly 33,089 service hours in 11 different languages.

2017

Life Span grows to 38 employees, providing 4,883 clients with over 20,000 service hours, including the addition of 3 counselors, 3 advocates, and 4 attorneys.

2024

Outreach & Prevention programs are made accessible in 7 area high schools and 7 area colleges.

CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES

Created in 1991, our Center for Legal Services and Advocacy is staffed by 8 attorneys, 4 paralegals, and 7 criminal court advocates. They have developed, over many years of providing representation in various types of contested family law cases, specialized knowledge that distinguishes our program from any other in Illinois. Our expertise includes an informed understanding of statutory and case law in the family law area, as well as a well-developed strategy for dealing with these matters in the complicated Cook County court system.

ILLINOIS PRISON PROJECT PARTNERSHIP

As a response to the growing number of incarcerated survivors and those individuals whose imprisonment is linked to experiences of gender-based violence, Life Span expanded our advocacy, legal, counseling, and policy efforts to better serve this population.

Overseen by senior staff members trained to lead clemency petitions, we've also partnered with the *Illinois Prison Project's* Women and Survivors Project to bolster the active efforts in representing survivors who were wrongfully accused, acting in self-defense, in defense of their children, or coerced by abusers. Through this collaboration, Life Span is currently representing an incarcerated survivor, while building internal capacity to expand this work agency-wide with ongoing technical assistance and referrals from the Illinois Prison Project.



"This has been such a huge relief. I don't know what I would do without your help."

-Jane, 42

CRIMINALIZED SURVIVORS

Life Span has expanded its support for criminalized survivors (those penalized for surviving abuse or systemic failures), as referrals have risen sharply. We have strengthened our counseling, legal advocacy, and policy efforts, pursuant to factors such as the pandemic, changing criminal justice priorities, and laws that unintentionally criminalize survivors, recognizing that around 80% of incarcerated people have experienced gender-based violence. Partnering with organizations such as *Women's Justice Institute*, *Moms United Against Violence*, and *Love and Protect*, as well as public defenders and survivor-led groups, Life Span provides trauma-informed advocacy.

POWER OF ATTORNEY/ GUARDIANSHIP

Life Span has increased support for clients seeking power of attorney and guardianship services in response to heightened fear and stress among immigrant communities caused by tightening federal restrictions and the rise in domestic violence fatalities. This expansion ensures clients have access to legal guidance and advocacy to navigate complex family, health, and financial decisions during a period of increased uncertainty and risk.



IMMIGRATION LEGAL SERVICES

Immigration issues seriously impact the ability of undocumented domestic and sexual violence survivors to obtain safety. Language and cultural barriers, combined with fear of deportation, make it particularly difficult for these victims to seek help. Life Span's Immigration Program assists immigrant survivors in obtaining legal permanent residency in the U.S. The Program is staffed by 3 attorneys, 2 Board of Immigration Appeals accredited representatives, and 1 paralegal, many of whom are bilingual and bicultural in Spanish and Polish. The Program serves several hundred clients each year and is one of the few programs in the Chicago area offering this service free of charge. Immigration Program clients also receive the support services they, and their children need, through the assistance of Life Span advocates, counselors and children's counselors, most of whom are bilingual and immigrants or from immigrant families. This distinction makes them better able to identify with the experiences of Program clients.

With nearly 40% of Life Span's clients being immigrants, we are beset with the challenge imposed by the federal government's onslaught of arrest, detention and deportation—regardless of status. These clients are terrified of being arrested by I.C.E. This climate of fear and anguish has forced survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking back into the shadows. Survivors are hesitant to call the police on their abusers, show up at court, meet appointments, or even take their children to school for fear of detainment. As a result of these federal policy shifts, the Immigration team finds itself having to routinely adapt to amorphous practices and procedures that negatively impact survivors. As Life Span continues to strive to build a community where survivors feel safe, informed, and empowered, this uncertainty has caused its own unique set of challenges.

How have we met these challenges?

- Life Span has partnered with the Cook County Public Defender, MacArthur Justice Center, and other organizations in legal actions to keep I.C.E. out of courthouses.
- Life Span launched "Know Your Rights" campaigns.
- Life Span increased services for short-term guardianship and Powers of Attorney, so that our clients' children and assets may be protected.
- Life Span attorneys and advocates have worked to provide expanded virtual access to court hearings to ensure safety.

We remain committed to serving survivors, regardless of status, in our pursuit of ending domestic and sexual violence.

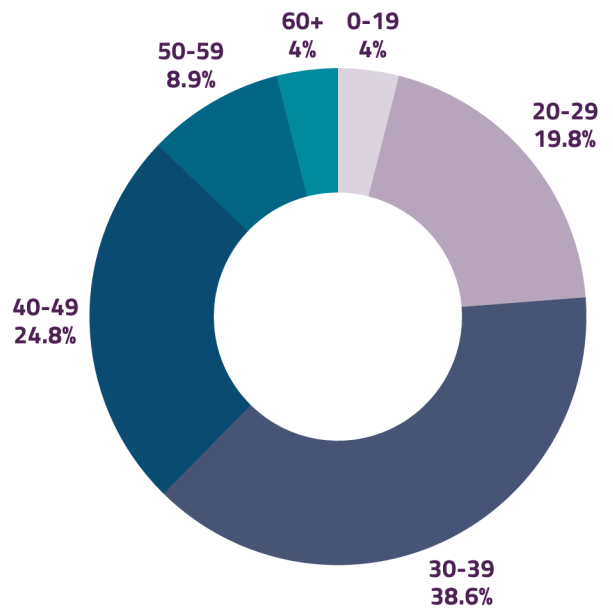
COUNSELING

Majority of our counseling work is done with clients in-person, on an individual basis, but some sessions are held over the telephone when transportation or safety issues arise. Counselors spend a significant portion of their time providing advocacy assistance with issues including: employment, housing, childcare, additional legal aid, and, connecting clients to services that address complex obstacles, such as medical issues and substance abuse. While we recognize emotional support and education about the impact of domestic violence are crucial in victims' journey to overcome abuse in their lives, we find that providing assistance with the many additional obstacles our clients face is equally important

CHILD AND TEEN SERVICES

Domestic violence doesn't affect just one individual, it affects the entire family. Child and teen counseling services, located in both Life Span offices and in school-based settings, include counseling, support-group services and advocacy. In a safe and supportive environment, counselors focus on client personal safety and well-being, developmental concerns, family and parenting dynamics and building healthy relationship skills.

Clients by Age:



HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROJECT

In 2023, Life Span created a specialized project for survivors of domestic violence who are also human trafficking survivors. We have seen an increase in referrals from court personnel, prosecutors and law enforcement for human trafficking services, as these survivors are likely to have experienced domestic violence and sexual assault. Those who have experienced human trafficking need a variety of trauma informed services to obtain safety and exit the life of trafficking. These services include counseling, legal representation, crisis intervention, education on dynamics of human trafficking, safety planning, access to referrals and an explanation of legal rights and remedies.



SPECIALIZED PROJECTS

CAFECITO

In commitment to fostering community for survivors, Life Span puts on a monthly Cafecito at both the downtown Chicago and Des Plaines offices. Welcoming clients and their families with light refreshments, we offer clients an occasion to live in the moment, surrounded by the encouragement of their fellow survivors and our staff. Children are invited to create arts and crafts while adults can relax in quiet moments of normalcy.



OFFICE OPEN HOUSE

Aligning with our community outreach efforts, Life Span hosted an Open House to welcome prospective clients, community partners, and donors into our space. At both the downtown Chicago and Des Plaines offices, our expert staff were available to answer questions, educate about our critical work, and speak to the impact of Life Span's service across our community.

"Life Span brought me out of shock and brought me to safety."

-Victoria, 37

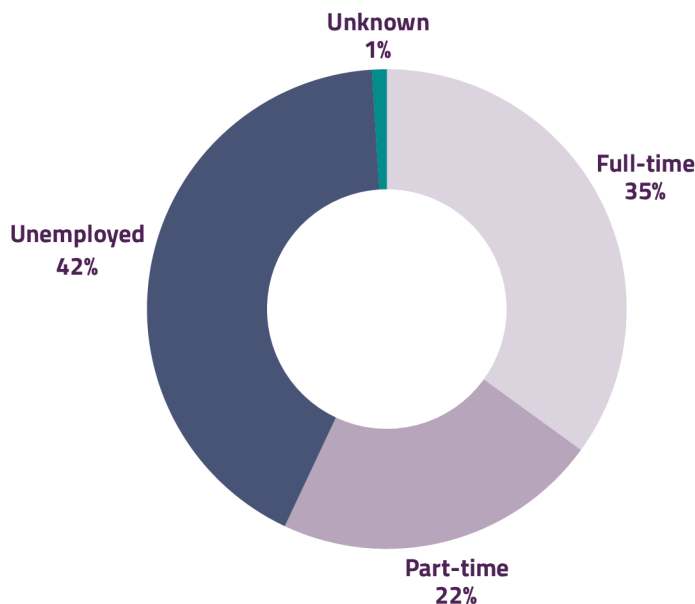
SURVIVOR LEADERSHIP PROJECT

As a critical priority, Life Span has launched a Survivor Leadership Project. Upon hearing feedback from clients about a need for ongoing services, Life Span held focus groups and created volunteer group to provide valuable insights and perspectives to our programming. Participants have firsthand knowledge of the barriers survivors face, as well as the support and resources that are most helpful to them. The Survivor Leadership Project will engage in professional development, learn the crucial skill of how to share their story, and create peer-led support groups.

WOMEN EMPLOYED

Through its partnership with *Women Employed* (W.E.), Life Span is entering its second session of the Career Foundations program, supporting survivors' transition from financial dependence toward long-term economic independence. In FY23, *Women Employed* trained Life Span staff to deliver the trauma-informed curriculum, which Life Span implemented through two concurrent cohorts of survivors, meeting weekly over ten sessions. Life Span and *Women Employed* met bi-weekly for technical assistance and program refinement. This initiative has continued throughout the succeeding fiscal years, but in FY25-26, the program has evolved. In this iteration, Life Span will conduct our own curriculum, tailored to the specific needs of our clients. By the time that clients graduate the Life Span program, they will be prepared to enter a higher education program, a trade school, or confidence to make a career change. Our curriculum will be offered in both English and Spanish.

Client Employment Status



LIGHT TO LIFE GALA

Life Span's annual Light to Life Gala was hosted September 19, 2024 with incredible attendance and record-breaking fundraising. Life Span had the honor of presenting Pulitzer Prize Winners Sarah Conway and Trina Reynolds-Tyler with the Fight for Justice award for their ground-breaking reporting in "Missing in Chicago". We also had the honor of presenting long-time board member, Anne Kohler, with the Leah Duckett Public Service Award for her commitment to survivors.





A NOTE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Having served on the Board of Directors since 2018, I am honored to be a part of an organization committed to lasting support for our community's most vulnerable. I have witnessed firsthand Life Span staff walk alongside survivors through their worst traumas and help them find safety, empowerment, and even joy.

From our systemic advocacy to our dedicated attorneys, advocates, and counselors, the Board of Directors and I have immense pride in the impact our organization makes in the lives of countless throughout the Chicagoland area.

- Bobbie Sengupta
Board President

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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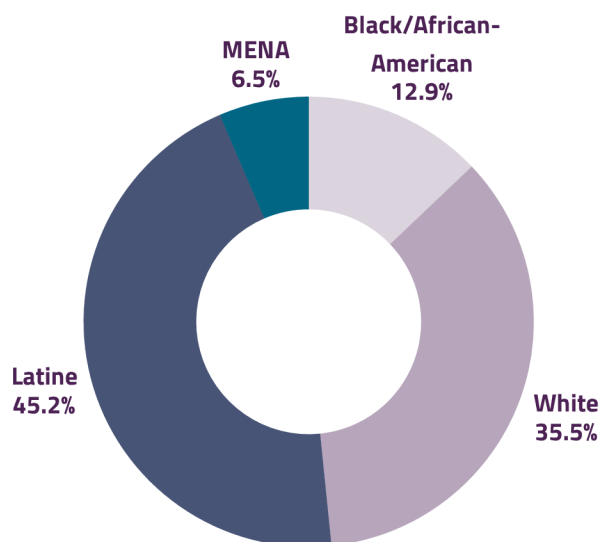
LIFTING UP EMERGING LEADERS

Life Span values staff as our most vital resource, understanding that success is achieved through championing the development of those who know our agency best. We pride ourselves in a staff diverse culturally and in lived experiences, working to actively represent the clients we serve.

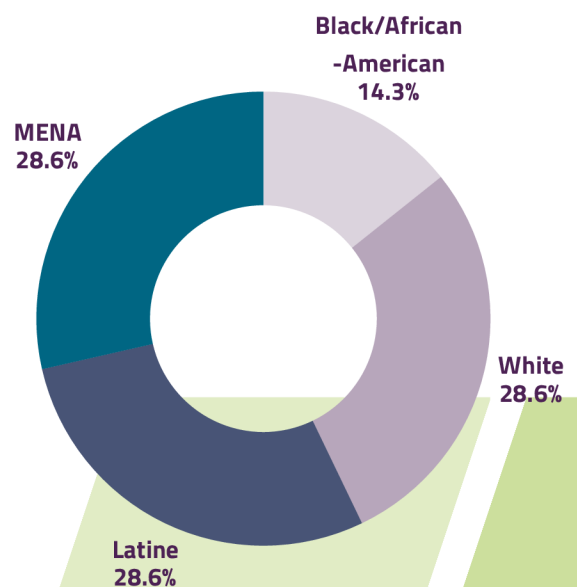
One of our biggest accomplishments this year is seeing the fruits of our strategic investment in creating and encouraging an “emerging leaders” initiative at Life Span. To foster employee retention, engagement, and diversity, Life Span has actively created pathways to leadership for all our staff. We established additional “coordinator” positions to afford more experienced staff the opportunity to supervise others and take on more management activities. We have engaged a leadership coach from Tiara Consulting to work with the team to build their skills. These efforts are also intended to support our overall succession planning efforts.

Life Span has also created a staff committee structure where staff are encouraged to create internal agency programming. Not only to encourage community-building, staff committees serve as a built-in leadership and professional development opportunity. The two most active committees are focused on agency Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives and Wellness.

Staff Demographics



Leadership Demographics



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

FY 2025

FY 2024

Source	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
SUPPORT & REVENUE						
Public Grants & Donations	\$3,805,292	\$596,923	\$4,402,215	\$3,282,254	\$584,375	\$3,866,629
Foundations, Companies, & Individuals	\$592,667	---	\$592,667	\$373,781	\$285,000	\$658,781
Special Event Revenue	\$88,286	---	\$88,286	\$77,308	---	\$77,308
Other Income	\$16,727	---	\$16,727	\$19,781	---	\$19,781
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	\$673,324	\$(673,324)	---	\$797,262	\$(797,262)	---
Net Public Support & Revenue	\$5,176,296	\$(76,401)	\$5,099,895	\$4,550,386	\$72,113	\$4,622,499
Total Public Support & Revenue	\$4,502,972	\$596,923	\$5,099,895	\$3,753,124	\$869,375	\$4,622,499
EXPENSES						
Program Expenses	\$3,914,711	---	\$3,914,711	\$3,542,668	---	\$3,542,668
Management & General	\$326,380	---	\$326,380	\$346,123	---	\$346,123
Fundraising	\$468,268	---	\$468,268	\$466,275	---	\$466,275
Total Expenses	\$4,709,359	---	\$4,709,359	\$4,355,066	---	\$4,355,066
NET ASSETS						
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	\$1,867,798	\$456,688	\$2,324,486	---	\$1,672,478	\$384,575
Net Assets, End of Year	\$2,334,735	\$380,287	\$2,715,022	---	\$1,867,798	\$456,688
Change In Total Net Assets	\$466,937	\$(76,401)	\$390,536	---	\$195,320	\$72,113

DONORS

Thank you to all those who support Life Span. It is because of you that Life Span is able to serve survivors throughout our community.

ADM	Illinois Bar Foundation	Northern Trust
Ahlgren Law	Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence	Northfield Township
Arnold Ventures	Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority	Office of Violence Against Women
Ascend Justice	Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS)	Palatine Township
AT&T	Illinois Equal Justice	Park Ridge Community Fund
Avery Kill, LLC	JPMorgan Chase & Co.	Park Ridge Wilderness Scouts and Princesses
barchart	Kingdom Charitable Trust	Polk Bros Foundation
Chicago Bar Foundation	Kozacky Weitzel McGrath PC	Rice Insurance Agency LLC
Chicago Clearing Corporation	Lawyers Trust Fund	Rivers Casino
Chicago Department of Family & Support Services	Lead True	Schaumburg Township
Chicago Foundation for Women	Levin & Perconti	The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence
City of Des Plaines	Lexis Nexis	The Rossotti Family
Coleman Immigration	Mary Lou Downs Foundation	Tiara International, LLC.
ComEd	Maine Township	Troester Sharpe
Community Memorial Foundation	Michael & Michelle Warner Family Foundation	Tucker Ellis
Cook County	Midwestern Gaming & Entertainment, LLC	Venable Foundation
County Line Audio Video	Mount Prospect Junior Women's Club	Village of Arlington Heights
Crown Family Philanthropies	Naffah Family Charitable Foundation	Village of Schaumburg
Edward Jones		Wheeling Township
Elk Grove Township		William J. Gasser Family Foundation
Family Horizons		Wines for Humanity, LLC
Frieda, Inc.		Wintrust
Gasser Foundation		
Gill Ports Hoste		
Horton Chiropractic, LTD		
Illinois Attorney General		

A special thank you to our individual and anonymous donors, though not listed here, who are indelible in the work of building a society free of domestic and sexual violence.

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