The Second Step

First, there's you.
Then, there's us with you.

Annual *Impact* Report

July 2025–June 2026

Changing Lives.
Changing Communities.
Changing Beliefs.

Get Support:
617-965-2538

Learn More:
thesecondstep.org

Platinum Transparency 2026
Candid.

Charity Navigator
FOUR-STAR

Our Programs

The Second Step

The Second Step provides free, trauma-informed services for survivors of domestic violence throughout Greater Boston and beyond.

We are dedicated to ending the cycle of abuse with our wraparound support, including safety planning, legal services, counseling, housing stabilization, support groups, and community education. These services help survivors heal and thrive while raising awareness to prevent abuse and build healthier communities.

OUR MISSION:
Helping survivors of domestic violence heal and thrive in safe and supportive communities.

OUR VISION:
Every intimate partner relationship is safe and healthy.

Intervention & Advocacy

The Second Step helps survivors of domestic violence rebuild their lives with safety, healing, and stability. **Donor support ensures survivors find safety, build skills, and heal from trauma.**

Legal Services

Our team of staff attorneys represent, advise, and guide survivors to secure the protections, resources, and opportunities needed to build a foundation for long-term safety and stability. **Donor support ensures survivors have access to justice and gain the legal protections necessary for lasting safety and independence.**

Prevention Education

We aim to prevent domestic violence and build shared understanding of safety, equity, and respect. We believe everyone can play a role in recognizing and responding to abuse. **Donor support ensures domestic violence resources are accessible and helps create safe and healthy communities.**

Dear Friends,

As The Second Step enters our 35th anniversary year, we are celebrating more than a milestone. We are celebrating the people and partnerships that have made lasting change possible.

For more than three decades, The Second Step has stood beside survivors of domestic violence, helping them find safety, stability, healing, and hope. Along the way, we have seen the ripple effect of that work. When one survivor's life changes, the impact extends outward to children, families, workplaces, schools, neighborhoods, and entire communities. Children grow up in safer homes, communities recognize and respond to abuse, systems better protect survivors, and beliefs shift so domestic violence cannot hide in silence.

Together, we are changing lives through compassionate, trauma-informed services; strengthening communities through education and prevention; improving systems through advocacy and collaboration; and changing beliefs by bringing domestic violence out of the shadows.

This report reflects more than what we have accomplished together. It shows what is possible when people unite around the belief that everyone deserves to live safely, with dignity, and the opportunity to thrive.

Thank you for being part of The Second Step's first 35 years. We look forward to continuing this work together and creating even greater change in the years ahead.

With gratitude,

Susan Ross, Esq.
Chief Executive Officer

Heather Mack
President, Board of Directors

Helping survivors of domestic violence ***heal*** and ***thrive*** in safe and supportive communities.

TheSecondStep
the_second_step
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Together, We Change Lives

181
court appearances with an attorney in
29
courts

5798
people reached through
83
workshops, events, and trainings

Top 4 Requested Services

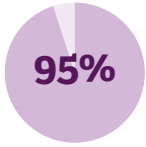
- Family Law
- Restraining Orders
- Safety Planning
- Economic and Housing Stability

736
safety planning sessions for
224
clients

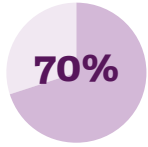
665
total clients served

900+
total children impacted

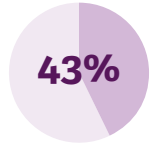
OUR CLIENTS



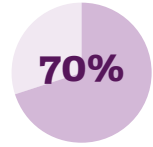
identify as women



low income



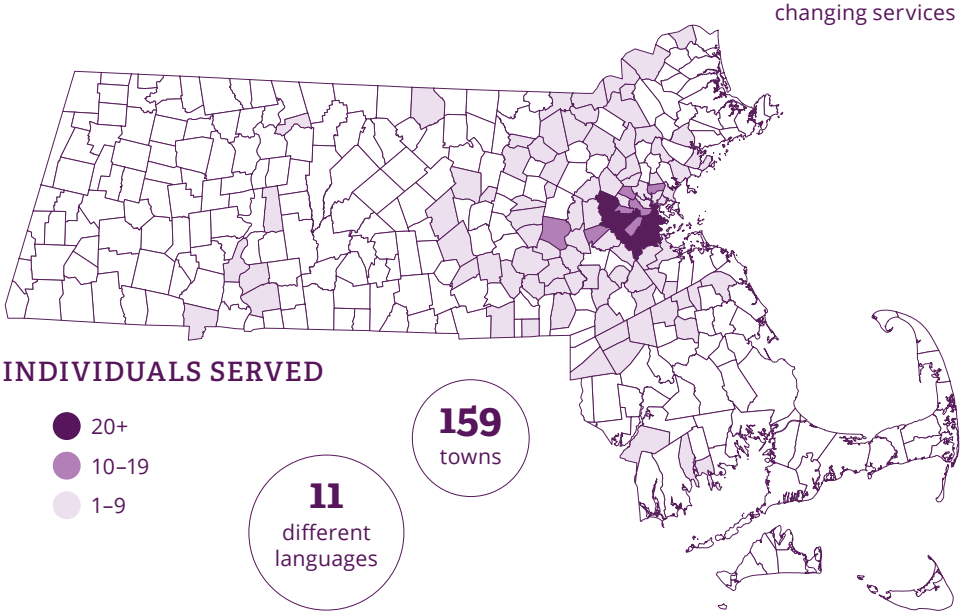
people of color



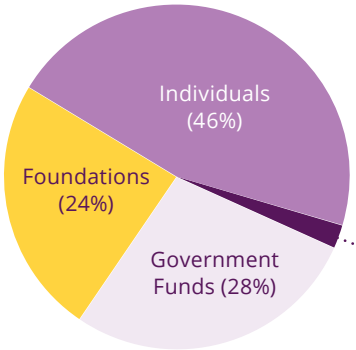
have children

received free life-changing services

INDIVIDUALS SERVED



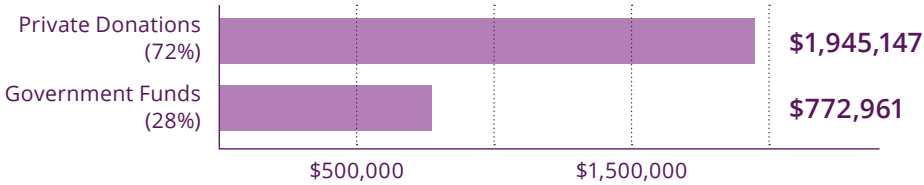
Looking ***Ahead***



Our Donors Help Survivors

72% of our funding comes from private support (individuals, foundations, corporations, organizations)

Total FY27 Budget: **$2,718,108**



35 Years of Change

Changing Lives.
Changing Communities.
Changing Beliefs.

As The Second Step approaches its 35th anniversary, we reflect on more than three decades of impact: helping survivors find safety, stability, healing, and hope while creating ripples of change across families and communities. We honor all who have made this work possible and look ahead to the next 35 years with gratitude, determination, and a shared commitment to creating safer families, more informed communities, and lasting change.

35 years
The Second Step

GROWING OUR IMPACT

Families served

431	503	665
FY 24	FY 25	FY 26

Community members reached with prevention education

Program began in FY 25	1841	5798
	FY 25	FY 26

Thank You to Our Partners!

Boston Bar Foundation

The Chickering Foundation
Est. 1864

Community Foundation for MetroWest

Cummings Foundation

MASSBAR FOUNDATION
TOGETHER IN THE PROMISE OF JUSTICE

MetroWest Women's Fund

United Way Massachusetts Bay

The Village Bank

Bushrod H. Campbell and Adah F. Hall Charity Fund
Frank W. and Carl S. Adams Memorial Fund
Perpetual Benevolent Fund

This report recognizes corporate and institutional foundation donors who contributed $10,000 or more during FY2026

Thank You to Our Board of Directors

We are grateful to our Board of Directors for their dedication, leadership, and commitment to our mission.

Heather Mack, *President*
Susan McMurry, *Vice President*
April Stein, *Treasurer*
Glenn Rosen, *Clerk/Secretary*
Lily (Guttentag) Buchbinder
Katia Canenguez
Lauren Clausen
Lesley Colognesi
Patricia Evans
Mai Hanlon
Lana Lee
Joan Sapir

Your Path is Unique. ***So Are We.***

The power of meeting survivors ***where they are.***

As part of our partnership with a local district court, a Second Step staff attorney is present during 209A restraining order sessions to provide free legal assistance and connect survivors with additional support.

When our attorney announces that she is there to help anyone facing a restraining order hearing, Melanie* is hesitant. She isn't sure she qualifies for help.

The staff attorney listens to Melanie's story and connects her with a Second Step advocate to create a safety plan.**

Recognizing an immediate threat, the advocate arranges for a locksmith to change the locks at Melanie's apartment before she even leaves the courthouse.

Our attorney represents Melanie at her hearing and secures a one-year restraining order.

But the danger doesn't end there. While the locksmith is changing the locks, Melanie's abusive partner arrives at the apartment and demands to be let inside.

The advocate calls to warn Melanie that it's not safe to go home. She then contacts police and uses The Second Step's flexible emergency funds to help Melanie secure a hotel for the night.

The next day, with the locks changed and the restraining order in effect, Melanie returns home safely.

In the months that follow, The Second Step helps Melanie file for divorce and connect with one of our support groups as she begins rebuilding a life free from abuse.

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** Names and identifying details have been changed to protect anonymity*

*** A safety plan is a personalized set of actions that can lower risk of harm in situations where violence could occur.*

HEAR A MESSAGE
FROM OUR CEO

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