



**ANNUAL REPORT  
10/01/2014 9/30/2015**

**OVERVIEW**

During the 2014-2015 fiscal year Marjaree Mason Center (MMC) experienced an 1% increase in clients served. An overwhelming number of the domestic violence referrals we receive reflect increased physically violent behaviors that often accompany both illicit and prescriptive drug misuse. Also, we specifically note a significant increase in younger women overall; and also young women accessing the Safe House, trying to escape violent relations with active gang members. Many of these young relationships are extremely complex, and have often resulted in the “survivor” requiring hospitalization or extensive medical attention. The violence we see is always compounded with the overwhelming number of individuals who have mental illnesses and homeless issues. Many of these families are also in the Child Protective Services system, due to the dysfunction that occurs in these families. MMC has continued to enhance its services through the use of trauma-informed care, which promotes active client involvement to craft an individual plan for both client and her children. This process maximizes their ability to eliminate or lessen their exposure to violence and other risk factors, as they feel in control of the process and seem to better understand

what steps they need to take to lead to a “safe life” for themselves and their children. The Marjaree Mason Center is proud of its multiple children-oriented programs offered both onsite in the emergency Fresno shelter, and also in the other two satellite programs in the suburban and rural areas of Fresno. The Children’s Enrichment Centers at each residential site is a therapeutic/coordinated effort aimed at assisting the more than 400 children that enter our shelter, in overcoming the severe developmental impacts that family violence can cause. In addition, we facilitate parent educational and life skills services to enable families to live independently and free of violence.

Some of the year’s highlights include:

- The Marjaree Mason Center Safe Houses had a total of 41,943 nights of shelter for victims of domestic violence.
  - The Clovis Safe House had 5,767 nights of shelter serving 15 adults and 33 children.
  - The Reedley Safe House served 14 adults and 25 children with a total of 1,947 nights of shelter.
  - Fresno transitional housing served 46 children and 42 adults with a total of 8,031 nights of shelter. These clients are able to stay in the MMC safe house for up to 18 months.
  - The Fresno Emergency program served 602 children and 408 adults for a total of 26,198 nights of shelter. The average length of stay for this program was 32 nights.
- MMC started a new housing program during the 2014-2015 fiscal year named Welcome Home. Welcome Home is a permanent housing program in which victims of domestic violence can receive assistance with rent, security deposits and utility deposits for up to 12 months. There were 11 families served during this fiscal year for a total of 5,199 nights of shelter.
- The newest program with the County of Fresno is the Family Stabilization (FSP) Program. CalWORKs recipients who were or are affected by domestic violence

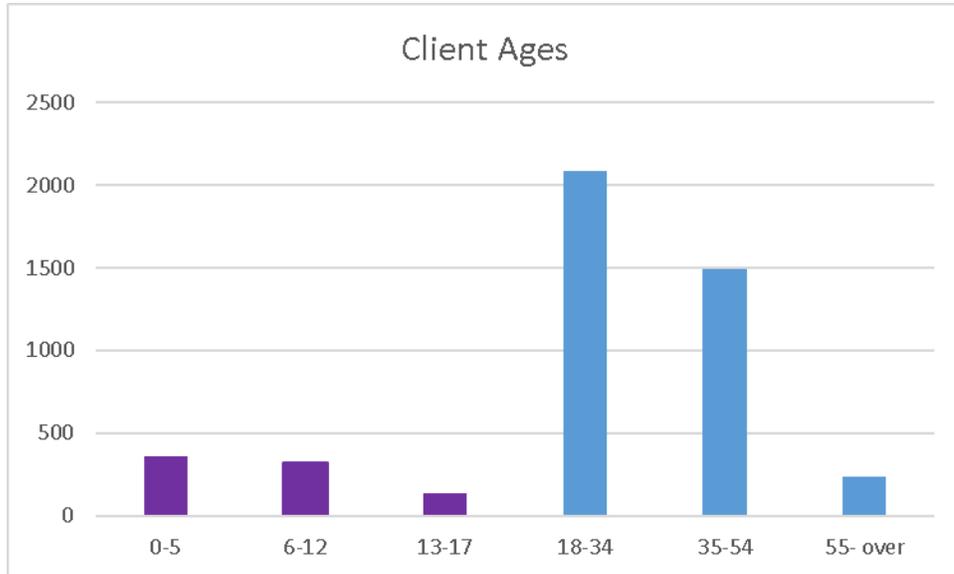
are allowed to participate in FSP. The clients will receive case management, individual and group counseling and childcare provided in MMC's enrichment center so they can overcome the barriers of domestic violence. During the short period of four months, MMC was able to serve 60 adults and children.

Over the past fiscal year, MMC remained dedicated to its core services, including shelter, counseling, legal assistance, and crisis support programs. Within these core service categories, MMC provides comprehensive assistance for victims: shelter programs offer assistance with food, clothing, case management, childcare, life skills classes, and enrichment activities for adults and children; MMC counseling services include individual and group therapy for adults and children, support groups, and clinical assessments; MMC Legal assistance includes a free weekly legal-options class, court accompaniment, and one-on-one assistance with restraining orders, divorce, child support, child custody, and full legal representation; and crisis support includes a 24-hour crisis hotline, crisis intake, safety planning, and referrals to supportive services.

### **Total Agency Clients**

Over the past fiscal year (2014-2015), MMC provided services to **5,239** unduplicated individuals.

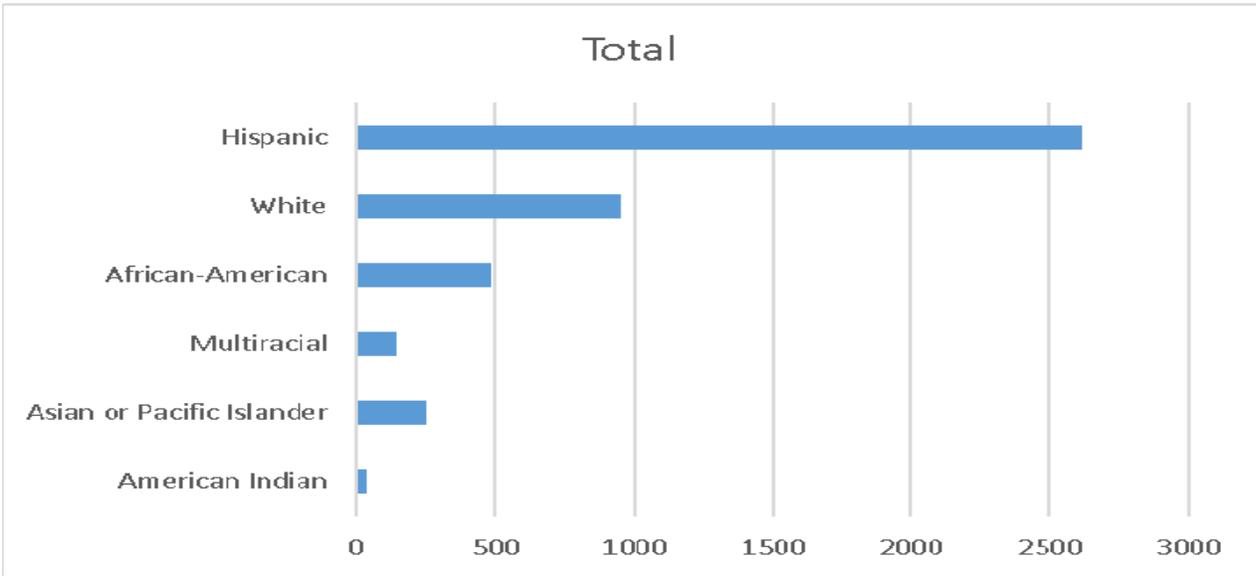
### **Client Ages**



Agency-wide, for all victim services, a vast majority (more than 75%) of clients were between the ages of 18 and 54 years of age, while nearly 17% of clients were children. Most of those **706 children** resided within one of the three MMC shelters or received essential counseling services.

**Client Ethnicity**

MMC clients reflect the ethnic makeup of Fresno County:



**Client Income**

Domestic violence abusers often control the family purse strings. This control is reflected in MMC statistics:

- 1,511 of MMC clients earn less than \$15,000 per year;
- 22% earn less than \$9,000 a year;
- And only 3.23% earn more than \$25,000.

**Client Geographic Origin**

Approximately 15% of all clients served came from the rural areas of Fresno County. During 2014-2015; MMC saw a 27% increase in the South and East Fresno County areas.

**West Fresno County**

Kerman:	38
Firebaugh:	12
Caruthers:	17
Coalinga:	16
Mendota:	19
Riverdale:	10
San Joaquin:	13
Laton:	3
Five Points:	3
Raisin City:	0
Tranquility:	1
Biola:	6
<u>Cantua Creek:</u>	<u>2</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>140</b>

**Fresno County Foothills**

Tollhouse:	7
<u>Friant:</u>	<u>1</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>8</b>

**South and East Fresno County**

Reedley:	120
Sanger:	87
Selma:	75
Parlier:	41
Orange Cove:	30
Fowler:	17
Kingsburg:	24
<u>Del Rey:</u>	<u>5</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>399</b>

**Fresno/Clovis Metro Area**

Fresno:	2,512
<u>Clovis:</u>	<u>257</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2,769</b>

## SAFE HOUSE SHELTER

MMC Safe House shelter services include emergency food and clothing, case management, childcare assistance, life-skills classes, and easy access to MMC's vast menu of supportive services and referrals. This assistance was rendered to all residents in MMC's Fresno County domestic-violence programs within our three shelter sites. The programs offered at these three sites include: the Emergency and Crisis Intake (93 beds), Reedley (18 beds), Downtown Transitional (16 beds), Next Step programs (8 beds), and Clovis Transitional (18 beds).

The Marjaree Mason Center Safe House emergency shelter offers 24-hour hotline and crisis intake. The shelter is staffed 24 hours a day for clients who may be in crisis and need immediate escape from a potentially life-threatening situation. The other shelter programs are transitional, offering victims a longer length of stay so they may gain education in self sufficiency and job skills, seek employment and learn other skills necessary to transition to an independent lifestyle, free from financial and emotional control of an abuser.

**Number of unduplicated people sheltered: 1,093 (14% increase from FY 2013/2014)**

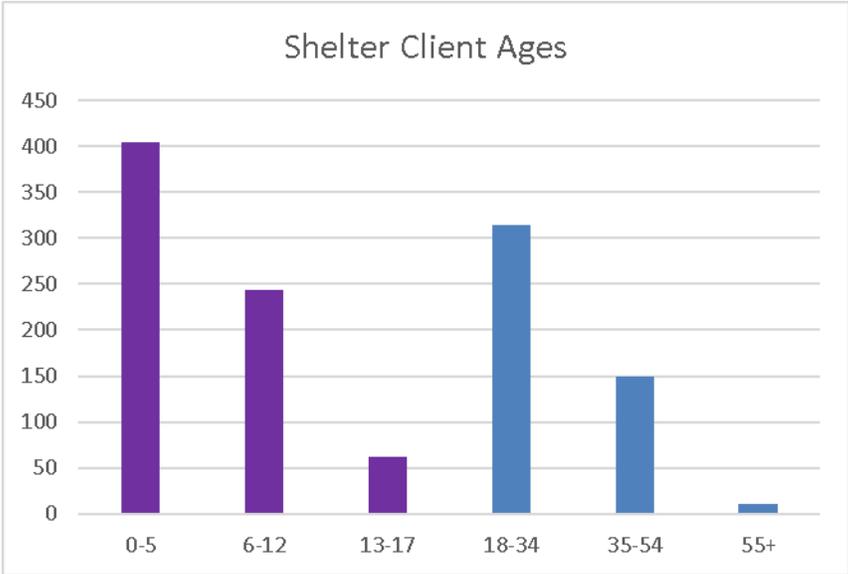
**Total number of nights of shelter provided: 41,943 (4% decrease from FY 2013/2014)**

### Average Length of Stay

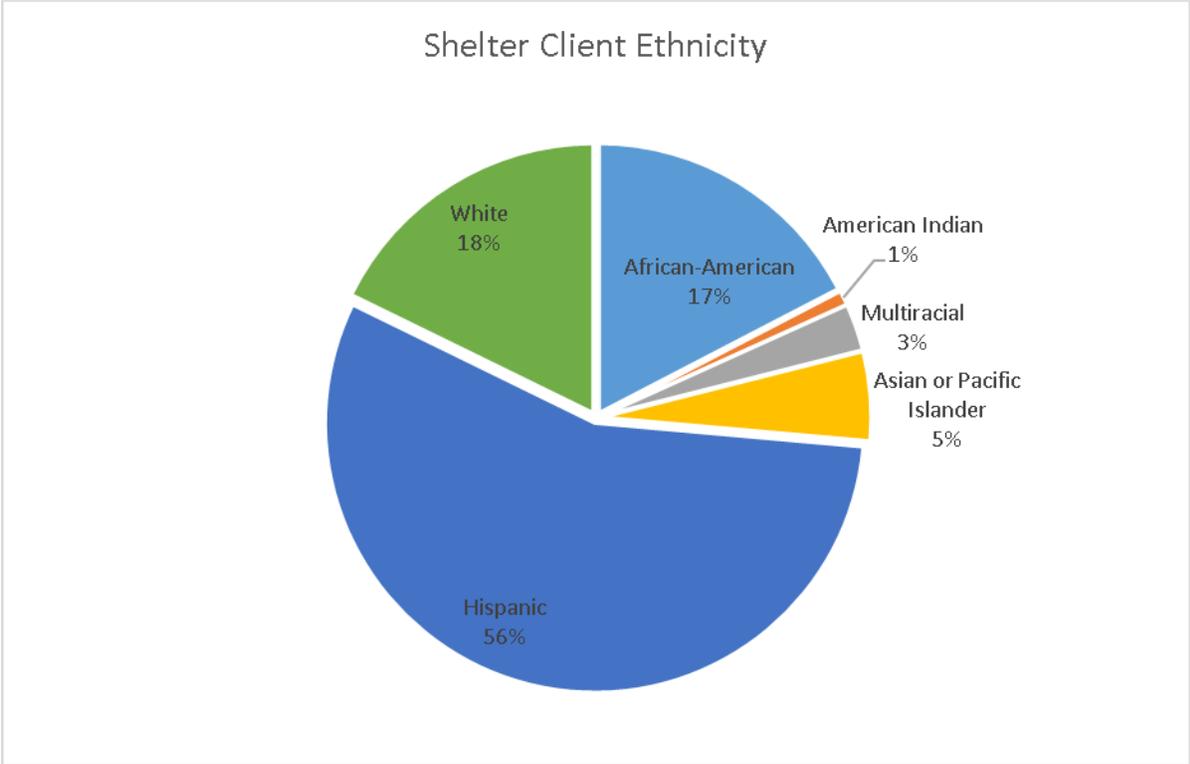
Emergency Shelter:	32 days
Transitional Shelter Programs:	128 days

### Safe House Shelter Client Demographics

As opposed to MMC's overall service population, 60% of MMC sheltered clients are children, and of those children served, 404 were 0-5 years old.

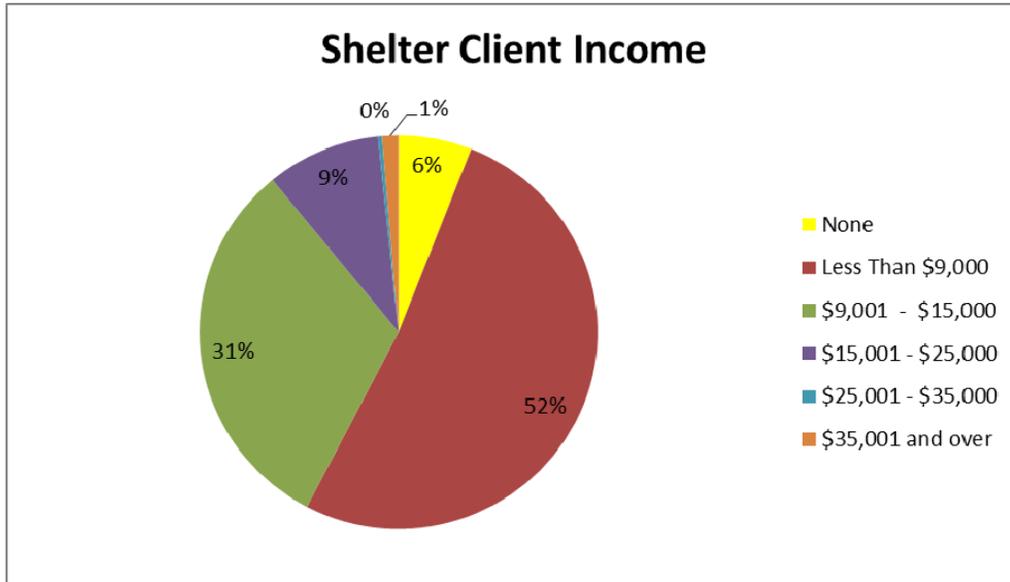


**Safe House Shelter Client Ethnicity:** The ethnicity of the shelter client population mirrors the makeup of the county. However, we serve a high proportion of African American families:



**Shelter Client Income:** 58% of the clients residing in a Marjaree Mason Center Safe House shelter had less than \$9,000 income when they entered the program.

Shelter Client Income



**COUNSELING**

MMC counseling services include individual and group therapy for adults and children. Last fiscal year, MMC provided **6,129 individual and group counseling sessions**.

**LEGAL ASSISTANCE**

For victims of domestic violence, MMC provides comprehensive legal assistance, including assistance with restraining orders, child support, child custody, divorce, and court accompaniment. MMC legal advocates also host a free weekly class to help victims learn about their legal options.

Last fiscal year, **1,952 unduplicated clients** received legal assistance from MMC. It is MMC's most utilized service area, and is broken down into several different services provided by a variety of staff members including victim advocates who are co-located at the Fresno County Sheriff's Office, Fresno Police Department, and rural

areas of Fresno County. Our staff attorney and paralegal are available for the more complex cases.

### **CRISIS SERVICES**

MMC crisis-services include the county's only 24-hour domestic violence hotline and crisis drop-in assistance, safety planning, and referrals to an abundance of other assistance. MMC crisis services focus on providing life-saving assistance, even during a time of great danger. If a victim does not require or desire shelter services, MMC still provides the full spectrum of services for them. The most important of those services is safety planning.

Over the last fiscal year, MMC provided life-saving assistance to **2,524 hotline callers.**

### **CONCLUSION**

Throughout the major part of the past fiscal year, domestic violence remained a major problem in Fresno County. Our economic forecast continues to place more people at risk of domestic violence and government budget shortfalls hinder our ability to hold batterers accountable and insure victims and their children can live in safe homes.

MMC is grateful to the Fresno County Board of Supervisors and your expert staff for having confidence in the important services that Marjaree Mason Center provides in our County. Marriage License Fees plays a very important role as the only unrestricted funding source that allows the Safe House to be available to so many in our community in need of a shelter from the storm of violence in their homes. We greatly appreciate the ongoing support of the community and Fresno County's Board of Supervisors. Thank you!