

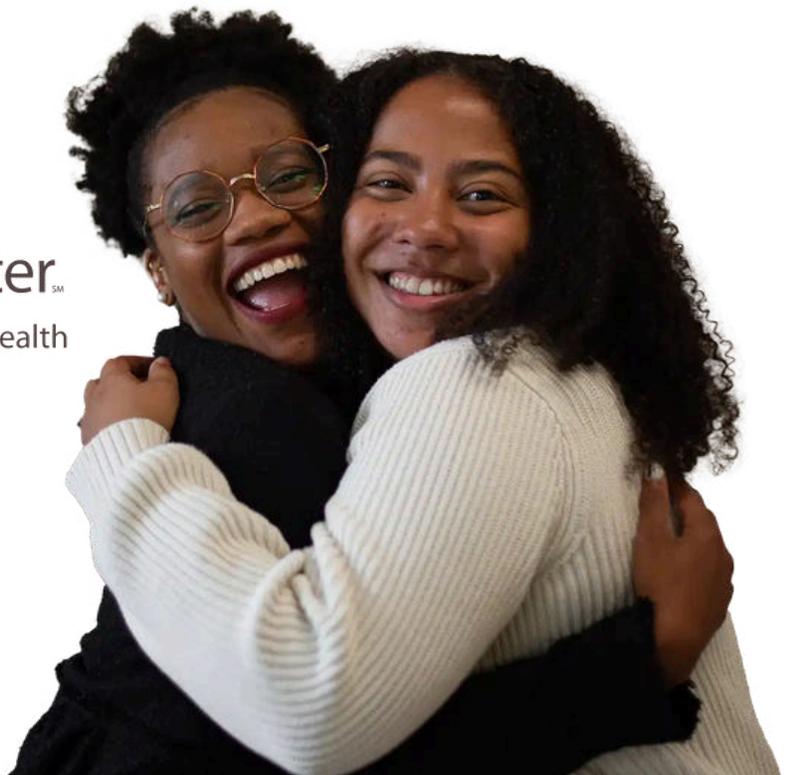
# ANNUAL REPORT 2025

LATEST INFORMATION AND UPDATES  
ABOUT MARIA DROSTE COUNSELING CENTER



**Maria Droste**  
Counseling Center<sup>SM</sup>

Colorado's Center for Mental Health



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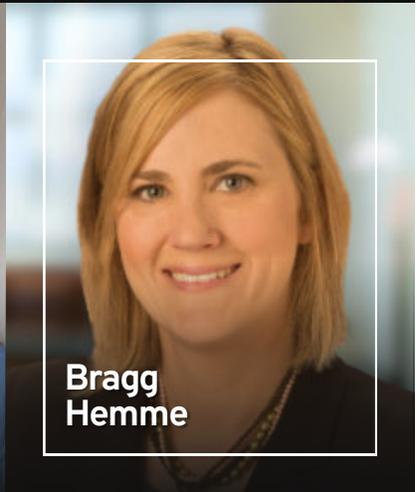
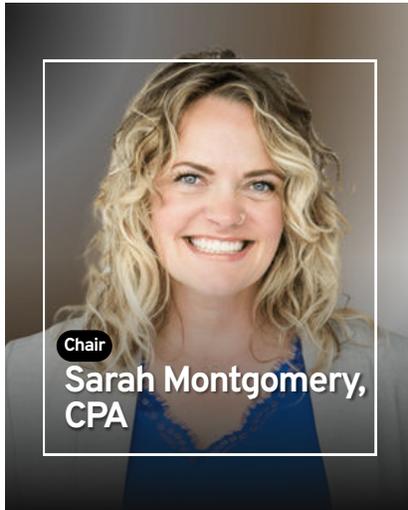
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# OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS





# A WORD FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

When I first became involved with Maria Droste Counseling Center (MDCC), it was because I saw the painful gap between how many people need mental health care and how hard it can be to access it. I've watched friends, family, and neighbors struggle to find support they could afford, and I was drawn to MDCC's clear mission to break down barriers to mental healthcare and make it accessible to everyone in our community, regardless of their ability to pay. That commitment to welcoming people as they are, and meeting them with empathy and humility, continues to inspire my service on the Board. I'm humbled to play a small part in this work.

This year has also been one of important transition and renewed direction. The Board had the privilege of leading the search for our new Executive Director, Laura Ferguson, and I am deeply confident in and excited about her leadership. Laura brings both steadiness and vision—qualities that will help MDCC continue building healthier lives and communities through mental healthcare.

2025 was not an easy year. Change, financial pressures, and the ongoing mental health needs in our community have all been very real. Yet time and again, I've seen MDCC live its mission: providing accessible, community-centered, high-quality care, and working to reduce stigma so people feel safe asking for help. That resilience, rooted in our values and in the dedication of our staff and partners, gives me real hope about the path ahead. It is a privilege to serve along such a dedicated team.

To everyone who donates, volunteers, refers a loved one, or simply speaks openly about mental health: thank you. Your belief in our mission makes this work possible and keeps our doors open to those who need us most. I hope you'll stay close to MDCC in the year ahead—your continued support truly changes what is possible for our clients and our community.

With gratitude and excitement for the year to come,

**SARAH MONTGOMERY, CPA**  
CHAIR

# A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As a mission-driven leader, it is both an honor and a privilege to step into the role of Executive Director at Maria Droste Counseling Center (MDCC). I first became aware of MDCC in the early 2000s, when I was still in graduate school and colleagues were eagerly seeking internship opportunities at this heart-centered, highly respected counseling center, known for its deep commitment to expanding access to behavioral health care so that those who need support most can truly thrive.

At that time, I was a single mother struggling to find affordable counseling services for myself and my family - a daunting and often discouraging task. More than twenty years later, I am both energized and deeply humbled to serve as the leader and steward of this invaluable community resource, which has long provided compassionate care to diverse individuals, couples, and families. In the year ahead, my intention is to serve as a stabilizing and steady presence at MDCC, leading with authenticity, vision, and profound respect for the meaningful work this community has carried forward for decades.

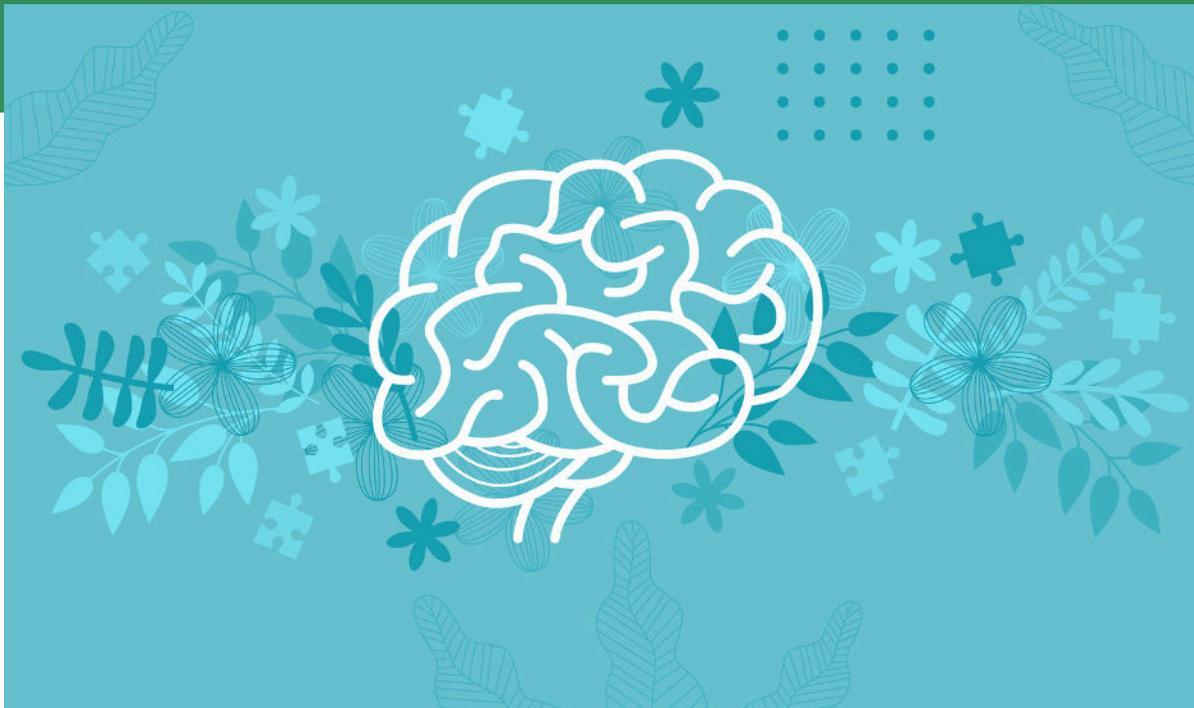
As I spend time in one-on-one coffee meetings with teammates, interns, and board members, I am continually struck by the way MDCC lives its values. This is a community that does not merely speak about equity and justice, but actively practices them each day through service, advocacy, and genuine care for both clients and one another - the very foundation of excellent clinical work. I have been especially inspired by our clinicians' advocacy in action: brainstorming practical solutions to barriers clients face, stocking our small lobby pantry with food, and identifying opportunities to expand supportive services where needs exist.

MDCC embodies its mission through the daily actions of a dedicated team that shows up with empathy, integrity, and an unwavering commitment to healing, even when the work is complex and emotionally demanding. Behavioral health work calls us to continually grow: to become better clinicians, better stewards of community resources, and better humans. It asks us to examine our biases, reflect on our growth edges, and consistently challenge ourselves to do better. With that spirit guiding me, my focus in the months ahead will be to listen deeply, learn from this community, and cultivate the partnerships that allow us to serve our clients with compassion and clinical excellence. I believe deeply in the work we do at MDCC, and I am honored to help carry this torch forward.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our donors, partners, and community supporters for believing in MDCC's mission as deeply as we do. Your continued engagement and support make this work possible - we truly cannot do it without you. I look forward to a long and meaningful partnership in service of our shared mission: to provide high-quality counseling services regardless of ability to pay. Together, we can, and will, make a difference.

**LAURA FERGUSON, LPC, LMFT**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR





## OUR STORY

Maria Droste Counseling Center was founded on a simple but powerful belief: everyone deserves access to high-quality mental health care, regardless of their ability to pay. Since opening our doors in Denver in 1989, that belief has guided every decision we've made—how we grow, who we serve, and how we show up for our community.

From the beginning, MDCC was created to address gaps in the mental health system—especially for individuals and families who were falling through the cracks. What started with a small group of counselors and a shared vision has grown into a trusted community-based organization providing counseling and clinical training across Colorado.

Today, MDCC is a collaborative nonprofit made up of mental health professionals, learners, volunteers, and community partners who are deeply committed to service, learning, and connection. Our uniquely sustainable model blends traditional outpatient counseling with co-located and community-based care, delivered in partnership with expert contract clinicians who share our commitment to paying it forward.

We provide mental health counseling at our Denver center, through telehealth, and in the places where people already live, learn, and receive care. Our services reach individuals of all ages and backgrounds—including children and adolescents, older adults, survivors of domestic violence and trauma, and many others who might otherwise go without support.

As community needs have evolved, so has MDCC. Over the years, we have launched and expanded programs to respond to unmet mental health challenges—bringing services into elementary schools, creating specialized care for survivors of trauma, integrating behavioral health into community settings, and strengthening our clinical training institute. Alongside this growth, we have remained deeply committed to preparing the next generation of therapists through graduate internships and post-graduate fellowships rooted in real-world, community-centered care.

Our name honors Maria Droste, a Sister of the Good Shepherd who provided counseling and support to those in need in the late 1800s. While we are not affiliated with a religious order, we carry forward her legacy through compassion, humility, and a deep concern for those most often overlooked. Today, that legacy is lived out through collaboration, volunteerism, and the shared belief that mental health care is essential—not optional.

Guided by our mission to provide accessible, community-centered, high-quality mental health counseling and clinical training, we continue to respond to emerging needs with intention and purpose. Our work is grounded in values of community, learning, and service—internally among staff, clinicians, and board members, and externally in partnership with the people and communities we serve.

More than three decades after our founding, MDCC remains focused on what matters most: meeting people where they are, honoring their dignity, and expanding access to care so that healthier lives are possible for all.





# IN 2025, WE HAD...

**830**

clients, including 675 through outpatient services and 155 through community-based partnerships.

**10,619**

therapy sessions overall, with 8,655 provided in outpatient settings and 1,964 in community-based locations.

**4,308**

hours of clinical service by trainees, including 3,432.58 hours from unlicensed clinicians and 875.83 hours from interns.

**89%**

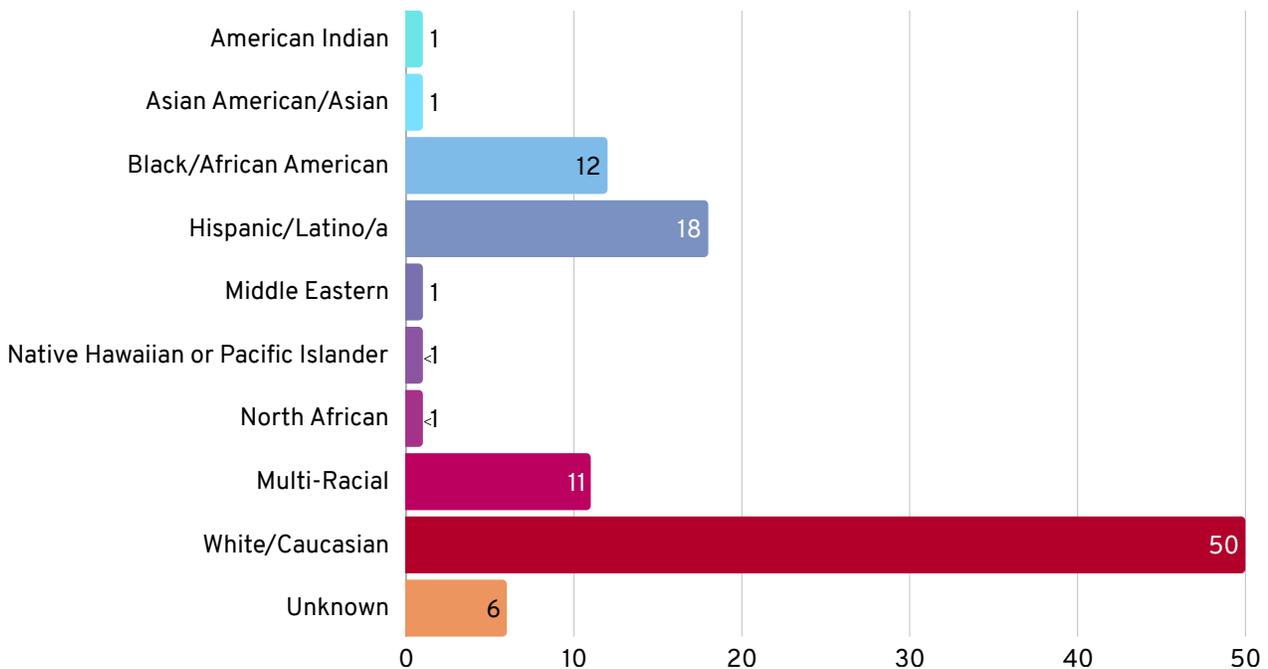
Individual therapy remained our primary service, representing 88.87% of all sessions provided.

# 2025 DEMOGRAPHICS

Maria Droste Counseling Center remains committed to providing high-quality, accessible mental health care that honors the dignity and individuality of every client we serve. In 2025, we continued strengthening our focus on equitable access, expanding services across community-based settings and deepening partnerships to reduce barriers related to cost, stigma, and transportation.

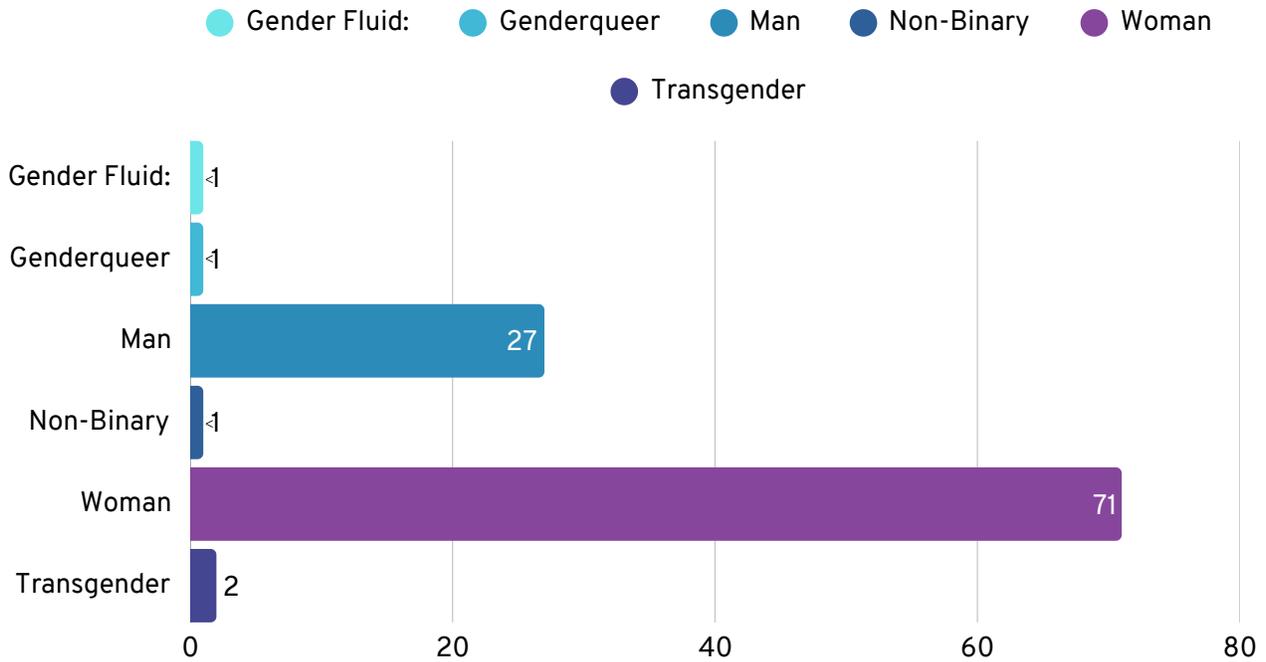
With a full year of data under our new Electronic Health Record system, this report reflects more comprehensive and accurate service trends, allowing us to better assess impact, identify needs, and plan strategically for the year ahead.

Ethnicity/Race  
% of clients



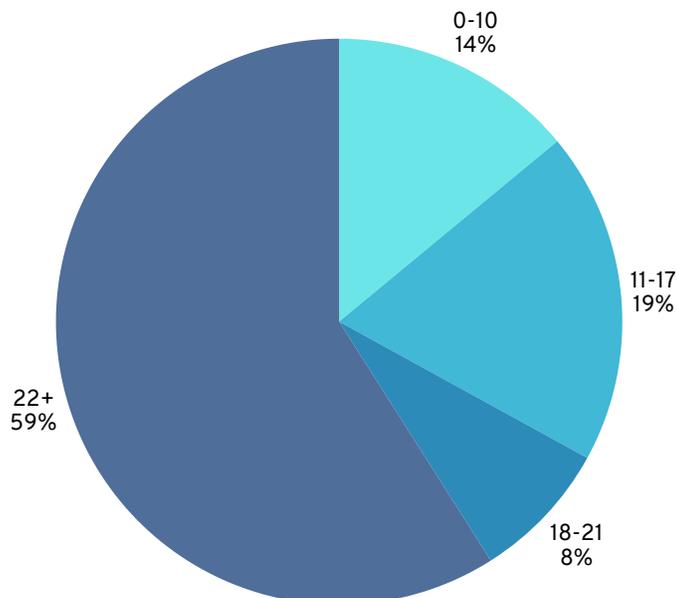
In 2025, 49.5% of clients identified as White/Caucasian, 18% as Hispanic/Latino/a, 11.6% as Black/African American, and 10.8% as multi-racial, with 1% each identifying as American Indian, Asian American/Asian, or Middle Eastern; less than 1% as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander or North African, and 5.8% unknown.

### Gender of Clients Served



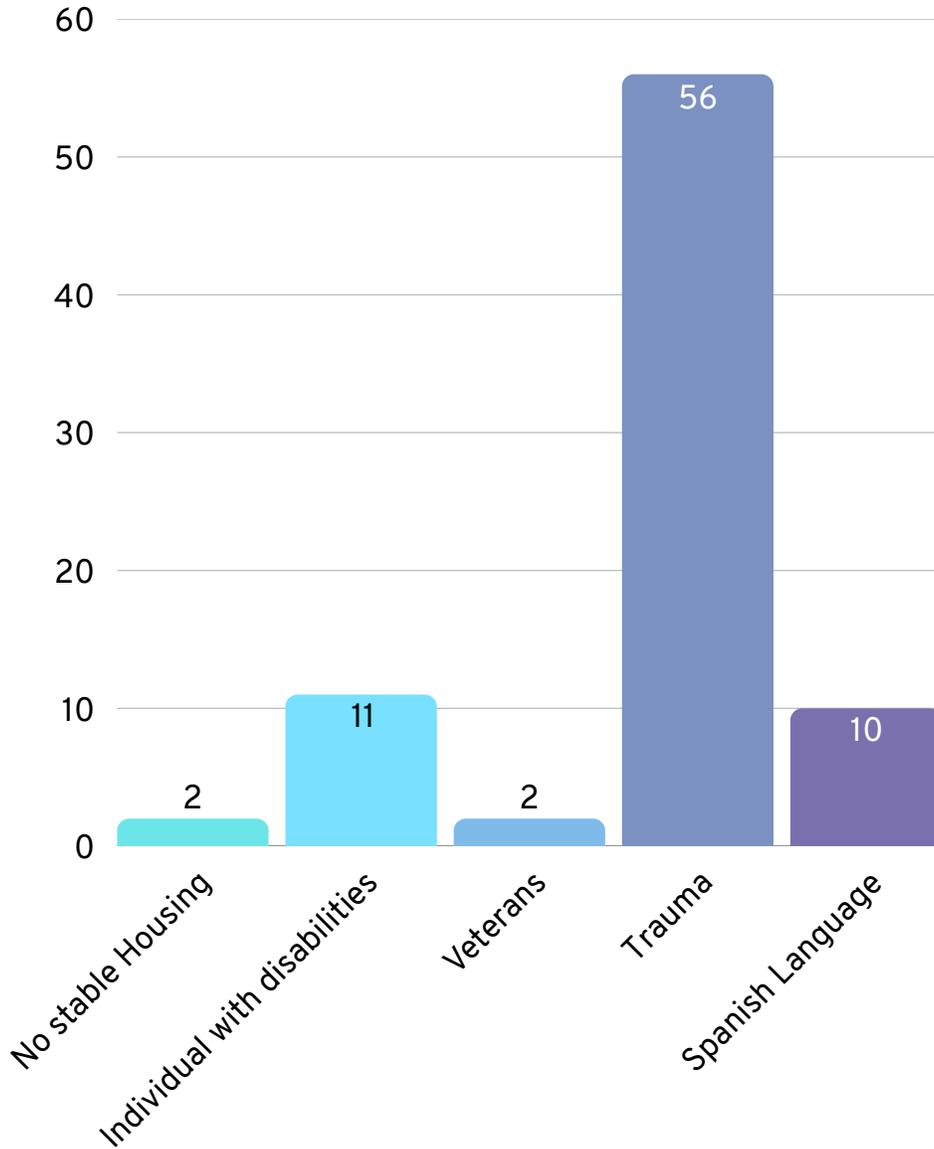
In 2025, the majority of clients served identified as women (70.7%) and men (26.8%), with a smaller percentage identifying as transgender (1%), gender fluid, genderqueer, non-binary/gender diverse, or unknown (each less than 1%).

### Age of Clients



In 2025, we continued to serve clients across the lifespan, with 58.99% age 22+, 19.14% ages 11-17, 14.45% ages 0-10, and 7.42% ages 18-21—reflecting a strong concentration of adults while also supporting a meaningful number of children, adolescents, and young adults through our school- and community-based programs.

### Other Categories % of client served

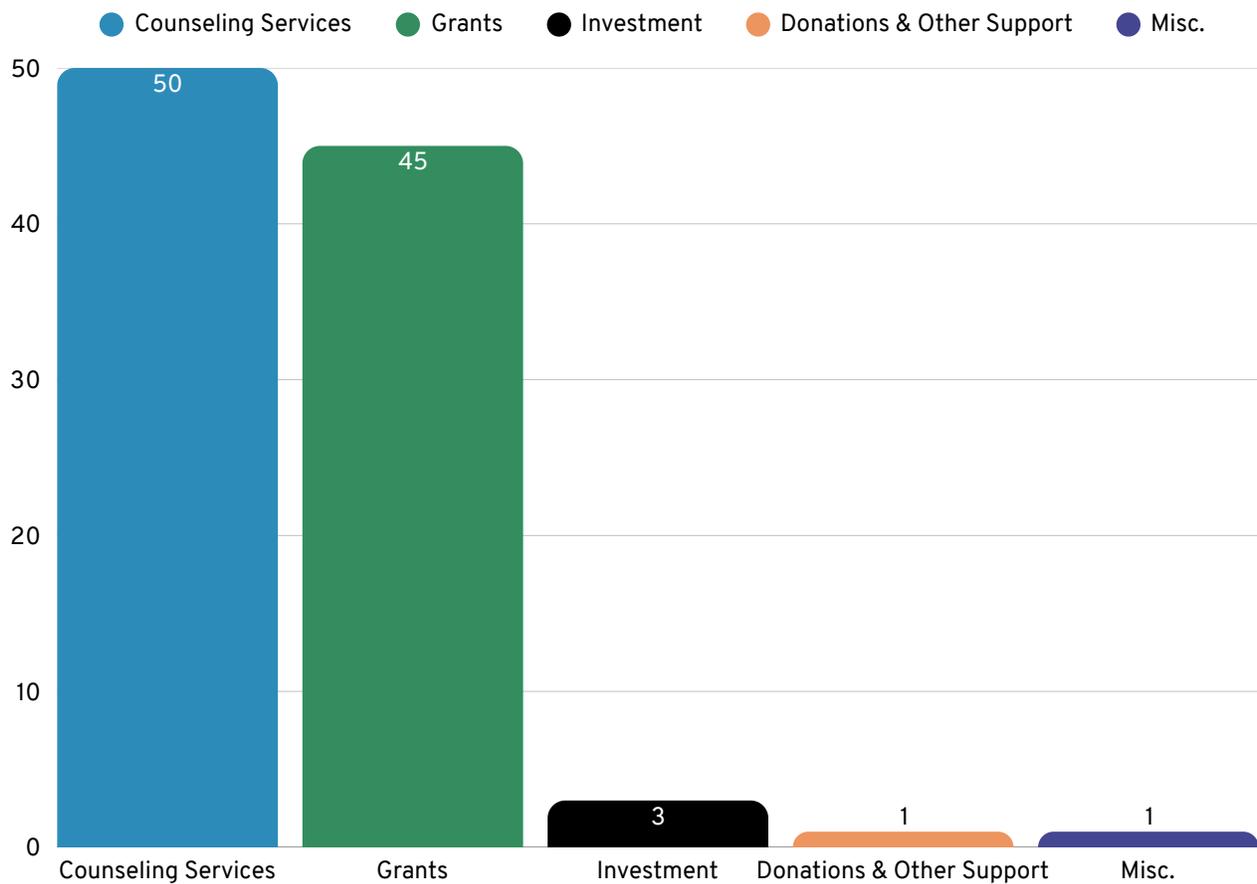


## CLIENT DEMOGRAPHIC HIGHLIGHTS

In 2025, 1.8% of clients reported having no stable housing or living in their car, 11% identified as individuals with disabilities, and 1.6% were veterans. Additionally, 56.11% presented with trauma-related concerns, 10% preferred services in Spanish, and LGBTQ+ data was not able to be assessed in 2025 but will be collected beginning in 2026.

# 2025 SOURCES OF INCOME

Our funding model reflects a balance between earned revenue and philanthropic support. Counseling services account for nearly half of our income, demonstrating strong community demand. Grants provide critical support to expand access for those who may not otherwise afford care. Investments, donations, and other revenue help ensure long-term sustainability while keeping services accessible.



In 2025, 49.9% of revenue came from counseling services and 44.7% from grants, with 2.7% from investments, 1.4% from donations and other support, and 1.3% from miscellaneous sources—reflecting a balanced mix of earned and philanthropic funding.



## SUCCESS STORY

When this client first came to Maria Droste Counseling Center, they were navigating the emotional fallout of a painful divorce and the sudden disruption of their family life. Feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and uncertain about the future, they knew they needed support to regain stability—for themselves and for their children.

Through counseling, the client worked on building healthy boundaries with their former spouse and strengthening their confidence to advocate for their role as a parent. Therapy focused on assertive communication, prioritizing their children's well-being, and rebuilding a sense of self during a deeply challenging transition.

Over time, and with consistent support, the client began to experience meaningful change. They developed greater confidence, maintained clear boundaries, and nurtured a strong, steady relationship with their children—even during difficult moments. While setbacks still arise, the client now approaches life with resilience, hope, and a renewed belief in what the future can hold.

Today, this client feels grounded, engaged, and optimistic—proof that access to compassionate, affordable mental health care can help families heal and move forward together.



## PROGRAM: CHILDREN FIRST

This year, our Children First Program expanded access to school-based mental health support across Denver Public Schools through the dedication of graduate interns, serving 155 unique children through 1,964 counseling sessions.

Established in 1990, Children First was created to provide counseling, mentoring, and consistent support for at-risk children and families in local elementary schools. Today, the program delivers onsite therapy in elementary, middle, and high schools, meeting students where they are each day.

By embedding emerging clinicians directly within school communities, we ensure students receive timely, relationship-centered care in the environments where they learn and grow. This approach allows for earlier intervention and more consistent engagement.

This model reduces barriers such as transportation, scheduling, stigma, and cost for families, while strengthening the broader support network around each child. In total, Children First supports approximately 450 students annually, helping them build coping skills, navigate challenges, strengthen relationships, and thrive both at school and at home.

WE SERVED  
155 UNIQUE  
CHILDREN



## PROGRAM: OUTPATIENT

Maria Droste's Outpatient Services provide accessible, high-quality therapy for children, adolescents, and adults across the lifespan. This year, we served 675 unique clients through 8,655 sessions, delivering consistent, compassionate care tailored to each individual's goals, strengths, and lived experiences. Individual therapy made up 88.87% of services provided, reflecting the strong demand for personalized, one-on-one support.

Our outpatient program is designed specifically for those who are uninsured, underinsured, or otherwise facing barriers to accessing behavioral health services. Many of the individuals and families we serve lack adequate insurance coverage or the financial resources to pursue private therapy, which is why we offer low-fee, sliding-scale counseling. Through relationship-centered, evidence-based care, we help clients navigate depression, anxiety, trauma, grief, and life transitions with dignity and hope.

THIS YEAR, WE  
SERVED 675  
UNIQUE CLIENTS



## PROGRAM: INTERNSHIPS

Maria Droste's Field Experience Program welcomes Master's- and doctoral-level students across the full continuum of training—from first-year practicum to final-year internship. During the 2025–2026 school year, we hosted nine students from local and nationwide colleges and universities representing social work, counseling, and behavioral health disciplines (seven internship/second-year placements and two practicum/first-year placements). Collectively, our interns completed 875.83 hours of service.

This program strengthens our ability to provide high-quality mental health care to individuals and families who might otherwise face barriers to accessing services, while also helping shape the next generation of clinicians. Students receive robust weekly individual and group supervision and participate in in-service trainings led by community partners. This year's learning included couples and family counseling approaches, psychopharmacology, art-based interventions, play therapy, trauma-informed care, and professional development topics such as recognizing secondary traumatic stress and preventing burnout.

OUR INTERNS  
COMPLETED 875  
HOURS OF  
SERVICE



# Thank You For Supporting Maria Droste!

Thank you for standing with us and making this work possible—your generosity fuels our mission and ensures more individuals and families can access the care and support they deserve.



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