

Domestic Violence and Safe, Affordable Housing Options

“What are the facts?”

- Domestic violence, also called intimate partner violence, is a serious public health crisis on local, national and global levels.
- Domestic violence is among the leading causes of immediate homelessness for women.
- Isolation from friends and family members make them unreliable emergency housing resources.
- Housing instability is also a potential outcome of domestic violence and is marked by difficulty paying rent or mortgage, frequent moves, nuisance notices and eviction threats.
- Housing options offered to survivors of domestic violence differ in eligibility, availability and consistency from state to state and community to community.
- Safety concerns for survivors are amplified when they have no option but to live in undesirable, high-crime areas and communities unsafe for their children.
- Survivors of domestic violence often have limited access to financial and economic resources (e.g. fair pay, safe working conditions, basic financial management skills and control).
- Survivors often skip meals, health care procedures and other vital needs in order to pay rent and utilities.
- Although emergency safe housing (shelter) and transitional housing offer secure short-term options and stability, available space in such facilities does not adequately meet need or demand.
- Some housing options (both private and federal) are able to discriminate against domestic violence survivors evicting tenants and denying applicants based on domestic violence history and activity.

“What can be done?”

- Raise awareness among public housing officials regarding the application process and its unique barriers to domestic violence survivors (e.g. credit checks, references).
- Train public housing staff and leadership, as well as private landowners on domestic violence and housing discrimination, as well as state and federal protections and safety options for survivors.
- Offer priority housing to survivors in new developments having difficulty occupying housing units.

Sources:

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