

What Are We Learning about Expanding Housing Options for Survivors?

NAEH Pre-Conference: Housing and Supporting Survivors of DV
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Domestic Violence and Housing Technical Assistance Consortium (DVHTAC)

- Launched in 2015
- An innovative, collaborative approach
 - To provide TA, training and resource development
 - At the critical intersection of DV, homelessness, and housing
- Funded by a partnership between FVPSA, OVW, OVC and HUD
- TA Team: NASH, NNEDV, NRCDV and CS

Safe Housing Matters

Domestic violence (DV) is a leading cause of homelessness for women and children

- Housing & supportive services are critical interventions in trauma recovery and long-term stability for survivors and their children.
- The threat of danger does not necessarily stop when housing begins -- *safety is a core element of permanent housing stability for survivors.*
- Building an evidence base is vital to guide best practice and provide a complete picture of safe housing options for survivors.

What are we learning from research and evaluation of innovative approaches?

How can we enhance safety, housing stability and well-being for domestic violence and sexual assault victims and their children?



RESEARCH CONSORTIUM
ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



Does Flexible Funding Work?

- Evaluated DASH – District Alliance for Safe Housing – an innovative program in Washington, DC



Amount of Flex Funding Awarded

- Average grant: \$2,078
- Grant range: \$275 - \$8,508

What were grants used for?

Moving expenses

Utilities

Car repair

Credit card debt

Storage unit fees

Back rent

Out-of-state travel to
court for custody hearing

Other needs
Child Care

The Potential of Flexible Funding

- Flex funding with **brief** advocacy is promising option for survivors who were relatively stable and are now experiencing a crisis
- ***Flex funding is far cheaper than shelter***
- Flex funding with **longer-term advocacy** (DV Housing First, DV Rapid Re-housing) is also promising, needs **further research**

Major Themes from Interviews with Mothers

- The value of housing stability for children
- How grants increased children's safety
- Limiting or eliminating children's exposure to the chaos of homelessness
- Improvements in children's school performance after family housing situations stabilized
- How children are impacted by their mother's stress

Avoiding Homelessness

"We would have been separated, and my children are my life. They my heart. So I'm sure physically, emotionally, spiritually, that would have really, really been negative for me and for him."

Impact on Child Stress and School

"My son's grades have much always been on the Honor Roll. But ...around that time his grades, they started slipping, but then we got back on track and back into our place. He brought home a progress report and it was like all A's... or A+'s."

"So once I moved and I actually got my apartment, they've been to school every day, and they've been to school on time, and both of their academics have improved."

Ability to Leave Unsafe Situations

“We’re in a place where we are safe and we don’t have to worry about no one trying to harm us.”

Making All the Difference

“It helped to provide us with the finances to make the move out of that bad situation. I mean if it wasn’t for that money... I don’t know how we would’ve gotten through... that rough time.”

Housing Status at Time of Grant and at Six-Months Post-Grant

Housing Status	At Time of Grant	At Six-Months Post-Grant
Homeless	25%	5%
Precariously housed	35%	15%
Economically imperiled	30%	10%
Stably housed	10%	65%

95%
HOUSED

Average grant:
\$2,106

Definitions:

- **Homeless** – living in a shelter, in a temporary arrangement with family or friends, couch-surfing or staying in a place not intended for habitation (such as a car, the streets or an abandoned building)
- **Precariously housed** – at risk of imminent eviction, or seriously behind on rent and in jeopardy of eviction
- **Economically imperiled** – housed, but unable to pay for or living without basic utilities or behind on bills to the point that their employment/housing could be jeopardized



FLEXIBLE FUNDING – CA DVHF PILOT PROCESS EVALUATION

Category	Funds	% of Total
Rental Assistance	\$788,439	85%
Move-in Costs and Deposit	\$ 49,476	5%
Children's Needs	\$ 48,859	5%
Utility Bills	\$ 11,835	1%
Other categories included (<1% each):		
• Education/Training		
• Transportation Assistance		
• Security Assistance		
• Legal Assistance		
• Physical/Mental Health Needs		
• Employment		
Total	\$926,837.61	100%





FLEXIBLE FUNDING: PROCESS CHALLENGES

- 1) Budgeting sufficient funds for the **administrative costs**
- 2) Determining **what funds could be used for**
- 3) Whether and when to **provide funds directly to survivors** rather than to housing or service providers

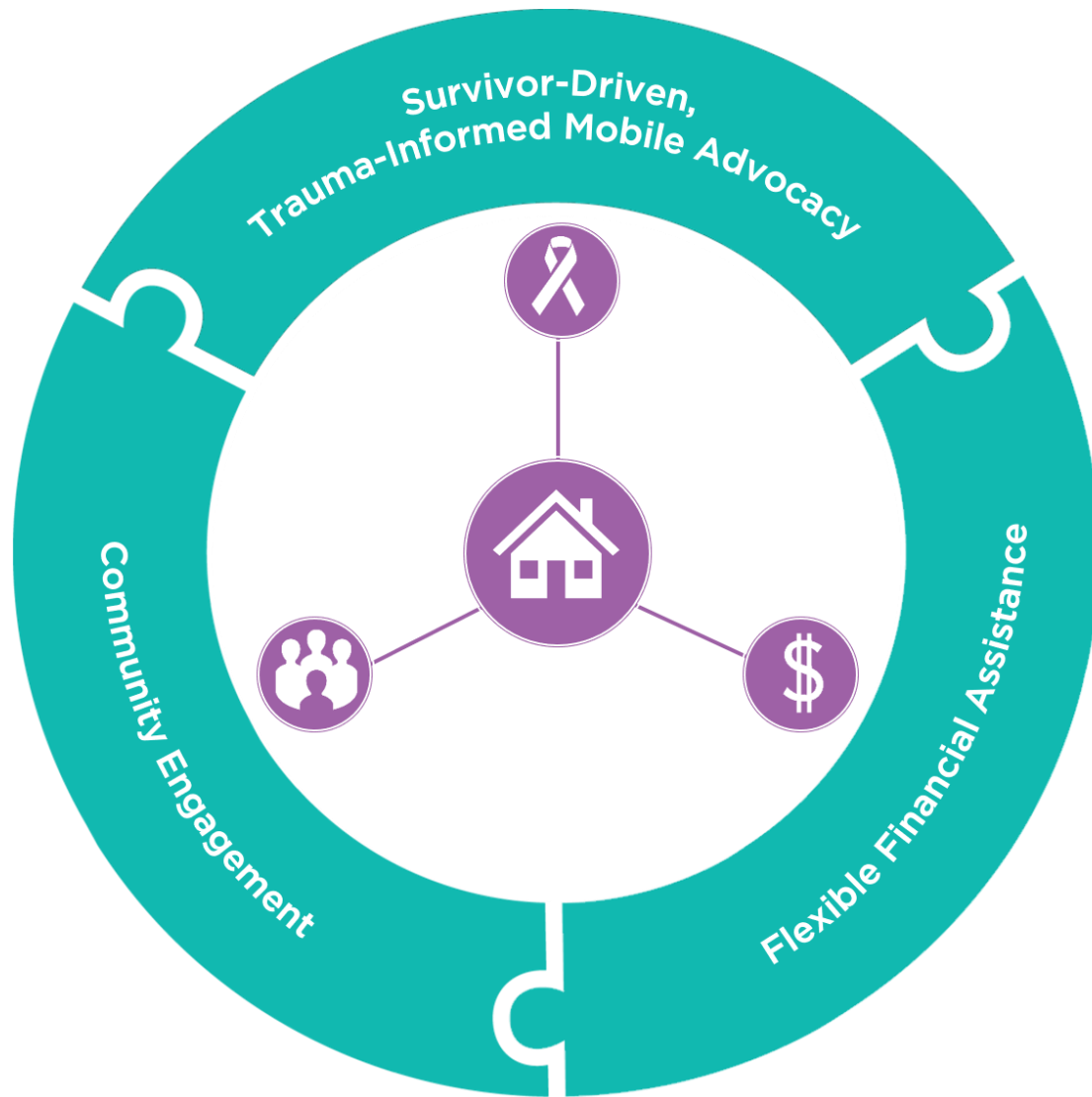


LANDLORD ENGAGEMENT CHALLENGES

- 1) **Engaging** landlords in a tight housing market
- 2) Not all landlords accept **third party checks**
- 3) Engage without **disclosing DV** agency

Other approaches of interest

- **Domestic Violence Housing First** is a model using intensive, mobile advocacy and flexible funding to help survivors obtain safe and stable housing
- **Rapid ReHousing**, which combines housing identification, financial assistance for rent and related expenses (typically for six months or less), and supportive services
- **Transitional Housing** and its short and longer term outcomes for survivors, including comparisons with Rapid ReHousing and DV Housing First



DV Housing First

A project of
Washington State
Coalition Against
Domestic Violence

Being evaluated by
the Research
Consortium on
Gender-Based
Violence at Michigan
State University

DV Housing First

- DVHF - Washington State: rigorous evaluation ongoing (320 survivors over 18 months, 2 urban and 2 rural sites)
- DVHF - California: 8 pilot sites (recently expanded to over 20) implementing DVHF utilizing VOCA funds as the source of financial assistance

Hypotheses

- Those receiving DVHF will show greater improvement over time on:
 - Housing stability
 - Financial stability
 - Safety
 - Quality of life
 - Mental health and substance misuse
- Children will show improvements on:
 - School attendance and performance
 - Behaviors and social-emotional skills

Additional Evaluations Underway

- ❑ Evaluating “DV Rapid Rehousing” in Houston, TX and Seattle, WA
- ❑ Examining survivors’ views of Transitional Housing vs. Rapid Rehousing (Transition-in-place) in Austin, TX
- ❑ Documenting process of establishing DVHF across 8 sites in California (expect to lead to outcome evaluation next year)

Additional Evaluations Underway

- ❑ Designing and locating resources to evaluate use of flexible funding in Ireland
- ❑ Received an OVW grant to evaluate transitional housing outcomes
- ❑ Dr. Nkiru Nnawulezi is evaluating a Transition-in-Place program in Washington, DC (including survivors with HIV/AIDS)

Building the Evidence Base

- Collaborating with Center on Social Innovations' Supporting Partnerships for Anti-Racist Communities (SPARC) Project to better understand racial equity as a key component of efforts to address disproportionate housing instability among survivors of color.
 - *A recent SPARC report underscored the need to understand that poverty alone does not explain the disproportionate rates of homelessness experienced by people of color, with Black and Native Americans dramatically more likely to become homeless than their White counterparts.*
 - *Their oral histories collected from homeless women of color revealed domestic and sexual violence as a common thread in their lives, ranging from extreme levels of physical violence to emotional abuse and isolation.*

Building the Evidence Base

- Intentionally using the same measures across studies where possible – housing barriers, financial stability, housing stability, safety, well-being
- Not looking for a one-size-fits-all but instead identify what works best for whom, under what circumstances

Getting the Word Out (* on SHP)

- * Sullivan (2017) - Understanding How Domestic Violence Support Services Promote Survivor Well-Being: A Conceptual Model
- Sullivan & Olsen (2017) - Common ground, complementary approaches: adapting the Housing First model for domestic violence survivors
- Sullivan & Virden (2017) - An Eight State Study on the Relationships Among Domestic Violence Shelter Services and Residents' Self-Efficacy and Hopefulness

Getting the Word Out (* on SHP)

- Sullivan & Virden (2017) - Interrelationships Among Length of Stay in a Domestic Violence Shelter, Help Received, and Outcomes Achieved
- * Nnawulezi, Godsay, Sullivan, Marcus & Hacskaylo (2018) The Influence of Low-Barrier and Voluntary Service Policies on Survivor Empowerment in a Domestic Violence Housing Organization
- Sullivan, Bomsta & Hacskaylo (2016) - Flexible Funding as a Promising Strategy to Prevent Homelessness for Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence

Getting the Word Out (* on SHP)

- * Sullivan (2018) - RESEARCH BRIEF - 'There's just all these moving parts:' Helping domestic violence survivors obtain housing
- Sullivan, López-Zerón, Bomsta & Menard (2018) - 'There's Just All These Moving Parts:' Helping Domestic Violence Survivors Obtain Housing
- * Sullivan (2017) – Creating Safe Housing Options for Survivors: Learning From and Expanding Research

Getting the Word Out (* on SHP)

- * Sullivan, Strom & Fluegerman (2018) – Final Evaluation Report: Evaluation of LifeWire’s DV Rapid Re-Housing Project
- * *Infographic* (2018) – Implementing the Domestic Violence Housing First Model in California: Key Findings from a Process Evaluation of Seven Pilot Sites
- * Sullivan, Strom & Fluegerman (2017) Establishing Domestic Violence Housing First in California: A Process Evaluation

Need Technical Assistance or Training?

Go to **SafeHousingPartnerships.org** and use the TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE tab in the top toolbar

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Questions and Discussion

