

HOUSING AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

YWCA is the largest network of domestic and sexual violence service providers in the country, serving over 500,000 women and children annually. YWCA housing is a safe haven for families fleeing domestic violence — and it has a real impact. Housing is the most common need for survivors of domestic violence and is often the most unmet need. No one should have to choose between shelter and safety.

Housing domestic violence and sexual assault survivors is central to helping survivors rebuild their lives. The connection between violence and homelessness for women is staggering. Abusers often use isolation and economic abuse to control their victims, making it difficult to find safety. In 2015 alone, 193,155 people called a YWCA domestic violence or sexual assault hotline and 44,062 people called the YWCA home, benefitting from comprehensive services, support and safe housing.

FACTS

- Recent statistics suggest that on a single night in January 2017, 16% of the overall homeless population, 87,329 people, reported having experienced domestic violence at some point.ⁱ
- 1 of every 4 homeless women is homeless because of violence committed against her, and over 92% of homeless mothers have experienced severe physical and/or sexual abuse during their lifetime.ⁱⁱ
- In many major cities around the country, domestic violence is cited as a major reason for homelessness among families with children.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Financial abuse is experienced by 94 to 99% of domestic violence survivors and occurs across all socio-economic, educational, racial and ethnic groups.^{iv}
- Due to “zero-tolerance” nuisance ordinances, many landlords can evict domestic violence survivors because of the damage their abusers inflict in the apartments they lease. Women who have experienced recent or ongoing domestic violence are more likely to face eviction than other women.^v
- Access to safe housing is even harder for some survivors. In a national survey, more than 20% of LGBTQ+ sexual and domestic violence survivors said they were denied access to domestic violence shelters.^{vi} In a 2014 national study, more than half of transgender individuals who accessed homeless shelters were harassed by shelter staff or residents, and almost 29% were turned away altogether.^{vii}

- Victims of domestic violence lost about 8 million days of paid work last year because of the violence that they experienced, increasing their risk of homelessness.^{viii}
- 1 in 4 women will experience domestic violence^{ix} and, on average, more than three women are murdered by their partners in the United States every day.^x
- By age 12, 83% of homeless children have been exposed to at least one serious violent event and nearly 25% have witnessed acts of violence within their families.^{xi}
- On a single day in 2016, there were 11,991 unmet requests for domestic violence services, 66% of which were for housing and shelter. More than half of survivors who identify a need for housing services do not receive them.^{xii}
- Adequate funding for safe and affordable housing is critical to supporting survivors of gender-based violence and their families. Federal funding streams and private donors are crucial for ensuring that housing is available to all who need it.

ADVOCACY RESPONSES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- Ensure that housing stakeholders in your community are aware of HUD's Final Rule^{xiii} protections for survivors of domestic violence living in public housing. These legal standards under the Fair Housing Act protect survivors of sexual and domestic violence, as well as stalking, from housing discrimination and unauthorized evictions due to intimate partner violence.
- Pass safe leave legislation to allow survivors to take time off from work without penalty to receive medical attention, make court appearances, seek legal assistance, and get help with safety planning for themselves or immediate family members.
- Promote affordable housing as a platform for improved health and economic independence.
- Create and promote avenues for economic stability (i.e. job protections, benefits, fair pay, child care, tax credits, individual development accounts).
- Advocate for an increase in funding for safe houses and shelters for survivors of violence.^{xiv}
- Ask legislators and community leaders to sign on to a non-binding resolution stating that your locality recognizes housing as a human right.^{xv}

ⁱ National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2017). Retrieved from <https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/what-causes-homelessness/domestic-violence/>.

ⁱⁱ Green Doors. "Family Homelessness Facts." (2016). Austin, TX.

ⁱⁱⁱ The U.S. Conference of Mayors 2012 Status Report on Hunger & Homelessness, at 26 (Dec. 2012). Retrieved from <http://usmayors.org/pressreleases/uploads/2012/1219-report-HH.pdf>.

^{iv} IWPR. (2016). Intersections of Domestic Violence and Economic Security. Retrieved from www.IWPR.org.

^v American Civil Liberties Union, Women's Rights Project. (2004). "Domestic Violence and Homelessness." Retrieved from www.aclu.org.

^{vi} The Williams Institute. (2015) "Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Abuse Among LGBT People." Retrieved from williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu.

^{vii} Grant, Jaime M., Lisa A. Mottet, Justin Tanis, Jack Harrison, Jody L. Herman, and Mara Keisling. (2011). "Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey." Washington: National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Retrieved from <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/domestic.html>.

^{viii} The National Domestic Violence Hotline. (2019). "Get the Facts & Figures." Retrieved from thehotline.org.

^{ix} National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. (2019). National Statistics. Retrieved from www.NCADV.org.

^x National Organization for Women. (2019). Violence Against Women in the United States: Statistics. Retrieved from www.now.org.

^{xi} Bassuk, E.L., Weinreb, L.F., Buckner, J.C., Browne, A., Salomon, A., & Bassuk, S.S. (1996). "The characteristics and needs of sheltered homeless and low-income housed mothers." *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 276, 640-646.

^{xii} National Network to End Domestic Violence. (2016). 11th Annual Domestic Violence Counts Census.

^{xiii} HUD Final Rule 2016. Retrieved from <https://www.hudexchange.info/news/hud-announces-new-protections-for-victims-of-harassment-and-survivors-of-domestic-violence/>.

^{xiv} For more information on state-by-state fair housing laws as they apply to domestic violence, see the National Housing Law Project's 2013 State and Local Law Compendium. Retrieved from <http://nhlp.org/files/Domestic%20violence%20housing%20compendium%20FINAL7.pdf>.

^{xv} Tars, Eric. "Housing as a Human Right." (2016). National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty. Retrieved from http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/2016AG_Chapter_1-6.pdf.