



Formerly Family Violence Prevention Fund

The Facts on Housing and Violence

On average, more than three women a day are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends in the United States¹ and women experience two million injuries from intimate partner violence each year.² Our nation's lack of affordable housing can dramatically reduce options for women experiencing domestic violence, trapping them in abusive situations or forcing them and their children to become homeless if they leave. Women living in poverty are especially vulnerable. Despite this, domestic violence often becomes so severe that women leave their homes, even when they have no place to go. In fact, domestic violence is a major cause of homelessness in this country.

Domestic and Sexual Violence Contribute to Homelessness

- A 2003 survey of 100 U.S. homeless mothers found nearly one in five reported being afraid of a partner and the same number reported being threatened by a partner. One in four U.S. homeless mothers reported being kicked, pushed, shoved or otherwise hurt by someone in the past year.³
- Nearly half of the 301 domestic violence victims participating in a Florida housing needs survey reported homelessness as the result of an inability to find suitable and affordable housing away from the abuser.⁴
- In a 2007 report by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, 39 percent of the city leaders who were surveyed identified domestic violence as a primary cause of homelessness among households with children. Family disputes were also cited as a cause of homelessness in 17 percent of the cities surveyed.⁵
- In one study, sexual abuse before leaving home was reported by 61 percent of homeless girls and 19 percent of homeless boys.⁶

Emergency Shelter

- A 24 hour census of domestic violence shelters and services found that more than 20,000 adult and child victims of domestic violence sought refuge in emergency shelter and more than 10,000 adult and child domestic violence victims were living in transitional housing in a single day in 2008.⁷
- On that same day, nearly 9,000 requests for assistance were unmet because of limited funding.
- Fifty-two percent of the city leaders surveyed in the 2007 U.S. Conference of Mayors report stated that they turn persons experiencing homelessness away from shelters and transitional housing because of a lack of capacity all or some of the time.⁸

Effects of Domestic Violence

- Victims and survivors of domestic violence have trouble finding apartments because they may have poor credit, rental, and employment histories as a result of their abuse.⁹

- In 2008, the Equal Rights Center investigated 93 rental properties in the District of Columbia to determine whether housing providers were discriminating against domestic violence victims. It found that, overall, 65 percent of test applicants seeking housing on behalf of a domestic violence survivor were either denied housing or offered less advantageous terms and conditions than an applicant not associated with domestic violence.¹⁰

¹ Intimate Partner Violence in the United States. 2006. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/intimate/ipv.htm>.

² CDC. Adverse Health Conditions and Health Risk Behaviors Associated with Intimate Partner Violence --- United States, 2005. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, February 8, 2008. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5705a1.htm>.

³ *Social Supports for Homeless Mothers*. 2003. The National Center on Family Homelessness. Available at <http://www.familyhomelessness.org/pdf/socialsupports.pdf>.

⁴ Kershner, M., Ough, J. 2003. When There's Nowhere to Go: Domestic Violence and the Need for Better Housing Options for Survivors and Their Children. Tampa, FL: ChildNet/SafeNet Collaborative. Available at http://www.lri.lsc.gov/pdf/03/030122_dvrprt.pdf.

⁵ U.S. Conference of Mayors. 2007. A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities: A 23-City Survey. Washington, DC. Available at <http://www.usmayors.org/HHSurvey2007/hhsurvey07.pdf>.

⁶ Estes, R.J. and N. A. Weiner. 2001. Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Work. Available at http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/~restes/CSEC_Files/Exec_Sum_020220.pdf.

⁷ National Network to End Domestic Violence. 2009. Domestic Violence Counts 2008: A 24-hour Census of Domestic Violence Shelters and Services. Available at http://www.nnedv.org/docs/Census/DVCounts2008/DVCounts08_Report_Color.pdf.

⁸ U.S. Conference of Mayors. 2007. A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities: A 23-City Survey. Washington, DC. Available at <http://www.usmayors.org/HHSurvey2007/hhsurvey07.pdf>.

⁹ Susan A. Reif and Lisa J. Krisher. 2000. "Subsidized Housing and the Unique Needs of Domestic Violence Victim." *Clearinghouse Review*. National Center on Poverty Law. Chicago, IL.

¹⁰ Equal Rights Center. 2008. No Vacancy: Housing Discrimination Against Survivors of Domestic Violence in the District of Columbia. Available at http://www.equalrightscenter.org/publications/documents/DVReport_FINALCOPY_000.pdf.