

2017



**DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE  
& HOUSING  
INSTABILITY**



**Oregon Coalition**

*Against Domestic & Sexual Violence*

[ocadsv.org](http://ocadsv.org)





# Oregon Coalition

Against Domestic & Sexual Violence

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND HOUSING INSTABILITY: AN OVERVIEW

More than one in three women and one in five men in the United States report experiencing domestic violence in their lifetimes. The impacts of domestic violence can be catastrophic on a number of levels: the physical wounds, emotional turmoil, and social stigma are generally well understood, but the negative effects of financial abuse on economic viability and housing stability are particularly insidious.

OREGON COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE (OCADSV), 2016

Individuals and families experiencing domestic violence frequently feel the need to leave their homes in order to regain safety and self-determination. An abuser's behavior impacts a survivor's life in multiple ways and can have a significant financial impact. Financial abuse may include preventing the victim from working, sabotaging work or employment opportunities, hiding bank accounts and other assets, running up large amounts of debt in the victim's name, refusing to pay child support or manipulating the divorce process, and theft (as seen in the story below). These actions can affect a victim's ability to access housing. Ruined credit, gaps in work and rental histories, and legal issues create very real risks of homelessness for individuals and families fleeing abuse.

Thus, it is no surprise that domestic violence is the leading cause of homelessness for women. Research shows a strong relationship between domestic violence and housing instability. 28% of families were homeless because of domestic violence in 2008 (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2008). 39% of cities cited domestic violence as the primary cause of family homelessness (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2007).

**“Women who have experienced domestic violence are four times more likely to also experience housing instability.”**

PAVAO, ALVAREZ, BAUMRIND, INDUNI,  
& KIMERLING (2007)

Sullivan, Bomsta, & Hackaylo (2016) describe how one “survivor had been giving her rent money to her partner, because she left for work long before the rental office opened. Her partner had kept the money and concealed overdue notices; the survivor was unaware of her rental situation until her abusive partner was arrested. Almost immediately afterward, her rental office told her that she was several months behind and that they were preparing to file eviction papers with the court” (p. 8). On top of healing from the trauma she experienced, the survivor had to deal with extensive debt. “When I found out that I was behind, it just felt like I just got knocked a million steps back and everything was runnin’ through my head. . . . To me, I feel like once you’re behind—you’re in a hole. There’s no way of getting out on, you know, your own—especially with the income that I have, that is completely impossible” (p. 8).



Not only does domestic violence impact a survivor's ability to obtain and maintain housing, but housing instability worsens mental and physical health outcomes for domestic violence and sexual assault survivors. Rollins et al. (2012) found that the greater the risk "for housing instability, the more likely the abused woman reported symptoms consistent with PTSD, depression, reduced quality of life, and increased absence from work and/or school as well as hospital and emergency department use" (p. 637).

Homelessness itself is a risk factor for violence. According to a study of people experiencing homelessness, 32% of women, 27% of men, and 38% of people who are transgender reported either physical or sexual violence in the previous year (Kushel et al., 2003). Youth can be particularly vulnerable to domestic and sexual violence while experiencing homelessness, with 70% of homeless youth reporting experiencing some form of violence, 32% of which included rape (Kipke et al., 1997).

One Oregon-based advocate who was interviewed shared an experience working with a survivor to place her in a transitional housing program, as she was living in a tent on the street and had just been evicted from her prior campsite. The survivor was introducing her friend to the advocate so that she could also access help securing housing. Additionally, the friend of the survivor was seeking safety planning services for navigating domestic violence while living on the street. After this meeting between the survivor, her friend, and the advocate, the survivor told the advocate that she never identified as a survivor or victim of domestic or sexual violence, even though she was raped almost weekly for many months by multiple perpetrators. She only disclosed this experience to the advocate when helping her friend connect to services so her friend didn't feel like the violence was her fault. "I can't think of it as rape. It's just not something I can think about right now."

The above survivor experience highlights the dangerous reality of housing security. In fact,

for some populations, violence can be a constant. The risk for sexual violence for homeless women diagnosed with a mental illness is 97%, making sexual violence a "normative experience for this population" (Goodman, Fels & Glen, 2006).

With few safe options and multiple hurdles, many survivors choose to stay in or return to abusive relationships in order to maintain housing and some semblance of stability, or reduce risk of sexual assault endemic to the experience of homelessness, especially for vulnerable populations.

## STATE OF OREGON HOUSING ASSISTANCE FOR SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The domestic violence housing services system is often characterized as supporting survivors in moving through three phases: emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent housing. This section will describe these phases, related resources, and some of the challenges survivors face as they navigate the complex system of housing assistance.

**"You shouldn't have to be in a DV situation ever. You should have the choice and the ability to reach out. There should be a safety net in place, and I feel that we are failing at that... People shouldn't have to resort to staying in a tent with no lock."**

ADVOCATE

### EMERGENCY SHELTER

Individuals and families who need to leave their homes may try to access an emergency domestic violence shelter in their community. There are 30 domestic violence emergency shelters in Oregon (Oregon Department of Human Services (Oregon



DHS), 2016). Unlike homeless shelters, these emergency shelters provide domestic violence related advocacy, support services, and a confidential location.

Emergency shelters for survivors of domestic violence are also trained in the dynamics of domestic violence and the additional safety precautions needed when navigating the real danger posed by abusive partners, thus, it is critical that survivors with high-risk abusive partners have access to safe and confidential services. In 2015, 60 people in Oregon were murdered or committed suicide in domestic violence incidents. The highest risk of fatality occurs when a victim leaves, or attempts to leave, an abusive relationship. Thus, it is critical that emergency shelter is available to survivors of domestic violence.

Domestic violence specific emergency shelters can negotiate with neighbors and government to maintain a confidential location, so that the public does not know that victims are able to be found in a given location. These shelters partner closely with law enforcement for increased patrol frequency or an enhanced response to alarms. Domestic violence programs also have communication protocols and safety drills so that in the case of an active shooter or other security risk, people in the shelter can be secured or moved to safety. Programs often invest in facility infrastructure, including extra lighting, fencing or other security measures to deter intrusion by abusive partners. Abusive partners are known to sometimes hire private investigators or illegally track victims through bugs in their phone, online accounts, vehicle, or other belongings.

These extra support and safety measures are often crucial for the health and wellbeing of domestic violence survivors. Most survivors who reach out to advocates in the domestic and sexual violence services system are experiencing extreme violence, high levels of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and depression, and trauma-informed services provided by experienced advocates are essential (Rollins et al., 2012).

In fact, PTSD rates for survivors (more than 1 in 2) far outpace the PTSD rates of US veterans returning from war (1 in 5) (Golding, 1999).

Intimate partner violence can occur or escalate quickly, and people experiencing violence may need to flee suddenly. Furthermore, the potential for lethality increases exponentially when survivors leave their abusers. Crisis housing options are vital for many survivors seeking to leave abuse and get safe.

Domestic violence support services provided at an emergency shelter can help survivors regain



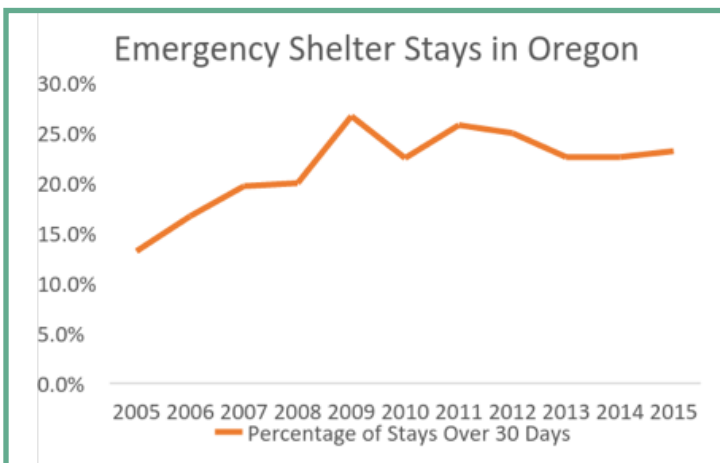
**In 2016, Bradley Angle provided advocacy services to Ellen,\* a survivor with impaired mobility who was fleeing a violent household with her three children. Two of her children also experienced physical and mental challenges. She was attempting to get her degree, but her financial aid and social security income were not enough to afford housing on her own. Ellen and her children slept in her car for two months before they were able to access shelter. With a negative rental history due to domestic violence and a criminal history for minor offences, affordable housing has remained out of reach, despite ardent advocacy.**

**\* The survivor's name has been changed to protect her identity.**



safety and begin the healing journey. For survivors of such trauma, feeling safe is often a critical first step in being able to regain one's life and seek long-term housing solutions. In fact, the majority of survivors who go through emergency shelter report feeling safer, more hopeful, and having more safety strategies at their disposal after their shelter stay (Sullivan, 2016).

Survivors often enter an emergency shelter with little or no financial resources. They have fled their home, often with few belongings and the weight of associated trauma. At shelter they benefit from trained advocates who help them navigate emotional, financial, legal and practical challenges in moving toward self-sufficiency.



Unfortunately, ***the need for emergency domestic violence shelter beds is far greater than the space available.*** Some shelter programs have waitlists and others use screening procedures to create equitable access for those most in need.

In 2015, **10,196** requests for shelter made by adult survivors in Oregon could not be met (Oregon DHS, 2016). While emergency shelter stays are intended to last no more than 30-60 days, typical stays have increased dramatically because many survivors have nowhere safe to go from shelter. In 2005, only 13.9% of emergency shelter stays exceeded 30 days. In 2009, the number climbed to 26.9%, and it has not gone below 22% since. Emergency shelter was meant as a safe place to escape the violence at home, a place to weather the immediate crisis, a brief

**In 2015, 10,196 requests for shelter made by adult survivors in Oregon could not be met.**

stop on the way to a new life. But shelter no longer functions as a stop gap.

With significant barriers and few options for safe long-term housing, survivors are staying longer at emergency shelters or returning to their abusers at alarming rates.

Given the dearth of emergency shelter space, if a survivor needs to leave their home to stay safe, domestic violence programs may discuss alternate possibilities. These last-ditch options may include motel vouchers, homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters in other areas, staying with family or friends, or camping. Many of these choices are not confidential and do not provide domestic violence specific support services; and some place survivors at ongoing risk.

### TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Transitional housing refers to intermediary housing meant to fill the gap between emergency services and permanent housing. Some domestic violence programs do not provide emergency shelter, instead focusing primarily on the transitional phase in the survivor's journey. There are multiple models of transitional housing that can generally be classified as either site-based housing or temporary rental subsidy (Baker et al., 2010). Domestic violence programs in Oregon operate and/or utilize both types.

#### SITE-BASED TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Some domestic violence programs own or lease homes or apartment buildings in which they provide transitional housing for survivors. This housing typically costs a percentage of the survivor's income, and supportive services are often provided in addition to housing. In other situations, domestic violence programs may partner with site-



**Limited housing options jeopardized the safety of survivors and their children. As Kelly explained: ‘They [the kids] don’t feel safe here anymore. They want to move too. But the whole thing is, it’s all financial, everything’s financial. If I had the money to do so, I would be gone, you know, that’s one of the things you lose is choices and we either have to move to somewhere less, in a bad neighborhood, or we have to stay where we are.’**

**CLOUGH ET AL. (2014)**

based transitional housing that isn’t DV-specific, and provide accompanying support services to augment what the housing program offers. A benefit of site-based transitional housing is that barriers to entry are typically lower, because the social service agency is the landlord and typically has more lenient standards for what they will accept regarding an applicant’s history (evictions, debt, credit issues, minor criminal charges, etc). A downside of site-based transitional housing is that it is limited to the number of physical units currently available, whereas a rental subsidy can be used in a more flexible array of units.

### *RENTAL SUBSIDY*

Domestic violence programs also rely on temporary rental subsidies in order to house survivors. As the barriers to permanent affordable housing increase, advocates frequently look to multiple sources to assist survivors with the transition period. Some of these come directly through the program and others through third parties such as a housing authority or other agency.

In order to provide rental assistance to as many survivors as possible, programs may place limitations on the percentage of rent they will assist with, the amount of time they will provide the subsidy, and/or pay a decreasing amount

of the rent over time. Programs may require participation in advocacy services as a condition of continued housing or financial subsidy.

Subsidies from third party agencies include: public housing owned by a local housing authority, project-based vouchers tied to specific units, and rent assistance funds that are not tied to a specific unit. Section 8 housing is one of the most widely used housing subsidies, and can be voucher or site-based. Voucher-based Section 8 often requires an applicant to compete in the fair market and it can be challenging to find landlords who accept the voucher. Site-based Section 8 is not confidential which presents safety risks for many survivors. Each of these programs is difficult to access and survivors can spend years on waiting lists.

### **TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS (TA-DVS)**

The TA-DVS grant provides a stipend of \$1,200 to be used by domestic violence survivors and their families within 90 days of issue. The amount of this and other government issued grants largely remains static rather than keeping up with cost of living; the amount of TA-DVS has not increased since the mid-90s, while housing costs have soared throughout Oregon. Adjusted for inflation alone, if enacted today, the equivalent amount would be a stipend of \$1,836 in 2016 dollars.

However, accounting for inflation is insufficient when considering that in some markets the cost of housing has far outpaced inflation. Oregon is currently ranked 18th in the nation for most expensive housing, with some communities facing especially difficult markets. Portland is well-known for rising housing costs, with rents in the four-county region having increased 63 percent over the last ten years, while for-sale prices are up 16 percent (Beebe, 2016). However, other areas of the state are just as challenged, even in rural areas. In the Bend area, Hood River, Tillamook and Lincoln counties, and other areas, rental vacancy rents are below 1%, even more challenging than the Portland rental market (Bulletin, 2016, Hammill, 2015).





This grant is often used for procuring housing (paying initial rental costs such as first/last/ deposit), transportation, or emergency housing in a motel when shelter space is unavailable. Because this program is funded by TANF, only survivors meeting stringent income restrictions with dependent children are eligible, thus excluding often-overlooked groups such as elders and people without children. To qualify for this program, a survivor can make no more than \$616 a month, with two children.

Given the high cost of housing and lack of affordable housing stock, TA-DVS grants frequently expire before survivors can find suitable housing they will be able to afford on their own after the one-time grant payment. This difficulty is compounded by the illegal discrimination TA-DVS recipients and domestic violence survivors often face from landlords.

## PERMANENT, SAFE HOUSING

Safe, permanent housing is frequently the main goal for survivors of domestic violence who have reached out to the domestic violence services system. It has become more and more difficult to secure permanent housing within the timeframe of an emergency shelter stay or during the average duration of domestic violence advocacy services, necessitating long-term case management to achieve successful placement. Unfortunately, currently there are no public funding sources for long-term case management for survivors of domestic violence.

In order to succeed in placing survivors in permanent safe housing, programs often continue services beyond the scope for which they were

**19 of the 36 counties in Oregon do not have enough affordable housing to meet the need.**

OREGON HOUSING AND  
COMMUNITY SERVICES (OHCS)

**“I don’t like to rent to black people, single mothers, Section 8, public assistance...”**

originally intended, extending emergency shelter stays and providing ongoing support. With over 10,000 unmet requests for domestic violence shelter in Oregon, annually, this poses a severe public health threat. Having emergency shelter beds available are critical to the health and safety of those survivors whose situations pose a high risk of danger or lethality.

Above and beyond the challenges inherent in beginning to heal from trauma, survivors often face multiple barriers in their efforts to gain access to permanent affordable housing.

While the housing crisis in Portland has been well-documented and voters passed a \$258 million bond in 2016 to help fill the gaps (Redden, 2016; Schmidt, 2016), lack of affordable housing is an urgent issue all across the state. According to a May 10, 2016 report utilizing data collected and compiled by Oregon Housing and Community Services, the counties with highest unmet need for affordable housing units are Benton County (only 21.8% of need met), Lake County (35.9% of need met), Sherman County (38.2% of need met), and Klamath County (44.7% of need met) (OHCS, 2016).

In addition to a severe lack of housing stock, Oregon maintains rental policy that perpetuates other significant barriers for survivors. Policies that favor landlords and unfairly penalize renters (including survivors) include the right to evict tenants with no cause and the prohibition of local rent control mechanisms. High demand for units enables landlords to be selective, putting survivors with histories of debt, criminalization, and substance use at a severe disadvantage.

Additionally, survivors may face increased risk for sexual harassment and assault by property





owners and managers, themselves. One study found that 58% of rape crisis centers and legal services providers had received at least one report from a tenant who was sexually assaulted by a landlord, property manager, or property owner (Keeley, 2006).

Many survivors experience discrimination in housing based on aspects of their identities, in addition to the barriers they experience due to domestic violence itself. Programs report additional challenges to housing access for African American, Native, transgender, lesbian/gay/bisexual/queer, immigrant, undocumented, disabled, limited English-speaking, and older adult survivors. Racist and discriminatory practices among landlords severely limit housing options for these groups. Participants working in tribal communities also reported high rates of racial discrimination that inhibit a survivor's ability to secure housing. These barriers and more are compounded for undocumented survivors, as the landlord can manipulate language barriers and threats of deportation.

According to the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) (2016), there are no federal protections prohibiting discrimination in private sector housing based on sexual orientation or gender identity, hence 11% of LGBTQ individuals experience discrimination when renting an apartment or buying a home nationally. Transgender people, particularly trans women, face even more concentrated discrimination: 1 in 10 trans people report being evicted from their homes because of their gender identity (NCAVP, 2016). However, no cause evictions and other forms of housing discrimination are hardly limited to a single demographic, although certain communities are demonstrably more vulnerable due to racism, transphobia, and other discrimination.



#### **IDENTITY-BASED HOUSING DISCRIMINATION: SURVIVOR EXPERIENCE**

**An advocate from an Oregon-based program shared the story of Sam,\* a single two-spirit Native-American survivor of domestic violence within a same-gender relationship, who experienced discrimination on multiple levels on her path to safe, permanent housing. After several negative experiences with law enforcement, she stopped calling the police when her partner was endangering her. She was only referred to tribal advocacy services after being treated at a local clinic and then mental health services for suicidal thoughts. With no emergency shelter on the reservation, she went to a shelter in another area when she was evicted from her home. At the shelter, she experienced discrimination based on her gender identity and ethnicity. She left to a hotel with a voucher and her abuser found her. She fled to another emergency shelter farther from her home, her social ties, and her community. After a 45-day stay at the shelter and apartments in two different counties and with few transportation options, she finally found permanent housing closer to her community.**

**\*The survivor's name has been changed to protect her identity.**



## PROMISING PRACTICES

Advocates, programs, and survivors have consistently found creative solutions to the ever-increasing challenge of safe, affordable housing. Attempts to counter the devastating cycle of housing insecurity include housing-related advocacy, flexible funding, and the Housing First model, also referred to as rapid re-housing.



### CREATIVE AND STRATEGIC ADAPTATIONS TO AN UNACCEPTABLE SITUATION

“After Jane left her abuser she stayed with friends and family for brief periods of time to lessen the likelihood they would refuse to accommodate her and her children if she needed a place to stay later. Jane explained: ‘I was living out of my car and I had the big Rubbermaid totes. I had one for my daughter’s clothes, one for my son’s clothes, one for my clothes, and one for all our socks and underwear. And, I would have some select toys in my car that we would take with us everywhere. We lived in about five different places so that’s why I had to have those tubs; because it wasn’t like we were staying in any one place. We would stay somewhere maybe for a couple of days, stay somewhere else for a week.’”

CLOUGH ET AL. (2014)

## PREVENTION THROUGH INTERVENTION

In response to the severe shortage of affordable housing options, many domestic violence programs have shifted their approach from an emphasis on leaving abuse toward the possibility of helping the survivor remain in housing. This

**“Flexible funding allowed one survivor to keep her car and she was employed and still in her home after that assistance. “...without my car it would be really, really difficult to try to take my kid to daycare and then try to go from daycare and get to work and repeat [at the end of the day].. it would be so impossible.”**

may work in situations where the abusive person has moved, been arrested, or is otherwise not cohabiting with the survivor. In these situations, support from an advocacy program and/or flexible funding can make a significant difference in the survivor’s ability to remain housed.

Domestic violence agencies have also increased provision of economic empowerment advocacy and eviction prevention work, including classes, one-on-one work to repair credit, and accommodation requests to landlords. Advocates can accomplish volumes simply by advocating on the survivor’s behalf and maintaining collaborative relationships with landlords and community partners.

Restrictions imposed on housing funding by either the program or the government source limit the ways and durations in which housing subsidies can be used. Domestic violence programs are increasingly seeing the benefit of flexible funding that can be used in a variety of ways to prevent survivors from having to move. Sullivan et al. (2016) found that while domestic violence survivors most commonly used flexible funds for costs directly related to housing, such as utilities, security deposits, and back rent, they also used funds for more indirect needs such as transportation, childcare, and furniture. Overall, this same study found that 94% of the survivors who requested flexible funds remained housed six months after the funding was received.

Advocates can also provide transportation by their own means or utilize flexible funding dollars for cab vouchers, helping survivors attend necessary



meetings, shelter, and new housing sites. Because funding is rarely available for these sorts of services in grants, programs have procured funding from nontraditional sources, and utilize community partnerships to compensate for lack of resources. Through inter-advocacy with these organizations, advocates can make referrals for their clients in order to bridge gaps in their own services and funding requirements.

Domestic violence agency models that do not revolve around housing have also emerged. One-stop centers allow a survivor access to services provided by multiple organizations in the same location, reducing transportation time and cost. Non-housing based agency models rely extensively on collaboration and relationship-building with partners who do provide housing, while the domestic violence program provides domestic violence-specific support so crucial to long-term success, often provided through mobile advocacy or home visits. Culturally-specific programs often offer many services similar to those above while addressing barriers specific to the populations they serve. For example, culturally specific programs serving Native Americans may be adept at navigating tribal systems and take a holistic approach to serving survivors that includes body, mind, and spirit. Programs serving immigrant and refugee communities have a depth of knowledge regarding immigration, language proficiency, and the specific concerns of those populations.

## HOUSING FIRST

One of the most prominent models for shifting away from site-based emergency or transitional housing is the Housing First model. Housing First recognizes the difficulty of accessing emergency shelter and transitional housing services and instead seeks to provide homeless individuals with immediate permanent housing. However, this approach is dependent on the availability of affordable housing in a given community, and is not effective in more challenging housing markets.

Reversing an earlier established model of housing placement, Housing First does not require that homeless individuals complete programs, conform

### ADVOCACY CAN HELP

Advocacy with landlords often involves advocates educating landlords on survivors' rights and holding them accountable for upholding such rights. Ana's\* story is a strong example. Ana is a survivor who experiences physical, mental, and developmental impairments and utilizes a wheelchair to get around. In violation of a restraining order, her abuser continued to break into her house. The landlord, reluctant to deal with Ana's security issues and hoping to gain a tenant who could pay more, issued her a 14-day eviction notice. Not only was this prescribed time period to vacate illegal, but Ana's apartment also had numerous health and safety concerns: the heat wasn't working (despite it being mid-December), the oven did not work, and the plumbing had serious problems. Obviously feeling he could take advantage of Ana's circumstances, the landlord also demanded that she pay for a storage unit. Once the unit was acquired, he began moving her things out to make room for new tenants. Ana connected with an advocate at the YWCA who contacted the landlord on her behalf. The advocate informed the landlord of legal protections for survivors and explained that the YWCA would connect Ana with legal representation if the eviction went through. With this twenty-minute phone call, the survivor's apartment was soon repaired and her lease reinstated. \*The survivor's name has been changed to protect her identity.

to prerequisites, or participate in prescribed services before qualifying for housing assistance. Rather, the philosophy that informs this model is the recognition that services addressing underlying causes of homelessness, such as domestic violence, are more successful when an individual is not experiencing the crisis of homelessness itself. In fact, HUD recognizes documented studies that report improvements in health, mental health, substance use, and employment as a result of promptly obtaining permanent housing.



## SEVEN PRIORITIES FOR URGENT ACTION

All of these priorities require an increase in funding along with programmatic, legislative, and/or regulatory changes.

- Affordable housing stock is desperately needed across Oregon. Promising models, like Housing First, are dependent on the availability of affordable housing. In addition to housing stock, legislative changes such as lifting the ban on rent control and addressing inclusionary zoning should be pursued.
- Transitional housing can help fill the gap between emergency services and long-term permanent housing, and is critically needed to free up emergency shelter space for high fatality risk situations. We request that the legislature consider increased investments in the Emergency Housing Assistance and State Homeless Assistance Program.
- While housing programs struggle to increase capacity, equipping survivors to individually navigate a complex and expensive housing market is critical to address immediate crisis needs. Increase funding for TA-DVS that supports interim solutions by and for individual survivors in their diverse communities. Increase the dollar limits on these resources along with expanding the populations eligible for each type of subsidy. Limits on the amount given to each individual should be revised to reflect actual costs of housing and costs of living more broadly. The ceiling on TA-DVS grants has not been increased since the mid-1990s.
- Specialized housing programs are needed, that include accessible units, units that allow pets, units for large families and for single people. There is also a need for housing that includes supportive services for tenants experiencing domestic violence, substance use, health and/or mental health issues. Increase culturally-specific services offered to tenants.
- Flexible resources should be increased so that domestic and sexual violence service providers and emergency shelters can increase their capacity. One such fund, the Oregon Domestic & Sexual Violence Services fund, though the Department of Justice, has long lagged behind the need, but nonetheless is critical to creating life-saving pathways for survivors. One of the few non-restricted grants, programs use these funds to keep the lights and utilities paid for at the shelters, phones ringing on the Hotline and trained advocates on staff to answer those calls. This fund has not been increased in several years: we are asking the Legislature to allocate \$10M to this fund.
- Education and collaboration between domestic violence programs and other housing systems should be increased. This includes training and education of landlords about legal protections and rights for survivors of domestic violence. Develop relationships with landlords to allow flexibility regarding criminal, credit, and rental histories. Local housing authorities, landlords, and other housing programs need to understand the barriers specific to domestic violence. Survivors should be at the center of housing policy reform. Voices from the domestic violence system need to be at the table for housing policy decisions.
- Counter discrimination faced by survivors at all phases of the housing process. Make sure that forms and documents are available in multiple languages. Examine policies and practices utilized by domestic violence agencies, housing agencies, and landlords through an equity lens. Hold landlords and other housing providers accountable for violating existing anti-discrimination laws. Advocate for additional protections for those not currently included. Increase funding for civil legal services.



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