

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Submitted by the DV/AH Committee of the
Fairfax County Commission for Women



APPROVED BY THE FAIRFAX COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN JANUARY 14, 2013

COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fairfax County Commission for Women (CFW) has been working since fall 2010 to develop a set of recommendations on how to increase safe, affordable housing options for Domestic Violence Survivors in the County. The objective was to present a “white paper” to the Board of Supervisors by spring 2013.

The CFW, through its Domestic Violence/Affordable Housing Committee, heard from a number of organizations, including government, faith-based and non-profit organizations that are in a position to assist DV Survivors with their housing needs. Further, the committee conducted a dialogue event with almost 50 individuals representing more than 25 organizations in early October, 2012.

There is a clear link between domestic violence and homelessness. The number of DV Survivors who are homeless is increasing at an alarming rate. Yet, it is also clear that many victims choose to return to their abusers because of a lack of viable housing alternatives. Moving forward, the needs of this group must be given priority in County planning.

To that end, the CFW is recommending the following actions to be implemented as quickly as possible:

1. Conduct a county-wide summit to elevate the priority of domestic violence “survivor-first” housing opportunities.
2. Immediately develop a blueprint for expanding capacity of “survivor-first” housing options.
 - a. Initiate planning to expand capacity that fits County needs.
 - b. Repurpose Community Housing Resource Program (CHRP) units for “survivor-first” transitional housing.
 - c. Assure that the needs of DV Survivors are prioritized in administering current housing programs.
 - d. Increase emergency shelter capacity for DV Survivors by a minimum of 42 beds.
3. Institute cross-communication and cross training measures.
 - a. Increase avenues of communication between County policy professionals in domestic violence and housing.
 - i. Add at least one domestic violence advocate to OPEH’s Governing Board.
 - ii. Include more domestic violence experts or professionals in the OPEH Housing Options Workgroup.
 - iii. Add at least one domestic violence advocate to the Redevelopment and Housing Authority.

- iv. Add a RHA representative to the DVPPCC.
- v. Include individuals with expertise in County housing programs on any DVPPCC subcommittee to address housing and domestic violence.
- b. Institute mandatory training for “first responders” and case managers.
 - i. OFWDSVS should develop and implement on an annual basis a training program for the Housing and Community Development case management unit, Housing Options Support Teams, Housing Locators, homeless shelter workers and Coordinated Services Planning employees assigned to family shelter intakes.
 - ii. OPEH, in conjunction with the Department of Housing and Community Development, should develop and implement an annual training program on housing services available to DV survivors for the victim services staff and housing specialists within the OFWDSVS.
- 4. Conduct a comprehensive review of the legal barriers to access to housing by DV Survivors.

We believe that County leadership, at the Board of Supervisor and County Executive level, must direct collective efforts to meet the needs of DV Survivors in Fairfax County. The Commission for Women would be pleased to assist and/or participate in moving the above recommendations to fruition.

INTRODUCTION

The Fairfax County Commission for Women (CFW) has been working since fall 2010 toward its strategic goal, to advise the Board of Supervisors (BOS) on how to increase safe, affordable housing options for Domestic Violence Survivors in the county. This goal was adopted at the CFW's September 2010 strategic planning meeting, after domestic violence and affordable housing were named two of the top concerns in the CFW's 2010 survey of constituents on issues facing women in Fairfax County.

Commissioners recognized that victims of domestic violence face unique physical and economic dangers, which often center on their need for safe, affordable housing. The objective was to present a "white paper" to the BOS by spring 2013.

From spring 2011 through early summer 2012, the CFW, through its Domestic Violence and Affordable Housing Committee (see Attachment A for a list of the committee members), heard from victim services professionals, housing and economic specialists, and domestic violence survivors, who graciously shared their knowledge at the CFW's monthly meetings. The CFW benefited from presentations by representatives of the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness, the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Office for Women & Domestic and Sexual Violence Services, Artemis House, the Women's Group of Mount Vernon, the Police Department's Victims Services Section, and the Office of the County Executive.

Next, the committee compiled relevant county statistics, and conducted a survey of emergency and transitional housing providers in the county. In September 2012, two committee members and the Liaison participated in a daylong workshop sponsored by the National Alliance to End Homelessness on rapid re-housing approaches for domestic violence services providers. The presentation, by Kris Billhardt, Director of the Home Free program in Portland Oregon, provided many insights into the issues and possible approaches to providing flexible, comprehensive housing services to domestic violence victims.

Finally, the committee organized a half-day dialogue event for public and private organizations interested in safe housing for victims of domestic violence in the county, which took place on October 1, 2012. The committee invited a variety of organizations, governmental, faith-based and nonprofits, who are in a position to improve conditions for victims of domestic violence struggling with housing issues, and who must work together in order to make significant improvements in the options available to victims of domestic violence and their children. Please see Attachment B for a description of the Dialogue, and a summary of the information presented to and gathered from participants.

The committee found that the link between domestic violence and homelessness is clear and multifaceted. Many victims are trapped in abusive living situations because of a lack of safe, affordable housing alternatives. At the same time, escaping from an abusive situation is a primary cause of homelessness and precarious housing. For those who do leave, a significant number conclude that their best option is to return to living with their abusers.

Since they are a large and growing part of the homeless population, the flexibility and ongoing special assistance this group requires should be prioritized in future plans. While more housing resources of every type are a significant need, integrating the knowledge and actions of County agencies, as well as nonprofit providers, will be crucial in reducing the amount of domestic violence and homelessness in the county. County leadership could, as one Dialogue discussion group suggested, be the single most effective way to bring about the collective action needed to meet the needs of domestic violence victims in Fairfax County.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. ELEVATE THE PRIORITY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE “SURVIVOR-FIRST” HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES IN FAIRFAX COUNTY THROUGH A COUNTY-WIDE SUMMIT

As the existence of the Domestic Violence Prevention, Policy and Coordinating Council (DVPPCC), the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness (OPEH) and the Office for Women & Domestic and Sexual Violence Services (OFWDSVS) demonstrate, both homelessness and domestic violence are human service priorities of the Board of Supervisors and Fairfax County's past progressiveness in these two areas cannot be denied. Nonetheless, we found significant frustration and dissatisfaction with the responsiveness to the unique issues that need to be addressed to prevent and end homelessness of Domestic Violence Survivors (DV Survivors). OPEH's 'Housing First' successes are many and yet DV Survivors are the largest and a growing segment of the homeless population whose housing needs remain unmet.

To the credit of both OPEH and OFWDSVS, efforts to integrate domestic violence concerns with the County housing programs have been made. However, the programs remain parallel or “siloeed” and the improvements have been insufficiently systemic. Each entity has a different culture and focus. OPEH's mission is focused on housing and they are concerned with the entire homeless population. The concern of OFWDSVS is providing a “package” of housing and other services to a subset of the homeless population. Clearly, the current statistics support the conclusion that those who suffer from this disconnect are DV Survivors.

The CFW has serious concerns that the county's homelessness and domestic violence systems will remain essentially parallel without a change in direction. This change needs to emanate from the BOS in order to mobilize county government and the community. Such changes are difficult to achieve at the agency level, particularly if they involve a modification of mission or reorganization. Shifts are best jump-started from the apex of leadership.

In recent years, there has been considerable innovation in ways to address the intersection of domestic violence and housing. For example, Portland's Home Free Program, a Rapid Re-Housing program focused exclusively on DV Survivors, expanded but did not replace that community's menu of housing options. CFW's October 1, 2012 Dialogue featured the Executive Director of the District Alliance for Safe Housing (DASH), which has successfully created a housing program that integrates safety, training and counseling with responsibility and independence. These are just two examples of many innovative programs across the country from New York City to San Diego.

In 2006, through the Summit to End Homelessness, the BOS successfully changed the direction of the County on homelessness policy. The Summit successfully raised awareness, provided information from experts across the country, mobilized community support and moved everyone forward on a concrete and considered plan. The CFW recommends that a similar Summit be held by the BOS on the intersection of domestic violence and housing and, indeed, believes such a Summit is a crucial first step to meeting Fairfax County's goal of preventing and ending homelessness. As summarized by Kris Billhardt, director of Portland's Home Free program, we cannot end homelessness without addressing domestic violence, and we cannot end domestic violence without addressing homelessness. These are intertwined, not parallel, issues and should be addressed as such.

2. IMMEDIATELY DEVELOP A BLUEPRINT FOR EXPANDING CAPACITY OF "SURVIVOR-FIRST" HOUSING OPTIONS

A. Initiate Planning To Expand Capacity That Fits County Needs

A uniform concern of those providing input to CFW was the lack of housing capacity for DV Survivors in Fairfax County at all housing need levels: emergency shelter, transitional and permanent housing. Moreover, for DV Survivors, the need for housing cannot be isolated from the need for tailored, Survivor-centered services. For example, while Portland's Home Free program closely followed a Rapid Re-Housing model, it folded in "mobile" counseling services and incorporated safety planning.

The Summit, discussed above, will provide the baseline information needed to develop a long-term plan to increase capacity of "Survivor-First" Housing Options. Currently, the County has stellar private and public emergency shelter, transitional and permanent supportive housing programs. In the CFW's view, the goal should be to supplement and not supplant these programs, and to implement innovations that fit the needs of Fairfax County. For example, Home Free's program was primarily based on "scattered" housing, while DASH relied primarily on site-specific housing. The issue, however, is what is the best model for expanding housing capacity for DV Survivors in Fairfax County. Thus, this report does not make specific recommendations with regard to a plan, but only recommends the initiation of long-term planning for expanding capacity.

B. Repurpose CHRP Units for Survivor-First Transitional Housing

Many DV Survivors require the support that a transitional housing program can provide. A repeated refrain from participants at the Dialogue was that Housing First or Rapid Re-Housing programs, since they are focused on clients' housing needs, do not meet the extensive needs of many DV Survivors and, as a result, might produce the unintended consequence of failing to address the victimization that is a primary cause of their struggles to maintain permanent housing. At the same time, survivors are encouraged to exit from Artemis House, the County's 24-hour crisis shelter for victims of domestic violence, within 45 days. This is insufficient time for

life skill development, let alone time to deal with the emotional and physical effects of trauma. This is a particular concern for Survivors of diverse cultural backgrounds, who may have added layers of legal and coping concerns.

CFW was informed by Dialogue participants of the potential availability for repurposing of housing units in the Community Housing Resource Program (CHRP). There are 32 units, which are managed by County partners Reston Interfaith, United Community Ministries and Northern Virginia Family Service. Given the current needs for DV Survivor housing, CFW believes that repurposing CHRP units as transitional housing for the needs of this special population would assist OPEH in meeting its homelessness goals, while assuring that Survivors continue to have access to appropriate services and support.

C. Assure that the Needs of Domestic Violence Survivors Are Prioritized in Administering Current Housing Programs

Great strides have been made by both the County's domestic violence and housing programs to coordinate the access to housing services by DV Survivors. However, the CFW sees a need for 1) domestic violence screening and referral to OFWDSVS by all housing programs; 2) resources and training to support that referral system; and 3) greater prioritization of DV Survivors in the provision of housing services.

Welcome advances have recently been made in screening for domestic violence by housing programs and prioritizing Survivors for housing assistance in the County. A routine County-wide "referral" system must be established through which all those who indicate they are fleeing abusive domestic situations are connected with OFWDSVS for services, including longer-term housing. This would require, at the least, that intake employees and case managers receive sufficient training to be able to screen effectively and make good use of referral resources (see Section 3 below). Private providers and contractors would be included in this mandate to the extent possible.

Fairfax County Homeless Shelters and other housing programs are focused on housing; these programs were not designed and not intended to address the needs of DV Survivors. The latter is the responsibility of OFWDSVS and, given that agency's expertise, we believe that is where the responsibility should remain housed. OFWDSVS has one Economic and Housing Specialist to assist with referrals, and this single staff person has multiple responsibilities. OFWDSVS needs more housing specialists and more resources for them to utilize to assist Survivors.

At the outset of its inquiries, CFW was disturbed to learn that housing for DV Survivors is not prioritized across all housing programs' services (e.g., shelter space, vouchers, etc.). To the extent that there is current legal authority for the County to include DV Survivors as a priority in administering these housing services, CFW recommends that program priority changes be

made as soon as administratively possible. Any statutory impediments to making these changes should be identified and forwarded for consideration by the DVPPCC (see Section 4 below).

D. Increase Emergency Shelter Capacity for Domestic Violence Survivors

There is a desperate need for an increase in County emergency domestic violence shelter capacity. CFW recommends that BOS adopt as a goal that shelter be increased by a minimum of 42 beds.

Currently, Artemis House is the only County emergency shelter for Domestic Violence Survivors and the only such shelter available 24/7. Its capacity is 34 beds. The average household size served is 2.34. Artemis House is a 45-day program; the average stay (2012) is 41 days. In FY 2011, Artemis House turned away 158 households because of lack of capacity.

Using these available statistics, Fairfax County's current DV emergency shelter need is 15,159 bed nights or an additional 41.5 beds (15,159/365). We also recommend that consideration be given to multiple locations for this expanded capacity.

3. INSTITUTE CROSS-COMMUNICATION AND CROSS TRAINING MEASURES

A. Increase Avenues of Communication Between County Policy Professionals in Domestic Violence and Housing

An almost universal issue heard by CFW was that policy and administration of two inextricably intertwined systems, domestic violence and housing, are being developed without adequate "cross-pollination." The "silo" problem in public administration is not novel, but is clearly evident in the County's domestic violence and housing programs. As discussed above, it is a problem that CFW does not believe is capable of being resolved at the agency level or through incremental work-arounds. Instead, the policy perspective of those sitting on the DVPPCC, the OPEH Governing Board and the Redevelopment and Housing Authority needs to be expanded, and implementation of initiatives at the agency level need to be monitored and measured.

Fairfax County's policy-level boards in place to address domestic violence and housing include DVPPCC, the OPEH Governing Board and the Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RHA). An OPEH representative has been added to the DVPPCC. Domestic Violence advocates have no separate voice on the OPEH Governing Board or the RHA. Domestic violence expertise also is under-represented on the OPEH Housing Options Workgroup.

Accordingly, CFW recommends the following:

- i. At least one Domestic Violence advocate be added to OPEH's Governing Board.
- ii. At least one Domestic Violence advocate be added to the RHA.

- iii. At least one representative of RHA be added to the DVPPCC.
- iv. The OPEH Housing Options Workgroup should include more domestic violence experts or professionals.
- v. Should DVPPCC establish a committee to address housing and domestic violence, its membership should include individuals with expertise in the County housing programs.

B. Institute Mandatory Training for “First Responders” and Case Managers

As noted above, during efforts to find housing, a Domestic Violence Survivor may not disclose that an abusive home environment is prompting the call, or may not indicate imminent danger the survivor is facing. Training in identifying DV Survivors for the County’s housing responders is imperative. Increasing the likelihood that DV Survivors will have access to the most appropriate package of housing and services – that referrals will be successful – requires training, including sensitization of “first responders” to the great likelihood that they are dealing with a victim of trauma.

CFW recommends that OFWDSVS develop a training program for the Housing and Community Development case management unit, Housing Options Support Teams, Housing locators, homeless shelter workers and Coordinated Services Planning employees assigned to family shelter intakes. Training should be annual and mandatory.

CFW also recommends that OPEH, in conjunction with the Department of Housing and Community Development, develop a training program on housing services available to DV Survivors to the appropriate victim services staff and housing specialists within the OFWDSVS, which should also be annual and mandatory.

CFW believes there are additional benefits to development of routine, mandatory training programs. For example, it will serve to increase cross communication and understanding among those agencies that administer parts of the housing program impacting DV Survivors and will enhance the professional development of County employees, particularly if the training evolves into certification opportunities.

4. CONDUCT A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE LEGAL BARRIERS TO ACCESS TO HOUSING

During CFW’s October 1, 2012 Dialogue, the participants in each of the three facilitation groups listed the existence of legal barriers – regulations, statutes, budget authorization, etc. – adversely impacting access to housing for DV Survivors. Barriers were identified at the County, State and Federal levels.

The CFW recommends that DVPPCC, through an ad hoc or standing committee, survey the legal landscape, including outreach to interested organizations, and compile a comprehensive list of legal barriers at the County, State and Federal levels, and the modifications, amendments and/or reforms necessary to remove them. This listing should form the basis for DVPPCC recommendations to BOS for County-wide regulatory changes or for the BOS legislative agenda.

**ATTACHMENT A –
COMMISSION FOR WOMEN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND AFFORDABLE
HOUSING COMMITTEE**

Catherine Baum, Hunter Mill District

Lee Helfrich, Mason District

Emily McCoy, Lee District

Kari Warren, Mount Vernon District

ATTACHMENT B – THE DIALOGUE EVENT

The Domestic Violence and Affordable Housing Committee identified dozens of agencies, committees and organizations in the County actively working on or advocating for affordable housing resources for domestic violence victims. The committee emailed invitations to the dialogue, and personally contacted individuals and agencies that could make important contributions.

In all, 40 individuals from 24 different agencies participated in the Domestic Violence and Affordable Housing Dialogue. (See Attachment C for the list of participants.) The committee split the participants into three groups, which would each generate their priorities for the County, through discussion facilitated by members of the committee. The committee broke down the information they were hoping to generate into three discussion questions:

1. What do you believe are the most significant barriers to reducing homelessness for victims of domestic violence?
2. What actions/policies might be instituted to address those barriers, both in the short and long term?
3. Are there opportunities for collective action and, if so, what is the best approach/structure to put in place?

Before breaking into groups for discussion, participants were provided with some of the background information the committee had worked to collect. A handout provided some of the most salient statistical findings (see Attachment D). Overall, in Fairfax County, the rate of homelessness due to domestic violence is high and rising, and safe emergency shelter and transitional housing are far short of the need. Some statistical highlights:

- **52% of homeless families reported that they were homeless because of domestic violence** in the 2012 Fairfax-Falls Church Point in Time Survey of People Who are Homeless.
- **The number homeless due to domestic violence increased 23% between 2009 and 2012** while the number of persons in families who were homeless due to other causes decreased 37%.
- Of those whose destination when they left Artemis House was known, in FY 2012, **20% of women and 27% of children returned home with abusers.**
- There are only **34 domestic violence emergency shelter beds in Fairfax County, or 3.1 per 100,000 residents.** The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence reports that **the median bed rate for jurisdictions of the same general size as Fairfax County is 14 per 100,000.**

- In FY 2011, Artemis House, the County's **domestic violence emergency shelter, turned away 158 households**. Given that the average household size was 2.34 and the average length of stay was 41 days, the County was unable to meet the need for 15,159 shelter bed nights. Dividing this number by 365 yields a **shortage of 42 emergency shelter beds for victims of domestic violence**.
- In FY 2012, Mt. Vernon police station reported the highest number of arrests for assault on a family member, 328. Of the zip code areas with the highest number of such arrests, 4 of the top 7 are along the Route 1 corridor in South County.
- The committee's survey of transitional housing providers found that while 155 persons who experienced domestic violence were known to have been provided transitional housing in the County in FY2011, many programs do not inquire whether a client has experienced domestic violence. Therefore, we cannot quantify the unmet need or be certain that the relevant resources are being provided. The **CHRP Program** run by United Community Ministries in South County estimated that **50-75% of their transitional housing clients are victims of domestic violence**. And while these clients are receiving invaluable services targeted for self-sufficiency and moving towards permanent housing, they are not receiving the trauma-informed services essential for victims of domestic violence.

Dialogue Speakers

The committee also identified speakers who would help frame the issues for participants and provide them with some common ground. Sandra Bromley, County-wide Domestic Violence Coordinator with the Office for Women & Domestic and Sexual Violence Services, provided attendees with a summary of the County's coordinated response to domestic violence. Kari Warren, member of the Commission for Women and Executive Director of Beth El House, painted a picture of the experiences and continuing trauma that domestic violence survivors face.

The keynote speaker at the Domestic Violence and Affordable Housing Dialogue was Peg Hacskaylo, founder and Executive Director of the District Alliance for Safe Housing (DASH), an innovative, successful housing program for victims of domestic violence and their children in the District of Columbia. (See Attachment E for Ms. Hacskaylo's handout.) Ms. Hacskaylo described DASH's effectiveness, which is based on their victim-centered approach. DASH ensures all victims access to safe housing, regardless of issues such as substance abuse or the need to house extended family members. They offer different types of housing options and a wide range of services to address survivors' unique needs.

Ms. Hacskaylo pointed out that:

- Not only is a large proportion of homelessness attributable to domestic violence, homelessness in turn dramatically increases women's risk of sexual assault and abuse, as homeless women often live in highly unsafe conditions.

- Traditional domestic violence and homeless shelters may be unhelpful or even counterproductive for some victims who are seeking help. Because of location or shelter policies, they may separate victims from their social support systems. Staff at domestic violence shelters may not know how to help victims navigate complex housing systems, and non-domestic violence housing staff may not know how to help them deal with the danger and trauma they face.
- Victims most in need of assistance may have difficulty qualifying for traditional housing programs because of behaviors that are excluded, extended family members, a need for ongoing support, etc.

Barriers Identified

All three breakout discussion groups generated long lists of barriers to reducing homelessness for victims of domestic violence (see Attachment F for the complete lists). Yet only two barriers were mentioned by all three groups:

1. Lack of affordable housing
2. Knowledge of available services

Two of the groups mentioned each of the following barriers:

- Coordination, communication, breaking down silos between agencies and organizations
- Waiting list and requirements for shelter & housing programs
- Personal finances, jobs, credit
- Responses to “coexisting conditions” such as substance abuse, mental health issues

Actions and Policies to Address the Barriers

See Attachment G for the complete list of groups’ actions and policies. Clearly the development of more housing of all types was a top priority, as were identifying and overcoming legal barriers and developing rewards such as tax breaks to help open up housing options for survivors. As participants identified, it will be important to have businesses, particularly landlords, involved as partners. There was consistent opinion that the County and private housing and services providers should challenge themselves to reduce or eliminate restrictions on qualification for services, for example substance abuse and mental health issues, the fact that the victim has already received services, and whether there is imminent danger. Finally, efforts to provide opportunities to improve the ability of survivors to make and manage money was a priority, though not of the highest order.

Collective Actions and Structures

One of the three groups did not get to the third question during the discussion. Another group had only one recommendation: “persuade the Board of Supervisors or a champion(s) on the Board of Supervisors to support a public/private effort to develop a formal county-wide response

or call to action on the dv/homelessness issue.” The top collective priority of the third group is somewhat similar: advocacy for more housing and attention to dv within the housing system. The other two top picks for the final group were to provide a more coordinated response between victim advocates and housing providers, with victim needs being central, and to develop private funding for emergency and transitional housing.

ATTACHMENT C: PARTICIPANT LIST

COMMISSION FOR WOMEN DIALOGUE, OCTOBER 1, 2012

Barnett, Tom	Program Manager	Office to Prevent and End Homelessness
Baum, Cathy	Commissioner, Hunter Mill District	Commission for Women
Boysko, Jennifer	Legislative Aide	Office of Supervisor John Foust
Bromley, Sandra	County-wide DV Coordinator	Domestic Violence Action Center
Carroll, Ramona	Community Developer	Neighborhood & Community Services
Cullers, Vanessa	Econ. & Housing Specialist	OFW&DSVS
Dailey, Cyndy	Director, Multicultural	Northern Virginia Family Services
Davies, Chris	Counseling Supervisor	OFW&DSVS
Driscoll, Kathleen		Office of Supervisor Hudgins
Edwards, Amanda	Volunteer	OFW&DSVS
Ekeagwu, C J	Bridge Program	United Community Ministries
Fayez, Razan	Attorney	Fayez & Khalil Associates
Fernandez, Ina	Director	OFW&DSVS
Goodmote, Laly	Director	Artemis House
Groat, Lisa	Social Worker	Ayuda
Guerra, Flavia	Social Services Program Mgr.	Tahirih Justice Center
Hacskaylo, Peg	Executive Director	District Alliance for Safe Housing
Harris, Laura	Unit Director	Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court
Hassingier, Cathy	Executive Director	Bethany House
Helein, Judy		League of Women Voters
Helfrich, Lee	Commissioner, Mason District	Commission for Women
Hemenway, Sondra	Commissioner	Commission for Women
Hill, Shak	Personal Finance Representative	Allstate

Hollis, Caitlin	Journeys Case Mgr.	United Community Ministries
Jacobs, Mara	Substance Abuse Counselor	Alcohol & Drug Services
James, Inga	Interim Exec. Director	Habitat for Humanity of Northern Virginia
Jew, Jeanie F.	Commission Chair	Commission for Women
Jiwa, Salima	Children's Services Coordinator	OFW&DSVS
Juhel, Catherine	Counselor	FAITH Social Services
Kelmelis, Kathleen	Program Manager	OFW&DSVS
Maier, Wolfgang	Missions Coordinator	Heritage Presbyterian Church
McCoy, Emily	Commissioner, Lee District	Commission for Women
McGill, Amanda	Program Manager	Office to Prevent and End Homelessness
Medina, Allison	Domestic Violence Program Manager	The Women's Center
Meyer, Joe	Deputy Exec. Dir.	Shelter House
Mueller, Michelle	Liaison	Commission for Women
Steene, Shannon	Executive Director	Good Shepherd Housing
Tenorio, Amanda	Victim Advocate	Fort Myer
Walker, Brandi	Social Services Associate	Tahirih Justice Center
Warren, Kari	Commissioner, Mt. Vernon District	Commission for Women

ATTACHMENT D - FAIRFAX COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING DIALOGUE

October 1, 2012

Fairfax County Statistics

Homelessness

In the 2012 Fairfax-Falls Church Community Point in Time Count of People Who are Homeless, 52% of homeless families reported that they were homeless because of domestic violence. While the number of persons in families who were homeless due to reasons other than domestic violence decreased 37% between 2009 and 2012, the number of persons in families homeless due to domestic violence increased 23% in the same period.

Emergency Domestic Violence Shelter

- Of those whose destination when they left shelter is known, 20% of women and 27% of children returned home with abusers
- 158 persons were turned away in FY 2011
- Beds: 34, 3.1 per 100,000 residents

Domestic Violence Shelter

- Bethany House reports that 94 persons received shelter (39 adults, 55 children) in FY 2012
- 370 persons were turned away
- Beds: 25

Homeless shelter beds in Fairfax County: 400

Transitional Housing

A total of 155 transitional housing clients known to have experienced domestic violence were served in Fairfax County in FY 2011 by Alternative House, Beth El House, Christian Relief Services, Family Pass, Friends of Guest House, Novaco and UCM Journeys.

Hotline Calls

- 891 domestic violence calls to the county hotline in FY 2012, up 23% since 2009
- 1,605 domestic violence hotline calls to Artemis House in FY2012, up 10% since 2009

Police response

- Fairfax County Police report 6,340 domestic dispute calls in FY 2012, and 1,796 arrests for Assault on a Family Member
- 1,677 domestic violence victims were assisted by FCPD Victim Services Section in 2010

National Studies

Lack of safe, affordable housing options keeps victims in abusive situations

- 46% of homeless women reported that they had previously stayed in an abusive relationship because they lacked a housing alternative. (Wilder Research Center, Homeless in Minnesota, 2003)
- 31% of domestic violence victims who left their abusers returned because of housing issues. (Melbin, Sullivan and Cain, 2003)
- The risk of severe violence and murder is 3.64 times greater when a victim attempts to end an abusive relationship. If the abuser is highly controlling, the risk is 5.52 times greater. (Campbell 2003)


Abuse leads to homelessness due to limited housing options

- 38% of women who separated from their abusers became homeless immediately. Another 25% had to relocate within the first year due to financial problems or continued harassment. (Baker, Cook and Norris, 2003)
- 28% of housing denials by landlords and 11% of evictions resulted from domestic violence against the tenant. (National Center on Law and Poverty and NNEDV, 2007)

Emergency shelter unmet need

- In its national single-day census of domestic violence service providers in 2009, the National Network to End Domestic Violence found that 24% of shelters were full, and 3,577 people who requested shelter were turned away.
- The NNEDV reports that the average domestic violence shelter stay is 60 days; many shelters are unable to house families longer than 30 days because they must make space for individuals in immediate danger.
- Even among women killed by their abusive partners, only 5% had sought shelter. (Sharps, Campbell et al 2001)
- According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, in metropolitan jurisdictions in the same size range as Fairfax County, the number of domestic violence emergency shelter beds per 100,000 population ranges from 36 (Kansas City) to 5.5 (Montgomery County, Maryland), with a median of 14. Fairfax County has only 34 emergency domestic violence shelter beds, for a ratio of 3.1 beds/100,000 residents.


ATTACHMENT E - SAFE HOUSING FOR SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE POWERPOINT PRESENTATION


 DISTRICT ALLIANCE FOR SAFE HOUSING

Safe Housing for Survivors of Domestic Violence

Approach and Advocacy


Presented by:
Peg Hacskaylo
District Alliance for Safe Housing




 DISTRICT ALLIANCE FOR SAFE HOUSING

Inception of DASH


- Need for a new type of safe housing in 2008
- Women and victims being denied access to safe housing programs
- Incidence of domestic violence on the rise
- Affordable housing crisis in the District




 DISTRICT ALLIANCE FOR SAFE HOUSING

Information Gathering


- Focus groups with women participating in housing/other programs and service providers
- Interviewed programs with similar missions
- Explored a variety of theoretical models
- Attended different trainings and conferences on housing/homelessness and domestic violence
- Conducted site visits to several programs offering promising practices



 DISTRICT ALLIANCE FOR SAFE HOUSING

DV and Homelessness

- 92% of homeless mothers are reported to have experienced sexual or physical abuse
- 50% or more of homeless women state that domestic violence precipitated homelessness
- Homelessness dramatically increases women's risk of being sexually assaulted and abused
- Lack of available safe and affordable housing options negatively impacts women's decisions to leave violent partners and frequently results in women falling into homelessness after exiting abusive situations



Intersection of DV and Homelessness

- DV Service Providers –
 - Focus is typically on crisis intervention rather than long-term safety and stability
 - Emphasis on protecting women may serve to disempower them and isolate them further
 - Many don't understand how to navigate complex housing systems and advocate for survivors
 - Trauma-informed services and Rapid Rehousing models creating change

Intersection of DV and Homelessness

- Homeless and Housing Providers
 - Focus on domestic violence as a symptom of homelessness rather than a condition
 - Emphasis on the violence that survivors have experienced may serve to keep them homeless
 - Many don't understand how to address survivors' needs and ensure their rights
 - Housing First and Rapid Rehousing models changing approach

Intersection of DV and Homelessness

- As a result, survivors may not get the support they need to help them avoid and/or exit homelessness and achieve safe, independent households.
- DASH works at this nexus to ensure that safe housing is available and accessible to everyone, no matter where they turn for help.

Home. Means. Safety.


- Victims of abuse have suffered from trauma;
- Trauma challenges people's ability to move on with their lives without help;
- Survivors need safe stable housing which affords them the space to recover, live without fear and be self-determining;
- DASH strives to create a culture where home is a safe place for everyone.

Mission

- To ensure access to safe housing and services for survivors of domestic and sexual violence and their families as they rebuild their lives on their own terms.

Definition of Domestic Violence


Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive and coercive behaviors, including physical, sexual, and psychological attacks, as well as economic coercion, that adults or adolescents use against their intimate partners.

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DASH's Definition


Includes:

- Survivors of intimate partner violence
- Survivors of torture
- Survivors of sex trafficking and prostitution
- Survivors of sexual assault
- Survivors of same-sex DV
- Survivors made homeless by prior DV

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Domestic Violence as a Trauma Experience

- Psychologically changes a person's belief in themselves
- Diminishes a person's ability to trust
- Hinders a person's ability to make decisions for themselves, organize and mobilize to accomplish goals
- Decreased sense of safety and intense fear

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Housing Barriers for Survivors

- History of substance abuse
- Language barriers
- No affordable housing
- Fear of losing children
- Lack of space at shelters
- Poor credit history
- Can't call for services
- Building access
- Discrimination
- Apartment accessibility
- Attitudinal barriers
- Program recreates power dynamics

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DASH Approach

- Three-pronged strategy:
 - Creating More Safe Housing
 - Facilitating Access to Housing
 - Preventing Homelessness
- Need to address the means to ensure safe housing on multiple levels, and ultimately achieve our mission.

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Creating More Safe Housing

- Emergency-to-Transitional Housing at our Cornerstone Building
- Transitional-to-Permanent Scattered Site Housing through our Empowerment Project
- All programs low-barrier, voluntary services, and safe for victims of domestic violence.

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Creating More Safe Housing

- Rapid Re-housing model – Combination of site-based and scattered-site housing options for survivors
- Housing First approach – provide apartment units, residents have leases, provide services in the home
- Trauma-Informed – survivors have autonomy, determine their own goals

Facilitating Access to Housing

- Removing barriers to accessing homeless shelter and housing programs through our Housing Resource Center
 - Providing housing program information through our Housing Resource Center Online
- Assisting with the housing program application process
- Addressing housing program rules that discriminate against victims of DV

Facilitating Access to Housing

- Improving safety for victims in homeless shelters and housing programs through our Training and TA
 - Providing training/TA for shelter/housing program staff
 - Educating programs about protections for victims under DC housing law
 - Ensuring confidentiality in programs

Preventing Homelessness

- Legislative and Regulatory Advocacy through our Policy Program
 - Violence Against Women Act
 - Office of Human Rights
- Emergency Transfers through our Housing Resource Center
 - Public Housing
 - Section 8 Housing and Housing Choice Voucher program
- Breaking leases

Preventing Homelessness

- Support obtaining affordable rental housing
 - Developing relationships with landlords
 - Accompany women to view units, provide support through the "leasing up" process, and assist women to assess community safety
 - Provide economic empowerment, budget counseling, and credit repair

Safe Housing

- Takes a broad-based approach to housing options for survivors
- Incorporates multiple options to address survivors' unique needs
- Works at the nexus of homelessness and domestic violence
- Ensures the right to safe housing for everyone

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ATTACHMENT F: BARRIERS

COMMISSION FOR WOMEN DIALOGUE, OCTOBER 1, 2012

GROUP 1

- Attitude/political will
- Lack of outreach and education for survivors and housing providers
- Supply of affordable housing, especially availability with short notice
- Lack of emergency shelter beds, and stringent requirements to qualify (imminent danger, single women)
- Criteria for emergency and transitional housing—definition of homelessness
- Lack of financial independence for women
- Credit issues, lease requirements, ruined credit
- Time to access shelter/services
- Income requirements for transitional housing
- Coexisting conditions, difficulty accessing multiple services
- Landlord business model, lack of subsidies or tax credits
- Lack of coordination
- New red tape, layers of access for transitional housing
- The move by HUD to eliminate transitional housing in favor of rapid rehousing

GROUP 2

1. Lack of housing
2. Lack of long term supports
3. Lack of jobs and training, to earn money for rent
4. Confidentiality across agencies

Others:

- Personal finances
- Re-entry into program
- Legal status
- Lack of family support
- Knowledge of services
- Lack of transportation
- Same sex couples, especially males
- Substance use/abuse
- Mental health
- Fear and isolation
- Legal issues: custody, support, visitation
- Children/dependency
- Legal advocacy—availability and access
- Language and cultural issues
- Trauma
- Waiting lists
- School requirements regarding performance and access

- Religious influences
- Family structure
- “Imminent danger”
- Access to transitional housing for “precariously housed”
- Lack of funding for public and private agencies

GROUP 3

A. Resources, resources, resources... And more resources. Lack of funding, lack of affordable housing stock, lack of knowledge of alternative resource sources, lack of knowledge in relevant community of resources that are available, insufficient emergency shelter space, insufficient transitional housing, insufficient permanent housing, insufficient voucher funding (overall).

B. Silos. Communication and common missions need to be developed across various public and private agencies that share a piece of the issues/problems.

C. Increased Training for Trauma Informed Service for the “non-DV” agencies, public and private, that have service responsibility/connection.

D. Increased Awareness and Education of cultural differences in the county and the impact those differences have on accessing services, e.g., legal status, forced marriage, etc.

E. Study and expand prevention measures. Also, more publicity to community on existing service availability.

F. Systems to assure the continuity or portability of services of all types (emotional, trauma, self-sufficiency skills) after shelter stay lapses.

G. Need to uniformly transition away from older service models. Must have more flexible service tools and options. One size does not fit all clients.

H. Allstate Foundation/DV project: “clicktoempower” (website)

ATTACHMENT G: COLLECTIVE ACTIONS AND STRUCTURES

COMMISSION FOR WOMEN DIALOGUE, OCTOBER 1, 2012

GROUP 1

#1 Emergency shelter: More funding and locations. More localized/dispersed services.

#2 Legal Changes: Safe housing as a civil right. Anti-discrimination laws, laws regarding leases, following the DC model. Change county policies. Policy changes will lead to attitude changes.

#3 Business Community: Change norms, for landlords and the broader business community. Use a coordinated community response and community education. Provide tax breaks, subsidies, etc. for landlords.

Others:

- Housing vouchers specifically for dv victims, or more points to help them qualify for regular vouchers. Some participants expressed problems with dv victims being required to publicly identify themselves as victims in order to qualify.
- Fewer restrictions on shelter and services, redefinition and flexibility
- More affordable housing
- Partner with landlords
- Partner with other localities, on all levels
- Improve communication between housing & dv providers; reduce barriers for individuals seeking help
- Get men more involved in anti-dv efforts
- DV housing clearinghouse/coordinated services
- Foster more nonprofits to provide dv services
- Provide rent subsidies through private sources and victim services
- Advocate against the federal government's plans to reduce/eliminate transitional housing funding
- Provide housing and services more quickly, don't make people wait
- Improve financial literacy

GROUP 2

Tie for #1:

- Develop self-sufficiency skills, especially job training and education
- Judicial/legal assistance: custody, support, visitation, restitution, criminal compensation, use of protective order, housing costs

Tie for #2:

- Invest in affordable housing
- Cross-trained, skilled, knowledgeable workers

Tie for #3:

- Bring public/private partners to table/collaboration
- Prevention programs – in schools, etc.
- Longer term advocacy and case management
- Lower barriers to services
- Targeted prevention to different populations and demographics

Others:

- Tax incentives to build/create
- Coordinating services around a client
- Realistic expectations/compassion for clients to move forward—time limits, mandatory services
- Shift from emergency housing to permanent or rapid rehousing model
- Need for documents to access services
- Policies and practices to make sure not discriminating against undocumented dv clients for transitional housing
- Change policies on transitional housing that don't just favor those coming from shelters
- Need to also consider those who became homeless due to dv in their history
- Mediation/assistance/supervised visitation and exchange

GROUP 3

- A. DV/Homeless Response System – Action in the Short Term. There was agreement on a need to develop response tools to assure that services are provided to DV victims that may not fall within a category of those facing “immediate risk.” Views were expressed by many that immediate risk DV victims would be directed to Artemis or Bethany to assure maximum safety measures are in place. However, there are still categories of victims that are not facing immediate risk. Two examples were those “fleeing” but not under threat and those who had a history of DV but were not necessarily seeking housing because of abuse. These types of victims were most likely directed to “general” homeless shelter for temporary housing. There was agreement that even though there might be no imminent physical risk, these categories of DV survivors and their families still may need the same type of emotional (trauma) and financial/job training/etc. support and that the former may overwhelm progress with the latter. This initiative would include development of training tools for providers and service portability, but would remain flexible enough in its mission to address other short term, doable, issues identified by participants in the initiative.
- B. Capacity Initiative – Action in the Long Term. There is a need for increased housing capacity at all levels – emergency, transitional and permanent. Housing First and RRH might be a good option to have on the DV housing menu, but will not be an adequate replacement for transitional housing. A continuum of options should remain.

Emergency shelter is not lengthy enough for many to work through disabling trauma, while also rebuilding life skills. A Capacity Initiative would study enhanced capacity need in each housing category, pursue available private funding options and plan for holistic, but flexible approach to moving survivors toward permanent housing.

Participants in a capacity initiative would look also for capacity solutions that are good fits for Fairfax County, e.g., consideration of multiple, regional offices/facilities (N. County, S. County, etc.), trained housing locators, continuation of independence of current capacity, etc. Consideration should be given to more fully integrating DV homelessness issues into the 10 year plan.

- C. Identify Legal Barriers – both the obvious and not so obvious – at local, state and federal levels. Public and Private providers share views on many beneficial legal changes that would enhance housing options and services for DV survivors, e.g. lease breaking protections. There may also be less obvious barriers that may help alleviate capacity and resource issues during times of resource constraints. For example, zoning restrictions on residences may hamper survivors from doubling up with friends and family for any reasonable period of time; yet friends and family may be the only viable escape option. Effort should be made to survey and list obvious and not so obvious legal barriers and develop action plans for promoting regulatory and statutory modifications at county level and for BOS legislative agenda.

NOTE: A fourth action plan revolving around community building and awareness was also discussed with the aim of increasing community involvement (churches, community associations, etc.)