



# **Silver Linings: Trends in Innovative Practices in Response to Survivors' COVID-related Needs**

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# DV & Housing TA Consortium (DVHTAC)

## Federal Partners

- Family Violence Prevention & Services Program/HHS
- Office on Violence Against Women/DOJ
- Office for Victims of Crime/DOJ
- Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs/HUD
- US Interagency Council on Homelessness

## Technical Assistance Providers

- National Alliance for Safe Housing (NASH)
- Collaborative Solutions, Inc. (CSI)
- National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV)
- National Resource Center on Domestic Violence (NRCDV)
- National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC)
- Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH)

# Coping with COVID and DV

- Increased demand for services due to spike in DV exacerbated by lockdowns and economic downturn
- Communal shelters working to prevent infection and spread of coronavirus in programs
- Housing providers turning to DV shelters for assistance due to increase in DV in homeless programs
- Budget cuts resulting in furloughs and layoffs which result in fewer staff to respond to increased demand
- Programs may need to conduct frequent deep-cleaning of facilities
- Staff functioning operating in shifts, remotely, and are often working without necessary PPE



# Safe Housing for Survivors Now More than Ever

- Access to services with minimal barriers and bureaucracy
- Advocacy and support in the community untethered to shelter
- **Survivor choice** to select the supports that are most useful and safe
- Safety planning which is dynamic and broadly focused
- Flexible financial assistance to maintain safety and housing stability
- Individualized services without rigid time limits, rules, or expectations
- Safe housing options in a variety of different settings



# “This is the new normal....

...That’s frustrating and heartbreaking but at the same time poses opportunities like never before to move toward service delivery models which survivors have been telling the field for a really long time that they need – like a shift away from congregant emergency shelters to a reallocation of resources toward assisting survivors establish and sustain safe housing....I won’t mourn the death of the congregant shelter if we can finally replace it with immediate access to safety which allows survivors to retain their dignity and autonomy and sets them on a path to long-term solutions.”

- DV Housing Provider in Indianapolis



# Emerging Innovation: Departure from the Communal “DV Shelter” Model

- Programs are developing or expanding hotel vouchering, which can allow for more flexibility and responsiveness to survivors’ unique needs, and can be the first step towards RRH.
- New partnerships with landlords and corporate housing providers are offering expanded housing options for survivors.
- More relaxed length of stay policies and other rigid program rules in response to the COVID-related economic, housing and safety impacts on survivors.



# Emerging Innovation: The Potential for Virtual Advocacy to Meet Survivors “Where They’re At”

- Programs are reporting that virtual advocacy is allowing them to connect with survivors in new and often more beneficial ways.
- Survivors in rural communities ***who have internet access*** are able participate in therapy/advocacy sessions more regularly.
- Some advocates report better outcomes with virtual advocacy.
- Programs are using Zoom to help promote a sense of community amongst isolated residents, and to broaden their reach of services offered by program partners.



# Emerging Innovation: Increased Use of Flex Funding to meet COVID-related Needs

- Some advocates are reporting using flex funding to cover food, medical supplies (masks, thermometers, etc.), as well as sterilization and cleaning supplies.
- Through a public/private partnership, the NYC's Mayor's Office is supporting City-wide flex funding grants for survivors.





# Emerging Innovation: VAWA Emergency Transfer Policies (LAHSA Spotlight)

IETP includes but is not limited to:

- Expanding definition of program participant/tenant to include individuals & families at motels/hotels
- Programs look for a safe transfer within their organizations first, but if they cannot find one or the survivor rejects it, the program contacts LAHSA's DV Coordinator directly for the transfer placement.
- Survivors can contact the DV Coordinator directly if they are uncomfortable for any reason reaching out to their case manager/staff.



# Emerging Innovation: VAWA Emergency Transfer Policies (LAHSA Spotlight)

- Expanding emergency transfer coverage to include emergency shelter, bridge housing, other short-term housing options
- Ensuring funding recipients (programs/organizations) have immediate access to funds for security deposits, first months rent, etc.
- No documentation requirement for emergency transfer requests



# Consortium COVID-19 Resources

- **Safe Housing Partnerships:** <https://safehousingpartnerships.org/news/>
- **NASH:** [DV and Housing-Related Coronavirus Resources](#)
- **NNEDV:** [COVID-19: Coalition Guidance for Programs by the National Network to End Domestic Violence](#)
- **NRCDV:** [Preventing & Managing the Spread of COVID-19 Within Domestic Violence Programs](#)
- **NSVRC:** [Resources for Covid-19 Response](#)
- **CSI:** [HUD and DV Resources -Covid-19](#)

# Thank you!

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