

# SERVING SURVIVORS: SAFETY, LEGAL PROTECTIONS AND ELIGIBILITY

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# Overview

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Today, you will gain a better understanding of:



How to best support  
survivor safety



Violence Against  
Women Act



Housing options for  
survivors

# Housing Assistance - Buckets

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## Federally Funded Programs

- Rapid Rehousing
- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Joint Component

## Housing Authorities

- Vouchers
- Project Based Housing

## State/Foundation Funded Programs

- Rapid Rehousing
- Prevention/Diversion/Flexible Funding
- Relocation
- Emergency Shelter

# HOUSING OPTIONS FOR SURVIVORS

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Homelessness  
Prevention

Shelter Diversion

Emergency  
Housing

Transitional  
Housing

Transitional  
Housing - Rapid  
Rehousing

Rapid Rehousing

Permanent  
Supportive  
Housing

Public Housing  
Authority  
Vouchers

Tax Credit/Low  
Income Housing

# Safety Planning with Survivors

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Safety planning is a process, not a one-time event or check list.

Safety planning is tailored to the survivor's life and daily activities—each day may even be a little different.

If the survivor is interested, refer to local DV program for safety planning assistance

Focusing on immediate safety, what your program can do to help, and long-term safety is essential

# Immediate Safety

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**Listen to the survivor  
and ask what s/he  
needs**

**If the abusive partner  
is also a resident or  
housing applicant, do  
not have safety-  
related conversations  
with him/her present**

**Remember that the  
survivor may use  
violence—in self  
defense or to regain  
control over her/his  
life**

**Utilize your DV agency  
partnership—either as  
a referral or for  
consultation**

# How Can Your Program Help with Safety?

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Have policies in place with your DV agency partner for emergent needs



Help the survivor with other safe housing resources within your program or another program



Help the abusive partner with resources if s/he becomes homeless due to exclusion from the unit



Don't judge or restrict the level of contact they might need to have with each other

# Long-Term Safety Planning

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**Once a survivor has obtained alternate or permanent housing, maintaining safety remains a priority**

**Safety at home  
and with children**

**Financial safety  
and  
independence**

**Safety on the job  
and in public  
settings**



# What is VAWA?

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Passed in 1994 in response to increase in DV, showing federal level commitment to supporting survivors, included both funding and protections for survivors of DV

Reauthorized in 2005, recognizing link between DV and homelessness

Reauthorized in 2013 with significantly expanded housing protections, included coverage of sexual assault survivors (also dating violence and stalking), and mandated compliance from federally subsidized housing programs

Reauthorized in 2022 with focus on Economic Justice

# VAWA 2022 Reauthorization – Key Components

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Maintains current protections

Incorporates economic abuse to the definition of domestic violence (upwards of 99% of DV cases involve some type of economic abuse)

Establishes a gender-based violence prevention office with a VAWA director at HUD

Shared economic security related findings for survivors of violence

- 60% of single women lack economic security
- 81% of households with single mothers live in economic insecurity
- 92% of homeless women experienced domestic violence with more 50% citing domestic violence as the direct cause of homelessness
- Best predictor of a survivor successfully leaving = degree of economic independence

# Basic Housing Protections and Documentation of Survivor Status

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Status as a survivor of DV/SA cannot be used as a reason to evict from, nor to deny access to, housing

Applicants cannot be denied housing based on factors that are a direct result of DV, such as poor credit or rental history

Protections can be provided based on applicants request, or with supporting documentation

- [HUD-5382: Victim Self-certification Form](#)
- Professional's Statement
- Legal Documentation
- Other evidence

# How to best support survivors

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## Safety

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## Confidentiality

Make sure the survivor knows that you will not share their disclosure and/or story with anyone

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Survivors can choose to be anonymous when their information is entered into HMIS and still receive services – i.e. their personally identifying information should not be entered

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If a survivor feels uncomfortable sharing, don't press for information

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## Trauma Informed

Interact with kindness and compassion

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Ask questions (even uncomfortable ones) slowly and clearly

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Focus on strengths if survivor needs further support

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Offer a range of options and allow the survivor to identify what they need

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If a survivor feels uncomfortable sharing, don't press for information

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