



KEY STATISTICS

Domestic violence is the **#1** driver of family homelessness in New York City

Domestic violence was the cause of homelessness for **39%** of families with children who entered DHS shelter

Survivors with children in domestic violence emergency shelter are nearly **8x** more likely to move to another shelter than to their own apartment

1 in 1000 chance that a family leaving domestic violence emergency shelter will enter city-funded supportive housing

An estimated **0.01%** of HPD homeless set-asides were available for survivors in domestic violence shelter

1 in 2 survivors are victims of nonconsensual, credit-related transactions

NEW DESTINY HOUSING 2023 NEW YORK CITY POLICY PRIORITIES

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & HOMELESSNESS IN NEW YORK CITY

For six years, domestic violence has been the number one driver of family homelessness in New York City.^[i] In Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, 39% of families with children who entered the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) shelter identified domestic violence as the reason for their homelessness.^[ii] The separate domestic violence shelter system, managed by the Human Resources Administration (HRA), was used by 10,201 adults and children in 2021, 95% of whom were families with minors.^[iii] Once in emergency domestic violence shelter, survivors with children are nearly eight times more likely to move to another shelter than to an apartment of their own upon reaching the state-mandated limit of 180 days. This shuffle causes more than further upheaval; moving to DHS means that survivors lose the anonymity and specialized services of the domestic violence shelter system. Moreover, their time spent in domestic violence shelter does not count toward time in shelter in the DHS system, a marker used to prioritize households for housing.

Families living in these two shelter systems make up only a fraction of victims of abuse without a safe home to go to. The New York City domestic violence hotline received nearly 94,000 calls in 2021 and more than 13,000 survivors made nearly 43,000 visits to one of the city's five Family Justice Centers. That same year, the New York City Police Department responded to more than 230,000 domestic incidents, 49% of which were intimate partner-related.^[iv] While domestic violence affects all racial and ethnic groups, New Yorkers of color, in particular Black and Hispanic residents, are disproportionately impacted. Black residents were almost 3 times more likely than other city residents to experience felony assault by an intimate partner in 2020, and Hispanic New Yorkers had the second highest rate, according to police reports.^[v] Countless more incidents were likely not reported; national data indicates that about half of all domestic violence incidents are reported.^[vi] This is especially true among undocumented survivors or survivors whose immigration status depends on their abuser, who often fear retaliation, discrimination, and/or deportation.^[vii]

While domestic violence transcends socioeconomic status, most survivors need housing assistance because they cannot access whatever household resources existed. More than 94% of survivors of intimate partner violence experience financial abuse and isolation,^[viii] and more than half are victims of nonconsensual, credit-related transactions.^[ix] As a consequence, survivors often have poor credit scores and rental history, or may have lost their rental subsidy due to violations committed by the abuser. The dearth of affordable housing only heightens





the barriers for survivors as they strive to regain stability. In New York City, over half of renters pay more than 30% of their monthly income in rent and one third pay more than 50%.^[x] Over the past three years, the median rent for a one-bedroom unit has risen 20% to \$3,267 in the five boroughs, and in Manhattan it surpassed \$5,000 in June of 2022.^[xi] Challenges are even greater for survivors from marginalized communities, survivors with a disability, and non-citizens survivors due to systemic discrimination and lack of equitable access to resources.^[xii]

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

While strides have been made in recent years toward bringing accountability to the various shelter systems, improving rental subsidies, and developing more supportive and affordable housing—including most recently, commitments made in Mayor Adams’ Housing Our Neighbors Blueprint—domestic violence survivors continue to have restricted access to critical housing resources. This is most stark in the lack of access to both the city’s homeless set-aside units and city-funded supportive housing. Additionally, investing adequately in the newly created housing stability low-barrier grant program for survivors can prevent homelessness and shelter recidivism for a fraction of the cost of shelter and re-housing efforts.

► EXPAND ACCESS TO HOMELESS SET-ASIDES

The New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) creates a critical pipeline from shelter to permanent housing for homeless New Yorkers by requiring most developers who receive funding to set aside at least 15% of their apartments for individuals and families in shelter. These units are commonly referred to as HPD homeless set-asides. In FY22, HPD moved 1,600 homeless households into newly constructed units and more than 600 into re-rental apartments, none of which were made available to survivors living in the HRA domestic violence shelter system.^[xiii] Currently, the administration only allows individuals and families in the DHS shelter system to access these units, despite committing “to even the playing field for all New Yorkers” in the Housing Our Neighbors Blueprint in April 2022. Expanding access to homeless set-asides would not only make this valuable housing resource more equitable, but would likely fill vacancies more quickly, leading to significant potential cost-savings. ***New Destiny urges the city administration to allow survivors in HRA domestic violence shelter equal access to this housing.***

► OPEN UP CITY-FUNDED SUPPORTIVE HOUSING TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS

Unlike New York State supportive housing programs, the city supportive housing initiative, NYC 15/15, does not include domestic violence survivors. NYC 15/15 requires families to meet the federal definition of “chronically homeless” to be eligible for supportive housing. There are two criteria: families must have a lengthy stay in DHS shelter—which doesn’t include the 180 days spent already in an HRA emergency domestic violence shelter—and have a diagnosed disability, such as serious mental illness or substance use disorder— which domestic violence survivors rarely divulge for fear of losing custody of their children to their abuser. In other words, survivors are effectively shut out of this important housing resource. At least half of survivors experience post-traumatic stress disorder and depression;^[xiv] moreover, survivors can sustain head trauma more often than football players, but they are rarely diagnosed.^[xv] Permanent, affordable, supportive housing is a lifeline for domestic violence survivors who need housing and some level of support to attain and maintain





stability. ***New Destiny urges the city administration to open its supportive housing program to domestic violence survivors and their families, who are among the most vulnerable.***

► **ADEQUATELY FUND FLEXIBLE FUNDING FOR SURVIVORS**

In 2022, New York City took a major step by enacting Councilmember Cabán’s Intro 153-A, which creates a housing stability program for domestic and gender-based violence survivors that provides low-barrier grants and connection to supportive services, with the goal of helping them maintain housing. We are grateful to Speaker Adams, Councilmember Cabán, members of the Council who voted in favor of Intro 153-A, and to Mayor Adams for swiftly signing the legislation into law. New Destiny witnesses the beneficial impact of microgrants every day. Our rapid re-housing program, HousingLink, receives small federal service funding that can be used to cover most emergency needs, such as utility arrears, moving costs, and healthcare.

Additionally, a privately funded microgrant pilot, which was overseen by the Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence and administered by Sanctuary for Families, further demonstrated that flexible funding can significantly improve survivors’ financial situation, help them remain housed, and foster financial stability.^[xvii] Implemented in 2020, the pilot illustrated the high demand for low-barrier financial support among survivors of domestic violence in New York City. The half a million dollars in funding was quickly depleted and forced the program to cease receiving applications in less than 2 months. For some survivors, an immediate, but otherwise manageable, financial or health crisis can quickly snowball into a catastrophe causing homelessness. This newly created housing stability program has the potential to be a lifesaver for survivors, especially for non-citizen New Yorkers, and help bridge the gap for existing federally funded initiatives that do not cover essential items, like furniture or groceries. ***New Destiny urges the Mayor and the City Council to fund the Housing Stability program at \$6 million dollars.***

ABOUT NEW DESTINY

New Destiny’s mission is to end the cycle of domestic violence and homelessness for low-income families and individuals by developing and connecting them to safe, permanent, affordable housing and services. To achieve its mission, New Destiny builds and manages housing with on-site services; offers innovative programs that assist survivors in finding and retaining affordable housing; and works to expand access to permanent housing resources for survivors. Founded in 1994, New Destiny is currently the largest provider of supportive housing for domestic violence survivors in New York and a leading advocate in the effort to obtain the resources needed to end family homelessness in New York City.

New Destiny is a member of the Supportive Housing Network of New York and a co-convener of the Family Homelessness Coalition.

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