

STATISTICS FOR ADVOCACY: DATA ANALYSIS

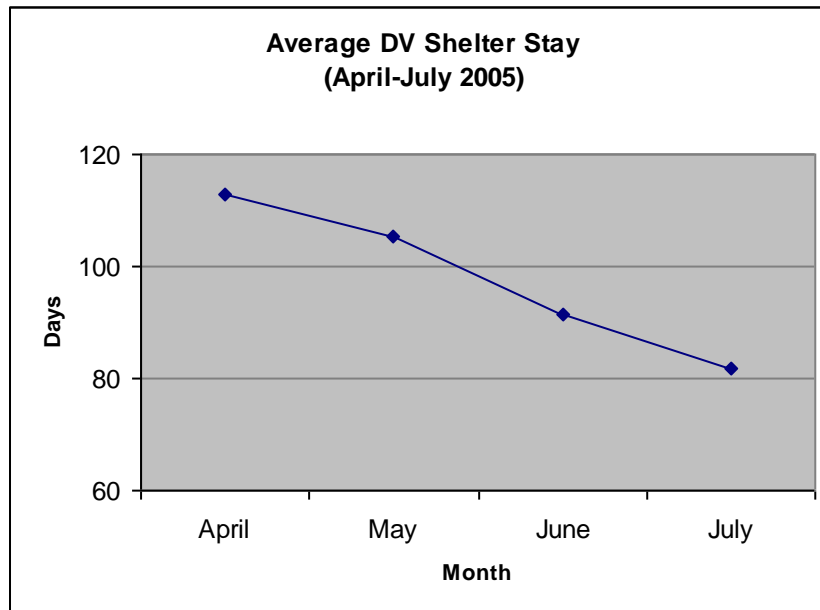
Data Sources

New Destiny's Statistics for Advocacy project has been collecting survey data from the city's domestic violence emergency shelters since May 2003. With the help of these shelters, we have been able to track how many women are leaving the shelter system and why. With the development of Housing Stability Plus, New Destiny worked with domestic violence emergency shelters to restructure the survey, so that more information could be collected about individual women, specifically where women are going upon leaving shelter and how HSP is affecting the permanent housing placements of women in the emergency shelter system. New Destiny began implementing the new survey format in April 2005 and for this reason much of the information presented below provides information from April through July of this year.

In addition, to this new survey format, New Destiny also had the opportunity to visit many emergency shelters this summer and spoke directly to residents. We conducted 11 separate focus groups and collected responses from over 100 women. Quotes from these focus groups are presented below as well.

Overview

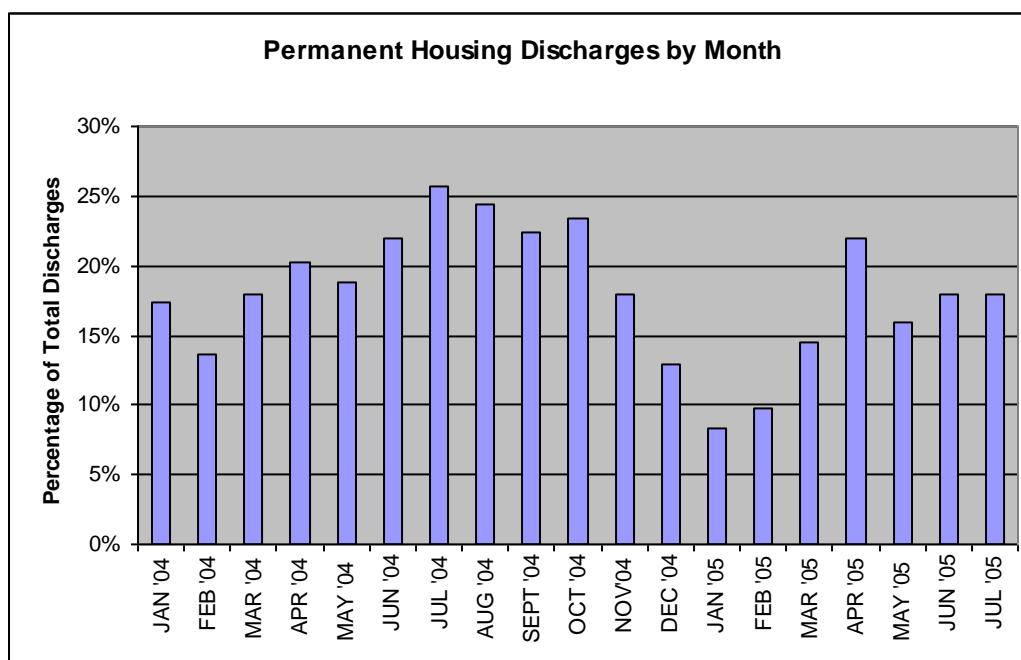
- 1136 women were discharged from domestic violence emergency shelters between January and July of this year, up 7% from last year.
- 728 women were discharged between April and July of this year, up 21% from last year.
- 93 women were discharged, between April and July, because they had reached the last day of their HRA-approved emergency shelter stay.
- 101 women moved from the shelter system into HSP apartments between April and July.
- 79 women were ineligible to receive HSP between April and July.
- The average shelter stay length between April and July of this year was 98 days, declining steadily in these months (see Chart 1 below).



Key Findings

Few women are leaving the domestic violence shelter system for permanent housing.

- In April through July of this year, only 19% of the women who left shelter moved into a permanent housing situation.
- Permanent housing discharges declined this year between April and July from 22% to 18% of total discharges, where last year they actually increased during the same period from 20% to 26% of total discharges. We will be watching to see if permanent housing discharges continue to decline this year.
- Chart 2 shows the number of permanent housing discharges monthly since January 2004. The spike in April is a result of the pent up demand for HSP as the program reached full implementation.



Housing Stability Plus is the main housing program available to women in shelter, however many are facing hardships and even revictimization as they search for HSP apartments.

- HSP is the overwhelming source of permanent housing for domestic violence shelter clients, 74% of the women who were discharged to move into permanent housing found housing through HSP.
- Only 14% of discharged women moved into HSP apartments from the shelter system between April and July, even though 72% of the women who left shelter had met shelter stay and public assistance requirements and were eligible to receive HSP.

In our series of focus groups this summer, we learned more about some of the difficulties women are having as they are sent out to find HSP apartments on their own. This may explain why a great number of women have not moved into HSP apartments. Even those that have are likely to face challenges with overcrowded conditions and apartments in remote neighborhoods.

- “In our support group tears are more often over housing problems than our batterers. Women get here and they listed to us cry, and they think ‘What did I do? What is it going to be like? Should I go back?’”
- “Every time I get that printed list of landlords who accept HSP, every single one I call no longer accepts HSP, or at least doesn’t for HRA clients. I don’t know why they bother printing up that list.”
- “The broker took me aside and put his hands all over me. I was too scared to say anything after everything I’d been through. I turned down the apartment and my DPE is approaching – maybe I shouldn’t have, since I am running out of time and choices.”
- “I have three kids and two of them are pre-teen boys. I am only certified for \$925, but I need a two bedroom because my growing boys need to be separate from us girls. There are no two bedrooms for that price.”
- “I’ve seen apartments that have literally brought me to tears. We have children we are trying to raise to be good citizens. It’s just so far from funny that I have to ask myself to choose between a drug-infested broken apartment and going back to their abusive father.”
- “I decided to take an apartment, but then the landlord told me I had to pay an extra \$150 a month. Not only that but I have to give him a security deposit on it too. My discharge is coming up so I have no other choice. I have to come up with \$300 by the end of this week, and keep paying it too. I guess I will have to ask my batterer for money but I really don’t want to. I have no choice.”

Public Housing is the only other subsidized housing available to women in shelter other than HSP. Very few women are finding housing through NYCHA, despite the priority for domestic violence survivors.

- Between April and July, only 16 women moved from the domestic violence shelter into NYCHA housing.
- Many women are not qualifying for the priority given to domestic violence survivors because of the strict documentation requirements.
- Furthermore, the length of time it takes to move into NYCHA housing with the domestic violence priority often exceeds the amount of time women have in emergency shelter. The average length of stay for the 16 women receiving NYCHA housing between April and July was 129 days, while the average length of stay overall was only 98 days.

There are few housing options available to working women in domestic violence shelters or those outside the shelter system.

- 32 of the women discharged between April and July were unable to receive HSP because they were working. These women accounted for 42% of the women who were HSP ineligible.
- Only four of these women left the domestic violence shelter system for permanent housing, one found an apartment through NYCHA, two rented apartments on their own, and a third returned to her own apartment and potentially to the batterer.

Although 89% of the women who enter shelter would be eligible to receive HSP, this may actually be masking the number of women who come into shelter and quit their jobs or turn job offers down in order to remain eligible for HSP. We found some evidence of this in our focus groups.

- “I was offered two jobs, but neither of them pay enough to pay rent so I had to turn them down in order to still receive HSP.”
- “As of right now I have nothing. I have a job, and I’m proud that I have a job. But he took all my money and I have nothing for a security deposit. I guess I will have to quit, otherwise I am out on the streets.”

Ultimately many of the women leaving the domestic violence shelter are leaving for temporary and unstable living situations that may put them in danger of revictimization.

- 24% of the women who left the domestic violence shelter system between April and July, left on their own. Over three-fourths of these women left to live with friends or family or for an unknown location. We are exploring why these women are choosing to leave the domestic violence shelter system without plans for permanent housing.
- 55% of the women who were discharged for the domestic violence shelter system left for an after-shelter destination that was identified as temporary or unstable. These destinations include women who went to live with friends and family, the batterer, or to an unknown location.
- In addition, women who went to the EAU/PATH are included in this 55%. Although, there is evidence that these women were referred to the EAU/PATH, there is no systematic way to ensure that these women were in fact able to enter the DHS shelter system.
- Particularly concerning is the increasing number of women whose after-shelter destinations are unknown, increasing from 12% in April and 8% in May, to 17% of all discharges in July.
- Chart 3 provides a breakdown of the after-shelter destinations of women between April and July of this year.

