



new destiny
housing

Out in the Cold:

Housing Cuts Leave Domestic Violence
Survivors With No Place to Go



A HousingLink Report

October 2012

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	3
Background	4
Key Findings.....	5
Snapshot of Emergency and Transitional Shelter Populations.....	6
Destination after Discharge	8
Access to Permanent Housing	11
Barriers to Permanent Housing.....	15
Recommendations	19
Conclusion	20
Further Areas of Research	21
References.....	21
Appendix	24

Acknowledgements

HousingLink, a program initiated in 1999 by New Destiny Housing Corporation assists victims of domestic violence to find and retain safe, permanent housing. It provides information, training and technical assistance to victims and their advocates and conducts research and policy work to maximize housing resources for the domestic violence community. New Destiny would like to thank Irene Lew, the primary author of this report, for her tireless efforts and expert analysis. Thanks are also due to Coalition of Domestic Violence Residential Providers and all of the shelter staff who provided data for this study. New Destiny would also like to thank the following staff who agreed to be interviewed for this report and provided critical insight and anecdotal information: Dania Allen at Food First, Alena Victor, New York Asian Women's Center, Sandra Cabal, Sanctuary for Families, Marcy Davis, Center Against Domestic Violence, Jessica Fabian, Sanctuary for Families, Josephine Vasquez, Freedom House, Barrier Free Living, Wendy Cerrato, Athena House, Palladia.



Catherine Trapani, HousingLink Director
New Destiny Housing Corporation

New Destiny Housing Corporation
12 West 37th Street, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10018
646-472-0262
www.newdestinyhousing.org

Background

Affordable permanent housing offers homeless domestic violence survivors and their families the best prospect for long-term safety and stability. Yet, the continuing economic recession, coupled with the rising unemployment rate and shortage of affordable rental housing, has been associated with an uptick across the U.S. in family homelessness and domestic violence. The number of homeless families in the U.S. soared 20% between 2007 and 2010¹, and families currently represent a much larger share of the total sheltered population than ever before. In a national survey of 738 domestic violence shelters conducted by Mary Kay, 78% of domestic violence shelters nationwide (nearly eight out of ten) reported an increase in women seeking assistance from abuse and 95% reported that survivors are staying longer in shelter. At the same time, there was a 19% increase in family-related homicides in New York City in 2011 over the previous year². Despite the increase in need, the fiscal crisis has also resulted in diminished public funding for domestic violence service providers and housing assistance.

Historically, residents in the City's specialized domestic violence shelter system have overwhelmingly relied on homeless housing assistance programs to find apartments in the private market. Yet, since 2009, New York City has gradually eliminated all housing assistance for homeless families and domestic violence survivors in shelter³. The only remaining program, the Advantage rental subsidy program, was eliminated in March 2011 when New York State withdrew 50 percent of the program's funding, prompting the City to terminate the program⁴. Developed in 2007 as part of the City's key homelessness re-housing strategy, Advantage had offered rental assistance for up to two years to help shelter residents afford their own apartments in the private sector, with a focus on self-sufficiency and employment.

Now, for the first time in three decades, there is no policy in place in New York City to help homeless families transition into permanent housing⁵.

This report focuses on a seven month period—April through December 2011⁶—to compare the ability of domestic violence shelter residents to obtain permanent housing as a result of the elimination of the Advantage subsidy program in March 2011, compared to the same period in 2010, when the Advantage subsidy was still available to survivors in shelter. This report provides an overview of the current state of the domestic violence shelter system⁷ without a viable homeless re-housing policy and analyzes the impact of the City's elimination of the Advantage subsidy on the outcomes of domestic violence shelter residents who leave shelter. Survivors who are unable to attain permanent housing upon their exit from shelter are faced with the difficult choice of remaining homeless, returning to their abuser, or living in unsafe or unstable housing situations.

In October 2011, New Destiny Housing Corporation's HousingLink program released the report, *Closing Doors: Eroding Housing Options, Dangerous Outcomes*, which found that the reduction of housing subsidy choices in Fall 2010 and the reliance upon employment as the path to housing stability resulted in only 11% of NYC emergency shelter residents leaving for safe, permanent housing. This report, a follow-up to *Closing Doors*,⁸ seeks to answer several questions:

- Has the end of the Advantage subsidy affected the length of stay of domestic violence shelter residents in emergency and transitional shelters?

- What is the profile of residents now using the domestic violence shelter system?
- Is there a link between permanent housing outcomes and factors such as education level, work history, English proficiency and eligibility for the Domestic Violence Priority for NYCHA public housing?

Key Findings

- **Access to permanent housing continues to be difficult**
 - Eighty percent of domestic violence shelter residents who exited the emergency shelter system in 2011 and were unable to secure permanent housing or a transfer to a transitional shelter had no safe place to go.
 - While transitional shelter residents have typically achieved better permanent housing outcomes than emergency shelter residents, permanent housing placements among Tier II residents exiting shelter declined by more than 25% in 2011 from the previous year, from over 50% of total discharges to just 24% of discharges in 2011.
- **Access to DV priority for NYCHA is severely limited**
 - Seventy-two percent of emergency shelter residents did not qualify for the DV priority, while 78% of Tier II residents did not meet the requirements for the DV priority.
 - In 2011, NYCHA implemented Imaging and Intelligent Form Processing (IFP), a new scanning system for applications. Case managers and housing specialists have reported inefficiencies and problems with the new system, which resulted in delays in processing applications with the Domestic Violence priority. One shelter reported that prior to NYCHA's implementation of the new system, clients who qualified for the DV priority were moving to NYCHA apartments within eight months to a year, but now clients were waiting up to eight months until they were notified of an eligibility interview.
- **Increased volatility in emergency DV shelters since the end of Advantage**
 - Residents in emergency shelter are leaving earlier in their stay, with 60% of residents leaving within 90 days of their stay in 2011, compared to 50% of residents in 2010, most likely due to the lack of any housing subsidy.
 - There was a 5% increase in residents who reported as leaving for an "unknown destination."
- **Access to transitional housing is increasingly difficult**
 - Residents are staying longer in Tier II shelters—the average length of stay for households in Tier II in 2011 was 232 days, compared to 168 in 2010.
 - The number of transfers to Tier II shelters declined in 2011, from 13% of total discharges in 2010 to 10% in 2011, suggesting that since the elimination of Advantage, spots in Tier II shelters are not opening up as quickly as before due to longer lengths of stay in Tier II shelters.
- **Limited economic opportunity is impacting residents' ability to attain permanent housing**

The end of Advantage, in combination with a slower-than-expected economic recovery in New York City and three straight years of state and local budget cuts, have disproportionately impacted low-income survivors of domestic violence and their children in New York City—67% of poor New York City families with children are headed by women⁹—who are now having a difficult time with

accessing job training programs and income supports that will help them achieve economic self-sufficiency, and subsequently, permanent housing stability.

- Only 26% of emergency shelter residents with strong work experience (those who had worked steadily for three years or more before entering shelter) were able to obtain permanent housing, a 4% increase over the previous year. This represented the only increase in permanent housing placements among emergency shelter residents with varying levels of work experience; just 6% of residents who had limited work experience (those that worked one year or less) were able to attain permanent housing in 2011, a 7% decline over the previous year.
 - Emergency and Tier II shelter residents who were the most educated—those with a 2 or 4-year college degree—achieved better permanent housing outcomes; however, given the weak economic recovery in New York City and the growth of jobs in low-skilled sectors with below-average wages that do not necessarily require degrees, such as tourism and retail, survivors in shelter are having a difficult time with obtaining employment that will generate sufficient income to afford safe, permanent housing.
- **Residents are continuing to obtain “other permanent housing”**
In *Closing Doors*, New Destiny had highlighted the need to research the surge in “other permanent housing.” Now, with the elimination of Advantage, “other permanent housing,” is representing over two-thirds of permanent housing placements in 2011 for both emergency and transitional shelter residents exiting shelter:
 - Advantage had accounted for 54% of total permanent housing placements in the emergency domestic violence shelter system and 71% of permanent housing placements in transitional shelters in 2010; with the loss of Advantage in 2011, “other permanent housing,” filled in the gap, accounting for 68% of all permanent housing placements for emergency shelter residents in 2011 and 69% of permanent housing placements for Tier II residents.

Snapshot of Emergency and Transitional Shelter Populations

Access to Temporary Housing

With a capacity of only 2,228 beds in New York City’s specialized domestic violence emergency shelter system¹⁰, the demand for shelter exceeds the current supply. In 2011, the city’s Domestic Violence hotline answered 114,760 calls, averaging more than 310 calls per day¹¹. New Destiny’s data revealed that in 2011, there was a 15% increase in the number of discharges from the emergency shelter system over the previous year, while discharges from transitional shelters declined by 20%. Unlike the emergency shelter system, which has a time-limited stay of 135 days, households are able to stay six months or longer in transitional shelter.

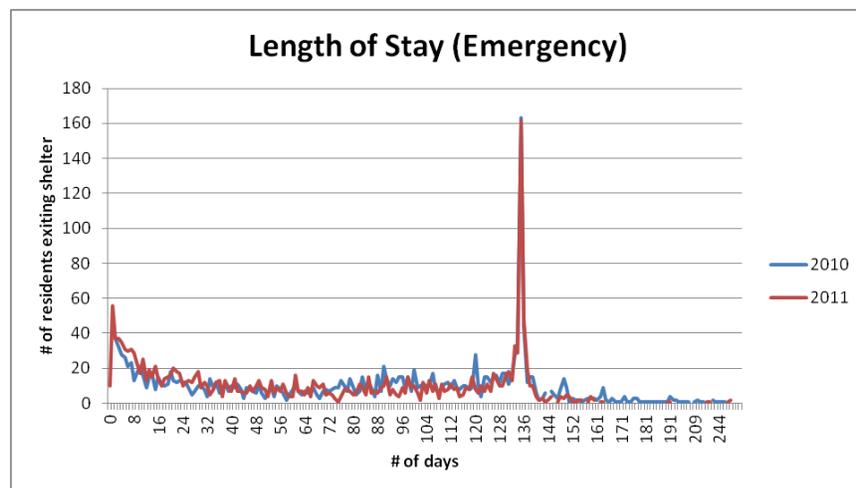
- In 2011, nearly 50% of the emergency shelter population was comprised of two-person households, followed by three-person households at 25%, and single households at 14%. Meanwhile, two-person households comprised 51% of the Tier II shelter population, followed by three-person households at 31% and four-person households at 13%¹².
- Nearly 54% of households in the emergency shelter system had no work experience or had worked for one year or less before entering shelter, compared to 45% of residents in the Tier II shelter. Over half of residents in the Tier II system—55%—had moderate or strong work experience prior to entering shelter.

- While nearly three-quarters of residents in Tier II shelter—70%—have a GED, high school degree or college degree, only 52% of residents in emergency shelter attained a GED, high school degree or higher.

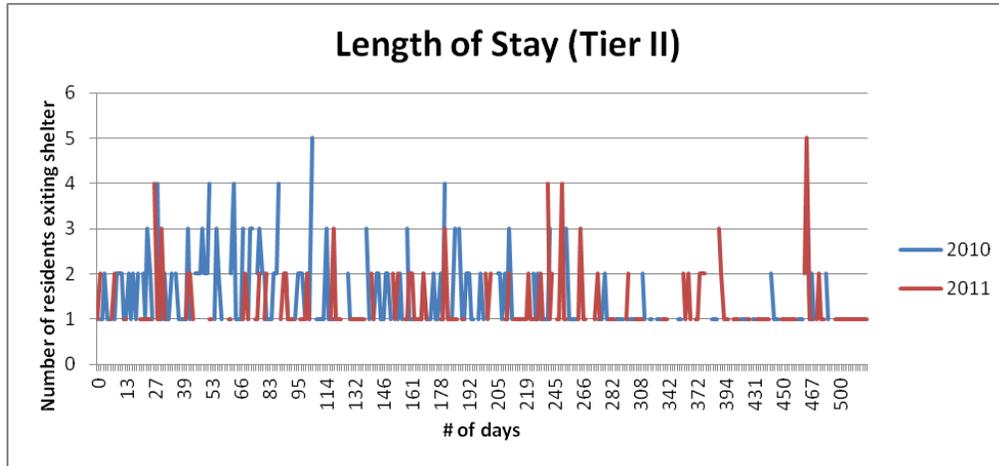
Length of Stay

Residents in the emergency domestic violence shelter system are limited to a maximum stay of 135 days due to state regulations that limit the number of days a shelter stay can be funded to a maximum of 135 days¹³. “DPE discharge,” shorthand for Date Payment Ends, refers to discharges occurring at the end of a resident’s maximum allowable stay. However, some shelters are able to arrange for longer stays for some of their residents by utilizing other funding streams, which account for recorded length of stays beyond the 135-day mark.

The longest length of stay in emergency shelter for the 2011 period was 486 days. Without filtering out the outliers, the average length of stay in 2011 was 70 days, compared to an average length of stay of 81 days in 2010. As the chart below demonstrates, the number of clients who left shelter on the 135th day represent the highest volume of discharges, increasing to 9% of total discharges in 2011 from 8% in 2010. However, residents are also leaving earlier in their stay, with 22% of residents leaving within the first two weeks in 2011, compared to 16% in 2010, and 48% leaving within the first two months of their stay in 2011, compared to 37% of residents in 2010. In 2011, 60% of residents left within 90 days of their stay, compared to 50% of residents in 2010. This suggests that residents may be leaving on their own as they learn that there is little hope of attaining permanent housing due to the lack of a housing subsidy.



In contrast to a shorter average length of stay in emergency shelter, residents in transitional (Tier II) shelter appear to be staying much longer. Among Tier II shelters, there was a longer reported length of stay: 12 out of 269 households (5% of total discharged households) stayed longer than the longest stay in shelter in 2010, which was 495 days. The longest stay in Tier II shelter during April and December 2011 was 645 days. The average length of stay for Tier II residents in 2011 was 232 days, compared to 168 in 2010.



The length of stay trends in Tier II shelters closely mirror length of stay trends for homeless families in the general homeless system operated by the Department of Homeless Services (DHS). In the eight months after the city stopped signing new Advantage leases in March 2011, the average shelter stay for a family in DHS shelters was 316 days, nearly two months longer than the average of 258 days during the same eight months in the year before the Advantage program ended¹⁴.

Destination after discharge: Where are domestic violence survivors going after they leave shelter?

More residents are leaving the emergency shelter system as homeless as when they first arrived

In 2011, 34.44% of emergency shelter discharges were referred to the Prevention Assistance and Temporary Housing (PATH) Office in the Bronx or to assessment centers for single adults, which are the gateways to the general homeless shelter system operated by the Department of Homeless Services (DHS), a nearly 4% increase over the same period in 2010. This suggests that residents who are leaving emergency shelter have no other available option.

Fewer emergency shelter residents are transferring to transitional shelter

The number of transfers from emergency shelters to Tier II shelters declined by 3% in 2011, from 13.29% of total discharges in 2010 to 10.15% in 2011. As previously noted, there was a 38% increase in the average length of stay in Tier II shelters in 2011 over the prior year, which has led to lower turnover of Tier II units and a fewer number of available slots in Tier II shelters. While all families in the emergency shelter are eligible for transfer to the transitional shelter system, historically, when a more robust portfolio of housing options was available, only 20% of the families who reached their end of their 135-day stay in the emergency system moved to a Tier II shelter, due to the fact that the Tier II system has fewer than one third the number of beds in the emergency system, and families can stay longer in transitional shelter.

Unknown destinations

There was a 5% increase in emergency shelter residents who left for an “unknown destination.” Based on interviews with several shelter providers, this may be attributed in part to clients who enter shelter and have difficulties with acclimating to shelter rules and regulations, and decide to leave shelter without notifying staff of where they are going.

More shelter residents are leaving New York City

Discouraged and frustrated by the lack of permanent housing options, more residents are leaving New York City, according to reports from shelter staff. Based on written information provided by shelter case managers and housing specialists in the survey, residents have had success with obtaining public housing and other housing outside of New York City. It has also been reported that clients who enter shelter with Section 8 vouchers have better luck with “porting” the voucher to another jurisdiction outside of the City¹⁵.

Elimination of the Advantage subsidy dealt a blow to Tier II residents

Previous New Destiny reports have shown that Tier II residents have typically achieved better permanent housing outcomes than emergency shelter residents. And in 2011, this trend appeared to continue with NYCHA placements: there was a 12% increase in the number of Tier II residents who were able to obtain NYCHA housing upon exiting shelter, while the percentage of NYCHA housing placements among emergency shelter residents remained level with the 2010 figure. Despite the increase in NYCHA placements among Tier II residents, this increase was not enough to mitigate the loss of the Advantage subsidy (see “types of permanent housing” charts on pg. 13 for more information). Since the elimination of Advantage, there was a 28% decrease in number of Tier II households who left for permanent housing over the previous year, and a 16% increase in the number of clients that went to PATH/general homeless system after leaving shelter.

These findings demonstrate that even with the benefit of a longer length of stay, survivors are still unable to attain permanent housing by the time of discharge and have no choice but to leave for the general homeless system.

Residents leaving Tier II shelters are doubling up

While there was a 3% decrease in the number of emergency shelter residents who doubled up with friends/family after leaving shelter, there was a 7% increase in the number of Tier II residents who chose this option, representing the lack of housing options for residents who remained in shelter the longest.

Destination after Discharge (Emergency)	N=1956 2010	N=2256 2011	% Point Change
Permanent Housing	12.83%	10.33%	-2.50%
Live with friends/family	19.68%	17.02%	-2.66%
Returned to batterer	1.99%	1.15%	-0.84%
Unknown destination	17.79%	22.74%	4.95%
Other DV Emergency Shelter	2.15%	2.35%	0.20%
DV Tier II Shelter	13.29%	10.15%	-3.14%
General homeless shelter	30.78%	34.44%	3.66%
Other	1.48%	1.82%	0.33%

Destination after Discharge (Tier II)	N=336 2010	N=276 2011	% Point Change
Permanent Housing	51.79%	24.28%	-27.51%
Live with friends/family	15.77%	22.34%	6.57%
Returned to batterer	0.60%	1.10%	0.50%
Unknown destination	12.20%	11.72%	-0.48%
Other DV Emergency Shelter	0.30%	2.56%	2.27%
Other DV Tier II Shelter	0.89%	2.20%	1.30%
General homeless shelter	17.26%	32.97%	15.71%
Other	1.19%	2.93%	1.74%

Impact of lack of housing options

Emergency and transitional shelter residents who reach the end of maximum allowable stay are leaving for PATH and the general homeless system

While the 2011 figure for DPE discharges in the emergency shelter system stayed level with the 2010 figure, of the 18% that had reached their maximum 135-day stay in shelter, 87% were referred to PATH/the general homeless shelter system, an increase of 19% over the previous year. Residents who “time out” of emergency shelter cannot re-enter the HRA domestic violence shelter system. Faced with no other permanent housing options after shelter, a majority of families who reach the 135th day and do not secure a transfer to a Tier II shelter, are leaving for the general homeless system, which is not confidential and does not offer the level of supportive services that the HRA-operated domestic violence shelter system offers.

Meanwhile, there was a much bigger increase—12%—in the number of Tier II residents who had left the system due to DPE. One Tier II shelter provider noted that it had difficulty with securing additional funding from HRA for extended stays. Of the DPE discharges from Tier II shelters, 89% went to PATH/general homeless system, a 14% increase over 2010.

More families are leaving on their own

As shown in the chart below, there was a 4% increase in the number of households that left emergency shelter on their own, while there was an even larger increase—13%—for Tier II shelter residents.

Reason for Discharge (Emergency)	N=1956 2010	N=2255 2011	% Point Change
Administrative Discharge	22.85%	19.87%	-2.99%
Left Without Notice	8.18%	11.31%	3.13%
Left On Own	23.62%	27.45%	3.83%
Left for Permanent Housing	12.01%	9.93%	-2.08%
DPE Discharge	17.38%	17.92%	0.53%
DV Tier II Shelter	12.88%	10.20%	-2.68%
Safety Transfer	1.84%	2.08%	0.24%
Other	1.23%	1.24%	0.01%

Reason for Discharge (Tier II)	N=336 2010	N=271 2011	% Point Change
Administrative Discharge	16.37%	18.45%	2.08%
Left Without Notice	7.74%	4.06%	-3.68%
Left On Own	14.29%	27.68%	13.39%
Left for Permanent Housing	52.98%	24.72%	-28.25%
DPE Discharge	7.14%	19.56%	12.41%
DV Tier II Shelter	0.30%	0.74%	0.44%
Safety Transfer	0.89%	4.43%	3.54%
Other	0.30%	0.37%	0.07%

Access to permanent housing

NYCHA Public Housing and Eligibility for the Domestic Violence Priority

In New York City, some survivors may qualify for NYCHA public housing under the domestic violence priority but this status only recognizes criminal justice or hospitalization-based documentation of abuse—a requirement that excludes all those survivors who are unable to obtain such evidence. Furthermore, although domestic violence survivors are given the highest priority for NYCHA public housing after city referrals such as the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) and the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)¹⁶, the NYCHA application process can still take up to one year¹⁷.

Case Notes From the Field

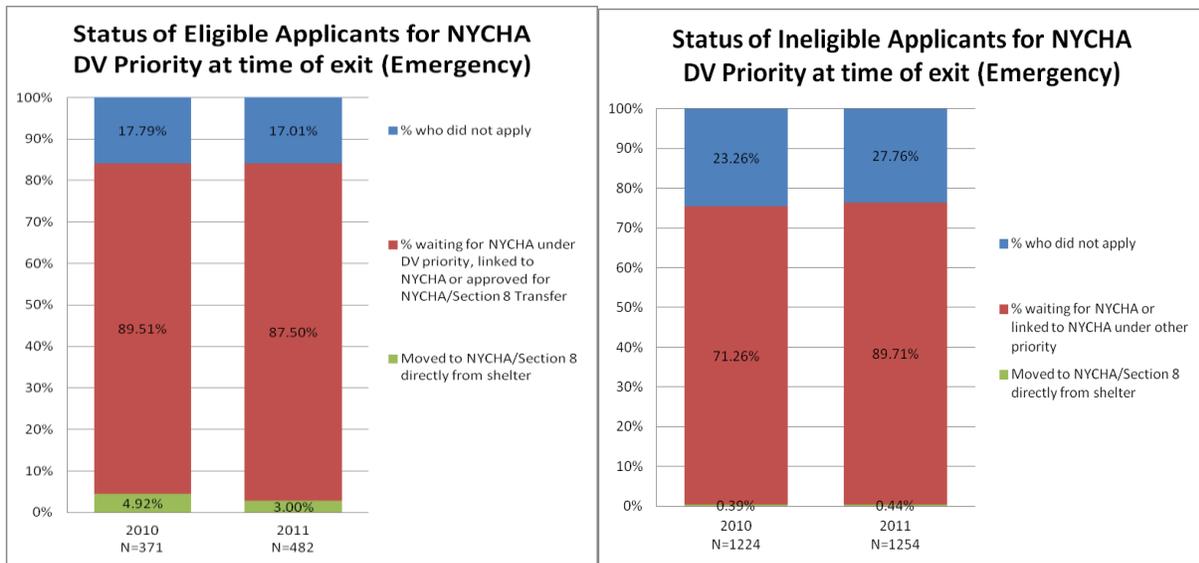
One emergency shelter reported that a resident’s application with DV priority was rejected because the police report did not include information about a physical incident—the police report and other documentation stated that the resident only received threatening text messages. The resident eventually applied for NYCHA under the lower general homeless priority.

Staff reported that NYCHA outcomes can also depend on how diligent clients are with following up with NYCHA about their application status after submitting an application.

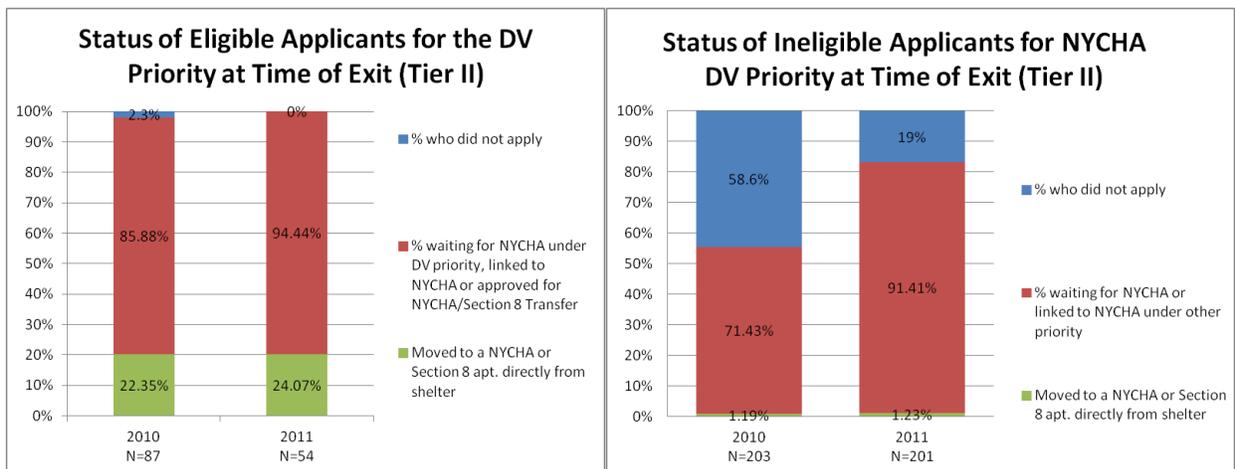
Among emergency shelter residents, 27.76% of clients were able to meet the documentation requirements for the NYCHA DV priority¹⁸ in 2011, an increase of 4% over the previous year. Yet, of the 305 emergency shelter residents who qualified for the DV priority and submitted applications, just 3% were able to move directly from shelter to a NYCHA or Section 8 apartment, a decline of 1.92% over the previous year. For residents who did not qualify for the DV priority and applied under another lower priority, less than 1% were able to move directly from emergency shelter to NYCHA housing.

Since safety from abuse is the first priority for residents who enter the domestic violence shelter system, it is often difficult for emergency shelter residents to collect all of the necessary documentation for the priority, and even those who might meet the requirements have a difficult time gathering their paperwork during their emergency shelter stay. One Tier II shelter provider explained that it is not uncommon for residents arriving at her site from emergency

shelter to have never filed an application for NYCHA. She observed that “a lot of clients are not eligible [for the DV priority]—when they enter shelter, they are just worried about safety so they did not move forward [with obtaining documentation].”

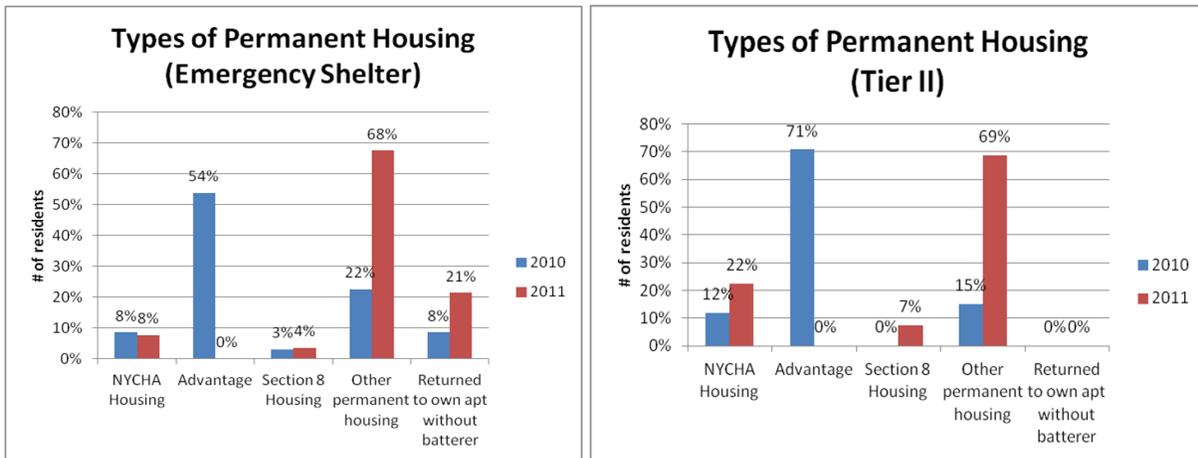


Unlike emergency shelter residents, all Tier II residents who qualified for the NYCHA DV priority applied in 2011, and 24% of the residents who qualified and applied for the DV priority were able to move directly from shelter into NYCHA housing, demonstrating that a longer length of stay led to better NYCHA outcomes than for emergency shelter residents whose maximum allowable stay is 135 days; the timeframe of 135 days is not aligned with the realities of the NYCHA application period. Shelters report that clients who qualified for the DV priority and submitted an application were waiting up to 240 days—8 months—until they were notified of an eligibility interview. In addition, over 80% of Tier II residents who did not qualify for the DV priority in 2011 chose to file a NYCHA application under a lower priority, compared to just under half—41.4%—of residents who chose this option in the previous year, suggesting that when given fewer permanent housing alternatives, more residents opt to apply regardless of priority status.



More emergency shelter residents report returning to their apartment without the batterer

There was an 11% increase in the number of emergency shelter residents who returned to their own apartment without the batterer, suggesting that residents who had determined through safety planning with a case worker or housing specialist that they were able to return to their own apartment safely (due to the abuser moving away or being detained in a long-term institution, for example), increasingly turned to this option rather than looking for another apartment. However in Tier II shelters, there were no reported cases of residents who chose this option in either 2011 or in 2010.



“other permanent housing”—the New Normal

There was a slight dip in the percentage of emergency shelter residents who left for permanent housing in 2011, from 12% of total discharges in 2010 to 10% in 2011. Given the elimination of the Advantage subsidy in March 2011, this decrease in the total number of permanent housing placements is not surprising; however, the loss of Advantage housing placements is offset by the large increase in “other permanent housing.” In 2011, “other permanent housing” accounted for 7% of total discharged residents during this period, up from 3% of total discharges during the same period in 2010. However, as the chart above indicates, when analyzed as a subset of total permanent housing attainments in 2011, “other permanent housing” accounted for 68% of all permanent housing placements among emergency shelter residents in 2011, compared to 22% of permanent housing placements in 2010.

The decline in permanent housing placements is even more dramatic among Tier II residents, from over 50% of total discharged residents in 2010 to just 24% of discharges in 2011. When examining Tier II residents who left for permanent housing as a separate subset, there was a 54% increase in the number of households who left for “other permanent housing,” which partially offset the loss of the Advantage subsidy, which had accounted for 71% of permanent housing placements in 2010.

As we highlighted in our 2011 *Closing Doors* report, the large increase in “other permanent housing” requires further research because this may not necessarily mean safe or stable housing for survivors. “Other permanent housing” can include securing an apartment in the private sector or renting a room in the home of a friend or relation. Shelters are also reporting that clients have been successfully using the Family Eviction Prevention Supplement (FEPS) to obtain permanent housing. However, residents who secure permanent housing with a FEPS subsidy continue to face challenges with landlords and brokers. One shelter reported that a client was able to obtain an apartment using FEPS; however, she was incorrectly sanctioned by public assistance and the broker and landlord requested a deposit to hold the apartment until the FEPS checks were delivered to them.

“Other permanent housing” can also include the survivor returning to a location that the batterer may be familiar with or to illegally converted, unregulated units that may have substandard conditions and/or NYC Department of Building code violations. Due to the scarcity of affordable housing in New York City, these illegally converted units may be the only units that residents can afford. In order to afford a two-bedroom apartment in New York at fair market rent, households would need to make \$24.68 per hour¹⁹, which is difficult for survivors with multiple barriers to employment.

Despite the challenges, shelters have noted that residents with undocumented immigration status who would not have qualified for housing subsidies under Advantage have had better luck with obtaining permanent housing, leveraging social networks and ties in order to find apartments on their own. Different shelters have adjusted to the loss of housing subsidies in different ways. While most sites have struggled, others have come up with innovating ways to help residents secure permanent housing. Several shelters reported a drastic drop in permanent housing placements –one shelter with a maximum capacity of 82 beds experienced a 26% decline in the number of residents who were able to obtain housing upon leaving shelter, while a shelter with a 51-bed capacity reported a 17% decline in placements. However, some shelters still saw an increase in their permanent housing placements in 2011 despite the elimination of Advantage. Due in part to the implementation of a new scattered-site housing program in 2011, the New York Asian Women’s Center (NYAWC) experienced a 16% spike in permanent housing placements in 2011, while other shelters reported smaller increases ranging from 2 to 7%.

● ● ●

“Undocumented clients are having an easier time [than other shelter residents] with finding housing. They are pounding the pavement, and they are more diligent with finding housing and tapping into resources within their community.”
- Emergency shelter housing specialist

● ● ●

Thinking outside the box: creative solutions for helping shelter residents obtain housing

New Destiny examined notes submitted by case managers and housing specialists and interviewed staff from high-performing shelters in an effort to identify promising practices.

Food First has reported that they are encouraging clients who have bonded with one another or were able to build positive rapport with one another during their shelter stay to secure housing together. Based on the language that clients speak, as well as their ethnic background, Food First has also utilized online mapping to help residents obtain shared rooms or apartments, in neighborhoods where residents

will most likely be surrounded by people who speak the same language and come from the same ethnic background. While Food First works to ensure that clients locate permanent housing in safe neighborhoods based on their history of domestic violence, shelter staff noted that do not have the capacity to accompany their clients on visits to prospective apartments to ensure that the units are in compliance with building code. Other shelters have restructured their housing programs, with a greater focus on economic self-sufficiency, budgeting and financial literacy.

Meanwhile, New York Asian Women’s Center (NYAWC) was able to secure a federal Transitional Housing grant of \$250,000 from the Office of Violence Against Women, under the Department of Justice, to provide time-limited rental assistance to clients to help them obtain permanent, affordable housing, specifically housing funded with Low Income Housing Tax Credits. The grant allows NYAWC to provide rental assistance to 12 families for 24 months on an incremental basis. NYAWC will pay 75% of the participant’s monthly rent for the first 6 months, gradually reduce the payment to 50% from months 7-12; and further reduce the payment to 25% from months 13-18 and months 19-24. The participant is responsible for the remaining percentage of the monthly rent payment, and receives support services through the duration of their enrollment in the program. The program is structured as a participant-driven model that allows the participant to take the lead, with NYAWC providing support through developing relationship with landlords. NYAWC reported that it has also helped clients obtain one-shot deals from HRA²⁰ to help subsidize housing costs.

Barriers to Permanent Housing

In *Closing Doors*, New Destiny identified a need to further research the characteristics and capabilities of those who were able to obtain housing and determine the extent to which these factors may support or inhibit households in emergency and transitional shelter in obtaining permanent housing. This section captures trends in various survey indicators: household size, English proficiency, work experience and education level.

The vast majority of households in domestic violence shelters are headed by women. While domestic violence impacts households from all socioeconomic levels, low-income women and those receiving public assistance, who have limited options and may be dependent on their abusers for financial resources, are faced with even greater challenges to self-sufficiency, including limited opportunities for employment that pay a living wage, an inability to access affordable child care, and sustained mental or physical trauma from abuse.

● ● ●

“[My] client could not work due to her medical conditions and mental health problems. She sustained major injuries from her abuser and continued to have panic attacks after the abuse.”

-Tier II shelter case manager

● ● ●

These challenges are compounded by the inability of some survivors to comply with the mandatory requirements for maintaining public assistance, the only lifeline available for survivors who are not yet working. Recipients of public assistance are required by federal law to engage in work activities designed to help them become self-sufficient but, many victims of domestic violence are either too traumatized or simply unsafe to immediately enter the workforce after fleeing their abusers. Case managers and

housing specialists have reported that residents are not yet able to work due to the destabilizing effects of abuse. Furthermore, although survivors of domestic violence who have experienced the dual traumas of domestic violence and homelessness would benefit from supportive services in permanent housing once their brief stay in emergency shelter ends, this population has been excluded from supportive housing initiatives such as NY/NY III.

Waivers from public assistance may exempt survivors from some of these mandatory work requirements but 79.44% of emergency shelter discharges did not receive a work waiver from public assistance; however there was a nearly 7% increase in the number of residents who were provided with a medical waiver, including WeCare. It is unknown if the lack of domestic violence waivers is due to residents not asking for them or needing them based on the concrete need to find employment to obtain housing and escape homelessness or if waivers are simply not made available to those who may need them.

Even those who are determined to gain and maintain employment face an uphill battle. Despite two years of “recovery” after the passage of the 2009 stimulus act, unemployment and underemployment rates have remained static in New York City,²¹ with most of the recorded gains in net job growth occurring in low-

skilled sectors with below-average wages such as such as tourism and retail. These economic trends, coupled with the declining purchasing power of cash assistance provided as part of federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds, have created mounting hardship for low-income survivors of domestic violence. Some shelters also reported that clients had difficulties with saving enough income before leaving shelter, and cited the importance of helping clients improve their budgeting and financial literacy skills during their shelter stay.

Smaller households may have better luck overcoming barriers associated with the current economic climate. Among single households exiting emergency shelter, there was a 4% increase in the number of residents who left for permanent housing presumably because residents without children can move to smaller, lower cost apartments or more easily find safe shared living situations and do not have to account for the cost of childcare. This group accounted for the only increase in housing placements among all emergency shelter household sizes represented. However, as noted previously, single households also comprise a much smaller portion of the total domestic violence shelter system,

Harsh Economic Realities

Survivors of domestic violence continue to struggle with broader economic challenges:

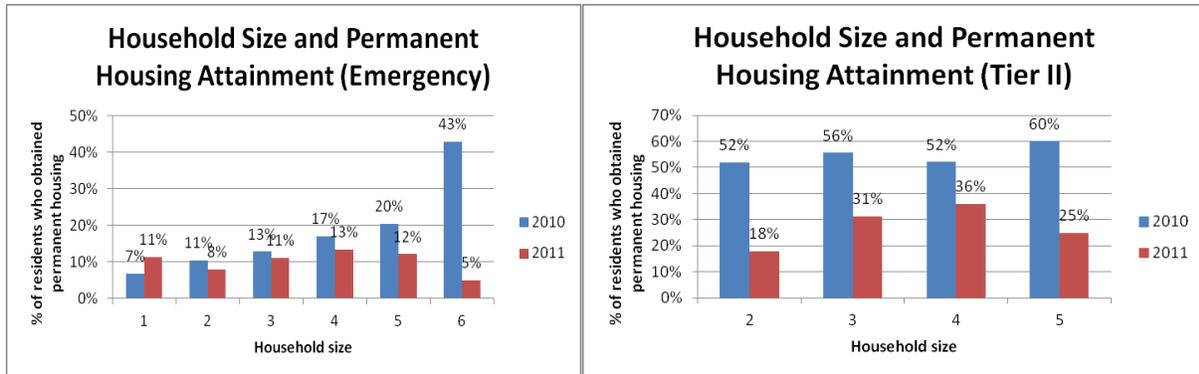
➤ **Gender wage gap**

A 2012 U.S. Census Bureau report revealed that among Americans with some form of post-high school education—a vocational, associate's, bachelor's, or advanced degree—men make more than \$800 above women's pay every month.

➤ **Limited wage growth in New York**

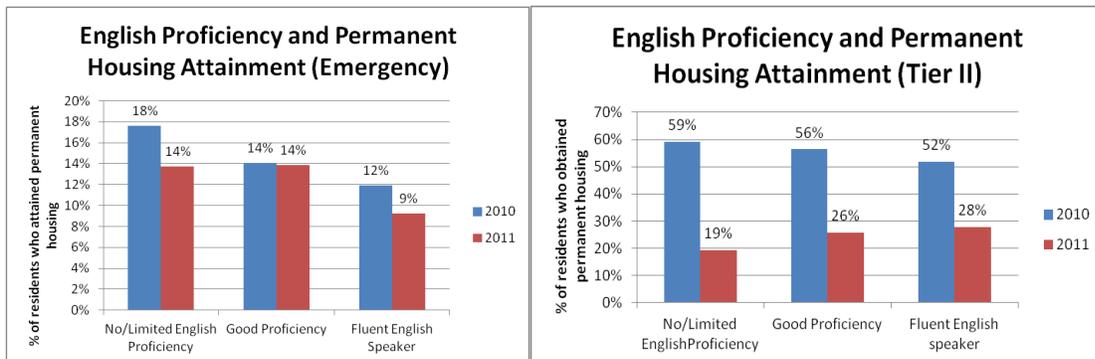
Real hourly median wages among workers with less than a high school diploma fell by 15 percent between 1988 and 2002 and by 3.1 percent between 2002 and 2010. New York's minimum wage has not been raised since 2004, and the purchasing power of the state minimum wage is well below levels in the 60s and 70s.

accounting for 14% of the shelter population in 2011. Just 8% of two-person households left for permanent housing in 2011, a 3% drop over the same period in 2010, and there were even bigger declines among five- and six-person households, with 12% and 5% of these households, respectively, leaving for permanent housing. These declines reflect across-the-board difficulties in securing permanent housing without any rental subsidies, but it appears that single households were more successful in obtaining permanent housing than larger households who had to look for bigger units, which are more expensive while also absorbing the costs of childcare, a necessary financial burden for working single parents.



Unlike emergency shelter, it appears that a larger percentage of Tier II households with three or more people were able to obtain permanent housing, with 31% and 36% of three- and four-person households, respectively, attaining permanent housing. Meanwhile, just 18% of two-person households were able to secure permanent housing. Yet, as in emergency shelter, there were significant declines in permanent housing attainment among all household sizes—in 2010, 60% of 5-person households exiting the Tier II system were able to obtain permanent housing, but this figure dropped by 35% in 2011.

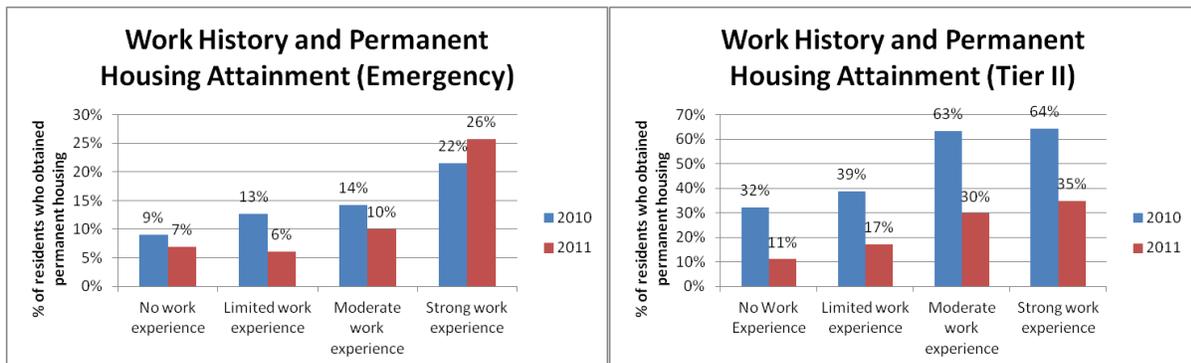
As for the relationship between English proficiency and permanent housing attainment, the data does not demonstrate a strong link between English language skills and improved housing outcomes. Of emergency shelter residents who are fluent English speakers, 9% obtained permanent housing, while 14% of residents with no or limited English proficiency were able to attain permanent housing. This may be attributed to the observations of one housing specialist noted earlier in this paper; immigrant households, particularly those without legal immigration status tend to be highly motivated to work and are adept at utilizing social networks and the underground economy to locate employment and housing.



In Tier II shelters, English speakers do outperform non-English speakers in terms of housing placements possibly because those non-English speakers staying in shelter longer were less able to make use of

informal networks that emergency shelter residents were able to employ to achieve housing placements. Of Tier II shelter residents with no or limited English proficiency, just 19% attained permanent housing, compared to 28% of residents with fluent English skills who left for permanent housing (a 20% decrease in permanent housing attainments from 2010), and 26% of residents with good proficiency in English who were able to obtain permanent housing by the time of discharge.

Of emergency shelter residents with strong work experience (those who had worked steadily for three years or more before entering shelter), 26% were able to obtain permanent housing, a 4% increase over the previous year. This represented the only increase in permanent housing placements among residents with varying levels of work experience. Meanwhile, of residents who had limited work experience (those that worked one year or less), just 6% were able to attain permanent housing in 2011, a 7% decline over the previous year; this was the largest decrease among all the subgroups. These findings are aligned with anecdotal information from shelter staff that, in addition to the lack of a housing subsidy, one of the main challenges that survivors face in obtaining permanent housing is the ability to secure employment that would generate sufficient earnings to help them afford housing at fair market rent in New York City. By promoting a “work-first” approach, Advantage had allowed families and individuals to secure private market housing without living-wage jobs or supports that would help them achieve higher income levels that could sustain the monthly rent for their apartment by the end of their subsidy. In the absence of such supports, the working poor who most recently (re)entered the workforce continue to struggle to find jobs that can support the cost of housing.

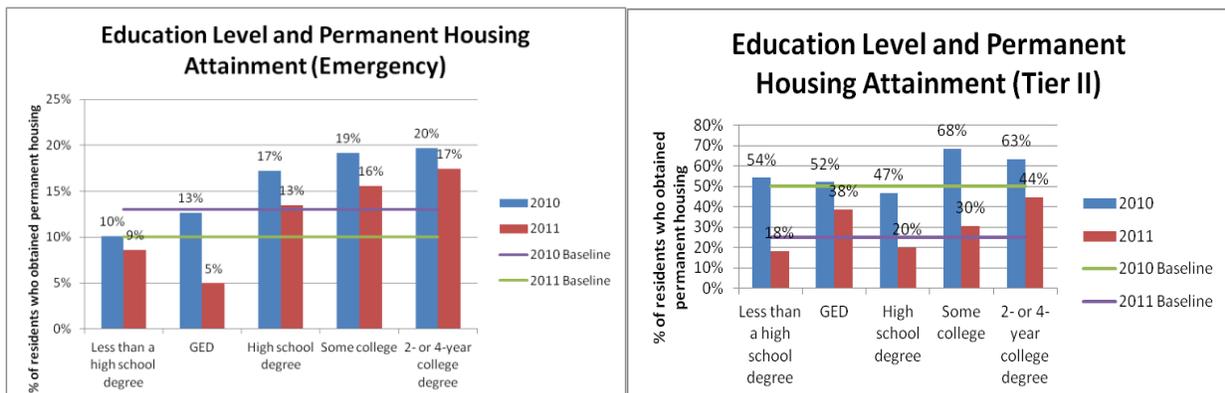


The data suggested that there was a stronger link between work experience and permanent housing attainment in the Tier II system than in the emergency shelters: residents with strong work experience achieved the largest percentage (35%) of permanent housing attainments among all the subgroups, while 30% of residents with moderate work experience were able to obtain housing. At the same time, these findings are unsurprising given that they are reflective of the work history trends of the total Tier II shelter population, as over half of residents in the Tier II system had moderate or strong work experience prior to entering shelter.

However, when compared to the same period in 2010, these figures represented significant declines in the percentage of residents with moderate or strong work experience who were able to attain permanent housing, with declines by over 50% within each subgroup. In 2010, over 63% of residents with moderate work experience obtained permanent housing, and 64% of residents with strong work experience were able to secure permanent housing. Of Tier II residents with no work experience, just 11% were able to obtain permanent housing, a 21% drop over the same period in 2010, and there was a similar decline among residents who worked for one year or less before entering shelter, with just 17%

of this group able to obtain permanent housing after leaving shelter. The significant drop-offs among Tier II residents of varying levels of work experience in 2011 demonstrate that Tier II residents may have been able to utilize Advantage to a greater extent than emergency shelter residents because Advantage rewarded work; however, it did not prioritize clients obtaining living wage employment that would help them achieve self-sufficiency beyond the duration of the subsidy.

Meanwhile, when examining the relationship between educational level and permanent housing outcomes, the charts below indicate that while a larger percentage of emergency shelter residents who had completed some college and had obtained a 2 or 4-year degree were able to obtain housing, there were declines among all subgroups, and permanent outcomes did not differ significantly among residents who had less than a high school degree and those who had more education. These findings are aligned with the fact that higher educational attainment does not necessarily translate into securing employment that would support private market housing. As previously noted in this report, there has been little wage growth in New York since 2002. And the situation is even bleaker among workers with less than a high school diploma, whose real hourly median wages fell by 15 percent between 1988 and 2002²². On the other hand, in Tier II shelter, there were more dramatic declines in permanent housing outcomes among the subgroups—while 54% of residents with less than a high school degree were able to obtain permanent housing in 2010, just 18% of residents with less than a high school degree were able to do so in 2011. However, the data indicated a stronger link between education level and permanent housing outcomes—of residents with a 2- or 4-year college degree, 44% were able to attain permanent housing.



Recommendations

Given the weak economic recovery in New York City and the shrinking safety net in New York State, even shelter residents with strong work histories and/or higher education levels, are having a difficult time securing employment that would enable them to afford permanent, fair market rate housing in New York City. In light of the bleak economic outlook, in combination with the elimination of all viable housing options for domestic violence survivors exiting shelter in New York City, New Destiny proposes the following recommendations:

- ✓ **Offer a rental subsidy tailored to the continuum of needs of domestic violence survivors in shelter that offers a real path to self-sufficiency and bridges the gap between wages and**

housing costs. The subsidy should address the varied needs of key populations of survivors in shelter, including undocumented immigrants, survivors with disabilities, the working poor and victims who are not yet ready to work due to sustained physical and mental trauma from abuse (see appendix for the Coalition of Domestic Violence Residential Service Providers' housing subsidy proposal).

- ✓ **Leverage federal resources and funding such as Shelter Plus Care and the Transitional Housing grant from the Department of Justice's Office of Violence Against Women.** These programs allow DV providers and municipalities broader latitude to better address the housing needs of DV survivors, including the provision of rental assistance and other supports as part of scattered-site permanent supportive housing/rapid re-housing models.
- ✓ **Revise the NYCHA DV priority documentation requirements to be more in line with the realities experienced and reported by DV shelter residents.** Although NYCHA revised its documentation criteria for the DV priority in 2006, residents continue to struggle with meeting the requirements for the DV priority. Residents are screened and identified as survivors of domestic violence by experienced service providers, and they should not have to undergo a duplicate screening to benefit from the priority, particularly when that screening fails to account for the reality that many domestic violence victims do not report their abuse to police²³.
- ✓ **Research homelessness prevention/rapid re-housing models from other states and municipalities throughout the U.S. that are tailored specifically for helping homeless domestic violence survivors achieve permanent housing stability and explore the possibility of implementing them in NYC.** Examples include Volunteers of America's Home Free program and the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence's Domestic Violence Housing First program. Both program models offer rental assistance that strive to be as low-barrier as possible for survivors and do not require heads of households to be employed in order to participate in the program.
- ✓ **Increase collaboration between DHS and HRA, particularly in data tracking and reporting of survivors who leave the HRA shelter system for DHS.** Despite overlapping needs and similar characteristics identified in families residing in the domestic violence shelter system and those in the general homeless system, data-sharing between the two systems has been limited. This is disconcerting given that 31% of families in the HRA and DHS shelter systems are headed by survivors of domestic violence, and as noted earlier in the report, there were increases in the number of residents in both emergency and Tier II shelters who left for the DHS system after they reached their maximum allowable stay in shelter. Increased data sharing can also reduce inefficiencies and gaps in service delivery, particularly in helping ensure that survivors who enter the DHS system receive an adequate level of protective services.

Conclusion

As New Destiny noted in *Closing Doors*, the HRA shelter system was designed to provide temporary safety to survivors of domestic violence, as well as supportive services that will enable them to stabilize from a crisis situation and start healing from the trauma of abuse. But the HRA shelter system does not offer enough supports to help staff focus on helping survivors obtain permanent housing because HRA does not see this as its mission. Historically, advocates and service providers in the domestic violence

community and the homelessness community have worked in different spheres. However, the two systems can learn from one another, as there is overlap between the two with respect to consumers, problems and solutions. Research also indicates that there may be a positive correlation between domestic violence service providers' level of collaboration with other homeless coalitions and housing agencies, and increased federal funding for domestic violence programs²⁴. In addition, findings from a recent Centers for Disease Control (CDC)-funded study also support the use of applying models that have typically been used in homelessness communities—rapid re-housing or housing first—to address the long-term needs and outcomes of homeless domestic violence survivors²⁵.

In March 2012, HRA recently launched the Domestic Violence Apartment Finders Program, a new initiative that offers financial incentives to domestic violence shelters to match clients to affordable permanent housing options that are aligned with their income level and ability to pay the ongoing monthly rent of the apartment. Through this program, shelter housing staff will focus efforts on providing assistance with applications, preparing families for landlord/housing interviews and supporting them in their transition to permanent housing. Shelters will be paid up to the amount of \$1,300 per apartment for families with children or \$750 per apartment for singles who are successfully matched to an apartment, discharged from shelter to permanent housing, and reside in the apartment for at least 30 days. A portion of the incentive award will be provided to the client to support the transition to permanent housing, including apartment set up. While the Domestic Violence Apartment Finders Program is one initiative that signals a shift toward addressing permanent housing needs, this initiative is time limited and it remains to be seen whether this will affect the permanent housing outcomes of residents.

Further areas of research

- Investigate the large increase in the number of Tier II clients leaving on their own.
- Track income levels of survivors when entering shelter and at time of discharge.
- Explore the surge in “other” permanent housing and the extent to which this type of housing is safe.
- Investigate the type of jobs that survivors are obtaining and whether they are full-time or part-time.
- Explore access to affordable childcare and childcare subsidies to see if barriers to safe childcare are impacting domestic violence victims' ability to secure employment and housing.
- Examine the extent to which survivors are users of other services within the community, including mental health facilities, hospitals and the foster care system, to determine additional barriers and systems where increased collaboration and intervention may be necessary.

References

¹ Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD's 2010 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress

² NYC Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, Domestic Violence Annual Fact Sheet 2011, http://www.nyc.gov/html/ocdv/downloads/pdf/2011_annual_dv_factsheet.pdf

³ In Winter 2009, the waiting list for Section 8 was closed, even for those applying for a Domestic Violence priority. This was followed less than a year later by the elimination of the Domestic Violence Advantage Program (DVAP), Short Term Advantage (HIFI) and Children Advantage.

⁴ New York City stopped any new lease signings under Advantage, the major rental subsidy program for shelter residents, on March 14, 2011, citing the withdrawal of funding from New York State. In addition, the City notified landlords that it would cease rent payments for current Advantage tenants as of April 1, 2011. A court subsequently ordered the City to continue monthly subsidy payments for current tenants until a lawsuit, brought by Legal Aid Society on behalf of tenants receiving

Advantage, was heard. Legal Aid lost the case in September 2011, when Justice Judith J. Gische ruled that the City could stop paying rental assistance Advantage tenants. Although another appeal was pending at the time, the City notified current Advantage tenants in February 2012 that their housing assistance had come to an end.

⁵ Feuer, Alan. "Homeless Families, Cloaked in Normality." http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/05/nyregion/ordinary-families-cloaked-in-a-veil-of-homelessness.html?_r=1&emc=eta1 February 3, 2012.

⁶ In this report, "April through December 2010" will be referred to as "2010" or the "2010 period," and "April through December 2011" will be referred to as "2011" or the "2011 period."

⁷ The analysis of all the data in this report, including destination after discharge, education level, work history, clients' eligibility for the NYCHA DV priority, and NYCHA/Section 8 status were based on information provided by clients who were discharged from shelter, as reported by case managers. While New Destiny reviewed additional notes in the survey provided by case managers and followed up with individual case managers regarding discrepancies and errors in the survey data, these statements may not accurately reflect what actually occurs after discharge.

⁸ Since 2003, New Destiny has collaborated with the NYC Coalition of DV Residential Providers to collect and analyze monthly surveys from HRA-contracted shelters. There was a response rate of 93% during the seven-month study period (April – December 2011). In the corresponding 2010 period, the response rate was 92%.

⁹ Fiscal Policy Institute for The New York Women's Foundation, March 21, 2012, "The Governor's Proposed 2012-13 New York State Budget: Continued Scarce Funding for Women, Families and Youth in a Weak Recovery."

¹⁰ Mayor's Management Report for 2011

¹¹ NYC Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, Domestic Violence Annual Fact Sheet 2011, http://www.nyc.gov/html/ocdv/downloads/pdf/2011_annual_dv_factsheet.pdf

¹² Only families are eligible for transitional shelter

¹³ Emergency shelter residents are permitted an initial 90-day stay with one potential extension of 45 days; the maximum length of stay of 135 days is regulated by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). Beyond 135 days, HRA receives a sanction, and both the 25% reimbursement from the State and the 50% reimbursement from the federal government are discontinued, leaving the City to pay 100% of costs.

¹⁴ Independent Budget Office, <http://ibo.nyc.ny.us/cgi-park/>

¹⁵ Section 8 tenants that are interested in moving outside of New York City's five boroughs, must request "portability" when requesting a transfer. "Portability" is NYCHA's term for transferring vouchers over to another city and/or state. In addition to navigating the portability process in the NYCHA Section 8 office, the Section 8 tenant will also need to make contact and determine the portability rules and process in the area to which she/he hopes to move. The portability process usually takes approximately two months

¹⁶ October 2011 NYCHA presentation

¹⁷ Domestic violence survivors can be moved up the wait list for NYCHA public housing if they are able to provide specific documentation such as orders of protection and police reports.

¹⁸ In April 2006, NYCHA had amended the DV documentation requirements for DV victims applying for the emergency priority for NYCHA public housing and Section 8 housing assistance

¹⁹ National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2012 Out of Reach: America's Forgotten Crisis

²⁰ New York City residents may apply for a one-time emergency grant, also called a "One Shot", when an unforeseen circumstance prevents the applicant from meeting an expense. An applicant must meet eligibility guidelines and is subject to investigative review of the application.

²¹ Fiscal Policy Institute briefing on Preliminary FY 2013 New York City budget, March 2012

²² Fiscal Policy Institute, The State of Working New York: The Unemployment Crisis Two Years into Recovery, Fall 2011

²³ NYC Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, Domestic Violence Annual Fact Sheet 2011, http://www.nyc.gov/html/ocdv/downloads/pdf/2011_annual_dv_factsheet.pdf

²⁴ Correia, Amy. Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (1999). "Housing and Battered Women: A Case Study of Domestic Violence Programs in Iowa Building Comprehensive Solutions to Domestic Violence: Publication # 3, A Policy and Practice Paper."

²⁵ Chiquita Rollins, Nancy E. Glass, Nancy A. Perrin, Kris A. Billhardt, Amber Clough, Jamie Barnes, Ginger C. Hanson and Tina L. Bloom. "Housing Instability Is as Strong a Predictor of Poor Health Outcomes: as Level of Danger in an Abusive Relationship: Findings From the SHARE Study." Journal of Interpersonal Violence. 10 October 2011

Appendix

Coalition of Domestic Violence Residential Providers Proposal for a Specialized Housing Assistance Program for Domestic Violence Shelter Residents

“Breaking the cycle of domestic violence includes giving victims of domestic violence real housing options.” Deputy Mayor Carol Robles-Roman 10/25/07

The Need

Domestic violence survivors have a history of violence that often results in serious trauma, isolation, and a long road to recovery for adults and children. When survivors are encouraged to seek safety from abuse by entering the specialized domestic violence shelter system, the expectation is that they will be able to remain safe when they leave as well. The best prospect for long-term safety and stability for low-income survivors and their families is safe, affordable permanent housing. However, domestic violence shelter residents face a number of challenges in obtaining housing:

Limited Length of Stay

Human Resources Administration (HRA)-operated domestic violence shelters offer residents a maximum stay of 135 days, much shorter than in the Department of Homeless Services (DHS)-operated general shelter system.

Barriers to Employment

- City policies focus on employment as the primary means for homeless families to obtain housing.
- Many survivors who are ready and able to re-enter the workforce lack the education and the job skills necessary to generate sufficient income to afford even “low-income housing.”
- Survivors may not yet be able to work due to the debilitating and destabilizing effects of abuse.

Dwindling Housing Options

Specialized affordable housing and rental subsidy programs for survivors have been totally dismantled:

- NYCHA stopped accepting new Section 8 applications in December 2009, even for applicants applying with a Domestic Violence priority.
- The HRA Domestic Violence Advantage program, a rental subsidy program tailored to the needs of domestic violence survivors, was eliminated in August 2010.
- Due to state budget cuts, the City discontinued Advantage, the major rental subsidy program for residents living in the HRA and DHS shelters, in March 2011.

As a result, 80% of households exit the domestic violence shelter system per year without a safe place to go, still homeless and at risk of future abuse. Without viable housing options, victims who flee danger face an impossible choice at the end of their shelter stay – become homeless again or return to the abuser. Neither of these outcomes is acceptable.

The Response

Ensure that no one ever has to choose between abuse and homelessness: create a specialized housing program to address the specific needs of domestic violence shelter residents

Similar remedies have been made available to persons living with AIDS and child welfare-involved families seeking to reunite with their children. *We recognize that budgets are tight but the cost of doing nothing is simply too great; family related homicides are up 27% so far this year. Breaking the cycle of domestic violence includes giving victims of domestic violence real housing options.*

Proposed Program Features

- Provides rental assistance in order to begin to move towards economic independence.
- Tailored to the varied needs of four key populations of survivors in shelter (see below).
- Offers competitive rents that rely on HUD's fair market rent standards (used for Section 8 payment standards) to make placement in safe, quality housing an attainable goal.
- Encourages landlord participation with competitive payment standards.
- Pays security deposits to landlords at lease signing and a broker's fee each equivalent to 1 month's rent.

Targeted Survivor Groups for Housing Subsidy

1) *Work-Ready Survivors—Rewarding Employment*

- Incentivize employment for those who are ready and able to re-enter the workforce and those who are working and can move to higher paying jobs.
- Determine resident eligibility for housing assistance based on a sliding scale; tenants pay 30% of income towards rent and shelter residents are deemed income-eligible unless 30% of household income exceeds the rent payment standards for the family/apartment size.
- Avoid arbitrary time limits for assistance and offer participating tenants a range of social service supports to help them earn a living wage. This strategy better aligns with the realities of the gap between wages and fair market rent. Once 30% of household income matches or exceeds the total rent costs for the household, rental assistance for the household would end.

Anticipated enrollment: between 175-210 families annually for a cost of \$2.8-\$3.3 million per year.

2) *Unemployed Survivors—Promoting Self-Sufficiency*

- Promote self-sufficiency as a long-term goal for all residents
- Acknowledge that many families in the domestic violence shelter system face multiple barriers to employment, including the effects of trauma, and limited education and work experience.
- Provide families with tools to secure living wage employment and end the cycle of dependency.
- Require public assistance (PA)-dependent households to enroll in ADVENT or similar programming and be engaged in 35 hours per week of eligible work-related activities. 21 hours would be devoted to training, education or job readiness programming and the remaining 14 hours would be dedicated to clinical services designed to help survivors heal from abuse.
- Use the PA shelter allowance normally granted to PA recipients towards total rental costs.
- Require these households to work with ADVENT II post-housing placement to continue their progress towards work and self-sufficiency, including mandatory appointments for follow-up. Once employed, these households would pay 30% of their income towards rent and a service plan should be developed in collaboration with ADVENT II staff to encourage wage growth. Once 30% of household income matches or exceeds the total rent costs for the household, rental assistance to the household would end.

By allowing families to find safe housing before requiring them to enter the workforce, they will have a better chance of securing employment in growth industries as opposed to minimum wage employment that offers little upward mobility or a chance to earn a wage that can support the full cost of housing.

Anticipated enrollment: between 350-385 families annually for a cost of \$5.6-\$6.1 million per year.

3) Persons with Disabilities—Offering Long-term Support

- Refer persons with disabilities residing in domestic violence shelters to Section 8 when it becomes available and/or NYCHA Public Housing with a priority that provides access to permanently affordable housing. For this population, the goal of earning a wage high enough to support rent may be unattainable.
- Develop a rental subsidy for such households to act as a bridge between the short length of stay in domestic violence shelter and placement in a public housing or Section 8 apartment, where processing of applications and wait for a placement can take over a year.
- Require households to pay 30% of their income (generally SSI income) towards rent and follow up with an authorized after-care provider to ensure that they will continue to attend to the responsibilities related to following up with applications for public housing/Section 8 assistance.
- End assistance upon the offer of a NYCHA Public Housing unit or receipt of a Section 8 voucher. This model follows the precedent of the Fixed Income Advantage Program and offers the best chance for long-term stability for persons with disabilities.

Anticipated enrollment: between 35-70 families annually for a cost of \$.6-\$1.2 million per year.

4) Parents with Unresolved Immigrant Status—Protecting the Children

Some families in domestic violence shelter are headed by adults whose immigration status does not permit lawful, documented employment or the receipt of federal housing benefits. Many of these families have citizen children who have been forced into homelessness by a parent's abuser. Some of these families can access VAWA self-petitions or U-Visa applications that will ultimately result in work authorization and legal permanent status but these remedies require a longer processing time than the maximum time in shelter allows. Other families have some documented source of income but it is not enough to support rent for the entire household.

- Offer pro-rated housing assistance based on the eligible household members (usually dependent children) until the parents are able to get the status needed to be legally employed.
- Require out-of-status household members to work with a licensed immigration attorney to apply for status while also engaging in skill-building activities like other program participants.
- Once such families secure the necessary status to receive PA benefits and become employed the program would convert to the other types of assistance offered to shelter residents and placed tenants who are either working or actively seeking employment, as described above.

Anticipated enrollment: between 35-70 families annually for a cost of \$.54-\$1.1 million per year.

Conclusion

The City of New York has the opportunity to provide life-saving housing assistance to hundreds of families residing in the domestic violence shelter system. A multi-pronged strategy to address the specific needs of domestic violence shelter residents, like that described above, could place 595-735 families in safe, permanent housing annually for a total cost of \$9.5-\$11.8 million per year. If the State legislature could be persuaded to use traditional cost sharing formulas for rental assistance to the homeless, the City share of those costs could be as low as \$2.9-\$3.5 million. We urge the City to implement this proposal, ensuring safe, permanent housing as a necessary part of the strategy to end the cycle of violence.

*Out in the Cold:
Housing Cuts Leave Domestic Violence Survivors With No Place to Go*

Number of Households to be Served by DV Housing Assistance Program

Shelter Population Description	Number of Households (based on historical housing placement rates under Advantage)	Number of Households (based on projected increase in housing placement under new proposal)
Average Number of Households Served by the Domestic Violence Shelter System Annually	5000	--
Base Number of Shelter Users Expected To Be Eligible For Housing Assistance: Historically, eligibility for housing subsidies is limited to those staying in shelter 42 days or more. On average, 70% of households remain in shelter long enough to qualify for housing assistance	3500	--
Work Ready Survivors: The Coalition assumes 5% of households could be placed using a subsidy designed for working families. This number is based on Work Advantage placement rates plus an increase of a few percentage points based on programmatic enhancements emphasizing self-sufficiency leading to more employment amongst shelter users	175	210
Unemployed Survivors: The Coalition assumes 10% of households receiving public assistance could be placed in housing in a program designed for those still working towards employment based on DV Advantage placement rates	350	385
Persons with Disabilities: About 1% of households were placed in a Fixed Income Advantage apartment when the program was available. We therefore assume that under our proposal, a similar number of households could be placed in housing using the option designed for persons with disabilities	35	70
Families with Unresolved Immigrant Status: It is estimated that about 10% of domestic violence shelter households contain at least one undocumented household member. The Coalition assumes that not all of these families would be placed in housing but rather that about 10% of them would be eligible for and placed in an apartment under our proposed program. Therefore, this group would account for a total of 1% of the total shelter population residing in shelter for 42 or more days.	35	70
TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS TO BE PLACED IN HOUSING UNDER PROPOSED PLAN	595	735

*Out in the Cold:
Housing Cuts Leave Domestic Violence Survivors With No Place to Go*

Budget for Proposed DV Housing Assistance Program

	Source of Income and Contribution Amounts by Household Type	Tenant Share of the Monthly Rent	Program Share of Monthly Rent	Annual Rental Costs Paid by Program	Broker Fee (equivalent to one month's rent)	Security Deposit (equivalent to one month's rent)	Total Cost per household per year	Total Cost for All Households Projected to Be Served Based on Historical Housing Placement Rate	Total Cost for Enhanced Number of Households Expected to be Served based on New Program Structure
Working/Work Ready Survivors	Assumes average wage of \$9 per hour with tenant paying 30% of her income towards rent	\$378.00	\$1,072.00	\$12,864.00	\$1,450.00	\$1,450.00	\$15,764.00	\$2,758,700.00	\$3,310,440.00
Unemployed Survivors	PA shelter allowance will fund rent for first 6 months (average allowance \$341.50) after which tenant gets a job and pays 30% of income towards rent. Assumes tenant earns \$9 per hour at 35 hours a week	\$341.50 for first 6 months (paid by PA) \$378 for following 6 months (paid by tenant's earned income)	\$1108.50 for first 6 months, \$1072 for second 6 months (once recalculated upon tenant getting a job)	\$13,083.00	\$1,450.00	\$1,450.00	\$15,983.00	\$5,594,050.00	\$6,153,455.00
Persons with Disabilities	Tenants will be expected to pay 30% of their income towards rent. The average SSI income for a single adult is \$700 per month	\$210.00	\$1,240.00	\$14,880.00	\$1,450.00	\$1,450.00	\$17,780.00	\$622,300.00	\$1,244,600.00

*Out in the Cold:
Housing Cuts Leave Domestic Violence Survivors With No Place to Go*

<p>Families with Unresolved Immigrant Status</p>	<p>Assumes average ratio of documented to undocumented is 2:1. Rental assistance would be based on eligible household size and disregard documented members. Average rent therefore assumed to be \$1350 and average PA rental allowance would be \$280. Since such households are not generally work authorized, tenant share of the rent from earned income would be \$0 for entire year but this would only be extended to immigrants with remedies and/or other verifiable sources of income (child support) so long term residents would be able to pay rent. Those with verifiable income at the outset would pay right away at the rate of 30% as any other tenant</p>	<p>\$280.00</p>	<p>\$1,070.00</p>	<p>\$12,840.00</p>	<p>\$1,350.00</p>	<p>\$1,350.00</p>	<p>\$15,540.00</p>	<p>\$543,900.00</p>	<p>\$1,087,800.00</p>
---	---	-----------------	-------------------	--------------------	-------------------	-------------------	--------------------	---------------------	-----------------------

*Out in the Cold:
Housing Cuts Leave Domestic Violence Survivors With No Place to Go*

	and are counted in the categories above as applicable.								
State/Federal Share								\$6,663,265.00	\$8,257,406.50
NYC Share								\$2,855,685.00	\$3,538,888.50
Total Cost								\$9,518,950.00	\$11,796,295.00