

# Family Violence Prevention Fund

## The Facts on Housing and Domestic Violence

Our nation’s lack of affordable housing can dramatically reduce options for women experiencing domestic violence, trapping them in abusive situations or forcing them and their children to become homeless if they leave. Women living in poverty are especially vulnerable. Despite this, domestic violence often becomes so severe that women leave their homes, even when they have no place to go. In fact, domestic violence is a major cause of homelessness in this country.

- Ninety-two percent of homeless women have experienced severe physical and/or sexual assault at some point in their lives.<sup>i</sup>
- In a 1998 study, 22 percent of 777 individuals surveyed stated that they had fled their home because of domestic violence.<sup>ii</sup>
- In a 2002 report by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, 44 percent of the cities surveyed identified domestic violence as the primary cause of homelessness.<sup>iii</sup>
- Victims and survivors of domestic violence have trouble finding apartments because they may have poor credit, rental, and employment histories as a result of their abuse.<sup>iv</sup>
- Requests for emergency shelter by homeless families with children increased in 68 percent of US cities surveyed in 1999.<sup>v</sup>
- In 2000, approximately 296,400 women and children were not able to access essential emergency shelter for battered women.<sup>vi</sup>
- In one study, sexual abuse before leaving home was reported by 61 percent of homeless girls and 19 percent of homeless boys.<sup>vii</sup>

<sup>i</sup> Browne, A. 1998. “Responding to the Needs of Low Income and Homeless Women Who are Survivors of Family Violence.” *Journal of American Medical Women’s Association*. 53(2): 57-64.  
<sup>ii</sup> *Ten Cities 1997-1998: A Snapshot of Family Homelessness Across America*. Homes for the Homeless. Retrieved January 9, 2004. <http://www.homesforthehomeless.com>.  
<sup>iii</sup> The United States Conference of Mayors. 1999. *A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America’s Cities*, p.39.  
<sup>iv</sup> Susan A. Reif and Lisa J. Krisher. 2000. “Subsidized Housing and the Unique Needs of Domestic Violence Victim.” *Clearing House Review*. National Center on Poverty Law. Chicago, IL.  
<sup>v</sup> The United States Conference of Mayors. 1999. *A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America’s Cities*, p.39.  
<sup>vi</sup> National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2001. Detailed Shelter Surveys.  
<sup>vii</sup> Estes, R.J. and N. A. Weiner. 2001. Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. University of Pennsylvania.

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