

domestic violence & homelessness | facts

According to the Indiana Coalition against Domestic Violence (ICADV) 5,842 adults and 5,420 children in Indiana required a combined 180,000 days of 24-hour shelter service in 2009-2010.

Even more alarming is the fact that 5,821 individuals were denied shelter due to programs being over capacity or due to inappropriate program fit.

Each year in Indianapolis and across the country, domestic violence is a major factor in homelessness, and not just for women and children, though those populations tend to be the most effected by domestic violence. In the same 2009-2010 reporting period, the Indiana Coalition against Domestic Violence, or ICADV, reported that nearly 20 percent of those seeking shelter were men.

Survivors of domestic violence are often isolated from support networks and financial resources by their abusers. As a result, they may lack steady income, employment history, credit history, and landlord references. They also often suffer from anxiety, panic disorder, major depression and substance abuse.

The National Network to End Domestic Violence

(NNEDV at www.nnedv.org) reports that 63 percent of homeless women have experienced some form of domestic or sexual violence in their lives.

Often families leaving domestic violence situations stayed in shelters or transitional housing longer than most populations. This is due to a variety of factors:

- Due to abuse, victims of domestic violence often have poor credit and work histories
- Family size is often large, requiring more-difficult-to-locate permanent housing
- Landlords sometimes discriminate against families with protective orders
- Occurrences of violence sometimes cause landlords to evict a family, resulting in an unfortunate mix of vulnerability and homelessness
- Abused victims fear for their own safety

Immigrant populations, domestic violence & homelessness

According to the ICADV, immigrant women often feel trapped in abusive relationships because of immigration laws, language barriers, social isolation, and lack of financial resources. Abusers often use their partners' immigration status as a tool of control. In such situations, it is common for a batterer to exert control over his partner's immigration status in order to force her to remain in the relationship. Battered immigrant women who attempt to flee may not have access to bilingual shelters, financial assistance, or food. It is also unlikely that they will have the assistance of a certified interpreter in court, when reporting complaints to the police or a 911 operator, or even in acquiring information about their rights and the legal system.

Abuse victims leaving such situations are often the most threatened and the most in need of intensive supportive housing, including translations services. Such situations can be extremely difficult to find.



What works

Clearly, victims of domestic violence are in need of a wide array of supports and services. With regards to housing and homelessness, the availability of reasonable, affordable housing, often with supports such as subsidies and ancillary services, like child care and security are the most important. Many times, these housing options need to be multiple bedroom units to accommodate larger families. As with general family homelessness, housing subsidies, either permanent or medium- or short-term are crucial.

And, as always, prevention and early intervention in situations of domestic abuse is of paramount importance.

What you can do

- Locally, urge city leaders to preserve and create more affordable housing options, particularly those that meet the needs of victims of domestic violence.
- Continue to call for more local funding for housing subsidies, particularly permanent or long-term focused on domestic violence victims.
- Connect with the ICADV and get involved in their efforts to advocate for all aspects of the domestic violence problem.

Contact CHIP at (317) 630-0853 or the Indianapolis Domestic Violence Network (www.dvnconnect.org) to find out more about how you can help end domestic violence homelessness in Indianapolis.



Did you know?

An animal's right not to be treated with cruelty predated a woman's right!

1866 American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is formed.

1871 Alabama is the first state to rescind the legal right of men to beat their wives (Fulgrahm v. State). Massachusetts also declares wife beating illegal.

1875 Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children is established.

(SOURCE: ICADV.org)