

the Sillerman Center

FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF PHILANTHROPY

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (DV) PROGRAMS: A Guide to High Impact Investments



At least 12 million people in the US experience domestic violence (DV)* every year. Local non-profit domestic violence programs provide crucial and often life-saving services to DV survivors and their children everyday. However, according to a recent census by the [National Network to End Domestic Violence](#), on an average day in 2014 there were 10,871 unmet requests for domestic violence services due to inadequate resources. More than half of these requests were for shelter or housing.

Domestic violence programs are supported by federal, state, local, and private funders, yet these programs often lack the resources to adequately address the needs of survivors and their children, leaving many without support. Private funding can help ensure that programs provide the necessary services so that survivors can achieve long-term safety and independence.

Domestic Violence Service Providers: Program Considerations

Domestic violence programs can provide survivors with physical safety, emotional support, parenting aid, safety planning, basic needs, and connection to community resources. However, programs face many barriers to providing adequate services, often due to financial constraints.

<p>NEEDS</p> <p>Sufficient staffing, training in best practices, adequate space to provide services, accessible community resources, opportunities for professional development, cultural competency training</p>	<p>SERVICES</p> <p>Emergency shelters, crisis line, transitional housing, legal advocacy, crisis counseling, crisis response teams, children & youth services, support groups, community education, long-term counseling, and provision of basic needs</p>	<p>BARRIERS</p> <p>Staff turnover, waiting lists, lack of beds/staff in shelter, lack of community support, lack of data collection/program evaluation, staff & supervisors untrained in providing services to diverse populations</p>	<p>In 2012, 88% of DV programs in the US reported increased demand for services</p> <p>69% reported decreased funding</p> <p>1 in 4 survivors who receive DV services do not experience future DV, compared with 1 in 10 survivors who do not receive services</p> <p>Contributing Factors: transportation, affordable housing, job availability, survivors do not trust systems, and abusers are not held accountable by legal systems</p>
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*Domestic violence includes physical violence, psychological violence, sexual violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner. More information can be found at the [National Resource Center on Domestic Violence](#).

A Strong Domestic Violence Program ...

- UNDERSTANDS AND VALIDATES challenges DV survivors face when seeking safety, using a trauma-informed approach
- INDIVIDUALIZES intervention services to meet the specific needs of survivors and their families
- SUPPORTS STAFF to prevent burnout and vicarious trauma, recognizing the importance of staff health for client success
- ENGAGES COMMUNITY PARTNERS to improve outreach, resources for survivors, and community support
- PROTECTS survivors' confidentiality and privacy with comprehensive policies that are consistently upheld
- UTILIZES DATA about best practices, service outcomes, and survivor demographics to inform and improve services

High Performing Programs Should Aim to Address the Following Areas:



Crisis Intervention Services

- Provide 24-hour crisis response services
- Plan safety procedures with all survivors (when possible) around crisis situation
- Use trauma-informed, evidence-based, survivor-centered approach
- Recognize causal link between parent and child well-being

Services Supporting Self-Sufficiency

- Empower survivors by providing resources, information, and DV education
- Work with survivors to develop detailed, individualized long-term safety plans
- Identify survivors' barriers to safety and self-sufficiency and develop goals with survivors
- Provide children's services and parenting support

Community Engagement & Advocacy

- Build relationships with police, schools, shelters, health services, city councils, and other locals
- Provide DV training and education for community leaders and service providers
- Advocate to improve protections for survivors, hold abusers accountable, and prevent future violence
- Host community events raising awareness about the effects of DV
- Collect and share data and information about DV

Services are trauma-informed when they take into account the trauma that a person has experienced and understand how this influences their well-being and the decisions they make.

Providers may experience vicarious trauma when they have symptoms of traumatic stress as a result of hearing about violence and abuse.

While not all programs will successfully address each of these areas, high performing programs with appropriate funding will aim to focus on as many as possible. When programs are successful, survivors will have the opportunity to create individualized safety plans, develop healthy coping skills, connect with appropriate community resources, support their children's healing, and move towards self-determined goals.

For more information please visit:

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