§ 14043e. Findings

Congress finds that:

1. There is a strong link between domestic violence and homelessness. Among cities surveyed, 44 percent identified domestic violence as a primary cause of homelessness.

2. Ninety-two percent of homeless women have experienced severe physical or sexual abuse at some point in their lives. Of all homeless women and children, 60 percent had been abused by age 12, and 63 percent have been victims of intimate partner violence as adults.

3. Women and families across the country are being discriminated against, denied access to, and even evicted from public and subsidized housing because of their status as victims of domestic violence.

4. A recent survey of legal service providers around the country found that these providers have responded to almost 150 documented eviction cases in the last year alone where the tenant was evicted because of the domestic violence crimes committed against her. In addition, nearly 100 clients were denied housing because of their status as victims of domestic violence.

5. Women who leave their abusers frequently lack adequate emergency shelter options. The lack of adequate emergency options for victims presents a serious threat to their safety and the safety of their children. Requests for emergency shelter by homeless women with children increased by 78 percent of United States cities surveyed in 2004. In the same year, 32 percent of the requests for shelter by homeless families went unmet due to the lack of available emergency shelter beds.

6. The average stay at an emergency shelter is 60 days, while the average length of time it takes a homeless family to secure housing is 6 to 10 months.

7. Victims of domestic violence often return to abusive partners because they cannot find long-term housing.

8. There are not enough Federal housing rent vouchers available to accommodate the number of people in need of long-term housing. Some people remain on the waiting list for Federal housing rent vouchers for years, while some lists are closed.

9. Transitional housing resources and services provide an essential continuum between emergency shelter provision and independent living. A majority of women in transitional housing programs stated that had these programs not existed, they would have likely gone back to abusive partners.

10. Because abusers frequently manipulate finances in an effort to control their partners, victims often lack steady income, credit history, landlord references, and a current address, all of which are necessary to obtain long-term permanent housing.

11. Victims of domestic violence in rural areas face additional barriers, challenges, and unique circumstances, such as geographical isolation, poverty, lack of public transportation systems, shortages of health care providers, under-insurance or lack of health insurance, difficulty ensuring confidentiality in small communities, and decreased access to many resources (such as advanced education, job opportunities, and adequate childcare).

12. Congress and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development have recognized in recent years that families experiencing domestic violence have unique needs that should be addressed by those administering the Federal housing programs.