

# ACCESS TO SAFE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

## NEVADA ECONOMIC JUSTICE WORKGROUP



### HOUSING AS VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Housing and violence prevention are directly linked. How many times have you heard or asked this question in relation to domestic violence: "Why doesn't the victim just leave?"

## This question assumes there is "somewhere else to be."

Sadly, survivors face barriers that often mean this mythical 'place-to-go' is non-existent, thus forcing survivors to choose between continued abuse and homelessness." [1] This reality means that 38% of all domestic violence victims will become homeless at some point in their lives. [2] Once a victim-survivor becomes unhoused their risk for experiencing power-based violence significantly increases.

According to a study of homeless and marginally housed people, 32% of women, 27% of men, and 38% of trans persons reported either physical or sexual victimization in the previous year. [3] BIPOC are overrepresented in the homeless population, so it is logical to assume that they experience even higher rates of power-based violence.



## Injustices Within the Housing System

When a victim-survivor finds housing, discriminatory practices often keep them from qualifying for or maintaining stable housing. Harmful stereotypes and the stigma around domestic and sexual violence cause landlords to refuse to rent to victim-survivors. Compounding this problem, victim-survivors often have poor credit and perhaps a criminal record due to their abuser manipulating the justice system.

Ultimately, because many victim-survivors do not qualify for housing, they need assistance with the applications and required deposits. We cannot expect to end violence without addressing the housing crisis and discriminatory practices taking place in Nevada. Outside of discriminatory practices to get into housing, landlords are increasing rent at rates beyond increases in pay rates or inflation. This drastic increase, if often forcing individuals out of their homes, with nowhere to go.



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## Housing In Nevada

Nevada currently ranks 43rd in the nation for housing affordability and has undergone massive population growth (one of the highest in the U.S.). [4] While there have been major investments in housing development, such as the Home Means Nevada \$500 million investment of American Rescue Plan Act dollars, victim-survivors and marginalized communities are still suffering. There is no easy answer to address the housing crisis, but we must look beyond development and focus on other interventions to keep folks in their homes and have opportunities to easily relocate when necessary.

Landlords and housing providers must be held accountable for discriminatory and unfair pricing practices. Nevada must address barriers in accessing existing housing such as deposits, fees, credit scores, and criminal records. Housing rights are human rights. If we fail to address these practices, we are keeping our most vulnerable people on the street and out of safe housing, thereby perpetuating violence at the systemic level.

## Victim-Survivor Stories On Housing

Housing is such an incredible barrier in Nevada that advocates and programs from across the state work tirelessly to find placement for victim-survivors and their families. Below, advocates share their stories on why housing and aligned supports are critically important:

**“When my client received the check to take to her landlord, she broke down crying. She had been stressing about having to pack and move her things into storage and sleeping in her car. This gave her hope and she was extremely thankful for the assistance received.”**

**“With the assistance and support received, my client and her child were able to move into their new apartment. They no longer had safety concerns because their abuser did not know where their new housing was located. Their new house is in a safe neighborhood and both are feeling safe inside and outside of their home for the first time in a while. They are starting a new chapter of their lives.”**

**These stories are just two of many. Without housing, victim-survivors are often forced into homelessness/houselessness, or they remain in unsafe homes risking further abuse and even death. Housing is a necessity and without access to affordable and safe housing, violence will continue in our communities.**

[1] National Network End Domestic Violence. Home safe and sound: the housing needs of domestic violence victims. Retrieved from: [https://nnedv.org/latest\\_update/home-safe-and-sound-the-housing-needs-of-domestic-violence-victims/](https://nnedv.org/latest_update/home-safe-and-sound-the-housing-needs-of-domestic-violence-victims/)

[2] U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Family and Youth Services Bureau. 2016. Domestic Violence and Homelessness: Statistics. Retrieved from: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/fact-sheet/domestic-violence-and-homelessness-statistics-2016>

[3] National Sexual Violence Resource Center. Housing & Sexual Violence: Fact Sheet. Retrieved from: [https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/Publications\\_NSVRC\\_Factsheet\\_Housing-and-Sexual-Violence.pdf](https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/Publications_NSVRC_Factsheet_Housing-and-Sexual-Violence.pdf)

[4] Davis, Brandon. July 2022. How we fix Nevada's Housing Crisis. Reno Gazette Journal. Retrieved from: <https://www.rgj.com/story/opinion/voices/2022/07/08/how-we-fix-nevadas-housing-crisis-brandon-davis/10015200002/>