

Flexible Funding as a Promising Strategy to Prevent Homelessness for Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence

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Abstract

The complex interrelationship between intimate partner violence (IPV) victimization and housing instability has been well established. Being the victim of IPV is a leading cause of homelessness for women, and once someone is homeless, their lives often spiral downward quickly. While some IPV survivors require extensive and possibly long-term assistance to achieve safe and stable housing (especially if they are contending with multiple complex issues), others could avoid homelessness if provided with immediate, individualized, and flexible assistance. For these survivors, whose housing has been otherwise stable but who face homelessness because of a crisis related to IPV, a brief intervention that includes flexible funding can restore a family's equilibrium and prevent the devastating repercussions associated with homelessness. A longitudinal evaluation of a flexible funding program in Washington, D.C., found that this brief, relatively inexpensive intervention may increase housing stability—94% of clients were housed 6 months after funding was received. Implications for both research and practice are discussed.

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Being the victim of intimate partner violence (IPV) is a leading cause of homelessness for women (Jasinski, Wesely, Mustaine, & Wright, 2002; Kannah, Singh, Nemil, & Best, 1992; Wilder Research Center, 2007). Housing instability is four times more likely for women who have experienced IPV compared with women who have not been victimized (Pavao, Alvarez, Baumrind, Induni, & Kimerling, 2007), and approximately one in four homeless women cite IPV as a major contributor to their homelessness (Jasinski et al., 2002; Wilder Research Center, 2007). The pathways from IPV victimization to housing instability or homelessness can be both direct and indirect. For example, many abusers intentionally destroy their victims' financial stability by ruining their credit, harassing them at their jobs, preventing them from working or attending school, or stealing their money (Adams, Sullivan, Bybee, & Greeson, 2008; Adams, Tolman, Bybee, Sullivan, & Kennedy, 2012; Hahn & Postmus, 2014). In addition, the experience of both physical violence and psychological abuse can lead to injuries, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and frequent absences from jobs or school, all of which can then lead to housing instability or homelessness (Adams, Bybee, Tolman, Sullivan, & Kennedy, 2013; Lacey, McPherson, Samuel, Sears, & Head, 2013). Some IPV survivors flee their homes to protect themselves and their children, but may lack the financial resources to live on their own (Galano, Hunter, Howell, Miller, & Graham-Bermann, 2013). All of these factors make achieving housing stability extremely difficult, especially as affordable housing stock in the United States is insufficient and continues to decline (Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard University, 2013; National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2015).

IPV survivors who are also experiencing housing instability or homelessness are under incredible pressure as they try to protect themselves and their children while also achieving housing stability. They are trying to simultaneously protect themselves from further abuse, heal from the trauma of prior abuse, and maintain housing and financial stability. In the case of survivors with children, they are also trying to provide a stable and loving environment for their traumatized children.

Some IPV survivors are in need of immediate safe shelter from a domestic violence agency knowledgeable in addressing not only the trauma of IPV victimization but in assisting survivors with obtaining what they need to achieve social and emotional well-being. Such shelters can be life-saving settings through which survivors can avoid violence and heal from prior traumas (Lyon,

Lane, & Menard, 2008; Tutty & Rothery, 2002). These settings are not for everyone, though, and few people choose entering shelters if they have other options available to them. Uprooting oneself (and often children) to an unfamiliar location, possibly living communally with other families in crisis, away from one's support systems and community, is not an ideal situation if it can be avoided. And for some survivors, moving into such a residential facility may even result in their losing their jobs or homes, or having to drop out of school.

Some domestic violence victim advocacy programs offer survivors immediate flexible financial assistance with brief advocacy support as a way to help them avoid homelessness (Baker, Billhardt, Warren, Rollins, & Glass, 2010; Bomsta et al., 2015; Mbilinyi, 2015). Dedicated flexible funds can be used in a variety of ways, including helping someone pay back rent, paying for new shoes required by an employer, or fixing a broken refrigerator. The lack of \$800 to replace slashed car tires can cost a survivor their job, and that loss can lead to the loss of housing and other disastrous consequences. It is difficult to quantify the impact of a family *not* losing their home, of *not* losing their belongings, of *not* having to move children from their homes and expose them to living in a shelter, of *not* needing to start again from nothing while coping with the inherent difficulties of living in a shelter. A small amount of flexible funding may be able to eliminate the need to shelter a family for months until they get back on their feet.

In 2001, the Massachusetts Governor's Commission on Domestic Violence's Economic Stability Working Group launched a project to address the entwined relationship between economic stability and IPV. The working group conducted four public hearings across the state, receiving testimony from more than 125 people (survivors, advocates, and community members); 20% of those testifying "described short-term financial crises with spiraling effects that could have been averted by access to a limited amount of cash" (Economic Stability Working Group of the Transition Subcommittee of the [Massachusetts] Governor's Commission on Domestic Violence, 2002, p. 11) In response, the state funded the Expanded Transition to Independent Living (XTIL) Program, providing flexible funding to domestic violence programs to help survivors maintain employment, pay moving or storage fees, change locks, and pay security deposits and first month's rent. Although no research was done to examine the impact of the program on survivors, participating agencies extolled its virtues and unanimously called for its expansion (Economic Stability Working Group of the Transition Subcommittee of the [Massachusetts] Governor's Commission on Domestic Violence, 2002).

Flexible funding is being offered by an increasing number of domestic violence programs to varying degrees, but to date, no evaluations have been conducted to examine the impact of such funding on survivors' housing stability

over time. Given the high level of interest in this intervention, coupled with pressure by funders for programs to engage in evidence-informed practice (Sullivan, 2011), a longitudinal evaluation of a flexible funding program in an urban area was conducted.

The Current Study

This longitudinal, qualitative program evaluation examined the effectiveness of using flexible funds to prevent homelessness for low income, primarily Black, IPV survivors. A qualitative methodology was employed because it is best suited to exploring the lived experiences of individuals in depth (Bernard, 2011; Willig, 2013). The study was interested in examining not only the impact of receiving flex funding on housing stability, but in how else such funds might impact survivors' lives.

Method

The sample was comprised of 55 IPV survivors who contacted the District Alliance for Safe Housing (DASH) in Washington, D.C., for housing assistance between March 2014 and August 2015, and who received flexible funding to facilitate either remaining in their homes, or obtaining safe and permanent housing.

The Flexible Funding Program

The District Alliance for Safe Housing is a nonprofit organization that works primarily with survivors of IPV, sexual assault, torture, or sex trafficking. In addition to providing emergency and longer-term residential services, advocacy, counseling, and support services, they engage in community outreach through their Community Housing Resource Center. When IPV survivors contact DASH's Community Housing Resource Center, they and staff work together to determine what services best fit their needs. Those in immediate danger or who need intensive support are referred to DASH's residential or transitional housing program. If a survivor is at risk of losing their current home but wishes to remain there, or if they have identified new housing that they could obtain and sustain if they were provided with brief assistance, then advocates ascertain with them whether flexible funding could help. They discuss current debt loads, current ability to pay rent, and other obstacles to safe housing. The key feature advocates seek to understand is whether a survivor is likely to safely sustain their housing if DASH were to step in with one-time financial assistance and brief housing advocacy.

Once the advocate and survivor have ascertained that the flexible funding program would likely meet the survivor's needs, they determine how much money is needed, who the check should be sent to, and whether brief advocacy is also needed to help obtain housing. Some survivors just need immediate financial assistance to have their car repaired or a month's back rent paid. Others need the advocate to intervene on their behalf as well (e.g., with a potential landlord, a community service provider, the legal system). DASH has intentionally designed this program to be low barrier. Survivors are not expected to provide reams of evidence proving that they need help, and they are not turned away because of mental illness, substance abuse, or immigration status. The program is also set up to ensure that funds are provided quickly, as many survivors are either already homeless or are at imminent risk of homelessness.

Study Recruitment

After a survivor obtained the financial assistance they had requested, to either remain in their homes or obtain new housing, they were invited by DASH staff to speak with a member of the research team about participating in telephone interviews 30 days, 3 months, and 6 months after receiving funds.

Of 109 clients served during the study time frame, 73 (67%) agreed to be contacted about the research.¹ Thirty days after receiving assistance, the survivor was contacted by telephone by a member of the study team and told about the study in more detail. They were offered a \$50 gift card for each interview and assured that their participation was voluntary and that their individual responses would be kept confidential. In all, 55 survivors agreed to participate in the study. All interviews were digitally recorded with survivor consent. The university institutional review board approved the study before data collection began.

A total of 53 of the study participants (96%) were women, and ages ranged from 21 to 57 (mean age 34.8). The majority (84%) had between one and four children. As is typical of the surrounding area, 93% of the survivors were African American, of African descent, or identified as multi-racial, including African American (2% White, 5% unspecified).

Interviews

The second author conducted all of the telephone interviews over the course of the study, using a semi-structured, qualitative interview format. The first interview (conducted 1 month after receiving funding) included questions about the process survivors went through in obtaining the grant. They were

asked how they were treated by the advocate, how long it took to receive the funds, and how the grant had immediately impacted their lives. The 3-month and 6-month interviews focused on asking survivors about their housing situation, how caught up they were on paying bills, how confident they were in their ability to sustain their housing, and how the flexible funding had impacted them overall. Interviews lasted from 9 to 108 min (mean length: 31 min).

Data Analysis

Data were content analyzed along the guidelines laid out by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). Transcribed interviews were coded for housing stability but were also “open coded” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) for meaningful categories related to how flexible funding impacted survivors’ lives. We then examined relationships among categories (axial coding; Hawker & Kerr, 2007; Miles et al., 2014) to gain a richer understanding of the data. The study involved both case-oriented analysis—looking within individual cases for meaning—as well as variable-oriented analysis—looking across cases at individual variables and their interrelationships across cases (Miles et al., 2014).

Trustworthiness of data analyses and interpretation was assured through a number of steps. The second author engaged in initial analyses and interpretation, and these were checked and confirmed by the first author. Findings were also shared back with the staff of DASH, and interpretations were jointly established among the academic and community partners.

Results

At the time of receiving the flexible funding, survivors were either at risk of losing their current housing (65%), or were homeless (35%). As expected, the flexible funding was used in a variety of ways across the sample. The average sized grant that survivors received was US\$2,079 (range from less than US\$300 to more than US\$8,000). Of the 55 grants, 26 (47%) were for rental assistance—in most cases where survivors had fallen behind on their rent due to the chaos that accompanies IPV. In some cases, abusers took rent money from survivors and concealed overdue notices. In other cases, abusers simply left without any advance notice and abandoned all financial responsibilities for the household to the survivor. In a number of cases, the violence caused survivors to lose their jobs or reduce their hours at work due to injury, child-related issues (lack of childcare support from a partner), or safety concerns; this reduction further reduced their ability to solely manage their financial

obligations. Two additional grants (4%) were for rental assistance and other bills—such as cellphone bills, transportation, utility bills, and food.

Nine survivors (16%) received grants to help pay a security deposit and first month's rent—to allow them to move from homelessness to being safely housed. Four additional homeless survivors (7%) received grants for security deposit, first month's rent, and other needs—such as childcare or transportation. Two survivors (4%) used their grants for security deposit only; DASH asks all survivors to contribute what they can manage financially to their situation.

Four survivors (7%) sought assistance with a utility bill alone, and two others (4%) used their grants to pay utilities as well as childcare and vehicle-related expenses. Two survivors (4%) used grants to pay for vehicle-related expenses; in areas without extensive public transportation, a vehicle is a critical factor allowing survivors to get their children to daycare and themselves to work.

There were four grants (7%) given to survivors to address fairly unique circumstances. One survivor needed furniture after a flood, another used the grant to prevent her storage unit from being auctioned, and another grant helped transport a survivor's children to family members for summer care (enabling the survivor to retain her job and provide safe childcare for her children).

Survivors' Housing Status Over Time

At the 6-month interview period, the evaluators reached 50 of the 55 participants (91%) and ascertained their housing status (48 survivors were interviewed fully, one was reached via e-mail, and one via advocate). In total, 94% (47) of the 50 survivors were housed 6 months after receiving the flexible funding.

Of the 94% who were housed, 20 (40%) retained their original housing throughout the 6-month period—avoiding the chaos and expense of moving or becoming homeless. In all, 22 survivors (44%) moved into new housing—some relocated due to safety, financial, or health concerns; some received subsidized housing vouchers during the 6 months post-grant; and some went from being homeless to being housed. Three survivors (6%) had chosen to live with family or friends; this was a voluntary decision for convenience reasons—these survivors could have lived independently, but determined that shared housing made more sense for them at that time (these survivors were distinguished from homeless survivors who were living with family/friends because they had no alternative). Two other survivors (4%) were living in transitional housing programs.

Six months post-grant, three survivors (6%) were homeless. Two were living with family or friends, and one was still being housed by an organization for homeless individuals. Two survivors had encountered new crises post-grant that caused them to lose their housing, and one survivor did not manage to exit the homeless system post-grant.

How flexible funding stabilized housing. Both the largest and the smallest grant were used for rental assistance. In the case of the largest grant, the survivor had been giving her rent money to her partner, because she left for work long before the rental office opened. Her partner had kept the money and concealed overdue notices; the survivor was unaware of her rental situation until her abusive partner was arrested. Almost immediately afterward, her rental office told her that she was several months behind and that they were preparing to file eviction papers with the court.

When I tried to pay the rent the following month [after he was arrested] was when I noticed I was behind so many [months] and I was totally confused because I just assumed, you know, that he was bringing my rent to the rental office. And also, the rental office really wasn't contacting me to let me know. Like there wasn't nothing on my door . . . nothing like that until the last minute.

Although the survivor was employed full-time and able to pay her rent on a monthly basis, she did not have the financial resources to fill the huge financial hole that her abuser had created.

When I found out that I was behind, it just felt like I just got knocked a million steps back and everything was runnin' through my head. . . . To me, I feel like once you're behind—you're in a hole. There's no way of getting out on, you know, your own—especially with the income that I have, that is completely impossible.

Without the flexible funding, the survivor felt that she and her young child would have entered the homeless system: "I probably would go to a shelter, you know, 'cause I didn't have anywhere to go."

Thirty days after receiving the grant, this survivor and her child were still in their home, and the survivor was able to focus on paying next month's rent and keeping up with other bills—as the sole supporter of her family. For her, the DASH grant put her back on level financial footing, where she could once again maintain her housing.

It was very important for me because I can keep a roof over my daughter's head. And it's even more amazing now because he's not there so it's more safer for her and I, as well. And . . . my apartment is so convenient to my job, her school—everything.

The smallest grant went to a survivor with two children who had fallen behind on her rent due to abuse. Until her back rent was paid, her apartment complex refused to move her family out of an apartment with mold—despite the fact that her children kept getting sick. “I was missing time off of work because, you know, when you’re beat up and hit on and stuff, you don’t wanna go to work and let them see you lookin’ the way you are, you know?”

The bruises were one factor in the survivor missing work—but she also missed days when she had to flee her home to escape the violence. In addition, she missed days due to her children’s illnesses and a lack of affordable daycare. “The baby was sick . . . if I didn’t have anyone to watch him I couldn’t go to work also. So, it’s like I’m tryin’ to build my life up, but things keep pullin’ me down.”

After the DASH grant paid the back rent, the survivor was able to move her family into an apartment without mold and begin to rebuild. Without the grant—for the lack of less than US\$300—the survivor and her children would have faced eviction. Another DASH grant in this category was for approximately US\$400, and again, paying the back rent enabled a survivor and her family to move out of an apartment with water leaking down the ceiling and walls, where the survivor and her two children had been camping out in one room for 4 months.

In one case, a survivor drew a connection between the grant for rental assistance and her ability to maintain her job. She was living with an abusive partner who had been paying the bills while she was job hunting. She had just started a new job when her partner assaulted her in her rental office in front of witnesses. The police were called. The survivor threw the abusive partner out and found out that she was behind on rent. Without the grant, the survivor felt she would have been homeless: “I probably would be on the streets or living with somebody that I didn’t—you know—want to be with.”

Keeping her housing meant she was able to keep her job and avoid exposing herself to the violence of homelessness.

It’s a federal government agency [where I work] so anything that you . . . if you are put out on the street, they’re gonna know. . . . If DASH wouldn’t have put their funds in—I woulda got put out, and my job woulda found out and basically I would have probably been on the streets and probably living in the shelter and, not knowing, like the street smarts of that part of the streets, I’d probably been dead from that.

Several survivors spoke about the flexible funding grants as “life saving.” One spoke about how the DASH grant helped her pay back rent when her apartment complex refused to work out a payment plan with her.

I've never been to court. I've been here for 14 years. I've never had that situation happen to me. So when I tried to work out a payment plan with them so that I could get back on track—they wouldn't do it.

The survivor had been taken to landlord-tenant court, but said she would not have qualified for most rental assistance programs because she made too much money from her full-time job. The survivor was working overtime whenever she could, to work toward paying other bills that were behind due to the abuse. This survivor's housing and financial situation had stabilized by the time of the 6-month interview.

Utility bills are another financial obligation that survivors can fall behind on when means are limited. One survivor received a grant that helped pay down her utility bills, as well as her car loan and insurance. This survivor had been living with the father of her young child until the violence became too much. She threw him out, but was then left to shoulder all the financial responsibilities for herself and her child—including the two-bedroom apartment where they were living. Her housing complex—as many commonly do—refused to move her to a less expensive, one-bedroom unit until her back rent was paid.

The survivor had used all her savings, her paycheck, and her tax return to pay the back rent, but as a result fell behind on other bills, including utilities and her car loan and insurance. "My lights were about to be cut off. I didn't have any money for food." In addition, keeping her car was a necessity, because this survivor lived in an area without convenient public transportation. Without her car, she would have struggled to get her young child to daycare and herself to work; she estimated that the 15-min drive to her child's daycare alone would take more than 1 hr using public transportation.

So without my car it would be really, really difficult to try to take my kid to daycare and then try to go from daycare and get to work and repeat [at the end of the day] . . . it would be so impossible.

In this case, the DASH grant enabled the survivor to avoid a utility shut-off, and keep her car—which resulted in her keeping her job and retaining housing 6 months post-grant.

The Importance of Grants Being Flexible

While most grants were provided for direct housing assistance (paying back rent, utilities and/or security deposits), in a number of cases, funds were needed for costs that indirectly impacted housing stability. For example, one survivor's furniture was damaged in a flood; although she was able to move

her family to a new residence, she could not afford to replace their beds. Her grant meant she and her children no longer had to sleep on the floor.

Another survivor received a grant to transport her children out-of-state to relatives for the summer. This single mother was unable to afford childcare and had been taking her children to work with her during the summer when they were out of school. Her employer informed her that this could not continue, and she was in imminent danger of being fired. The DASH grant paid for her to take the bus with her children to another state where they could stay with relatives—which essentially enabled her to keep her job and, by extension, her home.

The Impact of DASH Grants Beyond Housing Stability

Study participants were asked how they felt the flexible funding they received had impacted their lives overall. The most common themes from the data were (1) stress relief, (2) the impact of the grant on their ability to parent their children, and (3) getting back “on track.”

Stress relief. The majority of survivors talked about how the grant provided stress relief. By enabling survivors to address their most pressing issue—whether it be the looming loss of belongings in a storage facility or a writ of eviction—survivors described feeling “a weight lifted” and being able to “breathe” again. One survivor said the grant felt like someone had thrown her a life preserver; several said they cried.

Basically, I didn't have to worry about, like, just trying to struggle just to, you know, make the payments on the rent. . . . I just could like relax, I could relax for a little bit and save . . . Save enough money where I can, yeah, just pay my rent month to month like I'm supposed to. So, it just put me in a better zone.

While the stress relief in and of itself was notable, survivors talked about the radiating impacts of that relief—feeling more able to concentrate at work, sleeping better, and feeling better able to parent their children.

Impact on parenting. A few mothers described direct impacts on their children—such as having new beds to sleep in, a safe apartment to live in, electricity for heat and lights, and so on. Many others spoke about how the stress relief freed them to be better parents—giving them more time and energy to spend on their children, instead of their worries. Many mothers said they did not tell their children about their financial difficulties—preferring the children not bear their worries and instead stay focused on school and

childhood pursuits: “It just makes me make them . . . like, I play and laugh with them more. I just smile so much better. Everything is just better. I’m not sad all the time.”

Another survivor spoke about how the situation had impacted her perception of herself as a parent.

[The housing situation] just made me feel some kind of way as a woman, as a mother, like, I just felt like it wasn’t enough for my kids. Even though people are in worse situations than me, but I’ve never had a tragic moment like that happen to me. But my home is my everything. So for it to just be taken away, it just took a lot out of me.

One survivor spoke about her relief at being able to bring her children back under one roof—after having to split them up while homeless—especially her 15-year-old son.

It really played a strain because I don’t really like my son staying away and I really didn’t have hands on him. And as a teenage boy in DC—Black male—it’s kinda . . . you know, so I didn’t really like it at all.

Getting back “on track.” Flexible funding put many survivors back in a position where they felt able to keep up with their monthly bills, jobs, and families. For survivors, this theme evoked feelings of relief, a sense of control, and being back in charge of their lives and also a return to normal after the chaos of violence. “I could get things done now and move on. So I was feelin’, pretty, you know, pretty okay.”

Well, I’ve just been living my life, doing the best that I can. Trying to you know get back and make up for the lost time. . . . Just staying close to the family, working. I’m doing a lot of overtime so I could, you know, just have money and get back on my feet and you know make sure that [the kids] have everything.

Survivors also spoke of being able to move forward with their lives and start down new paths. Many spoke of returning to school/training, and considering future housing plans (such as home ownership programs)—the ability to think about the future that the violence in their lives had temporarily dimmed.

[The grant] changed my plans. Before it, it was . . . I didn’t really look into the next day . . . but now I have a brighter, you know, look ahead. Short term goals, long-term goals, and a positive future for me.

Discussion

This study represents the first longitudinal examination of how flexible funding can prevent homelessness for IPV survivors. It demonstrated that such funding can not only stabilize housing but can have additional radiating impacts on survivors' and their children's well-being. The vast majority of survivors in this sample were still housed 6 months after receiving grants, despite the fact that all were either in precarious housing or homeless when they approached DASH for help.

Research has shown that the greater the number of housing instability factors that IPV survivors have, the more likely they are to suffer from symptoms of PTSD, depression, and reduced quality of life (Rollins et al., 2012). Frequent moving—common in homelessness—has been found to increase women's depression (Davey-Rothwell, German, & Latkin, 2008). Relieving survivor stress over housing stability could help mediate such stressors—enabling survivors to move more quickly toward healing.

Findings should be considered in the context of study limitations. The study included a relatively small sample ($N = 55$), from one large urban location, and there was no control or comparison group. This pilot evaluation study was undertaken to gather preliminary data about the efficacy of this particular program. Additional research is needed that includes a comparison group of survivors who needed but did not receive flexible funding, to confidently understand the impact of flexible funds on survivors' housing stability and well-being.

Findings have useful implications for practitioners working with IPV survivors experiencing housing instability. Results indicate that flexible funding can be a useful tool to help survivors either avert eviction/foreclosure, or obtain new safe housing. Advocates considering a flexible funding program will need to make critical decisions regarding how to award grants, funding maximums, and allowable expenses. DASH chose to give relatively large and fairly unrestricted grants. Some programs, especially those using Rapid Re-Housing funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), are more limited in how they can allocate money.² Helping a survivor replace slashed tires may not appear to some to be directly linked to housing, but a car can be a lifeline to childcare, school, and work, and the loss of this resource can immediately impact housing stability. In making a decision to pursue a more narrowly defined flexible funding program, some survivors will fall into homelessness because their needs do not fit narrow housing guidelines.

DASH intentionally funded their program through a public-private partnership that allowed them to use government funds to pay for staffing, and

private funds for flexible grant making. Funds were generally disbursed directly to landlords or utility companies, but in some cases were given directly to survivors. Practitioners considering adding a flex funding program may want to consider diversifying their funding sources in a similar manner, to allow them greater flexibility.

Although the findings from this study were extremely promising, a great deal more research is needed to understand for whom flexible funding works, where, and under what circumstances. Flexible funding is not the answer for every IPV survivor experiencing housing instability. In addition, this study should be replicated in different geographical locations, with different survivor populations. Different flexible funding configurations should also be evaluated: Are small-scale programs—that may pay for a bus ticket or a set of work clothes—as valuable to survivors long term? Or is funding better spent in programs that address larger survivor needs? The cost-effectiveness of this program also needs to be examined, as anecdotally, it is believed that the program diverts some survivors from the very expensive homeless/domestic violence (DV) shelter system.

IPV survivors face higher rates of homelessness due to the chaos that all too often accompanies the violence in their lives. Some survivors require the safety and supportive atmosphere of a DV shelter or transitional housing program—but some survivors do not. Offering flexible forms of assistance to survivors who just need help with one roadblock may restore safety and housing stability without targeting additional resources where they are not wanted or needed. While a great deal more research is needed to fully understand the utility of a flexible funding program for IPV survivors, this evaluation suggests that such attention is warranted. As one survivor noted:

When I left there I was like, I get to start off fresh. I got him out of my life, I'm able to keep my place, he wasn't able to break me down, he wasn't able to take nothing away from me, you know? So, I was just like, "Yes."

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Notes

1. Not all clients were informed about the study, as some were either in a hurry or were viewed as being too much in crisis to invite them to participate.
2. As of this writing, Rapid Re-Housing funds could not be used for transportation costs or many other costs outside of rental assistance or security deposits: <http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/recovery/programs/homelessness>

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