

# FRONT-LINE PROVIDERS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND HOUSING/HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

*Please Join an Effort to Improve Policies and Regulations Affecting Families Facing Homeless Due to Domestic Violence*

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- **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS A SIGNIFICANT CAUSE OF FAMILY HOMELESSNESS.**  
Evidence of this fact abounds in the Commonwealth's EA-funded family shelters and hotels/motels. In addition, even after the danger of imminent harm has passed, too many families are "stuck" in domestic violence shelters because they are unable to obtain safe, affordable housing in the community.
  
- **GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES HAVE HISTORICALLY DEVELOPED AS IF THERE IS NO CONNECTION BETWEEN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND HOMELESSNESS.**  
Government regulations and policies too often create conflicts that undercut the efforts of domestic violence survivors to secure safe, affordable housing in their communities. By changing these regulations and policies, government can have a significant and positive impact on survivors, eliminating or shortening their experience of homelessness and greatly increasing the quality of services they receive.
  
- **FRONT-LINE PROVIDERS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES AND SERVICES RELATED TO HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRUGGLE WITH THESE REGULATIONS AND POLICES EVERY DAY.**  
As one of these providers you are perfectly positioned to educate policy makers about the impact of these regulations and about how they might be changed so that they no longer act as barriers to survivors seeking safety and housing for themselves and their children.

## **THIS IS HOW YOU CAN HELP:**

- Think about a particular government regulation or policy that undercuts the efforts of a domestic violence survivor to secure safe housing in the community.
  
- Think about a specific situation in which a government regulation or policy of one state agency conflicts with a regulation or policy of another state agency to undermine the efforts of a survivor to access safe housing in the community.
  
- Describe the situation or regulation using the attached chart, and send the chart to Northnode.

For purposes of this project, think of regulations as authoritative rules issued by government agencies to spell out how laws should be operationalized. Once issued, regulations carry the force of law. This means, among other things, that those who work in government must follow regulations and cannot decide to ignore them. Policies, on the other hand, can be understood to

be statements of principles that are intended to guide those who provide services. A government agency might issue a policy to explain how it understands the requirements of a law. Generally, policies do not carry the same force of law as regulations, though they are important in understanding what the intention of a government agency might be.

Whether you are describing formal regulations or policies, please be as specific as you can. When providing an example of how the regulation or policy impacts a survivor, also be specific (while protecting confidentiality). If you are not sure of the actual regulation or policy being followed by the government agency, you can describe your understanding of it. If you can send a copy of the regulation or policy or a citation to it, that would be helpful. If you are mailing a document, send it to; **Judith Lennett, Northnode, PO Box 130, Roslindale, MA 02131.**

Northnode will gather the examples submitted and produce a report (and a chart), which policy makers can use to consider changes they can make to regulations and policies so that domestic violence survivors who are facing homelessness become less likely to actually become homeless and/or more quickly secure safe, affordable housing in the community.

If you have questions or need more information, please contact Judith Lennett at Northnode (617-522-8755 or [lennett@northnode.org](mailto:lennett@northnode.org)).