

# ADDRESSING HOUSING NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF CRIME: WHERE WE ARE AND WHERE WE'RE GOING

2023 National VOCA Conference

August 15, 2023



# OVC FUNDING FOR HOUSING

Aaron Bryant

Grants Management Specialist

Office for Victims of Crime, Human Trafficking  
Division

- ▶ Most common victimizations FY22:
  - ▶ Domestic and/or Family Violence
  - ▶ Child Physical Abuse or Neglect
  - ▶ Adult Physical Assault
  - ▶ Adult Sexual Assault
  
- ▶ In FY '22, 97,157 victims per quarter self-identified as homeless.

## OVC VOCA HOUSING DATA

- ▶ In FY '22, there were an average of 1,218,306 instances of shelter or housing services per quarter\*
- ▶ During this same time period, an average of 97,157 individuals per quarter were served by OVC funded grantees.

\*Includes Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, and Relocation Assistance

## OVC HOUSING DATA

- ▶ Of the 4,873,224 instances of housing/shelter provided by OVC grantees:
  - ▶ 3,406,562 were emergency shelter or safe house
  - ▶ 1,179,470 were transitional housing
  - ▶ 287,192 were relocation assistance

## OVC HOUSING DATA



# DV HOUSING FIRST

Judy Chen and Sarah Kendall

Washington State Coalition Against Domestic  
Violence



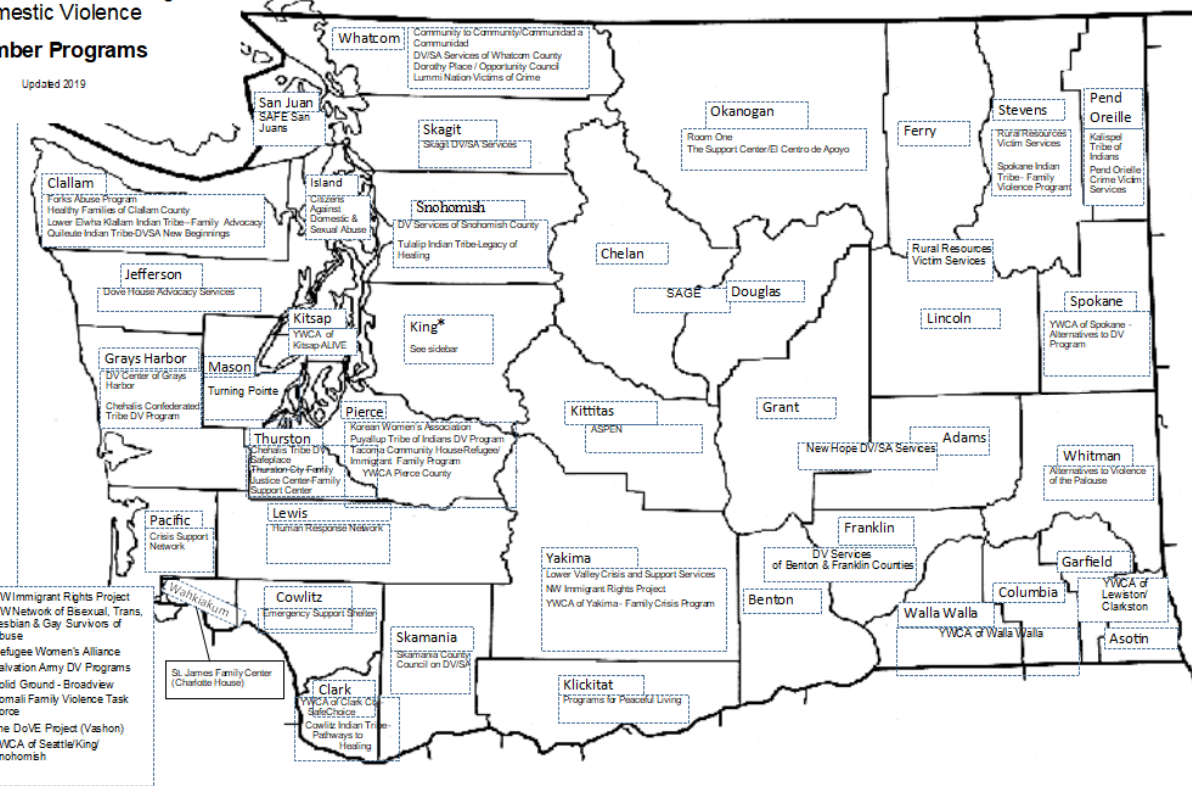
# HELLO FROM WASHINGTON STATE!



## Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence

### Member Programs

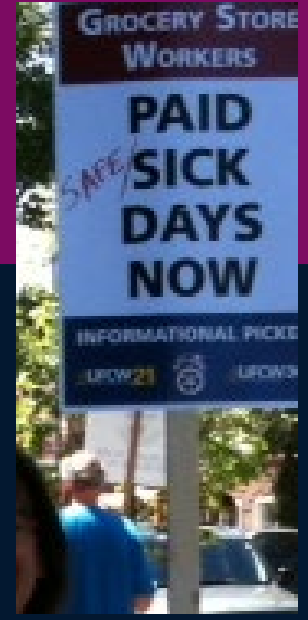
Updated 2019



### \* King County Programs

- API Chaya
- DANN
- Jennifer Beach Foundation
- Jewish Family Service/Project DVORA
- LifeVire
- Mother Africa
- Mother Nation
- Multi-Communities (MIC)
- New Beginnings

- NW Immigrant Rights Project
- NW Network of Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian & Gay Survivors of Abuse
- Refugee Women's Alliance
- Salvation Army DV Programs
- Solid Ground - Broadview
- Somali Family Violence Task Force
- The DoVE Project (Vashon)
- YWCA of Seattle/King/Snohomish



**75+ Members**

39 state-contracted sheltering programs

1/3 Culturally Specific or Tribal

Rural majority



# THE HOUSING FIRST PHILOSOPHY

- Housing is a right.
- Housing FIRST, not Housing READY
- No barriers for housing access
- Tailored, voluntary services





# DV HOUSING FIRST: THE APPROACH

DVHF supports survivors and their children to rapidly access new housing, or retain their current housing, while maintaining safety and stability.



# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOUSING FIRST (DVHF) HISTORY

**2009-2011**

DVHF Launches

Cohort I (4 programs) established

**2011-2014**

Due to success of Cohort I, DVHF expands to include 9 more programs (Cohort II)

Findings emerge suggesting that DVHF is a successful approach for safety and stability

**2015-2019**

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation invites WSCADV to coordinate Phase III 5-year demonstration project

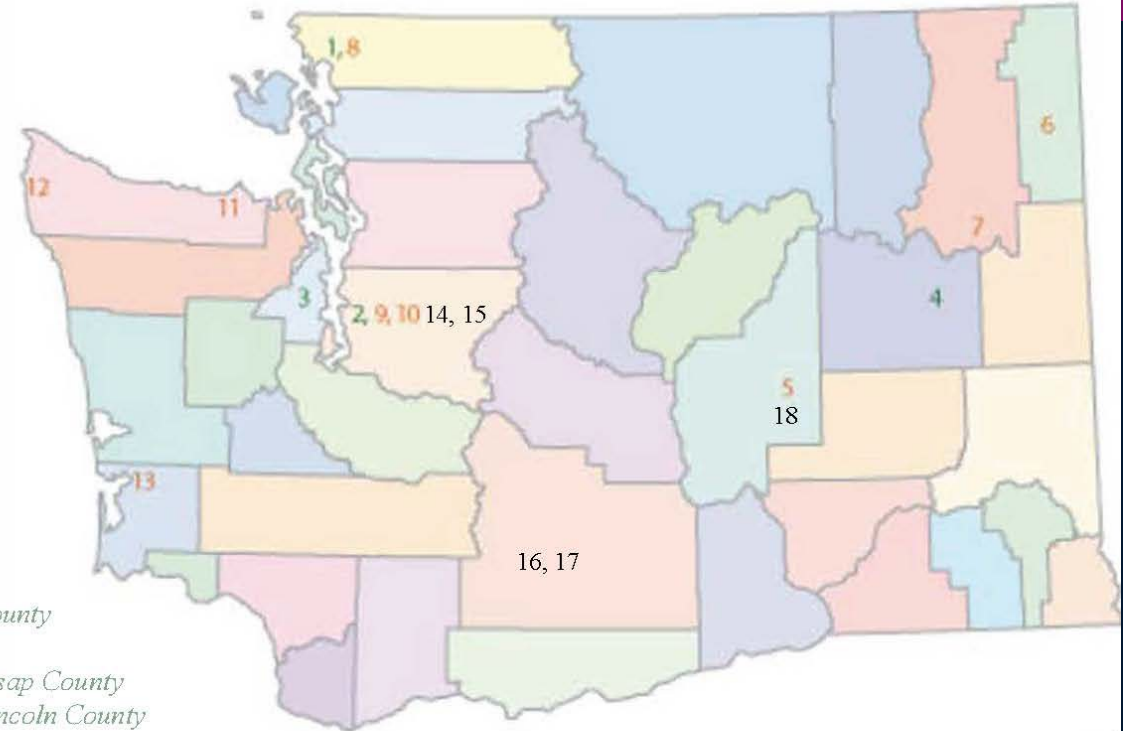
**2019-Today**

Demonstration evaluation and findings publications commenced through Michigan State University

Findings continue to show DVHF as a successful approach alongside benefits for children, survivor mental health, and more.

# 14 YEARS OF PILOTING, DEMONSTRATING, AND EVALUATING

Rural  
Urban  
Tribal Nations  
Culturally specific, By-and-For  
Immigrant & Refugee  
Economically depressed regions



## Cohort One

1. WomenCare Bellingham, Whatcom County
2. Lifewire Bellevue, King County
3. Kitsap County YWCA Bremerton, Kitsap County
4. Family Resource Center Davenport Lincoln County

## Cohort Two

5. New Hope DV/SA Services Moses Lake, Grant & Adams Counties
6. Kalispel Tribe of Indians Usk, Pend Orielle County
7. Spokane Tribe Family Violence, Wellpoint, Stevens County
8. Lummi Victims of Crime, Bellingham, Whatcom County
9. Salvation Army Domestic Violence Program, Seattle, King County
10. Interim CDA, Seattle King County
11. Healthy Families of Clallam County, Port Angeles, Clallam County
12. Forks Abuse Program, Forks, Clallam County
13. Crisis Support Network, Raymond, Pacific County

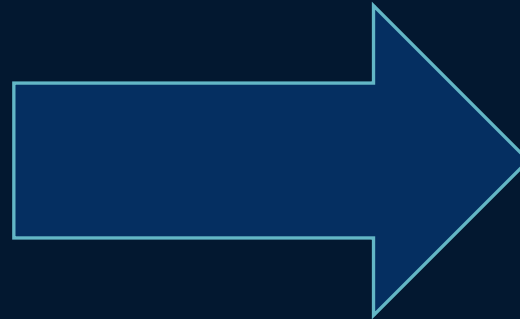
## Demonstration Sites

14. LifeWire Bellevue, King County
15. New Beginnings Seattle, King County
16. Yakima YWCA Yakima, Yakima County
17. Lighthouse Sunnyside, Yakima County
18. New Hope Moses Lake, Grant County

# SURVIVOR-CENTERED AND DRIVEN ADVOCACY

## Survivor-Driven Advocacy

- “What do you need?” instead of “Here’s what we offer.”
- Meet where it is safe and convenient for survivors.
- Survivors lead the process and choose their own goals.



- Focused on the survivor, not the program
- Orientation to the “whole person”
- Validation and acceptance
- Strengths-based
- Action Oriented

# Culturally Specific Housing Needs



Service providers and resources that reflect and represent culture/cultural values



Remove the expectation for survivors to educate providers about their culture, especially during crisis



Culturally specific healing options offered that include physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellness



Holistic responses around individual and generational trauma



Build trust/relationships while acknowledging a survivor's past experiences with the system



Provide ongoing and interactive training for staff members to address unconscious bias

# TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

**Trauma awareness – relationships are key**

**Emphasis on safety with awareness of potential triggers**

**Power sharing, choice, and survivor control**

**Strengths-based**

COMMUNITY  
OR  
MOBILE  
ADVOCACY



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS!

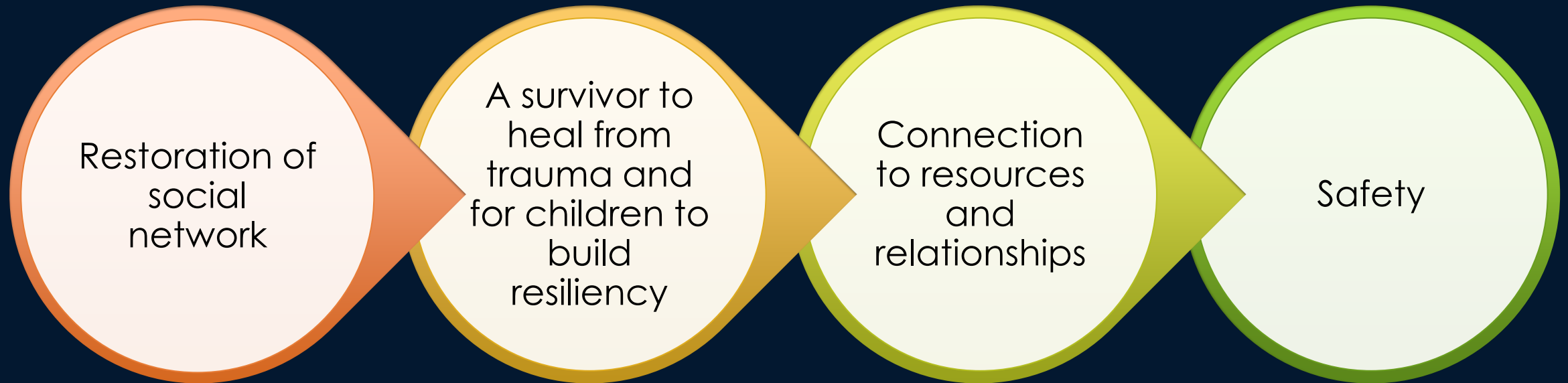
## **Community Engagement**

Advocates reach out to landlords, law enforcement, housing/homeless providers, and employment programs, encouraging them to support survivors.



# RESTORING CONNECTION

Abusive people isolate survivors to gain control. Re-connecting to community is vital!



## **Flexible Financial Assistance**

Funds are free to be used in whatever way will best help survivors retain housing: Rent and utilities, as well as costs like child care, transportation, and employee uniforms.

## WHY FLEXIBLE FUNDING?

Many survivors can avoid homelessness if they have access to immediate funds, coupled with housing advocacy and support.

Evaluations have shown that *direct funds* to those in need have immediate and long-term positive impacts.

# CORE COMPONENTS OF FLEXIBLE FUNDING PROGRAMS FOR SURVIVORS

---

Low Barrier Access

---

Survivor-Driven Advocacy

---

Flexibility

---

Swift Dissemination of Funds

# DV HOUSING FIRST = EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE

*Research  
Results!*

## Results Across 24 Months

Compared to survivors who received SAU, at 6-months, 12-months, 18-months and 24-months, survivors who received the DVHF model reported:



\*Domestic Violence includes physical, emotional, sexual, economic abuse, stalking, and use of children as an abuse tactic.

The DVHF model was equally effective regardless of race (comparing BIPOC with white survivors), ethnicity (comparing Latinx with non-Latinx survivors), or rural/urban location of DV agency.

\*SAU: Services as Usual

# Culturally-Responsive and Inclusive Services' Impact on DVHF

**Improvement at  
6 and 12 Months**

Housing  
stability

**Improvement at  
6 Months Only**

Domestic violence

Child behavior problems

**Improvement at  
12 Months Only**

Financial strain

Child prosocial behaviors

**In other words, culturally-responsive services improved survivor's lives!**

# STUDY SUMMARY OF FLEXIBLE FUNDING OVER TIME

<b>First six months</b>	<b>45% of survivors received flexible funding; average amount \$1,949</b> • 24% toward rent; great deal of flexibility in spending
<b>6-12 months</b>	<b>13% received; average = \$3,170 (45% for rent)</b>
<b>12-18 months</b>	<b>9% received; average = \$3,151 (43% for rent)</b>
<b>18-24 months</b>	<b>5% received; average = \$2,040 (61% for rent)</b>

# KEY FINDINGS FROM LONGITUDINAL STUDY

Increased housing stability

Increased safety from all forms of DV including: physical, emotional, sexual, stalking, economic abuse, and use of the children as an abuse tactic

Improved mental health outcomes: depression, anxiety, PTSD

Improved children's prosocial behaviors

Those who received DVHF were more likely to move from experiencing "high instability" to "doing better" than survivors who received SAU



# LEARN MORE

[wscadv.org/dvhf](https://wscadv.org/dvhf)



**DVHF  
TOOLKIT**



**DVHF  
RESEARCH  
RESULTS**

Building Dignity: From Sheltering to Housing @ [buildingdignity.wscadv.org](https://buildingdignity.wscadv.org)



WASHINGTON STATE COALITION

**WSCADV**

AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

[WSCADV.ORG/DVHF](https://wscadv.org/dvhf) | 2023



# ALLOWABILITY WITH VOCA

Nicky Gleason

Washington State VOCA Assistance  
Administrator

# WASHINGTON STATE'S APPROACH

- ▶ Some victim service providers in Washington State have “Rent Assistance Programs” specifically
  - ▶ Typically limited time competitive projects
- ▶ Most WA state providers incorporate rent assistance/housing assistance into other work
- ▶ Typically done through the provision of flexible funding, also known as emergency financial assistance

# FLEXIBLE FUNDING

- ▶ Washington State requires any organization that wishes to provide flexible funding as part of their grant to create and submit a procedure for doing so, then to follow that procedure.
- ▶ We do not typically pre-approve specific costs, other than general guidance about allowability

# WHAT CAN VOCA FUND?

Direct services to victims of crime means efforts that:

1. Respond to the emotional, psychological, or physical needs of crime victims;
2. Assist victims to stabilize their lives after victimization;
3. Assist victims to understand and participate in the criminal justice system; or
4. Restore a measure of security and safety for the victim.

*Assorted caveats also apply – VOCA is “a payer of last resort” etc.*

# WHAT CAN'T VOCA FUND?

No VOCA funds may be used to fund or support the following:

1. *Lobbying*
2. *Research and studies*
3. *Active investigation or prosecution of criminal activities*
4. *Fundraising*
5. *Capital expenses*
6. *Crime victims compensation*
7. *Medical care (except in very specific circumstances)*
8. *Salaries and expenses of management (unless specifically allowed)*



These are  
“Expressly  
Disallowed”

# CAN VOCA PAY FOR IT?

## If it IS one of these

1. Respond to the emotional, psychological, or physical needs of crime victims;
2. Assist victims to stabilize their lives after victimization;
3. Assist victims to understand and participate in the criminal justice system; or
4. Restore a measure of security and safety for the victim.

## And it is NOT one of these

1. Lobbying
2. Research and studies
3. Active investigation or prosecution of criminal activities
4. Fundraising
5. Capital expenses
6. Crime victims compensation
7. Medical care (except in very specific circumstances)
8. Salaries and expenses of management (unless specifically allowed)

# WHAT'S THE LIMIT?

- ▶ Washington State encourages each subrecipient to allocate their resources appropriate to the needs they've identified
- ▶ Some providers allocate large portions of their budgets to flexible funding
- ▶ No arbitrary caps on amount at state level



# AUDIT RESULTS

- ▶ Washington State has undergone a variety of state and federal audits, including Office of Inspector General
- ▶ None of our flexible funding costs were flagged as ‘questioned costs’
- ▶ No concerns about our flexible funding policies or procedures
- ▶ \*Different auditors may have different opinions

Click to edit Master title style

