Using Zoom

Everyone is automatically muted.

You can type in questions and comments into your Q&A box.

You can also “raise your hand” by clicking the hand icon and I will unmute you to ask a question/give a comment.
Training Hours

• Please fill out the survey/evaluation that will pop up when you exit this webinar.
• This is how we know who is on the call and how you get training credit hours.
Take the poll!

Tell us a little bit about yourselves
What Is Flexible Financial Assistance

Financial assistance and advocacy used to address whatever barrier exists between the DV/SV survivor and safe housing stability.
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*. 
Flexible Financial Assistance

• Funds are used to support housing, employment, survivor safety, and other critical needs

• Level of need and amount of financial assistance determined in full partnership with survivor

• Additional assistance may be provided based on changing needs of survivor

• No requirements to meet goals or participate in services
Examples of Flexible Funding

- Moving expenses
- Car repair
- First month’s rent
- Medical bills
- Back rent
- Storage unit fees
- Utilities
- Childcare
DV/SV Programs Can Use Flexible Funding to Support Survivor Housing Stability

- As a bridge from shelter to permanent housing
- As a strategy to prevent homelessness
- As one of several housing advocacy tools used to address survivors’ housing needs
Core Components of Flexible Funding Programs for Survivors

- Low Barrier Access
- Survivor-Driven Advocacy
- Flexibility
- Swift Dissemination of Funds
Low Barrier Access to Funds

Advocates determine when flexible funding can assist with stabilizing safe housing.

Assessment process to determine what a survivor needs is driven by the relationship with the survivor, rather than a form or “check off the boxes”.

Typically no cap on the amount a survivor can request or limit of times a survivor can request support.
Immediate crisis can have a cascading impact for someone without a financial or social safety net.

Addressing the barrier(s) that exist between a survivor and housing stability can be direct such as paying for rent (or back rent) or indirect, such as helping to pay for travel, childcare, or car repair.
Survivor-Driven Advocacy

Advocates utilize relationship building and trauma-informed support with survivors to:

- Determine the kind of advocacy and funding needed to support ongoing stability
- Offer safety planning before, during and after the flexible funding grant is provided
- Couple the flexible funding grant with housing advocacy
- Leverage the financial assistance to increase the amount of advocacy and services (keeping in mind this should not be required)
Swift Dissemination of Funds

• Funds typically provided within 24 to 48 hours to effectively respond to the crisis threatening housing stability

• Examples of how programs manage this include:
  ○ Minimize layers of organizational bureaucracy
  ○ Place the advocate in charge of a budget with discretion
  ○ Utilize private funding with minimal restrictions or parameters to offer greater flexibility with grants
Common Challenges & Concerns

**Supporting**
- Supporting survivors when flexible funding runs dry and avoiding the “gate keeper” role

**Minimizing**
- Minimizing internal bureaucracy in order to facilitate speedy payment

**Conveying**
- Conveying to potential funders how critical the core components are to outcomes for survivors
## Potential Issues to Consider

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accounting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounting for cash grants made directly to the survivor</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How to record grants to satisfy auditing and funding requirements while adhering to core program principles</td>
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<td>• Understanding potential impact cash grants may have on a survivor’s eligibility for public benefits or tax reporting requirements</td>
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<th>Understanding</th>
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<td>Understanding the limitations attached to funding sources</td>
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<td>• Are there opportunities for advocacy and funder education?</td>
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Financing Strategies Programs Use

Flexible funding programs are financed in a variety of ways, such as through:

• Development of a public-private funding partnership
• Utilization of charitable foundation funding
• Fundraising appeals to the community using a strengths-based marketing approach
• Survivor-led funding strategies
• State, local or federal funding
• Adds **transitional housing** as an allowable expense, including, but not limited to, travel, rental assistance, security deposits, utilities, and other costs incidental to the relocation to such housing, as well as voluntary support services such as childcare and counseling.

• Adds **relocation expenses** as an allowable expense, including costs related to the relocation of victims (generally where necessary for the safety and well-being of a victim) and including, but not limited to, reasonable moving expenses, security deposits on housing, rental expenses, and utility startup costs.

  • For example: WSCADV combines relocation funds with emergency relocation assistance, offering a deeper level of assistance.
The Washington State Domestic Violence Housing First Pilot

• Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Investment in 13 agencies required that half of the funds granted be used for flexible financial assistance defined by the survivor

• Now a key service component for DV Housing First

“The flexibility provides relief for survivors who are trying to rebuild their lives.”

--Advocate
No Typical Amount

- Average amount was $1,250
- Range was $40 to $10,000
- Flexible financial assistance allowed agencies to reach a broader group of survivors by offering a range of options for housing stability
- Could meet needs of survivors not served in emergency shelter.

“It really doesn’t take a whole lot of money with advocacy, to help someone and change their lives.”
Impact of Flexible Funding on Staff

• Led to increased staff morale
• Staff able to say “yes” to simple requests that could make a big impact on lives of survivors

“It’s the happiest money advocates have ever had.”
From Pilot to Demonstration & Research

- New Gates investment for additional five years
- Funding specifically provided for 8 agencies to provide flexible financial assistance
- Tracker created to document each agency’s results
Flexible Financial Assistance:

- 1667 unique disbursements totaling $590,286.62
- Disbursements ranged from .56 cents- $5,450
- $353.79 average amount
- 993 recipients 69% had children
- 46% of survivors stayed in their own home
“With the DVHF dollars we were able to help one survivor stay in her home by paying two months of rent and changing the locks on her door. Her car had also broken down so she couldn’t get to work. We helped her fix her car and she was able to continue to work… She is still in her home and has her job because of DVHF.”

--DV Advocate
Gates Foundation grant

Continued practice

Imbedded culture

ONE PROGRAM’S REAL TIME EXPERIENCE
How do we implement our process?

✓ Know our budget for EFA
✓ Advocates assess and ask
   Light touch/heavy touch
   Sustainability
   Partners/Sharing?
✓ And... the paperwork!
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Amount requested $</th>
<th>Supervisor Signature:</th>
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**Date:**

**Survivors ID:**

**Gender:** F  **Ethnicity:**  **Race:**

**Immigrant - Refugee:** □ YES □ NO

**Is survivor pregnant?:** □ YES □ NO

**Does survivor consider themselves parenting?:** □ YES □ NO

**Number of children parented by survivor?:**

**Where was the first in-person contact made at? (location)**

- Office
- Other community location

**What is the Flexible Funding Source used for?:**

- Background check for housing
- Childcare
- Direct assistance
- Driver's license
- Education/training
- Bus fare to return home
- Cell phone to stay connected
- Family well-being
- Mortgage
- Sanita/UPRO
- Utilities
- Security deposit
- Rental assistance
- Car payments
- Food/Necessities

**Immediate housing impact?:**

- Move from one home to another
- Move from shelter to a home

**Indicate what other support or resources were used?:**

- Housing Authority
- Salvation Army
- Serve MLK Quincy
- EDSHS
- CPS

**Month/Year of final housing impact:**

**How many Advocacy hours are associated with this Survivor?:**

**Updated:** 10/31/2018
The lessons learned - pitfalls

Accounting rules!
More forms
Overcoming scarcity mindset
The lessons learned - successes
The stories
They come back!
Change in culture
FLEXIBLE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OPPORTUNITY!

• The freedom of completely flexible financial assistance!

• WSCADV will be putting out an RFQ targeting agencies that have just received VOCA funds for DV Housing First projects

• Housing relocation, housing support, EFA, mobile advocacy

• Thanks to Coldwell Banker Bain’s generosity, 2 agencies will be selected to receive $25,000 each for this year (July-June)
• Stay tuned!
Contact us!

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Linda Olsen, WSCADV
linda@wscadv.org

https://wscadv.org/projects/domestic-violence-housing-first/

AND MANY THANKS TO OUR NASH COLLEAGUES, SUZANNE MARCUS AND KRIS BILLHARDT, FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SLIDE CONTENT!

https://safehousingpartnerships.org/