



FLEXIBLE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

Getting Into the Weeds!

May 28, 2019



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.

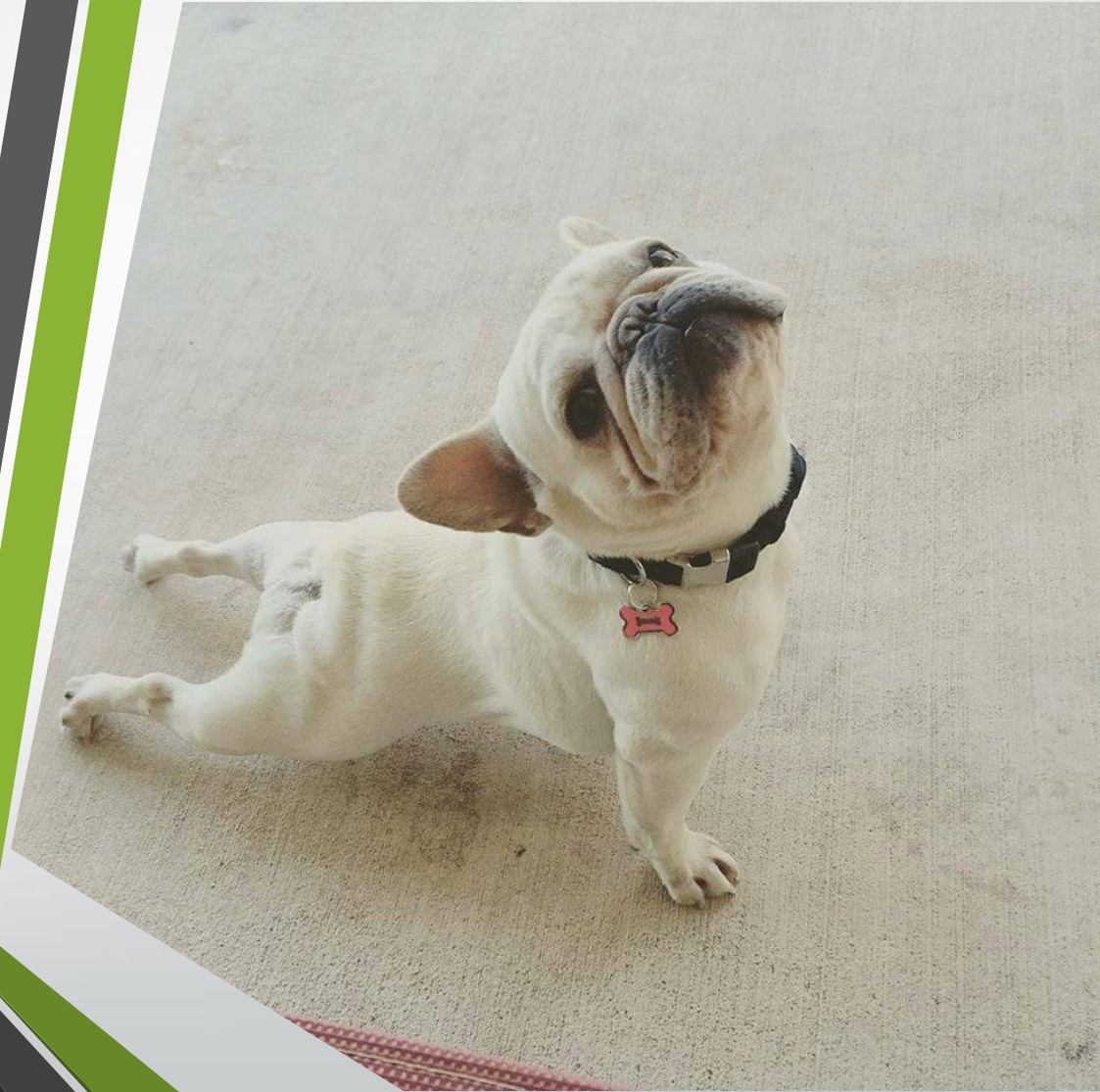
Take the poll!

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.

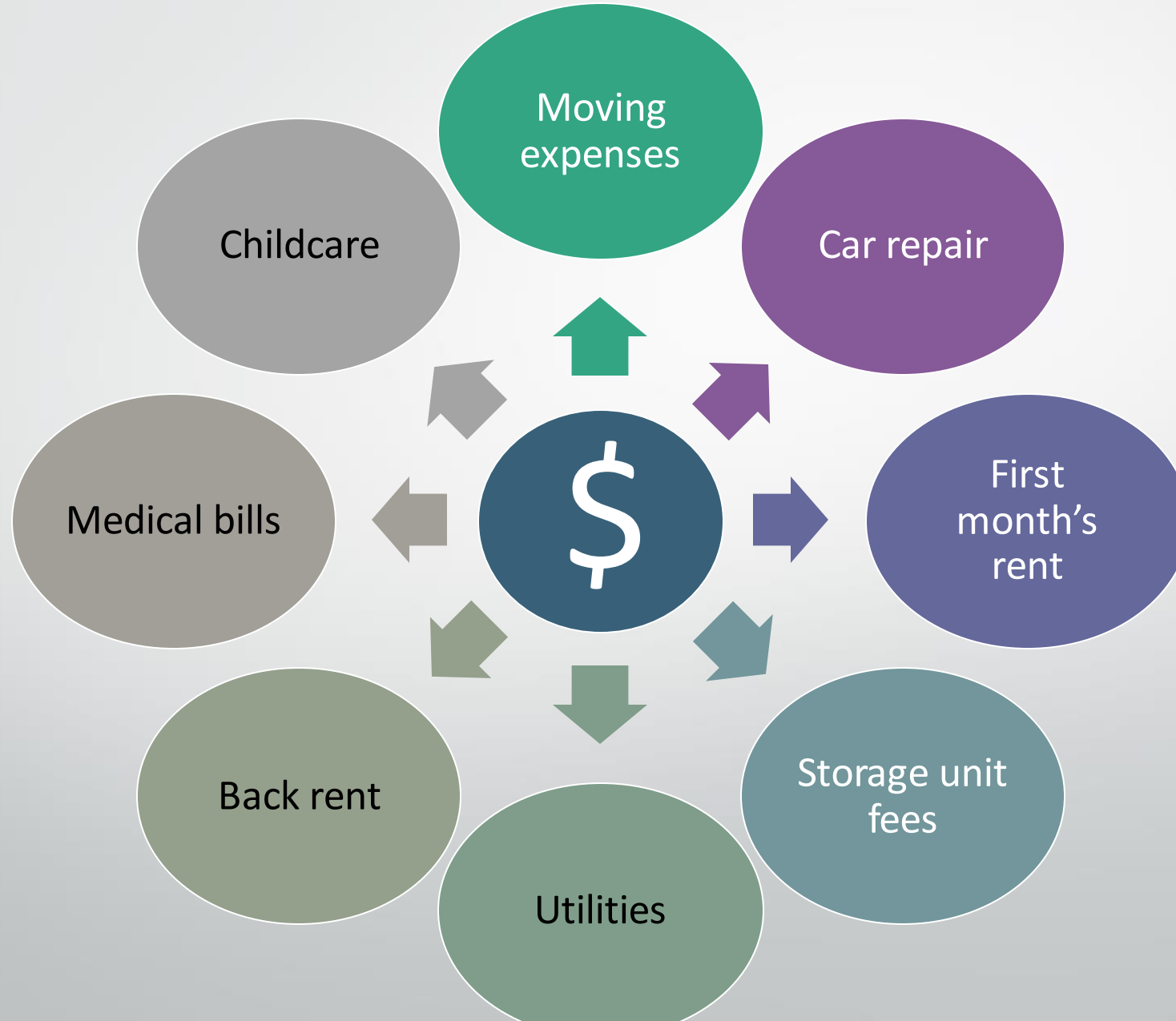
Evaluations have shown that *direct funds* to those in need have *immediate and long term positive impacts*.

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




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

Flexibility In How Funds Are Used

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

Accounting

Accounting for cash grants made directly to the survivor

- How to record grants to satisfy auditing and funding requirements while adhering to core program principles
- Understanding potential impact cash grants may have on a survivor's eligibility for public benefits or tax reporting requirements

Understanding

Understanding the limitations attached to funding sources

- Are there opportunities for advocacy and funder education?

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

VOCA Assistance Guidelines and Final Rule Related to Housing Assistance (8/2016)

- 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!





- ☐ DV Housing First
☐ Verizon (Othello CBHA Only)
- ☐ CHECK ☐ VISA
☐ DEBIT CARD ☐ PETTY CASH

Amount requested \$ _____

Supervisor Signature: _____

Date: _____

Staff name: _____

Survivors ID: _____

Survivors age: _____

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? _____

Do children live with survivor?
☐ YES ☐ NO

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

- Office
- Other community location

Explain: _____

What is the Flexible Funding Source used for?

- Background check for housing
- Children's needs
- Debt assistance
- Driver's license
- Education training
- Bus fare to return home
- Cell phone to seek work/housing
- Family well being

- Mortgage
- Service DVPO
- Utilities bills
- Security Assist
- Rental Assist
- Car payments
- Food/Necessities

Explain: _____

Immediate housing impact?

- Stay in own home
- Housing Preparation
- Move from homeless to housed

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

Explain: _____

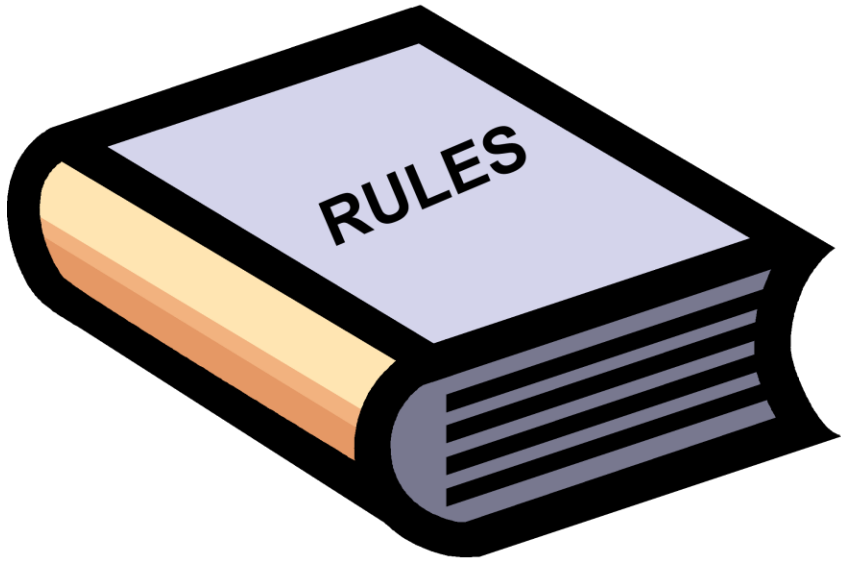
Indicate what other support or resources were used?

- Housing Authority
- Salvation Army
- Serve ML/Quincy
- DSHS
- CPS

Explain: _____

Month/Year of final housing impact: _____

How many Advocacy hours are associated with this Survivor? _____



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!

Suzi Fode, New Hope, Moses Lake

sfode@grantcountywa.gov

Kendra Gritsch, WSCADV

Kendra@wscadv.org

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/>