

Transitional Housing Assistance Grants for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Program

The Transitional Housing Assistance Grants for Victims of Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking Program (Transitional Housing Program) funds programs that provide transitional housing, short-term housing assistance, and related support services to victims, their children, and other dependents.

THE TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAM IS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE holistic, victim-centered transitional housing services that move individuals to permanent housing.

284 Grantees Reporting

Between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2017, 284 unique grantees reported activities funded by the Transitional Housing Program.

2,726 Victims Served

On average, grantees served 2,726 victims, 3,770 children, and 76 other dependents during each 6-month reporting period.

1,260,316 Bed Nights

Grantees provided a total of 1,260,316 bed nights to victims, their children, and other dependents.¹

Grantees provide housing units, rental vouchers, and victim-centered services such as case management, housing advocacy, counseling, job training, child care, transportation, and other assistance. It is crucial that these programs provide a wide range of flexible and optional services that reflect the differences and individual needs of victims, and allow them to choose the best course of action for their specific circumstances. Trained staff work with victims to help them determine and reach their goals for permanent housing.

Research shows that when victims work to become and remain free from violence, they may experience negative consequences such as limited access to financial resources, potentially escalating violence, and residential instability (Thomas et al., 2015).

¹ This number does not include nights spent in housing supported through a voucher or other rental assistance.



GA • Grantee Perspective

With this funding, we have been able to encourage and support women in achieving the goals they have identified for themselves, heal from abuse, and assist them in becoming self-sufficient. Without this type of program, many battered women feel they cannot afford to make ends meet on their own and often return to their abuser due to economic factors. This program helps them address those financial barriers to eliminate that factor.

GEORGIA MOUNTAIN WOMEN'S CENTER, INC.



VA • Grantee Perspective

Survivors report this funding has given them hope for a brighter future. One client we are working with has struggled with substance abuse resulting from prescription pain medications prescribed for her foot, a severe physical disability, living in a home where domestic violence has taken place, and losing her children to foster care. She reports, after working with us for over one year beginning in the transition house, she has left the abusive home, has had surgery to repair her disfigured foot and is able to walk, has maintained her apartment, gained employment, is working on her sobriety, and gained back full custody of her children who are very happy to be back with their mom and thriving.

RAPPAHANNOCK GOODWILL INDUSTRIES, VIRGINIA



CA • Grantee Perspective

These funds allow us to provide security deposit and rental assistance for 6-24 months, as well as staffing to assist victims identify their housing needs, search for appropriate housing, and move into a new home of their own where survivors can permanently remain, long after the Transitional Housing funds are completed. This was not possible prior to OWW funds.

INTERVAL HOUSE, CALIFORNIA

The Transitional Housing Program enhances the safety and security of victims, their children, and other dependents by supporting an array of services that are critical to the provision of temporary housing and the attainment of permanent housing. Purpose areas include:

- Provide transitional housing, including funding for the operating expenses of newly developed or existing transitional housing;
- Provide short-term housing assistance, including rental or utilities payments assistance, and assistance with related expenses such as security deposits and other costs incidental to relocation to transitional housing; and
- Provide support services designed to help victims fleeing violence locate and secure permanent housing and integrate into a community by providing them with services, such as transportation, counseling, child care services, case management, and other assistance.

VAWA 2013 added the following new purpose areas to this program:

- Expand support services to help victims secure employment, via employment counseling, occupational training, job retention counseling, and/or counseling concerning reentry into the workforce.

In addition, VAWA 2013 clarified that victim services and legal assistance include services and assistance to **victims of domestic/sexual violence who are also victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons.**

These changes were implemented in FY 2014, meaning that grants made on or after October 1, 2014 could specifically address them. If an activity falling under the added purpose area could not be captured in sections of the existing form that grantees use to report, they could describe their accomplishments in narrative sections of the form.

General Grant Information

Information for this report was submitted by **284** individual grantees for the July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2017 progress reporting period.

- **16** (6%) grantees reported that their grants specifically addressed tribal populations.
- Grantees most frequently addressed the following purpose area:
 - Provide support services, including counseling, transportation, and employment services.

Provision of Housing

The ability to provide housing is a vital part of supporting victims in leaving their abusers by allowing them to live safely in the community. Grantees note that without housing, a victim must often choose between becoming homeless or remaining with their abuser.

- **239** (84%) grantees used funds to directly support housing units.

Grantees use a variety of strategies to provide housing to victims, their children, and other dependents. Some programs use funds to support either program-owned or -rented units, whereas other programs use rental assistance vouchers to provide housing to victims.

During each 6-month reporting period, on average, grantees provided victims, children, and other dependents:

- **369** program-owned housing units;
- **217** program-rented housing units; and
- **977** vouchers/rent subsidies.

Housing Assistance

In addition to funding housing units, grantees used funds to support other expenses related to housing, such as relocation expenses and utilities.



IA • Grantee Perspective

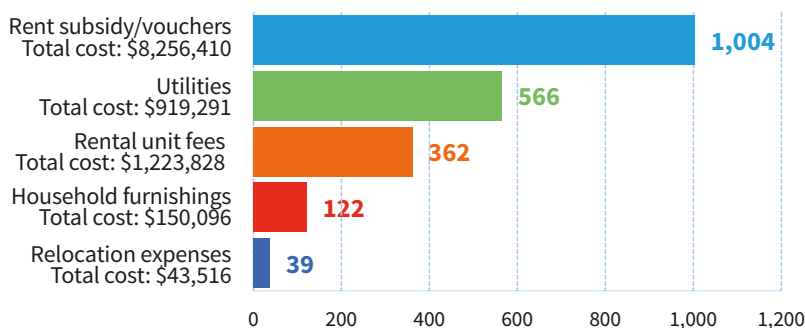
We are able to provide long-term housing and supportive services to address all aspects and varying levels of the barriers victims may be facing. This program has allowed us to expand our relationship with property managers. We have created great working relationships with several property management companies that provide us with multiple units in the communities they serve. We are able to build off of those relationships created when working on other housing cases and attempting to get other survivors into permanent housing. Since our program holds the master lease, the participant is never required to share information directly with the landlord until they decide they are ready to begin contributing to their housing costs. This creates an opportunity for participants to develop rapport with the landlord without fear that they are being judged by the information on a rental application. This clean slate has allowed our participants to focus on developing the skills that will make them good tenants in the future.

ASSAULT CARE CENTER EXTENDING SHELTER AND SUPPORT, IOWA

In a recent study of homelessness, families assigned permanent housing subsidies were half as likely to report intimate partner violence at a 20-month outcome measurement than families who had not been offered any priority access to homeless or housing assistance (Gubits et al., 2016).

Figure 1

Average number of victims provided with housing assistance by Transitional Housing Program grantees, July 2015–June 2017



Increasing Accessibility of Housing and Services

Some programs are able to offer units that are accessible to people with disabilities and/or enhance their programs' accessibility by providing interpretation services, language lines, translation of documents, and/or telecommunication devices for Deaf or hard of hearing victims.

- An average of **590** housing units were accessible to people with disabilities (for example, people who are blind or vision-impaired, people with physical disabilities, and people with diagnosed mental illness, if their activities are so limited) during each 6-month period.



CA • Grantee Perspective

The Program has allowed us to hire a Housing Supervisor who specializes in housing location and advocacy. This resource is particularly valuable in Los Angeles, an area of the country that is infamous for its lack of affordable housing. The funds have allowed us to provide the supportive staffing and financial resources necessary to help vulnerable victims navigate this difficult terrain with the support they need to overcome trauma and attain self-sufficiency. It also allowed us to partner with organizations and landlords, which has helped our program to meet the housing needs of our clients.

1736 FAMILY CRISIS CENTER, CALIFORNIA



MO • Grantee Perspective

The OWW grant supports the program's Employment Advocate, which also is in line with the VAWA 2013 Reauthorization. This position focuses on job preparation, placement and retention. The Employment Advocate meets with survivors individually and through group facilitation. The curriculum utilized is the workshop series created by the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) and WOW (Wider Opportunities for Women): Career Empowerment Curriculum. This position develops meaningful partnerships with local employers to serve as a bridge between survivors and jobs. The Employment Advocate targets specific industries that provide a wide range of positions. Employers have conducted job fairs at the organization and hired several survivors from Rose Brooks. Other employers have assisted with creating resumes and/or mock interviews.

ROSE BROOKS CENTER, MISSOURI

Staff

Grant-funded staff provide direct services to victims, children, and other dependents, as well as program administration. **Being able to hire staff is critical for the overall function and success of programs.**

- **278** (98%) grantees used funds for staffing needs.
- Grantees funded an average of **203** full-time equivalent (FTE) staff during each 6-month period.
- Grantees most often used these staffing funds to support case managers and program coordinators.

Table 1 Staff supported with Transitional Housing grant funds, July 2015–June 2017: Selected groups		
Staff funded	6-month average	
Total FTE staff funded	203	
Case managers	75	37%
Program coordinators	36	18%
Housing advocates	21	10%
Victim advocates	17	8%
Transitional services advocates	15	7%
Administrators	14	7%

NOTE: Data presented for the most frequently reported categories only (≥5%).

Services for Victims, Children, and Other Dependents

Grantees provide an array of support services to victims, their children, and other dependents to locate, secure, and maintain permanent housing and economic stability. **These comprehensive support services address a wide variety of needs to help victims become and remain safe from violence.**

- **272** (96%) grantees used funds for services provided to victims, their children, and other dependents.
- Grantees provided services to an average of **2,726** victims, **3,770** children, and **76** other dependents during each 6-month period.
- **72%** of victims who sought services received them during each 6-month period.

Support Services for Victims

During each 6-month period, on average, grantees provided:

- Case management services to **2,389** victims;
- Housing advocacy services to **1,673** victims;
- Material assistance (e.g. clothing, food, or personal items) to **1,501** victims;
- Support group/counseling services to **1,280** victims;
- Financial counseling services to **1,268** victims;
- Crisis intervention services to **1,254** victims;
- Victim advocacy services (e.g. assistance obtaining healthcare or social services) to **1,200** victims;
- Employment counseling services to **926** victims; and
- Transportation services to **913** victims.

Support Services for Children and Other Dependents

During each 6-month period, on average, grantees provided:

- Case management services to **1,773** children and other dependents;
- Material assistance (e.g. clothing, food, or personal items) to **1,414** children and other dependents;
- Advocacy services (e.g. assistance obtaining healthcare or social services) to **871** children and other dependents;
- Children's activities to **858** children;
- Child care services to **601** children;
- Crisis intervention services to **596** children and other dependents; and
- Transportation services to **588** children and other dependents.



CA • Grantee Perspective

Over the first 9 months of this grant Second Step has accomplished the following: Provided a cumulative total of 16,939 bednights of transitional housing to 84 women, children, and dependents and provided a wide range of supportive services, including assistance in securing permanent housing, to all 28 families enrolled in the program over the entire grant term.

CENTER FOR DOMESTIC PEACE, CALIFORNIA



NY • Grantee Perspective

In a two year period, the Transitional Housing Program grant has allowed us to assist 35 families/individuals with securing housing and/or other services. Those 35 households have a combined total of 58 children living within them. Those who did not secure housing benefited from advocacy, case management, transportation, accompaniments, counseling, goal planning, and emotional support. They are now aware of the available resources and may receive housing assistance in the future.

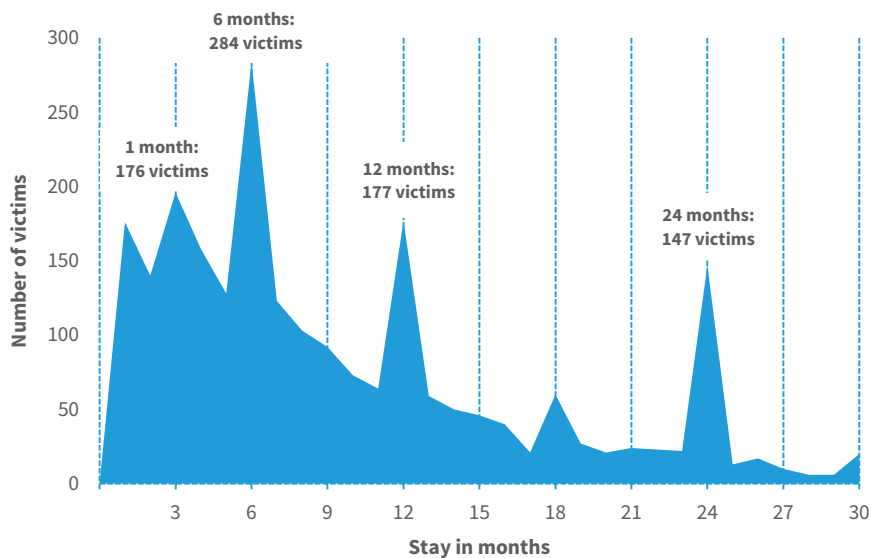
OSWEGO COUNTY OPPORTUNITIES, INC., NEW YORK

Table 2 Victims, children, and other dependents sheltered with Transitional Housing grant funds, July 2015–June 2017

Transitional housing	Number of people (6-month average)	Number of bed nights (2-year total)
Victims	1,054	509,905
Children	1,525	738,515
Other dependents	26	11,896
Total	2,604	1,260,316

NOTE: These numbers do not include victims, children, or other dependents receiving housing through a voucher or other rental assistance.

Figure 2 Victims and their families' length of stay in transitional housing in months, June 2015–July 2017



Victims, Children, and Other Dependents Seeking Services

Grantees serve victims of domestic/sexual violence.



IA • Grantee Perspective

With this program we are able to better serve entire households, including secondary victims and other dependents. Secondary victims and other dependents to primary victims do not always qualify for our other housing services due to lack of space, funding, and staff capacity. One participant identified that having her mother live in the home with her would provide significant support to her in terms of assistance with raising her small children and overcoming her struggles with substance abuse.

ASSAULT CARE CENTER EXTENDING SHELTER AND SUPPORT, IOWA

Table 3 Victims seeking services with Transitional Housing grant funds, July 2015–June 2017

Victims seeking services	6-month average					
	Victims		Children		Other dependents	
Total victims seeking services	3,781		5,094		85	
Victims served	2,474	65%	3,490	69%	73	86%
Victims partially served	252	7%	280	6%	3	3%
Victims not served	1,055	28%	1,324	26%	9	11%

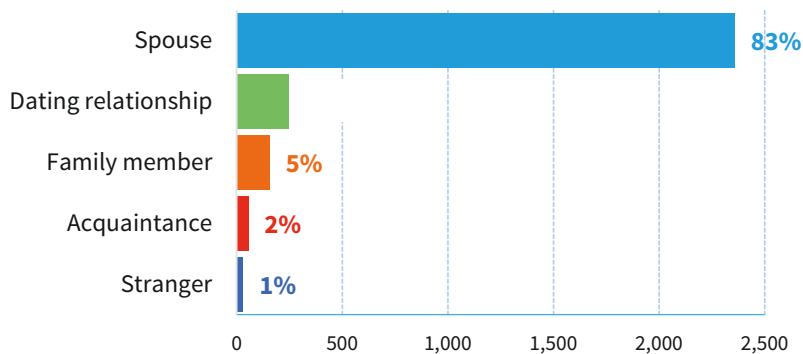
NOTE: “Partially served” represents victims, children, and other dependents who received some but not all of the service(s) they requested, provided those services were funded under the Transitional Housing Program grant. “Not served” represents victims, children, and other dependents who sought services and did not receive the service(s) they were seeking, provided those services were funded under the Transitional Housing Program grant.

Victims' Relationship to Offender

Grantees serve victims of domestic/sexual violence. Between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2017:

- The majority of victims served or partially served were victimized by a **spouse or intimate partner** (83%).
- The remaining victims were most commonly victimized in the context of a **dating relationship** (9%) or by another **family or household member** (5%).

Figure 3 | Type of victimization by relationship to offender (6-month average)



Reasons Victims Were Not Served or Were Partially Served

During the July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2017 reporting period, grantees reported that an average of **853** victims, **1,037** children, and **4** other dependents were not served or were only partially **served solely due to a lack of available housing**.

Grantees most frequently noted the following additional barriers as reasons why victims were not served or were only partially served:

- Program reached capacity;
- Program rules not acceptable to party(ies);
- Services were not appropriate for party(ies);
- Party(ies) did not meet eligibility or statutory requirements; or
- Safety/security risk.



MS • Grantee Perspective

During this funding period, the Transitional Housing Program successfully completed services with a few clients. One of the clients was a victim of domestic violence and sexual assault and had endured years of punching, kicking, and rape by her husband. The client and her family were accepted into the Transitional Housing Program. The client has completed safety planning, graduated with a degree in diesel mechanics, secured employment, filed for divorce, obtained housing, and met all therapeutic goals. The Center will continue to follow up with the victim to ensure she has a happy and successful life.

**THE CENTER FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION,
MISSISSIPPI**



ID • Grantee Perspective

We helped 36 survivors maintain housing stability for themselves and their 54 children and 6 dependents collectively, 19 of whom are people with disabilities. Funds helped multiple survivors move out of the area where the abusive person lived, and we were able to help them with full application, deposit and rent so they could re-establish jobs, schools, and needed supplies, in safe and stable housing.

IDAHO COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Demographics of Victims, Children, and Other Dependents Served and Partially Served

Grantees served or partially served an average of **2,726** victims, **3,770** children, and **76** other dependents during each 6-month period. The victims most frequently served or partially served were **white** (43%), **female** (99%), and between the ages of **25 and 59** (85%).

Table 4

Demographic characteristics of victims, children, and other dependents served with Transitional Housing grant funds, July 2015–June 2017

Characteristic	6-month average					
	Victims		Children		Other dependents	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Race						
American Indian or Alaska Native	159	6%	222	6%	3	4%
Asian	111	4%	109	3%	7	9%
Black or African American	787	30%	1,351	37%	16	22%
Hispanic or Latino	520	20%	905	25%	24	32%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	32	1%	49	1%	2	3%
White	1,149	43%	1,273	35%	25	34%
Unknown (missing)	67		124		2	
Gender						
Female	2,683	99%	1,887	50%	50	66%
Male	35	1%	1,859	50%	26	34%
Total	2,718		3,746		76	
Unknown (missing)	67		124		2	
Age						
0–6	-	-	1,824	49%	-	-
7–12	-	-	1,274	34%	-	-
13–17	4	0%	645	17%	-	-
18–24	349	13%	-	-	65	89%
25–59	2,286	85%	-	-	6	8%
60+	56	2%	-	-	3	3%
Total	2,695		3,743		74	
Unknown (missing)	31		27		3	
Other						
People with disabilities	489	18%	213	6%	8	11%
People with limited English proficiency	403	15%	247	7%	7	10%
People who are immigrants, refugees, or asylum seekers	385	14%	171	5%	8	10%
People who live in rural areas	630	23%	833	22%	16	21%

Transitional Housing and Destination Upon Exit

Grant funds can be used to house victims for up to 24 months.ⁱⁱ Grantees reported that victims most often moved to permanent housing of their choosing, after their stay in grant-funded housing.

Table 5 | Victims' housing destination upon exit, July 2015–June 2017

Destination upon exit	2-year total
Permanent housing of choice (Section 8, return to home, rent or purchase housing)	1,780
Temporary housing with family or friend	188
Transitional housing (not grant-funded program)	69
Domestic violence emergency shelter	36
Healthcare facility/substance abuse treatment program	17
Incarceration/jail	15
Homeless emergency shelter	12
Hotel/motel	3
Unknown	125

Victims' Perception of Risk of Violence Upon Exit

Victims most often reported perceiving a lower risk of violence (77%) after their stay in Transitional Housing grant-funded housing units.

Table 6 | Victims' perception of risk of future violence upon exit, July 2015–June 2017

Perception of risk of future violence	2-year total	
Lower risk of violence	1,738	77%
Equal risk of violence	129	6%
Does not know	86	4%
Greater risk of violence	38	2%
Unknown	274	

Follow-up Support Services

If grantees use funds for housing units and support services, they are required to provide a minimum of 3 months follow-up services to victims after their stay in transitional housing units. These follow-up services are intended to continue to connect victims and their families with assistance from the program.

- **241** (85%) grantees used funds for follow-up services.

ⁱⁱ By statute, a grantee may waive the 24-month restriction for no more than 6 months for victims who have made a good-faith effort to acquire permanent housing but have been unable to do so.



RI • Grantee Perspective

The Transitional Housing Program enables us to provide intensive support to survivors of violence by providing them with opportunities and resources to achieve greater self-sufficiency through supportive services while having safe temporary housing. This service-enriched program supports self-efficacy by emphasizing a service model that promotes safety, employment and education, and housing stability. Additionally, social supports are provided that inspire families to overcome challenges through mental, emotional, and personal development, supporting standards of healthy living, encouraging goal setting, and teaching basic life skills such as budgeting, time management, problem solving, stress management, and more.

WOMEN'S CENTER OF RHODE ISLAND



MA • Grantee Perspective

Through the Transitional Housing Program, ATASK has enabled clients to secure housing leases under their names. This proved to be critical in supporting 2 families this reporting period. After OWW housing assistance was no longer available to the clients, they were able to stay in their own units, avoiding the need to move. Without this program, the landlords would never have allowed the clients to rent from them, since they did not have good credit scores, enough income, or good housing histories.

ASIAN TASK FORCE AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, MASSACHUSETTS



AZ • Grantee Perspective

Attaining affordable (permanent) and safe housing for women and their children remains a major need faced by victims/survivors. The greater metro Phoenix area is reflective of similar housing markets. Once severely affected by the housing bubble crash, a period of increasing demand for rental properties occurred. Now with realty prices increasing, rents are rising in tandem. Survivors are not only priced out of more desirable neighborhoods (safer, better schools, readily available services, etc.) but the screening process for renting in some areas remains strict and highly exclusionary. Anyone presenting with a negative rental history, poor credit, and/or criminal history will find renting especially difficult. Many properties require “non-refundable application fees” which place an additional burden on women and families seeking to transition to safe and affordable housing. It remains an unfortunate truth that many of the properties that are the easiest to rent are not the most ideal in terms of safety, sobriety, or general location.

NATIONAL ADVOCACY AND TRAINING NETWORK,
ARIZONA



AL • Grantee Perspective

Economic self-sufficiency continues to be a huge need in achieving and sustaining housing, safety, and independence from abuse. Many times survivors reopen the door to an abuser because of the financial security that exists in that relationship. While we offer financial empowerment, budgeting assistance, and other supportive types of job readiness skills, participants still encounter difficulties when trying to obtain employment due to deficiencies in education or lack of job skills. Participants experience challenges with negative credit reports, paying past debts, transportation, and childcare. Because of the increased difficulties, we realize that we must move to a more focused and organized effort in our approach to job readiness and support. While some survivors come to the program with work experience, most do not. Others come with some skills, but because of the isolation and control they have experienced, they do not have confidence in their abilities

SAFEHOUSE OF SHELBY COUNTY, ALABAMA

During each 6-month period, on average, grantees provided:

- Case management services to **472** victims and **293** children and other dependents;
- Housing advocacy services to **225** victims and **49** children and other dependents;
- Material assistance (e.g. clothing, food, or personal items) to **209** victims and **193** children and other dependents;
- Support group/counseling services to **186** victims and **66** children and other dependents;
- Victim advocacy services to **182** victims and **131** children and other dependents;
- Crisis intervention services to **155** victims and **79** children and other dependents; and
- Financial counseling services to **152** victims and **13** children and other dependents.

Remaining Areas of Need

Grantees cited a **lack of safe and affordable long-term housing** as the biggest obstacle confronting victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

In addition to **high prices and low availability of rental units**, victims encountered **additional challenges to securing housing**, including:

- Long waitlists for Section 8 and public housing;
- No credit or poor credit history;
- Inability to meet the income requirements of landlords and property managers;
- A history of evictions;
- The presence of a criminal background; and
- Outstanding debt.

These challenges sometimes pushed victims into housing that was **unsafe, outside their target area, or poorly maintained**.

Grantees also cited difficulty in **helping clients secure employment that provided a living wage**. Challenges included:

- High unemployment rates in service areas;
- Lack of training and/or education;
- Little or no employment history;
- An inability to secure child care, especially for nighttime shifts; and
- Inadequate access to reliable transportation.

The **inability to earn a living wage and achieve financial self-sufficiency** put victims at a **much greater risk of returning to their abusers**.

Finding employment and housing was particularly difficult for **underserved populations**, especially:

- Immigrant victims especially those with in the process of obtaining legal status;
- Victims with limited English proficiency;
- LGBTQ populations;
- Elderly victims; and
- Victims with disabilities.

Grantees emphasized the need to **provide additional services to victims to promote self-sufficiency**, including:

- Affordable and pro bono civil legal services;
- Mental healthcare and substance abuse counseling;
- Funds for moving expenses, utilities, and security deposits;
- Financial education; and
- Job training, employment counseling, and education.



TX • Grantee Perspective



TX • Grantee Perspective

Immigration resolution, particularly pertaining to VAWA, U-Visa, and T-Visa applications, and the challenges it poses to attaining self-determination and sustainability remains the highest barrier to clients to date. Due to the amount of time the immigration process is currently taking (going on 3 years of backlog at last count) the 24-month maximum is not enough to maintain and improve client stability. Currently clients who are still in the metropolitan area where their trafficker/batterer/abuser resides cannot leave due to travel restrictions imposed upon those who do not have documentation, including state identification or driver's licenses. In addition, because clients are prohibited from moving across state lines, or are limited to the area due to location of courts and government agencies that are pertinent to their case (as well as legal services that are also certified by the state bar), safety becomes a pressing issue, especially when the batterer has no such restrictions due to his/her being a citizen or permanent resident of the US. Immigration's timeline and backlog also make finding fair and sustainable work next to impossible.

HOUSTON AREA WOMEN'S CENTER, TEXAS

We are finding that the individuals we are serving in transitional housing are having greater and greater mental health and substance abuse issues and that these issues are experienced by a majority, if not all of our residents, instead of just a few. Access to mental health and substance abuse services in rural areas is critical and yet lacking. Fewer providers means increased waiting lists and means that individuals do not necessarily have the luxury of selecting a provider with whom they are most comfortable as options are limited. Access to substance abuse treatment, particularly drug replacement therapies, is also a major issue. Physicians providing suboxone are limited in the numbers of patients they can serve and one resident must travel over two hours to access her services. The closest methadone clinics are in Bangor which has three such clinics but serves the northern half of the state. With a cap of 300, one clinic recently stated they have a 173 patient wait list while they wait for approval to expand the cap they can serve to 500. Bangor is 45 to 90 minutes away from our houses. While transportation to appointments may be covered by MaineCare, the distance and time involved in accessing what can be daily treatment is a barrier and prevents individuals from taking other necessary steps in their lives such as finding or maintaining employment

PENQUIS, MAINE

