



Housing Options:

A Summary of Resources for Survivors of Domestic Violence

For survivors of domestic violence, accessing affordable housing can be one of the major barriers to leaving an abusive person. Depending on where you live, there may be several housing options to consider before you choose what kind of housing is right for you and your family.

Types of Housing:

- **Transitional Housing:**
Transitional Housing may be an option for someone who is leaving an emergency shelter, someone who wishes to leave an abusive environment and emergency shelter is not a suitable option and/or someone not yet financially able to afford an apartment at the normal market rate. In addition to providing affordable housing, many transitional housing programs also provide supportive services to help residents build skills in money management or offer savings programs. Some of these programs also offer temporary rent subsidies, allowing participants to find and keep their own housing while the program assists them for a set period of time.
- **Rental Properties:**
Rental Properties refers to land, houses, apartments, or rooms available for rent. Rental properties can be privately or commercially owned. Without using any assistance programs, these properties will require you to pay the full rent amount. Some landlords include the utilities in the rent price but other times the tenant is responsible for paying them separately.
- **Public Housing:**
Public Housing refers to low-rent housing owned, sponsored, or administered by a government entity. This type of housing option is available to eligible low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Public housing comes in all sizes and types. The formula for determining the portion of rent a tenant is responsible for can vary but generally tenants will pay 30 percent of their monthly adjusted income. Eligibility requirements for this housing will be based on income and U.S. citizenship or eligible immigration status. For more information click here:
http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/topics/rental_assistance/phprog
- **Housing Choice Voucher Program (Formerly Section 8)**
Housing choice vouchers allow very low-income families to lease or purchase safe, decent, and affordable privately-owned rental housing.. Generally, families receiving the voucher must pay 30% of its monthly adjusted gross income for rent and utilities. While the formula for determining the portion of rent may vary, under this program a family will not pay more than 40 percent of its adjusted monthly income for rent. As a victim of domestic violence, you may be eligible for priority status in some cities/towns. Check with your local Housing Authority regarding rules, waitlists, and priority status. As with Public Housing, eligibility requirements for this housing will be based on income and U.S. citizenship or eligible immigration status. For more information click here:
http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/topics/housing_choice_voucher_program_section_8

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Things to Consider:

Before signing a lease, consider the following:

- Do not put money down unless you're sure you want the apartment. Although you may be legally entitled to have your deposit returned, it may be difficult to recover.
- Read through the proposed lease completely to identify if there are any rules or regulations for the property that you may not be comfortable with.
- Calculate the anticipated cost of utilities (e.g. heat, water, electricity). If the landlord does not have this information, you can contact the utility companies for information on that property and estimates. Additionally, the utility company may offer a monthly budget plan for the unit based on past use of the utility in question.
- Check the apartment to ensure that it's in acceptable condition. Put all agreements for repairs in writing.
- Evaluate how the superintendent, landlord, or owner responds to "after hours" emergencies.
- Talk with prospective neighbors about the competency and reputation of the landlord and/or management company.
- Visit the property at night and/or during the weekend to see what the community is like.

Staying Safe:

If you have relocated and are concerned about the abusive person locating you, talk to a local domestic violence program about privacy planning and consider the following:

- Check to see if your State has an Address Confidentiality Program, Voter Confidentiality Program, and learn about other options to maintaining your privacy. For more information, visit: www.nnedv.org/survivor-privacy.
- Look at the privacy policies of your utility companies and contact them to request additional account security options to minimize how your personal information is shared or accessed.
- Look at the security of your credit reports. Some rental properties require a credit check. If the abusive person has access to your credit reports, s/he might be able to see where the credit check was ran, giving away general location information. Contact the credit bureaus to discuss privacy options.

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