

2008 – 2009 CDBG/HOME APPLICANT QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

Name of Organization: **Sexual Assault & Domestic Violence**
Project Title: Domestic Violence Response Team

1. The proposal indicates that the DVRT project makes referrals that prevent homelessness among low-income victims of domestic violence. Is shelter and short-term housing usually available for victims seeking to leave the home?

We provide shelter for approximately 10 Low-Income and 25 Very-Low Income individuals each year. Homelessness becomes a factor from the moment we get the police report. Our shelter is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Victims must go through a screening process with an initial interview with a trained and certified crisis line specialist. This process usually takes 30 minutes to complete followed by a second level screening which usually takes another 30 minutes. If for any reason they cannot be immediately approved for admittance to the shelter, they can receive temporary shelter through the Short Term Emergency Aid Committee (STEAC) with motel vouchers or the Wayfarer Center until they complete the second screening interview and receive approval for entry into the SADVC shelter where they may stay and receive therapy, legal and other services for up to 14 weeks.

2. Are there any indications that the on-site and early intervention of the DVRT program reduces the cycle of abuse leading victims back to the abuser?

While we are not currently tracking the rate of returning individuals, (with the same or different partners) we do have history and client information on file and could provide a report in the future. Many are transient which must be taken into consideration. Each client presents a unique and complex background. Some have been abused since childhood while others may be involved in an abusive relationship for the first time. For these reasons our programs are designed to provide on-going and continuous group and individual therapy and support, for as long as it takes. Many families truly wish to stay together but did not have positive role models for healthy behavior. Our Alternatives to Violence Program for batterers plays a critical role in preventing a recurrence of violence while helping families to stay together if they so choose.

The on-site and early intervention of the DVRT advocate is a critical piece because isolation is part of the abuser's cycle of control. For example, a woman seeking legal residence, citizenship or even a driver's license may be told by her abusive partner that she is not smart enough to pass the test, and after many years she will truly believe it. He may tell her that if she leaves, he will take the children and call INS to have her deported. She may not know what the family income is or how to get a job and plan a budget for herself and her children. The DVRT advocate helps the victim to understand, in a language they are comfortable with, that they do not have to be a legal resident to file for a restraining order or custody; that health and success is entirely possible, and they are not alone. From crisis to counseling to legal assistance, when the decision to get help is pivotal, the DVRT advocates and early intervention provide victims with information to act on the moment of courage and take those brave steps toward physical and mental health for themselves and their children.