Questions and Challenges in Supporting Cash Transfer Programs for Survivors

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SHA’s mission is to ensure that survivors of domestic and sexual violence have a full range of safe housing options, through improved access, increased resources, and innovative solutions, ultimately catalyzing a safe housing movement.

Our vision is to create a world where safe housing and racial justice are human rights shared by everyone.
Our Mission:
To build a dynamic bridge that leverages technology to enable connections and innovative solutions for a more equitable planet.
Caravan Studios builds technology tools and solutions that help communities organize, access, and apply local resources to their most pressing problems.

Using a 5-step community design methodology, participating community members identify the issues they want to address and then help design and test potential solutions, thus ensuring that scaled solutions are made by and for the target communities.
Safe Shelter Collaborative

Find shelter faster for survivors of human trafficking, domestic violence, and sexual assault

www.safesheltercollaborative.org
Questions We Will Address:

- What is the connection between D/SV and homelessness in the US?
- What is flexible funding and what are the core components? How is it different from direct cash transfers?
- What are the common challenges and barriers flexible funding programs encounter?
- What is the evidence demonstrating the impact of flexible funds on survivors’ ability to access housing/avoid homelessness?
Intersection of Domestic and Sexual Violence and Housing Instability

One in four homeless women cite domestic violence as a major contributor to their homelessness.

Housing instability is 4x more likely for women who have experienced domestic violence.

Almost two-thirds of trafficking survivors report being homeless or experiencing unstable housing at the time they were recruited.

A majority of homeless youth report leaving home due to sexual abuse.
Cycle of Housing Instability

Victimization leading to Housing Loss

- Keeping Housing
- Losing Housing

SURVIVORS

- Getting Housing
- Victimization while Homeless
- Victimization while Getting Housing
- Victimization while Keeping Housing
Flexible Funding Definition

Financial support provided to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault to address whatever barrier exists between them and safe housing stability

- Swift, individualized, and targeted assistance, coupled with housing advocacy and safety planning
- Easily accessible, flexible, and as survivor-centered as possible
Examples of Flex Funding Grants

- Childcare
- Medical bills
- Back rent
- Grant
- Moving expenses
- Car repair
- First month's rent
- Storage unit fees
- Utilities
Core Components of Flexible Funding

- Low Barrier Access
- Swift Dissemination of Funds
- Survivor-Driven Advocacy
- Flexibility
Various Types of Flexible Funding

- Many other terms used for flexible funding --
  - Cash Assistance
  - Mini-grants
  - Microloans
  - Emergency financial support
  - Diversion
  - Prevention

- Majority of programs provide funding to vendors working with survivors, such as property management companies, storage companies, transportation vendors

- Many programs are informal – bus tokens, clothing vouchers, food coupons

- Others are more formalized, using various forms of support to help survivors
Comparisons to DCT

- Long-term economic mobility for youth vs. immediate housing stability and safety from abuse for survivors

- Funding provided directly to clients vs. funding provided to vendors

- Coordinated pilots vs. wide array of formal/informal programs

- Funding provided in conjunction with systems advocacy vs. housing advocacy and safety planning
Priority topics include:

- Ensuring BIPOC organizations can access flex funding resources
- Reaching survivors still living with the harm doer and/or not engaging with mainstream victim services
- Braiding public and private funds to meet the full range of survivors’ needs
- Balancing public funders’ documentation and reporting requirements with the need for flexibility and low barrier access
- IRS, accounting, and audit requirements
## Pilot Project Evaluations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pilot Project</th>
<th>Average Grant</th>
<th>Range spent</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Primary Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CA DV Housing First Evaluation, CA State</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$0.50 - $6,385</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>Rent, move-in costs, furniture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA DV Housing First Demonstration, WA State</td>
<td>$1,250</td>
<td>$40 - $10,000</td>
<td>681</td>
<td>Rent, utilities, student loans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DASH Survivor Resilience Fund, Washington, DC</td>
<td>$2,078</td>
<td>$275 - $8,505</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Rent, relocation, utilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENDGBV Microgrants Program New York, NY</td>
<td>$1,243</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>Rent, technology, furniture, food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCADV Flex Funding Pilot, Southwestern PA State</td>
<td>$920</td>
<td>$31.53 - $1,780</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Utilities, material goods, transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA CIFD Survivors First Pilot, Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>$4,963</td>
<td>$65.57 - $18,165</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>Rent, utilities, housing arrears</td>
</tr>
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## Pilot Project Evaluations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pilot Project</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CA DV Housing First Evaluation, CA State</td>
<td>46% of Survivors were able to stay in their own home, 40% obtained alternative housing</td>
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<tr>
<td>WA DV Housing First Demonstration, WA State</td>
<td>88% of Survivors obtained or maintained housing, 97% reported increased sense of safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DASH Survivor Resilience Fund, Washington, DC</td>
<td>93% of Survivors were stably housed after 6 months, 91% had not experienced repeat violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENDGBV Microgrants Program New York, NY</td>
<td>84% of Survivors reported increased financial stability, 48% reported increased sense of safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCADV Flex Funding Pilot, Southwestern PA State</td>
<td>72% of Survivors reported improved financial stability, 43% obtained or maintained housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA CIFD Survivors First Pilot, Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>59% of Survivors were able to stay in their own home, 33% obtained alternative housing</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Safe Housing Alliance & Caravan Studios

- Safe Housing Alliance’s deep experience in housing, flexible funding, and technical assistance
- Caravan Studios’ focus on co-designing tools with community members
Listening sessions

Perspectives on

- What works
- What doesn’t
- How they’d change it
What made flex funding work well

- Education
- Transparency of budgets/funds
- Payment processing efficiencies/managing documentation
- Mobile advocacy
- Internal trust between programs and administration
- Consistent and agreed upon process
What made flexible funding difficult

- Restrictions on how funding can be used
- Funder invoicing requirements
- Gatekeeping the advocates who are doing the work

“When an advocate is empowered, they’re more likely to empower the survivors.”
“No restrictions. I mean, just really flexible.”

“The more restrictions you put in, whether it's from a funder or whether it’s your own internal process, the more restrictions you put in, the harder it is in terms of that conversation, and the work with the survivor to really identify what it is we can do to make a difference in their life.”
How can we improve this process?

01
Improve how funds are administered, managed, and documented.

02
Increase the amount of available funding and broaden the diversity of funding sources.

03
Provide education and guidance and allow the community to share their own practices.
Let’s Discuss!
Questions?
Thank you!

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