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**HB14-1017: How Colorado’s affordable housing shortage affects victims of domestic violence**

Permanent, affordable housing is the key for domestic violence victims to restore safety and stability and reclaim their lives. Experience has taught us that victims of domestic violence must be stably and permanently housed before true progress on other fronts can be realized. In other words, housing is foundational.

Non-profit domestic violence service providers report that Colorado’s **lack of affordable housing** is and for many years has been the **most significant barrier to safety and independence for victims of domestic violence** **and their children.**

* Despite the existence of 33 domestic violence programs across the state offering emergency shelter beds, there were 10,102 unmet domestic violence shelter requests in 2012, the most recent year for which data is available.[[1]](#endnote-1)
* Due to the lack of affordable housing, the length of stay in Colorado’s emergency domestic violence shelters increased by 24% from 2007 to 2012, leading to a steady rise in the number of victims whose shelter needs go unmet.[[2]](#endnote-2)
* Domestic violence service providers in the Northeastern quarter of the state indicate that the housing needs of oil and gas industry workers and the 2013 floods are exacerbating this barrier for the victims they assist.
* The booming rental housing market is also exacerbating the affordable housing barrier for victims of domestic violence according to domestic violence service providers across the state.

**Colorado’s affordable housing shortage dramatically reduces options for people experiencing domestic violence**, particularly women and children, trapping them in abusive situations or forcing them to become homeless if they do leave. **Victims of domestic violence are placed in a position of choosing between remaining in an abusive situation or becoming homeless, neither of which are safe or meaningful choices.** Domestic violence is a major cause of homelessness in Colorado. Estimates range from one-quarter to nearly 60 percent of homeless women report that domestic or sexual violence was the immediate cause of their homelessness depending on the region and the type of study.[[3]](#endnote-3)

1. Colorado Department of Human Services Domestic Violence Program (2012). *Annual Report* retrieved on 1/17/14 from: <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDHS-DVP/DVP/1224067190267> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Webster, M. (2013). *Pathway to Permanent Housing for Victims of Domestic Violence.* Colorado Division of Criminal Justice, Office for Victims Programs. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty. (2010). *Some Facts on Homelessness, Housing, and Violence Against Women*. Available at <http://www.nlchp.org/content/pubs/Some%20Facts%20on%20Homeless%20and%20DV.pdf>. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)