
Domestic Violence: Facts, Baltimore City Issues, Options for Advocacy



Prepared by the Grantee Assistance
and Public Policy Committee

FACTS (Source: House of Ruth)

- Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women in the U.S.; over 4 million women annually are battered.
- More than 25% of all married women experience one or more incidents of battering within their marriage.
- 70% of murdered women are killed by a current or estranged intimate partner. Before they were murdered, at least two-thirds of those women had been physically abused.
- Health-related costs of intimate partner assault, rape, stalking, and homicide exceed \$5.8 billion annually.
- 81% of male batterers' fathers abused their mothers; children of violent homes 74% more likely to commit criminal assaults.
- 6,516 domestic violence and peace order cases were filed in Baltimore City in FY2004; 6,299 in Baltimore County.

BALTIMORE CITY ISSUES

- **REPORTING/ACCOUNTABILITY:** Baltimore City Police have not complied with mandatory reporting of domestic violence crimes for the past two years. Baltimore County has a more rigorous reporting system.
- **POLICE/CRIMINAL JUSTICE:** Information regarding police as perpetrators of domestic violence (or action taken in response) has never been made available to the public. Victims frequently disclose that they are afraid of the police and state's attorneys relative to reporting and prosecution of domestic violence crimes.
- **AFFORDABLE HOUSING:** Affordable housing in Baltimore City is in short supply, forcing battered women and their families to endure abuse or live in the streets. Baltimore City Housing Department has no set-asides for DV victims.
- **SERVICES:** In Baltimore City, the only source of emergency cash assistance for victims fleeing an abuser is the House of Ruth Maryland (HRM). Over 1,300 victims of domestic violence sought shelter at the HRM last year; 1,100 of the victims received services but couldn't be housed because all shelter beds were full.

ADVOCACY OPTIONS

- Ask any candidate running for office who seeks your contribution what he or she has done or plans to do to prevent and respond to domestic violence
- Encourage Baltimore's Mayor, law enforcement officials, judiciary, and emergency responders to improve reporting of domestic violence, including implementing a Local Domestic Violence Fatality Review team (enabling legislation was passed last year by the Maryland legislature, a model protocol has been developed by MNADV).
- For a domestic violence legislative agenda for the 2006 session of the Maryland General Assembly, check the website of the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV), www.mnadv.org
- For a Maryland affordable housing legislative agenda, see the website of the Maryland Affordable Housing Coalition, <http://www.mdahc.org/>
- For a national affordable housing legislative agenda, see the website of the National Low Income Housing Coalition, <http://www.nlihc.org/>

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