



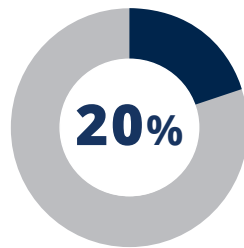
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVOR HOUSING DISCRIMINATION

Domestic violence disproportionately impacts women with **one in four women experiencing domestic violence in their lifetime**. Women are five times more likely to be survivors of domestic violence (hereafter, “survivors”) than men. Survivors often face housing insecurity as a result of domestic violence including housing discrimination due to their status as survivors of domestic violence and possible loss of current housing due to Criminal Activity Nuisance Ordinance (CANO) citations resulting from domestic violence. **CANOs adversely affect survivors of domestic violence, penalizing survivors for calls to emergency services.** A nuisance citation often results in the eviction of the survivor, which can lead to homelessness and difficulty finding new housing.

Twenty percent of survivors surveyed for this report responded that they struggled to find new housing following an act of domestic violence; 16.7% responded that they faced homelessness. Thirteen percent responded that they were evicted because of domestic violence.



of surveyed survivors **struggled to find new housing.**



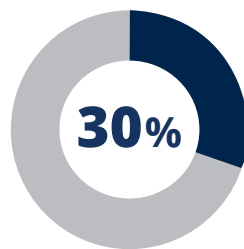
of surveyed survivors were **discouraged from calling 911.**



of surveyed survivors **became homeless.**



of surveyed survivors **were evicted.**



of surveyed survivors **reported housing discrimination.**

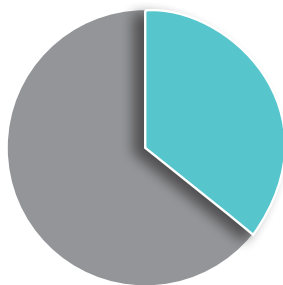


Multiple systems work to discourage survivors of domestic violence from contacting emergency services, including criminal activity nuisance ordinances, law enforcement, and child services. Twenty percent of surveyed survivors reported they had refrained from calling 911 concerning domestic violence for fear of eviction or that child services would remove their children from the home. Survivors of domestic violence face housing discrimination because of their history of domestic violence through unfavorable treatment from landlords, denial of access to housing, and eviction in both the private and subsidized housing markets. Thirty percent of surveyed survivors reported experiencing housing discrimination.

“ I was in a nursing home a few months. It caused me to lose everything. Now, I’m trying to start over from scratch on my own with two kids. ”

This report assesses the incidence of housing discrimination against survivors of domestic violence in the Cuyahoga County rental market. Survivors of domestic violence are protected in housing transactions under the Fair Housing Act on the basis of sex; however, there is no explicit fair housing protection for survivors of domestic violence in any local, state, or federal fair housing laws. Survivors in subsidized housing are afforded certain protections under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

The Fair Housing Center used matched-pair phone and email testing to measure the incidence of discrimination occurring towards survivors of domestic violence in their search for housing. Testing pairs included: A) an African American survivor or advocate for survivors (the protected tester) and an African American tester not associated with domestic violence (control tester); and B) a white survivor or advocate and a white control tester.



35.9% of tests revealed unfavorable treatment of domestic violence survivors and their advocates.

In 92 conclusive tests, **35.9% revealed unfavorable treatment of the protected tester.** Testers posing as a survivor of domestic violence experienced unfavorable treatment 34.0% of the time (17 of 50 total tests). Testers posing as advocates contacting housing providers on behalf of survivor of domestic violence experienced unfavorable treatment 38.1% of the time (16 of 42 total tests).

“The survivor is often the one that has to move, to find new housing, move the kids, get a job, etc. — it’s further victimization. It can be a fresh start, but it’s very challenging. They didn’t commit the crime yet they have to uproot their life.”

The Fair Housing Center recommends:

- Repeal all CANOs in Cuyahoga County
- Educate landlords and survivors on their fair housing rights and responsibilities
- Support statewide legislation to protect survivors of domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault from housing discrimination
- Correct designation of domestic violence as a crime in police reports and enact proper procedure for gathering evidence and pressing charges to better protect survivors
- Educate landlords regarding adverse rental factors for survivors of domestic violence that may be the direct result of domestic violence, such as poor credit history, poor rental history, criminal record, or failure to pay rent
- Educate HUD-assisted, LIHTC, and HCVP housing staff on VAWA protections for survivors of domestic violence