

The Need for Sexual Violence Housing Services in Ohio

EVALUATION REPORT Based on Survivor Survey Data

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents findings from anonymous survey data collected from survivors of sexual violence who accessed **OAESV's Meaningful Access Housing Program (MAHP)**. The MAHP was designed to address the urgent and often unmet housing needs of survivors who face significant barriers to stability due to sexual violence by providing immediate, short-term accommodations through hotel stays. This evaluation focuses on survivor experiences, program outcomes, and offers recommendations for strengthening and expanding housing interventions for survivors.

A core theme emerging from this evaluation is the **interconnection between housing and violence**: violence impacts access to housing, and the availability (or lack) of housing can increase vulnerability to violence. Addressing this dynamic is critical for promoting health equity for survivors.

This evaluation report:

- Evaluates the **efficacy of MAHP**;
- Explores the **relationship between violence and housing access**;
- Highlights **gaps in rural infrastructure and survivor-specific housing resources**;
- Explores the importance of rapid rehousing for this population;
- Offers **survivor-informed data recommendations** for service improvements, program expansion and systems change.

1 Introduction

Survivors of sexual violence often face significant barriers to safe and stable housing, including safety concerns, financial instability, trauma-related challenges, and limited access to survivor-centered resources.

Housing is not just a basic need; it is a form of **violence prevention**. For survivors of sexual violence, safe and stable housing is essential for healing, safety, and autonomy. Yet, housing is often out of reach due to the economic, physical, and emotional toll of violence.

The **OAESV Meaningful Access Housing Program (MAHP)** was developed to fill a critical gap in emergency housing options, providing survivors with immediate, flexible, and low-barrier access to shelter. This evaluation is based on the direct voices of those survivors and the systemic insights their experiences reveal.

2 Methodology

- **Data Source:** Anonymous surveys completed by survivors who utilized MAHP between 2024-2025
- **Participant Reach:** 30 survivors across diverse regions and demographics.
- **Assessment Focus:** Safety, access, survivor experience, program impact, systemic barriers, and service needs.

3 Key Findings from Survivor Survey Data

Violence and Housing Are Interconnected

Survivors frequently cited **sexual violence as the root cause of their housing instability**, and noted how a lack of safe housing increased their risk of further violence.

This data confirms the **cyclical relationship** between violence and housing:

- Violence disrupts stable housing;
- Lack of housing options increases exposure to unsafe environments;
- Safe, survivor-centered housing can **break the cycle** and promote long-term safety and healing.

Safety and Stability

- **86.7%** of respondents reported feeling safer as a result of their participation in MAHP.
- Many noted the immediate relief and mental clarity the hotel stay provided during a crisis period. The hotel stays were described as a **lifeline**, offering respite, privacy, and dignity.

“I had nowhere else to go. The hotel gave me a chance to breathe and plan my next step.”

Accessibility and Responsiveness

- Survivors appreciated the **low-barrier nature** of the program, citing ease of access and fast response time as critical factors.
- **96.7%** stated they would not have had any other safe housing option if MAHP had not been available.

Impact of Rural Infrastructure Gaps

Survivors in **rural areas** were more likely to report:

- Longer wait times for housing assistance;
- Fewer safe and confidential hotel options;
- Limited access to transportation, mental health care, and follow-up services.

This underscores the **urgent need for infrastructure investment** in underserved areas.

Trauma-Informed Approach

- Respondents consistently described MAHP as **nonjudgmental, respectful, and supportive**.
- Survivors reported that the program allowed them to maintain autonomy and dignity during a vulnerable time.

Impact on Long-Term Stability

- Many respondents indicated that MAHP served as a **bridge to longer-term housing**, employment, and healing.
- However, a recurring concern was the **lack of available transitional or permanent housing options** following the hotel stay.

Housing as a Healing Service

Survivors shared that even short-term housing access enabled them to:

- Stabilize mentally and emotionally;
- Begin job searches or return to work;
- Reconnect with support systems;
- Plan for long-term safety and independence.

This confirms that housing itself is a critical service model—
not just a referral or end goal, but an intervention that
promotes health equity and survivor well-being.

4 The Importance of Rapid Rehousing for Survivors of Sexual Violence

Survivors face unique challenges that distinguish them from other populations in need of emergency housing. Housing is a health equity issue for sexual violence survivors. Survivors often face:

- **Stigma**, which limits shelter access;
- **Safety prioritization** (escaping known assailants or unsafe environments);
- **Confidentiality needs**, especially in small or rural communities;
- **Barriers to traditional shelters**, which may not be trauma-informed or designed for sexual violence survivors;
- **Eligibility barriers** in domestic violence or general homelessness programs;
- **Re-traumatization risks** in communal or institutional settings.
- A system that underestimates the role of sexual violence in housing instability.

MAHP bridges this gap, showing how survivor-centered, trauma-informed housing models:

- **Interrupt cycles of violence;**
- **Reduce health disparities;**
- **Promote long-term stability and empowerment.**

MAHP and similar models of flexible, trauma-informed
rapid rehousing offer a lifeline that many survivors would
not otherwise have. These programs provide a crucial
foundation for recovery, independence, and reintegration.

5 Recommendations

Expand MAHP Capacity and Housing Infrastructure

- Increase funding and infrastructure to accommodate higher demand and survivor-centered housing, especially in rural and underserved high need areas.
- Strengthen connections between MAHP and transitional/permanent housing programs.
- Address infrastructure disparities by funding **transportation, mobile advocacy, and virtual support** in remote regions.

Collect and Use More Survivor-Specific Data

- Continue gathering **quantitative and qualitative data** on:
 - How sexual violence impacts housing access;
 - How housing access reduces re-victimization;
 - Long-term outcomes of survivor-focused housing programs.

- Use this data to educate on how housing is violence prevention and health promotion.
- Integrate **feedback loops** to continuously refine services based on survivor input.

Integrate Housing as a Core Service

- Recognize housing not as a supplement, but as a **foundational service model** for healing.
- Develop survivor-specific **rapid rehousing pathways** that reflect the needs of sexual violence survivors, distinct from general homelessness or IPV pathways.

Strengthen Cross-Sector Collaboration

- Build partnerships between sexual violence service providers, housing agencies, health systems, and local governments to create a **holistic safety net**.
- Ensure all providers engaged with MAHP are trained in **trauma-informed care, confidentiality, and cultural humility**.
- Ensure all systems understand the **link between violence and housing**, and respond accordingly.

Sustain and Advocate for Policy

- Advocate for state and federal investment in **sexual violence-specific rapid rehousing models**.
- Funding streams that **explicitly support housing for sexual violence survivors**;
- Housing policies that recognize **sexual violence as a qualifying experience of homelessness**;
- Inclusion of **survivor voices** in all housing policy discussions.

6 Conclusion

The data collected from survivors underscore the **essential role of MAHP** in promoting safety, dignity, and stability for individuals impacted by sexual violence. Survivors' voices reflect both the success of the program and the urgent need for continued investment in housing-first, trauma-informed interventions.

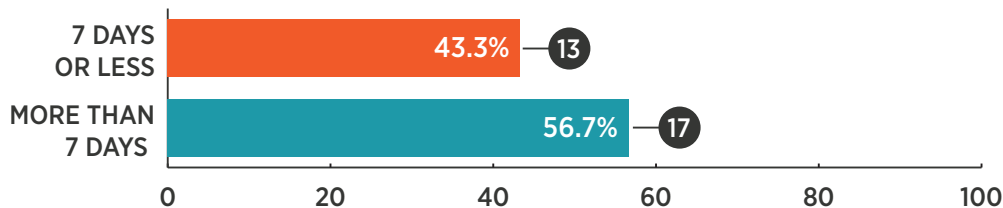
OAESV is committed to using these insights to strengthen its programming and advocate for systems-level change that honors the lived experiences of survivors.

The OAESV MAHP is more than a housing intervention it is a model for how we can **interrupt violence, promote health equity, and empower survivors** through safe, trauma-informed shelter access.

Survivors' stories and data tell us that **housing and violence are deeply interconnected**—and until we treat housing as a core component of violence prevention, many survivors will continue to fall through the cracks.

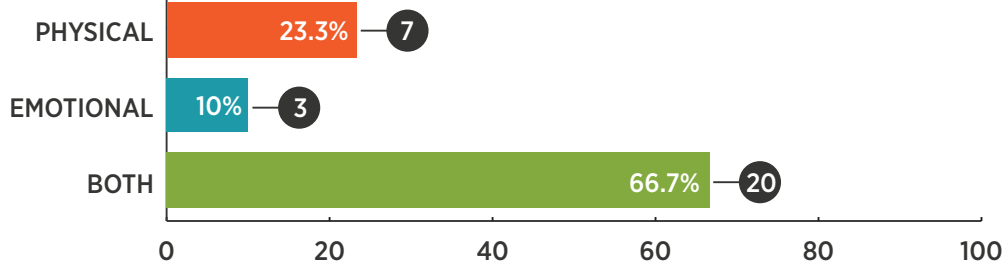
As we look ahead, expanding and embedding housing into the continuum of care for sexual violence survivors is not just a programmatic recommendation—it is a moral imperative.

LENGTH OF HOTEL STAY (N=30)



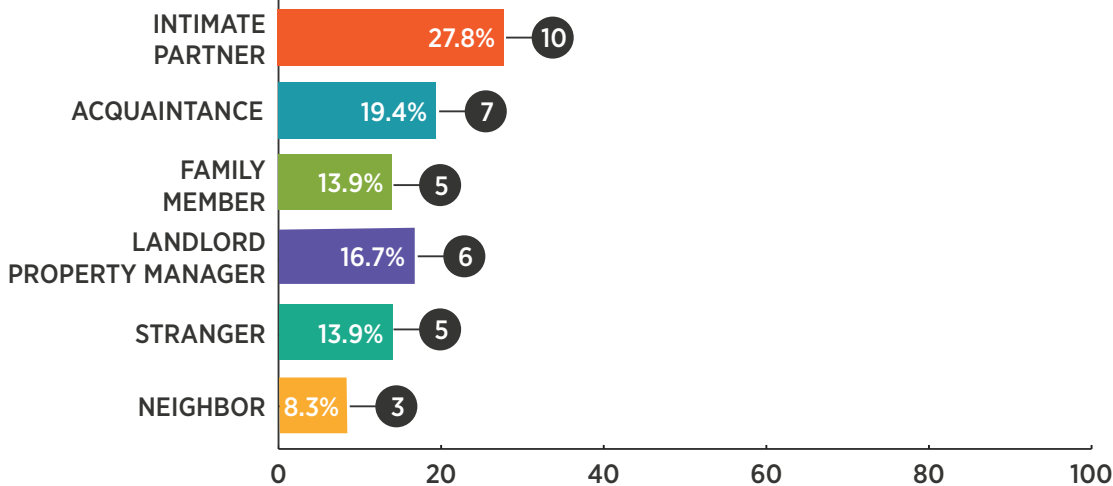
REASON FOR HOTEL STAY (N=30)

Hotel stay was needed for concerns: physical safety only, emotional safety only, or both physical and emotional safety

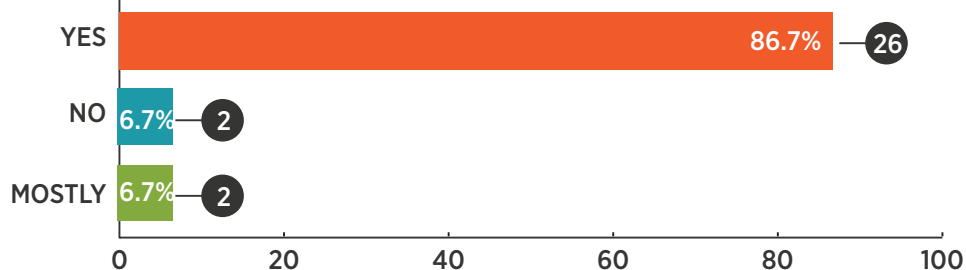


WHO HAS CAUSED HARM? (N=36)

Multiple responses possible

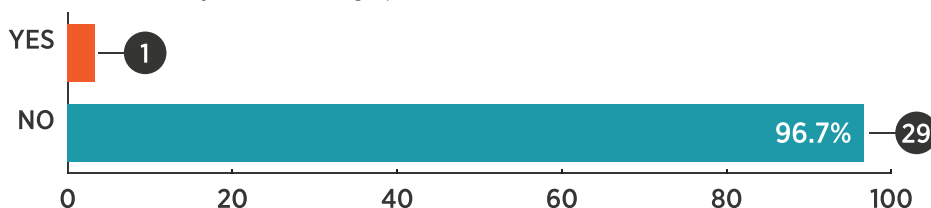


DID HOTEL STAY LENGTH MEET YOUR NEED? (N=30)

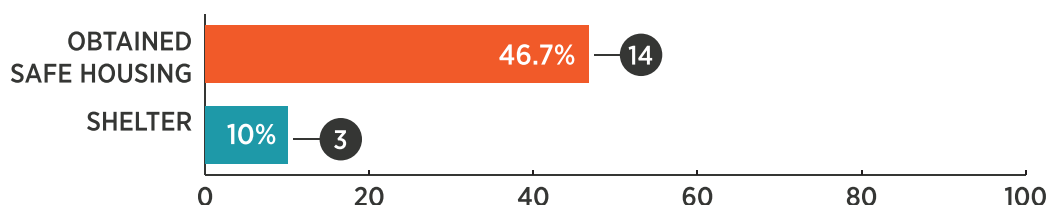


ACCESS TO ALTERNATIVE SAFE HOUSING IF PROGRAM WAS UNAVAILABLE (N=30)

If this program would not have been available, would you have had access to any other housing option in the moment or shelter?



AFTER HOTEL STAY WAS OVER WHERE DID YOU STAY? (N=30)



Acknowledgments

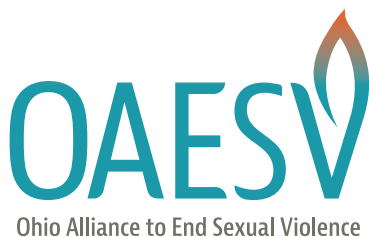
This project was made possible through the leadership and collaboration of dedicated professionals who guided its development and execution.

Jazmin Vera, Housing & Economic Empowerment Manager at the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence (OAESV), provided overall oversight and strategic direction for the project from its inception through completion. Her leadership ensured the project's alignment with survivor-centered and equity-focused approaches.

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