



## City Spending on Domestic Violence: A Review

*Also available...*

**Proposed Child Care Credit Would Erase City Tax Burden for Some Families**

*... at [www.ibo.nyc.ny.us](http://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us)*

### SUMMARY

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AFFECTS hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers every year. While there are immense human costs associated with incidents of domestic violence, there are fiscal costs to the city as well. At the request of the Domestic Violence and Permanent Housing Task Force, IBO has reviewed city spending on domestic violence in fiscal year 2005. Based on our review, the city spent at least \$227 million in 2005 (not including state or federal funds) on emergency, police, and other services related to domestic violence.

In this review, we looked at a range of city-funded services specifically targeted to abusers or victims and, where possible, have estimated the portion of costs of more broad-based programs that are also used by large numbers of domestic violence victims. Among our key findings:

- Emergency social services such as providing shelter for victims, counseling, and protective services for children, required the largest share of domestic violence-related spending we identified, nearly \$180 million or almost 80 percent of the 2005 total.
- Enforcement—responding to reports of domestic violence, and arresting, prosecuting, and supervising batterers—was the next biggest expense, roughly \$44 million.
- Prevention services, many targeting households that have already experienced domestic violence, received about \$2 million in city funds.
- Long-term services, mostly permanent housing for victims, received the smallest share of the city's domestic violence-related spending, less than \$2 million. The major source of spending on long-term needs such as permanent housing is the federal government, which subsidizes priority access to public housing and Section 8 vouchers for victims of domestic violence.

IBO's figures probably understate city spending on domestic violence. We could not estimate some direct costs because agencies do not necessarily track whether or not clients have experienced domestic violence. Domestic violence may also trigger indirect costs—for example, a child who moves frequently because her parent is fleeing an abuser may need to repeat grades in school. These indirect costs are outside the scope of this analysis.

Additionally, more than 200 organizations provide services to domestic violence victims and their children in the city and are supported by federal, state, and private funding sources. Although we have identified substantial spending, the true figure is certainly higher.

---

## BACKGROUND

Domestic violence affects hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers every year. In 2005, New York City's domestic violence hotline received almost 125,000 calls. There were 68 family-related homicides in 2005, nearly 13 percent of all murders in the city. In total, the police recorded more than 226,000 domestic violence incidents in 2005—an average of roughly 620 domestic violence incidents per day.

While there are immense human costs associated with domestic violence—the physical and emotional pain experienced by victims, trauma to children, family disruption and dislocation—there are fiscal costs to the city as well. At the request of the Domestic Violence and Permanent Housing Task Force, IBO has reviewed citywide spending on domestic violence. To do this we looked at a range of city services specifically targeted to abusers or victims and, where possible, have estimated the portion of costs of more broad-based programs that are also used by large numbers of domestic violence victims. Although domestic violence is often defined only in terms of assault by a victim's current or former spouse or an opposite- or same-sex partner, IBO's analysis of spending encompasses other dimensions of domestic violence such as elder abuse.

City spending on domestic violence falls into four general categories: emergency social services for victims, enforcement (such as arrest, prosecution, and supervision of batterers), prevention, and long-term services. These categories do overlap—for example, the police department is primarily involved in enforcement, but also helps victims access a range of social services. The Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence monitors all of the city's domestic violence programs.

Based on our review, the city spent nearly \$230 million on domestic violence in fiscal year 2005, not including services supported by federal, state, or other sources of funds. This expenditure was not evenly divided among the four broad types of services. The overwhelming share—nearly 80 percent in 2005—of spending on domestic violence is for relatively short-term social services for victims. The next biggest category of spending was nearly \$44 million for enforcement. A far smaller share of city funding goes to prevent violence from ever occurring—IBO was able to isolate \$2.1 million in preventive spending annually, although there are some preventive efforts that cannot be separated from social services for victims. Similarly, relatively little is spent by the city directly on programs designed to meet victims' long-term needs. The major source of spending on long-term needs such as permanent housing is by the federal government, which funds priority access to public

housing and Section 8 vouchers for victims of domestic violence.

It is best to think of IBO's citywide spending figures as a lower-bound estimate of city spending on domestic violence. There are a range of direct costs that we could not estimate because agencies do not necessarily track whether or not clients have experienced domestic violence. Domestic violence may also trigger indirect costs—for example, a child who moves frequently because her parent is fleeing an abuser may need to repeat grades in school. These indirect costs are outside the scope of this analysis. There are also over 200 organizations that provide services to domestic violence victims and their children in the city and are supported by federal, state, and private funding sources. Although we have identified substantial spending, the true figure is certainly larger.

## EMERGENCY SOCIAL SERVICES

Emergency social services constitute the bulk of the city's spending on domestic violence. This category includes shelter, case management, some health care, and child welfare-related initiatives. These services are all geared towards individuals and families who have already experienced violence.

The line between emergency social services and prevention is not always clear. Virtually all of the social service programs are designed to prevent domestic violence from *reoccurring*, and in that sense, could be considered preventative in nature. For the purposes of this analysis, IBO has distinguished between those programs that assist victims and those that are designed to stop violence before it ever occurs.

***Human Resources Administration.*** The Human Resources Administration (HRA) provides emergency and transitional shelter for domestic violence victims. HRA also partially funds the city's domestic violence hotline, and provides a variety of other services to victims. In 2005, HRA spent \$72.1 million on domestic violence programs. The vast majority of this spending is for emergency social services for victims.

New York City currently has 2,081 confidentially located emergency shelter beds in 39 facilities available for victims of domestic violence. Families may stay in these emergency shelters for a maximum of 135 days. Shelter staff members work with clients throughout this period to stabilize their situation and seek out new housing. After their stay at HRA emergency shelters expires, some families requiring extended intensive services move to one of the seven HRA-supported transitional housing programs for domestic violence victims. These transitional housing programs, which collectively have 240 units, are

designed to serve families for longer periods than the HRA emergency shelters. Nevertheless, they are still fundamentally intended to support families during periods of crisis, rather than to provide long-term housing.

HRA also supports a variety of nonresidential domestic violence services through contracts with 15 community-based organizations. These groups provide telephone hotline services, counseling, information and referral, advocacy, and community outreach throughout the city. Some contracted groups also offer legal assistance with orders of protection, custody, separation and divorce, and immigration issues.

HRA assesses families who identify themselves as domestic violence victims at city homeless shelters and HRA Job Centers, and where appropriate, provides services including referrals and waivers from public assistance work requirements.

**Department of Homeless Services.**

On any given night, there are 7,500 to 8,000 families in the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) shelter system. The DHS family shelters are not specifically targeted to domestic violence victims, but they clearly use DHS shelters in significant numbers. Domestic violence victims may enter DHS shelters after reaching their time limit at an HRA emergency shelter, or if there is no space available in HRA shelters. Still other victims may go directly to DHS because it is the larger and better-known of the two shelter systems.

Surveys of families in the New York City shelter system have found that anywhere from 20 percent to 50 percent of families have histories of domestic violence.<sup>1</sup> Recent research by the Vera Institute of Justice found that 21 percent of families in the shelter system had experienced domestic violence in the five years before entering the system, and that of those families, 88 percent reported that it had a direct impact on their homelessness. Based on these findings, IBO estimates that 18.5 percent (0.21 times 0.88) of families in the DHS shelter system are homeless because of domestic violence.

In 2005, DHS spent a total of \$369.1 million on emergency shelter for families. IBO estimates that of this total, \$68.3 million was directly attributable to domestic violence.

**Administration for Children's Services.** The Administration

for Children's Services (ACS), like other agencies, has programs targeted to domestic violence victims and serves families affected by domestic violence through its standard programs. In the case of ACS, the bulk of the agency's spending on domestic violence is through "mainstream" programs, namely child protection and foster care prevention.

The agency's protective services division investigates child abuse, maltreatment, and neglect reports and, if necessary, removes the children from their homes and places them into foster care until such time as it is deemed safe for them to return. When ACS receives a report of abuse or neglect from the state's child abuse hotline, an ACS caseworker goes to the family's home to investigate. Protective services staff also provide rehabilitative services, if needed, to children, parents, and other family members involved.

It should be noted that courts have ordered ACS not to remove children from their home solely because of domestic violence; there must be other factors in the home presenting a danger to the children. While there are undoubtedly children from households with partner-on-partner abuse in the foster care system, in principle these children would have been removed from their homes anyway as a result of other problems in

the family. As a result, these foster care costs are not attributable to domestic violence.

The agency estimates that domestic violence may be a factor for up to 50 percent of the children contacted by protective services staff. In about 10 percent of cases, domestic violence is the precipitating factor leading to that contact. On that basis IBO assumes that 10 percent of the total costs of protective services are attributable to domestic violence. These families may also be coping with drug use, unemployment, mental instability, and other issues that require ACS's attention. To the extent that this is true, the 10 percent figure overestimates the costs associated with domestic violence.

There are a significant number of other families, though, who may enter the ACS system for issues other than domestic violence, but who require domestic violence-related services, such as separate case conferences for each member of the family. Therefore, IBO feels that the 10 percent figure is conservative. Total spending on protective services in 2005 was \$153.8 million, so IBO estimates the domestic-violence related costs at \$15.4 million.

<b>City Spending on Domestic Violence, By Service Type, 2005</b>	
<i>Dollars in millions</i>	
Emergency Social Services	\$180.4
Enforcement	43.7
Prevention	2.1
Long-Term Services	1.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$227.9</b>
SOURCES: IBO; Department of Youth and Community Development; Department for the Aging; Administration for Children's Services; Mayor's Office of Management and Budget; Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence; Department of Correction; Department of Probation; and District Attorney offices.	

---

The agency also has a number of services designed to ensure that children remain safe in the home and reduce the number of children entering foster care. Among these preventive services are family or individual counseling, parenting classes, substance abuse treatment, domestic violence intervention, home care, and support for pregnant and parenting teens. To estimate the cost of preventive services due to domestic violence, we excluded the preventive services expenditures that were identifiably targeted to other needs such as substance abuse treatment, and assumed that 10 percent of the remaining costs were a function of domestic violence. Spending on the relevant programs was \$82.3 million in 2005, so IBO estimates the costs tied to domestic violence to be \$8.2 million.

In addition, ACS has a number of programs that specifically address domestic violence. ACS provides training for its child protective workers to prepare them to work with families experiencing domestic violence. ACS estimates that training costs about \$2,180 per worker, and that between 500 and 600 workers are trained annually. In 2005, therefore, IBO estimates that ACS spent \$1.2 million on domestic violence-related training.

The Clinical Consultation Program provides case-specific guidance and training to child welfare staff and facilitates access to community-based services. Teams are based in ACS field offices where they provide in-service training, case consultation, and assistance with resources and referrals. Each team contains a domestic violence specialist, a mental health specialist, a drug abuse specialist, and a coordinator. ACS spent about \$3.6 million on the program in 2005; the domestic violence portion of this program represents approximately one-quarter of the funding, or \$900,000.

For a number of years, ACS has contracted with two social service agencies that assist community-based groups in handling domestic violence issues. In 2005 the Urban Justice Center's Domestic Violence Project had a contract for \$239,000 and CONNECT's Community Empowerment Program had a \$1.2 million contract (through an allocation by the City Council).

The New Yorkers for Children's Domestic Violence Emergency Fund provides safety-related assistance such as transportation to a safe place, improved home security, or a brief hospital stay to protect the family while a safety plan is being developed or shelter space is secured for victims of domestic violence and their children who are involved with ACS. This program is funded at \$30,000 annually under a grant from New Yorkers for Children, and managed by ACS.

Finally, the agency has a strategic plan for working with families affected by domestic violence, developed by the ACS

Domestic Violence Policy and Planning Unit. ACS has also created a "protocol" that it distributed to all the agencies it contracts with for preventive services. The protocol addresses screening, assessment, and safe intervention for victims and children experiencing domestic violence, as well as reporting requirements. While these initiatives may be an important part of ACS's service delivery, they have a minimal effect on spending.

***Department of Youth and Community Development.*** The Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) manages contracts with nonprofit organizations to provide services to domestic violence victims at six sites in the Bronx and Brooklyn. The services provided include safe housing, victims' rights advocacy, court-based services, and crisis and long-term counseling. In 2005, DYCD spent \$530,000 on these services.

In addition, the City Council allocated \$335,000 in 2005 for housing placement, case management services, and rental subsidies for victims of domestic violence. These services were provided under a contract with United Way.

Other DYCD contracts for community-based services, such as family support services or substance abuse education, may assist families affected by domestic violence. But it is not possible to isolate spending from these contracts that is directly related to domestic violence.

***Department for the Aging.*** The Department for the Aging (DFTA) directly provides and also funds other organizations to deliver elder abuse intervention services, including receiving reports of abuse, case monitoring, legal assistance, transportation, and shelter. Elder abuse can be committed by a caregiver or other individual with no familial relationship to the victim, and is therefore not necessarily domestic violence in the customary sense. IBO has included DFTA's spending on elder abuse in this analysis because the majority of elder abuse is committed by family members.<sup>2</sup>

In 2005, DFTA spent \$1.4 million on direct services and 11 contracts to prevent elder abuse and provide services to victims. According to the Mayor's Management Report, DFTA funded the provision of about 20,000 hours of services to victims in 2005.

***Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.*** Having a home free of domestic violence is part of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's "Take Care New York" policy, which outlines 10 steps for New Yorkers to take to live healthier lives. The health department monitors health indicators of domestic violence in the city by watching for femicide (homicide of women) and the treatment and release of assault victims from hospital emergency rooms, as well as through its Community

---

Health Survey and Youth Risk Surveillance Survey. The health department also engages in domestic violence education and outreach initiatives. In 2005, the health department collaborated with the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) to update and distribute *The City of New York Resource Directory of Domestic Violence Services*. IBO cannot isolate spending on these outreach and education initiatives, but the total budget impact is likely small.

**Health and Hospitals Corporation.** Since the mid-1990s, the Health and Hospitals Corporation has had domestic violence coordinators in all of the city's 11 public hospitals and five diagnostic and treatment centers. The coordinators assist victims with legal and social services. Domestic violence victims are disproportionate users of emergency rooms and other health care services. When a victim goes to one of the city's public hospitals it creates a cost for the Health and Hospitals Corporation. While IBO was not able to isolate the total costs, over \$1 million was spent for the domestic violence coordinators.

**Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence.** The Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence is the city's coordinating entity for domestic violence policy. The office monitors citywide service delivery, develops policies and programs, and works with city agencies and other organizations providing services to victims. In 2005, the city spent about \$560,000 on personnel costs for OCDV.

OCDV initiatives include the Domestic Violence Response Team Program, which began in sections of the Bronx and Brooklyn with very high rates of domestic violence. Team caseworkers coordinate the provision of services from multiple agencies to high-risk domestic violence cases. (This program was a precursor to the Family Justice Center, which began just after the period under review in this report, and is operated in cooperation with the Brooklyn District Attorney's office.)

The Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence also develops annual outreach campaigns to raise awareness of domestic violence in the city. Outreach materials developed in partnership with community-based organizations and translated into 10 different languages have been distributed to schools, hospitals, houses of worship, public libraries, small businesses, and government offices citywide. *The City of New York Resource Directory of Domestic Violence Services* is updated annually by OCDV and distributed to service providers. The office has also published a best practices manual, *Medical Providers' Guide to Managing the Care of Domestic Violence Patients within a Cultural Context*, in partnership with the health department, public hospitals, and community-based organizations.

Although preventing domestic violence is part of the office's mission, IBO has classified the spending as emergency social services, since the programs directly operated by OCDV largely serve households that have already experienced violence.

**Criminal Justice Coordinator.** The Mayor's Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator routinely contracts with Safe Horizon, a nonprofit organization, to provide services to crime victims. In 2005 this contract totaled \$8.5 million. About 90 percent of the crime victims Safe Horizon served were victims of domestic violence, so IBO has estimated \$7.6 million of this city spending as related to domestic violence.

**Miscellaneous City Council Initiatives.** The City Council supports a number of nonprofits providing legal and social services to domestic violence victims. In 2005 the Council allocated a total of \$950,000 to InMotion, Safe Horizon, and Sanctuary for Families to provide legal services to victims, largely indigent women. The Council also allocated just under \$500,000 in additional funds to Sanctuary for Families to support the organization's provision of legal and clinical services to immigrant women.

## ENFORCEMENT

The police department, the District Attorneys in each borough, and the Department of Probation are all engaged in efforts to protect victims by arresting, prosecuting, and supervising batterers. IBO estimates that enforcement spending related to domestic violence totaled at least \$43.7 million in 2005—plus additional spending on responses by the police department to emergency calls concerning domestic violence that could not be quantified.

**New York City Police Department.** The New York City Police Department (NYPD) has a number of programs specifically designed to combat domestic violence and has assigned several hundred uniformed personnel for this purpose. In addition, NYPD officers not specifically assigned on a full-time basis to domestic violence-related duties respond to "911" radio runs involving domestic disputes. In 2005, NYPD made almost 154,000 "family dispute" radio runs, about 3.3 percent of all radio runs.

**Direct Services.** The NYPD Domestic Violence Unit (DVU) is responsible for the implementation, coordination, and review of NYPD's domestic violence prevention strategy. The DVU is staffed by 14 full-time uniformed and three full-time civilian personnel, which accounted for a total of \$1.4 million in personnel costs, not including pension and fringe benefits. The Domestic Violence Unit trains domestic violence prevention officers and investigators as well as other police officers and

---

supervisors. The unit also provides training for representatives of other organizations on NYPD's domestic violence prevention strategies. The DVU in 2005 also expended \$272,000 in state asset forfeiture funds on cameras, film, digital photography software, and computer systems, all of which were used in the unit's investigative and evidence gathering activities for domestic violence cases.

The Domestic Violence Unit also maintains a database with a citywide history of batterers and their victims. A report is entered into the database after every domestic violence call or walk-in complaint regardless of whether or not an arrest was made.

In addition to the centralized, citywide scope of the Domestic Violence Unit, every police precinct (with the exception of the Central Park Precinct) participates in the Combating Domestic Violence Program (CDVP). Almost 400 full-time uniformed personnel citywide (69 sergeants, 75 detectives, and 244 domestic violence police officers) are assigned to the program at a total annual cost of \$31.4 million. The NYPD operates special Domestic Violence Units in all patrol precincts through the CDVP. Overseen at Patrol Borough Commands, the program integrates the work of domestic violence prevention officers, crime prevention officers, community policing officers, and youth police officers in order to prevent victims from suffering further attacks.

In addition, the Domestic Violence Police Program is run by Safe Horizon in 15 police precincts and nine police service areas covering public housing projects that have a high volume of domestic violence cases. The program, which pairs a Safe Horizon case manager with a domestic violence police officer, provides support services and information about the criminal justice system to victims of domestic violence, fosters collaborative relationships with community-based agencies, and assists in developing law enforcement strategies to reduce domestic violence. Police personnel from the CDVP accounted for above are assigned to the domestic violence program.

*General Enforcement.* In 2005, NYPD responded to almost 154,000 family dispute radio runs, wrote more than 226,000 domestic incident reports, and made almost 20,000 "family-related" arrests. In addition, in 2005, domestic violence prevention officers conducted 76,360 home visits to check on the victim and prevent repeat violence. IBO was not able to isolate the cost of these aspects of domestic violence enforcement at the NYPD.

*Office to Combat Domestic Violence.* The Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence created the Language Line Program, which equips police officers with cellular and dual handset

telephones that have direct access to interpreters in over 150 different languages in order to better assist immigrant victims of domestic violence. Victims who do not speak English can tell their stories to the police and get the help they need. A federal grant provided the initial funding for this program; ongoing costs after 2005 were assumed by the police department.

*District Attorneys.* There are specific domestic violence bureaus in Queens, Bronx, and Brooklyn. In Manhattan, domestic violence cases are handled as part of the Family Violence and Child Abuse Bureau, and in Staten Island these cases are part of the Special Victims Bureau.

The Brooklyn District Attorney's office also operates a number of specialized domestic violence programs. Barrier Free Justice provides services to disabled women who are victims of domestic violence. Project Eden offers social services, legal representation, and culturally appropriate shelter to Orthodox Jewish women who are victims of domestic violence. Through Abused Women's Active Response Emergency (AWARE), the District Attorney's office gives abused women emergency necklace pendants through which the women can alert the police in the case of danger. The office also runs the Brooklyn Domestic Violence Task Force, which brings together hospitals, schools, businesses, child welfare agencies, and other stakeholders to work on issues concerning victims of domestic violence.

The Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens District Attorney offices each have a victims' assistance unit that helps crime victims—including, but not limited to, domestic violence victims—navigate the legal system and access social services.

IBO estimates that in Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island the District Attorneys together spend at least \$10 million on domestic violence services, including both prosecution of abusers and services to victims.<sup>3</sup> The Manhattan District Attorney's office reported that they do not track the number of domestic violence cases that they prosecute, and that attorneys handling these cases are spread out over multiple bureaus.

*Department of Correction.* The Department of Correction is responsible for incarceration of individuals pending trial who have been denied bail or who are unable to post bail. Some of these individuals are almost certainly there because of charges related to domestic violence, but IBO was unable to estimate the costs of this jail time.

*Department of Probation.* The Department of Probation provides intensive supervision to probationers who present a significant threat to public safety, including offenders with a

---

history of domestic violence. There were 781 active domestic violence cases in 2005, with 417 cases supervised at a 35:1 ratio, and 364 cases supervised at a 55:1 ratio. The average salary for a probation officer was roughly \$46,200 in 2005. Based on this average salary, IBO estimates that domestic violence added at least \$878,000 to the probation department budget.

## PREVENTION

Based on IBO's review, a comparatively small share of city spending on domestic violence goes to prevention programs. These programs often target households that have already experienced violence, and try to stop additional abuse from occurring. Programs that focus on stopping abuse before it occurs are much rarer, likely in part because it is extremely difficult to predict which families are most at risk.

**Office to Combat Domestic Violence.** The OCDV Prevention of Adolescent Dating Violence Project, which targets runaway homeless youth, is largely prevention-oriented. The project is collecting data about abuse in this population, and has developed a curriculum and training program to teach youth about the dynamics of relationship abuse and healthy relationships. Special sections have been developed to target specific at-risk groups including lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender youth, immigrants, and teenage mothers with children. Funding for this project is provided by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, but IBO was not able to separate it from other OCDV spending.

**Department of Youth and Community Development.** DYCD supports violence prevention through contracts with seven providers located across the city that offer "violence intervention and prevention services." Providers offer advocacy, counseling, parenting classes, educational workshops, cultural awareness activities, substance abuse intervention services, and mediation and conflict resolution. Some of these services are targeted to families and individuals who have already experienced violence, and hence are not prevention programs, but DYCD also supports education intended to help participants avoid potentially violent situations. In 2005 DYCD spent \$750,000 on violence intervention and prevention.

The Relationship Abuse Prevention Program, or RAPP, is a school-based program that focuses on preventing abusive relationships among teens. The program began in 1999 in five schools and by 2005 RAPP was in 20 high schools (with plans to expand to 10 more schools, including a few middle schools, in the following year). In 2005, funding for RAPP was \$1.3 million.

## LONG-TERM SERVICES

The city funds some limited services designed to meet domestic violence victims' long-term needs—primarily for housing—after the immediate crisis has passed.

**Human Resources Administration.** HRA helps victims of domestic violence access permanent housing through the Housing Stability Plus (HSP) program. (The Bloomberg Administration recently announced that HSP is being replaced by a new program called Work Advantage.) Residents of HRA domestic violence shelters are eligible for a special component of HSP, a time-limited rental subsidy program the city created in 2004. Housing Stability Plus is primarily geared to families in the DHS shelter system, who must reside in a shelter for 90 days before they are HSP-eligible. Domestic violence victims can receive HSP after 42 days. As of the beginning of April 2006, 616 families from HRA domestic violence shelters had signed leases using HSP. IBO estimates that in 2005, the HSP vouchers for domestic violence victims cost about \$1 million.

**Department of Housing Preservation and Development.** The Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) has funded 13 units of housing for domestic violence victims, using resources added to its capital budget by the City Council. HPD committed \$400,000 to this project in 2005. Unlike the shelter provided by HRA or DHS, the units developed by HPD are permanent housing.

A number of HPD's other permanent housing programs include set-asides for households in the shelter system. This preference only applies to families in the DHS shelter system, and not those in HRA's domestic violence shelters.

**New York City Housing Authority.** The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) is a largely autonomous government agency and almost exclusively federally funded. Because these funds do not flow through the city budget, IBO has not included any estimates of NYCHA spending in our total of city spending on domestic violence services. Nevertheless, NYCHA is a permanent housing resource for victims and merits discussion. Victims of domestic violence with documentation of their abuse (police reports, hospital admission letter, or legal documents) are eligible for priority access to public housing and federal Section 8 vouchers that cover a large portion of rent in private-market apartments. Victims who already live in NYCHA public housing are eligible for transfers to other developments.

In 2005, 490 apartments in public housing were newly rented to domestic violence victims. IBO estimates the federal subsidy for

---

these apartments was about \$2.5 million (based on the difference between the \$760 average monthly operating costs of NYCHA units minus the \$331 average monthly rent paid by tenants). In addition, 40 domestic violence victims rented new apartments with Section 8 vouchers, a federal subsidy of about \$358,000 (the average monthly payment to landlords from a Section 8 voucher is \$746).

Because the housing authority only keeps records of households newly receiving apartments under the domestic violence priority and does not record when they move out of their subsidized units, it is not possible to determine the cumulative number of households in 2005 occupying apartments because of domestic violence. As a result, IBO cannot estimate the total federal housing subsidy in 2005 for domestic violence victims. But the combined federal public housing and Section 8 subsidies of \$2.9 million for apartments newly rented to domestic violence victims in 2005 is only a portion of the total expenditure that includes apartments still subsidized from prior years.

But we can note that between 2004 and 2005 the number of domestic violence victims who secured permanent housing through NYCHA fell by more than 50 percent, from 1,146 in 2004 to 530 in 2005. Although the number of domestic violence victims placed in public housing apartments tripled in 2005, it could not offset the very large drop in the number of Section 8 vouchers provided—from 1,000 in 2004 to 40 in 2005. This decline was likely a reflection of federal policy, which curtailed funding for Section 8 and forced housing authorities, including NYCHA, to cut back on the number of families served.

**Department of Correction.** The Department of Correction and the Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator operate the local Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) system. The system, which tracks the custody status of inmates in city

jails, enables domestic violence victims to check on the location of their abusers. In 2005, the city spent \$309,000 in total on VINE. IBO has classified the VINE system as meeting victims' longer-term needs, since batterers may be released—necessitating the use of the system—well after the abuse occurred.

## CONCLUSION

Based on our review of city expenditures in 2005, at least \$227.9 million was spent on domestic violence. Nearly 80 percent of these funds were used to provide immediate services to families experiencing violence. The second largest portion of spending, about 20 percent, went to enforcement-related activities. Although some would argue that all the spending is intended to prevent domestic violence, resources for stopping violence before it occurs received a far smaller portion of city spending. The smallest amount of city funding went to long-term services such as permanent housing.

Because IBO could not isolate all of the funds spent as a direct result of domestic violence, actual city spending due to domestic violence in 2005 was higher than reported here. But it is not likely that these additional funds would significantly alter the overall shares of city-only spending on emergency services, enforcement, long-term services, and prevention.

## END NOTES

<sup>1</sup>For example, Coalition for the Homeless *Homelessness in New York City: The Basic Facts*; New York City Family Homelessness Special Masters Panel Family Homelessness Prevention Report November 2003; Vera Institute of Justice *Understanding Family Homelessness in New York City: an In-Depth Study of Families' Experiences Before and After Shelter* September 2005.

<sup>2</sup><http://www.elderabusecenter.org/default.cfm>.

<sup>3</sup>This figure excludes the Brooklyn District Attorney's Victims' Assistance Unit, which does not track the proportion of its caseload that is attributable to domestic violence. It also excludes non-personnel costs for the Queens District Attorney's Domestic Violence Unit, and Queens Victims' Assistance Unit costs.

You can receive IBO reports electronically—and for free.  
Just go to [www.ibo.nyc.ny.us](http://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us)