



NEWS

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Contact: Kristen Beaman
972-871-6656 (office)
972-897-9629 (cell)

Stays at Domestic Violence Shelters in Texas Jump as Much as 100% in 2010

Programs Brace for Surge in Services in the New Year

IRVING, TX, December 22, 2010— For the third year in a row, domestic violence programs across Texas have seen an increase in families needing emergency services, according to an annual survey by The Allstate Foundation. This year's survey not only found that programs are receiving more calls for help, but families are having to stay in shelters longer, pushing programs to capacity.

Of the 39 domestic violence programs The Allstate Foundation surveyed statewide this year, 84% say the need for services (hotline calls, counseling and/or shelter stays) continued to climb this year, after many also experienced spikes in 2008 and 2009.

The most significant change in this year's survey was in the amount of time families needed to stay in a shelter, with some programs seeing as much as a 100% increase in length of stays this year.

More than 80% of programs who saw a surge in services in 2010 point to the economy as the primary catalyst.

"The increase in length of stay is most likely attributed to the economy, lack of affordable housing options, financial insolvency, and very serious complex cases like multiple incidences of abuse over a person's lifetime," said Julia Spann, Executive Director of SafePlace in Austin.

"People don't have the resources they had a year ago to help themselves," said Jennifer Morrison, Executive Director of the New Beginning Center in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. "The clients who seek services have fewer to help themselves and therefore, they are more dependent upon the agency to help them find safety. The clients tend to need shelter services for a longer period of time and the transitional housing programs tend to be much fuller."

Close to half of the domestic violence programs in The Allstate Foundation survey also report cutting staff or holding back on hiring because of funding constraints despite the jump in need.

And that need may increase around the New Year. More than 75% of the programs surveyed by The Allstate Foundation expect a jump in requests throughout or just after the holidays.

“We typically see a slight lull in demand during December, but just after Christmas demand is heavy,” said Marta Pelaez, President and CEO of Family Violence Prevention Services located in the San Antonio area. “Victims, particularly those with children, often attempt to keep the family unit intact during the holiday season, though financial strain and substance use are notoriously heavy. The aftermath leads to increased demand during January and February.”

How to Get Help

This survey was conducted in support of The Allstate Foundation Domestic Violence Program. In 2005, The Allstate Foundation joined with the National Network to End Domestic Violence Inc. (NNEDV) and state domestic violence coalitions to provide a comprehensive network of resources and direct services to help economically empower survivors of domestic violence.

“By arming survivors with financial knowledge, skills and resources, the Allstate Foundation Domestic Violence Program is helping survivors end the cycle of violence to live, and thrive, free from abuse,” said Phil Lawson, Field Vice President of Allstate’s Texas Region.

The Allstate Foundation recommends survivors do the following to protect their financial security:

Contact a domestic violence program in your community through (800-799-SAFE):

Learn about the resources (i.e. emergency assistance funds, shelter, utility assistance, rent assistance, public benefits, and affordable housing).

Obtain a copy of your credit report and monitor your credit often:

Credit reports are available through the following three credit bureaus.

- Equifax: 1-800-685-1111 or equifax.com
- Experian: 1-866-966-1067 or experian.com
- TransUnion: 1-877-680-7275 or transunion.com

Open a new post office box in your name:

Obtain P.O. boxes from the United States Postal Service or other vendors for mail and any financial information you may receive before you leave or right after you leave your abuser.

Gather important financial information:

Call your utility companies, wireless phone services and financial institutions, to secure your private information with a PIN and password. Do not allow vendors to use your mother's maiden name, Social Security number, or date of birth to authenticate your identity.

Change passwords/beneficiaries: Change ATM and debit card PINs and online banking, investing and personal e-mail account passwords. If your partner is currently the designated beneficiary of your insurance, will or trust account, choose a new person to be the beneficiary.

About the survey:

The Allstate Foundation statewide survey was conducted with programs and shelters in the following Texas cities and/or surrounding areas:

- Abilene
- Amarillo

- Austin
- Beaumont
- Corpus Christi
- Dallas-Fort Worth
- El Paso
- Houston
- Laredo
- Lubbock
- Midland/Odessa
- Rio Grande Valley (Brownsville and Harlingen)
- San Angelo
- San Antonio
- Sherman
- Tyler/Longview
- Waco

About The Allstate Foundation

Established in 1952, The Allstate Foundation is an independent, charitable organization funded by The Allstate Corporation (NYSE ALL). Through partnerships with nonprofit organizations across the country, the Foundation brings the relationships, reputation and resources of Allstate to support innovative and lasting solutions that enhance people's well-being and prosperity. With a focus on teen safe driving and building financial independence for domestic violence survivors, the Foundation also promotes safe and vital communities; tolerance, inclusion, and diversity; and economic empowerment. For more information, visit www.allstate.com/foundation.