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MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON ANNOUNCES SAFE TRANSFER PILOT PROGRAM TO SUPPORT SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN CITY HOUSING

New emergency transfer initiative in The People's Plan for Community Safety helps survivors access safer housing without sacrificing stability

CHICAGO — Mayor Brandon Johnson, the Mayor's Office of Community Safety and the Chicago Department of Housing today announced the launch of the Short-term Assistance for Emergency (SAFE) Transfer Pilot to help survivors of gender-based violence access safe housing. The program addresses critical gaps for residents of the Department of Housing (DOH) federally funded multifamily properties who face barriers when seeking safer alternatives.

"Everyone deserves to feel safe in their home, and no one should be trapped in a dangerous situation because of their zip code or income. The increase in domestic violence calls within our city is a sobering reminder of the long work ahead," said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**.

"The SAFE Transfer Pilot is about affirming that survivors are not alone—and that this city will show up for them. This type of violence has no home in Chicago, and I remain committed to working toward a city that doesn't just talk about justice and equity but actively builds systems that reflect those values."

Mayor Johnson's commitment to providing services for survivors of gender-based violence aligns with the vision outlined in his [People's Plan for Community Safety](#). A people and place-based approach that is designed to interrupt and address acute violence, and focus on high-promise populations: adults, youth, victims and survivors. We recognize the importance of protecting and supporting victims and survivors of gender-based violence,



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which is why we are making the necessary critical investments towards safe housing for survivors of violence as a fundamental step to creating safer communities.

In 2023 alone, Chicagoans made 14,823 calls to the Domestic Violence Hotline—many of them from individuals experiencing violence in their own homes. SAFE directly supports survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) by creating a more responsive system that provides emergency temporary housing and transfer options for safer permanent options guaranteed under the 2022 reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

“Housing is more than a roof over someone’s head—it’s the foundation of stability and security. The SAFE Transfer Pilot allows us to respond swiftly and compassionately when a resident’s safety is at risk,” said **DOH Commissioner Lissette Castañeda**. “It reflects our values and responsibility to protect those most vulnerable. This program is not just about physical relocation—it’s about restoring a sense of safety, dignity, and agency to survivors. It’s about building a housing system that truly meets people where they are, especially in moments of crisis.”

The SAFE Transfer Pilot creates a coordinated response beginning when survivors or property managers contact the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline to activate the process. The Network then connects survivors with Family Rescue for immediate, trauma-informed support and safety planning while collaborating with property managers to facilitate internal or external transfers to safer units.

“I am glad to support the launch of the SAFE pilot—a much-needed effort to provide safe housing to survivors of gender-based violence. Ensuring victims are securely housed is a crucial step to breaking the cycle of violence, and helping victims rebuild their lives with dignity,” said **11th Ward Alderwoman Nichole Lee**.

Eligible residents may receive up to 60 days of temporary housing while receiving wrap-around services, including comprehensive case management, emergency housing, and referrals to ongoing services from Family Rescue.

“Imagine having to pick between being homeless or facing violence—no one should ever have to make that choice! The safe housing pilot is a game-changer, helping families break free from these tough situations and giving them the support they truly deserve,” said **20th Ward Alderwoman Jeanette B. Taylor**.

SAFE is a reflection of the Johnson administration’s broader commitment to making Chicago a national leader in equity-driven, survivor-centered housing policy and



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community-led approaches to safety. In addition to being funded through philanthropy, [The Network](#) is running the SAFE Transfer Pilot hotline, conducting the VAWA compliance education with property managers, and supporting the development partner coordination for external transfers.

“Family Rescue recognizes that housing and safety from gender-based violence are critically linked. The SAFE Pilot Program will help ensure that survivors in DOH housing are no longer forced to choose between their housing and their safety,” said **CEO/Executive Director Joyce M. Coffee, M.A., ICDVP**. “Family Rescue is excited to partner in this innovative project, which not only provides survivors the support they need to rebuild their lives after domestic violence but educates the community and property management on responding to gender based violence.”

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Mayor’s Office of Community Safety

The Mayor’s Office of Community Safety (MOCS) is committed to investing intentionally in people and communities through the full force of government and a community-driven approach that aims to: systemically promote community safety by addressing root causes, rapidly response to specific community safety challenges through trauma-informed and community-based interventions. For more information on MOCS, visit our website at <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/community-safety/home.html>