

THE RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH IN HOUSING FOR SURVIVORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

A rights-based approach places a survivor's priorities and narrative at the center of anti-trafficking work. The model relies on voluntary, non-judgmental assistance with an emphasis on self-determination to best meet survivor's short- and long-term needs.

RIGHTS-BASED PRACTICES FOR HOUSING SERVICES

Safe and stable housing is a basic human right. Implementing a rights-based model in services for survivors of trafficking promotes a survivor-centered and trauma-informed approach. Housing and anti-trafficking programs are encouraged to consider the following best practices:

- Reduce barriers to services.
- Promote self-determination of survivors.
- Assess a survivor's immediate and long-term housing needs and discuss appropriate programs and referrals.
- Acknowledge a survivor's identity, culture, and language needs to identify appropriate housing options.
- Provide accurate information on options and allow the survivor to choose which housing option is the best fit for them.

Survivors value policies that promote a person's autonomy and choice. The following practices are discouraged:

- Facilities that don't allow survivors to come and go as they please or impose mandatory curfews.
- Taking away cell-phones or restricting external communication.
- Mandated participation in program activities or implementing zero-tolerance substance use policies.

IN PRACTICE

Rights-based programs include policies and practices that:

- Allow survivors to accept or decline assistance;
- Provide culturally-competent services in the survivor's preferred language and support the practice of cultural traditions;
- Provide access or referrals to comprehensive health care;
- Support the survivor's decision whether to report the crime to law enforcement or not;
- Protect victim witness rights;
- Support survivors in engaging in civil and criminal justice options; and
- Inform survivors of opportunities to participate in anti-trafficking efforts, if they choose.

THE IMPACT

FNUSA members report that survivors served through a rights-based approach tend to regain trust, safety and self-sufficiency, and more fully recover than those who do not.

In contrast, survivors who are judged, discounted, not believed, treated as criminals, or feel that their needs are not being considered, are more likely to abandon services and the criminal justice process all together. This leads to insufficient justice outcomes and increased vulnerabilities to re-trafficking. Learn more at freedomnetworkusa.org/project/housing.