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**MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES EMERGENCY RELIEF PROGRAM FOR  
SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

*In partnership with Sanctuary for Families, program will provide immediate financial assistance to survivors experiencing safety, economic, and housing challenges*

**NEW YORK**— Mayor de Blasio today announced a new emergency financial relief program for survivors of domestic and gender-based violence to provide funding for immediate safety, economic, and housing needs currently exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In partnership with Sanctuary for Families, the Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV) will leverage its network of service providers to distribute funds to directly support survivors in need across the city. Funding for this program is provided by the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City’s COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund.

"Home should be a safe place for everyone in our city and we will not accept any other reality, now or after this crisis. We want any New Yorker experiencing violence at home to know that help is always available. New York City is here for survivors and we will continue to find new ways to ensure they are safe and supported," said **Mayor de Blasio**.

"For the first time, New York City is putting critical dollars directly in the hands of survivors to help them find safety and stability during this unprecedented crisis," said **First Lady Chirlane McCray**. "Domestic violence leads to devastating immediate and long-term effects on families, children and survivors for generations that follow. This innovative approach can help create positive outcomes for survivors and break patterns of abuse and trauma."

Aligned with the City’s efforts to help those most vulnerable during the COVID-19 crisis, this first-of-its-kind initiative will respond to the acute and unique needs of survivors. The pilot program will deliver “micro-grants” ranging in value based on need and follows evidence-based funding models that have emerged as powerful economic empowerment tools, particularly helpful in mitigating risk factors for survivors of domestic and gender-based violence. The micro-grant model will enable service providers to file for funds on behalf of survivors directly with Sanctuary for Families, speeding access to funds. The program will utilize best practices from other successful models building upon existing City investments for survivors by opening a new stream of funds.

ENDGBV and its partners continue to inform the public about its services and COVID-19 resources through its [agency website](#), its “[NYC HOPE](#)” resources directory, and social media to

ensure survivors know that help is available. The Office also created [Resources for Survivors During COVID-19](#) – a page dedicated to COVID-19 resources and information. Helpful information on resources is sent out regularly through the Notify NYC system and the City’s LinkNYC system. Multi-lingual advertisements for NYC HOPE appear on Google Search, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and will also be featured in convenience stores, check cashing locations, laundromats, pharmacies and grocery stores.

Last week, the City launched an ENDGBV COVID-19 response work group to prevent acts of domestic gender-based violence and best support survivors during the pandemic. The work group includes a diverse group of twenty providers representing multi-disciplinary services for survivors across the City including shelter, legal services, and counseling and mental health services. Providers from both small and large community-based organizations have representation in the work group, with an emphasis on those serving various communities citywide.

The Mayor’s Fund is continuing to pursue additional funds to enhance this crucial resource through grassroots fundraising and partnerships with the philanthropic and business communities. Anyone can contribute to the program through the [COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund](#).

“The COVID crisis compounds the challenges faced by survivors of domestic and gender-based violence,” said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Dr. Raul Perea-Henze**. “The de Blasio administration is committed to empowering all survivors with the tools to meet their immediate needs for safety, stability and economic security. This innovative pilot program achieves just that.”

“COVID-19 puts into sharp focus the vulnerabilities that many people in our city face every day, especially gender-based violence survivors; and it highlights the barriers and challenges that we know keep people from seeking help and finding safety,” said **ENDGBV Commissioner Cecile Noel**. “This funding will provide crucial support for survivors. The City is here for survivors during this crisis and beyond, and will continue to work to identify best practices and innovative approaches to enhance its services.”

“Every New York deserves to feel safe in their home and community, but too often that isn’t the case for survivors of domestic and gender-based violence,” said **Toya Williford, Executive Director of the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City**. “During these trying times, it is more crucial than ever to get resources into the hands of those who need them most. The Mayor’s Fund is grateful that, through our trusted network of partners, we’re able to implement this innovative model to help survivors achieve stability.”

“The COVID-19 health crisis has exposed an already vulnerable population to further peril as stay-at-home orders compound economic hardship for survivors of gender based violence,” said **Hon. Judy Harris Kluger, Executive Director of Sanctuary for Families**. “Sanctuary for Families is proud to be working hand-in-hand with ENDGBV and the Mayor’s Fund to ensure that survivors have access to the resources they need to maintain their safety as well as economic and housing stability. We applaud the City’s efforts to mitigate risk factors for survivors of domestic violence through the distribution of micro grants, which will be a powerful tool in helping survivors across New York City weather this crisis.”

“Even more so during this pandemic, survivors and victims of domestic violence find themselves in need of logistical, financial and emotional support,” said **Council Member Helen Rosenthal, Chair of the Committee on Women and Gender Equity**. “The micro-grants that the City will be providing are a critical stepping stone for survivors, helping to make the first steps toward safety more possible.”

“As many New Yorkers are struggling with financial hardship and instability as a result of COVID-19, the pandemic can have an even more devastating effect on survivors of domestic and gender based violence,” said **Council Member Vanessa L. Gibson, Co-Chair of the Women’s Caucus**. “I commend the administration for providing this support at such a crucial time and we must continue to work with advocates, CBOs, and our non-profit partners to support, empower and uplift survivors during these challenging times.”

“As COVID-19 struck our city, New Yorkers were encouraged to stay home to protect themselves and others,” said **Council Member Farah N. Louis, Co-Chair of the Women’s Caucus**. “However, we know that, for survivors of domestic and gender-based violence, staying home can be even more life-threatening. As a fellow survivor and a legislator who represents vulnerable populations, I believe that the flex-funding initiative is a step in the right direction to empower survivors and an innovative way to supplement any financial losses due to the coronavirus outbreak. These micro-grants will be vital in helping survivors achieve economic and housing stability necessary to shelter in place.”

“The challenges experienced by victims and survivors of domestic and gender based violence are many,” said **State Senator Roxanne J. Persaud, Chair of the Senate Social Services Committee**. “Currently, remaining indoors at home to mitigate the risks of contracting COVID-19, puts spouses, partners and children at an exponentially greater risk for physical, psychological and emotional harm. This new pilot program offers a promising model to meet survivors' varying levels of need. Thank you for advancing this important effort.”

“As we advise those who can to stay home, we must recognize that for some, home is not a safe place,” said **State Assemblymember Andrew Hevesi, Chair of the Assembly Social Services Committee**. “I commend the Mayor and the City for taking this step to provide survivors of domestic violence with what could very well be life-saving aid.”

“As stay-at-home orders are extended for New York City residents, it is critical that vulnerable survivors of domestic violence are provided with the necessary financial resources to protect their safety and economic security,” said **State Senator Alessandra Biaggi**. “I am grateful to the Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence, the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City, and Sanctuary for Families for this important initiative to provide direct financial relief for survivors, and look forward to the program's success.”

“Sometimes all a survivor needs is a little helping hand to lift them out of a dangerous situation and into safety, said **State Senator Liz Krueger**. “At this time in particular, when survivors are often at their most vulnerable, these grants could be a lifeline for New Yorkers in need. I thank the City and Sanctuary for Families for making this funding available and ensuring it gets where it needs to go.”

"During this emergency, people are told to stay home to be safe. But for many, home is not safe," said **State Senator Andrew Gounardes**. "The City is taking important action today to protect and empower those who have suffered domestic or gender-based violence so they can meet their immediate needs and protect their own safety."

"Abusers in domestic and gender-based violence situations use isolation as a tactic to establish control and unfortunately the COVID-19 pandemic has helped to facilitate this," said **Council Member Adrienne Adams**. "Enhancing the city's ability to help survivors of domestic and gender-based violence is desperately needed at this time. I thank the Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence and the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City for this important effort."

"I am proud to support the City in its efforts to protect those most vulnerable during this health crisis," said **Council Member Diana Ayala**. "This program is another way we can help survivors know they are not alone."

"Prior to the arrival of the Covid 19 virus, the life of a survivor of domestic or gender based violence was one fraught with anxiety, fear and uncertainty," said **Council Member Karen Koslowitz**. "This small stipend will provide some necessary stability in these fearful times to these victims of domestic/gender based violence."

"This pandemic has shed light on the intense challenges that many New Yorkers face every day, especially survivors of domestic and gender-based violence. Nothing should be a barrier between a survivor and their safety," said **Council Member Carlina Rivera**. "I am proud that our City is taking bold action with this innovative micro-grant model to provide survivors with the lifesaving resources they need for both immediate relief and long-term economic security."

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