



National Women's Shelter Network
theNWSN.org

217 NW 15th Street, Miami, FL 33136 | 786.676.5358
constance@theNWSN.org | 305.613.1573

May 9, 2025

The Honorable Carlos Gimenez
448 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ritchie Torres
1414 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Gimenez and Representative Torres,

The National Women's Shelter Network, Inc. ([NWSN](https://www.theNWSN.org)), in cooperation with the undersigned organizations and individuals, applaud Representative Carlos Gimenez (R-FL) and Representative Ritchie Torres (D-NY) for championing the needs of women and children experiencing homelessness through introduction of the *Women's and Family Protection Act*, H.R. 3319. This bipartisan bill will support the core operations, supportive services, and resources needed by women's and family shelters and safe haven programs designed to help the high special needs populations of women and children experiencing homelessness in America.

Nationwide, **an estimated 1 million women and 2.5 million children will experience homelessness this year - and homelessness is on the rise.**^[1] HUD recently recorded the largest ever year over year increase in their point in time (PIT) count of persons experiencing homelessness in 2024 at 18%, with families increasing by over 39%.^[2] Homelessness is devastating for everyone, but especially so for women and children who are extremely vulnerable. In the absence of safe shelter, they may be forced to remain in abusive circumstances or try to survive on the street. Women living on the street are at heightened risk for violence, including assault, rape, trafficking and even death. **Women experiencing homelessness have a mortality rate that is 4 times higher than their housed counterparts.**^[3] **Equally important to note, the majority of children experiencing homelessness are from birth to the tender age of 6,** crucial formative years in their development.^[4] Children, youth and families living in make-shift tents, cars, abandoned buildings and other places unfit for habitation and faced with food insecurity and unstable living environments cannot be expected to focus on and progress in school, work and other critical areas of life.

Shelters and safe haven programs serving women, children and families experiencing homelessness are the last and final safety net for vulnerable women, children and families. They provide safety, supportive services, and a life-saving hand up to the resources needed to help them successfully transition to stable homes. Safe shelter saves lives. Shelters and safe haven programs all across this country are tending to the rising number of women, children and families experiencing homelessness without adequate resources. They are the first responders in a nationwide crisis of homelessness.



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The Women's and Family Protection Act authorizes a set-aside within the Emergency Solutions Grants program designated for shelters and safe haven programs that are specifically serving the needs of women and children experiencing homelessness. The bill also updates the definition of "homeless individual" to better recognize survivors of gender-based violence, a term which includes domestic violence, elder abuse, trafficking, and related cycles of trauma that disproportionately impact women.

Thank you for your leadership in introducing the *Women's and Family Protection Act*. We look forward to a continued partnership in addressing the needs of our nation's most vulnerable women, children and families to ensure they live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives.

Sincerely,

National Endorsements:

THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S SHELTER NETWORK, INC.

National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma, and Mental Health

National Health Care for the Homeless Council

National Organization for Women

Policy Center for Maternal Mental Health

Samaritan Daytop Village

YWCA USA

American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work

Anxiety and Depression Association of America

Global Alliance for Behavioral Health & Social Justice

International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

National Association of Social Workers

National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors

National Council for Mental Wellbeing

National League for Nursing

National Register of Health Service Psychologists

Psychotherapy Action Network (PsiAN)

Schwartz Media Strategies



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Stateside Supporters:

Abby's House (Worcester, MA)
ACCESS, Inc. (Akron, OH)
Alternatives for Girls (Detroit, MI)
Alternative Structures International (Maili, HI)
Amethyst Place (Kansas City, MO)
Anacortes Family Center (Anacortes, WA)
Atlanta Mission (Atlanta, GA)
The Apostles' House (Newark, NJ)
Beyond Homeless, Inc. (Greencastle, IN)
BRASS, Inc. (Bowling Green, KY)
Breakthrough (Chicago, IL)
The Bridge Over Troubled Waters, Inc. (TX)
Brown & Brown, Inc. (Daytona Beach, FL)
Buffalo City Mission & Cornerstone Manor (Buffalo, NY)
CASA, Inc. (Hagerstown, MD)
The Center for Child and Family Advocacy (Napoleon, OH)
Center of Hope (Columbia, TN)
Change My Community (West Palm Beach, FL)
Chicanos Por La Causa (Phoenix, AZ)
Circle the City (Maricopa County, AZ)
City Mission of Findlay (Findlay, OH)
Community Forward SF (San Francisco, CA)
Community Help in Park Slope (Brooklyn, NY)
Community Youth and Women's Alliance, Inc (Coatesville, PA)
Crisis Center for South Suburbia (Tinley Park, IL)
Crossroads Rhode Island (Providence, RI)
CPLC-De Colores (Phoenix, AZ)
The Delores Project (Denver, CO)
Domestic Violence Services of Benton and Franklin Counties (Kennewick, WA)
Dove Project (San Saba, TX)
Downtown Women's Center (Los Angeles, CA)
Elizabeth Gregory Home (Seattle, WA)
Elizabeth House (Pasadena, CA)



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Esperanza Shelter (Santa Fe, NM)
Family Crisis Support Services, Inc (Norton, VA)
Family Independence, Inc. (Boston, MA)
Giving Grace (Denton, TX)
Godparent Ministries (Bangor, ME)
The Haven of Grace (St. Louis, MO)
Homeless Services United (New York, NY)
Homes for the Homeless (New York, NY)
House of Ruth (Washington, DC)
Hyde County Hotline, Inc (Engelhard, NC)
Interfaith Family Services a NJ Nonprofit (Toms River, NJ)
Lotus House Women's Shelter (Miami, FL)
The Lovelady Center (Birmingham, AL)
Maggie's Place (Phoenix, AZ)
Marguerite's Place, Inc. (Nashua, NH)
Mary's Place (Seattle, WA)
Milagro House (Lancaster, PA)
N Street Village (Washington, DC)
New Orleans Women & Children's Shelter (New Orleans, LA)
The Open Door Network (Bakersfield, CA)
Opening Doors (Dubuque, IA)
PeaceWorks, Inc (Bailey, CO)
Primo Center for Women and Children (Chicago, IL)
Rahab's Sisters (Portland, OR)
The Refuge Utah (Orem, UT)
Refuge for Women Kentucky (Wilmore, KY)
RESPONSE Help for Survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (Aspen, CO)
The Retreat (Suffolk County, NY)
Rose Haven (Portland, OR)
Roseland Christian Ministries (Chicago, IL)
Rosie's Place (Boston, MA)
Saint John's Program for Real Change (Sacramento, CA)
San Francisco SafeHouse (San Francisco, CA)
Shelter From The Storm, Inc. (Palm Desert, CA)



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Sisters Haven (Cleveland, OH)
St. Francis House (Boston, MA)
St. Mary's Center for Women and Children (Boston, MA)
Star of Hope Mission (Houston, TX)
Sundari Foundation (Miami, FL)
Tender Hearts Ministries (York, SC)
Thomas House Family Shelter (Garden Grove, CA)
Turning Point, Inc. (Monroe, NC)
Union Gospel Mission Twin Cities (St. Paul, MN)
UP for Women and Children (Louisville, KY)
Victory Programs, Inc. (Jamaica Plain, MA)
Volunteers of America-Greater New York (New York, NY)
Waukegan Township Staben House (Waukegan, IL)
Wild Iris Family Counseling & Crisis Center (Bishop, CA)
Women in Circle (Louisville, KY)
Women's Lunch Place (Boston, MA)
York Street Project (Jersey City, NJ)
YWCA of Greater Cleveland (Cleveland, OH)
YWCA Jamestown (Jamestown, NY)
YWCA Yakima (Yakima, WA)

^[1] <https://www.domesticshelters.org/data-center/state-reports-and-rankings/people-using-domestic-violence-shelters-by-state;>
<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/ahar.html>.



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^[2] <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/ahar/2024-ahar-part-1-pit-estimates-of-homelessness-in-the-us.html>

^[3] <https://nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/mortality-and-homelessness.pdf>

^[4] <https://www.air.org/centers/national-center-family-homelessness>