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GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES \$12.7 MILLION FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOUSING

Governor George E. Pataki today announced that four community agencies in New York City have been awarded grants to provide transitional housing and support services for victims of domestic violence. The \$12.7 million in capital funding through the Residences for Survivors of Domestic Violence Program (RSVP) will allow for the construction of 119 units of various size apartments to provide 281 beds for victims of domestic violence and their children.

"We've already declared New York a zero tolerance state when it comes to domestic violence. Now, we want to continue to be there to assist victims as they attempt to escape the severe hardships they've had to deal with and begin to build a new life with their children," Governor Pataki said.

"That new life should be one free from violence, free from dependency, and one that allows families to pursue opportunities in their best interests," the Governor said. "This program will help victims achieve those objectives while filling a critical need in domestic violence housing units in New York City."

To help in the transition, the program will provide appropriate support services to help the victims and their children attain independence.

The community agencies that will receive funding under RSVP include:

- African American Planning Commission, Brooklyn, \$4.8 million to construct 40 units of housing to shelter up to 45 families (120 individuals) at any given time. Included in the project is counseling, on-site medical care, permanent housing referrals, child care, independent living skills training, and job training and placement.
- Victim Services, Inc., Bronx, \$4 million to construct Bronx House, a 27-unit, 68-bed facility for single women and women with children. Victim Services is the city's oldest and largest provider of services to survivors of domestic violence. Caseworkers and therapists will be able to assist women obtain the legal, medical and counseling services they need to move beyond abuse.
- Urban Resources Institute, Brooklyn, \$1.5 million to add 48-beds for families to its existing domestic violence facility. Services include, but are not limited to, vocational and educational assessments, job search workshops, mental health screenings, substance / alcohol abuse assessments, and aftercare services.
- Project Return Foundation, Bronx, \$2.4 million to develop 45-beds of transitional housing for families and singles in an existing building. Project Return Foundation currently operates a 60-bed emergency shelter for domestic violence victims in East Harlem. Services at the new site will include counseling, medical care, crisis intervention, legal assistance, vocational services, and permanent housing placement.

The RSVP program is the latest policy initiative to assist victims of domestic violence, an issue that is one of Governor Pataki's highest priorities. The Governor recently signed legislation creating a statewide Automated Registry of Orders of Protection and Related Warrants. The legislation requires enforcement of out-of-state orders of protection in New York, enhancing local awareness and more effective enforcement.

Brian J. Wing, Commissioner of the state Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, said, "Our intent is to provide a comprehensive array of services to help battered women get back on their feet and to help them plan for their future. We are prepared to help these families overcome any physical and mental problems that may impede their successful transition to an independent lifestyle."

Last year, Governor Pataki proposed and signed into law Primary Aggressor legislation. The legislation protects victims of domestic violence by ensuring they are not arrested simply for defending themselves from attack.