



## HRA’s Office of Domestic Violence Hosts Forum on Improving Financial Security of Domestic Violence Survivors

On Thursday, October 11, HRA’s Office of Domestic Violence (ODV) held a forum focused on helping survivors of domestic violence live safe and independent lives and avoid the risk of falling back into abusive relationships by improving their financial security. The forum brought together leaders in domestic violence and financial security services from government and non-government organizations to discuss efforts to help domestic violence survivors live independently, plan for their futures, and improve their financial security and literacy.



*Commissioner Robert Doar*

“One thing HRA is about is helping the most vulnerable New Yorkers get the help they need,” said Commissioner Doar in his welcome address. “With survivors of domestic violence we want to help in the most direct and comprehensive way possible. We are also the Agency of work and work supports. We provide support for working people in large quantities, and, I think, better than we ever have before. Focusing on financial security is very important, and we want to make sure we work together to maximize the programs we have to help people make ends meet as they transition to financial independence.”



*Executive Director of the Office of Domestic Violence  
Marie Philip*

The forum focused on the history of increasing financial security for domestic violence survivors beginning with the Task Force on Domestic Violence and Permanent Housing in 2006 which brought together government and non-government leaders to discuss how best to help survivors of abuse go on to lead stable, secure lives. Forum participants discussed several of the programs that were born out of the task force, such as My Door, which offered survivors of domestic violence comprehensive help with job placement and retention, housing, and emotional supports to help achieve a good work/life balance.

My Door was the first Work Experience Program for domestic violence survivors through the Anti-Domestic Violence Eligibility Needs Team (ADVENT).

The task force also launched Ready, Set, Greenlight, which helps domestic violence shelter advocates speak to clients about their legal and financial rights, the importance of financial planning and other key issues for living financially secure and independent lives.

In March of 2012, HRA and the Financial Clinic launched DV Stability Assistance For Emergencies (DV SAFE), which brings financial planning and development services to domestic violence survivors who do not reside in DV shelters.

In addition to physical and sexual violence, domestic abuse often has an economic side. Abusers control their partner's finances, and even control access to important documents like birth certificates and social security cards. Victims of domestic violence are vulnerable to financial exploitation and identity theft. Financial literacy can help survivors of domestic violence and their families live independently and avoid falling back into abusive relationships, or having to enter homeless shelters.