

## MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

### REQUIRE STATE TO PROVIDE FREE INTERNET ACCESS TO SHELTER RESIDENTS

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**The New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NYSCADV) urges the New York State Legislature to pass this legislation which would amend the Social Services Law to require the state to provide free Internet access to those in temporary shelter.**

No one can dispute how important it is for individuals to have access to the Internet. It has transformed the way we communicate with each other, the way we access information, the way we learn and work, and the way we obtain healthcare. And for domestic violence survivors in emergency shelter looking to obtain jobs, find housing, and access critical resources, the Internet is indispensable. Further, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, many DV survivors are being asked to work remotely, and their children need access to the Internet for remote learning. However, Internet access can be expensive; many DV and homeless shelters cannot afford the costs of providing Internet for their residents.

NYSCADV supports the passage of this legislation which would amend Social Services Law to:

- Require local departments of social services (DSS) to cover the full costs of Internet access for residents in family shelters, adult shelters, DV shelters, runaway and homeless youth shelters, and safe houses for refugees;
- Require DSS to submit a plan detailing how each intends to provide such access to the state Office of Children and Family Services for oversight and approval; and,
- Permit DSS to obtain 100% reimbursement of the costs for providing Internet access to shelter residents from New York State.

NYSCADV urges the Legislature to pass this legislation so domestic violence survivors living in emergency shelter can find the information needed to rebuild their lives, work remotely, and facilitate their children's continued enrollment in remote schooling.

#### **ABOUT NYSCADV:**

Established in 1978, NYSCADV is designated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as the information clearinghouse, primary point of contact, and resource center on domestic violence for the State of New York. NYSCADV is responsible for supporting the development of policies, protocol, and procedures to enhance domestic violence intervention and prevention and also provides education and technical assistance to the network of primary-purpose domestic violence service providers statewide.

**For more information, contact: Joan Gerhardt, Director of Public Policy and Advocacy, 518.482.5465**

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