

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a significant social problem affecting 1.5 million women annually (Grossman, Hinkley, Kawalski, & Margrave 2005). Violence occurs most often in the woman's home, and often leads the woman to seek shelter outside of her home or face eviction from her landlord. Women who are victims of IPV may experience difficulty in accessing vital resources, especially housing (Barata & Stewart, 2010). A woman who left her abuser is additionally pressured with finding a rental unit quickly because she is at the greatest risk for injury soon after leaving an abusive partner (Barata & Stewart, 2010). The challenge of securing a rental unit may be affected by the unit's location in either urban or non-urban areas. This study sought to examine, in both non-urban and urban locations, whether a woman disclosing that she is residing at a battered women's shelter may experience housing discrimination relative to women who did not disclose their current living situation. The author and an undergraduate assistant called 171 landlords in non-urban and urban locations about the availability of a rental unit using one of two living conditions (staying in a shelter or no disclosure). Hierarchical logistical regression revealed a significant main effect for location, with landlords in non-urban locations being significantly more likely to indicate the unit was no longer available. Descriptive statistics and frequencies revealed that landlords in non-urban locations were significantly more likely to indicate that the property was no longer available (19.4%) relative to landlords in urban locations (4.7%) when the caller indicated she was currently residing in a battered women's shelter. Thus, preliminary evidence suggests that the likelihood for housing discrimination against victims of IPV is higher in non-urban locations compared to urban locations. These findings provide more information regarding how victims of IPV are perceived, the stereotypes they encounter, and provide a focus for fighting against the stigma that surrounds victims of IPV. The results may also present evidence that non-urban areas are lacking the vital resources that victimized women require, especially safe and affordable housing, thus necessitating an increase in activism and advocating on their behalf.