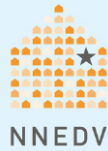




Allstate
Foundation



www.EconEmpowerment.org

The Allstate Foundation Domestic Violence Program *Domestic Violence and Economic Abuse*

Domestic violence poses a threat to the safety and security of victims and their families across the United States. Statistics are shocking and they reveal that domestic violence is an issue that cannot be ignored as a “personal” or a “private family matter.” It is a problem that affects individuals, families, communities and businesses.

- Nearly one in four women report being abused by a husband or partner in their lifetimes, according to the U.S. Department of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control.¹
- Nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of Americans personally know someone who is or has been a victim of domestic violence.²
- Studies conducted by The Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Institute of Justice, and Centers for Disease Control all find that victims of intimate partner violence are overwhelmingly female. A 2005 study by the U.S. Department of Justice reports that women comprise 84 percent of spouse abuse victims and 86 percent of victims of abuse by a boyfriend or girlfriend.³ In terms of victimization, intimate partner violence against men is overwhelming committed by male perpetrators.⁴
- Nearly 5.3 million domestic violence incidents occur each year among U.S. women ages 18 and older.¹
- Domestic violence results in nearly two million injuries and 1,300 deaths nationally every year.⁵
- In 2004, nearly 2.2 million people called local and national domestic violence hotlines to escape crisis situations, seek advice about leaving batterers and assist friends and family who might be victims.⁶
- In 2004, more than 1.35 million women, men and children accessed residential and non-residential domestic violence services, including temporary and transitional housing, counseling, child care, legal assistance, batterer intervention programs, food pantries, job training and placement, and transportation services.⁶
- Although demographic data is rarely collected about victims, it is widely reported that domestic violence touches all cultural, religious, socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds.⁷
- Approximately six out of 10 Americans strongly agree that the lack of money and a steady income is often a challenge faced by a survivor of domestic violence when leaving her/his abuser.²
- 57 percent of cities in America cite domestic violence against women and children as the top cause of homelessness.⁸
- One-third of all police time is spent responding to domestic disturbance calls.⁹
- 96 percent of domestic violence victims who are employed experience problems at work due to abuse.¹⁰
- Domestic violence victims lose a total of nearly 8 million days of paid work each year — the equivalent of more than 32,000 full-time jobs.⁵
- The health-related costs of domestic violence exceed \$5.8 billion each year.⁵

Domestic violence and economic empowerment¹¹

Often the term domestic violence conjures up images and signs of physical abuse. However, tens of thousands of women each year are also victims of an equally devastating situation—economic abuse. Economic abuse can include a woman being prevented by her husband or partner to work, have access to bank accounts, credit cards or transportation among other isolating tactics.

Because the path to economic empowerment requires time searching for jobs, participating in job-readiness programs, finding affordable housing and childcare options, repairing credit damaged by abusive partners, and dealing with the day-to-day challenges of taking care of a family, it is not surprising that survivors of domestic violence need unique assistance to become economically secure.

The Struggles of Victims of Abuse

A complex combination of psychological, cultural, religious, familial and economic factors contribute to a victim's decision to remain in or leave an abusive relationship. Behind fear, domestic violence victims frequently cite income, employment and financial stability as the strongest, most immediate deterrents to leaving abusive situations. The devastation of leaving a home, income, benefits and economic security behind are scenarios that all victims of domestic violence must overcome, regardless of their education, job skills and personal earning

potential, if they are to care for their families and live more safe and secure lives. The struggles of victims and survivors of domestic violence for economic empowerment reverberate throughout every community in this nation. Survivors and current victims of domestic violence are over-represented in the welfare population and many women and children are homeless because of domestic violence.⁸

Although evidence has shown that women who have economic skills are more likely to leave abusive situations and sustain themselves and their families on a long-term basis,¹² there have until now been few national resources dedicated to addressing the range of economic stability challenges confronting victims.

The Allstate Foundation Domestic Violence Program focuses on providing knowledge and skills—particularly those related to financial security and economic empowerment—to support survivors of domestic violence.

If you are the victim of domestic violence, please contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline to get support and discuss your options at 1-800-799-7233 or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY).

Contact Information

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- ⁵ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Injury Prevention and Control; *Costs of intimate partner violence against women in the United States*; April 2003
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