

Economic-Related Safety Planning Considerations:

- Close or change passwords to all financial accounts (checking, savings, investment, etc.), debit/credit cards and freeze credit reports.
- Change/close email and social media accounts.
- Change direct deposit, emergency contact, retirement and insurance plans, and other data on file at the workplace that might allow offenders to access victims.
- Change the victim's mailing address to a P.O. box or another alternative address to receive bills and other financial statements. Consider a state address confidentiality program.
- Store important documents, emergency funds and other items in a safe location.
- Assess safe, no or low-cost transportation alternatives. If unavoidable, determine how to recuperate costs or partner with local organizations.
- Work with victims to mitigate childcare risks:
 - ⇒ Research alternative childcare providers.
 - ⇒ Apply for childcare subsidies or other aid.
 - ⇒ Notify the provider of legal agreements and risks with the victim's approval.
- Work with victims and their employer to:
 - ⇒ Change the victim's shift or workspace.
 - ⇒ Change work phone numbers and email.
 - ⇒ Establish a code word to call for help.
- Work with victims and their schools to:
 - ⇒ Change the offender's housing instead of the victim's to reduce relocating burden.
 - ⇒ Remove the offender from classes or change the victim's classes or campus job.
 - ⇒ Ensure the victim has access to private or school-based health care and insurance.

Recommended Intake and Interview Questions:

- Did the offender destroy anything you need for immediate safety, to get to work or school, or to pay bills?
- Are there any documents you need to collect and keep safe for your economic security? (Visas, passport, social security card, etc.)
- What out-of-pocket costs have you incurred? (Bills, relocation, emergency contraception, security equipment, etc.)
- Has the offender taken any of your money, including paychecks?
- Does the offender have keys to your home, work or car?
- Do you have access to your bank account and other finances? Does the offender?
- Have you been intimidated or threatened financially?
- Have you had to take security measures or change your routine?
 - ⇒ What costs were associated?
 - ⇒ Did it affect your housing, school or job?
- Does the offender know the passwords to your computers, accounts or phone?
- Is the offender in a position of power over your job, school, scholarship or housing?
- Has the offender prevented you from gaining citizenship or a work visa?
- Has the offender forced you to commit any crimes, economic or otherwise?
- Are there any economic issues that will keep you from participating in the justice system if you choose?

Potential Economic-Related Evidence Examples:

- Photographs of injuries and damaged property.
- Property in the offender's possession at the time of arrest that belonged to the victim.
- Security camera footage that may have captured the offender's commission of injuries or property damage.
- Value or repair costs for damaged or destroyed property, with corroboration from the victim.
- Calls, emails, text messages, and social media both at home and at work or school.
- Financial documents showing related costs of the violence (bank statements, credit reports, bills, invoices, receipts, canceled checks, stolen pay checks, etc.).
- Documentation of health care costs due to injuries from violence.
- Records of missed work or school due to the violence (HR leave request forms, security sign-in logs, school attendance reports, etc.).
- Technological documentation of:
 - ⇒ Cyber-stalking/electronic surveillance;
 - ⇒ Online economic crimes and identity theft;
 - ⇒ Phone or email spoofing;
 - ⇒ Unauthorized GPS tracking; or
 - ⇒ Phone breaking.
- Cost of protection measures taken by the victim (security systems, moving to another residence, changing phone numbers, etc.).
- Interviews with the victim's employer, co-workers, teachers, school administrators, classmates, roommate, neighbors, or anyone else who can testify to the economic impact.

Know Before You Go

Economic-Related State and Local Policies:

- Restitution statutes
- Protection Order statutes
- Workplace protections and sick/safe leave
- Housing protections and lease termination
- Filing fees for protection orders
- Crime Victim Compensation
- Forensic medical exams

Costs of Justice System Participation:

- **Transportation and parking**
Cost of parking per hour: \$ _____
Bus passes provided? Yes No
Cost of public/other transit: \$ _____
- Cost/availability of childcare: \$ _____
- **Employment and education**
Leave from work? Yes No
Amount of lost wages: \$ _____
Number of missed classes: _____
- Filing fees for CPOs? Yes No
- **Navigating the system**
Do you need to bring food or money for lunch? Yes No
How many different courthouses and hearings do you need to go to? _____
Do any economic-related court orders contradict each other? Yes No
- **Encountering the offender**
Economic threats in court? Yes No
Property damage or harm? Yes No
- Other costs? _____

Know Before You Go

Economic Benefits of the Justice System:

- Through police response, court protection orders, or offender incarceration, the criminal justice system can help **protect victims from physical harm** that can lead to high costs or work/school interruptions.
- Prosecutors, civil attorneys, and judges can restore **victims financially** through restitution, damages, and other forms of economic relief.
- Collecting economic evidence, charging economic crimes, and enforcing economic relief can help **hold offenders accountable** for the full scope of their abusive behavior.
- Justice system professionals can include the workplace or school in protection orders and can protect victims from retaliation on their **housing and work** due to the violence.
- Economic insecurity, dependence, or abuse can **explain victim behavior** to the justice system and public, reducing victim blaming.

To access the full Victim Advocate's Guide to Safety and Economic Security for Victims of Violence Against Women, see: <http://www.wowonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/WOW-ESS-Victim-Advocate-Sector-Guide.pdf>

Institute for Women's Policy Research
1200 18th Street NW, Suite 301
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 785-5100 | www.iwpr.org

Economic Security Considerations for Safer Survivors: A Victim Advocate Pocket Guide

Includes:

Economic costs, benefits, and relevant policies
Safety planning issues
Intake & interview questions
Economic evidence examples



©Wider Opportunities for Women 2014