Consumer Rights for Domestic and Sexual Violence Survivors: Project Launch & Discussion

Wednesday, February 21, 2018
2:00 – 3:00pm ET

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Sara Wee, Director of Research & Programs

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CSAJ’s Mission & Vision

- **Mission:**
  The Center for Survivor Agency and Justice promotes advocacy approaches that remove systemic barriers, enhance organizational responses, and improve professional practices to meet the self-defined needs of domestic and sexual violence survivors.

- **Vision:**
  The Center for Survivor Agency and Justice envisions a world where all people have equal access to physical safety, economic security, and human dignity.
Today

**CSAJ’S Framework**
- What are you seeing?

**CSAJ’s Work**
- What are you doing?

**Consumer Initiative Activities**
- What do you need?
CSAJ’S Framework
Reciprocal relationship of abuse and economic hardship

Women living in poverty experience violence at twice the rate of those who do not.
**Economic abuse**

“Economic abuse involves behaviors that control a woman’s ability to *acquire, use, and maintain* economic resources, thus threatening her economic security and potential for self-sufficiency.”

Economic impact of domestic violence

Domestic violence is linked to a range of negative economic outcomes, including:

- Decreased safety options
- Increased risk of future violence

- Income & Job Loss
- Housing Instability
- Limited Transportation
- Decreased Access to Childcare
The “Economic Ripple Effect” of Domestic Violence

Predictors of IPV Across Race

What are the unique structural barriers facing survivors?

**Resource Availability**

**Access to:** Transportation, Housing, Education, Employment

**Looks Like:**
- Distance to court or services (across the state)
- Slow response time
- Have to stay in same court for all legal actions

**Service Response**

**Experience with:** Few, dispersed, short-staffed services; lack of staff information/awareness

**Looks Like:**
- Judges preference for 2-parent homes
- Turn over of court decision makers
- Caseworkers make survivors jump through hoops (requirements, eligibility)

**Impact of Policies**

**Outcomes of:** Geographic isolation combined with a lack of privacy

**Looks Like:**
- Reduction of absuer’s charges/increased plea deals
- Women on parole who call 9-11 violate probation
- Institutions defer responsibility, “passing the buck”
- Time frame from arrest to conviction is too long
What economic or consumer issues are showing up for survivors you work with?
CSAJ Key Projects

Consumer Rights for Domestic & Sexual Violence Survivors Initiative

Racial and Economic Equity of Domestic & Sexual Violence Survivors Project

Accounting for Economic Security: An Atlas for Direct Service Providers
Consumer Rights for Domestic and Sexual Violence Survivors Initiative

- A national project that enhances economic justice for survivors by building the capacity of and forging partnerships between domestic violence and anti-poverty lawyers and advocates in programs, communities, and states throughout the nation.

- Began in 2007 with funding from OVC.

- TA Project funded by OVW in 2011, 2014, and again in 2017

- Targeted Grantees: Open to all and potential OVW grantees, including: LAV, Rural, and State/Territory Coalition Grantees
CSAJ’s 2012 Economic Advocacy Needs Assessment

- Over 220 lawyers and advocates participated
- Both consumer and DV advocates do some CR for DV survivors work, but there is a gap in intersecting expertise.
- DV advocates often do not:
  - Address ways in which coercion manifests as economic abuse
  - Screen for economic issues that require more technical legal expertise
  - Develop institutionalized policies, protocols, and practices to encourage inter-and intra-agency collaboration with economic experts.
Guidebook on Consumer and Economic Civil Legal Advocacy

Topics Include:

- Credit reporting and repair, including discriminatory credit and identity theft
- Debt collections and defense, including navigating student loans
- Bankruptcy and foreclosure
- Federal tax advocacy
- Economic relief in civil protection orders
- Economic issues in family law
- Barriers in civil court
- Rights and protections in housing and employment, including for survivors with criminal records

https://csaj.org/Guidebook
Past Pilot Sites

2012-2013 Pilot Sites: Partnership Building

Download

2014-2016: Multilevel Advocacy Strategies
How are you or others in your community addressing the consumer rights of survivors?
Consumer Rights for Domestic & Sexual Violence Survivors Initiative

2018 – 2019 OVW Project Activities
Goal, Objectives, Activities

Goal: Enhance consumer and economic civil legal advocacy for survivors

1. **Build Consumer Advocacy Capacity:** build the capacity of grantees in consumer and economic civil legal remedies for survivors,

2. **Strengthen Organizational and Community Change:** strengthen collaboration and promote partnership building between DV/SA and consumer lawyers and advocates, and

3. **Engage in Systems Change:** engage lawyers and advocates in systems advocacy that advances consumer rights and removes barriers to economic security.
Consumer Rights Working Group

Center for Court Innovation
Futures Without Violence
National Consumer Law Center
Prosperity Now
Indiana Legal Services, Inc., Low Income Taxpayer Clinic
Legal Aid of Western Michigan
The Legal Aid Society (New York City)
Katie VonDeLinde, Washington University
Adrienne Adams, Michigan State University
Angela Littwin, University of Texas Law School
Technical Assistance

- It’s about Supporting your projects and advocacy
- It’s about Peer Exchange & Connecting
Training Toolkits on Consumer & Economic Civil Legal Advocacy for Survivors

- Intro Webinar: *Issue Spotting Consumer & Economic Civil Legal Issues (Guidebook)*

- Five Topics covered in Training Toolkits:
  - debt/credit
  - federal tax advocacy
  - foreclosure
  - court-related economic barriers
  - credit/criminal record barriers to employment

- Each Toolkit will be 2 webinars:
  - Part 1: Issue basics + strategies/legal remedies
  - Part II: partnership and systems change mapping
Spotlights on Innovative Consumer Justice Initiatives

- **Purpose:** Spotlights are a Peer Exchange opportunity to share best-practices in consumer and economic advocacy with the field.

- **Interested? Complete this form by March 31**
  - [https://goo.gl/forms/jDpmAlQKDZqpoG3t2](https://goo.gl/forms/jDpmAlQKDZqpoG3t2)
  - We’ll follow-up!
Conference & Technical Assistance

NCLC®
NATIONAL CONSUMER LAW CENTER®

Workshop at NCLC’s Annual Conference: Workshop at the Annual Litigation Conference to train on the Guidebook and building partnerships between consumer and DV lawyers
## 2018 Consumer Rights Calendar

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finalize Spotlights</td>
<td>Webinar: Issue Spotting</td>
<td>Spotlight #1</td>
<td>Toolkit #1: Debt &amp; Credit (2 webinars)</td>
<td>Spotlight #2</td>
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<td>August</td>
<td>Consumer Newsletter</td>
<td>Spotlight #3</td>
<td>NCLC Conference (Denver)</td>
<td>Spotlight #4</td>
<td>Toolkit #3: Bankruptcy/Foreclosure (2 webinars)</td>
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What would be most helpful to you in enhancing survivors’ economic security?

Training, technical assistance, resources, etc.
Don’t Forget!

Spotlights on Innovative Consumer Justice Initiatives

https://goo.gl/forms/jDpmAlQKDZqpoG3t2
Thank you!!

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