Doing “the work” well: Survivor centered economic advocacy in organizational context

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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.
Consumer Rights for Domestic and Sexual Violence Survivors Initiative

- A national project that enhances economic justice for survivors by building the capacity of lawyers and advocates to provide consumer and economic civil legal advocacy and engage in systemic advocacy to remove barriers to economic security for survivors.

- Began in 2007 with funding from OVC.

- Technical Assistance Project funded by OVW, since 2011.

- Partners include:
  - National Consumer Law Center
  - Home Free
  - Center for Court Innovation
  - Wider Opportunities for Women
  - Expert Advisors
Program Activities

- **Guidebook & Advocacy Briefs**
  - Stay tuned! Advocacy Brief on Survivor Centered Economic Advocacy

- **Consumer Practice Webinars**
  - [Survivor Centered Economic Advocacy: Expanding Our Approach to Safety](#)
  - [Building Partnerships for Economic Justice: A Report on CSAJ’s Innovative Pilot Projects](#)
  - [Credit Reporting & Repair for Survivors](#)
  - [Credit Checks: An Illegitimate Barrier to Employment for Survivors](#)
  - [Federal Tax Advocacy for Survivors](#)
  - TODAY!

- **Individualized Technical Assistance**

- **Innovative Demonstration Sites**
  - Texas Council on Family Violence
  - Women’s Resource Center
  - Indiana Legal Services, Low-Income Taxpayers Clinic
  - University of Denver School of Law, Civil Litigation Clinic
Accounting for Economic Security: An Atlas for Direct Service Providers

- **Purpose:** to assist service providers in understanding, navigating, and changing the economic terrain that domestic violence survivors traverse on their paths to safety.

- **Map Book I:** Mapping the terrain: Identifying and assessing domestic violence survivors’ economic advocacy needs
  - **Release Date:** April 15th!

Forthcoming:

- **Map Book II:** Navigating the terrain: Meeting domestic violence survivors’ economic advocacy needs

- **Map Book III:** Changing the terrain: Advocating for improved community response to survivors’ economic advocacy needs
DOING "THE WORK" WELL

EFFECTIVE SURVIVOR CENTERED ECONOMIC ADVOCACY IN ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXTS

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OBJECTIVES

• Discern survivor centered economic advocacy at the individual level (what advocates can do) from the organizational level (what advocates need in order to do).
• Identify evidence that supports the importance and effectiveness of organizational survivor-centered economic advocacy for comprehensive survivor safety.
• Describe your organizational context and the economic work you’re already doing.
• Identify key ways to effectively increase SCEA work in your organization (including economic needs assessment, leadership development, supporting organizational and staff capacity, diversity and partnerships, and evaluation).
• Apply strategies for SCEA work to your organizational context.
SURVIVOR’S STORY: GLORIA

• In transitional housing after leaving abusive partner of 10 years; afraid of ex-partner, Fred
• Phone calls from debt collectors; doesn’t recognize debts
• Fred controlling of money; lied about paying bills
• No bank account
• Has a store credit card in only her name
• Preschool teacher but turned down for promotion to lead teacher; worries that passed by because of her race as African-American (no other African-Americans in leadership positions)
• Hasn’t seen her credit report for several years
• Denied housing due to credit but confused because has good rental history
THINK OF GLORIA’S SITUATION

• What might Gloria need?
• How would she evaluate her risks? Her safety?
• If she came to your organizational context, could she get help with what she needed? If so, from whom?
  – What if she prioritized:
    • Denial of position due to race?
    • Opening a bank account safely
    • Finding housing in the face of possible credit issues
    • Figuring out what was wrong with her credit?
• Would Gloria know she could get those needs met within your organizational context? If so, how?
  – Web site “about” statement?
  – Word of mouth
  – Referral?
  – Other ideas?
WHAT IS SURVIVOR-CENTERED ECONOMIC ADVOCACY IN THE ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT?

- Organization or programs within organizations that respond to a broad range of risks in a survivor’s life in an effort to work with survivor’s efforts to move towards “safer”
  - Impact of IPV
    - Physical
    - Emotional/psychological
    - Sexual
    - Economic
  - Economic Justice
    - Financial challenges resulting from other forms of oppression
    - Poverty

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SCEA IN ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT RECOGNIZES:

• There is no “safety” without economic justice
  – Economic advocacy is ineffective without attention to the safety and privacy needs of survivors.
  – Advocates/lawyers doing economic work with survivors and who are supported within an organizational context of SCEA are more likely to increase safety for survivors
GOAL OF ORGANIZATIONAL SCEA:

- Diverse array of survivors of DV will feel like organizational context has something to offer them
- DV survivors will increase long term safety (physical and economic)
- Policies and protocols of the organization support SCEA
- Advocates/lawyers doing economic work with survivors of DV will feel supported and be more likely to:
  - Support survivor’s choices
  - Report higher levels of job satisfaction
  - Continue doing dv/economic work with survivors
- Organizational context will be aware of community economic needs, strengths and partners
- Organization context will value systems level SCEA and use information gained from individual work to inform policy
WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL SCEA?

**INDIVIDUAL SCEA**
- Supportive economic and dv advocacy/legal work with survivors
  - Could include but not limited to:
    - Economic planning
    - Credit advocacy
    - Tax advocacy
    - Bankruptcy
    - Employment
    - Medical
    - Transportation
    - Etc.

**ORG-CONTEXT SCEA**
- All levels of organization recognize and understand the connection between dv and poverty
- Protocols, policies, and practices are supportive of and informed by individual SCEA work
- Partner with diverse array of community partners

For more information see: [Building Partnerships to Enhance Consumer Rights for Domestic Violence Survivors: An Assessment and Resource Tool](https://www.csaj.org/) by CSAJ
ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

• What is your organizational context?
  – Please respond

• Possible options
  – Community domestic violence organizations
  – Community anti-poverty organizations
  – Legal services organizations
  – University Law Clinic
  – DV State Coalitions
  – Others?
WHY IS ORGANIZATIONAL SCEA WORK KEY?

- Economic abuse/debt coercion a key component in almost all DV relationships (Adams et al., 2008)
- Domestic violence impoverishes survivors (Littwin, 2012)
- WHO report (2002) states that poverty is the greatest risk factor for DV
- Women receiving public benefits experience even higher rates of domestic violence (Lyon, 2002; Goodman, 2013)
- Oppression (racism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, ableism, etc) compounds impact of DV and economic abuse
- Women with households less than $7500 are 7x more likely to experience DV than women in households over $75,000 (Rennison & Welchans, 2000)
- Survivors are asking for help with these issues (Dichter and Rhodes, 2011; Lyon, 2011)
WHY IS ORGANIZATIONAL SCEA WORK KEY?

a visual narrative

The Link Between Poverty & Domestic Violence

Poverty increases the risk of violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All women reporting abuse</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless women reporting abuse</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women receiving public welfare reporting abuse</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Abuse Creates Economic Instability

- Income & Job Loss
- Housing Instability
- Limited Transportation
- Decreased Access to Childcare

Leads to decreased safety options & increased risk of future violence

The Economic Impacts are Long-Term*

- Stalls Educational Attainment
- Impairs Professional Growth
- Damages Credit Compounds Debt
- Profound Health Effects and Costs

There is no safety without economic security


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SURVIVORS LIVING IN POVERTY

– Poverty causes more risks. Why?
  • Fewer options
  • Financially struggling survivors not prioritize physical safety (because issues of poverty are so acute)
  • May remain in contact
  • Are more affected by consequences for abusive partners
ECONOMIC RIPPLE EFFECT OF IPV

During relationship
- job loss
- credit damage
- theft
- debt
- missed work days
- forgone professional advancement

Leaving relationship
- relocation costs
- incurred debt from marriage
- legal fees

Short term
- forgone wages
- housing instability
- cost of childcare
- increased cost of independent living

Lifetime
- mental health effects
- obstructed/slowed professional development
- increased vulnerability to future abuse

EVIDENCE THAT SCEA WORKS FOR SURVIVORS

Survivors who work with advocates who employ survivor-centered models:

• Have less difficulty obtaining community resources over time (Allen et al., 2013).
• Experience less violence over time (Allen et al. 2004; 2013).
• Report higher quality of life and higher levels of social support (Allen et al., 2004).
• More satisfied with systems ranging from police and justice system to residential and community based IPV programs (Cattaneo & Goodman, 2010).
• Report fewer depressive symptoms and greater quality of life over time and reduced repeat abuse (Cattaneo & Goodman, 2010).
• More optimism and “internal tools”; survivor “knows what [their] path forward is and can do what is needed to move ahead” (Goodman et al., p. 15, 2014)
HOW DO WE DO EFFECTIVE SCEA?

• Needs assessment
• Fostering leadership support
• Increasing organizational capacity
• Increasing and supporting staff capacity
• Building and diversifying partnerships
NEEDS ASSESSMENT

What’s the problem?
WHAT IS...
NEEDS ASSESSMENT: WHAT’S THE PROBLEM?

IDENTIFYING NEEDS

• What IS versus what SHOULD BE
• Rooted in lived experience of survivors in your community
• Goal: Identifying the problem and linking root causes to drive action

REQUIRES

• Posing questions
• Brainstorming
• Seeking evidence
  (what do we already know?)
• Using theory
  (story of change)
• Finding answers for unanswered questions
  (data, experiences, insights)
• Summarizing
  (do our answers and logic hold?)

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Context matters: power, status, relationships, experience, geography, politics, culture
Locus of analysis matters: individual, interpersonal, organizational, community, systems/policy
YOU’RE ALREADY DOING THE WORK!
Self-reflection & dialogue between survivor-advocate

**SURVIVOR EXPERIENCE**

- ease of access to community resources
- satisfaction with resource and systems response
- feel advocates/attorneys listen to needs
- no question, need, or priority is out of place
- feel safer
- increased economic stability – and economic optimism
- able to work on things I’ve put on the shelf

**ADVOCATE EXPERIENCE**

- ease of access to community resources
- perception resource and systems response
- equipped (knowledge, skills, self-efficacy) to identify economic needs in context of priorities.
- Increased job satisfaction
- increased time/space to work with survivors
- feel supported by managers/leadership
- clear pathway to report common barriers
- see growth opportunities in my role (whether scope of work, leadership, skill development, salary, etc.)

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MATCH??

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MATCH??

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CSAJ’s Demonstration Sites: Assessment Process

- **SWOT** (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)
  - Brainstorming Tool
- **Articulate Purpose of gathering information**
  - Gaps, resources, advocacy, organization, systems/policies
  - Rooted in lived experience of survivors
  - Context specific: CBO, legal services tax clinic, state coalition, law school civil litigation clinic
- **Assessment**
  - Survey, SWOT, Observations, Data Collection
- **What is the Universe of Opportunities?**
  - Opportunity Map, other planning documents

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EXAMPLE: WOMEN’S RESOURCE CENTER

METHODS

• Internal SWOT
• Surveys to advocates and attorneys
• Survey to survivors in Transitional Housing Advisory Council
  – Meetings to interpret findings
• Convened WRC Economic Advocacy Team to establish priorities

FEEDBACK

• provided opportunity for WRC advocates and attorneys to come together as the WRC Economic Advocacy Team and broaden our understanding of the economic needs and long term affects to survivors while inspiring organizational response.
• provided opportunity for survivors to give voice to their successes and dreams.
• has lead to improved assessment of economic abuse, increased knowledge of resources, advanced system advocacy, and development of new partners to address the need.

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• Brainstorming
  – SWOT/Strategic Planning
  – External Facilitators
  – Regularly held meetings/forums

• Data Collection
  – Case/data management
  – Survey: Bigger reach, targeted detail
  – Focus Groups/Observations: Smaller reach, rich detail
  – Secondary: research, data from partners

• Planning
  – Community Forums
  – Survivor Engagement
  – Logic models stratégic plan

• Tools
  – Technical Assistance
  – CSAJ 2012 National Needs Assessment
  – Building Partnerships Pilot Project Report
  – Needs Assessment Toolkit (forthcoming)
LEADERSHIP SUPPORT

• Who are “thought leaders” in your organization?
  – Individuals who challenge others to think in new ways
• Who are “action leaders” in your organization?
  – Individuals who help others act in new/different ways
• How can you use people in different ways?
Thought leaders

Strategies to engage:

• Supply evidence
  – Why does this work?

• Case examples
  – Survivor’s stories
  – Other organizations with success

• Mission/vision of organization

• National leaders

• Provide a pathway
  – Create avenues for thought leaders with less formal organizational power to communicate ideas and programs to those with more institutional power
EXAMPLE: GATHERING SUPPORT FROM THOUGHT LEADERS

• Community forums: Iowa Economic Pilots Project
• Board inservice/retreats: St. Louis ROW/REAP
• Economic conference: St. Louis ROW/REAP
Action Leaders

• Program directors
  – Use directly in planning processes; changing protocols; encouraging supervisors

• Supervisors
  – Use needs assessment to inform processes and engage key leaders (or survivors experiences)
  – SCEA supervision (more later)

• Key action leaders: Who are “unofficial” leaders in your organizational context? How can you use those leaders? (Green dot model)
  – Economic training (more later)
EXAMPLE: ACTION LEADERS

• Staff members encouraged to present topics/training at staff meetings (ROW)
• Staff members at all levels provided economic training (ROW)
• Provide tools to gather “key needs” “key resources” “key questions” from advocate/lawyers; share internally and use to create programs, training, partners (ROW)
INCREASING CAPACITY: SUPPORTING “THE WORK”

- Strategic goals/evaluation of strategic goals
- Protocols supporting SCEA
STRATEGIC GOALS

• How does SCEA fit into your organizational mission/vision?
• Broad definition of “safety”
• How are organization strategic goals connected to survivor’s long term economic safety?
• How does your evaluation capture SCEA?
• What kind of “work” with survivor’s is valued in your context? How can you tell?
What kind of “work” with survivors is valued in your context? How can you tell?

Respond in the chat

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STRATEGIC GOALS: EVALUATION QUESTIONS TO ASK

• What impact are we seeking? What’s the change we want to see?
• How do we know if an impact/change has occurred?
• How do we know if we are the cause of change?
• Intentional listening to advocates and survivors
STRATEGIC GOALS: EXAMPLES

- Increase economic safety as defined by survivor
  - Credit score?
  - Employment?
  - Cost of living plan?
  - Housing stability?
- Increase survivor’s sense of capacity to make economic choices for their lives (self-determination; self-efficacy)
- Increase survivor’s economic knowledge
- Increase survivor’s understanding of economic systems and structure
DO CURRENT PROTOCOLS/PRACTICE SUPPORT SCEA?

Current state of programming
• What do we do with survivors?
  – Menu of items?
  – Moving beyond crisis work
    • How? When?
  – Intensity of work?
• Who are our clients?
  – Working with survivor’s in contact or currently in relationships
  – How do we get our clients?
  – Unwritten “goals” of our work; how do they get in the way?
    • What do clients think we “want” them to do? How do we know?
  – Do survivor’s see themselves in our organization? Staff? Leadership? Volunteers? Board?
• Long-term relationship with clients; no real time frame can be very long term (4 years and beyond)
• Survivor’s come in from many different sources: other DV orgs, homeless programs, faith communities, community colleges
  – Survivors at different places within relationships
• Survivors come in through economic education that is placed within a structural/intersectional power analysis
• Economic education advertised for all women (limitations here)
• Economic advocacy defined by survivor; driven by survivor’s needs and priorities; flexible safety planning

Protocols for SCEA: ROW
SHAPING SCEA FOR COMMUNITIES OF COLOR & INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Purvi Shah
Senior Consultant, Economic Policy and Leadership Project
Women of Color Network, Inc. (WOCN)
SHAPING SCEA FOR COMMUNITIES OF COLOR & INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

• Survivors are connected to communities
• Intersectional solutions for intersectional oppressions
• Leadership development of grassroots advocates and survivors
  ➔ Enables policy reform
  ➔ Builds movements
IMPACT OF WOCN’S ECONOMIC POLICY & LEADERSHIP PROJECT

• Advocates are able to work across movements:
  – Lead economic justice work as survivors
  – Incorporate economic empowerment as central to advocacy
• Community-specific resources and approaches for addressing economic security and violence
• Broadening the understanding of policy advocacy and change
• Fostering an environment for a wider understanding of economic security.
INCREASE STAFF CAPACITY

- Training
- Supervision
- Support
- Mentorship: Cornerstone Example
STAFF CAPACITY: TRAINING

Training on survivor-centered advocacy

- Broadening definition and understanding of safety and safety planning
  - Moving towards safer (Davies and Lyon, 2015)
  - Defining risk
  - Risks as related to partner
    - Risks as related to life conditions
      - Financial
      - Oppression and isms
      - Other risks (ex. Lack of education, housing location, substance use, criminal history etc)
  - Self-determination as a strategy towards safety (Northwest Network on Domestic Violence, 2015)
• On-going Training on economics
  – Economic assessment: [CSAJ Consumer Screening Tool](#)
  – Creating meaningful cost of living plans (budgeting)
  – Connection between money and power
  – Credit, credit discrimination and credit advocacy: [Training, Advocacy Brief](#)
  – Debt, debt collection: [Training](#)
  – Taxes: [Training](#)

• How?
  – [CSAJ webinars](#)
  – [CSAJ resources](#) (writings, briefs, upcoming economic advocacy guidebook)
  – Partners in the community
EXAMPLE: CORNERSTONE’S MENTORSHIP MODEL

- Mentorship
- [http://cornerstonemn.org/](http://cornerstonemn.org/)
- 2 staff trained on economics and economic literacy
- Provided economic literacy classes and increased support with staff
- Now providing mentorship to colleagues
- Brought in outside training for all staff
- 2 “specialists” reach out for additional support from economic/dv consultant
- Current steps:
  - Staff meeting to discuss barriers and create solutions
  - Challenging staff to go through economic process
STAFF CAPACITY: SUPERVISION

• Intentional, weekly, 1:1 supervision necessary
• SCEA supervisor provides listening support
  – Non-judgmental
  – Gentle self-assessment questions on directive advocacy (risks and safety)
• SCEA supervisor provides economic information/resources/training
  – Connects supervisee to resources to address questions
• SCEA supervision discusses issues of how supervisee is perceived by clients, colleagues, partners
  – Race and supervision
  – Other identities
• Group supervision is helpful as well; but should not replace 1:1
• SCEA supervisor looks for trends in survivor’s economic needs; informs policy work
• Regular 1:1 meetings
• Supplemental group supervision meetings
• Creative approaches to feedback and learning (e.g. mentorship)
• Integrate into other duties (e.g. ID trends for systems advocacy)
• Tools:
  – Supervision Worksheet
STAFF CAPACITY: SUPPORT

• Organization-wide review of pay scales; attempts to increase pay to living wages and beyond
  – Work with funders to support increase wages
• Recognition of on-going economic challenges for staff and support provided
  – In-services regarding staff economic challenges
    • Example: Student loan debt, Retirement, Home Buying
  – Economic literacy for staff (ROW example: REAP for advocates)
SCEA BENEFITS FOR STAFF

• From my experience as a SCEA supervisor I observed:
  – Reduced frustration with survivors
    • If not “telling” or suggesting what survivors should do, increased flexibility with survivor’s plan
    • Increased understanding of role in survivors life
  – Increase satisfaction with employment
  – Increase self-efficacy and engagement to find information and educate other staff; more comradery amongst staff
  – Increased complexity and efficacy in safety planning
BUILDING NEW PARTNERSHIPS

• Who do we need to partner with in order to provide effective organizational SCEA?
  – May be new partners

• Ideas from audience?
BUILDING NEW AND DIVERSE PARTNERSHIPS

• Anti-poverty organizations
• Racial justice organizations
  – Economic justice is not the same as racial justice
• Mistakes DV orgs have made in the past:
  – Frustration with orgs that “don’t get it” in the way we want (don’t prioritize DV over racism, poverty, etc.)
  – Leaving the table when conflict arises
  – Valuing confidentiality over safety
• Be respectful and curious about partners work
• Be open to learn from other organizations
• Build trust through small projects and time
• Sit with discomfort; process with trusted colleague before confronting new partner
• Increase self-awareness about your own biases and implicit racism
• Ask what the organization wants from the partnership: how will it be useful to their organization? To your organization? To their clients? To your clients? To mutual clients?
• Ask before providing training: what do they want to know? What do they know already about DV? What are challenges they have with clients who are experiencing dv?
EXAMPLES: BUILDING DIVERSE PARTNERSHIPS

- CSAJ’s Consumer Rights Initiative
- Women of Color Network, Inc.
- CSAJ & WOCN: Race and Economic Equity Project
"Candace and I were discussing the (Holtzclaw) case. The fact that his bail was reduced from $5 million to $500,000 was so insulting and infuriating, we wanted to stand up and say ‘No. This is not OK. You cannot let a man who (charges allege) attacked and raped 13 women, per the charges, go home and have Christmas dinner with his family while those women are still in fear.' We are black women. It could have been us. We are both artists who speak about the power of women and the need for each woman to protect the other. We live what we write about. We had to speak up. We have to be a catalyst for change."

-- Grace Franklin
Co-Founder, OKC Artists for Justice
Speaker, WOCN EPL Southern Convening March 2016
Source: newsOK
REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

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QUESTIONS

?
Resources & Announcements
CSAJ Core Resources

- CSAJ's National Needs Assessment Report
- Economic Ripple Effect DV Report Article
- CSAJ’s Pilot Site Report
- CSAJ’s Assessment Tool for Attorneys & Advocates

- CSAJ’s Resource Library
- Past webinars on consumer issues

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Key Resources: WOCN Field Reports

- Strengthening Institutional Services
- Policy Advocacy
- Reentry Populations
- T- & U-Visas
- Tribal Sexual Assault

Reports on Economic Security & Violence Against Women

Gaining Ground Reports

Mentorship & Aspiring Allies Tools

Introduction
Economic security and violence against women are deeply connected issues. Community members in low-income, marginalized areas, particularly the disproportionately high rates of economic insecurity in communities of color, face barriers to securing economic opportunity and security. Women’s economic literacy is necessary for self-sufficiency. Women in the WOCN Field Reports aim to increase access and address the economic needs of women and families who are struggling. In the wake of economic crisis, many anti-violence programs have been forced to cut back services. The need for viable, multi-sector solutions may be underestimated and overlooked in our current focus on the complex issue of violence. This resource provides tools and strategies for addressing economic security needs.

Gaining Ground, Breaking Through
A Report on the Leadership Experiences of Women of Color Leader, Grass-Roots, Transgender and Queer Individuals of Color to End Violence Against Women and Men: Non-Indigenous Women in the Anti-Violence Movement in Four States

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Coming Up!

- **Webinars**
  - **April 21**: Achieving Economic Justice for Survivors: A New Approach to Safety (hosted by Jewish Women International)
  - **April 29**: Coerced Debt & Debt Defense for Survivors ([Register Here](#))
  - **May 5**: Economic Relief in Civil Protection Orders (hosted by Battered Women’s Justice Project) ([Register Here](#))
  - **June 22**: Housing Foreclosure & Defense for Survivors ([Register Here](#))
NEW! Legal Impact for Racial & Economic Equity of Survivors Project (REEP)

Seeks to remedy the systemic inequalities facing survivors of color that impair their access to economic justice.

- Coalition building with diverse anti-poverty, race equity, and violence against women practitioners.
- Engage communities in identifying systemic barriers.
- Implementing legal and policy approaches that facilitate access to economic opportunity for survivors of color.

Partners Include:
THANK YOU!

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