

# **Escape is Half the Battle: National Domestic Violence Poll Reveals Access to Money is Next Key Hurdle**

## ***The Allstate Foundation Releases New Poll Findings and Financial Tips to Help Domestic Violence Survivors Achieve Economic Independence***

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CHICAGO, June 1 /PRNewswire/ – The Allstate Foundation has released the findings of its National Poll on Domestic Violence, which was conducted to gauge public awareness of the issue and reveal how Americans view domestic violence. The findings will be used to help the Foundation provide programming for its Domestic Violence Program, which focuses on the financial concerns of domestic violence survivors.

Key findings of the national poll include:

- ▶ 83% of respondents strongly agreed that domestic violence affects people in all racial, ethnic, educational, social and economic backgrounds.
- ▶ Approximately six out of ten respondents 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.
- ▶ More than a quarter (28%) of respondents thought that finding access to money or income to support the victim and/or children was the most difficult problem faced by those leaving an abusive situation, ranking second only to fear that the abuser would find the victim.
- ▶ The majority of respondents reported that programs to help with financial challenges would be very valuable to domestic violence victims.
  - Three quarters (75%) thought emergency funds would be very valuable.

- Two thirds (67%) thought education and job training would be very valuable.
- More than half (54%) thought training to help with financial challenges would be very valuable.

The poll is part of The Allstate Foundation Domestic Violence Program, which works in partnership with the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) Fund to provide comprehensive programming and resources to help survivors connect to resources that will help them live more safe and secure lives.

“Allstate is dedicated to helping domestic violence survivors feel better protected today and prepared for the future,” said Angela Cobb, program manager, The Allstate Foundation. “Our national poll shows us just how pervasive domestic violence is in the United States – and how important it is to empower these survivors economically.”

In addition to releasing the poll findings, The Allstate Foundation also offers six tips for domestic violence victims and survivors looking to secure their financial future:

1. Plan for your safety by contacting your local domestic violence program to discuss your options and learn about the community resources you can access for support (i.e., emergency assistance funds, shelter, utility assistance, rent assistance, public benefits, and affordable housing). To locate a program in your community, contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline 800-799-SAFE. Language translation is available.
2. Obtain a copy of your credit report and monitor your credit often. Most financial institutions provide credit monitoring services such as Privacy Guard at low costs. You can get a copy of your credit report by contacting one of the three credit bureaus. Equifax: 1-800-685-1111 or <http://www.equifax.com>; Experian: 1-866-966-1067 or <http://www.experian.com>; TransUnion: 1-877-680-7275 or <http://www.transunion.com>; FREE Annual Credit Report <http://www.annualcreditreport.com>, or 1-877-322-8228.
3. Open a post office box for mail and any financial information you may receive before you leave or immediately after you leave an abusive situation. You can obtain P.O. boxes from the United States Post Office or vendors such as Parcel Plus, Mail Boxes Etc., or the UPS Store.
4. Call your utility companies, wireless telephone service and financial institutions to secure your private information with special pin codes and passwords. Be sure to do the same on all new credit, wireless or utility accounts. Ask these companies to use identifiers other than your Social Security Number, date of birth or mother’s maiden name to authenticate your identity.
5. Change all ATM and debit card pin codes, online banking passwords and online investing passwords. Be sure to change the password on your e-mail account as well.
6. Be sure to make necessary changes to your insurance plans, will or trust beneficiaries to appoint a new person if your partner is your current designee.

“Survivors of domestic violence often face myriad financial challenges that prevent them from escaping abusive situations,” said Gretta Gardner, NNEDV Fund program manager. “Whether we’re helping survivors to find safe shelter, become financially literate, repair damaged credit, or participate in a job training program, The Allstate Foundation Domestic Violence Program will help domestic violence survivors prepare for futures of economic autonomy and opportunity.”

The Allstate Foundation conducted the National Poll on Domestic Violence in December 2005 and January 2006. The poll was designed and administered by Murphy Marketing Research, with input from the NNEDV Fund. More than 1,000 men and women of all races, ethnicities, income and education levels participated in the poll. Response quotas closely mirrored the ethnic breakdown of the current U.S. population – 16% African-American, 14% Hispanic and 6% Asian.

#### About The Allstate Foundation

Established in 1952, The Allstate Foundation is an independent, charitable organization made possible by subsidiaries of The Allstate Corporation. Allstate and The Allstate Foundation sponsor community initiatives to promote “safe and vital communities”; “tolerance, inclusion, and diversity”; and “economic empowerment.” The Allstate Foundation believes in the financial potential of every individual and in helping America’s families achieve their American dream. For additional information, visit <http://www.allstate.com/foundation>.

Source: The Allstate Foundation