

NEW YORK STATE OFFICE FOR THE PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

OPDV Bulletin/Winter 2011

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From the Executive Director



It's hard to believe we are beginning 2011, but we are, and happy new year to all. A heartfelt thanks from our office to all of the domestic violence providers, private citizens, companies, and state partners who helped make the "Shine the Light" campaign the most impactful one so far. More than 270 organizations participated, representing 50 counties – it was hard not to see something purple in October. Congratulations to all for their hard work – the photos on our [page on Facebook](#) show the breadth of participation, and hopefully will show victims and survivors how many people stand ready to support them.

Since it is the New Year, this Bulletin has a section on tax issues specific to domestic violence victims. We also highlight a key issue for victims – housing. As we know, domestic violence is an issue that reaches not only into criminal justice, but into housing, tax, child welfare, health – you name it, there's an impact! We work to address many of these issues in our quarterly Bulletin. If there is a domestic violence-related topic you would like featured, please e-mail suggestions to opdvbulletin@opdv.state.ny.us.

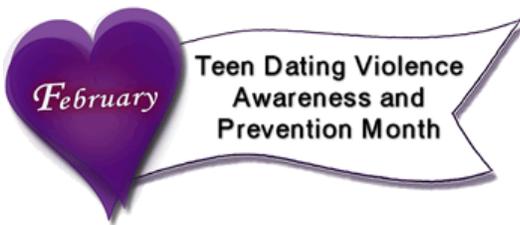
There are two important public awareness events to start off the New Year. January is Stalking Awareness Month and February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month. Please take the opportunity to highlight these important issues in your work. Keep an eye out for more from us about our plans to raise awareness about dating violence among young people starting in February!

As always, many thanks for your tireless commitment to keeping people safe in their intimate relationships. Let's make 2011 the safest year we've seen so far!

Amy Barasch
Executive Director



For more information on stalking, visit www.opdv.state.ny.us/professionals/criminal_justice/stalking.html



Stay tuned for more information on OPDV's new efforts to address dating violence.

Domestic Violence and Tax Issues

We all have to file taxes, including victims of domestic violence. For them, this requirement can present particular challenges, including giving the abuser an opportunity to further abuse the victim. The safety implications of decisions like filing jointly vs. separately, claiming children as dependents, and inaccurate returns that may have been filed in the past need to be considered.

To learn more about domestic violence and tax issues, see the Q&A on page 3.

Did you know...

About 25% of homeless women are homeless mainly because of violence.¹

¹ National Institute of Justice 2005 Experience of Violence in Lives of Homeless Women.

Domestic Violence and Housing

Carol Corden, Executive Director, New Destiny Housing

Domestic violence survivors in shelter must find permanent housing for their families. But the next step after shelter is challenging. Throughout New York State, decent affordable housing is difficult to find and support services for survivors in permanent housing are inadequate.

Residents of New York State's domestic violence shelter system have diverse needs. Some require a temporary sanctuary before moving on with their lives. Others need continuing support as they move toward self-sufficiency. For still others, prolonged or severe abuse may have caused debilitating problems requiring long-term support services. How can the diverse housing needs of domestic violence survivors best be met?

Promising models exist for housing survivors while promoting and supporting long-term stability and safety.

Some New York State domestic violence service providers have developed **semi-perm housing with residential services** that serves as a bridge between shelter and permanent housing. The [YWCA of Niagara](#) operates Carolyn's House, a renovated building that provides transitional housing and services for two years to nineteen homeless women (many of whom are domestic violence survivors) and their children. Casa Sandra, operated by [VIP](#) in New York City, houses 15 families coming directly from domestic violence shelters in apartments with on-site services for up to five years. Staff members in both programs help residents achieve their long-term goals by providing domestic violence counseling, children's services, case management, job readiness, and workshops on financial planning.

Marcello Manor in New York City, operated by [New Destiny Housing](#), provides **permanent housing with on-site services** for survivors leaving the shelter system. This 38-apartment project has a 50% set-aside for domestic violence survivors; the remaining apartments are for low-income households. The mixed population model is designed to be non-stigmatizing: the project looks like other apartment buildings on the block. Voluntary services—including financial literacy, case management, and job readiness—are tailored to the needs of domestic violence survivors but are available to everyone in the building.

Development of these projects required multiple public funding sources (e.g., NYS's Homeless Housing Assistance Program (HHAP), low-income housing tax credits from the State, and HUD's Supportive Housing Program) as well as private grants (see inset).

A third model, **nonresidential services**, supports survivors leaving shelter who find apartments. [Sanctuary for Families](#) recently completed a pilot in New York City called "My Door," which provided domestic violence counseling and workforce development to survivors in permanent housing. "My Door" recognized that women are ready to move on from shelter, but that finding themselves on their own in a new community without support is often daunting. It also responded to the need for finding living-wage jobs to cover rent after short-term rental subsidies end.

These models provide valuable lessons in how to break the cycle of violence. However, the barriers to replicating them involve not only scarce capital and operating funding but also the marginalization of domestic violence survivors as a group. The State's Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance and Homes and Community Renewal are among the only public agencies that recognize low-income homeless domestic violence survivors as a priority population for housing and services. The budget for Supportive Housing for Families and Young Adults (SHFYA), which supports services for families in permanent housing, has been cut in half, and no dedicated funding exists for residential services for domestic violence survivors in permanent housing. Finally, scarce long-term rental subsidies statewide creates a disincentive to developers interested in providing service-enriched permanent housing for low-income survivors.

Finding affordable, safe housing remains a top issue for women and children using the New York State domestic violence shelter system. More capital and service funding must be secured and it is vital that domestic violence survivors are not excluded from programs like NY/NY III (the New York State/New York City agreement to develop supportive housing for homeless households) and Continuum of Care plans (locally-developed strategies for addressing the housing and service needs of the homeless that are required to apply for HUD funding).

Permanent housing combined with services is key to keeping survivors safe from further abuse. Without it, too many women are forced to make choices that perpetuate domestic violence, poverty, and instability.

Some Capital Funding Sources for Semi-Perm and Permanent Housing

[NYS Homeless Housing Assistance Program:](#)

\$30MM available annually; priority to homeless domestic violence survivors; administered by Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

[NYS Low-Income Housing Tax Credits:](#)

annual RFP; \$220,000/unit max; administered by Homes and Community Renewal

[NYS Housing Trust Fund:](#)

annual RFP; \$2MM max per project; administered by Homes and Community Renewal

[NYS Historic Tax Credits:](#) administered by the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation

[HUD Supportive Housing Program:](#) up to \$400,000; project must support locality's Continuum of Care Plan

[Federal Home Loan Bank of New York](#)

[Affordable Housing Program:](#) RFPs twice a year; \$20,000/unit max; developer must partner with a member bank

PURPLE NEW YORK

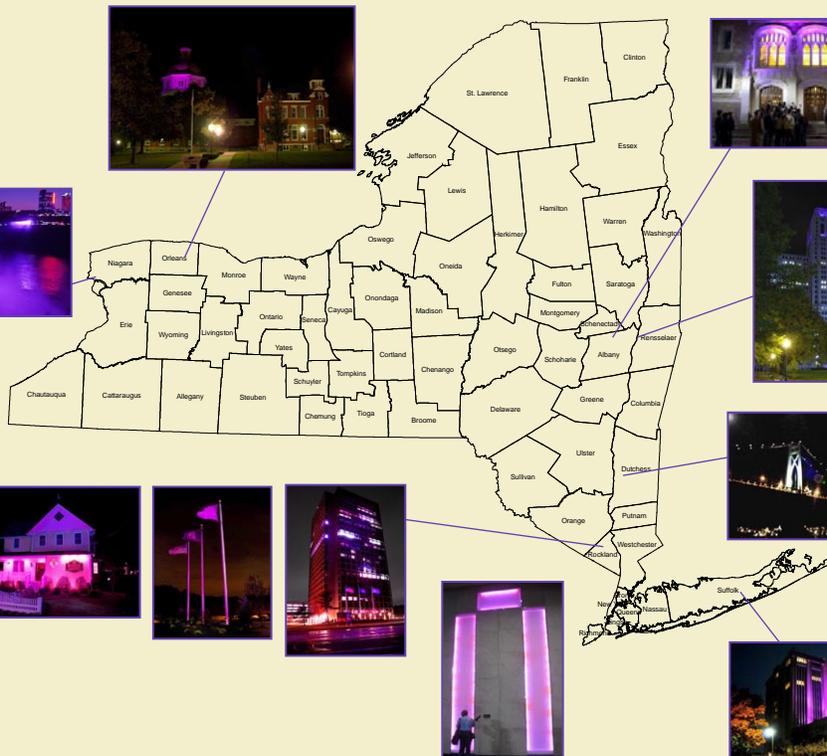
OCTOBER 2010

Last October, the New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV) had the honor and privilege of partnering with approximately 270 different entities across New York State – non-profit service providers, private businesses, churches, universities, tourist attractions, chambers of commerce, state, county and local government agencies, law enforcement, task forces and coalitions, hotels, entertainers, and retail stores – all of which joined with domestic violence survivors and elected officials to “show their purple” during Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Purple is the color chosen to help spread awareness of domestic violence.

With the number of 2010 participants more than double that of 2009, OPDV is excited to expand this effort every year, until everyone who sees purple understands why and vows to do their part to put an end to domestic violence. Show Your Purple in 2011!



“SHINE THE LIGHT ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE” IN NEW YORK STATE



Prominent buildings and structures across the State of New York were bathed in purple during October. This is a small representation. See the box on the next page for a full list of partners and visit the [Shine the Light Album](#) on OPDV's page on Facebook for more photos.



PURPLE PARTNERS

OCTOBER 2010

1. A New Hope Center, Tioga Co.
2. ABLE Club at Fulton Montgomery Community College, Fulton Co.
3. ACCORD Corp., Allegany Co.
4. Affinity Health Plan, Bronx Co.
5. AIDS Community Services, Erie Co.
6. Albany All-Stars Roller Derby
7. Albany ASAP Daisies
8. Albany City Domestic Violence Court
9. Albany, City of
10. Albany County Coalition Against Domestic Abuse (ACCADA)
11. Albany Co. Crime Victims & Sexual Assault Center
12. Albany County Department of Social Services
13. Albany County District Attorney David Soares
14. Albany County Probation Department
15. Albany County Sheriff
16. Albany Domestic Violence Court
17. Albany Law School
18. Albany Mayor Gerald D. Jennings
19. Albany Police Department
20. Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention Council Saratoga Co.
21. Alfred University, Allegany Co.
22. Alianza Dominicana, Inc./Project Faith, New York Co.
23. Alpha Beta NYC Alumnae Chapter of Omega Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., New York Co.
24. American Business Women's Ass'n of WNY, Erie Co.
25. Arbor Development, Steuben Co.
26. Assemblyman Bob Reilly, Saratoga Co.
27. Auburn Memorial Hospital, Cayuga Co.
28. Auburn Police Department, Cayuga Co.
29. Baby Center.com
30. Baker Victory Services, Erie Co.
31. Bethlehem Police Department, Albany Co.
32. BFNC (Buffalo Federation of Neighborhood Centers)/CASH (Creating Assets, Savings, and Hope) Hope Center, Erie Co.
33. Bonacio Construction, Saratoga Co.
34. Boston Properties/601 Lexington Avenue (former Citicorp Center), New York Co.
35. Bountiful Bread, Albany Co.
36. Brighter Tomorrows, Suffolk Co.
37. Bronx Chamber of Commerce
38. Broome Community College, Broome Co.
39. Buffalo Psychiatric Center, Erie Co.
40. Buffalo Public School Office of Student Support Services and Attendance Offices, Erie Co.
41. Buffalo State College, Erie Co.
42. CAPC (Community Action for Pre-Natal Care), Erie Co.
43. Capital District Gay and Lesbian Community Council, Albany Co.
44. Catholic Charities - Cheektowaga Office, Erie Co.
45. Catholic Charities - Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Erie Co.
46. Catholic Charities- Kenmore Office, Erie Co.
47. Catholic Charities Main Office, Erie Co.
48. Catholic Charities of Chenango County
49. Catholic Charities of Fulton and Montgomery Cos.
50. Catholic Charities of Schoharie County
51. Catholic Charities Service Corps, Erie Co.
52. Cayuga Community College
53. Cayuga Co. Administrator Thomas Squires
54. Cayuga County Sheriff's Benevolent Association
55. Cayuga/Seneca Community Action Agency, Domestic Violence Intervention Prog., Cayuga Co.
56. Central Referral Service, Erie Co.
57. Child & Family Services (CFS) Haven House, Erie Co.
58. CFS Mary Talbert Center, Erie Co.
59. CFS Sex Offender Management Program, Erie Co.
60. Chances & Changes, Inc., Livingston Co.
61. Chautauqua County Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
62. Cheektowaga Court and Police Department (non-uniform), including Court Clerks, Erie Co.
63. Gioffi, Slezak & Wildgrube Law Firm, Albany Co.
64. Girdles, Albany Co.
65. Clarkstown Supervisor Alex Gromack and town employees, Rockland Co.
66. Coeymans Police Department, Albany Co.
67. Cohoes Police Department, Albany Co.
68. College of Saint Rose, incl. Public Safety Dept., Albany Co.
69. Colonie Police Department, Albany Co.
70. Columbia-Greene Domestic Violence Program, Columbia and Greene Cos.
71. Community Health Worker Program at Buffalo Prenatal-Perinatal Network, Erie Co.
72. Cornerstone Manor, Erie Co.
73. CR Wireless, Albany Co.
74. Crisis Services, Erie Co.
75. CUNY College of Staten Island, Richmond Co.
76. CUNY Queens College, Queens
77. Daily Grind, Albany Co.
78. Department of Housing & Urban Development- Individual, Erie Co.
79. Division of Child Support Enforcement (OTDA), New York City
80. Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Services of Saratoga County
81. Domestic Violence Program of Herkimer Co.
82. Domestic Violence Task Force, Orleans Co.
83. Downstate Medical Center (SUNY), Kings Co.
84. ECMC- Southern Erie Clinical Services, Erie Co.
85. Empire State College, Saratoga Co.
86. Endicott Mayor John Bertoni, Broome Co.
87. Endicott Police Department, Broome Co.
88. Equinox Community Services, Albany Co.
89. Erie Community College South Campus, Erie Co.
90. Erie Co. Coalition Against Family Violence
91. Erie Co. Department of Social Services
92. Erie County Dept. of Social Services - DV Liaisons
93. Erie County Medical Center Corporation (ECMCC)
94. Erie County Probation Department
95. Evoke Style, Albany Co.
96. Family and Friends of Liza Ellen Warner Association, Inc., Rensselaer Co.
97. Family Domestic Violence Services, a program of Family of Woodstock Inc., Ulster Co.
98. Family Justice Center, Erie Co.
99. Fierce Woman Found Ministries, Inc., Kings Co.
100. First Columbia/Hedley Park Place, Rensselaer Co.
101. Four Winds Hospital, Saratoga Co.
102. Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley (GAGV) Monroe Co.
103. Gender Fairness Committee of the 3rd Judicial District, Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Schoharie, Sullivan, Ulster Cos.
104. Genesee County Courts Facility, Genesee Co.
105. Gerard Place, Erie Co.
106. Green Island Police Department, Albany Co.
107. Guilderland Police Department, Albany Co.
108. HAC Family Services Inc., Bronx
109. Hilton Garden Inn of Staten Island/Lorenzo's Restaurant, Richmond Co.
110. HOME, Inc., Erie Co.
111. Hot Yoga Saratoga, Saratoga Co.
112. Hutchinson Metro Center, Bronx
113. In Our Own Voices, Albany Co.
114. International Institute of Buffalo, Erie Co.
115. It's Only Natural, Albany Co.
116. Ithaca PAVE: Promoting Awareness Victim Empowerment, Tompkins County
117. Jericho Road, Kings Co.
118. John Jay College Women's Center, New York
119. Jose Peralta, State Senator, Queens
120. Joy Lucas, DVM, Saratoga Co.
121. Kathleen Mary House, Erie Co.
122. Lark St Business Improvement District, Albany Co.
123. Legal Aid Society of Rochester, Monroe Co.
124. Literacy Orange, Orange Co.
125. Lutheran Family Health Center Network, Kings Co.
126. Mayor's Office to Combat DV, NYC
127. Maxwell Property Management, Saratoga Co.
128. McDonald's in Cobleskill, Schoharie Co.
129. McGeary's Pub, Albany Co.
130. Mechanicville Domestic Violence Advocacy Program, Saratoga Co.
131. Menands Police Department, Albany Co.
132. Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty, NYC
133. Metropolitan Transit Authority, NYC
134. Mohawk & Hudson River Humane Society, Albany Co.
135. Moving Violations Motorcycle Club, Saratoga Co.
136. My Sisters' Place, Westchester Co.
137. Nation to Nation Networking Ltd., NYC
138. Neighborhood Legal Services-Individual, Erie Co.
139. New Bethel Community Church of God in Christ, Schenectady Co.
140. New York Asian Women's Center, NYC
141. New York Power Authority
142. New York State Police
143. Niagara Falls, Niagara Co.
144. Nicotra Group Corporate Park, Richmond Co.
145. Northern Westchester Shelter, Westchester Co.
146. NYC Transit Authority
147. NYPD 123rd precinct, Richmond Co.
148. NYS Banking Department
149. NYS Board of Elections
150. NYS Bridge Authority (Mid-Hudson Bridge), Ulster & Dutchess Cos.
151. NYS Chief Information Officer/Off. for Technology
152. NYS College of Ceramics at Alfred, Allegany
153. NYS Commission on Public Integrity
154. NYS Consumer Protection Board
155. NYS Council on Children and Families
156. NYS Department of Civil Service
157. NYS Department of Economic Development
158. NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
159. NYS Department of Public Service
160. NYS Department of Transportation
161. NYS Department of Health
162. NYS Department of Taxation & Finance
163. NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services
164. NYS Division of Lottery
165. NYS Division of Parole, statewide
166. NYS Division of Parole, Central Office, Albany
167. NYS Empire State Development Corporation
168. NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation Albany Co.
169. NYS Foundation for Science, Technology and Innovation
170. NYS Insurance Fund
171. NYS Office for People With Developmental Disabilities, Albany
172. NYS Office for Technology
173. NYS Office for the Aging, Albany Co.
174. NYS Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence
175. NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services
176. NYS Office of Children and Family Services
177. NYS Office of General Services (Alfred E Smith Building), Albany Co.
178. NYS Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance, Bureau of Training and Management Analysis, Albany Co.
179. NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, Albany Co.
180. NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (Office of Fair Hearings), Albany Co.
181. NYS Office of the Welfare Inspector General
182. NYS Olympic Regional Development Authority, Essex Co.
183. NYS Quality of Care and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities
184. NYS Racing & Wagering Board
185. NYS Young Democrats
186. OP Music House, Inc., Erie Co.
187. Orchard Park Presbyterian Church, Erie Co.
188. Orleans County Building and Grounds Crew
189. Orleans County Legislature
190. Oswego County Opportunities, Inc. Services to Aid Families
191. Palace Theater, Albany Co.
192. Partnership for Safe Children, Saratoga Co.
193. Peace Bridge, Erie Co.
194. Peaches Café, Albany Co.
195. Peachtree Daycare, Warren Co.
196. Perinatal Network of Monroe County - Healthy Start Rochester
197. The Prevention Council, Saratoga Co.
198. Private Practice, Erie Co.
199. Public Employer Risk Management Association (PERMA), Albany Co.
200. Queens Borough President Helen Marshall
201. Queens Children Psychiatric Center (NYS OMH)
202. Regional Food Bank of NENY, Albany Co.
203. Remarkable Finish, Saratoga Co.
204. Rensselaer County Probation Department
205. Richmond Co. District Attorney Daniel M. Donovan, Jr.
206. Rockland County Community College
207. Rockland County Executive C. Scott Vanderhoef
208. Rockland Family Shelter
209. Rockland Family Shelter Resource Council
210. Roosevelt Island Operating Corp., NYC
211. Safe Homes of Orange County
212. Safe Passage Domestic Violence Program, Sullivan Co.
213. Sagamore Children's Psychiatric Center (NYS OMH), Suffolk Co.
214. Saratoga County District Attorney Jim Murphy
215. Saratoga National Bank
216. Saratoga Rowing Association
217. Saratoga Soundtrack Chorus
218. Saratoga Springs Yoga
219. Services to Aid Families, Oswego Co.
220. Shawangunk Correctional Facility, NYS Dept of Correctional Services, Ulster Co.
221. Siena College, incl. Public Safety, Albany Co.
222. Silverstein Properties/7 World Trade Center, NYC
223. Skidmore College Golf, Saratoga Co.
224. Soroptimist International of Saratoga County
225. SOS Shelter, Broome Co.
226. South Beach Psychiatric Center (NYS OMH), Richmond Co.
227. Southern Saratoga Chamber's Women in Business Committee, Saratoga Co.
228. Stewart's Shops, Saratoga Co.
229. St. Lawrence Valley Renewal House, St. Lawrence
230. STOP Domestic Violence/BHNS, Clinton Co.
231. Student Activists Ending Dating Abuse (SAEDA), the student group of RFS, Rockland Co.
232. Stuyvesant Plaza, Albany Co.
233. Suffolk County Executive Office -H. Lee Dennison Building, Suffolk Co.
234. SUNY Cobleskill Wellness Center, Schoharie Co.
235. SUNY Genesee, Livingston Co.
236. SUNY Purchase, Westchester Co.
237. SUNY Rockland Community College, Rockland Co.
238. SUNY Stonybrook, Suffolk Co.
239. Tech Valley NYS Women Inc., Saratoga Co.
240. The Legal Project, Albany Co.
241. The Salvation Army Safehouse, Chemung Co.
242. Tri-Main Building, Erie Co.
243. Trustco Bank (Stuyvesant Plaza Branch), Albany Co.
244. Tully Rincey PLLC, Albany Co.
245. UB (SUNY, University at Buffalo), DV Task Force, Erie Co.
246. UB, Research Institute on Addictions, Erie Co.
247. UB, SBI Health Education, Erie Co.
248. UB, Sub Board, Erie Co.
249. UB, Take Back The Night, Erie Co.
250. Ulster County Executive Michael Hein
251. Unified Court System, Fourth Judicial District Fulton, Montgomery, Hamilton, Washington, Warren, Saratoga, Schenectady, Essex, Clinton, St. Lawrence Cos.
252. Unified Court System, Third Judicial District Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Schoharie, Sullivan, Ulster Cos.
253. Unified Court System, Twelfth Judicial District, Bronx Co.
254. Union Graduate College, Schenectady Co.
255. Union, Town of, Broome Co.
256. United Way of Buffalo, Erie Co.
257. Unity House, Rensselaer Co.
258. University at Albany Police Department, Albany Co.
259. University Heights Public Safety Department (providing security for Albany Law School, Albany Coll. of Pharmacy and Sage), Albany Co.
260. Upstate Animal Medical Center, Saratoga Co.
261. Vera House, Inc., Onondaga Co.
262. Victims Assistance Center of Jefferson Co., Inc.
263. Victims of Violence/Liberty Resources Inc., Madison Co.
264. Violence Intervention Program, Otsego Co.
265. Violence Intervention Program, Inc. (VIP), Bronx Co.
266. Washbourne House/Family of Woodstock, Ulster Co.
267. Wende Correctional Facility (Diversity Management Committee), Erie Co.
268. West End Salon, Erie Co.
269. WNED, Erie Co.
270. Women and Work, Queens
271. World of Women Staten Island, Richmond Co.
272. YWCA of Northeastern NY, Schenectady Co.
273. YWCA Tonawanda Domestic Violence Pgm., Niagara Co.
274. YWCA's Aid to Victims of Violence, Cortland Co.

Visit OPDV's page on Facebook to see sample photos. The full Gallery and descriptions will be available on the [OPDV website](#) in early spring 2011. Participation materials for Shine the Light in 2011 will be available by early summer. Don't miss out!

Q&A About Domestic Violence and Tax Issues



This Q&A was conducted with Laura A. Russell, Esq., Supervising Attorney, Family/Domestic Violence Unit, The Legal Aid Society, Bronx Neighborhood Office

Q: What are some examples of how an abuser can utilize the tax system to further abuse a victim?

A: While partners are married, many abusers will sign the victim's name to joint tax returns. In those returns, victim's income may not be accurate. This could lead to problems, especially if the victim is not a citizen and will be applying for citizenship in the future, as accurate filing of returns is a question for immigration. Also, many abusers, whether married to the victim or not, will prepare fraudulent tax returns and either force their victims to sign the return or "e" file the returns, so no signature is recorded with the IRS.

When parties are not married but have children in common, many non-custodial abusers will falsely claim the child or children (even step children). They do this by filing their tax returns before the survivor. As the IRS does not have any information on who should claim the dependent exemption, they allow the exemption to be claimed. When the survivor goes to "e" file, she is denied the exemption because the abuser has already received it.

Q: How can victims protect themselves from these types of abuses?

A: The best protection for a victim is to file her tax returns and to file them as soon as possible. If she is the custodial parent, she should file and claim the children, unless there is a prior agreement regarding claiming the dependent exemption.

The survivor should keep all documents showing she has been the custodial parent if there is no order stating she has physical custody. These documents will assist her in proving to the tax authorities that she has the right to claim her children. Some documents proving this include school or medical documents showing the address of the child as the survivor's address.

If the victim has been forced to file tax returns, she should obtain a copy of her taxes, which can be obtained through the IRS for a fee (www.irs.gov). State returns can also be obtained through the New York State Department of Taxation website, which is www.tax.state.ny.us. She may need to amend her tax returns.

Q: Are there any laws that can help a victim with some of these challenges?

A: The Internal Revenue Code, Section 151 and 152 discuss the dependency exemption in detail. The survivor who has physical custody of the child always has the right to claim the child unless the right is given away in a stipulation or order.

The married victim also has the right to file apart from her abuser/husband, regardless of whether she is physically separated or not. Of course, she can only file one return, so if she is not safe filing this way, she should not.

If the survivor has filed taxes with

the abuser and there is a tax debt owed, she might be able to file Innocent Spouse Relief. This relief must be filed for both federal and state tax returns if money is owed to both tax agencies. The relief is available to allow the survivor the ability to only pay back taxes on her actual income. This is usually done simultaneously with the filing of any amended return. A survivor should seek the advice of an attorney prior to filing for this relief. Also, the abuser will know the survivor has filed for this relief, as the IRS must inform them.

See more about [Innocent Spouse Relief](#).

Q: Are there resources available to assist victims in filing taxes?

A: Low-to moderate-income taxpayers can go to Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites, sometimes called Low Income Taxpayer Clinics, for free tax help. VITA sites can be found all over the country and are usually located in convenient places like community or neighborhood centers, libraries, schools, or shopping malls. Sites are staffed by competent trained volunteer tax advocates who, in addition to basic tax preparation, are also familiar with issues specific to low income taxpayers, such as Earned Income Tax credits and Child Tax credits. A list of VITA sites can be found at <http://www.irs.gov/individuals/article/0,,id=219171,00.html> or by calling 1-800-906-9887.



Legislative Update: US House and Senate Reauthorizes the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act



On December 20, 2010 President Obama signed the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) as part of the

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). FVPSA is the only dedicated federal funding source for domestic violence shelters and services, supporting emergency shelters, crisis hotlines, counseling and advocacy, primary and secondary prevention, legal assistance, and programs for underserved communities. The reauthorization builds upon FVPSA's core strengths and includes critical improvements for the National Domestic Violence Hotline, initiatives dealing with teen dating violence, services for US territories, and programs helping children who witness violence. The Child

Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) continues important work in addressing child abuse, neglect and sexual violence, and adds an important cross-coordination component to improve services for both victims of child abuse/maltreatment and families that are experiencing domestic violence.

Many domestic violence programs face severe public and private funding cuts, threatening reductions in services. Funds provided by FVPSA's current reauthorization will help programs continue to provide lifesaving services to victims of domestic violence and their families.

City of Albany First Municipality to Model NYS Domestic Violence and the Workplace Program

On October 22, 2007, Governor Eliot Spitzer signed Executive Order #19 (EO #19) mandating that every State agency adopt a Domestic Violence and the Workplace Policy. This initiative is managed by the New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV). Within eighteen months, all agencies were in compliance with the EO and in 2009, the Domestic Violence and the Workplace Report to the Governor was published. <http://www.opdv.state.ny.us/professionals/workplace/workplacereport09.pdf>

In early 2010, OPDV approached the City of Albany with the idea of creating a pilot program for a municipality based on the successful New York

State model. Mayor Gerald Jennings and his staff met with OPDV, reviewed the supporting materials, and committed to the project. OPDV then met with City administrators and department heads, and legal and union representatives to explain the program and its benefits. The City of Albany adopted the State policy with minimal changes. OPDV then conducted a full-day training for City personnel who had been identified to provide information and referrals to staff who request it.

In 2009, discussions began between OPDV and the City of Philadelphia Department of Health, Environmental Health Services. After reviewing programs around the country, they asked OPDV to provide a Domestic Violence and the Workplace

training as a pilot project for the City. The training was delivered in September 2010 and the City is now creating its policy.

OPDV is available to provide technical assistance to municipalities interested in developing a Domestic Violence and the Workplace Policy. E-mail opdvworkplace@opdv.state.ny.us for assistance.



Albany City Hall

Police Implement Home Visiting Program

Eleven police departments in New York State have received grants aimed to enhance their response to domestic violence. The \$25,000 one-time grants were awarded by the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) and are to be used to allow police officers to conduct follow up home visits to homes where they have responded to domestic incident calls. DCJS chose the participating jurisdictions based on analysis of domestic violence crime statistics.

The program, modeled after a similar initiative in New York City, will consist of officers returning to select homes

sometime after a domestic incident call to follow up on that case. Officers will use these visits to enhance the criminal investigation and to ensure that the victims have the information they need to seek help and access services. For example, officers will have an opportunity to collect evidence that wasn't collected during the original call and arrest the offender if they are at the home in violation of an order of protection. They will also be able to speak more with the victim and help get her connected to local domestic violence service providers, should she request such assistance.

As part of the grant, officers have been trained by OPDV and they are developing

written policies, which will ultimately be available as models for other departments. OPDV and DCJS are providing technical assistance to departments and are encouraging them to collaborate with others in their community, including domestic violence advocates and district attorneys' offices.

DCJS hopes that this program spreads across New York State in an effort to enhance offender accountability and victim safety. For more information on this program, email: opdvcriminaljustice@opdv.state.ny.us.

NYS Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence www.opdv.state.ny.us

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