

Information About OVW's Financial Assistance for Victims Survey

Updated August 2025

Purpose of the survey

The Office on Violence Against Women (OVW)'s Congressional Appropriations for FYs 2023 and 2024 include a combined \$8,000,000 for "an initiative to provide financial assistance to victims, including evaluating the effectiveness of funded projects."¹ OVW issued grant awards under this initiative early in calendar year 2025, supporting flexible financial assistance programming for victims of domestic/dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The planned data collection is a short, optional survey that grant recipients under the Financial Assistance for Victims Program will make available to victims who receive flexible financial assistance. Grantees will include aggregated survey results in their twice-annual performance reports submitted to OVW. This data will be used to inform future programming and share information to stakeholders, including Congress, about the effectiveness of the OVW Financial Assistance for Victims Program.

OVW anticipates the survey will take about 10 minutes to complete.

Questions the survey aims to answer

- What is the impact of flexible financial assistance on victims?
- What financial needs and economic impacts of domestic/dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking do victims report?
- How does flexible financial assistance impact victims? What else do they need?

Survey questions under consideration

Item text

Which, if any, factors limited or impacted your ability to pursue safety, justice, and healing?

This might look like: leaving an abusive relationship, going to the hospital, going to therapy, telling a friend, leaving an unsafe work environment, or reporting to law enforcement.

Response format/options

(Select all that apply)

- I didn't have a job
- I was unable to support myself on my income
- I didn't have another place to live or was unable to afford housing
- I had no money to physically leave
- I wouldn't have had health insurance coverage without my partner
- My credit was too low to get the resources that I needed
- I wouldn't have been able to pay for my schooling or job training

¹ See Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, Pub. L. No. 117-328, 136 Stat. 4459, 4532 and Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024, Pub. L. No. 118-42, 138 Stat. 25, 143

- I would have had problems affording childcare or meeting my children's needs
- I would not have had access to transportation
- Getting help from the justice and courts system was too costly
- I was worried I would lose my job
- I was unable to meet my basic needs
- Other (please specify) _____
- None of the above
- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer

Item text

We would like to know if you experienced any of the actions listed below from any current or former partner or partners.

Has a partner ever kept you from having access to a job, money, or other financial resources?

- Yes
- No

IF YES, how often did this happen in the past 12 months?

- Not in the past 12 months
- Once
- A few times
- Monthly
- Weekly
- Daily/almost daily

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Item text

During your experience with sexual violence, domestic/dating violence, or stalking, did you incur any of the following costs? If so, please estimate the cost.

Response format/options

(Select all that apply and give your best estimate in USD (\$) of the costs for each).

Relocation and housing (including rental deposits, moving fees, transportation, fixing broken locks, and other related costs). About how much did you spend on relocation?

- _____ More than \$1 but less than \$500
- _____ \$500-\$999
- _____ \$1,000-\$1,999
- _____ \$2,000-\$5,000
- _____ More than \$5,000

Court and justice related costs, such as attorney fees or lost time at work to get a protective order. About how much did you spend on court and justice related costs?

- ☐ More than \$1 but less than \$1,000
- ☐ \$1,000-\$4,999
- ☐ \$5,000-\$9,999
- ☐ \$10,000--\$14,999
- ☐ \$15,000-\$19,999
- ☐ \$20,000-\$29,999
- ☐ \$30,000-\$50,000
- ☐ More than \$50,000

Financial services, such as services for credit repair or debt management. About how much did you spend on financial services?

- ☐ More than \$1 but less than \$500
- ☐ \$500-\$999
- ☐ \$1,000-\$1,999
- ☐ \$2,000-\$5,000
- ☐ More than \$5,000

Replacing damaged, destroyed, or stolen property such as a cell phone, car, computer, clothing, or jewelry. About how much did you spend replacing damaged, destroyed, or stolen items?

- ☐ More than \$1 but less than \$500
- ☐ \$500-\$999
- ☐ \$1,000-\$1,999
- ☐ \$2,000-\$5,000
- ☐ More than \$5,000

Out of pocket healthcare costs (counseling or therapy, rape kit, STI testing, pregnancy-related care, medical care related to experience with violence)

- ☐ More than \$1 but less than \$500
- ☐ \$500-\$999
- ☐ \$1,000-\$1,999
- ☐ \$2,000-\$5,000
- ☐ More than \$5,000

Replacing or accessing essential items related to experience with violence (purchasing food, toiletries, new clothing)

- ☐ More than \$1 but less than \$500
- ☐ \$500-\$999
- ☐ \$1,000-\$1,999
- ☐ \$2,000-\$5,000
- ☐ More than \$5,000

Other (please specify) _____ About how much did you spend? _____ dollars

- I did not experience any costs
- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer

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Item text

For what purposes did you receive flexible financial assistance, and about how much in each category?

Response format/options

- ☐ Childcare (formal or informal)
- ☐ Housing (including rent, security deposit or utilities)
- ☐ Transportation needs (including car repairs, gas, bus tickets, rideshares, plane tickets)
- ☐ Legal assistance (retainer, court fees etc.)
- ☐ Cash assistance
- ☐ Financial counseling
- ☐ Loans
- ☐ Debt payments/credit card fees
- ☐ Tuition for training/education
- ☐ Food
- ☐ Clothing
- ☐ Utilities
- ☐ Supplies (for school or work)
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

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Item text

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements about the flexible financial assistance you received.

Response format/options

Likert scale, agreement with statement. Item scoring is 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

- I felt respected while accessing flexible financial assistance.
- I was able to access flexible financial assistance in a timely manner.
- Flexible financial assistance helped me meet a safety need or access justice.
- Flexible financial assistance helped me address a basic need (housing, food, clothing, transportation, medical care).
- Flexible financial assistance helped me improve my long-term economic opportunities (such as attend school or keep a job).
- Flexible financial assistance made me feel more hopeful about the future.

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Item text

How do you prefer to receive flexible financial assistance?

Response format/options

- Direct cash payment to me
- Gift card/prepaid card
- Third party payment (vendor payment)
- The way I received flexible financial assistance worked for my needs
- Other (please describe)

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Item text

After receiving flexible financial assistance, I am more likely to return to this organization for further services.

Response format/options

Likert scale, agree to disagree

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Item text

Is there anything you want to share about your service experience receiving flexible financial assistance?

Response format/options

Open-ended, short answer

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Item text

What hopes and dreams for your financial future do you have, and what, if any, plans do you have for achieving them?

Response format/options

Open-ended, short answer

Reason for the item

Highlight the strengths and capacity of survivors/victims

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Item text

Is there anything else you wish to share about flexible financial assistance and its impact on you and/or your family?

Response format/options

Open-ended, short answer

Methodology

Proposed survey questions are based on thorough review of the survey instruments used in the following studies:

- Adams, A. & CSAJ. (2022). Economic Wellbeing Survey.
https://csaj.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/DV_EWB_Study-Service_Provider_Report_FINAL.pdf;
- Bomsta, H., & Sullivan, C. M. (2018). IPV survivors' perceptions of how a flexible funding housing intervention impacted their children. *Journal of family violence*, 33(6), 371-380.
- Hess, C., & Del Rosario, A. (2018). *Dreams Deferred: A Survey on the Impact of Intimate Partner Violence on Survivors' Education, Careers, and Economic Security*.
<https://ncvc.dspacedirect.org/handle/20.500.11990/1464>;
- FreeFrom (2022) Support Every Survivor.
<https://www.freefrom.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Support-Every-Survivor-PDF.pdf>;
- Ford-Gilboe, M., Wathen, C. N., Varcoe, C., MacMillan, H. L., Scott-Storey, K., Mantler, T., Hegarty, K., & Perrin, N. (2016). Development of a brief measure of intimate partner violence experiences: the Composite Abuse Scale (Revised)-Short Form (CASR-SF). *BMJ open*, 6(12), e012824. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2016-012824>;
- Kim, B.-K. E, Castro, A., West, S., Tandon, N., Ho, L., Nguyen, V. T., & Sharif, K. (2024, July). The American Guaranteed Income Studies: City of Los Angeles BIG:LEAP. University of Pennsylvania, Center for Guaranteed Income Research;
- Sullivan, C. M., Simmons, C., Guerrero, M., Farero, A., López-Zerón, G., Ayeni, O. O., ... & Fernandez, A. I. (2023). Domestic violence housing first model and association with survivors' housing stability, safety, and well-being over 2 years. *JAMA network open*, 6(6), e2320213-e2320213.