

# News for Women

## Financial Tips To Bring Freedom To Abuse Victims ㊦

(NAPSA)—For victims of domestic abuse, financial concerns can be a matter of life or death. Learning to manage personal finances can empower victims to gain their freedom.

According to the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) Fund, domestic abusers commonly use financial control—blocking access to money and/or other financial resources—to prevent victims from leaving an abusive situation.

The uncertainty that comes with leaving a home and financial security is difficult for domestic abuse victims to overcome. When a survivor does escape, she is often left with few financial resources or skills to make ends meet.

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### **Financial knowledge allows you to make choices to secure a better future for yourself and your family.**

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The Allstate Foundation Domestic Violence Program, in partnership with NNEDV Fund, has developed a program to give domestic abuse survivors the knowledge and skills needed for economic empowerment.

“Financial knowledge allows you to make choices—choices to secure a better future for yourself and your family,” says Barbara Stanny, an expert on women’s financial issues and a spokesperson for The Allstate Foundation Domestic Violence Program. She recommends these strategies for victims planning to leave abusive situations:

1. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at (800) 799-SAFE to find a domestic violence program where you can learn about resources, such as emergency assistance funds, shelter, public benefits and affordable housing.

2. Get a copy of your credit report and monitor your credit often. You can request a free copy at [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com) or (877) 322-8228. Most financial institutions also provide low-cost credit-monitoring services.

3. Open a post office box—and change your mailing address—for any financial information you may receive before or after you leave an abusive situation. You can get one from the U.S. Postal Service or vendors including Parcel Plus or the UPS Store.

4. Contact financial institutions and utility companies, including your cell-phone service, to secure your private information with new PIN codes and passwords. Change ATM and debit-card PIN codes and the passwords for e-mail and online banking accounts.

5. Make necessary changes to your insurance plans, will or trust beneficiaries, appointing a new person if your abuser used to be your designee.

From her own experience, Stanny cautions, “If you don’t deal with your money, your money will deal with you.”

For more information, visit [www.allstate.com/citizenship/foundation/econ-empowerment.aspx](http://www.allstate.com/citizenship/foundation/econ-empowerment.aspx).