

## Course Introduction

Survivors of intimate partner and sexual violence face significant economic barriers to independence and recovery. Unaffordable housing, unemployment and low wages make it difficult for survivors to be independent. Transitional housing programs are lifelines for survivors striving to rebuild their lives. The support survivors receive from transitional housing programs can help them recover from the physical and emotional trauma of abuse and provide them with a safe space to take the necessary steps to become economically secure.

While transitional housing programs have the capacity to help survivors achieve immediate safety and heal, they may lack the tools and resources necessary to meet all survivors' needs. A recent [survey](#) of survivors in domestic violence programs across five states found that survivors have significant economic needs that these programs are often unable to address. The list below identifies the top 10 unmet needs. Note that all but two are directly related to finances. Finding a job and job training, learning to drive and access to transportation, meeting one's basic expenses such as rent and utilities – these are all components of economic security and are essential to the safety and recovery of survivors.

## Meeting Survivors' Needs Through Non-Residential Domestic Violence Services & Supports: Results of a Multi-State Study

* Percentage who wanted this kind of help, but reported they <u>didn't get any</u>	%*	Overall % who wanted service
1. Help learning to drive.	28.9%	9.1%
2. Help with a job or job training.	28.5%	26.9%
3. Help paying rent/utilities.	25.5%	37.8%
4. Help with cash assistance/vouchers.	22.6%	36.8%
5. Help for the person who hurt me.	21.0%	31.8%
6. Help with transportation.	20.9%	29.4%
7. Help with financial matters, such as budgeting.	20.3%	33.4%
8. Help with child support.	19.1%	26.5%
9. Help with contacting family who are far away.	18.8%	19.0%
10. Help getting housing.	18.7%	35.9%

Addressing the economic needs of survivors, particularly the work of helping survivors get good jobs, may not be something advocates and case managers are trained to do. Furthermore, advocates and case managers may not be comfortable discussing the financial needs of survivors, especially if they themselves do not feel financially secure. This assistance, however, is exactly the support that survivors need and must be prioritized by transitional housing programs. Addressing survivors' financial needs and obtaining a job that enables survivors to support themselves and their families are necessary for their safety and future well-being. As trusted resources, advocates and case managers are ideal in helping to promote this work and support the economic needs of survivors.

### **About the Course**

To provide case managers and advocates with the information, tools and strategies needed to help survivors obtain jobs and greater levels of economic security, Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) has developed this 12-part Employment and Economic Advocacy curriculum. Topics covered in this course include how to match survivors' skills and abilities to good jobs in growing fields, write an effective resume and cover letter, how to recover the cost of economic abuse and how to support survivors with significant barriers to employment. The course is informed by WOW's decades of experience helping low-income women gain access to good jobs and build economic security.

For learners' convenience, the course content is available in both a downloadable text and web-based audio format. The 12-module course is divided into three units: *Pathways to Economic Security*, *Financial Recovery and Growth*, and *Addressing Barriers to Economic Security*. Each module is approximately 15 minutes in length and is followed by a short multiple choice quiz. Learners must receive a score of 80% or higher to pass and move on to the next module in the unit. The quiz can be retaken as many times as necessary. Completion of the first six modules, which constitute Unit One, is required to receive the course certificate. The remaining modules, divided into Units Two and Three, provide supplementary information. These are optional and can be taken individually and in any order. Passing quizzes at the end of these modules is not required to move forward.

Supplemental materials and a list of additional resources for each module can be found in the course folder. These materials include handouts, worksheets, factsheets and other tools that can be used in case management.

To access the course, go to: <http://wow.mrooms.net/> and login for free to enroll.

### **Course Content**

The first unit of the course, *Pathways to Economic Security*, consists of six modules and provides the foundation for those seeking to counsel survivors in finding and securing good jobs. The first module, titled "Defining Economic Security," will define families' actual income needs so that survivors can target jobs that will allow them to best make ends meet. The following module titled "Career Matters" reviews how to identify survivors' skills and abilities and match them with their career interests. With a career goal established, module three, "Preparing for Your Career," will instruct case managers on how to identify and connect survivors with the resources necessary to gain the knowledge, skills and

abilities required to enter these career paths. The next step survivors will take is looking for a job. Module four, “Effective Job Search Strategies,” describes the key tactics job seekers should employ to maximize their job search. Module five, “Applying for Jobs: Written Correspondence,” details the elements of successful resumes and cover letters. Finally, module six, “Applying for Jobs: Interviews,” outlines effective strategies that advocates can use to help survivors adequately prepare for job interviews and build their confidence.

Units Two and Three are optional. They provide case managers and advocates additional information and resources to help survivors achieve and overcome challenges to economic security. Unit Two, *Financial Recovery and Growth*, offers three modules that include information on how survivors can recover financial losses resulting from economic abuse and how they can build assets and savings. The final unit, *Addressing Barriers to Work*, looks at common challenges that survivors face in getting jobs and becoming financially independent. The first module offers strategies to overcome barriers to employment for survivors with a criminal history. The second module provides basic information on important workplace protections and worker’s rights so that advocates can help survivors recognize when their rights are being violated and know where they can turn for help. The final module highlights strategies that can help to address two common and significant barriers to work: limited access to transportation and to affordable and stable childcare arrangements.

After completing the course, case managers and advocates will possess the understanding and skills needed to provide survivors with basic employment and economic advocacy.

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