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New Research Outlines the Economic Barriers to Safety Faced by Stalking Victims

New briefing paper includes recommendations for policymakers, service providers, and law enforcement to promote economic security for stalking victims

Washington, DC—In recognition of National Stalking Awareness Month, the [Institute for Women's Policy Research](http://www.iwpr.org) (IWPR) released a [briefing paper](#) documenting the economic insecurity faced by victims of stalking, who represent over one in six women and more than one in 19 men in the United States. The paper reviews available social science and policy research on the economic impact of stalking and presents data on the economic disparities faced by specific populations, including victims of color, with Native American women especially likely to experience stalking (24.5 percent of American Indian/Alaska Native women).

Some of the groups most likely to experience stalking also have among the lowest levels of financial resources available to address the issue. Research finds that three in 10 stalking victims accrued out-of-pocket costs such as attorney fees, damage to property, child care costs, moving expenses, and changing phone numbers. Nearly one in four victims experienced property damage and 12.9 percent of victims incurred out-of-pocket costs exceeding \$1,000.

“Not only do stalking victims face steep financial hurdles to satisfactorily address the issue, but they can also face challenges at work, compounding the lack of economic resources available to them,” said Sarah Gonzalez Bocinski, Director of IWPR’s Economic Security for Survivors Project. “Victims face higher rates of on-the-job harassment, which result in lower productivity and lost wages. Many of these victims are forced to change their job entirely.”

Access to workplace protections, such as paid sick and safe days, can reduce the economic burden carried by stalking victims, but access to these protections vary by race and ethnicity. Hispanic women are much less likely than women from other major racial/ethnic groups to have access to paid sick days on their jobs, with less than half (49 percent) receiving any paid sick days from their employers.

Women, who are more likely to be victims of stalking than men, face persistent earnings inequality, with women of color facing the widest gaps. In 2015, Hispanic women earned 56 cents for every dollar earned by White men and Black women earned 61 cents. Native American women, who have the highest rates of stalking among women, experienced the largest decline in wages over the last decade, with their earnings falling more than three times as much as women’s overall (5.8 percent, compared with 1.6 percent).

The [briefing paper](#) concludes with recommendations for advocates and service providers, justice system professionals, community leaders, and policymakers to better address the economic security needs of stalking victims. Recommendations for service providers include assessing victims' economic needs during intake and case management; making economic and employment services more widely available to victims; and establishing partnerships between advocates, legal service providers, and workforce development programs. Recommendations for the justice system include training all sectors of the justice system on the intersection of economic security and victim safety and reducing economic barriers to participating in an investigation, prosecution, or trial. Policy recommendations include cultural competency training; paid sick, safe, and family leave; improved unemployment policies for those who experience job disruption; and policies that foster an inclusive environment for people with diverse gender identities.

“Without economic security, safety from stalking and other forms of violence will continue to elude many women,” Gonzalez Bocinski said. “By considering reducing costs faced by victims and removing barriers to opportunities that can lead to long-term economic stability, policymakers, service providers, and justice system professionals can better ensure stalking victims are able to seek safety and justice.”

The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization that conducts and communicates research to inspire public dialogue, shape policy, and improve the lives and opportunities of women of diverse backgrounds, circumstances, and experiences.



Find more information and resources on the [Economic Security for Survivors](#) project.>>

Find more national and state-level data on the economic, social, and health status of women at [statusofwomendata.org](#).>>

Find IWPR's resources on [paid leave and paid sick days](#) at IWPR.org>>

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