

Financial Empowerment Grants Aid Survivors of Domestic Violence

The Allstate Foundation Domestic Violence Program Awards \$625,000

NORTHBROOK, Ill., Nov. 20, 2009 / PRNewswire-FirstCall / -- In the face of today's economic crisis and skyrocketing jobless rates, The Allstate Foundation is stepping up efforts to ease the financial burdens of domestic violence survivors with \$625,000 in new economic empowerment grants for statewide coalitions against domestic violence in eleven states.

The grants will be used to support a variety of local programs focused on developing strategies to move survivors of abuse toward financial independence. The grantees' work will center on financial literacy, Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) and job readiness activities.

"People often think of the physical bruises associated with domestic violence, but the financial devastation that results from an abusive relationship can also be especially crippling," said Jennifer Kuhn, Program Manager with The Allstate Foundation. "Our goal is to work with advocates through statewide and local initiatives, to help survivors build financial skills which are critical during these financially turbulent times."

The Allstate Foundation's *Economics Against Abuse* program has provided more than \$12 million in funding to national and state domestic violence organizations since its launch in 2005.

"Our partnership with The Allstate Foundation has been instrumental in helping survivors achieve financial independence," said Sue Else, President of the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV). "The Allstate Foundation has provided critical resources and financial support to create innovative programs that directly help victims overcome the tough economic challenges of beginning a new life, free from abuse."

In addition to efforts by The Allstate Foundation and NNEDV, FICO, a leading proponent of consumer credit empowerment, has stepped in to provide support for survivors to help them surmount the financial hurdles often encountered when leaving abusive relationships. FICO is donating 500 free FICO scores for survivors involved with the Economic Empowerment Grant Program. The FICO credit score is a snapshot of how lenders view consumer credit profiles; the higher the score, the lower the risk to lenders. Tools such as FICO scores and financial education lessen the initial fear of being out on one's own and maintaining a certain level of care for the survivor's family.

Part of moving beyond an abusive relationship involves declaring financial independence--which means establishing one's own, independent credit history," said Shon Dellinger, vice president of consumer services for FICO. "In addition to their FICO scores, which provide a snapshot of that history, survivors will learn about the factors impacting their credit profiles and information to understand their FICO scores from our

award-winning credit resource, myFICO.com. Understanding this information is the ticket to more favorable terms on credit cards, automobile loans, and mortgages--elements of financial success for survivors and their families."

Domestic violence survivors often face significant financial barriers stemming from abuse. These problems are heightened in times of economic downturn, making it increasingly difficult to escape abusive relationships. Many survivors are prohibited from entering the workforce or pursuing a higher education and job training activities because of their abusers. Abusers often use financial control to keep victims in abusive relationships, including destroying a victim's credit score or running up high debts.

The 11 new economic empowerment grants were awarded to the following statewide coalitions against domestic violence, to enhance already existing economic empowerment programs or build new ones throughout their respective states:

Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence awarded \$50,000
Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence awarded \$50,000
Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence awarded \$75,000
Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence awarded \$25,000
Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence awarded \$52,000
Kentucky Domestic Violence Association awarded \$90,000
New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women awarded \$50,000
Ohio Domestic Violence Network awarded \$50,000
Texas Council on Family Violence awarded \$50,000
Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence awarded \$63,000
Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence awarded \$80,000

About The Allstate Foundation

Established in 1952, The Allstate Foundation is an independent, charitable organization made possible by subsidiaries of The Allstate Corporation (ALL). Allstate and The Allstate Foundation sponsor community initiatives to promote "safe and vital communities;" "tolerance, inclusion, and diversity;" and "economic empowerment." The Allstate Foundation believes in the financial potential of every individual and in helping America's families achieve their American dream.

About the *Economics Against Abuse* Program

The Allstate Foundation created the *Economics Against Abuse* Program to help domestic violence survivors overcome economic challenges and lead financially independent lives, free from abuse. Through a partnership with the National Network to End Domestic Violence, the program provides a network of financial resources, including a comprehensive financial empowerment curriculum; funds direct services, including education and job training assistance; and spreads the word on how to empower those touched by domestic and economic abuse. For more information and to find out how to help, visit www.ClickToEmpower.org.

About the National Network to End Domestic Violence

The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is a leading voice for domestic violence victims and their allies. Its members include the 56 state and territorial coalitions against domestic violence. It works closely with them to understand the needs of domestic violence victims and service providers. NNEDV has been a premiere national organization advancing the movement against domestic violence for the past 15 years, after leading efforts among domestic violence experts and survivors in urging Congress to pass the landmark Violence Against Women Act of 1994. To learn more about NNEDV, please visit www.nnedv.org.

About FICO

FICO (NYSE: [FICO](https://www.fico.com)) transforms business by making every decision count. FICO's Decision Management solutions combine trusted advice, world-class analytics and innovative applications to give organizations the power to automate, improve and connect decisions across their business. Clients in 80 countries work with FICO to increase customer loyalty and profitability, cut fraud losses, manage credit risk, meet regulatory and competitive demands, and rapidly build market share. FICO also helps millions of individuals manage their credit health through the www.myFICO.com website.

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