

***Building
Comprehensive
Solutions to
Domestic Violence***

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Assistance*

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A Policy and Practice
Paper

**Policy Blueprint on Domestic
Violence and Poverty**

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Section I

Domestic Violence and Poverty

■ Overview

Domestic violence and poverty are interwoven. Significant numbers of low-income women are battered, and the violence they experience can make the climb out of poverty impossible. Poverty, in turn, makes it more difficult to end domestic violence and heal from its effects.

For too long, some efforts to assist battered women* and their children escape from violence have overlooked their basic human needs. Legislation, policy, services, and advocacy often focus on physically separating the battered woman and her children from the abusive partner, but do not guarantee that there will be a roof over their heads, food on their table, or health care available when they need it. Reducing the risk of physical violence will not make battered women and their children "safe" without also providing opportunity for long-term financial stability.

Similarly, anti-poverty efforts have often focused on increasing economic resources and access to programs without addressing the impact of violence on a family's financial stability. Anti-poverty advocacy often seeks to secure a family's basic human needs through temporary government benefits, housing assistance, or job training and employment, but may do little to prevent a batterer from attacking his partner or sabotaging her job or program eligibility. Nor do these anti-poverty efforts address the longer-term effects of violence that some women and children face. Providing access to financial resources will assure the economic security of a battered woman only if it also offers her options to reduce the violence and its effects.

Poverty and domestic violence affect a significant number of women and their families. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that about 31.1 million people were poor in the year 2000, a poverty rate of 11.3%. The poverty rate for Blacks (22.1%) and Hispanics (21.2%) is about 3 times the rate for White non-Hispanics (7.5%).¹

Recent studies demonstrate that impoverished women experience high rates of violence by a male partner; between 9% and 23% of women receiving welfare benefits reported being abused in the past 12 months. Studies show that over 50% of women receiving welfare report having experienced physical abuse at some point in their adult lives, and most of these women also report a history of physical and/or sexual abuse in childhood.² In a nationally representative sample, almost 25 percent of surveyed women say that they were raped and/or physically

*Because the overwhelming majority of domestic violence victims are women abused by a male partner, this paper uses "she" or "battered woman" when referring to a victim of domestic violence, and "he" when referring to a "batterer." All victims of domestic violence deserve safety and financial security including victims in same-sex relationships and male victims abused by female partners.

assaulted by a current or former partner at some time in their life; and 1.5 percent report they were raped and/or physically assaulted by a partner in the previous 12 months.³

■ **How poverty makes it difficult to deal with domestic violence**

Poverty reduces options for battered women.** Most safety planning strategies require significant life changes, such as moving, separation, or divorce. Some require extensive use of the civil legal system to obtain court orders for custody, child support, or protection. In addition, a woman must also be able to financially support herself and her children after she leaves her abusive partner. In many locations there are programs that provide housing and temporary cash assistance, child care, and free legal representation. However, most of these programs have limited funding, offer short-term resources, and regularly turn away applicants. As a result, some low-income battered women simply are without the income, government support, or access to services necessary to fully implement a safety plan.

Without financial assets, low-income battered women must be cautious when choosing safety options. For example, a woman who must attend repeated court hearings or enter a shelter might lose her job because of the time she has missed from work. If the police are called to the home, some victims will gain access to helpful interventions and others may face negative consequences such as their own arrest, escalating violence, eviction, immigration problems, their partner's job loss (thereby reducing or eliminating family income and insurance) and child protection involvement. Safety strategies that threaten a battered woman's ability to provide food, housing, and other basic needs for herself and her children force her to make unreasonable choices -- facing continuing physical violence or becoming homeless, for example.

Low-income women face multiple levels of bias and discrimination that reduce their options for safety and financial security. For example, some landlords may not want to lease an apartment to a single mother or to a woman whose rent is subsidized by the government. These same women, if they are African-American or immigrants may find certain employers unwilling to hire or promote them. In general, women living in low-income neighborhoods have fewer employment and economic opportunities. Many services are also provided in English only and fail to respond to the needs of battered women from diverse cultures. Poverty also limits a woman's ability to ameliorate the harsh effects of bias and discrimination. Money can mean mobility, choice, bargaining power, and access to enforcing laws that protect her against such discrimination.

Life for low-income battered women is difficult. For example, low-income women experience more physical and mental health problems than women in general, often diminishing their financial opportunities and making them more vulnerable to abuse.⁴ Despite the severity and pain of domestic violence, the abuse may not be the greatest risk that many low-income women

** This discussion provides an overview of the hardships and barriers that many, but not all, low-income women face. Each low-income woman has a unique set of experiences, risks, and resources.

face nor their priority when they ask for help. Women struggling to survive, to make sure their family has a place to live and food to eat, may have a hardened, pragmatic view of violence. This will affect from whom they seek help, what help they need, whether certain services and outreach messages seem relevant, and what decisions they will make about their lives.

Life for low-income men is also difficult. Lack of employment, health care, discrimination and other barriers also affect their options and decisions about their families. It is clear that most low-income men do not batter their partners and that most have-- or would like to have-- meaningful relationships with their children. These men also need economic supports and opportunities. For those low-income men who do batter, constraints and resources are needed to end their use of violence and control.

■ **How domestic violence undermines financial stability**

Batterers use a variety of tactics to control their partners, including physical attacks, sexual assaults, interference with their children, threats regarding custody, sabotaging financial security, attacks on family and friends, and creating criminal, immigration, or civil legal problems. For the women they batter, this can mean physical and emotional injury and a daily family life that is chaotic and disrupted. These “batterer-generated risks” directly and indirectly impact a family's ability to provide for its basic needs.

Physical violence, threats, and verbal attacks have far-ranging effects. The violence may lead to physical injury and, for some women, permanent disability. Serious injuries might necessitate a trip to the emergency room with children in the middle of the night and missed work the next day. For an abused woman, fear and anger may take over. With her adrenaline rushing and her mind racing to figure out how to make the abuse stop, she may not sleep or eat enough to function well. Over time, depression may take hold of some women and some may turn to alcohol or drugs to relieve the emotional and physical pain. Mental and physical health problems, whether temporary or more long-term, can diminish some battered women’s ability to work, participate in job training or education programs, or comply with government benefit requirements.

Some abusive partners, in order to tighten their control, will directly prevent women from achieving economic independence. Some batterers keep their partners or ex-partners from working, advancing in their jobs, or attending school or training programs. Employment-related sabotage could include keeping a woman awake all night, giving her a black eye or other visible injury, stealing or destroying her work clothes, repeatedly calling and harassing her at work, threatening her co-workers, tampering with her car, or ruining her child care arrangements.

Efforts to escape violence can have devastating economic impacts. Leaving a relationship might mean a woman will lose her job, housing, health care, child care, or access to her partner’s income. Often criminal and civil legal remedies are necessary to safely leave a relationship.

Criminal remedies typically have no monetary cost to the victim, but may take time away from work or job training, sometimes resulting in lost wages or loss of employment. The pursuit of civil legal strategies, such as divorce or custody actions, often drains family financial resources. Unable to afford litigation, some battered women concede financial and property demands in order to settle the case, further undermining their families' security.

Domestic violence can hinder child support enforcement and threaten the receipt of TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) benefits. Some batterers will retaliate if attempts are made to establish paternity, issue a support order, or implement consequences for their failure to pay support.⁵ A significant amount of child support is never collected, sometimes because the non-custodial parent is unable to afford it, but sometimes because non-custodial parents refuse to meet obligations to their children. For some battered women it is simply best to "let sleeping dogs lie" and try to make it on their own, thereby reducing the threat of violence. Battered mothers receiving TANF assistance must cooperate with state efforts to collect support. If they do not, they could lose some or all of their TANF assistance unless they can demonstrate they have a "good cause" not to cooperate. Ultimately, some battered women must choose to either enforce child support -- which may result in retaliatory violence -- or to abandon the pursuit of support, which could result in the loss of their TANF benefits and a potential long-term income source.⁶

Each attack or controlling action by an abusive partner violates a basic trust, destroys a sense of security, and horribly disrupts family life. Children may be frightened, unable to sleep, and worried about themselves and their mother. Sometimes the children will miss school or have trouble concentrating when they are there. Children who experience violence need more time and attention from their non-abusing parent and this may make the mother's pursuit of financial security more difficult. Time spent caring for and responding to the needs of children becomes time away from work or educational activities. Child protective services may also be involved with the family, placing additional demands on the non-abusing parent's time and resources and diminishing employment opportunities.

Each family coping with domestic violence faces different challenges and has different resources. Many battered women are able to maintain daily structure and schedules that allow them to be there for their children while they work or comply with requirements for government benefits programs, pay the bills, and plan for their future. However, some know only stress and disruption, which undermines their chances for even basic financial security.

Section II

Policy Framework Principles and Implementation Strategies

Domestic violence and poverty present complex challenges for policy development, crossing a broad range of substantive issues, including: violence, crime, family formation, health, housing discrimination, welfare, child welfare, employment and economic opportunity. The following principles provide a framework for comprehensively connecting these issues and systems.

After each principle, implementation strategies are listed, offering concrete steps to build more effective responses to domestic violence and poverty. Although the strategies were developed specifically for domestic violence advocates, they also provide guidance for anyone working with families affected by domestic violence or poverty.

■ Current policy context

Policies and systemic responses to battered women and the poor are undergoing extensive, fast-paced change. Overall, the approach is more stringent, with additional requirements and expectations placed on battered women and their families. As agencies struggle to implement the new policy directions, procedures and programs are in a state of flux. In addition, extraordinary local discretion means programs can vary greatly, even within a state. The extent and pace of the changes make things more uncertain for low-income battered women. Safety planning is harder because it is difficult to predict the availability of resources and the consistency of responses. Here are some examples of these shifting policy directions:

Criminal legal system: The Violence Against Women Act, state legislation, and funding have made arrest and prosecution a key strategy to end violence against women. For some battered women, this “tough on crime” approach brings improved intervention and increased protection, but for others it makes things more difficult, particularly if they are arrested and immigration or child protection issues arise or arrest of their partners brings more hardship than help.

Welfare: Federal “welfare reform” ended the AFDC program and replaced it with the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program, which authorizes state and local government to decide who receives help, how much help they receive, and what they must do to obtain it. Most states require recipients to work or participate in “work activities” and limit the amount of time a family can receive assistance. Newly organized job training and welfare-to-work programs have also been put in place. The reauthorization of the federal welfare law is scheduled for 2002 and is likely to bring even more change.⁷

Child Support: With the changes to welfare came legislation to streamline and automate the child support process and institute a more aggressive approach to establishing paternity and collecting child support.

Housing Programs: Federal housing policy has also shifted authority to a local level, giving local public housing authorities more power to decide issues such as which families receive priority for obtaining limited available subsidies. Other changes include building fewer affordable rental units and funding housing vouchers that can be used in the private housing market, and increased efforts to reduce crime, such as “one-strike policies” which are causing some battered women to lose their housing.⁸

Child Protection: Federal law places new emphasis on safety and permanent plans for children in foster care as a principal goal of the child welfare system. States are forced to terminate parental rights when children have been in foster care for 15 of the last 22 months.⁹ This short time line places very difficult burdens on battered women trying to implement plans to provide safety for themselves and their children.

■ **Principle #1: Policies should support interventions that reduce abuse and meet basic human needs.**

As described in Section I, abused women face batterer-generated risks -- the range of controlling tactics used by abusive partners -- and life-generated risks -- the range of challenges and setbacks that make life difficult, especially for women living in poverty. Because each set of risks affects and exacerbates the other, interventions must assess and respond to both.

Currently safety for battered women is too narrowly defined. Safety is primarily seen as the reduction of physical violence. Without offering meaningful options for housing, health care, and food, safety plans currently fail to provide battered women with the resources that they must have to build a life without violence. To be effective, safety plans must be comprehensive, meeting basic human needs and providing life plans for long range security. Strategies to assure income, benefits, and ways to build assets should be seen as essential to any long range safety plan.

For some battered women living in poverty, leaving a relationship is simply not a viable option due to the combination of life- and batterer-generated risks. Some women experience a greater threat of violence once they leave, and others face increased risks to their children, income, or housing. For these women, staying is their best possible alternative. This may seem an unacceptable conclusion, but it is nonetheless the reality for some battered women. Responses to domestic violence for these women must include strategies that reduce their risks and allow them to gain access to services and resources while remaining in their relationships.

In addition, policies and practices that assume leaving a relationship is always the best response

to domestic violence should be expanded to include more options. Similarly policies that penalize women who stay, or leave and return, with sanctions, increased requirements, or ineligibility for repeated use of services should be reconsidered. Even if battered women have left their abusive partners, their ex-partners often will be in their lives, particularly if the couple has children together. For example, a father may live in the neighborhood, visit with the children, and stay in contact with family and friends. His partner may again “take him in” because he has nowhere else to go and the children will get to spend some time with him. Some of these women will also need domestic violence-specific services and options.

Although leaving is not a viable option for some women, social policy priorities should still focus on helping battered women escape and on ending abuse. All battered women should have the opportunity to make a meaningful choice about their relationships. Some women will need to leave because there will be no other way to keep themselves or their children from harm. No woman should be forced to stay in a relationship, living with violence and threats, as a matter of public policy. Nor should policies and programs reward or require women to marry their abusive partners.

■ **Principle #1 Implementation Strategies**

- **Promote safety and financial security strategies as essential to ending domestic violence and poverty.**
 - Examine policies and practices to ensure government agencies, not-for-profit service providers, and community organizations meet the safety, financial and basic human needs of low-income battered women and their children.
 - Integrate financial and safety interventions into advocacy and services. Assure advocates have the tools, training, resources, and supervision necessary to provide safety and financial advocacy.
 - Focus employment initiatives on providing pathways to better jobs that ensure families can meet their needs. Work to ensure that government benefits such as Medicaid, Food Stamps, housing supports, and childcare are available to those who work but are unable to escape poverty.
 - Advocate that government benefits be available to those who are unable to work, to find work, or to work enough to support their families. Support welfare-to-work programs that provide customized supports and training to this population.
 - Support policies and practices that collect child support in a safe and fair manner.
 - Work to ensure that programs and policies support meaningful decision-making

regarding relationships and provide resources to strengthen and support all families (e.g. programs and polices should not reward or require women to stay in violent relationships or marry their abusive partners).

■ **Encourage all systems serving low-income families to provide a gateway for domestic violence intervention.**

- Advocate that systems provide a “basic response to domestic violence.” A basic response to domestic violence means that staff:
 - 1) communicate with all battered women in a positive and supportive manner;
 - 2) know how to explain all resources and options available from the system they work in, including domestic violence-specific programs or provisions, and how to help battered women access them;
 - 3) know how to provide meaningful referrals to other sources of information and assistance; and
 - 4) avoid increasing the risks to battered women or their children.
- Work to ensure policies and practices provide battered women the range of help and safety planning that they need, including voluntary access to confidential domestic violence advocacy. Consider the use of specialized units or staff and formal collaborations with community-based agencies to provide advocacy.
- Work to ensure systems provide the ongoing training and supervision, procedures, policies, forms, and computer data systems necessary to assure the full range of domestic violence help is accessible and confidentiality is protected.¹⁰

■ **Work to ensure expectations placed on battered women are reasonable.**

- Identify the system’s requirements and assess what resources are necessary for most battered women to meet those requirements. For example, is a TANF system's requirement "to get a job, ” accompanied by job opportunities, skills training, education, and the financial supports necessary to provide for safe childcare and reliable transportation?
- Help systems identify and provide additional options for safety and financial security for those women who are unable to meet the requirements.

■ **Work to require that funding levels match the policies and programs to be implemented.**

- Complete realistic assessments of the resources necessary to implement each policy initiative. Include funding needs in policy analysis and advocacy efforts.

■ **Principle #2: Policies should support responses that integrate the needs of women and their children.**

Children are often the primary consideration in the decision-making process of battered women, and many women craft safety plans around their children's needs. Some leave to protect their children and then must face the financial, legal, and emotional consequences. Other women make a different decision and endure years of violence to ensure that their children grow up living with their father and have the material things they need. Of course, staying also has its price: mother and children will have to cope with the violence and its effects.

Interventions must meet children's needs because children are affected by adult domestic violence. They are exposed to the sights, sounds, and aftereffects of violent incidents and may be hit or physically hurt themselves. How children are affected varies depending on the extent of the exposure, their age, social support, and other factors. Some children are seriously traumatized and others cope fairly well.¹¹

Integrating children's needs into their mother's safety plan is often the best way to protect children. Most battered women try hard to take care of their children. If these women are safe and able to meet their basic human needs, then their children will benefit. Including options and resources for the children in women's safety plans will more likely ensure that the children receive the interventions that they need.

Even with this strategy, the children of some battered women will still be at risk and may require separate interventions for a variety of reasons: sometimes their mother does not understand what is happening to them; sometimes the mother's options are so dire that she has in fact no choice at all (e.g. the "choice" of living with an abusive partner or becoming homeless and having no income); and sometimes children are at risk because their mothers are assaulting them or seriously abusing substances and neglecting them. Each of these circumstances calls for careful assessment and a distinctly different response.

■ **Principle #2 Implementation Strategies**

- **Support policies that ensure battered women have the resources necessary to protect their children and themselves and provide for their basic human needs.**
 - Assess how current child protection intervention protocols and practices respond to the safety and financial security needs of battered mothers and their children. For example, is the directive "protect your child," accompanied by the financial resources, legal protections, housing, effective batterer intervention, and advocacy necessary for a battered mother to do so?

- Develop collaborations among child protection services, juvenile court, domestic violence advocates, anti-poverty organizations, batterer intervention programs, government benefits programs, and communities to develop and implement strategies to fill gaps identified in the assessment.¹²
 - Develop protocols for mandated reporting of child abuse with the help of multi-disciplinary teams to ensure safety of all family members and avoid unwarranted reporting.
- **Support policies that establish responses to domestic violence in children’s programs, such as Headstart, child care, schools, and pediatric health and mental health care.**
 - Collaboratively develop interventions for children’s programs that increase options for battered mothers seeking safety and financial security for their children and that meet the safety and basic human needs of both the adult and child victims.
- **Include domestic violence in the analysis of policies and programs to support the well-being of children and their families.**
 - Assess the response to domestic violence as measures of effectiveness and commitment to the well-being of children and families.
- **Principle #3: Policies should support individualized interventions based on the risks, needs, and options each battered woman defines.**

Each battered woman has a unique set of circumstances, risks, and resources. Some face life-threatening violence and others much less severe forms of abuse and control. For some low-income women, obtaining housing is the largest challenge, and for others it may be finding health care. Some have support networks while others have none. Systems tend to respond to battered women as if they share common experiences, languages, abilities, and cultures. This is not the case. Some battered women will access and use systems differently, and some may avoid a particular system altogether.

Consequently, there is no “quick fix” for domestic violence. Each strategy to address domestic violence or poverty can be an important option for some or even many women, but no single strategy is the answer for all women. For example, arrest and protective orders provide some women with the intervention and safety they need, but for other women these strategies may increase violence or result in the loss of the family’s income or housing. Since battered women’s experiences are so fluid, and one woman’s safety strategy is another woman’s risk, solutions must be individualized. For example, batterer intervention programs may be irrelevant to a

woman who is leaving her partner or relocating to another state and supporting herself by working. Similarly, divorce, shelter and protective orders will be of little use to a woman who has decided her best plan is to stay with her partner; however, a batterer intervention program may bring her some relief.

Providing the opportunity for women to define their needs is neither a guarantee that they will receive everything they want nor a limit on the range of services or information offered. Rather it means that women are given the chance to influence the response they receive, make informed decisions and choices, and actively participate in implementing strategies to enhance their financial security and safety. This can create tension between meeting individual needs and developing systemic responses. Many systems look for opportunities to provide uniform or even automated services. In this context, providing several generalized categories of responses with an opportunity to choose among them or opt out of them altogether offers a step toward more effective interventions.

■ **Principle #3 Implementation Strategies**

■ **Work to ensure that domestic violence assessments are based on each woman's analysis of her needs and a voluntary and informed disclosure of abuse.**

- Advocate that systems provide all clients with accessible information about domestic violence services and options in their primary language.
- Work to ensure that before women are asked to disclose domestic violence information, they understand the purpose of the assessment, what resources it may or may not lead to, and how the information will be used.
- Support procedures and practices that protect confidentiality in order to enhance safety and improve the quality of information disclosed.
- Provide enhanced advocacy and intervention for battered women and their children at high risk of harm and work to ensure women have access to such advocacy.
- Help to establish and strengthen links between systems and community-based programs and advocacy.

■ **Support policies that provide flexible resources and responses that meet the needs women define.**

- Advocate for systems to assess and identify the need for flexible resources, such as cash, immediate vouchers, or services; and flexible responses, that waive, delay, or

relax program requirements. For example, procedures are implemented for special handling of information to protect the safety and privacy of a particular woman.¹³

- **Support policies that preclude formulaic safety planning requirements for assistance eligibility.**
 - Advocate that systems support women's decision-making regarding safety planning and do not require the pursuit of particular safety strategies, such as calling the police or applying for a protective order, for benefits or services eligibility.

- **Principle #4: Policies should support comprehensive responses that address multiple needs and reflect cross-system analysis.**

For a significant number of low-income women, domestic violence is only one of the issues affecting their lives and limiting their options. For example, battered women also may be susceptible to substance abuse and mental health problems as a result of experiencing violence and living in poverty. Currently, few domestic violence programs respond to substance abuse/mental health issues and few substance abuse and mental health programs integrate domestic violence safety needs as part of the intervention.¹⁴

Practical assessment and intervention protocols for battered women with multiple issues must be developed and tested. For example, a battered woman with substance abuse issues and a lack of job skills will need a range of resources and interventions. Does domestic violence or substance abuse need to be addressed first? What would a simultaneous intervention look like? What skills and knowledge do the interveners need? How will the pressure to work and acquire job skills affect these strategies? Can one agency take the lead and develop responses to multiple issues?

Even more challenging than determining the interventions will be implementing them in systems that tend to organize as “silos” – each providing a narrow service with little or no interaction or coordination among them. Currently, a system might provide several programs, each with its own funding streams, organizational hierarchy, rules, goals, eligibility requirements, and staffing.

Realistically, low-income battered women may need resources from multiple systems and are likely to be involved with several of them at one time. For example, a battered woman may receive assistance from a TANF agency and attend the required welfare-to-work training program while seeking protection from the police and criminal court and trying to comply with a child protective services plan. Policy initiatives in each of these areas may conflict and force women into “lose-lose” situations. The TANF agency may require her to put her children in childcare and take any job she can find; the child protection agency may require her to spend certain hours with her children; and at the same time the prosecutor may subpoena her to multiple court hearings. If she doesn't work, she loses benefits. Working, however, leaves less time for her

children, resulting in increased child protection intervention. Missing the court hearing causes her to lose the protective order and even face arrest. To prevent such conflicting objectives for families, analysis of policies and responses across systems is necessary.

Cross-system analysis is difficult, requiring a range of expertise and experience. Cross-agency collaboration and multi-disciplinary approaches will be necessary to accurately assess whether particular policies lead to safety and economic security for battered women and their children.

Principle #4 Implementation Strategies

- **Support policies and funding streams that break down “silos” and provide multi-issue interventions, such as those for domestic violence, mental health, and substance abuse.**
 - Develop multi-disciplinary and inter-agency teams, including community members, to design and implement interventions.
 - Collaboratively develop and test practical assessment and intervention protocols that provide a sequence of responses for women with particular sets of issues.
 - Work to ensure that funding streams make cross-issue help available at one site.
 - Advocate for funding streams that allow agencies to effectively serve families with multiple problems.
 - Develop protocols that protect the privacy and confidentiality rights of women seeking services from multiple systems.
 - Work to ensure that systems provide the training, tools, and supervision that staff need to implement new approaches.
- **Analyze the impact of particular policies on families in multiple systems.**
 - Develop a multi-disciplinary team, including consumers, to analyze and assess the cross-system impact of policies.
 - Explore the impact of intervention strategies on particular populations, such as battered immigrant women and their families.

■ **Principle #5: Policies should support responses that overcome cultural bias and barriers and are informed by the community served.**

Bias, discrimination and service strategies that ignore cultural differences diminish interventions, making some ineffective, irrelevant, or harmful. Comprehensive responses must include outreach strategies that connect battered women from different cultures with the resources, support, and services they need. Interventions with men who batter must also “connect with values and beliefs from their cultural, racial, class, and ethnic background...”¹⁵

Because it is particularly difficult for battered women from under-served communities to navigate multiple systems and access help, community level coordination and determined outreach are needed to overcome the barriers they face. On a local or smaller scale it can be easier to ensure that battered women who need multiple resources will be able to access them. However, local coordination also faces numerous obstacles: some localized services may be inadequate and ineffective and local politics, turf battles, cultural indifference, and funding structures can stifle coordination. In addition, some battered women will need to access services outside of their communities in order to protect themselves and their children. Therefore, all systems – as part of their response to domestic violence – must provide a gateway to the multiple services many battered women need.

For responses and interventions to be effective, local outreach and program development should also provide resources to community women and social service groups to start culturally relevant services. Community leaders should be involved in this process. Policy and program development as well as local implementation and monitoring should include many opportunities to integrate the perspectives and suggestions of the community served.

■ **Principle #5 Implementation Strategies**

■ **Support policies that ensure that the community and people affected are meaningfully included in planning, implementation, and evaluation.**

- Develop approaches and procedures that ensure community involvement in planning and carrying out advocacy and intervention.
- Develop collaborative relationships with community leaders and groups.
- Support the funding and development of community-based services, outreach, and advocacy and interventions for men who batter.
- Integrate a process for ongoing feedback and data collection from low-income battered women and their families into program services, outreach, and planning.

- Dedicate outreach efforts and resources to ensure the inclusion of under-served and under-represented families’ perspectives. Develop plans that detail how outreach will occur and how resources will be utilized.
- **Support policies that require interventions and programs to be culturally relevant, accessible in each woman’s primary language, and designed to reach the under-served.**
- Work with community members and leaders to identify under-served groups and develop strategies to fill gaps in resources, services, and responses. For example, develop and fund strategies to meet the needs of battered immigrant women, including legal assistance, advocacy and support, and basic human needs.
 - Work to ensure resources are provided to racially and ethnically diverse community programs for the development and provision of domestic violence responses.
- **Principle #6: Policies should support responses to abusive partners that reduce violence and strengthen the family's financial stability.**

There are only two ways to end the violence and control of abusive partners and ex-partners. One is to limit the contact and opportunity batterers have to attack and control their partners. This is often done through physical separation by protective order, relocation, temporary shelter, and strengthening the woman’s independence. The other way is to change a batterer’s behavior -- "make him stop." Here there are deterrents: arrest, financial costs, loss of job/housing or custody of children, and rehabilitation, such as batterer intervention programs and informal family and community interventions. Many battered women try one or more of these strategies depending on their access to resources, the level of danger, and their partners' reactions.

Whether women leave, stay, or come and go, they know that what happens to their abusive partners or ex-partners will affect their own safety and financial security. Battered women must carefully consider how their partners or ex-partners will react to certain strategies. Will the strategy reduce the violence or increase it? Will it reduce the violence but jeopardize financial security? For example, an arrest may temporarily stop the violence, but may also cause her partner to lose his job – the only source of income for the family. Too often the effects on an abusive partner are ignored in policy and program development. The consequences are deemed irrelevant or, if they are negative, the batterer is simply described as “getting what he deserves.” For interventions to be successful, their effect on an abusive partner must try to reduce all the risks a battered woman and her children face, including poverty.

Although abusive partners should be held accountable for their use of violence, criminal legal system punishment and sanctions cannot be the only strategy. This one system cannot be expected to end domestic violence. Although some men who batter will only respond to the intervention that arrest, prosecution, and court oversight can provide, others may respond to less intrusive and punitive approaches.

Batterer accountability must also be weighed against intervention effectiveness. Abusive partners must have both the constraints and resources needed to end their use of violent power and control. In addition, batterer intervention is still a relatively new field and, with necessary safety precautions and evaluation, diverse strategies that are community-oriented, culturally relevant, and non-punitive should be explored.

■ **Principle #6 Implementation Strategies**

■ **Support policies that provide men who batter with the constraints and resources necessary to end their violence and abusive control.**

- Advocate for a range of batterer intervention programs that are culturally competent and offered in a variety of settings.
- Work to ensure that criminal legal system interventions include graduated sanctions that provide gateways to services and resources for men who batter. Interventions should also protect victims and provide them with advocacy and gateways to resources.
- Support funding to develop new interventions and careful testing to assess effectiveness, including intervention in voluntary programs outside the criminal legal system and within diverse communities.
- Ensure that safeguards for victims are integrated into programs and interventions, such as advocacy, voluntary and informed participation in any aspect of the intervention, and confidentiality.

■ **Acknowledge that both parents may need help and support programs that enhance the financial stability of low-income men and non-custodial parents.**

- Support efforts to provide access to job training, job placement, health care, and housing to low-income men and non-custodial parents.

■ **Support policies that provide the maximum support for families using safe and fair child support enforcement.**

- Identify and change child support policies and enforcement costs that take money away from families for support of the children. For example, end welfare assignment and distribution rules and forgive child support arrearages owed to the state.
 - Assess safety strategies in current child support enforcement processes and develop additional options. For example, extend confidentiality protections, improve access to exemptions from TANF cooperation requirement, and customize court and other enforcement strategies to reduce the risk of violence for battered women and their children.
 - Assess fairness of the child support process to non-custodial parents and develop a strategy to address areas that need improvement. Implement a fair process to encourage parents' participation in the enforcement system, and potentially reduce the likelihood of violence or retaliation against some custodial parents.
- **Support fatherhood involvement programs that respect women and work to prevent and address the harm that family violence causes children and their mothers.**
 - Work with father involvement advocates to collaboratively develop assessments, programs, protocols, and services in fatherhood programs that protect battered women and children and guide father involvement.¹⁶ Approaches should not unnecessarily bar or discourage fathers' connection to their children.
- **Support early intervention and prevention programs for boys and young men.**
 - Support the development of family violence assessment and intervention protocols for health care, mental health and social service agencies serving boys and young men.
 - Support the development and use of family violence prevention curricula in schools, religious institutions, and other appropriate settings.

Endnotes

1. Poverty in the United States: 2000, Current Population Reports: Consumer Income, U.S. Census Bureau, September 2001.
2. Lyon, E. (2000) Welfare, Poverty, and Abused Women: New Research and its Implications, *Building Comprehensive Solutions to Domestic Violence* Publication #10, National Resource Center on Domestic Violence.
3. Tjaden, P. and Thoennes, N., (2000) Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence, Finding from the National Violence Against Women Survey, NIJ/CDC.
4. Tolman & Rosen, (1999) - check citation
5. A study of 413 AFDC applicants in Denver, Colorado found that 94 applicants (23%) claimed to be abused by the father of their child/ren. 51 applicants (12%) agreed with the statement "If I try to get child support, my child's father will harm me." [Pearson, J. and E. Griswold. 1997. *Child Support Policies and Domestic Violence: A Preliminary Look at Client Experiences with Good Cause Exemptions to Child Support Cooperation Requirements*. Center for Policy Research. Denver, Colorado.]
6. Lyon: Studies show battered women need child support despite danger. For example, in the Denver study, of the 51 applicants who believed they faced harm from the child's father if they tried to get child support, only 1% of them actually submitted an application for a good cause exception to the cooperation.
7. See *Building Comprehensive Solutions to Domestic Violence* Initiative Annotated Publications List for a series of papers regarding domestic violence and the welfare law, TANF program, and child support enforcement issues. Available from the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence or at <http://www.vawnet.org/VNL/library/genera/bcs-apub.htm>
8. See *Building Comprehensive Solutions to Domestic Violence* Initiative Publication #8 (1999), Federal Housing and Domestic Violence: Introduction to Programs, Policy, and Advocacy Opportunities.
9. Schechter, S. and Edleson, J. L., (1999) Effective Intervention in Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment Cases: Guidelines for Policy and Practice, NCJFCJ, Reno, Nevada.
10. See *Building Comprehensive Solutions to Domestic Violence* Initiative Practice Paper #3 (2000): Recommendations for Training TANF and Child Support Enforcement Staff about Domestic Violence, available from the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence for more information.

11. Edleson, J.L. (2001) Problems Associated with Children's Witnessing of Domestic Violence, for VAWnet. <http://www.vaw.umn.edu/ccp.asp>
12. See Schechter, S. and Edleson, J. L., (1998) Effective Intervention in Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment Cases: Guidelines for Policy and Practice, NCJFCJ, Reno, Nevada.
13. Examples of flexible resources and responses:
 - TANF and Welfare-to-work Programs:
 - waive requirements, such as child support cooperation and time limited benefits,
 - provide “up front” money in a lump sum to pay for relocation, buying or repairing a car necessary for transportation, or other work or safety related costs,
 - provide security at job training sites and allow women to transfer to different job training programs or sites if necessary for their safety.
 - Child Support Enforcement Agencies:
 - provide battered custodial parents with safe enforcement options
[See: *Models for Safe Child Support Enforcement*, Vicki Turetsky and Susan Notar, (1999) Center for Law and Social Policy. Also, *Building Comprehensive Solutions to Domestic Violence* Initiative Annotated Publications List for a series of papers regarding domestic violence, TANF, and child support enforcement issues, available at http://www.vawnet.org/VNL/library/general/bcs_apub.htm].
 - Public Housing Programs:
 - provide relief from “one strike” policies,
 - remove batterer from joint “Section 8” certificates,
 - provide expedited relocation money,
 - provide an expedited process for relocation within public housing.
[See: *Building Comprehensive Solutions to Domestic Violence* Initiative Publication #8 (1999), *Federal Housing and Domestic Violence: Introduction to Programs, Policy, and Advocacy Opportunities*].
 - Mental Health and Substance Abuse Programs:
 - provide extended mental health intervention for a battered woman and her children experiencing trauma,
 - provide residential substance abuse treatment that allows a battered woman to live with her children.
14. Substance Abuse Treatment and Domestic Violence, Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) Series, #25, by Patricia Anne Fazzone, John Kingsley Holton, Beth Glover Reed, U.S. DHHS, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Rockville, MD, 1997.

15. Connecticut's Evolve Program: A 26 & 52 week culturally competent, broad based, skill building, psycho-educational curriculum for male domestic violence offenders with female victims, by Denise Donnelly, Fernando Mederos, David Nyquist, Oliver J. Williams, and Sarah G. Wilson, State of Connecticut Judicial Branch, June 2000.
16. Some of the issues that may be raised in protocol discussions include the following:
- How to accurately assess when a father poses a risk to his children or their mother without unnecessarily hindering the majority of fathers who pose no risk.
 - How to prevent family violence without discouraging involvement of non-violent fathers or making all men feel as if they are being treated like batterers.
 - How to assess what level of intervention may be needed to assure involvement is in the best interests of the child. For example, which fathers just need to schedule time with their children and which will need parenting guidance or supervised contact?
 - What process will allow safety and other concerns of mothers and children to be heard and addressed?
 - What process will ensure father-involvement is not pursued if contact would violate a court order, such as a protective order?
 - What process will be used when Child Protective Services has found a father to be a risk to his children and is barred from contact?
 - How will the privacy of parents be protected?
 - How will contact be made with the mother? How will mothers or children who are "in hiding" for safety reasons be protected?
 - When issues are unresolvable, how will equal access to courts and advocacy or representation be provided?
 - How will programs be evaluated?