

# *BUILDING COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTIONS TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE*

## **Increasing Economic Opportunity for Battered Women**

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence

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### **BUILDING A NETWORK OF ADVOCATES COMMITTED TO IMPROVING BATTERED WOMEN'S ECONOMIC SECURITY**

This "Increasing Economic Opportunity" newsletter is planned as a forum for sharing how state domestic violence coalitions and local programs are responding to the economic issues facing battered women. We want to build a network of advocates working on economic justice so that we can learn from each other and support our work.

As advocates for battered women, we know how important financial security is to long-term safety and self-sufficiency. We also know that it is often hard to focus our efforts in this direction when thousands of women are calling our hot-lines and knocking on our doors – scared and in danger. The realities of welfare reform and the increasing scarcity of affordable housing can be huge roadblocks for battered women as they try to be safe. One of the goals for our project – *Building Comprehensive Solutions to Domestic Violence* – is to create strategies to meet battered women's basic human needs as one key strategy for ending domestic violence.

Our economic justice work is strengthened when we hear what others are doing and share our own thoughts and ideas. This is a space for doing that. You'll be hearing from us every few months. We want to hear from you. Call and let us know what you are doing, to add names to our mailing list, and to provide input on the kinds of information that is most helpful to you.

*Amy Correia, Newsletter Editor*

*Susan Schechter, Project Director*

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### **Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence**

#### **TANF Initiative**

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As the TANF-funded Economic Justice Coordinator at the coalition, Loretta Pyles has been working with the Kansas welfare agency – Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) – on a pilot family violence option (FVO) implementation project called OARS (orientation, assessment, referral, and safety).

OARS is a collaboration between a local domestic violence and/or sexual assault program and a county-level welfare agency, providing an on-site domestic violence advocate (funded with federal TANF money) at the welfare office. All caseworkers in this welfare office are trained in domestic violence and sexual assault. The on-site advocate explains the family violence option in group-presentation style to all new applicants. When a woman discloses domestic violence, sexual assault, or rape, the advocate schedules a private meeting with her and completes a standardized assessment form. The advocate also works on safety planning, provides individual counseling as requested, and facilitates a support group for women who have been granted a waiver from work requirements. The Kansas Legislature approved an increase in TANF dollars in FY2001 to replicate the pilot project state-wide. Training of advocates and case workers across the state is now underway.

Loretta distributes materials to domestic violence/sexual assault programs across the state on housing, welfare, and training/work issues. As the Economic Justice Coordinator, Loretta's work goes beyond state welfare issues and includes collaboration with anti-poverty organizations to influence public policy in the areas of welfare and poverty.

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## **Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence Public Policy Initiatives**

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In 1998, when a local Phoenix foundation awarded the coalition a grant to increase public policy staff, Danae Dotolo – the newest member of the public policy department – was interested in pursuing domestic violence advocacy in the area of welfare and poverty.

Since then, Danae's welfare and poverty work has focused in two areas – collaboration with anti-poverty advocacy organizations, and with official state governmental departments. She is a member of the steering committee of a state-wide collaborative effort called the Arizona Network for Community Responsibility (ANCR). (Among the ANCR members are the William E. Morris Institute for Justice, the Catholic Conference, and the Arizona Coalition to End Homelessness.) The primary goal of the group is to monitor welfare programs and influence public policy. This group is considering developing a joint request to the state legislature on use of surplus TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) funds.

Danae has participated on committees convened by the Arizona Department of Economic Security (the welfare department). One committee was formed to review the TANF sanction process. In doing that, committee members discovered that women who are granted a domestic violence waiver from work requirements are not offered any specialized services. This committee is developing a referral process for battered women granted a waiver. More recently, Danae was appointed to the JOBS Advisory Group (Arizona's welfare-to-work program). This committee is analyzing the orientation, assessment, and referral processes of Arizona's welfare-to-work program.

**WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT  
YOUR ECONOMIC JUSTICE  
WORK AT THE STATE AND  
LOCAL LEVEL**

**CONTACT AMY CORREIA ABOUT  
YOUR PROGRAM  
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## **Personal Economic Planning An Economic Literacy Model**

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Personal Economic Planning (PEP) is a flexible 8-12 hour economic literacy group curriculum developed by the Elizabeth Stone House (ESH) in Boston, MA. ESH operates battered women's, mental health, and transitional housing programs and in 1992 created a new program – Community Education for Economic Development (CEED) – in response to women's requests for concrete services to respond to their financial barriers.

Laurie Holmes played an integral role in the development of the CEED model and the PEP curriculum as a staff person at ESH. The CEED program includes the Women's Business Opportunity Program, the PEP curriculum and an Opportunities Network, connecting women with education, employment, and an ongoing support system.

While the community economic development field is awash in economic literacy curricula, PEP is unique because it was written with ESH program participants and staff and utilizes a popular education adult-learning methodology. Besides teaching financial and career planning skills, PEP supports participants to look at issues of economic justice in their lives and their communities. Also, it was designed to specifically address the economic development needs of women in the early stages of crisis, escape, and recovery from trauma.

Laurie Holmes provides a 2-day training of trainers for advocates interested in using the curriculum. Domestic violence advocates in Massachusetts and Rhode Island have been trained on use of the PEP curriculum. Interest around the country is spreading, and advocates in Maine and Tennessee have expressed interest in the full training. In Spring, 2000 a group of advocates in Iowa received funding from the Iowa Women's Foundation to bring Laurie's expertise to that state. Advocates from eight projects completed the PEP training, and the curriculum is being implemented in four communities.

*Copies of the Building Comprehensive Solutions to Domestic Violence paper series - with titles focusing on housing, economic development, welfare-to-work, and poverty are available by calling the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence at 1-800-537-2238.*