



ECONOMIC JUSTICE AS A FRAMEWORK FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION

2022

WHITE PAPER

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Executive Summary

The Delaware Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) Program encourages all local and statewide organizations, corporations, workplaces, and sectors to consider ways to adopt and advance policies that promote economic equity and revamp policies that may hinder success, stability, and safety for employees and communities. This white paper is being published to raise awareness and increase knowledge capacity of economic justice among community partners, corporations, and state legislators. It is the RPE Program's goal that all readers of this white paper will gain an understanding of the importance of economic justice and how it can effectively contribute to the prevention of domestic and sexual violence in Delaware. The state continues to have alarming reported cases of domestic and sexual violence. Domestic and sexual violence have disproportionate and harmful impacts on the physical, emotional, and financial health of its victims and survivors, including the development of chronic health issues and significant loss of income.

In efforts to prevent violence from occurring, the RPE Program through the Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence (DCADV) worked to identify evidence-based strategies that may reduce the prevalence of violence. While many strategies aim to impact individuals directly, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recognizes the importance of addressing this at a systems level and beyond to complement existing prevention efforts.¹ One systems-level strategy focuses on improving health and economic outcomes by promoting economic justice, since poor economic health has been identified as a risk factor for the likelihood of domestic and sexual violence to occur.^{2 3} Individuals who are exposed to risk factors of poor economic health and lack of access to economic supports may be forced to rely on a partner or family member, which could prevent them from leaving living environments if they become abusive.

Economic justice is the human right to be compensated a livable wage and benefits equitably, in safe working environments, with the right to choose a job that is fulfilling. Economic justice means that everyone has equitable opportunities to be financially self-sufficient and create economically stable lives for themselves and their families.⁴ The CDC is exploring economic justice as a complementary strategy to further reduce the prevalence of domestic and sexual violence. Given the risk factors of economic instability and poverty, embracing economic justice frameworks can contribute to mitigating these risk factors.^{5,6} These principles can be supported through the development of equitable public, workplace, and financial policies. As such, community and societal policies and practices that reduce power imbalances and promote economic justice principles have the capacity to contribute to the prevention of domestic and sexual violence.⁷

DCADV conducted an environmental scan of Delaware's largest employers to learn the depth and breadth of their employee benefits and healthy workplace policies. This scan also included a review of current financial institution practices and policies and state laws that support the well-being of Delawareans. Further, DCADV's environmental scan included research on promising and best-practice policies which corporations and workplaces can implement.

Workplace policies that support flexible work schedules and valuing employees as whole people have been shown to contribute to improved financial and physical health outcomes of employees.⁸ Financial sector policies build financial knowledge, which increases the number of financially strong households. Local and state public policies have the capacity to increase job security and the number of financially stable households, such as mandating that all employers provide paid family leave. The policies identified in this white paper are examples of how to strengthen economic supports for all to reduce risk factors associated with domestic and sexual violence.

We recognize the State of Delaware and several corporations, workplaces, and financial institutions that have already established the policies highlighted throughout this white paper. We encourage others, such as policymakers in local and state government, to follow their example by implementing the policy initiatives. Including the noted policies contributes to the likelihood that Delawareans can become financially self-sufficient, thus creating a financially thriving economy and community while simultaneously decreasing the economic risk factors associated with domestic and sexual violence.

This paper will provide more detailed information on policy initiatives that should be considered by policymakers in the government as well as within corporations, workplaces, and the financial sector.



Evidence-Based Policies to Influence Financial Stability

Corporate Sector and Workplace Policies

- Lactation Friendly Workplaces
- Paid Time Off and Paid Family Leave
- Anti-Discrimination
- Flexible Work Schedules, Onsite Childcare, and Childcare Subsidies
- Employee Assistance Programs
- Equal and Comparable Pay

Financial Sector Policies and Recommendations

- Financial Empowerment Programs
- Microfinance Programs
- Credit Building Programs
- Credit Repair Programs

Government Sector Policies

- Equal and Comparable Pay
- Adequate, Quality, and Affordable Child Care
- Fair Lending Practices
- Affordable Health Care Access
- Affordable and Safe Housing
- Livable Wage

It is DCADV's and the Division of Public Health's aim to decrease domestic and sexual violence occurrences as Delaware businesses, financial institutions, and policymakers shift toward economically-just policies. Through research, it is believed that supportive employee policies will lead to successful businesses; well-structured and supportive consumer policies will lead to a stronger economy; and comprehensive, supportive constituent policies will lead to an equitable, safe, and healthy community where all have opportunities to thrive.