



**FREE
FROM**

**ENDING GBV: AN ECONOMIC
ISSUE THAT WE ALL HAVE A
ROLE TO PLAY IN**

WHAT SURVIVORS SAY

“I had no control over my finances for 20 years, and my husband racked up debt, told me setting up my own 401k was me stealing money from him, and he also opened a credit card in my name without my knowledge.

I am using most of my income now to try to pay back debt.”

All quotes in this resource are from survivors of interpersonal violence shared through FreeFrom's Safety Fund program. We have compensated survivors for sharing their expertise, experiences, and time and we deeply thank every survivor for sharing.



OVERVIEW

- **The Problem**
- **The Cost of Economic Abuse**
- **FreeFrom's Mission**



THE PROBLEM

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) IS FINANCIALLY DEVASTATING FOR SURVIVORS

WHAT WE KNOW

THE TOP OBSTACLE TO
SURVIVORS' SAFETY IS
FINANCIAL INSECURITY

1 IN 2

trans people and 1 in 2 cis women will be subjected to GBV in their lifetime.

\$104K

is the CDC's estimate of how much GBV costs cis women survivors.

Being subjected to GBV is financially devastating for most people.

Survivors can only secure long-term safety for themselves and their families if they can afford to find safety, rebuild, and heal.

THE COST OF ECONOMIC ABUSE

THE COST OF ECONOMIC ABUSE

92%

of survivors reported being subjected to economic abuse, which occurs when a harm-doer controls and/or exploits a survivor's financial resources.

\$10,120

Survivors reported an average of \$10,120 in abuse-related costs.

\$289

Survivors reported having an average of \$289 that they alone can access.

\$10

Survivors reported having an average of \$10 in savings.

10%

Survivors' financial well-being is in the bottom 10th percentile for adults in the U.S.

THE COST OF ECONOMIC ABUSE

SURVIVORS' CFPB FINANCIAL WELL-BEING SCORES

A 2020 FreeFrom survey of over 1,300 survivors revealed their CFPB Financial Well-Being Scores:

- The average score for survivors was 38. The most common score among survivors was even lower at 29.
- For comparison, the average score for U.S. adults is 54.
- Scores below 50 typically indicate difficulty making ends meet.

This shows survivors face much greater financial hardship:

- Only 4% of U.S. adults score 30 or below.
- But 16% of survivors - four times as many - scored that low.

In simple terms, survivors are far more likely to face severe financial difficulties compared to the general adult population in the U.S.

WHAT SURVIVORS SAY

“I remember frantically calling the credit card company and saying, ‘Please help me, please send me my bills. My ex-husband won’t let me see my bills. I’m happy to pay you.’

They told me there was nothing they could do.”

All quotes in this resource are from survivors of interpersonal violence shared through FreeFrom’s Safety Fund program. We have compensated survivors for sharing their expertise, experiences, and time and we deeply thank every survivor for sharing.



GBV IS AN ECONOMIC ISSUE



A CRITICAL REFRAME

EXISTING RESPONSES FOCUS ONLY ON PEAK CRISIS

Survivors measure their experiences of GBV in years and generations – not merely the minutes, hours, or days of peak crisis.

Yet the U.S. treats GBV as a crisis issue rather than as a structural, societal economic problem.

As a result, our responses to GBV fail to leverage opportunities to support survivors before and after those moments of peak crisis, including by failing to leverage the private sector.

Reframing GBV as a long-term, structural issue opens up significant opportunities for more comprehensive and effective support for survivors. This shift in perspective allows us to engage various sectors of society, particularly the financial industry, in creating sustainable solutions.

OUR MISSION

At FREEFROM, we work to end gender-based violence with survivors by building safety and economic freedom. We do this through bold survivor-led strategies that build our collective power and activate everyone in society to play their part — before, during, and beyond moments of crisis.

EVERYONE HAS A ROLE TO PLAY

To learn more about the role you can play in ending GBV and supporting survivors, visit **www.freefrom.org**

FREE FROM

For more information, please contact:

FreeFrom’s Systems Change Team
policy@freefrom.org



info@freefrom.org



[/freefromorg](https://www.facebook.com/freefromorg)



[@freefromorg](https://twitter.com/freefromorg)



[/company/freefrom](https://www.linkedin.com/company/freefrom)



[@freefromdotorg](https://www.instagram.com/freefromdotorg)