

*DV Advocates in  
mainstream and  
LGBTQ  
organizations  
Funders  
Policy makers*

*LGBTQ Domestic Violence  
Targeted Recommendation:*

Integrate economic  
and educational access  
and empowerment  
into domestic violence  
(DV) advocacy,  
particularly for  
transgender survivors.



National  
LGBTQ DV Capacity Building  
Learning Center

## *Recommendation: Integrate economic and educational empowerment into DV Advocacy*

### Rationale

[Injustice at Every Turn: a Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey](#) highlights pervasive discrimination in education and employment as well as common experiences of poverty and homelessness among transgender people, especially transgender people of color.<sup>i</sup>

Trans people face a variety of barriers to employment in addition to discrimination. These include lack of identification that corresponds to their gender and name, and criminal records or warrants for nonviolent crimes that are the result of excessive policing, over criminalization, and gender/race profiling. Economic vulnerability can drive dependence on abusive partners and lead to difficult choices for obtaining housing and meeting other basic needs.

Further, many transgender people face disruptions in their education due to unsafe schools, lack of family support, and bias. This weakens their options for employment, setting the stage for economic exploitation, poverty, and vulnerability to abuse.

To effectively and competently serve transgender DV survivors, advocates and organizations need to address the economic and educational barriers that disproportionately impact trans communities.

### Recommendations for DV advocates in mainstream and LGBTQ organizations

1. Identify economic and educational advocacy as key prevention and early intervention strategies for domestic violence and as important parts of long-term safety planning.
1. Broaden the concept of “DV legal advocacy” to encompass resolving warrants, name changes, and old convictions.
2. Routinely ask people if they need help with the following: warrants, name changes, identification, and old convictions that prevent them from being employed or housed.
3. Learn how to request that the court quash a warrant. This work can be presented as alleviating the impact of profiling and over-criminalization and as a step toward reducing court caseloads.
4. Learn how to help a person file for legal name change; treat name changes as an important aspect of legal advocacy. This is a simple civil process, less complex than getting a protective order.

5. Learn and educate survivors about how to get a misdemeanor conviction vacated (removed from a person's record).
6. Address and destigmatize sex work in advocacy. Advocates should gain the skills, knowledge and collaborative relationships necessary to help survivors resolve charges related to sex work.
7. Seek out and create relationships with attorneys willing to help with the criminal-legal issues facing trans survivors (as well as other survivors).
8. Create job-readiness programming, including help with resumes, applications, and interviewing skills. Include information on how to manage interview questions about sex/gender identity and past convictions.
9. Think creatively about how to make job training and supporting entrepreneurship routine parts of your programming. For example, what job training can your program bring into your space? Does your building have a commercial kitchen that could be used for catering or making small-batch food products?
10. Work with local community colleges to ensure a welcoming atmosphere for trans people; build relationships with Adult Basic Education, General Educational Development (GED) and occupational skills instructors so that your program can provide a "warm referral" to these resources. Normal text

## Recommendations for Funders

1. Recognize working to prevent LGBTQ (and particularly transgender) discrimination in grade schools, high schools, and colleges as important prevention work that impacts the social determinants of DV.
2. Recognize legal advocacy around name changes, warrants, and past convictions as an important component of eliminating barriers to autonomy and expanding choices.

## Recommendations for Policymakers

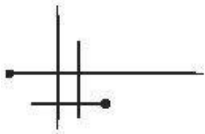
1. Work with local trans communities to reform police policies and practices that result in profiling trans people. For example, eliminate "possession of condoms" as evidence of prostitution or any other crime.
2. Reduce or eliminate the cost of community college. This makes it possible for people to access education without family support or good credit.
3. Remove barriers to attending community college for undocumented immigrants and refugees.

## Resources

- <http://www.lawhelp.org/>
- [“When and How to Vacate Misdemeanor and Gross Misdemeanor Convictions”](#) on Washington Law Help (2014)

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<sup>i</sup> Grant, J. M., Mottet, L. A., Tanis, J., Harrison, J., Herman, J. L., & Keisling, M. (2011). Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey. Washington: National Center for Transgender Equality, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.



### *Economic and Educational Empowerment*

One in a series of targeted recommendations from the LGBTQ Domestic Violence Capacity Building Learning Center intended to improve policy, research, intervention and prevention efforts regarding LGBTQ DV.

The LGBTQ DV CBLC is a project of the Northwest Network for Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian and Gay Survivors of Abuse with foundational partner the National Coalition of Anti Violence Programs

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