



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
OFFICE TO COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DON'T BE A VICTIM OF FINANCIAL FRAUD

The Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence hosted a forum on financial abuse and identity theft as they impact victims of domestic violence

Financial abuse occurs in 98 percent of abusive relationships, according to the National Network to End Domestic Violence, and it can manifest itself in various ways – whether a batterer restricts access to money during the relationship or drains assets when a victim attempts to leave. Often, financial pressures contribute to why victims stay in an abusive relationship or return to an abusive partner after leaving.

“An abuser can control a victim’s financial freedom in a number of ways and it often goes unnoticed by the victim,” said Commissioner Yolanda B. Jimenez of the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence. “A batterer can easily run up debt in the victim’s name without their knowledge and then fail to make payments. This is not only financial abuse, but identity theft and it is a crime.”

To raise awareness about the prevalence of financial fraud and identity theft as it pertains to all victims in abusive relationships, the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence held a conference featuring presentations and panel discussions from financial experts, including the NYC Department of Consumer Affairs, the Federal Trade Commission, the Social Security Administration, the Legal Aid Society, and The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Center for Elder Abuse.

“We encourage consumers who are victims of fraud or identity theft to file complaints with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC),” said Karen O’Connell, Attorney with the FTC’s Northeast Regional Office. “By providing the FTC with information about their experiences, consumers help us educate the public about the types of scams that are out there and also assist us in our fight against fraud and identity theft.”

The conference was attended by professionals from a wide range of disciplines who work directly with victims of domestic violence, including service providers and representatives from the legal, housing, law enforcement, banking, education, disability, elder services, and children services fields; additionally, members of the federal government were also in attendance.

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During a series of panel discussions, experts on economic justice and domestic violence discussed key components of financial abuse, fraud, coercive debt, and identity theft – offering strategies on how to help victims safeguard their personal information and repair their credit rating.

The *Don't be a Victim of Financial Fraud* forum was made possible through a grant from The Allstate Foundation to the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City. The forum was held at The Pershing Square Signature Center, 480 W. 42nd Street (btw 9th & 10th).

About The Allstate Foundation

Established in 1952, The Allstate Foundation is an independent, charitable organization made possible by subsidiaries of The Allstate Corporation. Through partnerships with nonprofit organizations across the country, The Allstate Foundation brings the relationships, reputation and resources of Allstate to support innovative and lasting solutions that enhance people's well-being and prosperity. With a focus on teen safe driving and building financial independence for domestic violence survivors, The Allstate Foundation also promotes safe and vital communities; tolerance, inclusion, and diversity; and economic empowerment. For more information, visit www.allstatefoundation.org.

About the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence

The Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) formulates policies and programs, monitors the citywide delivery of domestic violence services, and works with diverse communities to increase awareness of domestic violence. OCDV operates three New York City Family Justice Centers in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens, which are one-stop service centers for domestic violence victims and their children. In partnership with the District Attorneys' offices, 26 nonprofit organizations and six city agencies, last year these centers assisted over 16,000 clients by providing vital services including civil legal representation, onsite children's room activities, safety planning, assistance with filing police and probation reports, counseling, health care referrals, meeting with a prosecutor, English as a Second Language classes, self-sufficiency services including resume assistance and job training, specialized services for the elderly or disabled, and language interpretation.

In case of emergency 24-hours a day, victims are urged to call 911, and for information and services, victims may call 311. Domestic violence is a crime in New York City and batterers will be held accountable.

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