

Workforce Development Recommendations

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Futures Without Violence (FUTURES) is a leading national organization dedicated to preventing domestic and sexual violence, child and youth trauma, and human trafficking while helping people who have been harmed by violence heal. As part of that work FUTURES houses several educational programs including [The National Workplace Resource Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence](#) and the [Promoting Employment Opportunities for Survivors of Trafficking \(PEOST\) Training and Technical Assistance Program](#), which are designed to promote economic opportunity and mobility for survivors of gender-based violence and harassment¹. Through these efforts, FUTURES fosters systems alignment to support survivors pursuing education and job training as well as provides advocacy for survivors in the workplace and guidance for employers, unions, and advocates to create more supportive and safer workplaces. FUTURES has significant experience and expertise assisting survivors who have faced abuse, harassment, and violence both inside and outside their workplace.

Through these initiatives, FUTURES has witnessed the limitations of our workforce development system, which impacts the ability of survivors to access and successfully complete job training or education requirements. Survivors of gender-based violence and harassment often face unique barriers to accessing job training, education, and stable employment² that our workforce development system fails to adequately address.³ The majority of survivors of gender-based violence and harassment experience economic abuse⁴, which not only impacts their finances but their ability to attain and maintain employment or educational opportunities.⁵ In a 2018 survey of 164

¹ “Workplaces Respond to Domestic and Sexual Violence.” *Futures Without Violence*, <https://www.workplacesrespond.org/>.

² Hess, Cynthia, et. al., “Dreams Deferred. A Survey on the Impact of Intimate Partner Violence on Survivors’ Education, Careers, and Economic Security.” *Institute for Women’s Policy Research*, 2018, <https://iwpr.org/iwpr-publications/report/dreams-deferred-a-survey-on-the-impact-of-intimate-partner-violence-on-survivors-education-careers-and-economic-security/>.

³ “Building Partnerships and Collaborations with Workforce and Education Systems.” *Futures Without Violence*, <https://peostcollaborationguide.com/>.

⁴ Stylianou, Amanda M., “Economic Abuse Within Intimate Partner Violence: A Review of Literature.” *Violence and Victims*, Volume 33, Issue 1, <https://connect.springerpub.com/content/sgrvv/33/1/3> ; “2012 Truth About Abuse Survey Report.” Mary Kay (2012), <https://content2.marykayintouch.com/Public/MKACF/Documents/2012survey.pdf>.

⁵ Tarshis S. Intimate Partner Violence and Employment-Seeking: A Multilevel Examination of Barriers and Facilitators. *J Interpers Violence*. 2022 Apr;37(7-8):NP5774-NP5804. doi: 10.1177/0886260520962075.

survivors, 66 percent of respondents said an abuser impacted their ability to complete education or training while 83 percent of respondents said an abuser impacted their ability to work.⁶ Additionally, 39 percent of respondents stated they experienced harassment in the workplace from a manager, co-worker, or customer, which compounded the violence they experienced at home.⁷ In addition to these barriers, certain marginalized groups and workers in specific industries face increased rates of harassment. For example, in a recent analysis of EEOC reporting data, researchers found that Black women faced significantly higher rates of workplace sexual harassment than white women.⁸ Workplace harassment also tends to increase in professions that have traditionally excluded women, such as construction, as well as lower wage jobs that are dominated by women such as food service, domestic work, or agricultural work.⁹

These barriers can create an especially difficult situation for many survivors balancing supporting their families, maintaining safety, and completing job or educational training requirements.¹⁰ Knowing the difficulties survivors face obtaining and maintaining employment, it's imperative our workforce development system prioritizes addressing the impacts violence and harassment has on job seekers and ensuring that career pathways lead to jobs that are safe and sustainable.

Below FUTURES details several recommendations that the workforce development system should adopt to ensure greater access and success for all job seekers. These recommendations take a holistic look at our current system by highlighting the importance of partnering with victim services organizations, offering virtual or remote training, mandating trauma-informed and gender-based violence training and workplace policies, increasing funding for wraparound and supportive services, increasing language accessibility, and enhancing career exploration opportunities. These recommendations will benefit all job seekers by creating safer, more equitable, and trauma-informed workforce development programs where people can succeed and thrive.

Epub 2020 Sep 25. PMID: 32976037. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0886260520962075>; Showalter, Kathryn. "Women's employment and domestic violence: A review of literature." *Journal of Aggression and Violent Behavior*, July 1, 2016.

https://www.libertylane.ca/uploads/1/6/1/7/16174606/showalter_2016.pdf.

⁶ Hess, Cynthia. "Dreams Deferred." <https://iwpr.org/iwpr-publications/report/dreams-deferred-a-survey-on-the-impact-of-intimate-partner-violence-on-survivors-education-careers-and-economic-security/>.

⁷ Hess, Cynthia. "Dreams Deferred." <https://iwpr.org/iwpr-publications/report/dreams-deferred-a-survey-on-the-impact-of-intimate-partner-violence-on-survivors-education-careers-and-economic-security/>.

⁸ Rossie, Amanda, Tucker, Jasmine, and Kayla Patrick. "Out of the shadows: An Analysis of Sexual Harassment Charges Filed by Working Women." *National Women's Law Center*, 2018.

<https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/SexualHarassmentReport.pdf>.

⁹ "Sexual Harassment in the Workplace." *National Women's Law Center*, Nov. 2016. <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Sexual-Harassment-Fact-Sheet.pdf>; Shaw, Elyse, Hegewisch, Ariane, and Cynthia Hess, "Briefing Paper: Sexual Harassment and Assault at Work: Understanding the Costs." *Institute for Women's Policy Research*, October 2018. <https://iwpr.org/iwpr-publications/briefing-paper/sexual-harassment-and-assault-at-work-understanding-the-costs/>.

¹⁰ Stylianou, Amanda M., "Economic Abuse Within Intimate Partner Violence: A Review of Literature." <https://connect.springerpub.com/content/sgrvv/33/1/3>.

Workforce Development Recommendations

Recommendation: Workforce Development Systems Should Partner with Victim Service and Allied Human Service Organizations

It is imperative that workforce development systems partner with local victim service organizations to ensure job seekers have the support they need to successfully earn job training and education credentials or obtain and maintain employment. Survivors of gender-based violence and harassment would especially benefit from this partnership due to the complex employment and education barriers they face in our current system. Unlike many other vulnerable populations, survivors face targeted sabotage by abusive partners to keep them out of the workforce and education system, which can prevent them from maintaining economic security. Therefore, it is critical workforce development systems work to understand these unique barriers faced by survivors of gender-based violence.

Because of the unique education and employment barriers survivors face, they often need support that workforce development programs either aren't aware of, don't know how to obtain, or lack the capacity to address. While the workforce development system specializes in educating, training, and creating increased employment access for workers they are often not uniformly addressing the unique and specific barriers survivors encounter. As they currently exist, many workforce development programs are not designed to provide the flexibility and trauma-informed support many job seekers, especially survivors of gender-based violence and harassment, need. Tragically, the number of adults who have experienced trauma at some time in their lives is inordinately high. In an international study, 70 percent of adults identified as experiencing at least one traumatic event in their life with 30 percent saying they had been exposed to at least four to five traumatic events in their life.¹¹ Other studies conclude that almost 90 percent of adults have experienced a traumatic event in their lifetime.¹²

¹¹ Benjet C, Bromet E, Karam EG, Kessler RC, McLaughlin KA, Ruscio AM, Shahly V, Stein DJ, Petukhova M, Hill E, Alonso J, Atwoli L, Bunting B, Bruffaerts R, Caldas-de-Almeida JM, de Girolamo G, Florescu S, Gureje O, Huang Y, Lepine JP, Kawakami N, Kovess-Masfety V, Medina-Mora ME, Navarro-Mateu F, Piazza M, Posada-Villa J, Scott KM, Shalev A, Slade T, ten Have M, Torres Y, Viana MC, Zarkov Z, Koenen KC. The epidemiology of traumatic event exposure worldwide: results from the World Mental Health Survey Consortium. *Psychol Med*. 2016 Jan;46(2):327-43. doi: 10.1017/S0033291715001981. Epub 2015 Oct 29. PMID: 26511595; PMCID: PMC4869975. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4869975/>

¹² Kilpatrick, Dean G, Heidi S Resnick, Melissa E Milanak, Mark W Miller, Katherine M Keyes, and Matthew J Friedman. "National Estimates of Exposure to Traumatic Events and PTSD Prevalence Using DSM-IV and DSM-5 Criteria." *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 26, no. 5 (October 2013): 537–47. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.21848>.

Victim service and allied human service organizations can partner with workforce programs to align services and fill this much-needed gap in expertise. Importantly, the goal is not to screen for and identify survivors, rather it is to create an infrastructure that is responsive to the needs of those who have a history of violence and trauma to eliminate barriers and offer pathways to support.

Victim service organizations are designed to promote healing and safety and are already equipped to assist survivors and ensure they are receiving wraparound support in other areas of their lives. Victim service organizations can help to connect survivors to reliable access to transportation, housing, and child care while workforce development programs can ensure survivors are increasing their educational opportunities, receiving job training, and becoming more financially secure with stable employment. Moreover, their expertise can be leveraged by workforce programs to better identify and implement trauma-informed practices that will improve access and success for all job seekers and provide guidance to program instructors and support staff on how to best support individuals who may be experiencing violence and trauma. However, in order for this partnership to be successful, it's important that workforce development programs work closely with victim service organizations as true partners for job seekers, as opposed to just a referral service for survivors. A strong partnership will create better understanding of what job seeking survivors need and ensure safe, sustainable, and trauma-informed jobs.

We know workforce development systems are already capable of partnering with other organizations to ensure their workers are receiving the support they need. For example, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) One-Stop Career Centers already provide access to benefits and services like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and unemployment services in addition to other employment services provided.¹³ This is a vital partnership as workers know where to access the services they need and they can take care of several tasks at once, like receiving job training while also ensuring their TANF benefits are in place. This example proves workforce development systems are capable of partnering with other organizations to ensure their workers' needs are met.

In order to ensure a collaborative and successful partnership between workforce development programs, education programs, and survivor-centered organizations, FUTURES has created a guide to aid programs serving survivors of human trafficking.¹⁴ [“Partnership and Pathways to Economic Opportunity for Survivors of Trafficking: A Guide¹⁵”](#) was created in collaboration with several organizations and demonstrates that partnership between workforce development programs and victim service organizations is not only possible, but essential for ensuring the success of job seekers.

¹³ “Fact Sheet: One-Stop Career Centers” United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, https://www.ninaetc.net/WIOA_OneStop_FactSheet.pdf.

¹⁴ “Building Partnerships and Collaborations with Workforce and Education Systems.” <https://peostcollaborationguide.com/>.

¹⁵ “Building Partnerships and Collaborations with Workforce and Education Systems.” <https://peostcollaborationguide.com/>.

We strongly recommend workforce development organizations partner with victim services organizations to ensure job seekers have access to critical services and supports.

Recommendation: Workforce Development Programs Should Have Trauma-Informed and Gender-Based Violence Workplace Training and Policies

All workforce development programs - and their employer partners - should mandate trauma-informed and gender-based violence workplace policies and education and training programs in order to support all job seekers and employees, especially survivors.

Trauma-informed training and policies are critical for ensuring every individual feels safe, supported, and respected. Unfortunately, nearly 90 percent of adults have experienced some form of trauma in their lifetime, whether that be gender-based violence, discrimination, or the impact of a global pandemic making it essential that systems respond to its impact.¹⁶ Trauma can affect an individual's ability to work as trauma often manifests in physical pain, illness, or heightened stress, and anxiety.¹⁷ Working while experiencing trauma is common for survivors of gender-based violence and harassment.¹⁸ Many report feeling distracted, tired, or anxious at work due to the violence occurring at home.¹⁹

By centering a trauma-informed approach and acknowledging that performance and well-being could be impacted by trauma, training providers and employer partners can ensure that job seekers and employees experience greater agency, respect, dignity, as well as physical and psychological safety at work.²⁰ A recent Google study examining what makes an effective team determined psychological safety of their employers was one of the top indicators of an effective team as it allowed employees to take risks and be creative while trusting their colleagues.²¹ Job training programs and workplaces that prioritize trauma-informed practices lead to better employment outcomes for job seekers.

¹⁶ Kilpatrick, Dean G, Heidi S Resnick, Melissa E Milanak, Mark W Miller, Katherine M Keyes, and Matthew J Friedman. "National Estimates of Exposure to Traumatic Events and PTSD Prevalence Using DSM-IV and DSM-5 Criteria." *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 26, no. 5 (October 2013): 537–47. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.21848>.

¹⁷ "Coping with Racial Trauma." *Department of Psychology, University of Georgia*. <https://psychology.uga.edu/coping-racial-trauma>.

¹⁸ Wathen CN, MacGregor JC, MacQuarrie BJ. The Impact of Domestic Violence in the Workplace: Results From a Pan-Canadian Survey. *J Occup Environ Med*. 2015 Jul;57(7):e65-71. doi: 10.1097/JOM.0000000000000499. PMID: 26147553; PMCID: PMC4676385. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4676385/>.

¹⁹ Wathen, CN. The Impact of Domestic Violence in the Workplace: Results from a Pan-Canadian Survey. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4676385/>.

²⁰ Manning, Katharine. "We Need Trauma-Informed Workplaces." *Harvard Business Review*, March 31, 2022. <https://hbr.org/2022/03/we-need-trauma-informed-workplaces>.

²¹ Re:Work, Google. <https://rework.withgoogle.com/print/guides/5721312655835136/>.

In addition to implementing a trauma-informed framework, programs should also prioritize gender-based violence training and policies. Gender-based violence and harassment creates unsafe environments. Tragically, workplace violence is the number one cause of women dying at work in America. From 2003 to 2008, 33 percent of women killed in the workplace were killed by a known personal relation, of which the majority were intimate partners.²² Additionally, in a 2013 study by the Society for Human Resource Management, 19 percent of workplaces had experienced a domestic violence incident within the past year.²³ Abusive partners can also make their workplaces unsafe. In a survey of men in batterer intervention programs, 19 percent of respondents said they almost or did cause an accident at work related to the violence they were causing their partner.²⁴ Examples included almost hitting a co-worker with a car, almost falling off a ladder, and slamming hands in doors and equipment.

WIOA programs aren't immune from experiencing violence and harassment on job sites or within their programs.



In a survey of Black Latina, and Afro-Latina women in construction trade apprenticeships and employment,

many noted they often faced both racial and sex discrimination and harassment on job sites.

From July 2016 – June 2017, Job Corps centers experienced 13,673 safety and security incidents involving students at a Job Corps center including 2,593 incidents of assault and 790 incidents of serious illness or injury.²⁵ Additionally, tradeswomen are particularly impacted by harassment and feeling

unsafe on job sites. In a 2021 survey, 47 percent stated “lack of respect/harassment” was one of the main reasons they either left or were thinking about leaving the trades

²² Tiesman HM, Gurka KK, Konda S, Coben JH, Amandus HE. Workplace homicides among U.S. women: the role of intimate partner violence. *Ann Epidemiol.* 2012 Apr;22(4):277-84. doi: 10.1016/j.annepidem.2012.02.009. PMID: 22463843; PMCID: PMC4687019. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4687019/>.

²³ “The Workplace Impact of Domestic and Sexual Violence and Stalking.” *Society for Human Resource Managers*, February 1, 2013. <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/trends-and-forecasting/research-and-surveys/pages/shrm-workplace-impact-domestic-sexual-violence-stalking.aspx>.

²⁴ Schmidt, Michele Cranwell, and Autumn Barnett. “Effects of Domestic Violence on the Workplace: A Vermont survey of male offenders enrolled in batterer intervention programs.” *University of Vermont*, 2012. https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/media/VTDV_WorkplaceStudy2012.pdf.

²⁵ “Job Corps: DOL Could Enhance Safety and Security at Centers with Consistent Monitoring and Comprehensive Planning.” *U.S. Government Accountability Office*, June 15, 2018. <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-18-482>.

while 27 percent answered “safety concerns.”²⁶ In a survey of Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina women in construction trade apprenticeships and employment, many noted they often faced both racial and sex discrimination and harassment on job sites.²⁷ They also detailed they often felt unsafe at work because the average safety equipment is often built for men so gloves and safety goggles didn’t always fit appropriately.²⁸

Ensuring job sites have gender-based violence training and policies keeps all job seekers safe by discouraging abusers from exhibiting violent and harassing behaviors and teaching bystanders how to respond to the impacts of violence within their programs. In a study of men in batter intervention programs, 77 percent of respondents said a written company policy that makes clear their workplace culture doesn’t support domestic violence would be effective in preventing domestic violence.²⁹ Workforce development programs implementing gender-based violence training and programs create a safer environment for everyone by ensuring that job seekers know their work sites will respond swiftly and appropriately to violence and harassment.

Mandatory gender-based violence trainings and workplace policies allow survivors to maintain confidentiality and have their needs met while also guiding their coworkers in how to spot signs of gender-based violence and how to act if they positively identify those signs.³⁰ Training can also prevent well-meaning training instructors or program administrators from potentially putting a survivor at risk. For example, a program manager might think they should file a restraining order against an abusive partner without consulting the survivor, but that could only serve to further endanger that individual.³¹ By creating mandatory training and enforcing policies to accommodate survivors, everyone is included in the knowledge and protections without having to self-identify as a survivor.

Mandating trauma-informed and gender-based violence trainings and policies save lives and fosters safe learning and working environments that leads to better outcomes for all

²⁶ Hegewisch, Ariane, and Eve Mefferd. “A Future Worth Building: What Tradeswomen Say About the Change They Need in the Construction Industry.” *Institute for Women’s Policy Research*, 2022. https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/A-Future-Worth-Building-What-Tradeswomen-Say_FINAL.pdf.

²⁷ “Here to Stay: Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina Women in Construction Trades Apprenticeships and Employment.” *Chicago Women in Trades*. https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Here-to-Stay_revision2.pdf.

²⁸ “Here to Stay: Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina Women in Construction Trades Apprenticeships and Employment.” *Chicago Women in Trades*. https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Here-to-Stay_revision2.pdf.

²⁹ Schmidt, Michele Cranwell, and Autumn Barnett. “Effects of Domestic Violence on the Workplace: A Vermont survey of male offenders enrolled in batterer intervention programs.” *University of Vermont*, 2012. https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/media/VTDV_WorkplaceStudy2012.pdf.

³⁰ Maurer, Roy. “When Domestic Violence Comes to Work.” *Society for Human Resource Managers*. <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/risk-management/pages/domestic-violence-workplace-nfl-ray-rice.aspx>

³¹ Maurer, Roy. “When Domestic Violence Comes to Work.” *Society for Human Resource Managers*. <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/risk-management/pages/domestic-violence-workplace-nfl-ray-rice.aspx>

job seekers and workers. Therefore, we strongly recommend requiring workforce development programs to incorporate trauma-informed and gender-based violence training and policies in their programs and training to workers and employers.

Recommendation: Workforce Development Programs and Boards Should Invest More in Robust Wraparound and Supportive Services

As discussed above, survivors face many complex barriers to entering the workforce or accessing educational opportunities due to violence. This is compounded by many other barriers survivors may face like finding stable housing, reliable transportation, affordable child care; dealing with immigration-related issues; and handling the stress and trauma of an abusive relationship.³² These barriers can be further exacerbated by race, national origin, class, immigration status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Therefore, workforce development programs should create more supports for survivors so they can access safe and stable educational opportunities, job training, and employment.

Workforce development programs can create better pathways for all workers, including survivors, to access education, job training, and employment opportunities by providing robust wraparound and supportive services. WIOA is specifically designed to support people with significant barriers to employment and outlines several ways workforce development programs can support workers with barriers.³³ While WIOA recognizes the importance of offering supportive services such as child care, transportation, and housing³⁴, there is more to be done to ensure a wide range of supportive services are available for any workforce development program in the United States. We specifically highlight the importance of two of those for survivors of gender-based violence.

Child Care

Child care is a critical supportive service for all workers trying to balance family and work responsibilities. While most workforce development programs acknowledge that child care is a barrier, the cost and availability of child care has become more dire in the past few years. The pandemic worsened access to child care by making it less

³² Tarshis S. Intimate Partner Violence and Employment-Seeking: A Multilevel Examination of Barriers and Facilitators. *J Interpers Violence*. 2022 Apr;37(7-8):NP5774-NP5804. doi: 10.1177/0886260520962075. Epub 2020 Sep 25. PMID: 32976037. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32976037/>

³³ "Building Partnerships and Collaborations with Workforce and Education Systems, Chapter 1: Making the Case for Partnership." *Futures Without Violence*. <https://peostcollaborationguide.com/chapter-1-2/>.

³⁴ 200 CFR Sec. 680.900, <https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/20/680.900>.

accessible and more expensive with child care costs increasing by 47 percent.³⁵ Additionally, many low-income workers already don't qualify for child care subsidies, making the increased cost even more unsustainable.³⁶

Lack of available and affordable child care also creates a barrier for many women remaining in our workforce. When families are forced to choose between work and staying home with their children, the burden often falls on women to quit their jobs.³⁷ All too often, marginalized people have unique struggles affording child care. Black parents are almost twice as likely as non-Hispanic white parents to make job sacrifices because of child care challenges.³⁸ Same-sex parents are more likely than non-LGBTQIA+ parents to report household incomes closer to the poverty threshold, which impacts their ability to afford child care.³⁹ Many survivors of domestic violence are also kept out of the workforce development programming and educational opportunities for lack of child care.⁴⁰

Cash Assistance

Programs, like those under WIOA, may already provide needs-based payment for individuals who need financial assistance to participate in job training.⁴¹ However, FUTURES strongly recommends needs-based payments be expanded to provide cash assistance for job seekers in workforce development programs who need financial assistance to participate in educational opportunities, employment, or job opportunities. As stated previously, many survivors face economic abuse and financial insecurity due to the violence and abuse they've experienced. Disabled, queer, Black, Indigenous, and

³⁵ Workman, Simon, and Steven Jessen-Howard, "The True Cost of Providing Safe Child Care During the Coronavirus Pandemic." *Center for American Progress*, September 2020.

<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/true-cost-providing-safe-child-care-coronavirus-pandemic/>.

³⁶ Workman, Simon. "The True Cost of High-Quality Child Care Across the United States." *Center for American Progress*, June 28, 2021. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/true-cost-high-quality-child-care-across-united-states/>.

³⁷ Schochet, Leila. "The Child Care Crisis is Keeping Women out of the Workforce." *Center for American Progress*, March 28, 2019. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/child-care-crisis-keeping-women-workforce/>.

³⁸ Jessen-Howard, Steven, Malik, Rasheed, and MK Falgout. "Costly and Unavailable: America Lacks Sufficient Child Care Supply for Infants and Toddlers." *Center for American Progress*, August 4, 2020.

<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/costly-unavailable-america-lacks-sufficient-child-care-supply-infants-toddlers/>.

³⁹ Gates, Gary, J. "LGBT Parenting in the United States." *UCLA School of Law Williams Institute*, February 2013. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/lgbt-parenting-us/>.

⁴⁰ "Child Care as a Domestic Violence Issue." *Futures Without Violence*, June 2022.

<https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/wp-content/uploads/Child-Care-Policy-Brief-June.pdf>.

⁴¹ 20 CFR Sec. 680. 930.

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/20/680.930#:~:text=Needs%2Drelated%20payments%20provide%20financial,must%20be%20enrolled%20in%20training.>

other survivors of color have reported facing additional harm compared to white, able-bodied survivors.⁴² It isn't feasible for some survivors to attend job training or college courses without cash assistance to ensure they have stable housing, transportation, food, access to childcare, and other necessities. In a survey of survivors applying for cash assistance during the pandemic, 73 percent of respondents stated having flexible cash to spend on basic needs and living expenses was their primary financial need.⁴³ Survivors having access to financial assistance programs is critical for stabilizing their economic security and ensuring they can meet their basic needs so they can remain in job training, school, or employed.⁴⁴ It also keeps survivors and their families safer as they are less likely to stay with or return to an abusive partner if they are financially secure.⁴⁵ For example, from our work with trafficking survivors, we commonly hear that many survivors will complete a cost-benefit analysis between a training program, that pays nothing, and a stable source of housing and meals from their trafficker. Workforce development programs could partner with existing programs providing cash assistance to survivors, like FreeFrom's Safety Fund, in order to ensure survivors financial needs are being met.⁴⁶

While these recommendations only highlight two examples of where funding should be increased, FUTURES is supportive of increasing funding for all forms of wraparound and supportive services provided under WIOA and other workforce development programs.

Reasonable Accommodations for Survivors of Gender-Based Violence and Harassment

Most workforce development programs provide reasonable accommodations for disabilities as a supportive service for their workers. FUTURES recommends that this is expanded to include reasonable accommodations for survivors of gender-based

⁴² "Support Every Survivor: How Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexuality, and Disability Shape Survivors' Experiences and Needs." *FreeFrom*, October 2022. <https://www.freefrom.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Support-Every-Survivor-PDF.pdf>.

⁴³ "Support Every Survivor: How Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexuality, and Disability Shape Survivors' Experiences and Needs." <https://www.freefrom.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Support-Every-Survivor-PDF.pdf>.

⁴⁴ Goodman, Shaina. "The Difference Between Surviving and Not Surviving Public Benefit Programs and Domestic and Sexual Violence Victims' Economic Security." *National Resource Center on Domestic Violence*, Jan. 2018. https://vawnet.org/sites/default/files/assets/files/2018-10/NRCDDV-TheDifferenceBetweenSurvivingandNotSurviving-UpdatedOct2018_0.pdf.

⁴⁵ Goodman, Shaina. "The Difference Between Surviving and Not Surviving Public Benefit Programs and Domestic and Sexual Violence Victims' Economic Security." https://vawnet.org/sites/default/files/assets/files/2018-10/NRCDDV-TheDifferenceBetweenSurvivingandNotSurviving-UpdatedOct2018_0.pdf.

⁴⁶ FreeFrom. <https://www.freefrom.org/our-work/>.

violence and harassment. Survivors may need reasonable accommodations in order to safely access and participate in a job training program. Reasonable accommodations for survivors are changes or adjustments to a survivor’s training location or schedule that allows them to fulfill necessary parts of their education while keeping them safe. For example, a survivor may ask to have security notified to keep a stalker off site, their equipment or textbooks stored on site to avoid them being destroyed, or an escort to and from their car or public transit. Several states recognize these forms of sabotage and interference and are required to provide reasonable accommodations at work for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking.⁴⁷ FUTURES strongly recommends all workforce development programs and boards also incorporate reasonable accommodations for survivors as a supportive service available in all education and training programs.

Mental Health Care Supports

As stated previously, many survivors are coping with significant trauma related to the abuse and violence they experienced. Entering the educational programs and applying for work can be triggering for survivors who have to explain why they have significant gaps in their resume or why they have left previous jobs.⁴⁸ But trauma is not limited to gender-based violence survivors. All workers have likely experienced multiple forms of trauma and may have needed mental health care at some point in their lives.⁴⁹ Training programs and workplaces are often considered to be a place where people can experience trauma through workplace accidents, bullying, racism, toxic work environments, increased stress, and sexual harassment.⁵⁰ In order to help job seekers cope with trauma and other mental health care needs while keeping job sites safe and productive, workforce development programs should provide job seekers with better access to mental health care.

Recommendation: Workforce Development Programs Should Invest More for Language Accessibility for Workers

⁴⁷ “State Guide on Employment Rights for Survivors of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking.” *Futures Without Violence and Legal Momentum*. <https://www.workplacesrespond.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/State-Employment-Guide.pdf>.

⁴⁸ “Building Partnerships and Collaborations with Workforce and Education Systems: Chapter 4 Building Blocks for Survivor Success.” *Futures Without Violence*, <https://peostcollaborationguide.com/chapter-4-2/>.

⁴⁹ “Trauma and Violence.” *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration*. <https://www.samhsa.gov/trauma-violence>.

⁵⁰ Padhi, Ashwini. “Workplace trauma can effect anyone in any occupation. How can we deal with it?” *The Guardian*, September 20, 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/sep/21/workplace-trauma-can-affect-anyone-in-any-occupation-how-can-we-deal-with-it>.

The United States is a linguistically diverse country where U.S. residents speak more than 350 languages⁵¹ and 21.5 percent of people speak a language other than English at home.⁵² Immigrant workers and workers with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) can often face barriers accessing job trainings, education, and employment because the materials provided are solely in English. Language barriers are a common roadblock for immigrant survivors, who may have trouble navigating existing social systems to ensure they are gaining full access to support they need.⁵³ Similarly, workers with disabilities, workers who are hearing or visually impaired, or workers who are deaf can face language accessibility barriers in workforce development programs.⁵⁴ For example, if training videos aren't available with closed captioning, it's more challenging for workers who are hearing impaired or deaf to be able to get the necessary information from the video.

Currently, all federal agencies are required to improve access to services for persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).⁵⁵ FUTURES strongly recommends that workforce development programs invest more than they currently do in creating and maintaining language accessibility for job training, education, and employment opportunities. Language accessibility allows all workers to participate in our workforce system without facing unnecessary and discriminatory barriers. Workforce development programs can work to increase language accessibility in many ways including, but not limited to, translating materials into the most commonly spoken languages in their area, ensuring interpreters are made available and accessible, and providing captions or other technological tools to ensure online materials are accessible.

Recommendation: Workforce Development Programs Must Prioritize Career Exploration

Many workforce development programs connect workers to available job training or work opportunities without focusing on the existing interests of the job seeker. In order for all job seekers to succeed and thrive in a workforce development program and their career, FUTURES recommends workforce development programs prioritize career exploration. This is particularly important for survivors to help restore their own agency following controlling behaviors from an abusive individual. Instead of placing job seekers

⁵¹ "Main Languages Spoken at Home by U.S. Residents Aged Five Years and Older, 2008-2010." *American Academy of Arts and Sciences*. <https://www.amacad.org/publication/state-languages-us-statistical-portrait/section/3>.

⁵² "Why We Ask Questions About... Language Spoken at Home." *U.S. Census Bureau*. <https://www.census.gov/acs/www/about/why-we-ask-each-question/language/>.

⁵³ "Intimate Partner Violence in Immigrant and Refugee Communities: Challenges, Promising Practices and Recommendations." *Futures Without Violence*, 2009. https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/userfiles/file/ImmigrantWomen/IPV_Report_March_2009.pdf.

⁵⁴ https://www.ncsl.org/Portals/1/Documents/employ/Work_Matters_Report.pdf

⁵⁵ "Plan for Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency." *Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management*. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasam/centers-offices/civil-rights-center/lepDOLplan#:~:text=Executive%20Order%2013166%20requires%20federal,actions%2C%20developing%20Departmental%20LEP%20plans>.

in an available job without consideration for their interests or skills, we encourage workforce development programs to invest more in career exploration tools to find opportunities that not only provide economic security but are aligned with their interests and needs. These tools can help workers determine their ideal work environment as well as the types of work they like performing and how their interests intersect with available job opportunities and career pathways.⁵⁶ This is an especially important resource for individuals who have had little exposure to a broad range of career options and those without a lot of work experience, especially younger workers.⁵⁷ Prioritizing career exploration ensures job seekers are able to exercise their own agency, will be more fulfilled in their roles and can lead to long-term careers and financial security.

Recommendation: Workforce Development Programs Should Provide Remote or Virtual Workplace Training Options Where Possible

It is critical that workforce development programs provide survivors with remote or virtual training options where possible. While we acknowledge legitimate concerns about the quality and accessibility of online trainings, we believe the benefit of asynchronous learnings exceeds these limitations. There are several reasons remote or virtual training can aid survivors. First, attending in-person job training can be a safety risk for survivors. In a survey of the impact of domestic violence on work, 38 percent of respondents who experienced domestic violence stated it impeded their ability to get to work while 81 percent said the violence they experienced impacted their work performance.⁵⁸ An abusive partner may disrupt a survivor's ability to get to work in multiple ways including taking away or hiding their car keys or sabotaging child care arrangements.⁵⁹ Both education and employment sabotage are a common experience for survivors and can cause them to drop out of a training requirement.⁶⁰ Allowing survivors to attend trainings remotely would help prevent missing trainings or being late if an abuser was sabotaging their ability to get to work. Additionally, if a survivor is being stalked by an abusive partner, attending a training outside their home could make them more susceptible to harm. This is especially prevalent if a survivor is attending training to start a new job. If they have to physically leave their home to go to a different location and are being stalked, their abuser will know the location of their new place of employment.

⁵⁶ "Building Partnerships and Collaborations with Workforce and Education Systems: Chapter 4 Building Blocks for Survivor Success." *Futures Without Violence*, <https://peostcollaborationguide.com/chapter-4-2/>.

⁵⁷ "Career Exploration." *Boys and Girls Club of America*. <https://workforcetoolkit.org/career-exploration/>.

⁵⁸ Wathen CN, MacGregor JC, MacQuarrie BJ. The Impact of Domestic Violence in the Workplace: Results From a Pan-Canadian Survey. *J Occup Environ Med*. 2015 Jul;57(7):e65-71. doi: 10.1097/JOM.0000000000000499. PMID: 26147553; PMCID: PMC4676385. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4676385/>.

⁵⁹ Hess, Cynthia. "Dreams Deferred." <https://iwpr.org/iwpr-publications/report/dreams-deferred-a-survey-on-the-impact-of-intimate-partner-violence-on-survivors-education-careers-and-economic-security/>.

⁶⁰ "Here to Stay: Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina Women in Construction Trades Apprenticeships and Employment." *Chicago Women in Trades*. https://womensequitycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Apprenticeship-DV-Best-Practice_revision2.pdf.

Moreover, it's critical to offer remote or virtual trainings and asynchronous learning where possible.⁶¹ According to the National Network to End Domestic Violence, 22-57 percent of women experiencing homelessness state that domestic violence was the immediate cause of their homelessness.⁶² This was especially exacerbated during the pandemic for survivors of color. A study of survivors who are women of color reported 78.7 percent who were essential workers faced housing insecurity compared to 56.9 percent of their white counterparts.⁶³

Providing virtual or remote training allows survivors to connect without adding the additional stress of securing transportation to take them to work.

Recommendation: Workforce Development Programs Need to Examine Unrealistic Time Frames and Program Outcomes

While workforce development programs provide great opportunities to job seekers to receive education, job training, and employment faster than other routes, they are often wedded to unrealistic expectations about how quickly they can move a job seeker through their program due to funding requirements. For example, some of the trafficking survivors we've worked with have been tasked with completing a rigorous job training program and being completely off any form of government assistance within six months. That's an unrealistic timeline for any job seeker, but particularly unrealistic for survivors who may be actively in crisis and working to find affordable and reliable housing, transportation, and child care. Workforce development programs need to be able to design programs that are cognizant of the fact that every job seeker that walks through their doors is not the same. Some may require more time in order to successfully complete programs and thrive within our workforce system. In order for workforce development programs to better adapt to these suggested recommendations, they need increased funding to provide appropriate supports and services for survivors of gender-based violence.

⁶¹ Billhardt, Kris. "Rapid Re-Housing: Considerations for Homeless Service Providers Supporting Families Impacted by Domestic Violence." *Family Violence Prevention and Services Program, Family and Youth Services Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*, July 15, 2018.

<https://safehousingpartnerships.org/sites/default/files/2018-06/Key%20Considerations%20for%20RRH%20w%20Survivors.pdf>; "Domestic Violence, Housing, and Homelessness." National Network to End Domestic Violence, 2019. https://nnedv.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Library_TH_2018_DV_Housing_Homelessness.pdf.

⁶² "Domestic Violence, Housing, and Homelessness." National Network to End Domestic Violence, 2019. https://nnedv.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Library_TH_2018_DV_Housing_Homelessness.pdf.

⁶³ Ruíz, Elena, Ruvalcaba, Yanet, Berenstain, Nora, and Fluegeman, Steph. "Measuring the Economic Impact of COVID-19 On Survivors of Color." MeToo and FreeFrom, 2020. https://metoomvmt.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/MeTooFreeFrom_CovidImpactReport2020.pdf.

Conclusion

In order to create safe, sustainable, and trauma-informed work environments, the workforce development system must invest in reducing the barriers job seekers face. To do this, FUTURES recommends that our workforce development system partner with victim services organizations and allied human service programs, offer virtual or remote training, mandate trauma-informed and gender-based violence training and policies, increase funding for wraparound and supportive services, increase language accessibility, and enhance career exploration opportunities. If you have any questions about the materials in this brief, please reach out to Sarah Gonzalez Bocinski, Associate Director of Workplace and Economic Justice at sgonzalez@futureswithoutviolence.org or Kate Miceli, Economic Justice Policy Advocate at kmiceli@futureswithoutviolence.org.