

A SURVIVOR-CENTERED VISION FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE, EQUITY, & SOLIDARITY

The “economic ripple effect of violence” in the [factsheet](#) illustrates the current landscape which survivors must navigate -- a world where abuse and poverty converge into endless traps and hurdles. In contrast to this, survivors we spoke to in NYC proposed an alternative, positive ripple effect, which offers a vision of a new NYC landscape.

The survivors we spoke to proposed a vision for economic equity and solidarity in NYC -- ideas which will ripple out into new possibilities, opportunities, and choices.

SURVIVORS' VISION: FROM CASCADING CONSEQUENCES TO RIPPLING POSSIBILITIES



*Chart is illustrative, not comprehensive. All points are direct from notes, transcripts, or paraphrased to represent themes from calls.

POLICY PRIORITY AREAS

Following survivors' vision of an equitable economic ripple effect, and based on common recommendations from advocates, attorneys, and survivors in all visioning calls, our platform for survivor economic equity falls into four categories

- 1. Advance equitable responses and resources for gender-based violence survivors:** Multiple, robust, flexible, low-barrier resources and services must be available and provided to ALL survivors.
- 2. Place survivor equity and solidarity at the center of City & State economic development:** Survivors' principles of care, coordination, and community building should be centered in New York City and State plans for economic development.
- 3. Dismantle deeply ingrained racist systems and practices in our institutions and invest in new ideas:** Survivors want better coordinated, accessible, and trauma-informed services and supports. While system reforms are possible, they require systems leaders to acknowledge and contend with institutionalized racism that result in modern day barriers. New investments, directly to survivors, their communities, and survivor-led ideas, are also required.
- 4. Engage survivors in government policy and planning:** "We know what we need," survivors said during the visioning calls. And yet survivors are rarely brought in to advise programming, economic or social policy, budgeting, etc. Survivors should be engaged and treated as critical leaders.

"We all count, we have a say. There is equality and comradeship in our community."

— a survivor visioning call participant

KEY POLICY OUTCOMES

Advance equitable responses and resources for gender-based violence survivors.

- Survivors have multiple pathways to forgive, buy-off, pay, and/or remedy coerced debt, and repair credit reports. This may include: Debt buying, debt forgiveness programs, loan pools to pay survivor debts, fund and expand consumer legal advocacy and debt defense, and re-regulation of consumer industries.
- No survivor is denied safe housing in their preferred community due to damaged credit, use of city vouchers/programs, history of incarceration, gender identity, or immigration status.
- All survivors hear about and utilize public benefits and direct funding programs, regardless of race, immigration status, English proficiency, gender identity, criminal history, employment status, whether or not they are actively fleeing an abusive situation or housing/shelter status.
- Funds received under TANF, SNAP, MA, WIC, and other public benefits rules are exempted as income for housing or program eligibility.
- Survivors living with abusive partners are not denied public benefits, Medicaid, or other resources due to risks of fraud, assets/income of the partner, or limited access to or restricted use of digital tools.
- When survivors need housing, income, childcare, and consumer legal assistance from City programs, the process, systems, portals, and case management system are simple, coordinated, fast, and can be modified to meet individual needs. And all City employees have competency in trauma-informed care through a racial, economic, and gender justice lens.
- Direct advocacy organizations -- especially those that are survivor-, BIPOC-, immigrant-, and LGBTQ+-led -- are fully funded, staffed, and have operating capacity to support survivors and their communities in accessing funds, navigating new or changed government programs, and addressing long-term issues of housing and coerced debt legal matters.
- Advocates and attorneys working with low-income survivors (many of whom are also survivors) are paid a living wage, and there is greater pay parity within organizations, between domestic violence and gender-based violence programs and other direct service industries, and between government and non-profit, non-governmental advocates/staff.

Place survivor equity and solidarity at the center of City & State economic development.

- NYC funds survivors/communities directly to build alternatives to generating income and economic security. Funding and programs are not limited to worker cooperatives, but include things like: babysitting/childcare coops, urban homesteading or alternative use of commercial buildings, building loan pools to pay survivor coerced debt, mutual aid, alternative financial systems, holistic care, and healing cooperatives.
- There are viable alternatives to savings and credit: Examples include, but are not limited to, survivor dedicated loan products (like for DACA), community based financial institutions (like credit unions, public banking), alternative credit reporting systems-scores. Consideration for population versus neighborhood focus should be taken.
- Multiple forms of direct, low-barrier, and flexible funding (cash assistance) are available to survivors to secure safety on their own terms.
- Survivors inform development priorities and are involved in advocacy efforts.

Dismantle deeply ingrained racist systems and practices in our institutions and invest in new ideas.

- Survivors and their communities are not penalized, fined, or criminalized for engaging in survival and informal economies (from food vending to sex work). Instead, protections and supports exist as in any other employment context.
- Survivors are not required to contact police, file a police report, or utilize the criminal justice system to access economic resources for their safety or to repair the financial harm of economic abuse, including disputing information on their credit reports and defending themselves in consumer debt lawsuits
- Parent peer support is removed from Adult & Child Services (ACS) and placed in community-driven models of care. Survivors' mental health needs are understood in the context of violence, provided for, and do not place them at undue risk of losing their children in ACS cases. Parents need resources from job searching, parenting and childcare, to mental health support that are separate from child removal/protection.
- Delink housing and public benefits systems and build programs and investments for flexible cash assistance, housing, and other economic development programs outside of overly bureaucratic systems.

Engage survivors in government policy and planning.

- Survivors and their communities are actively engaged in and regularly inform decision-making on city policy, funding, and programming on matters that impact their safety and economic well-being (especially HRA, NYCHA, ACS, NYPD).
- Political candidates and elected officials come from, represent, engage, talk about, commit to, fund, and develop creative policy by and for survivors from multiply marginalized communities.

LIFTING UP SURVIVOR- & COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVES

This report and issue briefs offer a gender justice advocates' lens to complex racial and economic justice issues, on which other initiatives have long been advocating for radical change. We are advocates and attorneys who: work directly with survivors, represent diverse intersecting identities and are belong to many communities. We developed and committed to [shared values](#) and practices of survivor-centered advocacy. We are also students of these issues, and so commit to continuing to learn and explore through the expertise of survivors, communities, programs, and initiatives who have been creating economies rooted in solidarity for years.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Center for Survivor Agency & Justice: [The Economic Ripple Effect of IPV: Building Partnerships for Systemic Change](#); [Accounting for Survivors' Economic Security: An Atlas](#); The Economic Impact of COVID-19 on Survivors ([Data Dashboard](#) and [Recommendations](#))
- Coalition for the Homeless, [State of the Homeless 2022](#) (and previous years)
- [The Cooperative Economics Alliance of New York City](#) (CEANYC)

- [Denied! How Economic Abuse Perpetuates Homelessness for Domestic Violence Survivors](#), Report & Recommendations from the Domestic Violence & Consumer Law Working Group
- [The Downstate Coalition for Crime Victims](#), Legislative & Racial Justice Committees
- FreeFrom, [Prioritizing Financial Security in the Movement to End IPV: A Roadmap](#) and [Survivors Know Best: How to Disrupt IPV During COVID-19 and Beyond](#)
- National Coalition of Anti-Violence Projects (NCAVP), [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and HIV-Affected Hate and Intimate Partner Violence in 2017, Report](#) (and other Crisis of Hate Reports, [here](#))
- NCAVP's [Platform to End Violence Against LGBT Communities, 2017 Release](#)
- New Economy Project, [New York State Community Equity Agenda](#)
- Anti-Violence Project, [Individual Struggles, Widespread Injustice: Trans and Gender Non-Conforming Peoples' Experiences of Systemic Employment Discrimination in New York City](#)
- The policy platform developed by the [New York City Network of Worker Cooperatives](#). In particular, the recommendations offered by survivors from our calls echo the policy priorities of: Direct Financial Support, Education & Technical Assistance, and Movements for Racial & Immigrant Justice.
- [Report from the Special Advisory on Equal Justice in the New York State Courts](#) (on institutional racism in the courts)
- [SolidarityNYC](#) and the principles and practices in its ["Growing a Resilient City," 2013 Report](#).
- Survived & Punished, [Research & Policy Analysis Publications](#)
- [Time's Up, Pay Up: Gender and Racial Inequity During Crisis: The Pay Gap](#)
- [Urban Justice Center, Street Vendor Project](#)

What or who are we missing? Do you see an opportunity for alliance with other groups? Want to connect and sync efforts with us? Let us know by emailing: nyc_survivor_ej@csaj.org.

ISSUE BRIEFS & RECOMMENDATIONS



COERCED DEBT



HOUSING



PUBLIC BENEFITS



SOLIDARITY ECONOMY

The four issue briefs that follow are anchored in the six visioning calls and generated recommendations that cut across the policy priorities above. Each issue brief is a 3-5 page summary of the topic and list of specific recommendations offered by survivors and advocates from the visioning calls.

The four issue areas are complex in their own right and the briefs are not meant to distill the entire history or complexity of each topic. Rather, their purpose is to illuminate current systems barriers and offer advocate- and survivor-informed solutions and changes to policy, programs, budgets, regulation, and legislation.

CALL TO ACTION

We need a new vision of economic equity for survivors in NYC. And for City agencies, elected officials, and policy makers who have the will to take bold action toward change.

Survivors and community-based advocates from across New York City shared a new vision. We need partners to join us and City and elected officials to champion change.

Do you support this vision for survivor economic equity? Show your commitment by adding your signature at the link below.

Join Our Call-To-Action