

Santa Cruz County – Human Services Department
CALWORKS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INFORMING NOTICE

This notice is given to all CalWORKs participants. Domestic abuse means assaultive or coercive behavior, which includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, isolation, economic control, stalking, and/or threats or other types of coercive behaviors within a domestic relationship.

Because violence is unfortunately common, you should know about the following options that are available to survivors of abuse. If you are being harmed by an intimate partner or other person, please contact one of the local resources below. If abuse is happening in your life and you are required to participate in the Welfare to Work program, we will work with you to develop an activity plan that will keep you safe. If you are a survivor of abuse, we will help you develop a plan that includes counseling or other types of services to assist with your recovery. You may also receive waivers of CalWORKs program requirements (such as school attendance and immunization rules) that would put you or your children at risk or which interfere with your ability to recover from abuse. Some important things to consider:

- If you are fleeing your abuser, and you're applying for CalWORKs, you may receive up to 32 days of Homeless Assistance money to help pay for a motel or other safe shelter, even if you have not yet spent a night homeless.
- When you apply for CalWORKs, you are required to establish paternity for your children and the county is required to contact your children's absent parent to try to get child support. If this would put you or your children at risk of harm, you can be excused from this requirement.
- Information you provide about your abuse or fear of abuse will be kept confidential, unless we suspect child abuse or elder abuse. Please let us know if special arrangements need to be taken to keep your mailing address private from other county and state employees.
- If you are a battered immigrant, and you are married to a United States citizen or legal permanent resident, you and your children may be eligible to apply for residency and receive CalWORKs benefits and services. You may be waived from using your sponsor's information to determine eligibility. We do not routinely report information to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and will give information to them only when asked.
- You may disclose abuse and request special consideration at any time if abuse is interfering with your ability to meet CalWORKs program requirements. If you don't feel you are able to talk about this now, or would feel more comfortable talking to someone else about your situation, you can ask to meet with an Employment & Benefit Services Social Worker. You may also choose to discuss this issue with a community advocate and ask them to contact us about your needs.

LOCAL RESOURCES

24 Hour Domestic Abuse Crisis Lines

Monarch Services: 1-888-900-4232
Walnut Avenue Women's Center: 1-866-269-2559

Immigration Assistance/Advocacy

Santa Cruz County Immigration Project: 724-5667
Catholic Charities Immigration Program: 722-2675
California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA): 724-2253

Do not hesitate to call **911** if it is an emergency and you need immediate help!

SAFETY PLANNING FOR SURVIVORS OF ABUSE

Not all ideas work for all survivors. Choose the ones that make sense for YOU.

IF YOU ARE LIVING APART FROM YOUR ABUSER

- ▶ Change locks on doors and make sure windows lock
- ▶ Install a better security system - window bars, locks, better lighting, smoke detectors and fire extinguishers
- ▶ Teach children how to call the police or family or friends if they are in danger or taken against their will by the abuser
- ▶ Make sure children's school/daycare know who is allowed to pick up children and have copies of any restraining orders or custody orders
- ▶ Ask your neighbors to call the police if they see the abuser near your home
- ▶ If you do not have a custody or a restraining order, contact a lawyer or a domestic violence agency to discuss getting one

IF YOU ARE PLANNING TO LEAVE - REMEMBER LEAVING CAN BE DANGEROUS

- ▶ Try to figure out which are the agencies in the community that can help you (police, domestic violence agencies, legal services, etc.) and contact them for services
- ▶ Open a bank account in your own name so that your abuser cannot have access to it
- ▶ Leave money, an extra set of keys, and copies of important documents with someone you trust or in a safe place and take them with you when you leave
- ▶ Figure out with whom you can stay with or who can help you in other ways
- ▶ Would a restraining order help you?
- ▶ Bring prescription medicine, glasses, hearing aids, or other important items with you when you leave.
- ▶ After you and your children have reached a safe place (within ten days), contact the District Attorney's Office (454- 2400) to obtain a Domestic Violence exception. This will help you avoid future legal problems.

IF YOU ARE LIVING WITH YOUR ABUSER

- ▶ Practice how to get out of your home safely
- ▶ Decide and plan for where you will go if you need to leave in a hurry
- ▶ If you want a way to call the police, teach your children to dial 911, or work out a signal with neighbors to call the police (banging on the wall, calling and saying a certain code word)
- ▶ Keep a bag packed with money and important documents if you need to leave in a hurry
- ▶ Try to stay out of the bathroom or kitchen or other dangerous parts of your house if your partner gets violent
- ▶ If your partner has weapons in the house, think about ways to remove them
- ▶ Hide an extra set of car keys and some money

SAFETY AT WORK

- ▶ Give a picture of abuser to security guards and the receptionist and ask them to call the police if the abuser shows up
- ▶ Keep a copy of any court orders at work and give a copy to your supervisor unless you think they will not be supportive
- ▶ Be careful entering and exiting; try to get a parking spot near the door

