

# Financial Empowerment

## Moving Ahead Through Financial Management



## Short-Term Planning Guide



This guide was developed to assist survivors in planning for the immediate future during or immediately following a crisis. For a more comprehensive look at money management and financial planning, contact your local domestic violence program, state domestic violence coalition or download the complete "Moving Ahead Through Financial Management" Curriculum at [www.clicktoempower.com](http://www.clicktoempower.com) or [www.nnedv.org](http://www.nnedv.org). Once you are physically safe, it's important to assess your current financial status.

Many survivors who have fled their home report being surprised to discover their partner immediately drained joint bank accounts. This tactic is a deliberate attempt to regain control over you and your children and can be a very powerful method. Consider securing at least half of the money in joint accounts in another account under your name only, as soon as possible. Doing so is a way of protecting yourself and ensuring that you have the means to take care of yourself and your children. You may be asked to account for how the money was spent at a later date by the court, so it's a good idea to track how you spend the money.

Be aware that gathering these documents may put your safety at risk. Talk to an advocate to create a safety plan. As you start collecting the above documents, consider storing them in a sealed envelope and in a safe place.

**Step One-Take Stock:** It's important to know what you currently have access to, so that you can plan and protect it. Use the following grid to explore your access to finances and accounts.

|                  | Account In Your Name Only | Account In Both Names | Account In Partner's Name | Amount |
|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------|
| Cash On Hand     |                           |                       |                           |        |
| Checking Account |                           |                       |                           |        |
| Savings Account  |                           |                       |                           |        |
| Other Account(s) |                           |                       |                           |        |

**Step Two-Looking Ahead:** Determine your immediate living expenses. If you are staying in shelter or with friends and family, this amount should be minimal. However, you still may have expenses that need to be addressed such as medications, transportation expenses, etc. It's important to start planning now so that you optimize the resources.

|  | Amount | Due Date |
|--|--------|----------|
| <b>Current Cash/Account Total</b>                              |        |          |
| <b>Expected Income</b>   |        |          |
| Paychecks from Employers                                       |        |          |
| TANF (State/Federal Assistance)                                |        |          |
| Disability/Unemployment  |        |          |
| Child Support  |        |          |
| Other  |        |          |
| <b>Income Sub-Total</b>  |        |          |
| <b>Expected Expenses</b>                                       |        |          |
| Rent/Mortgage  |        |          |
| Transportation (Car Payment, Auto Insurance, Taxi, Bus, Train) |        |          |
| Credit Cards/Installment Payments                              |        |          |
| Food   |        |          |
| Medical (Co-Pay, Prescriptions)                                |        |          |
| Childcare  |        |          |
| Other  |        |          |
| <b>Expenses Sub-Total</b>                                      |        |          |
| <b>Income Minus Expenses Total</b>                             |        |          |

**Step Three-Document Checklist:** The following list of documents may help you stay safe and rebuild your financial life. In some cases, you may also need to obtain these documents for your children as well. Don't be discouraged if you are unable to obtain all of these documents.

|   | Have | Need |
|---|------|------|
| <b>Legal Documents</b>                        |      |      |
| Birth Certificate(s)                          |      |      |
| Marriage Certificate                          |      |      |
| Divorce and Custody Decree(s)                 |      |      |
| Passport/Immigration Paperwork                |      |      |
| Social Security Card(s)                       |      |      |
| Will/Trust Documents                          |      |      |
| Records of Pending Legal Actions              |      |      |
| Protection/Retraining Orders                  |      |      |
| Driver's License/ID Card                      |      |      |
| <b>Financial Documents</b>                    |      |      |
| Bank Statements                               |      |      |
| Credit Card Statements                        |      |      |
| Pay Stubs                                     |      |      |
| Tax Records                                   |      |      |
| Public Benefits Documents                     |      |      |
| Money Order Receipts                          |      |      |
| <b>Health Documents</b>                       |      |      |
| Insurance Cards                               |      |      |
| Medical Records and Prescriptions             |      |      |
| List of Doctors                               |      |      |
| <b>Property Documents</b>                     |      |      |
| Lease/Mortgage Documents                      |      |      |
| Titles (Car, Home, etc.)                      |      |      |
| Vehicle Registration                          |      |      |
| Insurance Policies                            |      |      |
| Pictures of Property/Furnishings/Collectables |      |      |