

News Release



For Immediate Release

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Domestic Violence Victims Program Provides Much Needed Assistance



Baton Rouge, LA - The Governor's Office on Women's Policy (OWP) reports that the Domestic Violence Victims Program (DVVP) is reaching out to its constituency and would like to reach out to an even greater number of women in need.

According to OWP Executive Director Dr. Shanta Harrison Proctor, the Governor's Office on Women's Policy greatly encourages all interested in learning more about

the DVVP qualification process to please contact the Louisiana Department of Labor by calling 1-866-783-5567 or by visiting their website at www.laworks.net.

Within the first three months of the DVVP, 18 applicants have received over \$26,000 in benefits. The program is currently funded through a \$300,000 allocation from the State's General Fund and is subject to renewal annually - allowing the program to benefit many more women in need.

Domestic Violence Victims Program

In response to the need for assistance for domestic violence victims, the Lost Wage Benefits for Domestic Violence Victims Act was passed in the 2007 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, establishing the Domestic Violence Victims Program (DVVP).

DVVP is a one-year pilot program that provides unemployment insurance benefits for survivors of domestic violence unable to continue employment as a result of abuse.

The program is operated in the same manner as the regular unemployment insurance (UI) benefit program. UI eligibility is explored first - if the claimant is not eligible for regular UI, eligibility for DVVP benefits is then explored.

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"These benefits provide an incentive as well as a sense of security to women who will essentially need to start from scratch in order to create a new life for themselves," said Dr. Proctor, Executive Director of the Governor's Office on Women's Policy.

Louisiana State Senator Advocates Program

State Senator Cheryl L. Gray, a Democrat from New Orleans, is the author of the Lost Wage Benefits for Domestic Violence Victims Act (Act No. 421), which funds the DVVP. Her persistence and leadership, as well as support from a number of other domestic violence advocates, helped pass Act No. 421 during the 2007 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature.



"It is important that we, as a state, have a program in place to help these women get back on their feet after having the courage to leave their abuser," said Senator Gray.

At the upcoming regular legislative session, Senator Gray will request for the continuation and renewed funding of DVVP.

Statewide News Media Reinforces Support for DVVP

The *Baton Rouge Business Report* published an article on March 10, 2008 regarding domestic violence victims and the impact of programs such as DVVP. Click [here](#) to view the article on the *Baton Rouge Business Report's* website: "Benefits worth renewing" by Maggie H. Richardson.

Louisiana Women Leaders

Louisiana Women Leaders (LWL) first gathered under this banner in New Orleans in May 2004. They focused on vision, influence and power and women's dramatic impact on recent changes in the political, economic and social fabric of our state. Regional conferences soon followed in Baton Rouge, Shreveport, and Lafayette. After 2005's disastrous storms, LWL did not convene again until October 2006, this time at Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, when about 300 women met to reclaim the initiative's earlier momentum. In March 2007, Louisiana Women Leaders gathered in the Capital City, when this electronic news service was born.