

UNDER STRICT EMBARGO UNTIL JANUARY 29, 2018 6:00 AM PST/ 9:00 AM EST

**NATIONAL NON-PROFIT LAUNCHES GROUNDBREAKING DIGITAL TOOL TO
DELIVER LEGAL AND FINANCIAL JUSTICE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
SURVIVORS**

Los Angeles, CA – January 29, 2018 - LA-based non-profit FreeFrom announced today the launch of a first-of-its-kind online self-help compensation tool that provides survivors of domestic abuse anywhere in the US with the information and resources they need to pursue legal compensation for the cost of the harm they have suffered.

FreeFrom is a pioneer in creating sustainable support for survivors of domestic violence through their entrepreneurship program and financial education. With the launch of their online self-help compensation tool, survivors across the US will be able to seek financial justice and navigate a complicated legal process with ease. FreeFrom is transforming a difficult, emotionally-taxing process into one that is accessible and empowering," *says Kat Manalac, Partner at Y Combinator and FreeFrom Board Member.*

One in four women and one in seven men in the US will experience severe domestic violence within their lifetime. It is estimated that domestic violence costs \$8.2 billion annually in the US, including \$5.8 billion in medical coverage and \$2.5 billion in lost productivity.

Domestic abuse costs an average of \$52,000 in lost wages over an individual's lifetime. Medical expenses for physical assault cost roughly \$4,273 per incident, and mental health costs for physical assault come to about \$1,631 per incident.

Survivors of domestic violence overwhelmingly shoulder the entire burden of their survivorship with little to no accountability on the part of the abusers themselves.

"Survivors should not have to pay for the medical bills and property damage resulting from them being abused but that is the status quo," *says Amira Samuel, FreeFrom's Compensation Program Director.* "Survivors have to navigate very time-consuming and emotionally-trying family law and paternity claims, all while trying to rebuild their lives. They're looking for housing, figuring out how to pay rent, childcare, therapy – the list is endless and expensive."

These virtually insurmountable challenges force many to choose between returning to their abuser or facing homelessness and poverty . In fact, the number one reason survivors of domestic violence stay in and return to abusive situations is because they cannot afford to leave and rebuild.

Survivors of abuse can qualify for compensation through four avenues – Small Claims Court, Criminal Restitution, Tort Litigation and Victims of Crime Funding. However, many do not pursue legal recourse due to a lack of knowledge about their options and how to utilize them.

FreeFrom's tool changes this paradigm by providing this information through an interactive and intelligible online platform. Now, a survivor anywhere in the country, at any time of day, can

access the resources they need to pursue economic justice, regardless of their physical or financial limitations.

The tool was designed in partnership with ThoughtWorks, a global software development and digital transformation consultancy whose purpose is to revolutionize software design, creation and delivery, while advocating for positive social change. FreeFrom began beta testing its self-help compensation tool in California on January 29, and aims to launch the tool nationally by mid-2018.

The tool is available at <https://compensation-quiz.freefrom.org/>

About FreeFrom: FreeFrom was founded in 2016 to make safety affordable for all survivors of domestic violence so that they can build safe futures for themselves and their children. FreeFrom's three areas of focus - credit repair, income building and access to compensation - are designed to help survivors achieve the economic justice and financial independence necessary to ensure permanent safety. To learn more, visit www.freefrom.org.

About ThoughtWorks: ThoughtWorks is a software company and community of passionate purpose-led individuals. They think disruptively to deliver technology to address clients' toughest challenges all while seeking to revolutionize the IT industry and create positive social change.