



# DATA BROKER

## HARMS:

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS

## THE PROBLEM

Data brokers are companies that collect, aggregate, and sell personal information without individuals' knowledge or consent. This information often includes names, addresses, Social Security numbers, and purchase histories.

For domestic violence survivors, the personal information market poses significant risks. Data brokers compile extensive profiles from public records, including property records, court testimonies, and consumer data.

By selling this information, data brokers inadvertently provide abusers with tools to locate and track their victims, creating severe safety threats.

## ALARMING CONSEQUENCES FOR SURVIVORS

- ➔ **Psychological Impact:** Survivors experience heightened anxiety and fear because their abusers can obtain personal information about them from data brokers.
- ➔ **Housing Insecurity:** Survivors may avoid purchasing or renting a home to prevent their addresses from being included in public records, which may be amplified by data brokers. Many resort to unstable living arrangements like couch surfing or temporary housing, and some may even opt for homelessness over the risk of being found.
- ➔ **Barriers to Legal and Social Services:** Survivors may avoid seeking legal services that require personal information, limiting access to necessary support. Public court records are often traded by data brokers, which further deters survivors from seeking legal action.
- ➔ **Employment Challenges:** Background checks can link new identities with past records, exposing survivors who change their names. Data brokers may obtain employer data through breaches, which could enable abusers to gain access to survivors' employment records and stalk or harass survivors at their workplaces.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

<https://epic.org/issues/consumer-privacy/data-brokers/>

## REINING IN DATA BROKERS WOULD HELP PROTECT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS

Policymakers at the federal and state level have an urgent responsibility to limit data brokers' ability to collect, share, and sell personal data. Stronger laws and rules are necessary to provide guardrails around data brokers' collection and sale of personal information.

**Minimizing the data that brokers amass and sell in the first place is a powerful way to safeguard survivors: you don't have to protect what you don't collect.**

**epic.org** / ELECTRONIC  
PRIVACY  
INFORMATION  
CENTER



**NNEDV**  
NATIONAL NETWORK  
TO END DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE

## WORKS CITED

1. Justin Sherman, People Search Data Brokers, Stalking, and 'Publicly Available Information' Carve-Outs, Lawfare (Oct. 30, 2023), <https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/people-search-data-brokers-stalking-and-publicly-available-information-carve-outs>.
2. Data Brokers: What They Are and What You Can Do About Them, National Network to End Domestic Violence (2022), [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/51dc541ce4b03ebab8c5c88c/t/63349056c51b4f6c68a6a4ba/1664389207608/NNEDV\\_Data-Brokers\\_2022.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/51dc541ce4b03ebab8c5c88c/t/63349056c51b4f6c68a6a4ba/1664389207608/NNEDV_Data-Brokers_2022.pdf).
3. Catherine Fitzpatrick, For domestic violence victim-survivors, a data or privacy breach can be extraordinarily dangerous, Tech Xplore (Dec. 4, 2023), <https://techxplore.com/news/2023-12-domestic-violence-victim-survivors-privacy-breach.html>.
4. Why Privacy and Confidentiality Matters for Victims of Domestic & Sexual Violence, Safety Net Project (2016), <https://www.techsafety.org/privacymatters>.
5. Gaby Dunn, Data brokers sell lists of HIV patients, addicts, and domestic violence shelters, Daily Dot (Dec. 19, 2013), <https://www.dailydot.com/irl/data-broker-private-info-scandal/>.
6. Technology-Facilitated Stalking: Fact Sheet, Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center, <https://www.stalkingawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/SPARC-Stalking-Techology-Fact-Sheet.pdf> (last visited Nov. 2025).
7. Stalking & Intimate Partner Violence: Fact Sheet, Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center, <https://www.stalkingawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Stalking-IPV-Fact-Sheet.pdf> (last visited Nov. 2025).