



## National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities

The National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities\* is a network of individuals and organizations committed to improving the health and well-being of Latino communities. The network is led by Casa de Esperanza, a national Latina organization whose mission is to mobilize Latinas and Latino communities to end domestic violence. The network builds on Casa de Esperanza's experience working in local communities to support families, end domestic violence, and increase meaningful access to services for Latina@s and incorporates

- A research center, based in Atlanta, GA, that conducts culturally relevant research to inform the creation of new strategies for engaging Latinas and their communities in ending domestic violence.
- A public policy initiative, based in Washington, DC, that takes Latin@ realities to legislative tables. Casa de Esperanza also translates policy decisions into information and tools that inform and enhance the work of organizations throughout the country.
- Training and support. Casa de Esperanza is a Technical Assistance (TA) provider for the Office on Violence Against Women, US Dept. of Justice. TA is provided to Latin@ domestic violence organizations and mainstream agencies that work with Latinas and their families.

### Goal of the Network:

The National Latin@ Network builds bridges and connections among research, practice and policy to advance effective responses to eliminate violence and to promote healthy relationships within Latin@ families and communities.

### Network Members

We recognize the intersections of realities that influence health and well-being beyond domestic violence, such as economic justice, access to health care, affordable housing, education, racial disparities and immigration. We believe that everyone has a role to play in ending domestic violence.

We are looking for members who are invested in promoting healthy Latin@ families and communities:

- advocates
- practitioners
- researchers
- academics
- policy makers
- community leaders
- attorneys
- survivors
- funders
- health care providers
- and others.

### Benefits to Membership

Participation in the network offers

- Connection to other Latin@-serving professionals and concerned individuals.
- Access to information, resources, and best practices for working with Latino families experiencing domestic violence, engaging Latino communities, and promoting community engagement to address these issues.
- Opportunities to inform policy and research that impact Latin@ communities.



## Public Policy

Casa de Esperanza engages in public policy advocacy with the goals of

- Improving policies that are responsive to the needs and realities of Latina survivors of domestic violence, as well as their children and families
- Improving access to resources for the development of innovative, culturally proficient programs by Latino community-based organizations in order to enhance access to intervention services and prevention initiatives in Latin@\* communities
- Improving access to mainstream prevention and intervention services for Latina survivors.

The four primary focus areas of work are to

- 1) Identify priority public policy concerns for Latin@ communities in efforts to end domestic violence and support healthy families and communities
- 2) Bring the voices and realities of Latina survivors and Latin@ communities to the table to influence and help shape national policy decisions
- 3) Support opportunities to access resources and increase capacity-building for Latin@ community-based organizations (CBOs) to provide domestic violence prevention and intervention services
- 4) Build the capacity of Latino CBOs to take the lead on addressing sexual assault/domestic violence issues at the local, state, and national level, through the development of a network of Latin@ organizations, programs, and advocates, known as the National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities.

Casa de Esperanza's Director of Public Policy, located in Washington, DC, oversees Casa de Esperanza's policy initiative through

- Legislative advocacy and informing the development of laws and regulations that impact Latin@s
- Communication with federal agencies
- Collaboration with national Latin@ organizations
- Collaboration with national and statewide domestic violence/sexual assault organizations on addressing policy issues.



## National Latin@ Research Center on Family and Social Change

The National Latin@ Research Center on Family and Social Change\*, located at Georgia State University, is one of the cornerstones of the National Latin@ Network for Health Families and Communities.

The research center has two primary goals:

1. Increase academic and practitioners' knowledge about Latin@s and the multidimensional issue of domestic violence (also termed Intimate Partner Violence or IPV).
2. Support the creation of, and facilitate support and mentoring for, a critical mass of Latin@ researchers.

Based on Casa de Esperanza's ongoing commitment to Latin@ communities, the research center's current three-year agenda focuses on how domestic violence affects entire families. Using approaches and methodologies that best suit Latin@ realities, we will explore issues of relevance to our communities, including topics such as:

- The context in which IPV occurs from the perspective of Latina survivors who stay in their relationships as well as that of women who leave their partners
- Cultural codes that Latino men use as justification for violence as well as other codes that can promote healthy behaviors
- Participatory action research with Latin@ youth witnesses of domestic violence regarding their perspectives about the effects of IPV on various aspects of their lives, including
  - Health
  - Gang involvement
  - Relationship with their parents
  - Peer and dating relationships
  - Strengths and resilience.

The research center is led by Dr. Julia Perilla, a clinical community psychologist and Associate Professor at Georgia State University. Her work for the past 20 years in the areas of domestic violence, diversity, Latin@ families, and trauma uses a human rights and social justice framework, which she applies to her research and interventions with immigrant communities. She is the founder of Caminar Latino, a comprehensive intervention for Latin@ families affected by domestic violence.

## Training and Technical Assistance

Since 2004 Casa de Esperanza has been providing comprehensive, culturally specific Training and Technical Assistance (TA) to OVW grantees and Latino CBOs that wish to enhance their capacity and work with Latino families experiencing domestic violence. We tailor our offerings to each organization, collaborating to identify what will be most helpful: one-on-one consultation, mentoring, coaching, training or site visits. To date, we have served more than 300 organizations in all 50 states and several US territories.

Casa de Esperanza provides direct services to Latino families experiencing domestic violence and engages Latino communities in and around St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota, to end domestic violence. As a result, all of our Training and TA services are grounded in the current lived realities of Latino families. We share our experience—our challenges and our successes—with other organizations across the country to help them explore and implement strategies for serving and engaging Latino communities.

Our training staff—all Latinas—has decades of experience in Latino organizations, the nonprofit sector, domestic violence and sexual assault, children and child abuse, government, law, education and community activism. Our knowledge and capacity is broad, ranging from cultural competency to program development and policy, from the day-to-day workings of an organization to applying philosophy and theory.

Ending domestic violence will require an integrated, collaborative effort. For that reason, we work with every kind of OVW grantee: Rural, Arrest, Transitional Housing, Coalitions, Justice Centers, and Elder Abuse Grantees. We also collaborate with other OVW TA providers, such as NNEDV, Praxis International, BWJP, FVPF, IDVAAC, API, SCESA, DVRN, ASISTA, Alianza and many state coalitions, to enhance trainings and support to organizations.

How do we work with organizations? What is our process?

- We listen and collaborate.
- We don't apply a prescribed "model." We believe that everyone brings expertise to the table. We seek to create solutions that are relevant and meaningful, so we collaborate with each organization to assess the organization's strengths and determine the best vehicles for training and support.
- We use Casa de Esperanza's culturally relevant tools, monthly conference calls and web-based resources, to support our TA as well as any ongoing work after a training session or consultation.

Through Training and TA we work with organizations to enhance their capacity to:

- Assess organizational readiness to work with Latino community members
- Respond in relevant ways to the unique dynamics of domestic violence in Latino communities
- Build an understanding of trauma-informed work in Latino communities
- Understand immigration and trafficking issues
- Effectively engage Latino community members in ending domestic violence
- Understand the lived realities of Latinas and their children
- Increase organizational sustainability.

Additional questions about Casa de Esperanza's Training and TA can be directed to Amy J. Sánchez, Chief Executive for External Relations, at [asanchez@casadeesperanza.org](mailto:asanchez@casadeesperanza.org) or 651-646-5553.

## Policy Report

The following is a highlight of activities during the first part of this fiscal year (July – November 2009)

### Policy Advocacy

- Reauthorization of the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA)
  - Participation in a coalition of national stakeholder organizations working on the reauthorization of FVPSA
  - Co-chair of the Communities of Color task force (along with the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community)
  - Involved in drafting changes in the legislative language to make such improvements as addressing the needs of communities of color and other underserved populations. Met with Congresswoman Roybal-Allard's office and Congressman Grijalva's office to seek the support of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus for these provisions.
  
- In communication with Senator Al Franken's staff to keep them informed and ask for their support of key provisions in FVPSA and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Senator Franken serves on the Health, Education, Labor and Pension (HELP) Committee (the lead for reauthorization of FVPSA in the Senate) and the Judiciary Committee (the main committee for VAWA).
  
- Co-chair of the Communities of Color committee—one of the committees formed to gather input and suggest legislative changes for the reauthorization of VAWA. The committee is gathering input from programs across the country and will submit a report to Congress on the committee's priority areas in VAWA.
  
- Serves on the Public Policy Committee of the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) and played a key role in persuading NNEDV to support important provisions in FVPSA.
  
- Participated in a meeting, convened by the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, entitled "Enhancing Public Policy Advocacy Efforts on Behalf of Survivors of Sexual and Domestic Violence." Representatives of eighteen national organizations discussed goals and guidelines for collaborating on efforts to enhance policy advocacy on numerous pending legislative initiatives.
  
- Established Casa de Esperanza's Public Policy Advisory Council, made up of 12 individuals from different regions of the country. The group demonstrated enthusiasm and commitment at its first meeting, October 26.
  
- Serves on Coregroups and the Appropriations task force, which hold weekly calls regarding legislative issues and advocacy with federal agencies. Rosie took the lead in setting up a meeting with the Secretary of HHS, Kathleen Sebelius, November 20, to

discuss increasing the prioritization of domestic violence programs and funding within HHS.

- Serves on the immigration policy committee for the National Network to End Violence Against Immigrant Women and will meet with the EEOC commissioner to address issues of sexual assault in the workplace of migrant women, predominantly Latinas.

#### Networking and Presentations

- Met with Amy Sánchez and Marylouise Kelley, Director of the Family Violence Prevention and Services Program of HHS, to develop our relationship with that office, which provides funding for various national resource centers and the culturally specific institutes on domestic violence. The meeting led to an invitation to Rosie to provide a training, November 10, for the violence against women grantees of the Office of Women's Health at HHS.
- Participated in a special meeting with Lynn Rosenthal, White House Advisor on Violence Against Women, September 11, with representatives from national organizations working to address domestic violence/sexual assault in communities of color.
- Met with Catherine Pierce, Acting Director of Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), Department of Justice (DOJ), and Anna Martinez, a new political appointee at OVW, August 6, to provide them with additional information about Casa de Esperanza and our advocacy efforts for communities of color.
- Attended an event at the residence of Vice President Biden to commemorate the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the passage of VAWA.
- Provided a plenary presentation at the conference of the New Mexico Coalition Against Domestic Violence. The conference, August 3-5, was entitled "Tools for Change: Communities, Systems, and Coalitions."
- Met with national Latin@ organizations in Washington, DC—with Amy and Patti Tototzintle—to explore possibilities for collaboration. The meetings with National Council of La Raza (NCLR) and the Self Reliance Foundation of the National Hispanic Communication Network were very productive. Areas of potential collaboration include addressing issues of teenage pregnancy, teen dating violence and sexual abuse of minors; joint research opportunities; and perhaps training and resources for NCLR's 300 affiliates.
- Participated as one of five "agents of social change," invited to speak at a DOJ event, October 19, to recognize Domestic Violence Awareness Month and the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passage of VAWA. The Attorney General, Eric Holder, and the Acting Director of OVW were present and addressed the crowd of 200. Rosie spoke about Casa de Esperanza and highlighted the needs of immigrant survivors and the importance of supporting culturally and linguistically specific community-based organizations.

- Provided a plenary presentation on policy issues related to domestic violence and Latin@ communities at “ Encuentro Latino: A National Conference on Latinos and Domestic Violence” in Las Cruces, New Mexico, November 3-4. The conference was hosted by Encuentro Latino National Institute on Family Violence, which has funding to do this work from HHS.
- Provided a radio interview for the AARP Spanish radio program on Domestic Violence and Elder Abuse and a presentation at the Diversity Dialogue in DC on Domestic Violence in Latino Communities.

# FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND SERVICES ACT (FVPSA) 2008

## RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Since 1984, the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) has played a central role in providing critical services to victims of domestic violence, yet too often historically marginalized racial and ethnic minorities have faced additional barriers and have lacked adequate access to services. Organizations that have traditionally served victims of domestic violence often struggle to meet the needs of these victims, despite progress made through outreach programs and efforts like translating brochures or offering cultural competency trainings for staff.

Communities need focused, community-driven strategies that address the impact of cultural dynamics on the occurrence of domestic violence, as well as on the development of appropriate prevention and intervention services. To end domestic violence against all women, including those from racial and ethnic minority communities, FVPSA must dedicate funding to services for diverse communities and take further strides to address complex community needs.



### Victims from racial and ethnic minority communities often face significant barriers to accessing services.



- Women from racial and ethnic minority communities often do not seek services for fear of becoming isolated from their cultural communities and/or may be skeptical or distrustful of mainstream domestic violence programs.
- Domestic violence victims from racial and ethnic communities often face intersecting issues including economic barriers, language access, acculturation issues, challenges dealing with the criminal justice system, and barriers to accessing health care. These issues have a disproportionate impact on marginalized racial and ethnic communities and result in additional layers of complexity in providing assistance to these victims.
- In some states, the criteria set forth for being able to access funding requires the organization to provide a 24/7 shelter program and hotline. Therefore, community organizations providing services for victims from racial and ethnic minority communities struggle to find adequate funding. Without this funding, these organizations cannot meet the demand for their lifesaving services.



### **The Solution: A grant program and targeted provisions in FVPSA that specifically address the needs of racial and ethnic minority groups.**

This reauthorization of FVPSA creates a new **designated grant program** to enhance culturally proficient services for racial and ethnic minority groups that is funded using 2.5% of the FVPSA formula grant funding, beginning when total appropriations reach \$130 million.

The purposes of this grant program are to:

- Develop and support innovative programs that provide culturally competent services to ensure that more victims of domestic violence in racial and ethnic minority communities seek and receive appropriate intervention and prevention services;
- Build capacity in racial and ethnic minority groups to take the lead in addressing domestic violence in their communities; and
- Address intersecting issues that affect individuals within racial and ethnic minority communities who are also underserved as a result of disability, geographic isolation, language barriers, age and other factors.

**For more information, please contact**

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