

IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEUR MOM
GRANDMOTHER MIGRANT RESEARCHER N

FRIEND RESIDENT DREAMER
WORKER RESTAURANT OWNER MOM
SCIENTIST BUILDER BOARD MEMBER

SISTER RESIDENT WORKER
INVENTOR POLICE OFFICER
COMMUNITY AMERICAN DOCT
ATHLETE

ENTREPRENEUR TEACHER DAD STUDENT
GRANDMOTHER NEIGHBOR UNDOCUMENTED IN
MIGRANT RESEARCHER VOLUNTEER RESTA

FRIEND RESIDENT DREAMER
WORKER RESTAURANT OWNER MOM
SCIENTIST BUILDER BOARD MEMBER

AMERICAN COMMUNITY DOCT
SISTER RESIDENT WORKER
INVENTOR POLICE OFFICER

ENTREPRENEUR TEACHER MOM STUDEN
GRANDMOTHER UNDOCUMENTE
MIGRANT RESEARCHER NEIGHBOR VOLUNTEER RES

FRIEND RESIDENT DREAMER
WORKER RESTAURANT OWNER MOM
SCIENTIST BUILDER BOARD MEMBER

AMERICAN DOCTOR MOM
SISTER RESIDENT WORKER
INVENTOR LEADER POLICE DAD
COMMUNITY ATHLETE VOLUNTEER AMERICAN COMMU

ENTREPRENEUR TEACHER IMMIGRANT STUDENT FRIEND ENTREPRENEUR T
GRANDMOTHER UNDOCUMENTED INNOVATOR MOM GRANDMOTHER T
MIGRANT RESEARCHER NEIGHBOR VOLUNTEER RESTAURANT OWNER MIGRANT RESEARCH

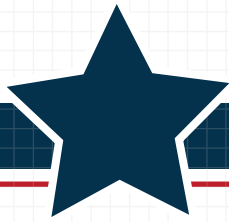
FRIEND RESIDENT DREAMER POLICE AMERICAN FRIEND RESIDENT DREA
WORKER RESTAURANT OWNER MOM LEADER WORKER
SCIENTIST BUILDER BOARD MEMBER STUDENT FATHER WORKER RESTAURANT OWNER MOM
INVENTOR ATHLETE SCIENTIST BUILDER BOARD MEMBER

AMERICAN COMMUNITY ATHLETE VOLUNTEER DOCTOR MOM
SISTER RESIDENT WORKER
INVENTOR LEADER POLICE DAD AMERICAN COMMU

ENTREPRENEUR TEACHER IMMIGRANT STUDENT FRIEND TEACHER
GRANDMOTHER UNDOCUMENTED INNOVATOR MOM
MIGRANT RESEARCHER NEIGHBOR VOLUNTEER RESTAURANT OWNER MIGRANT RESEARCH

A BLUEPRINT FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

FAMILY AND CHILD WELFARE



A BLUEPRINT FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

FAMILY AND CHILD WELFARE

ISSUE AREAS: Domestic Violence, Child Maltreatment,
Immigration Legal Assistance, Counseling, Cultural Competence

SUMMARY:

Domestic violence and child maltreatment are problems that affect millions of people in this country every year and thousands of New Yorkers, including many of the city's immigrants. In order to best serve immigrant victims, helping them with their immediate safety needs and enabling them to build stable, violence-free futures, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence and the Administration for Children's Services have worked extensively with legal experts and community organizations to design culturally and linguistically appropriate interventions. The focus of many of these initiatives is assisting immigrants to gain permanence in this country through federal legislation that provides immigration relief to victims of domestic violence, child maltreatment and crime. Efforts have also centered on making access to services as convenient and efficient as possible because a quick response is key for individuals facing daily, sometimes lethal, threats to their safety.

OBJECTIVES:

- + Comprehensively address issues of domestic violence citywide
- + Ensure that City agencies have an effective and coordinated approach to serving victims of domestic violence
- + Implement linguistically and culturally competent approaches to addressing domestic violence in immigrant communities
- + Identify and assist children who may qualify for certain immigration benefits to help them achieve permanence in the United States
- + Educate diverse communities about the role of the Administration for Children's Services and steps that they can take to protect children and families
- + Ensure the responsiveness and cultural competence of the Administration for Children's Services in relation to the unique needs of immigrant children and families

CHAPTER ONE: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

BACKGROUND

In cases of domestic violence, perpetrators seek to have power and control over their victims. Some batterers specifically use the fact that their victims are new to this country against them. Often that includes preventing their partner from learning English, or restricting his or her communication with friends and family from their home countries. Such isolation leaves victims not knowing how or where to seek help. Batterers use threats of deportation, the withdrawal of a petition for legal residence or refusing to allow a victim to obtain legal status in the first place as a way to control their victims. They might destroy important documents like passports, green cards, health insurance documents and driver's licenses; they might threaten to hurt the children or take them away if the victim reports the violence; and they might compromise a victim's job by lying to the employer about the victim's legal status, controlling his or her wages or reporting the victim for illegal work.

Abuse can take many forms. It can be physical, sexual, emotional or financial. At times, because of personal, cultural or religious views, victims remain in harmful relationships. As recent arrivals, perhaps with limited English proficiency, victims may not understand the U.S. laws that protect them from abuse, they may not know these laws apply to them or even how to access legal and protective services in this country. Fears of deportation for the batterer or the victim himself or herself may prohibit reporting as well.

For cities around the country to better serve immigrant victims of domestic violence, it's important that local organizations and government agencies understand the particular risks these immigrants are exposed to because of their status and design interventions to address these vulnerabilities. In New York City, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence has done that with the creation of its Family Justice Centers. These are one-stop resource centers for domestic violence survivors and their children to receive legal, social and therapeutic services and are available to all city residents no matter their immigration status.

OBJECTIVES:

- + Comprehensively address issues of domestic violence citywide
- + Ensure that City agencies have an effective and coordinated approach to serving victims of domestic violence
- + Implement linguistically and culturally competent approaches to addressing domestic violence in immigrant communities

NEW YORK CITY MAYOR'S OFFICE TO COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) was created in 2001 when New York City residents voted to make the office a permanent part of City government. The vote amended the City Charter to start the office and followed several high-profile domestic violence incidents in New York in the 1990s, as well as the first passage of VAWA in 1994 under President Bill Clinton. OCDV is one of only a few government offices in the United States to focus solely on issues of domestic violence.

In 2002, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg appointed Commissioner Yolanda B. Jimenez to head the office. By making the office chief a commissioner, which is a cabinet-level position, Mayor Bloomberg empowered Jimenez with the same authority as the heads of the City's numerous other agencies. Importantly, this has enabled her to convene those agency chiefs and work with them on issues that cut across sectors—like health, social services, crime and immigration—and that touch the lives of both victims and perpetrators of domestic violence.

The Office formulates policies and programs, monitors the citywide delivery of domestic violence services and works with diverse communities to increase awareness of domestic violence. Working closely with City agencies, community-based organizations, community leaders and others, the OCDV aims to make it as easy as possible for domestic violence victims and their children to get the help they need regardless of the language they speak or their immigration status. The OCDV also creates programs that are critical to preventing domestic violence and works with the criminal justice system to hold batterers accountable.

FAMILY JUSTICE CENTERS

Created in 2005 as a program of the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, the first New York City Family Justice Center (FJC) opened in Brooklyn. There are now four centers, one each in Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens and Manhattan. A fifth Center is scheduled to open in 2014 in Staten Island. These centers provide free comprehensive, multilingual services to victims of domestic violence and their children.

Funded in part by private grants made to the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, the centers are part of the Bloomberg Administration's goal to reduce domestic violence citywide while offering extensive services to survivors. Any victim of domestic violence can seek help at a center, regardless of his or her immigration status. Center staff speak more than 30 languages and, if needed, they can provide interpretation services in many more languages so that limited English proficiency need not be a barrier to accessing help. The centers, which have security measures in place, are open from 9am - 5pm Monday through Friday.

Since their creation, the centers have provided domestic violence victims with one-stop, life-saving resources. Without even making an advance appointment, city residents seeking assistance can walk into one of the four locations and meet with a prosecutor, the police or probation officers; seek legal advice about their immigration status, divorce, custody and protection orders; receive therapeutic counseling from a licensed professional or participate in support groups; create safety plans; apply for emergency housing, public benefits or other social services; and obtain referrals for education, job training and job placement services. They can do all this while their children play in a nearby, supervised room. To provide such extensive services, the centers have many on-site partners, including City agencies and community-based organizations.

Between 2005 and 2012, before the Manhattan center opened its doors, the other three locations along with the Staten Island Domestic Violence Response Team, helped more than 79,000 clients. In that same time period, more than 16,000 children visited the children's rooms.

ENHANCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION EFFORTS TO SERVE IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

STEP ONE >

ENHANCE COORDINATION IN SERVICE DELIVERY

The impact of domestic violence goes well beyond the immediate harm experienced by the victims. For those individuals, it is a complex issue that often involves their interaction with the criminal justice system, healthcare, mental health, social services, immigration and other areas. The OCDV exists in part to coordinate service delivery and policy across multiple City agencies, making it easier for victims to receive streamlined assistance. In New York, the process to develop this coordinated response included three broad steps.



EXAMINE SERVICE DELIVERY ACROSS AGENCIES

- + **Understand the landscape of domestic violence.** A key first step in developing a comprehensive response system to the crime of domestic violence is to understand which City agencies interact with victims and perpetrators. Often those include the police, health, human resources and child welfare departments, as well as the district attorneys' offices and still other agencies. It is also important to know how these agencies work with victims and perpetrators and what services they provide.
- + **Identify opportunities for collaboration.** After determining which departments and agencies interact with individuals affected by domestic violence, it's helpful to think about ways those offices can share information and collaborate. Streamlining these partnerships will enhance your city's responsiveness to the needs of victims and make it easier to comprehensively address challenges related to domestic violence citywide.
- + **Ease the route victims take for help.** Sharing essential information among agencies about the ways particular victims are seeking help (while maintaining client confidentiality and autonomy), not only makes the city's response to these individuals more effective and efficient, but it also makes getting help an easier process for those in need.



ESTABLISH A TEAM OR TASK FORCE TO ASSESS AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS

- + **Convene relevant agencies and organizations.** In 2002, the OCDV launched a pilot program called the Domestic Violence Response Team (DVRT) in select police precincts in Brooklyn and the Bronx. The program was later expanded to Queens and now operates on Staten Island. The Team is composed of staff from government agencies and community-based organizations. Their goal, like a task force, is to combine their efforts to provide timely, effective services to high-risk victims of domestic violence.
- + **Provide coordinated direct services to high-risk victims.** The NYPD, City agencies and community-based organizations refer domestic violence cases to the DVRT, which meets monthly to discuss them. At these meetings, the DVRT develops an action plan for each case delineating the steps to take and services that each participating member will provide to clients. The DVRT then helps to coordinate and implement the action plan insuring that clients receive the services outlined.
- + **Assess service delivery.** During its meetings, the DVRT also examines how effective and efficient service delivery has been at various City agencies and community organizations. Based on the experiences of its clients, the DVRT can report challenges to these agencies and organizations and makes recommendations about how to improve assistance to domestic violence victims citywide. The DVRT also helps members understand any new City policies that will affect their work. In this way, all domestic violence victims in New York benefit from the DVRT, not just those whose cases are reviewed.



ESTABLISH PHYSICAL SITES OR CENTERS TO COORDINATE SERVICE DELIVERY

- + **Co-locate organizations and agencies serving domestic violence victims.** The DVRTs continued to operate in Brooklyn, the Bronx and Queens until the OCDV created the Family Justice Centers. These multi-resource centers now exist in all the boroughs except Staten Island, which still has a DVRT, and are housed alongside the offices of the District Attorney. Created so that victims can receive free services from multiple City agencies and community-based organizations in one location, the FJCs make getting help easier and faster.
- + **Offer services in all critical areas.** Clients at the FJCs can meet with a prosecutor, police officers who specialize in domestic violence or probation officers; they can speak to a trained mental health counselor; they can apply for housing, financial assistance and other social services; and they can discuss immigration issues with an attorney all in one place while their children play in a supervised room designed just for them. Such convenience and efficiency is no small matter for individuals who find themselves in life or death situations.
- + **Provide wrap-around services and referrals.** Clients who need specialized wrap-around services or referrals for services not immediately available at the FJC can get them from the many off-site City agencies and community-based organization partners located near the centers. Partnerships among these agencies and organizations makes those referrals and extra services easier to provide.
- + **Enhance cultural competence through the co-location.** When creating the FJCs, the OCDV was careful not to just include large and well-known community organizations as partners, but has also brought in small local groups that work intensely with specific populations. One example is an organization focused on the Arab immigrant community in Brooklyn. With their intimate knowledge of that population, staff from this organization are able to help immigrant victims overcome their fear of interacting with government agencies or the police. They can also inform immigrants about the benefits of doing so, like the ability to obtain a U-visa if they assist in crime investigations. The presence of such locally embedded groups also improves the cultural awareness of staff from the other agencies and organizations at the FJC.

THAT'S ABUSE CAMPAIGN

In 2013, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence launched a multi-layered public service campaign to empower victims of intimate partner violence to seek the help they need. This citywide campaign sought to connect with victims through words and images that capture the emotional impact of abuse. Survivors of domestic violence who helped develop the campaign identified strongly with the message, and said they hoped it would empower others to both recognize abuse in their relationships, and to take the necessary steps to get help for themselves and their families.



**BROKEN
THREATENED
PUT-DOWN
SCARED
INTIMIDATED
MANIPULATED
HUMILIATED
BATTERED**

If you feel **ANY** of these in your relationship, that's abuse.

WE CAN HELP

- Free, Safe & Confidential
- Immigration status does **NOT** matter
- All languages
- Emotional Support
- Public Benefits
- Children's Counseling
- Emergency Shelter
- Job Assistance
- Legal Services

1.800.621.4673 OR 311
SEARCH "DOMESTIC VIOLENCE" ON NYC.GOV
CALL 911 IF YOU'RE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER

NYC Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence
Michael R. Bloomberg Mayor Victoria B. Jimenez Commissioner

Printed on paper containing 30% post-consumer material.



**DESTROZADA
AMENAZADA
MENOSPRECIADA
ASUSTADA
INTIMIDADA
MANIPULADA
HUMILLADA
MALTRATADA**

Si te has sentido **ASÍ** en tu relación, eso es abuso.

PODEMOS AYUDARTE

- Gratis, seguro y confidencial
- SIN IMPORTAR tu situación migratoria
- Hablamos todos los idiomas
- Apoyo emocional
- Beneficios públicos
- Consejería para niños y adolescentes
- Refugio de emergencia
- Asistencia de empleo
- Asistencia legal

1.800.621.4673 ó 311
BUSCA "DOMESTIC VIOLENCE" EN NYC.GOV
SI TE ENCUENTRAS EN PELIGRO INMEDIATO LLAMA AL 911

NYC Oficina del Alcalde para Combatir la Violencia Doméstica
Michael R. Bloomberg Alcalde Victoria B. Jimenez Comisionada

Printed on paper containing 30% post-consumer material.

Once all the relevant partners are sitting at one table, it's important to develop a comprehensive method to address the myriad challenges domestic violence victims encounter and to do so in a way that tackles not only their immediate safety and well-being, but their future stability as well.



PROVIDE WRAP-AROUND SERVICES FOR THE IMMEDIATE NEEDS OF VICTIMS

- + **Provide case management.** When clients come to a FJC, the first step is to meet with a client specialist who will help the client determine what services he or she needs. The client specialist will then refer the client to a case manager who will handle the ongoing work with that client including conducting risk assessments, crisis intervention or safety planning. Case managers work for many different organizations located at the centers, speak many languages and represent many cultures. The information clients share with their case managers is confidential.
- + **Provide counseling.** All FJCs offer therapeutic counseling with licensed professionals. Adult counseling is among the most frequently used service at the FJCs. Counseling for children aged 4 and older who have witnessed domestic violence is also available.
- + **Provide supervision for children.** While parents are receiving services on site, children ages 3 and older can spend time with a child specialist in the children's room. There are a variety of supervised and organized play activities available throughout the day.



ADDRESS THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE ELEMENT

- + **Provide police intervention.** Trained Domestic Violence Prevention Officers from the NYPD are on site at FJCs for clients who want to report a crime or learn more about how the police can help them stay safe. The opportunity to work with police can be especially important for immigrant victims because if they report a crime they may be eligible for a U-visa, which allows them to remain in the U.S. lawfully and, after three years, to apply for a green card.
- + **Provide access to probation officers.** Probation officers are located off-site. Because the FJCs have had a long and collaborative history with the NYC Department of Probation, probation personnel can help victims locate the appropriate Supervising Probation Officer if their abuser is on probation. They are also available to answer any questions clients may have about probation.
- + **Provide assistance from prosecutors.** The FJCs are located with the Domestic Violence Bureau of the District Attorney's office in each borough. This allows easy access to the prosecutors for clients when their abuser has been arrested because of a domestic violence incident. The attorneys can also answer questions about the criminal justice process, protection orders, and assist clients in safety planning.

- + **Replicate on a smaller scale if necessary.** If your city does not have the resources to have all of these individuals available, perhaps scale it down to one police officer trained in domestic violence or one attorney who specializes in this area of the law.
- + **Engage clients early.** The Brooklyn FJC, in partnership with the Kings County District Attorney's Office and two nonprofit organizations, contacts victims pre-arraignment of their abuser in order to connect them to the FJC for services. This program assists an average of 3,100 domestic violence victims per year.



ADDRESS FUTURE CHALLENGES AND HELP VICTIMS ALONG A PATH TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY

- + **Provide legal information.** Lawyers and paralegals are available at each FJC to provide legal advice and / or representation to clients in the areas of family, matrimonial and immigration law.
 - + **Offer protections for victims and their families.** Attorneys can assist clients with issues related to custody, visitation, child support, spousal support and orders of protection.
 - + **Help immigrant victims find more secure futures.** Immigrants who are victimized by a citizen or legal permanent resident spouse, parent or adult child may be eligible for remedies provided by VAWA that include legal status and work authorization. Parents can also apply for VAWA relief on behalf of a child abused by that parent's spouse. Lawyers at the FJC with expertise in immigration law can assist clients who qualify to receive a visa under VAWA.
 - + **Create partnerships to expand resources.** Since July 2008, the City has funded three immigration attorneys, one at every FJC. From then through 2011, those immigration attorneys assisted over 5,000 clients with federal immigration remedies. In January 2012, the number of immigration attorneys at the FJCs was doubled for a total of six attorneys. Knowing that changing an individual's immigration status from undocumented to lawful can be an important means to end poverty, the New York-based Robin Hood Foundation, an anti-poverty organization, funded an additional immigration attorney at each site. With this enhanced staffing, the FJCs were able to provide immigration legal services to over 3,100 clients from January 2012 through October 2013.
- + **Provide self-sufficiency services.** Often victims of domestic violence need assistance in areas of their lives that will help them build more stable futures. At the FJCs staff therefore provide referrals for on-site and off-site educational training such as GED, English as a Second Language and computer skills classes. They can also help clients find job training and placement opportunities, as well as access public benefits for which they are eligible like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid and childcare.

EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP CAMPAIGN

In 2010, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) launched a citywide public education campaign, in English and Spanish, consisting of posters and palm cards placed in supermarkets, banks, pharmacies, restaurants and financial centers along with a Spanish-language public service announcement radio campaign.

Does someone you love...

- Humiliate, criticize, or yell at you?
- Hurt you, or threaten to hurt you?
- Threaten to take your children away or harm them?
- Control where you go or what you do?
- Force you to have sex when you do not want to?
- Control your money?
- Control your medications, wheelchair, or other devices?

You have *the right* to a healthy relationship

If someone you love is hurting you or if you are afraid of someone you love, help is available in your language.

Call **311** or the New York City Domestic Violence Hotline at **1-800-621-HOPE (4673)**. In emergencies, call 911.

NYC Michael R. Bloomberg Mayor
Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence Yolanda B. Jimenez Commissioner
Hopeline 1-800-621-HOPE
verizon verizon.com

¿Acaso la persona que amas...

- Te humilla, te critica duramente o te grita?
- Te ha herido o amenazado con hacerlo?
- Te amenaza con que te alejard de tus hijos para siempre o les hará daño?
- Controla a donde vas y todo lo que haces?
- Te obliga a tener sexo aún cuando tu no quieres?
- Controla tu dinero y tus finanzas?
- Controla tus medicamentos, el uso de tu silla de ruedas, u otros aparatos que te ayudan a desenvolverte mejor?

Tienes derecho a tener una relación de pareja saludable

Si alguien que amas te esta haciendo daño o Si le tienes miedo a la persona que amas, Existe ayuda disponible para ti, en ESPAÑOL

Llama al **311** o a la Línea de Emergencia para la Violencia Doméstica de la Ciudad at **1-800-621-HOPE (4673)**. En caso de emergencia, llama al 911.

NYC Michael R. Bloomberg Alcalde
Oficina del Alcalde para combatir la violencia doméstica Yolanda B. Jimenez Comisionada
Hopeline 1-800-621-HOPE
verizon verizon.com



MEASURE IMPACT OF SERVICES ON INDIVIDUALS

- + **Track outcomes.** The OCDV has followed the progress of the FJCs closely to help determine how effective their approach has been.
 - + **Implement a system to track services.** In 2009, OCDV and the New York City Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications developed and implemented an internet based client information system that allows, with the client's consent, each agency assisting the client to view all the services being provided to the client. This allows the agencies at the Center to seamlessly share information and coordinate service provision. The system also collects demographic information.
 - + **Record the number of clients served.** Since 2005, when the first FJC opened in Brooklyn, through the end of 2011, the Brooklyn, Bronx and Queens FJCs combined saw about 68,000 new clients seeking domestic violence services. In addition to these adult clients, about 13,000 children visited the children's rooms.
 - + **Collect demographic data about clients.** By January 2013, before the Manhattan center opened, most clients at the three existing centers were women and the majority had children. In Queens 59 percent of clients were foreign-born, in the Bronx 49 percent were foreign-born, and in Brooklyn 25 percent were foreign-born.
 - + **Determine which services clients use most.** Also by January 2013, the most frequently used services at the Bronx center included safety planning, risk assessment and adult counseling. At the Brooklyn center, most clients also took advantage of safety planning and risk assessment service. However, unlike in the Bronx, many also participated in witness interviews with the DA. In Queens, most clients used adult counseling, safety planning and non-attorney civil legal assistance services.
 - + **Focus on cross-program outcomes.** In 2013, the FJCs began tracking self-sufficiency outcomes for those clients obtaining immigration services. Of the clients who received immigration legal services, almost 75% of these clients have also received onsite self-sufficiency services.
 - + **Partner with professional researchers.** An evaluation of the Early Victim Engagement (EVE) program at the Brooklyn FJC—which provides victims with timely, reliable information about the criminal justice system in their language and allows them to make informed decisions about their safety—found that the program contributed to a 9% increase in the conviction rate in intimate partner cases. The evaluation attributed the increase to a higher rate of victim participation in the prosecution for clients engaged by EVE.



While there are many important, possibly life-saving, resources available to domestic violence victims at the FJCs in New York, they are useless if City residents don't know how to access them. Thus, it has been essential for the OCDV to conduct outreach so that New Yorkers in need know where to go for help.



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- + **Host partner organizations on-site.** It has been important for the OCDV to partner with trusted grassroots organizations, community leaders and clergy and host them on-site at the FJCs because they can help make residents from the area more comfortable coming into the centers for assistance.
- + **Encourage partner organizations to make referrals when necessary.** Although often highly trusted by the community, not all grassroots organizations have robust resources. Thus they may only be able to provide limited services to victims. Nonetheless, they can, and should, provide referrals for clients to other organizations or City agencies that can meet their needs.



OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

- + **Target messaging and education efforts on immigrants.** In response to concerns that immigrant victims in particular would not come to the FJCs, staff with the OCDV took several proactive measures through tailored educational and outreach efforts.
 - + **Inform clients about safety procedures at all FJCs.** One of the messages FJC staff convey during educational events is that police and security guards are present at all the centers to insure client safety. Additionally, everyone coming into the centers has to check in first with the security desk and pass through a metal detector before entering the center.
 - + **Raise awareness about the City's confidentiality policy.** Executive Orders 34 and 41 guarantee that all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status, can access City services and that City employees will not disclose their immigration status. The orders further prohibit City employees from divulging information about a person's sexual orientation, status as a domestic violence victim or crime witness, receipt of public benefits and details of income tax records.
 - + **Explain what domestic violence is and help victims to self-identify.** One barrier to accessing services among some immigrants results from their failure to identify themselves as victims of domestic violence unless the abuse is physical. Thus it is important to explain that abuse can take many forms – physical as well as emotional, sexual and financial. It's not just the victims that need to learn these lessons either. The community at large also needs to understand what domestic violence entails in order to improve social acknowledgment, and repudiation, of the violence.

- + **Be creative when designing outreach campaigns.** Effective outreach campaigns reach their audience on multiple levels to assure maximum visibility and, hopefully, impact. The OCDV’s outreach program has thought outside the box about places where community members spend their time in order to develop and launch creative strategies for distributing informational materials about City services for domestic violence.
 - + **Use transit systems.** In New York City, the OCDV has created several subway outreach campaigns including “That’s Abuse” and “Don’t Underestimate Your Risk.” These images blanketed subway cars and platforms where the city’s thousands of commuters could easily see them.
 - + **Conduct grassroots outreach.** As a complement to the public education campaigns, a variety of activities have been undertaken to place posters and informational materials in community organizations and small businesses throughout the city, with special emphasis on certain target neighborhoods where victims have historically not reached out for help in high numbers. Posters and palm cards have been placed in medical clinics, city libraries, grocery stores, other City agencies, public housing, salon, social service agencies, after school programs and a variety of other community-level venues throughout the city. Presentations have been conducted at community board meetings and other community partnership meetings in target neighborhoods.
 - + **Partner with small business owners and street side vendors.** When the FJC opened in the Bronx in 2010, staff developed a community outreach plan that entailed attaching flyers about the new center to the carts of ice and “Coco Helado” frozen desserts. The OCDV further trained the vendors themselves how to answer questions about the FJC and to direct customers to the new location when they demonstrated interest.
 - + **Conduct salon outreach.** Modeling after successful national programs like “Cut It Out,” the OCDV has launched specialized outreach in nail and beauty salons. Salons are ideal for domestic violence outreach, because individuals often go without the batterer and have a relationship of confidence with their stylist.
 - + **Monitor outreach results and fill gaps in service.** In New York, the center-based outreach is ongoing, which builds the capacity of the OCDV to understand if the FJCs are attracting clients from high-incidence areas, what new groups of clients are accessing services, and, when community members don’t come into the centers, why that is.
 - + **Develop strategic partnerships.** In Queens, FJC staff started seeing many more foreign-born clients from Southeast Asian communities like Nepal. In order to better serve this diverse client base, the FJC partnered with Women for Afghan Women to understand the needs of these clients and to get feedback on the best ways to communicate with them. The FJC has also collaborated on outreach efforts with the Queens Library and two chains for federally-qualified health care centers because they have extensive experience serving a highly diverse population.
 - + **Build on existing partnerships.** In collaboration with the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA), the Queens FJC conducted a training of all Queens Library librarians so that they would be aware of City services for immigrants, including resources for victims of domestic violence. In addition, the OCDV and FJCs participate in MOIA’s “Know Your Rights and Responsibilities” community forums.

CHAPTER TWO: CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

BACKGROUND

The many challenges of emigrating from one country to another are not restricted to adults. Immigrant children – either the 2.6 million who are immigrants themselves or the 17 million native-born children of immigrant parents – also often encounter difficulties, sometimes right at home. Children with a foreign-born parent account for 8.6 percent of all youth who come to the attention of the child welfare system. That rate grows to 9.6 percent when it includes children living with a foreign-born adult relative who is not a parent but is the primary caregiver, and findings from the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being indicate that immigrant children are more likely to experience emotional abuse than their U.S.-born peers.

Without any universal standards for what constitutes “good parenting,” cultural differences in parenting styles can be an additional risk factor for maltreatment within immigrant families. Norms for discipline and punishment can be quite different in other parts of the world, bringing some immigrant parents unexpectedly into conflict with the American child welfare system. Not only might these newcomers be surprised to find their child-rearing methods questioned, but the very concept of a government agency with the right to enter a private home, remove children or even terminate parental rights can be unfamiliar and cause fear or alarm.

Still, immigrant families also often have protective factors for children including less alcohol or drug abuse, fewer recent arrests and more two-parent headed households. When, despite these mitigating factors, immigrant children do end up in the child welfare system, there are important ways caseworkers can help those who are not citizens. Among the most significant is through Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), a federal law created to help foreign children in the United States who have been abused, abandoned or neglected. With SIJS, children can get their green cards, and then live and work here. For children whose lives have been marked by the fear and chaos that comes with maltreatment and subsequent foster care, SIJS can provide stability and permanence.

In New York City, the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) has taken into consideration both the ways immigrant children are uniquely vulnerable to maltreatment and their particular needs if they are removed from their homes in developing initiatives to assist them and their families. By taking advantage of local and federal laws that address the needs of immigrant youth, working with knowledgeable local community organizations and legal experts and improving cultural competency among staff who interact with this population, ACS has been better able to serve thousands of children across New York’s diverse five boroughs.

OBJECTIVES:

- + Identify and assist children who may qualify for certain immigration benefits to help them achieve permanence in the United States
- + Educate diverse communities about the role of the Administration for Children’s Services and steps that they can take to protect children and families
- + Ensure the responsiveness and cultural competence of the Administration for Children’s Services in relation to the unique needs of immigrant children and families

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Administration for Children's Services (ACS) was created in 1996 as the only City agency devoted entirely to children's welfare. Today, ACS is the City agency responsible for child welfare, early care and education, and juvenile justice services. ACS strives to protect, support and promote the safety and well-being of the children, youth and families of New York City. ACS investigates approximately 55,000 allegations of child abuse and maltreatment annually; it offers preventive services to families allowing them to remain safely together, when possible; and, it provides a loving, safe and supportive environment to children who come into foster care. ACS also administers the largest publicly-funded early care and education system in the country, serving over 100,000 children to ensure that the City's youngest residents receive lessons and skills to prepare them for success in school and beyond. In addition, ACS oversees an array of services and programs for youth at every stage of the juvenile justice process. The agency works to promote services that strengthen family connections, keep youth engaged in their communities and ensure that young people continue to make educational and other developmental progress while in the juvenile justice system.

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF IMMIGRANT INITIATIVES

The first time ACS had extensive interactions with foreign-born children was before the agency was established in its current form and after the passage of the Refugee Act of 1980. Following the implementation of this law, increasing numbers of refugees began settling in the United States, especially in major metropolitan areas like New York City. For ACS, this often meant assisting refugee children with their immigration-related needs, which the agency was able to do with federal funding.

In 1990, Congress passed the provisions for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, which was expanded in 2008. With this legislation, ACS was able to broaden its work from a focus on refugee children to also assisting immigrant children. Rather than just protecting these young immigrants from abuse and neglect, the agency could also find them permanency and more stable futures in this country. With the law's passage, ACS started working with legal agencies and lawyers to provide services for children. As ACS staff worked with more immigrant children and families, they gained a heightened awareness of their unique needs. As a result, ACS partnered with organizations embedded in immigrant communities to provide referrals to these families for services that are not under ACS' purview.

Current ACS programming is extensive. Those services that are especially relevant to immigrant families include legal service referrals, community outreach and education, the use of cultural brokers to improve communications between immigrants and the agency, partnerships with community-based organizations serving immigrants throughout New York, and a robust use of federal and local laws to assist immigrant populations as much as possible.

ENHANCING PROTECTIONS AND SECURING PERMANENCE FOR IMMIGRANT YOUTH

STEP ONE >

IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMMIGRANT YOUTH IN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

When immigrant children come into the foster care system, they may be even more vulnerable than their U.S.-born peers as a result of their immigration status. This is true especially for undocumented children. Child protective caseworkers and provider agency staff can play an important role in helping these children heal from their experiences of maltreatment by ensuring that they can remain in the United States and gain access to public benefits, education, jobs, housing, healthcare and other opportunities that require lawful immigration status.



EXAMINE RELEVANT LAWS AND POLICIES

- + **Understand impact of key federal immigration laws.** Federal law includes several remedies for victims of domestic violence, human trafficking and child maltreatment that can provide crucial benefits to immigrant children in the foster care system. Some of these include:
 - + **Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS).** SIJS is a key means of providing relief and protection for foreign-born children who have been abused, abandoned or neglected by one or both parents. Through SIJS children can gain green cards and, ultimately, citizenship.
 - + **T Visas for victims of human trafficking.** Certain children may be eligible for protection under the provisions of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (VTVPA). This law provides T Nonimmigrant Status (the T visa) for victims of human trafficking and permits them to remain in the country to assist investigations or prosecutions of human trafficking. With this visa in hand, an individual can apply for permanent residence after three years.
 - + **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.** Since August 2012, certain immigrant youth who came to the U.S. as children can apply for deferred action from removal. This two-year provision can be renewed and includes strict eligibility requirements. Although deferred action does not provide individuals with legal status, it does allow them to remain in the country lawfully, to obtain a driver's license in most states, including New York, and to apply for work authorization.

- + **Violence Against Women Act.** The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) provides immigration relief to victims of domestic violence. The spouse of a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident whose child has been abused can file for immigration relief based on this child abuse benefiting both the non-perpetrating parent and child victim. Children can also file for themselves. Immigration relief under VAWA gives victims lawful status in the U.S., work authorization, access to public benefits, and the ability to apply for a green card.
- + **U Visas for victims of certain serious crimes.** U Nonimmigrant Status (the U visa) was created by Congress to improve community safety by encouraging undocumented victims of certain crimes (domestic violence, sexual abuse, and other crimes) to report crimes to law enforcement and child welfare agencies. Undocumented crime victims who meet the statutory criteria, regardless of whether or not they are in foster care, are eligible to apply to federal immigration authorities for U Nonimmigrant Status, which allows them to live and work legally in the U.S., and eventually apply for permanent residency.
- + **Evaluate and/or implement local protections.** While federal law offers important protections to immigrant child abuse victims, it is also important to take advantage of any local laws and policies that exist to help children.
 - + **Tailor services to integrate local laws with federal legislation.** In New York City, Local Law 6 of 2010 required that ACS develop a comprehensive plan to identify immigrant youth in foster care who may be eligible for SIJS or other immigration benefits. Some of the plan's elements include routinely asking children their country of birth and looking for certain key documents to determine whether the youth may need immigration legal help, as well as training ACS and provider agency staff on immigration benefits. At the state level, New York's Destitute Child Law of 2012 enables youth who may not be abused or neglected but who are without a caretaker and lack sufficient food, clothing, shelter or medical/surgical care to come into ACS custody, and therefore allows more undocumented youth to access certain immigration protections, such as SIJS. In addition, New York's Safe Harbor Act of 2008 supports ACS efforts to provide services to child victims of sexual exploitation.
 - + **Ensure limited English proficient children and families have meaningful access to services.** In 2008, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg issued an Executive Order that mandated a centralized language access policy for all city agencies providing direct public services.
 - + **Identify priority languages.** As part of its language access plan, ACS identified nine priority languages and translates all essential documents into these languages.
 - + **Provide free interpretation.** The agency also provides free interpretation to all clients with limited English either through bilingual staff, contracted telephonic interpretation, or in-person interpreters.
 - + **Use multilingual signage.** Multilingual signs in ACS offices and other locations alert children and families about the availability of interpretation. Staff use language cards when making home visits so families still know about the interpretation services even when not in an agency office.
 - + **Inform community based organizations about language services.** ACS staff distribute pamphlets about these language services to community-based organizations.
- + **Monitor legal developments locally and nationally.** It is important for child protective staff to stay up-to-date on immigration laws and any changes to them so that eligible children always receive the most appropriate services. Legal status is crucial for children in foster care because it affords them access to key services they otherwise cannot obtain.

MULTILINGUAL PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS

The NYC Administration for Children's Services conducts multilingual outreach to inform immigrant communities about child protective services and prevent and address maltreatment.

A HURT CHILD
IS EVERYONE'S
BUSINESS

PREVENT CHILD ABUSE

IF YOU SUSPECT THAT
A CHILD IS BEING ABUSED
OR NEGLECTED,
PLEASE CALL 311



UN NIÑO
LASTIMADO
ES EL ASUNTO
DE TODOS.

EVITE EL MALTRATO INFANTIL.

PARA DENUNCIAR UNA
SOSPECHA DE MALTRATO
O NEGLIGENCIA INFANTIL,
LLAME AL 311.





ENGAGE LEGAL SERVICE PROVIDERS WITH EXPERTISE IN IMMIGRATION LAW

- + **Learn from legal experts.** Legal service providers that partner with ACS to represent children in foster care can advise child protective staff on how to assist immigrant youth as well as help agency staff understand the impact of immigration laws on individuals, families, and entire communities. In New York City, legal service providers regularly conduct immigration trainings for ACS and provider agency staff.
- + **Check-in with immigration attorneys to stay up-to-date on federal law.** Immigration lawyers are constantly monitoring federal immigration law. When new legislation is enacted, these attorneys can help ACS staff anticipate how it will impact youth in foster care, and implement policies or initiatives to take advantage of any opportunities for children in need of immigration relief.
- + **Partner with immigration attorneys to provide legal services to youth.** In New York City, ACS refers children in its care to legal service providers who can fully assess their immigration relief options and assist them in pursuing SIJS or another form of relief. Partners include: Atlas DIY, Catholic Charities, Catholic Migration Services, The Door Legal Services, Lawyers For Children, the Legal Aid Society, Lutheran Social Services, the New York Law School Safe Passage Project, the Safe Horizon Immigration Law Project, Sanctuary for Families and the Urban Justice Center.



TRAIN CASEWORKERS TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL BENEFICIARIES

- + **Understand the challenges.** Identifying youth in need of immigration legal services is not always easy. Children don't always know their immigration status and sometimes, even parents don't know their status. At other times parents don't tell their child so as to spare them the harsh realities of being undocumented; children may not be in touch with their parents; they may not have access to documents that they need and that relate to their status; and they may be afraid to speak about their status, especially with government representatives. To alleviate some of these concerns, caseworkers in New York always inform children and their families of the city's confidentiality policy that prohibits city workers from revealing anyone's status. (Certain strict exceptions apply related to crime investigations and other legal requirements.)
- + **Keep it simple.** Child protective staff do not need to be experts in immigration law to effectively assist children. Because legal service partners in New York City are available to fully assess a child's immigration needs and options, ACS and provider agency staff only need to determine whether the child may be in need of immigration services. To make this determination, staff use information and documents already available through the intake process, such as birth certificates, and ask simple questions like 'where were you born?' and 'how long have you been in this country?'

GREEN CARDS FOR YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

Between January 2011 and May 2013, 340 youth in foster care were identified as potentially eligible for SIJS or other immigration benefits. Of those, 93 have already received lawful permanent residency through SIJS. The vast majority of the remaining youth are either currently working with immigration attorneys to pursue relief, or in the process of having their case reviewed by an immigration attorney. (Source: ACS Annual Report on Local Law 6 of 2010, issued June 2013.)

In New York City, ACS developed a straightforward process to assess children's immigration legal needs based on whether or not they have specific documents that demonstrate their legal status: a U.S. birth certificate, naturalization certificate, passport, or green card.

- + **Category 1 - Not in need of immigration services:** If a child has a U.S. birth certificate, passport, or certificate of naturalization, then he or she is not in need of immigration services.
- + **Category 2 - Possibly in need of immigration services:** If a child has an unexpired 10 year green card AND (1) has had criminal justice contact, (2) wants to travel outside of the U.S., or (3) wants to submit any type of immigration application (such as a green card renewal or application for citizenship) then he or she is in need of immigration services. If the child has an unexpired 10 year green card and none of those circumstances apply, the child is not in need of immigration services, but should be referred in the future if any of the circumstances occur.
- + **Category 3 - Definitely in need of immigration services:** If a child has none of the above documents then he or she is definitely in need of immigration services.



ASSIST OTHER IMMIGRANT FAMILY MEMBERS WHENEVER POSSIBLE

Even youth who are U.S. citizens may be impacted by immigration issues, particularly if they have undocumented siblings or parents. Recognizing this, ACS has developed two key resources for undocumented family members of children in ACS care.

- + **Establish a U visa certification program.** Under federal immigration law, child protective agencies may provide a U visa certification to individuals who are victims of a qualifying crime and who assist ACS in the investigation or prosecution of criminal activity. The certification allows crime victims to move forward with an application to federal immigration authorities for U visa status. ACS Commissioner Ronald E. Richter has designated multiple staff members to review requests for U visa certification so that requests are processed in a timely manner. ACS and provider agency staff are trained on U visas so they can provide basic information about this option to undocumented families and refer those families to immigration legal services providers.
- + **Inform families about the importance of seeking quality immigration help.** ACS created a pamphlet on Immigration Assistance for Children and Families which provides basic information about the benefits of having legal status in the U.S., types of immigration relief, and free or low cost immigration service providers. The pamphlet is available in languages other than English and is given out by staff in all ACS and provider agency offices.

BUILD PARTNERSHIPS IN COMMUNITIES THAT ENHANCE EDUCATION AND PREVENTION EFFORTS

One of the ways ACS helps immigrant children is by engaging members of their communities in education and outreach efforts. This builds awareness among immigrant populations about what ACS is and does as an agency. It also improves the cultural competence of ACS staff working with immigrant families. Combined, these efforts build better channels of communication between ACS and New York's immigrants, which are essential to protect children from maltreatment.



IDENTIFY TARGET COMMUNITIES

- + **Focus on priority areas.** To determine where to spend its time and resources on outreach efforts, ACS focused on key communities based on select criteria:
 - + Those that send most children to child protective services; and
 - + Those with large immigrant and foreign-born populations that may not be familiar with child protective services.
- + **Provide in-depth services in communities of high need.** In New York, ACS has focused its educational efforts on 11 community districts where the majority of cases originate. Within those 11 areas, the agency further identified five districts that are home to large and growing foreign-born communities for a more in-depth program called the cultural broker initiative. This project is an effort to use knowledgeable immigrant community members to facilitate communication and cultural understanding between ACS staff and immigrant families.



WORK WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS TO BUILD CULTURAL COMPETENCY

- + **Engage preventive service providers with cultural expertise.** For over 30 years, ACS and its predecessor organizations have contracted with a variety of preventive service providers based on their unique linguistic and cultural expertise. Examples include: Arab American Family Support Center, Chinatown YMCA, Chinese American Planning Council, Hellenic American Neighborhood Action Committee, Ohel Children's Home and Family Services, Puerto Rican Family Institute and Sauti Yetu.
- + **Provide translation and interpretation services.** Having essential documents and materials translated into languages other than English is an important part of working effectively with immigrant families. Providing free interpretation services is also essential. Both are crucial elements of culturally sensitive and competent direct service provision.
- + **Choose interpreters who are knowledgeable about the immigrant community and child protective services.** When working with populations for whom the concept of a government agency with the authority to terminate parental rights is totally foreign, it's not effective to simply employ interpreters who can translate words correctly. ACS has found that it is key to engage interpreters who are as knowledgeable about the culture of the population being served, as they are about the functions of ACS. This way the interpreter can clearly convey the tone and intention of the message on both ends - from the immigrants and from ACS. Interpreters familiar with the agency will also not mis-translate names of city initiatives or immigration laws, for example, which might confuse the communication. ACS also created a comprehensive glossary of child welfare terms, which has been translated into nine priority languages; the glossary has been provided to staff and contracted in-person and telephonic interpreters.

- + **Build relationships with community leaders.** By cultivating relationships and partnerships with community-based organizations, political, social, and faith leaders from immigrant communities, ACS staff have found it easier not only to understand the particular needs of the foreign families that come into contact with child protective services, but also to develop interventions suited to those needs.
- + **Use cultural brokers to improve understanding between ACS staff and clients and support culturally competent casework practice.** Among the ways ACS has tried to improve the cultural appropriateness of its services is to use cultural brokers who help caseworkers during their interactions with immigrants. These cultural brokers can be volunteers from the community or staff from organizations that have partnered with ACS. The cultural brokers help ACS staff better understand the culture of the immigrant families that they are working with and the context within which the alleged child maltreatment occurred. They also help to educate new immigrants about child welfare rules and regulations.



PROACTIVELY CONDUCT OUTREACH TO INFORM IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES ABOUT CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

- + **Offer information that may prevent children from ever coming into ACS custody.** Rather than waiting for a child to come into ACS custody and then explaining to a foreign family why their parenting contravenes U.S. customs and laws, ACS staff have tried to educate immigrant communities about these customs and laws before any mistreatment takes place.
- + **Build engagement events around community needs.** Conduct preliminary outreach with community contacts to understand what times and locations are most accessible for intended participants. Develop events that incorporate information about child welfare with other in-demand services, such as English classes or other educational workshops.
- + **Ensure language access.** It is always important that any outreach is conducted in the language that most of the audience speaks. Providing materials translated into this language is also key.
- + **Clarify what child protection agencies in this country do.** Among the most fundamental purposes of ACS outreach to immigrant populations is to inform them about ACS's role as a city agency, what its mission involves, and how staff do their jobs. In many other parts of the world, government bodies that monitor child welfare in people's homes don't exist. Thus there can be widespread confusion among immigrants to the U.S. about an agency like ACS.
- + **Explain U.S. laws about child care, child abuse, and corporal punishment.** Again, because parenting in other countries may not be regulated quite like it is in this country, it is crucial to explain the laws around child care and what differentiates lawful vs. unlawful treatment.
- + **Refer families for further services when needed.** When it comes to the attention of ACS staff that clients they are working with need services ACS cannot or does not provide – such as drug treatment, mental health therapy, or medical care, for example – staff will refer them to other partner organizations and agencies.



COLLABORATE WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND OFFICES

An effective way to expand prevention efforts is to partner with other city agencies that have similar goals and may also already have community connections from which your agency can benefit. In New York, when ACS has wanted to conduct outreach around domestic violence prevention or public safety, an important partner is the Police Department's Immigrant Outreach Unit. ACS has also collaborated with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs on a citizenship campaign in order to promote access to immigrant legal services for the communities in which they work.

Training for child protective staff who work with immigrant populations must build their cultural awareness and sensitivity. Learning about foreign customs and traditions is essential for caseworkers and others who interact directly with immigrant families because it enables them to communicate effectively and understand both the unique risk factors for child maltreatment within these families, as well as the protective factors at play.

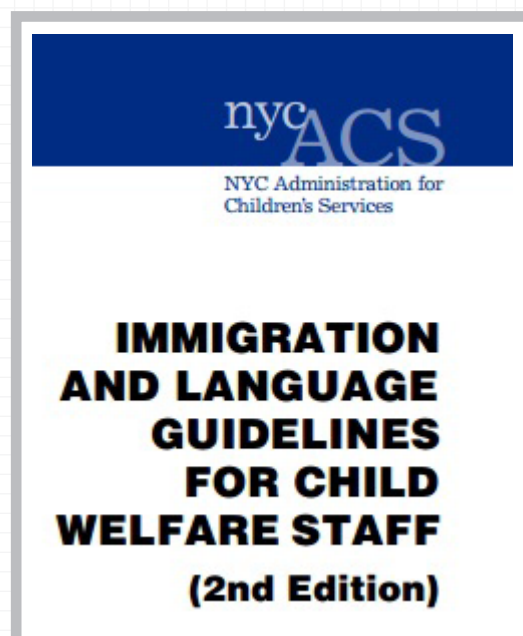


FOCUS STAFF TRAINING ON CULTURAL AWARENESS

- + **Conduct regular trainings.** ACS trains newly hired staff on issues pertaining to immigrants and re-trains them yearly.
- + **Build awareness of the challenges of acculturation.** One important issue to keep in mind for child protective staff is that sometimes what may look like child maltreatment is instead a consequence of cultural differences and a lack of knowledge. An illustrative example is the family that is reported to ACS because their children are not attending school. Caseworkers may find that this family is not abusing or neglecting their children but simply does not know how to enroll them in school. Another example is the family whose children are taken away because they have not followed a doctor's medication orders and their child has become seriously ill. That family may not have intended to harm their child, but rather didn't understand the physician's instructions, believed the medicine would actually make their child more ill, or felt a non-western approach to care was better suited to their child's needs.
- + **Partner with experts.** Experts can add to training initiatives by providing more in-depth information about certain issues such as immigration law, access to public benefits, healthcare, education, and other topics.

RESOURCES FOR STAFF

The NYC Administration for Children's Services trains its staff and provides information tools and resources to help staff members appropriately serve immigrant and limited English proficient clients.



A FOSTER CARE SIJS SUCCESS STORY

Jeffrey, a 17 year-old in New York City foster care, was brought to the United States from his native Jamaica over 10 years ago. Due to his mother's abuse and neglect, Jeffrey had been in foster care for the past 5 years. When ACS began training foster care caseworkers to identify youth in need of immigration legal assistance, Jeffrey's caseworker determined that because Jeffrey didn't have any documentation of U.S. citizenship or a green card, Jeffrey needed help.

Jeffrey's caseworker brought him to The Door, a local non-profit agency focused on youth development, for immigration legal services. At The Door, Jeffrey filled out an immigration intake form and was soon meeting with an immigration attorney who determined that he was eligible for SIJS.

After the caseworker obtained Jeffrey's birth certificate and other important documents from Family Court, Jeffrey's immigration attorney prepared Jeffrey's SIJS application. Several months later, Jeffrey and his immigration attorney met with an immigration officer. Jeffrey's interview with the immigration officer went smoothly, and one month later, Jeffrey received his green card.

As a lawful permanent resident, Jeffrey is able to better plan for when he transitions out of foster care. Along with his caseworker, Jeffrey is now applying for federal financial aid so that he will be able to attend college. Jeffrey is looking forward to his future.



INFORM STAFF ABOUT LANGUAGE ACCESS SERVICES

- + **Ensure consistent implementation.** Child protective staff need to know your agency's language access plan well and use it consistently and correctly when serving children and families with limited English proficiency. In addition to the provisions of the ACS language access plan outlined earlier, it also includes the following:
 - + **Allow clients to choose the language of communication.** An important component of the ACS plan includes always asking clients what language they wish to communicate in and then providing interpretation and translated materials in that language.
 - + **Use only trained, professional interpreters.** The ACS language policy strictly prohibits the use of children, family members, friends or neighbors as interpreters in child welfare cases.
 - + **Know when to use telephonic or in-person interpretation.** ACS staff use telephonic interpretation only for communications that will last less than 30 minutes. For any communications lasting longer, staff use in-person interpreters.

ENDNOTES

1. The National Domestic Violence Hotline. (2013). Abuse and Immigrants.
2. National Resource Center on Domestic Violence. (2013). *Addressing Domestic Violence in Immigrant Communities: Critical Issues for Culturally Competent Services*. Harrisburg, PA: Sheetal Rana.
3. Futures Without Violence. *The Facts on Immigrant Women and Domestic Violence*. San Francisco, CA.
4. National Resource Center on Domestic Violence. (2013). *Addressing Domestic Violence in Immigrant Communities: Critical Issues for Culturally Competent Services*. Harrisburg, PA: Sheetal Rana.
5. U.S. Census Bureau. (2012).
6. American Humane Association. *Children of Immigrants in the Child Welfare System: Findings from the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being*. Washington, DC: Alan Dettlaff and Ilze Earner.

CITIES FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION aims to support the expansion of programs and policies that facilitate the economic, civic and cultural integration of immigrants across the United States. The NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) has provided and will continue to provide technical assistance and guidance to other municipalities in their efforts to support immigrant communities and encourages local governments to network and share best practices in this important field.

Blueprints for Immigrant Integration, as well as additional tools and resources, are available on nyc.gov/integration and will continue to grow over the coming months. Please feel free to write us and share feedback by contacting integration@cityhall.nyc.gov.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work highlighted in this document was made possible with the support and guidance of many talented colleagues in New York City and across the United States. The NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs would like to thank Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg for his visionary leadership and voice on immigration, as well as our partner agencies, organizations, and funders, who share our commitment to supporting and investing in the well-being of immigrant New Yorkers.

MOIA is thankful to the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence for its innovative and comprehensive approach to addressing domestic violence across New York City, as well as the Administration for Children's Services for its commitment to supporting immigrant young people and fighting for their ability to have safe, stable lives in the United States.

Writing/Editing: Danielle Shapiro, Daniel Wallace, Yolanda Jimenez, Colleen Duffy, Fatima Shama

Design: Aaron Kinnari **Printer:** (add)ventures

Cities for Immigrant Integration and the Blueprints for Immigrant Integration were made possible with support from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. The opinions and views of the authors do not necessarily state or reflect those of the Fund.

Support for printing of the Blueprints for Immigrant Integration was generously provided by Citi Community Development.

The Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, a nonprofit dedicated to innovative public-private partnerships, has provided support for the Blueprints for Immigrant Integration.

Community Development



Office of
Immigrant Affairs
Fatima Shama
Commissioner



Rockefeller Brothers Fund
Philanthropy for an Interdependent World