



LATINA PORTRAIT

Domestic Violence and Latinas



MUJERES
LATINAS EN ACCIÓN

Domestic Violence and Latinas

Domestic violence is a destructive force in the lives of many Chicago Latinas, its negative effects rippling throughout the community. This article provides a portrait of the challenges many Latinas confront on a national and local level in relation to intimate partner violence. The study and subsequent recommendations are based on a literature review, an analysis of interviews with a total of 14 providers, and more than three decades of experience of Mujeres Latinas en Acción in working with battered Latinas.

Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behaviors in which one person uses physical, emotional, economic and sexual tactics to intentionally gain and maintain power and control over his/her victim in an intimate relationship, and may include threats, isolation and intimidation. While men are sometimes victims of abuse, women are the primary victims. In fact, 85 to 95 % of all cases of partner abuse involve a man beating a woman.¹ Although U.S. laws have increasingly sought to protect women, one in three has suffered abuse by an intimate partner. More alarming, many of them lost their lives at the hand of their intimate partner. During the first five years of the 21st century almost 6,000 women were murdered by their intimate partners.²

Domestic violence is not just a private issue, a woman's issue, a family or a Latino/a issue. It is a public health issue experienced by people of all ages, races, socioeconomic status and religious backgrounds. Domestic violence affects all aspects of life within the family, workplace and community. However, this article focuses on Latinas and domestic violence, with special consideration to the grievances of poor and immigrant survivors living in the United States.

The cost of domestic violence weighs heavily on society, given its long-term effects. Hospitals absorb the impact of broken bones, serious physical injuries, and even death. Physicians receive numerous visits from battered women seeking relief of somatic complaints, including sleep disruption, hypertension, and chronic pain. Mental health professionals are familiar with the psychological effects on survivors. They experience a sense of hyper-vigilance, symptoms of anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts and attempts. Mental health professionals commonly hear: "The only thing that keeps me alive is the thought of what will happen to my children."

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Children who witness domestic abuse, or receive abuse themselves have to deal with severe feelings of guilt, anger and fear. Some of the children may present problems with sleep, academic performance and delinquency. They are more likely to leave home at an early age, use drugs and alcohol, engage in prostitution, commit sexual assault crimes, and attempt suicide. Moreover, some will replicate the patterns learned at home and perpetuate the cycle of violence. According to one study, boys exposed to their parents' cycle of violence will be twice as likely as boys from nonviolent families to become men who abuse their partners. Growing up with familial violence is traumatizing for children, influencing every dimension of their life development.³

The effects of domestic violence are also seen in the workplace. Productivity suffers due to tardiness and missed workdays to address injuries and legal procedures. The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control estimates that the annual cost of lost productivity due to workdays missed in relation to domestic violence is \$727.8 million.⁴ The survivor may be more prone to job-related accidents or inefficiency because of impaired concentration and experience abusive incidents during the workday. These incidents inevitably impact coworkers. Moreover, one survey suggests that approximately 74% of employed battered women had been harassed by an intimate partner while at work. As a result of the severe emotional, social and economic costs of domestic violence in our society, communities have organized to provide support for survivors and to prevent the cycle from continuing.

The Battered Women's Movement in the United States

During the late 1960s and early 1970s as the term "domestic violence" emerged, women's organizations across the nation initiated an ideological shift, which not only demanded the institutionalized equal treatment of women but also pushed partner violence into the public sphere. During the 1970s, hundreds of women across the nation engaged in consciousness-raising activities that broke the silence of violence against women. These activities provided a platform of support from which many women could speak without shame. Thanks to these efforts domestic violence became an increasingly politicized and public issue.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s anti-domestic violence activism and advocacy influenced social institutions as legal statutes were established. Safe spaces and shelters were created for women and children to seek refuge and support. Social service programs with a focus on economic well-being, mental health, substance abuse issues and childcare multiplied. On

local, state and national levels, awareness campaigns began to influence public opinion about domestic violence. However, while the mainstream movement revolved around the concerns of white women, many experiences and voices, including those of Latinas, remained at the margins.

During the 1990s, previously excluded voices, including African American and Latina, began making themselves heard and many survivors of color began to share their experiences and activism on a large scale. Women from rural areas, communities of color, immigrant groups, prisons, LGBTQ communities and the disability community disclosed experiences of domestic violence, expressing particular needs that had not been accommodated by traditional services. For example, Latina leaders and advocates raised awareness of the importance of providing bicultural, bilingual services, shattering stereotypes and accentuating the diverse demographics and experiences of Latinas.

Chicago's Response to Domestic Violence

In Chicago, activists gathered in 1976 to discuss the crisis of domestic violence. This led to the formation of the Chicago Abused Women's Coalition (now known as Connections for Abused Women and their Children). The coalition offered the city's first services for survivors of domestic violence, followed by a hotline and shelter within the first few years of work.⁵ Recognizing the need for survivors to have access to legal representation, activists in Chicago established the country's first Legal Center for Battered Women in 1976. These organizations vitally served many women while demanding a culture of respect and equality toward survivors of domestic violence.

Acknowledging the criminal nature of domestic violence, a special court was established in Illinois in 1982 to deal with these cases. In 1986 the Illinois Domestic Violence Act mandated law enforcement to protect victims. For example, survivors became able to obtain an order of protection, a written mandate signed by the judge prohibiting the abuser from making contact with the victim. The violation of this mandate would result in arrest. The Act criminalized domestic violence and created legal ramifications. The Domestic Violence Act reflects an increasing intolerance of violence against women.

Latina activists played a key role in this movement by creating a grass roots organization for women in the Pilsen community in 1973 called *Mujeres Latinas en Acción* (*Mujeres*). Although the Latina organizers offered much-needed support to survivors of domestic violence while directly addressing interrelated issues such as housing, education and employment, the agency officially established its domestic violence program in 1981.

Throughout the first several years of organizing, Mujeres founders encountered significant resistance to their work because of the perceived threat within the community. This included death threats, beatings and the destruction of their building by arson. However, the agency earned the trust of the community and the recognition of funders who, nearly forty years later, continue to value the work of Mujeres.

Currently, numerous domestic violence agencies in Metropolitan Chicago employ a comprehensive philosophy when assisting survivors. However, the initial approach focused on helping the survivor leave the relationship and pursuing punishment for the abuser. Recently advocates have placed more emphasis on risk reduction and batterer intervention. By capitalizing on education, advocates developed prevention strategies that include the implementation of healthy relationships curriculum for youth, the celebration of Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October, and the development of campaigns to promote a nonviolent male culture.

Illinois Statistics

According to the Illinois State Police, there were a total of 115,988 cases of domestic crimes reported in Illinois in 2009.⁶ More than three-fourths of these domestic crimes were considered non-family committed by a boyfriend or girlfriend.⁷ Specific to Chicago, quarterly data reported as of March 2011, revealed that the 12th Police District, where Mujeres Latinas en Accion's main site is located, averages 1-9 domestic disturbance, domestic battery, and violation of orders of protection each day.⁸ Chicago's 911 emergency call center reported 197,798 domestic violence related calls in 2010.⁹ In the same year, arrests for Simple Domestic Battery totaled 7,917, while arrests for Aggravated Domestic Battery (cases involving serious bodily harm) numbered 74. Moreover, 674 arrests were made for violation of an order of protection.¹⁰ In 2010, out of the 30 domestic violence homicides that took place in the City of Chicago, four of the victims were Latina.¹¹

In addition to the figures above, the 2010 Domestic Violence Help Line Report states that were 29,641 phone calls answered in that year. Of these, 6% of the calls were conducted in Spanish. From these figures, 26% of the calls made to the Domestic Violence Help Line were referred by domestic violence and social service providers. The great majority of the callers were from Chicago (78%) and roughly 21% were from Illinois locations outside of Chicago.¹²

Moreover, 93% of the victim series callers were female and most of them sought shelter and legal services. Twenty one percent of the victims were Latino. Ninety percent of callers



reported being abused by an intimate partner and 10% by a family/household member. Of the 90% of intimate partner violence, abusers were a cohabitating partner (35%), spouse (32%), or a former spouse/partner (23%). In comparison to the Chicago victims, those in Cook County (38%) and the rest of Illinois (41%) endured significantly more abuse by a spouse. Most of the intimate partner violence (IPV) occurred between a female victim and a male abuser (90%) though four percent (4%) of the IPV occurred in same gender relationships between female partners. After further discussing the scenarios of abuse provided by the callers, one or multiple forms of abuse were recorded. Most victims mentioned emotional (99%) as well as physical (90%) forms of abuse. Lastly, 16% of the victims had an order of protection against their abuser at the time a call was made to the Help Line.¹³

Various issues complicate the compilation of city and state data, often making it difficult to draw conclusions. First, some data systems do not separate domestic violence incidents involving family members from intimate partner violence. For instance, reports from the Chicago Police Department include sibling or parent/child violence along with incidents between intimate partners. This distinction is important because the relational dynamics of domestic violence have strong implications on how to approach the issue. The Illinois Domestic Violence Act (IDVA), for example, applies to any two people who have dated in the past, have children in common, have lived together or are related by blood.

Existing statistics only account for cases reported to the police; yet intimate partner violence is highly underreported. This is due to barriers including misperceptions that abuse must have physical evidence, cultural attitudes and values, past negative experiences with police response, and the survivor’s fear of possible repercussions.¹⁴ “He just pushed me” or “I don’t have any marks” are common remarks uttered by survivors who are unaware that physical proof is not necessary to file a police report or request court protection. Cultural attitudes and values might include the belief that abuse is part of all relationships and that maintaining a marriage is the woman’s responsibility or that marriage should last until one of the spouses’ death.

Moreover, many have had negative experiences with law enforcement agents during past incidents in which the abuser was not arrested or the caller was identified as the primary aggressor. At times, police have trivialized situations and have delayed responses due to racism and/or discrimination toward less affluent neighborhoods. Finally, fear of repercussions for disclosing abuse is very real because some abusers may become angrier, resulting in intensified abuse, and the threat of death. Furthermore, some survivors may also fear the possibility of having their children removed by DCFS (Department of Children and Family Services) and therefore choose not to report the abuse.

Latinas are underrepresented in Chicago Police Department statistics, as well as in the use of civil and criminal courts. For instance, out of the 1,226 Latinas who sought domestic violence services at Mujeres in 2011, only 158 pursued an order of protection. According to Mujeres service providers, the number of police reports made by domestic violence survivors was even smaller. National statistics indicate that one in three high school students have been or will be involved in an abusive relationship, yet research for this age group in Illinois is lacking. Considering that 36% of Latinas in Chicago are 17 years or younger, this research is critical.¹⁵ As previously noted, there are variations as to what constitutes domestic violence, including the relational nature of those involved. Consequently, it is nearly impossible to grasp an accurate picture of domestic violence in the Latino/a community and how it relates to diverse groups of Latinas.

Fortunately, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) provides more extensive demographic data. Used by state-funded domestic violence service providers throughout Illinois, the InfoNet is a web-based system that has collected demographic information over time on city and state levels. The data that they provide allows for comparisons between groups served between the fiscal years of 2006 and 2011

(SEE TABLE 1). An analysis of the data reveals a 9.8 % increase in the numbers of Latinas served in Chicago while overall numbers of clients served dropped by nearly 10 percent.

TABLE 1. Client Population Served by Domestic Violence Programs in Chicago¹⁶

	FY 06	FY 11	CHANGE
NUMBER OF LATINAS SERVED (HISPANIC FEMALES)	4666	5123	9.8%
AFRICAN AMERICAN	6283	5261	-16.3%
ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER	633	684	8.1%
BI-RACIAL/MULTI-RACIAL	*	189	
HISPANIC	5079	5590	10.1%
AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE	58	425	632.8%
WHITE	2484	4531	82.4%
UNKOWN	*	115	
TOTAL CLIENTS SERVED	14,829	13,374	-9.8%

While services for Latinas remain limited, a higher number of domestic violence agencies are located in Chicago than in the six collar counties. In 2006, ICADV reported the existence of 14 domestic violence agencies (including shelters) in Cook County, including 9 in the City of Chicago. There are 2 providers in Kane, 1 in Lake, 2 in DuPage, 1 in McHenry and 2 in Will counties.

Cultural proficiency is essential to serving Latina survivors of domestic violence. One provider expressed: “I did have to change the way of counseling when I introduce myself and start doing the paperwork, I have to do it not in the same manner as I would do an Anglo woman...so I have to get comfortable with them first to get [them] comfortable with me.” Every provider interviewed urgently expressed the need for more funding to further develop services for Latinos/as, especially in areas outside of Chicago and Cook County. In response to a pressing demand for services accompanying the rapid rise of Latinos/as in Cicero and Berwyn, Mujeres initiated domestic violence services for these areas in 2004, offering bilingual/bicultural support.

Offering services that address the unique needs of Latinos/as involves attracting and retaining bilingual and bicultural professionals, a process about which several providers conveyed concern. Many qualified bilingual professionals have expressed discomfort about working in environments unreceptive to Latino/a culture, and they may not receive the structural support they needed for this work. Bilingual personnel, especially those who are the organization’s sole Spanish-speaker, tend to face an excessive work load and may be required to respond to anything related to Latino/as. Many are given additional responsibilities, such as translation of documents, in addition to the regular expectations of their position. Despite these challenges, 100% of the providers interviewed emphasized the

importance of employing bilingual and bicultural staff to ensure the delivery of culturally proficient services, and considered staff training in immigration and cultural competency a priority for improvement.

It is also essential to recognize the diversity among Latinas. Not all battered Latinas have low English proficiency, internalized traditional feminine roles and cultural values or low educational attainment. Furthermore, they may be well above the poverty line and may be U.S. citizens without concern for immigration status. For instance, Puerto Rican women are U.S. citizens and Cubans are likely to have legal permanent residency due to political asylum, along with many Central Americans. Additionally, South American women in the U.S. tend to have higher levels of formal education. Being aware of the diversity among Latinas is crucial when addressing their individual needs.

Barriers for Latinas

Many battered Latinas deal with significant internal and external obstacles to seeking assistance. For many, these barriers include cultural, familial and religious values, low income level, unstable means of transportation and immigration status. Even among middle class or wealthy Latinas, the concept of family evokes strong feelings of attachment and loyalty to



family members, implying that discussing the abuse brings shame and embarrassment to their families. Consequently, keeping family together is extremely important even in the face of an abusive relationship. This is true for many women, but especially for Latinas. Violating the value of family unity may risk not only losing their abusive partner but also the respect and acceptance from their own family and community.

1. Family Inclusion

When Latinas seek support in freeing themselves from violence, they frequently request the inclusion of their partners. Asking the support provider “Can you talk to him?” is common. According to psychologist Julia Perilla, Latinas commonly have wanted to remain in their relationship, seek assistance for their abuser to put an end to family violence.¹⁷ One provider’s comment corroborates this pattern: “I would say that the majority of the Latinas that we see in our organization are still in the relationships and most of the time they plan to stay in the relationships.” Latinas share similarities with South Asian women in that “the idea of working with the family unit instead of an individual can be a comforting notion for many clients who feel that seeking help is a selfish act.”¹⁸

While the safety of the woman is vital, the need exists to explore ways of including the woman’s family and social support system without jeopardizing her safety or perpetuating victimization by the abusive partner. On the one hand, inclusion of the abuser and survivor in the same room during treatment threatens the survivor’s safety since the abuser may take reprisal and intensify the abuse at home. On the other hand, if the abuser is not treated, the abusive behavior will continue with current or future partners. However, there are very few programs for Latino/a batterers that incorporate a culturally and linguistically appropriate approach.

A comprehensive approach includes identifying the support system of the survivor and providing education about domestic violence, also taking into account the treatment of children. Holistic family intervention is crucial to restructuring families and in creating new ways for people to relate with one other. Currently, two of the centers we interviewed are using this approach by providing services for children who have witnessed domestic violence.

2. Cultural and Religious Beliefs

The cultural concepts of *machismo* and *marianismo* set the basis for rigidity in gender roles, in which man is the dominant, primary provider and a “good” woman’s qualities consist of submission and inevitable suffering. While the Webster definition of *machismo* is “an exaggerated sense of power entitling one to dominate others,” the term also encompasses positive characteristics for men, such as “honor, pride, courage, responsibility and obligation to the family.”¹⁹ *Marianismo*, the female counterpart, is characterized by passivity, submission and resignation. It also defines women as semi-divine, morally superior and spiritually stronger than men.²⁰ These concepts create an unequal power structure in which men can take advantage of their privileged position and abuse women. Across

many Latino cultures, it is not acceptable to be divorced, to marry several times, to remain single, to have children out of wedlock or to have same sex relationships. Latinas holding this traditional feminine role may reject the possibility of leaving their abusive partners.

For the majority of Latinas, messages from the Roman Catholic Church have formed part of their socialization process, reinforcing how gender roles have been delineated by the indoctrinated indissolubility of marriage. Many may believe that the capacity for changing the abuser's behavior depends totally upon God. There may be an acceptance of God's will, "Es la voluntad de Dios," in relation to the experience of abuse.

However, there are progressive priests and nuns who use religion to assist survivors in freeing themselves from violence.

3. Socioeconomic Conditions

Widespread low socioeconomic and educational levels limit options for battered Latinas. In Chicago, 46% of households headed by Latinas earn less than \$15,000 annually.²¹ On average, over half in 2000 and 40% in 2007 of all Latinas in the metro area did not have a high school diploma or equivalency and are, therefore, more likely to work in lower paying industries and occupations.²² Low income, coupled with low formal educational attainment, makes it difficult for many Latinas to succeed. Considering these restricting conditions, they may not see alternatives other than to continue in abusive relationships. Lack of information about community services or limited means of transportation also inhibit many Latinas from seeking help. Ineligible for most public assistance, undocumented Latina immigrants often depend on the abuser for economic survival, thereby constraining their ability to leave. Many Latinas trying to escape violent abuse often struggle to find affordable housing, making a shelter their only alternative.



4. Shelter Accessibility

Unfortunately, safe houses for battered women are scarce. Currently, there are only six shelters in Chicago (one was closed recently) and nine in the suburbs. Women are frequently turned away because of lack of space. Without exception, providers urgently identified a gap in the availability of shelters for victims and recommended more funding for shelters and affordable housing. For battered Latinas this situation is challenging because of their tendency to have more children than their African American and white counterparts, as well as language and cultural differences.²³ In fact, 82% of Latinas had young children at home compared to 66% of African American and 51% of white respondents.²⁴

Additionally, many shelters do not have bilingual and bicultural staff to assist the needs of monolingual Spanish-speaking Latinas. In general, staying in a shelter can be traumatic to anyone experiencing crisis. Not only is privacy violated when sharing a bedroom and meals with strangers, but daily routines, customs and lifestyle are disrupted. Immigrant Latinas not accustomed to the mainstream culture undergo culture shock in addition to the carrying the emotional trauma of abuse. Thus, lack of affordable housing and culturally proficient shelters make it especially difficult to

seek help for Latinas who need space for their families and services in their native language.

5. Parental Visitation Rights

Abuse does not end when the survivor leaves the abuser. In fact, the risk for homicide is greatest when the survivor attempts to end the relationship.²⁵ Despite this elevated risk, abusers are still granted the right to see their children. Customarily, the court mandates supervised visitations in a safe space for abusers to spend time with their children. In Chicago there are only three centers that provide culturally proficient services free of charge: Apna Ghar on the north side for the South Asian community, Branch on the south side for African Americans and Mujeres Latinas en Acción in Pilsen for Latino families. These centers ensure a safe exchange so that victims remain protected while fulfilling court expectations.

6. Immigration Status

Immigration status significantly impacts undocumented victims of domestic violence. Low English language levels isolate them even more. In order to call Chicago home, some have risked their lives and may have suffered violence at the hands of thieves, police or *coyotes* (human smugglers) when crossing southern borders. Some Latina immigrants are unaware that domestic violence and sexual assault are crimes. For some there is an intensified fear of being accused of *abandono de hogar* (home abandonment), a law observed in Mexico to deter either parent from leaving their partner without previously being divorced. For instance, if a married woman in Mexico leaves her abusive husband, she can be accused of *abandono de hogar* and thereby lose custody of her children. Unfamiliarity with laws and the rights of women in this country keep many Latinas from identifying their experience as abuse.

Their undocumented status denies Latinas access to financial resources, such as public benefits and employment opportunities, as well as bringing difficulties finding legal assistance or childcare, and many live with the constant fear of deportation. This fear often inhibits many Latinas from reporting abuse, especially when abusers use deportation as a threat. One victim shared: “He said that if I call the police or if I go to court, they will take my kids, put me in jail and send me back to Mexico.” A provider discussed conditions that require change in order for undocumented Latinas to liberate themselves from abusive partners: “I would like to see more housing available for them and not being asked about legal status, jobs without being asked...availability of child care, education...”

Many immigrant Latinas distrust the police, believing they are connected to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). One immigration attorney commented: “Think in terms of a domestic violence service provider, you always have to be concerned that people are afraid of going to the police, and I think the responses to immigrants that occurred after September 11th definitely affect people’s responses to the police. They’ve become more fearful about going to the police.”

Abusers usually threaten non-citizen survivors with either not requesting or stopping the application process to regularize their immigration status. Enacted in 1994 and renewed in 2005, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) provides some relief for battered women married to a permanent resident or a U.S. citizen. Under this act, even undocumented victims can request a self-petition, which includes their children, from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to legalize their migratory status and become a permanent resident. However,

few undocumented Latinas meet eligibility criteria because many are not legally married or their spouses are also undocumented. The U-Visa may be a remedy for victims of crime who do not qualify for a self-petition under VAWA, provided they pursue legal action against their abuser.

7. Legal System

Most providers (71%) discussed significant problems with access to the police and legal system for Latina domestic violence cases, pinpointing language services as the primary barrier. As one provider explained, “Chicago has a huge population of people who only speak Spanish, and the court system is very difficult for people in that situation to navigate. There is a shortage of translators, people who go to court may have to wait for hours to get a translator... That makes it very difficult for people to enforce their rights because they can’t spend that much time.” Another provider believed Latina victims use the legal system depending upon their experiences within it: “I think, though, what’s happening is they have frustrations with the follow-through and their abusers getting a slap on the wrist and walking away, so that may deter them from using it in the future.”

Many providers pointed out that Latinas tend to use civil court rather than criminal due to current immigration laws, cultural issues and negative experiences with institutions. However, one agency in McHenry County commented that Latinas use the criminal court more than civil due to the lack of legal assistance for civil cases. Civil court sentencing is less severe than in criminal court, and felony convictions lead to the deportation of undocumented abusers, factors that victims often take into consideration when they have this information.

8. Services for Latina lesbians

Latina lesbians suffering domestic violence also face unique barriers and needs. A previous study published in the *Latina Portrait: Latina Queer Women in Chicago*, surveyed three hundred five Latina LGTBQQ participants between the ages of 13 and 60. The study reveals that 49% of respondents reported that a female partner prohibited them from contacting their family and friends, 43% reported they were pushed or hit by a partner, and 31% alleged a female partner threatened to kill them.²⁶ Conversely, 45% of the Latina lesbians polled admitted to have punched or hit a female partner, 23% admitted they had threatened to kill their current or previous partner. Police, legal institutions and service providers may ignore the existence of abuse in same-sex relationships or provide homophobic responses to lesbian victims. Latina lesbians are at greater risk of having their sexual orientation disclosed by the abuser, which may isolate them from traditional, possibly disapproving

communities. The lack of data on the intersection of domestic violence and Latina lesbians makes the need for further research obvious.

RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR POLICY-MAKERS

- Reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)
- Expand options for economic self-sufficiency so that Latina survivors may experience more power to leave abusive relationships
- Make public benefits available to survivors regardless of immigration status, including undocumented women and women with less than five years of legal permanent residency
- Create affordable workforce training and adult education opportunities, which offer bilingual services, child care and transportation
- Support a national pathway to citizenship for undocumented survivors
- Fund financial literacy trainings and housing counseling in both English and Spanish
- Improve the efficiency of the criminal justice system so that survivors may remain safe
- Establish positions for interpreters and bilingual staff in areas of high Latino/a growth
- Mandate cultural and domestic violence sensitivity training for all employees of the criminal justice system, especially state and local law enforcement and court personnel
- Fund bilingual legal advocacy positions to help survivors navigate the court system
- Increase funding for services and research so that Latinas have greater access to support, information and prevention strategies
- Provide funding for culturally appropriate victim services, outreach and shelters in areas of high Latino/a growth, particularly the collar county region
- Fund research for underserved populations, especially Latina teens and lesbians
- Direct funds to culturally appropriate batterer intervention programs serving Latino/as
- Invest funds to support the career training of bilingual/bicultural students, especially in the fields of counseling, criminal justice and health care services

FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Create and support a culturally sensitive work environment
- Hire bilingual and bicultural staff in both administration and direct services
- Offer opportunities for Latina staff to assume leadership positions
- Mandate cultural sensitivity trainings that address the diversity of Latinas for all staff
- Foster partnerships with local universities to draw culturally proficient staff
- Develop and implement culturally proficient services
- Explore holistic models that address children, family and abuser issues
- Offer support groups for Latina survivors
- Collaborate with other organizations to provide comprehensive resources for each individual, making referrals to culturally appropriate counseling, economic empowerment, and educational services
- Increase access to information and social service resources through bilingual outreach
- Initiate workshops to educate immigrant Latinas about rights, laws, and legal processes in this country
- Provide written materials in both English and Spanish
- Utilize community and faith-based organizations to raise awareness of domestic violence, educating clergy and leaders in the areas of gender oppression, accountability of the abuser, and the safety of survivors

EVENTS IN THE BATTERED WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN THE U.S.

- 1978 Both the National Coalition against Domestic Violence and the Illinois Coalition against Domestic Violence are established.
- 1979 Office of Domestic Violence is created in the Department of Health and Human Services.
- 1982 Domestic violence law takes effect in Illinois.
- 1984 Over 700 shelters operate nationally.
- 1990 Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) begins to recognize domestic violence as a motive for asylum in the U.S.
- 1993 Health providers are required to be trained in domestic violence issues.
- 1994 The Violence against Women Act becomes federal law.
- 2002 In response to the pressure of anti-domestic violence advocates in Chicago, funds are approved to improve legal pathways for victim protection.

NOTES

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