

NETWORK MEETING MINUTES December 10, 2014

Present: 40 present from 17 agencies including:

- NM Legal Aid
- 13th Judicial District DA's Office
- Albuquerque SANE
- Rape Crisis Center of CNM
- Resource Center of Victims of Violent Death
- Families and Youth, Inc, Children's Advocacy Center
- NM Crime Victims Reparation Commission
- NM Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- IMPACT
- Casa de Salud
- Catholic Charities
- HSD
- Santa Fe SAFE
- NM Aging and Long Term Services
- Haven House
- Encuentro
- Animal Protection of NM-CARE

Welcome, Introductions and Announcements: conducted!

Legislative Update: Susan Loubet & Pam Wiseman

- \$500,000 to fund Rape Crisis Centers to assist prisons with the Prison Rape Elimination Act. Being requested by NMCSAP. Susan thinks this money will be used for prevention activities in the prisons.
- \$500,000 for services for victims of trafficking to be administered through Crime Victims Reparation, subject to the New Mexico trafficking law.
- Pam Wiseman, NMCADV noted that strangulation legislation will be revisited this year. There is no intention at this time to request funding in light of the anticipated reduced revenues due to the oil revenues being so low.
- Safe Harbor (Trafficking) Task Force – wants to focus on children who are at risk of being arrested for prostitution. Task Force has guiding principles that have been established and are articulated in a document published by the Women's Agenda and posted on the Network's website. The document gives a good summary of the work going on, resources available, services available (as well as forthcoming services), data, promising efforts, recommendations, and other information.
- Ban the Box Bill: Sheila Lewis, Santa Fe SAFE spoke of pending legislation that would prevent employers from asking on applications if the applicant has been arrested or convicted of a felony. This question could be asked in an interview. Also plans to include "being discriminated against because of the felony" as a protected class.

Agency Spotlight: Resource Center for Victims of Violent Death – Joan Shirley, Co-Director

(www.bridgesforvictimsofviolentdeath.org)

Located on Lomas near Eubank across from the Target (10701 Lomas Blvd. NE, Suite 115). One of the co-founders was a Private Investigator who was involved in the Kaitlyn Arquette unsolved murder which led her to question how to support the families/loved ones of murder victims. In addition, the center supports those who perhaps weren't victims of homicide but were victims of attempted murder or undetermined death. Joan also participates on the NM Intimate Partner Death Review Team. The organization estimates that for every murder, there are a minimum of 10 folks who need assistance. They do not try to support child victims, but rather send those families to the Children's Grief Center. Counseling and peer groups are their primary services. The other major activity is a newsletter published 4 times a year, which includes a "Note from Joan Shirley as One Victim to Another." Services are all free. Some services may be accessed over Skype. There is also a Spanish speaking group. Joan's handout will be made available on the Network's website.

Program Spotlight: Sheltering Pets – Jeannette Baca, Project Coordinator with NMCADV

Partnered with Animal Protection of NM to identify funding for increasing capacity to provide care to companion animals. There is a need for safe places to house animals during a domestic violence situation, because most shelters will not accept animals. Effort is to get more providers (statewide) who will shelter these companion animals. Asking agencies to put note in newsletters requesting more shelters for these animals and/or posting a link to their website: www.apnm.org/care

Children's Capacity Building Pilot Project: Seven domestic violence programs are partnering with NMCADV and CYFD to assist children who are experiencing domestic violence, and expand services to children. This program does include funding which makes it easier to expand services and provide training.

Shelters with Minimal Rules: Jeannette Baca

(Also known as "low barrier shelters.") Survivor designed shelters and meeting the needs of the survivor. This means removing barriers that prevent clients from accessing shelters. Barriers can look different depending on the survivor needing services. An example: substance abuse can prevent a survivor from receiving shelter. Curfews and language can also be barriers. Survivors are really busy trying to cope with their circumstances, and dealing with lots of rules established at the shelter can interfere with the survivor's progress. The focus shifts from staff enforcing rules to staff building relationships with survivors. There are some tools available from the Coalition (www.nmcadv.org) which can help shelters determine how to implement some of these changes. NMCADV will also be bringing in some speakers to share information and research on the subject.

Panel Discussion:

Cultural Consideration for Immigrant Populations Experiencing DV/SA

This panel will address specific difficulties and issues advocates and lawyers encounter when working with clients from different cultural backgrounds. It will also focus on services that are available to these victims including such remedies as the VAWA and U Visa applications

Virginia Perez-Ortega, Enlace Comunitario

Virginia's presentation has been handed out and will be posted on the website. There are a variety of staff at Enlace who can assist the clients with attending court. Enlace continues to work with the courts to understand the needs of the immigrant client. Enlace provides the whole spectrum of services to victims of DV and SA, with the exception of shelter. They do have transitional housing available for some clients. There is also primary and secondary prevention work being done by Enlace. Immigrant population carries a lot of fear related to the public sentiment about immigrants. Major barriers are fear of deportation, language, isolation, economic barriers, cultural practices and beliefs and religion. Virginia also discussed the elements of Latino Culture compared to mainstream culture. In regard to sexual violence, 44% seek informal help, 35% didn't seek any help, and only 14% reported seeking formal and informal help. Existe Ayuda has a toolkit that can assist service providers to serve the immigrant community.

Anh Dao Bui, NM Asian Family Center

NM Asian Family Center's work is to advocate and empower individuals. The Domestic Violence victim has these challenges: culture (male dominant) (DV is part of culture) (that which happens in the home is not reported therefore underreported incidence of DV); language (no other agency in Albuquerque area offers on-site services in Asian languages); and already being marginalized (excluded) (a belief that Asians don't have problems). NMAFC serves a very large number of cultures and languages from all over Asia which can be very overwhelming to the staff. Some community mistrust of the Agency. Asian clients really need advocates to assist them to manage all the systems available to them for services.

Melissa Ewer, Catholic Charities

Provides immigration services to victims of DV/SA, as well as immigrants who are not victims of DV/SA. All of the staff is bilingual. Catholic Charities works closely with community agencies. Sometimes clients decline interpreter services because they don't want to be a burden, so asking the question in different ways can be important. Informing people of their rights is very important because there can be a lot of misconceptions.

Basic tenets of VAWA and U Visa: married status, length of time in county, and children don't really have any bearing on legal status or options for legal status. It is a very complicated system. For those experiencing DV or SA, there are a variety of questions that must be asked when determining options for U Visa or protections under VAWA. The best step is to contact Catholic Charities for assistance. Some immigration officials also might not understand VAWA and U Visa because it isn't the type of immigration work they are involved with. Catholic Charities is often the first stop for immigrant status issues but referrals might be made to other agencies dealing with immigration. U Visa was created to try to bring victims out of the shadows and seek assistance through law enforcement. There are legal protections available for immigrants who have been victimized, but be careful about creating false hope because the criteria to qualify can be very difficult. Please don't send clients to immigration for assistance!!!

Immigration law often intersects with other parts of the law and service providers need to be alert to this.

Wrap Up:

- Next meeting is February 25 beginning at 9:00 a.m.
- Website: <http://www.thenetwork-dvsa.org> (to see presentations from our speakers).
- Still recruiting for Steering Committee members. Applications are available on the Network website.

Minutes taken by Teresa D'Anza