

FIRST NATIONAL LATINO POLICY SUMMIT ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Executive Summary Report

On June 22 – 23, 2000, seventy-five representatives from more than fifty national and regional domestic violence organizations and other organizations that provide leadership and services in Latino communities gathered in Washington, D.C. for the First National Latino Policy Summit on Domestic Violence (Policy Summit). The gathering was convened by the National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence (the Alianza) to begin to plan a collaborative response to domestic violence in Latino communities. (See Appendix A for an overview of the Alianza).

The Policy Summit marked the first time that a dialogue of this magnitude had taken place between experts from the Latino domestic violence community—community activists, advocates, practitioners, researchers, and survivors—and Latino leaders from such diverse fields as immigration, women's and children's rights, public health, substance abuse and mental health, civil rights, religion, and the elderly.

Forums such as these that examine and yield information about the particular status, needs, and concerns of Latino communities are increasingly significant and necessary as the Latino population in this country continues to grow. According to the most current Census Bureau statistics, Latinos are the fastest growing minority group in the country, and are soon projected to become the largest. Their numbers soared from 22 million in 1990 to 35.3 million in 2000 (an increase of 60 percent).¹

The Policy Summit had four primary objectives:

- ⊙ Begin the initial stages of developing a blueprint for a Latino Domestic Violence Agenda (LDVA) that can guide Latino communities, and those serving Latino communities, in creating culturally competent and responsive strategies against domestic violence;
- ⊙ Examine the impact that domestic violence legislation, such as the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and other policies, has on Latinas/os;
- ⊙ Increase the visibility and amplify the voice of Latinas/os in determining relevant policies and the allocation of critical funding for Latino domestic violence initiatives; and
- ⊙ Encourage Policy Summit participants to begin to discuss the LDVA among their respective organizations and communities and to consider ways to contribute to its development.

The Policy Summit opened with a reception on Capitol Hill on the evening of June 22 that included the participation of congressional representatives. Congresswoman Grace Napolitano from California welcomed the participants on behalf of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and provided the opening remarks for the Summit. Jerry Tello, Director of the National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute, and a member of the Alianza Steering Committee, provided additional opening remarks. The following day, the Summit format consisted of a plenary session where speakers introduced general domestic violence themes and experiences that set the tone for the panel presentations and roundtable discussions that followed.

Plenary Session

Sandra Camacho, Co-chair of the Alianza Steering Committee, presented an overview of the Alianza's history and goals, explained the purpose of the Policy Summit, and acknowledged the presence of the diversity of participants in terms of regions of the country, ethnic origins, and experiences.

¹ *Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin, Census 2000 Brief*, CENBR/01-1, U.S. Census Bureau, March 2001.

William Riley, Director of the Family Violence Prevention and Services Program, Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), welcomed participants and encouraged them to take full advantage of the energy, the commitment, and passion of the Alianza.

A survivor of domestic violence shared a brief summary of her experiences and the consequences that she is still suffering as a result of the abusive relationship in which she had been involved. She expressed hope that the Policy Summit would lead to positive actions that would help the thousands of women who suffer similar abuse, especially undocumented women who she said find themselves especially marginalized.

Dr. Josephine Nieves, Director of the National Association of Social Workers, delivered an inspirational keynote speech that included a detailed vision of an ideal future that she said could be created for Latino families², complete with a comprehensive array of bilingual, culturally competent services.

Breakout Sessions

Following the plenary, the participants were split into two breakout sessions which allowed for in-depth discussions of two major themes: (1) **Domestic Violence and Latino Families: How Recent Policy Initiatives on Domestic Violence and Child Welfare Impact Latino Families; Developing Comprehensive Solutions for La Familia** and (2) **VAWA and Beyond: How to Address the Needs of the Latino Community through Legislation, Regulations, and the Allocation of Resources**. Each breakout session consisted of three panelists who introduced guiding themes, which were then addressed in further detail by participants in the ensuing roundtable discussions.

The findings and recommendations of the Policy Summit, which are summarized below, reflect the different needs, concerns, and perspectives of the participating organizations.

I. Track A: Domestic Violence And Latino Families

Findings and Recommendations

After hearing from each of the three panelists, participants were divided into three separate roundtables and assigned the following questions for discussion:

- ⊙ What are the Barriers that Prevent Latino Families from Accessing Services that Will Help Prevent/Reduce Domestic Violence?
- ⊙ What Policies, Resources, and Actions are Necessary in order to Address Barriers that Prevent Latino Families From Accessing Services?
- ⊙ What Barriers Prevent Latinas/os from Being at the Table to Develop and Obtain Necessary Policies and Resources?
- ⊙ What Kinds of Interventions, Treatments, and Prevention Programs Work Best With Latina/o Families and Communities?

II. A. Barriers that Prevent Latino Families From Accessing Prevention or Intervention Services

Panelists and roundtable participants were guided by the general consensus that Latino communities in the United States encounter an array of cultural, linguistic, and systemic barriers that have made it difficult to address and eliminate domestic violence effectively. Domestic violence within Latina/o families takes place in the context of a community suffering from a legacy

² The Alianza recognizes the legitimacy of various family structures/configurations—traditional, same sex, and unmarried couples, and the terms family, families, *familia*, when used in this document, will refer to these various structures/configurations.

of multiple oppressions, some of which go back for centuries—poverty, both here and in their countries of origin, long-term discrimination, racism, and colonization.

Because of this legacy of disempowerment, Latinas/os in the United States have not been able to promote their interests as effectively as other communities in the legislative, legal, and funding arenas. Lack of sufficient resources has also hindered them from developing adequate prevention, intervention, and treatment services that are culturally and linguistically competent and that take into consideration the strong orientation toward family values, traditions, and beliefs (including spiritual practices) that is predominant in Latino cultures.

Stereotyping and prejudice on the part of police, the courts, health workers, and domestic violence and social service providers often prevent Latino families from accessing prevention or intervention services.

Within this general context, roundtable participants enumerated specific barriers they have observed that prevent Latinas/os from accessing services in their respective communities. The barriers can be grouped into three general categories: (a) personal barriers, (b) service/program barriers, and (c) societal barriers.

1. Personal Barriers

Victims/survivors often hesitate to reach out for help because of feelings of unworthiness, shame, or fear—fear of retaliation by their abusers or of punitive action by police and immigration officials. Limited English proficiency also inhibits many Latina/o victims/survivors, especially immigrants, from trying to access services run by non-Spanish-speaking personnel.

2. Service/Program Barriers

Despite the recognition that domestic violence is a major public health and public safety problem, the level of services available, including culturally and linguistically competent services in Latino communities across the country, fall short of meeting the multiple needs of victims/survivors. Limitations also include a lack of adequate outreach and a lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate and reader-friendly materials to inform victims/survivors about existing services and their rights to such services. Prejudice, xenophobia, and homophobia on the part of police, the courts, health workers, domestic violence and social service providers often translate into inferior services and treatment, or actual denial of services.

3. Societal Barriers

We live in a culture that condones and glorifies various forms of violence, whether in actuality (e.g. war, police brutality) or through popular media and entertainment (movies, television shows, video games). There is also an acceptance of violence/aggression as attributes of manhood both in this country and in the victims'/survivors' countries of origin.

Other societal barriers include:

- ⊙ A lack of adequate public discourse about domestic violence by influential institutions, including universities, schools, and churches, and on the part of the media to help raise awareness and promote policies and interventions necessary to eliminate domestic violence.
- ⊙ Lack of short- and long-range housing options, including shelters and affordable housing for victims/survivors who may want to leave their abusive relationships.
- ⊙ Lack of employment, job training, and educational opportunities for victims/survivors who are otherwise financially dependent on abusive spouses and are forced to remain in violent situations for financial security.

B. Policies, Resources, and Action Needed to Address Barriers That Prevent Latino Families From Accessing Services

Because the barriers confronting Latino families and children are many and varied, they require a comprehensive and coordinated effort involving various sectors of our communities—from domestic violence survivors and advocates, to educators, policymakers, the media, faith organizations, and members of the health care, criminal justice, and social service systems. Recommendations for removing those barriers are summarized below.

Developing and Promoting Policies That Will Make A Difference

It is imperative that Latinas/os become active players in the national public policy arena. They must be instrumental in helping to formulate laws and policies; monitoring and interpreting local, state, and federal legislation; and providing information, training, and technical assistance to legislators, advocates, members of the criminal justice and health care professions, and the media.

Domestic violence service providers, advocates, and community leaders should:

- ⊙ Expand their knowledge beyond direct services to be able to analyze and interpret the myriad of policies introduced in the past decade that have had a direct effect on Latino communities and agencies that serve them (e.g., welfare reform, immigration reform, managed care, and mandatory reporting in the health arena); comment publicly on them; and prepare their organizations and constituencies to cope with the consequences.
- ⊙ Designate representatives to attend forums where domestic violence policies are discussed and formulated and become known as experts on domestic violence issues with whom policymakers can consult.
- ⊙ Meet with local, state, and federal legislators to provide them with information about domestic violence needs and concerns; to encourage them to adopt anti-violence laws and policies; and to obtain information on policies, regulations, and laws that might affect victims/survivors, programs, and services.
- ⊙ Reach out to and encourage established policy groups, institutions, and agencies that serve Latino communities and families to integrate domestic violence issues into their policy agendas or, at the very minimum, to lend their support to advocacy campaigns.
- ⊙ Advocate for and help develop culturally competent research on domestic violence that will better inform the development of policies and enhance the effectiveness of prevention, intervention, and treatment programs in Latino communities.
- ⊙ Establish a dialogue with communities that need services to gather information that will better inform policies and to ensure that services are client-driven.
- ⊙ Encourage private and public agencies to provide adequate funding for services, community education, research, and training in Latino communities and to include language on culturally specific service needs in their requests for proposals (RFPs).

Building Coalitions and Collaborations

Domestic violence has serious and widespread consequences for every member of the community, whether directly or indirectly, and it will take a concerted effort at local, regional, and national levels to address them successfully.

Domestic violence service providers, advocates, and community leaders can:

- ⊙ Help form coalitions or collaborations with other Latino agencies in their respective communities to pool together their resources and expertise, speak with a united, more effective voice, and formulate joint ideas and solutions.

- ⊙ Join existing state, regional, and national domestic violence coalitions, especially those working with communities of color, which would enable them to voice local concerns/issues while keeping abreast of policies and larger issues.

Providing Education, Training, and Technical Assistance

Because many agencies and institutions that serve Latino families are lacking adequate information about domestic violence issues and its effects on Latino families, domestic violence trainers and technical assistance providers need to:

- ⊙ Provide culturally competent information and technical assistance (TA) to community-based organizations that serve Latino families, including non-Latino domestic violence providers, as well as educators, health care, substance abuse, and social services professionals, on how to identify and assist Latino families affected by domestic violence.
- ⊙ Provide training on immigration laws, immigrants' rights, and cultural sensitivity for judges, lawyers, police, and other professionals who serve immigrant families, and advocate for the inclusion of a domestic violence curriculum in the training required for re-certification in these fields.
- ⊙ Provide training for domestic violence service providers and advocates on policy advocacy at the local, state, and national levels.
- ⊙ Provide training and opportunities for domestic violence survivors to become involved in domestic violence work as advocates.

Making Effective Use of the Media

- ⊙ Recognizing the influential role the media plays in shaping public opinion, the domestic violence community must develop stronger relationships with media representatives (editors, publishers, reporters) and enlist their cooperation in carrying out effective media campaigns. The community can also ensure that the media covers domestic violence stories responsibly (avoiding sensationalism) and is respectful of the rights of women and girls.
- ⊙ Latinas/os who are concerned about domestic violence issues can write opinion and editorial pieces (op eds) and letters to the editor that raise relevant and important issues. They can also become known as spokespersons on domestic violence issues in their respective communities whom the media can turn to when domestic violence issues are covered in the news.

C. Barriers that Prevent Latinas/os From Being at the Table to Develop and Obtain Needed Policies and Resources

Latinos/as have historically been absent or excluded from having a say in policies that significantly affect their communities. While some barriers may be self-imposed, most are the result of long-term discriminatory attitudes and practices that have marginalized communities of color in this country, in general, and Latinas/os in particular. In the words of some participants, "all the *isms* (racism, classism, sexism, ageism, tokenism, plus homophobia and able-bodied preference) keep certain groups, including Latinas/os away from the table."

Specific barriers the participants identified include the following:

- ⊙ The mainstream domestic violence movement has not sufficiently acknowledged or been open to the use of culturally competent or traditional healing approaches or other alternative perspectives to addressing domestic violence.
- ⊙ Government agencies continue to exclude Latinas/os from national advisory groups or other forums where policies are discussed and formulated, or in some cases name a few token representatives. This harmful practice ignores the growing numbers and diversity of Latino populations.

- ⊙ Few resources have been made available to fund research in Latino communities or the kind of studies and reports required to adequately inform policies.
- ⊙ Some Latina/o leaders hesitate to take on added responsibilities such as community-leadership positions or policymaking roles because they are totally immersed or overextended in the difficult day-to-day work of running organizations that are often understaffed, as well as providing critical services not offered by anyone else in the community.
- ⊙ Lack of available funding often precludes non-domestic violence providers from including domestic violence issues in their agendas, even when they see the necessity and have intentions to do so.

D. Interventions, Treatments, Prevention Programs, That Work Best With Latina/o Families

Several basic themes emerged from this discussion: (a) the need to employ holistic approaches that address the needs of all family members; (b) the need to develop and promote asset-based and culturally and linguistically competent programs and services for each family group—children, youth, women, and men; (c) the need to involve the community as a whole in developing prevention and intervention strategies and interventions; and (d) the need to protect families from being revictimized by potentially punitive policies adhered to by government agencies (e.g., child welfare agencies).

Latina/o Children and Youth

Because domestic violence affects the lives of millions of children and youth each year, it is critically important that we develop primary prevention and early intervention programs that identify and protect high-risk children and youth, and that help stop the cycle of violence.

Domestic violence service providers, advocates, and community leaders can:

- ⊙ Lead the way in building coalitions that involve a broad spectrum of agencies and institutions that come in regular contact with Latina/o children—early education programs, schools, after school and other youth-serving programs.
- ⊙ Encourage schools and youth service programs (including those run by churches/religious groups) to develop and implement conflict resolution, gender equity, and gender violence curricula and programs. These programs should be age-appropriate and reflect cultural values.
- ⊙ When working with older children and adolescents, include drug and alcohol prevention and treatment programs, involve youth as peer educators and advocates, and include age-appropriate sex education classes (including those that address sexual orientation issues).
- ⊙ Provide education about violence and violence prevention issues, along with positive parenting skills for teen parents, to enhance their nurturing and caretaking abilities.
- ⊙ Provide counseling for children to help them cope with the effects of domestic violence and to help them reconnect with their mothers by helping to rebuild respect and understanding of what the mother has been through.
- ⊙ Whenever possible, children and youth should be kept with their families. When it becomes necessary to separate children from their parents, efforts should be made to keep them in their communities, ideally with extended family.
- ⊙ While a mother and child's safety are paramount, when possible and appropriate, children should be allowed the opportunity to visit with the other parent.

Latinas

Critical intervention and prevention strategies include providing Latina survivors of domestic violence with opportunities to enhance their education (including access to literacy and ESL programs); helping them obtain job training and employment; and assisting them in accessing housing. Without the necessary education, training, economic, and housing supports, battered women may remain trapped in abusive relationships, relying on their abusive partners for a home and financial security. It is important to recognize that immigrant women in most instances require additional supports to overcome greater, more diverse barriers and hardships (e.g., discrimination, limited English proficiency, fewer job skills, lower educational attainment).

At the same time, it is important to recognize that some Latina survivors of domestic violence have attained higher levels of education in their countries of origin and may have professional backgrounds. These women need support in overcoming language barriers, transferring their skills, and overcoming discrimination when people assume that they are uneducated.

Domestic violence service providers, advocates and community leaders can:

- ⊙ Collaborate with job training, educational and vocational agencies/institutions to increase the economic independence and stability of Latinas wanting to leave abusive relationships.
- ⊙ Advocate for short- and long-range housing options, including shelters that don't discriminate against Latinas/os and that employ bilingual or culturally sensitive personnel; for transitional housing that offers comprehensive services, including child care, counseling, tutoring, mentoring; and for affordable permanent housing for victims/survivors who may want to leave abusive relationships.
- ⊙ Encourage, promote, and compensate the involvement of survivors in designing and staffing programs (as support group leaders and peer counselors, spokespersons and advocates) and in serving on boards or advisory committees.
- ⊙ Create better services that are culturally and linguistically competent for Latina survivors, especially for immigrant women who face exacerbated hardships.

Latino Men

The scarcity of culturally competent and effective programs for men, including those who have also been abused and are not just aggressors, has led to an over-reliance on criminalization strategies that are limited to punitive measures such as protective orders, arrest, and imprisonment.

- ⊙ While the safety of domestic violence victims is paramount, it is important to develop more comprehensive responses that offer batterers the opportunities and help they need to stabilize their lives and remain nonviolent.
- ⊙ Programs for batterers should address problems that may contribute to or exacerbate violent and abusive behavior, including low educational attainment, unemployment, any past trauma or oppression, and problems with alcohol and substance abuse; batterers must have access to alcohol and substance abuse treatment programs.
- ⊙ It is important to advocate with state licensing programs to permit culturally competent programs for Latino men.
- ⊙ More research and evaluation is needed in order to identify the most appropriate models for working with Latino male batterers.

Community Action

Participants recommended several actions that can be taken at the local, regional, and national levels to ensure that there are enough culturally and linguistically competent prevention, intervention, and treatment programs for Latino families.

- ⊙ Establish community networks among parents and teachers to advocate for the development and implementation of anti-violence, conflict-resolution programs in schools and after-school programs.
- ⊙ Advocate for unrestricted funding that does not limit how services are provided, and that allows for the development of comprehensive services rather than fragmented, narrow ones.
- ⊙ Encourage women, men, and youth to offer input and get involved in designing and developing programs and interventions that meet their needs and concerns.
- ⊙ Organize a National Conference on Domestic Violence for Latinas/os.
- ⊙ Conduct public education campaigns to change the negative perceptions that exist about mental health services and alternative medicine/treatments, both of which are important in addressing domestic violence.
- ⊙ Recognize that women's rights are human rights, making sure that people are aware of those rights, and organizing in support of them.
- ⊙ Support the National Alliance for Hispanic Health recommendations in "The State of Hispanic Girls Report," which recommends investing in community-based partnerships aimed at empowering Hispanic girls, strengthening Hispanic families, and promoting cultural protective factors.

III. Track B: The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) And Beyond: How to Address the Needs of the Latino Community Through Legislation, Regulations, and the Allocation of Resources

This breakout session provided an overview of VAWA and its impact on Latino and immigrant communities and examined ways to address the needs of Latino communities and families through legislation, regulations, and the allocation of resources. Panelists provided a brief and comprehensive overview of VAWA; presented a view of Latino men, especially batterers, that generally has been omitted from the standard criminal justice approach taken in VAWA; and described the efforts of various organizations to infuse protections and programs for immigrant women into the VAWA legislation.

The small group discussions yielded numerous recommendations for addressing the unintended consequences that an overemphasis on criminalization has in Latino communities and for developing actions, policies, and resources that will benefit battered immigrant women, children, and men.

Criminalization

- ⊙ Cognizant of the unintended consequences that an over-reliance on criminalization has created, including the escalating arrest rates for Latinos and other men of color, participants recommended evaluating the impact and consequences of mandatory arrest on Latino families and communities. Mandatory arrest, alone, has not been found to be effective, and often does not address the source of the problem.
- ⊙ All law enforcement personnel, including lawyers, judges, and police officers should have multicultural and bilingual training to increase their awareness of and sensitivity to domestic violence issues specific to Latinas/os, as well as to prevent misinterpretations that can adversely influence decisions. Social service providers, who often can impact how such issues are dealt with in the court systems, should also receive similar training.
- ⊙ Domestic violence programs should work to increase their communities' participation in the development of educational strategies to raise the level of education and awareness about domestic violence. They should consider initiatives that educate men and women about domestic violence, about the legal consequences of battering and the rights of victims, and

also increase information about other basic survival remedies (e.g. housing, training, job opportunities, etc).

- ⊙ Reduction of an over-reliance on punitive remedies and more emphasis on prevention, early intervention, and comprehensive service delivery needs to occur.

Battered Immigrant Women

Domestic violence programs and advocates can:

- ⊙ Provide training and education for agencies and institutions that serve immigrant Latina survivors of domestic violence, such as health professionals, spiritual leaders/counselors, and social service providers.
- ⊙ Design and conduct culturally competent research and help develop criteria for identifying and evaluating culturally competent services and best practice models.
- ⊙ Help create a central clearinghouse of information that will help identify good research and best practices and policy models that can benefit domestic violence service providers nationwide.

Children and Youth Issues

Domestic violence programs, advocates, and community leaders can:

- ⊙ Provide training and education for judges, police, school personnel, service providers and shelter employees about the effects of domestic violence on children who experience or witness abuse; and encourage these entities to create programs or interventions that help children cope with the effects of the violence.
- ⊙ Increase awareness of the high rates of teen dating violence among school officials and youth-serving program staff; help develop and promote the implementation of programs and school curricula to address teen dating violence.
- ⊙ Work with national Latino organizations and community-based agencies to get them to address domestic violence issues within their programs for children and youth.
- ⊙ Support efforts to revamp the child welfare system, making it more accountable to Latino families and communities. Work to prevent the system from prematurely removing children from their homes and placing them in foster care when this may result in victimizing the children even further.

Health Professionals

Domestic violence programs, advocates, and community leaders can:

- ⊙ Encourage the American Medical Association and other medical associations to mandate the inclusion of domestic violence curricula/training in medical schools and institutions and provide cultural sensitivity training for doctors and other health professionals.
- ⊙ Encourage doctors to conduct screening of patients to determine the existence of domestic violence and provide adequate referrals to services.

Recommending Action Items

The participants in this breakout session reconvened as one large group and engaged in three discussions. The first addressed how to influence policymaking decisions. The second discussion included a brief review of the “Action Steps” listed in the Alianza’s *Draft Commitment to Help End Domestic Violence* and recommendations of additional action steps that the Alianza could incorporate into a revised document (a copy is included in Appendix D). The third discussion focused on ensuring that an equitable portion of resources made available through VAWA and other legislation reaches Latino communities. Highlights of the recommendations offered are listed below.

Influencing Policymaking Decisions

Domestic violence programs, advocates, and community leaders can:

- ⊙ Encourage state domestic violence coalitions to increase the number of Latinas/os who sit on their boards and nominating committees. Once there, these representatives should ensure that other Latinas/os and people of color are invited to join.
- ⊙ Form Latino statewide coalitions, where Latinas/os are in the majority and their voices are heard; this can help lend power to that “lone Latina/o” who may sit on a state domestic violence coalition or commission.
- ⊙ Encourage national Latino non-domestic violence associations and organizations, such as the League of United Latin American Citizens, National Council of La Raza, the Mexican and Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Funds, and the National Latino Health Alliance, to integrate domestic violence issues into their agendas.
- ⊙ Hold organizations accountable, including state coalitions, that say they represent the needs of Latino communities, but continue to exclude Latinas/os from their panels and/or staffs.
- ⊙ Call upon Latina/o elected officials to use their positions of power and ties to other legislators to ensure Latina/o representation in policy-making forums and to assure that the input of Latinos can have an impact on the development of policy.
- ⊙ Work with researchers to develop statistical/demographic reports on Latino communities to help make a case for and leverage greater Latino representation in policymaking bodies, bolster demands for adequate resources, and advocate for equitable VAWA funding for Latino communities. Develop a research agenda to help guide the creation of legislation.

Action Items for Inclusion in Alianza’s Draft Commitment to Help End Domestic Violence

Domestic violence and other Latina/o organizations can:

- ⊙ Ensure that domestic violence organizations develop and provide bilingual copies of their main pamphlet so that everyone in the community receives information about the services they provide.
- ⊙ Encourage Spanish language newspapers to publish a listing/calendar of events sponsored by local organizations during National Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October).
- ⊙ Participate in or work with Spanish language radio stations to produce talk shows featuring experts who can provide valuable information to listeners about domestic violence and immigration issues. These shows often provide open lines for victims/survivors to call in anonymously. Make use of cable access television stations that welcome community participation. Establish relationships with the community relations’ offices of mainstream Spanish-language television stations and get them to run PSAs during domestic violence awareness month.
- ⊙ Develop statewide educational campaigns that provide information to women in their homes, grocery stores, laundromats, beauty shops, and other places they visit regularly.
- ⊙ Place advocates in community health centers to help victims/survivors access appropriate programs.
- ⊙ Use occasions, such as International Women’s Day, Cinco de Mayo, Hispanic Heritage Month, and other community events to educate women, men, and youth about the effects of domestic violence, elder abuse, and sexual assault.

Allocation and Monitoring of Public Funds

This discussion yielded recommendations aimed at ensuring that an equitable portion of resources made available through VAWA and other legislation reaches Latino communities. Domestic violence programs, advocates, and community leaders can:

- ⊙ Promote the need for funders to include criteria related to culturally competent programs, staff, and services in their requests for proposals (RFPs).
- ⊙ Assist the Alianza in creating a list of potential funding sources and technical assistance providers/consultants that can be disseminated to domestic violence organizations that lack the expertise to develop competitive grant proposals.
- ⊙ Encourage funding agencies to establish monitoring systems/mechanisms to ensure that Latina/o-led organizations are receiving a fair share of available funds and to verify whether organizations or institutions that claim they are serving Latino families are actually doing so. Groups that do not serve Latinos/as adequately should be held accountable.
- ⊙ Gather data on how much of the VAWA budget, for example, is being allocated to Latino communities, for programs and services that work with Latino families. If this type of data is not available, consider developing data collection procedures to ensure that data is collected in a way that will hold funding agencies and organizations receiving funds accountable.
- ⊙ Encourage groups such as the Alianza or Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) to develop a monitoring and evaluation system to ensure that federal funding is having an actual impact in communities served by organizations that claim to be providing services to Latino communities.

Closing Plenary

In closing, representatives of each of the breakout sessions briefly recapped the sessions, reporting on the process employed and highlighting some of the more noteworthy findings and recommendations described above.

Ms. Camacho ended the reporting part of the plenary by summing up the Alianza's future plans. This included hiring staff, transforming the Steering Committee into a board of directors, establishing a National Latino Advisory Committee, expanding the Alianza's web site and databases, and carrying out work in four priority areas: policy, research, training and technical assistance, and community development. She stressed the importance of maintaining culture and spirituality as guiding forces behind all of the Alianza's endeavors.