



# NJCBW UPDATE

August 2009

## DOOR OPENS FOR BATTERED IMMIGRANT WOMEN SEEKING ASYLUM

In a case involving a Mexican woman seeking to escape brutal domestic violence in her home country, Obama Administration officials have taken a position that may open a door to asylum in the United States for some victims of severe abuse.

The cautious position was laid out in a legal brief from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) this spring in the case of L.R., a Mexican woman who requested asylum because she feared her common-law husband would kill her. The brief only recently became public.

L.R. is a teacher whose husband repeatedly raped her at gunpoint, held her captive, stole her earnings, and tried to burn her alive when he discovered that she was pregnant. Local police dismissed her reports of violence, and a judge from whom she sought help tried to seduce her, the court papers say.

DHS did not recommend immediate asylum for L.R., but in its brief government lawyers conclude that “it is possible” that L.R. and “other applicants who have experienced domestic violence could qualify for asylum.” That may open a narrow path for some battered women to receive asylum in the United States. The brief argues that abused women who can show that they are treated as subordinates or property by their abusers, in a country where domestic abuse is widely tolerated and no institutions provide protection, should be granted asylum. *Read the DHS brief at <http://cgrs.uchastings.edu/pdfs/Redacted%20DHS%20brief%20on%20PSG.pdf>.*

The change does not affect women fleeing female genital cutting, whose cases have been accepted in the law since 1996.

At present, U.S. law requires that any applicant for asylum or refugee status demonstrate a “well-founded fear of persecution” based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion or “membership in a particular social group.” Victims

of gender-based violence are often not persecuted for their race, religion, nationality or political opinion, so in order to win asylum they need to be recognized as members of a social group. When the government declines to find them to be social group members, they are denied asylum or left in limbo.

## NATIONAL NEWS

Nearly one in five teens has bullied someone via social media, email or text message, and one in ten has been cyber-bullied, according to a survey commissioned by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and Cox Communication and conducted by Harris Interactive. It finds that one in five teens has engaged in ‘sexting’ – sending, receiving or forwarding suggestive text messaging with nude or nearly-nude photos. School administrators and teachers are also grappling with these issues. *Education Week* says that school officials have been “encouraged to provide information to students, teachers, and parents about the dangers of sexting, including the permanent digital record it creates.” Many school districts have no formal disciplinary process for teachers and administrators to follow when confronted with sexting. As a result, some are incorporating texting policies into student handbooks and holding workshops for students and parents on internet safety, with an emphasis on sexting.

Seventy-six percent of Americans believe the poor economy has made it more difficult for victims of domestic violence and 44 percent say the most difficult barrier to leaving an abusive relationship is financial security. These are the highlights of a new poll from the Allstate Foundation, conducted in May by Murphy Marketing Research. *To see the full survey, visit [www.ClickToEmpower.org](http://www.ClickToEmpower.org).*

Representatives Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Tim Ryan (D-OH) introduced the *Preventing Unintended Pregnancy, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act* on July 23. The legislation would provide support for a domestic violence and sexual assault prevention program for women.

## UPCOMING TRAINING

**August 12, 2009** **10:00 am–12:00 pm**  
**American Sign Language and Deaf Culture Awareness Follow –Up** **Jessica Stebnisky**

This class will review lessons learned in the ASL 101 class that met on July 29<sup>th</sup>, with a special emphasis on reinforcement of learned vocabulary. Participants will continue working together and with the instructor to practice their expressive and receptive skills. Time permitting the instructor will teach specific signs based on participant requests. Resources and visual reminders will be provided for home review and continued study.

**2 DVS Credits: Special Populations**  
**\$10 program staff; \$35 non-program staff**

**August 19, 2009** **10:00 am-1:00 pm**  
**Guide for DV Advocates working with DYFS**  
**Penny Paparteys and Christine Minerva**

Domestic violence advocates have learned that the concerns of battered women are inextricably linked to the welfare of their children and that the safety decisions of battered women are typically guided by the needs of their children. The child protective system has learned that there are better outcomes for non abusive parents and their children when they are able to address the safety concerns of the parent as well as the children. Often the two systems have felt at odds with each other, yet we recognize that our mutual desire help those families in which violence against women and children is overlapping and intertwined. Herein lies the basis for a more collaborative relationship between the systems. This workshop will highlight ways domestic violence advocates can work more effectively clients that have DYFS involvement.

**3 DVS Credits: Intervention**  
**\$10 program staff; \$35 non-program staff**

**September 9, 2009** **10:00am–1:00pm**  
**Proposal Writing I: Tailoring Your Proposal Writing for Success** **Ronice Bruce**

This workshop is geared for beginners who wish to understand how to match their proposals to the guidelines of donor agencies and begin writing grants that will result in procuring funding for their projects. Equally, it is a refresher course for experienced grant

writers who wish to augment their skills on the latest approaches now needed for successful grant research and writing. Participants will understand how to navigate the world of grant procurement, focus on the key sections of successful proposals and demonstrate that their projects merit the excellence and innovation that bring them to the top of other submissions. They will also understand the diversity of the funding community and how to respond to various guidelines. The sessions will cover the overall strategic plan of grant-writing, including, but not limited to, a needs statement, mission, goals, objectives, activities, evaluation, key personnel and budgets. All sessions engage the attendees in interactive exercises, writing, lectures and discussions so that all participants will leave the class understanding how to research, write and develop their specific project.

**3 DVS Credits: Community Resources & Networking**  
**\$10 program staff; \$35 non-program staff**

**September 23, 2009** **10:00am–1:00pm**  
**DVS 100** **Sally Scheidemantel**

This workshop is a hands-on tutorial with the DVS Coordinator to introduce you to the Domestic Violence Specialist Initial Application process. There is no prerequisite to register for the workshop. Bring your applications, certificates, and questions. The workshop is limited to 15 participants.

**3 DVS Credits: Community Resources**  
**There is no charge for this training**

~~September 16, 2009~~ – **RESCHEDULED TO**  
**SEPTEMBER 24, 2009** **10:00am–1:00pm**

**The Co-occurrence of Child Abuse and Domestic Violence** **Leslie Malkin**

Between 30% & 70% of the men who batter their wives also physically and/or sexually abuse their children. More than 3.3 million children each year witness violence against their mothers. Many fathers inadvertently injure children while hitting their mothers, or when throwing household objects while abusing their female partners. Children who suffer direct abuse or who witness the abuse of their mothers may show physical, emotional, and behavioral effects. Some research says witnessing abuse of a parent is the strongest clinical predictor of battering behavior in adults.

This three hour training will explore the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse. We will define the term “witnessing domestic violence,” discuss its behavioral, physical, and emotional effects on children, and the signs that indicate children may additional or therapeutic services.

**3 DVS Credits: Intervention**  
**\$10 program staff; \$35 non-program staff**

## AUGUST 2009 MEETING SCHEDULE

### **Women of Diversity Task Force Retreat**

Friday, August 7, Sussex County  
For details about the retreat, contact Annette McDonald at [mcdonald@dasi.org](mailto:mcdonald@dasi.org).

### **Shelter Directors**

Thursday, August 13, 10:00 am  
Coalition office

### **Community Professional Educators Network (CPEN)**

Friday, August 14

### **Legal Advocates Meeting**

Friday, August 21, 2009 10:30am-3:00pm

### **Battered Lesbian Task Force**

Thursday, August 27, 2009 10:30am (Rutgers)

## SEPTEMBER 2009 MEETING SCHEDULE

### **Coalition Membership Meeting**

Thursday, September 10, 2009, 10:30am-1:00pm

### **NJCBW Board of Trustees**

Thursday, September 10, 2009 1:00-3:00pm

### **Women of Diversity Task Force Meeting**

Friday, September 11, 2009 10:00am-3:00pm

### **DVRT (Domestic Violence Response Team)**

Monday, September 22, 2009 10:00am-3:00pm

### **Legal Advocates Meeting**

Friday, September 25, 2009 10:30am-3:00pm

**Call the Meeting Cancellation Line to check for training and meeting cancellations 609-584-8107, ext. 23**

## Special Event

Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr., Essex County Executive  
and the Board of Chosen Freeholders  
In conjunction with  
Rachel Coalition  
Partners for Women and Justice  
&  
The New Jersey State Bar Foundation  
invite you to a reception presenting  
the publication of the SPANISH EDITION:

### **Surviving Domestic Violence: Your Legal Rights\***

A handbook written to assist victims of domestic violence to navigate the legal system and learn of the many community resources available to them.

**Monday, September 21, 2009**

**12 Noon**

**Essex County Hall of Records, First Floor  
Lobby**

**465 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard  
Newark, New Jersey  
Parking in the Juror lot**

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For additional information, please call Arleen Munez at Rachel Coalition, (973) 765-9050, Ext. 252 or by e-mail: [amunez@jfsmetrowest.org](mailto:amunez@jfsmetrowest.org)