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## **Cultural Competency Project FAQ**

### **What is Cultural Competency?**

There are many factors that make the effective provision of services to immigrant victims of domestic violence and sexual assault difficult. Linguistic barriers, a service provider's lack of knowledge about a victim's culture and customs, and inaccessibility of information about existing services are just a few of them. Cultural Competency refers to the capacity of an organization to overcome these barriers to provide services to clients of a variety of cultures and backgrounds in an appropriate, effective way. This includes cohesive organizational attitudes and policies, and is demonstrated by characteristics such as language access and the ability to recognize and adapt service provision to culturally influenced needs and perspectives.

### **What are the objectives of this project?**

- To improve services to immigrant, refugee and trafficked victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (DV/SA) in Tennessee
- To increase collaboration between DV/SA programs and organizations that serve immigrant communities
- To increase understanding issues of immigrant victims among DV/SA programs and organizations that serve immigrants

### **How will these objectives be met?**

A committee will develop statewide standards for domestic violence and sexual assault service providers to follow in order to provide effective services to victims from a variety of cultures. Also, we will facilitate the development of collaborations between DV/SA service providers and immigrant-oriented groups, create interagency policies and protocols, and provide cross-training for these groups.

Finalized standards will be incorporated into a comprehensive, replicable manual that will also include federal and state law that specifically affects immigrant victims, related resources and other replicable materials. The manual will be given to all of our member programs and distributed to other state coalitions throughout the nation. Standards, model protocols, and much of the legal information that it will contain will be applicable in any state, and so this manual will be available as a model for any group that wishes to increase their capacity to serve immigrant victims and survivors.

### **Who is on the standards committee?**

This committee, which is facilitated by the Coalition, includes representatives from DV/SA programs and organizations that serve immigrants, as well as someone from the Office of Criminal Justice Programs.

**How will statewide standards be implemented?**

Once OCJP adopts finalized standards, they will require all domestic violence/sexual assault service providers that are seeking expansion funds for working with immigrants to adhere to these standards.

**Who else will be involved?**

We will be working with the Coalition's Immigrant Legal Clinic team while writing the state standards and during the creation of the manual to ensure that we take unique legal issues into account. We may also consult with other organizations that serve immigrants, domestic violence and sexual assault programs, and members of immigrant communities to ensure that many perspectives are heard in this collaborative effort.

**What is the time frame of this project?**

The composition of state standards and production of the manual will take place over the course of a year. Training, development of collaboration, and technical support will be provided by the Coalition during this project and after its conclusion.