



Dear FVPSA Grantee,

I am pleased to share with you a [letter from Attorney General Lynch, Secretary Burwell of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Secretary Julian Castro of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which provides guidance for recipients of federal financial assistance regarding access to services for immigrant victims](#). As the letter explains in detail, immigration status is not a bar to providing certain services necessary to protect life or safety, such as emergency shelter, or short-term housing assistance including transitional housing, crisis counseling and intervention programs.

Clearly victims of domestic violence who are immigrants need access to services and other protections to successfully escape abuse and break the cycle of violence. However, some service providers erroneously turn away immigrant victims from services necessary for life or safety, such as domestic violence shelters or transitional housing programs, on the basis of their immigration status. Other service providers are uncertain whether they can serve undocumented immigrant survivors. Over the years, the Family and Youth Services Bureau's Family Violence Prevention and Services Program (FVPSA Program) has received requests for further guidance on this subject.

This letter is not a new policy, but rather reiterates and consolidates the long-standing policies of all three Departments, and reminds federal funding recipients that federal law restricting immigrant access to certain public benefits also includes exceptions to protect life or safety. Accordingly, federal law does not restrict immigrant access to programs that (1) are necessary for the protection of life or safety; (ii) deliver in-kind services at the community level; and (iii) do not condition the provision of assistance, the amount of the assistance, or the cost of assistance on an individual's income or resources. These programs must be made available to eligible persons without regard to citizenship, nationality, or immigration status.

I hope this tri-agency letter resolves any concerns you may have about your ability to serve all victims with FVPSA funds. I also hope that it will serve as a useful tool when working with your community partners to ensure that all victims have access to services necessary to protect their lives or safety.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to your FVPSA program specialist for assistance. You may also wish to refer to our new [Frequently Asked Questions about Access to FYSB-funded Services for Survivors of Domestic Violence](#).

Sincerely,

Marylouise Kelley
Director, Division of Family Violence Prevention
Family and Youth Services Bureau

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