

October 2016

## Message from OCDV Commissioner Cecile Noel



(From Left: OCDV Commissioner Cecile Noel, NYC First Lady Chirlane McCray and Mayor Bill de Blasio recognize some of the City's most committed domestic violence advocates at the third annual NYC Upstander Awards.)

We have just emerged from a very inspiring Domestic Violence Awareness Month, which was full of awareness and educational events, and also full of exciting announcements around New York City's progress. The morning after the NYC Upstander Awards, I sat with Mayor de Blasio as he announced

the introduction of legislation that will provide additional protection to employees who are survivors of domestic violence. Paid Safe Leave, an amendment to NYC's Paid Sick Leave law, will allow survivors more flexibility to reach out for help and services without worrying that their paycheck will suffer. In addition, Mayor de Blasio announced the implementation of free housing legal assistance at all of the City's Family Justice Centers, further enhancing services available to survivors to address their housing needs. This is a loud and clear message from the City that no survivor should have to sacrifice their home or their livelihood in order to stay safe.

In addition to this major announcements, the NYPD and Safe Horizon have partnered to create the Crime Victim Assistance Program (CVAP) to immediately help survivors of domestic violence. CVAP will place victim advocates from Safe Horizon in police precincts across the city – 157 advocates over three years – to work directly with survivors by providing access to services and resources they may not know are available to them.

October may be over, but our work is never done. Elected officials, advocates and service providers are coming together in new and innovative ways to address the needs of our City's most vulnerable, and I am entering into November feeling grateful for all that we have accomplished and hopeful for all that we will do together in the future.

Please read more about these great announcements and more in the press clippings below. I thank all of you for being partners in the effort to end domestic violence in New York City. You are making a difference.



Host a workshop on teen dating violence and healthy relationships with OCDV's NYC Healthy Relationship Training Academy. Submit your request through our online [workshop request form](#) or call the Academy at 212-788-2516.

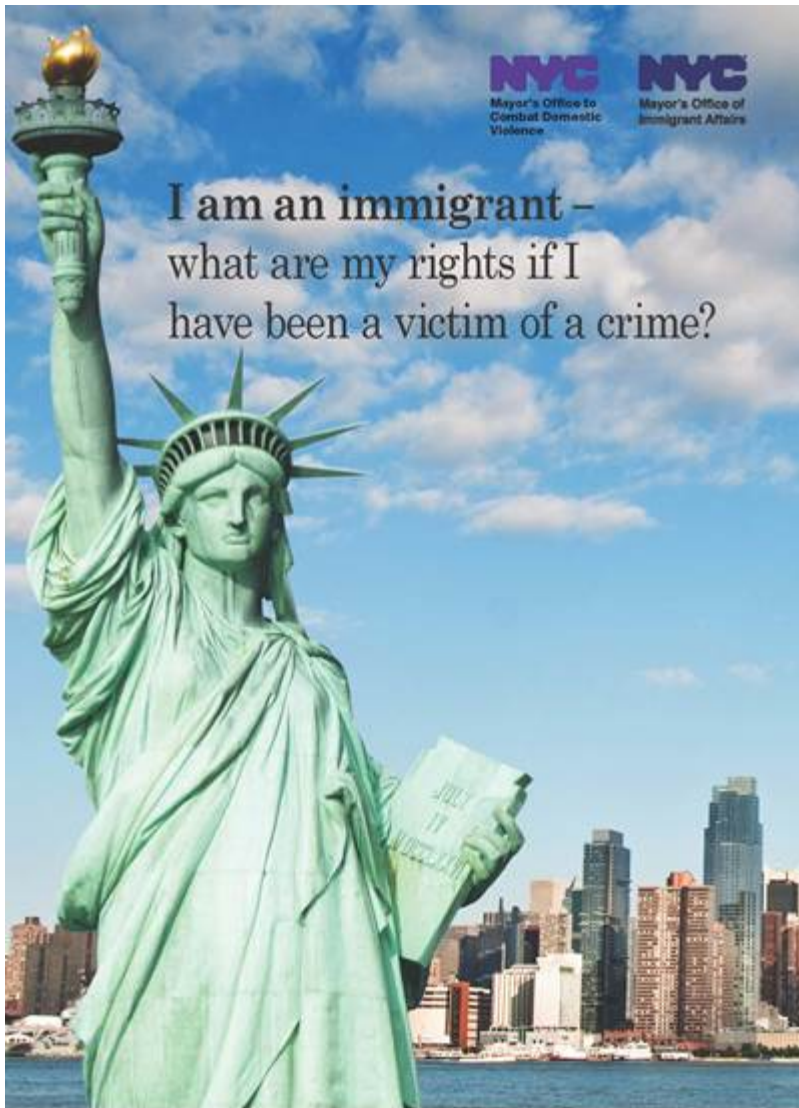


OCDV has updated the [New York City Resource Directory of Domestic Violence Services](#), which provides information regarding assistance available for survivors of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, sex trafficking and elder abuse. Your input and participation are important to ensure that the Directory is comprehensive, identifies culturally competent programs and reflects the variety of services for individuals, families and children in need.

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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FOR EMPLOYERS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">If your employee is a survivor of DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING –</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>You can support your employee by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Listening to and believing the employee</b> who is experiencing domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. You can <b>tell them that it is not their fault</b> and that you are worried about their safety.</li> <li>• <b>Asking your employee</b> about their safety concerns and what can be done in the workplace to make everyone safer.</li> <li>• <b>Educating yourself and your employees</b> about domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking, and on how to seek help at <a href="http://www.nyc.gov/domesticviolence">www.nyc.gov/domesticviolence</a>.</li> <li>• <b>Creating a workplace policy to support survivors</b> and ensure safety and productivity in your business. View a model policy at <a href="http://www.workplacesrespond.org/learn/model-policy">www.workplacesrespond.org/learn/model-policy</a>.</li> <li>• <b>Cooperating in securing unemployment insurance</b> for your employee if they left work because of the violence.</li> <li>• <b>Calling the NYC Commission on Human Rights</b> for information on workplace protection laws at <b>311</b> or <b>718-722-3131</b>, or visit <a href="http://www.nyc.gov/humanrights">www.nyc.gov/humanrights</a>.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The law requires that you:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permit your employee <b>time off to speak to a District Attorney or seek an Order of Protection</b>.</li> <li>• Make <b>"reasonable accommodations"</b> when requested (if you employ four or more people) as long as they are not an "undue burden" to your business.</li> <li>• <b>Do not discriminate</b> against a survivor in hiring, promotion, or other considerations in the workplace due to their status as a survivor.</li> <li>• <b>Keep confidential</b> any information about the employee's situation, requests for time off, or accommodations.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FOR EMPLOYEES</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">If you are a survivor of DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING –</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>You have the right to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Take time off to speak with a District Attorney or seek an Order of Protection.</b></li> <li>• <b>Ask your employer for "reasonable accommodations,"</b> like changing your worksite, schedule, or phone number.</li> <li>• <b>File for unemployment insurance</b> if you lost or left your job because of the violence – even if you quit, were fired, or relocated due to the violence.</li> <li>• Have any personal <b>information shared</b> with your employer remain <b>confidential</b>.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>You cannot be fired or penalized because:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You are a victim or survivor of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.</li> <li>• Your abusive partner harasses or makes threats to you or others at your workplace.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>You may have to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell your employer about the abuse in order to get reasonable accommodations, and your employer may ask for proof – like a letter from a service provider, police report, District Attorney's Office, or court staff.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>For more information or to ask for help:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call the <b>NYC 24-Hour Domestic Violence Hotline</b> at <b>311</b> or <b>(800) 621-4673</b>.</li> <li>• Visit <a href="http://www.nyc.gov/domesticviolence">www.nyc.gov/domesticviolence</a>.</li> <li>• Call the NYC Commission on Human Rights to report an employer violation at <b>311</b> or <b>718-722-3131</b> or visit <a href="http://www.nyc.gov/humanrights">www.nyc.gov/humanrights</a>.</li> </ul>
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OCDV and NYC Small Business Services want you to know that New York State and New York City Laws extend protections to survivors, or those perceived to be survivors, of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking. In October, OCDV partnered with NYC Small Business Services to produce a brochure for employers and employees to succinctly outline those protections and how survivors can access services, which was also distributed at an exciting panel discussion hosted by the Brooklyn Family Justice Center at St. Francis College.



**Resources for Immigrant Crime Victims**

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**>>> You can report the crime**

If you have been the victim or witness of a crime, or are not sure, contact the New York City Police Department. Police officers are prohibited from asking about the immigration status of crime victims and witnesses.

For emergencies call 911. For non-emergencies call your local precinct.

**>>> You can get help.**

Many New York City government agencies provide free services including emergency shelter, counseling, health care, child care and other family services. Call 311 to learn more about these services.

If you have been a victim of domestic violence, you can get free help at a New York City Family Justice Center, including criminal justice, civil legal, and social services all in one location. Call 311 to be connected to a Family Justice Center near you.

**>>> You can learn about your immigration options.**

Some immigrant victims of crimes may be able to get immigration visas called U and/or T visas. These visas protect victims of certain serious crimes who help law enforcement in the investigation or prosecution of those crimes.

U visas provide immigration benefits to crime victims who have suffered substantial mental or physical abuse as a result of the crime. T visas provide immigration benefits to victims of trafficking. U and T visas provide:

- Temporary immigration status
- Access to a work permit
- Opportunity to apply for permanent residence (known as a green card) for visa holders and their family members
- Access to cash assistance, Medicaid, a Social Security number, a driver license, and various other public benefits

In order to apply for a U or T visa, you must get a certification form from a law enforcement agency confirming that you meet certain requirements for the visa. Visit [nyc.gov/immigrants](http://nyc.gov/immigrants) to learn more about the U and T visa certification form and how to request it from a law enforcement agency.

Get free, safe immigration help to find out if you are eligible for a U or T visa or any other immigration benefits. Call 311 and say "ActionNYC" to make an appointment with a trusted immigration service provider in your community.

OCDV and the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs want NYC's immigrant population to know their rights when they are victims of crime. In October, OCDV partnered with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) to produce a one-pager to succinctly outline resources survivors can access, also discussed in a [Huffington Post op-ed](#) by OCDV Commissioner Noel and MOIA Commissioner Agarwal.

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## Upcoming OCDV Events & Trainings

***\*Please note that Family Justice Center trainings are geared toward service providers and professionals.***

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**STATEN ISLAND:**

**Introduction to Family & Matrimonial Law**

*Facilitated by the Safe Horizon: Domestic Violence Law Project*

Monday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

NYC Family Justice Center, Staten Island

126 Stuyvesant Place

To register, please [click here](#).

**Introduction to Sex Trafficking & Commercial Sexual Exploitation**

*Facilitated by the Center for Court Innovation*

Wednesday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

NYC Family Justice Center, Staten Island

126 Stuyvesant Place

To register, please [click here](#).

**Criminal Justice Responses to Domestic Violence**

*Facilitated by the Richmond County DA's Office & NYPD Domestic Violence Prevention Officers*

Monday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

NYC Family Justice Center, Staten Island

126 Stuyvesant Place

To register, please [click here](#).

**Introduction to Immigration Law**

*Facilitated by Her Justice & the New York Legal Assistance Group*

Monday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

NYC Family Justice Center, Staten Island

126 Stuyvesant Place

To register, please [click here](#).

**Introduction to Elder Abuse**

*Facilitated by the Weinberg Center for Elder Abuse Prevention*

Tuesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

NYC Family Justice Center, Staten Island

126 Stuyvesant Place

To register, please [click here](#).

**Housing & Shelter Options**

*Facilitated by Safe Horizon & OCDV Staff*

Thursday, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

NYC Family Justice Center, Staten Island

126 Stuyvesant Place

To register, please [click here](#).

**Cultural Conversations: Considerations for Supportive Practices**

*Facilitated by NYC Anti-Violence Project & OCDV Staff*

Friday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

NYC Family Justice Center, Staten Island

126 Stuyvesant Place

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To register, please [click here](#).

### **Engaging Trauma Survivors**

*Facilitated by OCDV Staff*

Monday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

NYC Family Justice Center, Staten Island

126 Stuyvesant Place

To register, please [click here](#).

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## **Top News Stories from October**

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### **City Pushes Legislation to Add Paid Safe Leave for Domestic Violence Victims**

City Councilwoman Julissa Ferreras-Copeland and the de Blasio administration crafted legislation to add domestic violence onto NYC's existing paid sick leave law, which requires some employers to give their workers paid time off for illness or family care. Adding domestic violence protections will help victims — often women with kids — get themselves out of danger without fear of losing their job, Mayor de Blasio said.

[Read More](#)

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### **How NYC Is Helping Immigrant Survivors of Domestic Violence**

Commissioner Nisha Agarwal of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) and Commissioner Cecile Noel of the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) have worked together to increase access to U and T visas. These federal immigration visas protect immigrant victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, human trafficking, and other serious crimes, who are helpful to a law enforcement investigation or prosecution. Receiving a U or T visa can be life-changing for immigrant survivors of domestic violence because it protects them from deportation, and allows them to work lawfully in the U.S. and apply for many public benefits. These visas also strengthen the ability of law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute serious crimes. Immigrants can report abuse and work

### **NYC's First Lady Sits Down with Troubled Teens in Domestic Violence Workshop**

Sixteen teens and young adults at the Osborn Association last week learned about healthy relationship skills through the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence's Healthy Relationship Training Academy. First Lady Chirlane McCray, a vocal abuse prevention advocate, was on hand to witness the workshop.

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with law enforcement without the threat of deportation which too often keeps immigrants in the shadows.

> [Read More](#)

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### **NYC Officials and Advocates Address City's Ongoing Domestic Violence Homicide Crisis**

Officials in New York City have been working on a number of policy changes to address the continued issue of domestic violence throughout the boroughs. They joined domestic violence service providers and advocates at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice to discuss the ongoing crisis and the city's latest efforts to reduce its toll.

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### **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Expands Housing Protections for Survivors of Violence**

When a home is a place of violence, residents are vulnerable to losing their housing through eviction, coercion, or abuse. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development finalized a new rule to protect the housing of survivors of domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. "Nobody should have to choose between an unsafe home and no home at all," said Secretary Castro. "Today we take a necessary step toward ensuring domestic violence survivors are protected from being twice victimized when it comes to finding and keeping a home they can feel safe in."

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### **President Obama Signs Historic Sexual Assault Survivors' Bill of Rights Into Law**

### **NYPD, Safe Horizon Launch New Program to Aid Domestic Violence Victims**



President Obama signed into law a groundbreaking piece of legislation that grants basic rights to survivors of sexual assault—one that protects those who come forward to report and bring their cases to court and amends how rape kits are handled in sexual assault cases. Introduced by Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) in February of 2016, the Sexual Assault Survivors' Rights Act focused heavily on revising how the medical exams that sexual assault survivors undergo to gather forensic evidence—more commonly known as rape kits—are handled in federal criminal cases.

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The NYPD and Safe Horizon are expanding their partnership with the launch of the Crime Victim Assistance Program (CVAP) to immediately help survivors of domestic violence. CVAP will place victim advocates from Safe Horizon in police precincts across the city – 157 advocates over three years -- to work directly with victims by providing access to services and resources they may not know are available to them.

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## Domestic Violence Shelters Are Turning Away LGBTQ Victims

Surveying 1,976 instances of LGBTQ intimate partner abuse from 2015, NCAVP found that nearly half of survivors (44 percent) had been turned away from shelters. Of those, 71 percent reported that they were denied services due to their gender identity, because women-only shelters would not accept gay men or trans women, for example.

Transgender women had a particularly tough time finding services that wouldn't slam the door in their faces, but gay, bisexual, and transgender men also reported that domestic violence shelters for men rarely even exist.

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## Domestic Violence Emerges as Economic Scourge and Primary Driver of Homelessness

Violence in the home has cost more New Yorkers their homes this year than any other factor. It surpassed eviction as the top reason for shelter entrance in early 2016, according to Department of Homeless Services data. The problem is hardly new, however. For the last decade, domestic-violence survivors and their families have comprised more than a quarter of those housed by the agency, a number that has crept up over the past few years while evictions have dramatically decreased, perhaps because the city began providing free legal services to help people stay in their homes.

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## What Women Need to Know about Reproductive Coercion

About half of all pregnancies in the U.S. are unintended. While it would be easy to assume in these cases that birth control failed, or that people were simply careless, research on abusive relationships shows that a minority of these unintended pregnancies are the result of reproductive coercion. Reproductive coercion is a specific type of intimate partner violence in which one partner forces unprotected sex in order to increase the chances that the other partner will get pregnant against her will.

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## It Adds Up: Financial Abuse Is Domestic Abuse

Financial or economic abuse, while possibly a lesser known form of domestic abuse, is actually one of the most powerful control tactics abusers use to keep their victims trapped in the relationship and isolated from friends and family. Financial abuse typically goes hand in hand with other forms of domestic violence, including physical assault and emotional or psychological abuse. Research indicates that virtually all (98%) abusive relationships contain some form of financial abuse.

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## Domestic Violence Is a Major Public Health Problem in the U.S.

Domestic violence is a crime, but it's also a serious public health problem. Those who experience it are at a higher risk of mental health disorders, chronic diseases and infections. They're also more likely to die. Experts on intimate partner violence gathered at The Forum at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health to discuss the factors that put some at risk for domestic violence, the physical and emotional impact of domestic violence on individuals, families and communities, and the annual financial cost — estimated in the trillions — from lost productivity, health care and law enforcement. The experts discussed research-backed ways to prevent domestic violence and promote healthy, respectful and nonviolent relationships.

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## An Estimated 4.5 Million Women Have Been Bullied with Guns by Abusive Partners

An estimated 4.5 million women in the U.S. have been threatened or coerced with a firearm by an intimate partner. Another 1 million have survived a gunshot wound or been shot at. Those are the central findings of the first systematic review on the nonfatal use of firearms in domestic violence. In 2013, the most recent year for which federal statistics are available, 473 women were fatally shot by their husband or intimate partner. When a gun is present in an abusive household, the likelihood of a homicide increases by 500 percent. But as the study explains, a gun doesn't have to go off to play a significant role in an abusive relationship.

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## Could a Summer Camp Stop Kids from Repeating the Violence They Saw Growing Up?

Sleeping under the stars at summer camp is a familiar experience for many, but not for Ryan. The lanky teen was still adjusting to life at Camp HOPE America, the first summer camp established specifically for children exposed to domestic violence. They grew up in homes where they watched men beat their mothers, and homes where they were beaten for trying to intervene. As children, they learned to navigate a type of violence that's unpredictable and ever-present, compounded by mental health issues, neglect, drugs and poverty. But for now they were away from all that, at a sleepaway camp here in northern California in a forest of almost 2 million acres, with a bunch of strangers who were just like them – survivors. Half of them were Camp HOPE America veterans, having attended two or three times before. The rest were first-timers like Ryan.

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## New York City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito Will Not Stay Silent on Domestic Violence

Mark-Viverito, a lifelong advocate for domestic violence awareness (last year she earmarked \$6.6 million in spending for support services), initially spoke out when the Yankees signed Aroldis Chapman last year, when he was still under investigation for domestic violence. José Reyes of the Mets followed, as did the germ of what became her #NOTAFAN campaign; in June, she released a statement admonishing teams that ignore these histories in their hiring decisions.

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Disclaimer: Opinions expressed in the content of this email and in linked articles do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the NYC Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence.

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