The background of the entire page is a monochromatic purple image of the Statue of Liberty, showing her head with the crown and her right arm raised holding the torch.

OCDV IN FOCUS

A Closer Look at Foreign-Born
Clients Visiting the New York City
Family Justice Centers



Mayor's Office to
Combat Domestic Violence

CECILE NOEL, COMMISSIONER

OCDV IN FOCUS: A Closer Look at Foreign-Born Clients Visiting the New York City Family Justice Centers

Sandhya Kajeepeeta, Kara Noesner, Edward Hill

Key Takeaway:

The New York City Family Justice Center client base reflects the diversity of New York City's population, with the majority of Family Justice Center clients being foreign-born. The Centers consistently strive to create an inclusive and accessible environment for all residents.

Highlights:

- The number of foreign-born Family Justice Center clients has increased since the beginning of Mayor Bill de Blasio's administration.
- In 2017, there were 7,637 unique foreign-born clients who visited the Family Justice Centers, representing 176 different countries of birth. This is compared to 5,054 unique U.S.-born clients in 2017.
- There are key differences between foreign-born Family Justice Center clients compared to U.S.-born clients, including:
 - Foreign-born clients visit the Centers more frequently on average (41. vs. 3.3 visits)
 - Foreign-born clients are less likely to report living in shelter (9.2% vs. 12.3%)
 - Foreign-born clients are less likely to report open family court (19.4% vs. 29.7%) and criminal court (29.7% vs. 34.6%) cases
 - Foreign-born clients are less likely to report that the police have been called (56.4% vs. 71.6%)
- OCDV has implemented targeted outreach and programming initiatives to ensure that we continue reaching diverse communities in New York City.

Suggested citation: Kajeepeeta S, Noesner K, Hill E. OCDV IN FOCUS: A Closer Look at Foreign-Born Clients Visiting the New York City Family Justice Centers. Office to Combat Domestic Violence, New York City Office of the Mayor, 2018.

A Research Report from the New York City Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence

The Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) formulates policies and programs, coordinates the citywide delivery of domestic violence services and works with diverse communities and community leaders to increase awareness of domestic violence. OCDV collaborates closely with government and nonprofit agencies that assist domestic violence survivors and operates the New York City Family Justice Centers.

For more information on intimate partner violence programs and services in New York City, please visit the OCDV website at nyc.gov/domesticviolence or NYCHope, the City's first domestic violence portal, at nyc.gov/nychope.

THE NEW YORK CITY FAMILY JUSTICE CENTERS

The New York City Family Justice Centers (FJCs), operated by the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV), provide comprehensive civil legal, counseling, and supportive services for survivors of domestic violence, elder abuse, and sex trafficking. Located in all five boroughs, the FJCs are safe, caring environments that provide one-stop services and support. All residents are welcome regardless of language, income, or immigration status. As part of the routine intake process, client service specialists ask FJC clients to report their country of birth. This report provides a closer look at the clients who reported a country of birth other than the United States, Puerto Rico, or the U.S. Virgin Islands, who are hereafter referred to as "foreign-born" clients.

HISTORICAL DATA ON FOREIGN-BORN CLIENTS (2010-2017)

New York City's foreign-born population comprises 38% of the City's total population, totaling over 3.2 million -- larger than the population of Chicago.¹

The FJC client population reflects this global diversity. In 2010, FJC clients reported 130 different countries of birth (Figure 1). This figure increased to 176 countries in 2017 (Figure 2).

The majority of FJC clients are foreign-born²

Since the beginning of Mayor de Blasio's administration, the total number of clients visiting the FJCs has increased, with substantial increases in the number of foreign-born clients visiting the FJCs (Figure 3). From 2014 to 2017, the FJCs received 99,861 total visits from 20,806 unique foreign-born clients. In fact, as shown in Figure 3, the majority of FJC clients report being foreign-born. Specifically in 2017, 7,637 unique clients reported being foreign-born compared to 5,054 who reported being U.S.-born.

Figure 1. FJC Client Countries of Birth (2010)

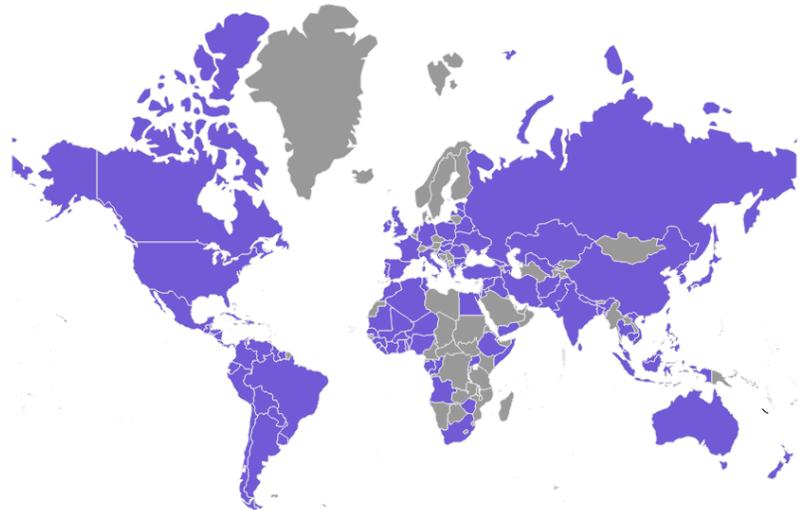
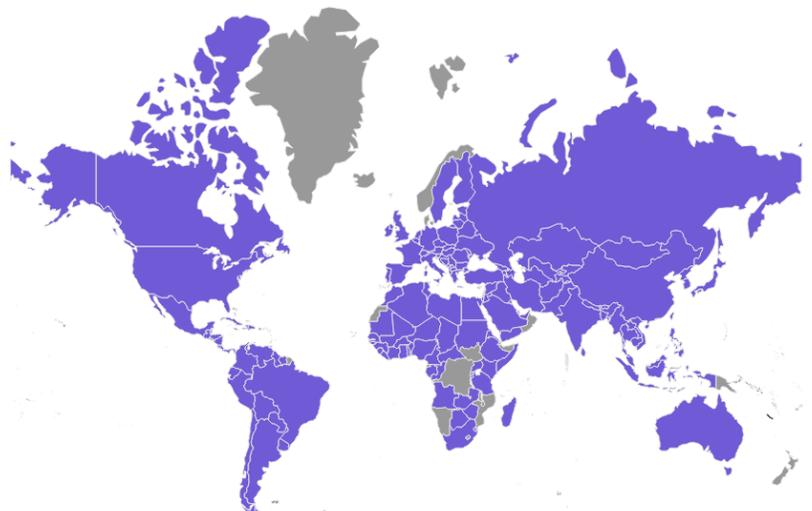


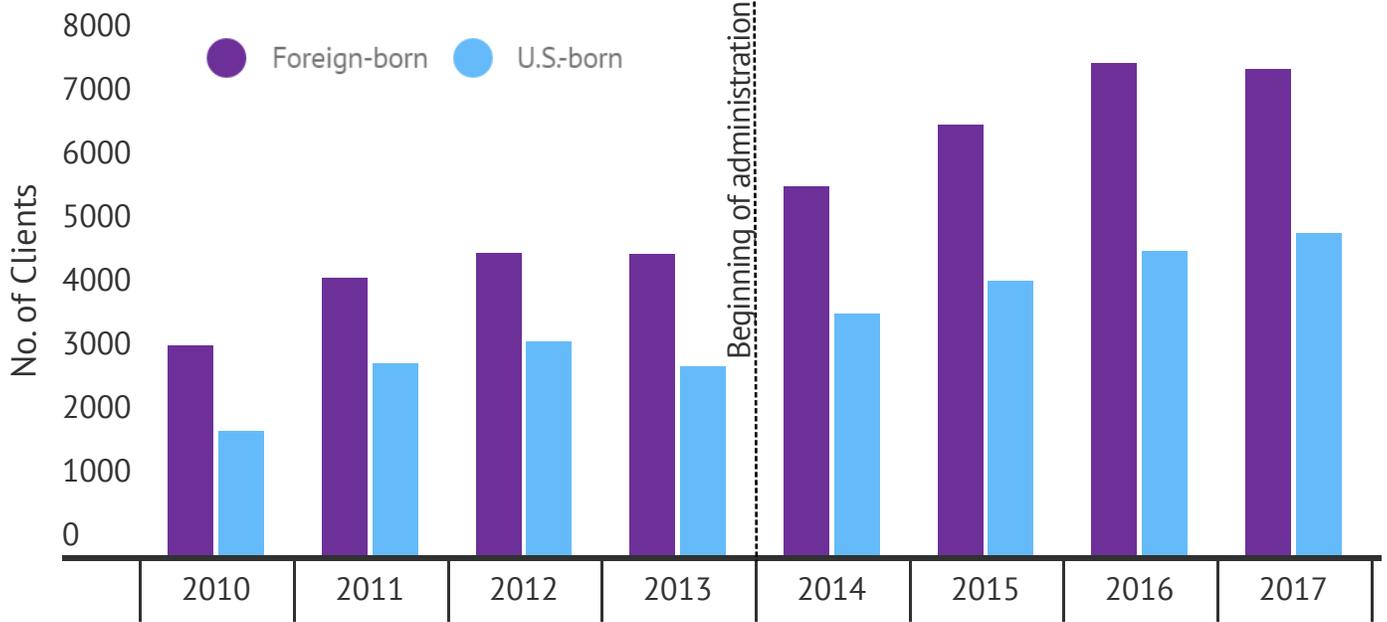
Figure 2. FJC Client Countries of Birth (2017)



[1] Source: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/about/dcp-priorities/data-expertise/nyc-foreign-born-info-brief.pdf?r=1>

[2] Note: About 25% of clients were missing data on country of origin; this statistic excludes any clients with missing country of origin data

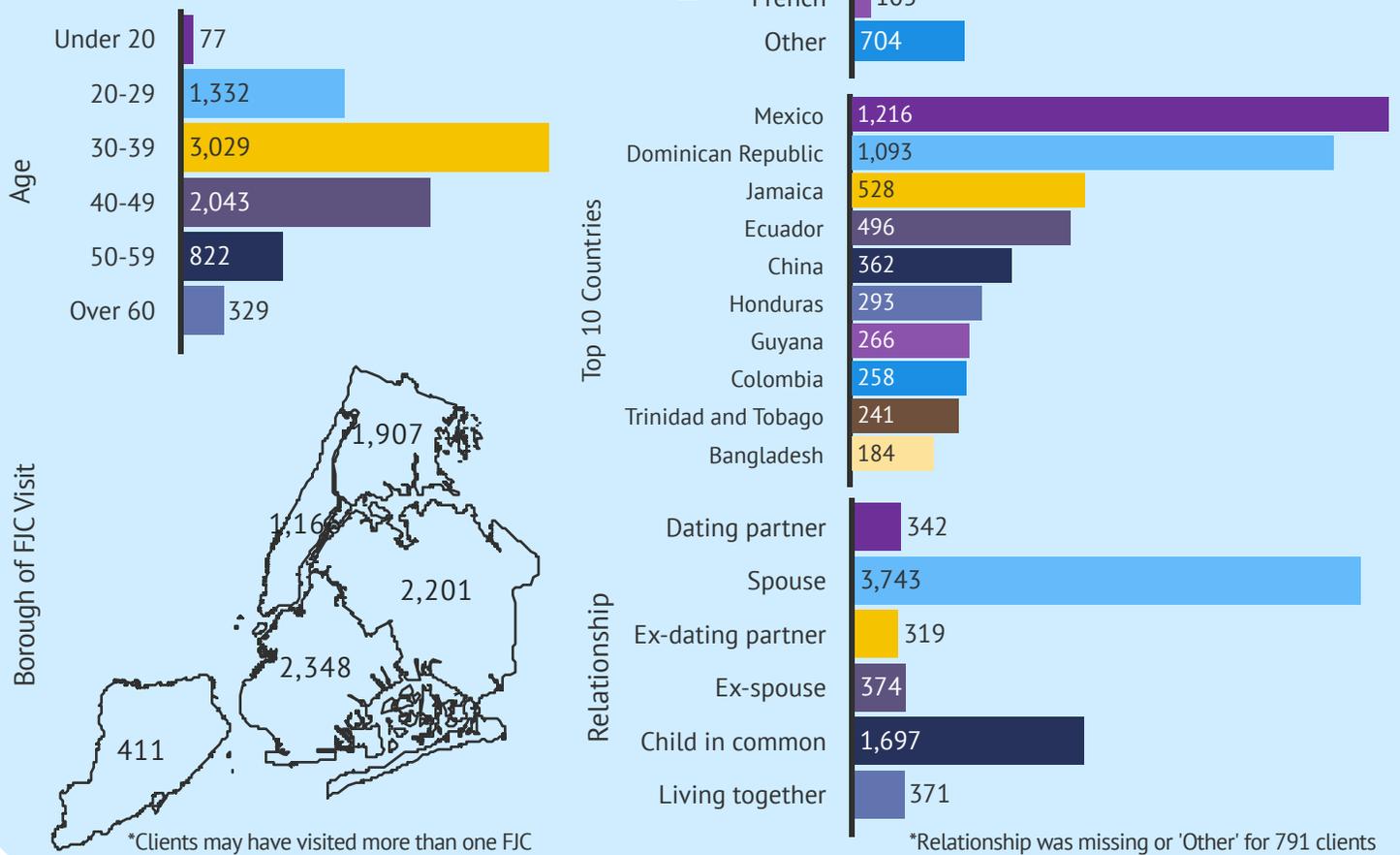
Figure 3. Foreign-born and U.S.-born FJC clients by year (2010-2017)



CLOSER LOOK AT FOREIGN-BORN CLIENTS IN 2017

As mentioned above, **there were over 7,000 unique foreign-born clients who visited an FJC in 2017 alone.** Figure 4 displays basic demographic information about these clients.

Figure 4. Demographics of Foreign-Born Clients in 2017 (N=7,637)



As shown in Figure 4, FJC foreign-born clients represent a wide range of ages and countries, live in all boroughs of New York City, and speak a wide variety of languages. Given this diversity, the FJCs consistently strive to be inclusive and accessible to all New York residents. The FJCs provide services in over 10 different languages and employ interpretation services for all other languages. Figure 4 also shows that about half (49.0%) of all foreign-born clients report a spousal relationship with their abusive partners compared to other relationship categories. Table 1 below shows the top five services that foreign-born clients receive at the FJCs.

Table 1. Top five FJC services foreign-born clients receive (2017)

Service	No. of Clients	% of Clients
Risk Assessment	6,975	91.3%
Safety Plan	6,966	91.2%
Group/Individual Counseling	4,396	57.6%
Immigration Civil Legal Assistance	3,296	43.2%
Crisis Intervention	3,157	41.3%

Borough-level foreign-born client data

Table 2 displays a breakdown of the top five countries of birth along with the total number of countries of birth reported by foreign-born clients in each of the five FJCs. The top five countries of birth in each borough generally align with the total foreign-born populations in each borough, but OCDV regularly monitors any differences in order to identify particular communities or neighborhoods that may benefit from additional outreach or service provision.³

Table 2. Top five countries of birth and total countries of birth among foreign-born clients by FJC (2017)

	Bronx	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Queens	Staten Island
1	Dominican Republic (n=613)	Mexico (n=362)	Dominican Republic (n=209)	Mexico (n=322)	Mexico (n=114)
2	Mexico (n=342)	Jamaica (n=218)	Mexico (n=126)	Ecuador (n=269)	Jamaica (n=19)
3	Honduras (n=151)	Dominican Republic (n=182)	China (n=77)	China (n=210)	Dominican Republic (n=18)
4	Jamaica (n=135)	Trinidad and Tobago (n=148)	Jamaica (n=60)	Colombia (n=176)	Egypt (n=18)
5	Ecuador (n=77)	Ecuador (n=113)	Ecuador (n=52)	Jamaica (n=131)	Honduras (n=18)
Total Countries of Birth	100	141	127	104	74

[3] Source: <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/data-maps/nyc-population/american-community-survey.page>

Differences between foreign-born and U.S.-born clients at the FJCs

When comparing characteristics of foreign-born and U.S.-born clients at the FJCs, some important differences are illuminated. Table 3 shows that, in 2017, foreign-born clients visited the FJC more frequently on average compared to U.S.-born clients. Additionally, foreign-born clients were more likely to report less than a high school education level, less likely to report a disability, and less likely to report living in shelter compared to U.S.-born clients. Among those clients in shelter, foreign-born clients were more likely to report living in a domestic violence shelter while U.S.-born clients were more likely to report living in a homeless shelter. Clients are asked how they heard about the FJC and foreign-born clients were less likely to report hearing about the FJC from the District Attorney's office or the police, instead they were more likely to report hearing about the FJC from family or friends. Compared to U.S.-born clients, foreign-born clients were less likely to report an open family court case, report that the police had been called, and report an open criminal court case. Finally, foreign-born clients were more likely than U.S.-born clients to be in a spousal relationship with their partners. These differences between U.S.-born and foreign-born clients help OCDV understand the circumstances and needs of the FJCs' foreign-born client population and tailor community engagement and service provision accordingly.

Table 3. Key differences between foreign-born and U.S.-born FJC clients (2017)

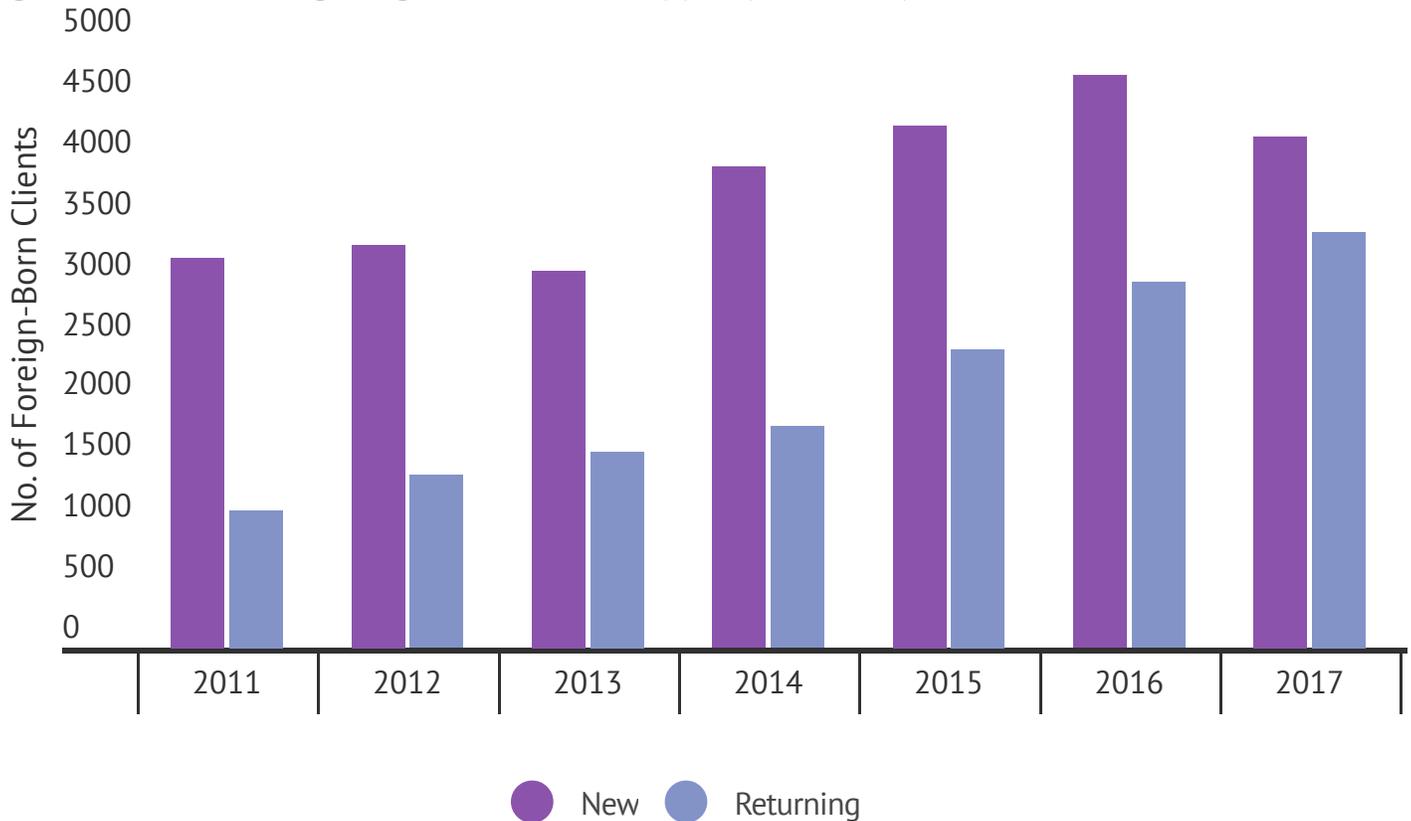
	Foreign-born (n=7,637)	U.S.-born (n=5,054)
1) Average number of visits	4.1	3.3
2) Less than high school education level	20.8%	3.2%
3) Living with a disability	7.4%	21.7%
4) Living in shelter	9.2%	12.3%
5) Among those in shelter: Shelter type - Homeless	48.1%	58.5%
6) Among those in shelter: Shelter type - Domestic violence	51.9%	41.5%
7) Heard about FJC from District Attorney or Police	44.1%	54.2%
8) Open family court case	19.4%	29.7%
9) Police called	56.4%	71.6%
10) Open criminal court case	29.7%	34.6%
11) Spousal relationship	53.2%	28.8%

LOOKING AHEAD

New vs. Returning Foreign-Born Clients

This report reflects the substantial number of FJC clients who report being foreign-born. However, in monitoring trends in the number of foreign-born clients visiting the FJCs, OCDV has identified a recent change in new vs. returning foreign-born clients (Figure 4). Between 2016 and 2017, there was a 10% decline (4,716 to 4,213) in the number of new foreign-born clients (foreign-born clients visiting an FJC for the first time). At the same time, the number of returning foreign-born FJC clients continued to increase steadily. This suggests that foreign-born clients who have previously visited an FJC are returning for continued services, but foreign-born New Yorkers who have not yet visited a Center may face additional barriers to seeking FJC services compared to the prior year. Given this change, OCDV has implemented a targeted outreach strategy to ensure that we continue to reach diverse communities in New York City.

Figure 4. New vs. returning foreign-born FJC clients by year (2011-2017)



OCDV Targeted Outreach and Programming Initiatives

The findings outlined in this report, including that the FJCs' client population is comprised of a majority of foreign-born clients and that foreign-born clients visit the FJCs more often than do U.S.-born clients, are unsurprising given OCDV's committed efforts to reach diverse communities. Specifically, the FJCs have strong on- and off-site partnerships with eight culturally-specific organizations that provide case management, counseling, and other services at the Centers or through expedited referrals from the Centers. A list of these partner organizations is provided on below. Additionally, New York City is a leader in understanding the importance of providing immigration legal assistance to domestic violence survivors and funds community-based legal services organizations to provide full-time immigration legal services at each of the City's FJCs in partnership with the Robin Hood Foundation. These immigration legal services are provided on-site at the

Centers to ensure clients are aware of their immigration options and the attorney represent clients in their immigration cases. Also, foreign-born clients without immigration status, who become eligible for certain public benefits due to their immigration applications moving forward, can meet with service providers from the New York City Human Resources Administration to receive assistance applying for benefits.

Beyond these programs in place to provide culturally-specific services to foreign-born clients, OCDV has launched a number of initiatives in the past year to further reach foreign-born populations. As part of a larger initiative to reach underserved communities in the City who may not be in contact with government services, OCDV is hosting a series of roundtables with community representatives. For example, in 2017, OCDV hosted two roundtables with members of the Muslim community, including faith leaders, advocates, and services providers from domestic violence partner agencies. The goal of these roundtables was to learn more about how domestic violence is perceived and experienced by community members, gauge their awareness of services and resources, and brainstorm new ideas for creating responsive public education efforts and building trust. OCDV will continue hosting these roundtables in 2018, including a roundtable that was held in February with leaders from the Indo-Caribbean community in southeast Queens.

In addition, the City has contracted with immigration legal service providers to increase the provision of legal services to immigrant survivors of domestic violence and sex trafficking who are seeking citizenship, permanent residence, or other authorized immigration rights and to build long-term sustainability within these legal service organizations. Under this program, the legal service providers will partner with community-based organizations that work within local communities to hold legal clinics and provide training to the community-based organization's staff to increase their knowledge of civil legal immigration issues and encourage referrals to the immigration legal provider. In addition, the legal service provider and the community-based organization will conduct outreach in targeted locations, provide information at community events and forums, and engage in other outreach efforts to raise awareness about domestic violence and immigration legal services that are available.

Finally, OCDV is using a data-driven approach to track and monitor the number of clients seeking services by neighborhood so that we can quickly identify and respond to trends that indicate specific neighborhoods are less likely to access services and to work toward bringing services to these neighborhoods. An example of this work is the unique partnership the Queens FJC has developed with Sakhi for South Asian Women (Sakhi) to better serve diverse Asian communities in Queens. Beginning in fall 2017, Sakhi staff is on-site once a month at the Queens FJC under a new flex partnership in order to meet with South Asian clients and provide them with ongoing linguistically- and culturally-specific counseling, case management, and support. Sakhi advocates will be working with South Asian women who trace their backgrounds to countries including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Bhutan, Tibet, and the South Asian Diaspora (including the West Indies and Africa). Additional examples of this work are the recently launched NYCHope portal accessible via nyc.gov/nychope and the roll-out of the City's first domestic violence public awareness campaign in over a decade.

List of Culturally-Specific Service Providers who Partner with the FJs:

Arab American Family Support Center

Garden of Hope

Korean American Family Service Center

Sakhi for South Asian Women

Sauti Yetu Center for African Women and Families

Violence Intervention Program, Inc.

Voces Latinas

Womankind