

Plenary IV: Bridging the Gap
Building Partnerships –
How Law Enforcement and
Advocates Can Work Together
on U Visa Certifications

July 30, 2015
New Orleans, LA

Introductions

- Officer Michael LaRiviere
 - Officer, Patrol Division, Salem Police Department
- Rocio Molina
 - Associate Director, National Immigrant Women's Advocacy Project
- Aparna Bhattacharyya
 - Executive Director, Raksha

Learning Objectives

By the end of this training, you will be better able to:

- Collaborate with various stakeholders in your community
- Adapt practices to improve your relationship with law enforcement in your community, thereby benefitting your clients

What are some of the good experiences you have had collaborating with agencies?

Understanding Each Other's Roles

- Advocates
 - Victim Advocates
 - Court Advocates
 - Police Department Advocate
- Law Enforcement (LE)
 - Police
 - Prosecutor

Laying the Foundation for Partnerships: The Department's Mission and Vision Statements

“We Maintain Open Communication with all the Communities We Serve. Their Input Helps to Determine Police Policies, Priorities and Strategies.”

-Excerpt from San Francisco Police Department's Mission Statement

“The people of our communities and members of the police Department must be united in their commitment to addressing crime, violence, and quality-of-life issues by engaging one another and all city agencies in problem-solving partnerships.”

-Excerpt from San Francisco Police Department's Vision Statement



Frame the Conversation: Focus on Common Goals

These goals include:



- Holding perpetrators accountable
- Increasing public safety
- Providing redress to victims
- Building trust in the community

“It’s not 10,000 visas; it is
10,000 tips to get criminals off
our streets.”

Chief Pete Helein

Appleton Police Department (ret.)

Appleton, Wisconsin

Strategic Plan

1. “Do Your Homework”
2. “Building Alliances”
3. “Meet and Greet”

1. “Do Your Homework”

Before contacting LE, prepare by:

- Learning about current policies , practices, and mission of agency
- Collecting survivors’ stories



Story Collection

- Collect stories of survivors of crime, illustrative of the impact of current U visa certification practices on crime victims:
 - Should be emotionally compelling—focus on victimization and crimes committed by perpetrators
 - Allows advocates to assess and document barriers survivors face when working with LE
 - Should connect with “protect and serve” mission

Data Collection and Fact Sheets

- Work with allies and the community to collect data documenting the extent of U visa certification practices:
 - Demographics
 - Who is and is not certifying
 - How widespread are the failures to certify?
 - Is the failure to certify particular to one precinct or police chief?
- Prepare talking points that document and articulate the problem

2. “Building Alliances”

Look for partners and/or coalitions that already have trusting relationships with LE



Multidisciplinary Partnerships

- Mainstream partners can help advocates successfully create relationships with LE
 - e.g. domestic violence and sexual assault agencies, courts, government, faith based, and health professionals
- Formulate strategy to approach LE based on allies' past experiences
- Collaborate with allies

3. “Meet and Greet”

Create a strategy for contacting, meeting with, and building relationships with LE agencies



Work with a Cross Disciplinary Team

- Determine who comprises the best cross-disciplinary and diverse team
- Set up regular meetings to share updated information
- Celebrate successes
- Develop a plan for improving shortcomings

Share Resources

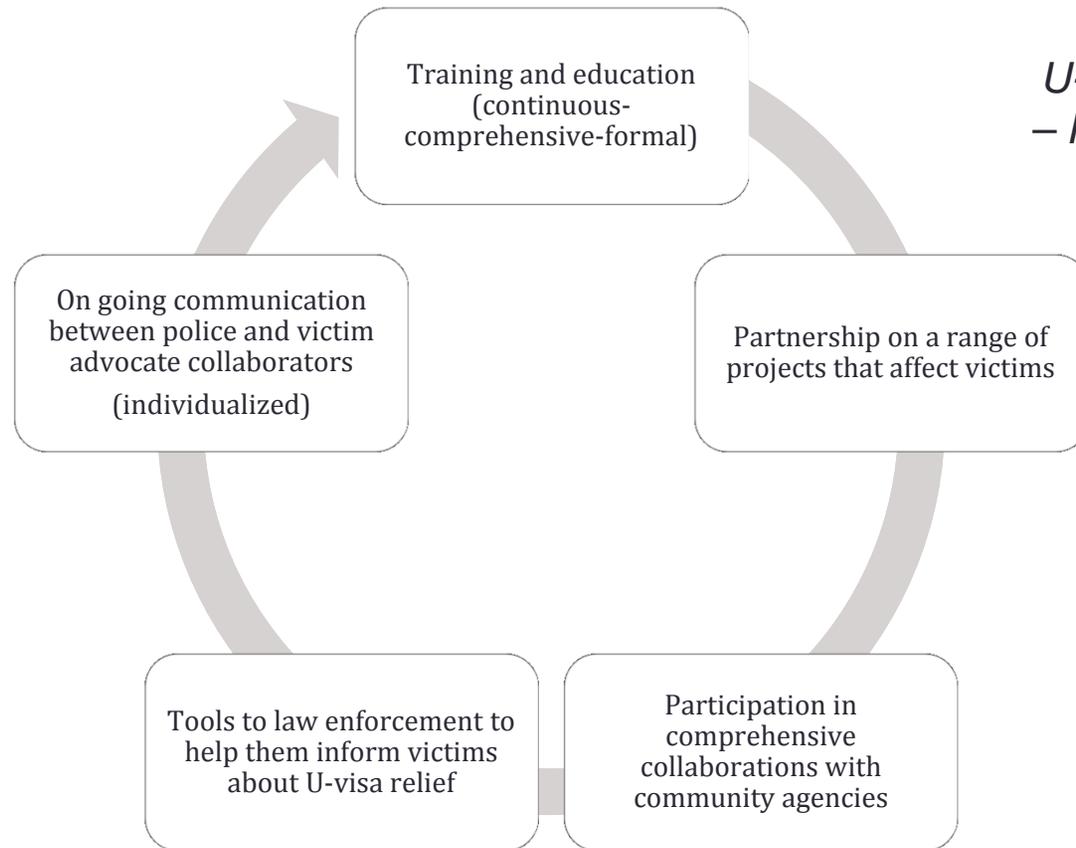
- Identify significant language needs in your community
- Collaborate with other advocates to identify information and handouts for victims being used by LE
 - Names of advocates and/or shelters
 - Victims' rights
 - Names and numbers to call for assistance and counseling
 - Medical information
- Work together to obtain translations of these documents

Putting Relationships with Law Enforcement into Practice

Factors that Contributed to Success

- Training, education, and development of training materials for certifiers and LE
- Ongoing 1-on-1 communication between advocates and LE that involved collaborative work
- Tools provided to LE to help them inform crime victims about U visa and VAWA

Building Advocate-Law Enforcement Relationships Result in U Visa Certification



*U-Visas Presentation
– IFVC – 2010 – Hass
& Monahan*

Ongoing Communication is Key

- Individualized contact
- Personal relationships
 - Developed earlier
 - Sustained over time

Approaches and Practices Proven Successful by Advocates

- Taking an open, problem-solving approach
- Listening to LE's perspectives
- Addressing concerns for signing certifications
- Providing information to support LE officers' ability to respond to questions raised by other LE officers
- Being clear about and respectful of the role that victim advocates, legal services providers, and LE each play in working with victims

Advocates Report Positive Results when LE

- Conducted predominate aggressor assessment – even in situations of self-defense
- Interviewed victims separately ‘in a trauma informed manner’
 - Away from the perpetrator
- Conducted interview in her own language instead of interpreter
- Informed victims of their rights including U visa
- Arrested abusers
- Brought victims to the hospital

Advocates Can Assist Law Enforcement By:

- Assisting survivors to apply for VAWA/U visa/T visa protections
- Collecting demographics on immigrant and LEP populations
- Locating survivors
- Encouraging clients to maintain contact with LE
- Getting client to office for interviews safely
- Planning to provide language access for client
- Educating clients about their rights so they are not further victimized in another context

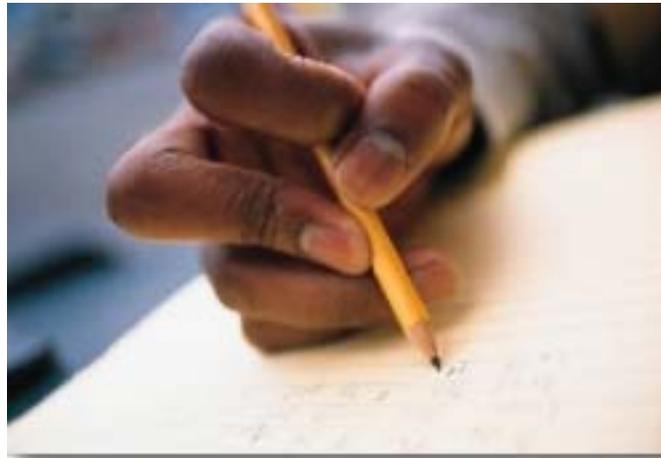
Technical Assistance and Materials

- Power Point presentations and materials for this conference at www.niwap.org/go/NOLA2015
- **NIWAP Technical Assistance:**
 - Call (202) 274-4457
 - E-mail niwap@wcl.american.edu
- Web Library: www.niwaplibrary.wcl.american.edu

Questions



Evaluations



Thank you!

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NIWAP

National Immigrant Women's
Advocacy Project, American
University Washington 28
College of Law