



**Mayor's Office to
Combat Domestic
Violence**

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The Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence Expands Economic Empowerment Programs for Latino Domestic Violence Victims

In 2014, 42% of clients to the NYC Family Justice Centers self-identified themselves as Hispanic

(New York, NY) Today Mayor Bill de Blasio joined with the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Lilliam Barrios-Paoli and the Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) Commissioner Rosemonde Pierre-Louis to announce through its New York City Family Justice Centers (FJCs) it will expand the economic empowerment programs facilitated in Spanish to two new locations – Brooklyn and Queens. The free financial and literacy programs will be offered citywide to 50 NYC Family Justice Center clients per cycle.

The OCDV provides self-sufficiency programs to clients as a part of its comprehensive resources offered and this month the Moneywise program and the NYC Supported Training and Employment Preparation Services (NYC STEPS) program will be offered in Spanish. Through these programs, clients will develop financial literacy and readiness for college and the workplace, and be connected to certified financial planners who can discuss their particular financial situation.

"Domestic violence has a devastating impact on individuals and families, and it tears at the very fabric that binds our communities," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "Finding new, creative ways to empower victims and increase access to critical services through programs such as the one's being offered at our NYC Family Justice Centers is a top priority for this administration."

"Economic empowerment programs offer critical resources and skills that can bring meaningful changes into the lives of domestic violence survivors," said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Lilliam Barrios-Paoli**. "Making these programs available in Spanish is an important step in our effort to increase resources for clients in need across the city and key to helping them in their path to become self-sufficient and independent."

The City of New York operates the largest network of Family Justice Centers in the country and as a part of the City's effort to continually improve distribution of the domestic violence resources, the OCDV is increasingly utilizing data to reach more diverse communities and identify populations experiencing domestic violence at higher rates. Some communities are disproportionately affected by domestic violence. For example, the recently released Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee Annual Report found that 42% of family-related homicides occurred in neighborhoods with very low socioeconomic statistics, including high rates of poverty and unemployment.

“Leaving an abusive relationship is never an easy decision but at our Family Justice Centers we provide our clients with the tools necessary to live a life free of violence,” said **Commissioner Rosemonde Pierre-Louis, Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence**. “Expansion of these programs will help to empower domestic violence victims by placing them squarely in charge of their finances and destiny.”

Queens is the most diverse borough in New York City and 75% of clients that visit the Queens FJC are foreign born. The Spanish component for the NYC STEPS program, founded by the OCDV and the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT), is being delivered through the Microsoft Digital Literacy curriculum. NYC STEPS provides free web-based workplace and computer skills training to help individuals reenter the workplace equipped with today’s basic technology skills. Graduates are connected to partner organizations for additional support, job placement, and training resources.

“Technology know-how is one of the most critical skills for success in today’s digital economy – and it’s never too late to learn something new,” said **DoITT Commissioner Anne Roest**. “DoITT is privileged to be an ongoing partner of the OCDV Family Justice Center in providing essential tools for victims of domestic violence to reclaim their independence and self-reliance.”

“Economic empowerment and financial coaching are key components to breaking the cycle of abuse for many survivors of domestic violence,” said **Commissioner Steven Banks, Human Resources Administration**. “The expansion of this initiative in the Family Justice Centers will provide survivors with opportunities to acquire the tools needed to increase financial independence and self-sufficiency. We applaud the OCDV and support their efforts to provide these critical services.”

“I applaud the Office to Combat Domestic Violence for continuing to develop new ways to connect victims of intimate partner violence to critical self-sufficiency services, including foreign born,” said **Mayor’s Office for International Affairs Commissioner Penny Abeywardena**. “We each have a moral responsibility to play a role in ending any form of violence.”

“Economic empowerment is a necessary part of the path to stability and opportunity for our most vulnerable New Yorkers, and I commend the Office to Combat Domestic Violence for making it a priority,” said **Immigrant Affairs Commissioner Nisha Agarwal**. “We have been working with OCDV and local law enforcement agencies to help immigrant crime victims gain protection and come out of the shadows, and I’ve seen firsthand what a powerful impact economic empowerment has on the lives of domestic violence survivors.”

OCDV will also expand the 13- week Moneyw!se program in partnership with Working Support of Education (W!SE). Through this program, clients will become Certified Financially Literate, earning W!SE’s widely recognized CFL.

“We are truly excited to offer the MoneyW!SE Program in Spanish at the Brooklyn Family Justice Center for the first time this spring,” said **Phyllis Frankfort Perillo, w!se President and CEO**. “The generous support of the NYC Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence and our other highly-valued partners will help provide much needed financial education to our Spanish-speaking clients in Brooklyn.”

Through a public-private partnership with the Brooke Jackman Foundation, a children’s literacy organization that has donated over 250,000 books to children and families in need since its founding in 2001, and Sanctuary for Families, the OCDV will offer its second bilingual Brooke Jackman literacy program in April 2015.

“We are thrilled to continue our work with the NYC Family Justice Centers and offer our programs to families from many backgrounds,” said **Erin Jackman, Executive Director of the Brooke Jackman Foundation**. “We hope the BJJ Family Literacy Programs will continue to provide valuable family time and the unique opportunity for families to experience the magical world of reading together.”

The newly added Spanish programs will be offered beginning February 24. For more information, call 311 to connect to the nearest Family Justice Center or visit www.nyc.gov/domesticviolence.

About the NYC Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence

The Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV), established in 2001, oversees the citywide delivery of domestic violence services, creates innovative policies, develops crisis intervention and prevention based programs, and works to increase awareness through broad and diverse outreach efforts throughout New York City. OCDV operates four Family Justice Centers (FJCs) in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens, with a fifth Center opening in Staten Island in 2015. The FJCs offer comprehensive wraparound services for victims of intimate partner violence, sex trafficking and elder abuse, including case management, civil legal and supportive services, as well as access to the District Attorney’s Offices and the NYPD. The FJCs are walk-in Centers that provide free and confidential services regardless of the client’s language, immigration status, income, gender identity or sexual orientation.

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