

BUILDING COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTIONS TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Increasing Economic Opportunity for Battered Women

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence

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New Visions, New Allies: Creating Domestic Violence and Poverty State Teams

This issue of the newsletter features information about the *Domestic Violence and Poverty State Team Leadership Institute* held in Hartford, Connecticut on July 17-19, 2001. The Institute was designed to develop teams in six states that will build and carry out a policy and practice agenda on domestic violence and poverty.

Domestic violence coalitions from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island took the lead in identifying people for their state's team. Each team had 9 to 11 members. Half of the members were from the field of domestic violence, while the other half were from anti-poverty initiatives. To prepare for the Institute, some coalitions spent time identifying and getting to know new allies involved in anti-poverty work. State team members represented a wide range of backgrounds, experience, and cultures, including community members, current and former welfare recipients, shelter advocates, community action agency staff, policy leaders from religious institutions and advocacy groups, housing advocates, and staff from government poverty programs.

The Institute was designed to provide all participants with basic information about domestic violence and poverty as well as emerging anti-poverty/domestic violence work occurring in programs, communities, and local, state, and federal policy contexts. Each state team also met separately and went through a series of facilitated exercises designed to strengthen the team's connections and explore the needs of low-income battered women and their families. Some teams talked about battered women's long-term financial needs;

they discussed how so many domestic violence responses focus on short-term interventions for physical violence. Another theme of the discussions was that low-income battered women seek services from a variety of agencies, including government welfare offices and job training programs. All the teams explored ways to enhance services and responses for low-income battered women and their families.

Toward the end of the Institute, each team went through a creative, participatory process to build a new vision of their work that (*cont. Page 2*)

The *Building Comprehensive Solutions to Domestic Violence Policy and Practice Paper Series* has published several reports on domestic violence and poverty, including:

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| Publication # 1: | New Challenges for the Battered Women's Movement: Building Collaborations and Improving Public Policy for Poor Women |
| Publication # 9: | Strategies to Expand Battered Women's Economic Opportunities |
| Publication # 10: | Welfare, Poverty, and Abused Women: New Research and Its Implications |
| Publication # 13: | Expanding Solutions for Domestic Violence and Poverty: What Battered Women with Abused Children Need from Their Advocates |
| Publication # 14: | Starting A Regional Coalition to Support Battered Women's Economic Development: One Community's Efforts |
| Publication # 15: | Blueprint for Comprehensive Policy Development on Domestic Violence and Poverty. |

These papers are available on the Internet at:
http://www.vawnet.org/vnl/library/general/bcs_apub.htm,
or by calling the NRC at 800-537-2238.

reflected the diverse perspectives of team members and integrated issues of domestic violence and poverty. Teams used “Seriousplay” training sets donated by the Lego Corporation to literally build the vision of their new work.

The teams’ final task was to develop a concrete plan to continue the collaborative work that they had begun at the Institute. State team plans included the following: commitments to meet regularly; develop a cable TV show;

repeat the Institute model within the state; hold public hearings on the economic impact of domestic violence; begin to offer a Personal Economic Planning program; add community, labor, and government representatives to the team; provide cross-training; add the issues to ongoing training; hold a conference; and begin a statewide network through email. Several domestic violence coalitions committed staff time or resources to further develop this work.

Post-Institute State Team Activities

Connecticut:

The state team meets regularly and has expanded its membership to include a representative working with low-income fathers. One of the team’s first commitments was to coordinate policy advocacy efforts. In addition, CCADV has adopted anti-poverty work as one of its six advocacy priorities and has hired a state-wide coordinator to implement that work. The state team and CCADV staff are developing a process to gather information from underserved/low-income domestic violence victims to inform their planning and advocacy.

New Jersey:

The team decided to conduct a survey of domestic violence programs to identify existing collaborations with anti-poverty allies. The NJCBW and New Jersey State Team are planning to replicate the Domestic Violence and Poverty Institute in June, 2002.

Rhode Island:

The state team meets regularly and team members have developed a training plan for educating domestic violence advocates and low-income battered women about Rhode Island’s welfare program (Family Independence Program). The training will be conducted by state team members. Team members report that they now share information about legislative and policy agendas with a clearer understanding of why low-income battered women need policies that address poverty and violence.

For more information on the State Team Leadership Institute, contact Jill Davies at Jdavies@ghla.org
Let us know what you think of this newsletter. Any suggestions on topics to cover? Send an e-mail to nancy-newkirk@uiowa.edu