Children's Hospital of Philadelphia PolicyLab

Access to Domestic Violence Services for Philadelphia Residents with Limited English/Spanish-proficiency

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Immigrants experience domestic violence at rates similar to other populations, yet survivors and victims who speak languages for which there are fewer bilingual, bicultural services often face significant linguistic and cultural barriers when seeking help. In partnership with Nationalities Service Center, a team of PolicyLab researchers sought to describe access to domestic violence services for Philadelphia residents whose primary language is neither English nor Spanish. The team conducted semi-structured interviews with thirteen stakeholders from domestic violence service organizations and immigrant-focused nonprofits, including community-based organizations.

The project's participants made several recommendations. Most notably, stronger, sustained partnerships across domestic violence and immigrant-focused nonprofits—including community-based organizations—are crucial to providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services for Philadelphia families. Based on these findings, we also suggest that funders prioritize support for interpretation, translation and/or multilingual staff. Doing so could help to ensure that all Philadelphia families have equitable access to domestic violence services.

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