

Are your services linguistically and culturally accessible to immigrant and refugee women?
Take the quiz to find out.

Question 1: Do you do community outreach? Yes or No

Answer: Identify population groups you are not serving, as well as agencies and organizations that serve those communities; locate immigrant organizations in your area which could provide support and assistance; collaborate and partner with organizations established within immigrant communities.

Question 2: Do you provide language accessibility? Yes or No

Answer: If your program does not have multilingual staff or volunteers, develop a referral list for translators; all translators should receive domestic violence training; when deciding whether a client needs a translator, be aware that you should provide her with assistance in the language she most comfortably speaks.

Question 3: Does your program recruit multilingual and multicultural staff and volunteers? Yes or No

Answer: To become a truly accessible organization to immigrant women, improve the diversity of your staff and volunteers; develop materials translated into all the languages spoken by the communities you seek to serve.

Question 4: Do you provide multi-lingual trainings? Yes or No

Answer: Provide regular training in languages other than English as one way to work towards recruitment of multicultural and multilingual volunteers and staff.

Question 5: Does your program assist with transportation? Yes or No

Answer: Be aware that you may need to explain to some immigrant women in detail about how to use public transportation and how to reach their destination; some women may require accompaniment to appointments, if they are not comfortable navigating the transportation system.

It is important to assess the accessibility of your program to battered immigrant women. Through examining your accessibility, you will be taking a big step toward breaking down the barriers that may keep an immigrant woman from getting help from your program. It will take a collaborative effort by more than one individual to make a program accessible, but the genuine concern and commitment of one person can make a big difference.

You should ensure that a culturally appropriate environment is available for immigrant women and children, who need to feel at home in the shelter. Be aware that some immigrant women are not used to Western style beds or to separate beds for their children. You should provide food that immigrant women are familiar with. If shelter residents share responsibilities for cooking, immigrant women should be given the opportunity to cook the food they are accustomed to.

Also, be aware that there may be racial tension in your shelter between residents from different communities, or between residents and staff of different backgrounds. Develop a policy for residents and staff to follow which will ensure the safety and well-being of all residents of your shelter.