

The ACCOUNTABILITY DIALOGUES



Summary of Recommendations for States, Tribes, Territories, and Child Welfare Agencies

In the Fall of 2021, Futures Without Violence, Latinos United for Peace and Equity, The National Center on Violence Against Black Women (Ujima, Inc.), and Women Transforming Families, a project of Ujima, came together with survivors of domestic violence who were impacted by the child welfare system, along with state, tribal, and federal policymakers in the *Accountability Dialogues*. The Accountability Dialogues created a platform that elevated the voices of survivors and provided an opportunity for survivors, policymakers, advocates, and judges to listen to one another and advance policy solutions that would prevent further injustice to adult and child survivors of domestic violence. These recommendations and policy solutions offer a new framework: work diligently with care and compassion, and without bias, to keep families together; robustly support survivors and their children, in their community and with the resources and supports that they have identified, to meet their family's needs; and invest in communities and culturally responsive, community-based organizations to help families thrive.

Summary of Recommendations for States, Tribes, Territories, and Child Welfare Agencies

1. Support and robustly invest in prevention strategies to improve family well-being.
2. Establish community accountability processes for child welfare agencies.
3. Fund and co-design with impacted families a new Family Assistance Pathway for families to obtain services and supports outside the child welfare system.
4. Fund and provide access to affordable or free, quality mental health and behavioral health services in communities, and strengthen partnerships with state Medicaid agencies.
5. Narrow the definition of neglect to state clearly and acknowledge that poverty and domestic violence (DV) do not, in and of themselves, constitute neglect.
6. Modify or create differential response pathways to respond to DV situations that present an imminent threat to safety and those that do not.
7. Engage survivors and survivor-led organizations to define active efforts, and require child welfare agencies to document active efforts at all phases of each DV case.
8. Cultivate a working partnership between child welfare offices and DV coalitions to develop DV practice and policy. Utilize state resources to support a cadre of domestic partner advocates in child welfare offices.