

The ACCOUNTABILITY DIALOGUES



Recommendations for the White House Gender Policy Council

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.

1. Host Roundtables and Listening Sessions to Highlight and Share Innovative Policies and Practices that Improve the Health and Well-being of Women, Children, Families, and Communities

- Bring together academics, policymakers, abolitionists, state and federal professionals, criminal legal system practitioners, philanthropists, advocates, and families with lived experience to promote innovative and promising practices and policies at the federal, state, and local levels that improve the health and well-being of women, children, families, and communities.
- Share and highlight how early investments in families and communities, and employment supports (a living wage, affordable housing, medical and behavioral healthcare, job training, unemployment insurance, paid family and safe leave, childcare, safe working conditions), correspond to better health, resilient and stable families, and a strong economy.
- Share and highlight innovative poverty reduction and family violence prevention practices and policies that states are implementing, such as New Mexico's 10 Vital Services model, Universal Basic Income projects and Guaranteed Income projects, and New York's legislation to cut poverty by 50% in 10 years.¹
- Share and highlight states' practices and policies that eliminate bias in the child welfare system, substantially narrow the definition of child abuse and neglect, implement a mandatory supporting model rather than a mandatory reporting model, and clearly state that DV, in and of itself, is not child abuse and neglect.

2. Advance Gender Equity and Equality by Recommending that the Children's Bureau Take Action

Recommend that the Children's Bureau:

- Produce an Information Memorandum on DV and child welfare;
- Produce an Information Memorandum that urges states to invest and support families;
- Integrate gender into the equity focus for child and family services reviews;
- Increase federal funds to tribal and rural children and families;
- Establish active efforts as the standard in all DV/child welfare cases;
- Assemble a task force on the role and scope of CAPTA and mandated reporting;
- Foster innovation and collaboration to create a family assistance pathway and strong communities;
- Host a convening to listen, learn, and co-design a child and family well-being system.

Note

1. Day, P.A., Day, A., McCarthy, M., Best, C., Brian-Lawson, K., & Pryce, J. (2022, Spring). Justice-Centered Child & Family Well-Being Systems to Address Neglect. *FJI Quarterly*. Spring Edition, pages 55, 64-65, <https://publications.pubknow.com/view/1055841541>. See also, <https://www.tenvitalservicesnm.org>, <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2021/S2755>, <https://basicincome.stanford.edu/research/guaranteed-income-dashboard/>, <https://economicsecurityproject.org/work/guaranteed-income/>.