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Support the Refugee and Immigrant Safety and Empowerment Program!

- Level-fund line item 4513-1130 at \$6.4 million in the FY10 Senate Budget
- Level-fund the Refugee and Immigrant Safety and Empowerment (RISE) Program (within line item 4513-1130) at \$1,319,854 and make no changes to the language of the line item that references immigrants: “...Provided further, that not less than \$300,000 shall be expended for sexual abuse and domestic violence services for immigrants and refugees...”

Governor’s Budget: \$6.4 million

Final House Budget: \$5.1 million

What are the RISE Programs?

RISE programs provide intensive linguistically and culturally specific domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking services. Currently 22 organizations are funded, which partially supports 22 bilingual/bicultural advocates throughout the Commonwealth who provide services in 15 languages. These RISE-funded programs are the **ONLY** programs across MA that have the capacity to provide domestic violence, sexual assault, and trafficking services in *Russian, Arabic, Hindi, Somali, Bahasa Indonesia, Malay, Congolese, Gujarati, and Nepali*. In addition to these organizations, RISE programs that are also funded with other state monies provide services in the following languages: *Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Khmer, Haitian-Creole, Somali, Amharic, French, and Farsi*. These services include:

- Crisis intervention; safety planning; interpretation; and victim support and advocacy with law enforcement, courts, and social services
- Outreach to isolated immigrant communities about rights and services
- Cross-training of service providers to enhance advocacy services
- Assistance with immigration and family court cases

Why is it Important to Provide these Services?

There is a much greater need than what is currently funded.

- RISE funds services in cities/towns and regions with large immigrant populations, including Chelsea, Lowell, Worcester, Holyoke, Boston, Waltham, Framingham, Brockton, Pittsfield, Malden, Lynn, Fitchburg and Springfield.
- Two geographic areas of the state with large immigrant populations, Cape Cod and Fall River/New Bedford, have **NO** RISE funded programs, forcing victims of domestic violence to either travel great distances in order to get services or remain in unsafe situations. These communities are not being served.

- Only 1 legal service organization in the state gets specific state funding to represent immigrant victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking, despite the great need across the Commonwealth. This money barely funds the work of 1 full-time attorney.

Immigrant and Refugee Victims of Violence encounter different barriers to accessing services, including:

- **More dangerous conditions.** The Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence 2006 fatality review reports that immigrants are less likely to have accessed help before being killed by their abusers. When immigrants finally do get through to police for help, they are likely to experience a higher level of danger.¹
- **More barriers to leaving their abuser.** According to a study by Catherine Klein and Leslye Orloff, physically and sexually abused Latina immigrants experienced greater barriers to getting free from abuse than the general population of abused women. These barriers include lack of money (67% of immigrant women versus 40% of abused women from the general population), lack of employment (32% versus 20%), lack of English proficiency, and a lack of a place to live if they leave (35% versus 18%).²
- **Immigrants are more likely to be abused by multiple perpetrators,** including extended family members, gang members, and organized crime networks. Therefore, safety planning must account these multiple perpetrators.
- **Immigrant women are increasingly victims of workplace harassment and sexual exploitation** as a result of human trafficking, limited bargaining power, and/or a lack of knowledge of their rights in the workplace. Violence is not limited to the home and as a result, new services and supports are needed to help these victims.

How can you help?

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For more information, please contact Toby Guevin, State Policy Director at the MIRA Coalition, at 617.350.5480 x216 or tguevin@miracoalition.org.

¹ Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, “If I Had One More Day” 2006 fatality review report
² Klein, Catherine & Orloff, Leslye; 1993.