

Organization Profile

Voces Latinas, Inc.

Organization: Voces Latinas Inc.
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Brief Description: Voces Latinas works to reduce the rate of HIV transmission and violence among immigrant Latinas by empowering, educating, and providing leadership and advocacy training to enable them to make healthier decisions for themselves and their families. Through collaborative relationships, Voces Latinas connects immigrant Latinas with culturally and linguistically sensitive services to address their immediate needs, which allows them to identify their risk for HIV/AIDS. To reduce the rate of HIV among immigrant Latina/os in Queens, Voces Latinas creates programs that recognize Latinas as the best educators in their community.

Program Description	
Setting	The Promotora training is held in the offices of Voces Latinas, located in Jackson Heights Queens, the epicenter of immigrant Latino settlement.
Target population	Voces Latinas trains Latina survivors to be Promotoras. Survivors include women who have lived violence, are living with HIV/AIDS, have lived through trauma and/or depression, among other things. They are now in a place in life where they want to reach out to other women and be a resource to them. Through the training, Promotoras recognize their strength, gain knowledge, and gain skills around recognizing symptoms of high risk. They identify with the community thereby gain the communities trust. Promotoras are the Ph.D's of the organization. Their experience and survival skills are invaluable in reaching other sub-populations at risk for violence and HIV. They are considered the frontline workers and the heart of the organization.

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Program origins	<p>Voces Latinas was born as a result of a disconnect between immigrant Latinas living with HIV and culturally appropriate supportive services. Immigrant Latinas were connected to treatment but they were not connected to supportive services, although services in Spanish did exist, they were not culturally appropriate. A group of social workers began holding forums in the community putting service providers who offered services in Spanish together in the same room with Latinas living with HIV in need of services. This grassroots approach led to educational workshops in Spanish for women living with HIV. Voces Latinas was therefore born in 2003 as a result of being one of the only culturally specific bi-lingual, bi-cultural organizations in NYC targeting immigrant Latinas/os at risk for HIV.</p>
Program goals	<p>The long-term goals of the Promotora project are to develop leaders in the community who will be the voice for the immigrant Latino community and assure that the Latino voice is being heard when policies and laws are developed that include Latinos.</p> <p>Short-term goals of the program include Promotoras becoming the frontline workers of Voces Latinas. Promotoras serve as role models and mentors to other women experiencing violence, depression, isolation, and high risk factors for HIV. Another short term goal is building trust with community members and linking community members to services and resources. The community identifies with the Promotoras thereby gaining the communities trust and following through with linking community members to services and other resources.</p>

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Program components	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leadership training program for immigrant Latinas to become HIV prevention educators and advocates• Facilitate Promotora presentations to City and State elected officials, at national, statewide and citywide summits, at festivals, fairs and cultural parades.• Establish partnerships business venues where Latino's visit in order to provide information to Latinos about HIV prevention and the need to test for HIV.• Hold HIV information sessions about HIV prevention such as condoms, posters and palm cards about stigma prevention, the need to know your HIV status, and sexuality.• Community Outreach during day and night hours targets high risk sub populations in Queens such as sex workers, bar patrons, restaurants, offering the HIV test, providing them with prevention information.• Support and art programs for women living with or at risk for HIV to pass tradition, knowledge, and exchange information while working on arts and craft projects.• Insurance Enrollment program supports individual consumers and families and small businesses and their employees seeking to obtain health insurance.• Educational workshops are held in Spanish twice a week- open to all Latinas in the community explore issues that puts immigrant Latinas at risk for HIV and violence. These workshops offer an opportunity for Latinas to meet and provide each other with support.• Offer case management services and support groups for women who are and/or experienced violence in their past. Also offer trauma informed individual counseling to women in the program.
Current evaluation practices	<p>Voces Latinas implements ongoing program evaluations of their promotora program for organizational improvement and to better understand the impact of the program on participants. Voces Latina is extending their current evaluation plan to document their cultural specific approach. Some of the highlights from this evaluation will answer questions like, "How does Voces engage, collect, and implement feedback from participants and community members about the organization programming?" and "How does Voces create an environment where Latin@ culture is positively represented and where participants are encouraged to follow their traditions?". Questions like these will help Voces provide evidence that they are indeed following the core principles of cultural specific work.</p>