

Casa de Esperanza Training: Responding to the Emerging Issues Facing Immigrant Survivors of Domestic Violence and Their Families

Scenario #1

- Numerous stories have been reported in the media and by advocates of the detrimental impact of increasing entanglement between local law enforcement officials and federal immigration enforcement efforts. Read this scenario, which is based on a true story reported in the Washington Post, and then answer the questions below.

On Christmas Eve, Maria Bolanos, a 28 year old woman from El Salvador, had a fight with her partner after he came home late. Maria called the police, seeking their protection. By the time the police arrived, her partner had left the apartment. The police filed charges against him for assault but those charges were later dropped when neither Maria nor the police officer showed up in court.

Months later, the fight forgotten, Maria received a warrant for her arrest on charges of selling telephone calling cards without a license. This was based on the observations of a police officer when he went to into her home months earlier, responding to the domestic dispute, and saw some calling cards on her table. She was charged with illegally selling a \$10 phone card to a neighbor, an allegation she denies. The charge eventually was thrown out, but not before she was fingerprinted and the prints were shared with ICE through the Secure Communities program in effect in Maryland.

Authorities determined that she was in the country illegally and ordered her detained. Her ankles and wrists were shackled and she was moved to an ICE detention facility, leaving behind her 10 month old daughter, who is a U.S. citizen. Maria told authorities she was breastfeeding her daughter but they disregarded her pleas to be released. Later, after a doctor confirmed that her breasts were engorged with milk, she was fitted with a locator ankle bracelet and sent home, pending deportation hearings. In El Salvador, Maria said her family has faced death threats from gangs and her brother was a killed a year ago.

Questions:

- 1- What issues and concerns does this story raise?
- 2- If this happened in your local community, what could be done to help Maria?
- 3- What can be done to try to prevent this from happening in your local community?

To read the full article see:

Call for help leads to possible deportation for Hyattsville mother

By Shankar Vedantam, Washington Post Staff Writer, Monday, November 1, 2010

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/11/01/AR2010110103073.html>