



Praxis International News

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New Program Staff

We welcome Genesis Lopez and Jolene Engelking to our Advocacy Learning Center team, and Olga Trujillo to our Institutional Analysis, and Rural Technical Assistance teams.



Genesis Lopez started with us in September 2014 as a Program Associate and provides administrative and programmatic support to our 18-month learning course for advocacy programs around the country. She is a recent sociology graduate who did public relations for the HALO (Hispanic and Latino Organization) campus program, and served as mentor with the McVay Youth Partnership after-school program to support students to flourish academically and artistically.

Jolene Engelking joined Praxis in February as a Program and Training Specialist, and is busy developing new training materials for ALC teams to use in training local program staff and board on key concepts from the in-person course events. Jolene has 10 years of experience as a sexual assault advocate, including work at a rural sexual assault advocacy program, involvement on the area multi-disciplinary sexual assault team, and was program coordinator of the Anishinabe Equay program, where she



developed culturally specific services for Native American women.



Olga Trujillo joined Praxis on May 1 as a Senior Program and Training Specialist, after consulting with us since 2005. She has 25 years' experience as an attorney and consultant/trainer to numerous local, state and national organizations on domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse and immigration. Olga will be developing new sexual assault materials to supplement the *Praxis Safety and Accountability Audit Toolkit*, providing TA and training to communities implementing audits, and supporting rural communities to implement coordinated community responses. Previously Olga served as attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice and directed programs at Casa de Esperanza in St. Paul.

Praxis Institutional Analysis on Violence Against Women

Analyzing institutional responses to violence against women

Testing of Child Protective Services Assessment Toolkit

"The safety of abused children often is linked to the safety of the adult victim. By helping battered women secure protection, the well-being of the children also is enhanced. If the family's circumstances are clear and it is appropriate, every effort should be made to keep the children in the care of the non-offending parent. Supportive, non-coercive, and empowering interventions that promote the safety of victims and their children should be incorporated in child protection efforts." H. Lien Bragg, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services



Wright County, Minnesota, was selected by the Office on Violence Against Women to test a new Child Protective Services Assessment Toolkit, developed by Praxis in our Institutional Analysis TA Program. The toolkit is designed to assist communities in identifying how case processing in child protection cases involving domestic violence can be improved to produce better outcomes for families where domestic violence and child maltreatment co-occur.

Working with staff of the Rivers of Hope advocacy program and Wright County Child Protection, Praxis TA partners and staff (Rose Thelen, Maren Woods, Jane Sadusky) engaged in a 6-month process to test a draft tool and make recommendations to

improve a final version. In the process, the Wright County team will also identify local changes to improve responses to battered parents and their children in the county.

The toolkit includes instructions for assembling a team and guides the team through a process to examine how workers are organized by federal, state and local mandates, as well as by policies, protocols, procedures, assessments, and forms to institutionally think and act on cases involving the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child maltreatment. The process assists the team to identify gaps and develop recommendations to strengthen their intervention capacity to protect children and the non-offending parent from long-term harm.

The toolkit organizes the process in four parts:

1. Laying the Groundwork for a Practice Assessment

A series of guided discussions between CPS and community-based advocates designed to begin conversations, establish relationships, and initiate a mutual exploration of issues related to the intersection of child welfare and domestic violence.

2. Expanding Understanding of Lived Experience

Includes links to and tips for conducting individual and group interviews with victims of battering, plus filmed interviews and accompanying discussion guide to use with a practice assessment team. Helps ground the assessment in the firsthand accounts of mothers who have experienced battering and the ways in which it affects their children.

3. Examining Policy and Case Processing

Includes tools for mapping the steps in child welfare intervention in domestic violence-related cases from the vantage point of CPS workers' knowledge and experiences, plus worksheets and templates for analyzing CPS policies, forms, and case files alongside recommended practices.

4. Planning for Change

Provides an implementation planning grid that captures key findings from the practice assessment and recommendations for change, with emphasis on areas of change that are realistic for a child welfare agency to accomplish.

Recently Completed Safety and Accountability Audits

- San Mateo, California: How Does Documentation of the Initial Police Response to a Domestic Violence Call Aid Subsequent Interveners in Domestic Violence Cases? [Read the full report.](#)
- Missoula, Montana: How Does Our Community's Response to Sexual Assault Engage and Support Victims and Enhance Victim Safety and Offender Accountability? [Read the full report.](#)

Consider using a [Safety & Accountability Audit](#) or [Best Practice Assessment](#) to reinvigorate or start your coordinated community response. We can help you think through how to do this. Call 651-699-8000 ext. 10 or [email us](#).

Rural Technical Assistance on Violence Against Women

Strengthening advocacy and coordinated rural interagency responses to violence against women

"The onsite training provided by Praxis to our rural Coordinated Community Response Teams, their local coordinators and the community-based advocacy programs has been invaluable - the webinars, personal contact, CCR institutes, and site visits have been vital to the development of our coalition's rural CCR project." Jacque Morse, Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence



Rose Thelen, Praxis TA Partner, Gender Violence Institute, conducting a Key Players Implementation Roundtable with the Pitkin County (Colorado) Domestic Violence Response Team on April 27, 2015.

In 2014, four rural sites (Alamosa, Aspen, Delta and Glenwood Springs) were selected by the Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) to strengthen their coordinated community response (CCR) to domestic violence, through a project funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). Through this project, CCADV provides funding, training and support to local advocacy programs to hire CCR coordinators who work with their inter-agency "teams" to implement practices and policies to enhance safety for victims and their children, hold offenders accountable, and create a deterrence to domestic violence in their communities.

To support these efforts, Praxis is providing three specialized onsite training and TA opportunities through the Praxis Rural TA project. This included an April onsite training for advocates and CCR coordinators and two "Key Players Implementation Roundtables" facilitated by Rose Thelen, Praxis TA Partner and CCR specialist. It will also include a June 16 workshop by Praxis trainers Marcus Bruning, (ret) Chief Deputy, St. Louis County, MN Sheriff's Office; Matt Wiese, Marquette County, MI Prosecuting Attorney; and Rose Thelen. A third onsite visit will occur in the fall.

The recent Advocate/Coordinator training and TA session focused on:

- Advocacy Initiated Response to victims following law enforcement response
- Data collection methods to document gaps in current responses and evaluate outcomes in practice changes
- Implementing evidence-based, written (sustainable) policy-driven practice changes
- Methods to include women who are battered in the work of identifying problems, developing solutions, and evaluating outcomes

The Key Players Roundtable focused on:

- Current strengths and weaknesses in existing responses
- Local and national models in CCR, advocacy, law enforcement, and prosecution case-processing that are shifting how communities intervene in domestic violence
- Adaptation and implementation of models to local conditions
- Action steps for changing systems

[Learn about TA available to rural grantees](#), call 218-525-0487, x251 or [email us](#).

Blueprint for Safety

A comprehensive interagency guide to battering

Blueprint for Safety Adaptation Demonstration Initiative

- New Orleans, LA
- Shelby County/Memphis, TN
- Duluth, MN

"The Blueprint brings fully-formed policies to the agencies that are clear and specific; it's an efficient way to reach agreement on policy that would take years to figure out if we had to do it on our own"; "Sites don't have to start from scratch - attention to victim safety and disparity is already built in"; and "Agencies and practitioners are now working together to analyze their community's response to violence against women". Demo Site Coordinators

The three communities in this Office on Violence Against Women demonstration initiative adopted Blueprint for Safety collective policies in the past six months. The next phase of Blueprint implementation includes activities to ensure that the Blueprint functions as a "living,"



sustainable response to battering:

1. Transitioning the adaptation committee to an implementation committee to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Blueprint.
2. Initiating new documentation and administrative procedures in agencies (e.g. a bail evaluation form that directs prosecutors to collect specific risk information)
3. Conducting agency-specific and interagency training
4. Establishing a process for internal agency monitoring by supervisors and inter-agency monitoring by small teams of practitioners
5. Data collection and assessment

St. Paul Blueprint for Safety

"This has fundamentally changed the way we do business in the City of St. Paul and how we keep our victims of domestic violence safe." Amy Brown Jensen, St. Paul Police Department

Practitioners in St. Paul continue to strengthen their *Blueprint for Safety* and support technical assistance and training to demo sites and other communities interested in adopting a Blueprint. In recent national webinars *Becoming A Blueprint Community: The St. Paul Experience*, St. Paul practitioners helped other communities learn about what has changed in St. Paul and how the Blueprint has strengthened their coordinated community response.

"We have experienced higher conviction rates with the Blueprint, but we also do much more now to listen to victims to keep them safe. We are more engaged with our partners than ever before, and the quality of our interventions has increased significantly. I can't imagine going back to pre-Blueprint days when we didn't have the kind of information that we have for our cases. It has made such a significant difference." Tara Patet, St. Paul City Attorney's Office

Read new materials on [Becoming a Blueprint Community](#).

"Prior to the Blueprint we did not have an interagency review process to improve responses to domestic violence cases. We now have a structured way of monitoring whether we are doing what we said we were going to do to protect people and hold offenders accountable." Bree Adams Bill, St. Paul Blueprint Coordinator, St. Paul & Ramsey County Domestic Abuse Intervention Project

In the past 18 months the St. Paul Blueprint Steering Committee has engaged in the following monitoring activities:

- Interagency teams reviewed

- 35, 911 calls/CAD reports focusing on history of violence, victim engagement and weapons documentation
- 25 prosecution files focusing on Gone on Arrivals, battered women defendants, domestic abuse no contact order violations, plea agreements, dismissals
- 7 in-court violation arrests
- 12 bail evaluations focusing on DV history, context, victim engagement
- 12 pre-sentence investigations focusing on history of DV, attention to risk and danger, victim engagement
- Multiple active vs. cleared warrants
- Police department staff reviewed
 - "advised" patrol reports
 - police reports for risk question compliance

Blueprint Updates

Praxis and the [National Immigrant Women's Legal Advocacy Project](#) are enhancing the adaptable Blueprint template to include provisions for the protection of immigrant women who are battered, who reach out to law enforcement for help or who get drawn into the criminal legal system. An updated adaptable Blueprint will be released in the fall.

The Blueprint for Safety is the first comprehensive interagency guide for criminal justice practitioners who process domestic violence cases.

It is an innovative approach in its emphasis on self-examination and problem-solving, [foundational principles](#), and the central role for community-based advocacy in its leadership and partnerships.

The Blueprint is grounded in over three decades of community practice, research, and reform related to the criminal legal system's intervention in domestic violence.

[Download the free Blueprint for Safety](#) or [email](#) us for information.

Advocacy Learning Center

Re-thinking our advocacy movement

"The Advocacy Learning Center has been the incredible fire we needed to spark a lot of changes within our organization."

Program teams in the Advocacy Learning Center engage in an 18-month course to re-think their approach to individual, institutional and community advocacy. Participants continue to positively evaluate their experience. Programs are



inspired, and convinced that assessment of and change to their advocacy practices is warranted and desirable. And advocacy program teams are taking action to incorporate core skills of advocacy and principles of advocacy. [Watch and listen to their own words.](#)

"Prior to the ALC I might have pathologized her behavior and choices. [Now] I focus on her sovereignty and her autonomy."

"With our intake revisions we think it reinforces that we want to be helpers, not case managers, not interviewers. By eliminating the paper wall, we have changed the space between us and women. Instead of us filling it with paperwork, and questions, it is free to be filled with what the woman wants to fill it with - her questions, her feelings, her needs, her ideas."

"We created a Change Team that meets bi-weekly to discuss issues that directly affect the marginalization and oppression of women."

"We were given a clear road map and some solid skills for analyzing texts, tools for bolstering constructive engagement, and the opportunity to learn from each other."

Eleven classes (192 advocacy programs and 506 advocates) have now completed or started the ALC course since the inaugural class in September 2009. A new class (15 programs and 45 advocates) joins approximately every six months with 3-4 classes in the course simultaneously. Two new classes are beginning the course in June and August 2015. Application for classes beginning in 2016 will open after the first of the year.

Contact advocacy@praxisinternational.org or 651-699-8000 ext. 16. for more information.

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Praxis works with local, tribal, state, and national reform initiatives to bridge the gap between what people need and what institutions provide. Since 1996, we've supported advocacy organizations, intervention agencies, and inter-agency collaborations to create a clear and cooperative agenda for social change to end violence against women and other social injustices.

***Praxis...integrating
theory and practice***

