APNA GHAR BOILERPLATE LANGUAGE

*Revised 7.31.17*

***Mission***

Apna Ghar provides holistic services and conducts outreach and advocacy across immigrant communities to end gender violence.

***Programs and Services***

Our core services to support immigrant and refugee survivors of gender violence include:

• 24-Hour Crisis Line: Our crisis line addresses the immediate safety needs of callers, who can connect to our services, get referrals to other programs, and get information about options available to them.

• Safe Housing: Our safe home/ emergency shelter provides survivors who are fleeing violence and trauma a home-like atmosphere where they can begin their journeys of healing and empowerment and start rebuilding and reclaiming their lives. Care is taken to maintain a culturally sensitive, secure and healing environment.

• Transitional Housing: We recently received funding to restart our transitional housing program to provide transitional housing in the city of Chicago and in the northwest suburbs. Our program includes leasing up to 8 apartments for survivors of gender violence and their families, providing rent and utilities for each apartment for the duration of the lease. Our staff work with participants throughout the time that they are in our transitional housing program with the goal of helping them move forward and gain stability and self-sufficiency.

• Case Management: Our staff work with program participants to develop action plans for safety, stability, and self-sufficiency. Staff identify and connect participants to community resources for health care, education, employment, housing, and other critical needs to ensure long-term stability.

• Counseling: Our counselors provide individual and group services, including psycho-social education, narrative therapy, support groups, creative art therapy, and conflict management to help adult and child survivors process and heal from the trauma of abuse.

• Legal Advocacy: Our legal advocates guide survivors through the legal system, help them understand their options and help them access available remedies, including obtaining civil orders of protection, pressing criminal charges, obtaining crime victims’ compensation, filing for divorce, custody, and support, as well as immigration benefits through protective statues such as the Violence Against Women Act. Advocates help clients obtain legal representation through an in-house family law legal clinic and partnerships with area legal aid agencies and volunteer attorneys.

• Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange: Our supervised visitation and safe program provides a safe place where children can interact with their visiting parents in the presence of a trained facilitator. The program also offers a safe location for parents to pick up and drop off their children when the courts determine that unsupervised visits are a safe option.

• Outreach and Education raises community awareness about gender violence and provides information and training on available resources to combat this violence. We also provide the state-required 40-hour training for new volunteers and staff as well as training and technical assistance to partner organizations.

• Policy Advocacy allows Apna Ghar to improve overall conditions for the survivors we serve. We work with legislators, advocacy and community groups, community leaders, and the general public to raise awareness, make systemic and policy changes to improve current processes, responses, and remedies and increase options available to survivors.

***Organization History***

Apna Ghar was founded as an emergency hotline in 1985 by five Asian American women who recognized that socio-cultural, linguistic and legal barriers prevented immigrant survivors from seeking help. Apna Ghar now provides comprehensive culturally-competent services, advocacy, and outreach.

Incorporated in December of 1989, Apna Ghar became one of the first agencies in the U.S. to comprehensively address the cultural, linguistic and legal barriers that immigrant and refugee survivors face, particularly those from underserved communities. Building on the experience of providing domestic violence services for more than 27 years, today our services include a 24-hour crisis line, emergency shelter, transitional housing, case management, individual and group counseling, legal advocacy including a volunteer attorney led family law legal clinic, and supervised visitation and safe exchange services that include a court liaison housed in the domestic violence court in Chicago. In addition, we conduct outreach, and provide community education and training. We also engage in policy level and systems change advocacy to help improve conditions for the survivors we serve, with a vision to end the violence and trauma they face. Our staff members also provide training and technical assistance, nationally and internationally to organizations working on issues of gender based violence.

***Organization Goals and Objectives***

*1. To provide crisis response to address the immediate safety needs of victims of gender violence*

*2. To enhance safety and promote stability and self-sufficiency for survivors of gender violence*

*3. To engage and educate the community to create a safer environment for victims and survivors of gender violence, specifically in immigrant populations.*

*To achieve these goals, in our proposal, we had defined the following objectives:*

*1. At least 80% of clients receiving Apna Ghar’s services will report an increase in immediate or short term safety (0-3 months)*

*2. At least 80% of clients receiving services will demonstrate an increased understanding of the cycle of violence, and increased knowledge of community resources that will help achieve the goals set forth in their action plan for safety, stability, and self-sufficiency. (3-6 months)*

*3. At least 80% of clients receiving services will demonstrate progress on achieving the goals set forth in their action plans for safety, stability and self-sufficiency (generally, this will mean that clients achieve one or more of the following: a decrease in symptoms related to traumatic experience; access to legal representation; progress/resolution on legal cases; access to long-term, stable housing; access to education and/or vocational training; employment). (12-24 months)*

***Organizational Changes and Challenges***

The biggest changes in staff at Apna Ghar includes hiring a case manager for our re-established transitional housing program. A few board members have left after being on the board for many years, but have joined the Alumni Board and are still involved with the organization and we welcomed 5 new members the board during this grant period. In January, 2017 our board officers changed as well with a new president, vice president, treasurer, secretary and the past president as member-at-large to help with the transition.

Apna Ghar has completed the construction of a purpose built, efficient and functional safe home/ shelter to provide emergency housing to survivors of gender violence. This safe home doubles the agency’s capacity to provide survivors of abuse, violence and trauma a home-like environment where they can gain safety, stability and self-sufficiency. The new safe home is designed to promote healing, with private spaces for physical health care, counseling, advocacy, and case management as well as communal space for therapeutic and group activities. This new facility is also ADA compliant. We broke ground in March of this year on land that the agency owned, and completed construction in January of 2017. We will be able to house approximately 30 women and children at a time and we expect to serve 120 - 150 adult and child survivors each year in the new safe home.

In March 2017, we were awarded a grant to provide transitional housing in the city of Chicago and in north and northwest suburbs. We now have 8 apartments for survivors of gender violence and their families. This program will allow them to gain stability and self- sufficiency through long term housing and comprehensive supportive services.

Apna Ghar also received funding to expand services in the northwest suburbs, allowing us to serve a wider range of families in need of supervised visitation services, and wraparound services including legal advocacy, family counseling and case management. We have monitored demographic shifts to the suburbs particularly of the communities we typically service, and we anticipate serving a higher number annually in the suburbs. In addition, there are currently no free sites for supervised visitation and safe exchange services in the area and we hope to fill an important need. We are also engaged in a research project, with Inspire Action for Social Change, to develop a model for enhanced supervised visitation and safe exchange services which will increase safety for the adult and child survivors we serve. We are working with Inspire Action to finalize the model and hope to begin implementation in the fall of 2017. Additionally, we partnered with Turning Point in Skokie and began renting an office space at their location in July of 2017 to provide services to suburban survivors.

Challenges included the state budget impasse that led to nonpayment of our FY 2017 contract. However, the FY 2018 budget that passed includes payment in arrears.