

September 20, 2006

Deborah Terwilger, Program Development Director
California Community Endowment Fund
200 Sea Bright Avenue, Suite 1A
Encino, CA 90025

Dear Ms. Terwilger:

Thank you for the opportunity to present this Promoting Peaceful Homelife letter-proposal for consideration under your crime and violence prevention/protection program area. Questions about the project or requests for additional information may be addressed to Dr. Marcos Braun, Executive Director, American Better Counseling (ABC), or to Joshue Rashid, Director of Development, ABC.

Applicant Organization

American Better Counseling (ABC) is a designated 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization with a budget of \$2,300,000. ABC has provided counseling to the residents of metropolitan Los Angeles County since 1975. Our goal is to empower our clients to become self-sufficient and productive in society.

ABC administers a variety of multi-faceted and bilingual programs:

- Challenge, a counseling clinic providing therapy to seriously and chronically mentally ill adults, families and children; counseling; and parenting classes. Challenge served 662 people in 2005-2006.
- Bethel Home for Young Women, a 12-bed, long-term residential facility for abused adolescent girls. In 2005-2006, we served 48 girls.
- Horizon House, a 12-bed, short-term residential facility for individuals diagnosed with mental illness and/or substance abuse who are reentering society after a long-term stay in an institution. Horizon House served 136 persons in 2005-2006.
- Beyond Gangs project, recently funded by the Office of Criminal and Justice Planning, disseminates counseling, information, services and books in a multi-purpose van serving Whittier-Lincoln Heights area youths who are at risk of joining a gang. Since January, 2005, we served 125 individuals.
- Whole Families, a state-funded program of counseling for families and abused children in collaboration with the Holy Heart Community Congregation in Watts. As of October 1, 2005, 84 families benefited.

The ABC Board of Directors and staff members developed the following goal statement regarding domestic violence programs:

American Basic Counseling seeks to approach the crisis of domestic violence through prevention – preventing the cycle of violence that creates and perpetuates the powerlessness of the person being battered. Our goal is to provide the tools with which that person can recognize the signs of a destructive relationship and take definitive action. The tools necessary to empower them to take charge of their lives are acquired through increased self-esteem and self-worth, enabling them to become self-sufficient, better parents, and ultimately increase the changes of a healthier relationship.

Summary of Proposed Project

Background: During 2005-2006, ABC administered the Promoting Peaceful Homelife project under a contract with Los Angeles County. The project provided counseling for children and adults in Central and South Central Los Angeles County. The many victims of domestic violence who turned to the project for help surprised and concerned the staff.

Upon conclusion of the project in July, 2006, Los Angeles County permitted ABC to use unspent funds to continue working with domestic violence victims. The ABC Board of Directors supplemented the budget to allow employment of two part-time staff members. On a very limited scale, the Promoting Peaceful Homelife project was piloted. Funding will be reduced beyond December 31, 2006, and unless another source of support is found, ABC will have no choice but to discontinue this much needed service.

The Promoting Peaceful Homelife project supports women who are still in a relationship with an abusive intimate partner (*Stage 1*), and enables women who have left such a relationship (*Stage 2*) to independently maintain themselves and their children in a safe environment. The project components are support/therapy workshops for *Stage 1* and *Stage 2* victims, an emergency access number, and workshops on domestic violence for the staffs and clients of agencies and organizations in the target area.

Geographic area: The ABC Promoting Peaceful Homelife project will serve Central and South Central Los Angeles County. ABC is well established in this area, having provided services to its residents for 20 years.

Participants: Experience working with domestic violence victims in this geographic area indicates that most of the participants in support/therapy groups will be African American or Latin American. The number that each component will serve follows:

- Weekly Stage 1 support/therapy groups — 256 victims of intimate partner abuse
- Weekly Stage 2 support/therapy groups — 256 victims of intimate partner abuse
- Monthly conflict resolution workshops — 240
- Workshops on domestic violence for clients of organizations — 600
- Workshops for staffs of Central Los Angeles organizations — 600

Stage 1 support/therapy groups: Women still living with an abusive partner will attend weekly support/therapy sessions in eight groups of ten persons. Regular attendance may be difficult for women in abusive situations. Many will be afraid to let their partners know that they have taken this step. Some will drop out and be replaced by other applicants. Others will drop out and return, perhaps several times.

Counseling will focus on helping them to accept how dangerous their situation is, protecting their children, and acquiring the skills and knowledge they need to escape from their life-threatening environments if they choose to do so. Statistically, the batterer is most likely to kill or seriously injure his victim after she leaves him. The women must understand the risks and know how to protect themselves and how to help their children through this confusing and threatening period. Since batterers usually isolate their partners out of jealousy and possessiveness, linkage to a support group is crucial. Encouraged by the group, individuals will gradually reclaim their own strength and courage and sense of worthiness.

Stage 1 support/therapy groups: Weekly support/therapy group sessions (eight groups of ten women each) will be offered to women who have left their abusers and are struggling to establish independence for themselves and their children. Since most battered women have no job training or experience, the work place is a frightening prospect. With the security of the group, participants will develop the skills they need to approach the work place confidently: how to find the right job, how to present themselves to a prospective employer, how to communicate on the job, how to combine working with raising a family, how to find affordable childcare. As their confidence builds, their expectations will become focused and realistic. The impossible will become the probable. The group becomes an important network in this transformation. As they give each other support and courage, self-esteem grows. Women who were wounded victims and thought they deserved their pain emerge as competent, confident achievers.

Emergency line: A 24-hour confidential access number will be available to support/therapy group members. During business hours, a staff member will be available to take calls. On weekends and after business hours, calls will automatically be forwarded to a staff member. Emergency line duty will be rotated among staff members.

Conflict resolution workshops: Many people do not know how to resolve a conflict without resorting to force. Those lacking negotiation skills become frustrated by tensions in their relationships and resort to abuse and brutality. Movies, television shows, and the news media reinforce the aggression response by emphasizing violent confrontation over peaceful resolution. Three-hour workshops will be offered monthly for men, women and couples who wish to learn the skills of conflict resolution. In the hands-on, experiential workshops, participants in pairs or small groups will practice addressing interpersonal issues by openly exploring their own feelings and listening to another point of view with the intent of understanding. The workshop facilitators will be a licensed Marriage, Family and Child Counselor (either the program director or counselor) and an attorney specializing in mediation (an ABC Board Member who has volunteered his time). The co-facilitators will model non-violent problem-resolution skills.

Domestic violence workshops: Organizations serving Central and South Central Los Angeles County residents will be offered free workshops for their clients. The workshops will define domestic violence, clarify its consequences, and identify resources for victims. The dual purposes are dissemination of information about domestic violence, and outreach to potential project participants. Many victims are confused and unaware of being a victim, because of their love for and dependence on the batterer. Experience indicates that many of the support/therapy group participants will be individuals who reached out for help after attending one of these workshops.

Staff workshops: Project staff will offer free workshops on how to identify and respond to battered women to the staffs of Central and South Central Los Angeles County organizations including schools, churches, service agencies and others. Participants will be informed of referral agencies and other resources for helping victims of domestic violence.

Staff: The project will employ a full-time program director, a part-time licensed Marriage, Family And Child Counselor, and three part-time counseling interns. Bilingual applicants will be encouraged to apply.

Program Director, Ms. Libby Finley, MA, MFCC, 100%

Qualifications:

- BS in Business Administration, and an MA in Clinical Psychology,
- Licensed Marriage, Family and Child Counselor.
- Staff Psychotherapist, Airport Marina Counseling Service
- Personnel Director, Career Planning Center, Los Angeles
- Staff Psychotherapist, Career Planning Center, Los Angeles
- Psychotherapist in private practice
- Supervisor of Interns, University of Judaism
- Psychotherapist/Lecturer for ABC Project Rebound
- Program Director, ABC Adult Self-Sufficiency Project
- Program Director, ABC pilot Promoting Peaceful Homelife project

Responsibilities:

Under the direction of the ABC Executive Director, assumes full administrative responsibility for all aspects of the project

MFCC Counselor, To Be Selected, MFCC, 75%

Qualifications:

- Licensed Marriage, Family and Child Counselor
- Experience counseling victims of domestic violence
- Experience with multiethnic/racial communities

Responsibilities:

Under the direction of the Program Director, facilitates therapy/support groups and workshops, and assumes other responsibilities as directed

Counselor Interns: (3), To Be Selected, 33.3% (one Full-Time Equivalent position)

Qualifications:

- Has met all requirements for supervised field work
- Experience with multiethnic/racial communities

Responsibilities:

Under the supervision of the Program Director or Counselor, assists in all aspects of the project

Organization Chart: (See attachment)

Facilities: Office space and meeting rooms are available at the ABC administrative building in Central Los Angeles County. Workshops will be held at the sponsoring organizations' facilities. Support/therapy groups may meet at the ABC building or at convenient locations in the community, such as shelters and churches. Safety of participants will be a concern in locating Stage 1 support/therapy group sessions.

The Problem

National tragedy: In the United States, approximately four million women are physically abused by their intimate partners every year. Six thousand of these women die from their injuries. In 70% of families where the wife is abused, the children are also physically abused. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, 42% of murdered women are killed by their intimate partners. Battering is the single major cause of injury to women, exceeding rapes, muggings, and even auto accidents.

State public health crises: In California 251,233 domestic violence calls for assistance were reported in 2003. 73% of these involved a weapon. The actual number is much higher. Typically, a woman is abused 35 times before she calls for help.

County shame: Almost half of the domestic violence homicides in California take place in Los Angeles County. Despite the formation of domestic violence commissions and conferences, agencies offering psychological services are confronted with evidence of tremendous family violence in Central and South Central Los Angeles County that is not being addressed.

Available services: The needs of domestic violence victims overwhelm the sixteen agencies providing psychological services in Central Los Angeles.

Available services include only

- one domestic violence shelter exists.
- four of the nine agencies focus on intimate partner abuse.
- five have adequate Spanish-speaking capabilities.
- eight have a waiting list of less than two weeks
- nine offer group counseling
- eleven have a fee of less than \$25 per session.

Anticipated Impact on the Population To Be Served

- Stage 1 victims of domestic violence who participate in a support/therapy group for at least 20 sessions will, if they choose, succeed in leaving their battering intimate partners without injury to themselves or their children.
- Stage 2 victims who have left a battering intimate partner and who participate in a support/therapy group for at least 20 sessions will find a means of supporting themselves and their children other than welfare or will be in a job preparation program.

Relevance of the Issue to Funding Priorities

The physical, emotional, and monetary cost of domestic violence is staggering. Even when the women survive attacks by their intimate partners, their children are damaged. Violence begets violence. Children who grow up in violent families learn to use violence to solve their problems. Studies repeatedly have shown that exposure to domestic violence in childhood strongly relates to juvenile delinquency and adult criminality. A least 85% of men in prison grew up in violent homes. The Los Angeles Commission on Assaults on Women commented that “the evidence seems to suggest that the home is the ‘nursery school of violence,’ not the streets.” Any effort to reduce violence on our streets and in our cities must begin with an effort to reduce intimate partner abuse.

Estimate Timeline for Project Completion

Components and Tasks	Months											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Support/Therapy Groups												
Recruit group participants												
Conduct support/therapy groups												
Evaluate results												
Workshops												
Publicize availability												
Conduct workshops												
Follow-up surveys												
Emergency Access Line												
Set up system and schedule												
Operate emergency line												

Evaluation

Evaluation focuses on two aspects: program evaluation and process evaluation.

- Program evaluation will assess whether participants successfully remove themselves and their children from the violent environment, and whether they are able to become financially and emotionally independent.
- Process evaluation will examine how each component contributes to achievement of the program objectives.

Program evaluation

Objective 1. Stage 1 victims (those living in a domestic violence environment) who participate in at least 20 support/therapy group sessions will, if they choose, succeed in leaving their battering intimate partners without injury to themselves or their children.	
Subjects	First 100 Stage 1 support/therapy group participants to complete 20 sessions
Instrumentation	Follow-up interview schedule
Assessment Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 month following exit from the support/therapy group • 3 months following exit • 6 months following exit
Data Analysis	Analyze responses from sub-groups based on participant characteristics
Criteria for success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitioning out of the violent relationship without physical harm to victim or children • Remaining independent and unharmed for six months • 75% of those that do not attend 20 sessions will be making progress based on observations and questionnaires
Persons Responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interns conduct telephone or in-person interviews • Program Director analyzes data and reports

Objective 2. Stage 2 victims (those who have left a battering intimate partner) who participate in at least 20 support/therapy group sessions will find a means of supporting themselves and their children other than welfare or will be in a job preparation program.	
Subjects	First 100 Stage 2 support/therapy group participants who have attended at least 20 sessions
Instrumentation	Follow-up interview schedule
Assessment Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 months following exit from the support/therapy group • 6 months following exit from the support/therapy group
Data Analysis	Analyze responses of sub-groups based on participant characteristics
Criteria for success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing paid employment full or part-time • Regular attendance in a job training or educational program
Persons Responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interns conduct telephone or in-person interviews • Program Director analyzes data and reports

Process evaluation

Twenty-Four Hour Emergency Access Number	
Subjects	All support/therapy group members who call on the emergency line
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records of date of each call and name of caller • Records of enrollment in support/therapy groups
Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of emergency line callers achieving objective 1 or 2 • Number of emergency line callers who complete 50 support/therapy group sessions
Criteria for success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of 20 support/therapy sessions • Achievement of objective 1 or 2
Persons Responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members responding to the emergency • Data analyzed and reported by the Program Director

Conflict Resolution Workshops	
Subjects	40 workshop participants
Documentation	Responses to a postcard questionnaire or telephone interview 3 months after the workshop
Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percent reporting use of skills and reduced aggression Sort responses by gender and age group (teens, young adult, middle aged, and older)
Criteria for success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70% used skills learned in the workshop 50% report less aggression in personal relationships
Persons Responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intern collects responses and processes Program director reports

Workshops for Clients of Community Organizations	
Subjects	600 participants in workshops conducted for clients of organizations serving Central and South Central Los Angeles County
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop sign-in sheets Enrollment in support/therapy groups
Data Analysis	Percent of workshop participants who enroll in support/therapy groups
Criterion for success	5% of workshop participants will enroll in support/therapy groups
Persons Responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected by workshop facilitators Data analyzed and reported by Program director

Workshops for Staffs of Community Organizations	
Subjects	Contact person in each group for which a workshop was conducted
Documentation	Responses to postcard follow-up or phone interview during 11 th month
Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The kinds of organizations which make the most referrals Number of organizations making referrals to the Promoting Peaceful Homelife project
Criterion for success	Each organization will have made one or more referrals
Persons Responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interns conduct the survey Program director analyzes data and reports

Amount of Funding Requested and Total Cost

The total funding requested for a 12-month period for ABC Promoting Peaceful Homelife project is **\$158,590**. At this time, no additional funding is available for the project.

Future Funding and Development Plans

We know of no programs for victims of domestic violence that are self-supporting. The abused victims usually are unemployed and have low income. They cannot afford the counseling fees that could support a program. Therefore, ABC will need continually to seek outside funding through private donors and foundations to meet this tremendous need. Once the program has proved its effectiveness, we hope that support can be generated from concerned organizations and government programs.

Sincerely yours,

Marcos Braun, Ph.D., Executive Director