

11/10/2022

To whom it may concern,

I had the pleasure of hiring and working with Dr. Elizabeth Silva to develop the City of Albuquerque's Violence Intervention Program (VIP) community engagement component. I hired Dr. Silva because of her commitment to racial equity and her ongoing work in our community through grassroots efforts to reduce gaps that underserved populations in the Albuquerque community experience. All of Dr. Silva's efforts at VIP were informed by evidence-based practice and research-based theory. Albuquerque is a majority Hispanic population, and the Hispanic history of New Mexico, its colonization and Mexican immigration is complex. Dr. Silva has a clear understanding through her own lived experience and through extensive research, of the challenges the multifaceted Hispanic community faces daily in Albuquerque.

Dr. Silva brought a rare skill set to the work of the VIP gun violence reduction program. She was able to grasp and handle the administrative details of grant management, human resource management, supervision and contract management as well as develop a system/community trust that led to unprecedented partnerships around community violence in the most impacted Albuquerque neighborhoods. Dr. Silva was featured in multiple media events representing the city and the VIP program, due to her capacity to articulate the challenges communities face and she spearheaded innovative work in the high schools through a community school framework to reduce the possibility of gun violence. Though violent crime was at its all-time highest level for Albuquerque the VIP became a shining star in the fight to serve populations most impacted and was very well received by the community due, in large part, to her efforts.

Dr. Silva had to wear many hats in her job. Her duties included planning and supporting community events around gun violence reduction, developing an innovative non-traditional peer workforce for the City of Albuquerque, and applying for grant funding, both private and federal (over 2 million dollars) to support the expansion of the VIP program.

Dr. Silva proved time and time again that she could walk through meetings and candid conversations with a variety of stakeholders that are often at odds with each other including the police department, community advocates and with many other system and community stakeholders. All conversations around violent crime are difficult and Dr. Silva was able to successfully navigate these conversations, turning words into collaborative action.

I have moved on to another position at the State of New Mexico and would be glad to speak with you about any other information you may need regarding my work with Dr. Silva.

Sincerely,


Gerri Bachicha

NM Children Youth and Families Department
Behavioral Health Services Project Director
505-526-3975
Gerri.bachicha@cyfd.nm.gov