September 20, 2017, BRONX, NY—Congressman JosÃ© E. Serrano and Legal Services NYC are pleased to announce that Project Not Alone, a collaborative effort between Bronx Legal Services and Sauti Yetu Center for African Women & Families, has been awarded a competitive grant for continued funding to provide holistic legal and social services for survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking in the Bronx. The funding, $600,000 over three years, was awarded by the Office on Violence Against Womenâ€™s Legal Assistance for Victims (LAV) Grant Program.

The Bronx experiences staggeringly high rates of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Since October 2014, LAV funding for Project Not Alone has provided hundreds of survivors with the legal representation and case management support they need to address and alleviate the many problems associated with sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Project Not Alone represents survivors in family, matrimonial, and immigration matters, and provides case management in the form of safety planning, crisis intervention, mental health services, housing and public benefits application assistance, and client accompaniment.

Project Not Alone leverages Bronx Legal Servicesâ€™ and Sauti Yetuâ€™s combined expertise and relationships with community advocates, hospitals, schools, organizations, and religious institutions to reach survivors through mutual referral mechanisms, and conduct outreach to publicize services available through the Project. Additionally, Project Not Alone conducts quarterly Know Your Rights trainings in communities throughout the Bronx that target the underserved and at-risk populations.

With this continued funding, Project Not Alone will continue to represent survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking, primarily in Spanish-speaking and African communities of the Bronx, in their requests for orders of protection, custody, child/ spousal support, divorce, asylum, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, U and T nonimmigrant status, VAWA self-petitions, and Battered Spouse Waivers; and to connect them to case managers who can help them with housing, public benefits, counseling, and safety planning. Project Not Alone clients will have access to all other legal and social services at Bronx Legal Services and Sauti Yetu so that, whenever possible, their needs will be addressed holistically.

"Victims of domestic violence and sexual assault need comprehensive help and support, something that can be a challenge in immigrant communities. This federal grant from the Department of Justice will allow Bronx Legal Services and the Sauti Yetu Center for African Women & Families to continue their collaborative effort, Project Not Alone, a groundbreaking program that provides immigrant women from Spanish-speaking and African communities in the Bronx with access to the legal assistance, social services, and other support in the wake of domestic violence," said Congressman Serrano. "Project Not Alone is a good example of how federal funding plays an important role in helping The Bronx. As Ranking Member of the appropriations subcommittee in charge of allocating funding for the Office of Violence Against Women and the Legal Services Corporation, I will continue working to ensure that these vital programs have the levels of funding they need to continue serving communities like the Bronx."

"OVW funding makes it possible for Project Not Alone to continue to deliver high quality legal and social services for people affected by violence in the Bronx," said Terry Lawson, Director of the Family and Immigration Unit at Bronx Legal Services. "We look forward to continuing our collaborative relationship with Sauti Yetu and with all those working hard in the Bronx to protect families."

"Sauti Yetu is grateful to have received this grant which allows us to strengthen our services to support and protect survivors and their children throughout the Bronx," said Zeinab Eyega, Sauti Yetuâ€™s Executive Director.

About Bronx Legal Services:

As a program of Legal Services NYC, the largest provider of free civil legal services in the country, Bronx Legal Services fights poverty and seeks justice for the most vulnerable populations in the Bronx by providing legal advice and representation in the matters most commonly affecting our clients. Bronx Legal Services has more than 60 attorneys, one social worker, and 29 administrative and support staff members, the majority of whom are bilingual Spanish speakers and provide on-site interpretation and translation services. In addition, Bronx Legal Services has a contract with Ethnic Bridge, which provides confidential interpretation into multiple languages through telephone interpreters. Bronx Legal Services helps survivors stabilize and rebuild their lives by providing free, high-quality legal services in the areas of orders of protection, immigration, divorce, custody, visitation, and child and spousal support as well as housing, foreclosure, benefits, tax, employment, consumer, and education law.

About Sauti Yetu Center for African Women & Families:

Sauti Yetu is the only African immigrant community-based organization that provides services to victims of violence from New York Cityâ€™s African immigrant communities. Sauti Yetuâ€™s holistic approach is informed by community outreach and advocacy around gender issues that uniquely affect immigrant women and girls, such as early marriage and female genital cutting. As a program geared towards providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services for survivors, Sauti
Yetu ensures that survivors with Limited English Proficiency are able to understand their rights and options and are empowered to make informed decisions. Sauti Yetu has multi-lingual staff that speaks French, Mandinka, Dioula, Soninke, Wolof, Fulani, Bambara, and other languages spoken throughout Africa. Sauti Yetu’s clients collectively speak up to 41 different languages at any given time. With deep roots in this diverse community, Sauti Yetu is able to reach those in need who cannot read, and who speak dialects that are oral and not written.

###