



2023 Impact Report

**VICTIM VOICE.
VICTIM CHOICE.**

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All victims – no matter their identities or backgrounds – have unique experiences and needs when navigating criminal justice processes, and deserve to have their rights afforded, their voices heard, and to be treated with dignity.

At NCVLI, we spent 2023 elevating victim voice and choice by providing legal expertise to ensure that individuals could make informed decisions about whether, when, and how to exercise their rights.

Dear Friend,

As we look back on 2023, we are proud of how much NCVLI, together with its partners, accomplished to Elevate Victim Agency, Equity & Dignity.

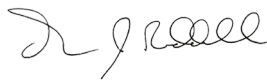
We trained attorneys and advocates and then worked diligently to pair them with survivors. We educated stakeholders about the meaning of victims' rights and how to ensure survivors can assert those rights in our justice systems. We argued in courts to promote broad, positive interpretation of victims' rights. We also launched a new project – Legal Services for Victims with Disabilities – and undertook intensive technical assistance for the Crime Victims Advocacy Program, which is a national fellowship program designed to increase access to legal assistance for survivors from underserved Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) communities.

All of these efforts set the stage for a year in which we will focus on the building blocks of victims' rights and the 20th anniversary of the federal Crime Victims' Rights Act.

We are excited to celebrate our past success with you, and look forward to continuing to work together on the future of NCVLI and victims' rights.



MEG GARVIN
Executive Director



SEAN RIDDELL
Board President



2023 MOMENTS OF IMPACT



MORE THAN
30 TRAININGS
REACHING MORE THAN 1,500
INDIVIDUALS



LEGAL WORK IN
25 STATES



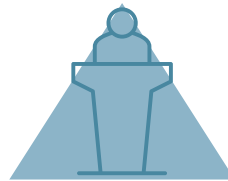
VICTIMS' RIGHTS ATTORNEY
TOOLKIT - AN ONLINE
RESOURCE WITH NEARLY
70 PRACTICE AIDS
TO SUPPORT ATTORNEYS AND
ADVOCATES SERVING VICTIMS



TOOLKIT FOR ADVOCATING
FOR MILITARY-CONNECTED
VICTIMS WITH MORE THAN
30 RESOURCES



THE 22ND CONFERENCE BROUGHT
TOGETHER MORE THAN
**300 PEOPLE FROM
35 STATES**



THE ONLY NATIONAL PORTAL
CONNECTING SURVIVORS TO
LAWYERS FOR
**NO OR LOW-COST
REPRESENTATION**



Spotlight:

JACKSON COUNTY SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE TEAM (SART)



NCVLI works nationally and locally. Among its partners at home is the Jackson County SART.

Jackson County SART is an organization that works to ensure an effective, collaborative response to sexual assault that prioritizes victims' needs and reduces the traumatic after-effects of this crime; to help bring more offenders to justice; and to prevent sexual violence through community engagement and change.

The SART concentrates area services into a single, coordinated program that responds to all area hospitals. Specially trained Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners, victim advocates from Community Works' SAVS, and local detectives approach each case as a team. District Attorney staff also join the team if the case goes forward to trial.

This past year, NCVLI collaborated with Jackson County SART by providing technical assistance on a variety of issues.



A fierce defender of victims' rights, NCVLI provides legal expertise in very tangible, useful, and accessible ways: JC SART's partnership with NCVLI allows us to support our clients when we need to connect survivors to legal experts who understand the nuanced needs of those who have experienced sexual assault and domestic violence. NCVLI truly elevates the survivor voice and ensures the protection of survivor rights when navigating what can be an often confusing and hostile court system. NCVLI has also been instrumental in informing the policies and protocols that impact JC SART's provision of services to survivors, particularly relating to privacy rights and right to representation. We are grateful that we have NCVLI available and willing to aid our work in such impactful ways.

Susan Moen
Executive Director
Jackson County SART

AGENCY: EMPOWERING EACH VICTIM

Our legal systems are not set up for self-representation. Having trained and well-resourced attorneys and advocates supporting victims helps to ensure that they know what their rights are and can self-determine whether, how, and when to assert or waive their rights. This is why we routinely conduct in-person and online trainings, and we host online rights enforcement resources to aid practitioners 24/7.

Spotlight

NCVLI developed an 8-hour, multi-session, online training titled *Collaborating to Advance Survivors Voices & Rights in Criminal Justice*. During 2023, we offered the training twice, reaching 50 system- and community-based victim service providers.

The goal of the training – increase knowledge and skills of advocates and attorneys within and outside of criminal justice to enhance their collaborations to ensure survivors have meaningful opportunities to engage. The training not only included live virtual sessions but also online advocacy tools and collaboration spaces to build community.



I'M A NEW ADVOCATE IN THIS SPACE AND LEARNING MORE ABOUT VICTIMS' RIGHTS AS WELL AS HOW TO BE CLEAR ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY WAS SUPER HELPFUL.

IT WAS WONDERFUL TO HAVE CONVERSATIONS WITH OTHER ADVOCATES AND PROBLEM-SOLVE SCENARIOS TOGETHER.

Spotlight

In June 2023 NCVLI partnered with Disability Rights Oregon (DRO) to host a half-day Pre-Conference Institute (PCI) titled *Supporting the Rights of Victims with Disabilities in Criminal Cases*. The training provided attorneys and advocates with an understanding of how to collectively overcome challenges and provide effective, trauma-informed advocacy services. The PCI was attended by 72 attorneys and advocates and culminated with a panel of diverse experts discussing scenarios and providing practical suggestions for advanced advocacy.

A key outcome: Our deeper understanding of the need for more work in this space!

As a result, NCVLI and DRO applied for, and were awarded, a grant to launch a statewide and ultimately national effort on Legal Services for Victims with Disabilities!



LOVED THE AMOUNT OF INTERACTING THAT WAS ENCOURAGED!

THE PANEL WAS REALLY INFORMATIVE!

EQUITY: ENSURING ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL VICTIMS

Spotlight

The Crime Victims Advocacy Program

NCVLI is working closely with a cohort of nearly 20 attorney Fellows to increase access to legal services for survivors of crime, especially in underserved Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities.

The effort called the Crime Victims Advocacy Program, (CVAP), is undertaken in collaboration with Equal Justice Works.

Fellows are located at host organizations around the country; and NCVLI is the designated TTA provider.

Throughout the second half of the year we helped onboard these fellows, training them on victims' rights, trauma-informed lawyering, and the fundamentals of privacy.

We are helping them to navigate tricky legal issues such as when victims' rights attach, how to protect immigrant victims, and more.



Claudia Torres is one of the CVAP Fellows. Claudia works at the Employment Unit of Greater Boston Legal Services. Throughout her doctoral studies, Claudia immersed herself in extensive field research with street sex workers and survivors of sex trafficking in Mexico City. Building on this experience, she transitioned into legal practice.

Presently, Claudia is actively engaged in representing BIPOC low-income and undocumented workers who have fallen victim to various workplace injustices, including wage theft, sexual assault, labor trafficking, and discrimination.



The primary aim of Claudia's fellowship has been to enhance accessibility to legal services for underserved populations.

Claudia also collaborates closely with community partners, such as worker centers and victim-centered organizations, to conduct outreach initiatives.



As an Equal Justice Works Fellow within the CVAP program, I consider myself fortunate and deeply appreciative of the opportunity to collaborate with attorneys who share my dedication to social justice and a passion for serving the community. As an immigrant, I am experiencing, for the first time, a sense of belonging and community not only among my fellow attorneys but also with the individuals we serve.

I am pleased to witness the impact of my fellowship as my team successfully represents more BIPOC and immigrant workers. It is a privilege to work alongside my colleagues at GBLS and the staff at EJW and NCVLI in the shared responsibility of listening to the stories of workers and going with them through the complexities of the legal system.

This program is supported by an award under 15POVC-22-GK-01116-NONF, awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice or Equal Justice Works.

DIGNITY: HONORING THE INDIVIDUAL

Dignity has many meanings in law and popular culture but at its core dignity is the recognition of a person's humanity – that they, individually, matter. In victims' rights, dignity requires that victims be treated as more than witnesses or pieces of evidence in a case; it requires that they be recognized as meaningful, independent participants at every critical moment in the exercise of justice.



Spotlight

In August, NCVLI submitted an amicus curiae (friend of the court) brief to the Maryland Supreme Court in the case of *Adnan Syed v. Young Lee*. In the case, Adnan Syed was convicted more than 20 years ago of murdering his ex-girlfriend. He unsuccessfully challenged the conviction in a direct appeal and in a post-conviction petition. During all of this time, the State defended the conviction to the victim's family and the public. However, sometime in 2022, the State began investigating the integrity of the prosecution. Despite its lengthy review, the State gave the victim only six days' notice that it would no longer stand behind the conviction by filing a vacatur motion, and then gave the victim, who was residing in another state, less than one business day notice of the hearing on the motion in which the conviction would ultimately be vacated. The victim, through counsel, asked that the proceeding be continued so that the victim could meaningfully exercise rights but the trial court rejected the request. When the victim sought appellate review, NCVLI joined and focused on a narrow issue - what does Maryland's constitutional right to be treated with dignity mean during vacatur proceedings. We argued that while vacating a conviction is necessary in some cases, the right to dignity must mean more than was afforded here.



The National Crime Victim Law Institute supported the Lee family in the most significant way: focusing on dignity that should be afforded crime victims, especially where there is a state constitutional provision mandating a 'right to dignity.' The NCVLI has it exactly right: a victim's rights should be enforceable rights and that is especially true when the right in question concerns foundational notions of dignity.

David Sanford
Chairman Sanford Heisler Sharp
LLP, Victim's Counsel

2024 THEME

NCVLI's 2024 theme is: **Building Blocks of Justice: Victims' Rights & Remedies.**

Often, when we talk about victims' rights there is a misguided critique that there are no remedies when a right is violated. In reality, much has been done over the last twenty years to clarify the availability of remedies in law.



BUILDING BLOCKS OF JUSTICE

Victims' Rights & Remedies

When we think of remedies, most people think of monetary damages. But money is only one type of remedy. Other remedies include stopping ongoing violations; vacating orders or proceedings that were reached in violation of rights, quashing discovery requests, directing actors to perform certain actions, and so much more.

Remedies are truly the building blocks of justice and this year, we invite you to join us in exploring this foundational aspect of victims' rights.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

01

ATTEND THE CRIME
VICTIM LAW INSTITUTE
PRE-CONFERENCE
MAY 20-22

02

SUPPORT THE WORK
BY BECOMING A
SPONSOR

03

JOIN US IN OCTOBER
FOR A SYMPOSIUM
MARKING THE 20TH
ANNIVERSARY OF
THE FEDERAL CRIME
VICTIMS' RIGHTS ACT

2023 SUPPORTERS

WE THANK YOU

Elevating victim agency, equity & dignity takes all of us. Thank you to our amazing supporters for being a part of this work.

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MISSION

NCVLI actively promotes comprehensive and enforceable legal rights for crime victims, and access to knowledgeable attorneys to help protect those rights in every case through victim-centered legal advocacy, education, and resources.

VALUES

Empowerment.

Voice, choice, and agency.

Dignity.

Every person treated with respect and with care for their well-being.

Equity.

Victims of all identities and backgrounds have rights afforded.

Collaboration.

Part of a national community.

Innovation.

Creative legal analysis, inventive solutions, and strategic litigation.