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## Family Justice Project Year-End Report 2023

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## Executive Summary

Since 2001, the Family Justice Project (“FJP” hereafter) of the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada has provided direct legal representation to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. Since that time, we have seen the landscape of cases change from mostly divorce cases to mostly custody and protection order cases. Regardless of case type, FJP attorneys prioritize domestic violence survivors and also represent the elderly, disabled, and generally vulnerable parties in family court in order to meet the needs of the most marginalized and underrepresented sectors of our population. The year 2023 was exceptional as we observed more extreme and brutal violence against women. Sadly, batterers are seldom held fully accountable because our criminal courts are not equipped to conduct jury trials where it is possible to get a conviction. The cases are pled down and dismissed after token conditions and fines. FJP attorneys struggle to win custody for survivors when the perpetrators are not convicted in criminal court forcing survivors to co-parent with abusers because survivors cannot prevail in court - Nevada’s children pay the price. Still, survivors represented by attorneys are far more likely to prevail in court than those who are not. Our goal is to represent more survivors each year in order to improve family court outcomes for the most vulnerable.

## Representation

<b>Family Justice Project 2023</b>	
Consultations 2023	2,121
New cases accepted for litigation 2023	573
Total cases worked on by attorneys (includes new and previous years’ cases)	767
<b>Total annual clients served</b>	<b>2,900</b>

<b>Pro Bono Family Law 2023</b>	
New cases placed 2023	74
Total cases worked on by attorneys (includes new and previous years’ cases)	300
Number of clients served in Ask-A-Lawyer	1,563
<b>Total annual clients served</b>	<b>1,863</b>

## **Accomplishments**

### **Meeting the Needs of Family Court Litigants**

FJP provides a number of services to the public besides direct representation in family court cases, including but not limited to:

- Community Legal Education Class supervision on topics of divorce, custody, and guardianship providing the basics of law and information along with court form samples;
- Divorce and custody consultations for Safe Nest shelter clients in English, Spanish and other languages through the language line;
- Ask-a-Lawyer participation providing weekly, free consultations with family law attorneys to the public;
- Referral services to other legal aid offices throughout the US.

### **Community Involvement and Advocacy on Behalf of Domestic Violence Survivors**

FJP attorneys at the Legal Aid Center are encouraged to join and affiliate with local agencies and groups to improve local response to domestic violence for victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and trafficking. The following is a list of groups FJP attorneys are affiliated with:

Member, Nevada Attorney General – Nevada Committee on Domestic Violence (NCDV);  
Member, Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Abuse (NCEDSV);  
Member, Nevada Policy Council on Human Trafficking  
Member, DV Partners (Eighth Judicial District Court-Family Division);  
Member, Independent Legal Advocates Against Domestic Violence (ILAADV);  
Member-Participant, Family Justice Center (Clark County);  
Member, Child Support Commission; and  
Member, Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee - DV Subcommittee

### **Success Story**

\*Teresa

Teresa is a young woman who broke off her relationship with her boyfriend. He decided that he would not accept that, and she needed to be with him. He would stalk her, show up at her work, send her text messages with pictures of guns and tell her that she was never leaving him. One night, she left work at The Linq and headed to the parking lot at Harrah's. It was almost midnight. When she got to her car, a car pulled up and blocked her in. Her ex-boyfriend then exited the car and came up to her car and tapped on the window with the barrel of his gun. Teresa was frightened and searching for her phone to call 911. She refused to roll down the window so her boyfriend turned the gun around and with the butt of the gun broke out her window. By that time, she had called 911. Seeing this, he fled. When the police arrived, she was sitting in her car, staring straight ahead, with her hands on the steering wheel and covered in glass. Using the camera in the garage, the police located her ex-boyfriend and found that there was also someone else in the car with him. It was clear that he meant Teresa harm and by blocking her car and bringing someone else with him, she was powerless to escape. He was

arrested and charged with four felonies. Teresa filed for a TPO. At the extension hearing, due to the nature of the attack and his continued harassment after the attack, her TPO was extended for two years.

*Name changed to protect client's confidentiality.*