

*Together
We Will
Rise and Soar*

*2020
Annual Report*

Message from the Executive Director

Dear Supporters,

2020 brought much pain and upheaval to us all. The COVID-19 global pandemic created additional barriers for survivors of domestic violence, making it harder for them to leave abusive environments and limiting their ability to seek legal protection. At the same time, the police killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor laid bare the systemic racism that underpins our justice system and highlighted how gender oppression and racial oppression intersect.

But crisis also provides fertile ground for deepening awareness and strength. Amidst the ashes of 2020, FVAP:

- Emerged with an even stronger commitment to center the needs of survivors of domestic violence who are impacted by multiple systems of oppression.
- Planted the seeds for the launch of our first-ever three-year “Rise and Soar” fundraising campaign to allow us to rise to meet the needs of survivors in California, while also helping us soar beyond state borders to bring our strategic legal approach to the state of Washington.
- Laid the foundation for opening a second office in Washington state to help fill a critical gap in legal services for survivors of domestic violence and their families.

Whether you have been with us for the past nine years or have just joined us recently – we are so grateful that you are part of the FVAP family. Thank you for joining us in the movement to end domestic violence. Please enjoy this annual report and take pride in the accomplishments we have achieved. Together, we will continue to rise and soar.

With gratitude,



Erin Smith, Esq.
Executive Director & Co-Founder



About Us

THE PROBLEM:

Nearly **ONE OUT OF THREE** women experience domestic violence in their lifetime.

When cases go to court, **LEGAL DECISIONS OFTEN THREATEN** the safety and well-being of survivors.

These challenges **ARE EVEN GREATER** for survivors experiencing multiple systems of oppression.

THE SOLUTION:

OUR STRATEGIC APPELLATE APPROACH:



WE PROVIDE LEGAL SUPPORT & TRAINING to survivors who do not have a lawyer in court, as well as to advocates, lawyers, and judges to ensure that the rights of survivors are protected.



WE OVERTURN DANGEROUS COURT DECISIONS that threaten the safety of survivors of domestic violence and their children. Through our cases, we create legal precedent to keep all survivors of abuse and their families safe.



WE MENTOR & CULTIVATE the next generation of advocates who are committed to ending domestic violence by creating real, systems-level change.

Our Strategies

CREATE robust case law that addresses survivors' needs.

LISTEN to survivors, especially those who experience multiple oppressions, and activate legal remedies to the needs they identify.

IDENTIFY & AMPLIFY creative solutions to shift the statewide legal landscape.

PROVIDE legal support and act as an information clearinghouse for those working directly with survivors.

MARSHAL resources, including from the private sector, and direct them to where survivors need them most.

CULTIVATE relationships throughout the state and foster unexpected linkages, especially to reach those most at the margins.

BUILD expertise in laws that impact survivors.

FOSTER an organizational culture that encourages agility.

Our Commitment to Racial Justice

According to the Centers for Disease Control's National Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence survey, **women of color in the United States are disproportionately impacted by higher rates of domestic violence** in the form of rape, physical violence and/or stalking.

FVAP's mission is grounded in the awareness that gender and racial oppression intersect to deprive survivors of the basic human right of a life free from abuse.

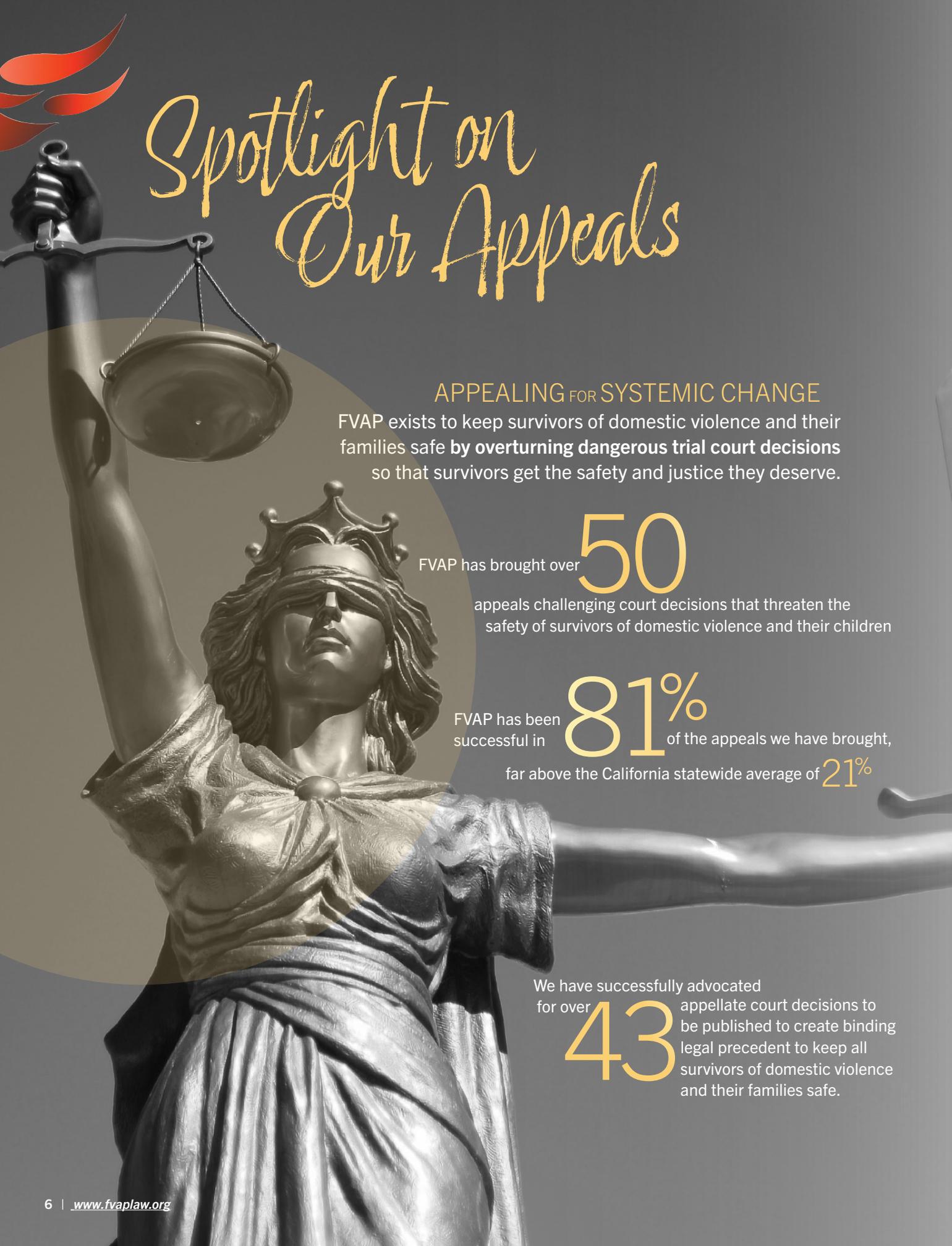
In 2016, FVAP adopted a Theory of Change cementing our commitment to prioritizing the needs of survivors who experience multiple intersecting oppressions.

In 2017, FVAP worked with expert researchers to further deepen our engagement with communities of color by identifying gaps and priorities in our outreach and service delivery.

To date, 71% of FVAP's cases have been filed on behalf of survivors of color.

We remain committed to deepening our capacity to ground our organization and our work in principles of antiracism.

We can do more.



Spotlight on Our Appeals

APPEALING FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE

FVAP exists to keep survivors of domestic violence and their families safe by **overturning dangerous trial court decisions** so that survivors get the safety and justice they deserve.

FVAP has brought over

50

appeals challenging court decisions that threaten the safety of survivors of domestic violence and their children

FVAP has been successful in

81%

of the appeals we have brought, far above the California statewide average of 21%

We have successfully advocated for over

43

appellate court decisions to be published to create binding legal precedent to keep all survivors of domestic violence and their families safe.

Spotlight on Our Appeals

Here are just some of the legal victories FVAP has achieved on behalf of survivors of domestic violence. These cases are **binding legal precedent in all trial courts in California.**

You can find these cases at **"Cases You Can Use"** on our **website**

Cases protecting the rights of survivors under California restraining order laws

In re Marriage of Carlisle (2021) 60 Cal.App.5th 244
McCord v. Smith (2020) 51 Cal.App.5th 358
Nicole G. v. Braithwaite (2020) 49 Cal.App.5th 990
Tanguilig v. Valdez (2019) 36 Cal.App.5th 514
N.T. v. H.T. (2019) 34 Cal.App.5th 595
Rybolt v. Riley (2018) 20 Cal.App.5th 864
Melissa G. v. Raymond M. (2018) 27 Cal.App.5th 360
Rybolt v. Riley (2018) 20 Cal.App.5th 864
In re Marriage of Davila (2018) 29 Cal.App.5th 220
Hogue v. Hogue (2017) 16 Cal.App.5th 833
Garcia v. Escobar (2017) 17 Cal.App.5th 267
Priscila N. v. Leonardo G. (2017) 17 Cal.App.5th 267
De la Luz Perez v. Torres-Hernandez (2016) 1 Cal.App.5th 389
In re Marriage of Fregoso and Hernandez (2016) 5 Cal.App.5th 698
Phillips v. Campbell (2016) 2 Cal.App.5th 844
Sabato v. Brooks (2015) 242 Cal.App.4th 715
Rodriguez v. Menjivar (2015) 243 Cal.App.4th 816
In re Marriage of Evilsizor and Sweeney (2015) 237 Cal.App.4th 1416
Faton v. Ahmedo (2015) 236 Cal.App.4th 1160
Isidora M. v. Silvino M. (2015) 239 Cal.App.4th 11
Cueto v. Dozier (2015) 241 Cal.App.4th 550
Gou v. Xiao (2014) 228 Cal.App.4th 812
Nevarez v. Tonna (2014) 227 Cal.App.4th 774
Burquet v. Brumbaugh (2014) 223 Cal.App.4th 1140
J.J. v. M.F. (2014) 223 Cal.App.4th 968
Eneaji v. Ubboe (2014) 229 Cal.App.4th 1457
Lister v. Bowen (2013) 215 Cal.App.4th 319

Cases protecting the rights of survivors under California child custody laws

SY v. Superior Court (2018) 29 Cal.App.5th 324
Celia S. v. Hugo H. (2016) 3 Cal.App.5th 655
Ellis v. Lyons (2016) 2 Cal.App.5th 404
Noergaard v. Noergaard (2015) 244 Cal.App.4th 76
In re the Marriage of Fajota (2014) 230 Cal.App.4th 148
Christina L. v. Chauncey B. (2014) 229 Cal.App.4th 731
Keisha W. v. Marvin M. (2014) 229 Cal.App.4th 581

Cases protecting the rights of survivors to due process and financial support

Jameson v. Desta (2018) 5 Cal.5th 594
In re Marriage of Kumar (2017) 13 Cal.App.5th 1072
Faton v. Ahmedo (2015) 236 Cal.App.4th 1160.
In re Marriage of J.Q. and T.B. (2014) 223 Cal.App.4th 687

Spotlight on Our Appeals

JIA'S STORY

JIA IS AN IMMIGRANT from China who was married to a man who started abusing her only months after her arrival in the United States. In addition to subjecting her to severe physical abuse, Jia's husband wouldn't let her learn English, give her any money, or let her have a phone. One night, after a brutal episode of abuse, Jia's husband threw her out of the house and locked the door. When Jia went to her church, her pastor could not recognize her given the bruises on her face. The church helped her receive an emergency restraining order against her husband. The husband was criminally charged with domestic violence crimes and was awaiting trial in criminal court, so the family law court did not hear Jia's restraining order request or her request for temporary spousal support. Jia had no money and no way to support herself.

FVAP SUCCESSFULLY APPEALED and overturned the court ruling and established that an abusive spouse can be ordered to provide financial spousal support as part of a domestic violence restraining order case before the court decides whether abuse has occurred or whether to issue a restraining order. This decision will help ensure that survivors who seek legal protection have the financial resources they need to stay safe.

Spotlight on Our Housing and Employment Justice Program

OUR HOLISTIC APPROACH

UP TO 57%

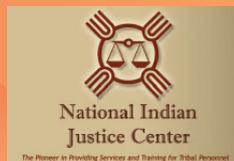
of homeless women in the United States report domestic violence as the immediate reason for their homelessness.

UP TO 90%

of homeless women have experienced severe physical or sexual abuse.

FVAP's Housing & Employment Justice Program (HEJP) addresses housing and employment issues faced by survivors of domestic violence so that the crisis of abuse is not compounded by housing or employment instability. Our HEJP:

- Provides direct legal representation to survivors in appellate cases involving employment and housing law issues
- Helps survivors overcome housing and employment discrimination they face because of the domestic violence they have experienced
- Works to make positive changes in California housing and employment laws, policies, and regulations.
- Creates toolkits and trainings to ensure survivors and service providers know about available state and federal laws and legal protections related to housing and employment.



This year our HEJP partnered with the National Indian Justice Center and the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence to have a **greater focus on rural and Native American communities in California**. In 2020 alone, our HEJP trained 125 people from over eight different rural counties in California and 26 different non-profit and tribal organizations.

In addition, in 2020 our **Helping Survivors Obtain Housing Toolkit** was translated into **Arabic, Hmong, Russian, and Spanish**. This toolkit helps immigrant survivors obtain housing by informing them of their housing rights, provides them with templates and helps them combat housing discrimination based on their survivor status.

“Thanks to FVAP and NIJC’s partnership, more survivors in our communities have access to critical information about their housing and employment rights.”

~Raquelle Myers
Executive Director
National Indian Justice Center

Safe housing is the **#1** unmet need of domestic abuse survivors.

Rise and Soar Campaign

In 2020, we laid the foundation for our first-ever multi-year *Rise and Soar* fundraising campaign that will allow FVAP to continue to rise to meet the needs of survivors of domestic violence in California, while also helping us soar beyond state borders to begin the journey of spreading our strategic appellate practice nationwide, starting with Washington state.

WITH YOUR SUPPORT, WE WILL:

Invest in Core Programs and Deepen Commitment to Race Equity

FVAP has a strong set of core programs designed to help survivors of domestic violence obtain justice from the legal system. We overturn dangerous court decisions, create systemic change, provide vital legal resources, and educate the next generation. Moreover, we prioritize the needs of survivors who experience the intersection of gender and racial oppression, and we intend to further deepen our commitment to centering principles of race equity in our work.

Expand to Washington State

We have always known that changing the law through legal appeals for domestic violence survivors is needed on a national level. After several years of extensive research and community outreach in five different states, we have begun our expansion by opening a second office in Washington State in order to meet the needs of more survivors.

Expand Programs to More Survivors of Gender Violence

Our proven strategy has moved the needle in the area of domestic violence law, and we see an opportunity to do more. The life experiences of domestic violence survivors often show up in the legal system as sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, or intimate partner violence cases. FVAP seeks to provide our critical services to more survivors of gender violence.

Fortify a Sustainable Infrastructure

Providing crucial services to survivors of domestic violence and fighting for change in the legal system requires a significant investment in staffing in order to build and maintain organizational capacity. FVAP plans to fortify a sustainable infrastructure that will allow us to grow with purpose and respond to the needs of survivors efficiently and effectively for the long haul.

Breaking Ground in Washington State

Starting in 2016, many advocates and attorneys in the field nationwide began reaching out to FVAP to see if our innovative model could be created in their state. FVAP began to explore how to grow our program and expand into other states if the need was there.

After 2+ years of research involving extensive outreach to stakeholders in five different states, FVAP learned that many of the factors that made us successful in California are also present in Washington state, and so we decided to break ground in Washington.

“We are excited for FVAP to join the Washington movement to end domestic violence, and we look forward to working with FVAP as a partner in a statewide approach to meeting the needs of survivors of domestic violence here in Washington.”

~Heather Wehr, *Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence*



FVAP intends to work collaboratively with existing legal and non-legal domestic violence organizations in Washington to bring our strategic appellate model to a new state to help more survivors of domestic violence.

“The Northwest Justice Project (NJP) is excited FVAP is joining the civil legal movement to end domestic violence in Washington as a partner to serve survivors’ great legal needs in a collaborative way.”

~Mary Welch, *Statewide Advocacy Counsel, Northwest Justice Project*

“I am honored and thrilled to help bring FVAP’s innovative appellate model to Washington state – a model that is responsive to the on-the-ground needs of the communities and survivors it serves.”

~Evangeline Stratton, *Senior Managing Attorney, FVAP Washington*

“The work that FVAP does is vital and critically needed to support the appellate work being done here in the state of Washington. We look forward to partnering with FVAP and further building the body of Washington case law for survivors and their children.”

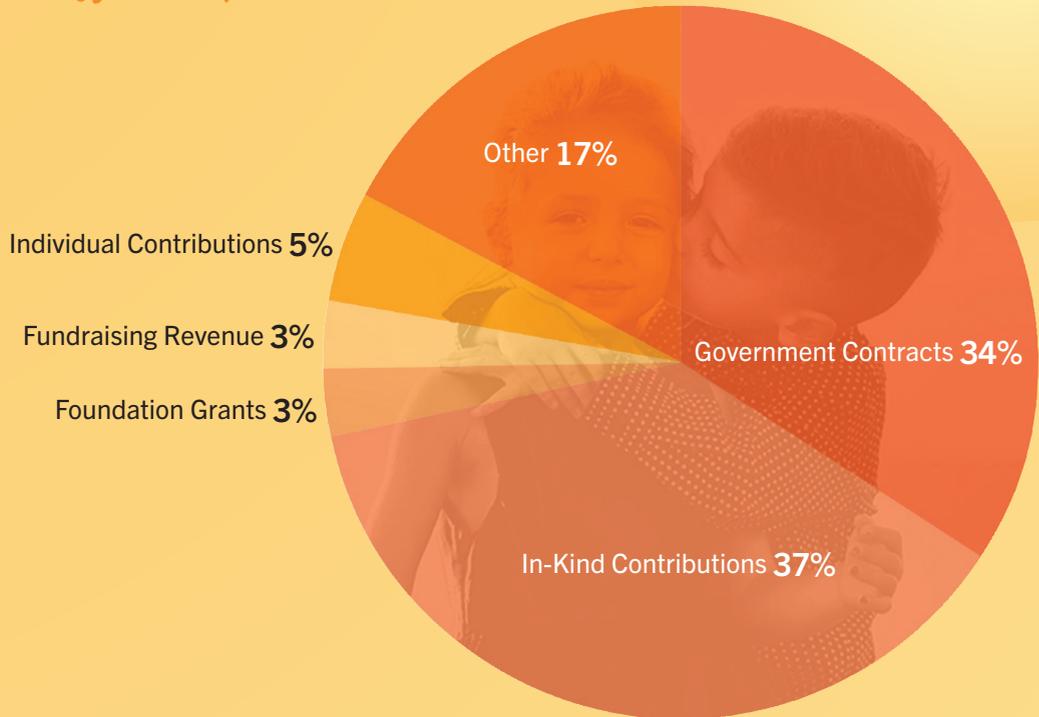
~Jerry Kroon, *Executive Director, Eastside Legal Assistance Program*

“Survivors deserve a robust and responsive legal system and FVAP’s appellate work is critical to ensuring that in Washington. We look forward to working with FVAP to meet the needs of survivors of gender-based violence in Washington state.

~Riddhi Mukhopadhyay, *Director, Sexual Violence Law Center*

Financials

Statement of Activities



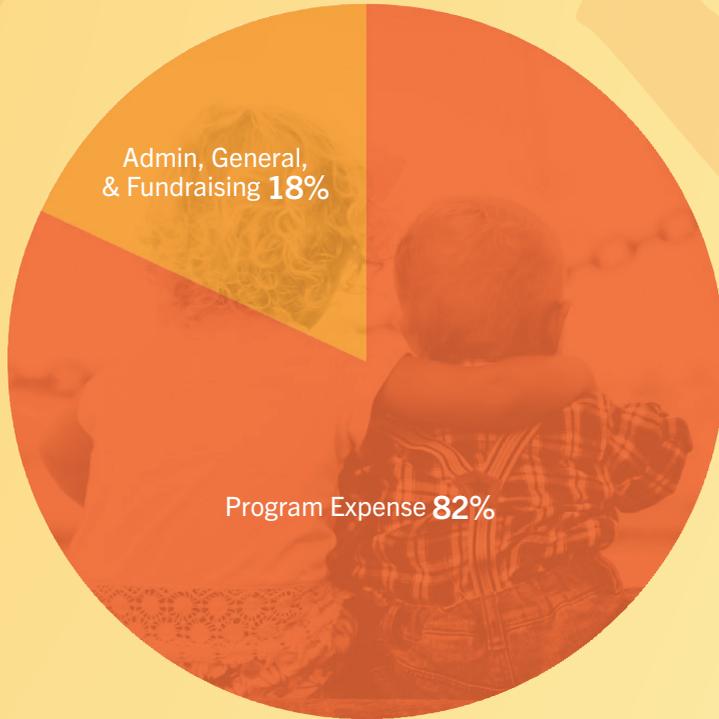
REVENUE & SUPPORT

Unrestricted and Released from Restriction

Foundation Grants	\$	112,886
Fundraising Event	\$	88,379
Individual Contributions	\$	167,319
Corporate/Law Firm Contributions	\$	11,550
Government Contracts	\$	1,037,010
In-Kind	\$	1,120,167
Other	\$	2,390
Total Revenue & Support	\$	2,539,702

EXPENSES

Program Expense	\$	2,062,391
Admin, General, & Fundraising	\$	460,201
Total Expenses	\$	2,522,592
Increase in Net Assets	\$	17,110



ASSETS

Current Assets

Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$ 2,015,929
Contributions Receivable	\$ 335,000
Government Grants Receivable	\$ 176,724
Prepaid Expenses and Other Assets	\$ 17,739
Total Current Assets	\$ 2,545,392
Security Deposits	\$ 12,767
Right of Use- Premises	\$ 155,508
Total Assets	\$ 2,713,667

LIABILITIES

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	\$ 67,759
Lease Payable - Current Portion	\$ 71,103
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 138,862
PPP Grant Payable	\$ 140,650
Lease Payable - Long-Term Portion	\$ 102,741
Total Liabilities	\$ 382,253

NET ASSETS

Without Donor Restrictions	\$ 1,683,489
With Donor Restrictions	\$ 647,925
Total Net Assets	\$ 2,331,414
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 2,713,667

Thank You to our Donors and Volunteers

Every success in this report happened because of the generous community of FVAP donors and volunteers. So, from all of us, to all of you, we would like to say thank you. We could not do what we do without your kindness, heart, and the resources you provide. We are humbled and proud to have you all in our FVAP family.



In 2020 FVAP added to its robust base of over **550 VOLUNTEERS**, including over **470 PRO BONO ATTORNEYS**.

In 2020, pro bono attorneys donated **\$1,120,167 value** of hours dedicated to FVAP cases.

In 2020, FVAP received donations from **429 donors**.

“FVAP offers an innovative and effective approach to addressing the problem of domestic violence. Investing in FVAP is compelling to us because we know that FVAP is creating broad systemic change for survivors of domestic violence. We are also excited to help FVAP take its model to Washington state, and to see FVAP continue to rise and soar.”

~Loni Mahanta and Peter Koob,
FVAP's multi-year Rise and Soar Campaign's
“Rising Leaders”

Our Team

STAFF

Meg Bay

Office Manager

Renee Boman

Paralegal

Taylor Campion

Housing & Employment Justice Senior Managing Attorney

Shuray Ghorishi

Senior Managing Attorney

Katharina Grimm

Program Associate

Cory Hernandez

Staff Attorney

Paul T. Jones

Finance and Administration Manager

Nancy K.D. Lemon

Co-Founder & Legal Director

Charity Peets

Development Manager

Erin Smith, Esq.

Co-Founder & Executive Director

Arati Vasan

Senior Managing Attorney

Jennafer Dorfman Wagner, Esq.

Director of Programs

Carolyn Walker

Housing Outreach Attorney

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Human Options

Julie Shah
Senior Director & Senior Corporate Counsel
Five Prime Therapeutics, Inc.

Erin Smith, Esq. *(Co-Founder)*
CEO/Executive Director
Family Violence Appellate Project

We Will Keep Bandin**g** Together to End Domestic Violence

Every year, the FVAP community gathers to make music together, while raising funds and awareness in furtherance of the movement to end domestic violence. While our 2020 event was forced to be a virtual gathering instead of in-person, we still raised nearly \$100,000 to push forward our mission. We look forward to continuing to band together to end domestic violence with you!



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