



Newsletter August 2025

"I am sure you hear it all the time, but the work you do over at FVAP is incredible. I could spend hours in the resource library!"

—Andrea Hodgson, Contra Costa Senior Legal Services

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We're Looking for Leaders Like You!

FVAP is seeking passionate, justice-driven individuals to join our Board of Directors. As a board member, you'll play a key role in shaping our strategy, strengthening our impact, and ensuring survivors of domestic violence across California get the legal support they deserve. Nonprofit or legal experience isn't required—just a commitment to equity, justice, and collective action.

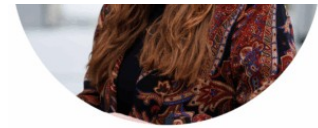
Interested or know someone who might be? Send your letter of interest and your resume to staff@fvaplaw.org by **August 31, 2025** to apply!

Staff Spotlight: Elissa Gray

Elissa Gray joined FVAP in 2023 as our **Equal Justice Works Fellow**, sponsored by Greenberg Traurig, LLP and The Clorox Company Foundation. She spent her two year fellowship establishing our writs program. Prior to her arrival, FVAP had concentrated the bulk of its efforts on appeals, but many clients needed the immediate relief only a



writ petition could provide.



What is a writ petition?

Like an appeal, a writ petition is a way to challenge a harmful trial court order in the appellate court. But writ petitions are typically used only for emergency circumstances and generally challenge temporary orders. An example of a temporary order that could be challenged by a writ petition is an order denying a person's request for the opposing party to temporarily move out of their shared home while a restraining order request against the opposing party is pending.

Thanks to Elissa's efforts, FVAP now has an established writs program, has secured several important victories, and has added three crucial materials to our [Legal Resource Library](#) to help survivors and the legal aid community access writs. View the plain language resources, including frequently asked questions ([FAQ](#)), a [lexicon](#), and a [flowchart](#) explaining the process.

FVAP Victories: Washington and California



So far this year, survivors in both California and Washington secured landmark legal victories—thanks to the tireless efforts of FVAP's staff and the dedication of our pro bono partners. Although FVAP closed our Washington office in January 2025, the impact of our past work and the continued efforts of our incredible advocates are still driving meaningful change for survivors.

Click the case names below to learn more about each ruling, the supporters who made them possible, and the lasting impact on survivors and their families.

[X.K. v. M.C. \(California\)](#) - explains that abuse occurring in other countries and/or during custody/visitation disputes must be considered by a trial court deciding whether to grant or deny a Domestic Violence Restraining Order (DVRO). *X.K. v. M.C.* is the first California appellate decision to expressly hold that incidents of abuse occurring outside the United States must also be considered when deciding whether to grant or deny a DVRO.

[Montesi v. Montesi \(Washington\)](#) - The Washington Court of Appeals Division I ruled earlier this year that the updated weapon surrender law is constitutional. This decision clarifies that Washington's weapon surrender law is constitutional and must be applied consistently across the state to protect domestic violence survivors.

[Navarro v. Cervera \(California\)](#) - reminds courts to focus on the survivor's reasonable apprehension of future abuse instead of the abusive person's justifications for abuse and that any violations of a DVRO must be taken seriously and strongly support renewal of a restraining order.

[French v. French \(Washington\)](#) - the first case to interpret an important

but rarely-used part of Washington's parenting plan law. The court ruled that when a judge finds domestic violence happened, they must make the abused parent's safety the top priority when creating custody schedules.

End-of-Summer Housing Campaign: The Law is on the Books — Now Let's Make It Work for Every Survivor

Californians facing domestic violence secured a major win earlier this year, thanks to a new law that provides stronger housing protections and guarantees tenants the right to change their locks at no cost to safeguard them from abuse.

But **laws are only effective** when **people know about them**, when **landlords abide by them**, and when **courts apply them correctly**, and that's why FVAP's work is so essential. By donating to our [End of Summer Housing Campaign](#), you help us to keep Californians across the state in safe, secure housing, and to build a strong judicial consensus of the right of every resident to access and retain housing.



- For every **\$10 donated**, you help keep our [Legal Resource Library online and free](#), so survivors and advocates can access templates and tools anytime.
- For **\$150**, you support the creation of **plain-language legal tools**, like template letters and information sheets, that survivors can use to assert their rights.
- For **\$500**, you provide **a training session for 10 outside advocates** to enforce lock-change and housing protections across California.

Donate

Be Part of the Change. Support Justice.

Your gift helps us provide steady, life-saving legal aid to survivors.

Right now, nonprofits across California are experiencing major declines in giving. By joining FVAP's Sustainers' Circle and **making your donation to our housing campaign a recurring one**, you can make a powerful, lasting impact.

Sustainers give monthly or weekly, helping ensure survivors have consistent access to legal protection—regardless of income. Your ongoing support gives FVAP a reliable funding stream, so we can focus more on serving survivors and less on fundraising.

If you aren't already, join the Sustainers' Circle today and stand with us year-round.

