



Because every survivor of intimate partner violence deserves a lawyer by their side.

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

**SLSLS provides free legal services to
survivors seeking protection from
Intimate Partner Violence.**



Dear Friends:

In three short years, SLSLS has grown from an idea into an organization that has served more than 650 survivors of intimate partner violence (“IPV”), with systems, staff, and credibility to match.

Our work changes the temperature in a room. When one of our attorneys walks into a courtroom beside a survivor, or when one of our advocates helps someone navigate through the initial steps of the legal process, something shifts. Fear ultimately changes to confidence. By its very nature, IPV is extremely isolating. **What we offer, beyond legal strategy and case support, is the simple and powerful message that no one has to face IPV alone.**

Too many people in our region are navigating the most frightening moments of their lives without anyone in their corner. **The need is enormous: there are always more survivors we could be reaching.** We want to journey with as many of them as possible.

We are grateful to our incredible partners, volunteers, and donors who make this work possible. As more survivors come forward and the need continues to expand, SLSLS will rely on your continued support to ensure that no one faces their nightmare alone. And with the right support, that nightmare can change to a vision of hope, peace, and confidence.

With gratitude and hope,



Michael D. Burton
Executive Director



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Ways to Support

When SLSLS gets involved: Families are safer. Children are more stable. Abusers are held accountable. Survivors have meaningful access to justice.

IN 2025:



172

ORDERS OF
PROTECTION
HANDLED

- **\$516,000** is the approximate value of **in-kind legal services** from SLSLS' volunteer attorneys (estimated value per OP case is based on a blended hourly rate reflecting prevailing market rates and SLSLS' typical staffing model)
- **Over 2.5X higher success rate** than that of the unrepresented petitioner
- **62%** of the full OPs that were granted were for **more than the standard one year**
- **131 attorneys volunteered** to represent SLSLS clients (many of the volunteers are being trained and mentored by more experienced volunteer attorneys)



446

SURVIVORS
AND CHILDREN
HELPED

- **267 survivors provided legal or advocacy services**
- **179 children in violent households ultimately helped** by significantly reducing their exposure to IPV
- **99% clients appeared** in court for their trials
- **60% more clients served** than in the preceding year



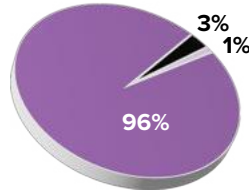


Client

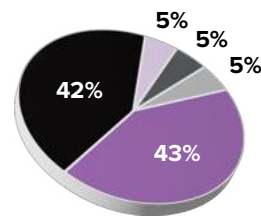
DEMOGRAPHICS

- **100%** lack access to resources to hire a lawyer

- **Gender:**
96% female
3% male
1% non-binary

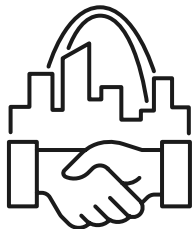


- **Race:**
43% Black
42% White
5% Asian
5% Hispanic
5% Other



- **Almost two-thirds** have children in the home

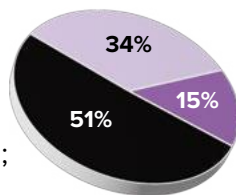
- **Nearly half** are from North St. Louis County (the most economically disadvantaged area)



68

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- **51% Cross-Sector Collaborators**
(Immigration; Hospitals; Mental health; Education; Worship; Law Firms)



- **34% Victim Advocacy Organizations**
(Safety planning; Counseling; Employment; Housing)

- **15% Law Enforcement Agencies** (Police departments)



Income

VS. EXPENSES

- **Income: \$516,716** (not including in-kind legal services)

63% donations

37% grants

- **Expenses: \$477,567**

85% program services

15%

administrative costs

All Time Stat



450

Since April 2023, **SLSLS** has provided **free legal representation** in **450 Order of Protection** cases.



Organizational Highlights

2025 marked a turning point for SLSLS.

In October, we received national recognition from the U.S. Department of Justice and the Office on Violence Against Women, which awarded us a **significant federal grant** to expand legal assistance for victims of intimate partner violence. The federal grant supports two new positions: a **Custody Attorney** to represent survivors



in their custody cases against their abusers, and a **Director of Community Engagement** to meet victims where they are, and to establish and support partnerships to help us identify and connect with more survivors.

In early 2026, SLSLS hired John DeMoor as the new Custody Attorney and Kimberly Birdwell as the new Director of Community Engagement. **Together, these roles deepen our impact at both the individual and community levels.**

Kimberly Birdwell,
Director of Community Engagement



John DeMoor,
Custody Attorney



In October, we hosted our most successful fundraiser yet: the Jim Holloran Memorial Happy Hour at McGurk's Irish Pub, honoring one of our most steadfast supporters, the late Jim Holloran.

More than 200 supporters gathered, raising nearly \$100,000 to sustain our mission – more than double the amount that this event raised two years earlier. A highlight of the evening was the presence of 11 former SLSLS clients — now SLSLS ambassadors — who shared powerful stories of resilience and courage.

In December, we moved into an office of our very own in Olivette to accommodate our expanding team! Our new mailing address is P.O. Box 8329, St. Louis, Missouri 63132. We are incredibly grateful to **Carmody MacDonald P.C., Gray Design Group Inc.,** and the **Incarnate Word Foundation** for generously donating all of our beautiful office furniture and helping us create a welcoming, functional space for clients and staff. We are extremely grateful for the incredible generosity of **MERS Goodwill** for providing SLSLS' first home for the past three years.



Client Impact

“ SLSLS made me feel heard, believed, and validated. I could not afford a lawyer on my own, and their free services gave me access to support and representation I never could have managed by myself. I don’t think I would even be here without them.” — A.H.

“ The day after I applied, I was assigned attorneys who spent 3 hours with me going over evidence and documentation. **At the lowest point of my life, when I really wasn’t sure if I’d make it, SLSLS lifted me up and carried me.”** — B.B.

“ I was granted a 10-year Order of Protection that automatically renews until 2045. This piece of paper may not physically shield me, but it gave me back my voice. **This is more than just a legal order – it’s a declaration that my life, my safety, and my story matter.”** — C.S.

“ For 25 years I endured physical violence, threats, sexual assault, humiliation, and economic abuse. I knew nothing about the law. My lawyer listened to my story, even on a Sunday, and thanks to his efforts I was granted a five-year restraining order. **For the first time in years, I have begun to find a sense of peace in my heart.”** — A.S.

“ I was embarrassed, hurting, and frustrated when I met the SLSLS advocate, but I probably wouldn’t have followed through with the process had she not been there. **I 100% wouldn’t have won without an attorney, and this nightmare would have just gone on and on.”** — A.K.

“ **The relief of just knowing I would have a lawyer there was tremendous.** In court, I was so nervous I was shaking, but my lawyer walked right next to me and sat beside me the entire time. I cried both from reliving the trauma and from hearing that I got a 10-year order.” — L.G.

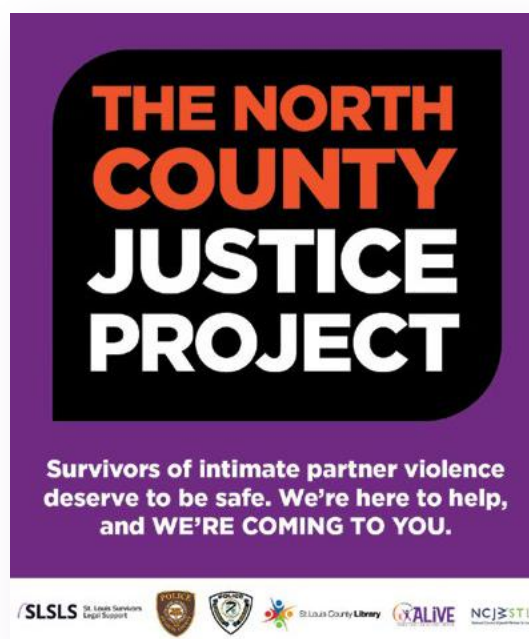
“ After attempting to navigate the legal process alone, standing up against my violent ex-partner and his attorney by myself – I was about to give up. **It’s only because of SLSLS that I was able to receive 8 years of protection. I have peace of mind knowing I won’t have to go through this again for a very long time.”** — J.B.

Looking Ahead

With the support from the U.S. Department of Justice and the Office on Violence Against Women, SLSLS launched two new initiatives in 2026: the Custody Project and the North County Justice Project

The Custody Project addresses a significant gap facing intimate partner violence (“IPV”) survivors in St. Louis County: access to legal representation in child custody proceedings. While Orders of Protection (“OPs”) provide immediate safety, they rarely resolve long-term custody issues. Custody litigation often becomes the vehicle through which abusers exert control. Despite having full OPs, many survivors who seek custody determinations are compelled to return to court and sit mere feet away from their abusers, who often have their own attorneys. **By providing free legal representation in custody cases, SLSLS is helping IPV survivors get orders that protect them and their children.**

In May, SLSLS launched the **North County Justice Project** in partnership with the St. Louis County Library, the St. Louis County Police Department’s North County Precinct, the Florissant Police Department, the National Council of Jewish Women St. Louis, and ALIVE. Through this initiative, SLSLS will be present at library branches and police departments in North County, which is disproportionately affected by IPV, to help survivors file petitions for OPs.



By embedding SLSLS in these accessible, familiar locations, a critical barrier to justice is eliminated: the need for survivors to travel to the courthouse in Clayton to file their petitions, often via public transportation with no direct route.

This approach meets survivors where they are and ultimately aims to interrupt violence sooner in its progression, reducing both its duration and severity.

SLSLS Board and Staff

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Aruna Tailor, Specialist in Immigration Services

Kimberly Birdwell, Director of Community Engagement

John DeMoor, Custody Attorney

Megan Duncan, Advancement Manager

Kylie Cain, Office Administrator



A black and white photograph of five women of various ages and ethnicities. In the foreground, a woman with dark hair and a dark jacket is smiling and looking towards a woman wearing a white hijab and a patterned long-sleeved shirt. Behind them, three other women are smiling and looking in the same direction. The woman on the far left has dark curly hair and is wearing a striped tank top. The woman in the center has blonde hair and is wearing a dark cardigan over a light-colored top. The woman on the far right has blonde hair and is wearing a white t-shirt. The overall mood is warm and supportive.

**Because of donors, volunteers, and
partners like you, survivors in St. Louis
do not have to walk into court alone.
Your support makes all of this possible.
We are deeply grateful.**

Ways to Support

There are many ways to get involved:

- **Make** a gift.
- **Volunteer** as an attorney or as a community advocate.
- **Explore** a partnership with our team.
- **Simply** share our mission with your network.

Every action, big or small, helps survivors and their children find safety and justice. To learn more, visit SLSLS.org.



VISIT US NOW!



DONATE NOW!



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