



ANDVSA

Alaska Network on Domestic Violence
& Sexual Assault

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Dear Legislators:

The 19 member agencies that make up the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (ANDVSA) support HB 106 (Civil Legal Services Fund) version A. We are grateful to Representative Fansler, his staff, and co-sponsors for their work on this important legislation.

Consistent and robust legal service provision for victims and survivors is integral to ending domestic violence and sexual assault in our state. When a victim is able to leave the person who is continuously committing violence against them, they are often entering an even more heightened period of danger and vulnerability. During this period of separation, legal services are an important tool in successfully escaping the cycle of violence. In fact, studies have found that **legal service provision is the most effective means of ending violence** in victims' lives. Pertinent civil matters include aiding victims in obtaining safety and other basic needs through protective orders, temporary custody of children, and safe and permanent housing. Pro bono attorneys are vital resources for victims throughout this process.

On average, the ANDVSA Legal Program's Pro Bono Program receives 10-12 case referrals from member agencies per week. In FY16 alone, we received a total of 410 applications for representation; and our pro bono attorneys represented victims in 71 cases involving domestic violence and sexual assault – providing thousands of hours of services and equaling approximately \$858,113 in donated legal assistance. In the same fiscal year, the Legal Program provided representation in 271 cases which, on average, take 20-100 hours of attorney time. One-hundred percent of clients who participated in the client evaluations survey indicated that they felt safer due to representation by an attorney.

In addition to offering training and resources to pro bono attorneys, our Legal Program also provides training and support to legal advocates around the state who, working through our member agencies, assist victims every day in safely navigating the legal system.

Given the scope of our work alongside partners like Alaska Legal Services, demand continues to exceed supply, despite the availability of volunteer attorneys and advocates who are eager to lend their time and skills to victims. Funding facilitated by HB 106 would ensure that we minimize turning away clients in need. We strongly urge you to support HB 106 in order to expand capacity for litigation and legal advocacy, as one critical factor in ending violence in Alaska.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at (907) 586 3650 or clowry@andvsa.org. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,


Carmen Lowry
Executive Director

Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

Member Programs

Anchorage AWAIC, STAR Bethel TWC Cordova CFRCC Dillingham SAFE Fairbanks IAC Homer SPHH Juneau AWARE
Kenai LeeShore Center Ketchikan WISH Kodiak KWRCC Kotzebue MFCC Nome BSWG Petersburg WAVE
Seward SeaView Community Services Sitka SAFV Unalaska USAFV Utqiagvik AWIC Valdez AVV