



RIGHTS IN SYSTEMS ENFORCED

# IMPACT REPORT

*Empower. Change. Ignite.*

# 2023

# INTRODUCTION

The Rights in Systems Enforced (RISE) Clinic was the first of its kind clinical teaching program in the country providing legal representation for survivors of violent crime in criminal court. RISE clients included survivors of human trafficking, domestic violence, sexual assault, attempted murder, and families of homicide victims.

Moreover, the clinic sought to represent populations that have historically experienced the most harm and discrimination by the criminal justice system, such as people of color, immigrants, refugees, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ, and low-income communities.

The RISE Clinic approached survivor representation through a critical race and gender justice lens, which called for culturally competent and trauma-informed legal counseling to center the interests of its clients.

Our Clinic's holistic approach included legal assistance with collateral civil matters, including record relief for crimes survivors forced to commit by their perpetrators, securing immigration status based on crime victim remedies, and other civil matters—including family law, civil lawsuits for damages, and applications for crime victims benefits.



# MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERS

The RISE Clinic at LMU Loyola Law School was founded on the radical idea that attorneys and service providers can take an anti-carceral approach to justice, and that crime survivors, like criminal defendants, deserve to have their interests represented in the criminal justice process.

In 2021, the RISE Clinic was awarded funding by Department of Justice (DOJ) for 3 years, as part of national network of clinics across the country dedicated to providing legal representation to assist in asserting and seeking enforcements of the rights of survivors of violent crime.

In its inauguration, the RISE Clinic became the only victims' rights program in a law school and the first in the country specifically designed to train law students in representing survivors of violent crime within the criminal justice system. In their practice, RISE Clinic students were some of the first Crime Victims' Rights attorneys in the country filing Notices of Appearances in criminal proceedings to inform the court that survivors had their own counsel. In addition, the clinic also incorporated a social worker as a co-teacher to promote a trauma-informed approach and community models of lawyering centered on survivor empowerment.

Unfortunately, the RISE Clinic along with the 14 other RISE programs in the country, will not receive additional funding to continue this important work. Although we celebrate our accomplishments and advocacy efforts over the past 3 years, it is with a bittersweet feeling that we prepare to close the RISE Clinic. We reflect on the challenges faced by survivors amid a climate that continues to rely on a traditional justice system that perpetuates mass incarceration.

The RISE Clinic hopes that policy reform and reallocation of resources will ultimately allow survivors to seek justice on their own terms. We also hope that the law students who participated in the RISE Clinic will be a leading voice for criminal justice reform locally and nationally.

With gratitude,



Director  
Stephanie Richard



Program Manager  
Paloma Bustos



Staff Attorney  
Anabel Sanchez

# IMPACT SNAPSHOT

**795**

TRAINEES

TOTAL NUMBER OF LAW STUDENTS, PRO BONO ATTORNEYS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS TRAINED

**65**

CRIME SURVIVORS

TOTAL NUMBER OF CRIME SURVIVORS SERVED

**\$500K**

RECOVERED FOR 38 SURVIVORS FROM THE CRIME VICTIMS COMPENSATION PROGRAM

**10,000**

HOURS

TOTAL HOURS OF LEGAL AND SOCIAL SERVICES, INCLUDING PRO BONO HOURS

**\$2.9  
MIL**

IN-KIND LEGAL SERVICES DONATED BY PRO BONO PARTNERS

# CLINICAL TRAINING

LMU Loyola Law School RISE Clinic students participated in weekly seminars and worked directly with survivors. Through the State Bar of California’s Practical Training of Law Students (PTLS) Program, law students were certified to provide legal services under the supervision of a licensed attorney. In their roles, they conducted comprehensive legal assessments to identify all potential legal benefits and barriers to formulate a strategic legal plan centered on the interest of the survivors.



“Through my client interactions, I’ve had the privilege of witnessing the real-world impact of the law on individuals and communities. This firsthand exposure has heightened my sense of responsibility as a future lawyer, emphasizing the importance of empathy, and communication.”

Savion Cotten '24



**28**  
**STUDENTS**

TOTAL CLINICAL STUDENTS

**86**  
**STUDENTS**

EXPOSED TO IMPORTANT VICTIMS' RIGHT ISSUES AND ITS INTERSECTION WITH CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM AND VICTIMS' RIGHTS ISSUES

**6,000**  
**HOURS**

ATTORNEY WORK PRODUCT AND CLIENT SERVICES

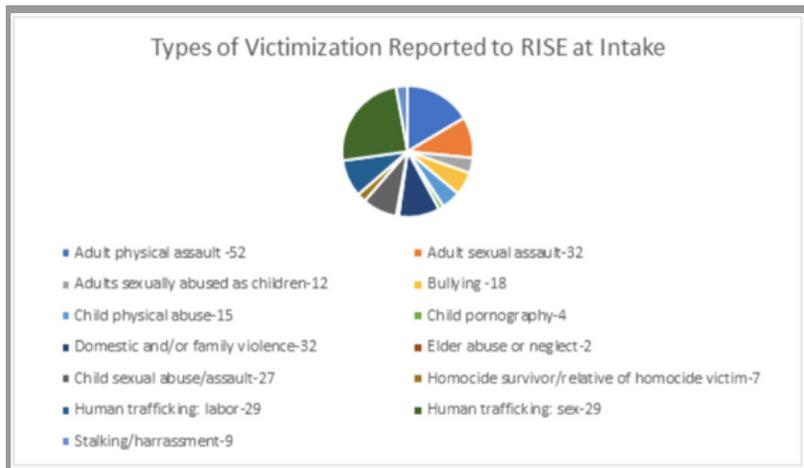
# HOLISTIC APPROACH

By taking a holistic approach to legal representation, the RISE Clinic worked with survivors to identify legal and non-legal issues and link them to resources and other support. In addition to direct representation in criminal court, survivors were assisted with record relief due to crimes they were forced to commit by their perpetrators, assistance with immigration remedies, compensation for loss of wages, and civil lawsuits for damages.



# SOCIAL WORKER DIFFERENCE

The RISE social worker played a crucial role in supporting our clients and students, and raised awareness around the challenges experienced by survivors. She helped create trainings on trauma-informed lawyering and worked in collaboration with our staff attorneys, law students, victim advocates, medical service providers, and therapists to ensure that survivors had the proper support.



## Trauma Informed Approach

Building a trusting relationship with clients through a collaborative, client-centered approach



## Support Services

Connecting survivors with complex medical, behavioral health, and social service needs, with much-needed resources.

“The intake process was very trauma informed and my client felt safe answering all of the questions.”

**630**  
SOCIAL SERVICE  
REFERRALS

**750**  
HOURS OF  
SOCIAL  
SERVICES

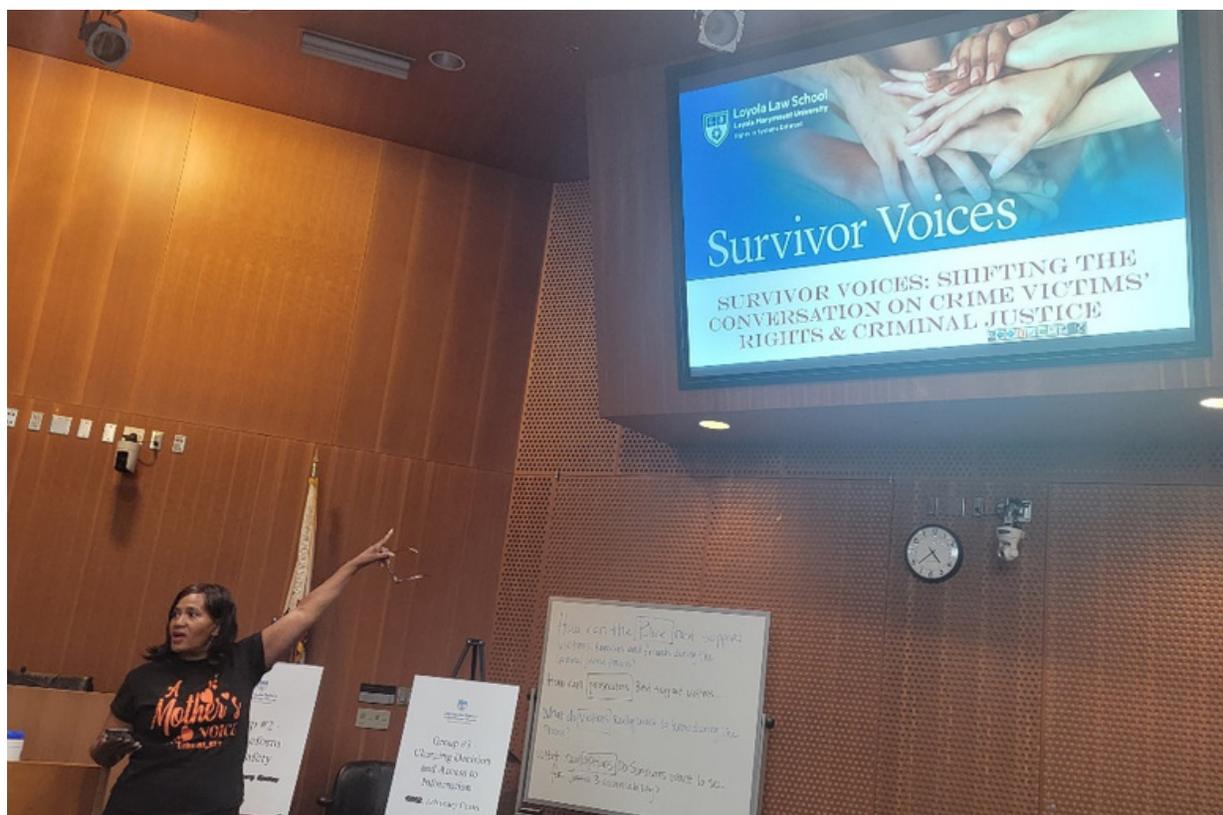
# RISE SYMPOSIUMS

The RISE Clinic hosted three forums to engage survivor leaders and expert practitioners in discussions about criminal justice reform. The forums brought together survivors, prosecutors, public defenders, victim advocates, and service providers to discuss survivor safety, charging decisions, bail reform, resources, and trauma-informed care. A total of 37 survivor leaders and 15 representatives from the criminal justice system served as panelists and experts at these RISE led events.

Criminal Justice Reform: Protecting, Enforcing, and Advancing the Rights of Victims, April 20, 2022

Survivor Voices: Shifting the Conversation on Crime Victims' Rights & Criminal Justice Reform, October 21, 2022

Human Trafficking Forum, June 30, 2023



# TRAINING PROGRAMS

RISE trained 795 law students, pro bono attorneys and community partners, resulting in leveraging an additional \$2.9 million in-kind services from our pro bono partners.



## PRO BONO TRAININGS

The RISE Clinic offered a comprehensive 8-hour training on Crime Victims' Rights for attorneys focusing on victims' rights established under the Federal Crime Victims' Rights Act and Victim's Bill of Rights in California. The hybrid-format training included practical tools on navigating the criminal justice system, trauma-informed care, and information on alternative forms of justice.



## CRIME SURVIVOR RIGHTS 101

RISE developed a training program 'Victims' Rights' specifically for service providers to further support their work with survivors. The trainings were attended by service providers, advocates, case managers, and social workers, situated across different counties of the state, including Los Angeles, Orange, and Fresno. RISE held a total of 19 Trainings for 393 participants.

*"This training acknowledged systemic and cultural forces which create and contribute to traumatizing experiences for survivors seeking justice."*

# LISTENING TO SURVIVOR STORIES



## Human Trafficking

The RISE Clinic provided legal representation and social service support to 6 women, all monolingual Chinese nationals, trafficked for commercial sex and labor in Los Angeles County.

The RISE Clinic assisted these survivors with asserting their rights throughout the criminal process after they decided to report to the police. The RISE attorneys and law students worked with four of the survivors, who testified in a federal case against the trafficker. During the two years that the survivors waited for their testimony to be heard in court, RISE assisted them with immigration relief, cleared their criminal records, and connected them to medical services and public benefits. After the 7-week trial was completed, RISE was able to secure \$288,000 in seized assets from the defendant. RISE also completed their applications to adjust their legal status and the survivors are now awaiting their green cards.

## **Domestic Violence**

RISE Clinic assisted a domestic violence survivor facing eviction and criminal arrests due to her victimization. When the survivor came to the clinic, she described multiple incidents of physical, emotional, and financial abuse by her partner. RISE assessed that her arrests and eviction notice had been the direct result of the domestic violence she experienced by her partner and helped her to seal this from her record. In this case, the RISE Clinic believes it was the first in Los Angeles to file a petition to vacate these arrests under California Penal Code 236.15, a new law that permits a victim of intimate partner or sexual violence to request that arrests and convictions that resulted during the time they were victimized to be sealed and vacated.

Further, RISE helped her secure pro bono services from a law firm to remove the eviction from her record. In addition, RISE's social worker wrote a letter to the client's school to explain the circumstances in her case, and to request an extension on her exams, which she was granted. She also helped the survivor get connected with mental health services and access financial support.

## **Homicide Victim Family Members**

The RISE clinic played a key role in providing legal and social services support to the family of a homicide victim, an 18-year-old Latino male who had just started a new job two weeks prior to his death. The sister of the deceased contacted the clinic after many failed attempts to find an attorney willing to represent their family to demand justice and obtain information about the investigation surrounding her brother's death.

RISE took on representation of the victims' family—his mother and his two older sisters. Student attorneys successfully advocated for criminal charges to be brought in this case. RISE students also successfully advocated for language access for these clients both with the coroner's office and during the criminal proceedings. Further, RISE also helped the family receive reimbursement for funeral expenses and cover the cost of therapy through the crime victims fund. Through the two years that the family was represented by the clinic, RISE maintained close contact with the family, including accompanying the family to a memorial service dedicated to murdered victims and accompaniment for all court proceedings.

# CRITICAL CUTTING EDGE LEGAL SERVICES



- Recovered \$500K for 38 survivors through the Crime Victim's Compensation Board
- Secured \$288K seized assets by the federal government for 6 victims of sex trafficking
- Appealed a restitution order that denied over \$300K in lost wages to three elderly survivors of labor trafficking
- Collaborated with Pro Bono Counsel to file 3 civil suits for damages, with expected outcome to result in millions awarded to survivors
- Filed 3 Writs of Mandamus asserting Victims' Rights in federal and state court
- Appealed denial of human trafficking crime victims benefits to the California Victim's Compensation Board
- Secured immigration relief for crime victims
- Secured housing protections and credit repair for domestic violence survivors
- Sealed and /or vacated criminal arrests and convictions directly related to being victims of human trafficking or domestic violence

# TESTIMONIALS

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*“Hearing directly from survivors one on one about their personal needs, barriers and their frustrations even with service providers is an important reminder to include survivors when designing and implementing support programs.”*

**RISE Symposium Participant**

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*“I had no idea Victim Right's Attorneys existed. I always assumed the District Attorney was the one representing the victim. Now I know they actually represent the state and not the victim.”*

**Crime Victims' Rights Training Participant**

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*“They helped me from the beginning and supported me in everything, explaining in detail on issues I didn't understand. I noticed their presence and commitment to my case.”*

**RISE Client**

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*“I'm proud of learning how to speak to victims in a trauma-informed way and I feel much more confident interviewing clients. I'm also proud of my case plan and all the work that went into it.”*

**RISE Clinic Student**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We want to thank our passionate and committed team, including our Crime Victims' Rights Service Providers, our dedicated social worker, eager law students, and our network of professional partners. A special thanks to Professor Kathleen Kim for bringing RISE to Loyola Law School and the inaugural classes of RISE students.

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*Our work would not have been possible without the support of our partners.*

**GIBSON DUNN**

**PERKINS**coie

**K&L GATES**

**O'Melveny**

**Arnold & Porter**

**Clark Hill**

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 [www.lls.edu/riase](http://www.lls.edu/riase)

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