

A photograph of a woman with dark curly hair and a young girl with long blonde hair. The woman is smiling and looking down at the girl. The girl is also smiling and looking towards the camera. They are both wearing light-colored tops. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene.

You make  
our life-saving  
work possible

2016 Annual Report





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<b>Allan Marks</b> Partner, Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy LLP	<b>Sonya Passi</b> (Co-Founder) Founder & CEO, FreeFrom

## Our Staff 2016

<b>Erin Smith, Esq.</b> Executive Director & CEO	<b>Shuray Ghorishi, Esq.</b> Staff Attorney
<b>Jennafer Dorfman Wagner, Esq.</b> Director of Programs	<b>Renee Boman</b> Paralegal
<b>Nancy K. D. Lemon, Esq.</b> Legal Director	<b>Claudia Baldwin</b> Administrative Assistant
<b>Jess Eagle</b> Development Director	



## Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

In 2016, Family Violence Appellate Project took a bold step forward to become a statewide leader in changing the legal landscape to protect survivors of domestic abuse and their children.

In addition to our steadfast advocacy in the appellate courts, which resulted in 7 new published cases being added to California law that benefit survivors and help break the inter-generational cycle of abuse, we conducted a landmark statewide survey of domestic violence attorneys and advocates to learn, from their perspectives, about the greatest challenges survivors face in California's courts.

The results of our survey were alarming and reinforced how much work remains to be done. But we are reinvigorated, not disheartened, and we launched our Central Valley Project to start addressing the greatest needs of survivors in an underserved region of the state.



FVAP will continue to be a leader in identifying and implementing statewide legal solutions for survivors, while always listening to survivors' voices. It is for them, for their well-being, for their empowerment, and for their children, that we press forward with determination and great hope.

With gratitude,

Executive Director & Co-Founder

Learn more about our work at [www.fvaplaw.org](http://www.fvaplaw.org)



## Our Mission and Vision

### Empowering survivors of domestic violence

Family Violence Appellate Project is the only organization in California dedicated to providing free legal representation to domestic violence survivors in appeals.

We represent low-income survivors to appeal and overturn dangerous trial court decisions that put survivors or their children at risk of ongoing abuse. Our goal is to empower survivors through the civil legal system, to ensure that they and their children can live in safe and healthy environments, free from abuse.

### Disrupting inter-generational cycles of trauma & abuse

We focus on changing California law with a larger goal in mind: ending the inter-generational cycle of trauma and abuse. Children who grow up in safe, healthy environments are far less likely to become abusive as adults. By keeping kids out of abusive homes, FVAP is building a better California for the next generation, one case at a time.





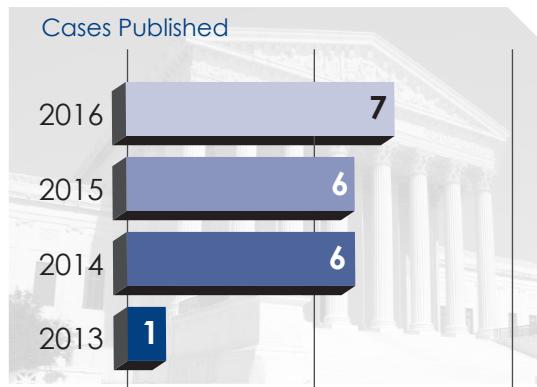
## How We Help



### Changing California Law

FVAP's innovative Case Publication Program focuses on obtaining official publication of California cases that prioritize the safety and well-being of children and domestic violence survivors. These cases set new, binding legal precedent statewide, resulting in fairer, safer trial court outcomes for thousands of survivors throughout California.

At the end of 2016, we had a **74% publication rate**, far above the average statewide publication rate of 9%.

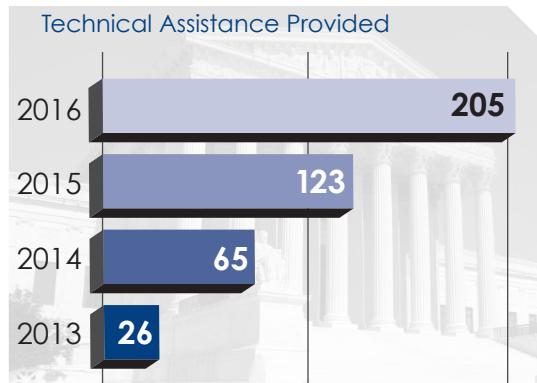


### Real-Time Legal Assistance

At FVAP, we believe survivors should have the justice they deserve the first time, without the need to appeal.

We are the go-to resource for real-time legal answers and strategic assistance with trial court cases in California, so California's domestic violence laws have the greatest impact possible, and so survivors have the best chance of winning their cases the first time.

This remains our fastest-growing service to the community.



**\$1,887,851**  
of FVAP Impact  
including Pro Bono

**\$546,242**  
FVAP Direct  
Expenditures

### Leveraging Pro Bono Services

We didn't do this alone! 109 volunteers donated over 6,500 hours of free, pro bono legal assistance to FVAP and our clients in 2016.

The value of this pro bono help was over \$1.3 million, almost 3 ½ times what FVAP spent on expenses in 2016. This means our spending had 3 ½ times greater impact than if we were doing this work alone.

On behalf of the survivors and children we were able to help this year because of your generous contributions of time and expertise, THANK YOU!

Learn more about our work at [www.fvaplaw.org](http://www.fvaplaw.org)

### 1

### Surveying the State

This year we conducted a landmark statewide survey of domestic violence attorneys and advocates to hear, from their perspectives, about the greatest challenges survivors face in California's courts. The results were distressing – nearly 90% of respondents across the state reported that trial courts make improper child custody and visitation orders in domestic violence cases, and nearly 80% reported problems getting restraining orders. FVAP is using the survey results to find statewide solutions to help survivors.

### 2

### Central Valley Project

To begin addressing the needs of abuse survivors in California's Central Valley, we launched our Central Valley Project. Legal assistance is extremely scarce in this region of the state, yet the need is great. To help fill this gap, we are providing training, real-time answers to legal questions, sample legal documents, and appellate assistance to address the greatest needs identified by survivors and advocates.

### 3

### Leading the Campaign for Access to Justice

FVAP believes all people have the right to access to justice and a level playing field in court. Yet in a majority of California's counties, there is no record of what happens in trial court hearings, effectively denying low-income people the ability to appeal their cases and shutting the doors of the appellate courts to our most vulnerable. In 2016, FVAP fought to end this injustice, advocating before the California Supreme Court and a statewide court Commission for the right of low-income abuse survivors to have access to justice and the ability to overturn dangerous trial court decisions.

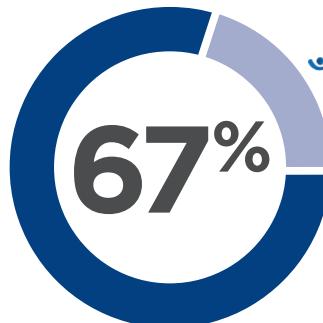


## By the Numbers 2016

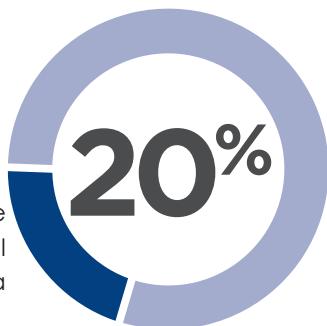


# 15

Survivors and their kids  
represented in appeals



 **FVAP** appeal  
win percentage



Statewide average  
percentage of successful  
appeals in California

# 9

Interns & volunteers  
in Next Generation  
Program



# 7

Cases published



# 205

Attorneys, advocates, and individuals assisted  
through Legal (Technical) Assistance Program

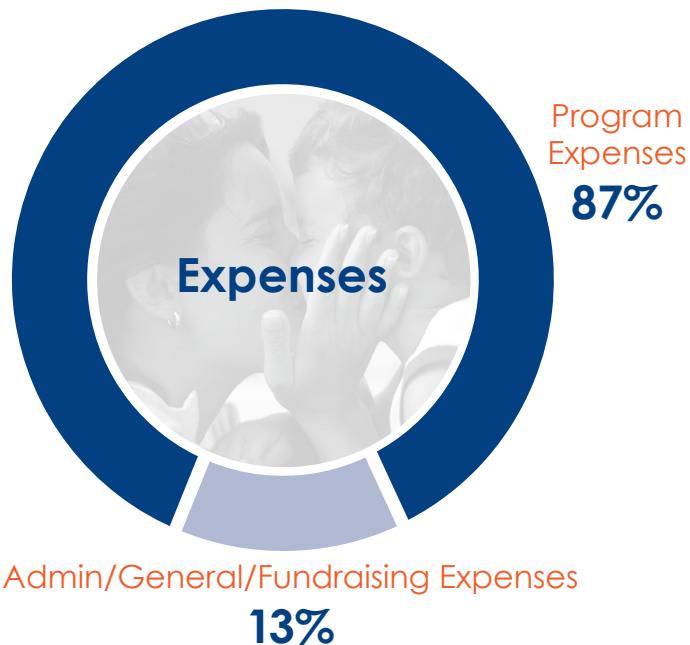
Attorneys, judges, law students, domestic violence advocates trained

# 406



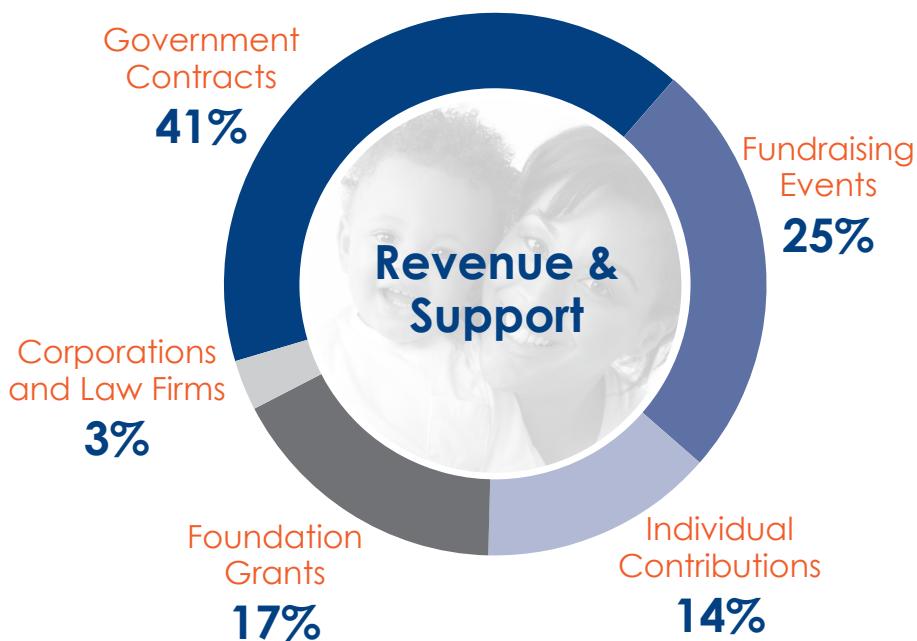
**Statement of Activities**

<b>Revenue &amp; Support</b>	<b>2016</b>
Foundation Grants	\$122,781
Fundraising Event Revenue	\$185,279
Individual Contributions	\$105,299
Corporate/Law Firm Contributions	\$22,421
Government Contracts	\$298,495
Contributions In-Kind	\$1,341,609
Other	\$1,867
<b>Total Revenue &amp; Support</b>	<b>\$2,077,751</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Expenses</b>	
Program Expenses	\$1,647,773
Admin, General, & Fundraising	\$240,078
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,887,851</b>
<b>Increase in net assets</b>	<b>\$189,900</b>



## Statement of Financial Position

	2016	2015
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash & cash equivalents	\$ 764,146	\$ 741,788
Grants & pledges receivable	\$ 159,043	\$ 50,000
Other assets	\$ 11,738	\$ 9,622
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 934,927</b>	<b>\$ 801,410</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Accounts payable & accrued liabilities	\$ 16,429	\$ 16,653
Deferred revenue	\$ 10,000	-
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$ 26,429</b>	<b>\$ 16,653</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Unrestricted	\$ 883,505	\$ 693,605
Temporarily restricted	\$ 24,993	\$ 91,152
Total net assets	\$ 908,498	\$ 784,757
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 934,927</b>	<b>\$ 801,410</b>



Learn more about our work at [www.fvaplaw.org](http://www.fvaplaw.org)

## 2016 Pro Bono Partners and Volunteers

### Pro Bono Professional Services

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Jones & Appel  
David Hunter  
Schiff Hardin LLP  
Jones Day  
Milbank, Tweed,  
Hadley & McCloy  
Qualcomm

### Law Student Interns

Irene Chen  
Cory Hernandez  
Emma McLean-Riggs  
Megan Miller  
Helen Wang

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Eliza Duggan  
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## Join us in this life-saving movement!

Since our founding in 2012, FVAP's success has been due to the efforts and contributions of many people like you. Without this community support, we could not have started a legal aid office from scratch in such a short time, or helped nearly as many survivors of domestic violence and their children find safety.

### You can be part of this movement to end domestic violence!

- **Join our Board of Directors**
- **Join our Advisory Board**
- **Join our New Leadership Council**
- **Volunteer**
- **Donate**

Please [contact us](#) if you are interested in any of these opportunities. We can't wait to welcome you into the FVAP family!



# 2016 Donors

**FVAP received donations from 949 supporters last year, including the following:**

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pro bono graphic design of this report.*