

SHARE:

[Join Our Email List](#)



**action &
impact.**

The Ascend Justice Newsletter • December 2025

Annual Appeal

Over the past year, we've witnessed so many kinds of change – of government funding priorities, public policies, and the very way that we engage with each other. In the midst of so much change, courageous survivors of gender-based violence continue to seek safety and independence. And that means they will continue to need holistic legal services. They will continue to need Ascend Justice.

That's why we are asking for your support.

Ascend Justice serves survivors with a unique model of legal services. We can provide legal help for survivors seeking to obtain an Order of Protection, get divorced, figure out parental responsibility, discharge coerced debts, clear criminal records, and/or apply for legal status, plus holistic help for those who need temporary shelter, to make a safety plan, to apply for public benefits, and/or to connect with health care, child care, mental health, and other services.

And no other organization has such an active, amazing community of supporters. When government funding priorities shift away from legal aid and gender-based violence, **our community steps up.**

Thank you for being part of this community. Thank you for helping survivors like Adeya, who fled horrible gender-based violence in her home country and spent seven long years in immigration limbo in the US before Ascend Justice immigration attorneys were able to secure green cards for her and her husband. Thank you for helping the more than 2,250 other people we were able to serve over the past year.

Next year, with your support, we hope we'll be able to serve even more.

BONUS: from now until December 31, your gift will go twice as far. A generous donor will match each dollar, up to \$5,000, so donate today to double your impact!

Donate to our Annual Appeal



Two State Legislative Wins, But City Budget Still in Limbo

Earlier this month, Governor Pritzker signed the Court Access, Safety, and Participation Act, which passed during the IL legislative veto session in October. The new law prevents federal immigration agents from making civil arrests within 1,000 feet of Illinois courts. The bill further prohibits federal immigration activity near daycares, universities, and hospitals.

Another state-level win for survivors during the veto session is the Illinois omnibus transportation bill, which includes a requirement to develop a free/reduced fare program for sexual assault and domestic violence survivors.

Both bills are good news at the state level for survivors, but the City of Chicago budget is still up in the air. Early budget proposals called for deep cuts (43%) to gender-based violence services, but Mayor Johnson's most recent proposal keeps gender-based violence funding the same as last year. The issue is far from settled, however, and a new vote is looming.

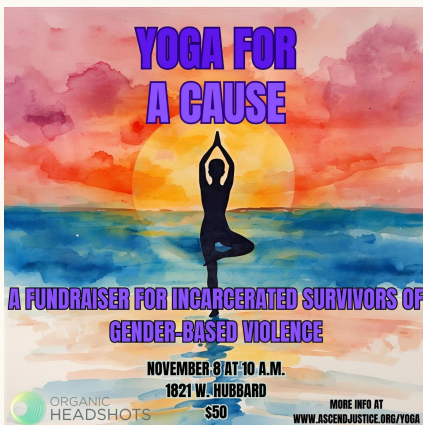
That's why we are urging all of our Chicago-based supporters to [contact their Alders](#) and ask them to keep funding for gender-based violence services intact. Please call or email your Alders THIS WEEK and let them know you are a constituent who wants to keep funding for gender-based violence services the same as last year in the Chicago city budget!

Trivia Night!

In early November, our awesome Young Professionals Board (YPB) hosted our most successful Trivia Night ever: **we raised more than \$11,000 in a single night!**

Our winners this year were the "A-Team," and along with the glory, they took home some highly coveted Ascend Justice picnic blankets. Honorable mentions go to second place, team "R1 and Done," and third place, team "It's Hammer Time." We are so grateful to everyone who came out to play with us this year, and we're already looking forward to next year's rematch!

Special thanks to [Skadden](#) for hosting us in their beautiful office space and to [Whaddayaknow? Free Pub Trivia](#) for running the game! And a HUGE thanks to our sponsors: **Mastermind** [DLA Piper](#), **Brainiac** [Hammer Serna & Quinn](#), and **Round King** [& Spalding](#), [Lathrop GPM](#), [Lawrence Kamin](#), and [Rudolph F.X. Migliore, P.C.](#).



Yoga for Good

In November, longtime Ascend Justice Board member, former law firm partner, and yoga instructor Karen Munoz, teamed up with YPB member Elena Panyard, to throw a yoga fundraiser for our organization!

Karen taught the yoga class at [Organic Headshots](#), a beautiful photography studio near West Loop. Check out the [short highlight video](#) they made of the event!

This is the second yoga fundraiser Karen and Elena have thrown for Ascend Justice, and we are so grateful! If you are interested in holding your own fundraiser for us, we can help you get started. [Learn more!](#)

Clinics for High-Risk Clients

Some of the survivors we serve are at high risk of getting caught up in the ongoing immigration enforcement sweeps. People are being seized off Chicago's streets, regardless of immigration status, in an unprecedented take-first-ask-questions-later federal assault on due process. And the blatant racial profiling recently OK'd by the Supreme Court has many of our non-white clients afraid to leave their homes.

So Ascend Justice is doing what we can to help these clients prepare. Over the past two months, we have held two weekend clinics, where Ascend



Justice attorneys and client support staff volunteered to work with clients to get essential paperwork filled out. We have been especially focused on immigrant clients with American citizen children, filling out passport applications and making sure that the kids have everything they need in case their parents are taken.

Because we do not expect the need to decrease any time soon, we plan to hold additional clinics in the coming months on an as-needed basis.



Please help us welcome our 2026 Skadden Fellow, Lindsay Nicholas!

As many of you in the legal profession know, a [Skadden Fellowship](#) is a HUGE deal. That's why we are thrilled to announce that one of our interns, Lindsay Nicholas, will be a 2026 Skadden Fellow with Ascend Justice!

Lindsay will be working with our incarcerated survivors program starting in fall 2026, just as soon as she passes the bar exam.

We are so excited to welcome Lindsay back to the Ascend Justice team, and we can't wait to see all the exciting work she will do on behalf of survivors!

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year from all of us at Ascend Justice!

2025 has been a tough year for a lot of people. Yet, despite everything that's been happening politically and socially, we find we still have so much to be thankful for.

We are thankful to have a **staff** full of such caring and skilled professionals. Every single person on our team works their hearts out to get survivors what they need to find safety and heal.

We are thankful for our **Board and YPB** for helping our organization grow. Because of their efforts, our agency is healthy, our work is reaching more people, and our community is growing.

We are thankful for our **incredible supporters**, who keep us going. The money and time our community donates to our work helps us reach more survivors every day.

And we are forever grateful to our **clients**, for trusting us and for teaching us. We are constantly in awe of their courage, not just in surviving, but in becoming a voice for others, for standing up and demanding change so that no one has to go through what they did again.

A graphic with a gold glitter background. The text "Offices Closed" is in black, "December 24 – January 2" is in black, and "Holiday Break" is in red. A small logo is in the bottom right corner.

Offices Closed
December 24 – January 2
Holiday Break

We hope you all have a wonderful holiday season filled with love and gratitude.

Please note: our offices will be closed December 24 through January 2. We'll see you again in the new year on Monday, January 5!



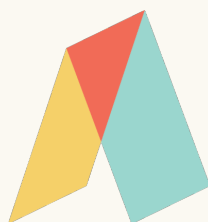
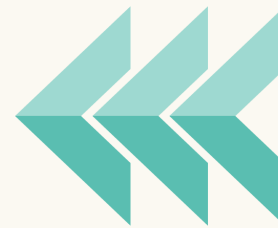
There are so many ways to support us!

Make a [one-time](#) contribution.

Join our [Sustainer Circle](#) with automatic, monthly donations.

Buy our [merch.](#)

[Check out all the ways to get involved!](#)



ASCEND JUSTICE

legal advocacy. transforming lives.



Ascend Justice | 177 N State St Suite 500 | Chicago, IL 60601 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!