

**legal advocacy.
transforming lives.**



ASCEND JUSTICE



our mission & vision

Ascend Justice is a mission-driven organization. Our mission is to empower individuals and families impacted by gender-based violence or the child welfare system—we strive to help people achieve safety and stability through holistic legal advocacy and system reform.

We work collaboratively with our clients, listening to their experiences and providing the services and support they tell us they need. And we work in partnership with other social and legal services organizations because our voices are stronger together. Through both legal services and advocacy, we work toward strong communities where survivors have the tools they need to build safe and healthy lives.

services

Ascend Justice provides free holistic legal services to people who have experienced gender-based violence or been impacted by the child welfare system. We work with survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence, trafficking, and stalking, as well as parents impacted by Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) investigations. Our goal is to use the legal system to help our clients navigate out of abusive situations or child welfare investigations to a place where their lives are more stable and secure. At the Domestic Violence Courthouse, we help people seeking immediate safety with Orders of Protection and Civil No-Contact Orders. In our headquarters office, we provide both legal and support services, tailored to each client's needs, including for divorce and child responsibility issues, immigration services, services for incarcerated survivors, DCFS defense, and with economic issues such as housing, employment, or debt relief.



Orders of Protection

When court is in session, we operate a legal clinic for people who need a court order mandating that an abuser stop the abuse, leave a home, or stay away from children.



Immigration

We help immigrants with U visas, T visas, VAWA Self-Petitions, Battered Spouse Waivers, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, asylum, and non-detained removal issues.



Family Law

To help survivors dissolve ties with their abusers, we provide divorce services and handle child-related matters for both married and unmarried parents.



Economic Justice

We help clients with employment law under VESSA, housing law under the Safe Homes Act, consumer debt brief services, and Crime Victims Compensation.



Family Defense

We help parents and caregivers with ongoing DCFS investigations of child abuse or neglect, as well as expungement appeals and civil rights cases.



Incarcerated Survivors

Survivors who are or have been incarcerated face unique legal challenges, plus harm from the system itself, and we provide them with services across all our practice areas.

advocacy

Not only do we help individuals use legal systems to meet their needs and heal, we also advocate for better, more just laws and systems for everyone. We work within existing systems like the courts and the child welfare system every day, and we see how laws and practices can harm individuals. We envision solutions to make these systems more equitable and just, and our advocacy team leads initiatives and works in partnership with peer organizations across the state to strengthen programs and supports, craft new laws, and reform systems to work for survivors and families.



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Support Our Work

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