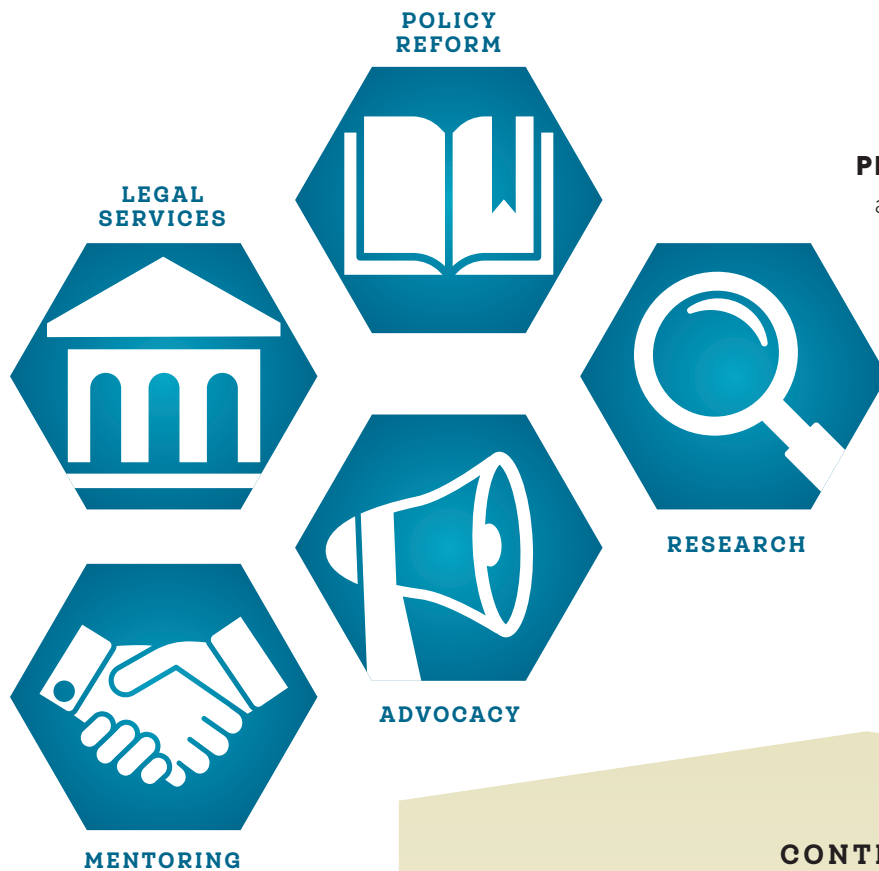


2018 ANNUAL REPORT



TRANSPARENCY. ACCOUNTABILITY. JUSTICE.





PROTECT OUR DEFENDERS (POD)

accelerates progress on behalf of military sexual assault survivors by focusing on Legal Services, Mentoring, Advocacy, Policy Reform and Research. With this flexible toolkit, POD's actions can be targeted, swift, and tailored to each situation.

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DEAR FRIENDS,

In 2018, Protect Our Defenders exposed the military's mishandling of sexual violence perpetrated by its personnel and successfully fought to fix justice system failures.

New Law Center sheds light on cases, strengthening efforts to advocate for reform.

Survivors urgently need legal support. This year requests for help more than doubled. Through our clients, we learned of the military's failure to inform them of their right to choose between civilian and military court. Then we convinced Congress to call for an investigation. This year alone, the center took on 24 cases in-house, including a headline-grabbing \$25 million claim against the Marine Corps for failing to protect two young girls from a colonel who sexually assaulted them.

Media partnerships draw national attention to issues military leadership tries to hide.

With USA Today, we exposed the Pentagon's efforts to kill a Rand Corp. report documenting highly elevated risk of sexual assault on certain military bases. We also collaborated with CBS News on an Emmy-winning investigation uncovering the mishandling of sexual assault cases by Air Force Academy leadership. The four-part series led to a change in the Academy's reporting policy.

We take pride in our small team working efficiently and effectively. While partnering with POD, Human Rights Watch senior counsel, Sara Darehshori noted, "Protect Our Defenders punches way above its weight class!"

Policy changes prevent sexual predators from hiding behind their uniform. Since our founding in 2011, we led and successfully advocated for 19 changes to federal law that better protect service members and civilians, patching loopholes that favored violent perpetrators and improving victims' rights and the military justice system. As of 2018, domestic violence is now a separate crime under military law, strengthening protections for military families.

We could not accomplish all that we have these past seven years without your support. As donor advocate Carole Middleton states, "I am inspired by POD's leadership,...proud of the progress POD continues to achieve and look forward to seeing what we can accomplish together in the coming years."

With gratitude,



Nancy Parrish

Founder and Chair



Col Don Christensen

USAF (ret),
President



Col Scott Jensen

USMC (ret),
Vice Chair



Launching one-of-a-kind Law Center

EXPANDING OUR LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM TO BETTER SERVE SURVIVORS AND MORE EFFECTIVELY DRIVE JUSTICE SYSTEM REFORM

POD has transformed its existing Legal Services Program to include a strategic, high-profile national Law Center. This expansion is to serve, pro bono, an ever-increasing number of active duty, veterans, family members, and civilians seeking help. We are the only organization in the nation providing free legal assistance to active duty services members and their families for cases involving sexual violence or supporting those facing retaliation for reporting.

PROTECT OUR DEFENDERS' LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM HAS SERVED OVER 1,000 SURVIVORS AND PROVIDED OVER \$8M IN LEGAL SERVICES. IN 2018 ALONE, THE NUMBER OF SURVIVORS REQUESTING LEGAL SUPPORT MORE THAN DOUBLED.

We are now able to directly represent clients and engage in litigation, in addition to providing free legal and casework assistance. We continue to build support from our extensive pro bono network of nationally known law firms and legal organizations. By serving as counsel on cases, POD can better assist our pro bono attorneys and survivors with the often traumatizing and complex legal and professional issues related to military sexual assaults and harassment.

The new Center uniquely positions POD to shed light on military sexual assault cases and in turn enhances our ability to prompt justice and call for fundamental legal and culture change.

2018 LEGAL SERVICES IN NUMBERS

362 CASES were submitted and reviewed through POD's intake process.

of those

24 CASES

were taken on in-house by POD's new Law Center

49 CASES

were referred to our Pro Bono Network or partners* who collectively put in 2,422 hours of services—valued at \$1,481,814.

132 INDIVIDUALS

were provided assistance that did not include direct referral to an attorney such as help with accessing healthcare for Military Sexual Trauma, filing Freedom of Information Act requests to access military records, and draft congressional inquiries.

*National Veterans Legal Services Program, the Veterans Legal Institute, the Veterans Consortium, National Women's Law Center



The new national Law Center is spearheaded by Col Don Christensen, President of Protect Our Defenders and former Air Force chief prosecutor. Opening the Law Center was the critical next step in not only helping those who have no one else to turn to, but also in enhancing our ability to demonstrate the need for fundamental reform of the justice system—we seek to empower prosecutors, rather than commanders, with the authority to prosecute.

Forbes

Aug 21, 2018, 10:00am

New Legal Center Gives Military Sexual Assault Survivors A Voice And Hope



Tara Haelle Senior Contributor
Healthcare
I offer straight talk on science, medicine, health and vaccines.



Protect Our Defenders took the unprecedented act of filing a \$25 million claim on behalf of the Perry family against the Marine Corps for failing to protect two young girls from a colonel who sexually assaulted them. Adrian Perry, the mother of a daughter abused by Col Daniel Wilson, filed a claim under the Federal Tort Claims Act for the pain and suffering of her children caused by the Marine Corps' failure to thoroughly investigate Wilson's prior criminal misconduct.

Despite having committed serious offenses while deployed to Australia, Wilson's commanding general swept the misconduct under the rug, which enabled the senior officer to later molest innocent children. The claim is the first step in the process of possibly suing the Marines in federal district court for failing to hold the colonel accountable for his earlier crimes and protect victims.

"We are truly grateful for the legal support Protect Our Defenders has provided our family. Their desire to fight alongside us in order to see to it that our voices are heard, rather than silenced, is truly remarkable. Their services provide a shining beacon of hope for survivors of sexual assault and harassment within the military community. That alone is a priceless gift to a survivor who has lost all hope due to the challenges that come with pursuing justice in cases of military sexual assault."

—ADRIAN PERRY

U.S. EDITION Sat, Jul 07, 2018

Newsweek

SIGN IN SUBSCRIBE

U.S.

EXCLUSIVE: U.S. GOVERNMENT
SUED FOR \$25 MILLION FOR
FAILING TO INVESTIGATE MARINE
COLONEL LATER CONVICTED OF
SEXUAL ABUSE

BY JAMES LAPORTA ON 7/6/18 AT 6:12 PM



Caught in the Act

HOLDING THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ACCOUNTABLE



Department of Defense fails to inform victims of their right to civilian justice

Through the Law Center and its cases, we gain important insights to drive policy reform and force implementation of existing law.

We have been ever vigilant in holding the Pentagon's feet to the fire to ensure it follows through with the reforms achieved to date. Through survivors who were coming to our Law Center, **we discovered the military was regularly ignoring a 2015 mandate that commanders inform victims of their right to request their case be handled by civilian authorities.** After hearing from numerous survivors who were never informed of this right or aggressively discouraged by the military from exercising it, we brought the issue to Congress. **As a result, Congress directed the Department of Defense Inspector General to investigate the military's failure to comply with the law.**

Department of Defense attempts to suppress sexual assault data

In 2018, an anonymous whistleblower alerted POD that the Pentagon was trying to bury a report that sheds light on the risk of sexual assault at individual military bases. In July, **USA Today—in collaboration with POD—first exposed the story to the public.** The report was conducted by the non-partisan RAND Corp. The Pentagon attempted to quash the report because of its conclusions. The report shows the Marines and Army have multiple installations where over 500 soldiers and Marines are sexually assaulted in a single year. It is the Pentagon's responsibility to make this data immediately available to service members on these installations and the citizens in those local communities. After relentless news articles instigated by POD, the report was released in September 2018.

POD President Col Don Christensen, USAF (ret.) noted in the USA Today and CNBC coverage: "It's disturbing the Pentagon would hire a reputable firm like RAND and then seek to bury the results because the brass know the numbers make them look bad. It would be nice if leadership was as concerned with finding solutions for the sexual assault crisis and holding offenders accountable as they are with manipulating data in an attempt to hide the scope of the problem."





POD Believes Survivors

TAKING ON A CULTURE OF DENIAL THROUGH POD'S ADVOCACY AND LEGAL SERVICES

Sexual harassment (defined by military regulations and the law) includes: “a pervasive and severe sexually hostile work environment that interferes with the ability to do one’s job.”

Challenging Claims of “Fake News”

Sherry and Traci were sexually harassed at the Marine headquarters in Quantico, in the very office designed to fight military sexual assault. They came to Protect Our Defenders because the General Officer in charge of their division openly retaliated against them. He publicly declared their complaint “fake news” in front of hundreds of colleagues at an “all hands” meeting.

Protect Our Defenders represented them in the Board of Investigation, where it was determined the harasser should be forcibly retired. We also worked closely with USA Today to cover the story in March, with a follow up piece published in October.

“Every day I have asked myself if I did the right thing by reporting. I’ve asked myself if the retaliation—and perception that I am a troublemaker—is worth the risk to myself, my husband, our careers, and the other victims. Truth be told, most days I wasn’t sure any of this was worth it. Then I heard about Protect Our Defenders. Not only did they provide legal assistance and support but most importantly, they listened, and for the first time I felt validated and understood. I can honestly say without the support of POD I would not have been able to continue.” —SHERRY

Holding a Defense Counsel Accountable for Online Bullying

Lisa came to Protect Our Defenders as a survivor of sexual assault whose assailant had already pleaded guilty at a court martial. But despite Lisa’s win, her assailant’s Area Defense Counsel claimed on his Facebook page that Lisa “fabricated her victim-hood” and was an example of a “fake sex assault victim.” We represented Lisa in filing an ethics complaint against the attorney with the Washington State Bar Association and with the Office of the Army General Counsel.

“Protect Our Defenders helped me when I thought that I was out of options. Before getting in contact with these amazing people, I was told that I literally was not that important. I felt that maybe I shouldn’t try to stick up for myself; that it wasn’t worth the stress but they helped me realize that what happened to me was wrong and that I shouldn’t have to put up with it.” —LISA

“I can never repay Protect Our Defenders for the work they’ve done. You gave me the support and clarity I needed to make informed decisions. Thank you for empowering me, providing honest and professional feedback, but most of all for treating me as an individual who matters and not as a circumstance.” —TRACI

HONOR



Honoring our Fiercest Allies

POD ANNUAL JUSTICE AWARD, GIVEN TO LEADING ATTORNEY IN POD'S PRO BONO NETWORK



The 2018 Justice Award was presented to Dwight Stirling, CEO of the Center for Law and Military Policy. Dwight is a nationally recognized expert in assisting survivors of military sexual assault upgrade their characterizations of discharge. The suffering of these survivors was swept under the rug by the military. Dwight's outstanding efforts bring these injustices to light and renew the lives of countless veterans.

Dwight co-founded the Veterans Legal Institute (VLI), a nonprofit law firm and think tank that provides free legal services to veterans. Dwight and his team at VLI took on dozens of referrals from POD for discharge upgrades and VA claims appeals.

Dwight is also an adjunct professor at the USC School of Law, where he teaches the Veterans Legal Practicum. Each student in the course is assigned two upgrade cases, many of which are placements from POD. The students perform their advocacy work under Dwight's supervision and tutelage, projects culminating in petitions submitted to the military's boards of discharge review.

Dwight led a symposium on the Feres doctrine* and military sexual trauma at Chapman University's Fowler School of Law in October 2018, where he was presented the Justice Award by POD President Col (ret.) Don Christensen *The Feres doctrine bars service members or their families from collecting damages for injuries or other harm incurred.



Amplifying Survivor's Voice Spreads Hope

A LIFE RENEWED AFTER RECHARACTERIZATION OF DISHONORABLE DISCHARGE

As a teen, Heath Phillips joined the U.S. Navy and immediately began to endure daily sexual assaults. He reported the crimes. His leadership failed to take action. In fear for his life, he went AWOL. He was forced out in 1989 with an "Other Than Honorable" discharge.

Through Protect Our Defender's network, Heath connected with our partners at the Veteran Advocacy Project (VAP). After 25 years, the VA finally diagnosed him with post-traumatic stress disorder connected to sexual assault. But still the Navy refused to change his discharge. After four tries, Heath's dishonorable discharge was finally upgraded to honorable. He is now eligible for the VA assistance and veteran's benefits he rightly deserves.

An Advisory Board member, Heath has been a survivor advocate with POD since 2012. We leveraged Heath's incredible story to advocate for systemic change and inform survivors that the discharge review boards are required to give "liberal consideration" to vets with PTSD. POD arranged appearances on the Today Show and NPR, among many other speaking engagements.



"While receiving my discharge upgrades is a massive victory for me, it is only a small win until all veterans who are still going through this horrific process find justice.

After three prior failed attempts to get my discharge reviewed and upgraded, I was ready to give up. But with the help and guidance from Protect Our Defenders and others, I didn't. Instead, I stayed in the fight and with the help from the Veteran Advocacy Project, we built a case and won.

For 25 plus years, I have been plagued with the stigma of having an Other Than Honorable discharge because I was raped and retaliated against. I carried this burden and shame most of my adult life, which led to me becoming an alcoholic and eventually trying to take my own life to end the pain. No survivor should have to endure this, none! Not one veteran should have to go through this process for this long! I will continue to advocate and fight for changes to create an impartial justice system and end victim retaliation." —HEATH

THROUGH HEATH'S ADVOCACY AND MEDIA APPEARANCES, THE U.S. ARMY CONTRACTED HIM TO PARTICIPATE IN A SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIM COURSE AT FORT LEONARD WOOD. HIS SURVIVOR BRIEFING EDUCATES RECRUITS ON THE EFFECTS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT. HIS FIRST COURSE WAS IN 2018 AND A MAJOR SUCCESS, AND WILL CONTINUE INTO 2019.



Major News Outlets Feature POD

GIVING VOICE TO SURVIVORS AND PROMPTING CHANGE



Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, Survivor and Advisory Board member BriGette McCoy, and POD President Col. (ret.) Don Christensen on the Daily Show with Trevor Noah.

"Our military is losing some of the best people that want to serve our country. I had three years of military training, top secret, SCI [sensitive compartmented information] clearance. And in the middle of the Gulf War, I was exited out of the military because I reported sexual harassment. It needs to stop."

—BRIGETTE MCCOY, ON THE DAILY SHOW

To view full report please visit www.protectourdefenders.com/media2018

CBS News wins Emmy for investigation and report supported by POD

In October, POD's work with CBS won a 2018 Emmy Award. The four-part series revealed mishandling of sexual assault cases by the Air Force Academy and won for Outstanding Investigative Reporting. Protect Our Defenders pitched a story and ultimately served as a core collaborator with CBS News on this six-month investigation. It built on reporting by Pam Zubeck of the Colorado Springs Independent. The series featured the stories of Protect Our Defenders clients and President Col., USAF (ret.) Don Christensen.

The resulting shakeup forced the Air Force Academy to make significant changes to their sexual assault policies.



"This recognition would not have happened without Protect Our Defenders. So grateful." —JENNIFER JANISCH, PRODUCER, CBS EVENING NEWS AND CBS THIS MORNING

VOICE



Domestic Violence Survivors Matter

FOR THE FIRST TIME, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WILL BE A SEPARATE CRIME UNDER MILITARY LAW

We continue to see important progress in our fight for justice through policy reform. After the horrific shooting of 26 people at a Texas church by a former airman, POD sprung into action. The airman had previously been convicted of physically abusing his infant son and threatening his wife with a loaded firearm. The military failed to report his conviction, which allowed him to purchase the assault rifle used to murder his victims. We leveraged our media contacts to shed light on the military's failure—and successfully advocated to make domestic violence a separate crime under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). This legislation ensures that when a military member's conviction is reported to civilian law enforcement, crimes will be properly identified as domestic violence. In turn, should the offender be released into society, it is far less likely they will ever have access to firearms. As the bill's sponsor, Rep. Jacky Rosen (NV) said, this change "will close a dangerous loophole facing military families" by ensuring more protections for victims of domestic violence.

IN 2018, WE ALSO TOOK AN IMPORTANT STEP TOWARDS EXPANDING THE SPECIAL VICTIMS COUNSEL (SVC) PROGRAM TO INCLUDE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. SVCS ARE ONLY AVAILABLE TO VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT AND RAPE; HOWEVER, VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OFTEN FACE THE SAME BARRIERS TO JUSTICE. AS A RESULT OF OUR ADVOCACY, CONGRESS MANDATED THAT DOD STUDY MAKING THE SVC PROGRAM AVAILABLE TO VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE.

The New York Times

Air Force Failed to Report Dozens of Service Members to Gun Database



"I'm not surprised that they are finding these lapses, because this was clearly never a priority in the past. Earlier inspector general investigations found that they were not doing this properly, and the leadership never made it a priority to correct it." —COL., USAF (RET.)

DON CHRISTENSEN, POD PRESIDENT



From Victim to Survivor Advocate

YOUR SUPPORT IS CHANGING LIVES

We were honored to have survivor Brittany Bentz and her mom, Melinda, speak at our annual POD Squad 2018 Benefit, sponsored by Carole Middleton and featuring activist Erin Brockovich.

In 2014, Melinda came to POD on behalf of her then 18-year-old daughter in need of legal support and guidance. Brittany was raped by a family friend and USAF member in 2012. She and her mom struggled to navigate the complex and dysfunctional military justice system. Then they came across Protect Our Defenders. POD provided a pro bono attorney, who worked with them through the remainder of their 2.5 year ordeal.

"Without Protect Our Defender's consistent support and availability, I don't know how we could have faced everything. POD found an attorney to represent my daughter pro bono. This attorney fought tirelessly against the military's repeated violations of my daughter's rights, and advocated before the military judge on my daughter's behalf. Having the attorney to explain the process, address our concerns, and speak on her behalf made it possible for my daughter to keep fighting." —MELINDA BENTZ

While Brittany's perpetrator was found not guilty, her case led directly to legislative reform that overhauled the military's pre-trial hearing process, once used by defense counsel to abuse victims and dissuade them from proceeding to trial. Brittany is now well, thriving, and a staunch advocate for the organization and fellow survivors.



"If it wasn't for POD, I wouldn't be standing here with strength to keep going. I am getting my Masters to be a therapist to other girls and guys that are raped, and be a voice to help them through dark times." —BRITTANY BENTZ



DONOR FEATURE

Carole Middleton

Devoted supporter & POD Squad member



Carole receives standing ovation for her work on behalf of POD at annual benefit.

At the age of 12 Carole's father became very ill. She loved taking care of him and knew then she wanted to take care of others as her profession and eventually became a nurse practitioner. Carole moved with her former husband to Northern California when he was about to start his new job as CFO of Genentech.

Carole spends countless hours volunteering. Her role as a volunteer gives her a sense of pride, identity, and a natural sense of accomplishment. Carole has been an integral partner with Protect Our Defenders as a donor and volunteer since 2013. She is part of the "POD Squad," an enthusiastic group of supporters in the San Francisco Bay area. Here is what Carole had to say about her work with POD:

"Since 2013, I have committed to helping POD fight to change the justice system and support victims of inexcusable abuse. I first got involved when POD Squad founders Sibylle, Lilli and Lia invited me to a focus group meeting. I was enlightened and appalled by what I learned. These indignities should not be suffered by the people who dedicate and risk their lives to serving and protecting our country."

"I am proud of the progress POD continues to achieve and look forward to seeing what we can accomplish together in the coming years. In the near future, I hope we can stop giving military commanders the final say on rape prosecutions. I also hope more attackers will be held accountable and support for victims will increase. POD provides a safe haven where victims can be heard, believed, and assisted both legally and emotionally.

Anyone with a passion for this issue can volunteer their special skills, give money and GET INVOLVED! I personally support POD by giving donations, sponsoring guest speakers and hosting fundraising events at my home. I enjoy brainstorming ideas with the POD Squad about how to promote the cause. This includes leveraging my contacts to help find exciting speakers for our fundraising events. Two years ago, actress Ashley Judd spoke, and this past year, activist Erin Brockovich was the speaker. I was moved by their genuine interest in and personal connection to the work that POD does. Both have since supported the organization in other ways. I am also inspired by the leadership of POD and their dedication to helping women and men serving our country."

FINANCIALS

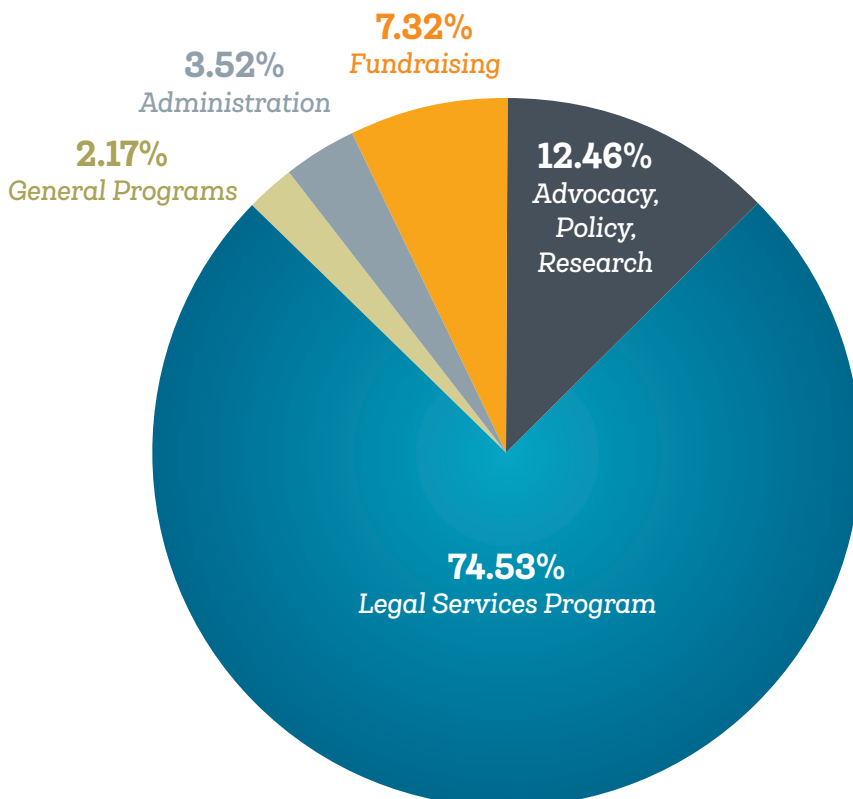
REVENUE

Grants (2018)	240,437.79
DBW Grant (2017-18)	380,000.00
Contributions	279,970.30
In-Kind*	1,508,935.31
Interest & Dividends	5,377.91

TOTAL **\$2,414,721.31**

**Contributions and pro bono Legal Services*

EXPENDITURES: \$2,439,852.30



IN 2018, OUR COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERED OVER 4,000 HOURS TO PROVIDE FREE LEGAL SERVICES, RAISE AWARENESS AND PASS LAWS TO ENSURE A SAFE AND RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE—FREE FROM MISOGYNY, SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ASSAULT FOR THOSE WHO SERVE.



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Recognized by GuideStar with Gold Seal. And the Catalogue for Philanthropy, Washington DC following a rigorous review process.



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Protect Our Defenders is a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization. The IRS has determined that donations to POD are tax-deductible for the donor as charitable contributions. There are no limits or restrictions on these donations. EIN# 45-4044997