



Leading a New Response to Sexual Violence



The Only Hope for Many Victims

An act of **sexual violence can devastate and derail a victim's life**. The impact is long-lasting—months, years, even a lifetime. Imagine all the necessities of your life—housing, employment, education, privacy, safety, and, in some cases, citizenship—put in jeopardy because you were attacked, forever altering your future. While counselors, nurses, and the criminal justice system can provide invaluable support, they cannot restore some of life's most basic needs.

In response, the Victim Rights Law Center (VRLC) was established in 2003 as **the first nonprofit law center in the nation solely dedicated to serving the needs of rape and sexual assault victims**. Through direct legal services, our staff and pro bono attorneys help restore victims' lives after an attack, ensuring that they may stay in school; protecting their privileged and confidential mental health, medical and education records; preserving their employment; maintaining safe housing; securing or maintaining their immigration status; and swiftly accessing victim compensation and other benefits.

Leading Nationally, Serving Locally

What we learn from serving our clients in Massachusetts is used to train legal professionals across the United States and U.S. Territories. Our unique and successful model for legal intervention in rape and sexual assault cases has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women (OVW); we serve as the OVW's primary trainer and technical assistance provider on these matters so that these services may be replicated nationally, helping an exponential amount of victims. **In 2009, VRLC staff trained more than 2,000 professionals and victim advocates nationally.**

*The **Victim Rights Law Center (VRLC)** is the first nonprofit law center in the nation solely dedicated to serving the needs of rape and sexual assault victims. Our mission is to provide legal representation to victims of rape and sexual assault to help rebuild their lives and to promote a national movement committed to seeking justice for every rape and sexual assault victim.*



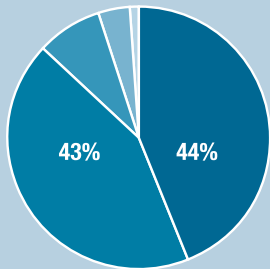
Rape can interrupt a life just beginning to flourish.

In 2009, **one third** of the clients served by the VRLC were under the age of 24, including preteens as young as 8 years old.



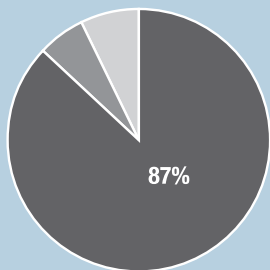
Maximizing Resources

In 2009, 87 percent of the VRLC's budget went directly to helping victims locally and leading the national movement against rape and sexual assault. Our ability to maximize resources is a result of our tremendous volunteer support. Last year, we leveraged \$566,500 in billable pro bono hours, roughly half of our total cash budget. Our stellar cadre of pro bono attorneys is a key part of our success.



2009 Revenue by Source

Donated Goods & Services	44%
Government Contracts	43%
Grants & Contributions	8%
Special Event	4%
Interest & Other	1%



2009 Functional Expenses

Program Services	87%
General & Administrative	7%
Development	6%

Helping Victims Rebuild Their Lives

“Lisa”[†] was a victim of repeated sexual and physical violence throughout her preteens, leaving her with brain damage and severe post-traumatic stress disorder. As a result, she left home and spent the better part of her teenage years sleeping on the streets. Finally, in June of 2009, Lisa was referred to the

VRLC as a homeless 23-year-old, marginally educated, minimally trained to hold a job, and in fear for her safety.

VRLC attorneys secured a protective order for Lisa against the person who had continually raped and abused her. When Lisa was denied a housing subsidy due to her financial situation and

poor credit, it was a VRLC attorney who appealed, arguing that the circumstances that deemed her ineligible were a direct result of the damage incurred through years of abuse. Thanks to the VRLC's services, Lisa is no longer in fear for her safety and she was granted a housing subsidy. Recently, she moved into her own apartment. **Lisa finally feels safe, and for the first time in years, she will have a roof over her head.**

[†]The client's name and other identifying facts have been changed to protect her privacy.



The costs of sexual assault are quantifiable, bearing negative, lifelong ramifications.

Over the course of their lifetimes, individual rape survivors sustain over \$109,877 in losses related to productivity, education, housing, and other social and financial areas.¹

¹ T. Miller, M. Cohen, and B. Wiersema, *Victim Costs and Consequences: A New Look*, Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, 1996.

Grantors: FY2009

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U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women
Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts



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Photography: Catherine Pedemonti

The Victim Rights Law Center is a 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.