



Frequently Asked Questions **by Attorneys**

What is the Advocate & Attorney Alliance?

The Advocate & Attorney Alliance is a project of the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance, which aims to build relationships between 1) local advocates for sexual and domestic violence survivors, and 2) attorneys, through the creation of a low bono referral network. The advocates and attorneys will work as a team to help survivors navigate the complicated legal system. The advocate will assist with safety planning, crisis intervention needs, resource sharing, trauma-informed healing, etc. The attorney will help specifically with legal matters. Together, the advocate and attorney can provide services in a more holistic, collaborative way, to survivors seeking justice through the legal system.

What would my role be as an attorney in the low bono referral network?

When we are contacted by a survivor in your area who needs legal assistance, we will reach out to you to see if you are able to accept their case. The goal is to provide legal assistance for those who are unable to obtain legal representation by other means. If you can take the case, you agree to represent the survivor for up to ten hours at the rate of \$100/hr. Payment may come directly from the Action Alliance, community resources identified by the advocate, or the survivor. This will be communicated prior to you taking the case.

What are the benefits of being a participating attorney?

We understand pro bono services are in high demand and require sacrifice many attorneys cannot offer at this time. We hope to mitigate some of that burden by offering a nominal fee, while allowing attorneys to still engage in meaningful, impactful work for those who need it most. As a member of this alliance, you will join a community of attorneys engaged in the work of addressing sexual and intimate partner violence. We will host your name and link to your practice on our website as a trauma-informed attorney. Finally, as we build our referral network, we hope to provide a material-sharing platform amongst our network of attorneys, including a brief bank.



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In what other ways does the Action Alliance offer legal advocacy services?

In addition to connecting survivors with trauma-informed advocates and attorneys, the Alliance connects survivors to our staff attorney for 60 minutes of free over-the-phone, case-specific, legal advice. We CANNOT represent survivors in court or prepare court papers. Currently, appointments are scheduled for 4-6 weeks out. We also provide legal education training for legal advocates and trauma-informed lawyering CLE classes for attorneys.

What does becoming a participating attorney entail?

To participate in the low bono referral network, attorneys must:

1. Sign the contract outlining the parameters of the program
2. Submit paperwork to allow for easy invoicing and billing
3. Take the Trauma-Informed Lawyering CLE offered by the Alliance with in the first year of participating (virtually or in person)

Is the program affiliated with the Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance?

Yes! The Advocate and Attorney Alliance is a project of the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance. You may be familiar with the Project for the Empowerment of Survivors (PES). This program is a restructuring of that program.

How do I get connected with the program?

Contact Jaime Clemmer,
Justice Projects Director, VSDV Action Alliance
jclemmer@vsdvalliance.

