

UTAH CRIME VICTIMS LEGAL CLINIC

Supporting Utah's victim rights legal aid organization to **take care of more people, and take care of people better.**



INVOLVEMENT

Utah Crime Victims Legal Clinic (UCVLC) plays a unique and critical role within the legal ecosystem: their team represents victims of crime in criminal proceedings to ensure their rights are protected. They are the only agency engaged in this work within Utah. Their attorneys would occasionally take protective order and stalking injunction cases if another legal aid organization had denied the client.

UCVLC first became involved with the Certified Advocate Partners Program in 2021 when Timpanogos Legal Center developed the training and practice manual for the certification course. Heidi Nestel, UCVLC Executive Director, authored two chapters, and two of their staff attorneys, Laurel Hanks and Crystal Powell, also wrote chapters. Their work has helped to train multiple cohorts of new Domestic Violence Community Justice Advocates.

In 2025, UCVLC's victim advocate became certified as a DV CJA. They felt that it would be beneficial for their organization; as a small organization handling cases all over Utah, having a DV CJA would allow them to help additional clients.

Their DV CJA, Launi Stone, explained that participating in this program "definitely helped with capacity. It hasn't been burdensome at all."

AT A GLANCE

Mission

The Utah Crime Victims Legal Clinic promotes and advances crime victims' Constitutional, statutory, and civil rights in the criminal justice system through victim-centered legal advocacy, education, and resource sharing.



Statewide



1 Domestic Violence CJA



Involved Since 2025

"I felt like I really knew a lot about protective orders before I went into this. I didn't. This training definitely increased my knowledge base and opened my eyes to how needed it is for people to have representation of some sort. Because an average person that has no court experience — I feel like this would be impossible."

Launi Stone

*Domestic Violence
Community Justice Advocate*

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IMPLEMENTATION

UCVLC already had a foundation for providing legal help to victims of crime seeking civil protective orders. They use their established intake and screening process to accept clients to be served by their DV CJA.

Their DV CJA has helped increase their capacity in two ways:

- She will independently assist clients when the staff attorneys do not have availability or capacity, and
- She will assist the attorneys in representing clients by conducting research, writing the request, and helping prepare for court.

The scope of services she provides depends on individual client needs, but will offer the full scope of DV CJA services when appropriate.

She extensively collaborates with and refers to other DV CJAs in CJAU's network. This has been particularly valuable for UCVLC, as they serve clients statewide but have limited staff capacity.

IMPACT

Strengthening Services

The DV CJA certification has enabled UCVLC to "take care of more people [and] take care of people better. We also work better together as an agency if we have people that have this knowledge and this availability to help people that can't get help otherwise."

Empowering Crime Victims To Make Their Case

Launi helped one client seek a civil stalking injunction against their neighbor. Because of her help, the client was able to represent herself throughout a four-hour hearing. Multiple people told Launi that her client was the most prepared *pro se* client they had ever seen—that she was absolutely as prepared, if not more prepared, than most attorneys. Providing clients with the information and confidence necessary to present their case in court is a key goal of this program.



"I am glad every single day that I took this training, that I did this training, and I got this certification.

Having increased that knowledge base has helped me so much in work. And then, again, those connections that I've made. Having somebody to reach out to if I have a question about a certain county or something like that has been absolutely invaluable.

"That has actually been probably my favorite thing about this—all of the connections that I've made. **I honestly don't think that a lot of the connections and collaborations that I have gotten from this would have existed otherwise.**

"Having access to CJAU for questions makes all the difference.... **Attending the roundtables and training meetings has been probably one of the most beneficial things for me** to have that opportunity to not only hear what other people are doing, but get people's input on what I'm doing. I think if we didn't have that continued connection, it would definitely be detrimental."

Launi Stone

*Domestic Violence
Community Justice Advocate*