

Awards

SLSLS TO HONOR BCLP FOR PRO BONO ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS

Sep 14, 2026

Two BCLP attorneys will be recognized this fall for helping lead a pro bono effort that's making a meaningful difference for survivors of domestic violence across St. Louis County.

St. Louis Survivors Legal Support (SLSLS) will honor Partner **Emilee Hargis** and Associate **Nicole Wurm** with the 2026 Jim Holloran Legacy of Advocacy Award at its Oct. 7 fundraising event. The award recognizes their work representing pro bono clients and coordinating BCLP's pro bono efforts with SLSLS, which connects survivors seeking orders of protection with volunteer legal counsel.

Through this ongoing initiative, BCLP attorneys have helped numerous survivors obtain orders of protection, providing critical legal advocacy at a pivotal moment in their lives. Because petitioners bear the evidentiary burden at full judicial hearings, legal representation can be essential. Yet only a small percentage of individuals seeking protective orders have counsel, even though represented petitioners are significantly more likely to obtain lasting protection.

Led by Emilee and Nicole, the initiative at BCLP brings together attorneys across experience levels to advocate for survivors while developing valuable courtroom skills. On their end, SLSLS provides training and ongoing support, helping attorneys build the confidence and skills needed to represent clients effectively.

The initiative has continued to grow in recent years. In 2025 and 2026 (through August), 14 BCLP attorneys handled 35 matters, contributing a total of more than 480 pro bono hours. Beyond the direct impact on clients, the program has provided meaningful opportunities for attorneys to gain courtroom experience while helping survivors navigate the legal system during a difficult and often intimidating process.

The impact of that work was on full display recently in a domestic abuse matter that resulted in a lifetime order of protection – the first such order obtained in SLSLS' history. Following the witness examination conducted by Associate **Grace Rowden**, the court granted the order. As the ruling was announced, the client tearfully embraced Grace in a crowded courtroom, repeatedly thanking her for her advocacy.

“In 45 years in and out of courtrooms, I’ve never seen anything like that. It was a reminder of the good we can do when directing our efforts to those who need legal help in telling their story,” noted Senior Trial Counsel **Ben Clark**, who second-chaired Grace at the hearing.

Meet the team



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