



## **Network for Victim Recovery of DC Celebrates the Launch of the Victim Legal Network of DC During 2018 National Crime Victims' Rights Week**

### **VLNDC: Creating No Wrong Doors for Justice and Recovery for Victims of Crime**

WASHINGTON, April 3, 2018 — The Network for Victim Recovery of DC (NVRDC) and the DC Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants (OVSJG) is pleased to announce the launch of the Victim Legal Network of DC (VLNDC). Since 2014, the District of Columbia has been one of ten jurisdictions around the country that has received funding from the U.S. Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime to lead the creation of enhanced legal service networks for victims of crime. The launch of VLNDC is the culmination of two years of planning meetings, collaboration with three other legal service providers (Ayuda, Amara Legal Center, and the Legal Aid Society of DC), a DC legal services needs assessment, and numerous consultations with experts and technical assistance providers.

NVRDC is excited to celebrate the official launch of the Victim Legal Network of DC, on **April 10, 2018**, during National Crime Victims' Rights Week. VLNDC is the embodiment of this year's theme, "Expand the Circle: Reach all Victims."

"The VLNDC is a critical addition to the District's victim services community, leveraging the specialized knowledge and uniting the resources of the legal community in order to ensure that crime victims are empowered and have all of their legal needs addressed," said OVSJG Director Michelle Garcia. VLNDC envisions a world where all crime victims have immediate access to high-quality, trauma-informed legal services. Through a unique hub-and-spoke model in which a Navigator - an attorney trained in holistic victim services - connects survivors to the best-fit legal service provider, we ensure that no victims fall through the cracks while seeking legal help in our network.

Since the soft launch of the network in July 2018, VLNDC has assisted over 100 unique individuals seeking legal services for over 200 legal issues. "We are proud to lead DC's effort to ensure that those impacted by crime are receiving the support they need following the impact of victimization," said Bridgette Stumpf, NVRDC's Co-Executive Director. "Without access to legal services many crime victims will face the long-term consequences of unaddressed trauma on their own, which can have a devastating effect on their lives, families, and broader communities."

VLNDC has reduced referrals time dramatically, by allowing a victim's case to be assessed by five different providers and still connect to legal assistance in as little as 48 hours. Before VLNDC existed, this process may have taken over two weeks, if the victim even persevered through this arduous task.

First designated by President Ronald Reagan in 1981, National Crime Victims' Rights Week increases general public awareness of and knowledge about the wide range of rights and services available to people who have been victimized by crime. "Now more than ever, it is critical that communities come together to identify and meet the needs of victims and survivors of all types of crimes," OVC Director Darlene Hutchinson said. "That's why this year's theme underscores the need to expand the circle to reach all victims, including those who need help and may be unaware of the many victim assistance service providers and programs that are available to them and play such a critical role in the aftermath of a crime."

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#### **About NVRDC**

Network for Victim Recovery of DC empowers victims of all crimes to achieve survivor-defined justice through a collaborative continuum of advocacy, case management, and legal services. For more information on upcoming events or about victims' rights and services in the District of Columbia, please contact NVRDC at [info@nvrdc.org](mailto:info@nvrdc.org) or visit [www.nvrdc.org](http://www.nvrdc.org).