



Arizona Attorney General Kris Mayes Office of Victim Services

Victims' Rights Brief

For Arizona's Justice System Administrators, Practitioners and Advocates



May 2025



National Crime Victims' Rights Week

Arizona Awards Ceremony

KINSHIP CONNECTING & HEALING

This collaborative event is held annually to recognize and celebrate National Crime Victims' Rights Week, a time dedicated to honoring the outstanding achievements of individuals and organizations committed to supporting crime victims throughout Arizona. This year's event was held on April 7, 2025, at Phoenix College. The program featured an inspiring keynote address by Troy Hillman, whose words emphasized the importance of resilience, advocacy, and community support in solving some of Arizona's worst crimes. Attorney General Kris Mayes also delivered remarks and presented awards to recognize exceptional service and dedication in the field of victim services.



Distinguished Service Awards

Individuals and teams were awarded Distinguished Service Awards by Attorney General Kris Mayes for their outstanding work with crime victims. She presented the following awards:

Advocacy and Direct Services: This award recognizes an individual or group of individuals who has evidenced passion and perseverance in facilitating victim justice and healing by both promoting and ensuring victims' legal rights, as well as crucial services to meet their needs for recovery from the shattering effect of crime.

Leadership: This individual or an organization has exercised principles and practices of effective leadership, thereby serving as a model or setting an example for others.

Innovative Practices: An individual, group, or an organization may receive this award for developing programs to serve victims in a new way, providing services where none previously existed, or used technology to assist victims.

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- Service Coordination:** Where a group or an organization has been instrumental in establishing comprehensive, coordinated, multi-disciplinary approaches to serving crime victims within its community or jurisdiction.
- Public Policy:** Where an individual, a group, or an organization has made an invaluable contribution or played a critical role in ensuring public policy reforms, including legislative enactments, aimed at improving the treatment of crime victims.
- Courage in Action:** This award recognizes a crime victim or survivor who has exhibited perseverance or determination with his or her own victimization by creating positive systemic change on behalf of other victims.

Distinguished Service Award Winners

Service Coordination
Lizbeth Saldana
Maricopa County Juvenile Probation

Lizbeth Saldana serves as the Victims’ Services Coordinator for the Maricopa County Juvenile Probation Department, where she plays a vital role in advocating for victims of juvenile crime. As a nationally accredited victim advocate, Lizbeth leads a dedicated team that provides critical support, ensuring victims are informed throughout the juvenile justice process. In the past fiscal year, her team facilitated over 50,000 victim notifications and directly assisted thousands of victims and their families. With a background in criminal justice from Grand Canyon University, Lizbeth began her career as a victim advocate in municipal law enforcement before transitioning to juvenile justice. Lizbeth is known for her leadership, as she effectively manages a high-impact program while mentoring staff and educating law enforcement on victims’ rights. Lizbeth’s dedication extends beyond her daily responsibilities, she actively contributes to policy discussions, improving services for victims, and providing training to ensure professionals are equipped to support those impacted by crime. Her commitment has earned widespread recognition, as she is an indispensable asset to her department and the broader community. Lizbeth’s passion for justice and advocacy continues to inspire change, ensuring victims’ voices are heard and their rights are protected.



Public Policy
Kay Radwanski
Arizona Supreme Court

Kay Radwanski dedicated over 16 years to the Arizona Supreme Court’s Administrative Office of the Courts, serving as a Senior Court Policy Analyst and the agency’s domestic violence subject matter expert. Throughout her tenure, Kay played a pivotal role in shaping policy and training initiatives to improve court responses to domestic violence. She was essential in filing rule petitions to modernize Arizona’s Protective Order statutes and led the development of training programs for judicial officers, court staff, and stakeholders on domestic violence issues. Kay’s leadership extended to high-level policy groups, including the Governor’s Commission to Prevent Violence Against Women and the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission’s Protective Order Workgroup. She helped launch the AZPoint Protective Order System, ensuring greater access to legal protections for



survivors. Prior to her judiciary work, Kay practiced family law for a public interest firm, advocating for victims in domestic violence, custody, and landlord-tenant cases. Her contribution to victim rights, legal reform, and system-wide coordination has left a lasting impact on Arizona’s court system.

Innovative Practices

Shanna Parker

Southwest Network

Shanna Parker is a national survivor-leader and subject matter expert in human trafficking. As the founder and CEO of AngelsGoToWork, she supports hundreds of at-risk youth and young adults in the community. She has served as the Public Relations Communications Chair for the National Survivor Network and as the Executive Chair of the Arizona Survivor Leadership Council. Shanna is a consultant for the Office for Victims of Crime, providing specialized training and program development. She collaborates with local and federal law enforcement agencies in victim advocacy, consultation, and training. She also works with the Arizona Financial Crimes Task Forces on sex trafficking cases and serves as an Anti-Human Trafficking Coordinator for Southwest Network. Shanna developed the Parker HT Classification System to aid professionals in trauma-informed victim support and has trained judges, law enforcement, and social service providers nationwide. She has authored *And He Called Me Angel: The Story of a Human Trafficking Survivor* and has conducted multiple TED Talks on the subject of human trafficking. Her dedication has earned her numerous awards, including the H.O.P.E. Award and the Paladine Award, recognizing her work in empowering trafficking survivors and advancing anti-trafficking efforts. Shanna’s daughter Marlayna Harper was able to receive the award on Shanna’s behalf and is pictured receiving it.



Photographed here is Marlayna Harper



Leadership

Jon R. Smith

Yuma County Attorney

Jon R. Smith has served as Yuma County Attorney since 2004, dedicating his career to advocating for victims’ rights and strengthening the justice systems response to crime. Licensed to practice law in Arizona, Colorado, and before the U.S. Supreme Court, he has also served as President of the Yuma County Bar Association and Chairman of the Yuma County Methamphetamine Coalition. Under his leadership, Yuma County implemented the Child Abuse Investigation Protocols ensuring a systematic, victim centered approach to handling cases. His collaboration with law enforcement, child protective services, and advocacy groups has set a new standard for protecting vulnerable individuals. Beyond policy advancements, Smith has prioritized victim support by expanding access to advocacy services and training victim advocates to help survivors navigate the legal system with confidence. His leadership extends to public outreach, ensuring community members are informed of their rights and empowered to seek justice. After five terms as County Attorney, Smith will retire in 2025, leaving behind a legacy of unwavering dedication to victims’ rights and the pursuit of justice.

Advocacy and Direct Services

Yael Alvarez *Defenders of Children*

As the Senior Victim Advocate at Defenders of Children, Yael Alvarez provided trauma-informed, healing-focused legal services to victims of crime across Arizona. Through her compassionate advocacy, she has empowered survivors, particularly parents and guardians of vulnerable children, helping them navigate the complexities of both the civil and criminal justice systems to escape abuse and neglect. With nearly a decade of experience, Yael has made a lasting impact by not only supporting victims directly but also mentoring a new generation of advocates. Her work with organizations such as Defenders of Children, Sojourner Center, Legal Services for Crime Victims in Arizona, and Verde Valley Sanctuary has strengthened victim support networks statewide.



Beyond direct services, Yael has been instrumental in transforming policies to improve victim resources, including courthouse law libraries and advocacy centers. Her unwavering commitment ensures that those affected by crime receive the protection they deserve. Yael continues to be a beacon of hope for many individuals and her dedication continues to shape a more compassionate system for victims and their families.

Courage In Action Jan Blaser-Upchurch *Arizona Peace Officer Memorial Board*



Jan Blaser-Upchurch has spent over three decades advocating for crime victims and survivors. After losing her husband, Arizona Department of Public Safety Officer John Blaser, to a drunk driver in 1990, she turned her grief into action and became a leading voice for victims’ rights. She has held leadership roles in Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), serving at the local, state, and national levels, including as National Vice President of Victim Issues. Jan has also worked with Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS) to support families of fallen officers, providing guidance and long-term assistance to those navigating their grief. From 2009 to 2020, Jan served as Administrator of the Office of Victim Services at the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation, and Reentry, helping expand resources for crime victims and implementing Arizona’s first victim-centered Offender Dialogue Program. She has also played an important role in legislative efforts, testifying before the Arizona State Legislature on victims’ rights and advocating for policies that prioritize survivors’ needs. Jan’s advocacy over the years has shaped policy, strengthened victim services, and changed the justice system for the better.



Victims' Rights Education

Participants are reminded of their training obligations within the Victims' Rights Education Program. It is mandatory to complete the Basic Victims' Rights course every five years. Additionally, systems-based practitioners should engage in the Advanced Victims' Rights course annually, with community-based practitioners encouraged to attend yearly as well. For more details, to request a training and to register for courses,

Please visit

 <https://www.azag.gov/criminal/victim-services/training>

Basic Victims Rights Training

Thursday, May 29th, 2025

9:00am- 3:00pm

Monday, June 9th, 2025

9:00am-3:00pm

Advanced Victims Rights Training

Friday, May 30th, 2025

9:00am-12:00pm

Tuesday, June 10th, 2025

9:00am-12pm

Phoenix Victim Services Office:

Mainline: 602-542-4911

Fax: 602-542-8453

2005 N. Central Avenue, Phoenix, AZ,
85004



Tucson Victim Services Office:

Mainline: 520-628-6459

Fax: 520-628-6566

400 W Congress, S-315, Tucson, AZ,
85701

Victims' Rights Program (VRP): Email OVSVRP@azag.gov for questions or information related to the Arizona VRP Program.

Victims' Rights Compliance: Email VictimRights@azag.gov for questions or information related to Arizona Victims' Rights Compliance.

Training and Education: Reach out to OVSTraining@azag.gov for information about victims' rights education opportunities provided by the Arizona Attorney General's Office.

The Arizona Attorney General's Office is dedicated to a system of justice that is inclusive of crime victims and will remain vigilant in striving to provide the most efficient service to the people of Arizona. For more information and resources about the Arizona Attorney General's Office, please visit: azag.gov