

EMPOWERED VOICE

SPRING 2025

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

The Lifeline of Legal Advocacy for Domestic Violence Survivors

For survivors of domestic violence, navigating the legal system can feel overwhelming and isolating. Legal advocacy serves as a crucial support system, offering survivors the guidance and representation they need to reclaim their safety, rights, and dignity.

Domestic violence often involves not just physical harm, but emotional, financial, and psychological abuse. Survivors face a myriad of legal challenges, from obtaining protective orders to securing custody of their children and ensuring financial stability. Legal advocates play a pivotal role in demystifying these processes, empowering survivors to make informed decisions. They act



as a bridge between survivors and the justice system, ensuring that their voices are heard, and their rights are upheld.

Protective orders can provide essential barriers between survivors and their abusers, creating the space they need to rebuild their lives. Legal advocates also help survivors access resources like housing, healthcare, and counseling, creating a foundation for long-term recovery.

By standing beside survivors in courtrooms, offices, and community spaces, legal advocates send a powerful message: no one should face abuse or its aftermath alone. Their work illuminates a path to justice and healing, reinforcing that survivors deserve protection, support, and the chance to thrive. At New Beginnings, we offer legal advocacy in Spanish and English.

In Their Own Voice

"My first contact with New Beginnings was in April 2000 – when my then-husband was arrested for domestic violence assault. The police officer who took my report was exceptionally kind and put a word to what had been happening over most of the marriage. The next day I connected with a New Beginnings advocate. I worked with her and attended a support group for a while. Hugely helpful in educating me and providing resources. I was 'lucky' in my experience – I had a job, a home, and no children. It wasn't easy but I came through it stronger. The most difficult thing was facing my ex in court. My advocate was a solid rock for me. I've never forgotten that. I've been a steady donor since then and have shared my knowledge and experience with many others."

A NOTE FROM AJA

Dear Community,

To say we are living through uncertain times is an understatement. As 2025 begins, we are facing looming federal funding cuts from the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), potential reductions from the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, and the looming possibility of a freeze on federal funds.

Dr. Becky from *Good Inside* explains anxiety as a formula: uncertainty paired with underestimating our ability to cope with what lies ahead. While we cannot resolve the uncertainty of this its effect on funding for domestic violence services, we can focus on how we respond. By trusting ourselves and each other, pooling resources, and leaning into the strength of our community, we affirm that our network of partners is enough to sustain us. Together, we can withstand this assault on our critical mission and the devaluation of our essential work.

Our advocates and service providers are survivors themselves – this truth is often overlooked. Forcing our staff with lived experience to work in

constant scarcity retraumatizes them, asking them to relive their most uncertain moments. Advocacy provided from a place of anxious survival is unsustainable. Thriving, healing advocacy requires abundance.

That is where you come in.

We cannot thrive without your continued partnership. Thank you for believing in survivors' capacity to heal, for trusting our ability to guide them through that process, and for sharing your resources to help us fulfill our mission. Only together will we stand strong through this uncertainty.

In solidarity,



Aja Osita
Executive Director



Advocacy Days in Olympia

Advocacy Days 2025, hosted by the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WSCADV), was a powerful gathering of advocates and survivors at the State Capitol on February 10-11. New Beginnings' representation was strong this year! Thank you to the program staff, advocates, and survivors who showed up and shared the expected impacts of this session's budgeting decisions. This event united voices to spotlight critical policy and budget priorities impacting survivors of domestic violence. Participants engaged



Representative Shaun Scott
and NB's Advocacy Days team

with 125 lawmakers, shared personal stories, and pushed for systemic change to break barriers faced by survivors. Whether seasoned advocates or first-time attendees, everyone was equipped with tools and support to make a meaningful

impact. Advocacy Days 2025 was a testament to the strength of collective action in creating a safer, more equitable future.



Funding for Victim Services: A Deep Dive

Domestic violence services providers across the state are asking legislators to include \$50 million in the 2025-2027 Washington State Budget to save victim services and support Senate Bill (SB) 5362 to stabilize funding long-term.

Federal VOCA funding has decreased by 76% since 2018, from \$74.7M to \$17.8M, leaving state support as the only way to stabilize the critical services provided by organizations like New Beginnings. The State's current stopgap funding will expire on June 30, 2025. Without new State funding, services will be severely reduced, leaving survivors without support when they need it most. At New Beginnings, we will also face a reduction in services.

New Staff Highlight: *Tracy Buck*



**LOYAL
GOOD LISTENER
ENERGETIC**

In the fall we welcomed a new Director of Development, Tracy Buck. We are so lucky

to have this bright, innovative leader on our senior leadership team. Let's hear a little more from Tracy:

Why do you choose New Beginnings?

I choose New Beginnings because I believe in building healthy relationships for everyone and am excited about our work with youth communities and prevention to end the cycle. I believe that every person deserves to be safe, have their basic needs met, and is given the opportunity to thrive.

How do you like to spend your time when you are not working?

While not working I enjoy the great outdoors in the PNW including hiking as well as getting lost in a great book. I am privileged to raise two strong girls alongside my husband and round out our family with our 4-year-old rescue dog, Pickle.

What is one fun fact about you?

I love early mornings where I can find time to sit quietly, read, or walk before the world wakes up.

What do you want our readers to know?

There are so many ways to invest in survivors and the work that New Beginnings does. They can reach out to me anytime to find out how to get involved by email tbuck@newbegin.org.





Save the Dates!



GiveBIG on May 6-7; **Give Early** on 4/22

STAY TUNED FOR WAYS TO DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT BY GIVING EARLY, STARTING 4/22! **New Beginnings** is only able to continue these essential services in partnership with community members like you, so

please mark your calendars for this special day! And remember, you can give as early as April 22nd.

If you'd like to learn more about how to adopt an apartment, contact Neba at give@newbegin.org!

Make a Lasting Investment for Survivors



Leaving a gift to charity in your will is a meaningful way to make

a lasting difference. By including New Beginnings in your legacy plans, you ensure that survivors receive the support they need for years to come. If you'd like to learn more about how to leave a gift to New Beginnings in your will, please contact us at give@newbegin.org.



April 23rd 5:30pm-6:30pm:
Learn about Consent and How to Talk to Kids About It

Do you know that consent is important, but aren't sure how to talk about it with the young people in your life? Come and learn from our advocates about the importance of supporting healthy relationships as early as possible to prevent domestic violence.

May 15th 5:30pm-7pm, Beacon Hill Meeting Room:
Community Resource Skill Share

This topic request comes directly from those who attended the Community Chat in February. At this meeting, attendees engaged in rich conversation about Community Resilience. This chat will be focused on sharing skills, such as growing food and nonprofit organizations who offered relevant services.



Spring DV 101 Training: May

Interested in taking a deeper dive and learning more about the complex dynamics of domestic violence, how to recognize the signs of healthy relationships, and how to connect yourself or a loved one to support and services?

For more information, email Neba at give@newbegin.org.

Want more information on how to empower survivors and mobilize our community?

Follow us online to learn more here!



www.newbegin.org



www.facebook.com/newbeginningsendingdv



www.instagram.com/newbeginningsendingdv

We at New Beginnings acknowledge that the land we work and live on is territory of the Coast Salish people, including the Stillaguamish, Duwamish, Muckleshoot, and Suquamish peoples. We encourage you to go to <https://native-land.ca> to find out more information and begin to build your own relationships with the original stewards of the land you inhabit.

Due to the sensitive nature of this material, all names and identifying details have been changed to protect the confidentiality of survivors; these blended stories represent the challenges and successes of many survivors who have used our programs. In addition, stock photography is used in most cases to further protect the ongoing safety of our current and past participants.