

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact:**

Mr. Dennis Harrison  
Chief Development Officer  
[Dennis.Harrison@JaxLegalAid.org](mailto:Dennis.Harrison@JaxLegalAid.org)  
(904) 356-8371 ext. 296

## **Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, Inc. Dramatically Increases Ability to Assist Victims of Crime**

**JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA**, *January 29, 2018* -- Thanks to the leadership of Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi and her team, the State of Florida has increased its ability to provide civil assistance to victims of crime. In the Northeast Florida area, Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, Inc. (JALA) a primary source for economic and social justice, and the oldest civil legal aid law firm in Florida, is now able to provide substantial and extensive civil legal services to survivors of sexual violence, stalking or cyberstalking, those needing protection from violations of court orders and victims of family or domestic violence in general.

The Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), administered by the Florida Attorney General, provides for civil legal services to victims of domestic violence.

As a provider of free legal services in the Jacksonville area, JALA provides essential services including representation at hearings for injunctions for protection against domestic violence, timesharing of children and support, and temporary use and possession of the household. JALAs services are also essential for enabling survivors to be safe and to regain their independence and control from their violent intimate partners. JALA also provides legal services to survivors of sexual violence, stalking and cyberstalking or those needing protection from a violation of a court order.

We know the need is great in our local area. Florida Department of Law Enforcement information confirms the following domestic violence reports for Duval in 2016 alone: 12 homicides, 40 forcible sex crimes, 6,918 assaults, and 112 cases of stalking and other threats/intimidation, for a total of 7,082 incidents (with another 1,218 in the surrounding counties of Clay and Nassau). Duval's incidence of domestic violence exceeds the state average. More than 3,000 injunctions for protection are filed in Duval yearly. Domestic violence dynamics commonly include cutting the victim off from education and employment opportunities during the relationship, and cutting the victim and children off from financial support when the victim leaves, and our entire community suffers as a result.

Although the need for emergency legal services far outweighs the available resources for domestic violence survivors, thanks to zero funding from the State of Florida, VOCA funding now allows JALA to close that gap.

### **About Jacksonville Area Legal Aid:**

The mission of Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, Inc. is to obtain and provide high quality legal assistance to low income and other special need groups and to stimulate and empower groups of poor people to accomplish energetic and affirmative advocacy, all to alleviate the circumstances, incidents and causes of poverty. Donate at [www.JaxLegalAid.org](http://www.JaxLegalAid.org).

###