



OUR IMPACT IN 2025



**OUR MISSION**

*To seek justice for the innocent, the wrongfully imprisoned, and those who have suffered manifest injustice under Arizona's criminal justice system.*

MAKING THE ARIZONA CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM **MORE FAIR FOR ALL.**

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



**COLLEEN MARING, JD, MBA**  
President, Arizona Justice Project

**I AM SO PRIVILEGED TO BE WRITING THIS NOTE TO YOU, OUR MOST VALUABLE DONORS AND SUPPORTERS OF THE ARIZONA JUSTICE PROJECT, AS THE PRESIDENT OF OUR BOARD.** This year, the Arizona Justice Project proved more clearly than ever that it is—and will continue to be—a resilient, effective force for justice for as long as there are wrongfully imprisoned individuals in Arizona.

Over twenty-five years ago, founder Larry Hammond gathered friends in a law firm conference room in Phoenix to volunteer to help free the innocent and the unjustly imprisoned, one client and one volunteer (and no paid staff!) at a time. Today, we manage dozens of cases through 7 professional staff members and more than 85 volunteer attorneys and investigators; we provide lifelong support to each of our freed and exonerated clients through our reentry team, led by our Director of Social Work; we leverage effective (pro bono!) lobbyists in advocating for bills and legal changes to protect the innocent and correct injustices.



We also have sustained and thrived in fulfilling our mission to seek justice for the innocent, the wrongfully imprisoned, and those who have suffered manifest injustice under Arizona’s criminal justice system since our founding in 1998, and, more relevantly to this note, since 2020. Since 2020, we have endured the passing of our beloved founder, successfully hired new attorneys and staff to replace the invaluable ones who have given us years of their careers, expanded our Board to include individuals across the entire State of Arizona, and now elected the first Board President who is not one of those early volunteers who made the Project what it is today. We owe our existence to Larry Hammond and the core group of dedicated pro bono attorneys, firms, and donors who grew the Project into everything it is, and we are so fortunate to enjoy their continued support. What they have accomplished since 1998 is indescribable—particularly for the 52 individuals they freed and hundreds more whose lives have been impacted due to the work and litigation of the Project. And now, the permanency and endurance of what they built is on display

and is the promise we, the Arizona Justice Project, offer to the hundreds of people who write to us seeking justice.

As one of the first innocence organizations founded in the United States, we seek to continue to be a source of hope for the wrongfully incarcerated, a voice for truth and change in the State of Arizona, and a model for justice organizations everywhere. We are so grateful for your support through our growth and change, and we ask for your continued assistance in growing the community of freed persons, lawyers, volunteers, donors, and advocates that is the Arizona Justice Project.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Colleen Maring'.

**COLLEEN MARING, JD, MBA**  
President, Arizona Justice Project

# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR





*When you have your health and your freedom,  
you've got it all. ”*

## LINDSAY HERF

Executive Director, Arizona Justice Project

### **ONE OF OUR FREED CLIENTS SAID THIS TO ME AS WE DROVE DOWN CAMELBACK ROAD, GAZING OUT THE CAR WINDOW AT HOLIDAY LIGHTS.”**

He spent 53 years in prison, and each day he appreciates his freedom more than I can ever imagine. It is this spirit, this appreciation, this positive energy from our clients that fuels the drive at the Arizona Justice Project each day.

Closing out 2025, we celebrate our **27th year** of working to exonerate the innocent and correct cases of manifest injustice. We mark the achievement of seeing our **52nd client** regain her freedom after a rare grant of executive clemency. We honor the Arizona lawmakers who voted to pass the **Erroneous Convictions Law**, which—for the first time ever—acknowledges that wrongful convictions have occurred in this state and seeks to address those who have been harmed by them.

This year, we advanced efforts to cut down on wrongful convictions by working with law enforcement agencies on eyewitness identification procedures. We lobbied lawmakers to pass an exoneree compensation law. We represented seven individuals before the Arizona Board of Executive Clemency, seeking release on parole or clemency. We litigated cases of wrongful conviction in state courts. We assisted nearly 2,600 individuals in expunging past marijuana-related criminal records.

None of this work is possible without supporters like you!

There is no shortage of individuals who need our help each year. The organization's ability to tackle difficult feats has been, and still is today, on the shoulders of incredible teams of dedicated people. Each year, hundreds of individuals in prison reach out to the AJP with claims of innocence, manifest injustice, or marijuana record expungement. AJP staff, interns, investigators, and volunteer attorneys tirelessly vet each case and carefully select those with meritorious claims of wrongful conviction or unjust punishment for pro bono legal representation. And, when our work is successful and our clients regain their freedom, our dedicated Re-Entry team is there to help individuals make a successful transition back into the community.

As we charge into 2026, we keep in mind a favorite saying from Arizona Justice Project Founder Larry Hammond, *“Who can we help today?”*

Thank you for making a difference.

Sincerely,

**LINDSAY HERF**

Executive Director, Arizona Justice Project

— OUR IMPACT IN 2025 —

# CLIENT UPDATES IN 2025

WE WELCOMED HOME OUR 52ND CLIENT THIS YEAR!



## CLIENT UPDATES

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### FREDDY RAMON

#### **FREDDY AND HIS WIFE WELCOMED A BABY BOY LAST AUGUST!**

Freddy was 15 years old when he was charged. He was convicted in Pima County and sentenced to 25 years to life. He served 28 years in prison before he was granted parole and released in 2020. After four years of parole supervision, he requested an absolute discharge from the Arizona Board of Executive Clemency. The Board recognized Freddy's rehabilitation, contributions to his community, and his incredible family support, and granted him an absolute discharge from his conviction and sentence. We are so proud of Freddy!



### EVERETT BERRY

#### **EVERETT BERRY WAS GRANTED AN ABSOLUTE DISCHARGE FROM HIS CONVICTION AND SENTENCE LAST SEPTEMBER!**

Everett was first granted parole and released in 2019. He moved in with family, secured employment, and followed all the rules of parole. Then, unceremoniously, he was picked up and returned to prison. A lawsuit ensued over the legal meaning of "release" and Everett's parole eligibility. He spent three more years in prison before he was again released on parole. Through it all, Everett acted with grace, never lost hope, never violated a rule, and we are so proud of him for all he has accomplished since his release.

## CLIENT UPDATES

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### SHANNON LILJENQUIST

**SHANNON LILJENQUIST ALSO OBTAINED AN ABSOLUTE DISCHARGE FROM PAROLE IN 2025!** Shannon regained her freedom in 2022. Over the last three years, Shannon worked her way up in her career at the Department of Economic Security, connecting less fortunate individuals with social services. She takes care of her parents, and she is a pillar of support for other women re-entering society. Shannon is a bright light to all of those around her, and we are so proud of her!

# CASE SCREENING AND REVIEW

752

Case-Related Letters  
and Correspondence

204

Applications for  
Assistance

3000

Pro Bono  
Hours



**AZJUSTICEPROJECT**

85

Legal Calls and Visits  
with Clients

406

Hours of  
Investigation

# 2025 CASE LOAD

5

Experts Consulted

DNA, Cell Phone Forensics,  
Memory Science,  
Psychology, Gangs

15

Individuals supported  
through reentry

2707

Hours of Litigation for  
Court Proceedings



AZJUSTICEPROJECT

9

Parole and  
Clemency Cases

4

Cases in  
Court/Litigation

16

Fact  
Investigations

## LARRY HAMMOND JUSTICE FELLOW ALEX PREISSING



**ALEX PREISSING IS THE ARIZONA JUSTICE PROJECT'S 2025/2026 LARRY HAMMOND JUSTICE FELLOW.** The Fellowship is named after the late Larry Hammond, who founded the Arizona Justice Project in 1998. This position is generously funded by The Lodestar Foundation.

Alex earned his B.S. in Finance and Legal Ethics from the Indiana University Kelley School of Business before graduating with his J.D. from Arizona State University's Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law. During his time at ASU, Alex gained valuable experience as a student intern at the Arizona Justice Project. With two years of internship experience, Alex positioned himself to hit the ground running as the newest Larry Hammond Justice Fellow.

In his spare time, Alex competes as a professional MMA fighter. He hopes to be the only practicing attorney in the UFC.

## AJP RE-ENTRY TEAM

*THE AJP RE-ENTRY TEAM CONTINUES TO PROVIDE VITAL SERVICES TO CLIENTS BEING RELEASED FROM PRISON.*

This year, the Re-Entry Team supported 15 clients, providing assistance by connecting clients with housing resources, employment and job-readiness training, securing health insurance and social services, connecting clients with counseling services, obtaining state identification cards and other vital records, and working with families on reunification. In addition, the Re-Entry Team helped prepare clients for commutation and parole proceedings and helped represent these clients before the Arizona Board of Executive Clemency.



## > AJP INTERNS

The Arizona Justice Project has a long history of working with law student interns, who help review case files, conduct legal research, and navigate paths of reinvestigation. This year, AJP was lucky to work with Ally and Sam, who were “2Ls” from ASU’s Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law. Ally and Sam were tasked with reviewing case files of convictions obtained by formerly disbarred

prosecutors from Maricopa and Pima Counties. We are extremely grateful for Ally and Sam’s dedication and diligence in this important review.

This year, Tyrese, who is obtaining his Master of Social Work from the University of Nevada, interned with the Project, assisting clients in their re-entry process and working with clients who are still incarcerated.

# RECLAIM YOUR FUTURE

EXPUNGING  
PAST MARIJUANA  
RELATED RECORDS

*THE RECLAIM YOUR FUTURE ("RYF")  
CAMPAIGN IS IN ITS 5TH AND FINAL YEAR! THE  
RYF CAMPAIGN IS DEDICATED TO IDENTIFYING  
THOSE WITH PRIOR MARIJUANA-RELATED  
CRIMINAL RECORDS AND PROVIDING PRO  
BONO LEGAL GUIDANCE AND SERVICES TO  
HELP IMPACTED INDIVIDUALS EXPUNGE THEIR  
PAST RECORDS.*

This program is supported by the Arizona Department of Health Services. AJP, along with DNA Peoples, Southern Arizona Legal Aid, Community Legal Services, Just Communities Arizona, the University of Arizona Restoration of Rights Legal Clinic, and the Arizona State University Post-Conviction Legal Clinic, has worked in collaboration to educate individuals about the marijuana expungement law and facilitate the process for individuals to exercise their right to expungement. Together, RYF has assisted hundreds of individuals through this effort to expunge past records and—for some—obtain their immediate release from prison!





## POLICY INITIATIVES TO CREATE A FAIRER SYSTEM



## SENATE BILL 1500 (COMPENSATION FOR THE WRONGFULLY CONVICTED) PASSED IN ARIZONA!

The Erroneous Convictions Law, colloquially titled “Exoneree Compensation,” passed in Arizona, making Arizona the 40th state in the country to pass such a law. The law creates a legal avenue for people convicted of crimes they did not commit and, as a result, lost years of their lives unjustly incarcerated, to apply for financial compensation. *“When the State wrongfully takes years of someone’s life, it has a responsibility to make things right,”* said Representative Khyl Powell, the bill sponsor, who led the bill through two House committee hearings, receiving near-unanimous support. In addition to financial compensation, the law allows for mental health counseling, educational help, and expungement of conviction records.

**AJP thanks former clients Khalil Rushdan and Drayton Witt, who testified before the legislature about what they went through in their respective cases, and AJP Strategic Litigation Counsel, Hope DeLap, who helped educate lawmakers and testify at legislative hearings. AJP also thanks Garrison 48 for its pro bono assistance.**



## EYEWITNESS IDENTIFICATION

**MISTAKEN EYEWITNESS IDENTIFICATIONS CONTRIBUTED TO APPROXIMATELY 72% OF THE DNA EXONERATIONS THAT HAVE OCCURRED IN THIS COUNTRY.**

Decades of research in social and memory science have identified ways to improve eyewitness identification procedures, reducing misidentifications and increasing the accuracy of eyewitness evidence.

In 2025, AJP worked with members of the Phoenix Police Department on its efforts to update its eyewitness identification protocols to incorporate many of the current best practices into their training and process. AJP also worked with other law enforcement agencies, providing them with best protocols and practices to adopt and implement.



## LEGISLATIVE MEET-N-GREET

AJP held a legislative Meet-N-Greet to educate lawmakers about issues surrounding parole in the State of Arizona in an attempt to create a fair and just system for those sentenced to life with release eligibility.



## "ONE INJUSTICE IS ONE TOO MANY" GALA

We welcomed over 500 guests to our 7th annual *"One Injustice Is One Too Many"* Gala in February 2025! We were joined by AJP clients Doyle, Shannon, Khalil, and Atdom, who spoke about their cases, their time incarcerated, and how they held on to hope. We are grateful to all who attended and participated in this event.





## LAW ROCKS PHOENIX



Thanks to AJP Board Member, Leon Silver, and his band, Crazy Finger,  
for selecting AJP as one of the charities to benefit from Law Rocks!  
Together, we raised over \$6,000 and got to rock out to awesome music!

## > 2025 INNOCENCE NETWORK CONFERENCE

This year, members of the Arizona Justice Project attended the National Innocence Conference in Seattle, Washington. The conference welcomed over 1,000 individuals, including exonerees from across the country, as well as lawyers, experts, social workers, family members, and others who advocate for the wrongfully convicted.



## ARIZONA PUBLIC DEFENDER ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

The Arizona Justice Project attended the annual Public Defender Conference in Arizona and led sessions on post-conviction relief litigation, parole, clemency, excessive sentencing, and federal habeas litigation.



## WRONGFUL CONVICTION DAY

AJP recognized International Wrongful Conviction Day by holding a community event where members of AJP shared their personal stories of wrongful conviction and talked about how we can improve the system to prevent injustices from occurring in the future.

**Thank you to all who attended and participated in this event!**



## ONE FOR JUSTICE TUCSON EVENT

AJP held its 2nd annual *"One For Justice"* event in Tucson, Arizona, graciously hosted by Don Martin. Members of AJP spoke about the importance of the work of the Project and shared their personal stories. Thank you to all who attended!



## FLAGSTAFF EVENT

Thank you to AJP Board Member, Jill Harrison, and David Johns for hosting an event in Flagstaff, and to our Board President, Colleen Maring, for helping to organize!

*We truly appreciated the opportunity to meet with our northern Arizona supporters and talk about the work of the Project.*



## TRAINING AND PRESENTATIONS

AJP staff and clients made presentations to various groups throughout the year, including: Arizona State University Medical School and School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Administrative Offices of the Court, Arizona Public Defender Conference, CLE by the SEA, The Florence Project, Birmingham City University, Innocence Network Conference, Phoenix City Council, employees of the Maricopa County Clerk's Office, and the Quattrone Center.



## HOLIDAY CARD MAKING & OPEN HOUSE



We welcomed over 20 guests and sent over 300 holiday cards to incarcerated individuals this year. We received many responses from people who were so appreciative to receive the cards.

— OUR IMPACT IN 2025 —

# MOMENTS OF FREEDOM

Reflecting on priceless moments captured on camera as we look back on 2025



— OUR IMPACT IN 2025 —



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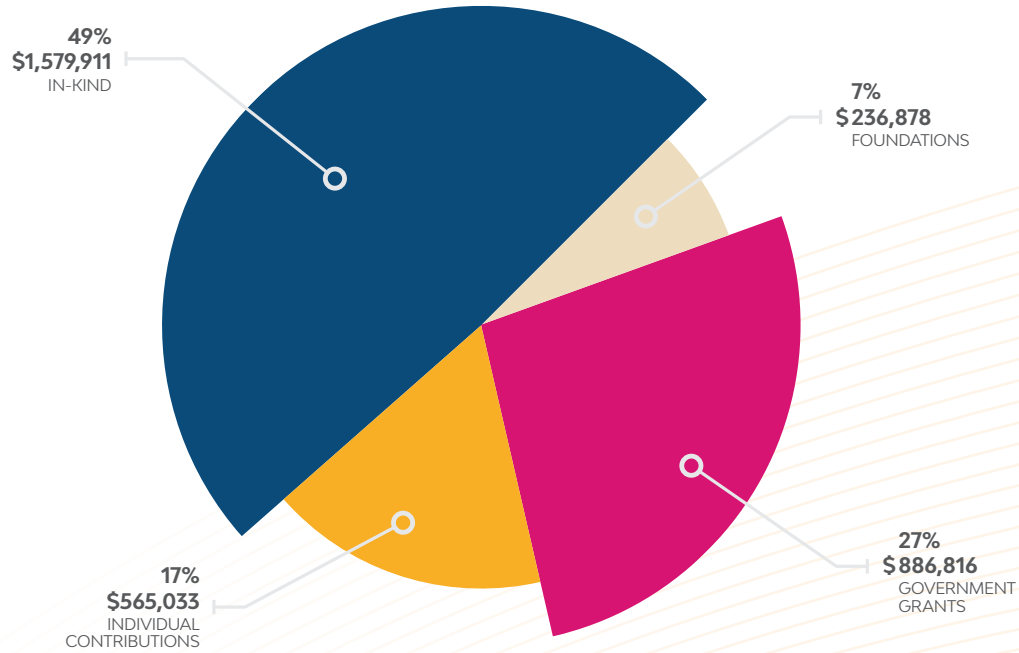
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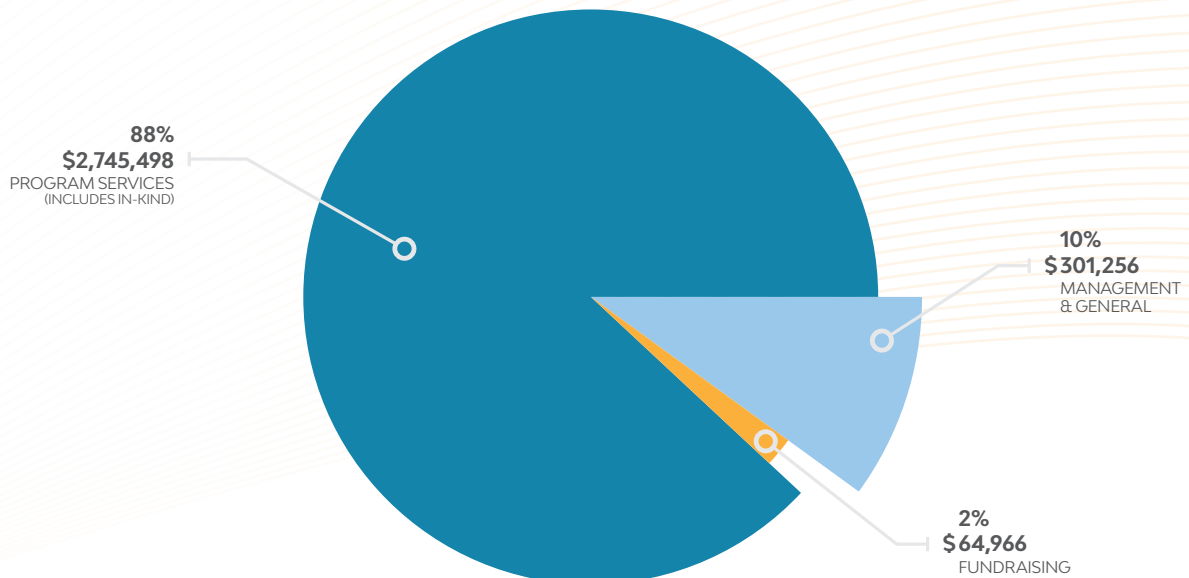
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| DiMaggio Law Office                                      | Mercaldo Law Firm                        | State Bar of Arizona                  |
| Don Bennett Moon Foundation, Inc.                        | Mitchell Stein Carey Chapman, PC         | State Employees Charitable Campaign   |
| Eliot Spalding Foundation                                | Nossaman LLP                             | The Bob & Renee Parsons Foundation    |
| Evergreen Law                                            | Osborn Maledon                           | The Dorsey and Whitney Foundation     |
| Feldman Family Foundation                                | Papetti Samuels Weiss McKirgan LLP       | The Goldberg Family Foundation        |
| Flagstaff Design Center (James Brooks)                   | Paypal                                   | The Lodestar Foundation               |
| Fox Family Foundation                                    | Perkins Coie                             | Thunderbirds Charities                |
| Gallagher & Kennedy                                      | P.E.O. Sisterhood Chapter BM AZ          | Treatment Assessment Screening Center |
|                                                          | Phillips Law Group Foundation Inc.       | United Way                            |
|                                                          | Piccarreta Davis Keenan Fidel            | Valley Players Theatre                |

## FISCAL YEAR 2025 REVENUE



## FISCAL YEAR 2025 EXPENSES



## MISSION PARTNERS



ARIZONA ATTORNEYS  
*Established 1986*  
FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The Arizona Attorneys for Criminal Justice (AACJ) founded the Arizona Justice Project twenty-eight years ago, and this amazing organization continues its commitment to the AJP through financial support, board participation, and assistance on cases. Thank you, AACJ, for your unwavering support!

## THE INNOCENCE NETWORK

As the fifth innocence organization to form in the U.S., the AJP assisted with the founding of the Innocence Network, a group of innocence organizations throughout the country. Today, there are 71 innocence organizations in the Network, and our collective work has inspired the founding of innocence organizations all over the world.



## CREATIVE PARTNERS

Team FabCom continues to be a valuable partner to the AJP, offering essential support in website management, technical services, strategic marketing, and artistic branding. Most importantly, they help us amplify the impact of our work and share the stories of our clients with the world.



## R<sup>3</sup> INVESTIGATIONS

We want to thank the many investigators who have helped us this past year by working tirelessly to track down witnesses, fact-check, find new evidence, and help with interviews.

**A huge thanks to R3 Investigations and Inter-State Investigations.**

**We would not be able to do this work without them!**



THE  
TEAM  
BEHIND  
IT ALL



## AJP STAFF IN 2025

**LINDSAY HERF**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**TANSHA HARRELL**

DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

**KAREN SMITH**

OUTGOING SENIOR LITIGATION COUNSEL

**ERIN MURPHY**

INCOMING SENIOR LITIGATION COUNSEL

**LENNA ORTEGA**

ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR & PARALEGAL

**KATIE PUZAUSKAS**

DEVELOPMENT & LEGAL STRATEGY COORDINATOR

**ALEX PREISSING**

LARRY HAMMOND JUSTICE FELLOW

**SHAWNEE ZIEGLER**

OUTGOING DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

**AMBER SAVAGE**

INCOMING DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

**HOPE DELAP**

QUATTRONE STRATEGIC LITIGATION COUNSEL

For more than 28 years, we have been Arizona's sole nonprofit organization dedicated to providing direct legal services to the wrongly convicted and those who have experienced manifest injustice. Our efforts have helped bring 52 individuals home.



[azjusticeproject.org](http://azjusticeproject.org)