

Amy Alvarado

Life Span

Position: Human Trafficking Coordinator

Time at Agency: 4 years

Commitment to advocacy on behalf of those affected by domestic violence:

Amy Alvarado has dedicated 20 years to supporting domestic violence survivors in various roles. She is currently Life Span's Human Trafficking Project Coordinator, managing programs for human trafficking survivors, especially where it intersects with domestic and sexual violence. Her previous roles include Policy Analyst and Victim Advocate for the Department of Corrections Women's Program and the Cook County Sheriff's Office, where she focused on policy creation and victim support. She also provided counseling to incarcerated women in the THRIVE Program. Amy has extensive experience with the Cook County State's Attorney's Office as the Human Trafficking Coordinator and a Victim-Witness Specialist. She has also worked with the University of Illinois at Chicago Medical Center, Family Rescue, and the Legal Assistance Foundation. Amy holds a Master of Social Work from DePaul University.

Personal qualities that reflect an ongoing commitment to ethical, peaceful, and respectful work with others:
Amy Alvarado is known for her exceptional empathy and commitment to trauma-informed services. She has the patience and determination to navigate various systems to create change and empower survivors to overcome barriers. Beyond her direct service work, Amy is passionate about training others and consulting on cases. Her dedication to combining direct service with education and systemic change highlights her commitment to making a broader impact. She is a natural leader who strives to understand and incorporate others' perspectives.

Ways in which they instill a spirit of advocacy in others:
Amy consistently offers to discuss cases or consult with newer staff. She does so in a supportive and nonjudgemental way that focuses on education and survivor empowerment. She takes leadership in staff meetings to support staff on challenging cases. She has developed and oversees new programming at Life Span including the formation of Life Span's survivor leadership group.

Experience that demonstrates a broad commitment to social justice:
Amy Alvarado's extensive career reflects her deep commitment to social justice. Starting as a paralegal, she witnessed the challenges faced by survivors, particularly immigrants, which motivated her to become an advocate and work on policy improvements. Amy has been a dedicated member of the Cook County Human Trafficking Task Force, organizing and facilitating their annual national conference, workshops, and events. Her ongoing dedication to training and education highlights her broad commitment to supporting survivors.

Creativity in building the domestic violence movement within a social change framework:

Amy Alvarado has worked both within and outside of systems to drive change for survivors of domestic violence (DV). Her leadership roles at the State's Attorney's Office and the Cook County Sheriff's Office led to improved responses for survivors, including those who have been criminalized. Amy's early experiences at Legal Aid Chicago and Family Rescue grounded her in the DV movement, shaping her approach to systemic change throughout her career, including her work at UIC hospital. She has been innovative in developing programs that address the intersection of domestic violence and sexual assault (SA).



Amy Alvarado (left) posing with her award alongside ICADV's Director of Operations, Sara Mentel (right)



Amy Alvarado (left) with Life Span Executive Director, Amy Fox (right)