

2022

YEAR AT A GLANCE

Survivors' Voices in Our Laws

Our [Policy Department](#) vigorously defended one of the most prominent laws passed in recent years: The SAFE-T Act, which is most known for ending the use of money bail in Illinois starting in 2023. CAASE proudly supports the law and had a direct hand in crafting its [victim-centered protections](#). We provided seven public education events about the legislation and three training sessions for gender-based violence advocates. We also participated in two press conferences, a Springfield lobby day, and were interviewed for a multitude of [news stories](#) highlighting our contribution. Our policy work also included support for new state laws to better [protect youth trafficking survivors](#) and hold sex buyers accountable, [end "source of income" discrimination](#) in housing, and improve [Illinois' definition of consent](#).

We also grew our advocacy capacity, adding Policy Associate Tayler Mathews to our team in September. Tayler holds a PhD in political science, an MA in sociology, and advocates for survivors from a gender, race, and disability justice lens.

Inspiring Young Change Makers

CAASE empowered 5,518 teens at 13 schools in 2022. That led us to a major milestone: [30,000 young people served](#) since our founding. We're encouraged to see students' needs shift over time from gaining awareness of sexual harm to coming into workshops with solid foundational knowledge and a desire to learn how they can take action.

We evolved our session on consent to reflect students' growing understanding of the concept and enthusiasm to focus on how it's practiced. We also developed new [workshops](#) on sexting and pornography based on students' feedback and launched a [webpage dedicated to teens](#). It's a one-stop resource for young activists with questions about sexual harm, getting involved in the movement to end it, and where they can find help for a peer or themselves.

Our programs remain in high demand but, as always, students' responses are our greatest indicator of success. This 9th grader's comment highlights the impact: "I will practice consent more in my everyday life and teach it to others around me."

CAASE addresses the culture, institutions, and individuals that perpetrate, profit from, or support sexual exploitation. Our work includes prevention, policy reform, community engagement, and legal services.

Connection and Collaboration

Our [Community Engagement](#) work focused on providing consistent connection over the past year through [3 recurring virtual offerings](#). At our monthly "Let's Chat Over Lunch" event, community members discuss and process current events related to gender-based violence and social injustice. Another monthly event, "Virtually Together", is produced in partnership with [Surviving the Mic](#). It's a creative outlet focused on poetry where survivors access healing and support. CAASE also invites fellow service providers who are survivors working in the anti-sexual violence movement to our quarterly gathering "Survivors Supporting Survivors in the Movement".

144 people connected at our Community Engagement offerings in 2022 and, all told, the department facilitated or participated in 91 community events, panels, or resource fairs. Our focus on building partnerships in the places we serve was also expressed in our commitment to coalition meetings. Our Community Engagement Director attends an average of 3 per month, collaborating with allied organizations to spark change throughout the city.

Seeking Justice With Survivors

Our [Legal Services](#) team took on 270 diverse matters while serving 174 survivor clients in 2022. Their work ranged from arguing against defense requests for therapy records on multiple cases (including three minor survivors), successfully representing 32 student survivors in Title IX matters, and winning the sealing or expungement of 175 arrests for a survivor of human trafficking, and much more. Our [Pro Bono Project](#) also connected 28 private attorneys with meaningful work supporting survivors, a 22% increase from 2021.

Our legal team's impact on the lives of our individual clients is also multiplied by our continued commitment to driving systematic improvements for survivors. In collaboration with our public policy department, our legal team championed the Pretrial Fairness Act. Their intimate knowledge about the experiences of sex crime victims in our legal system helped illustrate how desperately we need [pretrial detention decisions based on risk](#), not wealth. Their expertise helped bring survivors' perspectives to the forefront and counter widespread misinformation about the law.



1
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About CAASE

VISION

CAASE envisions a community free from all forms of sexual exploitation, including sexual assault and the commercial sex trade.

MISSION

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OUR WORK

Prevention Education

CAASE creates and implements educational curricula that empower high-school-age students to help put an end to sexual violence and exploitation.

Public Policy and Advocacy

CAASE advocates for legislative and policy reforms that provide support for survivors of sexual harm, and hold systems accountable for addressing and ultimately preventing the root causes of sexual violence.

Community Engagement

CAASE encourages a better understanding of sexual harm among diverse communities and helps them take action against it.

Legal Services

CAASE represents survivors of sexual violence and exploitation in civil litigation, as victims' rights representatives in the criminal justice system, and as advocates for public policies that increase the efficacy of criminal and civil laws pertaining to sexual violence and exploitation.

VALUES

Social and institutional systems do not adequately serve survivors of sexual violation which disproportionately harms people from marginalized communities, including girls and women, people of color, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities, people living in poverty, immigrants and undocumented people. To best support survivors, CAASE confronts the inequities that fuel or intersect with sexual harm. Our dedication to this work is reflected in our values.

Dignity

We respect the inherent humanity of all people and strive to expand opportunities for personal autonomy.

Accountability

We answer to survivors and collaborate with allies as we seek to hold those responsible for harm accountable.

Progress

We create individual, institutional and cultural change by using innovative approaches to ending sexual harm.

Equity

We commit to building a world where every person, with consideration for their intersecting identities and unique circumstances, has the same access to opportunity and power.

Learn more at caase.org
and follow us @thecaase

