

National Organization for Victim Advocacy
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**[NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR VICTIM ADVOCACY LAUNCHES *VICTIM ADVOCACY CORPS*]
[Students will participate in first-ever service corps aimed at expanding access to victim services]**

[Washington, D.C.] The National Organization for Victim Advocacy (NOVA), a recognized leader in the victims' rights movement for over 45 years, is launching the first-ever Victim Advocacy Corps. This pilot program, supported by funding from the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), aims to elevate the next generation of leaders in victim services by providing college students with victim advocacy training, credentialing, mentorship, and a nine-month, paid field-placement in a local victim service agency.

The inaugural cohort of Victim Advocacy Corps student fellows hail from college campuses across the United States, representing six minority-serving institutions:

- Aaniiih Nakoda College (Fort Belknap, MT)
- Coahoma Community College (Clarksdale, MS)
- Gallaudet University (Washington, D.C.)
- Regis University (Denver, CO)
- University of New Mexico (Albuquerque, NM)
- The University of Texas at El Paso (El Paso, TX)

The 17 student fellows, who represent multiple communities and bring unique experiences to their advocacy work, will convene for the first time in Washington, D.C. at the first-ever Victim Advocacy Corps Leadership Summit occurring at NOVA's 50th Annual Training Event to participate in advocacy training sessions and cohort bonding activities.

Thanh Nguyen, an undergraduate student at the University of New Mexico, shared her enthusiasm for the program. "I am deeply honored and thrilled to be welcomed into a program that embodies my values as an advocate, a student, and a community member...I express my gratitude to NOVA and look forward to participating in this opportunity together."



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Keijuan Neese, an 18-year-old at Coahoma Community College, shared their excitement about being selected for the inaugural cohort: “I am most excited about making a tangible difference in the lives of victims. Being part of the Victim Advocacy Corps allows me to provide support, empathy, and resources to those who need it most...As a student fellow, I aspire to amplify voices, raise awareness, and foster healing. Whether through policy advocacy, direct assistance, or community outreach, I aim to empower survivors and create a safer, more compassionate environment.”

Read the full list and biographies of the Victim Advocacy Corps student fellows [here](#).

Claire Ponder Selib, NOVA’s Executive Director, had this to say about the launch of the Victim Advocacy Corps: “NOVA’s Victim Advocacy Corps (VAC) comes at a critical time in our nation’s history. We are seeing an increase in violent crimes—including gun violence, mass violence and hate crimes—and youth across the country are mobilized and passionate about change. The VAC provides an opportunity to build a new future for victim advocacy that is grounded in our nation’s long commitment to national service; that is youth-led; and that uplifts the voices of all survivors of crime.”

Kristina Rose, Director of the Office for Victims of Crime, stated: “Congratulations to the inaugural cohort of student fellows of the Victim Advocacy Corps! They have chosen to turn towards those impacted by violence in a world where so many choose to turn away. I have no doubt that their leadership, passion, and hard work combined with mentorship, training, and credentialing will inspire a generation of torchbearers for the victims’ rights and services community. Thank you for answering the call to impart hope through services, support, and empathy.”

Abrianna Morales, NOVA’s Victim Advocacy Corps Program Manager, remarked: “As a victim-survivor, I’m very familiar with both the importance of having access to a victim advocate and the difference it makes when you feel that advocate is able to represent you and the communities you identify with. It is our hope that the Victim Advocacy Corps will allow all victim-survivors, of all identities, to feel represented, heard, and advocated for.”

Please direct all questions, media and press inquiries to AdvocacyCorps@trynova.org.

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