



AIR FORCE

SPECIAL VICTIMS' COUNSEL PROGRAM

- The Air Force (AF) Special Victims' Counsel (SVC) Program was implemented on 28 January 2013 as an important step forward in AF efforts to combat sexual assault and provide world class response capabilities to victims. Although the SVC Program has only been in place for 12 weeks, it is already making a tremendous difference in the lives of victims of sexual assault.
- As of 19 April, 269 victims have requested SVC representation and been detailed an SVC
- 82% of clients are AF Active Duty; SVCs are also representing dependent spouses and non-spouses, AF Reserve and Air National Guard (Title 10) members, Army and Navy members, and a qualifying civilian who is assigned overseas
- 93% of clients represented had made an unrestricted report by the time they requested an SVC. Of 18 clients whose report was restricted, half (9) have subsequently converted to unrestricted.
- SVCs are doing a wide range of work in representing their clients:
 - SVCs have attended and represented clients in 40 courts-martial and 34 Article 32 hearings
 - SVCs have attended and represented clients in 175 interviews their clients have had with investigators, defense counsel, and trial counsel
 - SVCs have addressed physical safety concerns for 32 clients; protective orders are in place for 53 clients
- The AF JAG Corps is conducting a comprehensive impact evaluation of the SVC Program, which includes a Victim Impact Survey. Initial feedback on the program from victims includes:
 - "I was utterly lost and afraid for almost a year until I was assigned my SVC. I did not feel like I had anyone on my side, until my SVC showed up. She was an exceptionally good legal representative. She even stood up for me in regards to issues I was having with my chain of command. My SVC did everything possible to ease the burdens associated with reporting sexual assault. I would recommend my SVC to most if not all sexual assault victims."
 - "I cannot imagine how difficult the court process would be without an SVC representative. They do a great job at keeping your privacy. I felt like I understood the entire court process a lot better and liked the fact that they can keep you updated during every step of the court process. My SVC kept in great contact with me and did everything I asked and made sure I understood what my rights were. It was great to have someone there for me, especially when I talked to the defense counsel."
 - "I had a sense of comfort knowing that someone was there specifically looking out for me and my best interest. My SVC made me feel comfortable and expressed all my opinions to ADC [Area Defense Counsel] and legal. Without him, I feel I would've been contacted more frequently and would've had to tell more people the situation that occurred."
- Sexual assault victims can contact their local Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) or Legal Office to make a request for an SVC. The SVC Program Office will detail an SVC within 48 hours (when practicable) of receiving a request.
 - o SARC contact information <http://www.afpc.af.mil/library/sapr/sarcontacts.asp>
 - o Legal Office contact information <https://aflegalassistance.law.af.mil/>