



Amara Legal Center joins the millions of people around the globe in celebrating the 51st anniversary of Pride Month this June and supporting the LGBTQ+ community!

Do you know why Pride Month takes place in June? In June 1969, patrons and supporters of the New York City gay club, the Stonewall Inn, staged six days of protests and demonstrations to resist the violent police harassment and persecution that many LGBTQ+ Americans commonly faced. These demonstrations led predominantly by Black lesbians, gay men and transgender women marked the beginning of a movement to outlaw discriminatory laws and practices against LGBTQ+ people.

We, at Amara, know well how our legal system, rooted in systemic racism and discriminatory laws, can destroy lives and decimate communities. We look at the work we do through a racial equity lens to provide free trauma-informed legal

services, access to the continuum of care and legal information to empower survivors of sex trafficking and individuals harmed by the commercial sex industry. Most of Amara's clients are African-American, U.S. born cis- and trans-women between the ages of 18 and 30, who are also survivors of sex trafficking. We promote criminal justice reform at the local level in the three jurisdictions of Maryland, Virginia and Washington, DC, and we advocate on behalf of our clients' legal rights.

The US Department of Justice's Office of Victims of Crime reports that "various studies show that LGBTQ+ individuals are more likely to be bullied by their peers, ostracized by their communities, and be vulnerable to human trafficking." According to the Family and Youth Services Bureau within the Administration of Children and Families at the US Department of Health and Human Services, "LGBTQ+ youth account for up to 40 percent of the runaway and homeless youth population. Once living on the street, the vulnerability to human trafficking can increase significantly."

We focus our efforts on addressing the intersectionality of social issues that impact the lives of our LGBTQ+ clients and other at-risk, vulnerable populations by providing trauma-informed training for professionals and advocating for policy change to stop the criminalization and stigmatization of individuals. Our priorities include:

- Decriminalizing survivors of sex trafficking by providing access to criminal record relief through the courts, including vacatur and expungements, name changes, gender marker changes and record sealing.
- Creating partnerships with community-based service providers to ensure the continuum of holistic care for victims, training service providers to increase knowledge on trauma-informed services, and sharing information on identifying victims and providing referrals to survivors for legal services.
- Increasing awareness and education about the prevalence of sex trafficking within our communities to help vulnerable individuals avoid trafficking, connect survivors with needed services, combat myths, highlight institutional and systemic biases, and engage community leaders at different levels and at various institutions to support needed changes.
- Expanding legal representation for Black and Brown LGBTQ+ individuals who have been harmed by involvement in commercial sex, whether through force, coercion or choice, to increase their knowledge of their legal rights and how to navigate the justice system.
- Training law enforcement to be able to identify victims and survivors of sex trafficking and to provide trauma-informed responses when survivors call upon the police and the court systems for assistance.

This June, Amara renews its commitment to the LGBTQ+ community, and we celebrate our LGBTQ+ clients. If you would like to support Amara's work to provide free trauma-informed legal services to the LGBTQ+ community, please participate in our month-long campaign - "Amara Pride =Legal Rights."

Throughout the month of June, Amara will share information about the LGBTQ+ community and sex trafficking to increase awareness and to support our efforts to ensure their safety, legal rights and journeys to healing from their exploitation.

You can make a difference! You can take pride in advocating for this community and support Amara's work. [Donate today!](#)

HELP SURVIVORS RESTORE THEIR DIGNITY AND THEIR LIVES!

DONATE TODAY!



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