

Winning Award Nomination  
Department of Justice / Office of Victims of Crime  
Attorney General's Award for  
[Professional Innovation in Victims Services](#)

It is a fact that many victims of domestic violence remain with their abusers for fear of poverty or the inability to support themselves and their children. Second Chance Employment Services is the only organization in existence devoted solely to helping victims of domestic violence enter the work-force. Founded as a 501(c)(3) organization by Dr. Ludy Green, Second Chance is a no-fee placement agency that connects victims of domestic violence with Human Resource professionals in an innovative effort to find them meaningful employment with full health benefits.

The women who come to Second Chance all found themselves in the same predicament—they were raising a family full time, and when they became victims of domestic violence, they had no means to escape from their abusers. Some had careers prior to motherhood, some had never worked before, and some were in need of English language skills. When all of these women wished to enter the workforce, they discovered that their time at home or their lack of skills served as a deterrent for traditional employment agencies and potential employers. They found they were shut out.

Second Chance was created to address this problem. In the area of domestic violence victims' services, the issue of employment is often overlooked. But at Second Chance, victims of domestic violence are provided with all of the resources and tools they need to land a career-track position that best fits their experience, interests, and talents.

By forging unique partnerships with Human Resource professionals across the United States, Second Chance can offer its clients résumé-building, job training, interview skills coaching, and most importantly, potential employers who give them serious consideration. Moreover, because Dr. Green was formerly a high-level HR manager herself, through her extensive professional connections, Second Chance can also offer its clients an inside track to employment.

Because every victim is unique, Second Chance often helps its clients in ways no other organization would. One example can be seen in the clients who have come to Second Chance badly scarred by their abusers. Finding a job for victims whose faces have been disfigured by violence is nearly impossible, so Second Chance connects these clients with a plastic surgeon who provides facial reconstructive surgery at no cost. After each of these clients have recovered from their operations, they have all found jobs, and a new sense of self-esteem.

As much as the services they provide, Second Chance provides hope and support. The women who come to Second Chance are recovering from traumatic experiences that have lasted for years. They have lost their self-confidence, they have lost their faith in a future without violence, they have lost hope. But the people at Second Chance provide a safe and positive environment, unending moral support, and fill these victims with the hope of a better future. Often lost and broken, victims of domestic violence need this kind of support almost as much as they need the services and the job. Confidence-building, empowerment, and support are pivotal aspects of what Second Chance does for victims.

While Second Chance provides and connects its clients with traditional services—housing, clothing, transportation, psychological counseling, ESL classes, medical attention, etc.—the focus at Second Chance remains the economic empowerment of women as a means of escaping domestic violence, from generation to generation. Domestic violence is handed down to children, remove it from one generation, and it is much less likely to reappear in the next. This is important, for domestic violence is seemingly a private crime, not always prosecuted or combated through law enforcement. Yet it is an insidious crime that infects our communities from within. And more often than not, it is up to the victim to stop it. Second Chance aids this by ensuring these victims can find employment, for the fear of poverty far too often perpetuates the crime.

The fact that Second Chance has done such extensive work throughout the Human Resources field has allowed it to have a great influence on how employers view women returning to the workforce after years of being full-time mothers. Whether victims of a crime or not, the difficulty women face upon returning to the work-force is a subtle form of abuse, and a form of discrimination, which is a crime. Second Chance and Dr. Green have proven time and again that these women can work, and work very well, even after living through long-term victimization. Beyond that, the success of Second Chance clients validates the fact that victims of long-term abuse can successfully rebuild their lives and be contributing members of their communities once again.

In the past four years since its inception, Second Chance Employments Services has been a blessing to over 1,600 victims of domestic violence. It has served over 1,200 through direct and referral services, and found meaningful employment with full health benefits for over 400 victims. None of Second Chances' clients have returned to their abusers.