



# National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women

*Working for justice for battered women charged with crimes*

## **How the National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women Assists Legal Defense Teams**

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### **What does the National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women do?**

The National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women (NCDBW) provides free information and technical assistance to attorneys and other members of legal teams who are defending victims of battering charged with crimes. More specifically, they work on cases that have a legal relationship between the crimes with which the defendant is charged and the defendant's experiences of being abused.

Located in Philadelphia, the National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women works on cases throughout the United States. Their website can be found at [www.ncdbw.org](http://www.ncdbw.org).

The National Clearinghouse does not provide direct representation. Rather, their legal team consults directly with defense attorneys, expert witnesses, battered women's advocates, investigators, and defendants themselves. They assist defense teams at any and all stages of the criminal legal process, identifying defense strategies, providing relevant case law and sample litigation materials, locating skilled expert witnesses if needed, and helping to identify support networks for victims of abuse who are facing trial or going through the appeals process.

### **Types of cases**

The National Clearinghouse works on a wide range of cases. Most frequently, they assist in cases where battered women who have defended themselves and/or their children against their batterer's violence and have been charged with assault or homicide. The National Clearinghouse also works on cases in which victims of battering have been coerced into criminal activity; charged with a crime for allegedly "failing to protect" their children from their batterer's violence; or charged with parental kidnapping or custodial interference for fleeing to protect themselves and/or their children.

### **History of abuse and expert witnesses on battering and its effects**

Many people charged with crimes have experienced, or are currently experiencing, abuse by their intimate partners. However, raising a defendant's experiences of abuse in court is not always useful, advisable, and/or permissible in every case. National Clearinghouse staff are available to discuss whether it might be appropriate and/or helpful to incorporate experiences of abuse as part of the legal case and, if so, if the evidence might be best presented by lay or expert witnesses or both. Based on circumstances of the specific case, NCDBW staff will provide information about possible expert witnesses.

### **How to contact the National Clearinghouse**

Please contact NCDBW at 215/351-0010 or 800/903-0111, ext. 3, or at [ncdbw@ncdbw.org](mailto:ncdbw@ncdbw.org).