National Police Accountability Project

MEETING THE MOMENT

2026 Annual Report



National Police Accountability Project www.nationalpoliceaccountability.org



A MESSAGE FROM LAUREN

We started this year reeling from ICE's New Year's Eve murder of Keith Porter Jr. in Los Angeles and bracing as the Trump administration launched an unprecedented attack on Minneapolis. We knew NPAP's expertise in holding the government accountable for state violence would be invaluable to the movement. The stakes were too high to not take on this fight.

We cannot call the United States a democracy if the federal government can kill people in broad daylight and face zero consequences.

So, less than a week after Alex Pretti was killed, NPAP showed up for local partners in Minneapolis to train lawyers to sue ICE and push back against government brutality. Now, three trainings later, **300 more lawyers are ready to sue the federal government!** We also equipped advocates and activists with resources on how they can fight ICE in their communities, and we are partnering with lawyers new to this work as they bring their first cases.

Plus, we continued to do our "OG" work in 2026, representing victims of local police violence, like Gary Thomas, whose story is included here, and helping pass legislation to regulate automated license plate readers.

After the election, the future looks brighter than it did in January, but we know communities are at risk for a double dose of local and federal police violence as long as Trump is in power. **There is no vision for protecting democracy that doesn't involve limiting police power and holding them accountable.** With your support, NPAP will continue to build the expertise, strength and number of lawyers powerfully resisting authoritarianism every day. Thank you.

> **We cannot call the United States a democracy if the federal government can kill people in broad daylight and face zero consequences.**
>
> **Lauren Bonds**, Executive Director, NPAP

SUING THE DOJ

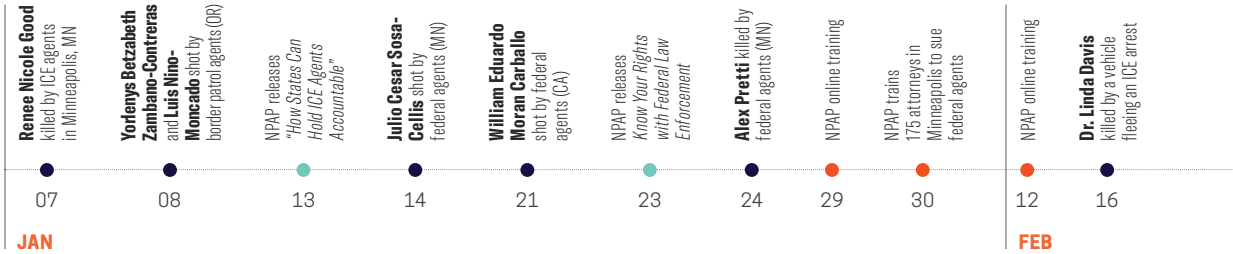
The DOJ won't tell the public why it took down an essential tool tracking federal officer misconduct, and the deaths keep mounting with no accountability.

Together with partners, NPAP is suing the Department of Justice (DOJ) for records regarding the Trump administration's decision to shut down the National Law Enforcement Accountability Database (NLEAD) in early 2025. The database was a centralized hub that tracked instances of federal law enforcement officer misconduct and was created as a guardrail to keep people with a history of misconduct out of positions of power. However, NLEAD was dismantled before state and local law enforcement were ever granted access to the database. At present, there is no streamlined mechanism to determine if eligible job applicants have a history of serious misconduct or a disciplinary record during their time as a federal law enforcement officer.

ICE and other federal officers are killing people in our streets. This is a terrifying example of what happens when law enforcement feels free to act with impunity. The DOJ won't tell the public why it took down an essential tool tracking federal officers, and the deaths keep mounting with no accountability. So we'll see them in court.

2026 A YEAR OF RESISTANCE

- Federal Brutality
- NPAP Lawyer Trainings
- Lawsuits Filed
- Resources Developed



300+ LAWYERS READY TO SUE ICE!



Growing the capacity of hundreds of lawyers to sue the federal government for abuse of power strengthens our democracy for decades to come.

When federal agents harm the public, there is next to no independent institutional accountability. As ICE violence has reached unprecedented levels, we need community-led methods to obtain information, expose lies, and force the Trump administration to answer for the harm it has caused. This is the time for innovative new strategies to defend the movement, and for building the bench of lawyers who can enact them.

The Federal Torts Claims Act (FTCA) allows individuals to sue the federal government when a federal employee's misconduct results in injury or death. In four trainings this year in Minnesota, Michigan, Florida and Texas, NPAP gave more than 300 lawyers step-by-step instructions on how to bring these cases – and the community of support they need to litigate them confidently. With the unprecedented levels of state violence, thousands of victims of federal agents need a lawyer. NPAP is training those lawyers. This is what resistance looks like.

Training lawyers to hold federal agents accountable is only the first step. NPAP will partner with the newly trained lawyers as they take their first cases in communities like Minneapolis, where local advocates have received an overwhelming 600+ requests for legal representation from victims of ICE brutality and protest suppression. Lawsuits give communities a proactive way to assert their rights. NPAP stands with victims of ICE abuse, so they don't have to stand alone.

MAR

- 27 — NPAP sues Harris Co. Jail for killing **Alexis Cardenas**
- 23 — NPAP releases *Know Your Rights with ICE at Airports*
- 26 — NPAP online training

APR

- 07 — **Carlos Ivan Mendoza Hernandez** shot by federal agents (CA)
- 08 — NPAP trains attorneys in Detroit to sue federal agents
- 24 — NPAP trains attorneys in NYC

MAY

- 13 — **Darren Pigram** killed by federal agents (TN)
- 14 — NPAP online training
- 21 — NPAP online training
- 21 — **Jonah Neal** killed by federal agents (TN)
- 28 — NPAP joins case on behalf of man shot 34 times by Topeka Police Department

JUN

- 15 — **Eduardo Cruz Garcia** shot by federal agents (NJ)
- 25 — NPAP online training

JUL

- 01 — **Clemente Lara-Hernandez** shot by federal agents (PA)
- 05 — **Tyrin Johnson** is killed by the Tennessee National Guard deployed as part of the federal Memphis Safe Task Force (TN)

IRRIGATING CIVIL RIGHTS DESERTS

Training and supporting lawyers is at the heart of NPAP's mission, particularly in 'civil rights legal deserts' where there are few lawyers, such as the South, Midwest and small rural communities.

Celebrating justice for Gary!
Micheal L. Littlejohn, Jr., NPAP Co-counsel, Lauren Bonds, NPAP Executive Director, and plaintiff Gary Thomas.

In North Carolina

In Plymouth, NC, a Washington County Sheriff's Deputy dragged Gary Thomas handcuffed across a parking lot and threw him down a set of stairs before slamming him into a brick wall. When Gary's elderly aunt tried to record the incident, the deputy punched her in the face. Local lawyer Micheal L. Littlejohn, Jr. had little experience handling high-profile police misconduct cases, but he couldn't stand by without trying to get some semblance of justice for Gary and his aunt. He reached out to NPAP for support.

Working together, Micheal L. Littlejohn, Jr. and NPAP sued and reached a settlement for Gary and his aunt for the harm they suffered. Micheal speaks highly of co-counseling with NPAP: "This kind of information and support when you come from a state where there just are not a lot of civil rights lawyers, it means everything."

In Oklahoma

When criminal defense lawyer Ronald Jones learned that three women had been sexually assaulted by guards at the federal detention facility in Cimarron, OK, he knew he had to do something. Ronald is an experienced criminal defense lawyer in solo practice who had recently started taking civil rights cases. NPAP offered to help.

CoreCivic, which operates the private prison, is renowned for egregious civil rights violations. In our case, the systemic understaffing common in private prisons allowed male guards to isolate women without supervision for extended periods of time. When one of our clients accompanied her friend to report a rape committed by a guard, she was sexually assaulted by the officer whose job it is to protect inmates from sexual violence.

When private corporations contract with the federal government both entities are difficult to sue. Using the Trafficking Victim Protection Act (TVPA), a novel vehicle to hold both officers and the company accountable, we will be seeking class action relief for all of the women harmed at the facility. If successful, this could be an innovative new pathway to justice for other incarcerated victims of sexual violence.



> **This kind of information and support when you come from a state where there just are not a lot of civil rights lawyers, it means everything.**
>
> Micheal L. Littlejohn, Jr.

JUL
- 07 — **Lorenzo Salgado Araujo** killed by federal agents (TX)
- 08 — NPAP files case challenging rampant sexual assault in federal detention facility
- 13 — **Joan Sebastian Guerrero** killed by federal agents (ME)
- 16 — NPAP online training
- 23 — NPAP trains attorneys in South Florida to sue ICE

AUG
- 26 — NPAP online training

SEP
- 03 — NPAP online training
- 04 — NPAP sues the DOJ to release database of misconduct by federal law enforcement officers
- 09 — NPAP online training
- 20 — **Wilber Rafael Garces Perez** shot by federal agents (TX)

OCT
- 01 — POST Board briefing
- 07 — NPAP trains attorneys in Austin to sue federal agents
- 09 — **Oscar Belgal** shot by federal agents in NYC with his 5-year old son in the car
- 13 — NPAP files FTCA claim on behalf of assaulted immigration attorney **Yovana Medina**
- 21 — NPAP trains attorneys in police accountability in Denver, CO
- 26 — NPAP releases *Know Your Rights at the Polls w/LEO and ICE*

As of late October, **at least 32 people have died in ICE custody** this year.