

# Unlocking the Future

## IPF's Strategic Growth Plan



INNOCENCE  
PROJECT  
OF FLORIDA  
*Unlock the Truth*



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# About The Innocence Project of Florida

The Innocence Project of Florida (IPF) is an IRS-certified 501(c)(3), non-profit organization founded in January 2003 to help innocent prisoners in Florida obtain their freedom and rebuild their lives. Our mission is to:

- Screen and investigate cases in which meritorious innocence claims are identified;
- Secure DNA testing when biological evidence exists;
- Advocate for the release and/or exoneration of individuals whose cases present meritorious innocence claims based on evidence of actual innocence;
- Provide transitional and aftercare services to exonerees; and
- Advocate for necessary criminal justice reform to avoid wrongful incarcerations in the future.

As of September 2023, IPF has freed 30 innocent individuals who have spent a collective 647 years incarcerated for crimes they did not commit.



object of Florida

# History of IPF

## 2003

The Innocence Project of Florida (IPF) was established in response to a filing deadline for post-conviction DNA motions, with Talbot "Sandy" D'Alemberte serving as the founding chair of the board of directors. Initially, IPF operated with two advocates, Jennifer Greenberg and Sheila Meehan, working from a small office located in a hallway at the Florida State University College of Law.



## 2006

IPF underwent significant growth and development, and moves to its current home at 1100 East Park Avenue in Tallahassee. The organization implemented systems for reviewing and accepting new cases, hired two full-time staff attorneys to tackle a substantial backlog of cases and improve the litigation process. Additionally, IPF became the first innocence organization in the United States to hire a full-time social worker to its staff.

## 2008-2022

IPF continued to expand its capacity through the hiring of additional staff. The organization brought on its first intake coordinator in 2008 to manage the screening process from initial inquiry to case acceptance. IPF began accepting and litigating non-DNA cases of actual innocence. In 2016, IPF hired its first staff investigator, and in 2018, hired two non-legal staff members to manage the organization's fundraising and communications respectively.

## 2022- Present

IPF has become the leading innocence organization in the state of Florida, and its annual budget has grown to more than \$1 million. At any given time, the organization has 30-40 cases in litigation and receives around 1,000 requests for assistance from incarcerated individuals annually. IPF's Board of Directors recognizes the current staffing level does not have the capacity to meet the needs of the population it serves. The Board in collaboration with IPF's staff develops the organization's first-ever strategic plan.

20<sup>th</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY





# Our Team

Under the leadership of attorney Seth Miller, IPF's current Executive Director, the organization continues its unwavering commitment to their mission. Seth oversees both the legal work and operational aspects of IPF. On the legal side, the project is supported by a Legal Director, two Staff Investigators, an Intake Manager, and an Intake Specialist. The intake team, led by the Manager, handles nearly 1,000 pieces of mail annually from those seeking for legal assistance. The Staff Investigators conduct field investigations to gather crucial evidence of actual innocence. With the expertise and experience of the Legal Director and Executive Director, IPF advocates strongly for the wrongfully convicted. Furthermore, IPF has a dedicated Director of Transition Services, Anthony Scott, LCSW, with 17 years of experience assisting clients in their reintegration process.

On the operations side, IPF has a Director of Operations overseeing administrative functions. They also have a Director of Development and Event Coordinator responsible for fundraising and events, and a Creative Content & Community Outreach Specialist that effectively shares the organization's mission with the wider community. The non-legal team brings a diverse range of experiences from working at large corporations, higher education institutions, and advocacy groups, further strengthening IPF's capabilities.



**Jessica Bivens**  
Director of Development



**Della Campbell**  
Intake & Internship Manager



**Amy Carr**  
Senior Staff Investigator



**Rachel Cook**  
Staff Investigator



**Saskiya Fagan**  
Creative Content & Community Outreach Specialist



**Juliana Hemela**  
Event Coordinator



**Carly Mayzum**  
Intake Specialist



**Seth Miller, Esq.**  
Executive Director



**Brandon Scheck, Esq.**  
Legal Director



**Anthony Scott**  
Director of Transition Services



**Stephanie Spurgeon**  
Paralegal



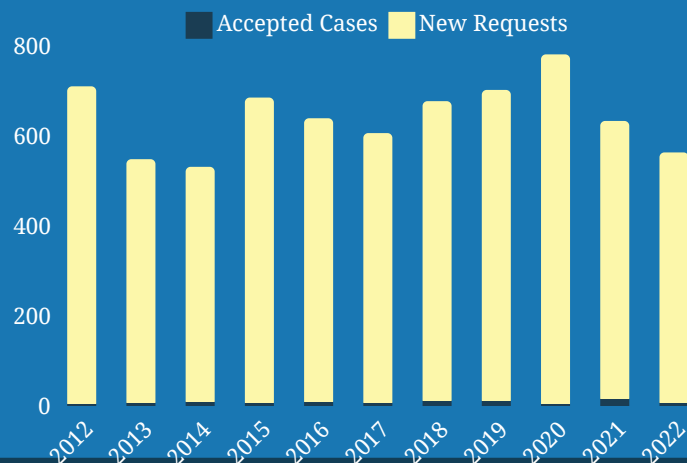
**Emily Thourson**  
Director of Operations

# Why Now? The Need to Grow

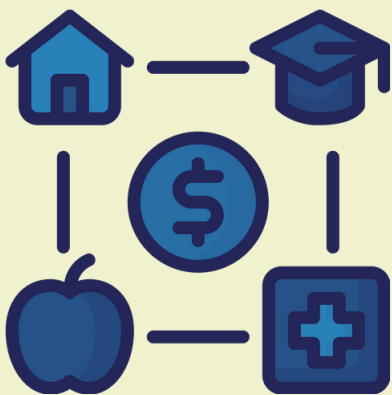


## I. Requests for our help have not slowed down

Over the last 10 years, the number of new requests for assistance our office receives has remained steady at between 550-750 each year. While some of these cases are not eligible for our assistance, IPF still must deny many requests due to the limited capacity of our staff. On average, IPF accepts 8-10 new cases for litigation each year, or about 1-2% of requests received.



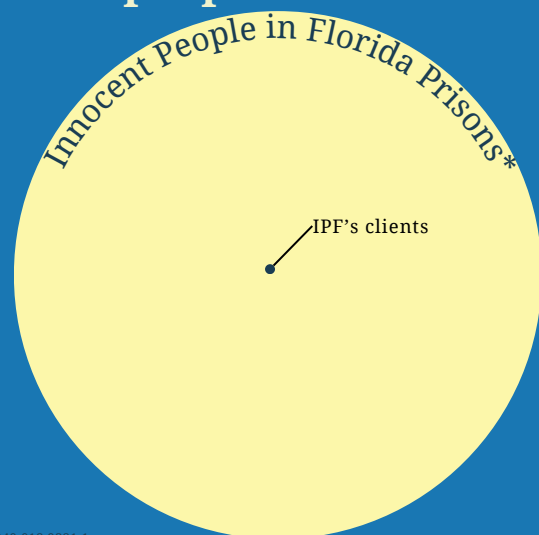
## II. As IPF frees more clients, the need for transition services grows



In the last 20 years, IPF has freed 30 individuals who have spent a collective 647 years incarcerated. Unfortunately, many of our clients do not have an adequate support network to transition to life after wrongful conviction, and even fewer are eligible for compensation from the state. IPF's Director of Transition Services fills in critical gaps to ensure these folks have a successful transition back to free society by providing clinical social work services as well as helping them secure housing and employment. As of 2023, IPF provides over \$50,000 annually in direct client support, a number which will only grow as we secure freedom for more innocent individuals.

## III. IPF is only able to help a small fraction of innocent people in Florida's prisons

A recent study\* estimated that approximately 6% of people in state prisons are wrongfully incarcerated. Per the Florida Department of Corrections, there are currently 80,000 incarcerated in state prisons, meaning nearly 5,000 are likely wrongfully convicted. While IPF will likely never have the capacity to represent all of these innocent people, there is a great unmet need among this population that could be assisted if IPF had more staff.

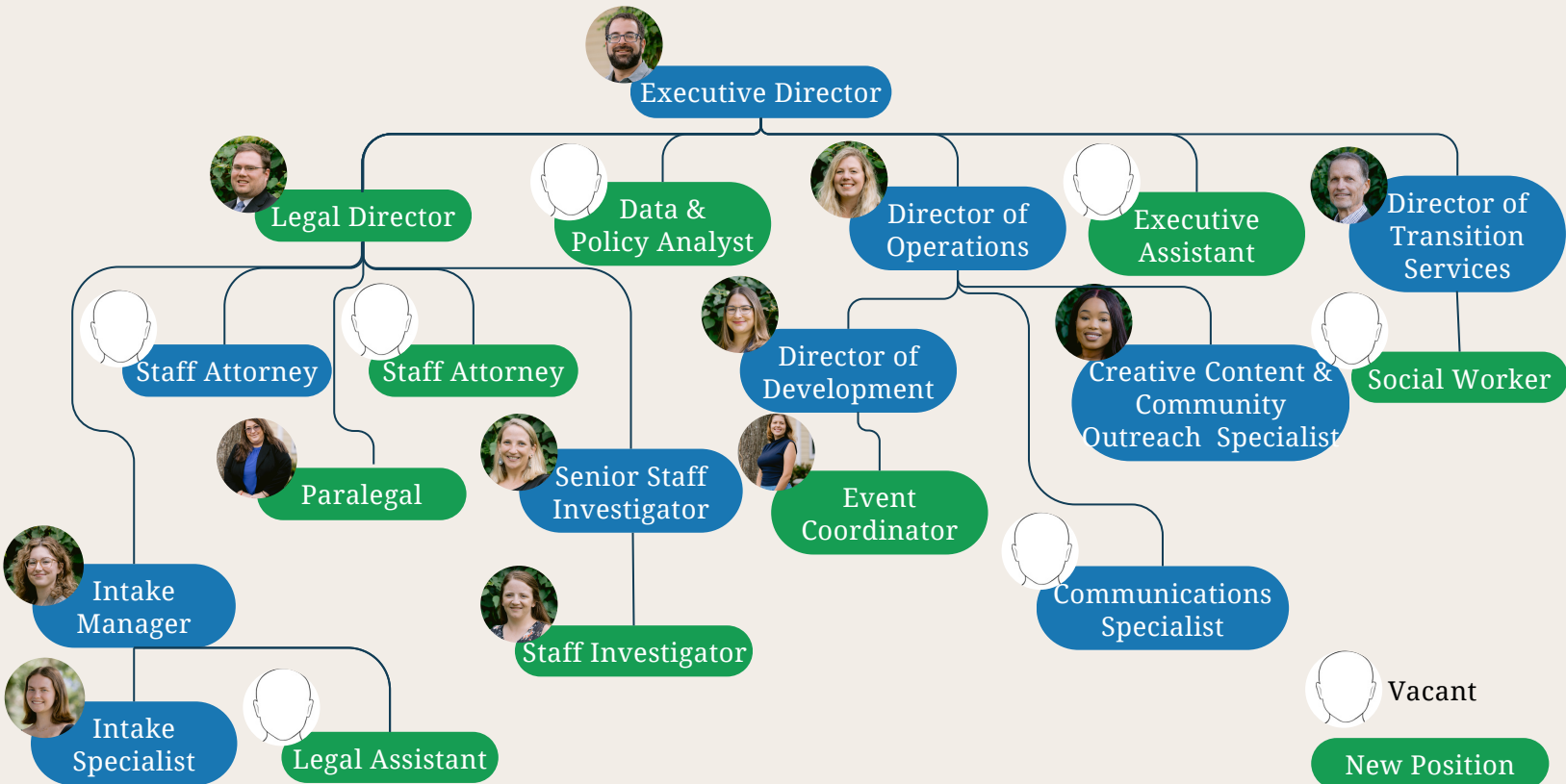


\*Loeffler, C.E., Hyatt, J. & Ridgeway, G. Measuring Self-Reported Wrongful Convictions Among Prisoners. J Quant Criminol 35, 259-286 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10940-018-9381-1>



# Staffing for the Future

## IPF's Organizational Chart



Through the strategic growth plan, IPF plans to add two additional attorneys, a paralegal, a legal assistant, a social worker, a data and policy analyst, an event coordinator, and an executive assistant to the office. A second staff investigator has already been hired through the strategic plan. This will tremendously increase our capacity to find and free the wrongfully convicted in our state. Additionally, the data and policy analyst will expand our organization's scope by having a dedicated resource to analyze the mountains of data collected over the last twenty years, as well as be an advocate for the reforms we hope to move through the state legislature.

In addition to hiring new staff, the strategic plan also contemplates a move to a new office building, as IPF has nearly outgrown its current space. The plan also includes new benefit offerings to current and new staff, including dental and vision insurance and a retirement offering with a match. These benefits are critical to recruiting and retaining top talent in a competitive employment market.



# Unlocking the future

Over the last 20 years, IPF has become the leading innocence organization in the state of Florida and one of the top innocence organizations in the United States. It has secured freedom for 30 innocent individuals and provided transition assistance to numerous others who were freed in other states and later relocated to Florida.

Our staff and Board of Directors is looking forward to the next twenty years finding and freeing innocent people, but it will take the support of many for IPF to continue the vital work the organization does.

If you have the means to make a financial gift, please do not hesitate to contact us. Your support directly impacts the lives of wrongfully incarcerated Floridians and their loved ones.



**If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out:**

**Jessica Bivens**

Director of Development

850-561-6767 ext. 1005

[jbivens@floridainnocence.org](mailto:jbivens@floridainnocence.org)

**Seth Miller**

Executive Director

850-561-6767 ext. 1004

[smiller@floridainnocence.org](mailto:smiller@floridainnocence.org)

**Emily Thourson**

Director of Operations

850-561-6767 ext. 1002

[ethourson@floridainnocence.org](mailto:ethourson@floridainnocence.org)