

INNOVATION THAT SUPPORTS THE WORK

Why Technology Must
Evolve in Advocacy

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Supporting survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking requires deep compassion, careful documentation, and constant adaptation. As the landscape of survivor services evolves, through changing funding requirements, emerging service models, and growing digital communication, organizations must have tools that evolve alongside them.

Innovation is not simply about adding new features to software. In the context of advocacy work, innovation means designing systems that understand the realities of survivor-centered services and continually improving them to support the people doing the work.

At Vela, innovation is one of our core values because the work of supporting survivors deserves technology that keeps moving forward.

Why Innovation Matters in Survivor Services

Survivor service organizations operate in a complex environment. Advocates must balance direct support for survivors with strict reporting requirements, confidentiality protections, and grant compliance.

At the same time, the nature of services continues to change. Survivors increasingly reach out through digital

channels, such as online chats, text, and social media. Programs may operate across multiple funding streams, each with different reporting expectations. And organizations are being asked to demonstrate impact through data more clearly than ever before.

Without thoughtful innovation, technology can quickly become a barrier rather than a support system.

The right tools should reduce administrative burden, improve accuracy, and help advocates spend more time focusing on survivors rather than systems.

Innovation in Technology is About Responsiveness

One of the most important aspects of innovation in advocacy technology is responsiveness, listening closely to the needs of programs and adapting systems accordingly.

Recent updates to Vela introduced enhancements designed to support both compliance and usability for organizations. These updates included key improvements:

- Updates to federal reporting structures to align with new funding requirements

- Tools that allow administrators to manage data retention and deletion in accordance with compliance guidelines
- Expanded integration capabilities, such as sending service activities directly to Outlook calendars
- Administrative controls that help protect data integrity, including timesheet and service locking
- Additional reporting and configuration options that reflect how programs actually operate

These kinds of changes reflect a larger philosophy: software for advocacy cannot remain static. It must continuously adapt as policies, reporting requirements, and service models evolve.

Security and Confidentiality Require Constant Innovation

Innovation is also essential when it comes to protecting survivor information.

Advocacy organizations hold extremely sensitive data. Systems must be designed to safeguard that information while still allowing programs to access the insights they need to operate effectively. This requires ongoing improvements in:

- Data access permissions
- Authentication and account security
- Administrative oversight of records
- Data retention and deletion controls

Security is not a one-time feature. It requires continuous monitoring and

updates to stay ahead of evolving risks. For organizations serving survivors, these protections are a matter of trust.

Innovation Should Be Guided by Advocates

Technology is most effective when it is shaped by the people who use it.

Vela was developed in collaboration with advocates and coalitions who understand the realities of survivor services. From the beginning, the goal was to create a system that simplifies data collection, reduces duplication, and reflects best practices in confidentiality and reporting.

That collaboration continues today. Many new features and improvements come directly from feedback within the Vela community. These are advocates and organizations sharing their experiences, challenges, and ideas for improvement, *and we are listening.*

Innovation is strongest when it is grounded in real-world advocacy work.

Technology Should Strengthen and Support

In fields like DV/SA and human trafficking survivor services, technology must always serve the mission. Innovative systems should:

- Reduce administrative complexity
- Help programs demonstrate impact to funders
- Protect survivor confidentiality

- Adapt quickly to changing requirements
- Support advocates' wellbeing by simplifying documentation and reporting

When technology is designed with these goals in mind, it becomes a powerful ally in the work of supporting survivors.

Innovation as an Ongoing Commitment

Innovation is a continuous process.

As policies change, service models evolve, and organizations discover new ways to support survivors, technology must evolve alongside them.

At Vela, innovation means listening closely to advocates, responding to emerging needs, and continuously improving the tools that organizations rely on every day.

We believe that when technology works the way advocates work, it creates space for what matters most: supporting survivors and strengthening communities.

Vela is driven by our core values to support survivor-serving organizations with compassion, integrity, innovation, collaboration, and gratitude.

Want to learn new ways to simplify your work or explore features you may not be using yet? Visit veladirect.com or reach out to our team. We're always here to help.



Developed with input from advocates at every stage, Vela by Element 74 is a trauma-informed case management and reporting platform built specifically for domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking organizations.

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