

**TEXAS**  
**▲AFTER**  
**▼VIOLENCE**  
**PROJECT**

**IMPACT REPORT**

**2023**

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[TEXASAFTERVIOLENCE.ORG](https://TEXASAFTERVIOLENCE.ORG)

**“The tricky thing about trauma is that it can be difficult to discuss. But if these things aren’t talked about, we run the risk of failing to document the painful parts of our history. ” –TAVP Collaborator**

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# A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

2023 was another remarkable year for TAVP.

As in past years, we continued to lead several important and innovative documentation, archival, creative, and advocacy projects. These include our Visions After Violence Community Fellows program, Access to Treatment Initiative, After Violence Archive, Virtual Belonging, Community Archives Collaborative, and many others. We continued to explore the ethical frameworks that guide our work to help us mitigate risk and harm to the communities we serve, and to ensure our work and mission always centers care, safety, and dignity. We continued to listen and learn alongside our communities and allies, we constantly challenged ourselves to be as intentional and ethical as we are effective, and to cultivate collective understanding and healing in the aftermath of violence.

We continued to grow and evolve as a team and organization. We welcomed Hannah Whelan (Documentation & Archives Director), Raquel Garcia (Community Archivist), Jasmarié Hernández-Cañuelas (Development & Communications Coordinator), and Imani Altemus-Williams (CAC Project Manager) to our team. We welcomed two new board members, Alexa Garza and Milad Taghehchian.

We focused on building a restorative workplace where we share a strong sense of purpose, value, and belonging. We doubled our annual budget and invested in our operations, our programs, and our people. We worked hard, prioritized rest and wellness, and ended the year proud of what we accomplished together.

In 2024, we will continue to ethically and responsibly document, preserve, and share stories and other records to build power in our communities, transform narratives about violence and justice, and strengthen our movements for abolition and liberation. We will continue to honor the community storytelling and memory work traditions that guide us while also pushing the boundaries of our work and impact with new ideas, projects, and collaborations. We will also explore how TAVP can be even more responsive to the growing national demand for our work and expertise while at the same time expanding and deepening our advocacy work in our communities in Texas.

I am honored to be a part of this extraordinary team and community.

Please stay in touch, and stay up to date with our work by [signing up for our monthly newsletter](#).

As always, thank you for your support.

Gabriel Solís



Executive Director



**Gabriel Solís**  
**Executive Director**

# THE AFTER VIOLENCE ARCHIVE: A FRESH START AND A NEW VISION

## AVA: A FRESH START AND A NEW VISION

Since 2021, TAVP's [After Violence Archive](#) (AVA) has become an indispensable resource for activists, researchers, and artists involved in decarceration, abolition, and trauma-informed memory work movements. The care and consent that we have always forefronted in our work was built into AVA, and we have been extremely excited over the past few years as people engaged with, added to, and activated the records within the archive.

To help guide the development and ensure the preservation of AVA, TAVP made two major hires in early 2023: Hannah Whelan as our Documentation and Archives Director and Raquel Garcia as our first-ever Community Archivist. While both Raquel and Hannah worked with TAVP as archival interns prior to their current roles, these new hires marked a significant change in the amount of time and resources devoted to TAVP's physical and digital archives.

Together, Raquel and Hannah set to work expanding access to TAVP's collections. They did so with increased input from AVA's most critical population: our community members who share their stories and artifacts with our archives. Importantly, Hannah and Raquel have also increased focus on how digital records documenting state violence can put community record creators at risk of surveillance and retaliation from the state or violent extremists.

TAVP's archival collections contain stories and records that help shape our individual and collective memory related to state violence, survival, and healing. While these stories and the power they hold are absolutely vital to movements for decarceration, abolition, and liberation, we also recognize that state violence increasingly relies on the documentation and digitization of materials from highly-surveilled populations. This includes our community members who are currently or formerly incarcerated, on parole or probation, or whose immigration status is deemed illegal.

In order to continue documenting and activating stories with care—and to avoid contributing to state-sanctioned erasure at all costs—we are committed to preventing instances of surveillance or criminalization through our archives. As such, we spent the last year creating individualized collection, documentation, and dissemination practices and protocols for each collaboration or interview in partnership with those whose stories are being told, being sure to be thoughtful and careful about what data is collected and shared and why.

As we've continued to expand and re-envision AVA, it's also become apparent that we needed to make some changes in order to increase accessibility, improve user experience, enhance visual aesthetics, and implement more collaborative archival description and access practices. As a first step in those directions, we held one-on-one sessions with our community advisors, staff members, and collaborators to hear their constructive feedback.

We are in the process of completely re-designing a selection of archival input processes, including how interviews are collected, described, and shared with the public. This work will ultimately impact how our materials are received and used by the public and—importantly—by those who share their stories with TAVP. In addition, we are also exploring how AVA can serve as a repository for increasingly diverse record formats—including visual artwork, correspondence, music, and photography.



**Hannah Whelan**  
**Documentation and Archives Director**

Oral history will continue to be our primary method of documentation, we see a critical opportunity to offer multi-layered narratives that emerge when combining oral history with other media. This effort is explored in our new Legacy After Loss Collection, which includes correspondence, artwork, and photographs and explores the building of legacy—both as a communal effort led by people facing execution at the hands of the state, and as a process of remembrance and grief-work carried out by their loved ones after their death.

## **ETHICAL FRAMEWORKS: WORKSHOPPING CHANGE**

In 2023, TAVP began hosting workshops and trainings to help community members create, support, and develop frameworks, guides, and resources that animate the power of archives for memory workers everywhere. This includes offering trauma-informed interviewing support, leading discussions about record creation and risk/surveillance vulnerabilities, or sharing resources about community-based archiving practices. Over the past year, we collaborated with four community members to conduct and process oral history interviews, create zines and use digital humanities and data mapping tools. In these collaborations we provided resources for our partners to design their own documentation projects while tailoring our support to meet the individual needs of their work and their communities.

Through these collaborations we continue to learn more from community members about the impacts of this memory work, develop deeper understandings of the needs of the communities we serve.

**“offering trauma-informed interviewing support, leading discussions about record creation and risk/surveillance vulnerabilities, or sharing resources about community-based archiving practices”**



TAVP Staff and Fellows presenting at the Texas Oral History Association conference.

One of our collaborators who sought our support on a trauma-informed interviewing project shared their experience with us. “The tricky thing about trauma is that it can be difficult to discuss,” they said. “But if these things aren’t talked about, we run the risk of failing to document the painful parts of our history. The folks at TAVP have demonstrated a courageous approach to having these discussions with our community members. TAVP’s strategy strives to make folks comfortable, to keep folks informed, and to show folks that they’re valued and in control of the difficult stories they have to share. They aim to create a safe environment to share stories without judgment where the storyteller is in control... History is a dialogue between a storyteller and the future, and TAVP’s strategies help to make sure these histories are accounted for with dignity, respect, and compassion.”

# UNVEILING THE COMMUNITY ARCHIVES COLLABORATIVE

The Community Archives Collaborative (CAC) is an emerging peer network that assists community-based archives to collaborate, share best practices, leverage pooled resources, and provide peer-to-peer mentoring to support growth and long-term sustainability.

After hiring Imani Altemus-Williams as our Community Archives Collaborative Project Manager in August, TAVP released an open call for applications to form a seven-person Steering Committee. We received over 60 applications and selected members who are each deeply embedded in their communities and engaged in important and compelling community memory work.

The Steering Committee had its first kick-off meeting in November, and over the course of the next 12 months, members will make key decisions about the CAC's structure, finances, mission, vision, values, and long-term planning.

Also in November, CAC Steering Committee members Hannah Whelan and Angela LeBlanc-Ernest represented the CAC at the 2023 Architecting Sustainable Futures gathering in New Orleans where they connected with community memory workers from across the US. These CAC members had the opportunity to explore and learn more about how the CAC can build collective power by offering a wide range of resources and support and contemplate how it can continue sustaining momentum and cultivating connection among the greater archive community.

## LOOKING AHEAD

In February, CAC Steering Committee members and TAVP staff will gather in Santa Cruz, California, where we will collectively deepen our relationship to our shared work of evolving the CAC. As the Steering Committee begins articulating the CAC's mission and vision, they will gain inspiration from being immersed in nature and space that centers justice, cultural reclamation, and healing. The Steering Committee will also meet with the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band & Amah Mutsun Land Trust to learn about their memory work and their need of support. The opportunity to hear directly from an organization that's engaged in community memory work about their needs will provide invaluable insight as the Steering Committee navigates how the CAC can best serve community archives in the US and around the world.

Throughout 2024, the CAC plans to launch social media channels and a website that illustrates who we are and what we value. The website will have information about how the CAC actively supports a large network of community archives and memory workers through its expansive skills and resource sharing network. The Steering Committee will complete a strategic plan as a lasting vision for the CAC.

**“Working with the CAC to create sustainable structures for community archives is a timely and exciting opportunity I want to invest in. I see the overlap between the networking function and coalition building goals of the ‘Indigenizing Archival Training’ and the CAC as having great potential to resource one another in nurturing empowered, self-determined, and resilient communities.”**

**Emilia Kandagawa**  
(Community Archives Collaborative  
Steering Committee Member)

# REFLECTION: MAKING MEANING

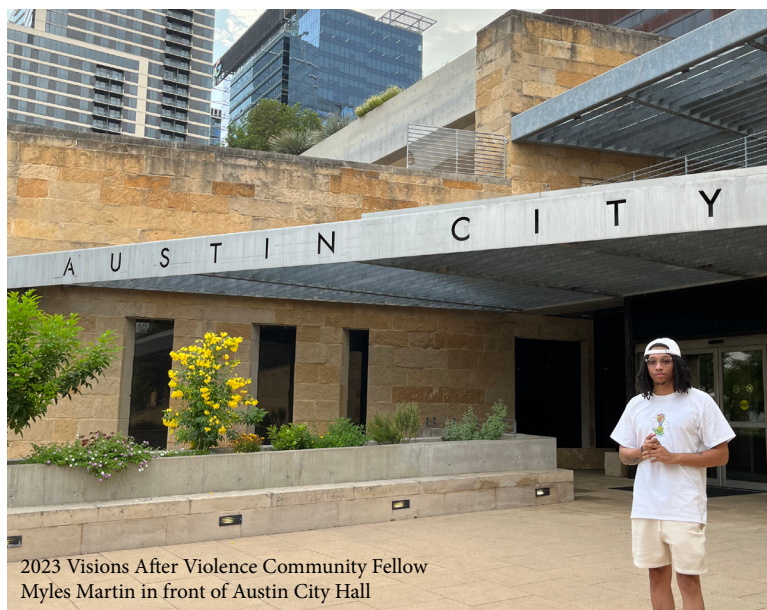
2023 offered TAVP's team so many moments to make meaning, collaborate, and dream. In May, TAVP's Community Archivist Raquel Garcia and Public Programs Direct Murphy Ann Carter went to San Antonio to visit the studio of Mark Menjivar, a TAVP Artist in Residence. Raquel and Murphy listened to tapes and learned about audio formats, qualities, and historical contexts. Mark shared his home and offered a tour of all that he'd been working on in his art practice. It felt like so many disparate pieces of our own understanding of TAVP's work coming together – listening to music and trading stories on the drive from Austin. It was quiet and exceptional.

We hope 2024 continues to offer opportunities for each of us to articulate and actualize why community memory work matters and how we can trace its meaning in our everyday lives.

## VISIONS AFTER VIOLENCE: NARRATIVE POWER IN ACTION

Our Visions After Violence Community Fellowship Program is a nine-month fellowship that exemplifies TAVP's commitment to centering the experiences, perspectives, and visions of people directly impacted by state violence. In the first half of the fellowship, each fellow conducts five to 10 oral history interviews with community members. They then collaborate with the TAVP team and each other as they work toward activating those stories at a public event. In so doing, the Visions After Violence Community Fellowship puts narrative power back in the hands of our community. The conversations that have emerged from this program are an essential re-examination of power dynamics in interview settings and how to challenge and dismantle them.

In 2023, TAVP's second cohort of Visions After Violence Community Fellows created memory work projects related to police brutality in Austin, the experiences of individuals currently incarcerated in Hays County jail, and the impact on families by the mass incarceration of women.



2023 Visions After Violence Community Fellow Myles Martin in front of Austin City Hall



**Murphy Anne Carter**  
Public Programs Director

## ARTIST AND WRITER IN RESIDENCE: THE IMPACT OF NARRATIVE CHANGE

Each year, we invite artists and writers whose work centers on the impacts of state violence on individuals, families, and communities to work with us and the materials in our archives. With these residencies, we hope to create space for artists and writers to imagine, envision, and create dynamic work that captures the textured nuance of the impacts of the carceral state and our work toward narrative change.

This year, Artist in Residence Mark Menjivar focused on the transfer of the



David Lee Powell archive to SUNY Albany and continued to find opportunities to bring the archive to the public and illustrate the role of art in every facet of TAVP's work.

Writer in Residence Juania Sueños interviewed members of her family and traced her lineage through mapmaking, poetry, and transcript in a zine called, *Then We Departed, Like Swallows*.

### **COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL: ENERGY THAT FUELS TAVP**

Our Community Advisory Council provides strong guidance to TAVP's documentation and archival collections, our public programming, and collaborations we may pursue.

Our five Community Advisory Council members are Lee Greenwood-Rollins, Lovinah Igbani-Perkins, Ayeshea Khan, Margarita Luna, and Rachel Winston. We cannot fully express our gratitude for everything that they do for TAVP, and the energy and brilliance with which they lead every conversation.

## **ARCHIVE 2023 STATS**

### **NEW COLLECTION LEGACY AFTER LOSS**

**DEDICATED TO LOVED ONES WHO HAVE BEEN KILLED BY THE  
DEATH PENALTY OR WHO HAVE DIED WHILE ON DEATH ROW.**

**RECORDED  
327**

**UNIQUE VIEWERS OF  
OUR ORAL HISTORIES  
AND TRAINING  
VIDEOS ON VIMEO**

**19**

**ORAL HISTORIES THROUGH  
THE VISIONS AFTER VIOLENCE  
COMMUNITY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM**

# ACCESS TO TREATMENT: ESSENTIAL SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

TAVP's Access to Treatment Initiative, directed by [Susannah Sheffer](#), highlights the barriers to mental health treatment facing family members of individuals who have been sentenced to death or executed and aims to work with the mental health community to reduce those barriers.

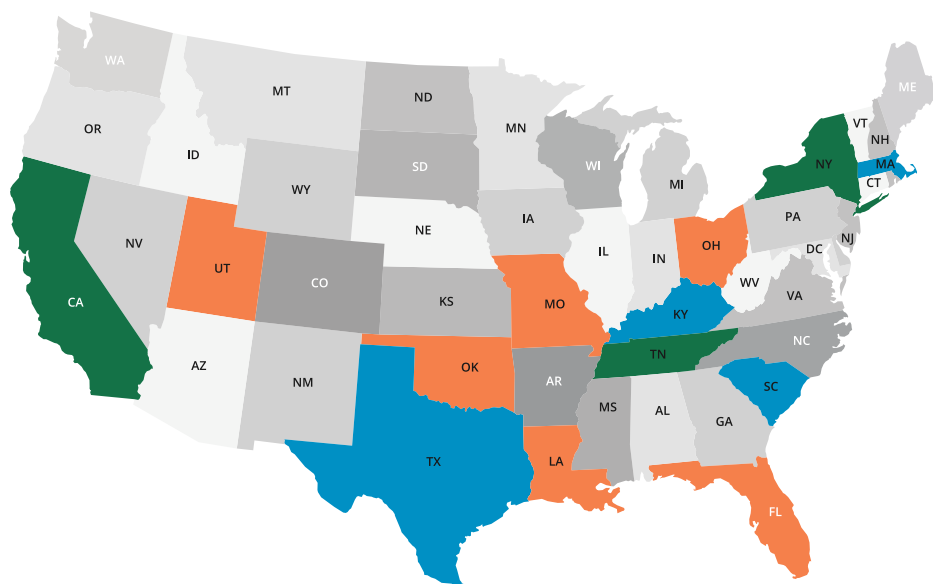
The program provided its "Working in Clinical Settings with Family Members of Individuals Who Have Been Sentenced to Death or Executed" training series four times over the course of 2023. In doing so, it reached a wonderful range of clients – from pre-graduation interns, to licensed clinicians throughout Texas and in several other states. To our knowledge, ours is still the only available clinical training that focuses on this specific population. Participants called the experience "phenomenal" and "heartbreaking," and the majority were learning about the topic for the first time.

Hiring our first Access to Treatment Project Assistant enabled us to expand our outreach efforts and find new allies at university programs and mental health agencies who could let others in the mental health field know about the Access to Treatment Initiative.

**Meanwhile, we continue to connect family members of those sentenced to death or executed with trained therapists, and provide regular consultation to these therapists in an effort to support and deepen their work.**

In partnership with [Advancing Real Change](#) (ARC), we developed a new presentation, "Working with Families in Capital Cases," to help members of capital defense teams consider how trauma impacts their clients' family members and use that understanding to improve their working relationships with those families.

## STATES WITH ATI TRAINED MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS



**STATES WITH ATI TRAINING**



**65 MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS COMPLETED OUR FULL TRAINING SERIES IN 2023**

**WE INCLUDED TRAINEES FROM FLORIDA, LOUISIANA, AND SOUTH CAROLINA FOR THE FIRST TIME**

**175 MEMBERS OF CAPITAL DEFENSE TEAMS ATTENDED OUR NEW WEBINAR**

# CONNECTING WITH OUR COMMUNITIES

In addition to providing updates about our work, TAVP's monthly newsletter is a critical connection to our communities.

Development and Communications Coordinator Jasmarie Hernández-Cañuelas worked with TAVP staff, board members, and community advisors to codesign our revitalized newsletter. Now, every month you can expect a monthly summary of what we're working on and what we're remembering.

This year we will focus on creating a more intentional online presence and community. This goal is in line with our target of creating a systemic approach to our front-facing online presence. These days, fostering digital relationships is more important than ever. Our goal is for people to leave our website, newsletter, and social media channels feeling like they have a deeper understanding of who we are, what we do, and what we fight for.

As we continue to tell our story we will center our vision of abolition, community care, and transformative justice in a way that illustrates the direct impact of our storytelling and archiving work.



2023 Visions After Violence  
Community Fellow Marci Marie  
Simmons speaks at the Texas State  
Legislature

## TAVP ADVOCACY: DYNAMIC ACTION

TAVP's advocacy is part of our archive, our documentation efforts, and how we interview our community members. Guided by principles formulated by the staff, the board, and our community advisory council, our advocacy is rooted in collective and individual memory work in a way that consistently amplifies the voices of those directly impacted by state violence.

We recognize the impact mental health support has in disrupting cycles of trauma. As such, we prioritize mental health access in our advocacy efforts. TAVP firmly believes that ending state violence requires not only documenting narratives, but also community-building and actively pursuing policy changes.

Jennifer Toon, our 2023-24 advocacy fellow, has been instrumental in expanding TAVP's role in direct action within our communities, such as participating in and supporting protests, vigils, and healing circles. Jen led discussions about how to best harness creativity to activate the archive for social justice and liberation. Through this fellowship, our advocacy efforts have become dynamic and proactive.

## STANDING UP FOR CARCERAL POPULATIONS

TAVP's involvement in protests at the Texas Capitol in 2023 to demand action about the oppressive heat suffered by people incarcerated in Texas prisons marked a significant moment of transition from documenting stories about the impacts of state violence to actively taking part in disrupting state violence. In 2023, TAVP collaborated with individuals affected by the carceral system to help create a vigil honoring those who have died from extreme heat while incarcerated in Texas.

TAVP traveled to Gatesville, Texas, home to the majority of women's prisons in Texas and the birthplace of youth injustice in the state. In Gatesville, TAVP co-hosted a unity rally and healing circle for system-impacted people in the very town where they were once incarcerated. This event not only demonstrated our commitment to restorative practices, but also provided a platform for the community to witness TAVP living out its mission through direct action.



TAVP Advocacy Fellow Jennifer Toon speaks in front of the Coryell County, Texas, Court House in Gatesville.

## LOOKING AHEAD

We often hear from interviewees who contribute to the archive, "So what happens next? What will you do with my story?" These questions stay present in my mind. They tell me something powerful about our community: They want us to act. Our community wants to know that the risk and the vulnerability they were willing to confront in telling their stories will count for more than documentation. In 2024, we will continue exploring how TAVP accomplishes these actions and continues to be a living, breathing, hands on community archive that truly serves people.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to our colleagues, board members, staff, and community. Your support makes this important work possible.

