

COLLEEN FRANCIS

A Fighting Chance

Co-Founded with Melanie Carr

2002 Global Fellow

BIG BOLD IDEA

Level the playing field for indigent defendants in the criminal justice system.

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

A Fighting Chance's mission is to provide prompt and thorough investigation and mitigation development services to indigents facing the death penalty, to expand access to qualified investigators and mitigation specialists through aggressive funding litigation, and to improve standards for investigation through recruiting, training, and supervising investigators and mitigation specialists. A Fighting Chance investigators work alongside the attorneys as members of the defense team, interviewing witnesses, procuring relevant documents, reviewing and analyzing evidence, and developing working relationships with clients and their families. In 2008, the organization re-incorporated into a for-profit organization and changed its name to NOLA Investigates. NOLA Investigates is still thriving and continues to raise the standards of capital defense investigation and mitigation development throughout the Deep South and beyond. The organization's investigators have expanded their expertise into areas of forensic science investigations, civil rights cases, and background investigations.

Impact Location

North America

United States

Organization Structure

Nonprofit

PERSONAL BIO

Colleen Francis is an experienced capital defense investigator who is currently employed by the Federal Community Defender in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Colleen began her career helping those facing the death penalty in 2000 at the Louisiana Crisis Assistance Center, in New Orleans, Louisiana. In 2004, Colleen was hired by the Federal Public Defender in Washington, DC, to work on a particularly complicated case involving the prosecution of three Rwandan nationals in connection with the deaths of eight tourists, including two American citizens in Uganda. After much investigation and factual research and development the case was dismissed in December 2006.