



Leslie M. Gomez

Vice Chair, Institutional Response Group

Philadelphia

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Practice Areas

- Environmental, Social & Governance
- Institutional Response Group

Industry Sectors

- Education

Education

- Yale Law School, J.D., 1995
- Brown University, A.B., *magna cum laude*, 1992

Bar Admissions

- Pennsylvania

Affiliations

President, Yale Law School Association

Board of Directors, Children's Crisis Treatment Center

Board of Advisors, Legal Issues in Higher Education Conference

Awards & Honors

- Latino Leaders Magazine 2021 Top Latino Lawyers
- NACUA 2024 First Decade Award

Leslie focuses her practice on the institutional response to sexual and gender-based harassment and violence, child abuse, and other forms of harassment, discrimination, and criminal conduct. Leslie provides consulting, counseling, and legal advice on all aspects of the institutional response to misconduct. She assists institutions in designing effective institutional responses that integrate the complex federal and state regulatory framework with the unique dynamics of trauma and the impacts of interpersonal violence on individuals and communities. Leslie regularly advises presidents, boards, senior leadership, counsel, student affairs, human resources, campus law enforcement, Title IX Coordinators, and other campus partners in implementing trauma-informed, fair, and impartial processes.

Leslie helps institutions develop comprehensive policies, procedures, systems, and training programs in compliance with Title IX, Title VII, the Clery Act, as amended by the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013, and state and local laws. Leslie conducts comprehensive policy audits; drafts policies, procedures, and internal operating protocols; develops and trains multi-disciplinary teams; serves as an expert adviser to campus task forces and working groups; consults and advises on Title IX investigations, adjudication and appeal proceedings; and assists educational institutions in meeting federal compliance obligations and responding to investigations by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and the Clery Compliance Division. She served on the stalking subcommittee of the U.S. Department of Education's Negotiated Rulemaking Committee for the Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act and has been designated as an approved equity consultant by OCR.

In addition to her work on sexual assault and intimate partner violence, Leslie is nationally recognized for her knowledge and experience related to child sexual and physical abuse, child protection, and child protective services laws. She conducts training and prevention programs on the identification and prevention of child abuse; provides child protection planning related to background checks, professional boundaries, physical plant, and mandatory reporter policies; coordinates internal investigations with child protective services and local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies; and conducts child abuse investigations. Leslie also assists educational institutions in evaluating and responding to historical allegations of abuse in an open and transparent manner designed to promote child safety and welfare. She is a faculty member for ChildFirst Pennsylvania where she teaches forensic interviewing to multi-disciplinary teams of law enforcement and child protective services professionals.

Leslie has two decades of experience investigating sex crimes, child abuse, domestic violence, and stalking, first as a career child abuse, domestic violence, and sexual assault prosecutor, and later as counsel to colleges, universities, K-12 schools, hospitals, summer camps, child-serving organizations, non-profits, community associations, and other institutions. Leslie directs internal investigations; coordinates communications and interactions with law enforcement and related agencies; and advises about the interplay between civil and criminal proceedings. She has led numerous highly complex investigations involving sexual and gender-based harassment and violence and child abuse at educational and religious institutions.

Prior to private practice, Leslie served as an assistant district attorney at the Philadelphia District

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Attorney's Office for 14 years. She handled complex child abuse, kidnapping, domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault cases for more than 11 years. She regularly prosecuted cases involving very young and especially vulnerable children, children with special needs or disabilities, children who were long-term victims of incest or child abuse, and children who were victims of serial pedophiles and repeat sexual offenders. She served as the chief of the Juvenile Court Unit at the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office. She was involved in every aspect of investigation and charging decisions in cases of sexual and domestic violence against minor victims for both juvenile and adult offenders. For more than five years, Leslie oversaw charging decisions and served as a liaison with the Philadelphia Police Department Special Victims Unit, the Philadelphia Department of Human Services, the Philadelphia Children's Alliance and local hospitals with respect to the investigation and prosecution of allegations of child abuses in Philadelphia County. She also was instrumental in obtaining grant monies and developing the protocol to allow child victims to testify outside the presence of the defendant in the Philadelphia courts.

As the senior prosecutor for child abuse and sex crimes litigation in the Juvenile Division, Leslie directly supervised and mentored more than 100 young prosecutors. She instructed them on pretrial investigation, case preparation, evaluating credibility, trial strategy, ethical issues, and the unique dynamics of sexual assault, intimate partner violence, child abuse, and stalking, including the neurobiological impacts of trauma. She authored numerous training materials and template briefs that continue to be used as the core of the District Attorney's training program. She has a firm grasp on policy and law with respect to competency, taint, prior bad acts, other crimes evidence, tender years hearsay exceptions, rape shield, physical and medical findings of abuse, forensic issues, alcohol-facilitated sexual assault, non-stranger sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking.

Leslie presents education and training programs and CLE programs at educational institutions and conferences across the country. She is a regular contributor to the Clery Center, National Association of College and University Attorneys (NACUA), College and University Police and Investigators Conference (CUPIC), Stetson University National Conference on Law and Higher Education, the Virginia Campus Safety Forum, University of Vermont Legal Issues in Higher Education Conference, and the Pennsylvania Bar Institute. Prior speaking or CLE engagements include the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office, National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), Association of American Universities, Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, Association of Delaware Valley Independent Schools, Headmistresses Association of the East, and United Educators. Recent publications include articles in the ABA's *Dispute Resolution Magazine* and *Penn State Law Review*, as well as a chapter in "Campus Sexual Assault Response Teams: Program Development and Operational Management."

Leslie is a volunteer child advocate attorney through the Support Center for Child Advocates. She is the current president of the Yale Law School Association. Leslie is a member of the Children's Crisis Treatment Center board of directors. She also serves on the Legal Issues in Higher Education Conference Board of Advisors, working primarily as a program consultant and ambassador for guiding the success of the conference. In addition, Leslie regularly volunteers in a programming capacity for NACUA.

Leslie received her undergraduate degree from Brown University, *magna cum laude*, and her law degree from Yale Law School.