

THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF CLEVELAND

2019

ANNUAL

REPORT

Where you see wrong or inequality
or injustice, speak out, because
this is your country.

This is your democracy.
Make it. Protect it. Pass it on.

– *U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, 1978*





Dear Supporters:

Part of our mission at Legal Aid is working for systemic solutions to the very problems that compel people to seek our services. Issues such as lead paint in old housing, unjust evictions, and barriers to education are examples of causes around which Legal Aid has built strategic initiatives.

These pursuits are not just ours, however. Societal problems require collaborative solutions. Our partnerships with community organizations, service providers, and other local stakeholders are integral to our successes on big public issues – and we had so many successes in 2019!

Some highlights:

- **Lead Poisoning:** After successfully suing the City of Cleveland for non-compliance with state lead laws, Legal Aid attorneys accepted the City's invitation to help craft legislation as part of the Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition. The group was instrumental in the creation of a city ordinance that would require all rental housing built before 1978 to be certified as lead-safe.
- **Evictions:** The City of Cleveland passed legislation in 2019 to create a right to counsel in Cleveland Housing Court. Our Housing Justice Alliance is now implementing this in 2020 and is exploring future opportunities for right to counsel.
- **Education:** In early 2019, Legal Aid joined Cleveland's new chapter of Say Yes to Education, a nonprofit that works with local stakeholders and service providers to increase educational attainment rates by addressing the web of factors (both in and out of school) that affect a child's ability to learn.

Legal Aid brings a unique perspective and skill set to these and other community partnerships. Our close relationships with clients and our analytical, problem-solving skills help us take constructive action while maintaining a focus on empowering individuals with low incomes. I am proud of our ongoing efforts to dismantle the cycle of poverty and tackle the roots of inequality in our community.

As a supporter of Legal Aid, you too share in our successes. Thank you for your commitment to extending justice throughout Northeast Ohio.

Sincerely,

Colleen M. Cotter, Esq.
Executive Director
The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland



IN 2019, LEGAL AID IMPACTED 16,710 PEOPLE


7,297 total cases handled, including 1,760 cases handled by volunteers
(5,911 cases handled & closed in 2019 + 1,386 cases continued into 2020)

LEGAL AID'S SUCCESS LAST YEAR Increased assets and income and reduced debt for our clients by a total of over **\$13 million**

92% 
safety **SECURED**

90% 
evictions **PREVENTED**

60% 
foreclosures **PREVENTED**

100% 
REMOVED barriers to education

CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

 **97%** of households served **MAKE LESS THAN \$25,000/year**

 **43%** of all households helped included **CHILDREN**


24% of all clients were **OLDER ADULTS (60+)**

 **560** cases involved **U.S. VETERANS** or **ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY MEMBERS**, impacting **1,227 PEOPLE**.

 **71%** Female

 **29%** Male


CASES BY COUNTY

 **77%**
Cuyahoga

 **10%**
Lorain

 **6%**
Lake

 **7%**
Ashtabula

 **1%**
Gauga

STAFF & SUPPORTERS

Our Staff

51 Attorneys / **38** Support Staff

Our Supporters

3,739 Total volunteers, including **3,513** Pro Bono Attorneys / **572** Pro Bono Attorneys Engaged / **16** In-House Volunteers / **313** Volunteer Law Students / **2,092** Financial Supporters

CLIENT RACE / ETHNICITY

54% Black

34% White

7% Hispanic

5% Identified as other races/ethnicities



COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

106 neighborhood clinics



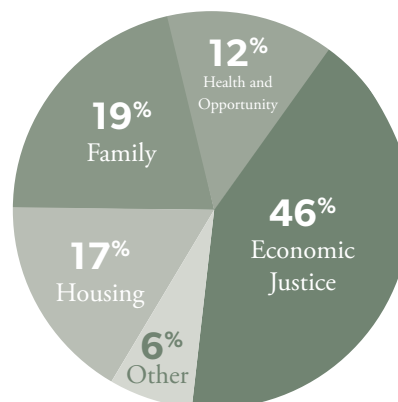
164 outreach events and educational presentations for community groups



137 educational presentations for social service providers



CASES BY PRACTICE





Legal Aid uses the power of the law to ensure access to basic needs and lift people out of poverty. Thanks to thousands of supporters and community partners, Legal Aid provides services that improve safety and health; promote education and economic stability; secure decent, affordable housing; and ensure the justice system and government entities are accountable and accessible.

The mission of The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland is to secure justice and resolve fundamental problems for those who are low income and vulnerable by providing high-quality legal services and working for systemic solutions.

2019 Finances

REVENUE AND OTHER SUPPORT	2019	2018
Legal Services Corporation (LSC)	\$2,689,423	\$2,445,581
Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation (now the Ohio Access to Justice Foundation)	\$3,664,383	\$3,115,922
Donations and Private Grants	\$4,750,363	\$3,211,832
Donated Services	\$1,477,948	\$928,040
Other Government Grants	\$698,499	\$645,320
United Ways	\$446,786	\$361,609
Partner Agencies (contracts for legal services)	\$487,338	\$456,837
Other Income	\$766,461	\$97,809
TOTAL REVENUE	\$14,981,201	\$11,262,950
EXPENSES	2019	2018
Program Services	\$10,118,533	\$8,171,922
Support Services (administration & development)	\$1,936,181	\$1,800,652
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$12,054,714	\$9,972,574
Excess of Revenue over Expenditures	\$2,926,487	\$1,290,376
Beginning Net Assets	\$8,886,801	\$7,596,425
NET ASSETS as of year end	\$11,813,288	\$8,886,801
BREAKDOWN OF NET ASSETS	2019	2018
Without donor restrictions		
-Undesignated	\$1,502,464	\$0
-Net Investment in Property	\$3,278,033	\$3,033,304
-Board Designated Endowment	\$23,459	\$18,788
-Board Designated Reserve Fund	\$5,546,366	\$4,956,851
	\$10,350,322	\$8,008,943
Temporarily Restricted	\$1,081,709	\$613,313
Permanently Restricted	\$381,257	\$264,545
NET ASSETS	\$11,813,288	\$8,886,801

2019 Legal Aid Donors

”

Jessica's landlord refused to repair water leaks in her apartment, and then demanded she pay a water bill that was much higher than it should have been. When she refused, he tried to evict her – but Jessica called Legal Aid. An attorney helped her avoid eviction and even receive money from the landlord to cover the cost of moving.

We are grateful to members of our fifteen-year giving society (“%”), ten-year giving society (“+”), five-year giving society (“*”).

We welcome our first-time givers (“#”).

We honor the memory of deceased donors in italics.

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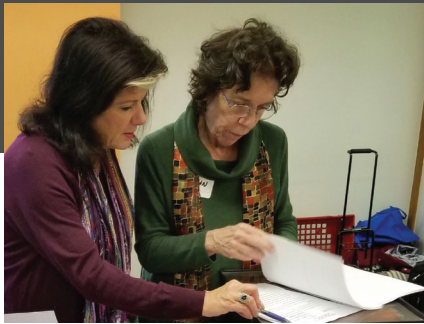
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\$500 - \$999.99**

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” Nora was concerned about her application for food stamps, because she was told she'd need to satisfy a work requirement to qualify. Nora has a mental health condition that prohibits her from working a steady job. Legal Aid helped Nora successfully file for a work requirement waiver, and she is now receiving her much-needed benefits.

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Liam's landlord filed for eviction when he was late on his monthly rent – even though Liam had been in the hospital, recovering from heart surgery. Legal Aid helped Liam fight the eviction in court and stay in his home.



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\$250 - \$499.99 (continued)**

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Harriet Applegate
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David Ashenhurst



When Kylie's husband abandoned her and her three children, money grew tight, and she missed one month's rent payment. Her landlord demanded she move out – but a Legal Aid attorney helped the young family avoid eviction and stay in their home.

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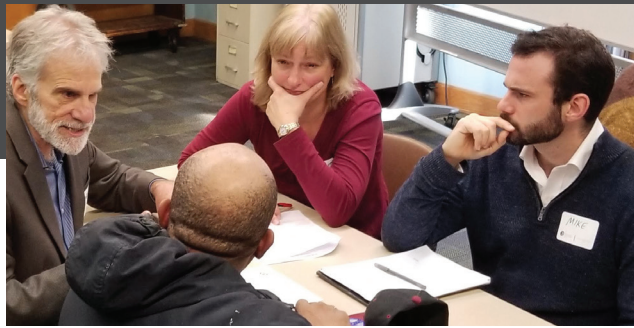
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“ When Jenn’s landlord refused to make needed repairs around her house and then caused her water to be shut off, she came to Legal Aid for help. Her attorney was able to secure time for her to move out and find a new place to live, as well as receive back much of the money she had put into escrow.

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Thanks to a Medical Legal Partnership with her son's healthcare provider, Tara was matched with a Legal Aid attorney who helped him achieve more at school with an education plan that accommodates his intellectual disability.



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Olivia is a senior with numerous medical challenges that require lots of home health care. When Medicaid tried to cut down her weekly hours, Legal Aid stepped in and successfully reversed the denial of care time.

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Rachel had faced consequences for trespassing years ago, but because the incident was still on her record, she could be denied employment on the basis of that mistake. A Legal Aid attorney helped Rachel secure a Certificate of Qualification for Employment (CQE), and she is now pursuing her dream career in social work.

”

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When Will received an eviction notice, he was shocked. He had been sending his rental checks on time for years – but unfortunately, there was a mix-up and one of the checks he sent was not received. Will called Legal Aid for help, and an attorney helped him remain in his home and retain his affordable housing voucher.



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