



LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF
GREATER CINCINNATI

Moving Forward

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati
Legal Aid Society of Southwest Ohio, LLC

DEAR FRIENDS:

In this Annual Report, we highlight our efforts to help families recover from the instability caused by COVID.

We added staff to our Housing and Consumer teams to help families prevent evictions and foreclosures. We collaborated with the Courts, Community Action Agencies, and County Departments of Job and Family Services to speed up the rent assistance process for the benefit of clients and landlords.

We represented Kinship Caregivers and protected children at risk due to parental incapacity. We helped families obtain income, food, and medical benefits to keep them stable, and worked with partner agencies to clear barriers to employment.

In 2021, Legal Aid focused on helping families move forward with their lives by resolving lingering pandemic-related threats to housing and income stability. We prevented evictions for 789 families, prevented foreclosures for 247 families, assisted 492 people obtain or maintain income and healthcare benefits, and removed barriers to employment for 714 individuals. In addition, we recovered over \$4 million for our clients.

Support from local government, philanthropic grants and our generous donors increased our ability to assist families as they worked to put pandemic obstacles behind them and move forward with their lives.

We are grateful to our donors, funders, partner organizations, volunteer attorneys and our dedicated staff for their contributions and support.

We look forward to a brighter future for all.



Mary Asbury
Executive Director



Christine Wheatley
President

The mission of the Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati is to resolve serious legal problems of low-income people, to promote economic and family stability, and to reduce poverty through effective legal assistance.

Legal Aid Housing advocates Elizabeth Girouard, Lois Kwa, and Blake Gibson with their CAA colleagues Matt Strauss, Ebony Griggs-Griffin, Diane Dozier, Earlene Newton, Yvette Hanley, Patricia Houston, and Antionna Pullin at CAA.



RESTORING HOUSING STABILITY

Many who lost jobs during the pandemic racked up significant housing and utility debt. The Cares Act/American Rescue Plan created opportunities for them to obtain rental and mortgage assistance funds. However, the overwhelming demand for assistance caused processing delays.

Legal Aid worked to help clients obtain housing assistance in a timely manner. For example, our advocates collaborated with Cincinnati-Hamilton

County Community Action Agency (CAA) to streamline the application process, and reduce the time it takes to get rental assistance checks to landlords.

Our advocates appear in court, negotiate with landlords and lenders, and make sure funds are available in time to prevent evictions and mortgage foreclosures. We also collaborate with Supports to Encourage Low Income Families (SELF), the Butler County Community Action Agency, to prevent evictions for Butler County residents.

Ariel Baughman's story is representative of many families. An army veteran and mother of a four-year-old boy, Ms. Baughman lost her job and fell behind on her rent because she had to quarantine after a co-worker tested positive for COVID. While Ms. Baughman was able to find new employment quickly, she could not pay off the entire rent balance, and her landlord filed for eviction.

A Legal Aid advocate helped her apply for rental assistance through CAA, while Legal Aid attorney Zach Frye negotiated with Ms. Baughman's landlord to accept the rental assistance funds and dismiss the eviction. Legal Aid then petitioned the court to remove the record of the filing from the public record so Ms. Baughman would not have difficulty renting in the future.



Legal Aid advocate Elizabeth Girouard receives rent assistance checks to take to Eviction Court from CAA Vice President of Community Services, Ebony Griggs-Griffin

PREVENTING FORECLOSURES

Legal Aid Attorney and OATJF Fellow Stacy Purcell meets with Ms. Greynolds

Ms. Greynolds, a single mother, lived with her two teenage children and grandson, in a home she bought through Habitat for Humanity. Ms. Greynolds' mother developed Long COVID, and to care for her, Ms. Greynolds had to leave her job. As a result, she fell behind on her mortgage and utility payments. When she contacted Legal Aid, Ms. Greynolds was just days away from losing her house.

Attorney Stacy Purcell helped Ms. Greynolds apply for homeowner assistance funds, and contacted Save the Dream Ohio to expedite Ms. Greynolds' application. Stacy then approached Ms. Greynolds' mortgage servicer and convinced them to cancel the foreclosure sale. Stacy was able to get Ms. Greynolds' mortgage reinstated, and her utility services restored, along with mortgage and utility assistance for six months going forward. Now, Ms. Greynolds has time to regain employment and financial stability.



ALLEVIATING INCOME INSECURITY

Many families also required legal help to access or establish eligibility for unemployment, food, and medical benefits. Legal Aid works with Job and Family Service Agencies (JFS) in each of our seven counties on behalf of our clients.

Sudden loss of child/adult care is often the reason behind a family's employment instability. A working single mom, Ms. "Dumont" is the guardian of her adult son, "Darnell", who has autism. He is unable to care for himself and requires close supervision.

Darnell worked for thirteen years at Goodwill's Adult Day program. Darnell is nonverbal so it was difficult to communicate with him about wearing a

mask for any length of time, or maintaining social distance. As a result, he could not return to his program after the COVID shutdown ended. Ms. Dumont was unable to hire outside care for him, so she needed to apply for emergency family leave from her job.

She then filed for pandemic unemployment. Weeks later, JFS stopped her benefits because her company reported she quit. She learned that the HR director had left the company without setting up Ms. Dumont's leave and that her replacement would not process it. JFS termed the funds she had received an overpayment that she would have to repay.

Legal Aid Advocate Annie Fort worked to resolve this problem. She negotiated with JFS to get the overpayment rescinded and represented Ms. Dumont at an appeals hearing to get the benefits reinstated. Annie realized since Darnell had been in a paid job, he was also eligible for unemployment and worked to get him those benefits. As a result, Ms. Dumont and her son were stabilized until Covid restrictions were lifted. Then Darnell could return to his program and Ms. Dumont could seek reemployment.

Legal Aid advocates Alex Walker and Annie Fort discuss a case



PROTECTING CHILDREN BY SUPPORTING KINSHIP CAREGIVERS

The number of children at-risk and in need of alternative care due to parental substance abuse, incarceration, untreated mental illness, or domestic violence increased significantly over the past year. Our Kinship Care team responded, providing comprehensive legal services to grandparents, relatives and other caregivers who step forward to care for these children. They often have legal issues that require assistance to integrate the children into their homes successfully.

We help caregivers obtain custody orders so they have clear authority to make key decisions for the children. To help them stay stable, we assess eligibility for benefits such as Medicaid for the children, Kinship Permanency Incentives (KPI), Prevention, Retention and Contingency (PRC) funds, childcare benefits, and food or cash assistance. In 2021, we helped 114 kinship caregivers with these issues so they could provide for the children in their care.

Legal Aid collaborates with the Ohio Kinship and Adoption Navigator — Kinnect Ohio program (OhioKAN) to provide expanded services to kinship caregivers in our seven county service area. We serve on the OhioKAN Regional Advisory Council for Region 9 (Butler, Clermont, Clinton, Hamilton, and Warren Counties).

“Baby W” was born to parents who struggled with addiction. As a result, Baby W suffered withdrawal symptoms after his birth, which required a month long hospitalization. Another family member then obtained legal custody of him. Shortly after the family member took custody, Baby W suffered an intentional injury.



“Baby W” at Susan’s home

Children Services placed Baby W with “Susan”, a family friend. Susan obtained emergency temporary custody and then filed for legal (long-term) custody of Baby W. The former legal custodian wanted Baby W back, but Susan was concerned for his safety and did not want to relinquish him. At this point, Baby W was 14 months old and had lived with Susan for 10 months. Legal Aid represented Susan at the custody trial. Ultimately, the judge decided Susan should have legal custody of Baby W. As you can see, Baby W is thriving and very happy in Susan’s care.

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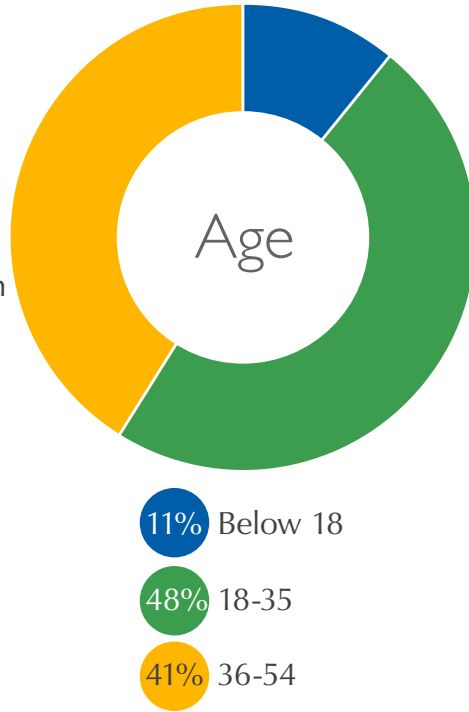
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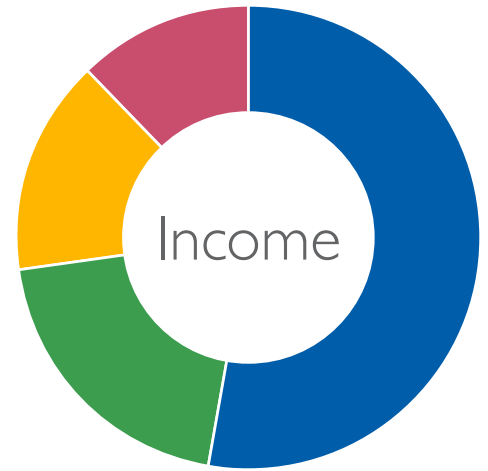
OUR CLIENTS



- 36% Securing Housing and Helping the Homeowner
- 29% Helping Obtain and Maintain Employment and Healthcare
- 26% Helping Children and Families
- 9% Other Types of Assistance



- 11% Below 18
- 48% 18-35
- 41% 36-54



- 53% Below \$10,000
- 20% \$10K - \$19,999
- 15% \$20K - \$29,999
- 12% \$30K and above

REQUESTS FOR INDIVIDUAL CASE SERVICES

January - December 2021

COUNTY	Requests for Service	Sent Written Materials	Made External Referral	LAS Case Open	VLP Case Open	Pending LAS & VLP
BROWN	255	42	84	45	11	41
BUTLER	2,537	240	773	638	115	991
CLERMONT	969	101	285	193	71	212
CLINTON	244	39	71	47	5	38
HAMILTON	14,353	1,296	2,455	4,325	851	3,034
HIGHLAND	203	59	59	40	2	20
WARREN	652	67	212	152	21	142
UNSPECIFIED	2,494	75	1,076	278	15	218
TOTAL	21,707	1,919	5,015	5,718	1,091	4,696

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	2021	2020
Operating Revenue		
Ohio Access to Justice Foundation	1,648,079	1,734,456
Legal Services Corporation	1,953,644	2,129,432
Other Grants & Contracts	4,617,896	4,206,056
Rental Income	264,196	260,753
Contributions	350,997	406,451
Forgiveness of PPP Loan	950,000	
Other	56,611	46,171
Donated services	143,673	64,041
Investment return, et	735,482	599,180
Net assets released from restrictions		
United Way	293,488	332,000
Other	305,390	476,347
Total Operating Revenue	11,319,456	10,254,887
Functional Expense		
Housing & Consumer Program	2,258,525	2,288,268
Employment & Benefits Program	1,339,866	1,152,267
Family Law	3,817,368	3,488,906
Children & Education Program		510,441
General Civil & VLP	268,735	373,541
Management & General	1,830,160	1,288,091
Fundraising	149,840	83,719
Rental Property	268,212	259,471
Total Expenses	9,932,706	9,444,704
Change in net assets w/o donor restrictions	1,435,662	776,679
Change in net assets w/ donor restrictions	(200,767)	(220,570)
Change in net assets	1,234,895	556,109
Net assets, beginning of the year	9,080,691	8,524,582
Net assets, end of year	10,315,586	9,080,691
Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2,221,801	2,828,463
Cash held in trust for clients	125,754	177,017
Investments	4,722,413	3,958,375
Grants and Contracts receivable	874,515	685,228
Contributions receivable, net	200,830	347,400
Property and equipment, net	3,247,685	3,282,390
Other	150,356	64,317
Investments restricted by donors for endowment	667,658	667,658
Total Assets	12,211,012	12,010,848
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Liabilities		
Accounts payable	153,286	68,742
Accrued annual leave	416,646	375,800
Accrued Expense	121,551	135,109
Assets held for others	125,754	177,015
Refundable advance	150,809	123,225
Interest rate swap agreement	58,235	107,147
Note Payable, bank	869,145	993,116
Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)loan	-	950,000
Total Liabilities	1,895,426	2,930,154
Net Assets		
Without Restrictions		
Operating	2,139,404	1,578,066
Board designated	4,772,658	4,036,512
Net investment in property and Equipment	2,320,305	2,182,127
Total without restrictions	9,232,367	7,796,705
With donor restrictions	1,083,219	1,283,986
Total net assets	10,315,586	9,080,691
Total liabilities and net assets	12,211,012	12,010,845

The Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati and its affiliate the Legal Aid Society of Southwest Ohio, LLC provide civil legal services in seven southwest Ohio counties: Hamilton, Butler, Clermont, Brown, Warren, Clinton, and Highland. Legal Services Corporation supports only the activities of the Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati. The Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati provides staff support for the Volunteer Lawyers Project (VLP). This Annual Report provides information about both Legal Aid Societies and the VLP.

MAKE A BEQUEST

Please consider including a gift to the Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati in your estate plan through your will, trust, or life insurance.

It is simple to do. Just name us: Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati, include our Tax ID: 31-056673, and state the amount or percentage gift you choose to bequeath to us. You will leave a legacy that will improve the lives of future Legal Aid clients.

OUR STAFF

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Debora Wagner
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Director of Development & Communication

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Hardrie Diggs
Annie Fort
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Alex Walker
Deanna White
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Laura Crosthwaite
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Tonya Young

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Dyland Bradley
Natalie Brown
Sheree Brown
Michelle Matthews
Naree Morcelo Rivera
Tonia Steinkamp
Diane Uduebor

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Molly Bohanon
Christina Brunton
Emily Gamber
MaKaisha Tresenwriter

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Elaine Fink
Jon Ford
Tracy Jackson

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Stephanie Moes
Molly Russell
Melissa Salamon
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Colleen Swim
Elizabeth Tull Laureano

Staff Attorneys & Fellows

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Nancy Braun
Caitlin Cliff-Perbix
Olivia Davis
Emily Edwards
Suzanne Firestone
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Courtney Kinter
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