



## *Dear Friends:*

Legal Aid's work to improve family and economic stability for low-income families is even more crucial in light of the current public health crisis. Thousands of people in our community have lost jobs and income due to the abrupt business shutdowns. Low-income families, many of whom work in healthcare, retail, or hospitality, are especially affected.

Legal Aid has remained open to provide essential services such as preventing evictions and foreclosures, obtaining unemployment benefits, and preventing domestic abuse. We have created a special Coronavirus FAQ page on our website to provide up-to-date information for our client community.

This Annual Report features several programs that we are expanding to address the crisis. Our Emergency Eviction Assistance Program focuses on preventing evictions before they are filed in court, or as soon thereafter as possible, by providing cash rental assistance as soon as the family receives an eviction notice. This program, a partnership with Community Action Agency, St. Vincent de Paul, and Strategies to End Homelessness, prevents families from becoming homeless when they face eviction for nonpayment of rent.

Legal Aid is one of the leaders of Project Lift, an initiative of the Child Poverty Collaborative, that is working with more than twenty non-profit agencies, community, and faith based sponsors, who have helped over 650 families increase household income and remove barriers to employment. Project Lift funds are supporting families so they do not lose ground due to COVID 19. We also continue our commitment to kinship caregivers who have taken in vulnerable children during this time.

Legal Aid's services and community leadership are more important than ever, and we are especially grateful for our donors, funders, partner organizations, and volunteer attorneys during this critical period.



*Mary*

Mary Asbury  
Executive Director



*Adam*

Adam Hall  
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.*

# Project Lift

## A Community Response to Reduce Poverty >>

Project Lift is a public/private partnership that grew out of the Child Poverty Collaborative. Legal Aid Executive Director Mary Asbury, a Project Lift leader, stated, “Our goal is to reduce our community’s high child poverty rate by improving employment opportunities and removing barriers.”

Project Lift builds on the capacity of nonprofit human services agencies and faith and community based organizations. The 23 participating sponsors provide job leads and coach families in Project Lift programs. Families eligible for Project Lift earn less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Limit, have at least one child in the household, are working or actively job seeking, and agree to work with the sponsor agency or workplace coach. Through Project Lift, families are connected to employment opportunities, and employers benefit from a stable, supported workforce.

During the 2019 pilot, Project Lift assisted 549 families, including 1,028 children. Families benefited from a total of \$687,000 in wrap around cash assistance. 32% of families enrolled for six months, increased household income by 20%.

### **CARS: A NEW APPROACH TO AFFORDABLE TRANSPORTATION**

Access to good paying jobs isn’t just a matter of education or skill, it is also one of affordable transportation. The recently launched CARs initiative, headed by Mary Asbury with an active advisory committee, is working to develop an innovative solution to help low income families afford a reliable car. With the support of a Project Lift subsidy and financial coaching, working parents will be able to access jobs throughout the region, while navigating medical appointments, grocery runs and trips to school and daycare.

### **LEGAL AID ASSISTS JOB SEEKERS**

Our Clearing Legal Hurdles to Employment helps families referred by Project Lift and other community partners throughout our seven counties.

Legal Aid clears up many barriers to a successful job search or new job. A criminal record is one significant barrier.

Legal Aid, in partnership with the Volunteer Lawyers Project, can often assist job seekers by obtaining an expungement of the criminal record. We also help clients obtain a certificate of qualification for employment or “CQE”.

Regina Campbell, Managing Attorney of Legal Aid’s Income, Work and Health Practice group, noted, “People often need both an expungement and a CQE. The CQE helps people overcome a discriminatory lifetime ban. A job seeker with a CQE gives employers added incentive to take a chance. CQEs can be obtained even if the person is not eligible for an expungement.” In 2019, Legal Aid helped 828 individuals resolve a barrier to employment including expungements, and CQEs.



## Preserving Housing >>

Becoming homeless jeopardizes job security, disrupts school attendance, and leads to continued poverty. Legal Aid works to keep housing safe, stable and affordable to improve family stability for our clients. Our advocacy prevents evictions, preserves affordable rental housing units, and prevents foreclosures.

### NEW ASSISTANCE PROGRAM PREVENTS EVICTIONS

The rate of evictions in our community remains high, especially in low-income neighborhoods, where most of our clients live. Many families are just one emergency away from being evicted.

Legal Aid created an innovative approach to help families threatened with eviction, the Eviction Prevention Assistance Program. Its goal is to prevent evictions before they are filed in court, or as soon thereafter as possible. Stopping an eviction early in the process minimizes the financial and emotion disruptions on families.

The program helps tenants in Hamilton County who face eviction for nonpayment of rent due to emergency circumstances but who can afford to pay the rent going forward. Other urgent and non-recurring expenses include: work missed due to illness, or to take care of a family member, or car repair.

Legal Aid utilizes a combination of cash rental assistance, negotiation, and representation in court to keep families stable in their existing apartments.

In the first four months of the program, we and our program partners, Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency and St. Vincent de



Legal Aid advocate Deanna White and attorney Nick DiNardo with client Paige Berry.

Paul, prevented evictions for 257 families. Due to funding from the City of Cincinnati & Hamilton County CDBG, and Hamilton County Job & Family Services, we could assist families we would otherwise not have been able to help.

The program was introduced in a series of information sessions, as well as social media, in partnership with the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County and the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati.

### IMPROVING CONDITIONS PRESERVES AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Legal Aid's efforts to preserve and increase the inventory of affordable housing is critical to neighborhood stability. We help tenants in multifamily properties address safety and security conditions and we represent individual tenants to get poor conditions remedied.

This community impact work requires significant commitment of attorney resources. Our fight to preserve the Alms Hill 200-unit landmark building as affordable, improved housing took five years.

Over the past three years, we assisted tenants in several Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority multifamily buildings to advocate for improved conditions. Our work helped preserve affordable housing for over 1,400 families.

During the past year, we guided the residents of the 248 unit Arts Apartments as they formed a tenant association. Legal Aid represented tenants to preserve their affordable housing and obtain the needed repairs.

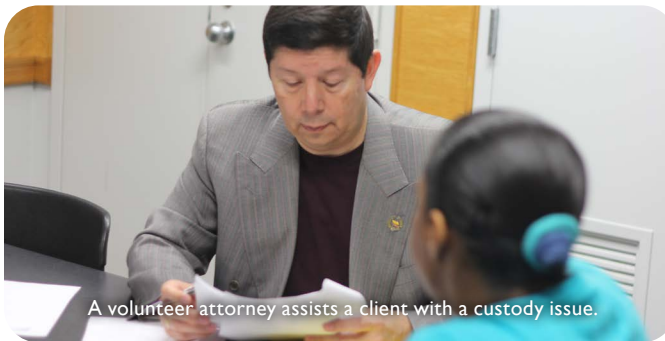


Legal Aid attorney Alpha Taylor conducts Eviction Prevention Outreach

# Kinship Care Expands Outreach >>

Legal Aid's Kinship Care team helps caregivers navigate the legal challenges of assuming the full-time care of a child no longer in their parents' care. Caregivers need to obtain timely legal authority to enroll children in school, get them medical care, or apply for public benefits.

In addition to helping caregivers obtain custody, the Kinship Care team also provides advice and representation to resolve unexpected financial or housing challenges that can arise. We assess clients to determine if they are eligible for benefits such as Kinship Permanency Incentives, Prevention, Retention and Contingency (PRC) funds, Medicaid coverage for the children, or income and food assistance.



A volunteer attorney assists a client with a custody issue.

Our integrative approach to kinship care resolved a crisis for Mr. B., a grandfather who assumed responsibility for his two young grandsons. Mr. B. moved to Ohio to care for the children after a

car crash killed their mother. Mr. B. was referred to Legal Aid by Dr. Joe Real through our Child HeLP medical legal partnership with Cincinnati Children's.



Legal Aid attorneys Elizabeth Zak, Kelly Malone and Donita Parrish were joined by Rene McPhedran and Anthony Osterlund of the Cincinnati Bar Foundation to celebrate the expansion of the Juvenile Custody Clinic.

We realized that as a kinship caregiver, Mr. B. was eligible for up to three years of financial support through Ohio's Kinship Permanency Initiative (KPI). As a result, Mr. B. is now able to support his grandsons and provide a stable home.

Kinship attorneys meet with Juvenile Court judges and magistrates, as well as children's services staff and kinship navigators, to establish a referral procedure. Legal Aid has negotiated with counties to streamline the process. Legal Aid accepts referrals from Beech Acres Kinship Navigators (Clermont, Clinton, Hamilton, and Warren Counties), Butler County Educational Services Center, Highland County Community Action Agency; and HealthSource.

## New Partnership Addresses School Discipline Disparities

In 2019, Legal Aid led the creation of a new education partnership to address the complex issues involving race, equity, and disparities in school disciplinary removals, school academic success, and diversion from child welfare and juvenile justice systems. The partnership is supported by the School-Justice Partnership Program of Georgetown University Center for Juvenile Justice Reform. An important goal is to reduce the influence of implicit bias in discipline decisions. The partners include Cincinnati Public Schools, Northwest Local School District, Princeton City Schools, Hamilton County Job and Family Services, Hamilton County Juvenile Court, Hamilton County Educational Service Center, and Legal Aid.



Legal Aid attorneys Colleen Swim, Elaine Fink, and Melissa Salamon pictured at the program kickoff.



# 2019 Annual Fund Donors

## \$5,000+

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Thank you to AK Steel Foundation, American Century Investments Foundation, GE Foundation, and SC Ministry Foundation for matching gifts.

The Legal Aid Society appreciates the generosity of donors who contributed to the Annual Fund from February 1, 2019 – January 31, 2020. Every effort has been made to list donors and respect anonymous contributions as requested. Please forgive any unintended errors and notify us of changes by calling (513) 362-2815. All private donation income is used in support of our mission, and in accordance with Legal Services Corporation and other funder regulations.

The Greater Cincinnati Foundation+  
Fidelity Charitable ++  
Charles Schwab +++  
National Philanthropic Trust -  
Wyler Family Foundation - -  
Johnson Charitable •

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Child HeLP\*

# Memorial & Honorarium Gifts

## MEMORIAM GIFTS

*In memory of Sharon Barker*  
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*In memory of Leo J. Breslin*  
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*In memory of Clyde Cooper*  
Judith B. Green

*In memory of Anthony J. DeCenso*  
Nancy & Bill DeCenso

*In memory of George W. Fels*  
Richard Boydston

*In memory of Judge Gilbert Bettman*  
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*In memory of Ruth & Donald Kahn*  
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*In memory of Sue Livensparger*  
Jennifer L. Branch  
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*In memory of John L. Noelcke*  
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*In memory of Michael Poast*  
Robert W. Buechner

*In memory of Gladys Pride*  
Sean Murray & Deborah Ann Henretta

*In memory of John Shaffer*  
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*In memory of Martha Allen Stimson*  
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*In memory of Dr. Henry Winkler*  
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*In memory of Mary Lou Wolf*  
The Cincinnati Associates  
of the Sisters of Mercy  
Alphonse A. Gerhardtstein & Mimi Gingold  
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Lawrence Zeinner

## HONORARIUM GIFTS

*In honor of Mary Asbury*  
Drs. Carolyn & Arthur K. Asbury  
Drs. Lawson & Victoria Wulsin

*In honor of Milo and Patty Beran*  
Laura & Joshua Beran

*In honor of Jennifer Branch*  
Judith B. Green

*In honor of Jean Feinberg*  
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*In honor of Gerry Greene*  
Eileen & Jim Chalfie  
Ellen Greene-Tom  
Elizabeth C.B. & Paul G. Sittenfeld

*In honor of the Housing Team*  
Jessica Powell & Jeff Cramerding

*In honor of Andrew Kaplan*  
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*In honor of Donald P. Klekamp*  
Jim & Bobbie Farley  
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*In honor of Erik Larson*  
Brandon Wise

*In honor of Harry Santen*  
Jerry Lawson & Barb Rinto

*In honor of Deanna White*  
Cathy Levine

## Legal Aid Honored with Bridge Builders Award

Legal Aid received a 2019 Bridge Builders award from Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency at the organization's annual meeting. Legal Aid was recognized for our new Eviction Prevention Assistance Program.

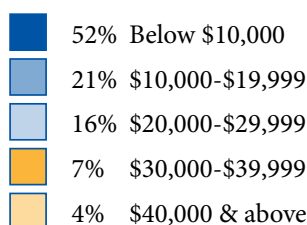
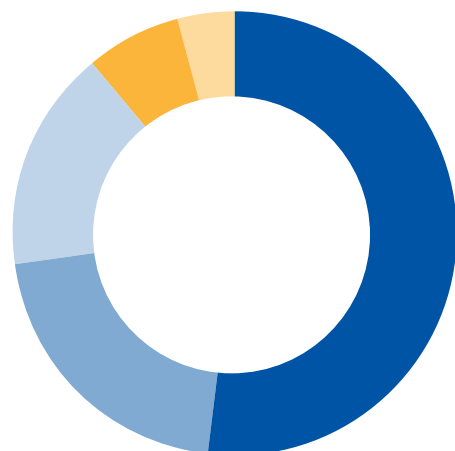
Attorney Alpha Taylor and Advocate Blake Gibson, Eviction Prevention Assistance team members, with CAA CEO Mark Lawson.



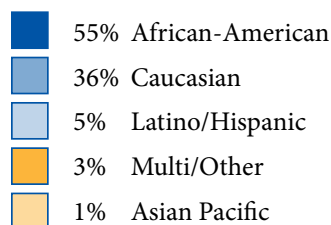
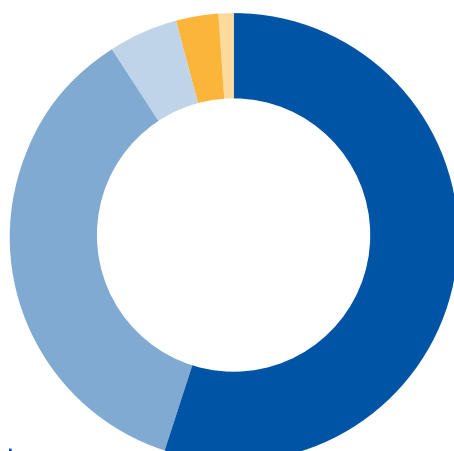


# Our Clients

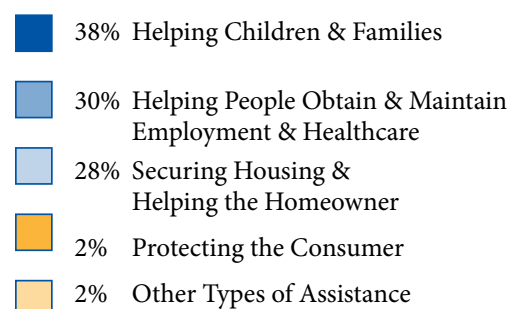
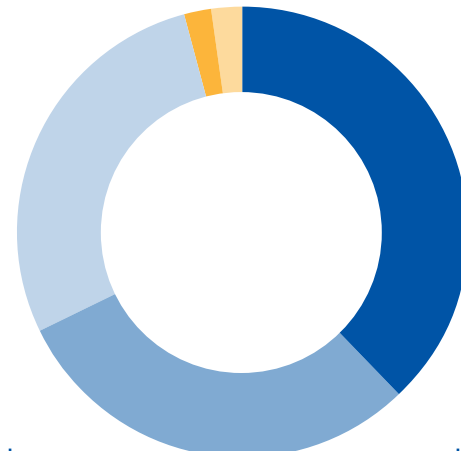
## Income



## Ethnicity



## Legal Services



# Individual Case Services

January – December 2019

COUNTY	Requests for Service	Sent Written Materials	Made External Referral	LAS Case Open	VLP Case Open	Pending LAS & VLP
BROWN	391	47	82	76	11	127
BUTLER	3,145	141	777	968	190	1,439
CLERMONT	1,221	67	286	259	101	255
CLINTON	238	49	70	36	15	40
HAMILTON	16,229	607	2,239	3,898	2,158	3,230
HIGHLAND	268	72	71	44	6	35
WARREN	642	32	203	139	37	156
UNSPECIFIED	2,585	57	1,124	171	44	112
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24,719</b>	<b>1,072</b>	<b>4,852</b>	<b>5,591</b>	<b>2,562</b>	<b>5,394</b>

# Program Funders

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 Volunteer Lawyers for the Poor Foundation  
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\* Legal Services Corporation supports only the activities of the Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati.

# Statements of Financial Position

## 2019 Operating Revenue

Other grants and contracts	3,840,610
Ohio Legal Aid Fund	2,672,839
Grants from Legal Services Corporation	1,674,391
Rental income	257,700
Contributions	240,084
Other	116,488
Donated services and materials	76,484
Investment return, net	765,702
Net assets released from restrictions	
United Way	332,000
Other	897,388
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>10,873,686</b>

## 2019 Functional Expense

Housing and Consumer program	1,809,442
Employment and benefits program	1,133,752
Family and children program	3,827,577
General and civil program	466,502
<b>Total program services</b>	<b>7,237,273</b>
Management and general	1,306,256
Fundraising	137,035
Rental property	262,501
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>8,943,065</b>

## Assets

	2019	2018
Cash and cash equivalents	1,833,136	1,189,090
Cash held in trust for clients	129,528	28,013
Investments	3,388,952	2,436,396
Grants and contracts receivable	772,549	462,630
Contributions receivable, net	383,634	802,675
Property and equipment, net	3,239,450	3,333,938
Other assets, net	27,599	26,907
Investments restricted by donors for endowment	667,658	667,658
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>10,442,506</b>	<b>8,947,307</b>

## Liabilities and Net Assets

### Liabilities

Accounts payable	72,226	174,282
Accrued annual leave	321,421	318,861
Accrued expenses	112,773	92,267
Assets held for others	129,528	28,013
Refundable advance	97,303	-
Interest rate swap agreement	73,643	40,498
Note payable, bank	1,111,030	1,223,183
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>1,917,924</b>	<b>1,877,104</b>

### NET ASSETS

Without donor restrictions		
Operating	1,536,052	406,515
Net investment in property & equipment	2,054,777	2,070,257
Board designated operating reserves	3,429,197	2,645,778
Total without donor restrictions	7,020,026	5,122,550
With donor restrictions	1,504,556	1,947,653
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>8,524,582</b>	<b>7,070,203</b>
<b>Total liabilities and net assets</b>	<b>10,442,506</b>	<b>8,947,307</b>

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.

# Legal Aid Attorney Receives Statewide Award

John Schrider, Director of Legal Aid Society of Southwest Ohio, LLC, was honored with the 2019 Denis J. Murphy Award. The Ohio Access to Justice Foundation presents the award annually to recognize outstanding leadership and advocacy within Ohio's legal aid organizations. Angela Lloyd, Executive Director of the Foundation presented the award to John.



## Our Staff

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Kelly Malone  
Donita Parrish  
Debora Wagner  
Elizabeth Zak

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Zach Frye  
Gerry Greene  
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