



# our course is set

honoring history; charting the future.



The  
Legal Aid Society  
of Cleveland  
*Since 1905*

Annual Report 2007

## Dear Friends,

Progress can be best made when you take time to understand who you are and determine where you want to go. In 2007, The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland completed a strategic planning process to answer those key questions and provide a roadmap that will guide us through 2010. The strategic plan aligns our staff, processes and resources with our clear and compelling future. You will read about some of our initiatives in this Annual Report.

As important as this strategic plan is, the dynamic process itself was just as beneficial. What did we discover? We experienced a renewal of commitment to our goals. We uncovered new avenues of communication and a systematic way of analyzing our work and measuring our impact. The strategic planning process made us better equipped to focus our expertise, not as individuals performing individual tasks, but as a team moving forward with the strength of our entire organization.

The process confirmed my own beliefs in the commitment and expertise of our staff and volunteer partners. I have the utmost respect and admiration for these skilled professionals. And I am deeply grateful for the support of our partners and donors as well. I look forward to our future together as we continue, now with more certainty than ever, to provide high quality legal services and work for systemic solutions.

Sincerely,



Colleen M. Cotter, Esq.  
Executive Director



## Dear Supporters,

Congratulations to The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland on completing its strategic plan – the first ever for this organization. Legal Aid’s willingness to undergo this arduous process reflects a dedication to efficiently and effectively deliver the highest quality legal services to those living in poverty in Northeast Ohio, a commitment that is a hallmark of Legal Aid’s century-plus history.

With poverty levels at an all-time high, the knowledge gained from the planning process and its implementation will serve Legal Aid well. The strategic plan is much more than a ‘to-do’ list. In fact, the plan provides a mechanism by which legal services can be evaluated and delivered based on the changing needs of the community. The plan also addresses the management of financial assets, personnel development, marketing and fundraising. Initial results confirm that Legal Aid is providing legal services consistent with the needs of the community it serves.

The relationship between the Board and Legal Aid staff has been strengthened throughout the past year. Indeed, this spirit of cooperation has continued as Patricia Poole completed her term and Edward Icove has taken over as Board President. Transitions remind us that we are always moving forward.

Thank you to our volunteers and funders. We could not accomplish this important work without your support. And thank you to Colleen Cotter and the Legal Aid staff and Board who make the journey worthwhile.

Sincerely,



Edward A. Icove, Esq.  
President, Legal Aid’s Board of Directors 2008  
Principal, Icove Legal Group



Patricia Poole  
President, Legal Aid’s Board of Directors 2007  
Partner, Baker Hostetler



## Summarized Financial Information

## Cases Handled in 2007

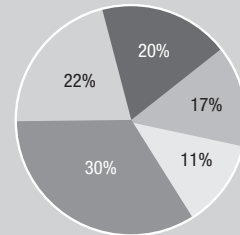
Revenue and Other Support	2007	2006
Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation (OLAF)	\$5,635,031	\$4,686,654
OLAF One-Time Addition to Reserves		\$1,952,772
Legal Services Corporation (LSC)	\$2,044,258	\$1,617,415
Donations and Private Grants	\$603,242	\$466,805
Donated Services	\$771,835	\$692,958
United Way	\$193,598	\$166,151
Contracts for Legal Services	\$140,001	\$88,287
Area Agencies on Aging	\$119,283	\$119,515
Other Government Grants	\$97,354	\$110,810
Other Income	\$396,994	\$261,605
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$10,001,596</b>	<b>\$10,162,972</b>

Expenses	2007	2006
Program Services	\$6,559,280	\$6,013,352
Support Services (Administration & Development)	\$1,166,658	\$1,111,770
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$7,725,938</b>	<b>\$7,125,122</b>

Excess of Revenue over Expenditures	\$2,275,658	\$3,037,850
Opening Net Assets	\$5,429,185	\$2,391,335
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>\$7,704,843</b>	<b>\$5,429,185</b>

### Total Cases in 2007: 8,010

Cases Handled & Closed in 2007:	5,585
Cases Continued into 2008:	2,425



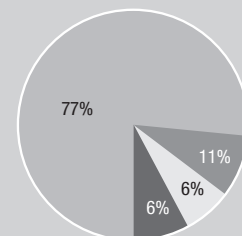
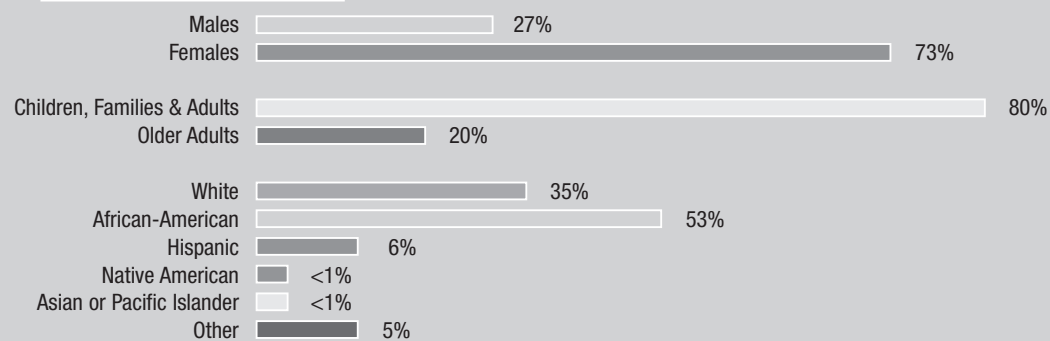
### Types of Cases Handled

Consumer	30%
Family	22%
Health-Education-Work-Income	20%
Housing	17%
Individual Rights-Immigration-Community Development-Other Matters	11%

### Legal Aid's Other Services

Presentations to community groups	590
Legal education brochures distributed	81,411
Legal education newsletters distributed	24,000
Newspaper stories	110
Radio and television interviews/PSA's	35

### Client Demographics



### Cases by Office

Ashtabula County	6%
Cuyahoga County	77%
Lake & Geauga Counties	6%
Lorain County	11%

our course is set

Legal Aid's mission 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. Legal Aid's mission statement was developed in the 2007 strategic planning process and guides Legal Aid's work. The strategic plan recognizes Legal Aid's organizational strength and the potential for greater achievement to preserve rights, maintain dignity and ensure justice. Legal Aid's 2007 - 2010 goals include:

**Access to Justice**

To ensure access to justice for low income people, Legal Aid seeks to:

- Increase capacity to serve more clients
- Increase *pro bono* support
- Expand reach to people with limited English proficiency and other underserved and vulnerable populations
- Track information regarding unmet needs to better inform organizational priorities

**Economics and Education**

The line between reasonable comfort and financial ruin is a fine line for many. Education provides access to a better future. Because of Legal Aid's work:

- Clients' income will increase
- Clients' assets will be protected
- Clients' barriers to employment, vocational training and education will be removed
- The rights of clients with regard to income and assets, employment and education will be preserved

**Health, Shelter, and Safety**

Communities are strengthened when health care is accessible, housing is decent and affordable and safety is not an issue. Because of Legal Aid's work:

- Clients and their families who are victims of domestic violence, abuse or neglect will be safe
- Clients will secure and retain decent, affordable housing
- The stock of decent, affordable housing will be maintained, despite pressures to shrink
- Clients and their families will have increased access to health care
- The rights of clients with regard to safety, housing and health will be preserved

**Marketing / External Communications**

In order to communicate its mission and better serve clients, Legal Aid seeks to:

- Develop and implement a mission-based external communications plan
- Increase the number of people in the client and legal communities who understand that Legal Aid provides high quality legal services and is a valuable contributor to the Northeast Ohio community

**Finances and Fund Development**

Legal Aid's course is supported by solid finances and increased ability to raise funds. Legal Aid's goals are:

- Increase total revenues to \$10 million, including \$1 million from the Annual Campaign for Legal Aid
- Diversify funding
- Establish a reserve and an endowment
- Appropriately and strategically allocate resources among locations, programs, administration and development

**Human Resources and Culture**

Human resources are Legal Aid's greatest asset. To support this asset and develop a culture devoted to client service, Legal Aid seeks to:

- Enhance organizational unity
- Develop multi-cultural competencies
- Develop succession plans for all leadership positions
- Establish competitive compensation packages
- Develop the use of work plans and evaluations
- Increase the number of staff including paralegals, social workers and technology staff
- Improve board performance, setting goals and assessing progress



Susan Stauffer and Howard Strain mentor volunteer attorneys



Board Members David Kutik and Barbara Leadbetter at a meeting



Dennis Dobos and David Dawson discuss a case with a volunteer



Margaret Terry provides assistance to a client

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## The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

awarded the Legal Aid-MetroHealth collaboration a four-year, \$500,000 grant through its Local Initiative Funding Partners (LIFFP) Program. Local corporations and foundations\* have agreed to match the \$500,000 grant amount. With additional in-kind support from MetroHealth and Legal Aid, a total of \$1.27 million was raised.

### \*The 2007 local funders include:

Thompson Hine LLP (lead local funder)  
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 Benesch, Friedlander, Coplan & Arnoff LLP  
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as of 12/31/2007

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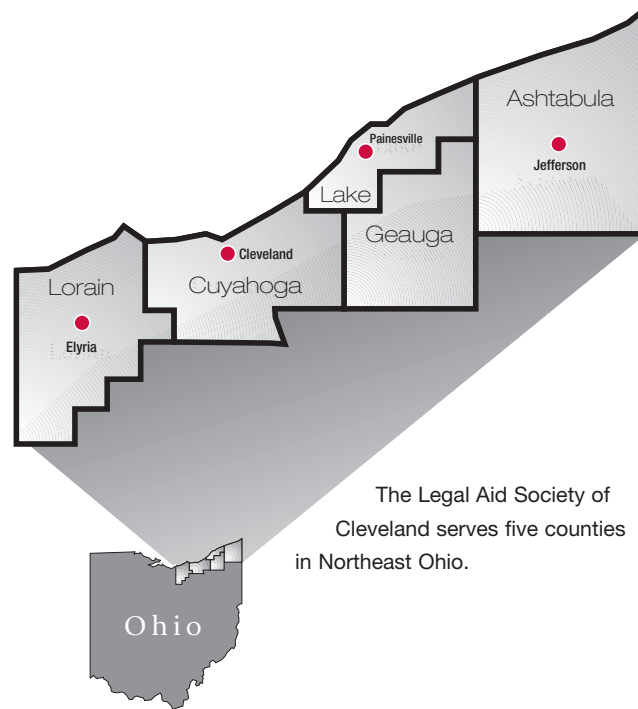
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## our mission

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.



The Legal Aid Society of  
Cleveland serves five counties  
in Northeast Ohio.

### 2007 Managing Attorneys

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Lorain County

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Ashtabula County

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Family Law Unit

Harold Williams, Esq.  
Consumer Law Unit

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David Kutik, Vice President  
Carole Heyward, Secretary/Treasurer

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Executive Director

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Information Technology Director

Melanie A. Shakarian, Esq.  
Development Director

### Cuyahoga County & Administrative Offices

1223 West Sixth Street  
Cleveland, OH 44113

Phone: 216.687.1900      Toll-Free: 888.817.3777  
Fax: 216.687.0779

### Ashtabula County

121 East Walnut Street  
Jefferson, OH 44047

Phone: 440.576.8120      Toll-Free: 866.873.9665  
Fax: 440.576.3021

### Lake & Geauga Counties

8 North State Street · Suite 300  
Painesville, OH 44077

Phone: 440.352.6200      Toll-Free: 888.808.2800  
Fax: 440.352.0015

### Lorain County

538 West Broad Street · Suite 300  
Elyria, OH 44035

Phone: 440.323.8240      Toll-Free: 800.444.7348  
Fax: 440.323.8526

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Sharon Baden, Baden Design

#### Event Photos:

Nannette Bedway, Jaime Janos

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