



2008 Annual Report

Total Cases Handled in 2008: 9,180

Cases Handled & Closed in 2008:	6,233
Cases Continued into 2009:	2,947

Legal Aid's Other Services 2008

Community Presentations	972
Brochures Distributed	63,710
Referrals	10,317
Policy Advocacy Opportunities	15

Personnel 2008

Staff Attorneys	53
Other Staff	31
Pro Bono Attorneys	1,456
Law Student Volunteers	259

Revenue and Other Support

	2008	2007
Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation (OLAF)	\$4,520,273	\$5,635,031
Legal Services Corporation (LSC)	\$2,054,329	\$2,044,258
Donations and Private Grants	\$1,135,809	\$603,242
Donated Services	\$939,809	\$771,835
United Way	\$220,193	\$193,598
Partner Agencies (Contracts for Legal Services)	\$272,985	\$140,001
Area Agencies on Aging	\$117,235	\$119,283
Other Government Grants	\$108,604	\$97,354
Other Income	\$125,506	\$396,994

Total Revenue	\$9,494,743	\$10,001,596
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Expenses

	2008	2007
Program Services	\$7,559,914	\$6,559,280
Support Services (Administration & Development)	\$1,362,689	\$1,166,658

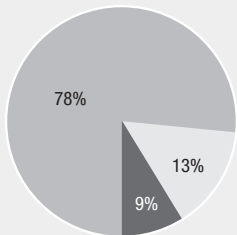
Total Expenses	\$8,922,603	\$7,725,938
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Excess of Revenue over Expenditures	\$572,140	\$2,275,658
Opening Net Assets	\$7,704,843	\$5,429,185

Net Assets	\$8,276,983	\$7,704,843
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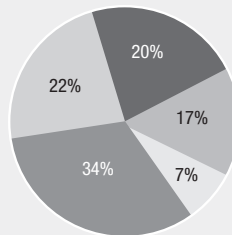
Breakdown of Net Assets

- Undesignated	\$177,389
- Net Investment in Plant	\$2,609,955
- Board Designated Reserve Fund	\$4,988,254
- Temporarily Restricted	\$501,385
Net Assets	\$8,276,983



Cases by County

Ashtabula, Geauga & Lake	13%
Cuyahoga	78%
Lorain	9%



Types of Cases Handled 2008 2007

Consumer	34%	30%
Family	22%	22%
Health-Education-Work-Income-Immigration	20%	20%
Housing	17%	17%
Other	7%	11%

Client Demographics

Males	27%
Females	73%
White	37%
African-American	52%
Hispanic	8%
Other	3%

Legal Aid's strategic plan identifies the following program categories:



Access to Justice

Legal Aid continually works to increase capacity for services, engage *pro bono* support, and expand outreach to underserved and vulnerable communities, including those with limited English proficiency.

2008 Highlights

January



Legal Aid distributes a tax education packet to hundreds with information about the pitfalls of refund anticipation loans, the value of the Earned Income Tax Credit, telephone refund, and consequences of loan forgiveness, and Legal Aid's Low Income Tax Clinic, which represents, educates and empowers taxpayers.

February



Legal Aid adds the first of two new hires for the Wage Project which enforces employment rights. The Project is funded by **The Thomas H. White Foundation** and the **Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation**.



The addition of an attorney and paralegal expands Legal Aid's ability to represent low-income debtors in bankruptcy proceedings. Also created: The Bankruptcy Bypass Program, supported by the **8th Appellate District Pro Bono Committee**, which helps some debtors resolve credit issues without bankruptcy.

March



Legal Aid attorneys participate in the **Mental Health Advocacy Coalition (MHAC)** Medicaid Access Initiative, a group of community allies partnering with community and statewide actors to expand Medicaid access for severely mentally-impaired residents of Cuyahoga County.

April



Initiated by Governor Ted Strickland, Chief Justice Thomas Moyer and other statewide officeholders, Ohio's "Save the Dream" foreclosure prevention program connects low-income Northeast Ohio homeowners with Legal Aid and volunteer attorneys. Legal Aid's participation in "Save the Dream" is made possible by the **Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation, Cuyahoga County Foreclosure Prevention Program** and the **Institute for Foreclosure Legal Assistance**.



Legal Aid partners with the Ohio chapter of the **American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA)** to coordinate Citizenship Day, an all-day clinic offering free citizenship application assistance to legal permanent residents. Partners include the **C. Lionel Jones Pro Bono Immigration Committee, Catholic Charities**, and **International Services Center**.



The Senior Years - a **Lorain County Office on Aging** publication - includes an article about Ohio statute changes removing a rule regarding Social Security offsets against unemployment benefits. The story is part of a Legal Aid community education effort to inform the public about the new law, changed, in part, through the efforts of a Legal Aid attorney.

May



Legal Aid's Painesville Office hosts a community open house to mark the office's 30th anniversary. Awards are presented to former Legal Aid employees in Lake and Geauga Counties. Additional Open Houses in Legal Aid's Elyria and Jefferson Offices recognized partners in Lorain and Ashtabula Counties who have worked with Legal Aid to ensure access to justice.

June



A staff attorney working in Legal Aid's Community Advocacy Program, a partnership with **The MetroHealth System**, collaborates with the **Cleveland Police Department** to develop department policy regarding U-Nonimmigrant Status Certification, known as the U Visas. This visa was established to encourage immigrants to report crimes - which they often do not, due to fear of immigration consequences or mistrust of the criminal justice system.

for those who are low-income and vulnerable by providing high-quality legal services and working for systemic solutions.



Economics and Education

Legal Aid protects rights to income and assets, and removes barriers to employment, vocational training and education.



Health, Shelter and Safety

By securing safety for victims of domestic abuse, retaining decent and affordable housing for clients, and increasing access to health care, Legal Aid helps to build strong communities.

“Without [our attorney] we would not have anything!” — Benjamin Havyarimana, *Family emigrated as refugees from Burundi*

July



A senior attorney in Legal Aid’s Consumer Law Unit testifies before **Cleveland City Council** on the community effects of foreclosures. Legal Aid also participated in negotiations with the **Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas** over court rules regarding mediation and processing of foreclosure cases, and Legal Aid’s Lorain Office staff submitted comments to **Lorain County Court of Common Pleas** on Local Rule 16, also regarding foreclosure procedures.



A **Wall Street Journal** story about unemployment benefits quotes a senior attorney in Legal Aid’s Health, Education, Work, Income and Immigration Unit – bringing national attention to the shortcomings of Ohio’s unemployment compensation system.

August



Board member David Kutik, Esq., a partner at **Jones Day**, receives the **American Bar Association Pro Bono Publico Award**. Mr. Kutik was also honored in May with the **Ohio State Bar Association’s** first John C. and Ginny Elam *Pro Bono Award*. Kutik directed the \$5,000 Elam gift to establish the **Sgt. Harry Fund**, named after Mr. Kutik’s father, to benefit Legal Aid’s Volunteer Lawyers Program.



A front-page **Star Beacon** story on a natural gas rate increase quotes a senior attorney from Legal Aid’s Ashtabula Office and brings community awareness to an issue impacting low-income homeowners.

September



A senior staff attorney in Legal Aid’s Family Law Unit conducts the first Civil Protection Order (CPO) training at **Squire, Sanders & Dempsey**. CPO Project *pro bono* attorneys provide legal representation to survivors of domestic violence.



Legal Aid attorneys file a complaint with the **U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights** regarding the Cleveland Metropolitan School District’s failure to properly communicate with language-minority parents. The Office of Civil Rights is pursuing the case.

October



In a continuing effort to serve a diverse population of the low-income community, Legal Aid begins an initiative to publish all of its community legal education materials in English and Spanish. Fifteen new publications were translated and distributed in 2008. In addition, staff attorneys in Legal Aid’s Wage Project gave community education presentations about employment rights to hundreds of low-wage workers.

November



The Private Tenant-Landlord Project engages four law firms (**Calfee, Halter & Griswold; Hahn, Loeser + Parks; Jones Day; and Thompson Hine**) to represent low-income tenants in housing matters including eviction, lockout and conditions. The Private Tenant-Landlord Project is funded by the **Charter One Foundation**, the **Eva L. and Joseph M. Bruening Foundation**, the **Murphy Family Foundation**, the **Sisters of Charity Foundation** and **United Way of Greater Cleveland**. Partners include **Cleveland Tenants Organization** and **Cleveland Mediation Center**.

December



Legal Aid joins and supports a statewide coalition, led by the **Ohio Consumer Counsel**, to litigate the first case applying Ohio’s new electric utility law, SB 221, to electric companies serving Northern Ohio. Negotiations led to a three-year \$6 million fuel fund for low-income families. Legal Aid client groups were crucial in efforts to secure the fuel fund and will administer the funds for the Cleveland territory.



In 2008 the Volunteer Lawyers Program held thirty-five Brief Advice & Referral Clinics in Northeast Ohio neighborhoods and numerous other specialty clinics. The Clinics were held in collaboration with the private bar, law firms and professional affinity groups. Neighborhood clinics alone provide access to legal assistance for more than 800 individuals annually.

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— Amelia Washington*, *Daughter's wrongful elementary school expulsion was overturned*

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In 2007, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation awarded the medical-legal partnership between The MetroHealth System and Legal Aid a four-year, \$500,000 grant through its Local Initiative Funding Partners (LIFP). Local foundations and corporations have agreed to match the \$500,000 grant.

The 2008 local funders include:

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"I cannot express my appreciation enough for the team of dedicated attorneys that are part of your agency. I had a great team by my side."

— Darlene Brown, *Home saved by Legal Aid*

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Toll-Free: 888.817.3777

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121 East Walnut Street
Jefferson, OH 44047
Phone: 440.576.8120
Toll-Free: 866.873.9665

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



www.lasclev.org

* Confidentiality: The names of some clients quoted were changed to protect their confidences.



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Annual Report 2008



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Since 1905

Dear Friends:

In 2008 The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland continued our mission, providing high-quality legal assistance for those most vulnerable during these tumultuous times.

Despite economic crisis, we did not cut programs, client services or staff. In fact, Legal Aid increased capacity to represent victims of domestic violence, prevent homelessness, curb the foreclosure crisis, and aid vulnerable immigrant families. One-third of the Legal Aid staff hired in 2008 speak Spanish, enhancing our ability to assist those for whom English is a second language.

In response to the recession we put more resources into representing homeowners in foreclosure, those who need bankruptcy to get a fresh start, tenants in private housing, and low-wage workers who are too often the victims of wage theft.

Throughout the year, we share stories about what we do through our newsletter, *Poetic Justice*. You respond to our call for action by joining with us as volunteers, donors and partners. This Annual Report is our opportunity to share with you Legal Aid's strength as an organization - and how we accomplish much success throughout the year because of your help.

Legal Aid has served this community for more than one-hundred years and we have every intention of serving Northeast Ohio for another hundred. We thank the donors, volunteers and community partners who are helping us weather the economic storm and we hope you continue to support our mission. How else can "justice for all" become reality?

Sincerely,

Colleen M. Cotter

Colleen M. Cotter, Esq.
Executive Director

Edward I. Cove

Edward I. Cove, Esq.
President, 2008

David Kutik

David Kutik, Esq.
President, 2009