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

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
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
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

Client Demographics
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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%

Cases by County
- Ashtabula, Geauga & Lake 13%
- Cuyahoga 78%
- Lorain 9%

2008 Annual Report
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.

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

**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.

**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.

**Legal Aid**

**Legal Aid’s mission is to secure justice and resolve fundamental problems.**

**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.
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 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.

A senior attorney in Legal Aid’s Family Law Unit conducts the first Civil Protection Order (CPO) training at Squire, Sanders & Dempsey. CPO 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.

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.

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.

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
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<td>Lessie and Clifton Jones</td>
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— Amelia Washington*, Daughter’s wrongful elementary school expulsion was overturned

Annual Report 2008

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#### The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

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 though its Local Initiative Funding Partners (LIFP). Local foundations and corporations have agreed to match the $500,000 grant.

#### The 2008 local funders include:

- Thompson Hine LLP (lead local funder)
- Benesch, Friedlander, Coplan & Arnoff LLP
- Eva L. and Joseph M. Bruening Foundation
- Caffee, Halter & Griswold LLP
- The Callahan Foundation
- The Cleveland Foundation
- The Harry K. and Emma R. Fox Foundation
- The George Gund Foundation
- The Lubrizol Foundation
- Saint Luke’s Foundation
- United Black Fund of Greater Cleveland, Inc.

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Toll-Free: 866.873.9665

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Painesville, OH 44077
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Toll-Free: 888.808.2800

Lorain County
538 West Broad Street
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Annual Report 2008

“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

www.lasclev.org

* Confidentiality: The names of some clients quoted were changed to protect their confidences.
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, Esq.  
Edward Icove, Esq.  
David Kutik, Esq.

Executive Director  
President, 2008  
President, 2009