

2017



THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF CLEVELAND
ANNUAL REPORT

"NEVER DOUBT THAT A SMALL GROUP OF THOUGHTFUL,
COMMITTED CITIZENS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD;
INDEED, IT'S THE ONLY THING THAT EVER HAS." – MARGARET MEAD

Margaret Mead summed up the power of partnerships:

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

In 2017, The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland staff, board and volunteers, in partnership with our supporters, embodied this lofty idea.

Together, we impacted more than 18,000 people — including veterans facing eviction, victims of elder abuse, toddlers poisoned by lead in their homes, and single mothers fighting for the health and safety of their families. Legal Aid serves a diverse client community, but each client shares in common the burden of living in poverty. Each client we served faced a situation that, without our free legal assistance, could escalate into a devastating emergency.

Legal Aid aims to be where and when our clients need us most. We have the ingredients, the foundation to achieve our audacious goals: Our incredible staff and volunteers, our partnerships, our community. Together, we achieve impressive outcomes for our clients: Evictions prevented; safety secured; barriers to education and employment removed. Through this work, lives are stabilized.

But these aren’t just individual outcomes, they are community outcomes. Families that were once wholly consumed with getting by from day to day are able to fully engage in their neighborhoods, with their children’s school, with training to get a better job. Democracy thrives because of your support.

We thank you for extending Legal Aid’s reach to more families living in poverty. Your support has created a ripple effect that impacts more families through partnerships, removes barriers to opportunity and elevates Legal Aid as a catalyst for community change.

We are proud of our work to create lasting change in our community in 2017. You should be as well; you are part of Legal Aid, and Legal Aid is part of you.



Colleen M. Cotter, Esq.
Executive Director
The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland



IN 2017, LEGAL AID IMPACTED **18,057** PEOPLE

7,743 total cases handled = 6,401 cases handled & closed + 1,342 cases continued into 2018 including 1,711 cases handled by volunteers and 137 advice clinics

LEGAL AID’S SUCCESS IN 2017

Increased assets and income, and reduced debt by **\$14.2** million for clients

96%
safety was **SECURED**

99%
evictions **PREVENTED**

63%
foreclosures **PREVENTED**

91%
REMOVED barriers to education

CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS 2017

83% of households served **MAKE LESS THAN \$25,000/year**

761 cases involved **U.S. VETERANS** or **ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY MEMBERS**, impacting **1366** PEOPLE.

21% of all clients were **OLDER ADULTS (60+)**

44% of all households helped included **CHILDREN**

30% Male **70%** Female

RACE / ETHNICITY

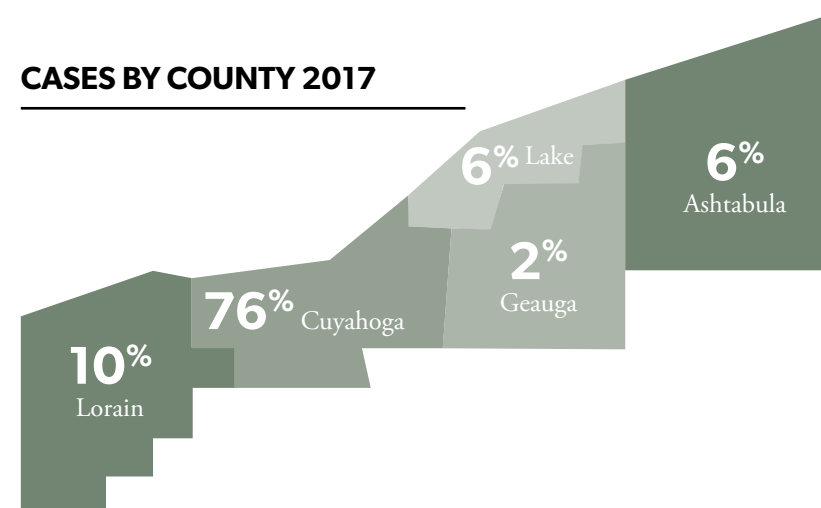
56% Black **34%** White **7%** Hispanic **3%** Identified as other races/ethnicities

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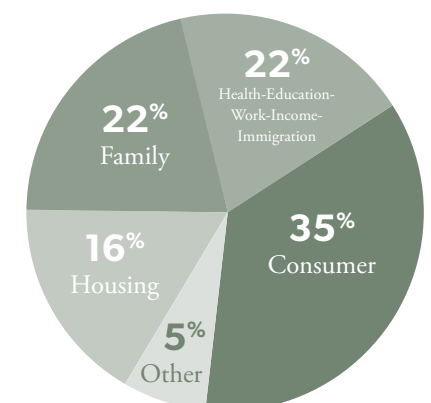
Our Staff
43 Attorneys
31 Support Staff

Our Supporters
3,434 Pro Bono Attorneys **648** Volunteer Attorneys Engaged
47 In-House Volunteers **229** Volunteer Law Students **1,949** Individual Donors

CASES BY COUNTY 2017



CASES BY PRACTICE 2017



The mission of The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland 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.

2017 Finances

REVENUE AND OTHER SUPPORT	2017	2016
Legal Services Corporation (LSC)	\$2,352,644	\$2,290,097
Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation (OLAF)	\$2,852,996	\$2,311,520
Donations and Private Grants	\$1,964,047	\$1,687,665
Donated Services	\$1,157,144	\$857,541
Other Government Grants	\$693,885	\$612,101
United Ways	\$371,942	\$325,075
Partner Agencies (contracts for legal services)	\$206,870	\$199,622
Other Income	\$498,013	\$270,060
TOTAL REVENUE	\$10,097,541	\$8,553,681
EXPENSES	2017	2016
Program Services	\$7,604,973	\$6,767,597
Support Services (administration & development)	\$1,586,647	\$1,370,136
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$9,191,620	\$8,137,733
Excess of Revenue over Expenditures	905,921	\$415,949
Beginning Net Assets	\$6,690,504	\$6,274,555
NET ASSETS as of year end	\$7,596,425	\$6,690,504
BREAKDOWN OF NET ASSETS	2017	2016
Unrestricted		
-Net Investment in Property	\$2,800,241	\$2,978,809
-Board Designated Endowment	\$18,230	\$15,188
-Board Designated Reserve Fund	\$4,183,172	\$3,292,297
Temporarily Restricted	\$429,407	\$289,085
Permanently Restricted	\$165,375	\$115,125
NET ASSETS	\$7,596,425	\$6,690,504

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We are grateful to members of our fifteen-year giving society (noted with a "+"), our ten-year giving society (noted with a "**"), and members of our five-year giving society (noted with a "*"). These donors and their consistent support deserve special recognition. We welcome our first-time givers (noted with a "#") to the Legal Aid Family. We honor the memory of deceased donors in italics.

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An estate attorney told Nicole her new home had a free and clear title, but a creditor threatened foreclosure with a \$31,000 lien. With the help of a Legal Aid volunteer lawyer, the creditor and estate attorney's malpractice carrier settled and Nicole doesn't owe a cent.

Julianne paid her rent on time, but her landlord refused to fix her daughter's caved-in bedroom floor and filed an eviction and sued for damages. Legal Aid showed Julianne was not at fault, and the judge dismissed the landlord's claim.

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Nancy had a mental disability and depended on a "rep payee" to manage her Social Security benefits. When the rep payee mismanaged her funds, Legal Aid helped get her money back.



When Agnes's surgery led to several months at a nursing home, she was shocked to learn Medicaid would not pay the \$50,000 bill. Legal Aid helped secure her coverage so she could move back home.



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After years of homelessness, Aurelia found an apartment close to her new job. When the landlord gave her conflicting information about what she owed, Legal Aid prevented her eviction and provided social work services so Aurelia could maintain housing stability.



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Young Jeremiah had frequent seizures, but Medicaid terminated his home care coverage. With Legal Aid's support and advice, Jeremiah's mom successfully regained the coverage at a state hearing.

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After 6-year-old Jill was put in foster care, she was suspended for hitting her classmate at school. Legal Aid requested the school evaluate Jill for special education, and a team of teachers helped Jill get back on track.



When 9th-grade Andrew, who had autism, was denied educational supports his first year in high school, Legal Aid negotiated with the school and secured special education with inclusion classes.

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Vietnam Vet Kevin's disability benefits were terminated because of the VA's faulty calculation, but Legal Aid helped get the overpayment debt waived and resume his benefits.

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After Kim's mechanic repaired her car with a hanger and tape, a Legal Aid volunteer advised her on taking the mechanic to small claims court. She won a refund and the mechanic fixed her car the right way.



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Celestine was fired from her job because her safety glasses slid off her face for a moment. Legal Aid represented her and helped her win unemployment compensation for termination without cause.



U.S. Veteran David kept a tidy unit and paid rent on time, but when the complex became infested by bed bugs, the landlord demanded hefty treatment costs. Legal Aid fought the unfair policy and ended the excessive fees.



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*Every effort was made to ensure the accuracy of
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