Alone we can do so little.

Together We Can do so much.

– Helen Keller
A collective commitment to justice is foundational to a democracy’s health, progress, and vitality. 2021 marked the second year of a modern global pandemic that challenged us all. As a justice-centered organization, Legal Aid expanded programs and outreach in COVID-safe ways while strengthening community connections. Together, we worked to ensure access to basic needs like shelter, safety, and economic security.

Alongside our clients, dedicated volunteers, generous supporters, and partner organizations, we secured justice for thousands of Northeast Ohioans. We achieved, learned, and grew from our work with people like Sarah (names changed for privacy), a single mother of four who was diagnosed with breast cancer during the worst months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Sarah knew continuing to work as a home healthcare provider would compromise her already weakened immune system. So, the single mother of four made the difficult decision to leave her job and seek a position that was less risky. Meanwhile, she got a new landlord who didn’t clearly outline how to make rent payments. The first time Sarah heard from him was when he filed for an eviction.

Fearing she would have to battle both cancer and homelessness, Sarah called Legal Aid for help. Her attorney worked quickly to secure Sarah more time to stay in her home and helped her apply for rent assistance funds. Thanks to the attorney’s assistance, Sarah was quickly approved for $3,024. The money went straight to her landlord, who dropped the eviction and discussed the procedure for future rent payments with Sarah. Finally, as part of negotiations, the attorney got Sarah’s landlord to agree to make much-needed improvements to the property.

In 2021, Legal Aid helped more than 17,300 people like Sarah through more than 6,600 cases—and we touched thousands more through our community outreach, education, and advocacy work.

As Helen Keller once said, “Alone we can do so littler. Together we can do so much.” Legal Aid is inspired by this call to action—and in 2021, we came together with our clients, partners, and community members to do so, so much.

Thank you for your part in this story of collective action. Together, we are making real and lasting change.

Sincerely,

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

## 2021 Finances

### REVENUE AND OTHER SUPPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal Services Corporation (LSC)</td>
<td>$3,048,953</td>
<td>$2,886,167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio Access to Justice Foundation</td>
<td>$2,518,115</td>
<td>$2,737,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations and Private Grants</td>
<td>$5,027,189</td>
<td>$5,498,881</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donated Services</td>
<td>$836,952</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Government Grants</td>
<td>$1,176,229</td>
<td>$996,227</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Ways</td>
<td>$999,412</td>
<td>$676,451</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partner Agencies (contracts for legal services with partner agencies)</td>
<td>$507,825</td>
<td>$317,267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Income</td>
<td>$885,813</td>
<td>$1,007,372</td>
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</table>

**TOTAL REVENUE**

$15,000,488  
$14,788,603

### EXPENSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Services</td>
<td>$12,488,116</td>
<td>$10,344,396</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support Services (administration &amp; development)</td>
<td>$2,238,603</td>
<td>$1,957,935</td>
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</table>

**TOTAL EXPENSES**

$14,726,719  
$12,302,331

### Excess of Revenue over Expenditures

$1,774,069  
$2,486,272

### Beginning Net Assets

$14,299,560  
$11,813,288

### NET ASSETS as of year end

$16,073,629  
$14,299,560

### OTHER INCOME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paycheck Protection Program</td>
<td>$1,500,300</td>
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### BREAKDOWN OF NET ASSETS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Without donor restrictions</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Undesignated</td>
<td>$2,410,188</td>
<td>$1,942,775</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Net Investment in Property</td>
<td>$3,031,753</td>
<td>$3,130,211</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Board Designated Endowment</td>
<td>$37,422</td>
<td>$27,273</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Board Designated Reserve Fund</td>
<td>$8,473,772</td>
<td>$6,679,737</td>
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</table>

$13,953,135  
$11,779,996

| Temporarily Restricted                        | $1,486,628      | $2,073,597      |
| Permanently Restricted                        | $633,866        | $445,967        |

### NET ASSETS

$16,073,629  
$14,299,560
IN 2021, LEGAL AID SERVED 17,115 PEOPLE THROUGH 6,655 CASES

LAST YEAR, LEGAL AID

Increased assets and income and reduced debt for our clients by more than $7.43 million

98% safety SECURED
93% evictions or involuntary moves PREVENTED
84% rent assistance SECURED
97% REMOVED barriers to education
88% REDUCED debt

CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

81.6% of households served
MAKE LESS THAN $25,000/year

353 cases involved U.S. VETERANS or ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY MEMBERS, impacting 727 PEOPLE

55.1% of all households helped included CHILDREN

58% of all cases were BLACK-LED HOUSEHOLDS

(60+) 17.7% of all clients were OLDER ADULTS

73% of all clients served were FEMALE

COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

94 neighborhood clinics
(76 virtual, 18 in-person)

65 education presentations and outreach events for community groups
(including 24 presented on Facebook Live)

125 educational presentations for social service providers

CASES BY COUNTY

83% Cuyahoga
8% Lorain
4% Lake
4% Ashtabula
1% Geauga

OUR PEOPLE

2021 Staff
64 Attorneys  /  51 Support Staff

2021 Supporters
1,656 Total Donors  1,469 Individuals  75 Law Firms/Corporations
73 Foundations  12 United Ways  27 Partner Agencies

CASES BY PRACTICE

5% Other
10% Health & Opportunity
15% Family
33% Economic Justice
37% Housing
In July 2020, the City of Cleveland became the first city in the midwest and only the fourth city in the United States to legislate a “right to counsel” in certain eviction cases – guaranteeing eligible low-income Cleveland tenants free legal representation in eviction hearings in Cleveland Housing Court. As a result, Legal Aid’s housing practice has grown tremendously.

Five years ago 17% of all Legal Aid cases were housing cases.

In 2021, 37% of all cases were housing cases.

Of all housing cases in 2021, 17% were because a Cleveland resident asserted their right to counsel.

Legal Aid staff doubled in recent years thanks to community investment

Together We Can achieve housing justice

An annually, up to 20% of Legal Aid’s matters are handled by pro bono attorneys.

Volunteer hours:
8,363 total volunteer hours contributed in 2021

➤ 5,033 hours contributed from 80 in-house volunteers (those providing extended service)

➤ 3,330 hours contributed from 278 volunteers (such as attorneys and law students helping at a Brief Advice Clinic or other community event)
2021 Legal Aid Supporters

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Richard Bedell and Elizabeth Grove
Mark Belasic *
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After becoming a single father, Darnell immediately became focused on providing his son Devon a stable, safe, and loving home. Devon had severe behavioral issues due to trauma he’d experienced in his short life, and taking care of him became such a priority for Darnell that he took some time off of work. When he couldn’t pay rent during COVID-19, his landlord tried to evict him. A Legal Aid attorney represented Darnell in the eviction case and helped him get rent assistance funds. Thanks to this skilled and timely assistance, Darnell won his case and he and Devon could stay in their home.
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Sasha is a single mother raising two young children on her own. After losing her job, her unemployment compensation suddenly stopped. Sasha had gone on some payment plans with her landlord, but eventually received an eviction notice. With help from her Legal Aid attorney, Sasha was able to receive CHN rent assistance which paid her back rent plus three months of future rent, and the eviction case got dismissed as well.
Cristina got a divorce from her abusive husband with help from a Legal Aid attorney. The judge on the case denied her husband visitation rights with her children, but a few months later, he tried again to get visitation by filing a new case. The Legal Aid attorney once again successfully represented Cristina and was able to protect the children from being around this abusive man.

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Tom, a widower raising two boys on his own, had relied on his job’s medical insurance to pay for the family’s health care. His employer penalized him for avoiding heavy physical labor while suffering a back injury and denied him the required two weeks of paid leave when he had COVID-19. Legal Aid’s advocacy led to a hearing decision that awarded Tom $6,645 in back-paid unemployment compensation and $3,900 in Pandemic Unemployment Assistance.
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At the age of 60, Kathy had to care for her infant great-grandchild, Mia, when the girl’s parents disappeared without a trace. When Kathy took Mia to MetroHealth Buckeye to get her medical care and vaccinations, a nurse referred her Legal Aid for help obtaining insurance and public benefits to cover these unexpected costs. A Legal Aid attorney and paralegal team helped Kathy enroll Mia in Medicaid for healthcare and obtain Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to help with the cost of food.
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