



The Legal Aid Society
of ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

*Annual
Report* 2017

Executive Message



The Legal Aid Society
of ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

Dear Friends,

We are pleased to report that 2016 was another great year for the Legal Aid Society of Rochester, NY (LASROC). Thanks to our generous supporters, dedicated attorneys and support staff, and committed community partners, we continued to expand our programs and provide more of our neighbors with the highest quality civil legal services.

We were able to add new attorneys and administrative support this year, and at 71 overall, we have the largest staff in LASROC's history. We also expanded into Ontario County in 2016, and now provide six counties with legal services in the areas of Family Law, Immigration, Education, Housing and Consumer Law.

As you will read later in this report, our Immigration Law unit saw a dramatic increase in its caseload over the past year, and we were fortunate to receive funding from the Office of Court Administration to add an attorney and advocate to better meet the increased need for services in this area. We are also excited to be providing additional services in Consumer Law. We have a renewed focus on helping our clients with credit repair, power of attorney, advance directives filings, and bankruptcies, services that have been very difficult for people with limited income to obtain in the past.

Finally, we were proud to celebrate our 95th anniversary in 2016 with a reception focused on the past, present and future. It was great to see many old friends, recognize the accomplishments of our current staff, and look forward to a future full of promise. You will find an excerpt from the impassioned speech of our special guest speaker, the Honorable Frank P. Geraci, Jr., Chief United States District Judge, on page 4, who spoke eloquently about the need for LASROC in our region.

Thank you for all you do to support LASROC in our mission to ensure our citizens have full and meaningful access to justice. We could not do it without you!

Sincerely,

Richard N. Chapman
Chairman, Board of Directors



Carla M. Palumbo
President and CEO

Programs and Accomplishments

CIVIL DIVISION

In 2016-17, the LASROC Civil Division provided legal representation in 4,424 cases. Our attorneys and staff obtained more than \$3,020,000 for the benefit of our clients through child support and maintenance awards, equitable distribution, preventing improper judgments and foreclosures, and assisting with debt relief.

Our **FAMILY LAW UNIT** provides legal representation to victims of domestic violence and litigants seeking assistance with divorce, custody, visitation and child support. The Family Law Unit provided direct representation in 2,240 cases in 2016 – 17.

Services are provided in Monroe, Wayne, Genesee, and Orleans County Family and Supreme Courts and were recently expanded to Ontario County. Our domestic violence legal services are provided in collaboration with Willow Domestic Violence Center and other domestic violence providers.

Our **HOUSING AND CONSUMER LAW UNIT** provides a continuum of housing and transactional services, including eviction prevention, foreclosure prevention, bankruptcy and consumer law, representation of first-time homebuyers, and wills and advance directives for seniors and homeowners. The Housing and Consumer Law Unit provided direct representation in 1,430 cases in 2016 – 17.

Our **IMMIGRATION LAW UNIT** provides legal representation and technical assistance in immigration-related matters to persons residing in a 32-county area of western New York. Representation includes cases involving asylum, permanent residence, removal defense, meritorious appeals, extension of immigration status, and work authorization, both at the main office and on site in migrant clinics. Services also include technical legal assistance on immigration law to indigent defenders representing individuals in criminal matters. The Immigration Law Unit provided direct representation in 424 cases in 2016 – 17.

Our **EDUCATIONAL LAW PROGRAM** provides youth and their families with legal representation and advocacy in education matters in Monroe, Genesee and Livingston counties. This includes representation for Committees on Special Education (CSE), school suspensions, reasonable accommodations for children with disabilities, eligibility for school enrollment, enrollment for homeless students, and access to appropriate school or community services. The Education law Program proved direct representation in 330 cases in 2016 – 17.

Our **ATTORNEY FOR THE CHILD UNIT** provides representation to children who may be the respondent in a Person In Need Of Supervision or Juvenile Delinquency matter, or the subject of a child abuse, neglect, custody, visitation or foster care petition. The Attorney for the Child is appointed by an order of a Family Court Judge. The Attorney for the Child Program provided legal representation in 4,522 proceedings before the Monroe County Family Court in 2016 – 17.

JUVENILE JUSTICE DIVISION

The Legal Aid Society



Excerpts from the Keynote Speech Hon. Frank P. Geraci, Jr.



Good evening. It is a pleasure to join you tonight for this celebration.

We are here tonight to celebrate this wonderful organization and reflect on the work performed by the dedicated staff.

The history of this agency is impressive. The leadership exhibited by the founders and carried out throughout the life of the Legal Aid Society demonstrates a true commitment to the very fundamental principles enunciated in our Constitution, “equal justice for all.”

The Legal Aid Society gives a voice to the poor. They open the doors to our courtrooms. Through their good works they uphold the fundamental promises of our Constitution.

Immigrants who travel to this country to escape persecution and seek a better life for their family can rest assured that the Legal Aid Society will assist them on their path and quest for citizenship.

The woman trapped in the cycle of domestic violence can finally live without fear because of the assistance provided by the staff of this organization in helping her secure an order of protection and provide her with the courage to break from an abusive relationship.

The child cowering in the corner of a cell in the juvenile detention center, petrified of being separated from his family, can have that fear alleviated once he recognizes that he has a capable, compassionate attorney advocating on his behalf.

The husband and wife fearing the loss of their home due to recent unemployment can sleep in peace learning that programs exist that can help them renegotiate their mortgage and save their home.

The family facing eviction from the only home they know can be assured that they will be represented by able counsel and can only be evicted for good cause.



Chief Judge, United States District Court Western District of New York

The special needs child can depend upon dedicated staff willing to pursue whatever legal action is necessary to be sure that programs exist to allow them to have access to educational and vocational programs that will allow them to live a productive life within whatever limitations they may have.

The homeless students who wander the streets wondering if anyone really cares can take comfort in knowing that there exists staff at the Legal Aid Society that truly do care and will help them find shelter.

The preamble of the Constitution reads in part as follows: “We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union ... establish justice.”

Discussing the Constitution, former Vice President and Senator Hubert Humphrey stated that the preamble contains important action words such as, “establish justice.” Justice just doesn’t happen; you have to work at it. It takes effort. You have to make it work.

The Legal Aid Society has made that effort for 95 years. You have not been a stagnant organization but rather a dynamic organization changing as needed to address the issues of the ages.

The Legal Aid Society is vibrant because of its willingness to partner with other agencies in order to leverage its ability to be effective. It is currently in partnership with the Willow Domestic Violence Center, the Volunteer Legal Services Program, the Rochester Housing Council at Pathstone, Empire Justice, Law New York, the City of Rochester, the County of Monroe, United Way and the Monroe County Bar Association.

We are a better community because of the dedication of all these organizations and individuals to the principles of equal justice for all. You make those words contained in our Constitution more than just some lofty ideal. You make them come alive.

Thanks for all you do.



Generations of Assistance

Many clients seeking assistance from the Immigration Unit of the Legal Aid Society of Rochester (LASROC) end up entangled in cases that span months, and often years. The Flores family is no exception, and LASROC has been a large part of this family's multi-generational story in America.

Eduardo Flores, originally a Mexican citizen, became a lawful permanent resident in the United States decades ago. The attorneys of the Immigration Program of LASROC helped Mr. Flores petition for his wife and daughters to join him in the United States. As is common with immigration cases, the extensive documentation and processing took many years, but eventually through the assistance of LASROC, Mr. Flores' family was able to come live with him as permanent residents in the U.S.

However, during the long processing time, life continued and Mr. Flores had become a grandfather; his two adult daughters each had children of their own. Not wanting to be separated from the children, the Flores family again sought the assistance of LASROC.

The staff of the Immigration program again assisted with the long application process and processing timeline to apply for the children to also be admitted to the U.S. The Flores sisters took turns caring for the children in Mexico and living and working in the U.S.

Yolanda Montalvo, the Immigration Program's Accredited Representative, said that LASROC's clients work incredibly hard to keep their families intact, and the attorneys and staff support them with what legal remedies are available. "One of our goals is to keep families together, and if they have been separated, we work to reunite them!"

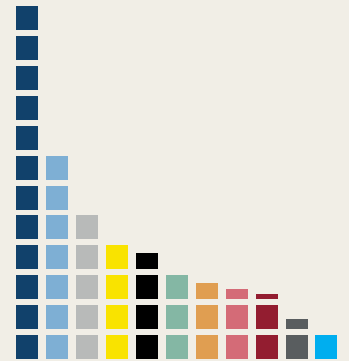
Earlier this year, the children were granted visas and came to the United States, and the entire Flores family was reunited. The family can look forward to continuing their lives, building their relationships, and creating a home here in the United States. They are very thankful for the work of our dedicated attorneys and advocates, and the generous people who support our work.



2016-2017 *Financial Statement*

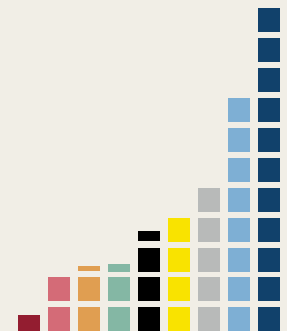
Revenue

NYS Government Grants (OCA,OAG, OILS, OVS, DOH, DOS, DCJS)	\$3,684,653
New York State Interest on Lawyer's Accounts	\$626,726
United Way of Greater Rochester, Monroe and Livingston Counties	\$274,312
US Dept of Justice - VAWA LAV	\$150,752
Miscellaneous/Interest/Other Income	\$147,435
Monroe County, City of Rochester	\$135,585
Case Fees	\$112,919
Fundraising & Special Events	\$78,784
US Dept of Justice - VAWA GTEA	\$75,078
Youth Bureaus - Livingston County	\$32,058
Foundations	\$17,600
TOTAL OPERATION REVENUE	\$5,335,902

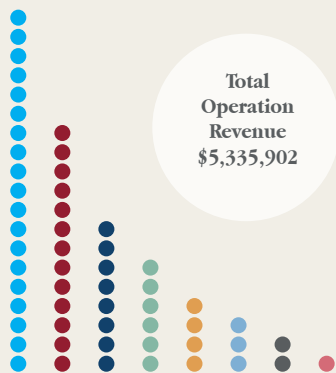


Expenses

Salary	\$3,751,483
Payroll Taxes and Benefits	\$821,121
Occupancy	\$216,706
Collaborative Partners	\$166,028
Travel, Training and Dues	\$124,641
Supplies and Postage	\$86,290
Contractual Expenses	\$86,084
Insurance, Recruitment, Other Miscellaneous Expenses	\$71,494
Specific Assistance on Behalf of Client	\$11,611
TOTAL FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES	\$5,335,458



How Our Funds Arrive



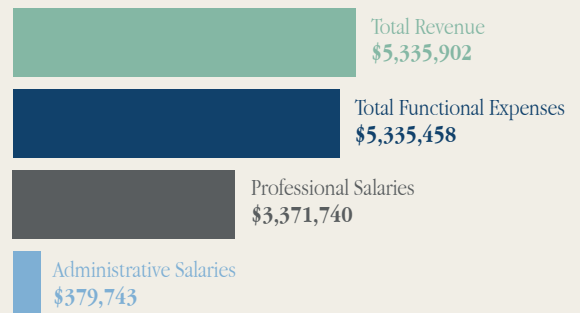
- 69.65%** NYS Government Grants (OCA,OAG, OILS, OVS, DOH, DOS, DCJS)
- 11.75%** New York State Interest on Lawyer's Accounts
- 5.14%** United Way of Greater Rochester, Monroe and Livingston Counties
- 4.24%** Fundraising & Miscellaneous Revenue
- 4.23%** US Dept of Justice - VAWA
- 2.54%** Monroe County, City of Rochester
- 2.12%** Case Fees
- 0.33%** Foundations

How We Use Our Funds



Program	Administration
\$4,733,992.41	\$601,465.44

Comparison of Total Revenue, Total Functional Expenses, How We Use Our Funds Professional Salaries and Administrative Salaries



Nature of Our Programs

- 38.23%** Family Law
- 34.95%** Attorney for Child
- 12.57%** Housing
- 9.24%** Immigration
- 5.01%** Educational Law Program



Our Board of Directors

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Tanya Conley, Esq. - *Supervisor of Appeals and Training*
Deral Givens, Esq. - *Supervising Attorney, Attorney For The Child Program*
Lindsey Jackson - *Supervising Social Worker, LMSW*

Our Mission

The Legal Aid Society of Rochester is a not-for-profit organization that provides direct civil legal services, including lay advocacy and related human services, to adults and children. We ensure that those who seek justice have an opportunity to receive a fair and full hearing. We obtain legal solutions that have a beneficial impact on our clients and the community. The Legal Aid Society of Rochester believes in the guarantees of due process and equal protection as promised in our State and Federal constitutions.

Our Vision

To ensure that those rights have real meaning, we will strive to provide a highly qualified and zealous advocate to anyone who cannot otherwise obtain representation in civil legal matters. We will create an environment in our community that values access to legal counsel, so every person is treated with dignity, equality, and fairness.



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