



# BOLD JUSTICE

Our Annual Report traditionally serves to memorialize the success of the previous year and report our financial position to the public. While we have reserved space in this document to honor the recent past, the events of 2020 require that we look and move forward with the zeal and commitment our time demands. We are walking through history, and like the century of Legal Aiders before us, we rise to meet these new challenges.

This Annual Report is a declaration of our **BOLD pursuit of justice** in the face of uncertainty and an acknowledgment of all those who have responded to the call.



*We dedicate this report to the staff, board, donors, and volunteers of Legal Aid Society who, in a time of great change and need, stand committed to our nation's highest ideal – "justice for all."*



# BLACK LIVES MATTER

## A Statement from our Board of Directors

At this pivotal moment in history, the Legal Aid Society stands ready to serve our community through the provision of free civil legal services to low-income individuals. As explained by Louisville's own Muhammad Ali, "Service is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth." We believe in service, we stand for justice, and we hold strong to the fundamental truth that equal justice under the law is not merely an aspiration, but a reality upon which all individuals should be able to rely.

There is no place for racism in our justice system. Equal justice under the law requires equal access, equal regard, and equal treatment for all. A justice system that applies the law unequally to some is a system devoid of justice for all. Through the eyes of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

Now and always, we say Black Lives Matter. As members of the legal community, it is our duty and honor to ensure that Black lives receive equal justice under the law. The loss of life in our community, our state, our country, and across the world as a result of racism is heart wrenching and unacceptable. It devastates the lives of individuals and their families and creates horrendous trauma, scarring our communities.

In 1921 the Legal Aid Society was formed on the fundamental principle of equal access to and justice under the law for all. For nearly a century,

# ES MATTER

we have fought for equal justice under the law. We represent individuals and non-profit groups every day in civil legal matters that are critical to their safety, stability, and health. Our fight for equal justice under the law must include engagement against racism. We have a duty to work every day to demand the best of our justice system, looking both inward and outward. While we advocate for equal justice for all, we also know from experience that justice is not always equal for all.

Until there is equal justice under the law for all, true justice is not accomplished. In the words of Dr. King, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." We will continue to serve our clients, our community, and our country during this pivotal moment in history. Black Lives Matter.

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# COVID-19 RESPONSE

[www.yourlegalaid.org/covid19responseandresources](http://www.yourlegalaid.org/covid19responseandresources)

## Virtual Environment

By March 15th, when stay-at-home orders took effect, 100% of Legal Aid Society's staff was working in a remote environment, ensuring a continuity of services for existing clients and preparing to serve the thousands of Kentuckians facing new and unprecedented legal challenges.



*Screenshot from statewide legal aid zoom meeting*

## Online Resources

With thousands of Kentuckians affected by the virus and hundreds of thousands experiencing unemployment or a reduction in income due to the economic downturn, Legal Aid Society put equal justice into action. We produced and shared legal resources and information online, in print, and over the phone as new rules and regulations rapidly changed. We launched a new resource page on our website, posted information on social media, and worked with media partners to disseminate accurate information about stimulus payments, unemployment insurance, domestic violence protections, and housing issues.

From the Great Depression through the Great Recession, Legal Aid Society has been on the front lines of justice, taking action to ensure our services meet the needs of our time. While the COVID-19 pandemic is ever-changing and there is still great uncertainty surrounding its impact, we continue to provide legal assistance to those most in need. We are here to help in the immediacy of the crisis and will be an essential part of our community's recovery.

## Your Questions, Answered

In April, Legal Aid Society issued a call for questions. Dozens of community members and organizations responded. In a series of videos, Legal Aid attorneys answered these general legal questions and responded to the community's concerns. As laws and regulations changed, Legal Aid presented detailed, accurate, and accessible information so that Kentuckians did not fall victim to fraudulent stimulus scams, lose their homes, or face the unemployment insurance process alone.

These videos can be viewed at [www.yourlegalaid.org/covid19responsesandresources](http://www.yourlegalaid.org/covid19responsesandresources).

## Top Five Series

Along with videos and other resources, Legal Aid created the "Top Five Series" to simply and efficiently get relevant legal information to Kentuckians in crisis and facing uncertainty. Since March, Legal Aid's website has been visited over 11,000 times by Kentuckians seeking legal resources and assistance.

# TOP FIVE

Things to know about stimulus payments during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 1** The government will send electronic deposits or paper checks of \$1,200 to individuals or \$2,400 to married couples, plus up to \$500 for each child under age 17.
- 2** You are eligible for the full payment amount if your adjusted gross income is below \$75,000 as an individual or below \$150,000 as a married couple.
- 3** You will not need to take any action if you receive Social Security retirement benefits or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits. Your stimulus checks will be sent the same way that you receive those payments.
- 4** Stay tuned! We are waiting on further guidance from IRS for those who normally do not file a tax return, including those on SSI and receiving VA disability benefits. The IRS may also place a link on its website to input your bank information so you do not have to wait for a paper check.
- 5** The stimulus check money is available through the rest of 2020. We regularly help with these kinds of cases at the Legal Aid Society, so please feel free to call (502) 584-1254.

While our physical office is closed to walk-ins, you can apply online for our services at [www.yourlegalaid.org](http://www.yourlegalaid.org) or call (502) 584-1254.



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The Marshall P. Eldred Award for Excellence was established by the late Hon. Boyce F. Martin to honor his long-time friend Marshall Eldred. The award is given annually to a Legal Aid Society attorney who has demonstrated excellence in advocacy.

The 2019 award was conferred on Leslie Clemons, an attorney in the Housing and Government Benefits Unit.

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# BOLD ACTION

The global pandemic and racial justice movement have elevated in our collective consciousness the great need for and the profound impact of civil legal aid. Since 1921, Legal Aid Society has worked to protect and uphold the American promise of prosperity and equity for all. Through individual advocacy, Legal Aid ensures fairness and transforms lives.

The pandemic and subsequent unemployment and loss of income have exacerbated many of the issues already facing our clients. Additionally, as the cry for racial justice grows louder, civil legal intervention is an important component of ensuring equality and equity in our courts. Based on recent events, Legal Aid has identified the following matters of focus: Eviction Prevention, Income Protection, and Family Stability.

## **Legal Aid attorneys and volunteers are working to ensure:**

- Families facing eviction do not lose their homes during a pandemic;
- Survivors of domestic violence quarantined with abusers have the representation they need to keep themselves and their families safe;
- Individuals understand the unemployment insurance process and receive legal assistance with denials and appeals;
- Kentuckians with mounting debt receive the legal intervention they need to avoid wage garnishment or predatory lending practices; and
- Kentuckians with criminal records receive their second chance through virtual expungement clinics, clearing their records and making them more competitive in an already competitive job market.

## **CALL TO ACTION: Together Lawyers Can**

Prior to the pandemic, the need for civil legal aid far outpaced available resources. With an expected surge of clients seeking services, Kentucky's legal aid programs came together to create Together Lawyers Can, an initiative designed to recruit and train volunteer attorneys to assist in areas of high need. Since the launch of the program in May, over 300 volunteer attorneys have answered the call.

**To learn more about our Volunteer Lawyer Program or how you can volunteer contact Tracey Leo Taylor at [ttaylor@laslou.org](mailto:ttaylor@laslou.org) or register today at [www.togetherlawyerscan.org](http://www.togetherlawyerscan.org).**



*Together Lawyers Can is  
generously supported by  
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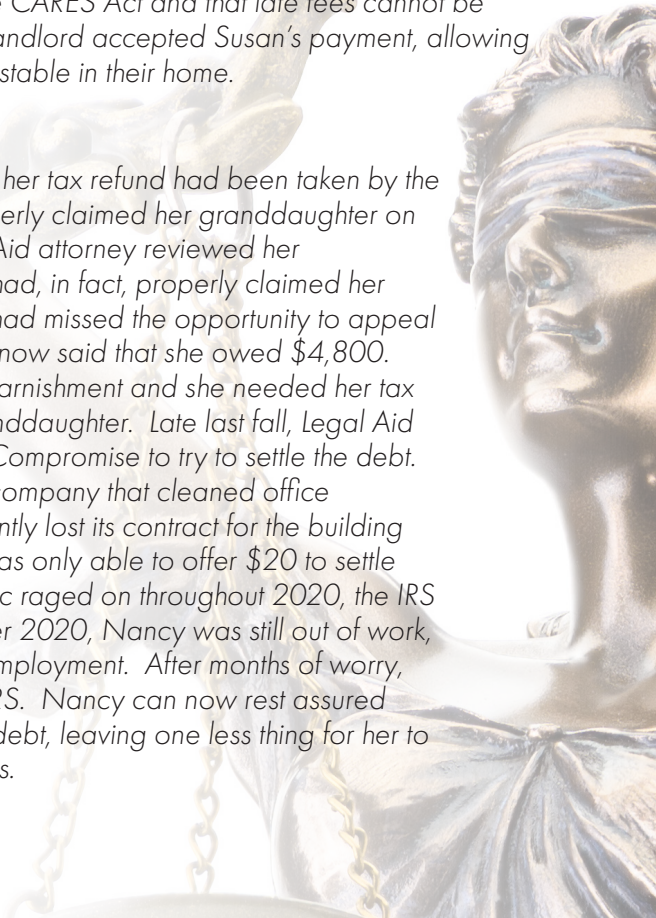


# This is what equal justice looks like...

“Padma” had been in a relationship with “John” for several years. Recent stay-at-home orders due to the coronavirus brought to light the fact that John was cheating on Padma and escalated tensions in their relationship. She asked him to move out of their apartment. One night as he was packing, John began a heated argument. John strangled Padma, hit her, and threw her up against the wall. She was terrified. Padma was finally able to get away and call the police from a neighbor’s phone. The police did not arrest John, which scared Padma. This was not the first time that John had hurt her, but this was the worst. Padma decided to file for a protective order. With the help of Legal Aid, Padma was fully prepared for her remote hearing over Zoom and obtained a protective order. Without the help of Legal Aid, Padma would have had to navigate remote court proceedings and face her perpetrator all alone.

“Susan,” a single mother of two small children, was trying her best to keep a roof over her family’s head when she lost her income due to the pandemic. She had enough money to pay for her rent but not enough to cover the late fees. She was devastated when her landlord would not accept her rent payment without the additional late fees. Fearing an eviction and with nowhere else to turn, Susan contacted Legal Aid Society. Her attorney stepped in and contacted the landlord informing him that he was violating the CARES Act and that late fees cannot be assessed during the pandemic. The landlord accepted Susan’s payment, allowing her and her children remain safe and stable in their home.

“Nancy” came to Legal Aid because her tax refund had been taken by the IRS. The IRS said that she had improperly claimed her granddaughter on her tax return for two years. A Legal Aid attorney reviewed her documents and realized that Nancy had, in fact, properly claimed her granddaughter on her taxes, but she had missed the opportunity to appeal the IRS audit determinations. The IRS now said that she owed \$4,800. Nancy was worried about a wage garnishment and she needed her tax refund to care for herself and her granddaughter. Late last fall, Legal Aid prepared and submitted an Offer in Compromise to try to settle the debt. Nancy worked as a custodian for a company that cleaned office buildings, and the company had recently lost its contract for the building that she cleaned. Out of work, she was only able to offer \$20 to settle her debt. As the COVID-19 pandemic raged on throughout 2020, the IRS began to review her offer. By Summer 2020, Nancy was still out of work, receiving only \$108 per week in unemployment. After months of worry, Nancy’s offer was accepted by the IRS. Nancy can now rest assured that she no longer owes this \$4,800 debt, leaving one less thing for her to worry about during these difficult times.



# Edward S. Bonnie Endowment Fund

The Edward S. Bonnie Endowment Fund was established in 2011 by Edward S. (Ned) and Cornelia (Nina) Bonnie as a resource for annual unrestricted funding to ensure our neighbors living in poverty always have access to civil legal aid.

In 2018, Mr. Bonnie passed away at age 88. His legacy to Legal Aid Society lives on through his wife, Cornelia, and through the Edward S. Bonnie Endowment Fund.

The fund is held at the Community Foundation of Louisville and is currently valued at over \$750,000. By 2021, Legal Aid Society's Centennial Anniversary, our goal is to raise additional funds to increase the endowment to \$1 million. To make a contribution to the fund, mail gifts to the Community Foundation of Louisville, 325 W. Main Street, Suite 1110, Louisville, KY 40202.


## Thank you to our Edward S. Bonnie Endowment Fund donors.

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# The Sixteenth Annual Brush, Bottle, & Barrel of the Bluegrass

Legal Aid Society held the Sixteenth Annual Brush, Bottle, & Barrel of the Bluegrass on April 26, 2019, at the corporate campus of Atria Senior Living. Martha Hasselbacher received the Fifth Annual Brown-Forman Spirit of Justice Award for her life-long commitment to equity and equal justice, especially for children and families. Chef Chad Welch of Atria Senior Living provided delicious hors d'oeuvres and purveyors of Kentucky wines, bourbons, and beers provided tastings of their products.



**MARTHA HASSELBACHER**  
**2019 Brown-Forman**  
**Spirit of Justice Award Recipient**

**The Brown-Forman Spirit of Justice Award was created to honor individuals who have made significant contributions to the mission of Legal Aid Society and who have had a lasting impact on ensuring justice in our community.**

## 2019 Brush, Bottle, & Barrel of the Bluegrass Host Committee

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Charles W. Dobbins  
Marshall P. Eldred  
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# Bottle, & Barrel of the Bluegrass

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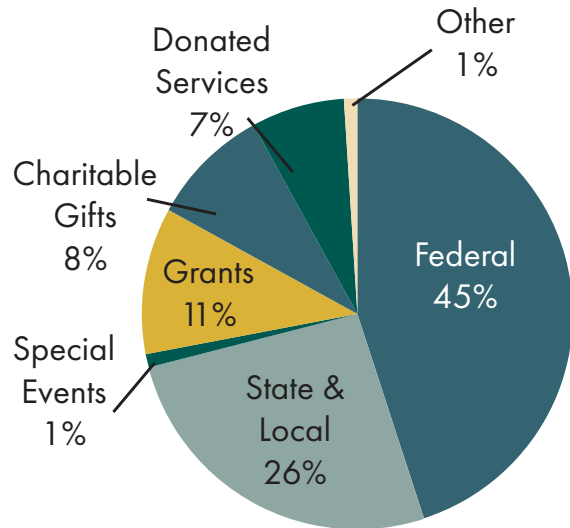
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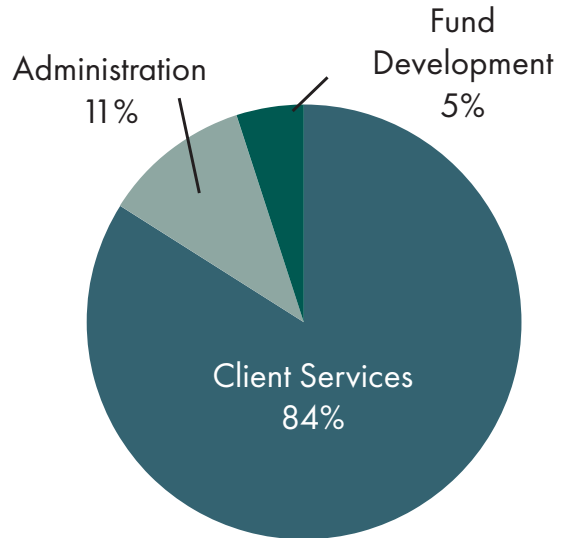
# 2019 IN REVIEW

Total Revenue	\$4,653,515
Total Expenses	\$4,722,830
Total Net Assets	\$3,414,822

## Revenue



## Expenses



## Legal Aid Society Staff

Neva-Marie Polley Scott,  
Executive Director

### Management Team

Kristie Clark, Director of Administration  
Andrea Doyle, Executive Assistant  
Meredith Greenwell, Associate Director of Development  
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Tiffany Williams, Social Worker

# 5,059

total cases  
closed in 2019

## 4,564

clients

## 4,941

children

## 692

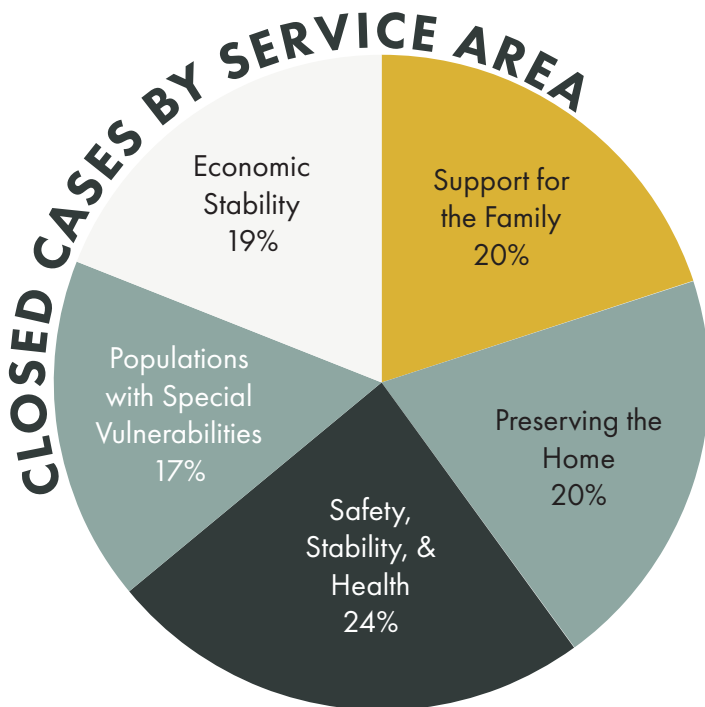
seniors

## 288

Veterans

## 1,265

volunteer hours



### **Intake and Limited Services**

Jonathan Braden, Paralegal  
Beverly DuVall, Paralegal  
Ashley Gray-Ziba, Staff Attorney  
Ashkan Rezai, Paralegal

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