The mission of the Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati is to resolve serious legal problems of low-income people, to promote economic and family stability, and to reduce poverty through effective legal assistance.

Dear Friends:

Legal Aid helps make the justice system fair and accessible to all, especially the most vulnerable in our society. By helping people secure housing, income, family safety, and educational opportunity, Legal Aid gives individuals the opportunity to help themselves achieve economic and family stability.

We are the primary legal resource, partnering with local nonprofits, serving those living in poverty. Our clients and communities know they can count on Legal Aid to consistently provide critical legal services.

Legal Aid receives close to 25,000 requests for assistance each year, but we cannot serve everyone who calls. To extend our reach, we’ve created innovative programs with high-impact strategies that are delivered in collaboration with community organizations who also serve our client base.

To sustain these key partnership programs, in late 2014, we initiated the Change a Life, Strengthen the Community Campaign with a goal of raising $1,000,000. We are pleased to announce that this campaign has generated $1,177,608 through June 30, 2015.

In addition, our current four-year Strategic Plan was approved by our Board of Trustees in December. This followed a year of outreach to determine shifts in client service needs and to obtain feedback from clients and partner organizations. From this research, we refined our client service priorities. Most of our core work remains the same, but there are some significant updates for each area of law that we cover.

For example, we are increasing the help we offer to working clients who may be in danger of wage or bank account attachments as the result of consumer debts or tax problems. We are launching a Low Income Taxpayer Clinic (LITC) with significant pro bono support from the Volunteer Lawyers Project. We are also reemphasizing representation of tenants and tenant groups to improve neighborhoods and save the homes of families who live in subsidized rental housing. And, we are responding to the legal needs of unaccompanied immigrant children who have recently entered the United States. Our service area has the highest number of these children in Ohio.

Thank you to all our donors, funders and partner organizations who make possible Legal Aid’s client service work. You have made a huge difference to our efforts to provide access to justice for the residents of Cincinnati and Southwest Ohio.

Mary Asbury
Executive Director

Earle Jay Maiman
President

Photos by MarkBowenMedia.com
Clearing Legal Hurdles to Employment

This program, originally established in partnership with Cincinnati Works, offers legal assistance to low-income job seekers attempting to overcome a wide range of barriers to obtaining and retaining employment. Job training and placement agencies report that 40% of participants experience barriers to employment that Legal Aid can resolve. Now, over 30 job training programs refer men and women to Legal Aid when they are struggling to maintain or gain employment.

Legal Aid helps job seekers resolve a multitude of problems. They include threatened eviction or foreclosure, loss of a driver’s license, the expungement of a minor criminal record, an unstable child custody arrangement, or concerns with loss of medical coverage, child care subsidy, or other benefits.

In 2014, our staff assisted 653 individuals with comprehensive employment and benefits assistance, including crafting legal resolutions for barriers to employment. As a result, these individuals gained the opportunity to succeed in their job searches and become gainfully employed, contributing members of the community.

Veterans Assistance

Legal Aid has a long-standing emphasis on serving those who have served our country. We have an Equal Justice Works/AmeriCorps Veterans Fellow in our office dedicated to addressing veterans’ legal needs. Outreach and education initiatives are important components of our legal advocacy. We partner with the Veterans Administration and Pro Seniors to conduct the Cincinnati Veterans Legal Assistance Project. This monthly legal clinic assists veterans with issues such as eligibility for VA benefits, long-term care, public benefits, and landlord/tenant problems. We also partner with many job training and placement agencies that help veterans find work, get work-ready, or get the education and training needed for employment success, through the TriState Veterans Community Alliance.
Child HeLP

Child HeLP is an innovative medical-legal partnership between the Legal Aid Society and Cincinnati Children’s Hospital. Legal Aid’s on-site Child HeLP advocates strive to improve the well-being of low-income children by providing free, comprehensive legal services to resolve obstacles that adversely impact child health and family stability.

The only program of its kind in southwest Ohio, this partnership recognizes the link between poverty and poor health. It has created systemic changes in how doctors approach pediatric medicine and serves as a national model for integrated care.

Since its inception, Child HeLP has helped over 8,300 children and 4,200 adults and has provided training for more than 400 pediatric residents and social workers. In 2014 alone, the Child HeLP team resolved 592 cases helping over 2,300 children and family members.

LawLink: Family Safety and Stability

The LawLink initiative offers comprehensive legal services to individuals struggling to recover from domestic violence. Legal Aid collaborates with partners such as the YWCA, the Alliance for Immigrant Women, Su Casa, and Women Helping Women. By breaking legal and financial ties with abusers, these clients can move towards economic self-sufficiency and gain the ability to create positive and safe home environments for themselves and their children. Legal Aid steps in when our domestic violence clients are most vulnerable. Through legal representation, we help them help themselves so they are no longer victims, but survivors.

Another vulnerable population is the focus of our immigration practice: unaccompanied immigrant minors. Southwest Ohio has seen a sharp increase in the number of these children over the past year and our attorneys work to obtain relief for them from abuse, neglect, or abandonment by a parent.

Our LawLink program also conducts Domestic Violence and Civil Protection Order Clinics for survivors in partnership with the University of Cincinnati College of Law, and engages over 200 pro bono attorneys through the Volunteer Lawyers Project. In 2014, Legal Aid assisted over 1,200 women and children in their pursuit of safety and security.
Stabilizing Neighborhoods Through Secure Housing

Legal Aid continues to lead community-wide efforts to revitalize neighborhoods through reduction of neighborhood blight, successful advocacy to preserve and improve affordable rental housing, support for neighborhood revitalization, and continued foreclosure-prevention activities. This program serves the communities of Cincinnati, Hamilton, and Middletown. Within Cincinnati, we primarily focus on the neighborhoods of Price Hill, Avondale, Walnut Hills, Northside, Westwood, and Camp Washington.

In 2014, Legal Aid partnered with the Land Bank and City of Cincinnati Solicitor’s Office to develop a “Good Samaritan” ordinance that allows community councils, community development corporations, and other city-approved entities to act as agents for the City to abate vacant, blighted properties by cutting the grass and removing trash without risking liability. It also strengthens enforcement of code violations.

We also work with the City to enforce the Vacant Foreclosed Property Registration Ordinance which requires financial institutions to register properties in foreclosure with the city and to be responsible for their condition. Legal Aid of Southwest Ohio, LLC attorneys worked with City Council to pilot the ordinance in five target neighborhoods, and successfully advocated for its expansion to the rest of the city in 2014.

Legal Aid helped many individual homeowners prevent foreclosures and modify their loans to keep them affordable. In one foreclosure case, we helped a homeowner who was struggling due to a reduction in income after a divorce. Mr. Smith wanted to keep his home because it was where his children had always lived and went to school, but he could not afford the mortgage payments on his own. Legal Aid assisted Mr. Smith in obtaining an affordable loan modification which allowed him and his children to remain in their home.
Education Advocacy: Supporting School Success

This innovative program is designed to give at-risk children the opportunity to attend school, benefit from needed special education and mental health services, and make academic progress. Children in foster care and children caught up in the juvenile justice system have a higher rate of mental health and special education needs which put them at greater risk for problems in school. School stability and success open critical doors for a child and can provide a means to overcome poverty.

Our program provides a combination of individual legal assistance and systemic advocacy to make educational achievement a priority for these vulnerable children. An important component is effective collaboration with schools and public systems that also impact a student’s educational outcomes. Two major initiatives fall under this umbrella:

**Kids in School Rule!** ensures that education is a high-priority for children in foster care who are particularly at risk. KISR! promotes individual education stability and success for youth in the custody of Hamilton County Job and Family Services, who attend the Cincinnati Public Schools.

- Legal Aid’s advocacy has led to all Cincinnati Public Schools having KISR! liaisons.
- All KISR! seniors graduated from high school in 2012 and 2013. 92% did so in 2014.
- No KISR! children have been expelled in the past three years.

**TeamChild** is a partnership with the Hamilton County Juvenile Court and public schools. Youths in the Juvenile Justice system are referred to TeamChild when they are having problems in school or facing other barriers to family stability. TeamChild advocacy ensures that these children receive the services and support they need, so they stay in school and are educated. This reduces the likelihood that they will get in more legal trouble but also gives students opportunities for a better future.

- Our TeamChild results show a 92% reduced risk of reoffending, as a result of Legal Aid’s services.

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**Volunteer Lawyer Of the Year Award**

We congratulate Montgomery Rennie and Jonson who took 25 VLP cases to celebrate the firm’s 25 year anniversary. Doug Rennie accepted the award on behalf of the firm and in memory of partner, Steve Brewer who led the firm’s pro bono efforts.
Our Clients

Services Provided

- 2% Protecting the Consumer
- 10% Other Types of Assistance
- 26% Securing Housing and Helping the Homeowner
- 34% Helping Children and Families
- 28% Helping People Obtain and Maintain Employment and Healthcare

Household Income

- 4% $30,001 – $40,000
- 2% $40,001 & above
- 11% $20,001 – $30,000
- 56% Below $10,000
- 27% $10,001 – $20,000

Individual Case Services January – December 2014

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<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>Requests for Service</th>
<th>Sent Written Materials</th>
<th>Made External Referral</th>
<th>LAS Case Open</th>
<th>VLP Case Open</th>
<th>Pending LAS &amp; VLP</th>
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Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati/Legal Aid Society of Southwest Ohio, LLC/Volunteer Lawyers Proye
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Thank you to GE Foundation and Mary’s Foundation for matching gifts. The Legal Aid Society appreciates the generosity of donors who contributed to the Annual Fund from February 1, 2014 – January 31, 2015. Every effort has been made to list donors and respect anonymous contributions as requested. Please forgive any unintended errors and notify us of changes by calling (513) 362-2815. All private donation income is used in support of our mission, and in accordance with Legal Services Corporation and other funder regulations.

* Indicates Fund of The Greater Cincinnati Foundation. + Indicates contribution designated for Child HELP program.
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University of Cincinnati College of Law
Volunteer Lawyers for the Poor Foundation
Xavier University

* Legal Services Corporation supports only the activities of the Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati.

Statements of Financial Position

2014 Operating Revenue
Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation.......................... $1,451,532
Legal Services Corporation*............................... 1,606,564
Government Grants & Contracts.......................... 1,431,638
United Way...................................................... 606,140
Contributions................................................... 223,425
Foundation Grants............................................ 744,040
Rental Income................................................... 232,012
Other............................................................. 758,012
Total Operating Revenue .................................... $7,053,363

2014 Functional Expense
Housing & Consumer Program.................................. $1,255,434
Employment & Benefits Program............................... 1,211,972
Family & Domestic Violence Program......................... 1,415,104
Children & Education Program............................... 1,539,978
General Civil & VLP........................................... 549,639
Management & General....................................... 750,776
Fundinging....................................................... 107,229
Rental Property.................................................. 251,698
Total Expenses ................................................. $7,081,830

Assets
Cash and cash equivalents...................................... $767,307
Cash held in trust for clients.................................. 56,874
Investments....................................................... 3,117,401
Grants and Contracts receivable.............................. 385,368
Contributions receivable, net................................ 549,179
Other accounts receivable.................................... 0
Property and equipment, net.................................. 3,518,841
Other............................................................. 70,920
Total Assets..................................................... $8,465,990

Liabilities
Accounts payable................................................. 45,628
Accrued annual leave........................................... 282,765
Assets held for others.......................................... 56,874
Long-term debt................................................... 1,619,608
Other accrued liabilities...................................... 216,152
Total Liabilities................................................ 2,221,027

Net Assets
Unrestricted
Operating......................................................... $3,582,248
Board designated............................................... 1,129,846
Temporarily restricted........................................... 887,773
Permanently restricted......................................... 645,096
Total Net Assets............................................... $6,244,963

The Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati and its affiliate the Legal Aid Society of Southwest Ohio, LLC provide civil legal services in seven southwest Ohio counties: Hamilton, Butler, Clermont, Brown, Warren, Clinton, and Highland. Legal Services Corporation supports only the activities of the Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati. The Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati provides staff support for the Volunteer Lawyers Project (VLP). This Annual Report provides information about both Legal Aid Societies and the VLP.
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Kelly Malone
Donita Parrish
Virginia Conlan Whitman

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Terry Willacker

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Peter Wright

LEGAL AID NAMED OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY PARTNER

Senior Attorney Stephanie Moes and John Schrider, Director of the Legal Aid Society of Southwest Ohio, LLC, are pictured accepting the Outstanding Community Partner Award on Legal Aid’s behalf from Price Hill Will in January. “John and Stephanie have been true partners in our efforts to improve the housing stock of our community and better the lives of our residents,” said Ken Smith, Executive Director of Price Hill Will, in a letter to Mary Asbury, Legal Aid’s Executive Director. “They are tireless advocates for those who are disadvantaged and/or facing injustice and we simply could not have accomplished as much as we have without them.”

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Lanese Layne
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Molly Russell
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Amanda Toole

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