

Annual Report

2022

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Our Mission

Our mission is to provide no-cost legal services to the most vulnerable in Central Florida and to help them protect their families, health, and livelihood.

Our Core Values

Our core values drive the decisions we make, how we work, and exemplify our staff, volunteers, and partnerships. Our mission requires us to be a PILLAR in the communities we serve.

PILLAR

PASSIONATE – We eagerly fight for meaningful causes, no matter how challenging. Our enthusiasm for justice influences others to join in making change in our community through their service, practice, and charity.

INTEGRITY – We are committed to honesty and professionalism in all our interactions. Trust is the foundation for the integral role we fill in our community's system of justice.

LEVERAGE – As a team, we make a difference in people's lives. We bring all our resources to the table to ensure that the clients feel supported, empowered, and heard.

LEADERSHIP – We are leaders working to find ways to make our communities a better place to live. High standards are in our blood, and we pursue excellence in our practice and partnerships.

ADAPTABLE – We see opportunities to increase our impact. We listen to all ideas, embrace change, and see continuous improvement in order to achieve better outcomes for our clients, organizations, and our community.

RESPECT – We treat everyone with professionalism, dignity, and respect. We keep our promises and embrace diversity, communicate with empathy, and foster positivity in all we do.

Our Programs



Children's Rights & Special Education — Advocate for students to increase services, reduce suspensions, and expulsions, protect the rights of those with disabilities and combat discriminatory practices for disability, race, and gender.



Community Economic Development — The project assists nonprofits and small businesses across the State of Florida in their community development activities by assisting with formation, governance, and various business activities.



Consumer — Works to protect consumers' rights and ensure that they are treated fairly and justly in their financial transactions and interactions with businesses.



Fair Housing — Combats housing discrimination based on federal, state, and local laws related to housing sales, rentals, advertising, lending, construction, and insurance underwriting on the basis of all the protected classes.



Family — Prioritizes assistance to survivors of domestic violence to promote family stability including injunctions for protections to ensure immediate safety and additional family cases to address long term family needs.



Helpline — Navigating clients through various legal issues by providing holistic advice and brief services.



Housing — Focuses on renter's rights, reverse mortgage foreclosure prevention, and other housing related issues with the goal of preserving the client's right to remain in their home safely.



Housing and Consumer Counseling — Provides the education, tools, and guidance to reach the goals of each individual and help them identify obstacles, credit improvement, savings, and sustainability by changing behaviors.



Medical Legal Partnership — Provides legal help that removes barriers to good health and health care access.



Older Adults — Assist seniors and relative caregivers with matters that impact their healthcare, housing, safety, and independence.



Public Benefits — Helps to secure and maintain benefits that create stability for medical, income, and food assistance.



Pro Bono — Expanding our capacity to serve our clients and community through our dedicated Pro Bono Attorneys, who assist with matters that support our firm's mission across all of our priorities.



Real Property Rights Protection — Preserving housing by transferring/clearing title to real property and enhancing generational wealth through estate planning.



Veterans — Serving veterans and their families by assisting with military discharge upgrades, appeals on VA Service Connected Disability denials and reductions, and appeals on survivor benefit claims.



MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Jeff Harvey, CEO

The lawyers, staff, and volunteers of Community Legal Services continue to surpass my expectations and surprise me with their impact. 2022 was a year of sustained growth and responsiveness to the community's needs. It began with emergency rental assistance programs receding and the wave of backlogged eviction cases breaking. Despite these challenges, we connected with thousands of tenants, preventing evictions and helping them secure over \$3.9 million in rental assistance.

While our area was less impacted than others, CLS led the State in response efforts to Hurricane Ian by coordinating and executing legal aid's first-ever mutual aid system with Legal Services of Greater Miami and Legal Services of North Florida. The success of this effort is now being replicated across the State to prepare for future storms. We staffed seven disaster recovery centers for several weeks, and we led the rescue/response effort to assist the former residents of Good Samaritan Village in Kissimmee, a community of seniors abandoned by the community they called home. Our efforts were recognized by Governor DeSantis with an award of an unsolicited \$600,000 grant from Volunteer Florida.

CLS continues to break new ground in legal aid marketing. In 2022, our website received more visitors in six weeks than all 2019 and our media and press coverage increased over 60%. I believe we are poised to continue to increase awareness of the benefit of legal services plus additional resources as more people learn the importance of organizations like Community Legal Services.

As you review our accomplishments from 2022, please consider reaching out to volunteer, taking a case, or donating. The tremendous support we received in 2022 contributed, in part, to our success with record numbers of volunteers, donors, partnerships, and collaborative projects. The community needs our help more than ever, and we certainly could use yours.

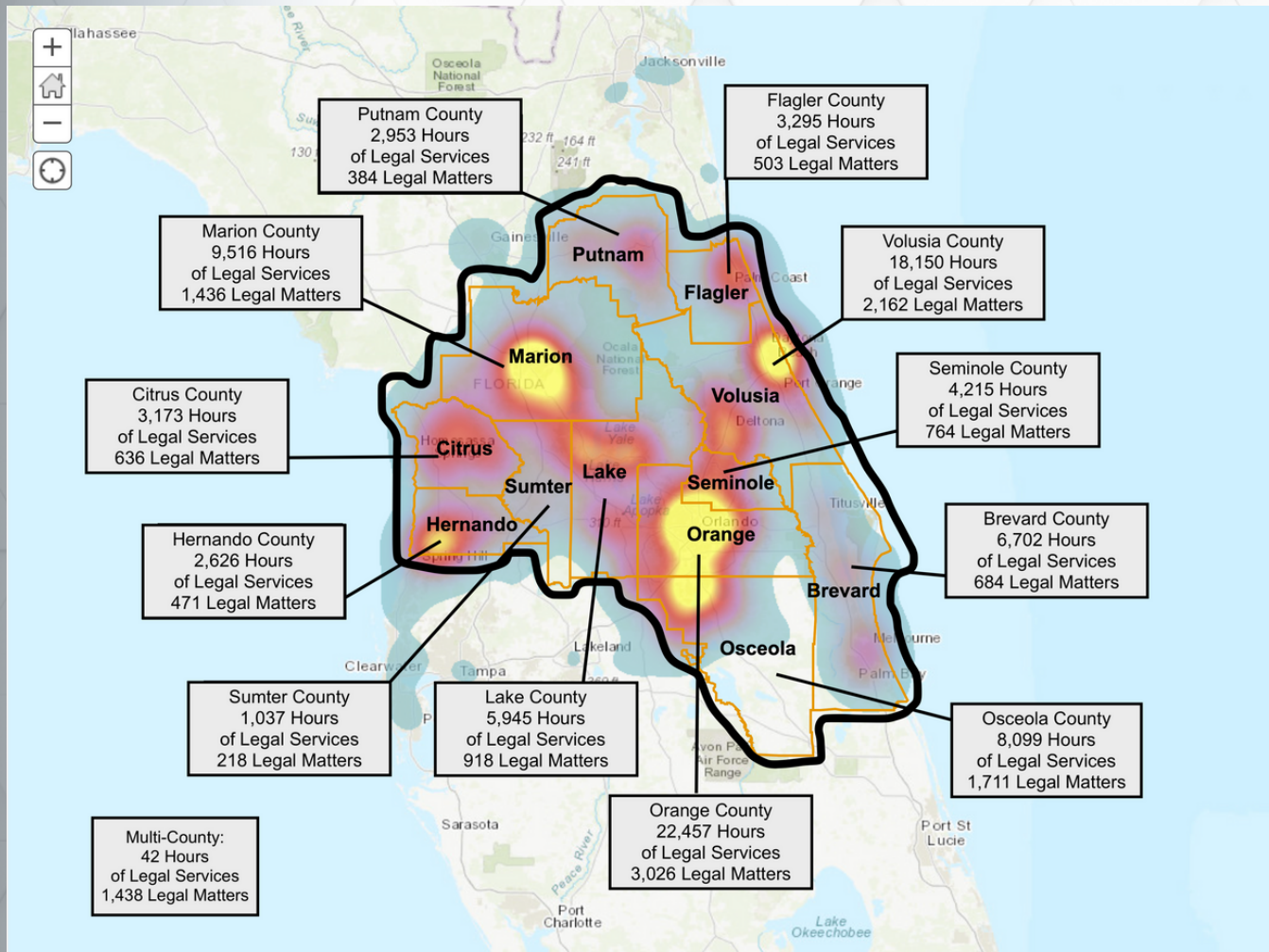
Together, we can ensure there is "Legal Aid for All."



Jeff Harvey, CEO, delivers a speech to senior citizens who were recently displaced from Good Samaritan Village in Kissimmee, Florida.

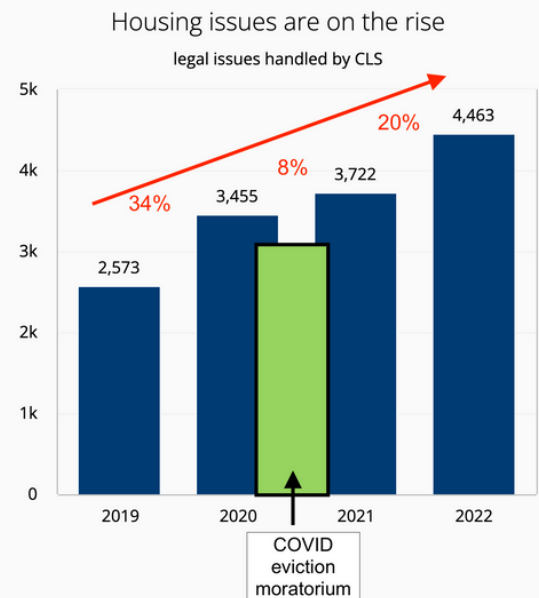
Sincerely,
Jeff Harvey, CEO

SERVICE AREA - 12 COUNTIES



From 2020 to 2022, median rent prices increased by over 30% across the state.* Someone who makes \$10 per hour has to work 86 hours per week to afford a modest one-bedroom.

*Florida Policy Institute,
<https://www.floridapolicy.org/posts/floridas-affordable-housing-crisis>



MAKING AN IMPACT



Handled 14,609 legal issues for clients



6,552 survivors of domestic violence protected with legal services like injunctions, divorce and housing.



Legal assistance provided 9,296 children with basic needs



Improved the quality of life for 2,716 seniors through CLS programs providing social security benefits, estate planning, and healthcare



942 veterans assisted with housing, public benefits, and other legal matters



Protected 290 individuals with a disability from discrimination

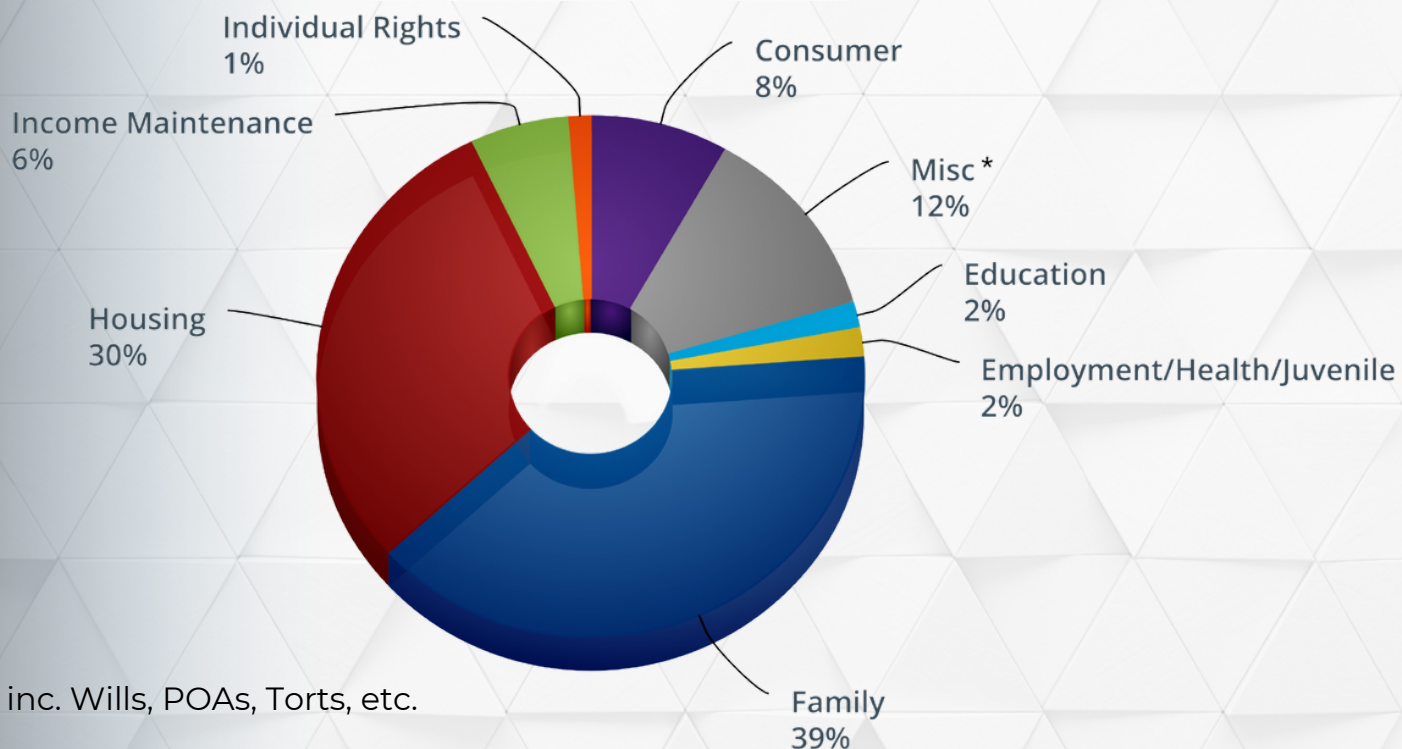


Educated 11,658 people at 387 in-person outreach events within our 12 counties

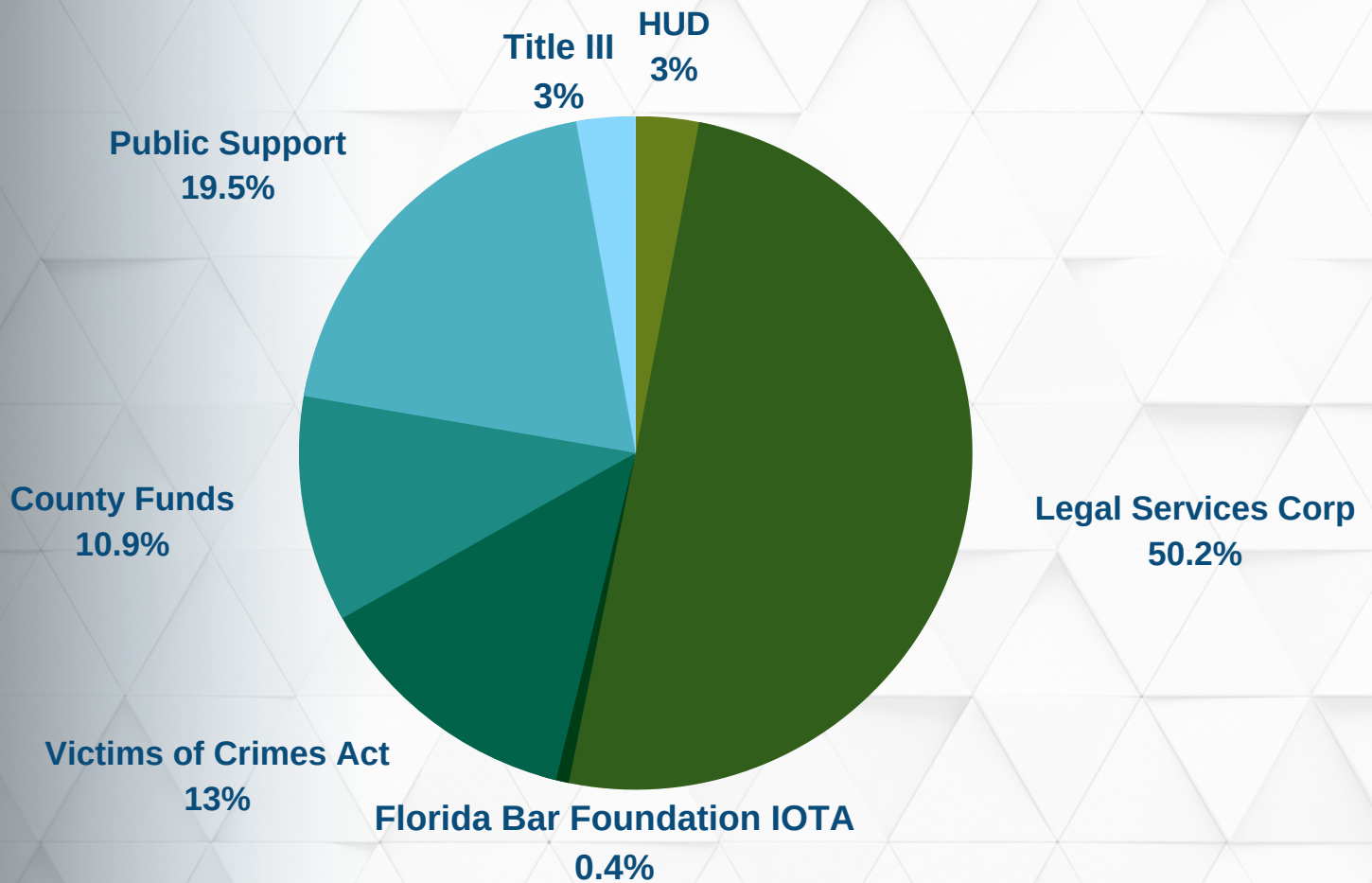


Hosted 26 Emergency Rental Assistance/Legal Advice Clinics with community partners which helped secure \$3.9M in rental assistance

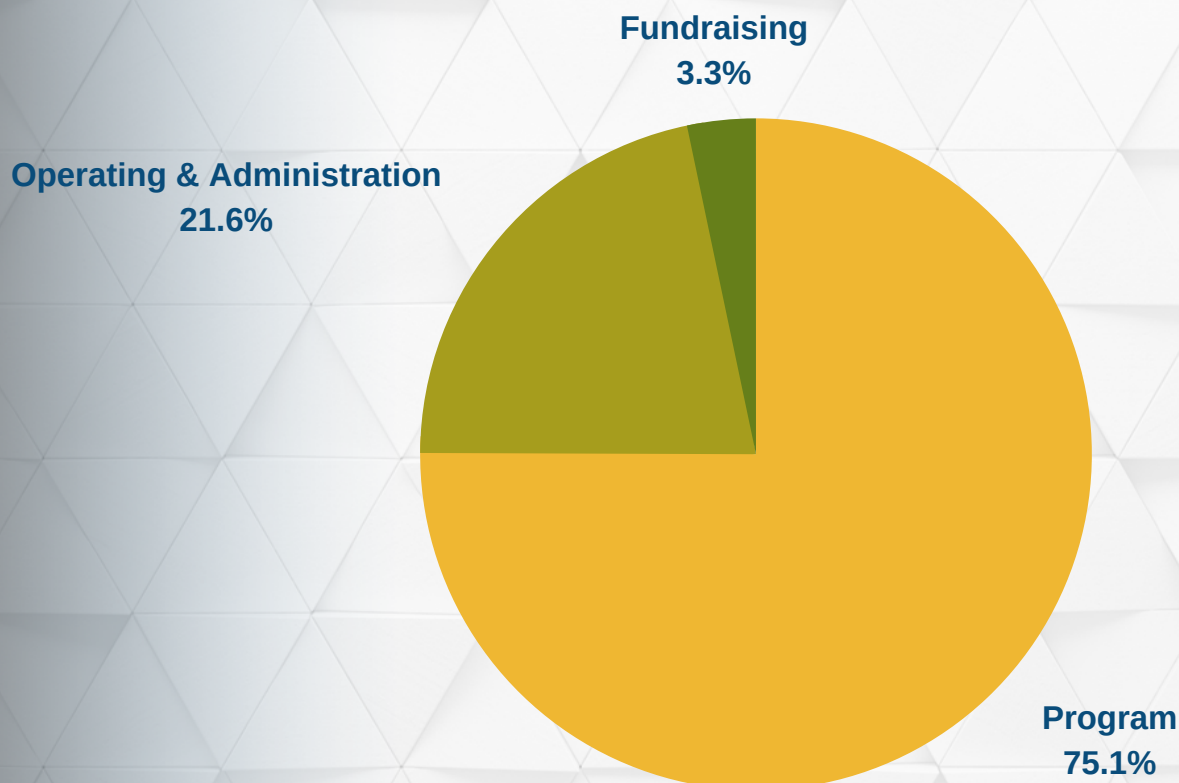
Areas of Law



2022 REVENUE- \$12,210,827



2022 EXPENSES- \$12,270,606



With \$12,270,606
spent in 2022, we
provided over 200%
economic value to our
clients.

59

Number of
Attorneys

12.2

Average Years of
Attorney Practice

86,094

Total Case/Matter
Hours Spent by
Attorneys

41,658

Total Case/Matter
Hours Spent by
Non-Attorneys

\$275



\$50



\$25,758,750

Market value of our legal work.

DISASTER RESPONSE OUTREACH



CLS provided information onsite to over **4500** people across Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC) in Brevard, Lake, Orange, Osceola, Putnam, Seminole, and Volusia counties.

Within Osceola County, we worked with county and non-profit leaders to set up a town hall meeting with residents.



Partnering with Legal Services of North Florida, we were able to provide assistance using their "Justice on the Block" mobile unit as well as setting up a temporary office at a motel where many of the residents were relocated.

CLS was recognized for our work by Governor DeSantis with a \$600K grant from the Volunteer Florida Foundation to help victims of Hurricanes Ian and Nicole.

BRINGING ATTENTION TO THE BIGGEST PROBLEMS IN OUR COMMUNITY



1.13 B

people who saw our campaigns.

1.13 k

mentions across media platforms.

61%
increase
IN MENTIONS OVER 2021

SENIOR VILLAGE

Pro-Bono Lawyers Help Good Samaritan Society Kissimmee Village Evacuees

BY CHERYN STONE | OSCEOLA COUNTY
PUBLISHED 6:27 PM ET OCT. 31, 2022



2022 DIGITAL IMPACT



Over 2 Million video views on YouTube



Reach of 160,000



Engagement rate 6X higher than Twitter's average.

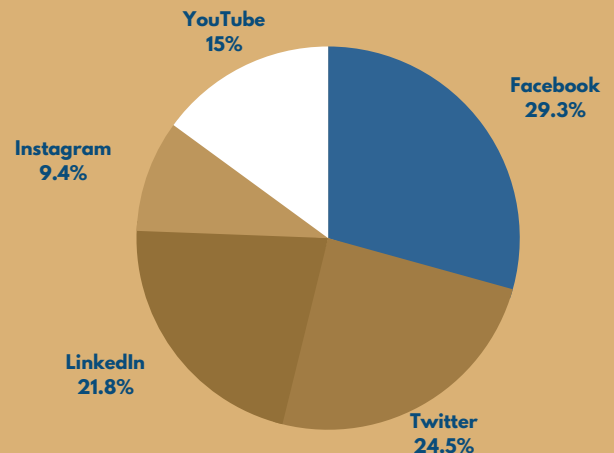


Over 300,000 used our Legal Self Help Library at www.clsmf.org



Averaging 4.5 self-help pages per user

2022 SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS



2022 PRO BONO ATTORNEY APPRECIATION

Airing on:



CLS Pro Bono team works alongside our local bar associations to provide legal assistance in civil legal matters to low-income clients within our service area.

In 2022, we began recognizing some of our most active pro bono volunteers with TV segments on WFTV's Daily Two.



- **229 Attorneys volunteered over 2,658 service hours, assisting 739 clients.**
- **CLS hosted 84 legal advice clinics, connecting 413 clients with volunteer lawyers.**

PEER ACADEMY

WHAT IS THE CLS PRO BONO PEER ACADEMY?

Our Peer Academy has been designed by volunteers for volunteers to prepare you to effectively represent clients in various areas of the law. Each Academy module will be a discreet area of law.



The program consists of live remote training, dedicated mentors, CLE's, and other resources to assist volunteer attorneys in learning and practicing a new area of law and networking with judges and other professionals.

Participation Benefits

- Learn a new area of law
- Receive CLE training and access to experts and peers
- Grow your practice
- Gain practical learning experiences with real cases and clients
- Work with a mentor to support your education and casework
- Attend live trainings, join networking opportunities, and receive recognition
- Satisfy your professional pro bono responsibility

What We Ask of You

- Take a full representation case (assigned during the Academy module)
- Attend live monthly trainings
- Complete two clinics or brief service engagements during the Academy module
- Consistent contact with your client(s) and mentor throughout the Academy module
- Return as a mentor for a future Academy module

WE ARE ALWAYS ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS.
REGISTER FOR FUTURE EVENTS AT
clsmf.org/pro-bono-attorneys



PRO BONO AWARDS

Every year, Florida Supreme Court & The Florida Bar host the Pro Bono Awards. For his work and dedication, our Volunteer Pro Bono Attorney, Tim Moran, received the highest honor of being awarded the 2023 Tobias Simon Pro Bono Service Award for exemplifying the highest ideals of the profession in ensuring the availability of legal services to the poor!



ATTORNEY TIM MORAN
2023 TOBIAS SIMON PRO BONO
SERVICE AWARD WINNER

MAKING AN IMPACT



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PRESS RELEASE

Justice Department Obtains Relief in Lawsuit Alleging Discriminatory Targeting of Hispanic Homeowners



Community Legal Services obtained a consent judgment for \$4,595,000 to compensate Hispanic homeowners who were harmed by a Miami law firm claiming to provide loan modifications and foreclosure defense services to financially struggling borrowers.

This case began in 2014 when CLS initially filed fair housing complaints on behalf of Lucia Hurtado, Noemi Roman, Argentina Roque, and their families with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). “When these families first reached out to us for help, I was so compelled by their stories I had to find a way to seek justice for them,” said staff attorney Alicia Magazu. “Because it was clear they had been targeted based on their national origin, I reported the activity to HUD.”

Upon completion of its investigation, HUD found cause and charged Defendants with discrimination in September 2018. HUD transferred the case to the Department of Justice (DOJ), which filed a lawsuit in the Middle District of Florida. CLS intervened shortly thereafter on behalf of Lucia Hurtado, Noemi Roman, and Argentina Roque (“Intervenor Plaintiffs”).

INVESTING IN

CLS is committed to improving the lives of individuals, families, and groups within the communities of Central Florida by addressing legal issues and advocating for their rights.



INVESTING IN INDIVIDUALS

CLS serves the legal needs of low income individuals, children, elderly, victims of abuse, veterans, and people with disabilities. Our assistance in obtaining federal benefits, child support, wages, and unemployment compensation has a direct, personal impact through access to legal aid.

INVESTING IN FAMILIES²

CLS works to educate families about their legal options by helping them navigate complex legal systems and make informed decisions about their family's future. Investing in families is not only a matter of social responsibility, but also a wise strategy for fostering healthy, stable, and prosperous communities.



INVESTING IN COMMUNITY

One of our core beliefs is ensuring that all members of the community, regardless of their socio-economic status, have equal access to justice. A 2017 study, commissioned by The Florida Bar Foundation, shows that every dollar spent on civil legal services for the state's low-income residents yields more than \$7 in economic impacts. This has wide-ranging benefits that extend to the well-being of our communities, our state, and the nation.

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

This signifies YOUR commitment to channel resources, efforts, and expertise towards creating a better, more just, and equitable society for the long term. CLS emphasizes a focus on sustainable, enduring, and long-term impact.



LEGAL AID FOR ALL

EVERYONE BENEFITS WHEN WE:

- Stop an illegal eviction, and one less person or family is homeless
- Force a fly-by-night contractor to redo poor quality work
- Prevent home foreclosures and assist residents facing crippling debt
- Stop the cycle of domestic violence
- Collaborate with other nonprofits to address their client's legal issues and improve the impact of our community partners

INVESTING WITH US HELPS:

- Vulnerable and exploited individuals and families
- Veterans facing challenges to their health, financial, or housing stability
- Domestic violence survivors and their children
- Seniors targeted by scams
- Families stabilize income and achieve affordable housing
- Children with education issues
- Individuals start their own non-profit or small business



Donate

FUNDING PARTNERS

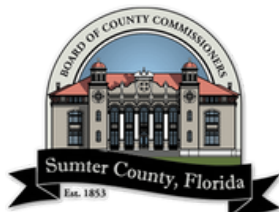
LSC | America's Partner for Equal Justice

LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

LSC is the single largest funder of civil legal aid for low-income Americans in the nation. Established in 1974, LSC operates as an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation that promotes equal access to justice and provides grants for high-quality civil legal assistance to low-income Americans. LSC distributes more than 90 percent of its total funding to 132 independent nonprofit legal aid programs with more than 800 offices. LSC-funded programs help people who live in households with annual incomes at or below 125% of the federal poverty guidelines.

THE FLORIDA BAR FOUNDATION

The Florida Bar Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide greater access to justice. Through strategic grant making, the Foundation funds local and statewide civil legal aid organizations and projects to improve the administration of justice and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the legal aid delivery system. The Foundation engages in catalytic philanthropy by investing in training, technology, technical assistance, assessment, and capacity-building for legal aid and works to develop and expand innovative pro bono initiatives.



COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- [Aging Network Agencies](#)
- [Aspire Health Partners](#)
- [Changing Homelessness for Volusia and Flagler counties](#)
- [Citrus County Senior Programs](#)
- [Community Action Agencies](#)
- [Community with a Heart](#)
- [Consumer Advocate Groups](#)
- [County Health Departments](#)
- [Domestic Violence Shelters](#)
- [Elder Options and Elder Source](#)
- [Flagler County Senior Services Program](#)
- [Florida Legal Services](#)
- [Florida Civil Legal Aid Association](#)
- [Guardian Ad Litem Programs](#)
- [Health Care Center for the Homeless](#)
- [Homeless Services Network](#)
- [Homeless Shelters](#)
- [Housed, the Central Florida Regional Housing Trust](#)
- [Housing Authorities](#)
- [Immigrant Assistance Programs](#)
- [Legal Aid Society of the Orange County Bar](#)
- [Marion County Bar Association](#)
- [Marion County Children's Alliance](#)
- [Orange County Eviction Diversion Program](#)
- [Orlando City Mayor's Veterans Advisory Council](#)
- [Osceola Council on Aging](#)
- [Salvation Army](#)
- [Services for the Blind](#)
- [Transition House](#)
- [Volunteers of America \(Brevard County\)](#)
- [Volunteers of America \(Marion County\)](#)
- [United Way](#)
- [United Way Heart of Florida](#)
- [United Way Volusia Flagler](#)
- [Westbrook Services Corporation](#)
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Members of Community Legal Services (CLS) Board of Directors serve as ambassadors, educating the community and building relationships that support our mission. Fiduciary duties include financial and program oversight, and broad policy-making.

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