



Breaking Barriers to Justice

2016 | Annual Report

LAND OF LINCOLN
LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION, INCORPORATED

**Bringing Justice Home
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Dear Friends and Supporters:

First, I would like to thank all of you who have so warmly welcomed me into my new position. The thought of returning to my home area 39 years after first serving with Land of Lincoln as a summer intern has been more meaningful to me than I would have ever imagined. Thank you for all your good wishes and support.

In her introduction to our last Annual Report a few days after the November 2016 elections, Lois Wood acknowledged that it was hard at that moment to find encouraging words. But she did. She reminded us of Land of Lincoln's accomplishments, the support we have received from our funders, and the strength of our relationship with the private bar. She also challenged us to stay true to the vision we all share, that the people we serve "should have access to justice, income security, adequate housing, quality education, health care, safety from violence and exploitation, and the opportunity to improve their own lives."

Now, almost a year later, Lois has retired, moving into a part-time role of extraordinary resource and advisor. I have succeeded her as executive director. The transition has been relatively smooth so far, thanks largely to Lois' generous sharing of her wisdom and judgment, and to a skilled management team and administrative staff that have worked hard to help their new director learn the ropes.

We still face challenges. The President has proposed zero funding for the Legal Services Corporation, our largest funder, and has also proposed elimination of Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) funding, which we had hoped would help support our domestic violence advocacy during 2018. Some of our funders have had to cut back on the funding they can provide.

But we have stayed true to the vision. We continue to serve the civil legal needs of the poor and elderly. In 2016, our attorneys and paralegals, together with our pro bono and private bar panel members, served over 9,700 clients, including 645 cases in which clients were represented by private attorneys.

Our supporters have also stayed true to the vision. 2016 was the second year of our three-year Bringing Justice Home campaigns, led primarily by private attorney committees, which have already achieved pledges and gifts of over \$2.7 million. We are deeply grateful to all of you who have supported our efforts so strongly, making it possible for us to sustain our services without cutbacks during the past two years and hopefully throughout 2018.

I want to also acknowledge everyone who worked so hard and so successfully for a state appropriation for legal aid, after two years without funding.

It has been both humbling and inspiring to see so much dedication to our mission from our private bar partners and supporters, our Board members, our funders, our staff, and members of the larger community. With such support, we cannot fail.

Last year Lois Wood made a promise: "Land of Lincoln will survive, and in partnership with the private bar, we will continue to represent clients with passion and with the highest quality legal work, in ways that will have the most positive impact on our clients." I commit myself to that promise as well. And why that promise? Because as Dr. Martin Luther King once said, "We...will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

Thank you for helping us make a difference in the lives of our clients. Thank you for all you do for the low-income and elderly residents of central and southern Illinois.

Sincerely,


Michael Ferry
Executive Director



Our Clients

Brandy is a disabled elderly woman, who, after living for several years in an assisted living facility, needed the extra care of a nursing home. She had recently moved into a nursing home, and knew that her care would be covered by Medicaid, as she had been approved and received Medicaid for several years. Brandy relied on her son to handle her financial issues. Out of the blue, her son received a notice from the nursing home that she owed the facility almost \$60,000. The facility staff advised Brandy's son that Brandy was not on Medicaid. Failure to pay would result in Brandy being discharged from the facility. Her son came to Land of Lincoln for help. Our attorney investigated the matter and found that Brandy had been terminated from Medicaid without being sent any notice. Our attorney was able to reestablish Brandy's Medicaid with no lapse in coverage. Brandy's past due amount was now covered by Medicaid, and she was able to stay in the nursing home without fear of being discharged for lack of payment.



Mike, a father of one came to us for legal help regarding his minor son. There was no formal custody arrangement between Mike and the boy's mother, and he lived at each house equally. However, the condition at the boy's mother's house soon deteriorated and both the police and a social service agency got involved. Soon after their involvement, she threatened Mike and her son. Our attorney helped Mike get an order of protection, and also filed for custody. The court awarded Mike custody (now known as parenting responsibility) and supervised visitation by the mother (now known as parenting time). Mike's son now lives in a stable environment, and he is safe when visiting his mother.

Land of Lincoln helped Linda, an employed mother of two, who came to us for assistance regarding the foreclosure of her home. She fell behind on her mortgage payments due to severe health issues. When the foreclosure was filed, she originally represented herself. Her case was assigned to the county's mandatory foreclosure mediation program. She was unable to attend, because her employer refused to give her any additional time off work. Her case was terminated from mediation, and went back to the judicial foreclosure docket. Our attorney represented her in court and asked that her case be sent back to mediation. The court granted our attorney's request and the case was sent back to mediation. Our attorney spent over 1 ½ years representing the client in mediation, and after 19 months the servicer finally approved the client for a loan modification to save her home. The foreclosure case was dismissed, and Linda and her children remain safely in their home, no longer at risk of homelessness.

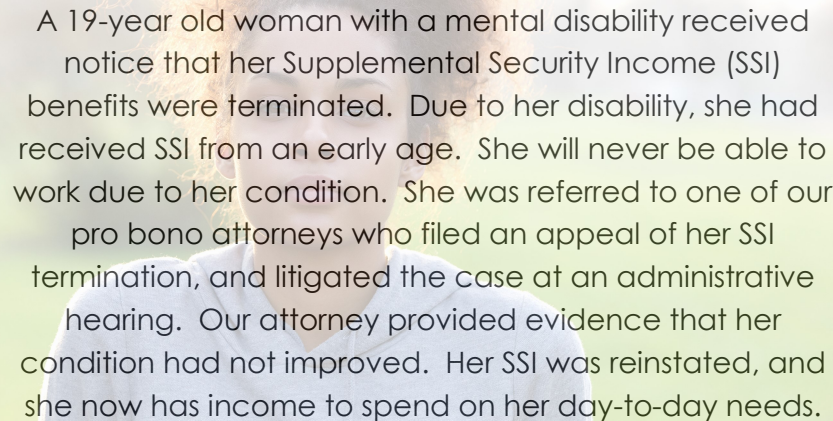


Any identifying information has been changed to protect the confidentiality of our clients.

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Our Pro Bono Attorneys Help Clients like Tiffany...



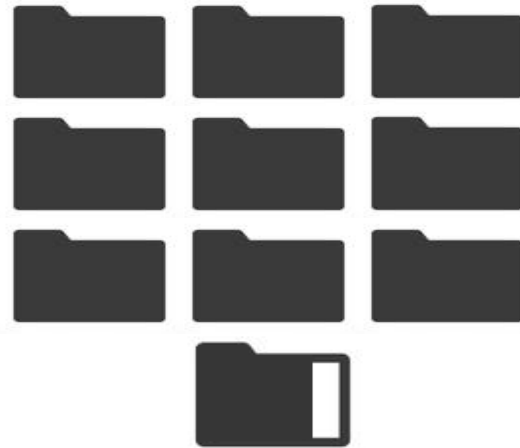
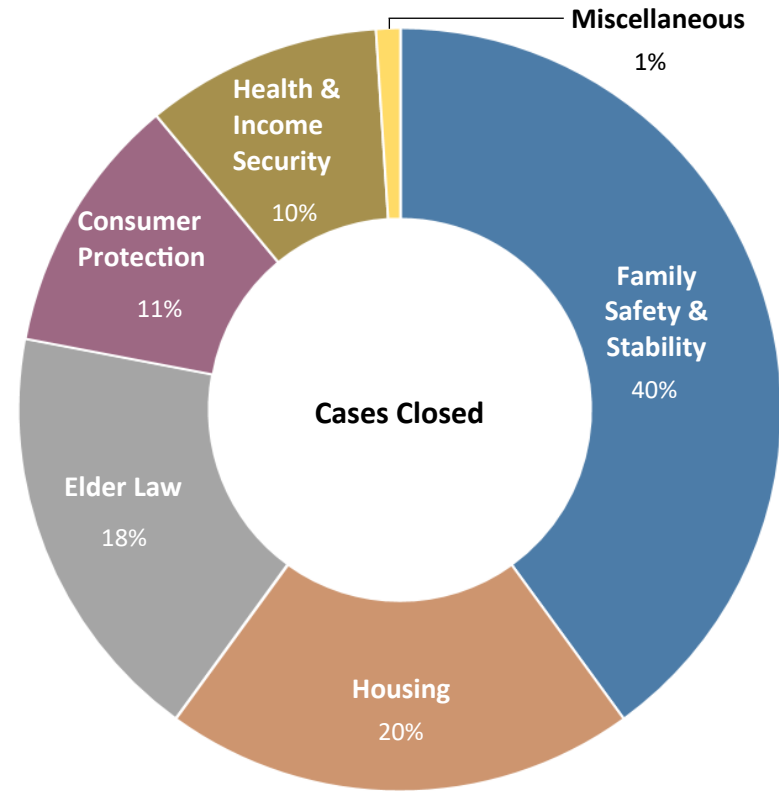
A 19-year old woman with a mental disability received notice that her Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits were terminated. Due to her disability, she had received SSI from an early age. She will never be able to work due to her condition. She was referred to one of our pro bono attorneys who filed an appeal of her SSI termination, and litigated the case at an administrative hearing. Our attorney provided evidence that her condition had not improved. Her SSI was reinstated, and she now has income to spend on her day-to-day needs.

Our Impact

Our Mission

To provide low-income and senior residents of central and southern Illinois with high quality legal services in order to obtain and maintain their basic human needs. Through advice, representation, advocacy, education, and collaboration we seek:

- to achieve justice for those whose voices might otherwise not be heard;
- to empower individuals to advocate for themselves; and,
- to make positive changes in the communities we serve.



Land of Lincoln Staff and Pro Bono Attorneys closed nearly 10,000 cases in 2016.

Our Vision

We believe all people of central and southern Illinois should have access to justice, income security, adequate housing, quality education, healthcare, safety from violence and exploitation, and the opportunity to improve their own lives.

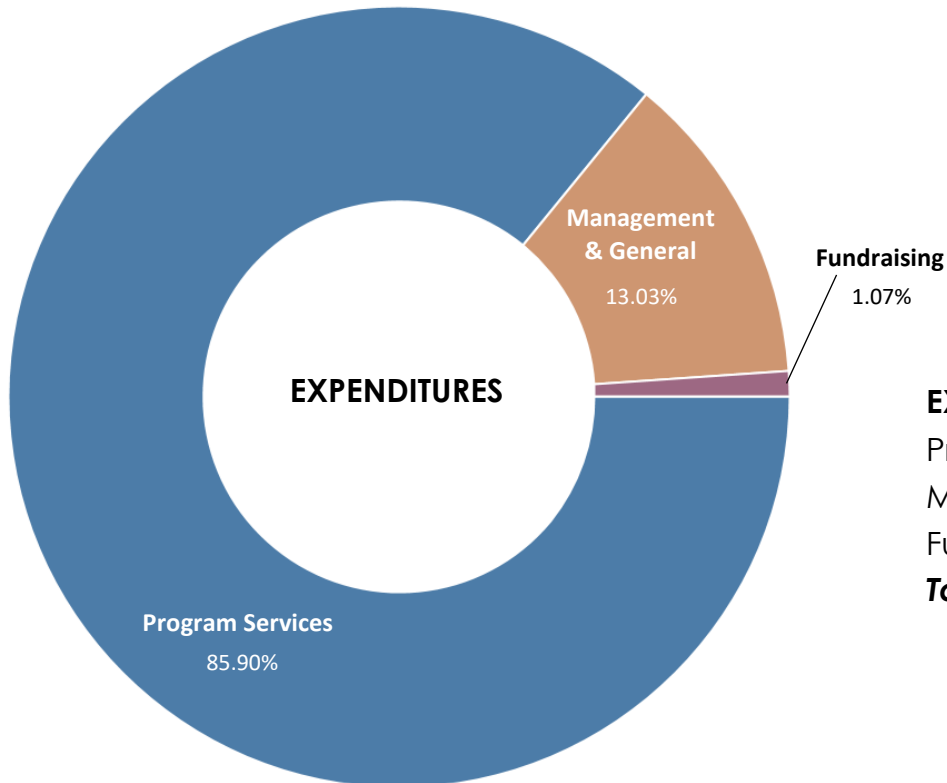
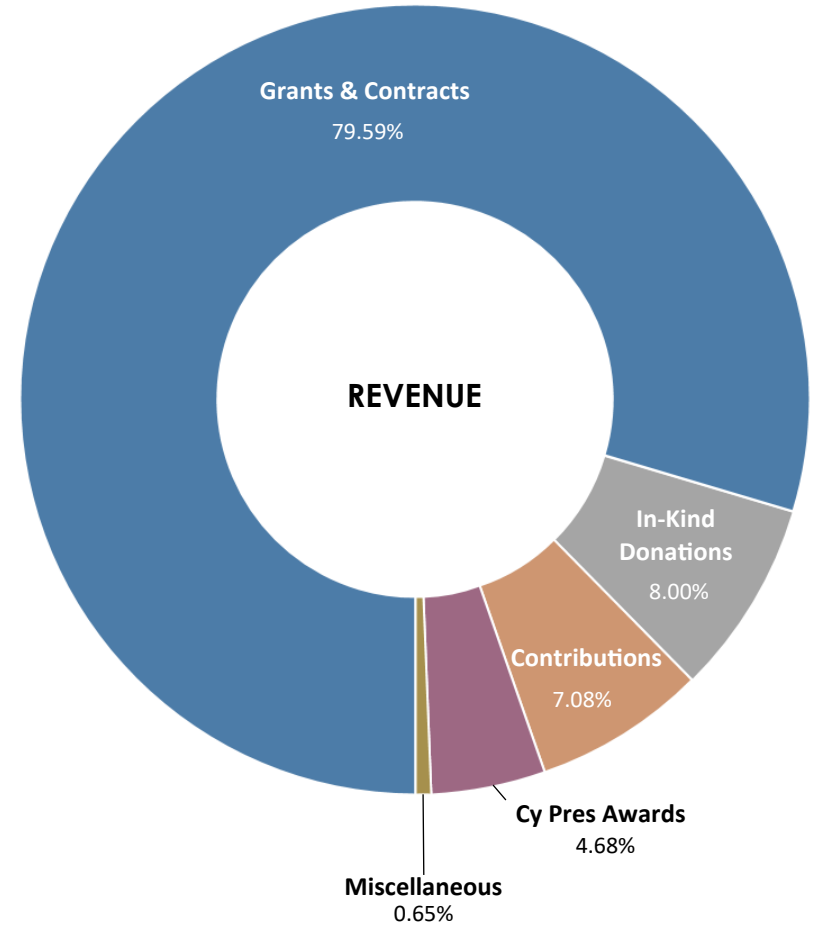
2016 Cases Closed

Family Safety & Stability	3,937
Orders of Protection, Divorce, Custody, Guardianship, Education	
Housing	1,924
Rental, Homeownership	
Elder Law	1,787
Elder Abuse, Financial Exploitation, Investigation and Enforcement of Rights and Quality of Care Issues for Nursing Home Residents, Advanced Directives and Wills	
Consumer Protection	1,109
Consumer Fraud, Illegal Debt Collection, Bankruptcy	
Health & Income Security	938
Medicare, Medicaid, SSDI, SSI, Employment	
Miscellaneous	101

Our Financials

REVENUE

Grants	\$ 6,968,613
Reimbursements	\$ 28,450
Interest & Dividends	\$ 28,628
Cy Pres Awards	\$ 417,088
Contributions	\$ 632,205
In-Kind Donations	\$ 714,041
Contract Services	\$ 129,659
Total Contributions & Revenue	\$ 8,918,684



EXPENDITURES

Program Services	\$ 7,637,693
Management & General	\$ 1,158,734
Fundraising	\$ 94,353
Total Expenditures	\$ 8,890,780

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Dear Friends and Supporters:

Thank You!

It has been an honor to work over the years with so many of the people who will read this report. This is not a good-bye note as I hope to see many of you again as we continue to work together for equal justice in Illinois. But I do want to thank and acknowledge all of you for being a part of the equal justice movement and for playing a key role in Land of Lincoln's work.

Clients. You have been my inspiration and my source of energy - from the first client I served in 1973, an elderly woman being wrongfully evicted from her public housing home; to the final client I served in 2003 before becoming Executive Director, a victim of a predatory lender. You have entrusted me with helping solve your most critical legal problems, you have worked alongside me to help solve them, and you have often worked with us in the community so others will not have to face the same urgent legal problems that you did.

Legal Aid Staff Members. You have lent your energy, your creativity and your determination to meeting the legal needs of the poor. You have done this at considerable personal sacrifice, working at modest salaries and often under the shadow of large student debt. And you have been fun to work with - from brainstorming sessions to mentoring to potlucks!

Board Members. Little did I know when I became Executive Director that one of the very most enjoyable parts of this new job would be working with our Board of Directors. A few of you I had known for years - others I met for the first time after your appointment or election. You have been a source of great ideas, as well as great leadership. Never once have I been refused when I called a potential board member to ask if they would be interested in an appointment. And never once have I been refused when I asked a board member for help.

Private Bar. When I became a staff attorney in East St. Louis in 1974, our office rarely worked with the private bar, except for those serving on our Board. That has changed dramatically, and the partnership that has developed with the private bar has been transformative for Land of Lincoln. When legal aid funding has been at risk of elimination, it was you who lent your power and prestige to saving federal and state funding. When it became apparent that the need was far greater than could be met by program staff, it was you who volunteered to help meet that need.

In more recent years, private bar leaders have come together repeatedly during fundraising campaigns, to not only donate generously to our work, but to ask their fellow lawyers to do the same. Your financial support has sustained our services throughout the 65 counties we serve.

Judiciary. The Supreme Court of Illinois has been a leader in the struggle for equal justice. The Court authorized add-on fees to attorney registration to support our work. It required private attorneys to report their pro bono service and their contributions to legal aid on the annual registration form, as an encouragement for such work. It has convened summits on Equal Access to Justice and Pro Bono, always with a view to moving forward and improvement. And the Circuit Courts have also been deeply involved, as they have established mediation and self-help programs and formed pro bono committees.

Funders. You have worked tirelessly to find sources of support for our work, and have passed those funds on to us in a spirit of partnership. You have encouraged us to improve our work and have been willing to fund initiatives to help us do so. In recent years you have enabled us to expand our services for victims of domestic violence and homebuyers facing foreclosure, and most recently for veterans and those facing barriers to employment.

Thank You. It's been my privilege to work with all of you.



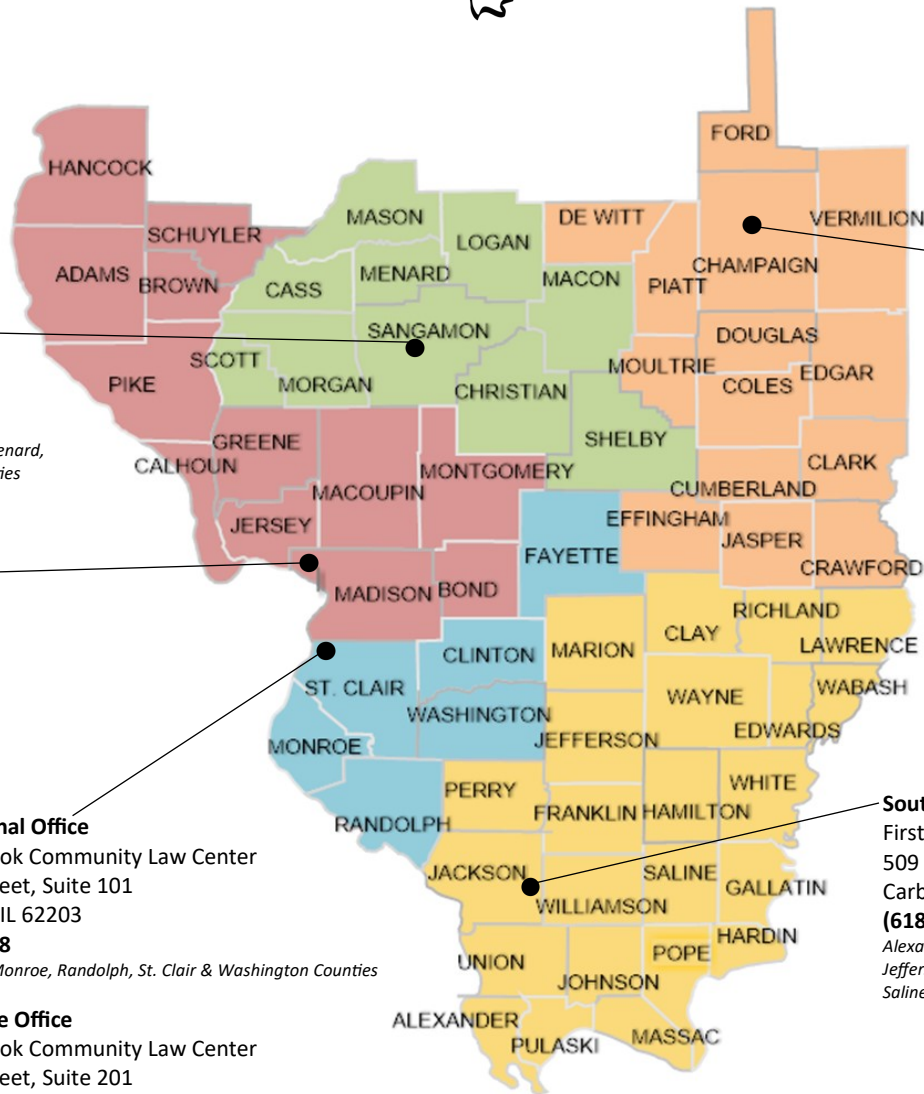
Sincerely,

Lois Wood

Lois Wood

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 East St. Louis, IL 62203
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