LETTER TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we reflect on our 2019 achievements, we acknowledge that we now live in a completely different world than that of just last year. Our world has been scarred by a global pandemic that has left families reeling, mourning, and scrambling to keep a roof over their heads and food on the table.

Further, as protests swell and we say their names—George, Breonna, Tamir—our country is also reckoning with the painful reality that we have so much more to do to dismantle the structures and systems that perpetuate racism and prevent Black residents from achieving the American Dream.

Reflecting on our work of 2019 gives us hope for the years ahead. As you review our accomplishments contained in this report, we hope you are struck by the many ways we help Illinois residents achieve safety, security, and a foothold for a better life. We’re proud of all that we do to protect victims from their abusers and achieve stability; to help grandparents become guardians of grandchildren left in their care; to prevent vulnerable residents of nursing homes from being evicted; to create opportunities for improved employment by helping individuals with criminal records get a fresh start through expungement and sealing of those records.

But we also know there is more to do. We are forging community-led partnerships with remarkable organizations to ensure we are connected to our communities of color and providing the services residents need. We’re creating new projects, like our TANF Project, to connect our clients to benefits they need but were not aware of. Thank you so much for your ongoing support. We couldn’t begin to accomplish all that we do without you.

Yours truly,

[Signature]

Clarissa Gaff
Executive Director
WHO YOU HELPED IN 2019

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, Land of Lincoln was able to help more than 10,000 clients throughout our 65-county service area, including:

- Caucasian: 69%
- African-American: 26%
- Hispanic: 1%
- Bi-racial: 2%
- Other/Unknown: 1%
74% FEMALE
25% MALE
1% TRANSGENDER/OTHER

984 Active Military, Veterans & Their Families

2,739 Living with a Disability

2,339 Seniors

4,818 Children Impacted
Isaiah, a widowed father of three, contacted Land of Lincoln after receiving notice that his utilities would be shut off in a week for nonpayment. Isaiah was also behind on rent and a title loan he had used to pay other bills. His driver’s license had been revoked for an outstanding traffic fine.

Our attorney filed a Chapter 7 bankruptcy on Isaiah’s behalf, and filed a Motion to Redeem his car. While Isaiah owed $1000 on the title loan, the car itself was 19 years old with over 150,000 miles on it. Through the bankruptcy, Isaiah was able to get his car title back for $1 and wipe out the balance of the loan. He was also able to keep his utilities on and get his driver’s license restored. The bankruptcy gave Isaiah room to breathe, and he was able to focus on his job and meeting his family’s daily needs.

Consumer Protection is a core Priority for Land of Lincoln. We protect individuals from abusive collection practices, consumer fraud, and predatory lending. We also seek to preserve their limited income, so that the clients and their families can meet critical day-to-day needs, such as rent, food, medical care, and transportation.
Michael, a veteran who suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), came to Land of Lincoln after being served with an eviction. He was homeless before obtaining a HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Voucher (HUD-VASH) which helped pay his rent. The voucher allowed him to rent his own place where he could live with his emotional support dog. Michael relied on a local food bank for food. He had applied for Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and his application was pending, when he received notice of the eviction.

Michael had gotten into a verbal argument with a neighbor, who had threatened to call animal control to have his emotional support dog taken away from him. The landlord filed an eviction case due to this confrontation. The stress from the eviction and threat to call animal control aggravated Michael’s PTSD, so he chose to find alternate housing. Because of his limited income and service dog, Michael struggled to find new housing.

Our attorney was able to find new housing for him and have his HUD-VASH transferred. Our attorney also helped him secure payment of his security deposit through the Veterans Assistance Center and a private foundation.

With our attorney’s assistance, Michael was able to negotiate a settlement with his landlord and avoid an eviction judgment. He kept his housing voucher, as well as service dog. In addition, his application for SSI was approved, so Michael now has a steady source of income and is living in a place that makes him feel safe and secure.
Kala, a mother of one young child, sought our assistance with an order of protection and divorce from her abusive husband. During the marriage, he became extremely violent when he started drinking excessively. In one incident, he pulled Kala by her hair to the car and choked her while they were driving. A month later, he strangled her with a cord in the house, put his gun in her mouth and threatened to kill her, after kicking and slamming her into a wall. A mutual friend called the police, and Kala’s husband was arrested and charged with aggravated domestic battery and aggravated battery with the use of a deadly weapon.

Our attorney represented her in an order of protection hearing. The court granted her a Plenary Order of Protection and awarded her exclusive possession of their home and no parenting time for her husband. Our attorney also represented her in a divorce, which the court granted. Kala was awarded primary custody of her son, child support, and the marital home. The court restricted her ex-husband’s visitation to one supervised visit per week. Kala and her son are now safe and able to live their lives free of the violence that overwhelmed them before the divorce.

Family safety and stability is one of our core priorities. Our goals include protecting victims and families from domestic violence, and ensuring continued stability and well-being through access to income and health benefits, housing, and spousal/child support.
Barbara, a senior citizen living in an assisted living facility, called Land of Lincoln after she received an eviction notice. She was at risk of getting kicked out of the facility because of a $46,000 Medicaid penalty she incurred when her estranged husband sold property several years back. She filed a hardship waiver with the State, but it was immediately denied.

A Land of Lincoln attorney helped Barbara appeal the denial, and showed the State that she never received the proceeds from the sale of the property. She was separated from her husband and had no chance of recovering any money she was penalized for.

After negotiating, the State eventually reversed course and approved the hardship waiver for Barbara. Her $46,000 Medicaid penalty was waived and she was no longer at risk of being removed from her home at the facility.

In addition to her nursing home eviction case, Land of Lincoln assisted Barbara in divorcing her estranged husband. Barbara no longer has to worry about her housing and Medicaid benefits being in jeopardy due to her former husband’s actions.

The protection of seniors and persons with disabilities is one of our core priorities. Our goals are to protect these individuals from exploitation, fraud, and violence, promote independence, and encourage self-determination.
CLOSED CASES BY PRACTICE AREA

- **Family Safety & Stability**: 4,029 cases (Orders of Protection, Divorce, Custody, Guardianship, Education)
- **Housing**: 1,802 cases (Rental, Homeownership)
- **Elder Law**: 1,587 cases (Elder Abuse, Financial Exploitation, Advanced Directives and Wills)
- **Consumer Protection**: 1,076 cases (Consumer Fraud, Debt Collection, Bankruptcy)
- **Expungement & Sealing**: 1,014 cases (of Criminal Records)
- **Health & Income Security**: 525 cases (Medicare, Medicaid, SSDI, SSI, Employment)
- **Miscellaneous**: 102 cases
CLOSED CASES BY OFFICE

2019 Closed Cases: 10,135

Central Regional Office: 1,631
Eastern Regional Office: 1,866
Northern Regional Office: 939
Southern Regional Office: 1,333
Western Regional Office: 1,641
Legal Advice & Referral Center: 2,725
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As of December 31, 2019
Land of Lincoln Legal Aid is grateful for the help of the private bar in meeting the legal needs of low-income residents of southern and central Illinois. Private attorneys partner with Land of Lincoln to provide pro bono legal services to our clients and are critical to ensuring access to justice to all, not just those who can afford it. In 2019, pro bono attorneys handled over 550 cases referred by Land of Lincoln. The following attorneys are currently active in our Pro Bono Attorney Program.

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If you are interested in participating in our Pro Bono Attorney Program, please call the Regional Office (p. 15) which correlates with the counties in which you work and/or live, or contact the Administrative Office at (618) 398-0574.
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Illinois Bar Foundation
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Illinois Department of Children & Family Services
Illinois Equal Justice Foundation
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Midland Area Agency on Aging
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Southern Illinois University School of Medicine - Medical-Legal Partnership
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United Way of Greater St. Louis - Tri-Cities Area Division

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FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

REVENUE

Grants $8,409,432
Cy Pres Awards $28,582
Contributions $783,472
In-Kind Donations (pro bono hours) $808,533
Other (investment income, attorneys fees, etc) $201,145

2019 Total Revenue = $10,231,164

EXPENSES

Program Services $7,744,378
Management & General $1,111,238
Fundraising $110,201

2019 Total Expenses = $8,965,817
Land of Lincoln Legal Aid provides free legal assistance and representation on civil legal issues to residents throughout 65 counties in central and southern Illinois.

When they have nowhere else to turn, low-income families and individuals, people with disabilities, seniors, and veterans look to Land of Lincoln Legal Aid to help secure the most basic necessities of life.

Legal Advice & Referral Center
(877) 342-7891
Mon. - Thurs.: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Friday: 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

The Fresh Start Project Hotline
(855) 601-9474
Mon. - Fri.: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.