OUR MISSION

Land of Lincoln Legal Aid's mission is to provide low-income and senior residents of central and southern Illinois with high quality legal services 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.
Dear Friends and Supporters,

On March 17, 2020, in response to the statewide COVID-19 shutdown, we closed our offices, gathered files and laptops, and sent our staff home to work at their kitchen tables, in their bedrooms, and if they were lucky - spare offices. It felt ominous, but I assumed it would be short-lived.

I was wrong.

In short order, we found ourselves forced to adapt to this new reality and figure out on the fly how to best serve our many clients and those newly unemployed and in need of legal help. Attorneys became frontline workers, attending courts where they might be unable to social distance and were often the only one masked. We set up zoom hearing rooms, so our clients who lacked internet or camera could attend court in our offices. For seniors wanting to execute advance directives, we instituted a drive-thru model, setting up tents in parking lots where notaries and staff alike assisted. Our outreach went virtual - Facebook Live "Know Your Rights" events with community partners, informational cartoon videos on our YouTube channel, and Expungement Summits conducted on a variety of virtual platforms.

The silver lining of the COVID-19 pandemic is that it spurred innovation and ingenuity in our response at Land of Lincoln. But the economic and social toll of this pandemic, not to mention the human suffering and devastating loss of lives, have had a striking impact on our staff and our clients. I felt a lump welling in my throat a few days ago as I reviewed cases staff have designated "COVID-related: a grandmother seeking custody of her grandkids after her daughter died of COVID; another client who got COVID, was hospitalized, took three months to partially recover and was in danger of getting evicted because he couldn’t work. While Land of Lincoln is uniquely situated to help them resolve these legal problems and provide some peace of mind, we know it will take years for our community members to heal.

This is why we are so grateful for all of you. The steadfast support of all you - our funders, friends, donors, and champions - have enabled us to weather this pandemic and help more than 10,000 Illinois residents last year. You have ensured our provision of high quality legal services in the hardest of times and deliver justice to many. We couldn’t do it without you. Thank you.

Yours truly,

Clarissa Gaff
Executive Director
Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, Land of Lincoln was able to help more than 8,700 clients throughout our 65-county service area, including:

- **726 Active Military, Veterans & Their Families**
- **9,011 Children Impacted**
- **2,185 Living with a Disability**
- **2,134 Survivors of Domestic Violence**
- **1,751 Seniors**
Hispanic: 1.6%
Other/Unknown: 1.6%
Bi-racial: 1.8%

Caucasian: 65.8%
African-American: 29.2%

72% Female
27% Male
1% Transgender/Other
A Land of Lincoln attorney assisted Tony, a veteran who made a good living as a truck driver after completing his military service and returning to civilian life. Tony had gone through a period in which he struggled with drug addiction that resulted in the loss of good paying jobs. He also received several felony convictions.

After his last arrest over 10 years ago, Tony successfully completed rehab and has been drug-free ever since.

Since becoming sober, Tony was able to get a job as a truck driver and has worked his way up the ranks. He applied for a promotion to a supervisory position, but was turned down due to his convictions.

Our attorney filed a petition to seal and expunge Tony's records. After the state's attorney objected, the attorney presented Tony at a hearing. Tony testified at the hearing about how he had changed and the impact his criminal record had on his life and his employment prospects. The court granted expungement of two records and sealing of three. Tony's employer has been supportive of his efforts to expunge and seal his records, and notified him that he is likely to receive the promotion.
In August 2020, Madison County was continuing to hold eviction hearings, but entering judgments with dates after the Governor’s eviction moratorium order was set to expire. The Governor’s moratorium orders had been entered every 30 days, so some of the eviction judgments had dates on them that were in violation of the current moratorium order (e.g. August 1).

In mid-August, Land of Lincoln’s Western Regional Office Managing Attorney, Chelsea Hubbard, received a frantic call from a mobile home tenant who, with his family of five, was going to be evicted that afternoon. The Sheriff had stopped by that morning to let the tenant know.

Chelsea called the Sheriff’s office and attempted to educate them about the current moratorium that was in place until August 22nd, but the Sheriff’s office insisted that it would enforce the eviction of the tenant and other tenants it had slated to evict that day.

Chelsea immediately called the State’s Attorney, who intervened with the Sheriff’s office and was able to get the evictions stopped. Madison County’s Chief Judge issued an order halting further eviction trials and stayed the issuances of summons when evictions were filed. With Chelsea’s tremendous advocacy, she was able to stop evictions in this county.
Lauretta, a senior citizen living in an assisted living facility, called Land of Lincoln after she received an eviction notice. She was at risk of being kicked out of the facility because of a $61,000 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, Megan Kinney, helped Lauretta 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 Lauretta. Her Medicaid penalty was waived and she was no longer at risk of being removed from her home at the facility.

Like many of our clients, Lauretta had several other legal issues. In addition to her assisted living facility eviction case, Land of Lincoln attorney, Nathan Elwood, assisted her in divorcing her estranged husband. In the midst of the divorce, we discovered that Lauretta had not received her pandemic economic stimulus payment of $1,200, which would help her afford incidentals like toothpaste. One of our paralegals, Felicia Voelkel, patiently facilitated calls between the IRS and Lauretta, and within a few days, she received her stimulus payment.
Ruth, a mother of two young children, sought our assistance with an order of protection and a divorce from her abusive husband. Ruth had suffered abuse throughout their marriage. Her husband had beaten and choked her in the past, and he was emotionally abusive. When Ruth told him she wanted a divorce, he obtained an Emergency Order of Protection against her by falsely accusing her of being abusive. She was forced to temporarily leave her home, and he gained temporary custody of their children.

A Land of Lincoln attorney represented Ruth in court and prevented a wrongful plenary order of protection from being entered against her. While our attorney was representing her in the divorce proceeding, our client’s husband began harassing her via text messages and told their children that he was going to kill their mother. Our attorney represented Ruth in an order of protection hearing, and the court granted a Plenary Order of Protection.

In the divorce proceeding, the court awarded Ruth with primary custody of the two children, and her ex-husband’s visitation was restricted to every other weekend. The court also awarded Ruth possession of the marital home.

Ruth was thrilled with the result, and she and her children are now living their lives free from violence.
CLOSED CASES BY OFFICE

2020 Closed Cases: 8,060

- Legal Advice & Referral Center: 2,966
- Eastern Regional Office: 1,367
- Northern Regional Office: 453
- Southern Regional Office: 1,019
- Western Regional Office: 910
- Central Regional Office: 1,345
- Southern Regional Office: 1,345
- Eastern Regional Office: 1,367
- Northern Regional Office: 453
- Southern Regional Office: 1,019
- Western Regional Office: 910
- Legal Advice & Referral Center: 2,966
CLOSED CASES BY AREA OF LAW

- Family Safety & Stability: 3,464
  - Orders of Protection, Divorce, Custody, Guardianship, Education
  - Elder Abuse, Financial Exploitation, Advanced Directives and Wills
  - Consumer Fraud, Debt Collection, Bankruptcy
  - Expungement & Sealing

- Housing: 1,437
  - Rental, Homeownership

- Elder Law: 890
  - Elder Abuse, Financial Exploitation, Advanced Directives and Wills

- Consumer Protection: 691
  - Consumer Fraud, Debt Collection, Bankruptcy

- Expungements & Sealings: 1,061

- Health & Income Security: 443

- Miscellaneous: 74
OUR PEOPLE

LEGAL AID STAFF

Administrative Office
Kathy Fleshren
Clarissa Gaff
Kim Harrington
Calvin Hwang
Lura January
Dawn Ripperda
Susan Simone
Jacqueline Tate
Denise Wiegand

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As of December 31, 2020
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111 East Fourth Street, Suite 330
Alton, Illinois 62002
(618) 462-0029/(800) 642-5570
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8787 State Street, Suite 101
East St. Louis, Illinois 62203
(618) 398-0958
Clinton, Fayette, Monroe, Randolph, St. Clair &
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Dorothy O. Cook Community Law Center
8787 State Street, Suite 201
East St. Louis, Illinois 62203
(618) 398-0674

EASTERN REGIONAL OFFICE
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302 North First Street
Champaign, Illinois 61820
(217) 356-1351/(800) 747-5523
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509 South University Ave., 3rd Floor
Carbondale, Illinois 62901
(618) 457-7800/(800) 642-5335
Alexander, Clay, Edwards, Franklin, Gallatin,
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Lawrence, Marion, Massac, Perry, Pope, Pulaski,
Richland, Saline, Union, Wabash, Wayne, White
& Williamson Counties
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 2020, pro bono attorneys handled 836 cases referred by Land of Lincoln. The following attorneys are currently active in our Pro Bono Attorney Program.

Central Regional Office

Jeanne Aubuchon
Jennifer Behme
Gary Bement
Thomas Benedict
Curtis Blood
Natalie Bower
Patricia Brennan
Pearson Bush
Deborah Cobb
Ryan Connor
Bruce Cook
Charles Courtney
Heather Daiber
Van-Lear Eckert
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Lucas Liefer
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Joseph Chamley
Kenneth Crossman
Adam Crutchley
Richard Dahlernburg
Scott Dempsey
Kaye Dent

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If you are interested in participating in our Pro Bono Attorney Program, please call the Regional Office which correlates with the counties in which you work and/or live, or contact the Administrative Office at (618) 398-0574.
OUR SUPPORTERS

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M. Ann Hatch
Simmons Hanly Conroy LLC
The Gori Law Firm

$10,000 - $49,999
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Becker Hoerner & Yeusza, P.C.
Bruce & Sandra Cook
Greensfelder, Hemker & Gale, P.C.
Michael Nester
Russell Scott
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Philip B. Alfeld
Lee Allen
AmazonSmile Foundation
AMVets Post 31
Anonymous (5)
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Carl Backstrom
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Land of Lincoln Legal Aid thanks our many donors for their generous gifts of support in 2020.
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AgeSmart Community Resources
AgeLinc (Area Agency on Aging for Lincolnland)
Alton Woman’s Home Association
Carle Foundation Hospital
Champaign County
East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging
Illinois Bar Foundation
Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority
Illinois Department of Children & Family Services
Illinois Equal Justice Foundation
Lawyers Trust Fund of Illinois
Legal Services Corporation
Midland Area Agency on Aging
Office of the Attorney General of Illinois
Office on Violence Against Women (VAWA)
Public Interest Law Initiative
Saint Clair County Health Department
Saint Clair County Intergovernmental Grants
Saint Louis Community Foundation
Southern Illinois Healthcare
Southern Illinois University School of Medicine - HIV Care Connect
Southern Illinois University School of Medicine - Medical-Legal Partnership
United Way of Champaign County
United Way of Greater St. Louis
Westside Justice Center - Access to Justice

Thank you to our institutional funders who supported Land of Lincoln in 2020.
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

**REVENUE**

- Grants: $7,864,163
- CyPres Awards: $905
- Contributions: $472,513
- In-Kind Donations (pro bono hours): $661,228
- Other (investment income, attorneys fees, etc): $152,320

2020 Total Revenue = $9,151,129

**EXPENSES**

- Program Services: $7,674,461
- Management & General: $1,161,148
- Fundraising: $149,656

2020 Total Expenses = $8,985,265
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.

Eviction & Fresh Start Project Hotline
(855) 601-9474
Mon., Wed., & Fri.: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Tues. & Thurs.: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.